

Race and the Reelection of the Longest Serving Mayor of St. Louis

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St. Louis City Primary Election Candidates, March 2013

Francis G. Slay	Lewis Reed
Age: 57	Age: 50
Sex: Male	Sex: Male
Race: White	Race: African American
Religion: Catholic	Religion: Not reported
Education: Law degree from St. Louis University Law School, B.S. in political science from Quincy College	Education: Attended Southern Illinois University and studied mathematics and computer science
Occupation: Attorney	Occupation: Corporate management and information technology
Political Experience: St. Louis Alderman for 23 rd Ward, 1985-1995; President of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, 1995-2001; Mayor of St. Louis, 2001-present.	Political Experience: St. Louis Alderman for the 6 th Ward, 1999-2007; President of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, 2007-present.

In 2013 Mayor Francis Slay was elected to a record fourth term and he is now the longest serving mayor in St. Louis history. Mayor Slay has maintained a winning electoral coalition since his first election in 2001, although that coalition was tested in the 2013 election. While Mayor Slay's electoral coalition has several features of an urban regime, his record-setting reelection does not guarantee that major items on his agenda will be implemented.

Characteristics of the City

Many institutional features of St. Louis government weaken the mayor's power and foster political factionalism. The city has a mayor-council form of government with a weak mayor. City budgets and contracts are controlled by the three-person Board of Estimate and Apportionment (BEA), which includes the mayor and the separately elected Comptroller and President of the Board of Aldermen. At least two votes are needed for BEA action. One of the

other BEA members, Aldermanic President Lewis Reed, was Mayor Slay's main challenger in the 2013 election. This has made the BEA a contentious governing institution in recent years. The Board of Aldermen has 28 other members – one elected from each of the city's wards. Each Alderman represents roughly 11,000 city residents and has strong influence over any developments in one's ward. Finally, St. Louis is not part of a larger county, having separated from neighboring St. Louis County in 1876. Thus, state law dictates eight additional citywide elected officials who conduct various "county" duties in St. Louis (such as Collector of Revenue, License Collector, and Recorder of Deeds). St. Louis has been described as an "unreformed" city where patronage transactions still occur.ⁱ The decentralized and factional nature of St. Louis politics makes a mayor's job difficult.

Like many Rustbelt cities, St. Louis has experienced a substantial decline in population and wealth over the past half century as the manufacturing economy has shrunk. St. Louis was the 8th most populous American city in 1950: in 2013, it ranks 58th in population.ⁱⁱ The loss of population has gone hand in hand with white flight, a series of failed zoning and urban renewal programs, racial segregation and concentrated poverty in St. Louis. Several large corporations that were once headquartered in St. Louis, such as TWA and Anheuser-Busch, have been bought out or moved away. One local columnist describes the city as a "branch-office town".ⁱⁱⁱ Civic and political leaders in St. Louis face an ongoing challenge to attract people and businesses to the city.

St. Louis politics have been dominated by the Democratic Party for several decades. President Obama received 82.5 percent of the vote in the city in the 2012 election, carrying every one of the city's 120 polling places. All of the city's elected officials are Democrats. The last time a Republican was elected to citywide office was 1971.^{iv} The last Republican on the Board

of Aldermen was defeated in 2011. The Republican Party has stopped running candidates for almost all elected offices in St. Louis.

Nevertheless, GOP voters can influence St. Louis mayoral elections, a structural advantage for white candidates. St. Louis holds partisan elections to select the mayor. Democratic Party dominance means that the general election is largely a formality. Winning the Democratic primary election is tantamount to winning political office in St. Louis. Most local elections in St. Louis are held in the spring of odd-numbered years. Turnout is very low in these elections, and the electorate is skewed toward white, wealthy, and more educated residents. Zoltan Hajnal outlines conditions in which low voter turnout can lead to unequal representation in local government and policymaking: (1) when turnout is skewed in favor of a particular social group, and (2) when that group has different policy preferences than other groups that vote in smaller numbers.^v As we describe below, these conditions regularly hold in St. Louis mayoral elections. Since there is no meaningful GOP primary election, Republicans can vote in the Democratic primary. Typically, Republicans and Independents comprise one-fourth of the electorate in St. Louis mayoral primary elections, and they tend to heavily support white candidates for mayor.

One-party supremacy also tends to foster factional politics based on race, ethnicity or class divisions,^{vi} and St. Louis is no exception.^{vii} St. Louis ranks ninth out of fifty major metropolitan areas in racial segregation,^{viii} and race is the dominant voting cleavage in St. Louis elections. According to the 2010 census, the voting age population in St. Louis is 49 percent African American and 44 percent white. As Figure 1 indicates, the African American population is concentrated in the northern part of the city, dating back to migration that occurred after both World Wars.^{ix} In recent decades the African American share of the population has increased in

parts of the central and southern regions of the city, although the southernmost and southwestern portions of the city remain heavily white. With two large racial groups of roughly equal size, elections for citywide offices tend to attract at least one African American candidate and one white candidate. Slay has worked with African American politicians on several initiatives, but he has not avoided racial conflict. For example, the mayor's backing of a redistricting plan that eliminated one of the north side wards, his school reform efforts, and his firing of the African American chief of the Fire Department all raised hackles among African Americans in St. Louis. As we show below, there tends to be a high level of racially polarized voting in St. Louis mayoral elections.^x

[Figure 1 about here]

A second voting cleavage in St. Louis elections is based on social class and pits reform interests versus machine politics. Several years ago, Robert Salisbury divided St. Louis into “newspaper” and “delivery” wards.^{xi} Delivery wards featured working class neighborhoods and strong party organizations that could deliver votes in city elections. A smaller number of newspaper wards comprised a wealthier middle class electorate (regular newspaper readers) that was more reform-minded and less influenced by ward endorsements. While the newspaper/delivery cleavage is more evident in charter reform elections than in mayoral contests,^{xii} it persists to the present day.^{xiii} Furthermore, the city's more liberal, upscale and racially diverse central corridor, where the newspaper wards are located, sometimes provides the swing vote in mayoral elections. Mayor Slay lives in the southern edge of the city (Ward 12) while his opponent, Lewis Reed, resides in the central corridor (Ward 6).

The Candidates

Mayor Francis G. Slay was first elected Mayor of St. Louis in April of 2001 and was reelected in 2005 and 2009. The second oldest of eleven children, Francis Slay is white and grew up in St. Louis politics. His father, Francis R. Slay, served two terms in the state legislature, two terms as the city's recorder of deeds, and was influential in city politics as a Democratic committeeman for the 23rd Ward for 45 years.^{xiv} Mayor Slay's grandfather was a Democratic city alderman in the 7th Ward.^{xv} Before running for Mayor, Francis Slay served as a Saint Louis Alderman for 10 years, and was twice elected President of the Board of Aldermen, serving from 1995 to 2001.^{xvi} Mayor Slay is an attorney by profession. Prior to his election as Mayor, Slay worked with the law firm of Guilfoil, Petzall, and Shoemaker for twenty years, becoming a partner in the firm while specializing in corporate law and commercial litigation.^{xvii}

Challenger Lewis Reed is African American and a native of Joliet, Illinois (40 miles southwest of Chicago). Reed attended Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and studied mathematics and computer science. He worked in the St. Louis area for several years in construction, telecommunications, and as a data network manager in the health care industry. Lewis Reed's career in elective politics shares much in common with Mayor Slay. In 1999, Reed ran for and won the Alderman seat in the 6th Ward, holding that office until 2007. In 2007, Reed challenged a white incumbent in a bid for President of the Board of Alderman and won.^{xviii} Reed has served as President of the Board of Alderman since 2007 and plans to run for reelection to the same post in 2015.^{xix} Lewis Reed is the most formidable challenger that Slay has faced since becoming Mayor of St. Louis. There was another African American candidate for the Democratic nomination for mayor, former Alderman Jimmie Matthews, but his campaign was a non-starter and he received only 1 percent of the vote.

Campaign Issues

Researchers from the University of Missouri-St. Louis conducted exit polls of city voters during the 2009 and 2013 mayoral primaries. These surveys reveal some information about the policy preferences of St. Louis voters. According to Hajnal, skewed voter turnout can produce unequal democracy if low turnout groups have different policy preferences than high turnout groups.^{xx} This condition is met in St. Louis politics, where African Americans are more likely than whites to be Democrats. In a more pointed comparison, St. Louis has experienced periods of state control of the city's public schools and police department. African Americans in St. Louis favor local control and oversight of public schools and the police department more than whites. In addition, African Americans express less support for immigration and gay marriage than whites. Finally, African Americans in St. Louis are more likely to oppose tax increases for police funding and downtown redevelopment.

In addition to policy preferences, however, it is important to consider the policy priorities of voters, where we also observe significant racial differences in St. Louis. In the exit polls voters were asked to indicate the most important issues facing the city, with eight possible responses to mark. Figure 2 indicates the percentage of voters mentioning each issue, by race, in the 2013 election. For the most part, issues were mentioned with the same frequency in both elections, with crime, education, and the economy emerging as the top three issues. However, Figure 2 indicates that African American voters were more likely than whites to rate crime, race, and neighborhood development as important issues, while whites were more likely to rate education and downtown development as important issues. The race differences on the priority of crime are not a surprise, as violent crime rates in St. Louis tend to be higher in heavily African American neighborhoods than in heavily white neighborhoods. In separate exit poll questions,

African American voters were more likely than white voters to report neighborhood crime as a significant problem. Thus, racial conflict in St. Louis includes differences in policy preferences and priorities.

Crime

Seemingly in touch with voter sentiments, the mayoral campaigns of Slay and Reed openly discussed crime as one of the most important issues facing St. Louis.^{xxi} For Mayor Slay, the reduction in crime since he first took office in 2001 has been a perennial campaign theme. According to data from the police department, the total number of crime cases in the city dropped from 2725 in 2009 to 2338 in 2013.^{xxii} Mayor Slay's campaign messaging asked voters to focus on the statistical data and trends on crime.

The Reed campaign argued that Slay and his administration underperformed in reducing St. Louis city crime rates. Reed's campaign messages emphasized the personal costs of crime and argued that some parts of the city have not enjoyed a reduction in crime. Reed's proposals for reducing crime included a "Public Safety Collaborative" in which local organizations such as universities, religious groups, businesses, and neighborhoods join to develop long-term initiatives aimed at reducing crime.^{xxiii} In a similar vein, Slay's office has established a partnership with the University of Missouri-St. Louis to study crime patterns and develop solutions for crime prevention. Regardless of campaign spin, both Slay and Reed agreed that more options need to be explored to reduce crime in St. Louis.

Education

A second important issue for voters and for mayoral candidates was education. While the mayor does not have direct control over the St. Louis school system (there is a separately elected

school board), Mayor Slay has made a controversial foray into public school policy and governance. Since the St. Louis Public Schools lost state accreditation in 2007, a state-appointed board has overseen the city's public school system.^{xxiv} For several years Mayor Slay has supported the formation of charter schools in St. Louis as a way to increase access to quality education.^{xxv} Reed criticized Slay's support for charter schools throughout the campaign, arguing that Slay prioritized charter schools ahead of public school options. The Slay campaign denied such claims and emphasized the need to provide options to families in combination with public school options.

The Economy

A third area of focus for both mayoral campaigns was the economy. Mayor Slay's campaign rhetoric emphasizes diversity, immigration, and racial inclusion through small and large business tax and investment incentives.^{xxvi} However, on economic matters Slay is best known for supporting large-scale growth policies such as tax credits and tax-increment financing for downtown development projects near Busch Stadium (home of the St. Louis Cardinals) and the Arch, as well as a massive redevelopment plan for north St. Louis and a proposed China trade hub for the St. Louis airport. In contrast, Reed's position on improved economic conditions for the city of St. Louis leans more toward small business incentives. His theory is that larger projects do not "reach a measurable level in the more disinvested portions of the city."^{xxvii}

Campaign Strategy

The campaigns of Francis Slay and Lewis Reed focused on three main objectives. First, direct community contact through a variety of paid and earned media sources served as a

foundation for campaign messaging. Second, specific issue-based messages and endorsements helped to buttress each campaign's rhetorical goals. Third, financing played a critical role in supporting the other campaign objectives.

Finance and Endorsements

Elite endorsements and campaign finance totals indicate that Mayor Slay had carefully laid the groundwork for his reelection. Slay gained the majority of high profile political endorsements during the campaign, including all of the statewide elected Democratic officials in Missouri. As a result of redistricting, the lone African American member of Congress from the St. Louis region, Representative William Lacy Clay, was drawn into the same district with another Democratic incumbent (Representative Russ Carnahan). Mayor Slay was quick out of the gate to endorse Clay in their 2012 primary election, which Clay won easily. Representative Clay returned the favor by endorsing Mayor Slay for reelection in 2013. Slay also garnered the endorsements some other prominent African American politicians, such as St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley and Democratic State Senator Jamilah Nasheed, whose district covers the eastern half of the city.^{xxviii} The St. Louis Cardinals baseball team and the St. Louis Labor Council also endorsed Mayor Slay. By comparison, Lewis Reed struggled to gain both high profile political endorsements and varied bases of support. Reed's local endorsements included the Organization for Black Struggle, Alderman Antonio French (21st Ward), and former state Senator Robin Wright-Jones.^{xxix}

The lead in endorsements mirrored a large advantage in campaign fundraising for the Slay campaign. Mayor Slay received just under \$ 3.5 million in campaign contributions, while his total expenditures were slightly over \$3.2 million.^{xxx} A significant part of the mayor's

financial advantage comes from his alliance with Civic Progress, an association of the CEOs of the largest corporations in the St. Louis region.^{xxxix} Civic Progress has supported several of the mayor's biggest initiatives, including school reform, charter reform, and redeveloping the area around the Arch. The Reed campaign received slightly more than \$700,000 in contributions with expenditures coming in just under \$650,000.^{xxxix} While Lewis Reed posed the best-financed opponent Mayor Slay had faced since 2001, the Slay campaign still had a large financial advantage which shaped other elements of the campaign.

Media

The Slay administration has long operated a well-connected direct community media outreach program. The media slate consists of direct communication with St. Louis city residents via a Mayoral website, Twitter, and Facebook pages.^{xxxix} This collection of communication tools carried into a vigorous mayoral campaign operation designed to illustrate Slay's committed connection to city residents and to demonstrate the Slay administration's dedication to solving ongoing city problems. For Mayor Slay, direct community contact through media sources, constant community involvement, and consistent paid media served as a formidable messaging machine.

Much to the dismay of his supporters, the Reed campaign was never able to financially capitalize on messaging for change in St. Louis. For example, Lewis Reed's opening profile was limited. For several months, Reed's main connection to city residents was his Internet link at the St. Louis Board of Aldermen website. Reed did not operate a comprehensive media outreach program throughout the campaign. In fact, Reed's candidate website presence was slim, lacking in interactive elements and containing limited information about Reed and his objectives for city

improvements. Reed's campaign also lacked a press machine for messaging, unlike the extensive media presence of Mayor Slay. Furthermore, along with a change in campaign managers roughly three months before the election, canvassing and outreach was somewhat limited for the Reed campaign. Negative attacks against Slay became a primary path for Reed to garner daily press coverage.

Image and Advertising

The Slay campaign owned the issues of crime, education, and economic prosperity by promoting a thick slate of accomplishments during the mayor's twelve years in office. Since taking office, Slay and his administration has consistently maintained a press voice related to ongoing city improvements such as crime reduction, establishment of charter schools, and support of ongoing tax-based business initiatives such as historic restoration tax breaks on city properties, and business investment tax initiatives like those used by Ball Park Village (a new downtown development being built across the street from Busch Stadium).

The Slay campaign aired two television advertisements and two radio spots between January and March of 2013. The TV ads were entirely positive in tone, while the Slay campaign's radio ads and direct mail pieces included some negative contrasts with Lewis Reed. The first video, televised in January of 2013, was titled "We call it home" and emphasized a "don't change horses midstream" message.^{xxxiv} The add includes appearances by the Mayor, St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley, Rhonda Broussard, founder of the St. Louis Language Immersion Schools, Arlene and Stanley Brown, owners of Robust Wine Bar, and Rick Dildine, executive director of the St. Louis Shakespeare Festival. The second video highlighted improvements made by Mayor Slay to reduce crime and help seniors.^{xxxv}

Slay's first radio spot was aired in February of 2013 and was narrated by William Lacy Clay, Representative of Missouri's 1st congressional district. The spot touted some of the mayor's accomplishments on crime and lead paint and promoted the Slay administration as inclusive.^{xxxvi} The second radio ad was a clear change in Slay's messaging concerning Reed. The ad began by mentioning positive programs the Slay administration implemented, such as hot spot policing and reverse 911. The tone of the ad then shifted to an attack on Reed's character, noting that Reed had been sued "for not paying his bills and taxes" and had taken campaign contributions from a convicted felon who once owned a strip club on the Illinois side of the St. Louis region.^{xxxvii} It is instructive that Slay viewed Lewis Reed as a strong enough challenger to merit negative campaigning. In response to the negative ad, Reed stated that the Slay campaign received money from prominent Republicans.

With limited resources and a much lower community profile in terms of advertising, Lewis Reed struggled to get his message of "a new direction for St. Louis City" out to the masses. Even though Reed's campaign videos aired early in the campaign (beginning in October of 2012) limited finances curtailed repeated airings midway through the campaign. As a result of a low level on-air presence, the Reed campaign lost momentum as Election Day approached.

Regarding the Reed campaign's advertisements, three television advertisements and one radio spot were aired in the St. Louis area. Two of the television spots were aired well before Mayor Slay had stepped up campaign advertisements. In October 2012, the Reed campaign aired the first TV ad, titled "Lewis Reed is running."^{xxxviii} In the spot, Reed literally runs to different locations in the city while the narrator discusses the leadership needed for all of St. Louis. The second television ad aired in December 2012, emphasizing a "new vision for St. Louis" with Reed professing that he seeks what is best for *all* of St. Louis. Reed is noted for riding his bike to

and from work everyday. The video shows Reed riding his bike to his office, changing clothes, pressing a suit, and walking out of his office ready to take on the day. In the television spot Reed professed hope for the city and stated a message of change.^{xxxix}

The third television spot was designed to be an interview style setting. The ad featured Reed discussing a personal tragedy, the fatal shooting of his brother. The presentation was designed to reach out to anyone who had experienced violent crime and to give personal testimony to such tragedy while focusing on the need to improve efforts to reduce crime in St. Louis.^{xl}

The one and only radio spot aired by the Reed campaign came as a direct response to the negative radio ad produced by the Slay campaign. In the spot, a female narrator made statements while a man yelled in the background “what!” One of the statements indicated “Slay gave over \$10 million dollars in no-bid contracts to his campaign contributors.”^{xli} The background speaker then yelled “What!” The ad further discussed crime in St. Louis and ended with a man saying “What! Come on... Slay.” The ad was meant to imply cronyism in the Slay administration.

Even though the number of unique television and radio spots produced by each campaign was similar, airtime repetition was substantially higher for Slay’s ads. The Slay team successfully blanketed the city with social media canvassing, and with the television and radio advertisements mentioned above.^{xlii} As a result, the Slay campaign owned messaging on the issues of crime reduction, education, and tax incentives for businesses. In contrast, the Reed campaign was only able to cast doubt about improvements in crime reduction and promote a message of a new direction, without a clear indication of how such action could be accomplished.

Race-based appeals have appeared in not-so-subtle forms during St. Louis political campaigns for many years.^{xliii} By historical standards, the candidates for mayor in 2013 largely avoided making the race card a topic for mass consumption. For example, as noted above, many of the Slay campaign advertisements included messages and images of racial inclusion. However, during the campaign, a film company used a drawing portraying Mayor Slay as a slave owner to promote a documentary on racial divisions in the city.^{xliv} Late in the campaign, an unaffiliated committee distributed door hangers and advertisements in the *St. Louis American* (a local newspaper with a largely African American readership) that featured pictures of Barack Obama, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. and pointedly asked whom they would support in the mayoral election.^{xlv} These episodes revealed ongoing racial tensions in a city divided.

Grassroots Bases of Support

As the incumbent, Mayor Slay has been in a position to make news and reach out to various constituencies in the city. Some of the mayor's ongoing grassroots efforts emphasize lifestyle improvements and city amenities. For example, Slay added a sustainability director to spearhead development and conservation initiatives concentrating on LEED-certified construction, urban farming, bicycle paths, and additional dog parks. In addition, Slay worked with members of the LGBT community to add gender identity to the city's nondiscrimination policy and to extend domestic partner benefits to gay and lesbian firefighters.^{xlvi} The mayor has also promoted trendy new businesses in the city like food trucks and microbrews.^{xlvii} As a result of these ongoing efforts to engage various groups in city politics, Mayor Slay has attempted to expand his base of support beyond white voters and Republicans.

Conversely, the grassroots efforts of the Reed campaign were limited to door-to-door efforts. Reed's primary base of support came from residents in north St. Louis, a largely African American population, and from firefighters and other city workers unhappy with Mayor Slay's efforts to overhaul pension programs. Given the mayor's large financial advantage, it is not a surprise that a majority of exit poll respondents reported being contacted by the Slay campaign, while just 43 percent mentioned any contact from the Reed campaign.

Election Results

In the primary election on March 5, 2013, Francis Slay defeated Lewis Reed by a margin of 54 percent to 44 percent to win the Democratic nomination for mayor. It was the closest margin of victory for Mayor Slay, including his first election to the office in 2001. Figure 3 shows a map with the mayoral results by city ward. As in many previous St. Louis elections, race was the strongest predictor of vote choice in 2013. Mayor Slay's strongest areas of support were in the heavily white wards in south St. Louis, and his poorest showing was in the north city wards. Our exit poll indicates that more than 80 percent of white voters chose Mayor Slay while over three-fourths of non-white voters supported Lewis Reed. Approximately 22 percent of African Americans voted for Slay, just surpassing the mayor's campaign goal of 20 percent.^{xlvi} Lewis Reed was not far behind Francis Slay in cross-racial voting appeal, receiving approximately 17 percent of the white vote.

[Figure 3 about here]

With a high level of racially polarized voting, the relative turnout of white and black voters helped determine the outcome of the election, and voter turnout indeed worked to the advantage of Francis Slay. Turnout was relatively low in the primary, at just 22 percent of registered voters, a substantial decline from the turnout in Mayor Slay's first election in 2001.

More importantly, as in previous local elections, turnout was higher in the southern portion of the city, where most white voters live. While blacks slightly outnumber whites among the voting age population in St. Louis, our exit poll suggests that white voters comprised about 55 percent of the electorate in the March 5 election.

Republican voters also helped Mayor Slay win reelection. More than 70 percent of Republicans and Independents voted for Mayor Slay. We found a similar share of GOP voters in the 2009 Democratic primary election and they voted even more heavily for Mayor Slay in that election. Also, Republican voters are concentrated in three wards in the southwestern corner of the city (12, 16, and 23). Those three wards had by far the highest turnout in the 2013 mayoral primary, and Francis Slay dominated the vote in all three of those wards. Republican voters are responsible for at least part of the mayor's margin of victory.

Eric Oliver has written that local governments are “managerial democracies” and that local elections hinge on evaluations of the incumbent's performance in office.^{xlix} The St. Louis election was clearly a referendum on Mayor Slay. Almost two-thirds of the exit poll respondents reported that things in the city are headed in the right direction, and a healthy majority evaluated the mayor's job performance favorably. These satisfied voters cast their ballots heavily for the mayor. Almost half of African American respondents reported that the city was heading in the right direction. Satisfaction with the city's direction helped Slay carry most of the wards in the city's central corridor, including a narrow win in Reed's own 6th ward. We observed very similar satisfaction levels in the 2009 election, so it appears that Mayor Slay managed to serve his third term without generating much additional hostility from voters. While the Slay administration's initiatives to improve city amenities did not generate increased support for the mayor's reelection among young voters and liberals, they may have enhanced Slay's image as a competent mayor.

Nevertheless, there has been some tension between Mayor Slay and city workers, particularly firefighters, over the mayor's attempts to reform and reduce their pensions. Exit poll data suggest that this is a constituency where voter support for Mayor Slay has declined. In our 2009 survey, 56% of union members voted for Mayor Slay, as compared to 63% of non-union members. In 2013, Mayor Slay's vote share among non-union members remained the same (63%) but his support among union members dipped to 43%. We see an even bigger decline among city employees. In our 2009 exit poll, Mayor Slay received the vote of 57% of city employees versus 61% from the rest of the voters. In 2013, Mayor Slay's vote share among people not employed by the city remained high (63%), but his voter support among city workers dropped to 24%. City workers remain a small portion of the electorate (around 10 percent), so they were not able to deny Mayor Slay reelection.

In April, Slay easily won the general election with 82 percent of the vote over a Green Party candidate to secure his record-setting fourth consecutive term as mayor of St. Louis. The same election featured a ballot measure (Proposition P) to increase the sales tax by $\frac{3}{16}$ th of a cent to fund improvements to local parks, trails, and the Gateway Arch. Proposition P was popularly known as the "Arch tax" because about one-third of the funds would renovate the Arch grounds and make the Arch more accessible from downtown St. Louis. The ballot measure passed easily in St. Louis and narrowly in St. Louis County, a policy victory for Mayor Slay. Figure 4 shows a map of the results of the city vote on Proposition P, clearly showing the strongest voter support for the measure in the "newspaper" wards of the central corridor. The map also shows that the north side wards provided the lowest levels of voter support for the Arch tax. Raising taxes for downtown redevelopment is a harder sell for African American political leaders and voters, who wonder if they will see any benefits from those programs.

[Figure 4 about here]

Analysis

Mayor Francis Slay has clearly built a successful electoral coalition in St. Louis. The St. Louis case demonstrates that election institutions matter. The rules and timing of the mayoral primary election in St. Louis favors white candidates, like Francis Slay. Furthermore, as long as turnout in St. Louis elections remains skewed toward wealthy, educated, and white voters it will be a challenge for an African American to win a mayoral election unless multiple candidates split the white vote. This raises questions about the equal representation of competing policy preferences and priorities in St. Louis government.

What else does Mayor Slay's reelection tell us about political power in St. Louis? Mayor Slay's background in corporate law, his affinity for large-scale downtown development, and his association with Civic Progress are characteristics of a "developmental" regime, in Stone's typology.ⁱ However, some of the mayor's other initiatives targeted toward dog lovers, bike enthusiasts, environmentalists and other activists show signs of a "middle-class progressive" regime.ⁱⁱ Mayor Slay seems to have built a coalition that includes some of both elements.

Since Mayor Slay has been elected to a record fourth consecutive term it is worth considering whether the Slay coalition embodies a "political monopoly," as delineated by Jessica Trounstine.ⁱⁱⁱ St. Louis under Mayor Slay's tenure has two characteristics that Trounstine associates with political monopolies: (1) declining turnout in local elections, and (2) efforts to centralize power. Voter turnout declined from over 86,000 voters in 2001 (Slay's first election as mayor) to just under 45,000 voters in 2013. Mayor Slay has also embarked on initiatives to centralize power by increasing the mayor's authority over public schools and the police department and by a charter reform program to significantly reduce the number of elected

officials in St. Louis. However, a charter reform effort supported by Mayor Slay and Civic Progress was soundly defeated by city voters in 2004, and the mayor's influence over public schools was short-lived after his slate of board members were defeated in the 2005 and 2006 elections. More recently, Mayor Slay has succeeded at regaining local control of the police department largely on his terms (through an amendment to the state constitution). Furthermore, last year Mayor Slay shepherded passage of a measure to reduce the number of Aldermen from 28 to 14, which will occur after the 2020 census.

The weak mayor system and the factional nature of St. Louis politics continues to pose a challenge for mayoral leadership in St. Louis. Mayor Slay recently attempted to contract with a private company to review and possibly help manage the city water department. After a public outcry and failed attempts to get another member of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to support the deal, the company withdrew from the proposed contract.^{liii} Mayor Slay's setbacks demonstrate Stone's point that governing coalitions are not based solely on winning elections.

Finally, it is important to note that Mayor Slay has become a polarizing political figure in St. Louis. In each city exit poll we embedded a survey experiment to test Mayor Slay's impact on public opinion on two salient local issues (state control of public schools in 2009, the Arch tax measure in 2013). Half of the voters in the exit poll were randomly selected to get a version of the survey question that pointed out Mayor Slay's position on the local issue, while the other half of the respondents were not informed of the mayor's position. In both cases, when informed where the mayor stood on the issue, white voters and Slay supporters became more supportive of the mayor's position while African Americans and those who voted for Slay's challengers became less supportive of the mayor's position. While the mayor's supporters appear committed

to his leadership, this suggests that there are serious constraints on Mayor Slay's ability to move beyond his electoral coalition.

Back Matter

P. Frances Gouzien is a Ph. D student in Political Science at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She won a Clifford C. Clogg scholarship to attend the summer program at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) in 2013. Her primary fields of study are American politics and statistical methodology, with a focus on public opinion and political behavior.

David C. Kimball is professor and director of graduate studies in the Political Science department at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He is the co-author of three books: *Helping America Vote, Lobbying and Policy Change*, and *Why Americans Split Their Tickets*. He is co-editor of *Controversies in Voting Behavior*, and he has written several articles on voting behavior, election administration, public opinion, and interest group lobbying in the United States. He won the Emerging Scholar Award from the Political Organizations and Parties section of the American Political Science Association in 2004. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University.

ⁱ Lana Stein, *St. Louis Politics: The Triumph of Tradition* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2002), xvii.

ⁱⁱ Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 223; U.S. Census Bureau.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bill McClellan, "Art of the Deal: Bank's Paintings are Pure Missouri," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 19, 1997, C1.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, 150, 174.

^v Zoltan L. Hajnal, *America's Uneven Democracy: Race, Turnout, and Representation in City Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

^{vi} John H. Mollenkopf, *A Phoenix in the Ashes: The Rise and Fall of the Koch Coalition in New York City Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 77; V.O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1949), chapter 14.

^{vii} Stein, *St. Louis Politics*, chapters 8-10.

^{viii} Logan, John R., and Brian Stults. 2011. "The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census." *Census Brief* prepared for Project US2010. Retrieved from <http://www.s4.brown.edu/us2010>.

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- ix Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, 1-4.
- x Also see Stein, *St. Louis Politics*, 246.
- xi Robert H. Salisbury, "St. Louis Politics: Relationships among Interests, Parties, and Governmental Structure," *Western Political Quarterly* 18(1960): 499.
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Figure 1
African American Share of Voting Age Population in St. Louis, 2010 Census

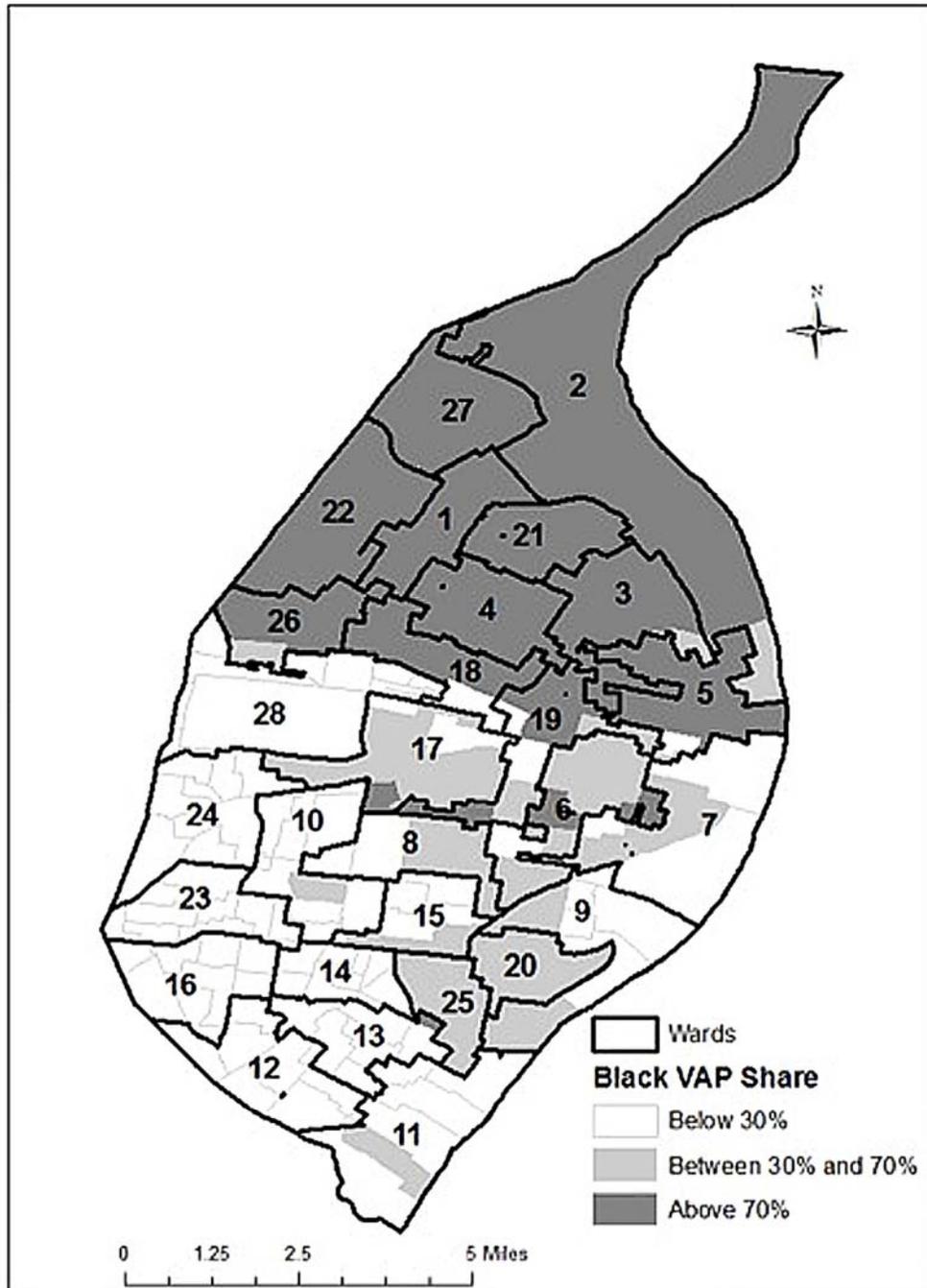


Figure 2
Most Important Issue Mentions by Race, March 2013

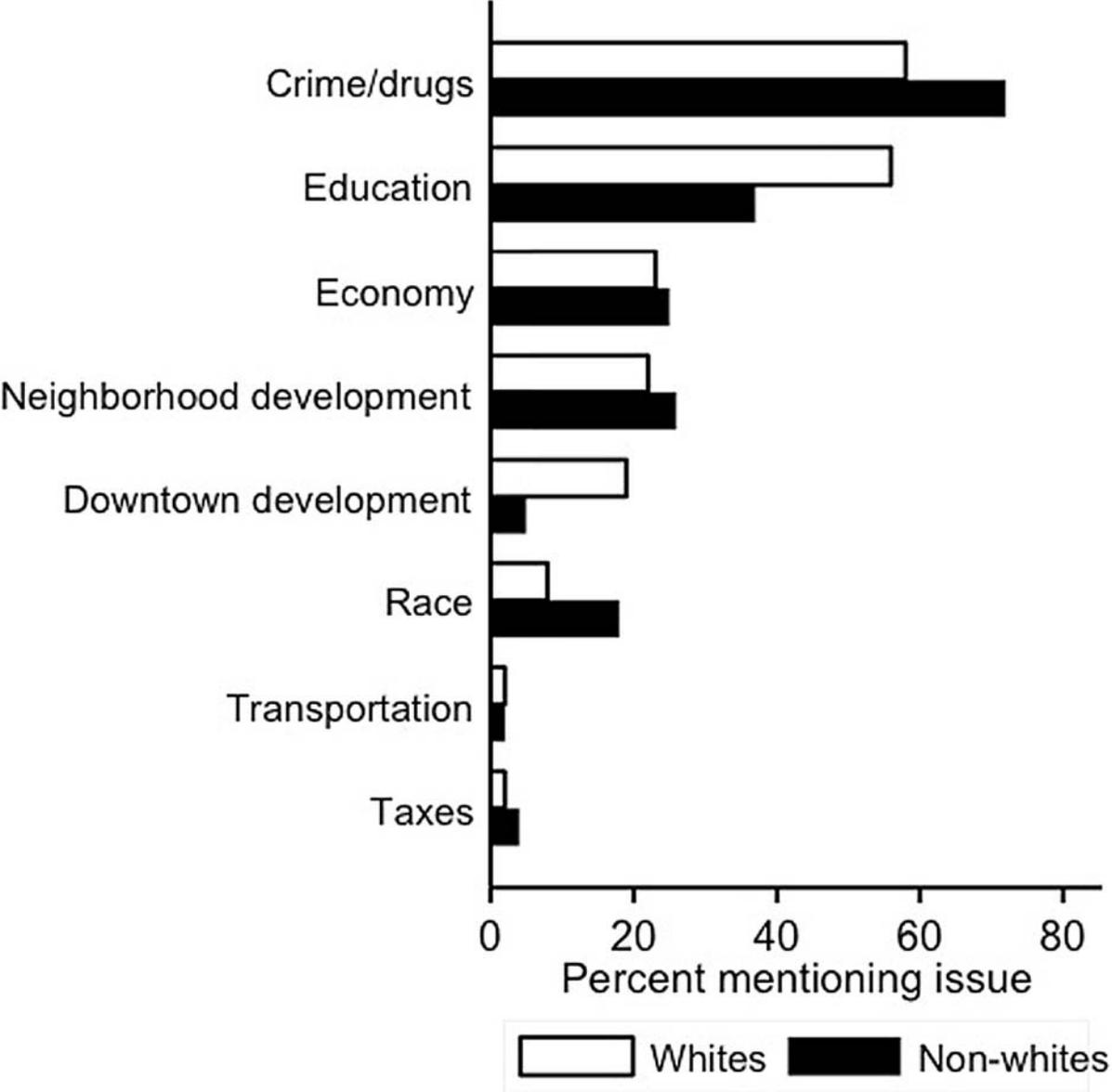


Figure 3
Voter Support for Mayor Slay by Ward, March 2013 Primary

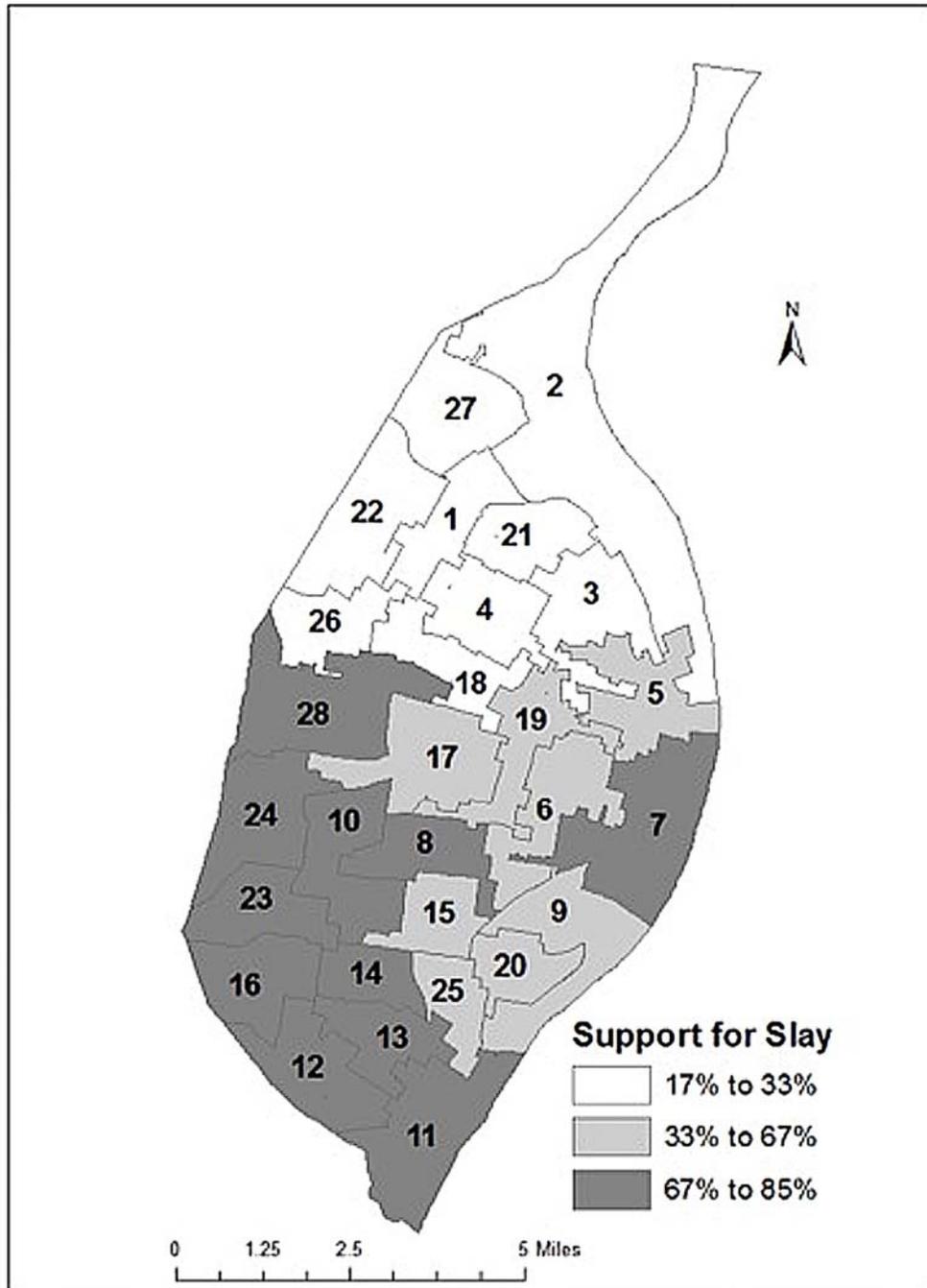


Figure 4
Voter Support for Proposition P by Ward, April 2013

