

Diversity in Legislative Leadership and Policy Representation

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Prepared for the 2018 meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA.

The authors thank J Ehlinger and Jacob Smith for research assistance.

Abstract: Does more diverse legislative leadership make policy more responsive to public preferences? A growing body of research suggests that greater descriptive representation of traditionally underrepresented groups, such as women, racial/ethnic minorities, and the working class, in legislatures helps to place group-preferred legislation on the agenda and wins it greater support in terms of roll-call votes. However, researchers have rarely explored the difference that greater descriptive representation in leadership makes. Legislative leaders, such as house speakers, senate presidents, and party caucus leaders, occupy important gatekeeping positions in American legislative bodies; their approval is usually needed to bring proposed legislation to a vote and ultimately change public policy. This paper offers two complementary expectations of the effect of diversity in leadership on public policy. First, more descriptively representative leadership might yield policy gains to the groups who are descriptively represented. Second, more descriptively representative leadership in legislatures might allow for more broadly representative public policy, such that policies more closely reflect public opinion. However, it could be the case that diversity has little to no effect on public policy as legislative leaders, who are also party leaders, pursue the same partisan policy objectives regardless of their personal characteristics. The analysis uses time series cross-sectional data to record changes in leadership diversity and public policy over the years 2003 to 2014 in the 30 states legislatures that produce historical biographical data of their members. This research can help scholars refine theories of descriptive representation and help reformers identify viable pathways to making public policy more representative of citizen preferences.

In 1980, Willie L. Brown Jr. became the first African American Speaker of the House in the California Assembly. During his 15 years at this post, Brown helped to usher in several laws that reflected black interests, and one of these included a law where the Golden State refused to do business with apartheid South Africa, an act that some argue was instrumental in bringing about political change in that country (Brown 2008). It is unclear whether Willie Brown's tenure reflects the actions of other legislative leaders who descriptively represent other traditionally underrepresented or minority groups; Brown was unique in that he occupied the most important position in a chamber in one of the country's most influential states. However, it is also true that other political minorities who serve in positions of power have the opportunity to implement laws that reflect the interests of their respective groups, so Brown's impact on public policy may not be unique.

In this paper, we present the initial analyses of a broader investigation into whether and how the incorporation of more members of underrepresented or minority groups into legislative leadership affects policy outcomes. Specifically, we examine the ascension of African Americans, Latinos, women, and blue-collar workers into leadership positions in state legislatures, moving beyond studies that examine how minority group seat share alone influences state public policy. With the purpose of standardizing and simplifying language, we refer to these groups as "minority" groups for the remainder of the paper.¹

We test three theoretical arguments made about the impact minority incorporation into leadership may have on public policy. First, minority incorporation may allow leaders to advocate for policies that would materially benefit the group they descriptively represent, such that incorporation produces policy gains for their groups. Second, minority incorporation may

¹ Though majorities of the population writ large, women and workers nonetheless represent numerical minorities in elected office, being descriptively underrepresented relative to their size in the population.

produce policy that is more responsive to public opinion as legislative leadership comes to better reflect the diverse range of views present in the population. Finally, minority incorporation may have no additional impact on policy outcomes as leaders (a) do not share or voice policy preferences common to their group or (b) have incentives to focus on policies that benefit their parties at large over their groups when preferences are in conflict.

We depart from previous studies of the policy impact of minority group officeholders, which tend to rely on cross-sectional analyses, and examine the impact of these leaders within states over time. We use several sources of data to conduct our analysis. We use original data from 30 states between 2003 and 2014 describing the composition of legislative leadership. We match these to a range of time-varying policies previously identified in the literature to reflect the interests of minority groups for the first set of analyses. For the analysis involving policy responsiveness to aggregate public opinion, we match our leadership data to the dynamic estimates of policy liberalism and public opinion on social and economic dimensions developed by Caughey and Warshaw (2017).

Our initial analyses show no support for the hypothesis that when these political minorities hold a greater proportion of party leadership positions that public policy better reflects their groups' interests. However, we do find some evidence that as these minority groups come to hold a greater percentage of leadership positions, aggregate changes in social policy (but not economic policy) over time become more responsive to changes in left-right public opinion in the state. If confirmed in future testing, our findings suggest that minority incorporation into legislative leadership has broad-based, rather than particularistic, implications for policy representation in the states.

Descriptive Representation and Policy Outcomes

Since Pitkin (1967), descriptive representation has been a focal point of scholarship, considering in particular the consequences of political minorities serving in office. A question of perennial concern to political scientists is whether descriptive representatives of a given group in political office are effective substantive representatives of that group (e.g. Swain 1993, Mansbridge 1999, Swers 2002, Minta 2011, Carnes 2013). As part of this realm of research, scholars consider how political minorities attain positions of influence and wield increased political power in representative bodies.

Many studies show that minority legislators are effective proponents of minority interests. Blacks strongly advocate for black policy interests at various stages of the lawmaking process (Bratton and Haynie 1999; Kopkin 2017; Minta 2011; Whitby 1997). The same is true for women (Bratton and Haynie 1999; Swers 2002; Thomas 1994). Thomas, for example, (1991) finds that women's presence coupled with the existence of a women's caucus is the key to whether they are positioned to successfully advocate for women's interests, and a recent paper shows that as more women serve in a state with a women's caucus that women cosponsor more bills with one another (Holman and Mahoney 2018). This increased collaboration among women can engender a sense of women that allows them to come together and vote for legislation that improves women's lives. Similar research finds support for the effectiveness of Latinos (Bratton 2006; Rouse 2013; Wilson 2017), and workers (Carnes 2013) in representing their groups in public office.

Asking whether descriptive representatives are effective advocates for the interests of their groups is a different question than asking whether those descriptive representatives can successfully obtain desired policy outcomes. Some evidence has shown that the collective

presence of political minorities can improve the policy representation these groups receive. When more blacks serve in the legislature, black interests are better reflected in public policy (Clark forthcoming; Griffin and Newman 2008; Haynie 2001; King-Meadows and Schaller 2006). For women, Cowell-Meyers and Langbein (2008) show that public policy better reflects women's interests in states where more women serve. Wilson (2017) finds the Congressional Hispanic Caucus has been successful in pushing for Latino policy interests.

Most of this research examines the presence and organization of minority groups within rank-and-file membership. But when it comes to policy outcomes, rank-and-file legislators' powers are limited. Members have individual powers to sponsor bills and cast votes, and those powers can be consequential, as the evidence cited above indicates. But even a large presence of a minority group in a legislature can be insufficient to shape what the legislature ultimately approves. Institutional considerations matter. Procedure and rules within legislative chambers, the bicameral structure of Congress and most state legislatures, and the veto power of executives all influence the ultimate policies that legislatures produce. Party politics also shape policy. A minority group's affiliation with a majority party makes its preferred policy more likely to be enacted than if it affiliates with the minority party (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Lublin 1997). However, intraparty conflict can also lead to policies benefitting minority groups to be defeated or kept off the agenda (Frymer 1999).

Minority group incorporation into legislative leadership can be more influential in helping those groups obtain desired policy outcomes because incorporation into leadership can help them overcome intraparty and institutional barriers. Within parties, leaders set party priorities, whip support for specific proposals among rank-and-file members, and provide incentives (both institutional and political) for members to toe the party line. Legislators are

often willing to support their party's leadership, though the perceived power of leadership among members vary in response to the organizational or electoral conditions that necessitate members' need to rely on leadership to resolve collective action problems in the legislature (Mooney 2012). At the institutional level, leaders have powers in gatekeeping powers, in terms of scheduling votes and determining rules of procedure, and in determining who serves on which committees, among other powers. Leaders' formal powers vary across states and chambers (see Mooney 2013, Jewell and Whicker 1994). Despite variation in the extent of formal powers, leaders across legislatures share the common trait of having a greater ability than rank-and-file membership to shape public policy in their respective states.

We expect that the greater the proportion of leadership positions held by blacks, women, Latinos, and workers, the more state public policies will reflect the interests of these groups. We examine only leaders who hold formal chamber and party leadership positions, excluding committee chairs.² The expectation for this relationship is based on the influence that state legislative leaders have over shaping legislative priorities and building support for proposals within parties. We expect that leaders are persuasive to their party caucuses at large in advancing policies that improve the quality of life for political minorities. Some existing evidence provides support for the idea that minority incorporation leads to policy outcomes that benefit incorporated groups. Nelson (1991) finds that when more women and Latinos serve in leadership positions, more money is spent on education, and when more blacks serve in leadership positions, more money is spent on mental health and hospitals.

² Committee chairs are powerful in their own right by holding agenda setting power within specific policy domains. In particular, research by Robert Preuhs (2005, 2006, 2007) suggests that minority group members use their positions as committee chairs to advance beneficial legislation. However, we consider the formal and informal powers of committee chairs sufficiently different from those of party leadership within chambers to deserve separate consideration.

Greater numerical incorporation into party leadership should give a group a better chance to win policy concessions beneficial to their group than the incorporation of a single group members. While a single leader could persuade others to act in a way that will advance the interests of their group, it is also true that an individual leader could be ignored, seen as idiosyncratic or, even worse, a gadfly. When a collection of leaders from a specific group exert pressure on the party membership then the outcome should differ. The presence of a greater number of minorities in leadership could also highlight the political importance of their group within the party coalition, and may further empower those descriptive representatives to act on their group's behalf in policy deliberations.

Leadership certainly has a hierarchical structure, and some individual leaders are more persuasive on policy matters than others. A speaker, for instance, leader may hold sufficient sway within a chamber to drive a bill to passage regardless of how many other group members simultaneously hold leadership positions. However, top leaders within chambers should be receptive to the political preferences of their subordinates. Completely disregarding the views of other leaders could ultimately lead to the end of one's tenure as the key leader in a state legislative chamber. Moreover, members in lower levels of leadership likely have achieved their position by having some amount of political support or clout within the body, including with top leadership (particularly in chambers where top leaders appoint lower-level leaders). Thus, when more political minorities occupy such positions, we should expect public policies to better reflect the interests of these individuals' groups.

There are a few reasons to doubt that minority incorporation into leadership would produce the type of group benefits that we would expect to observe, and it is worthwhile to explain them in greater detail. The first reason is that political minorities do not hold uniform

policy preferences, and so their descriptive representatives may hold diverging views about which policy changes could benefit their group. This could erode the importance of minority incorporation in two ways. First, policy disagreements between factions within a group means that any position a descriptive representation takes on an issue will not truly represent the position of the group. Osborn (2012), for instance, points out that partisanship alters how women define women's interests. Second, the preferences of elite descriptive representatives may not match the preferences of average group members. For example, Swain (1993) argues that black political elites tend to be more liberal than black citizens. A mismatch in elite and mass preferences in the group could mean descriptive representation leaves the group effectively voiceless in political office.

The second reason is that leaders have political incentives to put other considerations before group preferences in shaping and advancing public policies. Legislative leaders are party leaders and have to consider party politics in their decision making. Leaders are not only concerned with voicing and advancing their group's preferences, but also with satisfying other subconstituencies within parties, protecting their party brand, and reaching compromises with opposing parties in their chamber or with actors in other branches of government. While group preferences may not conflict with partisan considerations on some issues, leaders may occasionally be confronted with a choice between the two and feel a responsibility to concede a favored policy for the greater good of their party caucus.

Aggregate Implications of Minority Incorporation into Leadership

Minority incorporation has potentially broader implications for policy outcomes besides winning policy concessions favorable to their own group. An implicit justification for greater

descriptive diversity among political officeholders is that the policies they create will better reflect the preferences of a diverse society (Burnheim 1985).³ Descriptive representation can matter to policy outcomes if officeholders share common experiences and, as a consequence, common opinions or values with the group or groups they descriptively represent. Under this view, officeholders serve as vessels for the opinions of the groups they descriptively represent, and bring those views to bear when making political decisions. A political leadership more reflective of the population would make consequent policy decisions more reflective of public preferences because it would also be more reflective of the range of political views present in the population. When officeholders from diverse backgrounds are present in political deliberation, a more diverse range of opinions can be voiced and inform the ultimate decision that they body makes.

Extending this line of thinking, minority incorporation into leadership could strengthen the linkages between mass opinion and policy output. While diversity in the rank-and-file membership would contribute to the range of views presented in deliberations, it may be insufficient to move those ideas forward within the body. Legislative leaders, on the other hand, have greater agenda setting power and persuasive influence. The presence of minority group members among leadership could change legislative priorities and help to build support within their parties for new types of policies. As a result, policies preferred by segments of the population that were previously not considered are more likely to pass into law. In the aggregate, public policy comes to reflect average public opinion more closely as wider array of voices are aired and become influential in moving new types of policy change forward.

³ Political theorists sometimes refer to this concept as microcosmic form of descriptive representation, in reference to the idea that legislatures should be microcosms of the population (see Mansbridge 1999).

As before, there are reasons to doubt this explanation of how incorporation into leadership would change aggregate policy outcomes. Group preferences are not uniform, leaders may hold different views than the groups they descriptively represent, and leaders may perceive tradeoffs between what's best for their group and what's best for their party. Of specific relevance to the aggregate effects, it may be the case that the wide range of decisions legislatures have to make on seemingly minute issues like insurance regulations or agency budgets may not capture any element of public opinion. And in American legislatures, institutional rules, bicameralism, separation of powers, and party organizations intercede in opinion-policy linkages. For these reasons, diversity within rank-and-file membership may be insufficient to produce policy changes without a diverse membership being reflected in leadership. Nonetheless, minority incorporation into leadership could help introduce a more diverse range of views into party deliberations, and produce a different set of party priorities in what type of legislation to pursue. The more that leadership comes to reflect the population, the more we expect public policy will reflect public opinion.

Group Policy Benefits: Data and Methods

We begin by testing the effect of minority incorporation into leadership on policy outcomes intended to benefit their groups. In order to do so, we collected data on the composition of legislative leadership on state policy between 2003 and 2014. States are an ideal context to study this question given that they provide more variation in both the independent variable (minority incorporation into party leadership) and the dependent variables (policy outcomes) than a study of Congress could.

We rely on data from the 30 states that make biographical data of their members and leaders available through state blue books, legislative manuals, and other publicly available sources.⁴ We gathered biographical data on roughly 10,000 state legislators within this time period, and identified about 2,200 legislators who served in leadership positions in our 30 states. Rather than designating certain positions to count as leadership, we relied upon states' own definitions of who falls in leadership and who does not. This creates some variation in the size of legislative leadership across states; the Nebraska Unicameral has only one formal leader (the Speaker), while the Connecticut House in its 2009-10 term designated 72 members from both parties as holding formal leadership positions.

For the tests in this section, we studied the incorporation of women, blacks, and Latinos into both parties' leadership structures.⁵ We chose these three groups for two reasons. First, these groups are numerous enough and distributed in enough states to make quantitative, comparative analysis possible. Second, scholars have developed extensive literatures on these groups that allow us to rely on previous connections made between these groups and preferred policy outcomes. To measure minority incorporation across legislatures, we calculated the percentage of all leadership positions held by members of each group for each chamber, then took the mean of the percentages from both chambers to create a measure for each state-year. With this measure, we created the variables *Women in Leadership*, *African Americans in Leadership*, and *Latinos in Leadership*.

⁴ Those 30 states are AK, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, MI, MN, NC, NE, NJ, NY, NV, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, WI, and WY. Though these states are not perfectly representative of all 50 states, they do capture variation in important factors such as region, partisanship, ideology, population size, and demographic diversity.

⁵ We are also interested in the incorporation of blue-collar workers into leadership, but omit them from the analysis for the time being as we continue to identify more policy outcomes and data sources.

We studied the policy influence of minority incorporation into leadership by examining policy outcomes previously identified in the literature to be related to group presence in state legislatures. For the present analysis, we examined the connection between women in leadership and state restrictions on abortion access (see Cowell-Meyers and Langbein 2009; Swers 2002); between African Americans in leadership and state funding for historically black college and universities (HBCUs) (see Grose 2011); and between women, African Americans, and Latinos and cash assistance for needy families through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (see Clark Forthcoming; Reingold and Smith 2012; Preuhs 2006, 2007). These do not constitute an exhaustive list of policies that elites might see as benefitting these groups. Rather, they are a starting place to look for the policy influence of descriptive representation.

Many of the studies cited leverage cross-sectional variation to establish an association between descriptive representation of the group under examination and policy outcomes intended to benefit that group. However, traditional cross-sectional designs risk finding a spurious correlation unless all possible confounds are controlled for. A positive association between minority incorporation and the expected policy outcome using such a design could indicate that minority group leaders working to create policies that benefit people like them. However, it could not rule out the possibility that a state for some other reason is likely to both have minority group members in leadership positions and pass policies that are beneficial for those groups—for example, if the public at large is sympathetic to the group and policies that might benefit it (for example, see Hansen and Treul 2015). Departing from such studies, we attempt to isolate the unique contribution of the presence of minority groups in legislatures by observing how policy changes over time within states as legislative leadership varies in composition.

For each policy outcome, we estimated the effect of group incorporation leadership using fixed-effects regression. The data is time-series cross-sectional (TSCS); the unit of analysis is the state-year. The dependent variable is the policy outcome at time t ; the independent variable is the corresponding group's presence in leadership in prior year ($t-1$). In all models we include a lagged dependent variable, which allows us to estimate the year-over-year change to policy during the period when the group in question held a leadership position. All models include fixed effects for states and years to control for other unit-varying and time-varying confounders. While this model design does not completely eliminate threats to inference, it represents a substantial improvement over cross-sectional analysis.

Results

We begin by examining the impact of women in leadership position on state policy on abortion access. A simplistic group representation model would assume that women in legislative leadership would work to prevent restrictions to abortion access. To measure access, we rely on data collected by Kreitzer (2015). The dependent variable, *Abortion Index*, is a count of ten state laws designed to *restrict* abortion access; a value of 10 indicates a state has adopted all ten laws by a given year, while a value of 0 indicates the state has adopted none of those laws by that year. If greater incorporation of women into legislative leadership prevents the adoption of laws restricting access, we should observe a negative coefficient estimate for the *Women in Leadership* variable. Turning to the results in Table 1, we do not find such evidence. The coefficient estimate is signed in the expected direction, but is substantively small and not statistically significant.

Table 1: Women in Leadership and State Abortion Policy

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Abortion Index $t-1$	0.79* (0.05)	0.79* (0.05)	0.77* (0.05)
Women in Leadership $t-1$	-0.00 (0.00)		
Democratic Women in Leadership $t-1$		-0.05 (0.24)	-0.04 (0.25)
Democratic Control $t-1$			-0.11 (0.16)
Democratic Women in Leadership $t-1$ X Democratic Control $t-1$			-0.03 (0.41)
Constant	0.82* (0.21)	0.79* (0.22)	0.90* (0.21)
Observations	256	250	250
Within R ²	0.69	0.69	0.69
Between R ²	0.996	0.996	0.995

Note: * $p < 0.05$. Robust standard errors in parentheses. State and year fixed effects included. Six observations excluded in second and third model from Nebraska's nonpartisan legislature.

Among others, Osborn (2012) notes that abortion policy preferences differ significantly between Republican women and Democratic women. It could be the case that a simple count of all women in leadership obscures this crucial partisan difference. In the second model of Table 1, we estimate whether the percentage of women in Democratic Party leadership is associated with preventing restrictions on abortion access. While the coefficient estimate for *Democratic Women in Leadership* is signed in the expected negative direction, it too falls far short of statistical significance. Finally, it could be the case that having more Democratic women in office and the Democratic Party being in the majority in both chambers of the legislature is necessary to prevent policies restricting abortion access. In the third model of Table 1, we interact the percent

of women in Democratic Party leadership with an indicator for party control. But given the small and non-significant coefficient estimate for the interaction term, we find no evidence that the descriptive representation of women in legislative leadership (for both parties or for the Democratic Party alone) is related to changes in abortion access policies. As expected, abortion policy in year t-1 positively and significantly predicts abortion policy in the year of observation in all three models.

We turn to examining the connection between African Americans in leadership and state funding for HBCUs. We collected data on annual HBCU funding directly from state appropriations records. The data for HBCU funding are sparser than for our other policies, since only handful of states are home to HBCUs. We rely on data for seven states for which we were able to gather data: Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas. We assume that black leaders are interested in preserving or increasing the funding of these institutions, with one reason that they are an important access point to higher education for many black Americans, and another being that many attended such universities. Grose (2011) also finds that individual black members of Congress are more devoted than non-blacks to providing federal assistance to HBCUs. If black incorporation into leadership makes a difference for state HBCU funding, we should expect to see a positive, significant coefficient estimate on the *Blacks in Leadership* variable.

The results are presented in Table 2. The coefficient in model 1 for the independent variable of interest is signed in the expected positive direction. While the estimate is significant at the 0.1 level of confidence, it does not reach the conventional 0.05 level. We do not control for partisan differences in black leaders in this model as we did in the last because none of the black leaders in this subset of the data are Republicans. However, it could be the case

Table 2: Blacks in Leadership and State HBCU Funding

	(1)	(2)
HBCU Funding $t-1$	0.65* (0.10)	0.54* (0.12)
Blacks in Leadership $t-1$	0.89 (0.37)	0.72 (0.38)
Democratic Control $t-1$		-80.53 (48.15)
Blacks in Leadership $t-1$ X Democratic Control $t-1$		2.48 (1.86)
Constant	29.24 (17.57)	52.78* (15.72)
Observations	72	72
Within R ²	0.81	0.83
Between R ²	0.97	0.95

Note: * $p < 0.05$. Robust standard errors in parentheses. State and year fixed effects included. Data from 7 states: FL, GA, KY, MD, PA, SC, TX.

that black leaders are more effective in advocating for HBCU funding when they are in the majority party. We interact the percentage of black leaders with an indicator for the Democratic Party holding the majority in a given state-year in the second model of Table 2. We should expect to see a positive coefficient estimate to indicate that the marginal positive effect of black incorporation into leadership on HBCU funding increases when Democrats hold the majority. Though the positive coefficient estimate is signed in the expected direction, this estimate again falls short of statistical significance. As expected, HBCU funding in year $t-1$ positively and significantly predicts HBCU funding the year of observation in both models.

As a final test of the group-benefit hypothesis, we examine the connection between women, blacks, and Latinos in leadership and TANF benefits, a policy that has used to measure

policy representation for all three groups in various literatures (Clark Forthcoming; Reingold and Smith 2012; Preuhs 2006, 2007). Data come from the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research (2017).⁶ If leaders in each of these groups used their office to preserve or increase TANF benefits, we would expect a positive and significant coefficient estimate associated with the variables capturing each group's incorporation into leadership.

The results are presented in Table 3. For all three groups—women, blacks, and Latinos—greater incorporation into leadership does not seem to be associated with higher benefits for TANF recipients. In model 1, the coefficient estimate for women is negatively signed, in contrast with expectations. In models 3 and 5, the coefficient estimate for black and Latino leaders respectively are signed in the positive direction. However, none of the three estimates is statistically significant.

As in previous models, we interact incorporation into leadership with Democratic Party control of the legislature, given that a Democratic Party majority may provide the political conditions necessary for raising TANF benefits. However, looking to the coefficient estimates for the interaction terms in models 2, 4, and 6, we find no evidence that party control moderates the relationship between minority incorporation and this policy outcome. As expected, the relationship between TANF benefits in year $t-1$ and the year of observation is positive and significant across all six models.

To summarize the findings in this section, we find that the presence of women in legislative leadership has no relationship with changes in state abortion policy; that the presence of African Americans in legislative leadership has a suggestive but inconclusive positive relationship with changes in state HBCU funding; and that the presence of women, blacks, or

⁶ Specifically, the variable is the maximum monthly benefit paid to a family of four.

Table 3: Women, African Americans, and Latinos in Leadership and TANF Benefits

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
TANF Benefit _{t-1}	0.84* (0.05)	0.84* (0.04)	0.84* (0.04)	0.84* (0.05)	0.84* (0.05)	0.84* (0.05)
Women in Leadership _{t-1}	-0.10 (0.12)	-0.04 (0.11)				
Women in Leadership _{t-1} X Democratic Control _{t-1}		-0.40 (0.21)				
Blacks in Leadership _{t-1}			0.40 (0.30)	0.31 (0.31)		
Blacks in Leadership _{t-1} X Democratic Control _{t-1}				0.28 (0.35)		
Latinos in Leadership _{t-1}					0.01 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.08)
Latinos in Leadership _{t-1} X Democratic Control _{t-1}						0.08 (0.38)
Democratic Control _{t-1}		13.26* (6.37)		0.36 (3.37)		2.99 (3.47)
Constant	78.57* (22.13)	73.99* (20.74)	73.72* (22.83)	74.05* (23.51)	76.17* (24.49)	75.12* (24.46)
Observations	310	310	310	310	310	310
Within R ²	0.74	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.74	0.74
Between R ²	0.999	0.998	0.999	0.999	0.999	0.999

Note: * p<0.05. Robust standard errors in parentheses. State and year fixed effects included.

Latinos in leadership has no relationship with changes in TANF benefit levels. The absence of supporting evidence in these analyses does not mean that minority incorporation has no consequences for policy; the results presented here could be idiosyncratic for the three policies examined. More analysis across a wider array of policies will be needed before firmer conclusions can be drawn. However, the initial evidence examined here points to a tentative conclusion that minority incorporation into leadership has little to no effect on policy outcomes traditionally thought to be associated with these groups' presence in political office.

Minority Incorporation and Aggregate Policy Responsiveness: Data and Methods

The second part of our analysis focuses on the connection between minority incorporation and the responsiveness of aggregate policy to public opinion. We expect that as minority group members shape the policies emerging from state legislatures, policy output will more closely reflect public opinion as the views of more segments of the population are included in policy discussions. We assume policy and opinion move in a unidimensional left-right ideological policy space.

For data, we rely upon aggregate estimates of policy liberalism and citizen ideology in the 50 states. To measure policy liberalism, the authors bring to bear data on 148 policies considered in the states between 1936 and 2014 and estimate the ideological position of this policy output using a Bayesian latent-variable model (Caughey and Warshaw 2016). To measure citizen ideology, Caughey and Warshaw (2017) use a dynamic group-level IRT model to estimate average citizen ideology by state using over a million responses to a variety of survey questions over the same eight-decade time span. Separate estimates are obtained for policy and opinion on social issues and economic issues. The result are two measures of public policy

outputs, *Social Policy Liberalism* and *Economic Policy Liberalism*, and two measures of citizen ideology, *Mass Social Liberalism* and *Mass Economic Liberalism*.

To measure minority incorporation into legislative leadership, we calculate the percentage of legislative leadership in each chamber who belong to at least one of our four social groups of interest: women, blacks, Latinos, and workers.⁷ We then average the percentages between the two chambers in each legislature (except Nebraska's) to create the variable *Minority Group Leadership*. The variable ranges in value from 0 to 21.8%, with a mean value of 6.7%. For the purposes of statistical analysis, we test whether minority incorporation moderates the relationship between mass liberalism and policy liberalism. We expect that the positive effect of mass liberalism on policy liberalism will increase as minority incorporation increases.

As in the previous tests, we are interested in the difference that minority groups in leadership make within states over time as minority incorporation fluctuates. We again use data from the 30 states in the previous model over the years 2003 to 2014. We estimate the effects of our independent variables in year $t-1$ on the outcome of policy in the following year, t . We also include a lagged dependent variable to isolate year-over-year changes in policy liberalism. Finally we include state and year fixed effects to control for unit-varying and time-varying confounders.

Results

The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 4. Evidence in support of our expectations will come in the form of a positively signed coefficient estimate in the interaction term between the mass liberalism and minority incorporation variables. We begin by examining the moderating effect of minority group leadership on social policy liberalism in the first model

⁷ Leaders with intersecting group identities (e.g. black woman) are counted once for the purposes of this variable.

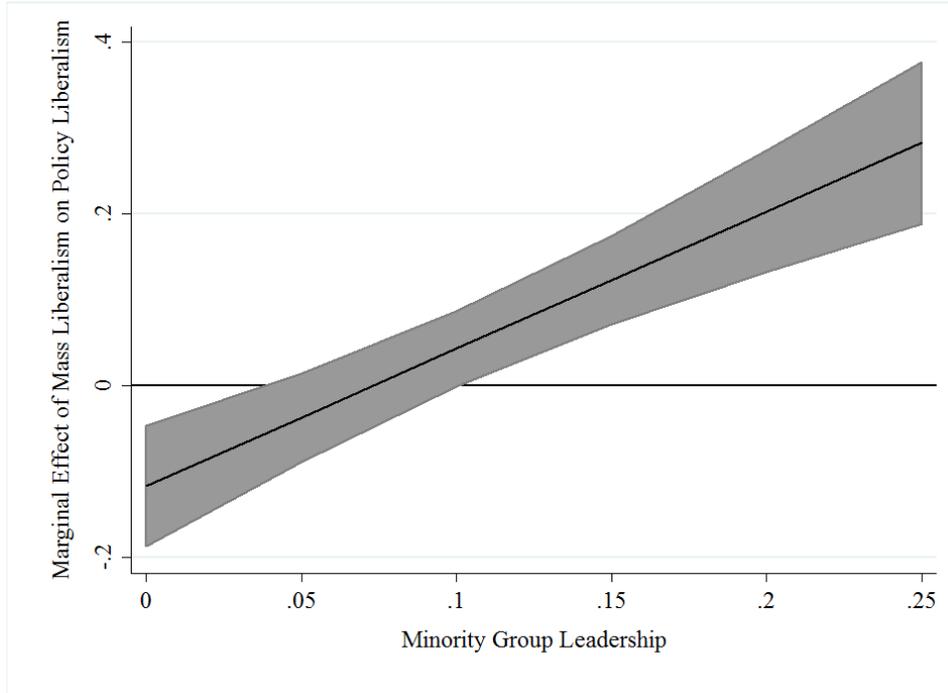
Table 4: The Moderating Effects of Leadership Diversity on the Link between Public Opinion and Public Policy

	(1)	(2)
Minority Group Leadership _{t-1}	-0.91 (0.60)	0.32 (1.25)
Social Policy Liberalism _{t-1}	0.67* (0.03)	
Mass Social Liberalism _{t-1}	-0.12* (0.04)	
Minority Group Leadership _{t-1} X Mass Social Liberalism _{t-1}	1.60* (0.28)	
Economic Policy Liberalism _{t-1}		0.62* (0.08)
Mass Economic Liberalism _{t-1}		0.07 (0.11)
Minority Group Leadership _{t-1} X Mass Economic Liberalism _{t-1}		1.43 (1.64)
Constant	0.03 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.09)
Observations	283	283
Within R ²	0.67	0.39
Between R ²	0.996	0.998

Note: * p<0.05. Robust standard errors in parentheses. State and year fixed effects included.

of Table 4. In line with expectations, the coefficient estimate for the interaction is positive and statistically significant. Because interaction term coefficients are difficult to interpret on their own, we plot the marginal effect of mass social liberalism on social policy liberalism across values of minority incorporation in Figure 1. At minority group leadership's lowest value of 0, the results indicate that mass social liberalism has a *negative* association with social policy

Figure 1: Marginal Effect of Mass Liberalism on Policy Liberalism for Social Policy

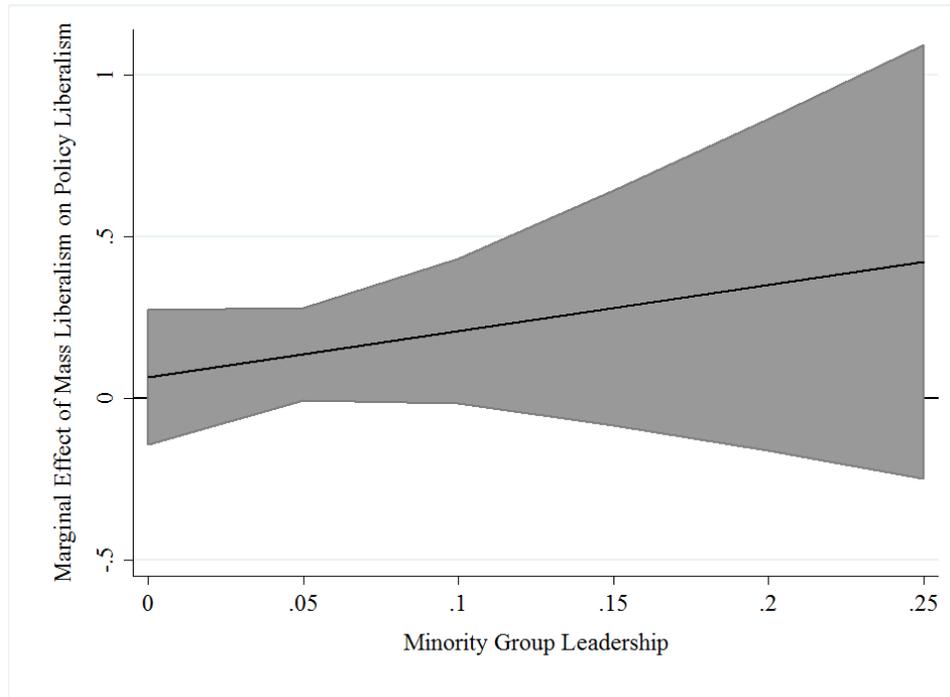


liberalism, indicating a lack of government responsiveness to changes in public opinion when few minorities hold leadership positions. However, when more minority group members serve in legislative leadership, the marginal effect of mass social liberalism on social policy liberalism increases, indicating greater government responsiveness to changes in public opinion.

Turning to the second model in Table 4, the analysis for economic policy tells a slightly different story. Though the interaction term between mass economic liberalism and minority incorporation is signed in the expected positive direction, the estimate falls short of statistical significance at the conventional .05 level of confidence. The marginal effect of mass economic liberalism across values of minority incorporation is plotted in Figure 2. The plot indicates that the relationship between mass economic liberalism and economic policy liberalism does not change as more or fewer minority group members have been incorporated into legislative leadership.

Overall, we find mixed evidence in support of our expectations that increased minority incorporation into leadership allows for public opinion to better inform public policy in states.

Figure 2: Marginal Effect of Mass Liberalism on Policy Liberalism for Economic Policy



Though we did find evidence of such a relationship for social policy, we did not find supporting evidence for such a relationship when it comes to economic policy. On the one hand, this seems perplexing because of research emphasizing differences in public opinion between the political minorities studied and political majorities (Claassen 2004; Herek 2002; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Swain 1993). That said, one potential explanation for our findings may be that when it comes to social issues, political minorities do not differ much from political majorities. For instance, many African Americans and Latinos are socially conservative because of their religious convictions, so in this way are similar to white Evangelicals. When it comes to economic matters, however, blacks and Latinos have preferences quite distinct from white Evangelicals. This similar preference for conservative social policy may allow political

minorities in leadership positions to effectively advocate for public policy that better reflects public opinion.

Discussion

Scholars studying women, racial and ethnic minorities, and workers in American politics have been commonly concerned with the question of whether the descriptive representation of these groups in office makes a difference in outcomes for policies that benefit these groups. We extend these studies by examining whether the incorporation of these groups into party leadership in state legislatures—roles with a more direct influence over policy outcomes than rank-and-file legislators—makes a difference in policy outcomes. Examining over-time outcomes in three state-level policies that benefit these groups, we find little evidence that incorporation into leadership alters the policies put into effect by state governments.

We also ask whether the incorporation of these groups into legislative leadership strengthens mass-elite linkages in terms of policy preferences and policy outcomes. On this front, we find mixed evidence. While the tentative evidence shows that minority group incorporation strengthens the influence of public opinion over social policy outcomes, we find no evidence that it does so for economic policy.

At the moment, our findings present a paradox; we find evidence for broad effects on government policy responsiveness without finding evidence for specific policy effects. It could be the case that minority incorporation makes policy changes more responsive to public opinion on a wide range of policies not marked by group divisions. However, it is likely too soon to draw conclusions from the small number of specific policies we have examined so far. Future efforts

will survey a broader range of specific policy outcomes to determine where minority incorporation makes a difference (if at all).

Moving forward, we intend to examine whether political minorities are able to advance the interests of their respective groups at different stages of the lawmaking process. It may be that these leaders are effective when it comes to agenda-setting and getting bills out of committee, stages of the lawmaking process where personal traits matter more (see Burden 2007). We plan to pursue these research questions in our quest to better understand the political consequences of having more diverse leadership.

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