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THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT ON AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL  
PARTICIPATION AND PARTISANSHIP

by

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M.A., Political Science, University of Missouri – St. Louis, 2007  
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## **ABSTRACT**

What explains the intensity of African American partisan attraction to the Democratic Party? This dissertation investigates how environmental or contextually based theory informs our understanding of partisan affiliation and political mobilization in general and specifically for African Americans. The dissertation research focuses on the extent to which geographic context at the neighborhood level influences the strength of black partisan attachment. I hypothesize that interactions at the neighborhood level affect African American partisanship; specifically, the racial composition of neighborhoods affects the strength of Democratic affiliation. The data used in this study is based on survey data of individuals residing in concentrated and non-concentrated African American neighborhoods collected in three successive waves during the 1996 presidential election in St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Indianapolis, and Marion County, Indiana. Using ordered logit regression, the findings indicate that respondents showed a predicted probability of strong Democratic affiliation in neighborhoods of concentrated and sparse black populations. However, in racially diverse populations, the respondents showed decreased levels of strong Democratic affiliation. Overall, the empirical findings support the hypothesized curvilinear effect of the racial composition of neighborhoods on the strength of African American Democratic Party affiliation.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **The Research Problem**

Historical data and elections have confirmed African American partisan affiliation is predominantly with the Democratic Party. Johnson and Gordon (2005) demonstrate black political affiliation is principally with the Democratic Party, but as blacks move away from the geographic and contextual bounds of black neighborhoods into residences surrounded by white neighbors, work environments with predominantly white co-workers, and worship at predominantly white religious institutions their political affiliation to the Democratic Party decreases. However, the magnitude of the decrease does not equate to a full retreat from the Democratic Party. Tate (2003) and Dawson (1994) demonstrate that African Americans of all economic strata exhibit widespread partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party. My dissertation research attempts to explain whether geographic neighborhood context contributes to our understanding of minority political participation. In this dissertation, I will investigate whether the intensity of African American Democratic partisan affiliation is influenced by the changing context of racial geographies.

The primary focus of my dissertation research centers on whether the intensity of African American Democratic partisan affiliation is influenced by social network communications. African Americans residing in black neighborhoods receive intra-network cues which reinforce and maintain majority partisan affiliations, while African

Americans residing, working, and worshipping in a racially diverse environment receive varied cues from heterogeneous sources that alter historical affiliations and lead to decreased levels of partisan affiliation or the intensity of affiliation with the Democratic Party (Johnson and Gordon 2005, 102). For blacks residing in white neighborhoods, the opposite effect occurs. They become similar to the Jewish school children observed by Cutler (2006, 696) who resided in majority Southern Christian neighborhoods. She observed that the Jewish school children exhibited a greater sense of self identity and an emotional distance from their white Christian neighbors (Caughy et al. 2006, 1223). African Americans are the minority group residing, working, or worshipping within the space of the majority group, and they are bombarded with white normative cues.<sup>1</sup> Stoll (2001, 548) found that African Americans residing in concentrated black neighborhoods have more political based voluntary associations than African Americans residing in non-concentrated African American neighborhoods.

DuBois (1903, 4) coined the phrase “double consciousness” to describe the self awareness of blacks as dually American and black—a social negative reinforced by their historical negative treatment by whites. I argue blacks residing in white neighborhoods become subtly aware of their blackness which manifest in a rejection, if only subtle of white norms, and an acceptance of historical African American norms. Hence, for blacks residing in white neighborhoods, we expect to observe their intensity of partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party to be greater than that of blacks residing in racially diverse neighborhoods.

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<sup>1</sup> Normative cues refer to ethnic and/or environmental communications which reinforce primary group expectancy-value reactions and attitudes, specifically, the assimilation and acculturation into prevailing environmental political orientations (Bagozzi and Schnedlitz 1985; Lamare 1982).

Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987, 1197) argue politics is a social activity imbedded within structured patterns of social interaction and explain that political information is conveyed through social interaction, via discussions, formal meetings, and informal meetings; political preferences are sustained via these “socially supplied” information channels. African American communication is bounded by racially homogenous environments. Communication networks develop in communities that are culturally, geographically, or ethnically bounded that reinforce political preferences (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1197). Johnson and Gordon (2005, 102) demonstrate that African American partisan preferences are altered when individual African American environments shift from predominantly black to white environments.

The effects of whites residing in proximity to blacks have been explored (Baybeck 2006; Huckfeldt 1986; Huckfeldt and Sprague 2004; Johnson and Gordon 2005; Carsey 1995; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989; Huckfeldt 1979; and Key 1949). Key’s (1949) seminal study of post-World War II Southern society highlighted a white populace that competed for socioeconomic resources with African Americans. He found that whites residing in close proximity to blacks exhibited negative contextual responses to African Americans—the “black threat” hypothesis. The contextual effects of blacks residing in environments with majority white populaces and diverse contexts have been little explored (Johnson and Gordon 2005; Huckfeldt and Sprague 2004). Johnson and Gordon’s (2005) focus is the context of black partisan attachment, specifically for African Americans residing, working, socializing, and worshipping in the context of white majority environments. They find that African Americans residing in a majority white neighborhood will have a weaker sense of identification with the Democratic Party

than blacks residing in majority black neighborhoods. This dissertation seeks to build upon the findings of Johnson and Gordon (2005) but clarifying the small differences in partisanship which they observed. They observed that African Americans residing in white neighborhoods exhibited lower levels of partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party than blacks residing in black neighborhoods, but their examination focused on three environments—black majority environment, racially mixed (50/50 black and white), and white majority environment.

I argue that Johnson and Gordon's focus on the partisan differences from Democratic to Republican affiliation measures negligible differences within African American partisan affiliation because of the very low percentage of African Americans who identify as Republicans. The Indianapolis-St. Louis Election Study, 1996-1997, ICPSR, collected by Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000) is a mix of demographic and survey data organized by means of geographical location. The data were collected from a variety of respondents residing in the cities and surrounding suburbs of St. Louis and Indianapolis during and preceding the 1996 presidential election. The respondents were asked a variety of questions ranging from individual partisan affiliation to likeability of presidential candidates. Of the 245 black respondents from the Indianapolis-St. Louis Election Study, only 4.5 percent identify as Republican while 76.7 percent identify as Democrat. At the aggregate level, modern Republican presidential nominees have only received 11 percent of the African American vote (Fauntroy 2007, 10). Dawson (1994) and Tate (2003) demonstrate that black partisan support of the Democratic Party crosses all economic strata; thus, a measurement of the intensity of African American support of the Democratic Party appears to be an improved measure of black partisan behavior

across environmental contexts. Johnson and Gordon (2005, 113) found the following sparse minimum to maximum differences in predicted probabilities for African American partisan affiliation from Democratic to Republican: +.03 for blacks working in the predominantly white environment; +.07 for blacks worshipping in predominantly white churches; and +.04 for blacks with majority white friends.

Johnson and Gordon's (2005, 113) findings reveal miniscule changes in predicted probabilities of African American partisan affiliation for minimum to maximum differences from Democratic to Republican which is indicative of little to no differentiation among black partisan affiliation from Democrat to Republican. The small differentiation is a shortcoming of their research because it shows the lack of variation of African American partisan affiliation; therefore, it confirms the concreteness of black partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party.

A second shortcoming of Johnson and Gordon's research is how they define racial contexts. Their designation of mixed racial environments at half black and white rarely exists beyond the wider environmental context of the city. Cities such as St. Louis, Missouri have population percentages close to the fifty/fifty racial mix, but at the level of the neighborhood, such a split is rarely found. For example, of the 2,151 survey respondents from Huckfeldt and Sprague's 2000 Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset, which is composed of respondents residing in the St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Indianapolis, and Marion County, Indiana areas only five (23 percent) resided at the block group level in neighborhoods with a fifty/fifty black/white racial split. Racially mixed environmental contexts designed to capture mixed racial environments at the block group level are necessary to explore the effect of racially mixed environments on black partisan

affiliation with a functional definition of racially mixed environments not stringently measured at fifty/fifty.

Baybeck (2006, 390) provides a functional definition of the racially mixed environmental context at the block group level. Baybeck defines the black contextual setting as 60 percent or greater African American population; the mixed context at a floor of 20 percent and a ceiling of 60 percent; and the white context as 60 percent or greater white population. Quinn and Pawasarat (2003, 3) define racially diverse neighborhoods as 80 percent white and at least 20 percent black. Neighborhoods over the 80 percent threshold of white population are considered less integrated.

In this dissertation, I argue that contextual and sociopolitical networks exist within African American communities that maintain historical partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party. The sociopolitical changes of modern society have enabled blacks to move from racially homogenous black communities to racially and ethnically diverse communities. I argue in racially and ethnically diverse communities, the strength of black partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party will decrease. For blacks residing in communities with white majority populations, their strength of partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party strengthens. I argue the strength of black Democratic partisan affiliation weakens in racially and ethnically diverse communities because of the absence of embedded communication networks which are traditionally located in homogenous black communities and the creation of new communication networks which do not emphasize Democratic affiliation. For blacks residing in majority white neighborhoods, there is an absence of traditional embedded communication networks that are located in homogenous black communities. There is a rejection or an absence of new

communication networks for blacks with their white neighbors. African Americans fail to form associations with their white majority neighbors and are similar to the white Republican autoworkers observed by Finifter (1974, 615) who became socially introverted, resisting association with the numerically superior Democrats.

### **Theoretical Approach to the Problem**

Academics argue that as Americans traverse the economic ladder the probability of identification with the Republican Party increases (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2003, 12). Campbell et al. (1960, 166) assert after reviewing partisan identification surveys of American voters, “. . . but in general the Republican Party has an air of respectability, conservatism and social status which the Democratic Party does not fully show.” Given the class role generally attributed to identification with the Republican Party, a simple correlation of socioeconomic status and minority identification with the Republican Party should exist for black voters, albeit at increasingly smaller numbers, with the additional factors of religion, social issues, and ideological conservatism. Tate (2003) and Dawson (1994) find that for African Americans there is no stratification between economic class and partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party.

America’s communities are homogenous enclaves, delineated by race and class—blacks predominantly reside in communities surrounded by other blacks, whites with other whites (Drier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2004, 72). America’s communities are further segregated by socioeconomic status with middle-class families residing in communities surrounded by other middle-class families, wealthy families with other wealthy families, and poor families with other poor families (Drier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2004, 66).

There is a gap in the literature on the influence of contextual factors in explaining African American partisan affiliations. This dissertation seeks to fill that void by investigating the extent to which geographic context influences black partisan attachment. The contextual effects of individual environmental interactions of African Americans residing in minority dominated communities affect individual political mobilization because of access to cultural, religious, and political institutions that are the key building blocks of partisan development and mobilization (Johnson and Gordon 2005, 104). Blacks residing in racially diverse communities are less influenced by environmentally bounded communication networks traditionally located in homogenous black communities and are influenced by their increased interaction with their diverse neighbors. Socioeconomic status enables middle-class blacks to out-migrate to the suburbs away from the concentrated mass of black populations. Outmigration to the suburbs or to racially diverse neighborhoods limits African American interactions with other African Americans; thus, resulting in increased individual interactions with non-minorities and non-minority institutions.

Racial and ethnic discrimination and segregation contributed to geographic segregation which is the basis of heavily concentrated black populations (Price et al. 1970, 53). The twentieth century development of Northern industrial based urban centers increasingly attracted black workers for industrial employment opportunities away from the Southern rural racially oppressive plantation life to racially homogenous communities. The result of minority migrations from the rural South was increased minority urban populations but in geographically defined African American neighborhoods (Sassan 1990, 467). Minority social networks developed as they did for



other ethnic based urban populaces in minority concentrated urban neighborhoods (Johnson and Gordon 2005; Manzano 2007). Because of segregation and discrimination, the outmigration and subsequent integration of minorities into the majority population did not occur as timely as it did with other ethnic populations.

The civil rights era afforded racial and ethnic minorities integration opportunities. However, the outmigration and subsequent growth of the black middle-classes occurred relatively late (Frazier 1965, 15). The expansion of minority middle-classes resulted in the outmigration of middle-class minorities from central city neighborhoods to suburban neighborhoods (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 20). Suburban living, especially for blacks, has a connotation of socioeconomic status with suburban blacks outpacing central city minorities in educational levels and employment rates (Wiese 2005; Alba and Logan 1991; and Gale, Grier and Grier 1986). Most African Americans reside in urban enclaves and are disproportionately less educated than suburbanites. Subsequently, they are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed (Current Population Survey 2008).

Blacks have followed the suburban migration pattern which has been enabled by their socioeconomic status (Weise 2005; Alba and Logan 1991; and Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986). Blacks have increasingly left the confines of homogenous black neighborhoods for racially diverse neighborhoods which enable a significant change in individual environmental interactions and influences. This dissertation research is an attempt to investigate the influence of geography upon black partisanship for blacks who reside in predominantly white, racially diverse, and majority black neighborhoods.

### **Significance of the Research**

The research question, whether the composition of neighborhoods in urban and suburban areas influences the strength of African American Democratic Party affiliation, is theoretically interesting and relevant to the political science literature for the following reasons. First, this research expands our understanding of the influences on black partisanship by building on previous research by Johnson and Gordon (2005). Johnson and Gordon's (2005, 113) findings that blacks residing and working in predominantly white neighborhoods lead to decreased support of the Democratic Party, leaves room for further investigation of the influence of contextual factors on African American partisan affiliation. Unlike Johnson and Gordon's research, my research focuses on the strength of black political partisanship within racially mixed environments in which I argue generates significant changes in black partisan behavior. Given the homogeneous nature of black partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party, traditional approaches to understanding black partisan identification by focusing solely on the Democratic, Republican and Independent labels are limited. There is little variation of individual African American partisan affiliation among the two primary political parties. Therefore, I argue that the focus of research must include the levels of intensity of African American Democratic affiliation. My dissertation research seeks to fill an important gap in the minority political participation literature and the social context literature by analyzing the importance of geographic context as a determinant of the levels of intensity of black partisan affiliation within the Democratic Party.

Second, my dissertation research contributes to our understanding of social capital theory by utilizing it as an explanatory framework in an investigation of African American partisanship and environmental context theory (Putnam 2000; Skocpol 1999;

Berry 1999; Brady et al. 1995; and Johnson and Gordon 2005). It merges environmental context theory (Baybeck 2006; Huckfeldt 1986; Huckfeldt and Sprague 2004; Carsey 1995; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989; Huckfeldt 1979; Key 1949) with social capital theory to explain levels of intensity of black partisanship. Finally, the dissertation research investigates political mobilization as a function of geographic context and embedded network communications.

The unit of analysis is the individual survey respondent coupled to their racial geographic locales (neighborhoods). The geographic nature of the data differs from the boundaries of the state and nation. It lies within wards that compose the political boundaries of the city and county. Wards or neighborhoods can be delineated into block groups and they may or may not be geographically contiguous. The multifaceted nature of the geographic context is important because people live in many differing overlapping contexts (Baybeck 2006, 387). The neighborhood appears the most salient unit of social space from the largest aggregate to the smallest, from the nation, state, congressional district, municipality, voting precinct, to neighborhood. However, Baybeck (2006, 388) observes that "...the multi-dimensional conception of context suggests that different contexts operate in different ways upon whites and that the effect of context depends upon the salience of the geography to the orientation in question."

Baybeck's (2006) research focused on whites but it is relevant to my research because most Americans reside in racially homogeneous neighborhoods. While the city may be racially diverse, particular neighborhoods in the city remain racially homogenous. For African Americans, this approach to understanding the influence of geography in the context of city and county is relevant for the following reason. African Americans reside

in urban classified areas in disproportionate numbers while whites disproportionately reside outside urban areas. The urban environment may be composed of a racially homogenous population but the environment in which African Americans reside in urban neighborhoods may be different from the environments in which African Americans reside in suburban neighborhoods. The neighborhood unit appears to be the most relevant for this research although the city versus suburban influences will be examined in this study. African Americans reside in homogenous neighborhoods but the increased flow of African Americans into previously white neighborhoods offers an opportunity to investigate the differences, if any, of the levels of African American attachment to the Democratic Party in different racial settings.

Third, this dissertation research is important because its focus is on African Americans. As previously mentioned, scholars (Baybeck 2006; Huckfeldt 1986; Huckfeldt and Sprague 2004; Logan and Stults 2001; Carsey 1995; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989; Huckfeldt 1979; and Key 1949) investigated the importance of environment interactions for whites. Little scholarly attention has been placed on the influence of environment on African Americans. The predominant view in the minority political participation literature establishes that black partisan identification is static and predominantly with the Democratic Party (see Tate 2003 and Dawson 1990 although their focus is on the influence of socioeconomic status). My dissertation refocuses African American partisan attachment away from the traditional Republican-Democrat dichotomy to the intensity levels of Democratic Party affiliation. My dissertation research is expected to fill an important void in the literature because of its dual focus on

the individual intensity of attachment of blacks to the Democratic Party and the relevance of geographic space in understanding partisan attachment.

### **Data and Methods**

The empirical analysis utilizes data extracted from the Indianapolis-St. Louis Election Study, 1996-1997, ICPSR, collected by Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000) during the 1996 presidential election period. In three successive waves, they conducted a survey of citizen attitudes about the campaign and the election from March 1996 to February 1997, with a fourth wave completed in February 1998 for baseline measures. The sample was taken from lists of registered voters in three counties: the city of St. Louis, Missouri, suburban St. Louis County, Missouri, and Indianapolis, and Marion County, Indiana. Huckfeldt and Sprague surveyed approximately 2,200 respondents of which approximately 1,800 were white and 280 black. Baybeck (2006, 389) modified the data by geocoding; a method which places the respondents onto a map by their individual addresses. He then placed each respondent into their various racial neighborhood contexts by matching them to aggregate units: the census block group and the municipality.

I use Huckfeldt and Sprague's dataset for my research for the following reasons: its geographic neighborhood focus, its use of individual level survey responses from multi-racial respondents, the use of varied socioeconomic levels of the individual level respondents, the sociopolitical nature of individual responses, and the use of two Midwestern cities. I expect the empirical examination to reveal the following relationships: that individual African American respondents residing in black and white majority neighborhoods will exhibit similar high levels of partisan attraction to the

Democratic Party, while African American respondents residing in racially diverse neighborhoods will exhibit decreased levels of partisan attraction to the Democratic Party. See Figure 1.1 for a visual representation of the hypothesis which displays a high distribution near the apex of the curve of Democratic affiliation for blacks residing in black and white concentrated neighborhoods and a low distribution near the trough of the curve for blacks residing in racially diverse neighborhoods.

### **Insert Figure 1.1 About Here**

The statistical technique used to investigate the hypothesized relationships in my dissertation is ordered logistical regression. Ordered logistical regression uses maximum likelihood estimation and is suitable for ordinal dependent variables. The dependent variable is measured in terms of the partisan intensity of the respondent (1 Strong Democrat, 2 Weak Democrat, 3 Independent, 4 Weak Republican, and 5 Strong Republican). A description of the model is presented as follows:

**Dependent Variable:** Partisan Identity Intensity = **Independent Variables:** percentage black per block group, percent black per block group squared, membership in a neighborhood organization, length of residence, membership in a church group + **Control Variables:** income, age, education, gender, median household income, percentage of female headed households with children, and a dichotomous city variable (St. Louis-Other).

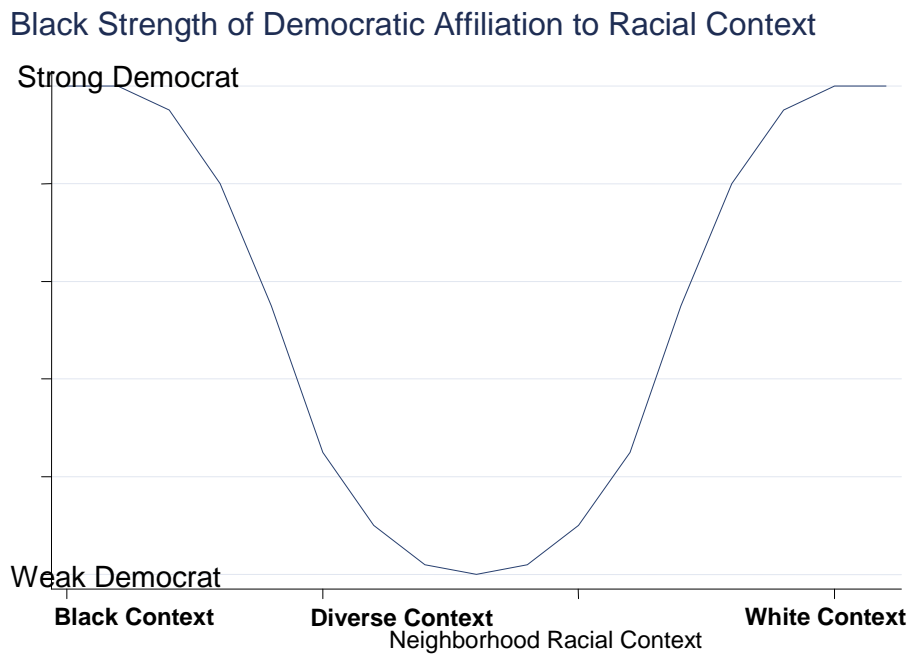
This research is limited by two factors: the time frame and the use of two locations. The research question is examined based on a survey taken from 1996 to 1997. Fourteen years have passed since the original survey and social and political changes have occurred over the period which may have altered individual perceptions. The use of two locations, the St. Louis and Indianapolis areas, limits the generalizability of the findings because of the social differences among residents of the two areas compared to

other geographic regions. However, the racial make-up of America's neighborhoods remain static, homogeneous, and individual communication networks in the homogenous communities affect partisan perceptions that make the data relevant.

### **Chapter Outline**

Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature which highlights important scholarly works analyzing American political participation followed by an analysis of works focusing on African American political participation. Chapter 3 is an examination of the role of geography in African American political behavior. It will review the role of federal policy in perpetuating housing segregation, the influence of urban machine politics on black political participation, and the role of social class and geography on African American residential patterns in St. Louis and Indianapolis. Chapter 4 will present the theoretical approach of the dissertation including relevant social capital theory, geographical influences, and the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 5 will present the research and methodology of the dissertation including data, model specification, and methodology. Chapter 6 is a presentation of the methodological findings and analysis. Finally, Chapter 7 presents a summary of this research's findings, conclusions and implications for future research.

**Figure 1.1: Curve of Hypothesized Black Strength of Democratic Affiliation to Neighborhood Racial Context.**



Y- Axis equals strength of Democratic affiliation and X-Axis equals neighborhood racial context.



## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will review the major findings of the American political participation, social capital theory, and demographic context literature that contribute to our understanding of whether geographic space explains the intensity of African American affiliation with the Democratic Party. I will focus on the political participation literature that defines participation, what constitutes participation, and what are the characteristics of those who participate. Next, I will review the literature that examines how partisan identification influences participation. Specific attention will be placed on the African American political participation literature. Finally research that incorporates environmental influences, institutions, and environmental interactions for minority and African American participation and partisan affiliation will be reviewed.

#### **Political Participation Literature**

Dahl (1961, 226) defined the primary act of American political participation as voting. It is the seminal act of choosing a representative voice in a representative democracy. Citizens weigh the opportunity costs of not voting to voting and if the benefits outweigh the costs, they vote (Downs 1957, 260).<sup>1</sup> Individuals possess an equal

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<sup>1</sup>It is simplistic to define participation solely as the act of voting; scholars have observed modern participation trends including email, phone contact with elective officials, letters, political events, and protests (Best and Krueger 2005, 185; Alvarez and Hall 2004, 13; Carpini 2000, 342; and Cant and William 1993, 187).

worth in democracies, and the collective decisions of political actors should equally consider the preferences of all the citizens (Best and Krueger 2005, 184). During the process of collective decision making, the interests of every person who is subject to the decision must (within the limits of feasibility) be accurately interpreted and made known to the decision makers (Dahl 1989, 86). The simplest form of expressing political communication, participation, or individual citizen preferences to the political decision makers is voting.

Given that voting is the prime expression of participation, the question becomes who votes. Dahl (1961, 226) identified seven characteristics of individuals who were likely voters: individuals with higher incomes, high amounts of free time, high social status, experience with prior voting, possession of political information, a high degree of social contacts, and employment contact with government officials. The seven characteristics can be characterized by the term socioeconomic status (SES). Citizens of higher socioeconomic status participate more in politics than citizens of low SES (Rosenstone and Hanson 2003, 8; Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995, 271; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 8; and Verba and Nie 1972, 130).

Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980, 8), utilizing empirical demographic data that include age, income, residence, and place (geographic region) from the Current U.S. Census Population File, empirically explored Downs's (1957, 260) premise that the "Cost of voting must outweigh the cost of not voting." They determined that voting is a reflection of motivation to do so and the cost of individual voting. Individuals weigh the following variables when deciding to vote: whether the vote will make a difference in the outcome of the election; whether the act of voting resolve interpersonal pressures to

do so; whether the act of voting meets one's civic duty to do so; and whether the individual has a primary interest in the election (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 8).

Wolfinger and Rosenstone (13) write that citizens with higher levels of SES participate more in politics. They write that more schooling creates a greater ability to learn about politics and to master the democratic processes; turnout increases with age; and there is a positive relationship of income to turnout (20). Conversely, Wolfinger and Rosenstone find that poor people have less time to vote because of employment and family obligations while wealthy individuals acquire in their professions and environment the interest and skill to vote (20). For their model, income determines neighborhood and exposure to a variety of norms and pressures. For the wealthy individual, socialized interactions manifest in pressures to vote and an equal pressure to maintain their higher social status via political participation.

Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995, 154) empirically analyzed the mechanism by which higher SES translates into greater political activity: "Who possesses the characteristics that enable participation?" Their approach begins by determining the relative impact of various explanatory factors on participation and access if the most vital characteristics are equally distributed in the population. They combine the who and why questions to suggest that higher SES individuals possess larger stores of social resources (civic skills) that enable them to overcome the high cost of political engagement (271). Their study differs from Wolfinger and Rosenstone's (1980) research in that they argue the poor have equal amounts of leisure time as the wealthy. Brady, Verba, and Schlozman argue that the poor are underemployed or unemployed which translate into leisure time but that they lack the civic skills that manifest in political participation.

Rosenstone and Hansen (2003) examined the question of participation from the scope of motivation. Like Brady et al. (1995), Rosenstone and Hansen (2003) argue that individuals of lower SES have equal if not more leisure time than the rich; however, they argue participation is contingent upon motivation. They write that political participation is action directed explicitly toward influencing the distribution of social goods and services (4). Participation in politics puts demands on individuals' scarce resources and some individuals are better at paying the cost than others (12). Individuals with high levels of SES are better equipped to pay the cost of participation and are targeted by political leaders to participate (12).

Rosenstone and Hansen (2003, 12) argue that people who participate in politics are affected by two problems: the paradox of participation and rational ignorance. The paradox of participation holds that the benefits of elections are collective and the result of the election will be the same if one participates or not. For the rational voter, voting is a waste of a valuable resource, time, since a single vote will not determine the outcome of an election (22). The second paradox of rational ignorance holds that the cost of obtaining political information is high and the value of political information once obtained is low. If an individual obtains all the necessary information, his or her single vote weighed against the collective votes of the many is insignificant. Thus, the individual voter forgoes the cost of obtaining political information and relies on the cues of family, friends, and leaders when choosing for whom to cast their vote (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003, 22 and Zaller 1992, 218).

The American political system is dominated by two political parties. One chooses to affiliate with one of the two major political parties or even with one of several minor

political parties or no affiliation at all. If cues received from family, friends, and elites play a role in participation then they must play an equal role in affiliation (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003, 22 and Zaller 1992, 218). Campbell et al. (1960) presents a political socialization model of partisanship: party identification constitutes an effective attachment to a social group, in this case a political party. These attachments are learned early in life, often at a pre-political age and remain stable over time (Abramson and Ostrom 1991; Green and Palmquist 1990; Miller 1991). For Campbell's model, change results from great personal changes like marriage or from exceptional political changes (Alvarez and Bedolla 2003).

Contemporary political scientists have critiqued and revised Campbell's et al. seminal work in which they argue that party identification is more malleable than what the traditional model espoused (Alvarez and Bedolla 2003; Hero et al., 2000, Fiorina 1981; Franklin 1984; Franklin and Jackson 1983; Markus and Converse 1979; McKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989). Contemporary political science scholars disagree on the agents driving change but they agree that political events do affect the nature and strength of party identification and that during their lifetimes Americans do switch their party identification (Alvarez and Bedolla 2003). Fiorina (1981) argues that voter identification is dynamic and is driven by retrospective past votes and political and economic evaluations. Markus and Converse (1979) argue that party identification is dynamic but that change is grounded in the individual policy perspective of voters (Franklin and Jackson 1984). Alvarez and Bedolla (2003, 33) construct a model of voter identification utilizing empirical survey data and conclude that three kinds of factors affect the nature and stability of party identification for Latino voters: social issues and a person's

socialization process, the nature of the political environment and resulting policy preferences, and economic status.

Alvarez and Bedolla's (2003) three factors that affect the nature and stability of party identification coincide with the necessary precursors of political mobilization as outlined by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993): education, gender, race, language, and political efficacy. Blacks meet one of the necessary precursors—race. Garcia (2003, 90) describes political participation as the involvement of an individual or group of individuals with the central objective of influencing the policy-making process and entails the accumulation and utilization of resources, developing positive participatory orientations, and the recruitment of others (mobilization). Individuals utilize their acquaintances and relationships to transmit and discuss political preferences (Manzano 2007; Leighley 1990; and McClurg 2003).

Political party affiliation is the foremost correlate of the direction of an individual's vote and has a historical intergenerational role as partisan affiliations have elements of parental socialization (Hero et al. 2000, 531). According to Hero et al. (2000, 531), "That is, the single best indicator of how a person votes in an election remains the person's partisan identification." Identification with a political party serves as a valuable psychological organizing mechanism that assists voters in making sense of the complex political system. Partisan affiliations are passed from generation to generation via parental socialization but are not limited to parental socialization (Achen 2002, 151). Valentino and Sears (1998, 150) conclude that both a high salience event at the aggregate level (presidential elections) and high individual levels of communication (parent-child communication) focusing on the event are necessary to maximize

socialization gains for adolescents in gaining partisan affiliations. Other social factors of political identification exist and are identifiable under the umbrella of identity politics.

The high level of partisan attachment of African Americans with the Democratic Party has translated to 89 percent of African Americans' presidential votes being cast for Democratic candidates (Fauntroy 2007, 10). Tate (2003) and Dawson (1994) find African American partisan attachment is solidly with the Democratic Party and devoid of any strong class cleavages for support of the Republican Party. Swain (1993, 73) finds African American support of Democratic candidates is nearly statistically complete in black dominated congressional districts.

Dawson (1994, 4) utilizes survey data of African Americans to explore a perceived class stratification of African American partisanship. His argument is that as the expanding black middle-class, "... [becomes] affluent, they seek to preserve their 'well-earned' measure of security and privilege by forming coalitions with other racial or ethnic groups whose economic interest are similar." Dawson argues that growing economic polarization within the African American community leads to class conflict which manifests in class related partisan differences with an expanding black middle-class forming a partisan coalition with other middle-class racial or ethnic groups. Dawson concludes no such coalition exists within the black middle-class and black middle-class partisan affiliation remains identical to the black lower class; that is, aligned with the Democratic Party.

Tate's (2003, 5) exploration of African American partisanship is conducted at the congressional district level. She finds black voters choose representatives that are not different from white representatives in vocation, previous occupations; but in majority

black districts, representatives are always Democrats, irrespective of class (5). Her argument, "...that the majoritarian or district plurality system that the nation's founders imported from Great Britain that systematically encourages lawmakers to provide descriptive and symbolic representation as much as substantive representation to their constituents," applies (5). African American voters seek to be represented by symbolic and descriptive representatives (fellow African Americans) and substantively by a political party which champions its policy preferences (Swain 1993, 73).

### **The Effects of Geography in Explaining Political Participation**

Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987, 1198) theorize that ingrained communication networks influence partisan behavior and that the communication is environmentally bounded by geography. Their work focused on geographical influences on individual partisan behavior. In a later study, Huckfeldt et al. (2004, 207) found that within communication networks political disagreement is widespread but that Democratic electorates are composed of individually interdependent citizens who depend on one another for political information and guidance.

Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) and Huckfeldt et al. (2004) provide the organizing theory of my dissertation research that communication networks form in geographically defined neighborhoods. Most blacks are geographically concentrated in racially homogenous neighborhoods with black neighbors who have historically exhibited similar partisan preferences. For blacks residing in racially diverse or white neighborhoods, the likelihood of communication with neighbors with heterogeneous political beliefs increases; therefore, the influence of these neighbors on African American partisan behavior is the question presented in the study. Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) and



Huckfeldt et al.'s (2004) focus was not African Americans but later studies by Johnson and Gordon (2005) and Manzano (2007) explore the environmental effects on partisan affiliation for African Americans and Latinos.

Johnson and Gordon (2005) examined the contextual effect of social experience and environment as it relates to African American partisanship, specifically, black majority partisan identification with the Democratic Party. They argue that environment influences the likelihood of blacks identifying with the Democratic Party. They define context as the cumulative effect of personal experiences such as residing, working, and worshipping with other blacks, which reinforce a feeling of black identity and linked fate. Their research is buttressed by two conclusions reached by Dawson (1994, 98): African American partisan support for the Democratic Party is issue-based and subordinate to economic class, and the individual contextual attachments of blacks to the Democratic Party are environmental and issue-based but free of class distinctions.

Johnson and Gordon (2005, 105) present four explanations of African American partisanship: blacks who reside, work, and worship with majority white populations have a weaker sense of partisan identification with the Democratic Party because they (1) reside in predominantly white neighborhoods, (2) work in majority white offices, (3) attend majority white churches, and (4) have a majority of white friends.

Johnson and Gordon utilize survey data from the 2000 American National Election Studies (ANES) Time Series Study and from the 2000 *New York Times* Race Poll to conduct an analysis relating to African American residential context and group identity. Their methodology involves the use of simple tables and a categorical regression. Tables are generated from the ANES data to conduct an analysis of black

respondent contextual feelings of linked fate by neighborhood composition. The black and white respondents are grouped by the racial composition of their residential neighborhoods (white majority, black majority, and fifty percent black and white) and their barometer feelings toward Jesse Jackson are gauged.<sup>2</sup> A second table is generated from the ANES data which measures the partisan attachment of black residents residing in the designated neighborhoods. Johnson and Gordon find that African Americans residing in majority black neighborhoods have significantly warmer feelings toward Jesse Jackson than black respondents residing in majority white neighborhoods (108). They also find African American respondents residing in majority white neighborhoods partisan identification with the Republican Party is greater than that of black respondents residing in majority black neighborhoods (109).

Johnson and Gordon present a more complex analysis when they examine the racial composition of the neighborhood, workplace composition, racial composition of church, and frequency of white friends utilizing data from the 2000 *New York Times* Race Poll. The model utilizes categorical regression with respondent partisan affiliation as the dependent variable and the following independent variables: racial composition of neighborhood, racial composition of the workplace, racial composition of church, and frequency of white friends. Each of the variables is ordinal in nature and the following variables are utilized as controls: sex of respondent, age of respondent, respondent income, and respondent education. The predicted probabilities of the estimates are generated. Johnson and Gordon (2005, 113) find that blacks attending all white religious services have the highest probability of Republican affiliation and blacks working and

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<sup>2</sup> Jesse Jackson is an African American social activist who participated in civil rights era protests and has run for president as a Democrat.

residing in majority white environments have the greatest probability of affiliation with the Republican Party but in very small magnitudes.

Manzano (2007) continues the contextual examination of minority participation by focusing on Latinos. Manzano relies on the social capital theories of contextual perception—bridging and bonding initially presented by Putnam (1993 and 2000).<sup>3</sup> Bridging activities extend an individual outside his or her environment, thereby broadening social networks and experiences. Bridging activities are defined by inclusive social connections across lines of class, ethnicity, gender, and race (Manzano 2007, 125). Bonding social capital is developed via associations within one's core community that may include voluntary organizations, religious institutions, and residential enclaves whereas bonding social capital reinforces exclusive identities (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, class) and defines the scope of social interactions (Manzano 2007, 125).

Manzano's (2007) examination is an attempt to explore Latino political participation in the context of bridging versus bonding social capital and which has a more significant role on Latino participatory levels. She presents three hypotheses: (1) among Latinos (bonding) social capital has a positive and significant influence on participation in Latino political activities; (2) bonding social capital will decrease participation in non-Latino (bridging) political activity; and (3) bridging social capital resources will have differing outcomes for Latino and white participation in general (bridging) political activity (124).

Manzano (2007) utilizes data from the Latino National Political Survey with the dependent variable political participation and the following variables as independent

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<sup>3</sup> Putnam (1993 and 2000) presented research on individual contextual interactions and civic engagement, social capital, as precursors to sociopolitical participation; specifically, that individuals who interact with neighbors, friends, and co-workers exhibit high levels of civic engagement.

variables: respondent organizational involvement, respondent engagement in public affairs, respondent level of community voluntarism, respondent informal sociability, and respondent level of social trust. Respondent ethnicity, gender, and education are utilized as control variables. The variables are categorical in nature and a categorical regression was utilized with the estimates transformed into predicted probabilities. Manzano finds bridging activities are positively related to Latino respondent participation and bonding activities negatively related to participation.

The significance of both studies by Manzano (2007) and Johnson and Gordon (2005) is that they present examinations of minority (black and Latino) partisanship and participation as factors of environmental interactions. The environmental approach is important because it reinforces the contextual nature of minority political behavior. Both studies incorporate geographical environmental interactions: Manzano's utilization of informal sociability as an independent variable and Johnson and Gordon's utilization of neighborhood composition. The concept of social capital and bridging and bonding easily fit into the context of linked fate and neighborhood composition and can be taken as synonymous explanations of minority sociopolitical interactions. Both examinations reinforce the theory of environmental context as a factor of minority partisan affiliation presented in this dissertation.

## **Institutions**

African American religious bodies are formal institutions that serve as conveyors of sociopolitical information (Verba et al. 1995, 20). Religious bodies are theoretically nongovernmental and nonpolitical institutions in the American system, but religious institutions serve as primary organizational units based not only on shared faith but also

on shared cultural cleavages (Verba et al. 1995, 20). They are the environmentally bounded institutions which serve as incubators of network communication and mobilization (Verba et al. 1995, 20). African Americans have a rich religious history which has served as a primary organizing body during protests and political mobilization. The frequency and nature of religious affiliation has served as both instruments of religious affiliation and partisan engagement (Verba et al. 1993, 303).

African American church attendance has historically been the impetus for political mobilization and participation (Tate 1993; Walton 1985). African American church attendance and its frequency has been correlated to political organization membership, the forming of positive political and racial attitudes, and higher voter participation rates (Reese and Brown 1995; Tate 1993; Verba, Scholozman and Brady 1995; Verba and Nie 1972; and Dawson, Brown and Allen 1990). African Americans of lower poverty levels report decreased levels of church attendance (Cohen and Dawson 1993, 290).

Cohen and Dawson (1993, 290) counter the premise that concentrated populations of blacks learn partisan identification and mobilization via church attendance. They demonstrate that African Americans residing in high poverty neighborhoods are less likely to attend church and exhibit negative civic attitudes. Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh (2001, 886) argue that due to similar factors as outlined by Cohen and Dawson but including the variables of single family households and high crime rates, African Americans will be less willing to be involved or participate in political or civic activities; thereby, negating the institutional and mobilizing influence of black church attendance.

The level of church attendance has a dual relationship for African American social mobility. Class and the frequency of black church attendance is correlated with income: higher income blacks exhibit higher frequencies of church attendance, increased involvement in civic activity and political responsiveness (Verba et al. 1995, 20).

The black church was historically the first organizing institution of the African American community and predates the ending of slavery (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, 10). In increasing numbers, middle-class blacks have moved from concentrated central cities; therefore, they move away from other African Americans and most black churches (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 20). Although the majority of suburban blacks travel to urban churches to worship, their distance from the urban core pushes a few to attend religious bodies with racially diverse congregations within the confines of their diverse neighborhoods. I contend that the political cues of diverse congregations lack racial appeals of solidarity and open the parishioners to decidedly middle-class ideological appeals or bridging (Manzano 2007; Johnson and Gordon 2005).

Church affiliation serves a twofold purpose: as an organizing unit and as a culturally specific conduit of information and norms (Verba, Scholozman and Brady 1995; Verba and Nie 1972; Dawson, Brown, and Allen 1990). Geographic separation from the mass of concentrated African Americans limits the scope of the sociopolitical messages that are filtered through the black church. Statistically, the influence of black church membership on African American respondents' partisan affiliation can be observed in Tables 2.1 and 2.2. From Table 2.1, which is prepared from 2008 ANES Time Series Study data (all black respondents) we observe 46.7 percent of respondents who are self-proclaimed "born again" Christians claim partisan affiliation with the

Democratic Party, which is the largest percentage of partisan affiliation among black respondents.<sup>4</sup> Table 2.2 is constructed from the Indianapolis-St. Louis Election Study, 1996-1997, ICPSR, collected by Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000). We observe 65.5 percent of black respondents claim to belong to a church organization, and of the total of 165 black church members, 131 (79.4 percent) claim Democratic partisan affiliation. Institutions such as the black church sustain black partisan affiliation, but individual black perceptions of linked fate are factors that maintain African American Democratic partisanship.

### **Insert Tables 2.1 and 2.2 About Here**

The contextual studies of Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987 and Huckfeldt et al. 2004 reveal the relevance of the dissertation's research question: do environmental and communication networks influence partisan behavior? Huckfeldt and Sprague's research focused on a study of whites and their findings affirmatively answered the question with the use of survey data. My dissertation research is relevant because it duplicates their research with individual level survey data focused on African American respondents.

The studies of Johnson and Gordon (2005) and Manzano (2007) utilize the environmental framework first used by Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) and Huckfeldt et al. (2004) and are helpful for my research because they both focus their research questions on minorities. Manzano's focus is Latino Americans and Johnson and Gordon's research focus is African Americans. Manzano's research is helpful for a second reason: she incorporates social capital theory into her framework as a proxy for

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<sup>4</sup> Born again status was utilized because it has a connotation of intense religious practice and church attendance.

participation. Social capital theory is relevant because it provides perspective on individual environmental interactions. Manzano (2007, 125) describes the culturally ingrained perceptions of bonded Latinos, that is, individuals who reside in concentrated Latino environments and rely on traditional partisan perceptions. She describes a second group of Latinos who reside outside concentrated Latino environments and their willingness to cross traditional Latino partisan perceptions, bridging Latinos. Manzano's incorporation of bonded and bridging social capital is an important guide for my research. I incorporate it as a framework to explain the differences in partisan perception for African Americans residing in racially diverse, white, and black neighborhoods.

Johnson and Gordon's (2005) research is important because it refocuses Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) and Huckfeldt et al. (2004) framework onto African Americans. Their study is useful as a guide to my research but within the following constraint. Johnson and Gordon narrowly focus their study upon the partisan differences of African American attachment to the Democratic and Republican Parties within white and black neighborhoods, work, and religious environments. They find a negligible increase of Republican affiliation for African Americans residing, working, and worshipping in white environments. My critique of their study is focused on their use of partisan attachment to the Democratic and Republican Party. Dawson (1994, 4) and Tate's (2003, 5) demonstrate that African American partisan affiliation is with the Democratic Party at all socioeconomic levels and the negligible differences in affiliation found by Johnson and Gordon affirm their findings. My research broadens Johnson and Gordon's focus onto the intensity of individual African American Democratic partisan affiliation, which I argue is a better gauge of African American partisan affiliation and behavior.



## **Conclusion**

The chapter was a review of the major findings of the American political participation, social capital theory, and demographic context literature that contribute to our understanding of the influence of neighborhood racial composition on black Democratic affiliation. The focus on political participation, partisan identification, environmental influences, and African American partisan identification literature is important because these factors provide the theoretical foundation for my thesis and they will be incorporated in Chapter 4 (Theoretical Framework). In the next chapter, I will examine the nature of geography and its linkages to political behavior.

**Table 2.1: Partisan Identification by Born Again Status for Black Respondents.**

<b>Party Identification</b>	<b>Born Again Status: All Black Respondents</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>Democrat</b>	241	46.7%	133	25.8%	374
<b>Republican</b>	9	1.7%	2	0.4%	11
<b>Independent</b>	69	13.4%	39	7.6%	108
<b>Other</b>	20	3.9%	3	0.6%	23
<b>Total</b>	339		177		516

*Source:* 2008 ANES Time Series Study.

**Table 2.2: Black Church Group Membership By Partisan Identification.**

<b>PID</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>
Democrat	70	27.8%	131	52%	201
Republican	3	1.2%	8	3.2%	11
Independent	14	5.6%	26	10.3%	40
Total	87		165		252

*Source:* Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000) Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset.

## **Chapter 3**

### **THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR**

#### **Introduction**

Americans reside in segregated spaces defined by ethnicity and class (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 20). Space has influenced African American partisan attachments with the creation and maintenance of communication networks in environmentally bounded concentrated neighborhoods (Johnson and Gordon, 108). The concentration of African Americans in homogenous neighborhoods was facilitated by discrimination and federal policy (Kruse and Sugrue 2005, 31). Civil rights strides allowed an increasingly mobile black middle-class to migrate into communities of higher socioeconomic status away from the influence of embedded partisan communication networks and lower class African Americans to create or be influenced by new or existent communication networks (Johnson and Gordon, 108). This chapter will highlight the role of discrimination and federal policy in the concentration of African Americans in Northern and Midwest central city neighborhoods followed by a description of machine politics that enabled blacks to form and maintain sociopolitical communication networks. The chapter will end with a description of social and economic change that enabled a mobile black middle-class to migrate from racially concentrated central city neighborhoods to racially diverse and white neighborhoods.

#### **Geographic Segregation**

During the period between the first two world wars, African Americans heavily migrated from Southern states to Northern and Midwest urban areas. Both black migrations coincided with industrial mobilizations and African American attempts to escape the poverty and disenfranchisement of Southern rural plantation life. African Americans were forced to live at the bottom caste of the Southern agricultural plantation system, and offers of increased wages lured blacks from the Southern states to the Northern and Midwest industrial states (Mandel 1978, 160). “Northern industries, faced with the loss of immigrant workers because of World War I and restrictive legislation pulled blacks from the South by paying attractive wages (Tolnay and Beck 1992, 103). Buttressing the claim of higher wages to attract workers to expanding industrial areas was Ford Motor Company, which in 1914, offered every employee irrespective of race, a daily salary of \$5.00 (Hawkins 1973, 142).

During the years 1910-1920, Mississippi experienced a net loss of 130,000 African Americans and Georgia, 260,000 (Tolnay and Beck 1992, 103). From the period 1900-1910, the percent increase of African Americans classified as urban by the United States Census Bureau increased by 56 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing: Decennial Census 2010). From 1920-1950, the black population of Michigan increased by 400,000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The level of black population growth after World War II can be witnessed by the increased population growth in the states of New York, Illinois, and Michigan. The large central cities of each of the states were the primary beneficiaries of increased black populations. The increased level in black voting from concentrated black areas culminated in the local election of African American mayors: in 1967, in Gary and Cleveland, in 1973 Detroit and Los

Angeles, in 1983 Chicago, in 1989 New York, and in 1993 St. Louis. Nationally, the number of African American members of Congress increased from three in 1953 to thirty-six in 2009 (Clay 1993, 103 and Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives 2008).

While African Americans were migrating from the rural South to Northern central cities, federal policy was influencing the rate of American home ownership and enabling geographical segregation and suburbanization. The Federal Home Mortgage Agency (FHA) is a New Deal program established to channel credit to build and modernize single family homes. The agency does not directly finance home loans. It insures the loans, providing a level of protection to lenders. It also streamlined the process of purchasing homes by popularizing the long-term amortized home mortgage and codifying appraisal and credit qualification guidelines (Kruse and Sugrue 2005, 30).

The FHA's official underwriting manual allowed private appraisers to systematically lower the appraisal value of property situated near African Americans, which pushed white property owners to sell property (that appraised lower) or not to buy at all (Kruse and Sugrue 2005, 31).<sup>1</sup> The result was a mass exodus of whites from urban neighborhoods that were geographically close to blacks. Blacks were systematically denied loans by private lenders; the effect was a rise in home ownership by whites and increased renting of homes by blacks in concentrated central city neighborhoods (Kruse and Sugrue 2005, 31). The FHA appraisal guidelines valued single-family homes at higher rates than multi-family structures which favored sprawling suburban areas over

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<sup>1</sup> The same guidelines were applied to Jewish Americans and other minorities.

denser urban areas.<sup>2</sup> Federal tax policy favors single-family suburban home ownership by offering substantial tax credits to home owners.

A second form of geographical segregation involved local real estate covenants and local ordinances. Local ordinances were written that legally denied the sale of homes to blacks in designated areas or banks, realtors, and home owners colluded not to sell homes in certain areas to black families. In 1916, St. Louis voters adapted a segregation ordinance forbidding the sale of homes to African Americans in designated areas. The ordinance was found to be unconstitutional by the courts, but Stein (2002, 126) writes the, “Restrictive covenants and realtor practices combined to carry out the intent of the ordinance...”<sup>3</sup> Lipsitz (1988, 68) describes the segregated nature of St. Louis housing in the 1950s:

In the 1950s the area of the city [St. Louis] open to black residents increased from 500 to 650 square blocks, but all 150 of these new blocks had already been designated as deteriorating or blighted by the City Plan Commission before blacks moved in. Loan agencies refused to extend credit to whites for purchases in those areas, further encouraging white flight. Unscrupulous realtors exploited the black demand for housing (as well as hostility to blacks) by “blockbusting”—frightening white homeowners about declining property values in order to panic them into selling houses at low prices that realtors could then resell to blacks at inflated prices.

In 1916, the Mapleton Civic Association of Indianapolis codified its member’s feelings in a statement of aims: “One of our chief concerns is to prevent members of the colored race from moving into our midst, thereby depreciating property values fifty

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<sup>2</sup> Returning World War II veterans increased single-family suburban home ownership with VA loans which mirrored the appraisal guidelines of the FHA. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title II) and President Kennedy’s 1962 executive order, 11063, banning federal financing of segregated housing, forced the end of race specific appraisal guidelines.

<sup>3</sup>In 1948, the Supreme Court outlawed racially restrictive covenants in the case of *Shelley v. Kraemer*. The case emanated in St. Louis.

percent, or more” (Thornbrough 1994, 7). Members pledged not to sell or rent property to anyone except a white person (Pierce 2005, 59).

The segregated and urban nature of black populations enabled African Americans to form political coalitions in Northern and Midwest machine dominated central cities. Urban political machines were historically the culmination of integrating networks of social customs of ethnic communities into political institutions. Judd (1979, 55) writes, “The social and economic insecurities of the immigrant, coupled with segregation of ethnic neighborhoods, encouraged the development of closed, protective social institutions and personal interactions.” America’s immigrants resided in ethnically homogenous neighborhoods, Italians with Italians, Irish with Irishmen, etc. Consequently, personal interactions and customs were unique to ethnic neighborhoods in large urban cities.

The decentralized nature of urban areas coupled with the mass suffrage of ethnic citizens led to the formation of urban political machines in many large cities (Judd 1979, 55). These cities were politically subdivided into precincts. Several precincts constituted a ward, and one elected official, the alderman, served as the elected representative of the ward. A single ethnic bloc could dominate several precincts or the entire ward. The social standing of a candidate within his ethnic community could equal electoral success. “Thus, most large American cities went through a “friends and neighbors” or “local followings” style of politics in which local leaders, very often pub owners came to dominate first as precinct and then ward leaders” (Judd 1979, 56). Machines linked the ward and precinct leaders into mutually supportive political institutions (Judd 1979, 56).



Machine politics has a requirement of coalition building and rewards (Judd 1979, 56). The building of coalitions allows for the centralization of power. Machine politicians are required to build coalitions within their own ethnic blocs and with politicians of similar political interests within and outside their wards of influence. It is paramount for a successful machine to increase the size of its coalition (Judd 1979, 57). Loyalty is paramount, and machines welcomed many other ethnic groups into their coalitions, as long as they ensured electoral success (Judd 1979, 61). Racially concentrated African American central city neighborhoods mirrored immigrant neighborhoods; blacks exhibited economic insecurities and developed closed protective social institutions and personal interactions. The development of these institutions and communication networks enabled blacks to form coalitions with political machines.

African American residents of large central cities were historically pigeonholed into segregated sections. Black residents in St. Louis at the turn of the twentieth century resided in the downtown and near downtown areas. The area was surrounded by slaughter houses, railroad lines, warehouses, and factories, which combined to make it one of the least desirable areas for residential housing. Blacks and recent immigrants concentrated in such areas. In St. Louis, African Americans were not allowed the assimilation gains of their white immigrant neighbors and for most of the century remained in the concentrated areas via racially restrictive real estate covenants or open discrimination (Stein 2002, 126).

The racially homogeneous nature of black neighborhoods fostered the creation of race based social institutions and communication networks. The isolated nature of black segregated neighborhoods encouraged the development of closed protective social

institutions and personal interactions. Leaders arose in the African American community, whose leadership was the culmination of personal interactions and community standing.

### **Unreformed City Government: St. Louis**

The unreformed city structure and the machine nature of St. Louis politics enabled African Americans to assert political power and seek political concessions.<sup>4</sup> On December 17, 1919, six prominent African American St. Louis residents met and demanded thirteen concessions from their local Republican dominated government. The demands included: a black congressman, a black judge, a black constable, a black committeeman, a black hospital, a black superintendant of garbage collection, that blacks serve on grand juries, a black fire station, a black on the board of education, a black city undertaker, and black uniformed policemen. A few of the demands were granted, as the participants threatened to end their support for the Republican slate (Clay 1993, 58).<sup>5</sup>

Jordan “Pop” Chambers became a prominent black St. Louis political leader in the 1930s. He was the owner of a funeral parlor and night club which granted him standing as a businessman and led to increased personal interactions within the black community. Chambers ensured black voters supported the Democratic slate for the 1932 general election (Stein 2002, 36). This was important, as blacks were loyal supporters of the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln and emancipation. Black local support for the

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<sup>4</sup> Reformed cities are the product of the Progressive Movement in which the corruption of the spoils system and machine politics was removed from local city structures by mimicking a business approach with an elected city council and an appointed city manager. Indianapolis reformed structure is a hybrid with the election of the city council and mayor from at-large elections (Stillman 1974, 25).

<sup>5</sup> The participants of the meeting were business owners and attorneys: Crittenden Clark, George L. Vaughn, J.E. Mitchell, Aaron A. Lloyd, Captain Walker Lowe, and Charles Odell Turpin.

Republicans faltered when continued requests for the building of a black hospital failed to materialize and blacks were excluded from most patronaged employment (Stein 2002, 30). Chambers sought a coalition with the winning party, specifically, Bernard Dickmann who was elected mayor. Black residents were rewarded with the construction of a segregated hospital, Homer G. Phillips Hospital, in 1936 (Stein 2002, 31). In 1938, Chambers was elected the Nineteenth Ward Committeeman and wielded the power of patronage in political employment and city services.

### **St. Louis County**

St. Louis City formerly separated from the County in 1876. St. Louis City and St. Louis County are two separate entities with independently elected officials. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, St. Louis County was a rural area and city officials quaffed at the notion of providing monetary support for rural roads and other County expenses (Jones 2000, 15).

After separating from the city, the county's population was slightly over thirty thousand and the City's population exceeded three hundred thousand (Jones 2000, 25). By 1970, Saint Louis County had a population of over a million while the city population reached its apex of approximately nine hundred thousand in the 1950s but dwindled back to three hundred fifty thousand by 1990 (Jones 2000, 26).

Saint Louis County is governed by a county commission composed of a seven member council with a county executive. St. Louis County is composed of over ninety separate municipalities and the County Executive Office was dominated by Republicans from 1937-1973 with only two Democrats elected over the period (Cohn 1973, 77). Democrats controlled the office from 1990 to the present.

The racial composition of St. Louis County showed countywide increases in racial diversity but geographic concentrations of blacks. The African American population is most concentrated in near north county and in the Black Jack and Spanish Lake areas (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Central county communities including Richmond Heights, Rock Hill and Kirkwood showed 2000 census tract populations of greater than 20 percent African American population (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

### **Reformed City Structure: Indianapolis**

In the 1890s, the city of Indianapolis transformed its government from a ward system of representation in which individual wards elect representatives, councilmen, to an at-large system in which councilmen are elected city-wide (Pierce 2005, 11). Unlike the traditional unreformed ward system in which machine politics can flourish, the reformed system diminishes the capacity for political machines to build geographic based coalitions in individual wards (Stillman 1974, 25). There is little benefit in currying favor with community members that cannot elect ward representatives in a reformed local government, and Indianapolis African Americans, despite their population could not wield the political influence of African American residents of St. Louis (Pierce 2005, 11).

Despite the inability of Indianapolis African Americans to directly influence the political outcomes of local council elections between the period 1920-1970 the black community and the Democratic Party solidified their relationship (Pierce 2005, 109 and Tenuth 2004, 132). The coalition with the Democratic Party help to elect a Democratic mayor from 1940-1968 (Pierce 2005, 109)

The at-large Indianapolis' electoral system hampered African American attempts to end segregation and housing discrimination. Pierce (2005, 56-57) writes that the system hampered attempts to mitigate housing inequalities:

The homes occupied by blacks immediately before and after World War II were below standard and sometimes lacked the most basic amenities like plumbing and electricity. Indianapolis black home ownership was greater than that of any Northern city in the 1950s. Without ward representation, local political leaders did not fight for open housing because it brought them no political advantage and possibly meant significant costs. Those advocating free enterprise and property rights hampered integration efforts, the ideologies took root in both political parties and open housing advocates could not rely on consistent support from either political party.

Political participation depends on political mobilizations, that is, on which person(s) are targeted for political recruitment (Hero et al., 2000, 530). The dominance of machine politics lay in ethnic coalition building, mobilization, and party affiliation. The ethnic nature of nineteenth and twentieth century urban enclaves enabled easily definable cultural affiliations. Political machines were successful in building coalitions with diverse ethnic groups by affiliating the groups under the umbrella of a unifying political party and mobilizing their aggregate collective electoral activity. Machine members had a dual affiliation, their individual ethnic group and their aggregate ethnically heterogeneous political party. The nature of the coalitions enabled the creation of political communication networks and dominant partisan affiliations. In Indianapolis, blacks formed a coalition with the Democratic Party absent the availability of a political machine, but they lacked the ability to influence local elected officials outside of mayoral elections.

St. Louis and Indianapolis share a common geography but different political structures. Both cities are located in the Midwest and have a rich African American

history; however, their political structures differ. St. Louis has an unreformed aldermanic ward system in which political machines flourished. Indianapolis local government is reformed with an at-large election of councilmen. The direct election of aldermen from geographically designated wards allowed blacks residing in St. Louis to build electoral coalitions and wield political influence. Indianapolis's at-large ward system hampered the ability of blacks to wield similar political influence because of the dilution of their voting power, yet blacks in Indianapolis supported successive Democratic mayors.

### **Race, Socioeconomic Standing, and Geography**

The conclusion of the civil rights era afforded black professionals the opportunity to move from their segregated neighborhoods to white middle-class neighborhoods and for the expansion of African American workers into white collar and professional designated professions. The class nature of American society did not escape black professionals who abandoned the inner cities for the suburbs like their white counterparts (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 21-22). Weise (2005, 100) and Alba and Logan (1991, 432) argue that upwardly mobile middle-class African Americans expressed a sense of class status and chose to migrate from dense urban neighborhoods to sprawling suburban locales inhabited by middle-class whites.

Space is an important demarcation of race and class. African Americans predominantly reside in racially and class defined geographies. Of the 254 black survey respondents from Huckfeldt and Sprague's (2000) Indianapolis-St. Louis survey, 71.7 percent reside in black neighborhoods, 22.8 percent in diverse neighborhoods, and 5.5 percent in white neighborhoods based on Baybeck's (2006, 390) definition of racially

defined neighborhoods.<sup>6</sup> A second correlation among the respondents is their socioeconomic status with 44.8 percent of all African American respondents who reside in black neighborhoods showing incomes below \$25,000 while only 24.4 percent of all black respondents who reside in racially diverse neighborhoods share similar household incomes. Viewing the broader household incomes of all the respondents, respondents residing in predominantly black neighborhoods have the highest percentage of incomes below \$25,000 (40.7 percent). A second indicator of socioeconomic status, education, shows that respondents residing in black neighborhoods have the lowest percentage of college degrees, 11.8 percent while 24.6 percent of respondents from racially diverse neighborhoods and 24.7 percent of respondents from white neighborhoods also. African American respondents residing in all three neighborhood environments have the following percentages of college education: black neighborhoods 8.8 percent, diverse neighborhoods 17.2 percent, and white neighborhoods 35.7 percent.

Where African Americans reside is defined by socioeconomic status. Drier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2004, 72) argue Americans choose to reside in communities with others of like status, and it appears African Americans are no different. Weise (2005, 100) and Alba and Logan (1991, 432) make the argument that African Americans migrate from concentrated black communities following increases in socioeconomic status, but increases in socioeconomic status do not translate to individual changes in partisan attachment from the Democratic Party. Changing environmental interactions do lead to new communication network formulations (bridging) and alter previously ingrained perceptions (Manzano 2007, 125).

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<sup>6</sup> Baybeck (2006, 390) defined black neighborhoods with 80 percent or more African American population, mixed neighborhoods with 20 to 60 percent black populations, and white neighborhoods with less than 20 percent black population.

The middle-class cannot be pushed to the upper echelons of the extremely wealthy, but they do live a different life than the poor and in different places. African Americans geographically self-segregate into communities with others of like status as observed by America's twentieth century migration to suburbia (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2004, 72). They are better educated and they live longer (Scully 2000, 10). Tate (2003) and Dawson (1994) argue the socioeconomic stratification within the African American community does not fundamentally alter the political preferences of the black middle-class from the whole of the community, but, in great mass, the black middle-class has followed their likeminded middle-class members to the suburbs (Weise 2005; Alba and Logan 1991; and Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986).

The 1970s class migration of blacks simultaneously occurred with the economic decline of urban centers. Middle-class blacks followed middle-class whites to the suburbs (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 72). Social scientists argue African Americans as a group exhibit partisan attraction that is free of the wider society's socioeconomic partisan ideological appeals and rely on a group specific contextual awareness of partisan attraction (Tate 2003; Dawson 1994; Kilson 1986; and Rose 1997). The geographic separation of the black middle-class from the lower class challenges the assumption that partisan attractions are not culturally ingrained; they are maintained by institutions and associations (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Skocpol 1999; and Putnam 2000). The historical socio-cultural institutions of African American partisan attainment are disrupted by a culturally diverse suburban lifestyle, which allows a small percentage of black voters to be open to the socioeconomic partisan appeals of the Republican Party or bridging (Manzano 2007, 125).



The underlying socioeconomic changes in the historical concentration of blacks in homogenous communities are fundamental to the theory of black partisan affiliation presented in this study. The geographic changes necessary to cement an outmigration of minorities from the urban core are predicated on a wider economic transformation; a transformation which redefined class roles and enabled class demarcation across the wider spectrum of American society. The economic transformation enabled a percentage of blacks to climb the class ladder and the economic means to self-segregate from the mass of black central city locales to the suburbs or to communities of higher socioeconomic status, but it geographically cloistered an increasingly impoverished concentrated African American population in central cities.

Jackson (1985, 31) writes that an economically privileged nineteenth century American elite abandoned the cities for a leisure-laden estate lifestyle in sprawling land surrounding central cities. Middle-class African Americans exhibit similar mobility and preferences as their fellow social class members geographically self migrate to communities of like socioeconomic status, a process once hampered by discriminatory practices (Alba and Logan 1991, 443).

Alba and Logan (1991, 433) write, “As members of minority groups acculturate and establish themselves in American labor markets, they attempt to leave behind less successful members of their groups and to convert socioeconomic and assimilation progress into residential gain. They do so by ‘purchasing’ residences in places with greater advantages and amenities than are typically to found in central-city enclaves.” Weise (2005, 101) asserts that middle-class blacks migrated to the suburbs to express their “newly won” social position.

Historical factors dictated the growth of the black middle-class and the structure of intra-ethnic sociopolitical communication networks embedded within the black community. I argue sociopolitical communication networks are reinforced by the geographical concentration of blacks in central city enclaves, but the growth of the black middle-class has disturbed the networks, as middle-class blacks have increasingly migrated from the urban core to racially diverse and white majority neighborhoods. Black suburban middle-class residents, free from the influence of urban concentrated communication network building and social institutions, are more open to bridging, influence from outside social networks, and exhibit a greater probability of partisan attraction to the Republican Party (Johnson and Gordon 2005, 105).

Durant and Loudon (1986, 255) write that the historical period after the ending of slavery gave rise to several factors that encouraged the rise of the African American middle-class:

(1) industrialization gave rise to industrial jobs and created a need for manpower; (2) urbanization or the concentration of minorities in high density metropolitan areas increased the interaction among persons of common economic positions, facilitated the development of class consciousness, and thus enhanced the formation of social classes; (3) occupational differentiation created opportunities for minorities in skilled, semi-skilled, and professional positions in the labor force; (4) educational attainment increased, although within segregated institutions of unequal economic support; (5) business entrepreneurship led to property ownership and the accumulation of capital; and (6) organized collective actions of educational, religious, business, fraternal, and political groups contributed to the communal pooling of resources to enhance opportunities for a few.

Frazier (1965, 13) argues that the modern black middle-class is a relatively young stratum, largely becoming visible during the 1950s and it developed very gradually due to institutional racism and inequities in social and economic opportunities. It is composed of blacks who attained middle-class status largely after the early 1950s when education

and occupation were much more emphasized than social origin, traditional life-styles, and behavior patterns (Durant and Louden 1986, 255). Durant and Louden (1986, 255) argue the expansion of the African American middle-class is the result of four social changes: (1) an increase in the level of education; (2) an increase in socioeconomic opportunities, largely due to occupational differentiation; (3) a decline in economic and racial barriers to upward mobility; and (4) greater drive by blacks to join the economic mainstream of the American society as demonstrated by the civil rights era.

The stratification of the black classes existed in segregated minority communities at the turn of the twentieth century, the African American community partisan identification remained static because of institutionalized segregation and racism—the oppressive nature of American society dictated minority middle-class preferences mirror those of the lower class; simultaneously, sociopolitical partisan building institutions were constructed in minority communities: churches, social groups, and mutual aid societies (Frazier 1965, 25).<sup>7</sup> The Great Depression and the economic calamity that followed initiated a realignment of minority partisan identification and the mechanisms that enable African American middle-class cleavages of political preferences and class mobility (Fauntroy 2007, 160).

Over the period 1972-2006 the American economy transformed from industrial based to service based (Siskind 2005, 162). Historical institutional racism systematically excluded most minorities from educational opportunities and industrial and skilled employment that set generational gains and class mobility—generation one was employed in middle-class industrial employment that afforded income and educational

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<sup>7</sup> During the period of racial segregation, middle-class blacks and lower class blacks resided in the same neighborhoods and their socio-political influences were similar.

gains for which generation two was able to garner upward class mobility (Sassan 1990, 467). Generation two was then able to move into high income professional employment (Sassan 1990, 467). Minorities were disproportionately excluded from the model; the gains of the civil rights era lessened some of the ills of historical racism, with advances in education and employment, but at the height of the civil rights era, the economic transformation had already begun (Sassan 1990, 467). The black middle-class was advantaged over poor blacks because of higher levels of educational attainment and professionalization. Their socioeconomic status enabled the black middle-class to bypass the first phase of the class mobility model while poor blacks had to begin at the first phase.

Poor minorities were seeking employment in the first phase of the model while simultaneously industrial employment was shrinking. Over the period 1979-1987, the percentage of Americans employed in manufacturing shrunk (Applebaum and Schettkat 1989, 397). The education level of African Americans increased during the period, but from extremely low levels. Simultaneously, the high paying knowledge based employers moved from urban centers, where minorities are disproportionally located to suburban enclaves (Siskind 2005, 163; Sassen 1990, 467). Over the period low skilled and low wage part-time service employment grew to 54 percent of the American labor force (Applebaum and Schettkat 1989, 431).

Given the shrinking level of manufacturing employment that occurred over the period and the relative late entry of minorities into the generational model of industrial employment-driven class mobility, the proportion of minorities in the ranks of the middle-class is small when compared to that of whites. Whites with household incomes

of \$100,000 or more equal 21.4 percent of all white households, while African American households of such incomes equal 10 percent of the African American population (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2008). A second aspect of African American income stratification is the urban concentration of the extremely impoverished. African American urban households with incomes of \$12,500 or less account for 20 percent of black households, of which 70 percent reside in urban areas. Similar white households account for only 8.82 percent of total white households, with 44.7 percent residing in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2008).<sup>8</sup> The income data show that the black middle-class is small compared to the white middle-class. The black impoverished are disproportionately located in urban centers and the black middle-class resides geographically apart from the urban impoverished black population.

In sum, African Americans over the first half of the twentieth century witnessed an expansion of the middle-class, albeit in lower proportions than white Americans, and the newly expanded African American middle-class was able to move away from the mass of concentrated impoverished African American communities (Alba and Logan 1991, 432 and Weise 2005, 101). Strides in social policy enabled a migration of middle-class African Americans into previously segregated communities creating opportunities for changes in communication network construction and maintenance, bridging.

### **Indianapolis Residential Patterns by Race**

Pierce (2005, 3) argues that the African American community developed differently in Indianapolis than it did in other Northern cities. Prior to both great twentieth century African American migrations from the South, Indianapolis contained a

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<sup>8</sup> 2007 Poverty thresholds per household: 1 person = \$10,590, 3 people = \$16,530, 4 people = \$21,203. *Source:* U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Thresholds 2007, Weighted Averages.

sizable African American population and it maintained a significant black population throughout the twentieth century (Pierce 2005, 3 and Thornborough 1994, 5). In 1900, blacks made up 10 percent of the Indianapolis population and, by 1910 it had the sixth largest black population (21,816) of all U.S. cities (Pierce 2005, 11). By 1930 African Americans constituted 12 percent of the Indianapolis population while in comparison Chicago blacks only constituted 4.1 percent (Pierce 2005, 61)

Ford Motor Company began building automobiles in Indianapolis in 1914 and at its peak was the largest automobile manufacturer in Indiana (Tenuth 2004, 109). The availability of industrial employment spurred black migrations from the rural South to the Northern and Midwest central cities, including Indianapolis: increased opportunities for industrial employment and Indianapolis's close proximity to Southern states, as well as the significant number of African Americans already living in city lured blacks to the city (Pierce 2005, 61).

Pierce (2005, 3) writes that, "After World War I, with the nation awash in nativist sentiment and the re-emergence of hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan, racial segregation and discrimination in Indianapolis increased." In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan dominated the Republican Party in Indiana and at its peak at least 25 percent of white men in Indianapolis belonged to the Klan (Tenuth 2004, 113-117). Klan supported candidates won both the Indianapolis mayor's office and Indiana's governor's office in 1924 (Tenuth 2004, 117).

The influence of negative racial attitudes contributed to the increased segregation of black Indianapolis citizens. Indianapolis had an integrated secondary public school system until 1927 (Pierce 2005, 6). In 1927, Indiana school officials segregated

secondary public education with the establishment of the city's black only high school, Crispus Attucks High (Pierce 2005, 6). Segregated public education was codified in Indiana in 1843, but prior to 1927 Indianapolis high school students were taught in integrated schools (Pierce 2005, 6).<sup>9</sup>

In 1926, the Indianapolis City Council passed an ordinance that was intended to “promote good order and general welfare” through the separation of white and black residential communities (Pierce 2005, 61). The measure created sanctions against whites moving into a “portion of the municipality inhabited principally by Negroes” or blacks establishing residence in a “white community,” except with the written consent of a majority of the opposite race inhabiting the neighborhood (Pierce 2005, 61). The ordinance was passed after a similar Louisville ordinance was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.<sup>10</sup>

The Capital Avenue Protective Association was a group that functioned as a self-selected collective of residents residing near Indianapolis's Capital Avenue. In 1927, the group advocated white racial homogeneity and urged residents to construct “spite” fences (Pierce 2005, 59). Spite fences were high wall fences that the group advocated building around the property of black residents that moved into the neighborhood.

Historically, African Americans resided in three distinct black areas in Indianapolis: Pat Ward's Bottoms, Indiana Avenue, and Brightwood. The largest and best-known was an area directly north and northwest of downtown Indianapolis, called

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<sup>9</sup> Indianapolis school officials held the authority to segregate schools if, in their estimation, the presence of African American children warranted the creation of separate facilities (Pierce 2005, 26). In 1843, the state legislature declared that blacks should be educated, but made no provisions for their schooling. The legislature did, however, bar blacks and mulattos from attending public schools with whites (Pierce 2005, 27).

<sup>10</sup> *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (1917).

Pat Ward's Bottoms; the area received its name from its proximity to a dank and smelly canal (Pierce 2005, 11). The second area, Indiana Avenue, connects with the Bottoms and became the cultural center of the African American community (Pierce 2005, 11). African American populations in suburban Marion County were nearly non-existent prior to the 1970s (Pierce 2005, 11).

By 1970, African Americans constituted 27 percent of Indianapolis's central city population (Pierce 2005, 121). Two-thirds of Indianapolis' white population resided in the Center Township but, by 1970, due to white flight, the white population of Center Township began to dwindle (Pawasarat 2003, 12). Tenuth (2004, 113) writes that by the 1970s, most of Indianapolis's African American citizens resided in defined neighborhoods and enjoyed comparatively few of the benefits of an urban society compared with white citizens. They were poorer, with fewer opportunities and less education.

The geographic concentration of Indianapolis's black population persisted in 2000. Per the 2000 U.S. Census, African Americans residents predominantly occupy neighborhoods located at or near the urban core. Map 3.1 and 3.2 spatially represent the African American concentration of Indianapolis-Marion County African American residents, and one can observe that African Americans appear to reside in heavier concentrations at or near the city core.

### **Insert Maps 3.1 and 3.2 About Here**

The Indianapolis metropolitan area has a combined city county government. The city of Indianapolis and Marion County governments combined under a 1969 unifying government called "Unigov." Under Unigov, the mayor is elected county-wide and



twenty-nine city-county council persons are elected throughout the city and county. Four incorporated Indianapolis area municipalities are independent of the combined local government—Beech Grove, Lawrence, Southport, and Speedway.

The 1969 incorporation of the mostly white suburbs dropped the African American presence in the city to 18 percent, and black political strength reverted to 1945 levels (Pierce 2005, 121). Pierce (2005, 5) argues that white Indianapolis civic leaders actually increased segregation measures through the 1940s which culminated with the enactment of Unigov that it is an effective reduction of African American voting power.

The problem with Unigov was that the African American population, which generally voted Democratic, had its voting strength diluted with the addition of tens of thousands of mostly white voters from the suburbs who generally voted Republican (Tenuth 2004, 132). Prior to Unigov, the Indianapolis mayor's office and city council were politically controlled by Democrats; Democrats won the mayor's office and council majorities in three of the four municipal elections from 1951 through 1963 (Blomquist and Parks 1995, 39). Republicans held majorities of the county council and county commissioner seats in all but one of the elections in even numbered years from 1950 through 1964 (Blomquist and Parks 1995, 39). Since the 1969 unification, Republicans have won a majority of the mayoral elections and council seats located in the former county areas with Democrats capturing council seats in the central city precincts (Blomquist and Parks 1995, 40).

### **St. Louis Residential Patterns by Race**

In 1967, African American Carl B. Stokes was elected the mayor of Cleveland and African American Richard Hatcher the mayor of Gary. Both men were the first

African American mayors in their respective cities. Yong Hyo Cho (1974) concludes that the election strides of black candidates could be attributed to heightened political awareness, increased political activism, and cohesive voting behavior.

It was nearly thirty years after the election of Stokes and Hatcher in Cleveland and Gary that a black mayor was elected in St. Louis. The unique political structure (weak mayor system and county within a city) and a nearly fifty-fifty black/white population make-up of St. Louis may be the most important factors in explaining the period between election victories of black mayors in Cleveland and Gary to St. Louis. The racial make-up of the population of St. Louis can be viewed in Map 3.3, a spatial representation of the racial concentration of the city of St. Louis. It depicts the population of the city by racial concentration of voting precincts. Voting precincts are utilized as a proxy for neighborhood and Map 3.3 shows that at the neighborhood level, blacks usually reside near other blacks and whites near other whites.

### **Insert Map 3.3 About Here**

St. Louis is essentially a one party city. In 2000, only one of the twenty-eight St. Louis aldermen was a Republican. A non-Democrat has not held a citywide office since the early 1970s. City elections are essentially decided during primary elections and these can be considered low information as the policy planks of the candidates running for citywide offices are not radically different from one another. One therefore expects to observe the friends and neighbors' effect as observed by Key (1949) in the racially segregated South.<sup>11</sup> The effect appears to be more specific to race; black residents cast

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<sup>11</sup> V.O. Key (1949) described a Southern electorate dominated by the Democratic Party in which individual candidates mirrored one another and support became localized to candidate associations: family members, friends, and neighbors.

their ballots in heavily concentrated numbers for the salient black candidate and whites for the white candidate.

Freeman Bosley Jr. was the first elected African-American mayor of St. Louis, elected in 1993. Prior to being elected mayor, he held prior city wide elected office, and he is the son of a long time serving city alderman. He ran in the Democratic mayoral primary in three successive elections: 1993, 1997, and 2001. In 1993, he captured the nomination and with it the office. During successive elections he was defeated, but for each of the elections, he received major support from the African American concentrated precincts against white opponents and a black opponent (Clarence Harmon) who has been designated as the “white candidate,” because of his strong white support (Stein 2002, 241).

The previous sections of the chapter have highlighted the geographic and socioeconomic nature of African American population concentrations and resultant sociopolitical communication networks that formed in African American neighborhoods. The study, which investigates whether African American partisan attraction is influenced by neighborhood racial composition, requires the use of survey data from populations that exhibit demographic characteristics representative of the nation. The survey data compiled by Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000) prior to and after the 1996 presidential election meets the characteristics. The survey is composed of respondents of the St. Louis and Indianapolis-Marion County metropolitan areas, two Midwest municipalities with population trends representative of the nation. Both areas have central city locales with decreasing urban populations, expanding suburban populations, and declining industrial bases. The racial and political composition of the two areas offers two

different views of geographic and political segregation. St. Louis and Indianapolis are located in the Midwest. Politically, the cities differ: St. Louis is dominated by the Democratic Party while Indianapolis is dominated by the Republican Party. The two metropolitan areas contrast one another in government structure with St. Louis fragmented by numerous municipal local governments and Indianapolis' centralized unified government structure. Demographically, St. Louis has a larger African American population but both African American populations are concentrated in the central city.

### **Conclusion**

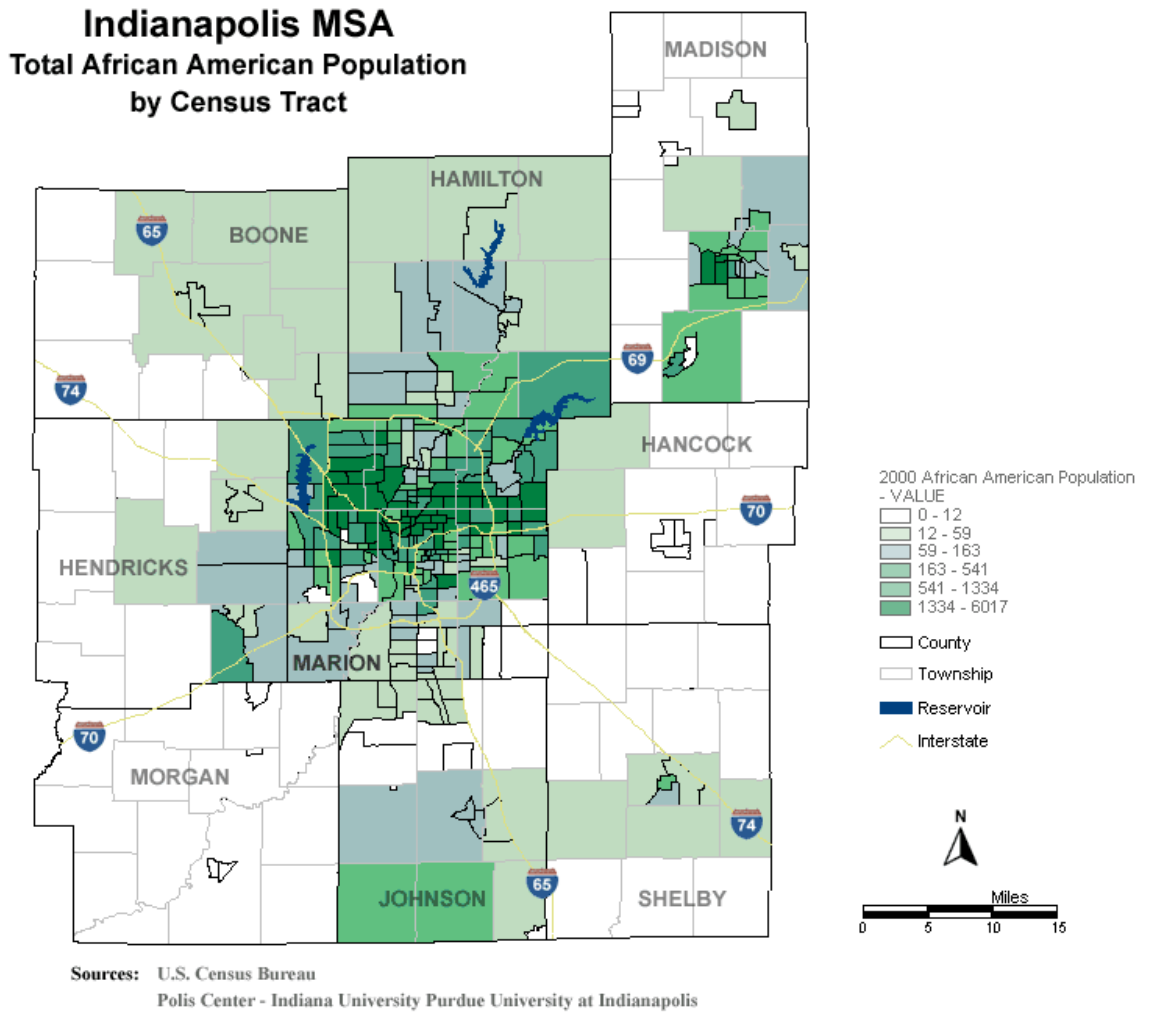
Gale, Grier, and Grier (1986, 20) explore the changing geography of America's residential space. They write that Americans geographically segregate by class and ethnicity. Environment has influenced African American partisan attachments (Johnson and Gordon, 108) and the space in which African Americans reside was influenced by federal policy that contributed to segregated black urban core enclaves. In many of the black concentrated urban core areas, a racially centered coalition flourished in machine dominated cities and communication networks prospered and cemented black partisan ideologies. Civil rights strides allowed an increasingly mobile black middle-class to migrate to communities of higher socioeconomic status away from the influence of embedded partisan communication networks and lower class African Americans. The chapter explored black geographic segregation, federal housing policy in cementing concentrated central city black populations, and the dynamics of social class in influencing African American residential patterns.

African Americans, who reside in ethnic centered neighborhood concentrations, enabled coalition building with dominant urban based political machines. The nature of

the coalitions led to the creation of political networks and dominant partisan affiliations. The concentration of blacks in isolated central city neighborhoods facilitated the formation of closed sociopolitical institutions and personal interactions. The nature of the interactions and institutions enabled blacks to play machine politics and wield political power in central cities. The sociopolitical institutions and personal interactions fomented communication networks that influence partisan ideologies and identification.

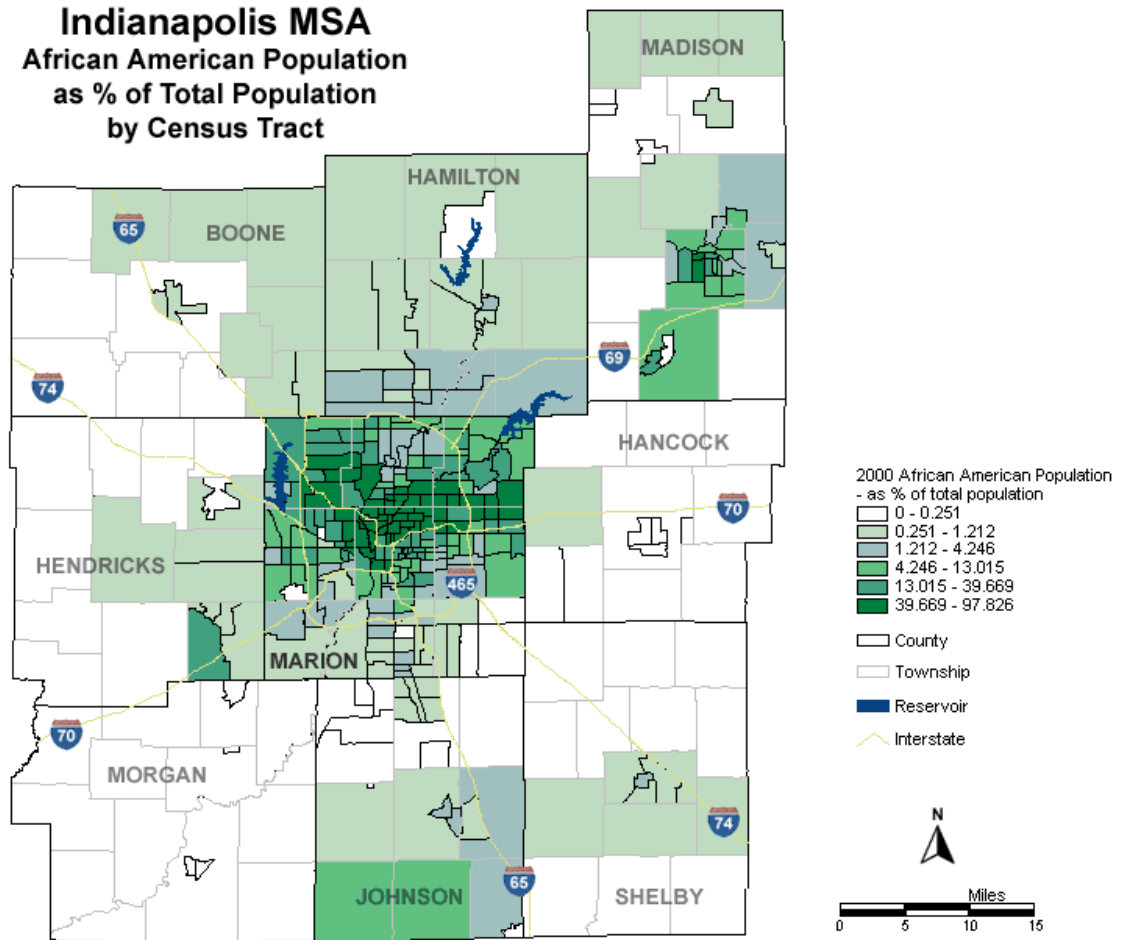
Socioeconomic strides coupled with civil rights advancements enabled a mobile African American middle-class to migrate away from racially concentrated black neighborhoods to middle-class white neighborhoods. Movement to white neighborhoods exposes middle-class blacks to existent and new socio-political networks, while impoverished blacks in concentrated neighborhoods reinforce embedded socio-political communication networks. The exposure of middle-class blacks to existing or new sociopolitical networks is expected to challenge embedded partisan ideologies and identification. For the reasons stated in the previous section, St. Louis and Indianapolis metropolitan areas are the geographic regions under examination to investigate the effects of African American neighborhood context on individual political participation. In the next chapter, I will combine the analysis presented in chapters two and three in an effort to present the theoretical framework underlying the dissertation's research question.

**Map 3.1: 2000 African American Population of Metropolitan Indianapolis.**



*Source:* Official website of the City of Indianapolis and Marion County Indiana  
<http://www.indygov.org/eGov/City/DMD/Planning/Maps/Census/MSA/africanamerpoppercent.gif>. Accessed 02-15-2011.

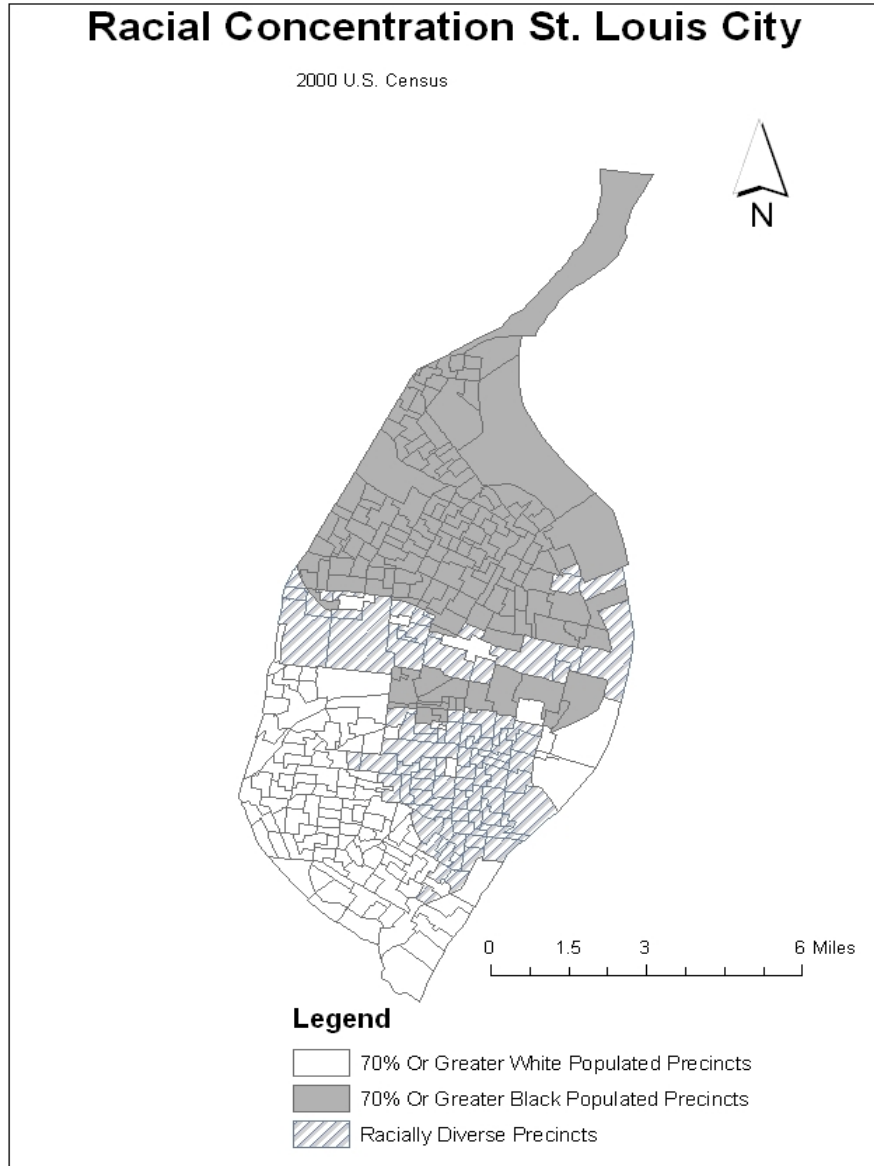
**Map 3.2: 2000 African American Percentage of Population of Metropolitan Indianapolis.**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau  
 Polis Center - Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis

Source: Official website of the City of Indianapolis and Marion County Indiana  
<http://www.indy.gov/eGov/City/DMD/Planning/Maps/Census/MSA/africanamerpoppercent.gif>. Accessed 02-15-2011.

**Map 3.3: Racial Concentration of the City of St. Louis, 2000.**



70% Population % Defines Racial Identity of Precinct

*Source:* U.S. Census Bureau, <http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/usac/usatable.pl> and the St. Louis Board of Election Commissioners. Accessed 09-15-2008.



## **Chapter 4**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Introduction**

The underlying theory of the study is that environmental interactions affect African American partisan behavior; specifically, the neighborhood composition of individual African Americans affects the intensity of their partisan attraction to the Democratic Party. The theoretical approach relies on a dual requirement of personal interactions and geographic environment: social capital theory and contextual environmental theory. Social capital researchers theorize that individual interactions, civic engagement, and social capital are precursors to sociopolitical participation (Putnam 2000 and 1993; Skocpol 1999; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; and Coleman 1988). Contextual environmental researchers theorize that contextual interactions affect participation and ideological preferences (Baybeck 2006; Huckfeldt 1986; Huckfeldt and Sprague 2004; Logan and Stults 2001; Carsey 1995; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989; Huckfeldt 1979; and Key 1949). The objective of this chapter is to present the social capital and contextual environmental theory underlying the dissertation.

#### **Social Capital Theory**

Social capital theory influenced the research of Johnson and Gordon (2005) and Manzano (2007) and also guides my exploration of the dissertation research. Manzano (2007, 125) argues environmental interactions lead to new communication network

formulations (bridging) and alter previously ingrained perceptions. Johnson and Gordon (2005, 105) argue environmental context influences the likelihood of blacks identifying with the Democratic Party. Context is defined as the cumulative effect of personal experiences: residing, working, and worshipping with other blacks which reinforces a feeling of black identity and linked fate.

Johnson and Gordon (2005, 105) argue that African American partisanship is affected by the individual interaction of blacks with whites. Their finding is retooled and explored in the dissertation but within the parameters of the intensity of individual African American partisan attraction to the Democratic Party. Manzano (2007) relies on the social capital theory of contextual perception—bridging and bonding initially presented by Putnam (1993 and 2000).<sup>1</sup> Bridging activities extend an individual outside his or her environment thereby broadening social networks and experiences. Bridging activities are defined by inclusive social connections across lines of class, ethnicity, gender, and race (Manzano 2007, 125). Bonding social capital is developed via associations within one's core community that may include voluntary organizations, religious institutions, and residential enclaves. Bonding social capital reinforces exclusive identities (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, class) and defines the scope of social interactions (Manzano 2007, 125).

Manzano (2007, 124) argues that for Latinos bonded social capital has a positive and significant influence on political participation, but bonded social capital will decrease participation in non-Latino bridging political activity. Latino communities possess characteristics that make the bridge versus bond discussion relevant: Spanish-language

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<sup>1</sup> Putnam (1993 and 2000) presents research on individual interactions and civic engagement as precursors to sociopolitical participation. He finds that increased individual level social interactions and civic engagement lead to increased political participation.

usage, multilingual media consumption, national-origin group, nativity, race, and concentrated community enclaves are all factors that have a strong influence on the kind of social capital available. African Americans exhibit similar characteristics: African Americans share a racial distinction and most reside in racially concentrated neighborhoods. Manzano (2007, 125) asserts that bridging and bonding social capital resources are shaped by ethnic-related factors that may work in concert to funnel political participation into specific or a more ethnically mixed political environment. Similar resources exist for the African-American community and they work in concert to funnel black political participation into black-specific or an ethnically mixed political environment. A social network that discourages and hinders bridging with out-group members limits available opportunities and benefits that are essential for political coalition maintenance and construction (Portes and Landolt 1996, 18).

### **Geographical Influences**

I hypothesize that in concentrated black neighborhoods, an intense bonded attraction to the Democratic Party occurs, while in ethnically diverse neighborhoods, the intensity of African American partisan attraction to the Democratic Party will be less intense or bridging. In neighborhoods where black populations are scant, bridging activities will be limited and African Americans will rely on ingrained historical communication networks and will present intense partisan attractions to the Democratic Party.

Both studies (Manzano 2007 and Johnson and Gordon 2005) present examinations of minority (black/Latino) partisanship and participation as factors of environmental interactions. The environmental approach is important because it

reinforces the contextual nature of minority political behavior. Both studies rely on a geographical framework: Manzano's utilization of informal sociability as an independent variable and Johnson and Gordon's utilization of neighborhood composition. The concepts of social capital bridging and bonding are connected to the concept of linked fate and neighborhood composition. For African Americans, linked fate is the recognition that individual life chances are inextricably tied to the race as a whole (Simien 2005, 529). Linked fate and neighborhood composition are synonymous concepts of minority sociopolitical interactions. For this research both concepts contribute to our understanding of the influence of environmental interactions on minority partisan affiliation.

Johnson and Gordon's (2005) investigation of African American conceptions of linked fate mirror contextual perceptions of black sociopolitical behavior explored by Du Bois (1903), Rose (1997), and Kilson (1986). W.E.B. Du Bois (1903, 4) described a "double-bind" or "double consciousness" of nineteenth century African Americans. Du Bois' defines "double-bind" as an individual perception by African Americans that sandwiches blacks between their unique blackness and their Americanism. African Americans cannot escape their blackness which is a constant physical and social reminder of their social status. While being historically or institutionally reminded of this secondary class position, appeals of American nationalism are maintained.<sup>2</sup> African Americans are beset by a "double-consciousness;" that is, they are constantly reminded of their blackness which engenders a unique "black perception" of their environment at

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<sup>2</sup> Du Bois (1903, 4) likened the broader appeals of nationalism to Eurocentric socio-historical trends which blacks were denied because of their African descent.

the same time they maintain a dual “American perception” which may be in conflict with the black perception and thus the double-bind perception.

Du Bois (1903, 31) predicted that a small segment of the black middle-class, “the talented tenth,” would anchor the whole of the black community, but he was unable to predict the impact of socioeconomic gains of the civil rights era which enabled the black middle-class to geographically move from the black concentrated urban core.<sup>3</sup> The nuances of Du Bois’ “double-consciousness” persist for middle-class blacks but their economic status places them within the realm of the wider American middle-class.

Frazier (1965, 15) argues the black middle-class is contextually placed upon an island, isolated from the black masses due to their status and rejected as equals by white society due to their color. This view implies structural barriers to socioeconomic integration into the larger society which may give rise to a negative group psychological identity within the black middle-class. Rose (1997, 463) argues that social class does shape consciousness but no particular political content can be read from one’s position in the class hierarchy, and he goes on to argue that social classes are not inherently radical, liberal, conservative, or authoritarian. Durant and Loudon (1986, 258) argue that Frazier’s view is outdated because the socioeconomic changes of the past forty years have affected the African American middle-class to such an extent that his description of the group may no longer be theoretically or empirically sound.

Durant and Loudon’s (1986) assumption that Frazier’s view is outdated is challenged by the geographic separation of the black middle-class from the urban concentrated mass of poor African Americans and the affiliation of middle class blacks

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<sup>3</sup> Du Bois was writing in a period of intense racial segregation and discrimination. It would have been a stretch for him to envision the strides of the civil rights era.

with the Democratic Party. Middle-class blacks have geographically separated from the mass of poorer African Americans into communities of similar socioeconomic status (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 19). African American families with incomes of \$100,000 or more comprise only 10 percent of African Americans and African-American urban households with incomes of \$12,500 or less account for 20 percent of black households of which 70 percent reside in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2008). Similarly, white households account for only 8.82 percent of total white households, with 44.7 percent residing in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2008).<sup>4</sup>

The 1964 presidential election marked the last election in which the majority of whites supported the Democratic presidential candidate; and over the same time period, the majority of blacks have supported Democratic candidates (Fauntroy 2007, 65). The rejection of the Republican Party by middle-class African Americans reflects a rejection of white norms and a retooling of Frazier's (1965) conception. Durant and Louden's (1986) assumption that Frazier's view is outdated can be retooled: The African American middle-class is not rejected by poorer blacks and whites; rather, it spatially resides apart from poorer blacks and the black middle-class rejects white majority partisan norms.

The 1970s class migration of blacks simultaneously occurred with the economic decline of urban centers and the passage of a federal law to prohibit housing discrimination. The class migration of blacks from homogenous black neighborhoods was facilitated by the passage of the 1968 Civil Rights Act. Title VIII of the Civil Rights

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<sup>4</sup> 2007 Poverty thresholds per household: 1 person = \$10,590, 3 people = \$16,530, 4 people = \$21,203. *Source:* U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Thresholds 2007, Weighted Averages.

Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in housing, specifically, prohibiting discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, and national origin. Middle-class blacks followed middle-class whites to the suburbs (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 19). Political scientists argue that African Americans as group exhibit partisan attractions that are free of the wider society's socioeconomic partisan ideological appeals and they rely on a group specific awareness of partisan attraction (Tate 2003; Dawson 1994; Kilson 1986; and Rose 1997). The historical socio-cultural institutions of African American partisan attainment are disrupted by a culturally diverse lifestyle which allows a small percentage of black voters to be environmentally exposed to the socioeconomic partisan appeals of the Republican Party (Manzano 2007, 124).

Exposure to white or diverse communication networks or bridging does not automatically disturb embedded partisan ideologies or political identifications. Huckfeldt et al. (2004, 158) argue that Americans communicate with others with opposite political ideologies but the communication does not automatically alter ingrained political ideologies. Huckfeldt, et al. (2004, 160) write that individuals bring a perspective with them that moderates their reactions to others. Individuals do not copy opinions from each other in an arbitrary or automatic fashion and change their opinions only when there is sufficient evidence supporting the opinion that has been communicated through the interaction. They assume that such a sufficient reason is found when a majority within the individual's existing network of acquaintances holds the proposed opinion. For African Americans residing in diverse or white environments to change their political opinions requires that their communication network be composed of a majority of acquaintances with the proposed opposing opinion, i.e. a majority of diverse or white

acquaintances. The assumption is not that all whites have similar opinions but that a majority whites or diverse social network contacts share similar opinions.

The organizing theory that guides this research is that ingrained communication networks influence African American partisan behavior and that the communication is environmentally bounded by geography (Manzano 2007, 125; Johnson and Gordon 2005, 105; and Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1197). The majority of African Americans reside in racially homogenous neighborhoods and have formed communication networks with family, friends, and acquaintances that influence their partisan ideologies.

Environmentally bounded communication networks are potentially disrupted by black middle-class migrations to diverse and white majority neighborhoods, but the isolated nature of middle-class African Americans in majority white neighborhoods prevents the formulation of intensive network formulations that would alter ingrained historical political opinions.

### **The Claim of African American Linked Fate**

Kilson (1986, 14) argues that African American voter choice developed a component which adhered to class and group time specific perceptions of black social and political attainment or protest. Kilson's personas are important because of the socioeconomic status he assigns to African American voter perceptions. Kilson develops a framework to classify the psychological component. He divides African American sociopolitical voter choice perceptions into three specific related personas. Each scheme relates to group specific periods of political integration, protest, or alienation: type 1: alienation protest; type 2: empowerment (exemplified by bloc voting); and type 3: trans-ethnic. Each political persona correlates with specific social status



levels as an ethnic bloc progresses from its marginal status. There can be competition between the types and one can exist independently or with the others.

The trans-ethnic and empowerment personas are important in regard to environmental and socioeconomic-based African American partisan attachment thesis explored in this study. The empowerment persona mirrors the social capital concept of bonding and is a reflection of closed communication networks. The trans-ethnic persona mirrors the social capital concept of bridging in which we observe people cross traditional sociopolitical ethnic/racial lines.

The alienation persona is defined by segregation, discrimination, and group specific partisan perceptions. The protest persona was evident in urban areas such as St. Louis during the 1919 “Phythian Hall” meeting and would continue throughout the civil rights era with subsequent elections of group conscious officials.<sup>5</sup> For most of the twentieth century, African Americans were socially and politically handicapped by discrimination. The collective persona of African Americans during the years of struggle to achieve basic civil rights and political representation would fall within Kilson’s conception of the protest and alienation personas.

Kilson’s conception of the trans-ethnic persona becomes relevant for middle-class African Americans who reside in the same neighborhoods. Environmental influences are different for African Americans residing in diverse or white majority neighborhoods. Communication with white and diverse neighbors presents varied ideological approaches absent in concentrated African American neighborhoods. The theoretical question posed by the study is whether the geographic divisions of African Americans weaken once

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<sup>5</sup> In 1919, a group of prominent St. Louis African American citizens met to discuss political and social demands from the machine dominated local government.

shared characteristics which were grounded in perceived or actual discrimination, negative historical interactions with political or governmental institutions, and geographic homogeneity (Johnson and Gordon 2005; Manzano 2007; Fautroy 2007; and Huckfeldt and Sprague 1989). The availability of communication networks with white or diverse neighbors exposes middle-class blacks to nontraditional ethnic political associations according to Kilson's trans-ethnic persona.

The perceptual bonds observed by Du Bois (1903), Rose (1997), and Kilson (1986) fit the scope of group based political identification as postulated by Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987, 1197). Politics is a social activity imbedded within structured patterns of social interaction. They explain that political information is conveyed through social interaction via discussions, formal meetings, informal meetings, etc. and political preferences are sustained via these "socially supplied" information channels (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1199). The group relevance of Kilson's (1986, 14) black persona and Du Bois's (1903, 4) black consciousness on individual African Americans can be explored in the context of Huckfeldt and Sprague's (1987, 1197) conception of bounded socially connected networks and it mirrors Johnson and Gordon's (2005, 113) exploration of African American perceptions of liked fate.

### **Framework of the Study**

Environmental interactions that affect African American partisan behavior guide the theoretical approach to the dissertation's thesis. The neighborhood composition (racial context) of individual African Americans affects the intensity of their partisan attraction to the Democratic Party. Social capital and contextual environmental theory are the dual frameworks that give foundation to the study. The frameworks marry

personal interactions to geographically bounded environments; environments that are the product of both racial segregation and socioeconomic status (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1197).

The contextual environmental framework was first presented by Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) and holds that individuals are influenced by environmentally constrained interactions. The framework is relevant because of the concentrated nature of African American populations and is given added weight with the inclusion of the study areas of St. Louis and Indianapolis. In the 2000 U.S. Census, both areas showed black populations that were concentrated in the urban core of each locale and the African American population in each locale showed an historical alliance with the Democratic Party.

St. Louis and Indianapolis neighborhoods both have populations of African Americans that reside in geographically concentrated neighborhoods. For the dissertation, the racially concentrated neighborhoods will be labeled as geographically bounded and contextually distinctive because of their homogenous black populations. Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987, 1197) argue that individual interactions are important factors in influencing partisan perceptions and in the racially concentrated neighborhoods personal interactions with non-blacks is limited by the scarcity of non-African American residents.

Individual communication networks guide individual political decisions (Huckfeldt et al. 2004, 158). The framework holds that African Americans in concentrated St. Louis and Indianapolis neighborhoods form communication networks that guide their political decisions. This framework is also important for African

Americans who reside outside black neighborhoods i.e., they form communication networks that influence their political decisions and their political decisions are similar to those of African Americans residing in black neighborhoods.

Another component of social capital theory becomes relevant for the question of interaction patterns. Manzano (2007, 125) presents a framework of social capital theory based on ingrained cultural and ethnic norms. Traditional partisan norms are accentuated by individuals residing in environments dominated by fellow ethnic members.

Individuals are more willing to cross traditionally defined partisan norms in environments dominated by their non-ethnic members (bridging). Her framework is relevant because of the concentrated and cultural distinctness of African Americans: African Americans have a shared social, cultural, and political history and reside in concentrated enclaves. For this study, it is relevant when exploring whether individual African American respondents residing in concentrated white neighborhoods show equal magnitudes of partisan affiliation to the Democratic Party as blacks residing in black or racially diverse neighborhoods.

## **Conclusion**

African Americans formed and maintain sociopolitical networks in the densely populated urban core and these networks maintain partisan affiliations via embedded communication networks. The theory presented in this study is constructed from the earlier contextual research of Manzano (2007) and Johnson and Gordon (2005) which presents minority partisan and political participation as products of contextual environmental interactions. This study seeks a broader exploration of their research. The chapter has briefly underscored the sociopolitical factors that maintain or fracture

historical black partisan affiliation and a demonstration of the relevance of communication network maintenance. In the next chapter, I will present the study's hypotheses and research design which will apply the theoretical approach specifically to the expected relationships for St. Louis and Indianapolis.

## Chapter 5

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The study is an exploration of the effects of neighborhood racial composition on African American of Democratic affiliation. An examination of the effects of environment upon the strength of this affiliation requires data at the individual level with variation in the type of racial environments and an intricate survey design incorporating geographic and individual level data that captures the spatial and sociopolitical differences inherent at the local level. In the sections that follow, I will present the hypothesized relationships, a description of the data used in the study and describe the research design and methods that will be used in the analysis in the following chapter.

#### Hypothesis

Environmental interactions are the product of cultural, professional, and religious interactions at the neighborhood level (Johnson and Gordon 2005, 105). The interactions influence political associations and behaviors (Johnson and Gordon 2005, 105). I hypothesize that interactions at the neighborhood level affect African American partisanship; specifically, that the racial composition of neighborhoods affects the strength of Democratic affiliation. For African Americans residing in black majority neighborhoods their individual strength of Democratic affiliation will be high, but blacks residing in racially diverse neighborhoods will show decreased strengths of Democratic

affiliation. African Americans residing in majority white neighborhoods will show high strengths of Democratic affiliation.

### **Description of the Data**

The analysis utilizes survey data collected by Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000) during the 1996 presidential election period. In three successive waves, they conducted a survey of citizen attitudes about the campaign and the election from March 1996 to February 1997, with a fourth wave completed in February 1998 for baseline measures. It consists of samples of registered voters from the three counties: St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and Indianapolis-Marion County, Indianapolis. A total of 2,200 respondents were sampled of which 1,800 were white and 275 African American. Each survey respondent answered a series of political and economic questions ranging from questions of partisan affiliation to levels of neighborhood satisfaction.

The respondents' addresses were geocoded, placing their individual addresses on a map (Baybeck 2006, 389). Utilizing U.S. Census block group units, the respondents were separated into neighborhood composition categories by the racial composition of individual neighborhoods: black neighborhoods (60 percent or greater African American), diverse neighborhoods (20 to 60 percent African American), and white neighborhoods (60 percent or greater white population).<sup>6</sup>

The neighborhood categories were defined utilizing racial neighborhood categories presented by Baybeck (2006, 390) and Quinn and Pawasarat (2003, 3). Both studies defined racially diverse neighborhoods at a floor of 20 percent African American population: Baybeck at 20-60 percent and Quinn and Pawasarat at 20-80 percent. Quinn

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<sup>6</sup> Block groups are geographically compact units drawn by the U.S. Census Bureau and are utilized as proxies for neighborhood composition.

and Pawasarat's floor for white and black majority neighborhoods at 80 percent or greater surpassed the 60 percent or greater floor defined by Baybeck. Categorizing diverse neighborhoods within the range of 20-80 percent black or white population include neighborhoods where both black and white respondents are members of super majorities. Racially diverse super majorities limit interactions between racial groups and mirror racially concentrated neighborhoods. Therefore, racially diverse neighborhoods defined within the range of 20-60 percent African American increase the probability of interactions and are a better measure of diverse neighborhoods. Categorizing diverse neighborhoods within the range of 20-60 percent African American requires that racial majority neighborhoods be categorized at 60 percent or greater which mirrors Baybeck's (2006, 390) racial neighborhood categories.

The St. Louis and Indianapolis areas surveyed exhibit variation in racial and political composition. The city of St. Louis has a nearly 50/50 racial split with a 52/48 black/white population; however, the racially diverse environment of the city is undermined by the homogeneous nature of the individual neighborhoods with blacks typically residing in neighborhoods with other blacks and vice versa for whites. The population of north St. Louis is almost completely African American; however, several south St. Louis neighborhoods are pocketed by integrated block groups. A band of racially integrated block groups bisect the central corridor of the city. Politically, St. Louis is an independent city with independently elected county officials. St. Louis County is fragmented by the incorporation of over 90 separate municipalities (not including St. Louis City) within its boundaries. St. Louis County is 20 percent black, but at the neighborhood level and even the municipal level is segregated by race (Baybeck



2006, 389). Indianapolis-Marion County differs slightly in racial composition from the Missouri municipalities: per the 2000 U.S. Census, it is composed of 69 percent white population, 26 percent black, and 5 percent other. In 1969, the city of Indianapolis was incorporated into the County of Marion County which makes its political structure different from that of St. Louis.

Across the dataset, there are 1,702 distinct block groups which are utilized as a proxy for the neighborhood and 95 municipalities—90 in St. Louis County and 5 in Indianapolis-Marion County. The size of the municipalities varies and the random nature of the survey prevents all of the survey respondents from falling into block groups—1,107 of the respondents resided in the designated block groups and 77 of the municipalities. Block groups generally contain between 600 and 3,000 people with an optimum size of 1,500 people; the block groups utilized in the study were delineated by local Missouri and Indiana governments (U.S. Census Bureau 2011).

### **Operationalization of Variables**

*Dependent Variables.* Using the Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset, I examine the effects of racial environment on the strength of individual partisan affiliation with two separate samples: one composed of all black respondents and the other all white. The neighborhood environments used are the percent black of the total population for the census block group. I examine the effect of these environments on the following question asked of respondents: “Would you call yourself a [strength of Democratic identification].” The second question, mirrors the first—“Would you call yourself a [strength of Republican identification].” The respondents’ answers fall on a two-point scale for each individual partisan identification with a lower score indicating strong

affiliation and the higher score weak affiliation. The answers were combined into one variable on a scale mirroring Down's (1957, 117) partisan left right ideological scale which increase from 1 to 5 with strong Democratic affiliation at 1 and strong Republican affiliation at 5 (1 Strong Democratic affiliation, 2 Weak Democratic affiliation, 3 Independent, 4 Weak Republican affiliation, and 5 Strong Republican affiliation). The expectation is that the relevant neighborhood environment will have an effect upon individual partisan identification or the strength of partisan identification after controlling for other factors.

The problem is approached in the following manner. I examine the effects of neighborhood context for each racially distinguished sample and compare the results. Utilizing the percentage of black population per block group, which is a proxy for neighborhood composition, the designee of partisan identification is examined individually in two models; one composed of all black respondents and the second all white respondents. A second form of the variable percent black per block group, percent black in block group squared, is included in the models. It will test the hypothesis about the curvilinear effect of racial context on partisanship.

***Independent Variables.*** A quadratic functional form of the variable measuring the percentage of African Americans per block group was generated to be utilized as an independent variable, percent black in block group squared. The functional transformation was necessary to test the hypothesis of a non-linear relationship with strength of Democratic partisanship.

Three variables gauge the level of individual network interaction as measures of social capital: length of residence as a measure of neighborhood connection, which

theoretically increases with increased opportunities for interaction; church membership; and membership in a neighborhood organization. For the length of residence variable, each respondent was asked, “How many years have you resided at your current address?” The responses were ordered from least to most on a scale from 0 thru 5 with 0 equal to less than one year at the current address; 1 from one to five years; 2 from six to ten years; 3 from eleven to fifteen years; 4 from sixteen to twenty years; and 5 from twenty or more years. For the neighborhood organization variable, each respondent was asked if they belonged to a neighborhood organization. The responses were coded 0 for no and 1 for yes. For the church membership variable, each respondent was asked the following question, “Do you belong to any church groups or religious organizations?” Each response was coded 0 for no and 1 for yes.

*Control Variables.* Controls for class based effects are included with the inclusion of measures of household income and the percent of female headed households per block group, which is included as a relative poverty measure. Respondent income is a dichotomous variable with respondents with incomes less than \$25,000 coded as 0 and for respondents with incomes greater than \$25,000 coded as 1. Also included are three demographic controls: education, age, and gender.<sup>7</sup> A dichotomous St. Louis variable (St. Louis, Other) is included for St. Louis city because of the inherent differences in politics among the various municipalities, specifically, the high degree of Democratic

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<sup>7</sup> The gender variable is a dichotomous variable coded 0 for females and 1 for males. The age variable lists the ages of all respondents. The ages range from 22 to 100 with a mean age of 58. The education variable measures the highest level of education obtained by individual respondents. It is coded from 1 to 20 with 1-12 representing primary and high school levels; 13-17 represents levels of college education; and 18-20 represent levels of post graduate education.

support within the city of St. Louis.<sup>8</sup> The variable also serves to mitigate the effect of the larger centralized St. Louis African American population.

## Methodology

The dependent variable response measure is categorical and is ordered from least to most; therefore, a modeling strategy of ordered logit is employed (Long and Freese 2003, 263). An ordered logit model (ordered logistic regression) is a regression model for ordinal dependent variables. It is an extension of the logistic regression model for dichotomous dependent variables and uses maximum likelihood estimation. The ordinal regression model is often presented as a latent variable model (Long and Freese 2003, 263). Latent variables are variables that are not directly observed but are rather inferred through a mathematical model from other variables that are observed or directly measured. Defining  $\gamma^*$  as a latent variable ranging from  $-\infty$  to  $\infty$ , the structural model is

$$\gamma_i^* = x_i\beta + \epsilon_i$$

where  $\beta$  is the observation and  $\epsilon$  is random error, and  $\gamma$  is linked to  $\gamma^*$  as follows for the dependent variable partisan intensity:

$$\gamma_i = \begin{cases} 1 \Rightarrow \textit{Strong Dem} & \text{if } \tau_0 = -\infty \leq \gamma_i^* < \tau_1 \\ 2 \Rightarrow \textit{Weak Dem} & \text{if } \tau_1 \leq \gamma_i^* < \tau_2 \\ 3 \Rightarrow \textit{Independent} & \text{if } \tau_2 \leq \gamma_i^* < \tau_3 \\ 4 \Rightarrow \textit{Weak Rep} & \text{if } \tau_3 \leq \gamma_i^* < \tau_4 \\ 5 \Rightarrow \textit{Strong Rep} & \text{if } \tau_4 \leq \gamma_i^* < \tau_5 \end{cases}$$

Where the  $\tau$ s are cut-points or thresholds. It is assumed that  $\tau_1 < \tau_2$  and in general that  $\tau_{m-1} < \tau_m$ . In probabilistic terms, the model is:

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<sup>8</sup> No Republican candidate has won city wide office in St. Louis in 30 years, only one of the city's 28 Aldermen has a Republican affiliation, and during the last five presidential elections the city has been carried by the Democratic candidate.

$$Pr(Y_i = m) = \Lambda(\tau_m - x_i\beta) - \Lambda(\tau_{m-1} - x_i\beta)$$

The probability of an observed outcome for a given value of  $x$  is the area under the curve between a pair of cut-points. The probability of observing  $\tilde{a} = m$  for given values of the  $x$ s corresponds to the region of the distribution where  $y^*$  falls between  $\tau_{m-1}$  and  $\tau_m$  (Long and Freese 2003, 153). There are several ways of utilizing ordered logit models: as a probability model, as an odds model, as a discrete choice model, and as a utility maximization model (Long and Freese 2003). The approach utilized will concentrate on one method of interpretation, predicted probabilities. Predicted probabilities offer a straightforward and simplistic interpretation of the results. It is easily understandable and offers the most parsimony for the presentation of the data. To calculate predicted probabilities requires holding  $x$  constant while changing the quantities of interest within plausible ranges that fall within the cut-points.

A description of the model is presented as follows.

**Dependent Variable:** Partisan Identity Intensity = **Independent Variables:** percent black in block group, percent black in block group squared, membership in a neighborhood organization, length of residence, membership in a church group + **Control Variables:** income, age, education, gender, percentage of female headed households with children, and St. Louis dichotomous variable (St. Louis-Others).

The dichotomous St. Louis City term takes on special significance because of an aspect of African American suburbanization. Weise (2005, 100) and Alba and Logan (1991, 432) argue that black migration to the suburbs is a reflection of class stratification. The socioeconomic advantages of black suburbanites compared to black residents of central city neighborhoods buttress their claim (Gale, Grier, and Grier 1986, 20). However, the concentration of blacks in central city border suburban locales with the

absence of whites supports the argument presented by Massey and Denton (1987, 814) that the initial black middle-class migration to the suburbs was to outer border ring communities followed by white flight. What will be observed in these suburban communities are racially homogenous neighborhoods mirroring those of central cities. Black communication networks will mirror those found in the racially concentrated central cities and the intensity of individual black Democratic affiliation will be high.

The statistical package utilized to examine the model is Stata. It is a software package designed to construct and analyze statistical data. The primary program command is `ologit`, the ordered logistic command. The `prvalue` command will be utilized to generate predicted probabilities from the final statistical models. Maximum likelihood cut points, pseudo fit measurements, and standard errors will be generated and presented.

### **Limitations of the Research**

One major limitation of this study is that there will be little observable variation in the racial composition of individual neighborhoods or block groups. Black suburban residents may exhibit greater levels of socioeconomic status than central city African Americans but with the same racial neighborhood composition. Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000) surveyed a total of 245 African American respondents of which 187, 76.3 percent, reside within the borders of the central cities of St. Louis and Indianapolis. A total of 58, 23.7 percent, of the black respondents reside in the suburbs. Ten of the suburban municipalities, all but one from St. Louis County and all border suburbs, show a 2000 population of 90 percent African American. A total of 36 of the African American suburban respondents reside in the concentrated black municipalities, 62.1 percent.

Fifteen, 25.9 percent, reside in diverse suburban municipalities and seven, 12.1 percent, reside in white majority municipalities.<sup>9</sup>

A second limitation is the lack of partisan variation among the black suburban respondents. Of the 58 black suburban respondents, one claims Republican affiliation (N=1), 46 Democratic, and 11 independent or something else. The survey respondents were sampled randomly, but their lack of partisan variation hinders any attempt at building a model that exhibits black partisan differences on the basis of suburban versus urban residency; but simultaneously strengthens the argument for the use of Democratic intensity as the dependent variable.

A third limitation of the research involves the time lapse between the survey collection and the study and the use of two Midwest locales. Huckfeldt and Sprague (2000) collected the data during the 1996 presidential election period. A substantial number of years have passed with various sociopolitical events that may have altered individual respondent partisan perceptions and ideologies which make the study's findings time bound. The use of only two Midwestern cities may lessen the generalizability of the findings; however, the strengths of the data outweigh its limitations. Both cities exemplify the demographic changes in urban populations of post World War II America—the suburbanization of America and the concentration of impoverished blacks in core central city neighborhoods. Although critical social, economic, and political events have occurred between the collection of the data and the study, African Americans in three presidential elections following the collection of the data have exhibited static partisan support of the Democratic Party (Fauntroy 2007, 160).

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<sup>9</sup> The seven black respondents reside in 6 municipalities which overall exhibited the highest levels of median household income while the heavily black concentrated border suburbs exhibited relatively low levels of median household income.

Even with its potential limitations, the data is relevant to the contemporary study and the exploration of African American partisan affiliation.

### **Conclusion**

The data and methodology of the study will allow for an investigation of the research question, whether the neighborhood racial composition affects the intensity of African American partisan attachment to the Democratic Party. In the next chapter, I will present the statistical results and provide explanations of my findings for the hypothesized relationships presented earlier in this chapter.



## Chapter 6

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### Findings

Outlining the distribution of party affiliation is the first step in analyzing the explanatory models. In the entire sample, a total of 4.38 percent of the African American respondents gave a party identification of Republican and 73.72 percent of Democratic. Clearly, the majority of black respondents gave responses which showed affiliation to the Democratic Party. By examining the intensity of respondent partisan affiliation, 66 percent of black Democrats gave responses that indicated strong Democratic affiliation while 24 percent of whites gave similar responses. See Table 6.1 for illustration. For African American respondents residing in black neighborhoods, the percentage of respondents with strong affiliations to the Democratic Party is 66.43 percent, diverse neighborhoods 58.70 percent, and in white neighborhoods 58.70 percent. See Table 6.2 for an illustration. The preceding observations from the data detail the strength of African American partisan affiliation to the Democratic Party and respondents residing in the black neighborhood context show the highest percentage of strong affiliation to the Democratic Party.

#### Insert Tables 6.1 and 6.2 About Here

**Strength of Partisan Identification.** The results for the strength of partisan identification model are presented in Table 6.3. The individual-level variables income, age, and gender are statistically significant with varying degrees of significance for the

black and white models. Age is statistically significant for the white model but statistically insignificant for the black model. The age coefficient has a negative sign in the black model toward strong Democratic affiliation but a positive sign in the white model toward strong Republican affiliation. The gender coefficient is statistically insignificant for both the black and white samples with a positive sign toward strong Republican affiliation.

**Insert Table 6.3 About Here**

The individual class related variables of income and education vary with statistical significance throughout the models. Income is statistically significant in a positive direction for the white sample and statistically insignificant in a negative direction for the black sample. Education is statistically insignificant for both the black and white samples with a positive direction toward strong Republican affiliation for the white sample. The variable measuring percentage of female headed households with children is statistically insignificant for both models in a positive direction for the black sample and a negative direction for the white model.

The variables measuring social capital: length of residence, church membership, and membership in a neighborhood organization vary with statistical significance throughout the models. Membership in a neighborhood organization is statistically insignificant for both samples with a negative sign for the black sample and a positive sign for the white sample. Length of residence is statistically insignificant for both samples with a positive sign in the black sample and a negative sign in the white sample. Church membership is statistically significant in the white sample with a positive sign toward strong Republican affiliation. It is statistically insignificant in the black model

with a positive sign. The St. Louis City dichotomous variable is statistically significant in the white sample with an expected negative sign toward strong Democratic affiliation. It is statistically insignificant for the black sample but with an expected negative sign.

The contextual variables of percent black per block group and the squared term percent black per block group were statistically insignificant in the black sample. The negative sign of the squared term and the positive of the non-squared term indicate a curvilinear effect. The terms were statistically insignificant for the white sample but their dual negative signs indicate a linear effect.

Discrete change is computed for the models. Discrete change can be interpreted as moving from the minimum block group percentage black to the maximum block group percentage black for the all black respondent sample changes the predicted probability of strong Democratic affiliation by 0.0617, holding all other variables constant at their means. Similarly, moving from the minimum income variable to the maximum income variable changes the predicted probability of strong Democratic affiliation for the black respondent sample by -0.0106, holding all other variables constant at their means. Moving from the minimum length of residence variable to the maximum length of residence variable changes the predicted probability of strong Democratic affiliation for the black respondent sample by 0.0121, holding all other variables constant at their means. Finally, moving from the minimum church group membership variable to the maximum church group membership variable changes the predicted probability of strong Democratic affiliation for the black respondent sample by 0.0001, holding all other variables constant at their means. A listing of the measures of discrete change for

statistically significant coefficients from both the black and white samples can be viewed in Table 6.4.

**Insert Table 6.4 About Here**

Predicted probabilities for each model with the percentage block group and the squared term set at their corresponding measures and all other variables set at their means were calculated. The percent black per block group has a measure of 1.45 and the corresponding squared term is set at 2.1. The resulting predicted probabilities were graphed and are presented in Figure 6.1. Figure 6.1 represents the predicted probability of African American respondents exhibiting strong Democratic affiliation by block group percentage of African Americans. The curvilinear relationship is apparent from the quadratic curve of the graph and represents a predicted increase in strong Democratic affiliation at low and high populations of blacks but with a dip at median populations. A corresponding graph, Figure 6.2, was constructed from the white sample which depicts the linear relationship of strong Democratic affiliation to increases in black population.

**Insert Figures 6.1 and 6.2 About Here**

Presenting predicted probabilities can be very complicated, and so far, simplified predicted probabilities have been presented. The statistical significance of social capital measures throughout the partisan intensity models allows for a more complex presentation with specific outcomes for individual African American respondents. A table was constructed with similar African American respondents who differ only in church group membership and length of residence: outcome 1, a church member who has resided at his or her residence from 6-10 years; outcome 2, non-church member who has resided at his or her residence from 6-10 years; outcome 3, a church member who has

resided at his or her residence from 1-5 years; and outcome 4, a non-church member who has resided at his or her residence from 1-5 years. The outcomes for the predicted probabilities are presented in Table 6.5.

**Insert Table 6.5 About Here**

Viewing the predicted probabilities of the outcomes listed in Table 6.5, we observe that holding all other variables constant at their means, the predicted probability of strong Democratic affiliation does not show significant changes because of church membership or increased lengths of residency.

I hypothesized that the neighborhood racial context of individual African American Democrats explains how strong his or her affiliation is. The curvilinear relationship between the two independent variables, the percentage of African Americans per block group and the square of the term, supports the hypothesis. The findings do not lead to an acceptance of the null of the hypothesis. The predicted probability of African American strong Democratic partisan affiliation increased with high and low populations of African Americans but ebbed in diluted populations of African Americans.

The findings do not mirror those of Johnson and Gordon (2005) with their traditional partisan identification model and challenge the scope of their findings for African Americans residing in a white neighborhood. The models utilizing the intensity of Democratic partisan identification as the primary indicator of black partisan attraction indicate greater probabilities of strong Democratic affiliation for black respondents residing in predominantly black and white neighborhoods and weaker probabilities for black respondents residing in racially diverse neighborhoods. Thus, the null of the hypothesis can be rejected.

The findings lead to a rejection of the null hypothesis but factors limit the generalizability of the empirical findings: the time period of the survey, the use of only two locations—the St. Louis and Indianapolis metropolitan areas, and the statistical insignificance of the independent variables the percentage of blacks per block group and the percentage of blacks per block group squared. The respondents were asked questions ranging from partisan identification to whether they discussed politics with family or friends. The survey was conducted in the late 1990s and during subsequent years three presidential elections occurred, two wars were initiated, a severe economic collapse crippled the nation, and the election of an African American president occurred. These social, economic, and political events may alter individual level sociopolitical responses of income and partisan intensity.

Another limitation of the findings is the statistical insignificance of the independent variables the percentage of blacks per block group and the percentage of blacks per block group squared. The statistical insignificance limits the predictability of the findings; however, the curvilinear relationship of the two independent variable coefficients buttresses the hypothesis.

The small sample size of African Americans limits the probability of the model obtaining statistically significant coefficients. Ideally, the data would be composed of a larger number of African American respondents who responded in varying geographical contexts. With a greater sample size of African American respondents the probability of statistical significance increases. Overall, the small sample size of African American respondents limits the predictability of the model; however, the curvilinear association of

the two independent variables suggests that a relationship exists and warrants further investigation.

The third limitation of the data, the use of two locations, limits the generalizability because of the inherent social, political, and economic differences of space. Although the St. Louis and Indianapolis areas exhibit diverse ranges of population and politics, they are only two of many metropolitan areas that compose the United States. Generalizations taken from the respondents from the two metropolitan areas may not reflect the responses of the nation as a whole. Even with the limitations, America's neighborhoods remain racially homogenous and communication networks in concentrated black neighborhoods remain static; therefore, the use of the data remains relevant.

**Table 6.1: Respondent Intensity of Partisan Affiliation by Race.**

<b>Partisan Intensity</b>	<b>Respondent Race</b>			
	<b>White</b>		<b>Black</b>	
Strong Dem	295	24.22%	128	65.64%
Weak Dem	204	16.75%	54	27.69%
Independent	31	2.45%	2	1.03%
Weak Rep	254	20.85%	5	2.56%
Strong Rep	434	35.63%	6	3.08%
Total	1,218	100%	195	100%

*Source:* Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000).



**Table 6.2: African American Respondent Intensity of Democratic Affiliation by Racial Composition of the Neighborhood.**

	Racial Composition of Neighborhood			Total			
	Black	Diverse	White				
Strong Democrat	93	66.43%	27	58.70%	8	88.88%	128
Weak Democrat	38	27.14%	14	30.43%	1	11.11%	53
Independent	1	0.71%	2	4.35%	0	0	3
Weak Republican	5	3.57%	0	0%	0	0	0
Strong Republican	3	2.14%	3	6.52%	0	0	0
Total	140	100%	46	100%	9	100%	195

*Source:* Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000).

**Table 6.3: Partisan Intensity Model.**

Partisan Intensity Dependent Variable	Race of Respondents	
	Black	White
Block Group % Black	0.0339 (0.0311)	-0.0033 (0.0083)
Block Group % Black Squared	-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.000016 (0.000112)
Income	-0.3753 (0.3876)	0.5925 (0.1551)*
Education	0.0183 (0.0544)	0.0172 (0.0222)
Age	-0.0196 (0.0129)	0.0095 (0.0042)*
Gender	0.3373 (0.3152)	0.1366 (0.1072)
Length of Residence	0.0945 (0.1243)	-0.0791 (0.0402)
Church Membership	0.0044 (0.3333)	0.2294 (0.1087)*
% Female Headed Households	0.0215 (0.0160)	-0.0054 (0.0090)
Member Neighborhood Organizations	-0.1998 (0.3285)	0.1338 (0.1135)
St. Louis Dummy	-0.1555 (0.4295)	-0.9122 (0.2028)*
Cut Point #1	0.6855 (1.4609)	-0.0804 (0.4593)
Cut Point #2	2.7318 (1.4781)	0.7317 (0.4589)
Cut Point #3	2.9119 (1.4833)	0.8417 (0.4590)
Cut Point #4	3.5505 (1.5101)	1.7355 (0.4616)
Chi-Square	8.7	72.9
N	195.0	1218.0
Log Likelihood	-167.2188	-1706.1840
Iterations	3.0	3.0

*Source:* Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000). Standard errors are in parentheses.

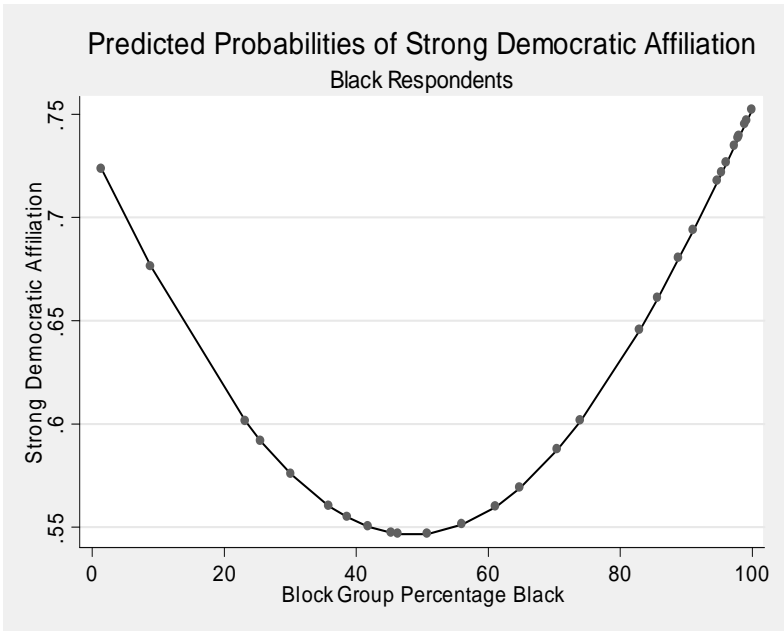
\*Significant at .05 and \*\*Significant at .01.

**Table 6.4: Discrete Change for Partisan Intensity Models.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Partisan Intensity Models</b>	
	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum Discrete Change</b>
	Black	White
Block Group %		
Black	.0617	-.07115
Income	-.0106	.1261
Length Residence	.0121	-.0906
Church Group	.0001	.5184

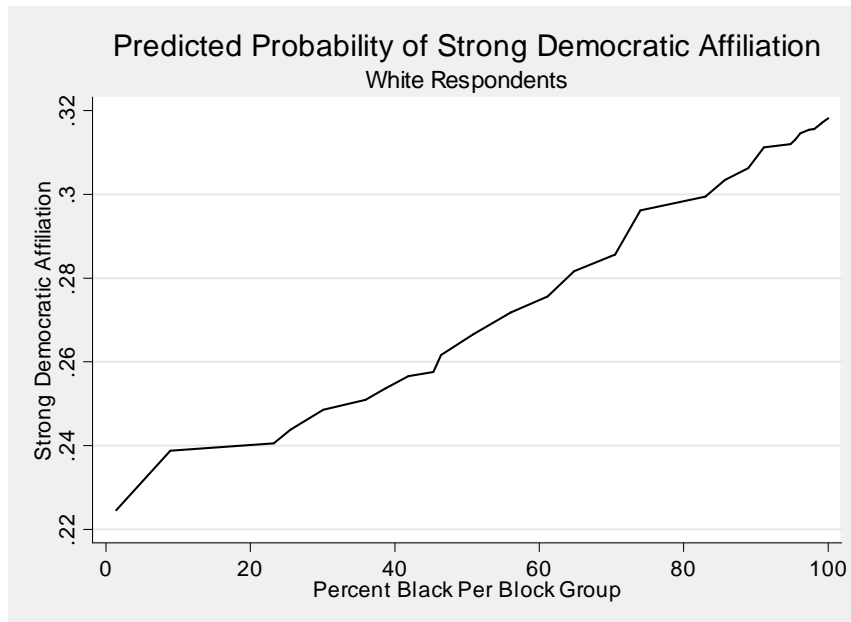
*Source:* Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000).

**Figure 6.1: Predicted Probability of Strong Democratic Affiliation for Black Respondents.**



Source: Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000).

**Figure 6.2: Predicted Probability of Strong Democratic Affiliation for White Respondents.**



*Source:* Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000).

**Table 6.5: Predicted Probabilities of Partisan Intensity for Black and White Respondents.**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Predicted Probabilities</b>			
	<b>#1</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>#4</b>
<b>Black Respondents</b>				
Strong Democrat	0.68	0.69	0.70	0.71
Weak Democrat	0.26	0.25	0.24	0.24
<b>White Respondents</b>				
Strong Democrat	0.20	0.24	0.19	0.23
Weak Democrat	0.16	0.18	0.16	0.17

Outcome #1: church member, 6-10 years at residence.

Outcome #2: non-church member, 6-10 years at residence.

Outcome #3: church member, 1-5 years at residence.

Outcome #4: non-church member, 1-5 years at residence.

*Source:* Indianapolis-St. Louis dataset (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000).

## **Chapter 7**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The focus of the research is to gauge the effect of environmental interactions on the strength of African American partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party. Historically, African Americans were pigeonholed into racially homogenous communities and environmental, institutional, and political communication networks reinforced a majority partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party (Fauntroy 2007, 160). The strength of the African American coalition with the Democratic Party can be witnessed by the 90 percent average black vote received by Democratic presidential candidates for twelve presidential elections beginning in 1964 (Fauntroy 2007, 160). The research question presented here is does the neighborhood composition (racial context) of individual African Americans affect the intensity of their partisan attraction to the Democratic Party?

Social capital and contextual environmental theories are the dual frameworks utilized as the theoretical foundation of the research. The frameworks wed personal interactions to geographically bounded environments; environments that are the product of both racial segregation and socioeconomic status (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1197). Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) were the first to present the contextual environmental framework which holds that individuals are influenced by environmentally constrained interactions.

The relevance of the framework for the research is the concentrated nature of African American populations and the inclusion of the study areas of St. Louis and Indianapolis. Both metropolitan regions were populated by concentrated black central city centered populations (2000 U.S. Census). The African American voters in both locales exhibit an historical alliance with the Democratic Party (Stein 2002 and Pierce 2005). The concentration of African Americans in St. Louis and Indianapolis neighborhoods mirrors the conception of a geographically bounded group. Because of the concentrated nature of the African American population in the two areas they are ideal locales for the exploration of the research question is individual African American Democratic affiliation influenced by environmental interactions with fellow African Americans.

Environmental interactions are defined as individual communication networks that influence individual political decisions (Huckfeldt et al. 2004, 158). It holds that African Americans in concentrated St. Louis and Indianapolis neighborhoods form communication networks that guide their political decisions. It is also important for African Americans who reside outside black neighborhoods to form communication networks that influence their political decisions. The question posed by the dissertation seeks to explore whether the political decisions of African Americans who reside in non-concentrated black neighborhoods are similar to those who reside in concentrated black neighborhoods.

Social capital theory is relevant for the question of interaction patterns. For example, Manzano (2007, 125) presents a framework of social capital theory based on ingrained cultural and ethnic norms. Her framework holds that traditional partisan norms



are accentuated by individuals residing in environments dominated by fellow ethnic members and that individuals are more willing to cross traditionally defined partisan norms in environments dominated by their non-ethnic members (bridging). Manzano's framework is relevant because of the concentrated and cultural distinctness of African Americans: African Americans have a shared social, cultural, and political history and reside in concentrated enclaves. For this study, it is relevant when exploring whether individual African American respondents residing in concentrated white neighborhoods show equal probabilities of partisan affiliation to the Democratic Party as blacks residing in black or racially diverse neighborhoods.

The research question, does the neighborhood composition (racial context) of individual African Americans affect the intensity of their partisan attraction to the Democratic Party, encompasses both social capital and contextual environmental theory. The frameworks are theoretically grounded in the effects of individual environmental interactions. Environmental interactions are the product of social interactions at the neighborhood, cultural, professional, and religious level, and the interactions influence political associations and behaviors (Johnson and Gordon 2005, 105). Thus, the following hypotheses were examined: interactions at the neighborhood level affect African American partisanship; specifically, that the racial composition of neighborhoods affects the strength of Democratic affiliation. For African Americans residing in black majority neighborhoods their individual strength of Democratic affiliation will be high, but blacks residing in racially diverse neighborhoods will show decreased strengths of Democratic affiliation. African Americans residing in majority white neighborhoods will show high strengths of Democratic affiliation.

The contextual effects of individual environmental interactions of African Americans residing in black dominated neighborhoods affect individual political mobilization because of access to cultural, religious, and political institutions that are the key building blocks of partisan development and mobilization (Johnson and Gordon 2005, 104). I argue African Americans who reside in concentrated black neighborhoods will utilize culturally ingrained institutions and individual network connections that reinforce an intense partisan association with the Democratic Party.

It appears African Americans who reside in racially diverse neighborhoods are less influenced by once environmentally bounded communication networks traditionally located in homogenous black communities and are influenced by their increased interaction with their diverse neighbors. Thus, African Americans in diverse neighborhoods form communication networks with neighbors and the interactions affect once ingrained political perceptions. The empirical results show African Americans who reside in diverse neighborhoods show less intense partisan associations with the Democratic Party. One can conclude that outmigration to racially diverse neighborhoods limit African American interactions with other African Americans; thus, resulting in increased individual associations with non-blacks and non-black traditional institutions.

I argue that in majority white neighborhoods network connections with black neighbors is sparse. Thus, the failure to interact and form network connections reinforces ingrained political perceptions and individual African Americans rely on ingrained political perceptions that reinforce partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party. They will exhibit a greater sense of self identity and an emotional distance from their white neighbors (Cutler 2006, 696; Caughy et al. 2006, 1223; Stoll 2001, 548; and Finifter

1974, 615). Stoll (2001, 548) observed that blacks residing in concentrated black neighborhoods exhibited a greater number of voluntary political associations with neighbors than blacks who reside in non-concentrated black neighborhoods. Stoll's findings reinforce a perception that individual African Americans who reside in predominantly white neighborhoods will show intense levels of partisan attraction to the Democratic Party.

The empirical evidence indicates that respondents showed a predicted probability of increased strong Democratic affiliation in neighborhoods of concentrated and sparse black populations. However, in racially diverse populations the respondents showed decreased levels of strong Democratic affiliation (see Figure 6.1). Overall, the empirical findings support the hypothesized curvilinear effect of racial context on African American partisanship.

### **Implications for Future Research**

In the introduction, I wrote that there is a gap in the literature on the influence of contextual factors in explaining African American partisan affiliations and that this dissertation seeks to fill that void by investigating the extent to which geographic context influences black partisan attachment. Johnson and Gordon's (2005) research focused on African American partisan affiliation at the neighborhood, work, and religious environmental contexts; however, my research narrowed the focus to the neighborhood and affiliation to the Democratic Party. It challenges the findings of Johnson and Gordon and builds on the past contextual research; past research which primary focus was whites: Baybeck 2006; Huckfeldt 1986; Huckfeldt and Sprague 2004; Logan and Stults 2001; Carsey 1995; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989; Huckfeldt 1979; and Key 1949. The intensity

level of Democratic affiliation for African American respondents remained high for blacks residing in the black and white neighborhood contexts.

African American respondents solidly self-identify as Democrats and environment plays a role in understanding the strength of African American affiliation with the Democratic Party. African Americans residing in predominantly white neighborhoods show equal magnitudes of Democratic affiliation as African Americans residing in concentrated black neighborhoods. The findings have the following implications for future researchers. Voter mobilization of black Democratic voters should not solely focus on concentrated black neighborhoods. Black voters who reside in white majority neighborhoods show equal strengths of Democratic affiliation as blacks residing in black neighborhoods and are equally receptive to Democratic mobilization.

Focusing on mobilizing African Americans outside the core black communities as well as inside core black communities can lead to increased black participatory rates and challenges the bonded nature of black communities as a whole. Discounting the potential Democratic votes of African Americans who reside in majority white neighborhoods can harm Democratic vote totals by failing to mobilize potential voters. The research shows that African Americans who reside in white neighborhoods show strong Democratic affiliation and focusing voter mobilization strategies on them has the potential of increasing Democratic vote totals in white majority neighborhoods.

A second aspect of focusing Democratic mobilization strategies on blacks residing in white neighborhoods is the potential to increase bridging activities. Focusing on mobilizing African Americans in white neighborhoods will result in increased social interactions with the potential to foster social capital building institutions in and outside

the white neighborhoods. The interactions will foster the creation of communication networks and offer opportunities for bridging activities. African Americans targeted for mobilization will have the opportunity to then target potential white neighbors, bridging, for mobilization and blacks within their existent individual communication networks. Thus, focusing on mobilizing African Americans outside core black communities can increase black participatory rates by mobilizing the targeted African Americans who reside outside core black neighborhoods and those targeted blacks then mobilizing other blacks within their individual communication networks. Focusing on mobilizing African Americans outside the core black communities as well as inside core black communities can lead to increased black participatory rates and challenges the bonded nature of black communities as a whole.

The empirical findings do not buttress the existence or the non-existence of embedded communication networks in African American neighborhoods; however, the empirical relationship between neighborhood racial status and black Democratic affiliation was not rejected. The rejection of the null can guide future researchers to explore mechanisms that shape black partisan attachment in concentrated black neighborhoods, diverse neighborhoods, and white neighborhoods.

For example, the mechanisms can include explorations of the variables of black communication network maintenance and formation. Future researchers can explore the avenues by which African Americans communicate or why they do not communicate in differing racial contexts and whether it affects Democratic partisan intensity. Researchers can explore the relationship of space and communication in terms of forms of communication, whether blacks engage in traditional social capital forms of

communication, i.e. neighborhood organizations, civic groups, or religious organizations with their neighbors in differing racial contexts; or researchers can examine black communication networks within the scope of modern social networks to explore whether African Americans are members of social networks with their neighbors from varying neighborhood racial contexts and if their partisan affiliation is affected.

Researchers who seek to examine the role neighborhood racial composition plays in African American partisan affiliation can utilize these research findings because it demonstrates that there is a relationship between the racial composition of an individual African American's neighborhood and his or her intensity of Democratic affiliation.

## **Conclusion**

Politics is a social activity imbedded within structured patterns of social interaction and political information is conveyed through social interaction, via discussions, formal meetings, and informal meetings; political preferences are sustained via these "socially supplied" information channels (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1197). Communication networks development is bounded by environment and neighborhoods are distinguishable geographic markers of environment that reinforce political preferences (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1197). For individual African Americans, neighborhood racial composition affects partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party. The research demonstrated that black respondents residing in white neighborhoods demonstrated equal magnitudes of Democratic affiliation as blacks residing in black neighborhoods. Thus, the racial composition of neighborhoods has an influence on individual African American Democratic affiliation.

## Appendix A

### REGRESSION DIAGNOSTICS

Regression diagnostics are important because they are diagnostic statistics that evaluate the regression estimates of the model. The first test is for violations of the parallel regression assumption which is necessary because we assume for ordered choice models the impact of the predictors is the same across the choices of the dependent variable. If the parallel regression assumption is false, then the estimate of the predictor will be inconsistent. The Stata statistical program `omodel` command was utilized to test for violations of the assumption for the black and white samples. The test approximates likelihood-ratio of proportionality of odds across model response categories. The results are as follows, for the black sample:

Approximate likelihood-ratio test of proportionality of odds across response categories:

```
chi2(31) = 48.93  
Prob > chi2 = 0.0214
```

And the white sample:

Approximate likelihood-ratio test of proportionality of odds across response categories:

```
chi2(33) = 50.61  
Prob > chi2 = 0.0257
```

We observe for both designees of the dependent variable the assumption has been violated. The test assumption is often violated and no equivalent model fits the parameters of the data; therefore, the results will not be rejected (Long and Freese 2003, 168).

The independent variables were tested for multicollinearity. A variance inflation factor table of the independent variables was generated.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>VIF</b>	<b>1/VIF</b>
bg00_pblk	29.71	0.033657
black2	28.99	0.03449
age	1.72	0.582069
income	1.64	0.61021
lengthres	1.63	0.611738
bg00_pfhhw	1.46	0.686242
educ	1.43	0.700685
stldummy	1.18	0.84857
neghbras	1.17	0.856656
churchgrp	1.12	0.89176
gender	1.05	0.948425
Mean VIF	6.46	

As expected the variable measuring percent black per block group and its square variable exhibit multicollinearity. However, the inclusion of both variables is essential to testing the study hypothesis and no other equivalent variables were available.



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