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Jessica Butler April 6, 2015

A Chocolate City No More? Exploring Racial Polarization and Population Shifts in Post-Katrina New Orleans

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Abstract

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This paper explores population shifts in New Orleans that occurred as a result of Hurricane Katrina, and the impact of such shifts on the outcome of mayoral elections. The research focuses on the movement of African Americans out of New Orleans, and the notion that this movement created a favorable climate for the election of the city's first white mayor in nearly four decades. Drawing primarily from voter registration and election returns data, this paper seeks to illustrate that the "black exodus" out of New Orleans created conditions that finally allowed Mitch Landrieu to be elected mayor of that city, while simultaneously putting an end to three decades of black mayoral control.

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Jessica Butler

A Note from the Author

When I embarked on the journey of creating this piece of original research roughly one year ago, I did so in part for purely selfish reasons. It was my hope that working on a project related to Hurricane Katrina and its lasting impact on the city of New Orleans would be a cathartic experience for me. It was not until I began my research by reading numerous accounts of the events that occurred that fateful week in August nearly ten years ago that I began to realize this project was much bigger than me. Make no mistake; I understand the limitations of an undergraduate thesis project in terms of impact. I do not expect this work to be read by hundreds of scholars, nor do I expect to launch a new strand of thought with this project. However, it was important to me that this work exists. Nearly a decade after Hurricane Katrina ripped through the Gulf Coast and the breach of the city's levees destroyed the lives of so many of its citizens, it has largely been forgotten.

New Orleans is once more thought of to the general public as The Big Easy, a place to cast your cares aside and eat until your heart is content. Yet only a few miles away from the French Quarter streets that tourists flood into every year for Mardi Gras, homes still remain abandoned, empty lots sit where other homes once stood and thousands of people still struggle with the emotional scars of Katrina that so often go unexamined. As a nation, we must never forget the over 1,000 United States citizens that lost their lives to Katrina's floodwaters, but this project is dedicated to those who survived and returned.

In my eyes, the human toll of Hurricane Katrina is not just the lives that were lost over the course of that week, but in the emotional baggage so many still carry to this day. I managed to escape the floodwaters and start over and yet I have not been able to escape those emotional scars. In my family alone, Katrina's effects can be seen in my eleven-year old brother, who although he was less than two years old at the time, remains inexplicably terrified of thunder and large amounts of water or in me,

just twelve years old at the time, never having slept a full night since the day I left New Orleans nearly a decade ago.

Yet we were the lucky ones. For those who remained or returned, the scars are much more prominent and can be found in the countless divorces that have occurred since, ripping apart once solid families, the suicides of childhood friends and countless others who found the pain too much to bear, and the thousands of lives that have been rocked by escalating crime in the city. Their stories and struggles have been largely forgotten and it was my desire, through this project to in any way I possibly can, once again make visible the struggles of so many who continue to fight to rebuild their lives. It is my sincere hope that they are never forgotten, and as such this project serves as a love letter to them all.

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Chapter One — Introduction

In the early morning hours of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall near the city of New Orleans as a powerful Category 3 hurricane with winds exceeding 125 miles per hour. While the hurricane did not make direct landfall on the city of New Orleans as a Category 5, as was initially predicted, multiple levee breaches and failures quickly led to the drowning of huge swaths of one of America's major cities and the deaths of 971 Louisiana residents. The destruction led to a number of residents fleeing the city and opting to start new lives in areas both near and far that perhaps provided greater economic opportunities than had previously been available in New Orleans.

In the 2006 mayoral election, just months after Hurricane Katrina, the black incumbent mayor, C. Ray Nagin faced stiff competition for his position from Mitch Landrieu, the son of the last white mayor elected in New Orleans in 1974. Nagin held on to his position, but four years later Landrieu was victorious and became the first white mayor the city had elected since his father's reelection thirty-six years earlier. The presence of a white mayor in charge of City Hall for the first time in nearly four decades just four years after Hurricane Katrina cannot be overstated. Landrieu's election is not merely a coincidence that would have most likely occurred even in the absence of a Katrina sized catastrophe. It is not merely Landrieu's viability in these two elections that is of note, but also the lack of viable African American candidates in a city governed by African Americans for four decades. This phenomenon begs the question, was it largely the disproportionate displacement of African Americans that enabled Landrieu to come so close to victory in 2006 and ultimately win in 2010? Perhaps more generally these events raise the question, why or how does black control in city politics come to an end?

There are a number of fascinating political questions that are born out of the Katrina disaster, ranging from the political agency of minority women to the ever-complicated issue of the right to return. But perhaps the most interesting questions focus on the long term and wide spread impact that Hurricane Katrina had on the nation. Katrina did not just affect the city of New Orleans, the state of Louisiana, or even just the Gulf Coast region, although the effects were immense. Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath was in its totality a truly catastrophic event unlike anything most Americans had witnessed in their lifetime. In some ways any Katrina related study is a historical study that seeks to investigate a phenomenon that hopefully and likely will never occur on American soil again. Along this vein, Katrina offers a unique albeit unfortunate opportunity to study how electoral politics changes when there is an exogenous shock that creates swift and massive population shifts.

While the movement of large numbers of African Americans out of New Orleans and into pockets in other cities is a fascinating development, this exodus is not a new phenomenon. The Great Migration, which saw millions of African Americans leave the South for greater economic opportunity in the North at the turn of the twentieth century is a similar example of black migration, although on a much larger and slower scale than the Katrina migration. The Great Migration had a profound and lasting impact on black politics in the North, proving that the migration of a particular racial or ethnic group can be potentially politically important (Grant 2014). The Katrina migration can be viewed as a smaller, swifter but still critically important movement of African Americans. Just as the first migration had a tremendous impact on politics in the North, the Katrina migration had and continues to have a dynamic impact on local politics in New Orleans and surrounding cities. Despite the fact that the Katrina migration was not voluntary, there is still a great

deal of information that can be gleaned from a study of the Katrina exodus out of New Orleans.

The Katrina catastrophe was a truly monumental event and while political science has devoted a significant amount of energy to exploring the 2006 New Orleans mayoral election and the complex nuances that emerged from that election (Lay 2009; Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007). However the academic dialog surrounding Hurricane Katrina has fallen short by failing to move past the 2006 election. This is perhaps due to the fact that most of the academic studies surrounding Katrina were conducted in the immediate or near immediate wake of the hurricane. Following Katrina, the political science community has moved away from studying the impact of the Katrina population shifts without giving due attention to what has occurred in New Orleans in more recent years. With time and distance, a more comprehensive study is both appropriate and necessary to understand the long-term impact of the black exodus out of New Orleans.

Theoretical Framework

Studying interstate migration across the nation, Gimpel and Schuknecht argue, "political mobility across state lines has produced major attitudinal and partisan shifts" (Gimpel and Schuknecht 2003, 97). This statement is the basis for the entire project that will follow. While the statement applies to interstate migration and the impact such migration has on national elections, the same principles can be applied to New Orleans. At the heart of this research is the focus on population shifts and thus the primary theory that will be tested is born out of interstate migration theory. Migration is one of the most frequently discussed factors in political change and my research seeks to further contribute to that discussion by explaining the impact that involuntary migration or population shifts

due to disaster had on mayoral elections in impacted cities. A great deal of the literature devoted to discussing interstate migration in the United States explores migration trends in the South and how these trends have led to Republican takeovers in southern states (Parker 1988, Wolfinger and Arseneau 1978, Wolfinger and Hagen 1985). There are also a few works that investigate the impact of population shifts for the strength of the Democratic Party, but these pieces deal with other parts of the country (Robinson and Noriega 2010). Gimpel and Schuknecht (2001) argue that areas with high cross-state migrant populations will be more likely to support Republican candidates over Democratic candidates. Much of my research will seek to offer an alternative explanation to their findings not just on the basis that they looked at gubernatorial elections instead of municipal elections, but on the basis that their research fails to fully capture all of the nuances, such as racial identity, that exist in electoral politics, particularly where migration is concerned.

Migration theory is a vast segment of political science research that often overlaps with economic theory. While it is somewhat difficult to find scholarly research that addresses the purely political impacts of interstate migration in the United States, or more importantly the process of migration in the wake of a natural disaster, there is some literature which states that democratic change is more likely to occur in the wake of negative weather conditions (Brückner and Ciccone, 2011). While this research focuses on droughts in sub-Saharan Africa, the principles argued by Brückner and Ciccone can be applied to post-Katrina New Orleans.

The principal distinction between this project and the migration literature put forth by other political scientists, because it will not only discuss the ways in which individuals

move, but will also explore how displacement can impact electoral outcomes. Moreover, this project examines the ways in which individuals move and the importance of racially polarized voting, particularly in the midst of crisis. While these ideas work in tandem to explain the post-Katrina elections in both New Orleans and Houston, the critically important element of this conversation is the exploration and explanation of how and why individuals move. Prior to Katrina, the single greatest example of mass African American movement was the Great Migration, a term that refers to the movement of six million African Americans out of the South between 1910 and 1970 (Grant 2014).

This migration was spurred by a desire on the part of blacks to achieve greater economic stability, and in the earlier decades of the Great Migration blacks were driven by a fear of racial violence in the South as well. It could certainly be argued that fear of racial violence such as lynching created a sense of urgency for those individuals and families who decided to leave the South for safer pastures (Grant 2014). While this may not necessarily be analogous to the swift exodus out of New Orleans it serves as the best possible proxy for such a movement prior to Hurricane Katrina. Of note however, is the fact that the Great Migration took place over the course of sixty years and in the later decades the movement was grounded more in a desire for greater economic advancement than fear and intimidation from Southern racists. In fact the majority of migration, regardless of race occurs for economic reasons, explaining why so much of migration theory is tied to the discipline of economics.

Unfortunately, scholars have yet to specifically address the potential power and impact of what could be called “the Katrina effect” where demographic shifts are concerned. There is a vast amount of literature that focuses on other phenomena related to

Hurricane Katrina or the singular case of the 2006 New Orleans mayoral election, but most scholars fail to explicitly address the very notion of demographic shifts that occurred in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and these scholars certainly do not discuss the importance of those shifts for local politics. The election of a white mayor in the wake of a large exodus of the city's black population after nearly four decades of black mayoral control cannot be simply regarded as coincidence. A study of the political landscape that made such an election possible has the potential to be vitally important to understanding black loss of control in other American cities as well as local politics in the wake of natural disasters.

This is perhaps an issue of timing more than anything. While the movement of citizens out of New Orleans, and blacks in particular, was a swift change, there was no evidence at the time to suggest that such movement would be permanent. In fact, nine years later we are only now truly able to say with a great deal of certainty that whatever movement patterns and effects are discovered are likely permanent. Much of the literature dealing specifically with Hurricane Katrina and the political consequences of that storm were published either immediately after or within a few years of the hurricane (Lay 2009; Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007; McBride and Parker 2008; Vanderleeuw, Liu and Williams, 2008). At that point, the evacuee population was still somewhat in flux and any study of population shifts would have been difficult to do. Liu and Vanderleeuw (2007) do posit that "a change in the voting cohort's racial makeup- that can result from normal patterns of in-migration and/or out migration- may readily produce a viable challenge to the elected component of a regime's leadership". While this change was not due to normal in or out-migration patterns, Liu and Vanderleeuw are correct in their assessment. Their research

was simply conducted and published before such a change was witnessed via the Landrieu election in 2010.

Scholars have also overlooked to some extent the salience and import of racialization in these New Orleans elections. The manner in which the candidates presented themselves as either in support of the black community or in support of the white community became critically important in their success in the election. While Lay (2009) does discuss how impactful race was in the 2006 election, she does so by discussing the choices of voters rather than the choices of candidates. While the ways in which voters perceive the candidates is important, an examination of the extent to which candidates were racialized or deracialized in each election is an important angle to explore given the history of racial division in New Orleans.

While many scholars fail to see the correlation between demographic shifts in 2005 and the mayoral elections that took place in 2006, 2010 and beyond, this is not to say that the entire scholarly community has failed to note and address this critically important link. Those studies that address demographic shifts out of New Orleans offer incredibly insightful commentary on the particularly fascinating case of Ray Nagin's successful reelection bid in 2006 (Vanderleeuw, Liu, and Williams 2008), but this focus on a single election fails to take into consideration the broader, long-term impact that has potentially been felt on the local politics of New Orleans. At the very least an update this work is necessary. Chapter 2 will be comprised of an overview of the literature surrounding broader concepts of black political participation, migration and racially polarized voting. Chapter 3 will explore examples of when and how black candidates run racialized campaigns or deracialized campaigns and the successes and failures of each. This chapter

will look not only at racialized and deracialized campaigns of black candidates across the country, but will also investigate the specific usage of these tactics in mayoral elections in New Orleans specifically. Chapter 4 will serve as a quantitative analysis of the 2002, 2006 and 2010 New Orleans mayoral elections to provide context on how Nagin was successful in 2006 and how Landrieu was ultimately successful in 2010. Finally, Chapter 5 will offer conclusions about the data presented from the three mayoral elections in New Orleans and will also discuss ways to further this research in the future.

Chapter Two — Surveying the Field

Literature Review

It is nonetheless important to begin with the captivating and puzzling 2006 mayoral election where Ray Nagin, the black incumbent, faced a difficult reelection battle against Mitch Landrieu, the white challenger from a political dynasty. In the city of New Orleans, there had been consistent black leadership for over three decades. White challengers for the mayor's office in this time period were rare. The last time a viable white candidate had entered the race for mayor was in 1990 and 1994, when lawyer and activist Donald Mintz faced Sidney Barthelemy and then Marc Morial in a runoff for the position. Against Barthelemy Mintz was only able to secure 44 percent of the vote. The Morial-Mintz race was a particularly bitter battle dripping with racial undertones and Mintz was defeated, capturing 46 percent of the vote. Yet in 2006 for the first time in over a decade, there was a legitimate threat to the black control of City Hall. This was due in part to Landrieu's overall strength as a candidate from a family with a long-standing history in the city, but his race, in the midst of an election where race was likely a salient issue, may have also been a factor. The strong challenge that Landrieu's candidacy presented to Nagin likely would not have existed absent Hurricane Katrina. Landrieu's first unsuccessful run for the office in 1994 against another son of a former mayor, Marc Morial, provides strong evidence for this claim. Landrieu's family connections were no less relevant in 1994 than they were over a decade later, yet Landrieu failed to make the runoff in 1994, only receiving 10 percent of the vote and now twelve years later Landrieu's bid in 2006 was a far more legitimate threat to black control. It would seem that in the intervening period between Landrieu's first run and his run in 2006, the conditions, or rather the change in the racial composition of the

city made a vigorous white challenge considerably more likely to occur (Vanderleeuw, Liu, and Williams 2008).

This discussion raises a myriad of questions ranging from why Nagin's performance inspired such significant challenges, to how local politics operated in New Orleans and Houston prior to Katrina and how that operation changed, if at all in Katrina's aftermath. New Orleans functioned much like other urban cities of its size prior to Hurricane Katrina, particularly as it pertains to competition in local elections. Local elections in racially split, urban cities are a fierce battle for a scarce amount of resources and this battle is usually fought along heavily divided racial lines with blacks and whites choosing to support different candidates (Hajnal and Trounstine 2014). In the case of New Orleans, a city that frequently only offered white citizens a choice between two black candidates, white crossover voting becomes not only an important phenomenon to understand, but wholly necessary to illustrate normative white voting behavior in a city under black control. Scholars have found that over time racial tolerance among whites in a black city grows and whites may select black candidates for office, even over white candidates when the opportunity presents itself (Liu and Vanderleeuw 1999). However election returns from the 2006 election highlight Ray Nagin's inability to garner white support, despite the fact that it was the support of whites that propelled him to the office four years earlier.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that perhaps Liu and Vanderleeuw's theory is not incorrect, but simply does not account for the many factors that were at work in post-Katrina New Orleans such as differing opinions of black and white residents. Ray Nagin intentionally repositioned himself as a vastly different candidate in 2006 than the candidate he was in 2002. This behavior could be a result of Nagin's perception of either

group conflict or racial competition between whites and blacks in New Orleans as a result of the weakened infrastructure, fewer resources and general scarcity that existed after Katrina. In a sense, group conflict and racial competition in this context are one in the same and the manifestation of this issue is the switch of support away from black candidates in the white community. This event is reflected in the literature as scholars have said, "racial competition in biracial elections, reflected by the racial composition of the candidate field, the strength of white/black candidates, and the election type (primary vs. runoff), may reverse white support for black candidates" (Liu 2001, 613-614; also Vanderleeuw et. al. 2008; Owens and Brown 2013).

Interestingly, this is not a localized phenomenon. Just as African Americans in New Orleans lost control of City Hall after four decades, African Americans in urban cities such as Detroit, have found themselves in similar situations as of late (Owens and Brown 2013), while cities such as Atlanta suffer from declining black populations and turnout but have yet to experience a loss of mayoral control. Still the viability of white candidates in these areas suggests that whites are changing their attitudes and approaches to crossover voting and now choose to vote more frequently for the candidate of the same racial background, regardless of the viability of such a candidate. The question that must be raised as a result of the loss of black control in urban cities is two fold. Of course, the voting behavior of whites in these cities must be studied, but changes in the voting behaviors of blacks in urban cities must also be taken into consideration. The primary question that must be asked in this context is, is there some shift in the voting behavior of blacks that has caused them to lose control of institutions they held for so many decades? In the specific case of

New Orleans, is this shift purely the decreased number of African Americans living in that city that has lessened the black community's ability to wield political power?

Returning to the shift in white support of black candidates and the loss of black mayoral control in urban cities, if such a shift has in fact occurred, it would seem that the shift has occurred in tandem with declining black empowerment. Black empowerment theory is foundational to understanding black political participation in any area, but especially black political participation in a black-led city such as New Orleans. Bobo and Gilliam's work in this area is viewed as one of the seminal works of black empowerment theory, and the basis from which more recent developments of black empowerment theory emerge. Since Bobo and Gilliam (1990), new strains of black empowerment theory have emerged which seek to address declining black empowerment. This theory, most clearly articulated by McBride and Parker (2008), states that blacks who live in areas where blacks have experienced long-term control will experience a decline in empowerment, while blacks who live in areas where blacks either do not have control or have held control for a short time will retain high levels of empowerment. Essentially McBride and Parker (2008) argue that once blacks have held on to local control for an extended period of time, black voters are lulled into a sense of security and grow somewhat apathetic. This apathy leads to declining voter turnout for local elections and breeds the declining black empowerment discussed by Owens and Brown (2013). Thinking of Landrieu's near win and later election to City Hall in this context, one could argue that New Orleans had been experiencing a decline in black empowerment already because blacks had controlled the mayor's office for nearly forty years and that conditions were simply prime for whites to reassert their dominance in local politics by electing Landrieu. This theory provides a "politics as usual"

explanation for loss of black control that does not address the critical importance of population shifts in these cities.

However the decrease in the city's population overall but certainly the city's black population suggests that this is not a case of politics as usual and greater forces were at work. The best way to think of the exodus of blacks out of New Orleans and the political impact of this movement is to consider such movement to be what Owens and Brown (2013) call a "black electoral disruption". Following Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans became a much smaller city both in terms of population and geographic size, yet many of the geographic areas of the city that became closed off were areas previously dominated by African Americans. Although their research applies to Atlanta, ideas put forth by Owens and Brown (2013) can be generalized to New Orleans. The scholars suggest, "as whites moved in and blacks moved out or around the city, the shifts transformed the city's electorate into more of a 'small, active [but] disproportionately middle-class and white' electorate." (Owens and Brown 2013, 671). Thinking of Landrieu's presence in the runoff in 2006 and his eventual win in 2010 in the context of an electoral disruption, it is clear that far more was at work than purely a politics as usual cycle in which whites, after a long period of dormant empowerment reemerged as a force in urban politics in a city with declining black empowerment. The resurgence and takeover of City Hall that whites in New Orleans mounted was not spontaneous, nor does this phenomenon exist in a vacuum. The movement of blacks out of the city led to a decline in black voter turnout, thereby weakening the electoral capacity for strong black empowerment and governance in the city (Owens and Brown 2013).

It is also entirely possible that other factors were at work, particularly among white voters in the 2006 election. There is significant evidence to suggest that in the elections following Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans voters largely made their candidate decisions on the basis of race (Lay 2009). Racially polarized voting in urban settings is certainly not a new trend, and has even occurred in New Orleans for decades (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007), but an exploration of racially polarized voting is important to understanding the totality of the post-Katrina mayoral outcomes.

Racially polarized voting frequently occurs in areas "fraught with intergroup tensions" (Kaufmann 2004, 11). The idea is closely tied to the feeling of racial threat. While racial threat has historically been associated with white voters (Key 1949; Wolfinger 1974; Giles and Evans 1986; Kaufmann 2004), the behaviors of African Americans in New Orleans in 2006 when black mayoral control was in jeopardy mirror white feelings of racial threat in response to growing black populations. Some research does suggest that large black populations do not necessarily equate to feelings of threat among white voters (Amir 1969; Stein, Post, and Rinden 2000; Hajnal 2001) but at least in the case of New Orleans, decades of mayoral elections largely split along racial lines indicate that even if there is no evidence of racial threat, there are clear indications of intergroup conflicts in the city that have lead to decades of racially polarized voting.

In these instances of racially polarized voting in particular, black and white voters likely respond differently to candidates, especially in times of turmoil or crisis. These decisions are often made along racial lines with voters aligning themselves with the candidate of their same racial background although there are instances were blacks and whites divide along racial lines even in the absence of a black candidate (Kaufmann 2004).

One of the best examples of differences in black and white reactions in the face of crisis can be found in the 1993 defeat of David Dinkins in his reelection bid for mayor of New York City which Kaufmann details in her work. Rudolph Giuliani, a white Republican who at the time was the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, defeated Dinkins who was left weakened by accusations of racial favoritism in the wake of the Crown Heights riots of 1991. The Crown Heights riots, in which African Americans destroyed property in a Brooklyn neighborhood and killed a Jewish student in retaliation for a car accident in which an Orthodox Jewish driver killed a young black boy, came on the heels of the racially charged Family Red Apple boycott, both of which were events where Dinkins was criticized for showing undue deference to blacks. Giuliani on the other hand, returned to challenge Dinkins in 1993 with his law and order platform, which had gained greater popularity after multiple years of racial unrest under Dinkins. Kaufmann (2004) finds that in the wake of these two racial crises for New York City, 78 percent of whites supported Giuliani, while 95 percent of blacks supported Dinkins. These are both increases on their support from the racial groups in the previous election held in 1989 as 72 percent of whites supported Giuliani, while 91 percent of blacks had supported Dinkins. These numbers illustrate that after two major events of racial unrest that placed the city in turmoil, both white and black voters in 1993, along very different and distinct racial lines chose to vote their fears rather than their hopes.

David Dinkins entered the 1993 mayoral race as an embattled figure marred by the racially charged events of 1991. Perhaps the secret to Dinkins's defeat lies in his inability to make successful appeals in the midst of less than ideal circumstances. While many white pundits publically scolded Dinkins for supposed leniency to blacks during the Red Apple

Boycott, Dinkins also faced criticism from African Americans. The boycott was spearheaded by black nationalists who as Claire Kim writes, "desired far more than a black mayor in Gracie Mansion" (Kim 2000, 110) and although black nationalists and moderate black officials had previously joined forces to oust former mayor Edward Koch and replace him with Dinkins, the coalition was tenuous at best and the two groups "had never been more than temporary bedfellows" (Kim 2000, 109).

When candidates are embattled they typically make very specific appeals to their base in hopes of generating maximum support from this group. In the case of black candidates, they frequently make overt and explicit appeals to race. In New Orleans, Ray Nagin's 2006 campaign strategy can be viewed as an example of how black candidates navigate the political landscape when they are embattled. His journey will be explored in greater detail in chapter three in the context of a black candidate's decision to run a racialized or deracialized campaign. In Nagin's case, as in the case of many other black officials, his status as an embattled mayor and his decision to run a racialized campaign are connected.

One of the remaining questions surrounding Nagin and his racialized approach to campaigning in 2006 is why he lost the white support that had initially propelled him to office. It was not the first time a black mayoral incumbent who had been elected with major white support was forced to seek a new electoral coalition. As will be discussed in greater detail later, Sidney Barthelemy had faced a similar hurdle during his reelection campaign in 1990. The souring of the relationship between Barthelemy and New Orleans' whites was rooted in issues surrounding differences in policy. For Nagin, the issue was not a difference in opinion but rather can be better attributed to a level of incompetency in the eyes of

many white voters. Retrospective voting can be a powerful force and there is no question that after New Orleans served as an international spectacle in the days and weeks following Hurricane Katrina, voters questioned Nagin's competency to lead the city. The issue of racially retrospective voting, in which the city's white voters chose not to support Nagin due to his mishandling of Katrina both in preparation as well as during the aftermath, serves as the basis for the work conducted by Lay (2009) in seeking to understand how Nagin was reelected, even in the midst of such turmoil.

Katrina can and aptly should be viewed as an exogenous shock. The implications of an exogenous shock on the political landscape can frequently be enormous and the possibility that such implications exist in New Orleans is an area that must be explored. Despite the fact that the 2006 election was highly racially polarized, it is possible that many other factors were at work. The concept of retrospective voting has already been discussed but in tandem with retrospective voting is the idea that Katrina presented such an exogenous shock that voters simply viewed Nagin as a liability that had to be removed for the good of the city. This can exist outside of the confines of race, as illustrated by the ousting of black mayors in the overwhelmingly African American city of Detroit after years of economic hardship. While it is likely that in the case of Nagin there is a racial division regarding which voters sought to oust him after such a shock, it must still be viewed as an alternative explanation for why Nagin received such anemic support from his former base in the 2006 contest.

The manner in which the political landscape changed after Katrina may also have less to do with the behaviors and opinions of voters, regardless of race, and more to do with the candidates themselves. While there is evidence that voters had vastly different

opinions of Nagin following Katrina, this is due in large part to the fact that Nagin reconstructed his image and both the support and abandonment he received from voters was a response to his own decision to reframe himself as a candidate. In 2002, Nagin ran with the support of white New Orleanians and as the preferred candidate of whites, Nagin made virtually no appeals to black voters. By 2006, Nagin made the calculated decision to overt and explicit racial appeals to black voters. While we will never truly be able to know why Nagin made this decision, it has served and continues to serve as an effective campaign strategy.

According to McIlwain and Caliendo (2011), authenticity appeals are successful because they convey to black voters that a vote for the unauthentic candidate "may translate into a loss of social and political capital and thereby diminish the collective power of voters' racial group members" (McIlwain and Caliendo 2011, 76). It is well documented in work from scholars across disciplines that a loss of social and political capital in areas ranging from fair housing practices to voting power was a very real concern for citizens who were poor, black or frequently both in a post-Katrina New Orleans. Nagin's appeal to race in this way resonated particularly in the black community because there was already a perceived threat to black political power and livelihood and Nagin's new position as an authentic black candidate represented hope and stability in a turbulent time.

Despite Nagin's position as a newly racialized candidate in 2006 that strongly appealed to black voters, Mitch Landrieu still posed a considerable threat. As discussed in depth by Tate (2004), white politicians have frequently shown that they are capable of substantively representing their black constituents just as effectively as if not better than black politicians. Tate points to individuals such as Lindy Boggs, the United States

Congresswoman representing New Orleans, as proof of white politicians who act with the interests of their largely black constituency in mind. Mitch Landrieu's own father could also be added to this list of effective and capable substantive representatives, as Moon Landrieu was responsible for many of New Orleans desegregation initiatives in the 1970s. Landrieu sought to convey an image in 2006 of a capable mayor even in a city that was majority African American. He failed to achieve this goal due to the tremendous racial divides that existed in that contest. However by 2010, with Nagin term limited and seeming even less competent than he had been four years earlier, race was no longer a salient issue. Campaign platforms and a vision for the city became the issues of central import to voters and under these conditions, Landrieu was able to convince black voters that he would continue in the family tradition of substantively aiding and representing what even in 2010 still remained a majority black constituency.

Scholars have a great deal to say regarding the issues of racial polarization, exogenous shock, migration, retrospective voting and the manner in which candidates are able to represent their constituents, as well as varying opinions on all of these topics. Yet this paper will focus on the ideas that racial polarization was a tremendously important factor in all of New Orleans mayoral elections beginning in 1978, but especially in the 2006 election following the exogenous shock of Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, the racial or deracialized nature of a candidate is just as important to the outcome of the election as the decisions voters make about the candidate. The switch from deracialization to racialization that can be found in the incumbency runs of Sidney Barthelemy and Ray Nagin indicate that the decision of the candidate to run towards or away from race is crucial to a campaign. While declining black empowerment is possibly an alternative explanation for what

occurred in New Orleans post-Katrina, it is far more likely that many other factors were at work and this paper will devote a great deal of time to those other contributing factors.

Chapter Three —Racialization vs. Deracialization: Is One More Effective?

As African Americans began to amass greater political power and the dream of asserting themselves into positions of power came closer to becoming realities, black candidates focused their campaign efforts on areas with large black populations as their first striking grounds. These candidates operated from a belief that if black candidates entered local races, support from the black community for that candidate would be overwhelming. These early candidates were brave enough to gamble on the solidarity of black voters, and history has largely illustrated that these calculations were correct. The belief and hope was that in these districts, the black base would be large enough to elect a black candidate, even with a viable white candidate also in the race. As early as the 1940's, black candidates in predominantly black districts began proving that success was possible even when relying almost solely on the support of the district's black base. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. found success in the historically black New York neighborhood of Harlem, Oscar De Priest and later William Dawson broke new ground on Chicago's South Side and several black candidates rose to prominence in South Central Los Angeles.

Following the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, black candidates collectively set their sights on positions of greater import on the local level, as "local politics offer an important stepping stone to minority incorporation" (Kaufmann 2004, 10). The determination among black candidates seeking greater political power, as well as the desire on the part of citizens for descriptive representation lead to the election of the nation's first black mayor, Carl Stokes in Cleveland, Ohio in 1967. Stokes election set off a firestorm among black candidates nationwide as nearly two dozen African Americans were elected mayor in the decade following Stokes' historic win. Most of these candidates won

their elections on the strength of the black base in that particular city as only about 22 percent of whites supported the first black mayors. These numbers typically increased when black mayors ran as incumbents (Hajnal 2007), proving that whites became more comfortable with the idea of black leadership once it had been experienced.

Into the 1980s and 1990s, more black candidates entered the fray and in many cases two black candidates could jeopardize both candidacies by splitting the black vote and allowing a third candidate to slide to victory (Canon 1999). It became clear that as more African Americans entered the political arena, black candidates would have to adopt new strategies to remain viable. This would come to include frequently appealing to white voters to separate themselves from other black candidates in the field.

The decision to run a racialized or deracialized campaign can often be one of the defining moments in the campaign for a black candidate. There is no template for which approach is more effective, as several candidates have been successful using both approaches, just as several candidates have failed to win under both techniques. Racialized campaigns are those that follow the model of early successful candidates by not necessarily seeking to heighten the issue of race, but certainly not shying away from the candidate's race and how that will impact their leadership in office. These campaigns are designed to appeal almost exclusively to black voters and are employed in areas where blacks comprise a significant amount, or likely a majority of the electorate. One of the cornerstones of a racialized campaign is the employment of direct racial appeals as a means to organize and mobilize the black community that will be the candidate's primary base of voters.

Deracialized campaigns on the other hand, seek to appeal to white voters by first and foremost conveying a non-threatening image of the candidate to the larger white

public. Deracialized candidates avoid "explicit reference to race-specific issues, while at the same time emphasizing those issues that are perceived as racially transcendent" (McCormick and Jones 1993, 76). These are typically issues such as crime reduction and prevention, or economic development. Due in large part to their insistence on deemphasizing race in every capacity, these deracialized candidates tend to perform better than racialized candidates among white voters while frequently producing unenthusiastic to anemic support among black voters. Thus, in areas where blacks comprise a large portion of the electorate but not necessarily a majority, or in areas where white voters may be the decisive vote of the election, black candidates will often turn to a deracialized campaign strategy to separate themselves from other black candidates in the field, and by extension garner the support of critically important white voting bloc.

A number of black candidates have found success by running deracialized, or rather race-neutral campaigns. Perhaps the best examples of such success occurred on November 7, 1989, when four African Americans were elected to executive office in their prospective jurisdictions. Among them were Douglas Wilder, who became the first black governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, David Dinkins, who became the first black mayor of New York City, Norman Rice, who became the first black mayor of Seattle, and John Daniels who became New Haven's first black mayor.

Wilder's campaign is perhaps the most fascinating due in large part to the fact that as a candidate for governor, his appeal had to widen to a greater audience than those candidates who ran for mayor in their respective cities. Wilder had already successfully run for lieutenant governor of the state four years earlier by "focus[ing] on his legislative record, and economic, educational and environmental issues that appealed to all voters"

(Orey 2006, 817). Wilder also never discussed race and spent much of his time endearing himself to white voters. In the months leading up to the 1989 election, Wilder appeared for public events 84 times, yet only ten of these appearances were before predominantly black audiences. (Orey 2006, 817). Wilder did everything in his power to make the gubernatorial race one focused on what was best for the whole of Virginia, not just black Virginians. His refusal to be portrayed as the black candidate ultimately proved successful as he was elected for the maximum of one historic term in office.

There are of course instances in which candidates do not fare as well as Wilder in Virginia, even when employing racially neutral tactics in their campaigns. This can be due to an error on the part of the candidate, or intervention from the candidate's opponent that forces the campaign to become racialized. This is one of the great risks of a deracialized campaign. Even in instances where a black candidate chooses to run a racially neutral campaign, the outcome is not entirely in their hands. White candidates can make racially coded remarks that change the entire narrative of a campaign into one centered on race, often to the detriment of a black candidate seeking to downplay the import and salience of race. The most notable example of a deracialized candidate failing to find success due to his own shortcomings lies in the candidacy of civil rights leader Andrew Young, for governor of Georgia in 1990. Young had previously run for mayor of Atlanta using some deracialization techniques such as seeking support from the many large corporations that call Atlanta home. When he ran for governor a few years later against a white candidate, Zell Miller, Young hoped to build a biracial coalition and devoted much of his time, energy and resources to appealing to white voters. He spent much of his time campaigning across Georgia's numerous white counties and sought to deemphasize the salience of race by

stating that where racism in Georgia was once like “cancer”, it had now become like “acne” (Orey 2006, 819). Ultimately Young’s calculations were horribly inaccurate. He grossly overestimated the loyalty of black voters in Atlanta, despite the fact that many in the black community had been critical of Young’s performance as mayor. By campaigning so heavily among whites, Young alienated whatever remained of his core base of black voters in Atlanta and these voters leading to immensely low black turnout. Young also was not successful in appealing to white voters across the state and only received fifteen percent of the white vote in a year when white turnout was higher than anticipated. The combination of low turnout among African Americans, coupled with high turnout among whites who ultimately did not support him left Young with crushing defeat (Orey 2006).

There is also the candidacy of Harvey Gantt, who upon serving two successful terms as the first black mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina launched his candidacy for United States Senate. Gantt ran a nearly textbook racially neutral campaign, stressing his success in making Charlotte an economically viable city. His opponent however, did not allow the campaign to unfold without addressing issues of race. Gantt’s opponent, notorious bigot, Jesse Helms, who was running for reelection against Gantt ran a television ad that placed race at the forefront of the campaign. Helms’ ‘Angry Hands’ ad, which implied depicted a white worker being passed over for a job due to racial quotas, ignited racial issues that Gantt was not prepared to contend with. Helms’ race-baiting tactics ultimately cost Gantt a seat in the U.S Senate, despite the fact that Gantt depicted himself as a candidate uninterested in a racially specific platform or one that would disproportionately aid African Americans as a group (Wilson 1993).

There are also those candidates who choose to run racialized or race-specific campaigns and achieve great success in doing so. One such example is Harvey Johnson, who ran a racialized campaign to become the first African American mayor of Jackson, Mississippi. In his 1997 victory, Johnson himself notes that he "went early at the black vote" and "made a conscious effort to get the black vote" (Orey 2006, 827). Johnson's candidacy in 1997 is one to note because he had run for the office just four years prior and upon running a deracialized campaign in the 1993 primary, he failed to make the runoff. Johnson made a concerted effort in 1997 to run a very different campaign from the one he had embarked on four years earlier and a cornerstone of this new campaign was a legitimate and resolute appeal to black voters. After his defeat in 1993, Johnson came to understand that in Jackson, "racially polarized voting [was] a political reality" (Orey 2006, 826) and in order to be successful, he would have to target and make overt racial appeals to black voters. This was a concept understood by Willie Herenton, the first African American to be elected mayor of Memphis, who made strong appeals to the black community to get elected in 1991 (Wright 2000). The shift in Johnson's campaign strategy between 1993 and 1997 proved successful as Johnson doubled his support among black voters in 1997 and would go on to win not just in 1997, but again in 2001 and 2009.

Black candidates have employed the tactics of launching racialized and deracialized campaigns across the nation, including the city that is the focus of this study, New Orleans. The city of New Orleans has elected four black mayors who served consecutive eight terms from 1978 to 2010. Each of these men imparted either a racially specific or a racially neutral strategy when running for the office of mayor and in the case of two of these men;

both strategies were used in separate elections. New Orleans offers a fascinating case study for the effectiveness of both strategies in a major southern city.

The 1978 and 1982 Elections: History is Made

Ernest Nathan "Dutch" Morial launched the first viable campaign for mayor by an African American that the city had ever seen in 1977. In many ways, the election of Moon Landrieu, a white liberal, in 1969 opened the door for Morial's successful election eight years later (Schnexider 1982). Landrieu's election illustrated the importance of the African American vote in such relief that by 1977 Morial saw a viable pathway to City Hall through the support of the city's black population. Thus, he vigorously sought the support of black voters in the city while still keenly aware of the fact that support from roughly one quarter of whites in the city was necessary to be win. Morial was victorious in a runoff against a white opponent due in large part to the unification among the black electorate. Morial received 95 percent of the black vote as well as twenty percent of the white vote, primarily from the city's more educated and wealthier whites, leading to a slim victory where he captured 51.8 percent of the total vote (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007).

Sidney Barthelemy: A Road Map for Nagin

Morial's racialized campaign approach proved to be successful as he was elected to two terms in office using this strategy of making direct appeals to "rank-and-file" blacks that cast the lion's share of his votes despite backlash from black leaders in his 1982 reelection bid. His successor however ran a very different campaign. Sydney Barthelemy first ran for mayor in 1986. His election bid pitted him against a popular figure in the black community, State Senator William Jefferson who had been defeated by Morial four years earlier. There are a number of racial nuances at play in this election that potentially

impacted Barthelemy and his decision to run a racially neutral campaign. First, when two black candidates are in competition, especially in a city as racially polarized as New Orleans it is likely that white voters will become the decisive voice in the election when the black vote splits between the two candidates.

As Councilman-at-Large, Barthelemy had already established a congenial relationship with whites in the city that endeared him to the white community. Inversely, his closeness to whites in New Orleans gave many blacks in the city cause for concern, as they feared he would be controlled by "the Uptown white power structure" (Johnson 1985). There was also, as is customary in Louisiana, the underlying issue of colorism which may have been at work here. Barthelemy was a Creole, which refers to "extremely light-skinned black persons who are Roman Catholic, usually of French ancestry and generally hold high status in the black community" (Piliawsky 1985, 9). Drawing on his already well-established relationship with the white community and the likelihood that Jefferson would be the black preferred candidate, Barthelemy embarked on a deracialized campaign and campaigned very little in black neighborhoods in contrast to Jefferson who established his base in these areas. His approach paid dividends as he received 88.2 percent of the white vote, winning the runoff with 57.7 percent of the total vote (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007). Jefferson had failed to unite the black community to the extent that Morial had and the overwhelming white support for Barthelemy coupled with limited but existent support for Barthelemy by blacks left Jefferson in defeat for the second straight election.

Barthelemy entered City Hall as the friendly black candidate that whites had hoped for but when he turned to bolstering black businesses as a means to help the city deal with its many economic issues he quickly lost white support. One of the limiting factors of any

campaign is that once elected, the candidate is beholden to those campaign promises if they intend to keep their core supporters happy. For many deracialized candidates, Barthelemy included, white support equates to a tacit consent to not address racial inequalities or other issues that are salient for African Americans (McCormick and Jones 1993; Smith 1993; Gillespie 2010). The white community selected Barthelemy because he was the candidate that would not make waves for whites in the city and was expected to act in similar accord as mayor. His decision to support black business ran counter to the goals of his base and created undeniable friction between Barthelemy and New Orleans whites.

By the time he launched his reelection campaign in 1990, it became clear that declining white city employment and skyrocketing crime rates would make it nearly impossible for Barthelemy to ride a biracial coalition into victory once more. In order to remain competitive, Barthelemy abandoned the deracialized strategy that brought him into office initially and sought out support from black community leaders as well the larger black community and received aid in the form of his former adversary William Jefferson, now a United States Congressman. Black voters rose to the occasion, rallied around Barthelemy, and reelected him for a second and final term in office. Barthelemy's switch in strategy from racially neutral to racially specific is a critically important moment in New Orleans mayoral politics, but this was not the last time a candidate would run to race when faced with a significant reelection challenge (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007).

The 1994 Election: Marc Morial Takes Over the Family Business

1994 opened in New Orleans with a new mayoral election on the horizon as outgoing mayor, Sidney Barthelemy was term limited and thus unable to run for a third

term. Naturally this led to a large number of candidates entering the race although it was notable for the number of high profile candidates. Among these high profile individuals were two sons of former mayors, a state representative, a city councilman and a civic activist. The first of the two mayoral sons was Marc Haydel Morial, the son of the city's first black mayor, Dutch Morial, who was currently serving his first term in the Louisiana state senate. The second mayoral son was Mitch Landrieu, the son of former mayor Moon Landrieu, who was serving as a state representative. The race also included lawyer and civic activist Donald Mintz, who had previously run against Barthelemy four years prior. City Councilman Lambert Bossiere, Jr. also ran in the 1994. Bossiere had served as the councilman from District D for over a decade and was a prominent member of the powerful black political organization, COUP and had the support of the outgoing mayor (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007).

Marc Morial almost immediately became a frontrunner in the race after receiving financial backing from a political organization headed by the city's District Attorney, Harry Connick, Sr. (Donze 1994). The other frontrunner in the race was Mintz and while the two generally agreed on the city's most pressing matters such as how to deal with rising crime in New Orleans, the race quickly became a torrid personal battle between the two candidates as Morial accused Mintz of distributing fliers that made insinuations about his sexual orientation and possible drug use (Ruth, Warner, and Donze 1994). There were also accusations that the Mintz campaign had distributed fliers about other primary candidates as well as fliers that were anti-Semitic and portrayed Mintz as a beleaguered candidate. Mintz, who was Jewish, denied that his campaign was the source of the fliers but did acknowledge that they had distributed the fliers to Jews across the country in an effort to

rally support for their campaign (Ruth, Warner, and Donze 1994). In the end, Morial forced Mintz into a runoff as Mintz received 37 percent of the vote in comparison to Morial's 32 percent.

The local media immediately posited that the black vote would be of particular importance in the runoff (Warner 1994) and race remained salient throughout the campaign. As the runoff season continued, the legal proceedings stemming from the issue of the campaign fliers dominated the coverage of the race and the contest focused very little on substantive issues. Instead, coverage largely focused on the campaign aides who had been implicated in the flier incident (Ruth, Warner, and Donze 1994) and the charges that followed. Even in the midst of the drama emanating from the flier investigation, Morial continued to perform well, receiving endorsements from Mitch Landrieu (Donze 1994 B) and William Jefferson (Donze and Warner 1994).

The two candidates entered Election Day in a dead heat, but it was Morial who emerged as the victor, capturing 54 percent of the vote (Thiem 1994). It was widely reported that the racial undertones that had emerged throughout the race became the deciding factor for many voters who ultimately favored Morial over the scandal ridden Mintz (Warner 1994 B). Morial, the city's third African American mayor ascended to the office once held by his father, the city's first black mayor after emerging from a bitter campaign filled with more mudslinging than is customary. Morial's racialized campaign strategy, similar to the one deployed by his father during his time as a mayoral candidate clearly appealed to the city's black voters. Morial's first run is yet another example of a successful racialized campaign in a city divided along racial lines.

The 1998 Election: Morial's Incumbency Advantage

In 1998, Morial entered his reelection campaign as the clear frontrunner. In fact, months before the election the local media concluded that Morial would win reelection. His opponents in the race were Paul Borrello, an arts supply store manager and Kathleen Cresson, a lawyer (Donze 1998). Both candidates were completely unknown in New Orleans politics and were immediately viewed as long shot candidates. Morial did not have to campaign extensively, as he faced no competition and was riding on a wave of considerable reductions in crime (Varney 1998). Morial was no longer just the black preferred candidate he had been in his first run four years earlier but was now a wildly popular mayor across the city and had support from voters of all racial backgrounds. Still, Morial's imminent reelection led to low levels of turnout. Unsurprisingly, Morial was reelected to his office on February 7, 1998, capturing 79 percent of the vote, the largest portion ever received by a black candidate in New Orleans.

The 2002 Election: Politics as Usual?

On May 6, 2002, Clarence Ray Nagin, Jr. became the 60th mayor of New Orleans and the city's fourth consecutive black mayor. Nagin won his election campaign just three months earlier by defeating Richard Pennington, the city's police chief in a bitter election battle that began in December of the previous year. As the December 12, 2001 qualifying date drew near, it became clear that the field of candidates seeking election to the mayor's office at City Hall would be a crowded one. The seat was an open one, as outgoing mayor, Marc H. Morial was term limited and despite his best efforts to amend the city charter, which would have allowed him a third run at the mayor's office, voters rejected the amendment forcing Morial to leave City Hall and leaving the race for his seat wide open.

Fifteen candidates officially entered the race for mayor but five emerged as major contenders. Among them were well known city-councilman of twenty-four years, Jim Singleton, fellow city councilman Troy Carter, State Senator Paulette Irons, Chief Richard Pennington and a the largely unknown vice president of the city's cable provider, Cox Communications, C. Ray Nagin (Donze and Grace 2001).

In the early weeks of the campaign leading up to the February 2nd primary, Carter seemed poised to make a legitimate run for the office (Donze 2002 A). In his time on the city council, Carter had gained a reputation as a skillful fundraiser and the mayoral campaign proved no different. He raised over one million dollars in his primary campaign, which was more than any of his opponents could boast. While Carter's fundraising was remarkably impressive, those funds did not translate to votes and he would eventually finish in a distant fifth place after capturing only ten percent of the vote.

Troy Carter's fellow city councilman Jim Singleton, who had a long and storied career on the political scene in New Orleans, faced a similar fate. Singleton's candidacy brought with it immense knowledge and experience in local politics that other candidates lacked. While the field did include well-known political figures such as Carter and State Senator Paulette Irons, neither could boast a career quite as long as Singleton's which began under the Moon Landrieu administration of the late 1970s. Singleton's campaign platform focused heavily on his opposition over the past eight years to the policies and practices of outgoing mayor, Marc Morial. His opposition to Morial and his years of experience in local politics ultimately did not endear him to the voters as he ultimately finished in fourth place in the primary after winning only thirteen percent of the vote.

The lone female candidate in the race was then State Senator Paulette Irons who at the time of the 2002 mayoral campaign had been active in New Orleans politics for a decade. She was not only a current state senator, but had also previously served in the Louisiana House of Representatives. Irons began her campaign like several of her opponents by promising to eliminate the patronage that many believed had run rampant during the Morial administration. This promise endeared her to many conservative Republicans and those seeking reform in City Hall. As a result, she was deemed a frontrunner by the press early in the primary campaign and some even speculated that she might become the city's first female mayor. Irons spent the early weeks of the campaign in a deadlock with Richard Pennington (Donze 2002 B), the other favorite for the top spot in the primary, until her campaign became unraveled by discoveries that she had violated the state's dual office holding law and that she may have been guilty of the very patronage she vowed to rid the city of. These allegations portrayed to voters that Irons would bring little more to the table than the 'politics-as-usual' patronage that so many believed had long plagued the city. In light of this, her campaign unraveled and she quickly fell from a frontrunner to a disappointing third place (Donze and Grace 2002 A), receiving eighteen percent of the vote.

While Irons was deemed a favorite to finish first in the primary early on, she was not alone. As the race began, political pundits and the local press believed that Chief Richard Pennington was also in position to become the next mayor of the city. While many of the candidates branded themselves as the antithesis of the outgoing Morial administration, Pennington was essentially a Morial proxy. He was hired by Mayor Morial in 1994 to take over as police chief for the immensely corrupt New Orleans Police Department at a time

when the city seemed to be riddled with crime. His tenure as police chief inevitably bound him to the Morial administration and because Pennington could boast about a reduction in both crime in the streets and corruption within the department, this was an association he appeared more than happy with.

Pennington was a clear favorite early in the primary campaign but on December 11, 2001, just one day before qualifying for the race closed, a major shakeup occurred that changed the trajectory of the campaign. On this day, C. Ray Nagin, Vice President of Cox Communications, the city's cable provider as well as owner of the New Orleans Brass, the city's mid-level professional hockey team, entered the race (Russell 2001). His candidacy was a surprising one not only because he entered at the eleventh hour as some would say, but also because Nagin was a political outsider in comparison to the rest of the viable candidates in the field. Nagin financed his campaign using much of his own money and separated himself from the rest of the field by proposing to sell Louis Armstrong International Airport, the city's airport as a way to raise capital to improve infrastructure, opposing a living wage referendum that was on the ballot for the next election, and positioning himself as a pro-business candidate (Mowbray 2002).

Nagin's strength in the primary was his label as a political outsider in a field of candidates full of career politicians. He was however, also completely unknown to the public but after impressive showings in the primary debates, Nagin experienced an almost meteoric rise in the polls as the primary date grew closer and when all the votes had been counted, the virtual unknown had mounted an unlikely and truly surprising first place finish by capturing twenty-nine percent of the vote.

Nagin bested Pennington in the primary, as Pennington was only able to bring in a somewhat disappointing twenty-three percent of the vote after spending much of the primary campaign as the frontrunner (Donze and Grace 2002 B). As is customary in Louisiana politics, if no candidate receives a majority of the vote, the top two candidates must face each other in a runoff to determine the winner. This meant that Nagin and Pennington would go head to head for the top position in City Hall. The runoff election was set to take place exactly one month to the day from the primary and despite the short time frame and the air of festivity that hung around the city in the early weeks of the runoff due to Mardi Gras, the February runoff period was anything but quiet.

The candidates initially pledged to run clean campaigns focused on the issues (Donze and Russell 2002), which were particularly important in this rare election where neither candidate had ever held elected office, but the runoff quickly divulged into mudslinging when a radio ad which implied Nagin was a 'closet Republican', aired just three days into the campaign. In addition to the implications that Nagin was a wolf in sheep's clothing, or a Republican in a Democrat dominated city, there were also a number of racial undertones to the campaign.

Despite the fact that both candidates were black, the vote in the primary had split along the economic and racial lines that had long divided the city (Grace and Scallan 2002). Nagin received much of his vote share in the primary from whites and upper-income blacks who found his pro-business attitude and calls for reform appealing. Nagin's vow to clean up the city's practice of showing deference to minority-owned businesses when distributing contracts was a direct appeal to the city's white citizens, as these contracts were an example to many of the corruption that had plagued City Hall since Dutch Morial's

administration. With 86 percent of the white vote, which was just shy of the support Barthelemy had received in 1986, Nagin easily defeated Pennington and proved that biracial coalition building through a racially neutral campaign was possible, even in racially polarized New Orleans (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007). Nagin's election in 2002 as a black candidate who made virtually no appeals to the black community demonstrated that Barthelemy's run had not been merely an outlier.

Pennington in contrast, found most of his support in the middle and lower-income black neighborhoods of the city and received endorsements from several well-known black pastors across the city (Williams 2002), while Nagin's endorsements included the city's major newspaper *The Times-Picayune*. Almost since the founding of the city, nothing separated New Orleanians like race and this campaign proved no different.

Pennington seemed to be launching most of the negative attacks in the campaign despite the fact that he was projected to be losing in the polls almost immediately after the primary (Grace and Donze 2002). Pennington caused controversy when he cryptically stated that he had obtained information about Nagin that "sickened him to the core" but he refused to elaborate on the nature of that information (Donze 2002 C). Pennington also repeatedly took Nagin to task over how funds were spent to renovate the Municipal Auditorium for the New Orleans Brass, the hockey team of which Nagin was a part owner (Schleifstein 2002). Nagin also experienced a brief hiccup in the campaign when proof arose that his resume was not as impressive as he previously claimed. Evidence surfaced that Nagin's claims about obtaining a CPA license were not entirely truthful and numerous additional questions regarding his resume emerged toward the end of the runoff campaign (Meitrodt 2002). Ultimately, these questions were not enough to stop endorsements and

funds from rolling into the Nagin camp and voters seemed unaffected by the issues with Nagin's resume as he continued to poll at least seven points ahead of the police chief in the last weeks of the campaign (Donze and Russell 2002).

Pennington, for his part, was plagued with his own issues on the campaign trail. In addition to trailing Nagin in the polls for the entirety of the runoff, he also had to contend with an allegation of spousal abuse. The allegations gained traction just weeks before the runoff election after an anonymous letter, that Pennington charged Nagin with fabricating, surfaced that accused Chief Pennington of physically abusing his wife (Pompilio 2002). While Pennington and his wife vehemently denied the allegations, the Pennington campaign was forced to temporarily spend time and resources to address the allegations instead of the issues of the campaign at a time when Pennington could not afford the distraction.

Pennington's campaign also endured trouble when just two weeks before the runoff election, the crime statistics for the previous year were released and showed an increase in crime in all major categories with the exception of rape. The statistics revealed an overall increase in crime of 6.7 percent, a 14 percent increase in violent crime within the year and a 5.3 percent rise in property crime (Perlstein 2002). These numbers did not fair well for Pennington as he ran almost exclusively on his experience as police chief of the city and his ability to bring a reduction in crime rates after years of exorbitant numbers. Now, just two weeks before voters headed to the polls to elect the next mayor of the city in a race where Pennington was already struggling to contend, a major platform of his campaign proved ineffective. While the release of the new crime statistics was not the only or even final nail in the coffin for the Pennington campaign, they certainly proved detrimental.

On Saturday, March 2, 2002, the campaign finally came to a close as voters went to the polls throughout the day to make their selection for the next mayor of the city of New Orleans. Election Day was overcast with light rain appearing later in the afternoon and turnout was predictably low. Saturday night after the polls closed it quickly became clear that Nagin had delivered a crushing defeat to Pennington in a win that shattered expectations as he defeated Pennington 59 percent to 41 percent. Nagin made history by becoming the first the political newcomer to ascend to the office of mayor in New Orleans, a city where career politicians are known to thrive, in sixty years. Voters had demonstrated a surprising break from tradition by sending both Pennington and Nagin, two men with no political experience, to the runoff over a field of better-known career politicians.

The votes were split among the candidates along stark economic lines with Nagin receiving support in the middle and upper income areas of the city, even middle and upper income black areas of the city. Pennington gained his support from the lower income neighborhoods of the city but this support was simply not enough to propel him to victory. Nagin had once again appealed to the upper and middle-income residents of the city with his pro-business stance, encouraging the sale of the city's airport to generate funds for the city and his desire to grow business and create jobs in the city through various methods such as hotel construction. Ironically, it was Nagin's allegiance to the hotel industry that would partially place him at fault in the Katrina debacle a few short years later.

The 2006 Election: Race is Ray's Saving Grace

On August 29, 2005, just months before Nagin was set to launch his reelection campaign, Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast and after multiple breaches in the city's levees, New Orleans was left underwater and debilitated. In the days following

Katrina's landfall, the world turned their collective gaze toward New Orleans as hundreds of citizens were left stranded in their homes, the Superdome or the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. The images of American citizens being airlifted from the roofs of their homes or crying in agony on national television for aid and rescue outside of the convention center quickly became associated with a deep sense of national tragedy. Many pundits would later posit that every level of government had failed the people of New Orleans, beginning with Nagin's sluggish call for evacuation and failure to provide bus transport out of the city, and ending with the snail's pace response from the federal government to provide for and rescue citizens after the storm made landfall (Brinkley 2007).

Nagin spent the next several months traveling back and forth to Washington, D.C. to appear before Congress on multiple hearings regarding the government's slow response to the disaster. Nagin was vilified in the national media for his role in the disaster, and matters were only made worse when Douglas Brinkley, a nationally recognized historian and author then teaching at Tulane University, unleashed a scathing critique of Nagin in his seminal work on Katrina entitled, *The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (2007). The blame game that emerged in Katrina's wake continued to play out for many months and as 2005 came to a close, speculation turned to the upcoming mayoral election set to take place in the early months of the next year, and who would seek to unseat Mayor Nagin. The early indications were that given the city's current state and the likelihood that the race would garner national attention regardless of which candidates decided to run, the field would be a crowded one. Many also speculated that Nagin would face legitimate opposition from either Lieutenant Governor Mitch

Landrieu, son of former New Orleans mayor Moon Landrieu, or President of the Audubon Nature Institute Ron Forman, or perhaps both. Nagin had been a popular figure in New Orleans prior to Katrina, but Hurricane Katrina had placed New Orleans on the international stage in an unflattering light and it was unclear if voters would punish Nagin for his role in that affair, and if they did, to what extent.

The year had barely begun and the candidate pool had not even been filled yet when Nagin in the words of the *Times-Picayune*, "shot himself in the foot, if not higher" (Varney 2006) and permanently altered the course of the campaign. At a Martin Luther King Day event on January 16, 2006, Ray Nagin's remarks digressed into a tirade that infamously became known as the "Chocolate City" speech. A forty-five second portion of this speech went viral, being replayed on news stations across the country and becoming fodder for late night talk show hosts for days. While the clip is short, it is laden with racially coded, and some even charged racist language. Among the most inflammatory lines in the speech was Nagin's statement, "…and I don't care what people are saying Uptown or wherever they are. This city will be chocolate at the end of the day" (Nagin 2006). His decision to single out 'Uptown' was seen by many whites in the city as deliberate. Despite the fact that the area of the city defined as Uptown encompasses many different neighborhoods with a variety of incomes and a mixture of historically white and historically African American neighborhoods, colloquially many associate Uptown with the upper Uptown area of St. Charles Avenue and the Garden District, areas known to be inhabited by the city's wealthy whites. Nagin further ruffled feathers by declaring that New Orleans "will be a majority African-American city. It's the way God wants it to be" (Nagin 2006). The speech was a public relations nightmare for Nagin and his team and while Nagin's strength and viability

had been a major question prior to the King Day speech, in its wake it was clear that Nagin was politically weakened and the candidate pool for mayor was only expected to widen.

Weeks after Nagin's "Chocolate City" speech but after months of speculation, Mitch Landrieu entered the field (Donze 2006), soon followed by Republican city councilwoman Peggy Wilson and Ron Forman, leading to a final candidate field that included 23 candidates (Russell and Donze 2006 B). Among the 23 candidates that entered the race only seven were seen as major candidates. This pool included Nagin, Landrieu, Forman, Wilson, Democratic lawyer Virginia Boulet who entered because she was disappointed with Nagin's recovery efforts, Republican Rob Couhig who had previously owned the city's minor league baseball team, the New Orleans Zephyrs, and Reverend Tom Watson, who as Nagin's only legitimate black opponent had spoken out against Nagin for years. The candidate field was so saturated that it was clear immediately that the race would go to a runoff. From the very beginning, only three candidates, Nagin, Landrieu and Forman were expected to contend for the runoff slots.

Nagin as the incumbent seemed to have the advantage going into the primary. Prior to Katrina, Nagin's road to reelection would have been virtually uneventful. His policies before Katrina had been largely well received and he was credited with jumpstarting job creation in the city as well as putting New Orleans on the map as "the Hollywood South" in the film industry. However, for all of the good deeds he had performed for the city at the start of his first term, the narrative in the reelection campaign focused squarely on his actions prior, during, and in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. While there was certainly enough criticism to spread between the various branches of government for how the Katrina disaster was handled, Nagin was criticized immediately after and throughout the

campaign for his lack of swift action and preparedness prior to the storm. Critics charged that Nagin was advised to prepare to evacuate the city as early as Friday, August 26, three days before Katrina made landfall, but did not order a mandatory evacuation of the city until 9:30 am on Sunday, August 28, forty-eight hours after he had been advised to do so and twenty-four hours after surrounding parishes had ordered mandatory evacuations (Brinkley 2007). Many believed that had Nagin had the foresight to act more quickly and provide adequate transportation out of the city for citizens rather than simply open the Superdome as a shelter of last resort, lives could have been spared. It was unquestionable that in the reelection race, Nagin would live or die by his Katrina record.

Mitch Landrieu represented a legitimate threat to Nagin's chances to regain office. Nagin was certainly politically weakened in the aftermath of the 'chocolate city' speech and Landrieu was a formidable opponent. Landrieu had run for mayor once before, failing to make it to the runoff in the 1994 election. In the interim years however, Landrieu had won statewide election by becoming the lieutenant governor of the state in 2003. Additionally, Landrieu came from a family that had long standing roots in New Orleans. His sister, Mary Landrieu, was a U.S. Senator for the state with enormous popularity in New Orleans and his father Moon Landrieu, had served as mayor of New Orleans in the 1970s. Moon Landrieu's legacy was that as a pro civil rights mayor he oversaw the integration of city facilities. This progressive stance at a time when racism was still so prevalent throughout the city endeared not just Moon Landrieu, but also his children, to black voters for decades to come. Landrieu had the ability to run a truly biracial campaign and this could be to Nagin's detriment.

Undoubtedly, race quickly became just as salient a campaign issue as Nagin's record or the recovery effort (Russell and Donze 2006). Some candidates such as Peggy Wilson did not even attempt to shy away from discussing its obvious import. Wilson stated that one of the primary reasons she decided to run was because the city's racial demographics had changed. Wilson also added to the frenzy surrounding race and racially coded language that ran rampant throughout the campaign by pledging to keep welfare queens and gangbangers out of the city. These terms are of course typically associated with lower income African American individuals and Wilson's comments were used as evidence to bolster the claims of some displaced black residents that a conspiracy was underway to make New Orleans a smaller, whiter city by keeping many of its displaced black residents from returning permanently.

As ludicrous as such claims may sound, they are not far removed from the truth. One of the recovery plans that continued to be discussed among the candidates was a decrease in the city's footprint by converting those areas hardest hit into green space and moving the population into the areas that were not as affected. The primary issue with such a proposal was that many of the hardest hit areas of the city were also the most heavily concentrated African American areas of the city. Plans to convert these areas to green space conveyed to many a desire to eliminate the former residents of those areas from the new New Orleans altogether; further straining racial divides in an increasingly racially tense race.

The primary election was pushed back several months due to the hurricane and the damage sustained to numerous polling places and the primary was scheduled for April 22, 2006. Displaced voters and their accessibility to absentee ballots and polling places was an

issue taken up by numerous civil rights organizations in the days, weeks and months leading up to the primary. Although the primary was held eight months after Katrina, estimates showed that at least two-thirds of the city's population was still displaced and living in cities across the country. There was immense unpredictability surrounding the primary because the city's population remained in flux and it was nearly impossible to determine the demographics of the electorate. For their part, MSNBC sought to increase accessibility by airing a special nationally televised debate featuring the top seven candidates and co-moderated by MSNBC personality and host of *Hardball*, Chris Matthews, and Norman Robinson, an anchor of the evening news on the NBC New Orleans affiliate WDSU (Grace 2006). Meanwhile, organizations worked hard to make sure that displaced voters received absentee ballots, and civil rights leaders also marched through the city, calling for satellite polling places to be set up in areas with high concentrations of displaced residents. Eventually, these satellites were established in nine state parishes. The grassroots organization, ACORN, also worked to organize bus transportation for displaced voters who had issues receiving absentee ballots to be able to cast their vote at one of the satellite locations.

As the votes were tallied at the end of Election Day, it became clear that the mayor's race would once again end in a runoff. This time Nagin once again emerged as the first place finisher but under very different conditions and political pundits now had different expectations for his campaign. Despite finishing in first place with thirty-eight percent of the vote, in a large field, the majority of the electorate had voted against him and he faced a formidable opponent in Mitch Landrieu in the runoff (Donze and Russell 2006).

The runoff was a month long as is customary, with the election date set for Saturday, May 20, 2006. Landrieu emerged from the primary with a strong chance to become the city's first white mayor since his father left office in 1978. Landrieu was expected to pick up the support of voters who had supported Ron Forman in the primary, nearly all of whom were concentrated in the city's wealthier white precincts. Additionally, Landrieu's family name and the immense popularity that the Landrieu's enjoyed in the black community, stemming from his father's time as mayor of the city and continuing with his sister Mary's tenure as U.S. Senator, Landrieu had established a biracial coalition by capturing roughly twenty percent of the black vote in the primary. Nagin's support had come primarily from predominantly black precincts, the very precincts that had voted against him four years earlier. Nagin however faced issues with his electoral coalition. Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the electoral support of the black community had been crucial for nearly every successful mayoral candidate. But, with turnout down in black precincts across the city, as was expected due to displacement, and Landrieu siphoning away votes from Nagin's African American base, Nagin's road back to City Hall would be an arduous one.

Despite the racial undertones and heightened stakes for both whites and blacks that encapsulated the campaign, disaster preparedness and a plan to rebuild remained the issues of the day. New Orleans was only eight months removed from Hurricane Katrina and the city still had a tremendously long road to recovery ahead. Voters went to the polls and by the end of the day Nagin had emerged victorious, capturing 52 percent of the vote. The vote was split starkly along racial lines with Nagin clearly dominating in predominantly black precincts and Landrieu winning huge majorities in the city's predominantly white

precincts. The national media was flabbergasted that Nagin had triumphed over Landrieu but nonetheless the people of New Orleans had spoken and given Ray Nagin another term as mayor.

Nagin in some senses used black fear of losing mayoral control to his benefit. While his opponent in the runoff, Mitch Landrieu, tried to build a biracial coalition by capitalizing off of his family's history with blacks in New Orleans, Nagin sought after the black vote almost exclusively. There were a number of unknown variables leading up to both the primary and the election as no one could be sure just how many voters had been displaced and how many of the displaced would return to cast a ballot or vote in absentia. In some senses Nagin's strategy was a risky one. When Barthelemy employed a similar strategy in 1990, blacks comprised slightly less than 65 percent of the population of New Orleans (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007). New Orleans was nearing 70 percent African American when Katrina hit, but displacement numbers were so hard to obtain that no one could be sure just how many citizens in general, but blacks in particular had been displaced from the city. The general consensus was that New Orleans was a smaller, whiter, city, but with civil rights organizations marching on the city to demand satellite polling places in areas with high numbers of evacuees, and groups such as Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) sponsoring charter buses to transport citizens in to cast their vote on Election Day, black turnout remained the great unknown for much of the race.

Ultimately Nagin's strategy proved to be successful as black voters rallied to save a candidate who had previously not been their own, just as they had for Barthelemy in 1990. But, as Liu and Vanderleeuw (2007) address, the failure of these biracial coalitions in New Orleans is telling. While these are coalitions that were built by both Barthelemy and Nagin

in earnest, they were tenuous at best. Racially polarized voting abounds in New Orleans, as it has for decades and these coalitions were electorally sound but were not meant to help them govern. Particularly in the case of Barthelemy, his coalition was built for helping him get elected against a black candidate the white community knew would absolutely not represent their interests. However when Barthelemy deviated from the plan and enacted policy that aided African Americans, at the expense of whites as many whites felt, they quickly mounted a challenge against him in his reelection bid (Liu and Vanderleeuw 2007).

The case can perhaps be made that in the absence of Hurricane Katrina, Nagin would have sustained his coalition, but the impact of that disaster drastically altered the politics of New Orleans. It changed how white voters viewed Nagin, beginning with his expletive-laden rant on live radio in the days after Katrina and ending with his 'Chocolate City' speech, and heightened the stakes of maintaining mayoral power for African Americans, even while the city underwent tremendous change in nearly every other sense.

The 2010 Election: Landrieu Skates to Victory

The 2010 mayoral campaign opened with very little fanfare as Mitch Landrieu had declared in the summer of 2009 that he would not run for the office a third time. However by December he had reconsidered and decided to enter the race on December 6, 2009 (Donze, Krupa, and Barrow 2009). Before Landrieu's entrance into the race, the most notable candidate in the race was John Georges, a wealthy businessman who had previously served on the Louisiana Board of Regents. He had acquired some public notoriety in 2007 when he ran for governor as an independent against Bobby Jindal. Georges brought a considerable amount of money to the campaign as well as an endorsement from the Orleans Parish District Attorney, Leon Cannizzaro (Krupa 2010).

The field was rounded out by a Republican candidate, Rob Couhig, who had also run in 2006, Troy Henry, a black businessman who was a political unknown, and James Perry, a fair housing advocate (Donze 2009).

From the moment Landrieu entered the race he was deemed the frontrunner and to some it was a forgone conclusion that he would face very little opposition to the office. Despite the usual mudslinging and typical snide banter that typically accompanies any campaign season, the race was a relatively quiet one. Landrieu's closest competitor was Henry, who spent much of the campaign protesting the media's insistence that Landrieu would become the first white mayor elected in over three decades (Donze and Krupa 2010). While Henry declared that he was prepared to go into substantial debt to fund his campaign (Krupa 2010), Georges was able to draw from his extensive wealth to support his campaign (Krupa and Donze 2010). Henry faced greater problems just weeks before the primary when one of his former business partners, Darren Diamond, sued Henry for breach of contract (Krupa, 2010). He also received strong objections from the Morial family after using an image of Dutch Morial in a campaign ad in an attempt to unite black voters around his campaign (Krupa and Donze, 2010).

Ultimately Landrieu's frontrunner status was too much for the other candidates to overcome and after three attempts at office, Mitch Landrieu was finally elected mayor of New Orleans in a landslide, receiving 66 percent of the vote in the primary with ten other candidates in the race. With this win, Landrieu became the first white mayor elected to City Hall since his father's last election in 1974. It was truly a departure from tradition for the city that had elected four consecutive black mayors. Although the Landrieu family was

known for their cordial relationship with the black community of New Orleans, as a white mayor in some ways Landrieu ushered in a new era for the city's local political spectrum.

Chapter Four — New Orleans' Mayoral Elections: A Closer Look

Hypotheses

Moving forward, there are currently two hypotheses that I will be testing. First, I hypothesize that predominantly white precincts will support the white candidate. Inversely, predominantly black precincts will support a candidate of their same race. Both of these hypotheses address ideas of racially polarized voting in urban elections.

Data and Methods

The unit of analysis for this project is precincts. While the overall study is a case study, the units of analysis are not a purposefully selected set of cases. As previously stated, the dependent variable is vote for the winning candidate while the independent variable is population shifts. Thus, using the voting precinct as the unit of analysis seems to be the most plausible decision. The population 'precincts' relates to dependent variable as the dependent variable deals with the actual vote cast by members in this population, and relates to the independent variable because in dealing with the shift of a population, it is necessary to establish where such a shift occurs. This unit of analysis works well with one aspect of the data, namely election returns and voter registration records, but when looking at survey data or census data that encompasses individuals such as voters in the case of survey data or counties or neighborhoods in the case of census data, this could be problematic.

The data for this project come from a number of sources. The primary data is the precinct-level election returns which were obtained from the Louisiana Secretary of State's office. Voter registration records were also obtained from this office. These numbers are updated the month before each election and offer the closest indication of just how many

individuals are qualified to vote in the upcoming election. This data is also broken down to the precinct level. For the purposes of this project, I am primarily interested in the racial breakdown among registered Democrats because they are the major party in New Orleans, and thus this data has been personally coded by hand. The election returns are unfortunately not broken down along racial lines by the election commissions, so census data will be used to establish which precincts can be viewed as 'black precincts' as opposed to 'white precincts' and this gets as close to the individual vote as is currently possible. With this newly merged data, regressions will be run to determine whether the above hypotheses can be accepted or must be rejected. This approach is nearly identical to the one taken by McBride and Parker (2008) as well as Lay (2009) and therefore I have confidence in the legitimacy of this approach. This being said, there are some concerns of reliability with the voter registration numbers from the 2006 election in New Orleans. The population of the city was still incredibly fluid with many registered voters choosing to vote via absentee ballot or drive into the city to vote in the election, that there are obvious questions about the reliability of the figures presented by the state at this time.

Results and Analysis

Race has been a tremendously salient factor in local elections in New Orleans for many decades. Thus, it is expected that race played a critical role in the mayoral elections surrounding Hurricane Katrina. Particularly in the 2006 election, which is a textbook example of the battle for scarce resources discussed by Kaufmann (2004), it should be expected that race played a greater role in determining the city's next mayor than it had in earlier elections. Racially polarization should be evident in both the 2002 and 2006 elections because these were hotly contested races that ended only after a runoff and the

candidates' coalitions were split starkly along racial lines. This level of polarization should not be expected in 2010 because Landrieu ran as the only viable candidate, making that election essentially a one candidate race, with both blacks and whites in accord about who the city's next mayor would be.

Beginning with the 2002 mayoral election in which two African American candidates faced off against each other, it was believed that one candidate, Pennington had the support of the black community, while his opponent, Nagin, sought to win with the overwhelming support of whites. As the city's police chief known for stopping rising crime rates and reducing corruption within the police department as well as serving as a proxy for one of the city's most popular mayors, Pennington was poised to perform well in predominantly black areas. This supposition is grounded in empirical evidence as the data does in fact show stronger support for Pennington in precincts with larger African American populations. In voting precincts where African Americans comprise ninety percent or more of the population, Pennington received on average 62 percent of the vote. In some precincts, Pennington was able to capture nearly 80 percent of the vote. This pattern of high levels of support for Chief Pennington in areas with heavy concentrations of black citizens can be seen in precincts across the city. There were however a few surprising areas, mainly in the Ninth Ward, that were overwhelmingly black and yet Nagin either ran essentially equal to Pennington or in some cases defeated him handily. Nagin in contrast performed far better in precincts with very few black inhabitants. In precincts where blacks comprised twenty percent or less of the population, Nagin received on average 84 percent of the vote.

The data indicates that both candidates did in fact rely on their expected racial groups for support, but Nagin proved far more adept at not only drawing support from his base, but also remaining competitive in predominantly black areas. Pennington did defeat Nagin a majority of the time in predominantly black precincts, but on occasion Nagin was able to capture victories in heavily black precincts and kept Pennington's victories small in others. In comparison, Pennington proved unable to compete in predominantly white precincts, frequently failing to capture even twenty percent of the vote. Using demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau to determine the racial composition of each voting district or precinct, I was able to establish support for each candidate among racial groups at the precinct level. A table illustrating support for Nagin and Pennington in precincts based on their racial composition is shown below.

Table 1: Average Percentage of Support Based on Black Population in 2002

	Nagin	Pennington
0-25%	79%	17%
26-50%	73%	29%
51-75%	56%	42%
76-100%	28%	69%

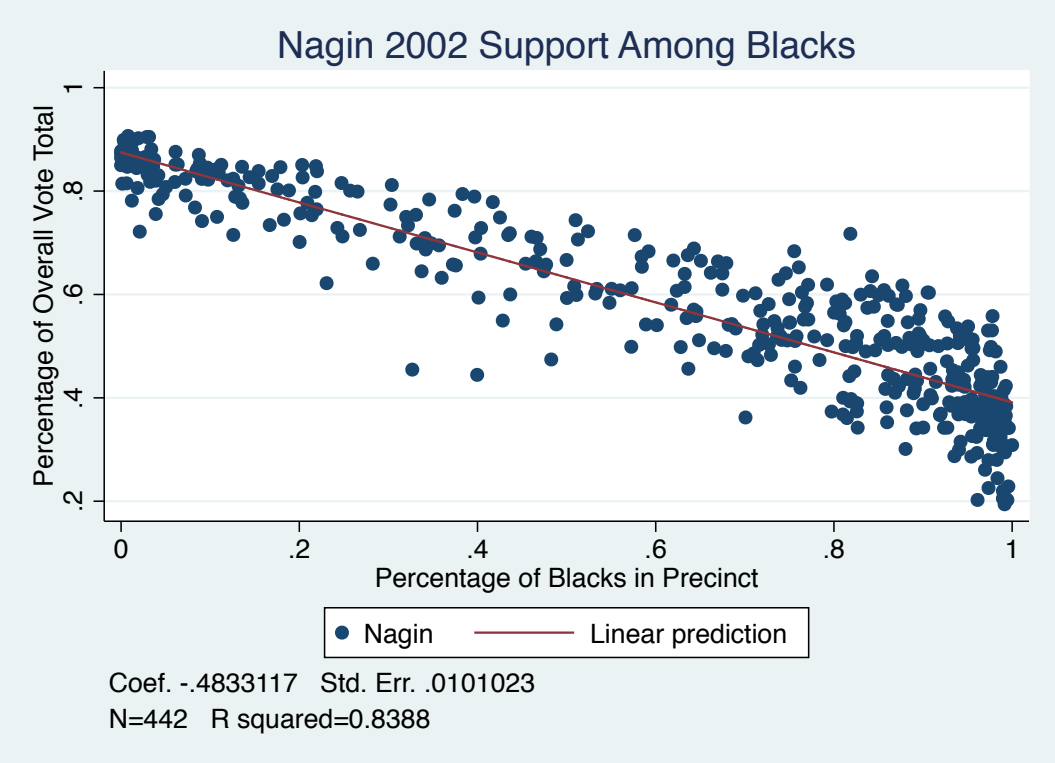
The dependent variable for this study is vote for the candidate while the independent variable will be the portion of the population that is African American. The unit of analysis for both variables is the voting precinct. A candidate's vote share was selected as the dependent variable because at the center of this research are the questions of whether or not the movement of a specific group of people out of the city, as is the case in New Orleans, or into the city, as is the case in Houston, impacted who was elected to the mayor's office in that city and if racial polarization is evident in these mayoral elections.

In the case of Richard Pennington, the black police chief who served as the continuation of the Morial legacy, the relationship between the variables is positive and very strong, which was the expected direction and strength given that the hypothesis rests on the idea that black voters vote for the candidate they believe serves their interests. In this instance, we portrayed Pennington as the candidate that served black interests and the regression model reinforced this notion. This supports the notion that Pennington's vote totals were greatly and positively impacted in areas with greater black populations, as blacks were the bases of his support.

Chief Richard Pennington's opponent, the young business executive and political novice C. Ray Nagin, ran in 2002 as a candidate vastly different from his opponent. Nagin, coming from the city's business community, ran as a pro-business candidate, but also ran as a candidate committed to snuffing out the corruption that had been so prevalent in city government for decades. These campaign platforms were ideas aligned more with white voters than blacks. Thus, regression models should indicate that Nagin's support in his eventual victory came primarily from white voters instead of voters in his own racial group, who as regression models have already indicated, largely supported Pennington.

In order to test this hypothesis, I ran a regression to determine Nagin's support among African Americans. Nagin's support among blacks, or lack thereof, is in essence the inverse of Pennington's support among the group. This strong negative relationship, which mirrors Pennington's support, indicates that for every one percent increase in the number of African Americans in a precinct, Nagin experienced a decrease of almost half a point in his vote share in that precinct. The negative relationship reflected in the decrease is the relationship that was expected given that Nagin's candidacy appealed more to white voters. A linear regression, overlaid onto a scatterplot, which details Nagin's support among predominantly black areas in the city, can be seen below.

Graph 1: Nagin's Black Support in 2002



In 2006 Nagin, who was an embattled incumbent, entered the mayoral race under vastly different circumstances than he had in 2002. One of the major differences in Nagin's status between 2002 and 2006 was the fact that he entered the 2006 runoff as the only viable black candidate in the race. Due to this fact, Nagin ran a decidedly more racial campaign than he had four years prior, thus leading to a shift in the makeup of his support base. The shift in Nagin's campaign strategy would be expected to manifest itself in the data by illustrating incredibly strong support for Nagin among African Americans.

The fervor with which blacks supported Nagin in 2006 is evident. In the precincts that are ninety percent African American or more, Nagin received roughly 86 percent of the vote on average. In fact in several precincts, Nagin received upwards of 90 percent of the vote and received as much as 95 percent in one precinct. Landrieu was effectively neutralized in the city's predominantly black precincts, save a few outliers. In fact, Landrieu's dismal performance in these areas somewhat mirrors Pennington's performance in the city's predominantly white areas four years earlier although Landrieu faired worse in many respects. For his part, Landrieu did perform well in predominantly white areas of the city. In precincts where blacks comprise twenty percent or less of the population, Landrieu received an average of 73 percent of the vote. He was able to hand Nagin decisive defeats in many of the precincts he had captured in similar fashion just four years earlier. He was also able to remain competitive with Nagin in several precincts, even a few with large black populations such as the curious third precinct of the Tenth Ward, which boasted a population that was 96 percent African American where Landrieu defeated Nagin by five percentage points. It was Landrieu's ability to remain competitive in a way that Pennington had not that spared him a defeat as great as Pennington's 2002

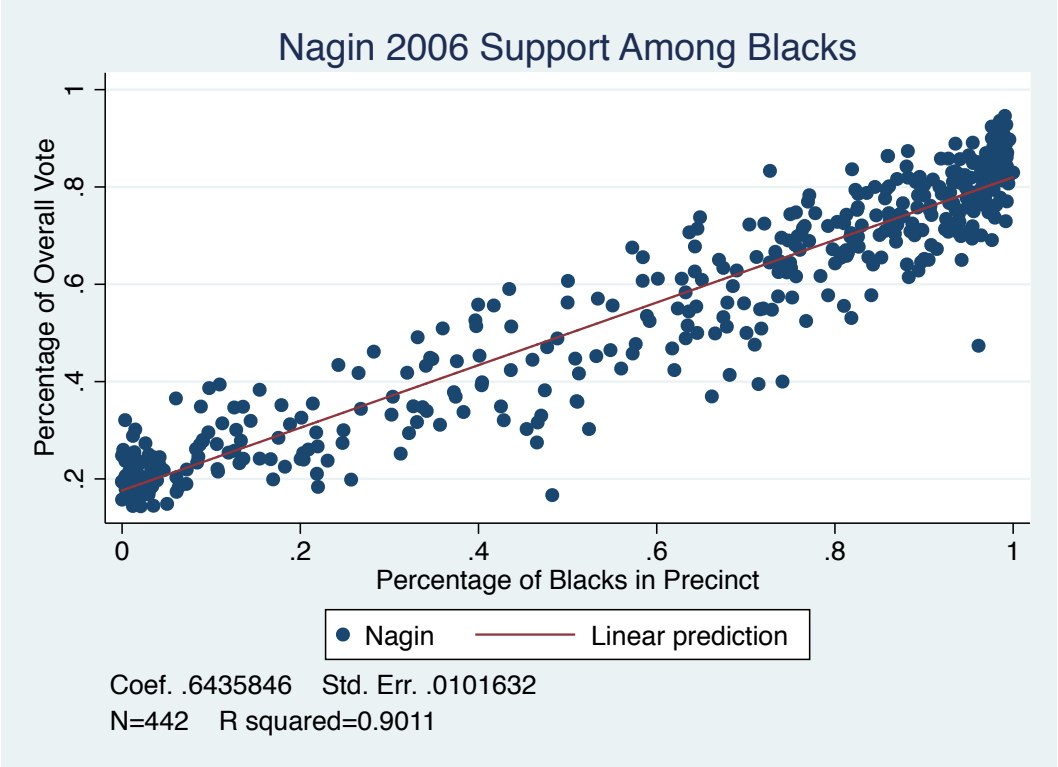
defeat by Nagin. A table illustrating Nagin and Landrieu's share of the vote across the city is shown below.

Table 2: Average Percentage of Support Based on Black Population in 2006

	Nagin	Landrieu
0-25%	24%	71%
26-50%	33%	72%
51-75%	61%	38%
76-100%	87%	12%

I ran a regression, using Nagin's percentage of the total vote as the dependent variable and percentage of the precinct's population that is black as the independent variable. The regression indicated that for every one percent increase in the number of blacks in a precinct, Nagin experienced an increase of nearly two-thirds of a percent to his overall vote total. This is the strong, positive relationship that was expected due to Nagin's concerted efforts to capture the black vote. A linear regression overlaid onto a scatterplot mapping Nagin's support in largely black precincts can be seen below.

Graph 2: Nagin's Black Support in 2006



The above model illustrates that Nagin experienced great support from black voters in 2006. The shift for Nagin between 2002 and 2006 is truly telling. After a clearly negative

and statistically significant relationship was discovered between the two variables in the 2002 election, the shift to a strong, positive relationship in 2006 illustrates how effective Nagin's racially specific tactics were in the black community in 2006.

Ray Nagin's opponent in the 2006 mayoral runoff was one of New Orleans most beloved native sons, Mitch Landrieu. As a white candidate in a now highly racially polarized election, Landrieu's main source of support came from white voters disenfranchised with Nagin and eager to bring a white mayor back to power in the city and vote for a candidate of their same racial identity. Landrieu's campaign is vastly different from Nagin's in the sense that because Landrieu's family enjoyed such popularity among African Americans, he genuinely sought to establish a biracial coalition built on support from white as well as black voters. The racial polarity of this election and Landrieu's eventual defeat would suggest that he was unsuccessful. Landrieu suffered in largely African Americans in a precinct, which was certainly a blow to the Landrieu campaign and its attempts to build the type of biracial coalition the family is known for. The regression above illustrates in stunning clarity the presence of racially polarized voting in the 2006 mayoral election.

The above graphic and data indicate that Nagin's tactics to win black voters was successful but Landrieu's attempts to build a biracial coalition, or rather his failure to create it largely provides the rationale for why Landrieu was unsuccessful in 2006. Landrieu's support in 2006 was largely white just as Nagin's had been four years earlier but even as Nagin lost massive amounts of white support in 2006, not all white voters abandoned him. From an alternative perspective, Landrieu did not successfully make the appeal to enough black voters that he was a more favorable candidate than Nagin and perhaps given the racial dynamics of the race this would have been impossible. Thus in

Landrieu's attempt to appeal to both racial groups, he failed to fully attract either group and ultimately fell short as much of the nation watched in disbelief.

By 2010 however, conditions had changed considerably. Without question, New Orleans was a smaller, whiter city with a tremendous amount of work to be done five years later in order to restore the city to its former glory. Landrieu once again entered the race for mayor for a third time although he was now clearly the frontrunner. Landrieu faced minimal challenges from white candidates and the well-known, experienced black politicians who had the potential to challenge him had either been significantly weakened by scandal or the changing order of local politics in the years since Katrina or chose not to run for mayor. Under such conditions where neither racial group had another viable candidate to speak of, Landrieu was likely able to build the biracial coalition in this election that he attempted to create four year prior.

Landrieu was the frontrunner in this election and without a strong black candidate and the Landrieu family's long-standing ties to the black community, Mitch Landrieu was also expected to do well among the black voters who remained in the city. Looking at black support for Landrieu via a regression model, Landrieu was victorious in nearly every precinct of the city even those with predominantly black populations. There is no evidence of racial polarization as Landrieu receives roughly 63 percent of the vote in heavily concentrated black areas. This is actually higher than his performance in other areas of the city where blacks are not the overwhelming majority of the population. There are of course fewer precincts where blacks comprise ninety percent or more of the population and many more precincts where blacks were once a majority and no longer are. Nonetheless,

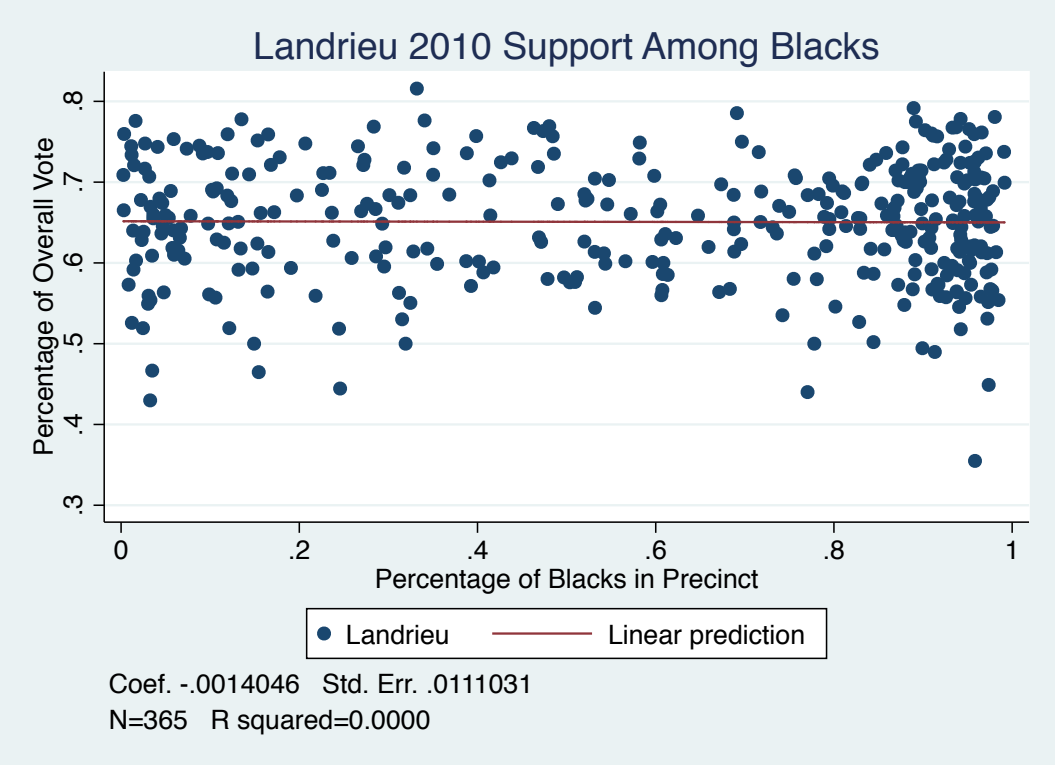
Landrieu was able to nearly sweep the city, thanks to an uncompetitive field and particularly poor turnout. This table is given below.

Table 3: Average Percentage of Support Based on Black Population in 2010

	Landrieu
0-25%	69%
26-50%	73%
51-75%	65%
76-100%	64%

The relationship between the variables is weak and more importantly, is not statistically significant, indicating that there was essentially no effect to Landrieu's campaign. It is more likely that the black vote had no effect on Landrieu's candidacy and he may have been successful in constructing the biracial coalition he attempted four years earlier. A scatterplot with a linear regression, weak as the connection may be, is shown below.

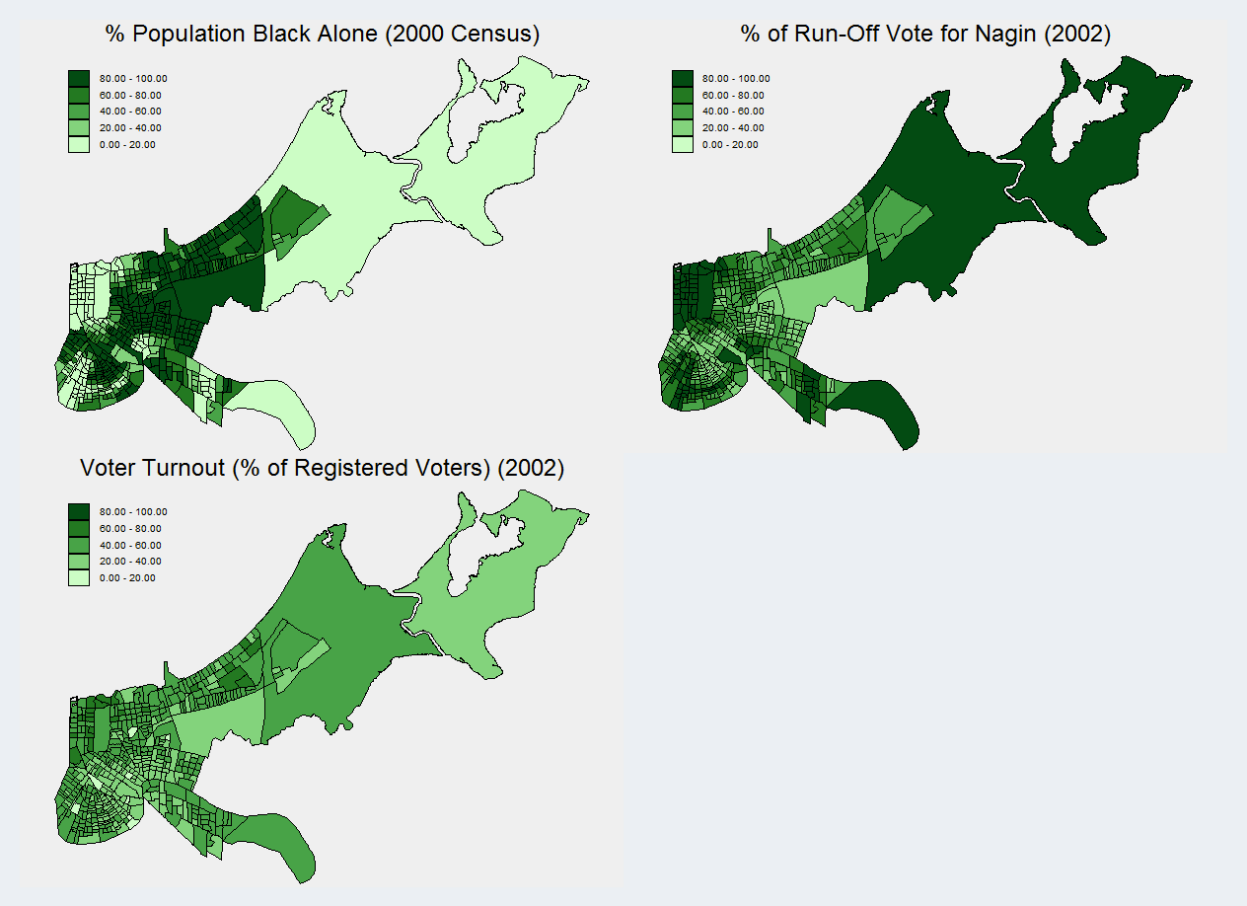
Graph 3: Landrieu's Black Support in 2010



While this project has looked extensively at the import of race in local elections, particularly in the wake of a natural disaster, it began as a look at the importance of population shifts and thus I find it fitting to end in the same manner. The following pages contain maps of Orleans Parish that were generated to illustrate three key elements of each

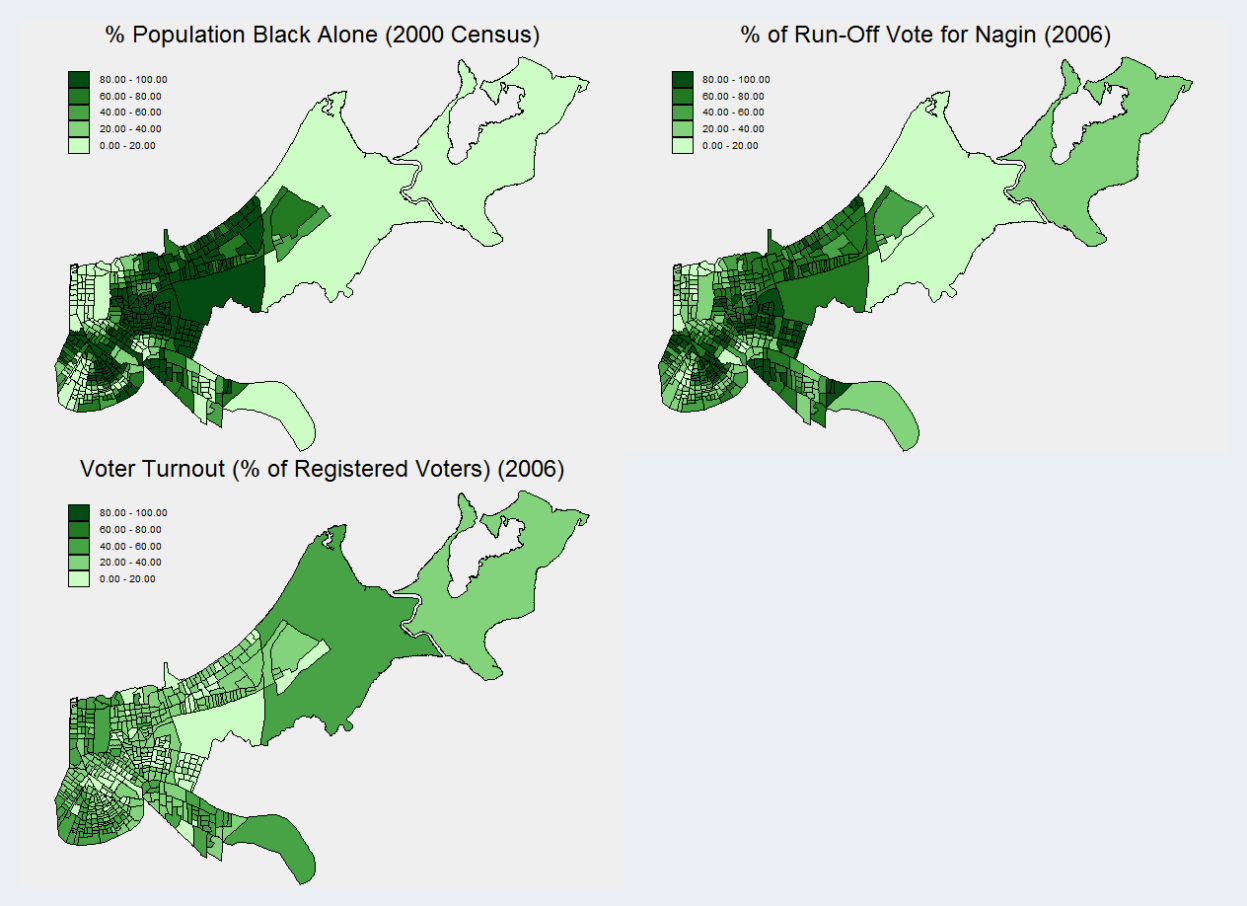
of the three mayoral elections discussed in the preceding pages. The following maps illustrate the black population alone for each precinct using data from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census, the percent of the vote each candidate received in their respective races, and the voter turnout in each of these elections. These maps, in concert with one another illustrate perhaps more clearly than this paper the racial segregation, even if self-imposed that continues to exist in New Orleans, as well as the racial polarization in voters' candidate choice and the loss of black population between Nagin's reelection in 2006 and Landrieu's ascent to City Hall in 2010. While there is no pattern that can be ascertained from the data, due to the fact that population shifts were random throughout the city, there is clear evidence of diminished black presence in the city between 2006 and 2010. Some precincts exhibit very minimal change in the black population, although these are frequently the areas of the city that had very few black residents prior to Katrina. These maps are shown here.

Map 1: Black Population, Nagin Vote Share and Turnout in 2002



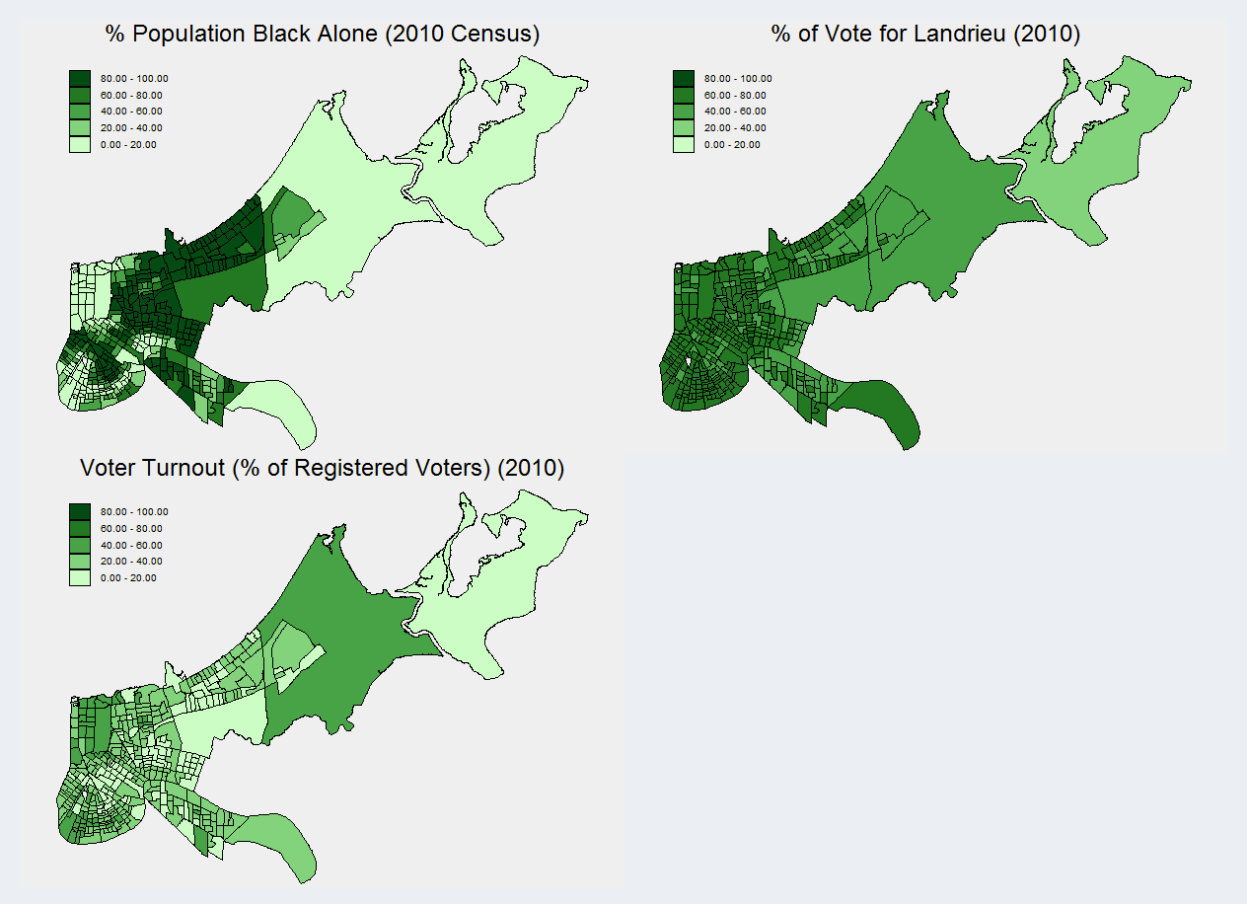
Source: National Historical GIS Project

Map 2: Black Population, Nagin Vote Share and Turnout in 2006



Source: National Historical GIS Project

Map 3: Black Population, Landrieu Vote Share and Turnout in 2010



Source: National Historical GIS Project

In terms of the black population of the city in the 2002 and 2006 elections, the maps are identical because both draw from the 2000 census for their demographic data. Therefore, it is really the map illustrating the city's black population in 2010 that tells the tale of New Orleans black exodus. It is first important to note that there are very few areas of the city that were previously predominantly white, as shown in light green, that increase in black population in 2010. The only areas where the black population increases was in a few precincts in the Algiers area of the city near the bottom of the map and a few precincts in the Gentilly neighborhood of the city. Much more often, the 2010 maps illustrate various areas of the city experiencing decreasing black populations. Some of the most notable areas of the city to experience such change are the Uptown/Carrollton neighborhood, Central City and the Garden District, portions of Mid-City, the French Quarter and the area known as Bywater in the Upper Ninth Ward.

In some of these areas, the change is hard to discern as the map drifts from dark green to slightly lighter green but in other areas, particularly Uptown and in Central City, the lightening of the map is far more evident. These maps illustrate in somewhat stunning relief the loss of black population in a city that was once nearly seventy percent black. This loss of population is minor is many areas, indicating that while the areas experienced black population loss, they remained slightly majority black precincts. In other areas, it appears that blacks were all but banished and this no doubt had political implications not only in the 2010 mayoral contest but also in other local elections in the following years. Looking at the population map for 2010, one cannot help but wonder if many of the black political elites in the city did not take these demographic changes into account before deciding not to launch a campaign against Landrieu.

The maps also illustrate a decrease in voter turnout over the span of the eight years that these three elections cover. Of course the decrease in turnout between 2002 and 2006 can likely to attributed to Hurricane Katrina. It is almost to be expected that voter turnout decreased in 2006 due to the increased hardship of casting a ballot. Those citizens who remained displaced at the time of the April runoff between Nagin and Landrieu had to either commute into the city to cast their vote or attempt to obtain an absentee ballot, which was a far more difficult task in this election. Thus, the majority of those who voted in this election were those who had returned to the city by this point and this was but a fraction of the city's pre-Katrina population. In 2010, Landrieu faced virtually no challenge to the office and this lack of competition likely depressed turnout below even the 2006 levels. Additionally, the mayoral election took place on the eve of the New Orleans Saints appearance in their very first Super Bowl and in a city known for throwing a non-stop party, it is highly likely that voters' preoccupation with the revelry of the Saints' first Super Bowl appearance in nearly forty years and the Mardi Gras season led to a decrease in turnout in an already uncompetitive election.

The 2010 election also marked the first time that the city's newly redrawn voting precincts were used. Following the 2010 Census, which showed a clear reduction in the city's population since 2000, voting precincts were altered to reflect the population decrease. While it is unclear exactly how the new precincts were comprised in 2010, it is likely a combination of precinct compilation and precinct redrawing.

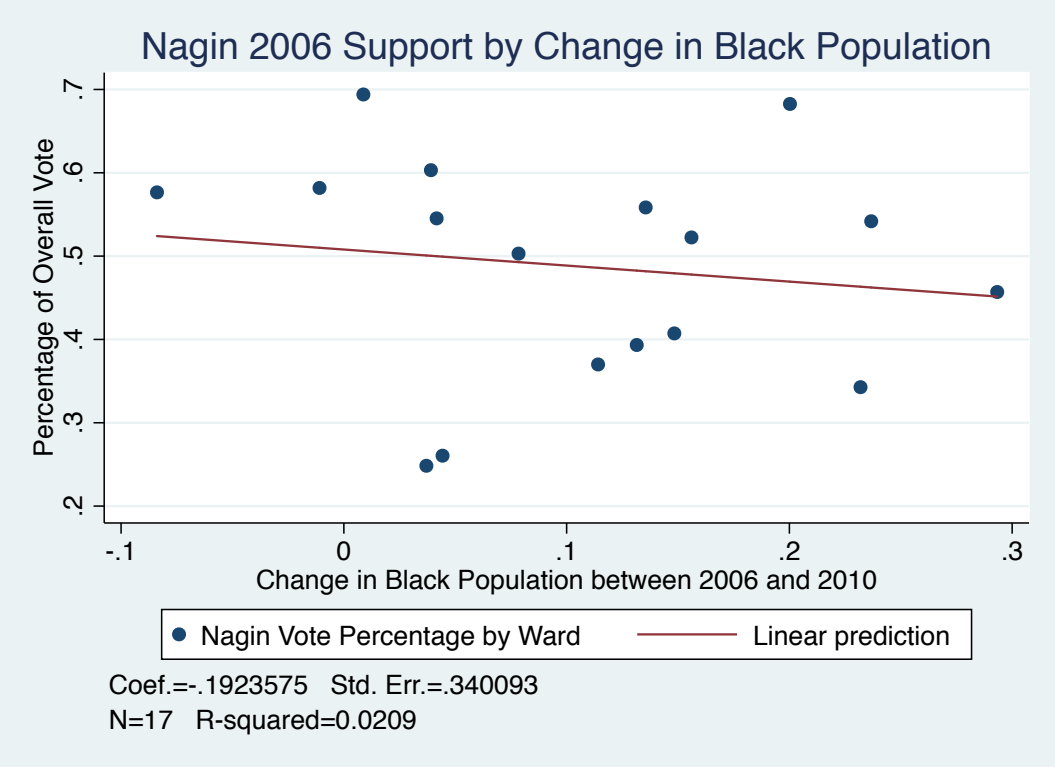
In the 2002 elections, the city's seventeen wards are divided into 442 precincts, many of which Nagin was victorious in. He was especially successful in the city's predominantly white precincts where he enjoyed overwhelming support. By 2010, the

number of precincts had been reduced to 365, which is a significant reduction across the city, but indicative of the population decrease brought about by Katrina. The reduction in population is evident just by noting the reduction in the number of voting precincts. The question that remains is whether or not current precinct sizes would have impacted the mayoral elections had they existed prior to 2010. Again, because the formula used to create the new precincts is unknown, much of what follows is simply speculation. However, using the 2010 parameters to study the 2000 mayoral race, it is unlikely that the current landscape would have radically changed the outcome of the race. If anything, the margin by which Nagin defeated Pennington may have been even greater. Assuming that the precincts were recreated to reflect fewer precincts in the areas that experienced the greatest exodus of citizens, predominantly black areas would be the areas most affected by the new precinct changes. Thus, their impact and strength in supporting Pennington would have been substantially weakened, given the current precinct map. Pennington struggled against Nagin despite strong support in largely black precincts. The diminishing number of such precincts as well as the redrawing of those that remain would have likely resulted in an even greater defeat for Chief Pennington.

While the 2006 mayoral election remains an anomaly that is difficult to recreate or draw substantial conclusions from, but I ran a regression of the percentage of the vote Nagin received with the change in the city's black population between 2006 and 2010, studying only the city's seventeen wards. The wards were used because there is no indication of how voting precincts were redrawn, but the voting wards remained the same. It would be expected that using the change in population, which was a decrease in nearly ward, would result in a decrease in Nagin's overall vote percentage. The regression moved

in the expected, negative direction but the model was not statistically significant. That regression is shown below.

Graph 4: Nagin 2006 Support by Change in Black Population



Nagin performed well in predominantly black areas, which leads to the expectation that the reduced political power of those areas would result in Nagin facing jeopardy in his reelection bid. However the change in population does not appear to have impacted the political landscape in such a significant manner as to radically impact the 2006 election. In the 2010 election, race did not play any meaningful role in the outcome of the election due to Landrieu running virtually unopposed. Therefore it was not necessary to investigate how the change in the city's black population impacted Landrieu's quest to become the next mayor of New Orleans.

Chapter Five — Conclusion

The data brought forth in the preceding chapters illustrate the immense racial divisions that persist in New Orleans. Even in elections where there are two black candidates, voters are heavily divided along racial lines, with black voters choosing to support the candidate with a racially specific platform while white voters supported the candidate more inclined to downplay the significance and impact of their race on their candidacy. These racial divisions were exacerbated even further in elections that placed a white candidate and a black candidate in conflict with one another. While the 2006 election was not the first time that two candidates of different racial backgrounds ran against one another, there were greater stakes in this election due to the tremendous uncertainty of the city's demographics and each racial group's desire to control City Hall in the new New Orleans.

Marc Morial's 1994 election bid pitted him against a Jewish lawyer, Donald Mintz was wrought with racial tensions and there was a stark racial divide among the electorate, but that election was held under far different circumstances and was devoid of the particular racial tensions that were born out of the sense of displacement created by Hurricane Katrina. The data implies that Hurricane Katrina inflamed already existing racial divisions within the city of New Orleans because as African Americans fought to maintain control of City Hall, white voters saw the exodus of potentially thousands of African Americans as a means to finally wrest control away from blacks after nearly thirty years in power.

While the data is sufficient in explaining the relationship between race and voter choice in the election immediately preceding Hurricane Katrina and the two subsequent

elections held in Katrina's wake, there were clear limitations to this research. There were tremendous obstacles to overcome, particularly where obtaining demographic data for the 2006 election was concerned. Since this election took place near the middle of the decade, the census data, which was taken from 2000, is potentially inaccurate as movement likely occurred within the six years that the census was taken and the election was held. Even if demographic data were available from the middle of the decade, it would likely still be insufficient because there is no official record of the movement of individuals out of New Orleans in 2005 specifically, which is the expressed focus of this project.

There were additional limitations with this project where New Orleans was concerned. The election returns provided by the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office do not provide a breakdown of how absentee ballots are factored into the vote totals for each candidate. It is likely that these votes are absorbed into the total for whichever precinct that voter is registered in, but there is no way to be certain and for a project centered on the movement of individuals, it would be more than helpful to have statistics on how many of those who cast votes in 2006 did so in absentia. There is also evidence that many voters traveled into the city to cast their vote, but there are no records of how many individuals took advantage of this option. While such a figure would possibly provide a proxy for how many voters actually fled the city in Katrina's wake, there is simply no way to determine how many of those who voted in the hotly contested 2006 runoff were currently living in the city.

While I firmly believe that this project provides a great foundation for examining the effects of swift demographic change incited by disaster, there is still tremendous work to be done. This element of political theory has been largely unexamined despite the fact that

Hurricane Katrina offers multiple political implications to be explored. There are numerous ways to build upon this research, perhaps simply by improving upon the data used in this project. Work on this particular subject could be greatly enhanced by the use of elite interviews or field research in New Orleans. There are several questions raised by this research that cannot be fully answered by data alone. Interviews with the candidates who ran in these elections, particularly Ray Nagin would add a new dimension to the research.

While I was able to form an argument about why Nagin decided to shift his campaign strategies between 2002 and 2006, but answers from Nagin on how he reached his decision to run a racialized campaign would be extremely helpful. The research could also be enhanced by interviews with actual voters, either those who voted absentee, traveled into the city to vote, or were residing in New Orleans at the time of the election. These interviews could provide insight into how voters made their candidate decision and what factors contributed to that decision. While I, and other scholars have made the argument that race was a highly contributing factor in voters' decisions, these interviews might uncover a previously undiscovered rationale for why voters selected various candidates.

Certainly this project is only a launching pad from which to conduct further research on this and related topics. Hurricane Katrina, nearly a decade later continues to offer important lessons for students in disciplines ranging from anthropology to sociology to political science. In the area of political science, Hurricane Katrina has been largely forgotten as a political event and the ramifications of this event, which continue to reverberate, have not been explored in great detail. There is the possibility that the results uncovered through this project may also apply to other municipal elections in the city such

as city council. Of course, furthering this research also creates a space through which these principles could possibly be generalized to other cities affected by some sort of disaster. It is my sincere hope that as we approach the ten year anniversary of that tragic disaster, more work emerges from within the scholarly community that seeks to examine and understand the complicated political ramifications of Katrina that continue to be impactful and continue to be felt in the cities and communities affected, even tangentially, by Hurricane Katrina.

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