Dealing with Diversity: Racial/Ethnic Context and Social Policy Change

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We propose and provide an explanation of voting behavior that argues it is a convergence of a *social context* (high racial/ethnic diversity) and *institutional context* (frequent use of direct democracy) that is associated with the adoption of public policies targeted at minority groups. We examine this argument in the state of California, the most racially diverse state in the nation, and one that has historically high usage of ballot initiatives. We analyze white voting for four social policy ballot initiatives that directly targeted minority groups over a twelve-year period. Using King's method of ecological inference (1997), the study demonstrates that white support for the initiatives varied systematically by racial and ethnic environments across policy issues and over time. The white votes was consistently higher in "bifurcated" environments, as might be expected given Key's (1949) research on a racial threat; but is was also notably higher in "homogeneous" contexts, even after accounting for economic conditions and partisanship. Social heterogeneity, particularly white ethnic diversity, is associated with lower support for the ballot propositions. The research expands the social diversity interpretation (Hero 1998) by taking into consideration institutional context, contributes to our understanding of minorities and direct democracy, and raises broader questions about procedural democracy and the appropriate scope of conflict for direct democracy elections in the U.S.

Direct democracy elections at the end of the twentieth century in the United States have had important implications for racial and ethnic minorities. During the 1980s and 1990s state ballot initiatives have been used to end affirmative action and bilingual education programs and to deny social services to illegal immigrants. We argue that the use of ballot initiatives directly affecting minority groups is in significant part a function of racial/ethnic context. While direct democracy has operated effectively for centuries in Switzerland, a small racially

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homogeneous country, it may lead to different policy outcomes in California or other racially diverse large American states.

We propose and provide an explanation of voting behavior that argues it is a convergence of a *social context* (high racial/ethnic diversity) and *institutional context* (frequent use of the initiative process) that is associated with the adoption of public policies targeted at minority groups. We examine this argument in the state of California, the most racially diverse state in the nation, and one that has historically high usage of the initiative process (Tolbert et al. 1998). In this context, white voters may use the initiative process to circumvent state legislatures where minorities have gained access (Cain 1992). This research contends that demographic configurations, along with institutional context, are central to understanding state ballot initiatives that affect minority groups.

The United States is among the most racially and ethnically diverse of the western democracies. This diversity has long been a central "dilemma" in U.S. political and social history (Myrdal 1944; Smith 1993). It has been argued that racial and ethnic diversity is a defining characteristic of state politics as well (Key 1949; Hero 1998). In the late twentieth century demographic change was a prominent concern. This study examines whether race/ethnicity matters in direct democracy elections, and with what implications. While most research on initiative voting focuses on one policy area, this study examines support for a series of ballot measures over a twelve-year period. Specifically, the research focuses on how racial/ethnic diversity affected white voting on ballot initiatives adopted in California, the nation's largest and most diverse state, over the period 1986-1998. The findings also raise broader theoretical issues. California has experienced rapid demographic change; as the United States as whole likewise experiences such change, we might anticipate similar, and different, policy responses.

At the same time that racial and ethnic diversity has increased, the number of initiatives and referenda on state election ballots has grown dramatically (Magleby 1984; Magleby and Patterson 1998; Cronin 1989; Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert 1998; Bowler and Donovan 1998; Gerber 1999; Smith 1998, Schmidt 1989). Indeed, the increase is probably not coincidental. Scholarly and popular literature suggests the availability of the initiative process, combined with high racial/ethnic diversity, fueled a backlash in California politics (Cain 1992; Schrag 1998). One analyst suggests that California's increased use direct democracy in the last three decades coincides with dramatic changes in the state's racial/ethnic composition; "neopopulism has its roots in the state's changing demographics—white, affluent elderly taxpayers who vote, against the younger, preponderantly black and Latino people who use the services but vote in much lower numbers " (Schrag 1998: 15). Since non-Hispanic whites constitute a majority of California's voting electorate but less than a majority of the general population, initiative elections provide a mechanism for whites to exert their policy preferences over those of minority groups.

In some states, with California as a leading example, governance by initiative has become a preferred mechanism of policy making. Over the past decade, ballot initiatives have shaped California's social policies and governmental structures, often with direct and/or indirect consequences for the state's growing ethnic populations.[1] In 1986, California voters adopted an initiative declaring the state official language English. In 1994 California voters adopted Proposition 187, which denied social services to illegal immigrants and their children. Two years later, voters adopted Proposition 209 which prohibits race or gender based affirmative action in public employment, contracting and education.[2] In 1998, voters adopted Proposition 227 that eliminates bilingual education in public schools. Surveys indicate that a majority of whites supported each policy, while minority groups opposed them.[3] This research analyzes whether white voting in direct democracy elections is shaped by the racial environments in which they reside.

We argue that the four California initiatives studied here share a common thread in seeking to curb government policies that are perceived to allow or encourage various detrimental impacts of racial/ethnic diversity.[4] Representative institutions, specifically state legislatures, have been seen as failing to curb, perhaps even exacerbating, the implications of this diversity. That is, the state legislature may have been perceived as overly responsive to minority groups. Government policies such as affirmative action, bilingual education, welfare for immigrants, and bilingual ballots are perceived to discourage the assimilation of ethnic minorities. Thus whites have turned to majoritarian institutions, specifically the initiative process, seeking to curb the perceived harmful manifestations of demographic change by supporting these policies placed on the statewide

[1] A number of California ballot initiatives not analyzed in this paper also directly affected the state's minority populations and foreshadowed many of the policies adopted by voters in the 1990s. A 1964 initiative overwhelmingly passed by the voters (2-1), Proposition 14, sought to overturn the state's 1960 Rumford Fair Housing Act prohibiting discrimination by race in rental housing. Implementation of the initiative was later blocked by state and federal courts. An initiative approved by 63 percent of California voters in November 1972 prohibited the busing of students to any school on the basis of race, creed, or color, and repealed the law mandating state school desegregation. This initiative was later ruled unconstitutional.

[2] California's decision to end affirmative action is arguably one of the most important referenda votes of the decade (Chavez 1998).

[3] On Proposition 209 Latinos, blacks and Asian American were unified in their opposition to the initiatives. It was opposed by 91 percent of black voters, 74 percent of Asian Americans and 71 percent of Latinos (LA Times Exit Poll, 1996). Strong white support led to passage of the initiative. On Proposition 63 a slim majority of blacks voted with whites against Latinos and Asian Americans. A majority of Latinos, blacks and Asian Americans opposed Proposition 227 and 187.

[4] An exception can be made for Proposition 187, the most extreme of the four ballot measures studied here. The ballot measure would have denied public education to children of illegal immigrants, and thus went well beyond our "assimilationist" definition. The courts have declared most of the provisions of the 1994 ballot measure unconstitutional.

ballot. We hypothesize there is an especially strong concern about increasing ethnic diversity, and support for assimilationist (or nativist) policies in counties with high racial diversity.

This study has broader implications for understanding the effects of majoritarian decisionmaking institutions on minority group representation. While stating the case too strongly, Bell (1978: 15) argues:

> Far from being the pure path to democracy . . . direct democracy, carried out in the privacy of the voting booth, has diminished the ability of minority groups to participate in the democratic process. Ironically, because it enables the voters' racial beliefs and fears to be recorded and tabulated in their pure form, the referendum has been a most effective facilitator of that bias, discrimination, and prejudice which has marred American democracy from its earliest day.

Recent empirical research may lend credibility to Bell's claim. Analysis of the 1992 ANES provides some evidence that racial minorities have lower levels of political efficacy in states with many initiatives on the ballot. While the effects of race are not consistent, Bowler and Donovan (2001) report that direct democracy may have an adverse effect on nonwhites' perceptions of their capabilities as citizens (internal efficacy), and perceptions of government responsiveness (external efficacy). In contrast, whites have higher levels of internal and external political efficacy in states with frequent initiative use compared to whites living in states without this process, after controlling for other factors (Bowler and Donovan 2001).

Research suggests when "civil rights" measures targeting minorities are placed on the ballot, they are more likely to pass than other types of initiatives and more likely to be adopted by wide margins (Gamble 1997). Others question Gamble's findings, however, on both methodological and theoretical grounds, and suggest direct democracy is no more detrimental for minority interests than traditional legislative channels (Donovan and Bowler 1997, 1998a, 1998b; Donovan et al 1999; Bowler and Donovan 2001; Frey and Goette 1998). *This research engages the debate by examining white support for ballot initiatives directly targeting minority groups under varying racial/ethnic environments.*

The literature on initiative voting has generally relied on survey data and thus context, especially racial/ethnic context, is often not emphasized (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sniderman and Carmines 1997). A growing number of scholars have addressed questions regarding the processes shaping direct democracy in the states (Bowler and Donovan 1998; Bowler, Donovan and Tolbert 1998; Citrin 1996; Gerber 1996, 1999; Lascher, Hagen and Rochlin 1996; Lupia 1994; Magleby 1984; Smith 1998). But little research has addressed whether "context matters." We suggest racial and ethnic context is an important omitted variable in determining voting patterns in direct democracy elections affecting minority groups. Was white support for the social policies discussed above related to the

demographic composition of the state and/or county? The answers are important, since they bear on the debate of whether direct democracy is detrimental to the rights of minority groups (Gamble 1997; Bell 1978; Donovan and Bowler 1998a).

The importance of context has long been recognized in the "racial threat" hypothesis literature. Previous research suggests that whites living in political jurisdictions with large minority populations are more likely to support candidates who favor policies detrimental to minority groups, than counties and regions where the minority group represents a smaller segment of the population (Key 1949; Hero 1998; Giles and Evans 1996; Giles and Buckner 1993). White racial attitudes are thus shaped by a racial threat. With few exceptions, however, this "racial threat" hypothesis has not been tested with respect to direct democracy elections. Are whites living in political jurisdictions with large minority populations more likely to cast votes for ballot initiatives targeted at these groups? Using California as a "test case," we analyze whether ethnic context had an impact on white support for four "social policy" initiatives—Illegal Immigration (1994), Affirmative Action (1996), Bilingual Education (1998) and Official English (1986).[5]

The research serves as an extension of previous research using an improved statistical method for analyzing aggregate data (cf. Tolbert and Hero 1996).[6] We first provide a brief summary of the four ballot measures in the following. Section 2 then proposes a model for understanding the passage of social policies directly targeting minority groups based on institutional and social context. Section 3 discusses the data and methods used in the analysis. Section 4 reports the findings of the statistical analysis. Section 5 concludes with a discussion of the implications of this research for the debate over direct democracy and minority rights and larger theoretical questions about American democracy.

1. Policy Change over Time: Four "Social Policy" Ballot Initiatives

Each of the four ballot measures studied here sought to end government policies that were perceived to create barriers to assimilating ethnic minorities,

[5] While California is clearly a unique case, it will not be long before other ethnically diverse states, such as Florida and Texas, follow a similar demographic pattern. This analysis may also apply to urban elections with diverse populations. The institutional structure in Texas and Florida, however, vary considerably. Based on this analysis, we would expect Florida (with direct democracy institutions) to follow more closely the lead of California than Texas (without direct democracy institutions). The response to diversity in non-initiative states and at the national level may well be moderated by the absence of majoritarian policymaking institutions.

[6] Tolbert and Hero (1996) find evidence of a statistical relationship between county level demographic characteristics and the popular vote for California's Proposition 187. This research is subject to criticisms of the ecological fallacy—using aggregate data to make inferences about individual level behavior. We use King's method of ecological inference to avoid this problem by analyzing the impact of county level characteristics on group (white) voting patterns in initiative elections.

although some policies, such as Proposition 187 arguably went beyond this definition. The policies were adopted over a twelve-year period, providing a window into the importance of continuity across direct democracy elections, as well as the relationship between demographic change and policy outcomes.

In 1998, California voters adopted Proposition 227, "English for Children," which required the state to dismantle hundreds of bilingual education programs and replace them with intensive one-year immersion classes for the 1.4 million pupils in the state with limited proficiency in English. The ballot measure was approved by 61 percent of the voters. Proposition 209 aimed to end state affirmative action programs, and was formally titled the "California's Civil Rights Initiative." The ballot measure, adopted by 54 percent of California voters in 1996, prohibits most preferences based on race and gender in public education, public employment, and public contracting.

In 1994, California voters adopted an "illegal immigration" initiative, Proposition 187, requiring that the state deny social services, non-emergency health care, and education to illegal immigrants (Alvarez and Butterfield 2000; Tolbert and Hero 1996). It also required public agencies to report suspected illegal immigrants to state and federal authorities. Proposition 187 was commonly referred to as the "Save our State" (SOS) initiative and was adopted by a 59-41 percent margin. This measure was the most restrictive of the four (and has largely invalidated as unconstitutional by the courts). In 1986, California was the first state in the nation to adopt an Official English amendment via ballot initiative. California's English Language Amendment, Proposition 63, required that all state governmental operations be conducted in English only and required the state to enforce the status and primacy of English as the state's official language (Citrin et al. 1990). Donovan et al. (1998) would categorize these social policies as "majoritarian" ballot propositions with diffuse supporters and opponents. Donovan et al found that the passage rate for majoritarian initiatives was significantly higher than the overall passage rate for initiatives in California.

2. Model: Convergence of a Social and Institutional Context

A number of scholars have argued that racial and ethnic composition is an important factor in shaping policy outcomes in the states (Key 1949; Hero 1998), but this research does not consider the importance of varying institutional contexts, such as the availability or usage of the initiative process. A growing number of scholars have shown the importance of the initiative processes in shaping state policy, but state variation in racial composition has been largely overlooked (Tolbert 1998; Gerber 1999).

Social Context: Racial/Ethnic Diversity

Race is widely acknowledged as a defining feature of the American political experience (Smith 1993). Research on race and voting preferences in the U.S.

relies predominantly on survey data. A common criticism of this literature is that it ignores context, including racial and ethnic context (see Oliver and Mendelberg 2000 for an exception). Recent research suggests racial diversity is central to explaining public policies in the American states, especially policies that affect minority groups (Hero 1998; see also Hill and Leighley 1999; Key 1949; Giles and Evans 1986; Blalock 1970). Hero and Tolbert (1996) claim that ethnic diversity is fundamental to understanding political processes in the American states. They demonstrate that minority diversity in state populations is associated with several social policy outcomes—such as graduation and infant mortality rates—that are principal targets of state policy efforts. Their results suggest that ethnic diversity is linked through the political process to public policy, but they don't provide evidence of the nature of these linkages.

Similarly, Hill and Leighley (1999) argue that greater racial diversity is associated with lower levels of voter mobilization, weaker mobilizing institutions and higher barriers to voter participation. They provide evidence that racial diversity is a potent negative predictor of turnout levels over time across the states. We argue that racial diversity in conjunction with a different linkage mechanism (ballot initiatives) may also have a negative impact on minority groups.

Extending the work of V.O. Key, who argued that race is at the center of southern politics, Hero (1998) argues that ethnic and racial diversity matters and shapes policy patterns across the states. The mixture or cleavages of various minority and or racial/ethnic groups define a state's racial/ethnic diversity. These scholars contend ethnic and racial context is important above and beyond socioeconomic factors and/or political ideology (Dye 1981; Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993).

State racial and ethnic diversity includes a state's black (African American), Latino/Hispanic and Asian populations. It includes those groups that have been defined as "minority groups," implicitly recognizing their unique historical experiences in the United States (Hero 1998), and bringing careful attention to these groups in the states, beyond other ethnic populations, such as Italians, Jews, Irish, Slavic, etc. (Elazar 1986). States and substate political jurisdictions may be thought of as falling into three broad categories, according to the degree of racial/ethnic diversity. Political jurisdictions with large minority populations (primarily black and/or Latino) and large white (non-ethnic) populations are classified as having a *bifurcated* social structure. Areas with large white ethnic populations (non-northern and non-western European white) and moderately sized minority populations have a *heterogeneous* social structure; finally, areas low in both racial and ethnic diversity, i.e., with small minority and small white ethnic populations, are relatively *homogeneous*. A social diversity interpretation suggests the potential for policy outcomes with detrimental impacts for minorities is higher in political jurisdictions with large racial/ethnic populations (bifurcation), such as California (Key 1949; Giles and Evans 1986; Blalock 1970).

However, support for these policies may also be high in homogeneous political jurisdictions (Kinder and Mendelberg 1995; Hood and Morris 1997; Hero 1998).

As the most ethnically diverse state in the nation, growing racial and ethnic diversity is a major feature of California politics. California's racial/ethnic composition, although very high in the aggregate, varies significantly across regions of the state. We are interested in whether white support for the four ballot initiatives studied here can be explained by the racial/ethnic context in which voters live. The southern and south-central part of California has a bifurcated racial/ethnic composition, the central/coastal regions of the state are more heterogeneous, and the extreme northern part of the state is relatively homogeneous.

California has experienced rapid demographic change in the past 20 years. The state gained 2.8 million residents through immigration between 1980 and 1994; this does not include illegal immigrants estimated to be between 1.4 million and 2 million people during this period. Most of the legal and illegal immigrants arrived from Mexico and Asian countries. By 1994, nearly 24 percent of Californians were foreign-born and 42 percent of the school-age population of California consisted of immigrants or the children of immigrants (Baldassare 2000: 3).

California is the first state in the nation in which racial and ethnic minority groups outnumber non-Hispanic whites (Baldassare 2000). In the 1970 census, 78 percent of California's 20 million citizens were white non-Hispanic, 7 percent were black, 12 percent Latino and 3 percent others, primarily Asian. In just twenty years, whites as a percentage of the population fell from a substantial majority to the largest minority group. In six years between 1990 and 1996 the size of the California's white population dropped from 57 percent to 52 percent of the state's 32 million people, while the Latino population rose from 26 percent to 29 percent.[7] In 2000 non-Hispanic whites constitute 49 percent of the state's population. When age is factored into the demographic forecasts, the racial diversity of the state is even more dramatic. Of the six million children in California public schools, barely two million (35 percent) are white.[8] Projections by the US Census Bureau indicate that by the year 2025 whites will comprise just 30 percent of the state's population (Johnson 1999). California's racial makeup today mirrors the projected makeup of the whole country in the middle part of this century. Research suggests that Latinos in California have been a primary target of white fears and frustrations (Alvarez and Butterfield 2000).

California politics are distinguished by a mismatch between the state's demographic composition and the composition of the electorate. In 1996 whites represented only 52 percent of the population but accounted for 88 percent of registered voters. In contrast, the nonwhite registered voters were 11 percent Latino, 5 percent

[7] California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, 1995. Population Projection Series, *Total Population by County, by Year, By Race/Ethnicity*.

[8] Data from the California State Department of Finance (www.dof.ca.gov).

black and 4 percent Asian (Chavez 1998). In 2000 whites comprise 68 percent of the electorate, while Latinos are well behind with 19 percent. Blacks and Asian Americans represent 7 percent each (Baldassare 2000). While Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the population, the voting share of their 31 percent population share will take years to emerge, as many are too young to vote or file for citizenship. Thus, instead of mirroring the growing ethnic/racial composition, the electorate exaggerates the power of white voters (Chavez 1998: 36). Initiative elections may be critical mechanism for white voters to exert their policy preferences over minority groups (Cain 1992).[9] By analyzing initiative voting over time, we measure the impact of changing demographics on white voting behavior.

Institutional Context

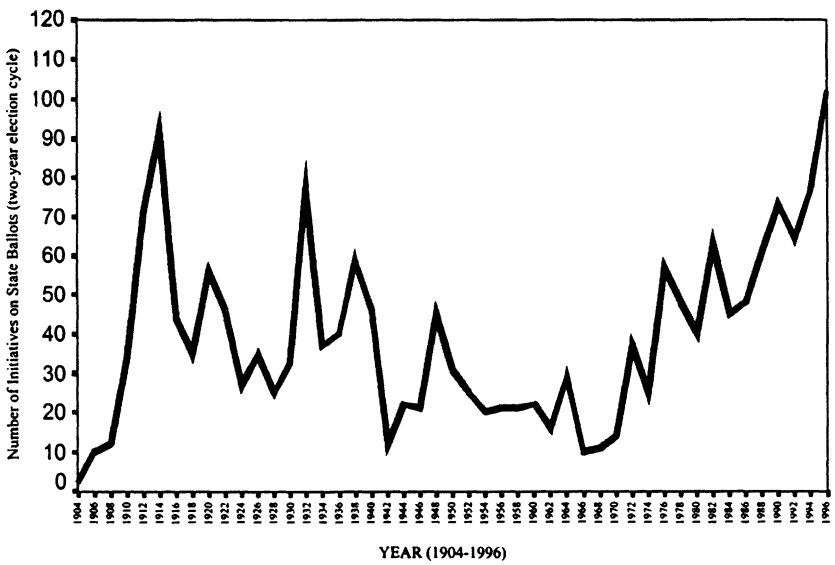
The fifty states also vary in their institutional structure. Twenty-four states provide for the initiative process, which allows groups (citizen and economic) outside of the formal institutions of government to draft their own laws, then petition to have citizens vote directly on the proposals in a statewide election (Magleby 1984; Gerber 1999). Nineteen states adopted the initiative process during the Progressive era in response to widespread corruption and the perceived strong influence over state politics by the powerful railroads. Of the direct democracy mechanisms, the initiative has been the most common tool for policy change. Because groups outside of the legislature can propose new legislation and set the political agenda, the subject matter of citizen initiatives tends to be more controversial than policy referred by state legislatures (referenda).

Scholars who study institutions recognize that political structures shape the context in which political actors make policy choices and ultimately policy outcomes (March and Olsen 1984, 1989; Steinmo et al. 1992; Steinmo 1989; Peters 1999). In this vein, state constitutional provisions for the initiative process can be understood as an institution that shapes politics and policy. States with frequent use of initiative process have been found to have different policy outcomes than states without this process. States with the initiative process are significantly more likely to adopt legislative term limits, tax limitations, state lotteries, and a host of other procedural and substantive policies than states without this process (Tolbert 1998; Gerber 1999). States with the initiative process have significantly lower spending and more regressive tax systems than in states without this process (Matsusaka 1995).

There has been a dramatic rise in the use of the initiative process across the states in the past two decades (see Figure 1 for the number of initiatives appearing

[9] This is also true of elections generally in California. Due to ballot drop-off (Magleby 1984) representation may be even more perverted within the initiative structure than in other electoral institutions, such as congressional representatives and statewide offices.

FIGURE 1.
RAW FREQUENCY OF INITIATIVE USE IN THE STATES

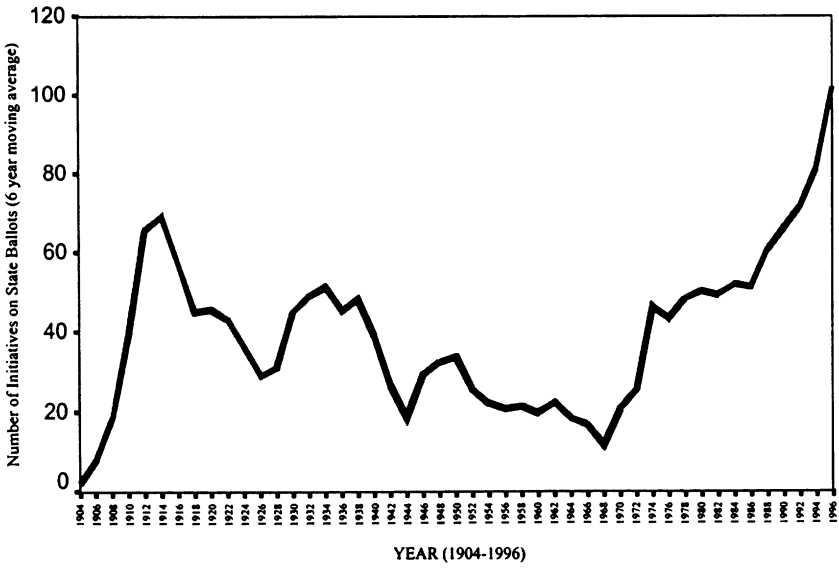


Source: Raw data from the Initiative and Referendum Institute, Washington, DC. Analysis by author.

on state election ballots for the period 1904-1996 and Figure 2 for the same data presented as a moving average). Since the late 1970s usage of the process in the American states has exploded, comparable only to the Progressive era (1900-1920). In the 1990s, over 300 statewide initiatives qualified for the ballot, an average of 60 per general election nationwide.

While a causal mechanism is difficult to prove, increased usage of the process may be a response to rapid demographic change. The period of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century was distinguished by growing ethnic diversity in America, with historically high rates of immigration from eastern and southern Europe. Progressive reformers were concerned with the disproportionate representation of ethnic immigrants in urban political machines and resentful of how local political machines made use of the immigrant vote (Price 1975; cf. McDonagh 1999; Hayes 1964). Reformer used the initiative process to pass political reforms (at-large elections, merit hiring systems, professional city managers, direct primaries, secret ballot, non-partisan local elections, direct election of U.S. senators) to weaken urban party machines that were perceived as overly responsive to ethnic immigrants. Progressive reforms, especially at-large elections, weakened political parties and lowered voter turnout rates, especially

FIGURE 2.
SMOOTHED FREQUENCY OF INITIATIVE USE IN THE STATES



Source: Raw data from the Initiative and Referendum Institute, Washington, DC. Analysis by author.

among ethnic urban immigrants (McDonagh 1999). Today, usage of initiative process by state electorates may be understood as constraining state legislatures' perceived over responsiveness to ethnic and racial minorities.

California has historically been a leader in use of the initiative process. More initiatives have qualified for the ballot in California than in any other state besides Oregon over the last century (Magleby 1984; Tolbert et al. 1998). At the turn of the twentieth century, initiatives in California were used to adopt "progressive" social policies, such as women's suffrage, child-labor laws and the eight-hour workday (Schmidt 1989). In the 1990s governance by ballot initiative has altered the democratic process as well, by compelling candidates and state and national parties to debate divisive issues during political campaigns (Chavez 1998; Smith 1998).

Cain (1992) suggests a "new populism" has arisen in California politics; a product of white concerns over the increased size and political influence of blacks and Latinos in the state. This new populism is perhaps a backlash against the legislative gains of minority groups in the 1970s. This is often referred to as a racial backlash, meaning a negative political response against increased demands by minority groups (Key 1949; cf. Radcliff and Saiz 1995). A manifestation of the

new populism may be the use of ballot initiatives to circumvent representative institutions, especially the state legislature, where blacks and Latinos have gained influence. Since 1978, the year that California's tax limitation Proposition 13 sparked a renewed interested in direct democracy in the states, ballot initiatives have fundamentally reshaped the state's governmental system and social policies.

Some have suggested the increased use of direct democracy in California coincides with a dramatic decline in the state's social services (Schrag 1998). In the California case, not only did Proposition 13 create severe fiscal limitations, but in the last two decades California has experienced increasing social costs resulting from growing minority and immigrant populations. While policies, such as tax limitations, may not on the surface appear affected by racial/ethnic diversity, some have argued that these policies have emerged because of concerns that state government policies have been "overly responsive" to various minority groups (Hero 1998: 114; cf. Cain 1992).

3. Data and Methods

Because we are interested in the environments in which voters make choices, we turn to available aggregate data to measure political, economic, and social context. Due to the private voting booth, the known votes for whites and nonwhites are not collected or reported in California. This means we must use the known turnout rate in the four elections, known votes cast for the ballot measures, as well as known estimates of the racial and ethnic composition of California counties to estimate the white and nonwhite votes for each California county. This is a common "ecological inference" problem of using geographically aggregated data to produce estimates of individual-level behavior. We use a recently developed method to estimate white voting patterns.

King's (1997) method of ecological inference is used to estimate the proportion of whites that voted for the four ballot initiatives at the county level. We compare the estimates of the white vote to those derived from survey data. We also compare the results to a county level analysis of the popular vote for the ballot initiatives. This research highlights an important application of ecological inference techniques to study race and direct democracy voting.

The major disadvantage of aggregate data is the irrecoverable loss of individual-level information in the process of aggregation. While there are limitations, aggregate voting results do offer some unique advantages. Unlike political surveys conducted in personal interviews, aggregate election results are obtained from actual elections. The data are derived directly from political actions carried out by actors in a real world context, and the choices voters make are likely to affect their lives. In contrast to surveys, which cover only a small sample of the entire population, aggregate voting data are derived from the choices of statewide voters over the entire area of interest. Aggregate data allows for the direct analysis of election data (instead of surveys taken either before or after the election),

so scholars can measure the immediate impact of key variables on the outcome of the election (Zhang 1999; cf. King 1997). In direct democracy elections this advantage is especially important when support for an initiative, especially those concerning civil rights, may fluctuate significantly before the election (see Magleby 1984 and Bowler and Donovan 1998 for evidence of opinion change over the course of an initiative campaign). Analysis of actual election results may be of additional value when studying racially charged initiative contests, since survey results are often unreliable.

The most important advantage of aggregate data is that some data are more reliable indicators of long-term socioeconomic conditions. Although surveys indicated high white support for the four initiatives studied here, the correlation of the regional votes between different elections are remarkably high, indicating an overall stability of regional voting patterns determined primary by local socioeconomic and political profiles. Unemployment rates are an important measure of local economic conditions, and may be preferable to survey questions of retrospective evaluations of the state economy or personal finances. Demographic data on the size of racial/ethnic populations is one of the best measures of diversity. Even if survey data are available, there are good reasons to be interested in analyzing aggregate data, especially to study context.

We are interested in the role of context in political jurisdictions that have policymaking authority. Identifying a context's boundaries is essential for understanding its potential effects. Counties are used in this analysis since they are administrative arms of the state government, and the direct providers of social services, the same services the four social policy initiatives aimed to eliminate. While neighborhoods or precincts could be used, we find these measures less desirable since they are not jurisdictions with formal/legal authority.[10] In California counties are particularly important political jurisdictions. From 1930-1968, the California Senate was apportioned geographically by roughly one-county, one-vote. Even though the California Senate was one of the most malapportioned legislative bodies in the United States,[11] California voters defeated six ballot measures over five decades proposing to create a one-person, one-vote apportionment system (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Woon 1999). Counties have thus historically played an important role in California politics, almost comparable to the identity of states in the U.S. Senate. While studying counties has limitations, including the unequal size in terms of population, we believe it provides a useful lens to analyze racial/ethnic environments.

[10] Statistical analysis using California census tracks merged with precinct level data revealed similar substantive results regarding white voting patterns for Proposition 209.

[11] The largest Senate district contained 400 times the people as the smallest Senate district under the one-county, one vote apportionment system.

King's (1997) method of ecological inference is used to estimate the proportion of whites who voted for the ballot initiatives across California's 58 counties.[12] We test whether support for the initiatives was related to the racial homogeneity or diversity of the county. Since we use aggregate data, the issue of adequate sampling across geographic regions is not a concern.[13] King's method also allows us to provide point estimates of the white vote by county, as well estimates of uncertainty (standard errors). Previous methods did not provide standard errors and the point estimates were often inaccurate.[14]

A two-stage process was used to estimate the proportion of white voters in each county who supported the ballot measures.[15] All methods of ecological inference can give incorrect estimates if the assumptions of the model are violated. Diagnostics and scatterplots suggest aggregation bias is not a concern.[16]

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[12] Electoral data were obtained from the California Secretary of State while data on the size of racial/ethnic populations were obtained from the California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit and the U.S. Census.

[13] Surveys are usually designed to make inferences at the national or state level, but rarely the county or district level (King 1997, 236). Statewide polls draw a disproportionate number of respondents from a few large counties and include only a small number of respondents (if any) from smaller counties. If the researcher is interested in small geographic units, survey data do not provide the most representative measure of the population. The ecological inference model used here is designed to provide accurate inferences at the district, or county level. We do not suggest, however, that aggregate data should replace individual-level data, which is clearly superior for studying voting behavior in many situations. Aggregate data can be very useful for studying sub-state jurisdictions (counties, precincts, cities) when individual-level survey data is not reliable or available, such as racially charged contests.

[14] Previous methods of ecological inference have produced inaccurate estimates of individual level behavior due to aggregation bias (Goodman 1953; Achen and Shively 1995; King 1997). Until recently, ecological regression or Goodman's regression was the prevalent method of ecological inference. But Goodman's regression assumes voters behave in a uniform pattern and does not adequately account for differences within districts and among various populations, thus potentially underestimating the effects of context on political behavior. King's method of bounds constrains the estimates to a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 1 which prevents the estimates from reaching unrealistic levels, which may occur with Goodman's regression. Even under the condition of aggregation bias King's extended model with external variables, can recover accurate estimates of individual-level behavior.

[15] In stage one the proportion of *whites turning out to vote* (β_i^{white}) in the four California elections is estimated using county-level electoral and demographic data for each year studied. Statewide and county level estimates of white turnout were calculated from the proportion of the population who voted (T_i) and the voting age white population (X_i). In stage two the *white vote* for the *ballot initiatives* (λ_i^{white}) is estimated from the estimated white turnout (β_i^{white}) and the proportion vote for the ballot measures in each county (V_i). Our problem is similar to the running example in King's (1997) book of estimating first black turnout (β^b) in the election, and then of those blacks who voted in election, the proportion who voted for the Democratic candidate (λ^b). Instead, we estimate white turnout in each election (β^b), and then of those whites turning out to vote, the proportion who voted for the ballot measures (λ^b).

[16] Aggregation bias might plauge our ability to use the aggregated data to make inferences about individuals (King 1997). Our sample is so limited that we do not believe that using alternative ecological

County-level voting patterns for the four initiatives follow a remarkably similar pattern (see Figure 3). The overall county-level vote for these initiatives is highly correlated, suggesting the policies are related and produced similar responses from the voting public.

4. FINDINGS

Describing White Voting Patterns

Table 1 presents the statewide estimates of the white vote for the California ballot measures (top row of the table). Standard errors of the estimates are in parenthesis and all are within the 95 percent confidence interval. The statewide white vote for Proposition 187 was 65 percent, 69 percent for Proposition 209, 62 percent for Proposition 227 and 71 percent for Proposition 63. Thus a clear majority of whites supported each of the policies. The estimates of the white vote derived from King's method are compared with Goodman's ecological regression (row two) and survey data (row three). The estimates of the white vote using the King method appear to be quite robust and track within a few percentage points of the survey data. The data suggest that the survey estimates, drawn from a relatively few highly populated counties, may underestimate statewide white support for the ballot measures. The close approximation with survey data increases our confidence in the statewide estimates of the white vote.

Appendix A reports the estimated white vote for the four ballot measures for each of California's 58 counties. Although not reported due to space constraint, a standard error is associated with each county level estimate. Rather than being constant across the states, as reported by survey data, there is significant variation in

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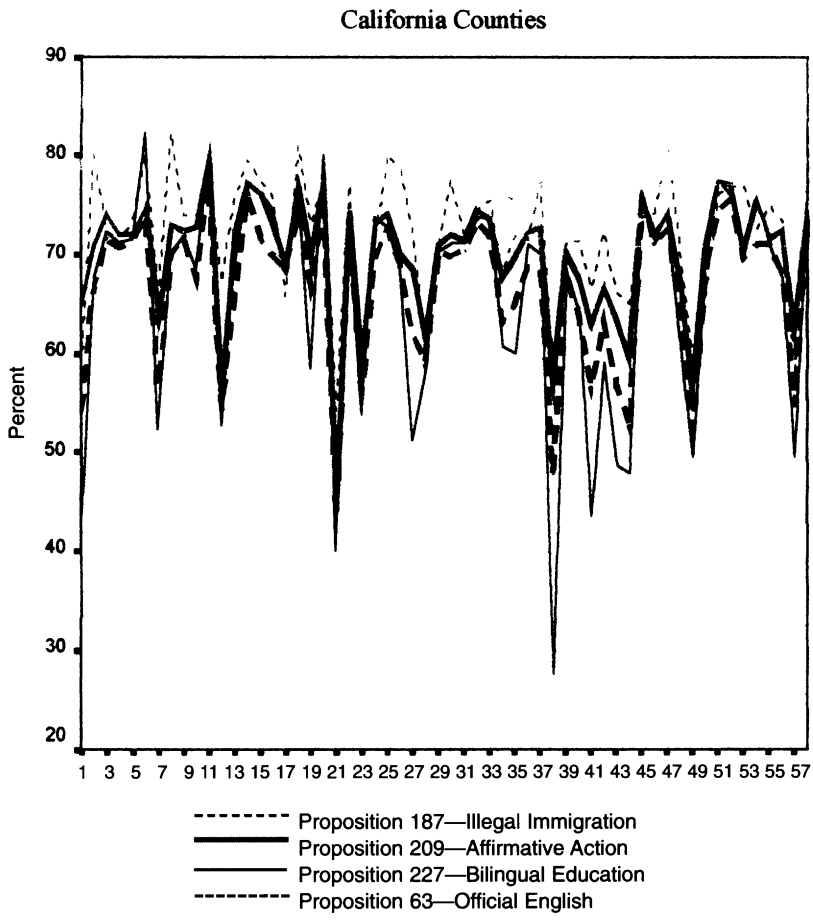
inference techniques is possible. An assumption of King's basic model required to recover consistent estimates of the true white vote is that the estimate of the white vote (λ^b) be mean-invariant with respect to X_i where X_i is the proportion of voters in a county who are white (1997, 159-161). If this condition is not met, aggregation bias can result. Diagnostics suggest that aggregation bias is not a problem. The contour lines for the white vote for each initiative are fairly narrow (truncated), representing the area from which the estimates are derived. Bivariate regressions between the proportion white in a county (X_i) and the white vote for the initiatives (λ^b) revealed no statistical relationship, another indication that the estimates display little evidence of aggregation bias.

Assuming aggregation bias, additional diagnostics of the white vote for each initiative were run by placing prior distributions on α^b and α^w to fix these parameters and their standard errors during estimation. The estimates of white voting were recalculated with a covariate Z_i^b, where $Z_i^b = Z_i^w = X_{i\,(\text{proportion white})}$, estimate α^w, and fix $\alpha^b = 0$. Mechanically, this entailed setting _Eeta =3 in the EZI program. The Pearson r correlation between the estimates of the white vote reported in the paper and those run with the additional covariate were .89 or higher. In a second stage regression as reported in Table 3, the direction and significance level of the coefficients remained virtually unchanged, as were the substantive findings. Even under the assumption of aggregation bias the estimates of the white vote remain fairly stable.

FIGURE 3.
FREQUENCY OF WHITE VOTE FOR SOCIAL POLICY BALLOTS



white support for the ballot measures across political jurisdictions. Figure 3 shows the frequency of white support for the four policies by county spanning more than a decade of California politics. White voting patterns are strikingly similar over time and across the four policy issues. The Pearson r correlation between the white vote for the four initiatives ranges from .82 to .96, indicating that a similar percentage of voters consistently supported each policy, from affirmative action to bilingual education. These findings provide some evidence to support the hypothesis that "similar forces" are driving the adoption of these ballot initiatives.

Paralleling previous state level analyses, an index of minority diversity and "white ethnic" diversity for California's 58 counties is created (Hero and Tolbert

TABLE 1.
STATE-WIDE ESTIMATES OF WHITE VOTE FOR CALIFORNIA SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES (λ^b_i)

	Proposition 187 Illegal Immigration (1994)	Proposition 209 Affirmative Action (1996)	Proposition 227 Bilingual Education (1998)	Proposition 63 Official English (1986)
King's Ecological Inference	.65 (.03)	.69 (.03)	.62 (.05)	.71 (.02)
Goodman's Ecological Regression	.70 (.02)	.73 (.02)	.68 (.02)	.73 (.02)
Los Angeles Times Poll	.63	.63	.61	.72
Actual State-Wide Popular Vote	.59	.54	.61	.73

Standard errors in parentheses. The white vote for the ballot initiatives are estimated using King's (1997) method of ecological inference.

1996; See Appendix A). California counties with the smallest "white ethnic" populations include the northern homogeneous counties and southern bifurcated counties with large Latino populations. Ranking high on the index of "white ethnic" diversity and moderately high on minority diversity were northern heterogeneous counties with sizable black, Asian American and Latino populations, as well as white ethnic populations (Italians, Irish, Slavic), such as San Francisco. Based on previous research, we would expect heterogeneous racial/ethnic environments to foster tolerance among white voters (Hero 1998).

Explaining White Voting Patterns

Weighted Least Square regression is used to model the impact of county level racial and ethnic diversity on the white vote for the ballot measures, with the standard errors of the point estimates for the white vote assigned the weight (see Table 2, cf. King 1997: 290).[17] Across the four models, the coefficients for the indices of minority and white ethnic diversity are statistically significant. The strong and negative coefficients for both indices suggest an inverse relationship between both minority and white ethnic diversity and white support for the ballot initiatives. As expected, whites in heterogeneous counties (with moderately sized minority

[17] Since the values of the white vote by county are estimates, using the standard errors as weights in a second stage regression allows us to account for the level of uncertainty associated with each estimate (King 1997). Analytical weights in STATA are used in which the cases are weighted as 1 divided by the standard error of the estimate; cases with smaller standard errors are weighted more.

TABLE 2.
RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND THE WHITE VOTE FOR THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES

	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994		Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996		Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998		Proposition 64 Official English 1986	
Regressors	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|
Minority[a] Diversity Index	−.26 (.06)	0.00	−.15 (.05)	0.01	−.53 (.15)	0.001	−.25 (.07)	0.001
White Ethnic[b] Diversity Index	−1.11 (.27)	0.00	−1.19 (.21)	0.00	−1.73 (.49)	0.001	−1.25 (.27)	0.000
Constant	95.52 (6.19)	0.00	95.02 (5.04)	0.00	115.37 (12.70)	0.00	102.50 (6.39)	0.00
Adjusted R^2	0.27		0.35		0.26		0.32	
Standard Error	6.25		4.94		10.74		5.97	
F	11.33	0.00	15.74	0.00	8.68	0.00	12.76	0.00

Entries are undstandarized WLS regression coefficients with standard error of the white vote assigned as analytical weights in STATA; standard errors in parenthesis. Source: California Secretary of State, US Census Bureau and California Department of Finance. Probabilities based on two tailed test· N = 58 counties.

[a]Following Hero and Tolbert (1996), an index (Sullivan 1973) of county minority diversity was created from 1990 census data on the percent Latino, black, white and Asian in each of California's 58 counties. The index is a measure of a county's racial/ethnic population. The index was computed with the following formula: Minority diversity = 1 − [(proportion Latino)^2 + (proportion black)^2 + (proportion white)^2 + (proportion Asian)^2].

[b] The index of county white ethnic diversity was created by adding the percent Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, and Irish reported in the 1990 census. Ethnic affiliation is a self-reported category. There was significant variation in the index of white ethnic diversity across California counties.

populations and high "white ethnic" diversity) were more likely to oppose the ballot initiatives. Whites living in homogeneous counties with low minority and white ethnic diversity were more likely to support the policies.

When the dependent variable is the overall vote for the ballot measures, the results are similar to those using the white vote (Appendix B, Table 1). These data confirm that the highest overall vote for the social policies was in homogeneous counties with small minority and white ethnic populations.

But does this relationship hold when controlling for economic and political conditions? Oliver and Mendelberg (2000) argue that white racial attitudes are shaped not by a racial threat (or competition for scare resources), but by scapegoating of the out-minority group. To a large extent racial segregation in American cities undercuts realistic group conflict (and contact) but economic contexts may still shape whites' racial attitudes. Most American cities and suburbs are not

simply divided along racial lines; they are highly distinguishable by their socioeconomic characteristics. Oliver and Mendelberg suggest that socioeconomic environments may influence racial attitudes as part of a larger psychological response to stressful collective circumstances. The stigma and stresses of living in a low-status environment may foster racial animosity from feelings of relative deprivation. In other words, whites in low-status settings may seek to denigrate out-groups (minorities) as a means of maintaining their own sense of well being. While Oliver and Mendelberg use national survey data to explore these questions, they have not examined actual referenda voting on policies that negatively affect minority groups.

Economic and political environments are also important in shaping white initiative voting as suggested by the coefficients reported in Appendix B, Table 2. The analysis suggests economic, social and political factors in California counties may be interrelated. There is a strong statistical and positive relationship between unemployment rates, Republican party affiliation and white voting patterns. Whites living in Republican counties with poor economic conditions were more likely to support the four ballot initiatives. Appendix B confirms that the overall vote for the ballot measures was also the highest in Republican counties with poor economic conditions. The findings are consistent across time periods and different policy issues.

Due to the correlation between unemployment rates and ethnic composition, an interaction term is created by multiplying the index of white ethnic diversity by unemployment rates. The complete model reported in Table 3 includes the interaction term, the indices of minority and "white ethnic" diversity, unemployment rates, and the measure of Republican party affiliation.[18]

As Table 3 indicates, political context measured by registered Republicans is a strong and statistically significant predictor of white support across the four policy issues. Partisan politics matter in California initiative elections, as candidate and issue elections may be increasingly intertwined (Chavez 1998; Schrag 1998). Research suggests that voters use endorsements by political candidates and interest groups as cues in deciding how to vote in issue elections (Bowler and Donovan 1998; Lupia 1994). Through endorsements of ballot initiatives, candidates for elected office link their political campaign to prominent issue elections. Political party and interest group endorsements allow voters to make decisions in ballot measure contests consistent with their policy preferences (Bowler and Donovan 1998). After controlling for other factors, party effects were still a major

[18] The models may still suffer from omitted variable bias. The models were estimated with additional control variables, such as educational attainment and median income, but due to the small number of cases, tolerance statistics reported unacceptable levels of collinearity. The coefficients for ethnic diversity and the interaction term remained statistically significant even with the additional control variables.

TABLE 3.
RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND WHITE SUPPORT FOR THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES, CONTROLLING FOR PARTY AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994		Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996		Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998		Proposition 64 Official English 1986	
Regressors	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|	β (Standard Error)	P > |z|
Minority Diversity Index	−.10 (.04)	.019	−.01 (.04)	.761	−.05 (.09)	0.615	.06 (.07)	0.352
White Ethnic Diversity Index	−1.66 (.36)	.000	−1.18 (.26)	.000	−.87 (.47)	0.073	−1.18 (.37)	0.003
Unemployment Rates '86-98	−.98 (.35)	.007	−.43 (.19)	.032	.10 (.34)	0.764	−.38 (.29)	0.202
Percent Registered Republican '86-98	.51 (.07)	.000	.44 (.06)	.000	1.09 (.12)	0.000	.64 (.11)	0.000
White Ethnic Diversity* Unemployment '86-98	10.50 (2.26)	.000	5.99 (1.36)	.000	7.17 (2.56)	0.008	8.01 (2.83)	0.007
Constant	71.74 (8.85)	.000	67.36 (7.37)	.000	27.57 (14.31)	0.061	62.76 (11.73)	0.000
Adjusted R^2	0.79		0.79		0.88		0.67	
Standard Error	3.32		2.76		4.37		4.19	
F	43.55	0.000	44.80	0.000	62.93	0.000	20.62	0.000

Entries are undstandarized WLS regression coefficients with standard error of the white vote assigned as analytical weights in STATA; standard errors in parenthesis. Source: California Secretary of State, US Census Bureau and California Department of Finance. Probabilities based on two- tailed test. N=58 counties. White ethnic diversity (1990) is correlated with unemployment rates at .56 for 1996, .50 1994, .59 for 1986 and .55 for 1998.

factor in the white vote, illustrating the potential for partisan manipulation of white racial attitudes.

Table 3 shows there is a strong and inverse relationship between the size of the "white ethnic" population and the vote for the initiatives, even after controlling for other factors. Whites living in counties with higher white ethnic diversity were less likely to support the four-ballot measures. Large white ethnic populations are the distinguishing characteristic of heterogeneous contexts. Previous research also suggests white ethnic environments have less negatives outcomes for minority groups (Hero 1998).

A poor economy, however, can dampen the positive effects of heterogeneous racial/ethnic environments, evidenced by the sign of the interaction term. The interaction term is positively related to the vote for the initiatives. Whites living

in counties with high white ethnic diversity and high unemployment rates were consistently more likely to vote for these propositions than whites living in areas with improved economic conditions. This suggests that even under the best conditions, frustration with the economy may be transferred to minority groups.

White Voting under Varying Racial/Ethnic Contexts

The central question of this analysis is, do racial environments shape white racial attitudes in direct democracy elections? Are whites in counties with large minority populations (bifurcated) more likely to support these ballot measures? The tentative answer appears to be "yes," but whites living in homogeneous counties with very small minority and Latino populations are also more likely to support the ballot measures (cf. Hero 1998; Kinder and Mendelberg 1995).

To facilitate interpretation of the models, regression coefficients were calculated as predicted probabilities using a simulation procedure, Clarify Software (King et al. 1998). This allows examination of the predicted support for the ballot measures under varying racial and ethnic environments. All independent variables (party, unemployment rates, and interaction term) were set to their mean value, except the index of minority diversity and "white ethnic diversity." To simulate bifurcated counties (high levels of minority diversity and low levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set to its maximum and white ethnic diversity was set to its minimum. For homogeneous counties (low levels of minority diversity and white ethnicity), both indices of minority diversity and white ethnicity were set to their minimum values. For heterogeneous counties (moderate levels of minority diversity and high levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set at its mean and white ethnicity was set at its maximum. This coding creates exaggerated examples of homogeneous, bifurcated and heterogeneous California counties that are useful for pedagogical purposes. A county may be bifurcated with less than the maximum value on the index of minority diversity.

Table 4 presents the average white vote for the ballot measures for each racial/ethnic grouping of counties. A strong curvilinear pattern emerges in which the white vote for the ballot initiatives is 20-30 percentage points higher in the homogeneous (predominately white) and bifurcated (Latino/white or black/white) than in the heterogeneous counties. The lowest vote for the ballot measures is in heterogeneous counties, with high white ethnic populations and medium sized minority populations. This pattern is consistent across policy issues and time periods. The group means for the homogeneous and bifurcated counties are very similar. This table provides evidence that white support for ballot propositions directly affecting minorities varies by racial and ethnic context, and that white support for these policies are lower in heterogeneous environments with sizable white ethnic populations.

TABLE 4.
PROBABILITY OF THE WHITE VOTE FOR THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES BY RACIAL/ETHNIC CONTEXT (EXAGGERATED CASE) BASED ON MODEL IN TABLE 3

	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994		Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996		Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998		Proposition 64 Official English 1986	
County Racial/ Ethnic Context	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation
Bifurcated	82.02	3.42	82.07	2.43	71.23	3.95	83.38	3.50
Heterogeneous	50.59	3.43	58.45	2.36	54.31	4.60	59.96	3.46
Homogeneous	87.79	4.89	82.83	3.81	73.49	7.08	85.19	5.31

Note: Estimates and confidence intervals computed with Clarify software in Stata. Michael Tomz, Jason Wittenberg, and Gary King (1999). CLARIFY: Software for Interpreting and Presenting Statistical Results. Version 1.2.1 Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, June 1. http://gking.harvard.edu/.

The estimates are based on the range and mean values of the independent variables. The percent registered Republican (various years), unemployment rates (various years), and value of the interaction term (various years) was set at its mean for all estimations. To simulate bifurcated counties (high levels of minority diversity and low levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set to its maximum (66.49) and white ethnic diversity was set to its minimum (4.76). For homogeneous counties (low levels of minority diversity and white ethnicity), both indices of minority diversity and white ethnicity were set to their minimum values (11.46 and 4.76) respectively. For heterogeneous counties (medium levels of minority diversity and high levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set to its mean (40.05) and white diversity to its maximum (24.7).

Rather than using the range (maximum and minimum) to define various racial/ethnic environments, we could instead use intervals closer to the mean. To simulate bifurcated counties (high levels of minority diversity and low levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set to one standard deviation above the mean and white ethnic diversity was set to one standard deviation below the mean.[19] Again, all independent variables are set to their mean values in Table 5. For homogeneous counties (low levels of minority diversity and white ethnicity), both indices of minority diversity and white ethnicity were set to one standard deviation below their respective means. For heterogeneous counties (medium levels of minority diversity and high levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set to its mean and white ethnic diversity to one standard deviation above the mean. This produces a more reasonable or typical set of parameters defining various racial/ethnic contexts.

[19] Simulations were also calculated by defining "high" or "low" racial and ethnic diversity by two standard deviations above or below the mean. The same curvilinear pattern emerged as in Table 4 with 20-30 points difference in white support for the initiatives in heterogeneous versus bifurcated and homogeneous environments. For additional data and estimations, please contact the authors.

TABLE 5.
PROBABILITY OF THE WHITE VOTE FOR THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES BY RACIAL/ETHNIC CONTEXT (TYPICAL CASE) BASED ON MODEL IN TABLE 3

	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994		Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996		Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998		Proposition 64 Official English 1986	
County Racial/ Ethnic Context	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation	Mean Vote	Standard Deviation
Bifurcated	69.18	.81	72.22	.60	64.32	.90	75.55	2.67
Heterogeneous	65.42	.60	64.56	1.12	58.90	2.32	70.37	.78
Homogeneous	72.58	1.58	72.60	1.44	65.77	3.11	75.28	2.41

Note: Estimates and confidence intervals computed with Clarify software in Stata. Michael Tomz, Jason Wittenberg, and Gary King (1999). CLARIFY: Software for Interpreting and Presenting Statistical Results. Version 1.2.1 Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, June 1. http://gking.harvard.edu/

The percent registered Republican (various years), unemployment rates (various years), and value of the interaction term (various years) was set at its mean for all estimations. To simulate bifurcated counties (high levels of minority diversity and low levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set to one standard deviation above the mean and white ethnic diversity was set to one standard deviation below the mean. For homogeneous counties (low levels of minority diversity and white ethnicity), both indices of minority diversity and white ethnicity were set to one standard deviation below their respective means. For heterogeneous counties (medium levels of minority diversity and high levels of white ethnicity), the index of minority diversity was set to its mean and white ethnic diversity to one standard deviation above the mean.

Table 5 also displays the average white vote for the ballot measures for each racial/ethnic environment. The pattern of voting that emerges in Table 5 is similar to that in Table 4, but with less variation among the groups. This suggests that even when varying racial/ethnic environments are defined by smaller variations from the mean (one standard deviation), we again find a strong and consistent curvilinear pattern in white support for the ballot measures over time. After controlling for other factors, the white vote for the initiatives is consistently five percentage points higher in the bifurcated and homogeneous contexts, than in heterogeneous environments; this is consistent with previous research (Hero 1998).

5. CONCLUSIONS

It was well known that a majority of whites supported the four ballot measures studied here; exit poll data reported that nearly two-thirds of whites voted for each policy in consecutive elections. The continuity in white support for these four different policies is alone notable. What the previous analyses did not tell us, however, is whether white support was constant or varied across the state. A major contribution of this research is its demonstration that white support for

the four initiatives targeting minority groups varied systematically by racial and ethnic environments across policy issues, and did so over time. This research suggests not only that *state* racial context matters, but racial diversity *within states* matters as well.

Was a white backlash operating in California initiative elections when voters adopted a series of ballot initiatives affecting social services for minority groups? The answer to this question is important. If "yes," it provides evidence for a central criticism of direct democracy—when voters adopt policies directly, minority groups may be more vulnerable to "tyranny of the majority" (Gamble 1997; Bell 1978).

White support for these policies is largely a function of the social context in which voters live. A curvilinear pattern emerged between white voting and racial/ethnic context. White support for the ballot initiatives affecting minority groups is higher in counties with high racial diversity (bifurcation) *and* very low racial diversity (homogeneity). White support for the policies is significantly lower in heterogeneous racial/ethnic counties. There is also a higher probability of white support for the ballot initiatives in counties with high Republican partisanship and those experiencing poor economic conditions.

While political party is clearly important, it is not sufficient to explain the social policies adopted in California. The model suggests the coefficient for white ethnic diversity remained statistically significant even after controlling for partisanship and the economy. One could argue that the party effects, racial effects and economic effects are so difficult to disentangle empirically, that the statistical results could be evidence of racial context, economic context or partisanship. The research provides additional evidence that the Republican party in California used anti-minority ballot initiatives to their electoral advantage (Bowler and Donovan 2001).

It may be useful to consider a number of hypotheses (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Why has California adopted these laws, when most other states have not? The other twenty-four states with the initiative process (institutional mechanism) have not followed California's lead and voted to end affirmative action, bilingual education, and social services for non-citizens. Other US states have an electorate with a similar ideological profile as California, but have not passed these laws (Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993). Other states with large racial/ethnic populations have also not passed these laws. What appears to make California unique is the state's high racial diversity *and* the frequent usage of the initiative process. With perhaps one exception, Washington, other states considering social policies similar to California also have high racial/ethnic diversity and frequently use the initiative process. States with high minority diversity are significantly more likely to adopt Official English laws (Hero 1998), such as Florida, Arizona and Colorado. In response to an initiative petition drive (cf. Gerber 1996) Florida's Republican governor and legislature voted to end state affirmative action programs in hiring, contracting and college admissions in

2000. Also in 2000, Arizona voters passed an initiative to end bilingual education programs. Consistent with the evidence and theory, it is the combination of an institutional context (frequency of initiative use) and social context (high racial diversity) that is associated with the passage of public policies with adverse consequences for minorities.

Whites living in bifurcated counties with high Latino populations were clearly more supportive of all four social policies, providing evidence for a "racial backlash" operating in California initiative elections. Whites living in heterogeneous racial/ethnic contexts, however, were consistently less likely to support ballot measures. This suggests that heterogeneous environments are more likely to foster tolerance for racial diversity among whites (cf. Hood and Morris 1997). But a poor economy may lower tolerance for racial diversity, even among whites living in areas with high white ethnic diversity, as the interaction term suggests. White support was also strong in political jurisdictions with high unemployment rates. In low socioeconomic environments, minority groups may be subject to scape-goating and anti-minority sentiments (cf. Oliver and Mendelberg 2000). These findings caution that under certain circumstances—high racial diversity and poor economic conditions—minorities may fare poorly in direct democracy elections. If whites living in low-status economic environments with high racial diversity are more likely to support policies with detrimental impacts for minorities, above and beyond political factors, this raises larger questions about procedural democracy and the costs and benefits of direct versus representative democracy.

Mechanisms for direct democracy, as the name implies, are perceived to produce more democratic policy outcomes. The irony is that the process may have anti-democratic effects, especially within particular social and economic environments. Madison in Federalist #10 argues a representative form of government is a preferable means of protecting the rights of political minorities and preventing majority tyranny and the "mischief of factions" than direct democracy ([1787] 1937: 54). In Federalist #51, Madison further cautioned, "It is of great importance in a republic, not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers; but to guard one part of society against the injustice of the other part. Different interests necessarily exist in different classes of citizens. If a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure" (339). If the initiative process allows political majorities to circumvent representative institutions it is important to understand the factors driving political majorities to adopt policies effecting ethnic and racial minorities.

Consistent with the broader social diversity thesis, we find that racial/ethnic diversity plays a role in explaining white voting in initiative elections (Hero 1998). The findings also indicate that understanding white voting in California direct democracy elections is more complex than the simple "racial threat" hypothesis contends (Key 1949). Consistent with Hero's social diversity thesis,

we find evidence for a contextual effect operating in heterogeneous, homogeneous and bifurcated political environments (1998). We believe the theory and findings presented here move us toward a better understanding of policies adopted via direct democracy.

The analysis suggests that state racial and ethnic diversity, in combination with frequent usage of direct democracy, may create a unique political environment in which policies with adverse consequences for minority groups can dominate the political agenda. California is not only the most ethnically/racially diverse state in the nation, it also is a leader in use of direct democracy. In this political environment, white voters who are unhappy with government policies that provide benefits to the poor and minorities have a mechanism to change government policy (cf. Cain 1992; Schrag 1998). The social demographic changes in California, accentuated by the forces of participatory government, are likely to have profound effects on the state's politics and policy. California politics and policy at the turn of the twenty-first century may be the result of two contextual forces working simultaneously—one social and one institutional—that will shape future policy and our ideas about democracy in the state of California, and possibly the nation.

This research has argued racial/ethnic configurations and institutional context are central to understanding policies affecting minorities. The analysis and findings also raise theoretical issues regarding national politics. California not only has a history of frequent usage of direct democracy, but has experienced rapid demographic change. As the United States as a whole experiences such change, we might anticipate similar policy responses at the national level. Whether the larger scope of conflict of national politics will mediate the impact of increasing racial diversity is unclear (Schattschneider 1960). Policy responses may be similar in that issues of race/ethnicity have often proved difficult in the nation as a whole, as it has in the states. But they may well be different in that the broader scope of conflict and absence of a national referenda/initiative process will likely produce more moderated outcomes.

Consistent with previous research (Key 1949), we suggest it may be easier for political majorities to override political minorities in local and state elections, with a narrow scope of conflict, than in national elections. Bowler and Donovan use similar reasoning in arguing for the benefits of statewide initiative elections over local ballot elections (1998). Questions about the appropriate "scope of conflict" for initiative and referenda elections, and the implications for representation of minority groups will likely become more important in the future. Worldwide trends highlight the increased use of referenda and more participatory models of governing (Peters 1996; Mendolsohn and Parkin 2001). There continues to be broad public support for a national referendum, yet at the same time national institutions have historically provided some protection of political minorities. The present research provides a baseline for assessing these questions.

APPENDIX A

ESTIMATED WHITE VOTE FOR CALIFORNIA BALLOT INITIATIVES (1986-1998)
IN PERCENTS AND INDICES OF MINORITY AND "WHITE ETHNIC" DIVERSITY

County	Proposition 187 Illegal Immigration	Proposition 209 Affirmative Action	Proposition 227 Bilingual Education	Proposition 63 Official English	Minority Diversity	"White Ethnic" Diversity
Alameda	54.12	64.94	42.51	58.69	.64	.158
Alpine	66.75	70.87	67.71	80.28	.52	.140
Amador	71.49	74.10	72.34	72.33	.29	.210
Butte	70.72	72.00	71.19	71.13	.24	.178
Calaveras	71.55	72.09	71.53	73.49	.15	.203
Colusa	74.02	74.70	82.40	80.09	.50	.136
Contra Costa	56.66	63.63	52.45	65.65	.48	.190
Del Norte	70.13	73.07	70.12	82.37	.38	.170
El Dorado	71.67	72.36	72.01	73.92	.18	.188
Fresno	67.54	72.76	68.52	73.95	.60	.104
Glenn	77.44	79.75	80.36	79.15	.41	.161
Humboldt	54.22	56.14	52.79	67.27	.22	.187
Imperial	66.14	72.35	68.61	75.71	.48	.048
Inyo	76.00	77.29	77.11	79.62	.34	.150
Kern	71.78	76.27	76.38	77.51	.52	.119
Kings	69.86	72.71	74.52	75.90	.58	.157
Lake	68.46	69.09	68.70	65.81	.22	.192
Lassen	74.56	76.90	77.35	81.05	.36	.152
Los Angeles	66.74	69.94	58.51	73.09	.66	.107
Madera	74.69	77.59	80.10	77.32	.52	.126
Marin	43.48	44.90	40.08	54.22	.27	.247
Mariposa	73.47	74.44	73.51	77.17	.21	.155
Mendocino	56.44	59.11	53.93	59.48	.28	.199
Merced	69.58	73.09	73.75	71.28	.59	.171
Modoc	72.74	74.13	72.79	80.17	.22	.156
Mond	69.01	70.14	69.00	78.70	.28	.177
Monterey	61.95	68.63	51.24	72.15	.61	.127
Napa	59.09	61.73	57.68	60.10	.32	.193
Nevada	70.41	70.91	70.20	71.00	.11	.185
Orange	69.87	72.08	71.14	77.61	.52	.151
Placer	70.50	71.52	71.17	72.03	.22	.197
Plumas	73.46	64.58	73.78	74.43	.17	.182
Riverside	71.86	73.50	73.65	75.54	.52	.137
Sacramento	63.24	67.68	60.86	67.98	.49	.158
San Benito	64.97	69.68	60.04	71.98	.53	.150
San Bernardino	68.75	72.20	70.92	71.56	.55	.130
San Diego	68.60	72.76	70.11	77.25	.53	.152
San Francisco	47.83	57.34	27.58	56.20	.66	.163

APPENDIX A (*continued*)

County	Proposition 187 Illegal Immigration	Proposition 209 Affirmative Action	Proposition 227 Bilingual Education	Proposition 63 Official English	Minority Diversity	"White Ethnic" Diversity
San Joaquin	68.14	70.31	68.21	71.31	.58	.147
San Luis Obi	64.08	67.67	64.04	71.45	.32	.181
San Mateo	56.68	62.98	43.59	66.57	.58	.203
Santa Barbara	63.38	66.68	59.11	72.36	.36	.147
Santa Clara	57.03	63.66	48.63	66.14	.49	.164
Santa Cruz	52.83	59.48	47.91	65.01	.62	.187
Shasta	75.57	75.68	76.32	73.85	.17	.178
Sierra	71.37	72.07	71.29	74.20	.15	.200
Siskiyou	72.72	74.30	72.81	81.78	.22	.190
Solano	63.42	67.61	60.30	69.43	.58	.151
Sonoma	52.28	56.54	49.69	59.13	.28	.236
Stanislaus	68.85	70.90	69.73	66.57	.45	.173
Sutter	74.59	77.35	77.51	76.22	.45	.137
Tehana	75.61	77.14	76.10	76.96	.23	.166
Trinity	69.72	70.43	69.75	76.93	.17	.164
Tulare	71.08	75.34	75.62	72.65	.54	.117
Tuolumne	71.05	71.63	71.16	75.04	.25	.195
Ventura	68.17	72.59	67.65	73.36	.49	.158
Yolo	54.59	62.39	49.52	58.47	.48	.150
Yuba	74.56	75.84	76.12	74.35	.43	.139

APPENDIX B

TABLE 1.
RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND THE OVERALL VOTE FOR THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES

	β (Standard Error)			
	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994	Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996	Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998	Proposition 64 Official English 1986
Index of Minority Diversity[a]	−.478**	−.422**	−.431**	−.253**
	(.086)	(.068)	(.064)	(.052)
Index of White Ethnic Diversity[b]	−.019**	−.012**	−.013**	−.005**
	(.004)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
Constant	1.151	.980	1.037	.956
	(.093)	(.074)	(.069)	(.056)

TABLE 1 (*continued*)

	β (Standard Error)			
	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994	Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996	Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998	Proposition 64 Official English 1986
Adjusted R^2	.37	.39	.43	.29
Standard Error	.086	.069	.065	.052
F	17.30**	19.033**	22.601**	12.384**

Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients, standard errors in parenthesis. Probabilities based on two-tailed test.
**p < .01
N = 58 counties.

TABLE 2.
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT AND THE WHITE VOTE FOR THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES

	β (Standard Error)			
	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994	Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996	Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998	Proposition 64 Official English 1986
Unemployment Rates (1994, 1996, 1998, 1986)	.63** (.12)	.48** (.09)	.89** (.11)	.48** (.12)
Percent Registered Republicans (1994, 1996, 1998, 1986)	.64** (.07)	.54** (.06)	1.24** (.08)	.73** (.08)
Constant	35.91 (2.68)	44.07 (2.53)	8.58 (2.99)	40.21 (3.32)
Adjusted R^2	.71	.67	.86	.61
Standard Error	.52	.52	.55	.55
F	69.40**	57.97**	180.27**	44.68**

Entries are unstandarized WLS regression coefficients, standard errors in parenthesis. Probabilities based on two-tailed test.
**p < .01
N = 58 counties.

TABLE 3.
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT AND THE POPULAR VOTE FOR THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES

	β (Standard Error)			
	Proposition 187 Immigration 1994	Proposition 209 Affirmative Action 1996	Proposition 227 Bilingual Education 1998	Proposition 64 Official English 1986
Unemployment Rates (1994, 1996, 1998, 1986)	.010** (.002)	.004** (.001)	.003* (.001)	.000 (.002)
Percent Registered Republicans (1994, 1996, 1998, 1986)	.011** (.001)	.010** (.001)	.009** (.001)	.007** (.001)
Constant	.128 (.036)	.169 (.030)	.269 (.033)	.517 (.045)
Adjusted R^2	.79	.80	.72	.39
Standard Error	.049	.039	.046	.048
F	108.80**	117.446**	73.352**	19.365**

Entries are undstandarized OLS regression coefficients, standard errors in parenthesis. Probabilities based on two-tailed test.
**p < .001
N = 58 counties.

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