

Blues in Colors: Police Violence, Racial Representation, and White Attitude Change

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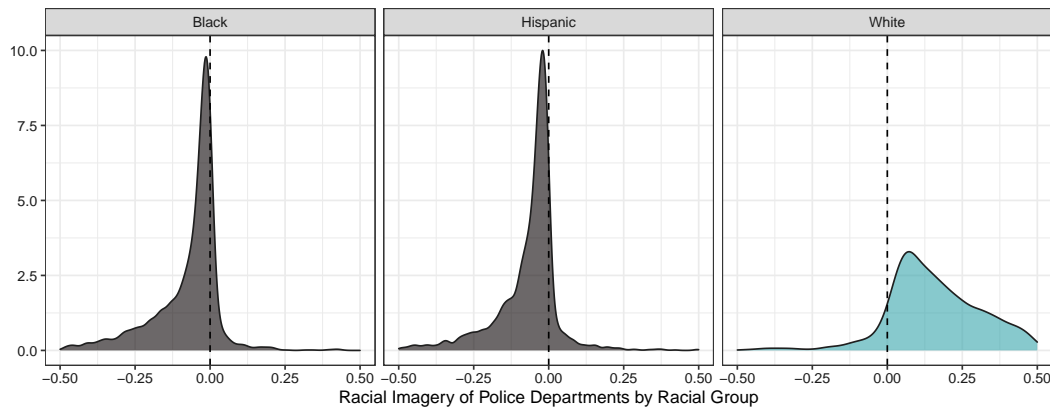
September 30, 2022

Abstract

What drives legislators to emphasize local issues in a nationalized setting? Although the representation literature has highlighted incentives that may lead legislators to present themselves as district- or nationally-oriented towards constituents, research remains limited on which legislators choose to emphasize local issues within the halls of Congress. We leverage congressional speech to provide evidence on how electoral competitiveness, district demographics, and legislator characteristics influence a member's representational style during the committee stage, a critical step in policy-making. Using all available hearing transcripts from 1999–2018, we measure the degree of local orientation each member exhibits and examine what types of legislators are more likely to choose a local focus. We also investigate what leads legislators to emphasize their constituents as a justification for arguments. Results reveal heterogeneous effects by party: among Republicans, electoral factors play a role, while among Democrats, women legislators are significantly more likely to demonstrate a local orientation.

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Figure 1: Distribution of Racial Imagery of Police Departments Surveyed in LEMAS 2016.



Note: On the horizontal axis, a positive value indicates that the corresponding racial group is excessively represented in local police departments, and a negative value the otherwise.

Table 1: Racial Imagery of Local Police Affects Racial Divide on Policing.

	Police Felt as Safe	Increase Police	Decrease Police
Racial Divide	0.221*** (0.016)	0.048** (0.016)	-0.072*** (0.016)
White Imagery of Police	-0.168*** (0.049)	0.003 (0.048)	0.018 (0.048)
Racial Divide × White Imagery	0.182** (0.055)	0.019 (0.057)	-0.039 (0.055)
Num.Obs.	39551	39597	39589
R2	0.076	0.002	0.007

This is the note of your regression table.

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

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Table 2: Racial Imagery of Local Police Moderates Attitudinal Reaction to Police Violence.

	Police Felt as Safe	Increase Police	Decrease Police
White Imagery of Police	0.009 (0.027)	-0.009 (0.029)	-0.014 (0.029)
Any Police Violence in 2020	-0.070*** (0.012)	-0.057*** (0.013)	0.074*** (0.013)
Police Violence × White Imagery	0.130** (0.041)	0.078+ (0.045)	-0.142** (0.045)
Num.Obs.	26016	26039	26036
R2	0.004	0.002	0.003

This is the note of your regression table.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

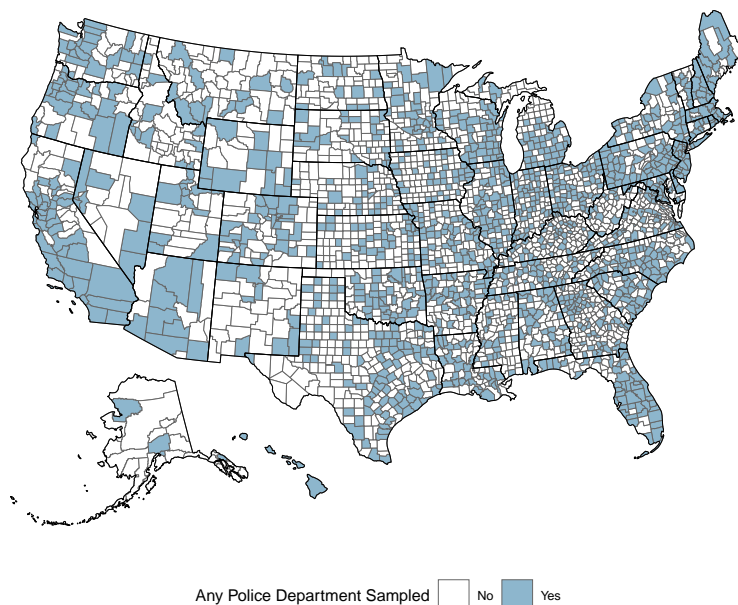
Table 3: Moderating Effect of Racial Imagery Depends upon Racial Groups Victimized by Police Violence

	Police Felt as Safe	Increase Police	Decrease Police
White Imagery of Police	0.007 (0.027)	-0.013 (0.029)	-0.010 (0.029)
PV Whites	-0.065*** (0.015)	-0.039* (0.016)	0.056*** (0.016)
PV POC	-0.076*** (0.015)	-0.077*** (0.016)	0.093*** (0.016)
White Imagery × PV Whites	0.098+ (0.053)	-0.003 (0.057)	-0.075 (0.057)
White Imagery × PV POC	0.164** (0.053)	0.162** (0.058)	-0.210*** (0.058)
Num.Obs.	26016	26039	26036
R2	0.004	0.002	0.003

This is the note of your regression table.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Figure 2: Geographic Coverage of LEMAS 2016 at the County Level.



Note: Counties are colored blue where at least one police department within its jurisdiction is surveyed in LEMAS 2016.

Figure 3: Racial Component in the Role of Racial Imagery

Note: Based upon interactional OLS models.

References