

Is All Descriptive Representation Equal?:
A Closer Look at Latino Representation in the U.S. House of Representatives

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Across the country, the ranks of Latinos are increasing in the Republican Party. The 2010 Midterm elections witnessed a record number of Latino Republicans elected to statewide and national office.¹ Latino Republicans more than doubled in size in the U.S. House of Representatives, making up eight out of 27 Latino members in the 112th Congress. Yet, it is unknown whether their presence benefits Latinos. Although there is a general consensus among scholars that descriptive representation benefits racial and ethnic communities, it is also acknowledged that political parties significantly influence representation, at least for Blacks. Further, scholars have shown that political parties have become even more important in Congress. However, Blacks benefit from descriptive representation because Black representatives place racial and symbolic issues on the political agenda that are otherwise given little to no attention by non-Black representatives. This paper will take a closer look at the symbolic representation provided by Latino Republicans in the 112th Congress by examining bill sponsorship/co-sponsorship and floor speeches in the U.S. House of Representatives.

A considerable amount of work has examined minority representation and its benefits. Some have emphasized the substantive benefits of descriptive representation by examining roll call votes, bills sponsorship/co-sponsorship, participation during committee hearings, and constituent services. Others have focused on the effect that descriptive representatives have on minority political behavior, showing that Latinos, like Blacks, are mobilized by co-ethnic candidates.² Still others have focused on the symbolic benefits provided by descriptive representatives, finding that Black representatives provide the greatest amount of symbolic representation to Blacks (Tate 2003). To date, much of the work examining minority

¹ Republican Susana Martinez was elected the nation's first Latina governor. Nevada elected its first Latino governor, Brian Sandoval, also a Republican. And, in Florida, Republican Marco Rubio was elected to the U.S. Senate.

² Matt Barreto (2007) shows that Latinos will vote for co-ethnic Democrats and Republicans.

representation has focused on Blacks. While a growing number of scholars have turned their attention to Latinos, there is still limited work examining the symbolic representation provided by Latino representatives. This paper seeks to fill this gap by conducting an exploratory analysis of symbolic representation provided by Latino Democrats and Republicans.

This paper will proceed as follows. First, I review previous research on descriptive representation, highlighting the work on Latino representation. Second, I point out ways in which our understanding of Latino descriptive representation can be expanded. Third, I describe the data and methods used in this paper to examine symbolic representation provided by Latino members of Congress. Finally, I discuss the findings and suggest lines for future research.

Minority Representation

In her seminal work, Hanna Pitkin (1967) outlines three different ways in which citizens are represented: substantive, descriptive, and symbolic. Substantive representation, which describes the more traditional understanding of representation, occurs when representatives are responsive to the demands and interests of their constituents. Descriptive representation occurs when elected officials mirror some characteristic of their constituents, like race or ethnicity. Lastly, symbolic representation, while at times devoid of substance, influences the attitudes and behavior of constituents through feelings of empowerment. Much research on minority representation focuses on how these three forms of representation overlap.

Considering the significant role of race throughout U.S. history, many have argued that descriptive representation plays a vital role in the representation of historically disadvantaged groups (Mansbridge 1999; Phillips 1995; Sapiro 1981; Williams 1998; Young 1990). While political institutions in the U.S. were designed to uphold fundamental democratic values, like liberty and equality, throughout history they have served as a vehicle for the White-majority to

oppress and discriminate against racial and ethnic minorities. Consequently, Sapiro (1981) points out that it may be “unreasonable” to expect the majority to protect the rights and interests of the oppressed minority. This requires minority legislators to be present in representative institutions so that they can pursue the interests of their group (Phillips 1998). Furthermore, scholars contend that members of historically disadvantaged groups benefit from seeing people like them in positions of power (Phillips 1998). “Representatives and voters who share membership in a subordinate group can also forge bonds of trust based specifically on the shared experience of subordination” (Mansbridge 1999: 641).

Why Does Descriptive Representation Result in Better Minority Representation?

Based upon a shared identity and the shared experiences that result, it is thought that descriptive representatives hold a unique understanding of the needs and interests of their group, which enhances their representation. Dawson (1994) argues that due to a shared history of racial discrimination and institutionalized racism in the U.S., Blacks share a feeling of “linked fate” whereby they view their individual interests and the interests of the group as intrinsically connected. This sense of linked fate, therefore, is expected to influence the behavior of Black legislators leading them to pursue policies that disproportionately impact Blacks (Whitby 1997).

In contrast to Blacks, a “linked fate” is less clearly seen among Latinos, who are members of a pan-ethnic group. Unlike Blacks in the U.S., Latinos come from a variety of different countries and cultures, and therefore lack a shared history. Given this, it seems unreasonable to expect Latinos to share a sense of “linked fate” comparable to African Americans (de la Garza et al. 1992; DeSipio 1996). However, scholars have shown evidence that group consciousness among Latinos exists (Garcia Bedolla 2009; Hero 1992; Jones-Correa and Leal 1996; Masuoka 2006; Sanchez 2006; Stokes 2003). While this feeling of linked fate

does not reach the levels felt by African Americans, Sanchez and Masuoka (2008) find that it is present and stronger than the group attachment felt by Asian Americans. Rouse (forthcoming) finds that while Latinos are more heterogeneous than African Americans, once they enter the United States they often share similar experiences, such as inclusion in a minority group status, discrimination, and exclusion from the political process, thus establishing a basis on which group consciousness emerges.

Regardless of the level of group consciousness felt by rank and file Latinos, some research has shown that Latino representatives feel a strong attachment to their pan-ethnic identity. Through interviews with Latino state legislators, Casellas (2010) determines that there exists sense of linked fate among Latino representatives. Similar to what has been found among Black representatives (Fenno 2003; Grose 2010), Latino representatives often have a sense of obligation to the broader Latino community that extends beyond their district and national-origin group (Fraga et al. 2007). Mansbrige (2003) identifies this as surrogate representation. She contends that “it is in the surrogate process that descriptive representation often plays its most useful role, allowing representatives who are themselves members of a subordinate group to circumvent the strong barriers to communication between dominant and subordinate groups” (2003: 642). Therefore, even if a strong group consciousness does not exist among rank and file Latinos, we would still expect Latino representatives to behave in ways that symbolically and substantively represent Latinos because they have a strong sense of linked fate.

Others, however, argue that representatives respond to the needs of minorities because they seek reelection. A vast majority of Black and Latino representatives in the U.S. Congress are elected from majority-minority districts or minority influence districts, where Blacks and Latinos constitute a significant minority of the district (see Canon 1999). Since the primary

motivation of representatives is to win reelection (Mayhew 1974), these representatives pursue the interests of Blacks and Latinos because of electoral incentives. Therefore, as scholars like Swain (1995) have argued, Blacks and Latinos can be represented by non-descriptive representatives.

Do Latino Representatives Behave in Distinct Ways?

Beyond the normative arguments for descriptive representation, empirical scholars have evaluated descriptive representation based upon its substantive and symbolic benefits. Following more traditional understandings of representation as policy congruence (Miller and Stokes 1963), a vast majority of the work evaluating Latino descriptive representation has focused on its effect on substantive representation. Under this perspective, representation is thought to be strong when members act like good delegates, responding to the demands of their constituents (Hall 1996: 2). Supporters of descriptive representation anticipate that descriptive representatives behave in distinct ways through which they are able to provide better substantive representation than non-descriptive representatives.

Scholarship evaluating the substantive benefits of Latino representation has produced conflicting results. Some have found that Latino representatives behave in distinctive ways, thereby providing better substantive representation for Latinos. Through their examination of roll call voting, Kerr and Miller (1997) find that Latino representatives provide better substantive representation through their votes on Latino interest bills than do non-Latino representatives. Bratton (2006) finds that Latino state legislatures in Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, and Texas sponsor more substantive Latino interest bills than do their non-Latino colleagues. Similarly, Wilson (2010) finds that Latino members of Congress were more likely to sponsor substantive Latino interest bills than non-Latino representatives in the 109th Congress.

Scholars of descriptive representation have also begun to look beyond roll call voting and bill sponsorship. Canon finds that Black members of Congress introduce racial issues into House floor debates more than White representatives (1999: 187-191). In her examination of Black descriptive representation, Katrina Gamble (2007) shows that Black representatives are more active during the full committee markups than White representatives. They are more likely to participate in more costly activities, like speaking during markups, offering amendments, and participating in votes. Limited attention has been given to these activities when evaluating Latino descriptive representation. The notable exception, however, is the work of Michael Minta which evaluates representative participation in congressional committee oversight hearings. While his findings are mixed, he provides a necessary first step in expanding how Latino descriptive representation is considered.

Still other research has found evidence that descriptive representatives do not behave in distinct ways (Hero and Tolbert 1995; Welch and Hibbing 1984; Swain 1995). Rather, they have found representative party affiliation to be a better predictor of how well minorities are represented. Swain (1995) finds that Black members during the 100th Congress did not provide better substantive representation for Blacks than White Democratic representatives. Instead, she finds that Blacks were better represented by Democrats. Knoll (2009) finds similar evidence for Latinos. By examining roll call votes, he finds that Democrats better support Latino interests.³

Research has also shown that representation can be powerfully symbolic. Eulau and Karps assert that representation is a complex phenomenon that includes much more than its traditional conception as substantive representation (1978). They define symbolic representation

³ Findings such as these have led some to argue that the creation of majority-minority districts should be done with caution because they may dilute the number of seats Democrats have in Congress, ultimately resulting in a decline in minority substantive representation (Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996).

as “public gestures...that create a sense of trust and support in the relationship between the representative and the represented” (Eulau and Karps 1978: 63). This can take the form of bill sponsorship, floor speeches, district activities, constituent newsletters, to name some. Tate (2003) finds that the symbolic representation of Blacks improves when they are represented by Black members of Congress. Their feelings of political trust, empowerment, and efficacy have been shown to increase when represented by a Black legislator (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Tate 2003; Gay 2002). While some scholarship has determined that Latinos feel less alienated and are more likely to participate at higher rates when represented by a Latino (Pantoja and Segura 2003; Barreto 2007; Barreto et al. 2002), no work has examined how Latino representatives symbolically represent Latinos.

Expanding Our Understanding Of Latino Descriptive Representation

This paper seeks to expand our understanding of descriptive representation in three primary ways. First, variation in descriptive representation by political party will be taken into account. While a considerable amount of scholarly attention has been given to evaluating the benefits of descriptive representation, less attention has been given to understanding the variation that exists between descriptive representatives. Williams (1998) asserts that the presence of descriptive representatives alone is not sufficient for providing historically disadvantaged groups with political representation, even though it is often necessary. Dovi (2002) reiterates this by asserting that some descriptive representatives fail to further the interests of minority groups. For instance, she writes that those descriptive representatives who are more concerned with promoting the common good, while they may be good representatives, do not necessarily fulfill the purpose of descriptive representation. Therefore, all descriptive representation is not equal, and this must be taken into account when evaluating its benefits.

One of the primary ways that Latino representatives in Congress differ is in their party affiliation. To date, there has been little work examining how minority Republican representatives behave and the benefits they provide to minorities. This has largely been due to the limited availability of data. For instance, since 1940 there have only been four Black Republicans.⁴ There has been an average of three Latino Republicans in Congress per legislative session since the late 1980s.⁵ However, the 2010 election increased the number of Latino Republicans in the 112th Congress to eight. While still a relatively small proportion of Congress, making statistical analysis difficult, the increase in the number of Latino Republicans (they constitute about one-third of all Latinos in Congress) demonstrates the growing importance of examining if and how they differ from Latino Democrats.

Second, legislator behavior beyond roll call voting will be examined. Recent work has demonstrated the importance of considering other types of behavior (Gamble 2007; Minta 2011). Hall (1996) asserts that there are a variety of activities legislators partake in, and roll call voting is only a small, and in many cases least significant, part of what members do in Congress. Thus, in order to fully understand representative behavior, other activities must be examined. This may be particularly true in the case of descriptive representatives who pursue racialized interests, which may be in opposition to the majority; thus making alternative forms of participation a more integral way for them to pursue the interest of their minority constituents.

Bill sponsorship/co-sponsorship and floor speeches will be examined here.⁶ Although both activities are more costly than roll call voting, scholars have shown that descriptive

4 Julius Caesar (J.C.) Watts Jr. (R-OK) served from 1995 to 2003; Gary Franks (R-CT) served from 1991 to 1997; Tim Scott (R-SC) served from 2011 to present; Allen West (R-FL) served 2011 to present.

5 Primarily, these representatives have come from the state of Florida.

6 Notable research that has examined the sponsorship of symbolic legislation for African Americans: Tate (2003); Canon (1999). Canon (1999) also examines floor speeches.

representatives are willing to take on these costs because they have an “internal commitment” to their group (Mansbridge 1999). Hall (1996) argues that evaluating these alternative forms of participation is beneficial in that they help determine how intensely a representative cares about a particular issue or group. Also, by sponsoring legislation or giving a speech on the floor of the House, legislators are able to “position take” and “credit claim,” thereby making visible to their constituents that they are working on their behalf (Mayhew 1974). Furthermore, one of the primary contributions descriptive representatives are thought to bring into Congress is their ability to add minority issues to the political agenda and shape the discussion in Congress (Mansbridge 1999; Phillips 1998). Roll call voting does not adequately capture these contributions.

Third, the symbolic behavior of Latino representatives has not been given adequate attention. Scholarship has shown that a primary benefit of descriptive representation is their symbolic importance for African Americans (Tate 2003). Furthermore, symbolic representation is important to consider when evaluating the descriptive representation because minorities are more likely to participate in “surrogate representation” (Mansbridge 2004). This is when representatives in one district represent the interests of those in another district. By examining symbolic legislation and floor speeches that mention Latinos, which have the potential to be symbolically representative to Latinos outside of a particular representative’s legislative district, a greater understanding of surrogate representation maybe gained.

Data and Methods

As previously stated, the primary purpose of this paper is to begin to consider the differences between Latino Democrats and Republicans in Congress by evaluating how they symbolically represent Latinos. I examine Latinos in the 112th Congress (2011-2012). This

Congress was chosen because it has the largest number of Latino Republicans to date (see Table 1 for a full list of Latino representatives). Eight out of the 27 Latino members of Congress are Republican. Five of these Republicans were elected to districts outside of Florida. This is noteworthy because in the past Latino Republicans had primarily been elected in Florida.⁷ Furthermore, four Latino representatives were elected from non-majority-minority districts, which may allow for the effect of group consciousness and electoral incentives to begin to be disaggregated. Therefore, the 112th Congress provides a unique context in which to examine the behavior of Latino Republicans.

In order to determine if Latino Republicans symbolically represent Latinos I examine two legislative activities: (1) bill sponsorship/co-sponsorship and (2) participation in floor debates in the House. All information pertaining to bill sponsorship was found using the Library of Congress' THOMAS website.⁸ I conducted several searches of sponsored bills in the 112th Congress by typing in key terms that would likely be used in the title or text of symbolic legislation for Latinos. The key terms used in these searches are: Latino; Latina; Hispanic; Mexican; Mexico; Puerto Rican; Puerto Rica; Cuban; Cuba; immigration.

The reason for using these specific terms requires further explanation. First, while I use the term Latino in this paper, others, including the U.S. Census, use the term Hispanic. Therefore, I conducted searches using both terms. Second, the key terms Mexico/an, Puerto Rico/an, and Cuba/n were selected because they are the three largest Latino groups in the United States. Individuals of Mexican decent comprise 63 percent of the U.S. Latino population, while those of Puerto Rican and Cuban decent comprise 9.2 and 3.5 percent of all U.S. Latinos.⁹

⁷ With the notable exception of Henry Bonilla (TX-23).

⁸ <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>

⁹ U.S. Census

Finally, the term immigration was used because of the issue's strong association with Latinos (Barreto et al. 2011).

The results of these searches produced several bills, each of which were then read and categorized as either symbolic or non-symbolic legislation. Tate defines symbolic legislation as those bills that do not “distribute or redistribute any public good or regulate in the standard sense” (2003: 98). They are bills that “confer symbolic recognition on groups” (Tate 2003: 99). For instance, bills seeking to rename a post office after a minority group leader, designate a day in remembrance of an individual or group, or awarding congressional medals of honor would all be considered symbolic legislation under this scheme. Table 2 depicts the symbolic legislation, along with a brief description, sponsored in the 112th Congress.

The text of floor speeches were gathered by using LexisNexis Congressional, which has transcripts of every statement made by a representative on the floor of the House of Representatives.¹⁰ Considering the large number of speeches made on the floor by the 435 members of the House over the course of a congressional session, and that the primary interest of this paper is to better understand Latino Republicans, only floor speeches made by Latino representatives were examined. During the 112th Congress, Latino representatives spoke on the House floor 1008 times. These moments vary from procedural, to personal tributes, to more issue oriented discussions. I reviewed all 1008 moments looking for any mention of or reference to Latinos.

Much like my examination of bill sponsorship, any speech that mentioned the terms Latino(a) and Hispanic were coded as “Latino” speeches. I also wanted to ensure that any reference to national origin groups were included, therefore those speeches that mentioned

¹⁰ <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp>

Mexico(an), Puerto Rico(an), and Cuba(an) were considered “Latino” speeches. However, this required extra attention to be paid since these terms were at times used in ways that did not pertain to Latinos in the U.S. For instance, some speeches spoke of Mexico in the context of foreign trade. In this paper, mentions of Mexico within such contexts were not coded as a symbolic reference to U.S. Latinos. In other instance, speeches referred to those in the U.S. who came from Mexico. Such mentions, in this paper, were determined as reference to Latinos in the U.S. Finally, any speeches that were made in tribute to an individual Latino were also coded as “Latino” speeches.

While the number of Latinos in the 112th Congress is the largest and most politically diverse it has ever been, Latinos still constitute a relatively small number of members of the House, which makes statistical analysis difficult. Given that the primary interest of this paper is to begin to understand the variation in symbolic representation provided by Latino Democrats and Republicans, this paper will be exploratory and descriptive in nature. However, the results of this paper will provide a useful first step in understanding the differences between Latino Republicans and Democrats and provide insight into how future statistical analysis could proceed.

Findings and Discussion

Bill Sponsorship

A closer look at the data shows that a total of nine pieces of symbolic legislation were sponsored during the 112th Congress (see Table 2). Table 3 shows that of the nine, six were sponsored by Latino Democrats, two were sponsored by non-Latino Democrats, and one was sponsored by a Latino Republican. All but one of the Latino representatives who sponsored bills

were from majority-Latino districts.¹¹ The one exception was Rep. Lujan, from the third Congressional district of New Mexico, whose Latino population is 38.5 percent. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, the only Republican to have sponsored a bill, comes from a majority-Latino district, where Puerto Ricans (45.2 percent) and Cubans (25.6) constitute that majority. In comparison, all of the other Latino Democrats who sponsored a bill come from districts where the majority of the Latinos are Mexican-Americans. This is noteworthy in that the bill sponsored by Diaz-Balart specifically referred to Cubans. Finally, the two non-Latinos who sponsored bills were Rep. Lynn Woolsey and Rep. Mike Thompson, both of who do not come from majority Latino districts, but who have sizable Latino minorities.¹²

Turning to bill co-sponsorship, the same picture arises. Again, Latino Democrats co-sponsor symbolic bills more than the other groups of representatives. There were 49 instances of co-sponsorship on symbolic bills among Latino Democrats. In comparison, there were only 10 instances of co-sponsorship on symbolic bills by Latino Republicans. As seen in Table 3, an average of about 2.5 symbolic bills were co-sponsored by Latino Democrats, while an average of 1.25 bills were co-sponsored by Latino Republicans. Although Latino Democrats co-sponsor at higher levels, Latino Republicans co-sponsor at higher levels than non-Latino Democrats and Republicans.

However, averages do not allow us to see what is occurring at the individual level. Table 4 depicts the distribution of co-sponsorship among representatives. Among Latino Democrats, eight co-sponsored between four to six bills, while three did not co-sponsor any. In contrast, two

11 Rep. Baca (CA-43): 67.5% Latino; Rep. Becerra (CA-31): 68.4% Latino; Rep. Grijalva (AZ-7): 56% Latino; Rep. Loretta Sanchez (CA-47): 67.9%; Rep. Serrano (NY-16): 66.5% Latino.

12 Rep. Lynn Woolsey (CA-6): 19.7% and Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-1): 22.8% Latino

Latino Republicans co-sponsored two bills and four did not co-sponsor any bills. All four were elected in 2010, and three of them did not come from majority Latino districts.¹³

Floor Speeches

A difference between Latino Democrats and Republicans is seen when examining speeches on the floor of the House of Representatives as well. As seen in Table 5, Latino Democrats gave 66 speeches on the floor that mentioned Latinos, while Latino Republicans gave 19 speeches. The average number of speeches mentioning Latinos given by Latino Democrats was near 3.5. In contrast, Latino Republicans averaged about 2.3 speeches.

Again, however, it is noteworthy to look at the individual level of representative participation. Only one Latino Democrat did not mention Latinos on the floor, while four Latino Republicans did not mention Latinos in their floor speeches. As was the case in bill co-sponsorship, those Latino Republicans with the smallest Latino populations were the ones who did not explicitly mention Latinos. Among Latino Democrats, Rep. Silvestre Reyes and Rep. Joe Baca gave the most speeches mentioning Latinos, ten and eleven respectively. In contrast, Rep. David Rivera and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen gave the most speeches among Republicans mentioning Latinos, with seven and six.

However, some representatives make more overall floor speeches than others. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the proportion of speeches mentioning Latinos to the overall number of speeches given by each representative. When examined through this lens, a Latino Republican, Rep. David Rivera, has the highest rate of floor speeches mentioning Latinos. About 38 percent of his speeches on the floor mention Latinos. Interestingly, among the top six representatives who mention Latinos in their speeches, three are Democrats and three are

¹³ Of the four that did not sponsor any bills Rep. Canseco (TX-23) was the only one who came from a majority Latino district (66.3%). Rep. Flores (TX-17) has 28.8% Latinos, Rep. Herrera-Beutler has 7% Latinos, and Rep. Labrador (ID-1) has 9.6 % Latino.

Republicans. As for the six representatives who mention Latinos the least, five are Republicans and one is a Democrat. By looking at Table 5 two points can be seen. First, four out of five of the Latino Republicans elected in 2010 were among those Latinos who devoted little to none of their speeches to mentioning Latinos. Furthermore, those Republicans that made the most speeches mentioning Latinos all came from majority Latino districts.

Conclusion and Implications for Future Research

The findings of this paper suggest that there are differences in the symbolic representation provided by Latino Democrats and Latino Republicans during the 112th Congress. However, contrary to what some may expect, these findings do not appear to indicate that Latino Republicans provide no symbolic representation to Latinos. While Latino Republicans sponsor and co-sponsor symbolic legislation and make floor speeches mentioning Latinos at lower levels than Latino Democrats, this analysis shows that some Republican Latinos participate in symbolic acts in Congress. This section highlights the implications of the findings and offers suggestions for future research.

The analysis shows that only six pieces of symbolic legislation were proposed during the 112th Congress. This is surprising considering that studies have shown that Black representatives sponsor symbolic legislation at much higher levels. For instance, David Canon (1999) shows that 98 symbolic bills aimed at African Americans were sponsored in the 103rd Congress. This may suggest that Latinos view their role as representatives in less symbolic terms than do African Americans. However, it is important to consider the larger context. In the 103rd Congress, there were 39 Black representatives and the Democrats held a majority in the House, holding 258 seats. In contrast, under the 112th Congress, the House is controlled by Republicans who hold 242 seats. Perhaps the low number of symbolic bill sponsorship is a

reflection of the partisan makeup of Congress. Future studies would benefit from expanding the number of Congresses examined to include those controlled by Democrats and Republicans. It may also be useful to examine bills sponsored by Black representatives in order to see if symbolic bills in general are sponsored at lower levels now than in the past.

Additionally, although Latino Republicans on average co-sponsored fewer symbolic bills and mentioned Latinos in their floor speeches less than Latino Democrats, the difference was not extreme. Latino Republicans on average co-sponsored about 1.25 less symbolic bills and gave about one fewer speeches mentioning Latinos than did their co-ethnic Democrats. This provides some support to those scholars who argue that descriptive representation provides an inherent benefit to minorities. There is, however, variation in how symbolically active Latinos are in Congress. For instance, three of the Republicans who did not co-sponsor any bills or mention Latinos in their floor speeches were elected from districts where Latinos comprised less than 25 percent of their district. This may suggest support for those who contend that electoral incentives are the primary motivating factor behind legislative behavior, not group consciousness. It may also highlight the role that the Tea Party played in the 2010 election since all three of those representatives were elected on a Tea Party platform.

While Latino Democrats consistently participate in more symbolic acts than do their Republican counterparts, the results show that some Democrats participate at particularly high levels. For instance, a majority (ten) of Latino Democrats co-sponsored between one and two symbolic bills. In comparison, Rep. Silvestre Reyes co-sponsored eleven and Rep. Joe Baca co-sponsored ten. While both come from majority-Latino districts, almost all Latino Democrats come from majority-Latino districts. Future research would benefit from exploring what contributes to these higher levels of activity.

In conclusion, this paper provided the beginning steps to understanding variation among Latino descriptive representatives. While some scholars expect only Democrats to be beneficial in the representation of minorities, the findings of this analysis suggests that Republican Latinos can also provide symbolic representation. The level of symbolic activity varies by political party, but also varies at the individual level. Therefore, future analysis should take both into account. Furthermore, future research would benefit from examining the connection between symbolic and substantive representation. It is reasonable to expect some sort of connection between the two. For instance, one could foresee that those representatives who partake in symbolic activity for Latinos also partake in higher levels of substantive activity. However, it is also plausible that the opposite occur. Evaluating the effect of descriptive representation on Latinos and the variation among descriptive representatives is ripe for future scholarship.

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Table 1: Latino Members of the House of Representatives 112th Congress

Representative	State/District	Party	Elected	Member Latino Identity	% White	% Black	Total % Latino	% Mexican	% Puerto Rican	% Cuban
Rep. Joe Baca	CA-43	D	1999	Mexican	55.5	12.2	67.5	59.9	.7	.3
Rep. Xavier Becerra	CA-31	D	1992	Mexican	39.2	4.1	68.4	43.8	.4	.4
Rep. Francisco Canseco	TX-23	R	2010	Mexican	78.9	3.8	66.3	59.3	.7	.1
Rep. Dennis Cardoza	CA-18	D	2002	Portuguese	66.1	7	51.3	47.6	.5	.1
Rep. Jim Costa	CA-20	D	2004	Portuguese	60.6	7	69.2	65.3	.4	.1
Rep. Henry Cuellar	TX-28	D	2002	Mexican	82.8	1.6	79.3	75.1	.3	.1
Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart	FL-21	R	2002	Cuban	83.7	9.3	75.8	1.4	45.2	25.6
Rep. Bill Flores	TX-17	R	2010	Mexican	69	11.4	28.8	21.9	.6	.46
Rep. Charles Gonzalez	TX-20	D	1998	Mexican	70	8.1	70.5	62.3	.9	.1
Rep. Raul Grijavala	AZ-7	D		Mexican	62.6	4.14	56	51.5	.54	.1
Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez	IL-4	D	1992	Puerto Rican	49.1	5.6	72.1	56.8	8.9	.3
Rep. Jaime Hererra-Beutler	WA-3	R	2010	Mexican	91.5	2.3	7	5.4	.3	.1
Rep. Ruben Hinojosa	TX-15	D	1996	Mexican	77.3	1.8	80.8	75.6	.3	.1
Rep. Raul Labrador	ID-1	R	2010	Puerto Rican	95.4	.9	9.6	8.3	.2	0
Rep. Ben Lujan	NM-3	D	2008	Mexican	67.5	2.1	38.5	15.8	.4	.1
Rep. Grace Napolitano	CA-38	D	1998	Mexican	53.8	3.8	74.5	65.2	.4	.3
Rep. David Nunes	CA-21	R	2002	Portuguese	74.1	2.9	49.9	47.5	.2	.1
Rep. Ed Pastor	AZ-4	D	1991	Mexican	71.5	9.6	63.4	59.4	.4	.2
Rep. David Rivera	FL-25	R	2010	Cuban	84.8	7.9	66.9	1.86	3.06	35.6
Rep. Silvestre Reyes	TX-16	D	1996	Mexican	79.6	3.6	81.3	76.7	.8	.1
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen	FL-18	R	1989	Cuban	86.6	8	66.9	2	3.6	35.3
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard	CA-34	D	1992	Mexican	51.4	5.2	79.4	65.3	.4	.8
Rep. Linda Sanchez	CA-39	D	2002	Mexican	47.1	6.2	65.7	56.9	.6	.3

Rep. Loretta Sanchez	CA-47	D	1996	Mexican	47.5	1.7	67.9	62.3	.3	.2
Rep. Jose Serrano	NY-16	D	1990	Puerto Rican	16.3	35.6	66.5	7.1	25	.5
Rep. Albio Sires	NJ-13	D	2006	Cuban	74.7	8	15	2.9	6.9	.4
Rep. Nydia Velazquez	NY-12	D	1992	Puerto Rican	49.6	10.4	46.2	8	17.6	.5

Table 2: Symbolic Legislation Sponsored in the 112th Congress

Sponsor	Bill	Description
Rep. Joe Baca	H.Res. 130	Expressing support of the fourth Friday of March as “Cesar E. Chavez Day”
Rep. Xavier Becerra	H.R. 3459	Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act
Rep. Raul Grijalva	H. Res. 400	Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a National Hispanic-serving Institutions Week should be established, and commemorating the 25 th Anniversary of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan	H. Con. Res 73	Honoring the service of Sergeant First Class Leroy Arthur Petry, a native of Santa Fe, New Mexico and the second living recipient of the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War
Rep. Loretta Sanchez	H. Res. 404	Recognizing the service and sacrifice of members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are Latino.
Rep. Jose E. Serrano	H. Con. Res. 8	Entitled the “English Plus Resolution”: calls for the United States to be tolerant of other languages and to voice opposition to English only laws.
Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart	H. Res. 536	Condemning the murder of Wilman Villar Mendoza and honoring his sacrifice in the cause of freedom for the Cuban people.
Rep. Lynn Woolsey	H.R. 793	To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 12781 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Inverness, CA as the “Specialist Jake Robert Velloza Post Office”
Rep. Mike Thompson	H.R. 3004	To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 260 California Drive in Yountville, CA, as the “Private First Class Alejandro R. Ruiz Post Office Building”

Table 3: Number of Representatives who Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Symbolic Legislation in the 112th Congress

	Sponsor	Co-Sponsor	Avg. Co-Sponsor
Democrats			
Non-Latino	2	24	.134
Latino	6	49	2.57
Republican			
Non-Latino	0	6	.0257
Latino	1	10	1.25
Total	9		

Table 4: Number of Symbolic Bills Co-Sponsored by Latino Representatives in the 112th Congress

Representative	Party	Co-Sponsor
Rep. Henry Cuellar	D	0
Rep. Luis V. Guterrez	D	0
Rep. Silvestre Reyes	D	0
Rep. Bill Flores	R	0
Rep. Francisco Canseco	R	0
Rep. Jaime Herrera-Beutler	R	0
Rep. Raul Labrador	R	0
Rep. Charles Gonzalez	D	1
Rep. Ed Pastor	D	1
Rep. Ben Lujan	D	1
Rep. David Nunes	R	1
Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart	R	1
Rep. Albio Sires	D	2
Rep. Dennis Cardoza	D	2
Rep. Jim Costa	D	2
Rep. Nydia Velazquez	D	2
Rep. Loretta Sanchez	D	2
Rep. David Rivera	R	2
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen	R	3
Rep. Raul Grijalva	D	3
Rep. Ruben Hinojosa	D	4
Rep. Joe Baca	D	4
Rep. Xavier Becerra	D	4
Rep. Linda Sanchez	D	5
Rep. Grace Napolitano	D	5
Rep. Jose Serrano	D	5
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard	D	6

Table 5: Floor Speeches Made by Latino Representatives in the 112th Congress

Representative	Party	Total Speeches	Latino Mention	Average
Rep. Bill Flores	R	33	0	0
Rep. Jaime Herrera-Beutler	R	25	0	0
Rep. Raul Labrador	R	5	0	0
Rep. David Nunes	R	14	0	0
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard	D	41	1	.0243
Rep. Jim Costa	D	78	2	.0256
Rep. Francisco Canseco	R	36	1	.0277
Rep. Ben Lujan	D	29	1	.0344
Rep. Grace Napolitano	D	57	2	.035
Rep. Albio Sires	D	54	3	.037
Rep. Luis Gutierrez	D	48	2	.0416
Rep. Raul Grijalva	D	39	2	.051
Rep. Jose Serrano	D	38	2	.0526
Rep. Xavier Becerra	D	36	3	.083
Rep. Ed Pastor	D	24	2	.083
Rep. Joe Baca	D	103	10	.097
Rep. Linda Sanchez	D	10	1	.1
Rep. Ruben Hinojosa	D	18	2	.111
Rep. Loretta Sanchez	D	56	7	.125
Rep. Dennis Cardoza	D	31	4	.129
Rep. Nydia Velazquez	D	31	4	.129
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen	R	43	6	.1395
Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart	R	35	5	.1428
Rep Henry Cuellar	D	34	5	.147
Rep. Charles Gonzalez	D	27	4	.1481
Rep. Silvestre Reyes	D	52	11	.211
Rep. David Rivera	R	18	7	.388