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Do Coal Unions and Racial Diversity Affect Split Ticket Voting in Kentucky?¹

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This paper performs an in-depth historical analysis in order to attempt to discover why Kentucky voters often split ticket vote between the national and local levels. Two theories are analyzed for validity: the coal union influence school of thought and the racial diversity school of thought. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were performed. The coal union influence theory was proved not to have significance; the coal unions have had little influence on Kentucky voting patterns throughout history and into the present day. The racial diversity school of thought was proven to have some significance; voters are influenced to a certain extent by the racial attitudes that have developed through history. Kentucky has low racial diversity and more split ticket voting than any other state in the US.

Key Words: Kentucky, Voting Behavior, Unions, Coal, Racial Diversity

It seems with every election that Kentucky contradicts itself in the polls. When it comes to state and local elections, Democrats are favored (a greater number serve in these offices). When it comes to the federal level, however, Republicans are favored. Why is this the case? Isn't partisanship the primary indicator of a person's voting habits? This paper seeks an explanation for why Kentuckians contradict themselves at the polls, or in other words, why they ticket split. By exploring the impacts of the coal industry and the level of racial diversity in the state, this paper analyzes the paradox and provides insight into why Kentuckians are split-ticket voters and if Kentucky is alone in this phenomenon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kentucky is known for its unusual voting patterns which continue to baffle political scientists to this day. The state finds itself consistently voting for Republicans at the national level, in Senate and Presidential campaigns, all while continuing to vote for Democrats at the state level, including gubernatorial elections and state House and Senate elections. This voting

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behavior defies the common perception that almost all votes are cast along partisan lines. With no readily available paradigm to explain this phenomenon, an analysis of historical context is needed to determine what events, if any, set apart the citizens of Kentucky from the general population of the United States. This paper will be divided into two distinct sections with the discussion focused around examining both the prevalence of the coal industry and labor unions for these miners, and also historical context specific to Kentucky. Using information about Kentucky's historical voting patterns, as well as research about the influence of the coal industry and labor unions, we hope to find the reason as to why Kentucky does not follow traditional partisan voting patterns.

The first school of thought that will be examined to explain this phenomenon is the influence of the coal industry and the effects of the Miner's Labor Unions as a result of this. The Appalachian region in Eastern Kentucky relies heavily on the coal industry not just for work, but for economic sustainability as well. However, for many decades the mining companies took advantage of their workforce by paying them exceedingly small wages for dangerous work while also forcing their employees to reside in subpar housing. Ian Hartman wrote that these Kentuckians "... had fallen into a state of economic, cultural, and biological decline" (Hartman 2014, p. 653). As the miner's discontent grew, it was only natural that they would turn to elected politicians in the Democratic Party, who were champions of fighting poverty and strong labor unions, to help free them from this cycle of oppression (Hartman 2014, p.653-654).

David Jacobs and Lindsay Myers provide evidence that unions were at the peak of their strength before Reagan took office in 1981, and were vigorously supported by Democratic presidents. As the miner's unions have become stronger, the people of Eastern Kentucky have consistently rewarded the Democratic Party with their votes. They typically elect Democrats to represent them in the state legislature, while also throwing their support behind any Democratic candidate for governor. As recently as 1992 and 1996, they could also be seen voting for national Democratic candidates, as was the case with Bill Clinton. The neoliberal policies of Republicans did not sit well with the laborers who relied heavily on the strength of their unions, and thus there was often little support for the GOP in Kentucky.

However, the miner's support for national Democratic candidates has begun to wane. The official national Democratic platform is seen as threatening to the coal industry because it calls for more regulations on coal and also funding for cleaner energy sources. So, while the Democratic Party promises to keep the miner's unions strong, it also threatens to significantly reduce the output of the region's most valuable resource and job creator. Ultimately, the miner's in Eastern Kentucky have decided to continue to elect Democratic candidates at the state and gubernatorial level because these

candidates do not oppose the coal industry. This causes these voters to remain registered as Democrat on the ballot. Yet these same voters have switched to the Republican ticket on the national level because of the Republicans dedication to keep the coal industry alive (Jacobs 2014). A potential weakness of this school of thought is that the Eastern Kentucky coal miners do not constitute a majority within Kentucky. However, it may be true that they turnout in greater numbers or that other Kentuckians have a similar devotion to the cause of keeping the coal industry economically viable.

A study completed in the early-to-mid twentieth century focused on voting habits in the United States concluded that voting trends can be explained based on geographic region (Wright 1932). According to this school, a true understanding of voting habits requires a "prolonged study of local history" (Wright 1932). When this study focused on Kentucky, it found that lands originally occupied by small farmers and not the institution of slavery were more likely to vote Republican at the national level, while regions where the institution of slavery was popular and the population density of African Americans was large were more likely to vote for the Democrats at the national level—all due to resentment or support of the federal government/the Reconstruction policies of the Republicans (Wright 1932); this resentment toward the federal government may help explain why ticket-splitting occurs, for this analysis did not find such resentment (or strong sentiments regarding a particular party) at the local level. All in all, this finding shows that demographics matter and that significant historical events can have long-term consequences in terms of influencing voting behavior.

While this study focused on post-Reconstruction United States (including Kentucky as a subcategory), we plan on analyzing post-Civil Rights era (post-Civil Rights Act of 1964) Kentucky to see if and/or how voting trends changed. Also, it is important to note that the conclusions made by this school were drawn after a fifty-two year analysis of voting patterns throughout the United States (Wright 1932). In closing, later studies also support the significance of geography in determining voting habits (Sigelman, Roeder, Jewell, and Baer 1985).

These two schools of thought work to answer the question of why Kentucky has a distinct pattern of ticket splitting throughout its recent history. Both of these schools take a historical perspective on Kentucky voting trends and relate Kentucky's unique past to their unique present. The first school cites the coal industry and the miner labor unions as the source of ticket splitting. It says that Kentuckians vote Democratic at the state and local levels because of the Democrats support of the unions, while they vote nationally for Republicans in order to protect the coal industry. The second school of thought cites Kentucky's geographical position and the effects of the Reconstruction after the Civil War. However, this school also attempts to explain the change in Kentucky's voting patterns after the Civil Rights

movement. It is unclear which school may turn out to be correct, but this paper will attempt to discover the true cause of Kentucky's ticket splitting.

MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS (COAL)

The overwhelming influence of the coal industry and labor unions give the best explanation for why Kentucky voters vote Democratic at the state and local level, but Republican at the national level. This argument can be understood as

Strength of coal industry and labor union interests → Ticket splitting in Ky between state/local and national elections

The prevalence of the coal in Kentucky and the labor unions that arose from this industry have a noticeable effect on Kentucky citizen's voting patterns. Throughout recent history, the Democratic Party has been the party that works to defend the rights of the labor unions. Since the labor unions are extremely important in protecting the rights of the Kentucky coal miners, many of these citizens have historically supported the Democratic Party. More recently, however, environmental protection has become a fundamental issue addressed on the Democratic national platform. This means that while the national Democratic Party protects labor unions in general, they no longer support the continuance of the coal industry.

This shift in policy has led to a shift in the voting patterns of Kentucky citizens, especially those involved in the coal industry in Eastern Kentucky. Kentucky voters continue to support local and state level Democrats because they continue to support the coal industry and also labor unions. However, on the national level Kentuckians have become more Republican due to the Republican Party's support of continuing the coal industry. It is this historical shift influenced by the coal industry and labor unions that causes ticket splitting in Kentucky between the state/local and national elections.

RESEARCH DESIGN (COAL)

Our model will be tested through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of historical evidence. In order to test our hypothesis, we hope to find historical evidence through primary sources, union membership data, and potential secondary source historical data to show that labor unions, and specifically coal unions, have had a strong effect on Kentucky's political climate. By observing and comparing Coal Union membership and voting patterns, hopefully a pattern will emerge.

In accordance to our hypothesis, we expect that pattern to be one of direct influence. We expect to find that in counties where the Coal Industry and labor unions are strongest, that we also find increased partisanship and a surge in Republican support on the national level, while having more

Democratic support on the local and state level. While previous literature and research have pointed out ways in which unions, in general, influence politics, we are going to go into greater detail regarding coal and mining unions, specifically. It is possible that we can also increase our sample size, and potentially reaffirm our hypothesis by looking at mining counties in other states and observing how their unions may or may not influence specific voting patterns, which could potentially lead to ticket-splitting in those counties and communities as well.

MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS (GEOGRAPHICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS)

Our second hypothesis is derived from the school of thought that claims that sentiments toward a political party, especially at the federal level, can be traced back to historical events of significance. In other words, events of historical significance (i.e. Reconstruction; New Deal; Civil Rights Acts) can have a multi-generational influence on partisan identification and voting habits. Our school's research focused on voting habits post-Reconstruction, where areas faced with Reconstruction changes were found to resent the party in control of the federal government (the Republican Party) for almost a century and, consequently, consistently voted Democrat at the national level. We plan to apply this school's thesis to the post-August 1964 Civil Rights Act era to see if it holds true. All in all, our argument can be understood as:

Level of racial diversity (percent of population that is African American) → Level of split-ticket voting (percent difference of votes cast for a Republican presidential candidate and a Republican gubernatorial candidate)

The formal hypothesis that will be tested in this paper is that the greater the level of racial diversity there is in a state (percent African Americans), the less split-ticket voting will occur. Furthermore, we hypothesize that Kentucky has less racial diversity than the Southern states, which is why Kentucky has less consistency (or more split-ticketing voting) when it comes to whom is elected for various offices. Our hypothesis assumes that voters in states with greater racial diversity started voting Republican after they became frustrated with the Democratic Party's support for the 1960s civil rights legislation; along these lines, it assumes that certain historical events can carry enough significance to influence the long-term voting habits of people.

RESEARCH DESIGN (GEOGRAPHICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS)

In order to test our hypothesized relationship, a comprehensive analysis must be done in order to determine to what extent the level of racial diversity of a state impacts voting behavior. To do this, we will collect two sets of data using U.S. Census data found in various volumes of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. The first set of data we will collect is the level of racial diversity

statewide; since our study is focused on the potential geographical significance of civil rights, racial diversity will be defined in this paper as the percentage of African Americans in the state. The second set of data we will collect is the rate at which a state engaged in split-ticket voting during various elections; for the purposes of this paper, split ticket voting will be defined as the difference between the percent vote count for the Republican presidential candidate (in a presidential election year) and the Republican gubernatorial candidate (in the year of or nearest the presidential election year, based on state election cycles). This data will be collected for the eleven states that made up the Confederacy during the Civil War (states that were directly affected by Reconstruction and Civil Rights) and Kentucky. A comparison will occur between these eleven states and Kentucky to see if Kentuckians split-ticket vote at higher rates than these comparison states and if racial density (or percentage of African Americans in the state) is a good predictor of the level of split-ticket voting in a state.

In order to determine the potential effect the civil rights era had on voter behavior (especially in relation to federal elections/office-holders), specific time periods and elections will have to be selected. For the purpose of this research, we plan on using data from presidential elections before the civil rights era (1952, 1960), after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (1972, 1980), and more current elections (1992, 2000, 2012). The election of 1968 was not included, because a third-party, pro-segregation candidate, Alabama Governor George Wallace, won five of our states under analysis. By looking at multiple time periods, we will be able to analyze how voting behavior has changed over time, specifically in response to the major historical event that we believe helps to explain Kentucky's ticket splitting behavior.

COAL'S EFFECT ON VOTING BEHAVIOR

Kentucky had a history of voting primarily democratic at the national level until the 1956 presidential election where Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower successfully ran for reelection and won the state of Kentucky. From this point forward, Kentucky began a pattern of voting Republican at the national level much more often than they voted Democrat, while remaining consistently Democrat at the local level. In order to fully examine the effect of the coal industry and the miner unions, a qualitative analysis will also be done. The qualitative analysis will examine the voting patterns of Kentucky and the Appalachian regions as a whole over time to determine whether or not these patterns can be linked with coal union or coal industry activity.

When examining the Kentucky voting patterns in the national elections since 1956, it should be noted that there is actually a divide in party voting within the part of Kentucky that is considered Appalachia. The northern part of the region has voted solidly democratic in most elections even if the rest of the state went Republican, up until the past two elections. Conversely, the

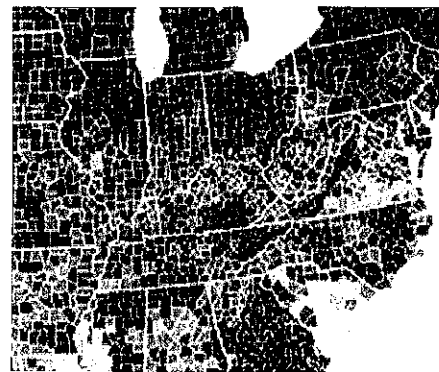
southern part of the region votes consistently Republican, even in the years where most of the state went Democrat (see maps). This evidence alone would suggest that the issue of split ticket voting in Kentucky cannot be directly related to the political decisions of the entire Appalachian region. The Appalachian region as a whole has tended to vote more Democratic in the past, until the past two elections when coal and energy have become more of a divisive issue between the two parties (see maps).

There is little to no historical evidence that suggests a correlation between the onset of Kentucky voting Republican at the national level and union and coal issues. Eisenhower did not have strong policies for or against coal, however, the US Department of Labor suggests that "prosperity led many workers to go against their union leaders and vote Republican" in the 1956 election (US Department of Labor 2014). While seemingly following union suggestion at the state level, the region of Appalachia in Kentucky has repeatedly gone against the union supported candidates throughout recent history. A good example of this is Ronald Reagan, who had tax policies that lowered government services to the poor and had "pro-oil and pro-western coal policies [that] placed Appalachia's fossil fuels at a considerable disadvantage" (Caudill 1983, 211). Despite policies that would suggest a lack of support from Eastern Kentucky, much of the Southern part of the region strongly supported him. More recently, the evidence provided earlier involving union donations suggests a similar pattern has continued to the present day. Thus, it does not seem to be the coal unions that have influence over citizen voting in elections.

However, there is some historical evidence that the coal industry, meaning the corporations in charge of the coal mining process, do have some amount of political clout in Kentucky. The environmental issues that have occurred in Appalachia over the years have highlighted "the unwillingness of most politicians to challenge the power of the coal industry or to confront the real costs of energy consumption in the United States" (Eller 2008, 251). This was the case with the 1972 Buffalo Creek flood when several government investigators were demoted after criticizing the coal industry (Eller 2008, 250-251). There is also a historical narrative that describes the coal industry's ability to prop up political candidates that support their policies; "the energy industries' community of interest seeks 'friends' who support candidates and policies they deem beneficial: low taxes and as few safety and environmental regulations as possible" (Caudill 1983, 141). These policies are most associated with the Republican Party at the national level, but within Eastern Kentucky local Democratic politicians cannot be successful without promising to help keep the coal industry alive. To summarize, coal unions seem to lack any notable political influence within the region of Eastern Kentucky, but the corporations associated with coal do have the ability to support and donate to candidates who favor their interests. However, as was the case with union

donations, it is unclear what effect the coal industry has on election outcome. Though their endorsed candidates often win, this may be a spurious relationship that has another unseen factor causing the outcome.

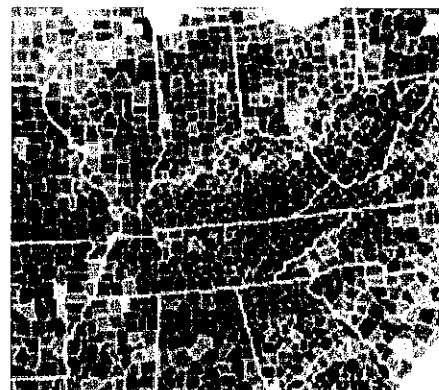
This analysis fails to definitively solve the question of why Kentucky voters often split the ticket between national Republicans and local Democrats. While it is true that support for the coal industry can cause people to vote Republican, the divide within Appalachia defies evidence of this idea. It raises the question of why one part of the Appalachian region in Kentucky has voted consistently Democratic in the past and one part has voted consistently Republican. In the last two elections the northern part of the region has become more Republican and perhaps this is due to the recent shift in the emphasis placed on environmental protection in the past few years. This issue will have to be analyzed from a different perspective because history does not yet allow a narrative to be created.



1956 election, Appalachian region



1984 election, Appalachian region



2012 election, Appalachian region



1972 election, Appalachian region

However, there are a variety of different ways to look at the influence of unions on elections. Throughout roughly the last 100 years, we have seen

union strength have both a significant and insignificant impact on various elections throughout the country. To this day, various labor unions continue to spend large sums of money in order to elect candidates that are more sympathetic to their own desires. In fact, it has been found that there is a statistically significant advantage in favor of the Democratic Party when it comes to whom labor union members are more likely to vote for. In his research paper, Harvard Ph. D. Candidate James Feigenbaum finds:

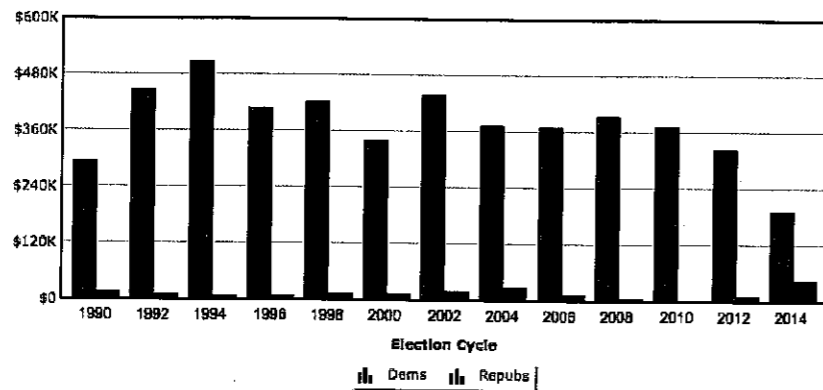
Private-sector unions have a positive effect on Democratic vote share in presidential races: an additional union increases Democratic vote share at the county level by 1.5 percentage points... [However], the effects on Congressional elections are not significant.

From this, we see that there is a definite advantage for Democrats on the presidential level, but there is no evidence of the same advantage on the Congressional level. This finding is significant, however, it may not necessarily apply to the phenomenon we see in Kentucky.

According to "Kentucky Coal Facts 2014," an annual document published by the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet and the Department for Energy Development and Independence, Kentucky ranked as the third highest coal producer in the United States, and Kentucky coal mines directly employed 11,885 people in 2013. The nation's largest coal and mining union, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), had a total membership of 73,160. The total number of Kentuckians belonging to the UMWA was 1,735, which is roughly 14.6% of those directly employed. In order to find the influence and potential partisanship of Kentucky coal unions, it would help to take a look at the partisanship of the union that represents so many of Kentucky's coal miners.

The UMWA, while claiming to have no partisan preference or affiliation, does participate in both political contributions and endorsements. And while the union claims to have no strong partisan preference, based on their recent campaign and PAC contributions that does not seem to be the case.

In the 2012 election, after making headlines for refusing to endorse either presidential candidate despite previously endorsing Obama in 2008, the UMWA contributed \$248,000 towards Democratic House candidates, and only \$10,500 towards Republican House candidates. Senate campaign contributions show an even stronger contrast with Democrats receiving \$75,400 and Republicans \$0. In 2014 this gap remained, although with a smaller disparity. 2014 Democratic House candidates received \$184,000 and Republicans received \$45,000. 2014 Senate Democratic candidates received \$9,000 and Republican candidates received \$2000. This striking disparity in political contributions is not a recent occurrence. In fact, looking from 1990-2014, we see that the UMWA has long favored the Democratic Party.



Seeing this information makes it difficult to assume that there is any sense of non-partisanship within the UMWA. However, it is entirely possible that the national union does not reflect the same partisan interests as the local union districts.

Steve Beshear won the 2011 gubernatorial election in a landslide victory, whereas Mitch McConnell won the 2014 Senate race by a wide margin. In both instances, we see a win of more than fifteen percentage points. To observe this “Kentucky phenomenon,” we can look at the three largest UMWA union districts in Kentucky and see if their voting patterns match that of the entire state. For instance, if we believe that coal union members support Democrats at the state level and Republicans on the federal level, we should see that reflected by the voting tendencies of counties with the largest coal union membership. Kentucky’s three largest UMWA membership counties are Union County, Muhlenberg County, and Hopkins County (Center for Union Facts 2014).

County	Beshear 2011 Vote %	McConnell 2014 Vote %
Union	72.4	61.8
Muhlenberg	69.4	53.6
Hopkins	66.8	65.2

Interestingly, in the three counties with the highest UMWA membership, Mitch McConnell won all three despite Alison Lundergan Grimes being the candidate endorsed by the United Mine Workers union (UMWA COMPAC).

This Kentucky phenomenon is given an element of credence by the data above; however, it is hard to argue that this is due to the strength of the UMWA and the groups political endorsements.

HISTORY OF SOUTHERN VOTING BEHAVIOR: RECONSTRUCTION ERA TO VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Following the conclusion of the Civil War, America might have been legally reunited, but states remained decisively in disagreement over the future path that the United States should take. This disagreement is evident when looked at from the perspective of voting behavior in major political elections. From the time immediately following the end of the Civil War, all the way until the 1960s, the once Confederate southern states emerged as a stronghold for the Democratic Party. This is due to the strong negative feelings toward the federal government. Due to the strict reconstruction laws that were placed upon the southern states as conditions for reinstatement into the Union, there was a general feeling of resentment toward the federal government. As former Kentucky Speaker of the House, Bobby Richardson, said, “In the 1860’s, being anti-federal government meant being anti-Republican, which was the party of Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction. Southern Democrats continued to support state’s rights over centralized power in Washington” (Willis 2012).

These feelings of resentment towards the federal government were not limited simply to the southern states that succeeded from the Union to fight for the Confederate cause, but the list also includes the border state Kentucky. It was argued that during this time period, Kentucky was “conditioned to individuality, and disliked any outside interference.” This mindset helps to explain that “although slavery was dying out in Kentucky by the advent of the war, the institution was defended by even non-slavers, who argued that a state should be allowed to exercise every power delegated to it” (Connelly 1966).

These strong sentiments for individual state power over large government only increased when “President Lincoln placed the state under Martial Law in 1865 and allowed for large scale Union occupation of the state.” This occupation, along with interference in elections and illegitimate arrests of accused confederate sympathizers, lead to a widespread sentiment not of confederate approval, but rather massive disdain for the Union army and Abraham Lincoln. This contributed to the state of Kentucky initially rejecting the Reconstruction Amendments of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments that dealt with abolishing slavery and the new rights afforded freeman. Ultimately, slavery stayed in Kentucky’s state constitution until 1890 (Connelly 1966).

These feelings of contempt that southerners, and specifically Kentuckians, felt towards Lincoln passed directly to his party, and Republicans were unable to run competitively in elections at any level for the state. The Democratic party became so entrenched in the state of Kentucky, that Democratic

candidates began to be known as the “Yellow Dog Democrats” meaning that constituents would rather vote for a yellow dog than a Republican candidate (Willis 2012).

In response to all of the reconstruction era amendments that southern states were forced to adopt to be readmitted to the Union, the south enacted various Jim Crow Laws. The Jim Crow Laws were noted for establishing separate but equal facilities and essentially separating the south into two distinct societies. We will focus on the Jim Crow laws that effectively prohibited African Americans from voting from 1900 to 1965.

One Jim Crow law required those who wanted to vote to pass a literacy test in order to be allowed to cast their ballot. Further, only those who owned a certain amount of land would be eligible to vote, which effectively eliminated everyone but rich white men. As we’ve discussed, the Democratic Party had a stranglehold on the south during this entire time period, so the only elections that effectively mattered were the Democratic primary elections, and to ensure the black voice was suppressed, only whites were allowed to vote during these elections. Finally, a poll tax was required to vote, and in terms of today’s value of money, it would have cost between \$25 to \$50 dollars to cast a vote (Brooker 2013). All of these laws effectively eliminated African Americans from having the right to vote and allowed the Democratic Party to run unopposed and establish a political dynasty in the south for over half a century.

The end of the Jim Crow Era was marked by the passage of the Voter Rights Act of 1965. This bill effectively lifted the restrictions that the south placed upon African Americans that limited their right to vote, and further it enforced the 15th Amendment to the Constitution. The primary objective is listed in section two of the act as it says, “No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by and State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color” (Voting Rights Act 1965). As a direct result of the passage of this bill, 250,000 African Americans registered to vote in that year alone. Further, 29.3% of the African American population was registered to vote in 1965, and by 1967 this number doubled to 52.1% (Tokaji 2006).

As a result of the passage of this bill, and other measures that were taken during the Civil Rights Era, many southern Democrats viewed that national party as becoming too extreme in their party platforms. The majority of Southern Democrats were against the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that were passed into law by Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson. As a result of the new extreme platforms adopted by the nation party, many Southern Democrats switched their allegiance to the Republican Party who sought to continue to limit African American rights and prevent the removal of segregation. It was at this point that the Democratic Party lost its stronghold on the South.

However, all was not lost for the Democrats though as African Americans with the new rights afforded to them, registered and voted largely for the Democratic Party. This switching of allegiance from Republicans to the Democrats was exemplified by one *Pittsburgh Courier* editor who said, “My friends, go and turn Lincoln’s picture to the wall...that debt has been paid in full” (Trotter 2004).

RACIAL DIVERSITY’S EFFECT ON VOTING BEHAVIOR

Does Kentucky split-ticket vote at a greater rate than the former Confederate states? How does Kentucky compare to these states in terms of the level of racial diversity? Before discussing the results of our analysis, it is important to understand how to read our data tables (see Appendix A for population density and split-ticket voting data tables). For population density data (or “Census Data”), we listed the year the data was from and the total population, white-population/percent population, and African-American population/percent population of the state under review. For split-ticket voting data (or “Election Data”), we listed the presidential election year under review, the percent vote for the Republican presidential candidate, the gubernatorial election year closest to the presidential election year under review (not always the same as presidential election year because states get to choose when to hold elections for state-wide offices), the percent vote the Republican candidate for governor received, and the split-ticket voting percentage (the difference between the vote the Republican candidate for president received and the Republican candidate for governor received). If a negative sign appears next to the split-ticket voting percent under the “split ticket voting percent” column, then the Republican candidate for governor received more votes than the Republican candidate for president. It is important to note that our selection of which party’s candidates to evaluate did not have bearing on the results, but rather the Republican candidate was chosen for consistency throughout our entire analysis.

Our analysis of racial density and split-ticket voting trends yielded several results (see Appendix A for population density and split-ticket voting data tables). First, we discovered that the average former Confederate state African American population density throughout the years studied was 23.37%. Meanwhile, Kentucky’s average African American population density was 7.21%. When it came to split-ticket voting, the average former Confederate state average was 7.59%. Kentucky’s split-ticket voting average was 15.95%. These findings tell us several things. First, Kentucky has less racial diversity than the former Confederate states. Second, Kentucky does split-ticket vote more than the former Confederate states. This supports our hypothesis that states with lower racial diversity would have greater split-ticket voting.

It is important to make a few comments about our data and results. First, in calculating state averages and the overall former Confederate

state averages, data was removed if there was a year where a race for governor was uncontested (Alabama 1960/62; Georgia 1952/54, 1960/62; Louisiana 1952; Mississippi 1951/52, 1959/60, 1971/72; South Carolina 1960/62, 1952/54; Texas 1952). Additionally, we were unable to study 1968 since Governor George Wallace (D-Alabama) ran on a third party ticket and won five of our states under review. Overall, our data does not reflect a massive uptick in split-ticket voting percentages after civil rights (only significant change was in 1972, where every state with available data voted for the Republican presidential candidate (Richard Nixon) at a significantly greater rate than the Republican gubernatorial candidate. While this is partially due to many Democratic candidates in these states still being pro-segregation through the 1970s, it shows that this phenomena is not solely linked to the Civil Rights Act of 1964/the civil rights movement of the 1960s (but may still be linked to the level of racial diversity in the state); future studies should analyze more elections to see how long the general split-ticket voting trend (which remained relatively the same after the civil rights era as it was before) in each state has existed.

All in all, our findings suggest that the level of racial diversity in a state has influence on the level of split-ticket voting in a state. With this, we can conclude that Kentucky's larger rate of split-ticket voting can be explained, at least partially, by its lower level of racial diversity (and therefore decreased voter disgust for the party responsible for the civil rights acts of the 1960s-the Democrats).

INTERPRETATION OF RACIAL DIVERSITY FINDINGS

As we have shown, less racial diversity in a state leads to higher levels of split ticket voting. Intuitively though this relationship does not make sense on the surface level. How does racial diversity actually relate to split ticket voting? The answer that explains this relationship does not currently exist in the literature. However, a possible solution does exist.

The answer as to why less racial diversity leads to more split ticket voting can possibly be explained by racial resentment. By racial resentment, that the southern state, or the states that were formerly part of the Confederate States, have a higher level of racial resentment than non-southern states. A study conducted that analyzed ANES survey data determined that southern states exhibit around 10% more racial resentment than non-southern states. This increased racial resentment most certainly stems from slavery, the reconstruction era, and the civil rights era.

The question is then, how does racial resentment tie into racial diversity levels and split ticket voting? We have shown that southern states have a higher level of racial diversity along with higher levels of racial resentment. It is possible then, that those who exhibit more racial resentment associate the

Democratic Party with racial minorities. This is a result of the national Democratic Party led by Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. As a result of the racial resentment and higher diversity rates, these individuals incorporate their prejudices into their voting behavior. As a result, these individuals are less willing to split their vote, because voting for the Democratic Party is voting for minorities, who they have potentially strong feelings against. This explanation might be an oversimplification of the thought processes of these voters, but we believe it is valid in explaining the relationship we are investigating.

If southern states behave this way, where does this leave Kentucky on the matter then? Since Kentucky is more of a hybrid state and not part of the deep south, we are working under the assumption that Kentucky did not have the same experiences with the Civil Rights Era as southerners. This helps to explain why Kentucky has lower levels of racial resentment than the rest of the confederate south. Another possible explanation is that Kentucky has lower levels of racial resentment because there is less racial diversity in the state. Either approach leads us to the same conclusion. Since Kentucky has less racial resentment and less racial diversity, voters in the state do not inherently associate the Democratic party with minorities. As a result, they do not have strong resentful feelings towards the party. In the absence of these strong feelings of resentment, voters are more comfortable splitting the ticket and voting as they see fit instead of allowing prejudice to dictate voting behavior.

These claims do have support outside the example of the former confederate states. The state of Texas has also exhibited a similar pattern in recent history. Much like the Deep South, Texas was at one time a solid blue state. The first time the state flipped to the Republican side was in the 1980 Presidential Election of Ronald Reagan against Jimmy Carter, with Reagan winning the election handedly. The decade leading up to this election was marked by a large increase in illegal immigrants coming over to border into Texas. The demographic makeup of the state shifted from having around 19% of its population as Latino to around 38% (Petersen 2003). This huge jump was undoubtedly coupled with an increase in racial resentment towards Latinos. These feelings of racial resentment lead the natives of Texas to associate the Latino race with the Democratic Party. This is due to the perception that Democrats are more lenient on immigration. As a result of this racial resentment and increased racial diversity in the state, the once solid blue state flipped to red as voting behavior changed. We also see a decrease in split ticket voting from the state as Texas now ranks 10th in the nation in straight line voting, or inversely 40th in the nation in split ticket voting (UT at Austin 2014). This lends support to our hypothesis that less racial diversity leads to more split ticket voting.

Further, the Texas example provides a way to improve our future research. For our project we exclusively looked at African Americans as the

minority group, but we have seen that this pattern of behavior extends to other racial minority groups and other geographic areas. We could potentially look at other time periods if the data is available. For example we could look at European immigrants in the New York area in the 1900s, or Asian immigrants in California in the mid-1800s to see if this pattern continues, or if our political structure was too young to exhibit high levels of ticket splitting.

CONCLUSION

The data collected does not support our coal hypothesis. Instead, we found that coal unions and the UMWA support the Democratic Party on the federal level. Additionally, we discovered that coal unions have not had an effect on Kentucky voting patterns in recent history.

The data collected did support our racial diversity hypothesis. When Kentucky was compared historically (1950-present) with the former Confederate States of America, Kentucky was found to have, on average, less racial diversity and greater split-ticket voting.

This study gives us insight into a possible explanation for the Kentucky phenomena: low racial diversity. Further research should be conducted to see if racial diversity truly is a significant explanation for why Kentuckians split-ticket vote at a high rate.

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