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Ethnic Enclaves and Success for Arab Immigration to the Detroit Metro Area

Introduction

The Rust-belt cities of the United States were once the industrial heart of the country, with high populations, job opportunities, and thriving economies. Today, these cities have faced significant rates of urban decline as industry becomes outsourced to the rest of the world. Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Detroit have all lost more than 40% of their populations over the last four decades¹. Coverage of these communities in the media largely occurs during the election season, and mainly focuses on white non-immigrants in these communities, shaping the public perspective of Rust-belt politics. However, during the 2024 election, this common pattern had a new twist. With the war in Gaza being a significant part of the Biden-Harris presidency, Arab populations in Michigan, specifically around the Detroit Metro Area gained attention. This population was generally politically progressive, and in past elections had voted for Democrats. However, in the 2024 election, Dearborn, the most Arab city in the United States, shifted from a 3-1 margin for Democrats to a Republican victory².

National attention was soon put on this community, as Muslims compose a sizable chunk of specific towns in the Detroit Metro Area, something that is unique in the United States. It is important to understand the role of these places for the Arab community. Using a regression model, this paper explores the *ethnic enclave hypothesis* by comparing the effects of living in

¹ Hartley, Daniel A. "Urban decline in rust-belt cities." *Economic Commentary* 2013-06 (2013).

² Cappelletti, Joey, et al. "Trump Breaks GOP Losing Streak in Nation's Largest Majority-Arab City with a Pivotal Final Week." *AP News*, AP News, 11 Nov. 2024, apnews.com/article/trump-harris-arab-americans-michigan-dearborn-aea96b9161a77de1fa47d668e23edb98.

Arab enclaves in the Detroit Metro Area on economic success. Alongside analysis of *territorial signage* in these places, this paper seeks to comprehensively understand the factors that bring in Arab immigrants and their families to these enclave cities.

Literature Review

The flow of Arab immigration to the United States during the 21st century is a process that receives much media attention. Despite having significant pathways to the United States since the 1880s³, Arab migrants have been on the wrong sides of conversations about the dangers of immigration in post-9/11 America. Migrants from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) had not historically practiced Islam upon arrival. Many were Christian or Jewish migrants fleeing persecution in the Ottoman Empire³. However, a new flow of migrants from this part of the world has widened in the last 20 years, now with many of these newcomers practicing Islam. Over half of all Muslim immigrants have arrived in the United States after 2000⁴. These new immigrants are coming into a discriminatory host nation after the September 11th attacks; safety and the right to retain their cultural practices is a large part of the identities of these communities. Like many immigrant groups that came before them, parts of this flow of Arab Muslim immigrants have settled in ethnic enclaves across America.

For the purposes of this paper, an ethnic enclave is described as a process in which a city or neighborhood has a higher concentration of a certain ethnic group, such that this presence operates as an attractive factor to new migrants of that same ethnicity. The ethnic enclave is a concept central to international migration geography. Spatial distribution of immigrant groups in

³ Kiskowski, William L. *Arab American identities and the cultural landscape of Dearborn, Michigan*. Diss. Kent State University, 2017.

⁴ Mitchell, Travis. "Muslims in America: Immigrants and Those Born in U.S. See Life Differently in Many Ways." *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 14 Apr. 2018.

America is never even, and when distances of migration become farther, the distinct qualities that make certain places attractive become more complex.

Ethnic enclaves must form out of some level of segregation, either intentional or unintentional. While the African American ethnic enclaves in the Great Lakes region formed out of specific housing practices designed to separate white communities from black ones, as well as through proximities to public housing, Mexican ethnic enclaves near the Southern border align with spatial proximity to their home country and ease of access to return and meet relatives⁵. Each ethnic group may have different levels of access to their home country. For immigrant groups who are extremely spatially separated from their perceived homeland, a large factor in the establishment and growth of ethnic enclaves is family reunification. Especially for spatially separated immigrants, family reunification is the main method for legal migration to the United States, with families moving to live with or near already established or successful co-ethnics and relatives⁶.

It is important to note that family reunification alone does not characterize the identities of ethnic enclaves. International perspectives in the early 2000s described the ethnic enclave as a process in the lifespan of immigrant flows to a city or region^{7,8}. They note that ethnic enclaving comes from a combination of economic disadvantage and a lack of cultural compatibility with

⁵ Miyares, Ines Maria. *Ethnic Enclave Formation and Function: A Study of Hmong Refugees in the United States*. Arizona State University, 1994.

⁶ Li, Wei, Emily Skop, and Wan Yu. "Enclaves, ethnoburbs, and new patterns of settlement among Asian immigrants." *Contemporary Asian America: A multidisciplinary reader 2* (2007): 222-236.

⁷ Poulsen, Michael, Ron Johnson, and James Forrest. "Plural cities and ethnic enclaves: introducing a measurement procedure for comparative study." *International Journal of urban and regional research* 26.2 (2002): 229-243.

⁸ Qadeer, Mohammad, and Sandeep Kumar. "Ethnic enclaves and social cohesion." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 15.2 (2006): 1-17.

the host nation. The end of this lifespan comes with each migrant or their family gradually assimilating into the host culture. While these scholars support the existence of ethnic enclaving, these theories have unspoken biases towards a goal of assimilation to a shared cultural experience.

In comparison, newer perspectives describe ethnic enclaving as a defense mechanism of the immigrant community from discrimination⁹. These communities protect against inherent biases in a host nation through community solidarity in housing, employment, and overall lifestyle practices. Economic opportunity is a big key to this description. An immigrant that lives among people of a shared cultural identity may find it easier to be hired into local businesses than to find employment in a community that discriminates against them. Arab Muslims may face this pressure more than any other immigrant group today, with reports of anti-Arab hate and bias in the United States receiving a sharp increase after recent attacks on the Gaza strip¹⁰.

Often, immigrant flows to the United States form out of a blend of poverty and conflict. For Hmong migrants to America in the 1980s, many came as refugees under new immigration policy. These groups were initially part of a “scatter” policy by the United States to inhibit the formation of ethnic enclaves. The goal of this policy was to increase the rate of Hmong assimilation in the United States, as it was believed this was better for social stability. However, secondary waves of immigration through family reunifications caused these enclaves to form anyway⁵, with the largest population of Hmong in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area today.

⁹ Gold, Steven J. "Ethnic enclaves." *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (2015): 1-18.

¹⁰ Alshrif, M. (2024, April 15). *Anti-arab hate, harassment and threats loom over this year's Arab American Heritage Month*. NBCNews.com. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/arab-american-history-month-2024-rcna146874>

⁵ Miyares, Ines Maria. *Ethnic Enclave Formation and Function: A Study of Hmong Refugees in the United States*. Arizona State University, 1994.

Ethnic enclaves often initially form from zoning restrictions, allowing for large groups of people to have affordable housing. In the case of the Hmong, ethnic enclaving occurred relatively suddenly, as no significant populations of Southeast Asians existed in the United States pre-1970. For the refugee Hmong, more affordable housing in Minnesota was a major attractive factor.

Another important part of ethnic enclaving is the presence and influence of territorial signs and symbols within the enclave. Not only do cultural identifiers within a city or neighborhood indicate a level of comfortability and establishment for that ethnic group, but their presence serves to delineate the boundaries of an ethnic enclave⁵. San Francisco's Chinatown developed a unique style of architecture to prevent its imminent destruction in the early 1900s, defining the neighborhood as distinctly Chinese¹¹. Norwegian products were displayed in public markets across the Ballard neighborhood in Seattle as an indication of the safety of Norwegian owned businesses⁵. Not only do these territorial claims serve as a symbol of the community's autonomy, but also as methods of cultural influence to new generations, with immigrants building the same cultural values from their homeland and extending the lifespan of these enclaves⁵. The preservation of these enclaves then continues to serve as an attractive factor for new immigrants to the country.

Success in the ethnic enclave has been studied many times before. The "ethnic enclave hypothesis" posits that an immigrant that settles in an ethnic enclave will be more economically successful than an immigrant that settles outside of one. Support for this hypothesis is largely mixed. While its earliest researchers found that certain communities (such as California's

⁵ Miyares, Ines Maria. *Ethnic Enclave Formation and Function: A Study of Hmong Refugees in the United States*. Arizona State University, 1994.

¹¹ Choy, Philip P. *San Francisco Chinatown: A guide to its history and architecture*. City Lights Publishers, 2012.

Chinese enclaves and Florida's Cuban enclaves) have better outcomes for entrepreneurs working in ethnic enclaves¹², more modern perspectives see that this effect may have changed (in the case of Cuban enclaves), or never have existed (in the case of Mexican enclaves)¹³. In fact, it seems that immigrants that settle in ethnic enclaves as a whole across all groups and employment types may perform worse economically¹⁴. Still, there are more factors at play, mostly surrounding the characteristics of the arrival cohort, with "high skill" enclaves and immigrant groups having better outcomes than "low skill" enclaves and immigrant groups¹⁵.

Studying Arab Immigrants in the United States became of interest to many following the 9/11 attacks and ensuing wave of discrimination many Arabs faced. Much of the difficulty in studying Arab Americans has been their historic lack of ethnic enclaves. The community of Muslim Arabs in America is largely heterogenous, with Lebanese, Iraqis, Syrians, Egyptians, Yemenis, and Palestinians all having different cultural norms¹⁶. However, this is not the case in the Detroit Metro Area, where a sort of Pan-Arab Muslim clustering has emerged¹³.

The largest center of ethnic enclaves for Arab Muslims in the United States is most famously in the suburbs of Detroit. Cities such as Dearborn and Hamtramck have gained national attention for their high percentages of Muslims in their communities, changing the local geographies across the towns. Territorial signs in these communities exist to protect belief in

¹² Sanders, Jimmy M., and Victor Nee. "Limits of ethnic solidarity in the enclave economy." *American sociological review* (1987): 745-773.

¹³ Aguilera, Michael Bernabé. "Ethnic enclaves and the earnings of self-employed Latinos." *Small Business Economics* 33 (2009): 413-425.

¹⁴ Xie, Yu, and Margaret Gough. "Ethnic enclaves and the earnings of immigrants." *Demography* 48 (2011): 1293-1315.

¹⁵ Foad, Hisham S. "Waves of immigration from the Middle East to the United States." *Available at SSRN 2383505* (2013).

¹⁶ Pavlovskaya, Marianna, and Jess Bier. "Mapping census data for difference: Towards the heterogeneous geographies of Arab American communities of the New York metropolitan area." *Geoforum* 43.3 (2012): 483-496.

Islam and Arab identity. In those initial migrations for the Arab community to America during the 1920s and 30s, many were Lebanese and Syrian immigrants attracted to Detroit by work in the automotive industry³. The initial immigrants quickly started to establish themselves through territorial signs. Dearborn has a high presence of Mosques, and the American Moslem Society, founded in 1938, was the first mosque in Michigan and was the first mosque to publicly broadcast the adhan (call to prayer)¹⁷. In 2004, Hamtramck, another city neighboring Detroit, enacted a noise ordinance change that allowed the adhan to be publicly broadcast 5 times a day¹⁸.

It's not only religious buildings that contribute to the territorial signs in these Detroit suburbs, but also the system of markets that exist across these towns. Arab grocery stores, restaurants, and clothing stores exist at high concentrations in Dearborn³. These markets allow Arabs in these towns to connect with their traditional culture, and solidify their presence. Specifically for Muslim Arabs, grocery stores offering halal goods is crucial to the continuation of their cultural practices.

Currently, these immigrants often face discrimination based on their religious practices. In recent national elections, the phrase "radical Islam" became more prevalent, and 2016 presidential candidate Ted Cruz even proposed patrolling Muslim neighborhoods as part of his campaign. As a result, places like Dearborn's territorial signs shaped by its historic Muslim community created an "inviting setting" for people to safely practice Islam without discrimination from others³.

³ Kiskowski, William L. *Arab American identities and the cultural landscape of Dearborn, Michigan*. Diss. Kent State University, 2017.

¹⁷ American Moslem Society. (n.d.). *Welcome to the AMSMASJID*. AMSmasjid. <https://amsdearborn.org/>

¹⁸ *Hamtramck Residents Will Vote on Call to Prayer*. The Associated Press. (2004, May 27).

Because these places in the Detroit Metro Area are seen as cultural havens for new Arab Immigrants to the United States, this paper explored their implications from a quantitative perspective in order to answer the following questions:

- **What is the role of settling in ethnic enclave communities in the Detroit Metro Area for Arab immigrants on economic opportunity and success?**
- **What makes ethnic enclave communities in the Detroit Metro Area appealing to new Arab immigrants?**

Methods

In order to study economic success among immigrants based on different demographic factors, the 2022 5-year American Community Survey was used, filtered by adult Arab immigrants that were listed as heads of households. To find these specific immigrants, data was first filtered by those that were born outside of the United States. This was then filtered further to Immigrants whose first listed ethnicity is a part of the greater Arab ethnic community, more specifically those with: Moroccan, Tunisian, North African, Bahraini, Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Yemeni, Omani, Muscatel, Trucial Omani, Qatari, Palestinian, Gazan, West Banker, South Yemeni, Adeni, Emirati, Middle Eastern, Arab, or Other Arab ancestry. Notably, specific Middle Eastern ethnic groups were excluded, such as Berber, Iranian, Israeli, Armenian, Turkish, and Assyrian/Chaldean people among others in order to control for uniquely Arab experiences. The data was then filtered to those who are adults and household heads in order to specifically focus on the main breadwinners for families. Many people in a surveyed family are dependents, and therefore their actual statistics of success are less related to their personal attributes. With these specifications in mind, significant relationships become clearer in statistical modeling.

Using an immigrant's housing location by Public-Use Microdata Area, residency was classified into four groups: Detroit enclave, Detroit non-enclave, non-Detroit enclave, and non-Detroit non-enclave. Classification of enclaves was done through another grouping of 2022 5-Year ACS data of all observations on where Arabic is prominently spoken in homes, identifying PUMAs with high concentrations of Arabic speakers. The threshold for an ethnic enclave to be identified was 1.5% of the population primarily speaking Arabic, which identified 52 separate PUMAs across the United States. Language is one of the most notable outward indications of cultural influence, and Arabic as a first language indicates influence of direct Arab immigration to a place.

Economic success was measured through total household income, home ownership, and employment status. These three factors can largely explain the success of an immigrant in the United States. In this case, more successful immigrant household heads have higher family incomes, own a home, and are employed. Self-employment as an attribute was also tracked in order to understand the rates and effectiveness of being a business owner dependent on residency classification. It is important to understand how self-employment may be different living in an ethnic enclave than not living in one in terms of economic success.

Using these variables, a linear regression model was built to study their effects. In order to do this, attributes such as sex, age, years in the United States (calculated through the survey year and the year of immigration), and family size were used as control variables. In these regressions, the focus was to find significant relationships between being in an ethnic enclave, being in the Detroit Metro Area, and being self-employed on total family income, home ownership, and employment status, excluding any comparison between being self-employed and employment status.

Results

Arab Ethnic Enclaves in the Detroit Metro Area

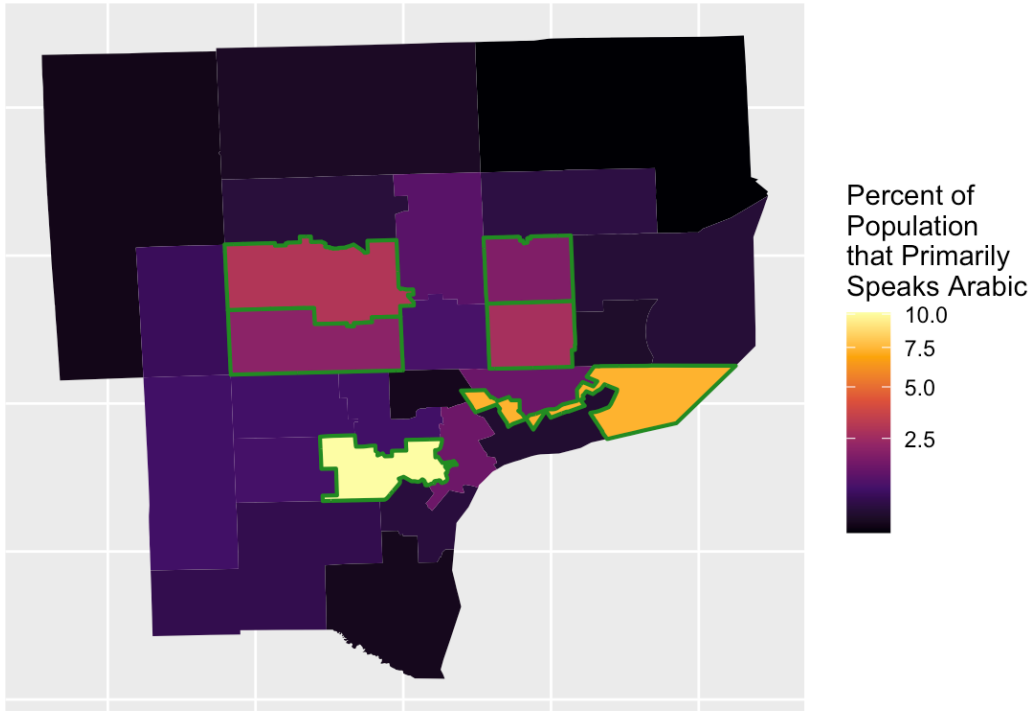


Figure 1: Arab Ethnic Enclaves in the Detroit Metro Area

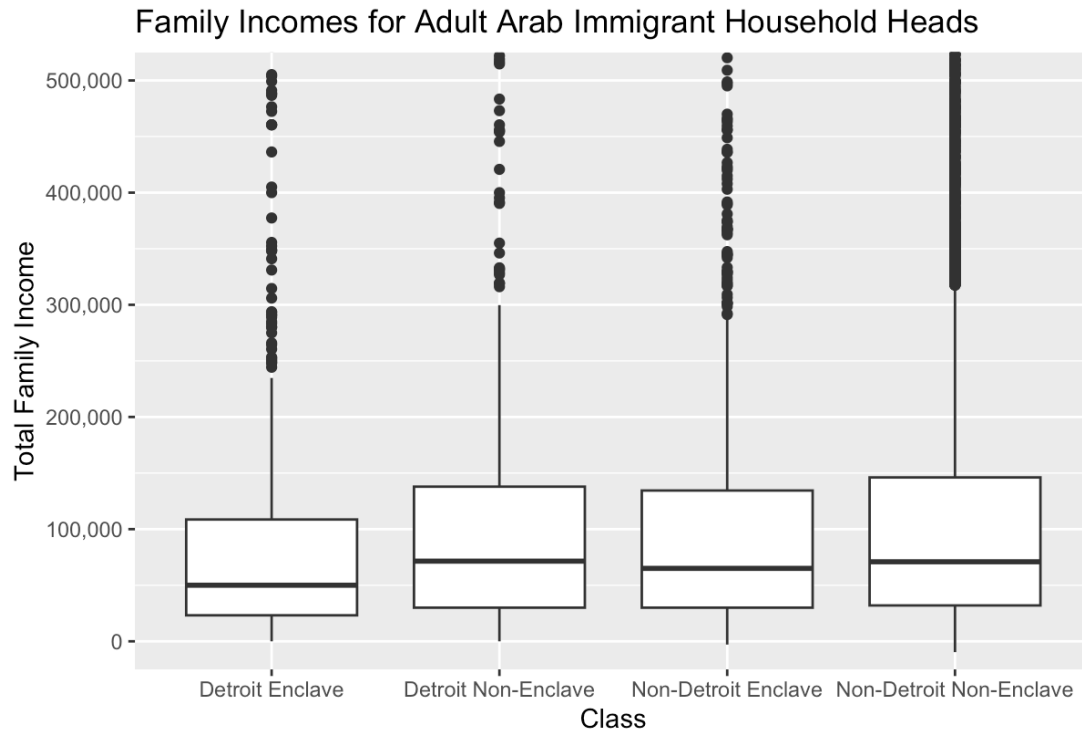


Figure 2: Boxplot of Total Family Income Separated by Residency Class

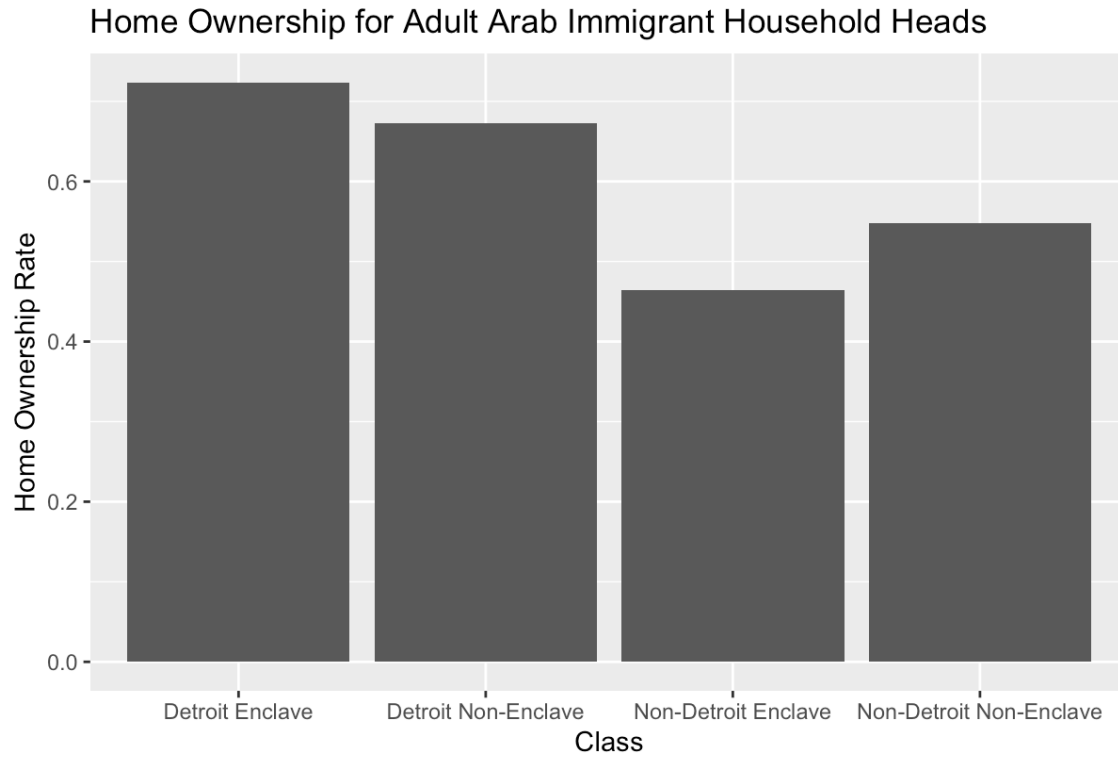


Figure 3: Column Chart of Home Ownership Rates Separated by Residency Class

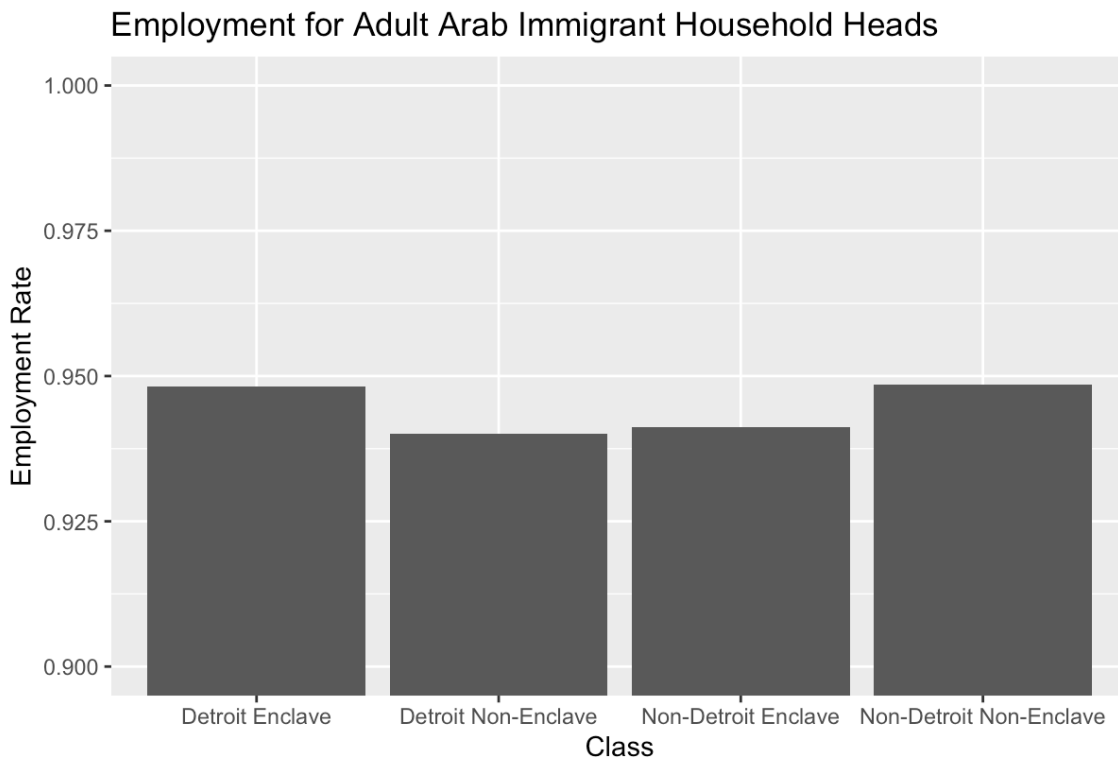


Figure 4: Column Chart of Employment Rates Separated by Residency Class

Gathering data from the 2022 5-Year American Community Survey, the total number of observations for specifically adult Arab immigrant household heads was 16,208. Of those observations, 1,596 lived in the Detroit Metro Area and 2,191 lived in Arab ethnic enclaves. Of the Detroit Metro Area residents, 887 were enclaved and 709 were not. Of the non-Detroit Metro Area residents, 1,304 were enclaved and 13,308 were not. On average, the Detroit Metro Area enclaves fare the worst in terms of median total family income, but fare the best in terms home ownership rates. Detroit enclaves and Non-Detroit Non-Enclaves had the highest rates of employment.

Table 1: Linear Regression Predicting Total Family Income for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	74627.64***	4783.63
Sex (Female)	-17302.47***	2546.17
Age (Years)	-811***	99.78
Years in the US	2249.34***	95.03
Family Size (Per Member)	12176.74***	653.68
Lives in an Enclave	-23165.36***	3326.72

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2: Linear Regression Predicting Home Ownership Probability for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	-0.0184078	0.0147645
Sex (Female)	-0.0013082	0.0078587
Age (Years)	0.0030373***	0.0003080
Years in the US	0.0111381***	0.0002933
Family Size (Per Member)	0.0530045***	0.0020176
Lives in an Enclave	-0.0138130	0.0102678

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3: Linear Regression Predicting Employment Probability for All Adult Arab Immigrant

Household Heads

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	0.9727591***	0.0092927
Sex (Female)	-0.0197136***	0.0049378
Age (Years)	-0.0008486***	0.0002134
Years in the US	0.0008099***	0.0001859
Family Size (Per Member)	0.0007161	0.0011789
Lives in an Enclave	-0.0046445	0.0060406

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ **Table 4:** Linear Regression Predicting Total Family Income for All Adult Arab Immigrant

Household Heads in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	62834.5***	16336.0
Sex (Female)	-6627.5	8024.2
Age (Years)	-285.9	292.9
Years in the US	1938.2***	278.4
Family Size (Per Member)	8789.0***	1953.5
Lives in an Enclave	-39832.4***	7221.9

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ **Table 5:** Linear Regression Predicting Home Ownership Probability for All Adult Arab

Immigrant Household Heads in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	0.2098251***	0.0489741
Sex (Female)	-0.0227939	0.0240559
Age (Years)	0.0016044	0.0008781
Years in the US	0.0092382***	0.0008346
Family Size (Per Member)	0.0482021***	0.0058565
Lives in an Enclave	0.0297196	0.0216508

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6: Linear Regression Predicting Employment Probability for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	0.9753001***	0.0332615
Sex (Female)	-0.0380946*	0.0169074
Age (Years)	-0.0013497	0.0006890
Years in the US	0.0011346	0.0006004
Family Size (Per Member)	0.0031892	0.0037900
Lives in an Enclave	0.0047188	0.0138204

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7: Linear Regression Predicting Total Family Income for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	74727.68***	4785.77
Sex (Female)	-17353.18***	2547.00
Age (Years)	-834.27***	99.76
Years in the US	2275.84***	95.06
Family Size (Per Member)	12042.89***	652.69
Lives in Detroit Metro Area	-23291.37***	3811.23

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 8: Linear Regression Predicting Home Ownership Probability for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	-0.0218921	0.0147217
Sex (Female)	-0.0025724	0.0078350
Age (Years)	0.0030120***	0.0003069
Years in the US	0.0110824***	0.0002924
Family Size (Per Member)	0.0507697***	0.0020078
Lives in Detroit Metro Area	0.1170136***	0.0117239

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 9: Linear Regression Predicting Employment Probability for All Adult Arab Immigrant

Household Heads

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	0.9727992***	0.0092946
Sex (Female)	-0.0197253***	0.0049377
Age (Years)	-0.0008541***	0.0002134
Years in the US	0.0008168***	0.0001861
Family Size (Per Member)	0.0007046	0.0011774
Lives in Detroit Metro Area	-0.0053321	0.0069906

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ **Table 10:** Linear Regression Predicting Total Family Income for All Adult Arab Immigrant

Household Heads Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	25226.2	21968.0
Sex (Female)	3474.6	11459.0
Age (Years)	330.2	447.5
Years in the US	1917.6***	403.8
Family Size (Per Member)	2473.8	2516.0
Is Self Employed	25373.1*	12209.4

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ **Table 11:** Linear Regression Predicting Home Ownership Probability for All Adult Arab

Immigrant Household Heads Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	0.320652***	0.078138
Sex (Female)	0.016044	0.040761
Age (Years)	0.003024	0.001592
Years in the US	0.007400***	0.001436
Family Size (Per Member)	0.022502*	0.008949
Is Self Employed	0.058984	0.043427

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 12: Linear Regression Predicting Total Family Income for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads Not Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves but in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	-31548.7	34481.2
Sex (Female)	10725.7	17919.5
Age (Years)	1550.5*	719.2
Years in the US	1722.6**	621.9
Family Size (Per Member)	12399.4**	4128.4
Is Self Employed	44975.4*	19463.9

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 13: Linear Regression Predicting Home Ownership Probability for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads Not Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves but in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	0.059765	0.081238
Sex (Female)	-0.009180	0.042218
Age (Years)	0.003546*	0.001695
Years in the US	0.011110***	0.001465
Family Size (Per Member)	0.053512***	0.009727
Is Self Employed	0.063522	0.045857

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 14: Linear Regression Predicting Total Family Income for All Adult Arab Immigrant Household Heads Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves Not in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	32233.1	20894.9
Sex (Female)	-7881.8	10705.6
Age (Years)	139.8	449.0
Years in the US	2624.1***	410.9
Family Size (Per Member)	7500.7**	2485.6
Is Self Employed	-980.1	10615.0

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 15: Linear Regression Predicting Home Ownership Probability for All Adult Arab

Immigrant Household Heads Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves Not in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	-0.156893*	0.066696
Sex (Female)	0.060109	0.034172
Age (Years)	0.005320***	0.001433
Years in the US	0.010599***	0.001312
Family Size (Per Member)	0.037373***	0.007934
Is Self Employed	0.038404	0.033883

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 16: Linear Regression Predicting Total Family Income for All Adult Arab Immigrant

Household Heads Not Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves and Not in the Detroit Metro Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	62541.5***	6292.4
Sex (Female)	-12568.0***	3397.8
Age (Years)	-347.8*	144.3
Years in the US	2590.7***	128.5
Family Size (Per Member)	10240.9***	828.5
Is Self Employed	-8613.4*	3767.4

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 17: Linear Regression Predicting Home Ownership Probability for All Adult Arab

Immigrant Household Heads Not Living in Arab Ethnic Enclaves and Not in the Detroit Metro

Area

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error
(Intercept)	-0.1067288***	0.0185855
Sex (Female)	0.0206415*	0.0100359
Age (Years)	0.0054295***	0.0004263
Years in the US	0.0110886***	0.0003794
Family Size (Per Member)	0.0485075***	0.0024470
Is Self Employed	0.0078955	0.0111276

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

A linear regression model of all adult Arab immigrant household heads in the 2022 ACS 5-year survey controlling for sex, age, the years spent in the United States, and family size found that living in an ethnic enclave was a significant predictor for lower values of total family

income, but not a significant predictor for home ownership, or employment status. Compared to their counterparts living outside of ethnic enclaves, these household heads were predicted for their families to earn \$23,165 less when living in an ethnic enclave at a 0.001 significance level. For this same group however, living in an enclave did not have a significant effect on their likelihood to own a home. Enclaving did not have a significant effect on their likelihood to be employed either.

For adult Arab immigrant household heads living in the Detroit Metro Area, living in an ethnic enclave was still a significant predictor for lower family incomes. Compared to the national level, these enclaved Arabs in the Detroit Metro Area were predicted to have a family income \$39,832 less than those living in non-enclave PUMAs at a 0.001 significance level. In this case as well, living in an enclave did not have a significant effect on either the probability of home ownership or the probability of employment.

A linear regression model significantly predicted at the 0.001 level that adult Arab immigrant household heads living in the United States are predicted to have \$23,291 less in total family income if they live in Detroit Metro Area than those outside of Detroit. Despite this, Arabs living in Detroit were significantly predicted at the 0.001 level to have an 11.7% higher chance to own a home rather than rent one. Still, living in Detroit did not yield a significantly higher likelihood to being employed.

The effects of self-employment are also significant when adult Arab immigrant household heads are split as 4 separate classes: those that live in an ethnic enclave in the Detroit Metro Area, those that do not live in an enclave in the Detroit Metro Area, those that live in an ethnic enclave outside the Detroit Metro Area, and those that do not live in an ethnic enclave outside the Detroit Metro Area. For both enclaved and non-enclaved immigrants around Detroit, being self-

employed was a significant factor in total family income, with \$25,373 and \$44,975 increases predicted respectively, both at 0.05 significance levels. Comparatively, while not significant for enclaved adult Arab immigrant household heads outside of the Detroit Metro Area, self-employed non-enclaved adult Arab immigrant household heads outside Detroit were predicted to have a total family income of \$8,613 less at the 0.05 significance level. In no case was being self-employed a significant predictor for home ownership.

Discussion

Contrary to the ethnic enclave hypothesis' prediction, Arab ethnic enclaves initially appear to harbor worse economic outcomes for Arab immigrants in the United States. In terms of total family income, evidence appears to push against the idea that the Arab enclaves of the Detroit suburbs can provide more success to those immigrating from the Middle East or North Africa to the United States. Despite this, there exist attractive factors for towns like Dearborn or Hamtramck that pull roughly 10% of all Arab immigrants to the Detroit Metro Area and 6% to the Detroit Metro Area's Arab ethnic enclaves. These factors are most likely complex and varied, involving both characteristics of the immigrants themselves and the infrastructure of towns like Dearborn and Hamtramck. Crucially, discussion of their effects can lead to a more complete picture toward explaining the results found.

Some of these explanatory factors include variables related to the immigrants themselves. In the case of higher total family incomes both outside the Detroit Metro Area and outside Arab ethnic enclaves, higher paying jobs in education or medicine require immigrants to live in specific geographic areas. These places often do not intersect with where Arab ethnic enclaves are. Additionally, many Arab immigrants across the United States mostly immigrate to cities. In

terms of average income, Detroit ranks low among major US cities¹⁹. Detroit does however have a lower cost of living than other US cities, with lower home prices on average²⁰. This would explain the higher rates of home ownership for populations in Detroit, and more specifically ethnic enclaves in Detroit.

From the linear regression models, it is clear that living in ethnic enclaves, especially those in the Detroit Metro Area, are associated with lower total family incomes for the Arab immigrant community. Enclaves are often associated with lower costs of living²¹, so lower wages can still support a family in these places. Additionally, in Arab ethnic enclaves, the Muslim population will be greater, leading to more traditional Islamic gender roles that might limit wives to domestic work, causing lower total family wages even if the household head's wage was the same. Still, a significant decrease of over \$23,165 predicted from living in an enclave represents a large repulsive factor for these enclaves.

From the regression itself, it's clear that Detroit and its metro area offer greater opportunity for Arabs to own their own homes and businesses. For immigrants coming into the United States, owning property and businesses can be a large factor in building generational wealth. Both Detroit's opportunities for Arab immigrant self-employment and housing opportunities in its Arab ethnic enclaves contribute toward an attractive factors for Detroit over other locations in the United States.

¹⁹ Winters, Mike. "Here's the Median Salary in the 25 Biggest U.S. Cities-See How You Compare." *CNBC*, CNBC, 11 July 2024, www.cnbc.com/2024/07/11/the-median-salary-for-the-25-biggest-us-citiessee-how-you-compare.html.

²⁰ "Detroit Housing Market: House Prices & Trends." *Redfin*, www.redfin.com/city/5665/MI/Detroit/housing-market. Accessed 12 Dec. 2024.

²¹ Gill, Fahad. "Do Enclaves Help or Hinder the American Dream?." *Journal of Economic Issues* 53.1 (2019): 39-56.

Even with these attractive features pulling Arab immigrants to the Detroit Metro Area, this reasoning ignores the existing institutions and history that have built places like Dearborn and Hamtramck to be centers of the Muslim Arab diaspora in the United States. The territorial signs in these towns contribute to the seen effects of ethnic establishment through home ownership and self-employment. As mentioned previously, Dearborn was one of the first communities of Arabs in the United States to have a mosque, and the first to have one that broadcast the adhan. The self-employed of Arab ethnic enclaves across the United States are the same people that own the Arab markets Dearborn is well known for. Territorial signage therefore plays a significant role in shaping the high rates of Arab migration to these enclaves.

With the combination of higher home ownership rates, higher incomes for self-employed people, and territorial signage in these Detroit Metro Area Arab enclaves, there is a collective effort by the Arab community to become established. Much like the Chinatowns of major US cities, establishment, ownership, and territorial signs are all a part of the same process of self-defense in ethnic enclaving. The Arab communities of places like Dearborn have built and are continuing to build a lasting presence that can exist for their children, defending their communities from discrimination and destruction in a post-9/11 America.

Conclusion

There exist attractive factors for new Arab immigrants that pull them to the Detroit Metro Area more than other cities of the same size in the United States. While immigrants living in these ethnic enclaves have less economic success in terms of income, the opportunity for establishment in the United States is greater. Establishment in an ethnic enclave is important to the wellbeing of one's co-ethnics. The creation of an ethnic enclave does not happen overnight, and the gradual growth of a community's demographic presence alongside the growth of territorial signage

deepens a places cultural connection to the homeland. For Arab ethnic enclaves in the Detroit Metro Area, this process started as one of the earliest in the country, leading to the continuing process seen today.

While a quantitative study on economic success in these specific towns and neighborhoods sheds light on these processes, it ultimately cannot tell the full story. Comprehensive qualitative research on a town such as Dearborn would be a good inroad to studying this community further. Identifying examples of territorial signage but also interviewing of the residents of these places, regardless of ethnicity or nativity, has the potential to uncover the meaning of establishment in the Arab community. Other quantitative future studies should include the effects of education on these communities upon arrival, where migrations occur initially and after multiple years in the United States, and separations by ethnicity.

Despite a large portion of Arabs in America arriving as immigrants more recently, the processes of enclaving have become clear. Contrary to perspectives on immigration that push for assimilation for new arrivals to achieve economic success, Dearborn and Hamtramck are examples of success in solidarity. In the ethnic enclaves around Detroit, establishment of new immigrants is leading to the protection of Arab Americans and the preservation of a shared Arab culture in the United States.