The Perceptions Held by South Asian American Youth When Facing Ethnic Homophily Practices in Voting

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ABSTRACT

Throughout this ethnographically oriented study, I explore the phenomenon of ethnic homophily in the context of voting behavior for South Asian Americans in the United States. Ethnic homophily, within the context of the study, is analyzed as having a preference towards candidates of a similar ethnic background, and being drawn in through the cultural and ethnic representation in American politics. Situated within the United States, South Asian American youth ages 18-27 are analyzed under this study, and a number of different factors are analyzed. Ultimately, the extent to which ethnic homophily impacts a voter's behavior, the limitations to its presence, and the contexts in which it is emphasized are all explored within my study. A mixed-methods analysis was utilized with correlation coefficients, and a superarching thematic analysis, being the ultimate result. Ethnic homophily, as the study results qualify, often impacts individuals by exacerbating struggles with cultural identity, creating isolating voting experiences, and misconstruing the sentiments of feeling represented. The limitations of ethnic homophily within South Asian American voters was ultimately found to only exist as a secondary factor to political propositions of candidates, and the contexts in which it is emphasized are within familial pressures, conforming to cultural norms, and begetting cultural representation for legislative processes.

Introduction

The process of voting has been, throughout the vast history of democratic institutions, one of the most important mechanisms by which citizens can voice dissidence, as well as acceptance (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2019; Whelan, 2020). For minority groups in any given context, it's an avenue for change and representation. In a multicultural nation like the United States, minority voters have systematically faced barriers to voting, but amidst this exigence, engagement and involvement in the voting process has only continued to rise in recent decades, a phenomenon that calls for greater study into this area (Morris, Grange, 2024; Luscombe, 2024; Vu, 2024). South Asian Americans, to specify, have become a growing force within political spheres, where in general, Asian American voting has exponentially increased, a phenomenon with effects such as the Kamala Harris Effect, an occurrence where more figures from the South Asian diaspora have been emerging as a result of greater voter engagement, coming to fruition (Budiman et al., 2024; Prezioso, 2024). This growing demographic of South Asian Americans has become more politically involved on all sides of the political spectrum, from leadership roles to grassroots organization (LaFleur, 2022). A new era of "action begetting representation" has thus ensued, not only within the South Asian diaspora, but other ethnic groups as well, a cycle that has continued to pervade into the status quo (Astor, Cowan, 2023).

The idea of "representation" for these groups often differs between individuals, but an understanding of how many of these lawmakers and politicians are elected to their respective positions provides insight into the values and metrics utilized to measure the extent of this dynamic (Melillo, 2023). In an ever-polarizing American society, understanding the patterns and perceptions of minority groups seeking representation is highly important to contextualize, particularly the factors which influence decisions and voting behavior.

Literature Review

The Formation of Youth Attitudes and Preferences When Voting

As the study is specifically situated within the context of a younger voting population, it is key to understand the process of the formation of voting understanding, action, and affinities towards certain demographic features, such as ethnicity (and thus, ethnically homophile practices). Currently, the research climate for political research fails to address the factors impacting the decisions of a growing younger voting population, a principle which will be further explored in the Research Gap section of this paper.

Social media has been extensively studied as one of the largest contributors in impacting youth political opinion and understanding (Foster, Markiewicz, 2023). Beyond the usage of social media by political parties, much of the setting revolving youth explorations in political science research is centered around the formation of political affinities and opinions. One of the largest contributors, unsurprisingly, is household opinions, something many youth are often forced to conform to, from young ages; almost subliminally, these opinions can be traced back to a number of different impacts, such as future voting behavior (Weiss, 2020). These political opinions, formed in the household, most notably impact the ideals of "youth civic engagement"; while it may be limited due to an inability to vote, civic engagement has soared in recent years, particularly as a result of social reform movements that have been led by Generation Z themselves.

Public Perceptions of Political Personalities

The public image of a candidate for a political position has showcased a number of ramifications within the voting behaviors of individuals. Within this study, the public image of a candidate is evaluated in the context of ethnic representation and is further explored through themes revolving around personal interpretation of these images, which can differ based on individual understanding of a political platform (Mishra, 2021).

Ethnic Homophilization/ Ethnic Biases

The ethnic origins of a candidate and political platform showcase impacts and influences within politics in a number of different facets, a fact that has become a defining trademark of politics in the 21st century (Paul, 2020). Within politics, two main influences of race are seen: 1. the preference for a certain candidate or policy in the name of diversity, equity, and inclusion tactics, and 2. the impact of racial cues and interlocked, woven cues that impact voter decisions, which have become the crux of voting behavior research (LaFleur, 2022).

Racial homophily has been explored in a number of international and domestic contexts, but none have been tailored to address the South Asian American demographic. Foremostly, research in Ghana situated much of the status quo's understanding of the impacts of racial homophily in voting (Yalley, 2017). As Yalley writes, much of the phenomenon of racial homophily is more intricately woven into voting behaviors (Yalley, 2017). Even though all of the participants within the Ghanian elections were considered "Ghanian", ethnic and tribal origins were one of the largest determinants when voters decide which candidate to cast a ballot for (Yalley, 2017). Ultimately, phenomenon has most notably been explored in regions that are ethnically and racially homogenous, a pattern is extended furthermore into a Croatian setting, where after ethnic conflicts in the region, ethnic homophily became a sole determinant of the outcome of different political candidates, (Glaurdic, Mochtak, et al., 2023). Both of these situations, though, illustrate international settings, and while they indicate some general patterns, they don't address the extremely diverse melting pot that is the United States.

One study, to date, has come close to this large feat though, through the explorations of the Hispanic/Latinx demographic, and the perceptions and behaviors held by this group conducted by Baretto (2010), which found that the

impacts of homophile voting have showcased greater Latino participation in politics, as well as fostered kinship alliances between marginalized communities (Barreto, 2010).

Research Gap

The primary gap that this paper attempts to answer and address is the impacts of certain factors on the formation of perspectives, and what the outcomes of those perspectives are. Political science research in the status quo has only explored ethnic homophily as a singular phenomenon independent of influence from other factors (Manzano, et al, 2009). This study actively attempts to explore the issue of ethnic homophily in relation to other factors, from familial pressures, to the bicultural identities South Asian Americans often have to form.

Secondly, the paper attempts to bridge a lack of research geared towards South Asian Americans. 5.4 million South Asians currently reside within the United States, and research within the field of political science and sociology fail to address a number of factors that impact the voting behaviors of this extensively large minority faction (SAALT, n.d.). This proves to be a significantly large gap within the current foreground of academic research, principally due to a lack of initiative. This gap needs to be addressed particularly as South Asian Americans are a group of swing voters for both the Democratic and Republican parties, an issue that must be addressed prior to upcoming, as of the time this paper was written, 2024 Presidential Elections within the United States (Shah, 2023).

Within this expansive group of South Asian Americans, this research explored youth aged 14-25. In a broader perspective, this study looked into the youth formation of political perspectives. This currently continues to be a lacking area of research, where no active studies have explored the direct factors which contribute to the formation of political affiliations for youth. As a growing population, a dire need exists for the purpose of exploring this group, particularly as ongoing national debates regarding voting age continue to thrive (Wagner, Johann, et al., 2012).

Initial Assumptions

A hypothesis this paper is developed upon is the idea of racial homophily/affinity, and its pervasiveness within voting behavior. As presumed by a number of different studies, achieving ethnic homophily through representation continues is a subliminal, often unrecognized, reactionary determinant for the voting behaviors of different minority groups (Manzano, Sanches, et al., 2009; Coufalova, Mikula, et al., 2023; Goodyear-Grant, 2017). Under such a precedent, this study presumes a similar outcome within the study: that within this younger South Asian demographic, race will still play a determining role within the casting of a ballot for a candidate. Age has also previously played a factor, as once assured by the aforementioned studies, a contributing reason to why those aged 18-36, or voting and "in-the-near-future" voters are a specified population.

Methods

Mixed Methodology Justifications

Mixed methodology research within the fields of sociology proves to be one of the most up and coming forms of research that provide dynamic results (Nguyen, Park, 2023). While the industry norm, according to Dr. Michael Tesler (2017), is the utilization of qualitative, person-centered research, analyzing minority groups involved in governmental institutions often requires more comprehensive approaches, a principle ability which would be achieved through the usage of mixed methodologies. Utilizing this combination helps reinforce both general trends and individual perceptions that can assist in developing theories applicable to a larger demographic (Stephens-Dougan, 2021). Furthermore, in the event of voting, having a combination of the both proves to be more effective as they create a more comprehensive approach that can better mitigate personal, racial, or political biases (Stephens-Dougan, 2021). Analyzing this

much data, while a hefty task, helps solidify the different perspectives that can arise in both individual and group settings, while eliminating anomalies of research, and biases, through the survey.

Data Collection 1: Quantitative Surveys

To illustrate generally representative statistics, surveys were administered to participants within my study. The importance of utilizing survey methods was to gauge a wide range of individuals and their perceptions from different political perspectives. The survey method aligned itself with field-specific standards of ethnographic research. More specifically, I utilized survey methods to provide a foundation, and reaffirming support for the themes that I discovered within my thematic analysis of the qualitative data. Such a practice is commonplace in the mixed methodologies research studies of sociology, where qualitative data, along with "anecdotal evidence values can provide better understanding of dynamics" (Ho, 2021). Participants will answer preliminary questions that align themselves in accordance with a political party, and then introduce different themes within the study which will be further explored within the interviews and focus groups. But, most notably, the purpose of administering a survey, in addition to other methods, was to illustrate some baselines of analysis, which could be predictive of later responses.

Survey methods were also essential for me to utilize as an important factor to mitigate party alliances and affiliation biases individuals within my study had. Previous research from Weiss (2020) has illustrated that party alliances often prove to be the most pervasive determinant in an individual's voting behavior. While this phenomenon cannot be completely mitigated unless it is an individual component of a study, such as the utilization of BIAT and AMP tests, Weiss furthers, I mitigated it through the usage of party selectors implemented within the surveys, which are specific criteria that are individually decided by a voter of what political party one aligns themself with (Weiss, 2020; Trappen, Singrid, 2023). Questions also included as neutral language as possible, such as the one seen in *Image 1.1* where were used within the study, to help manage the impacts of these issues.
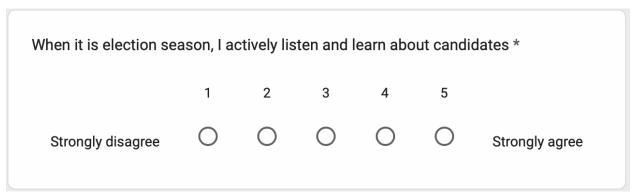

When it is election season, I actively listen and learn about candidates *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

Image 1.1

Factor analysis can also be better achieved under the survey method. Factor analysis, which is the exploration of certain influences on phenomenon, are essential to explore within this study. Through a set baseline, pressing issues such as perceived racism and the impact of stereotypes against one's own race are best mitigated under the survey style method (Trappen, Singrid, 2023). These surveys were distributed on a number of platforms, from social media mediums like Instagram and Facebook, as well as through the online databases of South-Asian centered organizations such as Indian American Impact, and South Asians for America. An intended goal of the preferable number of surveys needed was around 50 responses, a number which according to Morgan, is dependent on the researcher's individual and personal capabilities in the context of mixed-methods research (Morgan, 2014).

Data Collection 2: Semi-Structured Interviews

Ethnographic methods lie at the core of political science research, and thus, more adaptive methods to account for cultural exchange and dynamics need to be adopted. Semi-structured interviews are a method in which participants are asked thematic questions, which are followed by additional questions which allow for more in-depth involvement (Schatz, 2004). This was implemented within the study for the sole purpose of its adaptive nature, which is highly needed when unique political perceptions are introduced within research.

Moreover, though, these semi-structured interviews helped gauge individual perspectives and were conducted in a manner that was better suited for political science research. Questions regarding hypothetical situations were utilized to specifically target the opinions, and record the perceptions and perspectives of South Asian Americans. Doing so helped ensure some common themes can be found in an efficient manner, and such questions were asked in a nonpartisan, unbiased manner, often relating to the subject matters of individual perceptions, and expansions on the subject matters directly discussed by the candidates.

Data Analysis 1: Pearson's Coefficient

The nature of the quantitative method was solely to serve as a statistical basis, and supporting pillar to the thematic analysis found through the quantitative data analysis. Under this pretense, it was essential to evaluate the survey results under a correlative manner, seeing how two or more variables represented through the Likert scale questions were understood to be related, or unrelated. Pearson's Coefficient, which summarizes the strength levels between two variables on a scale of -1 (the strongest negative correlation), and +1 (the strongest positive correlation; p = 0 means that there is a nonexistent correlation between the variables (Laerd Statistics, 2018). A linear relationship between the variables, if present, was analyzed, which worked best to accommodate the nature of the Likert-scale type questions of the survey that assigned values to each of the different responses (Laerd Statistics, 2018).

IBM-SPSS was the online application utilized for this data to conduct analysis, as it specializes in calculating correlation coefficients and understanding linear relations between variables; as an online application, certain values had to be inputted (Levin, Devitt, 2008). Values between 1, which signaled strongly disagree with the statement, to 5, which meant strongly agree with the statement, were inputted as table values. The coefficient equation was used, and all survey responses were analyzed, with incomplete survey responses being removed in the data cleaning process. After, a coefficient number was produced, as well as a 2-tailed significance correlation figure, which is a p-value that indicates the significance of the data, and analyzes the critical areas of the data set (Brody, 2012).

Data Analysis 2: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to find common themes between participants, with the process of thematic analysis showcasing recurring perceptions that were seen within South Asian American youth (Penney, 2021). Thematic analysis was divided into three separate phases. Survey data was filtered and used to establish certain correlations between participants. Those who have indicated clear party biases, as per the selectors placed within the survey, were filtered out of the research results. The secondary phase involved the analysis of the transcriptions from the interviews and focus groups. Within this phase, common themes found among the interviews were examined and noted down. The third, and final section of the thematic analysis was to group the common perspectives, as per the discretion of the researcher, into common themes that will emerge as a result of the research. These themes will explore the ideals of "shared perspectives".

Thematic analysis was conducted as the most efficient and all-encompassing method to categorize the different perspectives that are being communicated by the participants. Thematic analysis proved to be the most competent form as it helped explore directly *why* an individual may feel ethnic homophily impacts their decision more compared to proposed policies, or vice versa. Analyzing the impacts of these factors, and their correlation to the

perspectives shared by South Asian Americans proved to be an important aspect of research, which could only be dissected by understanding common themes in the opinions held by this research demographic.

Boundaries, Definitions, and Selection of Participants

The comprehensive nature of this study had called for certain boundaries and baseline definitions to be established, which were key to developing the understanding necessary for my study. Ethnic homophily is thus defined as a "favoring or affiliation" towards those with a similar ethnic background, and is a definition that lies at the foundation of this study (Kendall, 2023; Logan, Darrah, Oh, 2018). Additionally, an important boundary of this study is in relation to participants within the study. Data was only analyzed from participants from the following ethnic and cultural identities: "Indian" (including Sindhi, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Tamil groups), Sri Lankan groups (including Malay, Moor, Tamil, and Sinhala), groups from Bangladesh (Bengali ethnicity), Nepalese ethnicities (Tamang, Rai, Limbu, and Bhutia), groups originated in Afghanistan (including Hazras, Pashtuns, Aimaqs, Tajiks, etc.), and Dhivehin groups of the Maldives (South Asian Concern, 2022). Participants were limited to those below the age of 27, as these were considered participants within *Generation Z*, and were limited to those residing, or born in, the United States (Debczak, 2024). An analysis of where these participants ranged from will be mentioned within the Findings section. Additionally, an important point of notice for this study is that, in an effort to remain as neutral and nonpartisan as possible, there will be no assumptions/discussions relating to political parties that candidates are affiliated with, and more importantly, no assumption that individuals will have "negative" attitudes towards ethnically homophile practices in voting.

Findings

7 separate themes were the principal result of the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews. These were derived from analyzing the transcripts of the interviews, and include definitions that are encompassing of participant experiences, as seen in Table 1. Each participant in the study was required to complete a survey, and for interviews, random selection was utilized to select candidates. Each candidate was assigned a number, and then 12 candidates were ultimately selected through a random number generator (Martinez-Mesa, 2016; Morgan, 2014).

Table 1: Themes & Definitions

Theme #	General Theme	Definition
1	Struggles With Bicultural Identity	Familial pressures and meeting cultural norms of voting behavior (voting one candidate consistently); having to separate opinions in the household, and in public
2	Cultural Representation	Voting for candidates of similar backgrounds will create greater understanding in policy formation
3	Feelings	NOT VOTING can lead to cultural loss, better to listen to elders and VOTE in a certain way
4	Isolation	Fear of being socially marginalized if found out not voting in a certain manner

Theme #	General Theme	Definition
5	Mobilization	Wanting to participate in politics/vote more if seeing candidates of similar backgrounds
6	Information Sources	Talking to family members, getting information from ethnic news sources, to find out more about politicians
7	Policy, Then Ethnicity	Public image, policy proposals, and mannerisms of candidates typically are more personally valued, before considering the ethnicity of individuals

The above table summarizes and provides the baseline definitions for the themes that I analyzed from the quantitative and qualitative data forms. Themes that are highlighted in *dark gray* are solely based off of the thematic analysis from the semi-structured interviews, while the themes highlighted in *light gray* are based on trends found from both the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews, and the correlation coefficients found through analysis of the survey responses.

Further quantification of these themes is seen in the Results section, with the anecdotal evidence that qualifies the themes.

Results from the surveys were analyzed for all participants, including those who were not selected to conduct an interview. Table 3 showcases the 3 themes that had a statistical substantiation to them, as well as their respective correlation coefficients (Pearson Correlation/Correlation Coefficient) and significance correlations [Sig. (2-tailed)] as well. Themes 5 and 6 both refer to one statistical correlation, but have unique characteristics that are later explored in the Results section.

Table 2: Statistical Evidence for Themes

Theme	Statistical Data
3: Feelings	**Correlations**
			Representation_Importance	Feeling_Represented
	Representation_Importance	Pearson Correlation	1	−.012
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.04
		N	59	59
	Feeling_Represented	Pearson Correlation	−.012	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.04	
		N	59	59
5 & 6: Mobilization, Information Sources	**Correlations**
			News	Learning_Candidates
	News	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	−.016
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.907
		N	59	59
	Learning_Candidates	Correlation Coefficient	−.016	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.907	.
		N	59	59

From 63 total survey responses, 59 candidates fully qualified for data analysis, as the remaining were cleaned out as their surveys were either not fully complete, or inaccurately completed. Table 4 showcases the 12 participants who were selected to have a semi-structured interview, all numbered 1-12, and a color-coded reference as to which themes each of them displayed.

Table 3: Color-coded chart for participants and theme presence

PID #	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	Theme 7
1	green	green	green	pink	green	pink	green
2	pink	green	green	pink	pink	green	pink
3	green	green	pink	green	pink	green	green
4	green	green	pink	green	pink	green	green
5	green	pink	green	green	pink	pink	pink
6	green	green	green	pink	green	green	pink
7	pink	green	green	green	pink	green	green
8	green	pink	green	pink	green	pink	green
9	green	green	green	pink	pink	green	green
10	pink	pink	pink	green	green	green	green
11	green	green	green	green	pink	green	pink
12	pink	pink	green	green	pink	green	green

Results

The findings of the conducted study unearthed two key principles: 1. Younger generations are not *extensively* tied to the phenomenon of racial homophily, and value political propositions over this metric in nearly every instance, and 2. A range of factors impact whether ethnically homophile practices are acted upon, even if an individual does not feel intrinsically compelled to act in this manner. Each of the 7 themes, explored in-depth, are located below.

Theme 1: Struggling with the Bicultural Identity

Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 all expressed their own perceptions of having to face two realities that often create struggles in relation to ethnic homophily, and how often "two personalities", according to Participant 5, would often have to be created. Kohli (2023) expands on this struggle for minority communities, not in the context of voting behavior, and how oftentimes, in multicultural communities, individuals find themselves at the dichotomy of two personalities, one that is often pleasing to the "popular culture, and another for the ethnic culture". My study reaffirms this trend, but more importantly, finds it in the context of voting behavior. Participant 11 elaborates on this common experience, saying,

"At school and around my friends, it's like I can actually live my like true political beliefs. But, at home, it's a lot more 'Oh, I have to be what the Sri Lankan culture is' even if I don't agree with it. Just so I can avoid getting into arguments with my parents."

Developing, or in this scenario, hiding a political opinion and publically submitting to a pressurized one, has been used by participants like 11 to avoid conflict, and thus, advance the process of ethnic homophily.

Theme 2: Cultural Representation

Participant 3 explicitly describes a general trend among many participants, which reaffirms previous research from LaFleur, of championing ethnic homophily as a way to ensure cultural representation for policy-making decisions (Participant 5; LaFleur, 2022): "Voting for an Afghani individual like myself means that I can have legislation made for me!"

Reaffirming this principle was key in developing greater understanding, as it showcases an extent to which ethnic homophily is used by the South Asian community. This plays into dynamics of survival, and ensuring a longevity of the respective cultural and ethnic group of which minority voters belong to, a factor which previous research has also concluded is a catalyst for voting behavior, and action (Clayton, 2022).

Theme 3: Feelings of Association

One of the preliminary themes found to have a statistical significance to it was based on how represented a participant felt within the American political system. A Pearson Correlation number of -0.012 was found to exist, which indicates a slightly significant, negative correlation between two variables: "Representation_Importance" which represents questions related to the significance of achieving representation, and "Feeling_Represented" the variable representing how sentiments of perceived representation impact action. Participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12 showcased this prevalent theme, and Participant 8 illustrates the exactness to which this reaction occured, describing the following:

"Representation, sure, is kinda important. But, I don't think it necessarily affects the way I vote for someone. Like if I like the way you are talking about things as a candidate, I might vote for you, but I won't vote for you just because representation is important."

The Pearson Correlation number of -0.0012 indicates a negative correlation, meaning that the perceived significance of achieving representation is inversely proportional to the likelihood that an individual will act out of this desperation. An important distinction between this theme, and Theme 2, of acting out of a desire for cultural representation, is that participants themselves who were in support of cultural representation argued for it in terms of the policies a potential candidate would enact (Participant 9), rather than the individual demographic factors of a candidate (Participant 7), which is what this theme is in reference to.

Theme 4: Isolation in Voting

Struggles of the bicultural identity, which were explored in Theme 1, are further expanded upon through a unique circumstance faced by South Asian American youth: isolation, in comparison to other age groups of South Asians. A paradox is often created, that goes hand in hand with the bicultural identity, where not submitting to ethnically homophile practices championed by elders often results in isolating experiences when voting, as best illustrated through the experiences of Participant 12:

"My parents told me to vote for [REDACTED], but I had to lie to them to vote for [REDACTED] at the polls because it didn't sit right with me."

This unique perspective must be differentiated with the bicultural identity, because rather than showcasing a limitation of the pervasiveness of ethnic homophily, it showcases an impact that the dynamic can have on younger voters, which is unlike the boundary that Theme 1 attempts to draw.

Theme 5 + 6: Mobilization; Information Sources Impact Decisions

A stronger negative correlation is seen between the variables of engagement with media, and the extent to which an understanding of what a candidate's cultural background could be. What this theme essentially translates to is that no matter how engaged an individual is with a source of media, the extent to which representation is portrayed is conversely affected, as seen with the coefficient number of -0.016. This is also expanded upon in terms of Theme 5, which discusses mobilization, as the levels of participation were negatively, not positively, correlated with the amount of understanding of an individual. Participant 6 expands upon both of these idea:

"I knew less about [REDACTED] from Asianet News than I did from my family. They basically reported him as this kind of national treasure 'cause he was Indian, but my family said he wasn't that good. I didn't feel like participating because I was hearing so many different things."

Previous research has relied on the notion that the sources of media an individual consumes impacts the extent to which ethnic homophily can prevade itself, but what Participants 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 showcased are that these sources don't affect homophile actions to the extent previously thought of (Badrinathan, 2020).

Theme 7: Policy Propositions Over Ethnic Background

This theme provides a crucial understanding of what many of the participants expressed, which is that the policies a candidate champions will be one of, if not the most important factors in deciding the manner in which voting occurs (Participants 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12). This showcases a trend from previous research, of Generation Z being socially aware and more responsive to the informational characteristics of politics rather than the demographic ones (Fitzgerald, 2019; Goodyear-Grant, 2017). Participant 4 best illustrates this belief:

"I couldn't care less about who you are, where you are from, and why you are representative of this and this. I am just more interested in what you are actually advocating for."

Valuing the political propositions of an ethnic candidate proves to be an extensive barrier to the pervasiveness of ethnic homophily in this younger voting generation. This refutes much of the previous understanding of ethnic homophily, where in Croatia, it proved to be the most important factor in impacting voting during an election period (Glaurdic, 2023).

Limitations, Conclusions, Future Directions

Limitations

Any form of research expands upon previous knowledge, and supports the development of a field of study. But, no matter the extensiveness of data collection and interpretation, limitations exist in the data study. Most obviously, a

researcher bias and affirmation bias may be present within this data, and the interpretation of the thematic analysis; party affiliation biases from candidates could have still been present as well, even with the many mitigating factors I implemented. Within this study, another limitation also lies within the population demographic; a majority of respondents, 54% to quantify, were cited as individuals stemming from an Indian-American origin, which means this study is not representative of *all* South Asian American groups. This demographic feature of the survey participants means that more marginalized South Asian ethnicities which are nuanced in their political activity, such as Dhivehin groups, are not as well represented, and thus, generalizing the results from this study to these groups can be harmful. Beyond this, as with any given research study, a sample size such as this is not as representative as possible, but with more survey results and continued expansion of the study, as well as longer semi-structured interviews, more data can be analyzed and understood in relation to these cultural dynamics.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this study, I hypothesized that the manner at which ethnic homophily manifests itself into South Asian American youth would continue to pervade as previous trends had shown, meaning that it would be one of the most important determinants for voting behavior. But, through my data analysis, I discovered that the extent to which it affects behavior is not as expansive within the South Asian American community, specifically as limitations exist to submitting to cultural identity struggles, information gathering abilities, and paradoxes between familial disapproval and intrinsic content exist.

Theme 1 showcases an impact of ethnic homophily within this voting group, showing how the pervasiveness of this issue can lead to perspectives of struggling with pleasing familial/cultural expectations and identities, while also facing issues with fulfilling one's own political affiliations and personal intents. Theme 2 reaffirms the extent to which ethnic homophily is used by a minority community like South Asians, describing how it is seen as an avenue to ensure that legislative processes accommodate for the cultural and ethnic desires, and representation of South Asians, an experience a majority of participants had. With a negative statistical significance, Theme 3 showcased illustrated that "feeling represented" is not correlated with actually prioritizing representation, and that ultimately, just because an individual prioritizes representation, that they actively feel represented, which is ultimately a limiting factor in how ethnic homophily is carried out. 4, 5, 6, showcase limits to ethnic homophily as well, while 7 showcases the ultimate restriction to its pervasiveness: that policy, and political propositions and campaigns, will continue to be the most important factor in the voting behaviors of this minority group.

The study itself confirms the existence of ethnic homophily, but more importantly, showcases how older generations continue to hold onto these ideals, and younger generations deviate from these, in a multicultural setting like the United States (Branton, 2022; ICPSR University of Michigan, 1998). The implications of this study are myriad, from impacting the manners in which identity politics for South Asians expands itself into the future, to showcasing the extent to which greater action and methods can be taken by political campaigns to appeal to these voters who have moved beyond the cultural representation elder age groups had once familiarized themselves with (LaFleur, 2022; Van Trappen, 2023).

Future studies based off of this should, most notably, conduct greater analysis into the ethnic groups who were not well accounted into this study, and explore more pervasively the extent to which familial pressures impact voting behaviors. While this issue was not expressly explored within the study, the recurrence of this being mentioned shows a potential correlative trend in voting behavior. Beyond this, the greater understanding begotten by this study of ethnic homophily showcases how in an ever-changing, globalized community, representation of marginalized groups continues to be ever-so important, and pervasive. Understanding this key principle can imply greater democratic involvement, that proves of a great essence.

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