

2022

Vote choice and support for diverse candidates on the Boston City Council At-Large

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/45026>

Boston University

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Thesis

**VOTE CHOICE AND SUPPORT FOR DIVERSE CANDIDATES
ON THE BOSTON CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE**

by

ELIZABETH DIANE DOLCIMASCOLO

B.A., Boston University, 2022

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

2022

© 2022 by
ELIZABETH DIANE DOLCIMASCOLO
All rights reserved

Approved by

First Reader

Maxwell Palmer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Political Science

Second Reader

Spencer Piston, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Political Science

DEDICATION

For Boston—the city that loved me until I was myself again.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Maxwell Palmer, Ph.D., for his support and guidance throughout this program. Your intelligence and mastery of your craft played a vital role throughout my research process. I am grateful for your wisdom, patience, and extensive knowledge of R.

To my parents, Susan and Phil, for their unconditional love and for giving me the gift of education. I would not be the woman I am today without you. To my sisters, Juliana and Katie, and my brother-in-law Juan Carlos; and our dog Janet, thank you for your encouragement, love, and support from all corners of the world. To my late grandmother, Laverne, for watching over me every step of the way. To my friends who are like family; Gracie, Juli, Claire, Sylvie, Ash, Grace L., Grace R., Marina, Latavia, Kiley, Stephanie, Leah, and Sophia, among many more. You have always encouraged me to be the best version of myself and, for that, I am forever grateful.

To Kappa Delta Eta Phi, our sisterhood shaped my college years. I could not have done it without you. To the Boston University Political Science Department, thank you for giving me the opportunity to explore my interests and creating a space in which I have truly grown into the fullest version of myself. To Mayor Michelle Wu and City Councilor Michael Flaherty, for giving me the opportunity to work hands-on in local politics and to grow my passion for campaigns. All politics is local. I am indebted to all of the women in politics who have come before me.

To the 18-year-old version of myself, who was terrified to move to a new city, but found herself in the end. I hope that I have made you proud.

**VOTE CHOICE AND SUPPORT FOR DIVERSE CANDIDATES
ON THE BOSTON CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE
ELIZABETH DIANE DOLCIMASCOLO**

ABSTRACT

The last two decades have marked major milestones in the diversity of the leaders of Boston's city government. The first Black female member of the City Council, Ayanna Pressley, was elected in 2009. Michelle Wu became the first Asian-American woman to serve on the City Council after the 2013 municipal election, and its first female or non-White mayor in 2022. Boston elected its first Latina member to the City Council, Julia Mejia, in 2019. Each of these women served on the City Council as one of the four at-large members, which are elected citywide rather than from individual districts. At-large elections have been controversial, and scholarly work finds that this electoral structure disadvantages minority candidates, underrepresents minority voters, and reduces opportunities for candidates of color to win office. How has Boston broken this norm? Using local election results and census data, I estimate a regression model for vote choice by racial and ethnic background and find that Boston voters have shifted to support a more diverse and proportionate City Council At-Large.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	x
SECTION ONE: Introduction.....	1
Representation in Boston	3
SECTION TWO: Literature Review	7
Background.....	11
SECTION THREE: Methods.....	13
SECTION FOUR: Findings.....	16
SECTION FIVE: Case Studies	18
Ayanna Pressley.....	18
Michelle Wu	21
Julia Mejia.....	24
SECTION SIX: Conclusion.....	26
APPENDIX.....	28
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	34
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	38

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Estimate of overall support by racial and ethnic group, 2005 to 2021	16
Table 2: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2009.....	28
Table 3: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2011.....	28
Table 4: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2013.....	29
Table 5: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2015.....	29
Table 6: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2017.....	30
Table 7: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2013	30
Table 8: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2015	31
Table 9: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2017	31
Table 10: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2019	32
Table 11: Estimated vote share for Julia Mejia, 2019.....	32
Table 12: Estimated vote share for Juila Mejia, 2021.....	33

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Jitter plot of candidate performance by voter racial and ethnic group.....	17
Figure 2: Estimated results by racial and ethnic group– Pressley (2009 to 2017).....	21
Figure 3: Estimated results by racial and ethnic group—Wu (2013 to 2019).....	24
Figure 4: Estimated results by racial and ethnic group – Mejia (2019 to 2021).....	25

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American Community Survey
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
US	United States of America

SECTION ONE: Introduction

For the first time in United States history, the 2020 Census reported a decline in the nation's White population (United States Census Bureau 2021), but minority participation and representation in government has remained historically disproportionate compared to their White neighbors. However, there has been a notable increase in the number of minority officeholders at the state and local levels since the turn of the twenty-first century (Shah 2014, 266). Despite the changing population, legislative representation overall remains disproportionate to the country's demographic make-up, for approximately 40 percent of Americans identify as non-White (United States Census Bureau 2021). As of 2021, 124 of the 535 voting members of the U.S. Congress identify as Black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Native American, which is approximately 23 percent of the House of Representatives and the Senate combined (Schaeffer 2021). This number is even lower for representatives in state legislatures, as research from 2020 has revealed that approximately 18 percent of statewide elected officials belong to a racial or ethnic minority group (National Conference of State Legislatures 2022). As the nation's minority population has grown, there has been an unequal growth in non-White officeholding.

Descriptive representation is the idea that historically disadvantaged groups should be represented by members of that same group in governmental institutions (Dovi 2002). Furthermore, to be fully democratic, a system which has denied full political membership or participation to certain groups should put forth an electoral structure to best allow for proportionate representation (Dovi 2002). Descriptive representation

presents the opportunity to encourage voter turnout among co-ethnic voters, alongside the formation of a legislature that more closely represents the demographic makeup of the country (Mansbridge 1999, 628). Scholars have determined four main advantages of descriptive representation, and I call attention to two of these functions: social meaning for members of historically disadvantaged groups, and legitimacy for that group among the entire polity (Mansbridge 1999, 628). Descriptive representation offers “the virtue of shared experience” both vertically, between constituent and representative, and horizontally, among legislative bodies (Mansbridge 1999, 629).

Scholars and activists alike have sought ways to increase descriptive representation and improve opportunities for minority candidates to both pursue and win office. As a result of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, majority-minority districts have become the primary method for increasing minority representation in elected office (Barreto, Segura, and Woods 2004, 65). Protected by Section 2 of the act, majority-minority districts aim to remedy the dilution of minority voters among majority-White districts (United States Justice Department 2021). This has been deemed descriptively successful, in that it has generally resulted in the participation of a diverse slate of candidates and the election of minority officeholders who resemble their communities (Barreto, Segura, and Woods 2004, 65). A thorough body of literature suggests that descriptive representation is often linked to higher levels of minority political participation (Mansbridge 199; Gay 2001; Dovi 2002; Tate 2003). This is best summarized by the *minority empowerment thesis*, which states that “minority representation strengthens representational links, fosters more positive attitudes toward

government,” and most importantly, “encourages political participation” (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004, 534). Beyond descriptive representation, these districts are designed to provide minority groups with an opportunity to elect candidates who best match their needs; however, at-large elections do not provide majority-minority districts to protect non-White electoral interests (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004, 538). This calls into question the true democratic nature of at-large electoral systems.

Representation in Boston

Electoral structure plays a critical role in determining opportunity for candidate success, regardless of race or ethnicity. As it stands today, The Boston City Council consists of thirteen elected officials— nine district councilors and four at-large councilors. However, its electoral structure has changed several times since its founding in 1822. For close to a century after its founding, the Boston City Council, also known as the Common Council during this time period, elected its members through a district-style format, separated into twenty-five wards (O’Connor 1995, 115). The first city charter was written by the Federalists who represented the wants of Boston’s wealthy merchant class, which stood in direct contrast to the needs of the increasing immigrant population (Tebbetts 2004, 2). The city’s population and geographical boundaries grew during the second half of the nineteenth century, as both the birth rate and immigration increased and residents moved out from the city center (O’Connor 1995, 115). However, the political system continued to serve the needs of the small, elite business class (Tebbetts 2004, 4). The

Council consisted of seventy-five representatives, with three members representing each of the twenty-five wards (O'Connor 1995, 116).

Throughout the 1800s, Boston grew into a multi-ethnic city with a large Irish-Catholic voting bloc, one that was much different from its Anglo-Saxon Protestant roots (Tebbetts 2004, 3). In 1909, the city's charter was reassessed and a new plan was adopted to create a city council with only nine members, all of whom would be elected at-large (Flack 1909, 411). The new charter came as a backlash to the rise in Irish political success within the Democratic Party in the first decade of the 1900s, which had invited lower class and immigrant Bostonians to have an influence in municipal government. The Republican upper class led the change to an at-large city council format in an attempt to weaken the Irish Catholic influence in City Hall that came from the district format (Tebbetts 2004, 13).

This remained the law until 1924, when a referendum was passed to implement a district system which maintained the original nine at-large councilors and added twenty-two district councilors, one for each of the city's wards (*Boston Daily Globe* 1924, 1A). As Irish Catholic Democrats continued to see political success in the city, wealthy Protestant Republicans sought to regain power in City Hall (Tebbetts 2004, 23). This updated district system resulted from the Republican-controlled Boston Charter Revision Commission, which recommended that the City Council fairly represent each of Boston's neighborhoods, which were closely divided by socioeconomic status (Marchione 1976, 374). The charter re-implemented the ward system of representation to create an opportunity for increased Republican representation (Tebbetts 2004, 23). Despite the

partisan divide, the referendum passed largely along socioeconomic lines, in that the ward plan was most popular among the city's lower class and immigrant population (Marchione 1976, 375). In all, voters sought representation by neighborhood as a way to bring hyper-local issues to light at City Hall (Tebbetts 2004).

In 1949, the district system was repealed, and the council returned to a format of nine at-large members (*Boston Daily Globe* 1949, 1). These changes came as an attempt to restore Republican control, much like that of the turn of the century. An ever-growing Irish Catholic immigrant population continued to influence local political matters, specifically in regard to the city's economic development (Marchione 1976, 373). Demographic changes in the city alongside a sharp, post-war economic downturn in the region sent the city into distress, and the Council faced issues with budgeting (Marchione 1976, 379). The Election Commission accepted petitions for a new City Council format, which debuted on the ballot in November and passed in favor of returning to the at-large plan (Marchione 1976, 396).

Not until 1981 did a partial district system return via referendum to include nine district councilors and four at-large councilors, and this combination of councilors remains in place today (Turner 1981, A29). The shift to a combined district and at-large council was the result of a campaign to create a more accountable government which gave minority voters a greater chance at descriptive representation (Butterfield 1983, A12). In municipal elections, voters are allowed to choose up to four candidates to represent them on the council at-large, alongside their one vote for their respective district councilor. At-large elections have historically provided inequitable opportunities

for candidates of color to win local office (Robinson and Dye 1978; Davidson and Korbel 1981; Karnig and Welch 1982), as White voters are more likely to turnout to vote and, until recently, have constituted the majority of Boston's population. However, there has been a stark increase in the number of minority candidates both on the ballot and in office in Boston's At-Large City Council.

The central goal of this paper is to examine the participation effects of minority communities in Boston over time as diversity on the ballot has increased. I seek to examine how descriptive representation influences turnout and vote choice among minority voters. I focus on Boston City Council At-Large races from 2005 to 2021, for there have been many milestones for non-White officeholders in a legislative body that has been historically nondiverse. In 2009, Ayanna Pressley became the first woman of color to serve on the Council At-Large in its 100-year history. Michelle Wu was elected to the Council At-Large in 2013 as the first Asian American woman. Additionally, Julia Mejia became the first Afro-Latina to win a seat on the Council At-Large in 2019. With these candidates in mind, I assess the strength of co- and cross-ethnic vote choice. These three councilors provide a unique perspective on the effects of a changing population and at-large elections because of the breadth of their success. Pressley, Wu, and Mejia have garnered significant support from a diverse range of racial and ethnic groups, and this continued throughout their respective re-election campaigns. Despite the bulk of their support coming from minority voting blocs, I present evidence to suggest that minority and White voters alike have voted for a diverse City Council At-Large.

SECTION TWO: Literature Review

The underrepresentation and lower levels of participation among racial and ethnic minorities across all levels of government presents a threat to the true democratization of our institutions. Social scientists have devoted decades of research to determine the best ways to increase non-White officeholding (Fox and Lawless 2005; Shah, Marschall, and Ruhil 2013), as well as determining what motivates minority voters to participate in elections (Hajnal and Trounstine 2003; Keele et al. 2013). A portion of this literature examines what is categorized as the supply-side of electoral politics—what makes candidates run for office. Shah examines this supply-side theory, which addresses the puzzle of a growing national minority population while Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American legislators make up only 20 percent of elected offices in the United States (Shah 2014, 266). She examines the common prerequisites for minority participation on the ballot, and finds that across levels of government, Black candidates are most likely to run for office if they have prior government experience, if there is an open seat, and if it is a municipal office (Shah 2014, 267). She notes that more than 90 percent of Blacks and Latinos serving in an elected office do so on the municipal level (Shah 2014, 270). These findings provide a foundation for understanding the pathway to minority office-holding throughout local, state, and federal governments. However, it is crucial to address the demand-side of electoral politics, or that which gives minority candidates a fair chance at winning.

The study of demand-side electoral politics is two-fold— what makes voters choose a certain candidate, and what makes a candidate win. In terms of voter behavior,

political scientists have long studied the link between electoral structures and minority voter participation. Research of the 1970s and 80s found that at-large style city council elections resulted in an underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic voters (MacManus 1978; Taebel 1978; Davidson and Korbel 1981; Karnig and Welch 1982; Engstrom and McDonald 1986). A common remedy for unequal participation is to create majority-minority districts so that minority communities have a fair chance at electing a descriptive representative without vote dilution. Majority-minority districts are useful in single-member district elections; however, these provide no minority support in multi-member district elections or at-large elections. At-large style municipal elections had been supported by the National Municipal League since their first model city charter in 1899, which argued that at-large elections would attract candidates of education and accomplishment who could appeal to the entire city (Engstrom and McDonald 1986, 203). This aimed to elect council members who would be good representatives for the city as a whole, not just one geographic area or population (Engstrom and McDonald 1986, 204). However, reform movements of the late twentieth century sought to implement district elections with the argument that it would be more representative of each segment of the population (Engstrom and McDonald 1986, 204). In at-large elections, minority communities faced difficulty in electing candidates of their choice and frequently found their vote diluted within the White majority (Engstrom and McDonald 1986, 205).

In regard to candidate success, studies spanning several decades have addressed the issues of whether minority candidates are more likely to be elected to city councils in

district-style elections versus at-large. Engstrom and McDonald (1981) argue that at-large elections, when compared to district-based electoral systems, tend to negatively impact the level of Black representation (352). They estimate that the electoral format begins to hinder Black representation when approximately 10 percent of the city's population identifies as Black (Engstrom and McDonald 1981, 352). In 2020, around 25 percent of Boston's population identified as Black or African American, among a minority population that makes up 55 percent of the city's entire population (United States Census Bureau 2020). This stands in stark contrast to Boston's demographic makeup of 1970, in which the U.S. Census reported close to 70% of the population as White (United States Census Bureau 1970). If Engstrom and McDonald's findings from 1981 hold true today, then we would expect for Boston's at-large elections to hinder Black representation. Is this the case, or has Boston broken this mold?

Similarly, Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah examine the extent to which Black population and electoral structures affect Black representation in local legislatures (Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010). This research follows the studies of electoral data from the 1980s and 1990s which found that Black descriptive representation increased across levels of government except for one key jurisdiction—city councils which use single-member district systems (Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010, 109). The authors find that the extent to which Black population is concentrated translates into electoral success for Black candidates, in that the likelihood of attaining proportionally- accurate representation increases as Black population increases (Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010, 122). Also, their study finds that Black success in local legislatures is a result of the

increased capacity of the electoral structure to produce more seats (Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010). Both of these offer meaningful findings for descriptive representation on the local level, for Black representation has consistently increased in city councils over time with the changing of electoral structures to district-style elections (Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010, 110). Many of Boston's BIPOC city councilors have been elected in district elections, a testament to the power of proper neighborhood districting to ensure community strength. Has minority representation on the City Council At-Large increased as the minority population has grown in Boston, despite its electoral structure?

Finally, minority candidates present a unique opportunity to mobilize and engage with historically disadvantaged groups, especially at the municipal level. Barreto (2007) analyzes Latino voters and the connection between ethnicity and participation, and the role of shared identities in electoral politics (432). To address this, he studies the impact of Latino mayoral candidates on voter turnout in areas with high concentrations of Latinos (Barreto 2007, 429). He finds that heavily Latino precincts tend to have similar patterns of candidate preference, in that they support the co-ethnic candidate (Barreto 2007, 432). Additionally, he finds that majority-Black and majority-White precincts trend in the same direction (Barreto 2007, 432). If Barreto's research holds true across major cities, we should expect that voters in Boston tend to support co-ethnic candidates. How have candidates of color performed across different racial and ethnic groups? Co-ethnic support is crucial for minority candidate success; however, the support from White voters for minority candidates in the city's at-large elections has broken the mold of nondiversity among the City Council At-Large.

Previous research on voter behavior and electoral structures provides insight into the effects on voter turnout and descriptive representation. The majority of research performed on the effects of at-large elections took place in the late nineteenth century during a period of nationwide municipal reforms, and only a few authors have revisited this topic today (Trounstine and Valdini 2008; Abbott and Magazinnik 2020). However, there has been little empirical research performed on Boston alone, or city councils in general. Boston has become a liberal hub, despite its deep racist history (Tebbetts 2004; O'Connor 1995). The city has trended toward more progressive politicians and policies, but it is important to assess the foundation of this support and the strength of its roots across the city. As the City Council At-Large has become more diverse, it is important to assess voter behavior and its implications for a more descriptively representative government.

Background

Boston's City Council elections occur every other year on what is typically an "off-year" for other U.S. state and federal elections. Altogether, this data represents nine municipal elections, five of which overlapped with the city's mayoral elections (2005, 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021). Candidates earn spots on the at-large ballot through a series of candidacy measures, beginning with an official statement, nomination petition, and 1,500 signatures from registered voters. Write-in candidates are not required to participate in this process. I excluded write-in candidates from my analysis because they

typically receive less than 1 percent of the total vote and their names are irregularly reported in election results.

Each election cycle typically begins with a preliminary election in mid-to-late September before the early November general election. Preliminary elections are only held if nine or more candidates are registered (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2015). Of the elections in my study, three did not have a preliminary election— 2007, 2011, and 2015. The 2007 general election for City Council had nine candidates on the ballot, which typically would have required a preliminary election. According to the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, the City Council, the State Legislature, and the Governor all approved a special act to allow all nine candidates on the general election ballot to save an estimated \$750,000 in expenses that would have resulted from hosting a preliminary election (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2015). In 2011, only seven candidates ran for the Boston City Council At-Large. Because of this, there was no preliminary election held for the at-large race (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2011). Finally, the 2015 race for the City Council At-Large had only five registered candidates and therefore went without a preliminary election (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2015). I chose these nine elections for two reasons: this data is readily available to the public through the City of Boston Elections Department website, and diversity among candidates and elected officials has increased significantly since 2005. In 2005, only two of the eight candidates on the ballot for Boston City Council At-Large were people of color; in 2021, this number increased to five. These elections represent a marked increase in diversity among a historically non-diverse legislative body.

SECTION THREE: Methods

To assess the variables of candidate race and ethnicity and community vote choice, I constructed a dataset of candidate demographics, election results, and census data from the American Community Survey. To analyze candidate race and ethnicity, I categorized each as either minority-identifying or White, based upon their self-identification on their campaign and/or personal websites, as well as news media sites. I categorized these into four groups: White, Black-identifying, Hispanic- and Latino-identifying, and those who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders, which also included those who are Alaska Natives, multiracial or of another racial group. I obtained precinct-level official election results from general municipal elections in Boston from 2005 to 2021 from the City of Boston Elections Department. Finally, I used 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey closest to each municipal election to approximate the racial and ethnic makeup of the city's 255 precincts.

I estimated ordinary least squares models to predict candidate vote share using precinct-level demographic data. Each of these models were divided by four to estimate vote share, since voters may choose up to four candidates in each election. These models provide an approximation as to how each of the four racial and ethnic groups described above supported minority candidates versus White candidates as a whole, as well as how they supported each candidate individually. The data overall shows the estimated relationship between BIPOC candidates and minority vote choice, and the individual candidate data will be of use in my case study analysis.

Over the span of these nine elections, there were 36 unique candidates out of the 69 total candidates on the ballots. Only 13 of these 36 unique candidates held office, many of whom sought successful re-election. Each election included between two and four incumbent candidates, and an incumbent candidate only lost three times.¹ Of these thirty-six candidates, seventeen were people of color, and only seven of these seventeen won seats to the Council At-Large.² In sum, eight of the thirteen different Councilors At-Large from 2005 to 2021 have been members of a racial or ethnic minority group.³

I examine two hypotheses about the relationship between minority candidacy and political participation. First, are minority voters, regardless of race or ethnicity more likely than White voters to support minority candidates for the Boston City Council At-Large? Second, do candidates of color perform best among their own racial or ethnic group? I analyze the first hypothesis primarily with ecological regression models, and the second with three case studies, of Ayanna Pressley, Michelle Wu, and Julia Mejia.

To analyze my first hypothesis, I ran a regression model using the vote share of the candidate as my independent variable and the estimated racial and ethnic precinct-level demographics as the dependent variables. In regard to my second hypothesis, I ran similar regression models to estimate how a specific candidate did among each of the four racial and ethnic categories described above. These hypotheses provide a

¹ The three incumbents who unsuccessfully sought reelection were Felix D. Arroyo in 2007, Stephen Murphy in 2015, and Althea Garrison in 2019.

² The seven BIPOC candidates to win seats on the City Council At-Large were Sam Yoon and Felix D. Arroyo in 2005, Felix G. Arroyo and Ayanna Pressley in 2009, Michelle Wu in 2013, Julia Mejia in 2019, and Ruthzee Louijeune in 2021.

³ An eighth BIPOC candidate, Althea Garrison, placed fifth in the 2017 election and filled a vacancy on the Council from January 2019 to January 2020. However, she did not win reelection in the November 2019 contest.

quantitative insight into the voting patterns of Bostonians in municipal elections, specifically as it pertains to their vote choice when presented with candidates of differing racial and ethnic backgrounds.

SECTION FOUR: Findings

Can a candidate’s racial or ethnic identity affect how well they perform among voters, specifically at the local level in Boston? In Table 1, I estimated two different models, one for White candidates and one for BIPOC candidates. I present evidence which suggests that minority voters are more likely to support minority candidates in comparison to White voters. However, White voters tend to support minority candidates, but not as much as their non-White counterparts. In all, White voters are the most likely group to support White candidates. Boston’s White voters are more likely to support a minority candidate than a minority voter is to support a White candidate. This is likely a reflection of the growing progressive community in Boston, whose values and visions for the city have closely aligned with many of the BIPOC candidates in recent elections.

	White Candidates	BIPOC Candidates
Black Voters	0.380	0.655
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.422	0.648
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.399	0.697
White Voters	0.582	0.417

Table 1: Estimate of overall support by racial and ethnic group, 2005 to 2021

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: City of Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

Figure 1 plots each of the 69 unique candidates and the estimated support by voter race and ethnicity. The y-axis extends beyond 100 percent, due to variation in the vote share estimates. The open circles represent White candidates, and the filled circles represent BIPOC candidates. Overall, candidates of color perform better among racial and ethnic minority groups than they do among White voters. However, there is not a direct correlation between the two variables.

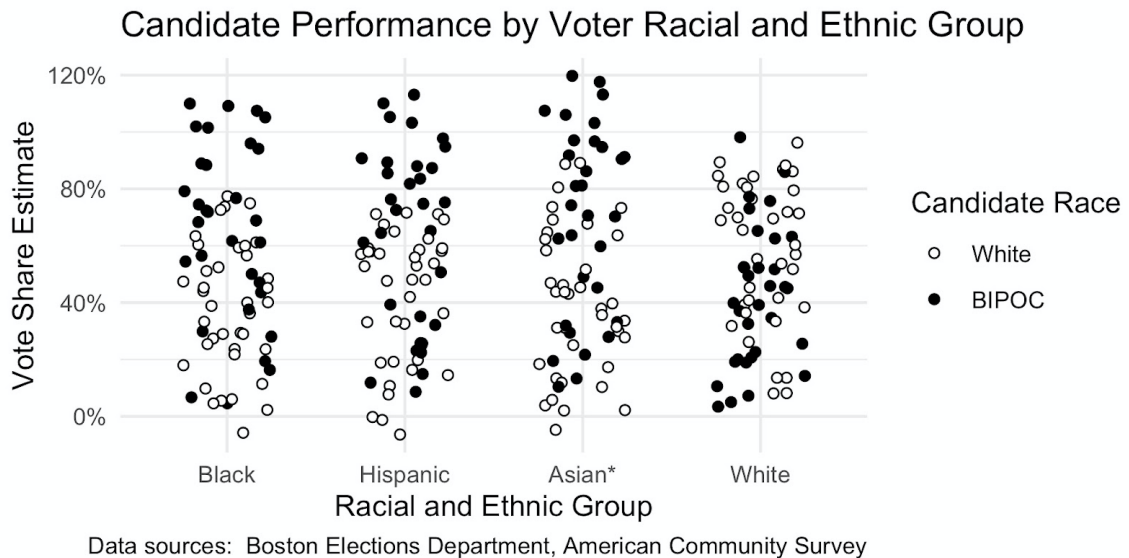


Figure 1: Jitter plot of candidate performance by voter racial and ethnic group

SECTION FIVE: Case Studies

Three councilors stand out among the eight electeds of color— Ayanna Pressley, Michelle Wu, and Julia Mejia. Each of these three councilors are women of color who have won re-election to the Council at least once, and two of the three have successfully pursued higher elected offices. They each represent major milestones for the Boston City Council, as they were the first Black, Asian, and Latino women councilors, respectively. They each have built coalitions across neighborhoods, wards, and precincts to earn continued electoral support. These case studies begin to shed light on the successes of women of color on the City Council At-Large.

Ayanna Pressley

Ayanna Pressley was first elected to the Boston City Council as an at-large representative in November 2009. She was the first woman of color to serve in this position and was the only woman in a preliminary field of 15 candidates. She placed fourth in the general election behind two incumbents, John Connolly and Stephen Murphy, and another first-time candidate, Felix G. Arroyo.

In her 2009 bid for the City Council, presented in Table 2 (see Appendix), she performed best among Black voters and voters who identify as Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander. She also earned support from approximately 45 percent of White voters who participated in this election. Her lowest performance was among Boston's Hispanic population; however, she still received approximately 25 percent of the group's vote. Despite lacking an incumbency advantage, Pressley performed well across the board and received an approximate total of 41,000 votes, or about 15% of the total votes

cast. She saw the most support from the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Mattapan, and Hyde Park. Each of her top performing precincts in the 2009 general election are considered to be majority-minority areas. In each of these precincts, White voters make up less than 12 percent of the total voting age population.

After a successful two-year term on the City Council, she sought re-election in 2011. Each of her colleagues— Connolly, Murphy, and Arroyo— sought re-election as well. In the 2011 general election, she placed first with approximately 37,500 votes. This put her at 2,000 votes ahead of second place candidate Felix G. Arroyo, who earned approximately 35,500 votes. She took first place in 13 of the 22 wards— up from just 2 wards in 2009.⁴

Boston's 2011 municipal election did not overlap with a mayoral election, and voter turnout dipped from the 2009 election. Despite this drop in overall turnout, Pressley saw an increase in support from voters across racial and ethnic groups. As presented in Table 2, she received the most steadfast support from Black, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander voters (see Appendix).⁵ Her support among White voters increased, from about 45 percent in 2009 to approximately 63 percent in 2011. The biggest growth in support occurred among Hispanic and Latino voters. In 2009, only 25 percent of this group who casted ballots did so for Pressley; in 2011, approximately 87 percent of this same group of voters gave one of their four votes to her.

⁴ In 2009, Pressley placed first in Wards 4 and 17. In 2011, she placed first in Wards 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19.

⁵ The category of Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander also includes the following groups: Alaska Native, two or more races, and other races not specified.

Her performance in 2013 and 2015 largely mirrors that of 2011, although there was a slight downward shift in support from Asian voters, likely due to the fact that Michelle Wu had joined the pool of candidates. In the 2013 general election, she took first place in eight wards.⁶ Michelle Wu took first place in the five wards that Pressley had won in 2011 but lost in 2013.⁷ Councilor Pressley gained back some of this ground in her re-election campaign in 2015, in which she won 11 of the city's 22 wards.⁸ She placed first overall in both 2013 and 2015, until her final re-election bid in 2017 in which she took second place behind Michelle Wu, and subsequently only won first in 5 wards.⁹

Figure 2 presents Pressley's electoral performance in each election across racial and ethnic groups. She earned consistently high support from Black voters, and generally varying but positive support among other groups. Overall, she saw an increase from each group of voters from her first bid for the City Council in 2009 to her last in 2017, which suggests a fairly strong popularity across racial and ethnic groups in Boston.

Across each of her campaigns for the City Council At-Large, she consistently won first place in Ward 17— her home district. Ward 17 incorporates areas of Mattapan and the Dorchester neighborhoods of Codman Square and Lower Mills, all of which have a significant Black population. However, Pressley performed well across all neighborhoods throughout her city council campaigns. Her electoral story is one of support from across racial and ethnic groups— especially during her bids for re-election.

⁶ In 2013, Pressley won first place in Wards 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18.

⁷ The five wards that Pressley lost to Wu in 2013 were Wards 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, and 19.

⁸ In 2015, Pressley took first place in Wards 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19.

⁹ In 2017, Pressley took first place in Wards 11, 12, 14, 15, and 17.

After her successful campaign for re-election to the Boston City Council in 2017, she announced her candidacy for the U.S. House of Representatives in January 2018. She ran to represent Massachusetts’ 7th Congressional District– the only majority-minority district in the state. Alongside being the first woman of color to serve on the Boston City Council, she was the first Black woman elected to represent Massachusetts in Congress. Her success can be largely attributed to her widespread, diverse support. On the municipal level, this support breaks the typical pattern of vote choice across racial and ethnic groups.

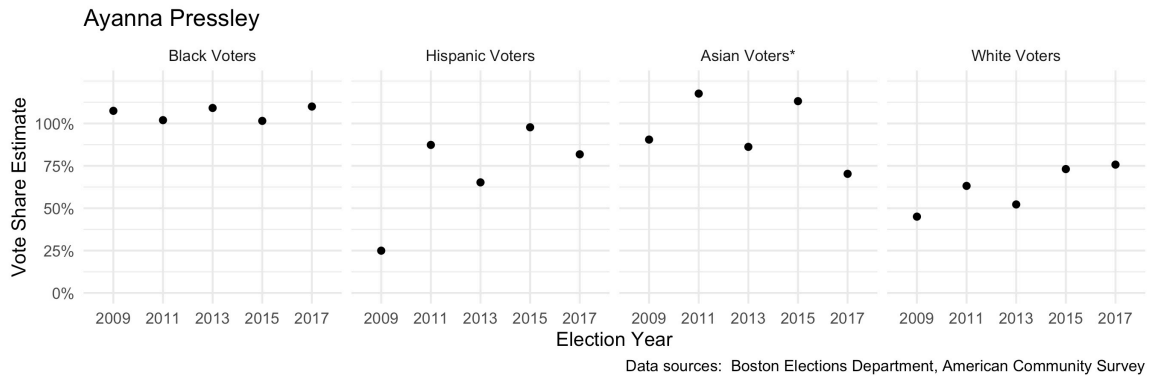


Figure 2: Estimated results by racial and ethnic group– Pressley (2009 to 2017)

Michelle Wu

Michelle Wu joined the Boston City Council At-Large after a second-place win in the 2013 municipal election behind incumbent Councilor Ayanna Pressley. Despite the fact that this was her first time running for office, she performed better than two seasoned representatives– Michael Flaherty, former City Councilor At-Large and previous candidate for Boston Mayor, and Stephen Murphy, an At-Large Councilor who had

served consecutive terms since 1997. Michelle Wu was the first Asian American woman to serve on the City Council.

In 2013, she performed well across racial and ethnic groups, with the bulk of her support coming from the city's Hispanic voters and Asian and Pacific Islander voters. Of the White voters who participated in the 2013 election, approximately 65 percent of them cast a vote for Wu. Similarly, of the Black voters who cast ballots in this election, approximately 61 percent of them supported Wu (see Table 7 in the Appendix). Compared to Pressley, she had more widespread support during her first election, and this coalition continued to support her in her subsequent bids for re-election.

In the 2013 general election, Wu took first place in 8 wards across the city.¹⁰ The breadth of her support is notable, as her support was more geographically diverse in comparison to Pressley. She topped the ticket in several neighborhoods and maintained this support throughout her re-election bids. She performed similarly in the 2015 election, taking second place behind Pressley, but earning more support from the city's White voters compared to her Pressley. While Pressley had greater support on average from Boston's Black community, both Pressley and Wu received the most diverse range of support in the 2015 election, as evidenced in Tables 5 and 8 (see Appendix).

In 2017, Wu surpassed Pressley and earned the first-place spot on the City Council ticket. She won first place in the majority of the city's wards, spanning across several of Boston's neighborhoods.¹¹ She maintained her first-place spot in the 2019

¹⁰ In 2013, Wu took first place in Wards 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 19, 21, and 22.

¹¹ In 2017, Wu took first place in Wards 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22.

election, topping the ticket with a comfortable margin of approximately 5,000 votes above second place. Her performance in the 2019 general election was unlike any other woman of color in the Council's history. She won in 17 of the city's 22 wards, taking second place in only a few neighborhoods— East Boston, Charlestown, South Boston, and Neponset.¹²

Figure 3 plots her performance across elections with each racial and ethnic group. Overall, she saw an improvement across each group from her first election in 2013 to her final City Council bid in 2019. She did not seek re-election in 2021 as she ran for the seat of Boston's Mayor. She won with approximately two-thirds of the vote over her opponent, fellow City Councilor At-Large Annissa Essaibi-George. After years of building coalitions across Boston's diverse communities, she won the seat of Mayor and will serve until the next election in November 2025. She became the first woman and non-White mayor to win this office.¹³

¹² In 2019, Wu took first place in Wards 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22.

¹³ Kim Janey was the first non-White woman to hold the position of Boston Mayor. However, she assumed this position when Mayor Marty Walsh stepped down from office because she was the City Council President.

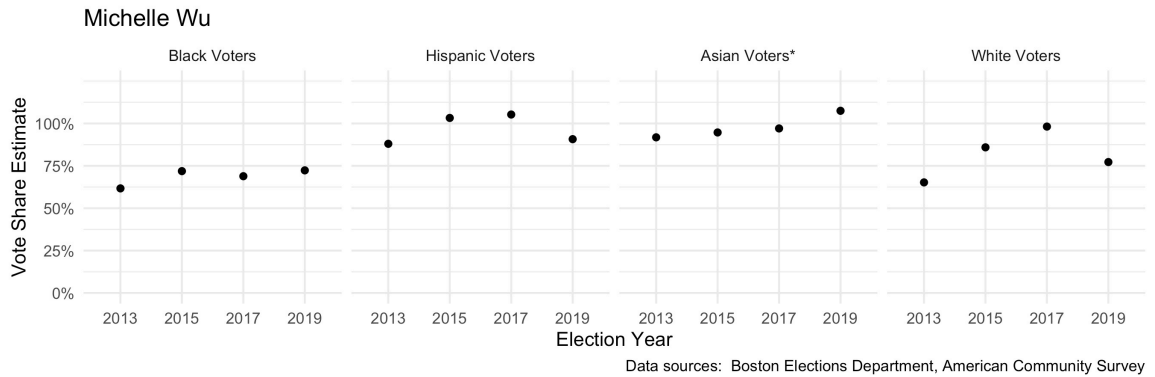


Figure 3: Estimated results by racial and ethnic group—Wu (2013 to 2019)

Julia Mejia

Julia Mejia was first elected to the Boston City Council in 2019 and was the first Afro-Latina to serve. She took fourth place in the 2019 municipal election and won a spot as an at-large representative by one vote over candidate Alejandra St. Guillen— an openly gay woman and member of the Latinx community. The 2019 election resulted in the first Boston City Council At-Large that was majority-woman and a City Council as a whole that was majority-minority.

Within the context of the 2019 municipal election, Julia Mejia is an important case study as she and her close opponent, Alejandra St. Guillen, both identify as women and members of the Latinx community. Both Mejia and St. Guillen saw widespread Hispanic and Latinx support— Mejia with approximately 90 percent of this group’s votes and St. Guillen with approximately 75 percent of this group’s votes. As presented in Figure 4, Mejia performed better among each racial and ethnic group in 2021 compared to 2019.

In her first bid to the Council in 2019, she did not place first in any ward. In her re-election campaign in 2021, she won in 13 of the 22 wards with support from several geographic areas.¹⁴ She placed 533 votes behind first place, Councilor Michael Flaherty, who has served several terms on the Council At-Large. Overall, Councilor Mejia has built a cross-racial coalition that shows itself in the city’s municipal elections.

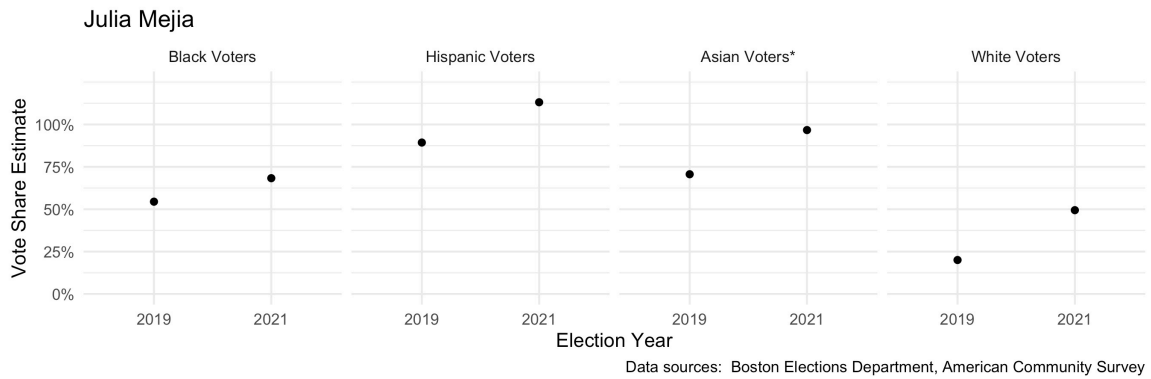


Figure 4: Estimated results by racial and ethnic group – Mejia (2019 to 2021)

¹⁴ In 2021, Mejia took first place in Wards 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, and 22.

SECTION SIX: Conclusion

Much of the scholarship in urban and electoral politics presents evidence that at-large elections hinder minority candidates' chances at electoral success, as well as underrepresent minority vote choice. At-large elections do not provide the same electoral safeguards as district elections do, as they do not allow for the creation of majority-minority districts to prevent minority vote dilution. In 2000, Boston was 49.5 percent White; in 2010, this number decreased to 47 percent. White voters are more likely to be politically active than their minority counterparts, and this would reflect itself in at-large elections. However, my findings show that White voters in Boston support candidates of color despite a long history of White elected officials. A trend like this is unlikely given the prior literature about at-large elections and the racially motivated history of Boston's electoral system.

When people of color run for the Boston City Council At-Large, they win. Candidates of color have run for office at similar rates to White candidates— of the thirty-six unique candidates, seventeen were members of a minority group and nineteen were not. Only five of the nineteen White candidates have held office, compared to eight of the seventeen BIPOC candidates. A difference of approximately 21 percent begs the question, how are minority candidates successful in an electoral structure that has historically disadvantage non-White contenders? My research presents evidence which suggests that minority candidates enjoy a wide range of support— a reflection of both a changing city and the increase in Bostonians of color seeking local office.

Despite the historically controversial nature of the at-large system, these findings paint a positive outlook of the future of at-large elections in Boston. Slates of diverse candidates running for election, winning office, and successfully seeking re-election or higher office provide a glimpse into the changing city, both socially and demographically. The Boston City Council in 2022 boasts seven councilors of color out of a total thirteen elected officials. In all, the combined structure of district and at-large representatives has created a legislative body that represents the true nature of the people of Boston.

My findings are limited in their scope, for they only reflect electoral data from 2005 until 2021. Furthermore, it does not consider any other demographic measures such as income, education, or religion, among others. As of Fall 2021, the Boston City Council began its decennial redistricting process as a result of the new census data. While this will not affect at-large elections, it could shift the gears on the nine district seats on the City Council. Future research could examine vote choice across racial and ethnic lines for the Council's district elections, and this would be of unique importance if districts were to shift significantly. This research could assess both voter turnout and vote choice of majority-minority districts.

As the city's minority communities grow and Boston becomes a majority-minority city, it is imperative that descriptive representation in local government increases as well. Descriptive representation is valuable, as it has been shown to increase levels of political efficacy and trust in government institutions, alongside increased social meaning for both the group and the city as a whole (Mansbridge 1999).

APPENDIX

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.450	0.0213	21.06	2.504e ⁻⁵⁷	0.408	0.492
Black Voters	1.074	0.0391	27.41	2.562e ⁻⁷⁷	0.997	1.151
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.249	0.0673	3.70	2.617e ⁻⁰⁴	0.116	0.382
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.904	0.0950	9.51	1.612e ⁻¹⁸	0.717	1.092

Table 2: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2009

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.063	0.022	28.26	1.135e ⁻⁷⁹	0.587	0.675
Black Voters	1.019	0.040	25.13	2.916e ⁻⁷⁰	0.939	1.099
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.873	0.073	11.92	3.095e ⁻²⁶	0.729	1.017
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	1.176	0.094	12.46	4.787e ⁻²⁸	0.990	1.361

Table 3: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2011

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.522	0.022	22.91	1.845e ⁻⁶³	0.477	0.567
Black Voters	1.091	0.041	26.07	2.127e ⁻⁷³	1.008	1.173
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.652	0.068	9.56	1.125e ⁻¹⁸	0.518	0.786
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.861	0.097	8.87	1.382e ⁻¹⁶	0.670	1.053

Table 4: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2013

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.730	0.019	37.65	3.02e ⁻¹⁰⁵	0.692	0.769
Black Voters	1.015	0.033	30.19	1.584e ⁻⁸⁵	0.948	1.081
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.977	0.058	16.67	1.524e ⁻⁴²	0.862	1.092
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	1.131	0.078	14.49	5.164e ⁻³⁵	0.977	1.285

Table 5: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2015

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.757	0.0196	38.68	1.621e ⁻¹⁰⁷	0.718	0.795
Black Voters	1.099	0.0346	31.74	1.081e ⁻⁸⁹	1.031	1.167
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.817	0.0555	14.71	9.791e ⁻³⁶	0.708	0.927
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.702	0.0765	9.18	1.656e ⁻¹⁷	0.552	0.853

Table 6: Estimated vote share for Ayanna Pressley, 2017

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.652	0.027	23.58	1.277e ⁻⁶⁵	0.597	0.706
Black Voters	0.616	0.050	12.14	5.087e ⁻²⁷	0.516	0.716
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.879	0.082	10.63	4.925e ⁻²²	0.716	1.042
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.918	0.117	7.78	1.785e ⁻¹³	0.685	1.150

Table 7: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2013

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.859	0.017	48.37	3.07e ⁻¹²⁹	0.824	0.894
Black Voters	0.718	0.030	23.36	6.33e ⁻⁶⁵	0.658	0.779
Hispanic/Latino Voters	1.032	0.053	19.25	2.28e ⁻⁵¹	0.926	1.138
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.946	0.071	13.26	8.98e ⁻³¹	0.806	1.087

Table 8: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2015

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.981	0.011	85.21	9.73e ⁻¹⁸⁷	0.958	1.004
Black Voters	0.688	0.020	33.79	3.44e ⁻⁹⁵	0.648	0.728
Hispanic/Latino Voters	1.052	0.032	32.18	6.86e ⁻⁹¹	0.988	1.117
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.970	0.045	21.54	6.24e ⁻⁵⁹	0.881	1.059

Table 9: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2017

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.772	0.022	33.73	4.879e ⁻⁹⁵	0.727	0.817
Black Voters	0.723	0.041	17.36	7.733e ⁻⁴⁵	0.641	0.805
Hispanic/Latino Voters*	0.907	0.066	13.55	9.267e ⁻³²	0.775	1.039
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	1.074	0.088	12.15	5.153e ⁻²⁷	0.900	1.248

Table 10: Estimated vote share for Michelle Wu, 2019

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.200	0.022	9.07	3.49e ⁻¹⁷	0.156	0.243
Black Voters	0.544	0.040	13.54	9.94e ⁻³²	0.465	0.623
Hispanic/Latino Voters	0.893	0.064	13.83	1.02e ⁻³²	0.766	1.020
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.706	0.085	8.27	7.48e ⁻¹⁵	0.538	0.874

Table 11: Estimated vote share for Julia Mejia, 2019

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

	Estimate	Std. Error	Statistic	P. Value	Conf. Low	Conf. High
White Voters	0.494	0.024	20.53	1.150e ⁻⁵⁵	0.446	0.541
Black Voters	0.683	0.045	15.13	3.307 e ⁻³⁷	0.594	0.771
Hispanic/Latino Voters	1.130	0.070	16.01	0.991e ⁻⁴⁰	0.991	1.270
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters*	0.966	0.096	10.02	4.013e ⁻²⁰	0.777	1.156

Table 12: Estimated vote share for Julia Mejia, 2021

*includes voters of two or more races, and other races

Data sources: Boston Elections Department, American Community Survey

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abott, Carolyn, and Asya Magazinnik. "At-Large Elections and Minority Representation in Local Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 64, no. 3 (2020): 717-33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12512>.
- Banducci, Susan A, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp. "Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation." *The Journal of Politics* 66, no. 2 (2004): 534-56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2004.00163.x>.
- Barreto, Matt A. 2010. *Ethnic Cues: The Role of Shared Ethnicity in Latino Political Participation (The Politics of Race and Ethnicity)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Barreto, Matt A. "Si Se Puede! Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters." *The American Political Science Review* 101, no. 3 (2007): 425. doi:10.1017/S0003055407070293.
- Barreto, Matt A, Gary M. Segura, and Nathan D. Woods. "The Mobilizing Effect of Majority–Minority Districts on Latino Turnout." *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 1 (2004): 65-75. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4145297>.
- Boston Municipal Research Bureau. "City Council Elections." Last modified July/August 2007. <https://bmr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Elect7.pdf>.
- Boston Municipal Research Bureau. "Candidates Running for Boston City Council in 2011." Last modified June 2011. <https://bmr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/election611.pdf>.
- Boston Municipal Research Bureau. "Profile of the 2015 Boston City Council Race." Last modified July 2015. <https://bmr.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/BUccRace715.pdf>.
- Butterfield, Fox. "U.S. Judge Says Boston Can't Hold Elections in New Districts." *New York Times*, July 28, 1983. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/28/us/us-judge-says-boston-can-t-hold-elections-in-new-districts.html>.
- Davidson, Chandler, and George Korbel. "At-Large Elections and Minority-Group Representation: A Re-Examination of Historical and Contemporary Evidence." *The Journal of Politics* 43, no. 4 (1981): 982-1005. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2130184>.

- Dovi, Suzanne. "Preferable Descriptive Representatives: Will Just Any Woman, Black, or Latino Do?" *The American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2002): 729–43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3117507>.
- Engstrom, Richard L, and Michael D. McDonald. 1986. "The Effect of At-Large Versus District Elections on Racial Representation in U.S. Municipalities." In *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences*, edited by Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart, 203-25. New York: Agathon Press.
- Engstrom, Richard L, and Michael D. McDonald. "The Election of Blacks to City Councils: Clarifying the Impact of Electoral Arrangements on the Seats/Population Relationship." *The American Political Science Review* 75, no. 2 (1981): 344-54. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1961369>.
- Flack, Horace E. "Municipal Charter Revision--Boston." *The American Political Science Review* 3, no. 3 (1909): 410–13. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1945694>.
- Fox, Richard, and Jennifer Lawless. "To Run or Not to Run for Office: Explaining Nascent Political Ambition." *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (2005): 642-59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3647737>.
- Gay, Claudine. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." *The American Political Science Review* 95, no. 3 (2001): 589-602. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3118235>.
- Hajnal, Zoltan, and Jessica Trounstein. 2007. "Transforming Votes into Victories: Turnout, Institutional Context, and Minority Representation in Local Politics." In *Voting Rights Act Reauthorization of 2006: Perspectives on Democracy, Participation, and Power*, edited by Ana Henderson, 83-106. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Karnig, Albert K., and Susan Welch. "Electoral Structure and Black Representation on City Councils." *Social Science Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (1982): 99-114. <https://ezproxy.bu.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Felectoral-structure-black-representation-on-city%2Fdocview%2F1291641508%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D9676>.
- Keele, Luke J., Paru R. Shah, Ismail White, and Kristine Kay. "Black Candidates and Black Turnout: A Study of Viability in Louisiana Mayoral Elections." *The Journal of Politics* 79, no. 3 (2017): 780-91. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bu.edu/10.1086/690302>.
- Macmanus, Susan A. "City Council Election Procedures and Minority Representation: Are They Related?" *Social Science Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (1978): 153–61. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42859875>.

- Mansbridge, Jane. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes"." *The Journal of Politics* 61, no. 3 (1999): 628-57. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647821>.
- Marchione, William P. "The 1949 Boston Charter Reform." *The New England Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (1976): 373–98. <https://doi.org/10.2307/364680>.
- Marschall, Melissa J, Anirudh V. S. Ruhil, and Paru R. Shah. "The New Racial Calculus: Electoral Institutions and Black Representation in Local Legislatures." *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 1 (2010): 107-24. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20647974>.
- National Conference of State Legislatures. "Legislatures at a Glance." Last modified Spring 2020. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/legislatures-at-a-glance.aspx>.
- "New Turn of Wheel in Boston Government: City Goes Back To District Representation, Meaning a Councilor from Each Ward." *Boston Globe*, Nov 06, 1924. <https://ezproxy.bu.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fhistorical-newspapers%2Fnew-turn-wheel-boston-government%2Fdocview%2F498051992%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D9676>.
- O'Connor, Thomas H. 1995. *The Boston Irish: A Political History*. Boston: Northeastern University.
- "Plan A Wins; Boston to Get New Charter." *Boston Globe*, Nov 09, 1949. <https://ezproxy.bu.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fhistorical-newspapers%2Fplan-wins-boston-get-new-charter%2Fdocview%2F822180447%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D9676>.
- Robinson, Theodore P., and Thomas R. Dye. "Reformism and Black Representation on City Councils." *Social Science Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (1978): 133–41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42859873>.
- Schaeffer, Katherine. "Racial, Ethnic Diversity Increases Yet again with the 117th Congress." Last modified January 28, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/01/28/racial-ethnic-diversity-increases-yet-again-with-the-117th-congress>.
- Shah, Paru R., Melissa Marschall, and Anirudh Ruhil. "Are We There Yet? The Voting Rights Act and Black Representation on City Councils, 1986-2006." *Journal of Politics* 75, no. 4 (2013): 933-1008. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0022381613000972>.

- Shah, Paru. "It Takes a Black Candidate: A Supply-Side Theory of Minority Representation." *Political Research Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (2014): 266-79. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24371782>.
- Taebel, Delbert. "Minority Representation on City Councils: The Impact of Structure on Blacks and Hispanics." *Social Science Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (1978): 142-52. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42859874>.
- Tate, Katherine. 2003. *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representatives in the U.S. Congress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tebbetts, Charlie. "Charter Changes in Boston from 1885 - 1949." *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 32, no. 1 (Winter 2004). <https://www.westfield.ma.edu/historical-journal/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/tebbetts-winter-2004-combined.pdf>.
- Trounstine, Jessica, and Melody Ellis Valdini. "The Context Matters: The Effects of Single-Member versus At-Large Districts on City Council Diversity." *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 3 (2008): 554-69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00329>.
- Turner, Robert L. "The City Votes for Change." *Boston Globe*, Nov 08, 1981. <https://ezproxy.bu.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fhistorical-newspapers%2Fcity-votes-change%2Fdocview%2F1012511791%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D9676>.
- United States Census Bureau. 2021. "United States QuickFacts." Accessed December 18, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/RHI825219#RHI825219>.
- United States Justice Department. "Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act." Last modified November 8, 2021. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/section-2-voting-rights-act>.

CURRICULUM VITAE

