# Elections and Voting in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Brian Brox

New Orleans suffered three catastrophic events in the late summer of 2005. Hurricane Katrina made landfall just east of the city on August 29th. The next day, the protective levees surrounding the city failed due to Katrina's pounding. And on September 24th, Hurricane Rita made landfall near the Texas-Louisiana border, its outer bands of rain causing the recently patched levees to fail and reflood much of the city. As a result the physical infrastructure of New Orleans was devastated and its population was scattered far and wide.

When the city was reopened to residents in early October, only those living in unflooded portions of the city (around twenty percent of the total area of New Orleans) were able to return; many of those who lived in flooded areas had nothing to come back to, so they remained in those cities that had given them shelter during the storm. But all New Orleanians – wherever they were – had one goal in mind as they faced life post-Katrina: rebuilding their hometown that had suffered so much because of the natural (and man-made) disasters.

Government leadership would be vital to the rebuilding process, and it just so happened that New Orleans had municipal elections scheduled for February 4th, 2006. However, it quickly became obvious that New Orleans would be in no position to hold those elections on time; a huge portion of the electorate was displaced and much of the voting infrastructure (not only voting machines but also the schools, churches, and community centers that would serve as polling locations) was destroyed by the hurricanes and subsequent flooding. After much work by local and state elections officials – and lawsuits seeking both to hold the elections as soon as possible and to delay the elections until the summer – an agreement was reached to hold the election on April 22nd, with a runoff election (if necessary) on May 20th.

Before the storm, the reelection of Mayor C. Ray Nagin was taken as a certainty; only token opposition had emerged in the summer of 2005. But after the storm, Nagin's electoral future was in doubt. Largely seen as ineffective at evacuating the city before Katrina's landfall, Nagin also faced mixed reviews of his performance immediately after the hurricane, as well as during the initial

recovery period of October through December of 2005. Nagin himself further jeopardized his own political future with some racially charged remarks during a Martin Luther King Day speech (Pope, 2006). As a result, at the end of candidate qualifying Nagin faced 21 challengers in his bid to be the mayor to lead the recovery of New Orleans.

The New Orleans mayoral elections of 2006 merit attention because of their historic nature – as well as the abundance of humorous, ridiculous, and scandalous anecdotes that can only be found in New Orleans politics. But for those interested in American elections, they also provide a unique context in which to test broader theories about the behavior of candidates and voters in producing electoral outcomes. From candidate entry to campaign resource allocation, candidate rhetoric to individual level voting behavior, these elections offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to test whether standard explanations of electoral behavior still hold in exceptional circumstances, or if the post-Katrina environment produced a campaign so unconventional that those who study election campaigns will (hopefully) never see its equal.

There are a plethora of possible research questions in such circumstances; arguably the most interesting would be to look at how the candidates campaign, or perhaps to look at how the voters respond. As others have provided excellent accounts of the latter (e.g. Lay, 2007), this paper will focus on the mayoral candidates and the campaigns they created in pursuit of the post that would lead the New Orleans recovery.

**An Unprecedented Election**

The 2006 New Orleans mayoral election was unique in a number of ways. The date of the election (April 22nd) was announced on January 24th (Donze, 2006). This shortened the campaign to a maximum of 88 days. More practically, since the qualifying period for candidates was set at March 1-3, potential candidates had only 38 days to decide whether or not to run, and the effective length of the campaign would be a short 50 days .

Also making the situation in the spring of 2006 unique was the fact that there were so many candidates vying for the mayor's office. Multicandidate races are not uncommon in American politics, and they are particularly common in Louisiana politics given the distinctive rules that govern Louisiana elections . In 2002, 15 candidates ran for mayor, but in 1998 only three candidates ran and only 10 ran in 1994. With 22 candidates in the 2006 race, voters would have difficulty learning about all of them.

Probably the most distinctive feature of this election was the fact that it would take place with a large percentage of the electorate not residing in the city. At the time of the election, around two-thirds of the city's population was not

living in the city. While many of these evacuees settled in other areas of Louisiana (particularly Baton Rouge), large numbers settled in other states, with especially large concentrations in Houston, Atlanta, Memphis, and Jackson. Thus, the record number of candidates would be forced to do something unprecedented in American municipal elections: campaign in multiple states.

## Is There Even Literature To Review For Such An Unprecedented Election?

Given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding this election, one might wonder if any of the existing accounts of candidate behavior can provide any insight into what happened in the 2006 New Orleans mayoral election. But three segments of the literature on campaigns and elections still have relevance to this story. Of primary importance is the existing literature on resource allocation within campaigns, as well as studies of geographical targeting of resources across multiple states or districts (e.g. presidential campaigns). Also significant is research into multicandidate campaigns. And there are even a few studies that explore the dynamics elections that took place following natural disasters that should prove germane to this situation.

As they established their mayoral campaigns, the candidates were faced with the challenge of putting together a campaign organization and engaging it in electioneering activity . As one might expect, candidates prefer to allocate a larger proportion of resources to the electioneering activity components of the campaign while minimizing allocations to overhead and other features that do not directly bear on winning the election. Previous research from other electoral contexts bears out this logic. Goldenberg and Traugott (1984) find that U.S. House candidates spend about a third of their budgets on printing and around a quarter of their budgets on television advertising. Similarly, Herrnson (1998) finds that candidates allocate three-quarters of their budgets to voter contact (including 18 percent to television advertisements, 14 percent to other advertisements, 18 percent to direct mail, and nearly 25 percent to other voter contact activity) and only 18 percent to overhead. In U.S. Senate campaigns, VanHeerde (2001) finds that candidates allocate over half of their budgets to voter contact activities while allocating between 20 and 25 percent of their budgets to both fundraising and overhead.

But unlike any other municipal candidate, those running for mayor of New Orleans had to make resource allocation decisions both in terms of which components of the campaign to fund and also in terms of where (geographically) to allocate resources. While all campaigns engage in geographical targeting to some degree (mobilize in some neighborhoods, persuade in others, ignore areas that favor the opponent), it is only presidential campaigns that have to allocate resources across multiple electoral districts. Generally, presidential candidates will

allocate resources to states where the race will be close or where the outcome may be pivotal to the overall election outcome (Nagler and Leighley, 1992). Bartels (1985) unites the "how" and "where" components of the resource allocation decision by showing that instrumental resources (those vital to winning votes) are distributed to the more populous states while ornamental resources (those less important to winning votes) are distributed more broadly. Other work that considers the allocation of resources vis-à-vis population addresses the "rule" for the distribution of resources; Brams and Davis (1975, 1974) argue that resources are allocated based on a state's electoral votes take to the 3/2's power , a result supported by Owen (1975).

    The literature on multicandidate campaigns should also provide insight into the behavior of the candidates for mayor. Perhaps the most important finding from this literature is that, in a multiple candidate setting, name recognition is vital, as voters are more likely to vote for a candidate they recognize (Bartels, 1988; Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina, 1987; Jacobson, 1985). Attention from the media is key to that endeavor (Lieske, 1989). As to who actually gets that media attention, research into presidential nomination politics suggests that the media consider "newsworthy" those candidates who are winning or those who hold a newsworthy position (Mayer, 1999). Since stronger initial candidates do not have to convince the media to give them attention, they can focus their attention from the outset at winning and solidifying support (delegates, in the case of presidential nominations). Long shot candidates, on the other hand, have to structure their campaigns to focus on capturing media attention (Gurian and Haynes, 1993; Gurian 1986).

    Finally, there have actually been some studies of election campaigns that have occurred in the wake of natural disasters. New Orleans has faced this type of campaign before. Hurricane Betsy made landfall just east of New Orleans on September 9, 1965, and it still managed to hold municipal elections on November 6th. As with Katrina, Betsy flooded substantial portions of the city with water that overtopped and breached levees holding back Lake Pontchartrain. And as was the case with his 2005 counterpart, incumbent mayor Victor Schiro was the subject of much criticism over his inadequate preparation for and response to the hurricane. Though Betsy's flooding was not as widespread as that produced by Katrina, it was African-American neighborhoods that took most of the water (though most residents of flooded homes did not leave the city). In a strange parallel to events forty years later, the incumbent managed to get re-elected as a result of his considerable material resources, the perception that he was working hard to facilitate the recovery, and his willingness to reach out to the African-American electorate (though having been elected on white support in his first

campaign) (Abney and Hill, 1966).

More recently, Houston also faced a serious natural disaster to be followed by a mayoral election. Tropical Storm Allison in 2001 caused extensive flooding throughout the city, inundating more than 70,000 homes. Yet the city managed to hold its scheduled mayoral election on November 6th, a mere five months after Allison made landfall. In that election, the African-American incumbent managed to win a narrow victory over two at-large city councilmen, one white and the other Hispanic. It should be noted, however, that the incumbent suffered as a result of the tropical storm. Those who blamed the city for inadequate preparation for the flooding were much less likely to vote for the incumbent mayor, and it was those who experienced the worst flooding that were most likely to hold city government responsible (Arceneaux and Stein, 2006).

### Candidate Behavior In The 2006 New Orleans Mayoral Primary

Immediately after candidate qualifying ended on March 3rd, it became clear that not all of Nagin's 21 challengers would be equally competitive. Very early in the campaign the local media performed its winnowing function, placing the candidates into three "tiers" based on the media's assessment of their competitiveness and newsworthiness (Russell and Donze, 2006a; Russell and Donze, 2006b; Krupa and Donze, 2006). In the top tier were incumbent C. Ray Nagin, incumbent Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu, and CEO of New Orleans' Audubon Nature Institute Ron Forman. These three achieved top tier status as a result of their actual or potential campaign war chests and, in the case of Nagin and Landrieu, their high name recognition.

In the second tier were corporate lawyer Virginia Boulet, businessman and owner of the local minor league baseball team Rob Couhig, influential minister Tom Watson, and former city council member Peggy Wilson. In general, these four achieved second tier status not because of their ability to win the election (or reach the primary), but because of their potential impact on the top tier candidates. Couhig and Wilson were the only Republicans in the race, and they had the potential to steal votes from Forman, the most conservative of the three top-tier candidates. Boulet posed problems for both Forman and (especially) Landrieu. Watson was seen as the only credible African-American alternative to Nagin based on his leadership of the Greater New Orleans Coalition of Ministers and his work with the youth in the city's poorer neighborhoods.

The third tier was populated by a plethora of interesting characters , including a local radio personality, an out-of-work actor/filmmaker, and the incumbent Clerk of Criminal Court who began her mayor campaign with a three day stay in the Orleans Parish Prison as a result of a contempt of court charge after feuding with a judge over her duties as Clerk. While a few had moderate levels

of name recognition, most of these third tier candidates had little or no money – and few prospects for raising the significant sums that would be necessary for movement into the second tier. Most of these candidates ran because they did not like any of the alternatives , because they wanted to be part of the debate over the city's recovery and rebuilding , or even because they received a divine calling to run , as well as other personal motivations.

One would expect candidates from each of the three tiers to campaign differently. As Paul-Henri Gurian notes (1986; and Haynes, 1993), frontrunning candidates can focus their energies on winning the race while longshot candidates have to focus on winning media attention. But with the "longshots" separated into two different groups (second tier and third tier), there should see radically different strategies among these candidates in their search for media attention. Also complicating candidate strategies is the fact that a significant (but unknown) number of voters were currently living outside of metropolitan New Orleans.

Based on the three tiers of candidates and the two locations of voters (in New Orleans, outside of New Orleans), one would expect three distinct pairs of strategies among candidates: top tier in-town and out-of-town, second tier in-town and out-of-town, and third tier in-town and out-of-town. Table 1 summarizes the specific expectations for each of six possible strategies. For the top-tier candidates, one would expect their campaigns to look much like the campaigns described in the general resource allocation literature: most resources going to voter contact (including a large percentage to advertising), though with significant spending on overhead. For these candidates, the distribution of resources to in-town campaigning versus out-of-town campaigning will depend on the candidates' understanding of the displaced electorate. Estimates suggested that 75 percent of displaced voters were African-American (Whoriskey, 2006a). Thus, only a candidate who expected to win African-American voters should be expected to devote any significant resources to out-of-town campaigning. That said, one would expect the allocation of resources among components of the campaign to look similar for both out-of-town and in-town campaigning.

Table 1 Expectations of Candidate Strategies

|  | In-Town | Out-of-Town |
|---|---|---|
| First Tier | Normal well financed campaign | Normal campaign, depending on understanding of displaced electorate |
| Second Tier | Moderately financed campaign focused on media/advertising | Little effort, depending on understanding of displaced electorate |
| Third Tier | Minimal campaign focused on grassroots efforts | Minimal or no effort |

For those candidates who would decide to campaign out of town, there was a subsequent decision of how much of the total budget to spend out-of-town and how much to keep in New Orleans. While it never seemed likely that a majority of voters would come from the displaced population, this sentiment was further affirmed by a statistical analysis that suggested as many as 80 percent of voters were still in the New Orleans metropolitan area (Thevenot, 2006). As a result, these candidates should have devoted more resources to New Orleans than to out-of-town campaigning.

For the second tier candidates, the necessity to capture media attention means that these candidates were unlikely to devote significant resources to out-of-town campaigning. The one exception to this is Tom Watson, both because of the perception that he was the only viable African-American alternative to Nagin, but also because he explicitly made representation of displaced African-Americans a cornerstone of his campaign. As for campaigning in-town, one would expect second tier candidates to allocate their (relatively moderate) resources in a largely conventional manner with perhaps a slightly larger allocation to media (to improve poll standing and to encourage fundraising).

Third tier candidates, with minimal resources to begin with, should allocate little – if any – to out-of-town campaigning. In New Orleans, most of these candidates' limited resources will be devoted to overhead, and to a lesser extent traditional campaigning (largely in the form of campaign paraphernalia).

Data on resource allocation were collected from campaign finance reports filed with the Louisiana Board of Ethics. Individual expenditures were then coded according to Fritz and Morris (1992) into seven major spending categories: advertising, traditional (grassroots) campaigning, overhead, fundraising, polling, donations , and unitemized spending. In addition, expenditures were coded based on whether they were intended to influence voters in New Orleans or

voters outside the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Table 2 Campaign Spending and Geographical Distribution

|  | Total | In-Town | Out-of-Town |
|---|---|---|---|
| First Tier Average | $1,887,850.29 | $1,827,615.70 | $58,112.23 |
| Forman | $2,188,754.30 | $2,188,754.30 | $0 |
| Landrieu | $1,837,056.62 | $1,760,910.78 | $75,778.80 |
| Nagin12 | $1,637,739.95 | $1,533,182.02 | $98,557.90 |
| Second Tier Average | $304,281.68 | $299,425.58 | $4,856.10 |
| Boulet | $454,815.00 | $454,815.00 | $0 |
| Couhig | $514,017.00 | $514,017.00 | $0 |
| Watson | $88,487.70 | $69,063.30 | $19,424.40 |
| Wilson | $159,807.00 | $159,807.00 | $0 |
| Third Tier Average | $3,631.23 | $3,304.20 | $327.03 |
| Adriani | $2,504.55 | $2,355.55 | $149.00 |
| Arey | $1,363.69 | $1,363.69 | $0 |
| Bacqué | $8,228.53 | $8,228.53 | $0 |
| Brown | $1,650.00 | $1,650.00 | $0 |
| Bruno | $729.97 | $729.97 | $0 |
| Butler | $24,295.60 | $21,356.10 | $2,939.42 |
| Dean | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| DeDais | $4,614.93 | $4,376.93 | $238.00 |
| Galatas | $8,038.00 | $7,191.00 | $847.00 |
| Gladney | $2,293.21 | $1,561.21 | $732.00 |
| Lemann | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Rahman | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Rome | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Watermeier | $750.00 | $750.00 | $0 |
| White | $0 | $0 | $0 |
|  |  |  |  |

Source: Campaign disclosure reports filed with the Louisiana Board of Ethics (http://www.ethics.state.la.us/cf.htm)

Table 2 summarizes candidate spending for all 22 candidates, including the distribution of resources between in-town and out-of-town campaigning. As expected, the impact of viability on resources (and vice versa) is great. Top tier candidates spent (on average) nearly $1.9 million during the primary campaign while second tier candidates spent a bit more than $300,000 and third tier candidates spent less than $4,000. And in general, the availability of resources is strongly and positively correlated with the number of votes a candidate received in the election. The overall correlation between spending and votes received was .8945. For second tier candidates only the correlation was .7532 and for third tier candidates only the correlation was .8997, but interestingly the correlation for only the top tier candidates was -.9961. This finding conforms to previous research that shows a declining marginal utility to additional campaign spending in local elections (Lieske, 1989). In the 2006 New Orleans mayoral election, it seems clear that significant financial resources were important for being considered a viable candidate and for implementing an adequate campaign organization, but considerable spending alone was not enough to propel a candidate to victory (or to the runoff).

In terms of the geographical distribution of resources, it seems the candidates of all types were reluctant to spend considerable sums on out-of-town campaigning. Top tier candidates spent roughly 3 percent of their budgets out-of-town while second tier candidates spent 1.6 percent out-of-town and third tier candidates spent 9 percent out of town. These low levels of out-of-town spending are understandable, given the relative uncertainty among candidates as to how many voters were displaced and how many would actually be able to participate in the election (Whoriskey, 2006b). The complete lack of out-of-town spending by Forman, Couhig, Wilson, despite having more prominent candidacies, again confirms the expectation that those who would not appeal to the largely African-American diaspora would allocate no resources outside the New Orleans area. And Watson, who made representation of the diaspora a cornerstone of his campaign, spent an atypical 22 percent of his budget out-of-town.

Table 3 Campaign Resource Allocation – In-Town

| | Adv | Don | Fundr | Over-head | Polling | Trad | Unitem |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First Tier Average | 58.5 | 0.6 | 3.7 | 12.7 | 7.7 | 16.3 | 0.4 |
| Forman | 74.3 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 12.4 | 5.7 | 7.3 | 0 |
| Landrieu | 59.8 | 0.1 | 1.0 | 12.3 | 5.3 | 21.1 | 0.4 |
| Nagin13 | 41.4 | 1.6 | 10.0 | 13.4 | 12.2 | 20.6 | 0.9 |
| Second Tier Average | 67.1 | 0.4 | 4.8 | 10.5 | 0 | 17.2 | 0.1 |
| Boulet | 66.1 | 0.1 | 0 | 9.6 | 0 | 24.2 | 0 |
| Couhig | 84.6 | 0 | 0.1 | 1.8 | 0 | 13.6 | 0 |
| Watson | 45.6 | 1.4 | 6.8 | 17.9 | 0 | 27.7 | 0.6 |
| Wilson | 72.0 | 0 | 12.3 | 12.5 | 0 | 3.2 | 0 |
| Third Tier Average | 16.1 | 0 | 1.2 | 42.9 | 0 | 39.8 | 0 |
| Adriani | 1.8 | 0 | 0 | 91.4 | 0 | 6.8 | 0 |
| Arey | 9.2 | 0 | 0 | 14.5 | 0 | 76.4 | 0 |
| Bacqué | 38.9 | 0 | 6.4 | 0 | 0 | 37.4 | 0 |
| Brown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bruno | 0 | 0 | 0 | 51.4 | 0 | 48.6 | 0 |
| Butler | 12.2 | 0 | 3.3 | 69.1 | 0 | 15.4 | 0 |
| Dean | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| DeDais | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19.3 | 0 | 80.7 | 0 |
| Galatas | 65.9 | 0 | 0 | 17.1 | 0 | 17.0 | 0 |
| Gladney | 0.7 | 0 | 0 | 63.2 | 0 | 36.1 | 0 |
| Lemann | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Rahman | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Rome | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Watermeier | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| | | | | | | | |

Source: Campaign disclosure reports filed with the Louisiana Board of Ethics (http://www.ethics.state.la.us/cf.htm)

Table 3 presents data on the allocation patterns of in-town campaign resources. The top-tier candidates were expected to conform to traditional patterns of resource allocation for prominent, well-funded campaigns. Specifically, they were expected to allocate most of their resources to voter contact, and they did, with the average combined allocation to advertising and traditional campaigning being nearly 75 percent of total spending. But they did not meet the expectation of allocating significant resources to overhead; all allocated 12 or 13 percent of total spending to overhead, which is somewhat lower than the typical U.S. House campaign which allocates 18 percent of total spending to overhead (Herrnson, 1998). The significant variance in advertising allocations is also unexpected, as was the remarkably low allocation by Forman to traditional campaigning. In essence, it seems that Landrieu ran the "modal" campaign, with Forman shifting resources from traditional campaigning to advertising, and Nagin diverting resources from advertising to augment the polling and fundraising operations. In retrospect, Forman's behavior seems reasonable; his prime constituency was more affluent and less likely to live in the higher density housing situations that lend themselves to grassroots campaigning. Nagin's emphasis on polling and fundraising, at the expense of advertising, is harder to explain. The only plausible explanation is that increased polling gave the Nagin campaign confidence that he would likely make the runoff (even with less spending on advertising), allowing him to redirect funds to fundraising in preparation for the runoff campaign.

In an effort to establish viability, the second tier candidates had to deviate from traditional resource allocation strategies to some degree. Indeed, on average they allocated a bit more (nearly 85 percent) to voter contact than normal, particularly for the advertising they needed so desperately to gain the media's attention. The one exception to this pattern was Watson, whose appeal to the African-American community was perhaps more effective via grassroots campaigning. Among the other three, increased advertising expenditures came at the expense of polling, overhead (for Boulet and especially Couhig), and traditional campaigning (for Wilson).

Third tier candidates were widely varied in their resource allocation strategies. On the whole they allocated large percentages to overhead and traditional campaigning, as expected. But individual candidates often exhibited bizarre allocation patterns, from Bacqué and Galatas spending very large portions of their meager totals on a few advertisements, to Arey, Bruno, and DeDais spending most of their funds on traditional campaigning (largely in the form of signs, bumper stickers, t-shirts, etc.). Perhaps most intriguing are the large percentages some candidates allocated to overhead expenses. Brown and

Watermeier spent all of their money on overhead (mostly the filing fees), and Adriani spent 90 percent of his funds on overhead (in his case, much of that on gasoline needed to transport him from his temporary home in Baton Rouge back to New Orleans to campaign).

Campaigning out-of-town was largely something that most mayoral candidates avoided. Forman avoided out-of-town campaigning due to his perception of the receptiveness (or lack thereof) of potential evacuee voters. All second tier candidates – save Watson – also avoided out-of-town campaigning, most likely for both monetary and constituency reasons. And among the third tier candidates, most allocated nothing to out-of-town campaigning; those that did spent small amounts to facilitate travel to candidate forums in Houston, Atlanta, and Baton Rouge.

Table 4: Campaign Resource Allocation – Out-of-Town

|  | Adv | Don | Fundr | Over-head | Polling | Trad Camp |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Forman | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Landrieu | 1.8 | 0.8 | 1.8 | 49.9 | 0 | 45.7 | 0 |
| Nagin14 | 71.3 | 0.5 | 0 | 2.5 | 0 | 25.7 | 0 |
| Watson | 21.6 | 0 | 0 | 47.6 | 0 | 30.7 | 0 |

Source: Campaign disclosure reports filed with the Louisiana Board of Ethics (http://www.ethics.state.la.us/cf.htm)
Note: Cell entries are percents. Total of all columns may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Data on the three candidates who did do significant out-of-town campaigning are presented in Table 4. In a few areas, resource allocation decisions by these three candidates make sense; nothing is allocated to polling out-of-town (reasonable, given the uncertainty surrounding the evacuated electorate) and almost nothing is allocated to out-of-town donations or fundraising. But in other areas, resource allocation strategies are quite unusual. Both Landrieu and Watson spend nearly half of their out-of-town budgets on overhead. In a way, this makes sense because the bulk of their voter contact spending came in the form of traditional campaigning, and that type of grassroots effort requires

an infrastructure to be in place. On the other hand, by focusing most of his voter contact spending on advertising, Nagin was able to avoid spending a large percentage on overhead, which begs the question of why did Watson and (especially) Landrieu choose a method of voter contact that would require a significant allocation to overhead.

### Moving Past The Primary

Early voting in the New Orleans municipal elections began on April 10th. For five days, voters were allowed to vote early at one of ten satellite voting locations established throughout the state of Louisiana. In addition, scores more cast an absentee ballot through the mail. All told, more than 20,000 voted early. And on April 22nd, over 80,000 more would head to the polls in New Orleans to select the next mayor (as well as other local officials). Turnout was down from four years prior; slightly over 108,000 eligible voters cast ballots, yielding a turnout figure of 36 percent (Dart, 2006).

In the end, Ray Nagin and Mitch Landrieu took the top two places and earned spots in the May 20th runoff. Despite spending the most of any candidate, Ron Forman finished a disappointing third. Rob Couhig, on the other hand, parlayed a savvy media strategy and strong debate performances to come in fourth. Vote totals and percents for all candidates are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Primary Election Results

| | Votes | Percent | Tier |
|---|---|---|---|
| C. Ray Nagin | 41,561 | 38% | 1 |
| "Mitch" Landrieu | 31,551 | 29% | 1 |
| Ron Forman | 18,764 | 17% | 1 |
| Robert Couhig | 10,312 | 10% | 2 |
| Virginia Boulet | 2,376 | 2% | 2 |
| Tom Watson | 1,264 | 1% | 2 |
| Kimberly Williamson Butler | 797 | 1% | 3 |
| Peggy Wilson | 773 | 1% | 2 |
| "Johnny" Adriani | 115 | 0% | 3 |
| Manny Chevrolet Bruno | 100 | 0% | 3 |
| James Arey | 99 | 0% | 3 |
| Greta Gladney | 99 | 0% | 3 |
| Marie Galatas | 74 | 0% | 3 |
| Leo Watermeier | 65 | 0% | 3 |
| Shedrick C. White | 64 | 0% | 3 |
| Sonja "Lady" DeDais | 62 | 0% | 3 |
| James "Jimmy" Lemann | 60 | 0% | 3 |
| F. Nick Bacqué | 52 | 0% | 3 |
| Elvin D. Brown | 52 | 0% | 3 |
| Mac Rahman | 50 | 0% | 3 |
| Norbert P. Rome | 42 | 0% | 3 |
| Roderick Dean | 16 | 0% | 3 |
| | | | |

Source: Louisiana Secretary of State (http://www.sos.louisiana.gov)

With just a month to go before the runoff, Nagin and Landrieu had significant work to do.  Most pundits felt Nagin was in trouble (Konigsmark, 2006; Russell, Donze, and Krupa, 2006b).  Landrieu had managed to capture 23 percent of the African-American vote in the primary, while Nagin had only managed to win the support of 10 percent of white voters (Konigsmark, 2006).  Heading into the primary, Landrieu's strategy was clear:  maintain his decent showing among African-American voters and win an overwhelming majority of whites.  This latter task seemed relatively easy, as 70 to 90 percent of white voters vote for the white candidate in biracial contests (Loewen, 1990; McCrary, 1990; Henry, 1987; Lieske and Hillard, 1984).  Nagin, on the other hand, had to hope that that figure settled closer to the 70 percent mark than the 90 percent mark; given Landrieu's strong showing among African-Americans, Nagin would need to increase his support in the white community if he hoped to keep his job.

Both candidates would spend as much as they could in the runoff campaign.  Since much of the work in establishing a campaign infrastructure had already been paid for in the primary campaign, one would expect resource allocation for both candidates to be even further skewed toward voter contact activities.  In terms of in-town versus out-of-town spending, here the candidates faced different dilemmas.  Nagin received 38 percent and Landrieu received 35 percent of the vote from displaced voters (Louisiana Secretary of State, 2006), a group that was two-thirds African-American.  Landrieu would need to repeat his strong showing among African-Americans in order to win, so one would expect him to campaign again to the largely African-American displaced electorate (though not significantly more than the 4 percent he allocated to out-of-town campaigning in the primary).  Nagin, on the other hand, had to improve his showing among white voters; as a result, one would expect him to allocate more of his runoff campaign spending in-town.

Table 6: Runoff Campaign Spending and Geographical Distribution

|  | Total | In-Town | Out-of-Town |
|---|---|---|---|
| Landrieu | $2,113,449.96 | $2,037,491.00 | $75,959.00 |
| Nagin | $853,408.00 | 827,220.00 | $26,188.00 |

Source:  Campaign disclosure reports filed with the Louisiana Board of Ethics (http://www.ethics.state.la.us/cf.htm)
Note: Subtotals may not equal total campaign spending due to a trivial number of expenditures that could not be definitively categorized as being in-town or out-of-town.

Table 6 presents Nagin's and Landrieu's runoff campaign spending, including the geographical allocation of resources. The first important finding is the vast difference in total spending; Landrieu outspent Nagin more than 2:1, and nearly 3:1 in out-of-town campaigning. Landrieu allocated 3.6 percent of his total runoff campaign spending to out-of-town activities, similar to his allocation in the primary. Nagin similarly allocated 3 percent to out-of-town campaigning, quite a bit less than the 6 percent he spent out-of-town in the primary. Interestingly, these findings seem to contradict reports that the candidates were "ignoring" displaced voters heading into the runoff (Nossiter and Dewan, 2006); indeed, Landrieu campaigned to them much like he did in the primary, and while Nagin reduced his out-of-town spending, he by no means eliminated it. Overall, Lieske's (1989) finding of a diminishing marginal utility to campaign spending in local elections is again confirmed, as Landrieu's large spending advantages did not result in victory (and only produced a tie among displaced voters).

Table 7: Runoff Campaign Resource Allocation

|  | Adv | Don | Fundr | Over-head | Polling | Trad Camp | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In-Town Average | 44.3 | 0.1 | 1.2 | 15.2 | 5.9 | 33.3 | 0.1 |
| Landrieu | 48.8 | 0 | 0 | 12.8 | 6.1 | 32.1 | 0.2 |
| Nagin | 39.8 | 0.1 | 2.3 | 17.6 | 5.8 | 34.4 | 0 |
| Out-of-Town Average | 0.9 | 0.5 | 0 | 15.0 | 0 | 83.7 | 0 |
| Landrieu | 0 | 0.2 | 0 | 26.6 | 0 | 73.2 | 0 |
| Nagin | 1.7 | 0.8 | 0 | 3.4 | 0 | 94.1 | 0 |

Source: Campaign disclosure reports filed with the Louisiana Board of Ethics (http://www.ethics.state.la.us/cf.htm)
Note: Cell entries are percents. Total of all columns may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 7 presents data on the resource allocation strategies of the two candidates, both in- and out-of-town. Both candidates spent between 75 percent and 80 percent of their funds on voter contact, with slight advantages to advertising. While the overall allocations to in-town voter contact are similar to their primary campaign allocations, the relative balance between advertising

and traditional campaign stands in stark contrast to the primary, where the bulk of the effort was put into advertising. Unexpectedly, both candidates allocated similar (relatively higher) amounts to overhead and polling.

Out-of-town, the skew toward voter contact is even more pronounced, with both candidates spending the vast majority of their out-of-town funds on traditional campaigning and relatively little on advertising. And as was the case in the primary election, Nagin managed to engage in heavy out-of-town without having to invest significant resources in out-of-town overhead, whereas Landrieu created (in the primary) and maintained (in the runoff) an out-of-town campaign organization to facilitate his grassroots efforts.

**Conclusion**

Again in May, New Orleans' voters had a weeklong opportunity to vote early, either in person at a satellite voting location or via an absentee ballot, and on May 20th in-town voters made their way to their local polling locations to choose the next mayor. By the end of the evening, Ray Nagin had been re-elected to another four-year term as mayor. He won 59,460 votes to Mitch Landrieu's 54,131, a 5,329 vote difference that amounted to a 4 percent victory. Nagin won despite Landrieu's spending advantage because of his ability to win white voters. While he only won 10 percent of white voters in the primary, Nagin captured around 20 percent of their votes in the runoff. Landrieu again managed to secure to votes of around 20 percent of African-American voters, but since African-American voters comprised a majority of the electorate, Nagin's 80-20 advantage with that group propelled him to victory (Krupa, 2006a).

More broadly, the two elections for mayor of New Orleans showed how these campaigns were largely conventional, with existing theories of campaign strategy explaining much of the behavior we saw from the mayoral candidates (at least the top tier candidates). Resources were allocated largely to voter contact (most of that to advertising, at least in the primary) with significant spending on overhead and lower (but not trivial) allocations to polling and fundraising. In terms of the geographic distribution of resources, top-tier candidates allocated far more resources to in-town campaigning than to out-of-town campaigning; this is understandable given the uncertainty surrounding the participation of the displaced voters, and in line with the Electoral College resource allocation literature which finds a disproportional emphasis on spending money where there are more votes. Finally, candidate behavior was largely in line with the expectations of the literature on viability/winnowing, as top tier candidates created diversified campaigns, second tier candidates struggled for media attention, and third tier candidates were idiosyncratic in their resource allocation

decisions. In the end, while the context of the New Orleans mayoral election may have been unprecedented, the behavior of the candidates was not.

## ENDNOTES

1. To get a bit of perspective on this shorter time frame, most elections scholars as well as political operatives consider a fall general election campaign to start around Labor Day. Depending on the exact date of the November election, the length of the campaign ranges from 57 to 64 days. While this is only 1 or 2 weeks more than what the New Orleans mayoral candidates faced, it bears keeping in mind that almost all of the mayoral candidates except Nagin had only the 88 days to make the decision to run, establish a campaign, raise sufficient funds, and engage in electioneering activity. Congressional candidates, on the other hand, usually make the decision to run over a year before Election Day and generally have the campaign established and fundraising underway at least 9 months before Election Day.

2. Louisiana elections are conducted under a system of unitary primaries. In a unitary primary, all candidates regardless of party affiliation run in the primary, and if a candidate receives a majority of the vote, he or she wins the office. If no candidate receives a majority, the top two candidates proceed to a runoff election (officially called the "general" election), even if both candidates are from the same party.

3. See Cotter et al. (1984) for a more detailed description of the theoretical distinction between a campaign's infrastructure and its activity. Bruce Dierenfield, "Congressman Howard W. Smith: A Political Biography," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Virginia, 1981), xii-ix (quotation on xii).

4. See Colantoni, Levesque, and Ordeshook (1975) for a different perspective. Francis J. Vaas, "Title VII: Legislative History," Boston College Industrial and Commercial Law Review 7 (1966): 431-458, www.law.stetson.edu/courses/empdis/vaas.htm (accessed 15 February 2006).

5. The remaining candidates were Johnny Adriani, James Arey, Nick Bacqué, Elvin Brown, Manny "Chevrolet" Bruno, Kimberly Williamson Butler, Roderick Dean, Sonja "Lady" DeDais, Marie Galatas, Greta Gladney, Jimmy Lemann, Mac Rahman, Norbert Rome, Leo Watermeier, and Shedrick White.

6. Personal interview with Greta Gladney, May 15, 2006.

7. Personal interview with Johnny Adriani, May 15, 2006.

8. Telephone interview with Norbert Rome, May 3, 2006; Personal interview with Marie Galatas, May 17, 2006.

9. Fritz and Morris actually have an eighth category – constituent gifts and entertainment – for expenditures that are not designed to win votes in an immediate campaign.  I have omitted it because none of the candidates made any expenditures fitting the Fritz and Morris criteria for this category.

10. The donations category includes contributions to other political candidates, contributions to political parties, contributions to ideological groups, and donations to civic and charitable organizations.

11. Landrieu and Nagin spending totals include only those expenditures made before the primary election (April 22).

12. Landrieu and Nagin spending totals include only those expenditures made before the primary election (April 22).

13. Landrieu and Nagin spending totals include only those expenditures made before the primary election (April 22).

14. New Orleans residents were permitted to vote during this early voting period at the voter registrar offices in Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Ouachita, Rapides, St. Tammany, Lafayette, Tangipahoa, and Terrebonne Parishes.

# WORKS CITED

Abney, F. Glenn and Larry B. Hill. 1966. "Natural Disasters as a Political Variable: The Effect of a Hurricane on an Urban Election." American Political Science Review 60 : 974-981.

Aldrich, John H. 1980. Before the Convention: Strategies and Choices in Presidential Nomination Campaigns. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Arceneaux, Kevin and Robert M. Stein. 2006. "Who is Held Responsible When Disaster Strikes? The Attribution of Responsibility for a Natural Disaster in an Urban Election." Journal of Urban Affairs 28 : 43-53.

Bartels, Larry M. 1988. Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

_____. 1985. "Resource Allocation In a Presidential Campaign." Journal of Politics 47 : 928-936.

Brams, Steven J. and Morton D. Davis. 1975. "Comment on 'Campaign Resource Allocations under the Electoral College.'" American Political Science Review 69 : 155-156.

_____. 1974. "The 3/2's rule in Presidential Campaigning." American Political Science Review 68 : 113-134.

Cain, Bruce, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina. 1987. The Personal Vote. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Colantoni, Claude S., Terrence J. Levesque, and Peter C. Ordeshook. 1975. "Campaign Resource Allocations Under the Electoral College." American Political Science Review 69 : 141-154.

Cotter, Cornelius P., James L. Gibson, John F. Bibby, and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1984. Party Organizations in American Politics. New York, New York: Praeger.

Dart, Bob. 2006. "Mayor's race boils down to 2 in May." The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. April 24, News Section, Page 3A.

Donze, Frank. 2006. "Election Date Gets N.O. Races Moving." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). January 25, National Section, Page 1.

Fritz, Sara and Dwight Morris. 1992. Handbook of Campaign Spending. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Goldenberg, Edie N. and Michael W. Traugott. 1984. Campaigning for Congress. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Gurian, Paul-Henri. 1986. "Resource Allocation Strategies in Presidential Nomination Campaigns." American Journal of Political Science 30 : 802-821.

_____ and Audrey A. Haynes. 1993. "Campaign Strategy in Presidential Primaries, 1976-88." American Journal of Political Science 37 : 335-341.

Henry, Charles P. 1987. "Racial Factors in the 1982 California Gubernatorial Campaign: Why Bradley Lost." In Michael B. Preston, Lenneal J. Henderson, and Paul L. Puryear, eds., The New Black Politics: The Search for Political Power. New York, NY: Longman.

Herrnson, Paul S. 1998. Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington. Second Edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Jacobson, Gary. 1985. "Money and votes reconsidered." Public Choice 47 : 7-62.

Konigsmark, Anne Rochell. 2006. "New Orleans' upheaval shows in vote results." USA Today. April 24, News Section, Page 7A.

Krupa, Michelle. 2006a. "Broad appeal aided Nagin in the runoff." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). May 22, National Section, Page 1.

_____. 2006b. "Candidates shrink travel plans." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). May 10, National Section, Page 1.

_____ and Frank Donze. 2006. "Rebuilding the city is debate theme." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). April 4, Metro Section, Page 1.

Lay, J. Celeste. 2007. "Voting in the Chocolate City: Retrospective Voting, Group Interests, and the Reelection of C. Ray Nagin." Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA.

Lieske, Joel. 1989. "The Political Dynamics of Urban Voting Behavior." American Journal of Political Science 33: 150-174.

_____ and Jan William Hillard. 1984. "The Racial Factor in Urban Elections." Western Political Quarterly 37 : 545-563.

Loewen, James. 1990. "Racial Bloc Voting and Political Mobilization in South Carolina." Review of Black Political Economy 19 : 23-37.

Louisiana Secretary of State. 2006. " Election Results by Precinct-Official Results for Election Date: 4/22/06 Mayor, City of New Orleans, Orleans Parish." At http://www.sos.louisiana.gov:8090/cgibin/?rqstyp=elcmpct&rqsd ta=0422062431750236. Accessed August 28, 2006.

Matthews, Donald R. 1978. "Winnowing: The News Media and the 1976 Presidential Nomination." In James David Barber, ed., Race for the Presidency: The Media and the Nomination Process. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mayer, William. 1999. In Pursuit of the White House 2000: How We Choose Our Presidential Nominees. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.

McCrary, Peyton. 1990. "Racially Polarized Voting in the South: Quantitative Evidence from the Courtroom." Social Science History 14 : 507-531.

Nagler, Jonathan and Jan Leighley. 1992. "Presidential campaign expenditures: Evidence on allocations and effects." Public Choice 73 : 319-333.

Nossiter, Adam and Shaila Dewan. 2006. "Displaced Gain Sway in New Orleans Vote." The New York Times. May 16, Page 17.

Owen, Guillermo. 1975. "Evaluation of a Presidential Election Game." American Political Science Review 69 : 947-953.

Pope, John. 2006. "Evoking King, Nagin calls N.O. 'chocolate' city." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). January 17, Page 1.

Russell, Gordon and Frank Donze. 2006a. "First debate for N.O. mayoral hopefuls." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). March 8, National Section, Page 1.

Russell, Gordon and Frank Donze. 2006b. "23 likely battling just to face Nagin in runoff." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). March 5, National Section, Page 1.

_____ and Michelle Krupa. 2006. "Winning re-election no shoo-in for Nagin." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). April 24, National Section, Page 1.

Thevenot, Brian. 2006. "N.O. voters still here, latest study shows." Times-Picayune (New Orleans). March 25, National Section, Page 1.

VanHeerde, Jennifer A. 2001. "The Savvy Senator? Resource Allocation in the U.S. Senate (1990-1994)." Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Las Vegas, NV.

Whoriskey, Peter. 2006a. "Election Plan for New Orleans Approved." The Washington Post. March 17, Section A, Page A3.

_____. 2006b. "A Mayoral Free-for-All in Changed New Orleans." The Washington Post. March 6, Section A, Page A3.