



## The Election of Black Mayors, 1977

John O'Loughlin

*Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Sep., 1980),  
353-370.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0004-5608%28198009%2970%3A3%3C353%3ATEOBM1%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N>

*Annals of the Association of American Geographers* is currently published by Association of American Geographers.

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/aag.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE ELECTION OF BLACK MAYORS, 1977\*

JOHN O'LOUGHLIN

**ABSTRACT.** Significant changes in the electoral support of black mayors occurred in 1977. Bloc-voting against black incumbents by whites decreased dramatically in all cities, except Detroit, while bloc-support for the mayors continued in black precincts. Overall turnout was lowered significantly but black turnout rates continued to exceed white rates. The "Manhattan Coalition" of blacks and upper- and middle-income whites was revised in 1977 in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New Orleans, but Detroit continued to experience a strong electoral cleavage based on intraracial cohesion and little crossover voting. The black mayoral victory in New Orleans was based on the same combination of factors as in the other cities in 1973.

**I**N a recent paper, O'Loughlin and Berg examined the bases of electoral support for black mayors in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. They found that black mayors were elected in these cities in 1973 because of black bloc-voting, support from a small but significant proportion of the white population, and a higher black voter turnout. Because of vote consistencies based on social cleavages in 1969 and 1973, they predicted the probable success of future black mayoral candidates.<sup>1</sup>

An unrivaled opportunity to test these predictions and evaluate electoral trends since 1973 was provided by the 1977 mayoral elections in these three cities. The incumbent mayors (Young in Detroit, Bradley in Los Angeles, and Jackson in Atlanta) ran for reelection and thus provided a continuity of choice for voters in these cities. Additionally in 1977, a strong challenge for the mayoralty in New Orleans was mounted by Ernst Morial, a black appeals court judge and former state legislator. Morial's opponent in the runoff was Anthony DiRosa, the most conservative white candidate in the primary. Incumbency was not a factor in New Orleans where political choices and circumstances similar to Detroit,

Los Angeles, and Atlanta in 1973 provided an added test of the electoral predictions.

Although opportunities for longitudinal study and further testing of empirical models exist, such studies have been rare in human geography. In electoral geography, however, longitudinal studies are encouraged by incumbents running for reelection and consistent electoral regulations. Despite these incentives, existing studies, both at municipal and national scales, tend to be of geographic patterns of voting returns for a single election.<sup>2</sup> Notable exceptions include studies of support for the Danish Communist and New Zealand Social Credit parties by Barnett, Taylor's examination of class and voting in England, Lewis's review of the effects of black migration on the voting surfaces of Flint, and Rowley's study of the council elections in Greater London.<sup>3</sup> By taking predictions and models

---

<sup>2</sup> P. J. Taylor, "Political Geography," *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 1 (1978), pp. 153-62. A notable exception is Morrill's review of his reapportionment plan. See R. L. Morrill, "Ideal and Reality in Reapportionment," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 63 (1973), pp. 463-77; and R. L. Morrill, "Redistricting Revisited," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 66 (1976), pp. 548-56.

<sup>3</sup> J. R. Barnett, "Scale Components in the Diffusion of the Danish Communist Party," *Geographical Analysis*, Vol. 5 (1973), pp. 35-44; J. R. Barnett, "Regional Protest and Political Change: Social Credit in New Zealand, 1954-72," in R. J. Johnston, ed., *People, Places and Votes: Essays on the Electoral Geography of Australia and New Zealand* (Armidale, N.S.W.: University of New England Press, 1977), pp. 69-91; A. H. Taylor, "Variations in the Relationship between Class and Voting in England, 1950 to 1970," *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geographie*, Vol. 64 (1973), pp. 164-68; P. F. Lewis, "Impact of Negro Migration on Electoral Geography of Flint,

---

*Dr. O'Loughlin is Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Illinois in Urbana, IL 61801.*

\* The support of the Graduate College Research Board of the University of Illinois is appreciated.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. O'Loughlin and D. A. Berg, "The Election of Black Mayors, 1969 and 1973," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 67 (1977), pp. 223-38.

and testing them with new data, electoral geographers can develop a coherent body of knowledge based on consistent review and modification.

With the emphasis on consistency, the three foci of this study are based on the results of O'Loughlin and Berg's study.<sup>4</sup> The electoral support for black mayors is analyzed under three research headings: 1) Bloc-voting—did it change between 1973 and 1977 in black and in white precincts? Did the presence of incumbents affect it? 2) White Support for Black Candidates—did the proportion of white support, critical to black mayoral wins in 1973, change in 1977? Did a significant proportion of upper-class whites vote for black candidates with lower income whites giving bloc-support to white candidates in 1977? 3) Turnout—was black voter turnout still significantly higher than white turnout in 1977? Was the importance of turnout lessened by a growth in the proportion of the black voting-age population in each city?

As in the earlier study, the cities are examined within the context of local political culture, social conflict, population composition, campaign issues, and political personalities. It should be emphasized that the four cities under study here use nonpartisan ballots and that, although party registration is correlated with support for a particular candidate, party considerations do not directly enter into the campaigns or the coalitions supporting the candidates.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE 1977 MAYORAL ELECTIONS

A careful distinction must be made between Los Angeles and Atlanta on the one hand and Detroit and New Orleans on the other. In 1977, Tom Bradley and Maynard Jackson in Atlanta won reelection without runoffs (Table 1). Bradley received more votes in the primaries than the combined totals of his eleven opponents, while Jackson scored a landslide victory over four major opponents. Bradley's

popularity was impressive because his opponents included such local political figures as Howard Jarvis and state senator Alan Robbins. Jackson had a black opponent but she received less than five percent of the primary vote. In some circumstances, it is easier for an incumbent to win in a primary because opposition is diffused over many opponents while a single rival can crystallize opposition to the incumbent's policies. In addition, voters are generally less interested in primaries and even strong opponents have difficulty in arousing interest in their candidacies.

In Detroit, the incumbent, Coleman Young, won convincingly over his black opponent, Ernest Browne. Young had been opposed in the primary by Browne and two white candidates. This election demonstrated an interesting change of electoral strategy by white voters. The nomination of two blacks to the runoff would seem to suggest that the primary was not characterized by racial bloc-voting. In fact, white voters in the city (almost half of the total) neglected the white candidates to support Browne because they perceived him as a "moderate black" and saw him as the only candidate capable of beating Young in a runoff. The rapidity of electoral change and political control as a function of racial voting and demographic trends is well illustrated in Detroit where, until 1973, whites controlled the mayoralty, city council, and school board.

Morial's victory in New Orleans by less than 4,500 votes (2.5 percent of the total cast) was made possible by the primary success of Council-member Joseph DiRosa, the most conservative of the three white candidates. In the first primary, white turnout averaged seventy-four percent (compared to sixty-six percent for blacks) and DiRosa received thirty-nine percent of the total vote but only four percent of black votes. Morial's vote was just the opposite (fifty-eight percent of black and five percent of white support) while the other candidates showed mixed black/white support.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the second primary (runoff) presented voters with a choice of two candidates at the opposite ends of the racial voting spectrum.<sup>7</sup> Morial knew that DiRosa's nomination

Michigan, 1932-62; A Cartographic Analysis," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 55 (1965), pp. 1-25; and G. Rowley, "The Greater London Council Elections of 1964 and 1967: A Study in Electoral Geography," *Transactions*, Institute of British Geographers, Vol. 53 (1971), pp. 117-32.

<sup>4</sup> O'Loughlin and Berg, op. cit., footnote 1, p. 238.

<sup>5</sup> See O'Loughlin and Berg, op. cit., footnote 1, pp. 227-28 for a discussion of nonpartisanship.

<sup>6</sup> A. Rosenzweig and J. Wildgen, "A Statistical Analysis of the 1977 Mayor's Race in New Orleans," *Louisiana Business Survey*, Vol. 9 (April, 1978), pp. 4-8.

<sup>7</sup> Similar eliminations of moderate candidates occurred in primaries in the other three cities in 1969 and 1973.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY STATISTICS OF VOTING PROPORTION DISTRIBUTIONS

City	Year	Candidate	Mean	Coefficient of variation	Skewness	Percentage of precincts over eighty percent
Detroit	1969	Austin	49.40	2.307	.213	33.9
	1973	Young	51.59	3.351	.001	38.8
	1977	Young	61.10	0.534	-.511	48.1
Los Angeles	1969	Bradley	46.73	0.629	.251	15.1
	1973	Bradley	56.34	0.855	.206	18.2
	*1977	Bradley	56.86	0.218	.775	19.6
Atlanta	1969	Massell	55.46	1.861	.791	33.3
	1973	Jackson	59.23	1.720	.098	40.0
	*1977	Jackson	62.67	0.482	-.428	48.2
New Orleans	1977	Morial	50.05	0.610	.272	26.9

\* Primary election with more than one opponent.

Source: 1969 and 1973 results from O'Loughlin and Berg; 1977 results calculated by author.

was his best hope of eventual success since he could mobilize black voters for a high turnout and, in addition to a black bloc-vote, win some white liberal support.<sup>8</sup>

Voting percentages for black candidates in 1969, 1973, and 1977 indicate a definite trend (Table 1). From narrow defeat in 1969 through narrow victory in 1973 to landslide wins in 1977, black candidates in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Atlanta would appear to be assured of continued election. If we can judge from the experience of black legislators in congress, state assemblies, and city councils, continued election of black mayors is likely in Detroit, Atlanta, and New Orleans with their increasing black majorities.<sup>9</sup> In Los Angeles, the black population constitutes only about one-fifth of the total and to large extent, Bradley's success is based on his cross-racial appeal and city-wide popularity.<sup>10</sup> However, projections of continued black electoral success must be made with caution, especially since they are based on a sample of ten elections. Black incumbents have been replaced by whites in the Cleveland mayoralty (after two terms by Carl Stokes from 1967 to 1971) and in the forty-three percent black 5th congressional district in Atlanta. Additionally, a split in the black vote might allow a white candidate to win a

three-way contest, although such an occurrence is unlikely in nonpartisan contests because the primaries guarantee only two candidates on the runoff ballot and a third candidate would have to rely on write-in support.

#### ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR IN RACIALLY-DIVIDED ELECTIONS

Almost all successful black candidates are elected from black-majority constituencies.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Hispanic-Americans, black voters express their perceived self-interest and give bloc-support to candidates of their race, predictable responses to their ethnic group identification and attitudes towards politics and society.<sup>12</sup> Black electoral success is often helped by socioeconomic factors such as high income, occupation, and education levels of whites, as Cole showed in his study of New Jersey cities.<sup>13</sup> Regional differences between

<sup>8</sup> Rosenzweig and Wildgen, op. cit., footnote 6, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> H. Walton, Jr., *Black Politics: A Theoretical and Structural Analysis* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Publishing Company, 1972); and J. R. Howard and R. C. Smith, eds., "Urban Black Politics," *Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 439 (1978).

<sup>10</sup> "A Triumphant Decent Man," *New York Times*, April 7, 1977.

<sup>11</sup> C. S. Bullock, III, "Election of Blacks in the South: Preconditions and Consequences," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 19 (1975), pp. 727-39; H. J. Bryce, "Problems of Political Management and Implementation of Local Government: A Minority Perspective," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 35 (1975), pp. 812-18; and H. Marshall and D. Meyer, "Assimilation and the Election of Minority Candidates: The Case of Black Mayors," *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. 60 (1975), pp. 1-21.

<sup>12</sup> N. P. Lovrich and O. Marenin, "A Comparison of Black and Mexican-American Voters in Denver: Assertive Versus Acquiescent Political Orientations and Voting Behavior in an Urban Setting," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (1976), pp. 284-94.

<sup>13</sup> L. Cole, "Electing Blacks to Political Office: Structural and Social Determinants," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 10 (1974), pp. 17-39.

North and South and structural factors, such as the size of districts, also are important.<sup>14</sup> Studies which focus on intercity differences at an aggregate scale overlook neighborhood circumstances, especially the voting behavior of whites in racially divided elections.

Much of the research on white voting behavior stems from Key's classic study of the racial issue in southern elections.<sup>15</sup> In particular, his hypothesis that support for liberal candidates (or black candidates in the 1970s) would decrease in districts with large black populations because of white fears of black empowerment has generated much discussion.<sup>16</sup> Research with both southern and national samples indicate consistent differences between the South and the rest of the country, and between the Black Belt and the rest of the South. Key's hypothesis is accurate only for the South, attributed to "the presence of a distinctly southern subculture concerning race relations."<sup>17</sup> Wright found more support for George Wallace (his test of the hypothesis) in the Deep South as a function of black concentration but, additionally, pointed to the importance of individual state contextual effects. Thus, race has a contextual effect on voter choice because primary group processes and issue proximities are major mechanisms through which the presence of black populations is evaluated by the voters.<sup>18</sup> Rural-urban differences in this effect were not significant. Racial differences in candidate choice are con-

sistent and are produced by the presence of black candidates or, to a lesser extent, by ideological splits (on the race issue) among white candidates.<sup>19</sup> Although Greeley has shown that white ethnic groups differ in their attitudes towards blacks, these differences can only be tested using individual-level data.<sup>20</sup> Conservative white candidates in northern states are expected to receive their strongest support in white neighborhoods close to expanding black ghettos, but candidates running a national campaign can be expected to be evaluated on more than local issues and fears. Consequently, the best tests of this hypothesis are local, especially mayoral nonpartisan elections.

When blacks constitute a minority, black candidates must rely on white allies for victory. Among these potential allies, two groups have generated most interest and controversy: lower-income whites who would form a "class" alliance and upper-income whites, forming a "Manhattan Coalition." Depending on how they view their potential allies, black candidates adopt a coalition strategy stressing issues of concern to their potential white supporters. It may seem unusual that upper-income white voters would ally with blacks but, as occurred in Atlanta from the early 1950s to 1973, these two groups kept moderate white mayors in office. The alliance was not based on party coalition but rather on local and racial circumstances. Research by Murray and Vedlitz has shown that lower status whites in southern cities tend to vote with blacks in state and national elections (with partisan ballots) as part of the Democratic majority, while differing in local elections with nonpartisan ballots. Polarized voting rose rapidly in the 1960s and continues at a high level as black candidates run for office. Black electoral cohesion results and white voters show much lower support for black candidates than is normally the case for white candidates who are

<sup>14</sup> A. Karnig, "Black Representation on City Councils: The Impact of District Elections and Socio-economic Factors," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 12 (1976), pp. 223-42; D. Taebel, "Minority Representation on City Councils: The Impact of Structure on Blacks and Hispanics," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 59 (1978), pp. 142-52; and T. P. Robinson and T. R. Dye, "Reformism and Black Representation on City Councils," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 59 (1978), pp. 133-41.

<sup>15</sup> V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred P. Knopf, 1949), pp. 43-44.

<sup>16</sup> R. Schoenberger and D. Segal, "The Ecology of Dissent," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 15 (1971), pp. 553-86; E. Black and M. Black, "The Wallace Vote in Alabama," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 35 (1973), pp. 730-36; and D. Knoke and N. Kyriazis, "Persistence of the Black-Belt Vote: A Test of Key's Hypothesis," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 57 (1977), pp. 899-906.

<sup>17</sup> M. W. Giles, "Percent Black and Racial Hostility: An Old Hypothesis Reexamined," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 58 (1977), p. 416.

<sup>18</sup> G. C. Wright, Jr., "Contextual Models of Electoral Behavior: The Southern Wallace Vote," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71 (1977), pp. 497-508.

<sup>19</sup> T. Pettigrew, "When a Black Candidate Runs for Mayor: Race and Voting Behavior," in H. Hahn, ed., *People and Politics in Urban Society* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972), pp. 95-118.

<sup>20</sup> A. M. Greeley, "How Conservative are American Catholics?" *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 92 (1977), pp. 199-218. WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) express the most consistent negative attitudes towards blacks while Polish-Americans are the most conservative of the Catholic groups.

supported by blacks. Atlanta showed consistent support for the "Manhattan Coalition," even in national elections, while New Orleans presented a mixed (pluralist) pattern, as blacks' voting allies varied by type of election and race of candidate.<sup>21</sup>

The 1969 and 1973 mayoral elections in Los Angeles have been the subject of conflicting studies which have related support for Bradley to the socioeconomic characteristics of precincts. In their original paper, Hahn and Almy concluded that, when race is controlled, there was an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and support for Bradley in the 1969 election. Recalculation of their data by Acock and Haley showed the reverse, a positive relationship.<sup>22</sup> The 1973 elections allowed a retest of the conclusions. Hahn and his coworkers found further support for their class-based voting interpretation, while the counter viewpoint was again put forward that the voting was ethnically (racially) based.<sup>23</sup> Los Angeles is exceptional because of the large support of whites for Bradley. In other mayoral elections, black candidates received between nine and twenty-three percent of the white vote.<sup>24</sup> The crucial question remains: is white support for black candidates based on social status and variable from city to city, or do consistent patterns of crossover voting by whites exist?

In close contests, the level of turnout of the voting blocs is critical. Unlike their performance in national-level contests, blacks vote

in large numbers in local highly salient elections.<sup>25</sup> Turnout, in both black and white precincts, increases dramatically when blacks first contest political office.<sup>26</sup> Olsen's "isolation theory" (that blacks vote in lower numbers because they have disproportionately lower social status) has been criticized by Danigelis and others.<sup>27</sup> Instead a "political climate" model has been proposed which states that black political participation is a function of the prevailing political conditions and attitudes to their participation. Additionally, an "ethnic community" model, focusing on the idea that increasing race and class consciousness within black communities enhance activism, was proposed by Myrdal.<sup>28</sup> In an extensive test of the relationship between turnout and socioeconomic status, Murray and Vedlitz showed that while the  $r^2$  was .56 for white precincts, it was only .25 in black areas in their sample of five, large southern cities, which included Atlanta and New Orleans. While the proportion of white adults registered rose from forty-seven percent in 1944 to sixty-seven percent in 1974, the proportion of blacks registered rose from six percent to sixty-eight percent for the same period. While the black turnout rate is slightly lower than the white rate, in mayoral elections and important Democratic primaries, it occasionally exceeded the white rate.<sup>29</sup>

Why is the level of participation in black precincts higher for given levels of socioeco-

<sup>21</sup> R. Murray and A. Vedlitz, "Racial Voting Patterns in the South: An Analysis of Major Elections from 1960 to 1977 in Five Cities," *Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 439 (1978), pp. 29-39.

<sup>22</sup> H. Hahn and T. Almy, "Ethnic Politics and Racial Issues: Voting in Los Angeles," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 24 (1971), pp. 719-30; A. C. Acock and R. M. Halley, "Reply to Hahn and Almy," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 28 (1975), pp. 737-78; H. Hahn and D. Klingman, "The First Bradley-Yorty Election: An Analysis of a Reconsideration," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (1976), pp. 645-46.

<sup>23</sup> H. Hahn, D. Klingman and H. Pachon, "Cleavages, Coalitions and the Black Candidate: The Los Angeles Mayorality Elections of 1969 and 1973," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (1976), pp. 507-20; and R. M. Halley, A. C. Acock, and T. H. Greene, "Ethnicity and Social Class: Voting in the 1973 Los Angeles Municipal Elections," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (1976), pp. 521-30.

<sup>24</sup> Halley, Acock and Green, op. cit., footnote 23, p. 522.

<sup>25</sup> H. B. Brotman, "Voter Participation in November 1976," *Gerontologist*, Vol. 17 (1977), pp. 157-59.

<sup>26</sup> Pettigrew, op. cit., footnote 19.

<sup>27</sup> Olsen concluded that blacks who identify as members of an ethnic minority tend to be more active than non-identifiers. M. E. Olsen, "Social and Political Participation of Blacks," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 35 (1970), pp. 682-97; N. L. Danigelis, "Theory of Black Political Participation in the United States," *Social Forces*, Vol. 57 (1977), pp. 31-47; and B. London and J. Hearn, "Ethnic Community Theory of Black Social and Political Participation: Additional Support," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 57 (1977), pp. 883-91.

<sup>28</sup> G. Myrdal, R. Sterner, and A. Rose, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper, 1944); A. M. Orum, "A Reappraisal of the Social and Political Participation of Negroes," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 72 (1966), pp. 32-46; and B. London, "Racial Differences in Social and Political Participation: It's not Simply a Matter of Black and White," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 56 (1975), pp. 274-86.

<sup>29</sup> R. Murray and A. Vedlitz, "Race, Socioeconomic Status and Voting Participation in Large Southern Cities," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 39 (1977), pp. 1064-72.

conomic status and less subject to social status variations than in white precincts? In addition to the "ethnic community" model, another possible explanation is that blacks may be better organized within their community and this organization may stimulate higher levels of political activity than expected given the relative socioeconomic deprivation of the group.<sup>30</sup> Obviously, certain elections have a greater salience for black voters, such as contests with black or racist white candidates or primaries offering a clear ideological choice. Within black neighborhoods, turnout increases as education levels increase.<sup>31</sup> Special registration drives for important elections often achieve spectacular results. Getting people to register is only half the battle, however: only 52.5 percent of those newly registered in Central Harlem voted in the ensuing 1976 Presidential election.<sup>32</sup>

#### DATA, HYPOTHESES, AND METHODOLOGY

The basic data set consisted of precinct electoral returns for the mayoral primaries in Los Angeles and Atlanta and for the runoffs in Detroit and New Orleans. Although the number of precincts varies from city to city (Los Angeles has 3221 precincts, 1122 in Detroit, 428 in New Orleans, and 193 in Atlanta), their small size ensures very detailed voting data and homogeneity of racial and socioeconomic status in most precincts. Precinct data provide the best aggregate data available to electoral geographers and have been analyzed extensively.<sup>33</sup> For each precinct, the total registered, total number voting, number of votes

for each candidate, and for Atlanta and New Orleans, the number of blacks and whites registered were collected.<sup>34</sup> Precinct boundary changes between 1973 and 1977 were minimal in Detroit and Atlanta, but were substantial in Los Angeles. These Los Angeles modifications, while denying the possibility of comparison of results for individual precincts, do not prevent longitudinal analysis of areal patterns because of small precinct sizes.

Although there is considerable correspondence between precinct and census tract boundaries in all four study cities, the process of allocating precincts to census tracts is difficult and certainly not worth the effort when the temporal gap between the census year (1970) and the election year (1977) is large. Johnston has recently called attention to the problems of aggregate correlational analysis of census and voting data and Cox's causal model of suburban location and Conservative voting in London, based on the regression of party support and socioeconomic component scores, has been criticized.<sup>35</sup>

In this present study, census data were used to determine a sampling framework. Using the 1970 data, areas of more than ninety percent black and ninety percent white were mapped for each city. In addition, high- and middle-income areas (more than \$11,000 median family income) were mapped. Sample precincts were selected from these areas in a random manner for the analysis of turnout rates and white support for black mayors (Tables 2 and 3). Precincts near the black ghetto in 1970 were avoided since they may have gained black population since the census and therefore contain more than ten percent black population. This method allows the researcher to

<sup>30</sup> Murray and Vedlitz, *op. cit.*, footnote 29, p. 1070.

<sup>31</sup> G. C. Wright, "Black Voting Turnout and Education in the 1968 Presidential Election," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 37 (1975), pp. 563-68. For another view on the same point, see M. Coveyou and D. Pfeiffer, "Education and Voting Turnout of Blacks in the 1968 Presidential Election," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 35 (1973), pp. 995-1001.

<sup>32</sup> C. V. Hamilton, "Voter Registration Drives and Turnout: A Report of the Harlem Electorate," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 92 (1977), pp. 43-46. A registration drive in black precincts in Philadelphia swelled the percentage of blacks among registered voters from 30 to 37.6 percent in the period before the 1978 City Charter Referendum. See R. Goldwyn, "Do you really think a Black can be elected mayor?" *Sunday Bulletin* [Philadelphia], April 29, 1979.

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, *op. cit.*, footnote 3; I. R. McPhail, "The Vote for Mayor of Los Angeles in 1969," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 61 (1971), pp. 744-58; and D. R. Reynolds and J. C. Archer, "An Inquiry into the

Spatial Basis of Electoral Geography," Discussion Paper No. 11, Department of Geography, University of Iowa, 1969.

<sup>34</sup> This racial breakdown is not available for Detroit and Los Angeles precincts.

<sup>35</sup> R. J. Johnston, "Political Behavior and the Residential Mosaic," in D. T. Herbert and R. J. Johnston, eds., *Social Areas in Cities*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976), Vol. 2, pp. 65-88; K. R. Cox, "Suburbia and Voting Behavior in the London Metropolitan Area," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 58 (1968), pp. 111-27; P. J. Taylor, "Causal Models in Geographic Research," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 59 (1969), pp. 402-04; and R. E. Kasperson, "On Suburbia and Voting Behavior," *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, Vol. 59 (1969), pp. 405-11.

TABLE 2.—WHITE SUPPORT FOR THE BLACK MAYORS, 1977

City	Upper and middle income			Low income			t-value
	n	mean	st. dev.	n	mean	st. dev.	
Detroit	44	7.95	2.02	48	9.79	3.27	3.07
Los Angeles	106	57.29	3.89	107	43.28	6.78	4.38
Atlanta	19	29.29	6.17	17	21.81	7.43	4.33
New Orleans	35	27.20	4.04	20	14.35	5.00	13.02

All t-values significant from zero at the .01 level for a one-tailed test.

isolate the effects of race and socioeconomic status on political variables while avoiding the pitfalls of changed spatial realities because of a temporal lag between census and election years.

The hypotheses for this research stem from the O'Loughlin and Berg results. The hypotheses tested were: 1) bloc-voting, both by white and black voters, existed in the 1977 elections and showed no significant change since 1973; 2) that black mayors continued to receive support from white middle-class voters significantly higher than from low-income white voters; and 3) that the turnout in black precincts was still significantly higher than in white neighborhoods.

Isopleths enclosing precincts with more than ninety percent for the black mayors were used to indicate areas of bloc-voting. This technique has been used by Lewis, Glantz, and O'Loughlin and Berg and its use to determine bloc-voting has been supported by Rosenzweig and Wildgen.<sup>36</sup> Unlike the previous study by O'Loughlin and Berg, isopleths with bloc-support for white candidates were not deemed worthwhile except in Detroit because

of the few and scattered precincts of their bloc-vote. This absence of bloc-voting in Los Angeles and Atlanta can be attributed to the lower salience of the elections to the white voters because of the proliferation of candidates, diffusion of anti-Bradley and anti-Jackson support, the perceived difficulty of defeating entrenched incumbents, and the fact that elections constituted primary, not general elections.

The analysis in this study parallels that of O'Loughlin and Berg with the exception that, instead of using the population of more than ninety percent black and ninety percent white precincts, a random sample was drawn and tests of significance are used in this present study. This approach is necessitated by the difficulty of determining all precincts in these categories and the sheer volume of precincts involved which would invite miscategorization. Additionally, instead of using isopleth overlays, this study uses statistical tests to determine significant differences in support for black mayors in white middle-income and low-income precincts.

#### THE ANALYSIS OF BLOC-VOTING

The average vote (based on the precinct results) for black candidates increased over time in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, even though both Bradley and Jackson faced a multiplicity of opponents in the 1977 primaries

<sup>36</sup> Lewis, op. cit., footnote 3; Rosenzweig and Wildgen, op. cit., footnote 6; and R. V. Campbell and D. B. Knight, "Political Territoriality in Canada: A Choropleth and Isopleth Analysis," *Canadian Cartographer*, Vol. 13 (1976), pp. 1-10.

TABLE 3.—VARIATIONS IN THE TURNOUT RATE, 1977

City	Citywide turnout			Precincts over ninety percent black			Precincts over ninety percent white			t-value
	n	mean	st. dev.	n	mean	st. dev.	n	mean	st. dev.	
Detroit	1122	49.74	9.15	216	54.44	7.06	101	49.07	10.04	57.13*
Los Angeles	3221	42.05	12.34	103	58.45	13.88	229	37.33	8.14	76.80*
Atlanta	193	41.42	9.86	43	46.28	8.85	50	38.98	10.54	3.55*
New Orleans	428	76.42	8.90	55	75.14	6.98	87	77.28	8.64	1.56

\* Significant at the .01 level for a one-tailed test.



(Table 1). The advantages of incumbency are well-known.<sup>37</sup> Not only did black mayors have this advantage in 1977 but also benefitted from growing black electorates in their cities. In Atlanta, for which accurate data are available, the proportion of the electorate that was black exceeded fifty percent (53.5) for the first time in 1977. Of course, more than the black proportion of the electorate is involved in the electoral outcome. Crossracial voting, differential turnout between the main voting blocs, and the strength of intraracial electoral cohesion all combine to set the mean citywide vote. Jackson's large margins in 1973 and 1977 indicate the combination of these factors in Atlanta. In both years he benefitted from the largest black majority, a high turnout in black neighborhoods (a tradition in Atlanta), and a significant white support (ten percent in 1973 and twenty-six percent in 1977). In fact, Jackson's increased majority in 1977 can be attributed to increased white support, indicative of support for his policies, particularly for his hardline stance against public employees on strike.<sup>38</sup> In a runoff in Los Angeles, Bradley undoubtedly would have received an even larger vote proportion, just as Young did in Detroit. Morial's very narrow win in New Orleans replicated that of Young in 1973. Unlike black candidates in the other three cities, Morial won on his first attempt. It was suggested by O'Loughlin and Berg that a serious attempt by a black candidate for the mayoral office must take place before eventual success.<sup>39</sup> While on first sight it might appear that Morial's victory defies this statement, Morial had already faced the total New Orleans electorate while running for a city council at-large seat (against DiRosa) in 1969. Thus, he was well known in the city, a prominence magnified by his pioneering role in Louisiana politics.

The Coefficient of Variation summarizes the distribution of the black candidates' voting

proportions relative to their mean support (Table 1). Large values indicate more variation about the mean, showing more extreme values. Bloc-voting by both black and white voters is indicated by percentages over ninety percent and less than ten percent for a candidate, and produces a U-shaped distribution (Fig. 1). Detroit had the largest Coefficient of Variation until 1977, when the figure for New Orleans was slightly greater. Most of the Coefficient of Variation can be attributed to black bloc-voting. In all cities, the number of precincts giving more than eighty percent of the vote to black candidates increased from year to year, so that by 1977, nearly half of the precincts in Detroit and Atlanta gave four-fifths of their vote to black candidates (Table 1). The relatively low levels of extreme voting in the other two cities are due to a polynucleated ghetto in New Orleans, and a relatively small ghetto and white crossover voting in Los Angeles. The degree of skewness is generally low and positive (Fig. 1 and Table 1). The exceptions in Detroit and Atlanta in 1977 were caused by high peaks of black bloc-voting in both cities.

The comparison of the vote-profiles in 1977 with those of the previous years revealed interesting contrasts between the four cities. All cities showed a sharp decline in bloc-voting against black mayors. This drop is probably the most significant feature of the past decade as strong electoral opposition to the black incumbents has weakened. At the other extreme, black bloc-voting shows no signs of decrease and actually increased in 1977 in Detroit and Atlanta. Bradley has shown increasing crossracial appeal in his three mayoral races. In New Orleans' first interracial contest, the vote-profile is the most platykurtic of the distributions, reflecting the city's polynucleated ghetto, many interracial precincts, and white support for Morial. When New Orleans' vote-profile is compared to those for the other three cities in 1969 and 1973, it is obvious that bloc-voting was not an automatic response of the voters although most voters did vote for the candidates of their own race.<sup>40</sup>

The isoplethic maps of support for black mayors confirm the persistence and spatial expansion of bloc-voting by black voters in 1977 (Figs. 2-6). White bloc-voting, as exemplified

<sup>37</sup> R. A. Erikson, "The Advantage of Incumbency in Congressional Elections," *Polity*, Vol. 3 (1971), pp. 395-405; and W. L. Kostroski, "Party and Incumbency in Postwar Senate Elections," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71 (1977), pp. 166-76.

<sup>38</sup> M. H. Jones, "Black Political Empowerment in Atlanta: Myth and Reality," *Annals*, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 439 (1978), pp. 90-117; and W. King, "Jackson Wins 2nd Term in Atlanta Contest," *New York Times*, October 5, 1977.

<sup>39</sup> O'Loughlin and Berg, op. cit., footnote 1, p. 237.

<sup>40</sup> Rosenzweig and Wildgen, op. cit., footnote 6, p. 8.

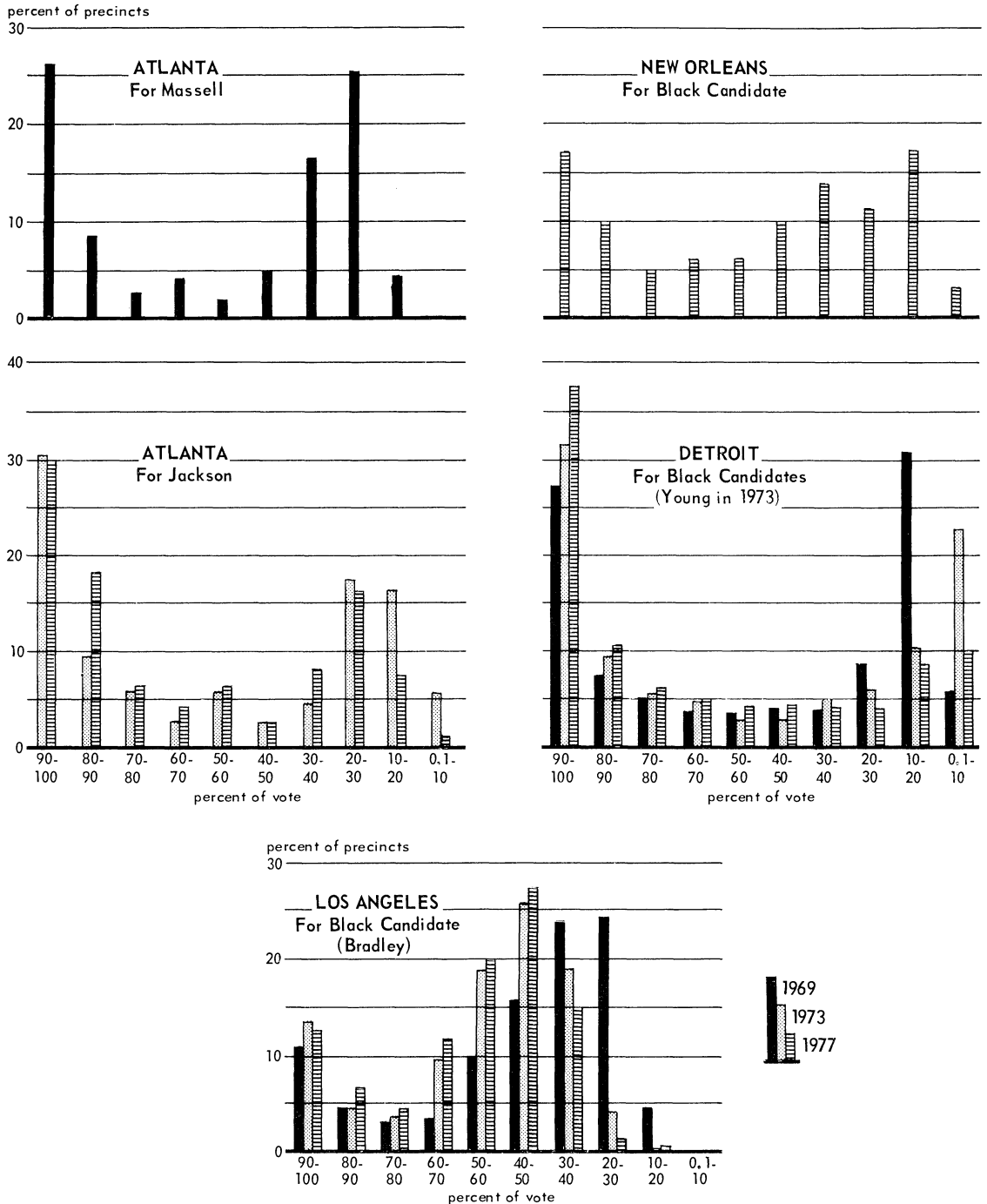


FIG. 1. Vote-profiles for black mayoral candidates, 1969-73-77.

by the ten and twenty percent isopleths for black candidates, vanished in Los Angeles and Atlanta and appeared in only a few New Orleans precincts. Only in Detroit was bloc-

voting by whites still substantial (Fig. 2). This bloc-vote by whites was for a black mayoral candidate, Ernest Browne, who had directed his campaign to the white electorate. Thus, it

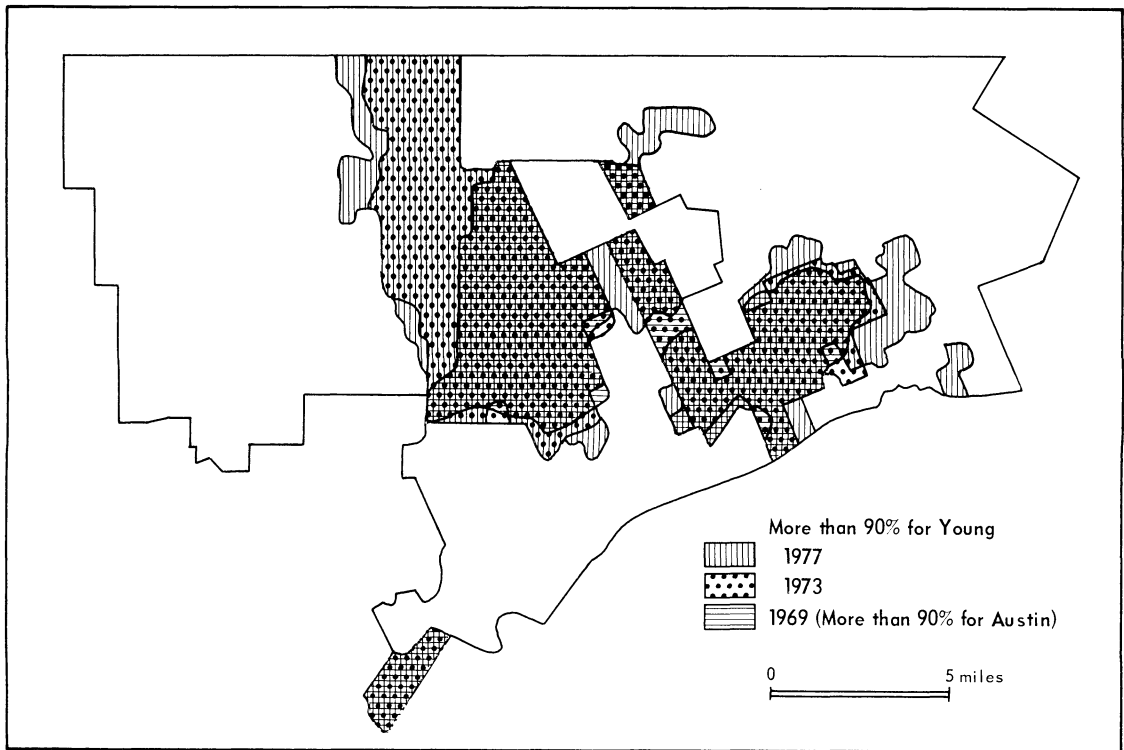


FIG. 2. White bloc-voting in Detroit, 1969-73-77.

constitutes a crossracial bloc-vote, a new phenomenon for white voters and one that most likely will be repeated as whites, in minority situations, are faced with a choice of two black candidates. Only a decade ago, black voters in the same cities were forced to choose between white candidates and consistently opted for that candidate who was most liberal on the racial issue.<sup>41</sup> The regular contraction of the white bloc-vote area in the extremities of Detroit from 1969 through 1973 to 1977 illustrates both the regular expansion of the black ghetto, especially in northwest Detroit, and the contraction of determined anti-Young vote (Fig. 2).<sup>42</sup> Lewis suggested that isopleths of black bloc-votes can be used to approximate intercensal locations of the black ghettos.<sup>43</sup>

Additionally, white bloc-voting can also indicate the location of the edge of totally white neighborhoods.

A comparison of the isopleths indicates a narrow transition zone, which is interracial (although changing to black) in population, and split in its electoral choice (Figs. 2 and 3). The 1977 Young vote shows a slight expansion over 1973 with some infilling around the edges of the ghetto in central Detroit. The Cass Corridor, running northward from the CBD, filled in at its northern fringe but the southern part is still split in its support for Young, reflecting its mixed black, Mexican, and Appalachian white composition. Young's support is firm in black neighborhoods while the anti-Young vote weakened between 1973 and 1977, both spatially and numerically.

One index of Bradley's growing popularity is the growth of his core of support in the black areas in south-central Los Angeles (Fig. 4). He could not rely only on bloc-support

<sup>41</sup> J. Q. Wilson, *Negro Politics: The Search for Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1965); C. Stone, *Black Political Power in America* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., 1968); and Walton, *op. cit.*, footnote 9.

<sup>42</sup> R. Sinclair, "Ghetto Expansion and the Urban Landscape: A Case Study in Detroit," *Wiener Geographische Schriften*, Vol. 2 (1976), pp. 191-206.

<sup>43</sup> Lewis, *op. cit.*, footnote 3, p. 20-22.

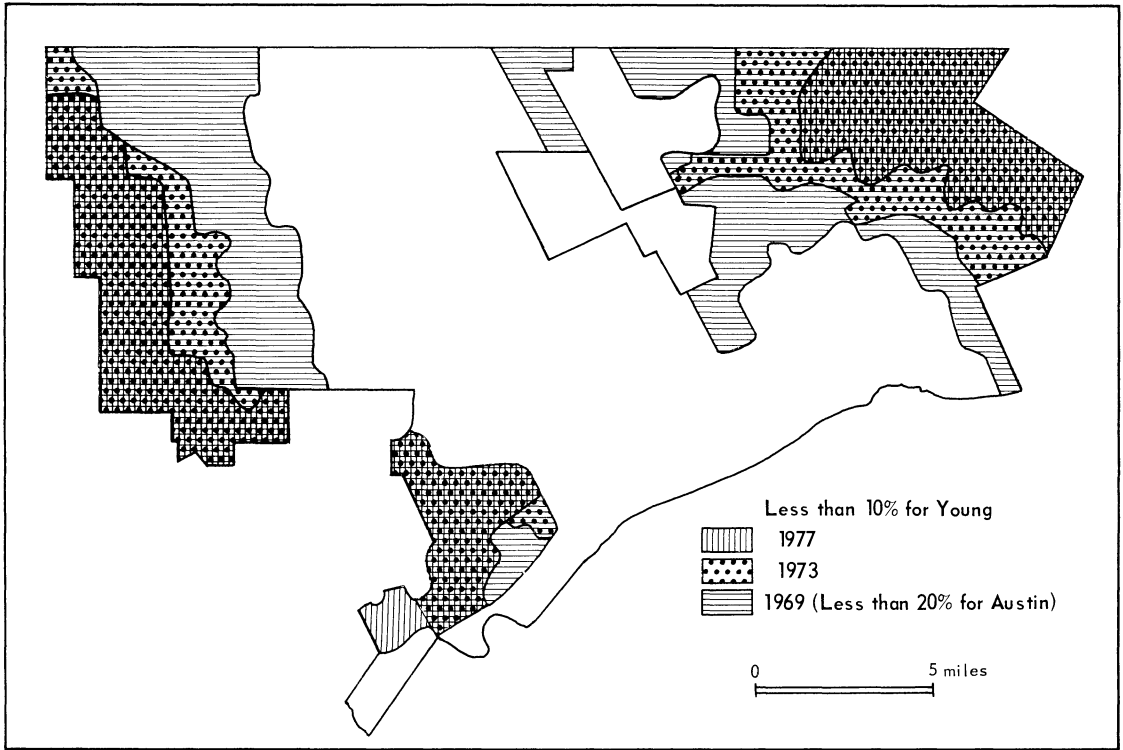


FIG. 3. Black bloc-voting in Detroit, 1969-73-77.

from blacks for victory but he needed about a third of the white vote for a majority. He achieved this combination in both 1973 and 1977 to such an extent that it is not possible to isolate precincts of anti-Bradley bloc-votes in 1977. His lowest votes were in San Fernando Valley precincts and in the southern extension of the city, similar to 1969 and 1973, except that the opposition was diffuse and turnout was lower. Bloc-voting by blacks now covers most of four city council districts and again indicates the spread and direction of ghetto growth.

The ninety percent isopleth in Atlanta expanded between 1969 and 1973 but remained in basically the same location in 1977 (Fig. 5). As in Los Angeles, bloc-voting against the black mayor by whites almost disappeared in 1977. Jackson, by picking up between twenty and forty percent of the vote in northern and southern white precincts and a bloc-vote from blacks, was assured of easy victory. With this combination of support, a candidate is unbeatable in Atlanta, provided that the black

turnout rate is not significantly lower than the white rate.

Morial's bloc-vote was overlaid on a racial map of New Orleans (Fig. 6). This is necessary because the correspondence between the two distributions is tested for the first time in 1977. The core of Morial's vote lies at the heart of the polynucleated black ghetto, delimited by those census tracts over eighty percent black in 1970. When tracts between forty and eighty percent black are added, all of the precincts of bloc-support are covered. Undoubtedly, many of the tracts that were racially mixed in 1970 gained black population by 1977, leading to a higher vote percentage for the black candidate than the proportion of the census tract's population which was black.<sup>44</sup> The difference is explained by the presence of more blacks in 1977 than is indi-

<sup>44</sup> This phenomenon was also observed for Detroit, Los Angeles, and Atlanta by O'Loughlin and Berg, *op. cit.*, footnote 1, p. 230.

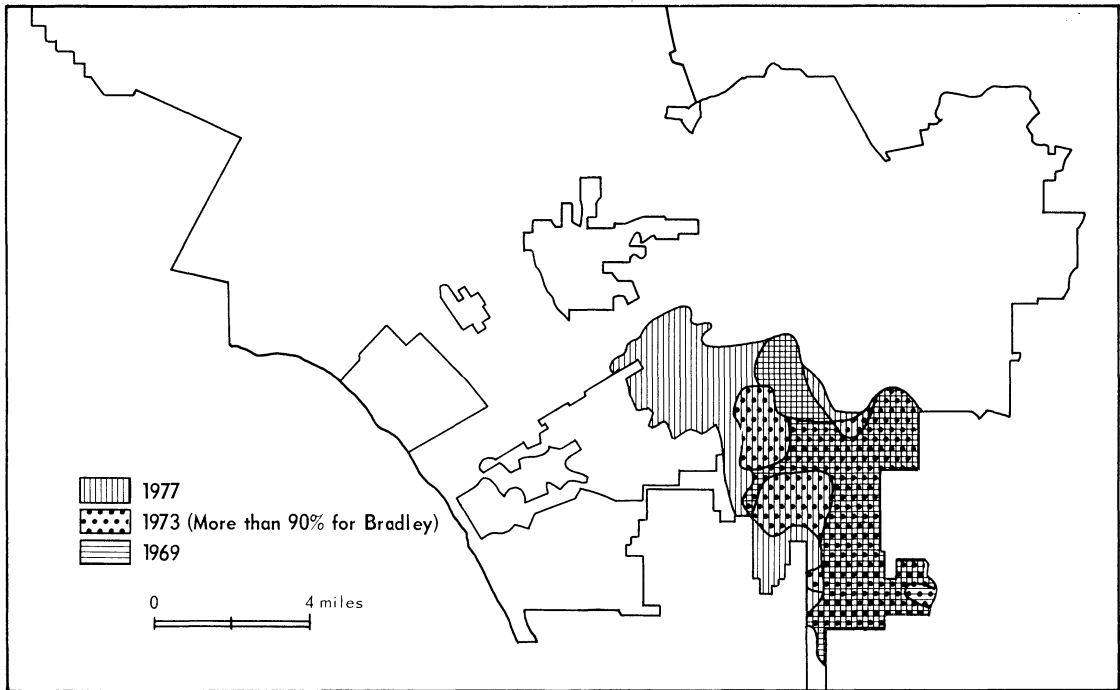


FIG. 4. Black bloc-voting in Los Angeles, 1969-73-77.

cated by the 1970 census figures and their higher turnout. New Orleans does not exhibit a spatial regularity of bloc-vote, as in the other three cities, because its ghetto is not compact. Nevertheless, the bloc-vote achieved by Morial in 1977 is comparable in pattern and strength to those achieved by the other three black mayors in 1973.

This study of bloc-voting indicates its continuation (and intensification) in black neighborhoods but a diminution in white precincts (with the exception of Detroit) in 1977. Black mayors gained a greater proportion of white votes in 1977 so that the hypothesis that bloc-voting is still the method by which interracial contests are decided is upheld for black precincts but its importance is on the wane in white precincts. In the trend away from white bloc-voting, Los Angeles leads while Detroit is still the most racially-divided city at its polling booths. Both southern cities, Atlanta and New Orleans, now have black-majority electorates and black mayors with interracial appeal.

#### WHITE SUPPORT FOR BLACK MAYORS

The level of white support for black mayors, now in the position of incumbents, is an im-

portant issue. Has the level of this support risen or fallen since 1973 when black mayors first won election in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Atlanta? Presumably, if white voters are satisfied with the policies and performance of the incumbents, the crossover vote will rise above the low levels of 1973. However, without a survey of the feelings of the white population at the time they voted, it is impossible to calculate how much of increased crossover voting is due to satisfaction with policies and performance, and how much is due to a lessening of racial tensions, and a consequent willingness to judge the candidates on qualifications rather than racial background.

Since both New Orleans and Atlanta collect information on race at the time of registration, it is possible to determine exactly the level of white support for black mayors in these two cities. In 1977, in precincts more than ninety percent white, Jackson received 25.29 percent of the vote and Morial received 21.25 percent in New Orleans. Thus, in addition to ninety-five percent of the black vote, each mayor received one-quarter to one-fifth of the white vote. These figures indicate that the "Atlanta Coalition" has revived after the battering it received in 1973, when Jackson first contested

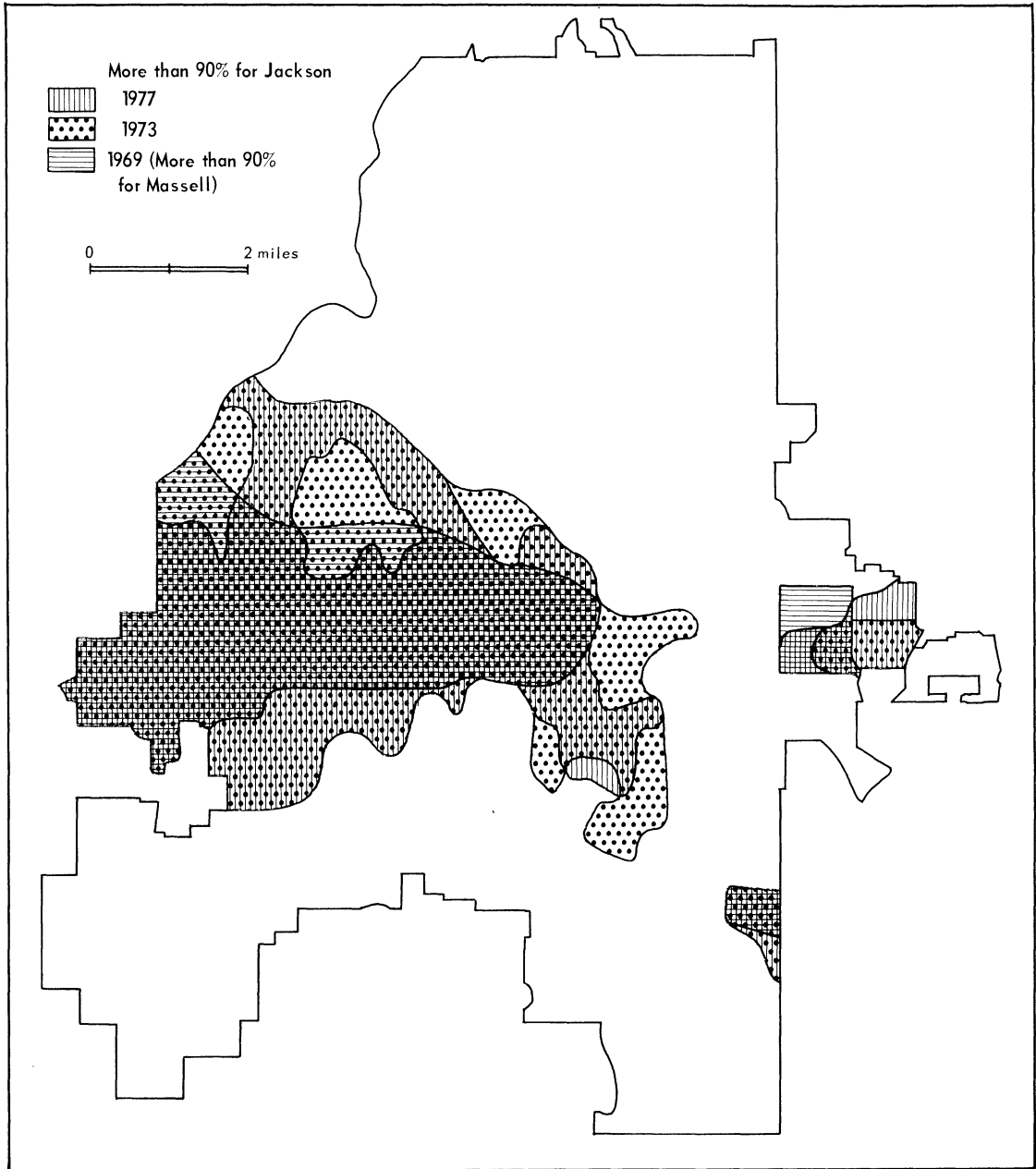


FIG. 5. Black bloc-voting in Atlanta, 1969-73-77.

the mayoralty, and only ten percent of the white voters supported him.<sup>45</sup> Morial's ability to gain twice the level of Jackson's 1973 white support must be attributed to his assiduous campaigning in white precincts, his local prominence and reputation, and the particular

political culture of New Orleans, where racial electoral lines have been less rigid than in other southern cities.<sup>46</sup>

If an "Atlanta Coalition" exists in the four cities, the level of vote proportions for the mayors should be significantly higher in up-

<sup>45</sup> Rosenzweig and Wildgen, *op. cit.*, footnote 6, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Murray and Vedlitz, *op. cit.*, footnote 21.



FIG. 6. Black bloc-voting in New Orleans, 1977.

per- and middle-income white precincts than in low-income white neighborhoods. To test this proposition, a random sample of precincts in both types of neighborhoods were compared in their vote percentages (Table 2). Bradley won a higher proportion of the white vote than any of the other three mayors, while Young received less than one in ten of the white votes in Detroit. Both Bradley and Jackson increased their white support from 1973, but Young's white vote did not change. The causes of these intercity differences must be sought not only in attitudes and the character

of the candidates, but also in the political culture of each city, the level of racial tensions, ethnic cohesion, and the importance and strength of the mayoralty.<sup>47</sup>

The hypothesis that black mayors received significantly higher levels of support in high-

<sup>47</sup> For political culture and the role of the mayoralty, see E. Banfield, *Big City Politics* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1965) and for the ethnic factor in interracial contests see J. K. Hadden, L. H. Massotti, and V. Thiesen, "The Making of the Negro Mayors 1967," *Transaction*, Vol. 5 (1968), pp. 21-30.

and middle-income precincts was supported in Los Angeles, Atlanta, and New Orleans (Table 2). In Detroit, however, Young's vote was higher in low-income white precincts, contrary to the direction hypothesized. The percentage difference is small (1.8 percent) but significant. The greatest opposition to Young centered in the precincts on the rim of the city, where, although their income is relatively high, white voters strongly opposed Young's policies. In this city, recent electoral history, local racial tensions (particularly those produced by ghetto expansion in northwest and northeast Detroit) outweigh socioeconomic status as vote determinants at the polling booth.

Apart from the income differences in white support for black mayors, areal differences within the upper- and middle-income white precincts were also evident in Los Angeles, Atlanta, and New Orleans. Bradley received his greatest white support in 1977 in the same white areas where he did well in both 1969 and 1973. West Los Angeles, particularly the precincts fronting the Santa Monica Mountains and the ocean, gave him up to seventy percent of the votes cast. Here the median educational level is high and in white precincts where income is a function of blue-collar status, Bradley received his lowest white support. In both Atlanta and New Orleans, the black mayors received greater support from white precincts near downtown, many populated by young, highly-educated professionals, than in precincts of similar income status on the fringes of these cities. In New Orleans, a sharp difference between wealthy white areas in the St. Charles Avenue and Uptown areas and those along the Lakeshore appeared in 1977. This electoral difference mirrored that between "old" New Orleans wealth, supplemented by newcomers who are renovating houses in the center city and "new" wealth in post-1950 neighborhoods along the Lakeshore.<sup>48</sup> Neigh-

borhoods of similar socioeconomic status produce different voting percentages because the voting decision, although influenced strongly by social position, also is affected by other sociopsychological considerations, related to education, ethnicity, location (neighborhood), and age.

Because black mayors are able to gain a significant proportion of the white vote, their future reelection seems assured in Atlanta and New Orleans. Because of the growing black majority in Detroit, a black mayor probably will continue there, although voters are racially bound with less than one-tenth of each group voting for the candidate of the other race. Bradley has achieved remarkable success in attracting white voters. Whether another black candidate could duplicate his performance remains a dubious proposition.

#### THE TURNOUT FACTOR

When a black first runs for mayor, the city-wide turnout rate increases dramatically over previous elections. Later elections with black candidates are likely to have much lower turnout rates, as in Detroit and Los Angeles in 1973. Thus, it is not surprising that the New Orleans turnout rate in 1977, the highest ever recorded in that city, should be much higher than any of the other three cities (Table 3).

The 1977 turnouts were down by eighteen and fifteen percent in Los Angeles and Atlanta because of the traditionally lower interest in primary elections and the predicted easy wins for Bradley and Jackson. The Detroit turnout was only marginally down in 1977, with slightly more voters turning out in black precincts, indicative of Young's efforts to get out the vote and the continued high interest in the effort to unseat him.

O'Loughlin and Berg emphasized the importance of turnout in deciding close races, a function of equally matched bloc-votes. They stated that black candidates can win only when the black turnout rate exceeds the white rate as happened in 1969 and 1973.<sup>49</sup> To compensate for a smaller bloc-vote, black candidates need a higher turnout from the registered black electorate.

The hypothesis that black turnout was significantly higher than white turnout was supported for Detroit, Los Angeles, and Atlanta

<sup>48</sup> The "neighborhood" effect influencing urban voting surfaces, after social factors have been filtered out, is discussed in D. R. Segal and M. W. Meyer, "The Social Context of Political Partisanship," in M. Dogan and S. Rokkan, eds., *Quantitative Ecological Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969), pp. 217-32; K. R. Cox, "The Neighborhood Effect in Urban Voting Response Surfaces," in D. C. Sweet, ed., *Models of Urban Structure* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1972), pp. 157-85; and Johnston, op. cit., footnote 35.

<sup>49</sup> O'Loughlin and Berg, op. cit., footnote 1, p. 237.



(Table 3). In New Orleans, the white turnout was higher, although not significantly so. The greatest gap between the two groups was in Los Angeles because white voters, particularly in the San Fernando Valley, stayed away from the polling booths. This stay-at-home movement was produced by the predicted win for Bradley, the only question being whether he would win a majority in the primary. Voter interest remained high in Detroit but declined dramatically in Atlanta, particularly among white voters.<sup>50</sup>

While the turnout of white voters was eight percent higher in the New Orleans primary, a strong effort by Morial and his supporters in black precincts reduced the gap to two percent in the runoff. Within both types of neighborhoods, turnout rates among middle-class voters were greater, ranging from ninety-one percent in a middle-income black precinct to fifty-five percent in a black public housing project.<sup>51</sup> In New Orleans, significant differences in turnout were not a function of race, but of socioeconomic status.

Given variations in turnout, the question of who benefits from these differences is important. Simple correlation coefficients between turnout and the vote for the black mayor were +0.301 in Detroit, +0.179 in Los Angeles, +0.321 in Atlanta and -0.119 in New Orleans. In three of the four cities, the mayors had higher support in precincts with higher turnouts, an expected result since turnout was significantly higher in black precincts. (The correlation between percent black and turnout in Atlanta was +0.326 and -.067 in New Orleans.) Because victory margins were large in three of the four cities, the mayors did not have to rely on higher turnout in black precincts for victory. Nevertheless, it is significant that black turnout continues to be higher in contests that have black candidates, indicating the greater salience of these elections to the black population.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The upward trend in the number of black elected officials is leveling off. Whether the

rapid growth of the late 1960s and early 1970s will occur again is very doubtful. A small and irregular increase in black mayors as a consequence of demographic trends and shifting allegiances can be expected, however. The preconditions necessary for the election of black candidates have been listed by Stone, Tryman, and O'Loughlin and Berg.<sup>52</sup> Based on analysis of the 1977 elections, it must be stated that significant new trends can be seen in mayoral elections with black candidates. While all four candidates benefited from black bloc-voting, Bradley in Los Angeles, Jackson in Atlanta, and Morial in New Orleans received large white support. The obstacles faced by former black candidates such as raising campaign money, gaining acceptance by the local political powers, and media exposure are diminishing. These obstacles are especially lower for those blacks who have succeeded in gaining election to other local political office. Thus, all four mayors used these less important posts as ladders to the mayoral office.

Stone was correct in stating that black electoral success is based on a large black population (and consequent bloc-vote), media support, some white votes, and acceptance by the political parties. Stone's fear of a second black candidate was based on the assumption that this would result in a split of the black vote.<sup>53</sup> However, as shown in Detroit in 1977, this need not happen if the white population support one of the black candidates, thereby ensuring two black candidates in the runoff. O'Loughlin and Berg's two preconditions for black mayoral success (previous exposure of the black candidate to the local electorate and a higher turnout by blacks) were met in the four 1977 elections, except in New Orleans, where a slightly higher white turnout was negated by nineteen percent white support for Morial.<sup>54</sup>

The major question arising from this study is whether Detroit or Los Angeles will provide the model for future elections involving candidates from different races. In three mayoral

<sup>50</sup> When the 1977 turnout rate was compared in upper-income and low-income white precincts, no significant difference was observed except in New Orleans where the rate for upper-income areas was significantly greater.

<sup>51</sup> Rosenzweig and Wildgen, op. cit., footnote 6, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> Stone, op. cit., footnote 41; M. D. Tryman, "Black Mayoralty Campaigns: Running the 'Race,'" *Phylon*, Vol. 35 (1974), pp. 346-58; and O'Loughlin and Berg, op. cit., footnote 1, pp. 237-38.

<sup>53</sup> Stone, op. cit., footnote 41, pp. 229-30.

<sup>54</sup> O'Loughlin and Berg, op. cit., footnote 1, p. 237-38.

elections, the scale of racial bloc-voting has not declined significantly in Detroit, even though both 1977 candidates were black. On the other hand, cross racial support for Bradley, first clearly evident in 1973 and continued in 1977, has ended bloc-voting by whites in Los Angeles. It is difficult to separate the effects of the personalities (Young and Bradley) from the general electoral trends and the effects of demographic size. To evaluate these differences, we must wait until these two mayors are no longer candidates. This question of continued racial bloc-voting versus the blurring of racial lines, at least among white voters, has important implications for the electoral future of the United States. Should white voters in other cities vote for black candidates to the same extent that white voters in Los Angeles vote for Bradley, many more blacks will be elected to political office, and not only from black-majority districts.

White support for black mayors varied significantly from one neighborhood to another and especially between social classes. As the clearcut racial lines of 1969 have become more fluid, other factors can be expected to enter the electoral equation. As race diminishes in significance, social class, party membership, economic rivalries, and ideological splits, which combine to decide most American elections, will gain in importance. Black mayors, recognizing these factors, have appealed to upper- and middle-class whites for support, hoping that ideology and programs are more important than skin color to many white voters. The overwhelming victories of Bradley and Jackson and Morial's win at his first attempt indicate the success of this approach.

Mayoral elections with black candidates in Memphis, Philadelphia, and Birmingham in 1979 and the 1977 Charlotte, North Carolina, contest have been characterized by consistent patterns of bloc-voting related to black electoral success. Only in Birmingham did the black candidate benefit from a bloc-vote from the black electorate (44.6 percent of the registered voters), a higher turnout of blacks than of whites, increased voter turnout from the primary and a smaller, but decisive, percentage (ten) of the white vote. In the other cities, black voters cohesion was outweighed by other factors, including white majorities, little cross-racial support for black candidates and black turnout rates lower or equal to whites.

It is clear that in elections involving black candidates and characterized by racial tension and bloc-voting, black candidates must either benefit from a majority black electorate or put together a set of electoral coalitions and forces similar to the black mayor of Birmingham to be assured of success.

It was recently stated that "most black politicians now view politics as the cutting edge of the civil rights movement."<sup>55</sup> Reviews of the performances of black mayors in office has shown them to be hampered by structural and institutional controls inside government and by economic and business elites outside it. While blacks have achieved "potential power" in Atlanta and Detroit by winning most city offices, "real power" remains beyond their grasp.<sup>56</sup> The lack of political machinery, ruling traditions, economic muscle, flexibility in switching votes (black voters remain overwhelmingly Democratic), and continued racism combine to reduce the effectiveness of black elected officials.<sup>57</sup> Although political office is the only power resource that blacks collectively possess, they cannot always exercise it effectively. Keller found no significant difference in expenditure patterns between black and white mayors because, although black mayors wished to reallocate expenditure priorities, spending is highly constrained by institutional controls.<sup>58</sup> While the pluralist view of American politics may stress the benefits accruing to the black electorate from organization and participation, the resulting political prizes are often control of old, poor, declining, majority-black inner cities.<sup>59</sup>

In most democracies, party-based voting remains the most important variable in explaining the geographical pattern of votes.<sup>60</sup> Non-partisan elections are especially interesting and worthy of study since they remove the

<sup>55</sup> M. B. Preston, "Limitations of Black Urban Power: The Case of Black Mayors," in L. H. Massotti and R. L. Lineberry, eds., *The New Urban Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Press, 1976), p. 111.

<sup>56</sup> Jones, op. cit., footnote 38.

<sup>57</sup> M. B. Preston, "Black Elected Officials and Public Policy: Symbolic or Substantive Representation," *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 7 (1978), pp. 196-201.

<sup>58</sup> E. L. Keller, "The Impact of Black Mayors on Urban Policy," *Annals*, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 439 (1978), pp. 40-52.

<sup>59</sup> Bullock, op. cit., footnote 11; and Bryce, op. cit., footnote 11.

<sup>60</sup> Taylor, op. cit., footnote 2, p. 154.

direct party effect and allow the researcher to focus on the other factors determining vote choice. Johnston has recently reviewed the importance of the spatial context (the neighborhood factor) in the study of elections.<sup>61</sup>

This study of black mayoral support emphasized social cleavages as a determinant of vote choice and, significantly, showed that neighborhood factors based on race are declining in importance as black mayors extend their support in white areas.

---

<sup>61</sup> Johnston, *op. cit.*, footnote 35; P. M. Scanlon, "Spatial Variations in Electoral Behavior in Urban Brisbane, 1972," *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. 15 (1977),

---

pp. 23-41; and J. S. Wolfe and A. Burghardt, "The Neighborhood Effect in a Local Election," *Canadian Geographer*, Vol. 22 (1978), pp. 298-306.