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UMI®
AN UNEASY ALLIANCE: BLACKS AND LATINOS IN NEW YORK CITY POLITICS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University 2002

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the nature and extent of Black and Latino electoral coalition building in New York City. In a city where today Blacks and Latinos alone form a majority of the population, one might expect to see a substantial increase in the level of minority political empowerment. Interestingly, such empowerment remains elusive.

It has been suggested that the formation of electoral coalitions could result in greater levels of minority incorporation and empowerment within New York’s governing bodies. Given the striking similarities in Black and Latino socioeconomic and political conditions in the city, issue agendas, goals, and residential proximity, one might assume greater prospects for alliances between these two groups. Despite the possible reasons why Blacks and Latinos should coalesce, however, stable long-term coalitions have not developed between these two groups. This dissertation seeks to understand why.

In an effort to assess the nature and extent of Black and Latino coalition building in New York, this study employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In addition to the use of mayoral election poll data and race relations survey data, this study relies on in-depth interviews with political and community leaders as well as mainstream and minority newspaper accounts to tell the story of historical and current efforts at coalition building. Using the 1989, 1993, 1997, and 2001 mayoral elections as case studies, the project details the extent to which Blacks and Latinos have or have not formed strong
alliance across these four election time periods. The study finds that while similarities in
goals, issue concerns, and cooperative and unified Black and Latino leadership are all
critical building blocks for the formation of Black-Latino alliances, so are perceptions of
minority group status and a sense of intergroup commonality. Moreover, this study finds
that the strength of Black-Latino alliances depends not only on the aforementioned
factors, but also on the presence or absence of a minority candidate in the election as a
mobilizing force. Specifically, under conditions of unified minority leadership committed
to similar goals and issue agendas, as well as a minority candidate in the election, Black-
Latino political engagement increases and a powerful minority bloc vote forms.
However, under conditions of divided minority leadership and the absence of a minority
candidate in the race to mobilize Blacks and Latinos around on-going issues, minority
political engagement decreases, a schism in the Black and Latino voting alliance
emerges, and coalitions break down.
Dedicated to my family
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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To my mother, father, and sister, words cannot begin to express my heartfelt appreciation for your unconditional love and praise, endless support, and unshakeable belief in my ability to complete this monumental task when self-doubt emerged.

I am also grateful to my friends in the Department of Political Science and those outside of academia for years of sound advice, encouragement, fun and laughter.

I offer many thanks to the political and community leaders who agreed to offer their thoughts and insights on New York City politics, thereby contributing greatly to the completion of this study.

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School’s Alumni Grants for Graduate Research and Scholarship, all of which helped to fund my trips to New York to conduct interviews.
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American cities have always been contested arenas in which various racial and ethnic groups grapple for political power and influence. Scholarly explorations into the context of racial and ethnic group struggles for power, however, have generally been considered in terms of Whites and Blacks even though the dynamics of that struggle have changed in such a way that the key players are no longer exclusively White and Black. As a result of the continuing decline of the White population and the simultaneous increase of non-White inhabitants over the last few decades, the racial demographics of many cities have shifted from once having been majority White to now majority non-White. Such a transformation suggests that other racial and ethnic minority groups must now be added to the political equation, thereby raising questions as to how minorities as political actors will adapt within the context of a rapidly changing urban environment.

New York City provides the perfect example of an urban area that has experienced racial transformation and today is home to a majority non-White population. As Table 1.1 shows, New York City’s population has undergone dramatic change.
<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7,071,639</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7,322,564</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8,008,278</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>3,703,203</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3,163,125</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2,801,267</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>1,694,505</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1,847,049</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,962,154</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Origin</td>
<td>1,406,389</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,783,511</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,160,554</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>239,338</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>489,851</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>783,058</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American, Inuit, Aleut</td>
<td>9,907</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>17,871</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>17,321</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1.1  Total Population New York City, by Race and Hispanic Origin 1980, 1990, 2000

In 1980, New York City’s population was 52% White, 24% Black, 20% Latino, and just under 4% Asian and Native American.\(^1\) By 1990, these numbers had changed with the White population decreasing to 43% and the Black population virtually unchanged. The greatest increase occurred in the Latino and Asian communities with each exhibiting a marked increase since the 1980s. And while those populations continued to grow, with Latinos and Asians comprising 27% and just under 10% respectively of the total New York population today, it is the White population that falls quite drastically to 35%. For the first time in New York City’s history, the non-White population forms a sizeable majority, with Blacks and Latinos alone comprising 52% of the city’s population.

Interestingly, the steady increase in New York City’s minority population has not followed with substantial increases in its levels of political incorporation and
empowerment. Political incorporation as referred to here considers whether an excluded group is represented descriptively in the local governing structure. Political empowerment, however, refers to the extent to which that group is entrenched in the governing coalition and is, as a consequence of incorporation, able to affect policy formation and outcomes favorable to that group over a period of time (Browning, Marshall, Tabb 1984; Eisinger 1976; Regalado and Martinez 1991). The concepts of political incorporation and empowerment are critical to minority group uplift if we assume that the racial/ethnic composition of local government makes a substantive difference in terms of political output. In New York City, racial minorities are still quite weak politically and are not substantively represented in the city’s decision-making and governing bodies to the extent that their numbers suggest they should be. Thus, while minorities form a numerical majority in New York City, it seems to matter little since they are not firmly concentrated in the powerful decision-making sectors of the city with the political strength to bring about policy changes favorable to their communities.

This situation highlights an interesting anomaly regarding New York City politics and also raises a number of questions concerning strategies for bringing about minority political incorporation and empowerment. They can best be explored by asking why, given its historical liberalism and majority minority population, New York City has failed to elect a series of more liberal minded regimes that would be more supportive of minority interests and concerns (Mollenkopf 1997). This study examines minority group coalition building as a possible way for racial/ethnic minority groups to collectively use their increasing numbers as a vehicle to enhance their levels of political empowerment. As Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (1970) aptly note, “no group or interests gets
very far alone in American politics....there are too many groups, too many interests, for everyone to adopt the attitude that its strength, its numbers, requires little cooperation with and accommodation to others" (79).

Given the city’s relative liberalism and large minority community, which has a history of political participation and alliance with the city’s White liberal sector, we might expect stronger minority incorporation and empowerment than what has historically and currently exists. Yet New York City has elected only one Black mayor, David Dinkins, who served one term and was quickly replaced by Rudolph Giuliani, a more conservative mayor who served two consecutive terms since his election in 1993. Despite the fact that Blacks and Latinos now comprise a numerical majority of the city’s population, and that a Puerto Rican candidate, Fernando Ferrer, was on the Democratic ticket for mayor in November 2001, Democrats chose Mark Green in the runoff election. Ultimately, the city chose another Republican mayor, Michael Bloomberg, as Giuliani’s successor. What explains this anomaly? Why has the “Rainbow Coalition” that helped to elect Dinkins in 1989 weakened in subsequent elections? This study seeks to answer these questions through an examination of Black and Latino electoral coalition building within the larger context of shifting New York City politics.

Although each group has its own distinctiveness, Blacks and Latinos in New York City have shared a common experience over the last half-century as socioeconomic and political outsiders. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan were perhaps among the first to recognize the striking similarities in the socioeconomic condition of Blacks and Latinos, specifically Puerto Ricans, in their classic study of racial and ethnic politics in New York.
They write that “to a degree that cannot fail to startle anyone who encounters the reality for the first time, the overwhelming portion of both groups constitutes a submerged, exploited, and very possibly permanent proletariat” (1963, 299-300). Even today, the socioeconomic position of Blacks and Latinos relative to the larger New York population is evident in the patterns of unemployment, poverty, and median family income levels where the gaps between these two groups and non-Hispanic Whites have persisted.

Figure 1.1 Poverty Rates in New York City, by race
(Two-Year Moving Average)

Figure 1.1 depicts the poverty rates for the city’s largest racial/ethnic groups, non-Hispanic Whites, non-Hispanic Blacks, and Hispanics since 1989. While the poverty rates for non-Hispanic Whites has been no more than 10-15%, falling to roughly 8% in 1999-2000, the poverty rates for Non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics, have been...
consistently much higher. For non-Hispanic Blacks the rate has been between 25-35% from 1989 to 1996 declining to about 27% in 1999-2000. The poverty rate for Hispanics has been much worse at 35% in 1989 and reaching a high of 45% in 1993, after which it falls to just above the poverty rate for non-Hispanic Blacks at 29% in 1999-2000. Moreover, the Current Population Survey for the year 2000 indicates a similar pattern of socioeconomic differentiation between Blacks and Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites. The median income and unemployment rates for all groups are detailed in Table 1.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Unemployment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Whites</td>
<td>$53,551</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Blacks</td>
<td>$33,318</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics *</td>
<td>$36,133</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Ricans</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Total Hispanic figure includes persons of Central and South American origin.

Table 1.2 Median Income and Unemployment Rates, 2000

As Figure 1.1 and Table 1.2 indicate, Blacks and Hispanics disproportionately suffer a worse socioeconomic fate than non-Hispanic Whites. Additionally, both groups have had to contend with a history of racial/ethnic discrimination and subordination, which has played a critical role in their inability to amass greater levels of socioeconomic and political power in New York City.
Given these striking similarities in their socioeconomic and political circumstances, one might reasonably conclude that these two groups would work together in an effort to address the issues that plague their communities. In fact, acting in collaboration would likely benefit both groups by incorporating Black and Latino officials who might be more likely to promote their interests within local government, thereby potentially yielding substantive policies geared toward alleviating the social and economic problems that large sectors of their communities face.

To date, however, minority incorporation and empowerment remain elusive to Blacks and Latinos in New York City, and some might say that this is largely due to lack of collaborative efforts between the two groups (Betancur and Gills 2000; Mollenkopf 1997; Piatt 1997; Villarreal and Hernandez 1991). In fact, Blacks and Latinos have been largely unable to consolidate and maintain lasting political coalitions. Aside from their success in electing the city's first Black mayor in 1989, Black and Latino coalitions have been somewhat unstable, thereby yielding very little for these communities in terms of substantive representation, favorable public policy, and group empowerment (Bonilla and Stafford 2000; Mollenkopf 1997; Mollenkopf and Castells 1992). This lack of sustained collaborative effort is disheartening given that not only does their close residential proximity provide the social space for electoral and non-electoral collaboration, but unification around complementary agendas and policies could give them the political strength needed to address their shared problems at the local level (Betancur and Gills 2000).

The socioeconomic conditions and limited political access that Blacks and Latinos face often drive the assertion that they should naturally coalesce. And while history has
demonstrated that coordinated efforts between the two groups are possible and can yield desired results, as in the election of David Dinkins, such alliances have been tension-filled and have sometimes cost these two groups the desired outcome. The contention of this study is that while historical and circumstantial developments may facilitate unity, Black and Latino collaboration in the form of stable coalitions is not automatic; they must be carefully constructed and maintained since similarities or shared conditions of socioeconomic deprivation do not by themselves create unity (Betancur and Gills 2000).

The fact is that in New York City, as in many other cities with significant populations of Blacks and Latinos, neither group has numbers to achieve, by itself, control of local government or tip the balance of power in its favor (Cruz 2000); thus political coalition building becomes a necessity. And while minority group collaboration may seem to be a logical option for obtaining a larger share of the pie, (particularly when one considers that the liberal White sector that is often so critical to electoral coalition building efforts has significantly declined), there could be other factors that keep Blacks and Latinos separated. Previous studies of coalition building have noted the importance of shared ideology, interests, and skilled leadership for the formation of stable alliances (Browning et al. 1984, 1997; Mollenkopf 1997; Sonenshein 1993). I argue that while these elements are crucial to any attempt to form coalitions, attention should also be paid to social-psychological factors such as perceptions of minority group status and intergroup commonality as foundational building blocks for minority coalitions. The assertion of this study is that these factors must be considered when discussing the possibilities and problems that arise with interracial/ethnic coalitions. These factors,
of course, are not unique to New York City; however, it could be argued that they come together with a special intensity to deter minority empowerment in that city (Mollenkopf 1997).

On a very general level, then, this study seeks to understand the factors and conditions that help to explain the nature of Black and Latino electoral coalition building in New York City. To what extent and under what circumstances have Blacks and Latinos formed coalitions? When such coalitions have formed, have they been purposeful or coincidental? What elements have served as building blocks, or alternatively, as points of contention, for those coalitions? How do we explain variation in the alliances formed over time? Moreover, what has been the role of not only issue concerns and goals, but also Black and Latino leadership in fostering or hindering these alliances?

This study suggests that coalition building efforts between Blacks and Latinos in New York have occurred with some frequency and have been more deliberate than not. However, this study also suggests that the nature and presence of Black and Latino alliances ebb and flow depending on several factors that go beyond similarities in socioeconomic status. The goal of this study, then, is to explore the nature of these factors that might affect Black and Latino political interaction, and thus the formation and maintenance of political coalitions.

The Challenges of Minority Coalition Building: A Theoretical Overview

Generally, a coalition has been defined as an aggregation of groups that may be loosely or tightly organized, and one in which cooperation may be tacit or explicit depending on the perceived nature and importance of the objectives and subsequent outcomes (McClain and Stewart 1998; Watts 1996). Coalitions usually form through the
expression of a common interest or the need to achieve a common goal (Olson 1965).
The objective of the coalition is for each group to maximize its payoff with respect to the
stated goals. Watts (1996), however, convincingly argues the need for a more
conceptually precise definition due to the tendency to label any existing (electoral)
configuration of different peoples a coalition, consequently making the term too broad to
be of any analytical use. A more explicit conceptualization suggests that political
coalitions form because of a concerted effort on the part of individuals or groups to
aggregate themselves for the purpose of pursuing a political end (i.e. election, policy
implementation) that could not be realized without the collective pooling of their
resources. The implication is that the parties involved not only share similar goals, but
also desire similar outcomes and are willing to pursue their objectives in a cooperative
manner. Accordingly, there are two main types of coalitions that generally surface.

Disjointed coalitions, which are often found in the electoral arena, are marked by
the participating groups having shared immediate goals, which are conducive to the
realization of a much larger goal that may not be shared by everyone (Watts 1996).
Indeed, groups coming together in these coalitions need not endorse the specific agendas
of the other members, as they band together for strategic reasons related to each groups’
particular political desires and resources available to them. Thus, groups form coalitions
because they perceive that they do not have sufficient resources to realize their goals on
their own. Indeed, if a group were sufficiently able to accomplish its goals through its
own resources, there would be little need to enter into coalitions with others.

While functional in that they may force a candidate to adhere to the various
groups’ political wants, there are a few weaknesses with disjointed coalitions that could
make them a weak tool for the long-term incorporation of minority group interests and eventual empowerment. In a more general sense, Watts argues that disjointed coalitions "undermine notions of civic responsibility to the society as a whole" (42). Such coalitions are created and reinforced by political cultures and incentive structures that promote the self-interest of individuals or groups over that of the broader society. Encouraged to think primarily of themselves, these groups’ political identities become defined in a very narrow manner, which ultimately undermines the ability of the group to develop empathetic linkages to the larger society. Additionally, disjointed coalitions assume, if not require, voters to be ethnically insular in their sociopolitical concerns and interests (Watts 1996). Thus, for a group whose interests are already being included to some degree, what incentive is there for that group to develop empathetic concern for the plight of others? Indeed, such a concern would dilute that group’s ability to amass benefits for itself. In short, the argument suggests that these types of coalitions encourage parochialism. And because there is not much beyond short-term interests underlying these coalitions, they tend to be easily dismantled.

The second type of coalition, a shared core coalition, occurs when various groups come together because they support a common issue agenda. Coalitions such as these, which are generally based on their strategic aggregation and a common ideological stance, are more difficult to generate than disjointed coalitions. In order for shared core coalitions to surface, each of the participating groups must willingly relinquish key aspects of their own specific agendas in pursuit of a universally shared agenda (Watts 1996). Yet, it is this universally shared agenda that may prove the biggest challenge to shared coalitions.
Indeed, a major task for elites who attempt to formulate these coalitions is convincing their constituencies that the lower common denominator (the shared agenda) is what can reasonably be acquired given the existent political context and the groups' resources at the time. However, a shared agenda that cannot reasonably include every component of the various groups' agendas makes it difficult for elites to promote it. Hence, there may be many rank-and-file group members who will refuse to engage in what they consider to be basically a useless contract. And those who do enter into the coalition may do so with less than full enthusiasm and effort. In either case, the shared core coalition will not be maintainable. Thus, any attempt to reformulate the shared agenda into policy platforms that try to please all of the potential members of the coalition is virtually impossible; one that incorporates the interests of only one group runs the risk of being insular and thus unappealing to the other participants. Therefore, even if the shared agenda is intensely promoted but not sufficiently encompassing to insure coalition members' allegiance, the coalition will be ineffective if formulated at all.

Good examples of shared core coalitions are those that develop around social movements. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, for instance, included various groups of differing backgrounds who came together to oppose the socioeconomic and political plight of Blacks. Most significant, though, is that these individuals were, by and large, committed to an underlying ideal. Thus, while there were noted leaders within the Movement, it was primarily an issue-oriented or ideologically-based movement, which tends to produce more lasting alliances than those that are solely candidate-oriented (as the coalition that formed around Mayor Dinkins in New York or around Jesse Jackson in 1984 and 1988 may have been). Moreover, the Civil Rights Movement emerged in...
response to a political crisis, and it was this heightened sense of crisis that allowed for a
diverse group of individuals to come together without the penetration of parochial
interests on behalf of something greater. It seems, however, that it is the inevitable
surfacing of parochialism that makes shared core coalitions difficult to sustain over time.
Thus, given the higher degree of political energy needed to sustain this type of coalition,
it is not surprising that they arise less often than disjointed coalitions (Watts 1996, 44).
When coalitions do form, however, on what basis are such alliances built?

At the heart of coalition theory in general seems to be the role of interests and
ideology as key elements guiding group participation in such alliances. As Watts (1996)
implies, there is a difference in the type of coalition that forms based on whether interests
or ideology is the main bonding element of the coalition.

Browning, Marshall, and Tabb (1984) in their study of minority political
incorporation in ten California cities focus heavily on the role of ideology and the
enduring character of the bi-racial coalitions formed there based on a common belief
system. They found that in addition to mobilization and unity among Blacks, a common
ideology between Blacks and liberal Whites (and Latinos) in California politics is what
allowed for coalitions to develop, ultimately leading to minority incorporation in city
politics. Thus, instead of a class alliance, the main thrust of victory for Black officials
consisted of a mixture of racial identification among Blacks, ideological affinity with
Whites (mainly liberal Jews), and some racial/class solidarity with Latinos.

Sonenshein’s (1993) application of the Browning et al. (1984) model to Los
Angeles found the same pattern. As Sonenshein suggests, “the ideological underpinning
of minority political incorporation have been so consistent that ideology must be
considered the central factor in the success of such coalitions” (1997, 264). Ideological differentiation among Whites as shown by Browning et al. (1984) is critical to minority political success. However, the very limited and unstable minority incorporation and empowerment in New York City, where White liberalism has traditionally been strong, raises questions concerning the generalizability of ideology as the foundational glue of coalitions. Indeed, more recent examples from New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco have shown that successful bi-racial/multi-racial coalitions may have been able to form, but as White liberalism and support for racial justice issues waned, and those cities began to experience greater racial diversification (bringing with it possible inter-minority group ideological differences), those coalitions disappeared (Browning, Marshall, Tabb 1997; Mollenkopf 1992; Mollenkopf and Castells 1992; Sonenshein 1997).

The theoretical assumption that ideology is the central component that helps to form coalitions is precisely what Carmichael and Hamilton (1967) attempt to refute. In their classic study, *Black Power*, in which they discuss bi-racial Black-White coalitions, Carmichael and Hamilton argue that the benevolence that underlay the Civil Rights Movement is no longer adequate for the new era of racial polarization. On the whole, the authors contend that self-interest, not ideology, is the key to bi-racial coalition building. They detail what they see as three major fallacies of coalition theory: 1) “the interests of Black people are identical to those of certain liberal, labor or other reform groups” (60). Carmichael and Hamilton argue that because these other groups accept the basic premise of and legitimize the institutions of this society, which sustain inequality, they are not interested in the revamping of society and thus, cannot meaningfully coalesce with
Blacks. 2) “The fallacious assumption that a viable coalition can be effected between the politically and economically secure and the politically and economically insecure” (60). As Carmichael and Hamilton contend, “by definition, the goals of the respective parties are different” (66). And 3) the assumption that political coalitions are or can be sustained on a moral or sentimental basis, or what basically amounts to appeals to conscience (60). They suggest that this premise is misguided, primarily because they view political relations as being based on self-interest. After all, “politics results from a conflict of interests, not conscience” (75).

Having outlined their critiques of the assumptions guiding bi-racial coalitions, Carmichael and Hamilton then detail four preconditions that should serve as the basis on which viable coalitions can ultimately be based. And while they refer to Black-White coalitions specifically, I think they can also apply to the formation of Black and Latino or other minority coalitions. First, and probably most important, Carmichael and Hamilton suggest that there should be the recognition by the parties involved of their respective self-interests. They state that “all parties to the coalition must perceive a mutually beneficial goal based on the conception of each party of his own self-interest” (77). This presupposes that each coalition group member knows definitively what is good for it and what it seeks to obtain in terms of rewards and benefits.

Second, they maintain that there must be a mutual belief that each party will benefit in terms of that self-interest from an alliance with the other group. In other words, each party to the coalition must be able to see their mutual interests and what they can mutually gain from working with one another. On this point, Carmichael and Hamilton would say that the interests of Blacks and most Whites are diametrically opposed because...
of their differing allegiances to the basic values and institutions of a racist society (60-66). The prospect of Black-Latino coalitions forming may be possible, however, if they can be made to realize their mutual interest in working collectively to eradicate the socioeconomic problems that both of their communities face, thereby working toward the similar goal of empowerment (Betancur and Gills 2000).

Third, in order for coalitions to be viable, each party has to have its own independent base of power and should not have to depend on any outside force for its ultimate decision-making power (79). And fourth, the parties must recognize that a viable coalition can only be formed with specific and identifiable goals in mind. Political cooperation implies at least some mutual coordination between groups with regard to the pursuit of similar goals. However, where differences are present in terms of the actual goals, and even the strategies or means for obtaining those goals, conflict could potentially arise. Thus, the extent to which there seems to be a relative similarity or dissimilarity of political goals and strategies becomes critical in determining conflictual or cooperative relationships (Eisinger 1976). In Carmichael and Hamilton’s (1967) conception of Black-White coalitions, they would likely assume that Blacks should not have to compromise their desired goals. However, in a political partnership, be it Black and White, or multiracial, some compromise and the possible relinquishing of certain aspects of each party’s agenda will have to take place if stable shared coalitions of the type Watts (1996) describes are ever to materialize.

In an attempt to bring both schools of thought together, I suggest that both ideology and interests are important ingredients in coalition building and perhaps should not be discussed as two theoretically divergent entities. In many respects, the
self-interests of the groups are important if we are to assume that each party would not be joining the coalition were it not for some self-serving benefit or goal that is being sought. Ideology, however, also has importance if we believe that there must be some underlying common belief system among the participants supporting what the groups are struggling to attain. Sonenshein (1997), also unwilling to accept an "interests or ideology" framework, convincingly argues that neither can fully explain the endurance of bi-racial coalitions, mainly because "group relations are not simply the outcome of objective interests or poll-measured attitudes" (264). Here, another key variable must be considered in our efforts to understand coalition formation: the role of leadership.

Undoubtedly, the formation and outcome of interracial coalitions will be shaped and influenced by leadership. Government leaders and community organizers are extremely important because they have an impact on how group interests are defined and perceived, and thus the prospects for successful inter-minority group coalitions depend heavily on their willingness and ability to create and sustain such alliances around ongoing issues (Hinckley 1981; Regalado and Martinez 1991; Sonenshein 1997). In fact, it was the presence of effective leadership in Los Angeles and Chicago that was capable of bringing various groups together under a reform agenda, which eventually led to Blacks winning political incorporation. Thus, Black and Latino leadership and their desire and skill in forging alliances are critical. If tensions between minority groups are to be kept at a minimum and their interests framed as shared or common, group leaders must be willing to work toward not only mobilizing their respective groups, but also forging positive relations between the two groups. In New York, however, interracial leadership networks have been relatively weak, internally divided, and vulnerable to outside
influences. These factors have hindered racial minorities’ ability to work together in their quest for incorporation and empowerment (Mollenkopf 1997).

This study hypothesizes that purposive Black-Latino coalitions will arise when both groups have clearly defined and similar interests/issue concerns, ideologies and goals. Moreover, stable coalitions will develop when leaders from each group promote coalition building by supporting collective mass mobilization strategies and acting in an inclusive manner with respect to shared goals. However, the propensity of Black and Latino elites to build coalitions will depend on at least two factors: 1) how each set of leaders interpret the behavior of its counterpart; and 2) how they perceive the structure of opportunities available to them. Are there political cues exchanged by elites of each community that indicate similarity of issue positions and policy goals, and thus the potential to act collectively? Is there a willingness on the part of Black and Latino leaders to speak positively about the prospects of alliances to the masses? The complexity of such relations deepens when one considers that oftentimes the terms of collaboration affect the outcomes, and because collaboration among elites can be punctuated by conflict at the mass level, mass perceptions and attitudes become important pieces of the puzzle.

Political collaboration between Blacks and Latinos can often be advanced or hindered depending on the extent to which they perceive a sense of common fate or, in short, the same reality in their socioeconomic and political situations. Previous studies that consider the issue of minority coalition building have generally focused on the role of ideology, interests, convergence of issue positions, and leadership as critical features of any theory purporting to explain the nature of minority group alliances. However, most
studies (until fairly recently) have not fully addressed the importance these groups' perceived minority status and the commonality of those perceptions as vital components of any minority coalition building effort. I contend that minority coalitions depend on more than the convergence of issue positions, ideology and leadership. Such coalitions are multi-dimensional in that they are a function of not only those factors noted in the existent literature, but also a function of coalition members' overall perceived commonality, or sense of "sameness" in their relative socioeconomic and political powerlessness. I argue that this sense of commonality or "sameness" can be observed in the degree to which these groups believe that their minority status affects their socioeconomic and political wellbeing in relation to the larger society. That sense of "we're all in the same boat" can then be molded and used by group leaders to bolster and strengthen Black and Latino collaborative efforts to work toward a common goal (such as the election of a specific candidate). Therefore, an understanding of race and minority status, their meanings and how they operate for each group, as well as how and whether they can serve as unifying tools for coalition members should be considered.

One's sense of minority status is believed to center around elements such as a history of socioeconomic and political repression, actual and perceived group discrimination, and lack of political empowerment, for example. The idea is that Black and Latino political behavior (i.e. voting in local elections) reflects the extent to which they perceive their political realities through the lens of their minority status. Black and Latino perceptions of their respective disadvantaged positions and unequal political access, for instance, could then be linked to that of the other group in a manner that fosters collaborative efforts (Garcia 2000, 266) to change their situations. These factors
are important in the sense that race and a past (and present) history of racial oppression or
discrimination can affect one's worldview (Dawson 1994). Thus, while disjointed
coalitions can form in an ad hoc fashion among groups who simply vote for a given
candidate because they all adhere to the same party or ideology and support a few of the
same issues (i.e. the Democratic Party Coalition), stronger shared core coalitions
seemingly stand a greater chance of forming and surviving when these other items are
present, but also when there is the acknowledgement and understanding of the collective
fate that these groups share, who or what is responsible for that fate, and what measures
can be taken to bring forth change in their collective circumstance.

However, self-interest has frequently proven to be a powerful element
(Carmichael and Hamilton 1967) and is believed to perform no differently with respect to
Black and Latino coalition building. So while Black and Latino experiences in New York
and in the United States generally have been largely based on differential treatment and
unequal access, which could serve as a basis for the pooling of their political resources,
competition between the two groups could surface. Competition theory suggests that
competition could arise when two or more groups struggle for the same finite objectives
(i.e. power and resources) so that success for one group is perceived to decrease the
probability that the other groups will benefit (Blalock 1967; Brewer and Brown 1998;
Eisinger 1976). What results, then, is essentially a power contest between minority
groups for the accumulation of power. In the case of New York City where Blacks have
historically held more political "clout" than Latinos and, until recently, were the largest
minority group in the city, Latinos could perceive Black political power (via the election
of a Black mayor, for example) to be less than beneficial to their needs and interests.

There is also the possibility that Blacks could perceive the same were a Latino to capture the mayor's seat.

With these aforementioned considerations in mind, this project seeks to identify and explain Black and Latino political interaction within the context of a changing urban environment in which conceptions of minority status, and to some extent, competition are expected to play important roles. To this end, the theoretical expectations and hypotheses regarding the changes in coalitional behavior and efforts between Blacks and Latinos are as follows:

**Minority Status Hypothesis**

The minority status hypothesis focuses on the common political agenda of Blacks and Latinos as socioeconomic and politically marginalized groups, the benefits that they each could gain via the election of a minority mayor, and the inherent rationality of both groups mobilizing and voting for each others' candidates. The theory centers on the discrimination (actual or perceived) and lack of political empowerment historically and currently faced by each group as both the underlying foundation affecting Black and Latino political choices and as something around which to build complimentary political agendas. The rationality in supporting each other's candidates is born of the expectation that both groups will benefit from a minority being elected to office – one who presumably understands, and will move to address the shared issues of importance in these communities. In this respect, race matters. For the mayoral elections examined in this study, the expectation is that this sense of shared interests, race, and minority status will propel Blacks and Latinos to respond to a minority candidate in a similar fashion,
with both demonstrating overwhelming support for that candidate. Conversely, it is expected that Whites will show a lesser propensity to vote for the minority candidate.

The Empowerment Hypothesis

It has been suggested that minority empowerment – specifically Black office-holding in city councils and the mayoralty – often result in both desired policy outcomes as well as psychological uplift for the Black community (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984). Therefore, Blacks gain both material benefits and a psychological boost that stems from Black representation in office. The psychological boost from Black incorporation is believed to also lead to higher levels of political activity and turnout (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Kaufmann 2000). As a social-psychological theory of group behavior, one might assume that a heightened sense of group consciousness and identity associated with the possible election of a Black candidate would make Blacks, in particular, more likely to experience the psychological boost associated with a Black candidate in the election.

The empowerment thesis is not limited to only Blacks; other minority groups would be expected to react in a similar manner. Therefore, Latinos would be expected to receive the same type of psychological boost and engage in higher levels of political activity and turnout if a Latino candidate were in the election. The question, however, is whether Blacks and Latinos experience similar levels of heightened political engagement and turnout for each other's candidates. What is the level of reciprocity between the two? Does Black empowerment enhance the political engagement and turnout of Latinos? Does Latino empowerment similarly inspire and engage Blacks? What happens to Black and Latino political engagement when there is no minority candidate running?
Where there is the presence of a Black or Latino candidate, Blacks and Latinos are expected to be equally engaged, demonstrating higher than usual turnout rates. However, a differential politicized identity will be invoked for each group that is seeking empowerment. That is, while both Blacks and Latinos will be overwhelmingly supportive of the minority candidate, Black and Latino voters are not expected to respond to the other’s potential empowerment with the same intensity. Thus, Blacks will be more likely than Latinos to support a Black candidate, while Latinos will be more likely than Blacks to support a Latino. On the other hand, when there is no minority candidate running, not only will minority political engagement and turnout decline, but coalitional activity between Blacks and Latinos will weaken, with Latinos proving to be unpredictable voters, as they are much more likely than Blacks to defect from the Democratic Party.

Retrospective Voter Theory

Retrospective voter theory assumes that individual voters rationally analyze whether to support a given candidate based on the improvement of his/her situation (financial or otherwise) over the course of the incumbent’s term. If the voter’s situation has improved, the incumbent will obtain greater support. If, however, the voter’s situation has not improved or has deteriorated, the incumbent will likely not receive support in the next election (Downs 1965; Fiorina 1981; Popkin 1991). To the extent that New Yorkers are satisfied or displeased with the performance of the incumbent, he will stand to be reelected or replaced.

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Data and Methodology

The formation of coalitions has been suggested as a possible strategy to bring about minority political incorporation and empowerment. It has been argued that because of New York City's large Black and Latino (specifically Puerto Rican) populations and their very similar histories of discrimination, socioeconomic and political deprivation, and residential proximity in many of the boroughs, there may be greater prospects for the building of political coalitions. However, in spite of the possible reasons why Blacks and Latinos should coalesce, stable long-term political alliances have not developed. This study seeks to understand why. What has been the nature of Black and Latino political coalitions in New York? What factors have either facilitated or hindered the formation of these alliances?

In an effort to answer these questions this study employs both qualitative and quantitative research strategies within the context of a single-city case study. Local electoral data, race relations surveys, mayoral election surveys, in-depth interviews with minority political and community leaders, and examination of mainstream and minority newspaper accounts are used to explore efforts at Black and Latino coalition building. Examining the 1989, 1993, 1997, and 2001 New York City mayoral elections, this dissertation identifies coalitional efforts between Blacks and Latinos by looking at voting patterns across these elections and establishing the extent to which these two groups vote together, reciprocate in supporting each other's candidates, and have the same impetus behind their electoral choices. Because of the importance of Black and Latino leadership in helping to forge (or not) minority coalitions, attention is also given to the role that they played in these elections. As a two-pronged examination of minority coalition building,
the first half of the project explores Black and Latino mass political behavior and attitudes as factors that help to structure intergroup alliances, while the second half applies the theories and facts established previously to the mayoral election case studies.

Chapter 2 empirically examines Black and Latino mass political behavior in general (partisanship, ideology, public opinion, group interests) in an effort to assess the extent to which Blacks and Latinos are politically compatible. An analysis of national electoral data and public opinion data suggest that based on a number of similarities, coalitions between Blacks and Latinos are, in fact, possible. However, I argue that those coalitions might be more or less likely to form between Blacks and certain Latino subgroups. Previous studies of Black-Latino coalitions have mainly considered the prospects of their development between Blacks and Mexican Americans in the Southwest. I submit, however, that those two groups are not the most politically compatible with respect to not only issue positions and group concerns, but also conceptions of minority status, which I argue is a critical foundation for the establishment of firm alliances. Such compatibility does, however, exist between Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans, who are most heavily concentrated in the Northeast, seem to be closer to Blacks on all dimensions than Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, or the newly arrived Central and South American groups. An exploration of the political behavior of Blacks and the three major Latino subgroups through the use of several data sets confirms this.

Based on the supposition that Blacks and Puerto Ricans share the greatest socio-political realities, the last section of Chapter 2 briefly considers the politics of Blacks and Puerto Ricans in New York and reveals a number of striking similarities, suggesting that
alliances between these two groups could very well emerge. Yet, Chapter 3 tries to make the case that in addition to the role of group interests and policy concerns as important for the establishment of coalitions, Black and Latino perceptions of race and minority status are also critical factors. Therefore, the theoretical importance of race and minority status and how they factor into African American and Puerto Rican social and political relations is considered. In short, there must be a sense of commonality or “sameness” between these two groups to help strengthen the foundation on which any alliance ultimately rests. So while Blacks and Latinos in New York may share similar socioeconomic and political interests, I argue that they must also perceive a common fate through the lens of their minority status, which can then be used to encourage collective electoral behavior.

The first section of Chapter 3 briefly examines the nature of Puerto Rican racial identity and the extent to which they view themselves as a “racial” minority. The second section of the chapter then moves to explore the extent to which both groups perceive a sense of minority status and commonality in their political circumstances in New York City. Using the 1992 Study of Intergroup Relations in New York City, this chapter suggest that while race is a complicated element within the Puerto Rican community, in some sense, Puerto Ricans seem to consider themselves a “racial” minority. Such a conception leads to an interesting parallel in Black and Puerto Rican sense of minority status, which I argue could be a partial basis upon which coalitions are developed. The last section of Chapter 3 explores the notion of Black and Latino social distance, questioning whether a sense of commonality and issue concerns are necessarily enough to establish stable Black and Latino coalitions. Noting the existence of a fair amount of Black and Hispanic social distance, this chapter nonetheless argues that it poses minimal
threat to the development of political coalitions between the two groups. Instead, what matters most for the formation of such alliances is a shared understanding of the issues and circumstances that both communities face – an understanding that partly depends on the willingness and skill of Black and Latino leadership to foster it.

The theories and analyses laid out in Chapters 1-3 help to set the stage for the subsequent chapters by highlighting some of the contextual and relational factors surrounding Black and Latino socio-political interaction. Chapters 4 through 7 present case studies of the 1989, 1993, 1997, and 2001 mayoral elections detailing the vote analysis and context of these elections while noting the types of electoral coalitions that developed at the mass level. These chapters utilize primary and general election New York Times/CBS News and Voter Research and Survey data as well as elite interviews and newspaper accounts in an effort to assess the level and degree of coalitional activity between African Americans and Puerto Ricans, and other groups during these elections.

In each chapter I explore the context surrounding the election and the nature and impact of Black and Latino alliances. Thus I analyze voter turnout and Black and Latino reciprocity in supporting each other’s candidates. How extensive was racial/ethnic bloc voting? Were there differences in the support that Blacks and Latinos (and other groups) gave to Dinkins, Giuliani, and Ferrer? What factors may have affected the candidates’ level of Black and Latino support? What were the perceptions of local government under Dinkins and Giuliani? To this end, I am interested in the extent to which shared interests and agendas were present, the role of the local political context, as well as race. What happens to Black and Latino voting alliances when there is no racial “cue” as in the 1997 and the 2001 general elections? And what was the role of Black and Latino leadership in...
attempting to forge coalitions? The main goal of these chapters is to not only explain the outcome of these elections, but also to see if various theories regarding coalition formation and inter-minority group relations can be successfully applied to New York City.

Chapter 8 offers a conclusion by way of a brief comparison of the four mayoral elections and summary of the main findings of the dissertation. In the end, the contexts of these elections differed markedly, as did the types of coalitions that developed and level of coalitional activity between Blacks and Latinos. This study shows that the strength of Black and Latino electoral alliances very much depends on the context (i.e. local political events, issues), the presence of a minority candidate in the election, as well as Black and Latino elites’ skill and effort in forging a sense of unity. Implications of this study for inter-minority relations and politics within New York City as well as the larger American political scene are also discussed.

The fact that Latinos and Blacks are unevenly incorporated in local politics, yet are dominant populations within many cities is disheartening since collaborative organization on all levels has the potential to lead to improvement of their socioeconomic and political conditions by influencing and altering local and national political contexts. In this respect, this dissertation proves significant on a number of fronts.

First, this project seeks to expand our understanding of the factors that can affect minority coalition building. Both the players and the context within which coalitions form have changed. Today’s minority or “rainbow” coalitions differ from the historical Black-White coalitions in that the latter were political relationships in which a socio-economically and politically powerless group and a relatively powerful group attempted
to join forces. In the case of minority coalitions, however, there are two (or more) relatively powerless groups seeking to join forces, oftentimes without the support of a once substantial liberal White sector. Indeed, in New York City, as in other parts of the country previously considered to be “liberal”, the liberal White sector has all but disappeared. But just because these groups are considered to be minorities, there is no guarantee that strong alliances will form and maintain themselves based on that status. Nonetheless, given the trend of increasing minority populations in many American cities that is certain to continue in the future, the issue of minority political interaction deserves greater consideration. And while this study of New York City may not be completely generalizable, it provides insight into some of the issues that minority leaders might consider in their attempt to build alliances.

Second, this dissertation can provide thought for future work on intra-group coalition building between Black Americans and Caribbean-born Blacks and the various Latino subgroups. In New York and other places that have substantial populations of native Blacks and Latinos and newly arrived foreign-born Blacks and Latinos, the ways in which they perceive their “commonalities” could prove instructive for scholars who are interested in the socio-cultural elements that are used to politically mobilize groups. For instance, what will happen in future New York City elections as the native Black population stabilizes and the Caribbean and African foreign-born populations increase? Can race and one’s “Blackness” be used as a mobilizing force? And as the Puerto Rican population in New York continues to decline, while that of the Dominicans and Central and South Americans increases, what strategy will be used to bond these Latino groups together? How will Latino politics in New York and similarly situated cities change as a
result? These are important questions for the study of not only minority and urban politics, but for the study of Americans politics in general.

CHAPTER 1 NOTES

1 Throughout this study, the racial terms Black and African American will be used interchangeably as will Latino and Hispanic. When reference is made to specific subgroups from these populations, their ethnic names will be used (i.e. West Indian, Puerto Rican, Dominican).

2 Blacks and Latinos have worked together to elect other notable figures such as Representative Nydia Velazquez and Councilmember Felix Ortiz. Yet these successes in electoral alliance building have not been sustained or institutionalized within these communities in a way that has resulted in permanent political empowerment (Sales and Bush 2000).

3 Browning, Marshall, and Tabb (1984) do talk about the importance of race as a unifying and mobilizing factor for Blacks. When discussing Latinos, however, caution must be taken as the various Latino subgroups have all had different histories and experiences here in the U.S. — some more favorable than others with respect to the amount of discrimination and oppression experienced or still being experienced and whether one is a U.S.-born Latino or an immigrant. These things, in addition to how race and minority status are conceived in their respective countries, make it unclear as to whether race/ethnicity inhibits minority coalition building (by leading to insularity) or enhances it (by highlighting the salience of shared historical patterns of discrimination based on race/ethnicity). It should be noted that these same issues regarding the strength of race is also being visited upon Blacks — particularly in places like New York and Florida where there are significant populations of native African-Americans and Blacks from other parts of the world such as West Indies, Haiti, Africa etc. (Falcon 1988).
CHAPTER 2

THE ELEMENTS OF A BLACK-LATINO COALITION

Given the similarities in the socioeconomic and political positioning of Blacks and Latinos in this country, we might expect these similarities to provide a partial basis on which minority coalitions could form. As briefly discussed in Chapter 1, for example, both groups disproportionately suffer from lower income levels and higher levels of poverty and unemployment. However, shared socioeconomic status alone is not enough to guarantee purposive Black and Latino coalitions. The likelihood and feasibility of such coalitions will also depend on the existence of common interests and other political variables.

Coalition building theorists such as Sonenshein (1997), Watts (1996), Mollenkopf (1997), and Browning, Marshall, and Tabb (1984) all suggest that some combination of interests, ideology, and shared political goals are important in terms of building successful coalitions. That the common political interests of groups oftentimes manifest themselves through the expression of a similar ideological, partisan identity, and ultimately vote choice makes the claim or notion of a Black-Latino coalition that much more appealing, especially given their voting behavior in national elections. But do Blacks and Latinos share enough of the requisites for successful coalition building as outlined by minority politics scholars to sustain political alliances beyond national
elections? What lies beneath the surface of the apparent similarities in Black and Latino political behavior that might complicate the formation of stable alliances at the local level?

This chapter provides a descriptive account of Black and Latino political behavior and the similarities and differences that exist between these two groups. Within this description, the chapter considers Black and Latino respective group (and sub-group) interests as well as their partisan and ideological leanings. The first section of the chapter discusses the political behavior of Blacks, followed by a discussion of Latino political behavior in the second section. Each section explores the political ideology, party identification, group interests and policy preferences of these two groups. While there may be an intuitive and logical basis on which to believe that Blacks and Latinos can form stable alliances, I argue that it is African-Americans and Puerto Ricans specifically that hold the greatest prospect for successful coalition building efforts. The last section of the chapter considers the political behavior of New York’s Black and Puerto Rican communities and finds considerable evidence of similarities, which could provide the foundation for a successful minority group coalition in New York.

**Black Political Behavior**

The political behavior of Blacks has been described mostly as both “liberal” and “Democratic” in reference to this group’s ideological and partisan leanings. On the whole, this is not an entirely accurate portrayal of Black political behavior, as it obscures the variation that is to be found within this group, especially in more recent times.

To understand the political behavior of Blacks, one must accept that the Black political experience, both historically and presently, emanates from the politics of race.
Black public opinion and partisanship both arise in part from the socioeconomic conditions within the Black community. As noted in Chapter 1, Blacks tend to suffer disproportionately from things like higher levels of poverty, unemployment, and poor educational systems as a result of centuries of racial segregation and inequality visited upon this group. Therefore, Blacks’ views on American politics have been greatly affected in that historical and present socioeconomic conditions have produced a group awareness of their shared interests, which in turn fosters a coordinated political behavior in pursuit of common goals (Dawson 1994; Walton 1985, 1994). This stance or “world view” grounded in a politics of race is what makes this group somewhat distinct from others in practically all facets of political behavior. A brief overview of Black public opinion will serve to demonstrate this point.

Even though Blacks are not monolithic, there does seem to be an identifiable Black political agenda around which this group mobilizes (Dawson 1994; Swain 1995; Tate 1993; Walters 1988). What seems to stand out most apparently is the high level of agreement within the Black community with respect to the primary problems facing the group and the role that the government should play in addressing those problems.

Typically, Blacks’ political interests fall into the categories of civil rights/race-conscious policy programs and social welfare policy (Elder 1999; Tate 1993). Civil rights/race-conscious programming continues to be of concern mainly because of the widespread perception that discrimination in the areas of employment and housing, for example, are still a bitter reality for many Blacks, which in many cases, has negatively impacted their opportunities for social and economic advancement. For these reasons, Blacks continue to support federal enforcement of civil rights laws and affirmative action.
programs. African Americans' support for federally supported social welfare policies, or those programs that provide a safety net for poorer citizens, continues as well. And this makes sense given that these programs are supposed to rectify the socioeconomic disparities between the rich and poor, the latter category of which a disproportionate number of Blacks comprise. Given the continuing socioeconomic divide between Whites and Blacks in terms of unemployment, poverty, wealth, health care, infant mortality etc., continued African American support for social welfare seems reasonable.

Various aspects of civil rights, race-conscious, and social welfare programming are central to what might be called a "Black agenda." Prior to, and throughout, the Civil Rights Era, African American mobilization centered mainly on the realization of integration, political inclusion and racial equality (Morris 1984; Smith 1996; Tate 1993). And while tremendous headway has been made in these areas during the post-Civil Rights era, racial discrimination and Black socioeconomic inequality are still viewed as major problems within the Black community. Thus, the African American agenda continues to center itself around an activist federal government in helping to combat discrimination and inequality.

Recent surveys indicate that Blacks not only perceive a vastly unequal socioeconomic standing between themselves and Whites, but they also continue to view discrimination as a problem that the government has a duty to address. According to a recent national race relations survey sponsored by The Washington Post, The Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University (2001), 74% of Blacks believe that they have less opportunities in life than Whites. Moreover, significant majorities of the Black respondents feel that African Americans are worse off than Whites in terms of income
(73%), access to health care (61%), education (59%) and jobs (67%). When asked in this same survey whether the federal government has a responsibility to ensure minority equality in these areas, as Table 2.1 shows, a significant majority of African Americans said yes to a greater extent than Whites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Health care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.1 It Is the Responsibility of the Federal Government to Make Sure that Minorities Have Equality with Whites

When asked whether Blacks would ever achieve full social and economic equality, the 1984 National Black Election Study (NBES) reveals that 36% said never (Tate 1993, 24). The 1996 NBES, however, shows that number increasing to a full 48% who believe that Blacks will never achieve equality. A large part of the story demonstrated in these figures has to do with the perception on the part of African Americans that racial inequality and discrimination are both simultaneously persistent and harmful to their life chances. According to the 1984 NBES, 85% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that discrimination against Blacks is no longer a problem.
(Tate 1993, 24), while the 1996 NBES reveals a startling 67% who feel that not much progress has been made over the last 20 years in terms of ending racial discrimination.

Given that “racial inequality and racial discrimination remain central concerns of many Blacks today” (Tate 1993, 46), it is therefore of little surprise that many African Americans continue to support race-conscious initiatives like affirmative action, even while the debate surrounding its necessity and impact continue unabated within the larger society. Survey data suggest that African Americans continue their relatively high levels of support for race-conscious policies of all kinds. According to the 1996 NBES, for example, 55% of the respondents believe that because of past discrimination, minorities should be given special consideration when hiring decisions are made, compared with 40% who disagree. And while the number of Blacks agreeing with affirmative action programs admittedly seems to have declined, a majority of Blacks – compared to a significant minority of Whites – still seem to believe in the need for such policies (see Figure 2.1).
Because of a socioeconomic agenda that tends to center on an activist federal government in addressing the needs of African Americans, as a group, they are considered to be ideologically liberal. However, to portray African Americans as across-the-board liberal would be inaccurate because as Tate (1993) and others have found, the degree of liberalism and conservatism that Blacks exhibit very much depends upon which types of issues are being discussed. As demonstrated above, for example, Blacks’ policy preferences are fairly liberal across a variety of socioeconomic issues dealing with civil rights, race-conscious, and social welfare policy. However, Blacks tend to be rather conservative on a number of social issues such as abortion and homosexuality where their views practically mirror those of Whites. For example, the Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University Race and Ethnicity Survey conducted in 2001
found majorities of Blacks and Whites opposed to same sex marriages (67% and 64% respectively) and opposed to abortion (56% and 57% respectively). Thus, Blacks' ideological stance taken as a whole cannot be viewed as entirely liberal. As Table 2.2 shows, Blacks tend to span the ideological spectrum with the number of Blacks self-identifying as liberal, moderate, and conservative varying over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/Haven't thought about much</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The NES 1980-2000 data are from the National Election Study; the NBES 1984 and 1996 data are from the National Black Election Study, Pre-election.

Table 2.2 Black Ideological Identification (%)

The general pattern demonstrated by the NES data suggests that not only have the number of those identifying as liberal decreased, but there seems to have been a noticeable increase in the number of Blacks who self-identify as moderates since 1980, with the number of those identifying as liberal and conservative now falling below self-identified moderates – a trend that appears to have remained fairly constant overtime.¹

The NBES data seems to show a similar pattern. Tate (1993) notes that while African Americans’ policy positions concerning race-specific and civil rights programs

³⁸
became more liberal during the 1960s and 1970s, their political orientations became more conservative, with those identifying themselves as conservative more than doubling between 1974 (12%) and 1980 (30%) (Tate 1993, 29-30). In fact, the 1984 NBES (Table 2.2) shows the number of Blacks self-identifying as conservatives at a much higher rate of almost 42%. This increase in Blacks identifying themselves as conservatives comes with a simultaneous decrease in the number identifying themselves as liberals (in 1974, for example, that number was at 60% (Tate 1993, 30)). According to the 1996 NBES data, however, an interesting trend in Black ideological identification emerges: the number of Black liberals and conservatives decreased substantially while the number of those identifying themselves as moderate increased considerably. In 1984, the number of Blacks identifying as moderate was a mere 7%, yet by 1996 that number had risen to 35%. This trend is not too surprising when considered within the larger context of shifts in American ideology.²

Since the 1970s, the country’s “ideological mood” has become more conservative, with the number of Americans identifying as conservative far outnumbering those considering themselves to be liberal (Erikson and Tedin 2001, 99). To some degree, “the sudden shift toward conservatism reflects an increased public concern about issues on which people saw themselves as conservative (e.g., law and order issues) and less public concern about issues on which people saw themselves as liberal (e.g., New Deal social welfare [and race] issues)” (Erikson and Tedin 2001, 100). This could also be a factor affecting the trend in Black ideological identification as well. The conservatism that Blacks tend to exhibit, however, is in the areas of homosexuality and abortion, which is probably a deeper reflection of this group’s religiosity more than anything else.
Moreover, the declining liberalism in the areas of social welfare and race policy apparent within the larger public has not been demonstrated to the same degree within African American public opinion. So while more recent surveys may indicate that African Americans span the ideological spectrum and fall into no particular category as a majority, it is probably safe to say that regardless of what polls show with respect to ideological self-identification, Blacks do form an identifiable ideological group on most socioeconomic issues – one that espouses a more liberal than conservative stance.3

African Americans' relative liberalism and cohesion, at least with respect to socioeconomic issues, transfers into other aspects of their political behavior as well. As will be discussed throughout the rest of this section, Blacks' ideological liberalism and electoral behavior can be tied directly to both their experience as a subordinate group in this country as well as the historical development of their relationship with the two major political parties. Without a doubt, the legacy of slavery as a state-sanctioned institution which advocated Black segregation and inequality, as well as the struggle to secure their civil and political rights have distinguished Blacks in a powerful way. As a result of the institution of slavery, Blacks were left with a particular type of economic, educational, and social disadvantage that greatly impacted their opportunities for social, economic, and political mobility. The unique history of slavery, then, coupled with historical and current memories of group-based socioeconomic discrimination, has fostered a remarkably high level of group identity or racial consciousness among Blacks. And while this chapter does not allow for a complete review of the complex political history
of Blacks in this country, a bit of that history must be told so that Blacks’ ideological and partisan identification can be understood and placed into perspective relative to other groups.

The African American political worldview, which is often concerned with how to satisfy collective group interests by ending Blacks oppression in this country, has greatly affected African Americans’ orientation toward not only the certain policy initiatives, but also the political parties under which policies are initiated. On this basis, political support by Blacks has been given and withheld based on the extent to which the parties and the policies that they champion were perceived as advancing or compromising Blacks liberation (Dawson 1994). Slavery and Black citizenship were the dominant and heavily debated political issues of the 1850s. The Republican Party, which began in 1854, emerged as one dedicated to the abolition of slavery (Berman and Murphy 1996, 339) and thus attracted the support of Blacks. Many Blacks were heavily involved in the Republican Party organization, with many serving as state legislators and members of Congress during the Reconstruction period.

The Republican Party’s association with abolition, Reconstruction, and to a lesser degree, the symbolic racial progressivism of the early Theodore Roosevelt administration, helped to solidify Black support for the Republican Party in the period following the Civil War. The Party’s efforts to move in a more progressive direction via the introduction and passage of critical legislation such as the 1866 Civil Rights Act, which provided Blacks protection from discriminatory legislation by state governments, and the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, which outlawed slavery and gave freed slaves citizenship, voting rights, and equal protection under the law, serve as critical examples.
of what tied African Americans to the Republican Party, resulting in them providing overwhelming support to the Republicans (Walters 1988, 8).

Black endorsement of the Republican Party would not last, however, as dissatisfaction increased after the Compromise of 1877 in which Rutherford B. Hayes promised to remove federal troops from the South, troops that had been sent there to ensure Black freedom and safety. The Compromise would essentially remove federal oversight and allow the former Confederate states to deal with the “race problem” in their own way. What this demonstrated to Blacks was the Republican Party’s disregard for their welfare and complete acquiescence to injustice, as they moved to slowly push Blacks out of the Party, subsequently weakening its commitment to racial equality (Carmines and Stimson 1989, 31; Walters 1988, 7). There was, however, no other partisan option, as Blacks’ relationship with the Democratic Party was even worse.

White Southern Democrats who controlled state government after Reconstruction worked excessively to strip Blacks of their civil and political rights by instituting a number of disenfranchisement techniques such as the Grandfather Clause, poll taxes, and the use of violence and intimidation. Moreover, a wide range of Jim Crow laws were implemented by Southern Democrats, which institutionalized racial segregation in all spheres of public life, thereby relegating African Americans to second-class status. Unfortunately, this left Blacks in a conundrum given the Republicans Party’s failure or reluctance to uphold its previous promises of racial equality and the Democratic Party’s engagement in racially oppressive actions. For the few Blacks still able to engage in political activity, they had no choice but to remain loyal to the lesser of two evils.
Given such blatant and hostile treatment by the two major parties, it was no longer clear which party could be counted on to best serve Blacks' interests. Both major parties continued to disassociate themselves from Blacks following the World War I period. Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover all attempted to attract more White Southerners to the Party while distancing the Party from Blacks and their concerns (Dawson 1994). For instance, Hoover endorsed the idea of a Lily-white Republican Party and Hoover abolished the Negro division of the Party and nominated a Southern Supreme Court judge known to support the disenfranchisement of Blacks. The abandonment of Black Republicans by that party, along with the economic policies of the New Deal, laid the foundation for a Black exodus to the Democratic Party during the Depression years.

Because of their lower socioeconomic status, northern Blacks were very attracted to the National Democratic Party's New Deal welfare policies. And as more Southern Blacks migrated to the North, they found that the Democrats welcomed them to register and vote. However, the realignment of Blacks to the Democratic Party would not happen overnight, but rather gradually. This was mainly due to Franklin D. Roosevelt's less than gleaming record on Civil Rights. Carmines and Stimson (1989) talk about the 150 Civil Rights bills that were introduced into Congress between 1937-1946 and how not one of them passed, mainly because of FDR's unwillingness to take public positions in favor of the legislation or to do anything to encourage their passage. Consequently, Blacks' movement to the Democratic Party was slow, with many Blacks continuing to give lukewarm support to the Party of Lincoln.

The 1952, 1956, and 1960 presidential elections would find a Black electorate deeply torn between the two major parties (Walters 1988, 28). However, the presidential
election of 1964 would mark an important period in the partisan identification and voting behavior of African Americans, where an overwhelming number of them began to identify themselves as Democrats. By this time, upwards of 80% of Blacks were identifying with the Democratic Party (Tate 1993, 52). The increase in Democratic support in the 1964 election was largely due to the new racial liberalism of the party as evidenced by the enactment of Civil Rights legislation during the Kennedy-Johnson administration. In response to the Civil Rights Movement and the widespread racial violence, marches, and boycotts, Kennedy pledged to support Civil Rights legislation. His successor Lyndon B. Johnson would eventually sign into law the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which mandated school desegregation, the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1968 Civil Rights Act, which prohibited housing discrimination. Johnson would also initiate the War on Poverty, which was a set of federal programs aimed at creating new social services that would greatly benefit poor Blacks.

It should be noted, however, that the shift in the perception of the Democratic Party as one moving from being racially conservative to racially liberal was seemingly more strategic than anything else. As Carmines and Stimson (1989) suggest, by World War II Southern Blacks had migrated to the North in large numbers, which meant that Northern Democrats – especially those in large urban areas – had to depend on Black votes which meant that Democratic politicians had to court the Black electorate. Also a factor in solidifying the perception of the two major parties as being racially liberal or conservative was Senator Barry Goldwater who turned race into a pivotal issue during the 1964 presidential election by effectively painting the Democrats as pro-civil rights and the Republicans as anti-civil rights. The public, who until 1964 had seen no real
differences between the parties on racial issues, now recognized the Democratic Party as the more racially liberal party because of its response to civil rights demands (Carmines and Stimson 1989). Thus, with major differences readily identifiable between the parties on civil rights and racial issues emerging during the Civil Rights era, Blacks (and Whites) increasingly came to view the Democratic Party as "pro-Black" and the Republican Party as "anti-Black" (Tate 1993, 56). Tate (1993) notes that Black Democratic identification and voting in presidential elections was constant with figures at or above 80% throughout the 1970s and 1980s (60). As Table 2.3 shows, Blacks continue to overwhelmingly self-identify and support the Democratic Party even today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Partisan Identification *</th>
<th>Black Presidential Vote Choice*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Apolitical</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.3  Black Partisan Identification and Presidential Voting

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The 1984 and 1996 NBES both indicate a majority of African Americans self-identifying as Democrats and that identification carried over into their voting behavior during the 1980s and 1990s. A recent Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies poll, however, shows the number of self-identified Black Democrats to be decreasing with the number of those identifying as Independents increasing somewhat (1999). To no surprise, the number of self-identified Republicans remains low. Thus, even in an era of supposedly weakened political parties, split-ticket voting, and increasing political independence on the part of the larger American electorate, African Americans are still demonstrating a preference for the Democratic Party.

The 2000 presidential election is probably the clearest example of that preference when Blacks gave the Democratic candidate Al Gore 90% of their vote. The overwhelming support shown to Al Gore probably had less to do with an undying love for either him or the Democratic Party than with their displeasure with George W. Bush and the Republican Party. A 2000 poll conducted by the Black America Political Action Committee found that a majority of Blacks continue to feel ignored by the GOP and believe the Democratic Party is better equipped (or at least willing) to address their needs. However, Katherine Tate (1995) has argued that Blacks’ allegiance to the Democratic Party, and thus the candidates that it promotes, is one of structural dependence rather than a great love for the Party itself, since Blacks have indicated a growing dissatisfaction with the Democrats based on the perception that even though they comprise a critical part of the Democratic coalition, Blacks themselves as well as their votes are being taken for granted.
African American support for the Democratic Party will likely remain high, even if not to the degree of past decades. On the whole, the Democratic Party has remained relatively supportive of African American interests, though some Blacks may question that assertion given the seemingly minimal attention given to obstacles that Blacks and other minorities continue to face. The Party’s platform can be said to speak to a very generalizable mission of non-toleration of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability and religion, and support of the Equal Rights Amendment, voting rights for minorities and affirmative action (Elder 1999, 106). President Clinton’s appearance of supportive action in these areas throughout the 1990s, however, is what has probably helped to sustain much of the Black support given to the Democratic Party.

**Latino Political Behavior**

Despite their long history in this country, Latinos have only recently become a major focus of scholarly analysis. Prior to the introduction of Latino politics scholarship a little over a decade ago, it was difficult to discuss and make inferences about the very basics of Latino political behavior, in part because the available data tended to homogenize all of the Latino national origin groups into one, thereby drastically overlooking the political heterogeneity within the Hispanic population (DeSipio 1996, 28-29). However, we now know that there tends to be great variation in the partisanship, ideological leanings, and issue preferences of Latinos. This becomes clear when we are able to disaggregate the major Latino subgroups and consider them as separate entities. We also know that there are differences in the political behavior between Latinos and African Americans. For example, it has been found that Latinos as a whole, while more
Democratic than not, do not hold the same strength of Democratic allegiance as do Blacks; they are more likely to defect from the Democratic Party in any given election (Desipio, de la Garza, and Setzler 1999). Yet, because Blacks and Latinos fall into the categories of racial and ethnic minorities, they are oftentimes believed to be “liberal” and to be parallel in their partisan leanings (McClain and Stewart 1998). As this section of the chapter shows, however, caution must be exercised when attempting to classify groups – especially when discussing a group as complex and varied as Latinos.

With respect to the political ideology of Latinos, Rodney Hero (1992) notes that the terms liberal and conservative do not resonate well with this group, nor do they accurately reflect the attitudes of the various Latinos subgroups. Several studies from the 1970s and 1980s, for example, found mixed results with respect to Latino ideological leanings. Some of those studies have found that Hispanics are more likely to identify themselves as more conservative than liberal, while others have found that an overwhelmingly large number of Hispanics identify as moderate. Still other studies have found that Latinos are equally divided between liberal and conservative identities (see Hero 1992, 65).

More recent studies throughout the 1990s have seemingly come to more consistent conclusions, thanks in large part to a sufficiently large data set of Latino attitudes and opinions (The Latino National Political Survey, 1990), which had been lacking in years previous. Studies from the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) reveal what seems to be evident from the inconsistencies found in earlier studies: Latinos are ideologically split, and to a much greater degree than African Americans and even
Anglos (Hero 1992). However, on the whole, Latinos do seem to be more moderately conservative than liberal as shown in Tables 2.4 and 2.5, though there is variation among the different Latino subgroups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>All Latinos</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Cuban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>27.6% (482)</td>
<td>28.6% (247)</td>
<td>28.4% (164)</td>
<td>23% (71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>29.6% (516)</td>
<td>35.4% (305)</td>
<td>24.6% (142)</td>
<td>22.5% (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>42.8% (747)</td>
<td>36% (268)</td>
<td>47% (268)</td>
<td>54.5% (168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 (1745)</td>
<td>100 (863)</td>
<td>100 (574)</td>
<td>100 (308)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latino National Political Study, 1990; de la Garza, 1992

**TABLE 2.4 Latino Ideological Identification, 1990**
Table 2.4 shows that in 1990 a greater number of Latinos as a group identified themselves as conservative, followed by moderate then liberal. The greater tendency for Latinos to identify as conservative or moderate continues as Table 2.5 indicates. However, the number of those self-identifying as moderate seems to have increased somewhat. One pattern is clear: as a group, Latinos do not overwhelmingly identify as liberal. But are all Latinos equally conservative? A brief look at which subgroups within the Latino community identify as conservative or liberal suggests that the answer is no.4

As both tables show, regardless of national origin, Latinos are more likely to describe themselves as conservative than as liberal. If we follow the standard socioeconomic model of political behavior, which assumes that a higher socioeconomic status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>All Latinos</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Cuban</th>
<th>Central/ South American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>26% (531)</td>
<td>24% (196)</td>
<td>29% (93)</td>
<td>41% (128)</td>
<td>26% (154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>34% (694)</td>
<td>36% (295)</td>
<td>22% (68)</td>
<td>29% (90)</td>
<td>34% (202)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>34% (694)</td>
<td>35% (286)</td>
<td>37% (119)</td>
<td>24% (75)</td>
<td>30% (178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/DK</td>
<td>6% (122)</td>
<td>5% (41)</td>
<td>12% (38)</td>
<td>6% (19)</td>
<td>10% (59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 (2041)</td>
<td>100 (818)</td>
<td>100 (318)</td>
<td>100 (312)</td>
<td>100 (593)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 2.5 Latino Ideological Identification, 1999
correlates with a more conservative ideology, then Cuban Americans seem to fit that pattern particularly well according to the 1990 data. The survey from 1999, however, shows a different pattern with respect to Cuban American ideology with a larger number identifying themselves as liberal than as conservative. As a matter of fact, the number of self-identified moderates slightly outnumbers conservatives. Upon first thought, this finding may seem contrary to Cuban American politics, but as will be pointed out in the discussion of partisanship and group agendas below, Cuban Americans are actually more liberal than conservative in many of their policy preferences.

Both tables also indicate greater variation in Mexican American ideology with fairly large numbers self-identifying as liberal, moderate, and conservative. This holds true in 1990 as well as in 1999. The surprise comes mostly from the Puerto Rican population, which seems much more likely than Mexican Americans in both surveys and Cubans and Central/South Americans in 1999 to identify as conservative. Overall then, it appears that Mexican Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Central/South Americans (in the case of 1999), form no clear majorities in any given ideological camp. Rather, these groups are, at best, more likely to fall toward the conservative end of the spectrum, especially in 1990. The pattern still holds in 1999, though many of them now seem almost equally as likely to consider themselves moderate as conservative. Even the level of Puerto Rican conservative identity seems to have tempered itself by 1999. How can we account for the relatively moderate to conservative ideological leanings within the Hispanic community and how does it resonate with their partisanship and issue preferences?
What has consistently been shown in a number of studies in which Latinos have been surveyed is that, despite regional and ethnic differences, Latinos demonstrate a striking similarity on some key issues. And regardless of their self-identified ideological label, large majorities of all three groups support what could be characterized as core elements of a liberal domestic agenda inclusive of an active federal government, affirmative action, and bilingual education (de la Garza 1992; DeSipio 1996; Garcia 1997).

To a large extent, Latino ideology and partisanship stem from not only their experiences here in the U.S., but also from a concern about homeland politics (DeSipio 1996; Hero 1992), which makes them both similar to, yet different from African Americans. Like African Americans, domestic politics with an overwhelming focus on civil rights/discrimination and social welfare, form the core of their politics. But a significant part of what mobilizes Latinos, especially Cubans and arguably Puerto Ricans, is what is happening back on their respective islands (unlike Blacks whose agenda tends to be mainly domestic). And so while there may not be a readily identifiable issue agenda among Latinos that is as cohesive as that of African Americans, partly due to differences in national-origin homeland politics, there are a set of domestic political issues that tend to unite and mobilize Hispanics here in the U.S., including civil rights/discrimination, preservation of the Spanish language, immigration, and social welfare policy (Elder 1999).

Despite moderately conservative ideologies, as within the African American community, the policy concerns of the Latino community center on social issues and an increased role for government in domestic policy (DeSipio 1996, 50). And while some of
their policy positions do tend to reflect a certain level of conservatism, as in the issue areas of abortion, homosexuality, and capital punishment, these issues cannot be said to undermine what basically amounts to a relatively liberal attitude toward the role and scope of government (DeSipio 1996). With few notable exceptions, the issues identified and the positions taken on those issues place Hispanics under the rubric of a progressive, Great Society-type social agenda (DeSipio 1996, 50). For instance, a majority of Latinos believe that federal spending should be increased, even if it necessitates an increase in taxes, with Puerto Ricans being more supportive of spending than both Mexicans and Cubans (de la Garza et al. 1992, 89).

When asked to identify the most important problems facing the nation in the LNPS, Latinos were likely to note issues of crime and the economy and when asked to identify the most important problems facing Latinos in this country, respondents most frequently gave a social issue such as crime, discrimination, or employment (de la Garza 1992, 88). More recent data duplicate these findings. The Public Broadcasting Latino Poll 2000, which surveyed 1000 Latinos in the key states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois before the November presidential election, again shows that Latinos as a group identified many of the same issues of concern. For example, the top five problems listed as facing Latinos in this country were racism/discrimination, education, jobs/employment, immigration, and English-language barriers. Of low salience, however, were the “moral issues” on which they demonstrate a higher level of conservatism.

Protection of civil and voting rights also continues to be of central concern to Hispanics. While it is true that they never endured slavery here in the United States,
Latinos, like African Americans, have experienced discrimination in education, employment, housing, and voting. Because many Latinos are visibly of color due to their African and Indian ancestry, there has also been race-based discrimination perpetrated against members of the Hispanic community. And because many Americans cannot tell who among the Hispanic population is a legal resident versus those who are not, many Latinos have been subject to and experienced anti-immigrant sentiment. Therefore, like African Americans, the common experience with discrimination and prejudice in the U.S. forms the basis for many of this group’s opinions and attitudes and public policy agenda. For example, the LNPS found that over 80% of Hispanics believe that they as a group face “a lot” or “some” discrimination in the U.S. (de la Garza et al. 1992). The Washington Post/ Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University National Survey on Latinos in America (1999) also found a majority of Hispanics (82%) believing that they as a group face “a lot” or “some” discrimination, with majorities in each Latino subgroup agreeing that discrimination against Latinos is a problem today.5

A policy area in which Hispanics have felt substantial bias, and which remains very important to the community, is that of language. Not only does the Spanish language serve as a cultural and symbolic connector to the various Hispanic ancestries, given that more than 40% of the U.S. Hispanic population is foreign born, Spanish also serves as the dominant language for many Latinos here in the U.S. (Garcia 1997; Schmidt 1997). Even among Latinos who use English as their dominant language, Spanish still serves as an important cultural link.

Given the anti-immigrant and English Only sentiment expressed throughout the 1990s, the Latino community has been politically mobilized around both the issues of

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language and immigration. In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of states passed Official English statutes, and while surveys conducted in those states reveal widespread support for them among the public in practically every demographic group, Latinos were the notable exception. While a majority of the Anglo respondents in the LNPS (1990) overwhelmingly favored linguistic assimilation, or an “English Only” educational approach (Schmidt 1997, 359), majorities within each Hispanic national origin group (at least 80%) opposed efforts to make English the official language, even though an overwhelming majority placed a great deal of importance on learning English (de la Garza 1992, 96).

In the area of immigration, one will also find differences in the opinions of Hispanics and non-Hispanics. While it appears that Hispanics share some of the general concerns that many Americans have about immigration, they nonetheless show a greater propensity than non-Hispanics to mobilize around this issue. And with good reason. For one, many Latinos have had direct/indirect experience with immigration laws, given that over the last three decades Latin Americans have accounted for the largest share of immigrants to this country (DeSipio 1996). Thus, Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanics to not only have recent immigrant ancestors, but also be the subject of anti-immigration sentiment and discrimination. More so than non-Hispanics, Hispanic Americans are more opposed to initiatives which would exclude legal and illegal immigrants from government benefits. Probably one of the greatest areas of division in opinion can be seen with the issue of California’s Proposition 187 where vast differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic support emerged. For instance, while the initiative aimed at curbing undocumented immigration into the state by denying undocumented
immigrants and their children access to public services such as health care, schools, and welfare was favored overwhelmingly by non-Hispanic Whites (64%), it was overwhelmingly rejected by Hispanics (72%) (Pachon 1999).6

Aside from an agenda focusing on language and immigration, socioeconomic concerns are equally as important to the Hispanic community. Socioeconomic data indicate that Latinos are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the United States. On almost every measure of socioeconomic well being, Latinos, like African Americans, lag farther behind non-Hispanic Whites. For instance, in 1998 the median income of White households was more than twice that of Black and Latino households, though some variation among the Latino subgroups exists, with Cuban American income levels approximating those of non-Hispanic Whites and Puerto Ricans faring the worst. Latino poverty and educational attainment rates have been found to lag far behind non-Hispanic Whites as well. Given these circumstances, it may not be surprising to find that Latinos of all national origins are very much in favor of increased government spending in the area of domestic policy, specifically in the areas of education, health care, child services, crime and drugs (de la Garza 1992). The Race and Ethnicity Poll 2000 (Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University) found that, like African Americans, a majority of Latinos (though to a lesser degree than Blacks) believed that Latinos are worse off than Whites in the areas of income (60%), access to health care (52%), education (51%), and jobs (61%).

As a general rule, Hispanics tend to see government as the proper vehicle to address the national and community problems noted by this group. There is variation, however, among the Latino subgroups with respect to who would be more supportive of
an expanded role for government in domestic policy. For example, the LNPS shows that Puerto Ricans are more likely than Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans to call for an expanded role for government (though all groups were in favor of government activism) (DeSipio 1996, 52). Puerto Ricans were also more likely to advocate increased spending for public assistance and welfare. The National Survey of Latinos in America (1999) also found a majority of Latinos favoring a larger government that provides services and agreed that the government should improve the standard of living for Americans.

The experiences of Latinos as a group in this country, like African Americans, have helped to shape their perceptions and opinions on a number of key issues. And while there is variation among the three major subgroups in terms of the degree to which they may favor or oppose a given policy, all three follow a similar pattern in their political behavior. Therefore, despite what appears to be a greater likelihood of Hispanics to describe themselves as conservative or even moderate, their policy concerns focus most on social issues and a positive role for the government in domestic policies. These key areas form the core of their respective and collective agendas around which their mobilization occurs, and what has, in part, shaped their partisan identity and voting behavior.

Overall, it appears that Latinos are more Democratic leaning than Republican leaning in their partisanship; however, the strength of that identity does not equal that of African Americans (Hero 1992; McClain and Stewart 1998). As has generally been the case Puerto Ricans and to a lesser degree, Mexicans, tend to vote overwhelmingly Democratic, while a majority of the Cuban population shows support for the Republican
Party. But because Cubans comprise such a small proportion of the Hispanic community in the U.S., in the aggregate, Hispanics appear to be more Democratic than Republican.

Tables 2.6 and 2.7 both show Latino self-identified partisanship in 1990 and 1999 respectively and each table disaggregates Latino partisanship by ethnic group so as to provide a clearer picture of who within the Latino community identifies as Democratic and Republican. Data from the LNPS (1990) reveals roughly two-thirds of Mexicans identifying as Democratic and 71% of Puerto Ricans identifying as such. Given Puerto Ricans' greater likelihood to self-identify as conservative, one might expect a greater partisan affiliation with the Republican Party upon first thought. Yet Puerto Rican partisanship (and to some extent Mexican partisanship) is likely the result of their socioeconomic status and the major parties' positions on key domestic policy issues. Cubans depart significantly from this pattern in that while they also exhibit moderately conservative ideologies while expressing moderately liberal social policy views, they tend to show a much greater likelihood of supporting the Republican Party.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partisan Identification</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Cuban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent/Other</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(811)</td>
<td>(550)</td>
<td>(309)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latino National Political Survey, 1990; de la Garza, 1992

TABLE 2.6 Latino Partisan Identification, 1990

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The LNPS (1990) shows that Cubans indicate a partisan preference for the Republican Party at a rate of close to 70%. However, it should be noted that it is Cubans in the Miami, Florida area that are driving the higher levels of Republican partisanship, since those who reside outside of south Florida are more likely to be Democratic than Republican. Moreover, Cuban identification with the Republican Party stems, not from agreement on domestic social policy, but rather from foreign policy concerns, as the U.S. Cuban community is highly mobilized around their opposition to communism and Fidel Castro. And because U.S. relations with Cuba have historically formed such a large part of their political agenda, Cuban American partisanship and voting behavior sharply diverges from that of other Latino groups – even while a majority demonstrate support for increased government spending on health care, crime, education and bilingual education, or those issues that could be considered key components of a liberal domestic agenda (de la Garza 1992).

More recent data on Latino self-identified partisanship reveals a rather interesting trend. Table 2.7 shows Latino partisan identification in 1999 with some notable changes. Perhaps most intriguing is the fact that Mexican American and Puerto Rican Democratic identification has substantially declined to a bare majority in the case of Puerto Ricans and to a minority in the case of Mexican Americans. Cuban identification as Republican has also decreased substantially to a minority. Interestingly enough, the decline in partisan identification has seemingly been replaced by a significant increase in the number of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans claiming Independence. The number of Central and South Americans claiming Independent identification is also quite significant.7
The apparent trend in declining partisan identification can also be seen in Latino vote choice over time. Table 2.8 shows the presidential vote choice for Latinos as a group since 1988. As the self-identified partisan affiliations shown above predict, Latinos in the aggregate have voted overwhelmingly Democratic since the late 1980s, with a smaller proportion tending to vote Republican. Since Cubans are more likely to vote Republican than the other Latino subgroups, it is probably safe to assume that it is the Cuban population driving the modest proportions of the Hispanic population voting Republican.

### Table 2.7  Latino Partisan Identification, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partisan Identification</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Cuban</th>
<th>Central/South American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something Else</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2.8  Latino Presidential Vote Choice 1988-2000

The Democrats seemingly enjoyed a great deal of support by Latinos in the late 1980s with close to 70% casting a vote for the Democratic candidate. That support would drop, however, by 1992 to a modest 61%. In fact, in 1992, Bush and Perot together received almost 40% of the Latino vote. Interestingly enough, the 1996 election in which Bill Clinton was reelected saw stronger Latino support than in 1992 with Democratic support increasing to 72%. In fact, only former President Jimmy Carter in 1976 has seen a higher support percentage from Latinos (New York Times, Who Voted: A Portrait of American Politics, 1976-2000). Meanwhile, Republican support in 1996 dropped to a low of 21%. Part of the reason for the jump in Latino Democratic support in 1996 could have been Clinton’s personal appeal, though that surge could also have been a protest vote against the Republicans Party’s anti-immigrant stance and its blaming of immigrants for the

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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

social and economic ills of the country as well as its threat to withdraw benefits from legal immigrants (McClain and Stewart 1998, 86). Even Cubans in South Florida who traditionally vote Republican split their votes almost evenly between Clinton and Dole, thereby giving Florida’s electoral votes to Clinton (McClain and Stewart 1998, 87). In fact, far more Cubans voted Democratic in 1996 than in any previous presidential election, with as many as 40% of Miami’s Cuban electorate defecting from the Republican Party for this election (DeSipio et al. 1999; Moreno and Warren 1999). Apparently, the Republicans overlooked the fact that no Latino group is more concerned with immigration than the Cuban American community in Florida.

Even though Hispanics continued to support the Democrats in 2000, that support was again much less than in the previous presidential election. This reduction in Democratic support could have been due to the perception that the Democrats have withdrawn support on a number of issues/policies championed by the Latino community. For example, it was Clinton himself who signed into law the 1996 Welfare Reform Act and 1996 Immigration Act, which may have been perceived as a setback for the Hispanic community. Clinton quickly positioned himself as one who favored increasing government aid to legal immigrants and naturalization programs to help immigrants become citizens, however, which may have helped to restore his favorable image in the minds of many Latinos (Elder 1999). I would argue, however, that Latinos – especially Puerto Ricans and some portions of the Mexican community – might, like African Americans, be structurally dependent on the Democratic Party. For those groups who are of a lower socioeconomic status and favor governmental programs to assist their communities in the areas of housing, education, and employment, the Democratic Party
may be their only option, no matter how weak its support of various initiatives to assist in these areas. In short, the Republicans do not offer a viable alternative for most Latinos.

**Black and Latino Political Behavior Compared**

Looking at Black and Latino political behavior in comparison, it becomes possible to make a few inferences. First, both groups demonstrate liberal and conservative ideological leanings in their opinions and attitudes. Thus, while both groups may show a fair level of conservatism on moral issues, on socioeconomic issues and the role of government, they both adhere to what can be considered a liberal agenda (and this is truer of Puerto Ricans than Mexicans or Cubans). Given the fact that these types of issues tend to most readily mobilize these communities politically, their relatively liberal socioeconomic leanings could serve as a critical foundation for coalition building.

Second, Blacks and Latinos share more political similarities than differences in the aggregate, which is promising as a foundation for alliances. Each group, for example, overwhelmingly identifies and votes Democratic (though again, differences prevail according to national origin group with Puerto Ricans more strongly identifying as Democratic than Mexicans and Cubans). However, Latinos as a group, even Puerto Ricans specifically, do not have a Democratic allegiance that is quite as strong as that of Blacks. Still, that Democratic tendency could provide an electoral foundation between these two communities.

The argument posed here is that surface evidence exists to suggest that electoral coalitions are possible between Blacks and Latinos because shared socioeconomic circumstance, policy issue stances, and ideological and partisan leanings are present. It appears, however, that shared coalitions may not develop equally among Blacks and all
Latinos groups, but might have a better chance of developing and surviving between Blacks and Puerto Ricans specifically. This means that coalition formation between Blacks and any Latino subgroup will be more “regional” in nature.

For one, in the Southwest and in Florida where Mexicans and Cubans respectively yield a great deal of political influence, Blacks and these respective groups have not had the best working relationships (Garcia 1997; Moreno 1996). Aside from ideological, and in the case of Cubans, partisan differences, with Blacks being much more liberal and Democratic leaning than Mexicans and Cubans, there is also the fact that the issues that tend to mobilize these respective groups can sometimes differ drastically. For example, with Mexicans and Cubans, language policy and immigration tend to be critical issues. These issues are not central concerns to the African American agenda; nor has an agenda focused mainly on racial inequality, discrimination and civil rights been as central to Cubans and Mexicans as it has been to Blacks. The same, however, cannot be said of Puerto Ricans in the northeast, especially in New York. Because Puerto Ricans tend to suffer the same (if not worse) socioeconomic fate as African Americans, they tend to champion and mobilize themselves around the same types of issues. Moreover, in the northeastern areas of New York and New Jersey, there tends to be much more residential proximity as well as political and social interaction between Blacks and Puerto Ricans; much more so than in the case of Blacks and Mexicans in the southwest and Blacks and Cubans in Miami (Garcia 1997; Moreno 1996).

Consider a recent survey on Latinos in America (1999) which asked the three major Latino subgroups how much they have in common with Blacks. The majority (59%) said that they had “little” or “nothing” in common with Blacks while only 25%
said that they had "a lot" or a "fair amount" in common with Blacks, with a substantial 16% indicating that they "don't know". There were, however, differences among the Latino subgroups with respect to this question. As Figure 2.2 shows, Puerto Ricans were much more likely to say that they had "a lot" or a "fair amount" in common with Blacks than were either Mexicans and Cubans who were more likely to say they had "little/nothing" in common with African Americans. Interestingly, the magnitude of perceived commonality with Whites among all groups was strikingly similar to that of Blacks except among Puerto Ricans in the sample who believed they had more in common with Blacks (43%) than with Whites (27%).

Still, the 47% of Puerto Ricans who said they had "little/nothing" in common with Blacks could pose a problem for coalition building given that one of the requisites for the development of a strong alliance is the feeling or sense of commonality. Though, again, question wording as well as respondent type could have something to do with the results shown in Figure 2.2. For example, the question in this survey asked only if "[respondent’s group] have a lot in common, a fair amount in common, only a little in common, or nothing at all in common with [other group], or don’t you know enough to say?". However, a question asking about cultural versus political commonality might yield different responses. Moreover, Puerto Ricans in the northeast part of the country might feel a closer connection with Blacks than those living in other parts of the county, which could also affect the level of expressed commonality.
FIGURE 2.2 LATINO COMMONALITY WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS
(Continued on next page)
Blacks and Latinos in New York City

In many respects, Black and Latino political behavior in New York City mirrors the behavior demonstrated by those groups at the national level. In local elections, both groups register and vote overwhelming Democratic. Their propensity to show more support for the Democratic Party may not be too surprising given that New York has been a Democratic machine stronghold for much of the 20th century. And so, in much the same way that the Republican Party has had little to offer Blacks and Latinos at the national level, neither can they gain much support at the local level in New York City.

Aside from the Democrats having dominated New York City politics until fairly recently, the Democratic Party has historically spoken to the types of issues that both Blacks and Latinos have found to be most important to their respective communities.
Recent surveys of New York City Latino and Black communities show striking similarities in the types of issue concerns to be found within both groups. For example, the 7th Annual Survey: Hispanic New Yorkers on Nueva York (1999) and the State of Black New York (2000) both asked Latino and Black respondents to indicate the most important issues facing their respective communities. Perhaps to little surprise both surveys found the same listing of concerns. Table 2.9 shows the top five issues facing Black and Latino communities, listed in order of importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Issue Concerns</th>
<th>Latino Issue Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Economic development/jobs</td>
<td>* Discrimination and racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and unemployment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Discrimination and racism</td>
<td>* Economic Development/jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Police brutality</td>
<td>* Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Crime and violence</td>
<td>* Police brutality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Education</td>
<td>* Drugs and crime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 2.9 Top Five Black and Latino Issue Concerns
That both groups list almost identical concerns about economic development and jobs, discrimination and racism may not be too surprising given their striking similarities in unemployment and poverty rates when compared with citywide averages as well as the more recent occurrences of discriminatory treatment by the New York Police Department. The listing of economic concerns and discrimination by Blacks and Latinos as the top two problems facing these communities was found across all Black and Hispanic subgroups regardless of gender, education level, age, income, or borough. In fact, substantial majorities in both survey samples indicated that they believed the police treated them unfairly (75% in the Latino survey) or failed to treat all groups equally (82% in the Black survey), and this perception was expressed mostly in relation to Latino (Puerto Rican) and Black men.

Given Blacks and Latinos’ greater focus on social and economic issues, as the two largest minority groups in New York City, the struggles for socioeconomic justice have often been joint efforts. For example, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Black and Puerto Rican community leaders fought together for increase social mobility, such as for changes in unequal public education and for adequate welfare and anti-poverty programming (Torres 1995, 80-84). Thus, it can be said that in general Blacks and Latinos have “worked as allies for social mobility and political empowerment” (Torres, 84). And as later chapters in this dissertation will show, Blacks and Latinos have also formed electoral alliances – albeit tenuous – in an effort to elect candidates who speak to the issues that concern their communities. However, even within the overall context of
apparent unity, competition and conflict have also arisen, as the sharing of a similar status of disadvantage and disempowerment have not always guaranteed bonds of cooperation between these two groups (Torres 1995).  

Conclusion

The discussion above provides some validity for the assumption that there are a commonality of interests between Blacks and Latinos. There is evidence that Blacks and Latinos – Puerto Ricans in particular – converge with respect to their partisan preferences, ideological leanings, and the types of issues that they prioritize. This pattern is especially apparent in New York City as the next chapter demonstrates. And while there appears to be clear evidence that Blacks and Puerto Ricans should be able to form coalitions based on shared political perceptions and lived experiences, political cooperation, which could potentially yield satisfactory electoral results for these communities, is no guarantee. Chapter 3 highlights this concern by challenging the assumption that political alliances – even between Blacks and Puerto Ricans – are so easily established and maintained. After all, a substantial number of Puerto Ricans in the National Survey on Latinos in America (1999) indicated that they had little to nothing in common with Blacks. By examining other factors that are critical to the formation of minority coalitions, but are often given only cursory attention, chapter 3 seeks to show how inter-minority group coalitions can be complicated by differing notions of race/minority status and social distance that must be appreciated if we are to fully understand the challenges facing Black and Latino coalition building in New York City.
CHAPTER 2 NOTES

1 The “don’t know” and “haven’t thought much about it” categories on the NES are combined and are included to make the total sum to 100.

2 Caution should be exercised with respect to any comparison of the NES and NBES data on ideology. While it is possible that responses reflect a true change in African American ideological identification, differences in the question wording of different surveys can, and often do, yield differences in responses. For instance, the question wording used in the NES is “On a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven’t you thought much about this?”. The question wording used in the NBES is “When it comes to politics do you think of yourself as liberal, conservative, moderate, or what?” (Follow-up questions then ask about strength in terms of being a strong or weak liberal etc.). The 1984 NBES does not provide an alternative to liberal, conservative, or moderate.

3 Converse’s (1964) classic piece on ideology and belief systems suggests that not much should be made of the public’s self-identified ideology since most Americans do not tend to think in ideological terms. Hence, one should not place too much emphasis on the distribution of ideological positions given that observable changes in a group’s ideology could be the result of shifts in the meaning of ideology depending on the issues current in the mind of the public.

4 As mentioned with respect to Black ideological identification, one should use caution when interpreting changes in Latino ideological self-identification. Alternative question wording used in different surveys can yield variation in the responses.

5 These are curious findings given that regardless of national origin, the majority of Latinos report that they have not personally been discriminated against (de la Garza 1992). This same pattern holds true in the NSLA (1999). Though perceptions of differential treatment based on race/ethnicity can have an effect on one’s political attitudes and behavior, even if one has not personally experienced prejudicial treatment (Garcia 2000).

6 As a general point of clarification, the immigration issue tends to hold more importance for Mexicans, Cubans, Central/South Americans, and Dominicans, for example, than for Puerto Ricans since they are internal migrants and are considered U.S. citizens.

7 The question wording for Table 2.7 reads: “In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?” The survey respondents included those born both inside and outside of the U.S.

8 It should be made clear that discussion of collaborative efforts between Blacks and Latinos in New York refers mainly to African Americans and Puerto Ricans. Despite the increasing numbers of West Indian and Dominican immigrants, for example, African Americans and Puerto Ricans still dominate minority politics in the city. Therefore, based on this factor, along with socioeconomic similarities between the two groups as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, and the fact that they are the two largest and most politically active minority groups within the larger Black and Hispanic communities, this dissertation focuses mainly on native Blacks and Latinos.
CHAPTER 3

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE: RACIAL IDENTITY, MINORITY STATUS AND PERCEIVED COMMONALITY IN BLACK AND LATINO COALITION BUILDING

That racial minorities now comprise a significant majority of New York City’s population is meaningful given the practical implications it could yield for local politics. The potential for successful coalition building by way of pooling minority group electoral strength does exist – especially between the city’s two largest minority groups, Latinos and Blacks. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, Black and Latino political behavior is quite similar, particularly that of Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Yet this chapter argues that while Black and Latino numbers have increased substantially in New York City and they may share similar voting behavior and group interests, there is no guarantee that strong political alliances will emerge. There are other factors that could serve as barriers to coalition building between Black and Latino masses.

This chapter offers a discussion of what has only been mentioned in a general way, yet not empirically examined (until very recently) in the existent coalition building literature: the role of racial identity and minority status, group commonality, and social distance as they relate to the formation of minority group coalitions. The role of these factors in determining the relations between Blacks and Latinos in New York City is a crucial one as these two groups continue in their respective quests for political empowerment. Indeed, simply sharing similar ideologies and interests is an insufficient
basis upon which to build coalitions. An underlying belief or perception that as coalition partners the two groups share a similar condition that is subject to change through collective effort must be present. Therefore, how these two groups interact, and the extent to which this underlying perception is apparent, could greatly determine whether their increased numbers will necessarily translate into anything relevant for increased Black and Hispanic group empowerment. In this respect, simply sharing similar ideologies and interests is an insufficient basis upon which to build coalitions.

The first section of the chapter discusses the conception of race/racial identity among Puerto Ricans. Much of the coalition building literature has suggested that racial group identification could be a potentially important unifying force among coalition partners (Browning et al. 1984, 1997; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Falcon 1995), though this reference is often made with respect to Black-White coalitions. Not much is made of the problems that arise in trying to make this same claim for Latinos. Therefore, a brief examination of Latino/Puerto Rican racial identity will be undertaken.

Using survey data specific to New York City, the second and third sections of the chapter empirically examine the level of perceived commonality and the level of social distance among Blacks and Latinos. Given the large concentration of Puerto Ricans in New York, their frequent contact and interaction with the African-American community, shared socioeconomic status, yet strong ethnic/cultural traits and multiracial heritage, an examination of Latino/Puerto Rican perceptions should serve as an interesting window through which to view Black-Latino relations. By focusing on the role of Puerto Rican racial group identity, minority status and how they view themselves, inter-group
perceptions of commonality, and social distance, I hope to offer a clearer picture of similarities and differences in Black and Latino perceptions.

What this chapter demonstrates is that there appears to be a sense of Black and Latino commonality based on shared minority status, which can be a potentially powerful unifying force and thus, a strong foundation for the building of Black-Latino electoral coalitions. And while the section on social distance and inter-group perceptions suggests that the way Blacks and Latinos feel about one another could pose a challenge to their efforts to unify politically, I argue that it does not pose as a big a threat as one might imagine.

Puerto Ricans and the Question of Racial Identity

For anyone newly immigrating to the United States, what becomes apparent almost immediately is this country’s fascination with the concept of race and racial categorization. The dichotomous racial classification system that has governed U.S. race relations since the first African landed on these shores is unique, and therefore foreign to many immigrants who have made their way to the United States. The rigid classification of either being (presumably) all White or Black based on the “One Drop Rule” with no in-between status is what has typically defined U.S. conceptions of race. However, for groups like Latinos, that come from a legacy of racial mixture including Spanish, other European, African, and indigenous populations, such a classification seems odd. As a result, there is a greater tendency for Latinos to view “race” ambiguously since they come from societies in which the racial classification is more complex and multidimensional in that there is a racial continuum from White to Black along which one
could be classified in an intermediate category such as mulatto, moreno, trigueno, etc.

(Betances 1995; Falcon 1988, 1995; Rodriguez 1996;).

Clara Rodriguez (1996) adequately captures the oddity of race in America and the racial dilemma that Latinos face in her account of Puerto Ricans in New York City:

“Puerto Ricans presented an enigma to Americans because from a North American perspective Puerto Ricans were both an ethnic group and more than one racial group. Within the U.S. perspective, Puerto Ricans, racially speaking, belonged to both groups; however, ethnically, they belonged to neither. Thus placed, Puerto Ricans soon found themselves caught between two polarities and dialectically at a distance from both. Puerto Ricans were both White and Black; Puerto Ricans were neither White nor Black. From the Puerto Rican perspective, Puerto Ricans were more than White and Black. This apparent contradiction can best be understood through an examination of the contrasting racial ambiences and histories of the United States and Puerto Rico...”.

Although both the U.S. and Latin America relied on the importation of Africans as slaves, the conception and incorporation of the peoples of African descent as a “race” took different directions in the two areas (Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992). In the U.S., those with even a drop of “Black” blood – no matter how light in color – were considered to be Black, as opposed to White. However, in Puerto Rico, as in much of Latin America, a racial continuum evolved in which different gradations and shades of color were recognized.1 Thus while African Americans also span the color spectrum, in this country they are all designated as Black, not as mulatto or trigueno as would be the case in Puerto Rico and other parts of Latin America.2 Consequently, African Americans have come to see themselves, and are seen by the state as a distinct racial group; Latinos, however, do not necessarily see themselves as a racial group per se, even if the state attempts to classify them as such (Jones-Correa 1998, 119).

Puerto Rican “racial” identity, then, becomes steeped in ambivalence and complexity where notions of race on the island and on the mainland do not easily coexist.
As Rodriguez (1996) explains, for Puerto Ricans on the island, racial identity is subordinate to cultural identity, yet on the U.S. mainland, racial identity determines cultural identity. Following the assumptions of race in the U.S., then, Puerto Ricans are not accepted by Blacks and Whites as a culturally distinct, racially-integrated group, but rather perceived and treated as either “Black” or “White” Puerto Ricans. Such racial dichotomies are instinctively unnatural to Puerto Ricans, which oftentimes prompts a resistance to these types of U.S.-based classifications of race (Rodriguez 1996). This represents a clear indication that Puerto Ricans, while aware of racial differences, do not really think of themselves as a part of a particular “race”.3

Various studies of Puerto Rican identity have shown that Puerto Ricans repeatedly reject the racial dichotomy of “White” and “Black” Puerto Rican, but when forced to identify as one or the other, they overwhelmingly choose the “White” option (Falcon 1995; Oquendo 1998; Rodriguez 1996). For example, using survey data from the Latino National Political Survey, Falcon (1995) found that when asked to identify themselves racially, the majority of Puerto Ricans identified themselves as White (58%), with 38% identifying as “Latino/Hispanic”, while only 4% identified as Black. However, in their study of New York Puerto Ricans, Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman (1992) found less of a propensity for Puerto Ricans to self-identify racially as “White” or “Black” (11% and 2% respectively) when presented with the open-ended question of racial self-identification. Instead, a majority of Puerto Ricans were much more likely to give socio-cultural responses that ignored physical attributes based on U.S. dichotomous conceptions of race (i.e. “Other”, Puerto Rican, Hispanic/Latino). However, the authors did find that when presented with closed-ended questions of conventional race choices,
respondents were less likely to give socio-cultural responses, but were still overwhelmingly providing “Other” as their response – not “Black” or “White”. Closer inspection of the “Other” response category revealed a greater racial response with 55% of those identifying as “Other” also identifying as “Trigueno” (Trigueno is a term that refers to wheat-colored individuals, who may be viewed in the U.S. as “mixed/bi-racial”) (532-33). On the whole, then, it appears that Puerto Ricans reject Black/White racial categorization in favor of other socio-cultural terminology, yet when forced to identify as either Black or White, more often than not, they identify as White even though most Puerto Ricans would fall into a mulatto/trigueno color category. How do Puerto Rican perceptions of their racial identification resonate with the perceptions of others? That is, are there perceptual differences between how Puerto Ricans identify themselves versus how they are seen by others? What impact might this have on how Puerto Ricans view their minority status?

Both the Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman (1992) and Falcon (1995) studies reveal the existence of perceptual incongruity in how Puerto Ricans view themselves versus how they are viewed by others. In both studies interviewers were asked to assess the “Whiteness” or “Blackness” of the Puerto Rican respondents. In each case, the Puerto Rican respondents were viewed as darker by the interviewers than the respondents viewed themselves. For instance, when rated by the LNPS interviewers, a large percentage of Puerto Ricans were viewed as dark (16%) which is a marked increase over the 4% who self-identified as Black (Falcon 1995). And while this same pattern was found in the Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman (1992) study, when asked how they believed they would be seen by non-Hispanics/non-Puerto Ricans, interestingly, the
proportion of respondents who felt that they would be seen as “Black” increased, while
the proportion who thought they would be seen as “White” decreased (534). Such beliefs
could stem from the recognition that North Americans do not readily recognize
intermediate racial categories in the way that Latin Americans do, therefore Puerto Rican
self-concepts could be partly affected by the their perceptions of how others see them.
Perhaps to little surprise, the study also found that the length of exposure to the U.S.
mainland affected these self-concepts in that the longer time spent in the U.S., the less
likely Puerto Rican respondents were to identify as “White”. This could suggest that as
Puerto Ricans become more exposed to North American conceptions of race and how
that interacts with majority and minority status, they undergo a process of identity in
which they do not identify with being “White” in this country, but rather as “non-white”
or “minority” (Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992, 538). Thus, while Puerto Ricans of
all color variations may not be considered a distinct racial group in Puerto Rico, they
quickly come to realize that in the U.S. Puerto Ricans of all colors are considered to be a
racial (minority) group. Such a realization could factor into their sense of minority group
status (despite their greater likelihood to self-identify as White than Black) and thus their
willingness to form coalitions with African Americans.

Still problematic, however, at least from the standpoint of coalition building, is
African Americans’ insistence or claim that race is the defining character of American
social and political interaction thereby making that the basis around which all identities
form. Such a conception does not fit squarely with Puerto Ricans – even those considered
to be “Black” Puerto Ricans or “Black” Dominicans. The problem is that while some
Puerto Ricans and Dominicans may very closely resemble African Americans in skin
color, they are nonetheless Puerto Rican and Dominican in their ethnic identity, which in many instances, takes precedence over their “racial” identification. For Blacks, however, it is one’s “blackness” or race around which an identity forms and it is often on this basis that the quest for coalitions with Latinos – particularly Puerto Ricans and Dominicans – is made, but is quite complicated as the foundation upon which a Black and Latino coalition can stand (Betances 1995, 13). The unspoken assumption on one side of the debate is that since many Puerto Ricans and Dominicans look “Black” and are ascribed a “Black” and/or minority status identity by the larger society, they should reasonably join the struggle embraced by African Americans, which is mainly clustered around an agenda based on racial justice. But Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are not “Black” in the American sense that one’s physical characteristic also determines one’s politicized and cultural identity. In this respect, “race” or racial identity may not be the strongest basis upon which to develop Black-Latino coalitions. However, most Latinos in New York – especially Puerto Ricans and Dominicans – possess a politicized identity based on recognition of their socioeconomic and political status as that of a “minority” in much the same way that African Americans do. If framed correctly by minority leadership, such an identity could be a much stronger basis upon which to build such alliances (Falcon, 1988; Perez y Gonzalez 2000; Torres-Saillant and Hernandez 1998).

Minority Status and Perceived Intergroup Commonality

Assuming that coalitions are, in part, dependent upon the level of perceived commonality between Blacks and Latinos, the argument advanced here is that a singular focus on shared interests and underlying liberal ideology as a foundation for political alliances is limited and seemingly overlooks what could be considered the symbolic...
nature of American political behavior. Much of the political behavior demonstrated in American politics—especially voting behavior—is based on some sort of group allegiance and groups then grant their symbolic support to the party or candidate that most closely approximates their views. All of the groups supporting a given party or candidate do not have to agree on every aspect that conditions their support, but there is usually some general or symbolic theme that underlies their support. Thus the “symbolic glue” that holds the Democratic Party coalition of women, minorities, gays and lesbians, and liberals together is the idea that the Democratic Party symbolizes tolerance with respect to the issues that these groups care most about.

I suggest that Black and Latino coalitions also require some type of symbolic glue that will hold them together. Thus in addition to a shared political agenda based on similar group interests and policy preferences, such coalitions also require a sense of commonality or “linked fate” if successful coalitions are to emerge. The idea is that in order for Blacks and Latinos in New York City to take advantage of their increasing numbers and the potential leverage that they could yield politically, mass coalitions must form that are both reciprocal and durable (Kaufmann 2000). If such coalitions are to emerge between Black and Latino voters, there must be an understanding and symbolic commitment to their collective goals and concerns. That is, both Latino and Black New Yorkers must perceive the similarities in their socioeconomic and political circumstances and translate those similarities into them all being “in the same boat” so to speak. If no such conception appears in the beliefs, discourse, and actions of each group, then coalitions will be much less likely to surface. Commonality, then, becomes a necessary
but insufficient basis for intergroup collaboration, successful political appeals and mobilization efforts by group leaders (Kaufmann 2000).

The focus of the remainder of this chapter is on perceived Black and Latino commonality and the extent to which these attitudes form a foundation upon which viable coalitions can rest. Since there is some indication that African Americans seem to be more committed to the general cause of minority empowerment than Latinos (Kaufmann 2000) and generally show both a relatively positive regard/moderately high level of affinity for Latinos as a group, as well as perceiving the feasibility of coalitions, much of the analytical focus here will be on trying to understand Latino perceptions as the basis for the establishment of Black-Latino alliances (though attention will also be given to Blacks’ perspectives).

Data and Methodology

Data from the Study of Intergroup Relations in New York City (1992) is used to assess the extent to which a sense of minority status can be identified among Black and Latino New Yorkers. The study includes a representative sample of New York City residents with a sample size of 1,057, including 533 whites, 247 Blacks, 116 Asians, 133 Hispanics, and 26 “Other”.

In this section of the chapter, I examine 3 items that measure a sense of minority status. The 3 items are: how much discrimination Blacks and Latinos are believed to experience, the amount of influence Blacks and Latinos are perceived to have within New York City life and politics, and lastly the perception of whether New York City government treats all racial/ethnic groups the same or whether it favors some over others. Interestingly, all three items reveal that Blacks and Latinos see a different reality than
their White counterparts. In short, Blacks and Latinos were much more likely than Whites to say that they experience discrimination, lack influence, and that local government is unequal in its treatment of groups. These findings suggest that race matters; more specifically, being a racial minority plays a significant role in how one perceives the fate of minorities in New York City. Yet because Latinos may not place the same emphasis on “race” and may not have the same heightened sense of discrimination founded on a history of racial prejudice in this country as African Americans, the level or degree of intensity on these items may not be as strong for Latinos as they are for Blacks.

The two general hypotheses that I explore are:

1) Black-Latino commonality is rooted in perceived discrimination, a sense of shared outsider status and a political consciousness as a racial/ethnic minority (Cain, Kiewiet, Uhlander 1991). To the extent that Blacks and Latinos perceive themselves as racial/ethnic minorities subject to discrimination, I expect to see a pattern indicative of Black and Latino commonality of thought on the one hand, and differentiation between Whites and Blacks and Latinos on the other. Specifically, Whites will be much less likely than Blacks and Latinos to believe that these two groups experience discrimination, lack influence, and that local government treats groups differently.

2) Because of African Americans’ heightened sense of race and the role and level of importance that they as a group accord to racial group identity and the effects of race discrimination (and conversely, Latino ambiguity regarding race), I expect to see differences in the degree or intensity of Black and Latinos perceptions. More specifically, while both groups will perceive discrimination and a lack of influence for both groups, as well as unequal local government treatment in general, Blacks will show a greater propensity to accept these claims for both groups more so than Hispanics.

**Discrimination**

Falcon (1995) notes that one indicator of a sense of minority status is the degree to which groups perceive discrimination against them. When asked how much discrimination Hispanics and Blacks in New York City face, a clear majority of all survey respondents in the sample said they face “some” or “a lot” of discrimination.
Figures 3.1 and Figure 3.2 show the racial breakdown for this item for Latinos and Blacks respectively. As Figure 3.1 indicates, an overwhelming proportion of Hispanics (82%) and Blacks (87%) believing that Latinos face “some” or “a lot” of discrimination. As is to be expected perhaps, Hispanics perceive that their group experiences “a lot” of discrimination to a much greater degree than do either Whites or Blacks. Blacks, however, seemed slightly less inclined than either Whites or Hispanics to suggest that Hispanics face “very little” discrimination. Whites also believe that Latinos face “some” or “a lot” of discrimination, though that number is somewhat smaller (75%), as Whites seemed a bit more willing than Blacks and Latinos to indicate that Latinos face “very little” or “some” discrimination as opposed to “a lot”.

![Figure 3.1 Perceived Level of Discrimination against Hispanics, by race](image)
As Figure 3.2 shows, the story for Blacks is quite similar in that all groups believe Blacks face "some" or "a lot" of discrimination, again with Blacks (90%) and Hispanics (87%) being more likely than Whites (80%) to express this sentiment. Moreover, it appears that all three groups were more likely to say that Blacks face "a lot" of discrimination as opposed to only "some" discrimination, which is quite different from the responses regarding Latino discrimination. A larger proportion of Whites than Blacks or Latinos were, again, more willing to suggest that Blacks face "some" or "very little" discrimination.

Figure 3.2  Perceived Level of Discrimination against Blacks, by race
Political Influence

When asked whether Blacks and Latinos have too much influence, too little influence, or just the right amount of influence in NYC life and politics, a majority of the sample (62%) said that Latinos had “too little” influence. Likewise, a slim majority also said that Blacks lack influence in NYC life and politics (54%). This suggests that New Yorkers perceive Latinos to have less power and influence in the city than African Americans. Stark differences emerge, however, when we look at this issue according to the racial breakdown.

As Figure 3.3 indicates, it appears that no group is willing to state that Latinos have too much influence in NYC politics, though Latinos and Blacks are much more willing to say that Latinos have “too little” influence as opposed to “too much” or just the right amount. Whites, however, seem almost split with respect to whether Latinos have too little influence or whether that amount is just about right.
A similar outcome is shown for Blacks as well. As Figure 3.4 shows, Whites are almost split in their belief that Blacks have too little influence or just the right amount, though a slight plurality believe the latter. Moreover, in contrast to their beliefs about Hispanic influence, a significant proportion of Whites (almost 20%) seem to believe that Blacks have too much influence in city politics (compared to the 8% who believe Hispanics have too much influence). When we look at Black and Latino responses, however, another pattern emerges. While both Blacks and Latinos overwhelmingly agree that Latinos possess too little influence, Latinos seem slightly less willing than Blacks to suggest that Blacks lack influence. Furthermore, Latinos (16%) are also only slightly less willing than Whites to suggest that Blacks have too much influence.
Treatment of Racial Groups by NYC Government

When asked whether respondents felt that NYC government generally treats all racial and ethnic groups the same or whether it favored some over others, a 75% majority indicated that they believed local government favors some over others, while only 25% believed that it treated all groups about the same. When asked in an open-answer format who the government tends to favor, of the myriad of possible responses, the largest number of responses suggested that Whites were favored. That an overwhelming majority of New Yorkers believe that local government favors some over others may not be a huge surprise. Yet, when we break down the responses to this item by race, again, racial differentiation emerges.
According to Figure 3.5, Blacks and Hispanics were significantly more likely than Whites to say that local government favors some groups over others. Whites, on the other hand, were roughly three times more likely to believe that government treats all groups about the same.

Figure 3.5  NYC Government Treatment of Groups, by race

On a very general level, what the results from the descriptive analysis presented above indicate is that race does play a role in the perceptions of the realities that minorities face in New York. On all three items, Blacks and Latinos tended to differ greatly from Whites in their perceptions. This finding would seem to lend support to Hypothesis 1, which suggested that differentiation would exist between Whites on the one hand, and Blacks and Latinos on the other, with respect to the amount of
discrimination these groups experience, how much influence they have, and whether government treats all groups equally. Blacks and Latinos definitely perceive a different reality in their situations than do Whites.

Support for Hypothesis 2, which suggested that Blacks would perceive discrimination against both groups, a lack of political influence and unequal local government treatment to a greater degree than Hispanics – greater than even they perceive for their own group – is a bit more sketchy. In these analyses, Blacks were found to be more accepting than Hispanics of the claim that Blacks and Hispanics experience discrimination and that government does not treat all groups the same. However, the degree to which Blacks were more likely than Hispanics to believe this was minute.

Intergroup Perceptions, Social Distance and Coalition Building

As Falcon (1988) observes and as this chapter and the previous chapter reveal, Puerto Ricans in New York have views closer to Blacks on their minority status and as such, could be the basis for feelings of commonality or “being in the same boat” socio-economically and politically as African Americans (Falcon 1995, 201). However, while this may in fact be true, something that could complicate the quest for Black and Latino unity is the degree of social distance between Blacks and Latinos. Social distance refers to the extent to which members from one group hold favorable or unfavorable opinions of members of another group in varying social contexts (Herring, Bennett, and Gills 2000). With respect to the building of minority group coalitions, this suggests that potential allies must possess somewhat favorable perceptions of each other if alliances are to
develop, especially those that form with Blacks. Negative stereotyping of Blacks is still quite pervasive and other non-White groups can be just as likely as Whites to accept them.

In their study of social distance between Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians using a 1990 national data sample, Herring, Bennett, and Gills (2000) found that while Latinos showed less resistance to Blacks than did Whites or Asians in general, they did express a fair amount of resistance to living among Blacks. Blacks also expressed the same sentiment regarding living among Latinos. Dash and Brown (1999) found that substantial percentages of Latinos believed that Blacks are hard to get along with and lack motivation to lift themselves out of poverty (though they were equally as critical of their own group). Blacks, however, were generally more positive in their assessment of Latinos on the various indicators of social distance. Dash and Brown then suggest that the extent to which Blacks and Latinos are disinclined to accept one another could raise challenges to them being able to operate as a politically united front.

Data from the Study of Intergroup Relations in New York City (1992) reveal not only a comparable pattern with respect to Black and Latino social distance, but also show that Blacks and Latinos are viewed quite similarly by those within the non-Black and non-Hispanic populations. There were, however, slight variations in the degree of positive or negative perceptions of Blacks and Latinos. The survey yields five items that measure intergroup perceptions and social distance. For three of the items, respondents were asked to rate each group on a 7-point scale where a 1 means that “almost none” of the people in that group are that way, while a 7 means that “almost all” of the people in that group are that way. The items examined here include perceptions of Blacks and...
Latinos as lazy, violent, and preferring to live off of welfare. The other two items from the survey asked whether these groups behaved in a way that provokes hostility and if respondents would like to have these groups as neighbors.

On the whole, a fairly large number of respondents found Blacks and Latinos to be more violent than not and to behave in a manner that provokes hostility, with Blacks being slightly more violent and hostile than Hispanics. And while Blacks and Latino were seen as almost identical in terms of laziness with respondents indicating that only some Blacks and Latinos could be categorized as such, both were seen as preferring to rely on welfare. And lastly, when asked whether they would prefer Blacks and Latinos as neighbors, a majority of respondents in both cases indicated that it made no difference (77% and 79% respectively), with only 13% and 12% respectively indicating that they would prefer not to live near Blacks and Latinos. These results are pretty standard across the various items, though the racial breakdown reveal some interesting findings.

Overall, the Intergroup Relations Survey data (1992) reveal that Blacks and Latinos expressed negative perceptions of each other, and in some cases the degree or intensity of those perceptions were worse than the impressions held by non-Blacks and non-Latinos. As Figure 3.6 through Figure 3.15 show, Blacks and Latinos were equally likely to view one another negatively, though the intensity of such negative perceptions were much greater among Latinos than among Blacks. For instance, Figures 3.6 through 3.7 show that while no group believed that “almost all” Blacks or “almost all” Latinos were lazy, there was some acceptance of this portrayal with Blacks being slightly less willing to believe these depictions about Hispanics than they are willing to believe about Blacks.
Figure 3.6  Perceptions of Blacks as Lazy

Figure 3.7  Perceptions of Hispanics as Lazy

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A bit of a different picture emerges, however, when discussing the perceptions of Blacks and Latinos as preferring to live off welfare. In both instances of perceptions of Black and Latino laziness and preference for welfare, Whites were less inclined to believe that "almost all" Blacks and Hispanics were this way. Yet, again, Black and Latino perceptions of each other reveal a significant likelihood on the part of Blacks and Latinos to believe that the other prefers to rely on welfare, as is the case for Figures 3.8 and 3.9. Latinos were more likely than Blacks and Whites to believe that "almost all" Blacks and Hispanics prefer welfare.

Figure 3.8 Perceptions of Blacks as Preferring Welfare
Figure 3.9 Perceptions of Hispanics as Preferring Welfare

With respect to Black and Latino propensity for violence and their greater likelihood to behave in a manner that provokes hostility, a majority of Hispanics (62%) believed that Blacks behaved in a hostile manner compared with 46% of Whites who felt the same. Whites, in fact, were slightly more likely to say Blacks did not behave in a hostile manner (39%) compared with only 30% of Latinos who said the same. Blacks, however, were slightly less likely than Whites (44% versus 46%) to say Hispanics behave in a hostile manner and slightly more likely to agree that Hispanics were not hostile (41% versus 37%). Similarly, with regard to being prone to violence, Whites were somewhat less likely to view “almost all” Blacks and Latinos as violent with most Whites placing Blacks and Latinos within categories 4 and 5. Blacks and Latinos, however, were more
likely to ascribe violent tendencies to each other, with Hispanics seeing Blacks as slightly more violent than Blacks see Hispanics (see Figures 3.10 through 3.13). And while both Blacks and Latinos indicated that it made no difference whether they lived in close proximity, Blacks were slightly less inclined than Whites to say that they would prefer not to live near Hispanics (10%) compared to 16% of Hispanics and Whites who made this claim (see Figures 3.14 and 3.15).

Figure 3.10 Perceptions of Blacks as Provoking Hostility
Figure 3.11  Perceptions of Hispanics as Provoking Hostility
Figure 3.12 Perceptions of Blacks as Violent

Figure 3.13 Perceptions of Hispanics as Violent
Figure 3.14  Having Blacks as Neighbors

Figure 3.15  Having Hispanics as Neighbors
Conclusion

This chapter provides a portrayal of how Latinos and Blacks view themselves and each other within the realm of New York City life and politics. It appears that while Blacks and Latinos view themselves as racial/ethnic minorities and perceive their respective circumstances through the lens of “race” and minority status, they also seem to hold relatively negative views of one another as indicated by their willingness to characterize one another (and even their own group) as hostile and violent, for example.

This would seem to provide mixed support for the notion that Blacks and Latinos are close enough socially to form meaningful coalitions. Though when taken on the whole with the information presented in both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 on Black and Latino socio-political similarities, perhaps the notion that Blacks and Latinos in New York hold some unfavorable views of one another is not all that significant. Herring, Bennett, and Gills (2000) and Dash and Brown (1999) both suggest that the amount of observable social distance between Blacks and Latinos could pose a challenge to coalition building efforts. I would argue, however, that what matters more for the building of electoral alliances is the similarity in Black and Latino perceptions and beliefs about their shared socioeconomic conditions, group interests, minority status and lack of empowerment in the city. These elements are the symbolic glue that will shape any type of Black and Latino coalition, or at least to a much greater degree than social perceptions of the type discussed in the latter part of this chapter. Indeed, if the goal is to form political coalitions, presumably based on a sense of shared condition or circumstance, then the fact that Blacks and Latinos hold less than positive attitudes and perceptions of each other is of minimal concern since condition/interest/status-based coalitions do not

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necessarily require that members hold positive perceptions of one another in order to be effective (Herring, Bennett, and Gills 2000). What matters most is that they see “eye to eye” on the issues they face, share a similar vision of change and empowerment, and have an appreciation of not only their own respective plight, but also the plight of the other coalition members.

As Councilmember Helen Foster and Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell assert, in New York City, there is so much more that unites Blacks and Latinos than divides.9

“We are really one in the same. We live in the same communities, we go to the same schools, we intermingle...There’s just a lot more that we have in common than not. We have the same needs – affordable housing, health care, schools...”.
(Personal interview. Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell. July 8, 2002)

To the extent that Blacks and Latinos understand this assertion and connect that to the potential for greater empowerment and influence they could gain by working together, coalitions will develop between these two groups. Though as subsequent chapters in this dissertation point out, strong Black and Latino alliances do not automatically appear; they must be nurtured and cultivated by Black and Latino leadership that is willing to advocate for a Black-Latino coalition and take the steps to strengthen and maintain it once created.10

The following chapters detail the context and outcome of the mayoral elections since 1989 focusing on the nature and extent of Black-Latino coalition building and how those coalitions developed and changed over time. What these chapters demonstrate is that the nature and presence of purposive Black-Latino coalitions will ebb and flow depending on the presence of minority candidates as well as on the existence of shared interests, sense of commonality, and cooperative leadership that actively seeks to build

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minority coalitions. Chapter 4 observes the presence of a strong coalition of Blacks, Latinos, and liberal Whites (Jews) in support of Dinkins in 1989. By 1993, however, that coalition had floundered, with Dinkins unable to halt fleeting Latino and White liberal support. As Chapter 5 reveals, this allowed for Giuliani to be elected in 1993. Chapter 6 reveals the lack of a Black-Latino coalition in the 1997 general election in the absence of a minority candidate on the ticket. In that election expectations of a Black-Latino alliance diminished as coalition building efforts seemed to develop between Latinos and other groups. The 2001 election, however, again offered a minority candidate, yet this time the candidate was Latino. Chapter 7 details the development of a tenuous, yet visible Black-Latino coalition that again was unable to secure the minority candidate a primary election victory over the White Democratic candidate.

CHAPTER 3 NOTES

1 The fact that there are different conceptions of race in Puerto Rico and the U.S. is not meant to imply that there is no racism in Puerto Rico and other parts of Latin America. Latin Americans are well aware of the coincidence of color and social status where those with lighter skin are afforded higher status and privilege than those with darker skin. And so while race prejudice may be more subtle in Latin America than in the U.S., it is no less pervasive or destructive in its effects (Jones-Correa 1998, 120; Sawyer, Pena, Sidanius 2002).

2 On some occasions the U.S. Census did separately count mulattos and other mixtures of European and African peoples, but this practice fluctuated and by the 1930 census used only the “Negro” category to describe those with any trait of African descent (Martin 1990).

3 Part of the reason why cultural identity supercedes “race” or racial identity in much of Latin America is because of the rhetoric of racial inclusion that historically has been used to subdue or calm what might otherwise develop into a contentious politics of race as witnessed in the United States (Sawyer, Pena, and Sidanius 2002).
4 Due to the rhetoric of racial inclusion and the presumption of racial democracy that informs Latin American thinking on race – one that promotes the idea of being "Puerto Rican", "Dominican", or "Brazilian" regardless of color – one finds a general lack of "linked fate" along racial lines and that which is most evident in the politics of U.S. Blacks (Sawyer, Pena, and Sidanius 2002).


6 The NBES 1996 (post-election) reveals that a slight majority (55%) of African Americans rate Hispanics between 50-100 degrees on the "feeling thermometer" indicating a sense of warmth or affinity for Latinos. The survey also shows that an overwhelming majority of African Americans (81%) strongly agree or somewhat agree with the statement that "if Blacks and other minorities, the poor, and women pull together, they can decide how this country is run".

7 Unfortunately, for this analysis the Latino category cannot be disaggregated by national origin group. However, a majority of the Latino respondents in the survey are Puerto Rican (65%), which is the group of analytic interest to this study.

8 The survey did not pose this question in a closed-question format, but the largest number of responses (35%) indicated (in order) that the Irish, Jews, Italians, and "Whites in general" were favored, which are groups generally subsumed under the racial category of "White".


CHAPTER 4

THE BUILDING OF A GRAND COALITION: THE 1989 ELECTION

The previous chapters have demonstrated the potential for Black and Latino coalitions to form. Not only do these two groups share a strikingly similar socioeconomic status and issue concerns, but they also perceive themselves to be racial/ethnic minority groups who lack empowerment in New York City life and politics. Yet as the remainder of the chapters reveal, there is a politics to what keeps Blacks and Latinos from forming sustained shared coalitions. The first part of this chapter seeks to provide a general geographic and demographic overview of New York in an effort to familiarize the reader with the city’s layout. The second part of the chapter briefly reviews Black and Latino past attempts to form alliances within the changed racial and political environment of New York City, while the last section details the context of the 1989 election.

New York City’s unique racial and ethnic plurality has contributed greatly to the complex nature of inter-racial/ethnic relations in this city. New York City has always been a critical port of entry for immigrants seeking to experience the American dream. The Irish, Jews, Italians, and Germans would first lay claim to New York City in large numbers, soon followed by Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Asians. Today, New York City is home to the largest racial and ethnic mosaic in the country inclusive of peoples from all
over the world. The city’s unique racial and ethnic plurality is set within a peculiar
geographic structure of five boroughs, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and
Staten Island. Each of the boroughs is a distinct ethnic enclave with differing
characteristics, which on the whole, produces an interesting political dynamic.

The Bronx, which has experienced the greatest White flight of any other borough,
is heavily Latino (mainly Puerto Rican and Dominican) and represents the first “majority
minority” borough in the city with Latinos (50%) and Blacks (31%) together comprising
80% of the population. Because of the overwhelming Puerto Rican and Black residency
in neighborhoods such as Morris Heights, South Bronx, and Morrisania, the Bronx is
heavily Democratic. The remaining 20% of the Bronx population is made up of non-
Hispanic Whites, Asians, and Indians, though the North Bronx areas of Riverdale and
Kingsbridge are home to a significant Jewish population.

Manhattan, typically known for its historically Jewish liberal character in
neighborhoods such as the Upper West Side and Greenwich Village, is undergoing a
conservative thrust in which its historical liberalism is now being questioned, particularly
among its Upper East Side residents who have in recent elections shown less of a
tendency to vote Democratic. Second only to Staten Island in terms of hosting the largest
non-Hispanic White ethnic population (46%), Manhattan also has substantial Black and
Latino communities in the northern section including the Washington Heights, Inwood,
Harlem, and East (“Spanish”) Harlem areas totaling 15% and 27% of Manhattan’s
population respectively. Asians comprise roughly 9% of the Manhattan population.

Brooklyn has for the longest time been home to a substantial non-Hispanic White
population (mainly Jewish and Italian) particularly in the areas of Canarsie, Bensonhurst,
and Bath Beach. A substantial non-Hispanic Black and Afro-Caribbean population can also be found in the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville/East New York, and Crown Heights. Whites and Blacks each comprise a third of the population, while Hispanics make up roughly 20%, with the remaining 14% being Asian, Indian, or other racial mixture. While Brooklyn continues to be an overwhelmingly Democratic borough, its more conservative thrust is evident outside of the minority neighborhoods.

Queens is perhaps the most racially and ethnically diverse of all the boroughs, as there is representation of virtually every group. Non-Hispanic White ethnics (Jews and Italians) of Forest Hills and Rego Park, non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics (particularly of Mexican, Central, and South American decent) of St. Albans and Corona, and Asians of Flushing reside in this moderately Democratic, yet increasingly more conservative borough.

Staten Island, particularly the Mid-Island and South Shore areas, is the only borough that remains heavily non-Hispanic White (Italian and Irish Catholic) at 71% of the population with smaller numbers of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians living in North Staten Island. This is the only borough that is overwhelmingly conservative and has an almost equal split of Democratic and Republican identifiers (Department of City Planning 2000; Green and Wilson 1989) (See Appendix A for a map of the city).

Given the racial and ethnic mosaic in the city, it likely comes as little surprise that New York politics is, in many respects, governed by race in that electoral outcomes usually depend on coalitions of ethnic groups. As a consequence of voting in patterns...
consistent with ethnic affiliations, electoral results can be explained with great power and consistency (McNickle 1993). Since no group has dominated New York City in sufficient numbers to control citywide elections for mayor, any type of success that a candidate hopes to yield requires the formation of alliances. Historically, the strongest coalitions in New York were between the Irish and the Jews up until the early 1960s. Once Jews replaced the Irish as the most dominant group in city politics, coalitions between Jews and Blacks developed, though the tumultuous racial climate of the 1960s and 1970s would eventually weaken that alliance leaving a path for a new neo-conservative coalition to develop in which Jews, Irish Catholics, Italians, and other White ethnics have formed alliances opposite Blacks and Latinos (McNickle 1993). Black and Latino efforts to unite have been in response to the neo-conservative rhetoric and the “backlash” evident in the political behavior of the city’s White ethnics (Green and Wilson 1989; McNickle 1993). However, efforts to form minority coalitions have been plagued with difficulties and as examples of their attempts to unite in 1977 and 1985 demonstrate, Black and Latino coalitions require much more than the sharing of interests and policy issue concerns.

By the 1970s, New York City’s White ethnic communities had grown weary of Lindsay-style liberalism that was characterized by big government and overzealous spending on social programs, which were seen as benefiting racial minorities. ¹ Additionally, rapid social transformation and racial turnover were occurring along with increased demands for minority (Black) rights, which created fear within the White community – even among the relatively liberal Jewish sector, which had by the mid-1960s developed a closer affinity to their White counterparts on a number of civil
rights/race issues (Green and Wilson 1989; Mollenkopf 1992). While the same response to increased demands on the part of Blacks was recognized at the national level as well, what makes New York City politics so different is the nature of the “White backlash” within the context of party politics. As was typically the case in other cities around the country, an increase in the number of minorities demanding new rights led to a political realignment. As Green and Wilson (1989) convincingly argue, the dynamics of that realignment, however, differed in New York City from what was occurring nationally. At the national level minority groups, and thus civil rights issues, became tied to the Democratic Party and a discernible shift in White (Southern) support away from the Democratic Party toward the Republican Party became evident; in New York the Republican Party would see no such realignment. Instead, New York City remained a one-party town with the realignment taking place under the rubric of the Democratic Party. Thus, White ethnics did not abandon the Democratic Party in favor of the Republican Party initially; they merely became weary of liberalism, increasing Black demands, and forged a coalition of White ethnics to maintain control over city politics. By the mid-1970s, however, the Black and Latino communities, who had long been locked out of Democratic politics in the city, recognized that minority empowerment would be necessary to break the tide of neo-conservatism.

The 1977 and 1985 mayoral elections prove interesting for a number of reasons, though perhaps most important to this study are that they highlight some points of contention between the Black and Latino communities that served to thwart efforts to unify. These examples demonstrate that parochialism and self-interest, more often than
not, prove damaging to coalition building efforts and in the case of New York, likely caused the election of a minority to the mayor’s seat to be delayed until 1989.

Seven candidates competed for the Democratic Party’s nomination in 1977. The contest included three Jewish candidates, Abraham Beame, Ed Koch, Bella Abzug; an Italian, Mario Cuomo; a Puerto Rican, Herman Badillo; an African American, Percy Sutton; and a candidate with no racial or ethnic base of support, Joel Harnett (Green and Wilson 1989). Percy Sutton was the Manhattan borough president who had long desired a mayoral run. And as a gifted politician capable of not only mobilizing the Black community, but also maintaining the support of White liberals in Manhattan, Sutton launched his campaign in 1977. He had hoped for a type of Lindsay-style liberal coalition of the 1960s to sweep him into office, but he found it very difficult to attain. At the same time, Herman Badillo, former Bronx borough president, once again announced that he wanted to make a bid for the mayor’s seat. Badillo had tried unsuccessfully in 1969 and 1973 but could never seem to gain enough Democratic support beyond his Puerto Rican and African American following.

With both Sutton and Badillo in the primaries – two capable politicians who spoke for the Puerto Rican and Black communities – the minority vote would split. However, had Badillo and Sutton forged alliances and agreed to have only one of them run in the primary, the minority vote would have remained in bloc and one or the other would have made it to the run-off election. Instead, both candidates decided to run but were outnumbered. Sutton and Badillo received only 14% and 11% of the vote respectively, while Abzug (17%), Beame (18%), Cuomo (19%), and Koch (20%) came in
as top contenders (Harnett received a mere 1% of the vote). In the end, the self-proclaimed liberal Ed Koch would win the run-off election between him and Cuomo. Koch would go on to dominate New York City politics and convincingly win reelection in 1981 and 1985 with notable Black and Hispanic support (McNickle 1993).

With increases in the Black and Latino populations came an increasingly tumultuous relationship between Koch and minority leaders – particularly the city’s Black leaders. Accusations on the part of Black leaders that the mayor was racist and spearheaded racial polarization in the city led to their quest to oust Koch from office. The 1985 election would again present an opportunity for Blacks and Latinos to build alliances around the election of a minority candidate. Unfortunately, conflict between Black and Puerto Rican leadership would again cost them that opportunity.

By the early 1980s, racial tensions, crime, and homelessness hovered over the city leaving an aura of pessimism and anxiety. New Yorkers in general were growing wary of Koch and his not-so-liberal approach, particularly in dealing with the problem of homelessness. Moreover, the Black and Latino communities were leveling charges of racism at Koch for not only his uneven handling of the homeless (who were overwhelmingly Black and Latino), but also his approach to dealing with anti-minority crimes. In 1983, hearings were held on NYPD abuse against Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Koch’s idea of solving the police brutality issue while simultaneously attempting to curb protest from the minority communities was to appoint a Black police commissioner. This was seen as nothing more than an empty symbolic gesture which did not impress the Black community as much as Koch had hoped. Then in 1984 Bernhard Goetz shot and killed four Black youth on the subway train and was subsequently acquitted. That same
year, Eleanor Bumpers, an elderly Black woman with a history of mental illness was shot to death by police. Two years later, a group of White teens beat and killed a Black youth in Howard beach. These events dramatized to the minority communities the powerlessness of their condition as well as the tenacity of racism and produced mounting anger against Koch within the Black and Hispanic communities. Jesse Jackson’s 1984 and 1988 presidential bids only helped to mobilize these communities more, as he inspired them with the hope that by working together, the situations of those on the bottom of the socioeconomic and political ladder could change. Jackson was able to forge a “Rainbow Coalition” of Blacks, Latinos, and a small core of liberal-minded Whites who showed an impressive amount of support for Jackson. And although he did not capture the state of New York, Jackson demonstrated in an unprecedented way that a minority coalition was indeed possible and could produce a powerful citywide vote (McNickle 1993).

The city’s minority leadership, witnessing this shared core coalition building around issues of socioeconomic status and representation, began considering ways to unseat Koch in the 1985 mayoral election. The key, however, was to keep all of Koch’s opponents united. Forty leading Black and Puerto Rican political officials and community activists announced the creation of The Coalition for a Just New York, which promised to work for progressive social change and empowerment for not just Blacks, but for all people. Under the slogan “Strive for ‘85” the coalition sought a viable candidate to challenge Ed Koch and quickly settled on Basil Patterson, the former deputy mayor and Secretary of State in the New York state government (Sleeper 1990). Patterson had appeal within the Black community, but he also had experience, name recognition, and
was well respected within the labor movement and White community. All would have been perfect with Patterson’s nomination except that Badillo, who had been locked out of the mayoral bid since 1969, wanted another opportunity to run and made no secret of his desire for the Coalition’s support. When Patterson decided not to launch his candidacy for health reasons, and with no other candidates in the wings, Assemblyman Al Vann and other Brooklynites who had been key in forging a community-based Black and Latino “Dump Koch” campaign, decided to sponsor Badillo to replace Patterson as the Coalition’s leading minority contender (Fulani 2001; Green and Wilson 1989; McNickle 1993).

Ethnic pride and self-interest, however, prompted resentment from Harlem’s Black political leaders who were not pleased with Badillo’s mayoral quest. The possibility of a Puerto Rican winning the mayor’s seat over a Black did not set well with Black elites, who definitely wanted to see Koch go, but also believed that a Black should replace him (McNickle 1993). Moreover, some members of the Coalition had reservations about supporting Badillo, many of whom still remembered Badillo’s election bid in 1977 which they felt shattered Sutton’s mayoral possibilities. In short, “the old wounds had not healed” (Green and Wilson 1989, 106). And just when Badillo’s candidacy seemed to be gaining momentum, two days before the Coalition was to formally announce its candidate, Herman “Denny” Farrell, a flamboyant Harlem assemblyman and Manhattan county leader, little known outside his borough, offered himself as a candidate, essentially pulling the rug out from under the Brooklyn-led Black-Latino coalition (Fulani 2001). Partly acting on protest and complaints that the Coalition had failed to come up with a Black candidate and that a Black candidate should rightly be
endorsed, the Coalition decided to back Farrell, even though he was by all measures a weak candidate with little support outside of Harlem.

In many ways, the Harlem power play by the Dinkins/Rangel clique, which promoted Farrell at the expense of Badillo (and thus a strong Black-Latino coalition), was ultimately about undercutting the momentum of the Black Brooklyn machine and ensuring the continued power of Black Harlemites. In the end, this ploy may have thrown the primary to Koch, but it paved the way for a future Dinkins mayoral run.²

Farrell’s belated candidacy and the Coalition’s support of him over Badillo was perceived by the Latino community and many within the Black community as undercutting the mobilization, strength and unity developed after Jesse Jackson’s candidacy, thereby thwarting any chance for a strong Black-Latino alliance (McNickle 1993; Sleeper 1990). Without a doubt, the Coalition’s denial of Badillo helped to exacerbate relations between Blacks and Latinos unnecessarily and confirmed for many within both communities that the Coalition’s “nationalist” tendencies had destroyed the city’s chance to rid itself of Koch. As predicted, Farrell’s campaign flopped, leaving the mayor’s seat open for Koch’s reelection with the incumbent receiving more than three-quarters of the total primary vote compared to Farrell’s 13% (Sleeper 1990, 283). When the smoke had cleared, the Coalition for a Just New York had dismantled, Farrell had lost, and Koch was still mayor. Within the Black and Hispanic communities, blame was thrown in every direction, with many Blacks blaming Latinos for the loss because of their lack of support for Farrell, while many Latinos resented the lack of Black support for Badillo initially (Piatt 1998).
Despite the challenges previously faced by Blacks and Latinos in their quest to elect a minority to the mayor’s seat, they were able to set aside residual feelings of resentment to form alliances for the election of the city’s first African American mayor in 1989. That alliance was again based on many of the same background factors that led these groups to coalesce in previous mayoral elections.

The Emergence of a Grand Coalition in 1989

Anguish and disappointment with the Koch administration had been mounting among New York City residents and likely voters in the Democratic mayoral primary since the mid-1980s. Shortly after Koch’s third reelection in 1985, New York was besieged with a series of bizarre events that threatened to change the prospects for Koch’s continued reign over the city. Accusations of municipal scandal surfaced when the Queens Borough president and Democratic Party leader Donald Manes committed suicide upon discovery of his corruption while in office. In the following months, a number of other New York City government officials were indicted, charged and convicted of bribery, extortion, thievery, and other crimes including Bronx Democratic County leader Stanley Friedman, Bronx Congressman Mario Biaggi, Bronx Borough President Stanley Simon, and Brooklyn’s recently retired boss Meade Esposito (McNickle 1993). The endless reports detailing the instances of deceit gave the impression that not only was city government corrupt, but that Koch had sat back and allowed it all to happen. Koch was friends with, and a political supporter of, many of those who were exposed as betraying their constituents, yet he seemed to feel no personal responsibility for what had happened, as evidenced by his assertion that the Democratic leaders were somehow independent from himself (McNickle 1993). While it was true that...
the corrupt politicians had won their elected positions on their own, the mayor had maintained close friendships with the county leaders and endorsed their candidacies, helped to raise money for their campaigns, and appointed their political workers to government positions that they then used to steal from the city. New Yorkers felt cheated and offended by Koch who had previously campaigned as a reformer seeking to end “politics as usual”.

The scandals harmed Koch’s public image, though there were other events that would lead to an equally damaging image of the mayor. Not only did a series of financial scandals erupt again implicating New York politicians, but the stock market crash in 1987 sent New York’s financial health into a tailspin with the economic recession and high unemployment rates of the late 1970s/early 1980s quickly returning. Koch’s 1988 budget called for a severe reduction of city services, higher taxes, and a freeze on city hiring (Lankevich 1998). Meanwhile, the issues of homelessness, crime, drugs, and AIDS begged to be addressed. However, it was likely the unwavering state of racial tensions and Koch’s reaction to this contentious environment that led to his eventual downfall.

Racial violence in New York had reached monumental proportions. In 1986 Howard Beach, Queens, three Black youth were chased by a group of White teens and one killed as they chased him into oncoming traffic. Blacks took to the streets in protest and demanded that a special prosecutor be assigned to the case in an effort to avoid the type of acquittal that had been seen in the Goetz case a few years earlier. That same year, two Puerto Rican youths were beaten by Whites while walking through the Italian section of the Bronx. The racial tensions from these incidents had barely settled when in 1987 a Black teen in upstate New York, Tawana Brawley, accused White law enforcement
officials of abducting and raping her. Eventually, it was discovered that Brawley had lied about the incident, but the racial tensions that were generated from that case added to the already edgy environment of the city. Then in 1988 Juan Rodriguez, a Dominican, was fatally beaten while in the custody of White police officers; at the same time, a burgeoning Black-Korean conflict in Brooklyn threatened to escalate. By the time the Democratic presidential contenders came to town in 1988, New York City was a hotbed of racial anxiety and dread. Koch’s seemingly aloof, yet controversial reaction to the municipal scandals and racial incidents troubled many New Yorkers who were tired of his overall abrasive and provocative style. The electoral coalition that he had constructed in the 1970s was dwindling and his reelection prospects seemed questionable. In fact, when a 1988 New York Times survey asked whether Koch should be reelected, a majority of respondents (56%) felt it was “time to give a new person a chance” (Falcon 1989).

New Yorkers were ready for a change. The desire for change was evident in all communities, but especially within the Black and Latino communities. The relationship between Koch and the Black community had been deteriorating since early in his second term and centered largely on racial issues within the city. Koch’s relationship with the Latino community, while not quite as divisive and touchy as the one between the mayor and African Americans, also began to wane. Jews and White liberals had grown tired of Koch’s divisive rhetoric as in when voicing remembrance of Jesse Jackson’s 1984 “Hymietown” comment, his expressed support for Yasir Arafat and a Palestinian homeland, and acceptance of an endorsement by Louis Farrakhan, Koch declared that “Jews and other supporters of Israel would have to be crazy to vote for Jackson” (McNickle 1993; Mollenkopf 1992). Koch’s racially polarizing discourse was
viewed as not only clearly antagonistic in a city struggling to avoid an all-out race war, but also served to further alienate White liberal and minority communities, both of whom had actively supported him in the past. Most importantly, however, Koch provided the incentive for minority leaders to overcome their past differences and unite.

The efforts at minority political unification can readily be seen in Jesse Jackson’s 1988 presidential primary run where he captured 45% of the New York City vote compared to 44% for Michael Dukakis and 11% for Al Gore (McNickle 1993). By appealing to all of these groups on the basis of a shared sense of socioeconomic justice, Jackson received a small but crucial 24% of the White vote (15% White Catholic and 9% Jewish), 63% of the Latino vote and 93% of the Black vote (along with a substantial proportion of organized labor support). And even though Dukakis won the state, Jackson’s campaign clearly demonstrated the possibility of developing a progressive coalition of Blacks, Latinos and White liberals at the local level. If this coalition could be duplicated in a race for mayor, Ed Koch could be defeated (Green and Wilson 1989; McNickle 1993).

**The Primary Election**

David Dinkins emerged as the principal opponent to Koch from within the Democratic Party. As a veteran to local New York politics and recently elected Manhattan Borough President, he not only held a high profile role as Manhattan coordinator in Jackson’s presidential primary campaigns, but he had also established good relations with those who proved to be a critical component of the Rainbow Coalition. As a longtime member of the New York County Democratic Party establishment, Dinkins had a strong base with the city’s unions, White liberal and Latino

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communities, and the city's Black political leadership. Moreover, he supported the cause of Israel and condemned the rhetoric of Louis Farrakhan. As such, Dinkins appeared well positioned to mount a challenge to Koch. However, despite his strengths as a Democratic contender, Dinkins was somewhat of an uninspiring choice. As a quiet, clubhouse politician he did not possess the charismatic disposition of a Jesse Jackson or an Ed Koch; instead he was often characterized as unemotional and refined, not as a dynamic and forceful leader (Biles 2001).

However, Dinkins represented, in many respects, a "coming of age" of African American politics in New York City. The political power of Blacks had steadily increased since the 1920s when they first began to make headway into the Democratic Party (Green and Wilson 1989; Sleeper 1990). The movement of African Americans to the outer boroughs during the 1950s and 1960s, however, exacerbated racial tensions on both the neighborhood and local party level. Blacks faced stronger resistance in the Brooklyn and Queens party machines, and as such, leaders in these areas were much more radical or nationalist than their Manhattan counterparts. In this respect, Dinkins, who came up through the Manhattan machine, was not necessarily viewed as a radical outsider of the establishment. Still, ideological differences were placed aside, as virtually all African American leaders recognized the opportunity that Dinkins's candidacy presented and joined to support him.

By the spring of 1989, the campaign battle lines had been well formed. On the Democratic ticket, neither Harrison Goldin nor Richard Ravitch, two of the three Jewish candidates, could convince voters that they presented a compelling challenge to incumbent Ed Koch, essentially making the election a two-person contest between the

Given the pervasiveness of racial tensions in the city and Koch’s perceived contribution to the contentious environment, Dinkins was in a prime position to capitalize on Koch’s fading popularity by developing his platform around the theme of racial healing. He argued that Koch had become a divisive figure in city politics all while presenting himself as a healing leader who could ease racial anxiety and tensions in the city. However, Koch and his supporters slammed Dinkins for his failure to pay income taxes in the early 1970s, which seemed to constitute Dinkins’s biggest liability. Conversely, Koch cited his experience and accomplishments in office. Thanks to campaign commercials praising Koch’s experience and accomplishments, and media focus on Dinkins’s financial indiscretions, by summer 1989 it appeared that the incumbent might even the race with Dinkins, who had been leading in the polls. That is, until yet another racial incident sparked more cries of Koch’s insensitivity.

On August 23, a group of White youth in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, without provocation, cornered Yusuf Hawkins and three other Black teens who had come to look at a used car, shooting and killing 16 year-old Hawkins. Koch initially denied any racial motivation for the killing and then chastised Blacks and others for taking to the streets in “The Day of Outrage” march to protest Hawkins’s death (Arian et al. 1991; Biles 2001). This seemingly senseless murder, along with Koch’s confrontational
remarks that the protest marches in Bensonhurst had done nothing but inflame tensions, intensified the crisis and inevitably highlighted the tumultuousness of race relations in the city. As Dinkins had done earlier in the Howard Beach, the Central Park "wilding" incident, and Tawana Brawley cases, he soothed tensions by speaking of racial reconciliation, winning him praise among New Yorkers. Then governor, Mario Cuomo emphatically endorsed Dinkins with his suggestion that the next mayor should be the one asserting to the people "I will bring you together" (Biles 2001, 136). The dynamics of the election, without a doubt, had been substantially changed.

With more than a million Democrats voting, Dinkins won the primary with 51% of the vote against 42% for Koch mainly by constructing a coalition of Blacks, Latinos, and liberal Whites who felt alienated by the previous administration. According to CBS/New York Times exit polls and New York City Board of Elections figures, Dinkins secured roughly 90% of the Black vote and almost 60% of the Latino vote. Support for Dinkins was most apparent in districts with heavy concentrations of Blacks and Latinos like Manhattan's Harlem sections, Morrisania, Melrose, and Morris Heights in the Bronx, and Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights in Brooklyn. However, with Blacks and Latinos comprising only 29% and 17% of the electorate respectively in 1989, they could not single-handedly bring victory to Dinkins (Arian et al. 1991, 77). The key to Dinkins's win over Koch was securing a third of the White Democratic (mainly Jewish) vote from heavily Jewish areas like Manhattan's East and West sides, despite facing three Jewish competitors. And while Dinkins did secure some White ethnic votes, those from Staten
Island and Queens, for example, went mostly to Koch (Arian et al. 1991, Lynn 1989). In the end, Blacks and Latinos provided overwhelming support for Dinkins, while Whites provided the same for Koch (see Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1 1989 Primary Election Vote, by race](image)


In the end, credit for the outcome of the 1989 primary election lay not only with New Yorkers' dissatisfaction with Koch's performance, but also with their changing expectations and Dinkins's presentation as a quiet strength who could address the city's needs. Dinkins's non-threatening nature proved to be critical in that it allowed him to appeal to groups beyond his political base in the Black community. By portraying Koch as a divisive force who had harmed the city, mainly by contributing to an atmosphere in
which racism flourished, Dinkins was able to gain the trust of most New Yorkers. And by publicly focusing his campaign platform and rhetoric on healing and bringing all New Yorkers together, without regard to the favoring of certain group interests, he gave Whites the impression that he would be a strong leader for everyone, and not just Blacks. In fact, of those who voted in the Democratic primary, very few voters believed that Dinkins would favor Blacks over Whites, but rather would treat both groups fairly (Lynn 1989).

The General Election

Having made history by winning the Democratic primary nomination and bringing the Koch era to an end, Dinkins faced the frontrunner of the Republican primary, Rudolph Giuliani. Again, the challenge Dinkins faced was being able to reach out to Whites and Hispanics while making sure he could maintain Black support. As in the primary election, Dinkins did not deviate much from his deracialized campaign in which he put forth his desire to improve the lives of all New Yorkers. As a compassionate who not only wanted to help those in need, but also bring racial healing and economic prosperity to all, Dinkins presented himself as the natural choice for voters. Moreover, Dinkins was able to draw attention to Giuliani’s inexperience and lack of concern for communities of color.

Giuliani, however, was able to amass a great deal of support among Koch’s traditional base of outer-borough, working and middle-class, conservative Whites, by focusing on Dinkins’s ties to the “corrupt” Democratic establishment, his financial indiscretions, and his apparent softness on crime, while offering himself as the “bulldog” former prosecutor who would make fighting crime his top priority. With a focus on “law
and order," decreases in social spending, and quality of life issues, Giuliani was able to capture a large portion of the Koch coalition. He was even able to make small inroads into the Latino community by espousing support for more conservative social values popular within the largely Catholic community. Both Dinkins and Giuliani tried to appeal to Jewish voters, with Dinkins pledging his support for Israel and other Jewish issues, and Giuliani portraying Dinkins as unable to tackle crime and as overly concerned with African American issues (McNickle 1993).

In the end, Dinkins won 51% of the vote to Giuliani’s 48%. Dinkins received 94% of the Black vote, 70% of the Latino vote and a third of the White vote (see Figure 4.2). As was largely the case in the primary, Dinkins took Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, while Giuliani took Queens and Staten Island. Again, in areas that were heavily populated with minorities and liberal Whites, Dinkins held the greatest support. Conversely, in heavily conservative White Jewish and Italian parts of Queens and Staten Island (and especially Brooklyn’s Bensonhurst and Canarsie), Giuliani held the greatest appeal.
In the end, while liberal in his policy preferences, Dinkins appeared to be the candidate of moderation, and the middle-of-the-road choice for a city anxious to move away from Koch-style antagonism. From the beginning, Dinkins's strategy of soothing rather than exciting through his appeal to the city's diversity and the need to work together, helped him succeed in winning the election.

Yet in a city where registered Democrats outnumbered Republicans five-to-one, and where the Democratic nominee had the endorsement of then Governor Cuomo and Koch, Dinkins should have easily won the general election against Giuliani. Instead he won the election by a mere 47,000 votes. If roughly 24,000 of the 1.8 million people who voted had changed their minds, Giuliani would have become mayor. Despite the identification of the vast majority of the electorate as Democrats, almost 30% of that
population defected from the Democratic Party to vote for Giuliani. And even though Giuliani was less successful among Jewish voters than among outer-borough White ethnics, they still gave him 63% of their vote despite being the only White group to have a large majority of Democratic identifiers (Arian et al. 1991). What led to this type of outcome?

Upon first inspection, the answer to this question seems quite simple. In an election where a Black and White candidate meet, and where 90% of the Black electorate votes for the Black candidate and almost 70% of Whites vote for the White candidate, the simple answer would appear to be race. Blacks, Latinos, and White liberals dominated the Democratic primary, which tends to be typical, especially when minority candidates are running (Mollenkopf 1992). However, those same voters tend to yield less influence in the general election in which both White Republicans and Independents turn out and vote in greater numbers. It was questionable as to whether the more conservative elements of the Koch coalition – particularly the outer borough Jews and Catholics – would still turnout to support the party’s nominee. In the aggregate, turnout increased for all groups, though in Black and Latino assembly districts turnout increased by nearly 10 percentage points, suggesting that a minority candidate propelled minority voters to become more engaged in the election and to turn out in higher numbers. And while turnout in liberal White assembly districts increased by almost 7 percentage points, turnout in the more conservative outer boroughs comprised of Jews and White Catholics increased by 11 and 19 percentage points respectively (see Table 4.1). The substantial increase in White Catholic turnout could have been due to their desire to support Giuliani as one of their own.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Black ADs</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>+9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino ADs</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>+9.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>White liberal ADs</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>+6.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Catholic ADs</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>+19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer-borough</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>+11.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Mollenkopf (1992, 182)

Table 4.1 Turnout (%) in the 1989 Primary and General Elections, by Assembly District Type

Mollenkopf (1992) notes that race, or more specifically, racially based mistrust, provided a new basis for Whites who had traditionally voted Democratic to defect from their party (181). And as the next section demonstrates, racial anxiety and mistrust were just as critical to the election, as were local issues and perceptions of each candidate.

**Issues**

In the *CBS/New York Times* exit poll, voters were asked to indicate, which if any, of the issues listed “mattered most in deciding how you voted”. Voters could check up to two choices. Table 4.2 shows the issues cited as most important by each group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Hispanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Homeless</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Relations</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.2 Issues that were Most Important in Respondent’s Vote Decision
(cell entries are percents citing the issue as first or second most important)

Among all voters it seems that drugs, education, crime, homelessness and corruption were among the top concerns. Interestingly, the importance of these issues seems to differ by group. For Whites, the key issues of concern were crime, corruption, and drugs. And while many of these concerns were also apparent among Blacks and Latinos, they did not seem to hold such a high priority. Instead, Blacks and Latinos rated homelessness, drugs, and education as their top concerns. Incidentally, Blacks and Latinos also mentioned affordable housing with greater frequency than did Whites.

In determining the level of association between the importance of a given issue to one’s vote choice and the probability of voting for Dinkins, Arian et al. (1991) found that those who saw homelessness, education, affordable housing, race relations, and AIDS as “most important” issues preferred Dinkins over Giuliani. As Table 4.2 shows, few Whites saw these issues as most important. By contrast, in almost every group, those who
regarded drugs, corruption, and crime as “most important” preferred Giuliani over
Dinkins. These were high priority issues mainly among Whites, who did in fact support
Giuliani overwhelmingly. Only among Latinos, for whom drugs had the highest priority,
was Dinkins the preferred candidate. \(^{10}\) Perhaps Latinos were more amenable to Dinkins’s
solution for dealing with the drug problem which would be more sensitive to their
community (i.e. treatment centers versus more jails). They found few statistically
significant coefficients for Blacks, which is of little surprise given that 9 in 10 Blacks
supported Dinkins.

**Candidate Qualities**

In addition to asking which issues mattered most to one’s vote choice, the exit
poll also asked which factors or candidate qualities influenced their vote choice. Table
4.3 lists what voters’ considered to be “very important” candidate attributes (again,
respondents could choose up to 2 qualities).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>All Voters</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Hispanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty/Integrity</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debating skills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate race</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cares about people like me</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will reduce racial divisions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough on criminals</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like other candidate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.3 Candidate Attributes Cited as Most Important In Respondent’s Vote Choice, by Group
(cell entries are percents citing the issues as first or second most important)

Across all groups, honesty and integrity, competence, and being tough on criminals were mentioned most frequently as high priority qualities. Yet two additional attributes emerged with greater frequency for both Blacks and Latinos than they did among Whites. Latinos and Blacks both mentioned “cares about people like me” more frequently than Whites (23% versus 7% respectively). This is evidence of Black and Latino support for Dinkins, and perhaps their belief that having a minority mayor would greatly benefit their communities. “Will reduce racial tensions” was also mentioned with more frequency among Blacks (14%) and Latinos (16%) than among Whites (8%).

Again, Arian et al. (1991) found that the extent to which one placed a high priority on these attributes as associated with an increased probability of voting for Dinkins, those who prioritized being “tough on criminals” were much less likely to vote for Dinkins. Again, Whites were more likely to value this candidate quality than either
Blacks or Latinos, though Latinos did seem to list this attribute with a fair amount of frequency. Honesty and integrity also seemed to work in Giuliani's favor, according to Arian et al. (1991), which again, was the greatest force for Whites.

**Racial Anxiety and Mistrust**

As Arian et al. (1991) note, when one racial group does not believe that it will receive fair treatment from members of another group, "color blind" voting will be virtually impossible as was the case in this election. The exit poll data addressed this matter quite keenly by asking: "If (candidate) is elected mayor, will he favor whites over blacks? Favor blacks over whites? Be fair to both?" While roughly 70% of the electorate seemed to believe that the mayor-elect would be fair to both Whites and Blacks, the composition of that 70% for each candidate is quite revealing.

![Bar graph](image)


**Figure 4.3 Trusted Candidate to be Fair to Blacks and Whites**

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As Figure 4.3 shows, Dinkins held a slight edge overall in voters’ assessment of who would be most fair to both groups. However, while 85% of Whites believed Giuliani would be fair to both Blacks and Whites, only 38% of Blacks believed the same. Conversely, 60% of Whites believed Dinkins would be fair to both groups, while 88% of Blacks believed that Dinkins would be fair to both. Latinos were in the middle with respect to both Giuliani and Dinkins with 61% believing that Giuliani could be trusted to be fair to Blacks and Whites and 75% saying that Dinkins would be fair to both. In many respects, these figures demonstrate the extent to which the underlying racial anxiety and mistrust mattered in this election. That 56% of Blacks believed Giuliani would favor Whites and 36% of Whites believed Dinkins would favor Blacks speaks to this point. And that such a high level of racial mistrust was found to be strongly associated with voting against the mistrusted candidate across all groups is perhaps of little surprise (Arian et al. 1991).

In many ways, Dinkins’s victory over Koch and Giuliani represents a major achievement and turning point in New York City politics. From the perspective of Koch’s landslide victory in 1985, there was reason to question whether Dinkins could eke out an electoral win. First, Koch still enjoyed a great deal of electoral strength and support, particularly from the Jewish-White ethnic (conservative) coalition that he had constructed. Moreover, while Latino leadership no longer supported Koch by 1989, he still had a fair amount of support within the Latino electorate. Second, Dinkins faced a strong opponent in the general election who spoke to the issues most dear to White (Koch) voters (Arian et al. 1991).
Ultimately, the outcome of the 1989 election, and the defection of traditional Democratic voters in particular, seem to link together two racial components. One component was the racially correlated agenda items and issue preferences. As Table 4.2 demonstrates, the issue concerns of Whites, Latinos and Blacks differed greatly in this election, with Blacks and Latinos caring most about the issues that Dinkins espoused in his campaign. Whites, on the other hand, valued more those issues highlighted by Giuliani. Incidentally, these findings connect well with what was established in Chapters 2 and 3 with respect to Black and Latino beliefs about their socioeconomic and political situations. To the extent that these two groups hold similar outlooks and concerns, and perceive different realities juxtaposed to those of Whites, it will be reflected in their voting behavior, as this election demonstrates.

The second component is the race-based anxiety and mistrust operating in the election. A great deal of White and Black mistrust was apparent, with both being less inclined to believe that the candidate of the other race would be fair. Dinkins worked hard to make non-Blacks believe that he could be fair to everyone and on many levels, he was able to successfully uphold his image as a non-threatening compassionate to capture the votes of uncertain Whites (Arian et al. 1991; Biles 2001). As a White supporter of Dinkins concluded: “David Dinkins is not really a black politician. He’s a coalition politician. For people who are white and for whom race is an important factor, Dinkins is not scary. They have nothing to fear” (Apple 1989). That Dinkins received only 51% of the vote, however, suggests that a large number of Whites were still perhaps wary of supporting the African American candidate. And as the next chapter shows, the element of racial mistrust coupled with differing agenda priorities (i.e. fighting crime versus

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building housing for the homeless) again surfaces, complicating the governing environment for the newly elected mayor whose goal was “to be the mayor of all people”.

The Building of a Grand Coalition

The margin of victory for Dinkins appears to have been exceptionally strong support from the Black community, Latino shift in support to Dinkins, and a substantial White minority who trusted Dinkins and wanted him to reduce racial tensions and address the legacy of social polarization left from the Koch years. Thus, in many respects, the victory of the “grand coalition” that brought Dinkins to office was, in part, about gathering White support. However, this dissertation is concerned with the development of a strong Black-Latino alliance. Yes, Latinos were drawn to Jackson’s 1988 campaign, giving him overwhelming support. But did that necessarily mean that they would support a Black mayoral candidate?

Recall that Blacks and Latinos have historically had conflict surrounding their attempts to coalesce around minority candidates, as in the 1977 and 1985 elections. Equally as important is Latinos’ ambiguous political standing. While it is true that Latinos tend to be overwhelmingly Democrat, moderately liberal, and share a strikingly similar socioeconomic status as Black New Yorkers, their wavering partisanship and religious conservatism, oftentimes keeps them from voting Democratic in bloc as African Americans often have. Where Blacks have frequently used race/linked fate to guide their voting behavior (see chapter 2), Puerto Ricans and other Latinos have not necessarily emulated this strategy to the same degree. Thus, Latinos continued to support Koch throughout much of the 1980s until their wholesale switch to join Blacks in support of
Dinkins in 1989. What kept Puerto Ricans and other Latinos tied to Koch? Why the substantial shift in support for Dinkins between the primary and general elections? And how was Dinkins able to attract that support?

Latino support for, and subsequent abandonment of, Koch can best be explained as a combination of factors working simultaneously. From Koch’s first mayoral victory in 1977 and throughout much of his second term, he continued to secure Latino and Black (albeit waning) support mainly because he was still viewed as a friend to the minority community. At that time his policy initiatives were still viewed as liberal, and the attention paid to the Black and Latino communities through symbolic appointments was noteworthy. He took great effort to keep intact the liberal-minority coalition that had elected him. Moreover, with no viable opposition to Koch during the 1981 election and most New Yorkers liking the way he was handling his job as mayor, it made sense that Koch would continue to get support from much of the electorate.

Relations between Koch and the Black community, however, had begun to sour early on during Koch’s second term. Blacks began to observe a conservative shift in Koch’s politics, which did not sit well with a constituency that had counted on him to being a fair, reform-oriented liberal. Amidst the various racial incidents, accusations of police brutality of Blacks and Koch’s seemingly aloof response to it, as well as changes in his approach to social welfare policy caused Blacks to question their allegiance. As African American support for Koch waned, he began to heavily court the Latino community, mainly through his influence on Puerto Rican leadership.

Despite an admittedly rocky relationship at times, Latino relations with Koch had been more tolerant and neutral than that between Koch and African Americans. Koch had
great influence within the Latino community because of his symbolic appointment of leaders, who had often been criticized as not having a solid base in the Puerto Rican-Latino community, to various parts of his administration. The difference between Black and Latino support for Koch, however, lay in how each group’s leadership responded to his changing politics.

The types of political cues that the Puerto Rican-Latino community received from its most visible elected officials and leaders had been both mixed and inconsistent in terms of Koch’s record with Latino issues and concerns. As Falcon (1989) argues, Puerto Rican leadership during the 1980s was not only marginalized, but also fractured and in a state of extreme flux, making it much more vulnerable to political “outsiders.” When Koch became the most powerful politician in New York City, many old-guard Puerto Rican leaders such as Herman Badillo and Congressman Robert Garcia, sought to ally themselves with him by promoting his candidacy and policies within the community. Newer Puerto Rican leaders such as former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer and Councilman Jose Serrano, however, began to adopt a more independent position, often openly criticizing Koch’s positions (as well as those of the old-guard Puerto Rican leadership) on issues of relevance to the Latino community. This produced inconsistencies in the messages that the Latino electorate received from its leaders, which is in contrast to the Black community where most of its prominent leaders had been more or less consistently critical of Koch.

As a result of Koch’s perceived involvement in, and reaction to, the municipal scandals, as well as internal developments within Puerto Rican leadership and larger community (Falcon 1989), the basis upon which Koch was able to secure Latino support
began to shift. Despite Latinos’ greater likelihood of being open to partisan persuasion than African Americans and lingering support for Koch long after Blacks had abandoned him, they nonetheless jumped to support Dinkins when provided the opportunity. As one of the poorest groups in New York City, oftentimes subject to the same types of discrimination and repression as Blacks, they behaved politically in a way that demonstrated an identification with Blacks. Moreover, Puerto Ricans identified with the series of assaults against Blacks by White ethnics and the New York City police in recent years (Mollenkopf 1992). While Puerto Ricans and other Latinos may not have been as racially resentful and as sensitive to racist actions being perpetrated against minorities, they nevertheless understood the meaning and context of those actions as significant for not just Blacks, but other visible minorities as well.

Moreover, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos, like African Americans, had come to recognize their political powerlessness in the city (as well as Koch’s increasing conservatism) and knew that hope for changes in their socioeconomic and political situations might be realized with Dinkins. As a Dinkins campaign worker suggests, “People now are concerned with empowerment, having influence in those institutions that control the life in their community…. They realize David is their vehicle for empowerment” (Bohlen 1989). By portraying Koch and Giuliani as lax on the issue concerns of minorities and by acknowledging crime, drugs, and poverty as priority concerns for the Puerto Rican-Latino and Black communities, and thus, his administration, Dinkins was able to secure the endorsement and widespread support of virtually all Black leaders, as well as that of Puerto Rican leaders such as then Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer and Councilmen Jose Rivera and Jose Torres
(Anekwe 1989). As Dennis Rivera, president of Local 1199 acknowledged, “For African Americans and Latinos, the candidacy of David Dinkins is the vehicle to get our community out of despair…” (Anekwe 1989).

Through a conscious and continued fostering and development of the coalition that had formed during the Jackson campaign the previous year, Dinkins was able to mold relations between Black, Latino, and trade union leaders, and White reform clubs to put forth a strong alliance. A critical part of Dinkins’s electoral success, in fact, seem to lay with his ability to take advantage of the bonds created between Blacks and Puerto Ricans during the Jesse Jackson campaign. Jackson not only had the support of the major Puerto Rican elected officials, but also of labor unions like the Local 1199, which had a strong tie to the Puerto Rican-Latino community. Like other unions in the city, Local 1199 came under minority leadership in the late 1980s. In fact, then Local 1199 vice president Dennis Rivera served as Jackson’s Latino coordinator for his 1988 New York campaign (Falcon 1992). Having this type of organizational backing greatly aided in Jackson’s ability to attract Latino voters. Dinkins was, in many respects, able to take advantage of the same organizational network to link Blacks and Latinos (Mollenkopf 1992). The Black-Latino alliance, then, was partly formed through organizational networks including the Black church, public employee unions, and Puerto Rican and Black Democratic Party officials who often met with Dinkins in an effort to plan strategies for maximizing minority group support for Dinkins. Much of that alliance was also developed through strong and effective community grassroots campaigning in Black and Latino neighborhoods through organizations like the New Alliance Party. 

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Dinkins's ability to gain such a wide variety of votes also lay in his campaign strategy. So as not to alarm weary White voters, Dinkins essentially conducted separate campaigns – one for Whites and one for minorities (Arian et al. 1991). The more “public” campaign was aimed at swing constituencies like the Jews and White ethnics in parts of Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island who were either unsure of, or virtually unwilling to entertain the idea of voting for a Black candidate. Within this environment, he focused on bringing all New Yorkers together and fighting common enemies such as homelessness, crime, and drugs. The other, more “hidden” campaign relied on networks within the Black and Hispanic communities including Black and Latino-dominated Catholic churches, Black and Latino elected officials and trade union leaders. There he focused on the need for, and his support of, social welfare programs, which greatly appealed to large segments of these populations. Dinkins’s ability to conduct this type of split dialogue was, interestingly enough, facilitated by the city’s racially segmented mass media (Arian et al. 1991). Dinkins could speak to Blacks and Latinos through the Black and Spanish-speaking media – channels which Whites rarely engaged. Dinkins also employed similar strategies used in the Jackson campaign including walking the Latino neighborhoods and using bilingual direct mail to attract Latino voters. As a credit to Dinkins, this strategy worked, as he was able to successfully mobilize Black voters to unprecedented levels of turnout, while simultaneously attracting large numbers of Latinos and Whites. Indeed, Blacks and Latinos alone comprised over two-thirds of Dinkins coalition with Jews and White ethnics encompassing a little under a third.

The Black-Latino coalition that developed to elect Dinkins suggests several things. First, as suggested by the minority status hypothesis and the political and
community leaders with whom I spoke, the strong coalition developed, in part, due to these groups’ (and respective leaders’) recognition of their shared socioeconomic and political plights as minorities. That Koch and Giuliani were not perceived as being able to materially benefit these communities in the way that Dinkins proposed, indicates a perceived rationality on the part of Blacks and Latinos that there would be an advantage to supporting Dinkins.15 Similarly, the retrospective voter theory suggests that voters rationalize whether to support a given candidate based on favorable or negative assessments of their situations over the course of the incumbent’s tenure. That Latinos, and especially Blacks, had grown increasingly disenchanted with Koch and his politics makes their support for Dinkins quite rational. Thus, we find that in the 1989 primary and particularly the general election, Black and Latino voting behavior look very similar. As hypothesized in Chapter 1, Blacks and Latinos showed support for Dinkins with overwhelming majorities in each group voting for him, while overwhelming majorities of Whites voting for Koch and Giuliani.

The second aspect that becomes clear is that symbolic empowerment effects were evident among both Blacks and Latinos. Both groups, albeit Blacks more so than Latinos, believed that they would experience a gain in material benefit from a minority being in office. As Councilmember Philip Reed noted, “They [African Americans and Latinos] vote for their candidates based on the notion of their best interests being served by those people in office”16. Additionally, the psychological boost associated with possibly being able to elect the first minority to office was significant, with both Blacks and Latinos excited about this prospect. Given that Dinkins was an African American, the heightened
sense of consciousness and identity was most evident among Blacks, which partly accounts for the tremendous level of mobilization and support received from this group.

However, as hypothesized previously, Blacks are not believed to be the only group to experience this sense of empowerment. Latinos also experienced a psychological boost, which led them to higher levels of political engagement, though turnout and actual electoral support for Dinkins was not quite as high as that of Blacks. Being able to vote for a minority candidate who “cares about people like me” and who would work to reduce racial tensions counted greatly, despite bouts of competition between Blacks and Puerto Ricans in the past. In short, Latinos and Blacks saw Dinkins as being the more effective candidate to deal with issues they cared most about. As such, his candidacy inspired pride and excitement in the fact that a leader outside the ranks of the White political establishment could possibly be elected. In the end, the possibility of Black empowerment via the election of Dinkins to the mayor’s seat stimulated political engagement in both groups. However, as theorized, the Latino response to Dinkins was not as intense, which accounts for the mayor-elect receiving only 70% of the Latino vote, compared to 94% of the Black vote.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the context surrounding the election of New York’s first African American mayor. The chapter shows that while the local political context, issues, and candidate appeal mattered greatly to Dinkins’s electoral success, so too did the strong alliance created between Blacks, Latinos, and to a lesser extent White liberals – within both the leadership ranks and at the community level. Dinkins was able to capitalize on Koch’s declining popularity and the wave of racialized events occurring in the city by

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presenting himself as a racial conciliator who would heal the city of the divide that had been cultivated by Koch. For White New Yorkers, the prospect of a Dinkins administration represented an alternative calmness to the turbulent and brash way of governing demonstrated in previous years. For racial minorities in the city, however, Dinkins represented much more. In addition to the much-desired change from the impudence experienced under Koch, Dinkins himself was a minority and for the Black and Latino communities, his election embodied some semblance of empowerment. For Blacks and Latinos who had long felt excluded as both racial and political minorities, Dinkins election was monumental. It was a strong sense of having “one of their own” in office, born out of the hope that Dinkins would look out for their interests, that prompted such an overwhelming desire and will on the part of minority Democratic, community, and religious leadership to mobilize on behalf of his candidacy.

Yet as the next chapter demonstrates, from the standpoint of coalition building and being able to maintain a strong coalition once erected, simply being a minority is not always enough. Race and/or recognition of a group’s disempowered status may very well provide a compelling rationale for group members to initially support a candidate as was the case with Black and Latino support for Dinkins in 1989. But such strong support can wane if coalition members do not feel that their respective communities have been well represented and have benefited from a given minority candidate being elected to office. Indeed, governing the city of New York with an eye toward the issue concerns of each constituency that helped to elect Dinkins would prove to be an arduous, if not impossible task. Due, in part, to the unsuccessful juggling of these demands, Dinkins would serve only one term as the first African American mayor of New York. As chapter 5 reveals, by
1993 Dinkins's perceived inability to govern effectively and grant neutral treatment to all groups, combined with the ever-present state of racial antagonism and anxiety in the city, resulted in a somewhat weakened and altered coalition which could not assure his reelection.

CHAPTER 4 NOTES

1 John Lindsay was considered to be one of New York City’s most liberal mayors. As a Republican, he managed to command a great deal of support from liberal Whites (Jews), Blacks, and Latinos with his dedication to equality for all groups and a commitment to expand government benefits for the poor (McNickel 1993).

2 Personal interview. Lenora Fulani, Chair of the Independence Party, New York City, June 20, 2002.

3 In that same 1988 New York Times survey, of the majority suggesting that Koch should not be reelected, 52% were White compared to 63% of Blacks and 61% of Latinos. Similarly, the 1989 Election Exit Poll revealed that if Koch were on the ballot as a candidate, 53% said that they would not have voted for him. Again, while only 40% of Whites said that they would not have voted for Koch, 75% of Blacks and 54% of Latinos stated this.

4 During Jackson’s 1984 presidential campaign, he fed Jewish fears of anti-Semitism when he referred to New York City as “Hymietown”, a derogatory remark referencing the large number of Jews in the city.

5 Examples of racial tension, especially between Blacks and Jews, surrounded the Oceanhill/Brownsville school district as well as the Forest Hills housing controversies. The school district controversy erupted when the African American Teachers Association (AATA) in 1964 called for community control of school districts so that Black teachers could exercise power over the predominantly African American schools in which they taught. This outraged the largely Jewish United Federation of Teachers union. The liberal Lindsay administration agreed with the AATA and enacted the decentralization experiment in Brooklyn. The experiment entailed personnel changes in which White administrators and teachers were replaced by Blacks, which triggered backlashes on all parts. The scatter-site housing experiment, another idea of the Lindsay administration, called for low-income housing to be built amidst middle-class communities. The working- and middle-class Italian community of Corona vehemently protested in 1966, as did the largely Jewish middle-class community of Forest Hills in 1971. Many White local, state, and even federal officials joined in the opposition (Green and Wilson 1989).

6 The Central Park "wilding" incident occurred in the spring of 1989 when a group of African American teens beat and raped a White female jogger in the park. The incident prompted a great deal of fear and concern within New Yorkers about crime and the apparent rising lawlessness overtaking the city.

7 Black and Latino turnout, as did that of all groups, increased substantially from the primary to the general election. For instance, turnout in Black and Latino assembly districts increased from 57% and 47% respectively in the primary to 66% and 57% in the general election.
Assembly districts are like wards with district leaders. In each county, the district leaders elect a county leader, or “boss”. Outside of Manhattan, the county organization exercises considerable control over access to such elected offices as state assembly, state senate, city council, and borough presidencies. The city's sixty ADs were designed to have a predominant racial/ethnic composition. Black and Latino ADs are situated mainly in upper Manhattan (Harlem, Spanish Harlem) and the Bronx, with more Black ADs located in southeast Queens and central Brooklyn. These same two boroughs have a significant number of Jewish ADs as well. White liberal ADs can be found mainly in Manhattan, while the more conservative White Catholic ADs are almost exclusively in Staten Island (Mollenkopf 1994).

Comparing primary and general election turnout can be questionable given the different types of voters that tend to turn out for these races. Yet both the primary and general elections in this year were hotly contested and brought to the polls many voters who ordinarily would not have turned out in an election that was less than engaging. The comparison here is simply to demonstrate how the general election galvanized voters from all groups to turn out.

Drugs, which tend to be a big problem in most poor Black and Latino neighborhoods, carried the greatest importance for Latinos. This may not be too surprising given that the crack cocaine trade was particularly prevalent in many Latino neighborhoods such as Washington Heights. Moreover, the cocaine trade tends to be dominated by Columbians, while Dominicans have been known to engage in middle-level dealing (Arian et al. 1991, 230).

Falcon (1992) notes that between the 1988 Democratic presidential primary and the 1989 Democratic mayoral primary, overall turn out increased among Democrats in the city. Interestingly, the greatest increase occurred in the Latino and Black communities. For instance, on average, there was an increase of 3,128 voters per Black district and 2,713 voters per Latino district.

Personal interview. Reverend Calvin Butts, Abysinnian Baptist Church, June 18, 2002; Councilmember Philip Reed, June 24, 2002.
The mayoralty of David Dinkins began on January 1, 1990 with an aura of hope from the city’s minority community and measured skepticism among Whites. Members of the electoral coalition that helped to place him in office hoped that he would live up to his campaign promise of addressing the social ills of the larger community. However, immediately faced with a budget crisis, revenue shortfall, and a host of social problems including increasing homelessness, a deteriorating educational system, a growing AIDS epidemic, and increases in crime, drugs, and racial tensions, Dinkins confronted an almost surreal challenge. In the end, that challenge would become insurmountable, mainly because he could not fully satisfy all members of his grand electoral coalition.

Dinkins’s first act as mayor was to assure the various components of the coalition that he was serious about his administration being reflective of, and attentive to, their concerns. He appointed a number of Jewish, African American, and Latino people to his administration including first deputy mayor, Norman Steisel and Victor Kovner as head of the Corporation Council, both of whom had been key Jewish figures under the Koch administration. Dinkins also appointed Bill Lynch who has a long history with the labor movement and Black politics as Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations, as well
as a Puerto Rican attorney Sally Hernandez-Pinero. With this first symbolic act, Dinkins was able to head off early on any accusations that he would only serve the interests of African Americans (Thompson 1996).

Soon after Dinkins’s historic victory widespread doubt began to surface regarding his ability to effectively govern the city. Much of the doubt and uncertainty stemmed from not only his demeanor and personal leadership style of being non-authoritative and reactive rather than proactive, but also from his ambiguous and seemingly directionless policy agenda. As mayor, Dinkins was expected to establish his own unique program and direction in order to successfully act upon his campaign promises, which would ultimately allow him to maintain the support of his core electoral coalition. Regrettably, no such direction emerged; instead Dinkins proceeded through much of his tenure with a series of incongruous and contradictory policies that made him appear indecisive and wavering – not at all the type of dynamic leadership the city required and had hoped for. Ultimately, the perception of Dinkins as an ineffective and weak leader would lead to the fizzling of his “grand coalition” and loss of the mayoralty in 1993.

A Fragile Mosaic

Concerns over crime and race relations remained top concerns for New Yorkers as Dinkins entered office, and those same issues would follow him throughout his tenure as mayor. The summer of 1990 was marked by a series of murders that swept the city. Everyday it seemed that the media focused on such senseless killings as child murders by random drug-related gun fire, stabbings of cab drivers, and murders committed by a serial gunman who had yet to be caught (Thompson 1996). The crime wave was the lead story
in not only the media, but also in the minds of most New Yorkers, and as the crime spree seemed to continue unabated, the media as well as city residents quickly formed a link between what seemed to be Dinkins’s hesitation to address the issue via expansion of the police force and increasing crime. The major newspapers even led with bold headlines stating “Dave, Do Something!” The perception of Dinkins as timid and “slow to react” to the crime wave earned him a great deal of criticism from both the media and the public, particularly White New Yorkers, whose support for him was fading (Thompson 1996). Amid such criticism Dinkins was forced to address the crime issue, though after having just inherited a hefty budget deficit from the Koch administration, any potential solution would mean having to choose between a costly increase in police hiring and safeguarding the budget to support social service programs so important to his main coalition members.

After weeks of hesitation, Dinkins finally announced that he would increase the police force by nearly 5,000 new officers, 3,000 jail beds, and $150 million for education and youth programs aimed at crime prevention. The total cost for the anticrime initiative would amount to $650 million a year (Thompson 1996). And while the new measure quieted the media and won him praise among voters for “doing something”, the cost of the anticrime initiative prompted two politically unpopular “musts”: a $453 million tax increase and $260 million cut in social services such as day care and public health clinics (Thompson 1996). Such a decision inevitably made Dinkins look unsympathetic to the poor and sparked a great deal of discontent from those who relied on the services that were cut – many of whom supported him in the election (Biles 2001).
After having just inherited a substantial deficit, a bourgeoning crack and AIDS epidemic, lack of adequate resources for public schools, social service agencies and health care facilities, and an increase in homelessness, Dinkins's willingness to entertain such a drastic increase in police hiring to appease those who suggested that he was being "soft" on crime, and agreement to a 4.5% wage increase for the teacher's union and other municipal workers, seemed irresponsible (Thompson 1996).

Indeed, the new administration seemed to be making deep cuts in services, even though Dinkins had insisted during the campaign that services and development programs were very important to him. Dinkins was able to partially redeem himself by funding programs like the Bradhurst Plan in Harlem in spite of the budget cuts. Such plans targeted low-income communities for the construction of better housing. For instance, the Bradhurst Plan allowed for a 1,800 unit low and moderate-income housing construction and rehabilitation that would permit a coalition of churches and community groups to develop a plan for service delivery and neighborhood economic development. This innovative plan, however, was often over-shadowed by what appeared to be Dinkins's adherence to balancing the budget without much regard for the city's poor and municipal workers, who were often put off by administration-initiated cuts (Thompson 1996). Unfortunately, the city's money problems never eased during Dinkins's tenure and he never appeared to gain control of the monetary process. As New York's economy continued to fall simultaneously with that of the nation during the recession of the early 1990s, Dinkins seemed to lose credibility with each day passing as New Yorkers
witnessed creeping rates of unemployment and little improvement in the other social ills that plagued the city.

Aside from the dilemmas stemming from the city's financial woes and Dinkins's perceived wavering on the crime issue, he met criticism from many who questioned his ability to be the racial healer he fashioned himself during the campaign. Moreover, his appearance of favoring the African American community in a series of racial incidents over the course of his four years in office would open a credibility gap that he could never close. At least three major race relations events occurred during Dinkins's reign as mayor, which in the minds of those who voted for him based on his pledge to heal the city of the divisiveness fostered under Koch, were three major events too many.

In January 1990, a Black-led boycott of Korean-owned grocery stores in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn won Dinkins condemnation as being lax and passive in his handling of the situation. The boycott began over allegations that a Korean store owner struck a Haitian-American customer. The storeowner was arrested, but Black residents in the area who had often spoken of mistreatment by Korean merchants began pelting Korean employees with rocks and bottles. In the days that followed, Blacks demonstrated and protested in front of the grocery store where the incident had occurred as well as in front of another Korean-owned store across the street. The picketing and boycotting continued for nearly a year with occasional violence between Blacks and Koreans in Flatbush. At an earlier point in the boycott a judge had issued an injunction ordering protesters to stay away from the stores, but Dinkins refused to call for its enforcement.
Reluctant to inflame tensions by appearing to take sides, Dinkins instead tried to mediate the situation to little avail.

Finally in April of that year as the boycott continued, Dinkins appointed a commission to investigate the events that initiated the incident and to recommend action to restore peace to the neighborhood (Biles 2001; Kirtzman 1998). At the end of the summer, the committee issued a report essentially praising the police’s efforts to maintain peace, yet denied any racial motivation for the hostilities that occurred in the area. The report from the mayor’s committee was immediately rebuked as simplistic and out of touch with the reality of the situation. Still beset by the image of being unconcerned about the boycott and tensions occurring in Brooklyn, the media challenged Dinkins to shop at one of the stores as a symbolic call for the end of the boycott. Dinkins initially appeared reluctant but later shopped at both Korean-owned stores, which many referred to as a long overdue gesture (Biles 2001). A U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report issued in 1992 on the Flatbush incident concluded that the incident could have been managed in a much more effective manner that would have improved race relations in the city instead of worsening them. Accusations of insensitivity to the plight of the Koreans were surely a blow to the new mayor who had campaigned so vigorously on being a racial conciliator. In the end, the perception among many New Yorkers outside of the Black community was that Dinkins appeared to have demonstrated little concern about violence perpetrated against other minority groups. This same sentiment would resurface the next year in what could be considered the most serious Black-Jewish racial conflict in the city.
In August 1991 violence erupted in the predominantly Black Caribbean and Orthodox Jewish area of Crown Heights, Brooklyn when one of the cars in an entourage carrying a Jewish community leader ran a red light, careened out of control onto the sidewalk, and hit and killed a little Black boy on his bike. When rumors quickly spread that an ambulance run by a private Jewish company had tended to the injured driver first before the critically injured child, angry Blacks, convinced that this was yet another instance of Jews receiving preferential treatment, protested through the streets. During the heated demonstrations, in a display of public disorder not seen in years, a Jewish student was stabbed and killed. The Jewish community was outraged, particularly when Dinkins chose to speak at the funeral services of the Black child, but failed to attend the funeral of the Jewish student who was slain (Biles 2001; Kirtzman 1998).

The riots in Crown Heights continued for four days with the police oddly playing a passive role. Black community activists such as Lenora Fulani, Al Sharpton, and Alton Maddox, in the absence of any elected Black officials, tried desperately to subdue the angry youth who were in a virtual stand-off with police. Only after Dinkins himself went to Crown Heights to observe the chaos did the police move in full force to quell the rioting. ¹ The Jewish community accused Dinkins of failing to protect Hasidic Jews from Black violence, which Dinkins adamantly denied. To make matters worse, when the man accused of killing the Jewish student was acquitted, Dinkins chastised the Hasidic community for questioning the verdict. Soon after the 1992 acquittal, then Governor Mario Cuomo, who would be facing a reelection bid of his own, commissioned a report of the Crown Heights incident analyzing the performance of the police and the mayor.

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Right before the 1993 election, Cuomo's commissioned report was publicly released and portrayed Dinkins, in no uncertain terms, as inept and woefully unaware of the depth of tensions and violence between Blacks and Jews, which led to his slow reaction in deploring police to shut down the riots (Biles 2001; Kirtzman 1998; Purdum 1993). In short, the commission's report and the media portrayed Dinkins as being "out to lunch" and ineffective in addressing a situation that could have been handled much better through the exercise of stronger leadership. And while hints were made of Dinkins failing to act more swiftly out of concern for offending the Black community by appearing to side with Jews, Blacks actually criticized Dinkins for not "backing them up" and doing enough to quiet commotion from the Hasidic community (McNickle 1993).

Dinkins would be forced to deal with yet another racial disturbance when the police and Dominicans in the upper Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights clashed over the killing of a Dominican immigrant by a White police officer. In the summer of 1992 Jose "Kiko" Garcia was shot and killed, according to arresting officers, for waving a handgun while resisting arrest; Garcia's family members, however, insisted that he was unarmed. Despite Dinkins's attempts to control tensions and anger in the Latino community, rioting in the area continued for nearly a week. Concerned about accusations of police brutality and appearances of cover-ups of police misconduct, Dinkins promised that the city would move to investigate the incident and went to great lengths to demonstrate his sympathy to the Garcia family. An investigation and autopsy later revealed that Garcia had been an active participant in drug trade in the Washington Heights area and also had drugs in his system at the time of his death. Despite these facts,
however, Dinkins arranged for the city to pay Garcia’s funeral expenses (Biles 2001). Moreover, he agreed to Black and Latino’s calls for the establishment of a Civilian Review Board to hear complaints of police misconduct. Knowing how divisive this same issue had been in previous years, Dinkins moved forward with the launching of the Board, precipitating open and hostile protest from the police in which racial epithets and other demeaning taunts were hurled at Dinkins for his perceived failure to back them. Rudolph Giuliani, who would face Dinkins in the general election, openly sided with the police union in his speech during the police protest (Lankevich 1998).

By the time campaign season for the 1993 election came around, Dinkins’s level of support had seriously diminished and he was regarded by many New Yorkers as an ineffective leader who was incapable of exacting fair leadership. A New York Times/ CBS poll revealed that not only had Dinkins’s overwhelmingly favorable status among probable voters dropped to a mere 42% (down from a 64% favorability rating in 1989), but only a bare majority (55%) said they had plans to vote for him in the upcoming election. The same 1993 poll also found that a majority of respondents believed that life in the city had gotten worse over the last four years (58%), that race relations were generally bad (80%), and believed the city to be less safe than four years previous (52%). These perceptions, coupled with the finding that a majority of respondents felt that Dinkins lacked strong qualities of leadership (51%) and was not tough enough on crime (59%), seems to indicate that a number of New Yorkers were not satisfied with Dinkins’s performance since entering office. In fact, only 53% said that they approved of the way Dinkins was handling his job as mayor. Interestingly, however, while a majority of
respondents said they believed Dinkins truly cared about the needs and problems of average New Yorkers (79%), they seemed split on whether his term overall could be called a success (43%) or a failure (40%). As the next section demonstrates, perceptions matter and greatly impacted New Yorkers’ vote choice, as those who believed Dinkins had failed as a leader were less likely to support him in the primary and general elections and more likely to support Giuliani.

The 1989 and 1993 mayoral elections were virtually identical in that both Dinkins and Giuliani were again the top contenders in the race. These elections differed, however, in terms of the changed composition of each candidate’s coalition. In 1989, Dinkins had overwhelming Black and Latino support along with that of White liberals. Yet by 1993 Dinkins could no longer be assured of the White liberal (mainly Jewish) support that was so critical to his electoral victory in 1989. Likewise, his Latino, and to a lesser extent, Black support, had also waned in that the fervor and excitement generated by his election in 1989 had declined. It appeared that the “gorgeous mosaic”, a reference Dinkins often made to the different racial and ethnic groups that comprised his coalition, had collapsed.

The Primary Election

In what was considered to be a rather uneventful primary race, Dinkins faced two challengers from within the Democratic Party. Roy Innis, a moderately conservative African-American and national chair of the Congress of Racial Equality, and Eric Melendez, a Latino civil engineer for the city’s Department of Environmental Protection Agency, established their candidacies on the notion that Dinkins had done an inadequate job as mayor since 1989. Innis portrayed the mayor as a weak leader who had not been
able to protect the city's residents and through his mishandling of various racial incidents, had actually led to more division among the races (Cottman 1993). Melendez, who also suggested that Dinkins lacked mayoral leadership qualities, also admitted that his candidacy was really more of a symbolic challenge so that a Hispanic candidate would be on the ballot (Purdum 1993).

Interestingly, while the Democratic primary included for the first time in history two top African American candidates and a Latino, the election failed to garner much excitement among voters. Aside from the fact that Innis and Melendez's candidacies stood little chance of preventing Dinkins from winning the nomination, the race was being overshadowed by the impending rematch between Dinkins and Giuliani in November. Similarly, the more competitive races for the number two and three jobs of Public Advocate (first in line of succession to the mayor) and Comptroller (government watchdog) received more attention than the mayoral primary. What did make the primary (and general election for that matter) interesting from the standpoint of Democratic politics in the city is that while no one doubted that Dinkins would take the nomination, fellow partisan leaders around the city were hesitant to support Dinkins. Indeed, while most council members were unwilling to fully abandon the mayor, few were eager to align themselves too closely - even though virtually all of the forty or so Democrats up for reelection were guaranteed to win their seats. The reluctance on the part of Democratic leaders to fully support the mayor likely had to do with fear of how their constituents would react to them as full-fledge supporters of Dinkins, whom many voters largely disapproved of by 1993. And although most Black and Latino Democratic leaders
remained loyal in their support of Dinkins, the fact that all Democrats were not on board signaled the trouble that lay ahead for Dinkins going into the general election (Purdum 1993).

In a predictable race in which less than a fourth of the city's 2.3 million Democrats turned out, and one in which neither Innis nor Melendez received the campaign money or visibility to mount much of a challenge, Dinkins won the primary election with 68% of vote. Innis and Melendez with 25% and 7% respectively, took the remaining 32% of the vote (see Figure 5.1).

![Figure 5.1 1993 Democratic Primary Vote](source)

Source: *New York Times*, September 13, 1993
And while a surprising proportion of Innis’s vote came from more conservative White areas in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, and much of Melendez’s minimal support came from predominantly Latino areas such as the Bronx and East (Spanish) Harlem, Dinkins still received a plurality, if not a majority, in virtually all Black, Latino, and White liberal areas.

However, that fewer people turned out in this year’s Democratic primary (22%) than in any other since World War II is telling, especially when turnout was at 50% in 1989. One might consider such low turnout as unsurprising given Dinkins assured victory over Innis and Melendez and the desire for New Yorkers to “save” their votes for the general election. However, one might also regard such a poor showing for Dinkins in the primary as a symbolic commentary on his performance over the previous years. Indeed, that in White neighborhoods like Bensonhurst, Canarsie and Bath Beach in Brooklyn, predominantly Jewish Riverdale/Woodlawn in the Bronx, Howard Beach and Forest Hills in Queens, and in Staten Island, Roy Innis who was often referred to as a neoconservative with extreme views could beat Dinkins by margins as great as 2 to 1, did not speak well for the mayor.

Although Dinkins was able to save face with the victory of his running mate for Public Advocate, Mark Green, that a quarter of the Democratic electorate was willing to support Innis only served to underscore voters’ skepticism and thus Dinkins’s vulnerability as the general election approached. And while Dinkins did very well in Black neighborhoods like Harlem, East New York (Brooklyn), and St. Albans (Queens), turnout was down significantly, with him winning only a fraction of the votes received in
these same areas in 1989. Likewise, in largely Hispanic areas like East Harlem, Williamsburgh/Bushwick (Brooklyn), and Morris Heights (Bronx), Dinkins did very well, despite Melendez being on the ballot. As he did in 1989, Dinkins met with key Black and Latino leadership and campaigned heavily in minority neighborhoods. But again, turnout was significantly down resulting in him receiving fewer Black and Latino votes in these areas than he did in 1989 (see Table 5.1).

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1993</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dinkins</td>
<td>Koch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominantly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black ADs</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem (Manhattan)</td>
<td>21,740</td>
<td>1,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. New York (Brooklyn)</td>
<td>17,183</td>
<td>1,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Albans (Queens)</td>
<td>25,754</td>
<td>1,852</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Predominately</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Latino ADs</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Harlem (Manhattan)</td>
<td>15,712</td>
<td>5,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg/Bushwick (Brooklyn)</td>
<td>8,356</td>
<td>5,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris Heights (Bronx)</td>
<td>11,788</td>
<td>2,565</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Predominately</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ethnic ADs</td>
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<td>Forest Hills (Queens)</td>
<td>3,138</td>
<td>15,505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canarsie (Brooklyn)</td>
<td>3,922</td>
<td>14,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Shore (Staten Island)</td>
<td>2,162</td>
<td>8,043</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Table 5.1 Primary Election Turnout by District Type
The considerable lack of turnout for Dinkins in 1993 compared with that of 1989 can be partly explained by changing perceptions of Dinkins as a leader and his ability to effectively govern the city. For many White voters, especially within the Jewish community, wavering support for Dinkins represented concern about whether he was tough enough on crime or decisive enough in general. Moreover, the Crown Heights incident was clearly a defining event for Jews and other White liberals who had looked to Dinkins to calm racial tensions. For more conservative Whites in areas like Canarsie, the feeling was that Dinkins had favored Blacks and other minorities over Whites, which left them feeling powerless in the city (Fisher 1993; Olmstead 1993).

Among Latinos and Blacks (albeit more so in the case of the former than in the latter), there seemed to be an overarching sense of Dinkins not having done enough substantively while in office, though that sentiment was mixed within these communities. Some Latinos in the University Heights area of the Bronx, for instance, indicated that "everything has stayed the same…. [Dinkins] hasn’t kept his promises..." (Mandell 1993). Others, however, showed a sense of understanding. "I feel that [Dinkins’s] doing all right. There are jobs now. I have a job now…. Dinkins got more cops out on the street" (Mandell 1993). And with respect to Dinkins’s performance, another Latino voter noted that "Dinkins is doing what he can. The fires, killings, drugs, robberies. It isn’t the Mayor. It’s the people" (Mandell 1993). Among some Black voters, while seemingly less likely to publicly voice the notion that Dinkins was an ineffective leader, the feeling nonetheless seemed to be that he had taken their support for granted and failed to deliver jobs and services to their neighborhoods. Though whatever Dinkins’s faults were during
his first term in office, Blacks were fervently against Giuliani winning the election, which likely accounted for their continued support for Dinkins in 1993 (Dugger 1993).

In the end, the combination of Dinkins’s handling of the deficit by way of cuts in city employment and social programs angered his working-class and poor constituents, while his management of the Crown Heights incident infuriated Blacks and Jews with each group believing that the Mayor had inappropriately shown deference to the other group. The perception of Dinkins as indecisive and directionless brought about growing skepticism among Whites and guarded support among minorities, placing Dinkins in a precarious position as the general election neared. With most New Yorkers dissatisfied with Dinkins’s performance, yet intensely uncomfortable with the notion of a Giuliani mayoralty, and Giuliani the tough-talking former prosecutor vying for the votes of crime-weary residents by way of his promise to sweep the streets of drug dealers and violent offenders, the November election would be anyone’s guess. Could Dinkins maintain the support of his 1989 grand coalition or would key members of that coalition defect to the Giuliani camp?

The General Election

Although the mood going into the general election was more anti-Dinkins than pro-Giuliani, both recognized the need to come out fighting – Dinkins to try and maintain the support of his 1989 coalition members, and Giuliani to try and capture those who might defect from the Dinkins camp but may have been wary about supporting a Republican.
Campaigning heavily in their respective hotspots – Giuliani in outer-borough conservative areas and Dinkins in Black, Latino and liberal White communities – each tried to drive home his main theme. Dinkins, who in 1989 pledged to be “the toughest mayor on crime” New York had ever seen, reiterated that pledge and urged voters to remember his landmark Safe Streets, Safe City program initiated after the 1990 crime wave. He also highlighted the fact that not only had crime declined in seven major FBI categories of serious crime for the first time in decades, but that there were also a record number of police on the streets protecting citizens in their neighborhoods (Liff 1993). Yet a number of polls, including the New York Times/CBS New York City Poll (1993) revealed that New Yorkers believed crime was still a problem and that the city was still unsafe. Thus, while the crime rate had actually fallen during Dinkins’s tenure, in this case, perception was everything. Giuliani knew this and exploited it to the fullest by campaigning throughout the city – even in “Dinkins” territory – underscoring the point that while Dinkins may be a nice guy, he was an incompetent leader not up to the task of managing the city, frequently making reference to his handling of the budget and racial incidents over the previous four years (Chiles 1993; Purdum 1993). Trying desperately to remove voter wariness and media claims of the election being a referendum on his tenure in office, Dinkins instead stressed Giuliani’s inexperience, conservative ideology, and proposed policies as antithetical to the people and overall direction of the city.

Still, what many voters perceived to be Dinkins’s haphazard and disconnected way of governing is what remained problematic for him throughout the campaign and very nicely laid the foundation for Giuliani’s campaign platform. So while many people
thought Dinkins was a nice person, that he had a mixed record on everything from race relations and homelessness, to contradictory budgetary policies and his inaccessibility to constituents, was indisputable. Therefore, while no one could argue that Giuliani necessarily had the capabilities and competence to do a better job (public perception of him was that he was not as likeable and caring as Dinkins, conveying an unfamiliarity and unease with people outside of his immediate circle of White males), he was able to successfully argue his ability to do a better job than Dinkins because of the strong public perception that the mayor was incompetent. Moreover, by focusing on the issue of competence Giuliani was able to draw in a number of disgruntled Democrats, urging them to have the courage to cross party lines and elect him so that “Democrats and Republicans could work hand in hand” to solve the city’s problems (Schanberg 1993).

By 1993 it was evident that many of those who had actively supported Dinkins in 1989 were now skeptical and were open to persuasion from the Giuliani camp. Recognizing the importance of drawing in what would be the critical swing vote – uncertain independent-minded liberals and Hispanics – both Giuliani and Dinkins engaged in strong grassroots campaigning, making the rounds in Jewish and Latino neighborhoods. And after what appeared to be a hard fought campaign that produced so little enthusiasm for either candidate, it ended with Dinkins losing the election by nearly the same margin with which he had beaten Giuliani in 1989. Running as a “fusion” candidate with two Democratic running mates, Councilwoman Susan Alter for Public advocate and Herman Badillo for Comptroller, and a host of endorsements from political
figures such as former Mayor Koch and the son of former Mayor Robert Wagner, Giuliani secured 51% of the vote to Dinkins's 48%.

Source: Voter Research and Surveys General Election Exit Poll

Figure 5.2 1993 General Election Vote, by group

Dinkins did about as well as he did in 1989 securing roughly 95% of the Black vote, approximately two-thirds of the Latino vote, but only one-fourth of the White vote, which accounts for much of the Democratic defection to the Giuliani side. Indeed, what helped Giuliani the most was overwhelming Republican and outer-borough White ethnic support. Turnout was up in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island and moved in his direction, though part of the increase in turnout can be attributed to the issue of Staten Island succession on the ballot. This was a driving force in Giuliani's victory because regardless of where Staten Island voters stood on the issue of succession, they were much
more likely than other New Yorkers to be Giuliani supporters. And while Giuliani fell short of creating a new broad and moderate coalition of Whites (and to a lesser extent Hispanics), he was able to creep into Dinkins’s base of support just enough to foil a Dinkins mayoral victory.

As Figure 5.2 and Table 5.2 reveal, while Dinkins did well among his core constituents, lower turnout and a moderate increase in support for Giuliani was evident. For instance, increased support for Giuliani in heavily Jewish (except the Upper West Side) and White ethnic areas was substantial. Lower overall turnout, particularly in Black and Latino districts, as well as White liberal (and some Hispanic) defection likely aided in Dinkins’s loss.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Giuliani</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Black AOs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Turnout</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Latino AOs</strong></td>
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<td>Bushwick (Brooklyn)</td>
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<td>Morris Heights (Bronx)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turnout</strong></td>
<td>71,313</td>
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Table 5.2 General Election Turnout by District Type
(Continued on next page)
Table 5.2 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Giuliani</th>
<th>Dinkins</th>
<th>Giuliani</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Jewish and White</strong></td>
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<td>7,537</td>
<td>23,341</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Shore (Staten Island)</td>
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<td>36,173</td>
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<td><strong>Turnout</strong></td>
<td>179,122</td>
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</table>


As was the case in the 1989 election, the vote was largely determined by issues and perceptions of the candidates within the larger context of racial mistrust.

**Issues**

According to the 1993 Exit Poll (Voter Research and Surveys), a majority of voters (55%) believed race relations had gotten worse and believed New York City to be less safe than four years previous (53%), and when asked which issues mattered most in deciding how they voted, most respondents mentioned crime, race relations, quality of life, the economy, and jobs/unemployment. Table 5.3 shows the proportion of each demographic group that identified these issues as important to their vote choice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race relations</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public schools</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Heights</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs/unemployment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5.3 Issues Mentioned as Most Important to Vote Choice
(cells represent a first or second mention by respondent)

As was the case in the 1989 election, the importance of a given issue varied from group to group. While crime, race relations, and quality of life issues were relatively important to each group, crime seemed to be most salient for Whites, while for Latinos and especially Blacks, the most important issue was race relations. And while Blacks and Latinos both mentioned crime as an important second issue, they found it to be somewhat less important than did Whites. Interestingly, quality of life appears as a distant third concern for both Whites and Blacks, but what seemed to matter a great deal for Latinos was the issue of drugs. As mentioned in Chapter 4, drugs are a particularly acute problem in many poor minority communities and have hit the Latino community especially hard.
which helps to explain their greater sensitivity to the issue. Interestingly, while a fair proportion from each group also mentioned the economy as a distant concern, Blacks (19%) and Latinos (14%) were much more likely than Whites (9%) to list jobs/unemployment as an issue of concern. The greater propensity for Blacks and Latinos, then, to be concerned about jobs/unemployment and to use that as part of their vote calculus suggests the impact of socioeconomic concerns and the fact that these communities suffer from higher levels of unemployment and poverty than do Whites in New York.

As one might imagine, how voters perceived the importance of these issues was reflected in their vote choices for mayor. Those who believed race relations, quality of life, and jobs/unemployment to be salient issues voted overwhelmingly for Dinkins, as he was still perceived as the candidate better able to handle race relations and socioeconomic problems like jobs and unemployment. As Table 5.3 showed, all groups tended to mention these issues as being important, though that tendency was somewhat greater among Blacks and Latinos, especially on the issues of race relations and jobs/unemployment. Conversely, those who voted for Giuliani were overwhelmingly concerned about crime, an issue that mattered most for Whites, and as such, drove the vote for Giuliani who was perceived as better able to handle this issue than Dinkins. And while Crown Heights was not mentioned as a major concern of voters according to Table 5.3 with only 4% of Whites and 2% of Blacks and Latinos mentioning it as important to their vote decisions, 9% of Jewish voters mentioned it as important. Perhaps to little

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surprise, Jews voted overwhelmingly for Giuliani, probably in response to their interpretation of how Dinkins handled that situation.

**Candidate Attributes**

In addition to asking which issues mattered most to the respondents in choosing between Dinkins and Giuliani, the exit poll also asked which of a number of “candidate qualities” mattered most. As can be seen in Table 5.4, being fair to all groups (17%), being tough enough to be Mayor (16%), being able to bring the city together (15%), and honesty/integrity (14%) were mentioned most frequently. These four candidate qualities, however, did not hold equally as top priorities for each demographic group. As was the case with issue concerns, Whites, Blacks, and Latinos prioritized different attributes, which ultimately seemed to affect their vote choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race of candidate</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough enough to be mayor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair to all groups</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cares about people like me</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can bring city together</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty/integrity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Voter Research and Surveys Exit Poll, 1993. N=1,276

**Table 5.4 Candidate Qualities Mentioned as Important to Vote Choice**

(cell entries are first and second mentions)
While all groups appeared to desire a mayor who would be fair to all groups, it was a first priority for Blacks (21%) and only a second for Latinos (18%) and Whites (16%).

Though, based on the demeanor and past actions of each candidate, it is likely that “being fair to all groups” probably meant something different for Whites on the one hand and for Blacks and Latinos on the other. If Whites felt that Dinkins had favored Blacks and other minorities throughout his term in office, which many voters in predominately White areas like Canarsie suggested, then they might perceive Giuliani as more likely to be fair to all groups (meaning being fair to Whites) (Fisher 1993). Blacks and Latinos, however, perhaps felt differently having experienced or at least perceived unfair treatment under White administrations. The Koch administration served as a potent reminder of how minorities would likely fare, and as a moderately conservative Republican, there was no indication that Giuliani would have the interests of the minority community at heart. For Blacks and Latinos, then, having a mayor who would be fair to all groups would mean having Dinkins who expressed concern for the interests of not only New Yorkers as a whole, but also for the special interests of the minority community.

Interestingly, while Whites much more so than Blacks and Latinos prioritized competence and having someone tough enough to be Mayor, likely meaning having someone who could adequately handle the city’s financial and social dilemmas, Blacks and Latinos were more likely to prioritize experience. What the previous section of this chapter indicated was that all New Yorkers, but especially Whites, believed that Dinkins had demonstrated an overwhelming sense of incompetence and ineptitude during his

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term. Giuliani was able to capitalize on these perceptions throughout the campaign, even though he himself lacked experience in office, which Dinkins had and Blacks and Latinos believed to be an important attribute.

Table 5.4 also shows racial group differences in candidate qualities that in the aggregate do not command an overwhelming proportion of voters’ concerns, yet do factor into the overarching vote decision. For example, in the aggregate “race of candidate” and “cares about people like me” were mentioned by only 2% and 9% of voters respectively. Yet it is the differences in who found these qualities to be important that is intriguing and it speaks to the racially charged atmosphere of the election.

While only 8% of Whites said that having a candidate that “cares about people like me” was important, 10% of Blacks and 11% of Latinos expressed this sentiment as having some importance in their vote choice. Similarly, while never explicitly stated, race was very much a part of the electoral outcome, as well over 70% of Whites (including 63% of Jews) voted for Giuliani, while 95% of Blacks and 66% of Latinos voted for Dinkins. However, only 1% of Whites were willing to admit that the race of the candidate mattered to their vote decision compared to 5% and 6% of Latinos and Blacks. As I argued in the latter part of Chapter 4, the greater inclination on the part of Blacks and Latinos to indicate that the “race of the candidate” and “cares about people like me” mattered to their vote decision is probably linked to the assumption that a mayor from a racial minority group will be more likely to care about and act upon the interests and concerns of those from minority communities. This, in part, helps to explain why Dinkins continued to receive overwhelming Black and Latino support in spite of a less than
remarkable first term. Blacks and even Latinos were not convinced that Giuliani as a White conservative Republican would necessarily act in their favor. Many Whites, however, did not believe that Dinkins had shown equal concern for their interests, but rather an over-concern for that of the minority community, which could account for the 8% of Whites who said “cares about people like me” mattered and they were more than likely referring to Giuliani as the candidate who would do so.

In many ways, the election hinged on perceptions of who would be more compassionate versus who would be more effective, and oftentimes these qualities can be found in the same candidate. For most New Yorkers, however, they were not, and so while Dinkins may have been perceived as the more compassionate individual, Giuliani was seen as the one who could “fix” the city. And as expected, those voters who prioritized “competence” and “being tough enough” voted for Giuliani, while those who mentioned experience, being fair to all groups, and caring about people like me voted for Dinkins. In the end, Giuliani’s rough and tough approach to fixing New York won out over Dinkins’s conciliatory, yet feeble approach which had worn thin with voters. Regression analysis of the determinants of the 1989 and 1993 mayoral votes indicates that in both years the probability of voting for Dinkins depended whether one was Black, Latino, a Democrat, and liberal, but also on issues and voter perceptions of the candidates. For instance, in 1989, while having an optimistic outlook on the city and wanting someone to reduce racial tensions was associated with a vote for Dinkins, wanting someone to be tough on criminals and to address corruption was associated with a vote for Giuliani. Similarly, in 1993, having a more pessimistic outlook on the city and
wanting someone who would be a tough mayor were associated with a vote for Giuliani, while caring about race relations, quality of life, jobs and the economy were associated with a vote for Dinkins (see Appendix B).

The Withering of the Grand Coalition?

Political observers agreed that the 1993 general election would come down to two swing vote groups – Jews and Hispanics. Many Jews, who had been slowly moving away from Dinkins ever since the Crown Heights incident in 1991, were expected to shift their support to Giuliani. Latinos also shifted some of their support to Giuliani as evident in the moderate increase in support from him between 1989 and 1993. In 1989 Latinos gave Dinkins nearly three-quarters of their vote making them second only to African Americans in support for Dinkins. However, in 1993 the Latino vote for Dinkins would amount to roughly two-thirds, which is still a fair amount of support. Yet, Latino support for Giuliani between 1989 and 1993 grew by nearly four percentage points. Thus, perhaps the issue is not so much that Dinkins lost tremendous Latino support, but rather that like Jewish voters, the small amount of support he lost among this group shifted directly to Giuliani.

In the end, the shift in Jewish and Latino support was just enough to erode Dinkins’s chances of edging out a win over Giuliani. Additionally, despite having an exceptional field operation campaign with voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives in Black and Latino communities, turnout in those areas, while still impressive, had declined somewhat (see Table 5.2). What led to such a decrease in turnout in these
communities and the moderate Latino defection from the Dinkins camp? What would this mean for the tenuous, yet visible Black-Latino alliance?

Like other New Yorkers, Blacks and Latinos were well aware of the mistakes made by the Dinkins administration. Both communities were, at times, angered and offended by the administration's policy decisions (or indecision) which were perceived as harmful to the interests of their communities (i.e. cuts in child welfare, city jobs).

However, it seems that Blacks were less willing, more so than any other group, to hold those mistakes against him and desperately wanted to see him reelected. Admittedly, such a desire to reelect Dinkins probably had more to do with pride in having seen the first African American mayor of New York elected to office as well as the continued hope that as a Black mayor, he would help the Black community. After all, Dinkins had appointed Blacks and other minorities to his administration, tried to address key issues like low- and moderate-income housing shortages, and issues of police misconduct. And while few Blacks could disagree with the argument that Dinkins had made mistakes during his tenure and that he conducted himself as more of a bureaucrat than a "street-level" activist for the Black community, they believed that he had honestly tried to do what he could with what he was given. Moreover, most Blacks were extremely uncomfortable with the thought of a Giuliani administration.

For African Americans, and to a considerable extent Latinos, Dinkins represented some measure of inclusion and empowerment for people of color in the city, something that minorities feared would disappear under Giuliani. And as the minority status hypothesis and empowerment thesis suggest, feelings of empowerment and the
expectation that minority communities would benefit more under a Dinkins administration than under a Giuliani administration should produce greater support for Dinkins as the minority candidate among minority voters. As hypothesized for the 1989 election, this pattern did in fact emerge with Blacks and Latinos voting overwhelmingly for Dinkins, and Whites showing overwhelming support for Giuliani. With minimal exception, Blacks simply refused to support Giuliani. So while enthusiasm for Dinkins may have waned somewhat within the Black community, producing a decline in turnout and even some movement in terms of support for Giuliani, Blacks remained solidly within the Dinkins camp. The same, however, cannot be said of Latinos whose support for Giuliani increased somewhat from 1989 to 1993. And although the 3–4 percentage point shift in Latino support for Giuliani cannot be said to have been the major reason for Dinkins’s loss and Giuliani’s victory, it deserves some attention as a partial factor related to the electoral outcome and it also sheds light on the apparent tensions within the Black-Latino coalition that seemed to have surfaced by 1993.

Latino support for Dinkins in 1993 was visibly less enthusiastic than in 1989 as evidenced by the lower turnout and actual support for Dinkins in Latino communities. The retrospective voter theory suggests that voters grant their support based on evaluations of the improvement (or deterioration) of their situations over the course of the incumbent’s term. To the extent that Latinos and other groups were satisfied or displeased with Dinkins’s performance, their voting behavior reflected that sentiment. Latino defection from the Dinkins camp stemmed not only from their greater openness to persuasion by non-Democrats given their tendency to self-identify as conservative, and
their reduced likelihood of using race as a voting cue, but also from the feeling that they as a group had not benefited as much from the Dinkins administration as they should have given their critical support in 1989.

Only slightly less numerous than Blacks in the early 1990s, Latinos received about one-third as many city jobs and fewer patronage positions as Blacks (Biles 2001). Early into the Dinkins mayoralty Puerto Rican leaders expressed concern about what appeared to be the lop-sided granting of affirmative action hiring and put the mayor on notice that the Puerto Rican community would be watching the Dinkins administration to make sure that it receives its “fair share” (Biles 2001). Thompson (1996) notes that Latino leaders often felt “out of loop” on major initiatives taken by the administration that in some way affected the Latino community. And even though Dinkins made symbolic gestures such as the appointment of a Puerto Rican woman as deputy mayor for Finance and Economic development and a Cuban as head of the Health and Hospital Corporation, neither had a political background in New York and were not really viewed as channels for local patronage (77). Puerto Ricans, more so than other Latinos in New York, felt that they deserved more power and inclusion in various levels of government and industry, and consequently, were not as impressed with symbolic gestures such as Dinkins traveling to Puerto Rico to show commitment to the Latino community. They wanted concrete benefits from Dinkins, but did not feel that they received them (Jordan 1993).

Perceptions of Latinos not receiving their “fair share” largely because of the preferential treatment of Blacks at all levels of government, combined with the
endorsement of Giuliani by such recognizable Puerto Ricans as former president of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund, Ruben Franco, and former Dinkins Fire Commissioner, Carlos Rivera, reflect a new development within the Puerto Rican establishment, which had grown disenchanted with Dinkins (Jordan 1993). The slight shift in Latino voter support for Dinkins in the 1993 election, then, was likely most evident among Puerto Ricans, since Dominicans (the second largest politically active group) still largely approved of Dinkins and his interaction with their community.6

Dinkins’s loss produced a contentious riff between Blacks and Latinos similar to that which developed in the 1985 election. Many Blacks blamed Hispanics for Dinkins’s loss, as they had when Ferrell lost in 1985, suggesting that Hispanic leaders did not campaign as vigorously to reelect Dinkins. In reality, however, Dinkins still had a great deal of support from Hispanic elected officials and Latino voters. But as Piatt (1998) notes, in politics perceptions become reality. Tensions increased producing a deterioration in the relations between Black and Latino leaders including Representative Charles Rangel and the then Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer and Representative Jose Serrano.

Despite rising tensions over Dinkins’s performance with respect to Latinos and the electoral outcome, Blacks and Latinos still recognized the need to work together. In early 1996, Black and Hispanic leaders began meeting to develop strategies for the two groups to work more closely. Hispanic legislators who had boycotted the annual meeting of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus in the state legislature in Albany began to attend the meetings again, indicating an understanding of the work that needed to be
accomplished for the betterment of both communities (Piatt 1998). Fernando Ferrer had a particular interest in rebuilding alliances between Blacks and Latinos given his suspected desire to run in the 1997 mayoral election. However, as the next chapter shows, the Black-Latino coalition would remain fragile, and Blacks and Hispanics would again experience the loss of a minority candidate in the primary election.

Conclusion

Evidence from the 1993 election suggests that at least four factors contributed to the shifting of key players in Dinkins's "grand coalition" of 1989, which ultimately led to the 1993 electoral outcome.

First, changed perceptions of Dinkins as a leader based on his performance in office, which was in great measure a combination of both his leadership style and unfortunate luck of inheriting the mayoralty in the midst of a recession and major budget deficit. The recession of 1990-91 left the city financially strapped, which forced budget cuts. Dinkins, as a liberal-minded Democrat, was wrought with the decision of cutting services and/or public jobs – both of which would adversely affect his poor and minority constituents. Unfortunately, cutting either services or jobs would set Dinkins up for charges that he was not working in the best interests of his primary coalition members. Not wanting to appear as a traitor and because it went against his liberal principals, he tried desperately to cut neither, thereby leaving him open to charges that he was indecisive at best or captive to Black interests at worse (Mollenkopf 1997). By trying to satisfy all members of his coalition – African Americans and Latinos by not cutting jobs and services until left with no choice, unions by granting pay increases, for example – he
ended up supporting contradictory policies which came to light when he was later forced to lay off thousands of city employees and cut social programs because of a growing deficit. Moreover, Dinkins’s billion-dollar effort to expand the number of police cost him dearly. While such an action fulfilled his pledge to be tough on crime and showed concern for the desires of outer-borough Whites, it also had the effect of deleting his political capital and took funds from social policy innovation that would have helped his other constituencies (Mollenkopf 1992).

Inconsistencies in policy direction were not the only problems perceived to be related to Dinkins’s performance. While he was believed to be a good man personally, he was also perceived to be inept and aloof where matters of local governance were concerned. As detailed in the previous section of this chapter, a majority of New Yorkers felt that crime and quality of life (the economy, race relations etc.) were worsening and apparently assessed blame to the Mayor. As one who pledged to bring the city together, work for all New Yorkers, and reduce crime and racial tensions, most voters believed that he had failed. The perception of Dinkins as not being able to follow through on his campaign promises gave Giuliani the ammunition he needed to successfully run against Dinkins, despite not having proven his own competence and abilities in these areas by way of prior experience.

Second, Staten Island’s push for independence clearly worked in Giuliani’s favor. It might seem odd that Staten Island would make such a difference in the election simply because voters from that borough were pulled to the polls by a referendum to leave the
city. Unfortunately for Dinkins, but luckily for Giuliani, Staten Islanders are overwhelmingly conservative and Republican.

Third, the issues of race and relations were also potent factors in the minds of voters – particularly Whites – as they entered the voting booths. Given Giuliani’s party, record and temperament, he would not have been expected to receive much Democratic support, especially in a city that had not in recent history given overwhelming support to a non-Democratic candidate. Nonetheless, in a city where the electorate is overwhelmingly Democratic, an inexperienced, Republican candidate who vaguely discussed his own approach and competence in dealing with the issues of the city, was able to win over the more experienced Democratic incumbent.

As political observers have noted, in this election, competency was not really at issue; if it were Giuliani would not have won. Race (or racial mistrust) was at the heart of this election as it had been in the 1989 election: Whites and Blacks questioned whether Dinkins and Giuliani could be trusted to treat the other group fairly. Voting in both elections was based largely on one’s perception with respect to this matter. For many Whites, the Korean boycott, Washington Heights, and especially the Crown Heights incident proved that Dinkins could not be counted on to be fair to all groups. In each situation, the mayor seemed susceptible to the charge of not only mishandling these incidents with a grave level of indecision, but he did so because of his excessive concern for not offending the Black community. In the Crown Heights incident, for example, Dinkins was expected, as mayor, to keep order and curb the anti-Semitic sentiment arising in the Black community. When he did not, or perhaps did not do enough, the
White liberal Jewish community felt abandoned and betrayed by the man who portrayed himself as a racial conciliator (Levitt 2001). Furthermore, as a Black mayor Dinkins was expected to “protect his own”. African Americans (especially the more militant Brooklynites) felt angered and betrayed by Dinkins’s apologetic concessions to the Hasidic Jewish community, since he should have understood their reasoning for protesting.

By the time of his reelection campaign, the events in Flatbush, Crown Heights, and Washington Heights had left an indelible mark on the minds of voters and had seriously eroded Dinkins’s image as an agent of compromise and healing. At best, he seemed to exert no moral leadership, and at worse he seemed to have become hostage to the Black community. Cries of disenchantment and exclusion emanated from not only Whites and other outer-borough ethnics, but also from Latinos, who complained of inadequate compensation for their crucial support in 1989 (Biles 2001). Incidentally, Giuliani was able to capitalize on the perception that Dinkins was beholden to the Black community by appealing boldly to Whites’ feelings of resentment at Dinkins’s having “favored” minorities, while simultaneously declaring that he and his administration would move beyond “identity” politics and work for all New Yorkers.

The failure to respond effectively to the various racial incidents that occurred during his tenure, along with the city’s gradual economic decline, seriously called into question the Dinkins administration’s ability to solve any crisis. And so while New Yorkers apparently still liked him, they overwhelmingly felt he had not managed the city’s affairs well or delivered on his promise to defuse racial tensions. Consequently,
Dinkins lost the vote for reelection and became the first Black mayor in a major city not to return after only one term (Biles 2001). So while race was clearly a factor in the election, it was not the only factor. Quite simply, had Dinkins been a stronger mayor, it is possible that he could have won reelection. Still the observation of the powerful effect of race as suggested by Black leaders like Percy Sutton, Charles Rangel, Al Sharpton, and former NAACP director Ben Chavis cannot be dismissed, in that had a mediocre White mayor been in Dinkins’s shoes, he would not have lost, emphasizing the notion that Blacks are often assessed and criticized much harder than Whites – particularly when one takes into account that his running mates Mark Green (Public Advocate) and Alan Hevesi (Comptroller), and all of the other Democrats up for reelection, won their contests by a landslide (Buettner 1993).

Lastly, the enthusiasm on the part of the “grand coalition” members that helped to elect Dinkins in 1989 had withered somewhat – even among the two largest coalition members. Blacks and Latinos, like other New Yorkers, had grown increasingly disaffected with Dinkins’s leadership. In many respects, both groups did not feel that they had gotten all that they had hoped for in Mayor Dinkins. And as the previous section of this chapter suggests, this general feeling of disappointment with Dinkins over the course of his term led to a slack off in turnout in virtually every minority district that had actively turned out for him in 1989.7

In the end, we might conclude that the fragility of the Black-Latino coalition in 1993 was indeed a function of Dinkins’s weak leadership, though perhaps it was something inherent in the structure of the coalition as well. Carmichael and Hamilton
(1967) note that (Black-White) coalitions do not endure, in part, because of differing goals and interests and the inevitability of conflict arising due to differences in those interests. They also note that among the conditions to be satisfied for a strong coalition to endure, a mutual belief that both parties will benefit from working with one another must be present. This assumption was seemingly violated in the Black-Latino coalition. While Blacks and Latinos both shared the goal of political empowerment and saw education, crime, unemployment, and homelessness, for example, as important issues for their communities, Latinos did not believe that they as a group had benefited to the same degree as African Americans under the Dinkins administration. The perception that they were "junior" partners instead of equal partners in the coalition likely led to a reevaluation by Latino leaders and voters of their support for Dinkins. And although the racial empowerment incentive was still a powerful force operating in 1993 for Blacks and Latinos, with both wanting to see Dinkins reelected, it was not necessarily strong enough to stifle Latino defections and curb decreasing turn out in that community. Given that Latinos are less likely than Blacks to think in racial terms, we might expect a moderate level of Latino movement away from the Dinkins camp, in part, because there was no racial group identity component keeping them tied to the mayor in the way that there may have been for Blacks. Moreover, such a shift might be expected to the extent that Latinos were dissatisfied with the results realized under the Dinkins administration.

Although a Black-Latino coalition was still evident in 1993 with Dinkins receiving a fair amount of Black and Latino elite and voter support, it was not as strong as the coalition that brought Dinkins to power in 1989. Indeed, the vigorousness with
which these communities campaigned and turned out for him was substantially reduced from what had been witnessed in 1989. In the end, drop in Black and Latino turnout, combined with slight shifts in the Latino and White Democratic electorate toward Giuliani, as well as the heightened participation by those in Staten Island, helped to push Giuliani over the top to win with 51% of the vote (see Figure 5.3).

As the next chapter demonstrates, the coalition that elected Giuliani in 1993 remarkably resembles that which elected him for a second term in 1997, albeit with some notable gains among some unlikely supporters. Even when pared with a liberal Democratic challenger, Giuliani easily secured the mayoralty. What makes the 1997 election so interesting and yet distinct from the 1989 and 1993 elections is 1) the absence of a racial cue in the general election on which to stake racially polarized voting, though polarization still emerged, and 2) the overwhelming support for a Republican mayor in a city commonly perceived as Democratic and "liberal". Chapter 6 explores both of these factors with an eye toward understanding the nature of the shifting coalitions within the context of evolving notions of ideology and partisanship in New York City.
Figure 5.3  Shift in Dinkins and Giuliani Coalitions
CHAPTER 5 NOTES


2 Giuliani’s challenger in the Republican primary was George Marlin, an investment banker running on the Conservative Party and Right to Life Party lines, tried to paint Giuliani and Dinkins as similar versions of the same liberal variety arguing that on most issues the two agree and therefore a Giuliani administration would differ very little from that of Dinkins.

3 Turnout in the 1989 general election between Dinkins and Giuliani was 60% while that for the 1993 general election was just over 50%.

4 26% of Jewish voters also prioritized having a mayor who would be fair to all groups – to even a greater degree than Blacks. Such a sentiment likely reflects the perception that Dinkins had treated the Jewish community unfairly during the Crown Heights incident.


6 The Dominican community, while more susceptible to appeals from those interested in protecting small businesses, of which they own a considerable amount in New York, was not particularly drawn to Giuliani. Dinkins’s perceived commitment to socioeconomic issues as well as his symbolic support of their community is what allowed him to maintain their support. For example, the young man killed by police in the Washington Heights incident was Dominican and Dinkins demonstrated a considerable amount of assistance for the community in the wake of what had happened.

CHAPTER 6

SHIFTING ALLIANCES: THE 1997 ELECTION

The general sense of despair and pessimism that plagued the city following the Dinkins tenure was all but gone by 1997. Giuliani had pledged in 1993 to not only be tough on crime and to improve New Yorkers' quality of life, but also to run the city by "one standard" (a reference to the perception that Dinkins had favored certain groups while in office). By all accounts, he appeared to be living up to his campaign pledge as crime fell, panhandlers, street prostitution, and the mentally ill homeless disappeared, and the city blossomed economically. Unlike Dinkins, Giuliani benefited from the Wall Street boom of the mid-1990s, the fruition of renovations around Manhattan, and the blossoming in tourism, which brought increased revenue for the city (Lankevich 1998). New Yorkers grew increasingly more accepting of a Giuliani mayoralty as they saw their city improve, despite a series of ups and downs during his first term.

While Giuliani was praised for the appreciable drop in crime (which had actually begun under the Dinkins administration and his Police Commissioner William Bratton), he was also praised for his highly touted workfare program, which required recipients to work cleaning parks, streets, and buildings. Thanks to this program, by 1997 the number of welfare recipients had fallen by 320,000 (Lankevich 1998, 352). Even though liberals denounced the program as ineffective because it did not create "real" jobs for the poor,
the decline in the rolls was widely applauded. Yet, Giuliani was also highly criticized for
his “bully” demeanor, inattentiveness to certain social and economic issues, and his
overall approach to dealing with crime. For instance, after the 1993 election Giuliani
discontinued the affirmative action programs created under the Dinkins administration,
which increased the number of minorities in the city workforce and awarded more city
contracts to minority and women-owned businesses. During the program’s first year
contracts to minorities and women increased from 9% to 18%. Under the Giuliani
administration, not only were official statistics on affirmative action initiatives no longer
kept since Giuliani considered those programs to be illegal, but the number of women
and minority city workers substantially decreased (Mandery 1999). Then in 1995 Giuliani
ousted a very popular school Chancellor Ramon Cortines and the next year pressured into
resigning Police Commissioner William Bratton who had been quite popular in the
Dinkins administration. Many New Yorkers also criticized Giuliani’s lack of financial
and political attention to everything from the city’s child welfare service and public
schools to the homelessness crisis (Lankevich 1998).

Perhaps Giuliani’s biggest criticism concerned his overall approach to crime,
which came mainly from minority groups and liberals. His strategy was one in which
panhandling, homelessness, graffiti, prostitution, and severe traffic violations were
controlled mainly by placing offenders in newly constructed jails. An unintended
consequence, however, was that the significant increase in arrests for “quality of life”
crimes clogged the jails and the court system. Additionally, charges of police
aggressiveness and misconduct increased 56% between 1993 and 1996 (Sanjek 1998). In
August of 1997 when police officers were accused of torturing and beating Haitian
immigrant Abner Louima in a Brooklyn Precinct station, Giuliani was widely condemned
for fostering an environment conducive to such behavior through his placid acceptance
and tolerance of aggressive policing.¹ The Louima incident was just one of many that
stoked criticism of the NYPD and Giuliani’s disregard of allegations of police brutality
against minorities and immigrants. For example, in April of 1997 a White officer shot
and killed 16 year-old Kevin Cedeno in Washington Heights. The officer alleged that
Cedeno came toward him with a machete when the officer tried to arrest him, though
witnesses maintained that the youth was running away from the officer when he was shot
in the back. Giuliani credited publicly the officer’s story and proceeded to detail the
arrest history of the victim as if to provide a rationale for him being shot (Mandery 1999).

Prior to these incidents in 1994 Anthony Baez was killed by a White officer when
he used an illegal chokehold during a scuffle that ensued after Baez’s football
accidentally hit the officer’s car. Other officers who were with the accused testified that
they did not see Officer Livoti use a chokehold despite the medical examiner’s report that
said the chokehold lasted more than a minute. Then Police Commissioner Howard Safir
refused to pursue perjury charges for the officers who witnessed the killing. Giuliani
refused to issue any statement on the incident until the officer was acquitted two years
later, and then he simply stated that the decision was “a careful, well-thought out, legally
reasoned decision” (Mandery 1999). And when a 1996 Amnesty International report
showed that in 35 of the NYPD’s latest shootings, 32 of the victims were Black, Latino,
or Asian, Giuliani complained that the findings were exaggerated (Mandery 1999).

Despite the fact that police misconduct with respect to minorities was becoming
increasingly more common, the unemployment rate neared double digits, many students
in the public school system were unable to read, and racial tensions loomed high, Giuliani continued to enjoy widespread approval as an effective mayor. In fact, a 1997 *ABC News Mayoral Poll* found that not only did a majority of respondents (68%) approve of Giuliani as mayor, but also that his approval depended greatly on perceptions of how he had handled crime and quality of life issues, as a majority of respondents (74%) approved of his approach to crime and believed that the quality of life in NYC was better (62%). The poll indicated, however, that while Giuliani received high approval ratings on issues such as crime, jobs, and his newly implemented welfare reform policies, he fared much worse in the areas of education, poverty, and minority/police relations (see Figure 6.1). As the remainder of the chapter reveals, while these latter issues seemed to be of greatest concern to voters and were highly emphasized throughout the election, ultimately, they were not the issues that would decide the fate of the election.
Even though Giuliani's handling of poverty and homelessness, education, and police misconduct earned him significant disapproval among many New Yorkers over the course of his tenure, it was essentially his "no nonsense" approach to dealing with crime and quality of life issues that earned him such praise. Entering the election season, however, there was no shortage of those wishing to unseat the Mayor. Yet given his level of support from the public going into the 1997 contest, it was of little surprise that he so easily won reelection. In short, the ultimate challenger in the general election stood no chance of winning. As the 1993 election demonstrated, New Yorkers are apt to punish incompetence, yet are quite willing to reward ability and skill. New Yorkers believed Giuliani was responsible for the prosperity and declining crime rate befallen on the city.
and they did not want to take a chance on losing the gains that had been made since he took office. In the minds of most voters, such a reversal was indeed promised if Giuliani were not returned to office for a second term. And as the remainder of this chapter shows, Giuliani was able to secure reelection by maintaining his 1993 coalition with additional support from some unexpected supporters.

The Primary Election

The Democratic primary election in many respects mirrored the 1993 primary in that it simply failed to stir a great deal of excitement and energy. Admittedly, much of the lack of enthusiasm had to do with the widespread perception that the primary would be a fruitless exercise in debate among similar candidates to see who would ultimately run against Giuliani in the general election. There was little question that Giuliani would take the Republican nomination and probably win the November election as well. Indeed, while Giuliani may have been seen as arrogant and egotistical, he was nonetheless regarded as one of the most effective leaders New York City has ever had. As such, there was a generalized belief that no challenger realistically stood a chance of unseating him.

The Democratic ticket showcased four main candidates, all of whom were largely regarded as inadequate competition to run against Giuliani in the general election. Such a general perception, actively fueled by the media as well as other Democratic leaders, aided in quelling much of the enthusiasm about the contest. Ruth Messinger, then Manhattan Borough President and unwavering Lindsay-style Upper West Side liberal, was the favored candidate among the Democratic contenders believed to stand any reasonable chance of unseating Giuliani. While Fernando Ferrer, the then Bronx Borough president, the infamous self-anointed Black leader Reverend Al Sharpton, and Sal
Albanese, a little known Councilman with a populist agenda, all varied in their levels of respect and public support, none were believed to be particularly strong candidates with popular agendas.\textsuperscript{2}

Interestingly, even David Dinkins flirted with the idea of a possible third run for mayor, yet he had done so little in the years since his 1993 reelection bid that he had virtually no platform on which to run. Still, in a hypothetical \textit{New York Daily News} match-up, Dinkins trailed Giuliani by only 10 percentage points (46\% to 36\%); none of the other Democratic candidates – including Ruth Messinger – came within 15 percentage points. Had Dinkins, in fact, announced his candidacy to run, the primary and general election line-ups would have been sealed, with the electorate anxiously awaiting the outcome of a third Dinkins-Giuliani race. However, Dinkins did not run, but instead endorsed his good friend and staunch supporter, Ruth Messinger. In some ways, a Dinkins endorsement helped Messinger stay on top of the Democratic competition by lending her candidacy a bit of credibility. But Dinkins’s support may have also hurt in that it created for Giuliani a solid platform on which to draw a link between Messinger, liberalism, and the failed Dinkins administration (Mandery 1999). One of the many reasons Dinkins lost reelection was because voters viewed him as being “overly” attentive to certain groups, mainly his own, in the form of various liberal policies. In this respect, while Dinkins was liked and respected within the minority community, he was chastised among Whites for being inept, weak, and unfair. Thus, any parallel drawn between Dinkins and Messinger, who was in her own right viewed as a tax-and-spend liberal who would be soft on crime, would be detrimental.
In an effort not to divide the Party, each of the Democratic candidates chose not to make the primary about attacking one another, but rather about criticizing Giuliani’s record. Messinger, who was very strong on civil rights issues (pro-gay rights, pro-choice, anti-death penalty), condemned Giuliani mainly on the issues of overcrowded schools and welfare reform. She initially began her campaign criticizing Giuliani’s approach to everything from crime and the economy to domestic violence and police brutality, which at best made her seem angry and at worse, a whiner because she seemed not to concede that Giuliani had in fact succeeded in a number of areas she claimed he had not. By the time she finally settled on public education and poverty as her main platform issues (since Giuliani could easy claim public opinion victories in the areas of crime, the economy, and quality of life), she had proceeded through much of the election appearing as if she had no clear programmatic approach and strategy on how she could do a better job than Giuliani.

Both Albanese, who realistically stood little chance of winning the nomination, as well as Ferrer were equally vague in what they stood for and in their approaches on how to bring changes to the city. Sharpton, however, proved to be a bit of a surprise in that he not only clearly articulated what he considered to be Giuliani’s major faults while in office (i.e. his record on minority hiring, police brutality), but he also outlined his agenda on school vouchers, police misconduct, and tax cuts for corporations (Mandery 1999). Unfortunately, Sharpton’s well- articulated and liberal Democratic agenda was overshadowed by the automatic and visceral reaction many New Yorkers have toward him and his history of being “Sharpton.” And as the previous chapters detailing the 1989 and 1993 elections demonstrate, perception is everything. On the whole, Messinger,
Ferrer, Sharpton, and Albanese, who only minimally differentiated themselves in the primary, simply were not viewed as having leadership qualities that could out rival those of the Mayor. So while Messinger and Ferrer may have been perceived as compassionate, Sharpton as abrasive, and Albanese as meek, they were all widely considered to be ineffective with no coherent theme (except Sharpton) when measured against Giuliani, who was also perceived as somewhat abrasive and imprudent, but highly effective in handling the issues voters cared most about: crime and quality of life (Mandery 1999). This reality necessarily made any challenge to Giuliani an uphill battle.

Early polls consistently showed Messinger leading over Ferrer, Sharpton, and Albanese. For instance, the 1997 ABC Mayoral Poll found that in a hypothetical primary vote Messinger led Ferrer 35% to 25%, with Sharpton and Albanese getting 14% and 7% respectively. And as might be expected, Jews (60%) and to a lesser degree White ethnics (46%) said that they would support Messinger, while Latinos (70%) indicated strong support for Ferrer. Interestingly, Blacks demonstrated split support for Sharpton (36%) and Messinger (32%) with only minimal support for Ferrer (14%). The minimal support expressed for Ferrer could have had more to do with a Black candidate being on the ticket and the perception that Ferrer may have stood little chance of winning. However, the almost equal Black support indicated for Sharpton and Messinger is interesting, and likely captures the simultaneous increase in support for Sharpton and decrease in support for Messinger based on both Sharpton’s somewhat credible campaign and Blacks being offended by Messinger’s failed attempt to increase her level of Jewish support via an attack on Sharpton. Messinger’s support among Blacks, which had been relatively high
when compared to other key voting blocs, began to wane when she made the decision to attack Sharpton on the issue of Louis Farrakhan.

Early in the primary Sharpton had been asked to denounce Farrakhan as an anti-Semite. When Sharpton refused to do so, Messinger chose to make it a public issue in an effort to demonstrate her commitment to the Jewish community. But she seemingly failed to fully consider whether alienating the Black community by attacking Sharpton would be in her best interest just to gain a few more Jewish votes. As it was, the Jewish community had shown little enthusiasm and support for her candidacy, which is curious given her history of loyalty to her community and to the liberal causes that Jews have conventionally been known to endorse. Blacks, however, probably because of her liberal socioeconomic positions and perhaps her affiliation with Dinkins, had shown her a fair amount of support. But Messinger’s attack on Sharpton for something that really had nothing at all to do with the issues of local government angered the Black community – not a good move for someone who so desperately needed all the votes she could get (Mandery 1999).

On the whole, Messinger’s campaign was replete with examples of contradiction and essentially being “caught” in between her biggest constituencies. For example, not only did she show up at the funeral of Malcolm X’s widow, Betty Shabazz, where Farrakhan spoke shortly after criticizing Sharpton for not denouncing him, but she was seen applauding Farrakhan’s speech – a man she herself believed to be anti-Semitic. She disappointed yet another key group, the gay community, when she was forced to endorse her successor for Manhattan Borough President as either C. Virginia Fields, who was Black or Deborah Glick, who was lesbian. Her decision would either offend Blacks, who
held crucial voting power, or gays, whose financial support she needed. In the end, she made the calculated decision to endorse Fields, which created the perception that she had caved in to pressure from Black leaders to support Fields (Mandery 1999). But the gay community, like the Jewish community, had only shown her lukewarm support at best throughout the primary, even though she was clearly pro-gay rights. Likewise, her pro-choice stance and support for "women's issues" such as increased spending for domestic violence services in the city did very little for her among potential women voters. And lacking a discernible strategy to target Latinos, she failed to secure their support, even after Ferrer later dropped out of the primary election.

Despite being on the right side of conventional liberal Democratic politics and being the assumed "favored" candidate, Messinger lacked a surprising amount of support from virtually every group that one might imagine would support her including women, unions, Mahattanites, Latinos, and Jews. Even the mainstream press along with key Democratic leaders such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Ed Koch, and notable Black leader Reverend Floyd Flake failed to endorse her. Furthermore, she held only a moderate level of support among Blacks and the minority press going into the September primary election. That she had the endorsement of Dinkins, Public Advocate Mark Green, and Fernando Ferrer upon his withdrawal from the campaign seemingly meant very little (Mandery 1999). The widespread perception among voters was that while she as a person may have been more tolerable than Giuliani, she simply was not able to convey her strengths over those of the mayor. Throughout the primary, and later the general campaign, she seemed unable to "claim" her issues and situate the campaign in such a way as to effectively challenge Giuliani. She tried to make education her key issue, but...
failed when Giuliani promised to commit more city funds to the public schools. She then tried to cite police brutality as a critical issue, noting the Louima and Cedeno cases, but her position on Giuliani’s handling of the NYPD seemed contrived in an effort to attract minority voters. For instance, Messinger initially called Giuliani’s response following the Louima incident in which he condemned the officers and called for a swift investigation appropriate only later to chastise him as not caring about the issue of police brutality toward minorities. Her drastic change in position made it seem as if she was simply grappling for minority votes. After that failed attempt, she then latched onto the issue of rent-control, which also fell flat when Giuliani settled on a rent-control deal (Mandery 1999).

Given that Giuliani had taken the crime, economy, and quality of life issues as his own, for which he effectively claimed credit, Messinger was left with little other than education, high unemployment, and poverty to claim as her platform issues. And while those issues were top concerns that voters believed Giuliani had not successfully handled according to the 1997 ABC Mayoral Poll, the fact is that he was perceived as being successful on issues that were of great concern in 1993 – issues such as crime and quality of life, which he had triumphantly dealt with by 1997. By the time the primary election rolled around, most voters saw it as a futile contest – either because the candidates had failed to mobilize them or because they were not particularly interested in replacing Giuliani. In either case, voters apparently saw little need to turn out. Boasting the lowest turnout in recent mayoral elections, the Democratic primary attracted only 18% of the voting public to the polls.  

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By all accounts, what should have been a relatively easy primary victory for Messinger given her “favored” status among the Democratic contenders turned out to be anything but facile. Messinger, as well as all of New York, were shocked when the Board of Elections could not immediately declare a winner of the Democratic primary. At the end of Election Day, it was unclear whether Messinger had attained the 40% needed to avoid a runoff against none other than the Reverend Al Sharpton.

Indeed, no one expected Sharpton to run the above-average campaign that he did, but by sticking to the issues at hand, he ultimately gained a moderate level of support. With little financial support and limited exposure via television and radio ads, Sharpton relied on canvassing minority neighborhoods in an effort to speak to voters. And while it cannot be said that Sharpton enjoyed the overwhelming support of virtually all Black and Latino elected officials in the city, he did receive the endorsement of Representative Jose Serrano. Interestingly, Black and Latino elite support for Sharpton was somewhat limited, as Serrano ended up being the most popular Latino to have endorsed him, while other Latino and Black leadership seemed to split their endorsements between Giuliani and Messinger.

Indeed, Sharpton’s greatest support seemed to come not from minority elites, but rather mostly from the activist community. According to Lenora Fulani, Chair of the Independence Party of New York, there was a strong Black-Latino coalition around Sharpton’s candidacy at the street level, where he addressed issues of unemployment, education, police brutality, and racism. Indeed, the connection formed with grassroots communities, greatly aided by his organization the National Action Network, likely aided in giving Sharpton the decisive electoral boost to nearly force a runoff with Messinger.4
The possibility of a runoff caused an uproar, particularly within the minority communities, who felt that Sharpton was being cheated out of an electoral victory due to deliberate maneuvering of the ballots. Sharpton even indicated that he would sue to challenge the results if unsatisfactory because of the appearance of vote disfranchisement (Mandery 1999). A Messinger-Sharpton runoff would have been uncomfortable, though particularly so for Messinger. Not only would she be forced to run head-on against a candidate with a strong following in parts of the Black and Hispanic communities, but she would have to do so without further offending that vital bloc if she hoped to defeat Giuliani in the general election (Nagourney 1997). Running a campaign against Sharpton would also complicate Messinger’s efforts to appear “centrist” should she ultimately encounter Giuliani, since appealing to Sharpton supporters would essentially require a “leftist” agenda.

A recount of the ballots later confirmed that Messinger had won the election with 40.19% of the vote, or just 793 more than the number needed to avoid a runoff. Sharpton, Albanese, and Melendez received 32%, 21%, and 4% of the vote respectively (see Figure 6.2). Messinger would become the first woman in the history of New York City to carry the Democratic Party nomination with the lowest percentage of the vote (Mandery 1999, 274).
In the end, Messinger only comfortably won Manhattan (54%), but barely took the Bronx (39%) and Queens (36%) over Sharpton (38% and 33% respectively), who easily won Brooklyn (40%). Albanese won Staten Island with 55% of the vote (Nagourney 1997). Undoubtedly, Messinger’s chances of easily sweeping the Democratic nomination were aided by Ferrer’s exit from the primary since he was believed to be favored second to her. But Messinger’s chances were also hurt by Albanese’s entrance into the campaign with his left-leaning agenda and by Sharpton’s increased support, which could easily have been a function of both the Louima case and C. Virginia Field’s candidacy for Manhattan Borough President. More importantly, however, Messinger seemingly failed to mobilize her natural base of Jews to turnout to support her. If
primaries are about giving your "natural" constituents a reason to come out, in many respects, she failed at this most basic task. Also, many Democrats noted their satisfaction with the way that the city had been governed under Giuliani, especially with respect to crime. Such sentiment was widespread as was the assumption that the outcome in November was all but assured.

The General Election

The voter apathy and lackluster nature of the primary continued as Messinger and Giuliani worked their way toward the general election. The campaign was particularly bitter, sometimes unnecessarily so, as each candidate attacked the other. Messinger nailed Giuliani on alleged illegal campaign contributions, his lack of attention to education, and the high unemployment rate in the city. Giuliani, however, was able to paint Messinger as a walking contradiction by twisting her policy positions to make them appear inconsistent. For example, he painted her as being soft on crime by recalling that she had hosted a party for a convicted murderer of a police officer. In actuality, the party Messinger hosted was for a prisoner who participated in the Attica riots in 1971 but who was wrongfully sentenced to life for the killing of an officer. The party, which in hindsight may not have been the best idea, was in celebration of the wrongfully accused having his sentence commuted and "justice" being served (Mandery 1999). Giuliani decided to leave this line of inquiry alone when Messinger publicized his efforts to dodge the draft, his flip-flop on the issue of abortion, and his affiliation with the actions of a past administration to put Haitian immigrants in internment camps (Mandery 1999).

The bitter ambience of the election continued, with Messinger and Giuliani each trying desperately to demonstrate why the other should not be elected. For all of
Messinger’s efforts, however, she seemed not to be able to garner much support beyond what she held in the primary. Her support among key groups remained limited, as she still lacked notable endorsements, which are believed to be critical for any campaign. For instance, while she had the endorsements of Senator Moynihan, City Council President Peter Vallone, David Dinkins, Sal Albanese, and later Al Sharpton, she failed to secure the support of Ed Koch, then governor Mario Cuomo, the New York City Labor Council, which encompasses 450 unions and 1.5 million workers, and the Fire Alarm Dispatchers Benevolent Association, whose policies she had actively supported in the past. Moreover, two very influential Black leaders, Reverend and Congressman Floyd Flake and Congressman Edolphus Towns came out in support of Giuliani, praising the job that he had done with crime in the city (Kirtzman 2000). Giuliani even held the endorsements of all major newspapers and even received the lukewarm support of El Diario, the Spanish-language newspaper. Even the noted African American newspaper The Amsterdam News, which blasted Giuliani as nothing more than a master at the game of fear, racism, and divisiveness, lacked glowing words of support for Messinger.

Among the public, a Marist College Primary Poll (1997) found that Messinger lacked a great deal of support overall compared to Giuliani, who was seen by voters as having done a fairly good job while in office and as being better able to reduce crime and improve the city’s economy. A clear lack of support and unapologetic defections to the Giuliani camp by members of her own party, in the end, could only prove detrimental to the Messinger campaign.

In an election that produced the lowest turnout in recent New York City history (38%), no doubt because its fate was practically sealed from the beginning, Giuliani beat
Messinger 57% to 41%. And while the basic electoral coalitions remained pretty similar to those in past elections, there were some notable surprises.


Figure 6.3 1997 General Election Vote, by group
As Figure 6.3 reveals, Giuliani did particularly well among White ethnics (76%) and Jews (70%), though he also gained some Black and Latino support. Securing 20% and 43% of the Black and Latino vote respectively, Giuliani did comparatively better among these groups than four years previously when he received only 5% of the Black vote and a little over a third of the Latino vote. Just as he did in the 1993 contest against Dinkins, Giuliani was again able to creep into the Democratic traditional base of support to win the election. Perhaps most intriguing is the substantial support Giuliani received over Messinger from the Jewish community and within each borough except the Bronx (see Table 6.1). Indeed, Giuliani won neighborhoods that had consistently voted Democratic for generations. What allowed for such an outcome to occur?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Type</th>
<th>Giuliani</th>
<th>Messinger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predominately Black ADs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem (Manhattan)</td>
<td>4,323</td>
<td>18,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. New York (Brooklyn)</td>
<td>4,255</td>
<td>12,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Albans (Queens)</td>
<td>4,876</td>
<td>12,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominately Latino ADs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Harlem (Manhattan)</td>
<td>7,115</td>
<td>15,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg/</td>
<td>5,712</td>
<td>5,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushwick (Brooklyn)</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td>11,496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 1997 General Election Turnout by District Type
(Continued on next page)
Table 6.1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predominately Jewish and White Ethnic ADs</th>
<th>Giuliani</th>
<th>Messinger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riverdale (Bronx)</td>
<td>16,055</td>
<td>8,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper W. Side (Manhattan)</td>
<td>9,226</td>
<td>14,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Hills (Queens)</td>
<td>16,900</td>
<td>3,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canarsie (Brooklyn)</td>
<td>15,116</td>
<td>5,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Shore (Staten Island)</td>
<td>19,006</td>
<td>1,572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As was the case in previous elections, the outcome turned largely on issues and candidate perception. According to the 1997 Exit Poll (Voter Research and Surveys), the issues that mattered most to voters’ mayoral choice were crime, quality of life, and public schools. As the previous chapters have shown, there were often racial differences in which issues were most salient to certain groups, offering substantive clues as to why Giuliani was able to so easily win reelection. Table 6.2 shows the proportion of each demographic group that identified these issues as important to their vote choice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public schools</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race relations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police brutality</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6.2 Issue Mentioned as Most Important to Vote Choice

While all groups identified crime, quality of life, and schools as important issues, the level of salience placed on those issues among the three groups is telling. Although crime and quality of life seemed to be of most concern for Whites, they did not seem to hold the same level of salience for Blacks and Latinos. That is, even though Blacks and Latinos both mentioned crime as top concerns, the intensity of that concern was somewhat reduced, especially among Blacks. And where Whites mentioned quality of life second as an important issue, it was listed as a distant third and forth concern for Latinos and Blacks respectively. Instead, Blacks and Latinos were much more likely than Whites to mention public schools as a concern, and in the case of Blacks, police brutality, race relations, and the economy.

To little surprise, the racial differences in the issues that mattered most to one’s vote choice were likely related to how those groups perceived those issues for their own group as well as perceptions of how Giuliani had handled them. For example, the 1997
exit poll found that while an overall majority of voters (63%) believed that the city’s economy was either excellent or good with 77% of Whites believing this, a majority of Blacks and Latinos were much more likely to believe that the economy was not so good or poor. Similarly, 56% of voters believed that the quality of life had improved, again, with 72% of Whites believing that it had gotten better. Blacks, on the other hand, were more likely to say that it had remained the same (49%) while Latinos were somewhat split in their assessment with 42% believing it had gotten better and 37% believing that it had gotten worse. With respect to whether the city was safer than four years ago, a 58% majority said that it was with 71% of Whites indicating this, while Blacks and Latinos were more split in their assessments of the city being safer or about the same as four years ago.

Two issues on which voters showed a measured level of displeasure were the public schools and police brutality. A strong majority of voters (75%) believed that the schools had either remained the same or had worsened since Giuliani entered office, while 37% felt that Giuliani’s approach to law enforcement made police brutality more likely to happen. The issue of the public schools, while only moderately salient among exit poll respondents, did seem to be of greatest concern for Blacks. When asked whether the schools had gotten better, worse, or remained the same, Blacks (47%) and Latinos (43%) said worse while only 29% of Whites believed the same. The difference in this assessment could in part be due to the fact that Blacks and Hispanics are disproportionately concentrated in the city’s failing public school system. Likewise, while Whites were much more likely to indicate that Giuliani’s approach to law enforcement had no effect on police brutality (44%), Blacks were overwhelmingly in
disagreement with 64% saying that it made police brutality more likely. Latinos, again, tended to be split in their evaluations with 36% saying that Giuliani’s approach makes police brutality more likely and 31% saying that it has no effect.

Interestingly, while both of these issues were raised in the campaign (mostly by Messinger), they were not the issues on which the majority of voters (Whites) based their votes; those issues centered largely on perceptions of how well crime and the quality of life had been handled. According to this group, these issues had been handled very well, which is why there was overwhelming support of Giuliani from this voting bloc. Blacks and Latinos were not as thrilled with respect to Giuliani’s handling of these various issues and thus their support for Giuliani’s reelection was not as apparent. Their relative displeasure with the Giuliani administration coupled with the greater likelihood of being Democratic (albeit Blacks more so than Latinos) ultimately produced a greater likelihood of them supporting Messinger. This can clearly be seen in the way that the vote correlates with specific issues.

Those who believed that the city’s economic condition and the quality of life in the city had gotten better and that the city was safer than four years previous, who were more than likely White voters, voted for Giuliani. Conversely, those who did not believe that there had been much improvement in those areas and also believed that the schools were worse and named police brutality among their concerns and felt that Giuliani had not handled this issue well (overwhelmingly Blacks), were more likely to cast a vote for Messinger. That Latinos were oftentimes split in their evaluation of Giuliani’s performance on many of these issues is partly reflected in their vote choice. While still clearly within the Democratic camp, Latinos were much more likely than Blacks to
support Giuliani. Regression analysis of the probability of voting for Giuliani also reveals that the likelihood of voting for the mayor was based on one's assessment of his handling of various local issues such as jobs, welfare, and quality of life. Only being Democrat, liberal, and Black produced a significant vote in favor of Messinger (see Appendix C). Such a division in the Black and Latino vote undoubtedly helped to weaken the Black-Latino voting alliance.

**Shifting Alliances**

As was the case in the previous elections discussed in this study, the 1997 election hinged on perceptions of who would be a better mayor. Even though Messinger may have been perceived as the more compassionate candidate, Giuliani was viewed as the candidate possessing effective leadership qualities and as such, he was perceived as the one who could “get the job done”. This election was very much a vote based on retrospective evaluations. New Yorkers, across gender, party, ideology, and to a lesser extent, race, believed that New York was a better place because of Giuliani’s “no-nonsense”, if sometimes brute, approach to governing. Replacing Giuliani with someone like Messinger, who was not seen as a strong, viable force, would have been detrimental to the progress made in the city – at least to the minds of most New Yorkers.

In the end, Giuliani was able to amass such widespread support largely because he was able to appeal to local Democrats, including Jews, gays, union members, and an increased number of Latinos and Blacks, by noting how much crime had fallen in the city. Moreover, his use of “pork” also worked in his favor. For instance, Giuliani had given a “no lay-off” pledge to the executive director of the largest union of city workers, District Council 37. In turn, Stanley Hill endorsed Giuliani because Giuliani had honored
his pledge of no lay-offs. Likewise, Giuliani allocated $1 million for library expansion, $1 million for a new Boys and Girls Club, and he gained the endorsements of Councilman Howard Lasher and Brooklyn Assemblyman Vito Lopez after their districts received millions of dollars for public housing and day care centers (Kirtzman 2000, Mandery 1999). Most New Yorkers felt Giuliani was good for the city, in part, because they could see the tangible benefits from him being in office. And while Giuliani’s attention to other issues around the city such as homelessness and police brutality had been widely criticized, voters chose not to indict him on charges of inattention to those particular social issues. What helped most, perhaps, to seal the electoral win for Giuliani was his ability to equate Messinger with the far left, thus capitalizing on people’s fears of returning the city to the pre-Giuliani era (Kirtzman 2000).

Messinger’s decision to run was ultimately a bad idea. Even though she and the other Democratic contenders may have had legitimate concerns about Giuliani’s inattention to certain social issues, he simply could not be touched on the issues that mattered most to the voting public. This was essentially a contest that would have been difficult for anyone to win since Giuliani was in no unspoken terms a secure candidate.

The electoral outcome also had as much to do with some campaigning mistakes on Messinger’s part as it did with Giuliani’s popularity based on retrospective evaluations of his tenure. Messinger did not do a very good job of running field operations and building coalitions in the way that Koch, Dinkins, and Giuliani had. In a general sense, it appears that she took her various Democratic constituencies for granted, simply assuming that they would automatically grant her their support. She also was not able to craft a “gorgeous mosaic” agenda or message that spoke to the various components of a
multiethnic coalition in the way that Dinkins did in 1989 and in 1993. There was nothing in her campaign linking these disparate groups together. Dinkins and Giuliani were able to draw upon notions of “similarity of situation” or “law and order” that united Democrats in the case of Dinkins, and Republicans and disaffected Democrats in the case of Giuliani.

For instance, Dinkins spoke to the parallelism in the socioeconomic standings of Blacks and Latinos and on the need for racial healing, which appealed to minorities and Jews. Likewise, Giuliani was able to speak to fears of crime, the virtues of law and order, and running a city based on “one standard”, which spoke to White’s fears of rising crime and the perceived favoritism shown to minorities under the Dinkins administration. Messinger had no unifying theme that allowed her to speak to the commonalities among her constituents. Yes, she talked about rising unemployment, education, and the need to create jobs and instill school reform, but she never seemed to clearly show a link between these issues and her coalition members. Instead, she tried to appeal to each of these groups as separate and distinct entities, if at all (recall that Latinos felt somewhat abandoned by her inattention to their community during her primary campaign, while Blacks were offended by her misstep with Sharpton). Messinger likely only won the Bronx because of the strong support she had from both Fernando Ferrer and the Bronx Democratic Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez, as well as the Black districts in that borough, though she got only limited support from the overwhelmingly Jewish district of Riverdale (Levy 1997).

In many respects, Messinger failed at one of the most basic rules of local campaigning: galvanizing one’s constituency through coordinated field operations.

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Instead of beating the pavement as Sharpton and Albanese did in an effort to court potential voters, she relied on television ads, which were mainly geared at Giuliani — not at how her mayoralty would benefit her constituents or New Yorkers as a whole (Mandery 1999). Giuliani, for instance, ran television and print media in English and Spanish not only attacking Messinger, but also detailing his accomplishments. As a consequence of Messinger failing to mobilize what should have been her “natural” base of support, Jews turned out heavily in support of Giuliani, while Black turnout dropped significantly from 28% of the electorate to 21%. Latino turnout, interestingly enough, increased from 13% to 20% of the electorate, but their turnout was not necessarily in overwhelming support of Messinger.

When asked to comment on Giuliani’s ability to so easily win reelection against a liberal Democrat and the nature of Black and Latino voting behavior in this election, many of the community and political leaders I interviewed mentioned several factors, which ultimately helped to explain the outcome witnessed in this election.

First, as detailed earlier in this chapter, Whites were very satisfied with the direction of the city under Giuliani, though especially with respect to the crime issue. And because New Yorkers felt safe and comfortable and gave Giuliani the credit for bringing about such change, the idea was that everything was essentially okay.⁹

Second, and somewhat related to the first, is that many Blacks, but more so Latinos, also bought into the notion that everything was okay, which partly explains Giuliani’s increased support among these groups.¹⁰ Councilmember Helen Foster of the Bronx explained the problem with this aspect of Black and Latino voting behavior in this election:
"Those who thought they shared in the successes of the Giuliani administration – including some Blacks, but more so Latinos, bought into the notion that things were okay... But I think that [Black and Latino] support for Giuliani produced a moral dilemma...Giuliani is morally vile; his policies were fundamentally racist. He hurt the homeless by significantly cutting funding for institutions that sought to help the homeless. How can you support someone whose policies are fundamentally racist? It's harmful when people of color buy into the notion that the rules are meant for them (referring to the way Giuliani governed the city, placing the interests of the privileged over those of the poor)." (Personal interview, Councilmember Helen Foster. June 13, 2002).

As the retrospective theory of voting suggests, voters reflect on whether a given candidate has essentially helped or harmed their personal situations while in office. At this time, many New Yorkers felt quite pleased with Giuliani’s performance and all that he had done for the city since 1993. Unlike Dinkins in 1993, Giuliani was more or less revered among the majority of the voting public who rewarded him with another electoral victory.

Third, while strong Black and Latino community organizing and mobilization for Sharpton was apparent in the primary, the enthusiasm and interest in turning out in the general election disappeared once Sharpton was out of the race. With no minority candidate on the ballot, and the only choices being Giuliani, who as a person commanded very little respect and admiration within the minority community, and Messinger, who had demonstrated her willingness to take the minority community for granted, turnout simply declined. This was especially true for Blacks who in 1989 and 1993 had been 29% and 28% of the electorate were only 21% of the voting population in 1997 (Firestone 1997). As the minority status hypothesis and empowerment thesis suggest, Blacks and Latinos will exhibit higher levels of mobilization and turnout when a minority candidate is in the race, often based on the assumption or expectation that the minority candidate, if elected, will be more likely to consider their interests. Conversely, when faced with two
non-minority candidates who are not perceived to have their best interests at heart, minority political engagement wanes. So while Blacks and Latinos were not as enthusiastic about Dinkins as a leader by 1993, they nonetheless turned out in support of him. In 1997 with no driving force like Sharpton or Ferrer in the general election, Blacks and Latinos withdrew their interest in the election.

Latinos, however, present an interesting case in this election. Not only were they a larger proportion of the electorate in 1997 (20%) than they were in 1993 (13%), but they also significantly increased their level of support for Giuliani. Recall that in 1993, while Latinos still overwhelmingly supported Dinkins, they nonetheless gave Giuliani over one-third of their votes. In 1997 that percentage increased to 43% (Firestone, 1997). In addition to some Latinos believing that Giuliani had done well by the city in terms of crime and quality of life issues, Giuliani also specifically reached out to them. Not only did he campaign more directly in the Latino community in 1997 and speak out on issues that they tend to care about such as immigration, but he took advantage of opportunities to exploit any divisions between the Black and Latino communities that may have been apparent. Reverend Calvin Butts explained:

"[Giuliani] reached out to them, but not to Blacks and he understood what he was doing in terms of the division. He played on those divisions and there were a lot of Latinos who understood this, but then a lot of them said "Hey, if we get on the 'in' we get more for our people". For instance, over in the Pathmark Supermarket that we built (the Abyssinian Development Corporation), there was some issue with the land that we had to negotiate with the city. Giuliani held our Executive Director hostage until he wrangled out what he wanted. He wouldn't give up the city's property until he got 49% of the deal. And then once he got that, he set it aside for Latinos. So there is a little store on the side of the Pathmark, I think over on Lexington and 125th that should be controlled by Latinos. The thing was, the Latinos were saying that we were closing the bodegas and setting up competition and so they wanted us out. Giuliani saw the divide there. The truth was, we weren't closing the bodegas...they're still doing well. We're bringing jobs to the community..." (Personal interview, Reverend Calvin Butts. June 18, 2002.)
In the end, the Black-Latino coalition almost cease to exist as Black and Latino elites divided their support among the candidates. While Sharpton had a great deal of community grassroots support, he never seemed to have the full support of minority leadership in the way that Dinkins did. Perhaps there was a generalized belief that Sharpton would not win the Party's nomination and thus there would be no need to "waste" an endorsement. Even before Sharpton was displaced from the primary election, minority leadership seemed to splinter as Black and Latino elites chose to support either Giuliani or Messinger. Representatives Edolphus Towns and Floyd Flake, for example, admitted that their support for Giuliani was based on the fact that he had done great things for the city in terms of economic development, quality of life, and crime and they did not necessarily want to see that interrupted (Browne 1997). To the extent that strong coalitions need unified leadership and organizational support to mold and shape them around the election of a specific candidate, the 1997 election failed to emulate those developed in 1989 and 1993.

To be sure, candidate appeal likely had a great deal to do with Sharpton's inability to craft the same type of "grand coalition" with widespread minority and White voter support. But lack of strong Democratic organizational club support linking Sharpton and party officials also proved detrimental. Messinger, on the other hand, had this type of support from which to draw, at least to a greater degree than Sharpton. Still, the strong coalition that one might have imagined forming for Messinger did not, as there seemed to be little excitement among Democrats at the prospect of her becoming the Democratic nominee. Those who supported her did so because of the perception that she was perhaps
the most viable Democratic candidate – not because she was necessarily the best candidate (Hicks 1997).

Conclusion

The impetus to build Black and Latino alliances around the possible election of a minority candidate was somewhat evident in the 1997 primary, but seemed to weaken during the general election, thereby not remaining as strong as it had in the two previous elections. In each contest, Blacks and Latinos rallied behind the minority candidate – Dinkins in 1989 and 1993, and Sharpton in the 1997 primary. In the general election, however, Black and Latino interest and turnout simply fell off from previous years, as no real effort by these groups to link themselves in coalition emerged. Democratic Party leaders such as Ferrer and Dinkins showed Messinger a great deal of support, though it seemed to be more on the basis of following party discipline than a desire to bring the Black and Latino voting communities into coalition for the purpose of electing her. In this year’s general election a strong Black-Latino coalition failed to materialize. And as Reverend Calvin Butts suggested, when faced with what could be characterized as two less than appealing choices, interest dwindles and then “we [Blacks and Latinos] cast our nets where we think we can bring back the most fish”.12

Black voting behavior was predictable in that African Americans gave a majority of their votes to Messinger as the winner of the Democratic primary, which had she won the general election, could have worked in their favor given the types of policies that she championed. They supported her because she was the Democratic nominee and they, by and large, disliked Giuliani. Latinos, on the other hand, while still within the Democratic camp, had gained some concessions from the Giuliani administration during his first
term, and thus branched off slightly in 1997 to give Giuliani a significant portion of their votes. This created a break in the Black-Latino voting alliance that had been quite visible to this point. Giuliani understood his position within the Black community: that he and his administration were regarded by most Black New Yorkers as conservative and anti-Black. This same sentiment, while evident among some sectors of the Latino community, was not as widespread. Giuliani knew this, and after recognizing early on that Latinos were not as tied to the Democratic Party as Blacks, and therefore open to persuasion (based on his level of support from Hispanics in 1993), he seized opportunities to grab more of their support in 1997 through calculated outreach to that community and its leadership. By positioning himself to the left of “conventional” Republican politics, Giuliani was able to tap into segments of the Hispanic community that were not as socially and fiscally liberal as African Americans, ultimately creating a schism in the Black-Latino voting coalition. The result was two-fold: not only had Latinos potentially bought themselves more leverage within the Giuliani administration, but the structure or shape of the Democratic coalition had been substantially altered.

In this election, a strong coalition did not emerge, in part, due to the absence of a minority candidate and a demobilized minority electorate. Moreover, fractured minority leadership that failed to vigorously lead a coalition in support of the Democratic nominee provided no incentive for Blacks and Latinos to mobilize and align themselves politically. Like the other elections examined in this study, the 2001 election, which will be detailed in the next chapter, serves as an interesting window through which to observe Black and Latino alliance building efforts in both the presence and absence of a minority
candidate on the ballot. As chapter 7 shows, a very strong and visible coalition resembling that in 1989 develops, though not with the outcome one might imagine.

CHAPTER 6 NOTES

1 Abner Louima was arrested outside a nightclub and taken to a Brooklyn precinct where he suffered critical injuries to his bladder and intestine when police officers allegedly sodomized him with a wooden stick handle. Giuliani ordered the precinct commander to be transferred and ten officers off of active duty.

2 Eric Melendez, who ran unsuccessfully in 1993 (winning only 7% of the vote) entered the 1997 primary race again in an effort to mobilize the Hispanic vote and hold Messinger under the 40% needed to win the election. As was the case in 1993, he again lacked recognition and a well-crafted platform on which to run thereby fielding another unsuccessful campaign (Mandery 1999).

3 Turnout in the 1989 and 1993 primary elections were 49% and 22% respectively.


5 Sharpton did file a complaint about voting irregularities and the outcome of the recount, though a New York City judge found no evidence of racial bias and state court ruled that the election results would stand (Mandery 1999, 292).

6 White registered voter turnout dropped from 55% in 1993 to 53% in this election, Black turnout dropped significantly from 28% in 1993 to 21%, while Latino turnout increased from 13% in 1993 to 20% in 1997.


8 Lenora Fulani made an interesting observation regarding why Messinger, as such an uninspiring candidate, was even able to launch a campaign. She noted that with respect to Messinger (and even Dinkins) that “like a lot of leadership inside the Democratic Party, they get to run for office because they stay in the Party long enough, they come up through the ranks, and then it’s their turn. Messenger was in line to be the next person. It didn’t matter if she was going to be the best candidate…. So she ran and called in a lot of chips” (Personal interview. Lenora Fulani, Chair of the Independence Party of New York. June 20, 2002).


11 The increased Latino support for Giuliani could have been due to a combination of factors including not only increased efforts to register newly arrived Latino immigrants, but also his advocacy for immigrant rights. During his second term, Giuliani tried to overturn a provision in the welfare reform law that sought to deny cash benefits and food stamps to elderly and disabled immigrants (Mandery 1999). Likewise, Giuliani also sought to ban the city bureaucracy from turning in illegal immigrants who reported crimes (Shepard 1997).

Giuliani began his second term indicating his full commitment to the continuation of a reduction in crime, improvement of the quality of life in the city, and to the development of a stronger relationship with minorities, noting that he intended to do a better job of serving all New Yorkers. On the first two pledges he succeeded. Through his advocacy of aggressive policing and an unwillingness to let small violations slide, Giuliani’s campaign against jaywalking, graffiti, turnstile jumping, prostitution, sleeping on subways, and crime in general led to a dramatic effect on the “quality of life” in New York City during his time in office. However, it was his support of aggressive policing tactics that led to his inability to establish better relations between himself, the NYPD, and the city’s minority leaders and larger community. Thus, it was not only Giuliani’s success with crime reduction for which his eight-year tenure was most noted, but also his less than favorable approach to handling police and minority group relations. With substantial increases in complaints of police misconduct and at least three nationally-publicized police brutality cases in which NYPD actions resulted in the torture or death of minorities, Giuliani’s last term in office would be marked by an even greater decline in support within the city’s Black and Latino communities. Moreover, Giuliani’s apparent
neglect of issues that would pertain most to those outside of the privileged class (i.e. public education, homelessness, unemployment), angered many New Yorkers who were affected by Giuliani’s social and economic policies.

For many New Yorkers, then, it was quite fortunate that term limits would prevent Giuliani from running for a third term. Even though various polls indicated that Giuliani held an impressive level of support, it was clear that the issue of police brutality had left an indelible mark on Giuliani’s perceived greatness as a leader. Of course, crime, drugs, education, and unemployment continued to be mentioned as top concerns by voters, but by 1999 “the police/police brutality” would surface as an additional concern, though mainly within the city’s minority communities. For example, a New York Times/CBS New York City Poll (1999) found that “the police” was mentioned second only to crime as something New Yorkers felt should be an area of concentration for the next mayor.

Given the string of allegations of misconduct against the NYPD, including the highly publicized 1997 Louima case and the 1999 and 2000 shooting deaths of Amadou Diallo and Patrick Dorismond, it may come as little surprise that “the police/police brutality” would be listed as a top concern that New Yorkers believed should be addressed.¹ It is, however, the racial disparity in concern over the issue that proves interesting. Noting that the NYPD is often accused of brutality, the 1999 New York Times/CBS New York City Poll asked whether respondents believed police use “excessive” force or use “necessary” force in dangerous situations. While Blacks (72%) and Latinos (62%) overwhelmingly believed that such force was “excessive”, Whites...
were much more likely to say "necessary" (54%). Likewise, the survey results showed that Blacks and Latinos were twice as likely as Whites to say that police brutality against minorities was widespread as well as much more likely to indicate that brutality was often enacted against Blacks and Latinos.

Hence, while New Yorkers from all racial and ethnic groups seemed to appreciate Giuliani's handling of crime and quality of life issues, unlike many White voters, these were not the only issues on which minorities judged Giuliani's performance. For instance, the mayor was perceived as having done very little in the areas of public education and unemployment, which are often noted as key issues for the Black and Latino communities. Furthermore, Giuliani's perfunctory attitude and overall handling of police misconduct in the city angered and alienated minorities and earned him widespread criticism from minority leadership. The general sense of discontent and ire was most readily observable within the Black community for whom a firm link between Giuliani and increasingly hostile law enforcement had been created by his refusal to reprimand and force changes within the police department.

The noted variation in Giuliani's approval rating and issues of concern to voters, particularly between Blacks and Whites, stems, in part, from African Americans' perceptions that Giuliani had not come through for all New Yorkers as he had pledged in his 1997 reelection speech (Nagourney 1997). Just as Whites felt that Dinkins had worked only for minorities during his tenure, so too did minorities believe that Giuliani had worked only for privileged Whites. The issues of socioeconomic inequality and police brutality, along with mounting evidence of all that Giuliani had not done while in
office helped to reinforce the notion of continued minority powerless. This would prove to be the perfect rallying point for minority voters as they sought to elect a candidate who would speak to their interests in a way they believed Giuliani had not.

The Primary Election

Since Giuliani could not run for reelection, the tone and mood of the 2001 election was not one of wariness and dread over the possibility of facing “the unbeatable Giuliani”. Instead, the Democratic and Republican tickets were full of potential candidates hoping to win their party’s nomination. The Republican primary included only two candidates: billionaire businessman, Michael Bloomberg, and former Democrat and several-time mayoral aspirant, Herman Badillo. The Democratic ticket, however, included three Jewish candidates, Public Advocate Mark Green, City Comptroller Alan Hevesi, and businessman/writer George Spitz, an Italian City Council President Peter Vallone, and Puerto Rican Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer.

It was clear that New Yorkers wanted the next mayor to continue with Giuliani’s crime and quality of life policies, as the city had changed remarkably since he took office. Given the apparent widespread support for a “Giuliani agenda,” the mayoral candidates could not stray too far from that mandate in their campaign platforms. And sure enough, all of them spoke to the need to continue fighting crime and making New York an even better place to live. In this respect, then, stark differences between the Democratic candidates were not readily observable. However, the candidates were free to expound upon an agenda inclusive of the areas that politicians and lay people alike declared had been all but forgotten by the Giuliani administration. Green, Hevesi,
Vallone, Ferrer, and Spitz all spoke about the need for better relations between the police and the larger community, and for the need to better the quality of education for New York children. Green varied his agenda a bit by also focusing on economic development, but it was Ferrer who really stood out among the Democratic contenders.

Ferrer’s platform was the only one that explicitly spoke of the need to address the socioeconomic divide between the “haves” and the “have nots” in the city, which he readily criticized Giuliani for intensifying. Moreover, Ferrer’s campaign was the only one that made explicitly clear the intention to build an “ideological coalition of conscience”. Without question, Ferrer ran as a candid liberal, while the remaining candidates, seemingly afraid to run too far to the left of Giuliani, ran as moderates. And though Ferrer tried to demonstrate that he was not simply appealing to minorities, but rather attempting to build a coalition for the “other New York”, or those who believed that the city under Giuliani had not work for them economically, his message was nonetheless interpreted as an attempt to forge an overt alliance between only Blacks and Latinos.

Ferrer’s problem, and that which would ultimately be his downfall, was that his “other New York” appeal, with the help of the mainstream media, was portrayed as an “us against them” campaign. So where Ferrer had hoped he would be seen as advocating for those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, the media portrayed his campaign appeal as a coalition of Blacks and Latinos against everyone else (Filkins and Nagourney 2001; Nagourney 2001).

The seeds of racial anxiety and mistrust had been planted. And if this portrayal of Ferrer’s candidacy was not destined to make difficult his quest to gain widespread
support from those outside of the Black and Latino communities, comments like those made by one of Giuliani’s aides, Bruce Teitelbaum, helped to seal Ferrer’s fate. In a Jewish weekly newspaper Teitelbaum stated that “If Ferrer wins the election, his administration will be full of people that worked with Dinkins. And if you ask Jewish leaders how they were treated during the Dinkins administration, they will say ‘not well’. An administration that includes Bill Lynch (Dinkins’s former campaign manager and advisor), Ruth Messinger, and Al Sharpton would be a great concern for the Jewish community” (Navarrette 2001).

The primary campaign season pushed forward with Green, Hevesi, and Vallone leading Ferrer and Spitz in the polls. Even early on it was evident where their support bases lay, with Green, Vallone, and Hevesi garnering most of their support from Jewish and outer borough White ethnics, and Ferrer’s support coming mainly from the Black and Latino communities. It appeared that Ferrer’s second mayoral attempt might be squashed since he trailed so far behind the other three main candidates. In May of 2001, however, Ferrer’s campaign seemed to gain a great deal of momentum as the race itself began to pick up. Much of the added momentum was likely connected to the endorsements of the candidates by major political figures.

At the very outset of the Ferrer campaign, it seemed to be a toss up as to whether Ferrer could count on the support of most Black and Latino leaders and elected officials. As Joe Ithier of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation and Ferrer campaign worker suggested, such support is sometimes debatable “because it often comes down to a question of split loyalties of race and ethnicity versus patronage and
borough loyalties”. However, Ferrer seemed to very quickly gain the backing of most Black and Latino leaders and elected officials, and the appearance of a Black-Latino coalition took shape (Spitz 2001). As the election pushed forward, Ferrer continued collecting endorsements from such notables as Dennis Rivera, leader of the city hospital workers’ union Local 1199, Representatives Charles Rangel and Nydia Velazquez, and Councilman Jose Serrano, former Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton, current Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, State Comptroller and Black gubernatorial hopeful Carl McCall, Ed Koch, and Al Sharpton, whom all four major candidates had been heavily courting for an endorsement (Navarrete 2001; Taylor 2001). Without a doubt, Ferrer enjoyed a great deal of support from Black leaders, though that support would prove to be interesting at best, as some of the community’s leadership split its endorsements. While most Black leaders readily backed Ferrer, indicating that they were in support of Ferrer’s attempt to create a Black-Latino coalition, others such as Dinkins, Reverend Calvin Butts, and Reverend Floyd Flake endorsed Green and Hevesi. Such behavior on the part of these leaders was curious given the potential to solidify a strong Black-Latino alliance with the showing that Black leadership was in support of Ferrer. When asked why he did not endorse Ferrer, Reverend Calvin Butts, an advocate of Black-Latino coalitions, explained:

“...There were a number of people like myself who did not support Ferrer. And I’ll tell you the truth, I was supporting Freddie, I really was...I was on his side. I think he was a little upset because he was sure he could go to the bank with my support; so was I. But then he drew some other support that I just couldn’t stand... It was a thing that I just thought really didn’t represent the interests of the Black or Latino communities. I think these interests were self-serving, so I stuck with Mark Green (Personal interview. Reverend Calvin Butts, June 18, 2002).
Dinkins noted that while he considered Ferrer a friend, his position was that the election was based not on ethnicity, but rather on evidence of all that he [Green] had done to unite New Yorkers of every race. And while Ferrer admitted that Dinkins’s decision to endorse Green was of little surprise given their longtime friendship, his decision understandably dealt a blow to Ferrer’s hope of building a strong Black-Latino coalition (Navarrete 2001; Tatum 2001). Likewise, Floyd Flake’s endorsement of Hevesi over Ferrer was odd in that as one of the most famous Black preachers in the city, boasting a roster of 10,000 members, he had the power to support a candidate who purported to speak for those who remain at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Instead, he endorsed Hevesi who had not demonstrated much concern for the Black community at all (Tatum 2001). In some respects, this made a Black-Latino coalition that much more difficult to construct.

Still, without the endorsements of Dinkins, Butts, and Flake, Ferrer was able to maintain a great deal of Black support since any loss that he may have incurred due to those leaders non-endorsement was more than recovered by Al Sharpton’s strong support. Initially, Sharpton was accused of holding his endorsement hostage unless Ferrer agreed to endorse two Black candidates for city offices. Sharpton’s refusal to endorse Ferrer unless he endorsed two Black candidates caused a great deal of controversy as Ferrer tried to maintain the appearance of being a candidate for all New Yorkers instead of one who would only represent the interests of minorities. Ferrer’s public outcry over being bullied into an endorsement tied to race by Sharpton was likely an effort to save face with non-minority voters. However, Sharpton argued that it was not he who interjected race
into the Ferrer campaign in the first place. Instead, he claimed that it was Ferrer himself who emphasized race by suggesting that Blacks should support his bid in an effort to ease historical riffs between the two groups. Sharpton correctly noted that it was Ferrer who set the conditions for a Black-Latino alliance by indicating that it was his intention to build such an alliance. Indeed, had Sharpton endorsed anyone other than Ferrer, he would have been portrayed as the one who broke the Black-Latino coalition and continued the political riff between the two groups (Nagourney 2001). Moreover, recall that in the 1997 election when Sharpton faced Messinger, Ferrer endorsed Messinger, even though Sharpton had a great deal of other elected official support within the Latino community. Sharpton did not forget this and in 2001 when it was time for Ferrer to run, Sharpton reminded him of what had happened four years earlier. Sharpton ultimately ended up being one of Ferrer’s strongest supporters, however, noting that Ferrer would be the best candidate, and one who would work for the Black and Latino communities. Sharpton even stated in what could be considered a strong endorsement of a Black-Latino alliance that “[Ferrer] will be able to unite a city divided with a coalition of Latinos and Blacks – a coalition of conscience and progression” (Ramirez 2001). Sharpton’s strong support and involvement with the Puerto Rican community as in his endorsement of Jose Serrano’s congressional campaign and his arrest with other Puerto Rican officials who protested U.S. bombing activities on the island of Vieques further sealed the alliance between the two groups. Moreover, and perhaps equally as telling as Sharpton’s endorsement, was the strong coalition building language used in the Black news publication, The Amsterdam News. There were a
number of articles and editorials printed during the campaign that spoke to the issue of coalition building, something that had not really appeared since the 1989 election. Articles and editorials in *The Amsterdam News* noted that despite their numbers, Blacks and Hispanics had been underrepresented in citywide politics and that because of this imbalance of power, a grave disparity in the allocation of resources by the Mayor and City Council was the eminent result. *The Amsterdam News* clearly noted that the only candidate on the Democratic ticket who could adequately represent the unrepresented was Ferrer. Thus, a coalition with Hispanics was necessary in order to elect Ferrer (Tatum 2001; Spitz 2001).

Yet Ferrer had to walk a fine line. Appealing to his “natural” base of minority voters was necessary and would likely yield him the most votes, but a minority-voting bloc alone would not ensure him electoral victory. He also needed non-minority support, which meant appealing to New York’s White communities. As Dinkins discovered, trying to run a deracialized campaign could be extremely difficult, particularly in a city that is so in-tuned to race and where the minority population desperately wants to know that the minority candidate will be on its side. Struggling with the temptation of highlighting his “Latinoness” to gain widespread Latino support and downplaying it in an effort to avoid alienating other groups, Ferrer chose to run as the “anti-Rudy” candidate rather than as a “Latino” (Navarro 2001). Ferrer understood that in order to attract White liberals he could not campaign on racial appeals, which in part explains why he tried to emphasize his building of a coalition of “have nots” based on economics and not necessarily on race. But Ferrer’s attempt to deracialize his campaign did not seem to
work; too much racial anxiety had already surfaced in connection with his advocacy for the “other New York” and the solid support from Al Sharpton, whom he publicly noted would be welcome in a Ferrer administration (Nagourney 2001). Gaining White support would be an almost insurmountable task. And even though by 2001 Blacks and Latinos were a numerical majority in the city and the population of registered Latino voters had significantly increased, the question heading into the September primary was one of turnout. Indeed, while Latinos and Blacks could be expected to show a high degree of solidarity for Ferrer, would they turn out in sufficient numbers to make a difference? Could Ferrer galvanize the Latino vote as Dinkins did the Black vote in 1989? In the end, would African Americans be energized by a race in which their leadership was split between a Puerto Rican and a Jew? Could Ferrer garner enough Black and White liberal support to create the type of electoral coalition Dinkins created in 1989? 8

In the remaining days before the Democratic primary, the candidates made their last rounds in an effort to court voters. By this time Green, who had run a cautious campaign to this point, and Ferrer, who had only recently begun to be taken seriously as a contender, were neck and neck in the polls with Hevesi, Vallone, and Spitz trailing. It was truly anyone’s guess as to who would win the primary election. Then tragedy struck. As voters lined up at voting booths early on the morning of September 11, the city and the election were brought to a halt as New York City fell victim to a terrorist attack in which two airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center killing thousands of people. From that point, the tone and dynamics of the election fundamentally changed. No longer were differences in how Green, Ferrer, Hevesi, and Vallone approached the issues of
education, unemployment, and police brutality of any real concern. Foremost in the minds of New Yorkers was what would happen to their city and the nation in the wake of such a tragedy. Stopped mid-vote, the primary election was postponed for two weeks.

With spirits still depressed over the events two weeks prior, 29% of Democratic voters turned out to cast their votes, including a fairly large turnout within both the Black and Latino communities. Once the votes had been counted, none of the Democratic contenders emerged with 40% of the vote. As Figure 7.1 shows, Ferrer (36%) and Green (31%) received the most votes with Hevesi, Vallone, and Spitz trailing behind with 12%, 20%, and 1% of the vote, respectively. The primary results were of little surprise considering the bloc of voters who turned out to cast ballots.

![Percentage of the Vote Received](image)


**Figure 7.1 2001 Democratic Primary Election Vote**

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As is generally the case in primary elections, White turnout was relatively low, while that of Blacks and Latinos was relatively high. This same pattern was evident in the 1989 and 1993 primaries as well when Dinkins ran. While Vallone and Hevesi, as two moderate Democrats from Queens fought for the same type of voters, Green and Ferrer were better able to fashion electoral coalitions from all over the city. Green targeted Jews, Manhattanites and other groups outside of the native Black and Latinos populations, while Ferrer targeted Blacks, Latinos, and liberal Whites. The high Black and Latino turnout coupled with lower than usual White turnout helped to push Ferrer over the top, as the votes of Whites who did turn out were split between Green, Vallone, and Hevesi. The same coalitions that developed for the first primary round would be the same as Green and Ferrer entered the runoff election.

Without a doubt, the terrorist attacks helped to determine not only how much politicking the candidates could appropriately do, but also the specifics of what they talked about. Green and Ferrer pledged not to engage in “politics as usual” with negative attacks that might normally be associated with a runoff election. Instead, each candidate chose to focus his campaign on questions of rebuilding lower Manhattan and on who would be a strong enough leader to pull the city through the future task of recovery. While both Ferrer and Green focused on the recovery effort, Green almost exclusively centered his campaign theme on how he would govern the city in its attempt to rebuild and recover economically. Green also came out in strong support of Giuliani’s desire to extend his term as mayor in the wake of the terrorist attacks. Conversely, while Ferrer also emphasized the importance of rebuilding, he repeatedly stated that he would not...
abandon the central appeal of his campaign which was to represent the interests of New Yorker's who had not benefited from the economic boom of the past few years (Nagourney 2001). He fervently maintained that the crisis in Lower Manhattan should not overshadow the city's efforts to deal with existing problems. Moreover, he sharply attacked the idea that Giuliani's request to extend his term should be honored (Nagourney 2001).

As the race continued and the last days of the campaign drew closer, Green's internal polls began to show his candidacy in danger of collapse. Fearing that he could be in danger of losing the runoff to Ferrer, Green decided to launch a series of attacks questioning Ferrer's leadership skills in a time of crisis. The ads suggested that not only did Ferrer not appreciate the magnitude of the World Trade Center crisis, but that New Yorkers could not afford to take their chances on having a "Ferrer administration". In what quickly became a decidedly negative last few days of the runoff campaign, Green's final attempt to harm Ferrer's credibility and plant within the minds of voters the link between Ferrer and Sharpton was his team's distribution of leaflets with cartoons that portrayed Ferrer as the diminutive puppet of a balloon-bellied Sharpton (Nagourney 2001). Phone calls were also placed to the homes of White voters suggesting that if Ferrer won the election Latinos and Blacks would essentially "take over". These tactics, which Green denied any knowledge of, enraged Ferrer's supporters and were not only harshly criticized within the Black and Latino communities as racist, but also staunchly questioned within the mainstream media. Lenora Fulani explained the response of Black and Latino leadership:
"The fallout in the community from [Green's] tactics was intense, but the response was split between leadership and the grassroots. Right after all of this happened, Rangel and other Black and Latino Democrats were up in arms; they were furious. At some point Rangel even had Bloomberg come to his office. But then they [minority Democrats] had a "unity" rally in which all the Black and Latino Democrats – including Ferrer – came together and endorsed Green. Sharpton went to the rally but left before the press conference...there was a lot of response to that [from the community]. Basically, the leadership "forgave" Green and they [Black and Latino leadership] thought that they were going to be able to make this shift and the grassroots would come with them; they didn't. People were upset. At the community level – I know this because I was in the streets organizing people around the Bloomberg campaign because I had started support for Bloomberg long before this.... People were outraged. Not only were they outraged that Green had done this, but they felt betrayed because Green was a White liberal, and you know, liberals aren't supposed to act like this...they're supposed to know better. As a result, the votes in these communities were up for grabs (Personal interview. Lenora Fulani. June 20, 2002).

With accusations of unfair and negative bickering now surrounding the runoff election, Green who in previous times had been viewed as just another East Side liberal, was suddenly positioned as the candidate of outer borough moderates. Speaking of his plans for the city’s recovery, while belittling those of Ferrer as the ideas of a man simply not up to the job of mayor, Green had all but abandoned his pledge to run a positive campaign (Siegel 2001). In what had been only two weeks prior a close race between Green and Ferrer, with Ferrer leading by five percentage points, Green was able to pull out a narrow victory in the runoff election – one that was again, sharply divided along racial and ethnic lines. In a contest overshadowed by terrorism and remnants of Giuliani’s dominance, 33% turned out to vote in the runoff, and as Figure 7.2 shows, in a turn of events, Green beat Ferrer 52% to 48%, winning the election by a mere 30,000 votes (Siegel 2001).
To be sure, while the runoff was dominated by issues related to the terrorist attack, the racial undercurrent that is so often a part of New York City campaigns was as strong as ever. Winning every borough except the Bronx, Green captured an overwhelming majority of the White vote (84%) and nearly 90% of the Jewish vote. Conversely, Ferrer received overwhelming support from Latinos (84%) and Blacks (71%) and a small amount of White liberal support (16%) (Sengupta 2001; Siegel 2001).

![Figure 7.2 2001 Democratic Primary Runoff Vote](image)

*Source: The New York Times, October 11, 2001*

Given the nature of New York City elections and the changed dynamics of this particular race, the results may not seem atypical. In fact, the results could have been predicted almost immediately following the primary race in which Green and Ferrer were forced into a runoff.
First, after having initially run a rather calm campaign because he assumed that he would be the top candidate, Green was stunned to discover that Ferrer was the more favored candidate, and was thus somewhat unprepared to enter into a runoff with the same type of campaign appeal he used in the first primary round. What eventually turned out to be the best move for Green was to change his campaign theme to suit the nature of the times to accord with what voters wanted to hear. He no longer centered his campaign on the need for better public schools, health care, and homelessness, but rather on the recovery effort and support for Giuliani, whose popularity substantially increased in the wake of the crisis. Ferrer, however, did not follow suit. Instead, he merged concern for the recovery effort into his original campaign theme of socioeconomic justice, which he never abandoned. Nor did he support Giuliani in the wake of the crisis. These things, along with the perception of Ferrer’s candidacy being an appeal to a “coalition of conscience” to speak for the “other New York” — and a coalition that was firmly linked with Al Sharpton, who is fervently disliked by many Whites and Jews, could be considered part of Ferrer’s downfall. In fact, exit polls revealed that Ferrer lacked support among Whites, in part, because of his strong endorsement by Sharpton, where nearly two-thirds said that Sharpton’s endorsement made them less likely to support Ferrer (Nagourney 2001; Siegel 2001).

Second, a shift in the turnout dynamic that seems to always happen likely played a pivotal role in the outcome of the runoff election. The low White turnout seen in primary elections usually increases for the general election, particularly when there is a minority candidate in the race. This pattern emerged in both the 1989 and 1993 Dinkins-
Giuliani elections. The relatively high turnout among minorities that is usually seen in the primary election, however, drops off nearing the general election, or in this case, the runoff. This was the case here. Where Latino turnout remained fairly high at around 25%, Black turnout began to wane to below the citywide average after the first primary round. Moreover, of those Blacks who did turn out in the runoff, close to 30% voted for Green. Just as was the case in the Dinkins 1993 reelection bid, if Ferrer could have gotten more of the Black and White liberal votes, he may have been able to squeak out a win. The dilemma for Green, however, was after the questionable tactics used in the runoff, could he count on the support of Blacks and Latinos as he entered the general election against Michael Bloomberg?

The General Election

After winning the runoff election, Green was quick to praise Ferrer as “an extraordinary leader of idealism and vision and eloquence” adding that “we need you, we need your ideas and I can’t wait to speak with you and your supporters to unite with us and win in November” (Nagourney 2001). It was questionable, however, as to whether Green would receive the widespread support that he had hoped for from the Black and Latino communities. There was every indication that his team’s last-minute campaign appeals had enraged Blacks and Latinos, many of whom vowed to sit out the general election (Siegel 2001).

Latinos were visibly distraught after Ferrer’s loss, much like Blacks were after Dinkins’ loss in 1993. In the Bronx, for example, where many Latinos revered him, Ferrer’s loss was seen as the passing of an opportunity to make history and to elect
someone who would look out for their interests. As one Latino voter from the Bronx stated, “if it wasn’t going to be Ferrer, then, frankly it didn’t matter that much who among those two Americans won...Ferrer was one of us. The other two are about the same” (Ojito 2001).

Neither Green nor Bloomberg was able to fill the void that Ferrer’s loss left for Hispanic voters, as many were convinced that neither Bloomberg nor Green truly cared about Latinos. Yet both Green and Bloomberg spent a great deal of time – and in Bloomberg’s case, money – appealing to Hispanic voters, and both received endorsements from key Latino leaders. And while Green gained the tepid endorsement of Ferrer and Bronx Democratic Party Chair Roberto Ramirez following the “unity rally”, Bloomberg was able to capture a fair amount of Latino support by appealing to Hispanics on the basis of how they felt about Green winning the nomination through the use of racially divisive campaigning tactics (Ojito 2001). Bloomberg’s appeals must have worked. In an interesting turn of events Bloomberg received the endorsement of the city’s major Spanish-language newspapers Hoy and El Diario, and even that of The Amsterdam News, which Bloomberg refused to denounce at Green’s request when the paper accused him of stealing the election from Ferrer with his racist strategy (Ojito 2001). Still Hispanics were not overly thrilled with either candidate, though many admitted that they leaned more toward Bloomberg because of this business experience, which they believed the city needed more than ever after September 11. It appeared that with Ferrer out of the picture, the question, in part, came down to who could steer the city toward recovery faster. Still, many Hispanics were hesitant to believe that on the issues they cared most
about—schools, affordable housing and health care—that a Republican would be the best one to address them (Ojito 2001).

As Bloomberg and Green debated one another’s leadership skills and who would be best equipped to handle the crisis that had befallen in the city, with Bloomberg arguing the need for someone with a fresh approach and Green arguing that someone with governing experience would be most suitable, the November election drew closer. Green continuously tried to paint Bloomberg as one who was insensitive to women and minorities, as disloyal to the Democratic Party from which he resigned to run on the Republican ticket, and as being nothing more than a wealthy businessman out of touch with what average New Yorkers want and need. Bloomberg, however, used that as a stepping stone arguing that primarily because he had business management experience, he would be able to better navigate the tough times ahead as the city sought to recover economically from the tragedy. Moreover, on the issue of insensitivity to minorities, Bloomberg noted that Green could hardly afford to point fingers (Nagourney 2001).

It may seem that the election pitting Green and Bloomberg against one another would have been a simple one. In a city where registered Democrats still outnumber Republicans 5-1, Green should have been a shoe in. However, if the elections of 1989, 1993, and 1997 are any indication that New Yorkers are willing to “forget the label”, then the 2001 general election outcome was, in many ways, normal.

In a mayoral election unlike any other, political newcomer and billionaire, Michael Bloomberg, edged out a win over Mark Green. Spending $50 million of his own money, Bloomberg made history by becoming the second Republican to have been
consecutively elected to City Hall (Nagourney 2001). At the end of a contest in a city still reeling from the World Trade Center attacks, Bloomberg beat Green 50% to 47% (see Figure 7.3).

While Green did best among Democratic voters, Bloomberg was able to fashion an impressive array of support from not only Republicans, but also Democrats and Independents. And as Figure 7.3 suggests, Green received a great deal of support from Blacks and a plurality from Latinos, but Bloomberg’s share of the White, Black, and Latino votes is interesting and says something about Green’s inability to maintain his own coalition. There were signs that the way Green ran his primary campaign against
Ferrer would probably diminish his support among traditionally Democratic voters (Nagourney 2001). With the World Trade Center attack still quite visible in the minds of voters, Bloomberg being portrayed as the better manager to deal with the crisis and recovery effort because of his business experience, Ferrer disappearing from the campaign trail in the final days before the election, and Al Sharpton refusing to support Green, the election results were probably predictable. All of these factors came together in an odd combination to present Bloomberg with the mayoral victory.

A Coalition of a Different Sort

The story of Black-Latino coalition building in 2001, in some respects, resembled that which took place in previous elections – the general appearance of unity behind the minority candidate until that candidate is no longer in the race. At that point, the schism in minority leadership becomes quite visible and they separate to support whomever they desire.

The coalition that developed around Ferrer in this election was strong once Black and Latino leadership finally came together. Through a coordinated and targeted campaign centered in the Black and Latino communities, Ferrer was able to attract a substantial number of minority voters. Ferrer, however, was unable to recreate the winning “grand coalition” of 1989, in part, because he was incapable of securing a substantial base of support within the White liberal and White ethnic communities. Indeed, at only 23% and 18% of the electorate respectively, Blacks and Latinos alone could not bring victory to Ferrer. So while Blacks and Latinos came together in strong support of the minority candidate and with the additional support of labor and the
Democratic Party organizations, without the small but crucial percentage of the White vote, Ferrer could not win the runoff against Mark Green. With Ferrer out of the race, the strong impetus and desire to remain linked in coalition eroded, as Black and Latino leadership and voters went their separate ways.

Bloomberg's victory was interesting in that it came with a great deal of help from those typically assumed to always support the Democratic candidate. The fact that Bloomberg received a third of the vote from those identified as Democrats is telling and speaks to the changing nature of New York City mayoral elections. Since 1993, the mayoralty seems to be the only election in which New Yorkers have felt quite comfortable electing Republicans while staying loyal to Democratic city council, congressional, and presidential candidates. And much of that change in Democratic voting behavior has come from liberal Whites and Jews, who over the years have tended to favor the more conservative candidate. In fact, not since 1989 when Dinkins ran has the Jewish community given a third of its vote to the Democratic candidate, even when those candidates were Jewish as in the case of Messinger and Green. In the 2001 election, Green saw his support erode among White voters, where in at least 9 of 25 predominately White assembly districts, he got fewer votes in the general election than in the runoff. And on the Upper West Side, which should have been the easiest for Green to win, Bloomberg got 41% of the vote (Cooper 2001).

Something else that proved to be interesting in this election was that Bloomberg received a quarter of the Black vote — a voting pattern unprecedented among New York City Blacks. Such a relatively large share of the Black vote was surprising given that
there was no real indication that he would be the sort of “liberal” mayor that Blacks have overwhelmingly supported.\textsuperscript{11} And that Green was only able to amass 71\% of the Black vote is curious as well given that Dinkins and Messinger received upwards of 90\% of the Black vote. And Green tried hard to gain the support of Blacks by campaigning in Black districts with both Dinkins and former President Clinton. The community and political leaders with whom I spoke, however, all agreed that anger and disappointment with Green helped to produce such an outcome. In short, Blacks stayed home, and according to Councilmember Philip Reed it was a “deliberate stay at home vote” that was in some ways assisted by the lackluster support demonstrated for Green by many Black leaders.\textsuperscript{12}

Latino voters clearly turned out to be the major players in this election, splitting their votes almost equally between Green and Bloomberg. And while Green, as the Democratic candidate, received a plurality of the Latino vote, it was not a \textit{majority}, which had typically been the case. In 1989, Dinkins received overwhelming Latino support, and while somewhat reduced in 1993, their support for Dinkins was still clearly evident. Even for Messinger, whom Latinos were not too impressed by, received a majority of their votes. Green was unable to keep hold of what has recently been called the unpredictable Latino vote. It seems that the campaign tactics Green employed against Ferrer were the main factor that led many Latino voters to either stay home or support Bloomberg.\textsuperscript{13} Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell also noted that after the runoff election, the Bronx leadership, still quite upset over the tactics used by the Green team, began meeting with Bloomberg. And despite the “unity rally” for Green as he entered the general election, Bronx leadership nonetheless began developing a relationship with
Bloomberg, who had also given money to several Democratic organizations. The Bronx leadership's emerging relationship with Bloomberg, along with its lukewarm support of Green, likely increased the incentive for the Latino community to support Bloomberg's candidacy.

Lenora Fulani, Chair of the Independence Party of New York, commented on the role that she and her party played in channeling Black and Latino anger with the Democratic Party, which helped to bring about a Bloomberg victory:

“...I had been working on creating an alternative party for the Black and Latino communities for many years and when this election came up I was in the churches, bars - everywhere - saying "This is the moment! This is the moment!" [Bloomberg] was running on the Republican and Independent Party lines (because in New York you can run on multiple party lines), which helped people respond to him. A lot of people would not have voted for him on the Republican line within the Black and Latino communities - particularly the Black community - but they could vote Independent. On election day, [Bloomberg] got 59,000 of his votes on the Independence Party line - we were the margin of victory. We got our highest Black vote on the Independence line in Harlem during this election...The victory for Bloomberg was definitely grassroots - it was not Black and Latino leadership. The people in those communities literally went over the heads of their leadership and elected Bloomberg for mayor” (Personal interview. Lenora Fulani, June 20, 2002).

Green supporters were bitter about his loss, blaming Green’s fate on Ferrer’s absence from the campaign trail, and the decision by Bronx Democratic Party Chair Roberto Ramirez and Local 1199 leader Dennis Rivera not to put the full weight of their organizations behind Green, suggesting that they let ethnic politics keep them from obtaining the greater good of a Democratic mayor who would be more favorable to their interests than a Republican mayor (Nagourney 2001). Green could have definitely used the help of labor’s “get-out-the-vote” initiatives, but labor did not turn out for him. Local 1199, for instance, has the best vote-pulling operation in the city, but on Election Day it had just 300 volunteers compared to the 8,000 they had for Ferrer in the runoff. Local
1199 did eventually endorse Green half-heartedly, but Local 1199 leader, Dennis Rivera and even the Teacher’s Union, both admitted that people were upset with Green, which made it difficult to get volunteers (Greenhouse 2001).

Latino leaders, however, maintained that Green had no one to blame but his campaigners for their choice of tactics, as well as the voting behavior of fellow registered Democrats. After all, this was the third straight election in which a sizeable number of Democratic voters did not follow the partisan label, but instead voted Republican; many of them were White voters. To blame Ferrer (and by extension, his supporters who were mostly Black and Latino) for Green’s loss was unfair. Understandably, Blacks and Latinos were quite resentful over Green’s actions in the runoff, which undoubtedly lingered into the general election. Though as Dennis Rivera, head of the influential healthcare workers union Local 1199, stated “For a city that is 5 Democrats for every 1 Republican, and for the Democrats to have lost the last 3 elections, it’s basically an indictment of the Democratic Party” (Nagourney 2001).

Conclusion

Trying to definitively state which particular bloc of voters puts a candidate over the top in any given election is never easy, since so many factors come into play. But in many ways, the story of the 2001 mayoral election was not only about the impact of racial anxiety, but also about the unpredictability of Latino voting behavior. White and Black voting behavior was typical – White support was split between Democrats and Republicans, though as in the previous two elections, increasingly more Republican, while Blacks still gave their support to the Democratic candidate (albeit greatly reduced
from what had been apparent in previous years). New York City Latinos, who have been overwhelmingly Democratic in their vote choices, split their support almost evenly between Green and Bloomberg, giving the latter a full 47% of their votes. The near even split in the Hispanic vote and the 25% Black vote for Bloomberg was a radical change in New York and altered the nature of that city’s voting coalitions (see Figure 7.4).

Wither the Democratic Party as the party of choice for Hispanics, and hence future prospects of a Black-Latino coalition? Democratic Party leaders seem to doubt that the 2001 election represented nothing more than a fluke and must be considered within the larger context of local events that year. As Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell of Harlem suggested, the 2001 election likely signals no change in Latino (or Black) voting behavior given that “the Democratic Party is the one that is most responsive to those communities.... It’s the party of civil rights, of minorities, and of immigrants… everything the Republican Party isn’t.” On this basis, then, Black and Latino coalitions will most likely continue to emerge.
Figure 7.4  Shift in Democratic Coalition
As was the case in the previous mayoral election years, 2001 was a year in which coalition building efforts between Blacks and Latinos were clearly evident. Like 1989 and 1993, this election presented yet another opportunity to elect “one of their own” to office. Consistent with the empowerment thesis and minority status hypothesis, Ferrer’s candidacy created an excitement and fervor not seen since 1989, and an actual Ferrer mayoral victory would have produced a tremendous sense of pride within the Latino community at having helped to elect the city’s first Latino to office – one who would presumably speak to the issue concerns of their community.15 The same eagerness to elect Ferrer existed within the Black community as well (albeit not to the same degree as within the Latino community). After eight years of a Giuliani administration, Blacks welcomed the possibility of a Ferrer administration with which they could work.

The Bronx political organization worked well for Ferrer and for the task of Black and Latino coalition building. Bronx leaders thought early on about the need to attract Black votes and to get them on par with Latinos. For instance, the previous year, the Bronx machine supported a Black candidate over a Latino for Congress, which was almost unprecedented. Regardless of the general feeling that some may have had about the candidate, it was done in preparation for lining up the Black vote for Ferrer in 2001.16 These types of “I’ll scratch your back if you scratch mine” politicking are what give the Black-Latino alliance shape and form. As conscious and deliberate efforts to unite for the purpose of electing minority candidates, Blacks and Latinos have developed alliances with which mayoral aspirants must now contend.
What this election demonstrates is that when there is a Black or Latino in the election, chances are a coalition created through politicking and maneuvering will arise. However, when there is no minority in the race, the Black-Latino coalition can easily wilt, rendering those votes up for grabs. In 2001, as in 1997, it is most often Latino voting behavior that produces a shift in the coalition, as Black voting behavior generally tends to remain constant.

Still, Blacks and Latinos have found it more or less advantageous to work together politically, and as their respective group numbers continue to increase, they may come to realize even more the benefits of such collaborative efforts. Because of their willingness to split their vote between both parties, as indicated by the 1997 and 2001 elections, Latinos have clearly put themselves in a position to be viewed quite differently than African Americans. As Lenora Fulani and Reverend Calvin Butts suggest, Latinos splitting their votes between the Republicans and Democrats has now offered them a degree of leverage and bargaining power not yet realized by Blacks, who remain more or less wedded to the Democratic Party. To the extent that Hispanics see tangible results from their support of Bloomberg, they could break with Blacks in what had been until fairly recent a trend of one-party support. Also, should Blacks and Latinos take advantage of New York's electoral system that allows voters to “opt out” of voting Republican by voting Independent should they not like the Democratic candidate, results like those observed in the 2001 case could become commonplace.

The 2002 gubernatorial race in which a Black candidate, Carl McCall, will run should prove interesting from the standpoint of Black-Latino alliance building and the
reciprocal politics that is often invoked as a key part of the process. Latinos mobilized and turned out significantly for Dinkins in 1989 and 1993, and turned out in sufficient numbers for Sharpton in 1997. Blacks knew that they had to reciprocate and in turn came out for Ferrer in 2001. The question up for debate now is whether Latinos will turn out for McCall as repayment for Blacks’ support of Ferrer.

CHAPTER 7 NOTES

1 The Amadou Diallo incident occurred when four White policemen shot and killed an unarmed Diallo as he stood in his doorway. The officers thought he looked like a suspect they had been looking for and shot Diallo as he reached for his wallet and identification. Patrick Dorismond was shot and killed by an undercover police officer as the officer attempted to buy marijuana from Dorismond during a “drug buy and bust” operation. Dorismond did not have drugs or a gun. In most of the police brutality cases against the NYPD, Giuliani often exacerbated tensions by siding with the police and publicizing the victims’ records in an effort to justify or mask the questionable nature of NYPD actions. In the Dorismond case, with little evidence to paint the victim in a negative light, Giuliani ordered Police Commissioner Safir to unseal a juvenile record which disclosed that Dorismond had been arrested for robbery and assault in 1987 when he was 13 (Vann 2000).


3 Incidentally, Councilmember Philip Reed of Harlem noted that one of the most important endorsements that Ferrer could receive – that of Representative Charles Rangel – was initially withheld. According to Reed, Ferrer did not have a great deal of support from the beginning, as some questioned him and whether he would be one to come through; was he Puerto Rican enough etc. Reed also commented that Rangel had actually toyed with the idea supporting other people but certain deals did not work out as he had planned. It was not until July that Rangel got with other Black Harlemites to support Ferrer. At that point the Black-Latino coalition really came together because they realized the inherent benefits of doing so (Personal interview. Councilmember Philip Reed, June 24, 2002).

4 Councilmember Helen Foster mentioned something that was not highly publicized – the fact that Ferrer had a lot of Republican money, which meant if he won, he would likely be beholden to those interests (Personal interview, June 13, 2002). This could very well be one of the things that Reverend Butts referred to as self-serving and not in the best interest of the Black and Latino communities.

5 Joe Ithier and Charles Flemming of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation both noted that Ferrer needed the endorsements of both Dinkins and Sharpton because of their influence within the native Black community and the ability to bring votes. Ithier and Flemming, however, also noted early on that Ferrer might not get Dinkins’s endorsement because of his close friendship with Green and Hevesi. They suspected that as a fellow Manhattanite, Dinkins would maybe endorse Green, which turned out to be true (Personal interview, April 16, 2001).
The electorate had grown by 400,000 new registered voters in the 1990s – mostly Caribbean and Dominican – while Whites declined to less than half of all voting-age citizens in the city (Sengupta 2001). Still, the question of turnout would be particularly acute given that the Black and Latino percentages of the electorate had changed somewhat since 1997. At that time Blacks and Latinos comprised roughly 21% and 20% of the electorate respectively. By 2001, however, while the Black percentage had increased slightly to 23%, that for Latinos had fallen slightly to 18% (Firestone 1997; Nagourney 2001).

On the Republican side Bloomberg won 72% of the vote against the 28% for Badillo.

This break in Black and Latino alliance in supporting the Democratic Party may only occur at the mayoral level since Hispanics have remained quite supportive of the Democratic Party at the city council and state assembly levels, where the Black and Latino officials in those bodies are more often than not Democrats.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have attempted to tell the story of Black and Latino electoral coalition building in New York, noting the conditions under, and the extent to which, strong and purposive coalitions have formed. This final chapter first discusses the major findings of the study in relation to the theories and hypotheses outlined in the beginning, and then moves to highlight the importance of the study for theories of coalition building and the future prospects for Black-Latino alliances in New York. Suggestions for future research in this area are also considered.

Ideology, Interests, or Something Else?

The debate over interracial coalitions has been an enduring one, centering mainly on the question of whether racial minorities should, in their quest to realize greater political empowerment, go at it alone or join forces with other groups. In recent years as the number of minorities concentrated in urban areas has increased, the question has taken on greater significance. Generally, no minority group on its own has the numbers and strength to decide an electoral outcome, bringing recognition of the need to form alliances. This practical realization, however, inevitably turns on the more theoretical question of on what basis are such coalitions built.
Scholars of coalition building have focused generally on ideology or interests as the bonding element of political alliances. Ideology, because of the common belief systems shared by coalition members, tends to yield long-term or enduring unions (Browning, Marshall, Tabb 1984). Pragmatic self-interest, however, has also been considered the central component to interracial coalitions, though because of the inevitablesurfacing of parochialism among coalition members, such alliances tend to be short-lived compromises at best (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967).

Studies of Los Angeles politics have found both of these patterns with respect to biracial Black-White coalitions. Alliances between Blacks and liberal Whites (Jews) who shared a similar belief system with regard to the goal of minority inclusion ultimately led to greater minority political incorporation and empowerment in that city. This notion was challenged, however, when years later those same coalitions began to break down as the link in Black and White ideology or belief systems began to erode due to conflicts of interest (Browning, Marshall, Tabb 1997; Sonenshein 1997). This latter pattern was also evident in New York, a city where White liberalism had historically been strong, but as it began to wane, so too did relations between White liberals and minorities, leading to limited minority incorporation (Mollenkopf 1997). As predicted by Carmichael and Hamilton (1967), a conflict of interests between Whites and minorities derailed the possibilities of interracial coalitions. However, as Sonenshein (1997) argues, examining interracial coalitions through the lens of either ideology or self-interest is problematic since “group relations are not simply the outcome of objective interests or poll measured attitudes” (264). Coalitions also depend heavily on the presence of leadership that has both the ability and desire to create and maintain alliances between groups.
This dissertation argues that ideology, interests, and leadership are all critical elements of coalitions. Although unlike scholars who have studied coalition building mainly between Whites and Blacks, I argue that coalition building between minority groups differs somewhat and, therefore, depends on more than the convergence of the aforementioned factors. I suggest that minority coalitions are multidimensional in that they are a function of not only common beliefs systems, interests, and skilled leadership, but also of coalition members' overall sense of commonality, or sense of “sameness” in their socioeconomic and/or political conditions. I contend that this commonality is fostered through minority groups' recognition of their minority status, oftentimes based on, among other things, a history of social and political repression, racial/ethnic discrimination, a lack of group empowerment and so on. The idea is that minority political behavior (i.e. the impetus to form coalitions, vote Democratic) will, in part, be filtered through the lens of their minority status. This study suggests, then, that in addition to ideology, interests, and leadership, consideration should also be given to race and minority status, how they operate for each group, and whether they can serve as unifying tools for minority group coalition building.

**Black-Latino Coalition Building in New York City**

This study examined four New York City mayoral elections in an effort to determine the level of coalition building between Blacks and Latinos, and the character of those coalitions when they have formed. An assessment of the mayoral election case studies reveal that Black and Latino coalitions have formed and have at times been quite strong. Furthermore, these coalitions developed as conscious efforts to elect minority candidates.
As hypothesized, Black-Latino alliances in New York formed around a mix of ideology, interests, and issues concerns, and were often guided by Black and Latino leadership. As the two largest minority groups in the city, they share an uncanny number of similarities that have led to them joining forces, including experience with discrimination, high unemployment and poverty rates, poor public school systems, inadequate health care, and lack of affordable housing. Given that both groups are almost equally afflicted by these issues, their politics tends to center on how to rid their communities of these ills.

The creation of Black-Latino alliances, then, are generally based on the recognition and understanding that they as racial minorities share these same issues and concerns, and that as the two largest minority groups, they should work together to create a situation of greater political empowerment so that the problems facing their communities can be addressed. The coalitions that formed during each of the elections detailed in this dissertation did so for these reasons. As the case studies demonstrate, however, the alliances that formed were not consistently strong across all four elections. Indeed, much of the variation in the strength and presence of Black-Latino voting alliances centered on the context in which the election took place and who specifically entered the contest as mayoral contenders. That is, the presence of strong Black-Latino coalitions tended to ebb and flow depending on the presence of minority candidates, issues, shared interests and sense of commonality, as well as cooperative leadership that sought to build alliances.

Under conditions in which these factors were present, strong coalitions were able to thrive. These coalitions met the greatest challenge, however, when outside forces
attempted to exacerbate tensions or divide the Black and Latino communities, or when no minority candidate appeared in the election. This study did not find Black and Latino social distance to be a formidable obstacle to coalition building efforts. Chapter 3 questioned whether negative feelings toward one another might impede Black and Latino attempts to unify for political purposes. I maintain that while some level of social distance undoubtedly exists between these two groups, there is little indication that it poses a problem for electoral coalition building given their greater interest in community uplift for both groups. Hence, what matters more for the formation of electoral alliances is similarity in Black and Latino perceptions and beliefs about their shared socioeconomic conditions, group interests, and lack of political empowerment, for example. As I suggest in Chapter 3, these elements are the glue that will shape the coalition, or at least to a greater degree than social perceptions of group members. If the goal is to form coalitions based on a sense of shared condition or circumstance, then the fact that Blacks and Hispanics may hold less than positive attitudes and perceptions of one another is of minimal concern since condition/interest/status-based coalitions do not necessarily require that they hold positive views of one another in order to be effective.

This dissertation emphasized three main hypotheses regarding Black-Latino electoral coalitions:

1) **The minority status hypothesis.** As racial minorities, there is recognition of a common plight experienced by both groups. The similarities in their socioeconomic and political conditions merge into a common agenda which leads to their support for similar policies, candidates etc. Because of differences in their political world views, minority preferences for certain policies or candidates, for
example, will differ from those of Whites. Thus, Black and Hispanic voting behavior will closely resemble one another, while differing greatly from that of Whites.

2) **The empowerment thesis.** Blacks and Latinos will be more likely than Whites to desire and vote for minority candidates based, in part, on the idea that having a minority elected as mayor or on the city council, for example, will result in their interests being served thereby leading to greater minority empowerment. Moreover, the presence of a minority candidate in the election produces a significant psychological boost for the minority group hoping to be empowered, prompting higher levels of political engagement (Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Kaufmann, 2002). Variation in the psychological boost and likelihood of turning out for a given candidate, however, will exist depending on which minority group is seeking election. Thus, Blacks will experience a heightened sense of group consciousness and levels of turn out more than Latinos when an African American is on the ballot and vice versa if the candidate is Latino. When there is no minority candidate, Black and Latino political interest and engagement decreases and minority voting alliances weaken.

3) **The retrospective voter theory.** Individual voters rationally analyze whether to support a given candidate based on the improvement of his/her situation (financial or otherwise) over the course of the incumbent’s term. To the extent that voters are satisfied or displeased with the performance of the incumbent, he/she will stand to be reelected or replaced (Fiorina 1981).
In 1989 a very strong Black-Latino coalition developed around the candidacy of David Dinkins. Both groups were excited about the possibility of electing the city's first African American mayor who they believed would better serve their interests. New Yorkers, though especially Blacks and Latinos, had grown increasingly disenchanted with the Koch administration and desperately wanted to replace the mayor with "one of their own". The Dinkins candidacy presented this opportunity, bringing with it a measure of pride for minorities and the hope that with Dinkins in office, their communities would be responded to in a positive manner. On this basis, then, a purposive and strong voting alliance emerged between Blacks and Latinos, fostered by minority leadership, which led to both communities turning out in both the primary and general elections in unprecedented numbers. As expected, the support for Dinkins was greatest among African Americans given that Dinkins was Black, though Latinos also showed an impressive level of support. Together Blacks and Latinos comprised a little over two-thirds of Dinkins winning coalition. By 1993, however, the "Grand Coalition" had weakened, leaving Dinkins unable to secure reelection.

Although Blacks and Latinos still shared the same issue concerns and desire for minority empowerment, their commitment to the coalition had started to wane. As suggested by the retrospective voter theory, voters often grant their support to incumbents based on an assessment of how well they (or their group) fared during the incumbent's term. By 1993 members of the Black-Latino alliance that had worked to elect Dinkins four years previous seemed to lack the same eagerness and enthusiasm. Neither community really felt that Dinkins had lived up to his promise of being "the best mayor the city has ever seen". Dinkins was perceived as an ineffective leader for a number of
reasons by most New Yorkers, including Blacks and Latinos, who felt betrayed by some of the Dinkins administration's policy initiatives. Moreover, Latinos did not feel that they had been sufficiently rewarded by the administration given their crucial support in the coalition that helped to elect Dinkins. African Americans were also put off by Dinkins for what many saw as his deference to Whites and an inconsistency in “sticking up for the community”.

Nonetheless, a Black-Latino coalition came together for Dinkins in 1993, though admittedly quite tenuous. On the one hand, Blacks and Latinos, like other New Yorkers, knew that Dinkins had not performed well as a leader; yet on the other hand, Rudolph Giuliani as the alternative was viewed as an even worse fate. In the end, Blacks and Latinos still turned out for Dinkins, but the levels of engagement and turnout were significantly reduced. Additionally, of those Latinos who did turn out, a number of them voted for Giuliani, indicating a breakdown in the strength of the “Grand Coalition”.

The 1997 election further demonstrates the fragility of Black and Latino alliances. The primary race initially included both an African American (Sharpton) and a Puerto Rican (Ferrer) on the ballot. In such an instance, Blacks and Latinos supported their own respective candidates until Ferrer left the race, leaving Sharpton as the only minority candidate. Given Sharpton’s history and reputation, it may come as little surprise that a Dinkins-type coalition did not emerge, or one with widespread mass and elite support from within the Black, Latino, and liberal White communities. Sharpton did, however, receive a fair amount of support within some sectors of both communities, particularly at the community level, though ultimately Sharpton lost to Ruth Messinger. Now with two
non-minority candidates in the general election, not only did interest in the campaign
decline, but the Black-Latino voting alliance nearly collapsed.

Blacks, who were less than pleased with Giuliani’s first term, for the most part,
behaved in a predictable manner, voting for Messinger as the Democratic candidate.
Giuliani did, however, receive an increase in the percentage of the Black vote (20%
compared to 5% in 1993), though Blacks remained solidly within the Democratic camp.
Latinos, on the other hand, while also still on the Democratic side, significantly increased
their level of support for Giuliani in 1997 (43%) from what they had shown in 1993
(29%). In short, without a racial cue to guide their voting behavior as in previous
elections, Blacks and Latinos went in slightly different directions, in part owing to
retrospective evaluations, and in the case of Blacks, issues of party loyalty.

Aside from the fact that Messinger simply was not a strong candidate, many New
Yorkers – including some Blacks and Latinos – appreciated what Giuliani had done to
change the city since he entered office. The reduction of crime and changes in the quality
of life struck a cord with everyone and New Yorkers wanted the good things Giuliani had
done to continue. In many respects, the Black and Latino vote in 1997 reflected this.
Some Blacks based their votes on these very issues, which accounts for the increase in
Giuliani’s support; though many more loathed him, leading them to stay committed to
voting Democratic. The Latino vote, which is not as wedded to the Democratic Party as
that of Blacks, drifted and likely had a great deal to do with how Giuliani had responded
to that community and its leadership. The existence of a bond between the Black
community and Giuliani was virtually undetectable; not so with Latinos. While it cannot
be said that Giuliani was a friend to the Latino community, he did reach out to Latinos.
For instance, not only did he speak out on issues that many Hispanics care about (i.e. immigrant rights), but he also identified potential divisions within the Black and Latino communities and acted on them, sometimes resulting in benefits to the Latino community. Moreover, Giuliani was able to tap into some segments of the Hispanic community (particularly the non-Puerto Rican sector) that were not as socially and economically liberal as African Americans. As a group that has neither the history nor the firm opposition to the Republican Party and is not as “liberal” as Blacks, Giuliani was able to develop a better working relationship with that community. The end result was not only increased bargaining power for the Hispanic community, but also a strained Black-Latino coalition as Latinos moved further away from Blacks and the Democratic Party. That minority leadership seemingly did little to “fight” for Messinger and keep Blacks and Latinos tied together to help maximize her votes, also exemplifies the weakening of the coalition.

The 2001 election brought Latinos back within the fold of the Democratic Party and in coalition with Blacks with the hope of electing the city’s first Latino mayor. As the minority status and empowerment thesis predict, a strong, purposeful coalition emerged around the Ferrer candidacy just as it had around Dinkins in 1989. Ferrer’s candidacy generated pride and enthusiasm within the minority communities, though especially among Puerto Ricans and other Latinos. By 2001 Blacks and Latinos had grown tired and frustrated with Giuliani and welcomed the change in administrations. Again, it was hoped that a Ferrer administration would bring changes in local governance and thus changes for minority communities.
Realizing the opportunity they had to possibly elect Ferrer, especially given the increase in Latino and Black numbers which now made them a majority of the city’s population, Black and Latino leaders crafted yet another strong alliance. Though initially shaky, the alliance finally came together in “Grand Coalition” style. Based on the idea that a Ferrer administration would best serve the interests of the Latino and Black communities, leadership within both communities actively promoted his candidacy. Just as was the case in the 1989 primary, Black and Latino turnout for Ferrer was tremendous (albeit more so among the latter than the former), with both groups forming the largest base of Ferrer’s support, as he enjoyed little White support. Undoubtedly, the large turnout among Blacks and Latinos pushed Ferrer over the top, forcing a runoff with Mark Green.

Excitement flourished as Latinos and Blacks felt the inevitability of Ferrer’s victory. But in a contest in which the politics of race and racial anxiety emerged, Ferrer ultimately lost the runoff to Green. Once again, the Black and Latino incentive to mobilize and turnout was gone. The campaign tactics used by the Green team were, by and large, believed to be racist within the minority community. Blacks, and especially Hispanics, were greatly angered by Green’s campaign against Ferrer and they demonstrated their fury by either staying home or voting for Green’s Republican opponent. Not only did Black and Latino turnout drop significantly in the general election, but in an unprecedented move, those Blacks and Latinos who turned out gave a considerable portion of their votes to Michael Bloomberg. Indeed, Blacks gave him 25% of their vote while Latinos split their vote almost equally between the Democratic and
Republican candidates, giving the latter a full 47% of the vote. In large part, due to the shift in the Latino vote, New York welcomed Michael Bloomberg as its next mayor.

The Politics of Shifting Coalitions: Reflections and Implications

The political and community leaders with whom I spoke about the nature of Black and Latino coalitions all determined their outgrowth to be a practical result of their increased numbers, shared interests and issue concerns, and favored them as a potential means of empowering their groups. In this respect, Black and Latino alliances are seen as something much more than simple happenstance or ad hoc disjointed coalitions in the way that Watts (1996) describes. Instead, they are something more deliberate and conscious in their construction. But can they really be considered shared-core coalitions, or those that are enduring and based on a shared underlying ideology?

I submit that Black and Latino coalitions, at least those that formed during the elections examined in this study, come very close to, but do not exactly approximate shared-core coalitions; however, they can be considered a bit stronger than those labeled as disjointed. In the sense that Blacks and Puerto Ricans and other Latinos intentionally come together based on an understanding of their group similarities and issue concerns as racial minorities, and the desire to see a common agenda enacted, in many ways makes them shared-core coalitions. Indeed, there is a functioning belief system (and cooperative leadership) keeping them tied to one another. On the other hand, these coalitions are basically candidate-centered meaning that once a given election is over, the coalition seems to disappear until the next election. Moreover, when the election does not include a minority candidate, the nature of the coalition changes with minority group engagement and turn out significantly decreasing and the Latino vote becoming somewhat
unpredictable. And because Latino voting is much more amenable to change than is Black voting, when shifts in the Latino vote occur, it gives the appearance that alliances have formed between Latinos and other groups.

For instance, in the 1997 general election the Hispanic community’s increased support for Giuliani generated talk of a burgeoning Latino-Jewish alliance. However, this alliance was mainly coincidental and not based on an underlying ideology or commitment to similar community issues, and thus absent of the same rationale that tends to guide Black and Latino alliances. Furthermore, the Latino-Jewish alliance did not have political and community leadership attempting to foster any type of sustained relationship between the two groups. Indeed, what may have looked like a Latino-Jewish alliance in 1997 was unintentional and ceased to exist in the 2001 primary as Latinos supported Ferrer and Jews supported Green. Hispanic and Jewish behavior again seemed to mimic one another in the general election as they both supported Bloomberg, but the reasoning behind Latino and Jewish support for Bloomberg differed. As the previous chapters have shown, the decision on the part of Black and Latino leadership (and voters) to support one of the two non-minority candidates depends on the context in which the election takes place and considerations of who they can work best with to amass the most benefit for their respective communities.

The existence of Black and Latino coalitions, no matter how purposeful, seems to beg the question of why they cannot produce consistent victories.¹ One reason that Black-Latino coalitions come up short is lack of mobilization. Although minorities in New York are now a numerical majority, they are still well below half of the electorate and both communities are plagued by habitually low turnout (Fulani 2001). In each election, Black
and Latino turn out increased or decreased depending on the presence or absence of a minority candidate in the election, which often serves as a mobilizing force. However, in each case, Black and Hispanic turnout was well below their potential given their increased numbers in the population. This phenomenon suggests the need for minority community and elected leadership to do more to engage and mobilize their constituents to not only register, but also to actually turn out. The Black and Latino vote is not automatically mobilized; it must be stimulated and reinforced through effective networking and organization of which minority leadership play a pivotal role. Indeed, to the extent that electoral politics remains the primary arena of focus for Black and Latino leadership, maintaining voter momentum – even when no minority candidate is in the race – must be a priority if Blacks and Latinos are to fully demonstrate their electoral power.

The other reason that Black-Latino alliances are producing mixed results has to do with the growing unpredictability of the Latino vote. In each election detailed in this study, Latinos proved to be a critical swing vote and as their numbers continue to increase within New York’s population, their electoral importance will also continue to grow. This assertion is of course contingent on sectors of the Latino community being mobilized to participate. But then the question becomes what happens to the Black-Latino coalition should Black and Latino behavior continue to diverge?

It is well known that Black voting behavior is more or less consistent in that Blacks vote Democratic, have a high degree of group consciousness and racial identity, and tend to be somewhat liberal in their socioeconomic positions, which leads to them oftentimes voting in bloc for Black candidates and/or Democrats who espouses liberal-
leaning rhetoric. Latinos, on the other hand, while they have tended to vote Democratic, lack a historical tie to the Party and are not quite as liberal-leaning or as racialized in their voting calculations as are African Americans. What can this mean for the continued development of alliances between one group that is consistently to the left, Democratic, and oftentimes votes based on racial cues, and another group that is more moderate on some issues, willing to vote Democratic or Republican depending on the situation, and is not as tied to racial bloc voting?

Black-Latino coalitions will likely continue to appear, particularly when there is a minority candidate in the election. Although Latinos may not have the same level of racial group identity and consciousness as Blacks given that they often do not see themselves as a racial group per se, they nonetheless, like Blacks, want to see “one of their own” in office and will therefore rally behind the candidacy of a minority. In those instances, because Black and Latino issues and agendas are likely to remain constant, the impetus to elect a minority to office will still be the same. Thus, we can count on strong Black and Latino alliances surfacing providing there is a minority candidate in the election given that a particular candidate can mobilize minority communities to unprecedented levels. The breakdown of the coalition will come when there is no minority candidate in the election, leading to a reduced tendency for Blacks and Latinos to mobilize and turn out to vote, and where Latinos have felt most free to break away from the Democratic Party. As either a tactical decision, which seemed to be the case in the 1997 election, or one made out of resentment as in the 2001 election, Latinos splitting their vote sent the message that they cannot be taken for granted, potentially resulting in them having greater bargaining power within both parties.
In the final analysis, this dissertation suggests that under conditions of low Black and Latino turn out relative to their numbers and the break in the minority voting alliance that seems to occur when no minority candidate appears on the ballot, coalitions between the two groups will not endure. Moreover, where minority leadership is divided in their support of the candidates and/or fail to demonstrate solid support for a candidate, strong Black-Latino electoral coalitions will fail to materialize.

What can be said of Black-Latino coalition building within the context of Democratic politics in New York City? This dissertation helps to highlight an interesting dilemma concerning the future of Democratic politics generally in New York City. Unlike the political machine in Albany, the roots of the New York City Democratic machine are almost entirely local, with much of its strength emanating from the close relations established between citywide party officials and voters. A general trend in New York City Democratic politics as of recently, however, has been the declining support for the Party – particularly by Jews and White ethnics. Mollenkopf (1992) notes, and this study further suggests, that these groups have been turning away from the Democratic Party in large numbers at least since the Koch administration. Although he received a fair amount of the Jewish and White ethnic vote in the primary race against Dinkins, once Koch was out of the election, a majority of those votes went not to the Democratic candidate, but to the Republican candidate. This produced an identifiable divide in White and minority voting behavior as minorities voted for the Democrat and Whites, by and large, voted for the Republican. The trend in decreased White support for the Democratic
Party continued and became more pronounced during the Giuliani years and was again evident in the last mayoral election.

This phenomenon suggests an interesting development in which the Democratic Party appears unable to keep minorities and White ethnics in the same political coalition. To the extent that Whites and Jews continue to defect from the Democrats, while Blacks and, to a lesser extent, Latinos continue to support the Party, the Democrats may find it challenging to win mayoral elections since a coalition of minority voters alone cannot ensure electoral victory.

However, even the minority support that the Democrats have traditionally received may now be called into question. Part of the reason that Blacks have been linked so closely with the Democratic Party locally has to do with not only their historical connection to the Party nationally, but also because of the relationships that formed between machine party officials and Black sub-leaders, which through on-going networks, effectively kept Blacks voting Democratic. Dinkins, for example, was able to take advantage of the connections between Democratic Party officials and Black ward leaders in both 1989 and 1993, which likely explains why his support in the Black community remained so high despite his waning popularity among other groups. The question, however, is whether these same types of linkages have been formed between the Democratic Party organizations and Latinos – an increasingly important issue as their numerical strength and voting power increase.

Martin Shefter (1985) and James Jennings (1977) suggest that the relationship between Democratic Party organizations developed quite differently within the Puerto Rican community than that which developed within the Black community. In short,
Puerto Ricans had no established political network between Democratic officials and their community; the emergence of that relationship was stunted by party officials’ preference for dealing with the Puerto Rican community through the Commonwealth Office instead of community leaders (Jennings 1977). With the development of Puerto Rican politics since the early 1980s, however, it appears that similar linkages have now formed between the party organizations and Latinos, though that linkage may not be strong enough to produce Latino votes for the Democrats in the way that it has with Blacks.

Additionally, to the extent that Lenora Fulani and the Independence Party continue to make inroads into the Black and Hispanic voting communities – particularly among immigrant populations that may not be as tied to the two parties as native Blacks and Hispanics in New York – it may be more and more difficult to identify a Black-Latino Democratic alliance. Because candidates can run on the Democratic/Republican and Independent lines, New Yorkers have a choice of voting Independent, even though the candidate will ultimately be recognized as either a Democrat or a Republican. This option allows disaffected Democratic voters who might otherwise be unwilling to cast a Republican ballot to vote for the Republican candidate. As a measure to both break the two-party stronghold and to send a message to the Democratic Party that Black and Latino voters in particular cannot be taken for granted, Fulani hopes to use the Independence Party as a vehicle to establish a new multi-race coalition of voters.²

The issue of how tightly linked the Black and Latino communities are with the Democratic Party organization, then, is important if we consider that it might provide an indirect measure of the strength of Black-Latino coalitions. Indeed, these coalitions could

²66
be based on not only the political interactions between Blacks and Latinos as observed in this dissertation, but also on their common relations with the Democratic machine.

**Future Research on Coalition Building**

This dissertation attempted to add to the existent base of knowledge on coalition building by moving beyond the focus on Black-White alliances to explore what may become a more common type of coalition: those that develop between racial minority groups. From the standpoint of coalition building theory as well as practical politics, this study is important because it identifies a critical piece of the puzzle that should be considered when discussing minority coalition building.

Previous studies of coalition building have focused, until recently, on the nature of Black-White coalitions. Such coalitions are much less common today as the two groups diverge in their ideological or underlying belief systems that serve to guide their respective politics. That racial minorities now comprise the majority population within many major cities, political relations have begun to develop among them. Theories of coalition building must expand to accommodate this change. That this study moves beyond the general focus on ideology, interests, and leadership as the foundation of political coalitions and identifies the importance of minority group status and a sense of commonality as potential bonding elements of minority coalitions is significant. As this study reveals, minority group identification and an understanding of the issues and circumstances that they both share served to keep Blacks, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in New York closely aligned and is, in part, the basis upon which coalitions between the two groups formed.
How might the nature and shape of the Black-Latino coalition change as increases in the immigrant Latino and Black populations continue? Such demographic transformations could certainly alter the nature of minority coalitions. The Black-Latino coalitions described in this study refer mainly to native Blacks and Puerto Ricans, who have historically and currently held the greatest level of political power within the broader Black and Hispanic communities. This could change in time, however. New York City has witnessed growth in both the foreign-born Black and Hispanic communities, with much of that growth being precipitated by the non-Puerto Rican segment of the Latino community. To the extent that growth in immigrant Latino and Black populations continues, they may move to challenge the notion that African Americans and Puerto Ricans should be the ones to lead the “Black” and “Latino” struggle. The area of intra-group coalition building between native Blacks and foreign-born Blacks, or between Puerto Ricans and other Latino subgroups could provide a fruitful avenue for future research.

Indeed, the future of Black-Latino coalitions broadly defined, could depend, in part, on the nature of intra-group Black and Latino relations. For instance, will African Americans and Puerto Ricans, for their own benefit, marginalize West Indian, Haitian, African, Dominican, and South American immigrants, or will they view them as assets and attempt to mobilize them into the polity? (Thompson 2001). To the extent that African Americans and Puerto Ricans perceive Black and Latino immigrants as groups who can advance the interests of the Democratic Party, to which most minority elected officials belong, as well as the political interests of the larger Black and Latino communities, elites may try to actively engage and mobilize them. If, however, the newly
arrived immigrants are viewed as anything other than able to advance the cause, then they may be rebuffed.

African Americans might find great benefit to mobilizing Black immigrants given that they are driving the growth of the Black population in New York and are becoming citizens fairly quickly. In fact, not only are Black immigrants naturalizing in substantial numbers, but they also overwhelmingly register and vote Democratic, turn out in city-wide and district elections, and are politically close to African Americans in terms of public opinion and issue concerns (Minnite and Mollenkopf 2001). Puerto Ricans might also find some benefit to mobilizing newly arrived immigrants, though the task may be a bit more difficult. Like Black immigrants, Latino immigrants are driving the growth of the Latino population as the number of Puerto Ricans in the city continues to decline. Still, problems arise because of the Latino immigrant groups’ reduced likelihood of registering and turning out to vote. Seeing a substantial increase in registration and turnout will depend, in part, on individual factors such as age, length of residency, education, and income, but also on the level of political organization within these groups and how they are perceived and acted upon by Puerto Ricans as already established key players in New York politics.

Beyond minority group electoral coalitions, a ripe area for future research might be the nature of minority group governing coalitions. Electoral coalitions center mainly on increasing a group’s level of descriptive representation in a governing body. Focusing on the interactions between minority group leaders as they seek to formulate policy within the state assembly or on the city council might also prove interesting from the standpoint of minority group relations and coalition building.
CHAPTER 8 NOTES


APPENDIX B

DETERMINANTS OF THE 1989 AND 1993 MAYORAL VOTES
PROBABILITY OF VOTING FOR DINKINS
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<td>Race relations</td>
<td>-1.228***</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>City less safe</td>
<td>-1.823***</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Qualities</td>
<td>1.844***</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>Bring city together</td>
<td>-.520</td>
<td>.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough on criminals</td>
<td>-1.559***</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>Tough enough to be mayor</td>
<td>-2.452***</td>
<td>-.405</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Race relations</td>
<td>1.734***</td>
<td>.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
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<td>.391</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/ Schools</td>
<td>-.209</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>1.005*</td>
<td>.435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>-1.408*</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>1.112**</td>
<td>.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td></td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.634</td>
<td>.940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>-.286</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2 Log Likelihood</td>
<td>420.284</td>
<td>402.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.918***</td>
<td>.807</td>
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<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>661.586</td>
<td>650.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 Log Likelihood</td>
<td>420.284</td>
<td>402.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent correctly predicted</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>458.181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>695</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Coefficients are logistic regression coefficients. *** sig. <.001; ** sig. <.01; * sig. <.05. Percent change refers to the difference between the high and low values. All values set to their means. Question wording reads: "In the [today's] election for Mayor, who did you just vote for?". This is the dependent variable coded 1-vote for Dinkins, 0-otherwise.  
[Note a] The race, religion, and gender variables are coded 1=Black, Latino, Jewish, Female; 0=non-Black, Latino, Jewish, Male  
[Note b] The political variables are coded 1=Democrat, Liberal; 0=non-Democrat, non-Liberal  
[Note c] The outlook variable for the 1989 election reads: "Are you generally optimistic/pessimistic about the city's future?" 1=optimistic; 0=pessimistic. The outlook variables for the 1993 election reads: "Over the last few years have race relations in NYC gotten better/worse/stayed about the same?" 1=gotten worse; 0=otherwise. The second variable reads: "Compared to four years ago, do you think NYC is more safe, less safe, about the same?" 1=less safe; 0=otherwise.  
APPENDIX C

DETERMINANTS OF THE 1997 MAYORAL VOTE
PROBABILITY OF VOTING FOR GIULIANI
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>%Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-.742*</td>
<td>.369</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>-.488</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>-.548</td>
<td>.415</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat b</td>
<td>-1.747***</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>-.843***</td>
<td>.295</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life better</td>
<td>1.307**</td>
<td>.479</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime in neighborhood better</td>
<td>.327</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approve of Giuliani’s Handling of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>.871**</td>
<td>.313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race relations</td>
<td>.651*</td>
<td>.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>.669*</td>
<td>.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and minorities</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constant        | -.712      | .635 |

-2 Log Likelihood | 356.239 |
Chi-square       | 240.509 |
Percent correctly predicted | 83% |
Number of cases  | 433 |

Notes: Coefficients are logistic regression coefficients ***sig.<.001; **sig.<.01; *sig.<.05. Percent change refers to the difference between the high and low values. All values set to their means. Question wording reads: “Suppose a general election for mayor were held today. If Giuliani were the Republican candidate and Ruth Messinger were the Democratic candidate, who would you vote for?” This is the dependent variable coded 1=vote for Giuliani, 0=vote for Messinger.

a The race, religion, and gender variables are coded 1=Black, Latino, Jewish, Female; 0=non-Black, Latino, Jewish, Male.
b The political variables are coded 1=Democrat, Liberal; 0=non-Democrat, non-Liberal.
c The question wording for the outlook variables: “Since Giuliani became mayor in January 1994, do you feel that the overall quality of life in NYC has gotten better, gotten worse, or what?” and “Since Giuliani became mayor in January 1994, do you think that the crime problem in your neighborhood has gotten better, gotten worse, or what?”
d The question wording concerning Giuliani’s handling of issues reads: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Giuliani is handling…” Crime, jobs and the economy, race relations, poverty and homelessness, changes in welfare, how police treat racial minorities in NYC.

Data Source: 1997 ABC New York City Mayoral Poll. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.
APPENDIX D

LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Participants:

Calvin Butts, Pastor. The Abyssinian Baptist Church. June 18, 2002
Helen Foster. Councilmember, New York City Council (Bronx). June 13, 2002
Adam Clayton Powell IV. State Assemblyman (Harlem). July 8, 2002
Philip Reed. Councilmember, New York City Council (Harlem). June 24, 2002

Questions:

1. In most of the mayoral elections Blacks and Latinos have voted together (1989, 1993, 2001 primary).

   What is the nature of these voting coalitions? In the instances where these two groups have voted together, to what extent were these alliances conscious efforts to cooperate as opposed to coincidence?

   On what were these alliances based - common socioeconomic and political interests? A shared sense of being minorities? Issues? Some other factor?

2. There are also instances in which variation in Black and Latino voting is apparent, where Blacks have given a significant majority of their votes to the Democratic candidate and the Latino vote splits (1997 general, 2001 general).

   How do we explain this? Are Latinos becoming increasingly more Republican? Is it a function of the growing heterogeneity within the Latino population?

3. What is the role of Black and Latino leadership (elected, religious, community) in helping or hindering Black-Latino coalitions in New York City?

4. When there is no minority candidate in the mayoral race, what happens to Black and Latino mobilization, interest, and turn out in the election?

5. There seemed to be a concerted effort to form a Black-Latino coalition to elect Fernando Ferrer. Can you talk about the mobilization efforts to get Blacks and Latinos to turn out for him? How did Blacks and Latinos feel about Ferrer’s candidacy? Were both groups equally enthusiastic?

6. How do we explain the Black and Latino vote in the 2001 election in which a quarter of the Black vote went to Michael Bloomberg and nearly half of the Latino voting population supported Bloomberg?
LIST OF REFERENCES


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Sawyer, Mark, Yesilemis Pena, and Jim Sidanius. 2002. “Cuban Exceptionalism: Group Based Hierarchy and the Dynamics of Patriotism in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba.” Prepared for presentation at the Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, IL.


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