Co-Ethnic Clustering and Voting Behavior
in Broward County, Florida

by

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under the direction of Dr. Daniel A. Smith

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I wouldn’t be here without my parents, Juan and Patricia Uribe, Colombian immigrants who brought our family here in pursuit of the American Dream, and who gave my sister and me the honor of being Colombian-American—de todo corazón, gracias.
Abstract

The fabric of American history is threaded together by its rich immigrant background. Many scholars have analyzed the social, economic, and political effects that immigrants have had on the United States, but there has been a notable silence surrounding the geo-spatial effects of immigrant voting behavior. This paper seeks to analyze how co-ethnic clustering affects voter turnout, with the ethnic groups of interest being Jamaicans, Haitians, Colombians, Cubans, and Venezuelans in Broward County. I theorize that in precincts where there is higher co-ethnic clustering, there are higher rates of turnout among those co-ethnics. The data used to test this relationship is pulled from the Florida Voter File and public records requests to see both vote history and optional, self-reported identification of a registered voter’s country of origin. In order to test the two levels of data, namely the individual voter turnout and the aggregate precinct-level effects, I run a mixed effects logistic regression. The findings show that co-ethnic clustering positively influences voter turnout for Colombians and Venezuelans, but the relationship is statistically insignificant for Jamaicans, Haitians, and Cubans. This research shows the importance of studying immigrant voting behavior specific to the immigrants’ countries of origin, and that the forces of the co-ethnic community in encouraging voting behavior ought to be studied in depth.
Introduction

For centuries, the American Dream has been a beacon of hope for individuals worldwide. The land that would come to be known as that United States has drawn immigrants from all around the globe in forging its future, most notably from the founding fathers of our country, but also to masses of refugees of famine and war, career-driven migrants, and individuals of exceptional talents. These immigrants have each left a piece of their legacy in the greater fabric of American history, adding to the culture, economy, and politics that have threaded progress throughout our narrative.

From settlement to development and beyond, scholars across many disciplines have studied immigrants and their influence in the American way of life. While there have been numerous studies analyzing the social, economic, and political influences of immigrants, there is a notable silence when exploring the geospatial effects of immigrant enclaves on political behavior. My research aims to close part of that gap. I theorize that co-ethnic clustering impacts voting behavior. I argue that, in areas where there is higher co-ethnic clustering, there are higher rates of turnout among those co-ethnics1.

I believe this to be the case because of the same economic and social networks that drive immigrants to their relevant enclaves. Having a network of co-ethnics allows for an easier transition into the American lifestyle, as there is less of a learning curve in adapting to a new

1 The concept of ethnicity is used throughout this paper in the definitional sense of the term, and not in the sense in which it is colloquially (or often academically) used. Simply put, ‘ethnic,’ and by extension ethnicity, refers to “large groups of people classed according to common racial, national… or cultural origin or background” (Merriam-Webster). I wish to emphasize the different backgrounds of the five ethnic groups of interest—Jamaicans, Haitians, Colombians, Cubans, and Venezuelans—and how we must consider them as individual groups of study, rather than by generalized terms. These co-ethnic groups are all composed of foreign-born, immigrant, naturalized, and registered voters of different countries of origin.
way of life. Other social networks, like schools and churches, also grow out of the cultural background that immigrants bring to the enclave and create powerful networks that ease the flow of information.

It is well-known that socioeconomic status also play a key role in voter turnout. While some immigrants—especially those of newer waves of immigration—are able to settle and create more affluent enclaves, the economic networks in these enclaves make up a primary pull factor for immigrants when choosing where to settle. Having established economic networks makes it easier for newer immigrants to find financial stability and experience economic growth in a new country.

With previous literature examining the historical context of enclaves in social and economic lenses, the field of political science has attempted to unravel theories of immigrant voting behavior. Some authors suggest that immigrants are a predominant non- or low-voting entity, though this is disputed. Other scholars also dispute the readiness for immigrants to join political parties. Still others question what co-ethnic factors influence behavior, such as having candidates of the same background on the ballot.

Co-ethnic clustering and its impact on voter turnout, however, has not been studied to the same extent. In this research, co-ethnic clustering is taken at a micro-level analysis, namely the precinct as the area for measuring density, and using individual voters’ countries of origin. This micro-level analysis has never been attempted before, and it is valuable in that it is able to capture the variety visible from different ethnic groups, asserting the fact that immigrant voting behavior should not be generalized. This research seeks to be foundational in the sense that it could open the path to more geo-spatial studies on voting behavior in regards to immigrant populations. It also focuses on the five predominant ethnic groups of Broward County, which
expands the scope of previous literature from immigrants as a whole—wide racial or ethnic
groups such as Hispanics or Asians, or even just particular groups, like Cubans or Mexicans. The
five major ethnic groups are Jamaicans, Haitians, Colombians, Cubans, and Venezuelans—three
of which are from the Caribbean, three are Hispanic, two are predominately black, one is
English-speaking, and all of which have their own unique historical and cultural experiences that
demand individual exploration.

Granted, because this research is primarily explanatory in nature, it does not cover the
subject matter at an ideal depth. The strengths of the research is that it includes optional, self-
reported country of origin data on an official document, which is the Florida Voter Registration
form. This dataset provides accurate information in regards to voter turnout, reducing the
possibility for over-reporting of turnout. It also provides information on a voter’s demographics,
such as age, gender, and race or general ethnicity. On the other hand, it does not include valuable
socio-economic information, such as income or education, and also does not include information
that would be particularly valuable in the case of immigrants, like the date of immigration or
naturalization. However, with the data that is provided, it is possible to study the effects of co-
ethnic clustering on voter turnout. The layout of this research is as follows.

First, I will provide historical context of immigration in the United States. Drawing from
theories of sociology and economics, I am able to connect other disciplines to theorizing about
these influences in the political sphere. I then discuss what is known about the immigrant voting
profile, and synthesize the information in applying my theory on co-ethnic voting behavior. I
discuss the uniqueness of the dataset as a combination of self-reported country of origin on voter
registration forms and the Florida Voter File, which provides voter turnout and other
demographic information. I then discuss my methods, and why I chose a mixed effects logistic
regression to analyze the individual and precinct-level effects of co-ethnic closeting. Lastly, I discuss the findings of the research, which point to variance among what is normally joined as ‘immigrant’ voting behavior, and discuss the value of running these models as separate ethnic groups.

This research takes these factors into account and attempts to answer if co-ethnic clustering plays any role in influencing voter turnout among ethnics residing there. I theorize that in areas of high co-ethnic concentration, naturalized voters of that ethnicity vote at higher rates. My argument stems from previous studies on social and economic factors that draw immigrants to these enclaves, as well as studies on immigrant voting behavior.

The Development of Ethnic Enclaves

What factors drive immigration?

The United States is a country founded by immigrants in the hopes of creating a higher quality of life for its citizens. Pew Research Center estimated in 2016 that approximately 14% of people residing in the United States are foreign-born. Their research also suggests that immigrants and immigrant families are expected to contribute to 88% of the projected population growth between 2015 and 2065. Previous literature has analyzed the various factors driving immigration, including strong economic and social influencers.

The most studied factors of immigration are arguably those related to economics. At the state level, economics of the regions create the basis for the gravity model of migration, which argues that migration out of one country and into the other is influenced by the relative difference in the two economies—with the weaker economy being the country of origin of immigrants—and the geographic distance between the two (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg 2013, Lewer & Van den Berg 2007). Furthermore, as economies grow and develop, there is an
agglomeration effect of the service industry in more developed countries, leaving the lower-paying, primarily agricultural jobs in developing countries (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg 2013); this widens the gap between the strength of state economies and the average incomes of each, as well as creating push factors out of an immigrant’s country of origin and pull factors to a more developed country. At the individual level, immigration can be seen as an economic investment into one’s future through factors of migration costs, opportunity costs, and income differentials (Sjaastad 1962). Economic development is also linked with individual migration towards urban centers, or the locus of the economic activity, a phenomenon dubbed agglomeration by economists (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg 2013). Overall, economic opportunity and the promise of a higher standard of life in the destination country largely influences the decision of individuals to immigrate.

Social factors have also been studied in an immigrant’s decision to move, and they are particularly prevalent once an economic foundation has been set by previous immigrants. Much in the same way that economic networks facilitate the basis of financial stability for a new immigrant, social networks also encourage other migrants to plant their roots in a new country, becoming self-perpetuating through the social structure needed to create it (Massey 1990). Colloquially referred to as chain migration, once some family members establish themselves, often through economic reasons, other family members, friends, or community members see that the initial transition has been made and decide to migrate, as well. The social and economic cost of each subsequent migration is lowered, and the strength of the network in the new country is expanded (Massey & España 1987). Therefore, the literature on the social causes of immigration seems to come to the consensus that social factors—family, friends, and community network
ties—that influence the decision to immigrate act as more of a multiplier of immigration, rather than a foundational factor, like economic incentive (Ciment & Radzilowski 2015).

Political push factors related to persecution in the home country have also been studied. From ancient times to modern day, state prosecution of groups of people and areas of conflict have catalyzed waves of immigrations into countries perceived as safer for refugees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that roughly 68.5 million individuals become refugees due to conflict and persecution in their country of origin every year. The United States has its own history of taking in political refugees, stemming from the 1600s in Maryland for Catholics who were persecuted, through the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 which was the first notable piece of legislation that granted a path to citizenship for political persecution, up until today’s I-589 visa for refugees and asylum-seekers (Hardy 1997; Ciment & Radzilowski 2015; 101(a)(42) Immigration and Nationality Act). Political causes for migration are also tied to social networks. Having social connections in another country facilitate the choice of the destination (if offered), as refugees also use social networks to ease their transition into their new country in the same way that immigrants of economic reasons do (Hein 1993).

Other factors not explicitly mentioned that have also been studied include persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion, and gender. For the purposes of this research, I will focus my attention on the economic, social, and political causes of immigration, as these factors are relevant to the development of immigrant ethnic enclaves and tied on a more general level to the factors I did not elaborate on, as discussed in the next section.

*Why do immigrants settle in enclaves?*
Once an understanding has been developed as to why individuals decided to become immigrants, it is worth noting that their patterns of settlement are reflective, at least in part, of their decision and a pursuit of a higher quality of life.

As immigrants settle into the United States, they tend to choose areas where other co-ethnics reside (Stark 1991). Past research shows that “new immigrants to the United States are geographically concentrated,” emphasizing that the pull towards a cultural community locus is indeed experienced by immigrants (Bartel, 1989). An ethnic enclave is defined by sociologists as a geographic region with a high concentration of co-ethnics, a defined cultural identity representative of the home country of the co-ethnics, and economic networks of businesses and firms owned or operated by co-ethnics (Abrahamson 1996). Their primary pull factors to joining their fellow co-ethnics stem from the opportunities that living in an enclave can provide them with in a new country, such as established economic networks and social ties (Edin et al. 2003).

The decision to settle in an ethnic enclave is partially due to already-established economic networks. One reason why co-ethnics are drawn to these economic networks is because of the opportunities for employment that they create (Xie & Gough 2009; Mitchell 2000; Edin et al. 2003). Portes and Bach (1985) found that ethnics working for other ethnics in these enclave networks had greater earnings than ethnics who worked outside of the networks. This leads to the assumption that the systems of economic support in these networks create a stronger sense of community support, as well. On the other hand, this community support is a system of financial stability that perhaps grew out of the restrictive quality of opportunities outside of the enclaves, as scholars have noted in studying the difficulty for lower-skilled immigrants to find jobs out of their enclaves (Volery 2007).
Ethnic entrepreneurship has also been vastly studied as an integral part to the support system of economic networks. The argument for the benefits of ethnic entrepreneurship stem from the recognition that ethnic professionals get from other ethnics that would otherwise not be recognized or valued as highly outside of the networks; for example, Greve and Salaff (2005) use the case of an ethnic doctor’s credentials being supported by those residing within an enclave, therefore encouraging the doctor to set the practice there, rather than the potential for fewer clients in a less ethnically concentrated and less supportive system. Cultural recognition among co-ethnics also drives business owners in the enclaves to hire fellow co-ethnics on the basis of skills like common language, opposite to the requirement of outside-network jobs that require a mastery of the English language (Light & Bonacich 1991). Another economic reason for enclave settlement stems from the flow of information regarding economic opportunity. The dissemination of information, commonly in the ethnic’s native language, provides an invaluable resource for the promise of growth that drew immigrants in the first place (Greve and Salaff 2005).

In addition to the cost-benefit economic analysis of immigration presented above, there is a psycho-social factor that draws immigrants to enclaves—the unquantifiable cost of moving away from familiarity that a host country provides, which is reflected in the decision to be drawn to ethnic enclaves where that cost can be reduced (Sjaastad 1962).

This ties to a greater notion of what these ethnic enclaves represent for the co-ethnics who reside there—after all, geographic proximity does little to socialize individuals if there are no lines of communication or interaction between them, as osmosis is not a factor of socialization in human interactions. Rather, ethnic enclaves create or are created by vast networks of formal and informal institutions, community centers, churches, schools, and other
lines of socialization that transform geographic proximity into a vibrant, cohesive network of social support and cultural connectivity (Qadeer & Kumar 2006). Additionally, the ease of transition into areas that speak the same language and eat the same food—communities of shared culture—reduce the costs associated with transitioning. The sense of connection to an ethnic enclave is worth noting, as well. There are emotional ties that immigrants have to their countries of origin, and the psychological shock of migration, stemming from being in an entirely new environment, is lessened when immigrants are able to settle in small areas that replicate or reflect their countries of origin; in turn, immigrants develop a strong sense of place-identity to these ethnic enclaves (Proshansky et al. 1983). A notable feature that grows out place-identity is the self-efficacy that immigrants develop in ethnic enclaves (Mazumdar et al. 2000); it is interesting to note that investigations into parallels to political efficacy have yet to be conducted by political scientists.

Lastly, there is little to no research on any modern political factors that drive immigrants to their ethnic enclaves. While this research will not add to this part of the dialogue, it does hope to provide insights on the voting behavior of these immigrants residing within the enclaves. In order to do so, an understanding of the literature on immigrant voting behavior is needed.

**The Immigrant Voting Profile**

*What do we know?*

Scholars have analyzed many facets of immigrant voting behavior in an attempt to understand the patterns of naturalized voter registration, affiliation, and turnout. The first step before understanding voting patterns among naturalized citizens is to analyze naturalization patterns—after all, naturalization is the first step for immigrants to assimilate into the voting-eligible population (McDonald & Popkin 2001). DeSipio (1996) challenged previous literature in
noting that the assumption that naturalization was a predictor for stronger political activity was only observed during times where naturalization and the immigrant vote were an important part of the political discourse, namely during the era of political machines and the New Deal. When comparing naturalized Cuban and Mexican-Americans to their native-born, ethnic counterparts, he found that naturalization, regardless of method, “does not have a clear impact on political participation” (DeSipio 1996).

In recent literature, however, studies have found that naturalization does have a positive, long-term effect on immigrant integration in political society, including higher levels of turnout (Hainmueller et al. 2015). While these studies and their subsequent investigations provide valuable insights into Latino immigrant sentiment and propensity to naturalize and vote, their scope at the state and country-wide level does not give a detailed view of sub-divisions among immigrant populations outside of the major Latino populations of each state, namely Cubans in Florida, and Mexicans in California and Texas. Furthermore, going down to a smaller scale, such as the precinct level in areas with high percentages of co-ethnic inhabitants, could give a more accurate view of the diversity of co-ethnic populations and each population’s propensity to vote upon naturalization, thereby avoiding generalization.

Another main theme in scholarly literature addresses the question of what factors have the greatest influence on voting behavior. Naturalized citizens, similar to their citizen-by-birth counterparts, are likely influenced by the same factors that have significant effects on voter turnout. Such factors include education and income, which both have a positive correlation with increased voter turnout; as education and income levels go up, the likelihood that registered voters will vote also goes up (DeSipio, 1999b; Wolfinger & Rosenstone 1967; Leighly & Vedlitz 1999). Among immigrant voters, it appears that education is also positively correlated with naturalization (Jones-
Correa, 2001), which strengthens the consensus that a more educated individual is more likely to participate in political processes. Furthermore, just as age is a strong factor in voting patterns among citizens born in the United States, so too does length of stay have a significant impact on naturalization and voting (Jones-Correa, 2001). A possible explanation to this could be that as immigrants remain longer or choose to permanently stay in the United States, they are also making the decision to become more assimilated into the American political system—through naturalization, registration, and voting. However, these variables are coupled with factors of socialization in increasing the propensity for immigrants to turn out to vote. Cho (1999) found that, for naturalized voters, these factors only told part of the story—having higher socioeconomic standing or higher levels of education merely expose immigrants to democratic ideals, voting, and political efficacy, and that socialization combined with these variables is what paints the full picture of immigrant voting behavior.

Other literature examines how different regime types, including democracies and non-democracies, from which immigrants migrated affect turnout, although there is disagreement in the literature over the extent of the influence. Studies suggest that national origin is not a factor of influence in political participation, and that immigrants who migrate from different regime types do not display any notable difference in participation (DeSipio 1996b; Ramakrishnan & Espenshade 2001). A missing gap in this literature is that varying and transient political strife has not been analyzed. Just as political climate shifts domestically, and the issues at stake in each election vary, then too should research focus on political strife happening in other countries that might affect newly-naturalized citizens who came from such countries of origin.

Once immigrants establish their sense of belonging within their ethnic community and have begun to socialize in their new country, they are able to organize and mobilize in the civic sphere.
Researchers have studied the degree to which naturalized voters register with political parties, though findings are varied. Hajnal and Lee (2011) found that, for the most part, immigrants choose not to register with political affiliations, Democrat or Republican, and often choose instead to remain non-partisan or independent. However, a more recent study conducted on naturalized voters in Miami-Dade County, Florida found that immigrants are registering with partisan affiliations (Kurganova 2017). Kurganova further finds that immigrants who come from the most and least democratic countries have higher rates of registering with the two major parties. In addition to partisanship, scholars have studied how ethnic candidates have influenced immigrant turnout. Theorizing with themes of minority empowerment, and particularly that among African Americans, scholars have found that racial representation increases turnout among constituents of the same backgrounds (Bobo & Gilliam 1990).

The effects of socialization on voting behavior is another critical theme in the literature. Factors of socialization have been found to influence the voting behavior of the newly-naturalized. Language, and particularly English proficiency, seems to have some degree of influence on voting behavior. When English proficiency is lower—whether of the voter or of the voter’s peers—there is a negative correlation with voter turnout (Ramakrishnan & Espenshade, 2001). Anti-immigrant sentiment is another variable that has a strong influence on naturalized voter turnout. A study conducted in 1998 showed that Latinos in Los Angeles County in California voted “at rates higher than any other group—including non-Hispanic white Republicans,” which consistently tend to be the voter group with the highest turnout (Pantoja et al., 2001). These researchers found the reason why they turned out at such high rates was significantly due to Proposition 187, which included strong anti-immigrant sentiment and galvanized these immigrants to vote. Through surveying this population of Latino immigrant voters, the researchers found that these socialization effects in a
political context, largely driven by fear, had significant impacts on the propensity of naturalized citizens in Los Angeles County to turn out. What this study does not answer is if this socialization factor is something that holds steady over time. In other words, because the researchers found that these socialization factors in the form of anti-immigrant measures on the ballot did correlate to higher levels of naturalized immigrant turnout, do these strong ties to the civic community last into future elections, or are they only election-specific to elections where these kinds of ballot measures are present? The authors’ theory suggests that “environments where immigration and ethnicity become highly charged and salient issues will yield a newly naturalized immigrant pool whose level of political participation should be higher” (Pantoja et al., 2001). If voters were successful and felt an added sense of political efficacy post-election, it would be worth measuring this over time. Furthermore, this theory is one I should apply to this research with caution, as the election of interest here is the 2016 General Election; Donald Trump created conditions in the political rhetoric similar to those measured in California for Proposition 187. Another factor of socialization within communities is attendance of community-centered events, such as attending church. While not all immigrant groups have a particular religion or belief systems to test, the Latino community seems to have a strong connection to churches in these studies. Attending church is one factor of socialization that is not only community-specific, but it also incorporates a geographic aspect to these communities. In one study, church attendance by Latino voters showed to be positively correlated with turnout (Pantoja et al., 2001). If factors of place because of socialization, such as the aforementioned churches, are recognizable in influencing voters, then it leads me to believe that there might also be a relationship with an individual’s ethnic community, as well.

*Immigrant Enclaves and Voting Behavior*
Previous literature has been silent regarding the analysis of geo-spatial effects of voting behavior on ethnic voters. The notable exception is Fraga, who found that at the district level and on general categories of race, the data suggests that white, black, and Latino voters are more likely to be political participants when they live in majority co-ethnic districts (2016). However, this study provides only the foundational support for further investigation on different ethnic groups and at the individual level. Nonetheless, the existing literature does provide a valuable thought map that allows us to draw from theories of economics, sociology, and political science in deciphering this missing piece of the puzzle. How does co-ethnic geographic clustering affect voting behavior among naturalized, registered voters residing within those clusters?

Before answering that question, it is relevant to emphasize the importance of examining voting behavior of different immigrant groups by country of origin, even though previous literature has shown generic trends among Hispanics, Asians, or other ethnic groups as a whole. Perhaps we will find that these patterns are far more interesting if seen much closer rather than from afar—after all, ethnic enclaves follow clusters of national origins, like Cubans in little Havana or Venezuelans in Weston, instead of a consistent mix of all Hispanic groups. This research is unique in that it does analyze voter turnout by looking at various ethnic groups and classifying them as distinct voting blocs, expressive of their variance in cultural histories and experiences.

The formation of ethnic enclaves can largely be attributed to economic and social factors. The stability provided by the economic networks is a considerable pull factor for immigrants to settle in enclaves, and it includes the likely promise of a higher relative income. Furthermore, the economic support among co-ethnics in these economic enclave networks leads to the development of a community support system. It is known that an important factor that influences the propensity for an individual to vote is tied to the individual’s economic situation; while ethnic enclaves might
not be the most affluent of areas, the strength of the economic networks could be a comparable factor. This gives a reason to anticipate the possibility of clustered areas having an influence the voting behavior of co-ethnics residing there.

A social component to enclaves is the sense of cultural belonging, both in that there are ties to the immigrants’ countries of origin and the community building with other co-ethnics that strengthens their place identity to the enclave. There is community strength in these cultural social networks, including those of direct influencers like family and friends or institutions such as community centers, churches, and schools. Dissemination of information, and particularly politically relevant information to these co-ethnic members with shared histories, is an important consideration in this research. Civic and community involvement can encourage the kind of socialization that would boost higher levels of political involvement, like voting. Furthermore, ethnic clustering, in a social sense, could create stronger feelings of efficacy within their community—tied to ethnic candidate representation and perception of power, the strength of these feelings could be a telling influencer in voter turnout. In-group mentality and the support of ethnic membership in social circles would also serve to add to this belief.

In synthesizing and understanding these relevant social, economic, and political factors, I theorize that there are higher rates of turnout among co-ethnics residing in ethnic clusters. This research will analyze the extent of the influence of precinct-level geographic clustering on individual voter turnout. Furthermore, this research will look at a variety of different co-ethnic groups, reducing the need for generalization when only looking at the predominant ethnic group within a state. Because of these added conditions, I anticipate seeing a correlation between the proportion of co-ethnic clustering in a precinct and voter turnout among these co-ethnics.
The Five-Year estimates of the American Community Survey in 2016 estimated upwards of 1.86 million individuals in Broward County. Broward is a very diverse county, with nearly one-third of its residents foreign-born and just under 60% of those naturalized (ACS 2016). 78.5% of Broward County’s population are of voting-eligible age. In 2016, there were over 1.2 million registered voters in Broward County residing in 577 precincts.

The Florida Voter File is public record, and it contains information about each registered voter, including name, age, gender, party affiliation, and in which elections they voted. When individuals fill out their voter registration in Florida, there is an additional, optional question about their country of origin. While this information does not appear in a general request for the Florida Voter File, it is nonetheless public record and attainable.

Tables 1 through 4 show the demographic composition of Broward County’s registered voters when the Florida Voter File was accessed in late 2016.² are 7.82% more registered female voters in Broward County than males, and unknown gender makes up only 3.42% of Broward’s registered voters. Unsurprisingly, at the time that this voter file was accessed, Broward’s registered Democrats amounted to 49.97% of the total party composition, followed by No Party Affiliation at 28.28% and Republicans at 21.24%. All other third parties account for slightly over 6,300 registered voters, or half of a percentage point. Broward’s racial and ethnic composition is predominantly white. The census five-year estimates in 2017 show that Broward County is 61.9% white, and the voter file suggests the number of white registered voters is 45.6%, a 16.3 point difference. The gap is significantly smaller with black individuals—census estimates have

² This information is voluntary and self-reported on the voter registration form.
### Table 1: Broward County Registered Voters by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>647,318</td>
<td>52.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>550,358</td>
<td>44.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>42,366</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,240,042</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Broward County Registered Voters by Party Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>619,666</td>
<td>49.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>263,389</td>
<td>21.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPA</td>
<td>350,644</td>
<td>28.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>6,343</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,240,042</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Broward County Registered Voters by Race and Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Census Freq</th>
<th>Census %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>565,463</td>
<td>45.60</td>
<td>1,153,566</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>293,597</td>
<td>23.68</td>
<td>525,216</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>258,574</td>
<td>20.85</td>
<td>513,748</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>122,408</td>
<td>9.87</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,240,042</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Broward County Registered Voters by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>205,751</td>
<td>16.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>298,954</td>
<td>24.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>449,995</td>
<td>36.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-104</td>
<td>279,624</td>
<td>22.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;18 or &gt;104</td>
<td>5,718</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,240,042</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
their composition at 28.2% versus 23.68% in the voter file, a 4.52 point difference. For reported Hispanics, there is a 6.75 point difference, from 27.6% in the census to 20.85% in the voter file. All other races or ethnicities comprise 9.87% of the Broward voter file. Obviously, the census estimates include individuals who are not voting-eligible, such as those under the age of 16 (for pre-registered individuals) and 18, individuals who have lost their voter rights, and non-citizens. Lastly, the age compositions in Broward County are relatively spaced out, with the highest age group being 45-64 year olds, and the lowest (apart from the out-group of under 16, or pre-registered voters, and over 104) being the youngest group, at 18-29 year olds.

Through previous public records requests, Dr. Daniel A. Smith was able to collect the country of origin data for Broward County voters. For spellings that were not exact to a country, a team of undergraduate researchers, including myself, hand-coded the estimation. For example, if a voter listed their country of origin as Venezuela as opposed to Venezuela, the approximation was close enough to be recoded. In the Broward County voter file, there were 408,154 individual registered voters whose country of origin was able to be matched3. Though there are registered voters whose origins range from all over the United States to all over the world, for the purposes of this research, I will look at the top five countries of origin to conduct analyses: in descending order, they are Jamaica, Haiti, Colombia, Cuba, and Venezuela4.

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3 This number is higher than the roughly third of Broward residents who the census shows as being foreign-born, but that can be explained for a few reasons. First, many voters write their country of origin to be the United States or even other states and cities across the United States, the latter two which are a clear misinterpretation of the question.
4 I am not including Puerto Rico, whose voters make up the fourth-highest country of origin. I consider them to be a special Latino case because they are US citizens by birth.
Table 5: Broward County Registered Voters by Documented Country of Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>36,672</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>30,747</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>23,545</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>19,730</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>9,125</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119,819</td>
<td>9.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth noting, however, that this dataset relies on voluntary, self-reporting for the voter’s country of origin when registering to vote. For various reasons, voters may decide not to include their country of origin. Furthermore, human error in processing is expected; processing the voter’s country of origin is something that requires manual entry, so spelling errors, poor handwriting, or exaggerated abbreviation could affect the validity of the data. It is reasonable to argue that there is underreporting for a voter’s country of origin, and that the raw count and percentages do not accurately reflect the percentage of voters by their country of origin. Country of origin data also does not reflect ethnic background to its fullest extent. A second-generation Colombian immigrant, for example, would not list Colombia as her country of origin. This restricts us from the ability to see an accurate count of the co-ethnics residing within an ethnic enclave.

An individual’s country of origin, which is self-reported, is optional information on the Florida voter registration form. Table 5 shows the ethnic compositions by country of origin of Broward’s registered voters in descending order. Of the individuals who reported their country of origin, I am able to see that Jamaicans are the largest ethnic group among Broward County registered voters. There are 36,672 Jamaican registered voters, or nearly 3% of the voter file.
Haitians are the next largest ethnic group with nearly 2.5% of the file, or 30,747 registered voters. The last three prominent groups\(^5\) are ethnically Hispanic, with Colombians (23,545), Cubans (19,730), and Venezuelans (9,125) making up the last three tiers. Together, these five ethnic groups comprise nearly 10% of Broward’s registered voters.\(^6\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining the precinct level, we can see where densities are highest. Although precincts are not drawn with any particular formula, they are reflective of a subsection of the population in geographic proximity with one another. Table 6 shows that precincts are reflective of these clusters, with one precinct having over one in every five people being a Haitian-born voter—once again, this is not accounting for other ethnically Haitian residents, such as second and third generation individuals. Having that data is likely to show that that precinct is heavily, ethnically Haitian. Similarly, Jamaicans make up nearly 20% of another precinct’s total population. Cubans, which are known to be residing more in Miami-Dade than in Broward, create the densest cluster at nearly 17%. Colombian-born voters are not as clustered as Haitians or

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\(^5\) Once again, I am not including Puerto Rico, whose voters make up the fourth-highest country of origin.

\(^6\) Keeping in mind that these numbers are optional and self-reported, there is a large potential for variance between the actual numbers of Jamaican registered voters and those who chose to include this information when filling out a voter registration form.
Jamaicans with only 12.3% A little under 10% of Venezuelans make up the densest Venezuelan-born precinct, though with trends of Venezuelan immigrants relocating to Weston, colloquially nicknamed “Westonzuela,” it would be valuable to track this density over time (Faiola & Miroff 2018).

Lastly, on a geo-spatial level, I recognize that a precinct’s boundaries are not impermeable, and that enclaves do not necessarily follow precinct lines. That is why I look at both an individual level and a precinct level in drawing conclusions from the data. If I were to link census data to this research, problems of ecological fallacies might arise. Census data would provide useful, aggregate data on notably significant factors like income and education, but I would lose the ability to draw conclusions from individual level results.

I would also like to include a notice for the potential Trump effect. The 2016 General Election featured Republican Nominee Donald Trump, a candidate who frequently used immigrant groups as part of his platform in a way that targeted them. It is notable in research that when immigrant groups are targeted, they turn out in higher numbers (Pantoja et al. 2001; Scott 2000). It would be worth conducting this study during other presidential years to see if the same effects observed in this research remain consistent over time and as immigrant discourse varies during election cycles.

Nonetheless, this dataset is unique in that it does allows me to see data at the individual level, the smallest unit of analysis, in seeing how co-ethnic clustering affects an individual’s voting behavior. Previous research has analyzed this at larger units of analysis—namely the county and state levels—and with only certain, generalized ethnic groups, like Mexican or Cuban Americans (Pantoja et al., 2001). I am able to see a melting pot of co-ethnics in Broward County with this self-reported and publically available data.
Divergence of the Dataset from Previous Research

Unlike previous studies, this dataset is not reliant upon survey data, which removes individual-level factors of income and level of education from the analysis. Furthermore, relying on sample data would vastly limit the number of unique observations—individual voters—that could be studied. Self-reported data through surveying methods, particularly those asking questions of income, could yield skewed or inaccurate results, thereby decreasing the trustworthiness of the findings. Personal testimonies of community-level influence on voter turnout would be a valuable supplement to this field of research if an endeavor could be undertaken to survey the large quantity of individual voters at a county level. Another shortcoming of the dataset is that the naturalized voter’s date of immigration or naturalization is not available, nor can the dataset provide contextual information regarding foreign-born citizens to domestic-born parents, which would likely not have the same degrees of influence by their country’s ‘ethnic’ community as other immigrants would. These additional variables would be valuable in understanding the influence of time and its effect on assimilation on immigrant voting behavior.

This research is also unique in that it provides a far more accurate linking of an individual voter to their country of origin, rather than making inferences based on an individual’s last name. While this dataset does have its various shortcomings around commonly-known variables that influence voting behavior, such as income and education, it does provide unique and accurate data on various other significant self-reported factors, such as race, gender, age, and party affiliation. This dataset allows the study of upwards of 1.2 million registered voters in Broward County, both individuals who report a foreign country of birth and those born in the United
States. This dataset also allows me to view the political behavior of interest—turnout during the 2016 General Election—in a manner that does not have room for over-reporting.

Research Design and Methods

I began by creating dichotomous variables for the 34 ethnicities with the highest number of registered voters in Broward County. This process began by running the countries of origin through code that approximated misspelling to the nearest country, then hand-coded to match misspellings that the algorithm did not match. I only used the top five in the analyses below. I then coded a variable for the total number of co-ethnics residing in each precinct, and a variable that captured the total number of co-ethnics in each precinct that voted in the 2016 General Election. After coding a count variable for the total number of individuals residing in each precinct, foreign-born and native alike, I was able to create variables for densities of each co-ethnic group in each precinct. I ran a similar code for densities of race, age, gender, and party affiliation per precinct.

Next, I used pre-coded information in the Florida Voter File for well-known, significant factors that influence turnout. Agecat2018 is a variable that captures age in pre-set categories by Dr. Daniel Smith. I recoded it into dichotomous variables for each of the age groups: 18-29, 30-44, 45-64, 65-104, and an additional category for those outside these age ranges, such as pre-registered voters of ages 16 and 17 who are on the voter file, but not yet eligible to vote. The same coding was done for gender, which was split between female, male, and unknown.

RaceEthcombo, also coded by Dr. Daniel A. Smith, was recoded to dichotomous variables for white, black, Hispanic, and other. Lastly, v24Party is a variable made by Dr. Smith that shows the three major party affiliations—Democrat, Republican, and No Party Affiliation—with Third as a category that aggregates all other third parties. This, too, was split into dichotomous
variables for each. I coded a dichotomous variable that captured whether or not an individual voted in the 2016 General Election, which the voter file provides by vote method. As my dependent variable, I captured this variable for turnout together with a voter’s country of origin—in other words, turnout specific to each ethnic group.

Once these variables were created, I was able to run various regressions, including a mixed effects logistic regression, to test whether co-ethnic clustering had any impact on voter turnout among those co-ethnics. I chose a mixed effects regression model because it accounts for both the individual and precinct-level effects of co-ethnic clustering on voting behavior. Compared to a regular, linear regression on aggregate clustering numbers per individual voters, it provides a far clearer picture about which effects are significant and related to voting behavior. Lastly, in order to ensure I am capturing the effect on those who are of the same co-ethnic group, I specified in the models that it only take into account voters of the ethnicity for which I was testing. This allows for a more accurate view of the voting behavior of each ethnic cluster, as opposed to their voting behavior compared to that of Broward County as a whole. The findings told a fascinating story of diversity of voting behavior among immigrant groups.

Findings

Table 7: Broward County Votes Cast in the 2016 General Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voted</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>825,058</td>
<td>66.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>414,984</td>
<td>33.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,240,042</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Broward County Votes Cast in the 2016 General Election by Country of Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Voted</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>28,745</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>7,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>23,191</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>7,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>17,946</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>5,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>14,752</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td>4,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>7,474</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>1,651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout for the 2016 General Election among all Broward County registered voters sits at 66.53%; of the 1.2 million registered voters, 825,058 cast their ballots for this election. Looking at each ethnic group by country of origin, however, paints a more interesting picture. Across the five highest ethnic groups, all of them had a higher turnout, on average, than did Broward County as a whole. Venezuelan-born registrants had the highest turnout rate at nearly 82%—a turnout rate that has not been seen for the country as a whole since 1876 (The American Presidency Project). Self-identified, Jamaican registered voters had the next highest percentage, with 78.4%, with Colombians closely in third with 76.2%. Haitians and Cubans both hover near or above 75% turnout. These rates tell a different story from what has been published in the literature, as other studies have found that immigrants—particularly those of Hispanic origins—have lower rates of turnout (DeSipio 1996a).

Starting with race, there is no significance in black, Hispanic, or other when compared to the control group of white voters. Essentially, voters of these three racial or ethnic backgrounds are no more likely to vote than white voters. The only exception to this is Venezuelans, which have a high significance when looking at Hispanic voters. Self-identified Hispanic, Venezuelan voters are more likely to vote than self-identified white Venezuelans. Nearly across the board,
the different age categories are all significant. For the youngest age group, it is expected that the coefficients are in the negative direction, since younger voters tend to vote at lower rates than older voters. It is interesting to note that in the 30-44 age category, Colombian voters are slightly more likely to vote than the reference category of voters ages 65-104. For every ethnic group, with the exception of an insignificant relationship among Cubans, males are less likely to vote than females are, which is in contradiction to what the prevailing literature says about the demographics with the highest likelihood to turn out. For Jamaicans, Haitians, and Colombians, registered Democrats are more likely to vote than their Republican counterparts.

This research seeks to answer whether co-ethnic clustering has an impact on voting behavior for the ethnic, registered voters residing within the clusters or enclaves. I argued in previous sections that it should show a positive correlation due to various economic and social principles. The findings presented in table 9 show mixed results, and in the groups that show significance, the coefficients are promising.

Jamaicans and Haitians are the two ethnic groups with the highest total number of self-identified registered voters and the highest densities—there are precincts where roughly one in every five voters is a foreign-born, registered voter. A 20% density is fairly dense, considering that this number does not account for second or third generation Jamaican or Haitian voters. However, the findings show that there is no significance between the density of a precinct and its propensity to influence the voting behavior of co-ethnics residing within that precinct.
Table 9: Co-Ethnic Clustering and 2016 General Election Turnout: Mixed Effects Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>Haiti</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
<th>Cuba</th>
<th>Venezuela</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clustering</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.415*</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.538**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
<td>-0.098</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.062**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
<td>-0.055</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 18-20</td>
<td>-0.182***</td>
<td>-0.190***</td>
<td>-0.098***</td>
<td>-0.148***</td>
<td>-0.187***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 30-44</td>
<td>-0.050***</td>
<td>-0.032***</td>
<td>0.026*</td>
<td>-0.041***</td>
<td>-0.030*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45-64</td>
<td>0.019***</td>
<td>0.040***</td>
<td>0.078***</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.048***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.068***</td>
<td>-0.057***</td>
<td>-0.036***</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-0.029</td>
<td>-0.107*</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>0.056***</td>
<td>0.125***</td>
<td>0.022**</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPA</td>
<td>-0.057***</td>
<td>0.033*</td>
<td>-0.038***</td>
<td>-0.085***</td>
<td>-0.031*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.008***</td>
<td>-0.010***</td>
<td>-0.010***</td>
<td>0.012***</td>
<td>-0.006***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>36,672</td>
<td>30,747</td>
<td>23,545</td>
<td>19,730</td>
<td>9,125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05    ** p<0.01    *** p<0.001
Colombians and Cubans make up the next largest ethnic groups. The relationship between Colombian co-ethnic voter density and turnout is significant. For every ten percentage point increase in Colombian voter density, voter turnout for Colombians in the co-ethnic group increases by 4.15 times. Interestingly, this relationship isn’t significant among Cubans in Broward County. Lastly, the least-dense of the top five densest ethnic groups are Venezuelans. Their relationship yields the highest significance—for every ten percentage point increase in Venezuelan voter density, voter turnout for Venezuelan voters in their precinct increases by 5.38 times.

These findings show an interesting and varied dynamic in immigrant voting behavior. Perhaps the most evident element that can be deducted from these findings is that this variance highlights the need for scholars to pay more attention to different ethnic groups rather than generalizing immigrant voting behavior as one, cohesive element or even by general origin, like Hispanic or Asian. Each ethnic group brings its own co-ethnically shared history, which is reflective in the decisions for co-ethnics to settle in enclaves reflective of their cultural roots.

Jamaican, Haitian, and Cuban co-ethnic clustering yields insignificant results. Each group has had their own political or natural happenings in their country of origin that have shaped the ethnic groups living in south Florida. Cubans, for example, are likelier to find higher densities of voters in Miami than they are in Broward, reflective of the enclaves they settle in, such as little Havana. The same can be said about Little Haiti in Miami for Haitian immigrants. These two groups are more concentrated in Miami-Dade County than they are in Broward, so while there are no effects of significance in the county that was studied, it would be of value to see if the relationships are significant in the county that draws the most immigrants. Since Haitians and Cubans who move to Broward are, in essence, moving away from the center locus of the ethnic
enclave, this is perhaps reflected in the insignificance of voter density to voter turnout among co-ethnics in these groups. A similar base is not notable for Jamaican immigrants.

Venezuelans are the newest ethnic group to become a permanent fixture in the south Florida political landscape. Venezuela has been struck by serious crisis in recent years, spurring a wave of immigrants to south Florida and areas like Weston in Broward County. The relatively new group still retains a strong sense of its ethnic identity, and particularly one that has been politically affected in their country of origin. Considering this voter data was accessed from 2016, and combined with the fact that the Venezuelan crisis is relatively new, it is likely that these Venezuelan voters had ties to US citizenship or were, at the very least, dual citizens—for most citizenship paths, the wait time to become a citizen can range from three to five years at minimum. This flexibility is easiest experienced by the more affluent Venezuelans, who were able to escape the crisis earlier on. The crucial information that is not on the dataset is, unfortunately, that of socioeconomic status. Having this key piece of information could more clearly point to any possible relationship between affluence and turnout among Venezuelan voters. However, the data is telling us that, even with random-effects testing, these areas do experience higher turnout among Venezuelans residing in these precincts. The socialization effects of being around other Venezuelan voters, who are likely experiencing similar levels of social, economic, and political pull factors to areas like Weston, clearly yields higher turnout.

On the other hand, it has been several decades since Colombians experienced a notable migration wave to the United States; Colombians faced a decade of hardship under the drug cartel dangers of the 1980s (Sturner 2019). This decade was marked by political opposition and the rise of reactionary government policies in order to keep the levels of violence at bay. Even though many Colombians emigrated and established new enclaves in regions like Broward
County, it appears that the strength of their networks have held over time. Unlike Venezuelans, Colombians have been an established and relatively large ethnic group in South Florida for a few decades, ruling out the potential for a recent political change as a reason for consideration in spurring higher levels of turnout. Furthermore, because the migration of Colombians to the United States has been relatively steady in an upward direction for the past several decades, there is also less of a concern that there is only or mostly affluent-voter information captured in this dataset (López 2015). Lastly, I would like to conclude by reasserting the value in seeing immigrant voting behavior as multi-ethnic. Each ethnicity has their own historical roots, and there is likely nothing extraordinarily exceptional or unique about Colombians as higher-likelihood voters—given the context of socialization and precinct-level density, it is very possible that these patterns are experienced by other co-ethnic groups in regions across the United States. Much in the same way that enclaves pull immigrants for social or economic reasons, these enclaves also have the potential to politically engage their co-ethnic residents.

These findings are valuable for many reasons. Most notably, as mentioned above, it highlights the necessity to see ethnic groups as distinct voting communities, rather than generalized as one immigrant group as a whole. The findings show that two of the three Hispanic countries showed significance in the relationship between precinct density to voter turnout among co-ethnics. This micro-level analysis is foundational and supportive of future research to get a clearer picture of different ethnic groups. Secondly, these findings are valuable to political groups who wish to target naturalized voters in their civic pursuits. For example, candidates can target their message to particular densities of ethnic voters. Because findings show that they have, all else equal, higher levels of turnout, they can effectively communicate their platform with an assurance that they are likelier to turn out to vote. Lastly, this research affirms that
immigrants are not a non-voting or low-voting block; they, too, are socialized to vote, as seen here through co-ethnic clustering.

**Conclusion**

The importance of immigrants in the greater narrative of American history is reflected in the numerous studies conducted by sociologists, economists, and political scientists in attempting to understand immigrant dynamics of influence. This research added to the literature of immigrant voting behavior in the hopes of expanding the scope to include the co-ethnic, geo-spatial effects on voting behavior. I argue that co-ethnic clustering impacts voting behavior; I theorized that in areas where there is higher co-ethnic clustering, there are higher rates of turnout among those co-ethnics. This research, unlike many others, is not dependent on survey data. Instead, it pulls form the Florida Voter File to obtain accurate vote history information for each registered voter in Broward County, and is combined with voluntary, self-reported data of a voter’s country of origin, which was obtained through additional public records requests. Broward County is home to upwards of 1.2 million registered voters, of which slightly under 10% are self-reported immigrants that make up the five co-ethnic groups of interest, making it a relatively diverse county to study.

This research builds on theories of other areas of study in arguing that co-ethnic clustering has an effect on voter turnout. I believe this to be the case because of the economic and social networks that drive immigrants to their relevant enclaves, which is argued in previous studies to facilitate the transition to their new American life. Having a network of co-ethnics allows for an easier transition, as there is less of a learning curve in adapting to a new way of life. Other areas of socialization, such as churches and schools, are known to foster a sense of civic duty, and are also at the center for community relations and information transfers for
immigrants, as well. It is also well-known that socio-economic status plays a key role in voter turnout, and I tie this into my argument for immigrant voting behavior in the sense that these economic networks provide stability during a time of variation and transition. Over time, as these immigrants settle, naturalize, and register to vote, these networks have played an essential role in their development in a new country.

I assimilate these theories in my argument, claiming that these factors of influence can be factored into a spatial relationship for political behavior. In order to see if this relationship is significant, I decided to study it at a micro-level of analysis, using the precinct as my geographic range and measuring for co-ethnic density. While controlling for demographic variables of age, gender, race and ethnicity (Hispanic), and party, I tested the co-ethnic clustering relationship by comparing it to an individual voter’s turnout in the 2016 General Election. I found that of the five major ethnic groups in Broward County, namely Jamaicans, Haitians, Colombians, Cubans, and Venezuelans, the findings were significant only for Colombians and Venezuelans.

What does this tell us about the future of immigrant voting behavioral studies? For one, it highlights a need to, ironically, not cluster all immigrant groups into one category, including the common method of seeing Hispanics, Asians, or blacks as individual voting groups. Even among these five ethnic groups, two are black, three are of the Caribbean, three are Hispanic, and they overlap between categories. However, each ethnic group’s history, culture, and even language varies from place to place. Their distinct identities merit individual study, as seen in the variation of statistical significance in the results. Colombians, for example, are a group that saw heightened levels of political strife in the 1980s, and have made their transition to areas of Broward County. Venezuelans, on the other hand, have a far more recent history in the United States. Venezuelan-born voters are clustering in areas like the colloquially-named Westonzuela.
(Weston, Broward County), and the statistical significance between density and turnout among Venezuelan-born voters is strong. One possible explanation for why Haitian and Cuban voters do not see such statistical significance in the results is that their locus is found in Miami-Dade County, implying that co-ethnics that are residing in clusters in Broward are far away from their primary enclave’s center.

Geo-spatial studies on voting behavior have only just begun. This research aims to be informative, observational, and, to some extent, foundational in understanding how co-ethnic clustering has a relationship with immigrant voting behavior. Furthermore, there is value in recognizing that these ethnic cultures are reflective of a particular set of shared identity, not to be generalized as is commonly seen. Indeed, place names are developed to reflect the uniqueness of each area—we know of places called Chinatown, Little Havana, and Westonzuela, names reflective of unique cultures and ethnicities, not generalized names of Asiatown or Little Hispanic Center.

Due to the fact that this research is primarily explanatory in nature, it does not cover the subject matter to the most ideal depth. Future research ought to delve deeper into these relationships. On a geo-spatial level, this research could be further developed to see the effects of sprawl on immigrant enclaves and how that effects turnout. For South Florida, this could look at the distance between co-ethnic clusters in Broward for Haitians and Cubans and comparing them to the much more concentrated areas in Miami-Dade County. Adding a degree of surveying to this research to be able to capture important socio-economic variables like income and education would also be worthwhile. Overall, this research is of value to more than just political scientists. These findings and the development of this area of study could provide useful for other groups, such as political campaigns, which could effectively target denser, more socialized areas of co-
ethnic voters. Ultimately, this research hopes to spark more curiosity in understanding immigrant voting behavior, particularly in a geo-spatial sense, but also in creating a more individualized perception of different ethnic groups in the hopes that scholars gain a clearer understanding of the influences of those who created this country.
References


