

A Latino on the Ballot: Explaining Coethnic Voting Among Latinos and the Response of White Americans

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In recent campaigns, candidates have sought to attract votes from the growing Latino electorate through ethnic cues. Yet, we know very little about the impact of appeals to ethnicity. This article examines the role that ethnic cues play in shaping the political opinions and choices of Latinos, as well as the response of non-Hispanic white Americans (Anglos). We take up the simplest of group cues, the ethnicity of the candidate. We argue that candidate ethnicity is an explicit ethnic cue that alters the political choices of Latinos through priming of their ethnic linked fate, but only affects Anglos through spreading activation of primed ethnic attitudes to national identity considerations. Evidence from an experiment that manipulated exposure to candidate ethnicity information provides evidence for these claims. Our results help to explain coethnic voting among Latinos and resistance to Latino candidates among Anglos.

The 2000 United States Census confirmed that Latinos have become the nation's largest racial/ethnic minority group, reflecting decades of population gains from both migration and birth. Along with this growth have come questions about the political strength of Latinos in the United States. The most fundamental unanswered question is the Latino vote, although pundit and media discussions are prone to claims based on little evidence (see Leal et al. 2005). Should we expect that Latinos will regularly vote as a group? Will a shared group identity lead Latinos to their partisan and candidate preferences, as we find in the African American community? Can a group identity be harnessed by ethnic cues in political appeals, like George W. Bush's "Viva Bush" campaign? Or will Latino diversity—of class, immigrant experience, national origin, and racial identification—lead to a more segmented electorate without political loyalties traced to ethnic identity?

Questions have also arisen about how Anglos (non-Hispanic whites) are responding to the rising numbers of Latinos and the political and cultural

power such numbers might convey. Recent years have seen a resurgence of articulation of anti-illegal immigration views, which have been interpreted by some as reflecting concerns over demographics, culture, and politics. Indeed, the specter of Anglo backlash to growing Latino political power has appeared in media and academic debates. Some of the commentary offered by "opinion leaders," in fact, might be properly characterized as suggesting that there *ought* to be such a backlash (e.g., Huntington 2004). Leaving the normative debate aside, the question remains whether Anglos are in fact likely to resist Latino political power for reasons traced to racial/ethnic attitudes.

We engage these increasingly important questions by examining the consequences of a Latino candidate's presence on the ballot. We do so because we take the presence of a Latino candidate to be key to the questions raised about the political consequences of the growing Latino population; it represents both the condition under which previous research would suggest ethnicity should be most relevant for Latino voters (e.g., Cain and Kieweit 1984; Wolfinger

1965) and a cue about Latino political empowerment to Anglo voters. Importantly, this investigation enables us to shed explanatory light on the causal mechanisms behind coethnic voting among Latinos—the propensity for Latino voters to support Latino candidates—documented in recent research (Barreto 2007). And it allows us to address questions about the similarities and differences between Anglos' race-based reactions to African American political empowerment and their response to the growing political presence of Latinos.

Drawing on the literatures on racial politics and social identity theory, we argue that the presence of a Latino candidate acts as an explicit ethnic cue that activates group-based considerations in the minds of both Latino and Anglo voters. Among Latinos, we argue, the result of such activation is increased support for Latino candidates among those who are *politically identified* with the ethnic group. For Anglos, we expect the explicit nature of the ethnic cue will limit their direct use of ethnic group attitudes in formulating their vote choice decisions, causing Anglos to funnel their ethnic group-based responses through more socially acceptable alternatives of nativism and partisanship. We test our theoretical expectations through a laboratory experiment in which we manipulate Latino and Anglo subjects' exposure to candidate ethnicity information. Finding support for these arguments, we discuss implications for the ever-evolving roles that ethnicity plays in contemporary American politics.

The Effects of Latino Candidates—Reactions to an Ethnic Cue

Sorting out what happens within the electorate when a Latino candidate runs for office is a difficult task, as observed differences in voting behavior may be due to a variety of factors in the campaign environment. Voters may react simply to the presence of a Latino candidate on the ballot, but they also might react, for example, to the particular types of campaign tactics that politicians choose when Latinos run (e.g., Leighley 2001) or to changes in the types of information offered to voters by the mass media under this still “unusual” circumstance. We focus on the question of what the simple presence of a Latino on the ballot does because of its political primacy. That is, we ask whether ethnicity would play a role in voters' choices *even if* the actions of political elites

were not altered to encourage such behavior. Our answer is that yes, it would; perceiving the candidate as Latino is a cue with political meaning for both Latinos and Anglos, one that stimulates group-based political behavior. And understanding the work this ethnic cue can do in isolation will aid in understanding the possibilities and limitations of contemporary ethnic politics in the United States. If such a cue already has political meaning, elite behavior must work with or around that existing meaning.

To understand the work that a candidate's Latino ethnicity does as a cue, we draw together what we know about racial priming, social identities and intergroup relations, and the contemporary political discourse about Latinos' presence in the United States. We argue that the presence of a Latino candidate is typically an explicit ethnic cue—revealed commonly through a Spanish name and/or direct mention of the candidate's ethnicity. Consistent with work on racial priming, we expect that an explicit ethnic group cue is effective in priming ethnic considerations among the ethnic minority ingroup, but is generally ineffective in activating ethnic outgroup attitudes among the dominant Anglo population due to a perceived tension between such ethnic group attitudes and American egalitarian norms (Mendelberg 2001; White 2007). We depart from the racial priming literature, however, in two important ways. First, among the minority ingroup, we delineate a need in the ethnic context to differentiate between ingroup members' attitudes about cultural similarities and their attitudes about political connectedness. We argue that only the latter cause Latinos to use the ethnic cue as information that increases their propensity to support the coethnic candidate. Second, among the dominant Anglo outgroup, we argue that contemporary political discourse offers a readily accessible and socially acceptable alternative outlet for ethnic group attitudes in the case of Latinos: attitudes about immigrants. We posit an expectation consistent with work on spreading activation: that the cue of Latino ethnicity of a candidate causes decreased support for that candidate only to the extent that individuals connect negative attitudes about the ethnic group to negative attitudes about immigrants in general.

Ethnic Cue Taking among the Ethnic Ingroup

That Latinos would make their voting decisions differently when they encounter a Latino on the ballot is certainly not a new idea, with study of the

consequences of shared ethnicity between voters and candidates dating at least to the beginning of behavioral research in American political science (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960; Wolfinger 1965). Existing research, however, has yet to demonstrate *why* information about shared ethnicity influences voting behavior. Work in Latino politics has suggested some possibilities about ways in which ingroup-based thinking is activated in the presence of a coethnic candidate. What remains unclear is whether that response is rooted in cultural affinity—a sense of social attachment built on connections such as common language and social networks (Barreto 2007; DeFrancesco Soto 2007; Stokes-Brown 2006)—or in political group consciousness (Barreto 2007; DeFrancesco Soto 2007; Stokes-Brown 2003) and perhaps a cue about likely shared partisanship (Graves and Lee 2000).

The literatures on social identity and racial politics help us sort through the possible explanations for Latinos' response to a coethnic candidate. Social identity theory (SIT) posits that group-based behavior results under the necessary and sufficient condition of awareness of common social category membership (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner 1982). Scholars looking to use SIT to explain racial politics have argued further that common fate perceptions are the element of social identity most important for translating group membership into group-based action in the political realm (e.g., Dawson 1994; Gurin, Miller, and Gurin 1980; Miller et al. 1981). Within this SIT paradigm, cultural affinity is insufficient as the explanation for ethnic group-based choices in politics. What is missing is a sense among group members that they collectively benefit or fail from political circumstances and policies. Without this sense, there is no direct connection between group membership and collective action. Group consciousness, built on common fate perceptions, bridges that gap.

Thus, we argue that more is needed than shared culture *per se* to translate a cue to shared ethnicity into a political choice, and that cultural affinity ought to be insufficient for explaining Latino political behavior, including coethnic voting. We contend that the presence of a Latino on the ballot functions as a cue or informational short-cut that helps Latinos to judge if a candidate will be likely to represent the interests of their ethnic group. That is, ethnic heritage can communicate a candidate's likely positions and commitments with regard to issues that Latinos believe affect the ethnic group. The effect of the cue on Latino vote choice should then depend upon the

degree to which Latinos believe their interests are dependent upon the fate of the larger ethnic group, with those who feel more of a sense of this Latino-linked fate becoming more supportive of the coethnic candidate. Importantly, those Latinos who have this sense of political linked fate may or may not be those who are most culturally identified.¹

Our argument fits well with previous scholarship in Latino politics, which suggests that we ought to observe both variation in group identification and political consequence thereof among Latinos. Jones Correa and Leal (1996), for example, find variation even in nominal identification with the group "Latinos." Evidence for political implications of shared Latino identity includes not only documented patterns of coethnic voting, but also tendencies for Latinos to place greater degrees of trust in elected officials who are Latinos and to contact them at higher rates than other elected officials (Pantoja and Segura 2003). Our contention is that variation in linked fate among Latinos can help explain variation in these political behaviors.

Ethnic Cue Taking Among the Ethnic Outgroup

Research on Anglo responses to Latino candidates—and to Latino ethnicity cues in general—is more limited than that on Latinos. The existing work, however, suggests that outgroup perceptions may be invoked and structure Anglo vote choice when a Latino candidate is on the ballot, just as some work has suggested racial attitudes may do in the case of Black candidates (Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Terkildsen 1993). Kam (2007), for example, finds that both implicit and explicit measures of non-Latinos' attitudes about Latinos seem to structure vote choice when they see a candidate with a Spanish surname. Yet it also seems that when non-Hispanics also know the party affiliation of the candidates, the effect of their attitudes about Latinos is attenuated by partisan considerations (see also DeFrancesco Soto 2007). This last finding suggests that the work of the ethnic cue is also in part some of the same work done by partisan cues, perhaps because Anglos associate

¹An online appendix for this article is available at <http://journals.cambridge.org/jop>. Data and supporting materials necessary to reproduce the numerical results in the paper will be made available upon publication at <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/insts/ppi/> (see "Data" section). Our expectations center on ingroup attitudes because a Latino candidate does not necessarily imply the group threat SIT implies is necessary to invoke outgroup hostility.

most (non-Cuban) Latinos with the Democratic Party.

While attitudes about the ethnic outgroup may be part of the story of Anglo reactions to Latino candidates, we question whether ethnic group attitudes directly structure Anglo responses. In so doing, we return to the literature on racial priming, which Mendelberg (2008a) defines as “the increased impact of negative racial predispositions on relevant candidates or policy positions” in response to racial cues (110). Mendelberg (2001) has argued that Whites are prone to reject explicit cues to their (negative) attitudes about Blacks due to their cognizance of a tension between those attitudes and pervasive American egalitarian ideals. Thus, racial priming occurs in the presence of an implicit racial cue, such as a racial code word or racialized imagery—one that has enough racial content to activate racial attitudes, but not so much that Whites are conscious of it. A growing body of research supports this argument (e.g., Hurwitz and Peffley 2005; Valentino, Hutchings and White 2002; White 2007). One can extend the logic of the argument to state more broadly that when outgroup attitudes are inconsistent with pervasive American ideals, the resultant ambivalence causes suppression of a priming effect in the face of explicit outgroup cues. By this extension, we would expect no role for (negative) attitudes about Latinos in Anglos’ vote intention decisions when a Latino is on the ballot, which we have argued offers an explicit ethnic cue.

The prediction of no role for ethnic (or racial) attitudes in vote choice decisions, however, seems at odds with research that shows hesitance of Anglos to support minority candidates (e.g., Kam 2007; Reeves 1997). Thus, we turn to the psychological idea of spreading activation to explain how group-based attitudes enter in response to minority candidates. Spreading activation is the idea that a cue to one piece of a rich cognitive structure—such as a network of ideas about a racial or ethnic group—can activate other elements of that structure (Collins and Loftus 1975; Dovidio, Evans, and Tyler 1986; Valentino 1999). Berinsky and Mendelberg (2005) apply this idea to the use of socially discredited ethnic stereotypes in candidate evaluations, arguing that a cue to these stereotypes affects candidate evaluations by activating related socially acceptable stereotypes. In particular, they argue that political stereotypes of ethnic groups, such as “Jews are liberal,” maintain social acceptability, and thus discredited stereotypes have an outlet through the political stereotype(s) to which they are connected in memory. We extend this

logic of spreading activation across socially discredited and socially acceptable attitudes about groups by arguing that political discourse can create associations between ethnic groups and other socially acceptable group attitudes.

In particular, we note that the contemporary political rhetoric about the rising number of Latinos implies an association between Latinos and concern for the preservation of the dominant Anglo-American political culture in the face of immigration (Huntington 2004). That is, the contemporary discourse provides an alternative and socially acceptable group-based outlet for negative feelings about Latinos activated by the Latino candidate: negative attitudes about the outgroup “immigrants” (nativism) and the ingroup complement of national pride or attachment (patriotism). Hence, we expect both that the Latino candidate cue will attach existing nativist and pro-American sentiment among Anglos to their evaluations of the Latino candidate, and that a Latino candidate on the ballot, signifying some Latino political empowerment, may create such nativist anxiety and national attachment among Anglos. With contemporary political discourse also linking racial and ethnic minorities, including Latinos, with the Democratic Party, we also expect that the Latino candidate cue will prime the political stereotype of Latinos as Democrats, leading Anglos to use their partisan predispositions to evaluate Latino candidates even when no partisan affiliation is provided.

In making this argument, we are drawing on research on intergroup relations within the SIT framework and work that has applied SIT to questions about national pride and nativism. In particular, our expectation that Anglos’ response to the Latino cue will be tied to some version of both ingroup and outgroup attitudes is driven by a growing body of intergroup relations research that suggests that even minimal cues about group membership can lead to ingroup favoritism, while outgroup hostility is activated distinctly under the condition of a perceived threat to ingroup interests (see Brewer 1999 for a review). Contemporary political rhetoric gives us the definitions of “in” and “out” and of the perceived threat: the dominant “native” Anglo population versus a Latino population that is increasingly present due (at least in large part, the rhetoric implies) to immigration. Hence, we argue that “Latino” is a cue that sends Anglos, through a process of spreading activation, into the realm of national pride and the “threat” of new immigration, rather than simply tapping their sentiments about the group “Latinos.” The findings of de

Figueiredo and Elkins (2003) that national pride (ingroup attitudes) in the form of patriotism—affectionate attachment to one's nation—does not regularly imply anti-immigrant or nativist sentiment (outgroup hostility), while national pride in the guise of nationalism—"a belief in national superiority and dominance"—is regularly associated with nativism, suggest that patriotism is the version of national pride that clearly taps nation-based ingroup attitudes, unclouded by outgroup sentiments. Hence, we translate our expectation that the Latino candidate will activate both ingroup and outgroup sentiment into the expectation that nativism or anti-immigrant sentiment and patriotism or affectionate attachment to America will become uniquely relevant in the presence of a Latino candidate.²

The City Council Experiment

To test our arguments about coethnic voting among Latinos and adverse reactions to Latino candidates among Anglos, we designed an experiment that would allow us to observe how (potential) voters of both groups decide between candidates when a Latino appears on the ballot. We find the experimental approach particularly useful for our purposes not only because of its ability to hold constant confounding factors (such as campaign environments) that threaten the validity of causal inference in observational studies of voting behavior, but also because of its ability to employ a battery of survey items that help us to isolate the mechanism of the causal effect of a Latino on the ballot. We chose to implement a posttest only design due to concerns about contamination of the treatment effect by pretest measurement that have been documented in the realm of racial priming (Keele, McConaughy, and White 2008; Mendelberg 2008b). In short, we did not want any questions we asked of the subjects to prime any of the attitudes that might be primed by the Latino candidate cue. Thus, all measures except for basic demographics were administered after the subjects were exposed to the treatment. This contamination concern therefore prevents us from comparing subjects' assessments of candidates before and

after a cue to Latino ethnicity is provided. Given that we expect subjects with similar relevant attitudes to respond to the cue in the same way, however, explanatory leverage will come from comparing similar subjects across two conditions—one where one of the candidates presented to the subjects is cued to be Latino through his name and one where he is not.

Subjects were randomly assigned to exposure to one of two different versions of campaign information about a city council election in a large southwestern city. The information was presented in the form of a website attributed to the local newspaper and featured photos, biographical information such as occupation and education, and information on the issue positions and priorities for the two candidates competing (fictitiously) for the city council seat. We gave no information about political party affiliation for the candidates, as these are nonpartisan elections. This design choice also enables us to test whether a Latino ethnic cue effectively functions as a partisan cue.

There were two experimental conditions in this study. In one condition, the website featured a candidate named John Morgan running against a candidate named Frank Barry. In the other condition, the website featured the exact same photos and candidate information, but "John Morgan" was now named "Juan Martinez." That is, the only difference across the two conditions is the presence of a Spanish name to cue the Latino identity of one of the candidates. The photo of this candidate was chosen because his phenotypes could be interpreted as either Latino or Anglo.³ As a manipulation check, we asked subjects at the end of the posttest battery to indicate what ethnicity they believed either John Morgan or Juan Martinez to be. While just 12% of all subjects (and only two Anglos) indicated they thought Morgan was Latino, 89% said they believed Martinez was—the remaining 21% claimed they did not know Martinez's ethnicity.

The experiment was conducted in a computer laboratory at a southwestern university. Upon arrival at the lab, subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental condition and then completed the entire experiment on one of the lab's computers. We ran subjects from August 1 through August 9, 2007, collecting data from 129 Anglo subjects and 63 Latino subjects. Subjects in the experiment were primarily students from liberal arts summer session courses at the university. Each participant in the

²We argue that ethnicity cues native vs. nonnative thinking while de Figueiredo and Elkins extract ethnicity from the equation, believing it "would be problematic since the multitude of ethnic groups makes it difficult to identify two reciprocal targets" (2003, 172).

³Screenshots of both websites are available upon request from the authors.

study received \$15 cash for their participation; in some cases they also received extra course credit. The experiment took about 20 minutes for subjects to complete. Although the Latino sample was more Democratic, of higher socioeconomic status, and disproportionately Mexican American in comparison to the national Latino population, and the Anglo sample was underrepresentative of women and Republicans, the sample contained a fair amount of variation on key demographics and political predispositions and was not unbalanced across experimental conditions.⁴

Hypotheses

Our theoretical expectations lead to the following specific hypotheses for the City Council Experiment.

H1: Latinos will express a greater preference for Juan Martinez than for John Morgan.

H1a: Latinos' preference for Martinez will increase with higher Latino linked fate.

H1b: Latinos' preference for Martinez will not be a (direct) function of Latino cultural affinity.

H2: Juan Martinez will increase patriotic and nativist sentiment among Anglos.

H3: Anglos will express a lesser preference for Juan Martinez than for John Morgan.

H3a: Anglo stereotyping of Martinez will activate nativist and patriotic attitudes.

H3b: Anglo preference for Martinez will decrease with higher levels of patriotism and nativism.

H3c: Anglo preference for Martinez will not be a direct function of attitudes about Latinos as a group.

H3d: Anglo preference for Martinez will be a function of partisan identification (Democrats more supportive, Republicans less).

Results

The simplest of our expectations to evaluate are the hypotheses about vote choice: Latinos will express a greater preference for Juan Martinez than for the identically described candidate John Morgan, and the converse for Anglos. To assess these hypotheses (H1 and H3), we simply calculated the percentage of

TABLE 1 Candidate Vote Choice by Race/Ethnicity

| | Juan Martinez | John Morgan | Difference |
|---------|------------------|----------------|------------|
| Anglos | 48.6 | 58.5 | -9.9 |
| Latinos | 54.8 | 50.0 | 4.8 |

Note: Entries are percentages of subjects who chose the specified candidate. For Anglos the estimated p-value on the difference is .14, and for Latinos the estimated p-value is .35, in one-tailed tests.

subjects of each racial/ethnic group that indicated they would vote for Juan Martinez and John Morgan if they were voting in the election that day. These percentages, and the differences for each group across the experimental conditions, are displayed in Table 1. While the directions of the resultant differences in the level of support for the two candidates are consistent with our hypotheses, the differences are not statistically significant.

Although the data do not confirm the vote choice hypotheses, we cannot assume that the results indicate that the ethnicity of the candidate made *no* difference in the vote choice calculations that our subjects made. We may still unearth differences in the considerations that the subjects brought to bear in making their assessments of the candidates across the experimental conditions. Moreover, it is entirely possible that the particular distributions of the underlying attitudes in our sample are the reason for the lack of significant difference in mean support—that a sample (or constituency) with different distributions of underlying attitudes (i.e., levels nativism, etc.) would, in fact, produce a significant mean difference in vote choice. We therefore turn next to the more essential hypothesis tests concerning the mechanisms by which the presence of a Latino candidate might change the vote choice process for both Anglos and Latinos.

First, we offer several analyses to shed light on the roles that Latino social identity and Latino linked fate play in the presence and absence of a Latino candidate. Although we had no expectation that the presence of a Latino candidate would change the degree to which Latinos indicated they were socially or politically identified, we begin by considering this possibility, comparing levels of social/cultural Latino identity and Latino linked fate across the experimental conditions. Social/cultural identity is measured with an index created from a battery of four questions that asked Latino subjects to indicate how often they speak Spanish, how much they enjoy speaking Spanish, how much of their social networks are

⁴Sample details available in the online appendix.

comprised of other Latinos, and how much they prefer to identify themselves by their ethnicity.⁵ We measure Latino-linked fate with a question based on a standard measure of Black-linked fate (Dawson 1994), asking the subjects the extent to which they believe that what happens to Latinos in this country has something to do with what happens in their own lives. As expected, we find no significant differences in either social identity or linked fate across the experimental conditions. The mean of the social/cultural identity scale is .54 in the Martinez condition and .48 in the Morgan condition, while the linked fate means are .55 and .63, respectively.⁶

Our next analysis assesses the degree to which Latino subjects indicated that they made their vote choice on the basis of the candidate's ethnicity. We offered subjects a series of possible factors that might have influenced the vote choice they made and asked them to indicate which they used when making their decision. While none indicated a role for candidate ethnicity in the Morgan condition, just over half in the Martinez condition did.⁷ We do not take this as *prima facie* evidence that candidate ethnicity influenced these subjects' decisions, as individuals' difficulty in accurately reporting the reasons for the choices they make is well-documented. Yet, we interpret the high frequency of Latino subjects' reported use of ethnicity as evidence that the ethnic candidate cue created a common sense that ethnicity was a legitimate—and perhaps socially desirable—political consideration.

Finally, we directly test H1a and H1b about expected differences in the ingredients of candidate preferences among Latinos. We estimate a model of intended vote choice for Latinos—where 0 indicates intent to vote for Barry and 1 indicates intent to vote for his opponent (Martinez or Morgan, depending on the condition)—that is a function of Latino social identity, Latino linked fate, partisan identification, and ethnic outgroup attitudes (stereotypes of Anglos).⁸ Party identification is a 5-point scale, the low value being strong Democrat and the high value strong Republican. Outgroup attitudes are captured

by an index of subjects' characterizations of Anglos as (not) hard-working, violent, and (un-) intelligent. Each of these terms is interacted with a dummy variable that indicates whether the subject was in the Latino candidate condition, allowing us to test if there was a distinct role for each across the two experimental conditions. Table 2 summarizes the results of the model.

Consistent with our hypotheses, Latino linked fate uniquely structures the voting preferences of Latinos in the presence of the Latino candidate. When the candidate was given the name Juan Martinez, Latinos were significantly more likely to use their sense of shared fate with other Latinos to decide to vote in favor of that candidate (versus the constant opponent Frank Barry). By changing the choices from two Anglo candidates to a Latino and an Anglo, the Martinez condition pushed Latinos to read relevance of political commonality defined by ethnicity into their vote choices, increasing their support of Barry's opponent in relation to their sense of shared political fate with Latinos.

To aid interpretation of this effect, we compare some of the model's predicted probabilities: that Latino subjects with the average characteristics in our sample would support Barry's challenger when he bore a Latino name and when he did not; and the same predicted probabilities among otherwise average Latino subjects who expressed the highest level of Latino linked fate. The model predicts that the name change would have no real effect on the average subjects. Their predicted probability of supporting Morgan is .85 while their predicted probability of supporting Martinez is .81. For highly group-identified Latinos, however, the ethnic cue would have a significant effect. Their predicted probability of supporting Morgan is .76, while their estimated likelihood of supporting Martinez is .99. That is, for highly group-identified Latinos, Latino ethnicity of the candidate would increase their probability of support by over 30%.⁹

The experimental manipulation, however, did not invoke significant roles for social identity or partisanship in Latino vote choices. Cultural affinity and partisan identification were no more important to Latino vote choice decisions in the presence of the Latino candidate than they were in his absence. The social identity result is not due to a collinearity effect of extensive overlap between social identity and

⁵Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.77$. Details of these and other key measures are available in the online appendix. All variables were scaled to run from 0 to 1.

⁶For social/cultural identity $p = .20$ and for Latino linked fate $p = .30$, two-tailed F-tests.

⁷Details of self-reports for both Latinos and Anglos are available in the online appendix.

⁸We have no expectation here for outgroup attitudes, but do this to compare to Anglos.

⁹Predicted probabilities computed by first setting party to Democrat, gender to male, and all other items to their sample means, then changing linked fate to the sample maximum.

TABLE 2 Predictors of Latino Vote Choice by Experimental Condition

| | Juan Martinez | John Morgan | Difference |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Latino Linked Fate | 4.33 (2.30) | −1.46 (1.62) | 5.79 |
| Latino Social Identity | −2.71 (2.66) | 0.55 (2.34) | −3.26 |
| Negative Ethnic Out-Group Attitudes | −0.98 (3.64) | 4.49 (4.07) | −5.47 |
| Republican PID | 1.65 (1.67) | −0.55 (1.71) | 2.20 |
| Pseudo R ² | 0.17 | | |
| N | 31 | 30 | |

Note: Entries are logit coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) from a single model that also includes controls for gender and education. John Morgan entries are baseline coefficients; Juan Martinez entries are linear combinations of baseline and attitude by condition interaction coefficients. Bolded differences indicate a statistically significant ($p < .05$, one-tailed t -test) slope change across conditions.

linked fate. The two measures are moderately correlated at .44, but dropping linked fate from the model does not cause social identity to take on a statistically significant role.¹⁰

Finding strong evidence for coethnic voting among Latinos on account of Latino linked fate, we return to the question of what happens among Anglos who are faced with a Latino candidate. As with Latinos, although we found no significant differences in the level of support among Anglos for the candidate when his name was changed from Morgan to Martinez, it is still possible that Anglos changed *how* they came to their decisions. Again, we expect that Latino ethnicity cues likely partisanship of the candidate (Democrat) and the relevance of attitudes about immigrants in general (nativism) through stereotyping of the Latino candidate. We also contend the presence of a Latino candidate can increase nativism and national attachment among Anglos, as it may function as a cue about growing Latino political power due, in part, to immigration.

We assess our hypothesis about increased nativism and patriotism among Anglos (H2) by looking for differences in average levels of the two across the experimental conditions. Our patriotism measure is

an index of four items that asked subjects about their emotional reaction to the American flag, the extent to which they are proud of America, the extent to which they are embarrassed by America, and how important it is to them to be an American.¹¹ We measure nativism with an index of three attitudes toward immigrants: the degree to which the subjects believe immigrants strengthen the country, are a burden on the country, and should have their rights limited.¹²

Changes in the levels of expressed patriotism and nativism among Anglo subjects across the conditions were in the expected direction, with slightly higher levels expressed in the Latino candidate condition. Patriotism increased from a mean of .50 in the Morgan condition to .58 in the Martinez condition, and nativism from .48 to .51. Only the difference in patriotism, however, was statistically significant.¹³ This result is consistent with the argument that the presence of a Latino candidate effectively conveyed social group information, encouraging Anglos' attachment to the ingroup "American."

With some evidence that Anglos reacted to the ethnic cue with increased group-based thinking, we begin our analysis of how group-based attitudes structured their vote decisions. As with Latinos, we start by looking for differences in subjects' own reports of the factors that went into those decisions. What we find is consistent with the argument that the cue was an explicit ethnic cue: subjects changed their thinking about the comparison of the candidates but did not mention ethnicity. Although the *only* difference between the information provided to subjects across the conditions is a cue about candidate ethnicity, the differences in the Anglo subjects' claimed voting criteria are in experience and qualifications—each was over 30% less likely to be mentioned in the Martinez condition.

While subjects' self-reported reasons for their vote choices only offer suggestive evidence on the effect of the ethnic cue, they also point to a way to observe our expectation of the ethnic cue leading to stereotypical thinking about the candidate, but conscious rejection of the ethnic content thereof. Given that the only change in the description of Barry and his opponent across the conditions is whether or not

¹⁰ $b_{\text{social identity}} = -0.51$, $s.e. = 1.98$; $b_{\text{social identity} \times \text{Martinez condition}} = 0.50$, $s.e. = 2.85$. Dropping social identity does not change the implications of Latino linked fate: $b_{\text{linked fate}} = -1.28$, $s.e. = 1.41$; $b_{\text{linked fate} \times \text{Martinez condition}} = 4.42$, $s.e. = 2.27$ ($p < .05$, one-tailed test). No real differences in linked fate but declining social identity across groups defined by immigrant generation provide further evidence that the two are distinguishable.

¹¹While Huddy and Khatib (2007) question whether these items sufficiently capture patriotism, we rely on the items used in the American National Election Study surveys to enable direct comparison to that national random sample. Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$.

¹²Cronbach's $\alpha = .54$. Again, all measures scaled 0–1.

¹³Difference in patriotism is significant at $p < .05$, one-tailed test.

the opponent's name cues Latino ethnicity, any change across the conditions in subjects' assessments of the candidates can be confidently attributed to a reaction to the ethnicity of Barry's opponent. Only through content loaded in memory on the category "Latino" do the two conditions provide any differential basis for evaluation of the Barry opponent. Yet, we expect to observe that a difference in assessments only arises to the extent that subjects are activating socially acceptable group-based attitudes. In particular, we expect stereotypical penalization of the Latino candidate to be linked to attitudes about immigrants in general, rather than those about Latinos specifically.

In order to test these expectations (H3a), we asked subjects to evaluate the two candidates comparatively, to indicate which was more qualified to be on the city council. If subjects are using negative stereotypes of Latinos to evaluate the candidates, then Barry's challenger should be deemed less qualified when he bears a Spanish name. Indeed, Barry's challenger is significantly less likely to be chosen as the more qualified candidate in the Latino cue condition. While 81.1% of Anglo subjects in the control condition chose Barry's challenger as the more qualified candidate, just 62.9% did so in the Latino cue condition.¹⁴ To assess whether the observed change in qualification assessments across conditions is funneled through nativism, rather than Latino stereotyping directly, we estimate a model of qualification assessments (0 indicates that Barry was deemed more qualified, 1 that his challenger was) as a function of nativism, patriotism, partisan identification, and ethnic outgroup attitudes (stereotypes of Latinos). Party identification is the same 5-point scale we used in the Latino vote choice model. Attitudes toward Latinos are captured with an index of subjects' characterizations of Latinos as (not) hard-working, violent and (un-) intelligent. We also include a measure of Anglo (White) linked fate, which may capture the role of ethnic group-based attitudes even if Anglo subjects are reluctant to admit negative ethnic outgroup attitudes. Each of these measures is interacted with a dummy variable that indicates whether or not the subject was in the Latino candidate condition, again allowing us to test whether there was a distinct role for each consideration across the two experimental conditions. Table 3 summarizes the results of the model.

¹⁴This difference is statistically significant at $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

TABLE 3 Predictors of Anglo Candidate Qualification Assessment by Experimental Condition

| | John Morgan | Juan Martinez | Difference |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| White Linked Fate | .43 (1.67) | 0.50 (0.91) | 0.07 |
| Latino Stereotypes | -1.41 (3.84) | 0.91 (2.07) | 2.32 |
| Republican PID | -2.44 (1.91) | -1.06 (1.05) | 1.38 |
| Patriotism | 2.57 (1.91) | 2.87 (1.63) | 0.30 |
| Nativism | 5.81 (3.04) | -1.44 (1.49) | -7.25 |
| Pseudo R ² | 0.12 | | |
| N | 53 | 70 | |

Note: Entries are logit coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) from a single model that also includes controls for gender and education. John Morgan entries are baseline coefficients; Juan Martinez entries are linear combinations of baseline and attitude by condition interaction coefficients. Bolded differences indicate a statistically significant ($p < .05$, one-tailed t-test) coefficient change across conditions.

Our expectations about spreading activation among Anglos are supported by the results in Table 3. Despite the fact that the only new information on which to base their qualification assessments provided to subjects in the Martinez condition was Latino ethnicity, ethnic group attitudes do not explain the significant change in qualification assessments across the experimental conditions. There is no significant change in the relationship between either Latino stereotypes or White linked fate and subjects' choice of the more qualified candidate when Barry's opponent bears a Spanish name. Rather, changes in qualification assessments across the conditions are explained by activation of the more socially acceptable negative group-based attitudes—those about immigrants in general. Moreover, we find that this change in qualification assessments is uniquely explained by group-based attitudes, rather than connected to broader political meaning. Although we expected that Latino ethnicity would cue Democratic partisanship, the lack of a significant change in the role of party identification indicates that subjects made no connection between any such partisan information and their qualification assessments.¹⁵

Finally, we return to the question of whether the activation of the socially acceptable nativist sentiment translates into a decreased willingness to support the

¹⁵Although we had no theoretical expectation for Latinos, we verified that this result was unique to Anglos by pooling the subjects and running a fully interactive model. The only statistically significant change across conditions was the decreased assessment of Barry's challenger as qualified among Anglos ($b = -7.60$, $s.e. = 3.43$, $p < .05$, two-tailed test).

Latino candidate. We hypothesized that it would. We also hypothesized that, through the same spreading activation process, the Latino candidate would act as a cue to Democratic partisanship to be employed in vote choice decisions. And yet, due to the explicit nature of the ethnic cue, we expected no role for ethnic group attitudes in the subjects' vote decisions. We test these three hypotheses (H3b–d) by estimating a model of Anglos' intended vote choice, where 0 indicates an intent to vote for Barry and 1 indicates an intent to vote for his opponent (Martinez or Morgan, depending on the condition). Vote choice is a function of nativism, patriotism, partisan identification, and ethnic ingroup and outgroup attitudes, using the same measures we used in the qualification assessment model. Once again, each consideration is interacted with a dummy variable that indicates whether or not the subject was in the Latino candidate condition, allowing us to test whether there was a distinct role for each consideration across the two experimental conditions. Table 4 summarizes the results of the model.¹⁶

The results displayed in Table 4 support the argument that the Latino ethnicity of a candidate functions as an explicit ethnic cue should—not by making any direct connection between ethnic group attitudes and vote choice, but by connecting related socially acceptable group-based attitudes to the vote decision. We find no evidence that a Latino candidate significantly altered Anglo subjects' use of ethnic stereotypes or ethnic ingroup attachment in their vote decisions. This result is not sensitive to model specification; eliminating either Latino stereotypes or Anglo linked fate from the model does not change the importance of the other ethnic group attitude measure. Neither does eliminating the nativism and/or patriotism measures yield results supportive of the hypothesis that candidate ethnicity activates attitudes about the ethnic group.

We do, however, find that the Latino ethnicity of a candidate can be a strong cue to Anglos about the relevance of related group-based considerations. That is, our hypotheses about the Latino cue working through a process of spreading activation through Anglos' related, and more socially acceptable, ideas about the immigrant status and partisanship of Latinos are supported. The results clearly indicate that Latino ethnicity functioned at least in

TABLE 4 Predictors of Anglo Vote Choice by Experimental Condition

| | John Morgan | Juan Martinez | Difference |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| White Linked Fate | 2.10 (1.50) | 1.03 (0.95) | −1.07 |
| Latino Stereotypes | −2.15 (3.11) | 2.21 (2.08) | 4.35 |
| Republican PID | 2.04 (1.42) | −1.33 (1.02) | −3.37 |
| Patriotism | −0.23 (1.60) | 2.46 (1.65) | 2.69 |
| Nativism | 3.08 (1.86) | −1.99 (1.52) | −5.06 |
| Pseudo R ² | 0.12 | | |
| N | 53 | 70 | |

Note: Entries are logit coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) from a single model that also includes controls for gender and education. John Morgan entries are baseline coefficients; Juan Martinez entries are linear combinations of baseline and attitude by condition interaction coefficients. Bolded differences indicate a statistically significant ($p < .05$, one-tailed t-test) coefficient change across conditions.

part as a partisan cue for Anglos, and that the information conveyed was Democratic affiliation. Greater leaning to the Republican end of the partisan spectrum in the Latino candidate condition engendered significantly less support for Barry's challenger than did Republican leanings in the condition without the ethnic cue. And the more socially acceptable negative outgroup attitudes—anti-immigrant sentiment—deflated support for Barry's challenger when he bore a Spanish name.

To ease interpretation of the effects, we consider a set of predicted probabilities produced by the model of Anglos' vote choice decisions. Given the significance of both partisanship and immigrant attitudes, we estimate two sets of probabilities, one for Democrats and one for Republicans. Within both groups, we estimate the likelihood that Anglo subjects would support Barry's challenger when he bore a Latino name and when he did not, first using the average levels of all the included variables and then again setting anti-immigrant sentiment at the highest level we observed among Democrats. Although we did observe some more extreme expressions of anti-immigrant sentiment among the Republicans, choosing the highest Democratic-expressed level allows for sensible and in-sample comparisons of the effects across Democrats and Republicans.

Among Democrats, the predicted effects reveal divisions in response to the ethnic cue. The model predicts that Anglo Democratic subjects with the average, lukewarm sentiment toward immigrants would actually increase substantially in their likelihood to support the candidate in response to the Latino ethnicity cue. In this case, the predicted

¹⁶This analysis tests activation as a moderating hypothesis. Tests of mediational effects require strong assumptions likely unfounded in this context (Imai, Keele, and Tingley 2009). Still, the results of those tests do not support mediation. Results available on request.

probability of supporting Morgan is .29 while for Martinez it is .55. If those Democrats, however, held the most negative views of immigrants we observed among the Democratic subjects in our sample, we would observe a negative effect of similar magnitude of the Latino cue. While their predicted likelihood of supporting Morgan of .37 is not far from that of the subjects with lukewarm attitudes about immigrants, their predicted probability of supporting Martinez falls all the way to .03.¹⁷

For Republican subjects, the model predicts that revelation of the candidate's Latino ethnicity would generally pull support from Barry's challenger, but that the effect is magnified among those with high levels of anti-immigrant sentiment. For Republicans with average, moderate attitudes about immigrants, the predicted probability of supporting Morgan is .75, while the predicted probability drops to .23 for Martinez. For Republicans with the high level of anti-immigrant sentiment, the predicted effect of the cue is over 20% greater, moving the likelihood of supporting the challenging candidate from .82 in the Morgan condition to .19 in the Martinez condition.¹⁸

Yet, while our results show that Anglos' nativist sentiment became tied up in resistance to Barry's challenger in the Latino cue condition, there was no significant difference across the experimental conditions in Anglos' use of patriotism. This pattern of results is not due to an inordinate degree of overlap between nativism and patriotism, however. The correlation between the two measures is only .32, and the size and statistical significance of the estimated effects do not change when one or the other is omitted from the model. Anglos' responses to the Latino cue, then, seemed particularly driven by outgroup attitudes.¹⁹ This primacy of outgroup sentiment is consistent with the expectation of group-based response

to threat, suggesting the current political climate does, indeed, connect Latinos with a threatening specter of immigration.

Conclusion

With trends that predict Latinos will constitute a quarter of the U.S. population in about four decades, the most important demographic question of the twenty-first century may prove to be how American society adapts to this group. Important to our understanding of the political dynamics surrounding the growing U.S. population of Latinos is considering the roles of Latinos as both actors and objects in American politics. We focused on the implications of the presence of a Latino candidate on the ballot not only because of the importance of understanding what happens when Latinos run, but also because doing so could add to our understanding of how cues to ethnicity function in American politics.

Our study has helped to clarify that ethnicity-based political choices among the target ingroup are not derived simply from cultural attachment to the group. Although shared language and other cultural markers may bring our attention to a possible "group" in politics, they do not necessarily carry political implications. A sense of political connectedness—an understanding of shared interests in what should be demanded from and is provided by government—was key to translating ethnicity into a factor that molded political behavior in our study. And such political linked fate, we observed, may be felt even by ingroup members who feel little cultural affinity with the ingroup, suggesting ethnicity-based politics may carry on despite cultural assimilation.

Additionally, we demonstrated how the predominant theoretical treatment of racial priming must be altered to account for the response of non-Hispanic Whites to an ethnic cue. Ethnicity, we found, can offer alternative routes for those negative sentiments about the outgroup that are suppressed because of their social unacceptability. Most notably, we found such a route through negative sentiment about immigrants in general. This most immediately suggests that to the extent Whites can connect an ethnic group with the ills of immigration, ethnic prejudice is enabled in their politics. Yet, the theory of ethnic priming through spreading activation we invoked and developed to explain responses to Latinos should have even further reach. Political discourse may enable a range of connections between taboo identity-based attitudes and socially acceptable alternatives.

¹⁷Note adding ideology and interacting it with the condition variable in the vote choice models neither produces significant coefficients on those terms nor substantively or statistically changes the predicted effects of the other included terms. Also note the same patterns of response to the cue are found by splitting the subjects into groups defined by "high" and "low" values on the relevant predispositions and testing mean differences.

¹⁸Using the highest observed nativism value among Republicans generates predicted probabilities of .91 for Morgan and .12 for Martinez. Predicted probabilities using condition-specific values changed very little (differences between .01 and .03), confirming most of the cue's work was through activation of considerations.

¹⁹Although our hypotheses implied separate and distinct analyses for Latinos and Anglos, a pooled and fully interactive model of vote choice confirms only Anglos responded by invoking their anti-immigrant sentiments. Results available on request.

Moreover, those alternative discourses may be even freer to stoke group-based threat, and, thus, further incite anti-outgroup politics.

Our findings point to several directions for future work to extend our understanding of both the political circumstance of a Latino on the ballot and the phenomenon of racial and ethnic priming. First, we place the fact that we found a small but not statistically significant difference in the overall levels of support among Latinos or Anglos for a candidate based solely on the perception that he was a Latino alongside observational studies that often find Latino candidates with overwhelming Latino voter support, and sometimes minimal non-Hispanic support. The question is whether the incongruence between our results and these observations is based solely on the distribution of the relevant predispositions and attitudes in the districts where Latinos run, or on additional influences in the campaign environments (e.g., mobilization efforts), or—more likely—both. Given the constantly changing demographic and political landscapes that Latino candidates face, isolating and understanding the distinct roles of each piece of this puzzle seems imperative to understanding the politics as a whole.

Our results also challenge the completeness of our understanding of racial and ethnic priming, including the extent to which we should employ the same theoretical framework to both. Placed beside a growing number of studies racial priming documenting the ineffectiveness of explicit racial cues, our findings about the work on an explicit ethnic cue raises the question of whether ethnic priming is an entirely different phenomenon than racial priming, or if racial priming works in the presence of an explicit racial cue in a way that scholars have yet to detect. In short, while we find no evidence that Anglos are directly making “ethnic” choices about Latino candidates, we do find that much changes in Anglo minds about how a candidate should be evaluated when he becomes “ethnic.” Whether the spreading activation explanation that we offer somehow applies in the context of race rather than ethnicity is an important open question about the degree of similarity of the work that race and ethnicity do in American politics.

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