

An Analysis of Voting Patterns in Glendale, CA

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Executive Summary

We were asked by the Community College League to evaluate the extent to which voting patterns in Glendale, California are characterized by racial bloc voting. Glendale is an interesting case because it has a quite diverse population including sizable blocs of Latino, Asian American, and Armenian American voters. In order to properly assess how each constituency voted we used a variation of ecological regression, multivariable regression in which we controlled for the independent effects of each of these three unique voting groups, to best isolate each group on it's own, as well as to isolate the White, non-Armenian population. Groups such as Armenian and Latinos may have sizable populations living side-by-side in some portions of Glendale, and by conducting multiple variable regression we can accurately, and scientifically isolate each independent effect.

To conduct this analysis we obtained data on the election results for 22 local elections including city council, school board, and community college in Glendale, California. In addition, to assess whether or not the patterns in the local elections were unique, or part of a larger pattern, we selected a handful of additional exogenous elections to also analyze. These included 4 elections for county judicial offices in Los Angeles County, and 4 elections for statewide office within the Democratic Primary balloting. We merged the election results for each precinct with the percentage of voters who were either Latino, Asian American, or Armenian American, by using a surname database, as per the procedures of the UC Berkeley Statewide Database, of the Institute Governmental Studies, at the University of California. All data are from public domains and can be replicated upon request.

Across the elections we analyzed, we find strong, and statistically significant evidence of racially polarized voting in 27 of 30 elections. In almost every case we examined, Latino voters demonstrated very high levels of group cohesion in support of Latino candidates, however these same Latino candidates received very low levels of support from non-Latinos, and especially low levels of support from non-Armenian Whites. Because Latinos represent a minority of all voters in Glendale, the degree of racial bloc voting is mathematically prohibitive to Latino "candidates of choice" being elected. Among Armenians, we also find strong evidence of group cohesion in favor of Armenian candidates and far lower levels of support from non-Armenian Whites. However, because Armenians represent a much larger share of all voters than Latinos, the existence of racially polarized voting is not as costly to Armenian candidates, however in some cases it still does cause Armenian candidates to lose office when running at-large.

In the absence of district-based elections, the election data we analyzed provides quite clear evidence that Latinos face considerable racial bloc voting which greatly diminishes their chances to win representation in Glendale.