# Representative bureaucracy: exploring the potential for active representation in local government

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## ABSTRACT

The theory of representative bureaucracy suggests that a demographically diverse public sector workforce (passive representation) will lead to policy outcomes that reflect the interests of all groups represented, including historically disadvantaged communities (active representation). Implicit in the passive-active link is the expectation that minority public administrators, in particular, will have similar attitudes to minority citizens on issues of critical import and relevance to those citizens, and those attitudes, in turn, will influence policy decisions. This research examines the attitudes of citizens and administrators on a series of survey items focused on the responsibilities of local government administrators to advocate for the interests of the African-American community. The survey results confirm the hypothesis that African-American citizens and administrators are more likely than white citizens and administrators to support governmental behaviors that specifically target the interests of the African-American community and that African-American citizens and administrators hold markedly different attitudes from white administrators. Most significantly, attitude congruence with the views of African-American citizens by administrators is shown to be a significant predictor of the adoption of an African-American representative administrative role, overwhelming the influence of other variables including race.

As is widely understood, the theory of representative bureaucracy suggests that diversity within the public workforce, especially in terms of characteristics such as race and ethnicity, will help to ensure that the interests of diverse groups are represented in policy formulation and implementation processes. (1) Stated more formally, the theory holds that "passive representation, or the extent to which a bureaucracy employs people of diverse demographic backgrounds, will lead to active representation, or the pursuit of policies reflecting the interests and desires of those people" (Selden 1997b, 5; see also Krislov 1967; Krislov and Rosenbloom 1981; Mosher 1968). (2) This connection occurs, according to the theory, because the demographic and social backgrounds of individual bureaucrats influence their socialization experiences and the development of attitudes, values, and opinions that ultimately affect their decisions on policy issues (Meier 1993b; Saltzstein 1979). As a result, the theory suggests that when the bureaucracy is representative of the public, policy decisions will, in general, be broadly reflective of the public interest. (3)

An important group of empirical studies has confirmed the linkage between passive and active representation (see Hindera 1993a, 1993b; Keiser et al. 2002; Meier 1993a; Meier and Stewart 1992; Selden 1997b), but this research has necessarily been limited to the examination of contexts where (1) minority interests are known or can be inferred, (2) specific minority decision makers can be identified, and (3) decisions on issues relevant to minority interests can be isolated and linked back to particular decision makers. Because of these limitations, the full extent of active representation may be greater than that revealed by earlier work. An absence of identifiable policy outcomes favoring minority interests, for example, does not necessarily mean that active representation did not occur. It may have taken place but was unsuccessful. It may also be the case that active representation produces outcomes that are not easily observed or have impacted a particular policy area by altering the terms of debate or discussion rather than producing immediate and tangible effects. The present study seeks to build on earlier research, therefore, by looking for bureaucratic attitudes consistent with active representation rather than seeking evidence of policy outcomes in line with the interests of specific groups. Our focus, therefore, is on assessing the potential for active representation.

In conducting this work, we examine the idea of a "minority representative role," introduced into the representative bureaucracy literature by Selden (1997b). This concept refers to the willingness of bureaucrats to see themselves as advocates for, or representatives of, minority interests. Selden (1997b, 140) found that administrators who adhered to that role were more likely than others to make decisions consistent with interests of the minority community. Selden also demonstrated that while minority racial or ethnic status was an important determinant of minority representative role adherence, nonminority bureaucrats also often shared that role perception. Indeed, Selden (1997b) and Selden, Brudney, and Kellough (1998) found that it was a bureaucrat's adoption of the minority representative role, rather than race or ethnicity itself, which directly produces the active representation of minority interests.

In our research, we first examine the connection between the race of individual bureaucrats and attitude congruence with African-American citizens and then explore the link between such attitude congruence and the extent to which bureaucrats view themselves as representatives of

African-American interests. Evidence of these connections allow for a fuller elaboration of the linkages between passive and active representation.


## REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY AND ACTIVE REPRESENTATION

In some of the earliest empirical work to explore the connection between passive and active representation, Meier and Stewart (1992) and Meier (1993a) found that the presence of minority public school teachers was positively associated with constructive educational outcomes for minority students. Meier (1993a, 411) focused specifically on the ability of Latino teachers to represent the interests of Latino students and found strong support for the idea that passive representation did indeed lead to active representation.

In other work, Hindera (1993a, 1993b) examined the effects of the passive representation of African-Americans in Regional Offices of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on the percentage of total charges filed on behalf of African-American employees or applicants in those regions. Hindera (1993b) found that charges benefiting African-Americans were filed more frequently as the percentage of African-American investigators employed within the Regional Offices increased. A more recent analysis of the EEOC, however, revealed that the introduction of new goals and priorities led to a decline in the extent of active representation of African-Americans (Meier, Pennington, and Eller 2005).

In her study of the US Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration, Selden (1997b, 139) concluded that the passive representation of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians positively influenced the allocation of loans favoring those groups in the Farmers Home Administration's Rural Housing Loans program. Selden (1997a, 36) asserted that such findings are "particularly important because active representation is found in an agency whose primary mission does not emphasize minority issues, that historically has employed low percentages of minorities, and that has implemented policies that have adversely affected minorities."

In addition, as noted earlier, Selden (1997b) also concluded that attitudes, beliefs, and values lead, for some public administrators, to the formation of a "minority representative role perception" that, in turn, leads to the formation of decisions consistent with minority interests. Selden found that "administrators who perceive their role as that of an advocate or representative of minority interests are more likely to make decisions that benefit the minority community" (140). Selden further demonstrated that while minority racial status was an important determinant of the minority representative role, non-minority bureaucrats also often shared that role perception. In related work, Selden, Brudney, and Kellough (1998, 717) reported that "race, education, age, party identification, years employed by the federal government, and perceived work obligations" collectively affect the likelihood that administrators will view themselves as representatives of minority concerns, and as was observed previously, it is the adoption of the minority representative role, rather than race or ethnicity itself, which explains the active representation of minority interests.

More recently, Wilkins and Keiser (2006) found evidence of the passive-active link in child support enforcement for women. Similarly, Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) found that the percentage of women in local law enforcement is positively related to the number of reports and arrests for sexual assault. Interestingly, however, Wilkins and Williams (2005) concluded that a higher percentage of African-American police officers led to an increase in racial profiling of African-American citizens. Thus, passive representation may affect policy outcomes but not always in the expected direction (see Andrews et al. 2005; Pitts 2005).

In general, all the research finding evidence of active representation of minority interests assumes the presence of minority administrator attitudes consistent with those of minorities in the general population. But to date, only a relatively small number of unique organizations have been examined, and the work is necessarily conducted within specific, narrowly defined circumstances described above. It seems likely, however, that active representation, in the sense of minority public administrators "press[ing] for the interests and desires of those whom they are presumed to represent" (Mosher 1968, 12), could be more common than current research suggests. An examination of the extent to which minority administrators exhibit attitudes, values, or beliefs congruent with those of minority citizens should help us to understand this possibility. Specifically, we shall be interested in observing whether the attitudes, values, and beliefs of African-American administrators are congruent with those of African-American citizens.

## THE POTENTIAL FOR ACTIVE REPRESENTATION

As we have observed, theory suggests that administrative attitudes consistent with those of minorities in the population and adherence to a minority representative role are important and necessary preconditions for active representation by minority bureaucrats. Only a limited amount of work has examined bureaucratic values as a precursor to active representation, however, and much of that is now 30 years old. Given the fact that values may shift over time, it is important that we continue to reexamine the degree to which key differences between minority and nonminority public administrators are present on a range of salient issues and whether congruence on those same issues exists between minority bureaucrats and minority citizens.

In the 1970s, work by a few scholars documented a significant amount of attitude congruence between minority public administrators and minorities in the population on issues directly related to minority interests, and major differences of opinion were found between minority and non-minority administrators. For example, Thompson (1976) found substantial differences by race on support for affirmative action programs, with minority group members, both in the population generally and among administrators, more supportive than whites. Similarly, Thompson (1978, 342) concluded that while most social characteristics of public personnel administrators were poor predictors of "how receptive to hiring minorities a civil servant will be," both minorities and women were significantly more receptive to hiring minorities than non-minority men.

In other work, Rosenbloom and Kinnard (1977, 38) explored the attitudes of high-ranking personnel at the Department of Defense on "the extent to which they felt a responsibility toward and sought to aid minority group members in obtaining placements with the federal bureaucracy." Again, significant attitude differences were found for different racial groups, with minority administrators being more supportive than nonminority administrators, but attitudes were also influenced by such factors as age, seniority, education, and position.

In another study, Rosenbloom and Featherstonhaugh (1977) directly compared the attitudes of federal administrators and citizens on several measures of political participation. They found that, regardless of organizational position, African-American administrators held significantly different attitudes than white administrators, but when compared to the attitudes of whites, African-American bureaucrats and African-American citizens tended to hold similar views. Their analysis "strongly suggests that passive bureaucratic representation can serve as a prerequisite for greater active representation" (879).

More recently, Dolan (2002) found that women and men differed significantly in their opinions regarding government spending priorities on a variety of social programs. These differences were present between men and women in the general population and between men and women in the federal Senior Executive Service (SES). In addition, the preferences of SES women were consistent with those of women in the general population, suggesting that organizational socialization had not eroded the potential for women in high-level positions to act as representatives of women generally.

It would be useful to continue this line of inquiry. No studies on attitude congruence have been conducted at the local level where, arguably, public officials interact more closely with the people. In addition, the significance of individual attitudes and values may, as mentioned earlier, derive from the fact that they lead some administrators to adopt a minority representative role that makes them more likely than other public servants to press for the interests of minority communities (Selden 1997a, 1997b; Selden, Brudney, and Kellough 1998). This idea is consistent with Herbert's (1974) argument that minority administrators feel a sense of responsibility and pressure to adopt an administrative orientation that serves minority communities. (4) It would be helpful, therefore, to also look for the presence of the minority representative role as an indicator of the potential for active representation in local government.


## RESEARCH METHOD

Data on minority and nonminority attitudes were collected through a survey administered separately to public administrators and citizens in Athens, GA, in the fall of 2002. Athens is a medium-sized city in northeast Georgia with a population of slightly more than 100,000 people. It is the home of the University of Georgia and in many respects is similar to numerous university or college towns. Administratively, the City of Athens and Clarke County (A-CC) have a unified government offering a broad range of services typical of an urban area of its size. African-Americans comprise approximately 30% of the population.

The survey was designed to solicit information that would permit a direct comparison of attitudes between public administrators and the people they serve. The development of survey questions was informed by, but do not replicate, questions used in previous studies of the potential for active representation, notably Herbert (1974), Karnig and McClain (1988), and Selden, Brudney, and Kellough (1998). The goal was to create a slate of survey questions that address political conditions, specific policies, and administrative behaviors that are directly related to the theory of representative bureaucracy and are salient to the African-American community.

Citizens and administrators were asked to indicate their level of agreement with two sets of 10 statements. (5) The first set of questions asked respondents to assess the quality of the local government and how well the government has addressed issues related to the African-American community. The second set of questions focused on the respondent's perceptions of the responsibility of individual administrators to represent the interests of the African-American community and to ensure that those interests are considered in the policy process. Thus, these questions measure the perceived importance of the minority representative role for public administrators. (6)

In conducting the survey, African-American neighborhoods were oversampled to ensure a sufficient number of African-American respondents to the citizen questionnaire. One sample of 1,000 individuals was drawn at random from the entire population of A-CC, and a second sample of 1,000 names was drawn at random from a single census tract that was known to have a high proportion of African-Americans (70.7%). Four rounds of direct mailings with replacement questionnaires were distributed. A number of the addresses in the original sample proved to be invalid (primarily from among those addresses in the heavily African-American tract), so the total sample was effectively reduced to 893. Ultimately, 302 usable survey instruments were returned producing a response rate of 33.8% which was respectable given the type of study being conducted. (7) Because of the oversampling of African-American citizens, 45% of our respondents to the citizen survey identified themselves as African-American while 55% indicated they were white.

The population of local government administrators was drawn from across all departments and agencies of the local government but was focused on employees in "higher level" positions since they possess the necessary authority and discretion to make significant administrative decisions and to provide a rigorous test of the theory of representative bureaucracy. (8) The sample consisted of all 787 employees categorized as officials and administrators, professionals, technicians, and protective service workers in reports submitted to the EEOC by the government. (9) Completed and useable surveys were received from 264 of these employees for a response rate of 33.5%. Again, this is a respectable rate given the type of survey that was involved and the fact that the respondents closely mirrored the population of administrators in the employment categories covered. Among our respondent administrators, 77.4% were white and additional 20.5% were African-American. Consequently, whites and African-Americans accounted for 97.9% of the administrators under analysis. Meaningful comparisons of attitudes among citizens and public administrators by race could, therefore, only be conducted for those groups. Administrators from other racial categories were excluded from the analysis. (10)

Analysis of the survey data focuses on three specific research questions. First, to what degree are the views of African-American and white citizens and African-American and white administrators similar or different? For example, are the attitudes of African-American citizens and administrators congruent? Second, are African-Americans in government more likely than whites in government to adhere to a minority advocacy role? And third, is attitude congruence with the African-American community a primary determinant of adherence to an African-American advocacy role by public administrators?

**FINDINGS REGARDING ATTITUDE DIFFERENCES AND CONGRUENCE**

Many important and interesting observations can be drawn from our survey. For example, there are substantial differences in the attitudes of African-Americans and whites on almost all the survey items, and those racial differences are present between citizens as well as administrators. In table 1, showing responses by race to survey questions dealing with the performance of the A-CC government, African-American and white citizens have significantly different views on all issues except that reflected in item 2 which asks if the A-CC government is "doing an excellent job of solving the county's most important problems." On all other items, striking differences appear. For instance, approximately 76% of African-American citizens agreed that "African-Americans have fewer opportunities than whites to get affordable housing in A-CC," but only 28.4% of white citizens held that view. On item 9, slightly more than 82% of African-American citizens agreed that "African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by A-CC law enforcement," whereas only 26.3% of white citizens agreed with that statement. Similar differences by race are found among the administrators surveyed. For example, 61.2% of African-American administrators agreed that African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by law enforcement, but only 3.7% of white administrators agree with that view.

Turing to a consideration of survey items 11 through 20 in table 2, we see even more dramatic differences. It should be recalled that these questions were designed to assess citizen and administrator attitudes regarding the extent to which local administrators should adhere to a "minority representative role" by promoting the interests of the African-American community. Substantial differences are found here between African-American and white citizens and African-American and white administrators on all items. For example, nearly 87% of the African-American citizens indicated that "High-ranking employees of the A-CC government should actively advocate in favor of policies that specifically address the interests of African-American citizens," but only 42.5% of white citizens agreed with that statement. Among administrators, on that same survey item, 86% of African-Americans agreed, but only 17.4% of the whites agreed.

Tables 3 and 4 provide information on differences between citizens and administrators within racial categories. Here, we see a considerable amount of consistency, as expected, among African-Americans on most survey items. For instance, African-American citizens and administrators have similar responses on 6 of the 10 items in table 3 and on 9 of the 10 items in table 4. This finding indicates clearly that African-American administrators have views that reflect those of the African-American community on issues that are salient to that community, as the theory of representative bureaucracy would predict. In sharp contrast, there are statistically

significant differences in the views of white administrators and African-American citizens on all but items 1 and 2 in table 3 and on every item in table 4, although indications of the statistical significance of these differences are omitted from the tables for clarity.

The final comparison that is reported directly in tables 3 and 4 is that between white citizens and white administrators. Here we see remarkable differences of views. In fact, white citizens have views that are significantly different from those of white administrators on 16 of the 20 items from the survey. This response pattern is intriguing because it reveals that the views of white citizens in this community are more in line with those of African-American citizens than with those of white administrators. In fact, the suggestion is that the views of white administrators are, in this case, out of touch with those of the citizenry in general. The dynamic underlying this pattern is uncertain at this point, and it would be very interesting, of course, to see if this pattern would emerge in studies of other communities or in studies that address other issues. In summary, however, and in direct relevance to the theory of representative bureaucracy, our survey responses show significant congruence in the attitudes of African-American citizens and administrators and major differences in the views of white administrators and African-American citizens.

## EXPLAINING ATTITUDE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN ADMINISTRATORS AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN CITIZENS

We turn now to a consideration of factors that may influence the extent to which administrators' attitudes are congruent with those of African-American citizens. Obviously, race may be a primary determinant since we have already seen that African-American administrators have attitudes largely consistent with those of African-American citizens, whereas white administrators do not. That does not mean, however, that no white administrators will exhibit attitudes similar to those of the African-American citizenry. A number of factors besides race may determine administrator's attitudes including sex, age, education, political ideology, and awareness of views within the African-American community. To examine that possibility, we estimate a regression equation in which administrator attitude congruence with African-American citizens is seen as a function of an administrator's race as well as the additional variables noted.

Our measure of administrator attitude congruence with African-American citizens, our dependent variable in this model, is constructed by first calculating for each administrator the proportion of African-American citizens who register the same response as that administrator on each of the 20 survey items presented in tables 1 through 4. (11) Then, also for each administrator, we calculate the arithmetic mean of those proportions across the 20 items. This procedure gives us a measure of the average extent to which an administrator's responses are congruent with those of the African-American citizens. An example may help to clarify how this is done. We may find, for instance, that an individual administrator agreed with survey item 1, and 70% of the African-American citizens also agreed with that item. If so, we would conclude that this administrator's response to item 1 is congruent with 70% of the African-American citizenry. If that same administrator disagreed with item 2, and only 20% of the African-

American citizens disagreed, then the administrator's response on item 2 would be congruent with 20% of the African-American citizen respondents. Similar measures of congruence are made on the remaining 18 items, and the average (mean) level of congruence across all 20 items is then calculated to serve as our summary measure. The higher the mean level of congruence on the survey items, the greater the level of consistency observed between an individual administrator's attitudes and those of the African-American community. For individual administrators, the mean level of attitude congruence ranged from 16.52% to 83.60%, meaning that one administrator at the bottom of the range agreed on average with only 16.52% of the African-American citizens whereas the administrator at the top of the range on this variable agree with 83.60% of the African-American citizens on average. (12)

Independent variables are drawn from a series of survey questions related to demographic characteristics of citizens and administrators. (13) The race of the administrators surveyed is a variable of primary interest, as noted above, since our earlier results indicate that African-American administrators are more likely than white administrators to have attitudes congruent with those of African-American citizens. Administrator race is coded 0 for white and 1 for African-American; thus, a positive coefficient on race is expected.

Administrator sex (coded 0 for male and 1 for female) is included as a control variable since early research has shown that women may be more sympathetic to issues associated with representative bureaucracy than men. For example, Thompson (1978, 335) concluded that, male administrators were "significantly less receptive to recruiting nonwhites" than were female administrators. Administrator age is also entered into the model as a control for generational differences in attitudes and is expected to be negatively associated with attitude congruence with the African-American community. On the other hand, higher levels of education achieved by administrators are expected to be positively associated congruence with African-American citizen attitudes. We expect also that the political ideology of individual administrators is important. More liberal administrators are expected to have higher levels of congruence with the views of the African-American community, once other variables are held constant. (14) Finally, A-CC administrators were asked to indicate the amount of feedback on important issues they receive from the African-American community in order to gauge their familiarity with such issues. (15) Responses were measured on a four-point scale: 1 for none at all, 2 for not very much, 3 for fair amount, and 4 for great deal. A positive association is expected between the amount of feedback from the African-American community received on salient issues by administrators (and thus, awareness of African-American citizen opinions) and attitude congruence with African-American citizens.

Results from this regression, estimated using ordinary least squares, are presented in the first column in table 5. As can be seen, five of the six independent variables have a significant effect on the extent to which administrator attitudes on survey items examined are congruent with the views of African-American citizens in A-CC. Race, sex, education, political ideology, and the receipt of feedback from the African-American community are all associated with administrator attitude congruence with African-American citizens as expected. Race clearly has a very large effect with African-American administrators on average registering a level of congruence more than 25% points higher than that of white administrators. The age of the administrator

apparently has no effect on congruence, contrary to our expectation. Overall, the model explains slightly more than 46% of the variance in the dependent variable.

**ADMINISTRATOR ADHERENCE TO AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE ROLE**

As was noted earlier, agreement with survey items 11 through 20 (see tables 2 and 4) provides an indication of the degree to which an administrator has views consistent with the adoption of an African-American representative role. A regression model was developed to predict and to better understand the impact of race and other variables on adherence to that role perception.

The dependent variable in this model is an index that represents the extent to which administrators agree that they should exhibit behaviors that are consistent with active representation, and thus the minority, or in our case, African-American representative role. It should be recalled that responses to survey items 11 though 20 were measured on a four-point scale where 1 equals completely disagree, 2 equals generally disagree, 3 equals generally agree, and 4 equals completely agree. The average (mean) response on those questions was calculated for each administrator, providing a measure of the extent to which the administrator had adopted the African-American representative role. (16) The independent variables, race, sex, education, and feedback, were expected to have a positive relationship with adherence to an African-American representative role perception by administrators, whereas age and ideology were expected to have negative coefficients.

Regression results are presented in the second column in table 5. As can be seen, race has a strong positive effect on adoption of the African-American representative role, indicating that African-American administrators have a much stronger propensity to adopt that role than do white administrators. However, education and political ideology are also significantly related to adoption of this role as expected. Administrators with higher levels of education are more likely to see the African-American representative role as important, whereas those who identify themselves as politically conservative are less likely to embrace that role. Notably, sex and age are only marginally significant by usual standards, with probability levels of .055 and .067, respectively. Overall, the model explains approximately 40% of the variance in African-American representative role adoption by administrators.

At this point, it is clear that an administrator's race impacts both attitude congruence with African-American citizens and the adoption of an African-American representative role. Other research has demonstrated that adherence to a minority representative role is, in turn, a primary determinant of active representation (Selden, Brudney, and Kellough 1998). Further insight into the potential for active representation would be provided by understanding the relative effects of race and attitude congruence on minority (i.e., African-American) representative role adoption. This is an intriguing question, in part because attitude congruence, being partially a function of race, will likely predate a public administrator's career and possible adoption of the minority representative role. As a result, it may typically be the case that active representation of minority interests occurs when race leads to attitude congruence with the minority community and that congruence in turn leads to adoption of the minority representative role. (17) Thus, it is

hypothesized that when administrators, regardless of race and other demographic variables, hold attitudes in common with African-American citizens, they will be more likely to adopt an African-American representative role orientation.

The results from a regression model designed to test this hypothesis are presented in the third column of table 5. These results show that, as expected, attitude congruence with the African-American community is the predominant predictor of advocacy role adoption. In fact, attitude congruence is the only variable in the equation that achieves statistical significance, and it does so at the .001 level. (18) In addition, the model explains 80% of the variance of the dependent variable, suggesting that it is attitude congruence with the African-American community, rather than race, per se, or any other demographic characteristic, which appears to be the most important direct influence on administrator adoption of an African-American representative role. When attitude congruence is held constant, race has no effect on African-American representative role adoption, although race was significant in our earlier model. This finding is consistent with our expectation that attitude congruence with African-American citizens intervenes between race and adoption by administrators of the African-American representative role.


## CONCLUSION

A number of interesting findings are produced by this study. First, our initial analysis of survey responses indicated that African-American citizens and African-American administrators exhibit very similar attitudes on the issues addressed in our survey. This finding is consistent with what would be predicted by the theory of representative bureaucracy, and as such, it may not be surprising. However, the pattern of attitude congruence is unmistakable and is, in fact, striking on questions related to the African-American representative role perception (items 11-20). In addition, an equally compelling pattern suggests that African-American citizens and white administrators hold markedly different attitudes.

The attitude congruence regression model explained a relatively large percent of the variance in the extent to which administrators share the views of African-American citizens. Race, as expected, proved to be a powerful predictor for attitude congruence. It is also true, however, that sex, education, political ideology, and feedback from the African-American community are important predictors of administrator congruence with the attitudes of African-American citizens. Collectively, these results confirm those found by researchers such as Rosenbloom and Featherstonhaugh (1977, 879) and support their finding that "passive bureaucratic representation can serve as a prerequisite for greater active representation."

The results of this study also support and expand upon the findings of previous research on the minority representative role (see Selden 1997b; Selden, Brudney, and Kellough 1998). Specifically, we find that African-American administrators are more likely than white administrators to adopt an African-American representative role, but more importantly, the inclusion of attitude congruence in the analysis overwhelmed all other predictors of role adoption, including race. This result underscores the importance of attitude congruence and

helps to expand our understanding of the adoption of the minority representative role and the potential for active representation.

As with all research on bureaucratic attitudes and behavior, this research has limitations. First, only white and African-American citizen and administrator attitudes were examined. Further research is needed to determine whether the observed patterns of attitude congruence hold true for other racial and ethnic groups. Second, the survey was administered in only one local government context. Obviously, idiosyncratic factors stemming from history, culture, and socioeconomic circumstances of that location may have affected the attitudes of residents and administrators surveyed. Third, the survey items in this research differ somewhat from those used in previous studies in terms of the range of issues included. Future researchers should test different constructs to assess whether the relationships observed here between race, attitude congruence, and representative role adoption will hold. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of our data prevents a direct empirical test of the causal relationship between administrator attitude congruence with African-American citizens and adoption of an African-American representative role. Future work with data that separate these concepts in time would be useful to confirm the direction of causality. Nevertheless, the attitudinal patterns observed here are consistent with previous studies of the potential for active representation and therefore provide a solid foundation for the further exploration of the adoption of a minority representative role.

Overall, this research presents a compelling argument that the potential for active representation may be substantial within the higher level bureaucratic ranks of local government. The data support the critical assumption underlying the concept of representative bureaucracy that race and other demographic characteristics are related to the attitudes held by both citizens and public administrators. The findings here suggest that demographic backgrounds and socialization experiences significantly influence attitudes regarding the desirability of a government workforce that seeks to represent the preferences of a historically disadvantaged group. Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of attitude congruence by suggesting that the impact of race on the adoption of the African-American representative role by administrators operates through the formation of attitudes consistent with those of African-American citizens. Given the importance of attitude congruence in determining the potential for active representation, future work examining its determinants in other contexts should be productive.

**NOTES**

(1) The interests of women may be represented in this manner well. See, for example, work by Keiser et al. (2002) and Dolan (2000, 2002) on that question. Although recognizing that representative bureaucracy may operate to the benefit of women, the current analysis focuses on the issue of the representation of racial minority, specifically African-American, interests.

(2) We wish to note, however, that passive representation is important for a number of reasons besides the fact that it may lead to active representation. Krislov (1967, 58) has argued, for example, that a representative public bureaucracy can help to ensure that divergent points of

view are present in policy deliberations, can promote the legitimacy of government action, can result in the presence of employees with diverse skills, and can give all groups within society a sense that they have stake in the outcomes of government.

(3) This is not to say that the links between social background, socialization experiences, and attitudes are the same for all groups. For example, the link may be stronger for African-Americans than for women (Keiser et al. 2002).

(4) See Selden, Brewer, and Brudney (1999) for an analysis of various administrative role orientations.

(5) Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a four-point scale: Completely Disagree, Generally Disagree, Generally Agree, and Completely Agree.

(6) To be consistent with earlier work, we have used the phrase "minority representative role" to describe the phenomenon we are interested in observing, although the reader is reminded that we are actually measuring the extent to which administrators believe they should represent the interests of African-Americans. Later, we describe this concept as an African-American representative role perception. The survey instrument was pretested by a small sample of administrators and local government specialists at the University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

(7) The reader should note that we are not attempting to generalize findings to the entire A-CC population.

(8) By focusing on administrators in higher level positions, we are to a moderate extent also controlling for administrator income and social/economic status.

(9) The personnel information system listed 45 employees in these categories erroneously as a result of recent retirements, transfers, or other personnel actions. Those 45 employees were not counted among the 787 in the sample.

(10) We should note that African-Americans are the oldest and by far the largest minority group in A-CC. We excluded 22 administrators from other non-White categories including one Asian, three Hispanics, nine of mixed racial or ethnic background, and nine from a racial or ethnic category described as "other."

(11) For purposes of this calculation, original response categories of "Completely Agree" and "Generally Agree" were combined into one category labeled "Agree," and the response categories "Completely Disagree" and "Generally Disagree" were combined into a single category labeled "Disagree."

(12) Across all administrators, this summary measure of attitude congruence with the African-American citizenry itself had a mean 50.71, a median of 48.55, and a standard deviation of 21.84. For African-American administrators, the mean of the measure was 76.29, indicating that, on average, African-American administrators agreed with 76.29% of the African-American citizens responding to our survey. For white administrators, the mean of the summary measure

was 44.58, indicating that, on average, white administrators agreed with only 44.58% of our African-American citizen respondents. Although this measure is not a simple summation of individual administrator's responses to survey items 1-20, Cronbach's alpha for those items is .915.

(13) Colinearity statistics including variance inflation factors revealed no evidence of multicolinearity problems in this or subsequent models. Variance inflation factors in the models tested ranged from 1.03 to 1.85.

(14) Political ideology is coded as 1 = Very Liberal, 2 = Liberal, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Conservative, and 5 = Very Conservative. Given that coding system, political ideology is expected to be negatively associated with attitude congruence with the African-American citizens who responded to our survey.

(15) The feedback variable measures the amount of direct interaction between an individual administrator and the African-American public. As such, this variable helps to capture the extent to which administrators are knowledgeable of concerns of the African-American citizenry.

(16) Cronbach's alpha for this measure is .956. Two administrators did not respond to this battery of questions and were excluded from this analysis and earlier analyses.

(17) Because race is an intrinsic characteristic at birth, it predates the formation of attitudes, including attitudes congruent with African-American citizens in general. We believe that race influences socialization processes that, in turn, influence the formation of a broad array of attitudes as the theory of representative bureaucracy suggests. To the extent that this process operates as assumed, an administrator's attitude congruence with African-American citizens will most likely predate adoption of an African-American representative role perception by that administrator. It is unlikely that an administrator will first adopt an African-American representative role and then formulate attitudes on policy issues congruent with the attitudes of African-American citizens. In other words, the direction of causality is expected to go from race to attitude formation to adoption of an African-American representative role, and our model is based on that assumption. An administrator who feels a calling to serve the needs of the African-American community must first have some understanding and appreciation of the challenges facing that community and must have attitudes that lead to the conclusion that those challenges warrant the dedicated efforts of public administrators. Thus, attitude congruence serves as a roadmap for the pressing for interests and desires that is the hallmark of bureaucratic advocacy (Mosher 1968). Although we cannot empirically test these causal assumptions given the cross-sectional nature of our data, it appears implausible that African-American representative role adoption would occur before the formation of the attitudes we measure.

(18) The correlation between race and congruence with the attitudes of African-American citizens in our sample is .59, indicating that while race is significantly associated with our measure of congruence with African-American citizen attitudes, the correlation is not perfect. Variance inflation factors for race and attitude congruence were 1.55 and 1.85, respectively, and for all other variables in this model, VIFs ranged from 1.04 to 1.22.

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Table 1
Citizen and Administrator Responses by Race: Percent Agreeing with
Survey Items 1-10 (number of category respondents in parentheses)

|  | Citizens | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Survey Items | African-American | White |
| 1. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of services that A-CC government provides. | 70.1 ** (134) | 85.5 (166) |
| 2. A-CC government is doing an excellent job solving the county's most important problems. | 57.0 (135) | 56.4 (165) |
| 3. A-CC government should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of African-Americans. | 95.5 *** (134) | 62.8 (164) |
| 4. A-CC government is more productive when its workforce reflects the racial diversity of the county. | 83.2 ** (131) | 67.7 (164) |
| 5. A-CC government should support programs that reduce the barriers to employment, such as the lack of affordable quality day care. | 97.8 *** (135) | 74.8 (163) |
| 6. African-Americans have fewer opportunities than whites to get affordable housing in A-CC. | 76.3 *** (135) | 28.4 (162) |
| 7. Public facilities in A-CC meet the needs of the African-American community. | 51.1 *** (135) | 73.5 (155) |
| 8. African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by A-CC public transportation. | 53.4 *** (131) | 12.7 (150) |
| 9. African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by A-CC law enforcement. | 82.2 *** (135) | 26.3 (152) |
| 10. Race relations are a problem in A-CC. | 78.5 *** (135) | 43.6 (165) |

```
                                    Administrators

Survey Items                     African-American       White

1.   Overall, I am satisfied        86.0 (50)      79.2 (192)
     with the quality of
     services that A-CC
     government provides.
2.   A-CC government is             66.0 (50)      51.0 (192)
     doing an excellent job
     solving the county's
     most important problems.
3.   A-CC government should      94.0 *** (50)     42.1 (190)
     make every possible
     effort to improve the
     social and economic
     position of African-
     Americans.
4.   A-CC government is          88.0 *** (50)     48.2 (191)
     more productive when
     its workforce reflects
     the racial diversity
     of the county.
5.   A-CC government should      90.0 *** (50)     63.7 (190)
     support programs that
     reduce the barriers to
     employment, such as the
     lack of affordable
     quality day care.
6.   African-Americans have      77.1 *** (48)     12.3 (187)
     fewer opportunities
     than whites to get
     affordable housing
     in A-CC.
7.   Public facilities in        69.4 *** (49)     91.8 (184)
     A-CC meet the needs of
     the African-American
     community.
8.   African-Americans are       29.2 *** (48)      1.1 (183)
     treated less fairly than
     whites by A-CC public
     transportation.
9.   African-Americans are       61.2 *** (49)      3.7 (187)
     treated less fairly than
     whites by A-CC law
     enforcement.
10.  Race relations are a        70.0 *** (50)     34.2 (190)
     problem in A-CC.
```

Note. Two-tailed tests of the difference of proportions
were conducted comparing African-American and white
respondents within the citizen and administrator groups.

** Statistically significant differences at the .01 level.

*** Statistically significant differences at the .001 level.

Table 2
Citizen and Administrator Responses by Race: Percent Agreeing
with Survey Items 11-20 (number of category respondents in
parentheses)

|  | Citizens | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Survey Items | African-American | White |
| 11. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should make special efforts to provide information to policy makers concerning the needs and perspectives of the African- American community. | 92.6 *** (136) | 63.6 (162) |
| 12. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate in favor of policies that specifically address the interests of African-American citizens. | 86.8 *** (136) | 42.5 (160) |
| 13. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate in favor of a more equitable distribution of services to African-Americans. | 91.9 *** (136) | 55.1 (158) |
| 14. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate for organizational change to ensure responsiveness to African-American interests. | 94.1 *** (135) | 47.2 (159) |
| 15. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should make special efforts to identify African-Americans in their organization and support them with opportunities and positive feedback. | 92.6 *** (135) | 52.8 (159) |
| 16. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should encourage and recruit qualified African-Americans for employment in A-CC government. | 97.8 *** (136) | 77.8 (162) |
| 17. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively work to enhance the access of African-American citizens to government decision makers, such as elected officials and department heads. | 93.4 *** (136) | 63.6 (162) |
| 18. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate for increased participation of the African- American community in the | 95.6 *** (136) | 65.8 (161) |

shaping of policy for A-CC.

19. High-ranking employees of          94.1 *** (136)     72.2 (162)
    A-CC government should seek
    out qualified African-
    American citizens who can
    be recommended to sit on
    boards and commissions.

20. High-ranking employees of A-CC     87.9 *** (132)     65.6 (160)
    government should sensitize
    others to stereotypes about
    race.


                                                Administrators

Survey Items                          African-American     White

11. High-ranking employees of A-CC     92.0 *** (50)      37.7 (191)
    government should make special
    efforts to provide information
    to policy makers concerning
    the needs and perspectives of
    the African- American community.

12. High-ranking employees of A-CC     86.0 *** (50)      17.4 (190)
    government should actively
    advocate in favor of policies
    that specifically address the
    interests of African-American
    citizens.

13. High-ranking employees of A-CC     96.0 *** (50)      29.8 (188)
    government should actively
    advocate in favor of a
    more equitable distribution
    of services to African-
    Americans.

14. High-ranking employees of A-CC     96.0 *** (50)      28.9 (190)
    government should actively
    advocate for organizational
    change to ensure responsiveness
    to African-American interests.

15. High-ranking employees of A-CC     87.8 *** (49)      35.1 (191)
    government should make special
    efforts to identify African-
    Americans in their organization
    and support them with
    opportunities and
    positive feedback.

16. High-ranking employees of          94.0 *** (50)      62.6 (190)

    A-CC government should
    encourage and recruit qualified
    African-Americans for employment
    in A-CC government.

17. High-ranking employees of A-CC     98.0 *** (50)      42.6 (188)
    government should actively
    work to enhance the access of
    African-American citizens to

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                    |              |
| --- | --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- | ------------------ | ------------ |
|     | government decision makers, such as elected officials and department heads.                                                                                                                                                      |                    |              |
| 18. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate for increased participation of the African-American community in the shaping of policy for A-CC.                                                               | 94.0 *** (50)      | 44.0 (191)   |
| 19. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should seek out qualified African-American citizens who can be recommended to sit on boards and commissions.                                                                            | 94.0 *** (50)      | 47.6 (191)   |
| 20. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should sensitize others to stereotypes about race.                                                                                                                                     | 95.9 *** (49)      | 74.2 (190)   |

Note: Two-tailed tests of the difference of proportions were conducted comparing African-American and white respondents within the citizen and administrator groups.

*** Statistically significant differences at the .001 level.

Table 3
African-American and white Responses by Citizen and Administrator:
Percent Agreeing with Survey Items 1-10 (number of category
respondents in parentheses)

|  | African-Americans | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Survey Items | Citizens | Administrators |
| 1. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of services that A-CC government provides. | 70.1 * (134) | 86.0 (50) |
| 2. A-CC government is doing an excellent job solving the county's most important problems. | 57.0 (135) | 66.0 (50) |
| 3. A-CC government should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of African-Americans. | 95.5 (134) | 94.0 (50) |
| 4. A-CC government is more productive when its workforce reflects the racial diversity of the county. | 83.2 (131) | 88.0 (50) |
| 5. A-CC government should support programs that reduce the barriers to employment, such as the lack of affordable quality day care. | 97.8 (135) | 90.0 (50) |
| 6. African-Americans have fewer opportunities than whites to get affordable housing in A-CC. | 76.3 (135) | 77.1 (48) |
| 7. Public facilities in A-CC meet the needs of the African-American community. | 51.1 * (135) | 69.4 (49) |
| 8. African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by A-CC public transportation. | 53.4 ** (131) | 29.2 (48) |
| 9. African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by A-CC law enforcement. | 82.2 ** (135) | 61.2 (49) |
| 10. Race relations are a problem in A-CC. | 78.5 (135) | 70.0 (50) |

|                                                                      | Whites | |
| Survey Items | Citizens | Administrators |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of services that A-CC government provides. | 85.5 (166) | 79.2 (192) |
| 2. A-CC government is doing an excellent job solving the county's most important problems. | 56.4 (165) | 51.0 (192) |
| 3. A-CC government should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of African-Americans. | 62.8 *** (164) | 42.1 (190) |
| 4. A-CC government is more productive when its workforce reflects the racial diversity of the county. | 67.7 *** (164) | 48.2 (191) |
| 5. A-CC government should support programs that reduce the barriers to employment, such as the lack of affordable quality day care. | 74.8 ** (163) | 63.7 (190) |
| 6. African-Americans have fewer opportunities than whites to get affordable housing in A-CC. | 28.4 *** (162) | 12.3 (187) |
| 7. Public facilities in A-CC meet the needs of the African-American community. | 73.5 *** (155) | 91.8 (184) |
| 8. African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by A-CC public transportation. | 12.7 *** (150) | 1.1 (183) |
| 9. African-Americans are treated less fairly than whites by A-CC law enforcement. | 26.3 *** (152) | 3.7 (187) |
| 10. Race relations are a problem in A-CC. | 43.6 (165) | 34.2 (190) |

Note: Two-tailed tests of the difference of proportions were conducted comparing citizen and administrator responses within racial groups.

* Statistically significant differences at the .05 level.
** Statistically significant differences at the .01 level.
*** Statistically significant differences at the .001 level.

Table 4
African-American and White Responses by Citizen and Administrator:
Percent Agreeing with Survey items 11-20 (number of category
respondents in parentheses)

| Survey Items | African-Americans | |
|---|---|---|
| | Citizens | Administrators |
| 11. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should make special efforts to provide information to policy makers concerning the needs and perspectives of the African-American community. | 92.6 (136) | 92.0 (50) |
| 12. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate in favor of policies that specifically address the interests of African-American citizens. | 86.8 (136) | 86.0 (50) |
| 13. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate in favor of a more equitable distribution of services to African-Americans. | 91.9 (136) | 96.0 (50) |
| 14. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate for organizational change to ensure responsiveness to African-American interests. | 94.1 (135) | 96.0 (50) |
| 15. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should make special efforts to identify African-Americans in their organization and support them with opportunities and positive feedback. | 92.6 (136) | 87.8 (49) |
| 16. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should encourage and recruit qualified African-Americans for employment in A-CC government. | 97.8 (136) | 94.0 (50) |
| 17. High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively work to enhance the access of African-American citizens to government decision makers, | 93.4 (136) | 98.0 (50) |

|  |  | |
|---|---|---|
| | such as elected officials and department heads. | | |
| 18. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate for increased participation of the African-American community in the shaping of policy for A-CC. | 95.6 (136) | 94.0 (50) |
| 19. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should seek out qualified African-American citizens who can be recommended to sit on boards and commissions. | 94.1 (136) | 94.0 (50) |
| 20. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should sensitize others to stereotypes about race. | 87.9 * (132) | 95.9 (50) |

|  |  | Whites | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Survey Items | | Citizens | Administrators |
| 11. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should make special efforts to provide information to policy makers concerning the needs and perspectives of the African-American community. | 63.6 *** (162) | 37.7 (191) |
| 12. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate in favor of policies that specifically address the interests of African-American citizens. | 42.5 *** (160) | 17.4 (190) |
| 13. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate in favor of a more equitable distribution of services to African-Americans. | 55.1 *** (158) | 29.8 (188) |
| 14. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate for organizational change to ensure responsiveness to African-American interests. | 47.2 *** (159) | 28.9 (190) |
| 15. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should make special efforts to identify African- | 52.8 *** (159) | 35.1 (191) |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |               |
| --- | ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- | ------------------ | ------------- |
|     | Americans in their organization and support them with opportunities and positive feedback.                                                                                                                                          |                    |               |
| 16. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should encourage and recruit qualified African-Americans for employment in A-CC government.                                                                                                | 77.8 * (162)       | 62.6 (191)    |
| 17. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively work to enhance the access of African-American citizens to government decision makers, such as elected officials and department heads.                                      | 63.6 *** (162)     | 42.6 (188)    |
| 18. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should actively advocate for increased participation of the African-American community in the shaping of policy for A-CC.                                                                   | 65.8 *** (161)     | 44.0 (191)    |
| 19. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should seek out qualified African-American citizens who can be recommended to sit on boards and commissions.                                                                                | 72.2 *** (162)     | 47.6 (191)    |
| 20. | High-ranking employees of A-CC government should sensitize others to stereotypes about race.                                                                                                                                         | 65.6 (160)         | 74.2 (190)    |

Note: Two-tailed tests of the difference of proportions were conducted comparing African-American and white respondents within the citizen and administrator groups.

* Statistically significant differences at the .05 level.

*** Statistically significant differences at the .001 level.

Table 5
Models Predicting Administrator Attitude Congruence with African-American Citizens and African-American Representative Role Adoption (unstandardized coefficients, SEs in parentheses)

|  | Attitude Congruence with African-American Citizens |
|---|---|
| Race | 25.602 (2.786) *** |
| Sex | 7.183 (2.266) *** |
| Age | 1.706 (1.549) |
| Education | 3.393 (1.185) ** |
| Ideology | -4.870 (1.304) *** |
| Feedback from African-American community | 2.281 (1.162) * |
| Attitude congruence |  |
|  | [R.sup.2] = .461 N = 229 |

|  | African-American Representative Role Adoption: Model 1 |
|---|---|
| Race | .877 (.107) *** |
| Sex | .168 (.087) |
| Age | .110 (.060) |
| Education | .134 (.046) ** |
| Ideology | -.174 (.050) *** |
| Feedback from African-American community | .072 (.045) |
| Attitude congruence |  |
|  | [R.sup.2] = .399 N = 229 |

|  | African-American Representative Role Adoption: Model 2 |
|---|---|
| Race | .067 (.072) |
| Sex | .059 (.051) |
| Age | .056 (.034) |
| Education | .027 (.026) |
| Ideology | -.020 (.029) |
| Feedback from African-American community | .000 (.026) |
| Attitude congruence | .032 (.001) *** |
|  | [R.sup.2] = .806 N = 229 |

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.