

Institutional Racism and Party Voting Patterns in Three Ohio Counties, 2008-2016

Bridget Dennis, University of Mount Union

Institutional racism describes established, systematic racial inequalities in the races usually including disparities in measures such as levels of education, health, income, and housing. In this study, I have investigated how well institutional racism can predict the percentage of residents in three Ohio counties voting for the Democratic party by asking “to what extent does institutional racism explain votes for the Democratic party?”. Based on the literature, I hypothesized that counties with more institutional racism (measured by the gap between Whites and non-Whites in homeownership, education level, and infant mortality rate) would have a lower Democratic vote percentage. I have analyzed data from the United States Census Bureau for the three most populated counties in Ohio including Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton from 2008 through 2016. A multiple regression analysis found that for these three counties, my measures of institutional racism predicted 74% of the variance in voting for the Democratic party.

Racism in America has been prevalent since the 17th century, although it was made illegal after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted, abolishing public segregation. But did this piece of legislation truly resolve the issue of racial discrimination? Although laws were adjusted in attempts to end the disparities among races, (with a focus on African Americans), remaining discriminatory thoughts, feelings, and behaviors were much harder to reconcile. Today, we are dealing with institutional racism, of which many are blind to, including our political leaders. Institutional or systemic racism is a more subtle, covert way of discriminating against America’s minority groups today, often hidden in governmental organizations, courts of law, and schools. We can only do so much as citizens to fight against institutional racism, as much of the decision making that affects minority groups are in our local politician’s hands. As our political leaders, both locally and nationally, make decisions impacting our everyday lives, we must wonder if the respected party in power truly makes a difference regarding institutional racism. Assumptions about each political party have been lingering in the minds of our citizens, reflecting what both the Democratic and Republican party have been known for during the country’s short history. The rhetoric we hear from each party’s candidates often reflect those assumptions, and polls indicate clear differences of opinion between citizens who affiliate with our two major parties. In a Pew Research poll given in 2015, 61% of Democrats felt that “people need to be more careful with language to avoid offending people”, while 78% of Republicans felt that “too many people are easily

offended these days over language” (Pew, 2015). This poll might allude to an assumption that Democrats are more concerned about people’s feelings, and the push for equality, while Republicans have a different mentality (Petrocik, 1996).

Because institutional racism is prominent in the United States, I was curious if there was a connection between institutional racism and political representation. In this study, I explored “to what extent does institutional racism explain votes for the Democratic party”? I researched the three most populous counties in Ohio, each of which has unique party voting patterns. Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Franklin County (Columbus), and Hamilton County (Cincinnati) were all analyzed and compared to one another in this study. After reviewing literature, I determined a multitude of ways to measure institutional racism, including data on housing, poverty levels, income, education, and health. The predictor variables in my final data set included the percentage point gap between Whites and non-Whites in education, housing, and infant mortality. Definitions of ‘Whites’ and ‘non-Whites’ for this study will be discussed later.

After analyzing the literature related to this topic, I discerned four schools of thought that could potentially answer my question in different ways: aversive racism, new institutionalism, Western culture, and in-group bias. Aversive racism suggests people’s racist actions are unconscious and influenced by past cultural influences (Dovidio, 2002). New institutionalism looks to issue ownership of both parties and how that could impact levels of institutional racism (Lopez, 2000). Western culture discusses how having a more individualistic culture may affect people’s attitudes and actions towards racial issues (Rothenberg, 2002). In-group bias suggests that when one is included in a group, that person will naturally be against people that are outside their own group, which could impact how a party makes decisions if overwhelmingly one race (Lynch, 2011). I have found that culture is a great predictor of the level of institutional racism in a county, which ties into aversive racism, new institutionalism, and Western culture in different ways. In-group bias is still important, as it shows how being a part of a group inherently makes us challenge people from outside our own group. Based on the literature, I hypothesized that counties with a higher level of institutional racism will have a lower Democratic vote percentage, and my model suggested this to be accurate. My model suggested that the gap between Whites and non-Whites in homeownership made the strongest contribution to explaining votes for the Democratic party, negatively impacting the Democratic vote. The gap in the level of education and infant mortality rate also negatively impacted the Democratic vote, with year positively impacting the Democratic vote. These results aligned with my literature and my hypothesis, suggesting that counties with a higher level of institutional racism had a lower Democratic vote percentage.

Clash of Culture or Something Else?

In 2016, according to the Pew Research Center, 65% of Blacks felt that it was “a lot more” difficult to be Black in this country than it was to be white, while only 27% of Whites felt the same way (Pew Research Center, 2016). Institutional racism has been a continued issue in the United States, and understanding this is essential when planning for this country’s future. Systemic racial discrimination does not only have an impact on the laws and policies our government implements today, but the racial attitudes derived from these actions will have a lasting influence for generations to come. It is imperative that we educate ourselves on institutional racism, to understand why it happens, and what perpetuates the problem to ensure society does not continue down this disturbingly old fashioned path.

We can look to four different schools of thought to explore “to what extent does institutional racism explain votes for the Democratic party in three counties in Ohio”? The first school contends that the act of racism may be unconscious and automatic, caused by historical perspectives, and can be called “aversive racism”. Henkel, Dovidio (2006), and Lopez (2000) are a few scholars that have discussed how our actions may be subtle, indirect and rationalizable based on historical precedents and norms. Aversive racism might try to explain current levels of institutional racism by analyzing each county’s historical perspective, including by whom and where they were founded. The second school maintains the idea of “New Institutionalism”, laid out by Haney-Lopez (2000), which looks to individual behavior within organized settings. Petrocik (1996) and Egan (2013) determine how issue ownership may influence society through new institutionalism, suggesting that the issues each party “owns”, may impact how each party influences the levels of institutional racism. The third school of thought explains the details of American ideals, and what I have called “Western culture”, including the concept of rugged individualism. Rothenberg (2002) and Giroux (1993) have found this to be a more Republican ideal, which is caused by one’s culture being historically individualistic. The level of individualism may influence a county’s level of institutional racism. The fourth and final school of thought is the idea of “ingroup bias” or “group-based emotion”, which explains how people have a natural desire for their ingroup members to do well and for outgroup members to do poorly, which is discussed by Lynch (2011), Stephan, and Finlay (1999). Ingroup bias would suggest that a party overwhelmingly represented by one race would have an ingroup bias towards that race, and potentially not consider other groups’ points of view when making decisions. Each of these schools of thought has played a role when attempting to answer my question.

Aversive Racism

The first school of thought focuses on how past persistent discrimination could affect our way of both thinking, and behaving in our lives today. Aversive racists are defined

by Henkel (2006) as one who “sympathizes with victims of past injustice, supports the principle of racial equality, and regard themselves as non-prejudiced, but, at the same time, possess negative feelings and beliefs about Blacks, which may be unconscious” (Henkel, 2006). Henkel, Dovidio and Gaertner (2006), analyze the events leading up to the deadly landfall of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, along with the potential roles institutional discrimination might have played following the event shortly thereafter. Their article explores the historical background of New Orleans, and how the historical norms may have had an impact on how political leaders handled the crisis, without obvious intention of any discrimination.

When looking at the larger context of Hurricane Katrina, Henkel and colleagues discovered quite a few alarming things about what might have caused the profound damage to the black community during Katrina. Their research provides a framework for understanding aversive racism. Lynch (2011) states that under aversive racism, “there is significant inertia pushing against reform efforts, because racially institutionalized ways of thinking and acting become normalized and routinized, especially within highly bureaucratic settings...”. Lynch is suggesting that historical ideals that have been practiced over long periods of time are ingrained in our way of thinking, which may inhibit positive change. Lynch’s mentality that our ways of thinking and acting becomes normalized, can be applied to the different counties in Ohio, by analyzing each area’s history.

Henkel and colleagues used several measures for historical discrimination, including the discrepancies between whites and blacks in New Orleans. Measurements included interpreting and comparing salary, wealth, job type, housing figures, loan opportunity, and “red-lining”. To give an example, the authors found that the past institutional discrimination involved in housing and mortgage loans had pushed many neighborhoods to be more segregated, as mortgage loans were un-proportionately given out in White areas (Henkel, 2006). Access to nice, residential housing in New Orleans required either “pre-existing wealth or access to substantial housing loans”, and in 2001, 36% of Black applicants in New Orleans were denied conventional home mortgage loans, compared to 16% of White applicants (Henkel, 2006). The areas in which Blacks were concentrated, tended to be in more environmentally vulnerable areas, and furthermore, the affordable housing was often built on slabs that were located 2.5-4.0 feet below sea level (Henkel, 2006). The housing discrimination that was occurring in New Orleans was only one factor that put the Black community in more danger during this disaster. Others included the lack of resources to leave the city, such as access to an automobile or money for a hotel room outside of the city. The events surrounding Hurricane Katrina show the importance of how history may affect and shape our attitudes toward race and discrimination today, and how contemporary biases further contribute to discrimination. For my study, I can mimic Henkel’s process to determine how prominent racial issues

have been in the past for Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties in Ohio. Aversive racism is often derived from history and routine, and examining the past racial tension of these areas, could help explain what level of institutional racism we could expect today.

The history of racial discrimination is not geographically identical in all parts of the United States, as Strobel (2008), has mentioned. For example, Strobel discusses how the early settlements of the Europeans into Ohio set a precedent for all future generations. The intrusions of the Europeans onto the land of the American Indians and Africans caused many disturbing behaviors, including violence, expropriation of land, and the forcing of population migration (Strobel, 2008). These actions led to what Strobel calls “colonial racial orders” which over time, has led to “racial differentiation”. Strobel states “the emergence of colonial racial orders was accompanied by the development and expansion of racism, empire, and capitalism...” (Strobel, 2008).

African American slaves were more openly oppressed in certain areas of the Southern United States than in the Northern parts. Ohio’s first constitution outlawed slavery in 1803, honoring the Northwest Ordinance, but ultimately did not guarantee opportunities for freemen. The only way to ensure ownership of a good amount of land was to be a white, wealthy male and these people were the ones chosen to be political leaders. The Ohio Constitution of 1803 was written and voted on by a Democratic-Republican controlled delegation, which meant the state constitution was established under a weaker, hands-off government compared to the Federalists.

Continuing to analyze the history of the three areas for the sake of understanding their possible levels of aversive racism today, it is important to note certain events. Roseboom and Weisenburger (1934) state that many African Americans made the move to cities such as Cleveland and Cincinnati but most of them were poor and could not afford to purchase much of anything, especially land. The authors suggest the migration was due to the job opportunities located in the cities, such as factory and nanny jobs. Most Ohio slave owners lived in the southern part of the state and in the early 1800s, race riots occurred in Hamilton County because “Irish immigrants disliked economic competition from the African-American community” (Roseboom, 1934). This gives a bit of understanding about Hamilton County and how they might inherently have lingering feelings about other races today.

To summarize, Henkel, Dovidio, and Gaertner have described how individual level biases are shaped by, and help shape, broader institutional practices from historical precedents. In other words, our actions as individuals are influenced by our present environment and from the history of where we were born and raised. By understanding how Ohio was founded, we can make inferences as to what mentalities and routines have been passed on through generations and how that may impact institutional racism today in Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties. Henkel and colleagues are not the only

scholars to investigate different types of racism and the perception of the unintentional racists perpetuating the problem.

New Institutionalism

Ian Haney -Lopez (2000) is a socio-legal scholar looking to answer how and why discriminatory practices persisted within the legal institution despite direct challenges to them through legislation (Lynch, 2011). To study this, Lopez analyzed and interpreted the persistent underrepresentation of Mexican Americans on grand juries in Los Angeles, California. By looking through transcripts of over 100 judges from the decade before his writing in the Los Angeles area, he found that there was a “near total exclusion” of Mexican Americans from grand juries, while each judge testified to harboring no discriminatory intent.

Lopez believes that institutions, rather than individuals, are what do most of the thinking. Lopez’s research is set out to “build a theory of racism that explains organizational activity that systematically harms minority groups even though the decision-making individuals lack any conscious discriminatory intent”. Relating this directly back to the first school of thought, one does not have to have evil intent to still be racist and as Henkel suggests, Whites may not be sensitive to their own racial biases (Henkel, 2006). This spells out my second school of thought and Haney-Lopez’s theory of racism called “New Institutionalism”, which says that frequently repeated but unexamined social practices structure and give meaning to human interaction (Lopez, 2000). He looks to individual behavior within organized settings. This could help explain how political parties themselves may seem discriminatory, because of what each party historically identifies with and what issues they have “owned” in the past.

John Petrocik explores issue ownership by doing a case study of presidential elections in the 1980s. Petrocik hypothesized that “issue emphases are specific to candidates” and voters will side with candidates who focus on what they are concerned about (Petrocik, 1996). The methods used include content analysis of news reports, open-ended voter reports of important problems, and the votes for presidential elections between 1960 and 1992. Petrocik did a regression analysis to investigate the relationship between the role of campaigns in setting the criteria for voters to choose between candidates, and his conclusion determined that candidates do have distinctive patterns of certain issues. Petrocik goes on to define “handling”, which is the ability to resolve a problem concerning voters, which leads citizens to believe one party over another could ultimately satisfy their wants based off the amount of attention given to the issue (Petrocik, 1996). Petrocik states that parties have “sociologically distinctive constituencies” and that there is a strong link between the social characteristics of a party’s supporters and that of the party’s issue agenda (Petrocik, 1996).

Diving into which party “handles” or “owns” certain issues, Petrocik explicitly lays out the foundation which could help explain the second school, “New Institutionalism”. Understanding what issues each party favors will help determine how that population prioritizes certain issues that may affect non-White populations. Petrocik includes a chart from the early 1990s in his study that exemplifies the perceived issue handling competence of each party by giving the percentage for both Democrats and Republicans on certain common issues. Social welfare issues such as protecting social security (52%), helping the elderly and poor (60%/64%), and improving health care (51%), are all perceived to be better handled by Democrats. Republicans are perceived to own much of foreign policy/defense issues including national defense (68%), maintaining strong defense (61%), as well as the American industry (55%). Figuring out what the population of each county deems important, could help us determine the level of institutional racism for that area. If a county is more Democratic in its voting, we might assume the citizens agree with what the Democratic Party stands for, and as stated before, social welfare, social security, and helping the poor are all thought to be owned by the Democratic Party. If a county’s residents vote for a Democratic candidate, we can fairly assume they are also voting for issues better handled by Democrats. Voting for the Democratic Party might lead to a lower level of institutional racism, considering the party’s issues are based more on equality.

These percentages given by Petrocik of what issues citizens deem each party to handle better, show a difference in what Republicans and Democrats handle more effectively, and how citizens view what a candidate prioritizes during their time in office. Considering more people believed Democrats better handle helping the poor over Republicans, we should see a positive correlation between poverty and Democratic party voting, and a negative relationship in more Republican areas. Education may show similar trends. While citizens felt as though Democrats “owned” education, this may show a similar result when assessing the level of institutional racism in education in Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties. In conclusion, new institutionalism suggests that institutions do most of the thinking and that frequently repeated and unexamined social practices structure and give meaning to human interaction. Understanding what issue each party owns could determine what candidates focus on during their time in office, and ultimately determine the level of institutional racism in an area.

Western Culture

In contrast to the first two schools, a wide range of scholarship has been written on American ideals and how individual competitiveness is what ultimately drives people in America to make decisions. The third school of thought, which can be called “western culture”, does not focus on the intention of discriminatory behavior, rather it discusses

how the past culture of an area has influenced its citizen's behavior over time. Western culture is an essential part of the American ideal mentality and Rothenberg (2002) states that rugged individualism is inherent in American culture; it refers to the idea that we should be able to help ourselves without government intervention (Rothenberg, 2002). In Giroux's research (1993), what is most important is linking culture to the practice of an absolute democracy, and that Western ideals, specifically the right wing, are what have been stopping us from progressing in this. Similarly, Felski (1989) points out several important political and cultural projects which include the wave of feminism and women's rights in the past few decades and has suggested that these movements have exposed the "patriarchal, heterosexist, and ethnocentric" nature of Western ideals (Felski, 1989).

Tim Wise is an American anti-racism activist and he suggests that while white liberals acknowledge that racial inequality is still materialized, and that Blacks are "underprivileged", they do not acknowledge how "over-privileged" Whites become in comparison. Without overcoming the denial Americans have about the persistent racial discrimination that is occurring today, along with how privileged white people are in return, change may not occur (Wise, 2016). The appeal of power may no longer be due to racial supremacy, rather Giroux suggests that the Western culture's uniformity is "parading under the politics of nationalism and patriotism" (Giroux, 1993). By blaming nationalism, and the love for one's country, this author is suggesting that the problem aligns more with conservative ideals than liberal and that conservative discourse signifies "racial exclusivity, segregation, and self-determination" (Giroux, 1993).

How does "rugged individualism" relate to the analysis of Ohio's three largest counties? When analyzing the three counties in Ohio (Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton), understanding the history of each county's broad culture is important. How each area has lived in the past, can tell us whether the population has been more of an individualistic society or that of a group based society. Again, Giroux (1993) suggests that conservative discourse aligns closer to the term "rugged individualism" than liberal viewpoints, and may suggest that counties with more of an individualistic approach will fall victim to the idea of "racial exclusivity" (Giroux, 1993). In other words, counties with a rugged individualistic culture, may be more attuned to issues of freedom for individuals than to equality, which could equate to votes for Republicans over Democrats.

Cleveland was established in 1814, by Moses Cleveland after he was sent in the late 1700s to lay out a township that focused on the center of the Public Square (Roseboom, 1934). Northeast Ohio was part of the Connecticut Western Reserve, which was land owned by Connecticut up until the 1790s. The Shaker movement was another New England import to this region. A part of Cuyahoga County, Shaker Heights, was originally founded by a pioneer settler from Connecticut of the Shaker religion. The

Shaker movement was characterized by “communal living, celibacy, confession of sins, pacifism, belief in the equality of all people...” (Ohio City Incorporated, 2016). This exemplifies how the Cuyahoga County area was founded on a stronger equality based and group mentality, and therefore, may vote more Democratic today.

The area now known as Franklin County, was once under control by the French colonial empire and the area often found itself caught between American Indian and European ideals and interests (Strobel, 2008). The influx of European immigrants in the early 1800s led to a large Irish and German population. Columbus became a center for learning and activities early in the nineteenth century. Many private and public schools started within the city of Columbus, including The Ohio State University and Capital University. An early focus on education may be individualistic because of the drive to be educated for one’s self, but could also be viewed as group based, as being educated would ultimately help one’s community.

Hamilton County/Cincinnati was established based on the ideals of both the Continental Army and the French military, and in the late 1700s, often established campaigns of terror against the Native Americans (Ohio City Incorporated, 2016). Cincinnati was considered the Northern United States, but reflected some Southern characteristics, as slavery was common in the state of Kentucky bordering the Ohio River. (Ohio City Incorporated, 2016). Reading about what is now known as Hamilton County, it appears the area was built on an individualistic mentality, as slave ownership was common in the area. This leads me to believe Hamilton County would vote less for Democratic candidates. By understanding the past culture of these three counties, we can understand how the areas may now lean more towards an individualistic (Republican), or group based (Democratic) mentality which could influence the level of institutional racism. With the historical overview, Hamilton seems the most individualistic, having a more western ruggedness approach, while Cuyahoga can be viewed with more of a group mentality.

Ingroup Bias

Moving on from aversive racism, “New Institutionalism”, and western culture, the fourth and final school of thought can be described as “ingroup bias” or “group-based emotion”. This school seeks to explain the role of empathy in intergroup relations. Stephan and Finlay (1999) argue that an absence of empathy “plays a role in shared negative attitudes and behaviors toward out-group members”. Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor suggest that the level of empathy can help explain group-level dynamics and that group-based emotion might be harnessed to promote social change (Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). Henkel, Dovidio, and Gaertner (2006) explain that “because of a range of normal cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural processes that promote intergroup biases, most Whites also develop some negative feelings toward or beliefs about Blacks, of which

they are unaware or from which they try to dissociate their nonprejudiced self-images". Henkel and colleagues discuss how aversive racism reflects a pro-ingroup rather than an anti-outgroup, which helps in protecting people from being blamed for obvious, blatant discrimination while saving their self-image. An example would include talking positively about a potential White job applicant to your boss, rather than talking poorly about a potential Black job applicant.

Hamilton and Trolie (1986) state that people inherently categorize others into groups, typically in ways that delineate the "we's from they's" mentality, which could help us understand society's arbitrary assignments of Whites and non-Whites and their relations to one another. Simply categorizing people in different groups, for any reason, creates an overall evaluative bias in which the members of one group feel as though they are more favorable than members of another group (Brewer, 1979). Oaker and Brown (1986) states "social characteristics place individuals in social networks that shape social identities and lead to social and political disagreements with other groups and their members". Recently, a scholar has conducted a case study in hopes of evaluating this thinking in terms of how crack cocaine has been used to racially discriminate against African Americans.

Mona Lynch (2011) has recently conducted a case study of institutional racism relating to crack cocaine and drug policy in Cleveland, Ohio. Her goals are to explain the history of crack cocaine in the courts, how crack cocaine policy has been used to disproportionately incarcerate African Americans, and how the "exploitation of empathy" can be used to make policy change (Lynch, 2011). Lynch (2011) has described empathy as an individual's capacity to take on the perspective of another and is applying this individual level attribute to a group level process. Lynch has asserted that empathy is generally felt stronger for similar others (Linder, 1996), and if the county's policy makers over represent one race, it may ultimately influence the decisions being made towards outside groups. If institutional empathy is locked out, it could potentially cause our policies to inherently, unintentionally, favor the group the policy makers consider themselves members of and "allow for systematic racial harm to persist" (Lynch, 2011).

We can apply the same mentality to the three counties in Ohio, and ask how well each county has represented "out" groups over the years. By researching the representation of each county, it would show if the area has been deprived of certain minority leadership, which to Lynch, could inevitably influence the level of institutional racism. I have researched the races of each Representative to Congress since 2000 in each county. In Cuyahoga County, there are four districts represented and non-Whites make up roughly 30% of the population. Since 2000, there have only been two non-White Representatives to Congress. In Franklin County, there are three districts represented and non-Whites make up about 21% of the population. Since 2000, there has been a total of one non-White Representative to Congress. Lastly, in Hamilton

County, there are two districts represented and non-Whites make up about 25% of the population. There have been no signs of a non-White Representative since 2000.

Relating this back to my original concern of whether a county's dominant party in power has an association with the level of institutional racism, ingroup theory may provide a good response. Looking at political parties in general, when aligned with one party or another, individuals share many of the same goals, beliefs, and practices with the rest of that group one belongs to (Kuklinski, 2001). If ingroup bias is true, one could make the determination that a political party in power may abuse that dynamic and act in aligning with their specific ingroup members without fully understanding the implications of leaving out a large portion of society that they may deem different than themselves.

Not only can we view ingroup bias in relation to political parties, we can also relate it to different racial identities. Once again, Lynch states that one has more empathy to an individual like him or her. By creating a "White" and "non-White" group, the history of representation for each county can be further explained. After analyzing the data, based on ingroup bias, we can hypothesize that Cuyahoga County, with two non-White Representatives to Congress since 2000, should have the lowest level of institutional racism. In contrast, Hamilton County, with only White Representatives since 2000, would have the highest level of institutional racism based on the ingroup bias school of thought. A total of only three non-White representatives to Congress in the counties with the three largest cities in Ohio is extremely concerning.

In conclusion, with the four schools of thought being described, although elements of each school help explain my question in some way, history and the culture of an area has led me to my primary hypotheses. To what extent does institutional racism explain votes for the Democratic party in these three counties? Ingroup bias, along with aversive racism, new institutionalism, and western ruggedness, all point to Hamilton County having the highest level of institutional racism and the lowest Democratic vote percentage, considering the history and culture of the region and the lack of representation in government, and Cuyahoga County having the least amount of institutional racism and the highest Democratic vote percentage with the history of a group mentality and Democratic ideals. I hypothesized that counties with a higher level of institutional racism will have a lower Democratic vote percentage.

Methods

I wanted to compare geographical areas with different ideological viewpoints for testing reasons, and because Ohio has gained a reputation for being a swing state for the past few decades in national elections, I chose to research Ohio. In Ohio, I decided to analyze the three counties that include the three largest cities in the state. Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties include Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati, respectively, and

have historically voted differently in elections. Cuyahoga County has voted more for the Democratic Party, Hamilton County has leaned more to the right, and Franklin County sits somewhere in the middle.

I determined measures of institutional racism in those three counties by referencing past literature. Literature has suggested and explained why variables such as education, poverty, income, housing, and health care are all possible ways to measure institutional racism (Henkel, Dovidio, Gaertner, 2006, Rothenberg, 2002). I originally included many independent variables, including the percentage of people owning a home, median home value, percentage of people under the poverty line, median home income, education level, percentage of people on food stamps, year, and county. After running my regression model, and checking for assumptions, the output showed a high level of multicollinearity, which forced me to remove some variables that might have been overlapping. I ended up with a total of four independent variables, including cases for homeownership, education level, infant mortality rates, and year (2008-2016). The data for homeownership and education levels came from the United States Census Bureau and were available in Excel spreadsheets. I downloaded every data set for each year and calculated the percentage for Whites and non-Whites. For infant mortality rates, I used data from the Ohio Department of Health, but county level data by race was only available from 2008-2012. I originally had cases for both Whites and non-Whites for these three variables, and after realizing the difference between them was the question of interest, I ended up taking the percentage point gap between Whites and non-Whites. I did so by subtracting the percentages of Whites and non-Whites from each other to get one number, which became the percentage point gap. Aside from gathering data on those three variables, I also found the percentage of votes for the Democratic party in these three counties as well, which I explain more below. I entered in all my data into one Excel sheet and imported it into SPSS.

I chose to focus on the years of 2008 through 2016 primarily based on election cycles. This period included five congressional elections (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016), three presidential elections (2008, 2012, 2016), and two gubernatorial elections (2010, 2014). I was not able to use state legislative elections as there were too many districts in each county to find data. Using census data from each county's board of elections website, I could find the percentage of people voting for both the Democrat and Republican party in each county for every year. I took the total raw number of votes for the Democratic party in each county in each election cycle and divided the number by the total votes, leaving me with a percentage of people who voted for the Democratic party for that year. I attempted to find state level race data by calling each county's board of elections, but was told they do not collect racial demographics. I chose to focus on congressional, presidential, and gubernatorial elections because the data was easily accessible and gave a clear representation of how the county leaned politically.

Because I utilized data from the United States Census Bureau for much of my variable data, I used their definitions for Whites and non-Whites as well. White is defined as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “White” or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, or Caucasian (Census, 2010). In my study, non-Whites are defined as a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “Black or African Am.” or report entries such as African American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian (Census, 2010). Below, I explain the data that I used for each variable measure.

Independent variables

Year: I researched the Census Bureau data for homeownership and education from 2008-2015, Ohio Department of Health information for infant mortality rate from 2008-2012, and included election results from 2008-2016.

Homeownership: Using United States Census Bureau data, I took the number of both whites and nonwhites for each year that owned a home and divided it by the total number of people either renting or owning a home in that county. I then subtracted the percentage for nonwhites from whites to find the percentage point gap for each year to include in my analysis.

Education level: The data I used to determine education level was from the United States Census Bureau, and included people over the age of 25 without a high school diploma. I found data for both whites and nonwhites, dividing out the number of people without a high school diploma to the total population over 25 in each county. I then subtracted the number of white people without a high school diploma from the number of nonwhites without a high school diploma to find one number for each year to include in my analysis.

Infant mortality rate: Using data from the Ohio Department of Health, I subtracted the white infant mortality rate from the nonwhite infant mortality rate for each county to get the gap between the two, for each year from 2008-2012. The infant mortality rate provided was per 1,000 live births (Ohio Department of Health, 2013).

Dependent variable

Democratic vote percentage: Using each county’s board of elections website, I could access PDF files with data from each election, whether that be congressional,

presidential, and/or gubernatorial, depending on the year. I added together the respective number of votes for the Democratic candidate each year, and divided it by the total number of votes for the Democratic and Republican party combined for each respected election. The Congressional districts were adjusted in 2013, and my information followed suit. The data I collected was from the county itself, not the whole district, so I am not sure this map adjustment mattered to my study.

The election data I collected for each county included the following:

2008: Congressional, Presidential
2010: Congressional, Gubernatorial
2012: Congressional, Presidential
2014: Congressional, Gubernatorial
2016: Congressional, Presidential

Using these variables, I created the following regression model.

Equation: Democratic vote percentage = $y + b^1(\text{year}) + b^2(\text{homeownership gap}) + b^3(\text{no high school diploma gap}) + b^4(\text{infant mortality rate gap})$.

Results

Before deciding to use all my variables, I tested my data to make sure it met some important assumptions, including multicollinearity, outliers, normality, linearity, and sample size. The first assumption I checked for was multicollinearity, which refers to the relationship among the independent variables. Multicollinearity can be checked by looking at Pearson's Correlation, which is a measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables. These values should be greater than .30 for every independent variable, and the correlation between each independent variable should not be greater than .70, as that would be an indication of multicollinearity. In my final data set, I did not have any values greater than .70 among my independent variables, however, I did have one issue with the level of education being below the threshold of .30 with a value of .199, which simply meant there was not a strong correlation between education and voting Democratic. Another way to check for multicollinearity is through coefficients. When looking at the tolerance level, it indicates how much of the variability of one predictor variable is not explained by other predictor variables in the model. This value should be above .10 for each independent variable to show there is not multicollinearity, and at least for this measure, there were no signs of multicollinearity in my final data set. Finally, we can look to the variance inflation factor (VIF), which is the inverse of the tolerance value, and becomes concerning when values are above 10.

Although my original data set had a few independent variables over the threshold, after removing many of them and repeating my model, I no longer had an issue, and my final data set met this assumption. I did not include a separate factor for counties in the model since my independent variable data was already separated by county. I also checked for normality and outliers, and my model met both assumptions as well.

When evaluating the model, I looked at the value given for R squared which shows how much of the variance in the dependent variable (combined vote from county for Democratic candidate), is explained by the independent variables (homeownership, education, infant mortality, year). After running a multiple regression analysis with the percentage of votes for the Democratic candidate as the dependent variable, 74.4% of the Democratic vote was explained by the gap between Whites and non-Whites in homeownership, education, infant mortality, and year (see Appendix A for output).

Before doing any research, I had predicted that Hamilton County would have the lowest percentage of Democratic votes, and the highest level of institutional racism because it has historically had a more individualistic culture, with no minority representation in congress. My regression analysis supports that assumption. After running the data with counties still included as a separate variable, being in Hamilton County alone, dropped the predicted percentage of Democratic votes by 24%. My literature has explained this claim through each school of thought in different dimensions. The historical background of the southern part of Ohio explains Hamilton county's low likelihood of voting Democratic. Historically, the area has been more of an individualistic society, which would influence the citizens to lean more conservative when voting. By exploring my claim that counties with a higher Democratic vote percentage have a lower level of institutional racism, I have found that for these three counties, my measures of institutional racism (homeownership, education, infant mortality, year), predicted 74.4% of the variance in voting for the Democratic party. My model suggested that the percentage point gap between Whites and non-Whites in homeownership made the strongest contribution to explaining the outcome, negatively impacting the Democratic vote. The percentage point gap in the level of education and infant mortality rate also negatively impacted the Democratic vote, but the year had a different result, as it increased the Democratic vote percentage. Although the gap in homeownership was uniquely significant in predicting the outcome ($p=.04$; standardized beta= -1.069), the rest of the regression analysis was not statistically significant, therefore removing the possibility of applying these results elsewhere.

Below, the results from my SPSS output are included in Table 1. The predictor variable wording is shortened, as it was listed in my SPSS data. To explain, "year" is simply the years between 2008-2016, "homeown" equates to homeownership, "educ" is the education level, and "inf mort" is the infant mortality rate.

Table 1

Predictor	Unstandardized Beta	Standardized Beta	t-Statistic	Sig.
year	1.28	0.364	1.196	0.298
homeown	-2.151	-1.069	-2.994	0.04
educ	-3.611	-0.77	-2.162	0.097
inf mort	-2.439	-0.642	-2.101	0.104

Below in Table 2, the percentage of Democratic votes for each county for each year is listed, with the mean percentage of Democratic votes for each county listed in the last column.

Table 2

% of Democrat votes						
	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	Mean
Cuyahoga	69.2	63.6	73.1	54.8	66.7	65.5
Franklin	57.1	52	59.6	45.8	59.6	54.8
Hamilton	53.2	47.6	49.7	39.7	50.7	48.2

Equation: Democratic vote percentage= -2500.539 + 1.280 (year) - 2.151 (homeownership) - 3.611 (no high school diploma) - 2.439 (infant mortality rate).

Discussion

Before doing any research, I hypothesized that counties with a higher level of institutional racism would have a lower Democratic vote percentage. I hypothesized this because of the assumption that the Republican Party is older fashioned, and not as progressive as the Democratic Party. To research this, I determined how past scholars have measured institutional racism and found that poverty, income, housing, education, and health care were possible indicators when evaluating discrepancies among races (Henkel, Dovidio, Gaertner, 2006, Rothenberg, 2002). To examine the discrepancy, I focused on the percentage point gap between Whites and non-Whites homeownership, level of education, and infant mortality rate in each of the three counties in Ohio (Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton). The study timeframe was between 2008 and 2016.

Of the three variables, the gap in homeownership was the strongest predictor and was uniquely significant in predicting the outcome ($p=.04$; standardized beta= -1.069).

In other words, the larger the percentage point gap between Whites and non-Whites for home ownership, the more it brought down the vote for the Democratic candidate. This result was interesting, as the counties were *less* likely to vote Democratic as the percentage point gap increased. Therefore, counties with a larger gap between the percentage of White versus non-White homeowners, voters were less likely to vote for the Democrats, the party focused more on improving inequality (Petrocik, 1996). Not only did homeownership negatively impact the Democratic vote, two other variables had the same affect. The larger the gap between Whites and non-Whites for the level of education, the lower the vote for the Democratic party, and the larger the gap between Whites and non-Whites for infant mortality rate, the more it brought down the Democratic vote as well. Year had the opposite effect, as over time, the Democratic vote percentage increased. This result is expected, as over time, the electorate is becoming more Democratic.

How can we explain why the three variables brought down the Democratic vote percentage? A possible explanation for homeownership bringing down the Democratic vote could be that non-Whites might not feel as though they are going to live in these areas for long periods of time, therefore refraining from buying a home, and simply renting until they find a permanent location. Another thought could be that non-Whites may just have more trouble purchasing a home in a less Democratic area, therefore sticking to renting their home. Do the inequalities between Whites and non-Whites encourage more people to vote for the Democratic party because of what issues they view the Democratic party to own? My results do not answer this question specifically, but the results do show that the greater the level of institutional racism, the more it brings down the Democratic vote percentage, therefore begging the question as to why? Are the minority groups that are being discriminated against not showing up to vote? As Petrocik (1996) suggests, Democrats are seen to handle issues such as social welfare and helping the poor better than Republicans, which would lead me to believe a higher level of institutional racism would demand more votes for the Democratic party, but that was not the case. By voting for the Democratic party, one might assume their concerns of inequality will be answered, as the Democratic party is known to own such issues, but my results did not explain this. Voter turnout becomes an issue, because if the minority groups that are being discriminated against are not turning out to vote, it could skew the results. If African Americans are not turning out to vote for the Democratic party to help fix the discrimination impacting them, we can ask ourselves why that might be the case? Do they feel as though they do not have a voice in the matter so their vote is irrelevant, or do they simply not have the transportation or time to go vote on election day?

Reviewing the results of my analysis, and understanding that my model seemed to explain much of the variance in Democratic voting using the gap between Whites and non-Whites in homeownership, education, and infant mortality, we should not forget

about the literature. How does the literature explain all the variables decreasing the Democratic vote percentage? Elements of each school of thought have played a role in answering my question. Aversive racism says that acts of racism may be unconscious and automatic, caused by historical perspectives. This ties into how each area was founded, by whom and how, relating to the school of thought focusing on Western culture and “rugged individualism”, of which discusses how individualistic or group-based the area had been in the past. The literature suggested that culture matters and the history of an area should play a significant role when analyzing institutional racism. Although my quantitative data does use institutional racism as a predictor of voting Democratic, looking at the bigger picture is essential when making any kind of judgement. A multitude of factors affect the culture of an area, including how the area was founded and by whom. This is important because the group of people who colonized such area, laid down the framework for how that society was going to function for generations to come, as mentalities are often passed down from parents to children. Ingroup bias would suggest that people have a natural desire for their ingroup members to do well, and for outgroup members to do poorly. Relating to the political parties in power, I found that if only one race is being represented, it might ultimately affect how those politicians vote, while not considering other race’s points of view.

These schools of thought have led me to believe that Hamilton County would have the highest level of institutional racism, as historically, the most southern part of Ohio bordering the former slave state of Kentucky, was founded on a more individualistic mentality, and had more pronounced slave ownership than the other two counties. As Hamilton leans more right, we would expect to see a lower vote percentage for the Democratic party, and as the literature and my results suggest, a higher level of institutional racism. Not only that, but Hamilton County has had no minority representation in Congress in the past few decades, and ingroup bias would suggest that that could increase its level of institutional racism. Cuyahoga County would have the highest percentage vote for the Democratic party, and the lowest level of institutional racism as New England had imported many of its beliefs of “communal living”, and the belief in the “equality of all people” into the area, along with having a few minority representatives in Congress in the past twenty years. The results of my analysis have clarified the views from the literature, as the larger the gap becomes between Whites and non-Whites for three variables, the more it brings down the Democratic vote percentage. There does seem to be an association between the level of institutional racism and Democratic vote percentage. Even though the model suggests certain quantitative results, including that the larger the gap in homeownership, education, and infant mortality rate between Whites and non-Whites, the more it decreased the Democratic vote, the culture of each area may be the greatest influence on people when voting for the Democratic or Republican party during election time.

Conclusion

The Republican Party has generally been less focused on equality, as demonstrated by its lack of issue ownership in social welfare programs and universal health care, and ownership of issues such as immigration (Petrocik, 1996). The Democratic Party, however, has historically focused on human rights by providing help to those in need through social welfare programs, and directing more attention to women's rights (Petrocik, 1996). Because of the controversy over this past Presidential election, and long standing assumptions made about the two main political parties, I was curious to see if there was any link between the level of institutional racism and the party favored by a county's voters. We know that over 90% of African Americans vote for the Democrat party and one may wonder why (Gallup, 2016). I have not yet been able to answer that question, but to begin, I explored "to what extent does institutional racism explain votes for the Democratic party?". I looked to three counties in Ohio which included Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton.

This study is significant because by understanding the association between levels of institutional racism and how people vote, we may begin to understand why a party wins or loses a county. With such a high percentage of African Americans voting for the Democratic party, we can see why Democratic candidates focus in on this demographic to win votes. Institutional racism is real and undeniably prominent in the United States, and being blind to the faults in our system will only perpetuate the problem. Although this study does not lead us to how we might end institutional racism, there are implications for the two major parties as to why they are not getting votes, and possibly presents how to win more votes in the future. It also begs policy makers to be aware of the influence of discrimination, including the underlying thought process in which these biases form.

If I could do this study once more, I would consider the possible voter turnout issue that could be present in these three counties when analyzing how Democratic or Republican an area is, as depending on who votes, could influence the results one way or another. If African Americans are not turning out to vote for the Democratic party, why is that the case? Could their lack of voting be influenced by another form of institutional racism, such as voter ID laws, or the lack of transportation, and time to go vote on election day? I think it would be interesting to see how the results would change if I had included more counties into my analysis to see how they all compared to one another. Instead of finding data over the 2008-2016 time span, it would be more telling if the analysis was comparing a Presidential election from the 1960s, to that of a more recent Presidential election, to examine the extent institutional racism has increased or decreased over time.

Moving forward, I would like to understand what the Democratic Party is doing to solve issues of institutional racism. A large majority of African Americans consider themselves Democratic, and in these three counties in Ohio, the greater the level of institutional racism, the fewer the votes for the Democratic party. But why is that the case, and what is holding the Democratic party back from being elected into these areas if the party is known to help inequalities? If the Democratic party is not being elected into areas of which need more equality among the races, does voter turnout play a role? Would it make a difference if the politicians in charge were of a certain race? If the Democratic party is doing its job and removing inequalities, shouldn't the areas that have higher levels of institutional racism be electing that party into power? How do we, as a society, change the culture that has been around for so many years that perpetuates racial discrimination, and is it even plausible? The question at hand was to what extent does institutional racism explain votes for the Democratic party, and for Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties in Ohio, my measures of institutional racism (homeownership, education, infant mortality, year), predicted 74.4% of the variance in voting for the Democratic party.

References

- Brewer, M. B. (1979). In-group bias in the minimal intergroup situation: A cognitive-motivational analysis. *Psychological bulletin*, 86(2), 307.
- Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. E., Kawakami, K., & Hodson, G. (2002). Why can't we just get along? Interpersonal biases and interracial distrust. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8(2), 88. <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/cdp/8/2/88/>
- Egan, P. J. (2013). *Partisan priorities: How issue ownership drives and distorts American politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Felski, R. (1989). Feminism, postmodernism, and the critique of modernity. *Cultural Critique*, (13), 33-56.
- Giroux, H. A. (1993). Living dangerously: Identity politics and the new cultural racism: Towards a critical pedagogy of representation. *Cultural studies*, 7(1), 1-27.
- Hamilton, D. L., & Trolie, T. K. (1986). Stereotypes and stereotyping: An overview of the cognitive approach.

Henkel, K. E., Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2006). Institutional discrimination, individual racism, and Hurricane Katrina. *Analyses of social issues and public policy*, 6(1), 99-124.

Kuklinski, J. H., Quirk, P. J., Jerit, J., & Rich, R. F. (2001). The political environment and citizen competence. *American Journal of Political Science*, 410-424.

Lopez, I. F. H. (2000). Institutional racism: Judicial conduct and a new theory of racial discrimination. *Yale Law Journal*, 1717-1884.

Lynch, M. (2011). Crack pipes and policing: A case study of institutional racism and remedial action in Cleveland. *Law & Policy*, 33(2), 179-214.

Oaker, G., & Brown, R. (1986). Intergroup relations in a hospital setting: A further test of social identity theory. *Human Relations*, 39(8), 767-778.

Ohio City Incorporated. (2016). History, Ohio City. Retrieved February, 2017, from <http://www.ohiocity.org/history>

Petrocik, J. R. (1996). Issue ownership in presidential elections, with a 1980 case study. *American journal of political science*, 825-850.

Pew Research Center. (2016). <http://www.pewresearch.org/>

Roseboom, E. H., & Weisenburger, F. P. (1934). history of Ohio.

Rothenberg, P. S. (2002). *White privilege: essential readings on the other side of racism*. New York: Worth.

Stephan, W. G., & Finlay, K. (1999). The role of empathy in improving intergroup relations. *Journal of Social issues*, 55(4), 729-743.

Strobel, C. (2008). *The Testing Grounds of Modern Empire: The Making of Colonial Racial Order in the American Ohio Country and the South African Eastern Cape, 1770s-1850s*. Peter Lang.

Thomas, E. F., McGarty, C., & Mavor, K. I. (2009). Transforming “apathy into movement”: The role of prosocial emotions in motivating action for social change. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 13(4), 310-333.

United States Census Bureau. Data Access and Dissemination Systems (DADS). (2010, October 05). American FactFinder. Retrieved 2017, from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Wise, T. (2016). White Privilege, Racism, White Denial & The Cost of Inequality. Lecture. Retrieved February, 2017, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPiGMP-_B3I

Appendix A: Output of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.147 ^a	.022	-.118	9.78566
2	.863 ^b	.744	.489	6.61701

