Gender, Race, Ethnicity and the Political Geography of Descriptive Representation in U.S. State Legislatures

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Abstract

Significant bodies of research tell us that women are more likely to hold state legislative office in more liberal and “moralistic” states with larger “pools” of highly educated, professional women, low levels of legislative professionalism, and multi-member districts; and that single-member, majority-minority districts are key to African American and Latino officeholding at all levels. But when it comes to which environments and institutional structures promote the descriptive representation of women of color, a great deal of uncertainty remains. Drawing on research suggesting women of color possess certain intersectional strengths and advantages over white women and men of color, we theorize that the electoral fortunes of both African American women and Latinas are less constrained than standard, “single-axis” models of descriptive representation would suggest. Our state- and district-level analyses of descriptive representation in all 49 state houses in 2005, however, suggest that the descriptive representation of women of color is no less constrained than that of their white female or their male counterparts, but differently constrained.
Why are some state legislatures more racially, ethnically, and gender diverse than others? Why are some state legislative districts more likely to elect women and minorities than others? Significant bodies of research address these questions. From this literature, we know that women, almost always undifferentiated by race or ethnicity, are more likely to hold state legislative office in more liberal and “moralistic” states with larger “pools” of highly educated, professional women, low levels of legislative professionalism, and multi-member districts. Concomitantly, extensive research on the political geography of African American and Latino officeholding shows that single-member majority-minority districts, or the numbers and geographic concentration of racial/ethnic minorities in the vote-eligible population, are key.

But when it comes to which conditions, institutions, and structures promote the descriptive representation of women of color, a great deal of uncertainty remains. Indeed, there is little definitive guidance for understanding or predicting how gender, race, and ethnicity (and the politics thereof) interact to shape the electoral fortunes of women of color – as well as men of color or white women and men. As scholars have lamented for decades (from Prestage 1977 to Lien and Swain 2013), women of color remain invisible in the predominant single-axis studies of representation that group all women together, or all African Americans, or all Latinos. Moreover, the relatively few studies that do call attention to women of color tend to be descriptive accounts of the backgrounds, experiences, and electoral accomplishments of officeholders (or, in some cases, potential candidates) that rarely examine the contextual or institutional determinants of state legislative diversity directly or systematically (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013; Darcy and Hadley 1988; Fraga et al. 2006; García and Márquez 2001; Hardy-Fanta et al. 2006, 2007; Moncrief, Thompson, and Schuhmann 1991; Montoya, Hardy-Fanta, and Garcia 2000; Prestage 1977; Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh 2009; Smooth 2006, 2010; Takash 1997; Williams...
2001). While suggestive, the fragmented, inconsistent, and often contradictory evidence these studies offer make drawing firm, generalizable conclusions difficult at best (CAWP and Political Parity 2012).

Rule (1992), Scola (2013), and Bejarano (2013) are notable exceptions in their efforts to gain a more thorough, intersectional understanding of geographic variations in the descriptive representation of women of color; yet they too suffer from some of the same limitations. To begin, the three studies reach contradictory conclusions as to whether the model that best explains white women’s pathways to winning seats in state legislatures also provides a reasonable and satisfactory explanation of the experiences of women of color seeking the same positions. For example, Rule concluded from her analysis of 1985 state legislatures that the “ideal environments” for black and white women legislators were quite similar in many respects (Rule 1992, 61, 65-66). Almost 25 years later, Scola (2013, 344) comes to the opposite conclusion: “…the indicators most useful in predicting women’s legislative service are noticeably raced, as they are less helpful in explaining where women of color serve.”

In addition to contradictory conclusions, these studies share some conceptual and analytical limitations commonly found in the literature on this topic. First, all three restrict their analyses to state-level variables, with little or no consideration for what may transpire at the district level, which of course is where the key actors in state legislative elections—the candidates and voters—actually reside. Second, each study provides only a partial and perhaps misleading analysis of “women of color.” Because there were so few Latinas, Asian American or Native American women in state legislatures at the time of her study, Rule could only examine the contextual factors associated with black women’s representation. Bejarano focuses only on Latinas, while Scola groups black, Latina, Asian, and American Indian women together and
analyzes the correlates of representation for “women of color” rather than testing models for each subgroup separately. In each case, we are left wondering whether the conclusions are equally applicable to all (or most) women of color, across race and ethnicity.¹

Like almost every other account of minority women seeking and obtaining public office, these studies note (some more explicitly than others) the potentially complex and unique positioning of women of color at the intersections of multiple systems of oppression, inequality, and political marginalization. Indeed, the vast majority of all these studies acknowledge that while political women of color undoubtedly suffer from the compounding effects of gender, racial/ethnic, and economic inequalities, they have achieved a “puzzling” degree of success in the electoral arena. Women make up larger proportions of minority officeholders than of white officeholders, and many of the recent gains in minority officeholding can be attributed to the electoral success of women of color (see, for example, Hardy-Fanta et al. 2006). Yet, none of these studies offers much theoretical insight into this rather complicated mixture of relative disadvantages and advantages, leaving us with little understanding of how and why the electoral environment affects women of color in particular. By taking on the standard women-and-politics models of descriptive representation and testing their generalizability across race and ethnicity, Rule, Scola, and Bejarano offer significant advancements. But, as we detail in the following pages, they leave many such questions unaddressed. Moreover, each stops short of critically engaging standard race-and-ethnic-politics models for additional insight into the political geography of descriptive representation.² We argue that a thorough, intersectional understanding

¹ Scola (2013, 341 and 344-45) readily acknowledges this limitation in her study.
² Scola (2013, 345) acknowledges that “a test of the conventional wisdom derived from the minority politics literature that disaggregates by gender would yield interesting results,” but nonetheless concludes that doing so is beyond the scope of her study.
of descriptive representation must be equally informed by both subfields and must include data that allow for comparisons across gender as well as across race and ethnicity.

Our study investigates these contradictions and addresses these analytical and theoretical limitations. We make a distinctive contribution to existing knowledge in multiple subfields and expand current understandings of geographic variation in descriptive representation by providing a more thorough, theoretically engaged, and empirically rigorous account of the contextual determinants of representation for white women and white men, black women and black men, and Latinas and Latinos – at both the state and district levels. Furthermore, we develop and test a theory of intersectional resistance and resilience particular to women of color in politics. Drawing on research suggesting women of color possess certain intersectional strengths and advantages over white women and men of color, we hypothesize that the electoral fortunes of both African American women and Latinas are systematically less constrained by political opportunity structures than standard, “single-axis” models of descriptive representation would suggest.

Like others, our examination is grounded in an intersectionality framework that highlights the complex ways gender, race, ethnicity, and other powerful “categories of difference” interact to shape individual lives, social norms, and politics in terms of power and privilege (Hancock 2007a, 63-64; Cohen 1999; Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1989; Hancock 2007b; Hawkesworth 2003; McCall 2005; Simien 2007; Weldon 2006). At its core, intersectionality is a normative, empirical, and epistemological critique of “single-axis” frameworks (Crenshaw 1989, 139) and additive models that treat such things as gender and race as mutually exclusive, independent social forces and categories of analysis. Such one-at-a-time approaches ignore important differences within categories, obscure the positions and perspectives of women of
color and others who are “multiply burdened” (Crenshaw 1989, 140), and render the experiences and perspectives of those who are relatively privileged generic, normative, and definitive.

Our approach to the study of descriptive representation, therefore, questions whether research on “women” is, indeed, applicable to all women and to women of color in particular; and it questions whether research on “African Americans” and/or “Latinos” is more indicative of the experiences of men than of women of color. While other studies have warned that single-axis approaches might be fundamentally flawed when it comes to understanding women of color in politics (Cohen 2003; Junn and Brown 2008; Smooth 2006b), our state- and district-level analyses within and across state legislatures, yields empirical evidence that both confirms and challenges many of the assumptions not only of “old” single-axis models, but also of “new” intersectional approaches. We too find that standard models of women’s representation are often much more applicable to the electoral fortunes of white women than to Latinas or African American women (Bejarano 2013; Scola 2013). But we also demonstrate that standard models of minority representation go a long way toward understanding the electoral fortunes of Latino/a and African American men and women alike. So strong are the similarities between women and men of color that our theory of intersectional resistance and resilience finds little confirmation. We conclude that the descriptive representation of women of color may be no less constrained than that of their white female and male counterparts, but differently constrained.

Single-Axis Approaches to Descriptive Representation

Women

Research on the descriptive representation of women in the U.S. has been primarily concerned with documenting and explaining why there are so few women in or even running for
elective office, relative to the general population. At the same time, political scientists have long noted and attempted to explain why the relatively few women in office are not evenly distributed across states, districts, or municipalities. In 2005, for example, women held anywhere from 8 percent of state legislative seats (in South Carolina) to 36 percent (in Maryland) (CAWP 2005). Indeed, the two phenomena – limited numbers and uneven distributions of women running for and gaining office – are intricately connected.

According to Lawless and Fox’s (2010) path-breaking study of eligible candidates, women are relatively reluctant to run for public office primarily because they are less confident in their (objectively equivalent) qualifications and less likely to be encouraged to do so by others – family, friends, co-workers, and political leaders alike (see also, Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013). Without such reassurances, eligible women likely suspect that they have to be more qualified than their male counterparts in order to do just as well. Thus, those few women who actually do run are, most likely, even more strategic and selective about when and where to run, making sure to minimize the gendered obstacles that led them – and others – to doubt their qualifications in the first place (Haider-Markel 2010; Pearson and McGhee 2013). The geographic variation in women’s officeholding, therefore, highlights the numerous political opportunity structures that channel their political ambitions and constrain their electoral fortunes. As Bledsoe and Herring (1990) suggested long ago, women and their electoral ambitions are more likely to be “victims of circumstance.” Whether they be cultural, ideological, demographic, or institutional, these geographically specific “circumstances” pose some of the greatest challenges to – and offer some of the best opportunities for – women’s descriptive representation.
Not surprisingly, then, the presence of women in state legislatures is strongly associated with various aspects of state political culture and ideological climate. States with “moralistic” political cultures (Elazar 1984), which value a government that actively promotes the public good and full democratic participation, tend to have more women in their legislatures than do states with either “traditionalistic” or “individualistic” cultures (Arceneaux 2001; Camobreco and Barnello 2003; Diamond 1977; Hill 1981; Hogan 2001; Nechemias 1987; Rule 1990). Liberal state electorates elect more gender diverse legislatures than do more conservative ones (Arceneaux 2001; Hogan 2001; Norrander and Wilcox 1998, 2005; Sanbonmatsu 2002). In such moralistic and/or liberal environments, women (who tend to be more liberal than men) appear more willing to run for office perhaps on the assumption that interest groups, party leaders, and voters will be more supportive of female candidates and officials (who are often assumed to be more liberal than their male counterparts).

Research has also identified a number of demographic correlates with women’s representation in state legislatures. Many studies show that states with more women in the labor force and in the professions also tend to have more women serving in their legislature (Arceneaux 2001; Hill 1981; Norrander & Wilcox 1998, 2005; Rule 1990; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Welch 1978). Camobreco and Barnello (2003) report that states with more college graduates and fewer religious adherents have larger proportions of female state legislators. According to Hogan (2001, 17), “Demographic features measured at the district level appear to play a large role in the probability of electing women to the legislature.” Specifically, districts that are more educated, professional/white collar, non-agricultural, and racially or ethnically diverse are more likely to elect women to represent them (see also Palmer and Simon 2006).
Various explanations for these demographic correlates are offered. Most see women’s labor force participation as a measure of the size of the “eligibility pool” of qualified female candidates (e.g., Norrander and Wilcox 2005; Sanbonmatsu 2002); but others (Hogan 2001) see it as a “cultural factor” indicating a greater willingness to support women in politics and the public sphere. Camobreco and Barnello (2003) use state educational levels and religious adherence to measure a post-industrial “cultural shift” that pits the socially liberal college educated against the socially conservative religious. But they could just as easily reflect the pool of women ready and willing to run for office (see Palmer and Simon 2006, 166).

Certain institutional factors have been shown to influence women’s descriptive representation in state legislatures. More professionalized legislatures—ones that have longer sessions, higher salaries, and more policymaking resources—have fewer female members (Arceneaux 2001; Camobreco and Barnello 2003; Carroll 1994; Diamond 1977; Hill 1981; Hogan 2001; Nechemias 1987; Norrander and Wilcox 2005; Squire 1992). Professional legislatures are thought to be more prestigious and attractive to potential candidates, thereby increasing the competition and costs of obtaining such positions and making it more difficult for women to win entry. Rosenthal (1998) suggests that legislative professionalization is particularly attractive to men (and unattractive to women), for it reflects and reinforces a masculinized approach to policymaking (hierarchical, objective, rational, etc.).

State political parties can also affect women’s descriptive representation. Some studies have shown, for example, that Democratic control of state legislatures has a negative effect on their gender diversity (Diamond 1977; Rule 1990; Sanbonmatsu 2002). More in-depth investigations of state political parties—Democrat and Republican—reveal that gender biases in candidate recruitment and support are still alive and well (Niven 1998, 2006; Sanbonmatsu...
State party leaders, most of whom are men, tend to look to their own “good ‘ole boy” social and professional networks for likely recruits; plus, they often underestimate the viability of female candidates, especially for races that are likely to be competitive. As a result, states with stronger party organizations, which are more involved in the candidate selection process, have fewer women in their state legislatures (Sanbonmatsu 2006).

Finally, there is ample evidence that electoral structures—namely, the choice between single- and multi-member districts—have significant effects on women’s representation in state legislatures. Women are more likely to get elected in states that have at least some multimember legislative districts (Arceneaux 2001; Carroll 1994; Camobreco and Barnello 2003; Darcy, Hadley and Kirksey 1997; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Diamond 1977; King 2002; Matland and Brown 1992; Moncrief and Thompson 1992; Norrander & Wilcox 1998; Rule 1990, 1992; Sanbonmatsu 2002) and in multimember districts themselves (Hogan 2001). As Darcy, Welch, and Clark (1994) explain, women may feel more comfortable running, and parties and voters may feel more comfortable supporting them, when they are not the only possible winner. Balancing the ticket and achieving more gender diversity may be easier for everyone to support in multimember districts than in single-member, first past the post systems.

**African Americans and Latinos**

Explanations for the variation in African American and Latino descriptive representation (across time and space) seem at first glance more parsimonious and powerful. Here, the legacy of centuries of racial conflict and minority disenfranchisement looms large, as does the efficacy of other electoral structures, such as term limits and turnover rates, seem to have done little for women’s representation (Arceneaux 2001; Camotreco and Barnello 2003; Carey, Niemi, and Powell 2000; Carey et al. 2006; Carroll and Jenkins 2001a, 2001b; Moncrief, Powell, and Storey 2007; Norrander and Wilcox 2005; Sanbonmatsu 2002, 2006).
the 1965 Voting Rights Act (and subsequent amendments). There is, in this literature, relatively little concern about the “pool” of willing and able minority candidates, and much more concern about racially polarized voting and institutionalized electoral mechanisms (e.g., multi-member, or at-large, districts in which substantial minority communities are overwhelmed by white majorities) that have intentionally denied minority voters the opportunity to vote for candidates of their choice.

Thus, the bulk of the early research focused on the power of newly created single-member, majority-minority districts to overcome widespread minority vote dilution and under-representation, especially in the South (Davidson and Grofman 1994; Grofman and Handley 1989, 1991; Grofman, Migalski, and Noviello 1986; Jewell 1982; Moncrief and Thompson 1992; Rule 1992). In one of the most powerful statements, Grofman and Handley (1991, 112) argue:

[T]he number of blacks elected to office has increased because the number of majority black districts has increased, not because blacks are winning office in majority white districts. … [Furthermore,] the number of black districts has increased not because of redistricting based on population shifts reflected in the decennial census, but primarily because of the Voting Rights Acts of 1965 and 1982 amendments to that act. Quite simply, had there been no intervention in the redistricting process in the South, it is unlikely that most southern states would have ceased their dilutive practices.

Today, there is as a result wide variation in the descriptive representation of African Americans and Latinos across states and districts. In 2003, for example, seven state legislatures (ID, ME, MT, ND, SD, WV, WY) had no African American members, while five (AL, GA, LA, MD, MS), had over 20 percent (NCSL 2003b). In that same year, 20 state legislatures had no Latino members; most others had Latino delegations of less than 10 percent; and Latino

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4 For early research on the effects of single-member, majority-minority districts (or the combined effects of electoral structures and minority population size) at the municipal level, see: Davidson and Korbel 1981; Engstrom and McDonald 1981; Karnig 1976; Karnig and Welch 1979, 1982; Welch 1990. On the importance of majority-minority districts for the election of African Americans and Latinos to Congress, see Lublin (1997) and Tate (2003).
representation in the remaining five states (AZ, CA, CO, NM, TX) ranged from 10 percent (CO) to 39 percent (NM) (NCSL 2003a). The fact that these patterns in minority representation track patterns in state minority populations (albeit imperfectly) is no coincidence (see also, Pachon and DeSipio 1992; Fraga et al. 2006; Lien 2006). As the most recent studies confirm, the size of the minority population is by far the most powerful determinant of African American and Latino descriptive representation at the state, local, and national level (Casellas 2009, 2011; Lublin et al. 2009; King-Meadows and Schaller 2006; Marschall and Ruhil 2006; Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010; Meier et al. 2005; Preuhs 2007; Preuhs and Juenke 2011; Trounstine and Valdini 2008). Most attribute this powerful effect to racially polarized voting patterns; minorities are much more willing than whites to support minority candidates. Casellas (2009), however, suggests that larger minority communities may also provide larger pools of eligible minority candidates.

Many of these studies analyze the effects of both the black and Latino populations separately (or independently). In such cases, intra-group effects are always stronger than inter-group effects. A number of studies find no significant inter-group effects at all, especially in the case of African American support for Latino candidates (Lublin et al. 2009; Marschall and Ruhil 2006; Preuhs and Juenke 2011).

In contrast to previous research, King-Meadows and Schaller (2006) find that the existence of multimember districts has no significant, independent effect on the election of minorities to state legislatures. Apparently, by the late 1990s, most of the offending

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5 In almost every state, the proportion of African American and Latino legislators is smaller than the proportion of African Americans and Latinos in the state population.

6 In the state legislative research, the impact of the size of the minority population is strong and positive in both aggregate- and district-level analyses. Additionally, some evidence suggests that the geographic concentration of minority populations (or, racial segregation) also enhances minority descriptive representation by facilitating the creation of (more) single-member majority-minority districts (King-Meadows and Schaller 2006; Trounstine and Valdini 2008).
multimember districts had been abolished and the ones that remain no longer dilute minority voting power or diminish minority representation. A good number of studies at the local level, however, suggest that single-member districts, or ward-based elections, continue to have salutary effects on African American and Latino representation by lowering the population threshold needed for minority voters to constitute a voting bloc powerful enough to elect candidates of their own choosing (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004; Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010; Meier et al. 2005; Trounstine and Valdini 2008).7

Other, more recent changes in electoral structure—namely, term limits—appear to have little systematic effect on minority representation in state legislatures. While the number of minorities serving in term-limited state legislatures did increase somewhat (Carroll and Jenkins 2001b), most studies conclude that term limits themselves were not responsible (Carey et al. 2006; Moncrief, Powell, and Storey 2007). As Caress et al. (2003, 194) argue, such increases in minority representation are more likely a result of redistricting and minority population growth; at best, term limits “function only as a triggering mechanism that allows minority voting power to emerge.” Indeed, Casellas (2009, 2011), who offers the strongest evidence for a term-limit effect, reports that term limits have enhanced Latino representation, but only in states with relatively large populations of Latino citizens.

In developing “a unified model of black representation that can be tested across different legislative contexts,” Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah (2010, 109) identify two other factors that have received some attention in the urban politics field, but very little in the state politics literature:

7 In this urban politics literature, the effect of electoral arrangements (single-member/ward vs. at-large systems) is almost always a conditional one, captured by interaction effects with the size of the minority population. At-large systems weaken the relationship between minority population and minority seats (Engstrom and McDonald 1981). But electoral arrangements have little or no effect when the minority population is very small or very large (no longer minority) (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004; Trounstine and Valdini 2008).
white “crossover” voters and group resources. Researchers have theorized that both white and minority socioeconomic status matter (Alozie 2000; Karnig 1979; Karnig and Welch 1979; Marschall and Ruhil 2006; Robinson and Dye 1978; Sass and Mehay 1995; Welch 1990). Well-educated whites are expected to be more racially tolerant and, thus, more supportive of minority candidates (Marschall and Ruhil 2006, 835). Higher status minority communities are thought to have the civic, fiscal, and human resources necessary to participate effectively in politics, field well-qualified candidates, and mobilize support for them (Karnig 1979, 137; Marschall and Ruhil 2006, 832). Although the empirical evidence is quite mixed, these propositions are still worth testing in any full model of minority descriptive representation. Interestingly, they also are congruent with theories of women’s representation that point to the importance of a supportive, liberal electorate and a large eligibility pool of potential candidates.

**Women of Color**

Far less is known about how the political and institutional environment shapes the descriptive representation of women of color in state legislatures. As noted above, women of color remain invisible in a great deal of the existing literature discussed above. Until quite recently, Rule’s (1992) analysis of “Minority and Anglo Women’s and Men’s Recruitment Opportunity” was the one notable exception. Like others (e.g., Darcy, Hadley, and Kirksey 1997; Welch and Herrick 1992), Rule was particularly intrigued by the conflicting theories and findings regarding the effects of multimember districts on the election of women and racial/ethnic minorities. This was one instance in which the electoral fortunes of women of color could not be so easily assumed or deduced from those of women and/or minorities. Although there were too few Latina state legislators at the time to permit any direct analysis of their
“legislative opportunity,” Rule’s multivariate analysis of state legislative officeholding in 1985 revealed that multimember districts enhanced the election of black and Anglo women alike and inhibited the election of men, regardless of race or ethnicity. Her analysis also indicated that the “ideal environments” for black and Anglo women legislators were quite similar in other respects: highly populated, northern states with relatively large numbers of working, professional, and well-educated women (Rule 1992, 61, 65-66). In stark contrast, “black men have much greater chances for election than do black women” in the rural, Deep South states with large, relatively poor black communities and relatively few black men in the labor force (1992, 61).8

Subsequent events and research highlight both the limitations and importance of Rule’s early work. First, analogous research on the impact of at-large vs. district elections at the local level suggests that smaller, single-member districts benefit only black men and harm only white women; contrary to Rule (1992), they have no discernible effect on the election of black women or Latino/as (Karnig and Welch 1979; Trounstine and Valdini 2008; see also Bejarano 2013). Second, a quick glance at the distribution of African American, Latina, Asian American, and Native American women across state legislatures in recent years suggests that the electoral fortunes of women of color are quite similar to those of men of color, and quite different from those of white women (Hardy-Fanta et al. 2006; see also Palmer and Simon 2006).

African American women, for example, have been most successful gaining legislative seats in southern and border states, the very “traditionalistic” states thought to be most inhospitable for women in general, but precisely where most black voters are located (Smooth 2006a, 133). According to Fraga et al. (2006), between 1990 and 2004, well over half of all Latina state legislators served in four states: Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas (see

8 Darcy, Hadley, and Kirksey’s (1997) bivariate analysis of 1989 house seats held by black men and women confirms Rule’s findings re the costs and benefits of multimember districts.
also, Bejarano 2013). Not surprisingly, these are the states where more than half of all Latinos in the U.S. reside; but these states differ quite a bit when it comes to their record of electing women to the state legislature. Trends over time, meanwhile, have consistently shown that, while women of color remain numerically underrepresented at all levels of public office\(^9\), their electoral gains at all levels of public office have outpaced those of both white women and men of color.\(^{10}\) Thus, for decades women have constituted larger proportions of African American and Latino elected officials than of white officials; and, in recent years, much of – and, in some cases, all – the gains in descriptive representation have been fueled by women of color (including Asian and Native American women).

Together, all of these disparate trends suggest the electoral environment for women of color is a rather complicated mixture of relative disadvantages and advantages, where opportunities and obstacles are shaped by intersections of race/ethnicity and gender – not simply one or the other, or one plus the other. As scholars have long warned, the political behavior and experiences of women of color “cannot always be anticipated from what we know about blacks [or racial/ethnic minorities in general] and women individually” (Darcy and Hadley 1988, 630). Indeed, the most recent attempts to understand how political opportunity structures shape the election of women of color to state legislatures offer empirical support for such warnings. Both Scola (2013, 344) and Bejarano (2013, 65) conclude that standard, single-axis models of women’s representation provide very little insight into the circumstances in which women of

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\(^9\) In 2004, parity ratios for black, Latina, and white women in state legislatures each hovered around .50, indicating there were roughly half as many women in state legislatures as in the states they represented. The parity ratio for Asian women was by far the lowest at .15, while white men, with a parity ratio of 2.04, were the only over-represented group (Hardy-Fanta et al. 2006, 17).

\(^{10}\) Herrington and Warrick (1977) noted such trends in black officeholding as early as 1969-1973, and almost every study of women of color as candidates or public officials since then (and cited in this section) highlights similar patterns of electoral success.
color gain footholds in state legislatures. Contrary to Rule (1992), the “ideal environments” for white women and women of color are not alike.¹¹

Nonetheless, it remains unclear just how gender and race interact to affect the electoral fortunes of women of color – theoretically or empirically. Part of the problem is that even among the few available multivariate analyses of state-level variation in descriptive representation, disparate research designs prohibit full and consistent comparisons across intersecting categories of difference. Rule (1992) compares Anglo women, black women, and black men; Bejarano (2013) compares all women, all Latinos, and Latinas; Scola (2013) compares all women, white women, and women of color (African American, Latina, Asian and Pacific Islander, and American Indian combined). Moreover, as is often the case, the array of explanatory variables is not consistent across studies. For example, unlike the others, Scola (2013) does not gauge the impact of multimember districts.¹²

Finally, the findings themselves raise more questions than they answer. According to Bejarano and/or Scola, the presence of women of color in state legislatures has very little or nothing to do with political culture, ideological climate, state political parties, legislative professionalism, multimember districts, or term limits and everything to do with the size (and, in Bejarano’s case, the socioeconomic status) of the state’s minority population. Questions about why women of color seem to be immune from the social structures and political institutions that constrain the electoral prospects of white women, whether minority women and men are equally dependent on the support of minority voters, and whether all “minority” voters are equally dependent on the support of minority voters, and whether all “minority” voters are equally dependent on the support of minority voters, and whether all “minority” voters are equally dependent on the support of minority voters, and whether all “minority” voters are equally dependent on the support of minority voters, and whether all “minority” voters are equally dependent on the support of minority voters, and whether all “minority” voters are equally dependent on the support of minority voters, and whether all “minority” voters are equally

¹¹ While Scola and Bejarano do not explicitly compare their models to standard, single-axis models of black or Latino representation, their findings suggest that such models are more effective (than their gender-only counterpart) in explaining the representation of both men and women of color.
¹² Similarly, unlike other studies of variation across all 50 states, Bejarano’s (2013) analysis is limited to the 36 states where at least one Latino serves in the legislature.
supportive of African American and Latino, male and female candidacies, have yet to be explored. For all these reasons, we offer a new, updated and expanded study of how political opportunity structures shape the electoral fortunes of women of color – and others.

But what, if any, theories or expectations can we glean from the disparate trends and analyses of race, gender, and descriptive representation in state legislatures? Numerous attempts to unravel the “puzzle” of African American women’s and Latinas’ electoral success provide the most useful clues (Darcy and Hadley 1988; Williams 2001). Explanations vary a bit, but they all tell a story of disadvantages overcome and opportunities seized. From the crucible of gendered racism and the collective struggles against it, women of color emerged more politically ambitious than their white female counterparts – more politically motivated, confident, connected, and skilled; deeply rooted in community activism; and less constrained by traditional gender norms (e.g., Bedolla, Tate, and Wong 2005; Bejarano 2013; Darcy and Hadley 1988; García and Márquez 2001; Montoya, Hardy-Fanta, and García 2000; Smooth, 2006a, 2010; Takash 1997; Tate 2003; Williams 2001). Thus, when new VRA-inspired majority-minority districts were created with each round of redistricting, women of color were well positioned to take advantage of the many open-seat opportunities presented (Darcy and Hadley 1988; Tate 2003). Judging from their success as candidates, they were able to draw cross-gender support within minority communities and, perhaps, cross-racial support from women outside those communities (Bejarano 2013; Clayton and Stallings 2000; Philpot and Walton 2007; Smooth 2006; Tate 2003).

If women of color are more politically ambitious than their white female counterparts; and if they have alternative networks and pipelines within minority communities and grassroots movements in which to “facilitate their candidacies,” then they may be less likely than white
women to be “victims of circumstance” (Bledsoe and Herring 1990, 220-21). In other words, their electoral fortunes may be less dependent on the sorts of political opportunity structures thought to constrain (all) women’s electoral participation and success – less dependent, that is, on professional or even employment-based eligibility pools, on large numbers of (white) liberal supporters and political gatekeepers, or on institutions (such as state party organizations, legislative professionalization, and multimember districting) that shape the contours of political competition (CAWP and Political Partiy 2012; Lien and Swain 2013, 149; Sanbonmatsu et al. 2009, 14). In short, this intersectional resistance, resilience, and resourcefulness may be why the whole single-axis model of women’s restricted pathways to state legislative office appears far less powerful or consequential for women of color (Bejarano 2013; Scola 2013).

And what of the standard models used to predict racial and ethnic diversity in state legislatures? Research (cited above) and history clearly suggest that political women of color have benefited from some electoral institutions (new, majority-minority districts) more than others (namely, single-member districts) and have gained a great deal of experience and support from within their respective minority communities. Yet it remains unclear whether, as candidates or potential candidates, women and men of color rely on and enjoy the same level of support from those communities.

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13 Two recent studies suggest these two conditions – higher levels of ambition and deeper roots in community activism among women of color – may not be found amongst post-civil rights generations of eligible candidates and elected officials (Hardy-Fanta et al. 2007; Lawless 2012).

14 This may explain why, for example, women of color in the 2008 CAWP Recruitment Survey of state legislators were less likely than their white Democratic female colleagues to report being recruited by party leaders or having party support for their candidacy, and more likely to have been discouraged from running in the first place (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2009, 10, 14). Women of color may be just as, if not more likely to encounter such obstacles, but more willing and able to resist or overcome them.
If women of color have deeper roots in community-based organizations and activism than even their male counterparts, as some studies suggest (Lien and Swain 2013; Williams 2001); and if they are more willing and able to build cross-racial coalitions and gain support from women outside their own racial/ethnic communities as other studies suggest (Bedolla, Tate, and Wong 2005; Bejarano 2013; Fraga et al. 2006; Smooth 2006a; Tate 2003); then their electoral fortunes may be less dependent on group-specific resources (especially those defined or measured in terms of socioeconomic rather than organizational resources) or on large concentrations of co-ethnic voters. Other studies – and the notable experiences of the two black women who have run for President – also suggest that women of color may have an especially hard time gaining support (endorsements, money, votes, etc.) from within when they are competing against men of color in high-stakes races (CAWP and Political Parity 2012; Karnig and Welch 1979; McClain, Carter, and Brady 2005; Philpot and Walton 2007; Smooth 2006a, 2010). This too suggests that women of color benefit less than their male counterparts do from large, well-off co-ethnic populations – and that standard race-and-ethnic politics models are less potent for women of color. On the other hand, the same research and trends suggest that, if women of color are so ambitious and undeterred, they might be more likely than men of color to tap into white “crossover” support, gain additional support from other racial/ethnic minority groups, and take advantage of new electoral opportunities, such as those provided by term limits. In these respects, then, standard models of descriptive representation might be more applicable to or powerful for women of color than for men of color.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{15} The two studies that gauge the effects of term limits on the election women of color (compared to men of color and white women) to state legislatures are inconclusive; in the early years, at least, term limits appear to have no consistent positive or negative effect (Bejarano 2013; Carroll and Jenkins 2001b).}\]
Testing these hypotheses about the conditions that foster or impede the election of women of color (and others) to state legislatures allows us to pick up where Rule (1992), Scola (2013), and Bejarano (2013) left off and advance our knowledge in multiple ways. Our results will provide a more complete and accurate understanding of how political demographics, cultures, and institutions shape the electoral fortunes and descriptive representation of women of color, as well as those of men of color, white women, and white men. This, in turn, will shed new light on how such political opportunity structures are shaped by intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender – how and to what degree they are raced, gendered, and/or “raced-gendered” (Hawkesworth 2003). Furthermore, in questioning the applicability and utility of existing, gender-only and race/ethnicity-only models for the representation of women of color, our research provides a more thorough and demanding test of one of the central critiques and assertions of intersectionality: that such one-at-a-time approaches are inadequate, obscuring more than they reveal about political processes of representation, difference, and marginalization.

**Research Design**

Existing studies of descriptive representation in state legislatures have adopted a number of different research designs. Most attempt to explain variation in the gender, racial or ethnic composition of legislatures (or chambers) as a whole, paying close attention to the effects of state-level cultural, institutional, and demographic factors.\(^\text{16}\) A more unusual but equally useful “seat-based” (Hogan 2001) approach takes the state legislative district—or, in the case of multi-member districts, the seat—as the primary unit of analysis to examine what sorts of

\(^\text{16}\) The predominant approach in the urban politics literature is similar, taking the city rather than the district or ward as the unit of analysis.
constituencies are more or less likely to elect women and men of various racial and ethnic backgrounds (see also Lublin 1997; Lublin et al. 2009; Palmer and Simon 2006). We undertake both approaches.\textsuperscript{17} Theoretically, descriptive representation is a product of both state- or system-wide, structural opportunities and constraints and the proclivities and resources of the district-level constituencies in which candidates emerge and run for election. The district-level approach is also advantageous on a more practical level. It provides a great many more units of analysis, more variation in our independent variables, and more flexibility in operationalizing our dependent variables and specifying our models. As will be shown, this flexibility is particularly useful when employing an intersectional framework to examine multiple, intersecting categories of descriptive representation and multiple, non-ordered outcomes of electoral processes.

Our analysis proceeds as follows. In Table 1, we test the standard state-level model developed (in the existing literature) to explain variation in (all) women’s descriptive representation to see if it is, indeed, applicable across race and ethnicity. We do this by using the same independent variables to predict the percentage of state legislative seats occupied by (1) all women, (2) white women, (3) African American women, and (4) Latina women. If our expectation that the electoral fortunes of women of color are less constrained by such state-level opportunity structures is correct, then we should find that the effects of such things as state political culture, institutions, and eligibility pools will be significantly weaker for African American women and Latinas than for white women.

\textsuperscript{17} Casellas (2009, 2011) also investigates both state- and district-level models of Latino descriptive representation. No one, to our knowledge, has considered the possibility of interacting effects of state- and district-level factors. Thus, we do not explore such cross-level interactions here. For similar as well as more practical reasons, we do not present a multilevel (a.k.a. hierarchical linear, mixed effect) model.
In Tables 2a and 2b, we test standard state-level models developed (in the existing literature) to explain variation in African American and Latino descriptive representation to see if they are applicable across gender (as well as across race/ethnicity). We use the same independent variables to predict the percentage of state legislative seats occupied by (1) all African Americans, (2) African American men, (3) African American women, (4) all Latino/as, (5) Latino men, and (6) Latina women.18 If our expectations that women of color are less likely to draw on intra-group support (population size and resources) and more likely to benefit from extra-group factors such as cross-over support from whites (or other racial/ethnic minorities) and term limits, then we should find significant gender differences in the strength of corresponding regression coefficients.

In Table 3, we test a district/seat-level model that incorporates the primary explanatory factors identified in both the women-and-politics and the race-and-ethnic-politics research. We use one multinomial logit model to predict the simultaneous probability of multiple discrete, non-ordered outcomes: representation by a white woman, a black man, a black woman, a Latino man, or a Latina woman (in relation to the probability of representation by a white man)19 This approach provides further tests of our hypotheses regarding the unique positioning and intersectional resourcefulness of women of color in state legislative elections.

We focus our analysis of descriptive representation on the characteristics of representatives serving in the lower house of state legislatures in 2005. Our state-level and seat-level analyses include all 49 lower chambers (excluding Nebraska’s unicameral and nonpartisan 18 Given the censored distribution of the dependent variables in Tables 1 and 2, – especially the lack of any minority representation in a number of states – we employ tobit rather than OLS regression models. 19 Our rationale for choosing multinomial logit over multinomial probit is detailed in the Appendix.
legislature). Like most of the research we draw upon, ours is a cross-sectional design. We chose the year 2005 for multiple reasons. First, it is the most recent year for which much of our data are available, including our own biographical data and the district-level demographics. Second, 2005 is a good midpoint in the redistricting cycle—one that can accommodate changes made in district maps both before and after the 2002 elections, but does not come so late in the cycle that the 2000 census data are no longer optimal.

Our data were collected from many different yet compatible primary and secondary sources. Data regarding the gender, racial, and ethnic identities of individual state legislators, which were used to construct our state- and seat-level dependent variables, are drawn primarily from the authors’ own biographical database and supplemented with information collected by the Center for Women in American Politics, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, the National Latino Legislative Database Project (Ramirez 2006), and others. State- and district-level demographic data used for many of our independent variables were obtained (directly or indirectly) from the 2000 U.S. Census. Data for all other independent variables are drawn from secondary sources frequently employed in the extant literature (e.g., Elazar 1984; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 2006; Mayhew 1986) or newly introduced (Tausnovitch and Warshaw 2013). Descriptive statistics and more detailed information on data sources, coding protocols, and alternative measures are available in the Appendix.

Results

State Level: Women’s Representation across Racial/Ethnic Categories

To test our hypothesis that the determinants of women’s descriptive representation differ systematically by race/ethnicity, we employ a standard women-in-politics model of descriptive
representation in state legislatures. According to this model, gender diversity in state legislatures is primarily a function of the ideological leanings of the citizenry, the long-standing political culture of the state, women’s employment in the professions (or the size of the eligibility pool), the professionalization of the legislature (or the desirability/power of the office), the strength of state party organizations, and the presence or absence of multimember districts. Our results strongly suggest, however, that this model is not generalizable across race/ethnicity. As theories of intersectionality posit, this single-axis model of a highly constrained, gendered electoral environment is in many respects more applicable to the fortunes of white women than it is to those of women of color.

As seen in Table 1, white women’s representation (column 2) is significantly lower in states with more conservative electorates, a traditionalistic political culture, a professionalized legislature, and strong party organizations – as the existing, single-axis research suggests. The effects of the eligibility pool (the size of white women’s professional labor force) and the presence of multimember districts are in the expected direction (positive), but are not statistically significant. Overall, the results for white women are quite similar to those for all women combined (column 1). The results for women of color, however, differ markedly in almost every respect.

As expected, the presence of black women and Latinas in state legislatures is unaffected by state ideology, political culture, or party organizational strength. Rather, the descriptive

20 The impact of party organizational strength on the percentage of white women in state legislatures just misses the cut-off for statistical significance at p=0.107 (two-tailed).
21 Results for predicting the percentage of white Democratic women in state houses are no different from those reported here. See the Appendix, Table A3.1 for more information.
22 In all these respects, the differences between the coefficients for white women and those for black women or Latinas are statistically significant (p<.10 in post-estimation chi-square tests, two-tailed).
representation of women of color appears to be almost entirely a function of the size of their respective eligibility pool. Given the almost perfect correlation between the size black/Latina women’s professional labor force and their racial/ethnic group’s share of the state population (r=.94 for black women; r=.98 for Latinas), this is precisely what the race-and-ethnic politics literature would suggest. Moreover, we cannot differentiate (in this model at least) the impact of intra-racial/ethnic communities from that of high-status labor force participation among women of color. Nonetheless, our hypothesis that professionalized eligibility pools are more important for white women than for women of color does not find support here; at the very least, such eligibility pools are inconsequential for all women vying for positions in 21\textsuperscript{st} century state legislatures.

The two remaining variables in the model have varying effects on women’s representation across race/ethnicity. While state legislative professionalism works against the election of white women, it has no effect on the election of Latinas and a small but significant positive effect on the election of African American women (as Squires’ early research would suggest).\(^{23}\) Holding all else constant (at the mean or median), white women’s predicted representation ranges from a low of 15.6\% in professional legislatures (CI: 11.8-19.4) to a high of 20.9\% in citizen legislatures (CI: 14.1-27.8), while black women’s representation ranges from a low of 1.7\% in both citizen and hybrid legislatures to a high of 3.2\% in professional legislatures (CI: 1.3-5.2).\(^{24}\) And while multimember districts have no apparent effect on either white women or Latinas, they have a small but marginally significant negative effect on African

\(^{23}\) The difference between the coefficient for white women and that for black women is statistically significant (p=.0135); that between white women and Latinas is not quite significant (p=.1232).

\(^{24}\) Predicted outcomes with 95\% confidence intervals for these and all other independent variables in Table 1 are available in the Appendix, Table A4.1.
American women (as the standard race/ethnic politics model would suggest). Holding all else constant (at the mean or median), black women’s predicted representation drops from 1.7% to 0.9% in states with multimember districts (CI: -0.4-2.1). Thus, while black women’s representation is not immune from legislative professionalism or multimember electoral structures, as hypothesized, it is impacted in ways that are not anticipated by standard single-axis models of (white) women’s representation.

**State Level: African American and Latino Representation across Gender**

To test our hypothesis that the determinants of African American and Latino officeholding differ systematically by gender, we employ two basic race-and-ethnic-politics models prevalent in the existing literature. According to these models, racial/ethnic diversity in state legislatures is primarily a function of the racial/ethnic composition of the citizenry: the larger the minority population, the larger the minority delegation in the state house. The strength of that population-representation relationship, however, can be weakened by the presence of large, multimember districts (which make it harder to construct majority- or near majority-minority districts) or by a lack of legislative turnover (or viable opportunities for relatively new or “outsider” candidates). Accordingly, Table 2a tests the population-representation model conditioned on the presence of multimember districts and Table 2b tests the

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25 This difference between the coefficient for white women and that for black women is statistically significant (p=.0314).
26 We use the term “citizenry” intentionally here. In the analyses below, we report the effects of the size of the state’s or (in Table 3) the district’s Latino citizen population. Though the effects of the full (citizen and non-citizen) Latino population tend to be a bit weaker than those for the citizen-only population, the general patterns remain the same and our conclusions do not differ. We opt for the Latino citizen measure because it has greater face validity. In our models, the variables measuring the ethnic and racial composition of the state or district are meant to gauge racially polarized support for Latino and African American candidates and/or larger eligibility pools. Thus, it makes sense to exclude non-citizens who can neither vote nor hold office.
population-representation model conditioned on having term limits in effect. Further analysis (not shown) discussed below also explores the effects of white cross-over support and group resources.

The figures in Tables 2a and 2b, along with the corresponding graphs in Figures 2a and 2b, confirm much of the previous research on African American and Latino representation in the U.S.: the racial/ethnic composition of the state population is key. The electoral fortunes of all African Americans—men and women alike—depend heavily on the size of the black population, and the electoral fortunes of all Latinos—men and women alike—depend heavily on the size of the Latino citizenry. As expected, however, women of color reap significantly fewer electoral benefits from their co-ethnic communities than their male counterparts do, especially in the majority of states without multimember districts (Table/Figure 2a) and in the majority of states without term limits (Table/Figure 2b). Only in states where term limits are in effect does black women’s representation get as much of a boost from the state’s black population as black men’s representation does (see Figure 2b, left panel).

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27 Given our limited number of observations and degrees of freedom, we cannot test both conditions (or sets of interactions) simultaneously. Following Casellas (2009, 2011), we also used legislative professionalization as the turnover-related conditioning variable. However, we found no evidence to suggest that professionalization inhibits the conversion of population to seats. Contrary to Squire (1992), we also found that professionalization has no significant first-order or direct effects on black or Latino descriptive representation, regardless of gender.

28 Again, due to limited observations and degrees of freedom, we added each of these secondary independent variables one at a time to the base models presented in Tables 2a and 2b. Even with only one secondary variable added, we are unable to estimate confidence intervals for our point estimates. Thus, we do not attempt to include more than one secondary variable at a time.

29 Predicted outcomes and 95% confidence intervals for results in Tables 2a-b and Figures 2a-b are available in the Appendix, Tables A4.2 and A4.3.

30 Holding all else constant at the mean or median, the estimated marginal effect of the black population in term-limited states (when it is above about 15%) is .787 (CI: .629-.947) for black men’s representation and .653 (CI: .436-.870) for black women’s representation.
As in previous research, there is only limited evidence here of significant inter-racial effects (See Figure 2c). Regardless of electoral structures (multimember districting or term limits), the size of the Latino population has no effect on the election of African American men, and only a small, positive effect on the election of African American women. While the differences in the estimated effects are not statistically significant, they are congruent with our hypothesis that women of color will benefit more from cross-racial support than men of color. On the other hand, the most significant inter-racial effects run counter to our hypothesis. In states with term limits, Latino male representation benefits tremendously from larger African American populations while Latina representation actually suffers a bit. In states without term limits, however, the size of the black population has no discernable effect on Latino or Latino officeholding.

Electoral structures themselves have very mixed effects on minority representation in states legislatures, according to our results. Contrary to expectations, multimember districting appears to have no effect on the election of black or Latino men but they do enhance somewhat the positive effects of co-ethnic populations for women of color (see Table/Figure 2a).31 Contrary to most of the existing research, term limits do make a difference. However, women of color do not always find them particularly advantageous, as we hypothesized. Term limits significantly enhance the co-ethnic population-to-seat relationship for men and women of color alike (Table/Figure 2b). As mentioned above, they benefit black women so much that they wipe out the “normal” advantage black men appear to enjoy in the conversion of population to seats (when the black population is higher than average, at least). Term limits can also create fertile

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31 Gender differences in the conditioning effects of multimember districting are statistically significant for Latino/a representation (p=.0562), but not for African American representation (p=.3880).
ground for the positive, inter-racial effects of other minority populations, but only for men of color, according to our results (Figure 2c). As noted earlier, Latino male representation enjoys a substantial boost from larger black populations under term limits. And though the interaction effect is not quite statistically significant, black men’s representation in state legislatures may gain a bit from larger Latino/a populations – as long as term limits are in effect. Contrary to our expectations, black women’s officeholding benefits only slightly from the presence of larger Latino populations, regardless of whether term limits are in effect. And Latinas’ ability to capitalize on the presence of large black populations is undermined somewhat by term limits. All in all, there is little evidence to suggest that women of color are any more willing and able than men of color to take advantage of the electoral opportunities term limits can provide.

None these results are affected by the inclusion of additional independent variables in our models of minority descriptive representation (analysis not shown). This is primarily because no other variable comes close to matching (or even approximating) the explanatory power of the racial/ethnic population (especially in interaction with term limits). Group-specific resources have significant, independent effects only for the representation of African American men – and even there, the effect appears weak and idiosyncratic (or, at least, contrary to expectations). Black men lose (rather than gain) slightly more seats as their own socioeconomic status and resources increase \((p=.056)\) (see also, Marschall et al. 2010). Latinas are the only ones whose descriptive representation benefits significantly \((p=.021)\) from larger populations of well-educated, presumably liberal, white populations; Latino, black male, and black female officeholding are all unaffected by the size of the white college-educated population in the state.

**Modeling Intersections of Gender, Race, and Ethnicity at the District/Seat Level**
Thus far, we have investigated how well standard models of either women’s representation or minority representation travel across racial/ethnic or gender boundaries, respectively. While informative, such analysis remains limited within the constraints of a single-axis framework that examines the efficacy of one type of model at a time for one group at a time. Our district- or seat-level analysis, on the other hand, allows for a more integrated and intersectional approach. Here, we can incorporate insights from both the predominant women-and-politics and race-and-ethnic-politics models to see how district-level factors affect the likelihood of all six possible representational outcomes simultaneously: whether a state house seat is occupied by a white man, white woman, African American man, African American woman, Latino, or Latina.\(^{32}\) We do this using a multinomial logit model, regressing the multiple, unranked outcomes on the following district-level characteristics: racial and ethnic composition (% black, % Latino citizen); ideology; size of the white college-educated population; level of urbanization; resources or socioeconomic status of each racial/ethnic-gender group (excluding white men); and electoral structure (multimember district or not).

Many of these independent variables test hypotheses regarding minority representation and women’s representation simultaneously. In some cases, this is because operational variables used in one model are so highly correlated with those of the other model. For example, the racial and ethnic composition of the district populations and civilian labor forces are so highly correlated (\(r=.95\) for Latino men; \(r=.98\) for black men and women, as well as Latinas), the coefficients for the former effectively capture the effects of both co-ethnic voters (from minority representation models) and group-specific eligibility pools (from women’s representation models).\(^{32}\) As is common practice, the most frequent outcome, a white man holding the seat, is the excluded, baseline or reference category in our multinomial logit model (Table 3). For reasons explained in the Appendix, seats held by multiracial, Asian American, or Native American legislators are excluded from this analysis.
Similarly, the size of the white college-educated population indicates both potential white crossover support for minority candidates and the size of the white female eligibility pool – because the two (% white college educated and % white-female college educated) are so highly correlated ($r=.99$). In other cases, a single variable tests very similar, overlapping concepts and hypotheses. District-level urbanization, for example, is thought to promote both female and minority representation (Lublin et al. 2009; Palmer and Simon 2006), as is district-level racial/ethnic diversity (Hogan 2001). Still other variables are rooted in only one single-axis model. Only the race-and-ethnic politics literature recognizes the potential significance of group resources, for instance. Plus, only the women-and-politics literature emphasizes ideological constraints (above and beyond the size of the white liberal population, at least) and theorizes about district-level (as opposed to aggregate-level) effects of multimember electoral arrangements. Incorporating these variables into our intersectional multinomial analysis allows us to see whether such insights reach beyond their single-axis origins.

The results, presented in Table 3 and Figures 3a-d, are in many ways similar to those of our state-level analysis. Again, we see little evidence suggesting the determinants of women’s descriptive representation are the same regardless of race/ethnicity and a good deal of evidence suggesting the determinants of African American and Latino descriptive representation do not differ dramatically by gender. Post-estimation (Wald) tests for combining alternatives (Long

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33 District-level measures of the size of professional or managerial level labor forces by race/ethnicity and gender are not available (as they are at the state level). Correlations between the size of district racial/ethnic populations (% black and % Latino/a citizens) and the size of district college-educated minority populations (% black/Latino college educated) are a bit weaker (ranging from .73 to .83), but still too high to allow us to disentangle the independent effects of each.

34 Results for Democratic-held seats only do not differ significantly from those reported here. Not surprisingly, district conservatism no longer has a significant effect on any outcomes. Plus, the negative effect of Latina resources on Latino representation and the negative effect of Latino
and Freese 2006, 239-40) indicate that the independent variables as a group significantly
differentiate between all (15) possible pairs of alternative outcomes except the black-man/black-
woman and Latino/Latina pairs. In other words, state house seats occupied by black men and
women, or by Latinos and Latinas, are (statistically speaking) indistinguishable with respect to
the variables in our model. Yet those occupied by white women, black women, and Latinas are
quite different. Further inspection of the results shows that these patterns are largely attributable
to the effects of the districts’ racial and ethnic makeup.

As Figures 3a and 3b illustrate, much depends on the size of the African American and
Latino citizen populations in the districts. Across gender lines, African American representation
benefits tremendously from the support of large black populations; Latino/a representation is
equally dependent on the support of large populations of Latino citizens; and white
representation suffers in both scenarios. Moreover, the marginal effect, or the degree to which
descriptive representation depends on racial/ethnic diversity follows similar patterns for women
and men in the same racial/ethnic group. For black men and women alike, the size of the
district’s black population has practically no effect until it reaches a threshold of about 30%; and
it has its strongest impact in the critical, majority-minority range of 45-55%. For Latinos and
Latinas alike, the size of the district’s Latino citizen population has no effect until it reaches a
threshold of about 25% and its strongest effect is in the range of 35-55%.35 And for white men

resources on Latina representation are enhanced; both coefficients are marginally significant (at
p≤.10), as are the gender differences between them. See the Appendix, Table A3.2 for details.

35 The effects of co-ethnic populations on African American and Latino/a representation are so
profound that no other variable has a significant, non-zero effect unless and until the respective
district populations are well above the “critical thresholds” identified. Thus, as Figures 3c and 3d
(panel 1) illustrate, estimating substantive effects when %Black and %Latino citizen are set at
their means (which are well below the thresholds) always yields null results – flat lines at zero
probability – for black and Latino/a outcomes. Consequently, we also estimate and show
predicted probabilities when %Black is set at 45 (panel 2) and %Latino citizen at 35 (panel 3).
and women alike, the probability of descriptive representation starts to decline at the same
thresholds and takes a proportionately similar dive in the same majority-minority ranges. Finally,
like the patterns seen in the state-level analysis, evidence of cross-racial/ethnic support among
minorities is quite mixed. The probability of Latino or Latina representation is unaffected by the
size of the African American population, and the probability of black female or black male
representation increases slightly with the size of the Latino citizen population (but only when the
size of the black population is well above the 30% threshold and the Latino citizen population is
below 40%).\textsuperscript{36} Contrary to our hypothesis that women of color are more likely to draw support
from outside their racial/ethnic communities, black women and men benefit equally from the
support of their districts’ Latino/a population.

Similarly, our multinomial logit analysis provides almost no evidence to suggest that
legislative women of color draw more “crossover” support from white women (or men) than do
legislative men of color. The size of the white college-educated population within the district has
no impact whatsoever on any representational outcomes modeled here. As shown in Table 3,
district conservatism has weak, statistically insignificant, negative effects on the electoral
fortunes of African American men and women, Latinos and Latina alike.\textsuperscript{37} Nor are the effects of
white women’s (and men’s) socioeconomic resources gender-differentiated. As illustrated in
Figure 3c (central panel), neither African American men nor African American women appear to

\textsuperscript{36} Post estimation Wald tests of equivalence on the effects of %Black and %Latino citizen across
pairs of alternative outcomes reflect these patterns. None of the cross-gender comparisons (black
man vs. black woman outcomes; Latino vs. Latina outcomes; white man vs. white woman
outcomes) yield statistically significant differences in coefficients. In contrast, most of the cross-
race/ethnicity comparisons show very significant differences. The strong, positive effect of the
black population is unique to black-man and black-woman outcomes; and the strong, positive
effect of the Latino citizen population is unique to Latino and Latina outcomes.

\textsuperscript{37} The Policy Conservatism coefficient for Latino representation is marginally significant (at
p≤.10), but the difference between that coefficient and the corresponding coefficient for Latina
representation is not.
draw electoral strength from the resources of their white constituents. White resources do seem to make a positive difference for Latino/a representation (see Figure 3c, right panel), but no more so for Latinas than for Latinos.\textsuperscript{38} Black women’s descriptive representation does appear in Figure 3d (central panel) to benefit slightly more from highly urbanized constituencies than does black men’s.\textsuperscript{39} But this is the only reliable indication that women of color might draw support from a larger or more diverse pool of voters. If anything, more urbanized districts give a slightly stronger boost to Latino representation than to Latina representation (see Figure 3d, right panel), but the difference is not statistically significant.

Similarly, our results provide very little evidence that the likelihood of a woman of color getting elected to a state legislative seat is any less dependent on within-group resources than is the likelihood of a man of color getting elected. Interestingly, the socioeconomic resources of black women and men in the districts appear to have differential effects: while black men’s resources are positively associated with both black male and black female representation (as the standard model of minority representation suggests), black women’s resources reduce the chances of black male and female representation. And while the effects of black resources do appear (in Table 3) to be weaker for black women’s representation than for black men’s, the differences are not statistically significant. The representational impact of in-group resources is also gender-differentiated among/for Latinos, but once again, not in ways anticipated by our hypotheses. Latina representation is more (not less) dependent on the resources of Latino men in

\textsuperscript{38} Although the coefficient for Latina outcomes is not statistically significant (due primarily to larger standard error), the difference between the Latino/Latina coefficients is not statistically significant. Similarly, although the Latino curve in Figure 3c (right panel) appears steeper than the Latina curve, the confidence intervals completely overlap, indicating the difference is not statistically significant.

\textsuperscript{39} The difference in the effects of urbanization on black women’s and black men’s representation is statistically significant (p=.09).
the district, and not in the way one would expect. Rather than being propelled by the resources of Latino men in the district, Latina representation may actually suffer a bit when the socioeconomic status of Latino men is relatively high.\textsuperscript{40} In this and in other respects, our results also fail to provide any support for the notion that women of color running for state legislative office (or considering a run) draw upon and benefit disproportionately from the support of well-to-do women of color in their districts.

As noted above, the chances of a woman capturing a state legislative seat are racially/ethnically specific – as are men’s chances. Black women’s representation, like black men’s, is largely dependent on the size of the district’s black population; Latina representation, much like Latino representation, is largely a function of how many Latino/a citizens reside in the district; and the more racially or ethnically diverse the district, the less likely white women (or men) will be elected to serve it. Clearly, women’s descriptive representation of state legislative districts is highly constrained by the politics of race and ethnicity – across intersections of race/ethnicity. But beyond the effects of district racial/ethnic composition, are the electoral fortunes of white women any more constrained by the political geography of state legislative districts than are those of Latina and African American women – as we hypothesized? Our multinomial, seat-level analysis (in Table 3 and Figures 3a-d) suggests not.

As noted above, no one’s electoral fortunes depends on the size of the white college educated population in the district and everyone’s chances of gaining a state legislative seat seem

\textsuperscript{40} The estimated effect of Latino male SES on Latina representation just misses the cut-off for statistical significance (p=0.104), and the difference between it and the estimated effect of Latino male SES of Latino representation is statistically significant (p=0.056). These patterns – as well as the gender-differentiated effects of Latina SES apparent in Table 3 – are stronger and more significant when the analysis is restricted to Democratic-held seats only. That is to say, Latino resources hinder Latina Democratic representation (but have no discernible impact on Latino Democratic representation), while Latina resources hinder Latino Democratic representation (but have no discernible effect on Latina Democratic representation).
to depend somewhat on the district’s ideology. While the negative effect of Policy Conservatism on white women’s (and men’s) representation is the only one that is statistically significant, that is due only to much higher standard errors for the estimated effects on black women’s (and men’s) and Latinas’ (and Latinos’) representation; the differences in the coefficients are not statistically significant. Nearly the same can be said for the effects of white women’s resources. As seen in Figure 3c, white women’s resources give both white female and Latina representation a small boost; and none of the differences in effects are statistically significant – even though black women’s (and men’s) representation appears unaffected. Similarly, both white women’s and Latinas’ chances of getting elected are significantly enhanced in multimember districts, according the figures in Table 3. If anything, Latina representation is more – not less – dependent on such electoral institutions than is white women’s (p=0.1134); and while black women’s (and men’s) representation does appear to be “free” of such constraints, the difference in the estimated effects of multimember districts on black women’s and white women’s chances of getting elected are not statistically significant (p=0.4335). A very similar pattern is seen in the marginally significant to insignificant negative effects of Latino male resources on Latina, white women’s, and black women’s representation. Finally, contrary to our hypothesis, district urbanization has a significantly stronger salutary effect on the electoral success of African American women and an equally weak effect on that of Latinas, as compared its effect on white women’s success (see Figure 3d).

Conclusions

41 The difference in the effects of multimember (vs. single-member) districts on African American women’s chances and Latinas’ chances of electoral success are statistically significant (p=0.0775).
Together, our state- and seat-level models of descriptive representation in state legislatures demonstrate the utility of an intersectional approach to studying the politics of gender, race, and ethnicity in the U.S. First and foremost, they highlight the perils of generalizing about gender across categories of race and ethnicity. In numerous instances, we see that the conditions that foster or impede white women’s representation do not necessarily affect the recruitment and election of African American women or Latinas in the same ways—and vice versa. At the state level, the conservatism, traditionalism, legislative professionalism, and party organizational strength that impedes white women’s representation have little or no effects on black women’s or Latinas’ representation. At the district/seat level, the racial and ethnic diversity that propels women of color into state legislative office, impedes the election of white women.

Nor is it always safe to generalize about “women of color,” for the electoral fortunes of Latinas and African American women can and do differ. At both the state and district levels, for example, African American women seem to benefit more from crossover support from Latino/as than Latinas do from cross-over support from African American women and men. Latina representation at both levels appears to benefit more from white crossover support than does African American women’s representation. Of course, the same can be said for generalizing about “minority” men. The politics of race, ethnicity, and gender are far too powerful and complex for such generalizations or assumptions to go unchallenged.

Having tested such assumptions, however, we can say with more confidence that conclusions regarding African American or Latino representation are often equally and similarly applicable to the experiences of both women and men of color. This is especially so when it comes to the effects of the racial and ethnic composition of state and district populations and, by implication, racial redistricting. Thus, even when the null hypothesis rules the day, an
intersectional approach can contribute to our knowledge. Evidence that the electoral fortunes of men and women of color alike are so closely tied to the support of their respective minority communities can speak volumes about the politics and history of race, ethnicity, and even gender in the U.S.

Nonetheless, our findings are not all that cut and dry. In our seat-level analysis, for example, we uncover a number of similarities in the kinds of districts in which white women, black women, and Latinas find electoral opportunities and challenges. All three groups of women find varying levels of support amongst more liberal and more urban constituencies; and none benefit from the support of highly educated white constituencies. Latinas and white women alike take advantage of multimember districts and the resources of their relatively well-off white constituents; and both suffer the consequences of having relatively well-off Latino (male) constituents. Also important to note are the very significant differences in the ability of women and men of color to reap the benefits of the population-to-seats relationship at the state level. Larger African American and Latino/a populations still somehow translate into more seats for African American men and Latino men than for African American women and Latinas, respectively—especially in the majority of states without multimember districts or without term limits. While women of color may not need larger concentrations of minority voters to get elected in any given district (as our district/seat level analysis suggests), they are not successfully contesting those districts at equivalent rates.42

Our research thus sheds much needed light on—and raises additional questions about—the experiences women of color in and around state electoral politics. Building on existing

42 Alternatively, these disparities at the state level may suggest that the higher and steeper curves for men of color in Figures 3a-d (at the district level) should not be dismissed entirely as statistically insignificant differences.
theories and evidence suggesting the comparative strength, ambition, and resilience of political women of color, we hypothesized that Latina and African American women would be less constrained by most of the opportunity structures thought to channel the electoral fortunes of women and racial/ethnic minorities in general – yet more likely to take advantage of new opportunities, such as term limits, and untapped resources, such as cross-over support from white women (and men) and other women (and men) of color. Our state level analyses do provide some support for these hypotheses: the presence of women of color in state legislatures is much less dependent on state ideological climate, political culture, party organizations, and legislative professionalism than is the presence of white women. And there is some evidence (in Table/Figure 2b) to suggest that black women have been particularly effective at taking advantage of term limits.

We hesitate, however, to conclude that the flatter curves for black women and Latinas in Figures 2a and 2b indicate that large co-ethnic populations are any less important for the electoral success of women of color than for that men of color. First, there is no indication in Figures 2a and 2b that women of color get more seats out of smaller co-ethnic populations than do men of color, thus making them less dependent on larger co-ethnic populations. Second, there is very little and no consistent evidence in either our state- or district-level analyses that women of color have the “luxury” or intersectional advantage of gaining support from elsewhere – that is, from either white women or other women of color. At the state level, the only indication of such gendered crossover support is that Latina descriptive representation benefits from large proportions of college educated whites in the state population, but Latino and black male representation does not. But neither does black female representation. At the district level, the only indication of gendered crossover support is that urbanization has slightly stronger effects on
African American women’s electoral success than on African American men’s. Other, more
direct measures of white crossover or inter-racial support have no gender-differentiated effects.

All of this further suggests that, compared to white women especially, the electoral
fortunes of women of color are no less constrained by the political geography of the sates, just
differently constrained. For, while women of color may be relatively immune from the
constraints of state political cultures, party organizations, and legislative institutions, they are
profoundly more constrained by the racial/ethnic politics of state – and district – demographics.
And to make matters worse, there are some indications that women of color find less support
from within their co-ethnic communities than their male counterparts do. In short, this is not
what intersectional advantage or resilience would look like. Rather, our results reinforce the
doubts, raised in more recent studies, that unusually high levels of community activism (Hardy-
Fanta et al. 2007) and political ambition (Lawless 2012) are what is propelling 21st century
women of color into public office. Further investigation and theorizing is clearly needed.

Indeed, future research on gender, race, ethnicity, and descriptive representation could
and should be even more intersectional in its approach, especially at the theoretical level. Our
research draws upon and tests single-axis theories, models, hypotheses, and variables developed
with either women (undifferentiated by race or ethnicity) or African Americans and Latinos
(undifferentiated by gender) in mind. Theorizing about the descriptive representation of black
women and/or Latinas remains relatively under-developed, leaving us with too few models,
hypotheses, or variables that might be uniquely or particularly applicable to them. Development
of such intersectional research tools could then help address many of the questions our research
uncovers, prompts, or resurrects. Why, for example, is the state-level population-seat relationship
so often weaker for women of color than for men of color? Why is there so little evidence of
cross-racial coalition building to further diversity public officeholding, by which political women could draw upon the support of other women (and/or men) across racial/ethnic boundaries? Are intersecting and compounding systems of marginalization undermining rather than facilitating such efforts? In short, what are we leaving out of our models? Where, exactly, do we need to dig deeper? Such intersectional theorizing can enhance our understanding of multiple forms and complex processes of descriptive representation, as well as multiple forms and complex processes of state electoral and governing institutions.

Finally, we hope our research encourages others to adopt intersectional approaches more often by offering some useful methodological examples and lessons. There is much to intersectionality that lends itself to in-depth, qualitative analysis and cautions against many of the simplifying assumptions underlying large-N, statistical analysis (Hancock 2007a). Our own research is certainly not immune to such criticism, but it does suggest that some designs and statistical tools are more fine-tuned or attuned to nuances of multiple, intersecting, interdependent identities and outcomes than are others. Even more importantly, we hope to demonstrate that these tools of quantitative research may be used to challenge or test the very assumptions upon which they presumably rest—assumptions about average, linear effects that are very similar to those of single-axis, unitary, or additive models of race, ethnicity, and gender. Nonetheless, we also believe and hopefully demonstrate that productive intersectional research begins, well, at the beginning – with questions about received wisdom, underlying assumptions, and dominant theories – and permeates every subsequent stage of the research process.
References


Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) and Political Parity. 2012. Research Inventory: American Women and Politics. August.

http://www.politicalparity.org/research-inventory/ (March 26, 2013).


Hardy-Fanta, Carol, Pei-te Lien, Dianne M. Pinderhughes, and Christine Marie Sierra. 2006. “Gender, Race, and Descriptive Representation in the United States: Findings from the


*Social Science Quarterly* 60: 465-96.


Table 1. State-Level Descriptive Representation (lower chamber only), 2005
Women-and-Politics Model

Tobit (robust standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% All Women (1)</th>
<th>% White Women (2)</th>
<th>% Black Women (3)</th>
<th>% Latina Women (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.381* (.151)</td>
<td>.277* (.113)</td>
<td>-.009 (.046)</td>
<td>.044 (.045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moralistic Political Culture</td>
<td>1.417 (3.563)</td>
<td>1.913 (3.392)</td>
<td>.026 (1.202)</td>
<td>1.215 (9.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalistic Political Culture</td>
<td>-3.711 (3.521)</td>
<td>-6.116^ (3.412)</td>
<td>1.481 (1.170)</td>
<td>.783 (9.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Labor Force that is Professional Women</td>
<td>.180 (.963)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Labor Force that is Prof. White Women</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>.477 (.628)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Labor Force that is Prof. Black Women</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2.023*** (.315)</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Labor Force that is Prof. Latinas</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>4.046*** (.421)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Legislature</td>
<td>-3.686^ (2.159)</td>
<td>-5.016* (2.179)</td>
<td>1.731* (8.18)</td>
<td>-.430 (.754)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens’ Legislature</td>
<td>-.520 (2.349)</td>
<td>.361 (1.952)</td>
<td>.017 (6.92)</td>
<td>-1.157 (.805)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Organizational Strength</td>
<td>-1.185 (.851)</td>
<td>-1.275 (.774)</td>
<td>.327 (.304)</td>
<td>.430 (.270)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimember Districts (any type)</td>
<td>2.312 (2.715)</td>
<td>3.009 (2.199)</td>
<td>-1.286^ (.661)</td>
<td>.631 (.772)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant (Intercept)</td>
<td>29.717^ (16.654)</td>
<td>21.564* (10.182)</td>
<td>-1.305 (1.367)</td>
<td>-3.060* (1.260)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of States</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F(8, 41) = 9.59***</td>
<td>F(8, 41) = 20.44***</td>
<td>F(8, 41) = 14.40***</td>
<td>F(8, 41) = 20.49***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R^2 = 0.0757</td>
<td>Pseudo R^2 = 0.1165</td>
<td>Pseudo R^2 = 0.2470</td>
<td>Pseudo R^2 = 0.3604</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^ p≤.10  * p≤.05  ** p≤.01  *** p≤.001   (two-tailed tests of statistical significance)

Joint significance of moralistic/traditional political culture:
   p(All)=.1323; p(White)=.0037; p(Black)=.1747; p(Latina)=.4402

Joint significance of professional/citizen legislature:
   p(All)=0.2436; p(White)=0.0748; p(Black)=0.0913; p(Latina)=0.3265
Table 2a. State-Level Descriptive Representation (lower chamber only), 2005
Race- & Ethnic Politics Multimember District Conditional Model
Tobit (robust standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Black (All) (1)</th>
<th>% Black Men (2)</th>
<th>% Black Women (3)</th>
<th>% Latino/a (All) (4)</th>
<th>% Latino Men (5)</th>
<th>% Latina Women (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>.773*** (.048)</td>
<td>.577*** (.041)</td>
<td>.245*** (.039)</td>
<td>.071^ (.041)</td>
<td>.027 (.037)</td>
<td>.040 (.035)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Latino Citizens</td>
<td>.077* (.036)</td>
<td>.017 (.049)</td>
<td>.063^ (.033)</td>
<td>1.154*** (.084)</td>
<td>.851*** (.060)</td>
<td>.382*** (.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimember Districts</td>
<td>-.874 (1.026)</td>
<td>-.126 (1.017)</td>
<td>-1.731 (1.216)</td>
<td>.533 (1.403)</td>
<td>.048 (.1372)</td>
<td>-.414 (1.301)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMD * % Black</td>
<td>.102 (.067)</td>
<td>.023 (.086)</td>
<td>.120* (.051)</td>
<td>.005 (.055)</td>
<td>.037 (.053)</td>
<td>.054 (.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMD * % Latino Citizens</td>
<td>-.022 (.067)</td>
<td>-.041 (.164)</td>
<td>.030 (.088)</td>
<td>.035 (.115)</td>
<td>-.055 (.092)</td>
<td>.157** (.058)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant (Intercept)</td>
<td>-.632 (.720)</td>
<td>-1.245* (.611)</td>
<td>-.459 (.712)</td>
<td>-4.610*** (.906)</td>
<td>-3.406*** (.735)</td>
<td>-2.939*** (.768)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of States</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F(5, 44)=</td>
<td>139.61***</td>
<td>56.10***</td>
<td>30.79***</td>
<td>153.78***</td>
<td>139.17***</td>
<td>269.84***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.3436</td>
<td>0.3560</td>
<td>0.2014</td>
<td>0.4083</td>
<td>0.4058</td>
<td>0.3730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># left-censored</td>
<td>8 @0</td>
<td>13 @ 0</td>
<td>15 @ 0</td>
<td>18 @ 0</td>
<td>21 @ 0</td>
<td>32 @ 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^p≤.10   * p≤.05   ** p≤.01   *** p≤.001 (two-tailed tests of statistical significance)
Table 2b. State-Level Descriptive Representation (lower chamber only), 2005

Race-&-Ethnic Politics Term Limits Conditional Model

Tobit (robust standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Black (All) (1)</th>
<th>% Black Men (2)</th>
<th>% Black Women (3)</th>
<th>% Latino/a (All) (4)</th>
<th>% Latino Men (5)</th>
<th>% Latina Women (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>.765*** (.041)</td>
<td>.567*** (.037)</td>
<td>.248*** (.034)</td>
<td>.048 (.032)</td>
<td>.013 (.030)</td>
<td>.046 (.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Latino Citizens</td>
<td>.091* (.038)</td>
<td>.005 (.058)</td>
<td>.088*** (.025)</td>
<td>1.108*** (.109)</td>
<td>.824*** (.076)</td>
<td>.352*** (.028)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Limits</td>
<td>-4.018** (1.340)</td>
<td>-2.872** (.968)</td>
<td>-3.195^ (1.839)</td>
<td>-9.323*** (2.348)</td>
<td>-9.412*** (1.573)</td>
<td>-2.023* (.847)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Limits * % Black</td>
<td>.454*** (.102)</td>
<td>.221* (.087)</td>
<td>.405*** (.111)</td>
<td>.557*** (.142)</td>
<td>.654*** (.092)</td>
<td>-.102* (.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Limits * % Latino Citizens</td>
<td>.023 (.073)</td>
<td>.082 (.066)</td>
<td>-.004 (.083)</td>
<td>.422** (.133)</td>
<td>.324** (.101)</td>
<td>.243*** (.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant (Intercept)</td>
<td>-.704 (.545)</td>
<td>-1.014^ (.557)</td>
<td>-.822 (.562)</td>
<td>-3.897*** (.833)</td>
<td>-2.968*** (.674)</td>
<td>-2.553*** (.696)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of States</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F(5, 44)=</td>
<td>106.91***</td>
<td>68.35***</td>
<td>17.60***</td>
<td>185.55***</td>
<td>111.19***</td>
<td>60.40***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>0.3657</td>
<td>0.3645</td>
<td>0.2335</td>
<td>0.4353</td>
<td>0.4525</td>
<td>0.3858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># left-censored observations</td>
<td>8 @0</td>
<td>13 @ 0</td>
<td>15 @ 0</td>
<td>18 @ 0</td>
<td>21 @ 0</td>
<td>32 @ 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^ p≤.10  * p≤.05  ** p≤.01  *** p≤.001 (two-tailed tests of statistical significance)
Table 3. District/Seat-Level Descriptive Representation in State Houses, 2005
Multinomial Logit (standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White Woman/White Man (1)</th>
<th>African American Man/WM (2)</th>
<th>African American Woman/WM (3)</th>
<th>Latino/WM (4)</th>
<th>Latina/WM (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Conservatism</td>
<td>-.690***</td>
<td>-.756 (.512)</td>
<td>-.904 (.606)</td>
<td>-1.136^</td>
<td>-1.157*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White College Educated</td>
<td>.008 (.008)</td>
<td>-.031 (.027)</td>
<td>-.008 (.032)</td>
<td>-.039 (.026)</td>
<td>-.016 (.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Urban</td>
<td>.003* (.002)</td>
<td>.021*** (.005)</td>
<td>.033*** (.007)</td>
<td>.023* (.010)</td>
<td>.018 (.012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>.001 (.004)</td>
<td>.112*** (.008)</td>
<td>.119*** (.011)</td>
<td>-.003 (.016)</td>
<td>.024 (.019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Latino Citizens</td>
<td>.008 (.007)</td>
<td>.040* (.016)</td>
<td>.045* (.020)</td>
<td>.138*** (.011)</td>
<td>.140*** (.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Member District</td>
<td>.448*** (.095)</td>
<td>.179 (.350)</td>
<td>.128 (.405)</td>
<td>.486 (.363)</td>
<td>1.157** (.444)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/SES</td>
<td>.219* (.109)</td>
<td>.033 (.237)</td>
<td>.080 (.257)</td>
<td>.475^ (.255)</td>
<td>.446 (.321)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/SES of Black</td>
<td>-.021 (.074)</td>
<td>.686^ (.388)</td>
<td>.300 (.655)</td>
<td>-.080 (.377)</td>
<td>-.063 (.483)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/SES of Black</td>
<td>.012 (.073)</td>
<td>-.906* (.404)</td>
<td>-.525 (.654)</td>
<td>.056 (.334)</td>
<td>.110 (.433)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/SES of Latino</td>
<td>-.134^ (.079)</td>
<td>-.383 (.286)</td>
<td>-.433 (.334)</td>
<td>.404 (.452)</td>
<td>-1.414 (.870)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/SES of Latinas</td>
<td>.035 (.079)</td>
<td>-.032 (.233)</td>
<td>.043 (.276)</td>
<td>-.537 (.507)</td>
<td>.159 (.735)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant (Intercept)</td>
<td>-1.877*** (.227)</td>
<td>-7.178*** (.810)</td>
<td>-9.620*** (1.084)</td>
<td>-7.020*** (1.210)</td>
<td>-8.428*** (1.587)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. of seats = 4685
LR chi²(55) = 3074.16***
Pseudo R² = 0.3292

^ p≤.10  * p≤.05  ** p≤.01  *** p≤.001  (two-tailed tests of statistical significance)
Figure 2a. Effects of State Racial/Ethnic Composition on Descriptive Representation – With and Without Multimember Districts
Figure 2b. Effects of Racial/Ethnic Composition on Descriptive Representation – With and Without Term Limits
Figure 2c. Effects of Racial/Ethnic Composition on Cross-Racial/Ethnic Descriptive Representation – With and Without Term Limits
Figure 3a: Effects of District Black Population on Descriptive Representation
Figure 3b: Effects of District Latino Citizen Population on Descriptive Representation
Figure 3c: Effects of District Urbanization on Descriptive Representation
Figure 3e: Effects of District White Women’s Resources/SES on Descriptive Representation