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THE LEGACY OF COTTON: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE
INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONALIST POLITICS IN MISSISSIPPI

By

William Edward Stephen Cottrell

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
in Geosciences
in the Department of Geosciences

Mississippi State, Mississippi

December 2011

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THE LEGACY OF COTTON: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE
INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONALIST POLITICS IN MISSISSIPPI

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It was hypothesized that the socialspatial dialectic (location, education, politics and race) contributes to Mississippi's low livability ranking. Regression models were employed using race, student funding rates, high school graduation rates, property tax, and voter turnout in the 82 counties as variables.

The research found evidence that Blacks have lower graduation rates than Whites and property tax has a significant effect on voter participation at the $\gamma = .001$ level. Social capital disadvantage seems to reside within both races with voter participation, property tax rates, and school funding being more pronounced with Whites. Results suggest that political capital should not be diminished in researching Mississippi's livability ranking.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to both those who suffer under societal restraints designed to enrich the few at the expense of the many and to those who would expose and attempt to rectify this injustice

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Friends, former students and some whom I've never met have each contributed in their own way and I salute each of them. Those having made the special effort towards having me stop intruding into their lives by providing researched data and advice are as follows: Charles Wax, Steve Shaffer, Xiao He Xu, Ginni Marwah, Chelsi Anderson, Alana McRaney, Ling-Shen Hung, Elizabeth Ogletree, Judy Nash Wilker, Terri Dickerson, Stephen Michael Davis, Derrick Shapley, Taylor Mack, Kim Thi Anh Doan, Mai Quynh Le, and Tom Brennan... princes & princesses one and all.

Finally, if I have erred in spite of the aforementioned array of professional and spiritual guides, I happily attribute my errors to my own stupidity and to an extremely seductive wife.

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LIST OF TERMS

Common Sense: What a particular cultural group believes to be prudent and without question although empirical evidence is lacking (author's definition).

Descriptive Statistics: Used to describe a sample's characteristics (Graham, 1999).

Ethnocentrism: A culturally determined behavior that generates a powerful perspective deep in the human psychic that is used by the mind to resist accepting society as multicultural (Wurzel, 1998).

Gerrymandering: A process whereby a specific group or political party gains an electoral advantage through the spatial configuration of constituency boundaries and subdivisions (Knox & Pinch, 2006).

Individualistic Politics: Government is instituted for largely utilitarian reasons.

Government should be largely restricted to those areas which encourage private initiative (Elazar, 1972).

Magnolia Strategy: Mississippi legislative maneuvers to restrict Black citizen participation in the political process (Reed & Reed, 1996).

Malapportionment: The unequal population sizes of electoral subdivisions (Knox & Pinch, 2006).

Moralistic Politics: Government tends to be seen as a positive force. This emphasizes the commonwealth conception as the basis for democratic government (Elazar, 1972).

Regression Statistics: Any technique used to analyze several variables when the focus is on the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (Graham, 1999).

Socialspatial Dialectic: A human geography invention known as *socialspatial dialectic* can be employed to expose societal exclusivity. This instrument is defined as a two-way process between people and the space they inhabit i.e. the human element influences the character of the community and in turn, the community shapes the ethos of its inhabitants (Knox, P and Pinch, S., 2006).

Stockholm Syndrome: A phenomenon in which a hostage begins to identify with and grow sympathetic to his or her captor (de Fabrique, Nathalie; Romano, Stephen J.; Vecchi, Gregory M.; van Hasselt, Vincent B. (July 2007).

Traditionalistic Politics: Social and family ties are prominent where this type of political culture is found. This often means that some families run the government and others have little to say about it. This reflects an older attitude that embraces a hierarchical society as part of the natural order of things. Government is seen as an actor with a positive role in the community, but the role is largely limited to securing the maintenance of the existing social order. Political leaders play a largely conservative and custodial role rather than being innovative. Otherwise, limited government is viewed as best because that is all that is required to meet the needs of those in power. The South is the regional focus for this type of culture. While undergoing change, traditional southern politics have been dominated by "backdoor" arrangements and strict class divisions. (Elazar, D.)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead" did precious little to dispel His lingering shadow in the South. Although the antebellum culture has seemingly passed, its heritage of economic, social, and political intrigue remains deeply embedded in the ethos of this region (Lazar, 1984). The historian David G. Sansing reminds us that southern historians have left "the relationship between the schoolhouse and the society that supports it, or does not support it, largely unexplored" (Sansing, D., 1993). The author of this thesis paper has found no empirical research focused on the variables used in this paper although it was discovered that Mississippi suffers to some degree from a cultural aversion to the pursuit of education (Mississippi's Mandate: Why the Investment in Education Pays Off in Mississippi, 2006). As education has been defined as the "entire process by which a society transmits itself across the generations" (Bailyn, B., 1960), this paper will explore certain geographical aspects (physical and cultural) of Mississippi's traditionalist political culture, their influence on education, and the ultimate disenfranchisement born of it.

The cotton plantation, known euphemistically as that "peculiar institution" due to its slave-based labor force, has significantly influenced Mississippi's developmental progress for well over two centuries (Reed, J. & Reed, D., 1996). One of the core

consequences born of this detrimental reality is”...while Blacks make up 37 percent of the state's population — the highest such percentage in the nation — it has not elected a Black to statewide office since Reconstruction” (George 2008).

The often used adage of the half empty glass exemplifies the human condition in Mississippi and its struggle between functioning democracy and political disfranchisement. Whereas voting can be viewed as absolutely necessary for improving the quality of life through community participation, there are those who view it as a useless exercise perpetuated by the elite to justify their own exclusiveness. Here lies the challenge to participatory democracy.

The general trend attributed to voting by the state's citizenry is reflected in their average 61 percent turnout (U.S. Election Project, 2008). The remaining 39 percent are either satisfied with the status quo or are so disenfranchised that voting is seen as a useless interruption to their normal life experience (Knox & Pinch, 2006). When such exists, social polarization is in effect.

Placing a monetary value on voting could raise its value in an increasingly anti-intellectual and materialistic world. For example, to encourage participatory democracy in Australia, voting is mandatory. Those who choose not to do so are fined. The result of this “legislated “democratic process is an average 98% turnout with only limited political corruption (Friedman, 2007). To bring this particular political point closer to home, former Mississippi governor William Winter once humorously suggested that, due to the extreme voting apathy in Mississippi, a type of Jim Crow poll tax be re-instituted. His proposal was presented not to discourage Blacks and poor Whites from voting through fines, but to tax only those who choose not to vote. Both the cowboy philosopher Kinky

Friedman and former Governor Winter have presented these non-participants with a very simple yet important mantra...If you don't vote...you don't count. (Friedman, K. 2007, Winter, W., 2002).

As mentioned, to some citizens voting is seen as a useless interruption. Such a perspective holds credence even though vilified through the extremely successful marketing of American democracy. A case can be made that this attitude has its base in classic Marxism. Marx proposed that the foundation of materialistic capitalism could be found in the economic class struggle between the owners of capital and the working class who owned nothing save their labor (Knox, P. and Pinch, S., 2006). Poet and Jackson State University professor Leigh McInnis has customized Marx's theory for the Black Mississippian in the following excerpt:

Voting has not worked for Afro-Mississippians because voting cannot address the three major flaws hindering first-class citizenship. Firstly, America is not based on or founded on the Constitution; it is based on the gaining of capital. Secondly, U.S. capitalism is based on exploitation. In order for American capitalism to continue working, there needs to be a permanently assigned labor class, which means we must limit some group's education so that they will have no choice but to serve as cheap labor. Thirdly, the African-American struggle for liberation is not a physical struggle but a mental and psychological struggle. Voting cannot solve these problems. When most African-Americans vote, they are trying to elect someone who has the ability to curry

the favor of Whites. They are hoping that the act of voting will allow them to gain a few crumbs from the American pie (McInnis, L. 2002).

Beyond the strong sentiment of the historical figures Thomas Jefferson and Mississippi governor W.C.C. Claiborne who unequivocally expressed that “...enlightened citizenry was absolutely essential to the success of the republic,” research has shown a positive correlation between education levels and voter participation (Sansing, D., pg. 4). Truman’s (1980) exploration of this phenomenon informs us that generally “...you are far more likely to vote if you have middle to large income, are educated to college level and have an occupation that is linked to your education.”

In summary, the physical, political, economic and cultural geographies of Mississippi have been both a blessing and a curse for its citizens, given that many of the state’s challenges can be traced to its cotton legacy. Within this context, I will employ socialspatial perspectives to explain Mississippi’s low quality-of-life ranking and why the state’s most powerful political currency, the vote, continues to be squandered.

Statement of the Problem

The legacy of the state’s history has produced a 37% (Black) and 59 % (White) population spatially segregated according to the physical geography conducive to cotton production. Probability indicators of Mississippi’s livability ranking seem to primarily reflect two criteria: race and socio-economic class. Challenging authority, no matter how misguided that authority, has never had political currency in a plantation-type governance model, and with the exception of the Civil Rights movement, has had very limited

leverage in progressing Mississippi (*State Rankings 2007*). Through its withholding or erasing from the voting electorate the memory of participatory democracy such a model does not support an educated citizenry. Consequently, the socialspatial balance has been perverted thus stifling societal progress.

Solidly integrated into these two independent variables of race and socio-economic class is the “location” factor (spatial). It can be assumed that these three categories (race-social/economic level-location) are interrelated as a direct consequence of Mississippi’s legacy of cotton and have been maintained by the deviant misuse of democracy (gerrymandering, malapportionment, poll taxes, etc.). Figure 1 provides a classic example of Mississippi’s use of gerrymandering to capture and maintain political capital. Reliable indicators such as the forty-four criteria used to rank Mississippi as the nation’s least livable state seem to support a positive correlation between educational levels and the citizenry’s civic vitality i.e. voting patterns (*State Rankings, 2007*). Traditionalist politics has maintained its exclusivity in Mississippi at the expense of both its Black and White citizens, and there lies the problem.

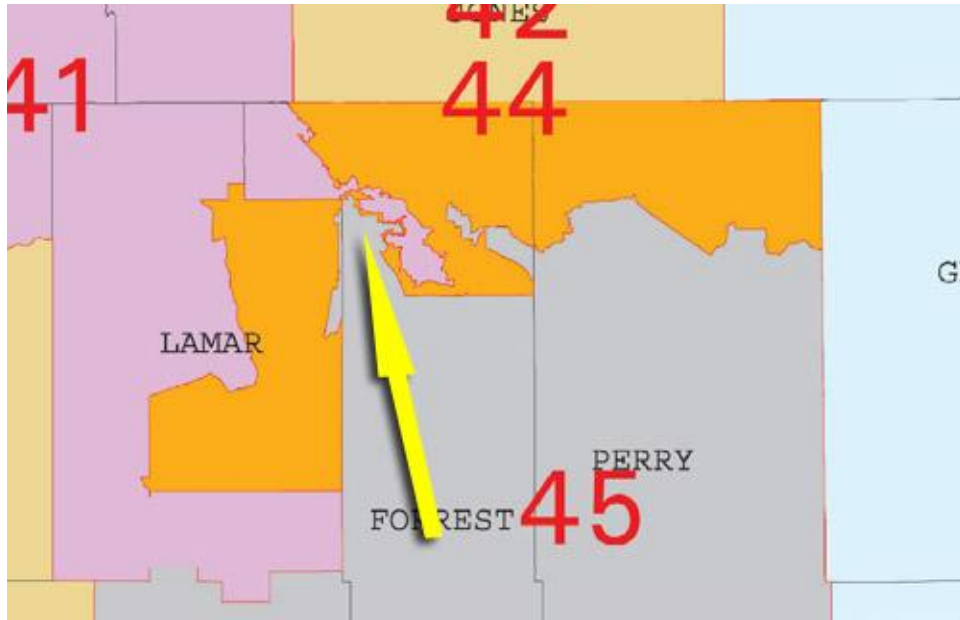


Figure 1: An Example of Gerrymandering in Mississippi

<http://www.newstohughes.com/archives/000328.php>

Hypothesis

This research is premised on citizenry education level being a primary predictor in participatory governance and by association, state livability standards. It is understood that critical thinking is at the core of this learning process and that a truly progressive society cannot exist without a significant percentage of active population involvement. It is further hypothesized that lack of education is detrimental to civic participation via the vote and that any lack of voting vitality is detrimental to the quality of life in Mississippi.

Research Questions

The general research question asks how education affects voter turnout and school funding in the state of Mississippi. The specific research questions are as follows:

1. Does a higher percentage of Blacks in a county school system correlate to lower school funding?
2. Does a higher percentage of Blacks in a county school system correlate to an increased dropout rate?
3. Does a higher percentage of Blacks in a county school system correlate to lower voter participation?
4. Does a higher dropout rate in a county school system correlate to lower voter participation?
5. Does lower school funding in a county school system correlate to lower voter participation?

Rationale for the Study

For the past seventeen years the British Broadcasting Corporation has awarded Mississippi the dubious distinction of being one of the least livable states in the nation. This paper will make the case that Mississippi's poor showing is primarily the consequence of the conflict between national demands for progressive educational excellence and this state's tendency to maintain its traditional milieu ... a milieu largely responsible for the state's political culture (Ayres, 2000). Using the tools of Critical Theory, this thesis will focus on how Mississippi's citizenry has embraced a cultural trait that promotes their own political and economic subjugation (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, Lakoff, 1996, Gutek, 1997).

The former Mississippi political leader, James Kimble Vardaman, rationalized in the early 20th century that education would ruin a good field hand (Rogers et al., 1994).

The rationale for this study is hinged on evidence demonstrating that a functioning democratic society requires an educated citizenry. This rationale is balanced on the premise that if a political system does not place a high value on education, then that political system is a detriment to its citizens and by association, to a functioning democracy. From the onset, the process for improving Mississippi's quality of life requires progressive decision making by the electorate through their vote yet the data does not support this occurring.

In sum, reliable indicators reflect a low quality of life in Mississippi in relation to the nation as a whole. Focus on the county-race-high school graduation rates–education funding- and voting trend relationships may provide insight into citizen disenfranchisement and its root causes, therefore furthering our understanding of how politics, race, tradition, etc. are interrelated in Mississippi for which there has been little research. There lies the rationale for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate why Mississippi has yet to make the transition to more progressive governance. Specifically, it was to investigate the traditional cultural components (racial-educational-political-economic) shaping certain governmental policies and practices resulting in a significant portion of its population being disenfranchised and, by association, providing evidence that the aforementioned culture does not generally serve the actual needs of its total citizenry ((Knox, P. & Pinch, S., 2006).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Historical Geography of the Plantation

Since World War II...winds of change were said to have swept through the Third World...It is ironic that although plantations were one of the main sources of condition that generated the winds of change, they have managed to withstand the tempest.

George Beckford, *Persistent Poverty*

The colonial plantation model belongs to an ancient agricultural system. For centuries European powers have exploited tropical and subtropical regions worldwide for the minerals and agricultural products needed to sustain their hegemonic goals. During the Crusades and long before Western Europe's Industrial Revolution this agricultural system was developing in the Mediterranean Basin for the express purpose of providing sugar for Europe's growing demand. As Europe developed economically, the colonial plantation system became enshrined as an economic mainstay of that development (Aiken, 1998).

The research of West & Augelli (1989) and Aiken (1998) on the nomenclature of this politico-agricultural arrangement reveals several core criteria contributing to its

existence. As contrasted against the traditionalist family farm, the colonial plantation was supported by large external financial investment. Even today, although the plantation may grow limited amounts of crops strictly dedicated to worker subsistence, its primary focus is on a single crop for commercial export purposes thus streamlining its efficiency of production. The criteria of size and worker are inseparable in that the plantation's worker population is positively correlated to its size. Here it should be noted that although slavery has given much to this system, the colonial plantation is not necessarily dependent on this type of human capital. Even so, human capital and skills are normally imported into the plantation system generating exported profit. Time wise, labor demand is seasonal, coupled to a unique socialspatial arrangement that distinguishes the plantation from all other agricultural settings. Finally, the plantation requires constant management with a well-defined, vertical organizational structure.

Overlaying these essential colonial plantation criteria on a map of the American South would provide geographic validation to their political, economic, and social legacy. In the case of the United States, socialspatial realities were deeply rooted in three centuries of French and English influence. Of these two, the English have left a dominant legacy of their cultural geography inclusive of tobacco plantation farming in Tidewater Virginia and Maryland. This agricultural system spread south and west through what is known as the Black Belt in accordance with the region's physical geography (soil & climate conducive to cotton agriculture) and the growing demand for cotton from the industrialized north and England (de Blij & Muller, p. 146).

Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana (and to varying degrees other southern states) can be shown to have more in common with the legendary colonial plantation

formula "...of the Caribbean and Central and South America than with the metropolitan United States" (Aiken, 1998, p. 364). For example, the leisure industries of Caribbean tourism and Mississippi gaming are in alignment with their imported human capital components; components borrowed directly from the colonial plantation economic structure. In both cases the respective industries have serious drawbacks for the local economy in that their substantial profits are exported outside the country or in the case of Mississippi, outside of the state. This is the direct result of traditional political collaboration with religious fundamentalism resulting in the lack of support for gaming management courses being taught in Mississippi's public higher education institutions.

This conservatively moral posture requires the gaming industry to import white collar management that regularly cycles its economic gains outside the state, thus leaving only the rank and file to contribute to the state coffer through their taxes. It is ironic that this same political culture has no qualms in providing "survival-only" skill training to its own citizenry for dead-end employment in those same houses of alleged "ill repute" (Bonfanti, 2003).

As of 2010, an estimated 114,555,744 people, or thirty-seven percent of all U.S. residents, lived in the South, the nation's most populous region (U.S. Census, 2010). This number has increased from the 33% figure of fifty years ago (Evans, 2005). Given this population influx of "new blood" northerners into the Sunbelt, some argue that the "modern" south has progressed beyond the southern planter slaveocracy mindset. Others observers contend that any progressive attitudes emanating from the South abruptly halt at the Atlanta city limits and a few other mid-sized southern cities thus leaving the vast

majority of the south unaffected (Aiken, 1998). It is generally accepted that Mississippi resides geographically and culturally deep within the folds of the unaffected South.

In defining the colonial plantation of the southern United States, Vance (1935) considered the whole southern plantation region as a colony of the North both prior to and after the Civil War. His logic was based on the southern plantation's historic colonial-type economic relationship with its northern patron region, i.e. the *raw* cotton south and the *cultured* textile north. Key (1949) further validated this relationship between colony and motherland by his comparison of the political South to that of the Dutch colonies of the East Indies and the British colonization of India. He brought to the fore certain similarities regarding White minority control over people of color through the homeland's support and tolerance. In the case of the plantation south, the colonial patronage system was maintained by the support and tolerance of the rest of America (Aiken, 1998).

Lastly, Mississippi's physical and cultural geography have had significant influence on the development of the state's traditional political culture. Specifically, Mississippi's landform regions are reflected through a variety of soil types as shown in (Figure 2) with the socialspatial areas under discussion being generally referred to as the Black Belt & Delta. In addition, the climate (Humid Subtropical), topography (Gulf-Atlantic Coastal Plain), and demographics (race and religion) have substantially influenced the plantation economic concept and the state, county, and local political culture born of it (Nisbett, 2003). Consequently, the traditional political culture hosts a "tops-down" command and control colonial plantation organizational structure, metamorphosed through centuries of slavery, and thoroughly ingrained with fossilized

fundamental religious ethnocentrism. This phenomenon has emerged as Mississippi's major liability in an increasingly progressive-thinking world (Altemeyer, 2003).

Physical Geography

Mississippi River Flood Plain

Black Belt

*Locations having soil conducive to cotton growth i.e. plantation (slavery) economic model

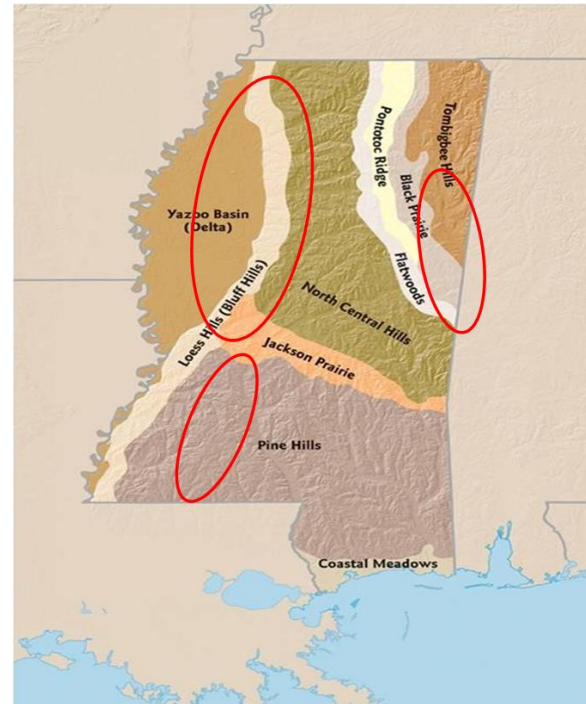


Figure 2: Mississippi Landform Regions

<http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/articles/295/geography-of-mississippi>

Elazar (1984), as cited by Breaux, Duncan, & Morris (1999), has succinctly compartmentalized America's unique political cultures into moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic states. The rankings have been depicted spatially showing the remarkable geographic aspects of cultural distribution (Figure 3). According to his definition Mississippi sits solidly in the traditionalist camp (Table I). To best define traditionalism, it should be contrasted with its cultural nemesis, the ideology of modernization.

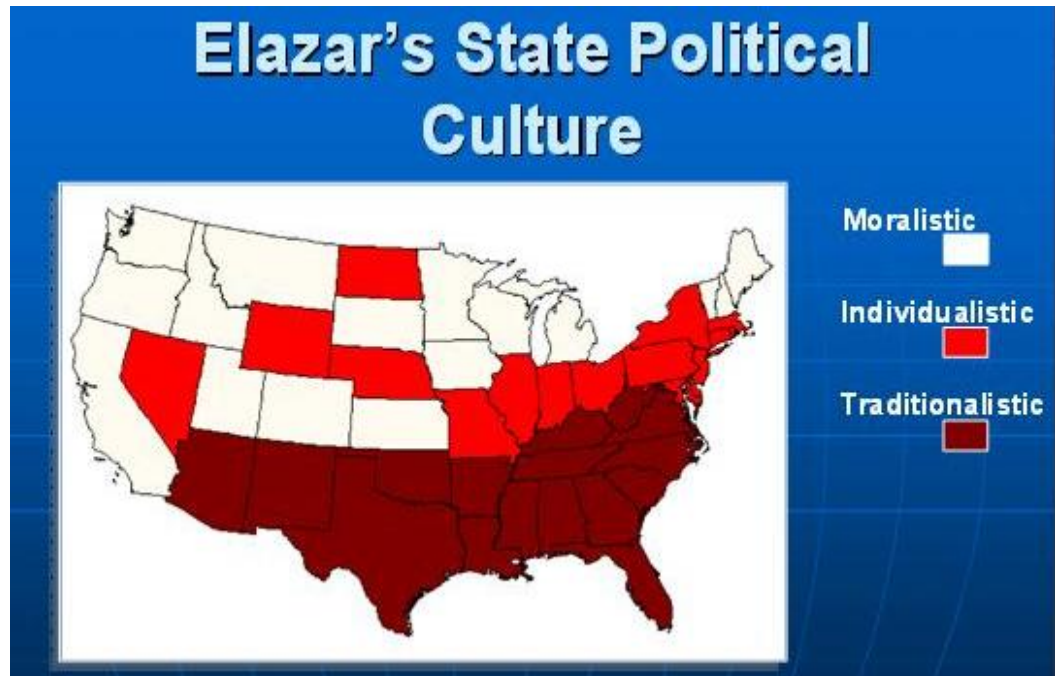


Figure 3: Elazar's Traditionalist Political Culture

<http://11d.typepad.com/blog/2008/02/state-political.html>

Table 1: Listing of States by Political Culture

Moralistic	Individualistic	Traditionalistic
California	Alaska	Alabama
Colorado	Connecticut	Arkansas
Idaho	Delaware	Arizona
Kansas	Hawaii	Florida
Maine	Illinois	Georgia
Michigan	Indiana	Kentucky
Montana	Maryland	Louisiana
New Hampshire	Massachusetts	Mississippi
Oregon	Missouri	New Mexico
South Dakota	Nebraska	North Carolina
Utah	Nevada	Oklahoma
Vermont	New Jersey	South Carolina
Washington	New York	Tennessee
Wisconsin	North Dakota	Texas
	Ohio	Virginia
	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
	Rhode Island	
	Wyoming	

According to Ormrod and Cole (1996, pg.16) as cited by Webster & Webster (2004) “ modernizers (progressives) pursue social and economic ‘progress’ and accept change as an essential requirement for achieving this goal, while traditionalists (cultural conservatives) value the status quo and follow a path of social conservatism.”

“Traditionalists generally reside in smaller towns or rural areas, many works in agriculture, and they are comparatively more likely to be adherents to conservative fundamentalist Protestant Christian denominations. They generally oppose big government, government regulation, taxes, *public education* (my italics), and egalitarian social movements. In contrast, progressives are generally more urbanized, well-educated, more secular in their religious behavior, and likely include newcomers to the area. Progressives also tend to be comparatively more supportive of economic growth and development, improved public education, social change, an active government, and taxes to provide an efficient infrastructure.” Ormrod and Cole (1996) and O’Reilly and Webster (1998) also argue that traditionalists are generally White and frequently have lower incomes. For example, Mississippi has the lowest median household income of any state at \$36,764 (Mississippi.gov. 2009). In comparison, modernizers tend to be younger, better educated, and commonly include minority groups.

Lastly, the dynamics of the traditionalist political apparatus in Mississippi seem to be both cause and effect of the state’s poor ranking in livability standards. Given that democracy is designed to best function with an educated, critical thinking citizenry, any transformation in the status quo must first begin with deconstructing the in-place political system’s rationale and motivation for the decisions it makes (Lakoff, 1996).

The Race Issue

The famous French explorer, Alex de Tocqueville's observation of America almost two hundred years ago is prophetic for Mississippi today... "The two races [Black and White] are bound one to the other without mingling; it is equally difficult for them to separate completely or unite" (De Tocqueville A., 2000). De Tocqueville's observation is one of the core challenges of today's Mississippi; if the races cannot overcome their mutual self destruction, the plantation apparatus's shadow will certainly lengthen. Figure 4 reflects the core distribution of Black population in the United States; the spatial pattern relates well to the historic influence of the plantation economy and traditionalist political culture previously mentioned. As a validation to de Tocqueville's polarizing race prediction, Goldstein (1999) provides statistical evidence that would seem to warrant further analysis as a possible predictor of slowly changing racial demographics on the national scale. His research has revealed that "One in seven Whites, one in three Blacks, four in five Asians, and more than 19 in 20 American Indians are closely related to someone of a different racial group. Despite an intermarriage rate of about 1%, about 20% of Americans nationwide count someone from a different racial group among their kin." Given that Mississippi reflects a racial mix of 61.4% White, 36.3% Black and a mere .07% mixture of two or more races (U.S. Census 2000), a shift towards more progressive educational funding and voting trends solely due to acknowledged kinship rates is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future.

PERCENT BLACK

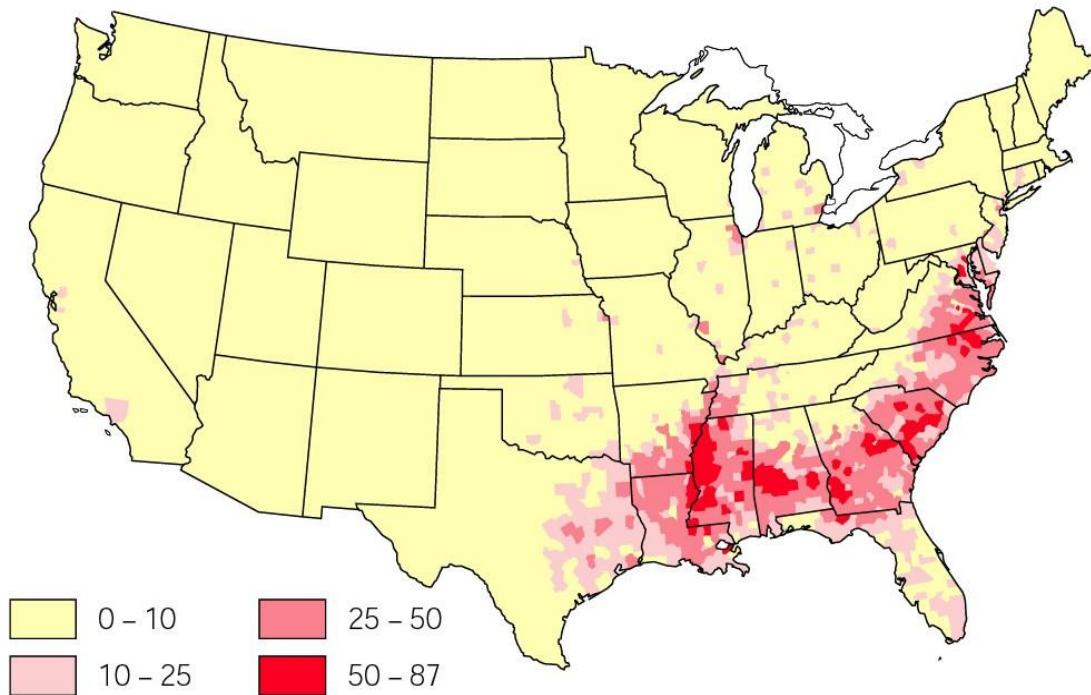


Figure 4: Black Population Distribution in the United States 2004

De Blij, H. & Muller, P. (2004)

In the case of Mississippi, both the poor Black and poor White “labor” citizenry suffer from a deep socio-economic disenfranchisement initiated by the dominant White culture’s “management class”. This division is covertly played out in *de facto* segregation in many aspects of the society including its religious institutions, neighborhoods, and education systems.

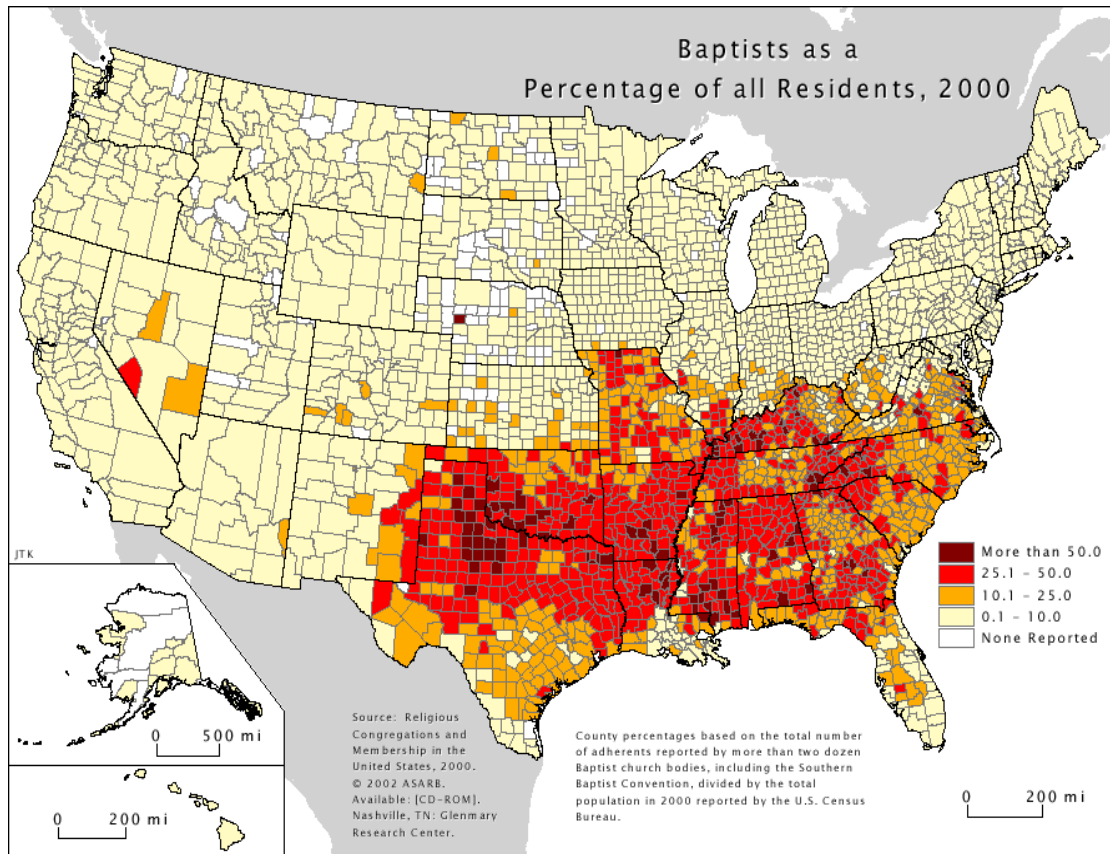


Figure 5: One Historical Religion of the South (2002)

http://dtsdapache.hershey.k12.pa.us/wpmu/hs_aphg/category/monotheistic-religion/

Plantation slavery was thoroughly entrenched into the southern ethos for nearly 250 years. The grand debate justifying this brutal economic practice has been regularly affixed to the common sense version of the Christian Bible. According to the author Mark A. Noll (1998), in his study of Christian justification of slavery, literal interpretation was the normal practice. Low education levels coupled to fundamentalist “common sense” religious fervor found no justification in Holy Scripture to deny slavery. Consequently, its legitimacy was molded into the southern mindset to the extent that religious propaganda sheets were abundantly published to extol to the confederate foot soldier the importance of contributing to the holy war (Reed and Reed, 2002). The

manufacturing of consent in the guise of common sense has taken many paths to place the brutal legacy of cotton on Mississippi's doorstep with fundamentalist Christian religiosity being a major contributor to this phenomenon. Figure 5 shows spatial aspects of a primary denomination in the South, showing alignment with the plantation economy and traditionalist political culture. The historic "common sense" question from the fundamentalist perspective has been: If the Bible condones slavery then who is the average righteous Christian to argue? Such religious logic has contributed to Mississippi's legacy of cotton.

An Educational Sampling

Within the culture of traditionalist politics resides the disconcerting perception that education is not a high priority. Centuries of plantation slavery survival methodology suggests that a Stockholm syndrome type relationship may exist between the leaders and the led. Low civic interaction levels including voting trends, seem to indicate that to be the case with a significant number of Mississippi's disenfranchised population.

To emphasize these extremely important points, one is reminded that a core objective of traditionalist plantation politics is to convince the lower (working) class to not act in their own best interests (Brookfield, 2005). Limiting educational opportunity is the classic method employed in this process, i.e. tacit promotion of a "common sense" way of thinking.

It is well beyond the scope of this study to thoroughly analyze the expansive inventory of empirical evidence justifying Mississippi's low livability ranking. However, this paper makes a limited contribution toward that effort. By observing examples of the

traditionalist political culture of governance and how that governance can bestow both credence and legitimacy to a system designed to benefit the few at the expense of the many, the classic plantation economic and literacy-control model has been an unmitigated success (West & Augelli, 1989).

To further underscore this point, the traditionalist plantation model reinforces how Mississippi's low wages are harnessed to and largely driven by an unskilled, undereducated, and disenfranchised workforce. Here lies the conundrum. Still today, in Mississippi's colonial-plantation political construct, laws are written (or not) and passed (or not) to benefit the few often at the expense of the many. The state's regressive consumer tax structure (NCPA 2007), and its past Technical Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) debacles are but a few examples of this construct. Reaching back into the state's history, Jim Crow laws, Black Codes, Poll taxes, Literacy tests, Magnolia Strategy, and the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission give further evidence as to the "many sacrificing for the few" political construct. What is so ironic is that still today the citizenry, through their cultural dictates as reflected in their voting practices, far too often vote for political, social, and economic realities contraire to their own well being (Lakoff, 1996).

This reality is not lost on the poor educational system that plagues Mississippi's students. It is a fact that the state's public education system (K-12) lags far behind the national average (U.S. News, 2009). One of many striking examples of spectator rather than participatory democracy would certainly include the low value of education as reflected in the state's teacher pay structure. Table 2 gives credence to this reality.

Table 2: NEA Research (June, 2005)

1.	CONNECTICUT	57,337
2.	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	57,009
3.	CALIFORNIA	56,444
4.	NEW JERSEY	55,592
5.	NEW YORK	55,181
47.	MONTANA	37,184
48.	MISSISSIPPI	35,684
49.	NORTH DAKOTA	35,441
50.	OKLAHOMA	35,061
51.	SOUTH DAKOTA	33,236
	MEDIAN	42,254
	UNITED STATES	46,752

Source: www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/05rankings.pdf

The Legacy

Although progressives would argue that Mississippi's poor ranking as the least livable state in the Union deserves to be critically examined and its outcome acted upon, there are those of the market-dominant "status quo" persuasion who would argue otherwise (Chua, 2004). Followers of the latter perspective generally originate from the historical plantation regions and heartily protect their socio-economic privilege. Many of Mississippi's White political leaders are the products of this traditionalist model; a model that assumes all governance problems stem from "exploitation from without." In contrast, their progressive counterparts argue that thorough and objective analyses attribute Mississippi's problems to, "...a result of leadership from within" (Aiken, 1998, p. 374). Elazar (1984) convincingly argued that traditionalist political culture,

“...is rooted in an ambivalent attitude toward the marketplace coupled with a paternalistic and elitist conception of the commonwealth. It reflects an older, pre-commercial attitude that accepts a substantially hierarchical society as part of the ordered nature of things, authorizing and expecting those at the top of the social structure to take a special and dominate role in the government ...but it tries to limit that role to securing the continued maintenance of the existing social order.” (pg.118-19).

Aiken (1998) further alludes to the greed-enhanced, short-sightedness of both the dominant Whites who fill power vacuums in Mississippi’s plantation regions and the ineffective Blacks who have become their malleable partners at a terrible cost to their own communities. Furthermore, Aiken (1998) and others have suggested that quality education could be quite useful as the catalyst to produce critically thinking and skilled human-capital citizenry. Even so, they readily acknowledge that accomplishing this may take an education-economic revolution.

Breaking the back of Mississippi leaderships’ inbred inertia is no small challenge but may very well be necessary if the state is to fully participate in the 21st century. Without such a transformation, Mississippi will condemn itself to chronic intellectual and economic poverty. Lyson (1989) provides insight into such misguided political culture in the following excerpt from another southern traditionalist governed state:

In 1984, for instance, Mazda Motor Company announced that it was considering the Greenville/Spartanburg, South Carolina area as a site for a new auto plant. Eugene Stone, chairman and founder of a textile company that employed over 1,500 workers in the local area, wrote to Mazda and asked them not to consider the

South Carolina location because such a plant would upset existing wage scales in the area. While it is not known how seriously Mazda took Stone's request, the company ultimately decided to build their plant in Michigan. The Spartanburg Development Association, a local industry-hunting organization, expressed the sentiments of many when it opined in its monthly newsletter, "it is our considered view that the Mazda plant would have had a long-term chilling effect on Spartanburg's orderly industrial growth. An auto plant, employing over 3,000 card-carrying, hymn-singing members of the UAW would, in our opinion, bring to an abrupt halt future desirable industrial prospects" (p.6).

This anecdote reveals the blueprint of an extremely fossilized and traditionalist political culture based on a strategy of keeping the general population in check by discouraging opportunity. Like the citizens of South Carolina, the citizens of Mississippi endure similar injustices that contribute to the state's dubious livability ranking. For example, in Mississippi, the constant refrain echoed by the status quo is, "No new taxes! We must learn to live within our means." Given the state's absurdly high regressive food tax compared to its extremely low property and cigarette tax structures, any progressive citizen would be apt to counter such political hyperbole with a more balanced approach. No doubt, such a revolutionary mantra would send chills up the spines of Mississippi's large land holders such as the neo-plantation timber industry, the White planter class, and their political allies who employ food taxation as an instrument of control (Rawls, 1971).

Regressive Taxation

To continuously supply the state coffer, the traditionalist political apparatus has taken maximum advantage of the fact that all Mississippians have enthusiastically taken up the habit of eating. Consequently, the state's population of nearly 3 million makes daily contributions to the state political system via the highest sales tax on food in the nation (Salter, 2005). Considering that Mississippi has the lowest per capita income of the 50 states in the world's only superpower (San Francisco Business Report, 3/28/05), Critical Theory's premise that the dominant class using social institutions, i.e. state taxation ... to reproduce the exploitative conditions that sustain their favored position" seems to have found its true home in this state (Gutek, G. p.324).

Pursuing another controversial tax anomaly; consider the strange rationale behind Mississippi's tobacco tax. In support of being 50th in the nation in livability, Mississippi's traditionalist political machinery has produced the nation's 3rd lowest tobacco tax. Even though the state regularly teeters on the edge of fiscal meltdown, the compassionate and paternalistic-plantation leadership cannot entertain the notion of depriving the poor (of which there is an abundance) of their daily fix of state sanctioned nicotine...while Medicaid, public education, roads and bridges continue to crumble (Salter, 2005).

Critical Thinking is Dangerous Business

The 20th century philosopher, Michael Foucault (1980), described the dominant culture as having ultimate societal authority. This includes what society can discuss and who is credible. Foucault further described the dominant culture strategy of designing educational infrastructure and curriculum to convince the subjugated minorities to

participate happily in their own subjugation (Guttek, 1997). This would certainly include such obvious examples as the marketing of tobacco products to those least able to afford them or the expensive medical bills tobacco may well contribute to at the expense of all of Mississippi's current and future citizens.

For nearly two centuries the United States has hosted an intellectual debate between ending poverty and ending dependency. Formalizing this debate into a national education dialogue has produced America's intellectual struggle between Capitalism and Democracy and questioning which should public education support? Capitalism's priority resides with compliant, yet skilled workers while democracy requires critical thinkers working for the improvement of society (Bonfanti, 2003).

In 1996, the passage of the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act* (P.L. 104-93), also known as "Temporary Assistance to Needy Families" (TANF) set in motion president Clinton's promise to "...end welfare as we know it." Thus began yet another swing toward ending dependency. The federal government swept away a significant amount of "political cumbersomeness" by allocating state funding through block grants rather than through the earlier burdensome and ineffective "waiver" case by case process. Some states built their momentum in increments, but Mississippi, in keeping with the mandates of Elazar's (1984) traditionalist (dominant and paternalistic) political culture, proposed immediate and rather dramatic changes. For example, "Mississippi's first piece of legislation included provisions for implanting in female AFDC recipients with four or more children the birth-control drug Norplant, linking welfare payments to school attendance and grades of the children in the household, the prohibition of increased benefits to recipients who

became pregnant while on welfare, random drug testing, mandatory job hunts, and a thousand dollar “reward” to women who married and left the rolls” (Breux, 1997, p.3).

Tootle (1999) expressed the worrisome nature of persistent poverty rates in the rural south that consistently surpass the national average. Given that a functioning democracy requires an educated citizenry, the public education system should be at the fore of both social and individual change (Auchter, 1998). Bonfanti (2003) further argued that the 200-year-old discourse between the needs of capitalism and those of democracy is well exemplified in how TANF has been implemented in Mississippi. His research focused on the role of higher education at the community college level in moving disadvantaged citizens forward. Due to the traditionalist political mindset of marketplace ambivalence and paternalistic elitism towards the commonwealth and a status quo hierarchy as the natural order of life maintained by an over centralized bureaucracy (classic plantation model), the state’s Department of Human Services and its 15 public community colleges were unable to collaborate on TANF’s program development beyond, “domestic housekeeping” i.e. *house servant* training for the casino industry and “grounds keeping” for Mississippi’s universities thus leaving the state’s most disadvantaged without a means to improve their lot (Holloway, 2002). In a sentence, the South (particularly Louisiana and Mississippi) has a majority of the nation’s persistently poor counties (parishes), yet the participation process by community colleges in relieving the poverty has been minimal at best. During the three year period studied, the Mississippi TANF program had two million dollars annually earmarked for poverty alleviation, yet less than \$90,000 was requested as reimbursement by the state (Bonfanti, 2003).

Education and the Vote

A compelling argument can be made that the conscious deprivation of quality education through a lack of sufficient funding is both a primary cause and effective contributor to racial alienation. Consequently, it can be assumed with a high degree of confidence that any political system that designs its infrastructure to govern its citizenry through their own ignorance will discourage education through legislation and practice. Mississippi's traditionalist political apparatus has done exactly that by withholding quality education, thus convincing its citizenry of their political impotence. Through this strategy the political culture has seriously retarded critical thought and its progressive benefits.

Critical Theory posits that the “dominant classes use social institutions [such as schools] to reproduce the exploitative conditions that sustain their favored position” (Gutek, p.324). Mississippi's centuries-old embrace of the cotton plantation “slavery” model exemplifies this theory. After the Civil War's reconstruction period came to an ignoble end the postbellum “Magnolia Strategy” was initiated in this state. Its sole purpose was to legally support the White elite in their mission to recapture and maintain their favored status through control of the vote (Cross, T. & Slater, R., 1996). Black Codes, Literacy Tests, Poll Taxes, Grandfather Clauses, and White Primaries were but a few of the controlling methods employed to accomplish this goal (Reed, J. & Reed, D., 1996). One definitive example of this type of *de facto* discriminatory mindset is revealed in the well documented thinking of the Mississippi legislator, governor, and United States senator, James Kimble Vardaman. This early twentieth century political leader seriously proposed repealing or modifying several U.S. constitutional amendments and stopping

“all expenditures for the education of African-Americans” (Frank, 1999, p.111). Vardaman rationalized his peculiar ideology on the grounds that, “Education only makes the Negro dissatisfied with his lowly position in society” (Frank, 1999, p.111). His perspective is further validated in the research of Rogers et al. (1994) who noted that “...an education will ruin a good field hand.” No doubt, this traditionalist school of thought would have difficulty embracing both Steward’s (1995) progressive argument that few in the dominant culture have accepted the challenge of assessing their own beliefs and feelings about others and Guerlain’s (1997) suggestion that belonging to the dominant culture makes it very difficult to participate in open-mindedness.

Summary

In summary, our nation’s first poet laureate, the Southerner, Robert Penn Warren, reminds us that, “Storytelling and copulation are the two chief forms of amusement in the South... “They’re inexpensive and easy to procure” (Reed, J., 1996, p. 140-141). It should also be noted that the latter of these two delightful southern pastimes as practiced by Mississippi’s traditionalist political culture comes at the expense of its citizens. A more progressive political culture emanating from a world class educational system would do much to shift the paradigm of Mississippi’s livability ranking from its present position to one with a better goodness-of-fit for the century in which the good citizens of Mississippi find themselves.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This research focused on Mississippi's 82 counties. As noted in Figure 6 these counties are identified as being either predominantly occupied by Black or White citizens. Historically, the Black counties coincide with the physical, economic, and political geographical landscape.

Mississippi Racial Demographics (White & Black Only)

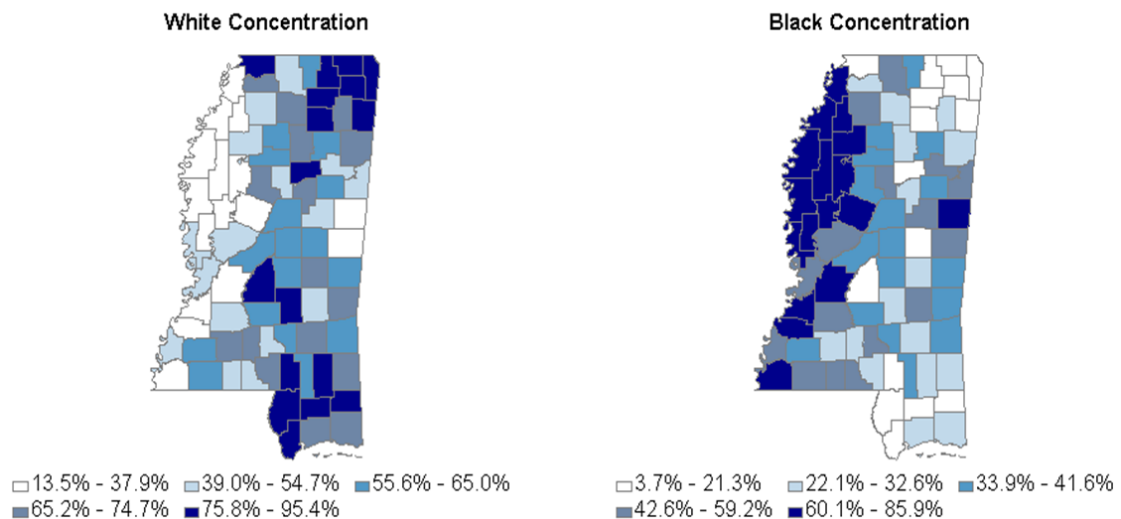


Figure 6: Predominate Black and White Mississippi counties

Research Design

Both descriptive and correlation research designs were employed to address the research questions in this study. Dependent and independent variables were determined from demographic and funding data associated to the eighty-two counties of Mississippi between the years 2003–2007 (minus 2005). Empirical evidence on the possible effect of education level being both a reliable voting indicator and by association, a substantial component of participatory democracy was used as the source of the study's conclusions.

Data and Methods

Data for this study originate from four sources. The Mississippi Poll Project provided descriptive data focused on White vs. Black political campaign interest, White vs. Black trust of government, policy preferences of racial social groups, and White vs. Black belief in local community stability.

The coefficient regression models were based on three distinctive data sets. The *National Center for Education Statistics* produced countywide data for high school dropout rates, percentage of Whites and Blacks in the Mississippi school system, and total funding per pupil. The data were from the years 2003-2007 and must be qualified due to several cities within the state of Mississippi having their own separate school systems. Using the total data sets from the 82 counties does not take into account the factors of geographic socialspatial clustering within counties. For example, property tax rates do not account for real estate values in each county. High income areas within a county may pay less millage yet provide more school funding than a county with higher millage rates but lower real estate values.

The second data source was county property tax rates taken from the *Mississippi Property Tax Commission* (2008). No data were available for the years 2003-2007 which may warrant limitations to the study. However, the collected and analyzed data are considered relevant due to the strong likelihood of little variation in property tax rates from the years 2003-2007 in each county.

The third data source originates from the office of the *Mississippi Secretary of State*. These data measure voter turnout for each county by reviewing the 2000 census population. However, due to data limitations, voter registration records for each county and the number over 18 years of age for each county were unavailable. Understandably, there has been discussion in voter turnout literature about whether one should use voter registration records or minimum age because some voters over 18 years of age are not eligible or available to vote due to such circumstances as felony convictions or disenfranchisement. For this paper it has been decided to use a total population estimate of people over 18 to describe citizen voting levels. (Campbell 1960)

There were five linear regression models for each year of analysis 2003-2007 for a total of 20 models (2005 was not included because there was no election) also 2007 did not have election results so data for elections were not used for that year. The dependent variable in the models 1 and 2 of each year was percent White and percent Black. The independent variables for models 1 and 2 were graduation rates, property tax rates, voter turnout percentage, and funding per student for the respective year. For model 3 of each year the dependent variable was property tax rates. The independent variables were graduation rates, voter turnout percentage and funding per student. For models 4 and 5 of each year the dependent variable was once again property tax rates. The independent

variables were graduation rates, voter turnout percentage, funding per student, and percent Black (model 4) and percent White (model 5).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter will provide the reader with empirical evidence of Mississippi's traditional political culture at the county scale as defined by Elazar (1984). He posits *paternalism* as the primary component which sustains the continuity of the antebellum south in the 21st century and, by association, its hierarchical society of elitism and exclusivity. In such a culture the special and dominant role of government is to secure the maintenance of the existing order. Any threat to the status quo is attributed to exploitation from the outside and unwelcomed agitators.

Tables 3-4-5-6 provide some analyses from the Mississippi Poll concerning the interest level of Blacks and Whites in the state of Mississippi on voting over the decades.

Table 3: Voter Interest Levels of Whites and Blacks in Mississippi

	Not Interested	A Little Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested	N Size	Very Interested – Not Interested
Whites						
1982-84	6.5	13.7	39.2	40.6	(950)	34.1
1990-94	10.5	17.8	31.8	39.8***	(1216)	29.3
2000-04	10.4	15.1	28.7	45.9***	(1134)	35.5
Change	+3.9	+1.4	-10.5	+5.3		
Blacks						
1982-84	11.9	16.0	27.6	44.5	(438)	32.6
1990-94	19.1	24.9	30.9	25.1***	(550)	6.0
2000-04	16.0	17.5	29.6	36.9***	(561)	20.9
Change	+4.1	+1.5	+2.0	-7.6		

Source: The Mississippi Poll project (1) (<http://www2.msstate.edu/~kauai/poll/poll.html>)

Note: *** gamma value reflecting racial differences in campaign interest levels is statistically significant at the .001 level.

Black citizens in Mississippi tend to have less enthusiasm in voter participation than do White citizens of the State of Mississippi.

Table 4: White and Black Trust Levels of Government

	<i>Always</i>	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Rarely	N Size	(Always + Most of Time) – (Rarely)
	<i>Whites</i>					
1982-84	8.3	40.5	44.0	7.1	(420)	41.7
85-89	8.2	39.4	41.0	11.4	(449)	36.2
1990-94	2.7	24.6	51.1	21.6*	(1185)	5.7
2000-04	4.6	38.4	44.3	12.7***	(1111)	30.3
Change	-3.7	-2.1	+0.3	+5.6		
	<i>Blacks</i>					
1982-84	8.3	35.7	43.5	12.5	(168)	31.5
85-89	8.3	30.4	46.4	14.9	(181)	23.8
1990-94	6.9	16.6	47.6	28.8*	(548)	-5.3
2000-04	4.5	21.4	51.0	23.1***	(555)	2.8
Change	-3.8	-14.3	+7.5	+10.6		

Source: The Mississippi Poll project (<http://www2.msstate.edu/~kauai/poll/poll.html>)

Note: *** gamma value reflecting racial differences in trust in state officials is statistically significant at the .001 level.

Black citizens of the state of Mississippi have less trust in the government than do White citizens. This distrust is held consistently through all time periods evaluated in the Mississippi Poll.

Table 5: Policy Preferences of Race and Gender in Mississippi

Years	Whites	Blacks	Men	Women
% Support Affirmative Action				
1992-94	9	61***	20	29**
1998-99	11	62***	23	30***
2002-04	14	67***	31	33**
% Favoring Death Penalty for Murder				
1986	87	47***	84	65***
1996	70	25***	62	51**
2002	79	50***	76	59***
% Spend More on Public Elem/Second Education				
1981	73	79*	72	78*
1990-94	78	87***	77	84***
2000-04	78	92***	80	85*
% Spend More on Health Care and Hospitals				
1981	54	85***	62	63
1990-94	65	91***	68	78***
2000-04	67	92***	70	79***

Source: The Mississippi Poll project

Note: *** gamma value reflecting racial or sex differences in policy preferences are statistically significant at the .001 level.

Blacks tend to favor spending on education and healthcare at higher rates than Whites. However the numbers for both Blacks and Whites in spending on education is greater than 50 percent. Blacks also favor affirmative action programs at levels almost four to five times above that of Whites. Blacks tend to be less inclined to favor the death penalty than Whites.

Table 6: Likelihood of Community Stability of Whites and Blacks in Mississippi

	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	Definitely No	N Size	Definite Yes – Definite No
Whites						
1990-92	49.0	36.0	10.5	4.4***	(789)	44.6
1996-98	52.3	33.1	11.0	3.7***	(794)	48.6
2004	52.0	31.4	10.0	6.6***	(331)	45.4
Change	+3.0	-4.6	-0.5	+2.2		
Blacks						
1990-92	35.5	40.7	12.7	11.1***	(332)	24.4
1996-98	38.8	36.3	18.0	6.9***	(361)	31.9
2004	28.6	32.7	21.4	17.3***	(168)	11.3
Change	-6.9	-8.0	+8.7	+6.2		

Source: The Mississippi Poll project

Note: *** The gamma value reflecting racial differences in likelihood of remaining in community in five years is statistically significant at the .001

Blacks tend to believe that their community stability is not as strong as what Whites believe.

Table 7: 2003 Model 1– Dependent Variable % Black

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	24.977	30.966		.807	.422
Property tax rates	.667	.183	.387	3.639	.000
2003 funding per student	.007	.002	.378	3.760	.000
2003 grad rate	-.566	.300	-.187	-1.885	.063
Voter_turnout_percentage_2003	-15.291	26.674	-.059	-.573	.568

a. Dependent Variable: % Black

The regression statistical Tables 7 and 8 in models 1 and 2 for the year 2003 show that property tax rates are actually lower in county school systems with a higher percentage of White than Black populations and have lower funding per pupil than Black school systems. Being Black has a significant effect on graduation rates in Mississippi with Blacks having lower graduation levels. The voter turnout percentage for 2003 is higher for Whites than Blacks.

Table 8: 2003 Model 2 - Dependent Variable % White

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	66.267	30.541		2.170	.033
propertytaxrates	-.642	.181	-.378	-3.553	.001
2003 funding per student	-.007	.002	-.374	-3.726	.000
2003 grad rate	.604	.296	.202	2.038	.045
Voter_turnout_percentage_2003	20.094	26.308	.078	.764	.447

a. Dependent Variable: % White

Table 9: 2003 Model 3 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	55.532	18.062		3.074	.003
2003 grad rate	-.310	.182	-.176	-1.702	.093
2003 funding per student	-.002	.001	-.221	-2.128	.037
Voter_turnout_percentage_2003	42.489	15.757	.281	2.696	.009

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Lower graduation rates were a marginally significant factor in lower property tax rates in Table 9 - model 3. Also the funding for students was a significant factor in lower

property tax rates in model 3. For places with higher property tax rates voter turnout percentage were higher at greater than .01 P value in model 3. This indicates that the higher the property tax rates the higher the percentage of voters who turnout.

Table 10: 2003 Model 4 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates - Black

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	d		
				Coefficients		
			Beta			
1	(Constant)	40.189	17.541		2.291	.025
	2003 funding per student	-.004	.001	-.324	-3.175	.002
	2003 grad rate	-.099	.182	-.056	-.541	.590
	Voter_turnout_percentage_2003	34.937	14.953	.231	2.336	.022
	Avg % Black	.155	.045	.367	3.401	.001

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Table 11: 2003 Model 5 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates -White

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	62.240	16.956		3.671	.000
2003 funding per student	-.004	.001	-.330	-3.241	.002
2003 grad rate	-.134	.177	-.076	-.757	.451
Voter_turnout_percentage_2003	40.911	14.707	.270	2.782	.007
% White	-.219	.062	-.373	-3.553	.001

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

In Tables 10 and 11 - model 4 and model 5 funding for students, voter turnout percentage, and percent Black are significant factors in property tax rates but when controlled for race are not a significant factor of dropout rates. Race is the most significant factor when it comes to property tax rates.

Table 12: 2004 Model 1 - Dependent Variable % Black

		Coefficients^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	95.784	33.699		2.842	.006
	2004 funding per student	.006	.002	.323	3.434	.001
	2004 grad rate	-.811	.295	-.253	-2.750	.007
	Property tax rates	.673	.164	.391	4.097	.000
	Voter_Turnout_percentage_2004	-89.277	28.175	-.290	-3.169	.002

a. Dependent Variable: % Black

Table 13: 2004 Model 2 - Dependent Variable % White

		Coefficients^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-3.531	32.892		-.107	.915
	2004 funding per student	-.006	.002	-.322	-3.465	.001
	2004 grad rate	.826	.288	.261	2.868	.005
	propertytaxrates	-.648	.160	-.381	-4.041	.000
	Voter_Turnout_percentage_2004	95.477	27.501	.314	3.472	.001

a. Dependent Variable: % White

Tables 12 and 13 for models 1 and 2 in the year 2004 the data seems to be consistent with 2003 with one exception. Higher turnout of voters appears to be a

significant factor for percent White counties and lower turnout seems to be a significant factor percent Black counties.

Table 14: 2004 Model 3 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	65.152	22.009		2.960	.004
	2004 funding per student	-.003	.001	-.247	-2.293	.025
	2004 grad rate	-.308	.200	-.165	-1.538	.128
	Voter_Turnout_percentage_2004	22.425	19.241	.126	1.166	.247

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Table 14 - model 3 property tax rates are once again a significant factor in funding per student but seems not to be a significant factor in graduation rates or voter turnout percentage.

Table 15: 2004 Model 4 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates - Black

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	40.189	17.541		2.291	.025
	2004 funding per student	-.004	.001	-.324	-3.175	.002
	2004 grad rate	-.099	.182	-.056	-.541	.590
	Voter_turnout_percentage_2003	34.937	14.953	.231	2.336	.022
	Avg % Black	.155	.045	.367	3.401	.001

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Table 16: 2004 Model 5 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates -White

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	52.801	20.351		2.594	.011
	2004 funding per student	-.004	.001	-.352	-3.450	.001
	2004 grad rate	-.031	.195	-.017	-.160	.874
	Voter_Turnout_percentage_2004	44.266	18.402	.248	2.406	.019
	% White	-.270	.067	-.459	-4.041	.000

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

In Tables 15 and 16 – models 4 and 5 there seems to be no significant variation between 2003 and 2004.

Table 17: 2006 Model 1 - Dependent Variable % Black

		Coefficients^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	38.028	36.374		1.045	.299
	Property tax rates	.563	.191	.327	2.944	.004
	2006 funding per student	.002	.002	.151	1.388	.169
	Voter_Turnout_Percentage_2006	12.509	38.975	.035	.321	.749
	2006 grad rate	-.440	.331	-.142	-1.331	.187

a. Dependent Variable: % Black

Table 18: 2006 Model 2 - Dependent Variable % White

		Coefficients^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	54.725	35.908		1.524	.132
	Property tax rates	-.548	.189	-.323	-2.906	.005
	2006 funding per student	-.002	.002	-.161	-1.474	.145
	Voter_Turnout_Percentage_2006	-3.148	38.476	-.009	-.082	.935
	2006 grad rate	.476	.326	.156	1.459	.148

a. Dependent Variable: % White

Tables 17 and 18 – models 1 and 2 for the year 2006 once again property tax rates seem to be higher in Black counties. There are no significant differences between the other independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 19: 2006 Model 3 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	38.137	21.108		1.807	.075
	2006 funding per student	-.002	.001	-.201	-1.844	.069
	Voter_Turnout_Percentage_2006	40.997	22.614	.199	1.813	.074
	2006 grad rate	-.039	.196	-.022	-.200	.842

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Table 19 - model 3 in 2006 indicates school funding and turnout percentage is a marginally significant factor in explaining property tax rates.

Table 20: 2006 Model 4 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates - Black

		Coefficients^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	27.442	20.466		1.341	.184
	2006 funding per student	-.002	.001	-.228	-2.179	.032
	Voter_Turnout_Percentage_2006	34.600	21.687	.168	1.595	.115
	2006 grad rate	.044	.189	.024	.232	.817
	% Black	.180	.061	.310	2.944	.004

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Table 21: 2006 Model 5 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates -White

		Coefficients^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	44.230	20.276		2.181	.032
	2006 funding per student	-.002	.001	-.230	-2.202	.031
	Voter_Turnout_Percentage_2006	36.379	21.665	.176	1.679	.097
	2006 grad rate	.051	.190	.028	.267	.791
	% White	-.180	.062	-.306	-2.906	.005

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Tables 20 and 21-models 4 and 5 for 2006 reflect not much change from previous years except for the fact that voter turnout percentage is a marginally significant factor in the positive direction when looking at higher property tax rates.

Table 22: 2007 Model 1 - Dependent Variable % Black

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.270	37.098		.789	.433
	2007 grad rate	-.373	.341	-.118	-1.092	.278
	2007 funding per student	.003	.002	.193	1.761	.082
	Property tax rates	.573	.190	.333	3.016	.003

a. Dependent Variable: % Black

Table 23: 2007 Model 2 - Dependent Variable % White

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	67.147	36.629		1.833	.071
	2007 grad rate	.393	.337	.126	1.166	.247
	2007 funding per student	-.003	.002	-.201	-1.829	.071
	Property tax rates	-.546	.188	-.321	-2.913	.005

a. Dependent Variable: % White

Table 24: 2007 Model 3 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	129.093	18.295		7.056	.000
	2007 grad rate	-.243	.170	-.133	-1.430	.157
	2007 funding per student	-.002	.001	-.217	-2.355	.021
	% high school	-.860	.154	-.514	-5.587	.000

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Table 25: 2007 Model 4 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates - Black

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	127.270	18.610		6.839	.000
	2007 grad rate	-.229	.172	-.125	-1.329	.188
	2007 funding per student	-.002	.001	-.228	-2.419	.018
	% high school	-.807	.177	-.483	-4.551	.000
	% White	-.039	.063	-.066	-.611	.543

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

Table 26: 2007 Model 5 - Dependent Variable % Property Tax Rates -White

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	123.042	20.605		5.971	.000
2007 grad rate	-.229	.172	-.125	-1.331	.187
2007 funding per student	-.002	.001	-.228	-2.425	.018
% high school	-.802	.179	-.480	-4.481	.000
% Black	.041	.063	.070	.647	.519

a. Dependent Variable: property tax rates

For the year 2007 there does not seem to be any significant variations from previous years with graduation rates not being significant in Tables 22,23,24,25,26 – models 1,2,3,4,5 listed above. Property tax rates still tend to be lower in white counties than black counties and Blacks still have significantly lower graduation rates.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As noted in the results, Blacks while having a higher distrust in public officials also tend to believe the communities they live in are less stable but have stronger support for social programs such as education and healthcare. Also Blacks tend to support Affirmative Action at higher levels than Whites. The legacy of cotton in Mississippi cannot be explained by Elazar's (1984) belief in a paternalistic pattern. This is due to the fact that Whites do not tend to have paternalistic tendencies and Blacks tend to not be as trusting of White officials in government. However, the traditionalist view of Elazar (1972) does seem to have merit through the maintenance of the status quo. Also, it seems that the conservative attitude of Whites within Mississippi has led to a creation of distrust among Black citizens.

This paper finds no support for the first research question in this study. Actually, this study finds directly the opposite of research question one i.e. low property tax rates seem to be greater in majority White counties than majority Black counties. There could be several reasons for this. There could be greater variability in White counties on the property tax rates with there being a few rich White county school systems and a large amount of very poor White county school systems. Also this analysis does not include real estate values, which may be higher in White communities

so that less property tax may be required. This analysis did include funding rates and found lower funding per student in White counties than Black counties, which does lend to a conclusion that low property tax rates have a more negative effect on school funding for White counties than Black counties. Once again, this research could not explain variations within counties and between school systems within counties. So this rejection of research question 1 could be the fact that we need more detailed data at the local level and not just the county level. Also since we are using county school systems our data is more focused on rural outcomes rather than urban outcomes.

For research question 2 there is strong support for all years listed in the study. Blacks tend to have lower graduation rates than Whites. While it can be concluded that property tax rates do have some affect on dropout rates there seems to be other factors omitted from this study that may further explain dropout rates. These could include poverty rates, single parent households, and educational background of parents. This should be an area for further research because the details are unclear as to the causes of low graduation rates among Blacks in this study.

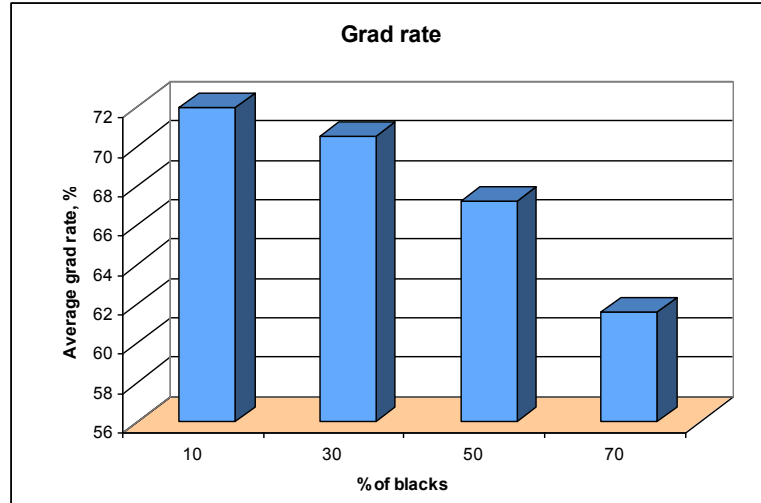


Figure 7: Average graduation rate - % of Blacks between counties.

National Center for Education Statistics <http://nces.ed.gov/>

To determine the cause of this difference in grad rate, research into the structure and levels of educational institutions and traditions, including percentage of high schools in counties, may warrant further study (Figure 8).

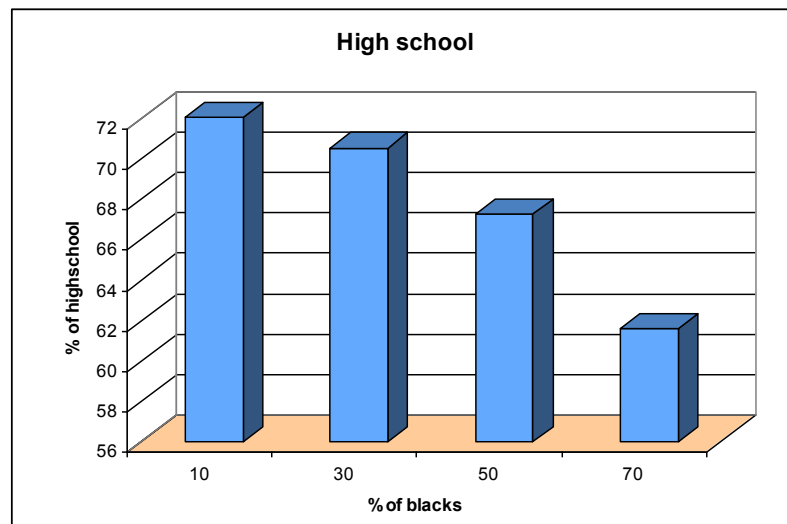


Figure 8: Percentage of Blacks in county high schools

National Center for Education Statistics <http://nces.ed.gov/>

Growing grad rate in counties with White population is small due to high educational level among White population. Taking into account this factor we can conclude that a balanced population of White and Black citizens positively influences the growing of the grad rate. In Figure 9 it can be seen that grad rates increase relatively faster in counties with a mixed population (50%).

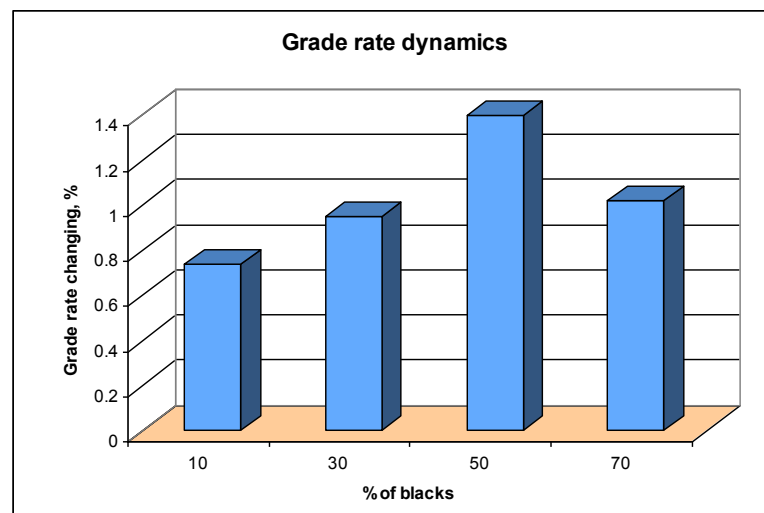


Figure 9: Graduation rate dynamics - % of Blacks

National Center for Education Statistics <http://nces.ed.gov/>

Research questions 3 and 4 seem to have strong support for most years in the study. The study shows that property tax rates for all the years of the study seem to have a significant effect on voter participation. With counties with higher property tax rates having higher rates of voter participation. Research question 5 seems to have mixed support with regard to funding of county school systems and voting participation and needs further clarification through more studies before a definitive conclusion can be reached.

The significance of this study is in the fact that social capital disadvantages seem to be a problem within the White community, as well as the Black community. However, problems with property tax rates/school funding seem to be more pronounced in majority White counties. With limitations of this study noted above it is hard to come to any definitive conclusions on these processes but this research does make note that further study of this is needed. Also this research notes that the importance of political capital should not be diminished. The higher the voter participation rates in counties, the higher the property taxes and graduation rates. Further study should also be conducted on the rural urban divide in Mississippi as it relates to school dropout rates, school funding, and property tax rates to see if there are socialspatial considerations that should be considered with regards to cumulative disadvantages of the citizens of Mississippi.

The legacy of cotton is alive and well in the state of Mississippi. Through the maintenance of low livability standards built on the foundation of a plantation economic model and its preservation through years of a conservative political culture the legacy has become a liability not only to Blacks but to Whites in Mississippi. The plantation economic model which maintained a de facto caste system at the expense of Blacks and poor Whites has produced a model that is now insufficient for the new globalized age of the 21st century.

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