Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation

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According to the minority empowerment thesis, minority representation strengthens representational links, fosters more positive attitudes toward government, and encourages political participation. We examine this theory from a cross-national perspective, making use of surveys that sampled minorities in the United States and New Zealand. Both countries incorporate structures into their electoral systems that make it possible for minority groups to elect representatives of their choice. We find that in both countries descriptive representation matters: it increases knowledge about and contact with representatives in the U.S. and leads to more positive evaluations of governmental responsiveness and increased electoral participation in New Zealand. These findings have broad implications for debates about minority representation.

Both New Zealand and the United States incorporate structures into their electoral systems that make it possible for minority groups to elect representatives of their choice in single-member districts.[1] In the United States, this is achieved by drawing special majority-minority districts that maximize the number of blacks in a congressional district. In New Zealand, seats are set aside exclusively for voters of Maori descent. In both countries, there were dramatic increases in minority representation in national legislatures in the 1990s (on the U.S. case see Endersby and Menifeld 2000, and on the New Zealand case see Karp 2002). However, such provisions have not been without controversy. Although the experiences of minorities in these countries differ, descriptive representation is assumed to be an important aspect of representation in either context.

[1] Other countries such as Belgium, Lebanon, Slovenia, and Zimbabwe also make special provisions for ethnic minority representation (see Lijphart 1986).

THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS, Vol. 66, No. 2, May 2004, Pp. 534–556

Little, however, is known about what effect representation by a minority legislator has on the attitudes and behavior of minority voters. We examine this question from a cross-national perspective, making use of survey data from the 1996 National Black Election Study (NBES) and the 1999 New Zealand Election Study (NZES). Examining this question cross-nationally allows us to make generalizations on the basis of more observations than would otherwise be the case if the analysis were restricted to one country. It also allows us to see if the effect of minority empowerment varies by context.

Electoral Structures and Minority Representation

The question of how minority representation might affect minority political behavior is of particular importance given the controversy over the creation and maintenance of districts designed to enhance the descriptive representation of underrepresented groups. Because the New Zealand case may be unfamiliar to readers, our discussion describes in greater details aspects of Maori representation in New Zealand.

In the United States, the 1982 amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Supreme Court's *Thornburg v. Gingles* decision of 1986 facilitated the creation of U.S. House districts in which a minority population constitutes a majority of the voting-age population (majority-minority districts) so that black and Latino candidates could potentially win elected office. After 1986, U.S. Justice Department policy encouraged implementation of this logic wherever an area contained a large, cohesive minority group (Butler and Cain 1992, 36; Swain 1993, 197). For the 1990 redistricting, this resulted in practices that substantially increased the number of districts where blacks and Latinos comprised a supermajority of district voters. The U.S. Supreme Court added complexity to the issue in 1993 by stating a lack of tolerance for "bizarre"-shaped districts (*Shaw v. Reno*) that might result from race-based districting and struck down plans where "race was the predominant factor motivating the drawing of district lines" (*Miller v. Johnson; Bush v. Vera; Shaw v. Hunt*).[2] Despite the continued controversy over these districts, they have furthered the representation of blacks (and Latinos) in the U.S. Congress. The largest gains in minority representation in the U.S. Congress occurred in the 1990s after state legislatures drew significant numbers of majority-minority district for the 1992 redistricting.

New Zealand, in contrast, has a much longer tradition of using districting to secure minority representation. Since 1867, the country has had a dual constituency system where representatives to the parliament are elected from two sets of single member electorates one for persons of Maori descent and the other for those of European descent.[3] The contemporary names for these ethnically sep-

[2] It is important to stress that *Shaw* and associated cases do not overturn the *Thornburg v. Gingles* criteria that are used to establish majority-minority districts.

[3] In New Zealand, legislative districts are referred to as electorates. Electorates for those of European descent were referred to as European electorates and districts for those of Maori descent are referred to as Maori electorates.

arate electorates are Maori and general electorates. The boundaries of these dual electorates are superimposed on the same geographical space. There are far fewer Maori electorates so the area of these electorates is much larger than that of the general electorates.

Creation of the Maori seats was a result of the Europeans' desire to pacify and assimilate Maori (Sorrenson 1986) and to accelerate the Europeanization of the Maori through their involvement in political affairs and European law (Fleras 1985). Prior to the passage of the Maori Representation Act in 1867, property requirements disqualified most Maori from voting since Maori land was owned communally. Foreshadowing concerns about "packing" in the United States, an additional motive for establishing separate Maori seats was to ensure a European majority in every other seat and limit Maori representation (see Weiner 1998). At the time the seats were created, the Maori population was around 50,000, compared to a European population of 250,000 (Sorrenson 1986, B-21). The creation of four separate seats reserved for Maori in 1867, instead of the nearly 20 they deserved, preempted the formation of a hostile Maori power bloc but also helped to maintain their underrepresentation.[4] This underrepresentation became even more pronounced as the number of European electorates continued to increase with population (from 72 in 1867 to 95 in 1993), while the number of Maori electorates remained fixed for 129 years. Thus, while giving the illusion of democratic power sharing, Maori were gerrymandered to the point where they became a permanently outvoted minority in a political system designed to suit majority interests (Fleras 1985).

Electoral reform in the 1990s succeeded in furthering Maori representation in two important ways. The Electoral Act of 1993 allowed the number of Maori electorates, which had remained fixed at four, to vary on the basis of enrollment. The act provides for the number of Maori seats to rise or fall depending on the number of Maori who choose to register on the Maori roll. After each five-year census, the drawing of the new electoral boundaries begins with a four-month Maori Electoral Option during which time those who indicate on their enrollment forms that they are of Maori descent are sent letters asking them to choose between registering on the Maori or the general electoral roll. Thus, one major difference between the Maori electorates and the majority-minority districts in the United States is that Maori can choose whether they want separate representation. It is estimated that if all Maori were enrolled on the Maori roll, there would be about 13 Maori electorates (Electoral Commission 2000).[5] Since 1993, the percentage of Maori choosing to take the Maori roll option has increased steadily, resulting

[4] The system of separate electorates also created double standards. For example, the general electorate received the right to a secret ballot in 1870 but it was not extended to Maori until 1937; registration was made compulsory in 1929 for the general electorate but it did not apply to the Maori electorates until 1956 (Fleras 1985).

[5] Registration in New Zealand is compulsory. While it is difficult to obtain precise figures on the proportion of the electorate that is registered, due to the fact that census data are not broken down by voting age population, it is estimated that over 90% of Maori are registered on either roll.

in the creation of an additional Maori seat in each of the three subsequent elections.[6] As of 2002, almost 170,000 Maori are represented in the seven electorates (about 25,000 Maori per electorate). A U.S. Representative, in comparison, represents about 25 times more constituents.

Another significant contribution to the representation of Maori in the 1990s was the introduction of proportional representation. In 1996, New Zealand held its first election under a new German-style electoral system, referred to as mixed-member proportional (MMP), that maintains constituency representation while ensuring proportional outcomes. About half of the seats in parliament are filled by constituency MPs while the other half are filled by MPs who are on the party list.[7] The commission that recommended the adoption of MMP also recommended abolishing the Maori electorates, as proportional representation for minority groups was assured via MMP (Royal Commission 1986). However, the suggestion met with Maori resistance. Subsequently, Parliament disregarded this recommendation and concluded that Maori should decide when to abolish the Maori seats (see Weiner 1998). Since the party list determines the overall allocation of seats in parliament, parties have an incentive to appeal to Maori voters despite the segregation of their constituency votes. Such a system enables the minority to have a guaranteed level of descriptive representation without risking loss of substantive influence (Nagel 1995). The adoption of a proportional party list electoral system together with the dual electorates has succeeded in increasing Maori representation dramatically. Following the first MMP election in 1996 the proportion of Maori in Parliament doubled from 6 to 12% (Banducci and Karp 1998).[8] In the 1999 election, Maori were able to maintain but not improve on their representation, electing a total of 14 Maori MPs, with equal numbers elected from the party list and electorate seats (see Karp 2002).

[6] In the second Maori Electoral Option round held in 1994, enrollment increased from 41% to 52%, resulting in a fifth Maori seat. In comparison, in the previous Maori option held in 1991, there was less than a 1% increase among those choosing to register on the Maori roll (personal correspondence with Murray Wicks, Electoral Commission Officer, July 3, 2002). In 1997, Maori enrollment increased to 54% resulting in a sixth seat, effective in the 1999 election (Electoral Commission 1997, 128). In 2001, a seventh seat was created following an increase of 4%.

[7] The new MMP system in New Zealand is similar to Germany's electoral system. Voters cast one vote for their local MP and another for a party. Parties receiving more than 5% of the vote are represented in parliament in proportion to their vote. MMP increased the size of parliament increased from 99 to 120. Of the 120 MPs who were elected in the first MMP election in 1996, 65 seats were held by MPs elected in single-member constituencies by first-past-the-post (plurality). Five of these seats were reserved for Maori. The remaining 55 seats were held by MPs on party lists.

[8] In 1996, about 40% of Maori entering parliament came through the electorates though all of these (with the exception of Winston Peters) were elected from the Maori roll. As for the party list, the overall number of Maori was evenly distributed across the five major parties, though some parties placed Maori more prominently than others, with Labour having the highest proportion of Maori elected from their list (Banducci and Karp 1998, 141).

Theories of Descriptive Representation and Minority Empowerment

A number of normative theorists have been skeptical of the merits of descriptive representation relative to other models of representation (e.g., Birch 1971; Pitkin 1972; see also Grofman 1982, 97–99). One concern is that there is a trade-off between descriptive representation (in the form of a larger number of minority members in legislatures) and substantive representation (in the form of roll-call votes that advance minority interests). For example, higher concentrations of blacks in majority-minority districts could strengthen Republican prospects in neighboring districts and thus produce a Congress with more minorities but fewer total members that support policies that many minority representatives promote. There are many studies that demonstrate some elements of a tradeoff between substantive representation of minority interests and descriptive representation (Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Lublin 1997; Overby and Cosgrove 1996; Swain 1993; Thernstrom 1987; Whitby 1997, 132–33), although there may be some reasons to think that the immediate effects of any tradeoff might be limited or overstated (Bullock 1995, 155; Grofman and Handley 1998, 61–62; and Whitby 1997, 132).

However, where controversy and empirical work have emanated from questions about what descriptive representation might deliver in terms of substantive policies for minorities, uncertainty surrounds questions about how an increase in representation might affect other aspects of the political system, namely trust, efficacy, and participation. While past research suggests that descriptive representation might not maximize the substantive interests of minority groups at the level of roll-call votes, increased minority representation might produce other effects that should be considered in any assessment of the potential tradeoffs between substantive and descriptive representation. Among these effects are what Mansbridge (1999, 642) identifies as the "communicative advantages" of descriptive representation. Without a descriptive representative, some constituents may face barriers communicating and identifying with their representative. In contrast, the presence of a representative of the same race, ethnicity or gender can break down such barriers. Mansbridge (1999) cites as an example Fenno's portrait of a black member's interactions with his constituents: "every expression he gives or gives off conveys the idea 'I am one of you' " (1978, 115; see also Swain 1993, 219). Cain notes that the effects of majority-minority districting "must be weighted against the losses in system legitimacy and stability when minority voices are not well represented" (1992, 273).

Along these lines, empowerment theory also suggests that descriptive representation has positive effects on minority citizens. Visible political leadership by members of a minority group should enhance trust in government, efficacy, group pride, and participation (see Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1991). Bobo and Gilliam (1990) suggest that minority citizens can become "empowered" after they have achieved significant descriptive representation and influence in politi-

cal decision making. Bobo and Gilliam reasoned that empowerment via descriptive representation should influence participation because the presence of minority representatives creates macro-level cues that affect how people perceive the costs and benefits of voting (1990, 379). These contextual cues signal *likely* policy responsiveness "that encourages minorities to feel that participation has intrinsic value" (1990, 387). In other words, the presence of minority elected officials sends a contextual cue to minority citizens that the benefits of voting outweigh the costs of not voting.

Bobo and Gilliam (1990) offer empirical evidence supporting their theory that minority empowerment is associated with greater participation. Conceptually and empirically they focused on the effects of blacks holding the mayor's office of large U.S. cities. Using a rare survey that oversampled blacks, they found that black citizens in cities having black local-elected officials were more likely to participate. Similar results have also been found by others. Howell and Fagan (1988) show that black citizens in New Orleans are much more trusting than African Americans in a national sample, and they attribute this difference to the presence of a black mayor. These attitudinal differences also extend to approval of minority representatives. Howell concludes that "black voters, because of their racial identification, are more likely to approve of the mayor regardless of their evaluations of general and specific city conditions" (2000, 69). Using aggregate data at the municipal level, black candidates appear to generate greater levels of political interest (Vanderleeuw and Utter 1993) and consequently higher turnout (Gilliam and Kaufman 1998) among African-Americans. However, the presence of black incumbents, as opposed to black candidates, is associated with lower turnout (Lublin and Tate 1995, 253).

Very few studies have extended Bobo and Gilliam's thesis and findings to the national context. Brace et al. (1995) tested the empowerment thesis by examining if minority-dominated congressional districts were associated with increased turnout. Their study was limited to two time periods (1988 and 1992) and utilized aggregate-level (precinct) data from Florida. Results were mixed, with evidence that turnout increased more over time in 46 predominantly black precincts that had moved from majority-white to majority-black congressional districts than it increased in 13 predominantly white precincts. However, they largely dismiss this effect, noting that it disappeared when controls for the presence of black candidates were introduced. The researchers did establish that a majority Hispanic congressional district was associated with a 10–12% increase in turnout, other things being equal (Brace et al. 1995, 199). These aggregate results, while suggestive, tell us little about how we might generalize beyond Florida,[9] nor do they establish *which* citizens might be affected by the presence of a majority-

[9] Florida is a difficult case from which to generalize, as it has some of the least competitive legislative districts in the world. In the 1992 general election, two newly created majority-minority (Hispanic) seats were uncontested. By the 1998 general election, 18 of 23 congressional districts were uncontested.

minority district. In a more recent study, Gay (2001) uses an ecological inference model to estimate black and white turnout rates for congressional districts with and without black representatives. She finds little evidence to suggest that the election of African Americans to Congress increases turnout among black citizens.

In general, the shortage of research on the consequences of minority representation is unsettling since there is a rival hypothesis to the minority empowerment thesis that suggests that methods to enhance minority representation through districting might actually depress turnout. For example in the United States, some observers suggest that because "safe" majority-minority districts would ensure minority representation, they might be associated with depressed turnout in the long run (Amy 1993; Guinier 1994). From this perspective, descriptive representation via majority-minority districts could thus lead to a downward spiral of minority engagement and participation.

Minority Experience in New Zealand and the United States

Although the focus of this paper is on electoral institutions that enhance the representation of previously underrepresented groups, the experiences of the under represented groups we study vary in important ways. Each group, Maori and African-Americans, is considered a "protected class"; however, Maori, as tangata whenua [original people of the land], are the victims of settler colonization while black Americans were brought to the United States as slaves and then suffered from segregation. Additionally, while black Americans suffered the ill effects of segregation, European settlers thought that, through intermarriage and cultural assimilation, Maori would become fully integrated with the settler population. Maori lay claim to entitlements established under the Treaty of Waitangi, the document establishing British sovereignty over New Zealand signed in 1840.[10] Maori also have their own language that is recognized as one of the two official languages of New Zealand. While some Maori may not consider themselves as an ethnic minority, their subordination by colonial powers, subsequent special status, and proportion within the population has led to the institutionalization of the cultural differences and hence recognition as an ethnic minority (Linnekin and Poyer 1990, 12).

Maori and black Americans do share a common experience as a disadvantaged group in society where the dominant cultural group is of West European descent. Social and economic disparities between Maori and New Zealand Europeans are comparable to those between black and white Americans. In terms of demographics and socioeconomic status, the position of Maori in New Zealand is

[10] In signing the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Maori exchanged their governance rights (according to the British Crown they exchanged their sovereignty) for the guarantees of the treaty (Orange 1987). The Treaty effectively established New Zealand as a British colony. The treaty is regarded by Maori as an affirmation of rights and a "sacred pact" with the ancestors of New Zealand.

remarkably similar to that of African Americans in the United States. Maori comprise 14.5% of the population compared to 12.6% African American (Statistics New Zealand 1996; United States Bureau of the Census 1996). Like African Americans, Maori have lower income and education levels; have higher rates of unemployment, teenage pregnancy, and single-parent families; and are incarcerated at a rate that is disproportionate to their size of the population (see Sullivan 1997, 364). In short, Maori are regarded as suffering the typical consequences of social disruption due to colonialism (Ritchie 1990).

Maori also share with African Americans continuous support for a party to the left of center. As with African American's support for the Democratic party, Maori support for the left-of-center party in New Zealand originated during the depression of the 1930s. The Labour Party was supportive of welfare reforms that equalized unemployment benefits between Maori and non-Maori and provided other benefits such as disability and old-age pension that were pushed by the Ratana movement, a religious and political movement that secured the Maori vote for the Labour party (see Sullivan and Vowles 1998). The alliance forged under the Labour government of the 1930s endured, and all Maori seats were held by the Labour party between 1943 and 1993. After growing disillusionment with Labour (Dalziel and Fox 1996), Maori turned to the populist New Zealand First party, headed by a Maori and former National party minister Winston Peters, in the 1993 election. However, after a number of scandals New Zealand First Maori MPs lost the respect of Maori voters, and Maori voters returned in large numbers to the Labour party in the 1999 election (see Sullivan and Margaritis 2002).

While Bobo and Gilliam (1990) specifically test minority empowerment in the case of black mayors in U.S. cities, there are reasons to expect that these arguments would apply in other cases where structures are in place to encourage representation among previously underrepresented groups (i.e., U.S. House districts and Maori electorates). Despite different experiences, the political and social and economic contexts of the indigenous population in New Zealand lead us to expect similar effects of descriptive representation on underrepresented groups in New Zealand and the United States. The historical roots of injustice may vary between the two countries, but there are important similarities between the two cases that make them useful cases for comparison. Group consciousness, socioeconomic inequalities and single party support since the depression are points of comparison between the two groups.

Expectations about the Effects of Minority Representation

Based on the minority empowerment thesis, we would expect that minorities represented by minorities are more likely to feel trustful toward government, experience higher level of efficaciousness and exhibit higher levels of participation than minorities with nonminority representatives. In the United States, blacks living in minority-majority districts then should score higher on these indicators than blacks outside these districts. If the empowerment thesis applies to the New

Zealand case, improvements in descriptive representation via the party list may be associated with a stronger level of attachment to the political system among all Maori, regardless of whether they choose to register on the Maori roll. However, if empowerment operates primarily through constituency representation, then Maori choosing to be on the Maori roll should feel a greater sense of efficacy, and, possibly, a greater likelihood of participation than those Maori in general electorates. Given that the Maori electorates overlap with the general electorates, Maori who choose not to be on the Maori roll nevertheless reside in an area represented by a Maori electorate MP. However, they may be less likely to consider the Maori electorate MP as their own representative. In contrast, Maori on the roll will have voted in the contest to choose their own representative, and, despite the advent of the party list vote in New Zealand, voters still maintain close ties to electorate MPs and the personal vote is important (Vowles et al. 1998).

The rival hypothesis to minority empowerment is that descriptive representation may lead to unintended and negative consequences. By being concentrated in districts that will automatically elect Maori representatives, Maori might actually have less incentive to participate in electing their constituency representatives since Maori will be elected regardless of individual vote decisions. For similar reasons, blacks may have less incentive to participate in minority-majority districts. However, while the likelihood of electing a minority representative is increased, it is not guaranteed in these electorates as it is in the Maori electorates. Because the number of Maori seats is predetermined far more by enrollment than election-day decisions, the incentives to vote might be further dampened.[11]

Additionally, the positive effects of empowerment might be reduced given the fact that Maori have long had guaranteed representation through the Maori electorates. There is another reason to expect that minority empowerment might be more evident in the U.S. case than in New Zealand. In New Zealand, minority empowerment is achieved through registering on the Maori roll. In some ways, Maori not on this roll may be achieving the benefits of the Maori electorates, (descriptive representation), without paying the costs (e.g., less competitive districts).

Testing Hypotheses about Minority Empowerment

Bobo and Gilliam (1990) measure the effect of descriptive representation on a large set of factors that measure political activity, attitudes toward government and elected officials, political knowledge, and engagement in politics. We use similar indicators but divide them into two categories: district-based evaluations and activity (such as knowledge and approval of the representative and contact-

[11]There may of course be other incentives to participate. Maori may be motivated to get a member of their own tribe or family or church into parliament.

ing the representative) and system-based evaluations and activity (such as political efficacy and voting). In the first case, the object of the evaluation or activity is the representative. The empowerment thesis posits that there will be a benefit to the constituent from racial or ethnic identity with his or her representative. Therefore, we expect that evaluations of the representative will be positively influenced by this identity. We also expect that identity with the representative will positively influence system-based activity and evaluations.

Data and Methods

Tests of the effect of minority empowerment on attitudes and turnout and models of minority participation have been constrained by data availability. Standard random-sample surveys such as the American National Election Study (ANES) are not useful for examining the effects of variation in minority legislative representation because there are few minority respondents, and even fewer who have minority representatives. We follow the approach of Bobo and Gilliam (1990) and Tate (1991), who used rare surveys that either oversampled the black population or were limited to blacks by relying on surveys that sampled blacks in the United States and Maori in New Zealand. The 1996 National Black Election Study (NBES) is based on telephone interviews of 1,216 voting eligible blacks completed before the 1996 Presidential election and 854 who were reinterviewed after the election.[12] The survey was designed to explore the electoral attitudes and behavior of blacks and has an explicit congressional focus (see Tate 1996, 2001). Respondents were matched to their congressional districts and asked to evaluate their House representatives. A total of 252 House districts are represented in the sample, including the districts of 34 of the 39 black members of Congress. In all, 31% of the black respondents were represented by these black legislators.

In New Zealand, a Maori survey was designed in conjunction with the New Zealand Election Study (NZES) to measure Maori political attitudes and behavior following the 1999 General Election. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 1000 persons of Maori descent in December 1999 and January 2000 using a national multistage stratified probability sample with clustering.[13] Maori respondents of voting age were selected regardless of enrollment status; thus, we can make comparisons between Maori enrolled on either the Maori or general rolls. The timing of both surveys takes full advantage of the increases in minor-

[12] The response rate for the preelection wave was 65%.

[13] A.C. Neilson (NZ) Ltd conducted the interviews on behalf of the NZES. Maori households were sampled from units that contained at least 5% Maori and respondents chosen randomly within the household. The sample is weighted by age and gender to reflect the Maori population. Personal interviews were chosen because of the high rate of residential mobility among Maori, especially younger Maori, plus factors such as lower access to telephones, a tendency to live in larger households than the general population, and the culturally more acceptable practice of kanohi ki kanohi (face-to-face). The response rate was 54%.

ity representation that occurred in both countries in the 1990s. Together these data sets provide a unique opportunity to examine the impact of descriptive representation. Rarely do researchers have the opportunity to examine minority attitudes using a large sample in one country; two large samples of minority populations provide an uncommon opportunity to make comparisons both within and across countries.

Our measures of district-based evaluations and activity are ability to recall the name of the representative, job approval of the representative, and contacting the representative. Two other indicators from the NBES ask respondents to recall anything special that the representative has done for the district and whether the representative is doing a good job keeping touch. Governmental responsiveness, trust in government, and interest served by government are used as indicators of system-based evaluations. Reported vote is used to indicate political participation. There is great similarity across the two studies in terms of the questions. Questions are detailed in Table 1 and full question wording is given in an appendix available from the authors.[14]

Bivariate Results

Table 1 is a first look at the potential effect of minority empowerment (via representation in the national legislature) on these indicators. These bivariate data reveal similar levels of awareness and contact with legislators among minorities in both the United States and New Zealand despite considerable differences in the number of persons represented in each district. Between 20 and 30% know the name of their representative and between 15 and 20% report having some contact with their representative or MP. In the United States, blacks are more likely to know the name of their representative when he or she is also black. Blacks are also more likely to report having contact with a black representative than with a representative who is not black. A similar relationship is evident in New Zealand but the differences are only slight. Overall, about 15% report having contact with their MP at some time over the past 12 months. Although not reported in the table, only a very small percentage of the Maori on the general roll (who are represented by a non-Maori MP) reported having contact with the Maori electorate MP from their area. This provides support for our expectation that Maori who choose not to take the Maori option are more likely to consider their general electorate MP, and not the Maori electorate MP, as their representative.

Larger differences are evident in evaluations of representatives and MPs. In the United States, 65% of blacks approve of their black representatives while only 44% approve of representatives who are not black.[15] Blacks are also more likely

[14] See http://www.banducci.com/articles/jop2004/.

[15] These are based on post election responses. In the preelection wave, there is a larger gap which is due to a lower approval of non minority representatives among blacks (36%). In comparison those represented by African American representatives were just as likely to approve of their performance in the preelection wave.

TABLE 1

Effects of Minority Empowerment

	United States				New Zealand			
	Nonminority Representative	Minority Representative	Difference	n	Nonminority Representative	Minority Representative	Difference	n
Correctly recall name of representative	9.7	22.3	12.6**	1199	24.5	26.1	1.6	971
Contact representative	8.3	13.6	5.3**	1199	13.0	15.9	2.9	970
Recall anything special representative has done for district+	16.2	32.0	15.8**	662	na	na		
Representative job (very good) keeping in touch+	17.6	34.0	16.4**	663	na	na		
Approval of representative's performance	44.0	65.1	21.1**	838	31.4	21.9	−9.5**	907
People like me have no say (% in agreement)	44.1	39.2	−4.9	838	63.0	55.8	−7.2[a]	958
You can trust government most of the time	29.4	28.2	−1.2	837	34.4	34.3	−.1	971
Government is run by big interests	66.5	70.4	3.9	836	64.6	65.4	.8	970
Reported voting	73.6	79.3	5.7[a]	836	70.9	76.8	5.9*	970
N	776	440		1216	461	509		970

Source: National Black Election Study, 1996; New Zealand Maori Election Study, 1999.

Note: First two questions in the Black Election Study were administered in the pre-election wave; all others were administered in the post-election. Reduced sample size is due to attrition.

+ Asked only of those who recognize representative's name.

**$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

[a] $p = .06$.

to believe the representative is in touch and more likely to believe the representative has done something special for the district when that representative is black. In New Zealand, Maori are more critical of their Maori MPs. Overall, just 22% approved of their Maori MPs while approval for non-Maori MPs was 31%. The low levels of approval for the Maori electorate MPs reflect in part their association with the New Zealand First party, whose electoral support dropped from 13% in 1996 to less than 5% in 1999.[16] The party, which positioned itself in 1996 as a centrist party, held the balance of power after the 1996 election and subsequently entered into a coalition with National whose policies were not compatible with traditional Maori issue positions (Sullivan 1997; Sullivan and Vowles 1998). Halfway through the parliamentary term, the coalition government collapsed, and all of the Maori electorate MPs defected from their party to support a National minority government.

While these results so far suggest that evaluations of minority representatives differ across countries, feelings of responsiveness and participation are more consistent. In New Zealand, Maori appear to have greater feelings of powerlessness than blacks. However, in both countries, slightly fewer believe they have no say when they have a minority representative. On the measures that tap more diffuse attitudes toward government, we find striking similarities across countries. About two-thirds of blacks and Maori believe that their country is run by big interests and just a third believe that government can be trusted most of the time. There are, however, few differences within countries indicating that descriptive representation does not matter with respect to these attitudes. These results are consistent with Bobo and Gilliam (1990, 383) who find that "local" empowerment did not change trust in the federal government or improve blacks' views of the motivations of politicians in general. However, the results in Table 1 do suggest that empowerment mobilizes voters. Although participation rates vary across countries, both blacks and Maori appear to be more likely to vote when they are represented by a minority.

The Effects of Minority Empowerment: Multivariate Models

In Tables 2 and 3 we model the effect of minority empowerment on recall, contact, approval, efficacy, and voting when controlling for other factors. Keeping in touch and doing something special have been dropped from the multivariate analysis due to their absence from the New Zealand data set. Because there were no significant differences in the bivariate analysis, we do not include trust in government and government run by big interests.[17] In addition to the term reflecting

[16] Although New Zealand First failed to cross the 5% threshold it still managed to retain parliamentary representation because its leader, Winston Peters, managed to retain his electorate seat by a slim margin of 67 votes.

[17] Because a significant relationship could be suppressed by another factor, we estimated a model with trust and big interests as dependent variables. However, the multivariate analysis did not produce any significant differences between those with and those without a minority representative.

TABLE 2

Impact of Empowerment: United States

Logit Coefficients Variables	Recall Name of Representative		Contact Representative		Approve of Representative's Performance		People Like Me Have a Say		Reported Voting	
Minority Representative	1.03**	(.23)	.49*	(.25)	.62**	(.16)	−.02	(.15)	.03	(.22)
Education	3.02**	(.50)	1.93**	(.54)	.41	(.37)	.07	(.36)	3.27**	(.60)
Identify w/same party as Rep	.69**	(.20)	.38	(.22)	.86**	(.14)	−.06	(.14)	.47*	(.19)
Female	−.67**	(.19)	−.17	(.21)	−.29*	(.14)	−.13	(.14)	.35	(.18)
Age (in 10s)	.19**	(.06)	.17*	(.07)	.11*	(.04)	−.08	(.04)	.38**	(.07)
Income	.65	(.44)	1.79**	(.49)	.44	(.31)	.47	(.30)	.34	(.43)
Economy	1.20**	(.38)	.53	(.42)	−.18	(.26)	.96**	(.26)	.64	(.35)
Attend religious service	−.03	(.43)	.57	(.48)	1.00**	(.30)	1.23**	(.29)	.47	(.40)
Urban residence	−.51*	(.24)	−.39	(.26)	−.15	(.16)	.24	(.16)	.23	(.22)
South	−.53	(.28)	−.44	(.31)	−.08	(.17)	.26	(.17)	.40	(.24)
Constant 1	−5.37**	(.54)	−5.50**	(.60)	−.65	(.35)	−.16	(.34)	−3.25**	(.50)
Constant 2					.02	(.35)	1.06**	(.34)		
Constant 3					1.60**	(.35)	1.16**	(.34)		
Constant 4					2.46**	(.35)	2.30**	(.35)		
Pseudo R^2	.22		.12		.12		.06		.19	
N	1208		1208		832		832		854	

**$p < .01$; *$p < .05$ (two-tailed test).
Standard errors are in parentheses.
Source: Black Election Study, 1996.

TABLE 3

Impact of Empowerment: New Zealand

Logit Coefficients Variables	Recall Name of Representative		Contact Representative		Approve of Representative's Performance		People Like Me Have a Say		Reported Voting	
Minority Representative	.17	(.17)	.24	(.20)	−.56**	(.14)	.28*	(.13)	.44*	(.17)
Education	2.05**	(.44)	2.75**	(.53)	.30	(.36)	1.47*	(.34)	2.37**	(.48)
Identify w/same party as Rep	.10	(.21)	−.08	(.27)	−.17	(.17)	.01	(.16)	.05	(.21)
Female	−.22	(.16)	.17	(.19)	−.14	(.13)	−.26*	(.12)	.26	(.16)
Age (in 10s)	.37**	(.06)	.21**	(.07)	.01	(.05)	−.06	(.04)	.55**	(.07)
Income	2.03**	(.39)	.66	(.46)	−.45	(.34)	.29	(.31)	.84	(.44)
Economy	−.29	(.42)	−.25	(.50)	.43	(.35)	1.53**	(.33)	.50	(.43)
Attend religious service	−.22	(.18)	−.11	(.21)	−.39*	(.15)	.08	(.13)	−.23	(.18)
Tribal residence	.70**	(.17)	.48*	(.20)	.12	(.14)	.12	(.13)	.17	(.18)
Constant 1	−4.47**	(.49)	−4.76	(.57)	−2.78**	(.40)	−.21	(.35)	−3.14**	(.51)
Constant 2					−1.69**	(.39)	2.10**	(.36)		
Constant 3					.95*	(.39)	2.77**	(.36)		
Constant 4					2.81**	(.41)	5.75**	(.43)		
Pseudo R^2	.18		.09		.04		.07		.17	
N	966		966		904		967		966	

**$p < .01$; *$p < .05$ (two-tailed test).

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source: New Zealand Maori Election Study, 1999.

the race or ethnicity of the representative (***minority rep***), another measure of representation is included that controls for whether a citizen is represented by a party with which they identify (***Identify w/ party of rep.***). We assume that individuals who are represented by someone of the same party will have more positive views about politics and governmental responsiveness. Our models also control for the effects of factors expected to influence attitudes about government, including level of education, gender, age, income, evaluations of the economy, and place of residence. These are labeled, respectively, ***Education***, ***Female***, ***Age***, ***Income***, ***Economy***, and ***Urban residence*** or ***Tribal residence*** (full coding is available from the authors). We have also included an indicator of religiosity in the model (***Attend religious service***).[18] Church attendance has been found to be an important mobilizing factor for black Americans (Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh 2001). We might also expect that church attendance among Maori acts as a source of psychological and social attachment to the community and fosters greater turnout. We also include a dummy variable for Southerners (in the U.S. model). To ease the interpretation of the coefficients and assess their relative impact, all independent variables have been rescaled from 0 to 1. All dependent variables are constructed such that higher values indicate more positive evaluations or attitudes. Since the dependent variables are either dichotomous or ordered responses to survey questions, models are estimated with logit.

Results

Table 2 reports the results for the United States. The effect of minority representative is more prominent for the district-based evaluations and activity than for the system-based evaluations and activity. The effects of minority empowerment are significant and in the expected direction on recall, contact, and approval. Even when controlling for party identification, blacks are more likely to recall the name of their representative, more likely to contact the representative, and approve of his or her performance. As the probabilities displayed in Table 4 show, the likelihood of recalling the name of a minority representative is more than twice as high (.21) as recalling the name of a representative who is not black (.09). While the likelihood of contacting a representative who is black remains relatively low, it is nonetheless slightly higher than for a representative who is not black. Moreover, blacks are far more likely to approve of their representative when he or she is also black (.61) than when he or she is not (.46). However, with regard to efficacy and political participation, minority representation appears to have no significant impact.

When comparing the effect of minority representation to same party representation, we see that policy congruence matters in name recall and approval

[18] In New Zealand, 71% reported not attending Church at all compared to just 5% in the United States. Therefore, in New Zealand whether or not a respondent reported attending Church is used while the frequency of attendance is taken into account in the United States.

TABLE 4

Estimated Probabilities

	United States		New Zealand	
	Nonminority Representative	Minority Representative	Nonminority Representative	Minority Representative
Correctly recall name of representative	.09	.21	.21	.24
Contact representative	.08	.12	.12	.14
Approval of representative's performance	.46	.61	.31	.21
People like me have no say (likelihood of disagreement)	.55	.55	.06	.08
Reported voting	.76	.76	.73	.81

Note: Estimates are derived from Tables 2 and 3 holding all other variables constant at their means.

of the representative. However, unlike minority representation, identifying with the same party as the representative did not influence contact with the representative. Also, the size of the coefficient for ***Identify w/ party of rep*** indicates that it has less of an impact on recall and contact than ***minority rep***. As for approval, both measures have a similar influence. Religious attendance, on the other hand, influences approval and responsiveness, but does not have much influence on voting.[19]

The results for New Zealand are presented in Table 3. Unlike the United States, the effect of minority representation is more prominent on the system-based evaluations and activity than district-based evaluations. The ethnicity of the MP does not appear to matter for recall or contact but it does have an influence on responsiveness. Maori who choose to be represented by Maori electorate MPs are more likely to believe that they have a say than those represented by electorate MPs who are not Maori. Although the likelihood of feeling efficacious is small for Maori regardless of enrollment status (see Table 4), the likelihood of having the *lowest level of efficacy* is higher for Maori on the general roll (.45) than those on the Maori roll (.38).[20] This suggests that the Maori electorates succeed in fostering a greater sense of efficacy among those Maori who choose to take advantage of the Maori option. Maori, however, are more critical of their Maori MPs than those on the general roll. Nevertheless, minority empowerment appears to lead

[19] While these results are inconsistent with Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh (2001), they are consistent with Calhoun-Brown (1996) who uses the NBES and finds that church attendance does not make a difference for black political participation, though membership in a political church does.

[20] Because the variable has five categories, the probability of falling into any one category differs. The largest differences occur across the categories of agreement, rather than disagreement, which probably reflects the way in which the question was asked.

to greater participation. Those on the Maori roll have a probability of voting of .81 as compared to .73 for those who are on the general roll.

In neither the United States or the New Zealand case is economic performance a significant predictor of representative approval though more positive assessments enhances the degree to which both blacks and Maori believe they have a say in what government does. While education has the largest impact on voting in both countries, with nearly identical effects, the impact of ethnicity on turnout is greater in New Zealand than the effect of race in the United States. Unlike the United States, partisan effects are not significant in any of the models indicating that those who identified with the same party as their representative were no more or less affected than those identifying with other parties regardless of minority representation. This suggests that the partisanship of the representative or MP is more likely to make a difference for minority citizens in the United States than in New Zealand.[21]

While not a factor in the United States, self-selection may explain some of the differences observed in New Zealand. Persons choosing to register on the Maori roll may be motivated by several factors that distinguish them from their counterparts on the general roll. One incentive for choosing to remain on the Maori roll is to further the representation of Maori since the number of Maori seats are determined by enrollment. Maori activists who opt for the Maori roll to further their representation may be highly educated and engaged in the political process. Others, however, may choose the Maori option if they are disenchanted or alienated from the political system. For them, the Maori option may serve as a means of registering protest. An analysis of the data suggests that none of these factors influences the decision to take the Maori option. Those opting to register on the Maori roll did not significantly differ on any sociodemographic characteristics with one exception. Those with lower incomes were more likely to be on the Maori roll. Greater political interest is also evident among Maori who are on the Maori roll.[22] To determine whether this influenced the results in Table 3, we estimated another model controlling for political interest. While the coefficient for ***minority rep*** was slightly reduced, the results remained statistically significant. Overall these findings point to the conclusion that the results observed in Table 2 are not likely to be the result of self-selection.

Conclusions

Many of these results are consistent with expectations derived from the minority empowerment thesis. In the United States, the race of the representative influ-

[21] African Americans appear to have much stronger levels of partisanship than Maori; specifically almost half (47.5%) of African Americans strongly identify with a party as compared to just 22% for Maori. The lower levels of partisanship among Maori almost certainly reflect disillusionment with the Labour party in the 1980s and early 1990s and New Zealand First in the late 1990s.

[22] While this may be due to self-selection, we cannot rule out the possibility that being on the Maori roll enhances political interest, which would still be consistent with the minority empowerment thesis.

ences recall, contact, and approval. In New Zealand, Maori who are represented by Maori electorate MPs are more likely to believe they have a say in government but are also more critical of their MPs. In New Zealand, Maori are also more likely to vote when their representative is also of Maori descent. While descriptive representation matters in different ways, the evidence from both countries leads one to conclude that the effects of descriptive representation are generally positive.

These results complicate a discussion of the potential tradeoff between descriptive and substantive representation. They illustrate that enhanced descriptive representation of minorities might produce normative gains that are removed from issues of whether such practices as minority-majority districts accomplish or harm the substantive representation of minorities. Our findings illustrate some of the legitimacy *gains* associated with minority voices being represented in the U.S. Congress and the N.Z. House of Representatives. If we desire electoral practices that strengthen representational links and encourage participation, then the use of special districts that enhance descriptive representation appear to yield some modest but valuable returns. We suspect that many electoral practices could produce similar effects if they empower minorities by enhancing their prospects for representation (e.g., PR, cumulative voting, limited voting, etc.). But we must also consider that the nature of single-member districts might enhance the link between representative and constituent (see Farrell 2001) and that minority empowerment is more likely to be achieved under electoral systems that maximize this link.

The relationship between minority representation and voter turnout further complicates the issue of a tradeoff. We have shown that minority representation increases the likelihood that minority citizens will vote *in those places where minorities hold office* (see the bivariate results in the United States and the multivariate results in New Zealand). However, it is difficult to conjecture about the aggregate effect that minority empowerment has on turnout.[23] For example, in the United States, aggregate turnout in districts with black representation might be lower because of a reduced likelihood that whites will vote (see Gay 2001). This negative effect suggests that, although minority populations may be more likely to vote, there is no guarantee that overall turnout will increase when districts are drawn to facilitate the election of minority representatives. It is possible in the United States, however, that turnout effects could operate on elections for governor, senator, and president. A number of statewide contests in states with majority-minority black districts were decided by margins of less than 1% in the 1990s.[24] Small changes in turnout generated from within one or two minority-

[23] Establishing such aggregate-level effects are beyond the scope of this paper.

[24] Examples include the 1996 LA senate race, won by 5,788 votes; the 1994 AL and SC and 1999 MS governor races, and the 1996 GA senate race. In the 1990s, four Democratic senators from states with majority-minority districts were elected with margins of less than 3% (Landrieu LA, Cleland GA, Hollings SC, and Feinstein CA).

represented districts could swing extremely close statewide races toward Democratic candidates, and thus possibly enhance the substantive representation of black interests. In New Zealand's mixed system, increases in turnout that are linked to minority representatives in the single-member district may also spill over to the party vote. Because we cannot be certain of the impact that increased minority turnout has on the policy positions of elected representatives, it is unclear whether the net effect of any differences in turnout rates inside majority-minority House districts or Maori electorates leads necessarily to changes in the substantive representation of minorities.

It is important to note that we cannot establish how sustained these effects on efficacy, trust, and turnout may be. In both cases, we have relied on data that is a snapshot of one election that for idiosyncratic reasons may explain some of the differences. As Tate (1991) suggest, once minority representation is achieved interest and, thus, turnout decline. At the same time, it is also reasonable to expect that minority citizens affected by descriptive representation may become socialized into the habit of voting more frequently, particularly if their attitudes about governmental responsiveness become more positive. In the United States, the more recent majority-minority districts may have worked to spark interest in the election and turnout. Increases in Maori representation through an increase in the number of Maori seats and through PR may have enhanced the awareness of descriptive representation. Yet as our results show, the effects of increased representation were more likely to be felt by those represented by Maori electorate MPs. What remains unclear is whether or not the difference we see will persist. Long-term panel studies of minorities are required to investigate such questions.

Acknowledgments

Names are listed alphabetically; authorship is equal. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 1999 Annual Meetings of the Western Political Science Association and the Southwestern Political Science Association. Funding for this research was provided in part by the New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. Research support for Susan Banducci was provided by the European Union's Fifth Framework Programme. Research support for Jeffrey Karp was provided by the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO). The U.S. data used in this analysis are archived at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). New Zealand data are available from the authors. We would like to thank Professor Jack Vowles for making the Maori study a major component of the 1999 NZES and for his helpful comments on the paper.

Manuscript submitted November 28, 2001
Final manuscript received June 27, 2003

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