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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL CYNICISM AND RIGHT-WING  
AUTHORITARIANISM:

A Study of the Louisville-Jefferson County Merger

By

Jeremy Reed Porter  
B.S., University of Louisville, 2003

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of the University of Louisville  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, Kentucky

August 2004

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A Thesis Approved on

August, 4<sup>th</sup> 2004

by the following Thesis Committee:

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Dr. William Dakan

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, my wife, my brothers, and my daughters;

Linda, Anastasia, Jason, David, Ciara, and Jamirah Porter.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First of all, I would like to thank Dr. L. Allen Furr for his valuable guidance and support in this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Furr for taking an interest in me as a person and providing me with an excellent professional opportunity. Next, I would like to thank Dr. J. Allen Whitt and Dr. William Dakan for agreeing to serve on my committee and for their valuable help and comments on the project. I would also like to thank the University of Louisville Sociology Department and its faculty for providing me with the tools and data needed to see this process through completion. Lastly, I would like my friends and family who have helped me get to this point in my life; hopefully I'll be able to return the favor.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL CYNICISM AND RIGHT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM:**

A Study of the Louisville-Jefferson County Merger

Jeremy Reed Porter

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004

The government's ability to gain and hold a high proportion of citizens' trust is essential to the functioning of an efficient and successful administration at the federal, state, and local levels. This thesis is a quantitative study aimed at finding possible explanations for differences in levels of political cynicism. One possible explanation, right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), is the subject of this study. Furthermore, the study aims to link the variables to the 2000 Louisville-Jefferson County merger. The data for this study were collected from 802 respondents residing in the Metro Louisville area using a random technique via the 2004 Louisville Metro Survey. Analyses of the data were done both statistically and spatially in order to determine significant relationships and the possible existence of residential segregation. The findings show that there is a relationship between the variables, which allows for the conclusion that RWA levels are a reliable predictor of political cynicism.

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## INTRODUCTION

The government's ability to gain and hold a high proportion of citizens' trust is essential to the functioning of an efficient and successful administration at the federal, state, and local levels. The levels of trust in a government can affect its ability to govern effectively and its process of decision making. Low levels of trust theoretically could result in weak decisions and policies that are unable to remedy the problems within the government's jurisdiction. High levels of trust, however, can be seen as a shield, under which the government can feel confident in creating and enforcing controversial legislation knowing it has the support of the public. In essence, government trust is an essential element in the development and implementation of controversial regulations and policies that segments of the population may oppose, but are thought to be best for the community as whole by those in office.

The literature has shown that those who distrust government and feel that government is not looking out for them, are often similar demographically due to common interests. The group tends to build an "us" versus "them" mentality based on those characteristics of the group that feels it has been wronged. This, in turn, further strains the trust of the group in the local and national government. For instance when the government wants to cut programs aimed at helping the elderly, it makes sense that primarily the elderly protest the policy. Another example of this took place in Louisville, KY, where there were a number of police shootings in which white officers shot and

killed a number of African-Americans over a relatively short period of time. A number of protests against the police were initiated; the majority of those who were protesting were African-Americans.

Also in Louisville, the Louisville-Jefferson County merger, a policy aimed at merging municipal Louisville and Jefferson County governments, was criticized by a number of groups. Rick McDonough, of the *Louisville Courier Journal*, showed that overall the group in opposition to the merger was relatively similar demographically and geographically. Based on the link documented in the literature it is possible to assume that these groups experience a relatively similar lifestyle and develop common social-psychological characteristics. Relative to this study, certain social-psychological characteristics could play a role in determining how individuals and groups interpret the performance of the government, ultimately predicting their overall level of trust in the government.

One such characteristic, authoritarianism, is the subject of this study and can be defined as the tendency to be conventional, hierarchical, and intolerant. It has also been implicated in extreme right-wing ideology, and Altemeyer (1996) has proposed that authoritarianism is a learned personality trait often resulting from the individual's upbringing or background. Because of the political dimension inherent in authoritarian personalities we can assume that an individual's level of trust in government is directly related to their level of authoritarianism. The purpose of this study is aimed at finding significant relationships between authoritarianism, selected demographic variables, and their relationship to levels of trust in the Louisville-Jefferson County Metro government. In addition, the study uses the respondent's 2000 self-reported vote on the Louisville-

Jefferson County merger to test the hypothesis that there are both demographic and underlying personality characteristics common among individuals within the population who distrust local government and local government policies. The demographic dividing lines of the merger are well documented, but, as shall be seen, the literature also hints at existing geographic dividing lines between an individual's spatial location in Louisville-Jefferson County and their predicted vote on merger. Related to residential segregation, in which individuals reside in homogeneous areas based on demographic characteristics, the study also spatially examines the concentrations in the area of the demographic variables, authoritarianism, trust levels in the metro government, and support of the merger.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Arthur Miller attempts to define political trust by stating, “Political trust can be thought of as a basic evaluative or affective orientation towards government” (Miller, 1974: 952). Hetherington (1998), drawing on Miller, further suggests that political trust is a basic evaluative orientation toward government, he goes on to say that this evaluation is an assessment of how well the government is operating according to people’s expectations. The assessment of government often has partisan influences, according to Miller (1974), who argued that much of the discontent and government mistrust is related to dissatisfaction with the perceived policies of the party in power on issues that are relevant to the values of a substantial part of the population. The importance of government trust in a democratic society is underscored by the fact that the government is run “for the people by the people” and theoretically should make most of the people content most of the time. Low levels of government trust then could be a symptom of a failing democratic system.

The Center for Political Studies (CPS) at the University of Michigan created a trust scale that has been used by many researchers as a way to measure trust in government. Research has shown that the respondent’s answer to the CPS government trust scale’s question regarding whether the government does the right thing most of the time is the best predictor of their overall level of trust (Easton, 1975; Erber, 1990). Using this CPS measure, researchers have based the legitimacy of democratic political systems

on the extent to which the electorate trusts the government to do what's right "most of the time".

Historically the literature shows that the levels of trust in government have dropped consistently since the 1960's. Through the early 1960's, survey researchers commonly found three out of every four respondents answered that the government did what was right "most of the time" (Erber, 1990). From mid-1960's until the 1980's, however, there was a steady decline in trust reported. Responses to the same statement fell from a high of 78% in 1958 to 53% in 1972, and dropped again to 33% in 1976 (Erber, 1990). A small rise in the 1980's accompanied the White House occupancy of President Reagan, but the early 1990's brought about a new all-time low in the public's trust in government. Hetherington later adds to these statistics stating, "With the exception of upturns in the early 1980's and mid-1990's, trust in government has declined dramatically over the last thirty years". The dramatic drop in trust in government parallels the public's belief that the government is not doing what is right "most of the time" (Erber, 1990).

Trust in government is not only a measure of government efficiency but also a measure of potential government power. Chanley says that trust is necessary for those in power to make decisions, commit resources to attain societal goals, and to ensure the cooperation of citizens. Trust in government is not only essential to a democratic political system, as in the U.S., but it can also be viewed as one of the most important factors in sustaining a successful political system. The importance of trust in government is summed up by Feldman when he stated, "Perhaps the most well documented trend in political attitudes over the past twenty years has been the sharp increase in political

cynicism” (Feldman, 1983: 341). This sharp increase in political cynicism (distrust) is telling of the attitude shift in the public’s perception of government. Hetherington explains that possible origins of this attitudinal change may result in the fact that “rather than providing benefits and protections, the government is viewed more as producing scandal, waste, and unacceptable intrusions on people’s personal lives” (Hetherington, 1998: 791). At least one author, however, points out that government trust is not as much of hindrance on the government as some think and that the level of trust among citizens is more a response to government actions and does not hinder the government’s power (Citrin, 1986). Here, Citrin is pointing out that the government acts often in order to secure political trust, however, if need be it does have the power to overstep public perception of what is right and wrong. The idea being that even with the power the government has, it is likely to stay in line with citizens’ beliefs in order to avoid eventual overthrow or what U.S. democratic society calls “impeachment”.

Trust in government, in essence, gives political leaders their power and legitimates their authority; without it they would be forced to make weak decisions and would be unable to cope with the most controversial problems facing the jurisdiction for which the leader is appointed. Again reiterating the importance of trust in a democratic political system, Miller points out that a democracy cannot survive long without the support from a majority of its citizens and that long term discontent eventually may lead to revolutionary changes in both the political and social system (Miller, 1974). The individuals involved in forcing such revolution do so because they feel alienated from the system and do not trust government because it does not function for them. This feeling of dissatisfaction with the government, as introduced earlier by Feldman, is referred to in



the literature as political cynicism which Citrin says is the rejection of conventional modes of political participation. The author goes on to define conformist modes of political participation as “voting, lobbying, writing letters to congressmen, and campaigning for political parties” (Citrin, 1974: 979). However, the problem with discontent arises as citizens withdraw support for government and become less willing to comply with government decisions leading to the legitimacy of a democratic regime being called into question (Easton, 1975).

The literature on trust in government is generally divided into two schools of thought. One is based on the ideas of Citrin and the relation of political cynicism to the approval rating of the incumbent political leader. The second is based on Miller’s idea that levels of trust in government are related to citizens’ feelings towards contemporary policies and issues. The debate between Citrin and Miller on the basis of government distrust has been called the central argument in the study of political trust (Williams, 1985). One author simplifies the debate when stating that it centered on the two’s contrasting ideas. Miller’s idea that declining trust reflects citizens’ disaffection with the political regime in general, while Citrin argues that political cynicism simply reflects dissatisfaction with incumbent political leaders (Chanley, 2000). Citrin, in a rebuttal to Miller’s 1974 article, states, “At a minimum the trust in government scale [in Miller’s study] fails to discriminate between the politically alienated and those who mistrust particular leaders or politicians as a class without repudiating regime values or institutions” (Citrin, 1974: 976). In this statement Citrin points out what he believes is a flaw in Miller’s study and tries to prove that the levels of distrust in the study are significantly associated with incumbent approval and not trust in the general U.S.

democratic regime. Recent literature has shown that both potentially are right, focusing on more of a social-psychological explanation for how people cognitively understand and feel towards the government at an individual level.

Erber (1990), added to these ideas by further suggesting a link between the way individuals cognitively process politics and their levels of political cynicism. According to Erber, individuals develop a set of personal constructs that they apply to understand their environment. These constructs are then applied to the surrounding world; in the realm of politics these constructs include issue, person, and group. Individuals who follow an issue schema tend to distrust government based on the issues at stake and the policies that deal with them, which supports Miller's argument. Those who follow a person schema evaluate politics primarily on the personal characteristics of the candidate running for office in support of Citrin's ideas on incumbent approval (Erber, 1990). The results of Erber's study show that taking into account how people process information, enables us to understand increases in levels of political cynicism since the mid-60's.

On the one hand, in support of Miller and issue schema, a number of social issues have impacted the levels of trust in individuals based on the governments handling of those issues. Two of the more obvious issues include the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. Both were initially supported by large segments of the population, but as the government failed to meet the public's expectations political cynicism grew. On the other hand, Citrin's belief is that levels of political cynicism are simply based on the incumbent's approval ratings. This is similar to Erber's ideas on the person schema. A good example of this approach to understanding trust in government is the belief that Reagan's persona was critical for initiating the reversal in the public's outlook on

government (Citrin, 1986). According to Citrin, the reason for the increased significance of Reagan's individual approval is due to the decrease in party loyalty and increase in the weight placed on the individual's personality. However, it is important to point out that research on stereotypes suggests "that feelings about the sum affect the parts more powerfully than the reverse" (Hetherington, 1998: 795). So theoretically it would be extremely hard for an individual, be it the mayor or president, to restore trust by themselves in what ever political system they head, whereas it is quite easy for a political system's reputation to spread to the politician.

Other predictors of government trust in the literature include the economic system, socio-cultural factors, and political factors. Economic factors seem to be simple and clear cut: a negative perception of the economy lead to greater distrust (Chanley, 2000). An example again using President Reagan shows that by implementing policies that successfully improved the economic situation in the U.S. he in turn improved levels of political trust in the 1980's. Simply, people are likely to trust things that they perceive to work effectively (Hetherington, 1998). Social-cultural factors include increased distrust based on rising crime and child poverty; while political factors include both Miller and Citrin's ideas of the approval of the regime as a whole and the incumbent (Chanley, 2000).

Chanley points out political factors have changed over the years and now also include increasing numbers of political scandals and increased media focus on scandal and corruption. Since Watergate, the role of the media has shifted to a more critical style, which has accompanied the increase of political cynicism (Hetherington, 1998). Other political factors that have had an effect on government trust include international affairs

and specifically the “cold war”, which accompanied Reagan’s term in office and also helped lead to higher levels of government trust based on the concern for common defense (Chanley, 2000). Chanley’s study shows support for the hypothesis that levels of trust rise and fall with the economy, and that social-cultural (crime) factors and political factors, including corruption and international affairs, are all significant predictors of trust, where low levels indicate the governments placement in the undesirable end of the economic, socio-cultural, and political arenas.

Brewer (2002) suggests that while low levels of trust can be disastrous for government, high levels of trust in government can be seen as a source of political capital. More trust provides leaders with more leeway to govern effectively and institutions a larger store of support (Hetherington, 1998). Hence, the level of trust for the administration in power at any given time has huge ramifications on the ability of leaders to exercise power and in turn on their historical legacies. Government trust also has an affect on incumbent approval; if trust is relatively low then the approval rating will be lower as a reflection (Hetherington, 1998). Hetherington (1998) comments on the idea of reciprocal causality in relation to low approval ratings stating that, the simultaneous relationship between trust and institutional support means that, once lost, approval is harder to regain. This work provides evidence of a cyclical downward spiral associated with low levels of government trust.

Despite the pessimism, cynicism does provide an important service to our political system as skepticism about actions of government officials is undoubtedly healthy in a democratic political system (Chanley, 2000). Citrin adds that realistic cynicism rather than unquestioning faith is much more functional for democracy. It

provides a sort of check for government officials in order to curb corruption and unrepresentative decision making. In fact, Erber (1990), goes a step further, providing evidence that cynicism may in fact lead to a more representative decision making. He argues that if short in duration, it may promote electoral and social changes. Examples include the War Powers Act, which was a result of the Vietnam War; policies on campaign finance and ethics of government that followed Watergate, and Reagan's fiscal program that stemmed from dissatisfaction with the economic stagnation of the 1970's (Citrin, 1986). The literature suggests, then, that a minority of the population who distrusts government is not only functional but needed to stimulate social change and serve as one facet of the checks-and-balance system.

Reasons for political cynicism have, more often than not, been associated with some level of discontent with the political regime. However, in 1974, Citrin pointed out that it had become part of popular culture to denigrate politicians and to criticize established institutions. This leads one to believe that a certain part of the population is simply distrusting of government because it seems like the "in" thing to do, and that in order for government to increase levels of trust it should instead focus on those segments of society that truly have withdrawn and feel alienated from the political system. After all, those withdrawn and alienated individuals are less willing to comply with government policies, while those who are fashionably cynical are more likely to provide the service of "checking" political officials.

Once the individuals remove themselves from the traditional methods of political participation they engage in non-customary activities such as riots and sit-ins or even a complete withdraw from political activity (Citrin, 1974). Citrin cites other studies that

have found similar results; one example is a Berkley-based study on political alienation that found a strong relationship between those who self-report their involvement in unconventional political protests and feelings of disaffection from the political regime. These “non-traditional” reactions to discontent with the government help to produce reciprocal causation between trust and government in which distrust creates conditions for further distrust (Chanley, 2000; Hetherington, 1998). The idea of reciprocal causation, as mentioned earlier, is that the public limits the power of the government based on distrust, causing those in power to be unable to make the proper decisions that could bring about positive change in society and potentially bring about high levels of trust in government. Hetherington later adds that disaffection for political leaders in turn creates an atmosphere in which it is harder for that politician to succeed.

In order to enhance political trust among those who have withdrawn or become alienated from the political system, initiatives such as minimum wage increase, education programs, strong stands on the environment, and family and medical leave can make a difference (Hetherington, 1998). Enacting popular non-controversial policies is one way for the government to gain trust from its citizens. Identification with those in office also helps raise levels of government trust. For example, those running for office often stress their identification with the public by modifying their language and attire in the presence of different demographic groups (Gay, 2002). The chameleon-like attitude of the politician is telling of the larger political system, which often shifts its focus in order to remain popular with its citizens. These shifts are directly influenced by the successful ability of citizens to affect government through their affection towards the political system, often leading to sought after changes. Changes in the social system seem to be

much more revolutionary, for example the civil rights movement, suffrage, and, most recently, same sex rights movement.

Perhaps the best example of political cynicism affecting the social system is seen in the levels of government trust by different demographic groups over time in relation to issues affecting those groups. Race and ethnic differences for example, have been associated with differences in levels of political cynicism, especially among blacks and whites (Miller, 1974). Since the Institute for Social Research began measuring political trust more than twenty years ago, racial differences have been noted (Howell, 1988). One of the issues, which helped to create this difference, is the Civil Rights Bill of 1964, which immediately affected the trust in government of both blacks and whites. For most of history both groups tended to be relatively even and high on the trust scale. In the mid-1960's, however, black trust increased significantly while whites decreased minimally during the same period of time (Miller, 1974). Unfortunately, the gains in trust were short-lived.

Passing the Civil Rights Bill proved, as literature has shown, that unmet needs of any given segment of the population may lead to that group's distrust in government. It was evident in 1966, after two years of unmet expectations following the Civil Rights Bill, the level of black trust in government dropped and fell below the level of whites (Miller, 1974). The reversal of trust in government by race was based on cynical responses to all five scale questions in the 1964 and 1970 CPS survey. Based on CPS survey results, 11% of blacks gave cynical responses to all five questions in 1964. That jumped to 40% in 1970 after failed promises and expectations from the Civil Rights Bill. During the same time period white's distrust in government, also at 11% in 1964, rose

more slowly to 20% in 1970 (Miller, 1974). The increase in white distrust is due to the fact that, among white, high “political cynicism has consistently been most prevalent among those favoring segregation and believing the federal government should not play a role in the integration of schools and public accommodations” (Miller, 1974: 957). Black levels of distrust rose at a faster rate during this time period as a direct reflection of unmet needs. The issues and policies designed to deal with social issues often have lasting affects on those groups involved.

The long term impact of the civil rights movement caused blacks to conceptualize politics in group conscious terms based on the positive or negative impact of political alternatives for blacks as a whole, while whites are more likely to choose among multiple dimensions, only one of which is race (Howell, 1988). This includes the ability of blacks to relate to those in government; for example, black control of a mayor’s office can enhance local levels of political trust among blacks in a community (Gay, 2002). This is consistent with earlier research which showed that the political reality of African Americans directly affects their level of trust. The difference was determined to be substantial if an African American was in a head position (Howell, 1988). Howell confirmed the political reality model in a study by comparing the trust levels of blacks and whites nationally to the local trust levels in New Orleans where at the time a black mayor was in office. The levels of trust among whites did not differ locally when compared to national averages; however, black trust was significantly higher locally leading Howell to accept the idea that, at least relative to blacks, an individual’s political reality does affect that individual’s level of trust. Howell’s political reality model went on to assume that as an African-American, in a city where there is a white mayor, the



minority group as a whole would have less trust in the local government because the policy alternatives chosen are likely to favor the majority.

Along with race, the literature includes a number of other factors that influence an individual's level of trust in government; these include gender, education, partisanship, age, income, access to media, and social-psychological factors, which were often shaped by the individual's background (Miller, 1974; Brewer, 2002; Hetherington, 1998).

Consistent with the political reality model, those with low levels of trust are often most unlike those in power, including female, poor, low educated, and a member of a minority race or ethnic group.

Citrin attempted to identify those who scored low on the trust in government scale, saying they appear to form a heterogeneous group that includes ritual cynics and alienated individuals as well as respondents who see no alternative to the incumbent authorities and reject the ongoing constitutional order. However, while Citrin believes they are a largely heterogeneous group, Miller attempts to show that those who score low on the trust scale belong to two different homogeneous groups that each settle on polar ends of the political issue spectrum. In Miller's study, a survey was administered on contemporary social issues and their liberal (left) and conservative (right) alternatives. A score of 1 was most liberal, 7 most conservative, and 4 was a central position. His study did not find that there is one heterogeneous group but instead a "bi-polarization of distrust" (Miller, 1974). The far-left (1) and far-right (7) are seen as the most extreme cases of political distrust and he named those on the liberal end "cynics of the left" and those on the conservative end "cynics of the right". "Cynics of the left" he described as predisposed to social and political change and as blaming system constraints as opposed

to individual shortcomings when analyzing individual place in society. These individuals are more conveniently labeled liberals. On the other hand “Cynics of the right” are predisposed to social control and stress a Protestant ethic approach to the individual’s responsibility rather than the system’s responsibility concerning the individual’s shortcomings and place in society (Miller, 1974). This second group, opposite of liberals, are labeled conservatives. Both groups were equally cynical of the government but agree with polar alternatives. Miller’s work has been applied to more recent studies with similar findings; “Political cynicism prevalent in the U.S. at this time was primarily due to dissatisfaction with the (centrist) policy alternatives that been offered by the two parties” (Erber, 1990: 237). Because of the fact that those who distrust government are on opposite ends of the issues spectrum, centrist policies that are enacted in hopes of pleasing the largest number of people essentially makes almost no one happy. This polarization infers that discontent vents from some individuals because of an unfulfilled desire for social change, while, among others from fear of change (Miller, 1974).

Citrin later adds in the mid-80’s that sustaining high levels of trust is harder today than in an earlier era because the government now operates in a culture that constantly questions and ridicules that which it does not agree with. This cultural climate is created because the majority of the people are either cynics of the left or right to some degree and those who agree with the centrist policy alternatives, which the government usually adopts in order to try and please everyone, are in the minority. The demographic makeup of the cynics of the right and left are also interesting. In the 1974 study, cynics of the left are 33% under the age of 30, 38% black, 71% Democratic, 38% income under \$4,000, and nearly 30% with college education. Cynics of the right differ greatly, as 12% are

under 30, 0.3% are black, nearly 50% are Republican, only 20% have income under \$4,000, and 18% have college education (Miller, 1974). The one thing Citrin and Miller agreed on is that, overall, the levels of political cynicism in the U.S. had risen in every demographic group.

In Miller's study those who scored as the most extreme conservatives, "cynics of the right", were more likely, in relation to liberals, to be white, Republican, older, and less educated. More recently, social-psychological characteristics have been linked to this cluster of demographics and right-wing ideology. Authoritarianism, is defined as "the tendency to be hierarchical, conventional, and intolerant", and it "has been implicated by research as an extreme feature of general right-wing ideology" (Butler, 2000: 1). Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) "refers to a personality orientation centered on several key attitudes and, in general, is characterized by attitudinal features" (Furr, 2003: 411). Altemeyer, in his book *The Authoritarian Specter*, groups these attitudinal features into three patterns that define RWA:

- 1) Authoritarian submission – High degree of submission to established and legitimate authority.
- 2) Authoritarian aggression – Aggressiveness directed against various persons, which is perceived to be sanctioned by the authorities.
- 3) Authoritarian conventionalism – Adherence to traditional norms and values usually backed by established authorities.

Definitions of the attitudinal clusters provided by researchers were summed up best by Bobo as follows, "Authoritarian submission involves trust, respect, and above all else, obedience to the established and legitimate authority. Conventionalism involves a reverence for traditional beliefs regarding such matters as patriotism, gender roles and sexuality, and religion. Aggression involves a willingness to harm or punish those who

deviate from the dictates of established authority and convention” (Bobo, 1990: 630).

Bobo suggests challenges to certain forms of free expression, such as proposed anti-flag burning legislation, or to continued violations are consistent with RWA theory.

Altemeyer’s RWA Scale is the most used measure for computing RWA scores in contemporary research. Despite its popularity, the literature is mixed on the effectiveness of the scale. Butler called Altemeyer’s RWA scale “psychometrically sound and a substantially valid instrument” (Butler, 2000: 1). However, others have disagreed saying that the measure of authoritarianism is subject to response bias and is not politically neutral (Goertzel, 2001). Overall, the research supports the use of Altemeyer’s RWA scale as it consistently delivers reliable results factorable into the three attitudinal features that are used define right wing authoritarianism.

The literature offers a large number of defining characteristics on authoritarianism. The consensus is that authoritarians seem to be linked to the need for routine, predictability, and consistency (Butler, 2000). “High RWA’s are authoritarian followers who have submissive attitudes toward established authorities, show a general aggressiveness toward persons “targeted” by those authorities, and adhere tightly to social [norms and values]” (Altemeyer, 2003: 161). The fact that RWA’s, in general, are aggressive towards “targeted” individuals shows their submission to the established authorities, who are believed to be doing the “targeting”. Indeed the research has shown that RWA is characterized by a dominance-submissive relationship to authority (Furr, 2003). RWA’s form groups based on an "us" versus "them" mentality: those who are like us are the “in-group” while those who are not are the “out-group”. The readiness of RWA’s to settle into in-groups based solely on similarities, consequently, creates

homogeneous groups with little life experience and produces individuals who yearn to follow what they consider a legitimate leader.

Authoritarians are thought to be intellectually dependent on rigid figures of power and their ideologies. These belief systems typically involve strong support for traditional values and conventionality, and are fearful of out-groups who are often perceived to threaten their ideology and authority structure (Furr, 2003). Their submissive tendencies create an easy opportunity for social dominators gain power (Altemeyer, 2003). In other words, RWA's are not often leaders but instead are typically followers of any leader with, what they deem, legitimate power. Their homogeneous groups not only limit life experiences, but also create an ignorance of outside groups leading RWA's to be prejudiced against most all racial, ethnic, or national minorities, and against homosexuals, women, atheists, and religions that differ from their own (Altemeyer, 2003). Butler's study concluded that authoritarian syndrome is mainly characterized by low openness to experience (Butler, 2000), no doubt internalized by their fear of anything unlike them and the "in-group" to which they belong. He later stated, "Authoritarianism is identical to being closed to experience" which "is to be restricted to one's range of acceptable ways of thinking, acting, and being" (Butler, 2000: 10). Butler's study showed a correlation between authoritarianism and conservatives, meaning that, important to this study, authoritarians and "cynics of the right" could possibly be members of the same group.

Along with conservatism, other correlates of authoritarianism include dogmatism, militarism, and religiosity (Butler, 2000), each with high levels equaling high levels of authoritarianism. Negative correlations of authoritarianism include intellectual

development, academic performance, and IQ (Gabennesch, 1972). Scholars generally agree that authoritarianism, intolerance of non-conformity, and racial prejudice are far less common among the well educated than the poorly educated (Houtman, 2003). The literature offers an explanation for this phenomenon by consistently agreeing that education allows for the individual to broaden and diversify their socio-cultural perspectives, agreeing that authoritarianism typically results from a lack of such perspectives (Gabennesch, 1972). Gabennesch goes onto say that this “breadth of perspective” gained through education and life experience is similar to the idea of reification in that learning to understand others and accept their different ways of understanding essentially creates “new” ways of doing things not “wrong” ways of doing things. Regulation of the outside world can lead to individuals with a limited number of experiences and a closed disposition. People who report having encountered unconventional people, atheists, or homosexuals and found them to be ‘normal’ people, are far less likely to score high in authoritarianism (Bobo, 1990). In relation, one explanation given to understand why people do not become authoritarian is that the accumulation of “cultural capital” through ones’ life experiences includes an acceptance of unconventional lifestyles and non-traditional behaviors (Houtman, 2003). However, those whose contact with the outside world is regulated will gain limited “cultural capital” and may find themselves naturally gravitating towards the traditional values and authoritarian thinking that define right-wing ideology. This is a direct consequence of their limited contact with alternative values and ways of thinking (Butler, 2000). Other correlates that are related to RWA include an individual’s level of social alienation, race, age, religiosity, class, background (rearing), tolerance of deviance, and negative attitudes

toward female roles, divorce, and sexual permissiveness (Gabennesch, 1972; Raden, 1994).

Researchers provide a number of theoretical explanations for the development of authoritarianism. Theories on the origins of authoritarianism are rooted in several different sources, including genetics, life experiences (especially adolescent), and education experiences (Butler, 2000). The most commonly-used theory for the development of authoritarianism is the idea that authoritarianism is learned, this approach assumes that an individual's attitudes and behaviors are shaped through imitation, reinforcement, and conditioning and are reinforced by peers, the media, and political rhetoric (Furr, 2003). Other more Freudian-based perspectives believe that both the hostility towards out groups and the basic style of thinking were rooted in repressed impulses. These repressed impulses were the outgrowth of a childhood upbringing involving harsh parental socialization, demands for conformity, and stiff punishment for non-conformity (Bobo, 1990). In essence, RWA as a social-psychological trait is a socially modifiable attitude. The trait is socialized and more likely to develop in children whose parents stress conformity to authority and enforce strict regulation concerning contact with new ideas and ways of thinking (Furr, 2003).

Right-wing politics and authoritarianism politics can be seen as ultimately one in the same. The literature provides examples of many right-wing political decisions which researchers found were supported by those who have high levels of authoritarianism. For example, authoritarians advocated U.S. involvement in a number of controversial political issues including the Vietnam War (Izzett, 1971), the Persian Gulf War, the use of nuclear weapons (Doty, 1997), and a "get tough" policy regarding social changes in

Eastern Europe and countries alleged to be engaging in unfair trade practices (Peterson, 1993). All of which are right-wing, conservative policies. As mentioned earlier, the literature shows that Altemeyer's RWA scale is indistinguishable from a conservatism scale, again lending support to the idea that right-wing cynics (conservatives) and authoritarians are similar in nature. The attitudinal features of conservatives also parallel that of authoritarians. In 1958, McClosky introduced the essential elements of the conservative outlook, all of which also seem to define individuals who score high on Altemeyer's RWA scale. They are as follows:

- 1) Man is a creature of appetite and will, governed more by emotion than reason.
- 2) Society is ruled by divine right; religion is the foundation of society.
- 3) Society is the product of a long and painful evolution; embodying the accumulation of wisdom which is the presumption of favor of what ever has survived.
- 4) Change is unnecessary.
- 5) Men are naturally unequal, requiring orders and classes.
- 6) Order, authority, and community are the primary defense against violence and anarchy.

These ideas are supportive of the literature on authoritarianism and consistent with the belief that authoritarians view authority as powerful individuals providing a set of standards to which subordinates must conform (Raden, 1994). McClosky said that conservatives place high values on authority, leadership, natural hierarchy, and an elite to guide and check the rest of mankind. He adds that although the intensity of their patriotism exceeds that of any other group, their faith in democracy is the lowest while their scores on the totalitarian, elitist, and authoritarian values are the highest. Also, consistent with research on highly authoritative individuals, McClosky points out that one of the clearest findings, contrary to claim, is that conservatism is not the preferred



doctrine of the intellectual elite, or of the more formally educated segments of the population, but the reverse. McClosky's study concluded that conservatives tend to score on the more undesirable end on each of the following items; sense of security, sense of belonging, isolation, feelings of worthlessness, submissiveness, inferiority, timidity, self-assurance, and personal strength, all of which are consistent with RWA theory (McClosky, 1958).

Much like McClosky's research on conservatives, RWA's have been shown to resist change and demonstrate hostility towards groups, policies, and ideas that advocate change from traditional and conventional beliefs. Also consistent with the research on conservatism is the fact that "authoritarians organize their world in terms of power hierarchies in which 'in-groups' are locations of tradition and convention and 'out-groups' are challengers" (Furr, 2003: 412). Those "out-groups" become the targets of authoritarian aggression. Based on the literature review, it seems that a relationship exists between Miller's "cynics of the right" and those individuals who score high on Altemeyer's RWA scale and the conservatives in McClosky's study. Using authoritarian theory, specifically focusing on the conventionalism dimension, it is likely that those who score high on the RWA scale will tend to distrust government. Right-Wing Authoritarians, as we've argued here, are a sub-set of the "cynics of the right". Therefore, they should be as equally distrusting of government as the group in Miller's study.

## *Louisville-Jefferson County Merger*

On election-day, 2000, Louisville-Jefferson County residents voted to merge the independent city and county governments in hopes of forming one large, more efficient government. Proposed merger in Louisville-Jefferson County had already failed a number of times, most recently in 1982 and 1983 (McDonough, 1999). However, the 2000 vote was successful: 54% voted “yes” and 46% voted “no”. After over two years of transition the proposed merger finally materialized in January, 2003. The city has hailed the merger a success from the very beginning pointing out a number of immediate positive consequences to merger. However, a number of groups disliked the idea of merging the city and county governments. The division of those who supported merger and those who did not divided along both literal geographical boundary lines and socially constructed demographic lines. The geographical divisions seem to be based on residential segregation patterns.

Residential segregation is the concentration of demographically homogeneous groups in geographic areas, and indicates that individuals tend to live in areas around others like them, either by choice or out of necessity (Schultz, 2002; Steinmetz, 2003). These clusters of homogeneity are consequences of government policies such as housing reforms, or of individual self selection in which people tend to choose to live in areas around people like themselves. Based on the literature it is possible to assume that, via residential segregation, distinct spatial patterns exist in relation to demographic characteristics. As a result of the strong influence demographics have in the development of authoritarianism and political cynicism, spatial patterns of the two should exist as well.

The African American community in Louisville was by far one of the most vocal and outspoken anti-merger proponents. Black activists helped to defeat earlier merger proposals in 1982 and 1983 for fear that a merged Louisville would be dominated by white suburban interests (McDonough, 1999). The 2000 attempt at merger had the same minority reaction as blacks feared their political power would be diluted (Nasser, 2002). It was feared that the concentration of African Americans in Louisville all but guaranteed their diminished representation in a larger county incorporated government. To African Americans, the merger was also seen as a roadblock to eventually placing an African American in the mayor's office. Blacks were further concerned about diminished services such as less police protection in inner-city areas (McDonough, 1999).

In southern Jefferson County, a number of residents also voiced their concerns for merger. Southern Jefferson County is primarily made up of white, blue collar workers who did not have much in common with most of those in control of Louisville government or those in support of merger. One member of the community was quoted by Rick McDonough of the *Courier Journal* as saying, "people see the bankers and big-shots in support of merger, and they don't like it". Others in the community likened it to a corporate takeover (Dalmer, 2003). In that statement underlies the difference between the people of southern Jefferson County, who did not support merger, and those in Louisville who supported merger. Many in this part of the county did not want to be associated with the city of Louisville. These feelings linger back to court imposed school busing and distrust for urban politicians and affluent East-End residents (McDonough, 1999). Those in southern Jefferson County, at the time of the merger vote, felt as if they

were their own isolated communities and did not want to be associated with Louisville or the more urban ways of life.

The case in support of merger centered primarily on the belief that merger would spur economic development so that Louisville could keep up with other progressing cities in the region. Immediate returns from the merge included the huge jump in city population rank, where Louisville jumped from 67<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> and improved its total geographical size by approximately 6.5 times the original city size. Also, the city's average income rose by more than \$10,000 (Nord, 1999). Positive consequences, citing the Metro Louisville government, include unity, efficiency, and national visibility.

Those in support of the merger tended to be individuals who would most benefit from the hoped-for economic spur merger would bring about. This group included individuals with high levels of education, income, and all-around a higher socioeconomic class. In contrast, the groups that did not support merger tended to be more of a blue collar type community, which in relation to those in support of merger had lower income, lower education, and had a higher probability of being a minority. The two factions who emerged seem to parallel the same factions which seem to always arise during controversial government policies, the "haves" vs. the "have-nots". In this case the "haves" saw the merger as a chance to build on their existing prosperity while the "have-nots" saw it as an attempt to further alienate blue collar type segments of the population from local government.

The merger provides an interesting opportunity to observe RWAs' response to a specific political event. Given their highly cynical nature as a sub-set of the "cynics of the right" and their need for routine and dislike of change, it is hypothesized that RWAs

would be against the merger. Also, incorporating the political reality model, the makeup of the local government should have an effect on the levels of trust among demographic groups in Louisville-Jefferson County. Since the mayor and most of the high ranking local government officials are predominantly representative of the higher socioeconomic classes, I would expect the highest levels of trust in local government to come from respondents who identify with those qualities held by those in office.

Since individuals in support and against merger seem to be from the same groups that tend to trust and distrust government, respectively, it is possible to assume that they voted on the merger accordingly. Individuals of high trust, usually defined by their high socioeconomic status, assumingly should vote in favor of the merger based on their trust in the government and their support for governmental policy and regulation. On the other hand, those individuals of low trust, blue collar workers, more than likely voted “no” on the merger for fear of the merger simply making the rich richer and the poor poorer. As mentioned earlier, trust in government is seen as a source of capital upon which the government can draw. This capital, or trust, is what those in support of merger are voting off and it is the very reason why those in support of merger bought into the government’s plea for support of the policy.

Using authoritarian theory, trust in government theory, and information gained concerning the merger the following hypotheses were created:

- 1) The higher the score on the RWA scale and RWA subscales the lower the score on the Metro Louisville Government Trust Scale.
- 2) The higher the score on the RWA Scale and RWA subscales the lower the support for the merger, via merger vote.

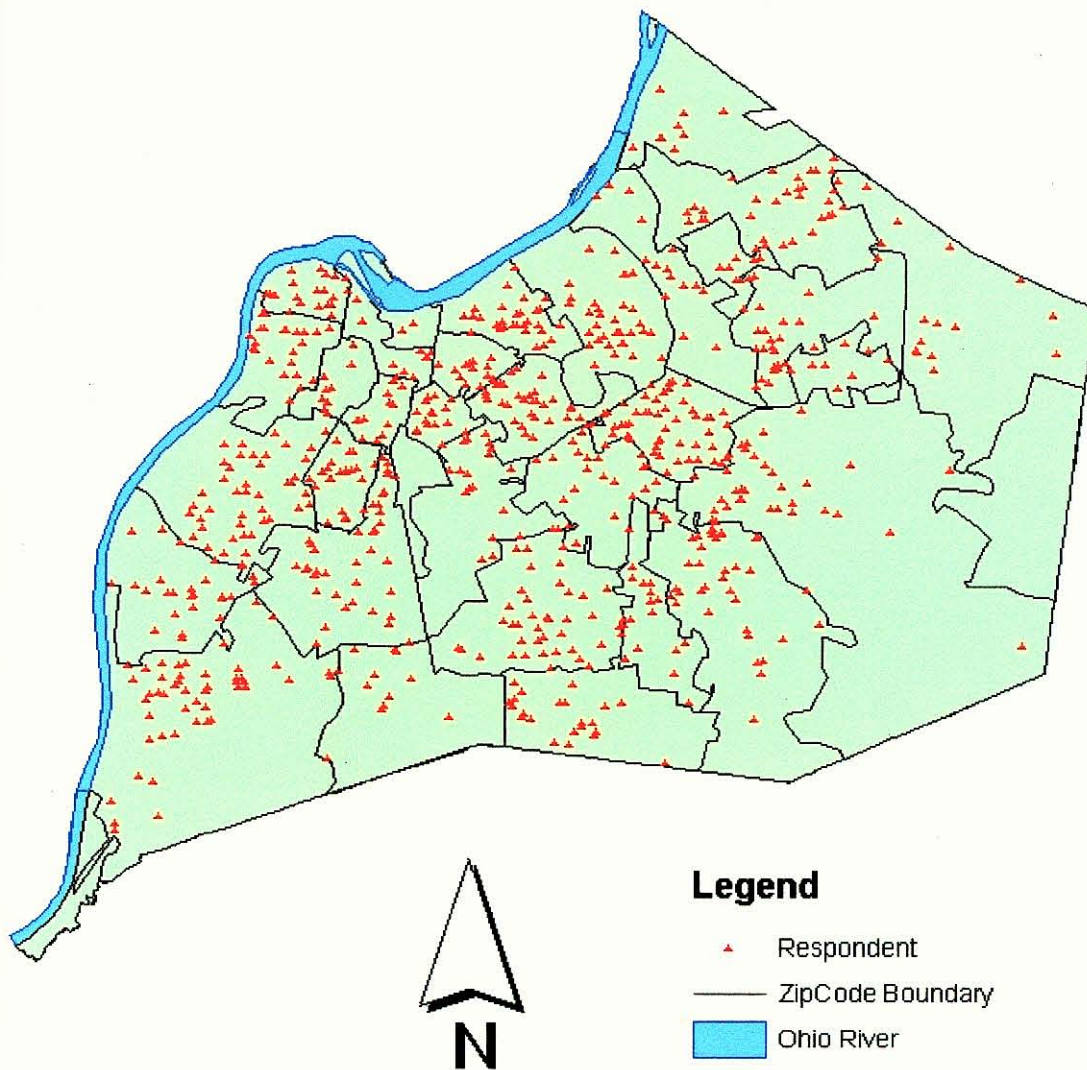
- 3) The higher the score on the Metro Louisville Government Trust Scale the higher the support for the merger, via merger vote.
- 4) The higher the score on the RWA scale the higher the conservatism level.
- 5) Distinct spatial patterns exist for the demographic control variables, levels of trust in government, support for merger, and authoritarian level.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Data*

The data used for this project were acquired via the 2004 Louisville Metropolitan Survey (LMS). The LMS is an annual telephone survey conducted in the metro area (Louisville-Jefferson County) by the Sociology Department at the University of Louisville. The respondents were chosen using a random technique that ultimately resulted in a sample population of 802 adult respondents 18 and over. The demographics of the sample were relatively representative of the demographics of the Louisville-Jefferson County metro area based on Jefferson County 2000 census data. Figure 1 shows the respondents' approximate location, based on self-reported cross streets and zip code, in Louisville-Jefferson County. The sample's sex and racial makeup was relatively representative of the census data for Jefferson County in 2000. The sample data resulted in a group which was 81% white, whereas, the census data shows Jefferson County as 78% white. Also relatively close, the sample was 45% male versus 48% male in the Jefferson County area based on census data. However, the sample over represented both education and income with the percentage on respondents attaining a bachelor's degree or higher being 36% and the percentage of respondents with an income over \$60,000 being equal to 34%. The census data on the same variables in Jefferson County in 2000 showed that 24% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher and 27% had an income of

**Figure 1: Respondents' Spatial Location;  
Louisville-Jefferson County, KY**



\* Disclaimer: Respondent's location is approximate based on self-reported cross-streets and zipcodes.



\$60,000 or greater. Older individuals were also overrepresented in the study; 22.5% were 65 or older compared to only 13.5% in the census data. This leads to a chance for potential biases in the study based on the sample's higher over-representation on these three demographic variables. Low levels of each usually coincide with lack of resources, which, in this case, include lack of time or perhaps even lack of a home phone. This means that the data are slightly biased toward higher socioeconomic status and when generalizing the data to the Metro area it is important to keep these biases in mind. Nonetheless, the sample is alright to use because, overall, the variables are relatively representative of the Louisville-Jefferson County metro area.

### *Dependent Variables*

The two dependent variables in this study are trust in the merged Louisville-Jefferson County Metro government and the respondents' self reported vote on the 2000 merger. The first construct, trust in the Louisville Metro government, was measured using a series of four questions, where high scores indicated high levels of trust in the government and its operation and efficiency. The maximum score possible was 12, indicating high trust and satisfaction of the Metro Louisville government. The questions used were worded and scored as follows:

- 1) How much of the time do you think you can trust the Metro Louisville government to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time? (Just about always = 4, most of the time = 3, only some of the time = 2, never = 1).
- 2) Would you say the Metro Louisville government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all people? (Run for the benefit of all = 2, run by a few big interests = 1).

- 3) Do you think the people in the Metro Louisville government waste a lot of money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much? (Don't waste very much = 3, waste some of it = 2, waste a lot = 1).
- 4) Do you think quite a few people running the Metro Louisville government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are? (Hardly any = 3, not very many = 2, quite a few = 1).

Again, the questions were scored so that high scores represent high levels of trust in the Metro Louisville government. These four questions from the Louisville Metro Survey trust scale were subjected to data reduction analysis (principle components) to determine if the index items consistently measured the trust construct. The factors were tested for factorability based on their resulting determinant and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling Adequacy (KMO). Reliability tests were also run on the scale.

The respondent's self-reported vote on the merger in 2000 was the second dependent variable. Limitations of using this variable include the respondent's not telling the truth due to changes in events involving their perceptions of the government over time; however, the variable was consistent with actual results taking into account the over-representation of high socioeconomic status respondents. The actual vote resulted in 54% voting "yes" and 46% voting "no". The sample resulted in 65% voting "yes" and 35% voting "no", the eleven percent swing is significant but the sample was predicted to have biases that lean towards individuals in support of the merger and overall higher socioeconomic class. The variable was included in the study as it is expected to produce, as predicted in the hypothesis, correlations with the other dependent variable and various independent variables based on demographics and social-psychological behavioral characteristics. The question on the LMS dealing with the respondent's vote on the merger simply asked: "Did you vote for merger or against merger, or did you not vote at

all?” The item was dichotomously scored a 1 for those who supported merger and 0 for those who voted against.

### *Independent Variables*

Authoritarianism, which was measured using ten statements from Altemeyer’s Right-Wing Authoritarian scale, is the measure of a cluster of attitudinal features. Altemeyer’s RWA scale is the most widely used scale in contemporary studies on authoritarianism and its attitudinal features. The features, based on the literature review, are assumed to be divided into three clusters: conventionalism, submissiveness, and aggressiveness. The scale used in the LMS is a shortened version of Altemeyer’s RWA scale, in which ten statements were scored on a four-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). The possible range of scores was 10 (low authoritarianism) to 40 (high authoritarianism). Questions 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 were reversed scored so that strongly disagree equaled high authoritarianism. The statements used are as follows:

- 1) It is wonderful that people today have greater freedom to protest against things they don’t like and to “do their own thing”.
- 2) Obedience and respect for authorities are the most important virtues children should learn.
- 3) “Free speech” means that people should even be allowed to make speeches and write books urging the overthrow of the government.
- 4) Some of the worst people in our country nowadays are those who do not respect our flag, our leaders, and the normal way things are supposed to be done.
- 5) The courts are right in being easy on drug users. Punishment would not do any good in cases like these.

- 6) In the final analysis the established authorities, like parents and our national leaders, generally turn out to be right about things, and all the protesters don't know what they're talking about.
- 7) It is best to treat dissenters with leniency and an open mind, since new ideas are the lifeblood of progressive change.
- 8) One reason we have so many troublemakers in our society nowadays is that parents and other authorities have forgotten that good old-fashioned physical punishment is still one of the best ways to make people behave properly.
- 9) Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly.
- 10) The real keys to the "good life" are obedience, discipline, and sticking to the straight and narrow.

This series of questions was then subjected to factor analysis (principle components) in order to find the underlying factors outlined in the literature review. These items and the yielded factors would also each be tested for factorability based on their determinant and scores from the KMO measure of sampling adequacy.

Other independent variables include conservatism, education, race, income, gender, and age, all of which have been shown in the literature to correlate with trust in government and authoritarianism. Race was scored as either a 1 or a 0 with 1 = white and 0 = non-white. Similarly, sex was scored as 1 = male and 0 = female. Conservatism was ordinally scored as 2 = conservative, 1 = middle of the road, and 0 = liberal. Age was simply scored as the individual's age in years. Income was scored in 9 categories, (in thousands of dollars); 1 = < 10, 2 = 10 – 19, 3 = 20 – 29, 4 = 30 – 39, 5 = 40 – 49, 6 = 50 – 59, 7 = 60 – 69, 8 = 70 – 79, 9 = 80 >. Lastly, education was scored in 8 categories; 1 = 8<sup>th</sup> grade or less, 2 = some HS but no diploma, 3 = HS diploma or GED, 4 = some college but no degree, 5 = Associates degree, 6 = Bachelors degree, 7 = some grad school but no advanced degree, 8 = advanced degree.

## *Analysis*

The strategy used in analyzing these data first involved using data reduction tools in order to find any underlying factors that could account for respondent's answers to the scales used to measure trust in the Louisville Metro government and authoritarianism. Principle components method with varimax rotation was used choosing eigenvalues over one for Louisville Metro trust scale and three factor extraction method was used for authoritarianism. From the factors produced, sub-scales were computed based on the dimensions of the original scales. Reliability tests were then run on all scales using a Cronbach's Alpha test. Next, a bi-variate correlation matrix was produced using all dependent and independent variables listed, and any new dimensions created using data reduction, all of which were developed based on information supported in the literature review. Significant relationships were noted and used to reject the null hypotheses where the original hypotheses predicted a significant relationship. Next, the dependent variables were regressed on the independent variables that were of significance in the bi-variate analysis.

Lastly, significant relationships from the correlation matrix were spatially tested using ArcGIS mapping software in order to confirm the literature on merger voting patterns, residential segregation, and demographic clustering. The maps allow for spatial analysis of the variables and their significant correlates. The literature suggests that spatial trends exist among the demographic variables. Raster maps were created gauging the area's score on the variables based on the sample population. The variables mapped were each divided into five classes (quantile method) used to measure the respondent's answers to the survey data. The variables are scored as categorized spatially as very low (dark blue), low (light blue), medium (white), high (light red), and very high (dark red).

Due to confidentiality, the addresses of the respondents are approximate and are placed on self-reported cross streets by zip code. Where the respondent refused to offer a cross street location or offered a location which did not exist the respondent's location was geo-coded into the ArcGIS system on one street by zip code if given if not it was geo-coded using random placement in the respondent's self-reported zip code. All maps are projected in the NAD 1983 State Plane Kentucky North FIPS 1601 coordinate system.

## RESULTS

I first used factor analysis to assess whether or not the trust questions used in the survey measured the same factor as they were intended to. The analysis was set up using the four questions and extracting the factors via principle component method searching for eigenvalues equal to or greater than one. The results of the analysis, which can be seen in Table 1, yielded one factor on which all of the items loaded .615 or better. As a rule of thumb, only variables with loadings of .320 and above are interpreted. The higher the loading, the greater the item is seen as a pure measure of the factor. A factor of .630 is very good and .710 is considered excellent (Tabachnick, 2001). The factor had an eigenvalue equal to 1.965 out of four items and the factor accounted for 46.113% of the variance. In addition the data were tested for factorability using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

**Table 1: Component Matrix Metro Government Trust Scale**

	Component
	1(Level of Trust)
Trust Scale Item 1	.741
Trust Scale Item 2	.615
Trust Scale Item 3	.703
Trust Scale Item 4	.737

Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) (Cribbs, 2001). This analysis yielded a KMO score of .716 leading to a rejection of the null stating that all correlations in the factor

analysis are significantly different from zero. KMO values of .6 and above are required for good factor analysis (Tabachnick, 2001). The analysis also yielded a determinant of .601 indicating that the variables are factorable. Using the strength of the loadings and the suitability of the variables for factoring, based on the determinant and KMO score, it is safe to assume that the items consistently measure the same variable construct. In this case, the measured variable was the construct of the perceived level of trust the respondent's have in the Louisville metro government.

Authoritarianism was analyzed much the same way with the exception being that the principle components extraction method, instead of asking for components with eigenvalues over one, I set it up to pull out three components based on the literature. The original ten-item scale yielded a determinant of .179 indicating that the items were indeed factorable. Furthermore a KMO score of .798 was returned, much better than the .6 required for a good factor analysis. All ten items were entered into the factor analysis using varimax rotation to maximize the interpretability of the factors. The three components cumulatively accounted for 54.726% of the variance explained. Out of the ten original items the first factor produced an eigenvalue of 3.090 and accounted for 30.898% of the variance. The second factor produced an eigenvalue of 1.371 and accounted for 13.706% of the variance, while the third and final factor had an eigenvalue of 1.012 and accounted for 10.122% of the variance. Each item had a unique loading above the required .320 on one of the three factors, with the lowest loading being .434. Table 2 shows the loadings and the factor on which each item loaded. Items 1, 3, 6, and 9, which dealt with the respondent's agreement with young people's freedom to protest, free speech urging the overthrow of government, agreement with protesters generally



being wrong, and atheists being just as virtuous as religious people and the courts leniency on drug users. Questions 1, 3, and 9 were all reverse scored so that to strongly disagree was the same as having high authoritarian submissiveness, which Altemeyer defines as a high degree of submission to established and legitimate authority. Question 6 was straight scored. Items 2, 4, 8, and 10 dealt with the respondent's agreement with obedience and respect for authorities being important for children to learn, the worst people disrespect the flag, leaders, and the normal ways to do things, troublemakers are a consequence of parents and authorities not using physical punishment, and the keys to the good life are obedience, discipline, and sticking to the straight and narrow. These four items were all straight scored as strongly agree equaled high levels of authoritarian conventionalism, and they all loaded highly on the conventionalism factor, which Altemeyer defines as adherence to traditional norms and values usually backed by established authorities. Lastly items 5 and 7 of the original scale, which dealt with

**Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix for RWA Scale**

	Component		
	1 (Conventionalism)	2 (Submissiveness)	3 (Aggression)
RWA Item 2	.766		
RWA Item 4	.623		
RWA Item 8	.630		
RWA Item 10	.790		
RWA Item 1		.735	
RWA Item 3		.434	
RWA Item 6		.665	
RWA Item 9		.533	
RWA Item 5			.806
RWA Item 7			.690

respondents' agreement that lenient sentences for drug users their agreement that dissenters are the lifeblood of progressive change loaded on the authoritarian aggression factor. Items 5 and 7 were both reverse scored so that the responses would be equal to high levels of authoritarian aggression, which Altemeyer defines as aggressiveness directed against various persons, which is perceived to be sanctioned by the authorities. The authoritarian components were then individually tested for factorability using the same method run on the larger authoritarian scale. Each of the components yielded one factor when entered into principle components method with varimax rotation. The conventionalism component yielded a determinant of .484 and a KMO score of .746 indicating that the subscale is factorable. The submissiveness component yielded a determinant of .708 with a KMO of .679, again indicating good factorability. However, the aggression component returned a high determinant above .900 and a KMO score well below the required .600 needed for a good factor analysis.

In order to test the reliability of the scales a Cronbach's alpha test was run on the Metro-Louisville Trust Scale, ten-item RWA Scale, and all three RWA sub-scales. The Cronbach's alpha for the RWA scale was .744 and the alpha for the conventionalism scale was .706, both of which are considered marginally acceptable (Bohrnstedt, 1982). The submissiveness and aggressiveness components had Cronbach's alphas below .600 and the Metro Trust Scale returned an alpha of .654. The low alpha on the scales may be due to their size as alpha usually increases as the number of items within a scale increase (Maxim, 1999). However, the submissiveness and aggressiveness subscales, were dropped from the study based on their reliability concerns and their performance in the following bi-variate analyses.

In order to begin testing the original hypotheses, the independent variables were placed in a bi-variate correlation matrix with each of the dependent variables using a two-tailed Pearson's coefficient to determine the direction and significance of any existing relationship. The outcomes were coded as significant at the .001 level or lower (\*\*) and significant at the .002 - .050 (\*) level. Table 3 shows the first matrix which includes the Metro-Louisville Trust Scale, the ten-item RWA scale, RWA conventionalism sub-scale, and each of the demographic variables shown in the literature to correlate with the trust scale and authoritarianism. As predicted education, income, and race (being white) all had significant positive correlations at the .000 level, with trust in the Metro-Louisville government. Consistent with the literature, RWA scores positively correlated with conservatism at the .000 level. The correlation allows for the acceptance of the first hypothesis, which stated that the higher the RWA scores the higher the level of conservatism.

The results showed a negative relationship between RWA scores and scores on the Metro Trust Scale, but the relationship was not statistically significant. RWA conventionalism, however, resulted in both the predicted negative relationship and was significant at the .000 level when correlated with the Metro Trust Scale. Based on the overall RWA scale, I am unable to accept the hypothesis that higher RWA scores are related to lower levels of trust, as measured by the Metro Trust Scale. However, the significant negative relationship between RWA conventionalism and levels of trust in the metro government allow for the acceptance of the hypothesis based on the assumption that respondents who score higher on the conventionalism attitudinal feature associated with RWA are more likely to have lower levels of trust in government. Right-Wing

Authoritarianism as an overall personality trait was not significantly correlated to levels of trust; however, the correlation with the conventionalism sub-scale shows a relationship between RWA ideology and trust in government.

**Table 3 Bivariate Correlation: Metro Trust Scale and Independent Variables**

	Trust Scale	RWA	RWA Conventional	Conservative	Gender	Educ	Race	Income
Trust Scale	1	-.057	-.156	-.021	.028	.190	.136	.162
Sig.		.268	** .000	.595	.475	** .000	** .000	** .000
RWA		1	.809	.371	-.061	-.221	.056	-.126
Sig.			** .000	** .000	.206	** .000	.242	* .012
RWA Conventional			1	.303	-.011	-.369	-.039	-.218
Sig.				** .000	.771	** .000	.321	** .000
Conservative				1	.077	-.019	.086	.072
Sig.					* .035	.597	* .018	.064
Gender					1	.087	.047	.138
Sig.						* .014	.186	** .000
Education						1	.108	.390
Sig.							* .002	** .000
Race (white)							1	.194
Sig.								** .000

Next the independent variables were entered into the same correlation matrix with the respondent's self-reported vote on the Louisville-Jefferson County merger in 2000; the results are in Table 4. Again, as with the trust scale, the RWA scale correlated to form the predicted negative relationship, but it again failed to be a significant relationship. However, supporting the hypothesis, the respondent's vote on the Louisville-Jefferson County merger correlated both negatively and significantly with the respondent's score on the RWA conventionalism scale. Also as predicted, the stronger of the two correlations was the RWA conventionalism sub-scale, significant at the .007 level. In contrast, those independent variables that correlated negatively with RWA and

RWA conventionalism, education and income, both positively and significantly correlated with the respondents' vote on the merger. Again, as in Table 3, the demographic control variables all correlated as expected, adding credibility to the finding that respondents who score high on the RWA conventionalism scale are more likely not to vote in favor of the Louisville-Jefferson County merger.

**Table 4 Bivariate Correlation: Merger Vote and Independent Variables**

	RWA	RWA conventional	Gender	Educ.	Income	Conservative	Race (white)
Merger Vote	-.098	-.131	-.013	.227	.130	.019	.047
SIG.	.100	*.007	.760	**0.000	*.006	.677	.286
RWA	1	.809	-.061	-.221	-.126	.371	.056
SIG.		**0.000	.206	**0.000	*.012	**0.000	.242
RWA conventional		1	-.011	-.369	-.218	.303	-.039
SIG.			.771	**0.000	**0.000	**0.000	.321
Gender			1	.087	.138	.077	.047
SIG.				*.014	**0.000	*.035	.186
Education				1	.390	-.019	.108
SIG.					**0.000	.597	*.002
Income					1	.072	.194
SIG.						.064	**0.000
Conservative						1	.086
SIG.							*.018

As mentioned earlier, the results show a clear relationship between the authoritarian personality and respondents' feelings on the merger of the Louisville-Jefferson County governments. Based on these results, I was able to accept the hypothesis that there existed a significant positive relationship between authoritarian conventionalism and the merger vote. However, the null hypothesis, that the original ten-item RWA scale, which measured overall authoritarianism, had no significant relationship with the respondents' level of trust in the Metro-Louisville government or

their feelings on merger, could not be accepted. It could only be accepted based on the conventionalism subscale and its significant relationships with both dependent variables. Based on authoritarian theory, the negative relationship in Table 3 is assumed to be related to the fact that individuals scoring high on the conventionalism subscale are quite similar to Miller's "cynics of the right". The negative relationship seen in Table 4 between authoritarianism and the respondent's vote on the merger can be attributed to the fact that authoritarians dislike change and, to borrow from the literature, believe unless it is necessary to change it is necessary not to change.

The two dependent variables were also entered into a correlation matrix; the results are in Table 5. As predicted, the two positively correlated with one another at a .000 significance level.

The results confirm the hypothesis that a high level of trust in the metro government is

**Table 5 Bivariate Correlation: Trust Scale and Merger Vote**

		Merger Vote
Trust Scale		.406
	Sig.	** .000

associated with supporting the Louisville-Jefferson County merger in 2000.

Next, the variables were analyzed using simple regression based on their significant correlations. The conventionalism subscale remained a significant predictor of trust in government while controlling for education, income, and race. Race and income were independently predictive of trust. The model was significant at the .000 level and the results confirm the significant positive relationships as all slopes and the betas are significantly positive. Education was the only variable that did not have an effect on the analysis. The variance accounted for in this equation is not very large

(6.8%), owing to the fact the regression model was used to control for alternative explanations and not to test a full causal model of trust in government, of importance here is the finding that conventionalism has an impact on trust when controlling for other factors known to have consistent relationships with the dependent variable.

**Table 6 Regression Analysis: Metro Government Trust Scale**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Beta	
1	(Constant)	8.107		.000
	Conventionalism	-.074	-.101	.033
	Education	.079	.077	.130
	Race	.580	.119	.008
	Income	.078	.109	.025

a. Dependent Variable: trustscale

Next, the respondents' support for the merger based on their self-reported vote in 2000 was analyzed in a regression equation with its significant bi-variate correlates. The results are shown in Table 7. The model itself was significant at the .002 level and each of the slopes and betas produced the predicted relationships. However, only the education coefficients were significant in the model. The combination of the variables accounted for 5.9 % of the variation in the merger vote item.

**Table 7 Regression Analysis: Merger Vote**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Beta	
1	(Constant)	.507		.002
	Conventionalism	-.013	-.072	.184
	Education	.045	.170	.003
	Income	.013	.069	.205

a. Dependent Variable: Vote

The results of the regression analyses provide further insight into the relationship between the dependent variables and RWA conventionalism. The conventionalism subscale was a significant predictor of trust even controlling for the variables which correlated in the bi-variate table. However, the scale proved not to be a significant predictor of the merger vote when controlling for the variables that correlated significantly in the earlier analysis.

The next step in this study involves the spatial distribution of the variables within Louisville-Jefferson County. If the literature is correct there should be distinct spatial patterns in relation to demographic clusters and concentrations based on residential segregation theory. Also, spatial patterns should appear in relation to the merger votes. McDonough and Nord of the *Louisville Courier Journal* point out that groups of individuals in the southern Jefferson County and West Louisville should have low levels of support for the merger, while respondents of the East End, who tend to be of high socioeconomic classes, should tend to have a high level of support for the merger. The literature and the statistical analysis make it possible to assume that trust levels in the Metro Louisville government will follow a similar pattern. All maps are at the end of this results section.

Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 are maps of demographic characteristics. Figure 2 is of race, 3 is of income, 4 is of education level, and 5 is of conservatism. High scores indicating that there are high levels of race (being white), income, education, and conservatism. All of the maps in this study use an inverse distance weighting interpolation method to create an overall surface of the variable throughout the entire county based on the data points (respondents). The use of this technique can cause



isolated data points in areas of low population to have a large impact on the area around it. This was not a major problem in this project as only the extreme eastern portions of the county had isolated data points. Each of the demographic variables significantly correlated with at least one of the following variables, Figure 6 - RWA scores, Figure 7 - RWA conventionalism scores, Figure 8 - trust in Metro Louisville government, and Figure 9 - vote on 2000 merger. Again, the same mapping technique was used, and high levels indicate high RWA scores, trust, and support for 2000 merger.

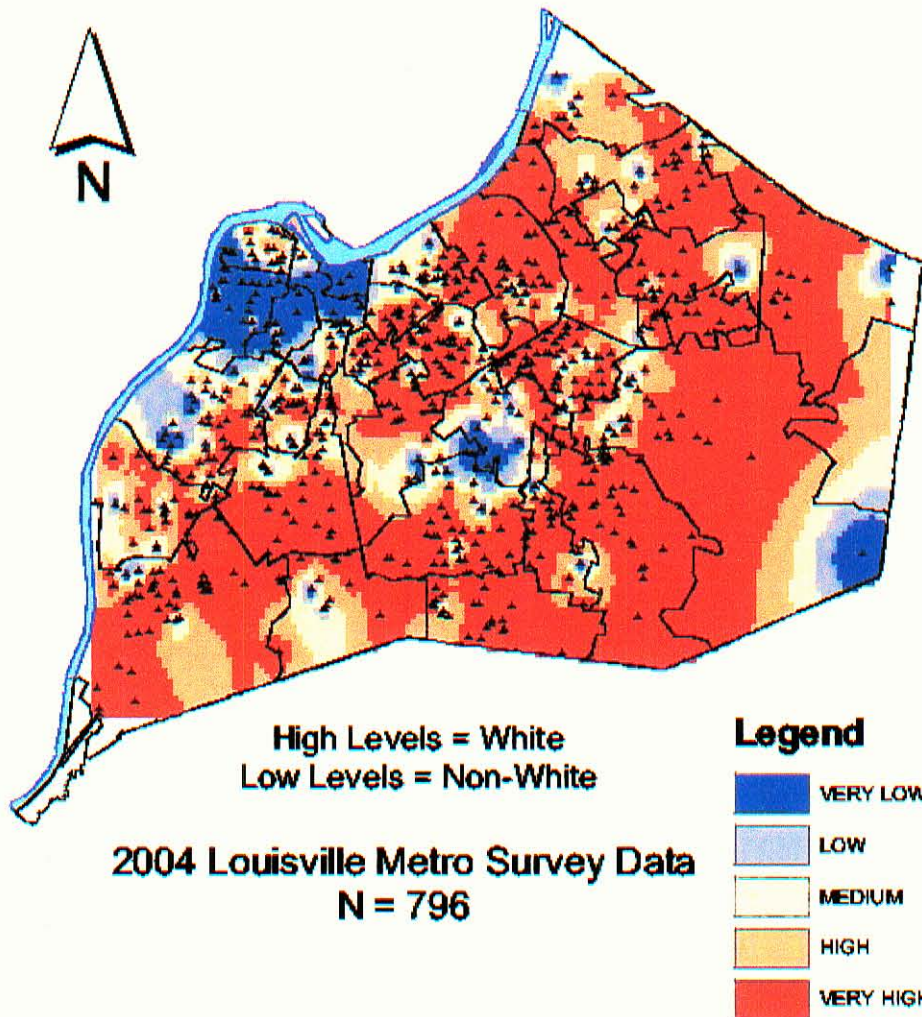
In analyzing the variables spatially, it is important to note spatial trends that the variables have in common or uncommon. Figure 2 (race) is predominantly shaded in the high to very high category, meaning high percentages of whites. The two clusters which go against the trend, shaded in low to very low, are located in northwest and central Louisville-Jefferson County. These two regions are in established minority neighborhoods know as the West-end and Newburg area. Figure 3 (income) is predominantly shaded in the high category in eastern Louisville-Jefferson County, specifically in the northeastern area. The lower levels of income dominate the west and much of the south-end. Figure 4 (education), much like income, shows a clear east-west divide. The areas with the highest levels of education are in the east while those with lower levels of education are in the west and south. Figure 5 measures the area's level of conservatism based on the respondent's identification as conservative, liberal, or middle of the road. The results show a weak differentiation again between the east and west regions, with the east having slightly higher levels of conservatism than that of the west.

These four maps give spatial and geographical meaning to the data from the respondents, based on the fact that the county is divided demographically into two

separate entities of the east and the west. The average individual in the east end, in comparison to those in the west, is more likely to be white, higher educated, have a higher income, and maintain a higher level of conservatism. The spatial clustering of individuals demographically leads to the assumption that the independent variables dealing with trust and the merger will also cluster spatially based on the fact that the strongest correlates of the two were the above mentioned demographic variables. Also, I can assume that the RWA scores will cluster spatially due to education levels, which the literature pointed out as being perhaps the strongest determinant of authoritarianism.

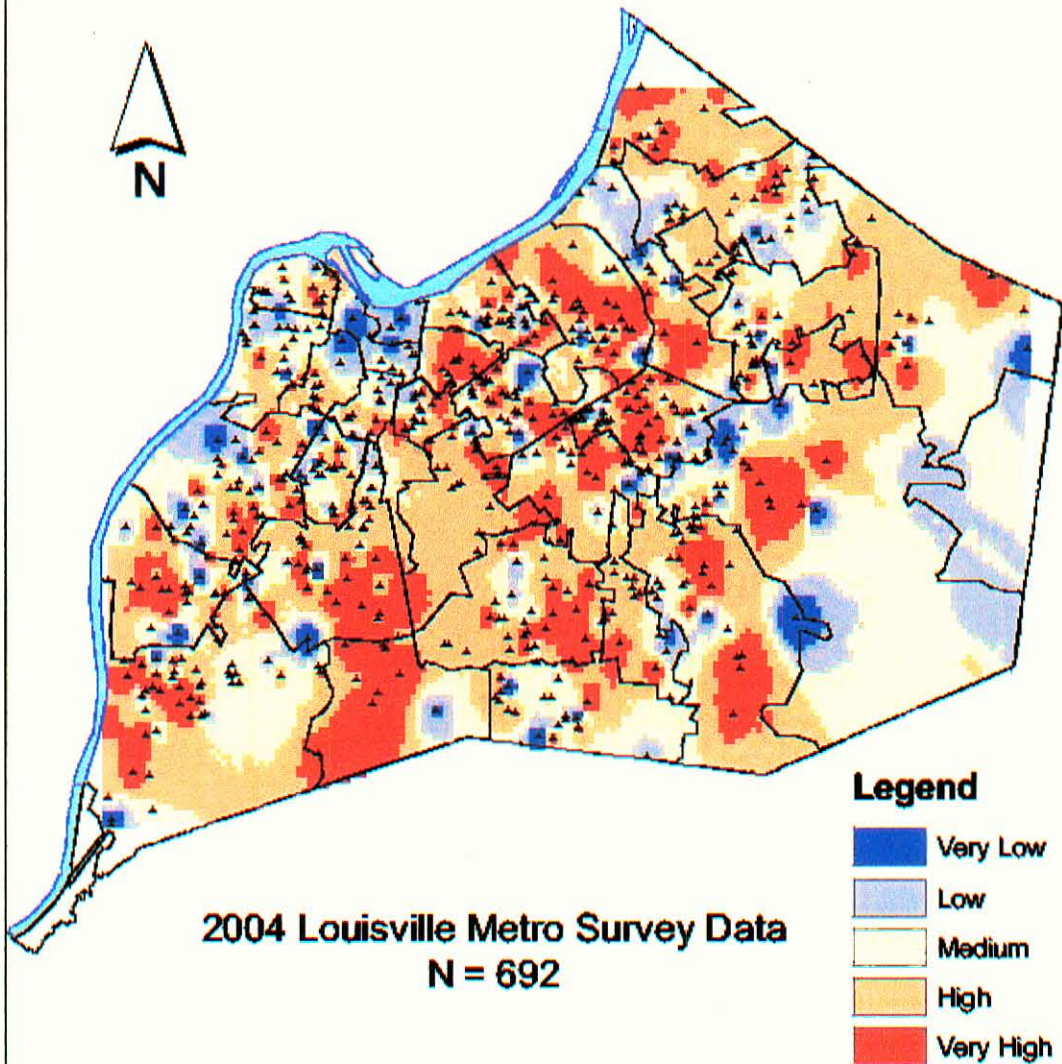
Figure 6 (RWA) and Figure 7 (RWA conventionalism), both cluster high scores in the west and south, not coincidentally where the lowest levels of education are located. Figure 8 (trust in metro government) also confirms what the literature suggested specifically the political reality model as the highest levels of trust are in areas of individuals more likely to be white, rich, and highly educated. Figure 9 (support for 2000 merger) is much the same, which also confirms the positive significant statistical correlation between the two dependent variables. This confirms the statistical results as the demographic east-west divide is again the dividing line of trust. Unfortunately, while it looks as if the variables trust the metro government and supported the 2000 merger have a negative relationship with the RWA variables, based primarily on education levels, statistically there is no such significant relationship.

## Figure 2: Racial Distribution; Louisville-Jefferson County \*



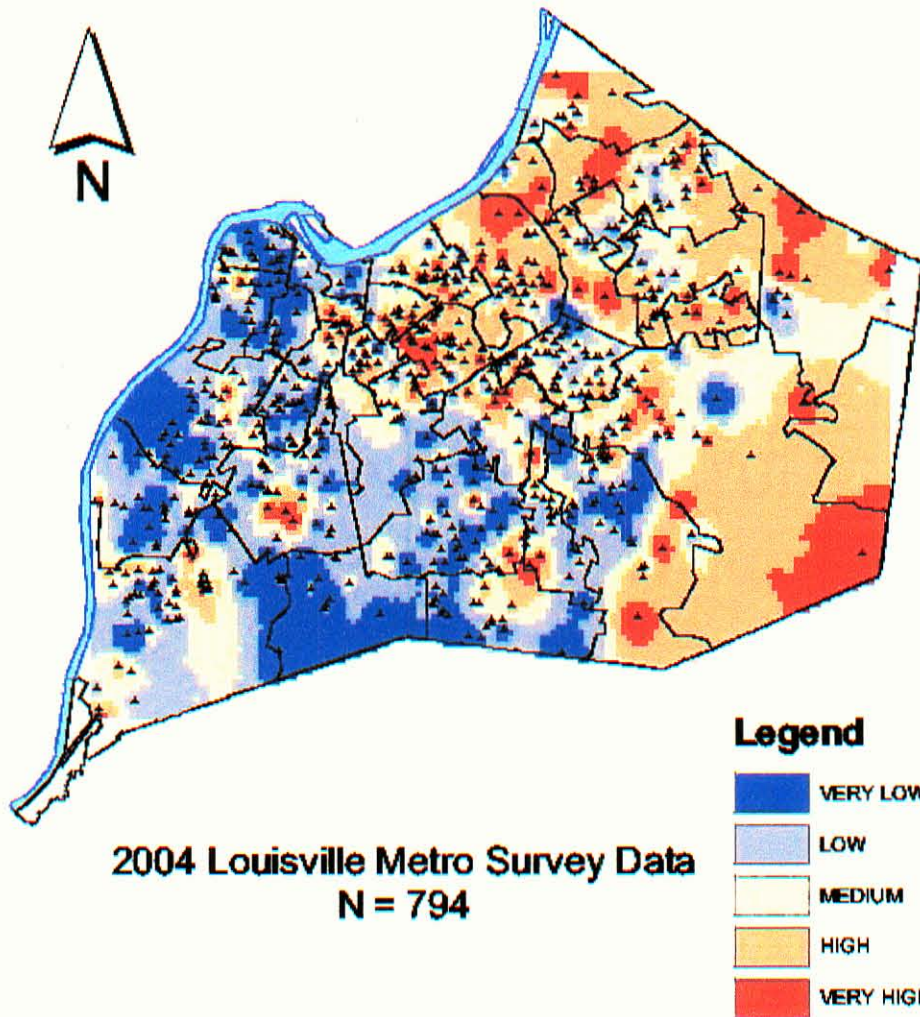
\* Disclaimer: The Respondent's location is Approximate based on self-reported cross streets and zip codes.

**Figure 3: Income Distribution;  
Louisville-Jefferson County, KY \***



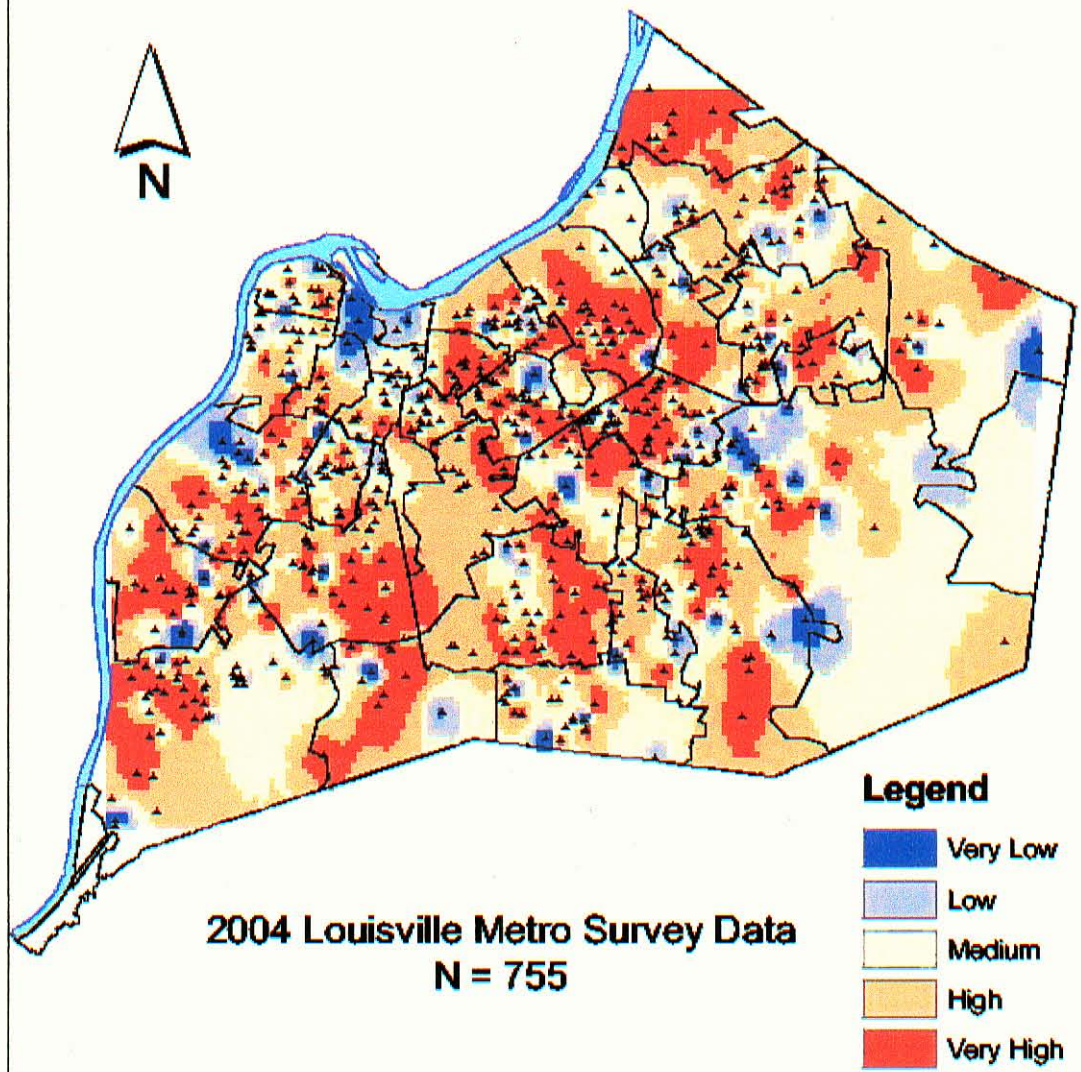
\* Disclaimer: Respondent's Location is an Approximation based on self-reported cross streets and zipcodes.

## Figure 4: Education Level; Louisville-Jefferson County \*



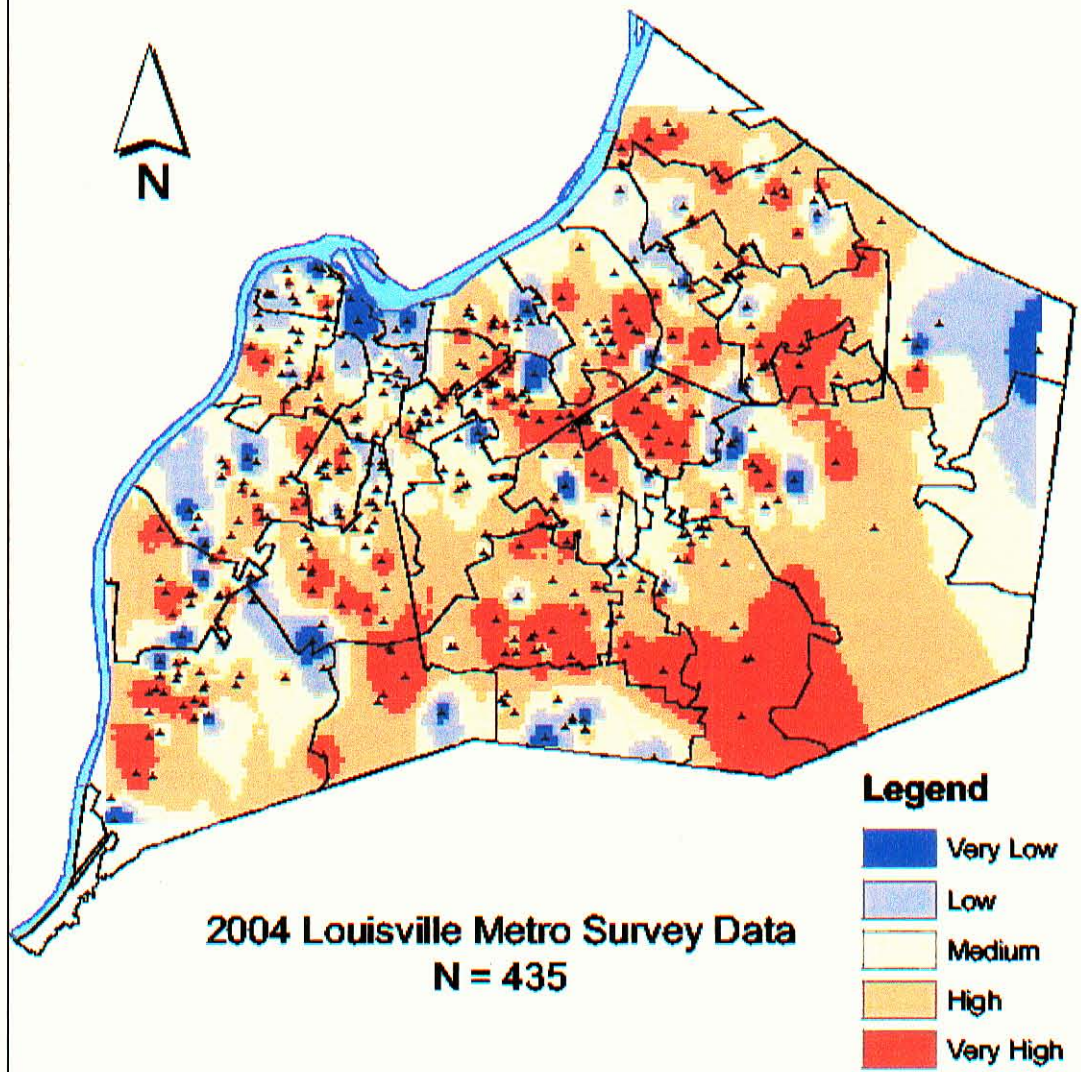
\* Disclaimer: The Respondent's location is Approximate based on self-reported cross streets and zip codes.

# Figure 5: Level of Conservatism; Louisville-Jefferson County, KY \*



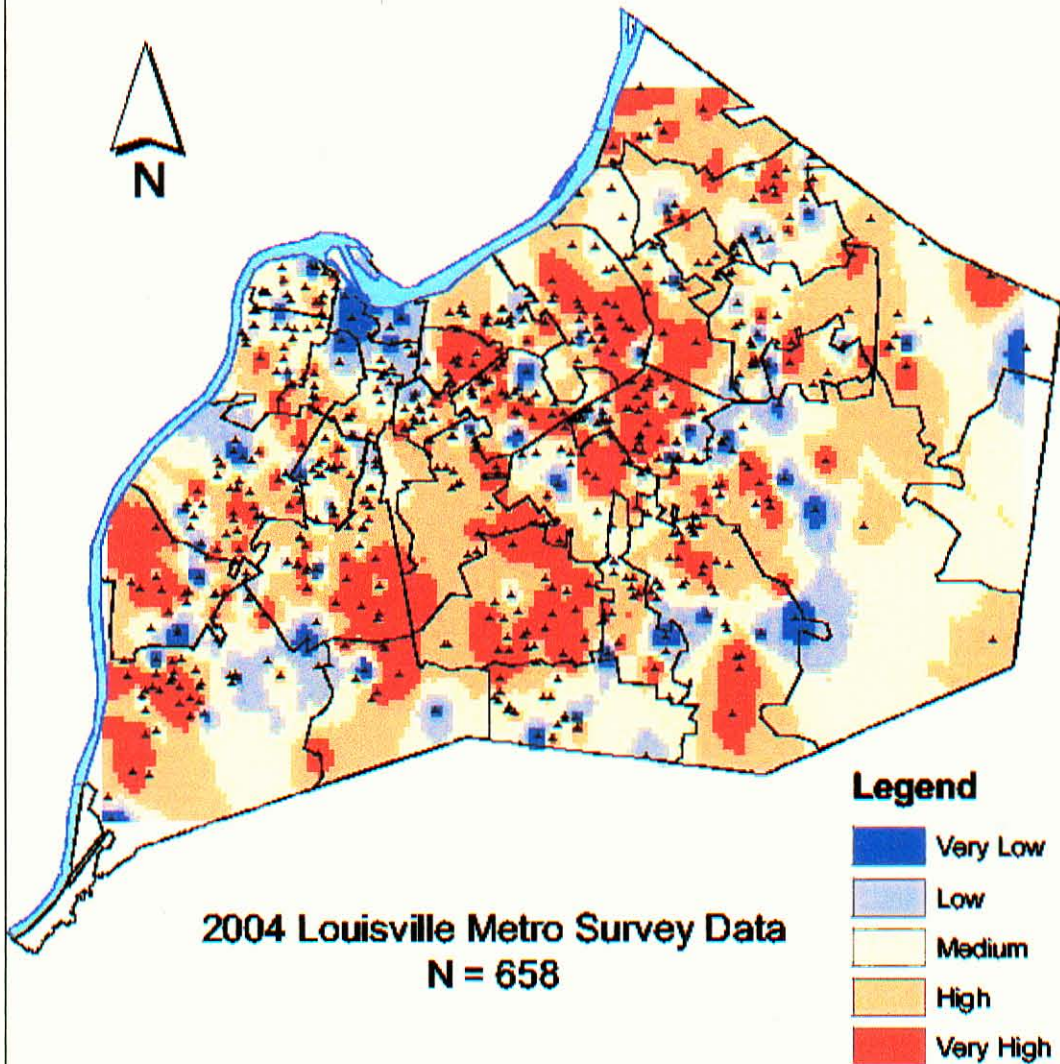
\* Disclaimer: Respondent's Location is an Approximation based on self-reported cross streets and zipcodes.

# Figure 6: RWA Scores; Louisville-Jefferson County, KY \*



\* Disclaimer: Respondent's Location is an Approximation based on self-reported cross streets and zipcodes.

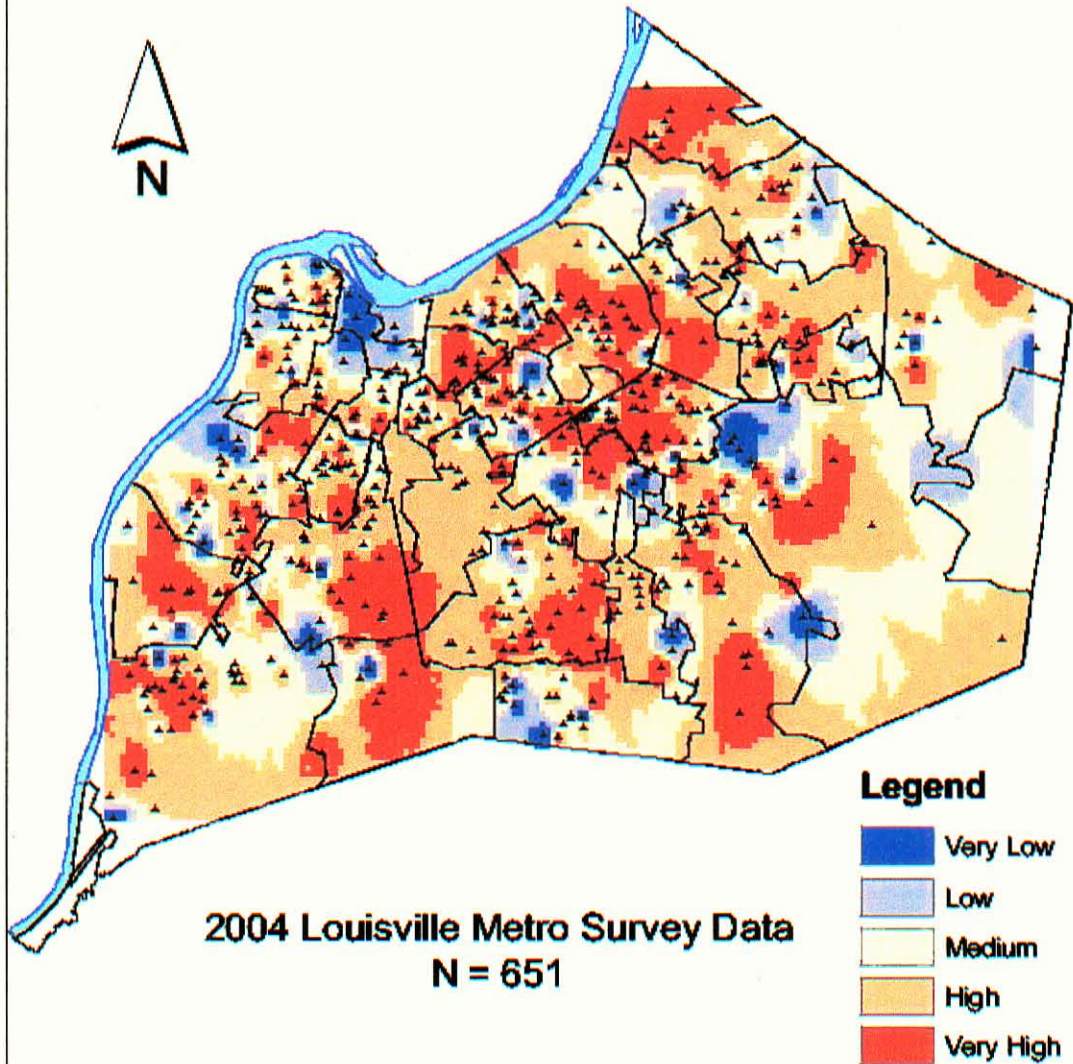
**Figure 7: RWA Conventionalism Scores;  
Louisville-Jefferson County, KY \***



\* Disclaimer: Respondent's Location is an Approximation based on self-reported cross streets and zipcodes.

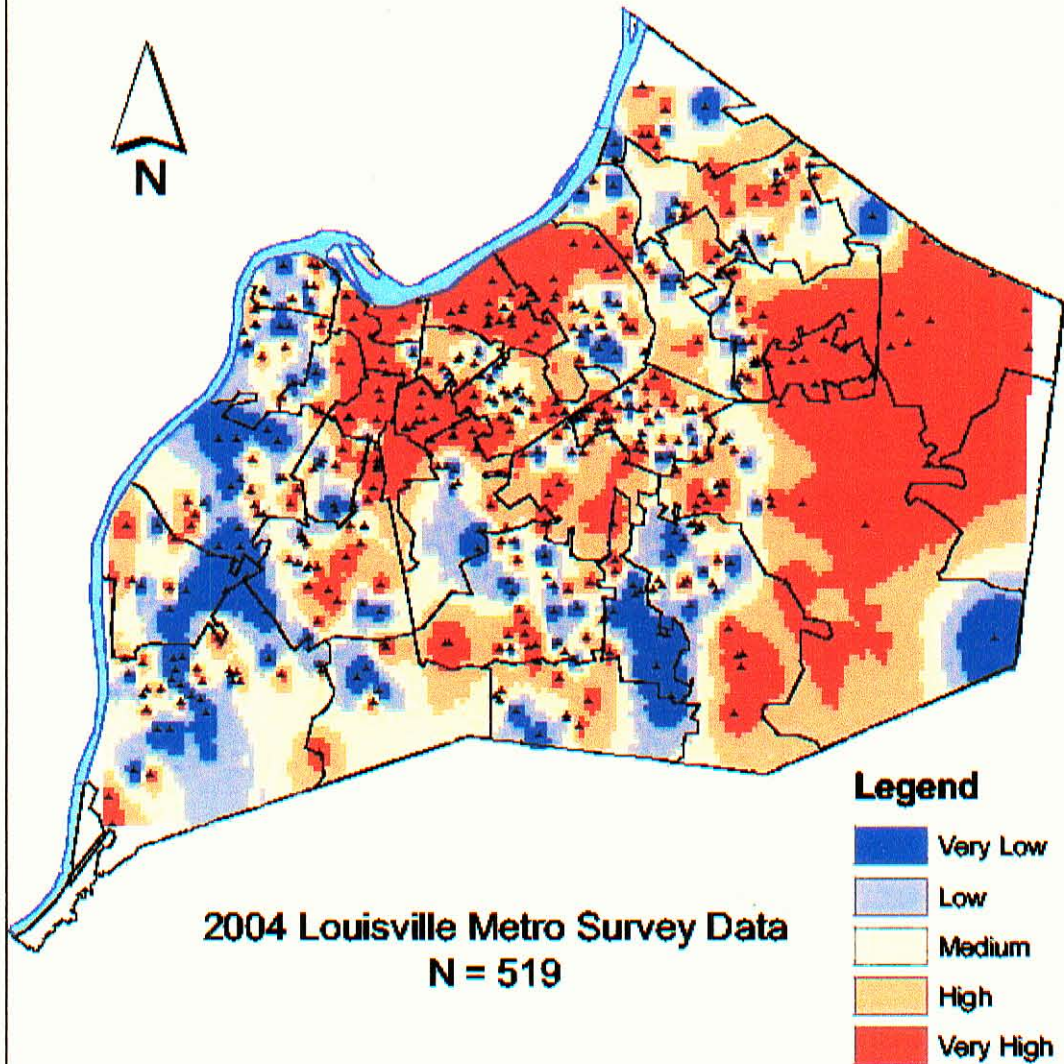


**Figure 8: Level of Trust in  
Louisville Metro Government;  
Louisville-Jefferson County, KY \***



\* Disclaimer: Respondent's Location is an Approximation based on self-reported cross streets and zipcodes.

# Figure 9: Support of Merger via Merger Vote; Louisville-Jefferson County, KY \*



\* Disclaimer: Respondent's Location is an Approximation based on self-reported cross streets and zipcodes.

## DISCUSSION

The results confirmed previous research concerning the significant relationships among many of the variables, most notably the demographic control variables. However, the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism and political cynicism was not directly significant. The literature suggested that such a relationship could exist based on the likeness of high right-wing authoritarians to Miller's "cynics of the right". While this study was unable to find such a relationship, it is still clear that a relationship between the two exists on some level. The RWA conventionalism factor, a dimension of RWA, was a significant predictor of both trust in government and support for merger. The fact that the relationship exists helps me to accept Miller's idea that there are two distinct groups who distrust government, both on the extreme ends of the issue spectrum. It would be interesting to have a measure for Miller's "cynics of the left" and compare their levels of trust with one another and with the rest of the population that does not fall into one of those two groups. RWAs, of course, are the individuals on the extreme right of that spectrum. I assume that with a more reliable submissiveness and aggressiveness component the overall RWA scale also would have produced the predicted relationships that the RWA conventionalism subscale produced.

A better predictor, in this study, of high levels of government trust can be found by using Howell's political reality model. The political reality model assumes levels of satisfaction and trust in the government can be predicted based on demographic

characteristics. The local government's highest ranking officials are primarily high educated, rich, white men. Based on the literature the lowest levels of trust, then, should be found in lower educated, poor minorities. Table 3 confirms the results as all three of the demographic characteristics have significant positive relationships. The results of the regression analysis were also consistent. A spatial analysis showed that the largest clusters of high trust levels are highest in eastern Louisville-Jefferson County as is the case with both education and income. The race variable was not as significant spatially due to the fact that most of the area is white with only a few minority clusters in the western and central regions of the area, making education and income better predictors. However, the largest minority cluster in West Louisville predictably had low levels of trust in the Louisville Metro government.

I was also able to find that a relationship exists between the RWA conventionalism factor and the Louisville-Jefferson County merger. This relationship is evidence that groups organize for or against government policies based not only on similar demographic characteristics, but on social-psychological characteristics as well. Again, this was already evident as the literature showed that characteristics are often learned through activities such as child rearing techniques, which invariably change across demographic groups. The merger variable was negatively related to both RWA and RWA conventionalism, and at a significant level for the conventionalism component. The stronger of the two relationships, predictably, was with RWA conventionalism. The relationship was predicted based on the fact that individuals who score high on the RWA conventionalism sub-scale tend to dislike change and adhere to traditional norms and

values believing, again borrowing from the literature, unless it is necessary to change it is necessary not to change.

The hypothesis regarding the negative relationship between RWA conventionalism and the merger support variable was also confirmed in the spatial analysis of the two variables. RWA conventionalism was expected to be higher in the west and south, based on those who actively spoke out against merger, while support for the merger was expected to be highest in the northeast, indicating a negative relationship. The conventionalism component scored relatively high across the south-western and the central portions of the county, while support for the merger was highest in eastern and northern Jefferson County. Spatially, this is the equivalent of the negative statistical relationship. The study hypothesized that such a relationship existed between RWA scores and support for merger. The RWA scale did not significantly correlate with merger support, but that may, again, be do to the fact that the submissiveness and aggressiveness components were tested to be unreliable. However, the conventionalism component shows that there is a relationship between Right-Wing Authoritarianism and support for the Louisville-Jefferson County merger. Based on the correlation matrix and the spatial analysis the null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between the variables, was rejected.

The relationship between RWA and the merger vote was initially predicted based on the evidence of RWA being a subset of Miller's "cynics of the right". Following Miller's theory it is possible to assume that those who distrust government do so because they tend to follow an issue schema of their cognitive processes regarding government performance. The merger vote can be seen as one of these issues and those who distrust

government based on the issues would then, in this case, be predicted to be anti-merger proponents. A similar relationship could be expected of those who are on the extreme left end of the issue spectrum.

The results also confirmed that RWA and RWA conventionalism are negatively related with education and have a positive relationship with conservatism. The relationships were among the strongest in the correlation matrices and were significant in both regression analyses involving RWA and RWA conventionalism as the dependent variables. This confirms the literature, which stated repeatedly that one of the best predictors of high RWA scores and levels of conservatism are an individual's low level of education. The significant positive relationship between RWA and conservatism made it possible to assume that even though all conservatives may not be Right-Wing Authoritarians, all Right-Wing Authoritarians are conservatives. Spatial analyses confirm the results as the RWA and RWA conventionalism scores are highest in the southwestern and central areas of Louisville-Jefferson County while highest levels of education are found in the north-eastern half of the county. The results of the statistical relationships and the spatial distribution of the variables allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis, which states that there is no relationship between the Right-Wing Authoritarianism and conservatism.

The last hypothesis to be tested predicted a positive relationship between high levels of trust in the Louisville Metro government and high levels of support for the 2000 merger. This hypothesis is based on the literature as high levels of trust are seen as capital, and it allows the government to create policies and regulations without fear of mass disagreement. Those with high levels of trust are more likely to be accepting of any

government policies due to their optimistic view of the government. The two variables correlated positively in Table 5 with a significant relationship. The regression confirmed those results and trust levels accounted for 16.5% of the variance in support for merger variable. Spatially the low levels of trust appear in the west and south of Louisville-Jefferson County which is consistent with the literature on merger support. In contrast the highest levels are in the north and east regions of Louisville-Jefferson County, also consistent with the literature on merger. The results allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis, which states that there is no relationship between levels of trust in the metro government and the level of support for the merger.

A number of other relationships were confirmed among the demographic control variables, which again gives credibility to the sample. Also as predicted, conservatism correlated positively and significantly with both income and race. Race and gender, also, both correlated positively and significantly with education and income. Each of these significant relationships led to spatial clusters of demographic variables, in support of residential segregation theory. The spatial analyses also allowed me to accept the final hypothesis that said there is evidence of distinct residential clustering based both on demographics and social-psychological characteristics.

In conclusion this study has shown that groups who support or do not support certain government policies and regulations have in common not only demographic characteristics, but social-psychological characteristics as well. These groups tend to residentially segregate into communities based on demographics, which leads to homogeneous groups in relation to those characteristics. The results of the analyses on support for the merger show that those with high levels of support are both highly

educated and have low RWA scores. Of course one reason for that is that both RWA scores and education are significantly related to one another. However, the fact that they are related and both have significant relationships with the merger variable brings up another point: social-psychological characteristics such as authoritarianism are often learned and may result from the different upbringings offered by different demographic groups. So one's demographic makeup may make him/her more susceptible to acquiring particular personality traits, which may, in turn, affect their feelings toward certain institutions including the government. The results of the study are inconclusive as to whether a relationship exists between levels of trust in government and an overall Right-Wing Authoritarian personality. However, this could be based on the reliability problems with the RWA submissiveness and aggressiveness components. The study did show that, based on the relationship between conventionalism and the dependent variables, RWA does have an effect on an individuals' level of trust in government and their level of support for the merger.

Also, in Louisville-Jefferson County levels of trust are high among those most like those in power, lending credibility to Howell's political reality model. For the most part, individuals like those in power are on the more desirable end of both education and income levels. This means those individuals are more likely to trust the government because it is working for them and they are living comfortable lives in upper-class neighborhoods, characterized by high education levels, high income levels, and a large proportion of non-minority residents. These neighborhoods, based on the spatial analyses, are located in east-northeast Louisville-Jefferson County. The low levels of trust in other parts of the county are due to the fact that the government is not working the



way it should be in the eyes of those with low levels of education, income, and high levels of authoritarianism. Their low levels of trust are a direct reflection of their dissatisfaction with the opportunities and resources the local government has offered them. Often these characteristics are accompanied by the individual's feelings toward a particular institution based their upbringing and developed social-psychological characteristics. Low levels of trust in this study, then, can be seen as a reflection of a relatively homogeneous group's belief that the government is not working for them.

The study has shown that a relationship exists between a combination of demographics and social-psychological traits and their relationships to particular policies created by the local government. The study used the 2000 merger and showed that individuals of high RWA scores and low education opposed the merger. The relationship between the two has already been addressed, and the fact that it exists allows one to assume that related personality traits may indeed have an effect on an individual or group's feelings toward the government, and may in turn affect the trust level of that individual. In the future the relationship between trust levels in government and RWA should be retested with more reliable data, specifically RWA and its components.

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