Gentrification and Racial Representation: A Comparative Analysis¹

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by

J. Rosie Tighe
Assistant Professor
Department of Urban Affairs
Maxine Levin College of Urban Affairs
Cleveland State University
j.l.tighe@csuohio.edu
216-687-2164

James Wright
Doctoral Student
Department of Public Administration & Policy
School of Public Affairs
American University
jw5069a@student.american.edu

Robert Renner
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research
robert.n.renner@hud.gov
202-708-5537

Derek Hyra²
Associate Professor and Director of the Metropolitan Policy Center Department of Public Administration & Policy School of Public Affairs
American University
hyra@american.edu
202-885-2440

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¹ Views expressed in this paper do not represent the views of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

² If you have questions regarding this paper, please contact this author.

Introduction

Gentrification is often discussed as redevelopment and reinvestment in low-income areas that attract upper-income newcomers, spurring displacement of long-term residents (Fraser 2004; Fullilove and Wallace 2011; Hyra 2008, 2012; Newman and Wyly 2006). However, in many neighborhoods gentrification does not always result in physical displacement of groups due to affordable housing and other policies that have kept a sizable proportion of long-term, low-income residents in place as their neighborhood redevelops (Ellen and O'Regan 2011; Freeman 2006; Howell 2015; Hyra 2015; McKinnish, Walsh, and White 2010). Beyond physical displacement, little is known about how neighborhood redevelopment affects other factors. Recent research has begun to delve into how racial and economic integration affects cultural identity (Anderson and Sternmerg 2012; Banks 2014), social cohesion and networks (Douglas 2012; Keene et al. 2014; Sampson 2012; Tach 2014), the use of public space (Apteker 2015; Chaskin and Joseph 2013; Thörn 2012) and political engagement (Knotts and Haspel 2006; Martin 2007; Michener and Wong 2015) among long-term residents.

This article focuses on another important potential gentrification consequence: shifting political representation. The loss of political representation at the local level within a gentrifying community, "political displacement," was identified by Hyra (2015), who broadly defined it as the loss of political voice among long-term residents due to neighborhood change. Inner city minority/majority neighborhoods that have long been a bastion of African American political power may find their municipal influence diminished as White households move in. The most immediate repercussions of this community change may appear at the local level, as long-time residents find themselves losing seats on city councils, county commissions, and community boards to people representing new residents and agendas.

For instance, Washington, DC (DC) was once known as Chocolate City due to its majority Black population and its plethora of Black political officials. In the 2000s the city experienced "wildfire" gentrification, led by an influx of thousands of new White residents into its low-income minority neighborhoods. Since 1973 the DC city council was majority Black, but with recent demographic and redevelopment shifts its city council, as of 2015, is now majority White (Hyra forthcoming).³

This study analyzes political changes in six United States (US) cities that contain some of the fastest gentrifying neighborhoods⁴ to determine if neighborhood redevelopment influences the political standing of low-income, minority groups in gentrifying neighborhoods. In particular, we focus on neighborhoods that have previously been predominately African American to determine whether neighborhood change reduces Black political representation. Using local election and census data from 1990 to 2010, we identify and measure the extent to which gentrification is associated with political displacement. Our evidence suggests that gentrification is associated with political displacement in some certain circumstances but by no means leads to political loss in all cases. Further research is needed to more rigorously tease out the specific neighborhood factors associated with political displacement.

Political Voice and Representation in Black, Urban America

One key tenet of democracy is the ability to express one's opinions through the formal elected political system (Dahl 1971). This expression is referred to as "political voice" – meaning expression or behavior that "has the intent or effect of influencing government action" (Verba et al. 1995: 38). According to Schlozman and Brady (2012), political voice is vital to

³ Furthermore, scholars have recently detected diminished African American political influence in other once Blackstrong hold cities experiencing gentrification (Arena 2012; Owens and Brown 2014).

⁴ "Fastest gentrifying" areas are those that had the largest increase in the share of the White population between 2000 and 2010. This definition comes from the 2012 work of Michael Petrilli.

American democracy, because it helps to promote equal protection of interests, ensures full membership in the polity, develops engaged citizens, builds democratic community, and facilitates governing legitimacy (Schlozman and Brady 2012: 98-101). Equality of political voice – that is, ensuring that all citizens have an equal ability to impact political decision-making – is a key facet to producing a truly representative democratic government (Schlozman and Brady 2012). However, there is considerable evidence that political voice in the United States (US) is not equally distributed (Bartels 2009; Hickey and Bracking 2005; Schlozman et al. 2005; Williams 2000). According to Schlozman et al. (2005: 3):

The exercise of political voice is stratified most fundamentally by social class. Those who enjoy high levels of income, occupational status and, especially, education are much more likely to take part politically than are those who are less well endowed with socio-economic resources. Attendant to the class differences in political participation are disparities in political voice on the basis of both gender and race or ethnicity.

In the US this political inequality is often drawn across racial lines, due, in part, to racial wealth and income inequalities (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

While many minorities feel disenfranchised and marginalized by the American electoral political system, African Americans have made substantial political inroads since the mid-20th century (Reed 2001). US inner city neighborhoods have been a reliable source of Black political power (Galster 2012; Hardy-Fanta et al. 2005; Owens and Brown 2014; Ture and Hamilton 2011). Due to residential segregation, local political districts that are majority-minority that have elected Black political officials to both local and national offices (Massey and Denton 1993; Thompson 2005) but Blacks and Hispanics are rarely elected locally from districts that are not heavily minority in composition (Grofman and Handley 1989). This equates to minority elected officials typically needing a minority-majority population in their districts to facilitate electoral success.

In the last 20 years, inner city communities have become more racially and ethnically integrated (Ellen, Horn and O'Regan 2012; Freeman and Cai 2015; Logan and Zhang 2011; Owens 2012). For instance, Freeman and Cai (2015) document that the proportion of African American neighborhoods experiencing a significant White influx doubled between 2000 and 2010, and some argue that inner city gentrification is a key factor leading to racial integration (Glaser and Vigdor 2012). As many of these Black-majority districts become gentrified, with a larger share of Whites, African American politicians might find it more difficult to be elected.

The potential loss of formal minority elected representation in urban politics is important for several reasons (Owens and Brown 2014). First, the race of elected officials affects perceptions of racial progress and trust in government as well as voting behavior. According to Gay (2001: 599), "In a country in which politics historically has been an important vehicle in the mobility (and "mainstreaming") of racial and ethnic groups, white and black constituents alike may equate minority office-holding with the advancement of a minority public policy agenda." As local minority representation decreases, this might be viewed as a "step back" in the country's racial progress. Second, Bobo and Gilliam (1990) suggest that minority office-holding can improve perceptions of trust in government, which in turn can improve rates of political engagement. Work by Gay (2001: 598) supports this assertion, finding that, "In Georgia, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Tennessee...greater political activity was exhibited among African Americans in black-represented districts." Furthermore, findings suggest that gentrification tends to reduce the political engagement among long-standing residents (Hyra 2015; Knotts and Haspel 2006; Michener and Wong 2015). Thus, a decline in minority representation might decrease trust and confidence in the American democracy, as well as political participation

among African Americans, and other racial and ethnic groups (Michelson 2001; Rahn and Rudolph 2005).

As gentrification increases in minority communities, these enclaves, which Black politicians relied on for votes, may become diluted by outsiders. This dilution might result in a decline in Black political representation in these communities (Fraser 2004; Hyra 2015; Knotts and Haspel 2006; Owens and Brown 2014; Wilson 2012). Given the importance of representation and voice to a functioning democracy, and the historic concentration of African American political power in central-city neighborhoods, how does demographic change and economic revitalization in Black neighborhoods affect electoral representation?

Methods and Data

This study analyzes the political changes at the local level for US cities that contain some of the fastest gentrifying neighborhoods. Michael Petrilli (2012) defined these by measuring largest increase in the share of the White population from 2000-2010 at the US zip code level.⁵ Of the fifty quickest gentrifying zip codes, thirty are located in ten cities (Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Charleston, SC; Chattanooga, TN; Denver, CO; New Orleans, LA; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA, and Washington, DC). We began our analysis with these thirty zip codes.

However, of these cities only six had sufficient overlap between the gentrifying zip codes in these cities and their accompanying city council political districts. We chose city council districts because these are small geographic areas of formal elected political representation. State and congressional seat districts are often too large to assess the relationship between gentrification as they contain too many different neighborhoods. In order to ensure that the gentrifying neighborhoods were concomitant with local political district boundaries, we

⁵ http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/flypaper/2012/the-fastest-gentrifying-neighborhoods-in-the-united-states.html [accessed November 9, 2015].

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established a threshold of over 40 percent population overlap.⁶ Thus, if more than 40 percent of the political district's total population over 18 was located inside the portions of the identified gentrified zip codes within that political district we included that political district in our analysis.⁷

The resulting sample consists of 11 city council political districts located in five cities – New York City, Atlanta, Washington DC, Charleston, Denver, and New Orleans. Thus, we assembled a dataset to assess political change for the following districts:

- New York City Manhattan District 7 (Gentrifying zip codes 10026; 10031; 10032 included)
- New York City Brooklyn District 35 (Gentrifying zip codes 11205; 11238 included)
- Atlanta Council District 5 (Gentrifying zip codes 30312; 30316; 30317 included)
- Washington DC Ward 1(Gentrifying zip codes 20001; 20010 included
- Washington DC Ward 5 (Gentrifying zip codes 20001; 20002; 20010 included)
- Washington DC Ward 6 (Gentrifying zip codes 20001; 20002; 20003 included)
- Charleston Council District 1 (Gentrifying zip codes 29492; 29492 included)
- Charleston Council District 3 (Gentrifying zip codes 29403 included)
- Charleston Council District 4 (Gentrifying zip codes 29403 included)
- Denver Council District 8 (Gentrifying zip codes 80205; 80207 included)
- New Orleans Parish B (Gentrifying zip codes 70112; 70115 included)

We then excluded New York City's Manhattan District 7 and Charleston's Council District 1 since theses political districts did not have majority Black populations in any of the observation years (in 1990 NYC's Manhattan District 7 and Charleston's District 1 were 40 percent and 41 percent Black and this population decreased in subsequent years ending at 26 percent and 10 percent in 2010). We sought to understand changing political representation in Black majority districts experiencing gentrification (see Table 1).

⁶ We initially chose an over 50% population criterion and we made the assumption that a majority of the political districts voting population needed to be in the gentrified areas. However, this limited our analysis to only seven political districts. Thus, we lowered the exclusion criteria to over 40% to allow for the analysis of another four political districts.

⁷ We used a dasymetric mapping technique, which will be described subsequently, to determine which political jurisdictions had at least 40 percent of their population (18 years or older) located within gentrifying ZIP codes identified by Petrilli.

Table 1. Percentage Black in Political Districts, 1990-2010

Year	NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New Orl.
	35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	В
1990	78	84	60	87	67	50	79	85	70
2000	72	74	49	89	65	36	72	73	68
2010	55	52	37	80	45	26	57	65	53

In the nine selected political districts, we calculated and assessed data at the political district and zip code level. Our primary dependent variable was the race of the districts' political representatives. While other individual charateristeristics of local elected officials were gathered, such as age, gender and political party, we chose to assess the racial change of the representatives as areas within their districts changed demographically (we plan to include other politician characteristics and specific policy agendas in future analyses). We collected the political representatives' racial information from 1990 to 2010.

Our lead independent variables were demographic and property values changes for the proportion of the gentrifying zip codes within the political districts. We calculated the percentage Black, percentage White, percentage in poverty, percentage homeownership, percentage with a BA or higher, the mean household income, and the mean home value for the gentrifying areas within the political districts in 1990, 2000 and 2010. Census data were used to calculate the 1990 and 2000 figures, while the American Community Survey was used to determine the 2010 levels.

We used the dasymetric mapping technique to estimate 1990, 2000, and 2010 demographic characteristics for the entire political jurisdiction and the part of the jurisdiction that gentrified (Mennis 2009; Zandbergen and Ignizio 2010). We use the block centroids to calculate a proportion of the population of each census tract that is located within the entire political jurisdiction and the gentrifying part of the political jurisdiction (see appendix for illustration). This proportion was then used as a weight to allocate data from the tract level to the target geographies, the entire political jurisdiction and the gentrifying part of the jurisdiction. For

example, if 100 percent of the population of a census tract was located completely within a political jurisdiction, its calculated ratio would be 1 and 100 percent of its demographic characteristics were allocated to the political jurisdiction. However, if only 45 percent of that census tract's population was located within the gentrifying portion of the political jurisdiction the calculated ratio would be 0.45. All of the demographic values for that tract would be multiplied by that ratio before being attributed to the target.

The demographic portion of the analysis was greatly aided by a product called the Neighborhood Change Database, made by GeoLytics. GeoLytics has taken historical census data and normalized them to 2010 geographic boundaries which allows users to measure change over time for hundreds of different Census variables. Census geographies change every ten years and cannot be compared across years without first accounting for these changes in geography. GeoLytics employs its own proprietary algorithms for apportioning historic Census data to current Census geography. So we have taken some historic data that has already been estimated to fit into the current geographic framework and then re-allocated it yet again to fit our own geographies of interest. While this might not be ideal, it is the best available data for our analysis.

Our hypothesis is that the process of gentrifying within sections of each political district will predict racial district representative change. More specifically, we expect majority Black political districts experiencing gentrification to alter their political landscapes by switching from Black to White elected representation. We expect that higher percentages of African Americans and poverty will be negatively associated with a political flip, while increased percentages of Whites, homeowners, and those with higher education, as well as rising household incomes and property values to positively associated with a political flip.

Results

Our results suggest that gentrification is associated with the changing racial political representation in four of our nine political districts (see Table 2). In two districts in Washington, DC, one in Denver, and one in New Orleans there were shifts in racial representation. However, to our surprise, five political districts experiencing signals of gentrification, one in New York, one in Washington, DC, one in Atlanta, and two in Charleston, did not shift racial representation. As areas gentrified within these political districts, meaning they became less Black and impoverished, increased in the percentage of Whites, homeowners, and educated, and rose in mean household income and property value, the elected officials remained African American (see Tables 3-9).

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No

18	abie 2. i	onneai	Leader	s Race	, 1990-	2010			
NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New	_
35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B	
A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	_
A.A.	A.A.	W	A.A.	W	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	A.A.	
A.A.	A.A.	W	A.A.	W	W	A.A.	A.A.	W	

Yes

Yes

No

59

No

No

No

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

No A.A. = African American, W = White

46

No

No

54

No

Yes

Yes

Year

1990

2000

2010

Political Flip

2010

Political Flip

Table 3.	Percenta	age Bla	ck in G	entrifyii	ng Sub-	District	Areas,	<u> 1990-20</u>)10
Year	NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New.
	35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B
1990	75	88	70	94	68	61	85	85	61
2000	67	76	59	93	64	43	78	73	58

Table 4. Percentage Poverty in Gentrifying Sub-District Areas, 1990-2010 Year NY Atl. DC DC DC Den. Char. New Char. 35 5 6 8 Orl. B 35 32 35 47 1990 25 20 19 20 34 2000 25 44 31 23 25 26 21 23 33 2010 20 21 18 23 18 22 34 44 20 Political Flip No No Yes Yes Yes No No No Yes

No

Table 5. I	Percent	age Wh	ite in G	entrifyi	ng Sub	-Distric	t Areas,	1990-20	010	
Year	NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New	
	35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B	
1990	16	11	17	4	30	24	15	15	37	
2000	21	21	23	5	31	35	21	26	39	
2010	35	40	41	11	48	55	38	34	51	
Political Flip	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
Table 6. Percer	Table 6. Percentage Homeownership in Gentrifying Sub-District Areas, 1990-2010									
Year	NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New	
	35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B	
1990	20	50	32	36	40	53	46	32	30	
2000	20	50	32	40	42	54	44	30	36	
2010	28	60	38	43	47	57	39	27	45	
Political Flip	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
Table 7. Perc	entage	BA or	higher i	n Gentr	rifying S	Sub-Dis	trict Ar	eas, 199	0-2010	
Year	NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New	
	35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B	
1990	25	8	22	10	35	17	12	12	30	
2000	34	19	25	14	41	25	19	16	34	
2010	49	42	47	28	60	38	31	25	46	
Political Flip	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
Table 8. Mea	Table 8. Mean Household Income in Gentrifying Sub-District Areas, 1990-2010									
Year	NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New	
	35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B	
1000	221	22	2.1	20	10	2.0	22	20	20	

NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New
35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B
33k	22	31	28	42	26	22	20	30
50	43	46	40	60	40	32	30	42
75	62	78	61	104	61	43	39	69
No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
	35 33k 50 75	35 5 33k 22 50 43 75 62	35 5 1 33k 22 31 50 43 46 75 62 78	35 5 1 5 33k 22 31 28 50 43 46 40 75 62 78 61	35 5 1 5 6 33k 22 31 28 42 50 43 46 40 60 75 62 78 61 104	35 5 1 5 6 8 33k 22 31 28 42 26 50 43 46 40 60 40 75 62 78 61 104 61	35 5 1 5 6 8 3 33k 22 31 28 42 26 22 50 43 46 40 60 40 32 75 62 78 61 104 61 43	35 5 1 5 6 8 3 4 33k 22 31 28 42 26 22 20 50 43 46 40 60 40 32 30 75 62 78 61 104 61 43 39

Table 9. Mean Home Value in Gentrifying Sub-District Areas, 1990-2010									
Year	NY	Atl.	DC	DC	DC	Den.	Char.	Char.	New
	35	5	1	5	6	8	3	4	Orl. B
1990	35k	42	127	89	148	67	52	55	85
2000	60	114	161	117	175	160	96	123	130
2010	592	249	495	396	522	282	341	368	354
Political Flip	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Comparing the Political Flip to Non-Flip Group

While all the majority-Black political districts assessed showed signs of gentrification (reduced Black percentage and poverty percentage, increased White percentage, education,

income, and property value), not all flipped politically. In the remainder of the paper, we compare the group of the political districts that flipped from Black to White political representation to the group of districts that did not. Since we do not have enough political districts to run a robust statistical analysis, we attempt to explore descriptively some possible reasons why some political districts shifted. We examine the means within these distinct groups on certain gentrification indicators including percentage Black, percentage in poverty, percentage White, percentage homeownership, percentage BA or higher, mean household income, and mean property value over time. This descriptive comparison is intended to suggest some plausible explanatory political flip factors.

Tables 10, 11 and 12 compare all of our explanatory community level variables between the two groups 1990, 2000 and 2010. It is clear from Table 10 that the group of districts that flipped compared to the group that did not had much lower shares of African Americans and those below the poverty level, and a higher proportion of Whites at the beginning of the observation period in 1990 when all of these districts were represented by African American leadership. There was a 20-percentage point difference between these groups in the proportion of African Americans, a six-percentage point in poverty level, and a 15-percentage point difference in the proportion of Whites. The political district group that flipped also had higher homeownership rates, education, income, and property values. These differences persisted through 2000 and 2010 suggesting that a certain base level or gentrification threshold might be important to explaining political shifts.

Table 10. Demographic Comparison Between Political Districts, 1990

Sub-District Areas	Flip	No Flip	Flip vs. Non-	Mean
			Flip Diff.	
% Black	65	85	-20	76
% Poverty	26	32	-6	30
% White	27	12	+15	19
% Homeownership	39	37	+2	38
% BA or higher	26	13	+13	19
Mean HH Income (k)	32	25	+7	28
Mean Home Value (k)	107	55	+52	78

Table 11. Demographic Comparison Between Political Districts, 2000

Sub-District Areas	Flip	No Flip	Flip vs. Non-	Mean
	_	_	Flip Diff.	
% Black	56	77	-21	68
% Poverty	25	30	-5	28
% White	32	19	+13	25
% Homeownership	41	37	+4	39
% BA or higher	31	20	+11	25
Mean HH Income (k)	47	39	+8	43
Mean Home Value (k)	157	102	+55	126

Table 12. Demographic Comparison Between Political Districts, 2010

Sub-District Areas	Flip	No Flip	Flip vs. Non-	Mean
		_	Flip Diff.	
% Black	41	61	-20	52
% Poverty	20	28	-8	24
% White	49	32	+17	39
% Homeownership	47	39	+8	43
% BA or higher	48	35	+13	41
Mean HH Income (k)	78	56	+22	66
Mean Home Value (k)	413	390	+23	400

While the initial level of gentrification might be important to explaining whether a political district shifts, the rate of change might also be critical. Table 13 compares the difference in the percentage point changes from 1990 to 2010 between the group of political districts that experienced a flip and the ones that did not. While the initial 1990 starting levels of the proportion Black between these groups were different (65%, flipped vs. 85%, no flip), the rate of African American change was equal between 1990 and 2010, both groups experienced a 24percentage point drop in the proportion of African Americans. The rate of change, however, was greater for the political flip group for poverty reduction, as well as the increase in the White proportion, homeownership rate, and household income level, suggesting that rate of change in these variables might be important in explaining racial political shift. Interestingly, the property value rate of change was greater in the political district group that did not flip, which was an unexpected finding.

Table 13. Change Comparison
Between Political District Groups, 1990-2010

Between Folitical District Gloups, 1990-2010									
Sub-District Areas	Flip	No Flip	Flip vs. Non-						
			Flip Diff.						
% Black	-24	-24	0						
% Poverty	-6	-4	-2						
% White	+22	+20	+2						
% Homeownership	+8	+2	+6						
% BA or higher	+22	+22	0						
Mean HH Income (k)	+46	+31	+15						
Mean Home Value (k)	+306	+335	-29						

Discussion

This exploratory analysis begs further questions and a more refined investigation into the relationship between gentrification and political representation. Of the nine majority-Black political districts experiencing gentrification we assessed, four followed the expected hypothesized pattern. In these four political districts, indicators of gentrification are associated with a shift in the race of the elected representative. But the presence of gentrification alone within a political district was not sufficient to explain a political shift as five of the political districts experienced some level of gentrification yet there was not a racial change in political leadership. The analysis suggests that there may be a baseline or threshold level of gentrification that needs to be achieved before a political flip can be expected. Further, the flip/non-flip group comparison suggests that there may be a gentrification change rate, particularly among poverty

reduction, White influx, homeownership, and income, might predict whether a political shift will occur.

This preliminary study has several strengths and limitations. This is one of the first studies to explore how gentrification is related to political representation. While there are some studies that investigate whether gentrification lead to changes in civic participation among long-standing residents (Knotts and Haspel 2006; Michener and Wong 2015), few assess how inner city redevelopment and gentrification relates to political representation. Our analysis suggests that gentrification, under certain circumstances, is associated with a shift in Black urban city council political representation. This finding advances and extends the gentrification literature by demonstrating that the recent back-to-the-city movement and the greater proportion of urban Black neighborhoods experiencing a White influx (Freeman and Cai 2015) and redevelopment (Owens 2012) appears, in some instances, to have important political consequences for urban Black America.

While this is an important finding, our preliminary study has several limitations. First, several factors were not taken into account that might influence whether a political shift occurs in an African American political district. This analysis only explored a certain number of community change factors occurring within a portion of a political district. It is quite possible that the gentrification of sections of a political district is important but that other changes taking place in other parts of the political district are also important. We did not control for political district level demographic changes. For instance, while we accounted for the changing geography of zip codes and census tracts during the observation period (1990-2010) for our independent variables, we did not account for political gerrymandering in our analysis. It could

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⁸ Furthermore, demographic changes within the political district might be related to broader city level factors such as White influx or employment rates at the city level.

be that redistricting could be an important confounding variable that is altering the political landscape in these districts and future studying on the relationship between gentrification and political representation must account for the process of political redistricting.

Second, our dependent variable is also quite limited. The race of an elected official does not signify whether that person represents the interest of segments of the African American community. It is quite possible that gentrification is related to political shifts at the district level that are detected in the policies of elected officials and not understood by knowing their race. The works of Thompson (2005) and Reed (1999, 2001) clearly indicate the diversity of African American political officials around the country. For this analysis to be more meaningful, information beyond the race of elected officials, such as political agendas, is needed.

Third, our sample inclusion criterion was limited. Our selection criteria for gentrifying areas only included racial change (i.e., increase the share of the White population). Gentrification is when upper-income people move into a lower income area and this phenomenon is not limited to the influx of Whites into a low-income minority area. The work of Boyd (2008), Goetz (2011), Hyra (2008), Moore (2009), and Pattillo (2007) demonstrate that Black gentrification occurred in the 2000s. Our initial political district inclusion criteria only used an increase in the White proportion as a signal of gentrification and this operationalization of gentrification likely underrepresents the totality of gentrification and political change occurring in urban African American political districts.

Understanding community transformations and demographic shifts and their influence on political voice and representation in urban American is an important endeavor (Owens and Brown 2014). Despite several limitations this analysis suggests that under certain circumstances gentrification and community transformation is influencing the politics of traditional Black

political wards in several cities across the country. Further research must more rigorously test this assertion as well as address the macro and micro conditions that mediate the relationship between gentrification and its political consequences.

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Appendix

