When Dividing the Pie Divides the House: Ethnic Minority Cooperative Behavior in Zero-Sum

Urban Politics

Eddie Lucero

Ricardo Robles

University of California, Merced

*WORKING DRAFT DO NOT DISTRIBUTE

Abstract

As the population of cities in America grew ethnically diverse, scholars and politicians predicted that inter-ethnic minority coalitions would come to dominate urban politics and policymaking leading to the long-awaited political incorporation of minority interests in local politics. However, reality has shown that ethnic minority coalitions are often temporary and fragile making quick initial successes in the election of minority leaders and winning some policy concessions but then collapsing. Why this is the case? We argue that the zero-sum nature of urban distributive policies makes it difficult for minority groups to maintain cooperative behavior in distributive policymaking. Using a survey of 1,800 black, Latino, and Asian American residents of Los Angeles County, we show that people of color are less likely to support distributive policies that exclusively target ethnic out-groups, relative to policies that exclusively target their ethnic in-group, but that this effect is attenuated when such policies are endorsed by co-ethnic elites.

Introduction

For decades, scholars have argued that the advancement of racial and ethnic minority groups' interests in American local politics is significantly influenced by these groups' willingness and ability to cooperate and form inter-ethnic coalitions. These "rainbow" or ethnic coalitions have been credited with catapulting several high-profile politicians of color to mayoral and city council seats in some of the largest cities in the United States and have generally increasing ethnic minorities' influence in the local political process (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1984, 1990; Munoz & Henry, 1986; Orr & Morel, 2018). While this literature posits that rainbow coalitions are a natural result of minority groups' shared political preferences and history of marginalization in American politics, in reality interethnic cooperation in ethnically diverse cities is often the exception rather than the rule. Minority groups face significant obstacles in engaging in cooperative behavior such as racial prejudice, socio-economic inequality, and competition for resources (Hajnal, 2010; Enos, Kaufman, and Sands, 2019; Benjamin and Miller, 2019). These factors make it difficult for ethnic minority groups to get along amicably, let alone cooperate to reach some shared political goal.

One argument raised against rainbow coalitions is that the zero sum-nature of urban politics makes cooperative behavior between minority groups difficult (Kaufmann, 2007). However, this argument has yet to receive much empirical attention and lacks theoretical clarity. While the literature has largely focused on the role of political elites and organizations in the formation of ethnic coalitions by facilitating cooperative behavior among co-ethnic voters, much less attention has focused on the conditions under which people of color are willing to engage in cooperative behavior with ethnic out-groups. That is the focus of this paper. We ask how the

zero-sum nature of urban politics affects ethnic group members' willingness to engage in cooperative behavior with other ethnic minority groups.

Building on prior theoretical work, we argue that the zero-sum nature of distributive local policy-making makes it difficult for ethnic group members to engage in cooperative behavior because individuals prefer to divert more resources to their ethnic in-groups as opposed to ethnic outgroups. Additionally, we argue that elite co-ethnic endorsements, which have been shown to increase cooperative behavior in the context of local elections, fall short of motivating such behavior among co-ethnic members when the target of the endorsement is a zero-sum policy outcome. We theorize that co-ethnic endorsements function by legitimizing the target of the endorsement to co-ethnic group members. We argue that endorsements are less effective when targeting zero-sum policy outcomes because ethnic group members can more readily determine if a policy benefits them or not . In the realm of local politics, where cities must balance their budgets, the distribution of municipal resources allocated to one group decreases the share of resources that can be allocated to other groups. In this context, we hypothesize that ethnic group members are less supportive of distributive policies that divert resources to ethnic out-groups and that endorsements of such policies by co-ethnic elites do not affect group members' opposition to such policies.

We test our theory of inter-ethnic cooperative behavior with a 2x2 experiment embedded in a representative survey of 1,800 black, Latino, and Asian-American Los Angeles County residents. Respondents are randomly assigned to one of four possible treatment conditions where we vary whether a policy proposal exclusively distributes benefits to a respondent's ethnic **ingroup/outgroup** and whether **the policy proposal is endorsed by a co-ethnic community organization or not**. We measure how likely respondents are to support the policy proposal they

have been randomly assigned, as a measure of cooperative behavior. We find that respondents are less likely to support policy proposals that exclusively target benefits toward ethnic out-groups compared to when their ethnic in-group is exclusively targeted. Contrary to our expectations, we find that when a policy proposal is exclusively targeting benefits toward the respondent's ethnic-outgroup the presence of a co-ethnic elite endorsement increases the respondent's support for that proposal, compared to when the endorsement is not present. We conclude that co-ethnic endorsements can provide an avenue for fostering inter-ethnic cooperative behavior in the zero-sum policy-making conditions of urban politics.

This study seeks to better our understanding of urban ethnic coalitions by examining one of its most critical components, the support of rank-and-file group members. While we are not the first scholars to theorize about the fragility of inter-ethnic coalitions, we are one of the few that investigate how context affects inter-ethnic cooperative behavior between ethnic groups. The paper proceeds by providing an overview of the literature on urban inter-ethnic coalitions and then presents our theoretical framework and derived hypotheses. We then describe our research design and the Los Angeles County survey we use to test our hypotheses. In our conclusion we discuss why we observe cooperative behavior in our experiment but see inter-ethnic coalitions in the real-world struggle and often collapse. We also discuss future avenues of research including the need for more updated studies on the coalitional behavior of ethnic city council members in multi-ethnic city governments and how coalitional behavior manifests in other levels of politics.

Literature Review

At their core, inter-ethnic coalitions are defined by the cooperative behavior of their partners. Browning, Marshall, and Tab's (1984) study on inter-ethnic coalitions in northern California cities found that the political gains, in terms of representation and policy

responsiveness, made by African Americans and Latinos in cities were strongest where black/Latino groups and leaders held equal political power with their liberal white allies. In cities where coalitions were defined by strong inter-ethnic cooperative behavior, blacks and Latinos saw increased levels of civic engagement, descriptive representation, and a certain level of policy responsiveness that contrasted with places where their liberal white allies dominated inter-ethnic coalitions. As the population of America grew exponentially more diverse throughout the latter half of the 20th and into the 21st century, inter-ethnic coalitions become even more important as racial and ethnic minority groups, who had long been marginalized from local politics, made significant gains in descriptive representations in cities through multi-racial coalitions (Browning et al., 1990; Munoz & Henry, 1986; Orr & Morel, 2018). Given the importance of inter-ethnic coalitions in local politics, the literature has worked to understand their emergence and how they function.

In general, the literature has given three broad explanations for the formation of rainbow coalitions; a shared liberal ideology among ethnic minorities and supportive white allies, dynamic ethnic minority leadership, and the overlapping material interests of minority groups (Kaufmann, 2007). Early literature placed a heavy emphasis on a shared liberal ideology among ethnic minorities and liberal white voters as the facilitator of cooperation against an entrenched urban conservative leadership (Barreto, Villarreal, & Woods, 2005; R. P. Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1990; Munoz & Henry, 1986; Sonenshein, 1990; Underwood, 1997). With the success of the Civil Rights movement, a generation of (mostly) Black leaders, and to a lesser extent Latinos and Asian-Americans, were able to capture elected offices at the city council and mayoral level in cities across the United States with the political support of white allies. Latinos would also

come to benefit from these multi-ethnic coalitions as their population in urban centers increased enough to make them viable coalition partners.

In Los Angeles, Underwood (1997) describes how Latino candidates ran deracialized campaigns to attract liberal white and Black voters to win four city council seats within 10 years. Studies on Latino mayors also found inter-ethnic coalitions to be critical to their success such as in the election of Federico Peña in Denver, Colorado, Antonio Villaraigosa in Los Angeles, and Henry Cisneros in San Antonio (Munoz & Henry, 1986; Orr & Morel, 2018). Yet, white-minority coalitions were not always willing to go the distance to meet the political demands of ethnic partners. While some liberal white voters were eager to assist Blacks and Latinos' run for local office and work on dismantling discriminatory city ordinances other white voters were less supportive, limiting the political gains of people of color (Browning et al., 1990). In some places, white voters were hesitant to include ethnic minority interests in the distributive aspect of urban policymaking. As Blacks and Latinos swelled the population of urban centers, new minority-centered coalitions arose (Kaufmann, 2007).

Both scholars and activists have highlighted the importance of ethnic leaders in the formation of multi-racial coalitions (Barreto, 2010; Benjamin, 2017; Bobo & Gilliam Jr., 1990; Gay, 2002; Orr & Morel, 2018). Ethnic candidates have been found to increase co-ethnics' feelings of political efficacy and inclusion in the political process. Black and Latino candidates' presence on the ballot has also been found to invigorate co-ethnic voter turnout. Most scholars agree that the wave of Black and Latino mayors elected thought the 1970s and onward were a result of strong ethnic candidates who were not only able to inspire their co-ethnics to show up at the polls but also carefully craft multi-racial coalitions that included liberal white voters, blacks, Latinos, and other minority groups that had been traditionally excluded from local politics. In

Los Angeles, Bradley Thompson, the city's first African American mayor, beat incumbent Sam Yorty with a multi-racial coalition of Blacks, Latinos, Asian-Americans, business groups, and a majority of white voters in 1973. Antonio Villaraigosa would later become the city's first Latino mayor with the support of a similar coalition in 2005. In 1983, Harold Lee Washington become the first black mayor of Chicago defeating Jane Byrne with a strong coalition of blacks and a growing Chicano and Puerto Rican population in the city's south side. Even in places where ethnic minorities make up a large share of the population, ethnic leaders still needed to forge ethnic coalitions to achieve electoral success. In San Antonio, Henry Cisneros galvanized Latino voters through large Get-Out-The-Vote efforts but also reached out to the city's black voters to become the city's first Latino mayor in 1981. Yet, hindsight shows us that these ethnic coalitions masterminded by strong ethnic candidates were only temporary as many of them would be unable to maintain a hold on the mayor's office in subsequent elections.

With the explosive growth of urban ethnic populations in the last few decades, many of America's largest urban centers became majority-minority cities. Scholars argued that this strength in numbers would finally allow minority groups to capture the local distributive benefits many had long been excluded from. Blacks, Latinos, and Asian-Americans, it was assumed, were natural allies sharing a history of political and social marginalization and a set of shared material interests in distributive politics that would make multi-racial coalitions the most likely vehicle for the advancement of minority interests. (Abrajano & Alavarez, 2010; Falcón, 1988; Segura & Rodrigues, 2006). According to these theories, rather than being held back by the not-so liberal attitudes of white allies on distributive and social issues, overlapping minority material interests; such as increasing funding for programs in minority communities, increased hiring of

minorities for municipal jobs and comabting discrimination of minorities would incentivize the formation of multi-racial coalitions.

Yet, empirical realities have sown doubt on the formation and success of rainbow coalitions. The assumption that urban ethnic groups can easily coalesce over shared interests has also been challenged by scholarly work (Falcón, 1988; Kaufmann, 2003, 2007; Meier & Stewart, 1991). Scholars have noted that Latinos and African-Americans often hold prejudiced views of one another (Gay, 2006; Jr, Martinez-Ebers, Matsubayashi, & Paolino, 2016; Kaufmann, 2003; Oliver & Wong, 2003) and in some places are in economic and political competition (Alozie & Ramirez, 1999; Bates, 1990; Kerr, Miller, Kerr, & Deshommes, 2016; Mcclain, 1993; McClain, 2006; Mcclain & Karnig, 1990; Meier & Stewart, 1991; Rocha, 2007). Gay (2006) found that African Americans' who lived in neighborhoods with a higher proportion of Latino residents had lower levels of affinity towards Latinos, *conditional* on black residents level of education and poverty. African Americans who lived in nieghborhoods with a high proportion of Latino residents and lower levels of black education/poverty were more likely to say that they had little in common with Latinos and were less likely to say they would extend benefits that they enjoy, such as affirmative action, to Latinos.

A similar pattern of Latino attitudes towards African Americans has been identified by Carey Jr, Martinez-Ebers, Matsubayashi, & Paolino (2016). They find that Latinos who live in neighborhoods where a higher proportion of the population is black are more likely to perceive that they are competing with African Americans for jobs and material resources. These findings are conditional on those neighborhoods having a higher rate of Latino unemployment. In an examination of multi-ethnic cities, Oliver and Wong (2003) find that individuals living in cities with greater minority populations express higher levels of intergroup hostility. In short, African

Americans and Latinos who live in neighborhoods where a higher proportion of the population is from an ethnic out-group and where their own in-group experiences higher levels of economic uncertainty are more likely to develop negative attitudes toward the out-group. The lower socio-economic status of Blacks and Latinos and the tendency to develop perceptions of ethnic competition in urban areas serve as another barrier to inter-ethnic cooperation.

Beyond attitudes, several studies have found more direct evidence of Latino-black competition in cities. Speaking on political power, McClain (2006), Meier & Stewart (1991) and Kerr et al. (2016) have found that increased Latino population growth can decrease local black political representation. Analyzing majority-minority cities across three decades, McClain finds that growth in a city's Latino population is negatively correlated with black representation at the city council and mayoral level. Kerr et al. (2016) also found that Latinos and blacks compete for teaching positions in school districts that have high black-Latino populations. In their analysis of city school board elections, Meier and Stewart (1991) find that increases in the Latino population decrease the proportion of school board members that are black. In addition to conflicts over descriptive representation, urban ethnic groups may also be divided over substantive policy outcomes as well.

As Kaufman (2003) explains, one of the main goals ethnic groups wish to achieve in entering the urban political arena is to increase the distributive benefits directed toward their ethnic in-group. The problem however, is that distributive benefits are an inelastic good. The supply of distributive benefits does not increase when there is an increase in demand. In fact, cities are incentivized to keep the taxes that fund redistributive policies low (Peterson, 1981). Second, as Falcon (1988) points out, Latinos and African Americans may want different types of material goods. Immigration has been a central issue to Latinos and urban activists have pushed

cities to provide government materials in Spanish, hire bilingual teachers, and fund programs to integrate Latino immigrants into American society. African Americans on the other hand have little need for these types of programs and instead would prefer a focus on job creation, obtaining municipal jobs for African Americans, and the revitalization of black housing projects.

In summary, while many activists and politicians might stake their political campaigns on the backs of ethnic coalitions there exists plenty of evidence that creating and maintain cooperative behavior among the partners of ethnic coalitions is extremely. However, the literature's reliance on case studies and observational data makes it difficult to say with certainty the conditions under which ethnic groups might engage in cooperative behavior. In the next section, we present our theory of inter-ethnic urban cooperation and discuss the conditions under which we expect to see ethnic groups engage in cooperative behavior.

Theory

At its core, politics is about the division of resources among groups of people. In urban politics, city leaders must make tough decisions every year on how their budgets will be spent, especially because cities must maintain balanced budgets. Historically speaking, racial and ethnic minorities, who have been the most in need of distributive policies, have usually been excluded from the political process and denied resources for their communities. As the size of urban ethnic populations increased, a real opportunity emerged for minority-centered ethnic coalitions to capture elected offices and claim municipal resources for their communities. However, we argue that the zero-sum nature of urban distributive politics makes inter-ethnic cooperation difficult and hampers the maintenance of inter-ethnic coalitions.

First, we define our key concepts. When we say **inter-ethnic coalitions**, we are referring to an alliance between two or more minority ethnic groups working to achieve some political

goal. This goal could be a range of objectives as described in the literature; electing ethnic minorities to office, appointing ethnic minorities to civil service positions, mobilizing group members to turn out and vote, or securing resources for the coalition and its members. Here we focus primarily on minority-centered coalitions where the major partners are ethnic minority groups. We exclude ethnic coalitions with white partners because the literature has emphasized that the zero-sum nature of urban policymaking significantly affects ethnic-centered minority coalitions because their primary goal is to divert municipal resources to their communities. While we do not argue that white partners in a coalition are not interested in municipal resources, we focus on minority-centered coalitions because it is ethnic groups that have relied on coalitions to realize their political goals.

Second, we define **inter-ethnic cooperation** as any action from a coalition group partner or member that furthers the attainment of an ethnic coalition's goal. This broad definition includes many possible actions at both the elite, organization, and mass level. For the most part, much of the literature has focused on the role of elites and organizations in facilitating cooperation. Ethnic organizations were, and are still, key players in inter-ethnic coalition-building by registering coalition group members to vote and turning them out to the polls. Elites and organizations also play a key role in the formation of ethnic coalitions through co-endorsements (Benjamin 2017) and dynamic leadership. Ethnic elites may build their winning electoral coalitions to capture elected office or they may endorse other ethnic candidates on the ballot, turning out their own supporters for other minority candidates. However, ethnic coalitions rely on the cooperation of both ethnic groups' members. If individual group members do not believe that the goals pursued by the coalition are in the best interest of their group, cooperative behavior may not mainfest.

We theorize that ethnic minorities are less likely to engage in cooperative behavior when the political goals under consideration are zero-sum in nature. One of the key goals of ethnic coalitions is to attain a greater share of resources, such as housing, municipal jobs, funds for parks, community programs, etc (Browning et al., 1990; Falcón, 1988). However, these resources are often in short supply in cities. Additionally, as the literature review above has mentioned, ethnic minorities do not always pursue the same types of resources. Because urban Latino populations account for a high proportion of immigrants, Latinos often focus on accessing bilingual resources for government documents, bilingual teachers in schools, and programs that help integrate Latino immigrants into American society. This set of concerns is similarly shared by Asian Americans to some extent. African Americans, on the other hand, have pushed for increased Black employment in municipal jobs and increased funding for maintenance of city housing projects. Because of the zero-sum nature of municipal resources, resources that are allocated to one ethnic partner often mean that resources allocated to other partners are decreased. When these outcomes are observed, it makes it difficult for ethnic minorities to justify cooperative behavior when their in-group gets the short end of the bargain.

Theories of ethnic group consciousness lend support to our assumption of individual self-interest in political decision making. Both scholars of Black (Bobo & Gilliam Jr., 1990; Dawson, 1994; Gay, 2002) and Latino (Barreto, 2010; Sanchez & Masuoka, 2010) politics have argued that Blacks and Latinos have each developed a sense of affinity toward co-ethnic group members that motivates collective action to better the social, political and economic outcomes of their respective ethnic group. This ethnic group consciousness is associated with higher levels of political participation, efficacy, and a belief that an individual's fate is tied to the fate of the broader group. More importantly, research has found that the politicizing effects of group

conscious are more likely to be triggered by the presence of other co-ethnics (Kaufmann, 2003)

but not members of an ethnic out-group even when that out-group is also politically and socially

marginalized. Thus, our first hypothesis states:

H1: Blacks/Latinos will be less supportive of policy proposals that target the ethnic out-group,

compared to when such policy proposals target their in-group.

Some scholars might argue that elite ethnic endorsements might facilitate co-ethnic

cooperative behavior in the face of zero-sum policy outcomes (Benjamin 2017). That is, if ethnic

group members observe unfavorable policy outcomes for their group, they might still be willing

to support such outcomes if these proposals receive an endorsement from in-group ethnic elites.

Benjamin argues that co-ethnic endorsements can be critical in the formation of electoral

coalitions at the local. She finds that when race is salient in a local election contest, Latino/Black

endorsements for a Black/Latino candidate on the ballot can significantly increase that

candidate's support among out-group ethnics. As an example, the 2005 mayoral election saw

Michael Bloomberg (a white man) receive five endorsements from Black community leaders and

organizations compared to his opponent's, Fernando Ferrer (a Latino man), ten Black

endorsements. While Fernando Ferrer lost the race, he did manage to win a majority of the Black

vote (53%) compared to Bloomberg's 46% (Benjamin 2017, pp. 54-46).

However co-ethnic endorsements do not always work as intended and their effect may

vary across context. In the 2001 Los Angeles mayoral election, both James Hahn (a white man)

and Antonio Villaraigosa (a Latino man) each received four Black endorsements, but Hahn

received 80% of the Black vote compared to Villaraigosa's 20%. Similarly, the 1997 Houston

mayoral election saw Robert Mosbacher (a white man) received six endorsements from the

Latino leaders and community organizations compared to his opponent's, a Black man named

Brown Lee, three Latino endorsements. Interestingly, Mosbacher received just 34% of the Latino vote compared to Lee's 66%. In this case, the candidates with the most Latino endorsements did not win that group's majority vote.

We theorize co-ethnic endorsements do not affect co-ethnic member's support of zero-sum policy outcomes that benefit the out-group. The mechanism by which co-ethnic endorsement motivates cooperative behavior among group members is still under-explored. Recent work (Lucero, Trounstine, Connolly, & Klofstad, 2020) has theorized that co-ethnic endorsements induce in-group cooperative behavior by legitimizing the target of the endorsement. However, if it is the case that individuals view the target of the endorsement, in this case, a policy outcome, as not being in the best interests of one's ethnic group relative to the other *prima facie* then co-ethnic endorsements would do little to motivate cooperative behavior among group members. This leads to our second hypothesis:

H2: Conditional on a policy proposal targeting an out-group, co-ethnic endorsements will have no effect on co-ethnic individuals' support for such policy proposals.

With our research hypotheses stated we move on to the research design in the next section.

Research Design

The two hypotheses derived from our theory naturally lend themselves to a 2x2 randomized experiment as outlined in Figure 1. The cells in the third column represent a test of H1 where we compare an individual's support for a policy that exclusively benefits an individual's respective racial/ethnic out-group compared to a policy that exclusively benefits the individual's in-group, with no co-ethnic endorsements in either case. As indicated by the signs in Figure 1, we expect a negative effect in the former case but a positive effect in the latter.

Figure 1. Policy Coalition Experiment 2x2 Design

	Co-ethnic Endorsement	No Co-ethnic Endorsement
Out-group Benefits	-	-
In-group Benefits	+	+

The cells in the second row represent a test of H2 were, conditional on a policy exclusively benefiting an individual's racial/ethnic out-group, we compare individual support for that policy if it is endorsed by a co-ethnic elite compared to if that policy was not endorsed by a co-ethnic elite. The negative signs in both cells represent our expectation that endorsements have no effect on individual support for a policy that significantly benefits the out-group regardless of whether a co-ethnic elite has endorsed such a policy or not.

We test our two hypotheses with a survey experiment embedded in a survey of Los Angeles County residents conducted shortly after the 2020 general elections in late November and early December. FM3 Research, a California based public opinion polling company, was contracted to conduct the online survey using a stratified sample of 3,481 Los Angeles county residents drawn from the voter file. We chose to run our experiment in Los Angeles county for a couple of reasons. First, L.A. county has a large population of ethnic and racial minorities. According to the 2019 American Community Survey (1-year estimates), 48.6% of L.A. County residents identify as Latino, 25.9% identify as White (non-Hispanic), 14.5% identify as Asian, 7.7% identify as Black with the remainder identifying as Native American, Other, Pacific

Islander or as two or more races (ACS, 2019). We hoped that the racially diverse demographics of Los Angeles County would provide a rich sample for our experiment.

The second reason we chose L.A. county for the experiment is that due to its diverse demographics, many cities in the region have had some experienced with ethnic coalitions. The seat of the county, Los Angeles city, has witnessed the election of two mayors of color both elected on the back of racially diverse ethnic coalitions that have included African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, Jewish Americans, and white Americans. However, L.A. County falls shorts of being a peaceful racial melting pot. Some of its cities have witnessed violent racial riots that include conflicts not only between people of color and white Americans but also between racial/ethnic minority groups. On city streets, violence between black and Latino gangs is a real issue that strains relationships between the two groups. In the realm of public policy, Asian-Americans, blacks, and Latino groups have often competed with one another for limited resources in the form of parks, the implementation of after-school programs and bilingual classes, and access to affordable housing. This environment, with a long history of inter-ethnic cooperation and competition, allows us to test the conditions under which minority groups are willing to cooperate in the realm of zero-sum urban policymaking.

Survey respondents were contacted via email with a link to participate in our survey. Upon entering the survey, respondents were provided with a consent form. Participants who consented to participate in our survey were then asked a series of demographic questions including gender, age, income level, level of education, city of residence, racial/ethnic identification, etc. Participants were also asked several questions regarding their turnout in their cities' 2020 elections and turnout in previous city elections. Respondents were also asked a series of questions asking them to identify how important a variety of local issues were to them.

These issues included things such as reducing crime, reducing homelessness, reducing taxes, hiring more people of color to municipal jobs, and other issues. Upon completion of the survey, respondents were entered into a raffle for a chance to win one of several Amazon gift cards.

Our experiment was placed just after the bloc of demographic questions. Because this paper is focused on the cooperative behavior of racial/ethnic minorities in urban policy-making, only respondents who identified as black, Latino, or Asian American were allowed to participate in our survey.[1] This brings our total number of respondents who participated in our experiment to 1,813. Upon reaching our survey experiment bloc, respondents were randomized into four possible treatment conditions that corresponded to those presented in Figure 1 and presented with the following text:

> Imagine that your local government will be partnering with community organizations to establish a scholarship for graduating seniors who have enrolled in a community college or a 4-year university. One of the community partners, United **(IN-GROUP/EMPTY)** Parents for Better Schools has proposed to use 100% of the money to establish a scholarship for **(IN-GROUP/OUT-GROUP)** high school seniors. How likely are you to support this proposal?

The response options were 4 "Very Likely", 3 "Somewhat Likely", 2 "Somewhat Unlikely", and 1 "Very Unlikely".

The survey was programmed in such a way that the racial/ethnic group presented to a respondent, in any of the four treatment conditions, reflected the respondent's racial self-identification choice made at the beginning of the survey. For example, a respondent who identified as Asian-American and who was randomized into the Co-Ethnic Endorsement/Out-

---

[1] Insert the exact language of the racial identification questions here.

Group Benefit treatment would have seen the text "United Asian-American Parents for Better Schools" in the first randomized field and "black/Latino high school seniors" in the second randomized field. A respondent who identified as black and was randomized into the No Co-Ethnic Endorsement/In-Group Benefit treatment would have seen the text "United Parents for Better Schools" in the first randomized field and "black high school seniors" in the second randomized field. In the two treatment groups where respondents observed an ethnic out-group benefiting from the proposal, the targeted outgroup was also randomized. This was done to ensure that individual's responses were not being biased by the ethnic group being targeted by the policy.

In writing our prompt, we made sure to choose an issue (access to higher education) that was meaningful to the ethnic minority groups in our survey and could be acted upon by a municipal entity (in the form of providing scholarships). We intentionally chose to frame the proposal in our experiment as completely inclusive or exclusive to a particular group to make clear to respondents that the outcome they were being asked to evaluate was zero-sum in nature. We now turn to the analysis of the data.

Analysis and Results

We first present some descriptive statistics of our L.A. county sample. Table 1 indicates that 29% of our respondents identified as Asian American, 12% identified as black/African American, and 60% identified as Hispanic/Latino. Respondents who identify as Female are slightly overrepresented in our sample (57%). The variable *Education* runs from 1 – 5 and indicates that our average respondent has between "Some College" (3) and a "Four-year Degree" (4). *Income* wise, our average respondent makes between "$60,000 and $74,000" and "$75,000 and $89,000". The average respondent in our sample is between 35-44 years old. *Party ID* and

Ideology ask respondents to indicate their partisan identification and political ideology, respectively. Both of these variables range from 1 – 7 with 1 being Strong Democrat/Extremely Liberal, 4 being Independent/Moderate, and 7 being Strong Republican/Extremely Conservative. Our average respondent identified as "Democrat" and is "slightly liberal". With our sample described we move on to the construction of dependent and independent variables.

Table 1. Summary Statistics of the L.A. County Sample

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Asian	1,813	0.288	0.453	0	1
Black	1,813	0.120	0.325	0	1
Latino	1,813	0.591	0.492	0	1
Gender	1,799	0.577	0.494	0	1
Education	1,776	3.553	1.023	1	5
Income	1,523	5.435	2.701	1	9
Age	1,813	4.399	2.936	1	11
Party ID	1,813	2.673	1.831	1	7
Ideology	1,610	3.370	1.459	1	7
L.A. City	1,813	0.153	0.360	0	1

Our main dependent variable is respondent support for the policy proposal presented to them in their treatment condition. Individual responses were aggregated across the four treatment conditions in the variable *Support*. The independent variable we use to test H1 is the binary variable *OutGroupBen*, which takes a value of 1 if the respondent was randomized into the treatment where an ethnic out-group exclusively benefits from the proposed scholarship policy and 0 if the respondent was assigned to the treatment in which their ethnic in-group exclusively benefits from the proposed policy. Note that this variable excludes participants in the two treatment conditions that also included an endorsement of the proposed policy by a co-ethnic elite. We use OLS to estimate the effect of being randomly assigned to observe a policy that

exclusively benefits an individual's ethnic out-group, compared to a policy that exclusively

benefits their ethnic group, on their support for that policy. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Effect of Policy Exclusiveness on Support

	Dependent variable:
	Support
OutGroupBen	-0.716***
	(0.064)
Constant	3.488***
	(0.046)
Observations	896
R^2	0.124
Adjusted R^2	0.123
Residual Std. Error	0.953 (df = 894)
F Statistic	126.275*** (df = 1; 894)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2 indicates strong support for H1. Respondents who were treated with a policy that

exclusively benefited an ethnic out-group were about .72 points *less likely* to say they supported

such a policy. Substantially, respondents who were treated with a policy that exclusively

benefited their ethnic in-group supported the policy at a 3.4 (Very Likely), on average. In

contrast, the comparison group's average support for a policy that exclusively benefits an ethnic

out-group drops to 2.78 (Somewhat Likely). These results are significant at $p < .001$ level. This

experiment makes it clear that African-American, Asian-American, and Latinos tend to prefer

policies that exclusively target their ethnic in-group, over policies that target an ethnic out-group,

on average.

To test H2, we pool together all respondents and generate a new variable *Endors*, which

equals 1 if respondents were randomized into a treatment that included an endorsement from a

Fig 2. Conditional Effect of Policy Exclusiveness on Support
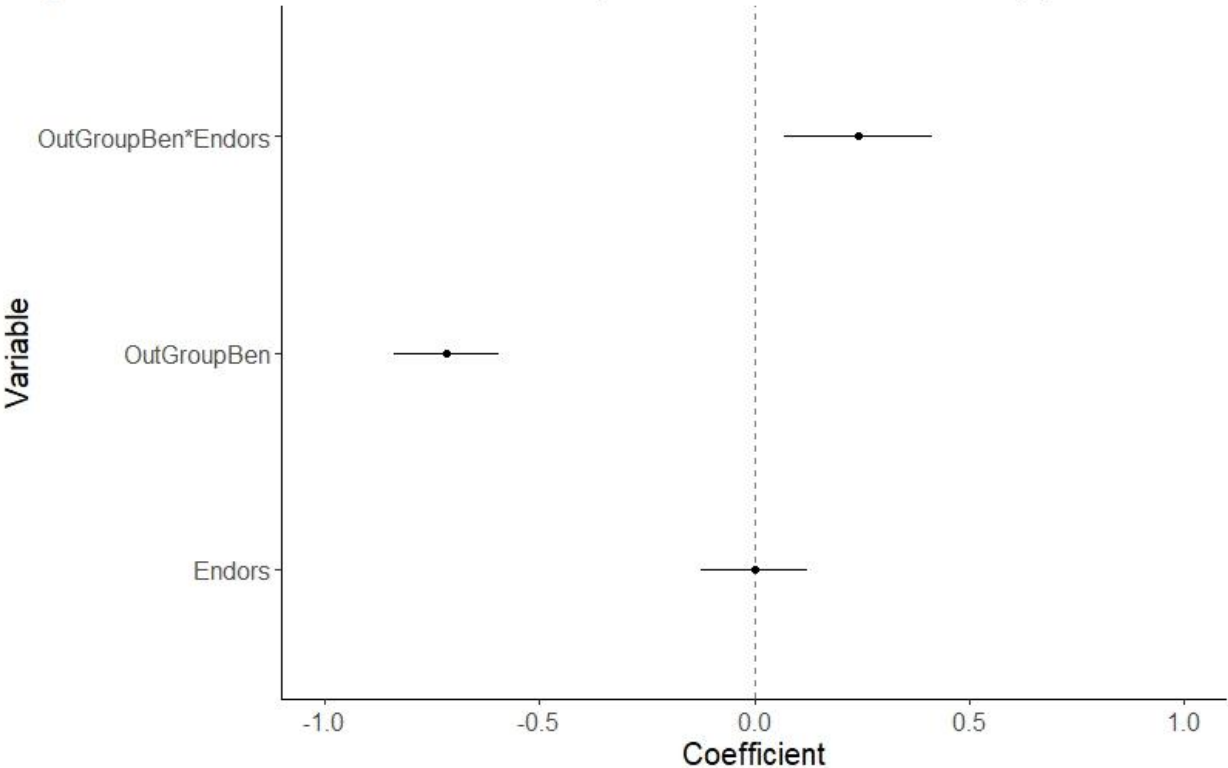
co-ethnic elite (regardless of who that policy benefited) and 0 to indicate respondents in treatment conditions that did not receive a co-ethnic endorsement. We repeat our analysis from H1 and include the interaction term *OutGroupBen*Endors* to test how individual support for zero-sum policies varies conditional on such a policy being endorsed by a co-ethnic elite. We present our results in Figure 2 in the form of a coefficient plot.[2]

Figure 2 shows our interaction term *OutGroupBen*Endors* to be be positive and statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. Respondents who are presented with a policy that exclusively benefits an ethnic outgroup show higher levels of support for that policy when they observe a co-ethnic elite endorsing that policy. Using STATA's margins command to generate marginal effects, we see that the average response for participants who observe a policy that

---

[2] The full regression model is presented in the Appendix.

exclusively targets one's ethnic outgroup with no endorsement is about 2.77. The average

response for participants who observe the same policy with a co-ethnic endorsement is 3.01.

Substantively speaking, the effect of co-ethnic endorsements is relatively large, moving

respondents from "Somewhat Likely" to support a policy that excludes their ethnic group to

"Very Likely".

Discussion

As racial and ethnic minority groups continue to win seats in local governments it is

important to consider how whether these groups continue to cooperate with one another in

crafting policy, distributive policies in particular. Do racial and ethnic minorities support local

distributive policies, even when their own groups are excluded from such policy benefits? Our

results show that they do to some extent. While the results from H1 indeed show that

respondents are *less likely* to support policies that exclusively benefit an ethnic out-group,

substantively they are still "Somewhat Likely" to support such policies. In addition, our test of

H2 shows that respondents are just as likely to support policies that exclusively benefit an ethnic

out-group, conditional on a co-ethnic elite endorsing such a policy, as they are to support a

policy that exclusively targets their in-group. In sum, we find that racial and ethnic groups can

indeed engage in cooperative behavior even when they do not benefit from the distribution of

resources in local policy making.

Works Cited

Barreto, M. A. (2010). *Ethnic Cues: The Role of Shared Ethnicity in Latino Political Participation*. AnnArbor: University of Michigan Press.

Benjamin, A. (2017). *Racial Coalition Building in Local Elections: Elite Cues and Cross Ethnic Voting*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bobo, L., & Gilliam Jr., F. D. (1990). Race , Sociopolitical Participation , and Black Empowerment. *American Political Science Review*, *84*(2), 377–393.

Browning, R. P., Marshall, D. R., & Tabb, D. H. (1984). *Protest Is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Browning, R. P., Marshall, D. R., & Tabb, D. H. (Eds.). (1990). *Racial Politics in American Cities*. New York, NY: Longman.

Carey Jr, T. E., Martinez-Ebers, V., Matsubayashi, T., & Paolino, P. (2016). ¿ Eres Amigo o Enemigo ? Contextual Determinants of Latinos ' Perceived Competition with African-Americans. *Urban Affairs Review*, *52*(2), 155–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087415574347

Dawson, M. C. (1994). *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Falcón, A. (1988). Black and Latino Politics in New York City: Race and Ethnicity in a Changing Urban Context. In F. C. Garcia (Ed.), *Latinos and the Political System* (pp. 171–194). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Gay, C. (2002). Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship Between Citizens and Their Government. *American Journal of Political Science*, *46*(4),

717–733. https://doi.org/10.2307/3088429

Gay, C. (2006). Seeing Difference: The Effect on Black Attitudes toward Latinos. *American Journal of Political Science*, *50*(4), 982–997.

Kaufmann, K. M. (2003). Black and Latino voters in Denver: Responses to each other's political leadership. *Political Science Quarterly*, *118*(1), 107–125. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1538-165X.2003.tb00388.x

Kaufmann, K. M. (2007). State of the Art: Immigration and the Future of Black Power in U. S. Cities. *Du Bios Review*, *1*(2007), 79–96.

Lucero, E., Trounstine, J., Connolly, J. M., & Klofstad, C. (2020). A matter of life or death : How racial representation shapes compliance with city disaster preparedness orders. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, *00*(00), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2020.1785303

Munoz, C. J., & Henry, C. (1986). Rainbow Coalitions in Four Big Cities : San Antonio, Denver, Chicago and Philadelphia. *PS*, *19*(3), 598–609.

Orr, M., & Morel, D. (2018). *Latino Mayors: Political Change in the Postindustrial City*. Philidelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Peterson, P. E. (1981). *City Limits*. University of Chicago Press.

Sanchez, G. R., & Masuoka, N. (2010). Brown-utility heuristic? the presence and contributing factors of latino linked fate. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *32*(4), 519–531. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986310383129

Appendix

Table A1. Conditional Effect of Policy Exclusiveness on Support

	Dependent variable:
	Support
OutGroupBen	-0.716***
	(0.062)
Endors	0.0003
	(0.063)
OutGroupBen*Endors	0.242***
	(0.087)
Constant	3.488***
	(0.045)
Observations	1,813
R^2	0.100
Adjusted R^2	0.099
Residual Std. Error	0.928 (df = 1809)
F Statistic	67.150*** (df = 3; 1809)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01