M u l t i R a c i a l
F o r m a t i o n s

NEW INSTRUMENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

MultiRacial Formations

NEW INSTRUMENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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PREFACE

I n 1999, the Annie Casey Foundation initiated its Making Connections project to strengthen the vision and voice of 22 neighborhoods to advance the well being of disadvantaged children and their families. Our partners in the neighborhoods soon confirmed that the issues of race, ethnicity, culture, language, class and power were central to building local movements for positive social and economic change. It was also readily apparent that to create the will, infrastructure, and power for community transformation required collaborations that crossed racial and ethnic lines; yet in communities across the nation, efforts to build these alliances were falling victim to complex dynamics of race and power, fueled by different economic and political realities.

To help bridge the gap between the critical need for successful multiracial configurations on the one hand, and the scarcity of useful models on the other, we asked the Applied Research Center (ARC) in Oakland, California to provide some texture and tools to move the discussion forward. This study is the result, and we believe it contributes new insights and suggests new avenues for action.

When ARC reviewed the existing literature on building multiracial/multi-ethnic configurations, it found that the examples were generally limited to electoral or single-issue coalitions and the relevant lessons were difficult to glean. Likewise, much of the existing work has been based on a black/white paradigm that does not reflect the much broader racial spectrum that prevails today, nuanced by diverse ethnicity. As scholar Manning Marable notes, even though they are all African-American, "native born African-Americans, Trinidadians, Haitians, Nigerians and Afro-Brazilians have remarkably little in common in terms of language, culture, ethnic traditions, rituals and religious affiliations." The same is true for the many different ethnic groups defined for the convenience of statisticians as Asian or Latino. Yet these nuances are vividly alive and in play in our communities.

This complex racial and ethnic landscape is intertwined with a number of political trends that affect the ability to develop multiracial collaborations, while at the same time, making them all the more necessary. As Multiracial

Formations author Gary Delgado notes, while the civil rights movement yielded significant gains in legal equality, structural racism remains evident in myriad arenas, from family income levels, to education, to prison sentencing patterns, to healthcare access. Yet, that reality is juxtaposed with a growing neoconservative, colorblind ideology where, "Race-conscious remedies, policies, and practices—such as affirmative action, minority set-asides, and redistricting—are increasingly being critiqued, contested, and dismantled. Any hints of race consciousness are now suspiciously viewed as inherently racist and impermissible in a good, just, and supposedly color-blind society."

This disjuncture between grassroots reality and prevailing theory represents a major challenge to organizations confronted with the centrality of race in forging viable alliances. An additional and unanticipated barrier is the impact of September 11, 2001, especially in immigrant communities where civil liberties are being curtailed. This provides a new set of issues in the move towards multiracial formations.

Yet, despite the challenges, innovative organizations and risk-taking leaders struggle to make multiracial collaborations that work, and win. This study presents a range of models and experiences: a hard-fought environmental alliance between whites and Native Americans in rural Wisconsin; a fight against racial profiling in Northern California; the interplay between different constituencies of color in campaign coalitions in New York City, Los Angeles and Providence; and the challenges and achievements of the national Rainbow Coalition. Together, these case studies suggest the many dimensions and dynamics of building multiracial formations, and the components that can enhance their success. They confirm that the task is both difficult and urgent; that bold ideas and brave leadership matter; and that there's work to be done.

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OVERVIEW OF MULTIRACIAL FORMATIONS

INTRODUCTION

T he idea of building multiracial coalitions is "in." William Julius Wilson observes in, *The Bridge over the Racial Divide: Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics* (1999), "perceptions of racial differences obscure the fact that the various racial groups in America suffer from many common problems." Wilson asserts that multiracial coalitions are essential for raising people out of poverty and providing the political and economic leverage for social change, and believes that multiracial coalitions could become the building blocks for progressive social change.

Conservative forces are also constructing multiracial formations, responding to major demographic shifts in the U.S. population—the country is now 31 percent people of color compared to 25 percent in 1990, and 11 percent are foreign-born—and the prediction that the U.S. will become a "majority minority" society by 2050. Commenting on what she calls "the spectacle of inclusion and diversity" at the Republican National Convention, Angela G. Dillard writes, (2001) "[W] idely denounced as an illusion, the 'rainbow' convention did raise two important and interrelated questions: What can the right offer to minorities, and what can minorities do for the right?"

> *"Before assuming that multiracial coalitions will enhance democratic participation, we need to develop a nuanced understanding of what these formations actually are."*

The liberal/conservative axis is not the only arena where multiracial coalitions are considered to be viable vehicles for change. The media are examining their efficacy; for-profit businesses, traditional nonprofits, and community-based organizations are attempting to "diversify" and become "culturally competent;" and foundations are funding multiracial experiments.

Given the growing complexity of U.S. society in terms of both race and culture, some of these efforts may well be putting the cart before the horse. Before assuming that multiracial coalitions will enhance democratic par-

ticipation, we need to develop a nuanced understanding of what these formations actually are, the best approaches to creating them, the factors that predict and influence their success or failure, and their limitations as well as their potential strengths.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As early as 1967, Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton's classic work Black Power elaborated four prerequisites for viable biracial coalitions:

- Parties involved in the coalition must recognize their respective self-interest.

- Each party must believe that it will benefit from a cooperative relationship with the other(s).

- Each party must have its own independent power base and also control its decisionmaking.

- Each party must recognize that the coalition is formed with specific and identifiable goals in mind.

These guidelines are not significantly dissimilar from the admonitions to "choose unifying issues, understand and respect institutional self-interest, carefully structure decisionmaking, and help organizations to achieve their self-interest" written by organizers from the Chicago-based Midwest Academy almost 25 years later in *Organizing for Social Change.* The question is, if the recipe for building coalitions hasn't changed, why haven't we seen more successful multiracial models?

The answer to this question is complicated, and it is only peripherally addressed in social science literature. As Gutierrez (1996), Chang (1995), and Hanley (1999) acknowledge, research on American multiracial coalitions and alliances is scarce. A review of the literature demonstrates that:

- There are few in-depth analyses of organizational and leadership structures;

- The existence of multiracial coalitions outside labor or electoral politics has been largely overlooked; and

- "Identity politics" within coalitions is generally discussed as a divisive rather than a positive force.

Multiracial coalitions began attracting the attention of scholars during the social change movements of the 1950s and 1960s. Chung (1998) and Chang (1994, 1998) have documented their emergence during the civil rights movement, through which people made connections between the African American struggle for civil rights and the oppression of communities of color both in the U.S. and in developing countries. Soon after, however, monoethnic and monoracial organizations superseded multiracial coalitions in what Anner (1996) describes as a "necessary response" to discrimination, white backlash, and resource competition (see also Sonenshein 1990; Chang 1995).

Research on more recent multiracial coalitions reveals both successes and failures, particularly in electoral politics, and their potential role in a broad-based movement against economic inequality. Studies also discuss some of the challenges and limitations of multiracial coalitions in general and of different types of coalitions in particular. Hero (1989) and Nelson (1979) analyze the multiracial constituencies responsible for the victories of non-white mayoral candidates such as Harold Washington (Chicago), David Dinkins (New York), and Tom Bradley (Los Angeles). While the coalitions that supported these candidates achieved electoral success, Underwood (1992) explains how these candidates' *deracialized* platforms, designed to harness the common interests of racial and ethnic groups as well as low-income whites and white liberals, ultimately caused these coalitions to break down, as different groups made conflicting demands upon their newly elected officials.

> *"If the recipe for building coalitions hasn't changed, why haven't we seen more successful multiracial models?"*

Another distinguishing characteristic of electoral multiracial coalitions is their inclusion of both low-income people and middle-class professionals. While this combination can be effective on election day, Betancur and Gills (2000) and Scott and Katz-Fishman (2000) explain how these coalitions often erode as middle-class bureaucratic and political professionals benefit from their new political influence at the expense of the interests of low-income constituencies. Chung and Chang (1998) discuss a more sustainable approach, which recognizes racism while locating common

ground among different constituents of people of color, but in the electoral realm such a model is rarely seen in practice.

Wilson's advocacy for the coalescence of different racial and ethnic groups around issues of unemployment, housing scarcity, poor working conditions and erosion of public support systems has reinvigorated interest in

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"Shared experiences do not necessarily lead to a willingness to work together as a coalition."

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building multiracial coalitions. In addition to Wilson (1999), Hanley (1999), and Pilisuk (1996) argue that such multiracial coalitions are critical to turning the nation's attention toward poverty and economic inequality. As numerous academics point out, however, shared experiences do not necessarily lead to a willingness to work together as a coalition. People of different races and ethnicities often compete over scarce jobs, housing, or political representation (See Chang 1992; Freer 1994; Min 1996; Oliver and Johnson 1984; Johnson and Oliver 1989; Sonenshein 1996; Chang and Chung 1998). The conflict between African American and Korean residents in New York and Los Angeles in the 1990s, caused by underemployment and competition for scarce, low-wage jobs, is an example of the tension that multiracial coalitions must overcome.

However, the challenges that organizers of multiracial coalitions face are deeper than tensions over scarce political and economic resources. Case studies of local coalitions (e.g., Delgado 1993), describe how a multiracial coalition must not only develop an approach to address the issue and present viable solutions, it must also facilitate relationships among various racial groups within the coalition, negotiate language and cultural barriers, implement a decision-making process that accommodates the interests of different groups, and develop an analysis that will direct the coalition toward victory for all parties involved (see also Betancur and Gills 2000).

The success of coalitions in the face of these challenges depends to a large degree on their structure and leadership. Studies delineate two archetypes of multiracial coalitions. Chang (1995) and Diaz-Veizades (1999) and McClain (2000) outline an interest-based coalition. Interest-based coalitions recognize the respective self-interests of different groups and strategically form to pursue specific goals that meet the particular needs of

coalition partners. Such a coalition might form, for example, to elect an individual candidate who has made specific promises to the coalition's disparate groups. A second archetype is that of the issue-based coalition, also referred to as a "shared core" coalition (see Delgado 1997; Chang and Diaz-Veizades 1999; Wilson 1997; Betancur and Gills 2000). Issue-based coalitions form around a common issue, rather than a specific goal. Cohesion around issues is a bridging factor that allows groups to work together in the face of racial, cultural, and ideological conflicts.

> *"Cohesion around objective socioeconomic issues is a bridging factor that allows groups to work together in the face of racial, cultural, and ideological conflicts."*

While distinctions between issue- and interest-based coalitions are useful, they are insufficiently nuanced. Not only does the literature fail to examine models outside of this framework, most of the studies focus on only one effort, thereby missing the potential for a comparative analysis of which organizational and leadership structures are most effective in different political climates, or how geographic locations, demographics, and funding intersect with the pursuit of different issues or agendas. In addition, while increasing numbers of studies examine how multiracial coalitions address race and deal with racial conflict, most of them focus only on alliances in the electoral arena. Finally, while many studies have focused on coalition building to combat economic inequality and win elections, few have explored multiracial coalitions that address racism, criminal justice, educational equity, environmental justice, or other issues of common concern. By exploring some of these models more thoroughly, we can deepen our understanding of the current spectrum of multiracial coalition building and its potential as a force for social change.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MULTIRACIAL FORMATIONS

Many types of organizational formations are called multiracial coalitions. The classic definition of a coalition is an "organization of organizations" that have banded together for a limited period of time to achieve a specific goal. The important components of this classic formation are a) they are built by combining the collective power of existing organizations, and b)

they are temporary. Of course, not all coalitions actually meet these criteria. Some are permanent, ongoing organizational alliances. Others are temporary, but the structural composition of the coalition includes both organizations and individuals. Still others call themselves coalitions, but their entire membership is made up of individuals. These variations affect a formation's strengths and limitations. Imprecise definitions can mask differences and limitations of coalitions in general. However, with respect to multiracial coalitions, they can create an even wider rift between expectations and real organizational possibilities because they amplify a number of common but unstated assumptions about the nature of these formations.

COMMON ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MULTIRACIAL FORMATIONS

1. The leadership of the multiracial formation is both shared and representational. It is often assumed that an organizational action or position is the end result of an inclusive process that considers the interests of all racial groups involved in the formation.

2. Multiracial coalitions are instruments that increase the collective voice and power of disenfranchised groups—particularly low-income people of color.

3. Multiracial formations are also multicultural.

4. These coalitions will implicitly address cross-racial issues of competition for political turf and scarce financial resources. Even when coalitions are single-issue-based, they are often assumed to be vehicles for addressing racial conflicts internal to communities of color, and/or between whites and specific groups of people of color.

5. The aforementioned point notwithstanding, it is also assumed that multiracial coalitions are relatively easy to organize because groups of people of color have more commonalities than differences.

6. The most common form of multiracial coalition is electoral.

7. They are more legitimate and effective instruments for advocacy than monoracial organizations, particularly monoracial organizations of people of color.

8. These formations will be the primary new instruments for the democratic expression and participation of people of color.

Few of these assumptions are true in every situation. Some (1-3) are true in well-organized multiracial coalitions with explicit participatory processes and politics. Point 4 only becomes a reality after intense, intentional, internal organizational work. Point 5, the notion that multiracial formations are easy to organize is almost never true. Effective multiracial coalitions are tough to organize and even more difficult to maintain. And, unless coalition organizers make it a point to explicitly and continually address areas of disagreement and conflict, they will almost certainly be seen as "divisive" and therefore avoided.

> *"Effective multiracial coalitions are tough to organize and even more difficult to maintain."*

Why do these assumptions hold sway? Like every other aspect of American life where we make explicit the dimension of race, we seem incapable of thinking logically and rationally about the implications of a specific course of action—about cause and effect.

PROTOTYPES OF MULTIRACIAL FORMATIONS

Before examining the implications of building multiracial formations, it is necessary to define our terms. Below are definitions, strengths, weaknesses, and examples of the most common types of multiracial formations:

Single-Issue Mobilizations (SIMs): These alliances often begin as ad-hoc, monoracial responses to specific incidents. The groups are composed of individuals, but they usually do not have formal membership structures. Common issues that SIMs address include police or INS violence against a person of color, employment discrimination, mistreatment or miseducation of young people in school, etc. However, if the grievance resonates in other communities of color, individuals from those communities may join the ad-hoc formation. SIMs are useful tools for developing a broad constituent base, which can enable a temporary formation to adopt a more formal structure.

The strength of SIMs is that they represent deeply felt sentiments in communities of color. They can mobilize grassroots support independent of more established institutions, and they often enjoy a broad base of support. Their weaknesses are that they tend to react to specific incidents and,

because of their informal membership and leadership structures, they often exist hand-to-mouth, with little formal recognition or financial support.

Examples: Committee Against Police Brutality (New York NY), Latino Students Against Standardized Testing (Long Beach CA)

Grassroots Multiracial Organizations: There are a number of organizational types that meet the definition of "multiracial organization." The most common is the community organization with individual constituent members of different races. Some of these organizations are neighborhood based, with constituents recruited from multiracial neighborhoods. Other formations are intentionally multiracial. These might be focused on an issue or a set of political principles. Multiracial organizations are not necessarily multicultural. As this study explores, multicultural organizations not only include different peoples of color, they also proactively address how language and cultural differences may be organizationally accommodated.

Strengths of these formations include broad representation of diverse constituents and an ability to secure ongoing staff and financial resources. Weaknesses of these formations are that although they are racially diverse, they are often monocultural and tend to focus on very specific concerns, sometimes at the expense of building unity around larger principles.

Examples: PUEBLO (Oakland CA), Padres Unidos (Denver CO), DARE (Providence RI)

Electoral Alliances: Though they are called coalitions, we differentiate between ongoing coalitional formations and electoral alliances. These short-term, opportunistic efforts are built solely for the achievement of one objective—the election of a specific candidate.

Strengths of these formations are that they have a collectively agreed-upon goal and a clearly delineated timeline. They can often recruit a multiclass as well as a multiracial base, and their efforts often attract media attention. The key weakness is that these formations are forced to put all of their political "eggs" into the basket of the alliance's endorsed candidate, often without solid political unity and with no guarantees of accountability if the candidate is elected.

Examples: Electoral coalitions in Providence, RI Los Angeles CA, and New York NY profiled in this report.

MultiRacial Issue-based Coalitions: These groups are also formed to achieve a specific objective. The main goal of these formations is usually the creation or alteration of a public policy. However, even in the classic coalition model of the "organization of organizations," structures vary. Some are leadership based, formed by the recruitment of the elite leadership of established organizations. Others are formed by obtaining formal buy-in or endorsement from member organizations. Still others combine key leader selection with organizational recruitment and the participation of unaffiliated individuals.

> *"The size of these networks makes 'quick and nimble' decisionmaking very difficult."*

One of the strengths of these organizations is the opportunity to build unity around a set of principles versus individual personalities. When these coalitions are well–organized, they can also take advantage of the assets of all coalition members. Weaknesses of this type of coalition vary, depending on the structure. Elite-based coalitions of key leaders may not have the support of ground-level organizational members. The "organization of organizations" model can slow down and complicate decisionmaking. Allowing individuals to participate in decisionmaking at the same level as organizations can raise questions of power and accountability: Who brings what to the table?

Examples: Wolf Watershed Education Project (Wisconsin), ACLU Racial Justice Project (Northern California)

Multiracial Networks: These are permanent formations organized to achieve specific political goals on a level that the individual organizations cannot attain. What differentiates these networks from multiracial coalitions is their commitment to mutual assistance. One example of a multiracial network is the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice. The network has challenged both corporate pollution and the regional Environmental Protection Agency's reluctance to take regulatory action. It has also provided a collective analytical framework for the groups involved, as well as access to national resources. Similarly, Grass-Roots Organizing for Welfare Leadership (GROWL), organized by the Center for Third World Organizing, has mobilized local welfare rights

organizations to advocate against racial discrimination and marriage promotion initiatives and to fight for educational access for welfare recipients. Strengths of these kinds of formations include the ability to weave together many different types of organizations and develop a common analytical perspective among them. These formations also have two weaknesses. The first is the lack of resources to sustain them—their utility is largely unrecognized by funders. The second weakness is that the size of these networks makes "quick and nimble" decisionmaking very difficult.

Examples: GrassRoots Organizing for Welfare Leadership (GROWL), Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice (SNEEJ)

MultiEthnic Organizations: Multiethnic organizations are not often thought of as multiracial coalitions. However, organizations like the Oakland-based Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA), Homies Unidos, a national organization with local chapters that include youth from a number of Latin American countries, and the Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAAV) in New York City demonstrate the importance of understanding the diverse nature of multiethnic formations. As CAAAV organizer Jane Bai observes, "There is as much difference between Korean entrepreneurs, South Asian cab drivers, and Vietnamese seamstresses as there is between any one of these groups and Latinos or African Americans." These differences are experiential, cultural, and political, and they are as substantial between Mexicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans as they are between Africans, African Americans, and people of African Caribbean descent. A major strength of these organizations is their ability to use the sophisticated political analysis and infrastructure of organizations in their countries of origin. A weakness is that these organizations do not fit any model that funders are familiar with, and they receive very little outside support.

Examples: Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (Oakland CA), Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence (New York NY), Homies Unidos

SUMMARY OF MULTIRACIAL ORGANIZATIONAL PROTOTYPES

The descriptions below are prototypes. Very few organizations will exactly fit the model, but many will share the majority of characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses.

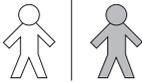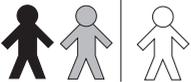| Formation Type	Key Characteristics	Examples
Single-Issue Mobilizations (SIMs)	Temporary, ad-hoc organizations organized as a response to a specific policy or incident(s).	Committee Against Police Brutality (New York NY) White Guys for Affirmative Action (Berkeley CA)
Grassroots Multiracial Organizations	Organizations with individual members; may be place-based or organized around a specific issue.	People United for a Better Oakland-PUEBLO (Oakland CA), Direct Action for Rights and Equality-DARE (Providence RI)
Electoral Alliances	Short-term electoral efforts built solely for the election of a specific candidate.	Coalitions featured in this report (Los Angeles CA, Providence RI, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition)
MultiRacial Issue-Based Coalitions	The classic formation in this category is the "organization of organizations." Other kinds of issue-based coalitions include elite leadership-based groups, and formations that include leaders of existing groups, with unaffiliated individuals.	Wolf Watershed Education Project-WWEP (Wisconsin), ACLU Racial Justice Project (Northern California), Rainbow/PUSH Coalition
MultiRacial Networks	Permanent formations committed to mutual assistance, organized to achieve specific political goals on a level not attainable by individual organizations.	GrassRoots Organizing for Welfare Leadership (GROWL), Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice (SNEEJ)
MultiEthnic Formations	Organizations that engage multiple ethnicities of established residents and immigrant members of one (U.S.-defined) racial group around specific issues.	Asian Immigrant Women Advocates-AIWA (Oakland CA), Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence-CAAAV (New York NY), Homies Unidos (National)

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched the *Making Connections* initiative in 1999. The purpose of the initiative is to stimulate a local movement that engages residents, civic groups, political leaders, grassroots groups, public and private sector leadership, and faith-based organizations in an effort to transform selected neighborhoods in 22 cities into family-supportive environments. *Making Connections* sites were chosen based on a variety of criteria, including geographic diversity, the influx of new populations, and the Foundation's institutional connections. As the project developed, one thing became very clear to key leadership within the Foundation: Unless models could be developed that fostered collaboration among the diverse constituencies represented in each city, it would be almost impossible to transform neighborhood infrastructure. While each of the cities chosen by the Foundation had a unique history, demography, culture, and political structure, one pivotal factor for neighborhoods participating in *Making Connections* is racial dynamics. (See chart on following page)

> *"Unless models could be developed that fostered collaboration among the diverse constituencies represented in each city, it would be almost impossible to transform neighborhood infrastructure."*

Of the 22 cities chosen, nine (Detroit, New Orleans, Savannah, Louisville, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Baltimore, Atlanta, and San Antonio) are highly segregated biracial cities, seven (Camden, Denver, Washington, D.C., Hartford, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and Miami) are multiracial and segregated, three (Providence, Oakland, and Boston) have integrated populations of people of color with isolated pockets of whites, and three (Seattle, San Diego, and Des Moines) are racially integrated.

While it would have been useful to examine the history of coalition organizing in each city to assess how different approaches worked in specific geographic locations, an inquiry of that depth was beyond the time and resource limitations of this study. Therefore, we have chosen a case study methodology to examine a spectrum of different cases and to extrapolate how the strengths, weaknesses, and lessons of each case might be applied to the Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* initiative.

SEGREGATION INDEX OF "MAKING CONNECTIONS" CITIES

City Type	Cities	Key Characteristics
Segregated biracial population	Detroit, New Orleans, Savannah, Louisville, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Baltimore, Atlanta, San Antonio\	More than 90 percent of the population is African American and white (except San Antonio, which is Latino and white). The two major groups are highly segregated from each other. With the exceptions of Savannah, Indianapolis, and San Antonio, these cities exceed the average segregation index for metropolitan areas. *
Segregated multiracial population	Camden, Denver, Washington, D.C., Hartford, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Miami	White, Latino, and African American residents all comprise more than 10 percent of the population. African Americans, Latinos, and whites all live in neighborhoods that are highly segregated from other groups.
Integrated multiracial population and a segregated white population	Providence, Oakland, Boston	White, Latino, and African American residents all comprise more than 10 percent of the population (in Oakland, Asians also comprise more than 10 percent). White residents tend to be highly segregated from other major racial and ethnic groups, while African Americans, Latinos, and Asians tend to live in integrated communities.
Integrated population of people of color and white people	Seattle, San Diego, Des Moines	No two groups together comprise more than 90 percent of the population. (Des Moines is the closest to a monoracial city, with an 80% white population; however, the 20 percent nonwhite racial and ethnic population is diverse.) All racial and ethnic groups and white residents generally live in proximity to each other.

* The segregation index, also called the dissimilarity index, is the measure of the number of people from one group that would have to move for two groups to be spread evenly in a residential area. For example, in the average metropolitan area in the U.S., which has a white/African American dissimilarity index of 65.1, 65.1 percent of African Americans or whites would have to move for the area to be fully integrated. A number above 50 is highly segregated, and a number below 50 is considered moderate to low segregation. Data is from the U.S. Census 2000, as compiled by the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This report utilizes case studies to draw lessons and conclusions by examining the dynamics of different types of multiracial formations.

Chapter Two presents case studies of the issue-based efforts of the Wolf Watershed Education Project (WWEP) to build a multiracial alliance in Wisconsin and the Northern California ACLU's fight against racial profiling through the organization's Racial Justice Project.

Chapter Three examines how issues of race affected multiracial campaign coalition efforts in New York City, Los Angeles, and Providence.

Chapter Four explores the delicate balance of charismatic leadership and a national political agenda through an examination of the history, accomplishments, strengths, and challenges of one of the best known multiracial formations: the Rainbow Coalition.

Chapter Five discusses issues that are important to understand and resolve in order to build successful coalitions.

Chapter Six summarizes general observations, lessons learned, and recommendations for future action.

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FORGING RACIAL UNITY
THROUGH ISSUE-BASED COALITIONS

P olitical analyst Mel King has observed that the political climate of this nation is exemplified by the politics of scarcity, which pits groups of people against one another, persuading communities to buy into the notion that our well-being can be gained only at the expense of other people. (1999) Echoing these sentiments, scholar Eric K. Yamamoto writes "the question then for communities of color is not so much 'can we all get along?' but rather, 'how do we get along?'" Building trust, overcoming the different perceptions that groups have about each other, framing the issue so that it includes interests of constituencies from a number of groups, and developing a viable plan of action, are key to the successful development of any coalition.

> *"Native American nations and white sportfishing groups are cooperating to protect the same fish they had fought over and building a powerful alliance."*

This chapter explores the advantages and disadvantages of issue-based coalitions in forging multiracial unity. Although issue-based coalitions take many forms, they are very often single-issue campaign efforts that build and mobilize a broad constituent base to achieve a specific goal. In the first case study, Zoltan Grossman and Debra McNutt document how the Midwest Treaty Network's Wolf Watershed Education Project (WWEP) used Native sovereignty rights to build a multiracial alliance. In the second case study, ARC researcher Nicole Davis explores how careful planning set the tone for the Northern California ACLU's fight against racial profiling through the organization's Racial Justice Project.

CASE STUDY I

FROM ENEMIES TO ALLIES: NATIVE AMERICANS AND WHITES JOIN FORCES IN WISCONSIN

The late 1980s and early 1990s was a time of intense conflict between Ojibwe (Chippewa) Indians and white sportfishers over Native treaty rights in the forested northern third of Wisconsin. For months, whites chanting racist taunts, assaulting tribal elders, and ramming Ojibwe vehicles to protest the ancient practice of Native spearfishing shattered the normal peace and quiet of this ceded area outside of the state's six Ojibwe reservations.

Less than a decade later, Native American nations and white sportfishing groups are cooperating to protect the same fish they had fought over and building a powerful alliance that has chased several mining companies out of the state. International mining industry journals now express worry about the contagious spread of Wisconsin anti-mining strategies and identify Wisconsin as one of four global battlegrounds for the industry's future.

While some activists downplay racial differences to build short-term cooperation among different groups, the Wisconsin experience shows that such a strategy can be counterproductive. The Native nations that asserted their rights most strongly also developed the strongest cooperation with neighboring non-Indian communities around issues of mutual concern and against outside corporate threats. The Wisconsin experience demonstrates that progressive racial politics can complement anti-corporate politics and that the leadership of a community of color in a formation that includes white activists can be critical to the success of a multiracial, issue-based coalition.

Treaty Conflicts

Under the treaties of 1837 and 1842, the Ojibwe had reserved rights to use natural resources—such as fish, game, wild rice, and medicinal plants—in the "ceded territories" they sold to the U.S. The tribe's historic practice of spearfishing was outlawed in 1908, driving the tradition underground until a 1983 federal court decision recognized that Wisconsin Ojibwe had retained treaty—and therefore spearfishing—rights in the ceded territories.

> *"While some activists downplay racial differences to build short-term cooperation among different groups, the Wisconsin experience shows that such a strategy can be counterproductive."*

In response, a backlash gained momentum among white sportsmen who feared that spearfishing would deplete the lakes of fish. Although the Ojibwe never speared more than three percent of northern Wisconsin fish, they were repeatedly scapegoated by the media and sportfishers for the region's environmental and economic problems.

Indian spearfishers were confronted by mobs of white anti-treaty protesters holding signs reading, "Save a Walleye—Spear an Indian." The pro-

testers shouted racist epithets and threw rocks, bottles, and full beer cans at Native people. Ojibwe saw their elders assaulted and nearly run over, and their drum groups harassed with whistles and mock chants. White sportfishers blockaded, swamped, and attacked Ojibwe boats with metal ball bearings, pipe bombs, and sniper fire.

The state deployed National Guard helicopters, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) patrol boats, and riot-ready police from nearly every county at boat landings during the two-week spring spearfishing season. But they actually did little to stop the violence, which centered on the Lac

"It was Native sovereignty rights guaranteed by treaties that became the key factor in building a multiracial alliance against the mining companies."

du Flambeau and Mole Lake Reservations. In response, the Midwest Treaty Network (MTN), founded in 1989 as an alliance of Native and non-Native groups supporting tribal sovereignty, initiated the Witness for Non-violence, modeled after similar monitoring programs in Central America. During the treaty conflicts, about 2,000 trained witnesses stood with Ojibwe fishing families as a supportive presence, documenting anti-Indian violence and harassment, and trying to deter or lessen the violence and promote reconciliation.

Witnesses noticed that many followers of the anti-treaty groups were confused by anti-Indian propaganda and genuinely concerned about the environmental effects of spearing. Even at the height of the clashes, the late Ojibwe activist Walter Bresette had predicted that white Northerners would realize that environmental and economic problems are "more of a threat to their lifestyle than Indians who go out and spear fish.... We have more in common with the anti-Indian people than we do with the state of Wisconsin." The task for MTN and the Ojibwe people was to turn this potential coalition into a reality.

Mining Invasion

The opportunity came with the 1990s entrance of mining companies into the area. The environmental threat they posed provided a crucial common enemy around which to build an alliance. A number of multinational mining companies, such as Exxon and Kennecott, had long eyed the metallic

sulfide deposits in northern Wisconsin. They saw the administration of pro-mining Republican Governor Tommy Thompson as the ideal opportunity to propose new mines, particularly since Native and non-Native communities were split over treaty rights.

Ironically, it was Native sovereignty rights guaranteed by treaties that became the key factor in building a multiracial alliance against the mining companies in Ojibwe ceded territory. The treaties gave the tribes legal standing in federal court to challenge environmental degradation. This political clout forced whites who were seriously interested in environmental protection to sit down at the table with the Native nations as potential allies. This budding alliance first appeared when local white environmentalists and the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe Nation jointly opposed Noranda Corporation's proposed Lynne mine near the Willow Flowage in Oneida County. The area had been the scene of some of the most intense spearing clashes, but an alliance against the mine nevertheless developed quickly. As a result, the company was forced to withdraw in 1993.

Teacher and environmental leader Carolyn Parker asserts that the spearfishing conflict "closed some people's minds but opened others," including some sportsmen who had been anti-treaty group followers. As anti-treaty groups revealed their racist agenda, most of their "environmental" following fell away, especially when they refused to oppose new mining plans that threatened the fishery. Lac du Flambeau spearfishing coordinator Tom

> *"As anti-treaty groups revealed their racist agenda, most of their "environmental" following fell away, especially when they refused to oppose new mining plans."*

Maulson, who was later elected tribal chairman, remarks that the spearing conflict offered an "education on everybody's part as to what Indians were about. It needed a conflict to wake them up."

But the key struggle broke out when Exxon attempted to mine the large Crandon metallic sulfide deposit in Forest County with backing from Governor Thompson. The Crandon mine site is one mile upstream from the ancient wild rice beds of the Mole Lake Ojibwe Reservation, five miles upstream from the pristine, trout-rich Wolf River (which flows through the Menominee Nation), and five miles downstream from a Potawatomi Reservation.

In 1995, the MTN initiated the Wolf Watershed Educational Project (WWEP) campaign, which quickly mushroomed into a grassroots alliance of Native, environmental, and sportfishing groups against the Crandon mine. The campaign organized a speaking tour to 22 river communities and a rally of 1,000, both unprecedented in the region. In 1997, WWEP toured the state to increase support for a Mining Moratorium bill, which Exxon unsuccessfully tried to defeat with a $2 million blitz of television ads and lobbying. (The bill passed but has since been undermined by the State Department of Natural Resources.) A 2000 WWEP tour visited schools around the state, culminating in a rally at the capitol in Madison and introduction of a bill to ban cyanide in mining.

Building Bridges

The WWEP tours brought many non-Indians into contact with Natives for the first time. Communication between the two communities was often facilitated by individuals whose family or personal history brought them into contact with the other group, particularly rural white teachers, shopkeepers, and nurses. In the wake of the previous conflicts, key players felt motivated to sit down at the table and to educate each other about common concerns. The groups came to view this alliance-building process as a welcome change from continued racial strife; it became a conscious goal of many participants. Retired white engineer George Rock observes, "Things we've gained from knowing who people are will not go away.... When you work with people, you don't just work on the issue...the passing of the pipe becomes part of the understanding."

By initiating positive relations between former enemies, WWEP and other Wisconsin anti-mining campaigns created a major obstacle for the mining companies. In 1998, Exxon sold the Crandon project to its Canadian partner, Rio Algom, which the London-based South African firm Billiton bought out in 2000. While Billiton is still trying to revive the Crandon mining operation, international mining journals now describe WWEP as "one example of what is becoming a very real threat to the global mining industry."

Unity out of Conflict

How has such a grassroots movement managed to slow down the corporate Goliaths? Part of the answer lies in Native nations' perseverance in defending their sovereignty, and treaty rights. Another factor is Wisconsin's history of environmental ethics and its tradition of populist and progressive

politics. Finally, a regional rebellion developed in rural northern Wisconsin, which has been poorer and more neglected historically than the southern part of the state.

The alliance was built on a sense of commonality cemented by environmentalism. Environmental protection not only served as a unifying concept, it helped build cultural understanding that extended beyond the issue that initially brought political unity. A common sense of place deepened this environmental unity. The geographic setting and the landscape's hold on the imaginations of tribes and their neighbors also helped to solidify the alliance. Langlade County sportfisher Bob Schmitz says that a "mutual love of the river" brought together angling groups and tribal members. Groups bonded in defense of places all perceive as sacred—such as the Willow Flowage or the Wolf River—even though they perceive this "sacredness" in very different ways and use natural resources for very different purposes.

> *"The groups came to view this alliance-building process as a welcome change from continued racial strife."*

Most political strategists seek to avoid or lessen differences among different communities. But in areas such as Lac du Flambeau and Mole Lake, the strong Native assertion of sovereignty was key to forging the alliance. The alliance allowed individual groups to use Native sovereignty and stewardship to the advantage of the whole community. Tribal representatives described treaties as posing a stronger legal obstacle to mining than weakened state laws, and sportfishers suggested that the Ojibwe had done a better job than the state in monitoring the fishery. In 1995, the Mole Lake Ojibwe and Potawatomi used federal laws to strengthen their reservations' environmental regulations to protect the air and water for Indians and non-Indians alike.

When voters in the township of Nashville (covering half the Crandon mine site) ousted their pro-mining town board in a 1997 election, they elected a Mole Lake Ojibwe to fill one of the three board seats. The new board not only went to court to try to stop the mine, but also instituted a joint economic development program with the tribe and approved the expansion of the tribal land base.

In addition, some Native nations used their sovereignty rights to open large casinos in the mid-1990s. This generated income that strengthened their

ability to fight mining companies in the courts and in the arena of public opinion, despite threats by Governor Thompson to close the casinos if the tribes did not back down from their treaty rights and environmental demands. Even some former anti-treaty protesters were given jobs at the casinos.

In fact, absent the demonstrated power of treaty and sovereign rights, rural whites would have felt little reason to try to work with Indians. Facing an unequal relationship with their neighbors, Native residents likewise would have had little incentive to unite with them. The demand for Native sovereignty rights equalized Natives and non-Natives, and this equality was a prerequisite for building real unity. Al Gedicks, executive secretary of the Wisconsin Resources Protection Council, says Native treaty victories help solidify the "perception that we are now dealing with equals rather than with a community perceived as victims."

Ironically, the previous treaty conflicts served to define the land and its resources as something both communities needed to defend in order to preserve their resource-based ways of life. An outside threat from the mining companies helped to build a common territorial identity that included all groups that lived in the threatened local area, but a strong assertion of Native nationhood was necessary to get to that point.

> *"Absent the demonstrated power of treaty and sovereign rights, rural whites would have felt little reason to try to work with Indians."*

In places where a treaty conflict was prevented or did not occur, the later Native/non-Native cooperation was not as fully developed, and environmental alliances may have failed as a result. For example, in Rusk County, next to the Flambeau River, Kennecott Corporation opened the Ladysmith mine after the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe ran out of funds to stop the mine in court. The tribe had not aggressively pursued an attempt to build a better relationship with non-Indians. Consequently, local whites may not have become aware of the treaties' legal powers, and the copper/gold mine was able to operate successfully from 1993 to 1997. Al Gedicks says that rural whites would be more likely to work with tribes if the treaty issue were "in their face.… They would have to have an opinion, get educated."

A New Environmentalism

Corporations are used to dealing with environmental groups made up largely of white, urban, upper-middle-class 20-somethings, who protest projects supported by rural communities for the jobs they produce. The companies have portrayed such activists as "hippies:" and "yuppies" who do not care about rural people, and white urban-based environmentalists often reinforce the stereotype by not being inclusive or supportive of people racially and culturally different from themselves.

In Northern Wisconsin, corporations face something new—an environmental movement that is multiracial, rural-based, middle- and working-class, and multigenerational. This movement does not just address the mining industry's environmental problems, but also its threats to Native cultures and the local tourism economy, its "boom-and-bust" social disruptions, and its mistreatment of union employees. Try as they might, the mining companies could not divide Wisconsin communities by region, by class, or by race.

The work of the Wolf Watershed Educational Project demonstrates how well designed, persistent, and consistent outreach, educational, and mobilization efforts can successfully bridge the divide between racial groups and help communities exercise joint power. The second case study in this section builds on this theme by exploring both how grassroots outreach built ownership in the goals of the coalition and how switching tactics from litigation to community mobilization fostered a broader base of campaign participation.

CASE STUDY II

RESISTING RACIAL PROFILING: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ACLU RACIAL JUSTICE PROJECT

The initial objective of the Northern California ACLU's Racial Justice Project was to pass legislation mandating local law enforcement agencies to collect and publish racially classified data on traffic stops. The following case study examines the coalition's goals, accomplishments, and limitations as it grew to expand both its mission and its constituency as a multiracial formation.

In March 1999, Michael McBride, an African American man in his early 20s, was pulled over by San Jose, California, police officers. They asked

him to get out of the car, grabbed his groin area while they searched him, pushed him to the ground, and handcuffed him. While McBride was lying face down on the ground, one officer reportedly told him, "You're lucky you're not in Alabama or Mississippi. If you move, I'll break your neck." After running his plates and license number through the computer, the police released McBride without a ticket or an apology.

> *"Data collection of racial profiling by the police is the first line of defense against the mass incarceration of black and brown people."*

McBride was a victim of "Driving While Black." The more technical term, racial profiling, is used to describe the broad practices used by law enforcement officers to target people of color ostensibly for traffic violations, but really because of the color of their skin.

A Cross-Racial Issue

"Driving While Black" is not just a Black issue. In an attempt to address the increasingly publicized phenomenon, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California coined the phrase DWB when it launched an anti-racial profiling campaign in 1998. The campaign was designed as a multiracial effort, recognizing that racial profiling affects all people of color. "At the outset of the campaign, we were well aware that the mass incarceration of people of color was not restricted to African Americans," says Michelle Alexander, director of the Racial Justice Project at the ACLU. "Our goal was to develop a movement to address racial profiling across racial and ethnic lines. It was an unusual opportunity to build an alliance across those lines."

The original focus of the ACLU's Racial Justice Project was to combat the anti-affirmative action ballot initiative, Proposition 209, passed by California voters in 1998. But the project's focus shifted after a roundtable discussion occurred among several organizations working on criminal justice issues. After three days of intense discussion and debate, "there was complete consensus that challenging racial profiling would be the most productive public education and litigation strategy for reducing racial bias in the criminal justice system," recalls Alexander. "There are almost no checks on police officers' discretion when they make that initial decision of who to stop, search, and detain. Reducing the number of people of color who

wrongly have contact with the criminal justice system in the first place will help to reduce cumulative bias over all."

Because the goal of the Racial Justice Project was to address issues of racism broadly in the criminal justice system, architects of the project knew from the start that the work would have to be a multiracial effort. "Racial profiling is very often seen as an issue that affects only African Americans," says Liz Guillen, a staff member with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) in Sacramento. "It was important for MALDEF and other members of the coalition to make sure that policymakers and the public understand that this issue affects Latinos as well."

Documenting the Problem

Law enforcement agencies across the country routinely collect data on the number and type of crimes committed in a given area, whether a weapon was used and if so what kind, and the race and gender of the victim and person committing the crime. However, information is seldom collected about the practices of the police. "Data collection of racial profiling by the police is the first line of defense against the mass incarceration of black and brown people," says Frances Beal, a staff member of the ACLU's Racial Justice Coalition. "We must be able to prove it in order to stop it."

"There are almost no checks on police officers' discretion when they make that initial decision of who to stop, search, and detain."

Until 1998, no law enforcement agencies in the country collected data by race on traffic stops. People of color have long cited anecdotal evidence of racial profiling by law enforcement but could not prove the extent of the practice because there were simply no statistics. Former President Clinton signed an executive order mandating that federal law enforcement agencies collect data on the race and ethnicity of people they stop, but local law enforcement agencies have no such requirements. While Clinton's gesture was significant, the fact remains that most federal officers do not conduct routine traffic stops.

In 1998, the ACLU introduced a mandatory data collection bill into the California state legislature. Although the bill moved through the legislature with relative ease, then-Governor Pete Wilson vetoed it. In response to the

veto, the ACLU launched its Driving While Black or Brown (DWB) hotline, a toll-free number that people could call from anywhere in California to report instances of racial profiling. The hotline received over 100 calls in its first three minutes of operation, crashing the system temporarily. "An extraordinary diversity of people called the hotline," says Alexander. "Rich, poor, people from the inner city, people from the suburbs. We developed an immediate constituency that was diverse in economic status and race." The hotline, which is publicized on both English and Spanish radio, has received more than 8,000 calls reporting instances of racial profiling by various law enforcement agencies.

"A central theme of the campaign is to get people to tell their stories and have them be taken seriously," says Alexander. "In the judicial process, it's so common for people of color to tell their stories and be disbelieved, and for law enforcement to be taken at its word. This was an opportunity for us to flip the script." Through the hotline, the Racial Justice Project gathered stories of thousands of people across the state who were victims of racial profiling. They then used these stories to build momentum and credibility for the campaign. Project organizers developed a multipronged strategy, using a combination of media outreach, lobbying, litigation, and grassroots organizing.

> *The Driving While Black/Brown hotline received over 100 calls in its first three minutes of operation, temporarily crashing the system.*

"We were developing a new model of advocacy," says Alexander. "We did not want the project to be driven by litigation. We wanted to give thought to how to use these stories and translate people's interest in working on the issue into real impact. Something more meaningful than a couple of isolated lawsuits."

Expanding the Definition of Profiling

A key part of developing a new model for the campaign was to recruit coalition members who represented various types of organizations, with different constituencies and different focuses. One such partner was the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR). Arnoldo Garcia, a staff member with NNIRR, has been working to connect the

DWB campaign to the broader immigrant rights movement. "We had been trying to build alliances between African American social justice organizations and immigrant rights groups," says Garcia. "The Racial Justice Coalition provides the space to bring different communities together. We've been able to contribute by bringing a broader perspective to what it means to talk about racial profiling."

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*"We must be able to prove racial profiling
in order to stop it."*

When the DWB campaign was first conceived, the focus was explicitly on racial profiling while driving. For Garcia, it has been important that the Coalition understand the many ways that Latinos are profiled. As an example, he refers to traffic stops conducted by the Oakland police in Fruitvale, a majority Latino neighborhood. "The police were only stopping Latinos, and they were confiscating autos if the driver had no identification. People who are perceived as not having documents are affected differently by racial profiling." Garcia also notes other instances in which people are afraid to report crimes because they fear backlash by the police. "Street vendors who are victims of crimes are afraid to report them because they are accused of lying, or they are harassed and detained by the police," says Garcia. "Racial profiling is not just about driving."

Campaign Limitations

Even though the Racial Justice Coalition has successfully recruited African American and Latino organizations to the DWB campaign, it has not had as much success with Asian American groups. "The participation of Asian American organizations has been pretty limited," notes Garcia. "It might be how the issues are framed, or how we talk about them. Racial profiling affects all communities of color, but each one deals with it in a different way."

"Racial profiling of Asian Americans occurs within several contexts," says Diane Chin, executive director of the San Francisco–based Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA). "In terms of criminalization parallel to Driving While Black, there are certainly examples of gang profiling of Asian Pacific young men throughout the Bay Area. In broader terms, we combat the stereotype of perpetual foreigner, which leads to a profile that assumes a lack of loyalty to the United States."

CAA has been supportive of the ACLU's Driving While Black campaign, "but only tangentially involved," says Chin. "We have not been more centrally involved because the communities we work with have prioritized other civil rights issues. There has also been very little effort of those who framed this campaign to identify ways for Asian Pacific Americans to be more centrally involved."

"It's so common for people of color to tell their stories and be disbelieved, and for law enforcement to be taken at its word."

Alexander agrees that recruitment of Asian American groups has been limited. She points out that prior to September 11, 2001 there was not much involvement of Arab American organizations in the Coalition either. "Before 9/11, our campaign had been focused primarily on racial profiling while driving," says Alexander. "Racial profiling of Arabs and Middle Easterners in airports is nothing new. Many Arab American organizations involved in the fight against racial profiling today had not been involved with our efforts before September 11, because we were not addressing the form of racial profiling that affects those communities." The campaign faces similar challenges in its efforts to recruit Asian American groups.

Unlike many coalitions spearheaded by civil rights organizations, the Racial Justice Coalition has a strong grassroots focus. The ACLU usually focuses on legislation and litigation. But in this campaign, Beal says, "The ACLU Racial Justice Project functions as the nerve center for grassroots organizing that has struck a responsive chord among those most affected by police misconduct throughout the state."

That does not mean, however, that forming the Coalition was without challenges. "Although we were working with people of color, who, whether rich or poor, were subjected to discriminatory police practices, their ability to deal with those practices was different based on their class," says Alexander. "The consequences of racial profiling are different for an African American doctor than for a young Latino male with no money. The doctor has access to legislators, to the media, etc. A young Latino with a criminal record doesn't even have access to a lawyer. He won't be believed by the cops or by the media. And he is more likely to be the victim of

repeated racial profiling. Working with people who have dramatically different levels of power and resources is difficult."

Working on the campaign also proved that a multiracial alliance can be successful. "Within the Coalition, trust was built over time as we learned to work together and recognize that we shared a common goal, that we all had a real stake in bringing racial profiling to an end," says Alexander. "Bringing people together across racial, ethnic, and economic lines is difficult. It's challenging because it's unfamiliar territory and there are few models of how to do it."

The Importance of a Common Goal

"The Racial Justice Coalition has an extraordinary level of commitment to achieving our goal," reflects Alexander. "Because people's lives depend on us bringing racial profiling to an end, political conflicts in the work are secondary. There is such a high level of commitment to achieving a common goal that the odds of overcoming differences in race and class are heightened." ACLU staffer Fran Beal adds, "Racism has been reduced to 'diversity' and 'multiculturalism.' The racial profiling frame puts the spotlight back on institutional oppression."

> *"Street vendors who are victims of crimes are afraid to report them because they are accused of lying, or they are harassed and detained by the police."*

Currently, 60 law enforcement agencies in California voluntarily collect racial data on traffic stops—a significant increase from zero in 1998, but a long way from the ACLU's goal of mandatory data collection for all law enforcement agencies statewide. Voluntary collection means the data that does get collected is often arbitrary and not very useful.

"Despite the fact that there's an overwhelming cry from the community to have consistent and effective data collection, law enforcement agencies are basically doing whatever the hell they want," says Renee Saucedo, a member of the Racial Justice Coalition. "It just makes it that much more difficult to learn what we need to learn from the data when different departments are doing it differently."

Not discouraged by Wilson's veto of the data collection bill, Murray and

the ACLU introduced the bill again in 1999, when Governor Gray Davis took office. With high expectations for the Democratic governor, neither the ACLU nor Murray anticipated what happened next. In October 1999, Davis vetoed the mandatory data collection bill, saying he did not believe racial profiling was a problem in California.

"The veto really stunned communities of color across California, who assumed Davis would do the right thing," Alexander says. "Signing the bill was the minimal thing he could do, and he didn't do it." Following Davis's veto, the Racial Justice Project quickly formed the Racial Justice Coalition, which brought together individuals and organizations dedicated to eradicating racial profiling and passing mandatory data collection legislation.

Escalating Tactics

The goal of the campaign was to bring people together who were interested in directly challenging Davis. A community organizer, not a lawyer, was hired to coordinate the activities of the coalition, and the group launched an ambitious campaign to build support for the bill and pressure the governor to sign it. With Murray as an advocate for the legislation, and Davis beholden to communities of color for his election, there was reason for optimism. In March and April 2000, the Racial Justice Coalition organized town hall meetings in Salinas, San Jose, East Palo Alto, Oakland, Sacramento, Stockton, Los Angeles, and Fresno to bring attention to the issue of racial profiling. These meetings culminated in a demonstration at the California state capitol in Sacramento in April 2000. A thousand people from across the state demonstrating there thought they had sent the governor a message he could not ignore. They were mistaken.

"Chinese for Affirmative Action combats the stereotype of perpetual foreigner, which leads to a profile that assumes a lack of loyalty to the United States."

Instead, Murray, the sponsor of the bill, came to the podium at the rally and announced to the incredulous crowd that he had struck a deal with Davis. Murray agreed to introduce a new bill, without data collection, and Davis agreed to sign it. "In retrospect, it's probably the best thing that could have happened for the coalition," Alexander says. "It forced us to make the choice: Do we play along and pretend this compromise bill is a

good thing for our communities, because to say otherwise would be to risk challenging and embarrassing the African American and Latino legislators? Or do we tell the truth and make it clear that this bill was not going to do anything for people of color? We decided that not only were we going to oppose the bill, but we were going to launch a campaign against it and expose it as a fraud."

"Many Arab American organizations involved in the fight against racial profiling today were not involved before September 11th."

Murray's compromise bill had three basic components: It would ban racial profiling, provide diversity training for police officers, and mandate that officers hand out business cards when conducting routine traffic stops.

"Racial profiling is already illegal and has been since the dawn of time," says Catherine Lhamon, a staff attorney with the ACLU in Southern California working on race-based civil rights cases. "This bill included no new civil or criminal penalties. There's no way to enforce it. If a police officer pulls you over and harasses you and doesn't give you a business card, there's no way to call and report it because you don't know who that officer was. It has no legal teeth."

Over the next several months, the coalition engaged in some intensive organizing to defeat the compromise bill. Youth groups from throughout California led a protest in Sacramento against the bill. Report cards sent to the capitol gave Davis an F on a host of racial justice issues, including racial profiling. Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) were approached and asked to publicly oppose the bill. The ACLU took out a full-page ad in the New York Times condemning Davis's veto. Hundreds of people in communities throughout California wrote letters to their state senators. When it came time for a vote on the compromise bill, it did not make it out of committee and died on the senate floor. But it came back to life.

"We were thrilled our message had gotten through," says Alexander of the compromise bill's defeat. But in the final days of the legislative session, again with no notice, Murray introduced yet another bill. Again, this bill called for no data collection, but instead asked for more diversity training

for police officers—diversity training to be conducted by the same group that already trains officers and adamantly opposes data collection. Davis signed this bill.

"Communities of color can organize effectively, even when their representatives who are people of color aren't standing up for their interests."

"It was disappointing that the bill slipped through," Alexander explains, "but at the same time we were successful in educating communities about the critical need for data collection, and they knew this bill was not the answer. We also demonstrated that communities of color can organize effectively, even when their representatives who are people of color aren't standing up for their interests."

The Racial Justice Project has made strides throughout California by helping to start local Racial Justice Coalitions in San Jose, Sacramento, and Los Angeles. These groups are bringing together individuals and organizations to pressure local law enforcement agencies to adopt data collection programs, while simultaneously building local support for another attempt at a statewide mandatory data collection bill.

KEY LESSONS

Because issue-based coalitions usually have clearly articulated and commonly understood goals, they have an advantage over more general coalitions—success or failure is easily determined. If we only assess these coalitions by the "product" standard of whether they achieved their programmatic goals, only one of the coalitions described can point to concrete successes. In the Wisconsin case, coalition members successfully stopped the Noranda Corporation's mining efforts, ousted the Nashville pro-mining town board, stopped mine expansion, instituted an economic development program, and expanded the tribal land base. In California, the coalition's successes are not as clear. While a significant number of local law enforcement agencies do voluntarily collect data as a result of the coalition's efforts, there is no state mandate, no standard format for classification of data, and no requirement to analyze or assess the data collected.

However, the product successes of these coalitions are not their only accomplishments. It is also important to examine the complexities of success in the arena of process, such as:

1. Tactical versatility

The ACLU's Racial Justice Coalition was able to replace litigation with grassroots mobilization as their primary lever for change, while the Midwest Treaty Network adopted a wide variety of tactics, including the Witness for NonViolence borrowed from similar approaches used by Central American solidarity groups. By employing different tactics, each group was able to provide a variety of points of entry for coalition participants.

2. Promoting shared values

One of the most important dimensions of the Racial Justice Coalition's work was reframing Driving While Black (DWB) into racial profiling. The new frame not only made the practice more accessible to a broader base of people of color, it also created a sound bite for the press. Similarly, the work of the Treaty Network elevated the notions of "Native stewardship" and "sacred trust" to elements of public discourse—environmentalism as redefined by Native activists. These efforts are not only important because they give a wider mix of people the opportunity to buy into the issue, but also because the coalitions have been able to frame public understanding of their issues and mobilize public support for their positions.

3. Activities to address the interests of different racial groups

Both campaigns realized that, to be successful, they needed to expand the base of the campaign. For the Racial Justice Coalition, the task was more than convincing Latinos and Asians that DWB did not just apply to Blacks—it was expanding the meaning of "racial profiling" to include raids on workplaces that used and abused Asian and Latino workers and the detainment of young Middle Eastern and South Asian men. The Treaty Network had an equally difficult task. Organizers not only had to convert hostile whites to the position of tribal activists, they had to get them to accept Native leadership in the campaign. In both cases, these are significant accomplishments.

4. Racial Justice Focus

A crucial difference between the two efforts explored in this chapter and electoral alliances examined in Chapter Three, is the willingness of coalition organizers to directly address issues of race and racial justice.

Three

ELECTORAL ALLIANCES

E lectoral alliances are the most commonly studied type of multiracial formation. However, these formations often lack the interracial unity necessary to overturn the status quo. Because the primary purpose of an electoral alliance is to elect a single individual—who is unlikely to embody the political interests of multiple racial constituencies—multiracial electoral formations are, by their very nature, difficult instruments through which multiple constituencies can express power. The following case studies of multiracial electoral efforts in New York, Los Angeles, and Providence examine how a number of variables, including racial unity and discord among constituents of color, influence a campaign's success.

CASE STUDY III
RACE & REACTION IN THE NEW YORK CITY MAYORAL ELECTION

In a pre-election Village Voice article titled "Race Counts," political commentator Jill Nelson (2001) observed, "Racism has long been the studiously ignored elephant in the middle of New York's political landscape...." While this statement might be generally true of New York City politics, the 2002 mayoral race marked a clear reversal of this trend. Issues of race and multiracial unity were almost universally acknowledged as pivotal factors in determining the outcome of the election.

The New York electorate is 35 percent white, 27 percent Latino, and almost 25 percent African American. The mayoral election was particularly important for Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, the first Latino candidate ever to make a serious run for the office of mayor of New York City. After a Democratic primary race in which he received more votes than any of his four opponents, Ferrer faced a runoff election against Mark Green, a liberal white candidate who, since 1994, had made a name for himself as New York City's Public Advocate.

> *"Racism has long been the studiously ignored elephant in the middle of New York's political landscape...."*

The critical controversy in the campaign was Ferrer's endorsement by the Reverend Al Sharpton. Sharpton's activism on issues of police violence, his visits to the Middle East, and his sharp criticism of outgoing Mayor Rudy Giuliani have earned the ire of many conservatives. A pre-election editori-

al in the New York Post (2001) acknowledged that Sharpton's sway over 100,000-plus votes made him "a tempting person to suck up to" and argued that if Ferrer were elected, Sharpton, characterized as "a riot-fomenting, police-defaming, black equivalent of David Duke," would in effect be a co-mayor. In slightly more measured tones, the New York Times noted that while the endorsement was a critical piece of Ferrer's campaign, the question remained whether Sharpton could transfer "his popularity in black neighborhoods to a candidate who is not black."

> *"[White liberals'] position inside the power structure makes coalition with minority outsiders unnecessary and even threatening."*

Ferrer ran a campaign that tried to speak to "the other New York," those in the Black and Latino communities who had not prospered during the years of the Giuliani regime. His polling indicated that his constituency was much more interested in education and social services than in rebuilding lower Manhattan. Accordingly, he suggested that part of the September 11 recovery efforts be directed to other parts of the city. Ferrer was criticized for failing to respond strongly to the September 11 attack. Green took advantage of Ferrer's response and ran a television advertisement quoting the New York Times, saying that Ferrer's city recovery plan in response to September 11 was "borderline irresponsible."

Ferrer grounded his electoral efforts in a campaign strategy requiring a Black/Latino coalition as well as white liberal support. Just days before the election, however, voters received phone calls that portrayed Ferrer as a tool of the "evil" Sharpton. The New York Post ran a cartoon showing Ferrer kissing the rear end of a grossly overweight Sharpton, and a day later thousands of leaflets and posters, some bearing the cartoon, began appearing in Brooklyn. The upshot? Ferrer lost to Green by a small margin (15,000 votes) in the primary, and Green lost to Republican billionaire Michael Bloomberg in the general election in a city that has a five-to-one ratio of Democrats to Republicans.

The endorsement of Bloomberg by Time magazine's "Man of the Year" Mayor Giuliani may have been sufficient to swing the election. In addition, Bloomberg had the financial ability to hire the best of the best and to keep his ads flooding the airwaves. Using these assets, Bloomberg overcame

a 22-point deficit in less than a month. How did this happen? The abiding irony of this election might be that the racial divisiveness that Green employed to defeat Ferrer was the very thing that caused his eventual defeat by Bloomberg. The lack of unity in the Democratic Party and the refusal of the Democrats' core constituency to back Green hurt him badly. This, coupled with Bloomberg's ads filled with Latino, Black, and Asian voters calling Green "divisive," won the election for Bloomberg.

> *"Hahn did the traditional conservative critique of the liberal candidate, accusing Villaraigosa of being soft on crime."*

This review of the New York City election illustrates that attaining multiracial voter unity in New York and other urban settings is not a simple proposition. Although the city has a population of people of color approaching 50 percent, a number of factors contribute to racial disunity. First, as Mollenkopf (1994) observes, there is the "identity differential" among people of color—only 10 percent of New York City's Latinos identify themselves as Black, compared to 50 percent who say they are white and 40 percent who identify themselves as "other." Among Blacks, furthermore, West Indians distinguish themselves from African Americans. The second obstacle Mollenkopf identifies is the success of white liberals in institutionalizing themselves in the city's large public bureaucracy and labor unions. "Their position inside the power structure," he writes, "makes coalition with minority outsiders unnecessary and even threatening." (In Henry 1994)

Ferrer's defeat in New York is one example of how the complexities of party politics, racial representation, and the use of race baiting by the media and white candidates can influence electoral outcomes. Of course, New York is not the only city where these dynamics are evident. As the percentage of voters of color increases, issues of race and racism will play an increasingly important role in local elections. The 2000 mayoral race in Los Angeles, where a white candidate became the surrogate standard bearer for Black political aspirations, illustrates the increasingly complex role of race and racism in the electoral arena.

CASE STUDY IV
COALITION AND CONFLICT IN LOS ANGELES

"The kind of white-backlash campaign that the demagogic Sam Yorty waged against Tom Bradley in the mayoral elections of 1969 and 1973 could not fly here today."

—Harold Meyerson, *L.A. Weekly*, March 23–29, 2001

The contest for mayor of Los Angeles in 2000 unfolded against a backdrop of rolling blackouts, a section of the city that wanted to secede, and federal oversight of the city's police force. The race came down to a duo of Democrats: former Speaker of the Assembly Antonio Villaraigosa and L.A. City Attorney James Hahn. As this case study illustrates, issues of race and multiracial unity/disunity played a major role in the electoral outcome.

Hahn won the mayor's race, 54 percent to 46 percent, with the specters of both Tom Bradley and Kenneth Hahn (father of James) having a hand in the campaign. It was an election in which one ambitious urban coalition arising out of L.A.'s dramatic demographic and political makeover went up against another unlikely crosstown alliance representing the status quo. A number of factors—among them the political wariness between Blacks and Latinos, the continuing influence of the city's diminishing yet influential white conservative and moderate voters, and a surprise tactic from the Hahn campaign late in the race—resulted in the maintenance of the status quo, a not completely unanticipated outcome. However, there are lessons to be learned from the defeat of Villaraigosa and the dynamic social and political implications of his challenge, especially in comparison to the mayoral race three decades earlier.

Tom Bradley and Sam Yorty

Some 31 years ago, City Councilman Tom Bradley ran against incumbent mayor Sam Yorty. This contest, too, represented the status quo versus change—or at least the promise thereof. Bradley had been a career police officer with the LAPD and was the first African American elected outright to the L.A. City Council.

When Bradley first challenged the mayor, Yorty appealed to his base in the San Fernando Valley, a sprawling community of single-family homes and breadbox apartment complexes that in the 1960s was largely white and conservative. The revolt of the white homeowners' associations and Southern California's anti-busing movement originated in "the valley."

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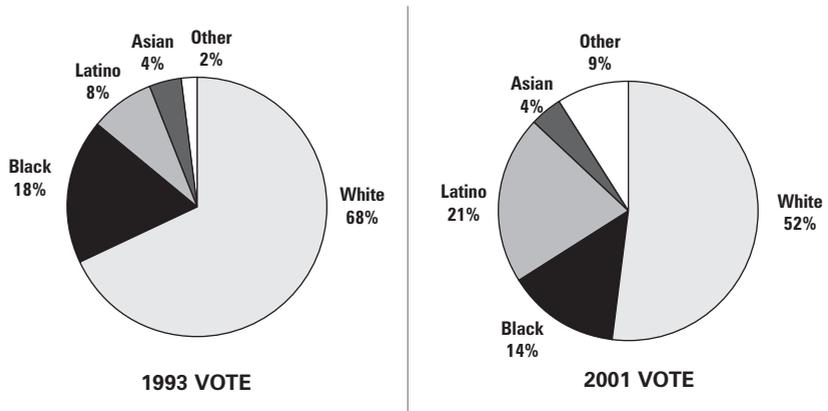
Yorty, a conservative Republican, fanned racial fears and openly stated that moderate Bradley was a dangerous man. He claimed that if Bradley were elected the Black Panthers would become more powerful, white police officers would leave in droves, and there would be another Watts riot. The overwhelming message to white voters was that a Black mayor of Los Angeles would signal the end of the lifestyle that WWII and Korean War veterans living in areas like Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, and North Hollywood had worked so hard to maintain.

History Repeats

Hahn proved to be an apt pupil of history. A little more than two weeks after the April 10 primary, where Villaraigosa and Hahn (with 30 percent and 25 percent of the vote respectively) emerged as frontrunners, Hahn did the traditional conservative critique of the liberal candidate. He accused Villaraigosa of being "soft on crime" and claimed that as Speaker Villaraigosa hadn't backed tough gang-related measures and had "taken a walk" when it had come time to get tough with sexual predators and child molesters.

Also during the primary, some voters received a recorded phone call wherein the message (with a voice imitating County Supervisor Gloria Molina, a Villaraigosa supporter, and calling herself "Gloria Marina") relayed that Villaraigosa was a danger to women and children because of his lack of support for tough crime bills. The call was eventually traced to City Coun-

A CHANGED ELECTORATE

1993 VOTE: White 68%, Black 18%, Latino 8%, Asian 4%, Other 2%

2001 VOTE: White 52%, Latino 21%, Black 14%, Asian 4%, Other 9%

Los Angeles Times, April 11, 2001

cilman Nick Pacheco and to Congressman Xavier Becerra, who at that time was also running for mayor.

The Villaraigosa camp responded that the attacks were typical low-ball politics and out-of-context distortions. It was telling that Villaraigosa responded to the broadsides in front of a police station in the valley's North Hollywood section. Although the L.A. electorate had changed dramatically between 1993 and 2000—with the Latino vote increasing from eight to 21 percent, African Americans decreasing from 18 to 14 percent, and whites decreasing from 68 to 52 percent (see chart: "A Changed Electorate)—both camps had done the political math and concluded that each had to attract significant support from white voters in order to win.

"If multiracial coalitions are to be successful, their organizers must be knowledgeable about the cultural and political histories of each group represented."

Hahn, trailing in some polls by five percent two weeks out from the April vote, dusted off the "Willie Horton" playbook. He ran a television ad in the last two weeks of the campaign showing a razor blade cutting cocaine and a crack pipe emitting narcotic fumes, followed by a grainy shot of Villaraigosa. And in the mail came a flyer—the cover image a vial and spilled crack—with the words "Why We Can't Trust Antonio Villaraigosa." The ads alluded to the fact that Villaraigosa had written a letter five years before to the White House pardon office on behalf of convicted drug dealer Carlos Vignali. Roger Mahoney, the Catholic cardinal of L.A., and numerous others (including Sheriff Lee Baca, whose letter to prison officials asked for Vignali to be moved closer to his family) had also done so— at the behest of Vignali's politically connected father, Horacio Vignali.

Villaraigosa was conflicted about hitting back, though there was ammunition to be aimed at Hahn. In 1997, Ted Stein, who ran against Hahn for city attorney, criticized his office for not doing more to seek jail time for two domestic violence offenders. Both cases wound up with the violators killing someone. (Ironically, in the 1997 election, Hahn accused Stein of using "Willie Horton tactics.") Hahn's office had also defended the infamous Daryl Gates, ex-chief of the LAPD, in the face of reforms after the Rodney King beating. The Villaraigosa camp finally produced a hard-hit-

ting mailer linking Hahn and Gates, presumably in an effort to erode some of Hahn's Black support, but it reached homes on the Saturday before the Tuesday election—too little, too late.

Black/Brown Power Struggle

Hahn received 71 percent of the Black vote in the primary and 80 percent in the runoff. This was largely due to the legacy of his father and the endorsements he got from veteran Black politicians like Congresswoman Maxine Waters and Councilman Nate Holden. Anecdotal stories by Villaraigosa supporters recount going door-to-door in Black districts and residents easily using "Kenny" (the father) instead of "Jimmy" when referring to the younger Hahn. Isabelle Gunning, a professor at Loyola Law School and an observer of the sociopolitical scene, opined at the time, "When are our people going to stop voting for a ghost?"

> *"Does the expansion of Latino political power have to come at the expense of Black representation?"*

The fame and favor that Hahn's father had gained in the African American community was certainly one reason that Hahn could take the Black vote for granted in the race. But it was not the only factor. Another equally important variable is the Black/brown tensions exemplified in this race. One Friday in May, the morning hosts of KJLH, a local Black radio station, were discussing the upcoming runoff. Several African American callers expressed resentment about the perceived "takeover" of diminishing Black political power by an increasing Latino community. Hahn became the surrogate Black candidate, the one who helped Black politicians facing redistricting and a changing, increasingly Latino, demographic hold on to their power.

The Great Progressive Hope?

Going into the primary, much of L.A.'s progressive community mobilized to encourage civic participation. Grassroots groups such as L.A. Metro Alliance, a coalition of organizations brought together by AGENDA (Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives), Coalition LA (whose political arm has run candidates for city council), POWER (Parents Organized for Westside Renewal), and the IAF

(Industrial Areas Foundation) all educated voters in key districts using candidate forums, report cards, canvassing, and phone banking.

As each candidate crisscrossed the vast city in search of votes and money, as their volunteers worked the phones, knocked on doors, and held coffee klatch after coffee klatch, the question remained: What would a Villaraigosa victory really mean for Los Angeles? Whether or not he was inclined to claim it, the mantle of diversity was foisted upon Villaraigosa by virtue of his being "an Eastside Chicano who made good." The familiar scenario, repeated time and again when it comes to nonwhite candidates for public office, is, "Will you represent only your own racial group, or will you work on behalf of all the people?" To win, Villaraigosa needed not only to increase his white and Latino votes, but also to erode Hahn's Black base and split the Asian vote.

Activists saw an opportunity in Villaraigosa, who had been a progressive community activist and labor organizer, to breathe new life into the city's multiracial left. As Karen Bass of South Central's Community Coalition put it, "Even more important than the election is the movement that's getting built around [Villaraigosa's] candidacy.… This is the future in terms of the Third World coalition…. We've been trying to do this for years."

> *"The mantle of diversity was foisted upon Villaraigosa by virtue of his being 'an Eastside Chicano who made good.'"*

An analysis of the mayor's race in L.A. demonstrates that race, class, and cultural preconceptions do matter, and can be significant barriers to building multiracial coalitions. To be successful however, community organizations must directly address tensions among different communities of color. Are the dynamics examined in Los Angeles and New York unique to "big city" politics? The following case study (commissioned for this report, published by ARC in ColorLines magazine, and updated for the final version of this report) examines the dynamics of organizing a multiracial electoral formation in one of America's smaller cities: Providence, Rhode Island.

CASE STUDY V
BROWN POWER VS. BLACK POWER IN PROVIDENCE

For most of the last 26 years, Providence was ruled by Mayor Vincent (Buddy) Cianci, a brilliant, old-school politician. Cooperation between various factions of Irish, English, and Italian ethnic politicians created a solidly white political establishment in both the city and the state.

However, a recent Department of Justice investigation resulted in the conviction of Cianci and three members of his administration for various graft-related crimes, and the mayor announced that he would not seek reelection. While this may present new opportunities for multiracial alliances in Providence, the 2000 election we now turn to illustrates that these alliances are not "natural," nor will they come easily. In that election, the white power structure was never called on to defend itself.

An upsurge in Latino voting in Providence in the 2000 election caused both celebration and concern among the city's progressive activists, because it revealed an electoral quicksand that pits Latinos against African Americans, separates identity from ideology, and sets up conditions ripe for manipulation by an entrenched white power structure.

As in Los Angeles, the increasing political presence of Latinos has been accompanied by decreasing Black political power in Providence. In the context of a demographic shift that has concentrated the potential electoral power of all people of color in the same few districts, there was no net increase in elected officials of color in a campaign marked by an absence of substantive discussions of policy or politics that would promote social justice. The institutions that guided the surge of Latino voting emphasized themes of Latino pride and power, while the multiracial teams supporting progressive Black incumbents spoke of the courage and integrity of their candidates without articulating any racial justice message.

> *"In the 2000 election, the white power structure was never called on to defend itself."*

More than 25 percent of the city's population is Latino, about half of whom are immigrants from the Dominican Republic. They are joined by Puerto Ricans, South Americans, and an emerging population of Mexi-

canos. Like the Cape Verdeans who immigrated to Rhode Island in large numbers throughout the first half of 20th century, and like most other Caribbeans, Dominicans are part of the African Diaspora. African slaves, a few indigenous survivors, and European colonizers created a population that has as many degrees of oppression as it does skin tones.

> *"Every Latino who ran is light- or white-skinned. We are more apt to run against ourselves than someone white."*

African Americans make up another 15 percent of the city. With about a six percent share of the city population (and growing), Asians have not yet emerged as a potent force in the political scene. Due in part to the search for decent housing, a sort of reverse colonization process has taken place, with the result that not one working-class neighborhood in Providence remains predominantly white. Councilman John Igliozzi, who represents the working-class Silver Lake neighborhood, recently lamented that not enough white people are moving into his ward.

The Latino Challenge

The electoral replacement of African Americans by Latinos is playing out across the country, from Southern California to Miami, from Seattle to New England. Does the expansion of Latino political power have to come at the expense of Black representation? Are communities of color even talking about racial justice when they engage in electoral work?

In Providence, despite the spread of Latinos throughout the city, all but one of the Latino candidates in 2000 decided to try to unseat progressive Black elected officials. The races involving Latinos were focused in three neighborhoods. South Providence, which is still over 50 percent Black, has been represented exclusively by Black politicians for more than 20 years. In the adjoining Elmwood and Reservoir Triangle neighborhoods, where Latinos also ran, white politicians have generally ruled despite a clear majority of people of color. South Providence has experienced a steady growth in Latino population, and the Latino presence in Elmwood has tripled in the last 10 years, while the Black population has remained at 25 percent. Reservoir Triangle was mostly white until the residency rule for city workers was temporarily lifted in 1992, resulting in hundreds of white fire-

fighters, clerks, and police officers relocating to the suburbs. Currently, Latinos and Blacks together outnumber whites in the Triangle.

The September 2000 primary and the November general election were historic in terms of the number of Latino voters, but this high turnout had precedents. In 1994, Luis Aponte became the first Latino to run for city council, and four years later he won. Anastasia Williams of Panama became the first Latina state representative in 1992, and in 1998, three Latinos ran for city or state office.

"Are communities of color even talking about racial justice when they engage in electoral work?"

By election 2000, the Latino vote had grown and consolidated. At Sackett Street School, the city's most heavily Latino polling place, lines reached down a flight of stairs and out to the street, while Dominican-owned taxi and shuttle services dropped off vanloads of voters in 15-minute intervals, and dozens of campaign volunteers swarmed the sidewalks. Poder 1110, the city's most popular Latino radio station, broadcast live from the polling venues all day, exhorting listeners to get out and "Vote Latino."

In Elmwood, León Tejada, owner of an income tax service, beat Marsha Carpenter, a Black six-year incumbent, for state representative by a mere 100 votes. A member of the political party currently in power in the Dominican Republic, the social democratic Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), Tejada was more a symbol of that group's emergence as local political power than a known entity in his own right. The PRD was instrumental in Tejada's victory, helping him overcome the fact that he moved into the district only a month before the filing deadline and had the public backing of Joseph Voccola, a lawyer and state representative from a suburb known for organized crime activity, and a frequent detractor of South Providence.

In South Providence, a young Latino marketing consultant named Gonzalo Cuervo ran against the social justice flag-bearer, Joe Almeida, a freshman Black representative and former police officer who challenged the House leadership and led a successful campaign to pass a law for collection of racial profiling data in Rhode Island. Almeida beat Cuervo by just 26 votes. Cianci urged Cuervo to make a run against South Providence's prominent Black councilwoman, Balbina Young, in the future.

What Black Means

Nationalistic tensions rose high at times in the Cuervo campaign. Gladys Gould, a Dominican who organizes with DARE (Direct Action for Rights and Equality), a multiracial social justice community organization, supported Joe Almeida "because of his courageous fight on Driving While Black legislation. I know he makes a difference for all people of color." In response, Cuervo supporters called her a traitor.

Almeida acknowledges that racism is a problem in getting Blacks and Latinos together and compares it to the privilege that lighter skin color carries within some Black communities. "Every Latino who ran is light- or white-skinned. What we have in common [with Blacks] is that we come in shades, and we need to accept that within ourselves, as who we are." He believes that people of color "are more apt to run against ourselves than someone white," because there is a fear of taking on the established power structure.

Gwen Andrade, an African American political and community activist, warns that racism has created a wedge between Blacks and Latinos rather than forging a bond. After running for state senate in the Elmwood and Reservoir Triangle neighborhoods in 1992 and managing successful campaigns, including her Puerto Rican husband's bid for city council, she sees the 2000 election as a sign that many Latinos will respond to racism by more readily aligning with whites. This is especially frustrating, she says, because the Caribbeans who make up the vast majority of Providence's Latino population share with North American Blacks not only African roots but also a history of slavery and brutal oppression.

> *"'Divide and conquer' is still a viable strategy to maintain white electoral dominance."*

"In America, the further away from 'black' you get, the better," says Andrade. "That's the perception that's been set up—it's the historical perspective of any group of people that has African roots. If you've got that African heritage that comes out in the skin color, or in the hair, you're fighting even harder to distance yourself from it because of what black means in this country."

The only Latino candidate to challenge a white incumbent was Juan Pichardo, who lost a bid for state senate in Elmwood and Reservoir Triangle by fewer than 100 votes. Pichardo comes out of a new generation of Latino political operatives, having served as campaign manager for a young Dominican man who ran against Joe Almeida for state representative in 1998. His opponent this time was Bob Kells, a five-term white incumbent and current police captain with inconsistent positions ranging from progressive to ultra-conservative.

> *"Multiracial electoral coalitions must pay as much attention to candidate stances on political issues as they do to racial identity."*

Pichardo tried to play the middle ground but alienated the Black political establishment by failing to support Marsha Carpenter, the progressive Black incumbent state representative from Elmwood. The PRD, on the other hand, was disappointed that Pichardo failed to give unequivocal support to Carpenter's opponent, León Tejada. Of all the Latino candidates, Pichardo came the closest to building a base of Black supporters and also drew heavily on his strong relationships with white progressives at Ocean State Action (an affiliate of US Action) and the Rhode Island Young Democrats.

Most of all, Pichardo's race proved to be a test for the Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee (RILPAC). Founded in 1998 by activist and philanthropist Dr. Pablo Rodriguez, the organization reflects its founder's solidly progressive politics and has a sizeable base of young Latino professionals. RILPAC also plays the role of providing a "safe" space for white politicians of both major parties to get exposed to Latinos, and the organization has raised eyebrows by endorsing Black candidates, most recently Marsha Carpenter, who ran against León Tejada for state representative.

The Dominican Connection

While RILPAC has been more visible to the political establishment's eye, the PRD has been the stronger grassroots player. Having recently recaptured the presidency in the Dominican Republic for the first time in 14 years, the PRD is adept at building its membership base. The organization

was founded in 1939 by exiled leaders during the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo and soon had a strong leadership base in New York. In 1961, party members returned to the Dominican Republic and overthrew Trujillo's regime.

In Providence, the PRD has built effective electoral operations but, for the most part, has not joined multiracial efforts. If the PRD is to reach its goal of expanded citywide and eventually statewide influence, it will require a broader base. Providence PRD President Rhadames Duran, who claims that the party is prepared to support any candidate who conforms to its mission, has publicly declared, "We believe it's necessary to work for the community as a whole. By uniting as minorities, as soon as we get ourselves organized politically, we can reduce the impact of racism."

RILPAC spokespeople explicitly describe the links between Latino interests and those of other "urban" communities in public forums. Rhadames Duran speaks of redoubling the PRD's work, so that within six years there will be a viable "minority" candidate for mayor representing a unified front of Latinos, African Americans, and Asians. As for the possibilities for creating a unified racial justice agenda, Gladys Gould of DARE says, "We're all in the same boat in terms of the struggle. Right now, the Latino community has the idea that the vote is a weapon, but they don't know how to aim it. Carrying a gun doesn't make me powerful—it's how I use that gun that makes me powerful."

KEY LESSONS

The case studies from New York, Los Angeles, and Providence illustrate a number of issues that electoral formations face, including identity politics, symbolic representation, power sharing, racial hierarchy, multiracial vs. multiethnic groupings, "old country" organizations, and time-limited organizations.

1. Identity Politics

Identity politics has become a whipping post for both liberal and conservative critiques. Conservatives claim that "race awareness" has led to demands for special treatment. They argue that racism in its most blatant forms is dead and that people of color should "get over it." Liberals, for the most part, do not necessarily see racism as a thing of the past (though often they would rather not talk about it); their complaint is that an adherence

to racial identity can lead to a separateness or nationalism among people of color. In terms of how they are operationalized, the liberal and conservative positions are actually very similar. They both assume that strong racial identification is divisive, at least in part, because they assume that racial identity equates with particular political positions. And, given the demographic changes in most urban areas, whites—both liberal and conservative—often fear a political takeover by people of color.

However, as these case studies indicate, "identity" is not necessarily synonymous with race or country of origin, and, at least for now, "divide and conquer" is still a viable strategy to maintain white electoral dominance. Possibly the most difficult dimension of racial disunity is the degree to which race relations among people of color reflect the Black/white paradigm of racial hierarchy. As the Latino leader in Providence unabashedly admitted, "Every Latino who ran is light-skinned," and people of color are "more apt to run against ourselves than someone white."

> *"The political differences between African Americans and Latinos are one of the most obvious complexities of identity."*

Both the L.A. and Providence cases indicate tension between the African American and Latino communities. The political differences between African Americans and Latinos are one of the most obvious complexities of identity. Even in New York, where Sharpton's endorsement of Ferrer was an important "crossover" in Black/Latino relations, the history of the relationship between these two constituencies has been mixed. The issue of racial identification is highlighted by the failure of Herman Badillo, a Puerto Rican candidate and U.S. Congressman from 1971 to 1977, to bow out of the mayoral primary in 1977 to support Percy Sutton, a Black candidate. Blacks retaliated in 1985 by failing to support Badillo's challenge to Mayor Edward Koch, even though there was no strong Black candidate (Mollenkopf 1994). Similarly, in Los Angeles, the Wave newspaper, a weekly giveaway and one of the mainstays of the Black community, broke ranks with the political establishment and endorsed Villaraigosa. Executive Editor Jarrette Fellows Jr. chastised the Black community in his editorials to get beyond Villaraigosa's Latino-ness and look at what he stood for.

Unfortunately, these "crossover endorsements" are unusual. In communities of color, racial identity and political issues are often collapsed into one category. This tendency often masks real political difference. For instance, not only are there strong general ideological differences between African Americans and Latinos, with African Americans generally more liberal and Latinos more moderate (McClain and Stewart 1998), there are real differences in issues. As Henry (1994) points out, "Latino immigrants…like their Asian counterparts, [tend to] oppose liberal, labor-oriented policies like welfare, job security, medicine, social planning, and so forth." Multiracial electoral coalitions must pay as much attention to candidates' stances on political issues as they do to racial identity.

2. Symbolic Representation

When Tom Bradley came to office in Los Angeles, his now almost mythical crosstown coalition—white Westside votes and money, coupled with Black belt support at the grassroots—was seen as a victory for the Black community because he was Black, and in comparison to Sam Yorty, a liberal. But the coalitional base that brought Bradley to power did not do much for low-income African Americans. Twenty years of Bradley's leadership had left rampant overdevelopment of downtown and underdevelopment and economic neglect of South Central Los Angeles, which was then the neighborhood with the highest percentage of low-income Black residents in the city. In addition, there was a continuing plague of police abuse that culminated in the civil unrest of 1992. By 2001, the remaining members of the Black political establishment agreed that their best chance for continuing influence and power was with the son of Kenny Hahn.

Even though many African Americans did not think that they had benefited from Bradley's 20 years in office, the perception that African Americans were in power was strong in other communities of color. It was not until the mid-1980s that Latinos and Asian Americans achieved representation on the city council, and Latino and Asian constituents wanted actual instead of virtual representation. As Cruz (2000) points out, "When minority elites represent a group that is simultaneously powerful and oppressed, even if access to power does little to improve objective conditions in ways that might benefit elites and others in the group, it is still perceived as beneficial by members of other minority groups." Symbolic representation can often undermine the efforts of a multiracial alliance, unless the alliance develops specific goals in terms of both issues and racial representation.

3. Power Sharing

At a time when the African American community of Los Angeles (and California as a whole) has been eclipsed by Latinos and Asians—most notably Korean Americans in L.A.'s urban core—there is the same kind of "circle the wagons" talk among African Americans that whites exhibited in the face of burgeoning Black political power in the late 1960s. The Providence case demonstrates a different phenomenon. With the dramatic increase of Latino residents to 25 percent of the city's population, Latino activists are clearly interested in direct political representation.

> *"When a significant alliance grounded in grassroots communities is developed, it is important to assess the level of opposition—and to ascertain whether that opposition is issue- or (racial) identity-based."*

These same dynamics exist in many urban centers. Examining the dynamics between African Americans and Puerto Ricans in Hartford, Connecticut, Jose Cruz (2000) concluded that African Americans reasoned that they:

- had come to Hartford first and should not be upstaged by more recent arrivals;

- had a longer, more tormented history of suffering, and the plight of Puerto Ricans paled by comparison; and

- had worked hard to achieve positions of leadership and influence, and no "upstart" group was going to benefit without paying its dues.

He concluded that Puerto Ricans believed that:

- all minorities were in the same boat; and

- Black activism ought to embrace Puerto Ricans—but Puerto Ricans should have their own leaders.

In each case, a key question is: "How can constituents share power?" If this question is not addressed head-on, the pattern of resentment and distrust documented in this report will continue to plague multiracial electoral alliances.

4. Racial Hierarchy

The lessons cited above are related to the more general problem of racial hierarchy. Financial interests and political parties that are controlled by wealthy whites often manipulate the environment in which African American and Latino candidates vie for political office. As the New York case illustrates, when push came to shove, only seven percent of white voters (who made up 48% of the electorate) ended up voting for Ferrer. In addition, the three major newspapers in New York—the New York Times, Daily News, and New York Post—all opposed Ferrer, the Latino candidate. In Providence, suburban white power brokers attempted to manipulate the 2000 election by backing a Latino candidate for state senate who ended up defeating a six-year Black incumbent. Thus, even when a significant alliance grounded in grassroots communities is developed, it is important to assess the level of opposition—and to ascertain whether that opposition is issue- or (racial) identity-based.

5. Multiracial vs. Multiethnic Groupings

The Providence case, in particular, illustrates the importance of understanding the differences among peoples who, for the sake of numerical convenience, have been classified as "Latino," "Hispanic," "Asian," or even "African American." As scholar-activist Manning Marable (1994) observes, even though they are all Black racially, in the sense that they share many of the pitfalls and prejudices built into the institutional arrangements of the

> *"If multiracial coalitions are to be successful, their organizers must be knowledgeable about the cultural and political histories of each group represented."*

established social and racial order, "native-born African-Americans, Trinidadians, Haitians, Nigerians, and Afro-Brazilians have remarkably little in common in terms of language, culture, ethnic traditions, rituals, and religious affiliations." Marable observes that the same is true for the relationships of Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, and Korean Americans to Hawaiians, Pakistanis, Vietnamese, Arabs, and Uzbekis, all of whom, he wryly points out, "are described and defined by the dominant society as Asians, or worst yet, Orientals." If multiracial coalitions are to be successful, their organizers must be knowledgeable about the cultural and political histories of each group represented.

6. "Old Country" Organizations

The influence of a political organization with political roots in an immigrant group's country of origin is exemplified in the relationship of immigrants from the Dominican Republic to the social democratic Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), the political party currently in power in the Dominican Republic. However, although the PRD is the only organization of this type explored in the case studies, it is important to note that immigrant communities are often organized in town, region-based,

> *"Understanding these formations, their structure, and leadership is key to building multiracial formations with authentic and legitimate participation from immigrants."*

political-party-based, religious, or kinship organizations that are directly linked to their countries of origin. Understanding these formations, their structure, and leadership is key to building multiracial formations with authentic and legitimate participation from immigrants.

7. Time-Limited Organizations

A final point about electoral alliances is that they are time-limited organizations. They usually start less than a year before a particular election and end when they are most needed—after the election. If a candidate is not elected, the coalition usually wanes and disbands, its purpose being served. If the candidate wins, key individuals within the coalition may be politically rewarded, but the formation will usually disband. Even winning candidates do not necessarily want an independent force pressuring them for specific policies or services. In the schema for multiracial coalitions, electoral alliances, unless they are conceptualized, developed, and financially supported as permanent organizational entities, have, in our view, the least chance in promoting long-range progressive policies and programs.

Four

THE RAINBOW COALITION: A HYBRID MODEL

T he Rainbow Coalition is a hybrid in our delineation of multiracial formations, sharing characteristics of both electoral alliances and issue-based coalitions. As a national formation, Rainbow's complexity combines the strengths and weaknesses of the local multiracial efforts described later in this report. Rainbow is neither a classic "coalition" (organization of organizations) nor a "network" of separate groups; rather, it is a formation that borrows from a number of traditions and relies on the political acumen and charisma of a single leader.

The Rainbow Coalition's beginnings were in a multi-issue, monoracial national formation called Operation PUSH, which was an outgrowth of the Civil Rights era. However, when the vision of its founder, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, expanded to include a campaign for the presidency, a partner organization was established that quickly became one of the most highly visible and dynamic multiracial, grassroots efforts in electoral history. Jackson's political campaigns changed the demographics and purpose of both Operation PUSH and the Rainbow Coalition to such an extent that the combined efforts are now a unique national model of multiracial, multi-issue work.

CASE STUDY VI

THE RAINBOW COALITION:
TRACING THE GROWTH OF A MOVEMENT

Every Saturday morning, an imposing, stately building at the corner of 50th Street and Drexel Boulevard on Chicago's south side is abuzz with people, sounds, and activity. Well-dressed local business people gather for a weekly networking meeting, low-income neighborhood residents attend

"Jackson's political campaigns changed the demographics and purpose of both Operation PUSH and the Rainbow Coalition."

economic literacy classes, and hundreds of community members gather for a weekly public forum of provocative presentations on timely issues. For those who cannot attend, the forum is broadcast locally on television cable, nationally on AM radio via satellite, and worldwide on video webcast. The

mood and spirit of the event is upbeat, with a sense of purpose and a feeling of welcome and warmth, reminiscent of a gathering of extended family. This is the weekly gathering at the national headquarters of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition (RPC), where the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. and other featured guests address a vibrant community that gathers to meet, learn, and get inspired to act upon their political and spiritual convictions.

When Jesse Jackson made two bids for the U.S. presidency in the 1980s, the idea of creating a "rainbow coalition"—a new, broad-based multiracial, multicultural political force—became part of the national consciousness. More than an idea, the Rainbow Coalition was consolidated into an ongoing organization shortly after Jackson's first campaign and began to take on a movement-like life of its own during his subsequent presidential run in 1988. The organization continues to be an active, vocal, and visible part of the national political landscape. The effort stands out as one of the most successful attempts in recent history to build a national, multiracial, progressive coalition in the United States.

> *"Operation PUSH advocated for jobs, livable wages, and support for Black-owned businesses and institutions."*

The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition is the result of a merger of Operation PUSH, founded in 1971, and the National Rainbow Coalition, founded in 1985. These organizations, for the sake of efficiency, consolidated their financial resources, staff, and leadership in the 1990s. The history of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition is inseparable from that of Jackson, who founded and led, for much of their existence, both Operation PUSH and the National Rainbow Coalition, and who continues to lead the merged Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

Jackson was a contemporary of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the civil rights era of the 1960s. In 1965, while still in his early 20s and a student at the Chicago Theological Seminary, he organized half the students at the seminary to answer King's public call to come to demonstrations in Selma, Alabama. Shortly thereafter, King hired Jackson to work for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) organizing Black ministers and their congregations in Chicago, a strategy for SCLC to move beyond its predominantly Southern base. Jackson also ran SCLC's eco-

nomic arm, called Operation Breadbasket, which pressured businesses, often through selected boycotts, to provide more jobs, loans, and investments to the African American community. Jackson played a visible role when King came to Chicago in 1966 to lead marches for open housing against the powerful Democratic machine boss, Mayor Richard J. Daley.

"A significant controversy erupted when Jackson took a trip to the Middle East in 1979 to meet with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat."

When Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis during the sanitation workers' strike in 1968, Jackson positioned himself in the national spotlight by being the first among King's aides to publicly talk to the media about the assassination. Thereafter, he continued to take an active and visible role, seizing opportunities to fill the media's and the public's desire for an heir to King in his role as premier Black leader and national moral leader. Jackson's combination of charisma, oratory skills, moral credentials, and willingness to deal with the media soon made him a leading national figure. At the same time, however, he drew strong criticism from many, even some of his contemporaries in the civil rights leadership, who considered his style to be overly outspoken and opportunistic.

In the first few years following King's assassination, Jackson continued to build Operation Breadbasket in Chicago, promoting Black capitalism as an alternative to Black violence. The organization's support of Black businesses boosted their sales, and the business people who benefited became significant financial contributors to the organization's operations. Jackson also made some initial forays into electoral and legislative politics by leading poor people's marches to the Illinois state capitol, holding a Black political convention, unsuccessfully running for mayor of Chicago, and attempting to start a political party, the Liberation Party.

 In 1971, Jackson broke with the SCLC over his leadership and financial management at Operation Breadbasket. On Christmas Day, he founded his own organization, Operation PUSH (People United to Change Humanity, later changed to People United to Serve Humanity), constituted with much of the former staff of Operation Breadbasket and a star-studded board of directors with celebrities such as Aretha Franklin and Ossie Davis. (House 1988)

Jackson and Operation PUSH began a rapid expansion program, building outward from its base in Chicago, by establishing nearly 30 chapters in different cities by 1975. The organization advocated for jobs, livable wages, and support for Black-owned businesses and institutions. As it grew, it began to take on larger corporate targets, such as Coca-Cola, Burger King, and A&P to extract "covenants," or voluntary agreements concerning hiring, contracting, investments, and philanthropy. In subsequent years, Operation PUSH continued to assist minority- and women-owned businesses to gain access to corporate America.

During the '70s, Jackson became increasingly vocal on a broad range of national issues, especially those that affected African Americans and poor people. By the mid-1970s, Jackson had become the most visible African American leader in the U.S. and had appeared on more than 1,500 media talk shows. His numerous speeches around the country were reminiscent, in style, to a circuit-riding country preacher. (House 1988; Reynolds 1975)

During the latter half of the '70s, Operation PUSH launched a new program called PUSH for Excellence, or PUSH/Excel, a motivational program for Black youth to succeed in schools. Jackson promoted this new national program as a "crusade" to support the education and life opportunities of Black teenagers. The program encouraged students, teachers, and parents to sign pledges that articulated values and standards of behav-

"There was an immediate backlash as PUSH/Excel programs around the country came under increased public scrutiny and lost some of their community support, media credibility, and financial backing."

ior. Churches, businesses, and the entire community were also mobilized to lend support. The efforts were widely welcomed as the quality of urban schools and neighborhoods declined amidst increasing governmental neglect, rising poverty, and increased violence.

PUSH/Excel emphasized values of self-discipline, hard work, and delayed gratification—values that appealed not only to African Americans, but also to religious communities and, notably, white liberals in high places. Officials in the Carter administration's Department of Health, Education and Welfare began sending millions of dollars of federal funding to

PUSH/Excel programs, which initially were funded solely with private contributions. With Jackson's motivational and moral leadership, the program continued to gain momentum, and more than 20 PUSH/Excel programs were replicated in cities across the country.

The program invigorated and united several school communities. But it wasn't long before obstacles developed to the momentum. A significant controversy erupted when Jackson took a trip to the Middle East in 1979 to meet with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat. The U.S. media splashed front-page photos of the two leaders embracing, which angered the American Jewish community as well as many people who associated Arafat with terrorism. There was an immediate backlash as PUSH/Excel programs around the country came under increased public scrutiny and lost some of their community support, media credibility, and financial backing. Program funding was also jeopardized when the Carter administration was replaced with the Reagan "revolution" in which all social programs became instant targets for the budget chopping block. Cabinet leadership in the Reagan administration was openly hostile to federally funded social services, particularly those aimed at serving the poor and people of color.

> *"What we're talking about here is not just blacks, but a…rainbow coalition."*

Perhaps most damaging to the PUSH/Excel program was a federal evaluation of the program, the preliminary results of which were released in early 1980. The program received mixed reviews, resulting in widespread uncomplimentary media coverage. The evaluation highlighted, among other things, a lack of a coherent program, insufficient monitoring, and inadequate management. (Murray, Murray, et al. 1980) In defense of the program, Jackson told the Washington Post, "PUSH/Excel is a motivational program. It makes no pretense at pedagogy and curriculum development." (Rich 1980) Jackson saw his role as a catalyst rather than an educator and felt that the program was being held accountable for things it had never promised to deliver.

A less publicized, but noteworthy, dimension of the evaluation was the fact that the American Institutes for Research, headed by conservative Charles Murray, conducted it. As principal investigator and architect of the evalu-

ation design, Murray adopted a business-oriented conceptual framework emphasizing the principles of investment behavior and industrial production. (Murray went on to write Losing Ground in the early '80s, which argued that social programs and policies were damaging to their recipients, and then co-wrote The Bell Curve in the '90s, positing that race and intelligence were genetically linked.) Though the evaluation reports revealed both progress and problems, evaluating a social program on the basis of a business model not coincidentally led Murray and his evaluation team to conclude that PUSH/Excel had "no program." Murray's research bias, as well as serious methodological flaws to which he later admitted, helped to permanently discredit the PUSH/Excel program. By 1982, after more than $9 million (about half from private sources and half from the federal government) had been spent on PUSH/Excel, the program was rapidly waning. In subsequent years, federal auditors doggedly pursued the organization, seeking to reclaim more than $1 million in unaccounted funds. (House 1988)

THE RISE OF THE RAINBOW COALITION

By 1983, Jackson was ready to shift his attention more fully toward the arena of electoral politics. If Harold Washington could become the first African American mayor of Chicago that same year, perhaps a presidential bid by an African American was not so far-fetched. Jackson, now one of the most charismatic and controversial leaders in the United States, began crossing the country drumming up cheers of "Run, Jesse, run." At the same time, he began sowing the seeds for an emerging new formation—the Rainbow Coalition. He took a leave and later resigned as head of Operation PUSH to launch a full campaign for the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination.

"What we're talking about here is not just blacks, but a…rainbow coalition," said Jackson at the time he was exploring his presidential bid. "And all those who feel locked out must become part of a coalition of converging needs." He claimed as his constituency "the desperate, the damned, the disinherited, the disrespected, and the despised." (Frady 1996) His foray into presidential politics drew both fire and fears from his detractors. But to an increasing number of people who felt locked out of the Reagan "revolution" and "trickle down" economics, his message began to take hold beyond the African American community. He provided a sharp critique of

Reagan's policies on a broad range of social issues, while projecting a sense of values and hope reminiscent of the civil rights era. His familiar refrain, "From the outhouse, to the statehouse, to the White House," inspired a new army of followers committed to building on the legacy of past leaders and reigniting the struggle for justice.

> *"Jackson was enlarging the tent, not only by fanning the flames of discontent, but also by offering a message with moral appeal and a unifying vision."*

Charles P. Henry's biography of Jackson observes that Mabel Teng, a community leader in Northern California's Chinese community, decided to support Jackson after he publicly drew attention to Vincent Chin's murder in Detroit in 1983. Although Teng acknowledged that Jackson "did not give the highest priority to Asian American concerns like immigration, bilingual education, hate crimes, and university admission quotas, he was the only candidate to treat that community as more than a fundraising source." (Henry 1991, Harrison 1988)

Jackson was enlarging the tent, not only by fanning the flames of discontent, but also by offering a message with moral appeal and a unifying vision. Perhaps even more importantly, his candidacy and campaign organization were beginning to produce thousands of newly registered voters. Jackson soon became a legitimate force to be reckoned with within the Democratic Party, enough so that the leading contender for the party's presidential nominee, Walter Mondale, convinced the National Democratic Party to launch a voter registration campaign of its own targeted at the same constituencies being actively courted by Jackson—Blacks, Latinos, women, the young, and the elderly.

Jackson's candidacy made waves throughout the primary season. The campaign organization's lack of structure, staffing, and funding was easily overshadowed by Jackson's energy and star power, backed by a growing cadre of dedicated volunteers. The campaign's glories (such as his successful trip to free Lieutenant Robert Goodman, held captive by the Syrian government) and major gaffes (such as his reference to New York as a "Hymietown") never went unnoticed by the media and general public.

In 11 Southern states, the number of African Americans registered to vote had risen nearly 30 percent in just two years, significantly closing the racial gap in voter registration. In five of those states, however, a total of one million new white voters had registered during the same time period, possibly in reaction to the Jackson candidacy. Jackson won in three Southern states and finished second in five others. In all of the primaries and caucuses, he carried seven major cities and 41 congressional districts, while garnering 384 delegates and 3.5 million votes. This gave him some bargaining room at the Democratic Convention to fight for reforms in the delegate selection and nominations process that contained many barriers for candidates not backed by the party. He also delivered a major prime-time unity speech at the convention, widely seen as one of his greatest orations, in which he exclaimed, "Our time has come! We must leave the racial battleground and come to the economic common ground and the moral higher ground. America, our time has come!" (Frady 1996) By appealing across racial and economic lines to all Americans, he was clearly setting the stage for a future presidential bid.

After the 1984 election, Jackson already had his sights set on using and expanding his electoral capital in the 1986 congressional elections and 1988 presidential elections. He set out to strategically widen his base beyond his solid Black following, to include Latinos, union members, poor whites from Appalachia, women's rights advocates, farmers, students, the elderly, gays and lesbians, environmentalists—who together could form a

"In 11 Southern states, the number of African Americans registered to vote had risen nearly 30 percent in just two years."

mass populist force representing a new political majority. In March 1985, the key organizers of the Rainbow Coalition convened in Indiana to create a permanent national formation. Jackson adopted a new 13-point program that included such demands as fair immigration policies, aid to small farmers, and revamping the tax structure—issues that would more directly appeal to Latinos, poor and disenfranchised whites, and other constituencies. (Marable 1995)

Jackson crisscrossed the country carrying the Rainbow Coalition message from the ghettos and barrios of major urban centers to the neglected small

towns and remote rural areas long ignored by most national leaders. He stumped in Hazard, Kentucky, in the heart of the Appalachian coalfields, appealing to miners and low-income whites; he stopped in Minnesota to take up the cause of the striking Hormel meat packing plant workers; he joined demonstrating farmers in Missouri and environmentalists in New Hampshire. His interest in these local issues was seen as genuine and well informed, winning over more whites and working-class families, as well as disenfranchised moderate voters. By 1987, he was polling as the leading Democratic presidential contender, well positioned to have significant influence in the 1988 election.

As the 1988 campaign season heated up, the Rainbow Coalition and the Jackson campaign, which were virtually synonymous, had almost no money for media or polling. But a solid grassroots following, growing in both size and hope, was busy setting up local, mostly volunteer-run chapters of the Rainbow Coalition in cities and states across the country. Jackson's political advisor, Robert Borsage, later described the new mobilization as "bringing people together who had never been together before. He was the only civil rights leader trying to make a link between African-Americans and white working people in the country, whereas most of the civil rights connection had been between the affluent liberal white community and the impoverished in the black community. And most in that coalition—the black unionists, progressive white unions, the peace community—had never been collectively electoral." (Frady 1996)

> *"Jackson decried Reagan's military buildup and denounced corporate 'economic violence.'"*

The energized Rainbow Coalition, following Jackson's leadership and message to "keep hope alive," was spreading like a movement to every state, from large urban areas to the rural towns in between. The coalition embraced Jackson's call for a "Marshall Plan"—domestic restructuring that included investments in housing, transit, healthcare, and schools, which would generate a massive number of new jobs. This new Marshall plan would be financed by reinstating the top tax rate for the wealthiest individuals and largest corporations. Jackson decried Reagan's military buildup and denounced corporate "economic violence." He distilled complex issues into simple sound bites, rhymes, and repeatable refrains, which added to the populist appeal.

Jackson also seized opportunities to raise a variety of international issues, such as U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, Cuba, Central America, and elsewhere. One notable opportunity occurred during one of the Democratic candidate debates, as described by Jackson biographer Marshall Frady: "Jackson still relates with glee how he once managed to 'snooker' [Richard] Gephardt and [Michael] Dukakis into avowing support for the African National Congress (ANC), then still an underground resistance in South Africa that was suspected by many of Marxist inclinations." (Frady 1996)

> *"Of the 21 primaries and caucuses held on Super Tuesday in early March 1988, Jackson placed first or second in 16."*

Of the 21 primaries and caucuses held on Super Tuesday in early March 1988, Jackson placed first or second in 16 of them; then, at the peak of his momentum, he followed up with a victory in Michigan. To the disbelief of nearly everyone, after 31 primaries and caucuses, Jackson was leading in total popular votes and in a near tie with Michael Dukakis for most delegates. The established Democratic Party leadership, now faced with the realistic threat of losing control of the party to a progressive African American challenger, began consolidating ranks behind Dukakis. A few weeks later, in a contentious New York primary (where Mayor Ed Koch rekindled Jackson's "Hymie-town" reference to undermine his campaign), Dukakis emerged as the clear front-runner. Jackson still managed to win in New York City, amassing an unprecedented majority of Black and Latino votes (which many credit as laying the groundwork for David Dinkens to defeat Koch the following year to become the city's first African American mayor). With only Dukakis and Jackson left standing in the field of Democratic candidates, Dukakis won the few remaining primaries, picking up enough delegates to secure the nomination. In the end, Jackson had placed first or second in 46 primaries and caucuses, finishing second overall, receiving nearly seven million popular votes and more than 1,200 delegates (about a third of the total). (Frady 1996)

Jackson hoped to be selected as Dukakis' running mate, with polls at the time showing that such a ticket could defeat the Republican candidate, George Bush. With the Democratic convention approaching, Jackson held off conceding the nomination to Dukakis, hoping to keep the pressure on.

But Dukakis, sensitive to being further branded as a liberal by Bush, showed no interest in Jackson, selecting instead the elder and more conservative Texas Senator Lloyd Bentson. Negotiations with Dukakis over Jackson's role in the convention were rocky, with Dukakis yielding only minor concessions and dismissing all of the Rainbow Coalition's platform proposals. Jackson was allowed another prime-time speaking spot during the convention, where he seized the moment to deliver another electrifying and unifying speech, interrupted with frequent applause and standing ovations. However, Jackson may have traded spectacle for substance, as Dukakis chose to keep Jackson at bay for the remainder of the campaign, pursuing instead an image and ill-fated strategy of non-ideological competence.

> "The organizational structure and platform, especially at the local and state levels, were not always very formalized. But Rainbow Coalition members were still willing to take Jackson's leadership."

At that point, many of the more progressive activists in the Rainbow Coalition wanted Jackson to launch a third-party bid against Dukakis and Bush rather than concede to the Democrats, who were distancing themselves from Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition's politics and colorful image. Despite Jackson's failure to capture the Democratic nomination, local and state chapters of the Rainbow Coalition vowed to continue the fight by launching grassroots organizing campaigns to keep building the base and sustain the momentum between elections. By this time, state Rainbow Coalition chapters were holding their own state conventions, with local leadership and active members. The organizational structure and platform, especially at the local and state levels, were not always very formalized. But Rainbow Coalition members were still willing to take Jackson's leadership and to hold out hopes for another run and more success in 1992.

POST–PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

In 1989, Jackson left Chicago and moved to Washington, D.C., where he based his ongoing organization, the National Rainbow Coalition. Meanwhile, Operation PUSH, which had continued scaled-back operations during the presidential campaign season, was struggling to maintain effective leadership, funding, and programs.

Internal ideological factions within the Rainbow Coalition had been brewing and were now coming to a head. Manning Marable, in his book Beyond Black and White, observed that there were "two rival tendencies within the Rainbow Coalition throughout the 1980s. The moderate, 'liberal integrationists' groups…drew support from black elected officials, civil-rights officials and black entrepreneurs. They favored staying within the Democratic Party. The more radical activist tendency…advocated a break with the Democrats and the creation of an independent, left social-democrat formation." Marable notes that Jackson eventually sided with the "accommodating orientation." (Marable 1995)

Jackson, still interested in elected office, considered a bid for mayor of Washington, D.C. But he instead decided to run for election as the shadow senator of the District of Columbia, a non-voting, symbolic position, which he won. In late 1991, Jackson officially announced his decision not to make a third run for the presidency. The eventual Democratic nominee was Bill Clinton, a key figure in the Democratic Leadership Council, intent on moving the party to the center. He was invited to speak at the Rainbow Coalition's conference in Washington in 1992 and used the occasion to denounce rap performer Sister Souljah (who had been outspoken about police brutality related to the Rodney King case in Los Angeles). He characterized her speech as Black "racism" and chastised the Rainbow Coalition for allowing her a platform at the conference. Clinton's move was

"His personal cell phone, used to instantly access most any major player in the mainstream media, has become one of his key tools of the trade."

calculated and symbolic, stunning Jackson on his own turf. "Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition had been cunningly manipulated, in effect, to illustrate the Democratic candidate's 'independence' from blacks in general and from Jackson in particular," observed Marable. (1995)

Throughout the remainder of the1992 presidential campaign, Jackson and Clinton's relationship remained chilled, and Jackson even became fascinated with, and close to, third-party candidate Ross Perot. Within days of the Democratic National Convention, however, Jackson gave a lukewarm endorsement to Clinton, in exchange for yet another speaking appearance at the convention. This time, Jackson made a public plea for the Democ-

rats to not seek the nation's "political center," but rather its "moral center." During his presidency, Clinton would later extend an olive branch to Jackson by appointing him the U.S. special envoy for the promotion of democracy and human rights in Africa.

THE RAINBOW/PUSH COALITION TODAY

During the 1990s, the National Rainbow Coalition and Operation PUSH consolidated operations into the streamlined and newly named Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, headquartered in Chicago. The organization has launched several major initiatives in the past decade and continues to be visible and active in the new millennium. Jackson has remained in the public spotlight, using the national media as his pulpit for timely social justice commentary on a wide range of issues. Jackson initiates frequent interventions and mobilizations in response to current local, national, and international events. His personal cell phone, used to instantly access most any major player in the mainstream media, has become one of his key tools of the trade.

Though often reacting to current events, Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition have also undertaken a number of proactive initiatives, which make up the organization's ongoing program work. For example, the coalition launched the National Wall Street Project in New York City in 1997. This effort is focused on the notion that "corporate America must re-negotiate its economic relationship with Black America so that a deliberate shift is made from an unfair situation, in which corporate America sells to Black America but does not buy from Black America, to one in which there is reciprocity." (Rainbow/PUSH Coalition website, 2002) The project

> *"The media and public often expect Jackson to represent and deliver the 'African American perspective.'"*

involved opening several new offices in major cities around the country to engage corporations in improving hiring and promotion practices, increasing contracts for goods and services, and expanding the number of people of color on corporate boards.

A more recent initiative of the coalition is One Thousand Churches Connected, which reaches families, by way of churches, with a message of eco-

nomic responsibility to reduce or prevent personal debt. The program seeks to establish financial ministries with 1,000 churches, assisting pastors with sermons and providing church congregations with an economic literacy curriculum made up of a series of courses on debt management, credit education, home ownership, financial planning, insurance education, and technology education.

> *"There is a tremendous anger towards America's youth—Three Strikes and You're Out, mandatory sentencing, and so on. Politicians refuse to modernize schools, they cut out midnight basketball, but build all these new jails."*

The Rainbow's work on education issues also continues, building upon its extensive experience with the PUSH/Excel programs. According to the Rainbow's education director, Renee Thomas, the Rainbow advocates for "equal facilities, funding, and faculty" and has taken a leading role in criticizing punitive zero-tolerance policies. Rainbow chapters are also active in a variety of direct services, including homework hotlines, reading clinics (some even based in McDonald's restaurants), and the "parent pledge" program aimed at getting more parents involved in education. (Thomas 2001)

Despite these proactive programmatic efforts, the hallmark of the Rainbow's work still focuses on timely public commentary and mobilization around current issues and events. For example, in response to the events of September 11, 2001, Jackson has stepped up his public commentary about U.S. foreign policy. During the same month of the attack, as the mass public patriotically rallied behind President Bush, Jackson was asserting that "dialogue opens diplomatic doors" and "'cowboy diplomacy' is not useful now." After Bush's 2002 State of the Union address in which he expounded on the "axis of evil," Jackson warned that "suddenly, the administration has gone from defending the U.S. against the terrorists of 9/11 to policing 'evil' across the world." Suggesting an alternative course, Jackson offered: "In an age of AIDS and growing inequality, the industrial world must act to provide hope by investing in basic needs—health care and education—so that peoples across the world see us as offering a hand up, and not just a mailed fist.… Military force alone is no answer to terrorism.… We must increase development aid, mediate disputes, and seek international coalition and legitimacy."

The media and public often expect Jackson, one of the most famous leaders of color in the nation, to represent and deliver the "African American perspective." Because of his race, the mainstream, majority white public commonly sees him as the African American perspective, or even more generally, the "voice of race." But Jackson often defies this expectation by deliberately downplaying the role of race in the way he frames issues. "The projection in the media is that he's a Black leader speaking about Black issues," says Rainbow Coalition National Field Director Gary Flowers, adding, "we want to deracialize the debate." He cites the example of poverty: "It's a resource gap more than a race gap, it's about access to capital.… In poor communities, the problem is not the presence of Black and Brown people, it's the absence of capital.… Deracializing poverty is a basic rubric for appealing to Hispanics, Asians, women—those marginalized in America."

Jackson attempted to downplay the role of racial discrimination in his initial interventions in response to a fight that broke out in the bleachers at a football game in Decatur, Illinois, in 1999, which resulted in the expulsion of seven African American high school students. Jackson chose to bring national attention to this incident because it represented a troublesome national trend of rising school expulsion rates fueled by punitive zero-tolerance policies. Jackson led local protests and took the issue to the local and national media. In a spring 2000 interview in ColorLines magazine, Jackson said: "I realized there is a tremendous anger towards America's

The streamlined form of leadership, well suited for campaigns, was not as appropriate for the building of a permanent organization and political base.

youth—Three Strikes and You're Out, mandatory sentencing, and so on. Politicians refuse to modernize schools, they cut out midnight basketball, but build all these new jails. There is an ethical issue…. I tried to be a racial bridge in that situation and not further tear the community apart."

Though Jackson attempted to serve as a bridge builder by downplaying the role of racism, his intervention angered the local, predominantly white Decatur community, who accused him of fueling racial tensions. Attempts to downplay and diffuse the race dynamic only fueled public suspicion that he was hiding his real agenda—"playing the race card." From their eyes, the messenger himself, a person of color, and therefore the message, was all

about race. The community's racial divide was rubbed raw—the school board defied his demands, white supremacists openly demonstrated, and Jackson was personally sued and legally restrained from appearing at school properties and functions. Still, the Rainbow's combined organizing, media, and legal strategy succeeded in getting the youths assigned to alternative schools instead of being expelled, and four of them eventually enrolled in college. Jackson's efforts brought much public attention to the issue from the U.S. Secretary of Education, the national media, and policymakers, who are now more closely scrutinizing the effectiveness and fairness of mandatory expulsion policies.

> *"Once a coalition is together, you've got to nurture and feed it with digestible bits of information."*

It is not uncommon for Jackson's moral high ground message to be over-shadowed by the messenger himself. Similarly, the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition is often overshadowed by its leader. Jackson has attained celebrity status because of his combination of media savvy, race, and vocal political stands. His wide base of detractors regularly accuses him of opportunism, egotism, meddling in others' affairs, race baiting, and hypocrisy. The media and his opponents are eager to report his failings. The fact that Jackson has had his share of publicized personal failings— most notably, an extramarital affair that resulted in the birth of a child— has provided plenty of fodder for those who seek to undermine him. One of the most recent attacks has come in the form of a sensationalist book, Shakedown: Exposing the Real Jesse Jackson, by Kenneth R. Timmerman, which landed among the top ten on the New York Times best-seller list within weeks of its release. Commenting on Shakedown, Michael Eric Dyson writes: "The real problem may be that Jackson has shaken up America, from political slumber, economic grogginess, and racial lethargy. No mistakes he has made can ever erase that." (Dyson 2002) Jackson and the Rainbow have weathered many storms, but not without some loss of support, credibility, and effectiveness.

CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FOCUS

The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition is steered by a board of directors along with several key issue-oriented commissions. Jackson remains the central

figure in the organization, as senior founder and president, along with a cadre of seasoned staff and board members such as the Rev. Willie Barrows, the Rev. James Meeks, Janice Mathis, Billy Owens, and Gary Flowers. In addition to its national headquarters with some 40 staff members, the Coalition's day-to-day operations are undertaken by staff in a number of city "economic bureaus," including Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Silicon Valley, and Washington, D.C.

> *For the first time in our history, at the national level, white progressives, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, farmers, unionists, [and] movement activists have stated their willingness to be led by a person of color."*

Any individual who agrees with the organization's program is encouraged to join, volunteer, and participate in the Coalition's activities. Churches and businesses can become formal members and partners in the Coalition's major programs. The organization holds annual national membership conventions. In addition to its members, the organization attracts a wide range of corporate supporters. The program booklets for their conferences are sprinkled with impressive lists of individual donors and ads from some of the nation's largest corporations, including Wal-Mart, Burger King, Miller Brewing Company, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, and AT&T.

The Rainbow's organizational literature describes it as "a multiracial, multi-issue, international membership organization founded by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr.…working to move the nation and the world toward social, racial and economic justice." The issues addressed by the organization include traditional economic empowerment, civil rights, and voter access, as well as gender, environmental justice, fair trade, and foreign policy issues. According to Field Director Flowers, "We choose issues under the rubric of inclusion, ones with the most transcendent appeal. For example, universal health care impacts white coal miners in Pennsylvania, a Hispanic day worker in San Antonio, and an African American in Oakland." (Flowers 2001)

Communication is a key part of the coalition, according to Flowers. "Once a coalition is together, you've got to nurture and feed it with digestible bits

of information." Some issues are explained in one simple phrase or slogan. For example, the "economic profiling" of race, gender, and socioeconomic class in the form of such things as predatory lending, insurance rates, and bank lending can be summed up in a simple rhyme: "The poor pay more." These and other issues are distilled using state-of-the-art communications tools—computer lists, the Internet, e-mail and the "Jacks Fax." The single-page, weekly "Jacks Fax" is one of the organization's most effective vehicles for wide distribution of political messages and action alerts, as is the live broadcast of the weekly Saturday morning forum at the Rainbow/PUSH headquarters.

Taking seriously its role of informing the public through mass political education, the Rainbow recently established its own new television and radio studio at its Chicago headquarters, where it conducts news conferences, broadcasts social commentaries, and continues to expand its production capacities and communications reach.

KEY LESSONS

1. Building a broad and diverse base of support

Although the Rainbow doesn't meet the classic coalition definition of an "organization of organizations," the formation has fostered a combination of constituencies. Clearly, during the Jackson presidential elections, the Rainbow succeeded in coalescing a remarkable and unprecedented array of diverse constituencies across race, class, and region. During the 1980s, the Rainbow Coalition took on a movement-like quality, attracting the interest and participation of tens of thousands of volunteers and the support of millions of voters. This required a message and a leader with broad enough appeal to attract a wide base of support. As former congressman Ronald Dellums observed, "The path from a decision to enter the [presidential] contest in 1984, to continue this quest in 1988, and to remain as the leader of a multi-ethnic coalition has redefined American politics. For the first time in our history, at the national level, white progressives, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, farmers, unionists, [and] movement activists have stated their willingness to be led by a person of color." (Henry 1991)

The success of building the Rainbow's base was not accidental. Jackson gave careful and intentional attention to an endless array of issues that mattered to real people in real places. He took notice of individual incidents

like a murder in Detroit, a fight in Decatur, or a strike in Minnesota by showing up, learning the details, comforting the families, making the connections to broader trends, and bringing national attention to the causes. Had he focused solely or primarily on "African American issues," giving only symbolic support to the issues of most concern to other constituencies, he could never have succeeded in building the Rainbow's broad base of support. Instead, he sought out people, places, and events where connections could be made across issues, constituencies, and geography— where one individual's or community's plight could be felt and embraced as everyone's struggle.

2. Winning concrete issues and influencing public policy

Jackson and the National Rainbow Coalition have played an active and influential role in bringing public attention to a number of significant issues, thereby shaping public opinion and influencing policy. Though the extent of the influence is impossible to document or directly attribute, the Rainbow has had numerous concrete victories it can claim.

- The Rainbow secured many "covenants" and agreements with major corporations, resulting in hundreds of franchises and business opportunities for people of color. For example, the Rainbow helped secure and is monitoring a recent agreement with Toyota that promises $150 million over the next three years to African American and Hispanic advertising agencies, $650 million to suppliers of color, and $100 million to "minority" asset firms.

- The Rainbow has fought for and secured educational access and professional opportunities for people of color by helping to increase the number of administrators of color in college and professional sports. This success has also expanded the potential for support from people of color who are middle-class professionals for the Rainbow's efforts.

- Jackson has played the role of a successful mediator in several domestic and international situations—for example, the release of hostages and the negotiated end to strikes (such as the transit strike in Los Angeles).

- Jackson, especially in his presidential campaigns, elevated the visibility of domestic health issues, such as drug abuse and AIDS, and

many foreign policy issues around the globe. The Rainbow claims credit for influencing U.S. political policy in South Africa and Haiti.

Concrete victories are an important element of holding coalitions together. Without them, coalitions will typically disband—it's not worth the effort to hold together the parts if the collective whole cannot deliver anything of substance.

3. Strategic use of the electoral arena to build an ongoing organization

Unlike the electoral alliances in Los Angeles, New York, and Providence explored in the previous chapter, the Rainbow Coalition was designed as part of a larger political vision that incorporated the core values of an existing formation. The electoral campaigns served to increase the base of support for those values that would last beyond a particular election.

The Jackson candidacy and Rainbow Coalition successfully used, challenged, and changed the U.S. electoral arena in several ways:

- Jackson used the electoral arena as a national platform to inform the public of key issues and insert a much wider spectrum of political debate than would have existed without him. Appearing on the national campaign trail and at major candidates' debates gave him an important platform to spotlight many progressive policy positions and force other candidates to engage with him. Local Rainbow Party candidates similarly used the electoral arena as a significant vehicle for political education.

- Hundreds of thousands of voters were registered by the Rainbow Coalition and Jackson campaigns.

- The Rainbow assisted in the election of hundreds of local, state, and federal officials (e.g., some give credit to Jackson's campaign for helping to lay the groundwork for the election of Mayor Dinkens in New York; Jackson's name recognition certainly helped pave the way for his son, Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. [D-IL], to be elected to Congress).

- Jackson used his leverage to negotiate changes in the internal Democratic Party convention and candidate nomination rules.

4. Successfully using media access and exposure for mass public education

Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow have attracted significant media coverage and used it for public education and commentary on a variety of social issues. Some of the most progressive messages by a leader or organization to be covered in the mainstream press in the past 20 years have come from Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition. He has appeared on thousands of media programs and has hosted a national program of his own. The Rainbow has also successfully challenged broadcast station licenses to ensure equal employment opportunities in the media and advocated for the inclusion of more people of color in all areas of the entertainment industry.

The impact of this media attention is difficult to measure in terms of its effect on public debate and public policy, but it cannot be underestimated. It would cost corporations billions of dollars for the comparable amount of airtime and printer's ink that Jackson and the Rainbow have garnered. Few other progressive organizations can claim as much exposure.

RAINBOW'S SHORTCOMINGS

1. Overreliance on a charismatic leader

Sometimes an organization's greatest strength can also be its greatest weakness. The personality, drive, and politics of the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. can be credited with putting Rainbow/PUSH on the political map. Without Jackson's insistence on a place at the table and his aggressive wrestling for some space on the national stage, the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition might hardly exist or be recognized. However, because Jackson and Rainbow/PUSH have always been so entwined, their reputations, credibility, and effectiveness are inseparable.

According to biographer Earnest R. House, "Organizationally, PUSH appeared to be a one-man decision-making operation in which Jackson made all the decisions, and the others followed him as a band of disciples following the inspired directives of their leader." (House 1988) While this kind of leadership may be effective and efficient for some types of organizations, it does not lend itself well to a broad-based multiracial/multiethnic coalition where more pluralism in leadership and organizational culture is needed.

While Jackson was an active or potential candidate for public office, he had credibility as a political leader. And throughout his career, even when his political ambitions and opportunities were waning, he still had moral leadership and credibility as a pastor and gifted preacher. Recently, however, Jackson's moral leadership has been called into question, in the aftermath of a publicly exposed extramarital affair. Though he accepted full responsibility for his actions and apologized, his reputation and thus that of Rainbow/PUSH have clearly been damaged. Without other highly visible leadership, the organization remains vulnerable, with its success or failure resting too heavily on the shoulders of a single, extraordinary, but very human individual.

2. Insufficient mechanisms for democratic decisionmaking by multiple constituencies

The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition is not structured as an assemblage of different organizations, each with equal or representational decisionmaking power. Not all coalitions have to fit such a formal mold. In fact, had the Rainbow, in the midst of Jackson's presidential campaigns, attempted to impose a formal structure with democratic decisionmaking processes and tighter platform adoption procedures, it might well have lost the moment and momentum to have such an impact. Field Director Flowers justifies the Rainbow's organizational structure, saying, "Sometimes you have to lead, and people have to follow." Indeed, campaigns can require rapid-response capacity for decisions and mobilizations, which a cumbersome coalition cannot accommodate.

*"Sometimes you have to lead,
and people have to follow."*

However, the Rainbow Coalition not only sought to win campaigns, but its organizational architects were also intent on building a power base between and beyond the election cycles so that they could develop a permanent and powerful political presence. The streamlined form of leadership, well suited for campaigns, was not as appropriate for the building of a permanent organization and political base. A permanent organization structured to achieve the dual goals of a nimble electoral campaign vehicle and an ongoing progressive multiracial formation would require a different kind of buy-in and shared power from many constituencies, as well as a structure that could both address political differences and make decisions.

Without participatory avenues for input or shared processes for decision-making, there isn't the shared power that is necessary in ongoing organizations. Instead, Rainbow/PUSH, throughout most of its existence, has been led and directed by Jackson, along with predominantly African American board members. Several of Jackson's key campaign strategists were also African American, although his campaign organization included four high-level Asian staff members. An organization intent on building a widely diverse base over the long haul would need to have a leadership that, in both appearance and actuality, was as diverse as the base it hoped to attract.

Jackson biographer Charles P. Henry concludes that "The major obstacle to the realization of a Rainbow Coalition rests in the nature of its leadership. A true coalition rests on democratic participation and shared decision-making. A symbolic coalition relies on public endorsements, token representation and charisma. Jackson has always operated on the basis of top-down decision-making." (Henry 1991)

3. Lack of organizational follow-through on ongoing issues

Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition speak out on far more issues than the organization could ever bring to resolution. Some people and communities have criticized Jackson, even when he did visit their locale, for being "here today, gone tomorrow." According to Jackson biographer Ernest R. House, "Some said PUSH was more of a movement than an organization, that the charismatic leader jumped from one issue to the next, depending on his intuitions. Departments and divisions within the organization were structured according to Jackson's current interests, and the internal units dwin-

> *"It would cost corporations billions of dollars for the comparable amount of airtime and printer's ink that Jackson and the Rainbow have garnered."*

dled as his interests waned. Issues also came and went. Depending on national events, Jackson would address one issue one day and a different one a few weeks later." (House 1988)

Jackson would answer these critics by saying, "I'm a tree-shaker, not a jelly-maker." He saw his role as that of a catalyst, someone who could spark people into action. But to his critics, the lack of follow-through fueled their belief that he was more interested in grandstanding than being a construc-

tive force for change. When Rainbow/PUSH chose to make a significant investment in an issue, their efforts could truly make a measurable difference. For example, in the case of the school expulsions in Decatur, Rainbow/PUSH adopted the case as a major campaign, providing staff support, legal interventions, and numerous appearances by Jackson. In this case, the coalition not only turned the case into a national issue, but also achieved some concrete local wins. Perhaps more sustained efforts and focus could have resulted in many more concrete wins for Rainbow/PUSH.

4. Tension between the prophetic and the pragmatic

When forming a broad coalition, there is always the temptation to appeal to the widest spectrum of people by watering down or moderating the message. Jackson and the Rainbow have had to navigate the tension between principles and political expedience, sometimes successfully, other times unsuccessfully. Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition often chose to take what they felt was the most principled, rather than most popular, position. The Coalition was not just about who was in it, but what it stood for. There was a political and moral standard to be upheld, amidst ongoing pressures to compromise. Whether it was embracing Arafat, supporting Cuba, or criticizing President Bush right after the events of September 11, 2001, Jackson has taken many controversial and unpopular positions. Clearly, current polling data, routinely used by other political leaders as a self-serving strategy to win broad public support, did not drive these positions.

But Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition were not immune to bowing to the pressures of political compromise. For example, while Jackson was serving as President Clinton's "Ambassador to Africa," he lobbied for the administration's neoliberal Africa Trade Bill, while his son, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-IL), proposed and supported an alternative bill that favored human needs over corporate interests.

Jackson may also be missing some opportunities to expand public awareness and clarity of an issue when choosing not to "lead with race," when an issue is clearly about race. For example, in Decatur, it might have been more truthful and effective to directly name the racism involved in the school board's decision to expel African Americans students who fought with no weapons or injuries. Had the students been white, it is unlikely that the school board would or could have imposed the same punishment. Although he attempted to make the issue more palatable to them, Jackson

was still ostracized by the local white community, which was not directly held accountable for its racism.

Clearly, a case could be made that Jackson and the Rainbow might have been better off launching a progressive third-party challenge in 1988. Given the marginalization of Jackson and the organization by the rightward-shifting Democratic Party in 1988 and 1992, Jackson's endorsements of Democratic presidential nominees alienated some of the Rainbow's base, which saw the organization not only as marginalized, but also politically compromised.

Five

THORNY THEMES FOR COALITION CONSTRUCTION

P revious sections of this report have defined prototypical models of multiracial formations and, through case studies, examined electoral, national, and issue-based examples of these formations. This chapter explores three issues that influence the general political context for the development of multiracial formations: a) the changing nature of structural racism combined with the emergence of colorblind ideology; b) the post-9/11 capacity of immigrant groups to work in coalition; and c) political divisions among groups of people of color.

STRUCTURAL RACISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF COLORBLIND IDEOLOGY

John Bunzel, former member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and current senior research fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution, argued in an August 1998 op-ed piece that the President's Advisory Board on Race should call for a halt to the use of the term "racism." Bunzel maintained that racism was evoked as a "smear word" that leads to "bitterness and polarization, not a spirit of pragmatic reasonableness in confronting our difficult problems." Other scholars and policymakers suggest that the term "racism" has assumed such a broad range of meanings and is used to label such a wide variety of ideologies and practices that it has become imprecise—if not useless—as an analytic category.

> *Many people believe that civil rights progress—defined by major court decisions and the passage of significant legislation over the past 35 years—has made racial discrimination a thing of the past.*

In everyday language, the message is "We're a *colorblind* society now; it's time to get *beyond* race." This perspective is increasingly heard in the classroom, in the workplace, in community-based dialogues, and in popular political discourse. Many people believe that civil rights progress—defined by major court decisions and the passage of significant legislation over the past 35 years—has made racial discrimination a thing of the past. Political commentators like Dinesh D'Souza have proclaimed the "end of racism." Race-conscious remedies, policies, and practices—such as affirmative action, minority set-asides, and redistricting—are increasingly being cri-

tiqued, contested, and dismantled. Any hints of race consciousness are now suspiciously viewed as inherently racist and impermissible in a good, just, and supposedly colorblind society.

These popular understandings did not emerge full-blown, but have developed since the late 1970s with the rise of neoconservative thought. Well supported by a network of foundations and think tanks, neoconservatives have profoundly rearticulated the language of race and racism of the civil rights period, widely disseminated their views through varied media outlets, and dramatically influenced both state and private-sector policies and practices. Neoconservative discourse has emphasized *de jure* discrimination, individual rights, and "colorblind" remedies.

> *"Any hints of race consciousness are now suspiciously viewed as inherently racist and impermissible in a good, just, and supposedly colorblind society."*

The neoconservative challenge has been a difficult one for traditional civil rights organizations to address and has revealed, in many ways, the relative exhaustion of the civil rights paradigm. Civil rights struggles in key institutional arenas (e.g., housing, education, healthcare) have led to dramatic gains in the advancement of legal equality. But persistent gaps in hiring, promotion, educational achievement, median family income, prison sentencing patterns, and mortality rates show that substantive racial inequalities remain, and in many cases have deepened. The popular backlash against immigrants and affirmative action threatens to resegregate social life, exacerbate inequalities, and erode any sense of coherent society.

Structural racism continues to plague U.S. society. Empirical studies document contemporary patterns of racial inequality and discrimination, hate crimes frequently capture the news headlines, and forms of civic unity are difficult, if not impossible, to sustain in a climate of racial suspicion and hostility. Given this gloomy reality, what can we do? Pundits and policymakers have recently focused attention on efforts to revitalize "civil society," to strengthen social networks and organizations in the social space that exists outside of the economic market and the arena of government. If we are genuinely interested in facilitating and nurturing positive forms of civil engagement, we must discuss race and racism, focusing on race not as a divisive issue, but as an essential analytical category. However, efforts to

proactively address issues of race and racial justice are moving against the political grain. Times have changed and ironies abound.

- **Domestic economic restructuring and the transnational flow of capital and labor have created a new economic context for race and racism.** We have seen the flight of U.S. factories to other countries, leading to the loss of well-paying union jobs available to semi-skilled workers and the erosion of the "breadwinner" wage. This transformation has created new anxieties for working- and middle-class whites and a new sense of desperation in urban communities of color. In this context, immigrants, particularly immigrants of color, have become scapegoats, blamed for the shrinking hopes of more established residents.

"In everyday language, the message is 'We're a colorblind society now; it s time to get beyond race.'"

- **Conservative fiscal priorities and the apparent popular rejection of the liberal social reforms of the 1960s have vastly curtailed the federal government's ability and willingness to expand social programs, equitably distribute resources, and ensure social justice.** The political right is engaged in a dramatic critique of government itself, resulting in attacks on government programs that benefit working-class and, especially, poor people—from public education and welfare to industrial health and safety. The consensus reached in the 1960s that government policies and programs could *and should* play a role in eradicating forms of inequality has eroded.

- **Demographically, the white majority is decreasing, dramatically in many localities.** At the same time, the dominant Black/white paradigm only partially describes race relations in a country that has seen a large influx of Latinos, Asian Americans, and other immigrants of color. These changes mean that multiracial initiatives must consider the distinct ways that institutional and interpersonal racism affect different groups of people of color, depending on the social and economic niches they occupy. For example, the recent initiatives to eliminate social services for immi-

grants and to end affirmative action programs targeted different communities of color in different ways. Anti-immigrant initiatives primarily targeted Latinos and Asians, while the anti-affirmative action initiatives primarily targeted African Americans. People of color make up a growing proportion of the country's population (in some states, the absolute majority), a change that in some regions might translate to a new balance of political power. But, as this study illustrates, "people of color" do not constitute a monolithic group. "Latino" and "Asian" designate an array of distinct racial and ethnic identities. Without conscious, organized efforts, differences of language, culture, history, and genuine and perceived interest will divide people of color and prevent the exercise of the collective power implied in their growing numbers.

- **There has been a disturbing resurgence of "scientific" racist thinking.** Hernstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve*, a project supported in large part by the Olin Foundation, purports to demonstrate the innate intellectual inferiority of African Americans. (1994) In his book, *The End of Racism*, American Enterprise Institute writer Dinesh D'Souza blithely observes that the liberal insistence that the races are identical seems to conflict with the following "common sense" observations: Black crime and illegitimacy rates are higher than rates for whites and Asians; white nations are prosperous, while Asian and Latin nations grow in pop-

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"Structural racism continues to plague us."

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ulation but not in prosperity; and most of Africa remains in a state of chaos. "For many whites," he argues, "America does not have a race problem but rather a Black problem."(1995) Polite academic racism has taken off the gloves.

- **Racial discourse is now littered with confused, contradictory, and sometimes deceptive meanings.** Conservatives seeking to dismantle state policies that were designed to mitigate racial inequality have appropriated the notion of "colorblindness" and stripped racial justice of its historical meaning. A ballot measure to outlaw affirmative action calls itself the "California *Civil Rights* Ini-

tiative," and its proponents quote the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s wish to be judged "by the content of our characters." Respected scholars and journalists publish opinion pieces blaming the very programs meant to ameliorate racism's effects for the (otherwise inexplicable) persistence of racism. In this formulation, racism expresses the "legitimate" anger of white people who have been denied the advantages of dark skin in a society that leans over backwards to accommodate people of color. Cases of discrimination brought to court are now likely to involve bias against whites.

- **The use of race and racial categories is under fire.** A significant political movement is now seeking to ban the collection of racial demographic information, led by the introduction of the "racial privacy" ballot initiative in California. Toward the end of his term, former California Governor Pete Wilson ordered state agencies to stop maintaining statistical data on minority and female participation in the state's $4 billion public contracting system. Certain states and local governments underreport or do not cooperate with the voluntary provisions of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act. And Newt Gingrich, prior to his fall from grace, supported a multiracial category on the Census as a way to point out the indeterminacy of all racial categories, setting up the argument for their abolition.

"Organizations of people of color are reluctant to organize around what has been negatively characterized in the media as the 'race card.'"

All of these changes have had a tremendous impact on racial identity, consciousness, and politics. Structural racism has grown simultaneously less visible and more destructive. It is now widely understood among civil rights activists that while the struggle to dismantle the structures of segregation was an essential strategic step, ending legal segregation has not, in and of itself, eliminated racial inequity. The grassroots militancy that crested in the early 1970s has ebbed. Racial justice advocates are reevaluating

strategies—new and old. Some advocates of integration, for example former Harvard Law School professor Derek Bell, find themselves arguing for a new look at "separate but (genuinely) equal" institutions as a potential locus for anti-racist work.

This rethinking comes at a time when neoconservative perspectives regarding "colorblind" remedies clearly dominate in the courts and public discourse, creating new barriers to legal intervention against racial discrimination. The seemingly schizophrenic June 2003 Supreme Court Decision that upholds the right of the University of Michigan Law School (where the rationale is vague) to utilize a truncated form of affirmative action, but not the undergraduate school (where the rational is both well-documented and transparent) attests to ascendance of the colorblind standard as the new sociopolitical norm. In a quote appearing in a *San Francisco Chronicle* editorial, Los Angeles attorney and former Supreme Court Clerk Edward Lazarus said that the Supreme Court opinion tells administrators, "Don't be overly candid or you're going to lose."

This lack of conceptual consensus about the nature of race, racial classification, racism, and racial justice has increased the difficulty of developing multiracial formations. Individual members of groups of people of color are often unclear about whether they can classify their negative experiences as "racist." Organizations of people of color are reluctant to organize around what has been negatively characterized in the media as the "race card," and, as the next segment will explore, recent events have made it even more difficult for immigrant groups to participate in coalition efforts.

THE POST-9/11 CAPACITY OF IMMIGRANT GROUPS TO WORK IN COALITION

The targeting of immigrants by the federal government after September 11, 2001, particularly those of Middle Eastern descent, is concomitant with a sharp increase in hate crimes against residents perceived to be Middle Eastern and/or Muslim. In November 2002, the FBI reported that the number of anti-Islamic hate crimes had jumped 1,600 percent since September 11. (http://www.newsnet5.com/news/1808378/detail.html) The fear in immigrant communities has had a deep impact on the capacity of immigrant organizations, as many immigrants feel compelled to maintain a low profile. "People are afraid to be involved in their community, especially at the advocacy level," says Xuan Nguyen-Sutter of the Refugee

Women's Network. "It's like immigrants and refugees don't want to be visible anymore. This makes our work doubly difficult."

On the policy level, the USA PATRIOT Act has serious implications for immigrant residents and U.S.–born citizens alike. As a result of this legislation, the federal government has:

- Indefinitely detained without charge over 5000 people (mostly men of Arab descent), refusing to release their names and denying them access to their families or to attorneys;

- Sanctioned the Justice Department's eavesdropping on conversations between lawyers and detainees when "national security" is at stake;

- Reactivated domestic surveillance procedures for the FBI and CIA;

- Promised to extend the stay of noncitizens who "critically and reliably report" on other immigrants; and

- Instituted "special registration" for immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries, and targeted immigrant workers through social security checks and increased workplace raids.

In addition, the Supreme Court has recently ruled in the Hoffman case that undocumented workers do not have the right to pursue claims under the Fair Labor Standards Act. These legislative changes and the growing anti-immigrant sentiment have affected the capacity of immigrant groups to coalesce with established residents in the following ways:

1. Immigrant communities, particularly new immigrants, are afraid. Legal and undocumented immigrants alike are afraid of being detained by the INS or the police and are less likely to engage in civic activities.

2. Immigrant rights groups had made tremendous strides toward gaining economic and legal rights for immigrants at state and national levels. Such progress included campaigns to make undocumented immigrants eligible for driver's licenses so they can open bank accounts, be insured, and pursue better employment, and to grant amnesty to undocumented immigrants. Much of this work has been undone. Cathy Tactaquin, director of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, discusses the setback in

amnesty efforts: "In the last four years, due to improvements in the economy, the growth and maturation of immigrant communities, greater levels of organization and feelings of empowerment, and the resurgence of organizing in the labor movement that emphasized immigrant workers, legalization has been on the table as a credible political issue. It is now off the table entirely." The agenda of many immigrant rights organizations is pure reaction to programmatic cutbacks.

"It's like immigrants and refugees don't want to be visible anymore. This makes our work doubly difficult."

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3. The short-circuiting of civil rights for people accused of potential terrorism has devastated immigrant and refugee communities, but it has also created an opportunity. The elimination of civil rights has created a potential "community of interest" that could include civil rights organizations, ACLU-related legal advocates, immigrant rights organizations, and members of the media who are displeased by government rejection of freedom of information requests. However, as the next section illustrates, there are many barriers to these groups coalescing.

OTHER OBSTACLES TO BUILDING EFFECTIVE MULTIRACIAL FORMATIONS

As the case studies in this report illustrate, the most formidable barrier to building multiracial coalitions is the participation of whites. As Henry (1994) concludes, "The importance of liberal white coalition partners is seen as being essential to minority incorporation." In his examination of New York City politics, Mollenkopf (1994) writes that a major obstacle to political power for communities of color in New York City is "the success of white liberals in institutionalizing themselves in the city's large public bureaucracy and labor unions. Their position inside the power structure makes coalition with minority outsiders unnecessary and even threatening." Even when whites participate in coalition efforts, their manner of participation is itself an issue. Ann Braden, longtime civil rights activist and founder of the Southern Organizing Committee, pointed out in a

Spring 2001 *ColorLines* interview, "We are so used to running things. Those of us who are white have to be careful that we aren't trying to dominate. We need more whites who are willing to take action and to serve in organizations with people of color in the leadership."

> *"The position of whites inside the power structure makes coalition with minority outsiders unnecessary and even threatening."*

Differences and difficulties between whites and people of color have both historical roots and contemporary manifestations. While these difficulties are abundant, they are easily observed, and the dynamics are largely understood in many progressive formations. Differences among people of color, however, often reflect a complex combination of stereotypes, competition, and attempts to build alliances with whites.

Framing documents for this study written by Mareasa Isaacs (2001) included references to a 1994 study conducted on behalf of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (now the National Conference on Community and Justice) that examined racial stereotypes among the three largest racial groups of color in the United States (i.e., Blacks, Latinos, and Asians). The study found that groups of people of color held many of the same stereotypes held by whites: 42 percent of Blacks, 46 percent of Latinos, and 27 percent of whites agreed that Asians were "unscrupulous, crafty and devious in business." Also, 68 percent of Asians, 50 percent of whites, and 49 percent of Blacks agreed that Latinos "tend to have bigger families than they are able to support." A large percentage of Asians, whites, and Latinos support the statement that "Blacks are lazy and do not want to work." In addition, Isaacs points out that foreign-born Asians and Latinos share a belief in America as a land of opportunity and may be likely to adopt the prevailing negative image of African Americans as "not embracing the achievement ideology."

How do these perceptual differences play out? A specific incident in which they are evident is in the reactions to the 1991 shooting of LaTasha Harlins, a 15-year-old African American girl who was shot and killed by Soon Ja Du, a Korean merchant in South Los Angeles. Karen Unemeto's media analysis of the incident (in Jennings 1994), found that the African American newspaper, *The Los Angeles Sentinel,* describes the shooting as repre-

sentative of the disrespect that Koreans allegedly have for African Americans. The death of Harlins is placed in the context of complaints about rudeness of merchants, their resistance to hiring African Americans, and high prices charged for merchandise in Korean-owned stores. The theme of "disrespect" turns into "injustice" upon the verdict and sentencing of Soon Ja Du, particularly upon the "no prison" sentence issued by Judge Joyce Karlin.

Unemeto found that the *Korea Times* paints an entirely different picture. The newspaper presents the plight of Soon Da Ju as that of an archetypal Korean merchant who reportedly had been harassed for months by African American gang members and is pushed beyond her limits. She is reported to have accidentally fired a gun that she had never before used and allegedly never meant to use. She becomes symbolic of many Korean immigrants who work night and day in a new land in search of the American dream, only to find themselves victims of robberies in crime-ridden neighborhoods. As conflict intensified between Korean merchants and individual African Americans, the focus shifted from the problem of "crime" to that of "anti-Korean hate crimes and scapegoating. Instead of a single archetype of African Americans, a distinction is made between African Americans who are actively fueling the scapegoating of Koreans and those who are willing to work together to avert it."

> *"African Americans and Latinos are often in competitive conflict over a number of turf and power issues."*

As scholar Manning Marable (1994) points out, "Perhaps the greatest single weakness in using the politics of racial identity to serve as a basis for coalition is that it is rooted implicitly on a competitive model of group empowerment." This competitive model is often based on the notion that there is only one "pie," and a larger piece for one group automatically means a smaller piece for another group. Therefore, despite data like the poll taken by the *Los Angeles Times* that indicates that Blacks and Latinos are the most likely coalition partners, the political reality is that as the two largest racial minority groups in the U.S., African Americans and Latinos are often in competitive conflict over a number of turf and power issues, including:

- **Differences in access to political power.** As the case studies in this report indicate, the perceived undercount of Latinos in the 1990 census has led to struggles between Blacks and Latinos over the reapportionment of congressional districts, as well as local electoral battles that pit Latinos and Blacks, who often live in the same or adjacent neighborhoods, against each other.

- **Competition for resources.** As Lusane and Jennings observe (in Jennings 1994), in municipalities such as Los Angeles and New York the local reverberations of the devastating national economic crisis and the competitive fight for jobs and services are tearing apart long-standing Brown/Black alliances.

- **Ideological differences.** There is also evidence of ideological differences between African Americans and Latinos. Not only do Latinos consistently poll more conservatively than African Americans, the lukewarm "crossover" support of African Americans on issues important to Latinos (e.g., bilingual education, immigration policy) and Latinos on "Black" issues (e.g., welfare, criminal justice) have also contributed to the difficulty of initiating and maintaining coalition efforts.

- **Divisions within racial groups.** Conservative forces have recently attempted to take advantage of the rifts among groups of people of color. Dillard (2001) writes, "The Reagan-Bush years were crucial for cultivating minority conservatives, and many, including Clarence Pendleton, Clarence Thomas, Kay Cole James, and Linda Chavez, achieved positions of influence. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Republican National Committee (RNC) launched a series of initiatives to reach out to potential candidates and voters of color…. In 1998, the RNC launched with much fanfare a new effort in this vein, the New Majority Council. Time will tell whether it will outperform its predecessors."

- **The difficulty of accommodating new ethnic subgroups within the racial construct of "Black" and "Latino."** The increasing diversity of national origin within both these groups due to expanded immigration has meant that even among themselves, Blacks and Latinos have had to learn to accommodate the interests and needs of people who are categorized as members of these racial

groups but who may speak different languages and have different political and cultural frameworks for understanding and operating in U.S. society.

SUMMARY

As we have seen in this chapter, the lingering remnants of the old forms of racism coupled with the new mutations create a political atmosphere hostile to racial equity and confusing for organizations attempting to work together in coalition. This hostile political environment has a particularly deleterious effect on immigrant and refugee communities. However, governmental attacks on civil rights have created both a reticence among immigrant families to participate in civil society on the one hand, and the potential for a new coalition of civil rights groups, immigrant rights organizations, and legal advocates on the other. Finally, although the greatest barriers to forming multiracial coalitions exist between white communities and various communities of color, tensions are growing among groups of people of color—particularly between African Americans and Latinos.

The concluding chapter of this report explores lessons learned and suggests additional activities and areas of further study to better understand and build effective multiracial formations.

Six

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS, KEY LESSONS, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. The key ingredients for forming multiracial coalitions were identified almost 40 years ago.

As we point out in the introduction to this report, Carmichel and Hamilton's Black Power (1967) set out the prerequisites for building multiracial coalitions:

- Parties involved in the coalition must recognize their respective self-interest.

- Each party must believe that it will benefit from a cooperative relationship with the other or others.

- Each party must have its own independent power base and also control its decision making.

- Each party must recognize that the coalition is formed with specific and identifiable goals in mind.

These organizational imperatives have not changed. What has changed is the external political environment. As this report has illustrated, people of color are less politically unified now than when *Black Power* was written. White opposition, bolstered by "colorblind" ideology, has made organizing more difficult, and the changing composition of "Black," "Latino," and "Asian" groups, differentiated by both class and ethnicity, has further complicated the task of building political solidarity among communities of color.

2. Immigrants must play a pivotal role in future multiracial formations, and it is important to be aware of the fact that their political and social experiences in their countries of origin heavily influence how and with whom each immigrant group will work.

Assuming that working with immigrants is important, it is critical to bear in mind two other factors explored in the case studies in this report. First, for many immigrant communities the infrastructure for electoral mobilization is in some cases transplanted from the "old country." Second, the framework for understanding issues of racial oppression, common to many established U.S. residents of color, is alien to many new immigrants. As the

efforts of Latinos in Providence, Rhode Island to run candidates with the lightest skin because they were perceived to have the "best chance of winning the election" illustrates, there is neither the same experience nor the same understanding of racism that is the backdrop for many established residents of color in the U.S., particularly African Americans.

3. The character of coalition leadership is a factor in determining both the external recognition and the internal support that coalitions need to grow and thrive.

While the electoral case studies point to the problems associated with symbolic representation, and the Rainbow case study critiques Jackson's charismatic but undemocratic style, the fact remains that both constituents and the media respond to dynamic, articulate leadership. Leaders who can articulate issues add legitimacy to concerns that are often very real to people of color but rarely mentioned in the majority media. On the other hand, the kind of leadership that is often most helpful in developing new leaders is facilitative and developmental. To build lasting coalitions, both kinds of leaders must play a role in the development of multiracial formations. Another key characteristic of coalition leadership, especially leaders who represent multiple racial constituencies, is the ability to understand and speak for the needs of the majority of constituents in the coalition. The problems of supporting politics over identity are illustrated throughout this report, but no example makes the case better than the Providence organizer from the Dominican Republic who was called a traitor by the Latino community when she supported a Black candidate over a Latino because the Black candidate stood up against racial profiling. Effective coalition leadership in multiracial formations is a critical challenge.

4. In addition to building relationships among coalition participants, coalitional efforts must also win concrete victories.

As several of the case studies demonstrate, these victories are the basis of the power and efficacy of the coalition. For instance, the Rainbow Coalition successfully used covenants and policy victories to expand its constituent base, and the Midwest Treaty Network's successful opposition to mining activities demonstrated that people working together across lines of race and culture could overcome powerful opposition.

5. The successful deployment of communicative resources to conduct public education and carry the message of the coalition is a critical variable in determining the success of the coalition's efforts.

The civil rights movement demonstrated the importance of autonomous communications infrastructures embedded in the African American community's religious institutions, publications, and even informal networks at gathering places like hair salons and barber shops. The homogenization of major media outlets and the purchasing of independent media outlets by corporate conglomerates have made getting the message out all the more difficult for multiracial formations. The ACLU's Racial Justice Project demonstrates the importance of refining the message of "Driving While Black" to fit and include other people of color. Multilingualism is another important dimension for communicating to different constituencies. And the Rainbow's use of electronic media to directly reach both its constituents and the ethnic and mainstream press points to yet another communications challenge—the use of technology.

6. Tactical versatility is an important tool for successful multiracial formations.

Borrowing tactics from community organizing, legal advocacy, popular education, and civil rights mobilizations has given some multiracial formations the flexibility they need to succeed. The next level of challenges for multiracial coalitions will be the ability to replicate successful efforts.

7. Issue-based coalitions tend to fare better than electoral alliances in building multiracial unity.

The question these formations raise, however, is: "Under what conditions will they be able to transcend the immediacy of the issue and build a more long-lasting social force?" While issue-based coalitions may succeed in winning a specific campaign, very often the issues are simple and straightforward—the lowest common denominator for all groups combined. While it is important to "start where people are," the key question for coalition work is the same question that one poses in community organizing: "How does the group use their successful work around a specific issue to move on to larger, more complex issues?"

KEY LESSONS

Demographics underscore the need for peoples of color and whites to work together on common needs and aspirations, and to struggle through areas of difference. Multiracial coalitions can be the organizational entities through which differences can be addressed and common aspirations realized. Given the importance of building multiracial formations, the following are some lessons that might prove useful to remember when engaging with these organizations:

1. Don't rule out the utility of monoracial formations

Many organizations in communities of color are not multiracial. They are grassroots efforts of a single racial group. In immigrant communities, mutual assistance organizations provide transitional services and spiritual sustenance for new immigrants and refugees. In established communities of color, single-issue mobilizations express those groups' deeply felt concerns. Characterized by indigenous leadership, these organizations are authentically grounded in the experiences of their constituents. If they are supported and nurtured, they make strong building blocks in coalition efforts.

2. Ideas are important.

The strongest coalitions examined in this study are built around explicit racial justice concerns. As the ACLU's racial profiling campaign illustrates, focusing campaign objectives around issues of racial equity expands the potential base of allies and enables coalition leaders to use the media to amplify public discussion of the issue.

3. Structure Matters.

There are concrete, definitive differences between organizations that have individual memberships, formations that are organizations of organizations, elite coalitions that include the chief executive of the member organizations, and groups that include individuals and organizations within the coalition's membership. While there is no "best" coalition structure, a number of variables affect the viability of all coalitions, including: a) the ability to secure and allocate resources; b) a decisionmaking structure that allows for the expression of both the powerful and the relatively less powerful; and c) a mechanism for sharing public credit and recognition.

4. Multiracial is not necessarily multicultural.

Organizations that boast of having a multiracial membership become multicultural when the organization proactively creates a multicultural environment. Intentional efforts to foster multiculturalism may include creating the "organizational space" for participants whose first language is not English to have discussions in their own language, or to creatively modify tactics to consider the experiences or cultural practices of people with different racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

5. Multiethnic organizations may be as significant as multiracial organizations.

Some of the most challenging and interesting work building diverse organizations is taking place in multiethnic, but what is defined in the United States as "monoracial," organizations. Key examples of these important efforts include the work of the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAAV), which has organized Vietnamese, Pakistani, and Chinese residents in New York and redefined racial violence in Asian communities to include hate crimes and police violence. Another example is the feminist Asian Immigrant Women Advocates' (AIWA) work with garment and industrial workers. These multiethnic organizations have bridged a number of gaps. They not only connect low-income Asians with other communities of color, proactively addressing Black/Asian tensions by promoting opportunities to work together, but they also reframe how the public and media think about Asian workers. Finally, they build bonds between new immigrants and established residents in Asian communities and beyond.

6. Leadership counts.

One of the criticisms we have made about electoral coalitions is that even when successful, the leadership of these coalitions is often not accountable to either a constituency or a political program. They are predominantly loyal to a particular candidate. This is not to suggest that coalition leadership that is representative of communities of color is unimportant. However, it is even more important to have leadership that is accountable to a set of clearly articulated political ideas and dedicated to put in the time and effort necessary to build and maintain a multiracial and multicultural formation.

7. A well-thought-out process can be an important internal organizational product.

If one of the major objectives of building multiracial coalitions is to provide a forum to build on commonalities and address racial differences creatively, then the process of coalition building may well be as important as achieving the objectives of a specific initiative. As both the Racial Justice Coalition and the efforts of the Midwest Treaty Council illustrate, the process of building the coalition was the key variable in making the campaigns politically viable. Conversely, for all of its strengths, the lack of an ongoing developmental process has arguably been the Rainbow Coalition's greatest weakness.

8. Electoral alliances have fewer advantages and more liabilities than other types of multiracial coalitions.

Electoral coalitions are often dependent on leadership that is not accountable to community residents. Likewise, resources for these efforts are often generated from outside of the community of the symbolic representative of color. Finally, these organizations are, by their very nature, short-lived. Even when these organizations win elections, the winning candidates often dismantle them.

9. Multiracial formations do not necessarily have a racial justice focus.

Many observers assume that multiracial coalitions implicitly address competition for political turf and scarce financial resources, and racial conflicts internal to communities of color and/or between whites and specific groups of people of color. In reality, these issues are difficult to resolve and, unless the coalition leadership makes an explicit decision to address them, they will much more likely be avoided—often to the detriment of the coalition's overall efforts. Moreover, even if the formation addresses internal power dynamics, the decision to explicitly focus the coalition's efforts on racial justice requires an additional level of political solidarity and campaign planning.

10. The evaluation of the relative success or failure of a multiracial formation cannot be limited to one dimension.

Neither product nor process can be the sole determinant of a multiracial formation's success or failure. Rather, an assessment of organizational accomplishment must rest on a number of factors, including: a) the polit-

ical context for the formation and maintenance of the organization; b) the appeal of the formation across racial and ethnic lines; c) the depth of support for the formation's efforts; d) the degree of involvement of coalition members in planning and decisionmaking; e) the formation's access to financial, personnel, and communicative resources; and f) the degree to which the formation is able to explicitly address issues of race and power—internally as well as externally.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

This study was a broad exploration of multiracial formations. With the time and resources allocated by the Casey Foundation, we were able to examine the dynamics of six formations, develop organizational prototypes, analyze key questions, and summarize key findings. However, this study points to a number of trends that we think call for future study and exploration.

1. Research the intersection of issues of race and public policy.

In virtually every case study, there were allegations that specific public policies had either a deleterious or beneficial effect on people of color. The traditional view of public policy work is that the policies fall evenly on the whole population—that they have a universal effect. The DWB campaign in California is the case study that most easily demonstrates that this is clearly not true. However, the allocation of post-9/11 resources in New York, the regulation of mining interests in Wisconsin, the employer covenants negotiated by the Rainbow, and ARC's investigative research documenting racially biased application of welfare policy (2000, 2001, 2002) all illustrate that public policy is not race neutral.

One area for future study is the racial impact of public policies. This study would include an examination of policies that promote racial equity, as well as those that impede it. It would convene a group of social scientists, policy experts, and racial justice advocates to explore the possibility of developing an instrument that could serve as a "racial impact statement." Just as environmental impact statements predict the effects of particular activities on the physical environment, a racial impact statement would examine the potential impact of new policies and programs on people of color.

2. Initiate activities to strengthen ethnic media.

Though most ethnic media outlets are underfunded, in poll after poll they are the media of choice for many communities of color—particularly immigrant communities. They combine local news with international news and are written in the first language of immigrant communities. It is becoming increasingly clear that the startling growth of print and television journalism in regions like California and New York is by no means an anomaly. A study released this year by New California Media, a confederation of more than 400 print, broadcast, and online ethnic media organizations, estimated that 84 percent of Asian Americans, Latinos, and African Americans in the state had some contact with ethnic media outlets. More than half voiced a preference for ethnic broadcasts or publications over English-language ones, and 40 percent said they usually paid more attention to advertisements in ethnic rather than "general market" media. Similarly, New York's Independent Press Association counted 200 ethnic newspapers and magazines in the city, an increase of 33 percent from 1990. Few figures exist for the states between, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the ethnic press is where many people of color go to look for news and information.

If communities of color are to work together and to participate more fully in civic society, it is imperative that key issues are presented, aired, and debated in the media that people trust. A program to build the capacity of these outlets could both preserve a valuable community resource and insure an alternative communications mechanism for members of coalitional formations to get out their message. Training of reporters, support for internships, investigative reporting efforts, and technological upgrades are among the funding efforts that could contribute to building the capacity of this sector.

3. Conduct further examinations of new multiracial formations.

The Racial Justice Project of the ACLU that focuses on racial profiling, the new Freedom Rides, that includes immigrants and African Americans initiated by the AFL-CIO, Justice is the Unifying Message Project (JUMP), a fledgling national effort to address civil rights violations and illegal detentions of immigrants—are examples of newly-formed, multiracial coalition efforts. Further examination of these new formations could shed light on a number of questions: a) how do different political environments affect the success of multiracial groups organized around the same issues?; b) how

does the addition of new immigrant constituencies to the coalition mix affect the dynamics of the group?; and c) can the lessons learned by organizational efforts in one state effectively inform strategic efforts in other states? Support for studies of attempts to replicate successful multiracial formations and strategic dissemination of the findings could contribute significantly to future multiracial coalition organizing efforts.

4. Support the organization of an ongoing forum on multiracial formations.

Baseline knowledge about the dynamics of multiracial formations is still relatively slim. The Annie E.Casey Foundation could support an annual seminar of organizers, social scientists, and journalists who are building and studying multiracial formations. The purpose of the seminar would be to bring together activists and analysts to examine what we collectively know about how to successfully build these formations. Just as the Ford Foundation built both the analytical and the hands-on dimension of the community development field, and Chicago-based funders supported and studied the field of community organizing, the building and replication of successful multiracial formations will require both doing the work and reflective analysis. If funders believe that multiracial formations are the wave of the future, it is important to support both analysis and action in order to build more successful models.
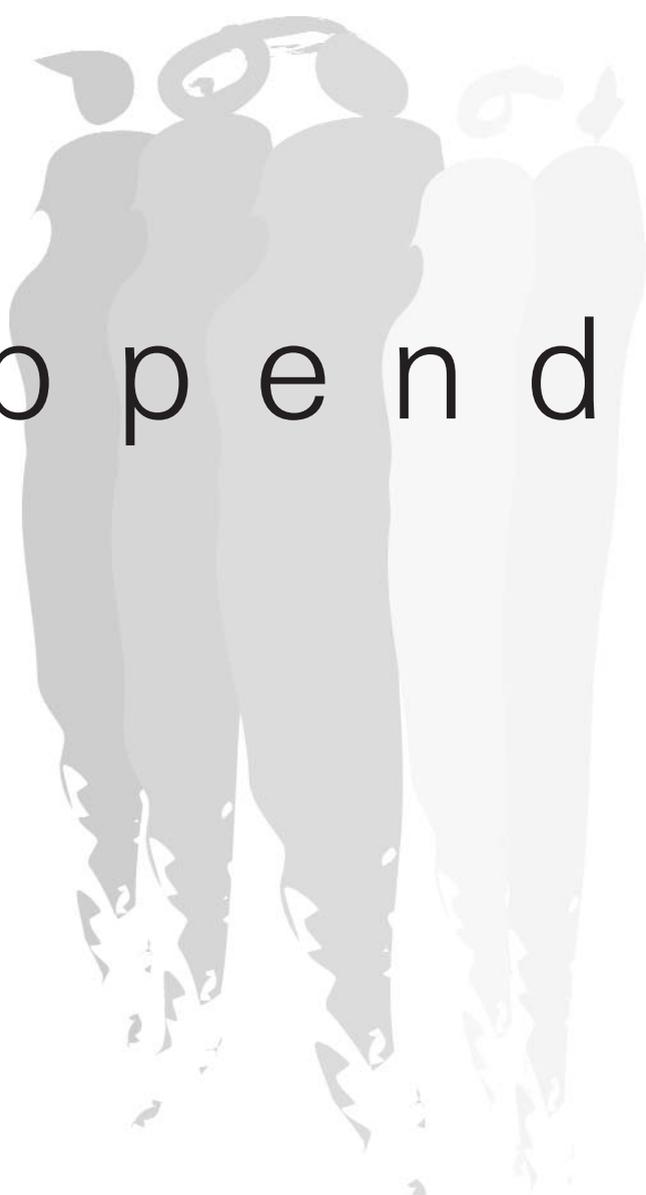
Appendix

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