Hitting the Bullseye:

Constituencies of Women and Descriptive Representation

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Abstract

As recently as 2014 (Celis et al.), researchers have sought to explore the intersection of substantive and descriptive representation of women through the behavior of female members of Congress. However, much of this work focuses exclusively on Congresswomen's behavior pertaining to "women's issues," thereby excluding a multitude of issues on which female voters may have distinct and firmly held preferences. Moreover, this work does not make distinctions among the multiple constituencies served by members of Congress, as described by Fenno (1977). In this paper, we assess representation of multiple constituencies of self-identified women across a number of important policy issues using cross sectional survey data from the 2010, 2012, and 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), which include registration and vote validation. By examining vote-validated respondents, we gain a better measure of policy-based representation of the opinions of women who did in fact turn out. We are able to compare their representation against that of those who did not turn out, regardless of their self-reported behavior. When examining the issue agreement between the policy preferences of women who voted and the corresponding roll call votes cast by legislators, we find evidence of better substantive representation of female constituents by female legislators than by their male counterparts (controlling for party). Results regarding registered women suggest that likelihood of voting increases representation in the form of roll call vote agreement. By extending the range of issues under consideration, our findings reinforce the view that the descriptive-substantive representational link is important for the quality of representation received by female voters, while challenging essentializing approaches to the study of women in American politics.

Introduction

The literature on women and politics in the US has consistently found that women are less interested in politics, have less political knowledge, and by consequence participate at lesser rates in varied political activity in comparison with men. Though some scholars have argued that the presence of competitive women candidates and officeholders increases political engagement of women, none have explored if higher levels of political engagement narrow the gap of representation between women and men. We adopt the notion that members of Congress represent multiple constituencies (Fenno,1977) and that they view these constituencies instrumentally based on their likelihood of participating in their re-election to office (Mayhew, 1974). Following these assumptions, we test whether constituencies of women with higher levels of political engagement are likely to get increased representation in the form of issue agreement on roll call votes. Furthermore, we test whether higher political engagement only increases women's representation under the condition of living in a district with a female member of Congress.

Political scientists have long been curious about the intersection of descriptive and substantive representation (Mansbridge 1999; Pitkin 1967). Scholars like Celis and Childs (2008), Gerrity, Osborne, and Mendez (2007), and Pearson and Dancey (2011a) have examined this connection through the behavior of female members of Congress, for example. These scholars have made a number of theoretical contributions with respect to women's descriptive and substantive representation, such as critical mass theory, and demonstrated the importance of female legislators' work on behalf of their female constituents (Wittmer and Bouche 2013; Cowell-Meyers and Langbein 2009). However, many of these scholars have explored representative behavior only on so called women's issues. This focus excludes a multitude of

issues on which female voters may have distinct and firmly held preferences that are outside of those thought to be central to every self-identified woman.

Much work on descriptive representation overlooks the existence of multiple constituencies for each legislator (as detailed by Richard Fenno (1977)), and potential differences in the representative relationship for members of each constituent group. Fenno notes that within any legislator's constituency lie nested, increasingly important and proximal sub-constituencies. More specifically, we contend that an understanding of the intersection of descriptive and substantive representation that accounts for the proximity of the constituent to the legislator (i.e., the level of her constituency) renders the representational relationship more clear, with proximity being defined as the re-election value the constituent holds to the congressperson.

In this paper, we assess the substantive representation of multiple constituencies of self-identified women across a number of policy issues by both male and female members of Congress. By focusing on general policy, we can challenge essentializing approaches to the study of women in American politics that only measure responsiveness to "women's issues" while reinforcing the importance of the descriptive-substantive representational link. Using cross sectional survey data from the 2010, 2012, and 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), which include registration and vote validation, we gain a better measure of policy-based representation of the opinions of women who turned out (a legislator's re-election and primary constituencies) and of those who did not turn out (a legislator's geographic constituency). We can then draw comparisons among these groups regardless of self-reported behavior.

When examining issue agreement between the policy preferences of women who voted and the corresponding roll call votes cast by their legislators, we believe we will find evidence of

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better substantive representation of women by their descriptive legislators than by male members of Congress (controlling for party). We further believe that likelihood of voting and political engagement increases representation in the form of roll call vote agreement when individuals are part of constituencies that are more proximal to the the legislator, meaning be more instrumental to the congressperson's re-election. Our examination will therefore provide further insight into the importance of the descriptive-substantive representational link for women, as well as help to further define the contours of the representational gap women face as a function of their gender.

The Centrality of Representation

The representational relationship has fascinated students of political science, who draw on the theoretic and conceptual contributions of scholars like Mansbridge (1999) and Pitkin (1967) to guide their understandings of American (and comparative) representation. In the United States, representation is a principal-agent relationship that grants state power to a sovereign people in geographic or population-based constituencies (Urbinati and Warren 2008; Pitkin 1967). The modern conception of representation in the United States includes the practice of free election, the presence of multiple leaders, and state and national representative bodies; thus, representation establishes the legitimacy of democratic institutions and practices, and also creates institutional incentives for the government to respond to citizens (Dovi 2011).

Responsiveness, alongside congruence and accountability, is one of three major elements of representative behavior on the part of a legislator (Urbinati and Warren 2008; Page and Shapiro 1983). *Responsiveness* to citizens through representation may include behavior like roll call voting in order to secure policy, as well as sponsorship activity or floor speech (Swers and Rouse 2011; Swers 2002), service to constituents (Butler and Broockman 2011), and even

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through symbolic action like homestyle (Fenno 1978; Eulau and Karps 1977; Hill and Hurley 2010). Mayhew (1974) notes that members of Congress face a number of incentives to respond to constituent interests in order to foster their electoral connection. *Congruence* is an element of "closeness" between constituents' opinions and those espoused by or acted upon by representatives (Ansolabehere and Jones 2010; Stephanopoulos et al. 2014). Whereas it is possible to understand responsiveness as an action (for example, a member of Congress may actively vote on, speak about, or even introduce policy), congruence refers to whether these changes follow the opinions of the citizenry. Where there is strong representation, one might expect strong, congruent responsiveness (Lax and Philips 2012). Finally, citizens may use the power of the vote to effectively threaten legislators who are not performing so as to keep them *accountable* (Mayhew 1974; Manin et al. 1999). Accountability implies the centrality of elections to the representative process.

Scholars of American politics have focused on the dyadic, or one-to-one relationship between an individual and her representative, where the citizen can hold her representative accountable for responsiveness to and congruence with (namely, representation of) her interests (Miller and Stokes 1963; Mayhew 1974; King 1997).[1] Theorists like Hanna Pitkin (1967) and Jane Mansbridge (1999, 2003) have elaborated on the dyadic representative relationship, offering scholars a number of "types" of representation. *Substantive* representation is activity of representatives on behalf of, interest of, or as agent of the represented (Pitkin 1967). Scholars generally assess substantive representation through the dyadic relationship between an individual and her representative based on issue position congruence, which scholars measure through issue positions or roll call voting behavior (Miller and Stokes 1963; Clinton 2006;

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[1] However, Miller and Stokes believe the electorate is unable to perform this task in practice.

Ansolabehere and Jones 2010; Pitkin 1967). Citizens will generally reward members of Congress for strong substantive representation (Grant and Rudolph 2004); thus, substantive representation includes congruence and responsiveness as important components of the representative relationship, as this form of representation is efficacious for citizens with positions spatially proximate to those of her representative (Ansolabehere and Jones 2011).

In *descriptive* representation, representatives are in some sense typical of or bear semblance to a larger group of individuals with whom they share a descriptive characteristic (Mansbridge 1999; Pitkin 1967). Hanna Pitkin developed this concept in "The Concept of Representation," noting that constituents could maximize representativeness by electing an individual with whom they share demographic or experiential characteristics (1967). For example, descriptive representation of women presupposes a connection (gender) linking legislator and constituent. Assessment of descriptive representation focuses on the legislator's behavior with respect to policy issues "common" to the descriptive group in question (Mansbridge 1999). Scholars tend to believe that descriptive representation can foster feelings of trust in deliberation and by bringing potentially marginalized groups and issues significant to them to the forefront of political debate (Swers and Rouse 2011; Mansbridge 1999). In a more aggregate sense, if a legislative body comprises representatives whose experiences and characteristics reflect those of a whole nation, or all citizens, the composition of the legislature may more accurately reflect all public opinion on legislative activities (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). Most importantly, constituents respond to descriptive representation in their electoral behavior; for example, voters often use descriptive characteristics as heuristics to predict whether a candidate will represent their interests (Kingdon 1989; Mansbridge 1999).

There is a clear theoretic link between descriptive and substantive representation where substantive outcomes are a product of the descriptive legislator's actions. This link for representation of women, for example, lies in the idea that a legislator's female gender identity may enable better representation of women's issues (Phillips 1998; Celis et al. 2008). More specifically, increased descriptive representation holds implications for substantive, preference-based representation including increased responsiveness to women's policy concerns and enhanced perceptions of legitimacy (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). It is therefore unsurprising that scholars contend the importance of descriptive representation lies not just in increasing numbers and presence of potentially marginalized groups in government, but in being "often…the most reliable way to achieve substantive representation in government" (Haider-Markel 2007, 110; Gerber et al. 1998).

Certainly, the link between women's descriptive and substantive representation exists and is an important guarantor of women's representation within Congress and state legislatures (Philips 1998; Celis et al. 2008). Specifically, this link can help to maximize responsiveness between female legislators and female constituents, which is an important step toward closing the representational gap female citizens face with respect to their male counterparts, which in turn may redress the historical political marginalization and underrepresentation women have faced.[2] This link can also help to maximize congruence between descriptive legislators and

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[2] It is important to note that while descriptive underrepresentation plagues women in Congress and other institutions, it also plagues racial minorities. For example, across a range of elections, African Americans are consistently more likely to see their candidate of choice lose than any other racial group (Hajnal 2009). Additionally, Butler and Broockman (2011) demonstrate that requests for service made by an individual with a putatively black alias receive fewer replies than those made by an individual with a white alias, demonstrating inequality in responsiveness. The descriptive representative relationship is important for the interests of racial minorities in the way that it is for women on women's issues: black legislators are more intrinsically motivated to advance black interests (Broockman 2013), and black constituents are more likely to approve of legislators and trust the system when those legislators are black (Tate 2001; Banducci et al. 2004).

constituents on a subset of important women's issues (Celis and Childs 2008; Cowell-Meyers and Langbein 2009; Alexander 2012).

Given the importance of gender-based descriptive representation for closing the gap between the quality of representation experienced by the genders, much scholarly work has examined the connection between this representation and legislative behavior with respect to women's issues as a substantive area of representation. Scholars contend that a legislator's female gender identity may enable better representation (via a number of behavioral vehicles) of women's issues (Philips 1998; Celis et al. 2008). Generally, researchers have operationalized the link between descriptive representation and substantive outcomes by either a) asking female legislators about their priorities and feelings about female constituents or b) examining legislation proposed by men and women and analyzing their broader political behavior (Cowell-Meyers and Langbein 2009). Scholars have demonstrated that female legislators will be more vocally representative of women's issues than their male counterparts, engaging more frequently in behavior like floor speeches, referencing women more frequently in speeches, introduction, sponsorship, and co-sponsorship of women's issues legislation, and casting roll call votes in favor of women's issues policy (Celis et al. 2008; Swers 2005; Leader 1977; Gerrity et al. 2007; MacDonald and O'Brien 2011; Pearson and Dancey 2011a, 2011b). Some scholars contend that the increased presence of women within a legislative body is essential for increasing these agenda setting and deliberative behaviors and for the ultimate enactment of women's issues legislation (Cowell-Meyers and Langbein 2009; Wittmer and Bouche 2013).[3]

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[3] More generally, scholars term this theoretical focus on increased proportions of women within legislatures "critical mass theory." While the concept is fraught (the assumption that mere numbers of women will impact legislative behavior and public policy, regardless of their diverse ideologies, is a reductionist perspective Weldon (1999) terms the 'individualistic fallacy'), it is nonetheless essential to include in a discussion of women's representation because of its ubiquity.

Certainly, then, descriptive representation has the potential to increase women's representation in a number of ways. First, women receive increased representation on issues thought to be important to them as a function of their female identity. With more women in office, there is likely to be increased consideration of women's issues, gaining them issue-based representation by female members of Congress. It is therefore possible that, because women's issues are merely a subset of issues members of Congress seek to represent, the descriptive representation benefitting women with respect to women's issues legislation may benefit them overall, which in turn may help to redress the gap in high-quality representation women face (as compared to their male counterparts).

Proximity: The Missing Link

Ultimately, much work on the descriptive-substantive link focuses attention on final outcomes, particularly with respect to women's issues legislation. However, descriptive representation does not necessarily increase women's substantive representation with respect to final outcomes in all policy areas (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005; Gerrity et al. 2007). Moreover, scholarly work on gender-based descriptive representation of women's issues within the institution of Congress does not often consider a link between descriptive and substantive representation on other issues, which is essential to a full understanding of the gender-based representational gap women face. Since legislators share a descriptive identity with constituents, researchers (and the public) assume that the essential trait binding a descriptive group gives them common interests that transcend other divisive policy issues (Mansbridge 1999). This assumption overlooks the notion that there are a number of important sub-group differences in preferences and behavior, such as the closeness of the constituent to her legislator (in Fenno's concentric circle conception of proximity). Even feminist literature has

treated women as a relatively homogenous group with roughly similar preferences, even though women consider issue preferences and experiential factors other than gender when making political decisions (Sigle-Rushton 2006; Goodyear-Grant and Croskill 2011). This scholarly tendency overlooks the real possibility of a descriptive-substantive relationship between representatives and constituents in a host of equally important policy areas.

Clearly, much scholarly work on descriptive representation focuses on women's issues at the detriment of understanding the substantive impact of descriptive representation in a more holistic sense (and in a comparative sense, when we consider the gap in representational quality experienced by male and female citizens). This literature also fails to explore the potential differential representation descriptive constituents may receive based on their proximity to their legislator. This oversight is critical, as it precludes two important elements of the representative relationship from analysis: the legislator's strategic calculus and important sub-district differences among constituents.

Richard Fenno, writing in 1977, articulates the proximal space between legislator and district as one comprised of nested and increasingly important and concentrated sub-constituencies. These constituencies are geographic, re-election, primary, and personal (Fenno 1977, 844). The geographic constituency comprises the district, the geographic and demographic characteristics of which are politically important for the representative's homestyle (how she presents herself to the district). A Member's re-election constituency is more "explicitly political…composed of the people he thinks will vote for him" (Fenno 1977, 886). To the mind of the legislator, the re-election constituency is "who voted for him 'last time'" (Fenno 1997, 886). Even stronger supporters of the legislator comprise the primary constituency, who support the legislator with more intensity through providing the bulk of

financial help to the legislator's campaign and by volunteering for the campaign (Fenno 1977, 887). Finally, a legislator's personal constituency includes only individuals close to her who provide emotional support and political advice (Fenno 1977, 889).

Specifically, Fenno claims that the representative relationship between member of Congress and constituent is that of principal and agent, with the importance and influence of the principal varying in accordance with his proximity to the agent, thereby structuring the activity of the member of Congress. The member will change her behavior in order to appeal to these constituencies in different ways, as manifest by how the legislator presents herself (namely, her "homestyle").[4] In other words, the level and appearance of responsiveness on the part of the legislator depends on the proximity of constituency whom the legislator is trying to reach. Correspondingly, Fenno's theory implies that the policy responsiveness a constituent receives from a legislator therefore depends not only on descriptive characteristics or party affiliation, but also on where she falls (proximally) within her legislator's constituency. Thus, we contend that accounts of representation overlooking the proximal relationship between legislator and constituent are incomplete. Additionally, we can gain more insight into the disadvantages women face with respect to issue representation (for example, lessened representation when they have male members of Congress and the overall representational gap resulting from descriptive underrepresentation of women in Congress) by considering these relationships in light of the proximity of legislator and constituent.

Testing Our Ideas

Our cross-sectional survey data from the 2010, 2012, and 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) allows us to examine the policy responsiveness a

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[4] For more on the concept of "homestyle," see Fenno (1977).

descriptive constituent receives based on her within-district proximity to her legislator. Additionally, given the battery of issue preference questions, we are able to assess differences in the descriptive-substantive relationship without restricting ourselves exclusively to women's issues.

Assessing the descriptive-substantive link for each of these multiple constituencies allows for comparison among them with respect to outcomes on a number of issue areas while controlling for their proximity to the legislator. More importantly, as CCES data is vote-validated, we are able to make these comparisons regardless of voter self-reports, which are fraught with inconsistencies (Holbrook and Krosnick 2010). This design therefore provides a more accurate snapshot of voter behavior and preference, which in turn facilitates a clearer conception of the descriptive representative relationship.

Hypotheses

Our main argument is that women constituents will receive higher levels of representation in the form of policy agreement proportional to their proximity to their congresspersons, and that descriptive representation should significantly reduce the gap between men and women's representation. We base these expectations on our view that members of Congress are more likely to have policy agreement with those constituents they believe are most instrumental in their re-election to office.

Data and Methods

We examine the relationship between descriptive representation and substantive representation while taking account of the constituents' proximity to their member of Congress. We measure this proximity by operationalizing the concentric circles of constituencies described

by Fenno in his work on House members' view of their districts and those they represent (1977). This paper presents analysis of three constituency groups 1) the **geographic**, 2) the **re-election**, and 3) the **primary** constituencies. We are able to identify these constituencies using data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) a web-based survey with a nationally representative sample of over 50,000 respondents, which includes registration and vote validation data acquired from the progressive political data firm Catalist, LLC.[5] Furthermore, the CCES includes contextual data regarding the name, party and gender of all current members of Congress during the election year of the survey. This facilitates the process of identifying party and gender congruence between respondents and their corresponding political representatives. The CCES also provides data on how congresspersons voted on key floor votes allowing us to measure policy agreement between respondents and their representatives either within its datasets, or as supplementary data.[6]

We use data from three congressional election years studies: the 2010,[7] 2012[8] and 2014[9] CCES. For all three datasets, we kept only actively registered respondents for analysis. Also, all respondents from the state of Virginia were excluded from this study because though this state keeps records of voter registration, they do not keep records of electoral participation, one of

[5] For a detailed description of the survey methods and voter file matching process refer to Ansolabehere and Hersh (2010).

[6] Cuevas-Molina, Ivelisse; Schaffner, Brian, 2015, "CCES 2014 Supplemental Data", http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/D1N0GO, Harvard Dataverse, V2
Cuevas-Molina, Ivelisse; Schaffner, Brian, 2015, "CCES 2012 Supplemental Data", http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/NI3BDE, Harvard Dataverse, V3

[7] Stephen Ansolabehere, 2012, "CCES Common Content, 2010", http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/17705, Harvard Dataverse, V3

[8] Ansolabehere, Stephen; Schaffner, Brian, 2013, "CCES Common Content, 2012", http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/21447, Harvard Dataverse, V8

[9] Schaffner, Brian; Ansolabehere, Stephen, 2015, "CCES Common Content, 2014", http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/XFXJVY, Harvard Dataverse, V1

the key factors we use to measure proximity to the member of Congress. Given this omission, the 2010 CCES has a total of 42,917 respondents with "active" registration status, the 2012 CCES a total of 35,342 , and the 2014 CCES a total of 32,341. Of these three studies, 2014 has the highest number of "active" status respondents represented by a female member of Congress with 18%, followed by those in the 2010 CCEC with 17%, and lastly the 2012 CCES with 16% of respondents being represented in the US House by a woman. There is little to no difference between the percentage of men and women respondents who are represented by a female member of Congress because the sampling of the CCES results in having an approximate 50-50 split of female and male respondents (see Table 1). Still, is noteworthy that less than 20% of Americans are represented by women, indicating a representational gap between male and female citizens and a descriptive representational gap for female members of the population.

We designate the aforementioned populations of "active" status respondents as our **geographic constituency** for each year of the CCES; these respondents are those citizens residing within a congressperson's district. We operationalize the **re-election constituency** as those respondents who *voted* in the general election of their corresponding election year who also *share party identity* with their representatives in the US House of Representatives. We assume that these respondents having voted while sharing the incumbent's partisanship are the population responsible for keeping their representative in office. Those in the **primary constituency** we define as those who vote in general elections, share partisanship with their member of Congress, and report having worked on a political campaign. This additional dimension of involvement in campaigns suggests that the incumbent might rely on these

individuals and be more responsive to them because of their instrumental value for maintaining incumbency.[10]

Consequently, we present three ordinary least squares models for each survey year restricting the data in each model to correspond to the respondents in each constituency. These regression models predict the degree of ***agreement*** on roll call votes between respondents and their representatives, for the purposes of this study, as a function of being female and having a female member of Congress. The 2010 CCES asked respondents to report their policy positions on six (6) roll call votes considered in the US House of Representatives using the following prompt: "Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle." The bills in question were 1) the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2) the State Children's Health Insurance Program, 3) the Clean Energy bill, 4) the Affordable Care Act, 5) the Financial Reform Bill, and 6) End Don't Ask Don´t Tell. Each bill was accompanied by a brief description of the what the legislation would do. The 2012 CCES included questions on eight (8) roll call votes: 1) the Ryan Budget Bill, 2) the Simpson Bowles Budget Plan, 3) the Middle Class Tax Cut, 4) the Tax Hike Prevention Act, 5) the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement, 6) the bill to Repeal the Affordable Care Act, 7) the bill to approve the Key-Stone Pipeline, and 8) End Don't Ask Don't Tell. Finally, the 2014 CCES only had three (3) questions on floor votes considered by the House: 1) the Ryan Budget Bill, 2) the Simpson Bowles Budget Plan, 4) the Debt Ceiling.

The respondents' self-reported policy positions on these roll call votes were combined with data indicating how each congressperson voted to create a measure of roll call vote

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[10] A legislator's *personal* constituency is harder to delineate, as the group will necessarily vary by legislator. We omit this group from the analysis, as it is impossible to quantify who a legislator considers to be her closest advisors, personal supporters, and confidantes without exclusive access to these legislators.

agreement on each policy. Then, these individual agreement measures were combined into a summary roll call vote agreement measure within each cross-sectional CCES survey. The summary measure from the 2010 CCES is a continuous variable with seven values from 0 to 6, from 2012, a continuous variable with nine values from 0 to 8, and from 2014, continuous variable with four values from 0 to 3. Our independent variable of interest is an interaction variable identifying female respondents enjoying descriptive representation resulting from combining gender of the respondent which is coded into a dummy variable using female as the indicator ("Female"), and a dummy indicating gender of the member of the US House of Representatives ("Female MC"). In the model for *geographical constituency,* we also include Age as continuous variable, a Political Knowledge index (0 to 6), a measure of Family Income with 16 values ranging from "Less than $10,000" to "$500,000 or more", and, most importantly, a variable for shared party identity between respondents and members of Congress, as partisanship is a driving force for agreement on policy issues and for constituent inference of legislators' positions (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964). All but shared partisanship are part of the models for the *re-election* and *primary constituencies* (the partisanship variable was used to restrict the data to include only those with shared partisanship in these constituency groups).

Results

As predicted, women enjoying descriptive representation across all constituency groups benefit from increased representation in the form of policy agreement in all three election years. We find positive and significant effects on roll call vote agreement among women in the geographic and re-election constituencies of the 2010 CCES; and among the women in the geographic and primary constituencies of 2012 CCES (SEE Tables 2 & 4). Though the interaction of being female and having a female member of Congress is not significant for any of the

constituencies in the 2014 CCES, all coefficients are positive for increased agreement.

However, being a self-identified woman most commonly results in decreased representation,

not accounting for gender of the representative, especially in 2010 and 2012. These results are

consistent with the notion of the representational gap women face overall in the United States -

overall, members of Congress tend to have more issue agreement with their male constituents.

We find that being female has negative and highly significant effects on agreement for both the

geographic and re-election constituencies of 2010 and 2012. Surprisingly, being female has a

positive effect on agreement in 2014 with significant effects for the geographic and re-election

constituencies. These last unexpected results might have resulted from the small amount policy

questions included in the 2014 CCES, or maybe women and their representative were more

aligned in 2014 no matter their gender.

Additionally, we find that most respondents, regardless of gender, who are represented

by a female member of Congress receive higher levels of policy agreement. The variable for this

measure resulted in positive coefficients across all constituencies in 2010 (all significant at the

$p<0.01$ level), and in 2014 with significant effects for the geographic and re-election

constituencies. The opposite is true for respondents in the 2012 CCES. Having a female

representative in the US House resulted in decreased policy agreement for members all three

constituencies, even more so for those in the geographic constituency of 2012. Due to these

mixed results, it is impossible to draw conclusions about the overall benefit of having a female

member of Congress without also considering respondents' genders. As our analysis indicates,

however, a descriptive match between constituent and legislator based on female identity is

most likely to result in increased issue agreement, and therefore, in overall representation.

Having found that descriptive representation does enhance representation of women by

women in Congress we move on to our main topic of concern: do constituencies with greater proximity to the representative get higher levels of representation? And, does descriptive representation close the gap between men and women as we move from one constituency to the next? The answer to the first question is a definitive "YES:" The re-election constituency receives better representation than the geographic constituency, and the primary constituency gains better representation than the re-election constituency. This phenomenon exists in all three election years included in this study. The evidence is found in the predicted probabilities presented in Figures 1, 2 and 3. There is an over 225% increase in roll call vote agreement in 2010 when moving from the geographic to the primary constituency, the increase in 2012 is of 63% and 34% in 2014 for women enjoying descriptive representation. Policy agreement also increases for men represented by women from constituency to constituency with a 200% increase in 2010, 59% in 2012 and 36% in 2014. Clearly, higher levels of political engagement and shared partisanship bring the constituent closer to their representative, in this case, with regard to shared views on key policies that should be of general interest to all.

As for the second question posed above, we find that descriptive representation makes no difference in narrowing the representational gap between women and men. In each year for each constituency, we find that the gap in policy agreement is practically the same for women and men represented by women and for women and men represented by men in the US House of Representatives. In both 2012 and 2014, we see that the representation gap decreases when moving from the geographic to the primary constituency among women and men who are represented by female and male members of Congress (see Tables 3 & 5). The difference between predicted probabilities drops from 7-percentage points to 4 in the 2010 CCES, and from approximately 6-percentage points to 4 in the 2012 CCES between those represented by

women and those represented by men. We must note that the representation gap does increase when moving from the geographic to the re-election constituency in both of these years. However, in 2010 the gap increases for those represented by women and those represented by men in the primary constituency when compared to the geographic constituency, a 15% difference and a 10% difference respectively (see Table 7). At the same time the difference in representation between men and women with female and male members of Congress in 2010 remains exactly the same for the geographic and re-election constituencies.

Conclusion

This paper accomplishes many things. First, it provides confirmatory evidence to the importance of descriptive representation in enhancing women's substantive representation. Our results show that women who are represented by women enjoy higher policy agreement with their congresspersons in all constituencies. Thus, we should expect that increased numbers of female elected officials should benefit women's' interests in general policy, especially at the congressional level. Second, this study shows that the increased representation of women's policy positions is a joint effort between female constituents and their representatives. We can see that individuals who participate in elections and political campaigns obtain increased representation no matter their gender. The relationship between the representative and the represented is a mutually beneficial one. Those who contribute to the representative's continued incumbency are bound to have their voices heard and taken into account when legislation is to be passed or rejected.

Third, though descriptive representation has its benefits, it still falls short: it does not close the gendered representational gap. In 2012, women across all constituencies represented by both women and men obtain less policy agreement than men. In the 2010 CCES, we find that

women represented by both genders go from having less policy agreement (with 10% less than men in the geographic constituency) to increased agreement with 14% more than men in the primary constituency. Only in 2014 are women consistently getting more representation than men in all constituencies, but this is regardless of the gender of their representatives. To reiterate, it is not descriptive representation, but the individual's constituency group that conditions this increased representation their policy positions. Finally, we break with traditional studies of women's political representation that focus on so-called women's issues by studying women's representation based on their self reported support or opposition to general policies. We show that descriptive representation matters when it comes to key legislation in Congress, and that women have policy opinions cover a range of issues regarding both domestic and foreign politics.

Our future research will delve into the particulars of each policy question included in the summary agreement measures that served as our measurement of representation. We also hope to broaden the scope of this study by examine how the intersection of race, ethnicity and gender along with constituency membership might affect representation in the form of policy agreement.

Table 1. CCES 2010, 2012 & 2014 Gender of Respondents by Gender of MCs

		Female Member of Congress		
	Gender of Constituents	**NO**	**YES**	**Total**
2010 CCES	Male	17,384 83%	3,653 17%	**21,038** **100%**
	Female	18,242 83%	3,637 17%	**21,878** **100%**
	Total	**35,626** **83%**	**7,290** **17%**	**42,917** **100%**
2012 CCES	Male	14,214 85%	2,519 15%	**16,734** **100%**
	Female	15,678 84%	2,930 16%	**18,608** **100%**
	Total	**29,893** **85%**	**5,449** **15%**	**35,342** **100%**
2014 CCES	Male	13,874 83%	2,909 17%	**16,783** **100%**
	Female	14,925 82%	3340 18%	**18,265** **100%**
	Total	**28,799** **82%**	**6,249** **18%**	**35,048** **100%**

Table shows weighted totals and percentages for three cross-sectional CCES studies.

Table 2. CCES 2010 Roll Call Vote Agreement by Constituency

	Geographic Constituency	Re-Election Constituency	Primary Constituency
Age	-0.00133 (0.000966)	-0.00447*** (0.00145)	-0.00360 (0.00358)
Political Knowledge	0.0446*** (0.00973)	0.202*** (0.0185)	0.227*** (0.0567)
Interest in Public Affairs	0.0265 (0.0198)	0.197*** (0.0349)	0.290** (0.136)
Family Income	0.00352 (0.00398)	0.0201*** (0.00593)	0.0189* (0.0114)
Female	-0.105*** (0.0299)	-0.104** (0.0420)	0.218** (0.0952)
Female MC	0.107** (0.0514)	0.241*** (0.0764)	0.543*** (0.135)
Female * FMC	0.339*** (0.0688)	0.305*** (0.0969)	-0.201 (0.167)
Shared Party ID	1.392*** (0.0134)		
Constant	2.788*** (0.0744)	2.907*** (0.144)	2.462*** (0.495)
Observations	40,459	15,333	1,803
R-squared	0.391	0.085	0.074

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3. 2010 CCES Predicted Probabilities for Agreement

	Geographic	Re-Election	Primary
Female * FMC	3.2633	4.7927	5.5175
Male * FMC	3.3676	4.8970	5.3711
Difference	*-0.1043*	*-0.1043*	*0.1464*
Female * MMC	3.1554	4.5519	5.0884
Male * MMC	3.2607	4.6562	4.9420
Difference	*-0.1053*	*-0.1043*	*0.1464*

This table presents predicted probabilities for roll call vote agreement between constituents and their corresponding members of the U.S. House of Representatives by membership in the geographic, re-election and primary constituencies. It also present the difference between predicted probabilities by gender of the constituent (Female and Male) and gender of the member of Congress ("FMC" for female member of Congress and "MMC" for male member of Congress).

Table 4. CCES 2012 Roll Call Vote Agreement by Constituency

	Geographic Constituency	Re-Election Constituency	Primary Constituency
Age	0.00222** (0.000924)	-0.000830 (0.00134)	0.00132 (0.00409)
Political Knowledge	0.0147 (0.0102)	0.108*** (0.0155)	0.169** (0.0798)
Interest in Public Affairs	-0.00410 (0.0179)	0.103*** (0.0261)	0.239* (0.125)
Family Income	0.0108*** (0.00406)	0.0370*** (0.00549)	0.0277 (0.0173)
Female	-0.0714** (0.0286)	-0.0957** (0.0399)	-0.0404 (0.107)
Female MC	-0.148** (0.0588)	-0.0764 (0.0705)	-0.259 (0.225)
Female * FMC	0.144* (0.0733)	0.0481 (0.0934)	0.487*
Shared Party ID	0.475*** (0.0141)		
Constant	3.665*** (0.0702)	3.448*** (0.104)	2.640*** (0.535)
Observations	**34,396**	**15,988**	**1,538**
R-squared	**0.088**	**0.037**	**0.043**
Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

Table 5. 2012 CCES Predicted Probabilities for Agreement

	Geographic	Re-Election	Primary
Female * FMC	3.7587	4.2729	4.3834
Male * FMC	3.8301	4.3685	4.4238
Difference	*-0.0714*	*-0.0956*	*-0.0404*
Female * MMC	3.9063	4.3492	4.6425
Male * MMC	3.9776	4.4449	4.6829
Difference	*-0.0713*	*-0.0957*	*-0.0404*

This table presents predicted probabilities for roll call vote agreement between constituents and their corresponding members of the U.S. House of Representatives by membership in the geographic, re-election and primary constituencies. It also present the difference between predicted probabilities by gender of the constituent (Female and Male) and gender of the member of Congress ("FMC" for female member of Congress and "MMC" for male member of Congress).

Table 6. CCES 2014 Roll Call Vote Agreement by Constituency

	Geographic Constituency	Re-Election Constituency	Primary Constituency
Age	0.00495*** (0.000556)	0.00326*** (0.000919)	-0.00168 (0.00254)
Political Knowledge	-0.0170*** (0.00637)	0.0265** (0.0109)	0.148*** (0.0564)
Interest in Public Affairs	-0.00386 (0.0114)	0.0193 (0.0183)	-0.0410 (0.0733)
Family Income	-0.00989*** (0.00250)	0.00205 (0.00373)	-0.0111 (0.0112)
Female	0.0573*** (0.0179)	0.0721*** (0.0278)	0.0424 (0.0886)
Female MC	0.0526* (0.0291)	0.190*** (0.0472)	0.192 (0.146)
Female * FMC	0.0391 (0.0399)	0.0123 (0.0625)	0.203 (0.195)
Shared Party ID	0.181*** (0.00849)		
Constant	1.506*** (0.0419)	1.411*** (0.0748)	1.489*** (0.275)
Observations	27,999	11,278	856
R-squared	0.046	0.016	0.034
Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

Table 7. 2014 CCES Predicted Probabilities for Agreement

	Geographic	Re-Election	Primary
Female * FMC	1.7695	2.056	2.1135
Male * FMC	1.7122	1.984	2.0711
Difference	*0.0573*	*0.0720*	*0.0424*
Female * MMC	1.7169	1.8675	1.9214
Male * MMC	1.6596	1.7936	1.8790
Difference	*0.0573*	*0.0739*	*0.0424*

This table presents predicted probabilities for roll call vote agreement between constituents and their corresponding members of the U.S. House of Representatives by membership in the geographic, re-election and primary constituencies. It also present the difference between predicted probabilities by gender of the constituent (Female and Male) and gender of the member of Congress ("FMC" for female member of Congress and "MMC" for male member of Congress).
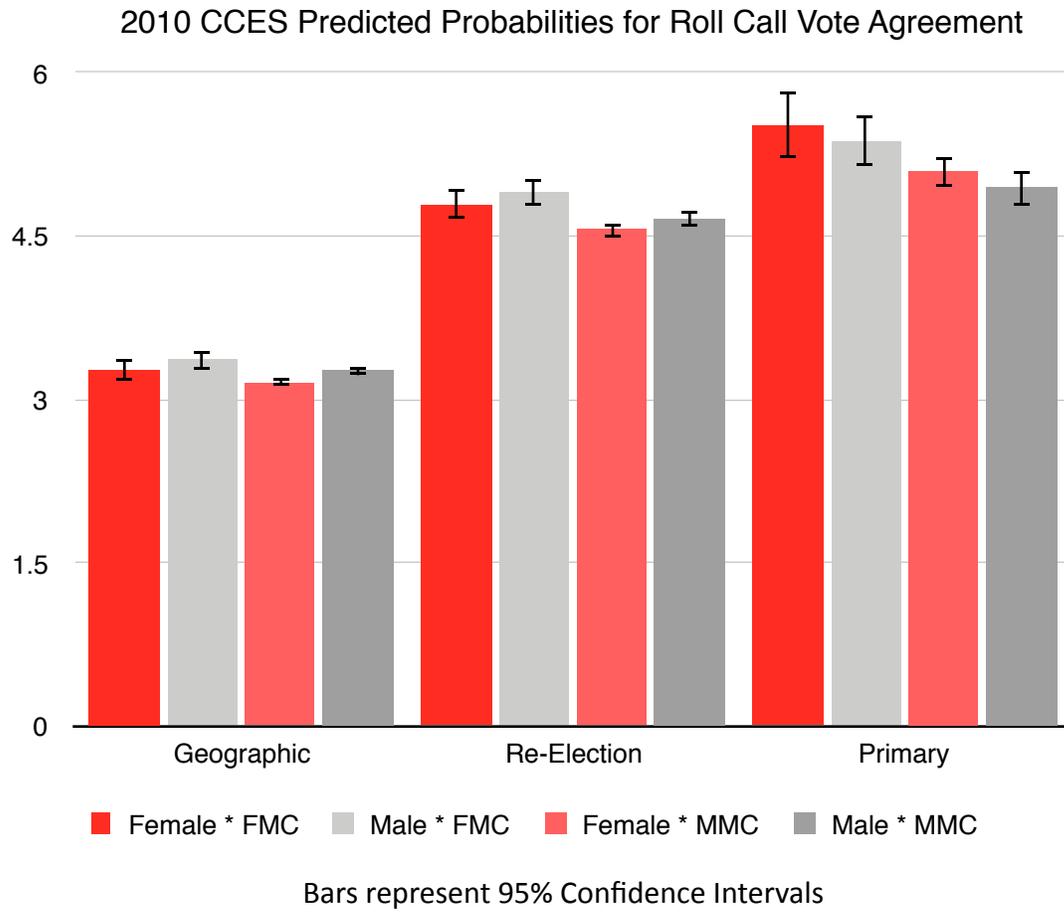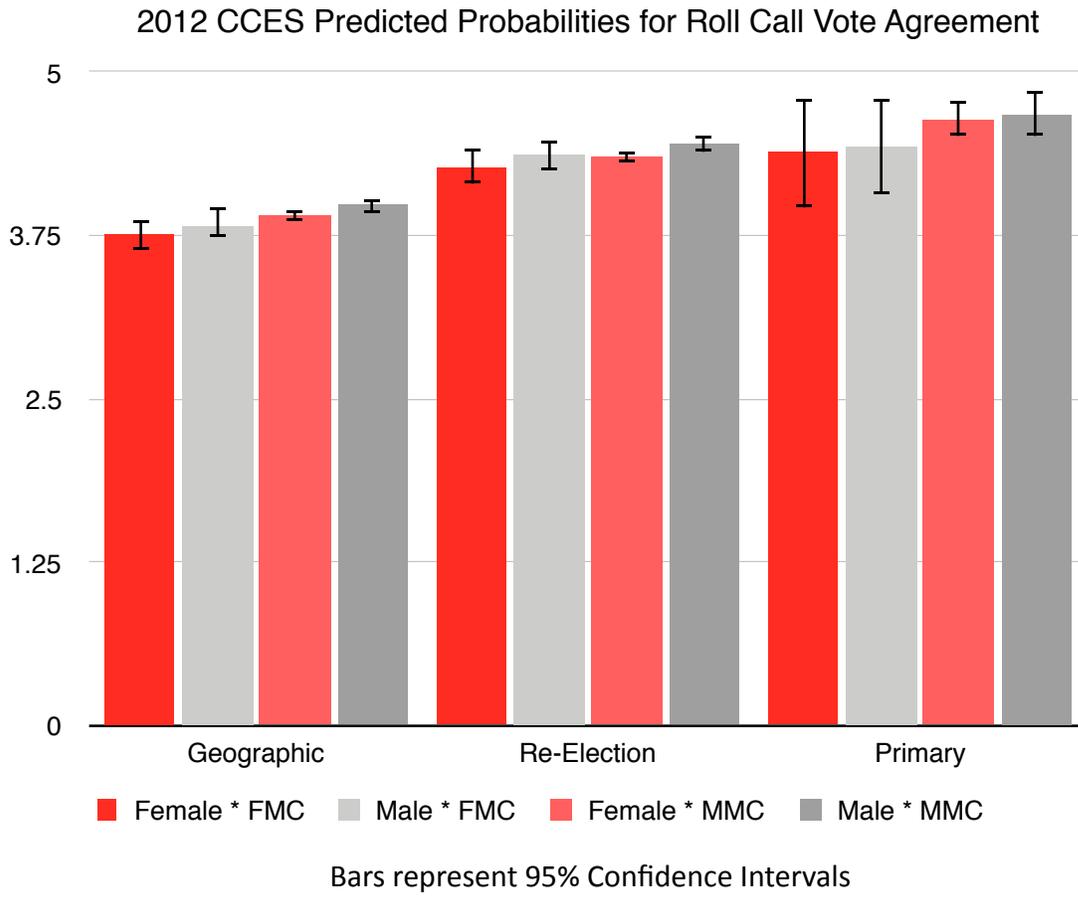
Figure 1

2010 CCES Predicted Probabilities for Roll Call Vote Agreement

Bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals

Legend: Female * FMC, Male * FMC, Female * MMC, Male * MMC

Categories: Geographic, Re-Election, Primary

Figure 2

2012 CCES Predicted Probabilities for Roll Call Vote Agreement

Female * FMC   Male * FMC   Female * MMC   Male * MMC

Bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals

Figure 3

2014 CCES Predicted Probabilities for Roll Call Vote Agreement
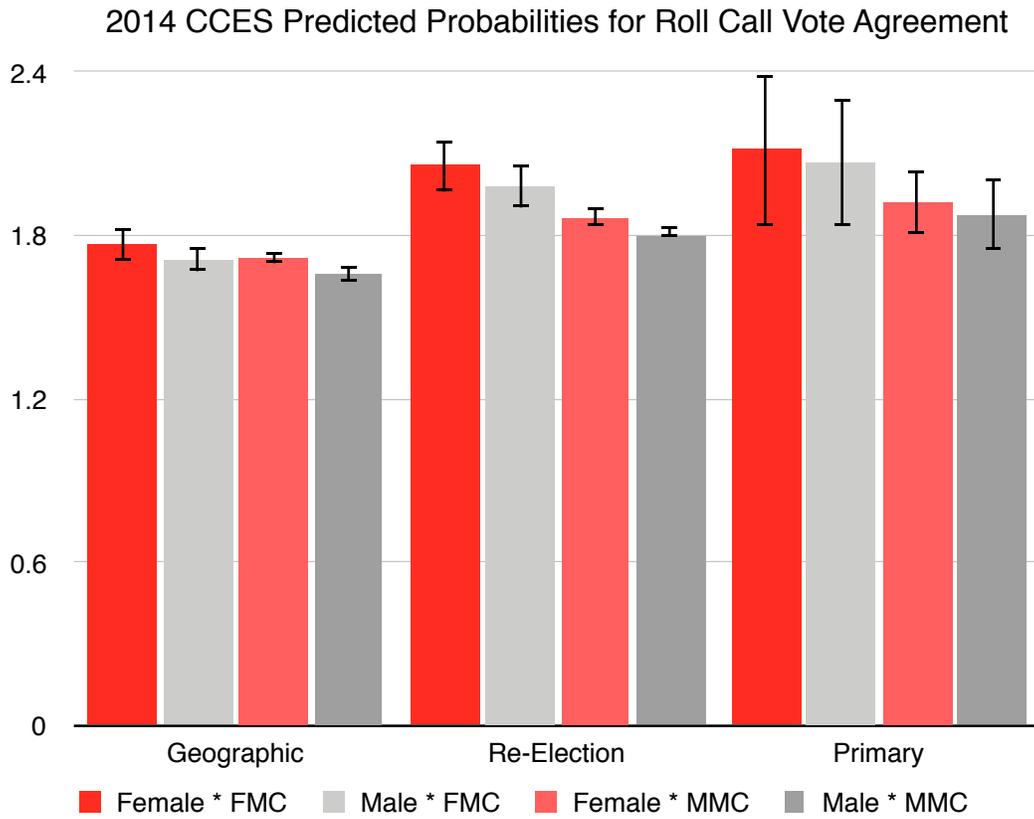

Bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals

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