

## Racial Coalition Building in Local Elections

This book examines racial and ethnic coalition building in local elections and considers Black and Latino political incorporation more broadly. Although many argue that Black and Latino voters have much to gain from alliances that advance shared interests, coalitions between the two groups have not always formed easily or been stable over time. Recent mayoral elections across the country show different patterns of out-group candidate support. This book seeks to explain these variations and the specific conditions under which Blacks and Latinos vote for the same candidate. Drawing on large-*n* observational data, survey experiments, and qualitative case studies, Andrea Benjamin develops a theory of co-ethnic endorsements, which points to the significance of elite cues from Black and Latino leaders. This book demonstrates that voters use elite co-ethnic endorsements to help inform their votes, that they do so particularly when race is salient in an election, and that this has real implications for representation and access to political benefits.

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**Racial Coalition Building  
in Local Elections**

*Elite Cues and Cross-Ethnic Voting*

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*This book is dedicated to my parents,  
Herman and Joan Benjamin*

## Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xii
Introduction	i
1 The Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory	24
2 An Experimental Test of the Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory	54
3 The Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory and Elite Black–Latino Coalitions	99
4 The Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory and Racial Attitudes	123
Conclusion	144
<i>Elections Appendix</i>	153
<i>References</i>	168
<i>Index</i>	178

## Figures

0.1	The Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory	<i>page</i> 10
2.1	Support for Candidate 2 among Blacks, by Treatment	67
2.2	Perceived Sympathy by Candidate 2 among Blacks, by Treatment	71
2.3	Support for Candidate 2 among Latinos, by Treatment	73
2.4	Perceived Sympathy by Candidate 2 among Latinos, by Treatment	75
2.5	Support for Garcetti (Marginal Effects)	80
2.6	Support for Greuel among Blacks (Marginal Effects)	81
2.7	Support for Garcetti among Blacks (Marginal Effects)	82
2.8	Support for Greuel among Latinos (Marginal Effects)	83
2.9	Support for Garcetti among Latinos ( <i>La Opinion</i> ) (Marginal Effects)	84
2.10	Support for Garcetti among Latinos (Salma Hayek) (Marginal Effects)	84
3.1	Support for Candidate 2 among Latinos	107
3.2	Support for Candidate 2 among Blacks	109
3.3	Support for Candidate 2 among Whites	110
3.4	Support for Candidate 2 among Whites	111
4.1	Latinos' Racial Attitudes towards Blacks (Priming)	129
4.2	Blacks' Racial Attitudes towards Latinos (Priming)	131
4.3	Whites' Racial Attitudes towards Latinos (Priming)	134

*List of Figures* ix

4.4 Whites' Racial Attitudes towards Blacks (Priming)	136
4.5 Whites' Racial Attitudes towards Latinos when Reading about Black Candidates (Priming)	139
4.6 Whites' Racial Attitudes towards Blacks when Reading about Latino Candidates (Priming)	141

## Tables

0.1	Percent White, Black, and Latino Populations in the Year 2000	<i>page</i> 12
0.2	Foreign Populations by City	16
0.3	Citizenship Estimates by City	17
0.4	Voter Turnout by City	18
0.1A	Top 10 Metropolitan Areas for Latinos	20
0.2A	Top 10 Metropolitan Areas for Blacks	21
0.3A	Top Six Cities with Latinos and Blacks	21
0.4A	Population Projections	22
1.1	Newspaper Circulation	39
1.2	Relationship between Endorsements and Vote Choice by Racial/Ethnic Salience in Mayoral Elections	40
1.1A	Racial/Ethnic Newspaper Coverage and Racial/Ethnic Issues	51
2.1	Black Sample Demographics	65
2.2	Latino Sample Demographics	66
2.1A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Candidate 2 among Blacks, by Treatment	87
2.2A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Candidate 2 among Latinos, by Treatment	88
2.3A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Garcetti	89
2.4A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Candidate Support (Greuel) among Black voters	91
2.5A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Candidate Support (Garcetti) among Black voters	92



*List of Tables*

xi

2.6A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Candidate Support (Greuel) among Latino voters	93
2.7A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Candidate Support (Garcetti) among Latino voters	94
3.1	Experimental Treatments	105
3.1A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Candidate 2 among Latinos	115
3.2A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Candidate 2 among Blacks	115
3.3A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Candidate 2 among Whites	116
3.4A	Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Candidate 2 among Whites	117
4.1	Regression Analysis of Latinos' Racial Attitudes toward Blacks (Priming)	128
4.2	Regression Analysis of Blacks' Racial Attitudes toward Latinos (Priming)	130
4.3	Regression Analysis of Whites' Racial Attitudes toward Latinos (Priming)	133
4.4	Regression Analysis of Whites' Racial Attitudes toward Blacks (Priming)	135
4.5	Regression Analysis of Whites' Racial Attitudes towards Latinos when Reading about Black Candidates (Priming)	138
4.6	Regression Analysis of Whites' Racial Attitudes toward Blacks when Reading about Latino Candidates (Priming)	140
C.1	Current minority mayors in the 100 largest U.S. cities by population	148
EA 0.1	Los Angeles Election Results (% Vote)	153
EA 0.2	New York Election Results (% Vote)	154
EA 0.3	Houston Election Results (% Vote)	154
EA 0.4	Chicago Election Results (% Vote)	156
EA 0.5	Los Angeles Poll	156
EA 0.6	Relationship between Endorsements and Vote Choice by Racial/Ethnic Salience in Mayoral Elections	158

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I started working on this project long before most of us knew the name Barack Obama. In many ways, the yearning of Black voters to elect a Black president overshadowed the perceived need for this project; the issue of minority mayors seemed limited and naïve. Yet, at the time, the media was interested in the potential to elect Latino mayors in places like New York and Los Angeles. In the years it has taken me to complete this book, in which national elections have revolved around race in an unprecedented way, I stand by my decision to focus on municipal elections. I believe this work is even more relevant today as we try to make sense of what is happening to Black and Brown people in our cities and towns. My hope is that this book provides communities and candidates with a plan to gain the representation they desire. This might seem too ambitious, but it is my one wish for this book.

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xiii

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As many of you know, I live my life by one rule: focus on your own path. I believe when you focus on your own path, you will always be where you belong.