"The Brutha’s & Sistah’s Are Runnin’ This City"
A Comparative Study of How Black Mayors Talk About Race & Class in their Campaigns

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We must go back to our roots in order to move forward. That is, we should reach back and gather the best of what our past has to teach us, so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward. Whatever we have lost, forgotten, forgone or been stripped of, can be reclaimed, revived, preserved and perpetuated.

The research and composition of this thesis has truly been a journey. I would not have been able to make it without the support of my family. Particularly the support of Kecia Hilliard, my mother, who was always available to talk, a constant source of inspiration, and provided a warm embrace for those times when I just needed to cry out. My father, Michael Witherspoon also deserves acknowledgement for his late night Facebook check-ins consisting of “hey boo, watchu doin?” and the comic relief these very short conversations provided. I’d like to acknowledge my friends, because without them I’m quite certain I would have lost my mind. I would also like to acknowledge my thesis advisor, Professor Stephen McGovern for being a constant source of information and scholarship. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge my grandmother, Mary Witherspoon, for her unremitting support of my college career. Thank you so much Nanny, for it was the memory of your voice that fortified my reserve to complete page after page. I love you, and this is for you.
Proposal

The United States’ history of chattel slavery, stable influx of diverse immigrant groups and subsequent discrimination based on race has created an environment where race has continually been a substantial factor in the nation. Furthermore, in a nation rooted in capitalist ideals and with a large disparity between the rich and poor, socioeconomic class has also proved to be a major factor. As significant demographic shifts occur in the nation that could potentially have key political implications (Berube et al 2010), the debate over which factor, race or class, is more salient within politics is becoming increasingly important. With a new style of black leadership on the rise, one whose deracialized leadership style has led to questions of whether race is still a contentious issue in society, evaluating what’s more salient for black politicians in local politics, the race of their constituents or their class is of great consequence.

For black mayors in the age of Obama deciding whether the race or class of their constituents is the most salient depends on two factors: (1) the internal political dynamics of their locality and (2) their individual political history—defined as a combination of political socialization and socio-political factors like the candidates’ generation, educational experience and path to electoral power. If the city’s socio-political context is one in which racial issues are a factor and the city has a mayor whose individual political history lends itself to addressing racial issues including civil rights and affirmative action policies, then race will be the most salient factor. However, class can overcome race as the most salient factor if the socio-political context of the city shifts to a climate where the public is no longer comfortable or concerned with racial issues and if the mayor’s individual political history is one where racial issues haven’t been a factor.
In order to evaluate my hypothesis that the internal political dynamics of a city and the individual political history of the person running for office influences whether race or class will be the most salient factor during their time in office I will complete a comparative case study of former Philadelphia mayor John F. Street and current Philadelphia mayor Michael A. Nutter. This comparative case study will include analysis of John F. Street’s campaign for mayor in 1999 and Michael Nutter’s campaign for mayor in 2007.

Devoting analysis to the local arena of black mayoralties is critical because it will provide new research into a realm where scholarly inquiry has reached before but not within the contemporary landscape. A focus on black mayoralties is significant to advancing the scholarship of contemporary racial politics because historically winning the mayoralty has been the “coveted political prize” of black politics (Persons 2007). “Black mayoralties have been seen as the embodiment of the major developments and constraints of the new black politics” (Persons 2007), therefore a focus on black mayoralties will provide the best analysis of the subtleties of the current state of black politics.

A detailed analysis of black mayoralties in Philadelphia has particular merit due to the lack of research into the candidacies of Mayor Street and Mayor Nutter. While there have been studies on Wilson Goode (Philadelphia’s first black mayor) the research into the men that succeeded him is surprisingly thin. A comparative case study of these two mayors in particular has the potential to elucidate questions of the transitions within black politics. Although they were black mayors in the same racially diverse city of Philadelphia, Street and Nutter had very different campaigns—mobilizing different majorities of the population—and pursued contrasting tactics to maintain the support of their base while also expanding into new parts of the electorate. These two politicians represent the divergent styles of black leadership and therefore exemplify
the racial and political conflict that scholars have depicted between “the old guard” (Ifill 2009; Gillespie 2010) of black leaders and “the new vanguard” (Ifill 2009; Gillespie 2010) of black politicians. The majority of contemporary study has been devoted to chronicling the rise of post-racial leaders in the age of Obama, but there is not enough study, evaluation and analysis of how the new vanguard talk about issues of race and class on the campaign trail in comparison to the old guard. Due to this lack of research students studying black politics are left with a gaping hole of what seems to be inexplicable processes of the contemporary style of both the old and new styles of black leadership. The diverging campaign strategy of the new vanguard may be a result of shifts in the national political landscape and local political dynamics. Or it may be a result of generational gaps within black leaders’ political socialization. It is my sincere hope and expectation that some light can be shed on the above questions through a comparative study of John Street and Michael Nutter.

Within the comparative case study I will evaluate the effect that both the internal political dynamics of the city and each mayor’s individual political history had on the decision to choose class or race as the most salient factor. Analysis of the city’s internal political dynamics is significant because any candidate running for mayor would take into consideration who the city encompasses (in terms of race and civic organizations), the public’s sentiment, and the socio-political context of the current period while constructing a campaign strategy. It is also suspected that if elected the candidate would then govern and be most responsive to those groups who were most significant during his campaign. Analysis into the individual political history and political socialization of a mayoral candidate is equally important because there is a need for more research into this realm. While the political socialization of voters has been examined quite often (Hyman 1959; Greenberg 1970; Renshon 1977; Gimpel et. al 2003) the political
socialization of mayoral candidates (black candidates in particular) is deficient. Exploring the shift within the internal political dynamics of the city of Philadelphia might account for why Michael Nutter decided to pursue a deracialized campaign strategy—characterized by diminishing the role of race throughout the election—that contrasted so strongly with his predecessor's strategy. On the other hand, evaluating the individual political history of each mayor would account for why former Philadelphia mayor John Street—who ran in the same political landscape as Nutter, yet had a political history of trumpeting race issues—chose to run a race-based campaign as opposed to de-emphasizing issues of race and trying to mobilize a wider segment of the public like his successor.

Due to the recent transformations within American politics, determining whether race or class is the most salient factor for black candidates is not only a poignant research question but essential. The recent electoral victories of Barack Obama and other candidates employing "the new black politics" (Gillespie 2010) has led some scholars, journalists and members of the public to wonder if we have entered into a post-racial society (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011). In the wake of the 2008 election there were ruminations that perhaps the election of the country’s first black President signaled that the electorate had transcended racial biases, voting patterns, and other racially based decision-making. More recently, the manifestation of the Occupy Wall Street movement surrounding issues of economic justice also hinted that perhaps class had become the more pressing issue within society. The air of ambiguity surrounding race and class issues and their salience to the American must be cleared up. Moreover the question of which factor is more salient draws attention to the pervading dichotomy of race and class issues within our society. By determining which factor should prevail in American and urban politics, I am ultimately showing which factor will be ignored. The average American citizen's identity is
formed by their race, class and a host of other factors, but if candidates only see one of these factors as the most salient then that is the factor that will be addressed in their campaign and eventually within their policy. In other words, if race is the most salient factor then arguably candidates’ will use racial appeals to mobilize the public and pursue racially based policies if elected. On the other hand if class is the most salient factor then candidates’ will use class based appeals to mobilize voters and pursue class based policies once in office. Ultimately, by assessing whether appeals to race or class should prevail in American politics I am assessing which factor will be ignored and allowed to fester into a greater source of division within society.
Literature Review

The impact of both race and class in the realm of American politics has constantly been an interesting field of study. As a nation that has been characterized as a melting pot of various ethnic groups and defined by its ‘pull yourself up by the bootstraps’ aphorism, race and class dynamics are intrinsic to the nation. In light of the race and class-based underpinnings of the country, scholarly work on these issues have depicted how these factors have influenced the citizenry. Yet much of the research has also centered on the race/class dichotomy within society, and has therefore centered on scholars aiming to resolve which factor has more of an effect within an individual’s identity and their existence within society at large. Recently the debate over which factor, race or class, is more salient within politics is becoming increasingly more important. Moreover, with a variety of current events including but not limited to the election of the country’s first black president, demographic shifts in the nation, and the Occupy Movement, evaluating what’s the prevailing factor within society has grown in magnitude. Scholars have also taken the race/class dichotomy into the realm of national and urban politics. Recent scholarship has acknowledged that a new vanguard of black leaders embracing a different campaign style and employing different campaign strategies has emerged onto the political landscape. These leaders de-emphasize issues of race within their campaigns, argue that the public should transcend these issues or don’t address them at all (Persons 2007) which has led some political scientists to posit that race is no longer a pertinent factor within the electoral realm (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011). Consequently evaluating what’s more salient for black politicians in the age of Obama, the race of their constituents or their class is of great consequence.
Class Overcomes Race

In 1978, William Julius Wilson made the argument in his text *The Declining Significance of Race* that the significance of race was declining within black communities because other factors were growing in importance thereby diminishing the place that ethnicity had in terms of discrimination between groups. Wilson demonstrated that many minorities, particularly African-Americans were increasingly being discriminated against on the basis of their class as opposed to the color of their skin. Wilson attributes the shift from simple racism to discrimination based on class to a shift in contact between blacks and whites in the post-World War II era. Wilson asserts that changes in the labor market over time are what have often controlled the way that blacks and white citizens interact and once the labor market changed after World War II "racial group access to rewards and privileges" (1978) also shifted. Wilson defines three stages of American race relations—the preindustrial, industrial and modern industrial—with the first two stages exhibiting the state and the economy exploiting black labor and protecting the economic elite from black competition. In contrast, during the post-World War II era, race relations entered into the transitional phase where the "rational imperatives of industrialization" (Wilson 1978) guided the labor market. These imperatives compelled businesses to primarily focus on economic interests as opposed to adhering to strict racial norms and as a result the labor market (which was split along ethnic lines) turned its racial animosity into a resentment based on class. In addition, Wilson asserts that the gains achieved during the Civil Rights Movement—winning the franchise, legislation prohibiting discrimination, and particularly affirmative action policies—helped blacks to advance while the processes of deindustrialization in the post-WWII era badly hurt the poor and working class. Given the above changes, Wilson (1978) concludes that "the problem of subordination for certain segments of the population and the experiences of
social advancement of others are more directly associated with economic class in the modern industrial period” as opposed to racial discrimination.

Furthering the idea that race is declining as a salient factor is Michael Dawson who developed a framework to test whether class or race was the primary determinant of black public opinion and political behavior. In *Behind the Mule* (1994), Dawson articulated the concept of a black utility heuristic—the sense of linked fate exhibited by blacks that has come about due to perpetual racial discrimination affecting all classes of African-Americans. Dawson considered this sense of linked fate due to discrimination to be the cause of the political homogeneity amongst black people and therefore the central claim supporting the theory that race is the most salient factor amongst blacks politically. Understanding that black people are beginning to attain positions of power economically and politically—moving from “behind the mule” (Dawson 1994)—Dawson began to see that the black utility heuristic was experiencing some cleavages. The black community may have been racially homogenous but was not economically. Accordingly, Dawson fashioned a counter argument and maintained that the sense of linked fate of most blacks is not permanent and can be undermined if race discrimination continues to decrease in society while class stratification continues to increase. “When members of a racial or ethnic group become affluent, they seek to preserve their ‘well-earned’ measure of security and privilege by forming coalitions with other racial or ethnic groups whose economic interests are similar” (Dawson 1994). Dawson illustrated that economic polarization between blacks and whites had increased but he also noted that within the black community economic polarization had increased. “The black community is literally divided into the haves and have-nots, those who have steady jobs and those who do not” (1994). Attributing this disparity to government’s effect on black economic status via enforcement of equal protection and affirmative action policies,
Dawson ultimately illustrates that class stratification has created a divergence in public opinion between middle class and lower class blacks—with middle class blacks less supportive of nationalist positions than blacks of the lower strata. Dawson’s data also demonstrates that the black middle class were experiencing increasing success than they were in the past thereby supporting his original claim that the sense of linked fate can be undermined thereby making class the most salient factor.

Building on Wilson’s research into changes in the larger society and the economy started during the Civil Rights movement—widespread shutdown of factories leading to a decline in low-skilled but well-paid jobs and relocation of high-quality employment outside of urban areas—Robert Smith asserts that a gap between black leaders and black communities has emerged. Yet unlike Dawson who argues that the gap is purely economic (due to class stratification), Smith asserts that the political incorporation of black leaders has created social stratification between the leaders and the black community (Smith 1981; 2007).

In the post-civil rights era, black leaders have effectively ignored the core community of African-Americans, those within the working and lower classes (Smith 2007). The Civil Rights Movement encouraged systematic integration of blacks into the larger society as a whole and as a result members of the black community who had the means and opportunity for economic advancement (primarily members of the middle class) were integrated into those institutions of the larger society where positions were available. However, while these few blacks were integrated into the larger system, a substantial number of black people were left out and lacked both the resources and skills to integrate as well. As a result of this phenomenon there is currently a huge divide between black leaders and the majority of lower class blacks, and as Smith purports in From Incorporation to Irrelevance: The Afro-American Freedom Struggle in
the 21st Century, the black community has no leaders because blacks in positions of power are not working to remedy the problems lower-income blacks—segregation and impoverishment, criminalization and most importantly marginalization within the political system. Smith also points out that the situation for the black community has only gotten worse since the original separation of the segregated working class community from its integrated leaders. Ultimately, the black community has gone from incorporation (during the Civil Rights era) to irrelevance (in the 21st century) (Smith 2007). In an effort to support this point Smith points out that the black community remains unorganized and despite showing continued support for the Democratic Party, the party continues to ignore black policy interests and has begun to distance itself from the black community in general.

Additionally, not only are black leaders less responsive to the needs of the black community but due to changes in class within the community, black leaders are employing new political strategies—such as the strategy of deracialization, which de-emphasizes or completely ignores racial issues (Smith & Walters 2007). Although many black leaders are not responsive to the needs of the black community, perhaps interest groups and other organizations can lobby on their behalf. Smith tackled this exact issue in his article, “Black Power and the Transformation from Protest to Politics”, where he argued that as a political consequence of the Black Power movement’s influence on electoral activism, black interest organizations have been integrated into the pluralist group system of electoral politics (Smith 1981). The integration of both black leaders and interest groups into the larger electoral system has ultimately left the black community and lower-class of blacks without a political ally or a mechanism through which their needs can be successfully addressed. While some scholars might argue that black political incorporation would lead to the opposite result, due to the disconnect between black leaders and
the lower-income blacks (Smith 2007), the group that has been incorporated can no longer ascertain the interests of the black community and therefore will not address those needs. What’s more is that other scholars have shown that black interest groups are less active in pursuing issues affecting disadvantaged blacks than they are when it comes to issues affecting more advantaged blacks (Dara 2006).

Without interest groups or leaders to lobby on their behalf, perhaps another strategy for the marginalized black community could be a large protest movement as seen in the 1960’s and 1970’s? Adolph Reed addresses the lack of a contemporary protest movement. He argues that due to the ‘brokerage politics’ established by black political leaders during the Nadir period of African-American history—beginning at the end of Reconstruction and lasting until the early 20th century—most black political action focuses on presenting a unified voice of black people as “a single corporate entity [that’s] ultimately a form of high-level negotiation [whose] main practice is assuming the voice of a putatively coherent black community and projecting it towards policy makers” (Reed 2000). Having origins within the black elite ‘brokerage politics’ is just a form of defeatism and does not lead to widespread mobilization of black citizens because the issues that black leaders focus on—affirmative action and majority-minority legislative districts (Reed 2000)—are too remote from these individuals’ everyday experience to engender their sustained support. Furthermore, the immense deterioration of the black community has made a transition from accommodationist politics back to protest politics difficult because ordinary blacks will be left out of leadership positions due to class limitations (Smith & Walters 2007). Reed (2000) concludes that brokerage politics ultimately ignores the majority of black people and gives weight to black leaders to speak on behalf of the masses and for only their needs to be addressed.
Interviewing prominent leaders like Newark mayor Cory Booker and Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick, Gwen Ifill (2009) aimed to chronicle the new vanguard of black political leader that de-emphasized issues of race in order to get to power. Ifill argued that the black political structure formed during the Civil Rights Movement of outsider protest style tactics has transitioned into a newer generation of black politicking. Positing that this “breakthrough” of new black leadership is made up of a younger generation of politicians who benefitted from the gains of the Civil Rights era, Ifill illustrates that many are less connected to the struggle of the 1960’s and exhibit a new style from their predecessors.

With the past decade exhibiting significant changes within the structure of black politics (Ifill 2010), the breakthrough of a phase of leadership personified by Barack Obama (Ifill 2009) intergenerational and economic shifts on the interaction between blacks and whites (Cose 1994; Wilson 2011) many scholars have come to the conclusion that race has declined as a salient political factor and has been replaced by class. Thus, class represents an increasing wedge issue within black communities and their politics.

Race Overcomes Class

As a direct response to Wilson’s 1978 argument that race is declining, Charles V. Willie contends that middle class blacks were increasingly coming into contact with whites due to desegregation, various integration programs, and affirmative action. With this increased contact came more discrimination based on race from whites on citizens of the black middle class (Willie 1978). Furthermore in contrast to Wilson’s argument that the lack of economic opportunities (a-class based issue) are now what bars blacks from becoming equal with white society, Willie uses data illustrating the disparity between blacks and white’s income, housing,
and education to argue that racism is still a factor in the lives of majority of black people. Willie purports that the economic factors cited by Wilson are still primarily a function of race because the economic disparity between the races is built on racial discrimination, thereby maintaining race as the most salient factor.

Further substantiating Willie’s claims that the significance of race as a factor is inclining within American society is Ellis Cose’s research into what he describes as “black rage”. In his text, *The Rage of a Privileged Class*, Cose conducts surveys and interviews of members of the black middle and upper class in order to assert whether they feel racism and discrimination is still relevant and has affected their ability to achieve success in life. Despite their high education, current positions in life and success relative to the lower classes of black people, the middle class feel that they are the most alienated from society. Although they have done what the dominant white society has asked of them, they are still not treated as equals. To make matters worse, the black middle class is alienated from the rest of the black community due to ideas that they have sold-out to whites in order to achieve their relative success; this ultimately renders them a class of citizens alienated by both sides of society. As a result of this alienation, “those paragons of middle-class virtue who will rescue the ghetto from violence, are themselves in a silent resentment or deeply repressed rage. Taken as a group, they are at least as disaffected and pessimistic as those struggling at the society’s periphery. They consistently report more encounters with racial prejudice and voice stronger reservations about the country’s success at delivering on the American dream” (Cose 1993). Although Cose has conducted new research to find that black rage is now on the decline, there is still something to say about the alienation of the black middle class from their lower class black counterparts. As Cose writes in his more recent text, “the outlook for people of color has substantially improved in the nearly two decades
since *Rage*” was published. Certain barriers have fallen, and new opportunities have opened up—at least for those who are well educated” (Cose 2011) which leaves the plight of lower class blacks and their opinions on racism and discrimination still open for discussion.

Further probing Cose’s argument in *Rage of a Privileged Class* is Jennifer L. Hochschild’s assessment of race and class considerations. Through an examination of how blacks and whites view their opportunities in life as well as one another’s chances for advancement comparatively, Hochschild contends that the American public is teetering on the edge of the abyss of racial conflict and anger. White people feel that blacks have increasingly gained more and more opportunities for achieving the American dream since the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s. However, as pointed out by Cose in 1993 middle class blacks are disgruntled with their prospects for further progress and equality with their white counterparts due to ongoing racial barriers (1995). Hochschild takes Cose’s argument a step further by assessing the aspirations of the lower class that are surprisingly optimistic about their families’ prospects for success. Yet, there are members of the black community who are completely impoverished, “the estranged poor”, who completely reject the American dream and can’t imagine themselves having a future at all (1995). Although Hochschild does not come down clearly on the race vs. class divide, she effectively illustrates how damaging and pervasive the disconnect between blacks and whites and between the black middle class, the black lower class and the class of estranged blacks who have completely given up on optimism and belief.

Delving into the realm of electoral politics Mendelberg (2001) illustrates that race is still a pertinent factor within the electorate by investigating implicit race-based appeals in advertisements. Citing the efficacy of the Willile Horton ad in priming racial fears Mendelberg purports that the race-based party system encourages the proliferation of implicit race-based
appeals in campaigns even though egalitarianism has generally become the norm within the political realm. Defining race-based appeals as racially-coded language, images or the combination of the two, Mendelberg (2001) concludes that today’s society is still heavily affected by racial stereotypes, fears and resentments because they affect our electoral decisions when they are overtly discussed but even more when implied within messaging.

Building on the research of Mendelberg are McIlwain & Caliendo (2011) who examine the implicit messaging of black candidates that is sometimes constructed to overcome the racial discrimination of white voters and used to appeal to black voters at other times. Labeling the appeals of black candidates “racial appeals” and the implicit messaging used by whites to prime racial fears as “racist appeals”, McIlwain & Caliendo explain that “overall, the racial appeals made by candidates of color spend more time focused on themselves than on their opponents” (2001). As such racial appeals by black candidates often don’t take advantage of systemic racist predispositions about minorities and are instead focused on inoculating (protecting themselves) from the racial thinking of white voters. Describing the biases still existing within today’s electoral realm, McIlwain & Caliendo write, “it is as if candidates of color are running against a kind of invisible but very real ghost. That is candidates of color oppose white candidates whose character seems fundamentally taken for granted, while they must fight tooth and nail….to convince white voters that their true color belies the color of their skin” (2001). Citing the continual use of counter-stereotypes and “racial inoculation strategies” aimed at allaying whites’ negative prejudices, McIlwain & Caliendo posit that black candidates enter electoral contests assuming that minimizing white voters’ racial thinking is not possible. They also contend that race is a necessary and important component of the landscape of American-style political campaigns (2001).
Considerations for Electoral Politics

By chronicling the advent and transformations within black mayoralties, Georgia Persons (2007) develops a framework for understanding the evolution of black mayors. Similar to other scholars, Persons contends that big-city black mayoralties experienced three developmental paths or phases: insurgency, racial reconciliation, and finally, deracialization (2007). The first wave of black leaders gained office through an insurgent style “characterized by direct challenges to the prevailing white dominated political order and encompass[ing] explicit criticisms of incumbents, institutional processes, civic leadership structures, and the resulting mobilization of interests and bias in local political contexts (Persons 2007). Persons states that this insurgent style was prompted because of the systematic exclusion from elected positions and other institutions within the political realm thereby limiting the manner in which black candidates—who typically were pitted against a white candidate in a racially charged contest—could effectively gain office. The insurgent style of the first phase of black leadership often provoked white resistance which was overcome through the use of racial appeals and the support of a black voting bloc. This black bloc and insurgent strategy not only helped the first phase of leaders get elected but helped them undermine and delegitimize all challengers of both races, leading to a pattern of incumbency.

The second phase of black leaders overcame the incumbent black mayors through simple term limitations, voluntary succession of the first phase black mayor, or by defeating them. Persons argues that the racial reconciliation style of the second phase of black leaders was borne out of the need to differentiate themselves from the first phase and the deracialized style of the third phase was born out of the shifting dynamic between the second and third wave leaders at their point of succession, she writes:
The first major dimension of change seemed to occur at the point of succession when a changed political dynamic significantly dictated a change in strategy and tactics. Just as insurgency could not be sustained indefinitely, neither could rancorous racial conflict be tolerated indefinitely. Thus, many black mayoral aspirants adopted racial reconciliation as a political posture as a perceived necessity for effective governance as much as for a purely electoral strategy (2007).

Persons (2007) concludes that an effective framework for understanding the evolution of black mayors from the first phase of insurgents to the third wave of deracialization has to encompass a consideration of: the national level political context, the state of the black empowerment struggle, the local socio-political context, the local economy and the individual mayoral leadership style.

Aiming to explain why the first wave of black mayors elected in the wake of the Civil Rights movement transitioned from the multiracial coalition building activities—the archetype of the movement—to forging more conservative political coalitions opposed to the majority of public policy reform, J. Phillip Thompson III provided an in-depth look at America’s black mayors in major cities and their mechanisms for achieving social change in his book *Double Trouble: black Mayors, black Communities and the Call for a Deep Democracy*. Dawson (2006) argues for that “there is a need for greater political inclusion and open and political discourse within communities”—which he labels “deep pluralism”—to enable blacks to increase their power and more effectively challenge opinions and public policies supported by the white public. Therefore, in order for black mayors to effectively combat the pressure to succumb to building conservative political coalitions that historically have not addressed black issues such as urban decline, black communities must “begin with unveiling painful internal oppressions and exclusions within black politics for the purpose of increasing the black community’s power to compel similar unveiling in broader interracial politics” (Thompson 2006). With this unveiling Thompson expects that intra-black conflicts will be bridged thereby creating “coalitions across
sharp class, gender and ideological divides within black communities” (Thompson 2006). Additionally, he expects that “deep pluralism helps blacks to understand the existence of oppression among whites, and also to appreciate many whites’ unwitting oppression of blacks” which will aid in interracial coalition building (Thompson 2006). In the end, Thompson proposes his theory of deep pluralism to be a successful strategy for addressing issues of race and class within the black community ultimately leading to a reduction of their marginalization within the political system and a consolidation of their political power.

Further advocating the call for interracial coalition building by the black community is William Julius Wilson and Richard Taub, who in their book *There Goes the Neighborhood* describes how neighborhoods in America are often culturally and racially segregated. Through an analysis of four Chicago neighborhoods—Beltway (predominantly white), Dover (mixed community in transition), Archer Park (a Latino community), and Groveland (predominantly black)—Wilson concludes “when residents perceive that in-migration presents a threat to their neighborhood, they will react by exiting or joining forces with other neighbors to resist the change. The stronger the social organization of the neighborhood, the more likely it is that local residents will select the voice option and take steps to keep the area stable. Residents are more likely to choose the exit option when they feel that a neighborhood’s resources, including the social organization of the community, are insufficient to stem the tide of ethnic change” (Wilson 2006, 177-178). Thus Wilson makes the claim that one mechanism to overcome to overcome racial and cultural separation of neighborhoods is through multi-racial coalitions between neighborhoods and particularly in neighborhoods like Dover that are in transition although the examples in his book (like the one listed above) also prove that racial prejudice persists despite multi-racial coalitions.
Race & Class in the Age of Obama

Scholars have increasingly become interested in assessing issues of race and class since the election of the nation’s first black president his election (Ifill 2009; Robertson et al 2011). Other scholars have also begun to evaluate the leadership styles of other black leaders who have sought electoral office in the “age of Obama” (Gillespie 2010). Finally, furthering the analyses of the new black leadership class are studies into the efficacy of the deracialized strategies that the majority of this new political class are employing (McCormick & Jones 1993; Smith and Waters 2007; Gillespie 2010).

Constituted by a shift from protest and race-based politics (as promulgated by Civil Rights era leaders) to a focus on the electoral process and race-neutral politics (Persons 2007), contemporary politics has seen the ‘breakthrough’ of a new brand of black politician (Ifill 2009). With analysis of gender and race, identity politics and generational conflict in the age of Obama the relationship between politics and race is becoming even more complex. Furthermore, the changes within black political structure and this new phase of leadership raises important questions about the efficacy of the new vanguard of black politicians to advance the condition of people of color in American politics being that these new leaders de-emphasize racial issues throughout their campaigns (Ifill 2009).

In an effort to further the research on the third phase of black politicians (Persons 2007) and evaluate the political strategy of deracialization, Gillespie analyzes the candidacies of black politicians as they campaign for both national and local political positions within the past decade. Through case studies of the new cohort of deracialized politicians such as Cory Booker, Jesse Jackson Jr. and Adrian Fenty, Gillespie argues that phase III black politicians are not monolithic.
They are politically and stylistically diverse, their connection to already established black leaders differs, their rise to power differs greatly, and their connection to race-based versus race-neutral strategies varies (Gillespie 2010). In reference to the new generation of leaders’ connections to the black establishment, Gillespie builds on Dawson’ black utility heuristic developed in *Behind the Mule*. She writes:

Michael Dawson (1994) noted that middle-class blacks, who may physically remove themselves from core black communities when they gain affluence, often maintain physical and psychic connections to black communities through a number of means. They can return to these communities for things as mundane as church and hair appointments, and they may still have relatives who still live in these core communities, which solidifies their connections to these communities. Finally, the fact that middle-class blacks still experience racial discrimination still plays a radicalizing force. These factors combine to give middle-class blacks a sense that their fate is tied to the fate of other blacks, which in turn leads them to support policy positions (such as welfare spending) that non-blacks of the same class status are far less likely to support. Thus, some young black politicians with no room in traditional black communities at all may be far less likely to advance a political agenda that would advance the interests of black communities (Gillespie 2010, 23-24).

Through her case study of Cory Booker’s 2002 campaign against incumbent and typical incumbent first phase leader Sharpe James, Gillespie fleshes out how Reed’s heuristic is often used to depict the new class of leaders as elitist outsiders, which is often linked to their race and perceived class status (Gillespie 2010). The older generations of the black public also take this “perceived lack of identification with the struggle” into consideration when evaluating these leaders down the line (Gillespie 2010). Additionally, she concludes that contemporary black politicians illustrate just how nuanced the deracialization strategy of politicking can be.
Ultimately, through her analysis of phase III black politicians Gillespie offers insight into what the emergence of this new phenotype of leader means for the future of African American politics and what their presence demonstrates about contemporary American politics.

Further complicating the complexities of race, class and politics in the age of Obama is Robertson et al. who assess just how multifaceted and convoluted the relationship between these three categories can be. Some have argued that Obama’s presidency has marked the beginning of a “post-racial” era within the United States (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011). However, as Robertson points out, despite Obama’s election there have been many indicators that racism persists as an issue within American society. Citing examples such as the arrest for the distinguished Harvard University Professor Henry Gates after he was mistaken by police for a burglar breaking into his own home and the increase in hate groups since 2008, Robertson points out that despite small feats of what may seem post-racial sentiment, racism is pervasive and resilient. Commenting on the centrality of race within black politics, Robertson points out that race “may serve as a lens through which other variables such as class and gender are filtered” (Robertson et al 2011); consequently adding to the abstract nature and impact of race on American society.
Research Design

Hypothesis

When evaluating which is a more politically salient factor—race or class—scholars have primarily fallen into one of two groups: race overcomes class, or class overcomes race. However with race and class issues being so interconnected, it is too naive to conclude that one factor always overcomes the other. For black mayors in the age of Obama deciding whether the race or class of their constituents is the most salient depends on two factors: (1) the internal political dynamics of their city and (2) their individual political history. If the city’s socio-political context is one in which racial issues are a factor and the city has a mayor whose individual political history lends itself to addressing racial issues including civil rights and affirmative action policies, then race will be the most salient factor. However, class can overcome race as the most salient factor if the socio-political context of the city shifts to a climate where the public is no longer comfortable or concerned with racial issues and if the mayor’s individual political history is one where racial issues haven’t been a factor.

Evaluating the internal political dynamics of the city is significant because any candidate running for mayor will take the time consider the socio-political context of the election to construct their campaign strategy. They will also investigate the public’s primary concerns and their sentiment on the direction of the city. In an effort to get elected the candidate would then create a campaign using rhetoric that appeals to public sentiment and addressing the top concerns of residents. Once elected, the mayor would then govern and be most responsive to those groups who were most significant during his campaign. Furthermore evaluating the individual history of each candidate would provide insight into their political philosophy, issues of top concern in
their mind, and their specific vision for the city. The campaign strategy that the candidate will construct will mediate the internal political dynamics of the city with their individual political history. Evaluating the internal political dynamics within Philadelphia in 1999 and later in 2007 while also evaluating the individual political history of John Street and Michael Nutter will account for why Street ran a campaign of racial appeals and Nutter ran a deracialized campaign.

**Definition of Concepts**

Although many have come to understand race as a social construct, it still has very real implications within people’s lives and as such it shall be evaluated within this thesis. A standard definition of race as a group of people united or classified together on the basis of common history, nationality, or geographic distribution shall be employed throughout the empirical analysis and case studies. It is also important to note here that the majority of research and analyses will play into the race-binary of black and white that is so often applied in politics. A standard definition of class as a social stratum whose members share certain economic, social, or cultural characteristics shall also be employed—yet in our case the economic characteristics will be the focal point.

The concept of internal political dynamics primarily entails an analysis of whom and what is encompassed in the locality or city of study. In our case the internal political dynamics of the locality will be presented by evaluating the socio-political context of the city, the local political economy. A more detailed description of how the preceding topics will be measured is presented in the measurement of variables section of this research design. The concept of individual political history entails an analysis of an individual’s political socialization, and how that political socialization in concert with the historical era in which they grew up has influenced
their decision to pursue specific policies later in their political career. This concept also includes a chronicle of the policies that they have been known to espouse before being elected as mayor. For example, if we were to take into account the individual political history of Thurgood Marshall it would demand analyzing his upbringing in the segregated South, how that experience lead to his political career as a civil rights attorney, and how these encounters finally steered him toward becoming Supreme Court Justice with a civil rights agenda that supported cases for equality and increased civil rights for people of color.

Measurement of Variables

*Measurement of Focus on Race*

What is considered to be focusing on a specific issue, in other words how will focus on race be measured? In an effort to evaluate whether each candidate/mayor is focusing on race within their campaign strategies, I will evaluate how race issues are encompassed within their approach, positions and language during the campaign. Being that the focus is on Philadelphia, attention will be given specifically to determining whether the candidate/mayor is focusing on the policy concerns of black communities in Philadelphia such as: housing/community development, rendering of public services, and reduction of crime (Urban League of Philadelphia 2007). This analysis will encompass an examination of speeches given by both candidates when running for office in an effort to ascertain their focus on the above policy issues. In other words, by looking at what policy areas are addressed in their speeches it will be possible to see if they truly want to address the policy concerns of black communities in Philadelphia. I will also examine the location of where they campaign as well as who they tend to speak to in order to further elucidate their focus. They will give speeches in those places where they are most
invested and will speak to those persons who they aim to appeal to and mobilize during the
election. Therefore, if the majority of a candidate’s speeches take place in North Philadelphia,
and they tend to speak to minority populations it will be apparent that they want to mobilize
North Philadelphia residents and black communities like it; however if a candidate primarily
gives their speeches in Rittenhouse square or downtown it will be apparent that they are trying to
mobilize that community and the predominantly white citizens who live there.

Measurement of Internal Political Dynamics of the City

Typically an evaluation of the internal political dynamic of the city includes an analysis
of the ethnic diversity of the locality, the local government structure and the presence of civic
organizations in the locality, however because the case studies take place within the same city
this working measurement of internal political dynamics needs to probe even more. Therefore,
the internal political dynamics of the locality shall be analyzed through an evaluation of the
socio-political context and the local economy of the city. This means that the history leading up
to the election will be considered, the top concerns of the resident’s will be addressed, and the
overall environment in which the election takes place will be analyzed. The effect of national
trends will also be accounted for in order to further explicate the general sentiment of the
electorate and provide a sharper depiction of the environment within the city at the time of the
election.

Measurement of Individual Political History

Measuring individual political history will not be a simple task because it is difficult to
truly measure one’s social and political upbringing. Therefore, when we measure individual
political history it will be more like appraising the political socialization of the candidate and
assessing the effect that being raised during a particular era has had on their internal politics. Employing the popular scheme of placing black leaders into 1 of 3 phases of black leadership—civil rights leaders, technocratic leaders, de-racialized/post-racial leaders (Gillespie 2010)—I will use the scholarly depictions of prevalent characteristics for leaders in each category and match the individual political history of the politician with those characteristics. For example, Gillespie (2010) writes that phase III black leaders were born immediately before or after the passage of Civil Rights legislation in 1960 and therefore were able to live in integrated neighborhoods and attend integrated schools unlike their phase I and II counterparts. In order to place a politician into the category of a phase III black leader I would try to match their background to characteristics like the one above. Furthermore, I would assess how their political socialization, the political environment that they were raised in and their firsthand experiences formed their political predispositions which were translated into their political objectives.

*Assessing Validity and Reliability of Measurements*

Given that the methods proposed for measuring the concepts of focusing on race, internal political dynamics of the locality and individual political history are of my own creation, it is rather difficult to ascertain whether they are valid or reliable. Measurements are considered reliable and valid if they produce consistent results and measure what they were expected to quantify. However, because these are new ideas I won’t be able to say precisely that they will produce consistent results until I actually employ the measurements during my empirical analysis. Because I aim to evaluate the local politics by examining the environment surrounding the election and public sentiment (which is often described in newspaper articles and polls surrounding the election), I presume that my proposed measurements of variables will indeed be valid. Furthermore, looking at the background of the politicians in my comparative case study
should also provide accurate insight into the manner in which their upbringing affected their political dispositions later in life. Ultimately, from my current standpoint the measurements I have devised should be both valid and reliable however once I engage in my empirical research, I may find otherwise.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection Methods

1. Scholarly literature
3. Magazine Articles (Philadelphia Magazine)
4. Interviews (tentative John Street Interview)
5. Observation

Using the scholarship I have read on race and class, as well as my background as an urban politics major, I will continue to research scholarly literature on the significance of race and class in mayoral elections. In order to assess the campaigns of those in my comparative case study I will employ local newspapers such as the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News to discover more intimate details on the effect that issues race and class played in the campaigns of John Street and Michael Nutter as well as how responsive the public was to their specific campaign strategies. I will also use these newspapers to elucidate the internal political dynamic of Philadelphia during their campaign. It is expected that the newspapers will cover those issues that are of top concern to city residents and as such my newspaper sources will be an integral part of my research. Magazine profiles of the candidates often tend to have biographical information and this will aid in reconstructing Street and Nutter's individual political histories.
I hope to have the opportunity to interview former mayor John Street himself and to ask questions pertaining to my research question such as: whether he feels race or class is the most salient issue and what issues/policies were the most important during his campaign and term in office? Hearing the answers to these questions straight from the former mayor himself would only add to my research and help me to prove if my hypothesis is indeed correct. I think it would also be interesting to ask him some questions about what he feels is most salient for Michael Nutter and what he thinks Michael Nutter is doing wrong while in office. In addition, as a Philadelphia resident personal observation of what I remember of both mayors will also add to my research and possibly help me to formulate more in-depth questions for John Street.

Last but certainly not least, in an effort to have a foundation of scholarly research that I can use to further explain the processes that I describe I will use a variety of books and journal articles of prominent scholars who have engaged in study around issues of race and class within urban politics.

Case Selection

In order to evaluate my hypothesis that the internal political dynamics of a city and the individual political history of the person running for office influences whether race or class will be the most salient factor during their time in office I will complete a comparative study of former Philadelphia mayor John F. Street and current Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter. This comparative study will include analysis of John F. Street’s campaign for mayor in 1999 and Michael Nutter’s campaign for mayor in 2007. Due to the surplus of information on both the 1999 and 2007 elections I feel that it would be best to only use these elections in my case study. There is not much need to look at Street and Nutter’s campaign as incumbents because these
campaign were primarily re-matches of their original campaigns to win the mayoralty. Furthermore, I feel that their first campaigns are better for my research because presumably the strategy that they first pursued to gain office is the strategy that most exemplifies their political inclinations thereby supporting my research into determining whether issues of race or class is more dominant.

Being that not much scholarship has been devoted to a comparison of these two leaders, such a comparative study would be invaluable to the field of urban politics. Ultimately, a comparative case study of John Street and Michael Nutter would truly get at my research question because such a comparison would either validate or disprove my claim that it's the internal dynamics of the city and the individual political history of each black mayor that accounts for what is most salient to them during their campaign and time in office—race or class.
Philadelphia Political History Leading to the 1999 Election

Philadelphia elected its first black mayor, Wilson Goode, in 1984. Goode spent most of his tenure trying to manage the fiscal crisis that the city was experiencing and ended up losing his bid for re-election to Mayor Ed Rendell in 1991. When Rendell took office the city was still in the midst of very grim conditions due to its terrible financial state. The city had a deficit of $250 million (Bissinger 1997), the city’s bond rating was the lowest of any major city (Meyers 1991), and the state board began to oversee the financial decisions of local leaders (Meyers 1991). Taking the oath of office Rendell remarked that the city’s financial plight “is worse than we thought it could ever be” (Duvoisin & Turcol 1992).

Once in office, Rendell turned immediately to addressing the city’s fiscal problems inherited from the Goode administration while also facing the general decline that Philadelphia was in. In an effort to turn the city around, Rendell devised a plan to reinvigorate the center city economy by transforming the southern portion of Broad street into a center of arts and entertainment in Philadelphia—running from City Hall to Washington Avenue. This area was already home to some of the city’s art and entertainment venues such as the Academy of the Arts and the Shubert Theater (currently the Merriam) and Rendell intended to use these venues as a foundation for increasing the city’s tourism and convention industries (Smith 2007). With plans to expand the southern base of Broad Street by converting the properties already there into new arts venues while also constructing new sites for entertainment, Rendell expected that the entertainment venues and cultural attractions would spur further growth and revitalization of Center City overall (Smith 2007). Branding the new area the ‘Avenue of the Arts’ and promoting it as an economic development project, Rendell successfully generated financial support of the initiative by the city and philanthropists alike (Smith 2007). Encompassing a streetscape project,
the construction of the Kimmel Center—a major center for the performing arts completed in 2001—the creation of the Prince Music Theatre, and construction of a creative and performing arts high school, the Avenue of the Arts initiative brought a host of new attractions to the city of Philadelphia, as well as prestige to Mayor Rendell.

Using the creation of the Avenue of the Arts as well as sound fiscal policies and budget reductions, Ed Rendell managed to bring the city out of its fiscal crisis, attracted new businesses to locate in the city, and enticed the Republican Party to hold its 2000 national convention in the city’s First Union Center (Kraus 2002). Philadelphia residents loved Mayor Rendell with 80% having a favorable opinion of him and less than 7% having an unfavorable opinion (Madonna & Yost, 1999), yet there was still a feeling that only a portion of Philadelphia had prospered while other areas—areas predominantly filled with minorities—continued to suffer. Even Vito Canuso, the chairman of the Republican Party in Philadelphia understood that the city was not completely out of the dark and quipped "Ed has dominated the city. For a good 7 1/2 years, no one has really questioned him. . . . There's no doubt about it, the city has improved greatly. But there's also no question there's a lot left to do." (Infield & Burton 1999).

Although Rendell’s mayoralty was largely seen as a success because he stabilized the city’s finances and revived the downtown area, the city was still experiencing an exodus of employment opportunities and population (Kraus 2002) resulting in a diminishing tax base for public services. Violent crime was steadily rising and the education system was facing economic decline and overall failure (Kraus 2002), further diminishing the momentary appeal the city had accumulated from downtown development. Much of the city’s decay disproportionately took place in already marginalized communities, particularly those with poor black citizens while more affluent white communities (like Center City) felt general prosperity. Political scientist
Jeffrey Kraus even went as far as describing 1999 Philadelphia as two cities separated along lines of race and class resulting in blacks and whites having different political priorities, needs and desires for the upcoming election (2002). Black Philadelphians anticipated that a black mayor would work to level the two Philadelphias, bringing prosperity to not just the downtown area and Philadelphia’s white citizens but its lower-class black citizens as well. The 1999 election presented a concrete opportunity for the city to elect its second black mayor; someone many black leaders and citizens hoped would shift the focus to communities ignored during the Rendell administration—communities that they lived in.
I. The 1999 Mayoral Election

The 1999 Philadelphia mayoral election was the focal point of local residents, officials, and national politics. Ed Rendell, the city’s former mayor, whom many credited with reviving the city’s economy (Bissinger 1997) was in his last term, and many wondered who could take the place of the political giant to maintain the city’s economic progress. Philadelphia neighborhoods were still suffering from the problems of physical deterioration, job loss, racial segregation, inadequate school quality, unresponsive government and the lack of affordable housing (Adams et. al, 2008). The city was continuously losing middle-class residents to nearby suburbs thereby reducing the local tax base and the city’s ability to provide public services to its low-income residents. Moreover, despite the fiscal successes achieved under Rendell, the inequality between the prosperous Center City area and the dilapidated local neighborhoods appeared to be widening—with development and the entrance of new businesses increasing the affluence of the former just as jobs and crime diminished the latter. Crime was the biggest concern of Philadelphia, with 50% of residents reporting in a survey that crime was the most important problem facing the city, followed by unemployment, welfare and education (Madonna & Yost 1999). Nevertheless, city residents still had a positive outlook about the city with many feeling that conditions in the city had improved, with 49% rating Philadelphia as a good place to live and 66% believing the city was moving in the right direction (Madonna & Yost 1999). The question remained: who would succeed “America’s mayor” (Madonna & Yost 1999) to maintain the city’s economic progress while also addressing the inequality between Center City and urban neighborhoods?

Further adding to the magnitude of the election were the characteristics and prestige of the mayoral candidates themselves. John F. Street, former city council President under Rendell
resigned in order to run for mayor and was perceived to be the favorite within the Democratic primary—primarily due to the support of Rendell. Also on the Democratic side were: Happy Fernandez, also a former City Council member; Dwight Evans, a state legislator; John White, the former head of the Commonwealth Department of Welfare and the Philadelphia Housing Authority under Rendell; Queena R. Bass, a community organizer; and Marty Weinberg, a prominent lawyer and close associate of Frank Rizzo, the mayor of Philadelphia from 1972-1980. The lone Republican was Samuel P. Katz, a former member of the Board of Education and an expert in municipal finance who aided Rendell in stabilizing the city’s finances (Janofsky 1999a).

The matter of race added yet another factor to the significance of this election. Race is the most reliable predictor of voting behavior (Fitzgerald & Matza 2007) and “even when race is not a prominent campaign issue, it often will be the decisive factor in voter choice” (Kraus 2002). The preceding political patterns and Philadelphia’s history of heated racial conflict meant there was no doubt that the voting in the 1999 mayoral elections would primarily coalesce around racial groupings as it had done for years. Mayor Wilson Goode, elected in 1984, despite holding a significant place in local history as Philadelphia’s first black mayor ended up being remembered for negative reasons. Unfortunately, Goode’s tenure consisted of the notorious decision to bomb the MOVE house, and later being occupied with Philadelphia’s fiscal crises that continued into the next mayor’s tenure. During the 1991 election Goode was unable to maintain unified black voting support—the presence of several black candidates vying for the same position pitted the black community against itself (Paolantonio 2007)—leading to a loss to Ed Rendell. Frank Rizzo, the Republican candidate in the general election died in July 1991 leaving Rendell as mayor-elect.
Because of past feelings that having multiple black candidates in the 1991 primary significantly split the black vote to the detriment of any black candidate winning—granting Rendell with an easy journey to securing the nomination—many black leaders were wary of making the same mistake in the 1999 election (Paolantonio 2007). With African-American voters estimated to account for 49-54% of turnout in the upcoming primary, whites accounting for 40-45% and the conventional belief that whites vote at higher rates than most minorities the mayoral primary was expected to be split almost equally between blacks and whites (Davies 1999). This didn’t even account for the historical indicator that blacks in Philadelphia were more willing to vote for white candidates than white voters voting for black candidates. Taking the above into account it was assumed that “the presence of three major African-American candidates [would make] victory by a well-financed white candidate, Weinberg...a possibility” (Kraus, 2002). Accordingly, black leaders were excessively attentive to the number of black candidates in the primary and even desired a “black primary” where the majority of black Democrats could be united into one block and nominate one candidate with robust support (Paolantonio 2007). “I think the reality is in Philadelphia we cannot win with three black candidates...I don't think we can win with two...I think we need one clear black candidate” (Infield & Cusick 1999) remarked Rev. Vernal Simms, pastor of Morris Brown A.M.E. Church in North Philadelphia while attending a meeting with other black clergy and other black leaders to discuss the need for narrowing the field of black candidates during the primary. This perceived requisite for selecting only one black candidate lead black leaders like those involved in the meeting described above to insist that less viable black candidates, like Dwight Evans, withdraw from the race (Kraus2 002).¹

¹ Despite the urging of influential leaders, Dwight remained to the end of the primary.
In such a hotly contested election, many of the candidates were willing to spare no expense financing their campaigns. It was speculated that the election was going to be the most expensive race in the nation in 1999, out-matching the spending on most gubernatorial elections in other states (Madonna & Yost 1999). Prominent pollsters were attracted to the race in its early stages while media firms geared up for the battle of attack ads that were sure to come. Meanwhile the public braced itself for what was seen as the most significant indicator of who would be Philadelphia's next mayor, the Democratic primary.
A. The Primary

As a Democratic stronghold, it was expected that whoever emerged as the winner of the Democratic primary would be Philadelphia’s next mayor. Consequently, the primary was a closely contested race from start to finish. Early polls revealed that John F. Street was the most recognized of all the mayoral candidates, corresponding to his early lead amongst voters with 27%, followed by Dwight Evans (13%), John White (12%), Happy Fernandez (11%) and Marty Weinberg (3%) (Madonna & Yost 1999). Despite his early lead Street and the other candidates understood how quickly voter’s preference change in a mayoral race and began pursuing their strategies for connecting to a larger percent of the public while also standing out from the rest of the candidates.

Formally announcing his campaign for mayor on February 9, 1999, John F. Street opened with a statement characteristic of “the neighborhood mayor” label he would later receive: “In the coming months, I will work day and night to bring my record and vision to every neighborhood in the city, to community meetings and to front porches, to barber shops, beauty parlors and grocery stores, to every place people gather together” (Burton & Infield, 1999a). Assuming what would become his familiar focus of growing inequality between a revived Center City and the dilapidated surrounding neighborhoods—including Street’s own North Philadelphia district—Street declared “we’ve been successful in revitalizing our downtown area, but now we need to concentrate on the neighborhoods” (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999). He promised to raise $250 million for a city-wide blight removal program as part of a larger neighborhood transformation initiative that would also encompass strategies to curtail high levels of drug-

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2 Queena R. Bass was not accounted for in this poll.
related crimes, improve services, and attract private capital and investment to formerly ignored neighborhoods (Street 2002). Making the argument that as a former community organizer (Quinones Miller & Burton, 2) and current North Philadelphia resident, he connected with the average resident in Philadelphia neighborhoods, understood how they felt, and knew they wanted the city to invest in their communities so that they too could be safe in their neighborhoods and live a better life (Peter & Yant 1999).

As part of his larger focus on neighborhoods, Street encouraged community feedback on his initiative and even pledged in a campaign ad to “visit neighborhoods across the city, gathering [community members’] input on issues important to Philadelphia’s future” (Peter & Yant 1999). Recognizing the public’s reverence for Mayor Ed Rendell, Street made sure to continually remind the public of his close relationship with the mayor as City Council President pushing through his legislation to help bring back the city from near-financial ruin (Quinones Miller & Burton, 4). Street argued that he had the most experience and was therefore the most prepared to take on the job of being Philadelphia’s next mayor. He even pronounced that when elected mayor he would be the most qualified person to ever hold that position (Quinones Miller & Burton, 1). Adding to Street’s celebrity and cementing his claims of superior experience was the support and early endorsement by Mayor Ed Rendell himself (Janofsky 1999b). During Street’s speech announcing his candidacy Rendell proclaimed that “if you like what I have done as mayor, understand that I couldn’t have accomplished any of it without John Street and City Council” (Burton & Infield 1999). Notwithstanding Rendell’s backing, Street also aimed to separate himself from Rendell’s legacy in order to make his own mark on city politics and address issues he believed were ignored during Rendell’s terms—particularly Philadelphia’s neighborhoods (Peter & Yant 1999).
The other candidates—Evans, White, Fernandez and Weinberg—worked diligently to boost their own name recognition amongst the public and rebut Street’s claims that he was the most qualified for the job. Marty Weinberg focused primarily on the group of voters he felt most identified with his views and would appreciate his past association with Mayor Frank Rizzo—white voters from working class neighborhoods—the same areas that had heavily supported Rizzo during his tenure as mayor of Philadelphia. Striving to appeal to this part of the local electorate Weinberg decided to depict himself as “the rowhouse candidate” (Yant et. al 1999)—linking himself again to working-class neighborhoods through a reference to the housing style most popular in those communities. Weinberg even announced his candidacy from the porch of his childhood rowhouse on south Mildred Street in South Philadelphia, arguably appealing to the white working class Philadelphians from the same area.

Street and Weinberg while being the top contenders later in the race (Infield & Cusick 1999) also shared the same political battle of securing the support of white Democrats. In an effort to tarnish Street’s perfect man for the job image and appeal to his target audience of working and middle class whites, Weinberg produced a series of advertisements drawing attention to Street’s personal financial problems and depicting Street as a boisterous bully in City Council with 18-year-old film footage of him throwing water on someone and pushing a reporter (Janofsky 199b). Yet another ad aimed at tarnishing Street’s image amongst the 20% of white Democrats who intended to vote for Street included a racial subtext. This ad featured a retired white police officer saying “I’d definitely be scared if we got the wrong mayor” (Infield & Burton, 1999b). Weinberg’s direct mailings were also aimed at Street with one mailing accusing Street of being soft on crime, and another claiming that unlike Street—who was not mentioned directly—Weinberg protected “people like us” (Kraus 2002). Local newspapers resolved that the
tone of Weinberg’s attack ads and direct mail was indeed inflammatory and too divisive in an election where race was such a significant and dividing factor (Kraus 2002).

Unfortunately for Weinberg, his racial and class polarizing tactics were obvious to many and he was condemned early on in the campaign for blatantly ignoring black communities by disproportionately appearing in white areas (Kraus 2002). Even one of his close supporters, Richard Costello, slipped up by making hotheaded comments about prominent black leaders Jerry Mondesire and Charles Bowser (Kraus 2002), making it hard for him to shake the discriminatory label. Nevertheless, Weinberg’s attack ads seemed to have a negative effect on Street’s polling in spite of having a racist and class inflammatory tone. During a meeting on April 29th, 1999 one of White’s supporters reported Weinberg was climbing while Street had dropped a few points in an independent poll (Infield & Cusick 1999). Again appealing to his target audience, Weinberg pledged that if elected mayor he would work to reduce the Philadelphia wage tax as opposed to Street who only promised to lower taxes. As the candidate arguing for neighborhood service improvements Street felt it was necessary to lower taxes in a more responsible way—one that would not lead to further cutting city services which Weinberg’s wage tax reductions would necessitate (Tribune, 1-2). Ultimately, Street and Weinberg—who were ahead of the rest of the pack in the polls—faced the same strategic problem of wooing white Democrats. Weinberg’s ads aimed at securing his base of working and middle-class whites while also luring some white liberal Democrats who would vote for a black mayor away from the Street camp. In spite of the negativity and clear racial subtext of his ad campaign, the attack ads had an effect on Street’s lead in the polls bringing him down a few points closer to Weinberg and adding to the already animated primary (Infield & Cusick 1999).

Expanding the series of attack ads were Sam Katz and John White. Katz produced
television commercials attacking White, who then produced television and radio commercials to discredit Katz's claims in the original advertisements (Panaritis & Yant 1999). As a candidate without an opponent Katz spent most of his time preparing for the general election, yet expressed frustration at not being included in the live TV debates between the candidates, running the risk of being forgotten. Taking a pre-emptive strike at the Democratic candidates, Katz also launched ads discrediting the candidacy of Marty Weinberg which astonished the Democratic candidates and political pundits alike because no one expected Katz to get that involved in a primary he didn't have to run in as the sole Republican candidate. "It's our primary. It's our fight" (Burton et. al, 1999a) commented Philadelphia Democratic Chairman and U.S. Representative Robert A. Brady. Street's strategists were also upset with Katz's attack ads and were afraid that they'd agitate a campaign that otherwise had been going well (Burton et. al, 1999a) for Street. Katz continued to levy attacks on White and Weinberg by airing ads on the only black-owned station in Philadelphia—WHAT-AM (1340), and appeared that Katz hoped to inspire black voters to turn out in higher numbers during the primary, something that would benefit John Street (Burton et. al, 1999b). Commenting on the claim that Katz wanted Street as an opponent in the general election as evidenced by the lack of attack ads aimed at him, Street's media consultant David Axelrod (who later became Barack Obama's advisor) said "thanks but no thanks, we do not need their meddling [and] are doing fine without their help" (Burton et. al, 1999a). Nonetheless, Katz and his campaign director were not alarmed about their negative ad campaign and later began to run more positive ads featuring Katz introducing himself to voters (Burton et. al, 1999a) in preparation for the upcoming general election.

Meanwhile, Happy Fernandez planned to release a TV advertisement critiquing Weinberg, Katz and White for being consumed with producing attack ads against one another as
opposed to focusing on the issues (Panaritis & Yant 1999). Broadcasting that she was different from her opponents because of their positions as political insiders while she was a professor turned politician, Fernandez played up her background as founder of the Parents Union for Public Schools and general supporter of better education, diminishing crime and supporting children at an early age (Panaritis 1999). Fernandez habitually portrayed herself as the spotless candidate during the primary, siting the absence of financial problems, questions about her legal residency, and questionable dealings in her political career to stab at the political flaws of her opponents (Panaritis 1999). She also stressed her desire to improve Philadelphia’s public schools and child care system as illustrated in an ad produced on April 6 containing images of her marching with citizens and promising safer streets (Infield & Burton 1999b). A portion of Fernandez’s strategy to accomplish such a feat was to increase the availability of city-funded after-school programs in schools and neighborhood community centers that would keep children out of trouble and reduce juvenile delinquency (Panaritis 1999). Further sustaining her image as the clean candidate, Fernandez spent most of her time on the campaign trail appearing at schools, community centers and community group meetings. In spite of her desire to retain her clean candidate image, Fernandez did recognize that her major opponent was Marty Weinberg— as the only other white candidate in the primary; she was competing directly with him for the same group of voters—and did her best to criticize him throughout the campaign (Panaritis 1999). Much of her criticism centered on Weinberg’s financial proposals and contained “veiled references to [his] Rizzo days, when the late mayor negotiated such generous labor contracts that the city suffered financially for years after” (Panaritis 1999). Unfortunately for Fernandez, despite her clean image and her perseverance to keep to the issues throughout the campaign, many felt that she wouldn’t be able to win against Street or Weinberg who were not only polling
better but had raised more money for their campaigns.

Despite originally promising not to enter into the typical mud-slinging ad campaigns of elections (Janofsky, 1) Street ended up speaking out on negative ad campaigns stating that Philadelphia residents don't like “the tenor of them, they don't like ads that appeal to the worst in people, they don't like ads that have a tendency to divide us” (Panaritis & Yant, 1999). Street also produced a TV ad criticizing Marty Weinberg for making race an issue in the campaign (Janofsky, 1) and for going negative in general (Panaritis & Yant, 1999). Taking a cue from Street, Evans decided to avoid the mud-slinging as well and instead aired a 30-second ad that was strictly issue-based and didn't even mention the negativity his opponents were engaged in while on the campaign trail (Panaritis & Yant, 1999).

Dwight Evans, who like Street was able to boast of a connection to communities due to his role as state representative of the West Oak Lane district of Northwest Philadelphia—95%, composed of middle and lower-class African Americans—and being raised in North Philadelphia, spent most of his campaign harping on issues comparable to Street—crime reduction via new gun laws, enhancing public schools, and diversifying economic development strategies (Gilderman, 2007). With a similar personal history and seemingly similar stances on issues, what separated Dwight Evans from John F. Street? One point of contention between the otherwise similar candidates was Evans' criticism of Ed Rendell's police commissioner Richard Neal in 1996. While Street as City Council President was known as Rendell's right-hand man, Evans and four other state legislators called Neal out on what they perceived to be his ineffective policing style (Gilderman, 2007) and demanded Rendell institute reforms ultimately leading to the appointment of a new police commissioner altogether (Paolantonio, 2007). In addition, Evans' calls for stricter gun control laws diverged from Street's general objective of working to
reduce crime in the city via a focus on drug corners and his support of school choice directly contrasted with Street’s position. More importantly however was the difference in Street’s and Evans’ approach during their primary campaigns. Despite having similar objectives, Street possessed the ability to bring his stance on issues to the street and connect to the average citizen; meanwhile Evans struggled to translate long lists of abstract policy objectives into points ordinary voters could understand and relate to—as evidenced by his continual low turn-out in polls (Gilderman 2007). Evans was good at gaining the support of political elites but “the problem for Evans [was] that people in the policy business don’t decide elections. Voters do, and in that area, Evans...has often struggled to make a connection” (Gilderman 2007) —especially in comparison with Street. Perhaps this inability to connect was the reason Evans remained so far behind in the polls with only 2% of the vote one month before the Democratic primary (Infield & Cusick 1999).

Evans also separated himself from the other Democratic candidates by supporting Senate Bill 494 which gave “the state secretary of education authority to declare the Philadelphia school district in financial distress if certain criteria are met” (Paolantonio 2007) thereby permitting the appointment of a new governing authority. In essence, Evans supported a bill allowing for state takeover of Philadelphia’s School District once the district was declared in financial distress. White, Fernandez and Street all condemned Bill 494, so Evans’ support of the bill made him stand out from the rest of the candidates while also alienating him from teachers’ unions and many local Democratic officials like State Representative Alan Butkovitz and local NAACP President Jerry Mondesire (Paolantonio 2007). Despite their criticism of his decision Evans was adamant about his support of Bill 494 and determined to distinguish himself from the other candidates. “There is a clear difference between me and the others” stated Evans, “I will be a
failure as a mayor if I don’t fix the schools. Let’s see the other candidates make that commitment...I’m being very clear where I stand. Some people will like it, and some people will not” (Paolantonio 2007).

As opposed to Evans who spent most of his campaign navigating difficulty connecting with voters and working to distinguish himself from the other candidates, John White spent most of his campaign securing endorsements to legitimate his candidacy. In most of the polls throughout the primary, White was right behind Street and Weinberg and ahead of Fernandez and Evans. Recognizing that as a black candidate in a race with two others he needed to present himself to black voters as the consensus choice, White thought that securing enough important endorsements would make black voters view him as the best choice of the black candidates running (Infield 1999). Following this logic White was not completely opposed to conducting an all-black primary, unlike Street and Evans who strongly opposed the idea. “I don’t know enough about the process to say whether it’s good or bad” (Bunch 1999), commented White on the prospect of having an all-black primary before the scheduled May 18th date. Due to White’s history as head of the Philadelphia Housing Authority establishing close ties to black voters while holding that position, it is easy to see why White wouldn’t immediately be opposed to the idea. Notwithstanding White’s uncertainty on the issue, the black primary never took place and White continued to focus on securing as many powerful endorsements as possible, hoping to diminish Street’s chances of becoming the consensus candidate White hoped to achieve amongst black voters. The knowledge that endorsements—particularly from unions—would grant him significant help in last minute mobilizing on Election Day (Infield 1999a) added to White’s focus on this area.

Touting endorsements from various city workers’ unions, the Philadelphia Federation of
Teachers, lesbian and gay groups, as well as city-employee unions representing police and firefighters (Infield, 1999a), White’s stances were similar to the other candidates: forming fiscally sound policies while maintaining city services, diminishing crime, addressing neighborhoods, and promoting the city’s economic development.

As May 18th drew nearer, polls continued to show Street in the lead, followed by Weinberg, White, Fernandez and Evans in last place (Infield, 1999b). Essentially the race had come down to a close contest between Street, Weinberg and White, with all candidates having a shot to move onto the general election and none certain what candidate it would be. Only 125,000 votes or less could usher any of the above candidates into the general election (Burton, 1999). Political analysts tried to get a clear idea of the racial make-up of the city’s electorate in order to calculate the racial cross-over vote and hypothesize which candidate would win, yet the actual racial breakdown remained unknown for sure (Davies 1999). Polls showed that no candidate had a majority of the white or black vote (Infield 1999b) and speculation about voter turnout only added to the uncertainty of who would win. In a race that had attracted national attention as the only competitive race amongst the country’s top 5 cities (Infield, 1999b), candidates had spent an estimated $12 million (Infield, 199b), and the final weeks exhibited a flurry of ad campaigns in an effort to make final appeals to voters, the 1999 mayoral primary boiled down to nothing short of a cliff-hanger.

The day before the election Dwight Evans attended a West Philadelphia church service, attended another church service in his district of West Oak Lane, and finally celebrated his birthday outside of Lloyd Hall on Philadelphia’s Boat House Row. Happy Fernandez made appearances at WDAS-FM, North Philadelphia, three churches in Germantown, Northern Liberties, and a diner in Roxborough. John White Jr. complained about newly discovered
telephone calls criticizing his previous roles as Department of Welfare Secretary and head of the Philadelphia Housing Authority, and attended a church dinner in North Philadelphia. Marty Weinberg spent time at a mural honoring the man he was most closely associated with, Frank Rizzo, and took a stroll through the Italian Market stopping to greet merchants and customers there. And lastly, John F. Street attended an evening church service at Tenth Memorial Baptist Church in his base of North Philadelphia (Panaritis & Nicholas 1999).

Acknowledging the air of ambiguity surrounding the city’s next mayor, the candidates launched their respective get out the vote campaigns on Election Day and focused their energies on shoring up support in their bases. Street focused on North Philadelphia and a portion of Center City; Weinberg converged on South Philadelphia, Roxborough and neighborhoods in the Northeast; White, Evans and Fernandez concentrated on Northwest neighborhoods as well as Center City; and all candidates aimed some energy on West Philadelphia—the area where all candidates were seen as having roots but where no one had a clear lead (Burton & Infield 1999b). Doorknockers and campaign volunteers dispersed throughout the city in what seemed like a frenzy of last-minute campaign activity but was actually evidence of an assortment of strategically organized campaigns coming to an irrevocable close. On Tuesday, May 18, 1999 at 8 p.m. when the polls finally closed, “the hundreds of paid and unpaid poll workers, doorknockers and telephone solicitors [went] home tired or to their candidates’ headquarters to see whether all [their hard work] was worth the effort” (Burton, 1999). Meanwhile the rest of the city waited for the final vote count and the subsequent announcement of which candidate had emerged as the victor of the 1999 primary.

In an election where approximately 297,000 Democrats came out to vote (Kraus 2002), John F. Street, the former City Council President, emerged as the winner of the Democratic
primary. Each candidate spent an average of $47 per vote, and despite Street being second in the race to raise campaign funds—raising between $3.5 to $4 million (Infield, 1999c)—he was the most successful, garnering 35.4% of the vote to beat out Weinberg’s 31.3%, White’s 21.7% Fernandez’s 6.3% and Evans’ 4.7% (Infield & Burton 1999c). In a primary that boasted a host of competitive candidates, where race was a significant factor, and there was a strong likelihood that the black vote would be split amongst the three black candidates, how did Street triumph with a primary win?

Although splitting the black vote was a legitimate fear, when all was said and done black voters rallied behind Street as their consensus choice hoping to keep Weinberg from winning. “Voters clearly went into the polls approaching this as much more of a two-person race and really viewed Street and Weinberg as the two people who could potentially win this thing” observed Fernandez (Infield & Burton 1999c), and black voters who supported White and Evans “looked at polls showing Street in the lead and decided not to risk their vote on anyone else” (Infield & Burton 1999c). “In the end, Marty Weinberg achieved what no one else could. He managed to unite the black electorate” (Infield & Burton 1999c) leading Street to victory.

As expected Street secured more than 70% of his base in North Philadelphia (Infield & Burton 1999c) yet he also received a majority of votes in other black areas that many expected to be split amongst the three black candidates. Black voters in Northwest Philadelphia who had previously told pollsters that they preferred the other candidates ended up voting for Street, and in West Philadelphia—thought to be the most contested area between the candidates—Street won overwhelmingly, securing all 11 wards there (Infield & Burton, 1999c). While historically black voters in Philadelphia had been more willing to vote for white candidates, in predominantly black wards such as Mt. Airy, West Oak Lane, and West Philadelphia, black
voters showed little support for neither white candidate, Weinberg or Fernandez. In addition, white voters gave black candidates 42% of their vote in the largely white area of Roxborough (Infield & Burton 1999c). Other predominantly white areas like the far Northeast crossed over to support Street, giving him 8% of their votes in two separate wards as well (Infield & Burton 1999c). "It’s almost like white voters were returning the favor" noted Mayor Rendell on Street’s white voter turnout being parallel to the black turnout he received during his 1991 bid (Infield & Burton 1999c).
B. The General Election

Taking a short two day vacation after his primary victory John F. Street was back on the campaign trail, this time facing Republican candidate Sam Katz. Hoping that his primary victory had cemented his ability to govern and removed questions about the role of race in local politics, Street expected to go into the general election with a clean slate. He admitted however, that competing in such an aggressive primary deprived him of many opportunities to concentrate on Sam Katz thereby leaving him unfamiliar with Katz’s positions (Infield 1999c). Street also understood that despite winning some white votes during the primary he was going to need even more to win the general election. Having spent approximately $4 million during the primary, campaign funding presented yet another difficulty for Street in the upcoming race and plans for summer fund-raising were in the works. Expecting some support from his defeated primary foes, Street was back in campaign mode and ready to work hard to defeat yet another fierce opponent declaring that he would “campaign in an organized, systematic way straight through to the general election” and “that he didn’t think there [was] anybody who [was] going to be able to keep up” (Infield 1999c).

Notwithstanding his lack of opponent in the primary thereby giving him the opportunity to prepare for the general election, Sam Katz did not have an easy battle against Street ahead of him. Katz began his general election campaign at a disadvantage simply because Philadelphia’s registered Democrats outnumbered Republicans by a 7 to 2 ratio (Fish 1999). Attempting to overcome this discrepancy, Katz planned to avoid party labels, positioning himself as the candidate best able to continue the prosperity achieved during the Rendell era. Additionally he wanted to present himself as the candidate who would maintain stability and provide more fiscal reform by cutting city spending and municipal employment (Fish 1999). City residents were
more familiar with former Council President Street than Katz (Quinones Miller 1999) and as a result it would be imperative that he make numerous public appearances on the campaign trail. Katz’s campaign also had the added chore of publicizing his stance on major issues due to his lack of involvement in the major primary debates. Yet in order to convince many of the city’s residents not to vote a straight Democratic ticket, Katz was going to have to spend a great deal of money. Katz had used campaign funds to produce negative TV ads against Street’s opponents during the primary, and using mass media advertisements was going to be especially crucial during his general campaign. Thus campaign funding was not only going to be an important challenge for Street but for Katz as well. Nevertheless, Katz geared up to take on a city where the Republican Party structure was nearly non-existent and was prepared to launch a full-scale general campaign right away. Affirming his desire to launch into the general campaign the very night the primary election had ended Katz proclaimed “today we start a campaign that will determine a direction and future of the city I love. It will not be a campaign that pits neighborhoods against Center City. It will not be a campaign that pits blacks against whites against Latinos. It will not be a campaign that pits Democrats against Republicans. This campaign has been about a dialogue about the future of the city [and] I intend to keep it that way” (Fish 1999).

The general election campaigns officially began after Labor Day although both Katz and Street had been fund-raising and campaigning since the May 18th primary—expecting to spend $5 million apiece during their general campaigns, of which $3.5 million was expected to be spent on advertisements alone (Zausner 1999). Both candidates pledged to run an issues-oriented campaign. Both candidates had plans to reduce gun violence in the city and both wanted to keep John Timoney as police commissioner. They both asserted a continuation of the Rendell era and
touted their respective connections with the mayor; Street touted Rendell’s endorsement, while Katz drew attention to the similarities between his message of fiscal reform and that of Mayor Rendell’s during his 1991 campaign (Fish 1999). Although there were similarities between the two candidates, there were also substantial areas of contention.

They differed for example on the issue of school vouchers and reducing the local wage tax. Street strongly opposed school vouchers and claimed that Katz’s support demonstrated that he was a radical Republican, in contrast to the moderate Republican image he portrayed to the public (Kraus 2002). Katz maintained that though he supported school vouchers he would not back any voucher system that didn’t provide additional money for Philadelphia’s public schools. Additionally, Katz expressed that by supporting vouchers Philadelphia might have the opportunity to secure more funding from Governor Tom Ridge, who had been trying to get a voucher pilot program passed through the legislature for some time (Cusick 1999a). Rebutting Katz’s plans to exchange city voucher support for greater school funding, Street stated that he had “no intention of accepting a couple of crumbs off the table of the General Assembly in return for vouchers” (Cusick 1999b). Katz also pledged to reduce the Philadelphia wage tax to 4% by 2004 in order to attract businesses and slow the exodus of middle-class residents (Burton & Zausner 1999). In order to achieve such cuts, Katz planned to change the culture of City Hall’s workforce from concentrating on plugging holes in the budget to focusing on attaining better results while using less money. Essentially Katz wanted to revolutionize city hall’s workforce and retrain them to produce a more efficient government. “We have a historic opportunity to change a fundamentally flawed system and give Philadelphians the high-performance government that they deserve and can afford” noted Katz when he revealed his plan to the Pennsylvania Economy League at a hotel meeting room in Center City (Burton & Zausner 1999).
Positing that Katz’s cuts would result in cuts to city services such as sanitation, recreation and public safety, Street proposed a more modest tax-cut strategy that would continue with Rendell’s 5-year plan cutting the wage tax to 4.46% by 2004 (Burton & Zausner). Labeling Street’s plan as “creeping incrementalism”, Katz defended his proposal by saying that it would not harm city services and would indeed make local government more efficient (Burton & Zausner 1999). Street’s press secretary, Ken Snyder, responded to Katz’s claims by saying “if it could have been done, it would have been done” (Burton & Zausner 1999) and that Katz’s plan was like “cotton candy initially sweet-tasting but not much to it and in the end not very good for you” (Burton & Zausner 1999). The media probed even further pointing out that Katz’s claims of no service cuts was unconfirmed due to the lack of details given during his tax-cut announcement (Burton & Zausner 1999). Further publicizing their differences to the public, Katz and Street began the media battle that both had fund-raised for during the summer. February 26, 1999, Street aired a 30-second TV ad asserting that Katz wanted to privatize public schools. This was compounded by Street’s portrayal of Katz as irresponsible and willing to cut services in speeches given to firefighters in the Northeast and to social-service center clients in North Philadelphia (Infield 1999d). Katz responded by producing a radio commercial where a narrator tells listeners that “Street has been running negative commercials distorting Sam Katz’s position on education... We need more from the next mayor of Philadelphia than the negative campaign of John Street” (Infield 1999d).

While early polls in the general election campaign depicted Street leading Katz, later polls showed that the race was getting very close (Infield 1999d). As the candidates were running neck and neck each tried strategies to garner more support to push them ahead in the polls. Street attempted to spur party loyalty and warned Democrats that the election of a Republican mayor
would lead to substantial cuts in services and a possible loss in the 2000 presidential election (Cusick 1999). Diminishing the endorsement that prominent Democrats John White and Happy Fernandez had given to Sam Katz, Street reminded the public that the majority of Democratic ward leaders would be for him on Election Day and used Marty Weinberg’s endorsement to bolster his claims (Cusick 1999). In an effort to woo more of the white electorate from Katz Weinberg even campaigned on Street’s behalf, attacking Katz’s tax cut proposal and noting that despite calling himself an issues candidate Katz’s lack of position papers proved otherwise (Infield 1999d). Katz encouraged bipartisan support and urged voters to “put aside both issues of race and party affiliation” to support him. Despite the endorsement of White—who was black—many voters were reluctant to put aside their racial and partisan prejudices to vote for Katz. As one black audience member remarked at a candidates forum sponsored by the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and Philadelphia Links, “for an African American to vote for a Republican is like a chicken voting for Col. Sanders” (Cusick 1999). It seemed the public was very aware that despite the candidates’ pledge not to inject race as an issue during their campaigns the election was going to come down to race.

After a June Keystone Poll was released showing that Republican Sam Katz was leading by 1 percentage point, 39% to 38%, in a city where Democrats outnumbered Republicans by a high ratio, many citizens assumed that race was the culprit because Street was clearly the more experienced candidate (Macklin 1999). As the poll illustrated, Whites favored Katz 67% to 14% with the rest undecided, while Blacks favored Street 66% to 13% (Infield 1999e). Although Street expected that his primary win—achieved with some white voter support—had laid the groundwork for some more white voter crossover during the general election, the history of Philadelphia politics suggested otherwise. According to an analysis by the Committee of
Seventy, "with credible black and white candidates, no more than 20% of voters have ever crossed racial lines" (Infield 1999e). As such, it would be crucial for both candidates to rely on the Philadelphia history of building coalitions to win local power. John F. Street would look to recreate the Democratic coalition that ushered Wilson Goode into office in 1983 and both he and Katz needed to appeal to the group of liberal swing voters caught between the two candidates. This meant that Street would need to energize his Democratic base—particularly the African Americans that chose him as the consensus candidate during the primary—while not ignoring swing voters. Katz, on the other hand, would need to mobilize his Republican base and other white voters while being careful not to spur any additional mobilization of Street's base of black voters. Fundamentally, race became a factor that both candidates needed to pay attention to but not address too forcefully or risk compelling the group of swing voters to lean towards their opponent. As one Temple professor remarked race remained the elephant in the living room that everyone stepped around but no one wanted to acknowledge (Infield 1999e).

As the weeks passed and the general election began to approach Election Day on November 2nd, Katz and Street sought to emphasize their respective strong points and shore up their bases. Street held a rally at a South Philadelphia church (with a predominantly black congregation) that drew approximately 1,500 people where he talked about the unification within the Democratic Party for the final race. Mayor Rendell, former Mayor Goode and Street's son Sharif also spoke at the rally urging the crowd to work hard in the final weeks leading up to the election (Boyer & Fleming 1999). Meanwhile, Katz shook hands with customers at a Northeast shopping mall (Boyer & Fleming 1999). Due to lack of endorsements from major media outlets—the major newspapers chose to endorse Katz during the general campaign—Street was left using Rendell's endorsement in one advertisement. Street also produced yet another TV ad
urging voters to question Sam Katz’s experience while emphasizing his own (Seplow 1999). “I have maturity, background, experience. I think I’ve made a difference in this city”, declared Street. Sam Katz also produced two ads near the end of the campaign, one that was geared directly towards labor with a member of the carpenters union praising Katz’s record working for the people, and another ad with images of Katz’s lever being pushed down (Seplow 1999).

During the campaign’s closing debate Street and Katz traded light-hearted remarks for one another while the moderator expressed his appreciation of a debate sans race-steeped attacks (Clines 1999a). “It’s not an election about race or about party. It’s about two different people with two different views about how to take Philadelphia forward” (Clines 1999a) commented Katz. As November 2nd approached, both candidates launched into their respective get out the vote campaigns hoping to shift voter turn-out in their favor. Once the votes were counted, Katz would find that although he was correct about the race being about two different people with differing strategies for how to take the city forward, his earlier statement that the election was not about race was misguided. After all the ballots were counted Street had won 211,136 votes (50%) and Katz had won 203,908 (49%), illustrating that the race ended just as close as pollsters had predicted it had become in the final weeks. As the district counts were evaluated and political analysts dissected the outcome, Street celebrated his victory and prepared to take to the reins of leadership of the city from Mayor Rendell.

Once data regarding voter turn-out was publicized, it was evident just how large a role the latent issue of race had played during the election despite the candidates not making race an overt issue. A report prepared for the American Jewish Committee found that 93.8% of black votes went to Street and 87.4% of the white vote went to Sam Katz (Infield 1999f). Although voters say that they vote for the most qualified candidate, it is not a coincidence that the
candidate voters feel is the most qualified is also of the same ethnicity. Voters are known to vote for the candidate that they believe will represent their interests, and this often correlates with the candidate's race. Essentially the candidate who voters believe will represent their interests is the candidate that is a member of their own race (Infield 1999f), and that is why they vote them into office. This report, as well as other studies of voting patterns during the election, illustrated that Philadelphia electorate was racially divided and the city's neighborhoods were racially divided as well. Katz won 28 of 33 wards in Philadelphia where whites outnumbered blacks while Street won all 33 wards where black voters outnumbered white voters and took 94% of the black vote overall (Kraus 2002). Ultimately, Street's close victory was due to his ability to maintain overwhelming black support while winning some Latino and white swing voters who were attracted to the party appeals made by Street and his supporters (Kraus 2002), making it evident that race still played an important role in determining electoral outcomes and that racial divisions still mattered within the city of Philadelphia.

Notwithstanding Street and Katz's promise not to make race an explicit issue the candidates' campaigns certainly encouraged the racially polarized outcome. Street embedded race in his approach, issues and language throughout the campaign. Meanwhile Katz's constant urging that black voters look past the issue of race merely served to keep race within the forefront of voter's mind in contrast to encouraging them to vote based on other factors.
C. Race & Class during the 1999 Election: A Focus on John F. Street

With the history of a Philadelphia electorate often divided along racial lines, the most pressing issue being the disparity between Center City and the surrounding largely minority neighborhoods, and the presence of three black candidates, issues of class were present but race was certainly the predominant factor during the primary. Furthermore, as the primary progressed into a general election positioning a black Democrat against a white Republican, the black versus white dichotomy became hard to ignore. Despite the strictly issues-oriented campaigns lead by both Street and Katz, race inevitably became a dynamic during the general election. Due to the grouping of race and class issues in today’s society, an election that seemed to focus solely on race also included class concerns—albeit in a much more coded fashion. Outside of the explicit discussion on splitting the black vote and post-election reports on the influence of race amongst voters, issues of race and class were most often coded within the candidates’ positions, embedded in the language used while on the campaign trail, and implicit in their overall campaign strategies. As the persistent front-runner of the primary who was later caught in a dead heat with a less-experienced white candidate, John F. Street was often the nucleus of race and class concerns. Progressing from the primary to the general election Street understood that appealing to white swing voters was imperative to win the election overall, yet he also recognized the need to maintain his base of black voters so they would not be swayed to vote for Katz. As a result, Street’s approach (fashioning of his image), positions and language during the campaign contained implicit racial appeals to identify himself with white swing voters and others to sustain black voters. By taking an in-depth look at Street’s approach, positions, and language throughout the 1999 election we can reveal how issues of race and class were implied in the election overall.
Street’s Approach

Announcing his bid for mayor on February 9, 1999 in a lecture hall at Community College of Philadelphia, Street approached the public as a candidate with widespread support, experience and most importantly a connection to the ordinary citizens of Philadelphia. From the start of his campaign Street was the candidate who represented the community, connected with the average resident, and personified Philadelphia’s neighborhoods. Following this approach his candidacy announcement was constructed to appeal to members of Philadelphia's neighborhoods. “A political announcement is something like a stage show, designed to demonstrate that the candidate has support from all quarters of the city” (Burton & Infield 1999). While displaying the classic features of any campaign announcement—the presence of local officials and other VIP, highlighting past political experience, and announcing a feel good strategy for the future—Street also expressed that those who were often disregarded by local politicians (essentially blacks and low income citizens) would be at the center of his campaign. This may seem more like a symbol of a class-based disposition; however Street’s individual political history (which will be assessed further in later sections) encouraged him to address the political marginalization of all blacks despite class variation. Even though Street did not identify himself in the manner described above, the sentiment was still there, concealed within the performance of Street’s stage show announcement.

The location of the announcement was a key indicator of Street’s approach as not only an ally of the average citizen but an ally to racially and class marginalized citizens as well. The Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) was reportedly chosen to emphasize Street’s commitment to education and job training (Burton & Infield 1999); however the location suggests much more. Although it is located in Center City, CCP is easily accessible by public
transportation and was known to serve a variety of communities across the city, analogous to the role Street desired to play as mayor. This location also had the added benefit of appealing to the interests of diverse groups including city officials and downtown businesses—the former having an interest in sustaining an educated populace within its bounds, and the latter relying on a highly educated populace to employ. CCP also appealed to community interests in that it chiefly served Philadelphia students from low-income communities who were drawn to the college by its low cost. Lastly, CCP’s reputation as an institution that was open and accessible to all races and classes of Philadelphia residents made it a location that would symbolize Street’s concentration on class and race concerns within his announcement and his campaign overall.

Outside of choosing locations for speeches that would add to his “connected to the average citizen” image, another essential part of Street’s approach was emphasizing his experience. Granted, it is expected that any political candidate would draw attention to previous political experience, but in Street’s case underlying racial appeals may have motivated his constant referral to experience during his campaign. By bringing up his experience in many of his advertisements in both the primary and general election, Street was drawing attention to his record in City Council and his relationship with Mayor Rendell, but more importantly he was using experience as a counter-stereotype reference to racially inoculate himself with white voters. “The racial inoculation strategy seeks to allay whites’ negative prejudices, predispositions and fears from the beginning with the hope that the stereotype will not remain white voters’ dominant perception of the minority candidate” (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011). Therefore Street aimed to use a racial inoculation strategy to encourage white voters to overcome the racial stereotypes that they have of black people, and give them their support. Through the use of counter-stereotypes such as ‘working hard’, ‘playing by the rules’ or in Street’s case
experienced’, minority candidates aim to separate themselves from racial stereotypes (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011); this was exactly what Street sought to infer when he emphasized his experience and qualifications for the position of mayor. During the campaign announcement at CCP Mayor Rendell gave Street a ringing endorsement calling him the most-qualified of the six Democrats running in the primary. He also proclaimed to the audience that Street deserved to be mayor because of his keen understanding of city government and ability to make tough decisions to protect the city’s finances (Burton & Infield 1999). These statements made by a popular white mayor served to highlight Street’s experience and work ethic—traits that acted as counter-stereotypes to typical black typecasts—even further. In addition, the counter-stereotype statements made by Rendell on Street’s behalf were amplified in their ability to racially inoculate Street being that they came directly from a white mayor—whose character white voters fundamentally took for granted because of his non-minority status. By emphasizing his experience in his campaign announcement and throughout the rest of his primary and general campaigns Street worked to counter the stereotype that minority candidates often have less experience than white candidates, hoping that white swing voters would extricate him from the racial stereotype and support him with their vote come Election Day. Although Street used counter-stereotypes to racially inoculate himself to white swing voters, this was not the same as pursuing a de-racialization strategy. To be de-racialized, Street would have had to diminish discussions of race throughout his campaign, thereby working to prevent race from becoming a factor at all. As illustrated, he did not do this and instead approached the election with the assumption that race would automatically be a factor in the election, and minimizing the racial thinking of black and white voters in Philadelphia was nearly impossible.

Street had not yet earned the ‘neighborhood mayor’ label, however he started his
campaign embodying this title. Street desired to continue the legacy of Mayor Rendell while also remedying the shortcomings of his tenure, primarily the flaw of overlooking Philadelphia’s communities beyond the immediate Center City district. In an effort to signal to voters that he was the candidate who would not overlook ordinary citizens, who empathized with their dismay and who would work to address their qualms, Street’s approach included both class and racially based appeals to lure marginalized communities and white swing voters to his camp. As mentioned, despite the conglomeration of racial and class based appeals within Street’s approach, race-based appeals predominated—as evidenced in the implicit messages his opening campaign announcement and the racial inoculation strategy of highlighting of his political experience. Street’s race based appeals, albeit implicit, would continue to outweigh his class based appeals throughout his campaign strategy, as seen in the issues at the center of his campaign.
Street’s Positions

Every candidate pledged to address citizens’ concerns about crime and public education, but Street proposed something that no other candidate suggested nor any other mayor had ever addressed—neighborhood development. During the Rendell years, development plans were primarily aimed at revitalizing the downtown business district in hopes of attracting more businesses, thereby creating jobs, and spurring the local economy. City officials expected that the wealth and prosperity generated by downtown businesses would spread to the city at large; however this often did not occur. Instead center city continued to prosper while outside areas continued to decline (Adams et. al 2008).

As the councilman for the North Philadelphia district during Rendell’s tenure, Street represented a predominantly low-income, black community, therefore making it one of the most marginalized communities in Philadelphia. Consequently, he saw the suffering of his constituents in the face of increased prosperity for residents of the Center City District. As a councilman Street worked to secure more than $100 million for housing development in North Philadelphia neighborhoods (Yant & Burton 1999), but soon realized that this was not enough to turn the tide on a neighborhood in such decline. Having witnessed the plight of North Philadelphia residents who simply wanted to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods, as a resident and then later as a councilman representing the district, Street had first-hand experience with the general disregard that declining communities received from local officials. Street was essentially a liberal, arguing for low-income housing and tax increases to increase services for the needy; however, Street was forced transition from a liberal to a fiscal conservative during the city’s economic downtown. Because the city was in overall fiscal decline during his time as Council President there was only so much Street could do to reverse trends in
declining communities like North Philadelphia. Still, once the city began to recover from its financial ills declining neighborhoods remained at the margins of local political attention, even as plans to revitalize and further develop Center City were underway (Adams et. al 2008).

Recognizing that this growing disparity between Center City and other neighborhoods was problematic, and identifying with the dismay of those within the surrounding communities, Street pledged to shift the focus from downtown development to neighborhood transformation. By taking a strong position urging the need for neighborhood development and pledging to create a plan to address neighborhood blight, crime and service delivery as mayor, Street sent a veiled message to members of blighted communities, a message saying that he heard their cries and was on their side—a race-based appeal.

Most politicians discerned that blighted neighborhoods were a problem primarily because neighborhoods with abandoned properties, vacant lots, abandoned cars and general decay became magnets for crime in Philadelphia. High crime rates forced the city to spend the relatively small amount of tax money it possessed—due to the tax base loss the city was already experiencing—to increase the police force and work to eliminate pockets of crime within the neighborhoods. Additionally, the large presence of crime in the city’s blighted neighborhoods would make even more middle class taxpayers leave the city for safer locations reducing the tax base even further leading to diminution of city services. Population loss left more unoccupied properties, and due to the lack of middle class residents coming into the city most remained vacant expanding the process of disinvestment and blight to other neighborhoods. “Spreading blight diminishes the quality of life in neighborhoods, creates more health and safety problems, depresses surrounding real estate values and frightens away potential private investment” forming a “vicious cycle, both the cause and effect of community decline” (McDonald 2000).
Traditionally, political leaders focused on how the presence of blighted communities reduced the likelihood of private investment within the city and engaged in urban renewal type programs to address the problem. As opposed to renewing blighted neighborhoods, urban renewal destroyed residential areas only to replace them with more marketable venues—primarily high-rise office buildings and office buildings. Street’s Neighborhood Transformation Initiative relied on private developers similar to the plans instituted within urban renewal program (McGovern 2006); however, Street’s focus on neighborhoods in his 1999 campaign marked a departure from the way politicians had typically viewed and proposed to address blighted communities. As opposed to simple urban renewal and destruction of neighborhoods for new office construction, Street wanted to invest money into the blighted communities, revitalize the neighborhoods and encourage economic investment right in their vicinity.

Police Commissioner John Timoney noted that seeing abandoned cars on a block sent a particular message to the members of that community: “it says nobody gives a shit about your neighborhood. Because it’s been abandoned it says the politicians don’t care, the cops don’t care” (McDonald 2000). For a long time residents of Philadelphia’s blighted communities felt the neglect that Timoney describes. Street understood this feeling of neglect and made a direct appeal in his campaign to citizens of blighted communities by arguing that the city shift the focus to neighborhoods and spend city money to spur economic development in blighted communities. Considering North Philadelphia “the last frontier” Street noted what message neighborhood revitalization would send to members of blighted communities, “It says to people: We care about your neighborhood; we care about what’s going on. You shouldn’t give up, because we haven’t given up” (Yant & Burton 1999). By making neighborhoods the focus of his 1999 campaign Street signaled that in contrast to his competitors and those who came before him, he would pay
attention to marginalized communities as mayor. This was yet another subtle-race based appeal to black voters because of the internal political dynamic within the city. Black citizens felt that local leaders did not care about their neighborhoods and were only concerned with improving Center City. Therefore, a mayoral candidate like Street, who was a part of the local government but still arguing for a shift in the city’s focus from Center City development to neighborhood revitalization, provided a subtle cue that unlike the leaders before him he recognized the disappointment of those outside of Center City.
Street’s Language

It is standard that political candidates employ phrases, sentences and terms that connect them to their intended audience. Often referred to as dog-whistling politics (Greenberg 2007), politicians will make speeches during their campaign using coded language that connotes one thing to the general public while containing a specific and more distinct connotation for a targeted part of the populace. Distinguishing dog-whistling particularly when it comes to race coding is very difficult because we currently do not have a common-understanding of the appearance of a racially-coded appeal. We know it when we see it, yet have been unable to come to a consensus on what ‘it’ actually looks like. It is important to note that there is a difference between a racist appeal—those that often draw on anti-Black sentiment and are targeted to white voters—and racial appeals—those that are racial in nature but don’t take advantage of systemic racist predispositions about minorities. For our purposes the term racial appeal refers to the underlying messages deployed by a candidate that are racial in nature and designed to portray him/herself in a positive manner and his opponent in a negative manner. It is not enough to conclude that Street employed racial cues to lure his targeted audience to grant him their votes; Street made racial appeals that were calculated to build up his image in the eyes of his target audience, send signals to his targeted audience, and encourage them to vote in his favor. Ultimately, Street complimented his approach as connected to the average Philadelphia resident and his stand of shifting the focus from downtown development to neighborhood revitalization, with racial appeals to members of marginalized communities in Philadelphia.

Although Street understood that he needed to acquire white voter support to win both the primary and general elections, he continued to make direct appeals to his base throughout his campaign. For example, at a candidate’s forum sponsored by two black groups—Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and Philadelphia Links—Street often used language to remind the audience that he
identified with them because of race. Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated is one of the oldest black Greek-letter organizations. Founded in 1911 with the purpose of encouraging black achievement in every field of human endeavor, Kappa Alpha Psi has grown into an organization that boasts: educational opportunity programs to promote college access for black youth, a youth empowerment division, and a philanthropic division that encourages civic engagement. The organization currently has over 15,000 members, undergraduate and alumni chapters in every state, and international chapters in continental Africa, Europe, and Asia. Philadelphia Links is an international non-profit established in 1946 consisting of over 12,000 professional women of color. This non-profit is one of the oldest volunteer service organizations encompassing: a health and human services wing, a national trends and services that provides educational services to increase awareness of problems affecting the quality of life within black communities, a youth services wing, and an international trends and services wing that focuses on providing services to descendants of the African diaspora across the globe. The predominantly black audience present at the forum as well as the sponsoring organizations’ influence within the black community magnified the strength of the racially appealing language that Street employed.

Street told the audience that “this shouldn’t be difficult for us” (Cusick 1999) referencing the choice between himself and a white Republican. Scholars have noted that “first person references to ‘us’; and ‘we’ define and qualify the relationship between candidates and voters as one predicated on racial group identity and the pursuit of group interests” (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011); therefore Street’s statement worked to infer an “in group collective” (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011) illustrating his connection with the black audience or the “in” group in opposition to the “out” group that Katz was a part of. Street later made additional references to the connections that he as a black man had with the audience as opposed to Katz who was white
and not familiar with the black community. At one point during the forum Street remarked “Sam Katz isn’t a bad person, but he just doesn’t have the set of experiences that you would have, or I would have, or anybody would have who’s been around here for a while” (Cusick 1999). Again marking an “in group collective” (McIlwain & Caliendo), this statement made the assertion that Katz didn’t share the same experience with anyone in the audience, with himself or with anyone else in the Germantown community (where the forum was held). In the end, by making this statement Street framed political interests as racial group interests and also invoked questions of Katz’s ability to pursue and protect minority interests without identifying with the minority group himself.

Following the assumption that most racist appeals come from white candidates and racial appeals come from candidates of color (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011), we can conclude that Street’s appeals were racial but not racist. Much of what Street said during the candidate’s forum sent the underlying message that as a white man Katz wouldn’t relate with the struggles of the “in” group, and therefore he couldn’t relate with black citizens at all; however, this was different than making racist claims. They were not racist appeals because they did not target “anti-minority sentiment for their efficacy” (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011) and instead were paired with his image as a black candidate to correlate with particular racial narratives (Mendelberg 2001) within black group identification. The majority of Street’s racial appeals worked to build up his own image in the eyes of black and white voters. At times Street’s appeals might have been used to draw attention to what Street felt were the flaws of Sam Katz, but ultimately they were aimed at boosting Street’s credentials and persona amongst the groups he needed to win the election—blacks and white swing voters.

As mentioned, a small portion of the implicit racial appeals of Street’s campaign also
included underlying class-based messages. Using coded language that would appeal to blacks and low-income residents of all colors, Street further indicated that he would work to address the needs of poorer Philadelphians and black Philadelphians and improve their situation if elected mayor. One appeal made during Street's Labor Day speech illustrated a focus on class issues as opposed to just race issues. Street proclaimed that he was the candidate who understood the needs of working people telling the crowd "in November, we're going to wake up and have somebody [as mayor] who understands labor or doesn't. . . . I will be a mayor who represents the working-class interests of this city" (Infield 1999g). Matched with Street's position on neighborhoods, Street's language during the Labor Day speech further signaled that he was the candidate that would pursue the interests of Philadelphia's marginalized communities.

Taking into consideration Street's language at the candidate's forum in Germantown and in his Labor Day Speech, it is fairly apparent that he made racial and class based appeals to maintain black voter support and secure white swing voters during his 1999 campaign. Such appeals were hidden within his approach, his positions and his language within his campaign and ultimately worked to emphasize his image, making black and white voters view him as the candidate who would best pursue their interests. In the end, Street used his race to his strategic advantage. By pairing it with specific narratives and emphasizing it in distinct ways to relate to enough voters, Street managed to win the 1999 election and become the city's next mayor.

On the surface, Philadelphia's 1999 mayoral election was the archetype of the average local election, but below this conventional veneer laid a public divided along racial lines. With the recent history of Center City communities thriving in the face of increased deterioration of the surrounding majority black communities, black voters represented a marginalized and scorned portion of the electorate. Street, the politically savvy leader that he was, seized upon this
dynamic and constructed a campaign that would attract this group of disparaged voters. His 1999 campaign featured implicit racial appeals aimed at sending coded messages to Philadelphia’s black electorate, and they were so well-hidden that groups outside of the black electorate didn’t even notice during the campaign. Ultimately, Street’s racial approach, positions and language convalesced into a nuanced style of implicit racial campaigning that worked to his advantage by appealing to his base of black voters, while still granting him the ability to expand support amongst white liberal voters. While Street effectively used Philadelphia’s political environment to his benefit during his campaign, transitions in the internal political dynamic of the city would furnish future mayoral candidates with a completely different environment to manage.
II. The 2007 Mayoral Election

Following two terms of “the neighborhood mayor” John F. Street, Philadelphia was once again holding a mayoral election with no incumbent mayor and very competitive candidates. On the Democratic side were: Congressman Chaka Fattah, Congressman Bob Brady, state representative Dwight Evans, former city councilman Michael Nutter, self-made businessman and former Deputy Mayor for the Office of Productivity and Management (under Rendell) Tom Knox. Representing the Republican Party was Al Taubenberger, president of the Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

While Street’s term started off on a positive note with Philadelphia residents hopeful and excited for significant change within the city’s local politics, it ended with an FBI probe of government offices and mixed feelings about his tenure as mayor. Due to the scandals in city government during Mayor Street’s term, many city residents were also interested in reforming the ethics codes for city officials. When asked what personal or professional qualifications were most important for the next mayor to have, 15% of Philadelphia residents expressed that they wanted a mayor with ethical and personal integrity and 18% reported they wanted someone who was honest, sincere and truthful (Yost et. al 2006). Mayor Street’s favorability had dropped amongst residents as well, with 46% having an unfavorable opinion of him and 37% expressing positive views (Yost et. al 2006). There was, however, a strong contrast in how black and white voters viewed the mayor; while 15% of white voters thought Street had done a good job, 50% of black voters thought that he had done an ‘excellent’ or ‘good job’ (Yost et. al 2006). Such disparity may have been due to the attention that Street paid to marginalized communities during his term—endearing him to Philadelphia’s black population and estranging him from white

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3 Queena R. Bass & Jesus White were also running as Democrats yet were not considered to be viable candidates
voters. All the same both black and white voters were concerned about what they felt was a declining Philadelphia.

Local residents’ feelings about living in Philadelphia began to decline in 2003 and further declined in 2007 with more residents believing the city was a worse place to live than before (Yost et. al 2006). Furthermore, 64% of residents felt that the city was headed on the wrong track (2006 Keystone Poll). Surprisingly, black and white residents were not nearly as divided on what issues were most important to the city as they were during the 1999 mayoral election, and both groups agreed about the direction of the city and its livability in 2006 (Yost et. al 2006). Crime was the major concern, with 64% of residents listing it as the top issue and many ranking it as 9.4 on a scale of 1 to 10 (Yost et. al 2006). Many of the issues that were important in the 1999 election remained at the forefront of residents’ minds, including the need to improve public schools and fund initiatives to improve the city’s neighborhoods (Yost et. al 2006). In contrast to the 1999 mayoral election, race was not expected to be a dynamic during the campaign. This was primarily due to the lack of divergence between the races on what path the city needed to take in the upcoming year as well as a civic pressure early on in the primary pressuring the candidates to vow not to engage in race-based attacks and appeals (Fitzgerald 2007b). Consequently, there were not many racially divisive issues, no candidate had a secure hold on one racial group and many candidates had cross-racial appeal. Ultimately, despite the understanding that securing the vote of the black electorate was integral to a primary win race was not nearly as overt a factor in 2007 as it was in 1999, and despite some instances of coded racial references and racial authenticity questions about Michael Nutter, the 2007 election was not consumed by race.

The central issues of the 2007 mayoral election would be how each candidate would work to combat crime and enhance public education within the city. In 1999 the big question...
facing the city was who would succeed ‘America’s mayor’ Ed Rendell and who would work to address the inequality of Philadelphia’s center city and the surrounding communities. In 2007, the question of the day was who could improve the city’s livability overall and who would encourage government reform?
A. The Primary

From the national change that presidential hopeful Barack Obama was advertising during his campaign to the local change in Philadelphia’s campaign contribution limits, change was the motto of the 2007 mayoral primary. Not surprisingly each Democratic candidate hopped on the campaign trail publicizing how they planned to bring change to a declining Philadelphia if elected mayor on November 6th, 2008. The candidate with the greatest name recognition, Chaka Fattah, had an early lead amongst voters in an August 2006 Keystone Poll with more than a quarter saying they would give him their vote if the primary was held today. Dwight Evans followed him with 15%, Michael Nutter with 11%, Bob Brady with 5% and Tom Knox with a mere 1%. Despite Fattah’s early lead, many voters were actually undecided leaving the race open for any candidate to grab. “There’s enough fluidity [in this election] that anything can happen” remarked Terry Madonna, the director of the Keystone Poll (Fitzgerald 2007a). In addition, because of the racial unity on the need for change and sentiment that the city was headed on the wrong track, analysts expected that the race would be highly competitive and more issue-based. “People are looking for candidates who can deliver a vision on the issues” (Fitzgerald 2007a) commented one analyst, therefore unlike 1999 it was going to take more than a neighborhood strategy to win the 2007 primary, and each candidate was set to “rise above the base and be the whole city’s candidate” (Fitzgerald 2007a).

Announcing his candidacy on July 22, 2006, Michael Nutter was the first to enter the race for mayor. In his speech given from the front porch of a newly constructed home in West Philadelphia Nutter highlighted the need for jobs, increased public safety, and better education. Similar to Street’s campaign announcement Nutter also emphasized his experience and qualifications as a councilman for the Fourth District. “Every day in Philadelphia, I’ve been
getting the job done for you! I’m ready to do the job, and there is no one more qualified to lead this city in the right direction than me!” (Gelbart 2006a) exclaimed Nutter in front of a crowd filled with community supporters, one elected official and three ward leaders. Nevertheless within Council Nutter was primarily viewed as a “budget wonk” (Gelbart 2006a) and many locals knew him for his desired ban on smoking inside of Philadelphia’s bars and restaurants. This formed the basis of Nutter’s biggest weakness—a lack of political and local support—and was illustrated during his campaign announcement. None of the other councilmen showed up and one family proceeded to have a reunion right across the street from where he was speaking totally ignoring Nutter and his campaign announcement. “Even though Nutter is from Philadelphia and knows Philadelphia, he needs to get well-rooted in neighborhoods all the way down to the ward precinct level across the city in order to make a viable run” noted St. Joseph’s history professor Randall Miller (Gelbart 2006a). “Michael’s biggest detriment probably is his lack of inside game” added Jerry Mondesire (Gelbart 2006a). Hoping to address his lack of political support and neighborhood appeal, Nutter made references to his community connections while also taking stabs at Chaka Fattah—who had formed an exploratory committee before officially entering the race—during his announcement. “I believe in a place called Hope, but I also believe in a place called Parkside” and “I don’t need a big committee to tell me what the city’s problems are” (Gelbart 2006a). This may have been true, however many voters and politicians only knew Nutter as a reformer who was popular amongst downtown business leaders (Gelbart 2006a). Nutter had particular trouble drawing black voter support, obtaining only 9% among black respondents in an October 2006 Tribune poll (Schaeffer 2006a). As one member of the black family across the street from his announcement remarked “I don’t think [Nutter] is crooked, I just don’t think he’s too cool” (Gelbart 2006). Consequently, Nutter needed to do an
extensive amount of work to make city residents—black voters in particular—view him as
connected to Philadelphia’s neighborhoods as he claimed in his campaign announcement.

Recognizing the need to gain black support and the city residents’ strong desire to elect a
candidate who would reduce crime in the city, Nutter made crime one of the focal points of his
campaign. Identifying himself as “an outraged black man” (Gelbart 2007a) who was angered at
406 homicides the city experienced in 2006 (Schaeffer 2007a), Nutter wanted to institute an anti-
crime plan for the city at large. As illuminated in his 15-page plan called Safety Now: Ten Weeks
to a Safer Philadelphia, Nutter’s strategy for reducing crime included placing surveillance
cameras in high crime areas, hiring 500 new police officers over the course of the next three
years at a cost of $130 million, establishing a new public safety cabinet within local government
to coordinate efforts of crime prevention agencies, and instituting a stop and frisk policy (Gelbart
2007b). “The level of violence in our city has reached epidemic proportions. My plan outlines
immediate steps to help alleviate the problems on our streets” remarked Nutter in a statement
about his proposed plan (Gelbart 2007b). Nutter also promised that on his first day as mayor he
would adhere to the Philadelphia Code and declare certain neighborhoods as experiencing crime
emergencies, in which police presence would be heightened, large groups prohibited from
gathering in public spaces and curfews enacted (Gelbart 2007a). He also criticized Street stating
that if he could not make the city safer he should step down as mayor of Philadelphia (Gelbart
2007a). Complimenting his plan Nutter also proposed the need for city hiring practices to give
ex-prisoners better chances to obtain certain city jobs (Gelbart 2007b).

Although much of the city wanted a candidate who would take a tough stance on crime,
and a Philadelphia Tribune poll illustrated that crime was a top concern of black voters
(Schaeffer 2007a), analysts were unsure whether Nutter’s anti-crime proposals would resonate
with them. “It’s the long-term approach that’s likely to be received by African-American voters. A let’s just lock-em up approach is not going to be well received”. Instead “black voters tend to respond to ideas like, new police recruits need to spend a month in boys’ and girls’ clubs, to get to know neighborhoods”, commented a Tribune pollster (Schaeffer 2007). In response to such assumptions, Nutter responded that his proposal did resonate with black people who lived in high crime areas stating “if you live in a hot spot and you’re ducking bullets every day, you’re thinking, what is anyone doing” (Schaeffer 2007a).

In contrast to Street’s anticrime plan other candidates’, like Fattah called for help for the poor and Evans called for increased personnel and leadership within the police department. Evans—who historically had crime at the center of his campaign—pledged that he would continue fighting for stronger gun-control laws and woo former police Commissioner John Timoney back to the position if elected (Schaeffer 2007a). Fattah’s plans were similar to Nutter’s calling for more police to help locate illegal guns and the implementation of surveillance cameras within dangerous communities; unlike Nutter, however, he was not critical of Street’s actions to combat crime citing the fact that many cities struggled with crime (Schaefer 2007a).

Notwithstanding his need to convince the black electorate of his community connections and overall procurement of their support, Nutter had wide appeal across racial lines exhibiting white voter support (Fitzgerald 2007a). Perhaps such support stemmed from his constant disagreement with Mayor Street or simply from their connection with other policy initiatives he hoped to institute if elected such as The Nutter Plan for Public Education. Nutter’s Putting Children First education initiative encompassed a two-prong approach that would fight for funding for public education and institute reforms via the Philadelphia School District (Fischer 2007). Other key policy initiatives included in Nutter’s agenda to reform the city were: revising
the zoning code for the city, promoting new housing production and revitalization of
eighborhoods, continuing city ethics reform that he started as a councilman, creating new
emergency management plan and making Philadelphia a more sustainable and “green” city
(Fischer 2007). Throughout his campaign Nutter worked to further elucidate these policy
initiatives to Philadelphia residents, while contending that he could be the candidate to institute
large scale reform and change within the city.

Congressman Chaka Fattah started out on the campaign trail as the front-runner, making
his announcement in November 2006 in front of the School of the Future. Sounding similar to
Street (an ally of Fattah) back in 1999, Fattah said he wanted to “transform [the] city from a city
of brotherly love to the city of real opportunity” (Gelbart 2006b) by helping disadvantaged
residents. As part of this focus on disadvantaged residents, Fattah’s primary policy initiative was
“the Fattah Opportunity Agenda” (Fischer 2007), which included a pledge to “invest needed
resources in Philadelphians to make sure that every child, regardless of need, can have access to
every opportunity that our city provides” (Fischer 2007). In order to achieve such a lofty goal
Fattah planned to lease out Philadelphia’s airport and use the proceeds—estimated to generate $3
billion—to finance new social programs and create a planned Philadelphia Opportunity
Commission that he would chair. “We’re launching a comprehensive effort to move into the
sunshine people who are now in the shadows of the city’s prosperity” (Schaeffer 2007b) said
Fattah when commenting on his opportunity agenda.

State representative Dwight Evans entered the race with a campaign slogan of “block by
block” (Fitzgerald 2007a). With crime reduction being the major issue in the city and Evans’
notoriety as the candidate who had long propagated crime reducing strategies, journalists and
political analysts expected 2007 to be Dwight Evans’ time to shine. Outside of his strategies for
crime reduction, Evans hoped to be seen as the candidate who would revitalize Philadelphia just as he had revitalized his West Oak Lane district. Citing blight as one of the biggest challenges in the city (Matza 2007a) Evans planned to capitalize on anchors within Philadelphia’s communities that possessed self-interest to help clean up the blight within the city. Claiming that he would create “synergy” (Matza 2007a) between the institutions and the people in the communities, Evans wanted to build up blighted communities by revitalizing their indigenous institutions. “There’s an institution in every community that you’ve got to build on. Some kind of institution that is your foundation….The question is: do you see anything it or don’t you? It’s a part of a vision” (Matza 2007a). This is exactly what he did at the Ogontz Plaza strip mall that had been a drug haven within Evans’ West Oak Lane district before he created a non-profit, the Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corp, that took control of the dilapidated property, redeveloped it and sold it to a variety of small business owners. With the help of OARC the avenue became a more attractive location to businesses and slowly but surely Ogontz Plaza was completely revitalized boasting a bevy of shops including a Wine & Spirits, a restaurant and a summer jazz festival that was growing in popularity as each year passed. “[Evans has] done a great job. This block was like a black hole. The city called it a blighted area, but he saw a diamond in the rough” remarked the owner of Cornbread & Coffee, a new breakfast located off of Ogontz Avenue.

In contrast to his campaign in 1999, Evans had a good amount of support from fairly powerful organizations like the Transportation Workers Union and the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and the Vicinity. Yet, Evans’ campaign still had its shortcomings. Even with his ability to revitalize communities like Ogontz Avenue that many had given up on, voters outside of his district continued to have a hard time connecting with him. Even local Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Michael Matza (2007a) took notice of how confusing Evans’ stories and syntax
could be when it came to expressing his vision for the city. As such, Evan’s major hurdle during the election was to get voters outside of West Oak Lane to view him in the positive manner that those in that area already saw him.

Announcing his candidacy just down the hill from the Abbotsford Homes public housing project on November 30, 2006, Tom Knox started off his campaign by emphasizing his impressive life story (Schaeffer 2006b). Growing up in the projects, Knox was familiar with poverty and was actually forced to quit school in order to help support his family after his father was injured at work. After years of hard work Knox went from an impoverished youth to a self-made businessman, who used a portion of his fortune to finance his campaign. Dwelling on his impoverished childhood, Knox remarked: “I know what it’s like to feel like you don’t have a chance in the world, I know what opportunity is and how it can change a life, because it changed mine” (Schaeffer 2006). Similar to Fattah’s agenda, Knox wanted to showcase his upbringing in order to appeal to people tired of the political status quo. Knox’s strategist, Joe Trippi, noted how emphasizing Knox’s childhood would endear him to the poor thereby inoculating him from the expected criticism he would receive as a rich, would-be reformer, political neophyte (Schaeffer 2006b). Recognizing the effect the pay-to-play scandal had on city residents Knox entered the primary putting forth an outsider reformist agenda and proclaiming to the small crowd gathered at his announcement “together, we’ll take the ‘for sale’ sign off City Hall, and we’ll replace it with a new sign: ‘open for business’” (Schaeffer 2006b). With plans to institute a new city-wide drug strategy for all levels of government, Knox wanted to attack the city’s drug scene head on. He also proposed to institute tougher prosecution of criminals in an effort to stifle the growing wave of crime. These policies were to be complemented by better low-quality healthcare for residents, and a plan to use CCP as a foundational institution to better train Philadelphia’s
workforce for future employment (Fischer 2007). Knox’s strength of being an outsider who could claim to be outside the muck of pay-to-play politics and therefore unable to be bought, also presented a weakness. As a political neophyte, he was an outsider without a constituency to build upon and leaving him open to be criticized as unconnected to voters. Even with such a weakness Knox was still a viable candidate throughout the primary.

After months of speculation on whether he would enter the race or not, Congressman Bob Brady was the last to announce his candidacy on January 25, 2007 at the Convention Center (Schaefer 2007c). Even with the other qualified candidates in the primary, Brady was seen as a political giant entering the race because of his status as head of the city’s Democratic machine. Once he entered the race questions surrounding his electoral capability abounded including comments on whether he was tough enough to handle a mayoral race, had enough cross racial appeal to withstand the polarizing climate of Philadelphia, and whether he could use his status and the organization of the Democratic machine to win the primary? “This will be a real test” for Brady remarked one local political veteran skeptical of Brady’s primary capacity because he had no experience running a campaign himself. “Brady claims he’s got all these chits of people that he got jobs for that he can call in. Well I think he’s in for a rude awakening” (Schaefer 2007c). Moreover some worried that a loss in the primary could cost Brady his status as the head of the Democratic machine or his congressional seat he held since 1998 in a predominantly black district.

Making references to his youth in Philadelphia, Brady’s nostalgic tone added to his position as the average candidate who didn’t want to make any major reforms to the city and simply hoped to bring back the good old days of safe streets and decent paying jobs. “Affordable housing, a safe street, a decent education, that’s the neighborhood I know. Everything else is
secondary" (Schaefer 2007c) maintained Brady. Again playing up his personal story Brady appealed to Philadelphia’s working class by talking about his days as a carpenter unsure of where his next paycheck would come from, and also reminded the audience of the important political role he held in the city by discussing his mediation of teachers and SEPTA strikes over the years (Schaeffer 2007d). During his campaign announcement Brady vowed to place 1,000 new police officers on the street, eliminate the city’s business privilege tax, and monitor the performance of public schools via a ‘SchoolStat’ system (Schaeffer 2007d). He also showcased his political power by having a boisterous crowd filled with important political leaders (including Mayor Street’s brother Milton), organized labor, and Democratic ward leaders. While having the advantage of leading the city’s Democratic machine and therefore being connected to a variety of political insiders, Brady also symbolized the status quo within the Democratic Party and a connection to pay-to-pay politics at a time when many residents felt a need for change within the city. In spite of these suspected shortcomings Brady planned to push forward with his campaign vowing to address Philadelphia’s problems with “one good idea and the strength and experience to make it happen” (Schaeffer 2007d).

The mayoral primary had a host of competent candidates with various strengths, weaknesses and backgrounds, however voters would ultimately decide which candidate was the best to lead the city based on the differentiation within each candidate’s plan to change the conditions of Philadelphia in 2007. As in most elections, the points of contention between candidates were of primary importance throughout the primary campaigns. Recognizing that crime was the most important issue for city residents, all of the candidates tried to distinguish themselves from one another by purporting that their proposed crime fighting strategies would be the best for the city. Most of the primary candidates took shots at Mayor Street’s inability to curb
gun violence in the city, and as mentioned Michael Nutter proposed that Street should step down due to this failure. The primary difference between the candidates when it came to the issue of street-crime was where their focus lied. Some candidates like Evans and Fattah focused on preventive measures including increased economic development in high-crime areas and increasing opportunities for the residents of those neighborhoods (Schaeffer 2007a). Tom Knox also focused on prevention by proposing that the state create stricter gun laws to reduce the availability of guns on the streets of Philadelphia (Schaeffer 2007a). In contrast, other candidates like Nutter focused on disciplinary measures to reduce crime including stop-and-frisk policies and police presence in high-crime communities (Gelbart 2007b). Meanwhile Brady focused on boosting his crime-fighting image by winning a high profile endorsement from District Attorney Lynne Abraham who represented a credible voice on issues of crime in the city (Fitzgerald & Schaeffer 2007). While the strategies above presented the candidates with concrete ways to woo voters whose primary concern was crime reduction in the city to their respective camps, there was no evidence saying that the strategies proposed would actually reduce crime in the city at all (Matza 2007b).

As the primary progressed the typical bickering, advertising wars, and intense political debates entered the campaign, yet one expected factor did not have nearly as large a place in the election—the race factor. For starters there was a lack of racially divisive issues present within the campaign (Yost et. al 2006) and this was compounded by the fact that many voters remained undecided in various polls throughout the election (Fitzgerald 2007d). Not even black voters (who usually clustered around the black candidates) were completely behind one candidate; 32% of black voters were undecided, 23% were for Fattah, 15% were for Knox, 10% for Evans, 8% for Nutter and 4% were for Bob Brady (Fitzgerald & Matza 2007). “Most blacks [don’t] see the
white candidates as any kind of threat" (Fitzgerald & Matza 2007), and as such racial consolidation was not necessary and didn’t occur within the 2007 primary.

Michael Nutter was the center of all the racial incidents that did occur during the 2007 primary. By depicting himself as an angry black man during his speech on rising crime within Philadelphia, Nutter illustrated that he was not completely above engaged in racially based appeals. Additionally, through his calls for stop-and-frisk programs as part of his crime reduction strategy, Nutter opened himself up to critiques from his opponents and outside groups that he was encouraging racial profiling of minorities by police. One attack included an anti-Nutter ad by the group One Step Closer in which footage of civil rights marchers facing police with batons was in the background while a narrator questioned Nutter’s stop-and-frisk proposal by asking “haven’t we had enough of politicians like Nutter who step on our rights in the name of security?” (Gelbart 2007c). The Committee of Seventy identified that the ad was blatantly racial (Gelbart 2007c), although the group insisted that they were not trying to inject race as an issue but simply wanted to emphasize how stop-and-frisk policies have been documented to unfairly target minorities whether intentionally or not (Gelbart 2007c). This ad was complemented during a debate at Philadelphia’s National Constitution Center where Nutter rebutted claims that his stop-and-frisk policy would encourage racial profiling by stating “as a person who’s been black for 49 years, think I know a little bit about racial profiling” to which Fattah responded by saying that Nutter needed to remind himself that he’s an African-American (Fitzgerald 2007c). Fattah’s statement drew gasps from the audience due to his overt questioning of Nutter’s racial authenticity. “He was basically saying, you are not only a phony, but you are a phony in the most fundamental possible way. In no way can you speak for us” noted one St. Joseph’s University
Professor. Notwithstanding these few racial incidents, the 2007 primary was primarily issue based and issues of race did not enter the election that often.

As the lack of racial divisiveness marked a change within the realm of Philadelphia local politics, the primary remained largely undecided throughout its progression. By May a fifth of voters still remained undecided and 41% of those who were categorized as decided told pollsters that they might change their minds (Fitzgerald 2007d). The primary was also rife with drastic shifts within the polls. At first Fattah was in the lead in the primary, midway through the election Tom Knox was the front-runner with 21% and two days before the primary polls illustrated that Nutter had surged ahead with 31% (Fitzgerald 2007d). Recognizing that many people were still undecided, journalists and analysts warned that voters' second choice might actually win the entire primary due to strategic voting, and even those who were at the bottom of the polls—Brady & Evans—could successfully lobby the 'undecideds' and triumph in the end. With this knowledge and hope in mind each candidate launched into their respective get out the vote campaigns and swarmed the city with their supporters on May 15, 2007, the primary election day.

Although racial discord was not felt throughout the primary campaign, once the election results were announced and analyzed it became even more evident that race simply was not a factor during the 2007 primary. Michael Nutter emerged as the victor with 104,299 votes, 37% of the total votes counted which was more than twice the margin Street won by during the 1999 primary (Eichel 2007a). Tom Knox came second in the race receiving 25% of the vote, Brady 15%, Fattah 15% and Evans last with 8% (Eichel 2007a). Pulling off such a strong win represented one accomplishment for Nutter; he also made history by crossing over to win the largest percentage of white votes ever cast for a black candidate in a Philadelphia primary
(Matza 2007c). In the top 10 wards with the highest concentration of white voters, Nutter won 24-43% of the vote (Matza 2007c). Moreover, in the 26th district a majority white area of South Philadelphia that historically voted along racial lines, Nutter pulled 19% of the vote (Matza 2007c). Nutter did equally well in predominantly black areas winning 29-39% of the vote in the top 10 wards with the highest concentration of black voters (Matza 2007c). Nutter’s win illustrated that Philadelphia residents truly wanted change, and were willing to ignore racial biases as well as the city’s racial voting patterns to vote for candidates based on merit. City residents expressed how race didn’t matter and the issues like crime, corruption and character were of the utmost importance (Vitez 2007). But one white woman who voted for Nutter expressed what many felt about the 2007 primary election “I feel very strongly the American voting public is by and large beyond the issue of race” (Vitez 2007). Although her claims are debatable, it is clear that in Philadelphia’s 2007 mayoral primary city residents were more interested in change than issues of race. Residents and candidates alike were willing to overcome Philadelphia’s racial voting history, cross racial barriers, and demand that the primary focus on issues in an effort to ensure that the city’s next mayor would be the change many felt was necessary.
B. The General Election

After briefly celebrating his primary victory, Michael Nutter re-entered campaign mode, this time facing Republican Al Taubenberger. Having spent approximately $43 per vote he received (Gelbart 2007d), Michael Nutter spent a grand total of $4.2 million (Ferrick Jr. 2007) for his primary campaign and started on the general campaign trail with strong fundraising efforts. “We raised it. We spent it. I’m happy I won, and I’m now going out to raise some more” commented Nutter a month after his primary victory (Gelbart 2007d). Accordingly Nutter sought out new donors while also approaching past donors to give the full amount under the city’s new donor limit of $5,000 per individual and $20,000 per political committee (Gelbart 2007e). Receiving $100,000 after a ‘CEO’s for Nutter’ event, and $75,000 from a business group called “Women for Nutter”, Nutter continued to chase general campaign funds while Al Taubenberger boasted a war chest of a mere 8,000 at the end of the May primary (Gelbart 2007f). Recognizing that the city was still overwhelmingly Democratic, many were sure that he would win the general election and were left to wonder why Nutter continued to fundraise so aggressively (Gelbart 2007e). His campaign financial advisers simply claimed that the future mayor of Philadelphia needed to be in the financial position to support good candidates in Harrisburg, Washington, and Philadelphia’s surrounding counties (Gelbart 2007e) therefore making it a necessity to continue fundraising efforts throughout the general campaign. Once again on the path to raising millions for his campaign, Michael Nutter held a fairly comfortable position going into the general campaign and continued to maintain that position throughout the election. Taubenberger on the other hand, faced what the Philadelphia Inquirer called an “uphill climb” (Shister 2007).

Originally from the Northeast section of Philadelphia and presiding as the president of the Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce (Shister 2007), Al Taubenberger was
well aware that the numbers were stacked against him as a Republican candidate. While many voters were certain of his opponent’s victory in the upcoming general election, Taubenberger was surprisingly optimistic about his chances, remarking “I wouldn’t be doing this if I didn’t think I was going to win. I’m in it to win it” (Shister 2007). Characterizing himself as the super underdog, Taubenberger ignored statements by other prominent Republicans like Sam Katz stating that he had no chance at all (Shister 2007), and remained determined that he’d beat the odds.

Starting on the campaign trail with a small war chest (Shister 2007) Taubenberger launched into a fundraising campaign of his own. Outside of fundraising he held various events around the city advertising his platform that urged continued reduction of business taxes (something that he and Nutter agreed on), the creation of more jobs, more police to reduce crime, and smaller class sizes in public schools to better Philadelphia’s education system (Shister 2007). Despite facing an uphill battle to win the election, Taubenberger and his supporters thought that the city’s desire for change could prompt city residents to vote for a Republican candidate (Gelbart 2007f). “There’s no Republican or Democratic way to collect the trash. I think voters will give me a fair shake” noted Taubenberger, who also commented on how Michael Nutter was originally perceived as an underdog when he announced his candidacy in 2006 (Gelbart 2007f). Unfortunately for Taubenberger, his optimism about his chances for an electoral victory was not shared by many Philadelphia residents.

Nutter and Taubenberger had their first joint appearance of the general election campaign on Friday June 29, 2007 in a news conference to announce their disapproval of Mayor Street’s five year plan to cancel scheduled cuts for business taxes. Taubenberger called the mayor’s plan to abandon the cuts a “big mistake” and Nutter confirmed that “this is one issue that we
absolutely, positively, agree on” (Eichel 2007b). Street’s plan proposed canceling the scheduled business tax cuts in an effort to save the city $12 million, but both Taubenberger and Nutter countered that they would make up the money in a way that would not run the risk of jeopardizing Philadelphia’s economic growth by dissuading business interests in the city (Eichel 2007b). This was not the only area where the two candidates agreed. In the first mayoral forum held in September both candidates expressed agreement on encouraging economic development, improving the city’s public schools and reducing crime. Despite one disagreement on the shift to full-value reassessment of residential properties in the city, the hour-long forum was a pleasant event with neither candidate making an effort to highlight their differences (Eichel 2007c). At the forum Nutter and Taubenberger also agreed on Nutter’s earlier proposal that in order to prevent ex-convicts from returning to a life of crime the city needed to provide tax incentives to businesses who would hire released prisoners. “If you do the crime, you do the time; but the time can’t last forever” said Nutter while Taubenberger offered his support of the idea by stating “before I became a candidate, I’d have given you a hundred reasons why businesses shouldn’t hire an ex-convict, today, I’d give you a hundred reasons why they must” (Eichel 2007c). The forum was an amazingly jovial event and the candidates got along so well that many journalists called the race the friendliest in city history and jested that Philadelphia was the city of “mayorly love” (Shister 2007).

Other campaign encounters between the two candidates were just as amicable as the September mayoral forum. Out of the 3 televised debates of the general campaign Nutter and Taubenberger only disagreed on the same issue of property taxes and full-value reassessment of residential properties within the city (Kerkstra 2007a), and city funding of employee pensions (Kerkstra 2007b). Nutter was in favor of the switch to full-value assessment of properties that
would raise property taxes for those residents who were being undertaxed—due to increases in their property value—while reducing bills for those who were overtaxed—due to decreases in their overall property value (Kerkstra 2007a). On the issue of city pensions Nutter thought that the city could not afford increases in pension benefits for city employees (Kerkstra 2007b). In contrast, Taubenberger stated that he didn’t want to see property taxes raised in any degree because he was worried that the shift would upset the real estate market (Kerkstra 2007a). He also felt that the city was obligated to better fund city employee pensions although he did not address how the city would pay for the increases (Kerkstra 2007b). Other smaller disagreements were on ‘English only’ signs at Genos Steaks (Kerstra 2007b), the Boy Scouts of America’s ban on homosexual scouts (Fitzgerald 2007g), and the city’s residency requirement for city employees (Fitzgerald 2007g); however all of these disagreements were discussed in a polite and peaceable manner not seen during most mayoral debates. Larry Mendte, local news anchor and questioner at one debate even asked about the friendly nature of the candidates’ general campaigns to which Nutter replied “we talk about issues and not about each other because issues are the only thing that really matter” (Kerkstra 2007a). As for most of the other issues including: improving Philadelphia’s environment by discouraging littering (Fitzgerald 2007f), increasing funding for the city’s parks (Fitzgerald 2007f), prohibiting the building of casinos in residential areas (Fitzgerald 2007g) and reforms within city departments (Fitzgerald 2007g) the candidates were primarily in accord.

A general campaign branded with harmony and agreeability between Taubenberger and Nutter maintained its goodwill to the very end. As the general election wound down Nutter raised $130,000 totaling more than what Taubenberger had raised during his entire campaign (Gelbart 2007g) began to behave more like the mayor-elect as opposed to a candidate closing out
his general campaign (Kerkstra & Gelbart 2007). Analysts worried about low voter-turnout yet still predicted an overwhelming victory for Nutter (Gelbart 2007h). After Election Day, November 6, 2007), the results revealed that Michael Nutter coasted to the easy victory over Taubenberger that most city residents expected when the general campaign began. Winning 224,217 votes (83%)\(^4\), Nutter beat Taubenberger in every section of the city including the Northeast ward where Taubenberger was from (Kekstra & Gelbart 2007). At his postelection party Taubenberger pledged to help Nutter in his upcoming tenure as mayor-elect yet also warned him of the difficulty of reforming the city (Kerkstra & Gelbart 2007). Nutter’s post-election celebration consisted of a moment of silence for the recent shooting of police officer Chuck Cassidy, acknowledgement to Taubenberger for running a clean campaign, and a host of proclamations concerning cleaning up the city (Kerkstra & Gelbart 2007).

“A city election is not just a contest among individuals. It is an invitation to a conversation; an invitation for citizens of that city and region to share their concerns and their dreams, to compare ideas, to decide where they want their community to go” (Satullo 2007). The candidates in the 2007 mayoral election all understood this belief and put it to action within both the primary and general campaigns thereby granting the Philadelphia public with an election where race was not an overt factor and issues were the focal point. In the end, the 2007 mayoral election was about change. Residents were largely unhappy with the direction the city was going in and were determined to elect a mayor who would usher in the changes they so desired to see in the city. “Former councilman Michael Nutter came into the election announcing that he could be the reformer that the city needed, and this reformist vision led him to victory in becoming Philadelphia’s 3\(^{rd}\) black mayor-elect.

C. Race & Class during the 2007 Election: A Focus on Michael A. Nutter

With regards to the history of Philadelphia local politics, the 2007 mayoral election represented a departure from the norm. There were no racially divisive issues within the campaign (Yost et. al 2006), race was not injected as a significant factor during the entire campaign (Fitzgerald 2007d), and voters did not vote along racial lines as they had done in previous elections (Vitez 2007). Following the logic that de-emphasizing issues of race attracts white voter support (McCormick & Jones 1993) and recognizing the air of change surrounding the 2007 mayoral election Michael A. Nutter decided that he could win the election by running a deracialized campaign. Deracialization has been formally defined as "conducting a campaign in a stylistic fashion that defuses the polarizing effects of race by avoiding explicit reference to race-specific issues, while at the same time emphasizing those issues that are perceived as racially transcendent, thus mobilizing a broad segment of the electorate for purposes of capturing or maintaining public office" (McCormick & Jones 1993). Abiding by this strategy, Nutter entered the race as a reformer candidate arguing for increased efficiency of government and local agencies, improved quality of public education, and a reduction of crime throughout Philadelphia—all issues that were race-neutral and allowed him to deliver a message of reform without being labeled as working solely for the benefit of the black community.

Comparable to the deracialized campaign style of Barack Obama, Nutter only addressed racial issues when he was forced to do so by his opponents. Outside of a few race-based remarks to mediate claims of racial inauthenticity Michael Nutter remained race neutral throughout his 2007 campaign. Nutter made it a point to de-emphasize race in his approach, his positions and language while stressing the reforms he planned to institute if elected—a strategy that took him through the primary and through the general election to become Philadelphia's mayor-elect. By
taking an in depth look at these three areas, we can illustrate that throughout his reformer
approach Nutter pursued a strategy emblematic of the new type of deracialized black leader of
recent years, ultimately making him a deracialized candidate.
Nutter’s Approach

Nutter approached the 2007 election as the candidate who would bring widespread reform to a city that many felt was in a terrible condition (2006 Keystone Poll). He portrayed himself as the candidate that had a history of instituting reforms to better the city (Gelbart 2006a), who would end the pay-to-play politics as usual in Philadelphia, and would hold city officials accountable to the public (Gelbart 2007a). On the surface Nutter’s reform approach and agenda encompassed plans to address the ills of the city while also improving local government efficiency. However hidden beneath these explicit reforms Nutter was actually working to transform the history of racial politics in Philadelphia. Nutter understood that the current political dynamic of the city—one where black and white voters agreed on the direction of the city—together with his pursuit of a deracialized campaign strategy could further minimize issues of race if they did come up during the election thereby laying the foundation for transracial voting patterns in the city. Reform was the perfect slant through which he could be deracialized. With his reform approach Nutter sent cues that he was not going to be the typical black candidate only relying on black voter support and addressing black needs. Reform served as a symbol that he was a new type of leader different from the black leaders that came before him and different from the local mayoral candidate that Philadelphia had become accustomed to. From the announcement of his candidacy to his continued attacks on the inefficiency of Mayor John Street, Nutter constructed himself as a reformer candidate who would bring the changes city residents desired. Yet it is important to realize that this reformer approach worked in concert with his deracialized strategy signaling that not only did Nutter want to bring wide-spread reform to the city but desired to transform Philadelphia’s racial politics as well.
Announcing his candidacy on July 22, 2006, Michael Nutter spoke from the steps of a newly built row home in West Philadelphia not far from where he grew up (Gelbart 2006a)—a location that was as important and symbolic as the issues he chose to address. As Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Larry Eichel wrote: “whatever the setting or medium [the announcement of candidacy] remains one of the few moments when a candidates is totally in control of the situation – free to say what he or she wants, when and where he or she wants, largely free of criticism, before an audience of his or her choosing. So the image projected, as well as the subjects discussed or ignored, provide insight into what the campaign brain trust considers to be central in terms of a candidate’s strengths to highlight and weaknesses to address” (2007). The image that Nutter projected during his announcement was an image of reform. Dressed in a suit and tie while speaking from the newly constructed home, Nutter’s entire image was laced with symbolism. The mere fact that he, as a political business type wonk, was announcing his candidacy in the middle of a dilapidated neighborhood in the early stages of a positive transition provided a message that could not be ignored.

The dichotomy between the declining surrounding area and the start of Nutter’s political campaign served as a metaphor for the revitalization and change he proposed to bring as mayor of Philadelphia (Gelbart 2006a). The location of the home in the Parkside neighborhood of West Philadelphia—a newly revitalized area within an evolving section of the city—also served to enhance Nutter’s image as the catalyst for city-wide recovery. Proclaiming “every day in Philadelphia, I’ve been getting the job done for you...I’m ready to do the job and there is no one more qualified to lead this city in the right direction than me” (Gelbart 2006a), Nutter highlighted his experience working in local government while implying that although he was part of local governance—that many felt was leading the city in the wrong direction (2006
Keystone Poll)—he was the reform the city needed. Choosing a location near his home also built on his reform image and served as yet another metaphor to represent the larger changes he pledged to bring to the city. By returning to the neighborhood where he started with fairly humble beginnings as a local politician on the cusp of becoming the city’s 3rd black mayor, Nutter became the embodiment of change, revitalization and positive transformation. “I believe in a place called Hope…but I also believe in a place called Parkside” stated Nutter in an effort to further hint to voters that his candidacy was that of positive change and revitalization for neighborhoods like Parkside but the city at large as well.

Although Nutter’s speech embraced general cues that he would lead the effort to reform the city, it is important to recognize what his candidacy announcement ignored. Nutter could have played on the location of his campaign announcement in a predominantly black section of West Philadelphia to insert racial appeals or address racial issues, but he did not. Topics like gentrification, the continued disparity and inequality between black and white neighborhoods in Philadelphia or even the high rate of black-on-black crime are all issues that affected the area; however Nutter ignored all of these topics in his announcement. Instead he focused on issues of public safety, education and jobs—all of which were top concerns of Philadelphia residents of every race (Keystone Poll 2006). Within his reform based approach Nutter built on the deracialized philosophy of appealing to wide segments of the populace by ignoring race-based issues, refraining from race-based appeals and highlighting issues that are transracial or race-neutral. Accordingly even when he was presented with an opportunity to discuss racial disparities and insert racial appeals during his announcement Nutter propagated a deracialized reform ethos, “one of saving the city, as a civic duty and responsibility and as a means of benefitting the entire electorate” (Persons 2007).
Another integral part of Nutter’s reform approach was to emphasize his reformist background on council while also encouraging the public to view him as an outsider to the unethical practices recently revealed in the scandal surrounding City Hall. In 2006 Nutter pushed through ballot questions to create an independent city Board of Ethics and to increase government transparency. Within his reform approach Nutter highlighted reforms like those above and even drew attention to the more recent reform of transforming Philadelphia into a non-smoking city by the fall (Gelbart 2006a). Advancing his reformist image and establishing himself as outside the muck of local Philadelphia politics, Nutter took aim at the man who the recent scandal and FBI probe surrounded, Mayor John F. Street. Most of Nutter’s attacks criticized Mayor Street for not doing enough to reduce the high levels of violent crimes and murders within the city. Nutter urged Street to declare a crime emergency in high crime areas in Philadelphia (something that he pledged to do if elected) and when Street replied that the matter of crime in the city was too complex for the solution Nutter proscribed Nutter insisted publicly that the mayor step down (Gelbart 2007a). “Philadelphia’s reputation is foundering on the inaction of this administration….putting more cops on the street is not a knee-jerk reaction, as the mayor suggests, but a proactive solution to a growing genocide in our city” declared Nutter in response to Street’s claims of complexity (Fitzgerald & Maykuth 2007). Street responded to Nutter’s continued attacks by stating that he thought it was better to focus on prevention as opposed to declaring states of emergency or installing more surveillance camera. “I’m done with him, he’s just trying to use me for his campaign” commented Street after a community forum on violence prevention at the Sheraton Hotel in Center City (Fitzgerald & Maykuth 2007).

The bouts between Nutter and Street provided yet another forum where racial appeals could have been made. Being that both Nutter and Street are black men Nutter could have
questioned Street’s racial authenticity and claim that he as a black man was not doing enough to reduce violent crime in the city—crime that other black men suffered from the most. Instead Nutter only made reference to himself as “an outraged black man” (Gelbart 2007a) which served as a means to racially inoculate himself with black voters and to pre-empt the claims of racial inauthenticity he expected to face from his black opponents as opposed to making a race-based appeal directed at Street. In the end Nutter attacked Street on the race-neutral grounds of not successfully addressing the needs of the entire electorate by not doing enough to reduce crime, adding to his reformist image and further signaling that he aimed to bring widespread change to the city—it’s black population but other citizens as well.
Nutter's Positions

The issues at the center of Nutter's campaign—increasing public safety, improving education and reforming city ethics within local government—were key indicators of his deracialized campaign strategy. While entailing widespread plans for reforms all of these issue areas were race-neutral addressing the concerns of all voters across racial lines. "Political strategies based on race neutrality not only de-emphasize race, but completely remove it from the voting equation. These race neutral strategies allow African American candidates to present themselves as non-threatening to voters of all races and as individuals who will focus on the projects and policies that are for the benefit of the entire voting district, not just the African American residents" (Yon 2010). Street followed the deracialization strategy approach by campaigning on issues that did not address race. Yes, these were issues that the general public had indicated were of primary concern during the election (2006 Keystone Poll) but more importantly they were issues where race could be ignored, de-emphasized and were intrinsically race neutral.

Building on his reformer image Nutter chose issues that would appeal to the general public and that would signal that he was interested in issues that were of value to the entire voting public, not just Philadelphia's black population. "People are looking for candidates who can deliver a vision on the issue. Who is going to rise above the base and be the whole city's candidate" asked Democratic consultant Dan Fee in a news article analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the primary candidates (Fitzgerald 2007a). Nutter was determined to prove that he was the whole city's candidate and by choosing to focus on issues that had wide appeal amongst Philadelphians he hoped to signal to city residents that he was a candidate that would not appeal to any single racial base but would actively work to represent everyone.
In terms of public safety, Nutter's anticrime plan included placing surveillance cameras in high crime areas, hiring 500 new police officers, establishing a public safety cabinet, and instituting a stop and frisk policy (Gelbart 2007b). While the other black candidates' crime plans appealed to crime reducing strategies that resonated with black voters like: increased after-school programs for youth, helping those in low-income communities and economic development in high-crime areas (Schaeffer 2007a), Nutter's plan was not based on appealing to black voters but was based upon research of similar anti-crime measures in other cities (Gelbart 2007b). It was designed to provide immediate steps to help alleviate the city's high homicide rate by confiscating illegal guns, increasing the presence of police and general surveillance of crime ridden areas (Gelbart 2007b). Nutter's stop-and-frisk policy received a lot of criticism from the other black candidates and other prominent black leaders who claimed that such a policy would encourage racial profiling, but even with these claims Nutter maintained his race neutral approach claiming that his race-neutral strategy was the best way to make the city safer for all citizens, both black and white (Fitzgerald 2007c).

Nutter's other positions on improving education and reforming local government ethics were as race-neutral as his anticrime plan. Nutter's plan for public education called for increased funding for public education and reforms within the Philadelphia school district (Fischer 2007) and his ethics reform plans called for continuing the reforms he started in council such as instituting campaign finance limits and sustaining the city's ethics board (Gelbart 2006a). In the 2007 election voters were looking for a candidate that could be fair and representative of all races, and Nutter sought to prove that he could be that candidate by encompassing issues that appealed to all Philadelphia residents not just black residents, or white residents. As Shirely Pierce, an African-American teacher in the city remarked "voters want somebody who can be
fair to all. Not only are African Americans slipping back, so are the whites and the Puerto Ricans. We all want better schools, lower taxes, safer streets” (Fitzgerald & Matza 2007).

Michael Nutter recognized what Ms. Peirce described and accordingly ignored those issues that could be considered part of a black political agenda. Just as other deracialized candidates minimized race-based issues within their campaigns and based their campaigns on quality of life platforms (Perry 1990; Persons 1993; Perry 1996), Michael Nutter maintained deracialized throughout all of his positions making race-neutral issues of reforming public safety, education and government ethics the center of his campaign.
Nutter’s Language

Nutter’s language throughout the 2007 election was that of change, reform, and revitalization. While the other black candidates made some coded racial references (Fitzgerald & Matza 2007), Nutter continued to use deracialized language refraining from making race-based appeals to increase black voter support. Deracialized candidates make no coded references to race in their speeches, and rarely mention issues of race while on the campaign. As such this section on Nutter’s language will primarily evaluate the few times that he did make racial references, analyze what these references meant and explain why they occurred.

Widely regarded as a policy wonk comfortable with the business interests of center city and white voters at large (Gelbart 2006a), Michael Nutter was intrinsically different from the other black candidates he faced during the 2007 election. As part of his deracialized strategy Nutter approached the 2007 election as a reformer candidate who had quality of life issues like public safety and education at the center of his campaign. Black voters made up more than 50% of Philadelphia’s Democratic electorate in 2007 and all candidates, both black and white, understood that they key to winning the election could lay in securing black neighborhoods ((Fitzgerald & Matza 2007). In spite of this recognition Nutter pursued his deracialization strategy and made appeals to secure the entire electorate not just a majority of black voters. Nutter’s deracialization strategy and reputation as a candidate who was not tied to a major black base made him vulnerable to claims of racial authenticity by other black candidates. In an effort to inoculate himself from the authenticity claims he expected from his opponents, Nutter made strategic references to race as a way to racially identify himself with black voters (Fitzgerald & Matza 2007). Essentially these racial references were involuntarily prompted by Nutter’s opponents, and had he not been afraid that they’d question his racial authenticity they would not
have been made at all. In the end, although he was called out by other black candidates and constituents for not being racially authentic he was able to overcome these attacks and win the election due to the tactical race references he made throughout his campaign.

Although crime was considered to be a significant concern of all Philadelphians, a Tribune survey listed crime as the top concern of black Philadelphians (Schaeffer 2007a). Understanding that crime could be a defining issue in the campaign many candidates tried to emphasize their crime reduction strategies (Schaeffer 2007a). Nutter recognized that both black and white voters were unhappy with the way the mayor was addressing issues of public safety (Schaeffer 2007a) and therefore he made Street a constant target within his speeches on crime, using these outspoken attacks as a way to visibly differentiate his stance on crime from the other candidates—many of whom were reluctant to openly criticize the mayor (Schaeffer 2007a). The first tactical racial reference Nutter made was when he referred to himself as an ‘outraged black man’ in his speech criticizing Mayor Street for his inability to reduce violent crime (Gelbart 2007a). Because more than half of the victims of violent crime were black men aged 18 to 40 (Schaeffer 2007a), Nutter’s description of himself as an outraged black man served to signal that not only was he concerned because of his candidacy for mayor but his position as a black man made him more connected to the issue than his opponents. Although many were unhappy with the Mayor’s anticrime strategies, by targeting Street Nutter ran the risk of opening himself up even further to criticism of racial inauthenticity from the black community and black leaders simply because he was negatively attacking a black mayor and going against the principal of black racial solidarity. Politically the principal of racial solidarity “has less to do with ignoring individual differences within the Black community than with sublimating those differences for the sake of solidarity as a necessary strategy to pursue and secure a racial group’s political
interests” (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011). According to this principal, Nutter should have set aside his feeling that the Mayor was not doing enough to reduce crime in an effort to support another black leader who could successfully pursue black political interests. However, because he did openly criticize the mayor and even used these criticisms to bring more attention to his anti-crime plan, the other black candidates could infer that because Nutter did not follow the principal of racial solidarity he was racially inauthentic. Ultimately, Nutter’s racial characterization of himself as an outraged black man was a tactical way to inoculate himself from pending questions of racial authenticity while also providing a way to connect with black voters on an issue that affected their communities more than others—a connection Nutter realized was essential to winning the election (Fitzgerald 2007a).

The second racial reference made by Nutter occurred during a live television debate near the end of the primary. During the debate Nutter brought up his anti-crime plan and opponents immediately began criticizing the plan due to their fear that the stop-and-frisk policy encompassed in the plan would lead to racial profiling. In an effort to defend his anti-crime proposal Nutter stated “as a person who’s been black for 49 years, I think I know a little bit about racial profiling” (Fitzgerald 2007c). In response Fattah countered that by making the statement about being black Nutter needed to remind himself that he was an African-American (Fitzgerald 2007c). “The appeal to authenticity suggests first and foremost that black voters think about their voting decisions primarily in racial terms. That is candidates making such appeals seek to racialize the nature of the election contest and castigate the opposition for deracializing it” (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011). Because deracialization is often seen as a candidate moving away from their own racial group interests to get closer to white values (Hajnal 2007), the racial authenticity claim within Fattah’s statement directly attacked Nutter’s deracialized strategy
throughout his campaign by intrinsically stating that “I am one of us, my opponent is not” (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011) and this is evidenced by the fact that he has to remind himself that he is black. Fattah’s racial authentic attacks were the claims that Nutter feared but expected from the start of his campaign because they implied that there was only one way to be black and because Nutter de-.emphasized issues of race in his approach, positions and language, he was not authentic in his blackness and would therefore not be suited to pursue black interests (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011). Although this was expected to be a fruitful strategy for Fattah to secure even stronger black support (Fitzgerald 2007c), Nutter expected such attacks and had been including some racial references to diminish the racial authenticity claims he knew his opponents would eventually lobby.

Similar to his outraged black man speech Nutter’s third racial reference was also a tactic to increase his identification with black voters and included another reference aimed at his own black image. During a commencement speech to graduates of Philadelphia Comprehensive Centers for Fathers, a job-skills and mentoring program for inner-city fathers, Nutter quipped that “at the moment, I’m just an unemployed brother from West Philadelphia trying to get a job” (Wood 2007). Because Nutter had to relinquish his position as a councilman in order to run for mayor, Nutter was truly unemployed and made reference to this as a way to associate himself with the graduating class of predominantly black men. The speech also encompassed additional references to black men including a remark about the graduation being significant because of its role in helping young black men turn their lives around, take care of their children and become role models (Wood 2007). Nutter also related the claims of racial inauthenticity he received from Chaka Fattah and other critics during the primary to the acting white phenomenon that plagues the black community by noting “some people say they don’t want to be seen as too smart, or as
‘acting white’...that’s not acting white, that’s acting like you got some sense” (Wood 2007).

These statements proved that Nutter knew that his deracialized campaign style within his approach, positions and language in the 2007 election would lead to questions of racial authenticity by his black opponents and other prominent black leaders. However because he expected these attacks he made the strategic decision to include tactical racial references to lessen the effect that racial authenticity claims would have during the election. In the end Nutter’s language during some speeches included racial references, however these references were a compulsory tactical reaction to the racial authenticity attacks he expected from his opponents in the campaign and therefore he remained deracialized in not just his reformer approach, reformist positions, but within his language as well.
III. Racial Appeals & Deracialization Strategies: A Comparison of John F. Street & Michael A. Nutter

Both John F. Street and Michael A. Nutter were black candidates with council experience running for mayor who aimed to emulate the success of Ed Rendell while also instituting changes within the city of their own. Despite these similarities they employed very different strategies within their campaigns. Street ran a race-based campaign ridden with implicit racial appeals aimed at drawing black voter support while Nutter ran a deracialized campaign devoid of implicit racial appeals aimed at drawing support from the majority of the electorate. Although Street and Nutter’s campaign styles differed, both of their strategies were successful in mobilizing the portion of the public that each candidate intended, eventually leading to their respective victories in becoming the 48th and 49th mayors of Philadelphia. Yet why did such similar candidates have such contrasting strategies within their campaigns? Furthermore, how were strategies that were total opposites yet enacted in the same city both successful? By comparing Street’s campaign of racial appeals with Nutter’s deracialized style, we can further elucidate the disparities between these two campaign strategies, their respective strengths and weaknesses and most importantly, explain why each candidate chose to employ the strategy that they did.

Street and Nutter entered their respective campaigns with diverging strengths that they hoped to build upon and weaknesses that they aimed to overcome. Both candidates hoped to emphasize their council experience in an effort to prove to voters that they had enough knowledge, skill and familiarity with local government to lead the city as its mayor (Burton & Infield 1999; Gelbart 2006a). Moreover, both aimed to diminish the off-putting images produced from their council experience—for Street it was reducing the image that he was violent brute who was
uncooperative with anyone who disagreed with him (Burton & Infield 1999) and for Nutter it was lessening the image that he was a policy wonk who could not relate to ordinary Philadelphians (Gelbart 2006a). Each candidate also hoped to increase support amongst groups that typically voted for them while making new gains into groups that they did not generally appeal to. Street historically had strong support amongst black voters in his North Philadelphia district and aimed to expand this support to areas outside this base (Burton & Infield 1999). In contrast, Nutter historically drew support from black voters in his West Philadelphia district and white voters from various areas in the city, and he hoped to draw support from black voters outside his district—a racial group he polled lower amongst (Fitzgerald 2007a). Each candidate’s campaign strategy was constructed to mediate the unique characteristics mentioned above with the concerns put forth by the public and the pressure of pursuing the interests of Philadelphia as a city. In the end, Street and Nutter fashioned campaign styles directed at negotiating the city’s interests, their political strengths and weaknesses, the concerns of the public, and their own vision for the city’s future, which are all features rooted in the political dynamics of the city and their individual political history. As such, the variation between Street and Nutter’s campaign strategies can ultimately be explained by two factors: (1) the internal political dynamics of the city during their respective campaigns for mayor, and (2) their individual political history leading up to their bid for the mayoralty.
A. The Internal Political Dynamics of the City: Racial Discord vs. Racial Unity

Our working concept of the internal political dynamics of the city is based on Persons (2001) analytical framework for understanding the emergence and evolution of black mayors, which considers the effect that the ‘local socio-political context’ and the ‘local economy’ of Philadelphia have had on producing a set of concerns that dominate a specific election year. Persons describes the local socio-political context as “the immediate environment within which black mayors must be elected and within which they must be responsive” and explains that the local economy “can be likened to a political and economic gene pool with which a mayor is either blessed or cursed” (2007) which includes quality of life concerns such as the state of public schools, city infrastructure, public services, and the like. In 1999 the internal political dynamics of Philadelphia were consumed by racial divisions between black and white voters on their priorities, needs and desires for the city (Kraus 2002). In contrast, the internal political dynamics of Philadelphia in 2007 were not absorbed by racial discord and all residents rallied around the need for change (Yost et. al 2006). The shift between the internal political dynamics of Philadelphia in 1999 and 2007 provided Street and Nutter with different environments that were conducive to their respective campaign styles ultimately leading them in their decision to pursue such strategies.

The internal political dynamic of Philadelphia in 1999 produced an environment where Street’s neighborhood message and racialized approach would be an effective strategy. Street recognized this and constructed his 1999 campaign to capitalize on the internal political dynamic of racial discord within the city. His campaign strategy of portraying himself as the neighborhood candidate while using implicit racial appeals to black voters was one that mediated the tensions of addressing the concerns of historically marginalized communities (predominantly
black) with his political need to appeal to white voters. What's more is that the city's internal political dynamic made his strategy more successful and is also one of the reasons his strategy differed so strongly from that of Michael Nutter. In comparison one the internal political dynamic of the city shifted from that of racial discord to racial unity the environment was ripe for a different campaign strategy. Michael Nutter recognized this shift and constructed a campaign that could capitalize on the new internal political dynamic of a united Philadelphia that was strongly pushing for change from the politics as usual in the city. Nutter's campaign strategy of portraying himself as the candidate that truly embodied reform while de-emphasizing race in his positions and language, was one that mediated the tension of urging crime reforms that some thought would boost racial profiling within the city with his political need to attract more voter support from black voters outside of his district.

There is also something to be said about the effect that the national political context had on Philadelphia's shifting local political dynamic from racial discord in 1999 to racial unity in 2007. The national political context experienced its own change from an environment where black candidates with an insurgent style and strategy—"characterized by challenges to the prevailing political order, embracing of a social reform agenda, and utilization of a pattern of racial appeals to mobilize a primary support base of black voters"—were the most successful in winning elections to one where black candidates with a deracialized style and strategy were most successful (Persons 2007). This national political shift to an "emerging era of colorblindness" (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011) began to materialize during Nutter's 2007 campaign and would continue to develop throughout Barack Obama's 2008 election campaign to emerge fully matured in the wake of his election as the 44th President of the United States. This era of colorblindness not only produced a new phase of black leadership with a deracialized campaign
style but also revealed "a diminishing tolerance for and growing prohibition not only against 
making racial distinctions, but against talking about race at all" amongst voters (McIlwain & 
Caliendo 2011). As a result, while Philadelphia residents in 2007 were united in their desire for 
change within the local government and improvement of the city thereby eliminating the local 
political dynamic of racial discord seen in 1999, the national political context of a ‘post-racial’ 
electorate made Philadelphia residents place a premium on issues as opposed to race.

In summary, the shift of the local political dynamic of the city of Philadelphia from one 
of racial discord in 1999 to racial unity in 2007 produced separate and distinct environments for 
Street and Nutter’s campaigns. The 1999 dynamic of racial discord was characterized by racial 
divisions on the direction of the city (Gelbart 2006a) producing an environment where black 
residents (the typical marginalized community within the city) could be mobilized by implicit 
racial appeals and black candidates needed to use racial inoculation strategies to get white voters 
to identify with him. The environment created by the internal political dynamic of racial discord 
ultimately shaped Street’s decision to employ a racial campaign strategy. The era of racial 
discord that Street exploited in his 1999 campaign shifted to one of racial unity in 2007 (Yost et. 
al 2006). Compounded by the national political context of an electorate embracing 
colorblindness with a growing distaste for discussions of race (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011), the 
internal political dynamic of Philadelphia in 2007 produced an environment sympathetic to a 
deracialized style ultimately shaping Nutter’s decision to employ such a strategy. While being a 
significant explanation of the variation between Street and Nutter’s campaign styles, the shifting 
internal political dynamic between 1999 and 2007 built on the effect of a much more deep-rooted 
factor—the individual political history of the candidate’s themselves.
B. The Individual Political History of the Candidate

Current scholarship analyzing the new type of deracialized black leadership has posited that the new campaign style of de-emphasizing issues of race may be an effect of shifts within the socio-political context of the United States at large (Gillespie 2010). After the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 black leaders changed their strategy of using the judiciary to increase civil rights to using the legislature, resulting in black communities working to use the franchise to elect black leaders who would pursue their racial interests (Hamilton 1982; Gillespie 2010). The black officials elected during this period were represented the first phase of black leadership (Gillespie 2010). The post-Civil Rights era gave birth to the second phase of black leadership who won electoral positions due to their insurgent tactics remnant of the protest style and outsider approach employed by black Civil Rights leaders during the movement period (Persons 2007; Gillespie 2010). The contemporary wave of black politicians (the third wave), characterized as being more moderate in their view and more ambitious in their political goals than their predecessors have won electoral positions due to a new strategy of deracialization (Gillespie 2010). As political science professor Andra Gillespie writes in her text Whose Black Politics examining cases in post-racial leadership:

"What distinguishes this group from its predecessors is its youth and connection to the civil rights history. The figures associated with the third wave of new Black politics were born after 1960, immediately before or after the passage of all the major civil rights legislation...As a result, these figures benefited from the fruits of the struggle and were able to grow up in integrated neighborhoods and attend predominantly White schools from kindergarten to graduate school. However their youth also means that some perceive this generation as being less likely to relate to the Civil Rights struggle" (2010).

Ultimately, the difference between the campaign strategies of each wave of leaders can be explained by their political socialization and therefore the contrast between Street and Nutter's
individual political history functions as the second factor explaining the divergence in their campaign strategies.

Although there are some similarities in their individual political history—primarily in relation to the political positions they've held—it is the dissimilarities between Street and Nutter that have led to their respective campaign strategies and style; therefore the focus will be on the disparities in their political socialization such as: the era in which they grew up, their educational experience and their route to political power. Classic assessments of political socialization focus on the manner in which political values are transmitted from parent to child forming a developmental process through which the child learns proper political norms and behaviors (Powell & Cowart 2003). A significant part of this process is the historical period during which the developmental process occurs because historical events can have a profound effect on the development of one's political cognition. As such, attention to the difference between the era in which Street and Nutter were raised warrants close scrutiny. John F. Street was born October 15, 1944 in Norristown, Pennsylvania. In contrast Nutter was born June 29, 1957 in West Philadelphia. Arguably this generational variation provided Street with a closer connection to the Civil Rights Movement than Nutter because Street was a young adult when the movement hit its peak in the 1960's while Nutter was still a child. Having the lived experience of the struggles associated with Civil Rights Movement era, Street was closer to the protest style politics exhibited by black leaders of the first phase. Alternatively, Nutter had less of a connection to the civil rights movement, and because he was able to enjoy the benefits of civil rights legislation, such as attending integrated schools and maturing in an era where discrimination was no longer legal, Nutter was more connected with the third phase of black leadership.
Street and Nutter’s educational experience also differed and this was an effect of the diverging eras in which they matured. At age 11 Street and his family moved from Norristown to Conshohocken where he attended the local high school and was advised to consider vocational training because he was not college material (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999). Street then attended Oakwood College in Huntsville Alabama in 1961 where he remembers facing racial discrimination and being pelted with rocks and bottles from other students (Goss 2003). After graduating from the college in 1964 with a degree in English, Street returned to North Philadelphia to work as a cab driver and remembers seeking out the teacher who attempted to discourage him from attending college. “I told her that she should be careful about what she tells students, because her words can be very damaging” (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999) commented Street on the experience. After being denied entry to Temple University’s Law School twice, Street entered the realm of community organizing and taught job-training while working as a hot dog vendor in North Philadelphia with his brother Milton (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999). While working as a street vendor Street met Carl F. Singley the man in charge of minority recruiting for Temple in 1972 and sought his aid in gaining admission to Temple’s law program. “This guy with a scrapply beard and a big old Afro wearing five sweatshirts hands me my hot dog and then says, ‘hey, why can’t I get in that law school?’” (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999) recalled Singley. Soon after their encounter Street interviewed at the school and amazed the admissions committee, later graduating from the school in 1975 (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999; Goss 2003).

With the help of a financial scholarship Nutter was able to attend St. Joseph’s preparatory school which at the time of his enrollment boasted a 15% black population. Recalling his high school experience Nutter spoke of a favorite history professor and his involvement in the Black
Culture Club (Fagone 2007). After graduation Nutter was accepted to the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School where he graduated with a degree in finance in 1979 (Fagone 2007). Whereas Street’s post-secondary education took place in the racially discriminatory environment of the 1960’s South, Nutter’s post-secondary education took place in the more liberal environment of the prestigious Ivy League institution. Moreover, while Nutter was preparing to enter the business world at Wharton, Street was busy launching protests at Temple and City Hall with his brother over the city’s new vending regulations and probing the allocation of federal funds to the city to benefit neighborhoods (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999). These diverging social and educational experiences steered Street and Nutter to the same political career but encouraged the two to employ different strategies in their initial bid for council seats.

Street employed the strategy emblematic of second phase of black leader by challenging first phase civil-rights leader Cecil B. Moore for his 5th district council seat in 1979 (Goss 2003). This competition from Street initially attracted scorn from other first phase leaders within the city but dissipated after Moore’s death before the May primary election—which Street won. Emerging into local politics “Street [was] the people’s councilman – filibustering to ensure North Philadelphia received its share of federal grants, sponsoring legislation legalizing the use of kerosene heaters; and initiating programs to help poor people stake claims on abandoned homes” (Quinones Miller & Burton 1999). In stark contrast Nutter employed the strategy emblematic of a third phase black leader by challenging Ann Land, a white incumbent and Democratic Party loyalist. Nutter lost to Land in 1987 but won against her in 1991 after attaining the position of ward leader and the backing of black Democratic Congressman William (Bill) Herbert Gray III (Fagone 2007). After establishing himself as a tenacious legislator “Nutter began to introduce the bills he’s best known for: sensible, well-crafted policies that changed the
City Charter to create an ethics board, brought sunshine to no-bid contracting, and turned Philly smoke-free” (Fagone 2007).

The disparity between the political socialization of Street and Nutter fashioned the diverging personal philosophies and political aspirations of the two. The shifting internal political dynamics of Philadelphia provided each with an environment that promoted and was conducive to their respective campaign styles, but it was the individual political history of each mayor that provided the philosophical predispositions that formed the foundation of that unique style. Street’s upbringing in the civil rights era provided him with the context of personal struggle in the face of racial discrimination making him more receptive to the insurgent political style of first phase black leaders. Nutter’s background in the post-civil rights era afforded him an environment with better access to institutions that blacks were previously barred from making him less connected to the civil rights struggle and open to the deracialized political style of third phase black leaders. In the end it was a combination of the shift in internal political dynamics of the city between their campaigns and the disparities between Street and Nutter’s individual political history that molded them into the racially based neighborhood mayor and the deracialized policy wonk mayor that we know today.
IV. Conclusion: Where do We Go from Here?

Philadelphia underwent a dramatic shift from a racially divided city to a racially united city between the 1999 and 2007 mayoral elections. In 1999 the city was characterized as a copy of Dickens' tale of two cities with blacks and whites having different political priorities, needs and desires for the upcoming election (Kraus 2002). It was in this political environment that John F. Street, a phase-II leader, with extensive experiences connecting him with the Civil Rights era struggle and racial discrimination, fashioned a campaign style that would maximize the internal political dynamic of Philadelphia to aid in his pursuit of the mayoralty. Just 8 years later Philadelphia was a completely different city. Residents were no longer divided in their desires and every resident thought the city needed change (Keystone Poll 2006). This was the political landscape afforded Michael A. Nutter, a phase-III leader, with the experiences of a man who benefitted from the gains of the Civil Rights era minimizing his connection with the era of struggle that was the lifeblood of his black political predecessors. Within the larger context of an American political landscape still in the midst of transformation with the rise of a new type of black leader to positions of power across all levels of government, but most importantly the Presidency, the urban political terrain experienced nothing short of a revolution. The transformations and shifts above provide the explanation for why two black mayors, from the same city, developed opposing campaign styles and employed such diverging campaign strategies. But what does this discovery say about the contemporary political context, how do the above findings illuminate the current era of black politics, and where do we go from here?

The comparative case study of John F. Street and Michael Nutter's campaigns for mayor reveals that national and local transformations have occurred in the political landscape that have minimized the effect that race plays in electoral contests. This does not however mean that race
is no longer a factor within the larger society because racial tensions, incidents and disparities continue to exist boiling beneath the surface of national attention until they erupt to the fore of the political agenda. Whereas issues of race were the most salient factor to the first and second waves of black mayors, it is evident that the new phase of leadership has relegated racial factors to the margins of their political psyche thereby supporting the research of Wilson (1978), Dawson (1994), Reed and Cose (2011). Class issues, however, have not begun to act as a replacement for the downgraded racial factor amongst black candidates. Instead this new class of leader continues to fashion a style and strategy that is as unpredictable, individually specific and nuanced as their political socialization. In the Philadelphia context, shifts from the phase II to phase III leaders was comparably smoother than it has been in other cities like Newark, New Jersey (Gillespie 2010); however the transformation is not complete. The new phase of black leaders are just beginning to mature and not enough time has elapsed to remark on whether incumbency will affect these leaders as it did with phase I and II black leaders (Persons 2007). As Gillespie (2010) writes “the future is likely to hold increased debate, not greater unity. On some levels this may seem frightening....On the other hand....disagreement and resolution can help combatants identify the weaknesses in their proposals and spur everyone toward creating better policies”.

Due to the structural constraints of an undergraduate thesis—time constraints, smaller research capacity, inaccessibility of necessary resources—an analysis of how black candidates address issues of race and class after they are elected is missing from this thesis. As such, further research and investigation should be devoted to assessing how black candidates address these issues once elected. There is also a need to evaluate how black candidates may transform once they are no longer on the campaign trail. If such research is completed we may have some more
concrete answers to whether deracialized candidates are less likely to pursue projects that are racialized or less likely to pursue black interests (McCormick & Jones 1993). There is an immense need for further research on John F. Street and Michael A. Nutter being that the scholarly literature is very slim and therefore the majority of information on the two has to be gleaned from print media sources that keep local Philadelphians up to date on their political activities. In the end, the ‘city of brotherly love’ is an interesting and significant realm for a case study of urban politics and black politics in particular. It is with sincere hope and optimism that scholarship that probes deeper into black politics within the city is conducted. Deeper analyses will not only benefit the overarching field of political science in general, but may influence the individual political history of a future leader and shape the internal political dynamic of an emerging polity enough fostering an even newer phase of black leadership to surge to the fore of American politics.
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