

Playing Hard to Get: Can Group Pivotality Increase Partisan Responsiveness?*

Albert H. Fang
Yale University

Adam Thal
Yale University

Patrick D. Tucker
Yale University

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Abstract

A central question in democracy concerns the extent to which elites are responsive to different social groups. While we know that certain groups receive limited representation, we know little about what these groups can do to gain greater representation. We examine one prominent strategy, in which groups attempt to gain more responsiveness from politicians by casting their support as pivotal. Existing theories suggest this should be a highly effective strategy, but offer little direct evidence. We fill this gap with a survey experiment fielded on U.S. state legislative candidates, where subjects are asked to form campaign strategies for hypothetical competitive electoral contests. We find evidence that uncertain support for the politician's party (as compared to certain support) causes politicians to be more responsive in exerting group-targeted campaign effort, but not in taking more pro-group policy actions. The results call into question a commonly practiced strategy for inducing responsiveness from politicians.

Keywords: party-group relations; group politics; party politics; survey experiment; elite experiment; electoral strategy

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A central question in democracy concerns the extent to which elites are responsive to different social groups. While prior research widely documents the phenomenon of group-level inequality in responsiveness (e.g., Butler 2014; Gilens 2012), few studies explore what groups can do to gain greater responsiveness from political elites, either in terms of the effort and attention elites expend on groups (affecting symbolic representation) or in terms of their policy behavior to advance the interests of a group (affecting substantive representation).¹ One potentially important strategy that may induce greater responsiveness from a given party is recasting a group’s support as pivotal.² Group pivotality has long played a central role in theories of elite responsiveness to groups (e.g., Downs 1957; Riker 1962). While group pivotality has been operationalized in various ways in the literature, we focus on a definition common across existing theories that maps onto realistic heuristics that politicians receive: the perception that a group’s support for one’s party is uncertain.

Existing work provides competing theoretical expectations about whether perceived group pivotality generates greater responsiveness to the group from party elites in competitive elections. On the one hand, party elites may be more responsive to “swing” and pivotal voters (as compared to non-pivotal “core” voters in the party’s base) due to the lack of core voters’ ability to credibly threaten to punish the party for being unresponsive and party incentives to court swing voters to win (e.g., Lindbeck and Weibull 1987; Dixit and Londregan 1995, 1996; Stokes 2005). On the other hand, party elites may not exhibit greater responsiveness to pivotal groups because they have greater incentives to be responsive to “core” in-party voters to maintain existing political coalitions and bases of electoral support (e.g., Cox and McCubbins 1986; Hirano, Snyder and Ting 2009). Relatedly, in certain cases, pursuing a marginal constituency may lead the politician to expect retribution from their core supporters (Fenno 1978), a potential trade-off that is understudied in the literature.

¹A key exception is a burgeoning literature examining the effects of protest (see, e.g., Wasow 2017), a different strategy groups use to exert political influence on elites, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

²For example, groups assumed to be captured by one of the two parties, such as African Americans with the Democratic Party, sometimes seek to extract greater responsiveness from politicians by casting their party loyalty as uncertain (Parnes 2019). By contrast, other groups such as working class whites are assumed to be “up for grabs” between the two parties, and appear to gain greater responsiveness as a result (Teixeira 2018).

Prior empirical work testing these competing expectations uses a number of approaches. Existing observational research designs compare the share of divisible political and policy returns allocated between “core” and “swing” constituencies and find mixed support for the claim that pivotality yields greater responsiveness. Swing constituencies receive a greater share of campaign resources (e.g., Colantoni, Levesque and Ordeshook 1975; Nagler and Leighley 1990; Stromberg 2008) but do not receive a greater share of government expenditures (e.g., Stromberg 2004; Larcinese, Rizzo and Testa 2006; Ansolabehere and Snyder 2006; Larcinese, Snyder and Testa 2010). Instead, core constituencies receive a greater share of government expenditures (e.g., Levitt and Snyder 1995; Ansolabehere and Snyder 2006) but may also experience higher policy costs (e.g., Kasara 2007). In addition, existing qualitative historical research assesses patterns in the development of specific party-group relations over time. Frymer (1999), for example, provides historical evidence that white swing voters receive more politician time and resources than captured Black voters, which is consistent with the argument that pivotality yields greater responsiveness.

However, our ability to draw credible causal inferences about the effect of group pivotality on elite responsiveness from existing empirical work is limited in two important ways. First, existing research designs do not explicitly assess the counterfactual condition where group support is certain (as opposed to uncertain), holding fixed the definition of the group and the political context. Second, while the underlying theory is a behavioral theory about elite strategy and decision-making, existing research designs provide only indirect inferences by comparing outcomes that result from collective choices that may be affected by other unobserved confounders, and do not directly test how group pivotality affects the behavior and decision of individual politicians.

To address these limitations, we use a randomized experiment to directly measure how elites treat groups different when they are and are not perceived as pivotal. This is to our knowledge the first causal and behavioral test of the effect of group pivotality on how partisan elites form group-based electoral strategies. By conducting our experiment on sample of real

world politicians, we create a high degree of internal and external validity.

In addition to our main analysis of the average effect of uncertain group support on elite behavior, we also conduct an exploratory analysis of heterogeneity across party-group pairs. Pivotality may have different effects depending on the social group and party in question. This is because politicians may have deep, strongly held attachments to certain social groups, and strongly held aversions to others (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Mason 2018; Bawn et al. 2012; McCarty and Schickler 2018). Politicians pre-existing preferences for and against certain groups may moderate how they respond to evidence that that group is or is not certain to support their party.

Our main results come from a novel survey experiment embedded in an original nationwide survey of state legislative candidates running in the 2018 election. In our experiment, whose design and analysis plan was pre-specified and pre-registered, we present politicians with vignettes involving hypothetical competitive districts where a co-partisan candidate is running in a contested race and ask them to advise that candidate on how they should craft group-targeted electoral strategies given information about the distribution of electoral support among likely voters in the district. The hypothetical electoral contests are framed such that either racial politics or class politics is salient, and we randomize (1) the definition of the group that is focal in the electoral contest and (2) whether the group's support for the co-partisan candidate is certain or uncertain.

We report three main findings. First, contributing to a large literature on social discrimination among partisan elites (CITES), we find that Democratic politicians are more responsive to racial minorities and union members whereas Republican politicians are more responsive to working class whites and business owners. Second, we find limited evidence that on average, across a range of racial and class-based groups, pivotality increases responsiveness from politicians. To that politicians respond more to pivotal groups, they do so only by exerting group-targeted campaign effort. By contrast, pivotality does not lead politicians to take policy actions that favor groups. Third, we find evidence of heterogeneous effects of

uncertain group support on partisan responsiveness between constituency groups, in which certain groups can extract benefits from the Democratic Party but not the Republican Party, and vice versa.

Our study advances prior research on the interaction between parties and social subgroups in four key ways. First, we identify the causal effect of uncertain group support on elites' group-based strategy and decision-making, and thus make an empirical contribution to prior research that has not focused on this causal relationship. Second, while previous work concentrates on a specific dyad between a group and a political party, we investigate the relationship of electoral competition across multiple groups and both major parties. Third, conclusions drawn from previous research are typically drawn from historical phenomena (e.g., Frymer 1999). While this work is essential to understanding modern dynamics in American electoral politics, it is unable to focus on the role uncertainty plays in forging partisan electoral strategies. Finally, our results have implications for groups seeking to increase the amount of responsiveness they can extract from political elites. Our findings suggest that at best, uncertain group support can move only superficial forms of responsiveness. It does not affect elites' policy behavior toward the group, calling into question the importance of electoral strategies that constituencies can employ to induce greater democratic responsiveness.

1 Design

1.1 Data: The 2018 State Legislative Candidate Study

Data for this project were gathered from a survey experiment fielded on the 2018 State Legislative Candidate Study, an online survey of legislative candidates. In the fall of 2018, researchers gathered email addresses for 12,638 individuals who ran as primary or general candidates in states with contested legislative elections that year. Invitations were sent to candidates 15 days before the general election and subjects were allowed to complete the survey online through the end of November 2018. Of those to whom emails were sent, 1,444 participated in the questions used in this study (a 11.4% response rate). This rate is

comparable to what others have obtained in elite surveys (e.g., Broockman and Skovron 2018; Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenerger, and Stokes 2019). The candidates come from X states. The sample is broadly representative of the overall population of candidates for state legislature in 2018 (see Appendix). One noteworthy exception, which has also been found in past elite surveys (e.g., Broockman and Skovron 2018; Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenerger, and Stokes 2019), is that Democrats were more likely to respond than Republicans. Of the candidates who completed the survey, 886 are Democrats and 448 are Republicans.³ Here we focus on Democratic and Republican politicians only.

1.2 Experimental Design

Subjects who entered the experiment were asked to evaluate two hypothetical districts in which a co-partisan candidate is running for office against an out-partisan candidate, and were asked to provide campaign strategy and advice to the co-partisan candidate. For one of the district-election scenarios, the group of interest was defined in racial terms. For the other scenario, the group was defined in class terms. The order in which subjects encounter the two scenarios was randomized.

For each district-election scenario, subjects are told: “There is a competitive district where experts say it is uncertain whether Democrats or Republicans will win. The latest poll shows that each party has the support of 40% of likely voters, but the remaining 20% of likely voters are undecided and can swing the election in either direction.” They are then shown a table summarizing “the groups that comprise the likely Democratic voters, the likely Republican voters, and the voters who are likely to turnout but have not decided which party to vote for yet.” A sample table is shown in Table 1.

The table summarizes the composition of likely voters in the hypothetical district. The placement of the other groups in the table (“young people” in the Democratic likely voters column, “senior citizens” in the undecided likely voters column, and “evangelical Christians”

³Party affiliation data were collected from state election board websites and is defined as the party identification the candidate indicated when initially filing to run for office in the 2018 cycle.

Table 1. Sample Treatment Table. This table summarizes the distribution of groups among likely voters in the hypothetical district and contains the treatments.

Democratic Likely Voters (40%)	Undecided Likely Voters (20%)	Republican Likely Voters (40%)
young people [<i>Group A</i>]	senior citizens [<i>Group B</i>]	evangelical Christians [<i>Group C</i>]

in the Republican likely voters column) are fixed across all scenarios and are defined in order to increase the realism of the hypothetical scenario. [*Group A*], [*Group B*], and [*Group C*] are placeholders where we randomly assign groups to be displayed.

Specifically, we randomize two factors: (1) the target group of interest and (2) whether the target group are likely voters who are undecided or are likely voters who support the candidate’s party.

In the class politics scenario, we have a 2×2 factorial design: the target group of interest can be either “business owners” or “union members.” In the racial politics scenario, we have a 3×2 factorial design: the target group of interest can be either “African Americans,” “Latinos,” or “working class whites.”⁴

Two aspects of the experimental design are notable and have key substantive implications for how we interpret results. First, by randomizing whether the group’s support is uncertain, we abstract away the process groups use to signal changes. Because the treatment is designed such that there is no uncertainty surrounding the information of whether the group’s support for the subject’s party is certain, we can interpret estimated treatment effects of uncertain group support as an upper bound on the responsiveness of partisan elites to group

⁴We are aware that the group “working class whites” arguably confounds race with class and creates a bundled treatment. However, we argue that qualifying a white constituency group as working-class (instead of not adding this qualifier) is preferred and increases treatment realism in several important ways. First, as the dominant racial group in the United States, whites are seldom perceived or discussed as a monolithic constituency with common group interests. Second, contemporary political discourse in the United States has defined working class whites as a relevant political and social category that plausibly could be a constituency in play for both the Democratic and Republican parties. Third, in contemporary American political discourse, “working class whites” are commonly described as having interests that are in conflict with the interests of racial and ethnic minority groups. The “working class whites” condition thus provides a comparison group for the other racial group treatments that lets us understand a real-world intergroup political conflict that many perceive exists and map onto realistic strategic tradeoffs that partisan elites plausibly confront.

pivotality. Second, because all groups being considered in the scenario are defined as likely voters, we are holding fixed turnout expectations by design.⁵

Table S1 in the Appendix summarizes the possible randomizations, defined as a function of the scenario type (racial or class group scenario) and the candidate’s party (Democratic or Republican), as well as the assigned values for [*Group A*], [*Group B*], and [*Group C*] in the treatment script that correspond to each randomization. The Appendix also provides illustrative examples of the tables shown to candidates across various conditions.

1.3 Outcomes

For each scenario, subjects are asked how they would advise the candidate on five different strategic decisions, two of which concern the costly allocation of group-targeted campaign effort and the remaining concern decisions about pro-group policy position-taking.⁶

First, subjects are asked to advise the candidate on the percentage of the candidate’s time they should devote to reaching out to groups defined in the scenario as co-partisan or undecided likely voters. This outcome is defined as the percentage of time the subject recommends the candidate spends on the group-of-interest.

Second, subjects are asked to advise the candidate on the percentage of a given budget that should be spent on group-targeted voter mobilization (for co-partisan likely voters) or persuasion (for undecided likely voter groups).⁷ This outcome is defined as the percentage of campaign funds the subject recommends the candidate spends on the group-of-interest.

Third, subjects are asked if they agree or disagree that the candidate should publicly promise the target group that they would advance a policy benefiting the group.⁸ This

⁵Importantly this feature of the design allows us to avoid exclusion restriction violations that could arise if subjects believe that some groups are more likely to vote than others and alter their behavior due to group-specific turnout expectations, rather than due to differences attributable only to the definition of the constituency group that is focal and being considered.

⁶See the Appendix for full details about the outcome measures.

⁷The budget is randomly assigned to equal \$50,000 or \$100,000 to include a range of electoral contexts by spending intensity, but we pool across these conditions as this difference is not of substantive interest.

⁸For the racial politics scenario, the promise is “to introduce legislation that would significantly increase funding for public health and community development programs benefiting” the group. For the class politics scenario, the promise is “to introduce legislation that would change existing labor and business regulations to be friendlier toward” the group.

measure of costless position-taking⁹ is measured on a 4-point scale (0=strongly disagree to 3=strongly agree).

Fourth, subjects are asked to consider a zoning dispute in the hypothetical district, where if the candidate takes the target group’s side, then they will likely anger other co-partisan voters in the district. Subjects are then asked if they agree or disagree that the candidate should take the side of the target group in the zoning dispute. This outcome is also measured on a 4-point scale (0=strongly disagree to 3=strongly agree).

Fifth, subjects are asked to imagine the candidate as an incumbent legislator going into the election and that the legislature were considering a bill that pitted the interests of the target group against the interests of an opposing group.¹⁰ Subjects are asked if they would advise the candidate to cast a pro-group vote (1), an anti-group vote¹¹ (-1), or abstain (0) if the bill came up for a vote before the election.

2 Results

2.1 Group Differences in Partisans’ Group-Targeted Strategies

We first assess whether partisan elites behave differently toward electoral groups only as a function of which group is being considered and is electorally focal. To answer this question in the context of racial politics scenarios, we regress each outcome on indicators for the group-of-interest being defined as African Americans or Latinos (the omitted reference condition is where the group is defined as working class whites). For class politics scenarios, we regress

⁹We construe this treatment as costless because it does not explicitly define a potential cost associated with the action, we acknowledge that all political actions that advance the interests of one group could be perceived as negatively affecting another group and thus be perceived as costly.

¹⁰For racial politics scenarios, the opposing group is defined as “working class whites” if the target group is defined as “African Americans” or “Latinos” and the opposing group is randomly assigned as “African Americans” or “Latinos” if the target group is defined as “working class whites.” For class politics scenarios, the opposing group is defined as “business owners” if the target group is defined as “union members” and vice versa. We stress that these groups are not inherently defined in opposition to each other. Instead, we define groups in this way in order to capture how groups are sometimes perceived and characterized in relation to each other in American politics and, consequently, to assess elite strategies given this particular framing of group relations.

¹¹An anti-group vote is defined as a vote that would further the opposing group’s interests.

each outcome on an indicator for the group-of-interest being defined as business owners (the omitted reference condition is where the group is defined as union members). We conduct this analysis separately by party and by the scenario type (racial or class politics) given differences in histories and expectations about party-group relations for each party-cleavage pairing. Across analyses, positive (negative) estimates of a group-specific coefficient provide evidence that elites of the party analyzed treat that group more (less) favorably on average in electoral campaigns than the reference group. Table 2 summarizes the results of these analyses, displaying a “+” (“-”) where the average treatment effect is positive (negative) and statistically significant at a 5% level.¹²

Table 2. Between-Group Differences in Partisans’ Group-Targeted Strategies

Between-Group Difference	Outcome				
	Percent Time	Percent Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
A. Democratic Subjects (racial politics scenarios)					
African Americans - Working Class Whites				+	+
Latinos - Working Class Whites	-				+
B. Democratic Subjects (class politics scenarios)					
Union Members - Business Owners	+	+	+	+	+
C. Republican Subjects (racial politics scenarios)					
African Americans - Working Class Whites	-	-		-	-
Latinos - Working Class Whites	-	-	-	-	-
D. Republican Subjects (class politics scenarios)					
Union Members - Business Owners	-	-	-	-	-

Notes: A + symbol denotes a positive average treatment effect estimate that is statistically significant at a 5% level. A - symbol denotes a positive average treatment effect estimate that is statistically significant at a 5% level. Full regression estimates are shown in Tables S8, S9, S10, and S11 in the online appendix.

As Table 2 shows, Republican elites treat working class whites more favorably than either African Americans or Latinos and treat business owners more favorably than union members. These patterns are fairly consistent across all outcomes. Democratic elites treat union members more favorably than business owners, a pattern that is also consistent across all outcomes. Interestingly we find that Democratic politicians treat African Americans and Latinos more favorably than working class whites in the domain of costly position-taking, but we find no consistent differences in how Democratic elites treat either African Americans

¹²Full regression estimates are shown in Tables S8, S9, S10, and S11 in the online appendix).

or Latinos (as compared to working class whites) in campaign effort. These results show that Democratic politicians are more electorally responsive to racial minorities and union members whereas Republican politicians are more electorally responsive to working class whites and business owners, and provide face validity to the data.

2.2 Does Uncertain Group Support Affect Partisan Strategy?

Does uncertain support have a main effect on partisans' electoral strategies? Pooling across groups, we find limited evidence that this is the case for both Democratic and Republican elites (see Appendix Tables S12 and S13). Uncertain support (instead of certain co-partisan support) causes the belief that greater campaign effort should be directed toward the group, but only for Democratic elites and only in the form of devoting more time to group-targeted campaigning. On all other outcomes for Democrats and on all outcomes for Republicans, the pooled analyses show null effects.

However, these null effects potentially mask heterogeneous effects across party-group pairs. To investigate this possibility, we estimate the effect of uncertain group support on each outcome by party and by group, when electoral politics and focal constituencies are defined racially (Figure 1) and in class terms (Figure 2).

As Figure 1 shows, Democratic politicians recommend devoting a greater share of time engaging in group-targeted campaigning for African Americans and for working class whites when their group support for Democrats becomes uncertain. By contrast, uncertain group support causes Republican politicians to become more responsive to working class whites by spending time and money on group-targeted campaigning and by taking costly pro-group policy positions that conflict with the interests of other Republican constituents in the district. In addition, Republican politicians also become less responsive to African Americans when their support becomes uncertain (as compared to being certain in support of Republicans) by being less likely to vote for pro-Black policy interests that conflict with the interests of working class whites.

Figure 1. Effect of Uncertain Group Support by Party and by Racial Group. The figure presents estimated mean effects with 95% confidence intervals.

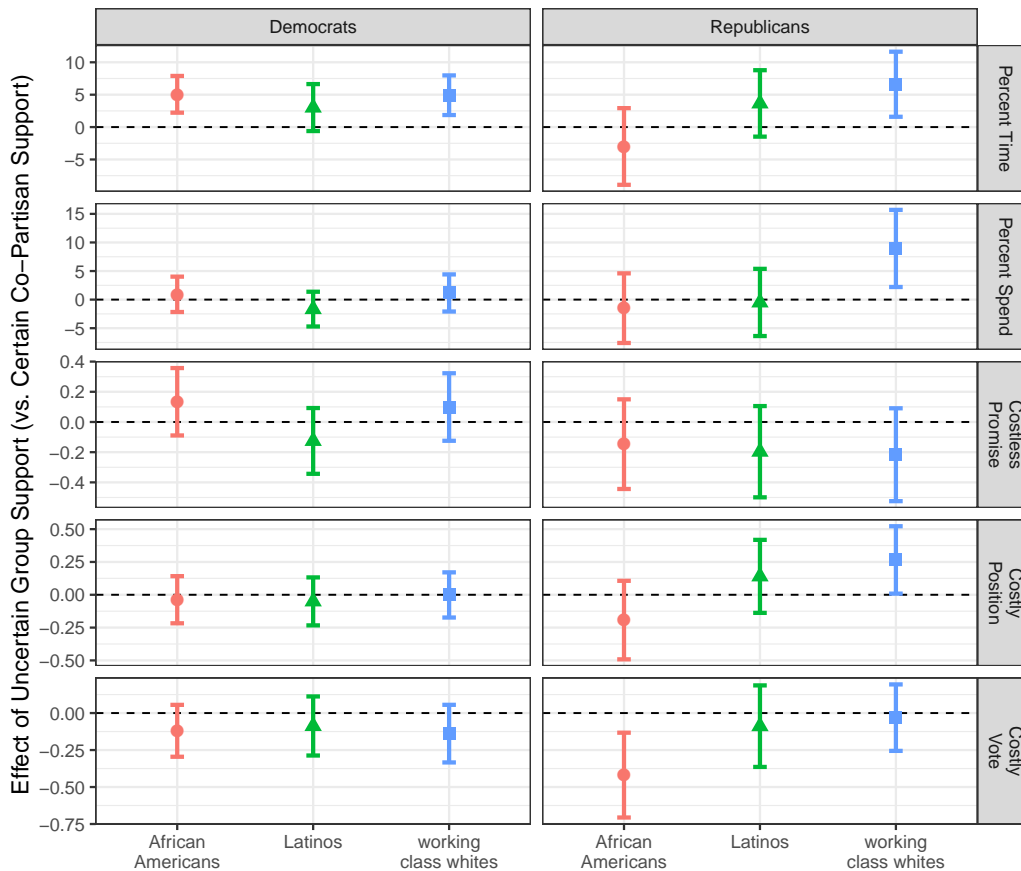
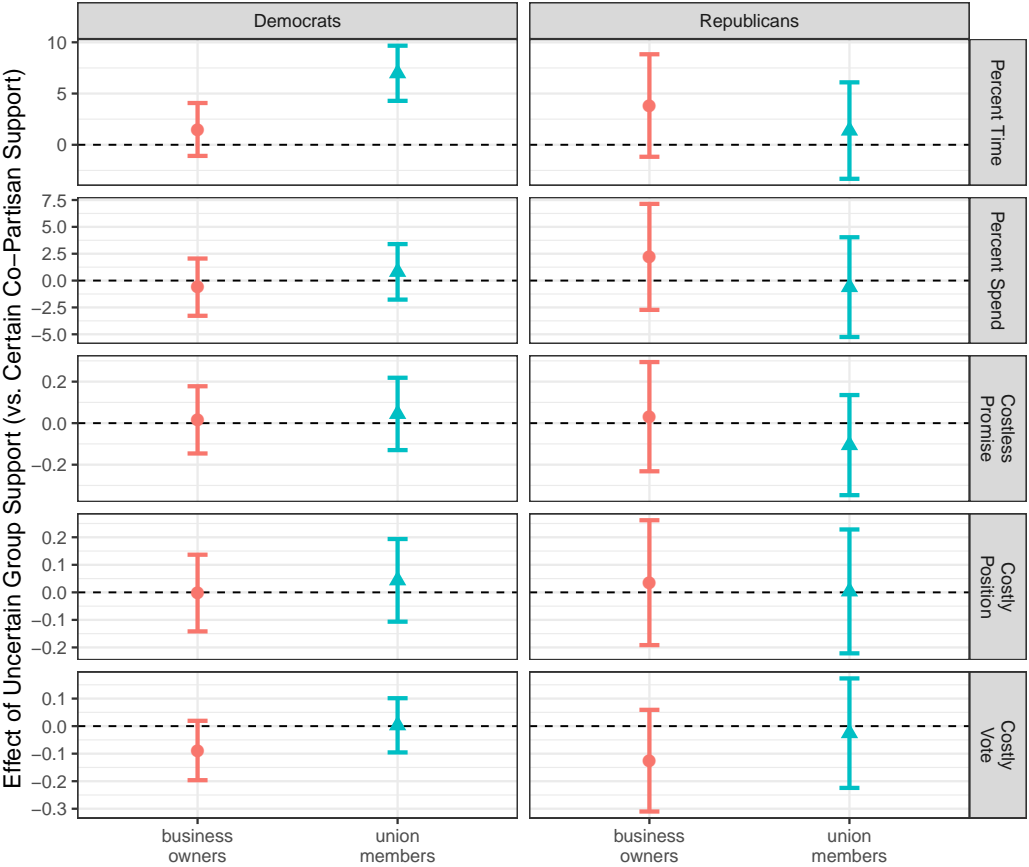


Figure 2 shows that Republican politicians are no more responsive to either business owners or union members when either group’s support for the Republican party becomes uncertain. By contrast, we find that Democratic politicians are more responsive to union members by spending more time on group-targeted campaigning when their support for the Democratic Party becomes uncertain.

In sum, our results show that for selected party-group pairs, uncertain support (instead of certain co-partisan support) can affect party elites’ responsiveness in exerting more group-specific campaign effort, but not in taking more pro-group policy actions.¹³

¹³We also conducted a differences-in-differences analysis to formally assess whether the definition of the focal group moderates the effect of uncertain group support. Full results are shown in online appendix C.3. Whereas Democratic elites’ responsiveness to the uncertainty of group support appears to be conditioned by the definition of the group in the domain of *class* politics but not in the domain of racial politics, we observe

Figure 2. Effect of Uncertain Group Support by Party and by Class Group. The figure presents estimated mean effects with 95% confidence intervals.



3 Discussion

Popular political narratives contend that racial and class subgroups play pivotal roles in determining the outcomes of elections. Our results provide greater insight to the study of the interaction between subgroups and elites within the context of political campaigns and governing. We provide the first causal evidence that social groups can extract responsiveness from elites by signaling that their support is available and pivotal. Yet we also show the limits of this strategy: groups that are perceived as pivotal gain attention on the campaign trail from partisan elites, but do not gain in terms of concrete policy.

the reverse for Republican elites, whose differential responsiveness to uncertain group support appears to be conditioned by the definition of the group in the domain of *racial* politics but not in the domain of class politics.

The results from this experiment cannot account for all of the systemic social inequalities that may contribute to disparities in representation. Yet, these findings demonstrate a potential way forward for groups to ensure greater responsiveness from elites. By signaling ambiguity or uncertainty of electoral support in a campaign, elites may respond more forcefully to relevant groups with more attention and, in some cases, favorable legislative outcomes. At the same time, however, our results indicate that elites have their own preferences which moderate reactions to these signals. Social groups have the ability to improve their level of responsiveness marginally by acting collectively, but they cannot upend the current political environment. Elites' pre-treatment preferences limit the ability of groups to improve their level of representation through the action of becoming pivotal. Perhaps most surprisingly, this collective action can lead to less representation in some cases.

Our findings are important in that we demonstrate social groups can induce a level of dynamism in the responsiveness of partisan elites. To be sure, this movement to pivotality is not a panacea to cure all lack of representation. In the case of African-Americans and Republicans, this movement may even worsen levels of responsiveness. If groups wish to improve their standing in the political order, they must do so strategically by considering how members of both parties view their importance to their electoral coalition. Correct calculations may lead to improved political representation, while errant strategies could contribute to widening representation gaps.

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Supplemental Information for:

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Albert H. Fang
Yale University

Adam Thal
Yale University

Patrick D. Tucker
Yale University

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A Additional Details about Experimental Design

A.1 Treatments

Table S1. Definition of Treatments

Arm	Randomized Factors:		Assigned Values in Treatment Script:		
	Target Group	Voter Type	Group A	Group B	Group C
Racial Group Scenario; Democratic Candidate					
1	African Americans	Democratic LV	African Americans	(blank)	(blank)
2	African Americans	Undecided LV	(blank)	African Americans	(blank)
3	Latinos	Democratic LV	Latinos	(blank)	(blank)
4	Latinos	Undecided LV	(blank)	Latinos	(blank)
5	working class whites	Democratic LV	working class whites	(blank)	(blank)
6	working class whites	Undecided LV	(blank)	working class whites	(blank)
Racial Group Scenario; Republican Candidate					
1	African Americans	Republican LV	(blank)	(blank)	African Americans
2	African Americans	Undecided LV	(blank)	African Americans	(blank)
3	Latinos	Republican LV	(blank)	(blank)	Latinos
4	Latinos	Undecided LV	(blank)	Latinos	(blank)
5	working class whites	Republican LV	(blank)	(blank)	working class whites
6	working class whites	Undecided LV	(blank)	working class whites	(blank)
Class Group Scenario; Democratic Candidate					
1	business owners	Democratic LV	business owners	(blank)	(blank)
2	business owners	Undecided LV	(blank)	business owners	(blank)
3	union members	Democratic LV	union members	(blank)	(blank)
4	union members	Undecided LV	(blank)	union members	(blank)
Class Group Scenario; Republican Candidate					
1	business owners	Republican LV	(blank)	(blank)	business owners
2	business owners	Undecided LV	(blank)	business owners	(blank)
3	union members	Republican LV	(blank)	(blank)	union members
4	union members	Undecided LV	(blank)	union members	(blank)

A.2 Example Treatments

In this section we provide some illustrative examples of what the experimental treatment looked like to respondents across different conditions. As an example, a Democratic candidate assigned to treatment arm 1 for the racial group scenario in S1 above would have seen the following in the table shown to respondents:

Table S2. Experimental Vignette

Democratic Likely Voters (40%)	Undecided Likely Voters (20%)	Republican Likely Voters (40%)
young people African Americans	senior citizens	evangelical Christians

By contrast, a Democratic candidate assigned to treatment arm 2 for the racial group scenario in S1 above would have seen the following in the table shown to respondents:

Table S3. Experimental Vignette

Democratic Likely Voters (40%)	Undecided Likely Voters (20%)	Republican Likely Voters (40%)
young people	senior citizens African Americans	evangelical Christians

A Republican candidate assigned to treatment arm 1 for the racial group scenario in S1 above would have seen the following in the table shown to respondents:

Table S4. Experimental Vignette

Democratic Likely Voters (40%)	Undecided Likely Voters (20%)	Republican Likely Voters (40%)
young people	senior citizens	evangelical Christians African Americans

By contrast, a Republican candidate assigned to treatment arm 2 for the racial group scenario in S1 above would have seen the following in the table shown to respondents:

Table S5. Experimental Vignette

Democratic Likely Voters (40%)	Undecided Likely Voters (20%)	Republican Likely Voters (40%)
young people	senior citizens African Americans	evangelical Christians

A.3 Outcomes

After being presented with each scenario, subjects are then instructed: “We’d like to know how you would advise the [CandidateParty] candidate on the following questions.” Subjects are then shown five questions:

1. The [CandidateParty] candidate has a limited amount of time left to contact voters, and is trying to decide how much time to spend reaching out to [CandidateParty] and undecided likely voters.

Using the sliders below, please give your advice about what percentage of the candidate’s time should be devoted to each group. (The numbers must add up to 100.)

<Show 3 sliders: 0-100. Label first with the fixed co-partisan LV group. Label second slider with the fixed undecided LV group. Label third slider with the randomized target group of interest. Randomize slider order.>

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The [CandidateParty] candidate should publicly promise [Promise] [TargetGroup] in their district.

<Show 4-item scale: Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree>

<For the field [Promise]: If showing the racial group scenario, display: “to introduce legislation that would significantly increase funding for public health and community development programs benefitting”. If showing the class group scenario, display: “to introduce legislation that would change existing labor and business regulations to be friendlier toward”.>

<For the field [TargetGroup]: Display the randomized target group of interest.>

3. Suppose [TargetGroup] were involved in a zoning dispute in this district. If the candidate takes the side of [TargetGroup], they will likely anger some potential [CandidateParty] voters.

Do you agree or disagree that the candidate should take the side of [TargetGroup] in the zoning dispute?

<Show 4-item scale: Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree>

<For the field [TargetGroup]: Display the randomized target group of interest.>

4. Suppose that there were three weeks left before election day, and the [CandidateParty] candidate has *<randomize: \$50,000 / \$100,000>* to spend on voter mobilization and persuasion.

What percent of this budget do you think should be used to mobilize [FixedCoPartisan-Group], persuade [FixedUndecidedGroup], and [TargetGroupAction] [TargetGroup]? (The numbers must add up to 100.)

<For the field [FixedCoPartisanGroup]: If [CandidateParty] is Democratic, then display “young people”; else if [CandidateParty] is Republican, then display “evangelical Christians”.>

<For the field [FixedUndecidedGroup]: Display “senior citizens”.>

<For the field [TargetGroupAction]: If target group is randomly assigned to be in the Undecided LV column, then display “persuade”; else if target group is randomly assigned to be in the co-partisan LV column, then display “mobilize”.>

<Show 3 sliders: 0-100. Label first with “Mobilize [FixedCoPartisanGroup]”. Label second slider with “Persuade [FixedUndecidedGroup]”. Label third slider with “[TargetGroupAction] [TargetGroup]”. Randomize slider order.>

5. Suppose the [CandidateParty] candidate were the incumbent going into the election and the legislature were considering a bill that pitted the interests of [TargetGroup] against those of [OpposingGroup].

If that bill came up for a vote before the election, would you advise the [CandidateParty] candidate to vote in a way that favors [TargetGroup], vote in a way that favors [OpposingGroup], or abstain?

<Show 3-item scale: Vote in a way that favors [TargetGroup]; Abstain; Vote in a way that favors [OpposingGroup]>

<For the field [OpposingGroup]: If [TargetGroup] is “African Americans” or “Latinos” then [OpposingGroup] is “working class whites”. If [TargetGroup] is “working class whites” then randomize [OpposingGroup] to be “African Americans” or “Latinos” with equal probability. If [TargetGroup] is “business owners” then [OpposingGroup] is “union members”. If [TargetGroup] is “union members” then [OpposingGroup] is “business owners”.>

These outcome measures can be conceptually grouped into three sets:

Table S6. Conceptual Groupings of Outcome Measures

Outcome Set	Description of Outcome Type	Associated Outcome Questions
1	Costless position-taking	#2
2	Costly position-taking	#3, #5
3	Costly campaign effort	#1, #4

For the main analysis, we construct the following outcome variables from raw responses to each of the outcome items as follows:

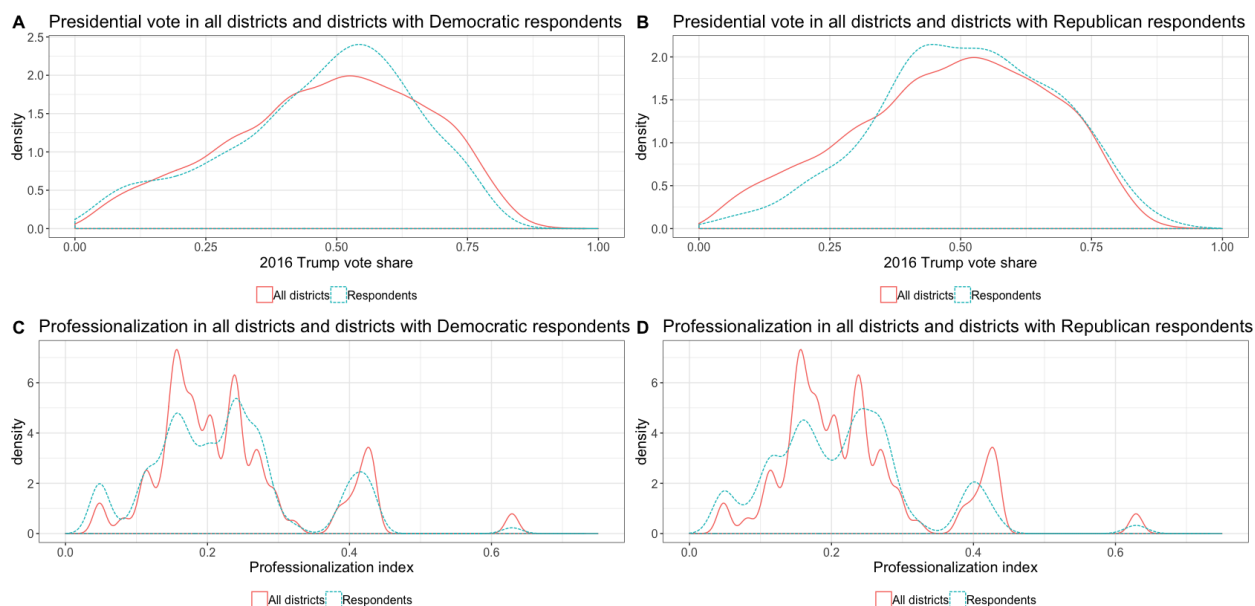
Table S7. Definition and Coding of Outcome Measures Used for the Main Analysis

Outcome Question	Variable Description	Value/Coding
#1	Recommended Percent of Candidate's Time to Devote to Outreach to Target Group	0-100
#2	Candidate Should Make a Costless Pro-Group Campaign Promise	4-item scale: 0=strongly disagree; 1=somewhat disagree; 2=somewhat agree; 3=strongly agree
#3	Candidate Should Take a Pro-Group Policy Position At Odds with Preferences of Some Co-Partisan Voters in District	4-item scale: 0=strongly disagree; 1=somewhat disagree; 2=somewhat agree; 3=strongly agree
#4	Recommended Percent of Candidate's Budget to Direct to Target Group Specific Campaign Effort	0-100
#5	Candidate Should Take a Pro-Group Policy Position At Odds with Preferences of an "Opposing" Racial or Class Based Group	3-item scale: -1=vote favoring opposing group; 0=abstain; 1=vote favoring target group

B Representativeness

The politicians who responded to the survey were broadly representative of the overall population of election candidates for state legislature. Following Broockman and Skovron (2018), we assess the representativeness of politicians who participated in the survey according to district ideology and the professionalism of the state legislature. Figure S1 compares all state legislative districts against the subset of state legislative districts where at least one candidate responded to the survey. We make this comparison according to (1) the proportion of voters in the district who voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election and (2) the professionalism of the legislature as measured by the Squire Index (Squire 2017).¹⁴ The left column compares the distribution of all districts against the subset of districts with a Democratic respondent (panels A and C), while the right column compares the distribution of all districts against the subset of districts with a Republican respondent (panels B and D). Overall the distributions are very similar, suggesting that the survey respondents from both parties are representative of the broader population of state legislative districts.

Figure S1. Representativeness of politicians who responded, by party, presidential vote share in the district, and state legislative professionalization



¹⁴This is a measure of the extent to which state legislatures are part-time, citizen-based groups or professionalized into bureaucratic occupations.

C Additional Analyses

C.1 Do Differences in the Definition of Electorally Focal Groups Affect Partisan Electoral Strategy?

Table S8 and S9 show the causal effect of changing the focal group on recommended group-specific electoral strategies when the group is defined in racial and class terms, respectively. As Table S8 shows, when electoral politics is defined in racial terms, Democratic politicians are likely to recommend co-partisan candidates to allocate about 3.7 percentage points *less* time courting Latinos (as compared to working class whites) when campaigning (s.e.=1.22, $p<0.01$). We also find that in the area of costly position-taking on group-specific interests that conflict with the interests of other co-partisans, Democratic politicians are more likely to recommend co-partisan candidates to express support for the policy interests of African Americans than when the focal group is defined as working class whites (0.24, s.e.=0.06, $p<0.01$). Democratic politicians are also more likely to recommend co-partisan candidates who are incumbent legislators to cast costly roll call votes that advance the interests of African Americans over the interests of working class whites when African Americans are the focal group of interest (0.59, s.e.=0.07, $p<0.01$) and of Latinos over the interests of working class whites when Latinos are the focal group of interest (0.45, s.e.=0.07, $p<0.01$). The intercept estimate in the last column of Table S8 also shows that Democratic politicians are less likely to recommend co-partisan incumbents to cast costly roll call votes in favor of working class whites when they are defined as the constituency of interest and when doing so comes at the expense of Black or Latino interests (-0.14 , s.e.=0.05, $p<0.01$).

Table S8. Effect of Group Type among Democratic Candidates (racial politics scenarios; omitted reference group is working class whites)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	31.91*** (0.79)	31.73*** (0.82)	2.02*** (0.06)	1.60*** (0.04)	-0.14*** (0.05)
African Americans	0.07 (1.07)	1.29 (1.13)	0.03 (0.08)	0.24*** (0.06)	0.59*** (0.07)
Latinos	-3.70*** (1.22)	-1.51 (1.13)	-0.03 (0.08)	0.05 (0.06)	0.45*** (0.07)
N	836	782	827	812	741

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

When electoral politics is defined in class terms, we find strong and consistent evidence that Democratic candidates recommend their co-partisans to exert more electoral effort to court union members instead of business owners. As shown in Table S9, Democratic politicians recommend co-partisan candidates to spend 3.96 percentage points less time campaigning (s.e.=0.96, $p<0.01$) and 5.46 percentage points less in campaign expenditures (s.e.=0.94, $p<0.01$) to court the support of business owners as compared to union members. In addition, Democratic politicians are also less likely to recommend their co-partisan candidates to make costless campaign promises for business owners as compared to union members (-0.78 ,

s.e.=0.06, $p<0.01$), take costly positions that support business owners' interests that conflict with the interests of other Democrats in the district (-0.60 , s.e.=0.05, $p<0.01$), and cast costly roll call votes that favor business owners' interests when they come at the cost of advancing the interests of union members (-1.61 , s.e.=0.04, $p<0.01$).

Table S9. Effect of Group Type among Democratic Candidates (class politics scenarios; omitted reference group is union members)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	30.27*** (0.71)	29.53*** (0.66)	2.00*** (0.04)	1.76*** (0.04)	0.84*** (0.02)
Business Owners	-3.96*** (0.96)	-5.46*** (0.94)	-0.78*** (0.06)	-0.60*** (0.05)	-1.61*** (0.04)
N	804	760	794	787	742

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Among Republican candidates, the focal group effects are of a much greater magnitude and, for the most part, predicted to be in the opposite direction, as displayed in Table S10. When confronted with the scenario of African Americans or Latinos as a potential electoral group, Republican politicians recommend significantly *less* time to spend with the relevant group relative to working class whites. For example, all else equal, when African Americans are the constituency of interest, Republicans recommend a percentage of time spent campaigning to the group that is 13.69 percentage points less (s.e.=1.98, $p<0.01$) than when working class whites are the constituency of interest. Similarly, we find that Republican candidates recommend their co-partisans spend significantly fewer campaign funds on racial minorities relative to working class whites (for African Americans: -13.05 points, s.e.=2.24, $p<0.01$; for Latinos: -9.11 points, s.e.=2.21, $p<0.01$). In addition to campaign allocations, our results indicate that Republicans are significantly less likely to recommend a costly position or costly vote in favor of the Latinos or African Americans when either minority racial group is the constituency of interest (as compared to working class whites). While Republican politicians are less likely to recommend co-partisan candidates to make costless promises to African Americans as compared to working class whites, the effect is not significant at the 0.05 level (-0.16 , s.e.=0.11). However we find that Republicans are less likely to recommend co-partisan candidates to make costless promises Latinos as compared to working class whites (-0.29 , s.e.=0.11, $p<0.05$). Moving beyond costless signaling strategies, Republicans are also less likely to recommend other Republican candidates to take costly positions favoring minorities (as compared to working class whites) when those positions clash with other Republican interests in the district (for African Americans: -0.20 , s.e.=0.10, $p<0.05$; for Latinos, -0.32 , s.e.=0.10, $p<0.01$) and are less likely to recommend other Republican incumbents running for re-election to cast costly roll call votes that favor minority interests over the interests of working class whites when minority groups are experimentally assigned as the constituency of interest (for African Americans: -0.67 , s.e.=0.09, $p<0.01$; for Latinos: -0.86 , s.e.=0.09, $p<0.01$).

When investigating the group-specific electoral strategies among Republican legislative

Table S10. Effect of Group Type among Republican Candidates (racial politics scenarios; omitted reference group is working class whites)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	37.61*** (1.30)	35.41*** (1.64)	1.42*** (0.07)	1.57*** (0.07)	0.47*** (0.06)
African Americans	-13.69*** (1.98)	-13.05*** (2.24)	-0.16 (0.11)	-0.20** (0.10)	-0.67*** (0.09)
Latinos	-14.92*** (1.84)	-9.11*** (2.21)	-0.29*** (0.11)	-0.32*** (0.10)	-0.86*** (0.09)
N	412	370	405	393	333

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

candidates, we find a pattern consistent with the behavior of Democratic candidates. Table S11 shows significant differences in campaigning recommendations across all outcome variables when considering the hypothetical business owners and union members. Yet, while Democrats were significantly more likely to provide attention to union members, Republicans are significantly more likely to recommend attention and support to business owners. For example, the effect of business owners as the focal group is 10.33 (s.e.=1.74, $p < 0.01$). The result suggests that Republicans are predicted to recommend spending 10.33 more percentage points in campaigning to business owners relative to union members. Similarly, the results of the experiment suggest a difference in recommended spending between the two groups of 9.15 percentage points (s.e.=1.72, $p < 0.01$). While these effects are stark by themselves, consider that the predicted differences in these two outcome variables between the two groups for Democrats was in an opposite direction and of much smaller magnitudes; the estimated difference in recommended time spent campaigning to the two class groups was roughly one-third the magnitude as that recommended by Republicans (-3.96 for Democrats versus 10.33 for Republicans). With respect to the non-resource allocation outcome variables, we find similar results. Republican candidates were significantly more likely to recommend making a costly promise (0.98, s.e.=0.09, $p < 0.01$), taking a costly position (0.55, s.e.=0.08, $p < 0.01$), and making a costly vote (1.39, s.e.=0.07, $p < 0.01$) in favor of business owners than they were for union members.

The evidence makes clear that Democrats and Republicans respond differently when electoral politics is framed in group terms and when the focal electoral constituency of interest is varied. In addition to assessing whether partisan elites are differentially responsive to different constituency groups, this analysis allows us to evaluate the face validity of the design by examining whether groups stereotypically perceived to be aligned with each party in fact are treated more favorably by elites of the respective party. Our results provide good face validity in this regard, showing that Democratic politicians are more electorally responsive to racial minorities and union members whereas Republican politicians are more electorally responsive to working class whites and business owners. In addition, we find evidence that Republican politicians are consistent in their differential responsiveness both between groups across electoral strategies regardless of whether electoral politics is defined in race or class

Table S11. Effect of Group Type among Republican Candidates (class politics scenarios; omitted reference group is union members)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	22.50*** (1.19)	21.74*** (1.18)	1.03*** (0.06)	1.09*** (0.06)	-0.67*** (0.05)
Business Owners	10.33*** (1.74)	9.15*** (1.72)	0.98*** (0.09)	0.55*** (0.08)	1.39*** (0.07)
N	403	374	399	390	355

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

terms. By contrast, Democratic politicians exhibit greater consistency in their differential responsiveness across groups in the domain of class politics, but vary in terms of the electoral strategies they use to signal greater responsiveness to racial minorities when electoral politics is cast in racial terms.

C.2 Does Uncertainty of Group Support Affect Partisan Electoral Strategy?

Does uncertainty of group support affect partisan electoral strategies among Democratic candidates? To answer this question, we pool data across racial and class politics scenarios, regress each outcome variable on a binary treatment indicator equal to 1 if the group’s support is uncertain and 0 if the group’s support is certain, and estimate standard errors clustered at the subject level. We conduct this analysis separately for Democrats and for Republicans. Positive treatment effect estimates would provide support that partisan elites would exert greater effort to court the votes of a group whose support is uncertain as compared to the counterfactual where that group’s support is certain.

Table S12 demonstrates that the percent of time Democratic candidates recommend their co-partisan candidate should devote to a constituency group increases by 4.4 percentage points (s.e.=0.68, $p < 0.01$) when that group’s support is uncertain as compared to when its support is certain. By contrast, for groups whose support is uncertain (as opposed to certain), we find that Democratic candidates do not recommend that their co-partisan candidates spend more campaign money courting the group, are no more likely to recommend making costless promises to the group, are no more likely to recommend taking costly pro-group positions, and are no more likely to recommend casting costly pro-group roll votes if their co-partisan candidate is an incumbent legislator.

Table S12. Effect of Uncertain Group Support among Democratic Candidates (pooling across scenario types, subject-level clustered standard errors)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	27.28*** (0.49)	29.06*** (0.49)	1.79*** (0.03)	1.58*** (0.03)	0.15*** (0.03)
Uncertain Support	4.44*** (0.68)	0.44 (0.68)	0.06 (0.05)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)
N	1640	1542	1621	1599	1483

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The effect of uncertainty of a group’s support is less clear for Republican candidates’ recommendations for time allocation. As the first column of Table S13 displays, the estimated effect of uncertain group support is less than half the estimated magnitude (2.09) for Democratic candidates and does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Similar to Democratic elites, our analysis does not allow us to identify a relationship between the certainty of a group’s support and recommendations for campaign spending allocation or taking costly positions. Nonetheless, the results provide some marginal evidence that uncertainty does influence campaign strategy recommendations for Republican candidates. For example, when a group is uncertain Republican elites were less likely to recommend making a costless promise to that group, as well as taking a costly vote on that group’s behalf (estimated effects of -0.11 and -0.12, respectively). These effects are significant at the 0.1 level.

Table S13. Effect of Uncertain Group Support among Republican Candidates (pooling across scenario types, subject-level clustered standard errors)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	26.95*** (0.86)	26.75*** (0.83)	1.44*** (0.05)	1.36*** (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)
Uncertain Support	2.09 (1.32)	1.34 (1.31)	-0.11* (0.07)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.12* (0.07)
N	815	744	804	783	688

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

These results offer limited evidence that uncertainty in a constituency group’s electoral support causes partisan politicians to exert greater effort to court the support of that group. We find evidence that uncertain group support (instead of certain group support) causes the belief that greater campaign effort should be directed toward the group, but only for Democratic elites and only in the form of devoting more time to group-targeted campaigning.

C.3 Differences-in-Differences Analyses

To formally test differences in the marginal effect of uncertain group support between groups, we conduct a differences-in-differences analysis by regressing each outcome variable on a set of binary indicators for assignment to different constituency group definitions (omitting the same reference groups as before), a binary indicator for assignment to the uncertain group support condition, and interactions between group and uncertainty treatments. As before, given substantive differences in party-group relations across party-cleavage pairs, we estimate this equation separately by party and by scenario type. The interaction term can be interpreted as between-group differences in partisan elites' responsiveness to that group's support being uncertain. Thus positive (negative) estimates on the group-by-uncertainty interaction terms provide evidence that the political elites from the party analyzed are more (less) responsive to changes in group support for the group-of-interest as compared to the reference group.

For Democratic elites evaluating a racial politics scenario, we find no evidence of differential responsiveness to uncertain support between racial constituency groups as shown by the small and insignificant effects on the interaction terms across all models in Table S14. By contrast, as Table S15 demonstrates, in class politics scenarios Democratic elites are willing to spend more time campaigning to union members when their support becomes uncertain (6.98 percentage point increase for union members) as compared to business owners when their support becomes uncertain (1.5 percentage point increase for business owners); the differences-in-differences estimate (i.e., the difference in uncertainty effects for business owners versus union members) is -5.48 percentage points (s.e.=1.90; $p < 0.01$). On the other outcome measures, we also find negative coefficients on the interaction term but these are not statistically significant at a 0.1 level.

Table S14. Diff-in-Diff among Democratic Candidates (racial politics)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	29.39*** (1.11)	31.15*** (1.08)	1.97*** (0.08)	1.60*** (0.06)	-0.07 (0.07)
African Americans	-0.26 (1.55)	1.35 (1.62)	0.00 (0.12)	0.26*** (0.09)	0.59*** (0.10)
Latinos	-2.76* (1.63)	-0.04 (1.59)	0.09 (0.11)	0.08 (0.09)	0.42*** (0.10)
Uncertain Support	4.92*** (1.55)	1.16 (1.65)	0.10 (0.11)	-0.00 (0.09)	-0.14 (0.10)
AfAm X Uncertain	0.14 (2.12)	-0.24 (2.28)	0.03 (0.16)	-0.04 (0.13)	0.02 (0.13)
Latino X Uncertain	-1.91 (2.41)	-2.82 (2.26)	-0.22 (0.16)	-0.05 (0.13)	0.05 (0.14)
N	836	782	827	812	741

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table S15. Diff-in-Diff among Democratic Candidates (class politics)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	26.90*** (0.97)	29.14*** (0.93)	1.98*** (0.06)	1.74*** (0.05)	0.84*** (0.03)
Business Owners	-1.31 (1.32)	-4.78*** (1.34)	-0.76*** (0.09)	-0.57*** (0.07)	-1.57*** (0.05)
Uncertain Support	6.98*** (1.37)	0.81 (1.31)	0.04 (0.09)	0.04 (0.08)	0.00 (0.05)
Business Owners X Uncertain	-5.48*** (1.90)	-1.43 (1.89)	-0.03 (0.12)	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.09 (0.07)
N	804	760	794	787	742

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table S16 shows in electoral political contexts where focal constituency groups are defined in racial terms, Republican elites are less responsive to African Americans when their support becomes uncertain as compared to when working class whites' support becomes uncertain. We observe this to be the case across four of the five outcome measures of pro-group campaign effort: percent time spent with the group when campaigning (-9.61 percentage points; s.e.=3.92; $p < 0.05$); percent of the campaign budget to spend on the group (-10.45 percentage points; s.e.=4.59; $p < 0.05$); support for taking costly pro-group policy positions that conflict with the interests of other co-partisans in the district (-0.46 ; s.e.=0.20; $p < 0.05$); and support for taking a costly pro-group roll call vote that would harm the interests of working class whites (-0.39 ; s.e.=0.18; $p < 0.05$).

Table S16. Diff-in-Diff among Republican Candidates (racial politics)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	34.86*** (1.75)	31.72*** (1.82)	1.51*** (0.09)	1.46*** (0.09)	0.48*** (0.07)
African Americans	-9.46*** (2.61)	-8.63*** (2.73)	-0.18 (0.14)	0.00 (0.14)	-0.50*** (0.12)
Latinos	-14.03*** (2.55)	-5.17* (2.71)	-0.29** (0.14)	-0.28** (0.14)	-0.83*** (0.13)
Uncertain Support	6.61*** (2.54)	8.95*** (3.41)	-0.22 (0.16)	0.27** (0.13)	-0.03 (0.11)
AfAm X Uncertain	-9.61** (3.92)	-10.45** (4.59)	0.07 (0.22)	-0.46** (0.20)	-0.39** (0.18)
Latino X Uncertain	-2.96 (3.63)	-9.45** (4.52)	0.02 (0.22)	-0.13 (0.19)	-0.06 (0.18)
N	412	370	405	393	333

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

We find similar evidence that Republican elites are less responsive to Latinos when their support becomes uncertain as compared to when working class whites' support becomes

uncertain: the point estimates on these interaction terms are, like their analogs for African Americans, negative for four of the five outcomes analyzed but the magnitudes of the point estimates are smaller and only one estimate—the percent of the campaign budget to spend on the group—is statistically significant (-9.45 percentage points; $s.e.=4.52$; $p<0.05$).

Table S17 presents the difference-in-differences estimates for Republican elites evaluating electoral political contexts where focal constituency groups are defined in class terms. The estimates on the interaction terms, while mostly positive, are small and not statistically significant at convention levels. Thus we find no evidence that Republican elites are differentially responsive to business owners and union members when either group’s electoral support becomes uncertain.

Table S17. Diff-in-Diff among Republican Candidates (class politics)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	21.83*** (1.72)	22.03*** (1.68)	1.09*** (0.09)	1.09*** (0.08)	-0.66*** (0.07)
Business Owners	9.13*** (2.37)	7.76*** (2.43)	0.91*** (0.12)	0.53*** (0.12)	1.44*** (0.09)
Uncertain Support	1.39 (2.39)	-0.61 (2.35)	-0.11 (0.12)	0.00 (0.11)	-0.03 (0.10)
Business Owners X Uncertain	2.44 (3.48)	2.81 (3.43)	0.14 (0.18)	0.03 (0.16)	-0.10 (0.14)
N	403	374	399	390	355

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Our analyses of these interaction effects uncover an interesting pattern. Whereas Democratic elites’ responsiveness to the uncertainty of group support appears to be conditioned by the definition of the group in the domain of *class* politics but not in the domain of racial politics, we observe the reverse for Republican elites, whose differential responsiveness to uncertain group support appears to be conditioned by the definition of the group in the domain of *racial* politics but not in the domain of class politics.

C.4 Effect of Uncertain Group Support among, Democratic Candidates by Racial or Class Scenario

Table S18. Effect of Uncertain Group Support among Democratic Candidates (racial politics scenarios only)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	28.38*** (0.66)	31.55*** (0.66)	2.00*** (0.05)	1.70*** (0.04)	0.25*** (0.04)
Uncertain Support	4.37*** (0.94)	0.20 (0.92)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.10* (0.06)
N	836	782	827	812	741

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table S19. Effect of Uncertain Group Support among Democratic Candidates (class politics scenarios only)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	26.26*** (0.66)	26.78*** (0.68)	1.60*** (0.05)	1.46*** (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)
Uncertain Support	4.29*** (0.96)	0.13 (0.96)	0.03 (0.07)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.07)
N	804	760	794	787	742

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

C.5 Effect of Uncertain Group Support among Republican Candidates, by Racial or Class Scenario

Table S20. Effect of Uncertain Group Support among Republican Candidates (racial politics scenarios only)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	27.62*** (1.14)	27.74*** (1.15)	1.37*** (0.06)	1.37*** (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)
Uncertain Support	1.57 (1.71)	1.76 (1.92)	-0.20** (0.09)	0.07 (0.08)	-0.22** (0.09)
N	412	370	405	393	333

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table S21. Effect of Uncertain Group Support among Republican Candidates (class politics scenarios only)

	Pct Time	Pct Spend	Costless Promise	Costly Position	Costly Vote
Intercept	26.24*** (1.23)	25.73*** (1.24)	1.53*** (0.07)	1.34*** (0.06)	0.02 (0.07)
Uncertain Support	2.65 (1.81)	1.01 (1.78)	-0.03 (0.10)	0.02 (0.09)	-0.04 (0.10)
N	403	374	399	390	355

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$