

10-2018


## Research Note: Have Puerto Ricans Experienced Increased Voter Registration Rates in Florida Since the November 2016 Presidential Election?

Laird W. Bergad

*Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies*

### How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/clacLS\\_pubs](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/clacLS_pubs)

 Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), [Demography, Population, and Ecology Commons](#), [Latin American Studies Commons](#), and the [Politics and Social Change Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Bergad, Laird W. (2018). Research Note: Have Puerto Ricans Experienced Increased Voter Registration Rates in Florida Since the November 2016 Presidential Election? New York, NY: Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center.

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Centers & Institutes at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact [AcademicWorks@cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicWorks@cuny.edu).



THE  
GRADUATE  
CENTER



CITY UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW YORK

## Research Note:

# Have Puerto Ricans Experienced Increased Voter Registration Rates in Florida Since the November 2016 Presidential Election?

Laird W. Bergad

Distinguished Professor

Department of Latin American and

Latino Studies

Lehman College

Ph.D. Program in History

Graduate Center

City University of New York

Director, Center for Latin American, Caribbean,  
and Latino Studies

Center for Latin American,  
Caribbean, and Latino Studies

Graduate Center  
City University of New York  
365 Fifth Avenue  
Room 5419  
New York, New York 10016

212-817-8438

[clacls@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:clacls@gc.cuny.edu)

<http://clacls.gc.cuny.edu/>

The Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies is a research institute that works for the advancement of the study of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States in the doctoral programs at the CUNY Graduate Center. One of its major priorities is to provide funding and research opportunities to Latino students at the Ph.D. level.

The Center established and helps administer an interdisciplinary specialization in Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies in the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies program.

The Latino Data Project was developed with the goal of making information available on the dynamically growing Latino population of the United States and especially New York City through the analysis of extant data available from a variety of sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Institute for Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and state and local-level data sources.

All Latino Data Project reports are available at <http://clacls.gc.cuny.edu>

For additional information you may contact the Center at 212-817-8438 or by e-mail at [clacls@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:clacls@gc.cuny.edu).

Staff:

Laird W. Bergad, Distinguished Professor, Department of Latin American, Latino and Puerto Rican Studies, Lehman College, Ph.D. Program in History, Executive Director, CLACLS

Victoria Stone-Cadena, Associate Director

Karen Okigbo, Administrative Director

Sebastián Villamizar-Santamaría, Director of Quantitative Research

Rafael Davis Portela, Research Associate

Andreina Torres Angarita, Events Coordinator

Copyright @ 2018  
Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies  
Room 5419  
Graduate Center  
City University of New York  
365 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10016  
212-817-8438  
[clacls@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:clacls@gc.cuny.edu)  
<http://clacls.gc.cuny.edu/>

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

There are no specific data on registered voters by national origins for the state of Florida. However, the Florida Department of State publishes data on the number of registered voters by race/ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it is possible to examine increases in Hispanic voter registration by county for the state between the closing date for voter registration for the November 2016 presidential election of October 18, 2016 and the latest published data for July 30, 2018. (See Map 1).

Demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau permit an examination of Puerto Rican population growth rates by county between 2010 and 2017. It is unfortunate that these data do not include the arrival of Puerto Ricans to Florida after Hurricane María. Nevertheless, the statistical data seem to indicate that in particular Florida counties' Puerto Rican population growth may have been related to an increase in Hispanic voter registration rates since the November 2016 presidential elections. However, in these same counties there were increases in all Hispanics, and in fact there was a closer statistical correlation between the increase in the number of all Latinos and increases in Hispanic voter registration rates.

A multiple R analysis comparing the percentage of Puerto Rican population increase between 2010 and 2017 the 16 Florida counties with the largest concentrations of Puerto Ricans indicated in Map 1, and the percentage increase in the number of Hispanic voters in these same counties, yielded a correlation coefficient of .50. This suggests a positive relationship between the increase in the Puerto Rican population and the increase in registered Hispanic voters.

The same multiple R analysis was run on the percentage population increase among Puerto Ricans between 2015 and 2017 in these same counties and Hispanic voter registration increases. This yielded a slightly higher correlation coefficient of .56, also suggestive of a positive correlation.

This same multiple R analysis was run on the increase in the number of all Hispanics in these same 16 counties and the increase in Hispanic voter registration. Between 2010 and 2017 there was absolutely no statistical correlation between the two as a correlation coefficient of .07 resulted.

However, when this exact multiple R analysis was run on the percentage increase among all Hispanics and the percentage increase in the number of Hispanic registered voters between 2015 and 2017 a correlation coefficient of .86 resulted. This is fairly conclusive evidence that increases in the number of Latinos after 2015 in these 16 counties was connected to increases in Hispanic voter registration.

Yet, it must be reiterated that Puerto Rican population increase was in fact part of overall Hispanic population growth in these counties and may have influenced the rise in voter registration rates among Hispanics. The percentage of Latinos who were Puerto Ricans in each of these 16 counties in 2017 was compared with the increase in Hispanic voter registration and a correlation coefficient of .48 resulted. This indicates a probable connection although it was not impressively strong. See tables 1 and 2 for these data.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Florida Department of State, Division of Elections, Voter Registration Reports.

Map 1  
Florida Counties with Largest Puerto Rican Populations, 2017

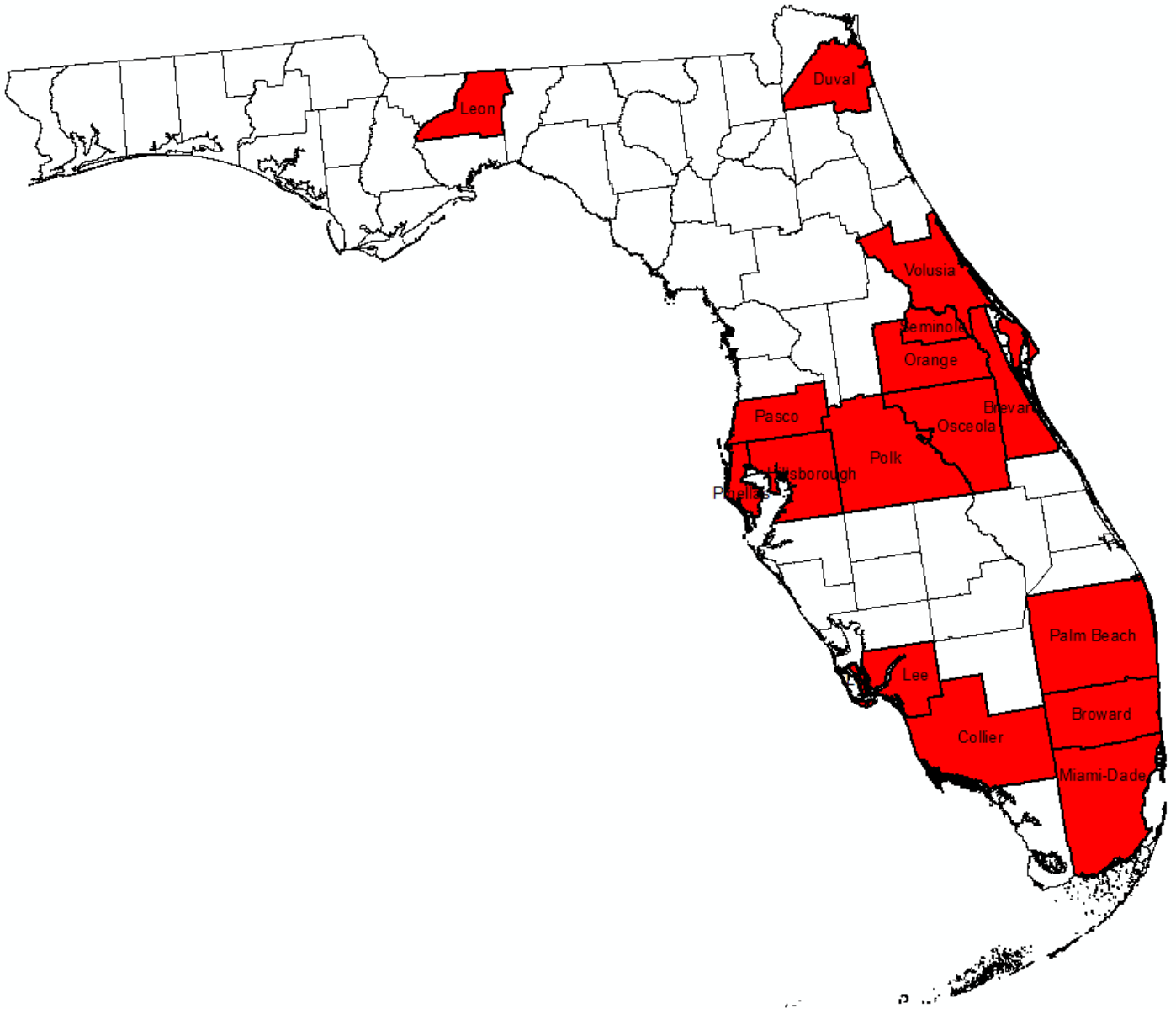


Table 1  
 Puerto Rican Population of Florida by Largest Counties of Residence in 2017  
 Increase in Hispanic Voter Registration between October 18, 2016 and July 30, 2018  
 and Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship between Puerto Rican Population Growth Rates and  
 Increase in Registered Hispanic Voters

|                     | Puerto Rican Population |         |           | Growth<br>2010-17 in<br>% | Growth<br>2015-17 in<br>% | % Increase<br>in<br>Registered<br>Hispanic<br>Voters | % Latinos<br>who<br>were<br>Puerto<br>Rican<br>2017 |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
|                     | 2010                    | 2015    | 2017      |                           |                           |  |   |
| Orange County       | 139,181                 | 173,512 | 194,754   | 39.9%                     | 12.2%                     | 4.7%   | 46.0%   |
| Hillsborough County | 86,303                  | 103,138 | 126,875   | 47.0%                     | 23.0%                     | 2.4%   | 31.5%   |
| Osceola County      | 64,654                  | 87,045  | 101,359   | 56.8%                     | 16.4%                     | 12.0%  | 53.6%   |
| Miami-Dade County   | 100,169                 | 103,468 | 93,190    | -7.0%                     | -9.9%                     | 2.3%   | 4.9%  |
| Broward County      | 72,074                  | 82,873  | 81,157    | 12.6%                     | -2.1%                     | 2.9%   | 14.1%   |
| Polk County         | 31,379                  | 42,114  | 62,302    | 98.5%                     | 47.9%                     | 13.6%  | 40.7%   |
| Seminole County     | 29,725                  | 40,084  | 55,171    | 85.6%                     | 37.6%                     | 7.0%   | 55.8%   |
| Palm Beach County   | 35,443                  | 43,390  | 48,754    | 37.6%                     | 12.4%                     | 7.6%   | 14.9%   |
| Volusia County      | 24,253                  | 29,370  | 34,337    | 41.6%                     | 16.9%                     | 11.0%  | 46.0%   |
| Pasco County        | 16,702                  | 24,662  | 32,827    | 96.5%                     | 33.1%                     | 12.9%  | 41.3%   |
| Lee County          | 22,060                  | 28,956  | 29,595    | 34.2%                     | 2.2%                      | 10.2%  | 18.9%   |
| Duval County        | 18,457                  | 24,442  | 26,129    | 41.6%                     | 6.9%                      | 8.0%   | 28.9%   |
| Brevard County      | 16,520                  | 21,067  | 22,914    | 38.7%                     | 8.8%                      | 7.3%   | 37.4%   |
| Pinellas County     | 20,275                  | 24,652  | 22,116    | 9.1%                      | -10.3%                    | 7.4%   | 23.5%   |
| Collier County      | 5,894                   | 7,483   | 6,046     | 2.6%                      | -19.2%                    | 7.5%   | 5.8%  |
| Leon County         | 2,294                   | 4,203   | 3,703     | 61.4%                     | -11.9%                    | 1.1%   | 19.8%   |
| Others              | 107,569                 | 137,536 | 186,996   | 73.8%                     | 36.0%                     | --   | 29.4%   |
| State of Florida    | 792,952                 | 977,995 | 1,128,225 | 42.3%                     | 15.4%                     | 5.1%   | 21.0%   |

| Correlation Coefficients/Multiple Regression  |     |
|---|-----|
| Population Growth 2010-17 and Increase in Registered Hispanic Voters                  | .50 |
| Population Growth 2015-17 and Increase in Registered Hispanic Voters                  | .56 |
| Percentage of Latinos who are Puerto Rican and Increase in Registered Hispanic Voters | .48 |

Table 2  
 Hispanic Population of Florida by Largest Counties of Residence in 2017  
 Increase in Hispanic Voter Registration between October 18, 2016 and July 30, 2018  
 and Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship between Hispanic Population Growth Rates and  
 Increase in Registered Hispanic Voters

|                     | Hispanic Population |           |           | Growth<br>2010-17 in<br>% | Growth<br>2015-17 in<br>% | % Increase<br>in<br>Registered<br>Hispanic<br>Voters |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
|                     | 2010                | 2015      | 2017      |                           |                           |  |
| Miami-Dade County   | 1,565,410           | 1,731,733 | 1,887,266 | 20.6%                     | 9.0%                      | 2.3%   |
| Broward County      | 415,627             | 496,991   | 574,026   | 38.1%                     | 15.5%                     | 2.9%   |
| Orange County       | 287,760             | 352,927   | 423,707   | 47.2%                     | 20.1%                     | 4.7%   |
| Hillsborough County | 286,394             | 339,540   | 402,798   | 40.6%                     | 18.6%                     | 2.4%   |
| Palm Beach County   | 233,557             | 280,872   | 328,182   | 40.5%                     | 16.8%                     | 7.6%   |
| Osceola County      | 112,439             | 147,382   | 189,157   | 68.2%                     | 28.3%                     | 12.0%  |
| Lee County          | 106,696             | 127,815   | 156,821   | 47.0%                     | 22.7%                     | 10.2%  |
| Polk County         | 97,811              | 120,481   | 153,113   | 56.5%                     | 27.1%                     | 13.6%  |
| Collier County      | 13,395              | 90,374    | 103,525   | 672.9%                    | 14.6%                     | 7.5%   |
| Seminole County     | 67,555              | 82,037    | 98,817    | 46.3%                     | 20.5%                     | 7.0%   |
| Pinellas County     | 68,009              | 81,072    | 93,952    | 38.1%                     | 15.9%                     | 7.4%   |
| Duval County        | 60,227              | 74,775    | 90,568    | 50.4%                     | 21.1%                     | 8.0%   |
| Pasco County        | 49,360              | 62,794    | 79,465    | 61.0%                     | 26.5%                     | 12.9%  |
| Volusia County      | 52,754              | 62,794    | 74,582    | 41.4%                     | 18.8%                     | 11.0%  |
| Brevard County      | 40,925              | 50,179    | 61,221    | 49.6%                     | 22.0%                     | 7.3%   |
| Leon County         | 14,276              | 17,151    | 18,690    | 30.9%                     | 9.0%                      | 1.1%   |
| Others              | 781,002             | 843,988   | 634,970   | 8.1%                      | -24.8%                    | --   |
| State of Florida    | 4,253,197           | 4,962,905 | 5,370,860 | 26.3%                     | 8.2%                      | 5.1%   |

| Correlation Coefficients/Multiple Regression                         |     |
|--|-----|
| Population Growth 2010-17 and Increase in Registered Hispanic Voters | .07 |
| Population Growth 2015-17 and Increase in Registered Hispanic Voters | .82 |

This statistical evidence on Puerto Rican population growth must be tempered by simple empirical observations. In the two counties with the largest Puerto Rican populations in 2017, Orange and Hillsborough counties, where nearly 30% of all Puerto Ricans in the state of Florida lived, there were marginal increases in the number of Hispanic registered voters between 2016 and 2018: 4.7% in Orange County and only 2.4% in Hillsborough County.

However, in Osceola County, the third largest Puerto Rican population county in the state experienced an increase of 12% in the number of Hispanic registered voters. If the data in Table 1 are perused closely, it is evident that in counties with smaller Puerto Rican populations, specifically Polk, Volusia, Pasco, and Lee Counties, increases in Hispanic voter registration were higher.

These data do not measure the impact on migrants arriving in Florida after 2017 because there are no precise county by county data.

It can be concluded that, despite statistical indicators associating increases in the Puerto Rican population in these counties and increases Hispanic voter registration (a correlation coefficient of .50 between 2010 and 2017 and .56 between 2015 and 2017), this is not conclusive evidence that there has been a significant rise in voter registration rates among Puerto Ricans in Florida between 2016 and 2018.