Supporting One of their Own?
Explaining Race and Gender Affinity in Vote Choice

Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant\textsuperscript{a} and Erin Tolley\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a}Department of Political Science, Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada
\textsuperscript{b}Department of Political Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Draft prepared for the annual conference of the European Consortium for Political Research
Université de Montréal, Montreal
August 29, 2015

Introduction
Race and gender are among the most visible socio-demographic characteristics in politics. They structure public opinion toward political issues (Gidengil 1995; Gidengil et al. 2003; Mueller 1988; Valentino et al. 2002); partisanship (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004); and voting behaviour (Chaney et al. 1998; Gidengil et al. 2005; Hutchings and Valentino 2004). The salience of characteristics like race and gender raises questions about how they can be mobilized by candidates to elicit voter support. In this paper, we examine the basis for racial and gender voter-candidate affinities and the conditions under which these affinities hold. We also assess the empirical support for strategies that parties have put in place to capitalize on apparent in-group preferences.

To date, much of the research on these questions has included entirely white or mixed samples of white and minority voters (Cassese et al. 2015; McConnaughy et al. 2010; Sigelman and Sigelman 1982). In contrast, we focus specifically on minority voters. We do so for three reasons. First, although “ethnic politics” have always played a role in Canada, racial minority voters are gaining increasing political clout. Political parties have advanced targeted strategies to appeal to this perceived block of voters and to recruit and nominate minority candidates. Second, Canada’s racial minority population is growing. It is projected that by 2031, racial minorities will make up 30.6% of the country’s total population (Statistics Canada 2012). Urban concentrations and adjustments to the country’s electoral boundaries have resulted in an increased number of electoral districts in which racial minorities—and sometimes even a single racial minority group—make up more than 30% of the riding’s population (Griffith 2015). This geographic clustering provides a mechanism to translate racial minority voters’ support into an electoral win.
Third, in spite of the increasing strength and political importance of racial minority voters, very little research provides a detailed examination of their political behaviour. This analytical blind spot leaves us with a limited basis for understanding the behavior of minority voters.

The absence of research on minority voters also has a practical implication given the increased attention that political parties are devoting to micro-targeting, which aims to identify and capitalize on perceived voting blocks and voter-candidate affinities (Delacourt 2013). These targeting efforts have taken a number of forms. First, political parties have put forward election promises and proposals tailored to appeal to specific groups (Wallace 2012). The Conservative Party of Canada has streamlined immigration procedures, while the Liberal Party has promised it would appoint a gender-balanced Cabinet if it formed a government. Both of these proposals are aimed at enticing specific voters. The political campaign is, in essence, a competition over scarce resources; such an environment is posited to activate in-group favouritism as voters seek out the candidates who are most likely to act in their interests. Targeted policy positioning may activate in-group favouritism (Bobo 1988; Esses et al. 1998; Glaser 1994), while issue mentions prime or cue voter-candidate affinities (Dolan 1998), propositions that we explore below.

In addition to targeting their messaging, parties have also recruited and run a broad slate of candidates. The New Democratic Party has had an explicit affirmative action policy since 1984, while the Liberal Party has introduced an initiative called Invite Her to Run, which asks party members to identify potential female candidates. Finally, parties have made some strategic choices about the ridings in which to place particular candidates. Analyses show, for example, that parties tend to cluster racial minority candidates in a small number of ridings and are most likely to nominate them when racial minorities make up 30% or more of the riding’s population (Ashe and Stewart 2012; Black and Hicks 2006). Underpinning these strategies are a number of assumptions about voters’ baseline candidate preferences, for which we can find some support in the literature. In Canada, there is some evidence that voters prefer candidates’ whose racial backgrounds mirror their own (Besco, forthcoming; Bird 2015). The American literature, likewise, provides convincing evidence of in-group racial affinity among black, Hispanic and white voters (Barreto 2007, 2010; Manzano and Sanchez 2010; Piliavin 1987; Sigelman and Sigelman 1982; Terkildsen 1993). The American literature similarly suggests that women voters prefer women candidates (Dolan 1998, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2010; King and Matland 2003; Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Zipp and Plutzer 1985), although in Canada, there is less evidence of gender affinity effects in Canada for reasons that we discuss below (Goodyear-Grant 2010; Goodyear-Grant and Croskill 2011).
Where the literature on affinity effects falls short, however, is in its tendency to focus either on race or gender in isolation, with little attention given to these characteristics in combination. Moreover, much of the research is preoccupied with the mere absence or presence of voter-candidate affinity, rather than probing the underlying explanations. In this paper, we move beyond the question of whether voters prefer racial or gender in-group candidates and look instead at how those preferences are conditioned: first, by the strength of their racial identity; second, by gender; and third, by issue priming. These factors have been posited to affect vote choice, but much of the literature on these questions has focused on white voters, or on the explanations in isolation. Moreover, little research has looked at how voters respond when faced with choices that appeal to both their racial and gender in-group preferences.

Our paper addresses these gaps. We argue that among racial minority voters, race trumps gender as a source of voter-candidate affinity, and that racial affinity effects are particularly strong for voters who have a strong sense of racial identity. Although issue priming on a so-called minority issue does increase support for minority candidates, this boost is no greater among minority voters than it is among white voters. Taken together, these findings suggest that the ways in which political parties understand voter-candidate affinity, and the literature’s testing of these effects, does not provide sufficient analytical purchase particularly in complicated political contexts where more than one identity or interest might be salient.

**Theoretical Bases for Affinity Effects**

There are a variety of reasons that voters might gravitate toward a candidate who shares one or more sociodemographic features with them. In the first place, socio-demographic characteristics are heuristics that provide voters with cues about a candidate’s likely competence, policy priorities, ideology, and ability to understand voters’ concerns (Cutler 2002; Dolan 2014; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004; Popkin 1991). Knowing a candidate’s race or gender, so the theory goes, allows voters to make all sort of inferences about the candidate’s qualifications, political positions and partisanship, thereby bypassing the need for costly information-gathering in the process of choosing which candidate to vote for.

Other theories of voter-candidate affinity retain this cognitive focus but suggest that the basis for the affinity is entirely rational in that voters simply choose the candidates whom they believe will maximize their own interests. Accounts in this vein say, for example, that voters stereotype candidates’ ideological beliefs on the basis of their sociodemographic characteristics and then select the candidate whose positions they perceive to be closest to their own. Female and black candidates are both stereotyped as more left-leaning, and this stereotyping drives the
affinity effects between them and demographically similar voters (McDermott 1998). Voters may also make inferences about a candidate’s policy priorities, with women and minority candidates viewed as most likely to advance issues “most explicitly linked to each group’s economic and social interests” (Conover 1984, 774). The tendency to support demographically similar candidates may be a function of “linked fate” whereby voters believe that what happens to group members in general has an impact on the lives of individual group members (Dawson 1994; McConnaughy et al. 2010; Tate 1993). What is unclear, however, is whether a desire to augment the electoral fortunes of demographically similar candidates is motivated by a voter’s self-interest or a sense of shared identity.

Social identity theory suggests the latter. According to this theory, individuals categorize themselves into distinct groups and then elevate the status of their own group (Tajfel 1981). These positive group attributions lead to improved individual self-esteem and, because individuals would rather feel positively than negatively about themselves, they are predisposed to thinking more highly of their in-group members (Brewer and Silver 1978). In an electoral context, voters may see in-group members as more hardworking, trustworthy or ethical or, conversely, reason that the success of the in-group member will result in a more positive evaluation of all group members. Whatever the case, the interplay between self- and group-identity is thought to result in voter-candidate affinity among in-group members.

Research examining voter-candidate affinity—whether driven by explanations rooted in heuristics, identity or voters’ interests—tends not to give considerable attention to the intersecting nature of the demographic bases for affinity. The literature provides little theoretical guidance regarding candidate preferences when both identities are cued because, as Cutler (2002, 467) points out, “Most studies, both experimental and using survey research, deal with one sociodemographic attribute at a time.” Examining affinity effects in isolation might limit the generalizability of findings, or present a distorted view of the effects of any single trait. When research has adopted a more intersectional approach, the findings indicate that both gender and race have an impact on vote choice, and in some contexts, the two appear to have mutually reinforcing effects, which Wilcox (1997) refers to as a “contagion” effect. Real vote choices occur under complex conditions that commonly involve multiple allegiances; our study assesses this dynamic. To do so, we present two scenarios in which race and gender could influence vote choice, one that we refer to as affinity congruence and the other that we refer to as a cross-pressure situation.

In an affinity congruence scenario, the voter and candidate share two visible and politically salient markers of difference (race and gender, in our study), and this is likely to
increase support for a candidate among voters of the candidate’s same gender. For example, if a Chinese female candidate faces a white male candidate, support for the former will be higher among Chinese female voters than among their male counterparts. When there is a race and gender match between a candidate and voter, the voter is unlikely to experience a “conflict.” In this scenario, in-group solidarity along both racial and gender lines will facilitate and augment their support of the Chinese female candidate. Such a conclusion is demonstrated convincingly in work by Philpot and Walton (2007), which shows that black women are the strongest supporters of black female candidates, with “the level of support in ascending order for black female candidates is as follows: white male, white female, black male, black female.”

In a cross-pressure situation, minority voters are forced to choose between a candidate of their same race or their same gender, and this is likely to increase support for the minority candidate. That is, when a Chinese male candidate faces off against a white female candidate, Chinese women will gravitate toward the candidate of shared racial background, rather than the candidate of shared gender. This hypothesis is consistent with the notion that race trumps gender in candidate choice (Gay and Tate, 1998; Mansbridge and Tate, 1992; Philpot and Walton, 2007). Relevant here is the research on group consciousness, which refers to a “politicized awareness, or ideology, regarding the group’s relative positions in society, a commitment to collection action aimed at realizing the group’s interests” (Miller et al. 1981, 495). Group consciousness appears to be stronger among minorities than among women (Dawson 1994; Gurin 1985). While women may exhibit a feminist orientation, this has not translated into a strong sense of female group identity (Conover 1988a; Plutzer 1988; Sears and Huddy 1990); this is in contrast to minorities. Conover (1988b, 67) argues that women’s weaker group consciousness is because “the frequent and intimate interaction that typically occurs between men and women interferes with women’s development of a sense of solidarity and their recognition of group deprivation. Thus the extent and intensity of group consciousness among women is less than for some other groups (such as racial minorities).” Faced with a candidate choice that pits race and gender cues against one another, race will produce stronger feelings of in-group solidarity and thus prevails.

In-group identification and consciousness may not be automatic, however, but rather must be activated. Individuals have many identities—those based on gender, race, age, ability, sexual orientation, occupation, marital status, and others—and not all will be uniformly accessible and equally important. As Davis (2011, 300) notes, “For the positive distinctiveness of group identities to become politically and socially important to the individual, a mechanism must exist for activating or making salient the psychological attachment to social categories.” Current events, media coverage, or repeated message exposure may all prime the activation of an identity
or a consideration of self-interest and, by extension, voter behaviour (Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Krosnick and Kinder 1990). If a candidate primes an issue relevant to a particular group’s interests, that is likely to raise the salience of that particular issue and, importantly, its connection to the group’s interests. This is a prototypical priming argument.

Further, if the candidate who primes the issue is also an in-group member, the affinity effect may be augmented because it has been cued by a sense of shared identity and interests. Our paper thus takes into account not just the existence of race or gender affinities but also the conditions under which they may be activated.

Data and Method

To understand how race and gender affect vote choice among minority voters, we employ an experimental approach. One criticism leveled at experimental studies of vote choice is that of artificiality, but in some ways this is an advantage. Not only is the environment contrived, but it is also simplified. Factors that may influence voters’ assessments of women and minority candidates, such as media attention to their novelty or so-called “ethnic targeting” are absent. This leaves the focus on voters’ reactions to a candidate’s race and/or gender irrespective of these external influences. Asking whether the very presence of a woman and/or minority candidate affects voter behaviour helps us to understand the political meanings of race and gender.

The study is based on an online survey experiment of 2,485 Canadian residents,\(^1\) which included 1,501 visible minority and 984 white respondents.\(^2\) Of those, 27% of participants self-identified as Chinese, 12% as South Asian, and 21% as having other visible minority backgrounds and 40% as not belonging to any visible minority group. This paper is concerned principally with the behaviour of the Chinese sub-sample, whose number is 679 respondents (or 27% of the total sample, as noted).

The 40-question survey was conducted in English, with no participants from Quebec. It contained two candidate preference experiments—one of which is the subject of this paper.\(^3\) Participants were recruited by Abingdon Research, which uses online ads and co-offers, as well as random digit dialing to maintain a bank of survey respondents. These individuals are to participate in a survey, for which they receive nominal compensation. Screener questions helped to ensure sufficient numbers of white and visible minority participants were included. Our sample

---

\(^1\) The survey was designed by Randy Besco, Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Erin Tolley with funding from

\(^2\) The sample also originally included 17 Aboriginal respondents, but these have been dropped for the analyses reported in this paper as Aboriginals are not considered visible minorities.

\(^3\) For details on the other experiment, see Besco (2013). Note that we coordinated resources for simultaneous data collection, but the two experiments and their resultant publications are separate.
is not representative of the population in that minorities were over-sampled in order to obtain enough respondents from which to draw meaningful conclusions. That said, variances within variables such as age, income, education, and others important to political choice are robust in our sample, and correspond relatively well with population figures.

Looking more specifically at the Chinese sub-sample, on which we perform most of our analyses, on key demographic variables it is broadly representative of the Chinese community generally in Canada. The median age of the sample is 44, which is similar to the average in this sub-population. Chinese respondents’ median household income is between “$60,000 to just under $90,000” (categorical variable), compared to the Chinese population median of $88,232. Chinese participants are more educated than the Chinese population in Canada generally. Forty-six percent of the Chinese participants in the sample have an undergraduate degree, which is actually the median response for the education question, and a further 19% of them have professional or graduate degrees. Overall, 64% of our Chinese participants have at least one university degree, compared to 44% in the Chinese population.

In our experiment, respondents were instructed to imagine they were attending a candidate nomination meeting for “X” party (the name of each respondent’s preferred party, which was obtained earlier in the survey, was piped into the “X” field). This allowed us to inject partisanship into the set-up and thus increase the authenticity of the experiment, while still holding this variable constant. In addition to selecting a candidate, respondents were told that that the other item on the meeting’s agenda was the discussion of a policy issue. Respondents were randomly assigned to either a pension or hate crimes issue treatment, which is important to our last hypothesis predicting a cuing effect of the hate crimes issue on racial affinities between respondents and candidates.

After reading about the meeting, respondents were randomly assigned to one of six treatments, each of which featured two candidates from which to choose (Table 1). We used varying combinations of a white woman, white man, Chinese woman, and Chinese man. In many of our analyses, we combine the four mixed-race treatments (treatments 2 - 5) into a single variable which codes 1 for selection of a Chinese candidate, and 0 for a White candidate.

---

4 All information on averages in the Chinese population is from the National Household Survey and the 2013 Statistics Canada report “A Profile of Chinese People in Canada.” See: http://www.labour.gc.ca/eng/standards_equity/eq/pubs_eq/eddr/2006/profiles/page07.shtml

5 That our sample is better educated than the population is common in web-based surveys. Dampening concerns about the representativeness of the sample on education is the fact that voters of all backgrounds may express or rely upon affinities. Sophisticated voters do not ignore traits such as gender and race in candidate choice, and low-information voters are unlikely to use them deterministically to stand in for all other considerations (Cutler 2002).
Analogous Canadian research has employed South Asian or Chinese candidates (Besco, forthcoming; Bird 2015), which are logical choices given these are the country’s largest visible minority groups. In the end, we selected candidates with Chinese origins for two reasons. First, while Canada’s Chinese and South Asian populations both have considerable internal heterogeneity, the latter is more diffuse in that it encompasses individuals whose origins include a number of countries, religions, and languages. By contrast, Chinese Canadians tend to originate from a more closely clustered group of countries, speak one of two languages as a mother tongue, and generally report no religious affiliation. This relative cohesion helps to mitigate against out-group response biases with non-racial foundations. A second reason for selecting Chinese candidates is more geographical. Although Canadians of South Asian and Chinese backgrounds are both heavily concentrated in two provinces (Ontario and BC), the Chinese Canadian community is somewhat more dispersed with larger populations in other provinces than their South Asian counterparts. As a result, the likelihood that respondents across provinces would encounter a candidate with Chinese origins is slightly higher than the likelihood of encountering a candidate of South Asian background.

Prototypical male and female, and Chinese and Anglo-Saxon names were chosen for the candidates (Susan Murphy, Steve Peterson, Julie Lo, John Wang). The ordering of the candidates was randomized within treatments, as were the biographies. Of the four biographies, two described the candidate as having what some might consider a high-prestige occupation (physician, civil engineer) and the other two are by comparison lower-prestige occupations (insurance adjustor, guidance counsellor) (see the online Supplementary Appendix for further details). We do not examine the effects of the biographies in this paper, but merely emphasize their random assignment; no two candidates in a set could have the same biography, and the fact that we have over 400 participants in each of the six treatments gives us confidence in the random assignment of biographies.

As an additional cue of race and gender, we provided photographs of the candidates. Using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk, we recruited 115 testers who rated the attractiveness, approximate age, and perceived ethnicity of 16 headshots. The four headshots selected for inclusion received mean attractiveness ratings that ranged from 3.58 to 4.01 on a 5-point scale (all received median ratings of 4 on a 5-point scale), and estimated ages between 39 and 43 years, with testers overwhelmingly recognizing them as white or Chinese (see the Appendix for additional details). This strategy helps minimize these factors as competing explanations for candidate preferences.
In our analyses we focus on fairly small number of variables. The power of this study is in the experimental research design, and the randomization of possible confounding factors such as candidate bios and the order of candidate presentation. In addition to race (Chinese=1, White=0) and gender (woman=1, man=0), we also use the issue prime variable (pension=1, hate crime=2) and an index that measures the different dimensions of racial identity (0=weak identifiers, 1=strong identifiers). On this last variable, some further discussion is warranted here, and in the context of results, we will raise several additional points, including brief discussion of how different indicators influence our analyses.

The racial identification index is based on a measure referred to as Identification with a Psychological Group (IDPG). The IDPG pinpoints an individual’s feeling of closeness to a particular group and, in particular, how this relates to perceptions of shared success and failure; it is both a measure of self-identity and feeling of “oneness” with a particular group (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Mael and Tetrick 1992). The IDPG is consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1986) and has been applied in other studies to measure feelings of ethnic or racial identification (Besco 2015; Kester and Marshall 2003). While the IDPG scale includes 10 items, like Patrikios (2013), we include a shortened version that provides an adequate foundation for measuring racial identification while recognizing our survey’s space limitations.

Our measure of racial identification is based on three items, each of which asks respondents about their orientation to Chinese people as a group: 1) a variable that asks whether they say “we” rather than “they” when they talk about the group, 2) a variable that asks whether it feels like a personal insult when someone criticizes the group, and 3) a variable that asks whether it feels like a personal compliment when someone praises the group. The first item probes a general sense of group belonging, while the other two more closely assess identification as a function of esteem, or how self-concept is linked to group membership, including where negative and positive esteem are in question. In our take on the literature, all three are relevant to feelings of group identification, and this is what motivates are use of an index which combine them. The IDPG questions were asked prior to our survey experiment, with a filler module on participation separating them. Respondents could choose from a five-point scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. To operationalize the scale, we coded as weak group identifiers those Chinese respondents who identified weakly with Chinese people as a group on all or most (2 of 3) of the items. Strong identifiers are those respondents who strongly agreed with all or most (2 of 3) of the items.
Hypotheses

We test a range of hypotheses. The first assesses whether visible minority voters are indeed more likely than white voters to select candidates from their own racial group over white candidates. The remaining hypotheses are focused on variables that are thought both in the literature and by parties to condition, and thus partially explain, voter-candidate affinities among visible minorities.

H1. Minority voters are more likely than white voters to prefer racial in-group candidates.

H2. Strength of racial identity conditions candidate preferences among minority voters. Minority voters with a strong sense of racial identity will be more likely than those who weakly identity to support racial in-group candidates.

H3. Gender conditions candidate preferences among minority voters.

Within this general proposition, we have two specific hypotheses:

• H3a. In a cross-pressure situation, in which minority voters are forced to choose between a candidate of their same race or their same gender, race will trump gender as a basis for affinity.

• H3b. In an affinity congruence situation, in which a candidate’s gender and race both match that of the voter, support for the candidate will increase among voters of the candidate’s same gender.

H4. Compared to cuing a more neutral issue, the cuing of a racially salient issue will:

• H4a. increase support for minority candidate generally (direct effect)

• H4b. increase support among racial in-group voters more than among White voters (a race-conditional effect)

Results

Simple Affinity

We start with the fairly straightforward question of whether minority voters are more likely than their white counterparts to prefer candidates from their own racial group (Table 2). Examining the four mixed-race treatments as a group, where respondents had the option of choosing a white or Chinese candidate (of varying gender mixes), the answer is yes. Nearly two-thirds of Chinese respondents choose the Chinese candidate, and a slim majority (54%) of the white respondents did too, meaning there is a fairly strong racial in-group candidate preference among Chinese voters, but no similar preference among white voters. This corresponds with much of the past
literature suggesting that visible minorities prefer one of their own (Besco, forthcoming; Bird 2015; Hahn and Almy 1971; Piliavin 1987).

(Table 2 here) The finding is also consistent with some research that demonstrates that while white voters may prefer candidates from their own in-group, they are not, in the aggregate, biased against minority candidates (Black and Erickson 2006; Tossutti and Najem 2002). That said, visible minority groups do not have uniform status; whether measured on economic, social, cultural or political dimensions some visible minority groups are seen as having higher status than others (Yang 2000), and this may influence the willingness of white voters to support them.

Because of their high levels of educational and occupational attainment and overall economic success, Chinese communities are often seen as “model minorities,” a stereotypical image that comes through in media coverage (Baumann and Ho 2014; Fleras 2014; Paek and Shah 2003). In the context of political choice, an examination of candidates from lower-status minority groups might reveal different results, including diminished support from white voters. Another important question about this finding for white voters is whether social desirability motivates their purported preference for the Chinese candidates over white candidates. Are white voters simply attempting to appear inclusive? Various features of our survey allow us to perform checks on this, and we are fairly confident that social desirability bias is not responsible for the effect.6

Strength of Racial In-group Identification

The second hypothesis relates to the strength of identification with one’s racial group and whether this affects candidate preferences. We predict that Chinese respondents who identify more strongly with Chinese people as a group will be more likely than weak group identifiers to prefer

6 First, self-administered surveys are less susceptible to social desirability biases than other modes (Holbrook and Krosnick 2010). Second, most of our survey questions were timed, so we can measure response latency on the candidate choice treatments. The idea is that we might see different item-response times for white and minority respondents in mixed-race treatments if a sizeable portion of white respondents misled or “faked” responses. Psychology research shows that item-response times are often longer when respondents give deceptive answers, on account of the added cognitive effort involved (Hooft and Born 2012). Of course, this is not a perfect measure for assessing social desirability effects because out-group biases like racism are often implicit rather than explicit, as is the desire for preservation of one’s reputation and self-image, but it is suggestive. There are no statistically significant differences in white and minority voters’ mean response times in mixed-race treatments (results not shown). Another approach we took to assessing response latency was to ask whether those who expressed negative views on a feelings-toward-Muslims question in the survey question had shorter response times in the mixed-race candidate treatments than those who professed positive views. The rationale is that unabashedly prejudiced respondents should be relatively immune to social desirability effects in candidate choice because of their demonstrated willingness to provide “politically incorrect” responses to other race-based questions. We found no statistically significant differences in mean item-response times comparing the openly prejudiced to the reportedly inclusive (results not shown).
Chinese candidates. The logic here is that mutual belonging to a racial group may not on its own be sufficient to motivate race-based affinity between a voter and a candidate. Rather, the strength of the voter’s racial identity, which would say something about what the group means to him/her, conditions the relationship. Stronger group identifiers, as such, would be more likely than weak identifiers to develop affinities for co-ethnic candidates.

(Table 3 here)

Looking at the in-group identification index, the result is not consistent with the hypothesis (Table 3). On this measure, there is no difference between Chinese weak and strong identifiers in their candidate preferences. They are equally likely to support one of their own in mixed-race candidate competitions. Keeping in mind that we have four separate mixed-race treatments, where the gender and race combinations of the candidates vary (but there is always one Chinese and one white candidate). We looked at the treatments separately as well, and found the in-group identification index had no effect in any of the individual treatments (results not shown).

Do any of the variables that make up the in-group identification index have their own effects? The answer here is yes. For each of the three IDPG variables in the index, we ran tabular analyses on the mixed-race treatments together and then separately to see if strength of racial identity according to any one of the index’s constituent dimensions conditions candidate preferences for Chinese voters. Without going into the details of all the analyses, the critical finding here is that the “personal insult” variable does have the effect predicted in H2. When strength of racial in-group identification is measured as a response to the notion that it feels like a personal insult when someone criticizes Chinese people as a group, strong identifiers (those who strongly agree or agree with the statement, coded 1) are more likely to prefer Chinese candidates than weak identifiers (neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, coded 0) (Table 4). It actually creates an 11 percentage point gap between strong (69%) and weak identifiers (58%). One of the important points about this operationalization of in-group identity is that it has more potential to evoke strong reactions than the other two components of the IDPG. This suggests that in-group identity is most likely to be activated—and influence voter behaviour—when individuals feel animosity toward their racial in-group from others.

(Table 4 here)

Gender
Because voters typically face candidate choices that require them to consider multiple allegiances at once, we next look at the ways that gender and race interact for respondents in our survey.
While gender has proven to have little impact on voter-candidate affinities in Canada, at least not broadly and not using observational data (Goodyear-Grant and Croskill 2011), we have two main reasons for testing whether it conditions racial affinities. First, like race, gender is a widely visible marker or difference, both as a result of candidate appearances, but also candidate names. Second, it is possible that while gender affinity effects have not been found broadly speaking, it is possible that gender operates differently in group-specific contexts and may not have the same impact on candidate preferences when race is also a salient criterion. This rationale underpins most intersectional studies of political behaviour (Cassese et al. 2015).

We test two hypotheses about how race and gender interact in candidate preferences. H3a examines a cross-pressure situation, where race and gender pull Chinese voters in different directions as they face the choice between a white candidate of the same gender and a Chinese candidate of the opposite gender. H3b looks at what we call an affinity congruence situation where Chinese voters encounter a choice between two candidates, one that matches their race and gender, and the other that matches neither.

We assess the two gender conditional hypotheses for both men and women Chinese voters, which is unusual in the literature. Work on gender affinity effects in voting (like much of the work on gender and political behaviour more generally) has tended to focus solely on women voters, reinforcing the idea that maleness is the norm or that men are genderless, and gender gaps in opinion or behaviour are the result of women’s difference. Research demonstrates that both gender groups actually have baseline candidate gender preferences for same-sex representation (Sanbonmatsu 2002).

(Tables 5 & 6 here)

Tables 5 and 6 depict our findings on these hypotheses. For the cross-pressures situation, Table 5 is the relevant one to examine for Chinese women, and Table 6 for men. For both Chinese men and women, we have hypothesized that race will trump gender in this setting, although this prediction is based on very few empirical tests of the general proposition. The prediction is based on theoretical work on group identities more generally, which tends to suggest that race is a more powerful group identity than gender (Conover 1988b; Philpot and Walton 2007). As we can see looking at the two tables, race does trump gender for both Chinese men and women. In both treatments, there is no gender difference in Chinese respondents’ candidate preferences. In both cases, the proportions of Chinese men and women who gravitate toward the co-ethnic candidate are not significantly different, providing evidence consistent with the hypothesis.
Moving to H3b, the affinity congruence question, this time Table 5 is the relevant one to examine for Chinese men, and Table 6 for women. The hypothesis predicts that in Table 6, support for the Chinese female candidate would be highest among Chinese female voters, and in Table 5, support for the Chinese male candidate would be highest among Chinese male voters. In short, the hypothesis is that while shared race motivates candidate preferences, adding shared gender on top of this should further boost support for same-race candidates. Tables 5 and 6 provide no evidence in support of this hypothesis. There are no significant gender differences in candidate preferences among Chinese respondents. It’s all about race here, with gender exerting no impact on candidate preferences. This diverges somewhat from Philpot and Walton’s analysis (2007, 49), which found that black men and black women preferred the black female candidate over the black male candidate because, they argue, “gender and race interact to create a separate consciousness whereby race trumps gender but the intersection of the two trumps both.” Nonetheless, our findings on the two gender hypotheses are consistent with past work on the limited impact of gender affinity on vote choice in Canadian federal elections (Goodyear-Grant 2010; Goodyear-Grant and Croskill 2011). This is not to say that gender is not important to political preferences, nor can we dismiss the possibility of candidate gender having other effects, perhaps through candidate perceptions, for example. However, in terms of creating direct bonds between women in the electorate and women riding-level candidates, there is no clear evidence of an effect here or in past Canadian work on the subject (or in work on parliamentary systems more broadly).

**Issue Priming**

In addition to the candidate nomination scenario, survey respondents were also told that the party meeting they were to imagine attending also had the discussion of an issue on its agenda. For half the sample, the issue was recent changes to the old age pension system, and for the other half it was hate crimes. More specifically, respondents who saw the hate crime version were told “the party will discuss a recent swarming of a young boy in our community. Police have suggested that the incident may have been a hate crime, and the party is looking at possible responses.” With the two issue primes, our objective was to assess whether a race-related prime (hate crimes) impacts support for minority candidates compared to a less racially salient issue prime (pensions). These primes are in line with Conover (1988) who categorizes issues according to the clarity and salience of the group cues they evoke. Some issues are clearly group-related, such as *affirmative action for women*, while the group content of others is more latent. So that we would not
exaggerate the priming effects in our study, we have opted for an issue that does not explicitly mention minorities but that most voters would see as salient to those with minority backgrounds.

Minority candidates are viewed as particularly qualified to address issues like immigration, multiculturalism, poverty, and affirmative action, which voters categorize as race-related issues (Gilens 1999; McIlwain and Caliendo 2011; Schaffner and Gadson 2004). Moreover, race-related issues may be more salient for minority voters and thus activate their self-interest (Sanchez et al. 2015; Stokes-Brown 2006) or racial in-group identification (Davis 2011). For these reasons, H4 predicts that in comparison to the cuing of a more race-neutral issue, this cuing of a minority issue will a) increase support for minority candidate generally, and b) produce a race-conditional effect whereby the effect is particularly strong among minority voters.

(Tables 7 & 8)

Table 7 shows candidate preferences for white and Chinese voters who were exposed to the pension issue prime, and Table 8 the same but for the hate crimes prime. In terms of H4a, which predicts a general increase in support for minority candidates in the race-related prime, comparing the two tables shows that for both white and Chinese voters, there was a roughly 5-6 percentage point increase in support for Chinese candidates over white candidates in the hate crimes prime. Support grew from 60% to 65% among Chinese respondents, and from 51% to 57% among white respondents, which is consistent with the hypothesis.

On the question of whether there is a race-conditional effect that produces a greater increase of support among co-ethnic voters, the answer appears to be no. The gap between Chinese respondents and white respondents who opt for the Chinese candidate is virtually the same in the two primes (8-9 percentage points). So, the simple race-based affinity presents itself in both primes, but we see no added effect of shared race in the hate crimes prime compared to the pension prime. We did a couple of follow-up analyses to this to see if the issue prime does have race-conditional effects dependent on strength of racial identity (using the racial identification index) or gender. On both fronts, the answer is no (results not shown). Among Chinese respondents, the gap between strong and weak identifiers’ support for the co-ethnic candidate is not significantly different in the hate crimes prime compared to the pension prime, suggesting that even among Chinese voters with strong racial group identification, the hate crimes prime does not motivate particularly strong affinities for Chinese candidates. Similarly, the gap in Chinese men’s and women’s support for the co-ethnic candidate is not significantly different across the two primes.

A couple of points deserve discussion here, because the fact that race does not appear to condition the relationship between issue prime and candidate preferences is surprising. First, it
may be the case that this is not the ideal race-related issue to prime or cue Chinese voters. It may be that hate crime is not a particularly salient issue to Chinese Canadians, at least in comparison to its salience among other visible minority communities. Statistics Canada reports that the most common target of race/ethnicity-motivated hate crimes in Canada are those with black racial backgrounds (accounting for 44% of all race-motivated hate crimes in 2013). In contrast, East and Southeast Asian populations comprised 10% of race/ethnicity hate crimes (followed by South Asians (9%), Arab and West Asians (8%), and Aboriginal (5%) populations – note that hate crime statistics are reported separately for race and religious motivated hate crimes, so these figures under-estimate the proportion of hate crimes experienced by certain Arab and West Asian, as well certain South Asian populations, who are also targeted as Muslims). In short, Chinese Canadians may not see hate crimes as something that often endangers them, because it is relatively rare in their community.

To address this possibility, we did follow-up analyses to assess whether the hate crimes prime might have the hypothesized race-conditional effect in regions where general prejudice toward Chinese populations is arguably more prevalent. To do so, we compared the effect of the issue primes among respondents who live in BC with their effect among respondents in all other provinces. In BC, not only is there a particularly large Chinese community, but also documented cases of hate crimes against Chinese populations in the province. This includes assaults on Chinese fishermaen (so-called “nipper tipping”), and a highly publicized case of racist slurs and swastikas being painted on Chinese realtors’ bus-stop advertisements in June 2015 in Nanaimo, BC. In a context where hate crimes might be more salient to Chinese communities, does race condition candidate preferences in the hate crimes issue prime compared to the pension prime? The answer is yes, but not in the way we hypothesize (results not shown). Among BC respondents, in the pension prime, white voters have a strong preference for white candidates (62% chose the white candidate), which is different than the result in our sample broadly (49% of white voters chose the white candidate). In the pension prime, 53% of Chinese respondents chose the co-ethnic candidate (down from 60% in the sample broadly). So, compared to the national sample, in BC, white voters have stronger affinities for white candidates (or prejudices toward Chinese candidates), and Chinese voters have weaker affinities for Chinese candidates. What the hate crimes prime does among BC respondents is eliminate the significant race gap in candidate

---

preferences by boosting white voters’ preference for Chinese candidates. So, there is a race-
conditional effect, but because the hate crimes prime boosts support for Chinese candidates
among white voters twice as much (20 percentage points) as it does among Chinese voters (10
percentage points).

**Conclusion**

The paper addresses questions about how gender and race – two visible and politically relevant
sources of social identity – structure candidate preferences. Our fundamental question is: do racial
minority voters prefer one of their own? The answer is clearly yes. We present compelling
evidence from a survey experiment performed on a large sample, with a large visible minority
over-sample, in which potential confounding variables are randomized across respondents, and
unequivocally, Chinese voters have distinct preferences for Chinese candidates. Nationally, so too
do white voters, by a slim majority, prefer Chinese candidates. At the very least, white voters are
not systematically biased against Chinese candidates. The final analyses in the paper, looking at
the effects of the issue primes among BC respondents, however, suggests that care must be taken
on the point about white voters. In BC, white voters have strong preferences for white candidates,
at least when issues unrelated to race are primed together with the candidate selection scenario,
reminding us that context matters for voters’ general orientations on this matter.

We’ve also taken up the question about whether strength of racial identity and gender
structure candidate preferences among Chinese voters. On the gender question, the conclusion is
that race trumps gender as a motivator of vote choice. Similar to other studies of national
electorates, gender does not appear to motivate candidate preferences among Chinese men and
women, at least not in the ways investigated here. Two possibilities emerge: either 1) gender
really does not matter to Chinese voters at all, or 2) gender matters, but race is so much stronger it
eliminates any detectable gender effect in candidate preferences. We do not get at which of these
is happening in our results, but simply raise it here as a question for future work.

On how strength of racial conditions Chinese voters’ candidate preferences, it’s an
important question that speaks to the causes of racial in-group affinities between voters and
candidates. In most of the literature more generally, identity and interests motivate in-group
biases. The story we present here is not completely straightforward. Overall, our racial in-group
identification index produces no differential effect on candidate preferences. Chinese voters who
identify strongly with Chinese people as a group do not behave differently than weak identifiers.
Yet, examining the constituent variables in our index, when racial in-group identification is
operationalized as a function of the extent to which personal self-esteem takes a blow when the
group as a whole is criticized, we do see the hypothesized strength-of-identity effect. Those who agree or strongly agree that it’s a personal insult are more likely to select Chinese candidates. So, two questions are raised by these analyses: 1) which is the best or most defensible measure of in-group identification? We think it is the index, because it captures the different facets of group identification, but 2) Is there some other, more optimal way to measure strength of racial in-group identification?

Finally, we assessed how the issue context affects candidate preferences, and found that race-related issues (hate crimes) boosted support for Chinese candidates generally, but did not alter the gap in support for Chinese candidates among white and Chinese voters. In short, there was no national race-conditional effect of the hate crimes prime. Interestingly, this suggests two things: minority candidates may receive a general boost when campaigning on minority issues, which may be important when campaigning in mixed or predominantly white ridings. Indeed, taking a broader view, our paper suggests that white voters are quite willing to vote for Chinese candidates, even when a white candidate is also offered, and that, moreover, white voters’ support does not require Chinese candidates to strip themselves of their racial identity or avoid addressing minority issues. On the contrary, white voters were even more supportive of Chinese candidates in the hate crimes issue prime than the pension prime. This suggests that parties need not be so conservative when nominating racial minority candidates, nor must they confine those candidates to the most racially diverse ridings. White voters are quite willing to support Chinese candidates, particularly when there is a racially salient issue on the agenda.

The second point that comes out of the issue prime analyses is that, nationally, minority candidates receive no special extra reward from co-ethnic voters as a result of campaigning on minority issues. Looking at BC separately, analyses suggest that minority candidates may have added incentives to campaign on minority issues, or at least mention minority issues, in ridings that have a lot of white voters. Indeed, in the pension prime, only about a third of white BC voters chose the Chinese candidates, whereas in the hate crimes prime, slightly more than half of white BC voters did so, a difference of nearly 20 percentage points in the proportion of white voters choosing Chinese candidates. This suggests that when candidates are thinking about how to position themselves, those with racial minority candidates may sometimes want to speak to minority issues, but not always. The bases for racial in-group support are context-dependent. This only underscores why research on the political behaviour of racial minorities is so necessary.
Tables

Table 1: Candidate Treatments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Chinese woman</th>
<th>Chinese man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 1</td>
<td>Chinese woman</td>
<td>Chinese man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 2</td>
<td>Chinese woman</td>
<td>white man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 3</td>
<td>Chinese woman</td>
<td>white woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 4</td>
<td>Chinese man</td>
<td>white man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 5</td>
<td>Chinese man</td>
<td>white woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 6</td>
<td>white woman</td>
<td>white man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Candidate Preferences by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White Respondent</th>
<th>Chinese Respondent</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Candidate</td>
<td>46% (303)</td>
<td>37% (165)</td>
<td>43% (468)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Candidate</td>
<td>54% (353)</td>
<td>63% (280)</td>
<td>57% (633)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>1,001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected all four mixed-race treatments, Fisher's Exact=0.003

Table 3: Candidate Preferences by In-group Identification Index, Chinese Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak ID</th>
<th>Strong ID</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Candidate</td>
<td>39% (97)</td>
<td>35% (68)</td>
<td>37% (165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Candidate</td>
<td>61% (152)</td>
<td>65% (128)</td>
<td>63% (280)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected all four mixed-race treatments, Fisher’s Exact=0.375
Table 4: Candidate Preferences by “Personal Insult” In-group Identification Variable, Chinese Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak ID</th>
<th>Strong ID</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Candidate</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(99)</td>
<td>(66)</td>
<td>(165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Candidate</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(134)</td>
<td>(146)</td>
<td>(280)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected all four mixed-race treatments, Fisher’s Exact=0.009

Table 5: Candidate Preferences by Gender, Chinese Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men %</th>
<th>Women %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Male</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>(71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected treatment 5, Fisher’s Exact=1.000

Table 6: Candidate Preferences by Gender, Chinese Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men %</th>
<th>Women %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Female</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>(31)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>(65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected treatment 2, Fisher’s Exact=0.444
Table 7: Candidate Preferences by Race, Old Age Pension Issue Prime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White Respondent</th>
<th>Chinese Respondent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Candidate</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(161)</td>
<td>(83)</td>
<td>(244)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Candidate</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(166)</td>
<td>(126)</td>
<td>(292)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected all four mixed-race treatments, Fisher’s Exact=0.019

Table 8: Candidate Preferences by Race, Hate Crimes Issue Prime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White Respondent</th>
<th>Chinese Respondent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Candidate</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(142)</td>
<td>(82)</td>
<td>(224)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Candidate</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(187)</td>
<td>(154)</td>
<td>(341)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected all four mixed-race treatments, Fisher’s Exact=0.027
Appendix

Candidate biographies and photographs

1. [Candidate name] is a family physician with a successful medical practice. [S/he] was a lead organizer of the Play Safe initiative and has canvassed for the Canadian Cancer Society. [S/he] is dedicated to improving the quality of life in our community. [S/he] is married with two children.

2. [Candidate name] is a civil engineer who has worked on a number of the city’s infrastructure projects. [S/he] coaches [her/his] children’s soccer team and is a member of the Eastboro Community Association. [S/he] would welcome the opportunity to represent you. [S/he and her/his husband/wife] have two daughters.

3. [Candidate name] is an insurance adjuster for Sun Life Assurance. [S/he] recently spearheaded an initiative to upgrade the Bond Street Community Centre. [S/he] would bring this same drive and determination to Parliament. [S/he] is married with three kids.

4. [Candidate name] is a guidance counselor at Elmvale Secondary School. [S/he] is the teacher supervisor of the drama club and was recently awarded a National Teachers Award. [S/he] is as passionate about politics as [s/he] is about [her/his] students. [S/he and her/his husband/wife] have one son.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate name</th>
<th>Steve Peterson</th>
<th>Susan Murphy</th>
<th>John Wang</th>
<th>Julie Lo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean attractiveness</strong></td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5-point scale)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median attractiveness</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5-point scale)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average age</strong></td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>43.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Attractiveness and average age scores are based on the ratings of 115 MTurk testers. During ratings and in the experiment, the candidate photographs were provided in colour.

**Question wording**

Which candidate would you choose to represent the [preferred political party]?
References


