Journal of Urban Affairs
The Journal of the Urban Affairs Association

WEAKENING STRONG BLACK POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT: IMPLICATIONS FROM ATLANTA'S 2009 MAYORAL ELECTION

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ABSTRACT: *Atlanta is perhaps the city with the greatest degree of black political empowerment (BPE) in the United States. Yet in 2009 a relatively weak white mayoral candidate nearly won the general and runoff elections over a field of stronger black candidates. Why? Treating Atlanta as a prototypical case, the article examines factors that undermine the capacity of blacks to retain control of mayoralties in strong BPE cities, with an emphasis on disruptions to black electorates, discontent among black citizens, and reinvestment in electoral politics by whites at the local level.*

> The city that became a post-civil rights movement emblem of the political power held by African-Americans could have a white mayor for the first time in a generation—a possibility that has some in the black community scrambling to hold on to City Hall. (Haines, 2009)

The struggle for and substance of black political empowerment (BPE) is a key concern of the urban politics literature. Studies examine the necessary and sufficient conditions for black political incorporation (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1984), especially the election of black mayors (Kaufmann, 2004; Marschall & Ruhil, 2006; Vanderleeuw, Liu, & Marsh, 2004), their governing challenges (Jones, 1978; Reed, 1999; Stone, 1989), and their symbolic and civic value for black communities (Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Gilliam, 1996; Thompson, 2006).[1] What of the electoral challenges and lessons of retaining blacks in city hall as mayors over time?

Other than the cases where black control of city hall was hard-fought but fleeting in non-majority black cities (e.g., Charlotte, Chicago, New York City, Denver, Dallas, and Seattle), scholars know little about the factors for losing mayoral control by blacks. Cases where blacks in BPE cities have lost mayoral control to whites (or other groups such as Latinos), or faced strong competition from non-blacks in biracial elections, are uncommon. In a few cities where BPE has been strong (e.g., Detroit, Memphis, Newark, and Washington D.C.), black mayoral regimes are uninterrupted for two decades or more. New Orleans is the exception because of its dramatic demographic transformations from hurricane recovery and public housing demolition. Nearly uninterrupted black mayoral regimes of a decade or so, with white mayors being electoral stand-ins between black mayoral administrations, have occurred in other strong BPE cities (e.g., Baltimore and Philadelphia).

Demographic projections, however, forecast that Detroit, Portsmouth (VA), Newark, Washington, D.C., Richmond (VA), Inglewood (CA), Philadelphia, and other strong BPE cities with black

This paper is the 2013 Urban Affairs Association Best Conference Paper award winner.

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JOURNAL OF URBAN AFFAIRS, Volume 36, Number 4, pages 663–681.
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ISSN: 0735-2166. **DOI: 10.1111/juaf.12067**

majorities or pluralities will see competitive biracial elections and that white control of mayoralties is likely in the coming years (Frey, 2010, 2011). Atlanta is on the list of cities likely to experience such "ethnoracial transition" in city hall (Eisinger, 1980). The probability is high. It is surprising.

Atlanta—"the preeminent example of consolidated black political, economic, and cultural power" (Thompson, 2006, p. 58; see also Stone, 1989)—is perhaps the city with the greatest degree of BPE in the United States. Yet in 2009 a white mayoral candidate almost won the general and runoff elections over a field of relatively stronger black candidates. Why? While Atlanta remains a crucial case for studying the benefits of strong municipal BPE, as well as the maintenance and meaning of local biracial governing coalitions over time (Owens & Rich 2003; Reed, 1999; Stone, 1989), Atlanta provides insights into the electoral limits of strong municipal BPE.

Traditionally, scholars look at the electoral limits of BPE in terms of influencing policymaking, whereby the electoral power of blacks in strong BPE cities may be insufficient to bias governance to their interests and preferences. Atlanta has been the classic site for understanding how economic power trumps electoral power, weakening the influence of black voters (Jones, 1978; Stone, 1989). We, however, are concerned with the ways that strong BPE may reduce the capacity of blacks to win elections; or how, in the words of an anonymous reviewer, "a black empowerment city potentially has within it the seeds of its own destruction."

In this article we treat Atlanta as a *prototypical* case for examining the challenges of blacks retaining control of mayoralties in strong BPE cities. By examining the near loss of black control of city hall in Atlanta after 40 years as a signal of forthcoming "pretransition breakthroughs" (Eisinger, 1980, p. 5), we consider theoretically informed factors for and make predictions about the electoral weakening of strong BPE in majority-black cities. We emphasize *black electoral disruptions* due to exogenous shocks to the composition of local black electorates, *black political discontent* signified primarily by disappointment-driven exits of blacks from cities and local black political demobilization in cities, and *white electoral reinvestment* at the local level due to demographic changes and the expression of grievance associated with long periods of perceived exclusion from electoral power.

STRONG BLACK POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND ELECTORAL MOBILIZATION

Atlanta is a strong BPE city (Owens & Rich, 2003; Stone, 1989), particularly in comparison to central cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 2003).[2] It is one of four large cities "with continuous minority empowerment where there has been at least one change in regimes," joined by Detroit, Newark, and Washington, D.C. (Gilliam 1996, p. 59). Since 1974 a black *political monopoly*[3] has controlled the Atlanta government (Owens & Rich, 2003; Stone, 1989). Its control remains broad and deep, inclusive of the mayoralty, city council, independent school board, and a variety of authorities.

In theory, the positive results of strong municipal BPE for blacks in cities like Atlanta are broad. Gilliam (1996, p. 60) posits that municipal BPE produces blacks that "express a politically 'engaged' persona." Others contend that it yields representation of and responsiveness to local black interests by black political actors (Stone, 1989), multiple forms of patronage and selective incentives (Stone, 1989; Thompson, 2006), and increased black knowledge of, trust in, and efficacy about municipal institutions (Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Marschall & Ruhil, 2007; Marschall & Shah, 2007). Furthermore, strong BPE should increase local black political participation: "Where blacks hold more positions of authority, wield political power, and have done so *for longer periods of time*, greater numbers of blacks should see value in sociopolitical involvement" (Bobo & Gilliam, 1990, p. 379, emphasis in original). Thus, a predominant presence and influence of blacks in executive and legislative institutions at the local level should redound to the benefit of blacks as political collectives.

In strong BPE cities like Atlanta, however, there may be "an empowerment life cycle": The longer the duration of strong municipal BPE the greater the likelihood of declining black political participation at the local level as the "symbolic effect" of BPE fades and the substantive limits of governance appear over time (Gilliam & Kaufmann, 1998, p. 741; Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Thompson, 2006). If so, an extended period of municipal BPE may negatively influence local black electoral

engagement, weakening the electoral capacity and strength of BPE, particularly concerning the retention of the mayoralty by blacks.

Strong BPE in cities like Atlanta, coupled with long-term black control, may influence the local electoral behavior of whites, too (Hajnal 2007, pp. 17–30; Vanderleeuw et al., 2004; Vanderleeuw, Liu, & Williams, 2008). On the one hand, it may reduce negative attitudes and low opinions of whites towards blacks, thereby increasing the probability of whites voting for and standing by black candidates. On the other hand, strong BPE may exacerbate white anxiety over the real and imagined loss of their local influence and resources, encouraging white electoral mobilization against blacks by recruiting and voting for competitive, even noncompetitive, white candidates. In short, strong BPE may induce either white electoral cooperation or opposition, with whites "voting hopes or fears" (Reeves, 1997).[4]

Gilliam & Kaufmann (1998, p. 744) predict, however, that "when the in-group does not have firm control of the office—such as when political opportunities are reshuffled by such exogenous factors as economic trends [e.g., recessions] or electoral rules [e.g., term limits]—the out-group will surge to the polls." Under some conditions a white minority may pose a serious challenge to a black majority in mayoral contests. Furthermore, as Liu (2001, pp. 613–614; also Vanderleeuw et al., 2008) concludes from research in New Orleans, "racial competition in biracial elections, reflected by the racial composition of candidate field, the strength of white/black candidates, and the election type (primary vs. runoff), may reverse white support for black candidates." Therefore, strong BPE does not guarantee sustained white demobilization; it may foster the *remobilization* of whites after long periods of stasis or decline. Thus, there may be what we call a *disempowerment* life cycle for whites in strong BPE cities such as Atlanta.

CONTEXT FOR A COMPETITIVE BIRACIAL MAYORAL CONTEST

Atlanta was a majority-black city with a shrinking black population in 2009.[5] Despite the strong magnetism of *metropolitan* Atlanta for blacks from outside the South, the pull of the *city* of Atlanta was weaker. While 445,578 blacks moved to metropolitan Atlanta between 2000 and 2008, the majority of them became suburban residents (Frey, 2010, p. 57). Simultaneously, many blacks left the city of Atlanta for its suburbs: 29,746 blacks departed the city during the 2000s, after a loss of 9,045 blacks in the 1990s (Frey, 2011, pp. 7–8). By 2009, 53% of the city's population was black, down from 67% in 1989. Meanwhile, its proportion of white residents grew from 30% in 1989 to 36% in 2009 (Frey, 2011).[6]

Atlanta also remained a city of racial and class divisions and inequities (Owens, 2012; Turner, 2012). While white segregation from blacks was on the decline in Atlanta (Turner, 2012; Wright, Holloway, & Ellis, 2012), whites and blacks tended to reside in different parts of the city. Generally, whites resided north and northeast of the former central business district and blacks resided in the neighborhoods arcing downward from the northwest across the southeast of the city. Such segregation fractured and segmented residential, employment, and social opportunities by race, resulting in concentrated poverty, unemployment, and dysfunction (Turner, 2012).

Additionally, Atlanta was a city of governance challenges. It was the central city of a region sprawling with disregard for its effects on its anchor city. New growth in the region even took the physical form of new (majority-white) cities that competed with Atlanta for residents and resources, while forestalling their annexation by the central city and wrenching local control from a majority-black county legislature. Plus, Atlanta was a capital city of a state that opposed and undermined many of its economic and social reforms (e.g., the state legislature prevented Atlanta's implementation of a 2005 living wage ordinance). Fiscally, it was a city of consecutive years of budget deficits and downgrades from credit rating agencies, coupled with an underfunded municipal pension system, increases in property tax rates and service fees, furloughs of police officers and other municipal employees, and public perceptions of increased crime.

Residents, regardless of race and class, worried about the city's course. A survey of likely voters in February 2009 suggested that 65% believed the city had "gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track" (Lake Research Partners, 2009). It suggested a perceptual shift from four years earlier when

a survey found that 26% of city residents perceived Atlanta to be off course (Ad Council, 2005). Furthermore, support for city hall was weak, measured by 47% of likely voters rating the performance of the incumbent two-term mayor—Shirley Franklin—as either fair or poor (Lake Research Partners, 2009).

THE CANDIDATES FOR CITY HALL

Atlanta's city charter limits mayors to two consecutive 4-year terms and stipulates off-cycle elections. Consequently, the city charter barred Franklin from running for reelection in 2009. Multiple candidates entered the race but only three were "quality" candidates, measured by whether they possessed experience (and resources) as elected officials (Hajnal, 2007; Krebs, 1998): Lisa Borders, Kasim Reed, and Mary Norwood.

Borders was completing her first term as the at-large city council president, which she had won in 2005 with 89% of the vote. An African American from a family with deep roots in the city's elite black politics, the chief executive officer of the philanthropic foundation that supported the municipal hospital, and a former executive with one of the city's most influential real estate developers, Borders came across as the candidate of the historic biracial governing coalition of elites that Stone (1989) dubbed the Atlanta regime. Reed, another African American, had ties to the regime, mainly by his former role as campaign manager for Mayor Franklin. He was serving an 11th year in the state legislature, representing a majority-black senate district in southwest Atlanta. Beyond his legislative experience, he had a reputation for bipartisanship and good relationships with statewide elected officials, including Republicans. Norwood was a white entrepreneur from the affluent and majority-white neighborhood of Buckhead and a two-term member of the Atlanta City Council that won her at-large seat in 2001 by defeating three men, including two weak black candidates, and taking 68% of the vote.

Norwood's entry in the mayoral race was surprising, because white mayoral candidates had been dormant in the racial garden of electoral politics in Atlanta.[7] Over much of the last four decades, whites in Atlanta were bearish on the city's electoral market. Generally, borrowing from Eisinger (1980, p. 111),

> preparations by whites to engage in contestation were virtually nonexistent. Not only was there no publicly chosen candidate who significant white elites sought to groom or encourage, but there was no hint ... of any sort of clandestine effort to produce a candidate. No money was being raised, no groups were being formed, and no strategy had been established. And finally, there were no self-declared white mayoral hopefuls who would admit their ambition in public or private. In short, not even buds of electoral opposition [to black mayoral control] had emerged.[8]

Hence, for decades whites did not mobilize electorally to identify and support white mayoral candidates and foster biracial electoral contests.

Also, Norwood's entrance was a surprise because she was more of a gadfly on the council than a council member focused on governance, which meant she was not a member of the dominant coalition on the council and had little to run on as a legislative leader. Accordingly, Norwood ran as a sort of insurgent during the 2009 campaign, asserting that her 8 years on the council did not make her "part of the problem" and that she was the candidate most likely to reform the municipal bureaucracy. She characterized City Hall as inefficient and broken, explicitly attacking Mayor Franklin's record and implicitly attacking the decades of black mayoral control (Dewan, 2009). To her, "city government [wasn't] working for anyone," failing whites and blacks alike.

More of a surprise, an October poll of likely voters conducted one week before the 2009 election forecast that Norwood would garner at least 46% of the votes, leaving Reed and Borders to split the remaining votes 26% to 17% (SurveyUSA, 2009a).[9] It predicted Norwood would win a majority of the votes of Republicans, independents, and higher income voters. It also suggested that race would influence the election: 70% of whites planned to vote for Norwood while 59% of blacks planned to vote for Reed (37%) or Borders (22%).[10] Yet many black voters expressed support for Norwood.

Polls implied that perhaps 25–35% of blacks would vote for her, possibly allowing Norwood to win the general election (SurveyUSA, 2009a; InsiderAdvantage, 2009).[11]

The survey results shocked some quarters of the elite and the electorate. Despite Norwood's past victories running citywide and her council experience, questions of her qualifications as a policymaker and strength as a candidate vis-à-vis Borders and Reed dogged Norwood throughout the race, mainly due to poor performances in public debates and limited achievements as a municipal legislator. Elites, in particular, viewed Norwood as unqualified to hold the position of mayor. The incumbent mayor, for instance, commented in public that "Norwood has not demonstrated vision, competence, or integrity in her public life as an elected official" and that she lacked "vision, integrity, and intelligence" (quoted in Galloway, 2009b).[12] Subsequently, Norwood received only one endorsement by an elected official (Galloway, 2009a).

ELECTION RESULTS

Theoretically, voter turnout in Atlanta's general elections should be high because of its term limits. "The mandate results in fewer elections with incumbent candidates and a potential surge in voter interest every eight years, maximally, as mayoral turnover occurs" (Gilliam & Kaufmann, 1998, p. 746). Empirically, voter turnout in Atlanta is low. In 2009, 30% of registered voters in Atlanta cast ballots in the municipal elections (Georgia Secretary of State, 2010), falling below the national average of 39% (Hajnal, 2010), and even below the 34% achieved in Atlanta in 2001. As expected, voter turnout varied by race in the 2009 mayoral election (see Figure 1A). Approximately 28% of registered black voters cast ballots in the mayoral election in 2009, compared to 35% in 2001, a decline of 4,341 votes. Meanwhile, white voter turnout increased by 8,544 votes from 2001, with 39% of white registered voters casting ballots in 2009, up from 34% eight years prior.

Norwood garnered 46% of the votes while Reed and Borders received 38% and 14%, respectively. Norwood and Reed performed best in the electoral districts of their racial bases. Approximately 60% of Norwood's votes came from three majority-white districts, while nearly the same proportion of Reed's votes came from five majority-black districts (Georgia Secretary of State, 2010). Additionally, racial crossover voting occurred unevenly. Generally, Norwood performed better in majority-black districts than Reed did in majority-white districts: 23% of Norwood's votes came from majority-black districts and 15% of Reed's votes came from majority-white districts. In racially mixed districts Norwood and Reed were nearly equal, with Norwood receiving about 40% of the votes to Reed's 38%.

The absence of a candidate earning greater than 50% of the vote required a runoff among Norwood and Reed. The record of black losses to whites in local runoff elections in Georgia advantaged Norwood. By one estimate, "a white primary leader defeated a black runner-up 83.8% of the time" in local runoff elections in Georgia (Bullock & Smith, 1990, p. 1211). Yet, while whites' support of Norwood remained high at 77%, black support for her eroded—25% of black respondents favored her candidacy (SurveyUSA, 2009b), down from 31% in the poll just before the general election. Historically, however, "Blacks who placed second in the primary were more formidable in the runoff when they had been more competitive in the primary" (Bullock & Smith, 1990, p. 1215). Reed soundly garnered considerably more votes than Borders, making him a serious contender to defeat Norwood. Also, Borders endorsed Reed in advance of the runoff, which implied a large transfer of the votes of black and white supporters of Borders to Reed, suggesting he would win the runoff. Furthermore, a survey of likely voters a week before the runoff election forecast Reed to get at least 49% of the vote with Norwood collecting 46%, the exact proportion she won in the general election (SurveyUSA, 2009b).

Estimates of turnout in the runoff election predicted a rate approximately half that of the general election (Stirgus, 2009). In fact, turnout in the runoff election was 33% (Georgia Secretary of State, 2010), slightly higher than the general election's rate, reflecting the competitiveness of the Norwood-Reed contest. Black turnout increased from 29% in the general election to 30% in the runoff election. White turnout increased from 38% to 40%. Put another way, the percentage change in voter turnout from the general and runoff elections for blacks and whites was 7% and 5%. Reflecting

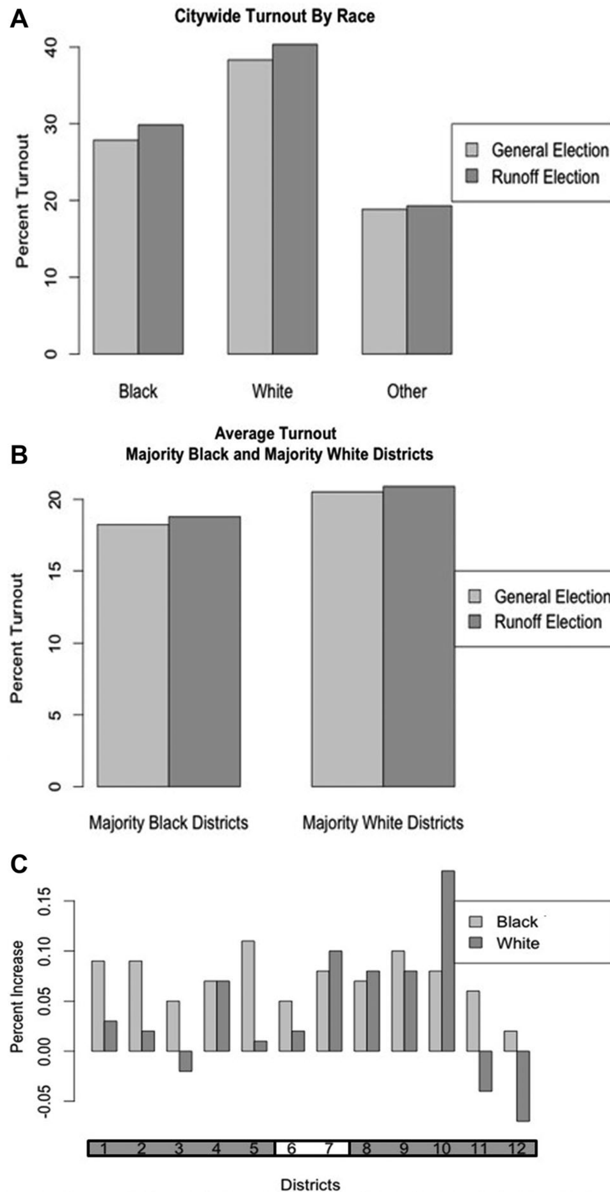

FIGURE 1

A Turnout in the 2009 Atlanta Election. B 2009 Turnout by Election, Race, and District. C Percentage Change in Turnout Between General Election and Runoff Election by Council District (Note: Districts 6 and 7 were majority-white districts)

individual-level patterns, turnout between the general and runoff elections increased in both majority-black and majority-white election districts (Figure 1B).

Mean turnout in majority-white election districts was higher than the average turnout in majority-black districts due to relatively large increases in whites in a few majority-black districts. However, white turnout decreased in three districts (Figure 1C). If white turnout from the general election had held in them, Norwood would have defeated Reed. Instead, Reed bested Norwood by 714 votes, winning 50.4% of the vote. Furthermore, the turnout revealed a divided electorate, one cleaved along racial lines. Table 1 shows the results of OLS models of electoral support for Norwood in the general

TABLE 1

OLS Models of Votes for Norwood and Black Turnout (Precinct Level)

Variables	Model 1 % Norwood (General)	Model 2 % Norwood (Runoff)	Model 3 % Black Turnout (General)	Model 4 % Black Turnout (Runoff)
% Female	0.002**	0.002**	0.363***	0.389***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.089)	(0.092)
% White	0.006***	0.007***	– 0.086***	– 0.101***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.023)	(0.024)
% Hispanic	– 0.002	0.000	– 0.230	– 0.182
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.135)	(0.138)
% Same house	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.048
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.066)	(0.067)
% Families in poverty	0.002***	0.001	– 0.213***	– 0.192***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.049)	(0.050)
% Owner-occupied housing	0.001	0.001	0.160***	0.172***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.037)	(0.038)
Black turnout rate	0.001	0.001	4.467	4.895
	(0.001)	(0.001)		
Intercept	0.022	0.008	4.467	4.895
	(0.063)	(0.057)	(5.708)	(5.814)
N	172	172	172	172
R^2	0.807	0.900	0.437	0.428

Note: $^{**}p \leq 0.05$, $^{***}p \leq 0.000$. Standard errors in parentheses.
Sources: Fulton County Board of Registration and Election, 2009; DeKalb County Board of Registration and Election, 2009; American Community Survey, 2006–2010; U.S. Census of Population, 2010.

and runoff elections. The results provide evidence of a direct and significant relationship between the percentage of whites in an electoral precinct and the percentage of votes cast for Norwood in the general and runoff elections.

Figure 2 maps the terrain of the biracial contest in the runoff election. The candidates carried their racial strongholds in the city. Reed won more than 75% of the vote in the majority-black (and multi-class) electoral precincts on the city's Southside and Westside, while Norwood won more than 75% of the vote in the wealthier, majority-white precincts of the Northside. They battled, often to near draws, in the central and eastern precincts on the city's belt of transitional neighborhoods. The precincts of neighborhoods experiencing racial turnover, public housing demolition, gentrification, and mixed-income and mixed commercial-residential development.

The racial reality of the runoff election cohered with Atlanta history. Most elections in Atlanta, according to Bullock (1984, p. 242), result in "voters support[ing] a candidate of their own race . . . . Black unity is greatest in congressional and top municipal contests . . . . Among whites, crossovers [white voters supporting black candidates] are least pronounced in elections to top city posts." Moreover, whites in Atlanta have been "significantly less likely to vote for a black [candidate]" in runoff elections (Bullock, 1984, p. 247). As for crossover black voters, Norwood won 20% of the black vote in the general election and 15% of it in the runoff election.[13] In other words, even with declining white turnout in three key districts, Norwood would have won the runoff if her black supporters in the general election had not abandoned her.

714 VOTES: AN OMEN OF "ETHNORACIAL TRANSITION" IN CITY HALL?

Multiple factors influence the results of biracial elections in cities (Kaufmann, 2004). Reflecting on both the general and runoff elections in Atlanta in 2009, three factors can be discerned as necessary and nearly sufficient for a black-to-white transition in mayoral control: (1) disruptions to the black electorate; (2) political discontent among segments of black civil society; and (3) electoral reinvestment by whites. While the scale may differ, these factors exist in strong BPE cities beyond

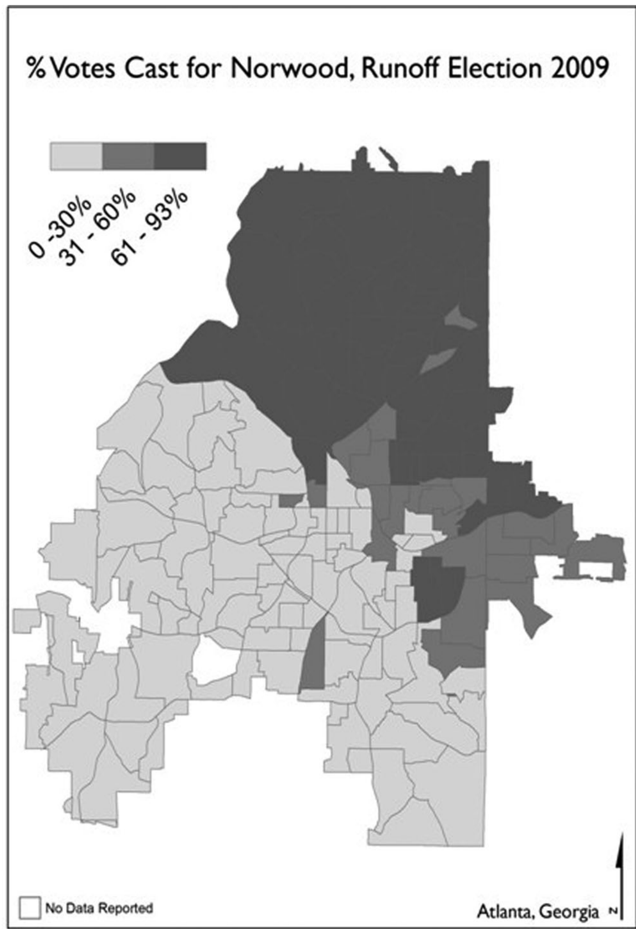

FIGURE 2

Geography of the Results of the 2009 Runoff Election

Atlanta that have elected white mayors such as New Orleans and may elect white mayors such as Detroit and Washington, D.C. (Riley, 2012; DeBonis, 2012).

Black Electoral Disruptions

As blacks left the city for the suburbs or bypassed it traveling from elsewhere between the start of the 1990s and the end of the 2000s, whites slowly and steadily moved into many of its longstanding working-class black neighborhoods such as Old Fourth Ward, Reynoldstown, Kirkwood, Edgewood, and Ormewood Park (Dewan, 2006; Hill, Owens, & Rich, 2007). The increased presence of whites spurred economic investment in the neighborhoods, luring more white migrants and fostering greater investment while decreasing the likelihood that working-class black residents could choose to remain in the neighborhoods due to increased property values and rents (Dewan, 2006; Martin, 2007).

Investments by newcomers, both white and nonwhite, increased the aesthetics and exchange value of working-class black neighborhoods, while destabilizing the use value of the neighborhoods and demobilizing many incumbent residents. Specifically, gentrification fostered the displacement of longstanding low-income and working-class residents from neighborhood-based organizations, the electorate, and the neighborhoods, weakening social and political capital among the remaining incumbent residents (Knotts & Haspel, 2006; Martin, 2007). This was consequential for recent Atlanta elections; for instance, the likelihood of “a longstanding resident voting” in Atlanta’s 2001

mayoral election declined "from 0.559 in the least gentrified neighborhood to 0.383 in the most gentrified neighborhood" (Knotts & Haspel, 2006, p. 119).

Beyond gentrification, public housing transformation, another force of residential instability, changed working-class black neighborhoods and the local black electorate. By 2009 the Atlanta Housing Authority was fourteen years into implementing its "Atlanta Blueprint" to distribute housing vouchers and convert all of its public housing communities into mixed-income communities, releasing its responsibility for the ownership and operation of large, family-serving public housing communities (Glover, 2009). The razing of Atlanta's public housing, followed by commercial investments in housing and businesses, displaced thousands of poor blacks from the neighborhoods where public housing once stood.[14] While some of the former residents left the city limits, the overwhelming majority churned throughout the city, especially its black neighborhoods (Oakley, Ward, Reid, & Ruel, 2011; Rich et al., 2010).

The destruction of public housing weakened historic bases of black political engagement and mobilization, namely churches and community–based organizations, which was true of the destruction of the slums that came before the erection of public housing in Atlanta (Ferguson, 2002). Both types of organizations traditionally catalyzed black electoral engagement in and around public housing in Atlanta. The removal of public housing also destabilized political lives, having negative consequences for political education and skills-building as church attendance declined, involvement in community-oriented associations decreased, voter registrations lapsed, and fewer votes were cast (Gay, 2012; Rich et al., 2010). Thus, public housing transformation, combined with the suburbanization of traditional resources key to working-class black political mobilization (e.g., congregations, leadership, and local networks) and white in-migration, diluted the strength of the black vote in Atlanta.

As whites moved in and blacks moved out of or around the city, the shifts transformed the city's electorate into more of a "small, active [but] disproportionately middle-class and white" electorate, with conservatives rather than liberals comprising the largest segment of white voters (Banks, 2000, pp. 265, 275). This was unexpected. During the 1990s and the start of the 2000s, blacks were a majority (56–58%) of registered voters. By 2009, blacks were a plurality (49%) of Atlanta's registered voters. Meanwhile, from the 1990s through the end of the 2000s, the proportion of whites among the city's registered voters increased from approximately 39% to 43%, including the addition of 12,256 whites to the voter rolls between 2001 and 2009, with Latinos and Asians comprising the remainder of registered voters.

Influenced by black exit and other factors, the "politically 'engaged' persona" and presence of black voters in Atlanta were diminishing in advance of the 2009 local elections. Black voter turnout in Atlanta's mayoral elections, for instance, had dramatically declined over the last 40 years, especially in the decade before the 2009 election. Figure 3 charts the decline. Black turnout in the mayoral election of 1973, when the first black candidate for mayor ran against the last white mayor, was 62%. By 1993 it had dropped to 45%. Nearly 20 years later, in 2009, black voter turnout was 28%.

Table 1 identifies a set of determinants of black voter turnout in the 2009 general and runoff elections. In particular, black turnout declined as the percentage of females in a precinct declined. Black male disenfranchisement via mass incarceration is perhaps the strongest explanation. In Atlanta 30% of black males cannot register to vote and 14% of black males are ineligible to cast ballots because of felony convictions (King & Mauer, 2004, p. 3).[15] Additionally, black turnout declined as the percentage of poor families (and renters) increased. Public housing transformation and the residential churning it creates explain a portion of the decline. Political alienation of the black poor from the electoral process, too, as we argue later, accounts for a portion of the inverse relationship between impoverishment and black voter turnout. An implication is that certain policy choices by black regimes may undermine the electoral capacity of strong BPE (see, e.g., Thompson, 2006).

The decline in black voter turnout in Atlanta since 1973 contradicts the idea "that the term limit design of Atlanta local government has mitigated the potential for black disengagement . . . [providing a perpetual] basis for new optimism" (Gilliam & Kaufmann, 1998, p. 753). More important, it demonstrates that declining black voter turnout in municipal elections weakens the electoral capacity of strong BPE in Atlanta, evidenced by the results of the 2009 general and runoff elections.

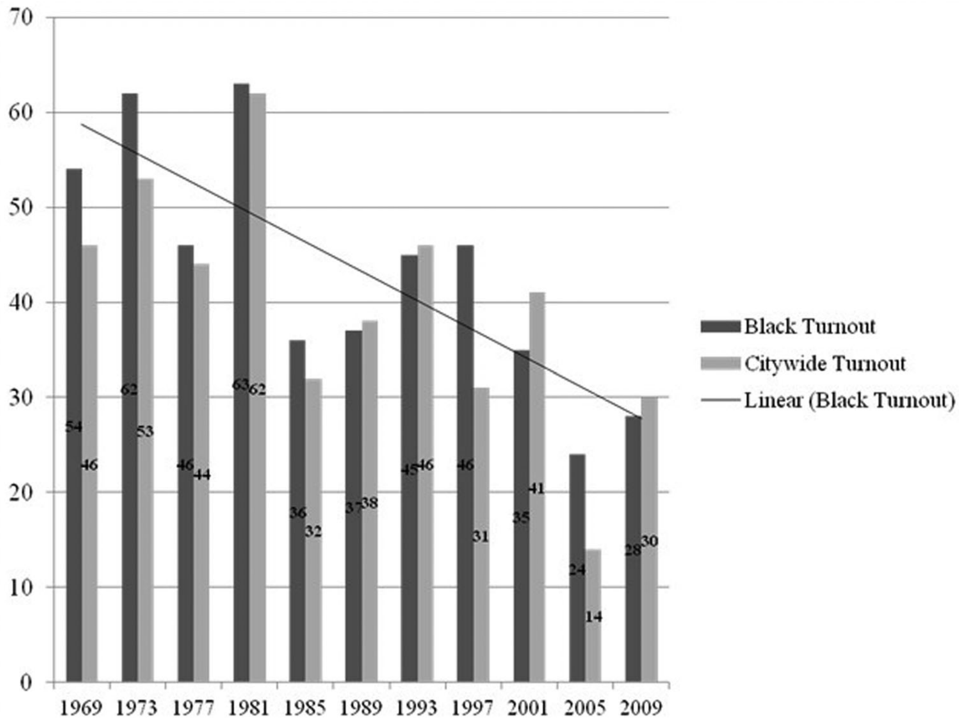

FIGURE 3

Turnout in Municipal General Elections, Atlanta, 1969–2009

Undetermined is whether the decline in voter turnout in Atlanta is symbolic of a more general observation across the United States—the inverse relationship between the length of municipal BPE (as measured by the uninterrupted presence of black mayors over time) and local black political participation (Spence, McClerking, & Brown, 2009).

Table 2 reports the results of two multivariate models of the correlates of local black electoral participation in a set of cities and a set of majority-black cities.[16] The models revise the specifications of Spence, McClerking, and Brown (2009). The revised specifications test the effect of the interaction of black mayoral tenure (measured in intervals of years in Model 1 and measured as ordinal units of years in Model 2) and region (1 = South, 0 = Non-South) on the number of local acts of electoral engagement by urban blacks. The results imply that longer tenures of black mayors may not necessarily be associated with declining local political electoral participation by urban blacks generally, which is surprising given earlier findings by Spence and his colleagues (2009). Rather, the evidence suggests that long black mayoral tenure primarily reduces the participation of urban blacks in the South. This implies that (a) Atlanta is not idiosyncratic and (b) the electoral strength of BPE may be weakest in southern cities, which may partly explain, for example, the recent black-to-white mayoral transition in New Orleans, and may contribute to transitions elsewhere.

Black Political Discontent

A key claim in the racial politics literature is that "[w]here blacks hold more positions of authority, wield political power, and have done so for longer periods of time, greater numbers of blacks should see value in sociopolitical involvement" (Bobo & Gilliam, 1990, p. 379). In Atlanta, strong BPE benefitted many black communities and individuals via patronage and selective incentives, especially in terms of municipal employment and government contracts (Owens & Rich, 2003). This may sustain "a contextual cue of likely policy responsiveness that encourages blacks to feel that participation

TABLE 2

Determinants of Local Black Political Participation

Independent variables	Model 1 (All cities)	Model 2 (Black mayor cities)
Family income	1.6530***	1.6112***
	(0.2561)	(0.3844)
Education	9.3042**	10.2074**
	(2.6319)	(4.2606)
Religious attendance	0.4719*	0.62541
	(0.2638)	(0.4463)
Age	0.02398***	0.0223***
	(0.0056)	(0.0067)
South (1 = yes)	– 0.3366	– 0.1755
	(0.2148)	(0.1741)
Gender (1 = female)	– 0.5261**	– 0.8443**
	(0.2076)	(0.3391)
Black mayor-years (interval)	0.0331**	
	(0.0171)	
Black mayor-years (ordinal)		0.2335
		(0.1822)
% Black	0.3229	1.0232***
	(0.5094)	(0.2221)
Black mayor (interval) × South	– 0.0363*	
	(0.0222)	
Black mayor (ordinal) × South		– 0.6701**
		(0.3229)
Constant	0.7472	0.6147
	(0.4723)	(0.6612)
N	824	386
R^2	0.1313	0.1484

Note: $^{*}p \leq 1.0$, $^{**}p \leq 0.05$, $^{***}p \leq 0.000$. The entries are unstandardized regression estimates with standard errors in parentheses.
Note: The variable *Black mayor-years (ordinal)* categorizes lengths of tenure (i.e., short, medium, and long), with long tenures being a decade or more.
Source: National Black Politics Study, 1993–1994.

has intrinsic value" (Bobo & Gilliam, 1990, p. 387). Still, according to Gilliam (1996, p. 62), "those outside of the ruling group should have (at the least) ambiguous or less positive orientations toward local government." This should hold for an assortment of groups who feel excluded from black political monopolies (e.g., fiscal conservatives and Republicans). It may also include subgroups of blacks perceived as off the agenda of black regimes and exploited by black political monopolies.

"Political alienation," as Gilliam & Kaufmann (1998, p. 760) reason, "results from the black public's increased understanding of [the] barriers [to progressive governance] and produces frustration and disillusionment that likely erodes much of the enhanced trust and political efficacy produced by empowerment." Moreover, it yields weaker attachments to the local electoral process, which strengthens and broadens the effects of disruptions to the black electorate. Perhaps reflecting disappointment with the seeming inability or unwillingness of the black regimes to manifest the rhetoric of their electoral campaigns in the governance of the city,[17] many middle-class, working-class, and poorer blacks remaining in the city may abandon elections in numbers higher than other groups in and beyond their race, keeping many of their votes out of the ballot box (Owens & Rich, 2003). Returning to Table 1, we observe in Models 3 and 4, for instance, that black voter turnout in the general and runoff elections was lower in districts with higher rates of families in poverty and lower rates of wealth (measured by homeownership).

The causes of political alienation may also have fostered the exodus of many blacks from the city, which contributes to an altered electorate that weakens the electoral capacity of strong BPE. Scholars contend that, aside from serving the interests and preferences of white economic elites, Atlanta's black mayors routinely accommodated the interests and preferences of the black middle

class (Keating, 2001; Orfield & Ashkinaze, 1991; Owens & Rich, 2003; Reed, 1999; Affigne, 1997; Stone, 1989). Yet the urban exodus and bypass of many blacks for Atlanta's suburbs over the last two decades invites a more nuanced perspective about the black beneficiaries of mayoral responsiveness. The decline in the number of blacks as residents (and voters) in the city was primarily a consequence of middle-class "black flight" to the suburbs. An undetermined proportion of the out-migration of middle-class blacks from the city proper reflects a rising discontent among what Lacy (2007) terms the "core black middle class," which is distinct from the "elite black middle-class" associated with Atlanta's "regime politics" (Stone, 1989) and the black lower middle-class. While elite blacks as a class possess greater resources for achieving and sustaining a high quality of life in the city, lower middle-class blacks have far fewer resources to exercise choice of or control over neighborhoods (Pattillo-McCoy, 1999). Core middle-class blacks, however, have adequate resources to search for improved neighborhood conditions in the metropolis.

Many core middle-class blacks departed and will continue to depart Atlanta for better prospects. Their departure is a response to discontent and alienation, influenced by the causes of discontent and alienation among working-class and poorer blacks. Generally, scholars agree that black mayors have accommodated the preferences and interests of the black poor and working-class last, if at all (Reed, 1999; Thompson, 2006).[18] Accordingly, in Atlanta black rule has not translated into tangible benefits for many poor and working-class blacks (Keating, 2001; Owens & Rich, 2003). As one black voter from a Southside neighborhood asked during a 2009 election forum, "What has black leadership done for us?" (quoted in Henry, 2009a). She and other blacks perceived minimal improvements in their lives, even retrogression, under black mayoral control.[19]

Assuming municipal neglect, the lack of mayoral responsiveness worsens conditions in working-class black neighborhoods. It also decreases the quality of life for many core middle-class blacks. Unlike the lower and core middle classes of other racial groups, the lower and core black middle classes are more likely to reside proximate to or alongside working-class and impoverished blacks (Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Lacy, 2007). As black working-class neighborhoods decline, the residential quality of the typical core black middle-class household declines (e.g., increased crime, reduced trust, declining property values). Rather than voice concern or accept the conditions, the core black middle class may opt for exit (Cashin, 2001). Their movement is an implicit judgment that the city does not work as well as it should or could in terms of their expectations for public schools, public safety, returns on investment in housing, and commercial development in their communities (Cashin, 2001). Their choice of residential mobility over political action fits with the prediction of the political alienation thesis (Gilliam & Kaufman, 1998, p. 756). Exit allows them to leave behind seemingly failed black urban regimes.[20]

We derive two implications from the phenomenon of urban black discontent for the endurance of strong BPE: one, political discontent is a causal mechanism for the declining rates of local political engagement by blacks, particularly in strong BPE, and two, discontent makes black retention of city hall, even in strong BPE cities, tenuous (Douzet, 2009). As Thompson (2006, p. 48) divines, "Black mayors may well find it in their interests to *re*-mobilize the black poor [and other segments of black civil society], and to respond to their demands, in circumstances where a large turnout of all sectors of the black community could be the means of returning the mayor to office. . . ."[21]

White Political Reinvestment

Following decades of strong BPE in Atlanta, and in accordance with information theory (Hajnal, 2007), many whites possessed positive information about and had good experiences with City Hall. After all, 30% of whites expressed political support for one of the black mayoral candidates in the general election (SurveyUSA, 2009a). And, according to findings from strong BPE cities like New Orleans, white crossover voting in Atlanta should have been high in the general and runoff elections because of the city's "black dominant context" (Liu & Vanderleeuw, 2001). In other words, Norwood should not have done as well as she did. Under normal circumstances, the majority of white voters should have supported either Reed or Borders in the general election and Reed in the runoff election, if they were behaving electorally in conventionally strategic ways. "From a strategic

political perspective, it makes sense that many whites would cast a ballot for the black candidate perceived to be least threatening to white interests, even over a white opponent" (Liu & Vanderleeuw, 2001, p. 311).

But white voters and majority-white precincts overwhelmingly supported Norwood as the best candidate for the mayoralty (e.g., 77% of likely white voters banded behind Norwood going into the runoff). Many whites perceived the chief black candidates as threats to their interests.[22] An overt racial appeal to black voters to unify behind a black candidate in the 2009 general election fueled the perception, or at least heightened the perceived threat.[23] The "plea for naked [black] self-interest" (Henry, 2009b) annoyed and worried many white voters; they judged it to be "race baiting" and resented its "vote for me because I'm Black" rhetoric (Wright, 2009). While publicly displaying the deep fear some blacks had of losing control of city hall, the plea also transformed Norwood in the eyes of some whites into a victim of "black racism" and reverse racism.[24] Thus, whites' electoral support for Norwood partially was a display of white racial alienation, whereby whites view black political influence and control by blacks as threats to their position, fueled by strong sentiments of disregard and disempowerment, even oppression, by the threatening group (Bobo & Hutchings, 1996, p. 10; Kaufmann, 2004).[25]

Additionally, living under strong BPE in Atlanta (or hearing about it in advance of moving to the city) may have negatively influenced whites' perceptions of Reed and Borders as suitable policymakers. Dramatic fiscal problems, spectacular crimes, and other negative experiences in 2009 led many middle-class and more affluent whites, as well as blacks and others, to question whether the city was governable. Increased taxation for seemingly diminished municipal services, a declining quality of life, and falling property values induced many to question the weight and outcomes of their tax burdens. The content and tone of many letters to the editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, along with critical comments on talk radio, in the local blogosphere, and on the streets of the city (e.g., Tea Party rallies) during 2009 suggested that fiscal resentment was deepening among whites.

Nevertheless, many white voters were relatively new to the city by the time of the 2009 election. Their support for Norwood may not have reflected experience-driven discontentment with black-controlled city hall. Yet race still may have influenced some of their support for Norwood. In biracial electoral contests "some voters who know little about either candidates will support the one with whom they share racial characteristics" (Bullock & Campbell, 1984, p. 150; also see Kaufmann, 2004). Moreover, newer white residents and voters may have felt or been like earlier white residents and voters in racially transitioning or newly strong BPE cities—that is, inexperienced with black governance. Amid the absence of experience living under strong BPE, as Hajnal (2007, p. 3) observes,

> many [whites] rely on racial stereotypes and past patterns in race relations to assess the likely consequences of a black candidate's victory. The result is that many whites fear that a black leader will favor the black community over the white community . . . they imagine black control will have negative consequences for themselves and their neighbors.

There already was a perception among some whites in Atlanta that the allocation of services and tax burdens by the black-controlled City Hall favored blacks and their neighborhoods over whites and their neighborhoods. This convinced some whites that a "wasted vote" on Norwood would at least express their opposition to (and even lack of tolerance for) further black governance.

All of this may have fostered not only white discontent but white reinvestment in city politics, justifying and energizing whites' support of Norwood while attracting more white supporters to her campaign. If so, white support of Norwood in 2009 was akin to the late 1970s when "the proportion of white Atlantans perceiving that they received preferential treatment declined, their trust in city government declined, and their perceptions of the honesty of city officials became less favorable" (Abney & Hutcheson, 1981, p. 98). While there may have been a moment in the 1990s when whites' political trust of Atlanta's black-controlled city government was neutral or increasing (Banks, 2000), the overwhelming support of whites for Norwood, measured by opinion surveys and correlated with the votes of majority-white electoral districts, belied their political trust.

It is conceivable too that some of the white support for Norwood was deliberately building on a foundation for the eventual election of a white mayoral candidate. The results of the 2001 election for city council president laid this foundation when a white candidate won 55% of the vote in a runoff against a black candidate, carrying nearly the same set of election districts that Norwood later carried (Owens & Rich, 2003, Figure 7.4). Specifically, the election of Councilwoman Cathy Woolard as council president (defeating Councilman Michael Julian Bond by nearly 4,000 votes) marked the return of whites to electoral positions of leadership in Atlanta's city politics.

An implication from a group conflict perspective is that racial bloc voting by whites, rooted in fear about strong BPE and accompanied by demographically driven alterations to the electorate, makes retention of City Hall by blacks more difficult. Thus, we should expect to see increased biracial competition for local office in other BPE cities in the years to come. This should not be a surprise, even in BPE cities with seemingly solid biracial electoral coalitions and white support for black regimes. As Vanderleeuw and his colleagues (2008, p. 797; see also Eisinger, 1980) point out, "if for some reason the racial makeup of the voting population changes to provide for a relatively larger white voting cohort, white candidates become viable and white-voter support for black candidates (that had previously been apparent) will evaporate." At a minimum, the Atlanta case suggests that an influx of politically invested whites in a strong BPE city may restart and advantage the political game for white mayoral candidates in biracial elections. This has been the case in New Orleans post-deluge (Vanderleeuw et al., 2008), and may be the case in strong BPE cities as different as Detroit and Washington, D.C.

CONCLUSION

Black-to-white mayoral transitions in strong BPE cities are rare. Yet changeovers from black mayors to white mayors are inevitable in many cities. The strong showing by a white candidate against multiple black candidates in Atlanta's 2009 general election and a single black candidate in the runoff signals to whites that mayoralties may be ripe for picking, even in the strongest BPE cities in the United States. More and stronger white candidates should emerge as competitors in future biracial contests for mayoralties in strong BPE cities (Douzet, 2009). Furthermore, if current demographic trends continue, especially black out-migration from strong BPE cities, coupled with deepening black discontent, the probability of black candidates—incumbents and challengers alike—retaining the key municipal prize of city politics, even if it is a "hollow prize" in some cities, will decrease. This will weaken and eventually end multi-decade governance by black urban regimes.

Yet, the new electoral contexts of Atlanta and other strong BPE cities may allow for the creation of new and different local electoral coalitions. Perhaps working-class blacks will align with moderate (or even conservative) whites to form an electoral coalition that produces a more responsive governing coalition (Banks, 2000). This may result in a broader distribution of municipal benefits and more comprehensive consideration of multiple preferences from a more varied group of interests.

Blacks in Atlanta forestalled the election of a white mayor in 2009. In 2013, as in the past, the incumbent black mayor faced weak candidates in a non-competitive reelection. Whether the next mayoral election extends the history of blacks sitting behind the mayor's desk or brings the era of uninterrupted black mayoral control to a close is undetermined. However, the race for mayor will be wide open in 2017, and contested in a city with continuing disruptions of its black electorate, greater discontent among middle-class and working-class blacks, and stronger electoral remobilization of whites. The same will be true of many other strong BPE cities in the United States.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2012 Urban Affairs Association meeting in Pittsburgh. The authors thank Rob O'Reilly, Michael Page, Bethany Nanamaker, and Stephanie Dean for their research assistance. They also thank Shauna Dozier, Karen M. Kaufmann, and Frank Gilliam, Jr. for providing Atlanta election data, as well as Lester Spence for assisting them with an analysis of the effects of long-term black empowerment on local political participation. Terry Easton and two anonymous reviewers provided helpful comments and suggestions.

ENDNOTES

1 Studies also investigate the distributive politics and substantive benefits of black control of city hall (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 2003; Eisinger, 1982; Mladenka, 1989). Furthermore, there is solid scholarship on public attitudes regarding BPE, especially its influence on white attitudes about blacks (Hajnal, 2007; Howell & Perry, 2004; Marschall & Ruhil, 2006; Marschall & Shah, 2007).

2 The strength of municipal BPE depends on the degree to which blacks have authority over municipal decisions (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1984). The presence or absence of a black mayor is one criterion of strong BPE (Eisinger, 1980). Additionally, strong BPE is associated with a black majority or black presence in a dominant coalition on the city council (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1984).

3 Trounstine (2008, p. 27) defines a political monopoly as "a single coalition" with "electoral dominance" by "having a high degree of coordination and bias, which increases the incumbent coalition's probability of maintaining power, and leads to suboptimal government responsiveness." Blacks in Atlanta have maintained such a coalition since the election of Maynard Jackson in 1973 (Owens & Rich, 2003; Stone, 1989).

4 A third possibility is white exodus from the urban electorate through voter abstentions and other forms of withholding electoral support (e.g., campaign contributions) or exiting cities for suburbs (Orbell & Uno, 1972).

5 The population of the city—approximately 420,000—was mainly biracial, consisting largely but unevenly of blacks and whites, who together accounted for approximately 90 percent of the city's population.

6 Atlanta was one of just six of the largest 50 cities in the United States where the proportion of white residents increased during the 2000s: Atlanta, Oakland, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Denver, and Miami (Frey, 2011).

7 In the absence of descriptive representatives among mayoral candidates, whites of all socioeconomic classes did one of three things: they left the city for its suburbs (Kruse, 2007), abstained from voting in high numbers (Gilliam & Kaufmann, 1998), or supported the black candidates that might best represent their interests (Stone, 1989).

8 Eisinger presumed that the description of white displacement from mayoral elections as candidates during the reelection campaign of Maynard Jackson in 1977 and subsequent years was accurate. Neither he nor his informants anticipated a competitive biracial contest in 1981 between a black candidate (Andrew Young) and a white candidate (Sidney Marcus). Nonetheless, the description proved prescient after 1985.

9 InsiderAdvantage (2009) conducted a poll a few days later that mirrored the SurveyUSA results.

10 Racial bloc voting is longstanding in Atlanta's elections (Bullock & Campbell, 1984; Owens & Rich, 2003) and it is conventional electoral behavior in municipal elections in the United States because "it [is] unusual when black and white voters [want] the same things at the local level" (Hajnal, 2010, p. 43).

11 Media reports suggested that Norwood's black supporters were alienated from City Hall and sought to disrupt "black politics" as usual. The media also implied that some black voters strategically supported Norwood, believing they would be able to hold her more accountable as mayor, given her overt appeals to black voters in her campaign commercials and appearances.

12 The critiques of the first white mayoral candidate in three decades were akin to the criticism that the first black mayoral candidate in Atlanta received, challenged "for his lack of managerial experience and administrative ineptitude" (Eisinger, 1980, p. 83).

13 Much of the black support for Norwood in the general election came from working-class and low-income voters. Table 1 provides some empirical evidence of this. Specifically, Model 1 shows a direct and significant relationship between the percentage of families in poverty in an election district and the percentage of votes for Norwood.

14 Atlanta has been a leader in the demolition of public housing, perhaps second only to Chicago. Yet many other BPE cities, even under black mayors, have eagerly and aggressively demolished and redeveloped large portions of their public housing stock. Strong BPE cities like Philadelphia, New Orleans, Baltimore, Newark, Detroit, Memphis, and Washington D.C., as well as Hampton (VA), for instance, have demolished the most units (by number and/or percentage) of public housing among American cities (Goetz, 2011, Table 2). Moreover, public housing demolition has been most common in the regions with the greatest proportions of urban blacks, namely the South and the Northeast (Goetz, 2011, p. 279).

15 Georgia like most states prohibits felons—persons in prison, on parole, or on probation – from voting in elections for public office and on referendum questions. The negative effect of mass incarceration on local black electorates

via disenfranchisement is likely greater, not less, in other BPE cities with higher rates of felons among the black male population (e.g., Washington, D.C., Detroit, Philadelphia, Memphis, New York, and Los Angeles).

16 The data, drawn mainly from the 1993–1994 National Black Politics Study, combine individual-level political behavior measures with contextual variables of BPE (e.g., presence of black mayor and the length of black mayoral control). The local political participation index includes responses to questions about "helping in a voter drive, donating to political campaigns, attending a political fundraiser, handing out campaign material, and signing a petition for a candidate" (Spence, McClerking & Brown, 2009, p. 278). Additionally, the inclusion of the interaction terms makes our models and results dissimilar to those reported by Spence, McClerking, and Brown (2009).

17 Generally, because of the imperatives of capital and the ideology of "city limits," the preferences and limited capacities of neoprogressive black political managers and brokers, the development of neoconservative and neoliberal tendencies within black regimes, the absence of biracial electoral competition and black grassroots activism, and enduring "hollow prizes," black-led regimes and mayors across multiple cities have been less responsive to the needs of non-elite blacks (see, e.g., Stone, 1989; Keiser, 1997; Reed, 1999; Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 2003; Thompson, 2006).

18 The lack of responsiveness to the black poor, in particular, is common among cities governed by blacks (Thompson, 2006).

19 At least one black politician, state senator Ralph Long, who endorsed Norwood, publicly echoed the theme during the election: "Am I supposed to believe that only my eyes see the trash, lack of development, vacant homes and absolute lawlessness plaguing my side of town? We are near the point of anarchy" (quoted in Galloway, 2009a).

20 Although we lack data to empirically test this thesis for Atlanta, implications from a recent study of public attitudes in 286 municipalities across four metropolitan areas suggest a correlation between black dissatisfaction with their neighborhoods (and schools and public safety) and black interest in leaving their municipalities (Salucci & Bickers, 2011).

21 Alternatively, it may worsen the situation: "If increasing political alienation and lower levels of black participation are likely to increase over time, there are potentially serious consequences for the future of black politics . . . in particular, . . . diminishing the ability of blacks to lead and to participate meaningfully in biracial and multiracial governance" (Gilliam & Kaufman, 1998, p. 761). One latent consequence is the further marginalization of poor blacks as black officials further neglect their plight because the poor are less reliable as voters.

22 Of course, many whites in BPE cities may favor candidates like Norwood (or back another descriptive representative of their group in the local election) because they reason and anticipate their packages of policy proposals and governmental reforms would better cohere with their preferences. Sam Massell, president of the Buckhead Coalition and the last white to serve as mayor of Atlanta, summarized this view during the 2009 election, using it to explain white support for Norwood: "Normally, people vote for those who they believe can best represent their interests and understand their needs" (quoted in Henry, 2009a). Put another way, "[t]hat voters generally prefer a candidate of their race need not connote racism in the electorate" (Bullock & Campbell, 1984, p. 150). Also, some whites may have supported Norwood as a "postracial" candidate, providing a means of fostering diversity in a majority-black city and municipal government run by blacks by increasing the presence of whites in electoral positions of authority.

23 The ad hoc Black Leadership Forum distributed a "Black Agenda Memo" that advocated a "'Black mayor first' approach" (Galloway, 2009c; Suggs & Stirgus, 2009). The memo expressed black anxiety over Norwood's candidacy: "Time is of the essence because in order to defeat a Norwood (white) mayoral candidacy we have to get out now and work in a manner to defeat her without a runoff, and the key is significant Black turnout in the general election; . . . . In fact, if a white candidate were to win the 2009 mayoral race, it would be just as significant in political terms as Maynard Jackson's victory in 1973" (Galloway, 2009c).

24 The charge of "black racism" in City Hall has existed to some degree since the election of the first black mayor of Atlanta in 1973 (Jones, 1978; Stone, 1989). Data from the Atlanta subsample of the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (Bobo et al., 2000), for instance, suggest that 48% of white Atlantans in the early 1990s believed that blacks tended to discriminate against members of other groups rather than to treat them equally or in a neutral way. Moreover, 21% of blacks held this view.

25 According to the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (Bobo et al., 2000), 46% of whites in Atlanta either agreed or strongly agreed that the more influence blacks have in local politics the less influence whites will have in local politics.

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