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978-1-107-02647-6 - Representational Style in Congress: What Legislators Say and Why it Matters

Justin Grimmer

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Representational Style in Congress

This book demonstrates the consequences of legislators' strategic communication for representation in American politics. *Representational Style in Congress* shows how legislators present their work to cultivate constituent support. Using a massive new data set of texts from legislators and new statistical techniques to analyze the texts, this book provides comprehensive measures of what legislators say to constituents and explains why legislators adopt these styles. Using the new measures, Justin Grimmer shows how legislators affect how constituents evaluate their representatives and the consequences of strategic statements for political discourse. The introduction of new statistical techniques for political texts allows a more comprehensive and systematic analysis of what legislators say and why it matters than was previously possible. Using these new techniques, the book makes the compelling case that to understand political representation, we must understand what legislators say to constituents.

Justin Grimmer is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Stanford University, which he joined after receiving a Ph.D. from Harvard University's Department of Government in 2010. His research combines new statistical techniques, machine learning, and massive data sets to study how political representation occurs in American politics. His work has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *The Journal of Politics*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Political Analysis*, and *Regulation and Governance*. Grimmer's research has received several awards, including the Warren E. Miller Prize for best paper published in political analysis, the Robert H. Durr Award from the Midwest Political Science Association, and the John T. Williams Prize from the Society for Political Methodology.

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To my wife, Terese

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> ix
1 Representation Inside and Outside Congress	1
1.1 <i>Position Takers and Appropriators</i>	3
1.2 <i>Presentational Styles, Representational Styles, and Representation: An Overview of the Argument</i>	7
1.3 <i>Conclusion</i>	10
2 Representation and Evaluation on the Senator's Terms	11
2.1 <i>The Study of Representation and the Irony of Home Style</i>	13
2.2 <i>Presentational Styles and Evaluation on the Senator's Terms</i>	19
2.3 <i>Conclusion</i>	25
3 Measuring Presentational Styles with Senate Press Releases	26
3.1 <i>Existing Sources for Measuring How Senators Engage Constituents</i>	27
3.2 <i>Why Press Releases</i>	29
3.3 <i>Conclusion</i>	38
4 Measuring Presentational Styles in Thousands of Press Releases	40
4.1 <i>A Bayesian Statistical Model to Measure Expressed Priorities</i>	41
4.2 <i>Identifying the Topics of Discussion</i>	44
4.3 <i>Assessing the Validity of the Topic Classification</i>	47
4.4 <i>Validating the Estimated Priorities</i>	50
4.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	57
5 The Types of Presentational Styles in the U.S. Senate	59
5.1 <i>The Types of Presentational Styles in the Senate</i>	60
5.2 <i>Position-Takers to Credit-Claimers: Validating the Policy-Pork Spectrum</i>	73
5.3 <i>Conclusion</i>	75
	vii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02647-6 - Representational Style in Congress: What Legislators Say and Why it Matters

Justin Grimmer

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

Contents

6	The Electoral Connection's Effect on Senators' Presentational Styles	77
6.1	<i>Introduction</i>	77
6.2	<i>The Electoral Connection and Presentational Style Choice</i>	78
6.3	<i>The Farmer and the Lawyer</i>	80
6.4	<i>The Electoral Connection's Influence on Expressed Priorities</i>	83
6.5	<i>Stable and Slowly Changing Presentational Styles</i>	92
6.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	102
7	The Correspondence between Senators' Work in Washington and Presentational Styles	104
7.1	<i>Introduction</i>	104
7.2	<i>Appropriators in Presentational Styles and Roll-Call Votes</i>	105
7.3	<i>Senators' Positions in Press Releases Are Positions Articulated in Floor Speeches</i>	111
7.4	<i>Correlation between Presentational Styles and Bill Introductions</i>	116
7.5	<i>Conclusion</i>	118
8	Why Presentational Styles Matter for Dyadic Representation	120
8.1	<i>Introduction</i>	120
8.2	<i>What Constituents Know about Representatives and How They Evaluate Their Members of Congress</i>	122
8.3	<i>How Press Releases Drive Newspaper Coverage</i>	125
8.4	<i>The Effect of Presentational Styles on Constituent Evaluations</i>	132
8.5	<i>Legislators' Presentational Styles and Dyadic Representation</i>	138
9	Why Presentational Styles Matter for Collective Representation	141
9.1	<i>Partisan Convergence in Issue Attention</i>	143
9.2	<i>Partisan Debates in Presentational Styles</i>	147
9.3	<i>Distorted Debate and Extremist Domination</i>	155
9.4	<i>The Collective Consequences of Presentational Styles</i>	160
10	Presentational Styles and Representation	163
10.1	<i>What Legislators Say and Why It Matters</i>	164
10.2	<i>Consequences for Existing Studies of Ideological Representation</i>	165
10.3	<i>How Politicians Are Covered in the Press</i>	166
10.4	<i>Credit Claiming: The Personal Vote and the Budget</i>	167
10.5	<i>Rhetorical Polarization</i>	167
10.6	<i>How Politicians Engage the Public</i>	168
10.7	<i>Representation Inside and Outside the Senate</i>	170
	Methods Appendix	171
A.1	<i>Statistical Model and Estimation</i>	171
A.2	<i>Latent Dirichlet Allocation</i>	180
A.3	<i>Chapter 3 Appendix</i>	181
	<i>Bibliography</i>	183
	<i>Index</i>	199

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In this book I show that politicians solve similar attribution problems with public statements – explaining what they did to earn the support of their constituents. This brief section represents my attempt to solve the attribution problem inherent in academic work. And as with other attempts to more appropriately distribute credit in the academy, I will fail to adequately thank everyone who helped me finish this book.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

xi

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