Effects of Candidates' Ethnicity on Vote Choice in Japan: An Experimental Approach[1]

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1. Introduction

In elections, voters take candidates' characteristics and backgrounds—age, gender, appearance, career history, religion and so on—into consideration upon making their decision (Cutler 2002; Campbell and Cowley 2014). Candidates' ethnicity is one of such factors that can influence voters' decision. With the increased diversity of candidates' ethnicities in many democratic societies (Bird, Saalfeld and Wüst 2011; Ruedin 2013), the number of studies examining this effect is also on the increase. Yet their evidence is mixed: It is not still clear how much impact it has on voters' choice. Obvious questions are the following: Does candidates' ethnicity really matter in elections? Do voters take candidates' ethnicity into account?

In contrast to the slowly growing population of ethnic minority representatives in established democracies, no significant increase in candidates' ethnic backgrounds is observed in Japan at least so far. As a matter of course, virtually no studies have been published on this topic in Japan (but see Murakami 2014). Examining potential effects of candidates' ethnicity on vote choice in Japan is important however, given that Japan expects to increase its ethnic diversity in the near future and perhaps consequently, its ethnic minority representatives. Japanese case is important, also for its fewer number of ethnic minority candidates itself. If ethnic minority candidates ran in the current Japanese national elections, could they gain a comparable support to the one that native Japanese candidates receive? Would Japanese voters vote less for ethnic minority candidates? If so, how much?

This study provides the first evidence that candidates' ethnic background can matter in Japanese elections. I adopted an experimental approach to examine this effect because few ethnic minority candidates have run in the past Japanese elections. In the experiment,

participants viewed four mock candidates in the assumed general election, and they were asked to vote for one candidate. All the candidates were shown to be affiliated with one of four major parties as of February 2017 in Japan, and only the minimum information about them was provided. Most importantly, one of four candidates' ethnic background was manipulated, so that he was either Japanese (control condition) or non-Japanese (Korean or Chinese, experimental condition). One of these two conditions was randomly assigned to the participants while all the other properties of the candidates were fixed (the same across conditions). The result shows several interesting findings. Due to the space limitation however, I focus on two points in this paper. First, ethnic minority (Korean and Chinese) candidates received a significantly lower support across four parties. In other words, ethnic minority candidates fared worse than Japanese native candidates, regardless of their party affiliation. Second, this negative effect was pronounced among the participants who usually support the party with which the ethnic minority candidate was affiliated in the experiment. In other words, *co-partisans* were significantly likely to punish their party candidate, when he was non-Japanese.

In the next section, the relevant literature on the effect of candidates' ethnicity on voting is briefly examined to contextualize this research. In the third section, I explain the research design of the experiment in detail. Then in the fourth section, I analyze the result of the experiment, followed by the summary of key findings and discussions in the final section.

2. Literature on the effect of candidates' ethnicity on vote choice

What electoral result do we expect to see, when an ethnic minority candidate runs for office? No doubt that "it depends" on many factors ranging from the candidate's characteristics, his or her affiliated party, the electoral context and history of the district that he or she runs, to the electoral rule which regulates the battle. But there are good theoretical reasons to suspect that voters penalize a candidate of his / her ethnicity. First, a theory of prejudice argues that negative prejudice against racial and ethnic minorities shapes specific political preferences related to groups, or activates certain frames with which people make some political judgments against ethnic minority groups (Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988; Kinder and Kam 2012). Simply put, the theory predicts that prejudiced individuals against ethnic minorities hold negative affects towards the group and individual members, and that such affects are transferred towards an ethnic minority candidate.

Second, an integrated threat theory of prejudice argues that fear or threat people feel from ethnic minority groups causes prejudice against them (Stephan and Stephan 2000). According to this theory, different types of threats—from realistic, symbolic to stereotypical—produce "emotional reactions like hatred and disdain, as well as evaluative

reactions like disliking and disapproval […] toward other groups" (Stephan and Stephan 2000: p. 28). When it comes to voting in elections, voters who perceive a threat towards their social position, resources, or life style by ethnic minority groups should be more likely to react negatively towards a member of that group.

If these theories hold, ethnic minority candidates should be less supported than the natives in elections. While we see an increasing number of studies that examined the effect of candidates' ethnicity on voters' perceptions and behavior, their tone about the effect is nonetheless mixed and complicated. Some studies indeed argue that ethnic minority backgrounds lead to a substantive loss in their support (Terkildsen 1993; Lewis-Beck and Tien 2009; Piston 2009; Fisher et al. 2014; Murakami 2014; Street 2014; Thrasher, et al. 2017). Using the 2010 British general election data for example, Fisher et al. (2014) find that ethnic minority candidates received smaller vote share than the British majority candidates by 4 points on average. Many studies in the US examined the election of the former President Obama in 2008, suggesting that he probably experienced a potentially substantive electoral penalties because of his racial background, mainly from White voters with negative prejudice against Black (Lewis-Beck and Tien 2009; Parker, Sawyer and Towler 2009; Lewis-Beck, Tien and Nadeau 2010; Piston 2010; Jackman and Vavreck 2010; Tesler and Sears 2010; Kinder and Kam 2012).

On the other hand, many other studies suggest that the observed effect is little at best, or even zero probably, when they find that the vote share of racial and ethnic minority candidates is comparable to that of native candidates with equivalent characteristics (Bullock III 1984; Black and Erickson 2006; Stegmeier, Lewis-Beck and Smets 2013; Street 2014). Some other studies using election surveys of individual voters also suggest that the effect of candidates' ethnicity virtually disappears, when they control for the effect of voters' and candidates' ideological positions and policy preferences (Citrin, Green and Sears 1990; Highton 2004; Abrajano, Nagler and Alvarez 2005). Furthermore, others that adopted an experimental approach join this tone, reporting little or null average treatment effects (Sigelman and Sigelman 1982; Sigelman et al. 1995; Reeves 1997; Brouard and Tiberj 2011; Weaver 2012; Brouard, et al. 2018). To summarize these "null-finding" studies, candidates' ethnicity plays little role in gaining (or losing) votes, because most voters make their vote decision based on other political information unrelated to candidates' ethnicity. But does it? And why so?

There are several possible explanations as to why this is the case (see Tesler and Sears 2010; Brouard, et al. 2018 Besco 2018 for this detail) but I discuss this more in detail elsewhere (Murakami 2014). More importantly, the number of studies examining this effect is still too few, and the existing evidence is too little to conclude about the effect. And interestingly, very few (virtually no) studies have examined elections where fewer ethnic minority candidates ran. This is peculiar: if there aren't ethnic minority, we should ask and examine why. The existing cases (or countries) with relatively more ethnic

minority representatives and candidates can be the result of a natural selection bias: In other words, if many ethnic minority candidates were elected because they selectively ran in districts or countries in which they could expect to perform well in election, a *potential* negative effect of candidates' ethnicity on vote choice would not have been detected (Murakami 2014). This can lead to a misleading conclusion about why the observed electoral penalty is small. By studying the country where few ethnic minority candidates have run, we may be able to find why we have mixed results in the literature. Japanese case serves this purpose well. Japan has relatively fewer ethnic minority population,[2] and very few ethnic minority candidates in the past elections.[3] But *if ethnic minority candidates ran*, how well would they perform in elections? How much effect does the candidates' ethnicity have on Japanese voters, most of whom have never seen ethnic minority candidates? While two theories described above predict that Japanese voters would discriminate against non-Japanese candidates in their vote choice, we know little about its effect size, nothing to say of specific conditions or characteristics of voters that are susceptible to this effect. Thus in this paper I aims to examine and explore the effect of candidates' non-Japanese ethnicity on typical Japanese voters' behavior in lower (but regular) electoral contexts.

3. Research design and method

To examine the effect of candidates' ethnicity on vote choice in contemporary Japanese elections, I conducted an online survey experiment in February 2017 in Japan. This experiment was managed by one of the major survey companies, *Nikkei Research*, which recruited participants from its panel. In total, 6,911 eligible Japanese voters between 20 and 79 years old completed the survey.[4] After participants answered various questions

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[2] As of June 2018, about 3.2 million "foreigners" reside in Japan, composing only about 2.5 percent of its population (Sōmushō 2019a, Sōmushō 2019b). This statistics is not a good measure of the number of ethnic non-Japanese (it represents nationality). As far as I know, no official statistics reports the ethnic composition of its population at the national level in Japan.

[3] It is extremely difficult to identify ethnic non-Japanese House members for definitional, methodological, and practical reasons. What is clear however, is that its number and proportion would be as small as the share in the population at best. In my rough count, no more than 10 ethnically non-Japanese MPs were identified out of total 717 MPs (about 1.4 percent). Note that Ryūkyūan (native residents in Okinawa prefecture) MPs were counted as ethnic non-Japanese.

[4] A sample of 84,941 panels were randomly sampled out from the *Nikkei Access Panel* monitors, after it was stratified by gender and geographic distribution of the population in forty seven prefectures so that they approximate the actual demographic proportion in the most recent Census data then. The age and nationality of the respondents was screened, so that only Japanese nationals between 20 and 79 years old were eligible to answer the survey. After being invited by e-mails, the panels saw the purpose of the study in general term (understand their political views and voting behavior in elections), and asked to participate, if they consent. The study purpose document did not clearly identify the very core intention of this study, because doing so would create an experimenter bias. Once they completed the survey, ↗

on Japanese society and politics, they saw the main experimental part in which four mock election candidates compete in a district. At this point, twelve different conditions were randomly assigned to the participants (see Table 1 below for this detail). Among them, an experimental manipulation sets one of four candidates' ethnicity either as Japanese (control condition) or non-Japanese (experimental condition). By comparing the vote share of this target candidate between these two randomly assigned conditions, I examine how mock candidates' ethnicity potentially influenced participants' vote choice in elections. In the following subsection, I will explain the detail of this protocol.

1) The experiment protocol

In the experiment part, participants were asked to assume that they would vote in the next House of Representatives election. They saw four hypothetical male candidates running for office in the same Single Member District (SMD) of the current Parallel System. Each candidate is described as affiliated with one of four major parties then, Liberal Democratic Party (hereafter LDP, *Jimintō*), Democratic Party (DP, *Minshintō*), *Ishin-no-kai* (Ishin)[5] or Japanese Communist Party (JCP, *Kyōsantō*).[6] Most importantly, one of three conditions about the target candidate's ethnicity was randomly assigned to participants by chance, either Japanese (control condition), Korean or Chinese (treatment conditions). In the treatment conditions, the candidate is explicitly described either as Korean or Chinese with articulating his "naturalization" record (becoming a Japanese national) in the past. In a control condition (Japanese), all four candidates' backgrounds are implicitly assumed as Japanese without mentioning anything about their ethnicity. This candidate is *Sēichi Hayashi*, which is a typical Japanese-sounding name. Hayashi's name is shown in *kanji* (Chinese characters) first, and his pronunciation follows either in a *hiragana* or *katakana* format.[7] Then here, taking advantage of the unique feature of three

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they were debriefed about this detail, and had a chance to withdraw from the study. Thirty nine respondents who completed the survey withdrew from the study after being debriefed, and their data was erased. All the completed respondents, including those who withdrew after being debriefed, were qualified for the reward provided by Nikkei Research. The response rate was $6,911/84,941 = 8.14$ percent.

5) At the time of this study, there was no official English name for *Ishin-no-kai*, later Japan Innovation Party. Before this, its English name was Japan Restoration Party, which started as a local political party led by a then popular Osaka governor, Toru Hashimoto, and experienced political uproar. For this detail, see Reed (2013) and Reed and Pekkanen (2015). In this study, I use "Ishin" to evade confusions.

6) All four parties had seats in the House of Representatives (House of Representatives 2017). The party support ratio in the randomly sampled opinion poll (telephone) by NHK at the time of this study (February 2017) was as follows: 38.2% of the respondents answered that they supported LDP, 7.6% for DP, 1.6% for Ishin, 4.4% for JCP, and 4.2% for other parties. As many as 40.1% answered that they support "no party" with 5.2% of "don't know" (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2017).

7) This style of writing, or showing candidates' name both in *kanji* and in *hiragana* is very typical and commonplace in Japanese elections, because some Japanese names, when they are written in *kanji* are often hard to pronounce. See for example, a list of candidates and their basic information in the 2016 House of Councillors election on the Yomiuri Shimbun webpage (2016).

different written formats of the Japanese language system (*kanji*, *katakana* and *hiragana*) as well as general practices of writing ethnic non-Japanese names in *katakana*, I showed exactly the same written name as *Sēichi Hayashi* in *kanji*, but showed its pronunciation as *Sung-Il Lim*, a Korean-sounding name, or Cheng-Yi Lin, a Chinese-sounding name in *katakana* in each treatment condition. This slight maneuver of pronunciation is a powerful indication of candidates' non-Japanese origin. Answers to an ethnicity manipulation check question later in the survey show a significant improve in correctly recognizing or memorizing the candidates' ethnicity by this manipulation coupled with the short description of Lim/Lin's naturalization.[8] On the other hand, other three candidates' name is held constant, each with a typical, natural-sounding Japanese name (*Kōichi Suzuki*, *Yutaka Shimizu*, and *Tōru Katō*, hereafter Suzuki, Shimizu and Kato). All of these three candidates cannot be read as indicating foreign or non-Japanese origins.[9]

   The effect of candidates' ethnicity needs to be teased out from their other related characteristics of the candidates, perhaps most importantly their party affiliation and policy orientations. In this study, I minimized the information about the candidates that participants saw: only candidates' name, its pronunciation, year of birth, non-incumbent status and party affiliation were provided.[10] This setting leaves a large room for the participants to make whatever inferences about candidates' characteristics. Yet candidates' party is explicitly shown, and randomly assigned to Hayashi/Lim/Lin, independently from his ethnicity. The default party affiliation for the other three candidates is fixed (DP for Suzuki, Ishin for Shizimu, and JCP for Kato), unless that party is assigned to Hayashi/Lim/Lin.[11]

   Thus, participants were randomly assigned to one of 12 conditions (4 party x 3 ethnicity for Hayashi/Lim/Lin), and they saw little other information about the candidates. All the 12 experimental conditions are summarized in Table 1.

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   8) On average across experimental groups, the percentage of correctly identifying the ethnicity of Hayashi/Lim/Lin jumped from 27% for Japanese Hayashi to 54% for Korean Lim or to 51% for Chinese Lin. The percentage of an answer option, "I don't remember" decreased from 70% for Hayashi to 29% for Lim or to 27% to Lin.

   9) I created these names by combining several popular Japanese first names and surnames, collected by a major insurance company (Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance Company 2016) and a name data providing service company (Myōji yurai net 2016). After creation, I searched those names on Google to check what appears with those names. Then I dropped some name combinations when celebrity or famous politicians appeared.

   10) All candidates are male, around the same age (either 56, 57 or 58 years old), and new (not incumbent). In addition, their names should sound almost equally familiar to the participants on average. Table A1 in Appendix A gives an example of what respondents saw in one of twelve conditions. Minimizing the amount of information has another advantage of reducing the cognitive and labor loads in the experiment.

   11) This means, for example, when Hayashi's party is DP, Suzuki's party is LDP, and the default party setting for Shimizu (Ishin) and Kato (JCP) is kept. This experimental design is necessary and efficient, because it is difficult to make participants to assume and read other three candidates name as Koreans and Chinese: Suzuki, Shimizu and Kato sound and look really like Japanese surnames, whereas only Hayashi can be read as Korean and Chinese.

Table 1. Summary of all the experimental conditions

Experimental group number	Backgrounds of Hayashi/Lim/Lin		(other) LDP candidate's name
	Pronunciation /ethnicity	Party	
1	Hayashi/Japanese	LDP	Hayashi
2	Lim/Korean	LDP	Lim
3	Lin/Chinese	LDP	Lin
4	Hayashi/Japanese	DP	Suzuki
5	Lim/Korean	DP	Suzuki
6	Lin/Chinese	DP	Suzuki
7	Hayashi/Japanese	Ishin	Shimizu
8	Lim/Korean	Ishin	Shimizu
9	Lin/Chinese	Ishin	Shimizu
10	Hayashi/Japanese	JCP	Kato
11	Lim/Korean	JCP	Kato
12	Lin/Chinese	JCP	Kato

Notes: See Table A1 in Appendix A for how the experimental stimulus page looked.

After participants read the information about the candidates, they were asked to rate their impression (omitted in this study for space considerations), and then asked to choose which candidate they would like to vote for, which is the main dependent variable in this study. Participants can choose one from randomly ordered four names appeared with their party, abstain from voting, or refuse to answer the question.[12]

2) Model and method

While the nature of participants' vote choice in this experiment is multinomial, I applied a logistic regression model to analyze the data for two reasons.[13] First, if I apply a multinomial logistic regression model, the result table would look lengthy and be hard to interpret, when it has six category outcomes (four candidates plus abstention and refusal). Second, the primary interest of this study lies *not* in comparing the probabilities of voting for Suzuki and Kato, but in examining the probabilities of voting for the target candidate (versus others) between the control (Japanese Hayashi) and the treatment (Korean Lim or Chinese Lin) conditions. In other words, the analysis should focus on the probability of voting for Hayashi/Lim/Lin, therefore all the other five categories can be merged to a single category of *not* voting for Hayashi/Lim/Lin. Accordingly, I set the main dependent variable as a binary outcome of voting for Hayashi/Lim/Lin (1) or not (0), the latter

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12) See Appendix B for this question wording and answer options.
13) I also tested multinomial regression models just in case, and it produced the result that can be interpreted in the same manner as I argue in this paper.

including abstention and refusal.[14]

The main independent variable is Hayashi/Lim/Lin's ethnicity. For the sake of simplicity, I use a dummy variable to capture the difference between ethnic Japanese (Hayashi: 0) and non-Japanese (Lim/Lin: 1) without further distinguishing Korean Lim from Chinese Lin.[15] Three dummy variables are added in the model to capture the party effect of the target candidate, DP, Ishin and JCP (LDP is a reference category). Because the effect of ethnicity is expected to be different by Hayashi/Lim/Lin's party, interaction effects of his ethnicity and party are examined by introducing three interaction terms of the ethnicity dummy and DP, Ishin and JCP dummies respectively.

On participants' side, the most important variable that have a decisive effect on their vote choice, is their partisanship. Partisans would be much more likely to vote for Hayashi/Lim/Lin, when he is a co-partisan candidate for them. Before the experiment, the participants were asked if they usually support any party, and six dummy variables representing their party support (LDP, DP, Komei, Ishin, JCP and other parties with keeping nonpartisans, don't knows, and refusals as a reference category) were included in the model. This leads to introducing 12 relevant interaction terms with Hayashi/Lim/Lin's party to control for the effect of the partisanship.

4. Results

In the first section of this chapter, I examine and compare the effects of Hayashi/Lim/Lin's ethnicity on participants' vote choice by his party (conditional effects). Then I turn to the conditional effect of participants' partisanship vis-à-vis Hayashi/Lim/ Lin's party to explore which voters were more influenced by Hayashi/Lim/Lin's ethnicity. Because the regression table is lengthy and complicated (coefficients are not straight-forwardly interpretable), only the estimated effects are shown in the main text.[16]

1) Conditional effects by Hayashi/Lim/Lin's party

Figure 1 compares the conditional effects of Hayashi/Lim/Lin's ethnicity (upper panels) and predicted probabilities of all the participants by different ethnicity conditions

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14) Including abstentions and refusals in this way is theoretically more appropriate than coding these two answers into missing, because some participants would vote for the target candidate when he is Japanese (Hayashi), but would abstain or refuse to answer, when he is Korean Lim or Chinese Lin. Thus, removing these answers as missing could underestimate the effect of candidates' ethnicity on vote choice.

15) I constructed models to examine possible different effects of these ethnicities, Korean Lim and Chinese Lin, and they produced some interesting results. The overall difference in effect size between Lim and Lin however, is as negligible as 0.2 percent points (Korean Lim was slightly more penalized than Chinese Lin). By party, the largest difference was 3.5 points for LDP (Lim is penalized more than Lin), 1.7 points for Ishin (Lin is penalized more), 1.1 point for DP (Lin), and 0.2 point for JCP. Explaining this variation requires other theories and variables, and thus I report and discuss it in another opportunity.

16) The full regression table is provided in Table A2 of Appendix A.

(lower panels) by party. The difference between two bars within each party panel in the lower panels (the left minus the right) equals the conditional effect size shown in the upper panels. These figures are also represented in Table 2. For example, the "Conditional effect (c)" for the LDP in the third row in Table 2 is indicated by the dot in the top left panel of Figure 1 (-19.2).

First, we notice that all four conditional effects are negative and statistically significant. The average treatment effect of ethnicity averaged across four parties (not shown in Figure 1) was -.087. This means that on average, participants are less likely to vote for Lim or Lin by 8.7 percentage points than Hayashi, even if he was introduced with the same party label.[17] In a four party/candidate race, an 8.7 point drop in vote share is a serious loss.

Figure 1. Conditional effect and predicted probability of voting for Hayashi/Lim/Lin by his party
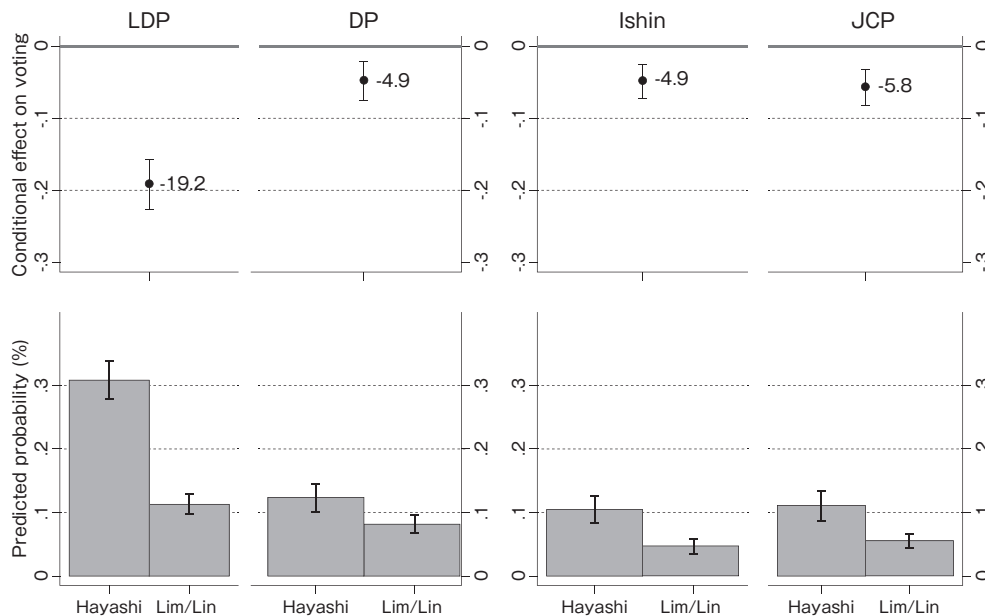
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Table 2. Predicted probabilities of voting for Hayashi and Lim/Lin and conditional effect ratios by party

Party	Predicted probability of voting for		Conditional effect (c)	Conditional effect ratio (c)/(a)
	Hayashi (a)	Lim/Lin (b)		
LDP	30.6%	11.4%	-.192	-.63
DP	12.9%	8.0%	-.049	-.38
JCP	11.3%	5.5%	-.058	-.51
Ishin	9.8%	4.9%	-.049	-.50

Notes: The estimates (a), (b) and (c) are based on the logistic regression model of Table A2 in Appendix A. Condition effects are almost equal to the differences between two predicted probabilities of voting for Hayashi and Lim/Lin: (c)= (a)–(b). All the conditional effects are statistically significant at 0.1% level.

Second among the four parties, the effect size is the largest, when Hayashi/Lim/Lin was an LDP candidate: the predicted probability of voting for Hayashi dropped from 30.6% to 11.4%, so the estimated conditional effect was -19.2 points. On the other hand, the effect size is roughly the same for DP and Ishin, -4.9 points, compared to the slightly larger effect for JCP, -5.8 points. When these raw numbers were compared, LDP candidate bears by far the largest penalty by his ethnicity. But here, I should take the size of each party's base vote into consideration, because a drop of 5 percentage points means differently for a small party like JCP and for a large party like LDP. Thus, the right column in Table 1 compares the conditional effect size ratios. The predicted probabilities of voting for DP, Ishin and JCP Hayashi in the control condition are 12.9%, 11.3%, and 9.8% respectively, and if we divide each effect size by this base probability, the conditional effect ratio for DP is -.38, the smallest among the four parties, followed by -.50 for Ishin, and -.51 for JCP. Compared to -.63 for LDP, these numbers are relatively smaller, but still substantively large for each party. For example, the Ishin candidate lost almost half of its vote share (from 11.3% to 5.5%) for his ethnicity.

Overall, when an ethnic minority candidate ran in Japanese elections, the result of this analysis implies, he or she would potentially gain less support than a Japanese native counterpart does, regardless of their party affiliation. The effect size is the largest among LDP, but the drop of about 5 points is a relatively large loss for the other three parties, given their relatively smaller base support.

2) Conditional effects by participants' partisanship

If Lim's or Lin's ethnicity reduces his vote share, who are the most influenced by his ethnicity? There are many ways to answer this question (see Murakami 2014), but one way is to focus on the role of voters' partisanship. Remember that no politically important information is given to the participants except the candidate's party. Then many

participants should have relied on their partisanship to decide their vote. Did LDP partisans still vote for an LDP candidate, even when he is ethnically non-Japanese (Lim or Lin)? If that is the case, were nonpartisans, influenced more by Lim/Lin's ethnicity than partisans, and did they vote against Lim/Lin?

Figure 2 illustrates the conditional treatment effects (level of drop in Lim/Lin's vote share compared to Hayashi's) by specific combinations of Hayashi/Lim/Lin's party and participants' partisanship. It tells a different scenario from the story I described above: partisans significantly voted against Lim/Lin. Figure 2 subdivides the conditional effects in Figure 1 (white bars) into that of co-partisans (black bars) and nonpartisans (gray bars). For example, the black bar for LDP on the left (-40.0, $p<0.001$) represents a conditional effect for LDP supporters, when Hayashi/Lim/Lin runs from LDP. Similarly, the gray bar for LDP (-12.6, $p<0.001$) is a conditional effect for nonpartisans under the same condition. As the length of two bars shows, the negative effect of Hayashi/Lim/Lin's ethnicity is much larger among LDP partisans than among nonpartisans. The same is true for the case of DP, Ishin and JCP.[18]

Figure 2. Conditional treatment effects of voting for Hayashi/Lim/Lin by his party affiliation and by voters' partisanship

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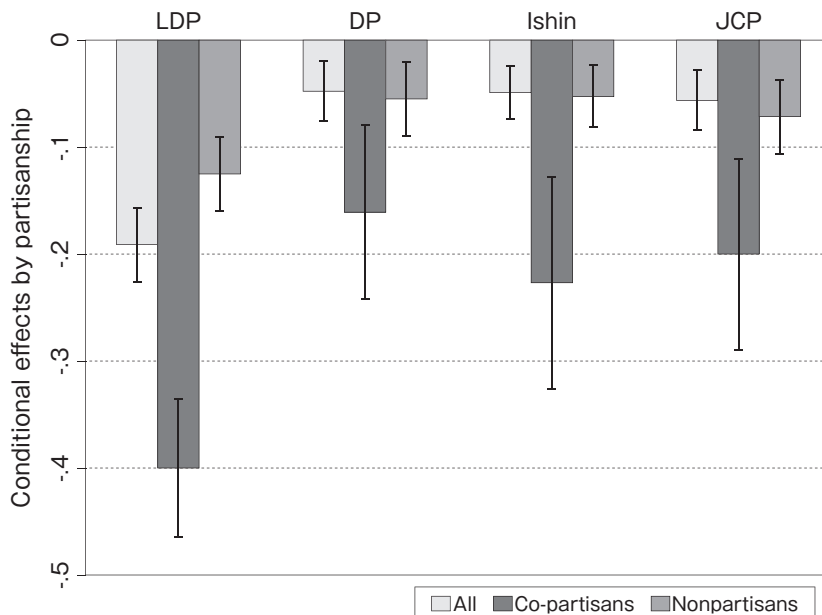
[18] There is a difference in the base probability of voting for a party between co-partisans and nonpartisans. Because LDP partisans are much more likely to vote for LDP than nonpartisans do, the potential room for a drop (size of the negative effect) is larger among partisans.
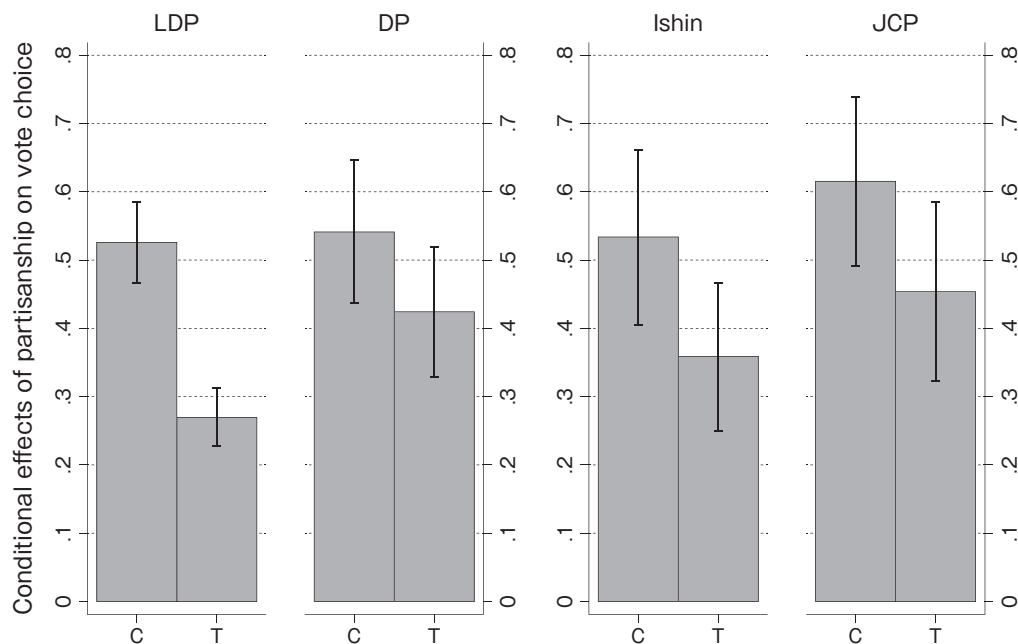
Figure 3. Conditional effects of voters' partisanship on vote choice by experimental conditions.

Figure 3 illustrates the same point from a different angle. In all four cases of Hayashi/Lim/ Lin's party, the effect of participants' partisanship on their party vote significantly reduced in the treatment condition ("T" in the figure, when the candidate is Lim/Lin) from the control condition ("C" in the figure, when the candidate is Hayashi). For example, in the left panel "LDP", the effect of participants' partisanship (LDP) on their vote choice is about .53 ($p<0.001$) in the control condition. This means that LDP partisans are .53 points more likely to vote for an LDP candidate, when he is Hayashi. But this partisanship effect drops to about 0.27 ($p<0.001$) in the treatment condition, when the candidate is Lim/Lin. The effect of participants' regular support for LDP on their vote, virtually became half by the LDP candidate's ethnic minority background. The same trend, a significant drop in the partisanship vote, is observed in different party conditions, DP, Ishin and JCP, too. Figure 2 and 3 together suggest that partisans are significantly influenced by the candidate's ethnicity, when their candidate was non-Japanese.

5. Summary of findings and discussion

In this paper, I examined the effect of candidates' ethnicity on vote choice in Japan, conducting an online survey experiment. In the experiment, participants saw four mock election candidates running in an SMD, and one candidate's ethnicity, as well as all four candidates' party were manipulated and randomly assigned. The result showed a

substantive penalty for the ethnic minority candidate compared to the equivalent native Japanese across parties. The vote share of the target candidate dropped by about 8.7 percentage points on average, when the candidate is explicitly shown as Korean or Chinese compared to when he is implicitly assumed as Japanese. This treatment effect varied by party: about 20 points drop was observed for LDP, and approximately 5 points drop for the other three parties.

A closer look at the results revels that this negative effect is pronounced among partisans who usually support the party of the target candidate. For all parties, the conditional negative effect is larger among co-partisans than among nonpartisans. The flip side of the coin is that the effect of participants' partisanship on their vote choice significantly dropped in a treatment condition compared to that in the control condition. These two observations together suggest that party supporters would be likely influenced a lot by candidates' ethnicity, and potentially "desert" their co-partisan candidate.

Accordingly, this study provided the first evidence that ethnic minority candidates can suffer substantively from their ethnicity in Japan. If a similar level of drop was observed in real elections, the effect size should have been substantive enough to change election results. To be fair though, this effect was observed only in an experiment with the lowest possible information in a specific electoral context. The actual effect must be smaller than what I found here. Even if the reported electoral losses in observation studies were "small enough" to be negligible as in the literature, the result of this study calls for giving a second thought to understanding why that is a case. As the Japanese case suggests, potential effects may not have been observed, simply because ethnic minority candidates haven't run for elections. Yet, ethnic minority candidates can *potentially* suffer from a significant loss in their support by their ethnicity, and the loss may come from their core party supporters.

Future studies should examine who are the most influenced by the candidates' ethnicity more, as well as how and why the effects are observed as such. Exploring plausible mechanism of why specific voters are more likely to "desert" a co-partisan ethnic minority candidate should refine theoretical explanations of whether, when, and how candidates' ethnicity matters in elections.

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7. Appendix

Appendix A. Tables

Table A1. A sample of an image of the candidate list page in the experiment.

Candidate's name: 林誠一 (Lim, Sung-il)
<Year of birth and new/incumbent>: Born in 1960 as a *Zainichi* Korean, naturalized in 1982, new candidate.
<Political Party>: LDP

Candidate's name: 鈴木浩一 (Suzuki, Koichi)
<Year of birth and new/incumbent>: Born in 1960, new candidate.
<Political Party>: DP

Candidate's name: 清水豊 (Shimizu, Yutaka)
<Year of birth and new/incumbent>: 1959, new candidate.
<Political Party>: Ishin

Candidate's name: 加藤徹 (Kato, Toru)
<Year of birth and new/incumbent>: Born in 1961, new candidate.
<Political Party>: JCP

□ I checked the information about these candidates.
Next

Table A2. Logistic regression estimates of vote choice for Hayashi/Lim/Lin

Variable	Coef.	(s.e.)	p
Non-Japanese	-1.70	(0.16)	.000
DP	-0.40	(0.21)	.055
Ishin	-0.67	(0.22)	.002
JCP	-0.35	(0.21)	.092
Non-J x DP	0.95	(0.26)	.000
Non-J x Ishin	0.73	(0.28)	.009
Non-J x JCP	0.66	(0.27)	.014
LDP partisan	2.64	(0.17)	.000
DP partisan	-1.10	(0.37)	.003
Ishin partisan	-1.97	(0.59)	.001
JCP partisan	-1.51	(0.59)	.010
Komei partisan	2.47	(0.47)	.000
Other partisan	0.72	(0.58)	.215
DP x DP partisan	4.33	(0.44)	.000
Ishin x Ishin partisan	5.21	(0.65)	.000
JCP x JCP partisan	5.06	(0.67)	.000
DP x LDP partisan	-4.32	(0.43)	.000
Ishin x LDP partisan	-3.94	(0.44)	.000
JCP x LDP partisan	-4.12	(0.41)	.000
DP x Komei partisan	-2.99	(0.88)	.001
Ishin x Komei partisan	-1.61	(0.79)	.041
JCP x Komei partisan	-3.52	(1.13)	.002
DP x other partisan	0.44	(0.73)	.546
Ishin x other partisan	0.01	(0.86)	.987
JCP x other partisan	0.41	(0.82)	.617
Constant	-1.66	(0.13)	.000
N	6,911		
Pseudo R^2	0.30		

Notes: The dependent variable is a vote choice for Hayashi/Lim/Lin (1) or not (0). "Non-Japanese" in the regression table is an experimental manipulation variable of Hayashi/Lim/Lin's ethnicity, where Hayashi (Japanese) is 1, Lim/Lin (Korean or Chinese) is 0. "DP", "Ishin" and "JCP" is a manipulated party condition, dummy variables representing Hayashi/Lim/Lin's party affiliation (LDP is a reference category, and thus omitted from the table). "XX partisan" is a dummy variable of participants' party support (a reference category is for nonpartisans).

Appendix B. Survey question wording and answer options

Vote choice (main dependent variable)

"If these candidates ran in the single member district in the House of Representatives election, which candidate/party would you like to vote for?"

[Answer options: the order of candidates is randomized]

1. Hayashi Seiichi / Lim Sung-il / Lin Cheng-yi (party name); 2. Koichi Suzuki (party name); 3. Yutaka Shimizu (party name); 4. Toru Kato (party name); 5. Abstain; 6. Don't want to answer.

Participants' partisanship (party support)

"Aside from your answer on which party you voted for in the last House of Councillors election, which party do you usually support?"

[Answer option]

1. LDP; 2. DP; 3. Komei; 4. Ishin (former Osaka Ishin-no-kai); 5. JCP; 6. Other party (please indicate: _____); 7. None of these; 8. Don't know; 9. Don't want to answer.