

The Blue Scare: How Cuban Voters Impact the Hispanic Electorate in Florida

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Background

- Hispanic voters generally favor Democrats, although less so than Black voters do (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010).
- Cuban voters historically have deviated from this pattern, consistently voting Republican due to a reaction against socialism and the Cuban Revolution, a pattern especially strong in Southern Florida (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010).
- Cuban exceptionalism was thought to be eroding among younger generations with less connection to the Cuban Revolution, with young Cubans expected to look more like other young Hispanics.
- The expected leftward shift among young Cubans may have failed to materialize, however, judging from the success of Republicans in recent Florida elections. Gov Ron Desantis won a crushing victory in 2018 in part due to Hispanic support.
- What's less clear is whether the growth in support for Republicans in South Florida represents a rightward shift among Hispanics as a whole, a return to Cuban exceptionalism, or a mixture of the two.

Methodology

Model Overview:

Using OLS, we created two models for each election we had data on to show the impact of our independent variables on the average percentage of votes the GOP received in a census tract.

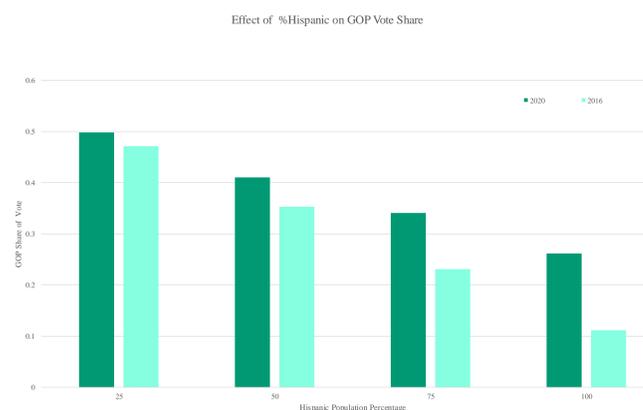
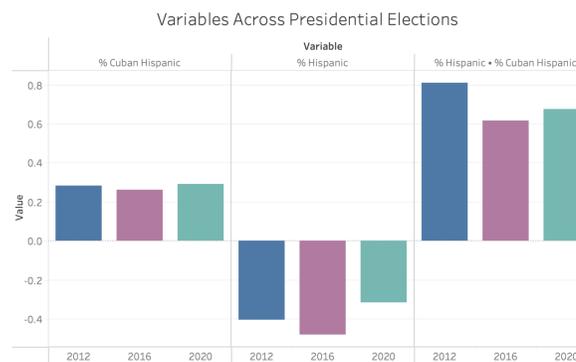
Unit of Analysis: Census Tracts

Dependent Variable: the Percentage of votes the GOP received in a census tract for that specific election

Control Variables: Black population percentage, total voting-age population, median household income, college education rate, and unemployment rate.

Independent Variables: Hispanic population percentage, Cuban Hispanics percentage, Hispanic population percentage by Cuban Hispanics percentage

Elections	% Hispanic	% Cuban Hispanic	% Hispanic • % Cuban Hispanic
2012 US Senate (Mack)	-0.316	0.2833	0.773
2012 Presidential (Romney)	-0.406	0.284	0.81
2014 Gubernatorial (Scott)	-0.306	0.289	1.064
2016 US Senate (Rubio)	-0.363	0.289	0.766
2016 Presidential (Trump)	-0.479	0.262	0.618
2018 US Senate (Scott)	-0.397	0.301	0.833
2018 Gubernatorial (DeSantis)	-0.421	0.319	0.824
2020 Presidential (Trump)	-0.316	0.294	0.674



Analysis and Interpretation

- An increase in the percentage of Cuban Hispanics in a tract correlates with an increase in the GOP's vote share in 2016 and 2020. More heavily, Cuban tracts showed a greater increase in the GOP's vote share in 2020 than in 2016.
- An increase in the percentage of the population that is Hispanic correlates with a decrease in the GOP's vote share in 2016 and 2020. Increasing the Hispanic population was correlated with a greater decrease in the GOP's Vote share in 2016 than in 2020
- % Hispanic • % Cuban Hispanic, which shows the impact of Cubans on the Hispanic vote decreased from 2016 to 2020, which points to Trump doing better among Hispanics not because of increased support among Cubans but because his support among non-Cuban Hispanics increased.



Conclusions

- The impact of Cubans on the Hispanic vote is decreasing because there is a rightward shift among Non-Cuban Hispanics

Future Work / Caveats

This project used OLS to generate results. One way to expand upon this project would be to use Ecological Inference.

Main References

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Acknowledgements

We thank the following institutions and individuals for their support of our work: Prof. D. Stephen Voss, my academic advisor, my research partner, the University of Kentucky Department of Political Science, the UK College of Arts & Sciences, the scholars who gave me data, and the people who gave me financial support.

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