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Education, Political Ideology, and Academic Outcomes

Gillion, Leah L

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Education, Political Ideology, and Academic Outcomes

Leah Luan Gillion

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty
of Princeton University
in Candidacy for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Recommended for Acceptance
by the Department of
Sociology and Demography

Advisors: Sara McLanahan and Douglas Massey

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Dissertation Abstract

Can the political leanings of communities and educators impact students' educational advancement, and thus inequality? In the current political climate, race is a divisive issue that affects how policies are discussed, written, and passed. While the hope is that the political climate does not spill over into educational institutions, the reality is public education is a political institution. Given increased political polarization (Pew Research 2014), the dissertation explores the influence of political ideology on neighborhoods, schools, and individual educators. The study uses original experimental data and compiles several data sets to assess the political influence on student's academic outcomes. The dissertation is divided into three empirical chapters. Chapter one lays the groundwork and shows there are measurable differences between Democrat and Republican leaning school districts in terms of spatial location, household characteristics, school budgets, and geographical shape. The second chapter identifies the ways in which the community's political ideology are associated with students' academic outcomes by examining the influence of the community's political leanings on minority students' ability to enroll in Advanced Placement courses (AP) or Gifted and Talented (GT) programs. Republican leaning school districts have lower placement rates of black students in AP and GT programs than Democrat leaning school districts net of a host of alternative explanations. The final chapter explores how the political ideology of individual educators can filter into the classroom to shape their perceptions of students' academic ability for placement in academically challenging honors courses. Conservatives show a racial preference for advancing white students to honors classes over black and Hispanic students despite all students having the same exact academic and

behavioral background. Liberals, in contrast, display a willingness to advocate for black students' placement in honors class relative to white students, though this effect does not quite reach statistical significance. Nonetheless, the gap between black and white student's placements among liberals is meaningful (17 percentage-points), which equates to black students recommended to honors class 33% more often than similar white students. The empirical analyses thus demonstrate that political ideology at the individual and community levels has profound effects on the educational outcomes and conditions experienced by minority students.

Acknowledgements

My committee members were integral to the completion of this project. Tod Hamilton's door was always open and took time to listen to my concerns and ideas. His constant flow of suggestions fueled my creativity and gave me the confidence to go beyond what I thought was possible. The completion of this dissertation and my overall success at Princeton University would not have been possible without my two co-chairs, Sara McLanahan and Douglas Massey. I have tried to model my own work ethic after that of Douglas Massey, whom I think of as a diligent and relentlessly active scholar. Finally, Sara McLanahan has been the foundation of my graduate education. She has always provided me with insightful perceptions on any issue or topic. Her intellectually stimulating discussions have kindled my passion for the study of educational outcomes of racial and ethnic minority students.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee readers—Jennifer Jennings and Brandon Stewart. They were amazing and provided valuable feedback not only on my dissertation, but also as I prepared for the job market.

There are others who did not serve on the committee, but who still played a vital role in my progress. Marta Tienda and Patricia Fernandez Kelly were instrumental to my acclimation to graduate student life. They were the voice of reality and offered prudent and direct advice that some might have thought to say but did not have the delicate words to express their concerns. Even though at times these harsh truths did not flatter my ego, they opened a path for me to constantly reinvent myself into a better scholar. I would also like to thank Cheng, Sal, Takudzwa, and Zitsi for the entertaining conversations in our office that always lightened the mood.

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Introduction

On a Sunday afternoon in September, millions of families across the country watched NFL football games. Vernon "Lynn" Redden, a superintendent of a small school district north of Houston, Texas was keenly interested in his local team, the Houston Texans as they played the Tennessee Titans. Like other interested fans he is posting on social media his reaction to the game. With 17 seconds left in the game and the Texans down three points, DeShawn Watson, a black quarterback has the ball on the 53-yard line. Watson gets the snap and looks around for over 14 seconds before completing a pass at the 20-yard line. Watson takes too long to make a decision and as the receiver is tackled, the game clock expires—game over, the Texans lose. Redden is in disbelief and writes on his Facebook page, “That may have been the most inept quarterback decision I've seen in the NFL. *When you need precision decision making you can't count on a black quarterback*."

The racial implications were clear. Quarterbacks are often thought of as the position requiring the most intelligence and black quarterbacks like DeShawn Watson did not have the intelligence needed to play this position. His words were screenshot by a concerned citizen and emailed to the Houston Chronicle. Redden’s initial defense of the ill-worded posting was that he thought it was a private message. This is a comical defense implying that as the superintendent of a school district it is okay to believe that blacks do not have the intelligence to play quarterback just as long as it is not verbalized to the public. He later tried to explain his comments and said they were based on the limited success of black NFL quarterbacks statistically. His defense in using numbers to back up his racial claims overlooks that statistically, there is limited success of NFL quarterbacks

regardless of race, and statistically, black quarterbacks are not afforded the same opportunities as white quarterbacks (Volz 2015).

Although Redden's social media posting did not directly impact school policy or minority students' academic outcomes, as the leader of the Onalaska Independent School District, his thoughts and perceptions of racial minorities matter. If Redden does not believe blacks have enough intelligence to play quarterback, what are his thoughts on black students' ability to take Advanced Placement classes or enroll in Gifted and Talented Programs? While Onalaska School District has few minorities (10% black and Hispanic), there are no black or Hispanic students enrolled in Advanced Placement classes or enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Program. Would he attribute the lack of minorities in advanced classes to the 'limited success of black students statistically' as he did for black NFL quarterbacks? There could be a number of reasons why racial disparities exist in advanced classes in Onalaska Independent School District but based on his views on blacks it is doubtful Redden would introduce policies or initiatives to address the racial disparities.

Even though Redden is the leader of the school district, he is just one person. Teachers and other staff working in the school district as well as the political culture created within the community can influence public education. Redden worked in the Onalaska Independent School District for 12 years, but he was one of the 176 staff and faculty and one of the 6,310 citizens in the overwhelmingly conservative community of Onalaska, Texas. In 2012, 53% of registered voters in the district identified as Republican whereas only 15% identified as Democrat; furthermore, in the 2016 election, 73% of the community voted for Donald Trump as the presidential nominee. This majority

Republican community elected the School Board of Trustees, who in turn appointed the superintendent.

Superintendent Redden made the public privy to his private thoughts on racial minorities, which were only meant to be shared with a close friend; but what are the racial perceptions of other school administrators, faculty, and staff who do not mistakenly publicize this information? Moreover, since the community presumably elects school officials whose policies most closely align with their own, what role does the community's political ideology have in shaping outcomes of minority students?

When the literature addresses racial perceptions and neighborhoods, it often frames the discussion in terms of race or socioeconomic status. This dissertation adds to that literature and attempts to answer questions about race, socioeconomic status, and ability by examining them through an ideological lens. Political ideology, in particular, is a belief system that can strongly shape racial perceptions and create a political culture within communities that shape perceptions as well as policies. The chapters that follow examine the influence of political ideology on education.

Public education is a branch of government and heavily influenced by community opinions and local politics. The dissertation is divided into three chapters. Part one shows that the community political ideology is not merely a concept, but there are measurable differences across ideological communities in terms of population, racial composition, income, and local government budgets. Part 2 examines the association of the community's political leanings and minority students' academic outcomes. The final chapter moves to the individual and investigates the extent to which political ideology shapes racial perceptions of students' academic abilities.

Why Education and Politics

Education is often viewed as an apolitical issue, but schools are political institutions. The Department of Education sets the educational agenda at the federal level and is involved in many facets of daily education from large programs such as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) and the *Common Core* to the type of food children eat at school (*Let's Move Campaign*[1]). Each state has its own Department of Education and some states even negotiate and set teacher salaries that all school districts within the state must follow. At the local level, voters help shape school policies through the election of political officials who set the school budget and create local school policies. Individual citizens who work in the school district do not leave their political ideologies at the schoolyard doors, of course, but carry their political beliefs into the classroom and draw on them to shape daily decisions.

Public education is a branch of government and thus subject to the partisan politics that plagues our government and society today. What is often forgotten, however, is that the divisiveness in government is simply a reflection of citizens' divisions across American communities. The growing political divide along partisan lines has steadily increased since the 1990s. A Pew Research Study (2016) finds that Democrats are becoming more liberal and Republicans are becoming more conservative. Specifically, the percent of Democrats identifying as liberal has increased 30 percentage points from 1994 to 2016 while the percent of Republicans identifying as conservative has increased 9 percentage points over the same time period. Furthermore, each respective political

[1] The *Let's Move Campaign* was a program put forth by First Lady Michele Obama and part of that initiative called for public school lunch to follow nutrition guidelines in order to receive additional federal funding

party has an unfavorable view of the other party and these negative perceptions have steadily grown since 1994. Finally, the Pew Research Center (2016) finds that the animosity Republicans and Democrats have for one another is rooted in the belief that the other party's policies are bad for the country. These changes in the ideological belief system of Democrats and Republicans are coupled with demographic changes to each respective party. The Pew Research Center (2016) found from 1992 to 2016, the Democratic Party has become more racially diverse, more educated, and younger at a faster rate than the Republican Party (See Figure 1.1).

[Figure 1.1]

Finally, these widening political divisions are accompanied by growing spatial divisions. Scholars are in agreement that America is becoming more politically segregated (Bishop 2008; Gimpel and Hui 2015; McDonald 2011; Strickler 2015), yet the consequences, especially for local government, have not been fully explored. The missing link in the literature on political segregation is school district boundaries. Prior studies use counties, congressional districts, zip codes, or census tracts, but these studies overlook one of the most important lines in residential decision making--school district lines (Owens 2017). School districts are associated with school quality, but more importantly, they are highly influential to the property taxes that all homeowners pay. This dissertation examines the effect of a community's political preferences on education because schooling is one of the largest expenditures of the local government.

Partisan Education: A Theoretical Approach

My theory of partisan education expands upon our understanding of the ways in which biases operate at both the individual and community levels and how political cultured and

preferences are associated with minority student outcomes. I argue that individuals' political ideologies move beyond elections to shape daily decisions in other arenas such as education. Educators likely carry their political biases into the classroom when assessing and evaluating students' performance. Given conservative political attitudes that view racial minorities as undeserving and lazy (Goren 2003; Tesler 2016), we are likely to observe political differences in how educators evaluate and award success to students in different racial groups.

Racial differences in student outcomes that stem from political leanings are not only present at the individual level, but can also contribute to political cultures that vary systematically across communities. A community's political ideology reflects the collective political preferences of registered voters in the district, thus there is potential for the political biases at the individual level to be expressed at the aggregate level to shape local policies. Academic spaces are not immune to strong political leanings that result in heightened racial inequality in our school system. Consequently, this dissertation posits that the ideological landscape of school districts as well as the political leanings of educators can affect the treatment of racial and ethnic minority students and further increase educational inequalities in America.

Structure of Dissertation

In the chapters to come, I aim to answer the central question driving this study: do the political preferences of individuals and communities influence the educational outcomes of minority students? Chapters 2 and 3 examine the association between a community's political preferences and its socioeconomic and demographic characteristics and educational outcomes. These chapters use multiple national data sets to provide the first

national assessment of community ideology at the school district level. Chapter 4 moves from the aggregate to the individual to provide an understanding of how political biases can operate in the classroom.

Chapter 2 explores the political ideology of communities and its association with various neighborhood characteristics, school budgets, and school district boundary lines. It seeks to understand how the political preferences of communities influence local government decisions. The political leanings of communities affect election outcomes and elections in turn shape local policies. I argue that the ideological landscape of America has real consequences, especially for local public schools. Over 70% of school districts in the United States are highly partisan with Democratic and Republican districts displaying different average household incomes, racial composition, and population size. Partisan school districts allow communities to speak with a unified voice and put forth their political preferences with few compromises. The political leanings of communities can also promote inequality through unequal school spending and unequal access to public goods and services is also achieved through the drawing of school district boundary lines. This chapter explores how the community's political preferences can be a source of inequality. Its importance lies in understanding that as communities become more politically segregated, they are able to exert greater influence over local government and control access to public goods and services such as education.

Chapter 3 documents the role of the community's political preferences in shaping the educational outcomes of minority children. Political ideology is an important community attribute for minorities because of its influence on policies and programs implemented at the local level. For example, communities may be more or less

supportive of policies used to address racial disparities, especially as it relates to schooling. This chapter explores the association between the political leanings of communities and minority students' educational opportunities. In particular, it assesses how the community's political leanings are associated with minority student's enrollment in Advanced Placement Classes and Gifted and Talented Programs? I find that ideology is strongly associated with the academic placement of minority students at the school district level. Black students are less likely to take advanced classes in Republican leaning school districts compared to Democrat leaning school districts. The empirical analysis demonstrates that political ideology at the community level is associated with unequal academic outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities. The argument advanced here has important implications for theories of neighborhoods and the role played by community political ideology in shaping outcomes of citizens.

Chapter 4 moves from the aggregate level to the individual and examines the political ideology of individual educators and its influence on the academic evaluation of minority students. Prior literature has examined racial biases in educational institutions primarily through a racial lens, but a less explored area of consideration is how the political leanings of educators may affect their assessment of minority students. This chapter uses original experimental data gathered from 389 educators identified on a national survey. Each educator was randomly assigned a black, white, or Hispanic student to evaluate, but each of these randomly assigned students has identical grades and behavior comments.

This exercise yields two different, but similar findings. First, I find that both liberal and conservative educators use students' race as a factor in the evaluation of their

academic merit. However, whereas conservatives exhibit a racial bias that favors placing white students over black and Hispanic students in high achieving honors classes, liberals are more likely to advocate for black students over white students for honors class placement. This empirical analysis demonstrates that political ideology has a profound effect on the decision-making of educators with respect to perceptions of race and academic ability.

I conclude the dissertation by discussing the major contributions of this work and the value of empirically conducting a national assessment of the political influence on education at the individual level and aggregate level. Finally, I explain the implications of my findings and what they mean for racial minorities in an increasingly politically polarized environment. I argue the ideological landscape of America today has real consequences not only in shaping the educational outcomes of minority students, but constitutes a powerful source of inequality by restricting their access to public goods and services.

Chapter 2

Politically Segregated Communities and Their Impact on Local Government

Abstract

Do the political leanings of communities matter? Communities are often studied based on racial composition or economic well-being, but a less explored aspect of neighborhood differences can stem from the community's political leanings. This study seeks to understand how the political preferences of communities can influence local government. The political leanings of communities affect election outcomes and shape local policies. I argue that the ideological landscape of America has real consequences, especially for local public schools. I examine the political leanings of over 13,000 school districts across the country and find that over 70% of school districts are highly partisan, which is associated with the average household income, the community racial composition, and community population. These partisan school districts allow the community to speak with a unified voice and put forth their political preferences without much compromise. The political leanings of communities can promote inequality through unequal school spending and also unequal access to local public goods and services through the drawing of school district boundary lines. This study is the first measurement of community political ideology at the school district level that explores how a community's political preferences can be a source of inequality. The importance in this work lies in understanding that as communities become more politically segregated, they are able to exert greater influence over local government and have the potential to restrict access of public goods and services.

Findings:

- Democrat leaning school districts are more populated, more racially diverse but have lower household incomes.
- Democrat leaning school districts spend more per-pupil and pay higher teacher salaries.
- Democrat leaning communities collect a larger share of school revenue from the state and federal government than Republican leaning school districts, while Republican communities receive a larger share from the local government than Democrat communities.
- Republican communities collect more from sales tax than property taxes in effect placing a lower burden on wealthier homeowners. Democrat communities collect more from property taxes than sales taxes.
- Republican leaning school district boundary lines are more gerrymandered (less compact) than Democrat leaning school districts as measured by the Polsby-Popper compactness test.

Introduction

> *People who think you can wave a magic wand and the legacy of the past will be over are blind. Think of neighborhood living patterns. We still have many neighborhoods which are racially identified. We still have many schools -- even though the days of state enforced segregation are gone, segregation because [of] geographical boundaries, remains.*
>
> *-Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg February 17, 2015*

Americans are more socially divided along partisan lines than in previous years past (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012) and recent research finds there are spatial divisions between where Republicans and Democrats live (Mummolo and Nall 2017). Studies theorize that as the US population has become more mobile over the past few decades, people are moving to places that match their lifestyle (Bishop 2008). Liberals like large cities with bike lanes and a majority Democratic base while conservatives prefer big yards, Bible studies, and communities that reflect their moral compass (Bishop 2008). If America is becoming spatially politically polarized, what does this mean for public schools?

I argue that the ideological landscape of America has real consequences, especially for local public schools. Local schools are the political tools communities use to enact community goals, values, and cultural norms. The community exerts its influence over schools through the election of school leaders. These leaders must reflect the educational values of the community or risk losing re-election. In essence, school districts reflect the political preferences of those living in the community, yet rarely are schools viewed through an ideological lens.

In this study, I discuss the political landscape of communities across America. In particular, I examine over 13,000 school districts and investigate theories of partisan

geographical sorting – where one political party (Democrat or Republican) dominates in homogenous enclaves to produce local communities with uniform political preferences. Moreover, what do partisan communities look like in terms of population, income, and racial composition? This study examines the geographical location of every registered voter within the continental United States to develop an accurate depiction of ideological living spaces at the school district level.

I examine the distribution of political affiliation at the school district level since prior research shows that schools are a factor in where people choose to live (Johnson and Shapiro 2003). School districts are an important policy arena since they are associated with school quality, property taxes, and home values, which are all crucial factors in determining a place of residence even for those without children. Using congressional districts, counties, or zip codes, misses out on this invisible boundary that is highly influential towards residential decision making (Owens 2017). I find that not only are school districts racially segregated (Orfield Frankenberg, and Lee 2003), but they are politically segregated as well. Specifically, fewer than 30% (2,994) of school districts have less than a 10% gap in the percentage of registered Democrat and Republican voters in the community. In other words, more than 70% (7,977) of school districts are highly partisan and have the ability to put forth their political preferences to influence the school agenda.

I theorize that these ideological living spaces create meaningful differences across school districts in ways not previously explored. Specifically, I outline two areas of focus to show the influence of the community political ideology on government – school budgets, and the geographical shape of the school district, which can promote exclusion

or inclusion depending on the level of gerrymandering of district boundaries. The importance of this work lies in establishing measurable differences between communities based on their political leanings and showing that these differences are associated with local government decision making.

Although many works find that differences across communities can promote unequal outcomes, little attention has been paid to the political culture created within neighborhoods as a source of inequality. In what follows, the article begins with a brief review of the existing scholarship on the theoretical importance of neighborhoods. The subsequent empirical analysis supports a theoretical shift to focus on how the political landscape of communities influence school budgets and the drawing of school boundary lines. The concluding section outlines how the nation's growing politically polarized geography likely affects local government to exacerbate the unequal distribution of local educational goods and services.

Neighborhoods

The research literature provides rich theoretical and empirical contributions in the understanding of how neighborhoods can be a source of inequality (Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1987; Sharkey 2013). These studies typically view communities in terms of racial composition, family income, or geographical location and overwhelmingly find that neighborhoods are influential in the development of children and the opportunities afforded to those living in the community. While there is no denying the association between the racial composition or economic composition of neighborhoods and the outcomes of its citizens, a less explored aspect of neighborhood difference can stem from the community's political leanings. Political ideology at the individual level is associated

with meaningful differences in political preferences, behavior, and even personality disposition (Carney, Jost, and Gosling 2008). Thus, at the aggregate level, the collective political preferences and behaviors of citizens are expected to be reflected in the policies and actions taken by the local government.

A growing literature examines the idea that Americans are engaging in partisan geographical sorting. While there is debate whether individuals are truly making a concerted effort to move to places that fit their lifestyle due to their political preferences (Martin and Webster 2018; Mummolo and Nall 2017; Bishop 2008), there is evidence that geographical clustering occurs along income and education levels that is in turn related to political preferences (Sussell and Thomson 2015). For example, high-income earners may be more likely to support Republican policies and identify as Republican, due to that party's historical support of lower taxes, while lower wage earners may support and identify as Democrats due to their commitment on social policies and programs.

Research finds there are political consequences to partisan geographical clustering. Increased partisanship in Congress is partially attributed to the geographical polarization of Americans' living patterns (Sussell and Thompson 2015). Also, the clustering of Democrats in dense urban cities diminishes Democrats' congressional representation in the electoral system (Chen and Rodden 2013). A less explored aspect of geographical partisanship is its effect on political decision making by local governments.

Theoretical Framework

Schools are a key part of local government, and a community's political ideology can shape local legislative agendas. I define *community political ideology* as the collective

political perspective of those living in the community. At the individual level, political ideology is a shared belief system that helps people interpret and make sense of the social world (Jost, Federico, and Napier, 2009) and a single unifying concept that can produce community cultural norms (Hinich and Munger 1993). Thus, individual political perspectives can function collectively to produce neighborhoods with homogenous belief systems and political preferences that can be influential to the local government.

In many ways, schools are the foundation of local communities. They are the vehicles used to teach the community's values and pass on its cultural norms. Yet public schools are rarely thought of as political institutions, despite being tax-supported government organizations. A large percentage of the revenue generated in the local community goes into the public-school system. As with other government institutions, registered voters are able to enact influence over public schools through the election of school leaders. Citizens within a school district directly or indirectly (depending on local election policy[2]) elect school board members, superintendents, chancellors, or other school leaders. These school leaders set the school policy agenda and establish the school's financial budget. Thus, the *community political ideology* of a school district can be expected to have a strong effect on schooling.

Both Republicans and Democrats have a strong commitment to increasing academic achievement, but there are noticeable differences in their views on the use of school funding to improve educational outcomes. For example, the Republican Party Platform, states that "the United States spends an average of more than $12,000 per-pupil

[2] In many school districts, school boards or superintendents are elected by the registered voters (direct). In other instances, school boards or superintends are appointed by an elected official such as the mayor (indirect).

per year in public schools, for a total of more than $620 billion. That represents more than 4% of GDP devoted to K-12 education in 2011-2012…. Clearly, if money were the solution, our schools would be problem-free. More money alone does not necessarily equal better performance" (Republican Party Platform 2016, p. 33-34). In contrast, the Democrat Party Platform (2016) calls for "equitable and adequate state funding for public education" (p.30), "expanding Title I funding" (from the federal government) (p.30), and "increasing investments in after school and summer learning programs" (p. 29) as well as "guaranteeing universal preschool" (p.29).

In other words, Republicans are opposed to increased funding, while Democrats want more state and federal funding as well as the addition of an entire grade (Pre-K) within every school district by guaranteeing universal access to preschool, which would be extremely costly. Communities are able to put forth partisan educational budgets by electing leaders who share their same views on school funding. Educational leaders are public officials whose responsibilities are to create a vision for the school and a budget to carry out this vision; public officials must adhere to the educational desires of the community in order to remain in office.

The political preferences of the community can also affect school district boundary lines. The creation of legislative boundaries is a political process, but they are typically discussed in terms of congressional districts since these boundaries are redrawn each decade based on the updated US population totals from the US Census. Studies find that the drawing of legislative district lines is often motivated by partisan politics rather than the interests of the people. The political motivations of school district lines are no different. Historically, school districts were intentionally drawn in response to

demographic shifts of the US population beginning in the 1940s. School district gerrymandering was especially prevalent during the Great Black Migration and accelerated after the Brown v. Board of Education decision (Clark, 1987; Leigh, 1997; Sugrue 2008; Jacobs 1998).

School boundary lines, while not always formed by the current political party in power, are created through a political process and serve as invisible lines that determine access to important public goods and services (Trounstine 2018). Schools are one of the most expensive public services available, but the quality of educational services varies widely across school districts. Evidence from current zoning boundaries and case studies suggests that local communities draw school district boundaries that produce racial inequalities (Orfield and Luce 2010; Siegel-Hawley 2013; Siegel-Hawley, Diem, and Frankenberg 2018; Strauss 2018).

If school district lines are used as mechanisms to exclude, communities may try to restrict entry of groups that do not share similar characteristics such as race and income. Given that members of the Republican Party are primarily white, they may live in school areas with boundaries that have been 'gerrymandered' in order to exclude racial minorities. Additionally, school districts with many high-income earners may also tend to live in school districts that have been gerrymandered to exclude poor families.

From the previous arguments, I derive four main hypotheses – two that concern school budgets and two that focus on school district boundaries. First, Democrat leaning communities will show a greater commitment to funding education through higher per-pupil spending and higher teacher salaries than Republican leaning school districts. Second, Democrat leaning communities' educational funding goals will be more heavily

subsidized by state and federal governments than Republican leaning school districts. Third, Republican leaning school districts will be more irregularly shaped and less compact than Democrat leaning school districts. Finally, as the number of high earning households in a community increases, Democrat leaning school districts will also become more irregularly shaped and less compact. Taken collectively, these four hypotheses guide the first in-depth examination of the association between a community's political preferences and local educational policies.

Data and Methods

In order to test the political influence on communities and school districts, I use a number of data sets. I create the first national assessment of community ideology using voter registration counts to compute the relative share of Republicans and Democrats at the school district level. Independent and control variables are drawn from the American Community Survey, which I use to construct community variables at the school district level. Finally, I draw on additional information from the Civil Rights Data Collection, Common Core Fiscal Survey Data, and the Geographical Shapefiles of school districts from the US Census. Combining these five data sets allows a thorough analysis of the association between community's political preferences on the spatial organization and funding of school districts in the continental United States (excluding Hawaii and Alaska).

Measuring Community Political Ideology

The main independent variable of interest measures political ideology at the school district level. This study takes a novel approach and uses voter registration files to assess community political ideology as opposed to election outcomes. Voter registration files

are more stable than election outcomes. With elections, the top of the ticket may not match the bottom of the ticket; for example, individuals may vote for a Democratic Presidential candidate, but a Republican State Congressional Representative, which makes it difficult to interpret the voter's political leanings. Additionally, political party affiliation more closely resembles political preferences as opposed to election results, which measures the candidate's popularity. Even if a majority Republican community elects a Democrat, that Democratic candidate will more likely lean conservative to satisfy and win the support of the community.

The database of registered voter files comes from L2, a leading non-partisan firm and the oldest organization in the United States that supplies voter data on over 180 million registered voters to candidates, political parties, pollsters, and consultants for use in campaigns. This data set includes counts of registered Democrat, Republican, and Independent voters within school districts as of 2012[3]. These totals are not dependent on who voted, but rather on who was registered to vote at the time of the 2012 elections. Although I examine the school district characteristics of those registered as Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, I only discuss results for Democrats and Republicans owing to inconsistencies in the reporting of Independents. Some states label all third parties as Independents, while other states clearly identify the third parties, such as the Libertarian or Green Party. It is not enough to identify all third parties as Independents, because in doing so I would not be able to make claims of their political preferences. In contrast, the Democrat and Republican's educational political preferences are well known

[3] *All but two state present voter registration files at the school district level. In these few cases, I sum the voter counts of each town within the school district. If a town is part of more than one school district, I average the number of registered voters among the number of school districts.*

and widely disseminated in Party Platforms every four years before the presidential election.

I measure the political leanings of communities by examining the percentage of Democrats versus Republicans in each school district. Figure 2.1 depicts the political leanings of school districts across the continental United States to illustrate differences in the share of registered Republican and Democrat voters. The lighter gradients of red or blue indicate a lower percentage of Republicans or Democrats, respectively, and white colored districts represent an even split between the two parties.

[Figure 2.1]

Community Data

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationally representative survey of the United States conducted annually by the US Census Bureau. I use data from 2010-2014 ACS 5-year estimates reported at the school district level. There are many benefits of the ACS. It provides median household incomes, population counts, racial composition, and a host of other variables for most school districts within the United States. Although there are over 13,000 school districts, however, the ACS only provides information on just under 11,000 districts. Moreover, it is difficult to obtain community characteristics for particular racial and ethnic minority groups in all school districts. Specifically, data for the black median household income is only available in 5,159 of the available 13,611 school districts. There are limitations, but there is no better data set that provides the amount of information on the community characteristics at the school district level.

School District Financial Data

To assess how communities and school districts vary according to the community's political leanings, I examine school budgets. School fiscal data come from a national data set developed by the Common Core of Data and in particular, I use data from the Local Education Agency Fiscal Survey for the 2013–2014 school year (F-33). The F-33 is an annual collection of financial data from all public school districts in the United States. Every school district that provides public education in any grade from pre-kindergarten to grade 12 is required to fill out this survey.

I examine a host of different kinds of expenditures as well as revenue generated from federal, state, and local sources. In terms of expenditures, I examine per-pupil spending and teacher salaries. Spending is an important component in understanding the value a community places on education. I also assess where school districts receive their revenue since Republicans and Democrats have different ideological views on how to fund public goods and services (Howard 2009).

School District Shape Files

Discussion of the shape of legislative land areas is often reserved for congressional districts, but school districts are also legislative geographical units, whose purpose is to collect tax revenue and provide educational services at the local level. The US Census Bureau collects composite school district shapefiles biennially, and this particular study uses shapefiles from the 2013-2014 year.

The US Census provides data by elementary, secondary, and unified public school district boundaries. However, I only examine unified school district boundaries that serve students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12, since elementary (K-8) and

secondary (9-12) districts may geographically overlap, whereas unified school districts are not permitted to overlap. In total there are 13,611 geographically defined unified public school districts.

Method

I conduct several analyses. The main model is an OLS linear regression, but a challenge lies in accounting for the influence of a state's political preferences on local school districts. States' policies and preferences have a great deal of influence over local politics. For example, 15 states determine teacher salaries that all local school districts within the state must follow, and to control for the state's political influence over local government salaries, I employ dummy variables to control for the state's political leanings. Specifically, I determine the percent share of registered Republican and Democratic voters in the state and create an index of 5 state levels: strong Democrat (1), Democrat leaning (2), swing state (3), Republican leaning (4), and strong Republican (5). This allows for an interpretation of how the state's political preferences impact local school districts and communities.

Results

In order to test how a school district's political leanings are associated with unequal school budgets and the geographical shape of the school district, I present several analyses. However, before discussing the influence of community political ideology on local government, it is important to establish meaningful differences across ideological communities. Recent research has started to examine how political party affiliation is associated with a multitude of neighborhood preferences--from social amenities and

neighborhood racial composition to neighborhood density--and has theorized how personal and political preferences contribute to geographical political polarization (Bishop 2008; Mummolo and Nall 2017; Strickler 2015). In this study, I use data on the geographic location of every registered voter to compute the share of Republicans and Democrats at the school district level and examine community characteristics associated with Republican and Democrat leaning communities. The first section of the analysis lays the groundwork in identifying measurable differences in ideological livings spaces. The next section examines the influence of the community ideology on school budgets, and the final section examines the association of community ideology with the geographical shape of the school district.

Community Characteristics

On average school districts are 33% Democrat, 39% Republican, and 28% Independent. In my analyses I did not weight school districts to reflect the population of the community, which is why the results indicate a greater percentage of Republicans than Democrats across school districts, despite the fact that a greater percentage of the US population is registered as Democrats. They tend to be clustered into high population communities and are not as dispersed across America's school systems as Republicans. The regression model in Table 2.1 shows that every 1% increase in the population of registered Republicans as opposed to Democrats in a school district is associated with a population decrease of 862 persons. Democrat leaning school districts are associated with larger populations in comparison to Republican school districts. Including Independent registered voters in the total, there are only 2,007 school districts where at least half of the registered voters identify as Democrat, and in these communities, the average

population is 50,522. In contrast, 3,904 school districts lean heavily Republican (at least 50%), and these communities have a much smaller average population of 12,320. Figure 2.2 illustrates the relationship between population and community ideology of nearly 11,000 school districts to show that an increase in the percent of Republicans in a community is associated with a decrease in the community's population.

[Table 2.1 Community Population]

[Figure 2.2 Populations Across Ideological Communities]

The regression models in Table 2.2 show that the median income of a community is associated with the political leanings of its citizens. Communities with a greater percentage identifying as Independents have higher median incomes than either Democrat or Republican leaning communities. When I examine how the percentage Democrat or Republican in a community is associated with income, I find that Republican leaning communities have higher median incomes then Democrat leaning communities. This is not simply a story of race, where minority incomes are driving Democrat community's median incomes down; column 2 and 3 examines household incomes of only whites and blacks and finds that as the percent Republican in a community increases, both white and black household earn higher incomes than in Democrat leaning communities. For every one percent increase in Republican registered voters, increases the white household income by $37 and the black household income by $125.

By way of comparison, the 2,007 majority Democratic school districts have a median household income of $44,447 (and a white median HH income of $47,980), while

the 3,904 majority Republican school districts have a median income of $51,686 (and a white median HH income of $52,482). These are median incomes and not means and so do not capture extremes in the income distribution. Column 4 shows that the percentage of Democrats in a school district is associated with a higher share of high-income households (over $200,000), which may suggest that Democrat leaning communities have greater income disparities than Republican leaning communities. These results hold when controlling for community population size, since larger communities are usually associated with greater economic opportunities (see Table A.1 in Appendix A for results).

[Table 2.2 Community Income]

Table 2.3 considers the racial composition of communities. As expected, Democrat leaning communities have much higher rates of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians living in the school district, than Republican leaning school districts. Similarly, Republican leaning districts have a higher percentage of whites residing in them. Once again examining the 2,007 majority Democrat leaning school districts, the average racial composition is 60% white, 14% black, 17% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. In contrast, the 3,904 majority Republican leaning school districts have an average racial composition of 87% white, 2% black, 8% Hispanic, and less than 1% Asian. The low rates of minorities in Republican leaning districts suggest that whites have minimal contact with minorities in comparison to Democrat leaning communities. This supposition is confirmed using an exposure rate index that specifically tests the probability of a white individual interacting with a black or Hispanic individual at the county level in columns 5 and 6. Nationally, whites have a low probability of interacting with a minority, but whites living in

Republican leaning school districts have a much lower probability of interacting with a minority, especially blacks, than Democrat leaning school districts.

[Table 2.3 Community Racial Composition]

This section has identified measurable differences between Republican leaning communities and Democrat leaning communities in terms of population, income, and racial composition. Thus, when we talk about ideological communities, this is not an abstract concept or simply a belief system, but rather there are real differences between ideological communities that have the potential to influence school budgets and perceptions of who should be a part of the community within school district boundaries. The following two analyses examine the influence of community ideology on educational institutions.

School Budgets

Both Republicans and Democrats are committed to increasing academic achievement among K-12 students, but there are noticeable differences in the level of financial commitment and the composition of school revenue by district. In this section, I examine differences in school district budgets. Specifically, I observe differences in per-pupil spending, teacher salaries, and the sources of school funding. Nationally, the median per-pupil spending is $11,360 per-pupil, with a mean per-pupil spending of $12,990. However, there are differences observed across school districts, as indicated in Table 2.4. On average Democrat-leaning school districts spend more per-pupil than Republican-leaning school districts. Column 1 indicates that every 1% increase in the percent of registered Republicans in a school district as opposed to Democrats decreases school

spending by $16.62 per-pupil. Column 1 predicts that a school district with 60% Republican will spend $332 less per student than a school district that is 60% Democrat. The differences become even more pronounced after accounting for median income. Column 2 predicts that a 60% Republican-leaning community will spend $555 less than a 60% Democrat-leaning community.

Column 3 includes school district population as well as a dummy variable if the state sets the teacher salary schedule. The school population is included since larger school districts are expected to benefit from economies of scale and spend less per-pupil. Additionally, 14 states within the continental United States set the teacher salary schedule, while the remaining 34 states negotiate teacher salaries at the local level[4] (See A.2 in Appendix A more detail). This variable is included because teacher pay is a large part of school expenditures which affects per-pupil spending. School districts where the states set the teacher salary spend nearly $3,000 less per-pupil than school districts not in these states.

Finally, the 4th column includes dummy variables for state political leanings with the reference category being swing states. This model shows the strong influence the state has on local school districts' budget, which makes sense because local governments receive part of their funding from the state. This model shows that Republican leaning school districts spend more than Democrat leaning school districts; however, this model accounts for the state's influence and school districts in heavily Democrat leaning states spend over $8,000 more per student than swing states. A school district that is 60%

[4] The 14 states are AL, AR, DE, GA, KY, MS, NC, OH, OK, SC, TN, TX, WA, and WV

Republican and in a heavily Republican state is expected to spend $11,671 per student; in contrast, a school district that is 60% Democrat and in a heavily Democratic state is expected to spend $19,468 per-pupil. Substantively, Connecticut as a state is heavily Democratic and Hartford School District, where over 60% of the voters register as Democrat, spends over $21,000 per-pupil. Utah, on the other hand, is a deep red state and in Washington School District, the per-pupil spending rate is just under $9,000 per student. These four models show the influence of the local community's political preferences as well as the state's political influence on school spending.

[Table 2.4]

Teacher Salary

The results for teacher salaries are in Table 2.5. Teacher salaries are tied to per-pupil spending, so naturally, the direction of the coefficients in Table 2.4 are similar to those in Table 2.5, with the minor exception of school population; teacher salaries are not tied to the number of students in the school district instead, they are typically tied to years of experience. Nationally the average teacher salary is just over $53,000 per year. Column 2 accounts for median income and on average a school district that is 60% Republican pays their teachers $3,982 less per year than a school district that is 60% Democrat. Model 3, as expected reveals that states that negotiate and set teacher salaries pay teachers an average of $690 less per year. The fourth column shows the state's political influence over local government. States with more registered Democrats on average have higher teacher salaries, and a Democratic school district in a heavily Democratic state is expected to have the highest teacher salaries. Surprisingly, swing states pay less than

Republican leaning states despite swing states spending more per-pupil as indicated in Table 2.4.

The other side of school budgets is revenue, and on average school districts in the United States receive 44.5% from local government, 47.9% from the state, and 7.6% from the federal government. Columns 1-3 of Table 2.6 investigate the percent of total revenue collected from the federal, state, and local government. Columns 4 and 5 takes a closer examination of what percent of local funding is collected through sales tax and property taxes.

[Table 2.5]

As shown in the table, Republican leaning school districts receive a larger percentage of revenue from the local government in comparison to Democrat leaning school districts. In contrast, Democrat leaning school districts receive a larger share from the state and federal government than Republican leaning school districts. These results suggest Democrat leaning school districts are subsidized to a greater extent by governments above the local level. This may also partially explain why Democrat leaning school districts are able to spend more per-pupil and pay higher teacher salaries.

[Table 2.6]

A further examination of local revenue reveals an interesting finding. Republican leaning school districts receive less from property taxes and a greater percentage of local revenue from sales tax than Democrat leaning school districts. This aligns with the Republican belief system of lower taxes, yet they collect more from sales tax, which is a regressive flat tax where everyone pays the same rate. Democrat leaning communities

collect more from property taxes, which allows these communities to place a greater tax burden on wealthier families as measured by the home value.

School budgets reveal the influence of the community ideology on government. Republicans have stated that more money is not the answer, and this is reflected in the per-pupil spending – Republican leaning school districts spend $555 less per-pupil than Democrat leaning school districts. Democrat ideology supports big government and relies and state and federal governments to finance education to a greater degree than Republican leaning school districts. This aligns with their respective educational party platform that calls for greater funding of Title I (federal level) and equitable state funding by Democrats and a deemphasis of money by the Republicans. Democrat leaning school districts look to increase revenue often through higher property taxes, while the Republican mantra is that high property taxes unfairly penalize high-income households. As school districts become more politically segregated, they are able to implement their political preferences with little resistance. This can create an unequal distribution of educational goods and services as well as an unequal tax burden across school district lines.

The Shape of school district inequality

In order to capture whether legislative districts were constructed to advantage a particular group by manipulating district boundaries, political science literature commonly measures these districts by their compactness. Legislative districts that are less compact are often referred to as gerrymandered districts. There are many ways of measuring the degree to which a district has been gerrymandered, but one of the most popular methods is the Polsby-Popper Test of Compactness. This is a widely used test and was chosen by

the state of Arizona's Redistricting Commission in 2000 to measure the legislative areas compactness. The Polsby-Popper score is calculated by the following equation:

$$PP(D) = \frac{4\pi A(D)}{p^2}$$

where *D* is the district, *p* is the perimeter of the district, and *A(D)* represents the area of the district. A Polsby-Popper score ranges from 0 to 1. A score of 1 represents a compact and regularly shaped land area; a circle is considered a perfectly compact landmass. A zero score indicates an irregularly shaped land area that is not compact. An irregular shaped land area is often thought of as an area that has been gerrymandered. Figure 2.3 indicates the most and least compact public school districts in the United States whose student population exceeds 1000.

[Figure 2.3]

Tuscaloosa City School District is the least compact school district in this sample of 13,611 school districts. It is located in Tuscaloosa, AL and has a total enrollment of 10,145 students. Of the students enrolled, 20% are white, 74% are black, and the remaining 6% are mostly comprised of Hispanic and Asian students. Even though this school district leans Democratic with 49% of the residence identifying as such, and 36% identifying as Republican, the school district is located in the heavily conservative state of Alabama and is completely surrounded by a predominately Republican Tuscaloosa County School District. In contrast, school districts that have a high compactness score are often located in rural areas. Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community School is located in northern Indiana and is a highly compact school district serving 1,760 students. All of its

surrounding neighbors are Republican leaning school districts with similar median income levels.

Tables 2.7 and 2.8 show the association between the political leanings of school districts and the school district's shape as measured by the Polsby-Popper Compactness Test. Column 1 indicates that the relationship between compactness and percent Republican is statistically significant and negative. An increase in the percent Republican is associated with less compact school district boundaries. Model 1 predicts that a school district that is 60% Republican has a compactness score of 0.342, while a similar school district that is 60% Democrat has a compactness score of 0.373. This holds even while controlling for the community's racial composition (column 2) and household median income (column 3). Column 4 adds controls for state's political leanings. Swing states are the reference category being a swing state (less than a 5% difference between the percent Democrats and Republicans in the state). The inclusion of these controls shows that school districts in strongly partisan or partisan leaning states are more compact than those in swing states. Among these partisan or partisan leaning states, however, districts in strong Republican states are significantly less compact, suggesting that they tend to have irregularly shaped school boundaries. Thus, political differences promote greater division in terms of how school district boundaries are drawn within the state, but that the most extreme departures from compactness are observed in strongly Republican states.

[Table 2.7]

Table 2.8 further examines the relationship between community ideology, income, and school district boundaries, since where people live is tied to income due to housing prices. These models interact the number of high earning households making

over $200,000 with the community's ideology. Column 1 interacts the percent Republican with the share of high earning households. The negative coefficient on the percent Republican indicates that as the percent Republican increases school districts generally become less compact. However, the positive coefficient on the interaction term indicates that Republican leaning school districts containing a large share of high earning households live in more compact school districts. This finding suggests that on average wealthy Republican school districts may tend to neighbor other affluent school districts, so there is not a need to gerrymander the school district boundaries.

Column 2 runs the same model with Democrats. The negative coefficient on the interaction term implies that as the number of wealthy households making over $200,000 in Democrat leaning school districts increases, the school boundary lines are less compact. This may be related to the spatial location of wealthy Democrat leaning school districts. Wealthy Democrat leaning school districts may be more likely to border large, urban poor cities than wealthy Republican school districts. Beverly Hills, for example, is a wealthy Democrat leaning school district, that is surrounded by Los Angeles Unified School District. Beverly Hills is disconnected and has a compactness score of 0.18. In order to go from one end of Beverly Hills School District to the other and one must cross through Los Angeles Unified School District. Beverly Hills used to be a part of the Los Angeles Unified School District, but it separated in 1936. School districts continue to separate from existing school districts for various reasons and since 2000, 71 communities, have attempted to secede from their school district, and 47 of those have been successful (EdBuild 2017).

[Table 2.8 Polsby Compactness and Income]

Conclusion and Discussion

The foregoing results offer a novel view of politically segregated communities and their influence on local government. This study is unique in that it examines political segmentation at the school district level. School districts are important political areas because prior research finds that schools are influential to housing choices, not only for those with families but also for taxpaying homeowners since property taxes and home values are often linked to the school district. I find many school districts are highly politically partisan, which allows the community to vote with a unified voice and put forth residents' political preferences to influence the policies and programs of local government.

In particular, an increase in the percent of registered Democrats is associated with increased per-pupil spending on education, which aligns with the Democratic Education Party Platform. Additionally, Republican leaning school districts are less likely to put the tax burden on homeowners in the form of property taxes to fund local schools and are more likely to fund schools through sales taxes than Democrat leaning communities. Finally, I find greater 'gerrymandering' of school district boundaries in Republican leaning school districts and wealthy Democrat leaning school districts, which suggests that these communities use their political influence to restrict access of public goods, such as public education, to nearby communities.

This work adds to our understanding of neighborhoods and communities. Ideological communities should not be thought of in terms of bike lanes or bible study attendance, but rather ideological leanings across communities lead to measurable differences across school district lines. I find the political ideology of communities is

associated with measurable differences in the average household income and racial composition of communities. Democrat leaning communities are more populated, racially diverse, and households on average earn less money than in Republican leaning school districts.

Next, I identified ways in which the community's political ideology can influence the decisions of the local government. The community's ideology is associated with school budgets. School leaders put forth school budgets that appear to align with ideologies reflected in the Republican or Democrat's Party Platform on education. There are other considerations, however, to take into account when discussing school district budgets. A powerful political group is teacher unions. Historically, teacher unions back Democrat candidates more often than Republican candidates. Since 1990, 94% of teacher union campaign contributions from National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have gone to Democratic candidates (Center for Responsive Politics 2019). Naturally, Democrat leaning school districts are expected to be supportive of spending more money to appease unions as well as its base that includes a large number of teachers and other educators, which may also explain differences in spending between Republican leaning school districts and Democrat leaning school districts.

The gerrymandering of school district boundaries aids in restricting access to local public schools and the sharing of local tax funds. While many individuals move to school districts to meet their community needs, such as lower property taxes, greater school quality, or higher home values. Since 2000, 71 communities have attempted to secede from their school district. Citizens couch their desire to withdraw as being

motivated by greater local control, but the reality is that many of the newly formed school districts are wealthy, white, and Republican that borders largely poor, Democratic communities. For example, a 2011 federal court decision consolidated Memphis City School District, largely black and poor, with Shelby County School District, largely white and non-poor to create one large school district. Three years later in 2014, six suburbs in Shelby County appealed to the state of Tennessee to succeed from the school district and create their own school districts. The state approved, and Shelby County School disbanded and created 6 additional and separate school districts.

Figure 2.4 displays the six newly formed school districts. The new Shelby County School District is disconnected and highly gerrymandered and left behind is a student population that is over 90% minority, and over 30% of the students live in poverty. The majority Republican state of Tennessee approved the majority Republican suburban communities of Shelby to succeed from the school district, without consideration of the financial impact. Since the redistricting, Shelby County Schools are in financial peril. This is an example of how political imbalance at the local and state level can hoard financial resources and exclude citizens access to public services.

[Figure 2.4]

While the use of the Polsby-Popper test is a useful test to understand if boundary lines are gerrymandered, it is unable to test which district is advantaged by the boundary lines. In the example mentioned above, Shelby County is a highly gerrymandered school district with a low Polsby-Popper score, but the boundary lines were drawn to the detriment of Shelby County Schools. There is not a perfect measurement to identify

which legislative area is advantaged and disadvantaged by the boundary lines, but the Polsby-Popper is useful in identifying areas that may be drawn to exclude citizens access.

The findings presented in this analysis may seem rather obvious, but the importance in this work lies in understanding that as communities become more politically segregated, they are able to exert more influence over local governments. In doing so, they can create greater barriers of access to public goods and services offered at the local level. In contrast, more politically integrated neighborhoods have to engage in greater discussions to create policies that benefit both sides.

Chapter 3

Community Political Ideology and Minority Students' Academic Outcomes

Abstract

Numerous studies have documented the role of neighborhoods in shaping the educational outcomes of minority children. Studies have viewed communities in terms of racial composition, family income, or geographical location. While these are important attributes, a less explored aspect of neighborhood differences is the political ideology of communities and the association it has with student's academic outcomes. Political ideology is an important community attribute because of its influence on policies and programs implemented at the local level and for racial and ethnic minorities, some communities may be more or less supportive of policies used to address racial disparities, especially as it relates to schooling. This study explores the association between the political leanings of communities and minority students' educational opportunities. In particular, how are the community's political leanings associated with minority student's enrollment in Advanced Placement Classes and Gifted and Talented Programs? This study uses original geospatial data that assesses the political leanings of school districts across the continental United States. This dataset offers the first national assessment of community political ideology at the school district level using voter registration data. I examine the association of community ideology and racial and ethnic minority student placement in advance classes and programs. I find that ideology is strongly associated with the academic placement of minority students at the school district level. Specifically, black students are less likely to take advanced classes in Republican leaning school districts in comparison to Democrat leaning school districts. The empirical analysis demonstrates that political ideology at the community level is associated with academic outcomes of racial and ethnic minorities. The argument advanced here, has important implications for theories on neighborhoods and the role of the community's political ideology in shaping outcomes of its citizens.

Introduction

> *Education should be the ultimate nonpartisan or bipartisan issue. [There] should be nothing Republican or Democrat about giving a child a chance to get a great education. And you hear none of that conversation coming from D.C. today. You just see ideological battles.*
>
> *-Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan September 3, 2018*

The academic success and advancement of every student has long been an important goal for American society. With court decisions such as Brown v. Board of Education and Brown v. Board of Education II, we have witnessed government's successful efforts in combating institutional racial bias in our school system, providing a more accommodating space for every student to thrive. Although institutional biases in the school system have been addressed, societal differences that occur outside the classroom, ranging from violent neighborhoods to troubled family homes, can reach back into our schools and perpetuate educational inequality. A less known area of societal differences that breeds inequity stems from our political difference.

The link between the political leanings of communities, educational strategies, and potential pedagogical biases for one group over another is rarely explored; however, public education is a part of political institutions and often educational systems and best practices are administered by political officials (appointed or elected) who have strong party affiliations and guided by their political beliefs. Moving beyond political officials, average everyday citizens who pay school taxes, vote on school policies, and teach in classrooms are also guided by their political beliefs and party allegiances.

Unfortunately, given the history of race and politics, ideological biases are interwoven into the racial divide and marginalized students may suffer greater

consequences from an ever-growing politically polarized America. Indeed, it is questionable whether a minority student living in the conservative town of Hinton, West Virginia would have the same educational opportunities and outcomes as a student living in a liberal area such as Los Angeles, California. The differences between these two regions, and others that share a similar ideological landscape are multifaceted and complex, yet the scope of the political influence on educational outcomes is not fully understood.

This study attempts to explore the far-reaching ramifications of community political ideology on racial and ethnic minority students' educational outcomes and expand our understanding of potential mechanisms at the community level that can facilitate or hinder racial inequality in educational institutions. I assess the theoretical reach of this work by using several data sources. I create a national assessment of community ideology at the school district level using voter registration data. The data are connected to schooling outcomes from the Civil Rights Data Collection as well as community level assessments using the American Community Survey. Thus, I offer the first national assessment of the influence that school district-level political ideology has on academic outcomes across communities.

The results show black students are placed in advanced classes at a higher rate in majority Democratic school districts than Republican leaning school districts; this may suggest the policies and educators working in Democrat leaning school districts promote greater educational opportunities for black students than in Republican leaning school districts. This work shows that the communities in which children grow-up, matter for minority's educational outcomes in ways not previously considered.

The theoretical importance of this work lies in extending our understanding of racial inequality and discovering potential new barriers to racial minorities' upward mobility and academic success in our educational institutions. Although many works have focused on the community's racial composition or socioeconomic background to explain educational gaps, little attention has been paid to the political culture created within students' neighborhoods. I argue that these *ideological school spaces* have real consequences that shape our children's future.

In what follows, the article begins with a brief review of the existing scholarship on neighborhood inequality and proposes several hypotheses that examine the impact of the community's political ideological leanings on minority student's schooling outcomes. The subsequent empirical analysis supports this theoretical shift to focus on the political landscape. The concluding section outlines how the growing politically polarized environment could impact education in America.

Neighborhoods and Schools

The literature on neighborhoods and schooling has provided rich theoretical contributions in understanding how neighborhood conditions influence students' educational outcomes. Numerous studies have documented the role of neighborhoods in shaping the outcomes of minority children (Logan, Minca, and Adar 2012; Massy and Denton 1993; Orfield and Lee 2005; Sharkey 2013; Wilson 1987). These studies typically view communities in terms of racial composition, family income, or geographical location, and overwhelmingly the research finds that neighborhoods are influential in the development of children and the opportunities afforded to those living in the community. In particular,

Wilson (1987) argued that living in urban high poverty neighborhoods resulted in worse life outcomes, including low student achievement and high dropout rates.

Massey and Denton (1993) advanced this theory and argued the effects of poverty are magnified for blacks living in racially segregated urban communities. These racially segregated communities isolate black citizens and cluster disadvantages of marginalized groups, such as high unemployment and low education and these characteristics move beyond the individual to create a community culture of the underclass -- where hopeless and despair set in, due to the structural inequalities faced by black Americans.

Neighborhoods directly relate to the school a child attends and influences the racial and economic composition of the student body, the financial resources available to the school, and school cultural norms. Students attending racially segregated schools with primarily underrepresented minorities receive lower quality education, fewer financial resources and this is a growing problem given the re-segregation of public schools (Quillian 2014; Orfield 2001, Frankenberg and Lee 2002; Johnson and King 2018). Likewise, people living in racially segregated communities are more likely to experience elevated concentrations of poverty and crime, and this is associated with lower educational attainment and school performance (Sharkey 2010; Owens 2010; Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, and Banerjee 2018; Diette, Goldsmith, Hamilton, and Darity 2017). Moreover, even minorities who attend elite academic higher education institutions but are from racially segregated neighborhoods, are typically less prepared academically and socially for the challenges of college life (Massey and Fischer 2007).

Community Political Ideology a Theoretical Framework

While there is no denying the association between the racial composition of neighborhoods and the academic outcomes of minority students, a less explored aspect of neighborhoods is the political ideology of the community. I define *community political ideology* as the collective political perspectives of those living in the community. At the individual level, political ideology is a shared belief system that helps people interpret and make sense of the social world (Jost, Federico, and Napier, 2009) and it is a unifying concept that can produce community cultural norms and political preferences (Hinich and Munger 1993). When communities embrace a political ideology, these ideological neighborhoods can be influential to school policy and community cultural norms. I theorize three mechanisms in which community political ideology can affect schooling outcomes. The community political ideology influences outcomes through elections, community cultural norms, and the political leanings of the school district workforce.

First, schools are political institutions and like most other government institutions, registered voters are able to enact influence over public schools through the election of school leaders. Citizens of a school district directly or indirectly (depending on local election policy[5]) elect school board members, superintendents, chancellors, or other school leaders. These school leaders set the policy agenda for public schools, establish the financial budget, and have a hand in hiring principals, staff, and filling open teacher positions. More importantly, the election of these school leaders has a direct effect on student outcomes (Meier and Rutherford 2016; Meier and England 1984). For example, if school leaders' goals are to increase the college academic readiness of minority students,

[5] In many school districts, School Boards or Superintendents are elected by the registered voters (direct). In other instances, school boards or superintends are appointed by an elected official (i.e. mayor).

principals and teachers may be charged with identifying more minority students for gifted and talented programs and increase minority enrollment in AP classes. In essence, the community's political preferences have an indirect effect on school policies, programs, and initiatives.

Second, where people live and who they socialize with, influences their political ideologies and preferences. Ideologies are partially shaped by one's environment (Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, and Rich 2001). Thus, living in neighborhoods with a diverse set of political opinions exposes individuals to new political perspectives. In contrast, living next to like-minded people allows individuals to become hardened in their beliefs since these ideologies would be constantly reinforced. Substantively, a Republican living in a liberal city like New York City, would be expected to be more moderate than a Republican living in a conservative city, like Oklahoma City; in other words, spatial location matters (Feinberg, Tullett, Mensch, Hart, and Gottlieb 2017).

Finally, the political leanings of communities are associated with the political preferences of the teachers, staff, and administrators working in the school district simply based on proximity. Teachers and other educators are likely to live in the school district or a nearby school district in which they work, due to the work hours as well as the relatively low pay of the profession. It does not make sense time wise to endure a long commute on a daily basis nor is it financially feasible to take alternative modes of transportation such as a plane or helicopter to work on a teacher's salary. Therefore, a Democratic leaning school district is more likely to employ a greater number of teachers and staff that identify as Democrat than Republican and vice-versa. The educator's political ideology may matter for racial and ethnic minorities. In particular, the literature

finds racial issues are a driving force that shapes party loyalties of Democrats and Republicans (Carmines and Stimson 1990). Partisanship along racial lines creates noticeable differences for support of racial policies, such as affirmative action, school integration, and racial discrimination (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). Teachers like other members of society, carry their political biases in the classroom and can make decisions that affect the academic outcomes of racial and ethnic minorities.

Why Would We Expect Different Academic Outcomes for Racial Minorities?

In the current political climate, race is seen as a divisive issue that can affect how policies are discussed, written, and passed. Given the increased political polarization (Pew Research 2014) and a growing belief that race is partially responsible for the growing partisan divide, (Telser 2016) racial and ethnic minorities may suffer greater consequences. While the hope is that the political climate does not spill over into educational institutions, the reality is public education is a part of political institutions. Undoubtedly, school leaders have strong party allegiances that influence the school policies they put forth. Even average everyday citizens who pay taxes, and teachers, as well as other educators, are guided by their political preferences and this can shape how they vote on school policies, which school leaders they elect, and perceptions of students. Based on the Republican and Democratic Education Party Platform there are ideological differences in approaches to education and what each party considers best school practices, policies and programs to improve student's educational outcomes. Table 3.1 lists each party's stated educational platform since 2012.

[Table 3.1 Education Party Platform]

This table indicates there are some similarities, but also notable differences in their approaches to education, especially as it relates to the education of racial and ethnic minorities. Both parties indicate a strong commitment to increasing academic achievement, but the Democratic Education Party Platform acknowledges a desire to specifically address racial achievement and discipline gaps. While the Republican Party appears to take a color-blind approach to race or concerns of racial achievement and discipline gaps. Moreover, in 2012, Republicans even cite low graduation rates of blacks and Hispanics as evidence that money is not the solution to our education problems.

The acknowledgment of racial disparities in education makes a difference when government and school districts craft educational programs and initiatives (Gillion 2016; Moses 2002; Stulberg and Chen 2013). Thus, Democrat leaning school districts may be more inclined to create race-conscious programs that address racial disparities in education. For example, former Secretary of Education and Democrat appointee, Arne Duncan, put forth a race-conscious initiative that forced schools to examine racial disparities in special education placement and school discipline (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 2014) and this is consistent with the 2016 Democrat Party's education platform (Table 3.1). His successor, and a Republican appointee, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, delayed Duncan's initiative and her reasoning was, "the previous administration's discipline guidance often led to school environments where discipline decisions were based on a student's race and where statistics became more important than the safety of students and teachers (DeVos 2018).

This message is consistent with the Republican Party's education platform in 2016 that takes a color-blind approach and minimizes the significance of race in the

creation of education policies or initiatives. Additionally, the Republican Education Party Platform argues against the idea that money is the answer (Table 3.1), and in fact research finds Republican leaning school districts spend less per pupil than Democrat leaning school districts (Gillion 2019a). Nonetheless, many studies that support the idea that increased school spending increases student achievement, especially for minority and low-income students, through reduced class sizes, increases in non-instructional support staff (i.e. nurses, counselors, and teaching assistant), teacher retention, and improved teacher quality (Krueger 2002; Wenglinsky 1997; Jackson, Johnson, and Persico 2015; Ferguson 1991; Confron and Roscigno 2003).

Moving beyond school policies and school spending, at the individual level, political science literature finds there are different political perspectives on race (Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996; Swim and Miller 1999; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009), which may shape teachers and other educators' perceptions of racial and ethnic minority students. Recent research finds political ideological differences in how liberals and conservatives perceive minority students' academic ability (Gillion 2019b). Conservative educators tend to exhibit a racial preference in advancing white students to high achieving classes over black and Hispanic students, while liberal educators tend to exhibit a slight racial preference in placing black students in advanced classes over white students. Teachers like other members of society, carry their political biases in the classroom and can make decisions that affect the academic outcomes of racial and ethnic minorities. While political ideology is not the same as party affiliation, political parties serve as vehicles that advance one's ideological agenda. Over time these partisan views of race have become more connected to the liberal-conservative ideology than in years

past, with liberals often identifying as Democrat while conservatives identify more closely with Republican (Mason 2015; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). Thus, political ideology serves as a proxy for party affiliation.

In this section, I have explained three main pathways in which community political ideology can influence students' academic outcomes and why there may be an expectation of different outcomes for minority students depending on the political leanings of a school district. In order to test the association of the community's political ideology with student's academic outcomes, I am interested in minority student's academic opportunity to take advanced courses and programs that prepare them for college. In particular, I examine how the political leanings of communities are associated with student placement in gifted and talented programs (GT) and advanced placement courses (AP).

Based on the political perspectives of Democrats and Republicans views on racial issues and the educational agenda put forth by the Democrat and Republican Parties concerning the education of racial and ethnic minorities, I propose the *hypotheses of community ideology:* the political leanings of communities are associated with the academic outcomes of black students. First, Republican leaning school districts will have lower placement rates of black students in AP and GT programs then Democratic leaning school districts. Second, since ideology is influenced by one's environment and spatial location, as Republicans are exposed to more Democrats the percent of black students enrolled in AP courses and GT programs will increase. Taken collectively, the operation of these hypotheses allows for the first-in-depth examination of the manner in which

political ideology of a community at the school district level is associated with the educational outcomes of minority students.

Data, Measures, and Methods

In order to explore the link between educational outcomes and neighborhood ideology, I rely on several data sets that provide information at the school district level. I focus on school districts rather than individual school attendance boundaries within a school district, or at the state level for several reasons. First, superintendents and other school leaders are typically elected by the voters in the school district and these leaders put forth programs and policies for the entire school district. Second, school districts more closely correspond to the political preferences of citizens in the local communities rather than at the state level. Third, community data and most states report voter registration counts at the school district level as opposed to school attendance boundaries. Thus, the best unit of analysis to examine the political influence on schools is at the school district level.

Measuring Community Political Ideology

My main independent variable of interest measures political ideology at the school district level. This study takes a novel approach and uses voter registration files to assess community political ideology at the school district level as opposed to elections. Voter registration files are more stable than election outcomes. With elections, the top of the ticket may not match the bottom of the ticket; for example, individuals may vote for a Democratic Presidential candidate and a Republican State Congressional member, which makes it difficult to interpret the voter's political leaning. Moreover, one's registered party affiliation more closely resembles their political preferences as opposed to elections which, measures the candidate's popularity.

The database of registered voter files comes from L2, a leading non-partisan firm and the oldest organization in the United States that supplies voter data of over 185 million registered voters to candidates, political parties, pollsters, and consultants for use in campaigns. This data set includes count totals of every registered voter in school districts as of the 2012 election.[6] These totals are not dependent on those who voted, but rather the number of registered voters at the time of the 2012 election. I only examine the number of Democrats and Republicans in a school district because their political preferences and educational agendas are widely known. States are not consistent with the reporting of third-party independents.[7] In each school district, I report the percent Democrat versus the percent Republican. The ideological leanings of each school district are depicted in Figure 3.1. This figure indicates the difference in percent share of Republican and Democrats in a school district, thus white color districts represent when the community has an equal number of Republican and Democrats.

[Figure 3.1]

A challenge in understanding the potential effect of neighborhood ideology is accounting for the ideologies of neighbors and those nearby at the county level. Studies find that ideology is partially shaped by one's environment and life experiences (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009). Citizens in a neighborhood do not live in isolation, but rather, they interact with people in the community and nearby communities exchanging

[6] Two states do not present voter registration files at the school district level. In these few cases, I sum the voter counts of each town that are located within the school district. If a town is part of more than one school district, I divide the total number of registered votes in the town, by the number of school district the town is split among.

[7] I do not include third parties for consistency. Some states report all third parties as independents, while other states clearly identify the third party by name such as the Libertarian or Green Party. Identifying all third parties as Independents is not beneficial, because their political preferences are not known.

ideas and information. Socializing with people who have different opinions can influence one's own ideology (Feinberg et al. 2017). To account for one's exposure to different opinions, I measure exposure rates using the interaction index (Massey and Denton 1988):

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n}\left[\left(\frac{r_i}{R}\right)\left(\frac{d_i}{t_i}\right)\right]$$

where r_i is the total number of Republicans in a school district, R is the total number of Republicans in the county, d_i is the total number of Democrats in a school district, t_i is the total number of registered voters in the school district, and *n* represents the total number of school districts within the county. This variable relies on traditional segregation indices and examines the probability of a Republican interacting with a Democrat.

A potential problem reporting the exposure index using the school district and county levels is that some school districts are the same as the county. This is especially prevalent in the South, because many southern school districts were and still are under desegregation orders by the federal government. A common remedy was to increase the land area of the school district to encompass more racial minorities, so many Southern school districts increased boundary areas to the county level. While this is a weakness of the analysis, only 8.7 percent of school districts overlap directly with counties. Thus, the remaining 92.3 percent of school districts are free of this potential concern. I am not able to use other remedies, such as census tract or census block analysis, because there are not many units of analysis available for voter registration counts that could examine the legislative and community influence of local school districts.

Measuring Academic Outcomes

The data measuring academic outcomes is created from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) during the 2013-14 school year. The CRDC is administered by the Elementary and Secondary Education Civil Rights Compliance Survey from the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. The response rate for the 2013-14 collection was 99.5% of public school districts. This data set includes over 90,000 schools and over 13,000 school districts. This study examines two main academic outcomes: 1) the number of students enrolled in gifted and talented programs (GT) and 2) the number of students taking advanced placement (AP) courses. Typically, students take AP courses in high school and GT programs are typically available during the elementary school years.

I measure the percent of minority students taking AP classes. I divide the total number of black students in AP by the total number of all students in AP. In the models, I control for the school population and the black student population. I measure the percent of minority students in GT programs using the same method. In Appendix B, I provide an alternative measurement: *the relative percentage of black students taking AP*. I divide the total number of black students in AP by the total number of black students in the school. I conduct the same analysis for GT programs.

Despite assessing the ideology of 13,506 school districts, only 7,475 school districts offered AP classes and 8,220 offered GT programs. AP classes are usually only offered in high school and GT programs are usually offered in elementary school. A potential explanation for the discrepancy is that some school districts have a separate district for high school and primary schooling. Additionally, schools are not required to offer AP classes or GT programs; only 7 of the 50 states require schools to offer AP courses (Education Commission 2018). Finally, rural school districts are significantly less likely to offer AP

classes or GT programs than urban or suburban school district (Mann, Sponsler, Welch, and Wyatt 2017).

This rural deficit may be partially due to the fact that school districts face budget constraints, and the cost to provide the classes may be difficult to justify to the community when only a few students would benefit. In this analysis, school districts that assign zero percent of black students to AP or GT, but offer these courses are included in the analysis; however, school districts that do not offer AP/GT or do not have any black students in the school district are not included in the analysis. After the restriction of schools that offer AP or GT programs and has a black student population, in total, I analyze 7,165 school districts that offer AP courses and 7,635 school district that offer GT programs. The CRDC reports these numbers by racial and ethnic categories. My outcome variable looks at the percent of black students taking AP and GT courses.

Alternative Explanations

To fully assess the hypotheses proposed in this study, I control for a series of district-level and community level variables that are associated with minorities' educational outcomes from the CRDC and the American Community Survey (ACS). A powerful alternative explanation for poor outcomes for minority students, especially black students, is residential segregation (Massey and Denton 1993). Prior research finds racial segregation is associated with a lack of investments in communities, lower property tax base to invest in schools, and a high concentration of poverty and disadvantage (see among other: Charles 2003; Massey, Condran, Denton 1987; Logan Minca, and Adar 2012). I control for the racial composition of the community. In particular, I use the percent white living in a school district from the ACS.

Another important explanation in understanding school outcomes is the family's financial resources. Using data from the ACS, I control for the average household income gap between black household's median incomes and the median household income of the school district. On average black families earn nearly $11,000 less than the median household income across school districts.

Within a school district, I control for various school characteristics. The main control at the school district level is the black student population. Also, there are fundamental differences between large and small school districts, so I control for the total number of students in the school district. Additionally, I account for the percent of certified teachers working in the school district, with the expectation that certified teachers on average offer better academic instruction. Lastly, I control if the school district is the same as the county. Expanding the physical size of the school district to the county level was a popular remedy by the federal government to force school desegregation.

Model

The main independent variables consist of the percent of registered Democrat and Republican voters in each school district across the United States as well as the exposure rate of Republicans to Democrats. The exposure rate is a traditional segregation index, and in this study, it measures the probability of a Republican interacting with a Democrat. I examine the community's political leanings and exposure rate of Republicans to Democrats on student's academic opportunity in terms of AP and GT class placement. To examine these associations, I use an OLS regression with various controls at the

community and school district level (See Appendix B for an alternative model using the dependent variable *relative percentage of black students taking AP*).

Results

The results in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 assess the association between the neighborhood's ideology and percent of black students enrolled in AP classes and GT programs. Table 3.2 displays results for AP and Table 3.3 presents results for GT. Students typically take AP courses in high school and have developed an academic record. In contrast, GT programs are typically offered in elementary school and students have not had the opportunity to create an academic record for evaluation.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Table 3.2 shows the association of community ideology and exposure rates on black students' enrollment rate in AP courses. The variable of interest in column one, community ideology, is negative and statistically significant. Column 1 explains that as the community ideology leans more Republican, the percent of black students taking AP courses decreases. The political leanings provide a link between the community's political preferences and the school districts AP rate. This model predicts that a school district that is 40 percent Republican will have a black AP rate of 5.6 percent and a similar district that is 60 percent Republican will have a black AP rate of 1.6 percent.

[Table 3.2]

The variable of interest in Column 2 is the exposure rate of Republicans to Democrats; in particular, this index measures the probability of a Republican interacting with a Democrat. This variable is statistically significant and positive; thus, as the probability of a Republican interacting with a Democrat increases, the percent of black

students taking AP courses increases. This model indicates that the ideology of our neighbors matters for increasing the percentage of black students taking AP. Nationally, the median exposure rate of Republicans to Democrats is 24 percent and the model predicts that a school district with an exposure rate of 24 percent will place black students in AP courses at a rate of 5.8 percent. If the exposure rate increases, the black AP rate is expected to increase as was the case in Paris Independent School District in Kentucky (Exposure Rate 75%; Black AP rate 13.3 percent).

The final column is the full model with the community political ideology, exposure rate, and the full list of controls. This model shows that the magnitude of the effect for both community ideology and exposure rate has decreased, but they both remain statistically significant. The model acknowledges that the racial composition of the community, as well as the average black household median income gap in the school district, has an impact on the black AP rate, but the political leanings of communities can still partially explain the black student AP rate. A 10 percent increase of Republicans in a community decreases the black AP rate by a half of a percent. Thus, as the community's political leanings move from 40 percent to 60 percent Republican, the percent of black students taking AP courses decreases from 5.6 percent to 4.5 percent. This may seem like a small difference, but it is notable to mention that the black student population remains unchanged and the slight decrease can be partially attributed to the political leanings of the community after accounting for the school's black population, the community's racial compositions, and the black median income gap.

Gifted and Talented Program (GT)

In this next analysis, I focus on the GT enrollment rate for black students. I decided to examine this program separately from AP since there are different evaluation assessments schools use to place students in each respective program. The results are in Table 3.3. There are similarities in the association of the community's political leanings on black student GT enrollment with AP enrollment. In particular, the first column indicates that as the community political leanings become more Republican, the percent of black students enrolled in GT programs decreases. Likewise, as Republicans are exposed to more Democrats, the percent of black students enrolled in GT programs increases.

[Table 3.3]

The variables of interest show that the community's political ideology, as well as exposure rate, have an impact on student outcomes. The district-level cues reflect a link between neighborhood ideology and schools. The exposure rates suggest communities are influenced by their neighbors. In the full model, a ten-percentage point increase in the community political ideology in favor of Republican political preferences decreases the percent of black students in GT by nearly one percentage point (0.8). Similarly, a doubling of the exposure rate from the median of 24 percent to 48 percent would increase the percent of black students enrolled in GT programs by nearly a percentage point (0.9). Naturally, the magnitude of the effect of the political ideology of the community has a more impactful effect than the potential contact or interaction between Republicans and Democrats due to the community's ability to influence school policy; however, exposure

rates are still statistically significant after accounting for many alternative explanations and have a positive association with black students enrollment rate in GT programs.

Discussion and Conclusion

These results add to the understanding of the impact neighborhoods can have on academic outcomes by examining the community's political leanings. I define the community political ideology as the collective political preferences of those living in the community. They represent the voting base and they put forth their political preferences in education with the elections of school leaders such as school board members or superintendents. Prior literature has already found that school board elections have an influence on student achievement (Meier and Rutherford 2016), so it is natural that the community that elects these officials would be associated with student achievement; and indeed, I provide evidence that the community's political preferences are associated with the academic outcomes of minority students.

Specifically, ideologically Republican leaning school districts with low exposure rates to Democrats are likely to have a small percentage of black students taking AP courses. Substantively, if we take two school districts in Pennsylvania, such as Upper Darby School District and Philadelphia City School District and they have similar black student populations and black household median income gaps, but with dissimilar community political ideology and exposure rates, the model predicts that the community's political leanings will be associated with the black AP rate.

Specifically, Philadelphia City School District has a 56 percent black student population and a nearly $8,000 black median household income gap, while Upper Darby has a 44 percent black student population and nearly a $10,000 black median household

income gap; however, Philadelphia is only 11 percent Republican, with a 78 percent exposure rate of Republicans to Democrats, while Upper Darby, though still heavily Democratic, is 34 percent Republican with an exposure rate of 42 percent. Indeed, Philadelphia has a higher black AP population of 38 percent, while Upper Darby only has an 11 percent black AP population. There are probably many other factors that explain the percent of black students taking AP, but this model finds that the community's political ideology partially explains differences observed in the black AP rate across school districts.

These results provide a new understanding of the ways in which community differences can breed inequality. Moreover, the argument advanced here, has important implications for theories on neighborhoods. I provide the first evidence that community political ideology at the school district level influences the academic outcomes of minority students. The theory of community ideology, therefore, advances a larger point of democracy working within communities to shape neighborhood outcomes. Generally conceived, democracy is the relationship between government institutions and its citizens; where elected officials are guided by the political preferences of their constituents. Thus, if citizens want to decrease the racial discipline gap, they can elect a superintendent who supports this policy. Or if the community wants to increase the presence of charter schools, they can elect school board members who share this vision.

Ultimately, schools are political institutions and the racial achievement gap associated with the community's political leanings could stem from school district policies, but there is also the potential for a political culture to develop systematically across ideological communities to affect treatment of racial and ethnic minorities. This

political culture has the potential to influence how citizens vote on policies that address racial disparities as well as shape teachers and other educators' perceptions of racial and ethnic minorities academic abilities.

Academic spaces are not immune to strong political leanings that result in heightened racial inequality in our school systems. Consequently, this study advances the idea that the ideological landscape of school districts can shape educational outcomes and further educational inequality in America.

Chapter 4

Examining Racial Biases in Educational Institutions through a Political Ideological Lens

Abstract

Prior literature examines racial biases in educational institutions primarily through a racial lens, but a less explored area of consideration is how the political leanings of educators may affect their assessment of minority student's academic merits. In the current political climate, race is a divisive issue that falls along party and ideological lines. Given the increased politically polarize climate (Pew Research 2014), this study explores the ways political ideology influences the decision-making of teachers and other educators. This study uses original experimental data of 389 educators. Each educator is randomly assigned a black, white, or Hispanic student to evaluate, but students have identical grades and behavior comments. I find educators use students' race as a factor in the evaluation of students' academic merit among conservatives and liberals. Specifically, conservatives show a racial bias that favors placing white students over black and Hispanic students in high achieving honors classes. Liberals, on the other hand, are more likely to advocate for black students, in comparison to white students, for honors class placement. This empirical analysis demonstrates that political ideology has a profound effect on the decision-making of educators when race is taken into consideration.

Introduction

> *I dream of a world where the truth is what shapes people's politics, rather than politics shaping what people think is true.*
>
> *- Neil deGrasse Tyson*

Biases in educational institutions have long been a source of concern for scholars and are often studied along racial or gender lines, but a less discussed characteristic is the political ideology of teachers and other educators. Political ideology is a belief system, and in recent decades, it has become part of our identity. These ideological differences are spurred by an increasingly politically polarized environment with race and ethnicity at the forefront of the political divide (Tesler 2016). Education is typically viewed as apolitical, but individual citizens who work in school districts do not leave their politics at the schoolyard doors. Studies rarely connect the political ideology of teachers and other educators to educational outcomes, but this growing partisanship exhibited in the political arena has the potential to spill over into our educational institutions and have academic consequences that are realized in the classroom. This work examines how ideological differences of educators can facilitate or hinder student's academic success and shape educational outcomes, especially for marginalized groups.

Current literature primarily focuses on the race of the student as a way to understand the mechanisms through which racial biases operate. Overwhelmingly, studies agree that black students are at a disadvantage in the educational process and are often viewed as having behavior problems and being less intelligent (Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, and Shuan 1990, McBee 2010); but are there differences among educators that

influence their perception of racial or ethnic minority students? Some studies point to the race of the teacher as a significant factor in the evaluation of students (Dee 2005; Downey and Pribesh 2004). While race is an important trait for understanding racial biases, there may be other characteristics that have not been previously considered.

I argue that one's political ideology shapes world views and moves beyond the narrow confines of elections to shape daily decisions. Educators are not immune to the partisanship that has plagued our government, because many of these same individuals participate in the political process through elections. Educators potentially carry their political biases into the classroom when assessing and evaluating students' performance. Conservative political perspectives have been linked to attitudes that racial minorities are undeserving and should work harder (Goren 2003; Tesler 2016), thus there is likely to be political differences on how educators evaluate and award success to students across different racial backgrounds. Consequently, I posit that the political leanings of educators can bias the treatment of racial and ethnic minority students and further educational inequality in America.

This study looks to fill a gap in the current literature of understanding racial biases in educational institutions. In order to address this subject, I use an original data set of 389 educators from across the country. Each educator is provided with a fictitious report card of either a black, white, or Hispanic student, but the grades and behavior comments of each child are identical. These data are the first, to my knowledge, that assesses the educators' political leanings. I analyze how one's political ideology is associated with perceptions of students' academic worthiness for advanced honors classes when the only distinguishing difference is their race. I find significant differences in the

way liberals and conservatives recommend students for honors classes that cannot be explained by the educators' race, gender, or other surface level features. Conservatives show a strong racial preference for placing white students over black and Hispanic students in high achieving honors courses, while liberals are more likely to advocate for black students, in comparison to white students, for honors class placement. Before attending to these findings, however, it is important to provide a brief overview of the current understanding of racial biases in educational institutions and how political ideology might be associated with one's racial attitude.

Do Biases Filter into Classrooms?

Across institutions and individuals, race as well as other observational characteristics are used as informational cues to categorize individuals and make broad generalizations that are often rooted in cultural stereotypes (Fiske 1998; Allport 1954; American Psychological Association 2012). Naturally, teachers are not immune to biases and stereotypes present in society, and it is believed that they "use the dimensions of class, race, sex, ethnicity to bring order to their perception of classroom environment" (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1978:85). A large body of literature supports the notion of teacher biases and finds racial patterns present in teachers' evaluation of students' behavior and academic ability (Bates and Glick 2013).

Teacher biases matter because educators are often viewed as the gatekeepers of the educational process, and their assessment of students can impact a child's educational trajectory. They make daily decisions concerning behavior and academics. School tracking, in particular, directly affects how prepared a student is for college. Unfortunately, minority children often take low-track courses that are less academically

challenging (Oakes 1987). Teachers and other educators play an integral role in deciding student's class placement (Brunello and Checchi 2007; Hanushek and Wößmann 2006), thus it is important to identify potential biases that may affect their assessment of students.

The current literature suggests that racial stereotypes and implicit biases play a role in teacher perceptions of students and overwhelmingly the evidence indicates that minority students are disadvantaged in comparison to white students (McGrady and Reynolds 2013). Studies using survey data find on average all teachers, regardless of their race, rate black student's academics and behavior lower than white students (Farkas et al. 1990; McBee 2010). Some researchers attribute these differences to a racial mismatch effect, where white teachers have lower ratings of black students than black teachers (Dee 2005; Downey and Pribesh 2004; Grissom and Redding 2016). Using survey data to examine a racial bias, however, ignores how student behavior may influence teacher ratings. Students may behave differently when they have a teacher of a different race (Cherng and Haplin 2016; Egalite and Kisida 2017); thus, it is unclear if differential teacher ratings are the result of a bias or if students behave differently based on the teacher's race.

In an effort to isolate potential teacher biases, psychology studies conduct experiments that hold constant the behavior of student**s**. These studies use fictitious students and survey educators on student behavior or intelligence. The fictitious children are provided in the form of vignettes. Educators are typically given a stereotypical ethnic or racial name along with a description of the student and their behavior either in writing or a video image (Gillian, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti and Shic 2016**;** Okonofua and

Eberhardt 2015). These studies indicate black students were perceived as behavior problems more often than similar white students as early as preschool (Gillian et al. 2016). This pattern continued into elementary and middle school, but by this point in their academic career, black students were also viewed as less intelligent and punished more often than similar white students for the same misbehavior (Anderson-Clark, Green, and Henley 2008; Kunesh and Noltemeyer 2015; Okonofua and Eberhardt 2015).

These experimental studies found that biases are pervasive in educational institutions and negatively affected black students; however, these studies suggest there is no difference among educators in their perception of students. A potential drawback of many of these studies is a small sample size (often $N<100$), teachers are recruited from one school district or regional area introducing regional bias, and only basic demographic information is collected, such as the educator's age, race, or gender. These limitations prevent studies from identifying potential mechanisms within educators that may explain the racial disparities in the assessment of students.

The consensus in the literature is that biases exist in educational institutions, but the mechanisms that produce these biases are unsettled. Studies that partially explain the causes of racial disparities have focused on the teachers' race. While race is a factor in understanding biases in America, other qualities may also help explain one's racial attitude. I examine political ideology, which is a "set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved" (Erikson and Tedin 2003:64) and is partially developed through one's social environment and life experiences (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009).

In the current political climate, race is a divisive issue and is attributed as a main reason for the growing political polarization in America (Tesler 2016; Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018). There is divided support between liberals and conservatives on racialized political issues such as affirmative action, welfare policy, and immigration. Moreover, conservative opposition is often framed as individualism, where success is due to hard work, thus the disproportionate poverty among blacks is due to laziness and lack of discipline and hard work (Sears 1993). Given ideological differences concerning race, it is questionable whether conservatives and liberals would share the same racial perspective of minority students in an educational setting.

A Theory of Political Ideological Bias in Educational Institutions

Do educators' political ideologies inform their decision-making on racial issues outside the realm of politics? We know and expect that political ideology informs political decisions such as voting and policy support, but are educators using their political ideologies to make decisions about kids' academic worthiness in the classroom? Much of the focus in the literature discusses the link between political ideology and governmental policy, but I argue that in a politically polarized climate where race is a divisive issue, individual's political ideologies inform their decision making not only in the realm of politics but in their daily lives, especially concerning racial issues. Political ideology moves beyond politics, and the *political ideological bias theory* argues that political ideologies are used as guides that inform decision-making on racial issues in and outside the political sphere. Teachers and other educators are no different than the rest of society, and their political ideology not only informs them on racial policies but can also shape their perception of minorities' academic abilities in the classroom?

Although the link between political ideology and racial bias in educational institutions has not been previously considered, the understanding of how political ideology informs individuals may already align with prior political psychology research on racial attitudes. This research finds ideology shapes how conservatives and liberals see the world (Jost, Federico and Napier 2009). Conservatives in particular exhibit a disdain for ambiguity, new experiences, uncertainty, and instability, while they crave order, structure, and closure (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, and Hunyady 2003); "and this (in conjunction with a relative acceptance of inequality) may help to explain why stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes are more appealing to them than they are to liberals" (Jost, Federico and Napier 2009:326). These traits and characteristics make them more likely to endorse unfavorable views of minorities that blacks are inferior to whites; specifically, blacks are viewed as less intelligent and lazier (Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996).

Conservatives' attitudes are not necessarily tied to socially desirable outcomes, instead they may be due to an unconscious bias (Jost, Banaji and Nosek 2004; Nosek et al. 2007). This unconscious bias among conservative educators could cause them to perceive blacks as less intelligent regardless of academic performance or behavior.

Liberals also exhibit prejudices, of course, but they tend to express racial sentiments differently than conservatives. They are more likely to show signs of subtle racism or even engage in reverse discrimination, which may indicate a conflict between egalitarian ideals and biased impulses (Feldman and Huddy 2005; Nail, Harton and Decker 2003). This conflict could arise from some white liberal's awareness of their privilege or acknowledgment of discrimination faced by blacks (Steele 1990). Studies on white guilt—the feeling of guilt for collective wrong to minorities—found that liberalism,

as opposed to conservativism among whites, was associated with these sentiments (Swim and Miller 1999; Klandermans, Werner and Van Doorn 2008). Moreover, white guilt, along with liberalism predicted greater support for affirmative action programs (Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2003, Swim and Miller 1999). However, liberalism in itself did not necessarily imply support for affirmative action among whites. In other words, liberals who had white guilt were more likely to support policies that advantaged marginalized groups, but this is not necessarily an attribute shared by all liberals.

Liberals racial attitudes had varying degrees of support for minority policies, suggesting a slight inclination to be an advocate for minority concerns. With this understanding, liberals may be more inclined to consider the disadvantages faced by minorities and more likely to perceive a minority student as more deserving of academic benefits than a comparable white student based on the perceived discrimination faced by blacks.

In this section, I have explained how liberals and conservatives' views of minorities differ and this naturally, can shape their perception of minorities academic worthiness. To explore the link between educational outcomes and political ideology, I test how the political ideology of educators is associated with their recommendations of students to honors math class. This leads me to three hypotheses: (1) liberals will have higher recommendation rates of black students for honors math class than conservatives, (2) similarly, conservatives will have lower recommendation rates of black and Hispanic students than white students for honors math class, and (3) there is heterogeneity in the decision-making of white educators that varies by their ideology. The operation of these

hypotheses is the first-in-depth examination of how an educator's political ideology can shape their perceptions of minority students.

Data and Measures

Data and Experimental Design

In order to explore the link between educational outcomes and political ideology, I examine how the political ideology of educators is associated with their academic assessment of minority students for high achieving honors classes. I conduct an experiment that uses an original data set collected through the Understanding America Study (UAS). This is a national panel study managed by the Center for Economic and Social Research at the University of Southern California. The UAS is an internet-based panel consisting of approximately 6,500 households in the United States and respondents are paid a nominal fee. Although it is internet based, panel members were recruited through address based sampling, and those willing to participate who did not have internet access were provided with a tablet and broadband service.

Surveys in general have reliability issues (Nederhof 1985), but research finds that web-based surveys may lessen respondents' tendencies to answer questions in a manner that they think will be viewed favorably by others, thereby minimizing social desirability bias (Kreuter, Presser, and Tourangeau 2008). The present study is based on 389 respondents[8]. Initially, the results consisted of 1,556 individuals over the age of 18, but in order to create a sample of only educators, respondents were asked, "Are you now, or have you ever been, a teacher, principal, administrator, faculty, or staff at any educational

[8] This survey was put into the field from March 12, 2018, through April 13, 2018

facility (e.g., primary, middle or high school, tech school, college, or university)?" 389 indicated experience working in an educational facility. The educators resided across the Continental United States and the District of Columbia and are located in all but three states thereby reducing regional bias. Figure 4.1 indicates the location and distribution of educators surveyed within the Continental United States.

[Figure 4.1]

Educators Political Ideology

First, to assess one's political ideology educators are asked, "How would you consider your political leanings?" I use a five-point ideological scale from very liberal, weak liberal, moderate, weak conservative, to very conservative. I ran a linear regression using the five-point scale and the results were not much different than the use of a three-point scale. Thus, for ease of clarity, I employed the three-point ideological scale and collapsed very liberal and somewhat liberal as liberal, and very conservative and somewhat conservative as conservative to have three distinct categories: conservative, liberal, and moderate. Figure 4.2 displays the results of the 5-point and 3-point political ideology scale. The singular dimension of political ideology may be perceived as a simplistic view of American politics, but in practice, the American political system is dominated by a two-party system that is associated with liberal or conservative viewpoints promoted through Democrat and Republican Party affiliation. Thus, the ideological continuum of liberal and conservative captures the majority of citizens in the United States.

[Figure 4.2]

Academic Assessment

Respondents are randomly assigned a fictitious modified report card of the students' fifth-grade year in elementary school. Based on this report card they are asked to evaluate the students' academic readiness for honors, regular, or remedial classes for the child's sixth-grade year. Each report card is identical and includes the same final grades, state exam scores, attendance, and comments about the student's work habits and behavior. The only difference among report cards is the student's name and photo image of the student. The final grades are presented as letter grades. State exams scores are presented as a percentile for ease of interpretation because states have different category names to classify scores. For example, Pennsylvania uses *Below Basic* to indicate the lowest score, while California's equivalent score is *Standard Not Met*. See Figure 4.3 for the exact modified report card respondents received.

[Figure 4.3]

[Figure 4.4]

The student's race is not explicitly measured, rather, a photo image and name suggest the student's race and ethnicity (See Figure 4.4). The black students are identified as DeAndre Jackson and Shanice Jackson and, combined with color photo images of the students gives a strong impression the students are black. The white students are identified as Emma Peterson and Thomas Peterson. The names combined with a photo suggest the students are white. The Hispanic students' racial complexion is fair skinned, and they have last names of Hispanic origin and are identified as Carlos Rodriguez and Isabella Rodriguez.

All the children presented in the vignettes perform well academically in school and on standardized exams, but the comments indicate they have behavioral problems. These problems include failure to complete homework, poor attitude, and lack of respect for authority. The only information provided about the student is given in the report card. Respondents are randomly assigned one black, white, or Hispanic student to evaluate. From this information, educators are asked to make recommendations for students' class placement in sixth grade. They are specifically asked, "In 6th grade, would you recommend [him/her] for: Remedial Math, Regular Math, or Honors Math?" They are asked a separate, but identical question for English class. Educators can only make one recommendation for math and one recommendation for English. Children do not have to be placed in the same class level for both subjects. For example, educators have the option to place a child in regular math and honors English. I created a dummy variable and the students are either placed in honors class (1) or non-honors class (0). The use of vignettes eliminates concerns of differential student behavior as the source of potential biases in recommendations.

The dependent variable is the educators' recommendation, and the two main independent variables of interest are the student's race and the political ideology of the educator. First, each educator was randomly selected from a larger panel data set, and they were randomly assigned one child to evaluate. The random assignment of a student assesses if there are different odds of placement that vary by the student's race. In essence, educators are asked to make class placement recommendations for students when the only difference is their race and gender.

Control Variables

In addition to the educator's political ideology, I have a host of background information on the educator. Table 4.1 provides a description of the educators' characteristics and the students they evaluated. Consistent with the K-12 teacher demographics, the sample population of educators is overwhelmingly white and female. National averages find that 23 percent of the teachers are male, and 80 percent are white (Goldring and Taie 2018). In the sample of educators, there are slightly more male teachers, but this sample includes past and present teachers as well as principals, and other administrators. Even though this was a random sample, roughly an equal number of conservatives (34%), liberals (33%), and moderates (33%) were surveyed, and each group evaluated a similar number of black, white, and Hispanic students. Educators were asked to recommend students for placement in honors math and English, and they recommended students at a rate of 58 percent and 44 percent, respectively.

[Table 4.1]

Consistent with prior research, I control for a number of surface level features that are associated with perceptions of race. I control for race and age of the educator given their association with racial bias (Stewart, Hippel, and Radvansky 2009; Firebaugh and Davis 1988). I also account for educational levels since higher levels of education are positively associated with racial tolerance (Campbell 1971; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985). Finally, I control for income given its close association with education.

Results

The study uses a logistic regression to analyze the results of individual educators and interacts the main independent variables of interest – educators' political ideology and the student's race. For ease of interpretation, I present the predicted probability rates.

Math

In Table 4.2, I examine the impact of educator's political ideology on recommendation rates for Math, but before considering the effect of political ideology, Models 1 and 2 assess the impact of students' race and educators' demographic background on class recommendations. Figure 4.5 presents the predicted probabilities using model 2. This figure indicates a slight advantage for white students over black and Hispanic students, but there is not a statistically significant difference. Thus, educators as a group did not exhibit racial preferences. Further examining Table 4.2, Model 2, shows that based on educators' characteristics, white educators are less likely than minority educators to recommend all students for honors math.

[Table 4.2]

[Figure 4.5]

[Figure 4.6]

Models 3 and 4 examine whether black and Hispanic students are less likely to be recommended for honors classes than white students when the evaluator is conservative in comparison to liberal or moderate. Model 3 assesses the interaction of the educators' ideology and the students' race, while Model 4 includes the full controls. For ease of

interpretation, I present the predicted probability rates for the full Model 4 in Figure 4.6 along with confidence intervals.

There are meaningful differences in the recommendation rates of black, white, and Hispanic students who have the same exact academic and behavioral comments. Conservatives recommend white students to honors math at a rate of 82 percent, which is 31 and 25 percentage points higher than the recommendation rate of black and Hispanic students, respectively. Using a Wald Test of coefficients there is a statistically significant difference in the recommendation rates of black and white students at the one percent level and a statistically significant difference among white and Hispanic students at the five percent level. The results indicate conservatives display a racial preference for white students over minority students.

Moderate educators display minimal variation in their recommendation rates among the three groups of students. They had slightly higher recommendation rates for Hispanic students than black or white students, but this difference does not reach statistical significance. Finally, liberals display a preference for black students over white and Hispanic students. The gap between black and Hispanic students is only a 6-percentage point gap, but the gap between black and white students is 16 percentage points. Although the difference between black and white students is rather large, liberal's evaluation of the three student groups does not quite reach statistical significance using a Wald Test of coefficients. While the gap is not statistically significant, the gap is meaningful, and suggest that liberals may be more likely to support the advancement of black students' to honors class than comparable white students.

The results presented in this section suggest a strong racial preference by conservatives for white students and a trend that may indicate a more willingness for liberal educators to advocate for black students. The students were exactly the same in every facet except their physical features and name. There are distinct racial patterns by the educators' ideology that is not present among educators as a whole.

Disentangling Race and Ideology

There are stark differences between liberal and conservative's evaluations of students. Could this be a product of race and not ideology? Blacks and minorities are more likely to identify as liberal than conservative and previous literature indicated that black teachers had higher ratings and expectations than white teachers of the same black student (Dee 2005). In order to address this question, I disentangle the effect of race and ideology and restrict the sample to only white educators. Of the 389 total educators, 319 self-identify as white. I examine how white conservatives, white liberals, and white moderates recommend black and Hispanic students for honors placement in comparison to white students.

The results are presented in Table 4.3. I use the same model as in Table 4.2 to test whether, among white educators, there are racial differences in student recommendation rates for honors class based on white educator's political ideology. Model 1 and 2 show that among all white educators there are not statistically significant differences in placement, but model 3 and 4 indicate that there are ideological differences in white educators' assessment of black, white, and Hispanic students. I discuss the results in more detail using the predicted probabilities.

[Table 4.3]

Figure 4.7 presents the predicted probability rates using the full model, 4, from Table 4.3 along with confidence intervals. The results indicate that moderates and conservatives behave in a manner consistent with the results from Figure 4.6. White conservatives recommend white students for honors math at a rate of 79 percent, which is 31 percentage points higher than the black students and 29 percentage points higher than Hispanic students. Moderates recommend all students at nearly a 50 percent rate regardless of race. Hispanic and black students, however, were recommended at a slightly lower rate among white moderate educators in comparison to the full sample of moderates in Figure 4.6, while white students' recommendation rate stayed the same. This is in line with the idea that white educators may have lower academic expectations of minority students than minority educators.

[Figure 4.7]

White liberals display a similar pattern to the full sample of educators from Figure 4.5, but among only white liberal educators, black students predicted recommendation rate is higher, while white students' recommendation rate is lower. Black students are recommended at a rate of 71 percent and white students are recommended at a rate of 44 percent. The gap between black and white students increases from 17 percentage points to 27 when the sample size is reduced to only white educators. Using a Wald test of coefficients, the difference between black and white students among white liberals is statistically significant. These results indicate that white liberals use race as a factor in the evaluation of students for honors class. This experiment shows that there is heterogeneity in white educators' decision-making of minority students. White liberal and conservative

educators came to two very different conclusions on black students and also white students' academic worthiness for honors math.

Other Considerations

In this section I only presented the results for honors math; however, there were differences in the recommendation rates for honors English. Educators recommended all students, regardless of race, to honors English at a much lower rate, but the trends and racial gaps exhibited by liberals and conservatives mirrored the results from the honors math recommendation rates, however, the racial gaps were smaller in honors English. Thus, the results did not reach statistical significance, despite meaningful gaps among liberal or conservative educators' recommendations of black and white students. (See Appendix C for more details of the English results).

Discussion and Conclusion

First, above and beyond race, educators placed a high premium on the students' academic grades. Students earned a B+ in English and an A- in math, thus educators had much lower recommendation rates for honors English than math. Additionally, educators did not display a strong racial preference in recommendation rates by the students' race or by the educators' political ideology. This suggests that political ideology does not motivate educators to show a strong racial preference towards students whom they do not feel are academically or behaviorally qualified.

The analysis indicates that for students with identical academic records and behavior comments, educators made different recommendations for placement into honors math depending on the educators' political ideology and the students' race. This study finds that conservative educators gave white students an advantage in class

placement, and white liberal educators gave black students an advantage, but not Hispanic students, in comparison to whites for honors class placement. This raises the question of whether the results are consistent with a racial bias. In a traditional class setting, teachers, administrators, and staff would have the opportunity to become familiar with the student and use a holistic approach to make their recommendation. The vignettes remove cultural differences, behavior differences, and any other confounding variables that may influence educators' recommendations. In this setting, where students are identical with the exception of a photo image and name, educators are expected to make recommendations based on their judgments. A race-blind selection would generate similar odds of placement for black, white, and Hispanic students, similar to the results found of moderates in Table 4.3. However, my results find distinct racial patterns based on the educators' political ideology for conservatives and white liberals. These results imply that race is a factor, especially for conservatives and white liberals, in their evaluation of students. Moderates, however, did not display preferential treatment for one group over another and appeared to hold true to a race-blind selection.

A criticism of this work may be that educators are associating the stereotypical names of the students with their income and not race, despite given no information concerning family income. Therefore, educators may have an income bias against students as opposed to a racial bias. If we consider this potential explanation, then we must consider it in the context of the results. Conservatives presumably, are espousing that DeAndre and Shanice are low-income students and Emma and Thomas Peterson are high-income students, which explains the gap in the recommendation rates. The problem with this alternative explanation is that conservatives and liberals are coming to very

different conclusions concerning the economic status of the student. Liberals and especially white liberals, in contrast, are associating the names, DeAndre and Shanice as coming from privileged or wealthy families, while the names Emma and Thomas are associated with low-income families. Even if income was the mechanism that created these unequal outcomes, and we accept these conflicting income assumptions of student names by liberals and conservatives, both groups are still engaging in racial biases. Conservatives are taking the stereotypical black names and associating them as low-income and poor students, presumably causing the low placement rate to honors math. Liberals are taking these same stereotypical black names and associating them with middle class or wealthy students and placing them in honors math at a high rate. Regardless of the mechanisms, the theoretical framework remains consistent. Educators are guided by their political ideology which biases their assessment of students and affects their academic outcomes.

The second analysis examined the patterns of only white educators since prior literature implied homogeneity in their racial attitude (Dee 2005). I found distinct racial differences in recommendation rates among white liberal and white conservative educators. White liberals showed a bias towards black students and white conservatives maintained strong support for white students. In future works, I would like to examine the intersection of race and gender and how that affects academic student placement. In the current data set the cell count of students by race and gender becomes too small to make definitive conclusions, but preliminary results suggest that race and gender may invoke different perceptions of student's academic ability or behavior.

Among white liberals, I found evidence to suggest that black girls are driving the gap between black and white students' recommendation rates. Black girls are recommended 81 percent of the time to honors math while black boys are recommended at a rate of 56 percent. These results are at odds with gender biases in math and science classes, but they do coincide with literature on the disparities in discipline and perceptions of black boys as problem children (Noguera 2003). The children in the study were identified as a behavior problem, and this appears to hinder black boys' academic advancement more than black girls. Among white students, I found evidence that suggested white boys are driving the gap in honors math among white conservatives. White boys are recommended to honors math 89.5 percent of the time and white girls are recommended at a rate of 71 percent by conservatives. These gender differences are consistent with prior literature that finds boys are perceived as more gifted students in STEM classes than girls (Riegle-Crumb and Humphries 2003).

This study suggests that political ideology influences the decision making of educators that biased their assessment of students. This is one of the few studies to explore racial biases in educational institutions through the educators' political ideology. Conservatives showed a strong racial preference for white students over minority students and liberals, especially white liberals, showed a racial preference in advancing black students to honors class over white students. I make two main contributions: 1) educators are informed by their political ideology that racially biases their assessment of students, and 2) there is heterogeneity in the decision making of white educators in their assessment of minority students that varies by their ideology. Taken at face value, these

results imply that teachers use race as a factor in the evaluation of students' academic abilities.

A final implication from my work is that the growing political climate of polarization that breeds divisiveness can have ramifications that impact the education of students. During President Obama's time in office, racial bias grew along ideological lines, especially among conservatives (Tesler 2016, Bonilla-Silva 2017). In a more polarized political climate in the Trump era, there is the potential for ideology to become more consequential.

Conclusion

Pennsylvania State Representative Thaddeus Stevenson first introduced public education with the Free Public Schools Act of 1834 and Pennsylvania became the first state to adopt a statewide public-school system. He felt that education was a public good and not a private good, thus it was the government's duty to provide all children, rich or poor, the same educational opportunities. On April 11, 1835 Stevenson offered a defense of the Common School Law of 1834 to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives:

> If education be of admitted importance to the people under all forms of government, and of unquestioned *necessity* when they govern themselves, it follows of course that its cultivation and diffusion is a matter of *public* concern, and a duty which every government owes to its people…Many complain of the school tax, not so much on account of its amount, as because it is for the benefit of others and not themselves. This is a mistake. It is for their own benefit, inasmuch as it perpetuates the government and ensures the due administration of the laws under which they live, and by which their lives and property are protected.

Many other states followed suit and provided public education. In 1852 Massachusetts was the first state to pass compulsory school attendance laws and by 1930 every state in America had some form of compulsory education requirement. The bond between government and education only strengthened in the 20th century. The Supreme Court desegregated education in 1954 with its Brown v. Board of Education decision. In 1957 the Sputnik satellite launching by the Soviet Union led to the National Defense Education Act of 1959, which provided federal funding to improve K-12 instruction in science, math, and foreign languages. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 introduced many new programs, most notably Title I federal funding for

disadvantaged children in rural and urban areas. Finally, in 1980 under President Carter, the federal government established the Department of Education as a cabinet level agency.

From its origins to present day, public education and politics have been inseparable, yet for decades lawmakers have tried to '*keep politics out of education,'* at least rhetorically. In the early 20th century nonpartisan elections were introduced to keep partisanship out of local politics. The goal was to have local government run as an administrative operation and allow voters to focus on the candidate and not party labels (Cassel 1987). At the time many school districts adopted these policies and the majority of school elections are still run as nonpartisan elections. In 1943, Governor Ellis Arnell of Georgia ran on a campaign to keep politics out of education and once in office he disbanded Georgia's School Board of Regents (Georgia Regents 1943). Finally, state Representatives from Minnesota and Arizona, introduced bills to limit political discussions in classrooms.

Despite attempts to create a separation between government and education, the two are intrinsically linked. Nonpartisan school board elections are more politically polarized than partisan school board elections (Crawford 2018); each state has an appointed or elected public official serving on school boards of education or school leadership positions; and teachers are members of society who carry their political biases into the classrooms spoken or unspoken. Thus, this study has been guided by one central question: do political ideologies and political preferences of individuals and communities influence the educational outcomes of minority students?

Contributions

For traditional sociologists, political scientists, and education policy scholars, this study may be viewed as unorthodox because it is not confined to social behaviors, the inner workings of government, or the advocacy of specific policies. Rather, it merges these scholarly lines to explore the interconnected influence between political institutions and society. The scope of this work examines the macro level and micro level influences that include the community and individual teachers and educators' influence on public education.

Building on traditional approaches, this work engages with the literature on residential segregation, partisan sorting, and racial bias studies in education. In doing so, it charts new territory and demonstrates the strong influence of partisanship among individuals and local governments on educational outcomes. My theory of partisan educational policy holds that citizens are guided by their political beliefs in their decision-making and this is seen through teachers' and other educators' assessment of students' academic ability at the individual level, as well as through the actions of taxpaying citizens who live in the community and vote for school leaders and other elected officials at the aggregate level.

At the macro level, a unique feature of this work that sets it apart from other studies is that it provides the first national assessment of the community's political ideology at the school district level. A criticism of prior studies is that they examined political segregation using census tracts, zip codes, counties, or congressional districts, but these studies overlook one of the most important invisible boundaries to residential decision-making. The influence of spatial partisanship is measurable. Local communities

are politically segregated and segregation is associated with community characteristics. Ideological differences across communities impact local government's education budgets and the drawing of district boundaries. This study adds to the literature on political segregation by moving beyond the question of whether America is becoming more politically segregated to examine its effect on local governments and their policies. School districts are associated with school quality, which is especially important for families with children, but even for households without children, school district boundaries are important for taxpaying homeowners.

A second important finding at the macro level is the association between a community's political leanings and minority student academic outcomes. Specifically, black students are less likely to take AP classes and enroll in GT programs in Republican leaning school districts compared to Democrat leaning school districts. Communities can thus create a political culture that biases the treatment of racial minorities. These biases operate through school elections, the community's political culture, and the political attitudes of teachers and other educators in the school.

At the micro level, this work uses original experimental data to provide the first evidence on how teachers and other educators are guided by political ideology in assessing students' academic abilities. Both liberals and conservatives use race as a guide in their assessment of students' academic ability, but they do so in very different ways. Political ideology appears to be a characteristic of individuals that partially explains their racial attitudes. The arguments advanced here have important implications for theories about neighborhoods and the mechanisms through which racial biases operate.

The Future Political Landscape of Schools

Undoubtedly, the results presented here suggest that the political influences at the individual and aggregate levels have an impact on schooling and the educational outcomes observed for minority students. Specifically, Democrat leaning school districts as well as liberal educators are associated with the provision of greater educational opportunities for minority students than in Republican leaning school districts or among conservative educators.

There are philosophical differences between Democrats and Republicans and liberals and conservatives, of course. The Democratic Party and liberals are known for their commitment to social policies aimed at improving the opportunities of marginalized groups, as evidenced by Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty and Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act. The Republican Party and conservatives, in contrast, support limited government and hold individualistic beliefs that stress self-reliance and a belief that opportunities are plentiful for those willing to work hard.

[Figure 5.1]

With increasing partisan divisions these ideological differences are not limited to policy, but also extend to views on race. Since 1964, the American National Election Studies (ANES) has asked Democrats and Republicans how warmly they feel towards blacks using a thermometer rating of 0-100. In 1964 Democrats and Republicans had similar feelings towards blacks, though Democrats had slightly warmer feelings. However, after 2008 their feelings began to diverge. As shown in Figure 5.1, in 2016 Republican had a thermometer rating of 60.3 compared to a Democrat rating of 73.5, troubling, because it is lower than the Republican rating in 1964. My research shows that

partisan Republican sentiments can have a detrimental impact on the educational outcomes of minority students and further exacerbate the racial achievement gap.

Appendix

Appendix A

Appendix A.1

Table A.1: Community Income

	Dependent variable:			
	Median Income	White Median Income	Black Median Income	% Over 200k
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reference Category = *Percent Democrat*				
Percent Republican	172.825***	118.535***	149.599***	−1.091
	(11.635)	(11.458)	(27.326)	(1.906)
Percent Independent	295.680***	245.109***	261.084***	−4.467**
	(13.437)	(13.218)	(29.609)	(2.202)
Log(Population)	2,904.445***	3,239.462***	2,493.220***	633.135***
	(124.071)	(122.034)	(331.163)	(20.250)
Constant	11,341.490***	13,339.790***	6,223.812*	−5,077.881***
	(1,468.033)	(1,445.788)	(3,770.855)	(239.687)
Observations	10,956	10,951	5,159	10,960
R^2	0.082	0.086	0.025	0.088
F Statistic	326.113***	344.711***	44.726***	354.155***
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

These models show the association of community ideology and household income. This model controls for the community population since larger communities are typically associated with greater economic opportunities.

Appendix A.2

According to the National Council on Teacher Quality 14 states within the continental United States set teacher schedules. Nine other states set minimum state salaries. Below is the salary schedule report by state retrieved from the *Teacher Contract Database* (https://www.nctq.org/contract-database/stateReport).

Salary Schedule	State
Yes-salary schedule	Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas[1], Washington[2], West Virginia
Yes-minimum salary	Illinois[3] ($9,000), California ($34,000), New Mexico ($30,000-level 1; $40,000-level 2; $50,000-level 3), Maine ($30,000), Missouri[4] ($25,000), Massachusetts ($20,000), New Jersey ($18,500), Rhode Island ($1,200), Idaho[5] ($31,750), Iowa
state mandates guidelines considered to determine teacher compensation	Florida, Indiana[6]
No	Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

[1](Texas) The state salary schedule includes only one lane and does not differentiate teacher pay based on advanced degrees.

[2](Washington) The state schedule determines ALLOCATIONS of state funds. Actual salaries are determined in local negotiations.

[3](Illinois) Minimum salary based on the 1980 school year.

[4](Missouri) Minimum salary for master's degree plus 10 years' experience is $33,000.

[5](Idaho) gives districts the authority for pay scale, however, the state does refer to the "experience and education index" when referencing the district-determined schedules necessary to receive state salary-based apportionment.

[6](Indiana) Years of teacher experience and content-area degrees beyond the requirements for employment may not account for more than 33 percent of the calculation. The remaining calculation is based on results of the teacher evaluation.

Appendix B

Relative Percent Black in AP courses and GT programs

In this following two models, I examine the percent of black students in AP or GT programs relative to the total black enrollment in the school.

$$Relative\ Black\ AP\ \% = \frac{Number\ of\ Black\ Student\ in\ AP\ in\ the\ School\ District}{Total\ Number\ of\ Black\ Students\ in\ entire\ the\ School\ Distict}$$

On average the relative percent of blacks in AP is lower than the percent of blacks in AP. On average the percent black in AP is 6.2%, while the relative percent black in AP is 3.7%. I also control for the black student population to account for school with a small number of black students. I run the same model as in Table 1.

I use the same equation for GT. I divide the total number of blacks in GT, by the total number of blacks in the school district. Similarly, the percent black in GT (5.6%) is slightly lower than the relative percent black in AP (4.8%). The results are in Tables 4 and 5.

Table B.1: Relative Percent of Black Students Taking AP Classes

	Relative Percent Black in AP		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Community Ideology (Percent Republican)	-0.017^{***}		-0.020^{***}
	(0.005)		(0.006)
Exposure Rep to Dem		0.022^{***}	0.023^{***}
		(0.005)	(0.005)
Community Racial Composition (Percent White)			0.020^{***}
			(0.005)
Black Median Income Gap			-0.0003
			(0.0005)
Percent Cert Teacher			-0.050^{**}
			(0.024)
School District=County		-0.012^{***}	-0.013^{***}
		(0.003)	(0.003)
Black Student Population	-0.011^{***}	-0.010^{***}	-0.009^{***}
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
School Population	0.003^{***}	0.003^{***}	0.003^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	0.042^{***}	0.031^{***}	0.073^{***}
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.024)
Observations	7,165	7,088	7,053
R^2	0.003	0.007	0.011
F Statistic	7.917^{***}	12.657^{***}	9.725^{***}
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B.2: Relative Percent of Black Students Enrolled in Gifted and Talented Programs

	Relative Percent Black in GT		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Community Ideology (Percent Republican)	−0.023***		−0.019**
	(0.007)		(0.008)
Exposure Rep to Dem		0.030***	0.027***
		(0.006)	(0.007)
Community Racial Composition (Percent White)			0.008
			(0.007)
Black Median Income Gap			−0.002***
			(0.001)
Percent Cert Teacher			0.059
			(0.041)
School District=County		−0.009**	−0.009**
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Black Student Population	0.002	0.004	0.004
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
School Population	−0.0004	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	0.057***	0.040***	−0.014
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.041)
Observations	7,635	7,536	7,495
R^2	0.001	0.004	0.006
F Statistic	3.487**	6.675***	5.276***
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix C

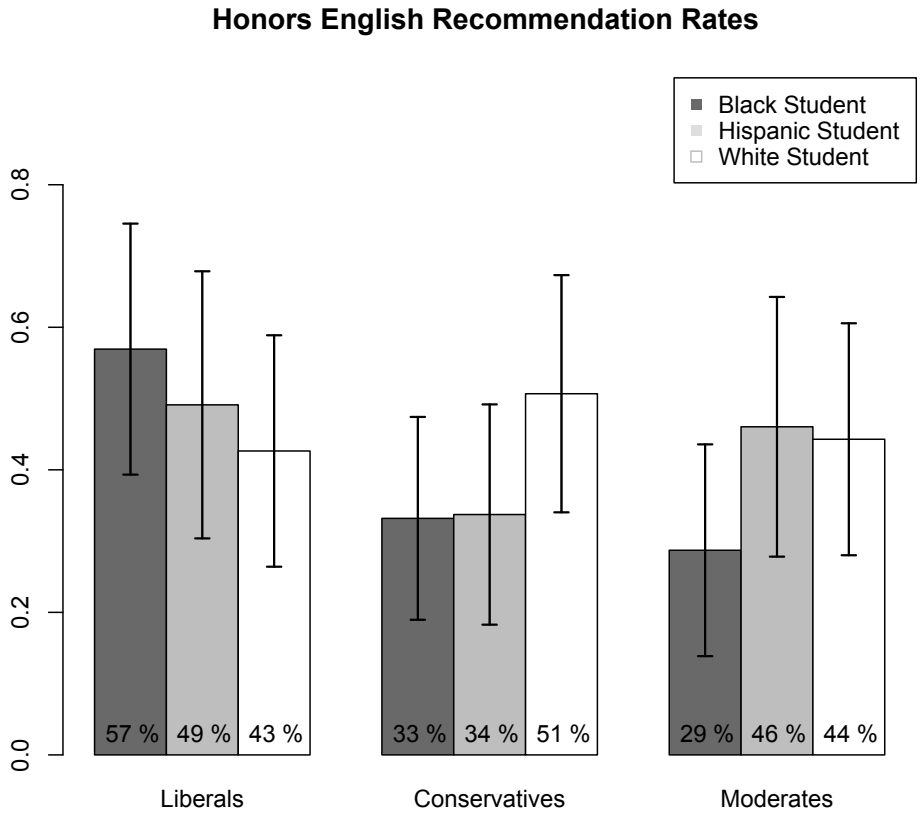


Figure C.1: Predicted probabilities of recommendations for placement into honors English class by political ideology.

English

Educators recommended students for honors English (44%) at a much lower rate than honors Math (58%). I examine the impact of educator's political ideology on recommendation rates for English class. I did not find a statistically significant difference in educators' evaluation of students as a whole or by political ideology. The predicted probability results suggest that educators maybe inclined to show a preference for one group over another and the trends mirror those found in the math results. Conservatives show a slight preference for whites over minority students and liberals show a slight preference for blacks over white students and Hispanic students. Despite the racial gaps exhibited by liberals and conservatives they do not reach statistical significance.

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Tables

Table 2.1: Community Population

	Dependent variable: Population
Reference Category = *Percent Democrat*	
Percent Republican	-862.013^{***}
	(74.009)
Percent Independent	-518.257^{***}
	(88.507)
Constant	$75{,}671.610^{***}$
	(4,865.232)
Observations	10,971
R^2	0.012
F Statistic	67.885^{***}
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2.2: Community Income

	Dependent variable:			
	Median Income	White Median Income	Black Median Income	% Over 200k
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reference Category = *Percent Democrat*				
Percent Republican	100.502***	37.177***	125.550***	−16.782***
	(11.494)	(11.390)	(27.284)	(1.916)
Percent Independent	276.591***	223.299***	260.197***	−8.499***
	(13.743)	(13.610)	(29.768)	(2.291)
Constant	41,057.070***	46,529.240***	31,989.160***	1,391.209***
	(755.618)	(748.975)	(1,591.961)	(125.963)
Observations	10,956	10,951	5,159	10,971
R^2	0.036	0.027	0.015	0.007
F Statistic	204.931***	154.786***	38.335***	38.922***
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2.3: Community Racial Composition

	Dependent variable:					
	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Asian	Exposure Rate White int Blk	Exposure Rate White int Hisp
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Reference Category = *Percent Democrat*						
Percent Republican	0.631^{***}	-0.270^{***}	-0.235^{***}	-0.043^{***}	-0.155^{***}	-0.002^{***}
	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.0002)
Percent Independent	0.596^{***}	-0.174^{***}	-0.297^{***}	-0.002	-0.106^{***}	-0.002^{***}
	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.0003)
Constant	38.715^{***}	21.359^{***}	26.364^{***}	3.378^{***}	12.951^{***}	0.201^{***}
	(0.732)	(0.453)	(0.572)	(0.148)	(0.403)	(0.016)
Observations	10,960	10,960	10,960	10,960	10,934	10,960
R^2	0.243	0.123	0.085	0.043	0.056	0.008
F Statistic	$1{,}761.241^{***}$	764.815^{***}	505.980^{***}	247.733^{***}	322.484^{***}	44.296^{***}

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2.4: Per-Pupil Spending

	Dependent variable: Per-Pupil Spending			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reference Category=*Percent Democrat*				
Percent Republican	-16.619^{***}	-27.742^{***}	-45.952^{***}	25.590^{***}
	(2.992)	(3.078)	(3.019)	(3.083)
Percent Independent	13.342^{***}	-27.338^{***}	-30.521^{***}	-61.965^{***}
	(3.609)	(3.738)	(3.595)	(3.590)
Median Income		0.077^{***}	0.064^{***}	0.021^{***}
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)
School Population			-0.028^{***}	-0.017^{***}
			(0.003)	(0.003)
State Set Teacher Salary			$-2{,}917.075^{***}$	
			(100.846)	
Reference Category=Swing State				
Strong Democrat State				$8{,}230.971^{***}$
				(153.853)
Democrat Leaning State				511.966^{***}
				(125.525)
Republican Leaning State				-236.652^{*}
				(130.914)
Strong Republican State				-77.833
				(131.884)
Constant	$13{,}231.600^{***}$	$10{,}517.180^{***}$	$13{,}095.780^{***}$	$10{,}786.920^{***}$
	(199.463)	(227.193)	(233.892)	(227.125)
Observations	13,088	10,759	10,759	10,759
R^2	0.008	0.080	0.153	0.323
F Statistic	51.224^{***}	313.811^{***}	389.976^{***}	642.442^{***}

Note: Columns 1-3 use an OLS model and column 4 uses controls variables for the state's political leanings.

**p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01*

Table 2.5: Teacher Salaries

	Dependent variable: *Average Teacher Salary*			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reference Category=*Percent Democrat*				
Percent Republican	−175.195***	−199.114***	−201.269***	−73.688***
	(9.911)	(9.969)	(10.189)	(11.336)
Percent Independent	−42.011***	−140.198***	−139.422***	−106.798***
	(11.981)	(12.091)	(12.119)	(13.179)
Median Income		0.364***	0.360***	0.295***
		(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)
School Population			0.012	0.025***
			(0.009)	(0.009)
State Set Teacher Salary			−689.577**	
			(338.634)	
Reference Category= *Swing State*				
Strong Democrat State				11,377.440***
				(562.267)
Democrat Leaning State				7,096.188***
				(461.336)
Republican Leaning State				2,949.557***
				(480.057)
Strong Republican State				−238.054
				(483.643)
Constant	61,280.870***	45,446.300***	45,898.400***	38,829.920***
	(662.349)	(736.832)	(790.637)	(838.000)
Observations	12,982	10,568	10,564	10,564
Adjusted R^2	0.028	0.178	0.178	0.220
F Statistic	190.032***	762.361***	458.845***	374.291***

Note: Columns 1-3 use an OLS model and column 5 uses a state fixed effects model based on the state's political leanings.

**p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01*

Table 2.6: Revenue

	Percent of Total Revenue:			*Percent of Local Revenue:*	
	Federal	State	Local	Property Taxes	Sales Tax
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Percent Republican	-0.065^{***}	-0.117^{***}	0.183^{***}	-0.010^{***}	0.084^{***}
	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.003)	(0.012)
Percent Independent	-0.103^{***}	-0.243^{***}	0.346^{***}	-0.004	0.060^{***}
	(0.004)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.003)	(0.015)
Constant	13.088^{***}	59.328^{***}	27.584^{***}	1.174^{***}	66.863^{***}
	(0.228)	(0.725)	(0.781)	(0.185)	(0.832)
Observations	13,400	13,400	13,400	11,832	12,383
R^2	0.047	0.025	0.043	0.001	0.004
F Statistic	327.479^{***}	171.158^{***}	300.526^{***}	8.222^{***}	23.220^{***}

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2.7: Polsby Compactness

	Dependent variable: *Polsby-Popper Compactness*			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reference Category=*Percent Democrat*				
Percent Republican	-0.002^{***}	-0.001^{***}	-0.001^{***}	-0.0002
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Percent Independent	-0.00005	0.0005^{***}	0.0003^{**}	0.001^{***}
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Racial Composition		-0.001^{***}	-0.001^{***}	-0.001^{***}
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Log(Median Income)			0.050^{***}	0.043^{***}
			(0.005)	(0.005)
Student Population			-0.003^{***}	-0.003^{***}
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Reference Category= *Swing State*				
Strong Democrat				0.057^{***}
				(0.006)
Democrat leaning				0.073^{***}
				(0.005)
Republican leaning				0.057^{***}
				(0.005)
Strong Republican				0.018^{***}
				(0.005)
Constant	0.436^{***}	0.432^{***}	-0.080	-0.080
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.052)	(0.055)
Observations	13,611	10,960	10,813	10,813
R^2	0.032	0.031	0.041	0.069
Adjusted R^2	0.032	0.031	0.041	0.068
Residual Std. Error	0.160	0.156	0.154	0.152
F Statistic	222.601^{***}	116.350^{***}	93.547^{***}	88.813^{***}
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2.8: Polsby Compactness and Income

	Dependent variable:	
	Polsby-Popper	
	(1)	(2)
Percent Republican	-0.001^{***}	
	(0.0001)	
Percent Democrat		0.001^{***}
		(0.0001)
HH making over $200k	0.018	0.127^{***}
	(0.012)	(0.024)
Percent Independent	0.001^{***}	0.001^{***}
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Racial Composition	-0.001^{***}	-0.001^{***}
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
School Population	-0.010^{***}	-0.011^{***}
	(0.002)	(0.002)
%Rep × over $200K	0.002^{***}	
	(0.0004)	
% Dem × over $200K		-0.001^{***}
		(0.0003)
Constant	0.440^{***}	0.344^{***}
	(0.007)	(0.010)
Observations	10,815	10,815
R^2	0.036	0.035
F Statistic	66.656^{***}	65.947^{***}
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 3.1: Education Party Platforms

	Democratic Party	**Republican Party**
2012	• Invest and expand Head Start	• Promote: Parent Involvement; English First, Abstinence Only; STEM programs
	• Expand public school choice options for low-income	• Expand school choice options for consumer rights education
	• Protect teachers from layoffs and reward and retain good teachers	• End current tenure process, support merit base promotions
	• **Address dropout crisis, especially for students of color**	• **More money is not the solution (59% black and 63% Hispanic graduation rate)**
	• Work with state and local communities to offer more flexibility in education	• More state and local control, support Locally Elected School Board
	• Close Achievement Gaps	• Allow teacher to discipline to maintain order in classroom
2016	• Oppose high stakes testing used to evaluate teachers and students	• Oppose national standards and assessments, but want to implement alternatives at local and state level
	• Recruit and retain high-quality teachers.	• End tenure systems and replace with a merit-based approaches and merit pay
	• **End school to prison pipeline and oppose discipline polices that disproportionately affect marginalize groups**	• Teachers should be protected against lawsuits and allowed to take reasonable actions to maintain order in classroom
	• Invest in universal preschool, afterschool programs, summer leaning opportunities, and mentoring programs	• More money is not the solution. 4% of GDP is spent on education with few results
	• Promote in STEM classes, community schools, improve school culture (bullying)	• Promote: STEM subjects and phonics, Teach Bible; English First; Abstinence Only; Parent Involvement
	• Public schools anchor of our democracy. Support school choice, but oppose for profit charter schools	• Expand school choice–magnet, charter, homeschooling, private, parochial, and online using vouchers and tuition tax
	• **Hold school districts and states accountable for increasing achievement, especially for marginalized groups**	• Against redefining sex discrimination to include sexual orientation or other categories.
		• Repeal federal regulations. Greater state and local control

Note: Information summarized from the Democratic National Platform on Education (2012, 2016) and Republican National Platform on Education (2012, 2016)

Table 3.2: Community Ideology and the Percent of Black Student enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses

	Percentage Black in AP		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Community Ideology (Percent Republican)	−0.204***		−0.055***
	(0.009)		(0.009)
Exposure Rep to Dem		0.142***	0.037***
		(0.008)	(0.007)
Community Racial Composition (Percent White)			−0.278***
			(0.007)
Black Median Income Gap			−0.001*
			(0.001)
Percent Cert Teacher			−0.051
			(0.036)
School District=County		0.092***	0.076***
		(0.005)	(0.005)
Black Student Population	0.152***	0.169***	0.144***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
School Population	−0.032***	−0.030***	−0.033***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Constant	0.141***	0.019***	0.342***
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.036)
Observations	7,165	7,088	7,053
R^2	0.174	0.219	0.375
F Statistic	504.443***	496.058***	529.097***
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.3: Community Ideology and the Percent of Black Student enrolled in Gifted and Talented Programs

	Percentage Black in GT		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Community Ideology (Percent Republican)	−0.230***		−0.079***
	(0.008)		(0.008)
Exposure Rep to Dem		0.138***	0.037***
		(0.007)	(0.007)
Community Racial Composition (Percent White)			−0.265***
			(0.007)
Black Median Income Gap			−0.002***
			(0.001)
Percent Cert Teacher			−0.120***
			(0.041)
School District=County		0.102***	0.081***
		(0.005)	(0.004)
Black Student Population	0.136***	0.151***	0.124***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
School Population	−0.030***	−0.028***	−0.031***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Constant	0.151***	0.014***	0.405***
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.041)
Observations	7,635	7,536	7,495
R^2	0.175	0.207	0.369
F Statistic	539.747***	490.884***	546.246***
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4.1: Descriptive Table

	Full Sample	Conservatives (34%)	Liberals (33%)	Moderates (33%)
Educator's Characteristics				
Male	0.32	0.33	0.33	0.31
White	0.82	0.87	0.79	0.80
Black	0.10	0.06	0.13	0.12
Other Race	0.07	0.07	0.09	0.07
Ethnicity: Hispanic*	0.10	0.09	0.11	0.09
Household Income	$50k-$60k	$60-$70k	$50k-$60k	$50k-$60k
Age	49.81	52.42	48.55	48.37
Education (BA=4)	4.05	3.80	4.46	3.89
Honors Math rec	0.58	0.61	0.59	0.53
Honors English rec	0.44	0.38	0.51	0.41
Students evaluated				
Male Student	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.52
White	0.36	0.30	0.39	0.39
Black	0.34	0.36	0.32	0.33
Hispanic	0.30	0.34	0.28	0.28

Note: *Respondents ethnicity is in addition to their race. Eighty percent of the respondent self-identifying as Hispanic indicate that their race is white.

Table 4.2: Educator's Recommendation for Honors Math

	Dependent variable: Honors Math			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Political Ideology: Ref Category Liberal and White S.				
Conservative×Black S.			−1.919***	−2.172***
			(0.654)	(0.683)
Conservative×Hispanic S.			−1.339**	−1.607**
			(0.664)	(0.695)
Moderate×Black S.			−0.613	−0.705
			(0.603)	(0.626)
Moderate×Hispanic S.			0.080	−0.104
			(0.624)	(0.651)
Conservative			1.226**	1.446**
			(0.487)	(0.513)
Moderate			−0.080	0.006
			(0.401)	(0.418)
Black S.	−0.222	−0.188	0.533	0.681
	(0.246)	(0.255)	(0.433)	(0.454)
Hispanic S.	−0.143	−0.086	0.176	0.372
	(0.255)	(0.264)	(0.441)	(0.463)
Educator's Characteristics				
White Educator		−0.642**		−0.763**
		(0.296)		(0.306)
Age		0.012*		0.010
		(0.007)		(0.007)
Male		0.014		0.035
		(0.230)		(0.236)
Education Level		0.076		0.065
		(0.086)		(0.091)
Income		0.936***		1.025***
		(0.246)		(0.255)
Constant	0.435**	0.267	0.160	0.215
	(0.173)	(0.618)	(0.284)	(0.694)
Observations	389	389	389	389
Log Likelihood	−264.412	−251.983	−258.063	−244.824
Akaike Inf. Crit.	534.823	519.966	534.12	517.649

Note: Models 1 through 4 use a logit regression to assess the odds of recommendation into honors class versus non-honors classes (regular track and remedial track). Political ideology is measured using three different categories of conservative, liberal, and moderate with the reference category of liberal. Black S. and Hispanic S. stands for black student and Hispanic student and the reference category is white student. Results are reported in log odds.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; *p<0.01

Table 4.3: White Educator's Recommendation for Honors Math

	Dependent variable: Honors Math			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Political Ideology: Ref Category Liberal and White S.				
Conservative×Black S.			-2.269^{***}	-2.550^{***}
			(0.708)	(0.743)
Conservative×Hispanic S.			-1.547^{**}	-1.837^{**}
			(0.716)	(0.748)
Moderate×Black S.			-1.143^{*}	-1.279^{*}
			(0.683)	(0.710)
Moderate×Hispanic S.			-0.342	-0.488
			(0.698)	(0.727)
Conservative			1.393^{***}	1.587^{***}
			(0.515)	(0.540)
Moderate			0.268	0.312
			(0.463)	(0.482)
Black S.	-0.147	-0.123	0.981^{**}	1.139^{**}
	(0.271)	(0.280)	(0.497)	(0.520)
Hispanic S.	-0.273	-0.208	0.313	0.512
	(0.281)	(0.292)	(0.495)	(0.518)
Educator's Characteristics				
Age		0.010		0.008
		(0.008)		(0.008)
Male		0.118		0.173
		(0.254)		(0.262)
Education Level		0.111		0.092
		(0.097)		(0.104)
Income		0.865^{***}		1.008^{***}
		(0.267)		(0.282)
Constant	0.398^{**}	-0.464	-0.105	-0.813
	(0.193)	(0.666)	(0.325)	(0.768)
Observations	320	320	320	320
Log Likelihood	-218.567	-209.258	-212.098	-201.707
Akaike Inf. Crit.	443.135	432.515	442.195	429.414

Note: Models 1 through 4 use a logistic regression to assess the odds of recommendation into honors class versus non-honors classes (regular track and remedial track). Political ideology is measured using three different categories of conservative, liberal, and moderate with the reference category of liberal. Black S. and Hispanic S. stands for black student and Hispanic student and the reference category is white student. Results are reported in log odds.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; *p<0.01

Figures

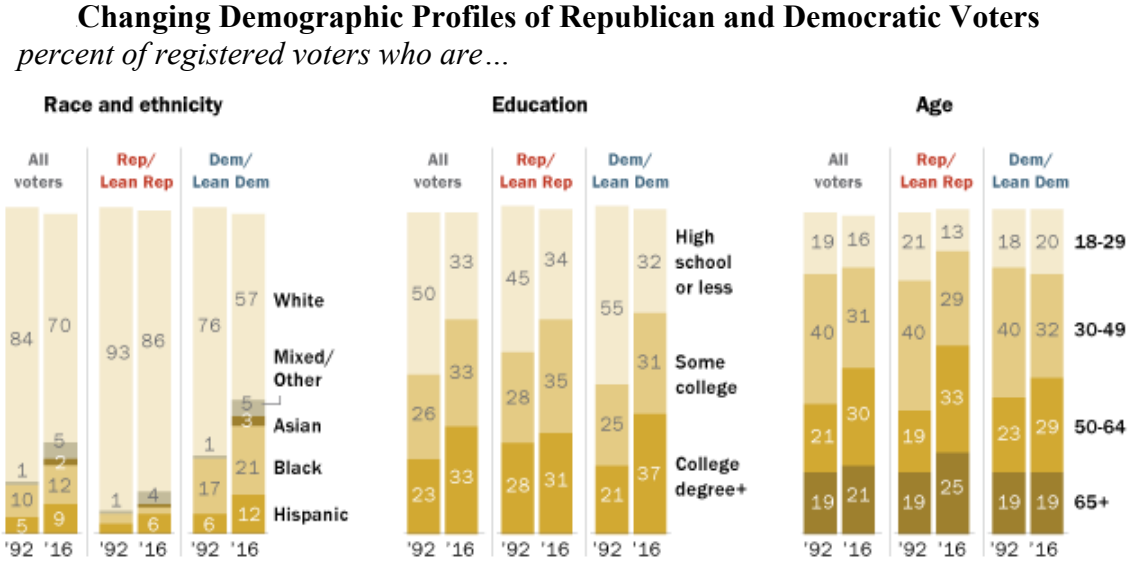


Figure 1.1

Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Hispanics ae of any race. Asians are non-Hispanic and English speaking only

Sources: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data: 2016 data based off surveys conducted January-August

Image take from Pew Research Center https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/07/americas-political-divisions-in-5-charts/

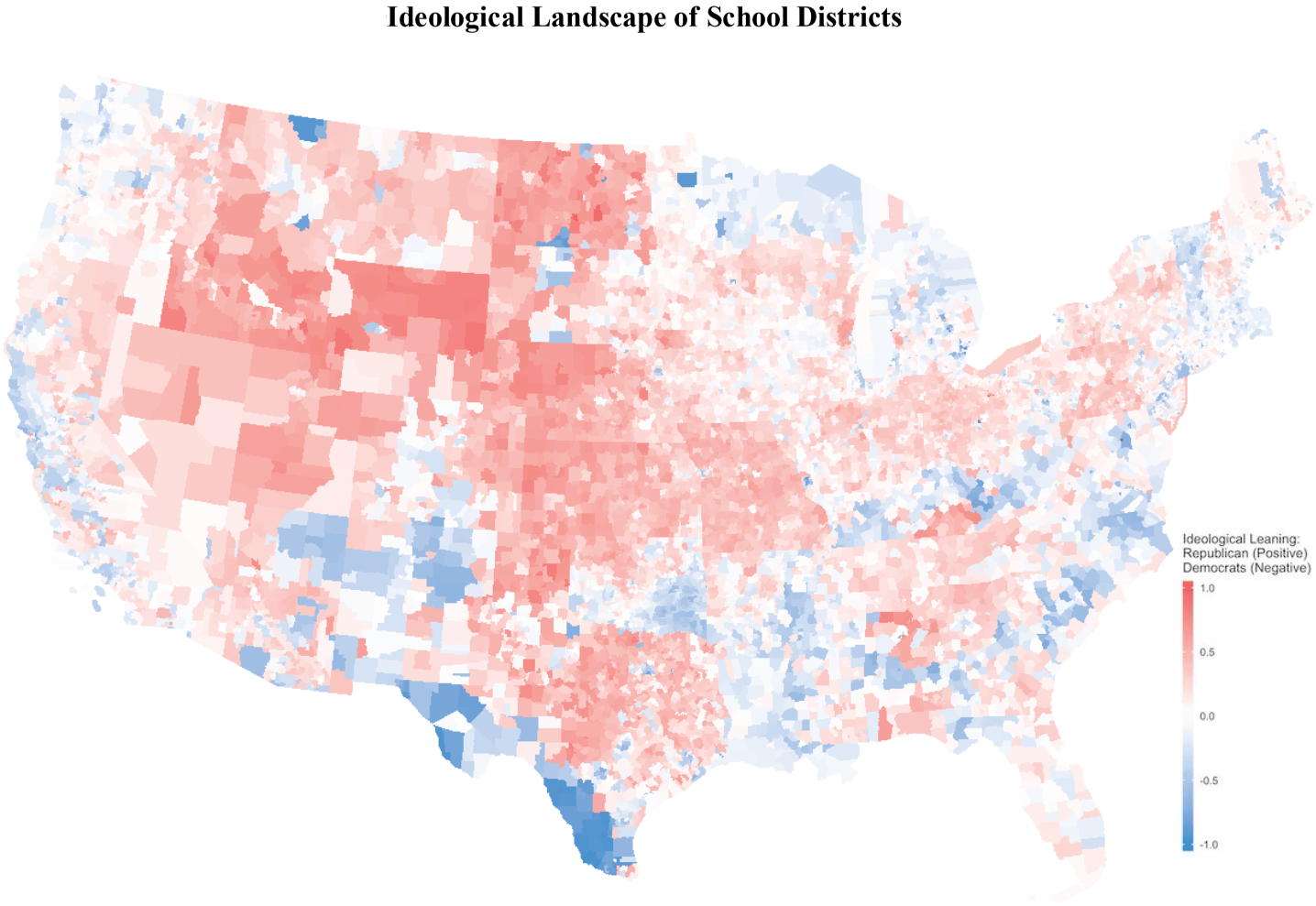


Figure 2.1: Indicates the percent share of registered voters in a school district among registered Democrats and Republicans.

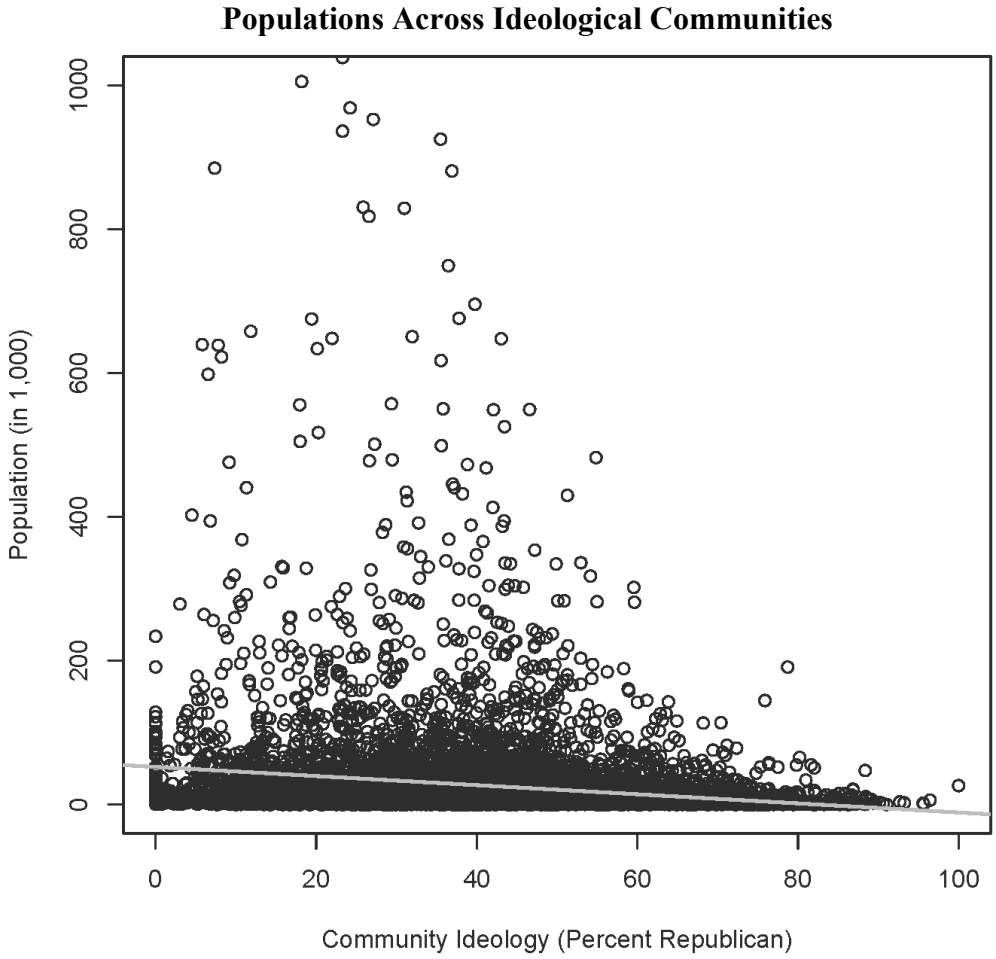
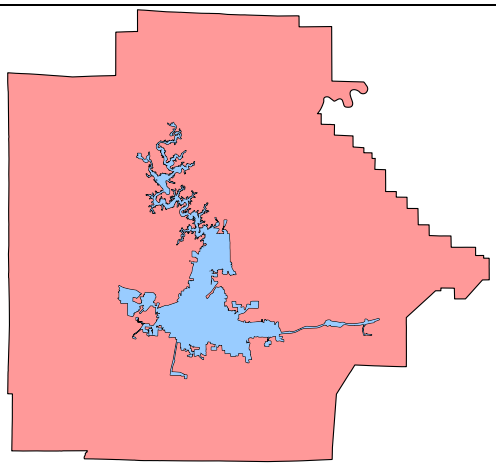
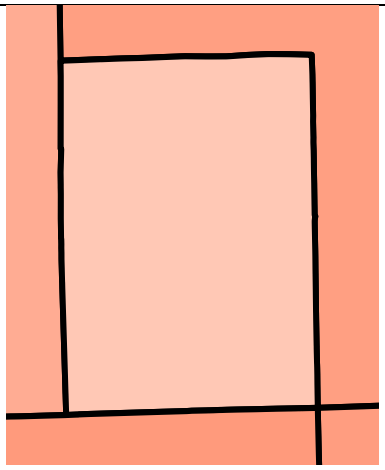


Figure 2.2: The relationship between community population and ideology. This image displays communities with a population of less than one million.

Most and Least Compact School Districts



Tuscaloosa City SD, AL
Polsby-Popper Compactness: 0.0048



Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community SD, IN
Polsby-Popper Compactness: 0.7896

Figure 2.3: Images of the school districts with low compactness (left) and high compactness (right). Tuscaloosa City School District is shaded blue (majority Democrat) and surrounded by Tuscaloosa County School District shaded pink (majority Republican). Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community School District is Republican leaning and neighbors four Republican leaning school districts.

Shelby County School District

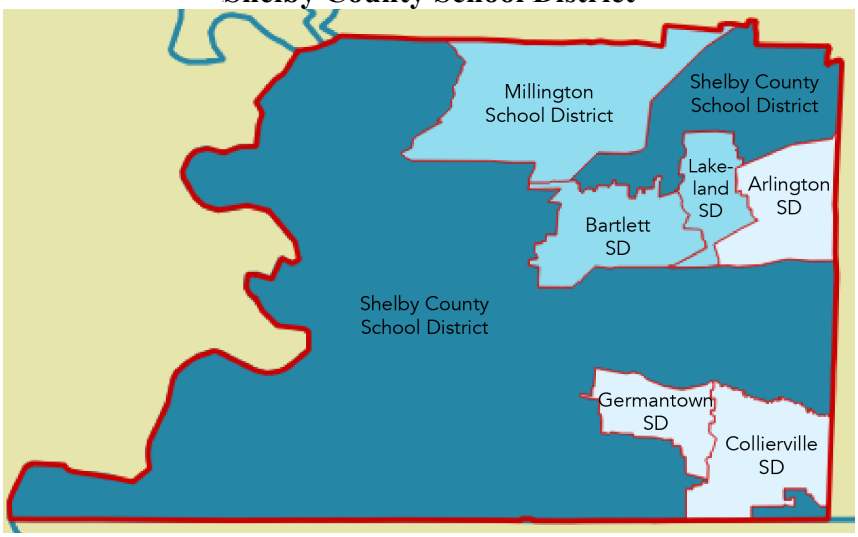


Figure 2.4: Shelby County School District after redistricting 2014. (image taken from EdBuild 2017)

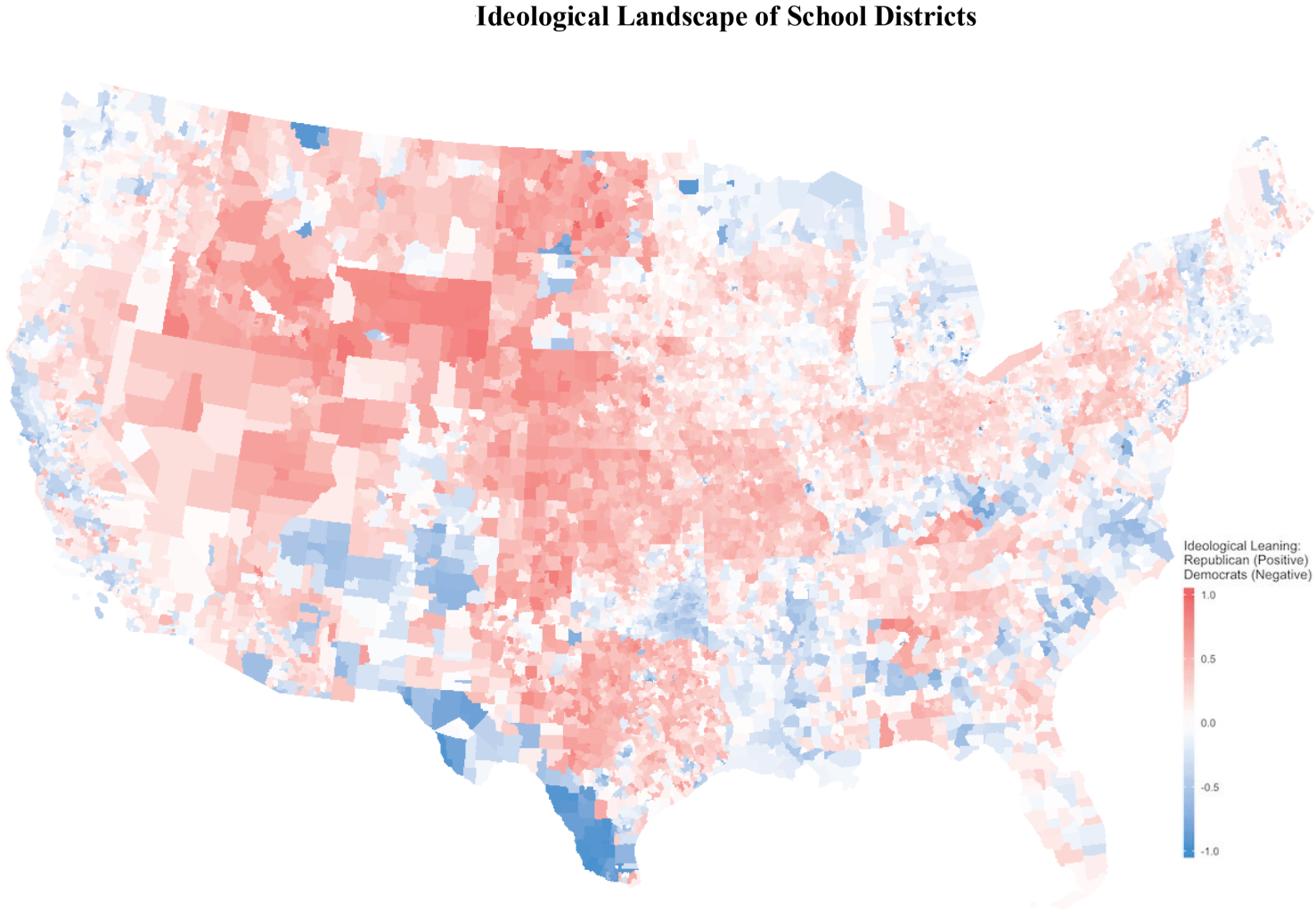


Figure 3.1: Indicates the percent share of registered voters in a school district among registered Democrats and Republicans.

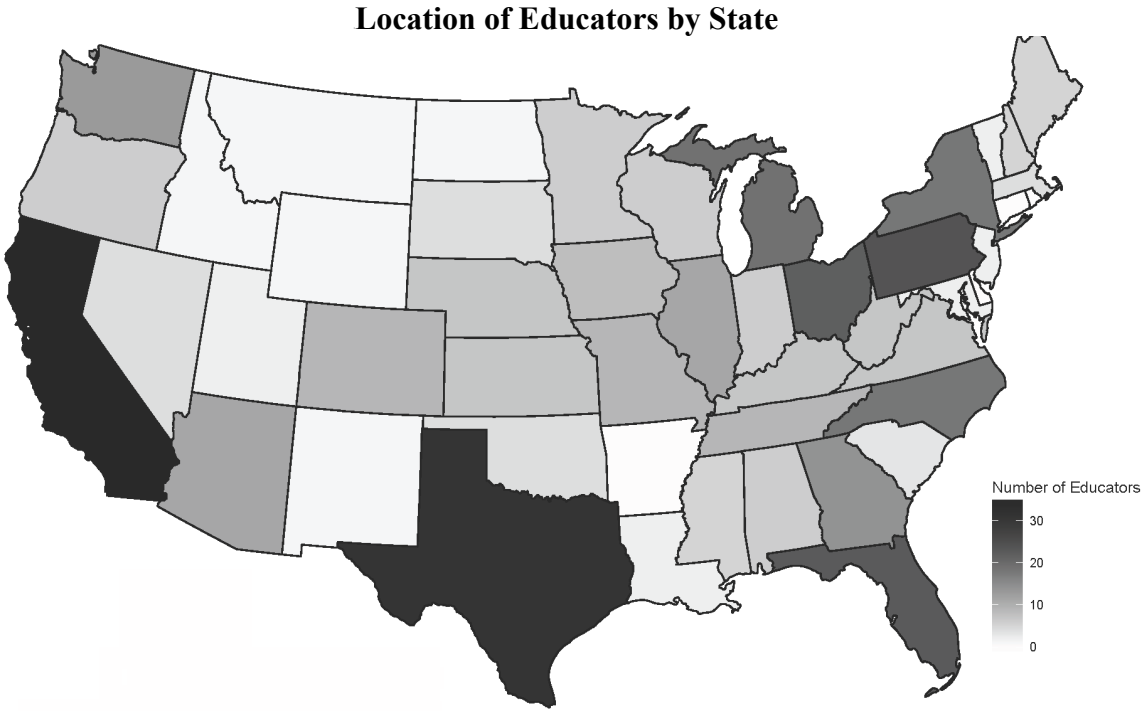


Figure 4.1: Indicates location of educators surveyed. Darker shading indicated a greater number of educators residing in the state and California had the greatest number of educators with 35.

Educator's Self-Reported Ideology

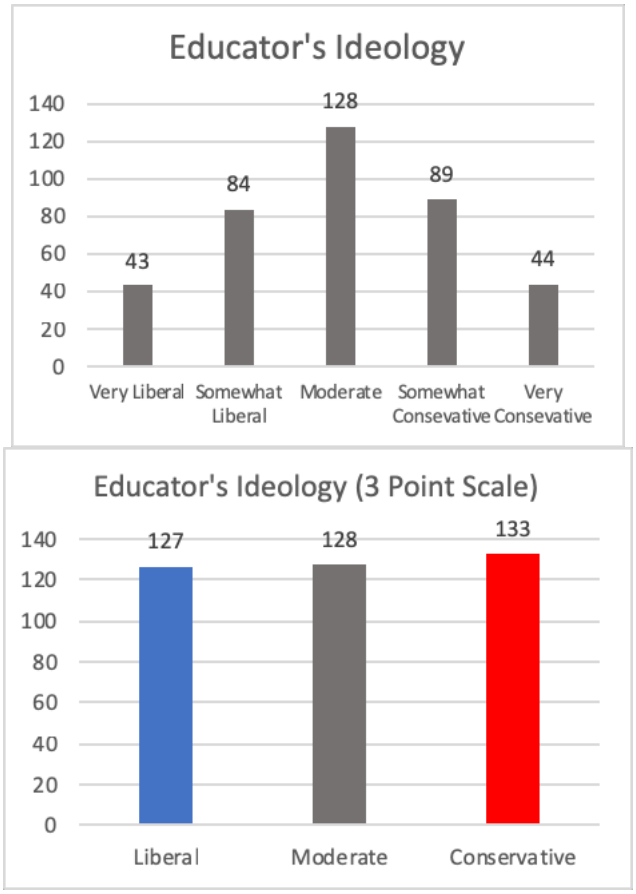


Figure 4.2: The 5-point and 3-point scale of political ideology

[Student Name]

	Final Grade	State Exam Score	
English 5	B+	97%	[Student Picture]
Math 5	A-	95%	
Absences: 4 Late: 7			
Comments: [insert full name] is a bright student, but his/her poor attitude interferes his/her studies. He/She excels on written exams but fails to complete homework consistently. He/She does not always work to the best of his/her ability. In addition, [first name] has some behavior issues such as talking out of turn and not always respecting authority.			

Figure 4.3: Universal Student Report Card

Student Images and Names

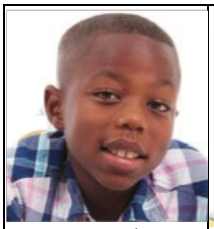
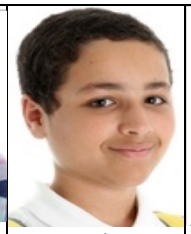
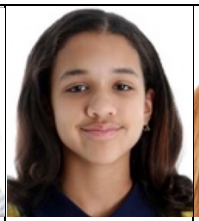
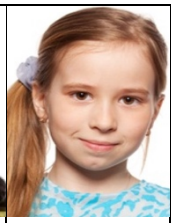
					
DeAndre Jackson	Carlos Rodriguez	Thomas Peterson	Shanice Jackson	Isabella Rodriquez	Emma Peterson

Figure 4.4: The photo image and names of the student provided to each survey respondent in the mock report card

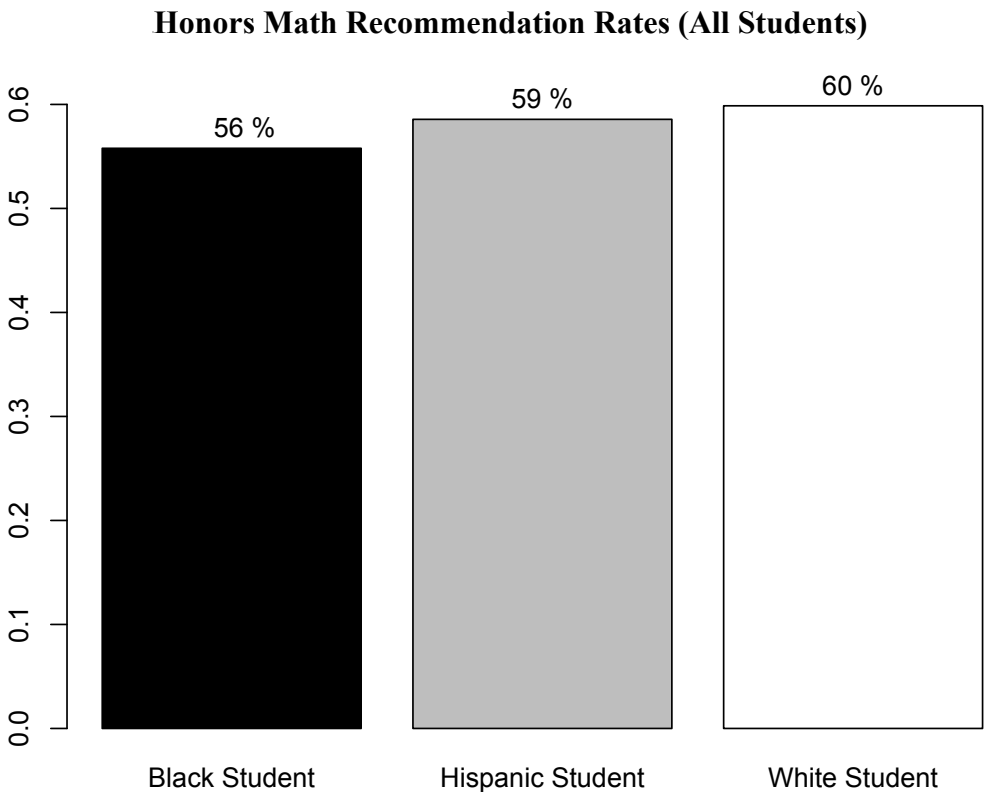


Figure 4.5: Predicted probabilities of all educators by students' race, using Table 2, Model 2

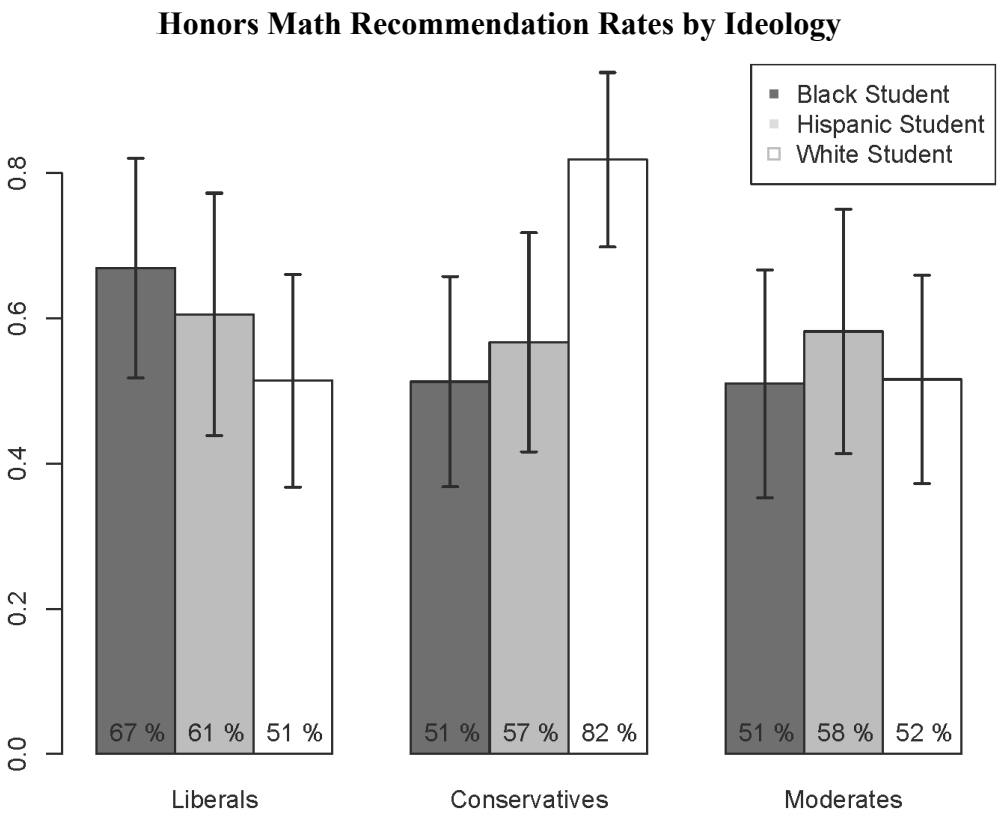


Figure 4.6: Predicted probabilities of all educator separated by educators' ideology and student race using Table 2, Model 4. These results are from the full models in Table 2, Model 4

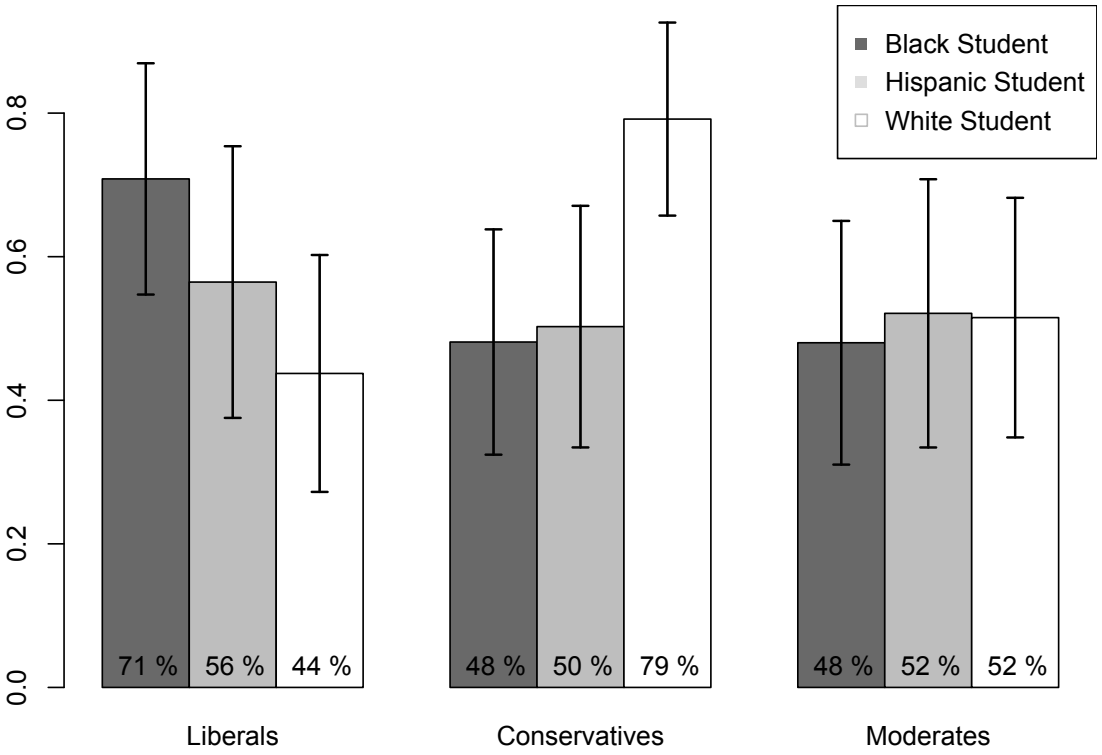


Figure 4.7: Predicted probabilities of recommendations for placement into honors math class by political ideology of a subset of white educators. *N*=319 (white educators) with 100 liberal educators, 116 conservative educators, and 103 moderate educators. These results present the results from the full models in Table 3

Partisans' Average Feeling Thermometer Rating Toward Blacks

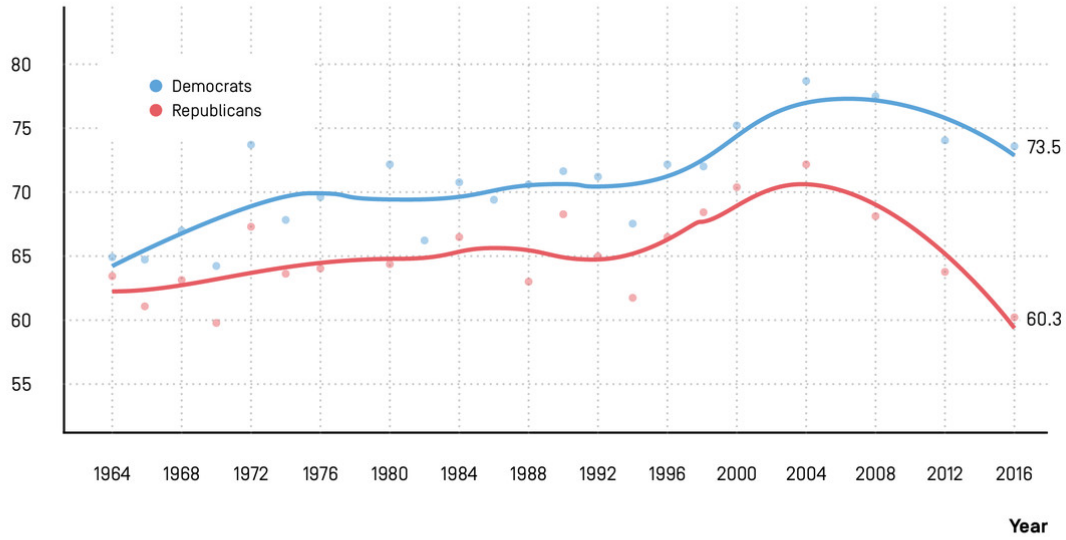


Figure 5.1
Source: American National Election Studies.
Image from Lee Drutman/New American