

The Voters' Veto: Local Racial Demographic Change and Exclusionary Behavior

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Abstract

As Western democracies diversify, racial threat may elicit exclusionary attitudes among members of the majority group. But does racial demographic change increase voters' direct, behavioral support for exclusionary policy? If so, is the effect limited to voters in predominantly white communities? Using referendum vote share from over 3,700 precincts in Los Angeles County, I find that an increase in the local non-white population leads to greater precinct-level support for direct democratic control over affordable housing. Drawing from historical evidence, I argue that behavioral support for this "voters' veto" is driven by the goal of excluding poor, predominantly non-white residents from one's community. I find this effect in both predominantly white and multiracial precincts, suggesting that exclusion is not limited to racial threat, but may extend to political and socioeconomic concerns felt broadly among local residents. These findings underscore the tension between integration and local democracy in a diversifying society.

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Introduction

The United States and other Western democracies are rapidly racially diversifying, largely due to immigration (Frey 2018). According to theories of racial threat, this increase in the multiracial minority population may present an economic, cultural, and political threat to the majority demographic group (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Key Jr 1949). Consequently, growing local racial diversity has been found to elicit exclusionary attitudes and behaviors among members of the majority racial group (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Campbell, Wong and Citrin 2006; Enos 2017; Fouka and Tabellini 2022).¹

However, research on demographic change and racial threat has focused heavily on either exclusionary attitudes or behaviors that indirectly shape policy outcomes. Examples of these indirect behaviors include increased voter turnout and support for conservative candidates (e.g., Enos 2017; Newman, Shah and Collingwood 2018; cf. Hill, Hopkins and Huber 2019). But neither of these pathways directly capture voters’ behavioral support for exclusionary policy. Additionally, much of this research has emphasized the exclusionary responses of the current majority group in these democracies — non-Hispanic whites. This emphasis on white voters risks simplifying emerging political cleavages into a majority-minority dichotomy and overlooking the motivations and behaviors of Black, Latino, Asian, and other non-white voters.²

As a political behavior, the effect of local racial demographic change on exclusion can be most directly observed in the context of housing policy. In the United States, voters and elected officials often use legal zoning practices to maintain economic segregation and therefore a degree of racial segregation (Trounstine 2018). From the enshrinement of single-family zoning to the obstruction of affordable housing, the practice of “exclusionary zoning” helps establish a local price floor that prevents the immigration of lower-income residents into the municipality (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2020; Rothwell and Massey 2009; Trounstine 2020). Taken to an extreme, residents can stymie integration via direct democracy, where housing proposals and land use policies are placed on the local ballot (e.g., Hankinson 2018). In short, an array of local regulatory tools give voters substantial veto power over the construction of new housing, entrenching existing patterns of racial

¹See Craig, Rucker and Richeson (2018) and Kaufmann and Goodwin (2018) for review.

²I use the term “Latino” to reference those identifying as of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin via the Census. I use the term “Hispanic” either when referring to the common categorization of “non-Hispanic whites” or when citing research which explicitly stated its findings in terms of the Hispanic population.

segregation.

To date, research on demographic change and housing policy has also focused heavily on both exclusionary outcomes and on the attitudes and behaviors of white residents. During the mid-20th century, as southern Blacks migrated into northern cities, whites not only left central cities for the surrounding suburbs (Boustan 2016), but also used exclusionary zoning to limit the ability of Black migrants to follow them (Sahn Forthcoming^b). Local zoning, national mortgage lending practices, and acts of racial violence helped institutionalize segregation across municipalities (Rothstein 2017; Trounstein 2020). But while increasing diversity is expected to have the largest effect in white communities with few minorities to begin with (Newman 2013), less attention has been paid to more racially diverse communities experiencing similar changes in their local demographics.

In this study, I measure the effect of local racial demographic change on exclusionary behaviors across an array of diverse communities. Since 1950, any proposal for new “low-rent” housing in California must win the support of a majority of voters via the municipal-level ballot.³ Known as “Article 34,” this policy transferred final decision making over affordable housing from the city council to the local electorate. Recognizing that placing this veto power in the hands of voters made it more difficult to build affordable housing, the California legislature has tried repeatedly to repeal Article 34 via statewide ballot referenda, with failed attempts in 1974, 1980, and 1993.⁴ These repeal efforts provide an opportunity to observe voters’ behavioral support for an exclusionary tool: veto power over new, nearby affordable housing.

Using electoral returns from 3,718 precincts across Los Angeles County in the 1993 repeal effort, I find that an increase in the local non-white population from 1980 to 1993 leads to higher precinct-level support for this “voters’ veto” over new affordable housing. I use two analytical strategies to assess this relationship. First, I show that a standard deviation increase in a precinct’s non-white population increases support for the voters’ veto by 2.4 percentage points ($d = .17$); similar effects are found when defining change as a proportion. I find that this exclusionary response emerges in not only majority white, but also more racially diverse precincts, including majority Black and majority Latino precincts. Additionally, this effect is unrelated to alternative explanations besides racial demographic change, such as local changes in median household income or a simple increase

³Though initially targeted towards public housing, “low-rent housing” has been interpreted to include even privately-owned housing in which 50% or more of the units are government-subsidized.

⁴See Section A for the full text of Article 34 and the 1993 repeal ballot proposition.

in local population density.

Second, to account for the possibility that new voters in each precinct are driving this change, I also measure the effect of a precinct’s spatial proximity to neighborhoods in which the non-white population increased most rapidly. In precincts which had experienced minimal change in their own racial demographics over this period of time, a standard deviation increase in spatial proximity to the nearest diversifying area led to higher support for the voters’ veto (mean +1.8 percentage points, $d = .13$). Again, I find this exclusionary response to nearby demographic change in both majority white and more racially diverse precincts.

This study makes three contributions to our understanding of the political consequences of racial demographic change. First, the exclusionary behavior found across a wide variety of communities emphasizes the need for additional study of demographic change beyond racial threat. An increase in the non-white population may come with political and socioeconomic concerns shared across a wide swath of current residents. For example, the exclusionary response observed in this study aligns with efforts by middle-class majority Black neighborhoods to separate themselves from poorer communities and “fortify their neighborhoods against this encroachment” (Pattillo-McCoy 1999, p. 6). Most recently, there is evidence that sizable shares of Latino, Asian, and even Black voters may be moving away from the Democratic Party (Fraga, Velez and West Forthcoming; Kao 2023; Sommer and Franco 2023), specifically in areas with the high levels of immigration (Cai and Fessenden 2020). Given the ability of local conditions to shape social identities and even partisanship (e.g., Cramer 2016; Ternullo 2024), these exclusionary behaviors may provide a local foundation for understanding the national shift of many non-white voters away from the Democratic Party.

Second, these findings advance our understanding of support for local institutions within federalism. While the effect of local participatory institutions — such as public comment and neighborhood meetings — on segregation is well theorized (e.g., Sahn Forthcoming^a), less is known about voters’ support for the participatory institutions themselves. Instead, researchers and policymakers have focused on either persuading voters to support more inclusionary housing policies (e.g., Marble and Nall 2021) or promoting greater representation *within* existing institutions (e.g., Einstein et al. 2023). But even were attitudes and representation improved, voters would still be able to block unwanted housing proposals. In contrast, reforming institutions to limit local voters’ direct

control over housing may expand the housing pipeline, both promoting integration and addressing the supply-side of the housing affordability crisis.⁵ Still, these findings suggest that efforts to repeal local institutions like the voters’ veto will face challenges across a spectrum of communities as the nation diversifies.

Finally, these findings underscore a fundamental quality of American local democracy: exclusion. Local governments in the United States have long been founded for the explicit purpose of excluding undesirable residents (Burns 1994). Compared to other Western democracies, the ability to shape the local population via housing policy is not only uniquely strong in the United States, but also incentivized through fiscal competition and a lack of interjurisdictional redistribution (Freemark, Steil and Thelen 2020). In California, direct democracy over affordable housing likely originated to enable voters to exclude poor, non-white residents from their communities (Cavin 2019). Debates over protecting the voters’ veto should consider these results as further evidence that voters understand and utilize this power in the pursuit of exclusion.

In November 2024, Californians statewide will again vote on whether to repeal Article 34. Unlike previous efforts, this repeal is being explicitly framed as a racial justice referendum (Vanderheiden 2022).⁶ But the past decade of demographic change in California mirrors that of Los Angeles County in the lead-up to the failed 1993 repeal effort. Not only has the state’s minority population substantially increased, but high housing prices may be fostering the same sense of competition and territoriality as observed in the Los Angeles of the early 1990s. In short, the November 2024 election is primed to again show how racial demographic change affects support for the voters’ veto. Despite the state’s liberal reputation, California’s struggle to repeal this exclusionary institution stands as a microcosm of the wider conflict between integration and local democracy in a diversifying society.

Direct Democracy as an Exclusionary Institution

In the United States, direct democracy has a long history of enabling voters to bypass legislative processes (Bowler and Donovan 2006; Gerber 2011). Within the state and local context, direct democracy frequently targets housing and has been used to perpetuate segregation. In a 1964

⁵See Been, Ellen and O’Regan (2019) for a review of the role of both market-rate and affordable housing supply in the overall affordability of housing.

⁶“Article 34 is a scar on the California Constitution — designed to keep people of color and poor people out of certain neighborhoods — and it needs to be repealed.” - Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco)

statewide election, California voters in predominantly white cities near diversifying areas were more likely to support a ballot measure allowing property sellers, landlords, and real estate agents to racially discriminate (Reny and Newman 2018). Once such *de jure* segregation was prohibited, voters began constructing economic barriers to integration (Trounstein 2018). Municipalities near center cities which experienced greater levels of mid-century Black migration were more likely to adopt single-family zoning (Sahn Forthcoming^b). By preventing the construction of more affordable multifamily housing, single-family zoning helps set a minimum price of residency. This use of policy levers to economically “defend” one’s community is collectively known as “exclusionary zoning” (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2020).

In this study, I focus on voter support for repealing one of these exclusionary tools: direct democratic control over affordable housing. While the institution appears race-neutral, the context of its implementation in 1950 underscores the tension between racial demographic change and support for voters’ veto power. Following World War II, Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949, promising “a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family” by building 810,000 units in six years. Simultaneously, the Second Great Migration was accelerating, with ultimately more than 5 million Blacks leaving the Southeast and moving to the Northeast, Midwest, and West Coast (Wilkerson 2020). Backlash to this progressive housing program was swift. Residents in the Northern California coastal city of Eureka spearheaded a statewide constitutional amendment which would allow voters to stop their local housing authority from developing low-income housing in their community (Cavin 2019; Varian 2022).

Seeking a megaphone, the Eureka movement partnered with the California Real Estate Association (CREA), a precursor to the modern California Association of Realtors and the largest real estate group in the country. The CREA paid for the campaign to pass the measure, pitching the amendment as essential to countering “minority pressure groups,” preserving white neighborhoods and therefore home values (Staff 2019). In contrast, the “pro” argument in the 1950 official voter guide did not explicitly oppose affordable housing, but instead elevated local democracy:

A “Yes” vote for this proposed constitutional amendment is a vote neither for nor against public housing. It is a vote for the future right to say “yes” or “no” when the community considers a public housing project... It is an expression of confidence in the

community’s future and in the democratic process of government. (*Voter Information Guide for 1950, General Election 1950*).

Passing with a narrow 50.8 percent majority, Article 34 immediately began throttling the state’s supply of new affordable housing. By 1968, voters had turned down nearly half of the public housing that had been proposed — around 15,000 units. Many public housing agencies shelved projects rather than put them to a vote. Others attempted to ameliorate voters’ concerns about aesthetics and concentrated poverty. In 1968, the San Jose Housing Authority put forward a referendum in support of small duplexes and apartments of no more than four units scattered throughout the city. Still, the measure failed (Cavin 2019).

Meanwhile, the democratic appeal of Article 34 followed it beyond the ballot box. The amendment eventually arrived before the U.S. Supreme Court, where it was upheld in a 5-3 vote (*James v. Valtierra*, 402 U.S. 137 (1971)).⁷ Writing for the majority, the generally liberal Justice Hugo Black emphasized the democratic nature of the law, finding no evidence that the law was racially motivated:

This procedure ensures that all the people of a community will have a voice in a decision which may lead to large expenditures of local revenues. It gives them a voice in decisions that will affect the future development of their own community. This procedure for democratic decisionmaking does not violate the constitutional command that no state shall deny to any person “the equal protection of the laws.”

At the justices’ private conference, Chief Justice Warren Burger allegedly scoffed at the plaintiff’s claims, framing their argument as a suggestion that “too much democracy violates the Equal Protection Clause” (Cavin 2019).

Having lost at the Supreme Court, efforts to repeal Article 34 returned to the ballot box. In 1980, the pro-Article 34 campaign focused on taxes and local democracy and again defeated the repeal effort. Facing a third repeal attempt in 1993, the pro-Article 34 campaign continued to emphasize the sanctity of local democratic voice: “Don’t give away our voting rights! Prop. 168 is a power grab by politicians. Elections are NOT ‘confusing’ and ‘wasteful.’ We should be able to

⁷Justice William O. Douglas did not participate in the case.

vote on low rent housing projects in our communities” (*Voter Information Guide for 1993, Special Election 1993*).

Public comment on the 1993 repeal effort connected Article 34 to the protection of community character and quality of life. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, State Assembly Member Gebe Ferguson framed support for voters’ veto power over housing as both unrelated to race and shared by a diverse constituency (Martinez 1993):

I don’t think anyone can blame the general public for feeling that way. You have a drive-by shooting in Mission Viejo and then you tell [residents] you want to move in low-income people?...It’s not a matter of race or income either, because low-income black communities don’t want low-income housing built in their communities either, because of past experiences with that.

While Assembly Member Ferguson may have extrapolated when describing the preferences of “low-income black communities,” affordable housing has been historically stigmatized due to stereotypes about its occupants (Tighe 2010). If voters associate direct democracy over housing with an ability to exclude poor minority residents, then the veto power granted by Article 34 would be a valuable backstop against affordable housing as a symbol of racial demographic change.

Racial Demographic Change and Exclusionary Behavior

What shapes voter support for direct democracy over affordable housing? From a principle-based perspective, voters may believe that some decisions should be voted on directly, others should not. In this case, support for direct democracy would be expected to remain stable or change in a way orthogonal to the expected policy outcome itself. But voters are often only “weakly principled,” caring more about policy outcomes than the principles themselves (e.g., Bartels and Johnston 2020; Prothro and Grigg 1960). From a policy-based perspective, voters may be more likely to protect direct democracy if they believe that doing so would lead to the policy outcomes they prefer, compared to turning control over to an administrative or legislative entity.

As a third perspective, voter support for direct democracy may be based on their perception of their self-identified ingroup’s status in comparison to relevant outgroups. A primary threat to

the majority group’s power is demographic change, wherein a new population threatens the status quo power structure (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Key Jr 1949). Threat-induced support may be less a concern about the particular policies pursued by the outgroup, but rather a general anxiety over the loss of economic, cultural, and political power (e.g., Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Thompson 2023). Absent specific conditions found to support positive inter-group contact and limit racial bias (Allport 1954), a sudden increase in the local non-white population is expected to elicit an exclusionary response from the non-Hispanic white majority group.

The November 1993 vote to repeal Article 34 is an opportunity to assess the importance of racial demographic change across a racially diverse array of communities. From 1980 to 1993, Los Angeles County — the focus of this study — saw relatively little growth in its Black population. Instead, the county experienced a large increase in Latino migration and a proportionally large increase in Asian migration largely from outside of the United States. In turn, during the same period of time, Los Angeles County’s non-Hispanic white population decreased from 53 to 38 percent of the population. From an individual’s perspective, the median Los Angeles County voter experienced an 14 percentage point (54 percent) increase in the non-white population share of their precinct.

For demographic change to trigger racial threat, voters must perceive their neighborhoods as changing (Hopkins 2009; Wong 2007). A 1992 survey of Los Angeles County residents found that 56 percent of respondents felt that their neighborhood was experiencing a change in ethnic composition (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996). Furthermore, this influx of Latino and Asian residents was concentrated in areas which were previously majority Black going back to the 1950s (Bergesen and Herman 1998). As a result, Black residents were the racial group most likely (78 percent) to agree that their neighborhood was racially changing (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996). Thus, as Los Angeles County was becoming increasingly racially diverse, some neighborhoods were experiencing a change from a majority Black to a plurality multiracial population.

This local racial demographic change may lead to exclusionary behaviors through two main pathways. First, while members of many racial groups tend to show a degree of in-group preference (Charles 2006; Farley et al. 1994; Krysan et al. 2009), there may also be a preference for having a sizable share of white neighbors due to concerns for their neighborhood’s political status and socioeconomic trajectory. White constituents often receive better representation, responsiveness, and public goods provision from elected officials (e.g., Hankinson and Magazinnik 2023; Schaffner,

Rhodes and La Raja 2020). Conversely, residents' opposition to demographic change may also come from who moves in as white residents leave. Middle-class minority communities may struggle to preserve socioeconomic status, especially in segregated contexts where they are spatially proximate to poorer, majority-minority neighborhoods. Pattillo-McCoy (1999, p. 6) writes:

Middle-income black families fill the residential gap between the neighborhoods that house middle-class whites and the neighborhoods where poor African Americans live. Unlike most whites, middle-class black families must contend with the crime, dilapidated housing, and social disorder in the deteriorating poor neighborhoods that continue to grow in their direction. Residents attempt to fortify their neighborhoods against this encroachment. . .

Thus, an influx of non-white residents may signal a risk of declining political influence, city services, or even property values. Second, a perceived competition for resources and status — defined by changing neighborhood landscapes — may magnify intergroup conflict (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Gay 2006).

As evidence of these preferences in the context of this study, Charles (2006)'s contemporaneous research uses an experimental design wherein respondents were asked their willingness to move into stylized neighborhoods of varying racial composition. Known as the Los Angeles Study of Urban Inequality (LASUI), the survey was fielded from 1992 to 1993, making its conclusions especially relevant for understanding the November 1993 election in Los Angeles County. Documenting these preferences, Charles (2006, p. 183) writes: "Across racial groups, patterns of neighborhood racial composition preferences reveal a clear and consistent racial rank-ordering of out-groups as potential neighbors. Whites are always the most preferred out-group neighbors. . ."

Charles also finds that this preference hierarchy extends to neighborhood change: "Across racial groups, blacks are indisputably the least-desired neighbors. It is equally clear that, among non-whites, integration with whites is more favorable than integration with other non-whites" (Bobo et al. 2000, p. 193). This intra-racial cleavage is also found among longtime Latino residents in the face of newer immigration waves. Located in Los Angeles County, the City of Pomona's Latino population share increased by 81% from 1980 to 1993. By 1993, tension within Pomona's Latino community was notable (Romney 1993):

With the incoming groups of immigrants, there's a new way of life. And I think these people [long-time Latino residents] feel a little threatened... They've been here for years and years and years and got used to a certain way of life. Now they see that they're being outnumbered.

Second, voters may be as responsive to changing local demographics due to perceived competition among racial groups for space and resources. Drawing from her research in Los Angeles County, Charles (2006, p. 164) notes: "Concerns about relative group position are also somewhat apparent among blacks, whose preferences for both Asian and same-race neighbors are negatively influenced by the belief that this group poses a competitive threat to economic opportunities and political power." Contemporary reporting reflects this conflict. A *Los Angeles Times* article written months before the 1992 Rodney King riots captures the unease among Black, Latino, and Asian residents. Clifford (1991) writes:

Cultural collisions, often violent, occasionally fatal, are occurring every day. Hostilities between black residents and Korean shop-keepers, Latinos and blacks vying for jobs at Martin Luther King Jr./Drew Medical Center, interracial fighting at Lawndale high school, and repeated charges of police brutality against minorities — all of this is disturbing the city's racial peace in a way that has some political analysts recalling Watts.

Additional reporting at the time highlights the competition felt by long-time Black residents towards the new arrivals. Noble (1995) notes:

Marilyn Thompson, 45, a [Black woman and] telephone company manager who lived in Los Angeles for nearly 20 years before moving to Atlanta last year, also said the doors of opportunity seemed open for Hispanic and Asian residents but shut for blacks in California. "It seems like you can come into California and have nothing and end up with everything," she said of other immigrants to the state. But, she said, blacks "can't seem to get ahead."

How does this perceived racial hierarchy and competition over housing and jobs shape inter-group relations? Eighteen months prior to the 1993 election, four white Los Angeles police officers

were acquitted in the beating of Rodney King, a Black man. Rioting began within hours, concentrated in South Central Los Angeles and Koreatown. Researchers argue that the riots highlighted competition-fueled resentment between racial groups, with Black and Latino rioters targeting the Korean community. Black residents viewed Latinos as having taken over their community and competing in the labor market, whereas Latinos believed they were underrepresented politically (Johnson Jr and Farrell Jr 1992). Bergesen and Herman (1998) attribute the intensity of the riots to this desegregation and neighborhood succession, with areas of racial demographic change showing the highest rates of violence.⁸

In short, much of the existing literature associates racial demographic change with feelings of group-based threat among white voters. However, local demographic change can also provoke exclusionary behaviors across an array of voters. These concerns may be grounded in what a shrinking white population means for a community's political representation, socioeconomic status, and access to public goods. Or, the response can be directed towards the arriving group, either driving competition for resources or animating both inter- and intra-racial group tensions. Through both of these pathways, increases in the local non-white population may drive support for the voters' veto over affordable housing among voters broadly, not just white residents.

Effect of Demographic Change

To test the effect of racial demographic change on support for the voters' veto, I use two analytical strategies. First, I assess the effect of within-precinct demographic change from 1980 to 1993 on that precinct's support for repealing Article 34 in the 1993 November election. Second, I subset to precincts which were demographically stable from 1980 to 1993, then measure the effect of spatial proximity to the nearest rapidly diversifying Census tract on support for repealing the voters' veto. Results from both approaches are substantively the same. I begin with the within-precinct design.

⁸Viewing the riots as function of animosity may best explain the beliefs of non-white residents in South Central Los Angeles. In contrast, proximity to the riots increased white voters' support for liberal policies (Enos, Kaufman and Sands 2019).

Data

I combine precinct-level election returns with tract-level Census data to generate 3,718 precinct-level observations in Los Angeles County. Compared to citywide returns, precinct-level measurement provides substantially more statistical power and is more likely to accurately reflect the variation in residents' local experiences. The analysis is limited to Los Angeles County as that is the only county where I have been able to find the contemporaneous voter file required for the analysis. Still, Los Angeles County provides a uniquely dense multiracial context which allows me to observe the effects of demographic change on a diverse array of communities. Also, as of 1993, Los Angeles County contained 29% of California's population, making this a substantively meaningful subset of the state's voters.

Combining precinct returns with Census data presented a challenge. Los Angeles County does not have a shapefile of 1993 precinct boundaries. Thus, I use a geocoded Los Angeles County voter file from 1992 which includes each voter's address and precinct. I overlay the voters on shapefiles of the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census tracts (Manson et al. 2022), generating data for the total number of voters per tract and per tract-precinct sub-unit. These quantities allow me to estimate the share of each tract's population that can be attributed to each precinct. I use this ratio to allocate counts of other Census data, e.g., the number of non-white residents, the number of manufacturing employees, etc. After allocating these tract-level counts to each tract-precinct sub-unit, I sum the counts within each precinct. Using these precinct-level counts, I then calculate the percentages and values needed for the analysis.⁹

Dependent Variable My dependent variable is based on the precinct-level vote share for the repeal of Article 34 as voted on in November 1993. Within the precinct data, the weighted mean vote share was 44.6% in favor of repeal.¹⁰ For conceptual clarity, I define *support for the voters' veto over housing* as the complement of support for repealing Article 34. Rather than contextualize effects as one's opposition to repealing the amendment, I can say that 55.4% of voters supported direct democratic control over new affordable housing proposed for their community.

⁹I repeated the process with two alternative approaches: using the Longitudinal Tract Data Base's standardized tract boundaries (Logan, Xu and Stults 2014), as well as using the tract of the precinct's centroid. While both alternative approaches generate nearly identical results, they also introduce noise via greater measurement error.

¹⁰This is compared to a recorded Los Angeles County vote share of 43.4% and a statewide vote share of 40.2% in favor of repeal.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of support for this voters' veto across Los Angeles County. Blue points are the centroids of precincts that are in the top tercile of support ($\geq 62\%$ in favor of the voters' veto), orange points are precincts in the bottom tercile of support ($\leq 47\%$ in favor), and the middle tercile is omitted for visualization purposes only. Support for the voters' veto is concentrated outside of the central, more urbanized areas of Los Angeles County. The spatial trend largely aligns with partisanship as found using voter file party registration. Precincts with higher rates of Republican registered voters were also more likely to support the voters' veto (Figure B-1).

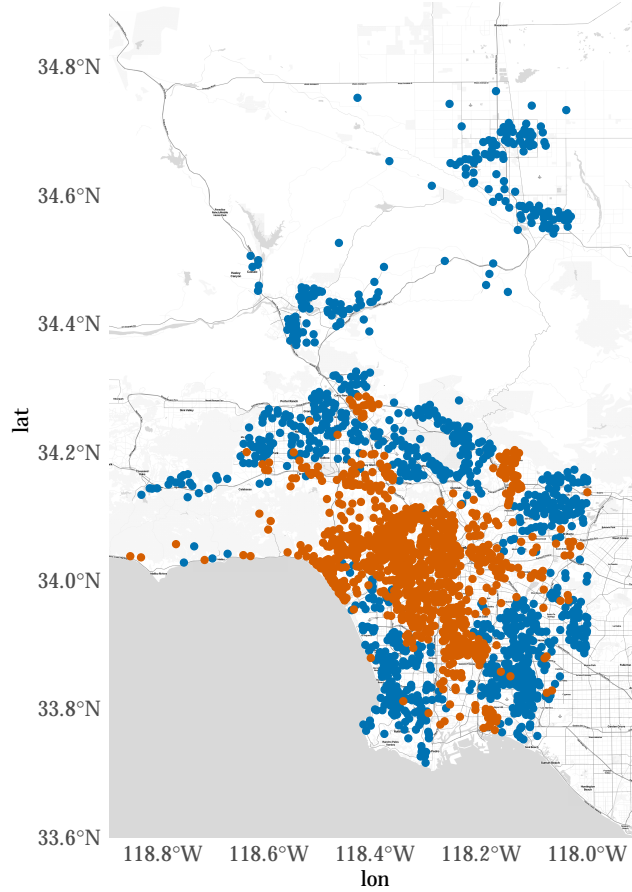


Figure 1: Distribution of support for the voters' veto using precinct centroids. Blue as the top tercile of support ($\geq 62\%$ in favor); orange as the bottom tercile of support ($\leq 47\%$ in favor). The middle tercile is omitted for visualization purposes only.

Independent Variables The treatment is local racial demographic change in the lead-up to the 1993 election. Given the election occurred prior to the creation of the American Community Survey in 2005, the data are limited to the decennial Census. To estimate values for 1993, I linearly

interpolate data from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses.¹¹ I operationalize this change in two ways:

- Percentage point change ($Pop_t - Pop_{(t-1)}$)
- Proportion change ($\frac{Pop_t - Pop_{(t-1)}}{Pop_{(t-1)}}$)

For reference, the population-weighted median precinct experienced an 14 percentage point (54 percent) increase in non-white population from 1980 to 1993. It is theoretically unclear which definition better captures local demographic change, so results are reported for both (e.g., Hill, Hopkins and Huber 2019). However, the correlation between the two measures of demographic change is 0.65, suggesting that the treatments are capturing different aspects of a similar phenomenon.¹²

Given this treatment is estimated by aggregating tracts into precincts, there is inevitable measurement error in operationalizing demographic change from 1980 to 1993. Even more, because the treatment is derived from two precinct-level estimates (1980 and 1993), the two opportunities for measurement error may compound each other, producing outlier swings in demographic change which do not reflect reality. While these errors are not expected to introduce bias, I account for them by presenting all results using winsorized treatments — truncating extreme values at both ends to their 5th and 95th percentile, respectively. The results using non-winsorized data are substantively the same, statistically significant, and reported in Table J-10.

Empirical Strategy

I regress precinct-level vote share in support of the voters' veto on the 1980-1993 change in non-white population at the precinct level. For comparability, I operationalize both treatments as a standard deviation increase in the precinct's non-white population.

My control variables account for other changes which may confound the relationship between non-white population change and support for repealing direct democracy over affordable housing. These include each precinct's 1980 pre-treatment percent non-Hispanic white, homeownership rate, vacancy rate, log median household income, poverty rate, population density, population share with a college degree or higher, unemployment rate, and share of manufacturing as employment.

¹¹Findings are substantively the same and statistically significant when dropping the linear interpolation and only using demographic change from 1980 to 1990.

¹²Section C discusses in detail the ways in which these two measures differ in the context of Los Angeles County.

Tables I-8 and I-9 show regression results using both the 1980 pre-treatment level of each control as well as the change in each control from 1980 to 1993. While including changes in controls over time biases the effect of demographic change as a treatment, results are substantively identical and statistically significant.¹³

I also condition for time-invariant place attributes by using a Census place-level fixed effect and weight the data by precinct population. As shown in Figures C-3 and C-4, local racial demographic change across precincts is non-random. Non-white residents may be more likely to select Census places to live, rather than selecting specific precincts. To account for this correlation across observations, I cluster Huber-White standard errors at the Census place-level.

Results

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in non-white pop.	0.054*** (0.014)	0.024*** (0.006)		
Prop. Δ in non-white pop.			0.069*** (0.008)	0.012*** (0.002)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.573	0.786	0.613	0.778
Adj. R ²	0.556	0.777	0.598	0.768
Num. obs.	3718	3651	3718	3651
RMSE	3.333	2.370	3.173	2.414
N Clusters	144	142	144	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 1: Effect of change in a precinct's non-white population (1980-199) on support for voters' veto, 1993. Treatment data are winsorized.

Table 1 presents the effect of a standard deviation increase in the non-white population on support for the voters' veto over affordable housing.¹⁴ Results for a percentage point change are shown in Models 1 and 2, while results from a proportion change are in Models 3 and 4. Models 1 and 3 use only Census place-level fixed effects, whereas Models 2 and 4 add controls for pretreatment

¹³I do not include a control for precinct-level partisanship, as I do not have pretreatment levels of partisanship. Effects are substantively similar when including 1992 voter registration, but the variable is post-treatment.

¹⁴Table D-1 presents the Table 1 including the coefficients for each control variable. Figure G-8 visualizes the bivariate relationship between the two treatment variables and precinct support for the voters' veto using the raw data.

levels. A standard deviation increase in the percent non-white population (+10.4 percentage points) is associated with a 2.4 point ($d = .17$) increase in support for direct democracy over housing. A standard deviation increase in the non-white population as a proportion change (+54.2 percent) is associated with a 1.2 point ($d = .09$) increase in support for the voters' veto. These effects are nearly identical to those using non-winsorized data and are stable across an array of model specifications, such as the removal of controls and place-level fixed effects (see Tables I-8 and I-9).

While I cluster standard errors at the place-level to account for correlated treatment within places, there are likely other omitted variables that contribute to the error term and are spatially correlated. Likewise, this study's proximity-based analysis (below) is premised on the belief that precinct outcomes are affected by nearby Census tracts. Both conditions violate SUTVA (Cliff and Ord 1970). As a robustness check, I use a spatial Durbin error model (SDEM) to account for potential spillover effects from neighboring precincts which may be affecting the relationship, as well as spatial autocorrelation among standard errors (LeSage 2014). The results are statistically significant and substantively the same as the non-spatial OLS models. For ease of interpretation, I present the non-spatial OLS model results here and the SDEM results in Section F.

As further evidence of the importance of racial demographic change, I replicate Table 1 with variables capturing alternative explanations. Tables H-5 and H-6 show that support for the voters' veto is neither related to precinct-level changes in median household income nor increases in local population density. Instead, it is solely the increase in the non-white population as a share of the precinct's total population which elicits an exclusionary response among both white and non-white residents.

Much of California's increasing diversity in the 1980s came from immigration, with undocumented immigrants alone representing 22 to 31 percent of all migrants to CA during this period (Johnson 1996). However, Table H-7 does not detect a treatment effect from an increase in the percent foreign born within a precinct. This null effect is likely due to two sources of measurement error. First, during the period of this study, there was considerable debate among demographers over how to accurately measure the percent foreign born, let alone the share of immigrants who were non-white (Van Hook et al. 2006; Woodrow-Lafield 1995). Second, even were percent foreign born a more accurate metric of the diversification triggering exclusionary behaviors in this study, the percent foreign born was measured via the long-form Census which only sampled 1 in 6 house-

holds. While this sampling approach may be sufficient for states and places, it faces limits when aggregated to the precincts with a median size of roughly 1,200 residents. In contrast, these limitations do not exist for the percent non-white population data, which comes from the short-form, full-population Census.

Mechanisms by Racial Groups

As discussed, much of the literature on racial demographic change has emphasized the sensitivity of white voters to an increase in the local non-white population. Accordingly, I had expected that the largest effect of demographic change would be found in the precincts with the largest non-Hispanic white population shares as of 1980. To assess this differential response, I divide precincts into terciles by their pre-treatment white population. I then replicate the models in Table 1, but interact treatment with an indicator for whether a precinct falls in the top tercile of percent white ($\geq 83\%$). I drop the middle tercile of pre-treatment white population. The bottom tercile include precincts which were less than 55% white as of 1980. I also omit the control for pre-treatment percent white, due to collinearity with the percent white tercile indicator.

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in non-white pop.	0.049*** (0.007)	0.047*** (0.007)		
Prop. Δ in non-white pop.			0.134*** (0.024)	0.120*** (0.020)
Pct. point Δ x precinct white, 1980	-0.021* (0.008)	-0.030*** (0.004)		
Prop. Δ x precinct white, 1980			-0.112*** (0.017)	-0.106*** (0.019)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.668	0.782	0.663	0.777
Adj. R ²	0.649	0.769	0.644	0.763
Num. obs.	2454	2418	2454	2418
RMSE	3.103	2.521	3.126	2.554
N Clusters	129	127	129	127

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 2: Effect of change in non-white population (1980-1993) on support for voters' veto, interacted with percent white at precinct level, 1980. Treatment data are winsorized.

Across both definitions of demographic change, a precinct’s white population in 1980 is a significant moderator of the treatment, but not in the way hypothesized (Table 2).¹⁵ The effect of demographic change is substantively and statistically *larger* in more racially diverse precincts (the lower order treatment term). In contrast, “white precincts” show much more muted effects. These results support the importance of alternative pathways for thinking about racial demographic change beyond racial threat.

To better understand this relationship among specific racial groups, I disaggregated precincts by their pretreatment racial composition. Unfortunately for statistical power, there were only 401 majority Latino precincts and 372 majority Black precincts in Los Angeles County circa 1980. Still, with this caveat of limited sample size, majority Latino and majority Black precincts express the same increase in support for the voters’ veto in response to an increase in their local non-white population as compared to non-white precincts broadly (Figure E-6).¹⁶

Additionally, voters may respond differently to influxes of specific racial groups over this period. But disaggregation of the treatment into individual racial groups has empirical limitations. A precinct that increases in the Latino population may also be increasing the Asian population at the same time. Isolating only a share of this overall treatment will generate a biased estimate. Still, as discussed in Section E, there is no clear evidence that voters’ exclusionary behavior is the response to any one group’s influx, rather than a general decrease in the local percent white population.

Effect of Proximity to Demographic Change

One threat to the above analysis is the possibility that voters within a diversifying precinct were not changing their behavior in response to the demographic change, but rather the composition of the precinct’s electorate was changing. In other words, the higher support for the voters’ veto may be coming from new voters arriving in these precincts.

This alternative explanation is unlikely for two reasons. First, precincts with more non-white voters on average show lower support for the voters’ veto (Figure B-2). Thus, it is improbable that the newly arrived non-white residents would be more likely to vote in favor of the voters’ veto

¹⁵Table D-2 presents the Table 2 including the coefficients for each control variable.

¹⁶Given there were only 8 majority Asian precincts in 1980, an independent analysis of majority Asian precincts is not feasible.

compared to long-time residents. Second, for residential churn to increase support for the voters' veto, those leaving the precinct would have to be *less* likely to support direct democracy over housing than those staying behind. This is also improbable. Exit in response to local demographic change is more likely among the least racially tolerant (Clark 1991) — those who are the most supportive of the voters' veto. If anything, I would expect to see less support for the voters' veto in diversifying areas if the least racially tolerant were being replaced with new arrivals.

Another way to account for the possibility that these effects are driven solely by residential turnover is to use an identification strategy which does not rely on racial change *within* each precinct as the treatment. Instead, I measure exposure to demographic change via the proximity of each precinct to a rapidly diversifying Census tract (e.g., Reny and Newman 2018). Across a variety of specifications, I find that racially stable precincts closer to diversifying neighborhoods were more supportive of the voters' veto over affordable housing. This findings suggests that residential churn is unlikely to be responsible for the results observed in the previous section.

Data

Using the same precinct data as described above, I calculate each precinct's proximity to a "diversifying tract," a Census tract which experienced an extreme increase in its non-white population share. I define the population of Census tracts as those within 20 kilometers (12 miles) of any precinct within my dataset of Los Angeles County.

Dependent Variable The dependent variable remains precinct-level vote share in support of the voters' veto over affordable housing in 1993.

Independent Variable The treatment is the proximity of each precinct to a Census tract which experienced an extreme increase in non-white population. For my main specification, I define diversifying tracts as those exceeding the 90th percentile of the increase in the non-white population from 1980 to 1993. For the percentage point treatment, this is a >27 percentage point increase in non-white population. For the proportion change, this a >127% increase in the non-white population. Results are substantively the same using cutpoints at the 85th and 95th percentiles (See Tables K-11 to K-14). I then measure proximity as the distance between the centroid of each

precinct and its nearest diversifying tract.

One challenge of using Census tracts to identify diversifying areas is that they do not perfectly match known neighborhood boundaries, meaning voters’ perceptions of change may not match the administrative boundaries of Census tracts (Wong 2007). On the other hand, Census demographers are careful to construct tract boundaries based on known landmarks, such as rivers, rail lines, and major streets. These boundaries tend to be very stable over time and are the most widely used unit of observation in quantitative studies of neighborhood racial change (Lee et al. 2008).

Still, some tracts have few residents, meaning a large change in the non-white population may be neither substantively meaningful nor perceptible to those nearby. After defining the percentile cutpoints for demographic change, I subset to tracts outside of the bottom tercile in population ($>3,136$ residents). As a result, the set of diversifying tracts are those which experienced large increases in the non-white population from 1980-1993 and were also large enough that their demographic change should register in voters’ minds. Figure 2 shows the distribution of these tracts using both the percentage point change and proportion change definitions.

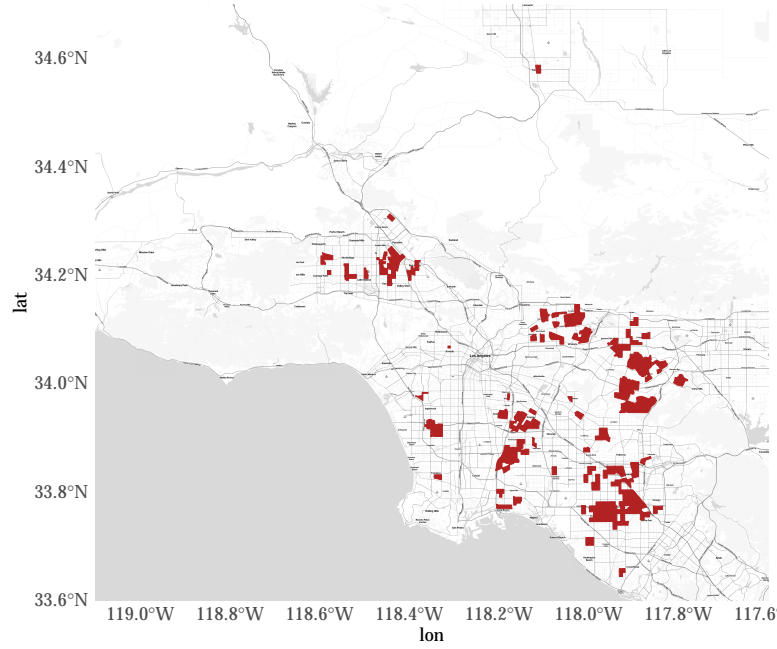
Empirical Strategy

In this design, the treatment is a precinct’s proximity to a diversifying Census tract — one which diversified significantly from 1980 to 1993. As in the previous models, I control for pre-treatment (1980) precinct-level covariates that would confound the relationship, including percent non-Hispanic white, homeownership rate, median household income, vacancy rate, poverty rate, population density, college education, unemployment, and share of manufacturing as employment. Because treatment is based on proximity to a diversifying tract, I cluster Huber-White standard errors at the level of the nearest diversifying tract.

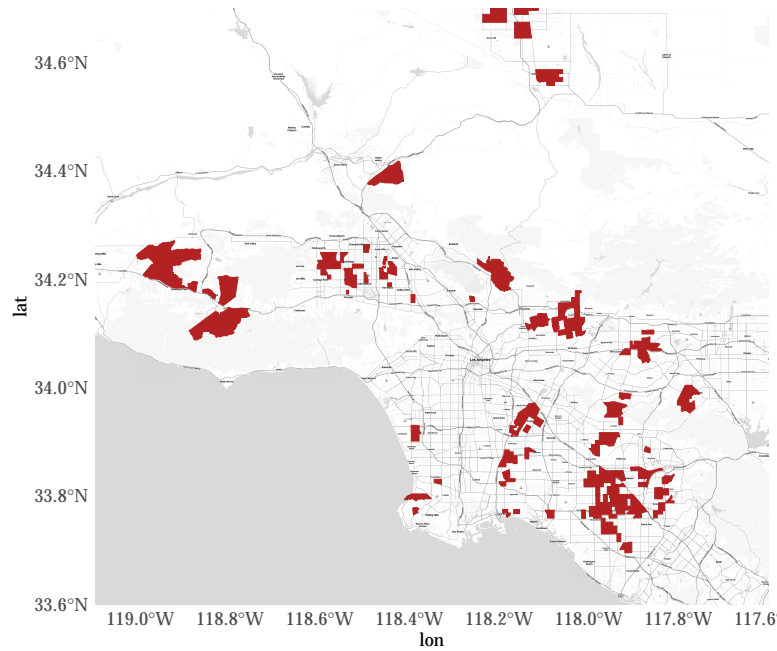
Results

I transform “distance away from” into the more analytically useful “proximity to” by multiplying distance by -1. I then standardize proximity so that the treatment is a standard deviation increase in proximity to a diversifying Census tract, centered at the mean. I regress support for the voters’ veto in 1993 on proximity to a diversifying tract, weighting by population.

The purpose of this analysis is to test whether precincts which experienced little change in their



(a) Percentage point change



(b) Proportion change

Figure 2: Census tracts above the 90th percentile for their increase in non-white population share, 1980-1993. Distance to the nearest of these tracts is used as the treatment for the for the proximity analysis.

demographics from 1980 to 1993 were responsive to demographic changes around them. If so, that would suggest that the within-precinct effects are less likely to be driven by residential turnover. Unfortunately, Census data from this period does not measure residential churn over the previous ten years. As a proxy for residential churn, I subset to precincts which experienced little change in their own non-white population from 1980 to 1993.

	Percentage Point Δ		Proportion Δ	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Prox. to pct. point Δ in non-white	0.017* (0.007)		0.015** (0.005)	
Prox. to prop. Δ in non-white		0.019*** (0.005)		0.021*** (0.005)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.735	0.739	0.688	0.693
Adj. R ²	0.717	0.721	0.664	0.669
Num. obs.	1043	1043	1046	1046
RMSE	2.401	2.384	2.723	2.702
N Clusters	44	44	50	50

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table 3: Effect of proximity to diversifying tract on support for voter’s veto, among precincts which changed minimally over the past ten years.

Table 3 shows the effect of proximity to a diversifying tract among precincts in the bottom tercile of demographic change.¹⁷ For Models 1 and 2, these are precincts where the non-white population increased by less than 6.6 percentage points. For Models 3 and 4, the non-white population increased by less than 27 percent. I again vary whether diversifying tracts are defined based on percentage point (Models 1 and 3) or proportion changes (Models 2 and 4). All models include the 1980 covariates as well as Census place fixed effects.

Within precincts which saw little demographic change themselves, areas which were closer to diversifying Census tracts were approximately 1.8 points ($d = .13$) more supportive of the voters’ veto over housing compared to those farther away. Furthermore, these effects do not vary between predominantly white and non-white precincts, again demonstrating a broadly shared reaction to local racial demographic change (Table L-15). Unfortunately, the additional subsetting by demographic stability means that independent analyses on majority Latino, majority Black, or majority

¹⁷Table D-3 presents the Table 3 including the coefficients for each control variable.

Asian precincts is not feasible with this design.

Discussion

It is difficult to know what exactly was on the voters' minds in the 1993 November election. By then, the large-scale, "slab-block" public housing developments associated with Pruitt-Igoe and urban renewal were no longer being built. Even if the proposition passed and Article 34 were repealed, voters would still have been able to block unwanted housing via the ballot. But rather than receiving an automatic placement on the citywide ballot, housing opponents would have had to collect signatures from 10% of local registered voters — the same protocol as most other local ballot initiatives. Still, the repeal failed, suggesting the popularity of direct democracy over one's surroundings.

These findings are timely. Los Angeles County of 1993 was a bellwether for California as a whole today. In the 1990 Census, Los Angeles County was 41% non-Hispanic white, 11% non-Hispanic Black, and 10% Asian; 38% of residents identified as Latino. As of 2020, California as a state is nearly identical: 41% non-Hispanic white, 6% non-Hispanic Black, and 15% Asian; 39% of Californians identify as Latino. The housing costs and competition that Charles (2006) documented in Los Angeles have now spread across the state, with California having the highest housing costs in the nation.

Yet despite these high costs, California continues to diversify. From 2010 to 2020, California's white population decreased by 24 percent, the largest statewide decrease in the entire United States. Coincidentally, from 1980 to 1990, Los Angeles County's white population also decreased by 23 percent. In November 2024, Californians will vote again on repealing Article 34. Voters statewide are primed to respond to these demographic changes and possibly fail to repeal this voters' veto for a fourth time.

Be it via ballot box or legislature, local control of land use has been a tool of segregation. Hopes to loosen local control to address both racial segregation and the supply-side of the housing affordability crisis hang on not only weakening the voters' veto, but on scaling up control to the state level. But these findings should give us pause: increasing racial diversity appears to beget greater support for local democracy in housing. And while Californians will be voting on Article

34 again in November 2024, a countermovement — “Our Neighborhood Voices” — is collecting signatures for a competing initiative that would end effectively state preemption of local land use policy. With California continuing to experience demographic change and increasing competition over housing, not only may this fourth repeal of Article 34 fail, but voters may instead seize the opportunity to solidify local control over housing, a vital tool of integration.

Conclusion

The attempted repeal of Article 34 is a rare case of observing voters’ behavioral support for exclusionary policy, in this case the voters’ veto power over the historically racialized policy of affordable housing. Using precinct-level returns, I find that local exposure to an increasing non-white population leads to greater support for voter control over affordable housing. For these voters, direct democracy over affordable housing appears to be a means of defense; “fortifying” their communities in the face of potential political, economic, and social changes.

Furthermore, this exclusionary behavior was not only expressed by majority white precincts, but across precincts with already sizeable Black, Latino, and multiracial populations. That this impulse was shared across an array of racial contexts suggests that understanding the effects of growing diversity in Western democracies requires more attention to theory beyond white racial threat. While my analysis cannot isolate the exact mechanism behind this shared exclusionary response, contemporary research and media coverage suggest that broad swaths of voters may have associate socioeconomic or political concerns with an increase in the local non-white population.

Currently, Americans harboring such exclusionary attitudes — either on national immigration policy or local zoning practices — are more likely to find their policy preferences embraced by the Republican Party. As the United States diversifies, there is evidence that many Latino, Asian, and to a lesser extent Black voters may be moving away from the Democratic Party, especially in areas with high levels of immigration. The exclusionary behaviors found in this study align with and may provide a local foundation for this national shift of many non-white voters towards the Republican Party. More broadly, these findings and California’s struggle to repeal the voters’ veto underscore the tension between integration and local democracy in a diversifying society.

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Supplemental Information for “The Voters’ Veto: Local Racial Demographic Change and Exclusionary Behavior”

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A Article 34 Background

Article 34 of the California Constitution:

“No low rent housing project shall hereafter be developed, constructed, or acquired in any manner by any state public body until, a majority of the qualified electors of the city, town or county, as the case may be, in which it is proposed to develop, construct, or acquire the same, voting upon such issue, approve such project by voting in favor thereof at an election to be held for that purpose, or at any general or special election.”

1993 ballot measure to repeal Article 34 (Proposition 168):

“LOW RENT HOUSING PROJECTS. LEGISLATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT. Amends state constitutional definition of low rent housing projects to include only projects owned by a governmental entity as defined. Excludes projects found to have no significant negative impact on the revenues of the affected governmental entity, and whose physical appearance is found to have no significant negative impact on the surrounding community. Requires approval by voters only upon qualification of ballot petition as specified. Exempts projects approved on or before November 3, 1992, or projects with existing contracts for federal financial assistance.”

B Descriptive Relationships

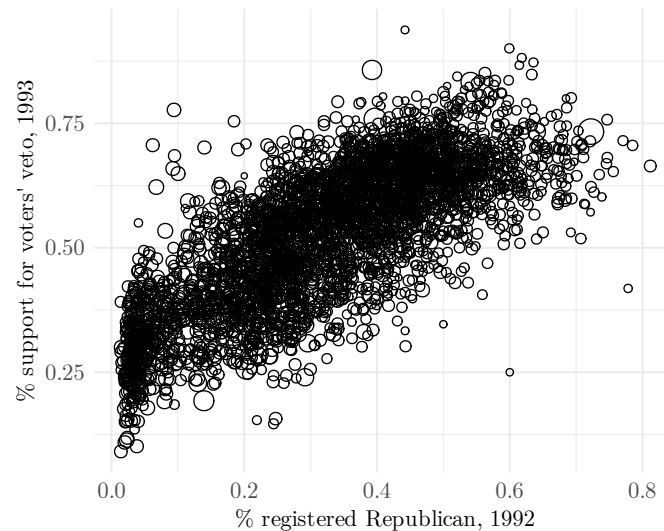


Figure B-1: Relationship between precinct-level Republican registration in 1992 and support for Article 34 repeal in 1993.

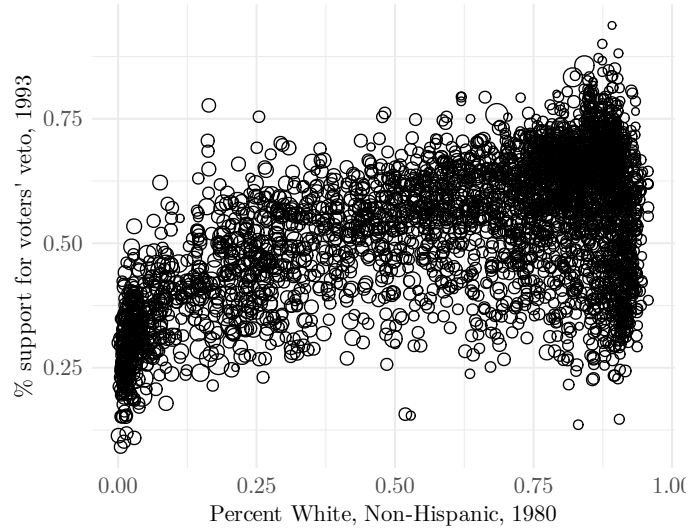


Figure B-2: Relationship between precinct-level percent white, non-Hispanic (1980) and support for Article 34 repeal (1993).

C Defining Treatment

Figures C-3 and C-4 show maps of how precincts changed from 1980 to 1993. Green precincts changed the least (bottom tercile), pink precincts changed the most (top tercile), with the middle tercile omitted. Q3 precincts (pink) of both measures of racial change generally cover comparable areas, though with some notable exceptions around the Santa Monica Mountains in the upper left quadrant of each map.

To understand how areas of intense demographic change may differ, Figure C-5 shows the relationship between the 1980 percent non-Hispanic white population (i.e., pre-treatment white population) on the x-axis and each treatment measure on the y-axis. In very white areas, large changes in percentage point population are unlikely, e.g., 98% white precincts cannot experience 20 percentage point increases in non-white population. However, a large proportion change is common in very white areas. A 98% white precinct could easily experience a 4 percentage point increase in the non-white population, equaling a 200% percent change in the non-white population. In short, most of the variation in the percentage point change in population occurs in areas between 50 and 80 percent white, whereas most of the variation in proportion change is in areas that are greater than 80 percent white circa 1980.

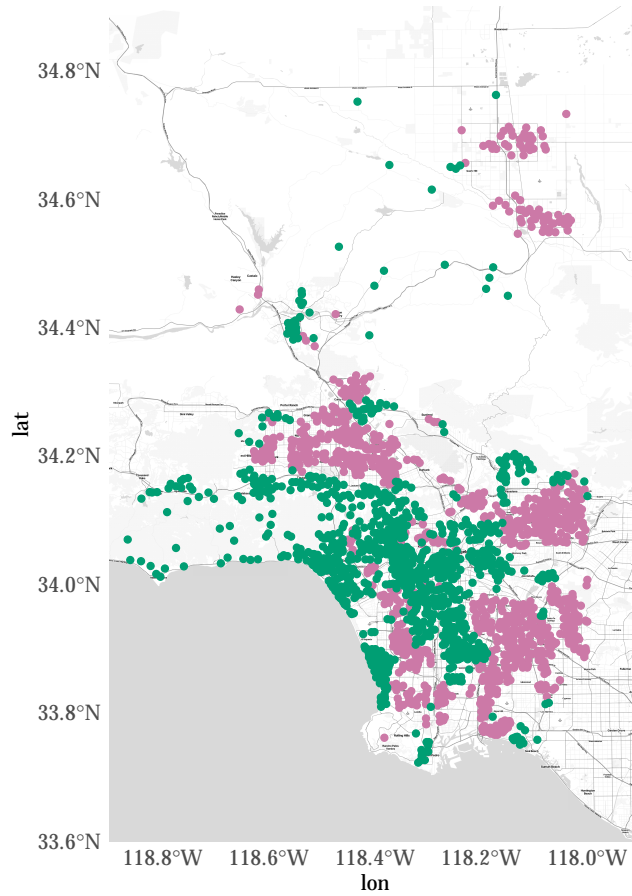


Figure C-3: Distribution of percentage point racial demographic change from 1980 to 1990 shown using precinct centroids. Green as bottom quartile of racial change; pink as top tercile of racial change. Middle tercile omitted.

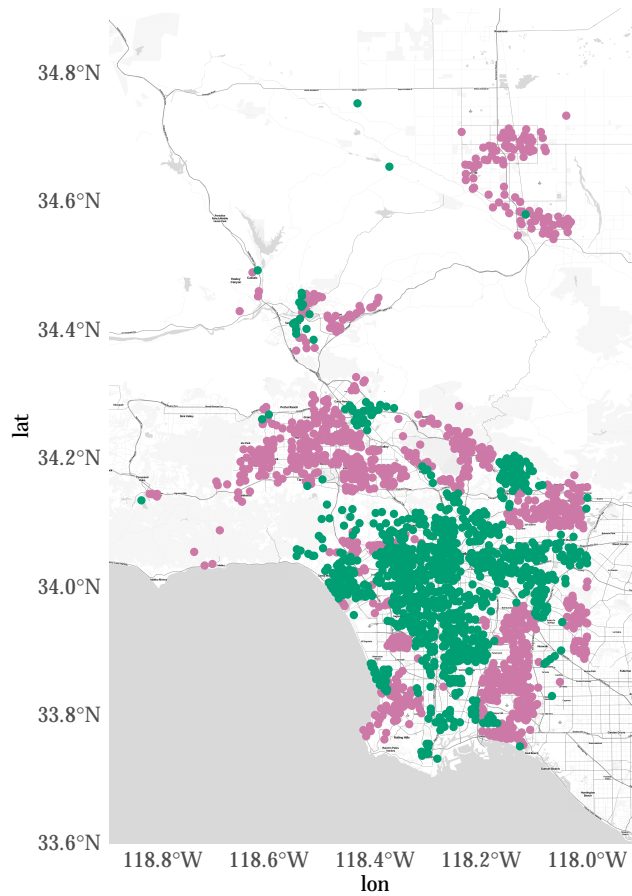


Figure C-4: Distribution of proportion racial demographic change from 1980 to 1990 shown using precinct centroids. Green as bottom quartile of racial change; pink as top tercile of racial change. Middle tercile omitted.

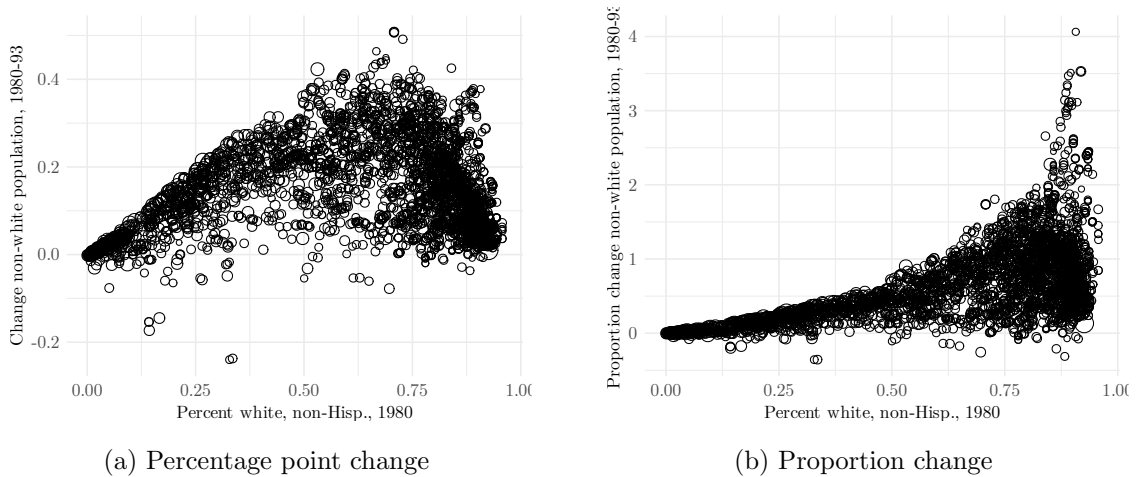


Figure C-5: Variation in the two treatment variables based on a precinct-level percent white, non-Hispanic population in 1980 (pre-treatment).

D Main Results with Controls

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in non-white pop.	0.054*** (0.014)	0.024*** (0.006)		
Prop. Δ in non-white pop.			0.069*** (0.008)	0.012*** (0.002)
Pct. white, non-Hispanic (1980)		0.183*** (0.019)		0.202*** (0.011)
Pct. college graduate (1980)		-0.519*** (0.076)		-0.619*** (0.114)
Pct. unemployed (1980)		-0.523*** (0.128)		-0.561*** (0.150)
Pct. manufacturing (1980)		0.166*** (0.031)		0.181*** (0.030)
Pct. poverty (1980)		-0.112*** (0.026)		-0.174*** (0.037)
Pct. homeowner (1980)		0.084*** (0.019)		0.066*** (0.014)
Pct. vacant (1980)		-0.033 (0.068)		0.028 (0.058)
Log median household income (1980)		0.057*** (0.010)		0.056*** (0.008)
Pop. density (1980)		-2.618*** (0.625)		-1.721 (0.916)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.573	0.786	0.613	0.778
Adj. R ²	0.556	0.777	0.598	0.768
Num. obs.	3718	3651	3718	3651
RMSE	3.333	2.370	3.173	2.414
N Clusters	144	142	144	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D-1: Effect of change in a precinct's non-white population (1980-199) on support for voters' veto, 1993. Treatment data are winsorized.

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in non-white pop.	0.049*** (0.007)	0.047*** (0.007)		
Prop. Δ in non-white pop.			0.134*** (0.024)	0.120*** (0.020)
Pct. point Δ x precinct white, 1980	-0.021* (0.008)	-0.030*** (0.004)		
Prop. Δ x precinct white, 1980			-0.112*** (0.017)	-0.106*** (0.019)
Pct. college graduate (1980)		-0.444*** (0.103)		-0.458*** (0.108)
Pct. unemployed (1980)		-0.557*** (0.123)		-0.588*** (0.134)
Pct. manufacturing (1980)		0.142*** (0.027)		0.157*** (0.025)
Pct. poverty (1980)		-0.175*** (0.047)		-0.192*** (0.038)
Pct. homeowner (1980)		0.062*** (0.018)		0.053** (0.018)
Pct. vacant (1980)		-0.140 (0.119)		-0.108 (0.103)
Log median household income (1980)		0.063*** (0.017)		0.069*** (0.016)
Pop. density (1980)		-3.673*** (0.666)		-2.517*** (0.594)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.668	0.782	0.663	0.777
Adj. R ²	0.649	0.769	0.644	0.763
Num. obs.	2454	2418	2454	2418
RMSE	3.103	2.521	3.126	2.554
N Clusters	129	127	129	127

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D-2: Effect of change in non-white population (1980-1993) on support for voters' veto, interacted with percent white at precinct level, 1980. Treatment data are winsorized.

	Percentage Point Δ		Proportion Δ	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Prox. to pct point. Δ in non-white	0.017* (0.007)		0.015** (0.005)	
Prox. to prop. Δ in non-white		0.019*** (0.005)		0.021*** (0.005)
Pct. white, non-Hispanic (1980)	0.171*** (0.030)	0.145*** (0.029)	0.220*** (0.030)	0.195*** (0.032)
Pct. college graduate (1980)	-0.441*** (0.114)	-0.394*** (0.099)	-0.662*** (0.120)	-0.603*** (0.100)
Pct. unemployed (1980)	-0.714*** (0.200)	-0.823*** (0.230)	-0.682*** (0.121)	-0.779*** (0.137)
Pct. manufacturing (1980)	0.195*** (0.030)	0.172*** (0.028)	0.140*** (0.037)	0.111** (0.036)
Pct. poverty (1980)	-0.188 (0.111)	-0.187 (0.111)	-0.204* (0.077)	-0.208* (0.087)
Pct. homeowner (1980)	0.051 (0.035)	0.048 (0.033)	0.006 (0.033)	0.001 (0.034)
Pct. vacant (1980)	-0.122 (0.172)	-0.135 (0.184)	0.054 (0.123)	0.051 (0.137)
Log median household income (1980)	0.026 (0.021)	0.012 (0.020)	0.067** (0.024)	0.050 (0.025)
Pop. density (1980)	-4.574 (2.353)	-3.141 (2.236)	-3.145* (1.283)	-1.289 (1.391)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.735	0.739	0.688	0.693
Adj. R ²	0.717	0.721	0.664	0.669
Num. obs.	1043	1043	1046	1046
RMSE	2.401	2.384	2.723	2.702
N Clusters	44	44	50	50

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D-3: Effect of proximity to diversifying tract on support for voter's veto, among precincts which changed minimally from 1980 to 1993.

E Main Results by Racial Groups

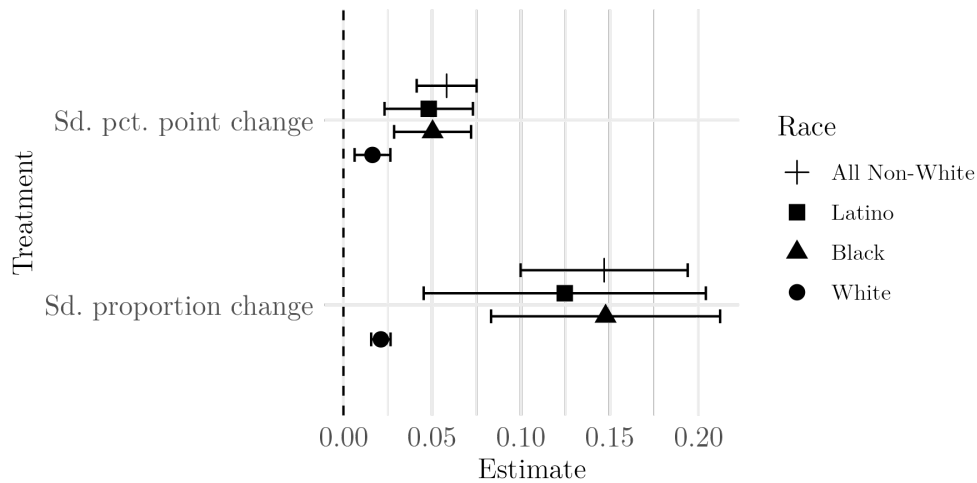


Figure E-6: Variation in the treatment effect of local racial demographic change in precincts with majority non-white, majority Black, majority Latino, and majority white residents pretreatment (1980). Point estimates shown with 95%-confidence intervals.

To assess whether this effect generalizes to majority Black and majority Latino communities, I adapt the interaction model to compare precincts with a majority of each group to precincts with a minority of the same racial group. For context, as of 1980, there were 401 majority Latino precincts and 372 majority Black precincts. However, because there were only 8 majority Asian precincts in 1980, I do not estimate an effect among majority Asian precincts.

As shown in Figure E-6, majority Black and Latino precincts show the same increase in support for the voters' veto as do majority non-white precincts as whole. In contrast, the effect in majority white precincts, while positive is generally substantively and often statistically smaller than that of other communities.

Additionally, I estimate the effect of an increase in any racial group. This approach faces empirical challenges though. An increase in one racial group may happen in conjunction with that of another group. Thus, isolating the effect of one racial group is likely to misrepresent the overall treatment of increasing racial diversity within these precincts.

As shown in Figure E-7, whether by percentage point change or proportion change, an increase in the population of any of the major non-white racial groups mirror the image of an increase in the overall non-white population. The one outlier is a proportion change in the Latino population. Many of the precincts which increased proportionally in percent Latino were majority Black neighborhoods in 1980. Why these communities did not have an exclusionary response to the influx of Latino residents should be the focus of future work. Still, it is difficult to identify the extent to which is this an empirical anomaly due to isolating fractions of the overall treatment (an increase in the local percent non-white).

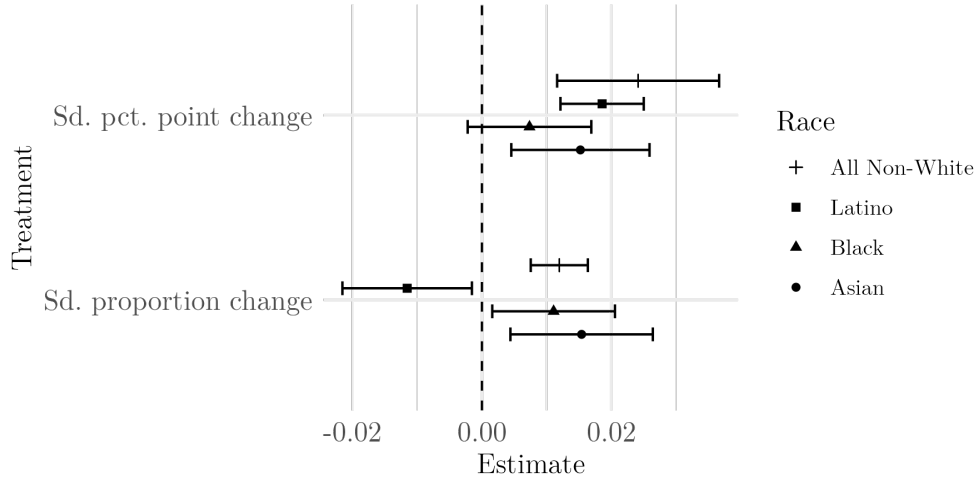


Figure E-7: Variation in treatment effect of non-white demographic change in precincts with majority non-white, majority Black, majority Latino, and majority white residents pretreatment (1980). Point estimates shown with 95%-confidence intervals.

F Spatial Durbin Error Model

Spatial autocorrelation can be a problem when using geographic data due to the data's violation of SUTVA. Neighboring observations can influence each other, violating SUTVA's independence assumption. Likewise, omitted variables may be spatially correlated. Fortunately, these relationships can be modeled.

Using a spatial model requires two steps: the definition of spatial relationships and the choice of a model to account for spatial dependence. The most common way to model spatial relationships is by using queen contiguity weights. These weights account for spatial interactions between units sharing either a border or a vertex. Contiguity weights are especially helpful for the precinct data used in this analysis because the relationships are not sensitive to absolute distance. For example, some parts of Los Angeles County are very dense, where spillovers may only extend 500 meters. In contrast, interactions between precincts in rural Los Angeles County may occur at the level of several kilometers. By defining spatial interactions at the level of shared precinct borders (i.e., a queen contiguity weights matrix), this design accounts for variation in the scale of human interaction across Los Angeles County.

To select a model, I considered how spatial dependence may be affecting the analysis. First, the treatment of demographic change is likely to be affecting neighboring precincts. In fact, the second analysis of this study is based on exposure to nearby diversifying precincts. Thus, the model would need to account for this spillover effect. Second, there are likely omitted variables which may be spatially correlated. A spatial Durbin error model (SDEM) accounts for the spatial spillover effects of covariates as well as autocorrelation in the error term (LeSage 2014).

I reproduce the results from the Table 1 using the SDEM. Due to the computational intensity of incorporating the spatial autocorrelation, adjustments were made to the model specifications. Models 1 and 3 include Census place-level fixed effects, but no covariates. Models 2 and 4 include covariates, but no fixed effects. Due to the computational intensity, the covariates in Models 2 and 4 are limited to the 1980 precinct-level percent non-white residents, homeownership rate, vacancy rate, population density, log median household income, poverty rate, and unemployment rate. The results are substantively similar across all four models. All models use the queen continuity weights

matrix and are weighted by precinct population.

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in non-white pop.	0.022*** (0.003)	0.020*** (0.003)		
Prop. Δ in non-white pop.			0.028*** (0.003)	0.008* (0.003)
Pct. white, non-Hispanic (1980)		0.103*** (0.015)		0.111*** (0.016)
Pct. unemployed (1980)		-0.573*** (0.078)		-0.597*** (0.080)
Pct. poverty (1980)		0.021 (0.039)		-0.026 (0.039)
Pct. homeowner (1980)		0.095*** (0.012)		0.083*** (0.012)
Pct. vacant (1980)		0.072 (0.068)		0.084 (0.069)
Log med. h.h. income (1980)		0.016 (0.009)		0.008 (0.009)
Pop. density (1980)		-3.234*** (0.927)		-3.133*** (0.941)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	No	Yes	No
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Num. obs.	3112	3112	3112	3112
Parameters	235	19	235	19
Log Likelihood	3592.387	3655.361	3637.647	3606.120
AIC (Linear model)	-5404.983	-6232.808	-5852.253	-5880.780
AIC (Spatial model)	-6714.774	-7272.722	-6805.294	-7174.241
LR test: statistic	1311.790	1041.914	955.041	1295.461
LR test: p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table F-4: Effect of change in non-white population (1980-199) on support for voters' veto, spatial Durbin error model. Treatment data are winsorized.

Having accounted for spatial spillovers and spatially correlated error terms, a standard deviation increase in the local non-white population causes a 2.2 to 2.3 percentage point increase in support for direct democracy over housing. When defined as a proportion increase, the effect is a 0.8 to 2.8 point increase in support for the voters' veto over affordable housing. These effects substantively match the results from the non-spatial OLS model in Table 1.

G Visualization of Bivariate Relationships

Figure G-8 shows the bivariate relationship between my two treatment variables and precinct support for the voters' veto (Article 34 repeal) using binned box and whiskers plots. Precincts that experienced greater increases in non-white population from 1980 to 1993 showed greater support for the voters' veto over affordable housing in the 1993 November election.

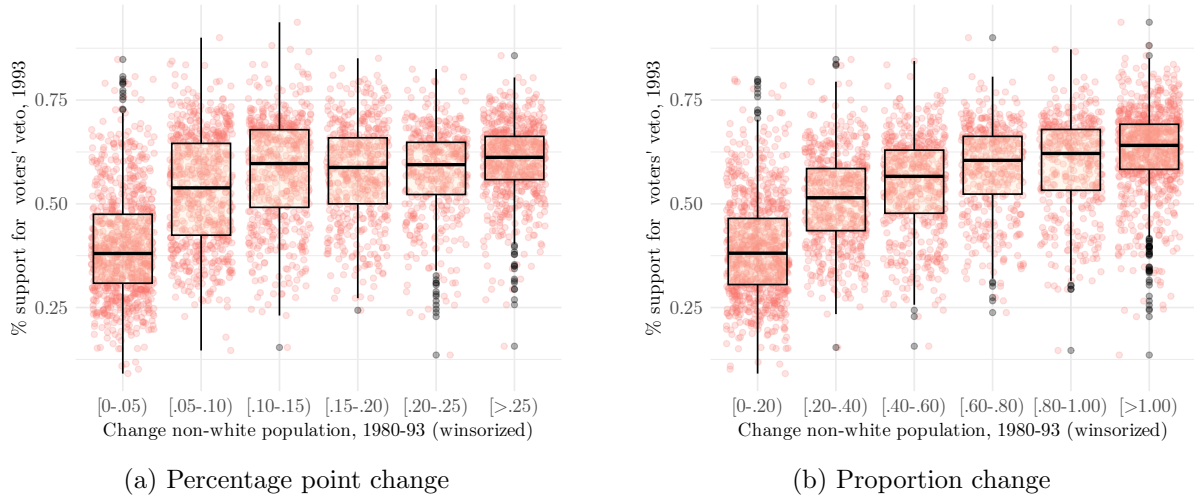


Figure G-8: Relationship between precinct-level change in non-white population (winsorized) and support for Article 34 repeal.

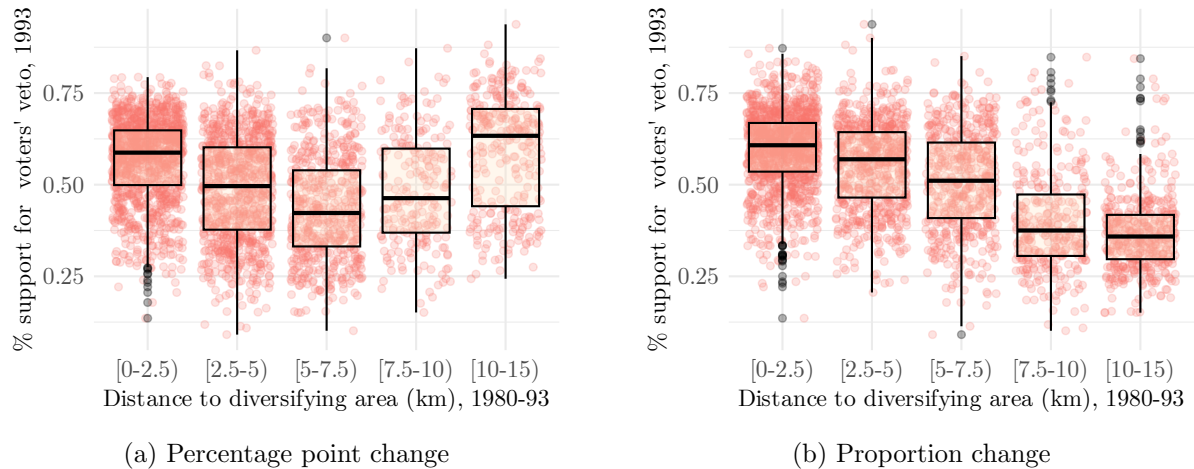


Figure G-9: Relationship between distance from a diversifying Census tract and support for Article 34 repeal in 1993. 10 to 15 kilometers binned together due to data sparseness.

Figure G-9 shows the bivariate relationship between a precinct's distance from a stimulus tract and support for the voters' veto using binned box and whiskers plots. Precincts farther from these diversifying tracts — defined using either percentage point change or proportion change — show less support for direct democracy over housing.

H Alternative Explanations

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in med. hh. income, 1980-93	0.054*** (0.003)	0.007 (0.005)		
Prop. Δ in med. hh. income, 1980-93			-0.008 (0.004)	0.001 (0.003)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.569	0.777	0.496	0.777
Adj. R ²	0.551	0.767	0.475	0.767
Num. obs.	3664	3649	3664	3649
RMSE	3.357	2.420	3.631	2.422
N Clusters	142	142	142	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table H-5: Effect of change in a precinct's median household income on support for voters' veto, 1993. Treatment data are winsorized. Controls included in all models, but excluded from table due to space constraints.

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in pop. density, 1980-93	-0.029*** (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)		
Prop. Δ in pop. density, 1980-93			-0.006 (0.007)	0.005 (0.004)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.535	0.777	0.497	0.777
Adj. R ²	0.516	0.767	0.477	0.767
Num. obs.	3718	3651	3718	3651
RMSE	3.481	2.421	3.619	2.420
N Clusters	144	142	144	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table H-6: Effect of change in a precinct's population density on support for voters' veto, 1993. Treatment data are winsorized. Controls included in all models, but excluded from table due to space constraints.

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in foreign born, 1980-93	-0.005 (0.006)	0.002 (0.002)		
Prop. Δ in foreign born, 1980-93			-0.000 (0.003)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.497	0.777	0.495	0.777
Adj. R ²	0.477	0.767	0.475	0.768
Num. obs.	3718	3651	3685	3651
RMSE	3.619	2.421	3.630	2.418
N Clusters	144	142	144	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table H-7: Effect of change in a precinct's percent foreign born on support for voters' veto, 1993. Treatment data are winsorized. Controls included in all models, but excluded from table due to space constraints.

I Internal Change Across Multiple Models

	Support for voters' veto, 1993		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Pct. point Δ in non-white pop.	0.070*** (0.009)	0.021*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.005)
Pct. white, non-Hispanic (1980)		0.250*** (0.031)	0.256*** (0.031)
Pct. college graduate (1980)		-0.633*** (0.069)	-0.684*** (0.080)
Pct. unemployed (1980)		-0.761*** (0.084)	-1.087*** (0.151)
Pct. manufacturing (1980)		0.173*** (0.034)	0.193* (0.077)
Pct. poverty (1980)		-0.055 (0.056)	-0.004 (0.071)
Pct. homeowner (1980)		0.107*** (0.018)	0.077** (0.025)
Pct. vacant (1980)		0.285* (0.129)	0.241 (0.168)
Log median household income (1980)		0.047** (0.014)	0.043** (0.016)
Pop. density (1980)		-3.779* (1.606)	-3.416 (1.882)
Δ pct. college graduate (1980)			-0.369*** (0.075)
Δ pct. unemployed (1980)			-0.430** (0.146)
Δ pct. manufacturing (1980)			0.137 (0.148)
Δ pct. homeowner (1980)			0.038 (0.032)
Δ pct. vacant (1980)			-0.012 (0.133)
Δ log median household income (1980)			0.029** (0.010)
Δ pop. density (1980)			-1.822 (2.005)
Place Fixed Effects	No	No	No
Num. obs.	3718	3651	3647
N Clusters	144	142	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table I-8: Effect of change in percent non-white population (1980-1993) on support for voters' veto, removing fixed effects and varying controls. Treatment data are winsorized.

	Support for voters' veto, 1993		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Prop. Δ in non-white pop.	0.089*** (0.004)	0.019*** (0.004)	0.013** (0.005)
Pct. white, non-Hispanic (1980)		0.227*** (0.023)	0.250*** (0.022)
Pct. college graduate (1980)		-0.701*** (0.081)	-0.740*** (0.092)
Pct. unemployed (1980)		-0.841*** (0.085)	-1.147*** (0.158)
Pct. manufacturing (1980)		0.193*** (0.034)	0.210** (0.073)
Pct. poverty (1980)		-0.124* (0.059)	-0.060 (0.076)
Pct. homeowner (1980)		0.093*** (0.017)	0.058* (0.024)
Pct. vacant (1980)		0.331* (0.130)	0.217 (0.171)
Log median household income (1980)		0.048*** (0.014)	0.045** (0.016)
Pop. density (1980)		-3.098 (1.789)	-3.796* (1.728)
Δ pct. college graduate (1980)			-0.439*** (0.083)
Δ pct. unemployed (1980)			-0.427** (0.156)
Δ pct. manufacturing (1980)			0.157 (0.138)
Δ pct. homeowner (1980)			0.025 (0.032)
Δ pct. vacant (1980)			-0.071 (0.129)
Δ log median household income (1980)			0.030** (0.011)
Δ pop. density (1980)			0.449 (1.883)
Place Fixed Effects	No	No	No
Num. obs.	3718	3651	3647
N Clusters	144	142	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table I-9: Effect of change in percent non-white population (1980-1993) on support for voters' veto, removing fixed effects and varying controls. Treatment data are winsorized.

J Internal Change, Non-Winsorized Data

	Support for voters' veto, 1993			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Pct. point Δ in non-white pop.	0.051*** (0.013)	0.021*** (0.006)		
Prop. Δ in non-white pop.			0.070*** (0.011)	0.010*** (0.002)
Pct. white, non-Hispanic (1980)		0.189*** (0.018)		0.212*** (0.011)
Pct. college graduate (1980)		-0.535*** (0.081)		-0.632*** (0.117)
Pct. unemployed (1980)		-0.540*** (0.135)		-0.561*** (0.152)
Pct. manufacturing (1980)		0.167*** (0.030)		0.181*** (0.030)
Pct. poverty (1980)		-0.116*** (0.027)		-0.176*** (0.037)
Pct. homeowner (1980)		0.082*** (0.018)		0.065*** (0.014)
Pct. vacant (1980)		-0.029 (0.066)		0.032 (0.058)
Log median household income (1980)		0.057*** (0.010)		0.056*** (0.009)
Pop. density (1980)		-2.515*** (0.652)		-1.706 (0.919)
City FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R ²	0.568	0.784	0.601	0.777
Adj. R ²	0.550	0.775	0.584	0.768
Num. obs.	3718	3651	3718	3651
RMSE	3.355	2.379	3.225	2.417
N Clusters	144	142	144	142

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table J-10: Effect of change in percent nonwhite population (1980-199) on support for voters' veto. Treatment data are not winsorized.

K Proximity to Change, Alternative Percentile Thresholds

	Proportion Change		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Proximity to change (95th)			0.003 (0.007)
Proximity to change (90th)		0.017* (0.007)	
Proximity to change (85th)	0.018* (0.007)		
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.736	0.735	0.732
Adj. R ²	0.717	0.717	0.713
Num. obs.	1043	1043	1043
RMSE	2.400	2.401	2.415
N Clusters	53	44	30

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table K-11: Effect of proximity to diversifying tract on support for voter's veto. Controls included in all models, but excluded from table due to space constraints.

	Proportion Change		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Proximity to proportion change (95th)			0.026** (0.009)
Proximity to proportion change (90th)		0.019*** (0.005)	
Proximity to proportion change (85th)	0.003 (0.005)		
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.732	0.739	0.742
Adj. R ²	0.713	0.721	0.724
Num. obs.	1043	1043	1043
RMSE	2.415	2.384	2.370
N Clusters	53	44	30

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table K-12: Effect of proximity to diversifying tract on support for voter's veto. Controls included in all models, but excluded from table due to space constraints.

	Proportion Change		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Proximity to change (95th)			0.005 (0.004)
Proximity to change (90th)		0.015** (0.005)	
Proximity to change (85th)	0.016*** (0.004)		
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.689	0.688	0.684
Adj. R ²	0.664	0.664	0.660
Num. obs.	1046	1046	1046
RMSE	2.721	2.723	2.741
N Clusters	65	50	35

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table K-13: Effect of proximity to diversifying tract on support for voter's veto. Controls included in all models, but excluded from table due to space constraints.

	Proportion Change		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Proximity to proportion change (95th)			0.028*** (0.007)
Proximity to proportion change (90th)		0.021*** (0.005)	
Proximity to proportion change (85th)	0.000 (0.005)		
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.684	0.693	0.697
Adj. R ²	0.659	0.669	0.674
Num. obs.	1046	1046	1046
RMSE	2.743	2.702	2.684
N Clusters	65	50	35

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table K-14: Effect of proximity to diversifying tract on support for voter's veto. Controls included in all models, but excluded from table due to space constraints.

L Proximity to Change, by 1980 Racial Composition

This analysis is conducted on precincts in the top tercile percent white ($> 85\%$) and the bottom tercile percent white ($< 52\%$). These values differ slightly from the “within precinct” analysis as the data are subset to precincts which changed only minimally between 1980 and 1993. Proximity to a diversifying tract is interacted with a binary variable for whether the precinct was in the top percent white tercile in 1980. Precincts that were in the bottom tercile percent white still show a statistically significant reaction to the proximity of a diversifying tract.

	Percentage Point Δ		Proportion Δ	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Prox. to pct. point Δ in non-white	0.017* (0.009)		0.011 (0.006)	
Prox. to prop. Δ in non-white		0.026*** (0.007)		0.034*** (0.006)
Prox. to pct. point x prec. white, 1980	0.008 (0.012)		0.004 (0.014)	
Prox. prop. x prec. white, 1980		0.010 (0.010)		-0.012 (0.021)
Pct. college graduate (1980)	-0.205 (0.148)	-0.087 (0.118)	-0.122 (0.174)	-0.028 (0.120)
Pct. unemployed (1980)	-0.666*** (0.160)	-0.785*** (0.171)	-0.603*** (0.142)	-0.747*** (0.131)
Pct. manufacturing (1980)	0.207*** (0.037)	0.189*** (0.034)	0.186*** (0.052)	0.153** (0.049)
Pct. poverty (1980)	-0.242* (0.097)	-0.243** (0.087)	-0.290** (0.093)	-0.274** (0.089)
Pct. homeowner (1980)	0.030 (0.040)	0.030 (0.037)	-0.021 (0.041)	-0.023 (0.040)
Pct. vacant (1980)	-0.113 (0.171)	-0.134 (0.181)	0.078 (0.130)	0.081 (0.127)
Log median household income (1980)	0.033 (0.024)	0.008 (0.022)	0.074* (0.029)	0.040 (0.027)
Pop. density (1980)	-5.280* (2.473)	-3.300 (2.366)	-3.856* (1.466)	-1.888 (1.553)
Place Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.706	0.719	0.640	0.662
Adj. R ²	0.683	0.697	0.611	0.634
Num. obs.	927	927	897	897
RMSE	2.490	2.432	2.946	2.856
N Clusters	43	43	49	49

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table L-15: Effect of proximity to diversifying tract on support for voter’s veto, among precincts which changed minimally from 1980 to 1993.