

**Racial or Spatial Voting?
The Effects of Candidate Ethnicity and Ethnic Group Endorsements
in Low-Information Elections**

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Abstract

Voters face difficult choices in elections where party labels do not distinguish the candidates' ideological positions. In these contexts, racial/ethnic cues may help voters to choose ideologically-similar candidates (spatial voting), or make choices based on race/ethnicity (racial voting). In most elections, these behaviors are observationally equivalent because race/ethnicity and ideology are strongly correlated (i.e., minority candidates and voters are typically more liberal than whites). We disentangle racial and spatial voting by examining local elections where this is not the case. Using original surveys and exit polls, we create comparable measures of candidate and voter ideology and examine how race/ethnicity and ideology affect voters' choices. We also embed experiments that manipulate ethnic group endorsements. We find that ideology powerfully shapes voters' choices, but that ethnic group endorsements diminish spatial voting. We also show that co-ethnic voters react favorably to endorsements from their group, while non-co-ethnics' reactions are driven by racial/ethnic stereotypes.

Each election cycle, candidates for public office seek to attract voters by taking policy positions and highlighting personal attributes that are likely to resonate with them. Candidates also attempt to make inroads with particular communities by securing endorsements from prominent public officials, interest groups, and other elites. While these activities are important in any election, they are especially consequential in local elections where candidates are less well known, party labels do not distinguish the candidates' ideological positions, and frequently no single racial/ethnic group predominates. In such contexts, racial/ethnic cues can provide powerful signals, and thus, candidates attempt to emphasize their race/ethnicity and/or secure endorsements from racial/ethnic groups and public officials.

Candidates' efforts to attract support from particular racial/ethnic communities are ubiquitous in local politics. For example, the 2007 mayoral election in San Francisco featured two liberal candidates, one white (Gavin Newsom) and one Latino (Matt Gonzalez), vying for support among the city's diverse, multi-ethnic electorate. Newsom secured endorsements from local organizations representing the city's two largest ethnic groups (Latinos and Chinese-Americans) and ultimately won a close election. More recently, during the 2013 mayoral primary in San Diego, Nathan Fletcher, a white candidate who had recently switched his party registration from Republican to Democrat, tried to attract support from Latino voters by securing endorsements from prominent local Latino officials like U.S. Representative Juan Vargas. David Alvarez, another Democrat running in this election, countered by highlighting his Latino heritage and progressive policy views via endorsements from Latino groups like the Chicano Democratic Association of San Diego. Alvarez ultimately outpolled Fletcher in San Diego's Latino neighborhoods and narrowly advanced to the runoff.

How do candidates' race/ethnicity, as well as the endorsements they receive from racial/ethnic groups, affect voters' decisions? These examples of efforts to provide voters with racial/ethnic cues reflect practitioners' expectations that they matter in local elections. How they matter, and for whom they matter, are open questions. On the one hand, racial/ethnic cues can send ideological signals about which candidate is to the left or right of others (e.g., a Latino endorsement might convey that a candidate holds liberal policy views). This may help voters to choose candidates who share their policy views. On the other hand, racial/ethnic cues can send non-ideological signals about a candidate's viability or commitment to issues that are important to racial/ethnic communities. This might induce voters to choose candidates who are associated with particular racial/ethnic groups even if these candidates hold policy views that are at odds with their own. However, while racial/ethnic cues might help candidates to attract support in racial/ethnic communities, there is also the risk of backlash from voters who hold negative stereotypes of these groups (Key 1949; Piston 2010).

Our study presents the first direct evidence of how candidate race/ethnicity and ethnic group endorsements affect the extent to which citizens vote spatially (i.e., choose candidates whose policy views resemble their own) or racially (i.e., choose candidates on the basis of race/ethnicity, regardless of policy views). We disentangle racial and spatial voting by examining nonpartisan local elections that lack a strong correlation between race/ethnicity and ideology. That is, the ideological positions of the white, Latino, and Chinese-American candidates span the liberal-conservative local policy space, as do the ideological positions of white, Latino, and Chinese-American voters. To measure the candidates' ideological positions, we conduct original surveys that ask them to take positions on important local policy issues during the campaigns. We develop comparable measures of voters' ideological positions by

asking them to report their positions on these same policy issues, as well as which candidates they voted for, on written exit polls. We also embed experiments that manipulate ethnic group endorsements and examine their effects on voters' candidate preferences.

By creating comparable measures of candidate and voter ideology in local elections and by manipulating ethnic group endorsements, we overcome three limitations of previous research. First, most previous research examines voter decision making in elections that feature black versus white candidates, as opposed to candidates of different ethnicities. This limits our understanding of how voters respond to candidates from two politically relevant and quickly growing ethnic groups (Latinos and Asians). Second, ideology and race/ethnicity are strongly correlated in the elections that most previous research examines; that is, minority voters and candidates tend to be more liberal than white voters and candidates (see Abrajano, Nagler, and Alvarez 2005 for an exception). This correlation makes it difficult to disentangle the effects of ideology and race/ethnicity on voters' choices. Third, previous experiments investigate the effects of racial/ethnic cues by manipulating attributes of candidates (e.g., surnames, pictures, skin tone), as opposed to endorsements they receive from racial/ethnic groups. This limits our understanding of how these racial/ethnic cues—which come from politically active groups and, therefore, might be particularly effective at conveying ideological information—affect voters' propensity to vote spatially or racially.

Our results demonstrate that candidates' ideological positions powerfully shape voters' choices in local elections, even when they must choose between candidates of different ethnicities (as indicated by the candidates' surnames). However, ethnic group endorsements diminish, rather than enhance, such spatial voting. Rather than help voters to identify candidates who share their policy views, these endorsements appear to trigger identity-based responses

among co-ethnic voters, which reduces their propensity to choose ideologically-similar candidates. That is, co-ethnic voters increase their support for candidates endorsed by their group, irrespective of those candidates' ideological positions. Among non-co-ethnic voters, these endorsements trigger race-based responses, mostly reducing support for endorsed candidates and weakening spatial voting. Indeed, we find that non-co-ethnic voters' reactions to these endorsements are driven by stereotypes they hold about particular racial/ethnic groups.

Spatial versus Racial Voting

Two theories that have guided empirical research on voting behavior are the theory of spatial voting and the theory of racial voting. The theory of spatial voting posits that candidates in an election take positions in an ideological space and that voters choose the candidate who is closest to their own ideological position (Black 1948; Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1984). Thus, spatial voting produces a close alignment between voters' policy views and those of the candidates they choose. Alternatively, the theory of racial voting asserts that voters choose candidates on the basis of their race, as opposed to policy positions (Key 1949; Glazer, Grofman and Owen 1998; Hutchings and Valentino 2004). According to this theory, voters prefer candidates of (or supported by) their own racial/ethnic group, and disfavor candidates of (or supported by) other racial/ethnic groups.

Distinguishing racial from spatial voting in real-world elections requires scholars to surmount two important challenges. One challenge is developing comparable measures of voter and candidate ideology. While it is easy to ask voters about their policy views or ideological positions on surveys, candidates often take ambiguous positions (Tomz and Van Houweling 2009). A second challenge is the observational equivalence of racial and spatial voting in most elections. That is, race/ethnicity and ideology are often strongly correlated because minority

candidates/voters tend to be more liberal than white candidates/voters. Thus, voting based on racial considerations (i.e., choosing a candidate because he or she is a member of a voter's own racial/ethnic group) and voting based on spatial considerations (i.e., choosing a candidate because he or she is more/less liberal and, therefore, similar ideologically) lead to the same observable choice. Indeed, a candidate's race/ethnicity can actually provide a proxy for ideology in these settings (Sigelman et al. 1995; McDermott 1998).

Scholars in recent years have developed methods for measuring candidate and voter ideology on the same scale, which has facilitated empirical tests of spatial voting theory (Stone and Simas 2010; Adams et al. 2011; Joesten and Stone 2014; Jessee 2009, 2010; Shor and Rogowski 2010; Bafumi and Herron 2010; Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie 2013).¹ One method combines candidates' known policy views with surveys that ask voters whether they support those policies. Using scaling techniques developed to study voting in democratic legislatures (Poole 2005; Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004; Poole and Rosenthal 1997), these scholars estimate ideal points for candidates and voters from their views on the same or overlapping sets of policy issues. Consistent with spatial voting theory, they observe a strong, positive relationship between voters' own ideological positions and those of the candidates they choose in presidential, congressional, and local elections.

In contrast, empirical tests of racial voting yield mixed results. Some studies find that white voters discriminate against minority candidates in real-world elections (Tesler and Sears 2010; Grofman, Handley, and Lublin 2001; Piston 2010), while others show that they do not (Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Highton 2004; Hajnal 2001; Voss and Lublin 2001). Further

¹ Like these scholars, we conceive of ideology as the extent to which voters' and candidates' take consistent positions across multiple policy issues (Converse 1964).

complicating matters is that it is sometimes difficult to know whether white voters react against minority candidates because of their race/ethnicity or because of their ideology, given the strong correlation between these two factors in many real-world electoral contexts. To avoid this correlation, some scholars conduct experiments that systematically manipulate fictional candidates' race/ethnicity and policy-relevant attributes (Karl and Ryan 2013; Moskowitz and Stroh 1994; Reeves 1997; Sigelman et al. 1995; Terkildsen 1993; McConnaughy et al. 2010; Jones 2014). These experiments have the advantage of providing tight control over a candidate's race/ethnicity and policy positions, thereby allowing for a clean test of these two factors. However, one disadvantage is that these results may not generalize to real-world elections where voters know more about candidates than the limited amounts of information provided in these experiments.

Local settings that lack a strong correlation between race/ethnicity and ideology provide an opportunity to distinguish racial from spatial voting in real-world elections. If voters in such settings vote based on race/ethnicity, then this should weaken the relationship between voters' own ideological positions and those of the candidates they choose. This is because racial/ethnic voting should increase voters' support for their own racial/ethnic group's candidates and decrease support for other racial/ethnic groups' candidates irrespective of ideological differences between themselves and the candidates. On the other hand, if voters choose candidates based on their ideology, then this should strengthen, not weaken, the relationship between voters' and candidates' ideological positions. These settings also provide an opportunity to use experiments that manipulate actual endorsements from ethnic groups to examine whether signals from these groups enhance racial or spatial voting.

Our study contributes to existing research on racial and spatial voting in four important ways. First, we test racial and spatial voting in a local setting that lacks a strong correlation between ideology and race/ethnicity. Thus, these behaviors are not observationally equivalent in the elections we examine. Second, in contrast to the typical focus on voters' responses to black candidates, we examine two elections that feature Latino, Chinese-American, and white candidates. Third, we examine the effects of ethnic group endorsements on racial and spatial voting, not just how candidate race/ethnicity affects these behaviors. Fourth, we shed light on the psychological mechanism that underlies white voters' reactions to ethnic group endorsements. In doing so, we clarify whether and when voters choose candidates based on their policy views or their race/ethnicity in local elections.

Hypotheses

The foregoing discussion suggests competing predictions about voters' propensity to vote spatially versus racially in local elections. On the one hand, research on local elections suggests that voters' choices in these elections are based on non-ideological considerations like race and ethnicity (Banfield and Wilson 1963; Kaufmann 2004; Trounstine 2008; Hajnal 2001). If this is the case, then we should observe a strong relationship between voters' own race/ethnicity and that of the candidates they choose. Given the absence of party labels that distinguish candidates' policy views and the large number of candidates in many local elections, this expectation of racial voting is quite plausible. On the other hand, research indicates that the elite ideological divisions necessary for spatial voting are present in many local contexts, including America's largest cities (see, e.g., Swanstrom 1988; Sonenshein 1993; Simpson 2001; Erie, Kogan, and MacKenzie 2011; Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie 2013). In these settings, candidates' efforts to appeal to voters based on their policy views reflect the expectation that position-taking

matters in local elections. If voters perceive and care about these ideological differences among candidates, then we should observe a strong relationship between voters' own ideological positions and those of the candidates they choose (i.e., spatial voting) at the local level.

With respect to how ethnic group endorsements should affect voters' propensity to vote spatially versus racially, we test the predictions that existing research suggests. On the one hand, research indicates that signals from racial/ethnic groups can convey ideological information (McDermott 1998; Sigelman et al. 1995; Karl and Ryan 2013; Jones 2014). For example, because Latino candidates/voters are typically liberal and Asian candidates/voters are often more conservative, these ethnic groups have ideological reputations that may help voters determine which candidate is to the left/right of the other and vote spatially.² If voters use endorsements from ethnic groups as ideological signals and if these endorsements send ideologically "correct" signals (i.e., a Latino [Asian] group supports candidates who are more liberal [conservative]), then voters who receive these endorsements should be more likely to prefer ideologically-similar candidates, relative to voters who do not receive these endorsements. As such, we should observe a stronger relationship between voters' own ideological positions and those of the candidates they choose.

On the other hand, research indicates that signals from racial/ethnic groups induce an identity-based response among co-ethnic voters (Barreto 2007; McConnaughy et al. 2010). Such a response may prompt voters to choose candidates who are supported by their racial/ethnic group, regardless of whether the candidates' ideological positions are similar to their own. If this is the case, then ethnic group endorsements should increase co-ethnic voters' support for those candidates, relative to co-ethnic voters who do not receive these endorsements. Importantly, if

² Karl and Ryan (2013) show that voters perceive Latinos as more liberal than whites and Asians.

the endorsements elicit an identity-based response, we should observe this favorable response irrespective of co-ethnic voters' ideological positions. As such, it could weaken the relationship between voters' own ideological positions and those of the candidates they choose.

Signals from racial/ethnic groups may also activate non-ideological stereotypes among voters who do not belong to that group (Terkildsen 1993; Sigelman et al. 1995; Piston 2010; see also Kam 2007). If this is the case, then voters who hold negative (positive) stereotypes of particular racial/ethnic groups should be less likely (more likely) to support candidates who receive endorsements from these groups, regardless of whether the candidates' ideological positions are similar to their own. We should, therefore, observe a weaker relationship between these voters' own ideological positions and those of the candidates they choose, relative to voters who do not receive these endorsements.

Testing Racial versus Spatial Voting: San Francisco Elections

We test our hypotheses by conducting studies during the 2011 mayoral and 2012 supervisorial elections in San Francisco. We selected these settings for several reasons. First, ideology and race/ethnicity are not strongly correlated in these settings. Like many major American cities, San Francisco features a real ideological divide among its political elites, who favor quite different local policies. Specifically, seasoned observers portray the city's political elite as divided between so-called "progressives" (the local left) and "moderates" (the local right).³ Recently, progressives have advocated cash grants to the homeless and opposed tax breaks for local businesses, such as Twitter. Moderates, in contrast, have opposed these cash

³ We follow local usage and refer to candidates and voters who are left-of-center on the San Francisco political spectrum as "progressive" and those who are right-of-center as "moderate."

grants and advocated tax breaks for local businesses. Importantly, these ideological differences are cross-cutting with respect to the city's three major ethnic groups – whites, Latinos, and Chinese-Americans. That is, knowing that a candidate is a member of one of these groups provides little information about whether that candidate is a progressive or moderate in local elections. Indeed, the two elections we examine feature white, Latino, and Chinese-American candidates on both sides of the local ideological spectrum. White, Latino, and Chinese-American voters similarly span the local ideological space.

Second, San Francisco uses rank choice voting (RCV), which allows voters to rank up to three candidates in order of preference. The city's RCV voting system serves our purposes in several ways. First, it was intended to diversify the field of candidates, and in this respect it seems to have worked. There were 11 “serious” candidates⁴ in the 2011 mayoral race, including four Chinese-Americans, two Latinos, one gay man, and two women (all Democrats). There were nine candidates in the 2012 supervisory race in District 7, including one Chinese-American, two Latinos, one gay man, and one woman (also all Democrats). Further, the RCV voting system gives politically interested groups an incentive to endorse multiple candidates, given that voters can choose more than one. In the 2011 mayoral election, the Latino Democratic Club endorsed two candidates, while the Chinese American Citizens Alliance endorsed two other candidates. In the 2012 supervisory election in District 7, these two ethnic groups endorsed the same candidate. This natural variation in the race/ethnicity of candidates

⁴ Eleven candidates in the mayoral race, for example, were current or former elected officials. Nine of these candidates qualified for and accepted more than \$290,000 each in public financing. A tenth (Edwin Lee) did not apply for public financing, but pro-Lee groups outspent all other candidates in the race.

and endorsements from Latino and Chinese groups enables us to conduct experiments that truthfully manipulate different endorsements and examine their effects on voters' choices. That these two ethnic groups endorsed the same candidate in the 2012 supervisorial election enables us to hold the candidate receiving the endorsement constant, while manipulating whether that endorsement is from a Latino or Chinese group.

Finally, San Francisco features a unique convention that enables us to overcome the difficulty of measuring candidates' ideological positions. Specifically, political party organizations, newspapers, and interest groups in San Francisco distribute questionnaires to candidates for local offices. It is considered bad form for a candidate not to answer a group's questionnaire, even if the candidate knows he or she has no chance of winning its endorsement. Answers to questionnaires are often made public and scrutinized for inconsistencies. Thus, candidates who refuse to answer or who dissemble do so at their peril. Typically these questionnaires use open-ended questions that allow candidates to elaborate (or obfuscate) their views. In the 2011 election, however, we collaborated with two groups, which agreed to ask candidates the yes/no policy questions we developed to measure candidates' local ideological positions. In the 2012 supervisorial elections, we collaborated with one of these groups again to develop similar measures of those candidates' ideological positions.

Study Design

We disentangle racial and spatial voting by examining voters' actual decisions in the 2011 mayoral election and by conducting experiments that manipulate ethnic group endorsements during the 2011 mayoral and 2012 supervisorial elections. Our analysis of voters' actual decisions (as measured by exit polls) allows us to examine how candidate race/ethnicity and ideology affect voters' propensity to choose particular candidates in a real-world election. It

also provides a baseline measure of the extent to which voters choose candidates based on racial or spatial considerations. The experiments we conduct during this same election enable us to assess whether ethnic group endorsements enhance racial or spatial voting among different groups of voters. Our experiments during the 2012 supervisorial election shed light on the psychological mechanism that underlies voters' responses to these ethnic group endorsements.

The 2011 Mayoral Election

To assess whether voters choose candidates based on spatial or racial considerations in the mayoral election, we first need to develop comparable measures of candidate and voter ideology. We follow Jessee (2009, 2010) and Shor and Rogowski (2010) by estimating ideal points for candidates and voters based upon their positions on an overlapping set of policy issues. Unlike Jessee (2009, 2010), we must estimate ideal points for many candidates with no record of previous roll call votes and, for the lesser-known candidates, little to no media coverage of their policy positions.

To scale the candidates' ideological positions, we take advantage of the unique convention in San Francisco politics described above. Specifically, we developed a set of binary policy questions for candidates based on divided roll call votes in the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (the city's legislative body) and other issues that had been in the news. We approached a number of groups about including our questions on their candidate surveys, and two agreed to do so. One is a local club of Democratic voters; the other is the *San Francisco Public Press (SF Public Press)*, a nonprofit news outlet. Virtually all of the candidates running for mayor answered at least one of these groups' questionnaires. We scaled candidates' ideal points from their responses to our survey questions and answers to binary policy questions found in other candidate surveys in the public domain.

To measure voter ideology on the same scale as candidate ideology, we asked voters a subset of the survey questions candidates answered, using written exit polls conducted on Election Day in 2011.⁵ Table 1 summarizes these questions and the candidates' answers. When conducting our exit polls, we recruited 117 student pollsters and assigned them to 41 teams working in precincts across the city. We randomly chose polling places from the San Francisco Department of Elections' list of precincts, oversampling majority-minority precincts (namely, Chinese-American and Latino) because of the historically low turnout levels among these types of voters. We randomly assigned morning or afternoon/evening coverage to each polling place, with each team of pollsters working a 3.25-hour shift.

[Table 1 about here]

As voters left their polling places, our pollsters approached them and asked if they would be willing to complete a short, written survey. Voters were invited to complete the survey in English, Spanish, or Chinese, and pollsters fluent in Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin staffed the majority-minority precincts. If a voter agreed to take the survey, pollsters escorted him or her to a nearby table with chairs so that the voter could take the survey comfortably. The survey asked voters to report their first, second, and third choices for mayor. It also included 13 of our yes/no policy questions, which we chose based on succinctness and utility for distinguishing the candidates' ideological positions.⁶ In this election, 1,593 voters filled out our survey, which took approximately 10 minutes to complete. These voters' demographic characteristics resemble San

⁵ Although experiments embedded in exit polls are rare in political science, scholars have recently used them to great effect (Druckman and Bolsen 2011; Katz et al. 2011; Klar 2013).

⁶ Each voter received 11 questions. Nine were the same for each voter. For the remaining questions, we randomly assigned two of four longer questions, for 13 questions total.

Francisco's voting and general populations in many respects, including partisan affiliation, sex, age, race/ethnicity, education, and income.

To examine how ethnic group endorsements affect voters' propensity to prefer ideologically-similar or racially-similar candidates, we experimentally manipulated different types of endorsements across the surveys. The experimental manipulations were included in a later section of the survey that asked voters to express their preferences for the leading candidates, considered pairwise. That is, we asked voters to make a series of one-on-one comparisons between the five leading candidates for mayor. Voters were asked to indicate which candidate in the pair they would prefer to be the mayor, *regardless of whom they had actually voted for*.⁷ In this way, we follow Alvarez and Kiewiet (2009) in using voters' pairwise comparisons to measure their sincere preferences.

Voters were randomly assigned to either a control or treatment group. Voters in the control group answered these pairwise comparison questions without any additional information about the candidates. For example, when comparing candidates John Avalos and Edwin Lee, voters in the control group were asked, "How about John Avalos or Edwin Lee? Do you prefer Avalos over Lee or Lee over Avalos?"

In the treatment group, we provided voters with ethnic group endorsements that the five leading candidates actually received in this election.⁸ Thus, all of the information voters receive

⁷ Our results are similar when we limit our analysis to only candidate pairs that did not include candidates that individual voters ranked as their first, second, or third choices.

⁸ This enhances external validity and avoids deception. A potential concern is "pretreatment" from the real-world campaign (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 2007; Druckman and Leeper 2012). If anything, this should make it more difficult for us to observe treatment effects.

is truthful. Specifically, voters in the treatment group were told which candidate(s) in each pair the Chinese American Citizens Alliance and/or the Latino Democratic Club endorsed. Thus, when comparing John Avalos and Edwin Lee, voters in the treatment group were asked, “How about John Avalos or Edwin Lee? (Avalos is endorsed by the Latino Democratic Club; Lee is endorsed by the Chinese American Citizens Alliance.) Do you prefer Avalos over Lee or Lee over Avalos?”

One consequence of providing real endorsements is that both candidates in some pairs receive endorsements (as in the above example), while only one candidate receives an endorsement in other pairs. We take advantage of this natural variation and analyze separately those candidate pairs where only one candidate receives an endorsement and those where both candidates receive an endorsement. This enables us to assess whether voters respond favorably to their own ethnic group’s endorsements, but not to other ethnic groups’ endorsements (an indication of racial voting). It also enables us to assess whether different types of endorsements increase voters’ propensity to prefer ideologically-similar candidates (spatial voting).

Follow-Up Experiments in the 2012 Supervisorial Election

In order to shed light on the psychological mechanism that underlies voters’ reactions to these ethnic group endorsements, we conducted follow-up experiments during the 2012 supervisorial election in District 7. These experiments are important because if voters react against the Latino Democratic Club’s and/or Chinese American Citizens Alliance’s endorsements, such reactions may reflect racial animus or they may stem from other non-ideological considerations (such as protest votes against well-funded special interests backing particular candidates).

To determine whether voters' reactions to ethnic group endorsements are driven by racial considerations, we use similar procedures to those described above for the 2011 mayoral election. As before, we developed comparable measures of candidate and voter ideology by conducting original surveys that asked candidates to take positions on important local policy issues during the campaign. We then asked voters a subset of these survey questions on a written exit poll and estimated ideal points for candidates and voters based on their positions on these policy issues. In this 2012 exit poll, we also included questions that the American National Election Study (ANES) uses to measure whether voters hold positive or negative stereotypes of particular racial/ethnic groups. Specifically, we asked voters to rate Latinos and Chinese-Americans on three one-to-seven scales (hardworking [1] to lazy [7]; intelligent [1] to unintelligent [7]; trustworthy [1] to untrustworthy [7]). These questions help us assess whether voters' responses to these endorsements are driven by racial considerations.

Another unique feature of our follow-up study is that the Latino Democratic Club and Chinese American Citizens Alliance endorsed the same candidate (Norman Yee) in this election. This enabled us to manipulate these groups' endorsements truthfully while holding the candidate receiving the endorsement constant. Thus, when asking voters to make a series of pairwise comparisons between the four leading candidates in this election, we randomly assigned voters to one of three groups: a treatment group in which Yee received the Latino Democratic Club's endorsement; a treatment group in which Yee received the Chinese American Citizens Alliance's endorsement; or a control group in which Yee did not receive an endorsement.

Methods and Data Analysis

To estimate the ideal points of voters and candidates, we use the Bayesian item-response model developed by Clinton, Jackman and Rivers (2004) and applied by Jessee (2009, 2010) and

others to national survey data. The model assumes a quadratic utility function with normally distributed errors. To enhance the precision of our estimates of the ideal points of both candidates and voters, we combined the policy questions we asked candidates and voters (13 in 2011 and 12 in 2012) with other binary policy questions gathered from publicly available candidate questionnaires distributed during these elections. While practical considerations prevented us from asking voters these other questions, most candidates answered many or most of them. In bridging candidate and voter responses to our policy questions with candidate responses to these other questions, we improve the precision of our estimates and make it more likely that the ideological dimension described by our ideal point estimates accurately reflects the ideological preferences of both candidates and voters.⁹

Figure 1 plots the estimated ideal points of candidates and voters in the 2011 mayoral election (estimates for the 2012 supervisorial election are in the Online Appendix). The candidates' ideological positions span the local policy space, with Latino (Avalos, Herrera),

⁹ Specifically, we used the IDEAL program (Clinton, Jackman and Rivers 2004) to analyze candidate and voter responses to policy questions. For each election, we estimated a one-dimensional model with uninformative priors for all model parameters with 200,000 iterations after discarding the first 10,000 and thinning by 100. Ideal point estimates were then post-processed, fixing one candidate at -1 and another candidate at 1 in the policy space. The first dimension correctly classifies 73.7 percent of candidate and voter responses in 2011. Adding a second dimension results in only mild improvement. These numbers are comparable to what scholars have found at the national level (Jessee 2009). As the first dimension explains most of the variance, we use candidates' and voters' ideal points along the first dimension in our statistical models.

Chinese-American (Yee, Adachi, Chiu, Lee) and white candidates (Rees, Dufty, Hall, Alioto-Pier) dispersed along the dominant first (Progressive-Moderate) dimension. Voters' ideological positions are also distributed relatively evenly across the local policy space. The weak correlation between race/ethnicity and ideology is evident in the similar densities and substantial overlap of Latino, Chinese-American and white voters' ideal points.

[Figure 1 about here]

We first use the estimated ideal points of candidates and voters to examine whether and to what extent racial and/or spatial voting occurred in the 2011 mayoral election. Our dependent variable in this analysis is a dummy variable that is coded as one if voters ranked John Avalos (a Latino progressive) ahead of Edwin Lee (a Chinese-American moderate) on their ballots. We use voters' choices between these two candidates as our dependent variable for several reasons. First, these candidates were the top two finishers in the election and clear frontrunners during the campaign. Thus, both candidates were equally viable. Second, a vote for Avalos over Lee indicates a preference for a progressive Latino candidate, while a vote for Lee over Avalos reflects a preference for a moderate Chinese-American candidate. Because ideology and race/ethnicity are not strongly correlated among voters in our setting, this candidate comparison enables us to assess whether voters' actual choices between Avalos and Lee are based on racial and/or spatial considerations.

Our main independent variable is a variable that quantifies for each voter how much closer the progressive candidate in a pair is to his or her own ideal point (*Spatial Advantage*). Specifically, for candidates Avalos and Lee with ideal points, x_p and x_m respectively, and each voter with ideal point, x_i , this variable is calculated as follows:

$$Spatial\ Advantage = |x_m - x_i| - |x_p - x_i|$$

Positive values of *Spatial Advantage* indicate that the more progressive candidate Avalos (with ideal point x_p) is closer to the voter's own ideal point than the more moderate candidate Lee (with ideal point x_m). Conversely, negative values indicate that the more moderate candidate Lee is closer to the voter's ideal point than the more progressive candidate Avalos.

We include interactions between *Spatial Advantage* and dummy variables that reflect voters' ethnicity (*Latino*, *Chinese*) to assess whether Latino and Chinese-American voters choose candidates who are closer to them ideologically. We also control for other factors thought to influence voting in local elections—voters' age, gender, income, interest in the election, local political knowledge, and evaluations of local government performance.

Analyzing the Effects of Ethnic Group Endorsements

We also use candidates' and voters' ideal points to test our hypotheses about the effects of ethnic group endorsements. In our first analyses, we rely on the pairwise comparisons that voters made between the five leading candidates in the 2011 mayoral election. We estimate three models that compare treatment and control group voters' candidate preferences when they receive different types of signals. The first model analyzes candidate pairs where one candidate received the Latino Democratic Club's endorsement and the other candidate did not receive an endorsement (labeled "Latino Endorsement Only"). The second model analyzes candidate pairs where one candidate received the Chinese American Citizens Alliance's endorsement and the other candidate did not receive an endorsement ("Chinese Endorsement Only"). The third model analyzes candidate pairs where one candidate received the Latino Democratic Club's endorsement and the other received the Chinese American Citizens Alliance's endorsement ("Latino and Chinese Endorsements").

Our dependent variable in these models is a dummy variable that is coded as one for voters who prefer the more progressive candidate in each pair and zero otherwise. Thus, the unit of analysis is voter-pair observations.¹⁰ Our main independent variables are interactions between 1) dummy variables that reflect participation in the control or ethnic endorsement treatment group and 2) dummy variables that reflect whether voters are of the same or a different ethnicity as the ethnic group making the endorsements. Specifically, the variable *Endorsement* is coded as one for voters in the ethnic endorsement treatment group, while the variable *Control* is coded as one for voters in the control group. We omit a constant term because the control group is included as an independent variable. The variable *Co-ethnic* is coded as one for voters who are of the same ethnicity as the ethnic group making the endorsements, while the variable *Non-co-ethnic* is coded as one for voters who are of a different ethnicity than the ethnic group making the endorsements. For example, in the “Latino Endorsement Only” model, *Co-ethnic* is coded as one for Latino voters, and *Non-co-ethnic* is coded as one for voters who are not Latino. In the “Latino and Chinese Endorsements” model, we include three variables that reflect whether voters are Latino, Chinese-American, or neither.

In the candidate pairs we analyze, the Latino Democratic Club always endorsed the more progressive (left) candidate, while the Chinese American Citizens Alliance always endorsed the more moderate (right) candidate. Thus, if Latino voters follow the Latino Democratic Club’s endorsements, the coefficient for the interaction between *Endorsement* and *Co-ethnic* in the “Latino Endorsement Only” model will be significantly larger than the coefficient for the interaction between *Control* and *Co-ethnic*. That is, Latino voters in the treatment group will be

¹⁰ We use robust standard errors to account for the fact that the errors in our models are independent across voters, but not necessarily within voters across the candidate pairs.

more likely to prefer more progressive candidates, relative to Latino voters in the control group. Conversely, if Chinese-American voters follow the Chinese American Citizens Alliance's endorsements, the coefficient for the interaction between *Endorsement* and *Co-ethnic* in the "Chinese Endorsement Only" model will be significantly smaller than the coefficient for the interaction between *Control* and *Co-ethnic*. That is, Chinese-American voters in the treatment group will be less likely to prefer more progressive candidates, relative to Chinese-American voters in the control group. The coefficients for the *Non-co-ethnic* interactions enable us to assess whether other voters follow or react against these ethnic groups' endorsements.

To examine whether and when these endorsements induce co-ethnic and non-co-ethnic voters to choose candidates whose ideological positions are most similar to their own, we also interact these variables with *Spatial Advantage*. As before, positive (negative) values of *Spatial Advantage* indicate that the more progressive (more moderate) candidate in a pair is closer to the voter's own ideal point. Thus, if co-ethnic voters in the control group prefer ideologically-similar candidates, the interaction between *Control*, *Co-ethnic*, and *Spatial Advantage* should be positive and significant (i.e., more progressive co-ethnic voters are more likely to prefer the more progressive candidate in each pair). The interaction between *Endorsement*, *Co-ethnic*, and *Spatial Advantage* enables us to examine whether ethnic group endorsements strengthen or weaken co-ethnic voters' propensity to prefer ideologically-similar candidates, relative to the control group. Similarly, by comparing the effects of the interaction between *Control*, *Non-co-ethnic*, and *Spatial Advantage* and the interaction between *Endorsement*, *Non-co-ethnic*, and *Spatial Advantage*, we are able to assess whether non-co-ethnic voters in the control group prefer ideologically-similar candidates and whether the ethnic group endorsements strengthen or weaken their propensity to do so.

We estimate similar models when analyzing the effects of ethnic group endorsements in the 2012 supervisorial election. The only difference is that we also include interactions that take into account whether non-co-ethnic voters hold positive or negative stereotypes of other ethnic groups. Specifically, we use voters' ratings of Latinos and Chinese-Americans on the three one-to-seven scales that we drew from the ANES to construct additive indices that reflect how positively or negatively they view these groups.¹¹ By including these additional interactions, we assess whether non-co-ethnic voters react favorably to endorsements from groups they view positively and/or react against endorsements from groups they view negatively. This enables us to disentangle whether non-co-ethnic voters' responses to endorsements from other ethnic groups are driven by racial considerations.

Results

The results of our analysis of the 2011 mayoral election indicate that ideology strongly affects voter's choices, even after accounting for the impact of race/ethnicity, partisanship, evaluations of local government performance, and other factors. However, our experimental results show that ethnic group endorsements induce voters to choose candidates based on racial considerations, while weakening spatial voting. Specifically, these endorsements appear to trigger identity-based responses among co-ethnic voters, increasing their support for their group's endorsed candidates, irrespective of those candidates' ideological positions. Among

¹¹ We combined the three one-to-seven scales (hard-working—lazy, intelligent—unintelligent, trustworthy—untrustworthy) into zero-to-21 composite scales for both Latinos and Chinese-Americans. Voters who scored below the median are considered to hold positive stereotypes and those who scored above the median are considered to hold negative stereotypes.

non-co-ethnic voters, these endorsements also trigger a race-based response, decreasing support for endorsed candidates and reducing the effects of ideology.

Racial versus Spatial Voting in the 2011 Mayoral Election

The influence of ideology in the 2011 mayoral election is evident in Table 2, which contains the results of our analysis of voters' actual rankings in this election. The coefficient for *Spatial Advantage* is positive and significant. Figure 2 converts the coefficients in our probit model into meaningful first differences. For example, changing *Spatial Advantage* from -3.86 to 0.40¹² (i.e., the more progressive candidate, Avalos, becomes relatively closer to a voter's own ideological position) increases the probability of choosing Avalos over Lee by 0.42 ($p < 0.05$). This effect of ideology is comparable to (and mostly larger than) other factors thought to influence voters' choices in local elections, including partisanship, race/ethnicity, and evaluations of local government performance.

[Table 2 and Figure 2 about here]

The results of our analysis also suggest that a healthy amount of racial voting occurred in this election. Latino and Chinese-American voters clearly prefer candidates who share their ethnicity. As Figure 2 shows, Latino voters are more likely to choose Avalos, a Latino, over Lee, a Chinese-American, than other voters (an increase of 0.15 in the probability of preferring Avalos; $p < 0.05$). Conversely, Chinese-American voters are much less likely to choose Avalos over Lee (a decrease of 0.39 in the probability of preferring Avalos; $p < 0.05$). Nonetheless,

¹² First differences for *Spatial Advantage* in all figures involve changes from the 25th to 75th percentiles. Because we analyze different candidate pairs in different models, the actual values of the 25th and 75th percentiles of *Spatial Advantage* differ depending on the model.

these large effects of race/ethnicity do not crowd out spatial considerations entirely. In fact, as Figure 2 shows, both Latinos and Chinese-Americans, like other voters, choose candidates who share their policy views. For both groups of voters, changing *Spatial Advantage* from -3.86 to 0.40 results in large and significant increases in the probability of choosing Avalos over Lee.

Ethnic Group Endorsements in the 2011 Mayoral Election

In light of the strong effects of race/ethnicity and ideology that we observe in this election, determining whether and how ethnic group endorsements change the weight voters give to these considerations is an important empirical task. In assessing the effects of ethnic group endorsements, we take advantage of our setting's natural variation in the ethnic group endorsements awarded to candidates. The results of our experimental analyses are contained in Table 3. To ease interpretation of our main effects and interactions, we convert our probit coefficients into predicted probabilities and first differences in Figure 3.

[Table 3 and Figure 3 about here]

Figure 3a plots the probability of supporting the progressive candidate in pairs where the more progressive candidate is endorsed by the Latino Democratic Club. The large effect of these endorsements on Latino voters is indicated by the increase in the probability of supporting the progressive candidate. The probability of support is 0.44 among Latinos in the control group and 0.76 in the ethnic endorsement treatment group. This difference is statistically significant and supports our hypothesis about the effects of ethnic group endorsements on co-ethnics' support for endorsed candidates. In contrast, the Latino Democratic Club's endorsements do not have a significant effect on support for the progressive candidate among non-co-ethnic voters.

We find little evidence that these endorsements enhanced spatial voting, either among Latinos or non-co-ethnic voters. As Figure 3b shows, our *Spatial Advantage* variable has no

effect on Latinos in our control group. Providing the Latino Democratic Club's endorsement in these pairwise comparisons has no significant effect on Latinos' propensity to choose candidates who share their policy views. Spatial considerations do modestly influence non-co-ethnic voters' candidate preferences in the control group. Changing *Spatial Advantage* from -1.86 to -0.50 (i.e., the more progressive candidate becomes relatively closer to a voter's own ideological position) increases the probability of supporting the progressive candidate by 0.10 ($p < 0.05$). However, providing the Latino Democratic Club's endorsement significantly reduces the effects of *Spatial Advantage* among non-co-ethnic voters. Thus, voters in our treatment group appear to choose candidates irrespective of how close the candidates' ideological positions are to their own.

Figure 3c plots support for the progressive candidate in pairs where the more moderate candidate is endorsed by the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. These endorsements have a smaller effect on Chinese-American voters than we observe for Latinos receiving the Latino Democratic Club's endorsements (partly due to Chinese-American voters' high level of support for the endorsed candidates in our control group). Interestingly, non-co-ethnic voters react negatively to these endorsements, with support for (non-endorsed) progressive candidates actually increasing from 0.45 to 0.61 ($p < 0.05$). As Figure 3d shows, we also observe the same reduction in the effects of *Spatial Advantage* in response to these ethnic group endorsements. *Spatial Advantage* has a large, significant effect on non-co-ethnic voters' preferences in the control group – changing this variable from -1.30 to 0.84 increases the probability of supporting the progressive candidate by 0.43 ($p < 0.05$). This same change increases support by only 0.17 ($p < 0.05$) in our treatment group, a statistically significant reduction. We observe a similar

weakening of spatial voting among Chinese-American voters, although the effect of *Spatial Advantage* on these voters in the control group was not significant.

One possible explanation for the weaker spatial voting we observe in response to ethnic group endorsements is the type of signal voters receive in the candidate pairs analyzed in our “Latino Endorsement Only” and “Chinese Endorsement Only” models. Whereas an endorsement from the Latino Democratic Club (Chinese American Citizens Alliance) might signal that a candidate holds progressive (moderate) policy views, receiving both endorsements makes the relative ideological positions of the candidates more obvious. Figure 3e plots support for the progressive candidate in pairs where the progressive candidate is endorsed by the Latino Democratic Club and the moderate candidate is endorsed by the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. Figure 3f plots the effects of changing *Spatial Advantage* from -2.56 to 0.34 (i.e., the more progressive candidate becomes relatively closer to a voter’s own ideological position). Given that the ethnic group endorsements in these pairs provide correct signals of the relative ideological positions of the candidates, they offer the best opportunity to enhance spatial voting.

The effects of ethnic group endorsements in these pairs closely resemble those in our other models. Support for the progressive candidate (endorsed by the Latino Democratic Club) increases among Latinos whereas support for the moderate candidate (endorsed by the Chinese American Citizens Alliance) increases among Chinese-Americans. Support among non-co-ethnic voters (neither Latino nor Chinese-American) is unchanged. As Figure 3f shows, these endorsements weaken spatial voting. Whereas changing *Spatial Advantage* from -2.56 to 0.34 increases support among non-co-ethnic voters for the progressive candidate by 0.28 ($p < .05$) in our control group, this same change increases support by only 0.15 ($p < .05$) in our treatment group. This reduction in the effect of spatial considerations is statistically significant. What

explains this puzzling result for non-co-ethnic voters – weaker spatial voting and no change or negative reaction? We turn to this question in our follow-up study of the 2012 supervisory elections.

The Role of Stereotypes

As we explain above, the 2012 supervisory election in District 7 offers a unique opportunity to investigate the effects, if any, of racial animus on non-co-ethnic voters' reactions to ethnic group endorsements. In this election, the Latino Democratic Club and Chinese American Citizens Alliance both endorsed Norman Yee, a Chinese-American and the most progressive of the four leading candidates. We use our measure of racial/ethnic stereotypes to identify voters with positive and negative views of Latinos and Chinese-Americans. If racial animus conditions the effects of ethnic group endorsements on non-co-ethnic voters, then voters who hold negative stereotypes of Latinos and Chinese-Americans will react differently to our treatments than voters who hold positive stereotypes.

The results of our analyses are contained in Table 4 and affirm that non-co-ethnic voters' reactions to ethnic group endorsements are driven by racial/ethnic stereotypes. The left-hand model (Latino Endorsement Only) analyzes candidate pairs involving Yee where voters in our treatment group are told that he received the Latino Democratic Club's endorsement. As before, we convert our probit coefficients into predicted probabilities and first differences in Figure 4. Figure 4a plots predicted probabilities of support for the progressive candidate (Yee) among non-co-ethnic voters with positive and negative stereotypes of Latinos. These two subgroups react quite differently to our treatment. Among non-co-ethnics who hold positive stereotypes, the probability of supporting the progressive candidate increases from 0.47 in the control group to 0.68 in the treatment group. Among non-co-ethnics who hold negative stereotypes, the

probability of supporting the progressive candidate decreases from 0.53 in the control group to 0.28 in the treatment group. Both differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

[Table 4 and Figure 4 about here]

As Figure 4b shows, the effects of *Spatial Advantage* are minimal. Changing *Spatial Advantage* from 0.22 to 0.83 has no effect on the probability of supporting the progressive candidate among control group voters with positive stereotypes and increases support for the progressive candidate by 0.12 ($p < 0.05$) among control group voters with negative stereotypes. The ethnic group endorsements exert no change in the effect of *Spatial Advantage* among voters with positive stereotypes and a significant increase in the effect of *Spatial Advantage* among voters with negative stereotypes (from 0.12 to 0.33; $p < 0.05$).

Figure 4c plots support for the progressive candidate based on the model in Table 4 that analyzes candidate pairs involving Yee where voters in our treatment group are told that he received the Chinese American Citizens Alliance's endorsement. Similar to what we observed in the previous analysis, non-co-ethnic voters with positive and negative stereotypes of Chinese-Americans react quite differently to our treatment. Among non-co-ethnics who hold positive stereotypes, the probability of supporting the progressive candidate (Yee) hardly changes (from 0.43 in the control group to 0.41 in the treatment group). Among non-co-ethnics who hold negative stereotypes, the probability of supporting the progressive candidate decreases significantly from 0.48 in the control group to 0.26 in the treatment group ($p < 0.05$). The negative reactions we observe among non-co-ethnic voters who hold negative stereotypes and the absence of such reactions among voters who hold positive stereotypes provide strong evidence that the non-co-ethnic voters' reactions to ethnic group endorsements are largely race-based.

As Figure 4d shows, we do observe a significant increase in the effect of *Spatial Advantage* among non-co-ethnic voters who hold negative stereotypes (from 0.03 in the control group to 0.27 in the treatment group; $p < 0.05$). For a couple of reasons, we are skeptical that this and the similar result for non-co-ethnic voters who hold negative stereotypes of Latinos represent enhanced spatial as opposed to racial voting. First, the endorsements do not have similar effects on non-co-ethnic voters who hold positive stereotypes. It is unlikely that ethnic group endorsements signal “different” spatial information to voters with positive versus negative stereotypes. Second, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance’s endorsement should convey that Yee holds moderate views while the Latino Democratic Club’s endorsement should convey that Yee holds progressive views. Yet these two endorsements exert the same effect on our *Spatial Advantage* variable. We suspect that these results reflect the correlation between ideology and racial/ethnic stereotypes (non-co-ethnics with negative stereotypes tend to be more moderate [right-leaning], though the differences are not statistically significant). In this context, reacting against a candidate for purely racial reasons actually leads more moderate voters to select candidates whose ideological positions are closer to their own.

Conclusion

Our analyses provide the first direct evidence of the effects of candidate race/ethnicity and ethnic group endorsements on racial and spatial voting in real-world elections. Our results affirm that spatial voting occurs in a setting – nonpartisan local elections where neither party labels nor race/ethnicity distinguish candidates’ ideological positions – where previous research suggests we should least expect to find it. Using original data from candidate surveys and exit polls, we demonstrate a strong relationship between voters’ policy views and those of the candidates they choose. To be sure, voters’ racial/ethnic identities exert a strong influence on

their candidate preferences. So, too, do voters' evaluations of local government performance, partisanship, and other personal characteristics. The simultaneous presence of spatial and racial voting suggests that the two behaviors are not wholly incompatible, even in settings such as ours where voters must choose between candidates of different races or ethnicities.

Whereas the high levels of spatial voting we find in our observational study of the 2011 mayoral election signal good health for local democracy, our experimental results offer some reason for concern. We find, for example, little evidence that ethnic group endorsements enhance spatial voting. Chinese-American and Latino voters are more likely to support candidates endorsed by groups that represent them, irrespective of whether such candidates share their policy views. For many such voters, racial/ethnic identity trumps ideological considerations. Ethnic group endorsements have different effects on whites and other non-co-ethnics. These voters, if anything, react negatively to such endorsements rather than treat them as signals of candidate quality or viability. More importantly, ethnic group endorsements weaken spatial voting considerably.

The results of our follow-up study during the 2012 supervisorial election indicate that non-co-ethnic voters' reactions are rooted in the stereotypes that they hold about Chinese-Americans and Latinos. Specifically, ethnic group endorsements reduced support for the endorsed candidate among voters who hold negative stereotypes of these ethnic groups. For voters who hold positive stereotypes of these groups, these same endorsements had the opposite effect. That the Latino ethnic group endorsement produced a backlash against a Chinese-American candidate among non-co-ethnic voters is especially telling.

Our results have important methodological and practical implications. For political scientists interested in understanding how race/ethnicity and ideology shape voter decision

making, we show the benefits of studying elections where these factors are less strongly correlated than at the national level. In San Francisco and, we expect, many other local settings, the racial/ethnic identities of candidates and voters are much less predictive of their ideological positions. Indeed, the elections we examined featured multiple white, Latino and Chinese-American candidates whose ideological positions span the local policy space. The ideological positions of white, Latino, and Chinese-American voters are similarly dispersed across the local policy space. Given the weak correlation between race/ethnicity and ideology in these elections, we have greater confidence that the spatial voting we observe is driven by ideological, not racial considerations.

We also show how experiments that manipulate ethnic group endorsements in these settings can further improve our understanding of the effects of racial/ethnic cues, including their ability to enhance or weaken spatial voting – an outcome that previous research on this topic has rarely examined. In contrast to national-level elections, where the strong correlation between race/ethnicity and ideology renders race-based and ideological responses to ethnic group endorsements observationally equivalent, a race-based response in our setting should weaken spatial voting whereas an ideological response should strengthen it. We find evidence of mostly race-based responses to ethnic group endorsements. That we find such effects in an exit poll survey taken after voters have already acquired other information about candidates that might influence their preferences is impressive. Indeed, our experiments set up especially difficult tests of the effects of ethnic group endorsements.

For practitioners interested in how race/ethnicity can influence local election outcomes, our experimental studies – the first to manipulate ethnic group endorsements in a real-world election – are especially relevant. Such endorsements are interesting because, unlike physical

attributes and personal characteristics, they are things that candidates have a fair amount of control over. Our results indicate that ethnic group endorsements present candidates with a catch-22. On the one hand, we show that Chinese-American and Latino voters respond positively to candidates who are endorsed by groups that represent them. Securing these endorsements and advertising them to voters through scripted campaign events and advertisements can bring candidates the support they seek among Latino and Asian voters.

On the other hand, we find that many non-co-ethnic voters respond negatively to candidates who are endorsed by groups that represent particular racial/ethnic communities, such as Chinese-Americans and Latinos. For a large bloc of voters – those with negative stereotypes of Chinese-Americans and/or Latinos – ethnic group endorsements result in lower levels of support. Securing these endorsements and advertising them to voters might cause a backlash among non-co-ethnic voters. If alienating such voters is an important concern, it could lead to candidates to forego seeking the support of ethnic groups or, worse, exploiting the racial divisions such ethnic endorsements might cause. The 2014 mayoral runoff election in San Diego illustrates this catch-22. In this election, David Alvarez (a Latino progressive) sought to mobilize support among Latino voters by lining up endorsements from Latino groups and officials, including San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro. In this same election, an independent expenditure group supporting his opponent, Kevin Faulconer (a white conservative), sent out advertisements suggesting that Alvarez’s close ties to the Latino community would make him “a mayor for some.” This group later sent out a mailing featuring a picture of Alvarez with a suspiciously dark skin tone waiving a wad of cash. A Latino advocacy group criticized the advertisement with its “gangster-style image” of Alvarez as dog-whistle racism.

We believe our methods and findings provide new answers to questions that have long occupied scholars while suggesting new areas of research on the effects of race/ethnicity and ideology. To the question of *whether spatial voting*, our results offer a qualified “yes.” Spatial voting theory can be fruitfully applied to local elections, though our pairwise comparisons indicate that the extent of spatial voting depends on the candidates being considered and the race/ethnicity of voters. More research is needed to identify the conditions under which local elections are characterized by strong spatial voting. To the question of *whether racial voting*, our observational and experimental results offer an unqualified “yes.” Latino and Chinese-American voters favor candidates who share their race/ethnicity and ethnic group endorsements elicit race-based responses rather than enhancing spatial voting. That ethnic group endorsements elicit mostly race-based responses can inform future studies of candidate strategy in local elections. Under what circumstances will candidates seek ethnic group endorsements, and when will the electoral benefits of these endorsements outweigh their costs? In seeking answers to these questions, we think scholars would do well to make use of the detailed measures of candidate and voter ideology, as well as the research design and experimental approaches described in this study.

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Table 1. Policy Questions with Candidates' and Voters' Answers

Policy Proposal	2011 Mayoral Candidates										Voters Y-N-DK (%)
	Avalos	Yee	Chiu	Adachi	Herrera	Rees	Dufty	Lee	Alioto-Pier	Hall	
Charge entry fees to non-residents for use of botanical gardens	N	N	Y	N	n/a	N	N	Y	Y	N	40-48-12
Base school admissions primarily on proximity to schools	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	36-58-6
Support "Care Not Cash" program	N	n/a	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	67-12-21
Require strict nutritional standards when selling food with toys	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	66-28-6
Impose fee on distributors of alcohol to pay for health costs	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	n/a	N	50-41-9
Ban new buildings more than 40 feet tall that cast shadows	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	n/a	54-31-15
Prohibit loitering outside nightclubs	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	53-32-15
Rent control for all tenants, not just those who cannot afford market-level rents	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	53-35-12
Prohibit sitting or lying on public sidewalks between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	54-40-6
Exempt Twitter from 1.5% city payroll tax for six years	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	57-32-11
Increase tax on sales and leases of properties worth over \$5 million	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	76-15-9
Delay Central Subway project until MUNI shortfalls are eliminated	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	44-42-14
Require AT&T to undergo full environmental review before installing boxes on sidewalks	Y	Y	Y	Y	n/a	Y	N	N	N	Y	56-27-17

Table 2. Ideology and Race in the 2011 Mayoral Election

Spatial Advantage	0.310
	(0.028)
Chinese	-0.855
	(0.275)
Chinese * Spatial Advantage	0.140
	(0.098)
Latino	0.659 ⁺
	(0.391)
Latino * Spatial Advantage	0.088
	(0.121)
Republican	-1.653
	(0.387)
Independent	-0.232 ⁺
	(0.132)
Female	0.230
	(0.103)
High Knowledge	-0.121
	(0.105)
High Interest	0.190
	(0.118)
Local Govt. Evaluation	-0.322
	(0.075)
Age	-0.036
	(0.055)
Income	-0.151
	(0.030)
Constant	2.250
	(0.258)
Log likelihood	-401.04
<i>N</i>	896

Numbers are probit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is one for voters who prefer John Avalos over Edwin Lee. Boldface indicates $p < .05$ (two-tailed); + indicates $p < .10$ (two-tailed).

Table 3. The Effect of Ethnic Endorsements on Support for Mayoral Candidates

	Latino Endorsement Only	Chinese Endorsement Only	Latino and Chinese Endorsement
Control (Non-co-ethnic)	0.078 (0.064)	0.341 (0.069)	0.264 (0.054)
Control (Non-co-ethnic) * Spatial Advantage	0.181 (0.034)	0.548 (0.066)	0.254 (0.026)
Endorsement (Non-co-ethnic)	0.063 (0.069)	0.474 (0.067)	0.118 (0.053)
Endorsement (Non-co-ethnic) * Spatial Advantage	0.065 ⁺ (0.036)	0.230 (0.063)	0.135 (0.025)
Control (Co-ethnic, Chinese)		-0.380 ⁺ (0.227)	-0.494 (0.188)
Control (Co-ethnic, Chinese) * Spatial Advantage		0.257 (0.214)	0.236 (0.099)
Endorsement (Co-ethnic, Chinese)		-0.805 (0.299)	-0.558 (0.260)
Endorsement (Co-ethnic, Chinese) * Spatial Advantage		-0.012 (0.311)	0.427 (0.158)
Control (Co-ethnic, Latino)	-0.221 (0.252)		0.204 (0.194)
Control (Co-ethnic, Latino) * Spatial Advantage	-0.060 (0.130)		0.124 (0.090)
Endorsement (Co-ethnic, Latino)	0.435 (0.287)		0.662 (0.203)
Endorsement (Co-ethnic, Latino) * Spatial Advantage	-0.229 (0.147)		-0.210 (0.099)
Log-pseudolikelihood	-889.48	-575.44	-1149.17
<i>N</i>	1321	948	1835

Numbers are probit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is one for voters who prefer the more progressive candidate in a pair and zero otherwise. Boldface indicates $p < .05$ (two-tailed); + indicates $p < .10$ (two-tailed).

Table 4. The Effect of Ethnic Endorsements on Support for Supervisorial Candidates

	Latino Endorsement Only	Chinese Endorsement Only
Control (Non-co-ethnic, Positive)	-0.083 (0.163)	-0.169 (0.155)
Control (Non-co-ethnic, Positive) * Spatial Advantage	0.021 (0.239)	0.192 (0.220)
Endorsement (Non-co-ethnic, Positive)	0.508 (0.232)	-0.233 (0.169)
Endorsement (Non-co-ethnic, Positive) * Spatial Advantage	-0.359 (0.327)	0.376 (0.253)
Control (Non-co-ethnic, Negative)	0.089 (0.191)	-0.048 (0.180)
Control (Non-co-ethnic, Negative) * Spatial Advantage	0.576 (0.279)	0.164 (0.253)
Endorsement (Non-co-ethnic, Negative)	-0.567 (0.185)	-0.664 (0.280)
Endorsement (Non-co-ethnic, Negative) * Spatial Advantage	1.478 (0.380)	1.208 (0.399)
Control (Co-ethnic, Chinese/Latino)	-0.326 (0.307)	0.507 (0.432)
Control (Co-ethnic, Chinese/Latino) * Spatial Advantage	0.069 (0.370)	0.173 (0.569)
Endorsement (Co-ethnic, Chinese/Latino)	0.770 ⁺ (0.468)	0.598 (0.421)
Endorsement (Co-ethnic, Chinese/Latino) * Spatial Advantage	-0.535 (0.697)	-0.612 (0.684)
Log-pseudolikelihood	-408.09	-417.22
<i>N</i>	616	616

Numbers are probit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is one for voters who prefer the more progressive candidate in a pair and zero otherwise. Boldface indicates $p < .05$ (two-tailed); + indicates $p < .10$ (two-tailed).

Figure 1. Ideological Distribution of San Francisco Voters and Mayoral Candidates

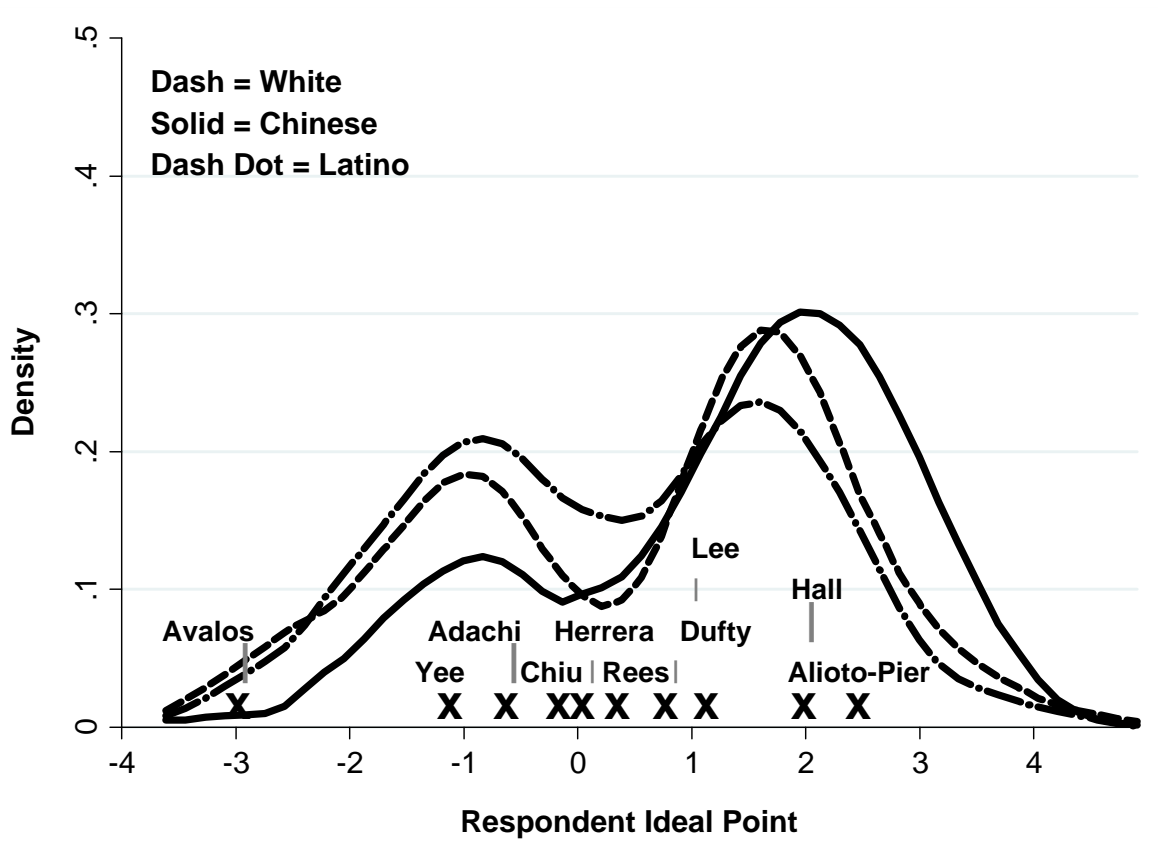
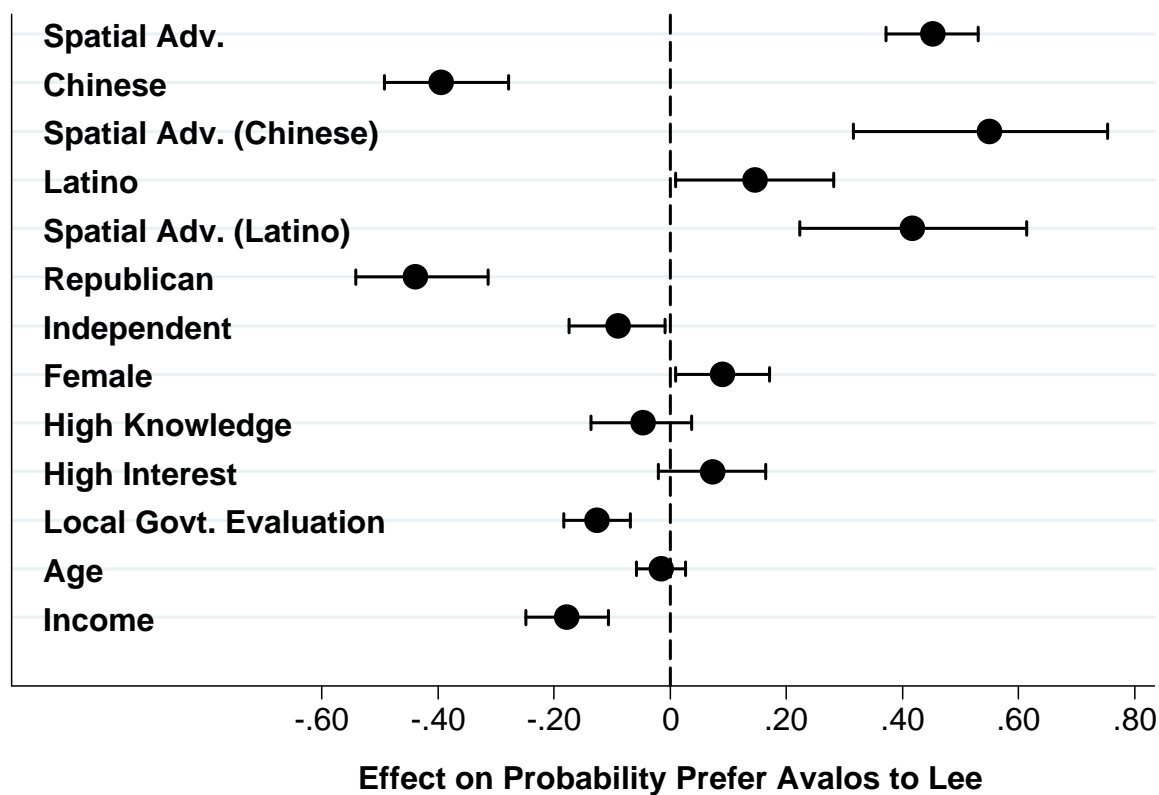
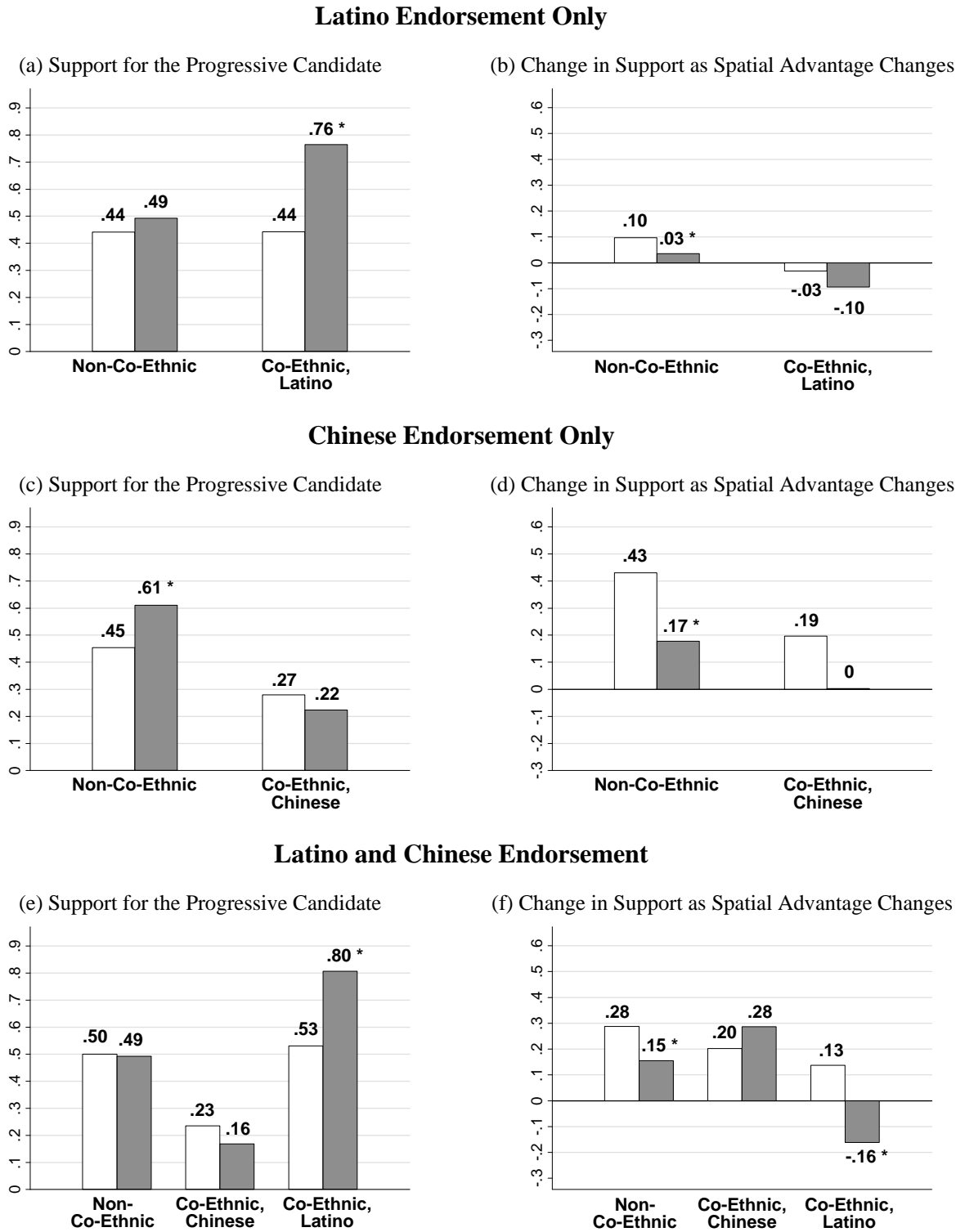


Figure 2. Effects of Ideology, Race and Other Factors on Mayoral Vote Choice



NOTE: Predicted first differences with 95 percent critical intervals generated from Table 2 using CLARIFY (King et al. 2000). The baseline probability of preferring Avalos to Lee with all variables set to their medians is .49. First differences for continuous variables indicate effects of changing from 25th to 75th percentile.

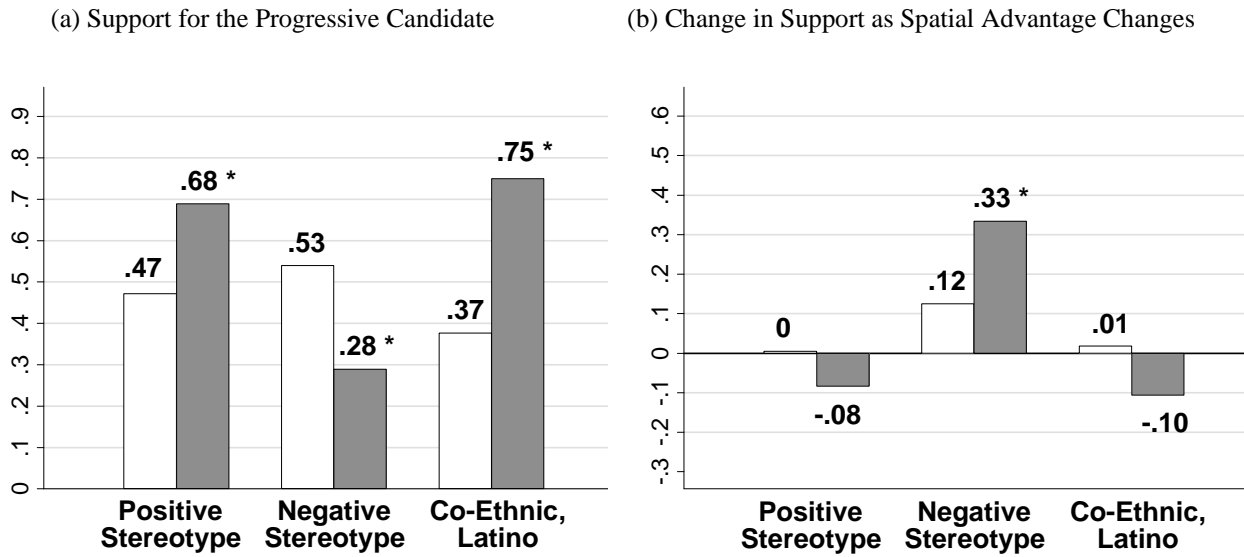
Figure 3. The Effect of Ethnic Endorsements on Support for Mayoral Candidates



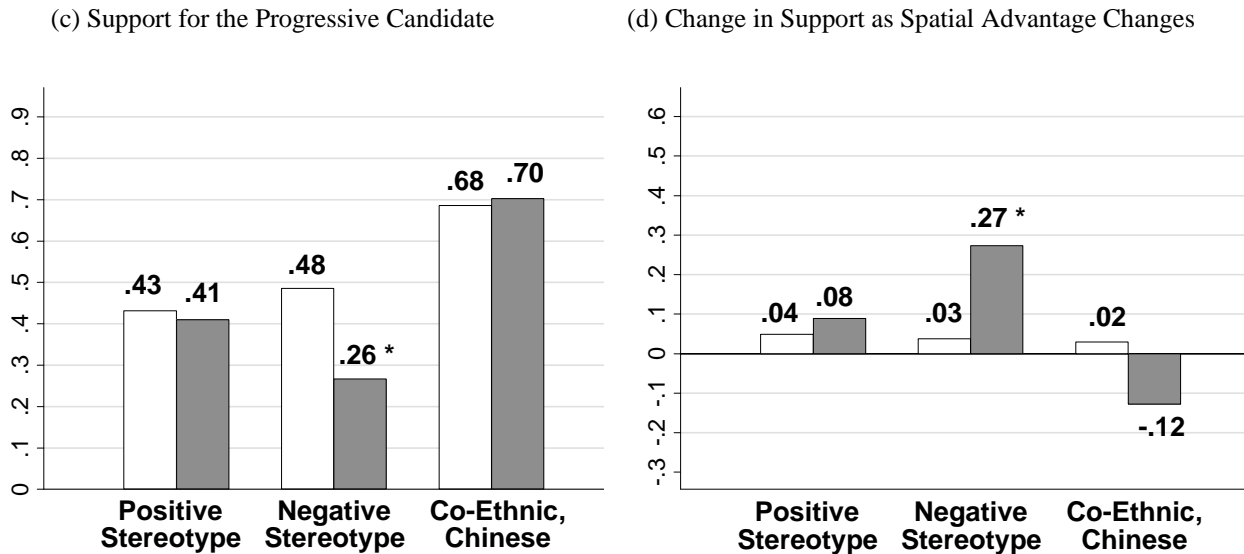
NOTE: White = Control; Gray = Ethnic Endorsement Treatment. * denotes difference with control is statistically significant ($p < .10$, two-tailed). First differences for *Spatial Advantage* indicate effects of changing from 25th to 75th percentile.

Figure 4. The Effect of Ethnic Endorsements on Support for Supervisorial Candidates

Latino Endorsement Only



Chinese Endorsement Only



NOTE: White = Control; Gray = Ethnic Endorsement Treatment. * denotes difference with control is statistically significant ($p < .10$, two-tailed). First differences for *Spatial Advantage* indicate effects of changing from 25th to 75th percentile.