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# HIDING FROM THE HEAT: WHY TUCSON FAILED TO BECOME A SANCTUARY CITY (WORKING PAPER)

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite being an “immigrant welcoming city”, in November, 2019, Tucson, AZ, voters rejected Proposition 205 – the Tucson Families Free and Together Initiative. We leverage theories of elite partisan cues to explain why voters in a Democratic city would vote against such an initiative. Given Tucson’s location in the broadly immigrant-hostile state of Arizona, local Democratic elites conveyed mixed cues to residents on how to vote: some supported the initiative whereas others worried Prop. 205 would produce more harm to Tucson than good given threats from the state. Employing a combination of precinct voting and Census block group demographics, we hypothesize and show that this mixed partisan cues environment produced a split among Democrats (50% pro, 50% opposed), whereas Republican voters – who received consistent elite cues of opposition – voted nearly uniformly against Prop. 205. These findings expand our knowledge on how powerful partisan elite cues can be in shaping sanctuary city attitudes and voting behavior, and highlights the unique role of state-city interplay in shaping sanctuary outcomes. Implications are discussed.

**Keywords** Sanctuary Cities · Ecological Inference · Local Politics · State Politics

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## Introduction

In 1982, Tucson, AZ, birthed the sanctuary movement, with John Fife, minister of Southside Presbyterian, declaring his church a sanctuary for immigrant refugees fleeing civil conflict in El Salvador and Guatemala (Gonzalez O'Brien et al., 2019; Collingwood and O'Brien, 2019). The movement spread to hundreds of houses of worship around the country, and by 1985, Madison, Wisconsin became the first sanctuary city. Sanctuary cities are cities with ordinances that expressly forbid local law enforcement from inquiring into residents' immigration status. Since Madison, the sanctuary movement has morphed into a national movement, with the largest cities (and state) in the country declaring themselves sanctuaries for the undocumented.

Despite being a broadly progressive locality, surprisingly, Tucson, the home of the sanctuary movement, is not a sanctuary city. However, in 2012, the Tucson City Council voted 6 to 1 to declare Tucson an "immigrant-welcoming city" and to oppose SB-1070, an Arizona state law that allowed police officers to question and detain people for the purpose of obtaining their identification papers.

One reason for this may be that Tucson resides in the famously anti-immigrant state of Arizona, home to punitive laws such as SB-1070, originally coined "No Sanctuary Cities for Illegal Immigrants Act" (Collingwood et al., 2017; Wallace, 2014; Varsanyi et al., 2012; Armacost, 2016). Given the state's historical hostility towards sanctuary cities, Tucson sanctuary advocates may have historically had a difficult time pushing such an agenda and getting local elected officials to respond. In fact, some otherwise allies have argued that by making the city a sanctuary, the state government may be inclined to impose some sort of financial or police fine upon the city. For instance, outgoing Democratic mayor, Jonathan Rothschild, penned a "vote no" op-ed in the Arizona Daily Star newspaper just three weeks before the 2019 vote.<sup>3</sup> Rothschild asserted, "If passed, Prop. 205 would harm our community in ways that have nothing to do with immigration. And, while intended to protect immigrants, it may actually make their situation worse."

But, with Donald Trump's victory and subsequent attack on sanctuary cities beginning in early 2017, states and cities have begun to push the issue onto the agenda with California and Washington making their states sanctuaries, and Texas, Tennessee, Florida, and Iowa banning sanctuaries outright (Collingwood et al., 2017). Finally, in 2019, Tucson pro-sanctuary proponents placed a proposition on the ballot (Prop. 205, "Tucson Families Free and Together"), which, if passed, would finally make the city a sanctuary.<sup>4</sup> However, in a citywide general election held on November 5, Tucson voters soundly rejected the sanctuary proposal 70% - 30%.<sup>5</sup> In a racially diverse city that votes overwhelmingly Democrat – the mayor and all city council members were Democrats as of 2017 – why did Tucson fail to pass Proposition 205?

In this paper, we build upon scholarship on elite partisan cues, and an emerging scholarship on sanctuary cities and public opinion to argue that Tucson partisans are operating in an asymmetrical elite cues environment. Despite evidence

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<sup>3</sup>[https://tucson.com/opinion/local/tucson-mayor-rothschild-vote-no-on-tucson-sanctuary-city-prop/article\\_e0a032e8-c671-5c77-aefc-e0c954787007.html](https://tucson.com/opinion/local/tucson-mayor-rothschild-vote-no-on-tucson-sanctuary-city-prop/article_e0a032e8-c671-5c77-aefc-e0c954787007.html)

<sup>4</sup>[https://www.tucsonaz.gov/files/clerks/2018-I001\\_Application-Title\\_and\\_Text\\_Pages.pdf](https://www.tucsonaz.gov/files/clerks/2018-I001_Application-Title_and_Text_Pages.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.tucsonaz.gov/files/clerks/COT\\_2019\\_OfficialResults\\_General\\_11122019.pdf](https://www.tucsonaz.gov/files/clerks/COT_2019_OfficialResults_General_11122019.pdf)

that political behavior has increasingly become nationalized (Hopkins, 2018), we suggest that local level political behavior (i.e., sanctuary city proposition vote choice) about an issue that has become nationalized, can still be shaped by local and state politics.

Specifically, while Republican voters receive consistent one-sided elite cues on sanctuary cities (ban them), Arizona Democratic elites provide mixed cues to voters. While Arizona Democrats likely broadly support the idea of sanctuary policy, the party's elites can be placed into two camps: 1) Support sanctuary policy regardless of the potential costs; 2) Only support sanctuary if external costs are not present. Given this elite environment, we hypothesize that Republican voters will uniformly oppose any sanctuary ballot measure, while Democratic voters should be more mixed in their support/opposition to a sanctuary proposition. This asymmetric elite cues environment, we argue, is why Prop. 205 ultimately went down in defeat.

Taking precinct voting data from the 2019 general election, we show that Republican voters nearly uniformly oppose Prop. 205, whereas Democratic voters reveal nearly 50-50 splits in their support/opposition to the initiative. Additionally, we show that Prop. 205 outcomes are not a result of disproportionate Republican turnout. Our research contributes to the broad literature on partisan elite cues and suggests that sanctuary policy attitudes/voting behavior are strongly influenced by the local level partisan elite cue environment even though the issue has become nationalized in recent years. Therefore, we expand upon current knowledge related to political behavior and sanctuary city politics.

Below, we outline relevant literature on partisan elite cues and how such cues applies to the study of sanctuary city politics. We then review the specific case of Prop. 205. This review generates two hypotheses. Next, we discuss our data and methods, followed by our results. We conclude with some final thoughts and suggestions for future research.

## **Background**

Mainstay theories of political attitude formation and attitude change promote the idea that citizens (and hence voters) are strongly influenced by elite cues and political communication (Converse, 1964; Zaller et al., 1992). More specifically, partisans in the mass public take cues from same-party candidates and elected officials – and tend to exhibit elites' policy preferences (Gilens and Murakawa, 2002; Levendusky, 2010). For instance, Lenz (2013) shows that voters often support candidates, and then adopt said candidates' policy positions.

Under this model of elite partisan communication, the scholarship suggests that when elite partisan cues are one-sided then partisans in the mass public should exhibit similar trends as their respective elites. For instance, if Republican messages essentially say that sanctuary policy is bad policy, we should anticipate Republican voters to uniformly oppose sanctuary policy. However, if Democratic elites send mixed cues – some support sanctuary policy, others not so much – Democratic voters will likewise respond in a mixed manner.

These trends of reliance upon partisan elite cues may be increasing in an era of mass partisan polarization (Mason, 2015), although Klar et al. (2018) suggest that many people simply disdain partisanship. Still, Mason (2018) argues that partisan identity has become a core social identity, whereas Abramowitz (2010) argues the political center is

disappearing. Indeed, recent research shows that individuals express increasing dislike of out-group partisans, a term Abramowitz and Webster (2016, 2018) coined negative partisanship. It stands to reason, then, that elite partisan communication should strongly influence attitudes towards a budding topic like sanctuary cities.

Recent research on sanctuary cities leverages these broader political science findings to understand political attitude formation. For instance, Collingwood et al. (2018) argue that Trump's campaign against sanctuary cities and then Democratic mayors' response helped to further polarize public opinion on the topic along partisan lines. Casellas and Wallace (2018) provide confirming evidence that partisanship is a primary cleaver of sanctuary city public opinion formation. Gonzalez O'Brien et al. (2019) further show that media coverage of sanctuary cities has become increasingly partisanized over the past four decades. As such, they suggest that Democrats and Republicans will increasingly hold polarized attitudes on the topic of sanctuary policy. Collingwood et al. (2018) show this to be the case, specifically demonstrating that Democratic voters in the states of California and Texas moved strongly into the pro-sanctuary camp between 2015-2017.

However, in a piece most directly relevant to the current investigation, Oskooii et al. (2018) show an asymmetric effect of political knowledge on attitudes towards sanctuary city policies. Specifically, regardless of whether Republicans do or do not claim to know what a sanctuary city is, they oppose sanctuary policy. Democrats, meanwhile, are much more likely to support sanctuary policy if they are familiar with what a sanctuary city is. The implication from these findings suggest that if Democrats are knowledgeable about what a sanctuary city is, then they will be strongly supportive of such a policy. Since Prop. 205 Tucson voters likely were somewhat aware what they were voting on (so they had knowledge of a sanctuary), Oskooii et al.'s findings would suggest that Tucson Republicans and Democrats should strongly polarize.

However, that study examined public opinion in a strongly pro-Democratic city (Seattle) and Democratic state (Washington State) where Democratic elites uniformly supported sanctuary city policies. We show that in a different context – a Republican controlled state with an overriding anti-immigrant atmosphere – Democratic elites are more cautious on local immigration policy – and therefore send mixed cues to voters. If this is true, then voters most inclined to back sanctuary policies (Democrats) will actually exhibit mixed voting behavior, whereas Republicans will exhibit strong opposition.

## **The Case: Tucson, AZ, Proposition 205**

Since Donald Trump's presidential campaign, the topic of sanctuary cities has gained increasing public attention and scrutiny (Gonzalez O'Brien et al., 2019), not only leading to a nationalization of the issue but also a polarized public response. Indeed, Trump began his presidency with a memo aiming to ban sanctuaries outright, although a federal judge later overturned the executive order. In response, states such as California and Washington enacted statewide sanctuary policies, while Texas, Florida, Iowa, and Tennessee banned sanctuary cities outright. Thus, with such national

attention, it seems reasonable that voters casting ballots in local elections evolving around the topic of sanctuary cities may be influenced by both national and local elite cues.

In response to President Donald Trump’s immigration policies, in 2019, a coalition of Tucson immigrant activists and local religious leaders gathered enough signatures to place Proposition 205 – the “Tucson Families Free and Together Initiative” – on the city’s general election ballot. If enacted, the proposition would make Tucson a sanctuary, by blocking law enforcement from detaining residents to ask about citizenship status, and by limiting a police officer’s ability to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement officials.<sup>6</sup> Given Tucson’s status as an “immigrant welcoming city”, and overall progressive city, a priori one may think that the city’s voters would provide strong support for Prop. 205. However, as we outlined in the previous section, voter response to Prop. 205 should be guided by elite partisan cues. And elites in local elections may have different perspectives or take different issues into account than either national or state level elites.

To substantiate our framework, we examine the uniform support of Republicans throughout the federal, state, and local level. At the national level, in Congress, Bob Goodlatte’s (Republican, VA-6) bill, “No Sanctuary for Criminals Act”, co-sponsored by 15 fellow Republicans, passed the House on June 29, 2017, with a vote of 225 Republicans for, and 7 Republicans against. Democrats, meanwhile, voted 3 yea and 188 nay.<sup>7</sup> During the 2016 GOP primary presidential campaign, leading candidates voiced opposition to sanctuary cities, including Donald Trump, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, and Jeb Bush.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Trump build a large chunk of his immigration policy agenda around opposition to sanctuary cities (Collingwood and O’Brien, 2019).

In Arizona, Republican governor, Doug Ducey, voiced opposition to the proposition.<sup>9</sup> Other Republican state level politicians such as Jay Lawrence, John Kavanaugh, and Bret Lawrence announced their opposition to Proposition 205 by threatening to ban local governments from declaring themselves sanctuary cities. Further, they threatened to withhold state funds to cities that made such a declaration, citing SB-1487, a state law enacted in 2016.<sup>10</sup> This bill was meant to withhold funding from local governments if they passed a laws contrary to state law or the constitution of Arizona. Local officials were clearly aware of these issues. For example, city attorney Mike Rankin stated that Proposition 205 violated a state law that bared cities from adopting policies that limit the enforcement of federal immigration laws within their borders.<sup>11</sup>

Locally, while Pima county is a generally Democratic county, the Pima County Republican Party attempted to block the proposition from getting on the ballot by challenging it in the courts ultimately failing.<sup>12</sup> Pima County Republican Party

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<sup>6</sup>See supporting material: 2018-I001\_Application-Title\_and\_Text\_Pages.pdf

<sup>7</sup><http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2017/roll342.xml>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2016-candidates-call-change-sanctuary-cities-after-san-francisco-murder/>

<sup>9</sup><https://tucson.com/news/local/gov-ducey-tucson-voters-should-reject-sanctuary-city-ballot-proposal/article715dbf05-8837-5efe-b72b-803fd5e8759e.html>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/immigration/2019/10/17/arizona-legislature-sanctuary-city-vote-crackdown-tucson/4002434002/>

<sup>11</sup><https://media.azpm.org/master/document/2019/9/19/pdf/mike-rankin-memo-about-prop-205.pdf>

<sup>12</sup><https://tucson.com/news/local/gop-files-lawsuit-against-sanctuary-city-initiative-in-tucson/article8e2bc5b3-5242-55f6-a8df-904a7b120682.html>

chairman, David Eppihimer, stated, “Making Tucson a sanctuary city would be a mistake. . . We are saving Tucson from itself.” In addition, the Pima County GOP voiced strong opposition to Prop. 205.<sup>13</sup> Taken in total, the evidence strongly suggests that national, state, and local Republican officials and elites were unified against proposition 205.

While Democratic elites nationally have been moving strongly in support of sanctuary cities (Democrats nearly unanimously voted against “No Sanctuaries for Criminals Act”), state and local Democratic officials took mixed positions on Prop. 205. Democratic state law makers such as Andres Cano and Victoria Steele expressed support for the proposition, as did the Arizona Democratic Party Progressive Caucus, Progressive Democrats of Southern Arizona, No More Deaths, and a handful of left-wing interest groups.<sup>14</sup>

Local Democratic elites and affiliated organizations did not convey unified support for Proposition 205. Pima County Democrats endorsed the proposition, and so too did Pima County Supervisor, Democrat Richard Elias. However, many local Tucson Democrats opposed the initiative, including Democratic mayoral candidate, Regina Romero.<sup>15</sup> In her opposition, Romero, elected as the city’s first Latina mayor in 2019, stated: “I’ve led on those issues [immigrant welcoming] and they are very important to this community, but I vehemently oppose the sanctuary city initiative because of that language.” Tucson Democratic city councilmen Paul Durham, Richard Fimbres and Steve Kozachik wrote in Tucson’s official voter guide against Proposition 205, arguing that it placed millions of dollars in Federal grants at risk, jeopardized state shared revenues, and did not make Tucson safer.<sup>16</sup> These concerns were echoed by City manager Micheal Ortega, Police Chief Chris Magnus, and City Attorney Mike Rankin, who in had a Q and A memo on Proposition 205, stated the initiative would damage the city by withholding of state funds. In addition, local groups against Proposition 205 were Chicanos Por La Causa an organization that self-proclaims advocacy for Chicanos, Mexican Americans, Central Americans, and indigenous peoples in Tucson.<sup>17</sup> Elites and Democrats against Prop 205 stated points highlighted by white Republican Lawmakers. This non uniform support for Proposition 205 shows that Democratic voters faced a mixed partisan cues landscape.

## Hypotheses

The above theorizing and background regarding the Prop. 205 vote suggests two hypotheses that we test in the rest of the paper. First, because Republican elite partisan cues are almost uniformly in opposition to sanctuary cities and Prop. 205, we expect Republican voters to vote no on Prop. 205. Second, while Democratic voters may preference a sanctuary policy abstractly, due to mixed elite partisan cues, we expect Democratic voters to exhibit mixed voting behavior with sizable numbers both supporting and opposing Prop. 205. We therefore generate the following two hypotheses:

- $H_1$ : Republican voters will strongly oppose Proposition 205.

<sup>13</sup><http://pimagop.org/vote-republican-say-no-to-205>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.familiesfreeandtogether.org/endorsing-partners/>

<sup>15</sup>[https://tucson.com/news/local/tucson-mayoral-candidates-agree-sanctuary-city-initiative-would-be-bad/article\\_97722918-1a94-5cc5-9c4b-3430060e9586.html](https://tucson.com/news/local/tucson-mayoral-candidates-agree-sanctuary-city-initiative-would-be-bad/article_97722918-1a94-5cc5-9c4b-3430060e9586.html)

<sup>16</sup>City of Tucson. The Choice is yours: Official Voter Information. Tucson : Published, November 5th, 2019.

<sup>17</sup>[https://tucson.com/opinion/local/chicanos-por-la-causa-prop-not-good-for-community/article\\_7e5ed67c-219c-5b31-9979-db88ca39eddb.html](https://tucson.com/opinion/local/chicanos-por-la-causa-prop-not-good-for-community/article_7e5ed67c-219c-5b31-9979-db88ca39eddb.html)

- $H_2$ : Democratic voters will split their vote somewhat evenly between yes and no on Proposition 205.

## Data and Methods

To test our hypotheses, we rely on a variety of data sources. First, from the Tucson City Clerk's office, we gathered Proposition 205 precinct-level election results.<sup>18</sup> There are  $n=135$  precincts in the data.<sup>19</sup> Variables we use include number of registered voters, number of people who voted yes for Proposition 205, and number of people who voted no. To produce baseline partisan precinct estimates, we gathered percent Sinema (Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate) and percent Garcia (Democratic candidate for Arizona governor) from the 2018 general election. We average the percent vote share for these two top of the ticket Democrats to form our latent partisanship variable.

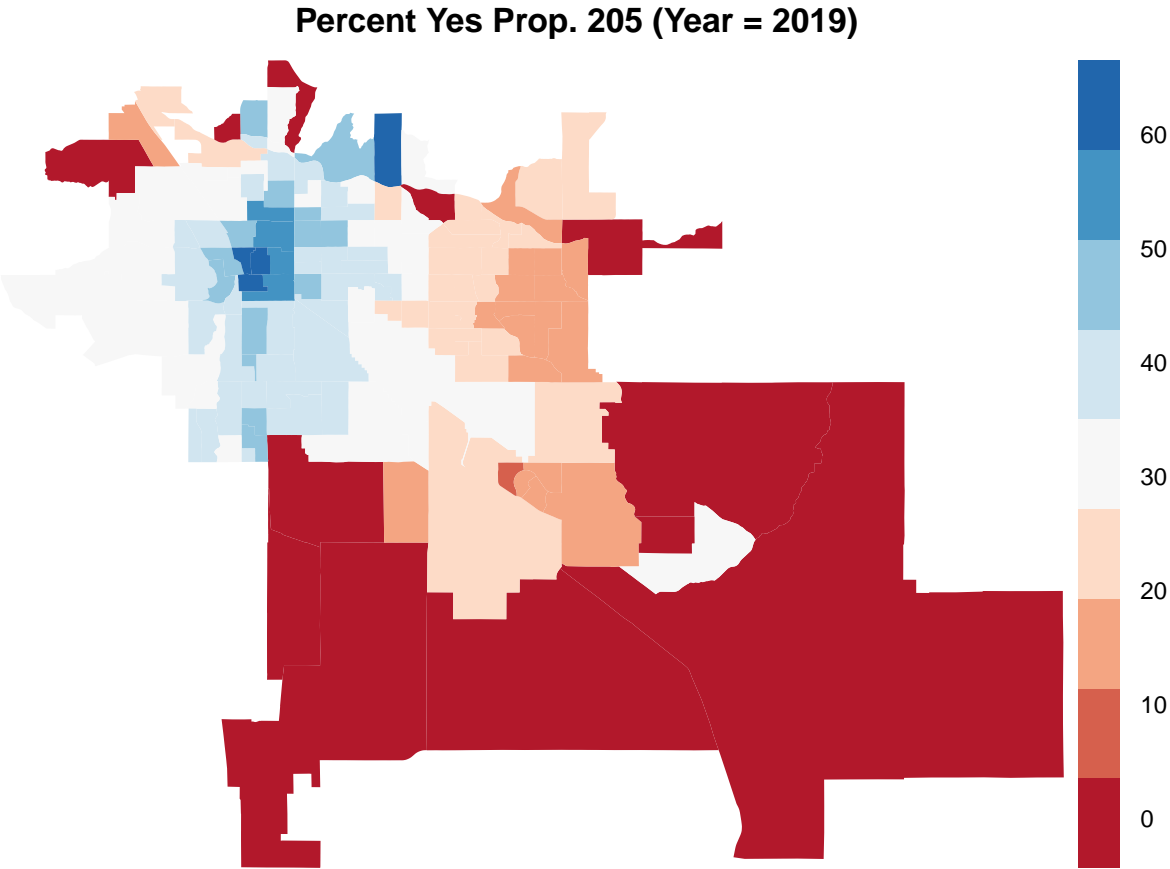
Figure 1 maps the citywide Prop. 205 precinct vote. Dark red equates to strong opposition whereas deep blue signifies greater support. A curious look at the map indicates that the south and southeast portion of the city voted overwhelmingly in opposition to Prop. 205, whereas the proposition performs increasingly favorable towards the center of the city in the area around the University of Arizona. Still, very few precincts exhibit strong Prop. 205 support as indicated by the lack of deep blue precincts.

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<sup>18</sup>[https://www.tucsonaz.gov/files/clerks/2019Election/COT\\_2019\\_OfficialCanvass\\_General\\_11122019.pdf](https://www.tucsonaz.gov/files/clerks/2019Election/COT_2019_OfficialCanvass_General_11122019.pdf)

<sup>19</sup>Thirteen (13) precincts have fewer than  $n=10$  registered voters. Due to various data limitations, for some analyses, these precincts are dropped. This does not change any substantive findings.

Figure 1: Tucson 2019 general election percent yes for Proposition 205. If passed, the proposition would make Tucson a sanctuary city.





Next, to rule out variables that might confound the relationship between partisanship and sanctuary policy vote choice, we gathered block group data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS, 2013-2017 5-year). It is important to try to rule out alternative explanations because research indicates that Latinos, for example, are more supportive of sanctuary policy than are Anglos. Furthermore, in a state like Arizona, partisanship may be cleaved by race/ethnicity.<sup>20</sup>

From the ACS 2017 5-year, we gathered: total population, Hispanic/Not Hispanic racial data (non-Hispanic white, Latino/Hispanic, black, Asian, race: other), age, education level obtained, unemployment rate, and median household income (2017). To generate our racial estimates, for instance, percent Hispanic, we divide the total number of Hispanics in a given Census block by the total population in that Census block. From the 2010 Census, we gathered percent Hispanic, enabling the creation of a percent Hispanic change variable.<sup>21</sup>

To measure precinct racial diversity, we calculate the Herfindahl–Hirschman index based on percent white, percent Hispanic, percent black, and percent other (Rhoades, 1993). Higher values indicate greater precinct diversity, and lower values little diversity.

However, moving into the spatial space, because precincts and block groups overlap but are incongruent, we employ a spatial join technique called areal-weighted interpolation (Pebesma, 2018). First, we took the Pima County precinct shapefile (the target) and overlaid it against the Pima County block group shape file (the source). For each block group variable of interest (e.g., race, ethnicity), we then produce a precinct level count and ultimately percent. For each precinct, these estimates are calculated via a weighted function:

$$W_i = \frac{A_i}{A_j} \quad (1)$$

Here,  $W_i$  denotes the areal weight for each intersected feature;  $A_i$  the area of intersected feature  $i$ , and  $A_j$  the total area of feature  $j$  (blocks). From this we calculate the following function:

$$E_i = V_j \times W_i \quad (2)$$

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<sup>20</sup><https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls/arizona/president>

<sup>21</sup>The Census and ACS do not include foreign-born (nativity) or gini coefficient at the block group level so we are unable to test for their independent effects. However, we offer two reasons why this is not such a problem for our analysis. First, our measure of party overwhelms all other variables in terms of predicting the vote. Second, we downloaded tract level data for Pima County and correlated percent Hispanic with foreign-born (0.76) and percent Hispanic with foreign-born non-citizen (0.72). This indicates that non-citizens – who in Pima County are largely Latino – are tending to live in areas where Latinos as a whole live. Thus, our percent Hispanic variable does capture somewhat how areas with vulnerable populations are voting.

Here,  $E_i$  is the estimated value for the variable of interest for intersected feature  $i$ ,  $W_i$  is the aforementioned spatial weight, and  $V_j$  is the population count for the block source  $j$ . Then, for each target feature  $k$  (precinct) we sum all values intersections ( $E_i$ ):

$$G_k = \sum E_{ik} \quad (3)$$

Areal-weighted interpolation, however, makes a significant assumption – that the population is evenly spread out within a particular set of polygons. In practice this is not true, so to check the plausibility of our resulting precinct-level estimates, we conducted a variety of robustness checks. First, we correlated the total population (estimated the above process) and total registration (from the board of elections) resulting in a correlation of 0.593. This indicates the two variables are related as one might expect. If, for instance, the correlation was below 0.10, we might be suspicious that the spatial join was mistakenly pushing populations counts disproportionately into low population precincts. Second, we correlated percent Hispanic with percent Yes-205, resulting in a correlation of 0.37 (percent Anglo and Yes-205 is -0.39). This corresponds to extant public opinion findings indicating that Latinos are more supportive of sanctuary cities than are Anglos Collingwood et al. (2018); Collingwood and O’Brien (2019). Finally, we subset the spatially merged data to the 135 Tucson precincts.

We analyze the data in two ways. First, to assess whether Republicans are in uniform opposition to Prop. 205 and Democrats mixed, we estimate individual level voting behavior via ecological inference from the eiCompare package in R (Collingwood et al., 2016).<sup>22</sup> Our measure of partisanship is proxied from the average of the 2018 vote for U.S. Senator Kyrsten Sinema and Democrat David Garcia.<sup>23</sup> The ecological regression equation takes percent yes on the left side of the equation and percent Democrat on the right. Finally, the model incorporates total vote. The baseline model is presented:

$$Y_i = \beta_i^l \times X_i + \beta_i^{nl} \times (1 - X_i) \quad (4)$$

where  $Y_i$  is our outcome variable (percent yes),  $\beta_i^l$  the estimated coefficient for percent Latino, and  $\beta_i^{nl}$  the coefficient estimate for percent non-Latino, by precinct.

Second, to evaluate whether we are capturing indeed a partisan effect and that our findings are not conflated with race, ethnicity, education, and some other factor, we estimate a multivariate linear regression. However, to guard against regression assumptions that individual units (precincts) are independently and identically distributed, we tested whether statistical assumptions related to our OLS voting model are violated.

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<sup>22</sup>We employ both ecological inference regression and multinomial dirichlet model for ecological inference. Both show very similar results so we present the former.

<sup>23</sup>We also estimated partisanship based off the 2016 presidential vote choice. Results are presented in Table B1 in Appendix B. Results are nearly identical.

We conducted a Moran's-I test on our residuals, finding a Moran's I statistic of 0.081,  $p < .05$ . This indicates spatial autocorrelation in our data. In addition, we conducted a LaGrange Multiplier test to ascertain whether a spatial lag or spatial error model is most appropriate. A LM spatial lag test produces a test statistic of 8.09 that is statistically significant ( $p = 0.004$ ), whereas an LM spatial error test does not produce a statistically significant test statistic (2.42,  $p = 0.12$ ). Therefore we estimate a spatial lag model. To do so, we construct a Queens weights matrix for each precinct's spatial connectivity to every other precinct. The model takes on the following form:

$$y = \rho W y + X \beta + \epsilon \quad (5)$$

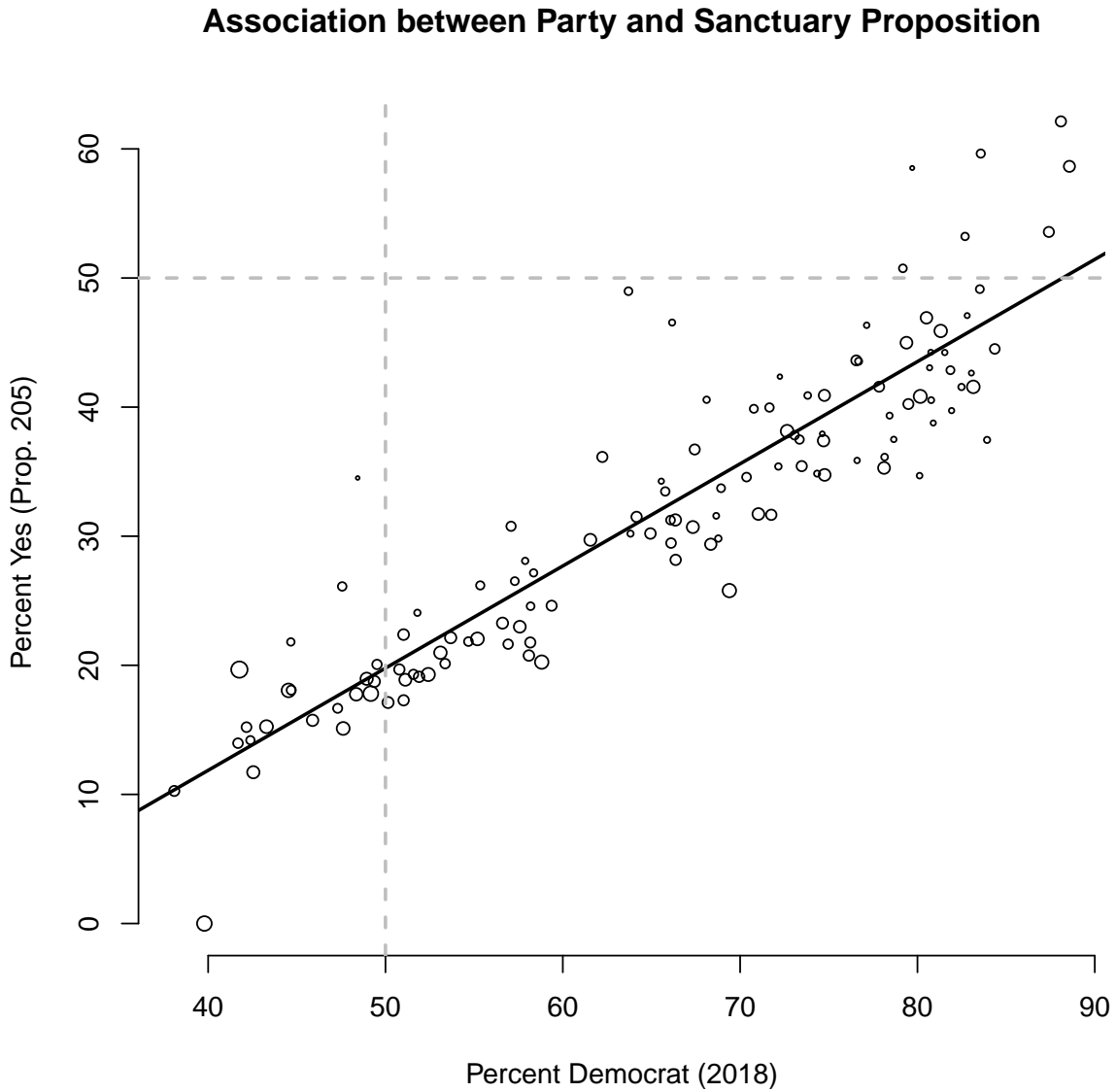
where  $\rho$  is an estimated spatial correlation parameter,  $y$  is the outcome variable (percent Yes Prop. 205),  $W$  is a spatial weights matrix where an individual precinct's weight is a function of row standardized sum of all links to the precinct, and  $X$  a vector of predictors (Bivand et al., 2013). We then present predicted probability estimates based on this model to test our hypotheses.

## Results

Before we get to our main analyses (ecological inference and spatial regression), we begin with a x-y scatterplot of our key variables of interest: percent Democrat (Republican) and percent Yes (No) on Prop. 205. Figure 2 plots percent Democrat (as measured by precinct support for Sinema/Garcia in 2018) on the x-axis against percent support for Prop. 205 on the y-axis. Each point represents a precinct and the bubble size is weighted by precinct population.

The two variables are strongly related, receiving a correlation of 0.91. However, a distinct pattern emerges, which is that the majority of the data fall above the 50 percent Democrat line on the x-axis (vertical dotted gray line) but below the 50% percent Yes line on the y axis (horizontal dotted gray line). This suggests that while party continues to separate voters on the issue of sanctuary cities, which is consistent with prior literature (Collingwood and O'Brien, 2019; Casellas and Wallace, 2018), a large share of individual Democrats did not support Prop. 205. In fact, just seven precincts voted 50 percent or more in support of Prop. 205. These bivariate aggregate findings strongly suggest that Democrats betray mixed voting behavior on the sanctuary city proposition.

Figure 2: Association between percent Democrat (2018) and percent Yes to Proposition 205. The dotted draw vertical and horizontal lines denote above/below the 50 percent threshold for the respective measure.



## Ecological Inference Regression

However, because our data are aggregate but we are most interested in estimating individual-level behavior, we turn to an estimation technique designed to infer individual behavior from aggregate data: King’s ecological inference (King et al., 2004; King, 2013). Table 1 presents our main results.<sup>24</sup> For our hypotheses to be true, we should expect to see Republicans in strong opposition to Prop. 205 (above 90% opposed) whereas Democrats more mixed (between 40-60% support/oppose). Indeed, this is precisely what we find. Beginning with the column labeled “Democrats”, we estimate that 49% of Democrats supported Prop. 205 whereas 51% opposed it. Among Republicans, we estimate that just 1% supported Prop. 205, whereas 99% opposed it. These estimates are strongly supportive of our hypotheses, and strongly supportive of an asymmetric elite cue environment.

|             | Democrats<br>(Sinema/Garcia) | Republicans<br>(Not Sinema/Garcia) |
|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Percent Yes | 49.34                        | 0.78                               |
| se          | 0.06                         | 0.17                               |
| Percent No  | 50.79                        | 99.35                              |
| se          | 0.18                         | 0.09                               |
| Total       | 100.13                       | 100.13                             |

Table 1: Estimated Proposition 205 support by Democrat and Republican as estimated by combining Percent Sinema and Percent Garcia: Source: Tucson Board of elections, 2018, 2019 returns. King’s ei estimates

<sup>24</sup>Table B2 in Appendix B presents results based on estimates using the multinomial dirichlet RxC model (Lau et al., 2019). The results produce substantively similar findings as relying on Sinema alone.

We also conducted a homogeneous precincts analysis by subsetting the precinct data to only precincts that voted at least 75 percent for Sinema/Garcia in 2018 (n=31 precincts). We then calculated the weighted mean (by total vote) of Prop. 205 in just these precincts, with the idea being that these are places where the ecological inference problem is less severe. This method produces a Democratic estimate of 45.15, a similar number as that estimated by ecological regression.

To add additional assurances that our applicable theory of mixed partisan cues is not simply a fluke of our estimation process, we analyzed the mayoral vote happening contemporaneously as Prop. 205. Tucson mayoral candidates campaign as partisans. In 2019, Regina Romero ran as the Democratic candidate, Ed Ackerley as an independent, and Mike Cease as a Green Party candidate. Both Romero and Ackerley opposed Prop. 205, with Cease supporting it. That said, we anticipate that Democrats and Republicans should polarize in their vote choice between Romero and Ackerley – the two main candidates (Romero scored 55.90 percent of the vote to Ackerley’s 39.4). Democrats are likely to vote for Romero given her partisan identification. Ackerley is the only viable option for Republicans, having recently switched from Democrat to independent and having a background as a businessman.

We estimated an ecological inference model on this election, with results presented in Table 2. The results confirm a polarized partisan electorate, with 88 percent of Democrats backing Romero, and 92 percent of Republicans backing Ackerley. Thus, these findings suggest our ecological estimation procedures are capturing campaign dynamics both for Prop. 205 (mixed) and mayor (partisan).

|                        | Democrat<br>(Sinema/Garcia) | Republican<br>(Not Sinema/Garcia) |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Percent Romero (Dem)   | 87.97                       | 5.95                              |
| se                     | 0.45                        | 0.74                              |
| Percent Cease (Green)  | 5.49                        | 1.49                              |
| se                     | 0.11                        | 0.22                              |
| Percent Ackerley (Ind) | 5.61                        | 92.06                             |
| se                     | 0.39                        | 0.62                              |
| Percent Write-In       | 0.66                        | 0.95                              |
| se                     | 0.12                        | 0.06                              |
| Total                  | 99.73                       | 100.44                            |

Table 2: Estimated Mayoral support by Democrat and Republican as estimated by combining Percent Sinema and Percent Garcia: Source: Tucson Board of elections, 2018, 2019 returns

Finally, a word on party variation in voter turnout. Our vote by party estimates suggest that Prop. 205 failed due to a combination of strong Republican opposition and mixed Democratic support, not necessarily due to lower Democratic turnout relative to Republican turnout. One alternative explanation for Prop. 205’s defeat is that Republicans voted at relatively higher rates, and that is why overall vote share was so staunchly no. Using the same technique as above, we estimated Republican turnout at 57% of registered Republican voters and Democratic turnout at 25% of registered Democratic voters. But because Democrats comprise 45% of registered voters, whereas Republicans just 22%,<sup>25</sup> the composition of Prop. 205 voters remained roughly equal between both Republicans and Democrats. Given the asymmetry in vote preference (Republicans nearly unanimous; Democrats mixed), the explanation for Prop. 205’s

<sup>25</sup><https://www.recorder.pima.gov/VoterStats/voterttldist>

failure cannot be explained by low Democratic turnout. Had Democratic voters voiced strong support for Prop. 205 but then voted half as frequently as Republicans, then we might conclude Prop. 205 lost due to lower Democratic turnout.

### **Spatial Lag Model**

The next step in our analysis is to take into account possible confounders that might bias our estimates of the relationship between partisanship and sanctuary city policy preferences. Table 3 presents correlations between our outcome variable of interest, percent Yes Prop. 205, and possible vote choice predictors. Many variables are related to the vote, including race/ethnicity, age, unemployment, income, and of course our measure of partisanship.

Table 3: Correlation between Prop. 205 and covariates

|                                     | Correlation |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Percent Yes-205                     | 1.00        |
| Percent White/Anglo                 | -0.34       |
| Percent Hispanic                    | 0.30        |
| Percent Black                       | -0.04       |
| Percent Asian                       | 0.15        |
| Percent Race: Other                 | -0.19       |
| Herfindahl–Hirschman index          | 0.05        |
| Percent Hispanic Change 2000 - 2010 | -0.11       |
| Age: Under 18                       | -0.02       |
| Age: 18 - 44                        | 0.51        |
| Age: 45 - 64                        | -0.45       |
| Age: 65 Plus                        | -0.28       |
| Percent BA or higher                | -0.01       |
| Percent unemployed                  | 0.32        |
| Median hh income                    | -0.51       |
| Percent Democrat 2018               | 0.77        |

To begin to account for other confounders, we turn to multivariate regression analysis. Table 4 presents our spatial lag regression results.<sup>26</sup>

Just three variables are statistically significant as judged by values in the p value column: our key Democratic latent vote variable, age 45 - 65, and median household income. Turning to the first variable, for each point increase in Democratic vote from 2018, the model predicts an increase of about 0.524 percent vote increase for Prop. 205.<sup>27</sup> In addition, precincts with higher shares of voters between the age of 45 - 65 are statistically less supportive of the initiative than are precincts with fewer shares of these voters. Likewise, precincts with greater shares of residents with higher incomes are less supportive of Prop. 205.

Finally, in fitting with our Moran's I and Lagrange Multiplier tests, our spatial autoregressive parameter,  $\rho$ , is 0.31 and statistically significant at the 0.01 level suggesting the spatial lag model improves model fit. This is true, as the spatial lag model AIC is about six points lower than that estimated with a baseline linear model.<sup>28</sup>

Table 4: Simultaneous Autoregressive Lag Model predicting percent yes on Proposition 205, Tucson, AZ.

|   | Estimate | Std. Error | z value | p value |
|---|----------|------------|---------|---------|
| (Intercept)                             | 22.399   | 16.197     | 1.383   | 0.167   |
| Percent Hispanic                        | -0.081   | 0.102      | -0.798  | 0.425   |
| Percent Black                           | -0.276   | 0.352      | -0.784  | 0.433   |
| Percent Asian                           | 0.578    | 0.458      | 1.262   | 0.207   |
| Percent Other                           | 0.465    | 0.562      | 0.827   | 0.408   |
| Inverse Hirfindahl Index: Race          | -0.930   | 2.904      | -0.320  | 0.749   |
| Percent Hispanic Change 2000-2017       | 0.007    | 0.013      | 0.551   | 0.582   |
| Percent Age Under 18                    | 0.000    | 0.001      | -0.127  | 0.899   |
| Percent Age 18-44                       | -0.241   | 0.183      | -1.318  | 0.187   |
| Percent Age 45-64                       | -0.611   | 0.254      | -2.406  | 0.016   |
| Percent Age 65 plus                     | -0.100   | 0.208      | -0.483  | 0.629   |
| Percent BA or higher                    | 0.057    | 0.132      | 0.430   | 0.667   |
| Percent Unemployed                      | -0.023   | 0.227      | -0.103  | 0.918   |
| Median hh Income                        | 0.000    | 0.000      | -2.017  | 0.044   |
| Percent Democrat (Senate/Governor 2018) | 0.524    | 0.129      | 4.073   | 0.000   |
| $\rho$                                  | 0.314    |            |         | 0.005   |
| AIC                                     | 985.54   |            |         |         |
| AIC for lm                              | 991.2800 |            |         |         |

<sup>26</sup>We conducted a variance inflation factor (VIF) test. Because percent white/Anglo and percent Hispanic are so strongly correlated, the VIF is exceedingly high so we do not include percent white/Anglo in our model. When we include white/Anglo and drop Hispanic, our substantive findings remain. The only other possible multicollinearity issue is between percent Hispanic (VIF 9.91) and education (VIF = 10.19). We keep education in the model but note here that when we drop education our core substantive findings remain.

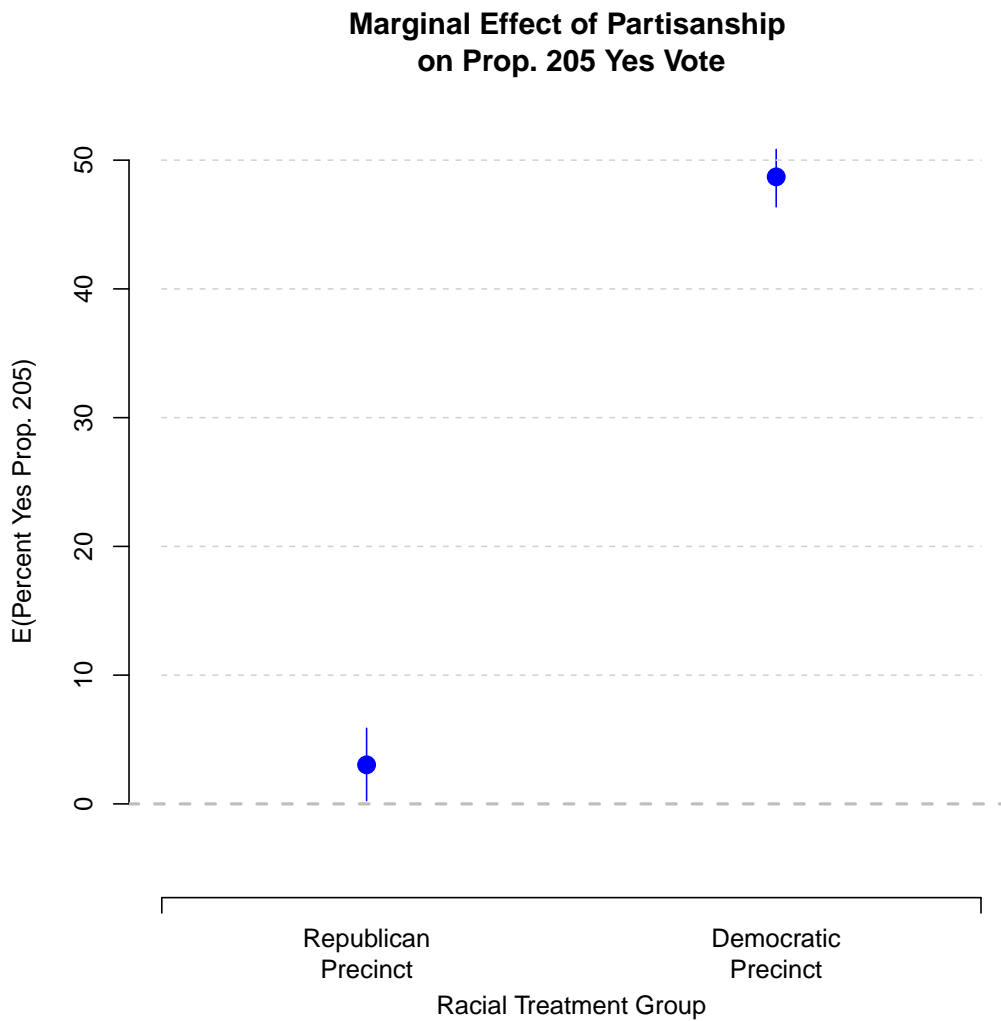
<sup>27</sup>Due to strong multicollinearity between percent non-Hispanic white and percent Hispanic, we do not include a measure for percent white. If we swap out percent Hispanic with percent white our substantive results – i.e., party driving the vote – do not change.

<sup>28</sup>Table B3 in Appendix B presents estimates from a spatial error model, the other common spatial regression technique. Here our results are substantively similar but the AIC remains unchanged from an OLS model. Therefore, we opt to present the lag model as the main model.



To fully evaluate our hypotheses, we conducted a post-estimation Monte Carlo simulation where we hold all covariates at their mean values then iterate from minimum (24.5) to maximum (86.7) on Democratic vote share 2018. The minimum value is conceptualized as a strong Republican precinct whereas the maximum is conceptualized as a strong Democratic precinct. Under this design and analysis, if our hypotheses are to be confirmed, we should simulate very little support for Prop. 205 among Republican precincts and mixed Prop. 205 support among Democratic precincts. Figure 3 presents the simulations based off of Table 3. The results comport with our hypotheses. Republican precincts give just 3.7 percent of their vote in support of Prop. 205, whereas Democratic precincts nearly evenly split the vote on Prop. 205 (48 percent yes). These results are very consistent with our ecological inference analysis, and supportive of our hypotheses.

Figure 3: Monte Carlo post-estimation simulation estimating percent Yes Prop. 205 vote in Republican vs. Democratic precincts.



## Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, we showed that despite its reputation as a progressive city, Tucson, AZ, voters nonetheless rejected a ballot proposition in 2019 that would have made the city a sanctuary. At first glance, given Tucson's historic status in the sanctuary movement, voters' rejection of the proposition seems surprising. However, upon closer inspection, the vote is consistent with what literature on partisan elite cues would suggest. And that is that voters tend to rely on partisan elites to help them form public policy attitudes.

In the case of sanctuary cities, Republican elites at the national, state, and local level all express opposition to sanctuary policy (Collingwood and O'Brien, 2019). Democratic elites, meanwhile, are more mixed, at least in the case of Tucson. While Democratic elites have moved strongly into the pro-sanctuary direction over the past several years (Collingwood et al., 2018), we showed that Democratic elites in Tucson expressed considerably mixed views about Prop. 205. This is actually consistent with public opinion data prior to Trump's election, in states like California and Texas. In California, for instance, governor Jerry Brown had previously expressed reservations about sanctuary cities, footnote <http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/05/06/californias-governor-once-opposed-sanctuary-status-have-time-and-trump-changed-his-mind/> and polling data in 2015 showed California Democrats mixed on whether to support sanctuary policy.

Thus, we suggest that partisans' Prop. 205 vote choice is very much a reflection of how political elites framed the issue. Republicans voted nearly unanimously against Prop. 205, whereas Democrats split their vote 50-50. This redounded to an overwhelming majority of voters opposed to the sanctuary ballot proposition, and rules out the possibility that the proposition's defeat is due primarily to low Democratic turnout.

However, we want to be careful not to conflate public opinion and voting behavior. While the two often operate similarly, in this particular case, we think it entirely possible that some Democrats support sanctuary policy abstractly, but were worried that a yes vote on Prop. 205 might actually make the situation worse for undocumented Tucson residents and for the city as a whole.

More specifically, does the Prop. 205 vote suggest that Democratic voters in Tucson oppose sanctuary policies in general? We doubt this to be the case. Elite arguments that Prop. 205 could actually undermine the situation for undocumented immigrants may carry legitimate weight. The state government, controlled by Republicans, has broad power to enforce SB-1070 across the state, and this could spell trouble for a city that tries to buck state law. To be clear, this paper is not arguing that Tucson Democrats are opposed to sanctuary city policy as a general principle. Rather, we are arguing that – rightly or wrongly – Tucson Democrats received mixed elite cues. Some elites argued that voters should support Prop. 205 because it is the right thing to do to protect undocumented immigrants, whereas other elites argued that Prop. 205 might bring the force of the state government upon the city and ultimately make life worse for the undocumented population. Thus, Democratic voters faced multiple considerations when deciding which way to vote. Republican voters, on the other hand, were presented with messages and images that sanctuary policy breaks federal

laws and makes cities unsafe. These are a different set of arguments than those facing Democratic voters, but for a portion of Democrats, they ended up resulting in the same vote choice of no on Prop. 205.

Ultimately, our findings expand our knowledge about how voters come to support or oppose an emerging policy area (sanctuary cities). We suggest that the state level context may matter a great deal in whether partisans who know what a sanctuary city is support or oppose sanctuary policies. Oskooii and colleagues suggest that what matters for Democrats is whether they knew what a sanctuary city is or not. For those who do, support for such a policy is very high, but for those who do not, support for such a policy is limited. In the city of Tucson, where presumably voters know what a sanctuary city policy is, we do not find such a result. Instead, voter behavior among Democrats splits evenly in a pro-205, anti-205 way. Still though, these findings do not necessarily contradict Oskooii et al, given the different state institutional settings.

What these findings suggest, is that Democrats in states that are mostly controlled by Republicans, may be more careful in how out-front they are when it comes to sanctuary city policy. In the face of a hostile national and state government, is officially declaring a city a sanctuary city really in the best interests of those most vulnerable to a central state determined to undermine local policy? Or is relying on a more relaxed version of a “welcoming city” a better policy move? These are questions that voters are likely to continue to face in various states and cities around the country.

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## Appendix A: Variable Coding

## Appendix B: Alternative Models

|             | Democrat<br>(Clinton) | Republican<br>(Not Clinton) |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Percent Yes | 50.29                 | 0.75                        |
| se          | 0.12                  | 0.19                        |
| Percent No  | 49.60                 | 98.98                       |
| se          | 0.05                  | 0.47                        |
| Total       | 99.89                 | 99.74                       |

Table B1: Estimated Proposition 205 support by Democrat and Republican as estimated by 2016 Presidential vote:  
Source: Tucson Board of elections, 2018, 2019 returns; Pima County Elections Department; 2016 precinct results

|             | Democrat<br>(Sinema/Garcia) | Republican<br>(Not Sinema/Garcia) |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Percent Yes | 47.96                       | 2.93                              |
| se          | 0.04                        | 0.06                              |
| Percent No  | 52.04                       | 97.07                             |
| se          | 0.04                        | 0.06                              |
| Total       | 100.00                      | 100.00                            |

Table B2: Estimated Proposition 205 support by Democrat and Republican as estimated by combining Percent Sinema and Percent Garcia: Source: Tucson Board of elections, 2018, 2019 returns. Multinomial Dirichlet RxC results.

Table B3: Spatial Error Model predicting percent yes on Proposition 205, Tucson, AZ.

|   | Estimate | Std. Error | z value | p value |
|---|----------|------------|---------|---------|
| (Intercept)                             | 12.485   | 16.882     | 0.740   | 0.460   |
| Percent Hispanic                        | -0.091   | 0.109      | -0.841  | 0.400   |
| Percent Black                           | -0.379   | 0.373      | -1.017  | 0.309   |
| Percent Asian                           | 0.613    | 0.474      | 1.294   | 0.196   |
| Percent Other                           | 0.445    | 0.573      | 0.777   | 0.437   |
| Inverse Hirfindahl Index: Race          | -0.187   | 3.215      | -0.058  | 0.954   |
| Percent Hispanic Change 2000-2017       | 0.013    | 0.014      | 0.947   | 0.344   |
| Percent Age Under 18                    | 0.000    | 0.001      | 0.216   | 0.829   |
| Percent Age 18-44                       | -0.157   | 0.187      | -0.837  | 0.403   |
| Percent Age 45-64                       | -0.530   | 0.259      | -2.050  | 0.040   |
| Percent Age 65 plus                     | -0.048   | 0.223      | -0.215  | 0.830   |
| Percent BA or higher                    | 0.038    | 0.137      | 0.273   | 0.785   |
| Percent Unemployed                      | 0.039    | 0.235      | 0.167   | 0.867   |
| Median hh Income                        | 0.000    | 0.000      | -1.809  | 0.071   |
| Percent Democrat (Senate/Governor 2018) | 0.712    | 0.119      | 5.998   | 0.000   |
| $\lambda$                               | 0.248    |            |         | 0.094   |
| AIC                                     | 990.46   |            |         |         |
| AIC for lm                              | 991.2800 |            |         |         |