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Focus on Facts: Who Votes Early In-Person in Cuyahoga County?

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Focus on Facts

Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs – Cleveland State University

Levin. November 2016

Map of the Month: Who Votes Early In-Person in Cuyahoga County?

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- Registered voters in Ohio can cast their votes before Election Day in two ways. The first is by using an absentee ballot to vote by mail. The second is by showing up in-person to a designated early voting center, operated by each County's board of election.
- Like any state law, the rules that govern voting in Ohio are enacted by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor. The rules are then administered by the Ohio Secretary of State. Disputes are resolved by the courts.
- The proportion of early votes that are cast in-person has increased over the last decade. And the rules in Ohio have varied over time. Rule changes have been very controversial since research suggests that early in-person voting is used more frequently by African-American voters.
- How a person votes is confidential. But data on who is registered and when they voted is not. Their addresses can be mapped and totals aggregated to geographic areas such as census blocks and neighborhoods.
- The map displayed below shows the number of early in-person voters by census block within Cuyahoga County from the 2012 General election. The source of the data is the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. Each blue dot on the map, randomly located within the census block, represents 10 voters who chose early in-person voting that year.
- Each census block is also shaded differently based on the percent of voting-age residents in that block who were African-American. The source of the data is the 2010 U.S. Census.
- A visual assessment of the map suggests that early in-person voting is more common in blocks that have higher percentages of voting-age residents who are African-American.
- A more rigorous assessment of that finding comes from calculating a precise statistic that compares the overall correlation between the two measures. The statistic is known as a correlation coefficient. It ranges between 0 and 1.0. A value of 0 means no correlation between two measures. A value of 1.0 means that two measures are perfectly correlated.

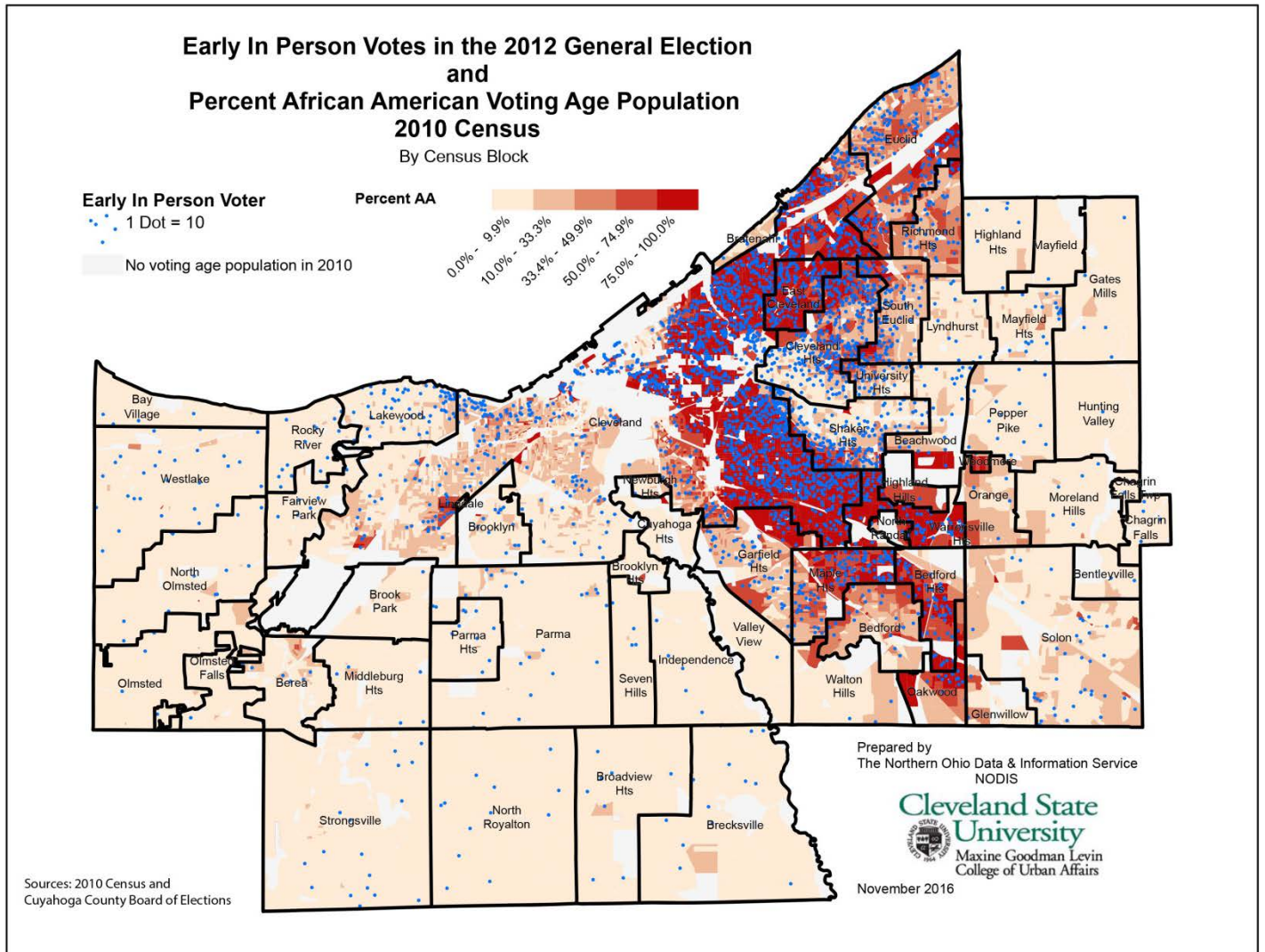


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- The precise correlation coefficient between the number of early in-person voters in each census block in Cuyahoga County during the 2012 General election, and the percent of each block’s voting-age residents who were African-American in 2010 is 0.728. This is a high level of correlation.



A full sized PDF of this map can be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/WhoVotesEarly>.