Introduction

I don't know what taking an endorsement means.
– Michael Bloomberg[1]

In many ways, the candidates' policy ideas were in sync on transportation, flooding, economic development and other issues, leading voters to pay more attention to endorsements and attacks.
– Mayoral race voters delve into hopefuls' personalities. Campaign that ends Saturday pits Locke, Parker in tight contest [for] voters: election is Saturday. Houston Chronicle[2]

This book is primarily concerned with voting behavior in local elections. More specifically, it examines Black and Latino voting behavior in mayoral elections. I ask, what explains voting behavior in these elections? In many recent mayoral elections, there does not appear to be a consistent pattern of vote choice for Blacks or Latinos. In local elections, the race and ethnicity of voters help explain vote choice very well. In some elections, there is evidence of high levels of co-ethnic voting: Blacks and Latinos support candidates from their own racial and ethnic groups at high rates. However, when Black and Latino voters do not have the option to support a candidate from their own racial/ethnic groups, the pattern is less consistent. In order to win an election, candidates must outreach to all potential voters, and one strategy to do this effectively is to build a coalition. Yet, there are many barriers to coalition formation. One barrier is co-ethnic voting itself. That is, if there is a co-ethnic candidate on the ballot, the other candidate may find it hard to get support from that group. In addition, there is evidence that Blacks and Latinos do not always feel positively about one another, which makes a coalition seem less likely.

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Finally, changing demographics in cities create varied incentives for coalition formation. When groups are large in a city, they may decide it's not worth it to work with other groups. When groups are smaller, larger groups may reach out to them to join their coalition, but the smaller group may have to give up some of its preferences and power to work with that group.

How do voters decide which candidate to support when there is not a co-ethnic candidate on the ballot? I argue that co-ethnic cues can help us better understand vote choice in local elections. In addition to the race or ethnicity of the candidates, co-ethnic elite cues (endorsements) can help us better understand *when* Blacks and Latinos will engage in cross-ethnic voting. This book adds to our knowledge about elite cues and helps us better understand Black and Latino vote choice in local elections. Co-ethnic cues provide voters with a low-cost piece of information about which candidate will best represent the interests of the group in office, when there is not a co-ethnic on the ballot. The endorsers take on the burden of researching the candidates, so the voters only have to know about the endorsement to make an informed decision on Election Day. While many elites (elected official and organizations, for example) may endorse candidates in an election, voter awareness and responses toward these endorsements will vary. The relationship between the voters and endorsements will be strong if the voters perceive a connection between themselves and the endorser. That connection might come from membership in the organization offering the endorsement, through mutually shared beliefs with the endorser, or through shared racial and ethnic group membership. If this relationship is strong, then the voters may translate this endorsement into votes for the endorsed candidate. However, if this relationship is weak, then the voters may cast support for the opposing candidate, or abstain from voting altogether. In the case of Blacks and Latinos, the context of the campaign – the extent to which race and ethnicity become a part of the campaign – will remind Blacks and Latinos about this identity, making co-ethnic endorsements more important in that election and cross-ethnic voting more likely.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND VOTING BEHAVIOR IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

In the past 20 years, mayoral elections in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston demonstrate this mixed pattern among Black and Latino voters. I selected these cities because of their large Black and Latino

populations – in fact, these cities are in the top five locales where Blacks *and* Latinos reside. These are the places where we *might* observe Black and Latino cross-ethnic voting in electoral coalitions. The racial and ethnic diversity of the mayoral candidates in these cities provides a unique opportunity to explore Black and Latino cross-ethnic coalitions. Yet, there are limitations to the generalizability of these cases. In cities where the Black or Latino populations are not as large, we might expect each group to form coalitions with Whites instead. Further, in cities and towns where the Black and Latino populations are smaller, there might be greater incentives for these two groups to compete with one another.

In many of the elections in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston, voters faced the same candidates, but support for those candidates was not fixed. In some cases, Blacks and Latinos supported the same candidates, but this was not always the case. In some elections, candidates formed Black–Latino coalitions, while in other cases, Blacks and Latinos supported the same candidates without any coalitions. I argue that voter preferences are better understood when we consider the presence or absence of co-ethnic elite endorsements. These cues have the potential to help Black and Latino voters select candidates that will represent the interests of their group (Grossman and Helpman 1999). These cues, much like cues from partisans, ideological organizations, and newspapers, serve as a shortcut that allows voters to distinguish between candidates. However, co-ethnic endorsements will not matter in every election. The racial and ethnic salience of each campaign and the race and ethnicity of both the candidates and the voters also matter. In this way, this book expands what we know about cues and helps us understand racial and ethnic politics more fully. These co-ethnic elite cues work most effectively when voters are thinking about their own racial and ethnic identities. To the extent that a campaign or a candidate does not highlight these identities, voters will not rely on co-ethnic elite cues. However, if race and ethnicity are salient, then these cues become useful to voters. Once we account for these factors, we can better understand why Blacks and Latinos supported the same candidate in some elections and not in others.

Recent mayoral elections in Los Angeles, New York, Houston, and Chicago reveal a mixed pattern in voter behavior among Blacks and Latinos.[3] Two mayoral contests in Los Angeles illustrate this mixed pattern well. In 2001, Jim Hahn, a White candidate, was elected mayor of Los Angeles against Latino opponent Antonio Villaraigosa. Black voters overwhelmingly supported Hahn (80%); Latino voters overwhelmingly supported Villaraigosa (82%). But in 2005, Villaraigosa defeated

Hahn in a rematch of their 2001 mayoral contest, with a majority of Blacks (58%) voting for Villaraigosa. Latino support for Villaraigosa remained stable and exceptionally high across both contests. What happened between 2001 and 2005 that made Blacks more supportive of Villaraigosa? Some commentators have suggested that Hahn lost the support of Blacks because he did not appoint Bernard Parks, an African American, for a second term as police chief. *Los Angeles Times* poll data, however, suggest that many Black voters chose Villaraigosa because they believed he was better suited to the office of mayor (as determined by policy preferences) – fewer than half of Blacks attributed their votes to the Parks situation. That is, Blacks did not vote for Villaraigosa solely because of Parks' dismissal. Black elites in Los Angeles were clear, though, that the Parks firing drove their support for Villaraigosa over Hahn in 2005. Why did a Black–Latino electoral coalition emerge in 2005 but not in 2001?[4] After a successful first term, Villaraigosa ran virtually uncontested in 2009, but, due to term limits, the 2013 race was wide open. In 2001 and 2005, the race and ethnicity of the voters were important. Latinos supported the Latino candidate in each election, while the Black votes shifted from one candidate to another.

The mayoral race in 2013 started with a diverse set of four candidates: Eric Garcetti, a Latino and Jewish candidate; Wendy Greuel, a White candidate; Kevin James, a White candidate; and Jan Perry, a Black candidate. In this election, 56% of Black voters supported Jan Perry and 49% of Latino voters supported Eric Garcetti (Guerra and Gilbert 2013). No one candidate won the race outright, so Garcetti and Greuel vied for the office in a runoff election. While Garcetti was poised to be the first Jewish mayor and the only consecutive Latino mayor, Greuel was poised to be the first female mayor of Los Angeles. In the runoff, there was evidence of racial and ethnic voting blocs as a majority of Latinos, Whites, and Asians supported Garcetti, while a majority of Blacks voted for Greuel (Guerra and Gilbert 2013).

The volatility of Black and Latino votes in local elections is not confined to Los Angeles. In New York City, for example, Blacks and Latinos often vote for the same mayoral candidate, but the levels of support vary across elections. When Latino candidate Fernando Ferrer ran for mayor against an incumbent in 2005, most Blacks and Latinos voted for him (at 53% and 63%, respectively). But only four years earlier, the 2001 mayoral contest featured two White candidates, and the vast majority (75%) of Blacks supported the Democratic candidate, Mark Green, whereas Latinos were almost evenly divided between Green and the Republican

candidate, Michael Bloomberg. This division among Latino voters was most likely due to what many regarded as Green's ethnically inflammatory campaign against Fernando Ferrer during the Democratic primary.

In 2009, Blacks and Latinos supported Bill Thompson, a Black candidate, in his losing bid against Michael Bloomberg, a two-term incumbent who received permission to run for a third term from voters. Thompson lost the election by four percentage points. In 2013, there was no incumbent candidate and the Democratic primary was quite competitive. Bill Thompson put his hat back in the ring, and he faced an Asian American candidate, John Liu; two White candidates, Bill de Blasio and Christine Quinn; and a Jewish candidate, Anthony Weiner. Thompson and de Blasio split the Black vote, while Latinos gave de Blasio a slight advantage over Thompson. Overall, the Democratic primary was close, but Thompson conceded the election and de Blasio earned the party's nomination. Bill de Blasio went on to easily win the general election (73% to 24%), with support from all racial and ethnic groups (*New York Times* exit poll).

An even starker racial divide emerged in Houston. In 1997, the mayoral election produced four contenders in a nonpartisan contest: Lee Brown, a Black candidate; Rob Mosbacher, a White candidate; Gracie Saenz, a Latina candidate; and George Greanias, another White candidate. Blacks overwhelmingly supported Brown (97%), while Latinos gave the majority of their support to Saenz (69%), and Whites split their votes between Mosbacher (51%) and Greanias (30%). The election was forced into a runoff, which pitted Brown against Mosbacher. This time, Blacks and Latinos supported Brown (97% and 66%, respectively), while 77% of Whites voted for Mosbacher. Brown became the first Black mayor of Houston. In 1999, he was easily reelected. However, in a 2001 runoff election, Brown faced a Republican candidate of Cuban descent, Orlando Sanchez. Blacks and Latinos each overwhelmingly supported the candidate from their own group (97% and 70%, respectively), but Brown was able to get close to 28% of the Latino vote, while Sanchez received only 10% of the Black vote. Brown defeated Sanchez in a close race, 52% to 48% in overall votes. The next mayor, Bill White, served three terms from 2003 to 2009, and race was less of an issue in those campaigns. In 2009, Bill White reached the term limit and Annise Parker was elected mayor in a race that focused more on her sexual orientation than on her race or ethnicity. She was easily reelected in 2011 and 2013.

In Chicago, Richard M. Daley served as mayor from 1989 to 2011. Prior to the Daley reign, Blacks and Latinos worked together to elect the

city's first Black mayor, Harold Washington, in 1983 (Muñoz and Henry 1986). In 2011, Daley did not run for reelection and so for the first time, the race for mayor of Chicago was open. Four candidates vied to be the next mayor of Chicago: Carol Moseley Braun, a Black candidate; Gery Chico and Miguel del Valle, both Latino candidates; and Rahm Emanuel, a Jewish candidate. Polls leading up to the election showed that the race was not close at all; Emanuel led the way with 49% of voters saying they planned to vote for him.[5] Emanuel won that election with 55% of the votes to become Chicago's first Jewish mayor. In 2015, Emanuel was back and faced a viable Latino candidate, Jesus "Chuy" Garcia. Garcia forced Emanuel into the city's first runoff election, but he did not win. He tried to build an Elite Black–Latino Coalition, but was not successful. Emanuel was reelected in the runoff election.

These elections illustrate the variance in voting patterns among Blacks and Latinos in mayoral elections. These elections featured White, Black, and Latino candidates, and provide some insight into how groups vote when they have the option to support a co-ethnic candidate and how they vote when they do not (cross-ethnic voting). While co-ethnic voting is important, this book is concerned with cross-ethnic voting – the situations where groups do not have the option to support a co-ethnic candidate. In the next section, I discuss electoral coalitions to lay the foundation for how the race of the candidate, the electoral context around racial and ethnic issues, and the presence of co-ethnic elite cues (endorsements) help or hinder the likelihood of cross-ethnic voting among Blacks and Latinos.

MINORITY COALITIONS: A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In order to best understand coalitions, one must first understand the process of incorporation. This book owes a great debt to previous work on political incorporation (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984). By asking how groups gain access to positions of power in local governments, Browning, Marshall, and Tabb demonstrated that groups who were once excluded from positions of power were more likely to gain access to power by working together (ibid.). In their seminal study of 10 cities in Northern California, they observe one instance of a biracial electoral alliance, where liberal Whites and Blacks were equal partners in the coalition to elect the first Black mayor, in Berkeley (ibid.). Browning, Marshall, and Tabb highlighted the importance of the coalition or electoral alliance as a successful strategy to gain access to the mayoral office. Prior to the scholarship on the success of the biracial

alliance as a route to winning office, racial and ethnic groups assumed that it was best to present a united front and support their own co-racial or co-ethnic candidates (Dahl 1962). However, as cities grew more diverse, it became clear that working with other groups might be the best route to political power. But which groups? The answer was simple: racial and ethnic groups should seek out partners that share similar interests and ideology (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Ture and Hamilton [1967] 1992). Some scholars even suggested that leaders matter in solidifying these group connections (Sonenshein 1993). Many cities were studied to assess how minorities gained access to the mayor's office: Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York (Browning et al. 1984; Kaufmann 2003a; Keiser 2003; Mollenkopf 2003; Pinderhughes 2003; and Sonenshein 2003a).

As elections took place in many of the larger and more diverse cities, however, observers began to lose faith in the strength of the biracial liberal coalition like the one observed in Berkeley. The increased diversity in many cities, coupled with some early success in getting minorities into the mayor's office, seems to have lessened the commitment among minority groups to working toward shared political goals. In addition to the evidence that minority group members were not supporting the same candidates in elections, surveys that measured feelings about out-group members found that minorities were not always fond of one another (Jackson, Gerber, and Cain 1994; Kaufmann 2003a; McClain et al. 2006; Orr and West 2006). When feelings were positive, there was support for coalitions with other racial and or ethnic[6] groups, but when feelings were negative, it was unlikely that successful coalitions could emerge (Jackson et al. 1994; Orr and West 2006). I will return to this question in Chapter 4, but the data presented here will show that elite cues are largely ineffective at moving voters to feel more positively toward out-group members.

TOWARD A BROAD THEORY OF ETHNIC POLITICS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

In this book, when I use the term *coalition*, I mean an electoral coalition, where the goal of the coalition is to elect your preferred candidate to office. I contend that when a simple majority of voters from two racial or ethnic groups supports the same candidate, we have evidence of support for such a coalition. Voters, then, are crucial to ensure victory and translate preferences into outcomes. So, how do voters learn which candidate

to support? I argue that leaders or elites are an important part of this story as they provide the information to voters about the coalition. In the context of local elections, elites may be other local politicians, state and national politicians, leaders of local or national organizations, clergy, unions, or prominent businesspeople. These elites may endorse a particular candidate, which is then announced to the voters via newspapers. To the extent that voters feel that they share particular traits with the endorsers, these endorsements will be persuasive. The endorsements serve as a cue to voters to know which candidate to support. In the case of Black and Latino voters, the endorsements from Black and Latino elites have the potential to provide the voters with information about the coalition and tell voters which candidate has agreed to help their racial or ethnic group in this particular election. However, I do not think endorsements from co-ethnics matter in each and every election. The levels of racial and ethnic discourse or racial/ethnic salience around the campaign will determine how effective co-ethnic elite cues are among voters. That is, voters are more likely to rely on co-ethnic elite endorsements when some aspects of the campaign have highlighted race/ethnicity or made these identities salient in the minds of voters. This book contributes to the source cues literature by showing that co-ethnic elite endorsements are a very important source cue that can explain candidate preferences under certain conditions. This book contributes to the coalition literature by showing the link between elite-level coalition formation and voter support.

THE CO-ETHNIC ELITE CUES THEORY

In order to win elections, candidates must appeal to a variety of voters; in this project, I am interested in appeals to Black and Latino voters. To account for the development of Black–Latino voting blocs, I present the Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory: when partisan cues are absent and race/ethnicity is salient in an election, co-ethnic endorsements should prompt minority group members to vote for that candidate, even if the candidate is from another ethnic group.[7] I expect that whenever a Black or Latino candidate is running, Black and Latino voters will overwhelmingly support the candidate belonging to their racial/ethnic group, regardless of leader endorsements (co-ethnic voting). But if there is one White candidate and one Latino candidate, I expect the Black vote will be determined largely by Black leader/organization endorsements. Thus, when an Elite Black–Latino Coalition has formed, I hypothesize that this has occurred because of electoral cues sent by co-ethnic leaders, and I expect to find

a preponderance of local Black leaders and organizations endorsing the Latino candidate and to observe a high level of cross-ethnic voting among Black voters. Similarly, if there is one White candidate and one Black candidate, I expect the Latino vote will be determined largely by Latino leader and organization endorsements. And, as with the previous example, when Black and Latino voters coalesce behind a Black candidate, my theory holds that this is due to co-ethnic elite cues indicating that Latinos should support this candidate, and I expect to observe a high level of cross-ethnic voting among Latinos. When minority voters are confronted with two White candidates, I expect Latino votes to be determined by Latino leader and organization endorsements and Black votes to be determined by Black leader and organization endorsements. The campaign context is an important factor in my theory: when racial/ethnic issues are particularly salient in the campaign, then elite endorsements should be especially influential. If race/ethnicity is not salient in an election, then endorsements will be less effective (see Figure 0.1).

Previous research on biracial coalitions has mostly been limited to the study of Whites and Blacks – and to a much lesser extent, Latinos – in cities where the Black population ranged from 5% to 45% and the Latino population ranged from 5% to 21% (Browning et al. 1984, 21). But today, Blacks and Latinos make up about 28% of the population of the United States.[8] According to the Census Bureau, Latinos are now the largest minority group in the United States, and in many major cities, Blacks and Latinos comprise a plurality or majority of the population.[9] Cities, therefore, are the ideal sites for a study of potential minority coalitions (for details on the distribution of Black and Latino populations, see Appendices 0.1 and 0.2).[10] Indeed, in metropolitan areas like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston, Blacks and Latinos compose 37% to 56% of the population, significantly more than the nationwide average of 28% (see Appendix Table 0.3 in this Introduction). In light of these demographic changes, this project seeks to understand the prospects for coalitions between Blacks and Latinos. It is often assumed that Blacks and Latinos should work together – that is, that they are natural allies – because of their shared experience as disadvantaged minorities relative to Whites. I will show, however, that when Blacks and Latinos make up a plurality of the population, they exhibit only a mixed pattern of electoral alliances.

Why is it that Elite Black–Latino Coalitions emerge in some cities but not others – in some elections but not others? There seems to be no clear pattern from one election to the next, even when voters are faced with the same candidates (e.g., the Los Angeles mayoral elections of 2001 and
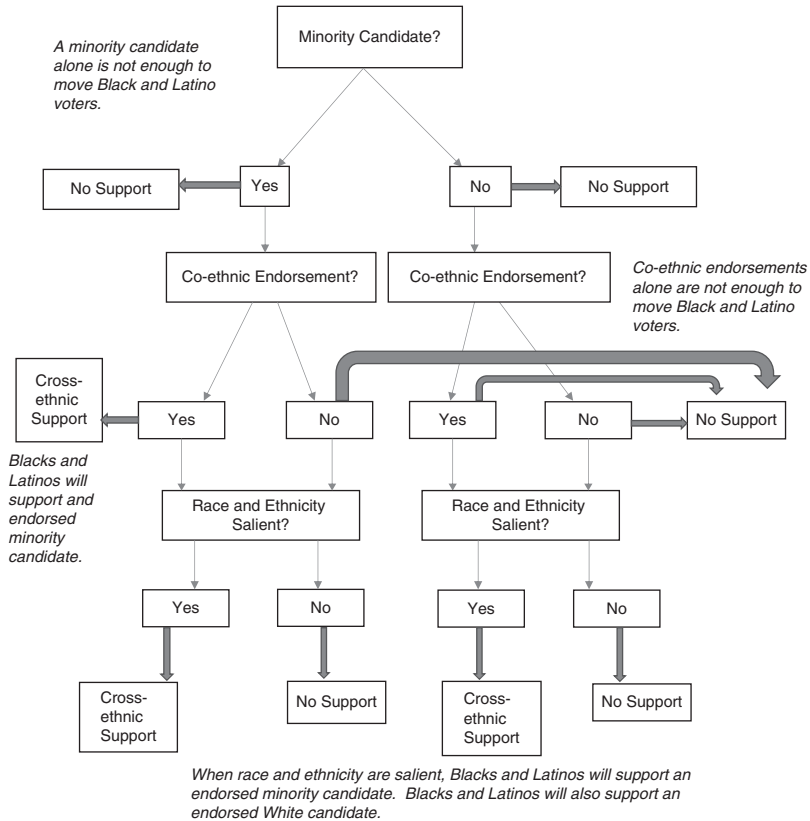
FIGURE 0.1 The Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory
When Blacks and Latinos do not have the option to support a co-ethnic candidate

2005). In the next chapters, I demonstrate that the extant literature has
failed to provide a satisfactory answer to these questions. I argue that this
is primarily due to researchers overlooking the important role that elite
cues, in the form of endorsements from ethnic and racial group organiza-
tions and elites, provide in explaining the variation in voting patterns
among Blacks and Latinos. In this book, I explore the relationship
between endorsements and candidate preferences. More specifically,
I examine the circumstances under which elite cues are persuasive enough
to voters to encourage them to support the endorsed candidate.
I introduce and provide evidence to support the Co-ethnic Elite Cues
Theory. This book seeks to explain what happens when a Black–Latino
co-ethnic leadership coalition is formed and publicized to voters.