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**THE EFFECTS OF A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD ETHNICITY ON
VOTING**

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THE EFFECTS OF A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD ETHNICITY ON VOTING

By

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ABSTRACT

During most of the 20th century, immigration to the United States had slowed considerably. When the United States changed to the immigration policy of family reunification in 1965, the source of immigrants shifted from Europe to South America, Central America, and Asia. With this change, the nation became increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. With increased pluralism, the number of intergroup contacts increased. In a society whose history of race relations has been complicated and often unpleasant, this paper begins an on-going examination as to how the majority group, Whites, responded politically to increased pluralism. Racial threat theory explains how Whites used party shifting and voter turnout to respond politically towards ethnic changes in the traditionally White neighborhoods.

Dissertation Advisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Braunstein', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Richard Braunstein

Table of Contents

Committee Signatures.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
List of Tables	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Problem Statement.....	1
Literature Review.....	4
The Neighborhood.....	7
Sorting.....	9
Ethnicity & Race	10
Socioeconomics.....	13
Self-Selection	18
Information Sharing, Social Networks, and Contact.....	19
The Neighborhood Effect:.....	26
Part Three:.....	32
Intergroup Contact Theories.....	32
Anxiety	34
Racial Threat Theory (Conflict Theory)	38
Intergroup Contact Theory	42
Constrict Theory.....	47
Contact Theory	49
Geography and Contact Theory	50
Theory	51
Party Switching	55
Voting Turnout.....	55
Data and Methods	56
Voting Rolls	57
U.S. Census	59
The Study Areas	61
68105	64
68107	66

68108	69
Research Results	73
Party Switching	74
Voter Turnout	82
Voter Turnout	83
Republican Voter Turnout	83
Democrat Voter Turnout	86
Other Voter Turnout	88
Conclusion	89
References	97

List of Tables

Table 1	59
Table 2	611

List of Figures

Figure 1.U.S. population trends by racial and ethnic group, 1960 – 2010	1
Figure 2.Quality contacts variables.....	21
Figure 3. Acclimation curvilinear relationship and group bias tipping point.....	26
Figure 4.Intergroup Contact Theory Model.....	34
Figure 5.Contact model.....	54
Figure 6.The ethnic transition for zip code 68105, 1990 – 2016.....	65
Figure 7.Zip code area 68105	66
Figure 8.Zip code area 68107	68
Figure 9.The ethnic transition for zip code 68107, 1990 – 2016.....	69
Figure 10.Map of zip code area 68108	70
Figure 11.The ethnic transition for zip code 68108, 1990 – 2016.....	71
Figure 12.Party shifts in zip code area West Omaha (68022)	74
Figure 13.Total shifts in zip code area West Omaha (68022)	75
Figure 14.Party shifts in zip code area 68111	76
Figure 15.Total shifts in zip code area 68022.....	76
Figure 16.Party shifts in zip code area 68105.....	78
Figure 17.Party shifts in zip code area 68107.....	79
Figure 18.Population trends in 68107.....	80
Figure 19.Party shifts in zip code area 68108.....	81
Figure 20.Party Switching by zip code, by election. Dotted lines depict control groups.	82
Figure 21.Republican turnout by zip code by election cycle, 1998 – 2016. Dotted lines depict North Omaha and South Omaha control groups.....	84
Figure 22.68005 demographic changes, 1990 – 2016	86
Figure 23.Democrat turnout by zip code, by election cycle, 1998 – 2016. Dotted lines depict control groups.	87
Figure 24. Other turnout by zip code, by election cycle, 1998 – 2016. Dotted lines depict control groups.....	88

Problem Statement

In an ideal world, racial and ethnic diversity would be viewed as factors that enrich the quality of life in a community. However, for some, diversity can be a source of threat and anxiety (Hero, 2007). Toward the end of the 20th Century, the nation's demographic mix began to change. During this time the population of Whites and African Americans began to shrink while the number of Hispanics and Asian Americans increased. These changes moved the nation toward a more racially and ethnically diverse population. With these changes in demographics, the contacts and relationships between individuals and groups became more complex. And as will be discussed, change causes anxiety.

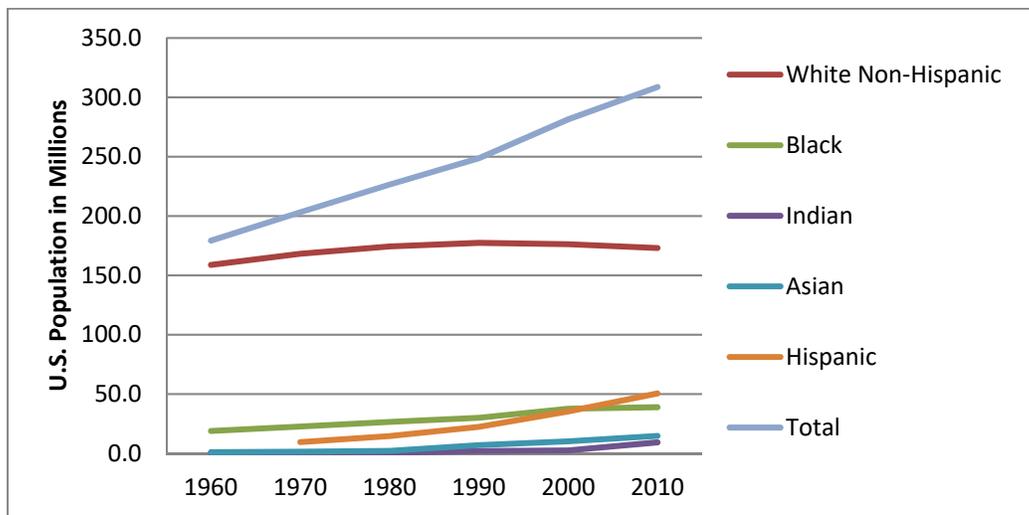


Figure 1. U.S. population trends by racial and ethnic group, 1960 – 2010

American society has struggled to deal with issues of race and ethnicity. Although immigration is an on-going factor of American society, the nation has been slow to accept 'the outsider.' Whether along religious, ethnic, racial, or social economic status, the schism between in-group and out-group members often unveiled a paradox between the pursuit of equality & equal rights, and societal attitudes of racism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia. An aspect of this

racial and ethnic struggle is the efforts by some to maintain access to political power and the benefits of government. This research will examine how increased racial and ethnic pluralism at the neighborhood level affects voting behaviors by White Americans. An underpinning of that question is that as the racial and ethnic demographic mix in the USA continues to evolve, how will these changes affect existing political power dynamics?

The demographic composition of the United States is affected by immigration and refugee policies. Although the race or ethnicity of the stigmatized groups has changed over time, the rhetoric of immigration, including the concerns, and responses towards newcomers has stayed surprisingly the same (Brader, Valentino, & Shuay, 2008). In the early 20th Century, immigration included large numbers of Eastern and Mediterranean Europeans who practiced Roman Catholicism. As demonstrated by the Henry Cabot Lodge's speech on the Senate floor, American society did not accept these immigrants with open arms (Cabot-Lodge, 1896). The contrast between an iconic statue beckoning the tired, the poor, and the huddled masses, against a full stadium chanting, "build a wall" could not be starker. At the same time, many Americans swell with pride when recounting their own family's immigrant story of a relative arriving on these shores with pennies in their pockets and the only the shirt on their back.

Since the mid-19th Century, the demographic composition of American society remained relatively stable until the mid-1960s. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) was passed in 1965. Also known as the Hart-Cellar Act, the INA was named after its sponsors Senators Phillip Hart and Emanuel Cellar. The INA was intended to address discriminatory immigration legislation in place at the time. The former immigration policy was designed to maintain the nation's existing racial and ethnic demographic mix. This policy to maintain the demographic mix was known as The National Origins Formula. Prior to the INA the existing mix was

maintained by issuing visas based upon the immigrant's nation of origin. By limiting who got visas, the nation's immigration policy maintained the existing racial and ethnic mix. When the legislation changed in 1965, the new approach was premised on a policy of family reunification. After the passage of the INA, immigration shifted from the predominately White influx from Europe to immigrants from South America, Central America, and Asia.

Because immigration is an important aspect of American society, Americans are keenly aware of immigrants and refugees. In 2006, 75% of Americans thought immigration was a "moderately big to very big" problem for the country (Massey, 2007). As recently as July 2019, more than one in four Americans described immigration as the "top problem" facing the nation (Jones J. , 2019). For the fourth time since Gallup began polling the question in 2001, immigration was the top concern policy concern for the majority of American voters in 2019.

The willingness and ability to adapt to racial and ethnic change will manifest itself in numerous ways including access to political power and the benefits of government. Where we live, and who we live by, influences individual behavior including voting. Voting is a method by which groups can maintain political power and receive the largess of government. In 1949 V.O. Key noted that voting by Southern Whites was affected by the proximity and density of African Americans in the county. This paper will test Key's racial threat theory in a Midwestern city at the neighborhood level. However, instead of examining the relationship between Whites and African Americans, this study will take a longitudinal examination of how Whites respond politically to the influx of Hispanics. By measuring changes in party switching and voter turnout in specific zip code areas of Omaha, Nebraska, over time, I hope to identify political behaviors by White voters as neighborhood ethnicity changes.

The study and control areas for this study are five zip codes in Omaha, Nebraska. Three of the zip codes have been undergoing ethnic transition to varying degrees. These three study areas have move from a of majority Anglo residents to include a larger number of Hispanic residents. Two of the three areas are currently majority-minority zip code areas. Of the two control areas, one is a White, middle class, predominately Republican suburb. The other control zip code is an urban setting comprised of mostly African Americans Democrats. The information sources used for this study include voter rolls the zip codes areas and data from the U.S. Census including the American Community Surveys.

The reader will note the findings are inconclusive. Predicated behaviors are seen among White voters in both voter turnout and party switching. However, future studies may be designed which more effectively reflect whether the behaviors are in response to changes in the neighborhoods ethnicity.

Literature Review

To effectuate this research, theories that explain the interaction between groups will be examined. Within the field of intergroup contact studies, there are two primary schools of thought. These two schools differ as to whether contact or the lack of contact, between disparate groups elevates or decreases prejudice. In one school, as exemplified in V.O Key's book *Southern Politics* (1949), intergroup contact elevates prejudice. Known as racial threat theory, Key found that Whites responded negatively to large groups of African Americans. The other school, as depicted in Allport's book *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954). Allport found that given time and positive contacts, groups have the ability to get along and reduce prejudice.

After 1965 and the passage of the INA, the racial and ethnic composition of American society began to change. Some areas in the nation experienced this trend before others. A central contention of intergroup contact studies is whether this wave of societal change exacerbates prejudice levels and whether, over time, communities, and the individuals that comprises these cities, are able to acclimate to these changes. Since ethnic and racial change is inevitable, being able to adapt to these trends will become a necessary aspect of American society. Historical precedent suggests that some will continue to exhibit reluctance to share their group's political and societal power.

Social contact occurs within a context. To fully understand the complex dynamics of intergroup contact, it is essential to understand how this context forms, how contact occurs, and how the social network shares information and stimulates positive or negative intergroup relations. There are three sections in this literature review.

Part one examines some of the many shared characteristics that help explain the demographic composition of a neighborhood's residents. While intergroup studies can occur at various levels, such as national, state, or county. This study will examine behavior at the neighborhood level. Of the many possible variables that determine the demographic composition of a neighborhood, the focus of this research is on the process of sorting, ethnicity (McClain, et al., 2006), race (McKee & Springer, 2015), and socioeconomic status (Fan & Stark, 2007). The literature examines other factors, including partisanship (Walks, 2006), education level, gender, age, religion, and occupation (Oliver and Wong, 2003). For this section I will review factors which influence the demographic composition of a neighborhood including sorting, ethnicity & race, socioeconomics, the self-selection process, and the Neighborhood Effect. This section is labeled, Factors.

How the demographic residency of neighborhoods change over time helps to develop an understanding of why racial and ethnic change alters the historical balance of political power. As this research examines, if changes to the demographic composition of a neighborhood affect voting, and therefore voting and political ideological outcomes, the results should demonstrate this effect.

Part two of the literature review examines how residents share information within the neighborhood. This includes a discussion on social networks. Social networks not only share information but, based upon which information is shared or withheld, define the in-group and out-group members of a neighborhood. This section of the literature review is divided into three smaller sub-categories. The first sub-section is self-selection or the reasons individuals use to determine which neighborhood to live in. An individual's pre-existing attitudes can affect the self-selection process. A second sub-section of this part of the literature review is social networks or the process of sharing information and attitudes within the neighborhood. The final sub-section is the process by which those in the neighborhood influence the behaviors of each other. This process is known as the neighborhood effect.

The final section of the literature review is a discussion on the intergroup contact theories. There are numerous theories which explain how group's interact including racial threat theory (Key, 1949), intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), proximity theory (Enos, 2017), social capital thesis (Putnam, 2000), and conflict & constrict theory (Putnam, 2007). The importance of examining contacts is to understand how demographic changes affect individual behavior including voting and party switching. Understanding the mechanics of intergroup contact and the process of sharing information through these contacts shows how race and ethnicity play a role in social networks.

Part One: Factors

The Neighborhood

The results of intergroup contact studies are that the size of the study area affects the research findings (Hewstone, 2015; Oliver & Wong, 2003; Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000). One can examine intergroup relations at numerous levels including international, national, regional, state, and county levels (Key, 1949), at the metropolitan level (Enos, 2017; Firbaugh & Farrell, 2016), at the urban and suburban level (Walks, 2006), Census Tracts (Putnam, 2007), or at the zip code and neighborhood level (Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000; Enos, 2017; McGowan, 2017; Weaver, 2014). Zingher and Thomas found that individual and group behavior is more readily discerned at the neighborhood level (Zingher & Thomas, 2014).

Where we live, who we live by, and how we communicate with them matters. Americans continually sort themselves into residential patterns and neighborhoods. A neighborhood's defining characteristics can include numerous factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, religion, political affiliation, and education. What information is shared and with whom, is affected by the demographic composition of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood boundaries can be defined by things others than geography or zip codes. Depending upon the attribute or characteristic being studied, it affects the boundaries of a study area. This includes things like race, income, or religious affiliation. The findings are more meaningful if they are derived from a smaller geographical area rather than from larger, less personal contexts such as cities, counties, or states (Hewstone, 2015). How a neighborhood is defined affects research results since the neighborhood context influences individual political behavior (Weaver, 2014). Determining the geographic context is a reoccurring concern

whenever scientists attempt to examine and study the influence of residential context of groups or individuals (Weaver, 2014). Weaver suggests that a neighborhood is a casually relevant sphere of influence. Another definition is "a bundle of spatially based attributes associated with clusters of residences" (Galster, 2001). For example, at the neighborhood level, we are more likely to see the humanity and individuality of those being studied more clearly. At the metro level, such out-group members are less known and often perceived as competition for jobs, resources, the largess of government, and political power (Ha, 2010).

Studies in electoral geography examine how the physical space itself influences behavior. In this instance, geography does define or influence the study area. Geographic boundaries such as railroad tracks, lakes & rivers, highways, and Interstates can serve as boundaries and limit the size of study areas (Enos, 2017). The neighborhood study areas for this study are bounded by the Missouri River, two interstates, an upscale redevelopment, the regentrification of a neighborhood, and the downtown Omaha business district. Geographical spaces can also be associated with their reputation. For example, the mental images of Bel-Air (Los Angeles) are significantly different from the connotations associated with North Platte, Nebraska. Enos posits that space is a mental shortcut by which people identify and organize their world and, thus, frame their thoughts, references, and stereotypes of the area. Mental boundaries are established and reinforce bias or prejudices and, consequently, influence individual behaviors.

A challenge to researching neighborhood influences is matching available data to human behavior. Individual connotation of an area influences perceptions and behavior (Enos, 2017). An individual uniquely identifies their neighborhood and the associated sphere of influence, which may or may not align with the physical space. Associations coupled with a neighborhood, such as level of racial segregation, the groups, and sizes of groups or density within the space

and its proximity to neighboring areas, influence how the space is perceived. However, available data is often defined by the physical space and boundaries that exist within it, including state and county lines, city limits, districts, zip codes, PUMA districts, and city blocks. These influences become apparent in the research as we examine a specific study zip code area.

To some degree, proximity does not guarantee interaction or contact. A single person might occupy several residential geographic spaces of influence simultaneously (Weaver, 2014). Thus neighborhoods are often defined by the data that is available to study them. Assumptions of contacts can lead to spurious associations and false negatives in the results.

Sorting

Where we live and who we live by does not occur by happenstance (Bishop, 2008). As the nation becomes increasingly pluralistic, more are finding themselves living in neighborhoods that reflect, to some degree, the nation's demographic changes. Studying neighborhood formation occurs in several academic fields. This process is known as sorting (Bishop, 2008). These studies examine the web of relationships among neighbors and how information is shared. Numerous characteristics conjoin to define a neighborhood. Among the characteristics around which residential clustering occurs can include age, political affiliation (Walks, 2006), religion, education, or sexual orientation (Bruch, 2014). The focus of sorting research tends to be sorting along ethnic and racial lines as well as along socioeconomic lines. The findings are that while there continues to be segregation, American neighborhoods are increasingly integrating and reflecting the nation's growing racial and ethnic diversity. Between 1980 and 2010, American neighborhoods are increasingly becoming more alike in terms of median income and neighborhood poverty levels (Firbaugh & Farrell, 2016).

At the same time, Americans have become sufficiently secure to begin choosing their neighborhood so as to reflect their values, tastes, and beliefs (Bishop, 2008). This sorting process highlights a “desire to shape and control our identities and surroundings.” Increasingly, a sufficient number of Americans are self-sorting themselves into communities that, from their perspective, allow them to avoid living next to neighbors that might force them to alter their tastes or principles. Bishop refers to this as, “an unconscious decision to cluster into communities of like-mindedness” which can amplify attitudes and exaggerated societal divisions. Like Bishop, Crowder finds that increasingly Whites and Blacks are choosing same race neighborhoods (Crowder, Pais, & South, Neighborhood Diversity, Metropolitan Constraints, and Household Migration, 2012). This like-minded clustering is sharpening societal divisions and inhibiting the development of social capital.

Ethnicity & Race

As it pertains to this research, ethnicity is an important variable. This research will discuss four demographic groups including non-Hispanic Whites or Anglos, Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asian Americans. Admittedly, this is an overly general model that omits numerous groups and ethnicities, including the glaring omission of those who identify as mixed-race or mixed-ethnicity. However, for the sake of simplicity, these are the racial and ethnic groups focused on in this research. At the turn of the 20th Century, 86% of immigrants were European (Ramakrishnan, 2005).

An aspect of this factor is how Whites respond to the influx of Hispanic residents into the study areas. The two apparent responses are to either move away from the neighborhood or to stay put. Current research indicates that a number of Whites and Blacks prefer same-race neighborhoods (McGowan, 2017; Crowder, et al, 2012; Bishop, 2008). The preference for same-

race neighborhoods is not indicative of all Whites and Blacks. The number of mixed race or mixed ethnicity neighborhoods in the United States has been increasing (Crowder, et al, 2012). However, when the decision to move is made, frequently, Whites and Blacks will choose to ‘out-migrated’ to same-race, or neighborhood that are predominately shared-race areas (Crowder, Pais, & South, Neighborhood Diversity, Metropolitan Constraints, and Household Migration, 2012).

When Whites move, this is known as White flight. White flight suggests that Whites have chosen to ‘out-migrate’ from a neighborhood because they no longer want to live in an ethnically or racially mixed area (Crowder & South, 2008). As has been seen in metropolitan areas, White flight can occur not only when mixing is happening in the resident’s immediate neighborhood but also in an adjoining or ‘extra-local’ neighborhood. While a resident may have an aversion to living in proximity to those of another race or ethnicity, Kaufmann notes that such an “aversion” could actually be a preference for one’s own in-group (Kaufmann, White Shift: Populism, Immigration, and the Future of White Majorities, 2019).

This study researches how changing neighborhood demographics and increased diversity affects the political behaviors of White voters. Due to long distance migration and ethnic transformation, Kauffman argues that the world is experiencing its third demographic transition (Kauffmann, 2018). The author speculates that by 2150, seventy-five percent of British citizens will be of mixed race origins. And while greater diversity is inevitable, for some this diversity represents a threat to political power. Recent research finds that a 7.7 point shift of White voters towards the GOP is in response to these ethnic changes (Zingher, 2018).

While diversity is imminent, it is not necessarily an easy transition. Early man learned that forming groups increased his chances of survival. Groups also developed shared norms and values which, when violated, could result in punishment and even banishment. It was through communal collaboration that mankind developed its values and shared sense of morality (Tomasello, 2018). Man also learned to view the outsider as a threat. This potential for conflict with members of the out-group led to social tensions that ranged from subtle slights to war and armed conflict. Historically, diversity through ethnic change is, “the main factor” in the contemporary growth of right-wing populism (Kaufmann, 2019).

The negative aspects brought on by diversity, at least in the short term, include lower levels of social capital including low trust levels, less volunteering, and reduced civic group membership (Putnam, 2000). Putnam also found that diversity led to lowered political efficacy including inhibiting voter turnout, and reduced citizenship among immigrants. It can also lead to sharper class differentiation, higher infant mortality rates, increased inequality, political underrepresentation, higher incarceration rates, and social cleavages such as lower welfare benefits, less flexibility in work requirements, and stricter application of transfer payment systems (Hero, 2007).

Fleeing one’s neighborhood due to racial or ethnic change is not response unique to Whites. While the number of mixed race neighborhoods in the United States is increasing, there is simultaneous, albeit smaller, movement toward same-race neighborhoods (Pais, South, & Crowder, 2009). For example, while Hispanics are more tolerant of black neighbors, as a demographic group, there is overall little integration among the groups. This can be broken down along further among nation-of-origin Hispanics. For example, according to Pais et al, Cubans are more likely to move than Hispanics of Mexican or Puerto Rican ancestry. In the end, what is

noted is that among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics, for many Americans there is a preference for same-race neighborhoods.

Clearly, diversity can, over time, also present society with numerous positive benefits including higher graduation rates, shared culinary and artistic expression, diverse forms of religion, a wider breadth in research and intellectual pursuits, greater levels of equality, individual civil right & human rights, and, ideally, peaceful coexistence. In his book, *Racial Diversity and Social Capital*, the author argues that behavior as well as “social and political outcomes” can be correlated to the levels of diversity. For example, special interest groups operating in the interests of the “haves” are stronger and more active in high diversity areas.

Socioeconomics

Throughout the body of research, a change in income is a strong predictor of moving (Bruch, 2014; Crowder, Pais, & South, 2012; Pais, South, & Crowder, 2012). Simply, when people can afford to move into a more desirable neighborhood; however they may define that, they often will. More affluent neighborhoods are more desirable because they have greater access to higher quality healthcare, education, and services, including retail and food outlets. Wealthier neighborhoods generally have lower crime, proximity to better-paying jobs, and better connections through social networks (Firbaugh & Farrell, 2016).

With increased pluralism and slowing birthrates among Whites and Blacks, greater residential integration is inevitable. Although economic disparity along racial and ethnic lines continues, the nation has experienced greater economic parity since the mid-to-late 20th Century. This growing economic equality allows an increasing number of those who may have lived in impoverished areas the opportunity to move out of poverty and into more desirable

neighborhoods. In a relatively short time, more than 50% of African-Americans now live in suburban settings as compared to only 4% in 1990 (McGowen, 2017). As a demographic group, the average household income for African Americans has improved. However, the research indicates that economic equality does not necessarily, at least in the short term, produce less prejudice and greater integration. The overriding reality in neighborhood sorting is that non-Hispanic Whites and African-Americans prefer to live in same-race neighborhoods.

There is a well-documented history of formal and informal residential segregation in the United States. Institutional barriers such as "redlining," enforced neighborhood segregation. Redlining is the systematic process by which specific neighborhoods barred home sales to out-group members. The mechanism allowed realtors, banks, and mortgage companies to enforce racial or ethnic segregation to maximize home values, and therefore income opportunities. Neighborhood redlining locked poorer and often minority homebuyers into less desirable neighborhoods. Another cause of segregation is the individual preferences to live in majority same-race or same-ethnicity neighborhoods. An example preference-segregation is the large Muslim enclaves in Detroit or the ethnic Greek communities in Cleveland. And since income and race are closely correlated, often Whites have the economic means to afford more desirable and often suburban homes. However, in some instances, the preference to live in same-race neighborhoods results in wealthier homeowners living in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods.

Since 1980 U.S. Census reporting finds that residential segregation has been declining. Between 1980 and 2010, the number of racially and ethnically mixed neighborhoods has been increasing. Because of increasing household income parity, many Asian Americans live in neighborhoods that are on par with those of Whites. Because of this economic equality, there is greater residential integration among Whites and Asian Americans than there is among Whites

and Blacks or Hispanics. At the same time, more Whites are living in more impoverished neighborhoods, while Blacks have been living in "less poor" neighborhoods (Firbaugh & Farrell, 2016). This narrowing between Blacks and Whites has been "sizeable" and more substantial than the narrowing between Whites and Hispanics.

With the enhanced opportunity afforded by greater economic equality, there are more racially and ethnically mixed neighborhoods than in the past. This process of resorting is complex and constant. Neighborhoods continually evolve. For example, often, as people age, they get married, increase their earning power, and create families. These three demographic characteristics each influence when, how often, and where we move. And, as we will see in this study, there are tipping points where people will re-segregate themselves.

Each year 13.7% of American residents move their homes (Ihrke, 2013). Over one's lifetime, the average American will move 11.8 times. The research shows that most Whites and most Blacks live in predominately same-race neighborhoods. While racial tolerance by Whites is increasing, they tend to rate integrated neighborhoods as less desirable (Crowder, Pais, & South, Neighborhood Diversity, Metropolitan Constraints, and Household Migration, 2012). The likelihood of Whites moving away from a neighborhood goes up as the size of the minority population(s) increases. And although there is greater integration today, there is a tipping point that signals the racial or ethnic transition of the neighborhood.

One tipping point is that separate is not necessarily unequal. In some communities, such as Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Chicago, or Washington D.C., there are a sufficient number of African-Americans to sustain a predominately black middle-class and upper-class neighborhoods. However, in communities where there are a fewer number of African-

Americans, affluent Blacks may not have the option of moving into a same-race, similar income neighborhood. For most, residential segregation means that racial or ethnic groups are spread unevenly across a community. Because of this distribution, the largesse that often comes with living in a desirable neighborhood may not be shared equally across the community or targeting areas where the need is highest. This uneven distribution of benefits contributes to the perpetual economic, educational, and housing disparity between racial and ethnic groups.

Although there is greater economic-earnings parity today than in the past, some affluent African-Americans prefer to live in lower-income but same-race neighborhoods (Bruch, 2014). Others may elect to move into predominately white neighborhoods that more closely reflect their household income bracket. African-Americans living in predominately White and affluent neighborhoods report higher levels of prejudice than do Blacks living in less affluent or predominantly same-race neighborhoods (McGowen, 2017).

There are numerous reasons for the high level of prejudice reported by affluent African-Americans living in more affluent neighborhoods. Since education often leads to higher incomes, Blacks living in suburban areas may have a better understanding of the nation's tumultuous history of race relations. Throughout the research, findings indicate that this "history of hostility...is not lost on the learned" (McGowen, 2017). Legacy shapes current attitudes.

A second reason for reporting elevated levels of racism is the lack of racial affirmation that African Americans receive in suburban neighborhoods. (McGowen, 2017). An aspect of social networks is shared values and affirmation of social status. Blacks living in a predominately White neighborhood did not experience affirmation of their racial identity and often perceived this as a racist or prejudicial attitude. However, according to McGowen, the

ethnic and racial consciousness among Whites was low and was thus not providing the race-based affirmation needs of Blacks. While phrased delicately, Whites are more likely to choose to avoid possible topics that could present uncomfortable confrontations. Suburban ideology is the desire of Whites to conceal racial or ethnic differences by avoiding relationships defined by race or ethnicity (Lacy, 2002). Other terms to describe this "vener of racial tolerance" include a public mask, smokescreen, lumping-it, and moral minimalism.

Such perceptions and interpretations of group behaviors can also be affected by whether an individual is a strong-identifier with a personal characteristic. These characteristics can include race or ethnicity (Perez E. , 2015). While the subject matter of Perez is on political rhetoric, he found that low-identifiers were less likely to use their own ethnic identity to interpret political behaviors. Simply, these 'low identifiers' were less threatened and more trusting when their self-identification placed less emphasis on race and ethnicity. Conversely, high identifiers tend to use their racial or ethnic identity to filter and interpret political and social actions. African Americans living in predominately White neighborhoods can more easily navigate racial complexities by downplaying race, and up-scaling shared qualities such as income, education, or affluence. In a guise known as 'suburban identity,' middle-class Blacks meet with greater success in neighborhood social networks when they use a shared income-class identity, rather than a race identity, to manage neighborhood engagements (Lacy, 2002). The research indicates that how we define ourselves and we present ourselves to the world influences our acceptance, including how we are accepted, how we perceive the motivations of others, and how we behave towards others.

A tipping point when neighborhoods move towards greater integration, and at some point, as the number of minorities rise, Whites begin to move away. This process, known as

White flight, begins the transition of predominately White neighborhoods. A relatively recent phenomenon known as black flight or the moving toward resegregation among African-Americans is also occurring. Black flight is moving from a mixed-race or ethnic neighborhood towards predominately black neighborhoods. Like Whites, Blacks are more frequently moving to reinforce existing residential segregation (Crowder et al., 2012). Today, over 50% of moves by Blacks are to neighborhoods where African-Americans are in the majority. Among Whites, this number is 86.5%. Subsequently, in larger metropolitan areas, Asian Americans and Hispanics are becoming de facto buffers between majority-White neighborhoods and majority African-American neighborhoods (Crowder, Pais, & South, Neighborhood Diversity, Metropolitan Constraints, and Household Migration, 2012).

While segregation certainly has elements of racial and ethnic prejudice, our choices of where we live and with whom we share our social geography not only reflect past behaviors such as racism, but these spaces exacerbate and amplify our attitudes and behaviors (Enos, 2017). Some may choose to live in segregated neighborhoods due to prejudice, but, as I will discuss in the section on social networks, segregation actively causes increased levels of prejudice.

Self-Selection

A Challenge of studies that examine behavior at the neighborhood level is a process known as self-selection. Several factors including self-selection help researchers understand how the demographic composition of a neighborhood along with sorting, a preference for same-race neighborhoods, and socioeconomics.

A challenge of neighborhood contact studies is determining whether current residents chose to stay or whether they were unable to move (Kaufmann & Harris, 2015). One view is that

those who can move do, leaving behind those who are unable to move. A second view, known as self-selection, is that those who remain have learned to acclimate to the new neighbors whose race or ethnicity is different from their own. While there is active disagreement, Kaufmann and Harris residential geocoding over a 20 year study period to determine that tolerance is more likely than self-selection to explain residential mixed neighborhoods.

Generally, suburban areas are Whiter, wealthier, politically conservative, and have a lower population density. Those living in suburban space want more private space and are, generally, less communicative than those living in urban areas. Urban dwellers live in larger cities, are racially and ethnically mixed, often have lower household incomes than those in the suburbs, and are politically more progressive. Residents who choose to live urban areas indicate they want a sense of being a part of the city and the broader, more diverse community.

Sub-Section Two

Information Sharing, Social Networks, and Contact

As has been mentioned repeatedly, individual behavior is influenced by the context. The process of settling a neighborhood is dynamic. Some estimates suggest that on average 14% of heads of households move out of a neighborhood every year (Pais, South, & Crowder, 2009). As a neighborhood sorts, residents tend to settle-in and, eventually, get to know their neighbors. Through these contacts, social networks form where ideas and values are shared and communicated. The importance of social networks to this research is to understand how neighbors influence behaviors and how these contacts communicate ideas, values, and

expectations that ultimately affect behavior, including partisan affiliation, how we vote, who we vote for, and whether or not we vote (Gimpel, Dyck, & Shaw, 2004).

Whether the contact is direct or indirect, residents are influenced by their neighbors (McGowen, 2017; Ryan, 2017). As will be discussed in the examination of proximity or racial threat theory (below), individual behavior is influenced by those in a social network, including when contact is absent (Oliver & Wong, 2003). Understanding neighborhood sorting contributes to an understanding of the dynamics that influence the opinions and actions of the residents, including voting. Shared human characteristics, including race, gender, age, education, and ethnicity, define group membership. Depending upon the situation, how the in-group is defined fluctuates. Shared characteristics have the potential to create stronger ties and thus incur repeated interactions, which result in higher quality and higher quantity contacts.

To understand how intergroup contact affects individual behavior is understanding the nature of the contact. Influential contacts are informal process of gathering and sharing information within a social network. Social networks are interactions that occur between neighbors, co-workers, and other usually casual contacts such as those we might confer with at places of worship, the gym, and at volunteer or sporting activities. These networks filter information intake, affirm beliefs, provide additional information, and formulate norms. Social networks include information of interest to most members in a group, which enhances the information's credibility and contributes to shaping group or political norms (McGowen, 2017). The setting of a social network can shape the attitudes and beliefs of in-group and out-group members. Within a social network, the behavior of some exerts influence on the actions of others in the network. Through a social network, groups can form, and with these groups come expectations and shared behaviors. This process is known as the Neighborhood Effect.

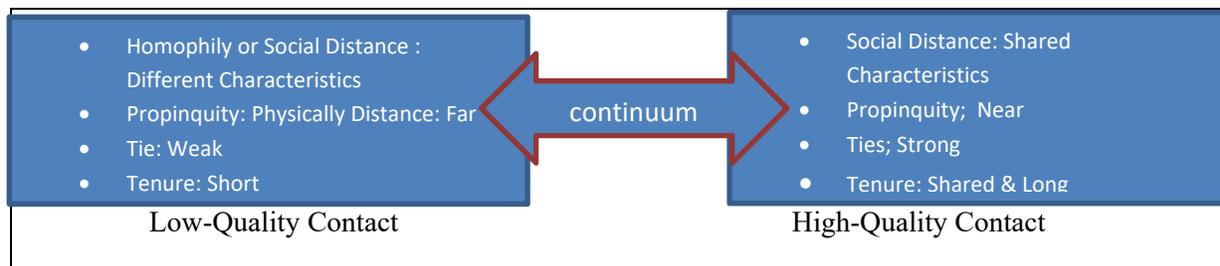


Figure 2. Quality contacts variables

A modern social phenomenon is that an increasing number of Americans are finding themselves living near-by neighbors who very likely do not share their demographic characteristics. However, generally, urban and suburban neighborhoods, in metropolitan areas, are defined initially by common median home values. Sorting by home values is especially prevalent in desirable neighborhoods. While home values have historically prevented neighborhood integration, because of the marked improvement of socioeconomic status (SES), more than 50% of African Americans now live in the suburbs (McGowen, 2017). This improvement in SES has, as discussed earlier (see *socioeconomics* above), created greater racial integration at the neighborhood level. And while interracial contact is a desirable outcome in integrated neighborhoods, there is some question whether this sort of contact is occurring, at least in the short term.

Homophily is the idea that 'birds of a feather flock together.' The idea is that our strongest ties, or best quality contacts, are with those with whom we have a shared characteristic or common value system (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). As a neighborhood baseline, often, a shared characteristic is wealth. Since social networks are, by nature, informal information sharing among neighbors, the first delineation within the neighborhood social network is often income. Understandably, those who are financially unable to, or choose not to

live in a neighborhood, are excluded from the social network. However, financial means alone do not infer automatic membership in a social network. With the increasing SES of African-Americans, Blacks are increasingly moving into more desirable neighborhoods. In this setting, Blacks are more likely to experience interracial contacts. But for reasons explained earlier, African Americans who live in suburban settings report higher levels of racism.

While wealth is the first factor that eliminates some from a social network, predictably, race also ranks high. As discussed previously, there is an increasing number of mixed-race and ethnic neighborhoods. In our highly pluralistic society, despite the propensity among many Whites and Blacks to seek same-race neighborhoods, there is a reasonable likelihood that city dwellers are increasingly living near neighbors who are of a different race or ethnicity. Nonetheless, proximity does not infer contact. Racial or ethnic differences are usually insufficient to form strong social ties. In 2013, a survey found that 92% of Whites had only same-race members in their social network (Enos, 2017). Among African-Americans, 81% of Blacks had only same-race social networks: among Hispanics, the survey was 66%. According to Enos, these homogenized social networks suggest that, for the most part, interracial contacts occur primarily in informal settings and are casual and, therefore, less frequent. At a time when most Americans do not want to appear overtly prejudiced, we have learned to share mixed-race spaces without interacting. Micro-segregation is when several races share a space, but interactions are limited (Enos, 2017; Spitz, 2015). Micro-segregation can include events or attractions where different races participate but socialize primarily with their same-race groups, thereby, despite physical proximity, maintaining social distance and having sparse interracial contacts.

In a neighborhood, residents are most likely to be in contact with those who are physically closest. Proximity suggests that by nature, interaction occurs with those physically

nearest. Propinquity requires the expenditure of the least energy and effort (Hipp & Perrin, 2009). However, simply because we live next door to someone does not infer we share the social networks salient characteristic. For example, living in a predominately same-race and similar-income neighborhood may not result in high-quality contact. For example, if all the residents are White, then the salient social network characteristic is more likely to be something other than race. Similarly, wealth equity is a powerful influence on neighborhood sorting. However, since neighborhood home values often tend to be somewhat similar, wealth equality salience may be low in the area's social network. In these settings, another characteristic might serve as the basis for contacts, such as occupation, religion, age, special interests, or cultural values and attitudes.

For example, in my neighborhood, young families replace older families to have access to Rockbrook Elementary School, which has a reputation for high academics. This form of sorting creates a sense of transitory residency in the neighborhood. Conversations take place in the street (since there are no sidewalks). And what bonding does occur appears to be primarily men consuming alcohol while admiring lawn implements or pick-up trucks (neither of which interest me very much).

Additional identified factors that either limit or enhance social distance include "life course position." Life-course notes that different households are going through different stages in life. For example, having young children in the home inhibits contact, except with those who also have children near in age (Hipp & Perrin, 2009). Busy parents tend to focus on raising their family and have little bandwidth for other things. However, in the course of raising a family, they will meet other families at a similar life-stage, perhaps at a school function, little league games, outings at the park, Girl Scouts meetings, or religious organizations. People of similar

age, gender, and marital status are also life course characteristics that affect the likelihood and the quality of contact.

The nature of the contact between groups matters. Contacts in a social network can lead to sharing, developing a relationship, and, as it pertains to this research, influence individual and group behaviors. Contacts also create opportunities to realize social advancement as well as to reinforce social groups and survival. The research discusses two forms of contact. The first is ties or quality.

There are either strong ties or weak ties. Homophily tends to help individuals form strong ties with those who are alike, identifying, and sharing a similar characteristic. Putnam uses the term 'bonding' in lieu of strong ties. As discussed in the section on Ethnicity & Race, bonding is a social network connection among like-minded people. Shared or common characteristics are the foundation for a bonded connection. This contact reinforces group membership in the network due to the shared characteristic(s) of the homogenous nature of the group. Bonding reinforces exclusivity. Bonding is a survival mechanism that allowed groups to withstand external threats and work together to overcome challenges. However, its nature of exclusivity excluded others, which, in an increasingly pluralistic society, can be counterproductive.

The other forms of contact ties are bridging contacts. This form of contact is a weak tie social network connection between those who do not necessarily have a shared characteristic. It is the sort of outward-looking connection that typified the relationships among the diversity of actors in the civil rights movement (Knudsen, Florida, & Rousseau, 2007). Those engaged in bridging come from different groups. This dissimilarity allows the connection to introduce and share among the group's different ideas and connections. For example, the insularity of like-

minded groups limits the likelihood of new ideas circulating into the group's discussions. The possible dangers of bonding are echo chambers and groupthink, which have, over history, proven to be potentially destructive forces in society. Within an echo chamber, ideas become increasingly radical and far-fetched.

The second form of contact is the quantity of contacts within a social network. As the title suggests, repeated contacts create familiarity. However, simple familiarity does not necessarily lead to a tie or relationship. Due to segregation, and the exclusive nature of social networks, it would be wrong to assume that integration increases interpersonal contact across groups, or that such contacts reduce prejudice (Enos, 2017). He argues that behaviors and attitudes "cannot be shaped by an extended relationship with members of another group because such relationships simply do not exist." Interracial contacts do occur, and, as has been discussed already, American neighborhoods increasingly reflect this pluralism. And, central to this research, contact or the sort of non-contact discussed in proximity theory (below) demonstrates that behaviors are influenced by those around us even though they may not be active in our social network. In a rather nuanced argument, for several reasons, the size of the out-group is a crucial dimension to behavioral influence. Smaller groups are more comfortable to ignore, whereas larger groups or growing groups are more noticeable.

When a neighborhood becomes increasingly pluralistic, current residents may move away, "hunker down" and avoid contact or acclimate to the change by reforming social networks to be more inclusive (Putnam, 2007). The research indicates that a curvilinear relationship exists between the increasing proportion of out-group members in a neighborhood, the likelihood of an increased quantity of contacts, and group-bias (Enos, 2017). Over time, as the number of out-group member's increases, intergroup contacts will also increase. Eventually, as the number of

out-group member's increases, there is a tipping point, and social networks reform and become more inclusive. This process of acclimating is due, at least in part, to the quantity of contacts. According to the research, the specific tipping point varies between 30% (Bruch, 2014) and 40% (Enos, 2017).

In the long term, people acclimate to demographic changes. As depicted in figure 14 (below), over the long term, the out-group population grows, and inter-group contacts increase. As the number of members in an 'out-group' increases, contacts with out-group members inevitably becomes more common. Due to an increased number of intergroup contacts, residents eventually go past the tipping point. Through these repeated out-group contacts, residents become familiar with members of the out-group. This first-hand knowledge, negative stereotypes get replaced with more accurate information. Eventually negative stereotypes are replaced with positive, first-hand experiences. With experience, fear of the unknown is replaced with knowledge causing anxiety or negative attitudes to go down.

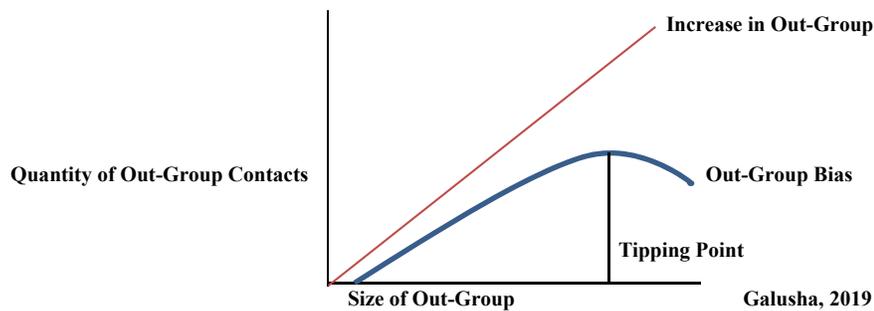


Figure 3. Acclimation curvilinear relationship and group bias tipping point

Sub-Section Three

The Neighborhood Effect:

As neighborhood social networks diversify, an increasing number of Americans, particularly those living in larger cities, are, directly or indirectly, being asked to learn new rules and norms and adhere to new expectations for appropriate engagement. Whether they are urban, suburban, or rural, interactions with our neighbors help define our perceptions of the society we live in and, for many, influence how we see our role in society. This influence is known as the neighborhood effect. It is by examining this highly complex network of neighborhood interactions that leads to a better understanding of human political behavior at the neighborhood level.

The neighborhood effect finds that residents respond to their neighbor's behaviors, including pressure, overt or more subtle, to adapt to, or not, change. This effect is the result of contacts and interactions within social networks. As discussed above, the social network is an informal method of communication within a neighborhood. Neighborhoods are chosen based upon shared characteristics. Larger communities provide a wider variety of neighborhood choices. Smaller communities may not have a variety of neighborhood types that larger cities have. The buyer's perception of current residents in a neighborhood affects their choice of where to live. It is a process of self-selection. However, even within a residential area, some characteristics are shared while other characteristics divide.

Residents participate in a network because it provides information, a sense of community, group membership, affirmation, and self-identification. Within this network, neighbors share information as well as establish norms and expectations, sort through issues and concerns, expectations, define the rules of group membership, and defend or legitimize the group to outsiders. People want to avoid conflict in their neighborhoods. They do this by 'going along to get along.' This behavior is often in the form of emulating majority norms and behaviors

(Weaver, 2014). For example, when my family moved into our current neighborhood, lawn care and maintenance was a high priority among the current residents. Most of the neighbors used a powered edger to create a sharp, crisp line between their lawn and the curb. (You may recall there are no sidewalks). This normative expectation came to my attention when a neighbor casually mentioned to me that she used to borrow the lawn edger of our home's previous resident. In the most subtle and appropriate fashion, her point was well made and received. By Father's Day, that year, the journey towards joining the ranks of becoming a good neighbor began. It was by noticing the environmental context of the neighborhood that I was able to pick-up on and learn the expectations of the social network. These lessons are true from lawn care to politics.

The most applicable example of the Neighborhood Effect for this research is on voting behaviors. The neighborhood effect influences voting patterns (Weaver, 2014; Hero, 2007; Pattie & Johnston, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Simply, “people who talk together vote together.” Studies indicate that political actions, including registering to vote, whether we vote, and who we vote for, can be affected by where we live and the social interactions that occur within the residential sphere (Gimpel, Dyck, & Shaw, 2004).

One of the information sharing attributes of a social network is it provides political information to in-group members. An argument for not voting is that the act of voting incurs the cost of information gathering (Downs, 1957). For many voters, this cost is too high to justify the time and energy required. For these eligible voters, these higher costs justify not voting, especially in primary and local elections. However, other voters reduce the costs of information gathering by relying upon short cuts. Information obtained by short cuts includes those from social networks, mass media, political rhetoric, and partisan cues (Enos, 2017). An aspect of this

reliance on short cuts is that voters who lack information are overly susceptible to misinformation, or suffer from a lack of policy specifics. Traditional voting theory suggested that voters were rational and aligned their voting and party affiliation to maximize personal benefits (Downs, 1957). Modern voting research suggests this approach, which motivated voters to make informed decisions, is probably overly optimistic.

A by-product of group membership is an enhanced salience between "us" and "them." It is through these short cuts that social networks can influence voting behaviors. As members of a social network, we receive affirmation or reinforcement of our social identity. Enos refers to this as "groupishness." Another term might be tribal membership or tribalism. Through this awareness, there is a tendency to homogenize the characteristics of in-group's members. At the same time, the differences between the in-group and the out-group tend to be exaggerated. This heightened sense of difference can artificially elevate anxiety and a sense of threat. By maximizing group differences, in-group members view their group, and therefore themselves, as better than members of the out-group.

Even those who, for one reason or another, do not participate in the social network can discern their neighborhoods norms and expectations (Gimpel, Dyck, & Shaw, 2004). This form of intuitive knowledge provides cross-pressure for conformity. Those in the political minority or at least perceive themselves to be, are sensitive to their status. Often this means their opinions differ from those in the majority (McClung, 2006). Consequently, this knowledge tends to moderate political disagreements in the neighborhood's social network since most prefer to avoid uncomfortable confrontations (McClung, 2006; Oliver & Mendelson, 2000). A result of this desire to avoid cognitive dissonance is that informal pressure to comply can cause those in the political minority to not vote. There are numerous reasons for this, including a sense that one's

vote doesn't matter, or because the social network does not provide voting information. Another reason is that neighborhood political outreach efforts often target voters who likely represent the opinion of those in the majority. Due to the time, energy, or expense, political parties focus on contacting voters in high results areas and may overlook voters in less dense partisan neighborhoods. The research finds that historically Republicans are more likely to vote than Democrats (Gimpel, et al, 2004). However, there is an increased likelihood that a Republican living among a throng of Democrat voters will not vote. Conversely, under a similar circumstance, despite being outnumbered, Democrats are more likely to votes.

In separate findings, suburban African-Americans living in a predominately White neighborhood often find themselves in the political minority (McGowen, 2017). African-Americans tend to be Democrats while White, middle-class Republicans tend to be the majority voters in the suburbs (Walks, 2006). As such, it is less likely that neighborhood social network will include African Americans in discussions on racial or political issues. Because those in the majority elect officials, representatives from suburban areas may take positions that differ politically from the interests of African-Americans. As discussed above, this absence of shared political views contributes to heightened impressions of increased racism among African-Americans who live in in suburban settings. Many suburban African-Americans will seek co-ethnic social networks outside of their immediate neighborhood (McGowan, 2017). A search for attitude affirmation often requires Blacks to travel from the suburbs to inner-cities. While these inner-city networks tend to reinforce racial identity, suburban Blacks tend to have a higher SES than inner-city Blacks. This means suburban African Americans can find themselves alienated from these substitute social networks due to differences in SES. Simply, affluent Blacks may find that while inner-city social networks share their interests in racial and political concerns,

these networks may not share their SES interests. This phenomenon adds further complications to the already complicated lives that many African-Americans living in an integrated neighborhood may experience.

People self-select where they live by moving into or away from neighborhoods for a variety of reasons, including race, economics, and other characteristics. Some moves result in greater in-group segregation by living near those with whom there is a shared characteristic. This creates neighborhood homogeneity. Other moves result in moving to live among those with whom there are fewer shared characteristics. Moving among, or remaining among out-group members enhances the level of neighborhood integration, creating neighborhood heterogeneity.

As it pertains to this research, where we live affects whether we have contact with other racial or ethnic out-group members. It also affects the nature, quality, and quantity, of the intergroup contact. As society becomes increasingly pluralistic, racial or ethnic intergroup contacts are increasing. It is becoming more challenging to avoid interracial or interethnic contacts, although, in rural areas, avoidance or the lack of contact is more likely than in metropolitan areas. Within metropolitan areas, intergroup contacts are more likely in the inner-city areas than in the suburbs.

To summarize the factors discussed, as residents settle into a neighborhood, they get to know and communicate with their neighbors. Neighbors are more likely to engage those who are physically nearer. However, the strength of these propitious contacts, weak or strong, depends upon whether that neighbor has a shared characteristic (homophily) or not. When there is a strong connection among those with a shared characteristic, this is known as bonding. Through these contacts, the neighbors shared values, information, and define expectations and norms.

This social network includes or excludes participation based upon the nature of the contact between the neighbors. The nature of the information that is shared also affects the social network. Through the social network, neighbors define themselves into the group and begin to alter their behaviors and attitudes to fit in as a good neighbor or group member. As a member of good standing, a division made between "us" (in-group members) and "them" (out-group members). The explanations for how the neighborhood social network influences an individual's behaviors are examined in the various derivations of intergroup contact theories discussed below.

Part Three:

Intergroup Contact Theories

Theories which examine the effects of contacts between groups consist of two schools, conflict theories and contact theories. Most interpret these two schools as competing theories (Enos, 2017; Putnam, 2007). V.O. Key's *Southern Politics* (1949) is an early pillar associated with conflict theories. These theories find that intergroup contacts elevate prejudice levels. Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) is the foundation of contact theories. This group of theories find that contact reduce prejudice levels. Recently, research by Enos posits a theory that melds these two schools by suggesting that over time, and in the right context, residents eventually acclimate to demographic changes which results in a reduction of prejudice levels. Each school will be discussed in detail below (Enos, 2017). To fully understand the development of the two theories, and how they have changed over the year, ancillary theories will be examined including racial threat theory, social capital theory, conflict & constrict theories and geography& contact theory.

Subsequent research expanded on these original theories by adding findings that provide more details and insights into how intergroup contact affects individual and group behavior. The study finds that the so-called neighborhood effect influences the behaviors and attitudes of residents. Contact or non-contact proximity can cause these effects. While both schools agree that group proximity affects intergroup and individual behavior, they disagree on whether the effect elevates or reduces prejudice. Contact may be personal or impersonal; it may be informal or formal; it may occur in the office, at a religious institution, school, while shopping at the grocery store, or between homes (DiMartino & Davis, 1980). Or there may be no contact at all (Enos, 2018; Putnam, 2000; Key, 1949). Proximity does not assure social integration (Enos, 2017; Spitz, 2015). For instance, micro-segregation can prevent interracial contact from occurring despite physically sharing space. Micro-segregation is where, despite being in physical proximity to out-groups, members of the two groups do not intermingle. Examples might include a public event or social gathering. Although multiple races may both attend an event or work at the same firm, the choice to be physically separate can prevent contact from occurring. Examples of this behavior are often readily apparent at institutional meals such as at a school or workplace cafeteria. In these settings, diners often form groups with a shared characteristic, including race or ethnicity. As an overview, contact theory applies to contacts between individuals. However, the racial threat theory applies to a lack of contact between groups.

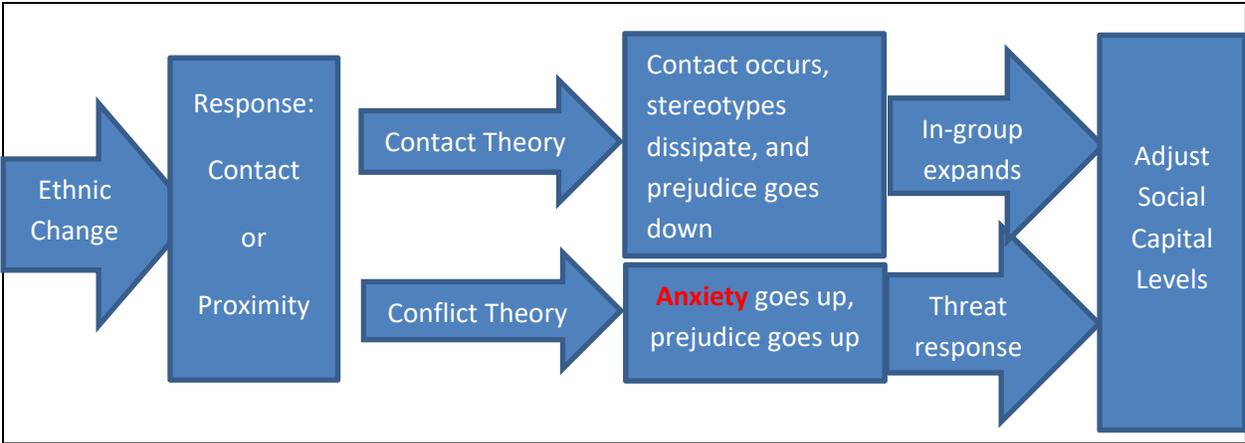


Figure 4. Intergroup Contact Theory Model

Anxiety

Individual and group anxieties play a prominent role in both contact theories and Racial Threat Theory. Whether rational or otherwise, anxiety is a normal response to societal change (Marcus, 2002). The human emotional spectrum is complex and varied. However, a shorthand approach to explaining human emotions is known as The Big Five. Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability are the Big Five emotional categories. Anxiety is an indication of a low level of emotional stability (Mondak, 2012). Anxiety is the emotional state that makes one pause, reconsider their actions, and be open to changing behavior. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Scottish philosopher David Hume noted that a sudden and threatening or violent change provoked an emotional response (Hume, 2019). The reaction to the heightened level of anxiety is shifting one's attention toward the "intrusive stimuli." In a heightened state of anxiety, the individual is susceptible to new ideas and ideological defection, including party switching and split-ticket voting. In this case, the stimuli in question are rapid demographic, racial, or ethnic change. With demographic changes comes an

influx of new values and morals, challenges to existing social norms and expectations, and competing interests.

Depending upon the group, this process of assimilation took time, and many suffered great hardships. During stressful times such as war or economic downturns, these changes elicited hostile or even violent responses. During World War One, the United States was at war with Germany. Before the war, German farmers immigrated to the U.S. and settled in the American Midwest, including Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. In response to elevated uncertainty and anxiety caused by the war, Nebraskan's burned down Lutheran Churches; renamed sauerkraut "freedom cabbage," banned speaking German in public, shuttered German-language newspapers, and even lynched several German immigrants (Norris, 2009).

One model of intergroup anxiety provides a working model from which to understand better how and why anxiety causes individuals to change their behavior (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). The model discusses antecedents to anxiety, intergroup anxiety, and the consequences that anxiety has on individual behaviors.

In this model, antecedents to anxiety include three sets of factors, the history of prior relations between the groups, knowledge of the out-group or intergroup cognitions, and situational factors. Fundamentally, anxiety manifests as fear. This includes the fear of being perceived in negative light or suffering negative consequences, such as physical or psychological pain. Pain avoidance can modify behaviors. The fear of negative consequences can be at the individual or group level. Numerous things can cause anxiety, including negative judgments within or outside of the group. For example, high-status groups and those with power want to avoid negative labels such as racist, ethno centrists, or xenophobic.

Conversely, those whose characteristics place them in a group without power or in low status are afraid of being victimized. Membership in a desirable group is potentially jeopardized by behaviors that reflect negatively upon the group or detract from its prestige. The quantity and quality of contacts can also influence group interactions. For example, if the history of past interactions has been positive, then anxiety is lower. If intergroup behaviors have normalized, anxiety should also lower. On-the-other-hand, if an interaction is formal and, therefore, more likely to be safer since the conditions and expectations of interaction are known, anxiety can also be lower.

A second antecedent to anxiety is one's knowledge level of the out-group. If knowledge levels are high, then one is less susceptible to negative stereotypes or prejudicial attitudes. Rather than being subject to inaccurate schema, greater knowledge about the out-group develops more founded expectations of the pending interaction, and more accurate perceptions of those in the out-group.

A final antecedent is situational factors. These factors include variables such as whether the interaction is highly structured, whether the nature of the interaction is competitive, cooperative, or unknown; the ratio of in-group members to out-group members, and the relative difference in the social status between those engaged in the interaction.

The consequences of an interaction can be either positive or negative. Consequences divide between behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. If anxiety levels are high, normative responses are amplified. The most common response is avoidance. By avoiding contact, anxiety goes down in the short term. A second behavioral consequence is that an elevated level of anxiety will cause normative behaviors to become more rigid and exaggerated. For example, if

the situation calls for politeness, anxiety may cause the individual to become overly polite, stiff, and seemingly superficial. This response is caused by a concern to safeguard against possible negative outcomes. Another anxiety-driven response could be a defense response mechanism such as increased levels of arrogance or use of condescension by members of higher status groups towards those from a lower status group.

The second form of post anxiety consequence is cognitive. These cognitive responses include information-processing biases, motivational biases, and self-awareness. Anxiety influences how one processes their bias. If one focuses on a negative attribute or characteristic of the out-group, they narrow-in their focus on that behavior. With a more narrowed focus, other behaviors, including those that contradict the anticipated negative behavior, may be ignored or minimized. Pettigrew frames this as "the ultimate attribution error" (Pettigrew, 1979). Another aspect of this narrow focus is a false impression of behavioral correlation or that the two traits closely move in covariance.

Another aspect of cognitive consequences is that heightened anxiety causes increased self-esteem concerns, possibly leading to increase ego-enhancing or ego-defensiveness behaviors. In these circumstances, group membership elevates differences between the groups with a resulting attitude of in-group superiority.

The final category is the affective or emotional consequences. If the interaction goes well, despite pre-contact anxiety, it will invoke stronger positive emotions, including joy, relief, or "even love." However, if things go negatively, heightened emotions might be hate, resentment, guilt, or disgust. Anxiety plays an important role in contact theory. It is important to understand how this emotion can warp or bias, otherwise reasonable responses.

Racial Threat Theory (Conflict Theory)

Another theory of intergroup interaction is racial threat theory (RTT). RTT studies how perceived racial threats influence behaviors. Other fields also theorize on racial threat using different monikers, including conflict theory (Putnam, 2000), intergroup threat theory (Stephan, Ybarra & Rios-Morrison, 2016), and power-threat theory (Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000).

An early proponent of this theory was V.O. Key. Key's book, *Southern Politics*, was published in 1949: well before the southern voter registration efforts associated with the Stokely Carmichael and Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. As the title of the book suggests, Key's work focused on politics in the American South. Key's study was conducted late in the Jim Crow era, a time which included active suppression of black voting. The study examines how Whites reacted to area demographics and would vote collectively against candidates whose platform aligned with the interests of area Blacks. White voter turnout was also higher in counties with large black populations, whereas counties with smaller black populations would experience lower White voter turnout (Key, 1949).

In contrast, in counties where African-Americans represented less than 25%, White voter participation rates fell twenty-five points to 51%. In Alabama, voters were more conscious of race and politics. In the seventeen Alabama counties with the highest black populations, White participation rates ranged from was 33% to 50% higher than the state average. Key writes that voters in South Carolina were most likely to elect legislators who were the "most reactionary – and most vocal about White supremacy." As noted earlier, voting is indicative of a desire to continue and protect the established equilibria of racial and economic relations.

Despite on-going efforts to improve access to voting rights and civil rights, more recent studies in Louisiana (Zingher & Thomas, 2014, Giles & Hertz, 1996), and Mississippi (Giles & Hertz, 1994) indicate this behavior continues. Much like the original study, an increase in the out-group population resulted in the elevated mobilization of White voters. The Zingher & Thomas study found that over eight years, White turnout peaked at 23.1% higher than average in a parish (i.e., county), which was 66% black. Interestingly though, at the more granular voting precinct level, Whites living in more diverse settings were less likely to vote than Whites living in proximate, but homogenous voting precincts. This study finds that non-Hispanic Whites, living in homogenous areas located peripherally to more heterogeneous areas, are more reactive to proximity threat, despite the lower levels of intergroup contact. More recent studies find this behavior, out-group hostility, is not limited to the American south (Taylor, 1998).

Racial threat theory is based upon stereotypes. The theory posits that mere proximity, and not necessarily contact, elevates anxiety (Gravelle, 2016; Burbank, 1997). This anxiety heightens negative stereotypes and reduces trust. The lack of interaction lowers the experience and knowledge levels that the in-group has of the out-group. The lack of interaction leads to less accurate perceptions that further reduces trust, heightens prejudice, and raise negative racial attitudes. Once a stereotype is accepted, salience, or awareness of the objectionable behavior or characteristic increases. As anxiety elevates, the behavior is more likely to be singled out and noticed (Campbell, 1967). When the population of the out-group is perceived to be too large, too dense, or the group increases too quickly, the in-group reacts negatively to out-group members (Crowder, Pais & South, 2012; Taylor, 1998). One explanation is that increases in the out-group size elevate awareness or salience of the out-group and thereby stimulate anxiety and competition (Rocha & Espino, 2014).

A threat may be actual or perceived. For some, actual contact is not necessary to elevate anxiety levels and negative responses. Simple proximity can stimulate a response. For example, those living in segregated areas such as the suburbs or rural areas may have racial prejudice despite having minimal contact with members of the out-group. One study found that among those who are susceptible to proximity anxiety, their judgment can distort their perception of reality. The social and physical proximity of an out-group can be perceived as being closer than and thus, more menacing (Xiao, Wohl, & Bavel, 2016). This misperception can contribute to the overestimation of the perceived threat by in-group members. It perceives the threat as being more imposing and stimulates negative behavior.

Media coverage also plays a role in influencing Racial Threat responses. For example, news stories provide cues that elevate the salience of immigrant groups (Brader, Valentino & Shuay, 2008). While events and facts in-and-of-themselves may not cause negative responses, coverage can add context or meaning to events, which raise awareness of the out-group. Media coverage of critical rhetoric towards out-groups can heighten awareness of the group and create a greater awareness of the out-group's size (Hopkins, 2010). Coverage of hostile immigration rhetoric played a heightened role in the Presidential campaigns of Reagan (Massey, 2007) and Trump (Mutz, 2018). Interestingly, Whites living in homogenous neighborhoods are more responsive to the use of negative racial stereotypes in media coverage. In contrast, Whites living in heterogeneous neighborhoods remain mostly unaffected or become derisive of media reports using negative stereotypes (Gilliam, Valentino, & Beckmann, 2002).

Where one lives influences their reception of newscasts regarding racial stereotypes (Gilliam, Valentino, Beckmann, 2014). The attitudes of Whites living in heterogeneous neighborhoods, within proximity of a stereotyped group, tend to be unaffected or even act

against the media's negative stereotype. However, Whites living in homogenous neighborhoods are more likely to endorse policies that were more punitive towards the group being stereotyped. This behavior helps us understand the divergence in political attitudes and voting behaviors of Whites living in more heterogeneous, inner-cities, and Whites living in predominately White suburban and rural settings.

While Key's theory is about race and specifically competition between Whites and Blacks, there is not a blanket effect among all ethnicities. The ethnic composition of groups matters. Not all races share similar cross-group acrimonies. The ethnic composition of the neighborhood is particularly salient when it comes to the formation of attitudes towards immigration policies (Ha, 2010). For example, non-Hispanic Whites are less likely to harbor negative immigration attitudes when living in proximity to Asian Americans than when living in proximity to Hispanics.

Thus, the context of the neighborhood and which groups are in proximity to one another matters. This study focuses on the intergroup contacts between non-Hispanic Whites and Hispanics. Among the Hispanics are those who are American citizens as well as immigrants. Among the immigrants are those who have complied with immigration law as well as those who have not.

Even when there is little to no interaction among their neighbors, the neighborhood effect affects voting (Enos, 2017; Gimpel, Dyck & Shaw, 2004; Baybeck & McClurg, 2004; Putnam, 2000). In one case, the study found, although being influenced by neighbors, that there was "scant evidence" that interpersonal contact was the sole determinate of voting (Burbank, 1997). Despite a lack of personal interaction, residents were able to discern the neighborhood's political

leanings: perhaps by political yard signs, bumper stickers, or comments and conversations. Being in a partisan area, and holding dissimilar political views, can suppress the likelihood of voter turnout (Gimpel, Dyck & Shaw, 2004; McClung, 2006). The research indicates that Republicans are more susceptible to this form of suppression than Democrats. Being at ideological odds with the neighbors, voters want to avoid cognitive dissonance or partisan conflict with neighbors. Either way, a lack of engagement, specifically political engagement, inhibits the voter's acquisition of political information (Burbank. 1997). While the information on candidates for national or statewide races is more accessible, one-to-one sharing of information through interpersonal exchanges is more influential on down-tickets races such as for school boards or utilities. Another explanation for this dampening of voter turnout might be the sense of futility that one's vote will not matter. Finally, political outreach is less likely to occur in areas under a heavy sway of the opposition party. Notably, Get-out-the-vote (GOTV) drives play an increasingly important role in modern election strategies (Fiorina, 2017).

Intergroup Contact Theory

Intergroup contact theory argues that under certain conditions, interpersonal contact between in-group members and out-group members reduces prejudice. Numerous fields of the social sciences, including political science, geography, psychology, and sociology, use intergroup contact theory (ICT). ICT congeals into a theory in Allport's book, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954). Since its initial formulation, extensive research in ICT has occurred, including the work by Stephan & Stephan, Pettigrew & Tropp, and Hewstone & Brown. It is a multifaceted model that attempts to unwind the complexities of human behaviors. ICT includes innumerable exceptions and caveats.

Allport's initial theory focused on prejudice between races and ethnic groups. Since then, this theory has been applied extensively to other groups. In the initial examination, Allport noted that sociologists held that under normal conditions, there are four stages that groups pass through in the development of a relationship. The first of these successive stages is "sheer contact," which leads to competition between the groups. Eventually, the competition gives way to accommodation and, finally, assimilation of the out-group. However, he notes, "this progression is far from being a universal law" (Allport, 1954).

Allport found that four optimal conditions were necessary for the intergroup contact to result in lower levels of prejudice. For contact to reduce prejudice, the parties involved needed to have equal status. It is more likely that positive results come from the contact if both parties perceived themselves to be equals in the relationship. Inequality inhibits contact (Bruch, 2014; Fan & Stark, 2007; Allport, 1954), including economic inequality (Hipp & Perrin, 2007; Fan & Stark, 2007). The social status of the groups involved plays a role in the development of prejudicial attitudes. When parties are not equals, the effect of contact varies depending upon whether one has the majority or minority status. More recent studies find that the effects of intergroup contact are "significantly stronger" for members of the in-group, then they are for those whose membership is minority group status (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). The status of the group within society, or historical experiences of the group, defines their expectations of intergroup contact. Those in higher status roles are concerned about being perceived as prejudiced, while those in lower status groups are concerned about becoming targets of prejudice (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Among those in the out-group, their perceived devalued status can be inhibitive.

The second condition in Allport's original study was the need for the groups to share common goals. Examples that demonstrate the positive effects of shared goals among mixed groups include interracial sports teams and the military. By working together to achieve a shared objective, the competition gives way, and the contact-relationship focuses on creating the desired, shared outcome. By focusing on the accomplishment of the common goal, the groups learn to work in tandem for mutual success. Examples exist where the positive effects of the shared goal do not extend beyond the immediate relationship. Allport cites examples including inter-religious contacts among Irish farmers. When working in the fields, Allport found that Catholics and Protestants formed cooperative relationships. However, in social or family settings, contact levels divide along religious lines.

Allport's third condition is the willingness to participate in intergroup cooperation. The willingness to work together is necessary for the contact to lead to a positive relationship between the groups. Finally, the actions of the groups need to be supported by authority figures, including the legal system of laws and customs. Holdouts by members of the group can undermine the success of the effort. In its initial phase, these four conditions were necessary for intergroup contact to develop into a relationship that moved beyond group prejudice. This model is somewhat intuitive but provides a highly detailed look at intergroup contact.

Allport's original theory was expanded to include the fifth condition. The fifth condition to lowering inter-group prejudices is that that contact has the potential to lead to friendship (Pettigrew T. F., 1998). Friendship suggests the potential for repeated contacts and might include numerous social settings. Pettigrew's meta-analysis of research found that much of the research agreed that contact reduces prejudicial attitudes. Pettigrew's model of intergroup contact theory reformulates Allport's model.

The new model incorporates time as a vital ingredient in contacts that lead to the reduction of prejudice. Step one in the model is a context that facilitates contact. This step assumes all five conditions of contact and includes factors that favor intergroup outcomes, including less negative stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

The initial contact includes anxiety but optimally leads to a general liking without generalizations. This step is decategorization or a willingness to reconsider the out group's status or one's attitude towards them. The second step is an established contact. Through repetition and open-mindedness, this step leads to reduced prejudice and a salient categorization. It is at this stage that in-group members make the mental adjustment of moving the out-group from "them" to "friend." Finally, step four is a unified group or the complete recategorization of the out-group. Ideally, this final step leads to the maximum reduction of prejudice. Pettigrew and Tropp note that within the field of ICT (Intergroup Contact Theory), there are three mediators or explanations of how contact can lead to a reduction in prejudice. The first mediator is by obtaining enhanced knowledge. Through contact, one obtains accurate information and enhanced knowledge of the out-group. This first-hand information provides a more accurate depiction of each other's values and lifestyle. Accurate knowledge replaces errant information. This new understanding or greater salience of the group's characteristics elevate trust and reduces anxiety. Putnam refers to this as social capital.

A second perspective comes from the work of Stephan and Stephan (1985). In the absence of first-hand knowledge, contact induces or elevates anxiety levels. Of the five primary emotional states, anxiety is the emotion that causes one to pause and reconsider their behavior. Anxiety causes us to change our behaviors (Mondak, 2010; Marcus, 2002). Findings indicate that among non-Hispanic Whites, those who experienced repeated contact with out-group members

are less threatened and have reduced levels of anxiety than Whites who have not had similar out-group contact.

The final mediator is the effect that empathy and perspective-taking have on prejudicial attitudes. The findings are that intergroup contact includes "self-expansion processes," which allow the individual to experience empathy for out-group members. Of these three mediators, reducing anxiety, empathy, and perspective-taking are more likely to have a mediating effect on prejudice, whereas knowledge does not have a concomitant reduction in prejudice. Empathy and perspective-taking can lead to behavior change. Often, changes in behaviors lead to a change in attitudes (Pettigrew, 1998).

The findings are that over time, residents acclimated to diversity. In the longer-term, quality or repetitive positive interactions generate positive impressions of the group at large (Ellison, Shin & Leal, 2011; Hood & Morris, 1998; Allport, 1954). Although inferred throughout the literature, I want to place greater emphasis on the role of time. Relationships take time to develop. The possibility of reduced prejudice in the short term is less likely than in the long term. Time allows for acclimation or recalibration of the relationship between the groups.

In addition to allowing sufficient time, the nature of the contact, known as a quality contact, is also a determining factor. The process of lowering prejudice through contact occurs over the long term. Some encounters result in a personal connection, while others are passive experiences. While quantity or frequency bears notice, quality is also essential. Contacts between the groups can also be formal or casual. The contacts can be with an acquaintance, residential, work-related, or situational, such as while shopping for groceries.

There are instances where casual contacts elevate levels of prejudice. If one is predisposed to a prejudicial attitude, they are aware of and sensitive to the behaviors that reinforce their attitude. For example, in a casual contact setting, the prejudicial party might seek out or is more likely to notice a behavior that reinforces their stereotype of the out-group. At the same time, the prejudicial party ignores out-group members not displaying the offending behavior. When there are a large number of out-group members in proximity, the number of casual contacts is higher, and there is a greater likelihood for the offending behavior to be noticed.

In instances of positive contact between individuals, this positive experience may be extended vicariously to other in-group members through a "secondary transfer effect" (Hewstone, 2015; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The STE extends the positive attitude towards a specific member of the out-group to other out-group members. However, the contact participants need to be aware of their group membership and the associational cleavage, or differences (Pettigrew, 1998). In other words, one needs to recognize that the positive experience occurred with a member of an out-group. If the positive experience is associated with an out-group member, STE may extend to others in the out-group. If one is unaware of another's group membership, then the benefits of STE are not extended to other members of the out-group. Unless the contact participants are aware of their differences, they are unlikely to apply the positive association beyond the one-on-one interpersonal contact.

Constrict Theory

Putnam's constrict theory postulates how intergroup contact affects behavior and society. Putnam's landmark book, *Bowling Alone*, examined the national trend of declining social capital.

Putnam lamented the negative effect of the decline in social capital and the resulting negative behaviors caused by an individual's withdrawal from society. When the individual withdraws from society, social capital declines. As social capital goes down, distrust goes up. Consequently, society becomes coarser. This is known as Putnam's Social Capital Thesis.

Conversely, Putnam noted that civic engagement builds social capital and, with it, an increase of societal trust. A definition of social capital is "networks together with shared norms, values, and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups" (Keeley, 2007). Social capital is extending the benefit of the doubt to another. This act lowers distrust and reduces anxiety. As trust builds, and anxiety goes down, intergroup contacts can lead to a reduction in prejudice.

According to Putnam's research, in the short term, contact with out-group members can result in a harsher and less trusting society, including lower social capital. Over time, through repeated contacts, trust between the individuals may be established. Contact can either be a bond with a member of the in-group or a bridge with a member of the out-group. The quality or quantity of contact influences the nature of the contact. Through this trust, which resulted from personal engagement, social capital builds up. In essence, Putnam's original discussion, in *Bowling Alone*, postulates that over time, contact can lead to lower levels of prejudice. However, constrict theory 'splits-the-baby' by adding a flair to conflict theory by finding that as some withdraw, they will develop a distrust towards members of the out-group and in-group.

To elaborate, Putnam's studies examine three possible relationship outcomes when in-group members and out-group members come into contact. Historically, Putnam assumed there was a negative correlation between in-group trust and out-group trust. He noted that, at least in

the short term, immigration and ethnic diversity presented challenges to social solidarity as well as served to inhibit the building of social capital between the groups (Putnam, 2007). However, he also notes the many benefits of intergroup contacts and diversity add to American society over the long term. Putnam presents findings that suggest creativity and economic growth, both locally and internationally, benefit from immigration and diversity.

Contact Theory

Another theory is contact theory. This theory finds that when the diversity between in-group and out-group members erodes the distinctions between the groups, it lowers ethnocentrism and strengthens inter-group bridging. However, when the distinction amplifies the distinctions between the groups and maintains the divide between the groups, this heightens ethnocentrism and fortifies in-group solidarity and in-group bonding. As social capital builds, a secondary transfer effect (STE), or extension of trust to out-group members may develop. As discussed earlier, if the trusting relationship is with someone identified as an out-group member, STE extends this trust to other out-group members. They share the characteristic that initially identified the original out-group member.

Putnam later modifies conflict theory to something labeled constrict theory (Putnam, 2007). This theory posits that this withdrawal from the public sphere is driven by increased isolation from society or what he calls "hunkering down." Constrict theory finds that this decline in trust applied not only to out-group members but spreads to include in-group members as well. Constrict theory finds that as people withdraw, they experience a reduction in social capital. Under this theory, trust goes down not only with out-group members but among those who "hunker down" and reduce engagement with in-group members. Under constrict theory, those

who hunker down experience elevated distrust for in-group members as well as out-group members. The study finds numerous demographic factors that predict a decline in trust. Age matters: Putnam finds that younger people are less trusting than older generations. Race matters: Putnam's findings are that Blacks and Hispanics are less trusting than other racial or ethnic groups. The study also finds that education and homeownership increase individual trust levels. Socioeconomic status also affects trust: those that are poorer are less trusting. And those who live in high crime areas are less trusting. Finally, residents of heterogeneous neighborhoods are less trusting than those living in homogenous neighborhoods.

Geography and Contact Theory

The geographic lens used to study intergroup contact studies affects the results. Group behaviors at the national level may point to behavior that more granular levels, such as at the zip code or PUMA level, are not seen. The research indicates that the smaller the geographic context, over time, it is more likely that positive interactions will take occur (Pettigrew, 1998). Studying neighborhoods provides better results than using larger geographical study areas (Oliver & Wong, 2003). Examining contact at a neighborhood or zip code level, indicate a lowering of prejudice as opposed to more extensive views such as a nation, state, regions, or view, which indicate that intergroup contact elevates prejudicial attitudes.

In a series of studies focused on cities, proximity to the point of contact also influences the findings. The nearer one is to the contact area between the in-group and the out-group, the more likely they are to respond negatively to out-group interests (Enos, 2017). These results echo Key's earlier studies. Those living nearest to the geographical contact point between two relatively homogenous groups voted against the interests of the out-group. However, another

study found that those living in highly diverse or heterogeneous neighborhoods are less likely to report prejudicial attitudes. In contrast, those in more homogenous neighborhoods, such as the suburbs, are more likely to report prejudicial attitudes. For example, in results that contradict Key's findings, Whites living in a highly diverse setting, in this case next to a larger African-American population, were willing to support an African-American candidate whose agenda supported African-American interests (Liu, 2001).

A nation's history and culture can also influence findings. Studies in other nations often find similar results (Lancee & Dronkers, 2011), although the adverse effects of neighborhood diversity appear to be higher in the United States than in other European nations (Hewstone, 2015). Studies of intergroup contact occur in numerous settings including American cities (Enos, 2017), the American South (Mckee & Springer, 2015; Giles & Hertz, 1994; Key, 1946), Canada (Walks, 2006), Germany (Dill, Jirjhn, & Tsertsvadze, 2015), The Netherlands (Lancee & Dronkers, 2011), and Europe (Quillian, 1995).

Theory

The history of intergroup contacts in the United States is rife with conflict, abuse, and mistrust. The research indicates that ethnocentric schism between Whites and Hispanics is less acrimonious. RTT found that Whites used political power, including voting, turnout, and party switching to curtail the interests of Blacks (Key, 1949). Conversely, intergroup contact theory found that over time contacts developed relationships and prejudicial attitudes declined. This study will examine behaviors that might point to whether Midwestern Whites, in the late 20th and early 21st century leveraged political power against Hispanics in a similar manner as was used against Blacks.

Intergroup contact theory suggests that over time, after an initial period of negative responses, social capital, including trust will increase between Whites and Hispanics. Specifically, that the use of political power against the interests of Hispanics should lessen over time. RTT suggests that Whites will continue to use political power to suppress the interests of Hispanics.

In areas where diversification occurred long ago, residents have likely cycled through the various stages of acclimation. To get a view of this process, this study will take a longitudinal look at how Whites responded politically to the influx of Hispanics into select Omaha neighborhoods. The study will use racial threat theory as the lens through which to evaluate this behavior. RTT finds that intergroup contacts elevate anxiety levels. As anxiety goes up, the in-group, in this case White residents in South Omaha, feels threatened by the ethnic and racial changes in their neighborhoods. According to the theory, this perceived threat causes an increase in prejudicial attitudes and negative behaviors towards the out-group members. These negative actions included voting against the interests of the out-group (Putnam, 2000; Key, 1949). While Key's original study focused on the relationship between Whites and Blacks, this study will look at the intergroup contacts of Whites and Hispanics. And while Key's study focused on the behavior of Whites living in rural Alabama in the mid-20th Century, this study will examine the behaviors of Whites living in an urban setting in the American Midwest in the last 20th and early 21st Century.

Although this study uses RTT to view and hypothesize the political behaviors in the study areas, this paper will include references to constrict theory, contact theory, and geography theory. Understanding these theories provides clarity on the discussion and the political behaviors of voters in the study.

To depict how intergroup contact influences behavior, I created a Contact Model (below). This model flows through the processes by which contact or proximity to out-group members can alter behavior. To understand this model, sorting determines who lives in the neighborhood based upon identified characteristics which may include SES, race, politics, or religion. Depending upon the parties involved, the identifying characteristic may or may not be shared. The identifying characteristic determines whether the contact is among the in-group or whether the context is an intergroup contact.

The next step is how contact, or the lack of contact, affects individual attitudes. Intergroup contacts can lead to an increase or decrease in prejudicial attitudes. As discussed earlier, contacts can include bonding or bridging, as well as be based upon homophily or propinquity. These attitudes manifest in the area's social network. Depending upon the nature of the in-group/ out-group relationship, the communication process creates a Neighborhood Effect which then exerts influence on the behaviors of individuals within the area. For the purpose of this study, the examined behaviors are Party Switching and Voter Turnout.

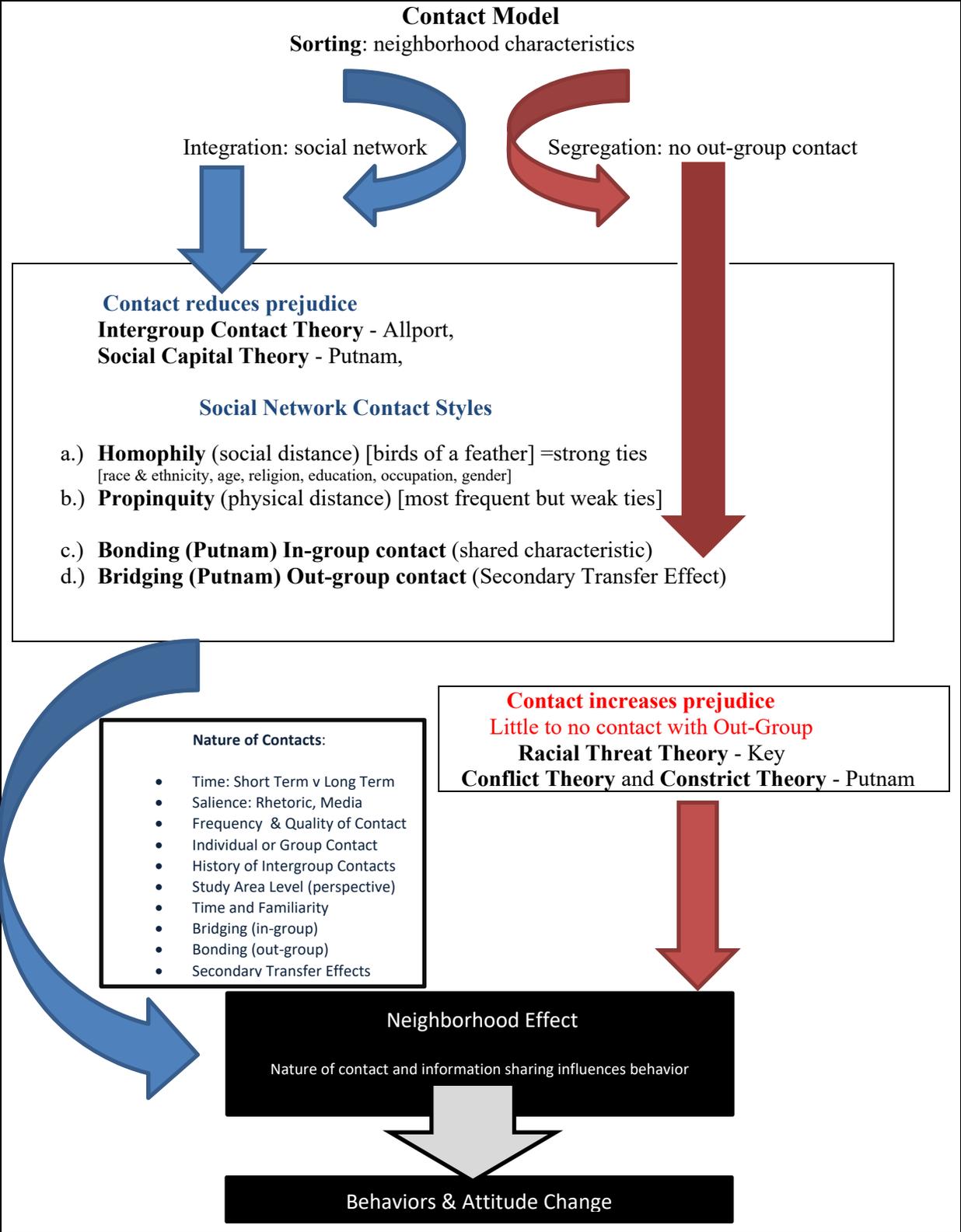


Figure 5. Contact model

Party Switching

Based on Key's observations in his book *Southern Politics*, the hypothesis is that as the number of Hispanics in the study area increased, there would be two responses by White voters. These responses would include a shift among White voters to the Republican Party and higher voter turnouts. As will be demonstrated, the vast majority of those who voted during the study period were non-Hispanics. Among this pool of voters, the number of non-Hispanic White residents was substantially higher than the number of HW/NH residents. For this study, the term party-switching denotes voters who formally changed their political affiliation.

Changing one's political party can be an indication of a shift in political ideology. Known as party-switching, reregistering can also be a strategic move for voters. According to the RTT, party-switching and increased voter turnout is two political responses to demographic changes. If racial threat theory accurately predicts the behavior of majority voters, not only will Whites shift to the GOP, but the percentage of Republican voter turnout will also go up. Specifically, the expectation is that White voters will take a more conservative position by shifting party registration to become members of the Republican Party. To determine if the hypothesis regarding party switching is correct, the voting records for Douglas County, Nebraska, were used. For this portion of the study, the dependent variable is voters changing their party affiliation or switching from one party to another.

Voting Turnout

In his study, Key found that turnout by White voters was higher in a county with a higher percentage of African-Americans than in counties where the percentage of African-American voters was lower. Key formulated that the elevated levels of White voter turnout were a response now known as the foundation for racial threat theory. The independent variable in voter turnout

is the movement of Hispanics moving into the area. The dependent variable is voter turnout in the study area.

If racial threat theory accurately predicts behavior, the percentage of voter turnout for Republicans in the South Omaha zip codes will trend upward as the number Hispanics in the area goes up. As was established earlier, the majority of the voters in the study area are likely to be non-Hispanic Whites. The trend lines in the control group zip codes were assumed not to be reacting to increases in Hispanic residents in other parts of the city. Racial threat theory suggests that Whites voting will increase, especially among Republicans, in response to the increasing number of Hispanic residents in their neighborhoods.

Formally stated, my hypotheses are as follows:

H1: As the number of Hispanics in the study area increased, Whites would shift their political party registration to become Republicans, and

H2: As the number of Hispanics in the study area increased, voter turnout among Whites would increase.

Data and Methods

This research examines how voters in South Omaha, who are predominately White, behaved politically during a period of increased racial and ethnic neighborhood change in the late 20th and early 21st century. By juxtaposing political behavior, over time, against ethnic change, this paper looks how voter behavior amid a period of demographic changed. Increasingly, the racial and ethnic mix of American society is changing. As a community becomes increasingly pluralistic, an understanding of what could be responsive political behavior

to demographic changes provides insight into what the future may hold socially as well as politically.

To examine how Whites responded during an era of growth in Hispanic population groups, I used two dependent variables to explore behaviors that occurred in South Omaha, including party switching and voter turnout. Throughout this study, the independent variable is the increase of Hispanic residents in the study area. The dependent variables are the behaviors of White voters including party switching and voter turnout. The sources for data used in this research include the Douglas County (Nebraska) voting rolls and the United States Census, including off-cycle U.S. Census-based efforts known as The American Community Survey.

To provide context of the results in the study areas, control groups were necessary. The control groups are two Omaha zip codes that did not undergo ethnic transition. The first control group is residents living in 68111. This group is an urban area located in northeast Omaha. Residents in this control group are predominately African American Democrats living in mid-to-lower socioeconomic conditions. The second control area was 68022. This area is predominately non-Hispanic White, suburban, middle-class, and Republican.

Because each election cycles is unique, the turnout for each election is dynamic. To compensate for normal fluctuations between election cycles, turnout and party switching is expressed as a percentage of registered voters, by party, within the zip code, for each election cycle. By charting voter turnout as a percentage of the registered voters for each party by election cycle, turnout over time can more easily be compared and evaluated.

Voting Rolls

Voting rolls are comprised of personal information for each voter, including their home address, zip code, and current party affiliation. The voter roll also records the voter's party affiliation in each election cycle in which the voter participated. To determine party-switching, voters in the study area were culled from voters who were registered but did not vote. These registered voters were then sorted by zip code and subsequently sorted by party affiliation. This provided the opportunity to examine behaviors at the zip code level in both the study areas and the control areas.

Party switching was then determined for each election cycle. A tally of those who switched for the election cycle was created, including noting which party the voter had been a member of and which party they joined. The results are the number of party switchers for each of the election cycles in this study. These results are examined by individual zip code as well as across elections. This process provides a view of how party-switching changes over time, by party, by zip code, and by political affiliation.

Party switching is a regular occurrence. And, interestingly, some voters change their affiliation frequently. I assumed that party switching in the control groups was indicative of typical or non-affected party switching. Although there is no indication that party switching was caused by the area's ethnic transitions, I assumed that the party switching in the study area zip codes was a likely indication that something interesting was occurring. The results will show, depending upon the election cycle, there is a relative and consistent similarity in party switching among the five areas. However, there are deviations from the pattern which bear closer scrutiny and consideration.

Turnout is a second dependent variable used to examine voting behaviors. Turnout is the percentage of registered voters, by party, that actually show-up and vote in a given election. Key found that White voters in Alabama turned out in greater numbers when the county included a higher percentage of African Americans.

U.S. Census

A second source used in this study was data from the U.S. Census Bureau. This information provides demographic information of residents within each of the defined areas. Census information provides data at several societal levels, including national, state, community, zip code, and PUMAs (public use microdata areas). While individual information is not available, self-identified characteristics, including race, ethnicity, and age, are captured. Because the decennial census occurs every ten years, the American Community Survey (ACS) was used to determine racial and ethnic changes in the study areas and control areas during non-Census years. The ACS uses a statistical sampling method to project demographic trends between the decennial censuses.

Table 1

Ethnic and racial composition in the study and control areas

Race	68105	68107	68108	68022	68111
White	56.0%	34.8%	46.5%	93.4%	19.5%
African American	6.6%	6.1%	3.3%	0.7%	63.5%
Asian American	0.8%	0.7%	1.0%	1.6%	1.9%
Hispanic	32.2%	55.8%	46.7%	3.0%	8.9%
Other	4.3%	2.6%	2.5%	1.3%	6.2%

The voting rolls indicate that registered voters in the study areas are predominately Democrats. RTT (Racial Threat Theory) suggests that this voting group would not sense a threat

to political power that the smaller number of Republican voters in the study area would feel. Therefore, RTT suggests a shift towards the GOP should occur. To understand the demographic composition of voters, the voting rolls and the U.S. Census information need to be combined.

Step one is to determine the voter ethnicity of those casting votes in the study area during the period. The voting rolls do not record the racial or ethnic background of voters. In other studies, the U.S. Census database of surnames helped identify the ethnicity of voters (Barreto, Segura, & Woods, 2004). While imperfect, this method does provide an accepted means to identify registered Hispanic voters. Using the U.S. Census identifies the racial and ethnic composition of residents in the study areas. This weighting, in conjunction with the database of surnames provides an accepted approach to determining the demographic composition of those who voted.

Historically, Hispanics tend to have low voter turnouts (Manual-Krogstad, 2016). As Table 5 (below) indicates, the number of non-Hispanic voters in the study area is consistently in the upper 90 percentile. As Table 6 (below) shows, the number of non-White, non-Hispanic (NW/NH) voters in the area are approximately 10% (11.8%, 68105; 7.4%, 68107; 6.8%, 68108). Nationally, of those Hispanics who did register to vote, 64% registered as Democrats, and nearly 24% registered as Republicans (Hugo-Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, Manuel-Krogstad, & Lopez, 2016). Therefore, it is highly likely that those voting in the study area as Republicans are non-Hispanic Whites.

Table 2

Estimated percentage of registered Hispanic voters in the study area

Year/ Ethnicity	Likely Hispanic	Likely non- Hispanic
2002	1.1%	98.9%
2004	1.8%	98.2%
2006	2.0%	98.0%
2008	2.9%	97.1%
2010	2.0%	98.0%
2012	3.2%	96.8%
2014	2.3%	97.7%
2016	4.3%	95.7%
2018	3.7%	96.3%

The Study Areas

This paper examines how changes in ethnicity in South Omaha altered voting patterns in the study areas from 1988 to 2016. The focus is on the voting within three South Omaha zip codes: 68105, 68107, and 68108. These neighborhoods experienced varying stages of demographic transition. The transitions are from historically non-Hispanic White residents to Hispanic residents.

Since its development in the mid-19th Century, residents in South Omaha have been predominately White, non-Hispanic, European immigrants, and their progeny. The stockyards and nearby packing plants were the financial lifeblood of Omaha during the 20th Century. At various times European immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds immigrated to South Omaha for jobs in the meatpacking houses. Waves of immigrants arrived in South Omaha to take jobs and replace previous immigrant groups. From Italians to Germans to Czech and Poles, South Omaha has provided homes and jobs for generations of immigrants, including Slavs, Hungarians, Croats, Russians, Swedes, Greeks, Danes, and Magyars (Lawson, Cottrell,

Dalstrom, & Dalstrom, 2007). By 1920, fifty percent of Omaha's residents were immigrants or first-generation Americans. In 1904 Japanese immigrant workers were briefly employed by the stockyards as strike-breakers. For the most part, this has historically been an enclave of non-Hispanic White, blue-collar, Democratic voters.

In the late 20th century, the residents of this area began to transition from White European ancestry to ethnic Hispanics. In the 1970's the business model for stockyards moved from a large factory in an urban setting to more numerous, smaller, facilities in rural settings. As the Omaha stockyards scaled-down, workers moved to find jobs in other areas of the city. In 1981 Omaha Mayor Mike Boyle began revitalization efforts in North and South Omaha (Larsen & Cottrell, 1982). The mayor's initiative included the gradual reopening of packing houses and a scaled-down stockyards area. These new jobs attracted Hispanic workers.

According to U.S. Census records, South Omaha's Hispanic population began to increase in the early 1990s. Several factors contributed to this growth, including jobs due to the re-opening and growth of the meatpacking industry beginning in the mid-1980s (Arbalaiez, 2007). According to the literature, another factor contributing to this growth includes the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (INA). Because of the INA, the demographic characteristics of immigrants coming to the USA shifted to represent a broader mix of ethnic and racial backgrounds. A third factor in the growth of South Omaha's Hispanic population is the "militarization" of the southern border. In 1993 authorities began a build-up of immigration enforcement in San Diego and El Paso. This build-up caused the flow of those coming from south of the border to shift migratory patterns from California and Texas to other destinations, including the American Midwest (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). A fourth factor is that during this time, Hispanic population growth accelerated due to higher fertility and birth rates

(Passel, Livingston, & Cohn, 2012). As seen in figure 15 (below), between 1990 and 2016, the number of Hispanics in the study area grew from 10.3% to 52.9%. This process resulted in the area becoming majority-minority. During the same period, Whites fell from 84.8% to 37.2%, while non-White/non-Hispanics doubled from 4.9% to 9.9% (Census Data 2015). From 1990 to 2000, the area's Hispanic population grew from 9,703 residents to 29,397. By 2,000 Hispanics represented nearly 8% of the cities resident. That number would continue to rise in the study area for the next decade.

The relatively recent ethnic transition in South Omaha provides a window from which to study the political behaviors of residents as their neighborhoods become increasingly pluralistic. Over several decades, South Omaha residents experienced the sort of racial and ethnic changes that other areas of the nation had already undergone.

In the late 20th century, Hispanics, both immigrants and native-born, began moving into South Omaha neighborhoods. These areas had historically been inhabited by non-Hispanic Whites. This study will examine the longitudinal political behaviors of White voters. It will also graph over time the study areas with Hispanic growth.

Voting patterns indicate the desire to maintain "the established patterns of racial and economic relations" (Key, 1949). Groups with political power use voting as a mechanism to maintain their hold on power (Putnam, 2000; Key, 1949). Voting allows those with historical political advantage to sustain their grip on the political system and its distribution of access, largess, and other benefits. This status quo is assured by voting with the interests of the in-group and voting against the interests of out-groups.

Omaha is a riverfront city that has grown west from the Missouri River, which borders the city's east side. As the city grew west, generally, residents in east Omaha were lower socioeconomic status. South Omaha is located on the lower, east side of the city and abuts the Missouri River. When the South Omaha meatpacking houses closed in the 70s and 80s, the economy, including jobs, in South Omaha, declined rapidly. Storefronts shuttered, and long-standing restaurants and public service offices closed. Today South Omaha is a vibrant part of the Omaha economy. Omaha is home to 525,000 people, of whom 12% self-identify as ethnically Hispanic (Cogua-Lopez, Aliaga-Linares, & Gouveia, 2015). Of the Hispanics living within city limits, 58% were born in the United States – a majority of those were born in Nebraska. Among the 42% of Hispanics living in Omaha that was not born in the United States, only one-fifth, or 21%, have sought American citizenship. Eighty-one percent of Omaha's Hispanic population has ancestral roots in Mexico. Among the city's Hispanic population, 81% live in east Omaha and fall into a lower socioeconomic status.

68105

Of the three zip code study areas, 68105 lies west of 68107 and 68108. Of the three study areas, 68105's population is less than 68107 but more than 68108. Two interstates define this area: I-80 on the south and I-480 on the east (see figure 8 below). This area butts up against railroad tracks on the south and east sides. The geographic space is blocked on the north side by high-end development. In 2012, the Mutual of Omaha Corporation began a \$365 million regentrification in the Midtown Crossing district that includes shopping, dining, and entertainment district. This city-within-a-city lies on the north side of the 68105 zip code. It includes high-end condominiums, over 40 businesses, including a radio station, multiplex movie theatre, hotels, and several middle-to-high-end restaurants (Gonzalez, 2015). Since the

investment, crime, including drug dealing and prostitution in the area, has fallen. The average household income is also rising.

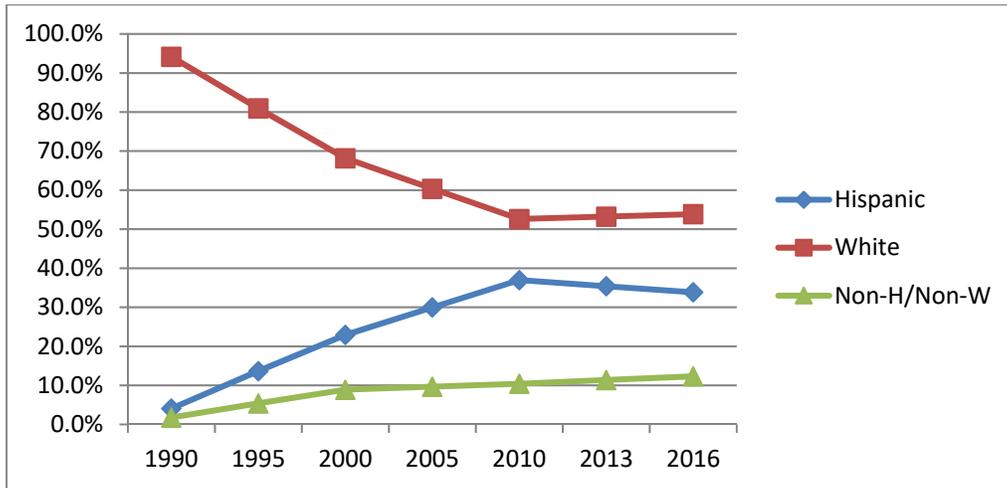


Figure 6. The ethnic transition for zip code 68105, 1990 – 2016

This 68105 study area is one of a top-three Omaha zip code with the highest percentage of Hispanic residents. From 1990 to 2016, the number of Hispanics in the area grew by 876%. However, as seen in figure 7 above, when the economic development began, the growth of Hispanic residents in the area reversed and began to decline. Before the increase in high-end residences, the percentage of Whites living in the area had fallen by 40%. Since the development of high-end condos, Whites began returning to the area. Simultaneously, the number of non-Hispanic, non-Whites residents went up 736%. As discussed earlier, geographic space, including physical and economic barriers, can define the residency and intergroup contacts within an area (Enos, 2017).

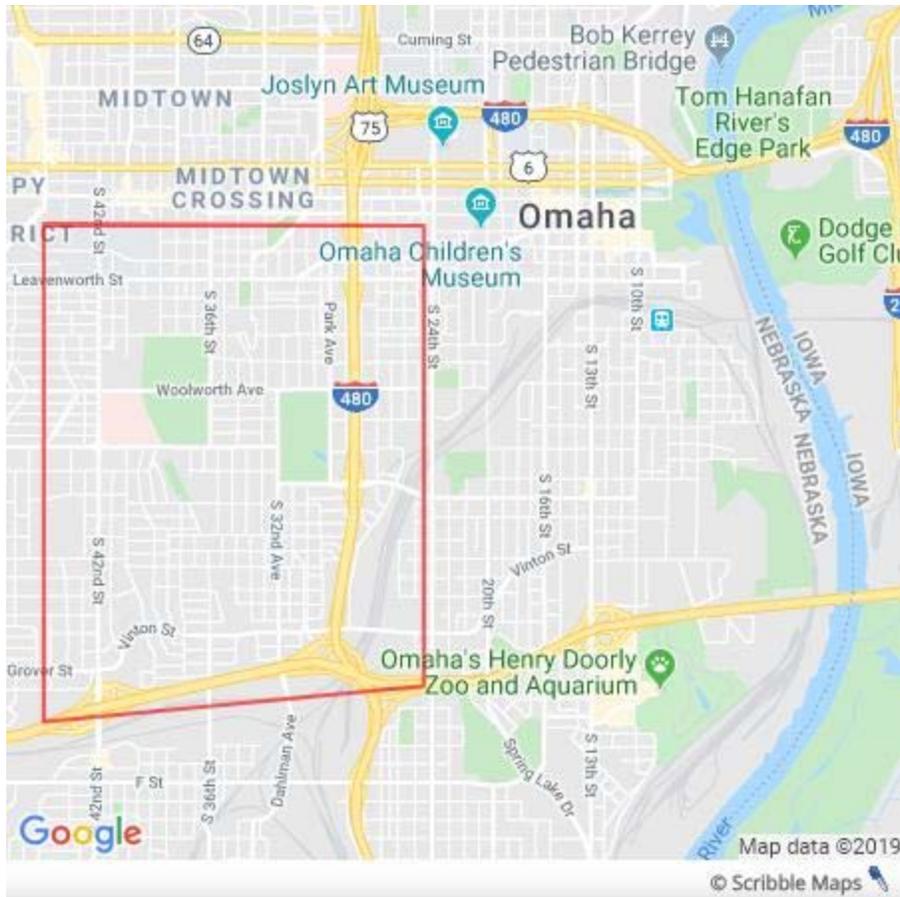


Figure 7. Zip code area 68105

68107

South Omaha and the hub of Omaha's Hispanic community are within the 68107 zip code area. Of the three study areas, 68107 experienced the most ethnic transition. Today residents in 68107 are nearly 56% self-identified Hispanic and is a minority-majority area. Interstate I-80 and the Henry Doorley Zoo delimit 68107 on the north. Harrison Street, which is the Douglas County line, defines the southern side of the study area. The Missouri River is on the east, and the 42nd Street corridor marks the west side of the 68107 zip code area.

The heart of Omaha's Hispanic community runs through 68107 along the 24th Street corridor. A downtown-like shopping district on the 24th street corridor includes numerous shops and service outlets, the Omaha Public School's South Omaha Magnet High School, and Jacoby's Supermarket. Just off the 24th Street corridor are two South Omaha landmarks, the G.I. Forum, a club for Hispanic military veterans, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Church. A vibrant shopping and restaurant area, South 24th was recently redesigned to honor its Hispanic culture (South 24th Street: Omaha , 2010). Subsequently, the redesign has won numerous urban designed awards.

According to the U.S. Census, in addition to being home to the city's largest number of Hispanic residents in the city, 68017 is also host to the largest percentage of foreign-born residents (32%). This figure is dramatically higher than the city zip code average of just under 7% foreign-born residents. As a group, strong family ties are a characteristic among Hispanics. As one might imagine, 68107 includes the fourth-highest number of family households in the city.

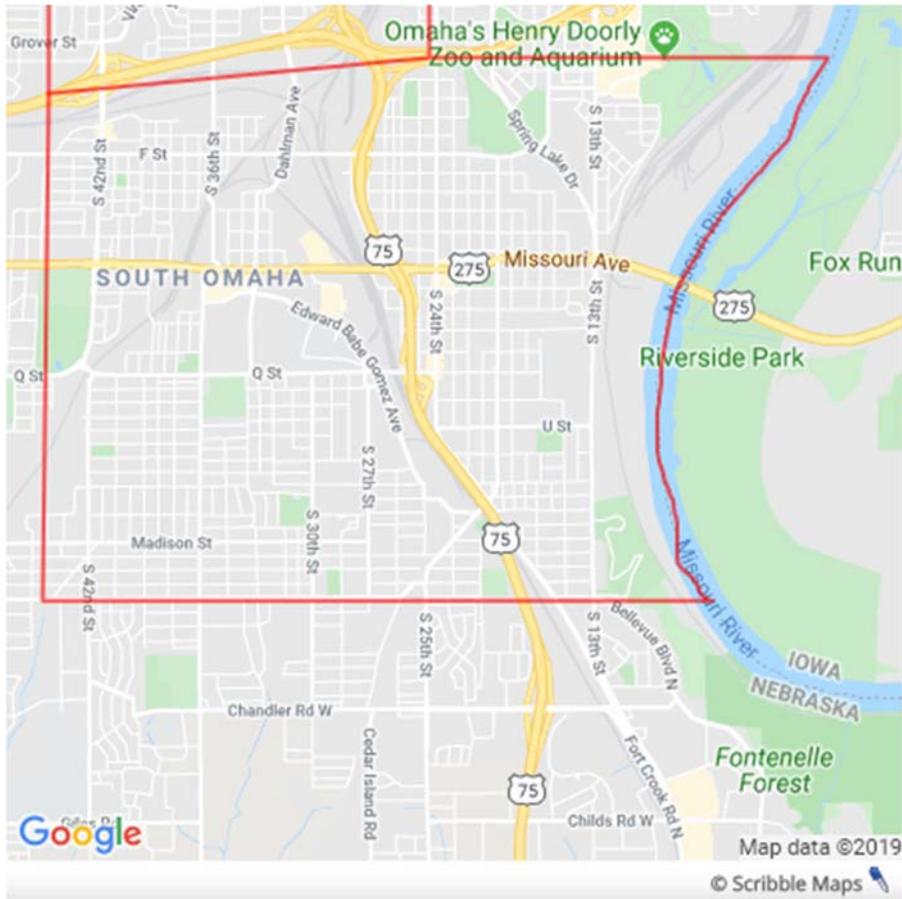


Figure 8. Zip code area 68107

Since 1990, the Hispanic population in 68107 has grown 642%. Growth among the non-Hispanic/non-White population is 191%. At the same time, the White population has fallen by more than 50%. Census data indicates that 68107 became a minority-majority area in 2005. While the population shifting has become less pronounced, racial and ethnic minorities represent over 73% of the area's population.

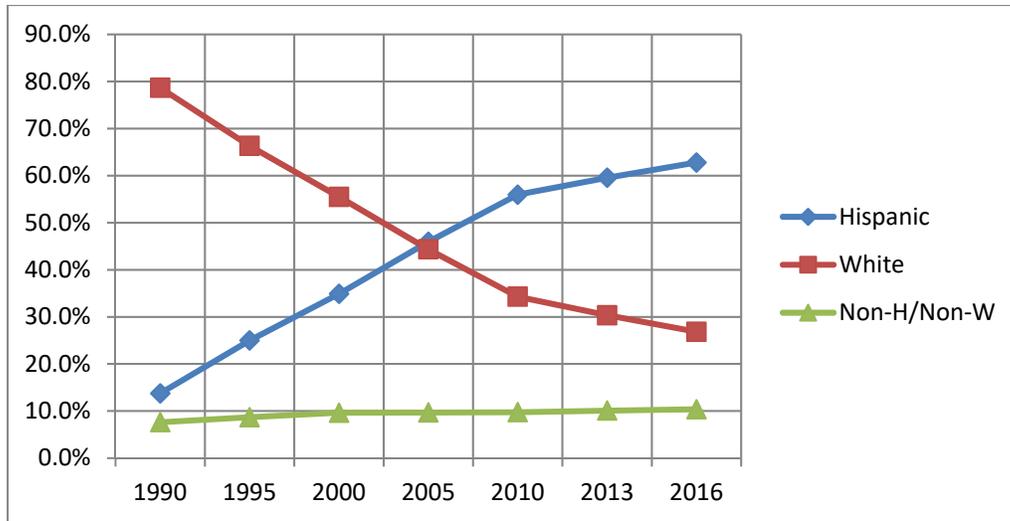


Figure 9. The ethnic transition for zip code 68107, 1990 – 2016

68108

The third study area is the zip code area 68108. Geographic barriers on all four sides tightly constrain this portion of our study areas. Interstate I-80 and the Henry Doorley Zoo border the south. Interstate I-480 and railroad tracks border the area on the west, and like 68107, this zip code runs adjacent to the Missouri River, and industrial areas, including a railroad yard, border the river. Finally, the area is confined by Omaha's revitalized Downtown area to the north. The Union Pacific Railroad yards, including the former Union Pacific train station, which today is the Durham Western Heritage Museum, and the 10th Street viaduct, are also located to the north. Due to its proximity to the downtown area, the northern portion of 68108 is currently undergoing housing re-gentrification including the development of downtown condominiums, the "Little Italy" housing area, and service industries along 10th street such as the Blue Barn playhouse, restaurants, a bakery, and coffee shops.



Figure 10. Map of zip code area 68108

Since 1990, the Hispanic population in this portion of the study area (68108) has grown by 554%. The non-Hispanic/non-White population grew by more than 205%, although that number has begun to decline. While the White population shrank by 39%, due to regentrification, that number rose along with a modest increase in household incomes. Recently Grace Bible College located in the district was closed. The empty campus might stimulate further redevelopment. Overall, as we see in the study, 2010 appears to have been a turning point where Hispanic growth slowed substantially, and White de-population also slowed down.

Recently, the city has moved towards numerous city-with-the-city neighborhood bar and restaurant redevelopments. These re-development areas including Benson, Blackstone, the Capital District, and NODO or North of Downtown. The 13th Street corridor has joined existing neighborhood destination developments such as Dundee, Rockbrook Village, Countryside Village, and projects on north and south 24th Street. By 2016 Hispanic growth in 68108 had begun to slow.

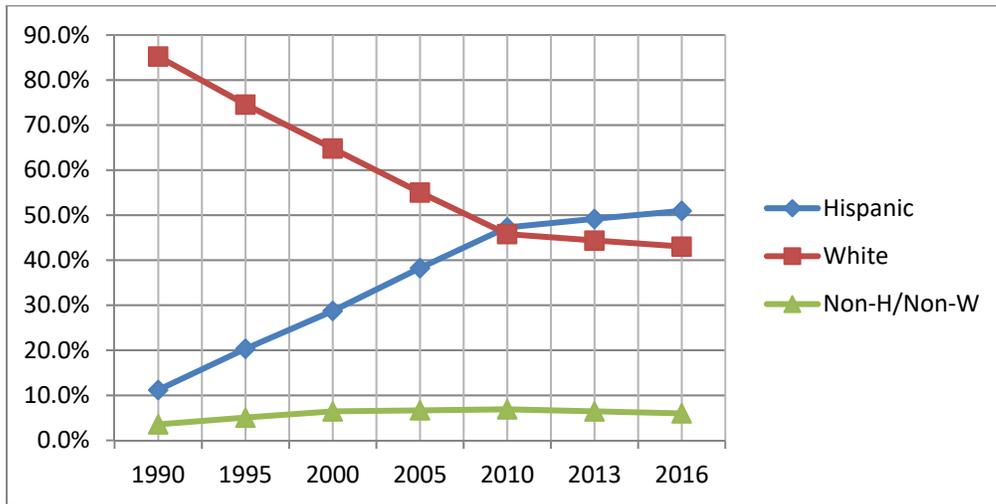


Figure 11. The ethnic transition for zip code 68108, 1990 – 2016

It is important to define the terms used in this study. Race refers to physical or biological characteristics. Ethnicity refers to sociological or cultural aspects, including language, practices, nationality, and beliefs (Race and Ethnicity). While the differences between race and ethnicity are distinct, most people use these terms interchangeably. As it pertains to this study, a distinction between race and ethnicity is not of paramount importance to the findings; however, it would be remiss not to clarify this point. In the U.S. Census, respondents self-report their racial and ethnic identification. The definitions used by the U.S. Census Bureau are:

“White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa,

Black or African American. A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "Black or African American,"

Asian American. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam” (Race, 2020).

“Hispanics or Latino refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. This includes people who reported detailed Hispanic or Latino groups such as: •Mexican, •Puerto Rican, •Cuban, •Dominican Republic, Central American (excludes Mexican), South American, and Spaniard” (Hispanic or Latino Origin).

This study faced numerous challenges. While reviewing the literature, it became clear there is a limited body of longitudinal studies on voting. Although election results are relatively accessible, voting databases are dynamic and, depending upon the county, are subject to near-daily changes and updating. Several factors cause these changes, including a voter moving outside of the district, delisting a non-active voter, removal due to death, redistricting, and the addition of new voters. In Douglas County, Nebraska, once a voter falls off the roll, their entire voting record is removed. To capture an accurate glimpse of a specific election, a database that was recorded as near to the election date as possible was necessary. The longer the span between the elections, and the age of the database, increased the likelihood of discrepancies. Another challenge for longitudinal voting studies is that the software used by election offices became more sophisticated and more detailed over time. Voting records from earlier elections were Xerox copies of green-bar print outs. These election rolls provided sparse details. More current

election databases are available in Excel and Access software. A fourth challenge was that over time, the amount of detailed information on voters and party affiliation increased. With the increase in data captured, the number of data entry errors, or missing data, became more frequent or apparent. A final challenge was that turnout is affected by numerous factors, including population growth or shrinkage, the nature of the election cycle, issues or bonds on the ballot, and news coverage. Turnout is also affected by the voter's demographic characteristics. Hispanics, young people, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds generally have lower voter turnouts than other groups. To account for these fluctuations, I used percentages to represent voter turnout and party-switching numbers results.

This study used the zip codes and U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA), to define the study areas. Whether using data from the U.S. Census Bureau or the Douglas County Voting Rolls, zip codes provide a common foundation from which to view behavior. It is also a commonly used measure for research studies of intergroup contact.

Research Results

The focus of this paper was to discover how residents behaved politically during a period of ethnic change in their South Omaha neighborhood. Based upon RTT, two hypotheses were proposed. The first hypothesis was that as the number of Hispanics moved into the study areas, voters, who are predominately White, would switch their political party affiliation to the Republican Party. The second hypothesis was that as the ethnicity of the neighborhood changed to include more Hispanics, voter turnout would increase. Both of these hypotheses are premised on RTT.

Party Switching

The examination of party switching begins by looking at voter behavior within individual zip codes across election cycles. This perspective provides a view of voter behavior over time within the three study areas. The control group zip codes for this portion of the research are 68022 and 68111. West Omaha is predominately White, middle class, and Republican. The control group for these voters is represented by zip code 68022. To help make it easy to follow this discussion, the White Republican control group, 68022, will be referred to as West Omaha. Northeast Omaha is predominately African American, and lower socioeconomically, and voters are predominately Democrats. This control group is represented by zip code 68111. The African American control group, 68111, will be referred to as North Omaha.

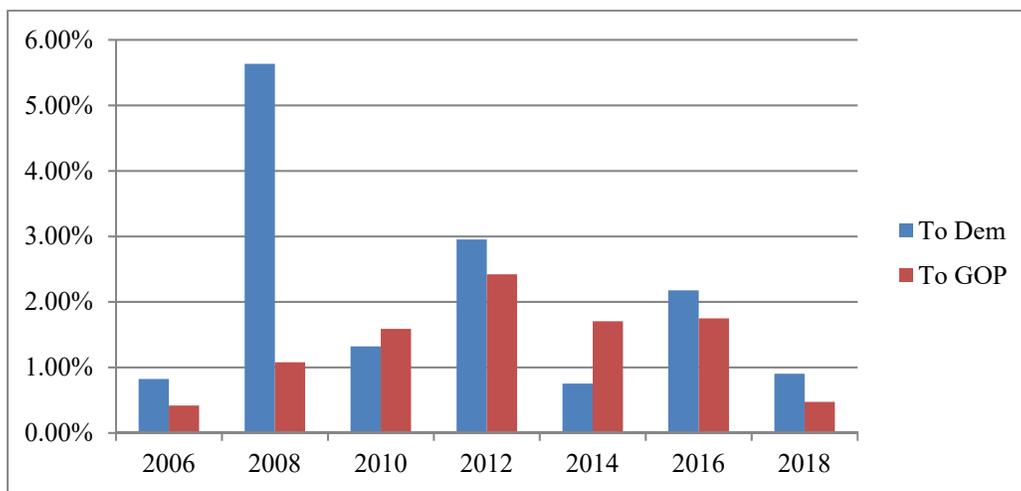


Figure 12. Party shifts in zip code area West Omaha (68022)

West Omaha voters are nearly 4:1 Republican. West Omaha is one of two control areas and was not subject to high levels of ethnic transition. In 2008 there is a clear increase in party shifts to the Democrat Party. A likely explanation for this spike is that although there was a slight edge in the number of Republicans in Nebraska's CD2, enough voters in the area re-registered as

Democrats to cause this result. In 2008 Nebraska’s Electoral College split is votes, awarding one electoral vote to Presidential candidate Obama. Democratic Party switching peaked again in 2012. However, the 2012 election cycle found that total party shifting, including both Democrats and Republicans, peaked in the West Omaha study area when 3.5% of all registered voters changed political affiliation (see figure 14 below). As the figure 13 depicts (above), there is a slight ebb and flow in party-switching among both Republicans and Democrats although, generally, the shifts between the parties are relatively close and ranging around 2 percent.

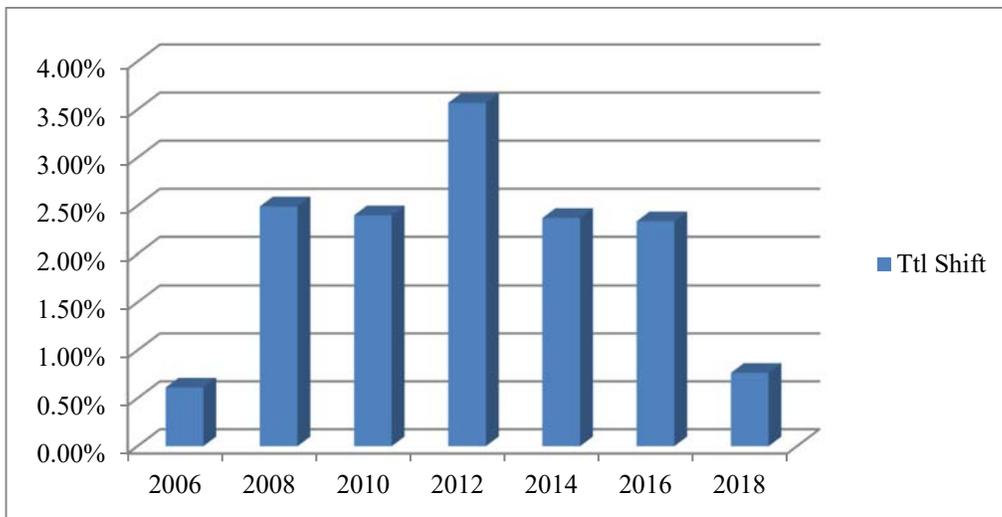


Figure 13. Total shifts in zip code area West Omaha (68022)

The other Party Switching control group is North Omaha (68111). Among this control group registered Democrats are 9:1 over Republican voters. In figure 15 (below), note the shift toward the GOP in the 2016 Presidential election. Two years later a second inordinately high switch to the Republican Party occurs. Since the gross number of Republican voters in this area is quite small, total shifting among the North Omaha control group remains, generally, under 2% of total voters (see figure 16 below). While the shifts towards the Republican Party are of interest to this study, since North Omaha was not undergoing an ethnic change at this time, this behavior

is not necessarily something that RTT would have predicated. The cause of the party shifting in the '16 and '18 elections is unknown. However, except for the West Omaha area, the other four cases all exhibit this behavior.

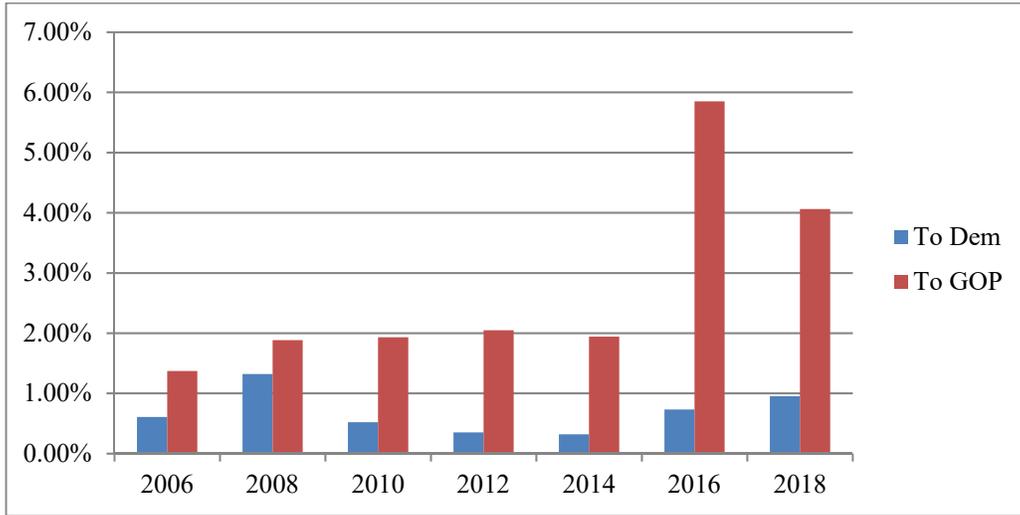


Figure 14. Party shifts in zip code area 68111

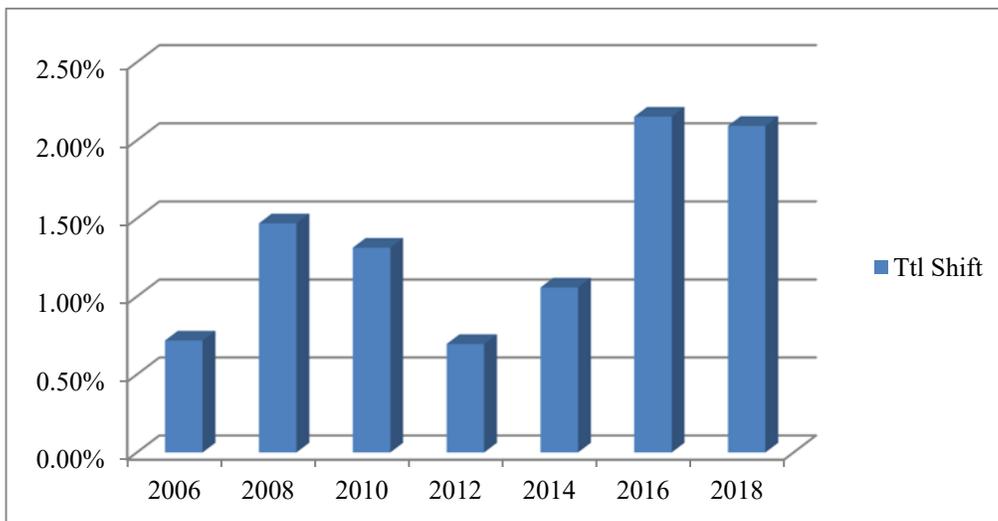


Figure 15. Total shifts in zip code area 68022

Of the three transitional South Omaha neighborhoods, 68105 is the area that did not become minority-majority. In terms of Party Switching, there is a noticeable upward blip among Democrats in 2008 (see figure 17 below). This uptick may be the result of a GOTV drive conducted in the area during the 2006 election cycle (Benjamin-Alvarado, 2009). An equally feasible likelihood is that the Obama candidacy motivated a response among voters in 69105.

More noticeable, however, is the increase in party switching in 2016, and to a lesser degree in 2018. A similar shift is seen toward the Republican Party in 2016 among voters in the 68111 area. The amount of switching in 68105 was higher in this study area than in both control groups including a Democrat spike in 2008 and the Republican spike in 2012. Because of the larger number of switching, these results were reviewed and re-checked. That they were determined by the same methods and from the same source as the other areas suggested that something unpredicted is occurring in this transition area.

For the most part, party-switching in this transition area has been mostly to the Democratic Party. However, shifts in excess of the levels seen in the control groups to the GOP occurred in the '12, '16, and '18 election cycles. While shifts to the Republican Party are predicated by RTT, shifts to both parties are not what RTT predicted. Once again, an increase in party-switching in both 2016 and 2018 occurs.

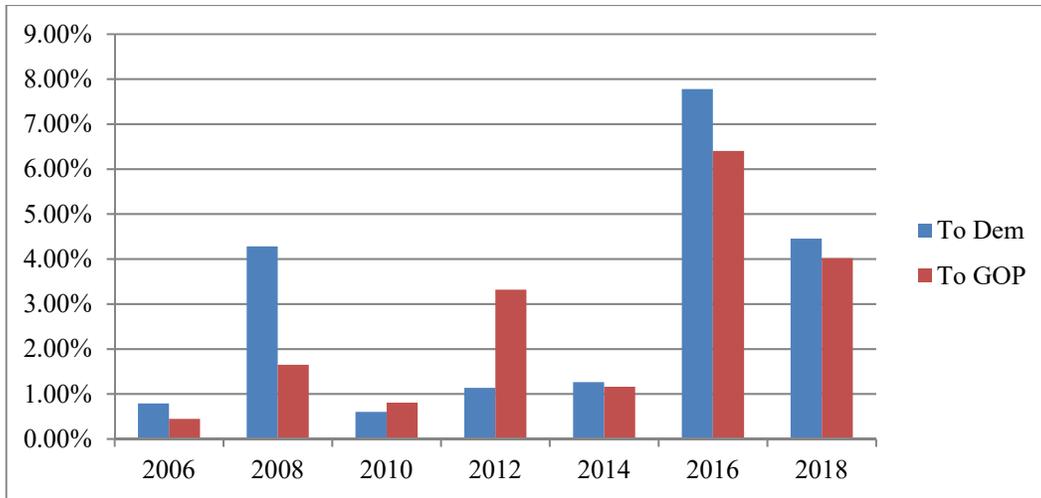


Figure 16. Party shifts in zip code area 68105

Like 68105, party switching in the South Omaha transitional neighborhood 68107 is higher than either of the control groups (see figure 18 below). Only the '06 and '10 election cycles align with the results in the control areas. In five of the seven elections cycles examined, the amount of party switching in 68107 exceeds the findings in the control groups. To clarify what is being seen in these results, these party switchers are not new registrants, which one might expect to see in an area undergoing residential transition. This party switching activity is being done by previously registered voters. To heighten the point, as was demonstrated in Table 2 (above), the vast majority of these party switchers are non-Hispanics, or residents who are not an identified part of the larger ethnic transition occurring in this study area.

In all seven of the election cycles examined in 68107, party switching to the GOP is notable. In 5 of the 7 elections cycles, switches to the GOP exceed moves to the Democrat party. Of the two exceptions, switches in the '08 election cycle are of nearly equal percentages to Democrat switches. In '18, although switches to the GOP are above control group levels, they are less than switches to the Democrat Party. Also, in 2016, shifts in 68105 favored the

Democratic Party, whereas shifts in 68107 during the same cycle were towards the GOP.

Another notable difference is that in 2018 switching in 68105 dropped down to approximately 4%. However, 68107 switching fell to approximately 6% of voters. Except for 2018, party-switching in 68107 exhibited a conservative lean towards the Republican Party. This shift towards more conservative voting is an outcome predicated by RTT.

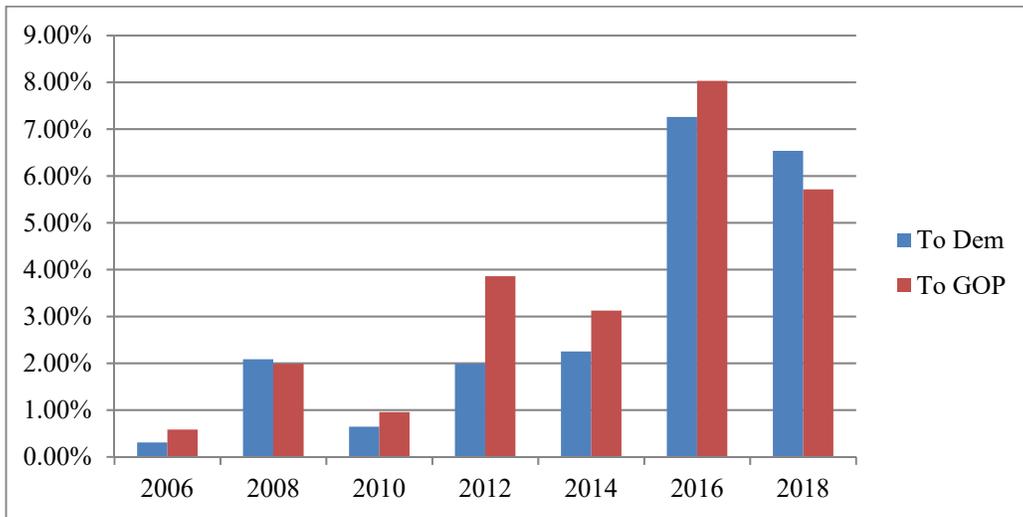


Figure 17. Party shifts in zip code area 68107

Racial threat theory does predict the sort of party-switching behavior seen in 68107. An interesting facet of these results is that the behavior spikes after the 2010 election cycle.

Although growth in the area's Hispanic population continued after 2010, the rate of Hispanic population growth slowed after 2010. At the same time, the rate of growth among non-White, non-Hispanic (NWNH) minority members continued to grow, albeit slower than the growth among Hispanics. Also paralleled is that the decline of Whites also slows down after 2010.

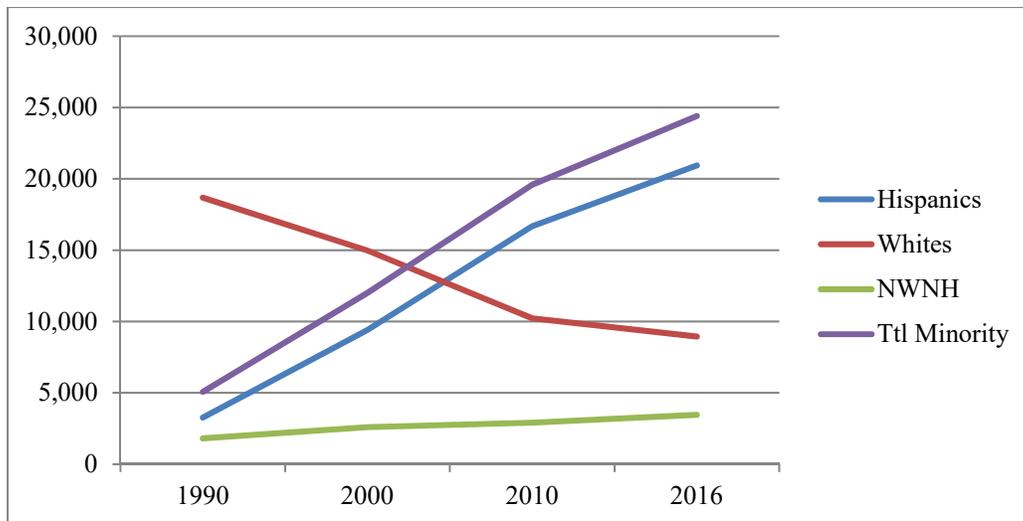


Figure 18. Population trends in 68107

The final look at party-switching is in the third South Omaha transitional area, 68108, located just south of downtown Omaha. Until recently, this area had a growing Hispanic population. More recently, the area began to experience regentrification, and with that an influx of more affluent and more White residents. Beginning in 2010, there is a shift of voters to the Republican Party (see figure 20 below). Once again, though, a shift among voters to the Democrat Party in 2008 is also seen. A similar change occurred in West Omaha and 68105. The moves by voters in 68108 towards the GOP are a behavior predicated by RTT. However, shifting towards the Democrat Party also occurred. This is not a behavior that RTT would have predicated. Again, these are switches among already registered voters, rather than an influx of new voters.

Unlike the other two transition areas (68105, 68107), party switching in 68108 occurs at a lower level, although it remains higher than trends in West Omaha or North Omaha control

groups. The simultaneous high levels of switching to the Republican and Democrat Party is not a behavior predicted by RTT.

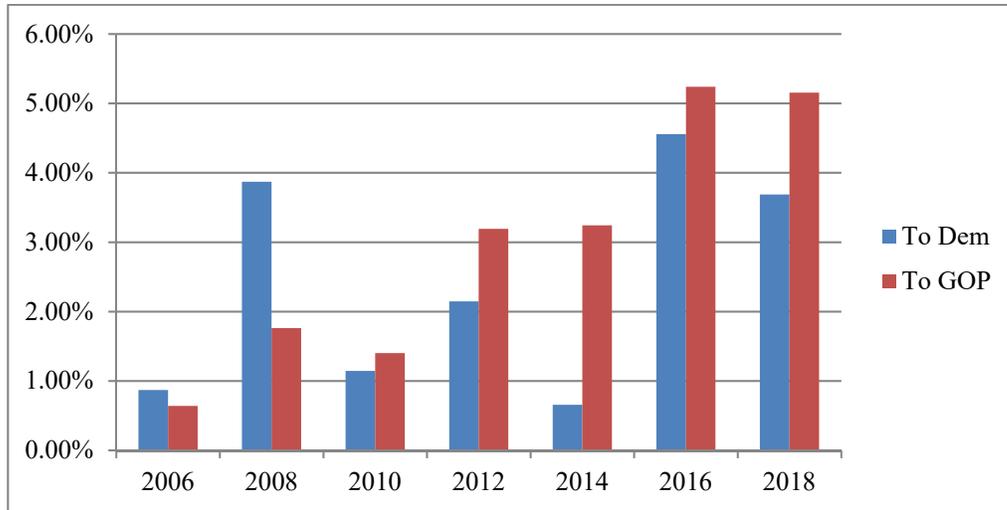


Figure 19. Party shifts in zip code area 68108

The previous examination of party-switching looked at voter behaviors across election cycles in specific neighborhoods. This view contrasted party switching among Republicans and Democrats in each of the five studied zip codes areas. This next section is a comparative view combining party switching behavior in the three study areas and the two control areas. Except for West Omaha, at no time does the number of Republican voters exceed Democrat turnout.

This view is depicted in figure 21 (below). Generally, one notices that after 2014, gross party switching in the transitional areas exceeds switching in the control areas. As depicted above, these switches include voters re-registering as Republicans and Democrats. RTT suggests party switching towards the Republican Party, which is seen. However, RTT does not predict switches to the Democrat Party. The results are inconclusive, therefore.

These results do not consider the likely increase in voter registration of Hispanic voters. As discussed earlier, accepted methodologies were used to identify likely Hispanic voters. However, since the voting rolls do not identify race or ethnicity, distinguishing between White voters and non-White/non-Hispanic (NWNH) voters is not possible. Hispanic voter participation during the study period was consistently in the lower single digits (see Table 2 above). Thus, voters in the study area are highly unlikely to be Hispanic. Furthermore, the percentages of NWNH residents in the study areas are also low. There are 11.7% NWNH residents in 68105, 9.4% in 68107, and 6.8% in 68108. Ergo, the share of White voters in the study area is higher than the number of NWNH voters. While inexact, it is a reasonable assumption to estimate that the party-switching seen in the transition neighborhoods is largely among White voters; these voters re-registered as Republicans and as Democrats. RTT does not predict this behavior. Therefore the hypothesis is not accepted.

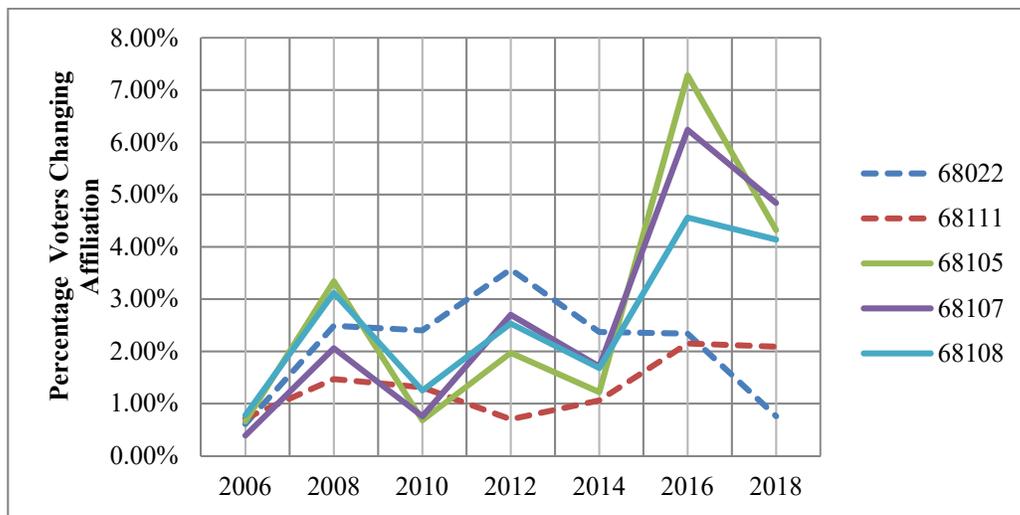


Figure 20. Party Switching by zip code, by election. Dotted lines depict control groups.

Voter Turnout

A second hypothesis was that voter turnout would increase during a period of increased Hispanic residency. Specifically, RTT predicts that White voters who remained in South Omaha would be more likely to turn out and vote. To test this hypothesis, voter turnout by cycle and party affiliation were studied. Like many election findings, the numbers of voters who turn out to vote ebb and flow from election to election.

To examine voting behaviors, my approach is to view party turnout, across time, among the three study areas and two control areas. For this perspective, Republican turnout in all five zip codes areas, spanning the various elections, is examined (see figure 22 below). A similar examination occurs for both Democrats (figure 23) and those who are not members of either major political party (figure 24). For this study, voters who are not registered members of either the GOP or the Democrats are referred to as 'Others.' For this approach, three graphs were generated to depict voter turnout. The charts are Republican turnout, Democratic turnout, and Other turnout in each of the five zip codes.

Voter Turnout

Republican Voter Turnout

When examining Republican voter turnout, the most obvious result is that turnout is affected, to some extent, by those around the voter. For example, West Omaha, which is predominately Republican, turnout, remains higher than the other study areas between for the duration of the study period. During the same period, turnout among Republicans living in North Omaha, which is predominately African-American and comprised mostly of Democrat voters, is consistently lower. These results align with the theory that living in "alien territory" suppresses voting (Gimpel, Dyck & Shaw, 2004; McClung, 2006).

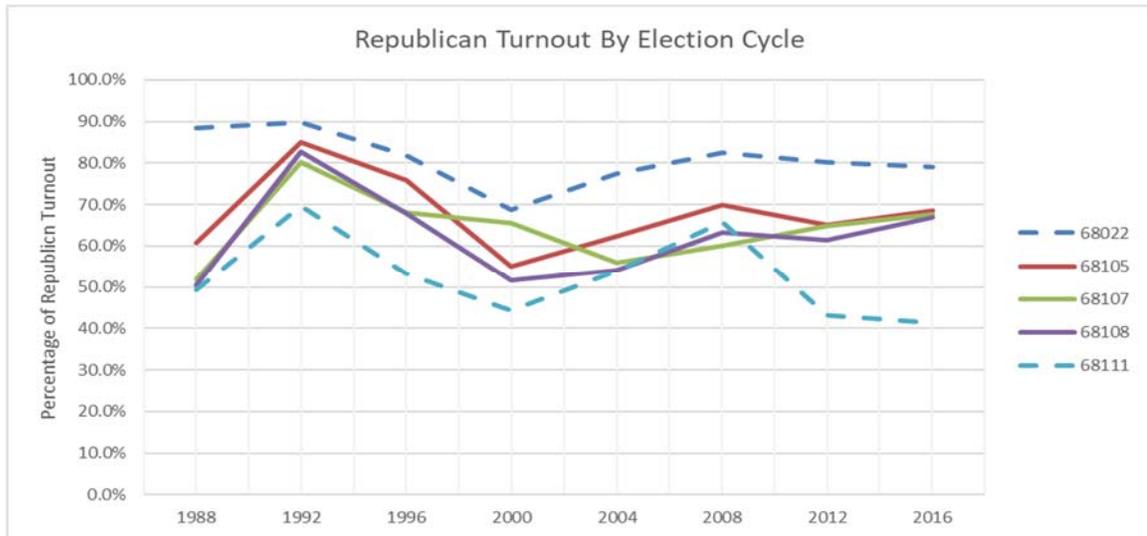


Figure 21. Republican turnout by zip code by election cycle, 1998 – 2016. Dotted lines depict North Omaha and South Omaha control groups.

Among all the partisan examinations, there is a strong turnout in the 1992 contest between incumbent George H.W. Bush, Governor Clinton, and businessman H. Ross Perot. In 2000, as Clinton termed out of office, office-seekers were running for an open office. Among Republicans and Democrats, voter turnout bottoms-out in 2000 and begins to pick up by 2004. Voter turnout bumps up again in 2008 when incumbent George W Bush termed out. This Presidential contest pitted Obama (D) against McCain (R). Among all three partisan groups, turnout dipped in 2012 and continued downward to 2016. The lowest Republican turnouts are North Omaha, reaching a low in 2016. While Republican turnout dropped among all the study areas in 2000, the gap between Republican voter turnout in North Omaha and West Omaha is 25 points. The gap between the transition neighborhoods and North Omaha ranges from 5 points to less than 20 points. At the same time, turnout in the transitional neighborhoods is lower than in West Omaha. It is a point of interest that Republican turnout is 68107, which is the heart of

Omaha's Hispanic community, distinctly differentiates from the other two transitional areas in 2000. In fact, only 68107 exhibited an increase in Republican turnout in 2000. This could be indicative of RTT. At the same time, the former Texas Governor George W. Bush did well with Hispanic voters including Cubans and Hispanics in the American Southwest (Leal, Barreto, Lee, & delaGarza, 2005). However, my research suggests that voter turnout among Hispanics in 68107 is unlikely to have been sufficient to have caused this aberration in turnout trends.

Despite an 876% growth of Hispanic residents between 1990 and 2016, 68105 remained a majority White area. In 2010, non-White residency peaks at 47% (see figure 23 below). By 2016 non-White residency slowly declined. In 2012 the area began a large scale re-gentrification project. The development of the Midtown Crossing area increased White residency and raised the area's socio-economic levels. Among the three South Omaha transition neighborhoods, 68105 had the highest percentage of White residents. If the racial threat theory is accurate, this could be a predicted result although, since it is similar to the trends in the other transitional areas, it is unlikely. Turnout among Republican voters in 68107 and 68108 does not appear to respond to the influx of Hispanic residents, while the results in 68105 seek further examination.

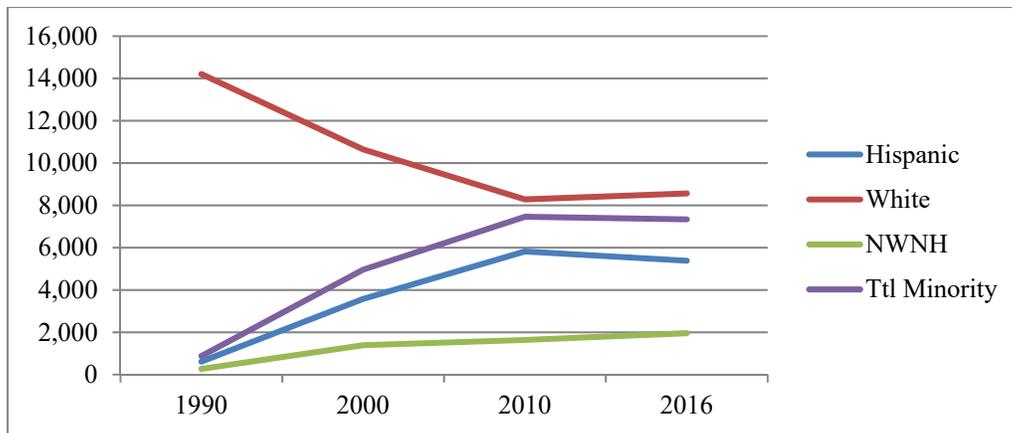


Figure 22.68005 demographic changes, 1990 – 2016

An interesting result is the sharp decline in Republican turnout in 68111 between 2008 and 2016. The number of Republican voters in North Omaha is very low. Since the area is not identified as an area undergoing ethnic transition, this behavior, while interesting, is unexplained by RTT, and could warrant further investigation in future research.

Democrat Voter Turnout

The second examination is on turnout among Democrat voters, by zip code, over the study period (see figure 24 below). Once again, among the transition areas, 68105 reveals an interesting pattern. After the sharp lull among Democrat voter turnout in the 2000 election cycle, each area of 68105, North Omaha, and West Omaha begin to deviate. Turnout among the two of the transitional areas, 68107 and 68108, continue to decline until the 2004 election cycles. However, turnout in 68105 and the control groups increases after the 2000 election cycle and into 2008 election of Barak Obama. And while Democrat voter turnout dips in 68108 to one of the lowest levels during the study period, this area and 68107 both experience an increase in Democrat voter turnout into the 2008 election cycle.

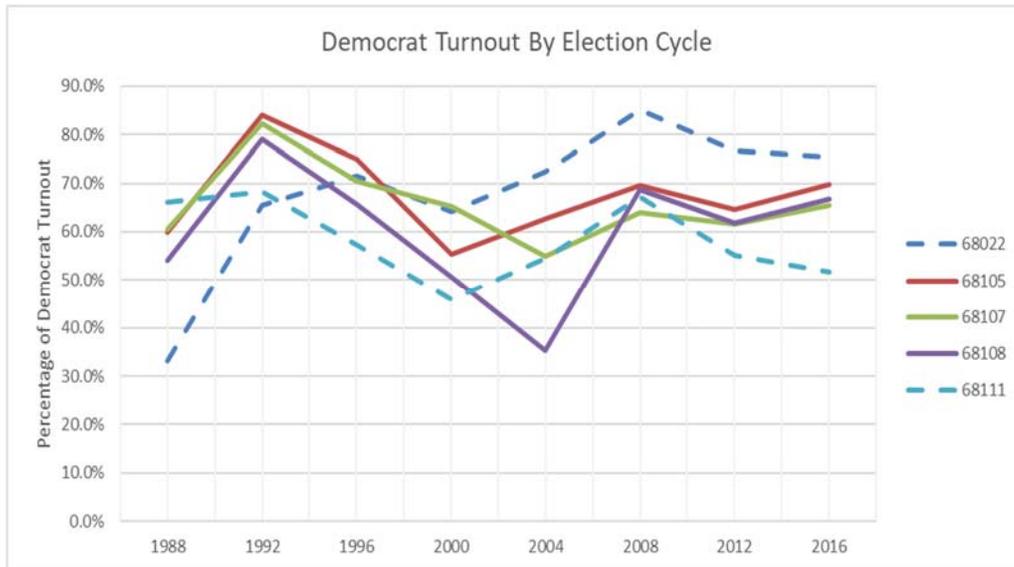


Figure 23. Democrat turnout by zip code, by election cycle, 1998 – 2016. Dotted lines depict control groups.

In 2008, despite being in 'alien territory,' Democrat voters in predominately Republican West Omaha neighborhood, turned out in higher numbers. Coincidentally, Nebraska is one of two states that divide its Electoral College votes (Maine is the other). In 2008 Nebraska split its Electoral College votes, awarding four votes to Republican John McCain and one to Barack Obama (2008 Electoral College Votes). Another interesting long term trend among Democrat voters in West Omaha is that by 1996, despite being outnumbered, their turnout is higher than in other areas. It appears that the among West Omaha voters, voting is an expected behavior.

Between 1988 and 2016, North Omaha and two of the transition neighborhoods, 68107 and 68108, did not deviate from a shared trending pattern. The tight turnout among Democrat voters in the transition areas between 1988 and 2000, and again between 2008 and 2016 is very interesting. While there is a shared turnout pattern among all the study areas, the relative lack of deviation appears. The deviation in 68108 in the election cycle of 2004 is perhaps the only stand-out aberration. By 2008 this transition area returns to the trend lines of the other areas. The lack

of a deviation among Republican voters in 68108 in the 2004 election cycle does not offer an explanation for this deviation among Democrat voters in the area.

Other Voter Turnout

Like Republicans and Democrats, the turnout in the voter category, ‘Other’ clusters tightly between 2012 and 2016. Noticeably, all three partisan groups trend downward after 1992. It is interesting though that Others dipped lower than the Democrats and Republicans. However, once again, Others in West Omaha turnout at high levels than in the other areas.

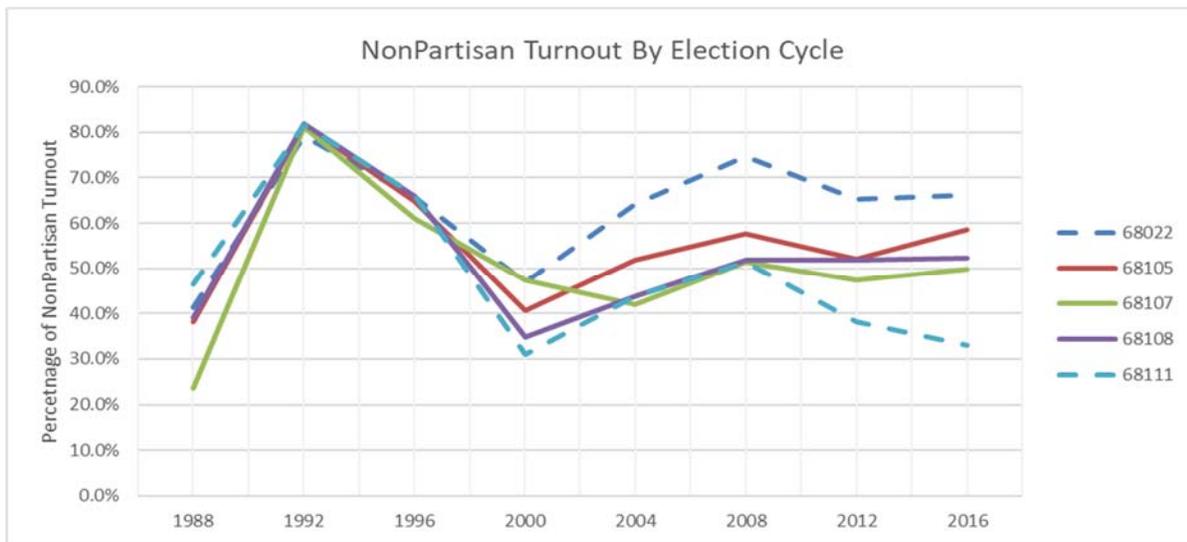


Figure 24. Other turnout by zip code, by election cycle, 1998 – 2016. Dotted lines depict control groups.

Turnout behavior during the cycles when an incumbent Presidents leaves office also demonstrate interesting results. Voters responded strongly in the 1992 election that put Clinton in office, but much less so when George W Bush entered office (2000). Turnout then climbs to the 2008 cycle when Obama won office. These results are apparent among Republicans, Democrats, and Others. Interestingly, while Republican and Democrat turnout respond strongly to the 2016 cycle and the election of Trump, the response appears more muted among Others.

Admittedly, as a group, Others represents a much smaller number of voters, so an even smaller number of actors wields a larger effect on the graphed results. It may also be possible that the 2016 election cycle caused a number of Others to switch to the more traditional political parties, which would explain, in part, the elevated results described in Party Switching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the goal of this paper was to determine whether the political behaviors of Whites changed as the ethnicity of their neighborhood evolved to include an increasing number of Hispanic residents. Previous studies have found that Whites had used political power to suppress out-group members. This use of political power was seen in party switching and voter turnout. Conversely, the consensus among researchers is that, over time, intergroup contacts lower prejudicial attitudes (Pettigrew T. F., 1998). While these other researchers have found that intergroup contact lowers prejudicial attitudes, my interpretation of the nuances of the study is that despite the shared aspiration towards this goal, there are a sizable number of Americans who, for a myriad number of reasons, continue to harbor mistrust towards fellow Americans. At the heart of this study is the questioning of how the American society is going to adjust to its increasing racial and ethnic diversity. This diversity represents a re-orientation of traditional cleavages of political power. This resorting in political powers includes increased sharing power and access to the largess of government.

In 2017, when asked, "In your opinion, what is the best way to make racial progress in the United States?" the second response among African American millennials was "revolution" (Cohen, Fowler, Medenica, & Rogowski, 2017). A 2019 NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll found that 81% of African Americans described the nation's race relations negatively ['fairly bad' (34%)

and 'very bad' (47%)] (Study #19305, 2019). Among Whites (60%) and Hispanics (61%), the cumulative findings were twenty percent lower than among Blacks. These findings suggest that America's two largest ethnic groups are experiencing society very differently than are many African Americans.

According to Pettigrew, the majority of intergroup research studies suggest that over time, most people acclimate to the changes. However, the recent movement among Western nations towards conservative forms of populism suggests that in reality not all are comfortable with the changing world (Kaufmann, 2019, Kaufmann 2018, Zingher, 2018). Over the last decade, salience of social equality was elevated in the public's awareness by peaceful and unruly street protests, in campaigns for the Presidency, in the media, and at the individual level through social media, at work, or the kitchen table.

The findings of this research did not support either of my hypotheses. Based upon RTT, I hypothesized that party switching to the Republican Party would be one response by White voters in the Study Areas. Among the control groups, North Omaha and West Omaha, over the study period, party switching was generally around 2%. Among the study areas, party switching was more dynamic. However, in the study areas, the party switching was towards both major parties, as opposed to a general movement to the GOP. An interesting behavior was the much larger amount of shifting in the study areas during the 2016 Presidential and 2018 mid-term elections. It appears something unique is happening among South Omaha voters. Whether that behavior is seen again in 2020 will prove to be interesting.

While there is switching towards both parties, there are select instances where the switch to the GOP does exceed those to the Democrat Party. This is seen in 68107 in the '10, '12, '14,

and '16 elections. Similar results are seen in 68108. However, the motivation for this behavior is unknown. Could these results represent the normal level of switching, as seen in the control areas, plus a responsive amount of switching caused by the changes in area ethnicity? Since the results show switching levels in both parties that exceed the amount of switching in the control groups, while interesting, this behavior was not predicated by RTT. Given the time, it would certainly be interesting to further explore the causes of this seemingly unusual voter behavior. Were voters responding to more than one independent variable? Without access to specific localized attitudes, I can only speculate on the causes of these behaviors. Any future study would need to access attitudes in the area to discern a possible cause, or causes, for their behaviors. Another aspect for future studies would be develop a method to factor out the static of 'typical' party switching and possibly isolate switching in a cycle that is responding to other variables.

Additional future studies could include an effort to examine the behaviors and attitudes of mixed race individuals. Studies indicate that these demographic groups are increasing. The legitimacy of future intergroup studies will be dependent upon including the effect that these voters are having on American society. However, it will be necessary to develop the 'vocabulary of ideas' from which to determine how to provide context and definitions from which these groups can be examined.

Lastly, recent voting cycles indicate that Hispanic voters are becoming more active. However, the term, Hispanics, may be an inadequate reference point from which to study this demographic group. For example, it is clear that Hispanics are not a monolithic voting group. The political interests and motivations of Cuban Americans living in Florida are different from the interests of voters in the American Southwest or rural Nebraska. This group of Americans cut across racial and ethnic lines, religious affiliation, geography and SES. The term Hispanic

represents a complex amalgamation of humanity that no longer fits comfortably into current definitions. Future intergroup contact studies will need to reconsider how to account for the attitudes, behaviors, and context of people who are no longer adequately described by current definitions including Hispanics and Mixed Race individuals.

Ultimately, despite good intentions, effort, and assistance, the model for this research did not resolve the research questions. The process of examining voting patterns was more arduous than initially anticipated. Although voting rolls are a matter of public information, the decay in the quality of information presented challenges. As was suggested by the lack of longitudinal studies in the literature, viewing the trends over shorter periods could address this issue.

A second challenge was the complexity of the available U.S. Census data. Accessing this data and working it to its best advantage requires a level of expertise that takes time to master. Between the PUMA districts and the American Community Surveys, the amount, specificity, and quality of available data are immense. However, the available tools to learn how to manipulate the data are not readily accessible, nor are the databases intuitive. The American National Election Studies databases are more intuitive and wonderful to explore. Despite the number of annual ANES surveys taken, specific data allowing the researcher to reliably identify trends and determine causal relationships at the local level is unavailable.

The biggest inhibitor was the availability of polling and data at a sufficiently local or granular level to indicate group behaviors and attitudes. While the ANES data did suggest evolving attitudes towards immigrants, illegal immigration, and Hispanics, I was unable to tie these national affective responses to local voting patterns. Polling by local political parties or candidates probably contains data that could help answer the questions posed in this study.

However, this information is proprietary and, thus, difficult to obtain. Also, political polling may, or may not, provide insights into the questions explored here.

RTT predicted that White voter turnout go up in response to an increase in the population of out-group members. This behavior was not seen in the study areas. Therefore, the hypothesis fails based upon the constraints of the applied model. Other interesting behaviors were uncovered by the research. For example, generally, Republican turnout was in consistently higher than Democrats and Others. Also, turnout in West Omaha was consistently higher than in other areas of the city. Finally, turnout in North Omaha was usually lower, regardless of party affiliation, than in other areas of the city.

The results did expose some behaviors that are worthy of discussion and speculation. Seemingly, general malaises, in terms of less trust in elected officials and in the institutions of self-governance, have been simmering in the American political system for some time now. Whether in the media or among discussants, this negative attitude by voters towards their own government seems to have reached a new height in recent years. As the 2020 election cycle fired up, media outlets questioned changes in the political system including the idea that the two major parties are re-building voting blocs along racial and class lines (Smith, 2019). Could the party switching findings in the transition areas in '16 and '18 be a part of this voting bloc realignment? And, since these behaviors are seen specifically in working class areas undergoing ethnic transition, how might race, ethnicity, and class pertain to these behaviors? Perhaps this research provides a preliminary perspective of the on-going changes in the American political system and could, in the future, be the starting point of research on changes in the early 21st Century.

In the end, the bottom-line question is how will future Americans deal with the societal changes in race and ethnicity? The research of Pettigrew and Tropp suggest that given time, some citizens will, after a period of anxiety and withdrawal, acclimate to societal demographic changes and learn to trust out-group members. Yet, at the same time, other citizens will become cut off and isolated, increasingly less trusting while being unable or unwilling to cope with the anxiety caused by societal change. Kaufmann suggests that a “White shift” has begun which encompasses the growing number of mixed race individuals. He suggests that an expanded definition of what it means to be White will inevitably lean towards greater inclusion.

Currently, the American population is nearly 25% of immigrant and first-generation Americans. While much of this study dealt indirectly with Hispanic immigration, today, the nature of immigrants and refugees coming to America includes those from other parts of the world. For example, recently, northeast Omaha has become home to Somalian refugees. A similar study, examining how Omaha's African American population responded to new same-race residents from another nation, could be an illuminating future study. Religion is another variable that has historically challenged American tolerance. Numerous religious groups have faced the gauntlet of assimilation into American society, including Mormons, Roman Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and, some might argue, Evangelicals. Examining voting behaviors associated with group contacts as it pertains to faith or even the lack of a background in organized religion, could also help political scientists understand how in-group and out-group contacts shape and influence political behaviors.

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