Voting Cultures: Network Effects and the Political Participation of Naturalized Citizens

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Immigrants and Political Participation

Why is immigrant political participation important?

- ▶ Civic engagement an important aspect of social integration
- ▶ Electoral participation essential for political representation (Cascio and Washington (2012), Fujiwara (2015))

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How do immigrants become politically mobilized?

- ▶ Social networks may be especially important

Ethnic Networks

"Ethnic enclaves"

- ▶ Immigrants often find job market opportunities, other forms of social and economic support in areas of high ethnic concentration
- ▶ Important effects on rate of assimilation and economic outcomes (e.g. Edin et al. (2003))

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Consequences for immigrant political participation?

- ▶ Plausible, but little conclusive evidence
- ▶ Directionally ambiguous

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- ▶ Relationship between assimilation and political participation characterized by heterogeneity

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- Current Population Survey (CPS): Voting Supplement 2006-2016

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Methodology:

- ▶ Cross-sectional analysis, exploiting two sources of variation:
    1. Variation in local co-ethnic residential concentration
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  2. Variation in voting rates by country of origin

Main results:
- ▶ Ethnic networks indeed exhibit patterns of differential mobilization, evidence of strong network effects.
- ▶ Evidence inconsistent with self-selection and "top-down" mobilization

Sources of Variation
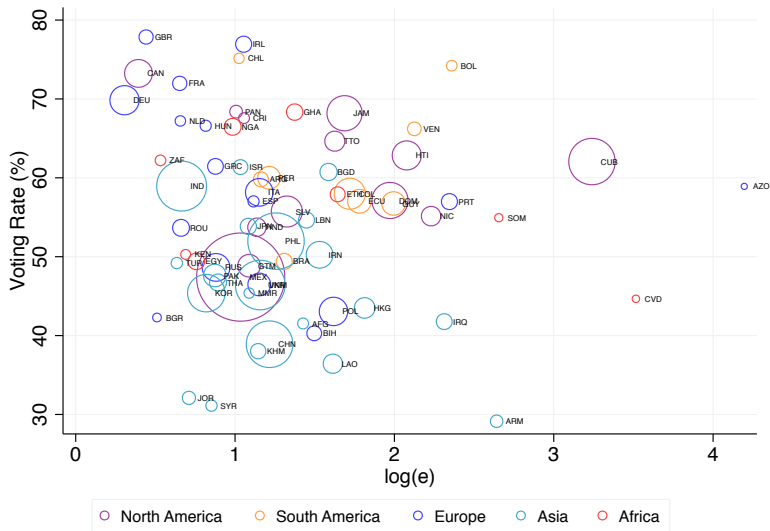
Related Literature

- ► Effect of living in ethnic neighborhoods: Abramitzsky (2014), Edin et al. (2003), Borjas (1995)
- ► Political mobilization
  - ► **Observational studies:** Gentzkow (2005), Madestam and Yanagizawa-Drott (2012), Enos (2015), Bursztyn et al. (2017)
  - ► **Experiments on social image and peer effects:** Gerber et al. (2008), Funk (2010), DellaVigna et al. (2016), Fafchamps et al. (2017), Perez-Truglia and Cruces (2017)
  - ► **Immigrants:** Pons and Liegey (2016), Shertzer (2016), Oberholzer-Gee and Waldfogel (2009)

Outline

How might ethnic networks affect political participation?

Two channels:

1. Social norms (Bénabou and Tirole (2011))
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1. Social norms (Bénabou and Tirole (2011))
2. Information (including social learning)
   - May increase the benefits of voting (acquiring a sense of civic duty)
   - Or lower the costs (getting informed about candidates, registration procedures)

Conceptual Framework

Simple framework for social image (Bursztyn and Jensen (2017)):

$$S_i(e_i) = \lambda E_i(\omega_k) Pr_{-i}(\sigma_i = h | R_i)$$

- λ: overall importance (and direction) of social image concerns
    - Increasing in the number of group members in same area
- $E_i(\omega_k)$: individual's expectation about the social desirability ω_k of being perceived by group k of being of type h
    - Increasing in observed political participation of group
- $Pr_{-i}(\sigma_i = h | R_i)$: probability individual i is perceived by group as being of type h conditional on voting decision R_i

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Can tell a similar story for the information channel.

$\Rightarrow$ **Predicts a differential effect**: the effect of having a larger network should be greater when the group is politically active

Outline

Identifying network effects

Empirical investigations of network effects face definite challenges (Manski 1993):

- Correlated effects
    - Individuals within a group have correlated outcomes because they have similar personal characteristics
    - Individuals within a neighborhood have correlated outcomes because of characteristics of the neighborhood
- Residential selection
    - Individuals living close to their ethnic group different than those living away from their ethnic group

Empirical Framework (1)

Adapted from Bertrand et al. (2000). Focus on the differential effect of networks.

- ▶ Define a measure of "network size" using # of local co-ethnic members (ethnic concentration)
  - ▶ variation across areas (within groups) and across groups (within areas)
  - ▶ allows for inclusion of area and group fixed effects

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  - allows for inclusion of area and group fixed effects
- Define a measure of "network quality" using average group voting rate
- Construct a measure of "network strength" as interaction between network size and network quality
  - allows for inclusion of lower-order ethnic concentration term

Empirical Framework (2)

Main specification:

$$Pr(Vote_{ijk}) = \alpha \underbrace{(e_{jk} * \overline{Vote}_k)}_{Netw_{jk}} + \theta e_{jk} + \beta X_i + \gamma_j + \delta_k + \epsilon_{ijk}$$

where

$$Netw_{jk} = \underbrace{\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{Ethnic} \\ \text{concentration of} \\ \text{group } k \text{ in area } j \end{array} \right)_{jk}}_{e_{jk}} \times \underbrace{\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{Political "quality"} \\ \text{of group } k \end{array} \right)_{k}}_{\overline{Vote}_k}.$$

- ▶ X_i vector of individual characteristics
- ▶ γ_j locality fixed effects
- ▶ δ_k group fixed effects

Outline

Data

Current Population Survey (CPS)

- ► Monthly survey of 60,000 households
    - ► Demographic characteristics
- ► Voting supplement: even years from 2006-2016
    - ► Three presidential and three midterm elections
    - ► *In any election, some people are not able to vote because they are sick or busy or have some other reason, and others do not want to vote. Did you vote in the election held on Tuesday, November X, XXXX?*
- ► Data at the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) level
    - ► Urban core (10,000+) and adjacent neighborhoods
- ► Combines detailed data on personal characteristics (including country of origin), geographic identifiers and voting turnout

Sample Selection

- Eligible voters (naturalized citizens, 18+ years old)
- 66 ethnic groups, 273 MSAs and 3,906 MSA-ethnic group cells, 24,909 individual level observations

Ethnic Concentration

Data on residential ethnic concentration from American Community Survey (ACS)

- ▶ Much larger sample (2 million households/year)
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"Share of MSA that is co-ethnic divided by share of US that is co-ethnic":

$$e_{jk} = \frac{C_{jk}/A_j}{L_k/T}$$

- ▶ C_{jk} number of people in area j in ethnic group k
- ▶ A_j total population in area j
- ▶ L_k total number of people in the U.S. in ethnic group k
- ▶ T total population of U.S.

Summary Statistics

	Full Sample	Low e	High e
N	24,909	12,477	12,432
Voted (%)	53.33	53.38	53.27
Registered (%)	69.52	69.50	69.54
Highschool Degree (%)	82.09	85.62	78.54***
Employed (%)	66.63	67.32	65.93**
Married (%)	68.65	69.83	67.45***
Age	51.25	51.11	51.38
Family income ($)	84,937	90,940	78,854***
Years in U.S.	25.92	26.41	25.43***
Contact share (%)	2.77	1.06	4.49***
	(4.58)	(2.05)	(5.66)
Contact ratio (e)	4.81	1.19	8.44***
	(7.98)	(0.66)	(10.05)

Notes: Asterisks refer to p-values from t-tests of equality with the control group. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Threats to identification

Two remaining concerns:

1. *Differential selection*
   - Inclusion of e_{jk} as regressor absorbs unobservable differences due to choice of e which are fixed across groups
   - But what if mechanisms governing selection are different for groups with high and low political participation?

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     - ▶ Instrument for ethnic concentration at the MSA level using ethnic concentration at the state level
     - ▶ Dropping education controls

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2. *Strategic mobilization*
   - Do "top-down" mobilization efforts target dense ethnic networks which tend to vote at high rates?
     - Effects stronger in swing states?
     - Different outcome: voter registration

Outline

Main Specification

$$Pr(Vote_{ijkt}) = \alpha(e_{jkt} * \overline{Vote}_{kt}) + \theta e_{jkt} + \beta X_{it} + \gamma_{jt} + \delta_{kt} + \epsilon_{ijkt}$$

- $Vote_{ijkt}$ dummy for whether individual i in area j and ethnic group k votes at time t
- e_{jkt} ethnic concentration
- $\overline{Vote}_{kt}$ average voting rate of group k
- X_{it} vector of individual characteristics
    - log(family income), age, age^2, years since entry, gender, labor force participation, marital status, 8 education dummies
- γ_{jt} locality fixed effects; δ_{kt} group fixed effects

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- X_{it} vector of individual characteristics
    - log(family income), age, age^2, years since entry, gender, labor force participation, marital status, 8 education dummies
- γ_{jt} locality fixed effects; δ_{kt} group fixed effects
- Linear probability model
    - Standard errors clustered at group$\times$area cell level

Main Results

	(1) MSA OLS
Network Strength	0.0380***
	(0.00821)
Ethnic Concentration	-0.0246***
	(0.00582)
High school degree	0.114***
	(0.0318)
Years in U.S.	0.00315***
	(0.000460)
log(Family Income)	0.0364***
	(0.00660)
N	12533
adj. R^2	0.127
Clusters	2683

Notes: Column (1) reports OLS estimates from the main specification. Column (2) reports IV estimates where ethnic concentration at the state level is used to instrument for ethnic concentration at the MSA level. Columns (3)-(4) report the same for midterm election years. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

IV Specification

Differential selection (DS): what if mechanisms governing selection are different for groups with high and low political participation?

- ▶ Instrument for ethnic concentration at the MSA level using ethnic concentration at the state level
  - ▶ OLS estimate biased by DS both within and across states
  - ▶ IV estimate biased only by DS across states

Main Results

| | Presidential | |
	(1) MSA OLS	(2) MSA IV
Network Strength	0.0380***	0.0379***
	(0.00821)	(0.00922)
Ethnic Concentration	-0.0246***	-0.0243***
	(0.00582)	(0.00697)
High school degree	0.114***	0.115***
	(0.0318)	(0.0313)
Years in U.S.	0.00315***	0.00315***
	(0.000460)	(0.000454)
log(Family Income)	0.0364***	0.0364***
	(0.00660)	(0.00651)
N	12533	12533
adj. R^2	0.127	–
Clusters	2683	2683

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Main Results

	Presidential		Midterm	
	(1) MSA OLS	(2) MSA IV	(3) MSA OLS	(4) MSA IV
Network Strength	0.0380***	0.0379***	0.0511***	0.0618***
	(0.00821)	(0.00922)	(0.00676)	(0.0114)
Ethnic Concentration	-0.0246***	-0.0243***	-0.0188***	-0.0242***
	(0.00582)	(0.00697)	(0.00309)	(0.00552)
High school degree	0.114***	0.115***	0.110***	0.109***
	(0.0318)	(0.0313)	(0.0287)	(0.0282)
Years in U.S.	0.00315***	0.00315***	0.00366***	0.00366***
	(0.000460)	(0.000454)	(0.000486)	(0.000481)
log(Family Income)	0.0364***	0.0364***	0.0189***	0.0189***
	(0.00660)	(0.00651)	(0.00629)	(0.00619)
N	12533	12533	12376	12376
adj. R^2	0.127	–	0.138	–
Clusters	2683	2683	2587	2587

Notes: Column (1) reports OLS estimates from the main specification. Column (2) reports IV estimates where ethnic concentration at the state level is used to instrument for ethnic concentration at the MSA level (see the text for discussion). Columns (3)-(4) report the same for midterm election years. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.
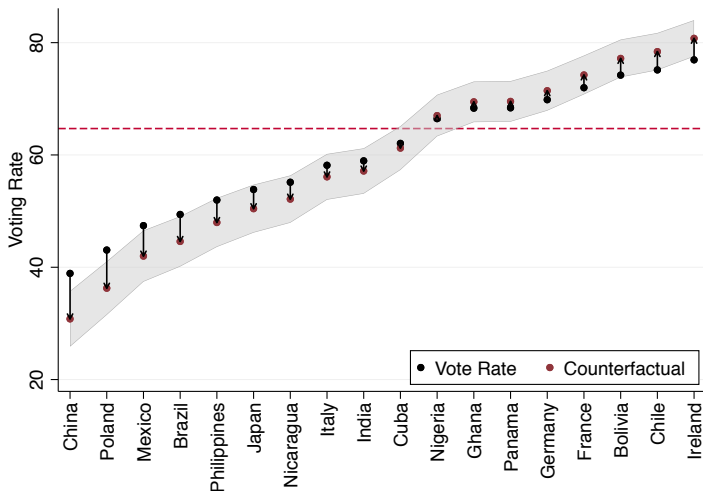
Marginal Effect

What is the marginal effect of a one-standard-deviation increase in ethnic concentration on likelihood of voting?

Robustness

- Dropping education controls
  - Inconsistent with differential selection
- Functional form of e
- Logit/Probit
- Sample selection
  - Dropping English/Spanish-speakers

Swing States

Strategic mobilization: Are political candidates or parties mobilizing immigrants?

- ▶ If so, effects should be much stronger in swing states

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	(1)
Network Strength * Swing State	.0035
	(.0129)
Network Strength (Non-swing states)	.0377***
	(.0107)
Swing State	.0851***
	(.0284)
N	12,533
adj. R^2	.1278

Notes: Reports OLS estimates from models interacting network strength with various institutional variables. Lower order terms (5 in total) are included in all regressions. "Voter ID Law" takes value 1 if individual lives in a state which has instituted a voter ID law of any kind at the time of observation (source: National Conference of State Legislatures). "Swing State" takes value 1 if individual lives in a state listed as swing state by POLITICO in the presidential general election during the year of observation. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Registration

Registration type:	All	
	(1) Presidential	(2) Midterm
Network Strength	0.0311***	0.0310***
	(0.00743)	(0.00646)
Ethnic Concentration	-0.0192***	-0.0108***
	(0.00521)	(0.00321)
Bachelor's degree	0.263***	0.269***
	(0.0316)	(0.0308)
Years in U.S.	0.00358***	0.00530***
	(0.000418)	(0.000497)
log(Family Income)	0.0359***	0.0333***
	(0.00587)	(0.00644)
N	12372	12091
adj. R^2	0.122	0.143
Clusters	2667	2554

Notes: OLS estimates reported for the main specification, with various outcome variables.
* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Registration

Registration type:	All		Excluding Drives	
	(1) Presidential	(2) Midterm	(3) Presidential	(4) Midterm
Network Strength	0.0311***	0.0310***	0.0252***	0.0231***
	(0.00743)	(0.00646)	(0.00689)	(0.00689)
Ethnic Concentration	-0.0192***	-0.0108***	-0.0159***	-0.00766**
	(0.00521)	(0.00321)	(0.00486)	(0.00325)
Bachelor's degree	0.263***	0.269***	0.256***	0.252***
	(0.0316)	(0.0308)	(0.0319)	(0.0295)
Years in U.S.	0.00358***	0.00530***	0.00355***	0.00451***
	(0.000418)	(0.000497)	(0.000424)	(0.000531)
log(Family Income)	0.0359***	0.0333***	0.0338***	0.0386***
	(0.00587)	(0.00644)	(0.00656)	(0.00669)
N	12372	12091	12372	12091
adj. R^2	0.122	0.143	0.105	0.122
Clusters	2667	2554	2667	2554

Notes: OLS estimates reported for the main specification, with various outcome variables.
* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Mechanisms: Civic Engagement

Outcome (2008 CE):	Political Conversation		Civic Activity
	(1) Frequency	(2) Dummy	(3) Index
Network Strength	0.493***	0.0242***	0.0724**
	(0.181)	(0.00818)	(0.0364)
Ethnic Concentration	-0.229**	-0.0133***	-0.0560**
	(0.112)	(0.00512)	(0.0261)
Bachelor's degree	1.054	0.0789*	0.208***
	(0.865)	(0.0429)	(0.0659)
Years in U.S.	0.0209	0.000445	0.00466**
	(0.0139)	(0.000675)	(0.00181)
log(Family Income)	0.556***	0.0239***	0.0332
	(0.172)	(0.00798)	(0.0215)
N	6035	6035	3906
adj. R^2	0.102	0.093	0.102
Clusters	1605	1605	1182

Under the heading "Political Conversation", "Frequency" recodes the question options to (roughly) frequency per month. "Dummy" is an indicator taking value 1 for individuals reporting talking about politics at least a few times a week. "Civic Activity" is an index of participation in 7 types of civic and political activities. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Outline

Conclusion

Network effects are important for the political mobilization of immigrants

- ▶ Stronger for those from ethnic groups that are highly politically active
- ▶ These effects work at least in part by increasing frequency of political conversations and other forms of civic engagement
- ▶ Suggestive evidence that ethnic networks may in fact be more beneficial to political participation than assimilation

Thank you!

Functional Form Checks

	Presidential	Midterm
(1) Baseline Model (Table 1)	.0380***	.0511***
	(.0082)	(.0068)
(2) Logistic Regression	.2252***	.2479***
	(.053)	(.0389)
(3) Probit Regression	.1205***	.1456***
	(.0281)	(.0208)
(4) Same as (1) but with VR_k replaced by $\log(VR_k)$	.0225***	.0192***
	(.004)	(.0027)
(5) Same as (1) but with $e := C_{jk}/A_j$	7.54***	11***
	(1.851)	(2.41)
(6) Same as (1) but with $e := \log(\frac{C_{jk}/A_j}{L_k/T})$	.2641***	.2805***
	(.0354)	(.0399)
(7) Same as (1) but with e^2 included as a control	.0381***	.0506***
	(.0085)	(.0067)

Notes: OLS estimates of the coefficient on network strength under various functional form adjustments. Ethnic concentration in the baseline model is specified as $e_{jk} = \frac{C_{jk}/A_j}{L_k/T}$. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Sample Choice

	Presidential	Midterm
(1) Baseline Model (Table 1)	.0380***	.0511***
	(.0082)	(.0068)
	[12,533]	[12,376]
(2) Excluding English Speaking Countries	.0384***	.0513***
	(.0083)	(.0067)
	[11,899]	[11,756]
(3) Excluding Spanish Speaking Countries	.0336***	.0469***
	(.0088)	(.0065)
	[8,867]	[8,690]

Notes: OLS estimates of the coefficient on network strength with various sample choices. English speaking countries are defined as those in which over half the population speaks English as their first language. Spanish speaking countries are defined as those in which over half the population speaks Spanish as a native language. Standard errors are clustered at the MSA×ethnic group cell level (shown in parenthesis). * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Dropping Controls

	Presidential			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Network Strength	0.0353***	0.0418***	0.0392***	0.0380***
	(0.00844)	(0.00906)	(0.00859)	(0.00821)
Ethnic Concentration	-0.0228***	-0.0292***	-0.0266***	-0.0246***
	(0.00609)	(0.00651)	(0.00614)	(0.00582)
High school degree				0.114***
				(0.0318)
Bachelor's degree				0.278***
				(0.0332)
N	12533	12533	12533	12533
adj. R^2	0.045	0.062	0.103	0.127
Clusters	2683	2683	2683	2683
Ethnicity F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Neighborhood F.E.		✓	✓	✓
All Other Controls			✓	✓
Education Dummies				✓

Notes: OLS estimates for the main specification where various sets of covariates are treated as unobservables. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.