

THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS OF WHITE SUPREMACIST IDEOLOGY AND
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Lucy Reynal. The Environmental Politics of White Supremacist Ideology and Class Struggle in Louisiana.

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This thesis analyzes the relationships between racism, education, partisanship, and environmental policy preferences in Louisiana voters utilizing data from the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the relationships between the explanatory scales (an individual's symbolic racism, biological racism, party identity, political ideology, and education level) and opposition to five environmental policies, identified as negative environmental policy preference. I hypothesize that racism will be a better indicator variable for negative environmental policy preference than education level, in spite of popular discourse which tends to rely on lack of education as an explanation for negative environmental politics, conveniently obscuring the role of racist ideologies. Chapter 1 outlines the basis for this study in the historical and political realms and in the literature of theory on racism in American politics, political polarization of climate change, environmental racism, and the case of environmental politics in Louisiana. Chapter 2 delineates the methods by which I analyze the relationships between these phenomena, for which I use three statistical models (correlation, analysis of variance, and multivariate logistic regression) to derive the results explored in Chapter 3. The discussion of these results and analyses in Chapter 4 concludes that racism is a better indicator variable for negative environmental policy preference than education. This thesis builds on the exploratory work of American political scientists on the influence of historical white supremacy on contemporary racism in the American political landscape by applying this theory to environmental politics.

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Introduction

There is significant evidence that in regions of the American South, geographic locations with greater ties to slavery have more actively and openly racist white people. Thus, it is logical to examine the ways in which slavery has shaped the manifestation of racism in present-day Louisianians, as well as how this interacts with environmental politics. The question of class division and wealth disparity is especially important in light of the dominant national narrative which surfaced in the wake of the election of 2016, which takes the spotlight off of race and racism by placing the onus for the election of Donald Trump on low-income white people, especially in the rural South.

Environmental politics are an especially apt lens through which to examine the relationship between racism and class in Southern politics for two primary reasons: first, in Louisiana, environmental politics have been integral to the greater political and economic landscapes, being so fundamentally intertwined with the oil and gas industry, the processes of development, and the greatest adversities faced en masse, and secondly, the impacts of environmental policy failures are not evenly distributed but instead illuminate racial and class divisions. I am therefore interested in examining which factor, class (as measured by education level) or racist ideologies, acts as a better predictor of environmental politics in Louisiana.

I hypothesize that racist ideologies will be a better indicator for environmental policy preference than education level in Louisiana. In other words, I expect there will be a higher correlation between racism and environmental politics than education and environmental politics. It is well-established by past scholarship that there is a strong

correlation between racism, Republican identity, and conservative ideology. It is also well-established that Republican identity and conservative ideology are significantly correlated with negative environmental policy preferences and political action. This thesis explores the theory that racism is a strong predictor of negative environmental policy preferences by interrogating and analyzing the statistical relationships between environmental policy preferences and symbolic and biological racism, partisanship, ideology, and education. By distinguishing between symbolic and biological racism, “colorblind” liberalism is isolated and more precisely measured while minimizing inaccurate measurements of racism which result from exclusively using questions which target biological racism. The cumulative impact of these layered analyses will create a framework by which to answer whether racism or class, as measured by education, functions as a stronger predictor of climate change politics in Louisiana. The hypotheses explored in this thesis are as follows:

H₁: Symbolic and biological racism will have strong correlations with negative environmental politics.

H₂: Racism will have a stronger correlation with negative environmental politics than education level.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

I. The Shifting Landscape of American White Supremacist Politics

Racism is important to the political interests, motivations, and actions of white Americans. In “Racial Prejudice, Racial Identity, and Attitudes in Political Decision Making,” Jardina and Piston argue that individual’s psychological attachments to their

racial group are a significant element of American politics, and that as diversity increases, this psycho-political phenomenon may become more important, especially in light of a resurgence in the belief that biological differences between races exist. This resurgence comes at the same time as “new racism” emerges, in which racial inequality is attributed to “market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks’ imputed cultural limitations.” Jardina and Piston argue that scholarship examining biological racism and the role of racial identity for white Americans is more important now than ever.

In “The New American Minority,” the first chapter of *White Identity Politics*, Jardina argues that race and racism are central to American politics, saying, “White racial solidarity is a pivotal factor in contemporary electoral politics” (Jardina 4). “In-group” motivations of the white electorate are as strong today as they’ve ever been, and are no less relevant or less impactful on social and economic stratification as well as vote choice for being made to appear invisible (“colorblind” racism, or “racism without race”) in the contemporary political landscape.

DeSante and Smith investigate the role of social psychology and emotion in racial resentment theory in “Fear, Institutionalized Racism, and Empathy: The Underlying Dimensions of Whites’ Racial Attitudes.” DeSante and Smith argue that modern racism, while disparate from “old racism,” or biological racism, demonstrates the ephemeral nature of the expression of racial resentment and attitudes. The primary emotions they find most influential are a contradictory set of white guilt (presumably a response to awareness of white privilege) and resentment towards Black people.

Webster examines the role of emotion, specifically anger, as a political force within America in “Anger and Declining Trust in Government in the American Electorate,” postulating that not only is anger a significant factor in partisan antipathy, but it also shapes trust and perception of government. Anger and trust in government have an inverse relationship, whether or not that anger is political in origin or nature; apolitical anger impacts individuals’ perception of government and sways public opinion.

In “The Distinct Pattern of Relationships Between the Big Five and Racial Resentment Among White Americans,” Federico and Aguilera argue that racial resentment (RR) will be strongly correlated with and best predicted by conservatism among whites. This is due to high conscientiousness, or are more likely to engage in intergroup judgmentalism, and low openness, or greater support of convention and tradition, as compared to generalized prejudice, which is predicted by agreeableness and openness. Thus, American white racism is distinct from other systems of prejudice in its expression and origin.

Racism in America is changing. Therefore, the way that we measure and study it must change as well. As a new generation of white voters come to political consciousness and enter the electorate, the “old racism” which characterized past generations is being usurped by a “new racism.” In “Less Is More: A Cross-Generational Analysis of the Nature and Role of Racial Attitudes in the 21st Century,” DeSante and Smith argue that racial attitudes have not actually changed from the Jim Crow era, but are presented in young white people in different ways; there have not been meaningful changes in aggregate levels of racial resentment in young white people, and while some studies may

appear to demonstrate that young white people have lower levels of racial prejudice, these studies are simply based in outdated stereotypes that are no longer exemplary of racist ideologies. Thus, scholars have incorrectly concluded that younger white people are less racist based on “old fashioned racism,” rather than “new racism,” as exemplified by the statement, “Irish, Italians, Jews and other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.”

Valentino and Brader also call for a redefining of American racism in the “colorblind” era which followed the 2008 election of Barack Obama in “The Swords Other Edge: Perceptions of Discrimination and Racial Policy Opinion after Obama.” While there was a significant drop in perception of racial discrimination, this did not apply to racist whites, and there was no measurable decline in actual racial resentment. In fact, declines in perceived discrimination correlated with increased anti-Black racism and opposition to affirmative action.

Abromowitz and Mccoy examine the revelatory impact that the Trump administration has had on American racism and the accompanying augmented political polarization in “United States: Racial Resentment, Negative Partisanship, and Polarization in Trump’s America.” Trump’s return to overt racism, its success evidence in itself of the essential falseness of the “post-racial” era, illuminated the severe polarization ideologically and politically of the American electorate as economic discontent and racial resentment rose and the divide grew.

Racism in the American electorate is typically studied and understood in relation to education and the urban-rural or North-South divide. In “Racial Perceptions and Evaluative Responses to Welfare: Does Education Attenuate Race-of-Target Effects?”

Federico examines not just the impact of racism on welfare attitudes, which has been strongly established as a direct negative relationship, but whether education level impacts this relationship or even supersedes it. Federico concludes that although it is true that among college-educated whites, racism is less prevalent and thus opposition to welfare is less connected to anti-Black racism, the relationship between class and racial hostility is problematized by the tendency of education to make it easier for the individual to find justification for positions on policies which are consistent with their existing belief systems, including racism.

II. Communication and Polarization in Environmental Politics

Environmental politics in America are fraught with challenges of partisan polarization, inconsistent and ineffectual framing and communication, stratified socio-economic and racial vulnerability, and generational gaps in understanding and actionable political will. In “Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement,” Nisbet argues that reframing climate change in a way that appeals to broader coalitions of Americans can create the level of public engagement required for political expediency of climate action. This would necessitate an undoing of the political polarization that characterizes current public opinion on climate change and which falls strictly along the lines of partisan division. Furthermore, the urgency of the issue is broadly dismissed in favor of other more salient political issues. Thus, climate change must be reframed to combat political division and dismissal of the issue altogether. Nisbet suggests a deductive set of mental boxes and interpretive storylines in order to unite diverse audiences and mobilize collective action.

Nisbet's assertion that framing is significant to climate change action is contested. Bernauer and Mcgrath offer an alternative understanding, arguing that alternative frames are unlikely to produce significant augmentation of public support for climate change adaptation policies, and thus policymakers should simply maintain the narrative of climate risk reduction. The resources required for such a reframing are both limited and better utilized in more productive means of climate risk reduction.

Feldman and Hart study the impact, if any, of the framing of environmental impacts by partisan divide in "Broadening Exposure to Climate Change News? How Framing and Political Orientation Interact to Influence Selective Exposure." They found that while a public health frame increased exposure in Liberal-Democrats and moderate-Independents, framing had no effect whatsoever on Conservative-Republicans.

The development of environmental political beliefs is influenced strongly by education, wealth, partisanship, familial beliefs, and race. Perceptions of vulnerability and danger, real or imagined, are powerful motivators in climate change politics and are linked directly to physical vulnerabilities (health risks, pre-existing conditions, or geographic/place-based) and financial vulnerabilities. In "Education, Politics and Opinions about Climate Change Evidence for Interaction Effects," Hamilton compares the skewed impacts of climate change information on perception of climate change risk based on partisanship in order to predict the impact of mediated climate change information on public concern. Hamilton finds that while Republicans who think that they understand global warming are far less likely to view it as a danger than Democrats

who think they understand global warming, other factors like age, education, and gender impact this relationship significantly.

Cutler et al. further explore the relationship between political ideology and perceived climate change risk in “The Influence of Political Ideology and Socioeconomic Vulnerability on Perceived Health Risks of Heat Waves in the Context of Climate Change.” Cutler et al. investigate individual and geographic-level influences on public concern around climate change and environmental risk, finding that political ideology and climate change beliefs are the strongest predictors of perception of heat wave risk. Cutler et al. conclude that there is a significant link between socioeconomic characteristics and climate change ideology and that this link is essential to understanding actual climate change vulnerabilities.

In “An Experimental Examination of Measurement Disparities in Public Climate Change Beliefs,” Motta et al. provide a novel lens through which to view this partisan divide in understanding and reacting to climate change information and disinformation, asserting that common measurement practices used for measuring belief in anthropogenic climate change nearly double subsequent estimates of Republican’s beliefs in climate change. The wording of these questions varies significantly, sometimes using “global warming” and other times “climate change” and implying to various degrees its nature as human-caused, which significantly impacts the results of these public opinion studies. Motta et al. demonstrate that only one third of Republicans are typically shown to believe in anthropogenic climate change when the construction formats include discrete choices, hard don’t know options, and no explanatory text of the origins of climate change, while

almost two thirds of Republicans are shown to believe in climate change when the construction formats include Likert-style responses, soft don't know options like the ability to skip the question, and an explanatory text about the origins of climate change. This article is especially relevant to this work, as the disparity between these estimates is remarkable and has potentially damning consequences for all studies which examine the relationship between partisanship and climate change belief and action. Notably, the data used here is in binaries in the environmental beliefs section and in Likert-style for the racial resentment section.

III. Historical and Contemporary Environmental Racism

There is a gap in the literature on the intersection between environmental history and degradation and racist ideologies and politics. However, the literature on political legacies of slavery and its expression in contemporary politics of racism is significant in establishing a foundation for that exploration. In "Toward an Environmental Perspective on Slavery : First Thoughts," Jones paints, in broad strokes, a narrative of slavery in the United States from a specifically environmental standpoint. Jones centers the narrative around physical space, its construction, and the politics of the space for which they contended. This is especially significant in light of the significance of the environment to West African psychology and philosophy, as "the people of the region were at one with the land on which they lived." Black people in the "New World," however, were forced out of those places deemed most valuable through violence, cruelty, imprisonment, and mutilation. An environmental perspective of slavery also suggests that slavery is the

South was less different from that in the rest of the Americas in terms of treatment of the slave than prior scholarship has implied.

“The Political Legacy of American Slavery” provides a more contemporary application of these principles. Acharya et al. explore a new theoretical explanation for the political attitudes concerning Republican politics, affirmative action and racial resentment of Southerners across counties in the historical persistence of political attitudes, as demonstrated by the correlation between whites who had a high share of slaves and conservative and racist political beliefs. This is demonstrated in today’s Black Belt, the most politically conservative part of the South, which Acharya et al. argue is due at least in part to its history of chattel slavery. The power of intergenerational transmission of political beliefs is foundational to this study, and challenges the focus of political science on contemporary factors. This has broad implications within the field of political science, as historical forces are not a traditional bulwark of the study of contemporary politics.

In *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*, Acharya et al. expand on this research, providing a framework for the introduction of historical praxis to political science theory, specifically in the American South where the historical legacy of slavery, Acharya et al. argue, continues to shape political relationships and institutions. In “Chapter Two: A Theory of Behavioral Path Dependence,” Acharya et al. offer a framework for understanding historical forces as contemporary mechanisms of public opinion and social order, applying the well-established concept of path dependence to attitudes, behaviors, norms, and beliefs. “Patterns of political attitudes can outlive the

forces that produced them” (44), providing a radical argument for the inclusion of historical data in the study of political attitudes, especially racial attitudes in the United States, today. Acharya et al. find that there is a direct geographic link between the places in the Black Belt which had the most concentrated populations of enslaved people and the racial attitudes of white people who live there today; white people in high-slave areas today are more likely to oppose the Democratic party, to oppose affirmative action, and to express racial resentment. This proves that historical phenomena can be used to predict contemporary politics. For the case of this study, it is especially important to ruminate on the fundamental role that the land played in the institution of slavery and the economic structures created around it; the physical landscape dictated much of this geographic distribution via fertility and riparian access to trade systems. Environmental and geologic history also has a significant impact on the historical and contemporary political landscapes, making the study of environmental politics of the Deep South all the more essential.

In Chapter Nine, “What Lessons Can We Draw from Southern Slavery?” of *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*, Acharya et al. conclude that the behavioral path dependence of political attitudes may explain the persistent patterns of concentrated, especially virulent white supremacist politics in the Black Belt consistently throughout the last 150 years up through the present. The mechanisms of reproduction of these politics include intergenerational socialization, often through familial channels, and institutional reinforcement, specifically Black Codes, then Jim Crow, then mass incarceration. This chapter illuminates the mechanics of white supremacist politics as not temporal, limited to certain years or eras, but spatial and enduring.

In “The Legacy of American Apartheid and Environmental Racism,” Bullard provides a framework for combining these phenomena on a theoretical level, describing white supremacist politics in the distribution of land, housing discrimination, environmental public health threats, and wealth accumulation. “Environmental racism combines with public policies and industry practices to provide benefits for whites while shifting costs to people of color,” (8) citing cases across the American South including Louisiana’s Cancer Alley and the disproportionate petrochemical poisoning levied on Black populations on the Mississippi River.

The studied impact of racism on environmental action and politics in America varies in precise estimate but is without exception striking. Chanin’s “The Effect of Symbolic Racism on Environmental Concern and Environmental Action” posits that racist individuals will be less likely to perceive risk from climate change and therefore be less concerned with environmental issues and less likely to engage in environmental political action. Chanin finds that both biological and symbolic racism are significant predictors for low levels of environmental concern. These results become more significant when examined in tandem with partisanship, indicating that racism may shape environmental political decisions.

Hannibal and Vedlitz’s “Social Capital, Knowledge, and the Environment: The Effect of Interpersonal Communication on Climate Change Knowledge and Policy Preferences” may aid in the interpretation and application of Chanin’s work to actual policy preference, providing a framework for the study of the effect of interpersonal relationships and social positionality on the exchange of climate change information. Hannibal and Vedlitz conclude that one’s perceived knowledge of climate change as well

as simply having discussions about climate change with one's family and peers has a very positive impact on policy preferences consistently throughout demographics, demonstrating the importance of interpersonal relationships and individual identity in broader environmental political trends.

IV. Climate Change Politics and Costs in Louisiana

The scope of climate change as an existential threat to global economies, food systems, healthcare networks, and political realms is too vast to explore here; instead, the price of ineffective environmental policy will be evaluated. Nationally and globally, the cost of inaction is massive. Shindell et al. estimate in "Climate and Health Impacts of US Emissions Reductions Consistent with 2 °C" that the implementation of efficacious and aggressive clean energy policies could prevent about 175,000 premature deaths by 2030 with national benefits estimated to be between 140 and 1,050 billion per year. The benefits wrought by achieving these levels of emissions cuts are about 20 to 80 times greater than the implementation costs.

Louisiana provides an ideal study of climate change and the politics of environment and place because these things are so essential to the way of life and are in abject peril, and have been for many decades. Attachment to place in Louisiana is particularly strong, as evidenced in "Place Attachment and Environmental Change in Coastal Louisiana." Burley et al. explore the ways in which residents of coastal Louisiana frame and perceive land loss, and the fragility that characterizes their place attachment, as well as the intergenerational wariness of environmental destruction. The study found a strong attachment to place, and thus concluded that people must be at the forefront of restoration when a place is damaged, especially when their sense of community,

economic activities, and social identities are so strongly intertwined with the physical landscape.

The land is particularly important to the people of Louisiana, and yet it is disappearing, quickly, costing them culturally, psychologically, physically, and economically. In “Welfare Loss of Wetlands Disintegration: A Louisiana Study,” Farber estimates the minimum dollar amount of welfare losses of the Louisiana coastal wetlands, taking into account reduced incomes and consumption opportunities and increases in costs that could have been avoided through successful restoration. The economic losses total to a range between \$5.9 and \$23.4 billion in 1990. Farber thus concludes that there are major and quantifiable costs to inaction.

“The Peculiar Waterfront: The Crescent City and the Rewriting of the History of Race and Labor in the United States” by Eric Arneson in Adams and Striffler’s *Working in the Big Easy: The History and Politics of Labor in New Orleans* provides a thorough assessment of the relationship between the economic structures and the labor necessitated by and for the cultivation, processing, and distribution of the natural resources provided by the land in and around Jim Crow-era New Orleans. Arneson reexamines the racial divisions within the labor forces, focusing specifically on waterfront and dock workers as there was ample interracial solidarity in unionization efforts, constituting significant pushback against class and racial subordination. White southern trade unionists either viewed Black peers as threats, commonly creating white-only union organizations, or possible allies in holding a solid, unified front, even though Black members were often excluded from full membership and were granted only limited rights through auxiliary unions. However, on the New Orleans docks there rose two interracial labor federations:

the Cotton Men's Executive Council (1880's) and the Dock and Cotton Council (1900's-1920's). The proliferation of these "biracial" (though notably not equitable) unions was followed by waves of white supremacist violence and riots which were intended to push Black laborers off of the docks. The basis for this tentative unionization may be explained by the political interests of the Democratic Party, which depended on the votes of white laborers and as such was willing to turn a blind eye to the violation of segregationist policies, and the strength of Black unions, which forced white unions to negotiate at least somewhat equitable deals.

Arneson posits that this apparent class solidarity was a last-resort measure, as the strength of Black organizers conspired with the desire of the ruling class to maintain a racially divided workforce for their own benefit to ensure that somehow excluding Black workers from the trade altogether, through negotiation, violence, political avenues, or otherwise, was impossible. This is essential to this study, as class divisions in New Orleans have, as Arneson argues, been marked as exceptional in historical narratives due to the problematization of the application of national or regional race and class politics to a city with unique cultural, political, and socio-economic mechanisms. The richness of the land, the mouth of the Mississippi, the most important port in the region, and the largest market for enslaved people during the Antebellum period collide in this one place, where the issues have certainly transfigured but are certainly the same bodies bearing different masks.

Chapter 2: Data and Methods

To measure the relationship between individual racism, education, partisanship, and environmental policy preferences, I use data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) 2018 survey, which provides 708 responses from Louisianians. The 2018 CCES yielded a sample of 60,000 American adults, representing the target population of all adults through a two-stage sampling process including an initial random sample followed by a matched sample meant to ensure that the sample of respondents matches the target sample. For the purposes of this study, the respondents have been limited to residents of the state of Louisiana. The population of Louisiana is 4.649 million. In order to achieve a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error, the minimum population size (N) becomes 385, well below the value of 708 used here. Population size N varies slightly between the different scales applied in the data treatment, but all analyses standardize the data and control for these minor variations.

The 2018 CCES survey was chosen for this thesis because it includes a far greater than sufficient sample size for the target population of Louisianians, includes data for both symbolic and biological racism, and targets various environmental policy preferences which allows for a more nuanced understanding of the impact of these different racist ideologies on disparate environmental policy actions. The CCES is an online survey, which participants opt into using YouGov accounts. The CCES constructs weights using a dual process of matching and post-stratification weighting. The common content weight has been elected for use in this study to adjust for the sample size of 2018 in isolation, rather than a multi-year or Pre/Post scope.

The education scale is a six-point scale (No high school, High school graduate, Some college, 2-year, 4-year, Post-grad), used here as a rough estimation of class level. Typically, socio-economic class level is measured using income, occupation, and education; in future work on the relationships between the psychology of racism, environmental policy preference, class, and ideology, I would recommend the inclusion of income and occupation in addition to education as a fuller measurement of the variable “class.” For the purposes of this thesis, education will be used as a proxy thereof, as it is one of the most widely cited explanations in popular political discourse and media for conservative politics, such as negative environmental policy preferences and actions. The education scale here has an N of 708, and is simply coded education. Partisanship is measured on a three-point scale (Democrat, Republican, or Independent) with a population size N of 647. Party ID is coded as PID3. Ideology is measured on a five-point scale from very liberal to very conservative, with a population size N of 627. Ideology is simply coded as ideology. See Appendix A for a complete list of the questions used in all scales.

The racial resentment scale, labeled FIRE (an acronym for Fear, Institutionalized Racism, and Empathy), is grounded in those principles of “new racism,” or symbolic racism, requiring a different lens than the traditional racial resentment frameworks by which to examine the proliferation of neo-conservative racism in American politics as explored by DeSante and Smith in “Fear, Institutionalized Racism, and Empathy: The Underlying Dimensions of Whites’ Racial Attitudes.” This scale utilizes a five-point Likert-scale to assess the degree to which a respondent holds more insidious racist views, rooted not in biological disparities but in an abstractly colorblind liberalism which erases

the long histories of white supremacist violence, pervasively institutionalized racism, and continuing economics and politics of white supremacy which have conspired to create immense inequities along racial lines. Population size N for the New Racism scale, coded FIRE here, is 576.

Racism is measured by the principles of “old racism,” rooted in biological disparities more overtly coded in white supremacist ideology, such as the idea that Black people don’t “try hard enough” as is used in this study to determine an individual’s biological racism, also explored in Desante and Smith’s “Fear, Institutionalized Racism, and Empathy: The Underlying Dimensions of Whites’ Racial Attitudes.” Population size N for the Old Racism scale, coded RR1 here, is 594.

The environmental policy preference scale measures a respondent’s support (1) or opposition (0) to the following policies: give the EPA the power to regulate Carbon Dioxide (CO²) emissions (coded CO2reg with an N value of 591), lower the required fuel efficiency for the average automobile from 35 mpg to 25 mpg (coded fueffici with an N value of 591), require each state use a minimum amount of renewable fuels in the generation of electricity even if electricity prices increase (coded REmandate with an N value of 592), strengthen EPA enforcement of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) even if it costs jobs (coded EPAenforce with an N value of 592), and withdrawing the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement (coded Withdraw_paris with an N value of 706).

To interrogate the effect of symbolic and biological racism on the environmental policy preferences and actions of individuals, I ran a series of analyses using environmental policy preferences as the dependent variable. First, I ran correlation

models between the five environmental policies and the independent variables in isolation, which include symbolic racism (FIRE), biological racism (RR1), partisanship (3pid), ideology, and education. I then performed analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests to compare the relationships between the variances of each set of variables, applying the treatment to each of the environmental policy preferences using all five independent variables. Finally, I applied logistic regression models to these relationships to test the percentage of the variance explained by the models across each environmental policy type. Table 1 summarizes all variables included in the analysis with a brief description, range-size, and the mean thereof.

Variable	Description	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Environmental Policy Preference: CO2	Respondent's (R) policy preference; 1=Support, 0=Oppose	0-1	0.5972927	0.4908582
Environmental Policy Preference: REmandate	R's policy preference; 1=Support, 0=Oppose	0-1	0.5050676	0.5003971
Environmental Policy Preference: Fueleffici	R's policy preference; 1=Support, 0=Oppose	0-1	0.394247	0.4891023
Environmental Policy Preference: EPAenforce	R's policy preference; 1=Support, 0=Oppose	0-1	0.4932432	0.5003771
Environmental Policy Preference: Withdraw_paris	R's policy preference; 1=Support, 0=Oppose	0-1	0.5325779	0.4992913
Symbolic racism (FIRE)	R's scale score on "New Racism" question; lower=less racist.	0-5	2.6484375	1.284732145
Biological racism (RR1)	R's scale score on "Old Racism" question; lower=less racist.	0-5	3.391835	1.333738422
Party identity (3pid)		0-3	Frequency	Percentage
	Democrat		208	32.15
	Republican		232	35.86
	Independent		207	31.99
Ideology		0-3	Frequency	Percentage
	Very liberal		64	10.21
	Liberal		84	13.4
	Moderate		195	31.1
	Conservative		156	24.88
	Very conservative		128	20.41
Education		0-5	Frequency	Percentage
	No HS		42	5.93
	High school graduate		239	33.76
	Some college		156	22.03
	2-year		60	8.47
	4-year		136	19.21
	Post-grad		75	10.59

Table 1. Summary of variables included in the analysis with a brief description, range-size, and either the mean and standard deviation or frequency and percentage, as appropriate, thereof.

Chapter 3: Results

The three treatment models applied use the environmental policy preferences as dependent variables. Model 1 analyzes the correlations between each of five independent variables (FIRE, RR1, 3pid, education, and ideology) and the five dependent variables which constitute the five environmental policies for which support is measured (CO₂, fueleffici, REmandate, EPAenforce, and Withdraw_paris). Figure 1 displays the mean values of the relationships between each independent variable (old racism, new racism, partisanship, ideology, and education) and each environmental policy. The strongest relationships are found in ideology, symbolic racism, and biological racism, supporting the hypothesis that negative climate change policy preferences and political actions will have a stronger relationship to racism than education level.

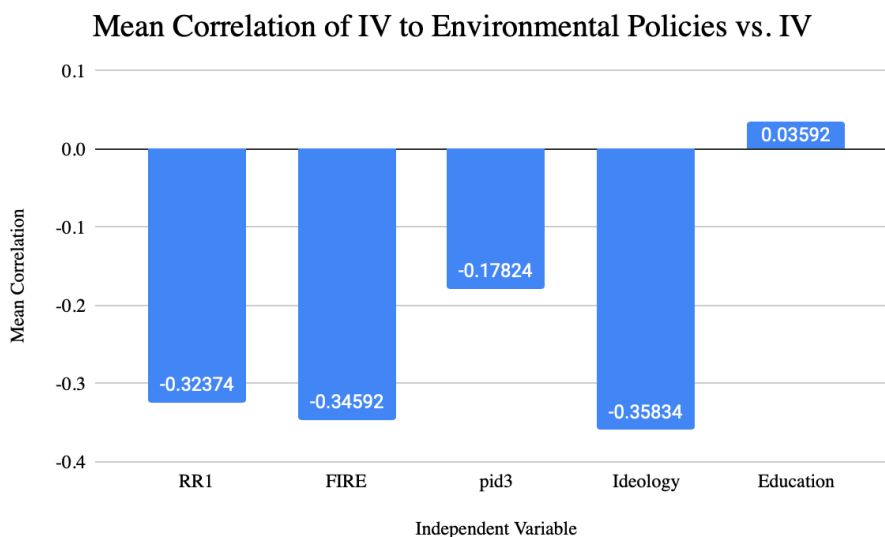


Figure 1. Visualization of Model 1, depicting the mean correlation between old and new racism, partisanship, ideology, and education and environmental policy preferences.

A complete breakdown of correlations between each explanatory factor and each individual environmental policy may be found in Figure 2, which provides a more

nuanced interpretation of these relationships. As hypothesized, the strongest predictors were by far ideology, symbolic racism, and biological racism.

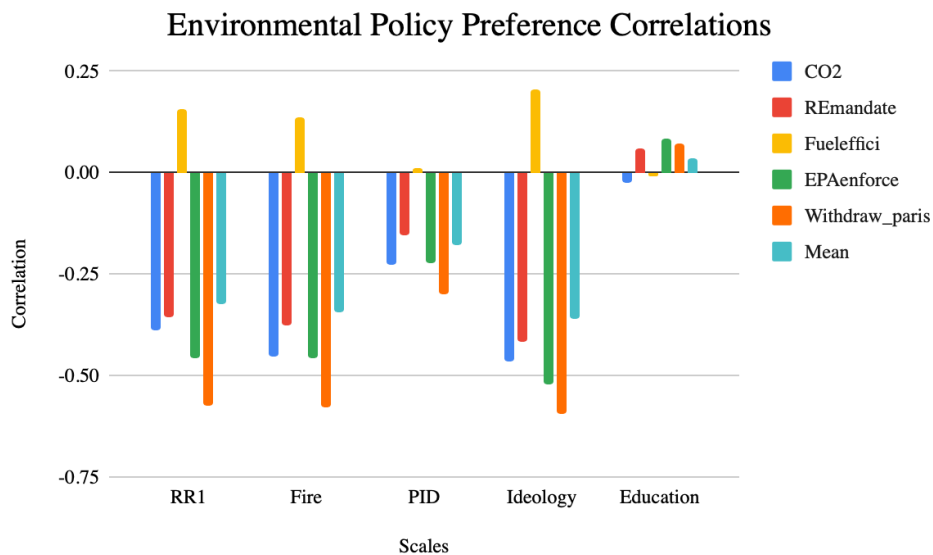


Figure 2. A visual representation of the relationship between each independent and dependent variable interrogated in Model 1.

Notably, the disparity between symbolic and biological racism is nearly negligible for mandated renewable energy minimums (REmandate), EPA enforcement of the CAA and CWA (EPAenforce,) and the United States withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement (Withdraw_paris). Fuel efficiency (Fueleffici) is the prominent outlier, demonstrating the only inconsistencies with the predicted outcomes. This inconsistency holds true across each model, and may be explained by hidden mechanisms including disparities between American cultural conceptions of CO² emissions, which were predictable by the control variables included in this study, and automobile emissions, which are associated more strongly with individualism as opposed to corporate or aggregate activity. Individualism is essential to American cultural narratives of identity and foundation myths; the automobile plays a key role in these mythologies of freedom, independence, and mobility. The fuel efficiency (Fueleffici) policy preference provides

nuance to this study but does not undermine the confirmation of the other four policy preference patterns and models.

Model two uses a series of one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) tests of group-based differences to demonstrate the significance of the experimental results. Table 2 delineates the f-statistics which describe the variances between each of the independent (old and new racism, partisanship, ideological, and education level) and dependent variables (environmental policy preferences).

	CO2	REmandate	Fueleffici	EPAenforce	Withdraw_paris
RR1	0	0	0.0001	0	0
Fire	0	0	0.0009	0	0
PID	0	0.0002	0.7254	0	0
Ideology	0	0	0	0	0
Education	0.5792	0.1279	0.8258	0.0369	0.1223

Table 2. F-values derived from ANOVA models predicting environmental policy preferences.

Once again, fuel efficiency regulation was the only inconsistency with the hypotheses, marking the only departure from f-values of zero for biological and symbolic racism and a significant disparity for the partisan identity values, the second highest and only other non-zero value being 0.0002. Possible explanatory variables for these inconsistencies in fuel efficiency policy preferences may be found above.

The analyses conducted in Model 2 provide support for H₃, racism will have a strong correlation with negative climate change politics, and H₄, racism will have a stronger correlation with negative climate change politics than education level. The f-values for biological racism and symbolic racism reject the null hypothesis for every single environmental policy, evincing the claim that racism, both “new” and “old,” is a more consistent and precise predictor for negative climate change political preferences

than education. Model 2 also demonstrates that ideology is a very strong predictor for environmental voting preferences and patterns, rejecting the null hypothesis for each environmental policy.

Model 3 uses multivariate logistic regression models to assess the goodness of fit and explained variation in the models. Figure 3 represents the p-values which describe the probability of rejecting the hypothesis that no statistically significant relationship exists between each predictor and a respondent's preference for each environmental policy. The variable which measures and approximates racism for this analysis has been reduced to one variable rather than differentiating between symbolic and biological racism as was done in Models 1 and 2 because there was no statistically significant difference in the behaviors and relationships found between those two variables (FIRE and RR1, respectively). Biological racism, labeled RR1, is utilized for Model 3 due to its slightly larger sample size and the significantly greater foundation of literature on the interaction between biological or "old" racism and political behaviors.

As illustrated in Figure 3, Model 3 supports the hypothesis that racism is a better predictor for negative environmental politics than education on the whole; however, this data treatment reveals nuance within this general trend. The p-value for fuel efficiency (Fueffici) and racism (RR1) is 0.064, constituting the only value which reveals a relationship between racism and an environmental policy that is not statistically significant (below 0.05). Notably, all the other p-values found for RR1 and the remaining environmental policies were below 0.03 (Withdraw_paris was 0). Education acted as a statistically significant predictor for one environmental policy, the introduction of a mandatory minimum of renewable energy fuels for each state (labeled REmandate), with

a p-value of 0.032. For this policy, RR1 had a significantly lower p-value of 0.001 while ideology had a p-value of 0; it is worthy of note that for the only policy for which education does have a statistically significant p-value, two other explanatory variables have more significant p-values.

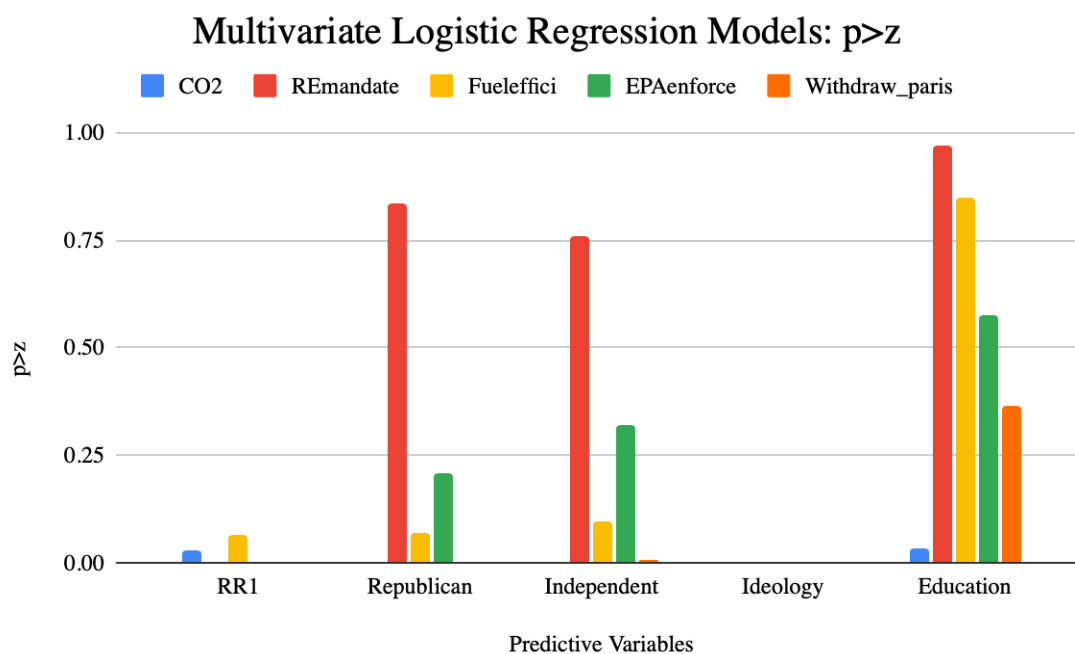


Figure 3. P-values created by the logistic regression analyses in Model 3.

The R^2 values derived in Model 3 help illuminate the degree to which the support or opposition to each of the environmental policies may be explained by the scales (racism, partisanship, ideology, and education) used in this study. Figure 4 describes the R^2 values of each policy in descending order. The previously highlighted weakness of the relationship of the scales to fuel efficiency is demonstrated here in the notably low R^2 value of 0.0389; a mere 3.89% of the variance in the data for fuel efficiency may be explained by the variance in the scales listed above. The next lowest R^2 value is .1561 (REmandate), a value approximately four times greater than that of fuel efficiency. This provides further support for putting less weight in the results born by the fuel efficiency

analyses and instead focusing on the results of those environmental policies with more significant R^2 values, like Withdraw_paris ($R^2=0.4063$), EPAenforce ($R^2=0.2525$), and CO2 ($R^2=0.2237$).

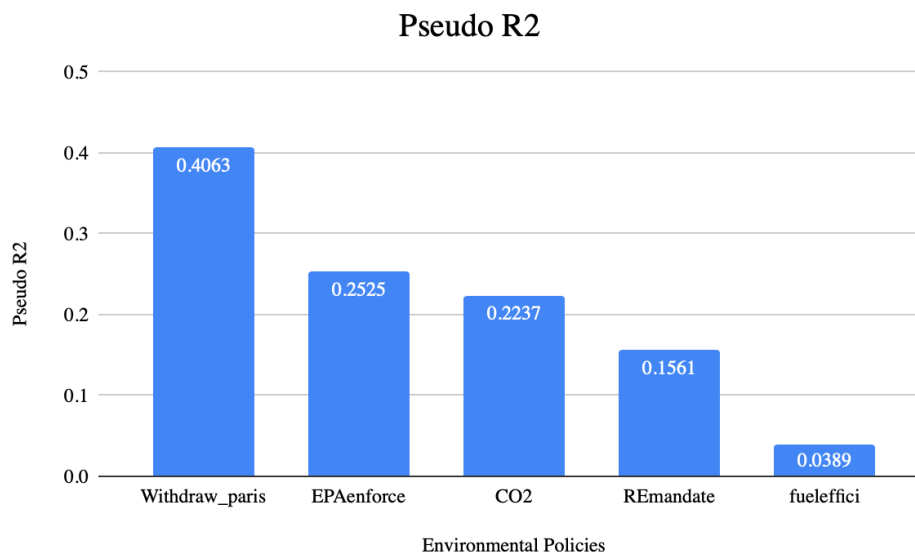


Figure 4. Pseudo R^2 values derived in Model 3 describing the amount of explained variation.

Chapter 4: Discussion

All three models demonstrate that there is a strong association between racism, both symbolic and biological, and oppositional preference to environmental policies in Louisianians. Ideology is a slightly stronger predictor than both types of racism, but it is important to note that the relationship between ideology and racism is well-established in the literature as very strong and often described as co-occurring. They are, however, included as distinct scales in this thesis to define a more precise understanding of the direct relationship between environmental policy preference and the two types of racism by isolating the variables yet including ideology as a disparate explanatory variable to prevent the genesis of a spurious relationship. As hypothesized, Models 1, 2, and 3

supported the hypothesis that racism is a better predictive variable for negative environmental policy preferences than education level or even party identity.

The differences in the relationships between biological and symbolic racism and environmental policy opposition were minor; in Model 1, symbolic racism was shown to have a slightly stronger correlation with opposition to environmental policies, while in Models 2 and 3 biological racism was a marginally better predictor. This almost interchangeable nature of the results was unexpected but supports the broader claim that racism, in general, is a good predictive factor for negative environmental political preferences.

This supports the broader trend in the discourse on how white supremacy is operationalized in contemporary American politics; racism is not disappearing as a new generation comes of voting age, but is simply switching facades, but not as quickly as was once thought. Biological, or “old,” racism is not dying but in fact remains a very potent force in the psychology of political decision-making and the development of policy preference. The application of the study of racism in American politics to that of environmental politics and individual environmental policy preference is revelatory in understanding the causal mechanisms driving public opinion on environmental policy. This is essential as a result of the urgency of the climatic and ecological crises, as well as the political and economic disasters which these environmental disasters engender as resources grow ever more limited and the point of no return draws near, as well as the unique role which disinformation has played in the development of environmental political discourse in the United States. This incredibly successful disinformation campaign has bolstered global racial capitalist interests at the expense of the health,

safety, and livelihood of the global population, with the greatest bodily cost falling on the least culpable polluters, people of color and impoverished nations, while endangering the health and security of the biosphere and economic systems globally, nationally, and locally. The resulting hyper-polarization on the issue of environmental degradation and climate change in the United States has prevented meaningful political action, making public opinion levels and the factors which shape them incredibly important. In the United States, the connection between the exploitation and degradation of the land and white supremacist violence against Black people is centuries-old and remains integral to understanding contemporary political decision-making and policy preference formation. Acharya et al. explore in *Deep Roots* (2018) the inclusion of historical data in the formation of contemporary political theory, especially in regard to race and racism, as a burgeoning aspect of political science literature; this is foundational to this thesis and, hopefully, future research in the field of environmental politics.

More definitive study of the relationship between exactly *how* racism influences environmental policy preference may be revelatory in informing more effective political mobilization around environmental policies. I argue that due to the strong relationship between racism and negative environmental policy preference, anti-racist work may be extremely efficacious in shifting individual preferences and creating broader public support on the aggregate level for more stringent environmental policies. Furthermore, due to the grossly disproportionate burden which people of color, especially Black people, in the United States have been bearing as a result of climate change and environmental disaster, anti-racist work must be fundamental to environmental policy in order to create a truer justice for both the people earth. The harm done unto the ecological

systems of the planet cannot and must not be undone using the same global racial capitalist ideals and means which created this crisis in the first place.

Future research may seek to understand if it is racism, specifically, which acts as an indicator for negative environmental policy preference or if this extends to other identities tied to socially dominant systems of oppression, like patriarchy. Gender is not included within the scope of this study, but could be an integral aspect of this relationship as women bear greater environmental vulnerabilities globally. Further research is also necessary to parse the causal mechanisms by which racism and environmental policy preference are related, to which other social identities like gender, region, and religion may be essential.

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Appendices

I. Appendix A: Survey Questions (“Guide to the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey”):

Applied Filter: State of Residence is Louisiana

Demographic Questions:

3PID: Three Point Party ID

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a ...?

1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent
4. Other
5. Not sure

Ideology: In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

1. Very liberal
2. Liberal
3. Moderate
4. Conservative
5. Very conservative
6. Not sure

Education: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. No HS
2. High school graduate
3. Some college

4. 2-year
5. 4-year
6. Post-grad

Racial Resentment Questions:

RR1: It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough, if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

Likert Scale: Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5)

FIRE: Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.

Likert Scale: Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5)

Environmental Issue Questions:

Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals?

1. Support
 2. Oppose
- I. CO2reg: Give the Environmental Protection Agency power to regulate Carbon Dioxide emissions
 - II. Fueleffici: Lower the required fuel efficiency for the average automobile from 35 mpg to 25 mpg.
 - III. REmandate: Require that each state use a minimum amount of renewable fuels (wind, solar, and hydroelectric) in the generation of electricity even if electricity prices increase

- IV. EPAenforce: Strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency enforcement of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act even if it costs US jobs
- V. Withdraw_paris: Withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement.

II. Appendix B: Data Summaries

Model 1: Summary of correlation analyses.

	CO2	REmandate	Fueleffici	EPAenforce	Withdraw_paris	Mean
RR1	-0.3888	-0.3557	0.1581	-0.4574	-0.5749	-0.32374
Fire	-0.4514	-0.3776	0.1363	-0.4588	-0.5781	-0.34592
PID	-0.2266	-0.1562	0.0113	-0.221	-0.2987	-0.17824
Ideology	-0.4644	-0.4178	0.2064	-0.5231	-0.5928	-0.35834
Education	-0.0263	0.0594	-0.0084	0.0839	0.071	0.03592

Table 3. Summary of correlation analyses.

Model 2:

	Explanatory Variable	Prob>F	Prob>Chi2
CO2			
	RR1	0	0
	Fire	0	0.691
	PID	0	0
	Ideology	0	0
	Education	0.5792	0.789
REmandate			
	RR1	0	0
	Fire	0	0.647
	PID	0.0002	0
	Ideology	0	0.001
	Education	0.1279	0.979
Fueleffici			
	RR1	0.0001	0.125
	Fire	0.0009	0.921
	PID	0.7254	0.147
	Ideology	0	0.333
	Education	0.8258	0.318
EPAenforce			
	RR1	0	0
	Fire	0	0.564
	PID	0	0
	Ideology	0	0
	Education	0.0369	0.458
Withdraw_paris			
	RR1	0	0
	Fire	0	0.855
	PID	0	0
	Ideology	0	0
	Education	0.1223	0.487

Table 4. Summary of ANOVA analyses.

Model 3:

	Explanatory Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
CO2							
	RR1	-0.2436437	0.1124301	-2.17	0.03	-0.4640026	-0.0232847
	Republican	-1.020509	0.3583772	-2.85	0.004	-1.722915	-0.3181024
	Independent	-0.9631234	0.3242852	-2.97	0.003	-1.598711	-0.3275362
	ideology	-0.6854056	0.1270278	-5.4	0	-0.9343755	-0.4364357
	education	-0.1483987	0.069515	-2.13	0.033	-0.2846457	-0.0121518
	_cons	4.928476	0.5641518	8.74	0	3.822759	6.034193
REmandate							
	RR1	-0.346615	0.1047377	-3.31	0.001	-0.5518972	-0.1413328
	Republican	-0.0673971	0.3258049	-0.21	0.836	-0.705963	0.5711689
	Independent	-0.0858698	0.2815417	-0.3	0.76	-0.6376813	0.4659418
	ideology	-0.5436376	0.1148809	-4.73	0	-0.7688001	-0.3184751
	education	-0.002625	0.0648272	-0.04	0.968	-0.1296839	0.1244338
	_cons	3.140093	0.4616405	6.8	0	2.235294	4.044892
Fuelffici							
	RR1	0.1894146	0.102401	1.85	0.064	-0.0112877	0.390117
	Republican	-0.5826533	0.3198413	-1.82	0.069	-1.209531	0.0442241
	Independent	-0.4587034	0.2768224	-1.66	0.098	-1.001265	0.0838586
	ideology	0.3447115	0.1070122	3.22	0.001	0.1349716	0.5544515
	education	-0.0115885	0.0608879	-0.19	0.849	-0.1309266	0.1077495
	_cons	-1.843552	0.4131221	-4.46	0	-2.653257	-1.033848
EPAenforce							
	RR1	-0.3604305	0.1103434	-3.27	0.001	-0.5766995	-0.1441615
	Republican	-0.4293121	0.3422548	-1.25	0.21	-1.100119	0.2414951
	Independent	-0.298243	0.2984731	-1	0.318	-0.8832396	0.2867535
	ideology	-0.7731016	0.1274232	-6.07	0	-1.022846	-0.5233568
	education	0.0390685	0.069603	0.56	0.575	-0.0973509	0.1754879
	_cons	3.979775	0.51926	7.66	0	2.962044	4.997506
Withdraw paris							
	RR1	-0.6354216	0.1221785	-5.2	0	-0.8748871	-0.3959561
	Republican	-1.360804	0.3734247	-3.64	0	-2.092703	-0.6289049
	Independent	-0.9648641	0.3427049	-2.82	0.005	-1.636553	-0.2931749
	ideology	-0.8290397	0.1466909	-5.65	0	-1.116549	-0.5415308
	education	0.0716401	0.0787784	0.91	0.363	-0.0827626	0.2260429
	_cons	5.702607	0.6643445	8.58	0	4.400516	7.004699

Table 5. Summary of multivariate logistic regression analyses