



Latinos and Jews
Old Luggage, New Itineraries

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Series on Pluralism

The American Jewish Committee protects the rights and freedoms of Jews the world over; combats bigotry and anti-Semitism and promotes human rights for all; works for the security of Israel and deepened understanding between Americans and Israelis; advocates public policy positions rooted in American democratic values and the perspectives of the Jewish heritage; and enhances the creative vitality of the Jewish people. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States.

**Latinos and Jews:
“Old Luggage, New Itineraries”**

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Intergroup Research and Publication Fund.*

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Foreword

Jews, even those who have lived for generations in their current country of residence, have the immigration experience hard-wired into their systems. Perhaps it is because we recall every year our experience of going out of Egypt at the Passover *seder*. Perhaps it is because there has been so much transience—self-chosen or outwardly enforced—in our history. Being “strangers” is something we identify with, even when others see us as having “arrived.”

The United States has differed from every other land of Jewish dispersion in that it has truly provided both a safe haven and a home—a place where we can be one particular group among many, where we need not choose between being amalgamated in the melting pot or remaining on the sidelines of society. Today as America has become much more ethnically diverse, Jews, whose peak period of immigration was almost a century ago, still identify with the newcomers, the “strangers.”

It has been an article of faith of the American Jewish Committee from its inception that whatever promotes the freedom and security of all groups within the American mosaic also ensures the freedom and security of American Jews. Therefore, our activities promoting positive intergroup relations have been a hallmark of our organizational thrust. In pursuit of our ideals of equality, justice, and diversity, we have conducted pioneering research, pursued legislative and court initiatives, and engaged in face-to-face dialogue with many subgroups within the American spectrum.

Our active relations with the Latino community, both locally and nationally, are of several decades duration. We have worked together to strengthen the Immigration Reform Act, to diminish the stereotyping of minorities, and to promote the integration of immigrants into the American social fabric.

But on a people-to-people level, we are still just getting to know one another. This is not a simple undertaking, because the Latino community, like the Jewish community, is quite diverse. As the essays in this volume attest, the Latinos of Florida carry different historical baggage than do the Latinos of California or New York; and newly arrived immigrants, of course, are at a different stage in their journey of acculturation than are American-born Hispanics.

The purpose of this volume is to help provide some understanding to both communities about where we have been and where we are going, about what unites us and what divides us. The authors of these essays—coming from the diverse worlds of scholarship, journalism, and community relations—do not all agree with one another in their prognostications for the future.

No one has a crystal ball and can say definitively where Latino-Jewish relations will be in a decade or two. It is clear that persons of Hispanic heritage will form an increasingly large proportion of the overall American population, and may soon be the “majority minority” in certain U.S. cities. It therefore behooves us to get to know one another on more than a superficial level, and to come to understand what issues are seen as critical to the interests of each group.

This book advances a wider goal of promoting intergroup understanding that has been the vision of our past president, Bruce Ramer. Through the creation of the Madeline and Bruce Ramer Intergroup Research and Publication Fund, which supported this volume, he has recognized the importance of complementing dialogue with research.

The AJC staff who saw this project to fruition are also deserving of our thanks: Stephen Steinlight, who conceived of this book, identified the contributors and edited their essays; Roselyn Bell, who shepherded the publication through to completion; and Ann Schaffer, Director of the Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Center for American Pluralism, who articulated the policy implications of the research.

David A. Harris
Executive Director
The American Jewish Committee

New Bedfellows

Peter Beinart

This essay, which appeared in The New Republic in August 1997 (August 11 and 18, 1997, pages 22-26), first drew attention to the outlines of a new Jewish-Latino political alliance. As its observations sparked the thinking of many writers in this volume, it is reprinted here as the seminal work for the current debate about that alliance. Peter Beinart is the editor of The New Republic, from which this article is reprinted, by permission of the author.

Roosevelt Avenue, Queens

The block of Roosevelt Avenue between 82nd and 83rd Streets in Queens spans less than a football field. It is inhabited by the following: the Tiepas Colombians restaurant, Martinez Cargo Express, Protestia Dental, Señora Adela (an astrologer), Cúpedo Travel, Jimmy's Ecuador Travel, El Rinconcito (a music shop), Mayra E. Tang Enterprises, the June Deli, Pilatos (a hairdresser), Metropolitan House (a furniture store), Libby's Travel, Jairo's Enterprises (international money transfer), Jerusalem Home Décor, Four Seasons Dresses, Photo Discount, Sharks Clothes Store, an attorney's office, a dressmaker, an income tax preparer, an employment agency, a sporting goods store and, at 8218 Roosevelt Avenue, next to Jairo's Enterprises, a store with no apparent name—just some shirts hanging on a rack in an open doorway. All in all, twenty-three tiny commercial establishments, not a chain store among them. And this is only the right-hand side of the block.

Roosevelt Avenue is a main thoroughfare in the neighborhood of Jackson Heights, and, from 80th Street to 110th Street, it is one of the key thoroughfares of Latino Queens. Queens is home to New York's newest Latino immigrants: Colombians, Dominicans, Ecuadorians and Mexicans. Twenty years ago, these groups barely existed in New York. Today, they are among the fastest-growing segment of the city's Latino population, and they have changed New

York from a city where most Latinos were Puerto Rican to one where Puerto Ricans no longer constitute the Latino majority.

If depression and dysfunction remain the sociological stereotypes of Latino America, you won't encounter them on Roosevelt Avenue. Latinos in Queens have a rate of welfare dependency half that of Latinos in the largely Puerto Rican Bronx. Jackson Heights boasts a full-size supermarket, something East Harlem does not yet have, and three Latino-owned banks. Latinos in Assembly District 34—the only majority Latino district in Queens and home to parts of Jackson Heights—are twice as likely to be middle class as Latinos in Assembly District 74, the largest Puerto Rican district in the Bronx.

And the political stereotype—left-liberalism—doesn't fit either. True, in 1996, Bill Clinton won over 80 percent of the vote in Queens Assembly District 34. Registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by close to 4 to 1. But, according to a survey by the Hispanic Federation of New York this June, 69 percent of Dominicans and 58 percent of other non-Puerto Rican Latinos back a five-year limit on welfare payments. And in 1993, in this immigrant, minority district, Republican challenger Rudolph Giuliani beat incumbent Democratic Mayor David Dinkins by a margin of 2 to 1. Among Latinos in Queens, polls show Giuliani easily defeating Ruth Messinger, the likely Democratic nominee, this fall.

Riverdale Avenue, the Bronx

There is perhaps no more unmistakable sign of Modern Orthodox Judaism than kosher Chinese food. On Riverdale Avenue in the Riverdale section of the Bronx you can find it in abundance. Near the top of the street is Szechuan Garden. A sign in the window announces, "We are now closed Saturday nights except for special events," which means the owners are tired of reopening the restaurant after Shabbat ends on Saturday night and staying late into the night while teenagers socialize. Down the block is Main Event, an over-the-counter joint that also offers up the odd dish of kosher lo mein.

Of the nine preteens and teenagers downing pizza and falafel at Main Event on a recent Sunday, three wore exposed yarmulkes, the other six wore baseball caps—almost certainly covering yarmulkes—and all nine wore Knicks, Mets or Giants paraphernalia. There was not a black hat in the restaurant, and *peiyos* protruded from not a single sideburn. Jewish Riverdale may not be the Upper West Side—it's more observant and less yuppie—but it's not Borough Park or Crown Heights, either. Riverdale is more Modern Orthodox than Hasidic, and you can see the tensions and compromises of Modern Orthodoxy

on the street. At West 235th Street and Johnson Avenue is Nathan's Kosher Meat, and across from it stands the Riverdale Fish Company, which defiantly boasts "Fish-Shrimps-Lobster."

Like the Latinos of Jackson Heights, the Jews of Riverdale gave Bill Clinton over 80 percent of their votes last fall. Democrats outnumber Republicans in the area more than 4 to 1. And, also as in Jackson Heights, Rudy Giuliani crushed David Dinkins here, winning 65 percent in 1993.

In a million ways, Jackson Heights and Riverdale have nothing in common. But, politically, they are the same, and in this the two neighborhoods point to a broader convergence. At the ballot box, if not yet in the minds of politicians and community activists, Latinos and Jews are in political alliance. In city after city, state after state, the two groups vote the same way. What they do not do—to the great surprise of leaders in both communities—is vote like African-Americans.

*The New Political Alliance:
Fiscally Conservative, Culturally Cosmopolitan*

Consider the following. This spring, in Los Angeles, moderate Republican Mayor Richard Riordan won 70 percent of the Jewish vote and 60 percent of the Latino vote against liberal-left Democrat Tom Hayden. Hayden won three-quarters of the black vote. In 1989, in Chicago, conservative white Democrat Richard Daley won over 80 percent of the Jewish and Latino votes against incumbent black liberal Mayor Eugene Sawyer. Sawyer won 94 percent of the black vote. In Houston, in 1991, white businessman Bob Lanier won 70 percent of the Jewish vote and 70 percent of the Latino vote against liberal black state legislator Sylvester Turner, who won 95 percent of the black vote. In New Jersey, in 1993, Republican Christie Todd Whitman won 45 percent of the Latino vote and 40 percent of the Jewish vote in her victory over incumbent Democratic Governor Jim Florio, who won three-quarters of the black vote. In Illinois, in 1994, moderate Republican Governor Jim Edgar garnered a majority of the Jewish vote and a third of the Latino vote in his successful reelection bid against Democratic State Comptroller Dawn Clark Netsch. Netsch won 85 percent of the black vote. This fall, Giuliani may well win over 50 percent of the Jewish and Latino votes against Jewish Democrat Ruth Messinger. Knowledgeable observers predict Messinger will get a large majority of the black vote.

Taken together, these results represent a structural shift in the political alliances that define many of America's largest cities and states. The axiom that Jewish politics are pretty much like African-American politics, and that Latino

politics are pretty much like African-American politics, is widely assumed to be critical not only to each group's identity, but to the continued viability of left-liberal politics. But this axiom is being superseded by a very different political reality. Both Latinos and Jews are proving themselves far more economically conservative than African-Americans, and far more conservative on crime. Yet both groups, alienated by the Republican Party's attacks on immigration, cultural diversity and minority rights, are refusing to follow white ethnics into the national GOP in significant numbers. So, although their presidential voting patterns and party registration numbers appear at first to confirm the stereotype of both Jews and Latinos as anchors of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, in fact they are stranded together in a fiscally conservative, culturally cosmopolitan political no-man's-land. And they are a large part of the reason that growing numbers of candidates who are themselves ideologically stranded between the two parties—Whitman, Riordan, Edgar—have in recent years been elected.

*Houston: Where Political Power
Is Shifting to Latinos*

Standard descriptions of Latino political identity go something like this: Latinos are an impoverished community of color who, like African-Americans, are heavily invested in a large public sector, and share with them a strong mistrust of the police.

To see why this description doesn't work, try it out on Houston, America's fourth-largest city, and a city in which power is gradually passing from both whites and blacks to Latinos. In 1970, Houston was 12 percent Latino. Today, it is 32 percent Latino. In the 1995 mini-census, Latinos outnumbered African-Americans for the first time, and, if trends continue, they will soon outnumber whites. In 1991, Latinos swung Houston's mayoral election by voting overwhelmingly for a moderate white businessman, Bob Lanier, against a liberal black state legislator. A Latina city councilwoman allied with Lanier is currently running to succeed him as mayor.[She lost to Lee Brown.] As Latinos become the biggest single players in Houston, how closely will their politics mirror black politics?

Not closely at all, because most of Houston's Latinos don't have the same interests—don't live the same sort of lives—as most of Houston's blacks. In 1995, the unemployment rate for African-Americans in Houston was 13 percent. For Latinos, it was 9 percent. African-Americans were three times as likely as Latinos to work for the government. Although there were only slightly more Latinos than blacks in the city, Houston had close to twice as many Lati-

no-owned as black-owned businesses. Eighteen percent of Latino households with children were headed by single mothers, compared to 48 percent among blacks. This spring, in the region of Texas encompassing Houston, more than twice as many African-Americans as Latinos received welfare benefits.

Furthermore, Latinos, at least in their own perceptions, suffer less police brutality than African-Americans. According to a 1996 survey by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, a plurality of Latinos in Texas said the police treat Latinos and whites equally, and that police brutality against Latinos is not widespread. In the words of Rodolfo de la Garza, a professor of government at the University of Texas and vice president of the institute, “When’s the last time you read a story about a Mexican-American in a fancy car with a white wife (and there are lots of them) getting beaten up by cops in a white neighborhood?”

From different perspectives come different politics. Latinos don’t suffer nearly as much from the downsizing of government employment. (To be sure, if a Latino becomes mayor of Houston, Latino representation in public employment will rise—but not by much, since most city jobs are covered by civil service laws and do not change with administrations.) Their large numbers of small businessmen create an interest in reduced taxation and regulation. And, since Latinos are more likely to have intact families, they can afford to take a tougher line on welfare. In the Rivera Institute poll, 62 percent of Latinos in Texas opposed increasing benefits for mothers who have additional children while on welfare; 61 percent said people on public assistance were there because “they don’t want to work” rather than because “they can’t get a job.” Is it any surprise that Latinos backed a small-government, law-and-order candidate for mayor? As Sanders Anderson, an African-American political scientist at Houston’s Texas Southern University, puts it, “The intelligentsia feel there should be an alliance between blacks and Hispanics, but it doesn’t usually happen.”

As goes Houston, so go most cities and states with large Latino populations. There are exceptions, of course. Houston’s Latino population is mostly composed of Mexican-Americans, whereas Puerto Ricans, who live largely on the East Coast, are demographically closer to African-Americans and politically more likely to ally with them (though many will vote for Giuliani nonetheless). But Puerto Ricans make up only 12 percent of America’s Latino population. Mexican-Americans make up 60 percent, and other Latino groups—including Cubans, who have traditionally been affiliated with the GOP but like other Latinos have been deeply alienated by its attacks on immigrant rights—seem similarly uncomfortable with both the politics of the Republican right and the politics of the Rainbow Coalition.

*Latinos and African-Americans:
Less in Common*

In Chicago—whose Latino population is three-fifths Mexican-American, one-fifth Puerto Rican, one-fifth other—the demographic picture is similar to Houston's. Black unemployment is close to double Latino unemployment. Blacks are three times more likely to be employed by the government. Twenty-three percent of Latino families with children are headed by single mothers, compared to 60 percent of black families. The African-American rate of welfare dependency is two and a half times the Latino rate. Latinos not only broke with African-Americans over Mayor Richard Daley, voting him into office in 1989 with 80 percent of their votes, compared to 5 percent for blacks, but they have also backed moderate Republican Governor Jim Edgar at more than double the rate of blacks. If immigration and birthrate trends continue, Latinos will outnumber blacks in Chicago by 2005.

But it is in Los Angeles where perhaps the most striking picture of black-Latino political and sociological difference emerges. As elsewhere, Latinos there have shown a greater willingness than blacks to desert liberal candidates. This spring, incumbent Republican Richard Riordan won 60 percent of the Latino vote but 25 percent of the black vote against Democratic challenger Tom Hayden. As elsewhere, Latinos represent a vast source of latent political power. The Latino population of Southern California has grown by 450 percent in the last 25 years, and there are now three times as many Latinos in Los Angeles as blacks.

And, as elsewhere, the city's Latino and African-American communities have less in common the more closely you look at them. The Latino unemployment rate is 10 percent, and the black unemployment rate is 15 percent. Blacks are four times as likely to be employed by the government. Black families with children are two and a half times more likely to be headed by a single mother. In Los Angeles County, blacks are close to twice as likely to receive welfare as Latinos.

But it is not simply that Latino poverty is accompanied by less family breakdown than black poverty. As Gregory Rodriguez, a research fellow at the Pepperdine University Institute for Public Policy and an associate editor at Pacific News Service, shows in his remarkable study, "The Emerging Latino Middle Class," the stereotype of entrenched Latino poverty may itself be misleading. Rodriguez explains that, while large numbers of recent immigrants push up overall Latino poverty rates, the picture among U.S.-born Latinos is

strikingly different. In Southern California, U.S.-born Latinos are close to four times as likely to be middle class as poor, have rates of home ownership closer to whites and Asians than to blacks, and intermarry at rates nearly three times that of African-Americans. Rodriguez argues that, while Latinos in Southern California may not be following the conspicuously successful trajectory of Jewish or Asian immigrants, by the second and third generation they already look more like Italians than like African-Americans.

Latino Alienation from Nativism

Still, Latino politics are not Italian-American politics. While in local and state elections Latinos sometimes vote like white ethnics, in national races they hew much more closely to the Democratic Party. Last fall, 74 percent of Latinos voted for President Clinton, compared to only 53 percent of Catholics overall. The reason is that Latinos have been deeply alienated by the Republican Party's culturally conservative wing. At first this might seem odd, since Latinos are often pro-life and anti-gay rights. But there is little evidence that these issues make Latinos sympathetic to the Pat Buchanans and Ralph Reeds of the GOP. Rather, Latinos in the past five years have been massively alienated by the cultural right's attack on immigrant rights and by its attack on cultural diversity more generally.

The reason the Republican Party's growing nativism has so deeply turned off Latinos is complex. Polls show that Latinos themselves are ambivalent about immigration, perhaps because newcomers threaten their jobs and the stability of their communities. In fact, several months before the vote on Proposition 187, a *Los Angeles Times* poll showed 50 percent of California Latinos supporting it. But, as the campaign for the proposition progressed, and Latinos were barraged with grainy television commercials of brown-skinned Mexicans crossing the border, they increasingly began to associate Proposition 187 with anti-Latino racism. By Election Day 1994, 70 percent of Latinos opposed the measure, and they turned furiously on politicians who supported it. Pete Wilson's support among Latinos dropped from 35 percent in 1990, before he took up the anti-immigrant crusade, to 22 percent in 1994. A poll of Latino voters by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute found that 63 percent attributed the motivation behind Proposition 187 to racism, compared with only 19 percent who said it was based on "honest concern" about immigration.

It is the ideology and tone of the cultural right—its idealization of a homogeneous America, its hostility to the cultural and ethnic difference that Latinos

represent—that have made Latinos nearly as reliable a Democratic constituency in national elections as blacks, even while in local and state elections they often end up on opposite sides. In 1980 and 1984, before the Republican Party veered toward nativism, Ronald Reagan won a third of the Latino vote—three times his percentage among blacks. But, in 1996, Bob Dole’s share of the Latino vote dropped to close to half what Reagan got in 1984. A survey by the University of Texas showed that almost half of the Latinos in Texas who voted for George Bush in 1992—in the days before Proposition 187 and the welfare bill’s anti-immigrant provisions—deserted Bob Dole in 1996. As Antonio Gonzalez of the Southwest Voter Research Institute told *The New York Times* after Election Day, “The Republicans once could compete for our vote, but now it’s clear that they’re facing a powerful and united bloc of opposition from us.”

Jewish Hostility to the Christian Right

The story of Jewish politics over the past two decades is remarkably similar. In 1980, 1984, and 1988, Republican presidential candidates Ronald Reagan and George Bush won about a third of the Jewish vote. But, in 1992 and 1996, the GOP’s share of the Jewish vote for president dropped to less than half that number. To be sure, this stems partly from George Bush’s perceived hostility to Israel and Bill Clinton’s strong support of the Jewish state. But it is also true that the Republican Party’s increased emphasis on the culture war since the end of the cold war has sent Jews, like Latinos, scurrying back into the national Democratic Party.

Much Jewish hostility centers on the Christian Right, which has grown more prominent since the emergence in the early 90s of the Christian Coalition as the Republican Party’s premier interest group. A 1995 poll of Jews in the San Francisco area by the local Jewish Community Relations Council, to cite one example, found that 80 percent of the respondents agreed that Christian fundamentalism threatens Jewish security, higher even than the percentage who believed Jewish security was threatened by Louis Farrakhan. A national poll by the American Jewish Committee found 47 percent of Jews believe that many or most members of the religious right are anti-Semitic. Various polls have shown Jews strongly opposed to prayer in public school and vouchers for religious schools.

But, beyond their particular concern over issues of church and state, Jews, like Latinos, see in the Buchanan-Reed wing of the GOP a threat to the American cosmopolitanism on which, as conspicuous minorities, they both rely for

acceptance. Jews were the only major white ethnic group to vote against Proposition 187, and a poll by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago found that 60 percent of Jews wanted rates of immigration to increase or remain the same, compared to only 36 percent of blacks and 33 percent of whites. A 1992 poll of New Yorkers for the American Jewish Committee found that 30 percent of blacks and 40 percent of Italian-Americans agreed that immigrants detracted from overall quality of life, compared to only 15 percent of Jews. Even the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican group, declared in 1996 that it would not support Pat Buchanan if he won the GOP primary. Jewish alienation from the GOP's cultural right wing is a large part of the reason Jews voted much more heavily for Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996 than did other white ethnics.

Observers sometimes cite the 1992 and 1996 Jewish vote as evidence that traditional Jewish liberalism persists, even as Italian-Americans, Irish-Americans and others drift right. But if by liberal we mean supportive of a large, wealth-redistributing public sector—the way African-Americans are liberal—Jews no longer deserve the label. Polls by the National Opinion Research Center taken year after year during the 1990s found that blacks were more than twice as likely as Jews to say the government should work to reduce differences in income, and that 62 percent of Jews opposed government redistribution of wealth, compared to 25 percent of blacks and roughly 50 percent of whites. Such fiscal conservatism is simply self-interest for a community that today, unlike a generation ago, is barely represented in public employment, depends relatively little on anti-poverty programs, and strongly feels the effects of high marginal tax rates.

The Gap Between Image and Reality

The gap between the reality of Jewish political identity and Jewish political identity as it is commonly portrayed is playing itself out dramatically in this year's race for mayor in New York. Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, a former member of Democratic Socialists of America, is articulate, wonkish and compassionate—an embodiment of Jewish left-liberalism. And, outside of her base on the Upper West Side, she is getting creamed by Republican incumbent Rudy Giuliani—among Jews. Outer borough Jewish politicians, like Congressman Charles Schumer from Brooklyn, Congressman Ackerman from Queens and Congresswoman Nita Lowey, whose district encompasses parts of Westchester County, Queens, and the Bronx, have refused to line up

behind her, and a staffer for one outer borough member of Congress said simply, “Ruth’s going to get killed in our district.” Claire Shulman, the Jewish borough president of Queens, is reportedly mulling an endorsement of Giuliani. In middle- and working-class Jewish neighborhoods like Canarsie and Kew Gardens, Messinger’s opponents gently remind voters that the Democratic candidate recently told the Jewish newspaper *The Forward* that New York’s workfare program was “indentured servitude”—a sentiment well within the Democratic Party’s ideological mainstream not long ago—and one that is producing a rich harvest of Giuliani votes.

So is Messinger’s opposition to the death penalty. Most Jewish politicians oppose the death penalty, and the conventional assumption is that Jewish voters—being liberal—oppose the death penalty, too. But the assumption is wrong; polls show that Jews, like non-Jews, support the death penalty overwhelmingly. Jules Polonetsky, an Orthodox Jewish Democratic state assemblyman from Brighton Beach, who is running on Giuliani’s ticket for Public Advocate, argues that, particularly since the Crown Heights riot of 1992—which Al D’Amato seized on to take close to half the Jewish vote from Jewish Democrat Bob Abrams in that year’s Senate race—crime has been the key issue driving working-class and middle-class Jewish voters from liberal Jewish candidates. “Crown Heights will be the turning point in New York Jewish politics,” Polonetsky says. “It’s why D’Amato won. D’Amato said that [Abrams was] the kind of Manhattan liberal Jew who was afraid of standing up for Jews. It’s the idea of being the kind of liberal Jewish leftist who’s willing to be mugged because the mugger had a bad childhood. That’s how people see Messinger.”

Creating New Political Spaces

In recent years, countless seminars, conferences, colloquia, articles, and books have addressed themselves to black-Jewish relations. Howard University and the American Jewish Committee have founded a magazine devoted solely to the topic [*CommonQuest* magazine, which recently ceased publication]. Similarly, politicians and activists of the left have agonized about the conditions for, and state of, a black-Latino alliance. Terms like “Rainbow Coalition” and “people of color” make little sense without one. It is strange, then, that Latino-Jewish relations occasion so little discussion. Strange because unaided by years of discussion groups and community forums, Jews and Latinos are doing together what neither group is doing with blacks: constructing a vibrant politics based on their commonality of interests.

Had large numbers of Latinos and Jews not broken with African-Americans and backed candidates like Rudy Giuliani, Richard Riordan, and Christie Todd Whitman, these law-and-order fiscal conservatives could not have won election in traditionally liberal Democratic cities and states, no matter how overwhelming their support from white ethnics. And, although Italian and Irish voters might not mind much, these politicians cannot make overtures to the cultural right because of their need for Jewish and Latino support.

The political space that Jews and Latinos are creating in places like New York, Chicago, New Jersey and California is likely to grow. Jews, although declining in numbers, are a powerful source of campaign money, and the Latino population is increasing fast—Latinos already outnumber African-Americans in three of America's four largest cities and will outnumber them in the fourth, Chicago, by early in the next decade. Between 1992 and 1996 alone, the Latino percentage of the electorate increased by 40 percent in California and 60 percent in Texas. And the political space that the Latino-Jewish alliance is creating is important because it is spawning candidates who cannot be assimilated by the two parties, and whose bids for national office could, given the right set of circumstances—if say, Christie Todd Whitman seriously challenged for the Republican presidential nomination—spark a crisis powerful enough to redefine one or both of the major parties. Perhaps one day, maybe in Riverdale and Jackson Heights, they will have conferences about that.

Two Peoples on a Journey

Roberto Suro

On the second floor of a YWCA in the old riverfront industrial city of Elgin, Illinois, immigrant women, mostly from Mexico, gather every weekday morning to sit in small classrooms and dully repeat simple expressions like, “Today is Thursday, tomorrow is Friday.” When I asked why they spend the little free time they have learning English, the students, answering in Spanish, offered predictable motives. They wanted better jobs. They wanted to understand the English-speaking world their children inhabit.

Their responses were far more surprising when I tried to learn how the new language was changing the way they thought about themselves. Martina Flores, a small 35-year-old woman who had left her rural Mexican village as a teenager, told me that she did not intend to speak English with her children. In fact, she had not even told them she was taking the classes and giggled when she added that her reason was so she could eavesdrop when they talk to their American friends.

When I asked Martina and her classmates whether they were becoming American by learning English, the women looked shocked, almost as if I’d made a rude suggestion. “I am a Mexican,” Martina said. “Even if I could be, I would not want to be anything else.” The others nodded and clucked their approval. There was no hint of chauvinism, no hint of patriotism in the assertion—just a statement of fact. But just as clearly the women were intent on making a new life in the United States. “This is my children’s country, and this is my home now, and I want to learn how to appreciate the good things here without sacrificing who I am,” Martina said. She went on to talk about the compromises she is always striking between the two aspects of her life, especially in the way she raises her children. She permits pizza one night if they will eat enchiladas the next. Her teenage son can wear the baggy pants fashionable among his friends if he pairs them with a neatly pressed shirt.

Listening to these immigrant women, one instinctually ascribes their responses to the old conventional conception of Latinos who come to the Unit-

ed States as ambivalent people who straddle two worlds, never fully engaging either one. They are, according to this common view, enclave dwellers with no real interest in becoming Americans. But, listening carefully to them talking about their lives, one comes to a different conclusion. Watching them labor over their English, hearing of their ambitions to rise from the factory floor, to have time for aerobics classes, to buy a clapboard house on a shaded street in an ethnically mixed neighborhood, it became clear that these Mexican women are allowing themselves to become Americanized. In fact, they are actively seeking a new identity while trying to preserve some aspects of their mother culture.

Survey results and much hard evidence indicate that Latino immigrants develop a strong desire to participate in American society, that they embrace much of what this nation stands for, and that over time they are changed inside by the experience of living in this country. Some of the same evidence shows that these newcomers strongly desire to maintain a distinct Latino identity and that some essential cultural traits and personal beliefs are transmitted across generations.

While baffling to some, this paradox ought to be easily understood—and accepted—by American Jews, because it closely mirrors one of the most basic aspects of the Jewish experience in this country. Obviously, there are fundamental differences in the nature of group identity between Latinos and Jews, and there is great variation within each of these populations. But, broadly speaking, they share a common characteristic not encountered so significantly in the white Christian mainstream or among African-Americans.

Both Latinos and Jews can be seen as peoples on a journey whose goal is to become full and successful participants in the American experience while still retaining a discrete identity that draws its power and its character from communal experiences in times and places far distant from American shores. From this perspective, the key difference between Latinos and Jews in the United States is that they are at different stages in this journey. Latinos—certainly the large and growing immigrant population, but also those whose families have been here for generations—are in the early stages of this journey. Jews, for the most part, are well down this road.

Embracing this perspective, I will argue, is crucial to developing relationships between these two groups based on confidence, comfort, and trust. It is also essential to understanding where the United States is going in the first half of the twenty-first century as it experiences vast demographic change and how Latinos and Jews can help direct that change toward positive outcomes.

Demographic Change Engine

Immigration from Latin America has added more than 13 million people to the U.S. population, with three-quarters of them arriving since 1980. The Hispanic second generation—the U.S.-born children of Latino immigrants—now stands at more than 10 million people, average age 19 years old, and is growing faster than any other native-born sector of the population. Those two pieces of data and many other similar formulations have erased any doubts that Latinos are the major engine of demographic change today and will be for the foreseeable future. There also can be no doubt that Latinos form by far the largest single bloc now embarking on the adventure of becoming American. Indeed, they are the largest cultural-linguistic group, both in terms of overall numbers and as a proportion of immigrant flows, to arrive here since the Irish potato famine influx in the mid-nineteenth century.¹

Latinos are indeed at the beginning of an age-old journey that has taken many routes in the past. Now and throughout American history it has been easy to view immigration as a force of nature that carries the impoverished and the persecuted to a place of greater opportunity as ineluctably as water flows downhill. That is not true now, nor was it true in 1883 when Emma Lazarus wrote a poem destined to decorate the Statute of Liberty beckoning the “tired ... poor ... homeless and tempest-tossed.” The tempest-tossed were, and still are, just that. They are at the mercy of forces beyond their control. That describes most people. It is the exceptions, those battling the storms, who end up migrating.

Even today, with the stark economic contrasts between the United States and its largest source of immigrants, Mexico, it is not true that migration is simply driven by wage differentials. In Mexico today, as in Europe a century ago, it is not only the poorest who emigrate. Instead, numerous studies of sending communities then and now have shown that the emigrants are those who have the strongest reasons for believing that the voyage will be profitable, that it will be the engine of upward mobility, and who have the means to carry out the trip.²

Among Latinos today that reasonable prediction of success is usually based on a channel of family members at both ends of the migration. Those at the receiving end provide assistance with housing, finding work, and general acclimatization, and those at the sending end ensure that remittances sent home are put to good use. Geographic proximity and the ease of travel and communications ensure that migration is not a simple break with the home country. These channels also provide a vivid means for the constant refreshment and

reaffirmation of the Spanish language, the home-country culture more generally, and, perhaps most powerfully, the deep devotion to family that is a common trait in Spanish-speaking societies. The efficient functioning of these family channels is most clearly demonstrated in the extraordinary remittances sent south by Latinos in the United States. Immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua now living in the United States send an annual \$8 billion back home, according to a study by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL). In El Salvador, remittances from immigrants equal 18 percent of the gross domestic product and half of the income from exports.³

For many Latino immigrants, and most obviously for Mexicans living in U.S. border states, easy access to home can lead to a prolonged transnational experience in which life in “El Norte” is viewed merely as a sojourn that does not require compromise or commitment. And, indeed the appetite for seasonal workers among American farmers and fruit growers has fostered patterns of temporary migration that are nearly a century old.

But, for as long as some Mexicans have been coming north to make some money and go back home, others have settled here, created communities and become fully Americanized to the point that Spanish has disappeared and their ancestral culture is a vestige that comes forth only in cuisine, holidays, and other expressions of heritage. In this regard, Mexican-Americans who live just miles from the Rio Grande are no different from the descendants of Irish or Italian or Polish immigrants who live a hemisphere away from the old country. And, just as fears proved unfounded that European immigrants in the nineteenth century would remake the United States, so too today there is no justification for worries that Mexican immigration will produce a kind of *Reconquista* of the U.S. border areas, making them part of Mexico, in spirit if not in fact. America’s absorptive powers are undiminished, and the process of Americanization proceeds as before, albeit under vastly different circumstances

Latino immigrants today arrive more deeply influenced by the United States than any other major group of newcomers in the nation’s history. In an era of the globalization of American political, economic, and cultural forms, the United States exercises a special and unrivaled power over Latin America. It sits atop the Western Hemisphere like a lighthouse beacon, a sole source, powerfully distorting everything it illuminates, even as it points the way. For a hundred years, it has exercised tremendous influence in Latin America, and whether the medium was the Marine Corps or the Peace Corps, the message has always been that Americans knew better, did better, lived better. Meanwhile, the

American consumer culture penetrated deeply into the Latin psyche, informing every appetite and defining new desires.

From the moment of departure then, Latino immigration begins as a paradoxical journey. On the one hand, the act of departure does not necessarily break ties to home country and to family, but transforms and may actually rejuvenate them. On the other, Latinos leave with the desirability of all things American deeply imprinted in their psyches, but it is an appetite tinged with envy. These newcomers are at the very start of a process in which they and their children will try to find a place for themselves in this country, even as they strive to preserve parts of the identity they brought with them.

Native-born Latinos of long standing, primarily Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, are also in the early stages of a similar journey, though they are obviously further along than the newly arrived immigrants. Latinos who trace their roots not to the villages of Jalisco, but to Houston, Los Angeles, and New York, are now entering the middle class and the professions in large numbers for the first time. They are buying homes and gaining a voice for their views and beliefs. They are also still fresh from a civil rights struggle that has colored Latino politics for the past half century and that in some areas still remains unresolved. They are arriving but not yet arrived. While many are prospering, a disproportionate number are poor and ill-educated compared to the white majority. And, as other chapters of this volume show in detail, they have yet to firmly establish their place or fully define their roles in politics at either the local—Miami excepted—or the national level.

Jews in the United States, it goes without saying, are far, far down the road by comparison. They have succeeded in becoming educated, affluent, and influential. American Jews have become a well-established, fully integrated component of the American social landscape without losing a powerful identity as a distinct people. The fact that the Jewish identity is interpreted and lived in several starkly different ways only heightens the value of this accomplishment. If anything, American Jews may have reached the end of this paradoxical journey and moved into a new phase, evidenced by their sometimes agonized preoccupation with preserving Jewish identity in the face of population decline and intermarriage. Success exacts a price, too.

For a quick measure of where these two groups stand one can glance at the 2000 presidential campaign. For Latinos it was the first time that the political parties paid any attention to them as a potential factor in a national election. For Jews, it was the first time that one of their own was on a national ticket.

Perspective and Understanding

Rather than weighing the common ground and points of divergence between Jews and Latinos on political, social or economic issues, I'd like to suggest that the proper starting place for assessing the interaction between these two groups is a matter of perspective: The Jews look back and see something in their history that resonates with the contemporary Latino experience. The Latinos look forward and see that the path they have embarked upon is similar to the Jewish trajectory in America. That is not the stuff of powerful coalition building. But that perspective might be the basis for some mutual understanding, and I believe that such understanding is the essential first step in relations between such disparate communities. Elsewhere in this volume there are discussions of work done at the leadership level to manage political relations and to find common ground on issues. Such efforts are important and must go forward, although, in my opinion, they will not bear much fruit in the long run if the attempt to build mutual self-interests is not matched by an effort to build mutual understanding. The failure to achieve such understanding was one cause of the bitter feelings among some African-Americans and Jews after they had so successfully come together on the issues during the civil rights era.

“Understanding” may sound Pollyannaish or even anachronistic in the field of ethnic relations, conjuring up visions of art exhibitions, performances of folkloric music, and earnest if uninformed “dialogue” between grassroots groups. Without belittling such efforts, I am pointing to something considerably beyond cultural appreciation. To put it bluntly, Latinos can be spared from absorbing the widespread and prejudice-inducing view of American Jews as a remote, powerful elite, if they come to see Jews as a people who have taken a similar approach to defining their place in the United States. Jews can be spared the equally dangerous view of Latinos as a foreign minority unwilling or unable to assimilate to American ways.

There is a definable mutual self-interest in this, as both Latinos and Jews are easy targets for nativists and cultural hegemonists, like Pat Buchanan and other less extreme and less noted figures, who insist on a singular outcome for anyone seeking a place in this country. Both Jews and Latinos have and continue to be confronted by false prophets of the melting pot or of “patriotic assimilation.” Those are the loud voices complaining that a given group is failing to adapt to American ways. Those are the voices that fall silent when asked how the white Christian majority can better adapt to those supposed national norms.

As a matter of daily life, the direct experience of that kind of prejudice lies

more in the past than in the present for most Jews. But it was Jews long ago, during their last great era of immigration, who realized that tolerance does not function selectively, that the only way to open a space for themselves was to ensure spaces for all those who held on to elements of identity not shared by the majority. The same holds true today, though not with the same immediacy as a century ago. Jews still have a self-interest in ensuring that this nation can incorporate diverse peoples. Although the old divide of race remains largely unhealed, today the new challenge of incorporation lies with accepting the immigrant experience, something that Jews know well from their own communal history. As always, it is an experience of overwhelming change for individuals absorbing a new language and a new culture. And for Jews and Latinos, though for different reasons, it is an experience of clinging to beliefs, values, and a sense of communal identity sometimes at odds with the new land.

The Process of Assimilation

Someone who every few years casually strolls through Washington Heights in upper Manhattan, the Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago, or any other well-established barrio in a major American city might come away with the impression that nothing changes. Spanish is the language of the streets; the stores sell goods from Latin America, and the whole place might seem a home away from home for immigrants not willing to learn English or absorb American ways. That would be a mistaken impression because the most visible Latino communities are ports of entry where the sounds of Spanish are constantly being refreshed by newcomers.

Latinos as a whole are still in the era of arrivals. Every day across the country thousands of people are launching their immigrant journey afresh, even as thousands of others buy homes, graduate from high school, or move into mixed neighborhoods, taking steps that carry them toward a more Americanized identity. Looking at Latinos at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is important to remember that the most recently arrived draw the most attention because they are the most dissimilar. But, as with Jews at the beginning of the twentieth century, there are also some that are well-established here and are more comfortable in English than in the language of their grandparents, others who are in the midst of a transformation, and still others who are just starting out. The process of assimilation is already producing many different outcomes, but even though the story is much closer to its beginning than its end, some broad trends are becoming apparent.

In today's immigrant families, the pace of change from one generation to another is more rapid than for those of the European influx, according to a variety of field studies by leading immigration scholars. In the first half of the twentieth century the broad pattern has been described as "straight-line assimilation," in which children pretty much picked up where their parents left off in terms of language preferences and cultural practices in a general progression toward Americanization. Today there is ample evidence of what some experts call "bumpy-line assimilation." According to this model, children adapt much more quickly to American ways than do their parents, producing the kind of generation gap that Martina Flores of the YWCA English classes encountered when she found she could not understand her children's conversations with each other because English was their language of choice.⁴

Another important pattern is called "segmented assimilation," which finds important differences in identity according to income and education, because American society so powerfully affords opportunities and assigns roles along those lines. In this view, middle-class Latinos often retain a largely symbolic connection to their ethnic heritage. The connection is marked by the observance of holiday rituals and an enduring adherence to certain cultural values, especially those centered around family, even as in many other aspects of life they model themselves after the English-speaking white majority. Meanwhile, those who remain poor and who live in communities populated predominantly by similarly poor Latinos often develop a strong sense of ethnic identity synonymous with outsider status. Responding to the stratification of American society, they find a defense mechanism in defining themselves as a minority group.⁵

Undoubtedly, a complex process of change is underway with many powerful crosscurrents, but, predictably enough, one factor above all others drives assimilation: language. One of the most comprehensive opinion surveys ever conducted of the Latino population recently found that the experience of coming to the United States powerfully reshapes Latinos' worldviews, altering their beliefs about, among other things, morality, social issues, and gender roles. The 1999 survey by the *Washington Post*, in collaboration with researchers at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University, found that the acquisition of English is more often associated with these changes in attitude than any other factor. It is more important than age, income, immigration status, educational accomplishment, and the amount of time spent in the United States, even more than whether the individual was born here or in Latin America. Equally important is the finding in this poll and in other data that the American-born children of Latino immigrants—the second generation—rapid-

ly embrace English. Among the respondents to the *Post* survey, only one in ten of the second-generation Latino adults relied principally on Spanish in their daily lives.⁶

Latinos who rely most heavily on Spanish—those who say they speak no English, who watch Spanish-language television shows, who need instructions in Spanish when they buy a new appliance—are not bashful about saying that they are anxious to learn American ways. Nearly nine in ten of the Spanish-dominant respondents in the survey, most of them recently arrived immigrants, believed it is important to change so they can fit into American society. That belief holds firm among those who are fully English-dominant—most of them the American-born children or grandchildren of immigrants. Among the English-speakers, eight in ten expressed the same strong belief in assimilation. At the same time, however, Latinos of all sorts were equally unanimous in stating a strong belief that they should maintain a distinct Latino culture even as they assimilated to life in the United States.

Assimilation is not a one-for-one process of replacing old attitudes with new ones. Nor is it a continuous process, but one marked by many steps backward and sideways as well as forward. As such, immigrants and their children are most likely to be a bicultural mix of attitudes, with Latino traits coming to the fore in some situations and Americanized notions surfacing at other times. Differences in education, occupation, nationality, even the kind of neighborhood an immigrant resides in can produce very substantial differences in the speed and direction of assimilation. With these reservations in mind, it is possible to identify some broad patterns in data such as the results of the *Washington Post* poll. That data, and hundreds of follow-up interviews conducted by fellow members of the research team and me, offer some strong indications of what changes and what remains the same during this paradoxical journey to a new life and a new language.

How Attitudes Change

Spanish-speakers—some 70 percent of foreign-born Latinos speak mainly Spanish at home—have idealistic views about American institutions, especially the power of government to improve the lives of its citizens, and they express almost unbounded confidence in their children's future. As Latinos acquire English, this idealism erodes, and their attitudes come to mirror the more skeptical views that most Americans hold toward government, the media, and other institutions. Once they have learned the language and, with it, a familiarity with

American life, even Latinos who have prospered here are less optimistic about their children's future than poor, recently arrived immigrants who live in linguistic isolation.

Once language opens them to the influences of English-speaking co-workers, neighbors, and the American popular culture, Latino attitudes even on "culture wars" values issues also undergo a profound transition. For example, they shift away from fierce condemnation of abortion and homosexuality to positions that fall well within the range of opinions expressed by non-Hispanic Americans, both white and black. Similarly, Latinos views on gender roles evolve and old-style machismo fades. The percentage of Spanish-speaking Latinos who believe that a husband should always have the final say in family decisions is twice as high as among English speakers.

Given the widespread assumption that Latinos are devout and obedient Roman Catholics, the survey's findings on attitudes toward religion and religious institutions are illuminating. No more than three-quarters of the Latinos surveyed expressed a favorable view of the Catholic Church when they were asked their attitudes toward a variety of institutions, and that rating slips as Latinos become more assimilated. This may simply reflect the large number of Latinos both here and Latin America who are switching allegiances to Pentecostal and Evangelical ministries. But it is also significant that nearly 60 percent of the Latinos polled expressed a belief that organized religious groups should stay out of politics and that view held across the board from the most recently arrived to the most assimilated native-born. This is not the place to delve into the history of the church in Latin American politics, but the poll results reinforce other evidence suggesting that Latino attitudes toward that history are much more ambivalent, even negative, than most American realize. Finally, religious practice declines precipitously as Latinos become assimilated. Seventy-percent of the Spanish-speakers, but only 55 percent of those who rely on English, say that religion is important in their lives.

One aspect of traditional Latino culture appears to survive life in the United States with little dilution: devotion to family. Regardless of their linguistic abilities or whether they are foreign-born or are third-generation Americans, most Latinos fervently believe that relatives are more important than friends. Although less emphatic in this belief than recent immigrants, well-established English-speaking Latinos continue to give family the top priority in greater numbers than non-Latino whites. The same pattern emerges on the delicate question of whether elderly parents should live with their adult children. Again, the preference for family is strongly evident regardless of assimilation. About

two-thirds of Latinos who are fully reliant on English agree that aging parents should find a home with their kids, compared to less than half of whites.

Moreover, a strong sense of Latino identity persists, and it is marked by a degree of apprehensiveness about the United States. Immigrant parents often express fears that life here will morally corrupt their children, that their families will come apart, or that they will always suffer a degree of exclusion from the mainstream. These worries typically serve to reinforce a sense of ethnic identity as a defensive measure, especially among Latinos who live in large enclaves where they are the dominant population.

It is not, however, a very cohesive identity. As noted above, Latinos in every income, language, and immigration category almost unanimously stated a strong belief that Latinos should maintain distinct culture, even as they changed to blend in better. Looking at the question from a different perspective, more than two-thirds of the Spanish-dominant respondents said they felt little or nothing in common with Anglos or African-Americans. The poll indicated that this sense of alienation from the great bulk of the American population diminishes somewhat over time and as Latinos learn English. But even among the most assimilated Latinos, more than half of the respondents felt the same lack of commonality with and social distance from either American whites or blacks. Even by the standards of a society marked by considerable ethnic and racial separation, those are strong sentiments. The *Post* survey asked similar questions to a control sample of non-Latino whites and blacks. Both groups expressed a higher degree of commonality with each other than Latinos did with them. Blacks most certainly have a longer and more bitter experience of discrimination in the United States than any Latino group, but over generations, African-Americans have developed a stronger sense than Latinos that this is their country, for better or worse, and that they share its history and culture with whites.

One likely source for this alienation among Latinos emerged from a series of questions probing perceptions of discrimination. Across the board, about 40 percent of all the Latino respondents said that they or someone in their families had experienced discrimination in the past five years. And, although the newly arrived stated the concern most forcefully, Latinos in all categories complained in the poll that discrimination remains a significant problem. Among bilingual Latinos, people who can readily move between English and Spanish, three-quarters said they saw discrimination against Latinos as a problem, and two-thirds of the English-speakers said the same. Whether it is the historical experience of native-born Latinos as a minority group or the kind of rejection felt by a non-English speaking immigrant, the perception among Latinos that they suf-

fer bias is a powerful force binding them together. Their experience may mirror the history of German and Italian immigrants who coalesced with their countrymen from different, sometimes rival, regions after they emigrated to the United States—even before their homelands were unified—because of the shared experience of discrimination at the hands of American nativists. But, Latinos may have to overcome differences even greater than the ones that separated the Piedmontese and Neapolitans or Bavarians and Pomeranians.

*Pan-Latino Identity vs.
Identification with Country of Origin*

Although Latinos express a distinct loyalty to Latino culture even after they have acquired many American attitudes, this does not necessarily translate into loyalty to other Latinos. In the *Post* survey when we asked Latino respondents whether they felt much in common with other Latinos according to their nationality, the answers reflected the respondents' regional and national backgrounds. People of Mexican ancestry, for example, said they felt much in common with Mexicans, but people who hailed from the Caribbean did not. The boundaries were less distinct among Latinos whose families had been in the United States longer and who spoke English, but they never broke down altogether. The 1993 National Latino Political Survey similarly found that given the choice, Latinos would first identify themselves with labels based on national origin, such as Mexican-American or Cuban before they would use pan-ethnic labels such as Latino or Hispanic.⁷

This phenomenon would seem to echo the experience of Jews in the first part of the century, when clear divides were evident between Jews of Western European ancestry, primarily German Jews, and those from Eastern Europe, such as Polish and Russian Jews. As with Jews, Latinos of different origins are pushed together in the United States because here they are treated similarly, and it is negative experiences that most forcefully promote group identity and solidarity.

But there is a clear difference. Jews share an overarching sense of ethnic and religious cohesiveness that predates distinctions according to nationality, and that group identity was reformed among Jews in the United States in response first to the pogroms in Eastern Europe, then to the Holocaust, and finally to the birth of Israel. In contrast, Latinos did not begin as a single people, nor do they have an ancient history in common; they are, instead, a mixture of European, African, and Native American brewed in the Western Hemisphere over the past 500 years. Even in this relatively short history, national identities

have always been stronger than any overarching sense of linguistic or ethnic commonality. Immigrants from nations as diverse as Cuba and Peru cannot be expected to form close bonds automatically any more than the diverse nations of Latin America can be expected to act in concert.

For Latinos and Jews to understand each other, it will be important for both to realize that they have very different experiences of group identity. That should be obvious from their histories. There is nothing in the Latino past that approximates the Holocaust, either in its horror or its continuing power to draw Jews together in common purpose. Nor do Latinos share a bond comparable to the religious beliefs and liturgical traditions that connect all Jews, despite their disparate practices. It would be an easy mistake for Jews to assume that in a community mobilization effort Puerto Ricans and Dominicans would naturally work together. Similarly, Latinos might easily conclude that Orthodox and secular Jews embrace such different lifestyles and are in conflict on such basic issues as the very nature of religion that they are disparate communities, without realizing that on issues that touch on the fate of the Jewish people as a whole, such as the endurance of the State of Israel, they can overcome seemingly enormous differences in the interests of ethnic unity.

The different degrees of ethnic cohesion are already apparent in the ways Latino and Jewish leaders handle some foreign policy issues. Latinos have come together on immigration controversies relating to Latinos in the United States, including broad measures such as support for more generous legal immigration and the provision of social services to foreign residents, as well as on more narrow efforts such as the campaigns to win safe haven for Central American refugees over the course of more than a decade. When it comes to U.S. relations with another nation, however, they have been much less unified. The 1993 vote on the North American Free Trade Agreement, for example, split the Hispanic caucus in the House of Representatives. Mexican-American legislators voted in favor, primarily because they hoped their districts in California, Texas, and the Southwest would benefit from increased trade with Mexico. Puerto Rican congressmen were opposed because they feared their constituents in New York and Chicago would lose manufacturing jobs.

Despite the efforts of some advocates in Washington, Latino communities for the most part have not been willing to expend political capital on demands for increased U.S. foreign aid to Latin America. Calls for Latinos to mobilize on this issue as Jews do on behalf of Israel betray precisely the kind of misunderstanding that I believe can be harmful in the long run. Leaving aside the merits of the argument as a policy matter, it should be obvious that the ties between

Latino immigrants and their homelands are in no way comparable to the link between American Jews and Israel. The distinction holds even if one considers the influence exerted by the Cuban and Irish communities on foreign policy. These are examples of political mobilization in opposition to a hated regime. Given that both Fidel Castro and the Protestants of Northern Ireland are of the same nationality, even the same ethnicity as the immigrants in the United States, these cases fall under the category of expatriate politics. Support for Israel among American Jews, meanwhile, is perhaps a unique example of a group identity translating into broad and enduring support for a foreign nation. The vast majority of American Jews have no direct link to Israel by family ancestry or economic or political interests. Instead, the bond is both strong and extraordinary because it is built on a shared history of catastrophe. With the knowledge that one third of world Jewry was consumed in the Holocaust still a matter of living memory, support for Israel is seen as a matter of communal survival, even for Jews who have no intention of going to Israel as anything more than tourists.

Not All Ethnic Coalitions Are Created Equal

For Jews, especially those with a long history of political activism, it can be tempting to view Latinos through the lens of the Jewish experience with African-Americans during the civil rights era. This is an understandable perspective as a matter of human nature, but it is flawed as matter of history and could be the point of departure for deep misunderstandings.

Without belaboring a familiar chronicle, it is worth recalling that Jews and blacks formed an alliance to break down legal structures both considered morally wrong. It was an alliance based on shared beliefs as well as mutual self-interest, because many Jews, still considered outcasts in some regards, felt they would benefit by fighting for inclusiveness and against prejudice. However, the alliance had a geographic focus in that the effort was aimed mostly at the Deep South, an area with a relatively sparse population of Jews. And the relationship underwent strains primarily as a result of direct friction between Jews and blacks in northern cities, where they lived together and were undergoing a process of ethnic succession. In that setting the ideological and political bonds so effective in creating a civil rights coalition did not produce a bridge of understanding and mutual respect between the two communities.

The unhappy memories on both sides stem not from the experience of Freedom Riders in Mississippi, but mostly from old urban neighborhoods

where both were victims of circumstances. In the classic saga of ethnic succession, blacks and Jews found themselves in landlord-tenant, shop owner-customer, and employer-employee relationships that inevitably produced friction. Moreover, this took place during an era of decline for America's old cities marked by rising crime rates and poverty, a collapsing urban economy, and the near-disintegration of the civic infrastructure, including the public schools. Largely as a result of historical forces beyond either group's control, blacks and Jews often came to see each other as adversaries.

The civil rights and ethnic succession relationships overlapped in an unhappy way over the issue of education, especially in New York City. There, the tension between the two different bases for relationship was most vividly demonstrated in the struggle between the Jewish-led New York Teacher's Union and the local community board in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville School District. At a time when the public schools and universities were still an important source of employment, upward mobility, and political power for Jews, African-Americans pressed a moral claim for greater access to classrooms, jobs, and decision-making. Puerto Ricans also participated as plaintiffs in the some of these clashes, though as lesser players. Even though civil rights rhetoric and law were important factors in these episodes, the underlying dynamic was still one of a rising group demanding a share of the spoils held by a group that had risen previously.

Neither the civil rights nor the ethnic succession models apply to the current relationship between Latinos and Jews. Although important civil rights questions remain unresolved for Latinos, they are primarily in the realm of ensuring fair access to public goods, e.g., affirmative action in higher education and electoral redistricting, rather than ending historical injustices such as poll taxes. Moreover, there is little or no ethnic succession underway. Jews for the most part hold sufficient wealth and power that Latinos, especially the new population of low-income immigrants, pose no threat to their jobs or neighborhoods. While some Jews already feel concerned by outreach and recruitment programs designed to increase Hispanic representation at prestigious colleges and universities, the number of Latino entrants is still so small that it is inconceivable that they will threaten the Jews' well-established position as the best educated ethnic group in the country. Indeed, overall there is very little competition between Latinos and Jews, indeed there is not even much contact between them. And for Latinos, this means that Jews are only one of several power centers that need to be engaged in pursuit of position and influence. There are exceptions, of course, such as parts of Los Angeles and New York City where the two communities live in close proximity or even share neighborhoods, and

thus compete for access to public services and elected representation. But, even in those cities in the larger arena of municipal politics, Latinos find themselves competing and collaborating with Jews more or less to the same degree as they do with blacks and other whites.

As with so many things, Miami stands out as an exception in this argument. As described elsewhere in this volume, there was an ethnic succession struggle between Latinos and Jews there, but it occurred under unique circumstances. First of all, there is no other city where a large population of Jews has only recently established itself as a result of an internal migration. And, I feel safe in predicting, the United States will never again see a sudden mass migration by affluent and highly skilled Hispanics who are showered with benefits from a federal government that considers them a national security treasure. Miami is unique, and not a harbinger of things to come elsewhere. Even in Miami the ethnic succession between Cubans and Jews is rapidly drawing to a close with the movement of Jews out of Miami-Dade County up the coast to Broward and Palm Beach Counties and the rapid aging of the Jewish population that remains behind in the condo corridors of Miami Beach.

Indeed, the dynamics developing nationally and in many major cities are almost the opposite of ethnic succession. The potential for conflict between Latinos and Jews does not arise out of competition for the same political and economic spaces, but because they are so distant from each other.

Demographic Differences

Exogamy, marriage with someone of a different racial or ethnic group, is increasingly commonplace among Latinos in the United States. Among young and well-educated Latinos, for example, about a third of all marriages now cross ethnic or racial lines. Indeed, for the most part, intermarriage has long been an accepted, even predictable aspect of Latino culture. Jews, of course, have traditionally put great value on seeking a mate who is also Jewish—in fact, the traditional definition of a Jew is someone with a Jewish mother—and now in the United States many Jewish communities are struggling to discourage out-marriage. In some quarters intermarriage is even seen as threat to the very survival of the Jews as a distinct people.⁸

These contrasting attitudes underscore fundamental demographic and socio-economic differences between Latinos and Jews. To simplify, Latinos are a fast-growing and very young population, while the Jewish population is shrinking and aging. Latinos are the poorest and least educated major population

group, while Jews are the richest, best educated and, of all ethnic groups, have the highest proportion of their members in prestige professions. By virtue of their numbers, not just here but also across a vast continent to the south, Latinos have never had to worry about the survival of their heritage. For Jews, by contrast, the threat of extinction through assimilation may not be just a bad dream.

Differences on Policy Issues

Jews and Latinos live in two different Americas, and the situation will not change in the next generation or two, so it needs to be understood and accepted. Both Jews and Latinos stand apart from the white Christian majority and the black minority, but they are not natural allies, not necessarily even natural friends, given the differences of class, generation, and demographic prospects. Inevitably, Jews and Latinos present different and potentially conflicting demands on the public sector and the economic marketplace.

Public education is the most certain flash point now and probably for decades to come. By virtue of their affluence and aging, Jews have a disproportionately small stake in urban public schools, although suburban Jews still send their children to public schools in overwhelming numbers. Latinos are in exactly the opposite situation. Because of the large number of youngsters in Latino households and because they often cannot afford private or parochial schools, and because of their concentration in big cities, Latinos are heavily dependent on urban public schools that are frequently underfunded and provide a mediocre education.

At the very least, one can expect Latinos to press demands for greater public spending on education and perhaps also for greater accountability by school administrators. And they will look to Jews to continue the tradition of Jewish support for public education as a matter of principle and not merely self-interest. But it is also possible within the next few years that Latinos will join the growing movement to find alternatives to the public schools rather than to fix them. Having substantially abandoned urban public schools, Jews should not be surprised and certainly not outraged when Latinos do the same.

Vouchers and tuition tax credits are the most contentious and most immediate issues in this regard. Major Jewish organizations, including the American Jewish Committee, sponsor of this volume, are highly visible opponents of any programs that grant public funds to parents for use in paying tuition at nonpublic schools. In court and in public forums, they argue that such grants constitute

an unconstitutional breach of the separation of church and state and constitute poor social policy. Interestingly enough, these Jewish organizations find support for this view in mainstream African-American civil rights groups and legal defense organizations that see vouchers as representing a dangerous abandonment of public education. The same is true of the mainstream Latino political advocacy groups, although high percentages of African-Americans as well as Latinos support vouchers, especially in the inner city, where many public schools have demonstrably failed in their missions.

Public opinion surveys often show that Latinos support vouchers more than any other population group. So far these views have not translated into a surge of activism, at least in part because most of the prominent Latino organizations are opposed to vouchers or are quiet on the issue, often out of concern not to undermine support for the public schools. In fact, lack of Latino support was a key factor in defeating the California ballot initiative on vouchers in the 2000 elections. Nonetheless, there is a potential for conflict, and it is exacerbated because the two groups come at it from different perspectives. Jews represent a diminishing share of the public school student population and have taken a stand on a principle that reflects their position as a religious minority. Bitter experience has taught Jews to oppose any policies that bestow state favor on religious practice or education, seeing in such measures a potential threat to religious liberty that could harm people of all faiths in the long run.

For Latinos, especially immigrants who arrive with little schooling, it is a question of survival. Publicly funded education is the only avenue of upward mobility across generations available to them, and the aspiration to see their children achieve a better life is a powerful emotional undercurrent in Latino communities. If public schools continue to fail Latinos, they will listen to those who offer them choices. It would be a mistake to assume that Latinos simply want money to put their children in Catholic schools. As noted above, the church's claim on Latinos is easily overstated. If Latinos mobilize on the issue of vouchers, it will not be out of loyalty to the church, but out of devotion to their children.

A confrontation between Jews and Latinos over vouchers is far from inevitable. The loudest proponents of vouchers, Republican politicians and conservative Christians, have never enjoyed a large Latino constituency, and, despite repeated efforts, they have failed to rally Hispanic communities behind this cause. The antidote to the appeal of vouchers seems clear. A credible commitment to school reform and a visible effort to address the particular needs of Latino students might dampen the interest in experimentation. American Jews

have a role to play here because of the political and financial position they currently enjoy and because of their traditional support for education. Rather than a point of contention, the public schools could become a natural point of confluence for Latinos and Jews. This is not to suggest that the burden of salvaging America's public school systems should fall on Jewish organizations—far from it. But a serious show of support for public education by prominent Jewish individuals and groups would seem an essential starting point for any effort to assure cooperative relations with Latinos. And, in fact, the AJC has formed a task force to reinvigorate its longstanding support for public education, but much more extensive and concrete action is needed from Jewish agencies at the national and local levels. Certainly the potential for conflict will grow if Jews are perceived, fairly or not, as preventing Latinos from escaping crumbling public classrooms, even as Jewish children prosper in the suburbs or in private schools.

Moreover, Jews, and anyone else with wealth and influence, need only look to the nation's demographic future to find self-interested reasons for making this effort. By the end of the next decade, the children now growing up in poor immigrant households will be workers, taxpayers, and voters. They are, for the most part, native-born American citizens, and they are not going away. Failing to invest in them now will have inescapable costs in the not-distant future.

Finding Common Purpose

Elsewhere in these pages other authors chronicle the intriguing interplay of Latinos and Jews in the politics of several major cities. The picture that emerges from those narratives is of two groups who, by necessity, must seek influence through alliances while remaining ethnic advocates. Both share an interest in promoting tolerance and diversity as positive values in American society. Although for Latinos it is only evident at the local level, each in their own world displays a strong sense of community, and although it is much more evolved among Jews, each shows an ability to develop communal organizations and to participate in civic society. These seem to be the basis for a fellowship that flows from common interest and common purposes at a very fundamental level. Jews and Latinos may or may not be successful partners in big-arena politics, but what I am suggesting could be more important in the long run than a coalition built around specific issues or leaders. Coming from very different directions, both groups would seem to have an interest in taking the country past the kind of ethnic and racial politics that characterized the twentieth century.

From the era of big-city machine politics to the most recent debates over

affirmative action, ethnic and racial groups have played a zero-sum game for a finite set of benefits. Every gain by one group necessarily meant losses for another, whether they were competing for patronage jobs or university admissions. If one chooses to be optimistic about America, one can hope that in this era of peace and prosperity there is a chance to move beyond the old formulas.

Whether Jews and Latinos can find common purpose in this admittedly idealistic endeavor is open questions. Both will have to change some of their basic expectations. Jews, for example, cannot assume that Latinos will automatically view them as victims of bias or that the Holocaust will define Latino perceptions of them. This is not a matter of insensitivity or anti-Semitism on the Latinos' part. Rather it reflects that this is a young, poorly educated, non-European population, and the Holocaust is not a vivid aspect of their experience—indeed, they may not know very much about it at all. As a further complication, some Latino immigrants bring with them negative images of Jews fostered by traditional forms of Roman Catholicism, as well as some of the new evangelical religious practices taking hold in Latin America.

Latinos, for their part, especially those in leadership positions, must move beyond the demographic triumphalism that cites their enormous surge in population growth as justification for almost any demand. Moreover, as they demand tolerance from others, Latino advocates must do more to promote tolerance within their own communities. That includes combating their own regrettable tendency sometimes to develop grudges against those perceived as more privileged. In a struggle for inclusion, whether the goal is access to jobs at a hospital or the creation of an ethnic studies department at a university, it easy to perceive the gatekeepers as the enemy rather than as someone who needs to be won over as an ally. Symbolic victories are often the result, because the struggle itself undermines the potential for cooperation in the long term. Moreover, in battles over bilingual education and immigration, Latino advocates have sometimes resorted to branding their opponents as racists, and as such, they have both misrepresented the issues under debate and misunderstood their foes.

Rather than trying to win at the old game of ethnic competition and coalition, Latinos and Jews and all other Americans have a chance to end that contest and start anew. That chance exists largely because government is no longer the central repository of benefits in our society, and politics is no longer the most important playing field on which ethnic and racial groups compete for status. Instead, the economic marketplace, which was always the final arbiter, has become the most visible and the most significant area of endeavor both for the newcomers seeking to find a place in American society and for those already

well-established. Ethnic advocates who made their careers playing the old game may be slow to see this, but it is well understood at the grassroots.

Fortunately, the United States has enjoyed many more years of economic expansion than of contraction over the past two decades, and these bountiful times create opportunities for all. The critical task in this climate is to open doors to these opportunities rather than to fight for a fair share of entitlements. It would be naive to think that there will not be conflicts and important competitions in the political arena. But there is a chance to change the tenor of those contests, if Jews and Latinos can have the faith that the country is big enough and rich enough to give everyone a chance without having their own status threatened. These two groups, perhaps more than any others, can help ensure that America is a place where people can come, adopt a new land and a new language, and prosper without losing their souls. Both Latinos and Jews are on that journey, and it is time that the rest of the country learned from them.

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Sharing Histories and Hopes: Latinos and Jews in the United States

Jean-Pierre Ruiz

This article is based upon a speech given to the Interreligious Affairs Commission of the American Jewish Committee on September 10, 2001. Since this presentation was made one day before the tragic events of “Black Tuesday,” Dr. Ruiz adds, “As I honor the memories of those who lost their lives that day, I am more convinced than ever of the need to strengthen the bonds of understanding and mutual respect among individuals and communities across the lines of ethnicity, race, and religion.”

I want to express my deep gratitude to Rabbi David Rosen for making it possible for me to be with you. Sometimes timing is everything, and the timing of Rabbi Rosen’s invitation and the scheduling of this meeting could not have been better, taking place in the days following the state visit of Mexican President Vicente Fox to Washington. These are interesting times for relations between the United States and Latin America, and also for the Latino population in the United States, times when the challenges that confront us are as plentiful as the opportunities that are available to us, when the need for mutual respect and for more than superficial understanding, friendship and cooperation are more urgent than ever.

In that spirit, your decision to spend time this afternoon reflecting on the U.S. Latino community and Latino-Jewish relations and considering ways to advance interreligious understanding between our two communities strikes me as an initiative that bears great promise.

A Nuyorican Identity, a Theologian’s Training

In his invitation, Rabbi Rosen noted that you were looking for an “expert insider” about the Latino community. Let me explain how I qualify as an “insider” and the area of my particular expertise. I am a Nuyorican—a Puerto Rican-

American with the accent on the hyphen, born in New York as the son of a Puerto Rican father. There is a story behind my first name—the story of my father’s service in the U.S. Army during the Second World War, of his unit’s participation in the liberation of Belgium, and of the hospitality of a grateful Belgian village whose families welcomed U.S. soldiers into their homes. Corporal Pedro Ruiz, the man who would become my father, came to dinner at the home of my maternal grandparents-to-be. He became best friends with my Uncle Jean and met the woman who would become my mother—an acquaintance that continued after the war when my father returned to Puerto Rico. My mother eventually made the journey to Puerto Rico herself, where she and my father were married, and where they lived for a number of years before they moved to New York, one couple among the tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans who participated in the “Great Migration” from 1946 to 1964.

As for my area of expertise, I am neither a demographer nor a sociologist nor an historian. By training and employment, I am a biblical scholar and a theologian. Thus my take on the Latino situation in the United States proceeds from the conviction that understanding what we believe and how we believe is crucial to understanding who we are. If current trends continue, it is likely that more than 50 percent of Catholics in the United States will be Latinos by the end of the present decade. It is clear to me that, if the growth in ecumenical and interfaith understanding that has taken place in the United States in the last several decades is to continue, the Latino presence must be reckoned with. That is why I am glad to be here with you today and why I look forward to our discussion.

I have organized my remarks under three headings: First, I want to present a snapshot of the Latino population of the United States, combining attention to some key demographic trends with consideration of the impact that the increasing Latino presence is having on U.S. society. Next, I will identify what I think are key elements of the U.S. Latino religious heritage experience. Finally, I will try to identify some ways in which interreligious understanding between the Latino community and the Jewish community might be advanced.

How Does a Latino Person Smell?

“You may ask: How does a Latino person smell? Liz Claiborne printouts answer that the women smell like mango life scent, mandarin salsa and flirty ylang-ylang. The men smell like zesty lime and natural bergamot and geranium bourbon.” That’s what *Washington Post* staff writer Ann Gerhart reported in an August 25 piece about the \$20 million launch by Liz Claiborne Cosmetics of a

scent called “Mambo,” targeted at the “independent, passionate psychographic” of all Americans between 18 and 34, who are having “a love affair with all things Latino: up things, pleasurable things.” This demographic group is responsible for the shift in U.S. consumer trends that has made salsa more popular than ketchup as the top-selling condiment and that has made Corona overtake Heineken as the leading imported beer. Listen to the Claiborne pitch: “We all know that mambo is not just a dance, it’s a scorching bond between two people, enraptured in movement and feeling. But isn’t this the way of all things Latin? Come, find the Latino way of relationships, love and romance, captured within the magical liquid in every bottle.”

It isn’t just perfume either. In response to the dynamic growth of the U.S. Latino market, the M&M /Mars candy people have introduced M&M’s *Dulce de Leche* caramel chocolate candies. M&M /Mars will be the first major “mainstream” candy manufacturer to introduce this flavor. According to Roberto Garcia, M&M’s Ethnic Marketing Manager, “Although *Dulce de Leche* was designed with Latino taste buds in mind, everyone is sure to love the rich and creamy combination.”

It’s the music and the moves and the looks of Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez; it’s perfume, candy, and even greeting cards! American Greetings is launching Spanish Soft Touch, *Momentos de Inspiración*, and other lines of greeting cards aimed at the U.S. Latino market—including cards for Christmas, Three Kings’ Day, Valentine’s Day, Easter, Christmas, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Graduation, Thanksgiving and other occasions both sacred and secular.

Not everybody shares this enthusiasm about the rapidly growing Latino presence in the United States—an enthusiasm predicated on the fact that the discretionary income of Hispanics in the United States is actually greater than the gross domestic product of Mexico, and that Hispanic purchasing power is growing by more than \$1 billion every three weeks. Take people like Long Islander Christopher Slavin, found guilty of two counts of attempted murder and assault for attacking Mexican day laborers Israel Pérez and Magdaleno Estrada Escamilla on September 17, 2000. With an alleged accomplice whose trial has not yet begun, Slavin lured the two men to an abandoned warehouse with the promise of a day’s work, and there the two Mexicans were brutally attacked with a shovel, a posthole digger, and a knife. Crimes like this are fueled by the anti-immigrant activism of groups like Sachem Quality of Life that worked to halt the construction of a center for day laborers in Farmingville, New York, a facility that would have provided education, legal, and referral services for the workers as well as a place where they could wait for work. At a pub-

lic hearing on a proposed bill to penalize contractors who hire undocumented aliens, Suffolk County legislator Michael M. D'Andre suggested, "If Smithtown was attacked tomorrow with the same thing [an influx of undocumented aliens], we'll be up in arms; we'll be out with baseball bats."¹ Tell me: What does fear smell like?

Listen to the numbers: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately one out of every eight persons in the United States is of Hispanic origin. In Census 2000, 281.4 million residents were counted in the United States, of whom 35.3 million (12.5 percent) were Hispanic. Since 1990, the Hispanic population in the United States (excluding Puerto Rico) has increased by 57.9 percent, from 22.4 million to 35.3 million. That does not account for the estimated 11 million undocumented aliens living in the United States (up from Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates of 5 million in 1996), of whom perhaps 3 million are Mexican. Half of all Latinos live in just two states, California and Texas. In 2000, according to the Census Bureau, 27.1 million (76.8 percent) of Hispanics lived in the seven states with Hispanic populations of one million or more: California (11 million), Texas (6.7 million), New York (2.8 million), Florida (2.6 million), Illinois (1.5 million), Arizona (1.2 million) and New Jersey (1.1 million). The 2000 Census counted 20.6 million Hispanics who identified themselves as Mexicans (7.3 percent of the total U.S. population), 3.4 million Puerto Ricans outside of Puerto Rico (1.2 percent of the total U.S. population), as well as 10 million from Central America and South America.

With 35 million Hispanics and somewhere between 34.7 million and 36.4 million African-Americans, the two minority groups are already roughly equal in number. Current trends in the growth rates of the two populations suggest that Hispanics will very soon become the "majority minority" in the United States. That trend worries more than a few, who fear that political courting of Hispanics in order to score their votes at the polls will lead to rivalry rather than cooperation between Hispanics and African-Americans.

The Census reports that Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to live in central cities of metropolitan areas, with 46.4 percent of Hispanics living in cities in comparison with 21.2 percent of non-Hispanic whites.² Hispanics are also a young population, with 35.7 percent of Hispanics under 18 years of age. Latino children are more likely to be living in poverty than non-Hispanic white children, with 34.4 percent of Hispanic children under age 18 living in poverty, in comparison with only 10.6 percent of non-Hispanic white children. In fact, the Census Bureau reports that Hispanic families are three

times as likely to be living in poverty as non-Hispanic white families. In 2000, Hispanics were more likely to work in service occupations than non-Hispanic whites (19.4 percent vs. 11.8 percent). They were also almost twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to be employed as operators and laborers (22 percent vs. 11.6 percent). On the other hand, only 14 percent of Hispanics were employed in managerial or professional positions, compared to 33.2 percent of non-Hispanic whites. Statistics indicate that Hispanics are also more likely to be unemployed than non-Hispanic whites, with a March 1999 unemployment rate of 6.8 percent for Latinos 16 years of age and older as compared with 3.4 percent for non-Hispanic whites.

Hispanics are significantly less likely to have a high school diploma than non-Hispanic whites. In March 1999, 27.8 percent of Hispanics 25 years of age or older had less than a ninth-grade education, 56.1 percent had a high school diploma or more, and 10.9 percent had graduated from college with a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares to the approximately 4.5 percent of non-Hispanic whites who had less than a ninth-grade education, 87.7 percent who had a high school diploma, and 27.7 percent who had a bachelor's degree or more.

While statistics don't speak for themselves, it does not take too much effort to read between the lines and recognize the challenges that the burgeoning Hispanic population represents. Let's move from numbers to names. The Census Bureau itself notes that the concept and measurement of Hispanic origin has changed over several censuses.

In Census 2000, people of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin could identify as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. The term "Latino" appeared on the census form for the first time in 2000. People who marked "other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" had additional space to write Hispanic origins, such as Salvadoran or Dominican.... The census in 1970 was the first to include a separate question specifically on Hispanic origin, although it was only asked of a 5 percent sample of households. In 1970, respondents were asked to choose whether their origin or descent was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish. Prior to 1970, Hispanic origin was determined only indirectly; for example the 1960 and 1950 censuses collected and published data for "persons of Spanish surname" in five southwestern states, whereas the 1940 census identified people who reported Spanish as their "mother tongue." Mexican was included as a category within the race question only in the 1930 census.³

The controversy over the racial and ethnic classifications used in Census 2000 is well known. As the Census Bureau itself explained:

In October 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced the revised standards for federal data on race and ethnicity. The

minimum categories for race are now: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African-American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and White. Instead of allowing a multiracial category as was originally suggested in public and congressional hearings, the OMB adopted the Interagency Committee's recommendation to allow respondents to select one or more races when they self-identify. With the OMB's approval, the Census 2000 questionnaires also include a sixth racial category: Some Other Race. There are also two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race.⁴

As for the complications involved in the use of the "Some Other Race" category, Thomas Ginsberg reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

When some Latinos came to answer the race question on the 2000 census, they may have unwittingly thrown a wrench into the government's first attempt to count multiracial people in America. The Census Bureau said...that the most common answers in its "more-than-one" race category were Latinos who checked one race, such as white, then in the space for "some other race" added words such as Latino, Hispanic or Mexican or Puerto Rican. The government, however, says none of those is a race. Hispanic or Latino is a culture, a language, a social identity. Mexican (or some other country name) is a nationality. Either is like calling "American" a race, the government contends.⁵

Latina theologian Carmen M. Nanko has a very different take, suggesting that "the presumption of a misunderstanding on the part of these mistaken Hispanics is both condescending and premature. The controversial race question has elicited responses that reflect an act of resistance or even defiance to current categorizations of race and ethnicity."⁶

As Ilan Stavans explains in his book *The Hispanic Condition*, "Until the early eighties, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, and even Spaniards were considered independent units in the United States, never a part of a unified whole. If culture is defined as the fabric of life of a community, the ways its members react in a social context, then Hispanic culture in the United States is many cultures, as many as national groups from Latin America and the Caribbean."⁷ Stavans, himself a Mexican Jew (born Ilan Stavchansky Slomianski, he uses Stavans, which is his father's stage name), writing autobiographically, admits, "I don't think I knew the meaning of the words *race* and *ethnicity* until I moved north [to the United States]. You see, Mexico is a multiracial society in which Indians, Europeans, Asians, and Africans coexist more or less peacefully. But people refuse to acknowledge the mestizo heterogeneity....Furthermore, I was born Mexican without really knowing what that

meant, and I did not learn what it meant until I came to the United States, where people automatically began addressing me as Hispanic. *Comprende español, eh?* People would ask. *Un poquito*. Funny, you don't look Hispanic! Ever tried seafood burritos?"⁸

Stavans, the Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latin American and Latino Culture at Amherst College, is a descendant of Eastern European Jews who settled in Mexico. He refers to himself as "a sum of parts. Spanish is my right eye, English my left; Yiddish my background, and Hebrew my conscience."

What should be made of the fact that some of us call ourselves Hispanics and some of us call ourselves Latinos? The academic journal I edit rides the hyphen by calling itself the *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*. Etymologically (remember my philological training as a biblical scholar), Hispanic is borrowed from the Spanish adjective *hispánico*, while Latino was invented by the French in the effort to distinguish French-, Spanish- and Portuguese-colonized America from English-colonized America—and thus we have *Amérique Latine* to distinguish the former from the latter. Politically and ideologically, depending on the circles in which one travels, Hispanic and Latino have different connotations—from the East Coast sensibilities of Hispanic to the distancing from Iberian roots asserted by some advocates of Latino on both coasts and in between.⁹ The very ambivalence and ambiguity involved in the ride along the hyphen suggests the importance of another category, that is, *mestizaje*, a term that bears in itself the betwixt-and-between of the Hispanic/Latino heritage.

Of that *mestizaje*, New Testament scholar and cultural critic Fernando Segovia maintains that it is a tie that binds us, for we are

...a hybrid people, a *mestizo* and *mulatto* people, whether in cultural or biological terms, or both.... On the one hand, we are the children of Spain and thus of Europe, Mediterranean and Catholic Europe—deeply rooted in Western civilization...On the other hand, we are also the children of pre-Columbian America and Africa—deeply rooted as well in other ancient cultures, histories and languages. Thus, we are neither European nor Amerindian nor African, but rather *criollos*, the native children of the white and the black and the brown, of the conquerors and the conquered, the masters and the slaves, the North and the South. Such *mestizaje* and *mulatez* permeates our art, our music, our language, our food, our religion, our very way of constructing and functioning in the world.¹⁰

Ours is a noninnocent history, says eminent Cuban-American church historian Justo González, for our *mestizaje* makes us heirs both of the *conquistadors* and of the indigenous populations they conquered, as well as of the Africans they enslaved.

Our hybridity extends to language as well. Juan Flores observes:

There seems to be a lifecycle of language used in the community. The younger children learn Spanish and English simultaneously, hearing both languages from those who use them separately and from those who combine them in various ways. The older children and adolescents speak and are spoken to increasingly in English, which accords with their experience as students and as members of peer groups that include non-Hispanics. In young adulthood, as the school experience ends and employment opportunities begin, the use of Spanish increases, both in mixed usage and in monolingual speech with older persons. At this age, then, the Spanish skills acquired in childhood but largely unused in adolescence become reactivated. Mature adults speak both languages. Older persons are, for the present at least, Spanish monolingual or nearly so.¹¹

The ease of the back-and-forth—by airplane, over the airwaves, and now over the Internet—between where we came from and where we are has nourished the persistence of Spanish as the language that binds us to our past and to each other in the present. For Ilan Stavans, Spanglish is more than slang. Its vitality as a hyphenated vernacular is a sign of both the vibrant hybridity of the growing Latino community in the United States and a vivid example of the radically democratic quality of language.¹² The permeability of language and the permeability of international borders are what make the new immigration so different from earlier waves of immigration to the United States. Homelands left behind are no longer forgotten. In fact, ease of travel and communication means that they are no longer left behind either.

The Faith of Latinos, Heirs of a Violent Evangelism

Ours is not an innocent history, for we are heirs of the threefold violence of 1492. Listen to how Christopher Columbus set out his program of conquest and conversion to his royal patrons Ferdinand and Isabella:

By knowing the language of the Indians, devout and religious persons could see to it that all [the Indians] would become Christians, and I hope in our Lord that Your Highnesses would be determined to act in this matter with great diligence, so as to turn to the church such great peoples and convert them, just as you have destroyed those who did not want to confess Father, Son and Holy Ghost [Moors and Jews], and at the end of your days (for we are all mortal), you shall depart your kingdoms in a very peaceful state and clean of heresy and wickedness...to increase the holy Christian religion.¹³

Bound up with the *Reconquista*, the victory over the Muslims, and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the program of colonial missionary activity in

the Americas began as part and parcel of the ideology of empire. Yet the encounter between the *conquistadors* and the indigenous populations of these lands yielded not only the complex patterns of ethnic hybridity. It also produced a complex, inculturated, mestizo Christianity that borrowed elements from the indigenous religion, from the religion of African slaves, and from the Iberian Catholicism of the missionaries.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 38 percent of the more than 62 million Roman Catholics in the United States are Hispanic. It is estimated that by the second decade of the present century, more than 50 percent of Roman Catholics in the United States will be Hispanic. Seventy-one percent of the growth in the U.S. Catholic population since 1960 is due to Hispanics. While 71 percent of the more than 30 million Hispanics in the United States are Roman Catholics, there has been increasing concern in Catholic circles about the “defection” of Hispanic Catholics, that is, their conversion to other Christian churches that is attributed to proselytism by these churches. The alarm was sounded by priest-sociologist Andrew Greeley in two articles in the influential Jesuit-sponsored magazine *America* in 1988 and 1997. In the 1997 piece, Greeley wrote that the “equivalent of one out of seven Hispanics has left Catholicism in a little more than a quarter of a century. The annual loss is approximately one half of one percent. If this hemorrhage should continue for the next 25 years, half of all American Hispanics will not be Catholic.” Estimating an attrition rate of 600,000 Hispanics every year, this loss, according to Greeley, “exceeds that of early Irish immigrants to the American South. It is the worst defection in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.”¹⁴

I would submit that such alarmist and intolerant rhetoric is dangerous, especially when it comes from someone who speaks with Greeley’s authority. It fails to recognize that what Greeley and others call “defection” should instead be recognized as a positive outcome of the religious freedom experienced by Hispanics in the United States, and that it represents a new expression of an increasingly rich and diverse mestizo Christianity. The challenge for Latino Catholics in the United States is not a matter of a Reconquista or even of more effective strategies of evangelization and retention, but of respectful initiatives toward ecumenical dialogue with Hispanic brothers and sisters who belong to other Christian churches—especially evangelical/Pentecostal churches. It is sad to say that such efforts to date have been sorely lacking except in relatively isolated instances.¹⁵

Toward Growth in Understanding

The final part of my presentation is by far the most important—and the most tentative. While the first two parts of my presentation have not broken new ground, it is time to address the vital matter of how we might begin to promote growth in understanding between our communities.

First, from the Catholic side, it is high time that the significant progress in Jewish-Catholic dialogue since the Second Vatican Council should have an impact on Hispanic Catholics in the United States and on the Catholic Church in our Latin American and Iberian places of origin. Our Jewish dialogue partners need to hold us to this imperative. In concrete terms, programs such as *Bearing Witness* (created by the Anti-Defamation League's Washington, D.C., Regional Office and the ADL Braun Holocaust Institute, in partnership with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington) undertake the enduring work of teaching the teachers. Through the active participation of teacher-scholars like Latina theologian Dr. Carmen Nanko, *Bearing Witness* has deliberately included Hispanic Catholic educators in its work of consciousness-raising. It is also encouraging to see that religious education programs such as the 2001 Summer Session of the El Paso Diocese's Tepeyac Institute included Rabbi Larry Bach's course, "Judaism and the Jews: An Introduction." That course was by far the best attended of the 28 courses offered, with more than 80 participants—most of them Hispanic.

Real growth toward real understanding doesn't just happen from the top down. Real reform happens, to recall the medieval dictum, *in capite et in membris*, in the head and in the members. Grassroots efforts toward interfaith understanding between Latino Catholics and Jews must be encouraged at every level if we are to realize the hope that our communities will learn to respect and value each other. To come to understand each other and to respect each other, we must meet each other and talk to each other in an atmosphere of trust and mutual esteem.

At the same time, such consciousness-raising must also include educating Latino Christians about the history of the Latin American Jewish Diaspora and about the thriving Jewish communities that exist throughout Latin America today. In this regard, I can point to one example, the magnificent exhibition, *I Carry My Roots With Me: Mis Raíces las Cargo Siempre: Touchpoints of the Latin American Jewish Diaspora*, mounted by the Amy Bronfman Gallery of the Washington, D.C., Jewish Community Center from May to November 2000. Most Latin American Christians know very little about Jews—and that igno-

rance is yet another pernicious legacy of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and of the prohibition against Jews settling in the new Spanish colonies, a prohibition that remained in force until late in the nineteenth century. Knowledge is power, and education is both empowering and liberating.

Third, it is important that the Jewish community in the United States join us in combating the sorts of stereotyping that do such damage. We Latinos don't all look like J Lo or play baseball like A Rod. We don't all speak with accents or belong to gangs or sell drugs. Not all of us eat tortillas (how I hate that Taco Bell chihuahua!), and not all of us know how to mambo. The history of such religious, ethnic, and racial stereotyping in the United States goes hand in hand with the sort of fear and mistrust that undermines the basis of civil society.

Finally, and perhaps most urgently, in the wake of the visit by Mexican President Fox to the United States, it is important that Jews and Latinos work together to advocate for just and responsible immigration reform that will end the militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico, that will end the deaths of the hundreds of migrants in the Arizona desert (the border patrol reports that since 1998, 991 people have died crossing the 2,000-mile southwest border, most from heat exposure or drowning), and that will end the violence of words and deeds against immigrants in our cities and our suburbs. Immigration is an important part of the history and of the experience that Latinos and Jews share as a common heritage in the United States.¹⁶

As we join our efforts in the service of justice, and in the protection of human rights, our cooperation promises to be a mighty force for good which we can hand on as a legacy of hope for future generations.

Endnotes

1. *New York Times*, August 31, 2001.

2. The controversy over the racial and ethnic classifications used in Census 2000 is well known. See the U.S. Census Bureau's "Racial and Ethnic Classifications Used in Census 2000 and Beyond," available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/racefactcb.html>. This document explains: "In October 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced the revised standards for federal data on race and ethnicity. The minimum categories for race are now: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and White. Instead of allowing a multiracial category as was originally suggested in public and congressional hearings, the OMB adopted the Interagency Committee's recommendation to allow respondents to select one or more races when they self-identify. With the OMB's approval, the Census 2000 questionnaires also include a sixth racial category: Some Other Race. There are also two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race."

3. Betsy Guzmán, "The Hispanic Population: Census 2000 Brief" (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001) 1-2. Also see Jorge Chapa, "Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity and Identifiers," in *Encyclopedia of the U.S. Census*, ed. Margo J. Anderson (Washington, D.C: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000).
4. U.S. Census Bureau, "Racial and Ethnic Classifications Used in Census 2000 and Beyond," available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race/racefactcb.html>.
5. *Philadelphia Inquirer*; March 13, 2001.
6. Carmen M. Nanko, "From Conversation to Challenge: A Synthesis of ACHTUS Colloquium 2000," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 8, 2 (November 2000) 75.
7. Ilan Stavans, *The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture and Identity in America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995) 11.
8. *Ibid.*, 196-197.
9. Jorge Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) 1-26: "What Should We Call Ourselves?"
10. Fernando F. Segovia, "Two Places and No Place on Which to Stand: Mixture and Otherness in Hispanic American Theology," *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture* 27:1 (Winter 1992) 26-40; as reprinted in *Mestizo Christianity: Theology from the Latino Perspective*, ed. Arturo J. Bañuelas (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995) 32.
11. Juan Flores, *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1991).
12. Ilan Stavans, "The Gravitas of Spanglish," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 13, 2000. Stavans is the author of the forthcoming *The Sounds of Spanglish: An Illustrated Lexicon* (New York: Basic Books, forthcoming).
13. As cited in Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 49.
14. Andrew M. Greeley, "Defection among Hispanics," *America* (September 27, 1997).
15. See Allan Figueroa Deck, S.J., "The Challenge of Evangelical/Pentecostal Christianity to Hispanic Catholicism," in *Hispanic Catholic Culture in the United States: Issues and Concerns*, ed. Jay P. Dolan and Allan Figueroa Deck, S.J. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1994) 409-439.
16. On the eve of President Fox's visit, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, chair of the USCCN Committee on Migration, urged Presidents Bush and Fox to "seize the moment and set out a vision which embraces immigration as a vital component in the development of both nations in the twenty-first century," to "take bold action by calling for a legalization program for Mexicans and other nationalities who have built lives in our country and who have contributed their skills and hard labor to building up our nation" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2001/01-154.htm>). See the statement by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Welcoming the Stranger among Us: Unity in Diversity* (Washington, D.C: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 15, 2000). The bishops understand that "[t]he ultimate resolution of the problems associated with forced migration and illegal immigration lies in changing the conditions that drive persons from their countries of origin. Accordingly, we urge the governments of the world, particularly our own government, to promote a just peace in those countries that are at war, to protect human rights in those countries that deny them, and to foster the economic development of those countries that are unable to provide for their own peoples. We also urge the governments of the 'receiving' countries to welcome these immigrants, to provide for their immediate needs, and to enable them to come to self-sufficiency as quickly as possible."

Divergent Understanding or Conflicting Interests? Latino and Jewish Policy Differences

Charles Kamasaki

Peter Beinart's groundbreaking article in the *New Republic* (see page 1) demonstrated a close parallel between the voting patterns of Jewish and Hispanic Americans in key recent elections. To those of us engaged in public policy debates in the nation's capital for nearly two decades, the apparently growing convergence of the Latino and Jewish vote in the elections Beinart studied came as no surprise.

After all, Hispanics and Jews are tied together by several deep philosophical traditions. Both communities are ethnic minorities, with strong immigrant traditions, who have experienced substantial discrimination in the United States. Both communities have been active in the nation's epic civil rights struggles. Moreover, given the Jewish community's ancient and enduring commitment to social justice, it is almost axiomatic that American Jews would be at the forefront of policy debates over proposals to address the severe social and economic inequalities experienced by the Latino community today. But there is an even deeper connection, at least from a Latino perspective.

A Cultural Model

Many Hispanic leaders and intellectuals see the condition of Jews in the United States as an almost ideal cultural model. Perhaps more than any other ethnic minority, American Jews have succeeded in maintaining their own cultural identity while simultaneously achieving considerable political power, economic success, and social acceptance.¹ In this context, Jewish Americans represent a successful—albeit imperfect in terms of social acceptance—manifestation of the “cultural pluralism” model at a time when most Americans and policy makers appear to maintain a strong identity with the more traditional, if somewhat mythological, “melting pot” model.²

It is also not surprising that, as Ann Schaffer notes elsewhere in this vol-

ume, organizations representing Jews and Hispanics have found common cause on numerous public policy issues over the past two decades. With few exceptions, Latino and Jewish advocates have worked closely together on civil rights, immigration, and other “social justice” issues for almost as long as most contemporary observers can remember. The exceptions are worth noting, however.

Issues of Controversy

In the area of civil rights, perhaps the most noteworthy example of Jewish-Latino disagreement involved differences over affirmative action. At its height in the 1970s, the controversy centered on whether certain forms of “race-conscious” remedies to address previous and ongoing discrimination “went too far.” Some prominent Jewish leaders opposed certain types of remedies advanced by African-American and Latino civil rights advocates.³ While the issue was ultimately resolved—with all of the parties essentially agreeing on certain principles while maintaining uneasy but muted disagreements on others—this issue was never a particularly difficult one in the Hispanic-Jewish relationship, for several reasons. First, Latinos were not then, and arguably are still not now, major beneficiaries of affirmative action, except in higher education admissions; it was not a central issue for many Hispanic advocates at the time. Second, the debate was played out largely between African-American and Jewish advocates, in part because Hispanics were not particularly prominent members of the “civil rights establishment” at the time. In this respect, notwithstanding the fractious and sometimes ugly debate it engendered, the controversy couldn’t endanger relationships that, by and large, were not yet well-developed.

A lower-profile but perhaps more difficult tension centered on refugee policy. During the 1984-94 period, Jewish and Latino organizations worked side by side to support a legalization program for certain undocumented persons enacted in 1986 and to maintain generous legal immigration policies; the two communities also jointly opposed numerous punitive immigration enforcement proposals. Historically, refugee policy had never been a major Latino priority, but this began to change when Central Americans, fleeing widespread civil war and human rights violations in their home countries, began to arrive in the United States in large numbers in the mid-1980s.

Few of the Central American refugees received political asylum in the United States. In part this was because many did not fit the statutory definition of a refugee—someone who has an imminent, individualized, “well-founded fear of persecution” based on political, religious, and certain other grounds. It

was also politically inconvenient for Reagan administration officials to admit those Central Americans who did meet this test, because doing so would have constituted a de facto admission that U.S.-backed regimes in the region were persecuting some of their own citizens. Certain Central Americans did receive temporary protection in 1990, which subsequently was extended several times, although many Central Americans in the United States remained in undocumented status. Even those who received safe haven were afforded only a temporary status that did not provide a path to permanent residence and were not eligible for any federal cash benefits.

Jewish advocates, including the American Jewish Committee and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, were among the earliest supporters of proposals backed by Latino and human rights groups to provide temporary safe haven to these Central Americans. Notwithstanding this posture, some proponents of safe haven for Central Americans, joined by some advocates for similarly situated Haitian entrants, quietly criticized what some viewed as lukewarm support and challenged Jewish advocates to give these issues higher priority.

This simmering tension gained greater salience with the breakup of the Soviet Union. The long history of persecution of Jews in Russia, combined with the breakdown in civil authority in the former Soviet Union, led many Jewish advocates to call for increased admissions of refugees to the United States from the region. The problem was that, like most Central Americans, most would-be Jewish émigrés could not document the kind of *imminent*, “well-founded fear” of *individualized* persecution required by law. Nevertheless, legislation was passed—via the so-called Lautenberg Amendment—which provided for the admission of former Soviet Jews under a special “parole” status. Under this status, former Soviet Jews were eligible for eventual permanent resident status as well as access to cash assistance, language courses, and job-training programs normally provided only to bona fide refugees. To some Hispanic advocates, the inequity was obvious. Both Central Americans and Jews from the former Soviet Union faced similar circumstances, but they were treated very differently. Several discussions were held among advocates and members of the Black and Hispanic Caucuses that centered on seeking to attach Central American and/or Haitian relief proposals to the Lautenberg legislation, although no formal action, which Jewish advocates opposed, ever emerged.

Perhaps the most visible, if somewhat isolated, contemporary policy dispute between Jews and Latinos involves the distribution of housing assistance in the Williamsburg neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) has joined a black and Latino

tenants group in a lawsuit alleging that the New York City Housing Authority discriminates against African-Americans and Hispanics. The suit alleges that numerous current public housing tenants, many of whom are Hasidic Jews, are being permitted to stay in units that they are no longer eligible for, thus denying scarce affordable housing to low-income Latino and black families. Furthermore, some Latino advocates allege, Jewish organizations and politicians are using their relatively greater political power to maintain the status quo, despite widespread knowledge of abuses including massive under-reporting of income and assets, the use of “sham tenants” and subleases, and other illegal practices by some Jewish tenants. These advocates argue that if the context were different—say, low-income African-Americans being denied public housing by more affluent whites in the South—Jewish leaders probably would be among the first to object. Their failure to do so in this case, indeed their tacit acceptance and support of an inequitable situation, has been a major disappointment to some Latino leaders.

A somewhat complicated legal situation has ensued, essentially resulting in a stalemate on the ground. Although a number of national Hispanic organizations, including the National Council of La Raza, have sided with PRLDEF in seeking expedited action on the plaintiff’s complaints, the controversy has remained largely regional in nature. This may be true in part because, from a Latino perspective, conflicts over the distribution of public resources nationally more frequently involve competition with African-Americans, not Jews.

Competition for Political Office

A long-simmering political conflict with implications for Hispanic-Jewish relations is taking place on the opposite coast, in California. The issue has its roots in the congressional redistricting following the 1980 Census, which resulted in two new majority-Latino congressional districts in Southern California. At the time, Rep. Edward Roybal, the first Latino elected to Congress from the state, and several other key Hispanic politicians, sought to assert control over the selection of the Democratic Party’s nominees for these new seats. Reps. Henry Waxman and Howard Berman, two prominent Jewish congressmen, asserted that, since they and their supporters would be asked to provide the bulk of the financial support for these campaigns, they should have a say in the candidates’ selection. Eventually, a rapprochement was reached, although insiders reported that the (now somewhat defunct) Waxman-Berman “machine” prevailed in its selection of preferred candidates. Since then, numerous lower-level conflicts

have occurred around similar issues; typically, however, these disputes have taken place “behind the scenes.”

In 1998, however, a race for a State Assembly seat in the San Fernando Valley between incumbent Richard Katz and challenger Richard Alarcon turned ugly, with both blatant and thinly veiled ethnic slurs hurled by supporters of both candidates. The Katz campaign, for example, produced a mailing that accused Alarcon of having “dirty hands” resulting from an alleged conflict of interest. The mailing’s implication that Alarcon was tied to other Hispanic politicians accused of more serious improprieties was seen as racially tinged by some Latino observers. An Alarcon supporter produced a campaign mailing accusing Katz of having supported efforts to keep Latino voters away from the polls, among other things. Given his strong progressive record in the Assembly, Katz and several Jewish organizations denounced the attack as race-baiting, or at least terribly inaccurate and racially divisive.

Some observers attribute the somewhat surprising, openly hostile nature of the race to the long-simmering tensions between various Southern California political factions that are roughly divided along ethnic lines. What is not clear in this case is the extent to which the conflict is even ethnic in nature, or whether these tensions simply involve the natural tendency of ambitious politicians to compete with one another. Some would argue that the ethnicity of the politicians involved is accidental, and that similar conflicts would have taken place regardless of the ethnic identity of the establishment political machine. These observers point to Howard Berman’s success in being elected several times by comfortable margins in what has become a majority-Latino district as evidence of the absence of serious Hispanic-Jewish tension.

While acknowledging the somewhat universal nature of competition in the context of “ethnic succession,” others might counter that the disproportionate influence of Jewish Americans over the political fate of Latino elected officials in the state with the largest and fastest-growing Hispanic population is, fundamentally, an ethnic question. Still others suggest that these kinds of conflicts are especially troubling because of, and in some respects result from, the failure to forge a Jewish-Latino coalition equivalent to that established by African-Americans and Jews in the civil rights movement era. In light of similar tensions between Jews and Latinos in South Florida, these observers undoubtedly would point to the Katz-Alarcon race as potentially the harbinger of things to come.

Hispanic population growth estimates revealed by the 2000 Census apparently surprised those unfamiliar with recent demographic trends. Although not a surprise to the Latino leadership—many of whom have been predicting that

Hispanics would become the nation's largest ethnic minority at the turn of the century—this development has attracted widespread media attention, much of it focused on potential increases in tension between Latinos and African-Americans. The redistricting required by the 2000 Census has resulted in competition between Hispanic and Jewish politicians similar to that which occurred in 1992. In North Texas, for example, several current and former Latino elected officials are seeking to create a majority-Hispanic congressional district, roughly centered between seats held by current Democratic incumbents Martin Frost, a Jewish American, and Eddie Bernice Johnson, an African-American. For such a district to be created, significant numbers of Latinos would have to be reapportioned away from the two incumbents' districts, and a third swing district. Because this might make either or both of these representatives more vulnerable in a region that has been trending Republican in recent elections, Frost and Johnson are expected to resist such reapportionment. Similar tensions have arisen in New York and Southern California, two other areas with substantial Latino population growth and numerous Jewish and African-American incumbents.

Distribution of U.S. Foreign Aid

An emerging policy issue that is potentially very fractious in the context of Jewish-Latino relations involves the distribution of U.S. foreign assistance. Particularly beginning with major budget cuts in domestic social programs with the advent of the Reagan administration in the early 1980s, some Latino advocates began to question the size and scope of U.S. foreign and military assistance to the Middle East in general and to Israel in particular. What began principally as a minor irritant may soon emerge as a matter of major policy concern, for three reasons: First, in recent years Hispanic advocacy organizations increasingly have begun to address foreign policy issues, including various aspects of U.S. foreign assistance, with an emphasis on increased aid to Latin America. Second, the combination of overall reductions in the U.S. foreign assistance budget, combined with increased aid to the former Soviet Union, other Eastern European countries, and to a lesser extent, Africa, has led to dramatic absolute and relative declines in the level of U.S. assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean. Third, in terms of absolute levels of need, Latino advocates might argue that Latin America, with its high levels of poverty, is far more deserving of scarce U.S. assistance dollars than Israel, which has a relatively high per capita income.

Against this backdrop, some progressive Hispanic advocates have begun, albeit generally in private settings, to question the size and scope of U.S. assistance to the Middle East. Scarce U.S. foreign assistance ought to be distributed more broadly on equity grounds alone, they argue.⁴ Moreover, some Latinos argue, given the economic and political fragility of the emerging democracies in the Western Hemisphere—as well as the immediate tangible consequences for the United States in the event of a major political or economic disruption in a neighboring country—Latin America should receive a greater share of U.S. foreign assistance, even if it results in reduction of aid to the Middle East. Finally, Hispanic advocates argue that the failure to provide an equitable share of aid to Latin America endangers U.S. Latino support for foreign assistance in general. Resolution of this conflict is especially important given the likelihood that eventual resolution of Middle East status talks will invariably be accompanied by calls for increased aid to the region.

The initial Jewish response to these concerns generally has involved seeking to engage Latinos in broad coalitions to urge overall increases in the foreign assistance budget. They argue that distributional concerns simply cannot be addressed unless there is more money to spread around. While acknowledging the fundamental truth of this argument, some Latino leaders are suspicious of this approach. The concern is that Hispanic support for foreign aid provides political “cover” for the largest current recipients of such aid without altering the fundamental dynamics of the process. Without assurances that the equity issue will be addressed, some in the Latino leadership are reticent to provide this cover.

Views on Religion-Based Values

One other set of potential differences revolves around issues that Jews see as church-state separation questions, but which may be viewed very differently by Latinos, especially the Hispanic rank and file. Jews overwhelmingly oppose school vouchers, for example, because they could become a mechanism for state support of parochial education. On first glance, public opinion polls suggest substantial Latino support for vouchers; in at least one such poll, more than 70 percent of Hispanics polled supported vouchers, a much higher rate of support than whites, and a slightly higher rate than blacks. Some have noted that this apparent Latino support for school vouchers may be more a reflection of generalized frustration with the public schools than any strong, considered, specific support for vouchers as a policy. Other evidence suggests that these poll data

may be somewhat misleading. For example, Latino voters decisively opposed a California ballot proposition that would have established a voucher system in 1994, and opposed similar ballot propositions in California and Michigan in 2000. In addition, the major Hispanic advocacy groups, including the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and NCLR, have expressed general opposition to school vouchers, although NCLR's position is highly nuanced.⁵

This resistance to vouchers, however, does not apply to charter schools, which most Latino organizations vigorously support. Data from the Department of Education suggest that Hispanics are significantly overrepresented as students in charter schools, and the number of such schools established or planned by Latino community-based groups is growing rapidly. For the most part, perhaps unlike many Jews who may tend to see charter schools as a "half step" toward vouchers, many Latinos view charter schools through a pragmatic, not an ideological, lens. The education practitioners and advocates who sponsor such schools point to the smaller class size, greater individualized attention, and more relevant curricula available through community-controlled charter schools as important to improving achievement of disadvantaged Hispanic students. They generally deny any interest in or support for the notion that charter schools would lead to vouchers, which in turn could lead to violation of church-state separation.

Some have argued that the two communities' differing views on the role of religion and religious-based values may translate into other policy differences as well, on issues including school prayer, abortion, gay rights, etc. The operative assumption here is that Jews' highly secularized views on these issues may clash with purportedly more socially conservative, religious-based belief systems of many Latinos. The author claims no special expertise on this question, except to note that it does not appear to have materialized in terms of policy disputes at the national level. One possible explanation is that, however strongly these views may be held by Hispanics, they tend to be "trumped" by competing, more progressive considerations. For example, even if some Latinos may have been attracted to some aspects of the social conservative agenda, they overwhelmingly supported Democratic congressional candidates in 1996, 1998, and 2000, principally because of the perception that the congressional Republican leadership sponsored anti-immigrant legislation and opposed government interventions like federal education and job training programs. In any event, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that any broad philosophical differences between the two communities have led to either major national policy disputes or numerous regional-level conflicts.

Few scholars have had the opportunity to study closely the results of the 2000 election, but they do not appear to contradict recent trends. According to the consensus of the major polls, Hispanic voters supported Vice President Al Gore over Governor George W. Bush by a 64 percent to 34 percent margin; and Democratic congressional candidates by a substantially higher margin. While Latino support for the Republican candidate grew sharply from the approximately 20 percent Senator Robert Dole received in 1996, it is also true that in 2000 Governor Bush's Hispanic support nationally was far smaller than the estimated 45 percent he received for his Texas gubernatorial re-election in 1998. Moreover, most close observers attribute Bush's relatively strong showing among Latino voters to three factors—unprecedented outreach to Hispanics, a moderate record on issues like immigration, and a return to more traditional levels of Latino support for Republican presidential candidates—and not to any documented change in the Hispanic electorate's views toward church-state issues.⁶

Tensions in Non-policy Areas

Finally, while not exactly matters of policy, some of the author's experiences underscore an important tension in the two communities' relationship. In the mid-1980s, NCLR and American Jewish Committee held the first formal Latino-Jewish dialogue at the national level. At one point in the meeting, when informed of the amount of money raised at AJC's annual dinners, NCLR leaders asked for help in gaining access to major Jewish donors. The request was politely, but firmly, rebuffed. Similarly, after the release of a major 1994 NCLR report documenting massive levels of underrepresentation and stereotyping of Latinos in the media, NCLR asked key AJC leaders for help in facilitating meetings with high-level media players, some of whom were AJC members; the request was taken under advisement but never acted upon. In both cases NCLR was advised privately that perhaps it wouldn't be such a good idea to press the point, because of understandable Jewish sensitivities in these areas. Since NCLR had, over the years, supported AJC's positions on expanding refugee protection, increasing foreign assistance, and opposing United Nations resolutions equating Zionism with racism, at least some in the NCLR leadership concluded that the relationship was a largely superficial one—cordial and mutually supportive, but distant and unequal. Perhaps as a result, NCLR and some other Hispanic organizations in recent years have been less inclined to support reflexively policy positions unrelated to vital Latino interests promoted by Jewish organizations.

*What the Two Communities Share:
A Progressive Political Philosophy*

While other actual and potential policy differences may exist between the two communities, the examples cited above, as well as the many shared policy positions of Latinos and Jews discussed elsewhere in this volume, are illustrative of several key points: First, the two communities appear to share a common progressive political philosophy. Even the differences identified in this article—with the possible church-state exceptions noted above—spring from highly contextual, not fundamentally policy-oriented, philosophical disputes.

Second, the policy and political relationship between Jewish Americans and U.S. Hispanics is largely confined to professional elites. While interaction at this level is largely positive—fueled in part by the significant overrepresentation of Jewish Americans in progressive politics—it should be a matter of concern to both communities that the grassroots ties remain weak. Given the economic disparities between the two communities, as well as current patterns of residential separation, this is not surprising.

Third, the areas of tension between the two communities stem in large part from the relatively unequal status of Latino and Jewish Americans. Hispanics are disproportionately low-income, poorly educated, and politically underrepresented, relative to their numbers. Jews are relatively affluent, well-educated, and politically powerful. Relationships between people, or communities, with such vastly different social, economic, and political statuses are inherently difficult, in part because the parties' perspectives are so different. One result of the two communities' isolation from one another is the inevitable reliance on stereotypes. Several recent polls demonstrate, for example, that significant numbers of Latinos hold views of Jews that are disturbingly similar to classic anti-Semitic stereotypes. Similarly, Hispanic leaders are often frustrated by Jewish leaders and policy makers who hold inaccurate views of Latinos, often linked to traditional stereotypes.

There are other policy-related consequences as well. One need look no further than the polar opposite approaches to public relations “spin” undertaken by Latino and Jewish advocates. To counter the common stereotype that Hispanics are a politically marginalized group, some Latino leaders almost reflexively tend to exaggerate their influence on policy and politics. Faced with the opposite stereotype, some Jewish leaders almost reflexively understate their ability to shape policy or influence politics. To some Jews, appeals for assistance from a coalition partner that will soon be the nation's largest ethnic minority may seem

somewhat inappropriate. To some Latinos, the reticence to acknowledge its political, financial, and media clout leads to suspicions that Jews' "vast hidden power" is being withheld, coalitional rhetoric to the contrary.

Fourth, given the social, economic, and political distance between the two communities, several previous attempts to engage each other have been less than satisfactory. Many formal dialogues have taken place, but often these seem terribly stiff and somewhat forced. One recent potentially positive development is that Latino Jews increasingly are leading efforts to link the two communities. Although many Hispanic leaders remain skeptical, the role of Latino Jews in building bridges between the two communities has not been fully tapped.

How to Strengthen the Ties

Thus this author would argue that those interested in improving and strengthening ties between the communities should focus more attention on two items: the *relationships* between Jews and Hispanics, not just on their respective policy agendas; and *actions*, not just dialogues, which can bring the two communities together. In this connection, Jewish leaders might consider a couple of questions, which are highly sensitive and therefore are almost never included in public discourse:

- Even in areas of apparent agreement—a generous refugee admissions system or a much larger foreign aid budget to take two examples—they might consider that to many Latinos, these issues appear coalitional only in theory. After all, to many Hispanics the outcome appears predetermined—i.e., increased refugee admissions will benefit Jews but not Central Americans, and more foreign aid will get to Latin America only after the Middle East is taken care of. What can Jewish leaders do to make the outcomes of these public policies more amenable to the interests of Latinos?

- Jewish Americans are prominent in two fields of great interest and importance to Hispanics: philanthropy and the media. However, public discussions between Jewish and Latino leaders focused on ways that Jews can help increase philanthropic support to Hispanics or improve Latino media portrayals are almost nonexistent. Latino leaders understand the reluctance of some Jews to address issues so closely tied to terribly inaccurate and unfair stereotypes—e.g., that Jews control the banks and the media. However, the existence of illegitimate stereotypes should not foreclose what to Latinos are entirely legitimate issues—how can the each community best support the other's interests with the people and tools available to them?

Hispanic leaders may have some equally difficult questions to address, for

example:

- Hispanic advocates need to acknowledge that, like other Americans, many Latinos share inaccurate stereotypes of Jews, including some that date back to the Spanish Inquisition, and others of more recent origin. What can Hispanic leaders and organizations do to address this problem and promote common understanding?

- The political and economic power, if not necessarily the social acceptance, of Hispanics is growing rapidly. Nevertheless, many Latino advocates approach other communities and many public policy issues laden with the baggage of a victim mentality, which may undermine constructive dialogue. How can Hispanic advocates, who are representing a community that is just coming of age, come to the table as an equal with a more mature, but equally progressive ally?

Irrespective of the difficult questions involved, however, what might be most noteworthy about the Latino-Jewish political relationship is the relative absence of public rancor between the two communities. For example, not one prominent Latino politician or organizational leader known to this author has ever articulated, either publicly or privately, the kind of heated anti-Semitic rhetoric associated with Louis Farrakhan and his followers. Similarly, this author is unaware of any prominent Jewish leader who has been associated with organized anti-immigrant, anti-Latino movements, including “English-only” campaigns or California Ballot Proposition 187. (*See Abraham Lavender’s account of the English-only ordinance in Miami, pages 75-77.*)

At a time of notable incivility in public discourse and “gotcha” journalism, which has the tendency to amplify even modest private disagreements into major public differences, this is no small achievement. The challenge for the leadership of both communities is to get beyond a relationship that is largely confined to elites, is mutually sympathetic but largely superficial, and is rarely hostile but is also rarely passionate. This author hopes that this article contributes to the mutual understanding required for both communities to take steps to explore a deeper, more engaged, and ultimately more satisfying and mutually beneficial relationship.

Endnotes

1. The author recognizes concerns about “Jewish continuity” in the context of high intermarriage and low birthrates. To the extent that these are also indicators of social acceptance and economic success, one suspects at least some Latino leaders would welcome this kind of problem.

2. The public and intellectual debate over these models is too complex to cover comprehensively here, but readers may find this one perspective illuminating. In short, the discussion focuses on differences between an assimilation model, in which the minority group adopts the values, norms, and culture of the dominant group (“melting pot”) vs. an acculturation model, in which groups come together and form a third culture, which includes both groups’ values, norms, and cultures (“cultural pluralism”). The author characterizes the assimilation or melting pot as mythological, in part because most sociologists argue that the American reality never quite fit the model, but for several other reasons as well. First, the model does not and cannot accommodate racial and ethnic segregation and discrimination by the dominant group(s)—what is the minority group supposed to do if it is not allowed to “melt?” Second, and more in context, Hispanics first became Americans by conquest, not voluntary migration; thus, historically, the assimilation model carried with it aspects of severe coercion and oppression. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the author believes that the assimilationist approach rests on the faulty assumption that one cannot *both* be a “good American” *and* simultaneously maintain some aspects of one’s ethnic, cultural, or religious heritage; one reading of history might suggest that the United States’ relative tolerance for this form of pluralism is itself a core value that should be assimilated by the assimilationists.

3. Traditional civil rights groups supported a variety of forms of affirmative action that some critics, including many Jews, viewed as coming perilously close to quotas. Given the history of the use of overt quota systems as a means of excluding Jews from elite universities, these affirmative action tools were anathema to many Jewish leaders and organizations. While the substance, and particularly the nuance, of the debate is far too complicated to do justice to here, suffice it to say that civil rights leaders denied then and deny now that, properly implemented, affirmative action constitutes any form of quota system.

4. It should be noted that a fundamental tenet of the growing Latino evangelical Christian community is increased support, including foreign aid, to Israel. Relatively little has been written about the size of the Latino evangelical community, or about their social beliefs and political behavior. Although some have expressed concern that this population of Latinos is in danger of being “captured” by the Radical Right, the consensus seems to be that this population is not especially active politically, and is not likely to be particularly receptive to a message of intolerance espoused by some evangelical political leaders even if it were. There is no dispute, however, that the number of Hispanic evangelical Protestants is growing rapidly, particularly within the Hispanic immigrant community.

5. For example, NCLR’s opposition is qualified with phrases such as “at this time,” and has been characterized as leaving the door open at least to controlled experiments with voucher proposals in the future. The NCLR policy position is silent on the question of public support for sectarian education, although the NCLR president previously has publicly opposed crossing this line.

6. The author would admit, however, that the 2000 election returns could be interpreted as evidence for substantial Latino tolerance of, if not necessarily active support for certain aspects of the social conservatives’ agenda, including school choice, restrictions on abortion, and government support for faith-based organizations.

Latino-Jewish Relations in New York

Michael Tomasky

From Turf Wars to the Politics of Empowerment

As recently as two years ago, the story of Latino-Jewish relations in New York would have produced a narrative that, if somewhat unresolved, was at least upbeat in its essential elements. The story would have been constructed around the evolution of a relationship that commenced as a tense one in the 1970s, when turf wars and arguments over social services began in neighborhoods like Brooklyn's Williamsburg and Manhattan's Lower East Side, where both groups lived side by side; but the story would also have gradually resolved itself into one of grudging accommodation and even, in some instances, happy cooperation.

It would have centered around figures like Sheldon Silver, the veteran Lower East Side politician and powerful speaker of the state assembly, who, in the more boisterous 1970s, was a target of Latino activists' ire over allegations of discrimination in the way the neighborhood's public housing slots were doled out, but who, by the 1990s, had made common cause with many Latino legislators to protect the social services budget as it worked its way through an Albany now run by Republicans. And it would have revolved around Fernando Ferrer, the recently departed borough president of the Bronx and the city's most powerful Latino politician, who, throughout the 1990s, took care to cultivate good relationships with those enclaves within his borough that had remained predominantly Jewish.

Today the story still centers on Ferrer—indeed, even more so—but in a very different way. Ferrer's unsuccessful mayoral campaign of 2001 drove a wedge between Latinos and Jews not only in his borough, but citywide. This was, as we shall see, the result of a deliberate electoral strategy chosen by Ferrer and his top advisers—an effort to build a “black-Latino coalition” that would change the electoral math of New York City elections forever and vault Ferrer into the mayoralty. That it very nearly did shows, perhaps, that it was an intelligent strategy; most close observers of New York politics credited Ferrer with

having run the “best” campaign of all the four major Democratic candidates, tactically speaking. But the Ferrer campaign also exposed—and even, with an assist from Al Sharpton, counted on exploiting—the extant racial and ethnic divisions in the city. If it may be said that the history of Latino-Jewish relations in New York, not unlike black-Jewish relations, has been a constant and ever-changing inquiry into finding the right balance between multiracial coalition politics on the one hand and a more truculent empowerment politics on the other, then the Ferrer campaign very aggressively and consciously fell into the latter category.

Or, to put it more straightforwardly: Ferrer made virtually no effort to appeal to Jewish voters. Quite unlike, say, David Dinkins in 1989, who built his campaign rhetoric around reaching out to African-Americans, Latinos, and (largely Jewish) liberal whites—and, incidentally, unlike Ferrer’s three major opponents, all of whom at least tried to woo voters from every major group—the Ferrer campaign was constructed around the idea of pulling black and brown voters into an exclusive coalition, with white voters more or less an afterthought. In this most race-conscious of cities, the notion was dynamite; and when the dynamite exploded, New York had elected a Republican mayor after a Republican predecessor for the first time in its history, and in doing so had chosen a man, Michael Bloomberg, about whom the average citizen knew virtually nothing, outside of the propaganda that Bloomberg spent \$60 million making sure they knew. And the New York Democratic Party was in pieces. Latino-Jewish relations were at their frostiest since the 1970s, which is when, as luck would have it, our story begins.

The Epicenter of the Encounter

When historians set out to describe a broad development or event, their shorthand way of doing so is often temporal: The Eastern bloc collapsed, for example, on November 9, 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, or the French Revolution began on July 14, two centuries earlier. But when the subject is the history of Latino-Jewish relations in New York City, a spacial shorthand would be more useful.

Latino-Jewish relations in New York can be traced, at least emblematically, to one specific place: 260 Broadway. This is not the famous Broadway of Richard Rogers and Bob Fosse and Julie Andrews—the Broadway in Manhattan. This decidedly less glamorous Broadway, where storefront signs advertise kosher confections and urge Spanish-language passers by to place their long-

distance *Ilamadas*, runs through the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. And it is at number 260 that you'll find the ramshackle headquarters of the public defender's office known as Brooklyn Legal Services. One might zoom in the lens just one beat further, to the particular office—brief-strewn, walls smothered in plaques of appreciation, and full of photographs of various Brooklyn pols—of Marty Needelman.

Why Needelman? Because for two decades, before people gave much thought to the idea that Latinos and Jews could or should develop relations, Needelman was at the epicenter of the highest profile Latino-Jewish “relationship” in New York. That focal point was a bumptious and often bitter battle between the two communities over the allotment of apartments in buildings put up by the city's housing authority. Needelman is Jewish himself, but what makes his presence in this story the more interesting is that he was litigating against the Hasidic Jews of Williamsburg (Satmar, to be precise) and in behalf of the Latinos (mostly Puerto Rican when the lawsuits started; mostly Dominican now).

Williamsburg is a working-class and poor neighborhood that sits across the East River, more or less, from the Lower East Side. Given the community's proximity to that historically important Jewish neighborhood, it should be no surprise that it, too, quickly became Jewish, especially after the opening of the Williamsburg Bridge in 1903. But it was in the wake of World War II that Williamsburg took on a very particular Jewish identity. The Orthodox Satmar settled there after fleeing Hungary and quickly grew into a community of considerable size, with roughly 30,000 members today. To most outside observers, the Satmar were and remain an isolated and self-contained group. Walking or driving along the smaller commercial streets of Satmar Williamsburg, one encounters a homogeneous population, with no one dressed in other than traditional clothing, and even buildings with no signs in English.

Yet, insular as the Satmar were, they understood political power, and how to get it in a city such as New York. They voted, and in large numbers. And such was their own internal social organization that they voted en masse, at the direction of the Grand Rebbe, who would find, over time, Brooklyn county leaders and even mayoral candidates come courting at his doorstep. The Jewish vote already being one of the three most important constituencies in the city (Irish and Italian the others), elites didn't find it difficult to include the Satmar in their political calculations, particularly when thumbs up from one man could mean 5,000 votes or more. The Satmar were culturally conservative, to be sure, guided by religious obligations to remain separate in order to obey what they regard as

divine injunction about sacred law. But their vote was largely non-ideological and almost entirely practical—which is to say, with the Democrats in general, and with the Democrat who promised the community the best treatment in particular. By the late '50s and early '60s, the local Democratic club, the Seneca Club, was closely linked to the Satmar; by the early '70s, the network of social service agencies, which received (and still receive) city and state funds but which were established to deliver social services in ways consonant with Satmar religious codes, was in place.

By the time Latinos began arriving in large numbers, the Satmar in Williamsburg held significant political power and had developed a model of political organization that has proved staggeringly effective in maintaining that power—in contrast, it must be said, to the Latinos, who did not constitute a voting bloc that pols feared. It came as no surprise, then, that in the mid-1970s, when the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) demolished several blocks of tenements to construct three different public (and semi-public) housing projects, it was the Satmar who won the lion's share of the units, and not the neighborhood's then-burgeoning population of Puerto Ricans. It is true that more Hasidim were displaced by the demolition, and that the Hasidim had longer roots in the community; but Latinos saw rank discrimination, and pure reflection of political muscle in the distribution of units.

Enter Marty Needelman. In 1976, Brooklyn Legal Services brought a lawsuit charging discrimination in the rental procedures NYCHA used in Williamsburg. "We discovered," Needelman says, "that there was not mere favoritism. There were racial quotas. Jonathan Williams and Independence Houses, for example, were set by the Housing Authority at 75 percent white. Not 70. Not anything else. Seventy-five percent. We were shocked." And so commenced a court battle that would continue into the 1990s. Needelman and his tenants won a landmark consent decree in 1978 establishing new procedures for filling vacancies, but these were not adhered to for many years. Well after the consent decree, Needelman recalls discovering during a new round of legal squabbling that, on certain NYCHA forms, "if it had a number 55 there, it meant whites only. This is in New York City, in 1990." It's easy to imagine the degree of acrimony such revelations engendered; that animosity set the general tone for relations between Latinos and Jews in Williamsburg, and, in turn, the Williamsburg relationship helped set the tone for relations around the city.

This result was curious, perhaps, since the overwhelming majority of New York's Jews are not Hasidic, of course, and the insularity and cultural conservatism of the Hasidim are clearly at odds with the traditionally progressive atti-

tudes of mainstream Jews—who, as a whole, were probably more sympathetic to the claims of Latinos. The city's mainstream Jews, by and large, do not live in neighborhoods on the frontiers of ethnic succession, and their idealization of the Latinos' struggle may have been, at least in part, the result of that comfortable social distance. Nevertheless, the Williamsburg situation, primarily because it attracted heavy media attention over the years, became something of an ideological dividing line throughout the '80s. Remember that the city was in the midst of a real-estate boom at exactly the same time that a housing crisis was exploding; that the gap between rich and poor was becoming literally unavoidable. Many of the city's left-leaning activists—Jewish, Latino, and otherwise—saw Williamsburg through this framework, as yet another battle between haves and have-nots.

But it's also true that there were other fronts on which the communities were starting to see common purpose. Both, first of all, are mainly Democratic, and so both Jews and Latinos were supporters of Ed Koch, who was mayor throughout the 1980s. (The Jews were very strong supporters; among Latinos, Koch certainly had foes, but regularly won majorities until his final and unsuccessful run in 1989). This was in stark contrast to that most loyal Democratic constituency of all, African-Americans, who became increasingly hostile to Koch (or put another way, who believed Koch became increasingly hostile to them). Also in the 1980s, Jews and Latinos were starting to learn to work together in politics, notably in the Bronx—the city's most heavily Latino borough, but also home to Riverdale, one of its most thoroughly Jewish neighborhoods. Political power in the Bronx—historically Irish, then Jewish—underwent its symbolic transfer in 1988, when Borough President Stanley Simon, Jewish, was convicted in a bribery scandal and succeeded by Fernando Ferrer, Puerto Rican. Ferrer was the county organization's chosen successor to Simon, and was thus the consensus candidate of Jewish, Latino, and black political leaders throughout the borough.

But Williamsburg was, after all, what people read about, what was in the news. And people in other neighborhoods saw its patterns reflected in their own experiences. In Washington Heights, Yeshiva University's needs and the community's came to inevitable loggerheads, over, among other things, parking spaces created by the paving over of a mall that area residents had used for recreation. This was, of course, a classic example of a large institution flexing, or trying to flex, its political muscle in a constricted urban space. These things happen everywhere, but in densely packed and extremely Latino Washington Heights, the battle inevitably took on an ethnic coloration.

On the Lower East Side, a similar struggle over housing occurred, this time centered around the Grand Street Houses. The animus there was every bit as intense as Williamsburg. I've talked to some veterans of those wars whose eyes still pierce with anger when they recall some particular community board meeting back in 1979. "Man, we had some tough times then," says Herson Cabrerias, a longtime activist in the neighborhood, who was born and raised off Tompkins Square Park and still lives just a block away. Cabrerias is not a holder of grudges; he laughs now, but he doesn't downplay the rancor. "I mean, this was war. War! Over housing, and services."

Did it have to be thus? The retrospective answer, probably, is yes, at least for a time. Jews had spent generations cultivating their political power; they expected that that power would mean concrete things for them in terms of housing, social-service contracts, trash pickup, you name it. They had fought hard to become full participants. Latinos looked at all this and saw favoritism and discrimination, while their own struggle for political representation was making very slow progress indeed. Latino elected officials, for example, were few and far between in New York City in the 1970s and even into the 1980s (there were by then a few high-profile exceptions, but only a few). Further, with the city going into bankruptcy, the money simply wasn't there as it had been in the old days, when the city had a diverse job base and steady tax revenues weren't a concern. Between 1966 and 1973, the number of manufacturing jobs in the city went from around 800,000 to 250,000, while the welfare rolls increased from roughly 300,000 to 1 million. Even if John Lindsay or Abe Beame had wanted to improve schools and day-care centers in then-growing Latino neighborhoods, there was no money to do it with.

It was, of course, the '60s, metaphorically, if not precisely; old models of slow and careful assimilation had given way to an angrier, less patient style. "I think the mentality 25 years ago was, 'We're gonna take over,'" says Sheldon Silver, a veteran of the Lower East Side tensions. "It was, 'We're gonna get rid of you, and what was yours will be ours.'"

Learning to Work Together

Then, in early 1990s, something changed. It's hard to say exactly what changed, or precisely when. But it changed. As Silver put it, with reference to the confrontational style: "Nobody talks that way anymore." In the main, the change had to do with Rainbow Coalition-style empowerment politics having run its initial course. Dinkins had indeed campaigned seeking a multiracial coalition;

but to many observers, he hadn't governed that way. With the Crown Heights disaster and the Korean deli boycott controversy (both 1991), the Rainbow was rather heavily second-guessed. The empowerment model had certainly changed some things, shifted some social service contracts around (under Dinkins, millions in Williamsburg social-service money was transferred to Latino community groups; under Rudy Giuliani, it shifted back). But it had not changed the level of tension. If anything, that was a little worse. It is not mere coincidence that it was around this time that Luis Miranda, a former Koch administration official who at the time in question was the head of the Hispanic Federation, instituted a series of sit-downs—maybe the first ever in New York, at least in a systematic way—between Jewish and Latino leaders. The American Jewish Committee, the United Jewish Appeal, B'nai B'rith, and Williamsburg's United Jewish Organizations, led by Rabbi David Niederman, on one side; Miranda, Williamsburg community leaders Luis Garden Acosta and David Pagan, and various other Latino leaders on the other side. "It was five to six people on each side," Pagan recalls, "just trying to understand each other. It lowered the temperature a few degrees."

The Williamsburg lawsuits were still ongoing. But by this time, the two communities were discovering how to work together. In 1993, there had been a Latino-led sit-in at one Williamsburg housing site; but by 1996, the UJO and Los Suros, a Latino community-service agency, had worked together to develop a building on Driggs Avenue. It was a small effort—a building of fewer than 20 units—but it was emblematic of other small efforts around the city. Robert Kaplan, director of intergroup relations and community concerns for the Jewish Community Relations Council, describes various initiatives he helped found that involve both Jewish and Latino community coalitions around such issues as health care and education. "These are quality-of-life issues that we've been able to utilize," Kaplan says. "Everybody needs it. It's non-confrontational. And no one understands the system, including the system itself, so everybody's in sort of the same boat with each other."

Just as empowerment politics, which had different ethnic and racial groups battling against one another for their share, gave way to more cooperative models of community behavior, so, too, did the battlefronts change. Issues other than housing gained preeminence, particularly as the effect of Reagan-era budget cuts to social services began to filter down to the state and local levels and as New York City's economy tanked in early and middle-1990s. Also, as New York elected a Republican mayor and then governor, Jews and Latinos—both still mostly Democrats, although a majority of Jews had supported Giuliani in all

three of his mayoral runs, nearly three-quarters in his first (unsuccessful) bid in 1989, and a hair less than that in both 1993 and 1997—banded together to work on the kinds of issues on which Jews and Latinos generally agree, issues that are the basic building blocks of Jewish-Latino relations nationally: support for generous levels of immigration; provision of welfare and other social service benefits to immigrants; opposition to welfare reform; and so on.

I remember being struck, during Governor George Pataki's first budget in 1995, how quickly Speaker Silver and the assembly's Latinos made common cause to fight for money for the city, and how quickly all the past bad blood between Silver and the Lower East Side's Latinos was forgotten. Saving schools and hospitals and other neighborhood institutions became more important. There were still occasional turf wars. One thinks, for example, of School Board 10 in the Bronx, where the feuds have been a virtual constant over the last two decades. In one recent case, an insurgent Latino and black school-board faction tried to put forward a plan that would have blocked the expansion of a middle school, arguing that the increased number of white students that would come into the new school would amount to a de facto segregation. They found little support even among Latino officials. "Myself, [Councilman] Jose Rivera, a number of us were against [the insurgents'] plan," says Borough President Ferrer. "There were some who took extreme positions: 'It's racist,' and so on. No, dummy. You want middle-class people to go to public schools in their neighborhoods. That's a good thing. And I should note that the rabble rousers [on the school board] were voted out."

The Evolution of Ferrer

That was the Ferrer of 1999 talking. But starting the next year, Ferrer's tune, and that of his campaign advisers, began to change.

In June 2000, while most of political New York was focused on Rudy Giuliani's spectacular withdrawal from the U.S. Senate race, amidst his cancer diagnosis and his marital flame-out, and how that would affect Hillary Rodham Clinton's chances, Roberto Ramirez, Ferrer's close adviser and the Bronx County Democratic leader, struck the first blow of Ferrer's 2001 mayoral campaign. Ramirez announced that he would not endorse incumbent Democratic Congressman Eliot Engel for reelection. A county leader almost never opposes an incumbent congressman of his own party, so Ramirez's move naturally raised eyebrows. What was it about?

It was about securing Al Sharpton's endorsement of Ferrer's mayoral can-

didacy. Ramirez passed over Engel, who is Jewish, to back State Senator Larry Seabrook, an African-American who at that point was perhaps best known for combining one of Albany's shoddier attendance records with a propensity to be at or near the top of the list of state legislators putting in for per diem expenses. Ramirez said publicly that Engel has ceased to represent the district, which is largely minority, in an effective way. "He said some things about me that I have to believe he knows were untrue," Engel says. "He charged, for example, that I had never visited a school in the district. Well, not only had I visited many schools, but I had brought Education Secretary Dick Riley to one school, and that school was in Roberto's own district." Privately, what had happened, as revealed later in *The Village Voice* and other publications, was that Ramirez approached Sharpton about backing Ferrer's candidacy; Sharpton said he'd be inclined to do so provided that Ramirez backed Seabrook, a longtime Sharpton ally, in the congressional race. Ferrer, for purposes of plausible deniability, remained neutral in the race. After Engel trounced Seabrook (about whom further unappetizing information came out during the campaign), Ferrer tried to go to Engel to patch things up and ask for Engel's support for Ferrer's candidacy, but the damage by then was done, and Engel said no.

Thus was the first bonafide mayoral candidacy of a Latino in a generation, since Herman Badillo's 1973 run, assembled around a deal that attempted to unseat a long-serving and competent Jewish official—opinion on Engel's effectiveness as a legislator varies, but he has never been accused of shirking his duties and has represented his Latino constituents vigorously on immigration cases and the like—to curry favor with a man whom many Jews in the city regard with abhorrence. Jews in Riverdale were furious, and Ferrer's goodwill in the community vaporized to the point that the majority of Jewish elected officials from the Bronx opposed the candidacy of their own borough president, and when the vote came, Green carried the predominantly Jewish areas of the borough by four to one.

As the campaign began in earnest and progressed, it became clear that Ferrer's strategy would be a throwback to the 1970s style of empowerment politics. Attempts to forge a "black-Latino" coalition to elect a mayoral candidate dated back to that decade, but they had always failed. In 2001, however, three factors made things different: First, the city's demographic make-up and voter-registration rolls had changed in such a way that it was now possible, maybe, for a mayoral candidate to win without any meaningful white support. Second, Ferrer was running against three white candidates, two of them Jewish, and felt that, as a strategic matter, he needed to maximize his vote among blacks and Latinos to

become one of the two candidates to make it through the first round of balloting and qualify for the run-off (which he did). And third, Ramirez—a brilliant tactician and in many respects an admirable man, who went from being a janitor when he moved to the city as a young man to teaching himself English by reading the *Daily News* and ultimately completing law school—saw that Sharpton had a following that was worth perhaps 50,000 votes (that is, around 7 percent of a likely Democratic primary electorate), a constituency that no other figure in the black community could approach. The Ferrer strategy, in essence, was to concentrate on black and Latino support to make it to the run-off, and then, having made it that far, try to move back to the center to win the run-off and make it to the general.

But it didn't work out that way. By the time of the runoff between Ferrer and Public Advocate Mark Green, Ferrer had been running to the left for so long that moving back to the center wasn't really possible (in both the primary and the run-off, he was in single-digits among Jews). And Green, a Jew and a lifelong liberal, saw that his only hope of beating Ferrer, who finished first in the September 25 primary, was to concentrate on winning the backing of white voters. The World Trade Center attack of September 11 had, among its many other consequences, exposed yet another racial divide in the city: According to polls, white voters, Jews included, ranked rebuilding the city as a much higher priority than did blacks and Latinos, who continued to say they were voting on the more traditional bases of education and housing. Green decided he should be the candidate of the crisis; Ferrer continued to press his year-long theme that he would represent the "other New York"—in the Giuliani era, a reference with clear class and racial meanings.

When Green finally won the October 11 runoff by about 25,000 votes out of 700,000 cast, Ferrer's backers were making allegations that Green and his supporters used racist tactics to win. To be sure, Green made one very tough commercial against Ferrer, in which some saw racial code words ("Can we afford to take a chance?" his tagline asked). And some Jewish politicians in the southern belt of Brooklyn, in neighborhoods such as Canarsie and Sheepshead Bay, circulated fliers linking Ferrer to Sharpton, which reproduced a *New York Post* cartoon that showed Ferrer puckering up near Sharpton's capacious derriere. Whether these were racist tactics or legitimate, if coarse, warnings about the role that might be played in a Ferrer administration by a man who has used racially divisive rhetoric on many occasions in his past is in the eye of the beholder.

Beyond dispute, however, are the following four assertions: first, that

Green lost to Bloomberg by around 30,000 votes; second, that Ramirez kept the Bronx headquarters closed on Election Day, resulting in an especially low turnout in the Bronx, which arguably cost Green the election; third, that Ferrer, Ramirez, and Sharpton, though “officially” endorsing Green, could scarcely contain their glee when he lost; and fourth, that Sharpton and Ramirez forced the hands of State Democratic Party Chair Judith Hope and National Chair Terry McAuliffe in such a way that they have now implicitly accepted the argument that any attack on Al Sharpton is, *ipso facto*, a racial attack.

And so here we are: The Latino-Jewish relationship, never terribly prominent in a New York so roiling with other ethnic contests and rivalries, is now, for perhaps the first time, certainly an important one; unfortunately, it is also poisoned beyond the hope of immediate repair. It will improve, over time. Perhaps all the politicians whom the two groups have backed in large numbers—Chuck Schumer, Hillary Clinton, and others—will be able to lead the way in gluing the pieces back together. Perhaps a new figure will come along who can help lead people into less overtly racialized modes of thinking. Perhaps Democrats of all races will finally decide that the cankerous Sharpton should be less central to their affairs and to do something to isolate him. And it’s worth remembering that all those Latino voters who abandoned Green—he got 49 percent of the Latino vote, unusually low for a Democrat—pulled the lever for another Jew, Mike Bloomberg, so it may be the case that Latino-Jewish relations will be repaired outside the context of the Democratic Party, which would be a first for New York City.

Fate handed Bloomberg an opportunity to endear himself to Latinos even before he took office, albeit tragically, in the form of the crash of American Airlines Flight 587, on which some 200 Dominicans perished. Bloomberg’s first overseas trip as mayor-elect was to the Dominican Republic. But Bloomberg is a blank slate, largely, who may or may not be relevant to our story’s next chapter.

What will certainly be relevant is the central question of whether Democrats (which, after all, most Jews and Latinos are) can commit themselves to models of multiracial cooperation whose slogan is not “it’s our turn,” but “it’s everyone’s turn.” That won’t happen if Latino leaders continue to make common cause with the likes of Sharpton, but it will require leaders from every camp to sacrifice for the mutual good—not a habit, alas, that comes naturally to very many New Yorkers.

A History of Jewish and Hispanic Interaction in Miami-Dade County, Florida

Abraham D. Lavender

The Jewish community in Miami-Dade County, Florida, is one of the largest in the United States. Combined with the neighboring Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach areas, the southeast Florida Jewish community is the third most populous in the nation. Miami-Dade is also the heartland of southeast Florida's huge Hispanic community, dominated by its politically and economically powerful Cuban-American core. Rapidly expanding over the past forty years, while the Jewish population has steadily declined, the Hispanic community now comprises over half the county's population, and a Hispanic presence is also beginning to register in the Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach areas. But Miami-Dade remains the epicenter of the Hispanic-Jewish encounter, the setting where the convoluted relationship plays out within the broader framework and familiar rhythms of the politics of ethnic succession and of historic tensions between the lure of identity politics and the search for inclusion.

Background of the Jewish and Hispanic Communities

The Miami-Dade metropolitan area is relatively young. In 1900, Miami-Dade County, then including today's Broward County (Fort Lauderdale) and Palm Beach County (Palm Beach) had only 4,955 residents and only a sprinkling of Jews and Hispanics. Long since separated from the other areas, today it has over 2 million residents, and the entire three-county area has close to 5 million.

As late as 1940, there were only 7,071 Jews in Miami-Dade, 3 percent of the total population—but things changed rapidly after World War II. Jewish soldiers who had trained in Miami Beach during the war and large numbers of Jewish retirees from New York and the Northeast began to move to the area, attracted by the warm weather and the Jewish ambience that was beginning to develop, especially in Miami Beach. By 1970, there were 197,619 Jewish residents (16 percent of the population). By 1975, when the number peaked at about 248,000, the Jewish percentage of the county's population was already

decreasing because other groups (especially Cuban-Americans) were growing faster. After 1975 the absolute number also began to drop significantly, and by 1994 the number of Jews was estimated to be down to 155,000, representing only 8 percent of the county's population.

The great majority of Miami's Jews are the children or descendants of immigrants who settled in the United States during the great migration of 1881-1924, lived in New York or the northeastern United States for several decades, and then moved to Miami. About 9,000 are Hispanic Jews, the single largest group being Ashkenazim who left Cuba after Castro took power on January 1, 1959. About 10,000 are Sephardim, many of whom lived in Cuba before coming to Miami-Dade. About 7,000 are Israelis. One in five Miami-Dade Jews was born in a foreign country, and over half have at least one foreign-born parent.

A high percentage of Miami-Dade Jews are elderly (65+). In 1994, the elderly accounted for 31 percent of the Miami-Dade Jewish community, giving the area one of the highest percentages of elderly among American Jewish communities. Only Broward and Palm Beach counties, directly to the north, have higher percentages. In Miami Beach, which became synonymous with its elderly Jewish population, the elderly accounted for 77 percent of the Jewish community (and 52 percent of the city's total population) in 1980 and 75 percent (and 30 percent of the city) in 1990, compared to 20 percent nationally. More recently, as a result of continued gentrification, especially the transformation of South Beach from an enclave of elderly, often poor Jews into a chic, trendy tourist attraction, the percentage has decreased even more to about a quarter of the total Miami Beach population.

As recently as 1960, Miami-Dade's 50,000 Hispanics accounted for only 5 percent of the population. But soon after Castro took power, scores of thousands of Cubans began fleeing, especially to Miami. By 1965, there were 174,500 Hispanics (16 percent) and by 1970, 299,000 (24 percent). Sometime around 1964 the number of Hispanics (nearly all Cuban-Americans) surpassed the number of Jews, but this development was little noted. By 1980, there were 581,000 Hispanics, 36 percent of Miami-Dade's population, and by 1990, 953,407 Hispanic residents accounted for 49 percent of Miami-Dade's population. By 2000, the number was estimated at 1,295,500, making the county 59 percent Hispanic.

In terms of national origins, Cuban-Americans comprised 91 percent of all Hispanics in Miami-Dade in 1970, but decreased to 70 percent in 1980 and to 59 percent in 1990, as Hispanics from many countries were attracted to Miami-

Dade by the Hispanic ambience developed by Cuban-Americans. As a result of legal and illegal immigration in the 1990s, the Cuban-American proportion has increased slightly to 60.2 percent of the Hispanic population. Compared to Cuban-Americans, the numbers of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, the second- and third-largest Hispanic groups in the United States, have remained small in Miami-Dade County over the decades. Puerto Ricans comprise 7.6 percent, and Mexican-Americans comprise 2.5 percent of all Hispanics. Other Hispanic populations (especially Nicaraguans and Colombians) have greatly increased, but each remains small relative to Cuban-Americans. Nicaraguans comprise 8.1 percent and Colombians 5.8 percent of the local Hispanic community.

Jewish and Hispanic Political Involvement

Jews started to become active in Miami-Dade County politics in the 1950s and 1960s, when the area was politically and culturally still part of the Deep South and the Bible Belt. There was enforced racial segregation, blacks suffered multiple forms of discrimination, and Jews were excluded from many residential neighborhoods, hotels and clubs. White Protestants held virtually all the political and economic power, and Protestant Christianity was pervasive in the public schools.

The new Jewish residents from the New York and the Northeast were veteran political activists, with a strong liberal bent, and they quickly began to challenge Christianity in the public schools and joined blacks in opposing segregation. The Anti-Defamation League successfully pushed for passage of Florida legislation outlawing the Ku Klux Klan in 1951.¹ An American Jewish Committee chapter was founded in 1952. The American Civil Liberties Union opened its first permanent office in Miami in 1956. Mt. Sinai Hospital, founded in 1952 by Jewish doctors excluded from other hospitals because of anti-Semitism, was the first local hospital to racially integrate its staff. Four attempts (two successful) were made to bomb synagogues or Jewish community centers in 1951, and in 1958 another synagogue was bombed.

Although Jews took risks and paid a price for challenging the system, they persisted in their efforts to transform Miami-Dade into a more tolerant community. As Moore puts it, "When new immigrants from Cuba entered Miami politics a decade later [the 1970s], they found a political milieu more accustomed to the practice of ethnic politics than it had been before Jews settled in Miami."² Jews feel particularly insulted when Cuban-Americans claim that Miami was a *pueblo de campo* (a country town) until Cuban-Americans came.

Jews experienced increasing political success because of their growing numbers, economic prosperity, and political activism, and by the 1970s and 1980s a significant number were regularly elected to public office in Miami-Dade County.

While Jews were becoming deeply engaged in the public life of Miami-Dade in the 1960s and 1970s, most Cubans remained preoccupied with returning to Cuba. For the first decade and a half after the post-Castro exile began in 1960, most Cuban-Americans identified themselves as exiles rather than as immigrants and did not become American citizens, vote, or become involved in local politics. By the early 1970s, some Cuban exiles began to realize that the return to Cuba was not imminent, and they began to become involved in local politics. There was rising concern in the Cuban community that they did not have political influence in the county and were consequently victims of insensitivity or discrimination in important settings, including public education.

Jews and Hispanics Begin to Interact—the 1970s

In November 1972, Miami-Dade saw the first indicator of polarized voting in presidential elections by Jews and Cuban Americans, a pattern that would begin to weaken only in the 1990s with Bill Clinton. Jewish precincts voted 73 percent for George McGovern, and Cuban-American precincts voted 81 percent for Richard Nixon, largely because of the candidates' platforms regarding Cuba. But the early presidential election pattern had few ramifications for Miami-Dade because Cuban-Americans were not yet deeply involved in local politics.

That began to change in 1972 when activists among the country's 350,000 Hispanics, 100,000 of whom spoke no English, began petitioning the County Commission to proclaim the county officially bilingual and bicultural. On April 16, 1973, six Hispanic leaders appeared before the County Commission asking for a bilingual and bicultural resolution. The group was shepherded by Benardo Benes, a Cuban Jew, and Alfredo Duran, who would soon be appointed by the governor to a vacancy on the powerful county school board.³ Sponsored by the county mayor, the resolution was supported by all eight commissioners, including Harvey Rubin and Joyce ("Mrs. Stanley") Goldberg. Hispanics in the audience gave Rubin a standing ovation when he answered "sí" instead of "yes" to the roll call.⁴

An election in September 1974 was the catalyst for further Cuban involvement in local politics. Duran, appointed to the county school board fourteen months earlier, ran for election to a full term. Though he did not run an ethnic campaign and suggested only that Spanish be an optional course for English-

speaking students, his opponent turned the election into a referendum against bilingualism and drew support from voters disturbed by the increasing use of Spanish in the county. Duran was defeated, along with several other Cuban-American candidates. Although Cubans comprised a third of the county's population, only a third had obtained citizenship, and they accounted for only 9 percent of county voters. Jewish precincts gave Duran strong support, and later, with solid backing from Jewish Democrats in Miami-Dade, he went on to become the first Cuban-American chair of the Florida Democratic Party.

The first clear indication of profound differences between Cuban-American and Jewish voters on issues of cultural-social values also surfaced quickly, in June 1977, when Ruth Shack, a Jewish member of the County Commission, led a local initiative to recognize gay rights. The initiative was endorsed by the actor Ed Asner, who stated in a widely reported speech delivered in Miami that his support for gay rights stemmed from his sense of Jewish identity: "Where does bigotry stop? As a Jew, I can't forget that once in this world it didn't stop. That's why it's imperative that on June 7 you vote against repeal of homosexual rights in Dade County."⁵ Support for the ordinance within the Jewish community was strong but not unanimous. The local Miami Beach newspaper, the *Daily Sun Reporter*, with a Jewish editor and mostly Jewish readers in the area of the county with the highest concentration of Jewish voters, opposed it.

Of the four local ethnic groupings (Jews, Hispanics, blacks, and "Anglos"—a term used locally to identify everyone who is not Hispanic or black, but used in this paper to exclude Jews as well), Jewish voters were the strongest supporters of the gay rights movement. Representative comments from Jewish precincts and Hispanic precincts illustrate the differences. In Jewish South Beach, a voter was quoted saying, "I voted against repeal because I think they [the gays] deserve their rights despite their quirks. How they live in their business. You take away their rights and next time it's someone else's."⁶

Cuban-American voters, themselves recent victims of oppression, responded very differently. In Little Havana, for example, a voter remarked, "I have six grandchildren in school and I don't want them exposed." Cuban-Americans opposed gay rights by a margin of almost eight to one. The largest circulation Spanish-language newspaper, *Diario Las Americas*, strongly opposed gay rights, using the antigay-rights movement's slogan "Save Our Children." As Roberto Suro has written about Cuban-Americans, "The experience of being shunned, however, did not make the Cubans sympathetic to other victims of discrimination. It just made them determined never to let themselves be victims again."⁷ After the vote, the newspaper noted that Cuban areas were most strongly

opposed to gay rights, African-Americans ones were mostly indifferent, while the Jewish areas gave the strongest support for gay rights.

In another article in *Diario Las Americas*, the antigay campaign was portrayed as a religious crusade, with references to Jesus as the light of the world and to the victory of Christ. One writer wrote that he believed that Cubans in particular and Hispanics in general had been the decisive factor in winning the battle for *valores cristianos y morales en nuestra comunidad* (“Christian values and morals in our community”).⁸ Another activist quoted in *El Miami Herald*, the Spanish-language version of the *Miami Herald*, not only characterized gays as “immoral” and “abnormal,” but also said that the ordinance was a communist conspiracy and emphasized *la oposicion de las autoridades locales de la iglesia catolica a la ordenanza* (“the opposition of the local authorities of the Catholic church to the ordinance.”)⁹

1980—Beginning a Decade of Conflict

The great turning point in the political awakening of the Hispanic community occurred in 1980, when there was a massive migration of Cubans to Miami-Dade, followed by a county antibilingualism ordinance that passed in a bitter election. In the wake of these events, Cuban-Americans greatly increased their rate of naturalization, voter registration and, political involvement, mostly as Republicans.

The massive “Mariel Boat Lift” brought an additional 100,000 Cuban refugees to Miami within the space of only a few months, and it produced a powerful backlash. Castro had forced the boats to include hardened criminals among their passengers. Although these accounted for only about 2 or 3 percent of the immigrants, the “Mariel Boat Lift” resulted in an increase in local crime in run-down South Beach where many of the immigrants first settled, and the crime victims were primarily elderly Jews.

Fears about the county’s ethnic balance combined with concerns about crime and living conditions created a tense atmosphere, and it was difficult to separate intergroup hostility from pragmatic concerns. African-Cubans comprised about 20 percent of the refugees, compared to about 2 percent in previous Cuban migrations, causing even more resistance from some segments of the county. There already was a housing crisis, which was made much worse by the large and sudden influx of new residents, and there was a strongly hostile reaction. A *Miami Herald* poll published on May 11, 1980, reported that among non-Hispanic whites, 79 percent thought the refugee influx would make it more difficult for non-Spanish speakers to live in the community. Seventy percent

thought that there were enough Hispanics in the area already, and 85 percent thought the influx would crowd the schools and cause other educational problems. Eighty-six percent thought there were not enough jobs; 90 percent thought there was not enough housing; 85 percent thought there would be a burden on taxpayers; and 69 percent thought there would be an increase in crime. Forty-one percent of Hispanics, including non-Cubans, and 77 percent of African-Americans also thought that there were enough Hispanics in the area already. One local Jewish man delivered tons of food and clothing to Cuban refugees on behalf of Jews who saw Cubans as an allegory for Soviet Jews.¹⁰

The backlash by non-Hispanics against the recent immigrants and, more broadly, against demographic and cultural change focused on the use of Spanish and specifically targeted the bilingual and bicultural ordinance that the County Commission had quietly passed in 1973. Bilingualism became the most divisive issue in Miami-Dade between Cuban-Americans and others. The drive against bilingualism was led by Emmy Shafer, a Russian-born Jewish Holocaust survivor and a speaker of six languages. Shafer and another leader of the drive received death threats and hate mail, and the other leader's dog was poisoned.

On November 4, 1980, Miami-Dade voters passed, by 59 percent to 41 percent, a Bilingual Ordinance (referred to interchangeably as the English Only Ordinance or the Anti-Bilingualism Ordinance). It prohibited the use of any language other than English in county business and prevented the county from promoting any culture other than that of the United States. An exit poll by the *Miami Herald* showed that 47 percent of those who supported the ordinance did so to express protest, not because they thought the ordinance was a good idea. About 65 percent of Jews voted for the ordinance, as did the county's other non-Hispanic whites. African-Americans voted 55 percent in favor of bilingualism.

Most civic groups, including generally progressive ones, as well as most clergy, including rabbis, remained on the sidelines during the battle because of the level of bitterness. Annie Ackerman, an elderly Jewish activist with tremendous political power in Jewish condominiums, stated that she personally supported bilingualism, but that she was steering clear of the issue because of its divisiveness. But the local newspaper in Miami Beach, the *Sun Reporter*, with a Jewish editor and a mostly Jewish readership, addressed itself specifically to "those of you who are immigrants," and it editorialized in favor of bilingualism. "To end bilingualism would cast a shadow over our nation's reputation as the harbinger of all ethnic groups, cultures, philosophies, and political beliefs."¹¹

The local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League did not take a position, but the local chapter of the American Jewish Committee supported bilingual-

ism. In a letter to the editor of the *Miami Herald*, a member of the Committee wrote that there was frustration in the community “due in significant part to insensitivity by both Anglos and Latinos to each other.... Cuban-Americans become offended by the open resentment displayed by Anglos to them. On the other hand, Anglos become upset when Cuban-Americans wave Cuban rather than American flags at rallies and refuse to accommodate English-speaking customers in downtown stores.”¹²

Despite Shafer’s leadership in gaining its passage, and despite their negative vote, Jews were not perceived as particularly hostile to bilingualism. Jewish attitudes were accurately seen as representative of those of non-Hispanics in general, and the battle over the ordinance did not increase hostility to Jews among Hispanics. It is interesting that the Proposition 227 (“End Bilingual Teaching”) effort in California in June 1998 was also spearheaded by a Jew, Ron K. Unz. Unz, whose grandparents spoke Yiddish, argued that bilingualism was hurting a generation of immigrant children in preparing for the job market. Although opposed by most Hispanic leaders, all major candidates for governor in California, much of California’s educational establishment, and President Clinton, Proposition 227 passed by 61 percent to 39 percent. A majority of Jews supported it (55 percent), as did some 37 percent of Hispanics. Unz had initiated and heavily financed the campaign after some Hispanic parents had protested that their children were not learning English and had boycotted an elementary school “until the school agreed to teach the children to read and write in English.”¹³ When Proposition 227 passed, Unz declared, “The California immigrant population has also won a victory.”¹⁴

In Miami-Dade and Los Angeles the antibilingual drives were not led by politically conservative, nativist “old guard” Americans who resented immigrants, but by two Jews, one who was an immigrant polyglot and another who had immigrant, Yiddish-speaking grandparents. No empirical data exist on Jewish attitudes, but the prototypical anecdotal explanation offered by Jews in Miami-Dade, most of whom were immigrants or the children or grandchildren of immigrants, was that they (or their forebears) had proudly learned English and felt that other immigrants should do likewise. Up through the 1970s, and somewhat into the 1980s, it was common to hear Yiddish in Miami Beach, but most of the elderly Jews also spoke English, albeit with heavy accents.

Whatever the vicissitudes of its intergroup dimension, the antibilingualism vote had one extremely important, unambiguous consequence: it thoroughly politicized the Cuban-American community. It led to a rapid and sharp increase in the number of Cuban-Americans gaining citizenship and registering to

vote—mostly as Republicans.

Jewish opposition to bilingualism in Miami-Dade did not reflect wider antagonism toward Hispanics. Indeed, on the day it passed, about 90 percent of Jewish voters helped elect Paul Cejas to the powerful countywide school board, the first Cuban-American (who had a Jewish wife) to be elected to countywide political office. Miami-Dade's Jews supported Cejas knowing his history of leadership on behalf of efforts to involve Hispanics more in county activities. Cejas had served as chair of the Spanish-American League Against Discrimination and had fought in 1977, for example, to have more Hispanics appointed to county positions. Despite Cejas's fears, the antibilingualism issue did not spawn a larger anti-Cuban reaction; he also received 90 percent support from African-American voters and a 50 percent share of the Anglo vote; with the exception of Cuban-Americans, most voters voted along party lines rather than on the basis of race or ethnicity.

Three years later, when there was talk of Mariel refugees being released from federal prison, Mayor Norman Ciment of Miami Beach proposed a draconian city ordinance requiring any resident who sponsored an "alien" to register with the police and suggested roadblocks (check points) at the city's entrances. Ciment and five of the six city commissioners were Jewish (the other, Alex Daoud, was a Lebanese Catholic who later was elected mayor three times), and Ciment noted that he was the son of immigrants from Czechoslovakia and that he meant no slur against Hispanics. But Hispanics were outraged, and they were not alone. The *Miami Herald* published a devastating editorial saying that "Miami Beach cannot afford to pay the price of ethnic division and xenophobia."¹⁵ The Spanish-American League Against Discrimination became involved, the Florida regional office of the Anti-Defamation League condemned Ciment's comments as exacerbating ethnic divisiveness, and Ciment withdrew his candidacy for reelection as mayor.

In 1981, the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) was founded, and it began to play a major role in advocating the hard-line anti-Castro position in national and local politics. Jorge Mas Canosa, one of CANF's founders and its leader until his death in 1997, asserted that to influence politics nationally, the foundation copied the Jewish model of organization and lobbying and had developed a close alliance with the Jewish lobby in Washington. Whatever its success in Washington, however, the CANF and Mas Canosa became very controversial in Miami. Supporters viewed the CANF and Mas Canosa as leaders in the fight for Cuba's freedom; opponents viewed the CANF and Mas Canosa as a threat to freedom in Miami-Dade, with Miami beginning

to acquire “the features of a Latin American dictatorship...”¹⁶

A major area of conflict in Miami-Dade between Cuban-Americans and others, including Jews, has been the issue of freedom of speech. Most Cuban exiles have suffered greatly because of Castro and have traditionally felt that anything was justified in toppling him. This issue exploded in 1987 when the Cuban-American National Foundation wrote in criticism of the *Miami Herald*: “It refuses to understand that Cuban-Americans see the struggle between totalitarianism and democracy as a personal, ever-present struggle. We live the struggle daily because our friends and families enslaved in communist Cuba live it daily.”¹⁷ Barone and Ujifusa, editors of the *Almanac of American Politics*, argued that while the accusation against the newspaper seemed absurd, “it should be added that many good-hearted liberals, for which the *Herald* is a proxy, have failed to appreciate the totalitarianism of Castro’s regime and glossed over the brutality that has been its steady conduct.”¹⁸ Though most Jews strongly disapprove of the Castro regime, they have had difficulty allying with Cuban-American activists who typically demand absolute unanimity on issues and tactics. Failure to give unquestioning support has frequently ended friendships and led to ostracism or threats of violence, alienating Jews.

Not having personally tasted exile, most non-Cubans do not realize the extent of suffering caused by Castro, but it is also true that most non-Jewish Hispanics are unfamiliar with the history of Jewish oppression and resultant Jewish concern for civil liberties. Because of their passionate hatred of Castro and historical siege mentality, many Cuban-Americans have not viewed civil liberties as sacral, and they have found the transition to the norms and practices of American pluralistic democracy difficult.

No empirical data exist on the difference between American Jews and Cuban-Americans regarding freedom of speech, but different historical experiences are probably the primary explanation. As members of a frequently persecuted minority that has been repeatedly denied freedom of expression by both right-wing and left-wing regimes and extremists, Jews have become strong supporters of civil liberties. Cuban-Americans, the majority culture in their own country, do not have the historical experience of an oppressed minority. Nor does Cuba, as a “colonized” country with an unstable political structure and a history of dictatorship and frequent coups d’état, have a tradition of respect for freedom of speech or democracy.

As the Cuban-American community became involved in Miami-Dade politics in the 1980s, other differences emerged between Jews and Cuban-Americans, one of the largest being habitual Jewish liberal support for and

Cuban conservative opposition to tax increases for municipal services. It appeared they could agree only about legalizing casino gambling. But these differences did not cause animosity, and despite the large and rapid increase in Cuban-American participation in elections, direct conflict between Cuban-Americans and Jews has been almost entirely absent. This is partly because Jewish numbers were decreasing as dramatically as Hispanic numbers were increasing, and partly because Cuban-Americans and Jews lived, for the most part, in separate residential areas.

But at the end of the 1980s there was a direct conflict: the 1989 special election to fill the congressional seat of the late Claude Pepper, a Southern Baptist Democrat originally from Alabama. Jews had fervently supported Pepper against Jewish and other candidates in elections for Congress since 1962 because of his liberal views and strong defense of Social Security. In August 1989, a bitter election pitted a moderately conservative Cuban-American Republican, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, against a moderately liberal Jewish Democrat, Gerald Richman, and Jews and Cuban-Americans each strongly supported their own ethnic candidate, regardless of political or ideological affiliation.

Both sides exploited ethnicity. Republicans first raised the ethnic flag when Lee Atwater, the GOP national chair, appeared before the convention of the Cuban-American National Foundation and declared that the seat “belonged” to a Cuban-American. Richman, then running against a Cuban-American in the Democratic primary, responded, “It’s not a Jewish seat, or a black seat, or a Cuban seat, it’s an *American* seat.” The slogan helped Richman win the nomination, but Democratic leaders pressed him to drop it in the general election and Richman refused. Ros-Lehtinen seized on the slogan as an attack on Cuban-Americans and publicized it repeatedly to increase voter turnout. Ros-Lehtinen accused Richman of being a bigot and racist and refused to debate him. She concentrated exclusively on getting out the Cuban-American vote and abandoned attempts to build bridges with Jewish and African-American voters.

Richman, for his part, was accused of pandering to Jewish and other non-Cuban voters, and was specifically criticized for having small six-pointed stars on some of his advertisements. A Spanish-language newspaper falsely reported that he had been endorsed by the Castro regime. In response to the “American seat” issue, Ros-Lehtinen’s campaign put out a brochure, printed only in Spanish and distributed in Hispanic areas, stating: “No, we weren’t born in Brooklyn, N.Y., like him. No, we don’t speak English the same way he does....”¹⁹ The brochure did not explicitly mention Richman’s Jewishness, but some Jewish voters viewed this as a veiled slur against his “New York Jewish” background. Dur-

ing the campaign, the county's Fair Campaign Practices Committee criticized both candidates. A poll taken by Mason-Dixon Opinion Research, released on August 23, reported that 82 percent of Cuban-Americans said Richman was running a "bigoted campaign," but that no other group, including non-Cuban Hispanics, agreed with the charge.

The same Mason-Dixon poll found a marked difference between Cuban-Americans and Jews with regard to their adhesion to identity politics. It reported that 45 percent of Cuban-Americans thought it was very important to elect a Cuban-American, 10 percent thought it was moderately important, and 43 percent said it should not be a factor. Among Jews, 81 percent said Ros-Lehtinen's being Cuban-American should not be a factor, 9 percent said it was a good idea not to elect a Cuban-American, and 9 percent said it was very important not to elect a Cuban-American. The *Miami Herald* concluded that the poll "showed that if bigotry doesn't run just below the surface of voter attitudes, chauvinism—the uncritical belief that one's own group is superior to others—does." It also found that "the fervor of Cuban-Americans to elect the first person of that heritage to Congress is intense, but not at all shared by other segments of the community."²⁰

Richman carried the Jewish, Anglo, and African-American communities, but Ros-Lehtinen won the Cuban-American community. The turnout in Hispanic areas was 58 percent compared to 42 percent in non-Hispanic white areas and 33 percent in African-American areas, giving Ros-Lehtinen a victory with 53 percent to Richman's 47 percent. Experts suggest that the significant and economically very successful Jewish Cuban community in Miami Beach, largely centered around an Ashkenazic synagogue, Temple Beth Shmuel, and a Sephardic synagogue, Temple Moses (sometimes attended by Catholic Ros-Lehtinen's Jewish-born mother and relatives), supported Ros-Lehtinen and made a crucial difference in the narrow race.²¹

The 1990s—Sharing Power

Hispanics, especially Cuban-Americans, made strong political gains in the 1980s, especially in the Florida legislature. Most of that success initially came at the expense of Anglos, however, and Jewish candidates continued to be well represented until the 1990s. As recently as 1980, there were sixteen Anglos, twelve Jews, two blacks, and no Hispanics in the delegation to the Florida House of Representatives and Senate. But, of the twenty-seven members of the local delegation in 1990, about a third were Cuban-American Republicans and about a third Jewish Democrats. There was also one Jewish-Cuban Republican,

Alberto Gutman, who received most of his support from non-Jewish Cuban-American Republicans, but who resigned in 1999 after an indictment. Currently, the Florida State House delegation, reduced to eighteen representatives, includes ten Cuban-Americans (nine Republicans and one Democrat) and two Jewish Democrats. The Florida Senate delegation includes three Cuban-American Republicans and one Jewish Democrat.

Despite increased Cuban-American political activism, in countywide elections, Cuban-Americans were not very successful until court-ordered redistricting (combined with increased numbers) in the early 1990s for the county commission and the county school board. In these areas, the percentage of Jewish members decreased while the percentage of Hispanics and African-Americans increased. The nine-member County Commission had only one Hispanic member until 1993, but now (out of thirteen members) has seven Hispanic members, including six Cuban-American Republicans and one Hispanic Democrat of mixed Cuban and Puerto Rican background (with a Jewish wife). By the late 1970s, three of the nine members of the County Commission were Jewish, and this percentage held until the court ordered single-member districts in 1993. Now the County Commission has only one Jewish member out of thirteen, Gwen Margolis, a Democrat. A strong county mayor system was begun in 1995, and a young Cuban-American Democrat, Alex Penelas, was elected. Penelas, as previously in his election to the County Commission, received strong support from heavily Jewish precincts. Margolis was elected commission chair in a political alliance with Penelas.

Before court-ordered changes, there was only one Hispanic on a seven-member countywide school board; by 1999, an expanded nine-member county school board included four Cuban-American Republicans along with two Jewish Democrats, the same number as before redistricting.

Two Cuban-American Republicans, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Diaz-Balart, have been elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Miami-Dade, Ros-Lehtinen in a special election in August 1989 and Lincoln Diaz-Balart in 1992 from another district (after redistricting made two seats tailored for Hispanics). There has not been a Jewish member of Congress from Miami-Dade since 1992, although, as the Jewish population has shifted northward, two Jewish congressmen, Peter Deutsch and Robert Wexler, now represent areas—the Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach areas—immediately to the north.

Another bitter election campaign occurred in Miami-Dade in 1993 between a Cuban-American candidate and a Jewish candidate; this time, how-

ever, political support did not track with ethnicity. In fact, although both Cuban-related issues and charges of anti-Semitism were part of the campaign, the election demonstrated that, under the right circumstances, ideology could trump ethnicity. Bruce Kaplan was a conservative Jewish Republican, had a Puerto Rican wife, and was bilingual in English and Spanish. Conchy Bretos was a liberal Cuban-American Democrat, and was bilingual in English and Spanish. Kaplan attacked Bretos as being soft on Castro and thus “not a real Cuban.” She also was criticized for favoring abortion, feminism, and gay rights. In the last few days of the campaign, Kaplan also accused Bretos of anti-Semitism, but the charge was never substantiated and was roundly rejected by Jewish voters. Jews (mostly Democrats) voted heavily for Bretos, the Cuban-American Democrat, and Cuban-Americans (mostly Republicans) voted heavily for Kaplan, the Jewish Republican. Bretos lost, but Kaplan was later forced out of office after accusations of financial improprieties. Bretos was disturbed by the failure of local institutions to oppose defamation of a candidate, but noted that “the tenacity with which the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith sought out the truth about my opponent’s utterly unfounded eleventh-hour charges of anti-Semitism deserves vigorous applause and wide emulation.”²²

In countywide elections, differences between Cuban-American voters and Jewish voters have persisted, especially around support for public spending. In 1994, for example, Jews voted heavily in favor of increased funding for fire protection, crime fighting, and the justice system. Given their traditional support for activist government, including a strong commitment to public education and public funding for cultural activities and municipal services, Jewish voters have supported most bond issues in Miami-Dade. Hispanic voters, especially Cuban-Americans, have strongly opposed them, including all three in 1994. One of these was to provide scholarships at Florida International University, a public university in Miami-Dade County whose student body is about half Hispanic and heavily of Cuban heritage. This bond issue was opposed by 55 percent of Cuban-American voters and supported by 70 percent of Jewish voters, despite the small percentage (about 6 percent) of Jewish students at the university, probably because of traditionally strong Jewish support for education. (The university has also received multimillion-dollar contributions from Jewish benefactors.) African-American voters also strongly supported the FIU bond issue, but Anglo voters were heavily against it.²³

A rare exception to this pattern, perhaps signaling a larger change in the Cuban-American community with respect to its support for local government initiatives, took place in July 1999, when Cuban-Americans gave more support

than either Anglos or Jews to an unsuccessful bond issue to relieve traffic congestion. Elderly Cuban-Americans on fixed incomes were especially in support of improved bus service, and the Cuban-American construction industry also campaigned heavily in favor.

The gay rights issue resurfaced in 1998, but this time the County Commission, by a vote of seven to six, passed a motion to ban discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations based on sexual orientation. The commissioners were lobbied heavily by both sides. The Democratic Cuban-American county mayor, a young Cuban-American Democrat born in Miami-Dade soon after his parents fled Cuba, spoke in favor of gay rights, stating in a letter to the County Commission that the matter was one of basic human rights. Though he has taken a tough stance on issues related to Cuba and Castro (including supporting the county's ban on contracting with any entity that does business with Cuba), he has generally taken tolerant positions on social issues. The only Jewish member of the commission (Gwen Margolis, the chair) supported gay rights, but five of the six Cuban-American Republicans opposed the motion and only one supported it. The only Hispanic Democrat, Jimmy Morales, of Cuban and Puerto Rican heritage (and with a Jewish wife), supported gay rights. Significantly, a prominent member of the Cuban-American community, Rafael Penalver, addressing himself directly to the Hispanic members of the commission, argued that the issue was not about supporting a lifestyle but rather condemning discrimination and respecting members of "our" community. Penalver also said that it was important to show the world that Cuban-Americans are not intolerant and that just as the Cuban community openly desired a Free Cuba, they also had openly to send a message of tolerance.²⁴ The active stands taken by the mayor and Penalver indicate that some Cuban-Americans, at least among the leadership elite, are being progressively, if slowly, Americanized. They are beginning to go against the Cuban-American establishment's conservatism, act in a less predictable manner, and show somewhat greater sensitivity to the perception that the Cuban-American community is intolerant.

Despite their differences on the gay rights issue, no apparent hostility developed between Jews and Hispanics because both sides of the issue had varied ethnic support. While Hispanics were mostly opposed to gay rights, they also had Anglo, African-American, and a small number of Jewish allies. Supporters of gay rights included more highly acculturated Hispanics, African-Americans, and Anglos as well as Jews.

Conflict over other culture/values issues also occurred in Miami-Dade in

the 1990s after increasing numbers of mostly conservative Republican Cuban-Americans were elected to county positions. Officially sanctioned school prayer, stopping the distribution of condoms in public schools, limiting sex education in school health clinics, and legalizing corporal punishment have been pushed by conservative Cuban-American Republicans on the county school board, while the Jewish Democratic members, reflecting their liberal values, have opposed these proposals. There has been no apparent anti-Semitic reaction to this conflict.

It is conventional wisdom that Cuban-American political, economic, and social conservatism stems from a worldview developed within the tight boundaries of an ethnic enclave. Within that close-knit world, the community is the source of services and solutions to problems, not government, and the traditional community is seen as the repository of values and possesses far greater moral and social legitimacy than the larger society, which is seen as alien and threatening. In Latin countries, there is no tradition of local taxation or a trust that the money is going to be put to good use. Miami-Dade's massive corruption has reinforced this belief. A tradition of hard-right politics is also credited with identifying liberalism with communism, and hence any liberal program incites opposition. It is also argued that the Cuban community has preached the most extreme version of the capitalist success story to proclaim capitalism's superiority to communism.

But others regard this view as oversimplified and suggest that Cuba did have a strong liberal tradition and that liberal elements will reemerge in the Cuban-American community as the fixation on Castro diminishes. Cuban-Americans became fervent Republicans because they associated the Republican Party with tough anticommunism, and the Republican Party has used this connection to further a wider conservative agenda. But Cuban history is more complicated. From the late 1800s, for example, Cuba had a strong labor movement (which later excluded Jews because of a strong nationalist philosophy). Early twentieth-century Cuban-Americans in Tampa, Florida, were militant unionists, and there is a significant Cuban-American labor presence in Miami-Dade County which recognizes that domestic issues and Democratic Party politics should influence Cuban-American behavior.²⁵

Cuban-Americans in Union City, New Jersey, the largest Cuban-American settlement outside of South Florida, have followed a different political path from that of Florida. Robert Menendez, the congressman from the area, born in New York City in 1954 (before the Castro takeover) of Cuban-American parents, has a strongly liberal voting record, despite his strong opposition to Castro.

Menendez's congressional district went 53 percent to 36 percent for Bill Clinton against George Bush in 1992, and 71 percent to 22 percent for Bill Clinton against Bob Dole in 1996.

Nor are Miami-Dade's Cuban-American members of Congress, Ros-Lehtinen and Diaz-Balart, unswervingly conservative, and their voting records belie the stereotype of Cuban-Americans as knee-jerk right-wingers. They were two of only three Republican incumbent members of the House of Representatives who did not support Gingrich's "Contract With America." Both have moderate voting records, with conservative-liberal ratings about midway between national Republican ratings and national Democratic ratings. In the 104th and 105th Congresses, for example, out of 23 key votes, both Ros-Lehtinen and Diaz-Balart voted against Republican majorities (averaging 70 percent) on five votes. Both agreed with Democratic majorities (averaging 88 percent) on raising the minimum wage, opposing limitations on the enforcement powers of the Environmental Protection Agency, opposing congressional fast-track negotiations of the international trade agreement, supporting a referendum on statehood for Puerto Rico, and supporting human rights in China. In addition, Ros-Lehtinen voted with Democrats on two other issues, and Diaz-Balart on three other issues.

Both Ros-Lehtinen and Diaz-Balart have also been strongly pro-Israel, and both Jewish representatives from South Florida (Deutsch and Wexler) have been responsive to concerns about freedom in Cuba. Both Cuban-American representatives have a small number of politically active Jewish supporters, and both Jewish representatives have a small number of politically active Hispanic supporters. In February 2000, Representative Deutsch clandestinely met with 15 well-known dissidents in Havana.²⁶

Solidly Republican Cuban-American voting patterns in presidential elections began to change in Miami-Dade in 1992, when Cuban-Americans cast about a fifth of their votes for Bill Clinton. This increased in 1996 to a little over a third, and played a critical role in Clinton's carrying the state. Increased Cuban support was due partly to Clinton's support of the embargo against Cuba (the Helms-Burton Act), his support of Radio Marti, and his condemnation of the shooting down of the Brothers to the Rescue planes in February 1996. Having removed the Cuban issues as negative factors, Clinton's positioning of himself in the political center as a "New Democrat" then allowed him to appeal to moderate Cuban-Americans on other issues such the military and the economy. Clinton's increase of votes was also partly the result of Cuban-Americans beginning to give more importance to issues other than Castro. Republican opposition to

immigration and Republican support for denying welfare benefits to noncitizens and for English-only initiatives finally began to impact Cuban-American voting in the mid-1990s, somewhat narrowing the chasm between Cuban-American and Jewish voting patterns in presidential elections. In November 2000, because of Cuban-American anger following Janet Reno's armed seizure of Elian Gonzalez from his relatives' home, Cuban-American voters returned heavily to the Republican candidate for president. Jewish voters continued to vote heavily Democratic. For example, a group of heavily Jewish precincts which had voted 84.3 percent for Clinton and 12.6 percent for Dole in 1996 voted 85.3 percent for Gore and 14.6 percent for Bush in 2000.

Into the New Millennium—Mixed Signals

As noted, freedom of expression has been an explosive issue in Miami-Dade County from the 1960s to the present. For more than 40 years, vituperative personal attacks, censoring of publications, economic reprisals, and even death threats and bombings, among other actions, have been undertaken by a small number of Cuban-Americans against those (usually other Cuban-Americans) perceived as too soft on Castro or not "Cuban enough." Most Jews, Anglos, blacks, and non-Cuban Hispanics have strongly criticized these activities.

But little vocal criticism has been expressed from within the Cuban-American community. This stems both from fear of retribution and also from what a *Miami Herald* columnist describes as Cuban-Americans' perceptions that they do not need to build allies with other ethnic groups: "Since emerging as a significant presence here, Cubans have not particularly needed allies. They've prospered, placing their cultural and political stamp on Miami-Dade County largely by using their own resources and determination.... The result: many older Cubans view non-Cubans as irrelevant to their lives, if not as obstacles to the mission of deposing Castro."²⁷

This comparative communal obliviousness to the attitudes of non-Cubans helps explain why some Cuban-Americans chose to vent their feelings regarding the Elian Gonzalez situation in the manner they did. They blocked traffic and held disruptive street protests, engendering strong resentment from all non-Cubans, including non-Cuban Hispanics. While most Jews shared the general public resentment, their anger was not seen as primarily Jewish and thus invited little anti-Semitism.

The balance of ethnic power has also sustained isolation. As a result of the increased political and economic success of Hispanics (especially Cuban-Amer-

icans), the greater political power of blacks, and the continuing political and economic clout of Jews, the Anglo-Saxon Protestants who traditionally discriminated against ethnic minority groups have become a small minority within Miami-Dade County. Hence, the alliances that might have been forged between Cuban-Americans and Jews facing a common enemy were superfluous. In fact, unlike most urban areas, in Miami-Dade non-Hispanics and Hispanics complain about equally of discrimination by the other. As Portes and Stepick have noted, "As the Cuban community gained political power it imposed a monolithic outlook on the city, often with little regard for the concerns and interests of other segments of the population."²⁸

Areas of Potential Common Ground

Whatever the local balance of power, Cuban-Americans and Jews are tiny minorities in the national and world arenas, and both need allies to protect their interests. They have struggled successfully to build alliances on the national level, but it also is necessary to build them locally.

To accomplish this, Jews and Hispanics need to identify commonalities. At present, there are a number of important shared sociological characteristics and civic concerns that could lead to a closer relationship between Jews and Cuban-Americans, in particular. Sociological parallels include similar age distributions, small family size, high expectations for children, emphasis on social and economic mobility, interaction at the elite level, cultural crossover by significant numbers of individuals who are both Hispanic and Jewish, and generational change.

Among Hispanics in Miami-Dade, Cuban-Americans are the closest to Jewish Americans on demographic variables. The median age for Jews is 48 (largely a product of the high number of elderly retirees and zero Jewish population growth), and 40 for Cuban-Americans (accounted for partly by the migration pattern and partly by small numbers of children). The median is 37 for Anglos, 24 to 28 for other Hispanics, and 26 for blacks. The high percentage of elderly among Jews and Cuban-Americans can lead to a shared concern on issues such as health care and Social Security.

Also like Jewish Americans, Cuban-American families typically produce few children, a familiar pattern for groups with high expectations for their children's social, professional, and financial success. Both Cuban-Americans and Jews place heavy emphasis on educational and professional success. Because of their strong sense of group identity, Cuban-Americans also send a significant

number (about 20 percent) of their children to private or religious schools to perpetuate their cultural values and to encourage economic and professional success. For students in elementary through high school, the percentage in private schools is 24 percent for Jews. The comparable figure is about 22 percent for Anglos, 10 percent for non-Cuban Hispanics, and 5 percent for blacks.

Cubans have often been referred to as “the Jews of the Caribbean,” with both the negative and positive traditional connotations. Both groups are perceived as industrious, highly interested in educational and cultural activities, and skilled at business—but they are also negatively stereotyped as tough businessmen, materialistic, too powerful, and clannish. Cuban-American median income is generally one-third higher than that of other Hispanics, and their unemployment and poverty levels are about one-half those of other Hispanics. The Hispanic community in Miami-Dade County, led by Cuban-Americans, has achieved considerable economic strength along with much political power. Primarily because of Cuban-American prosperity, the three-county area including Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties is the third-largest Hispanic market in retail sales and in buying power in the United States—only Los Angeles and New York surpass it—and it has the highest per capita buying power. Moreover, Hispanics in general are industrious, and both Cuban immigrants and other Hispanic immigrants probably will close the gap between Hispanics and Jews as Hispanics overcome the difficulties of starting over in a new country.

Professional and, to a lesser degree social, interaction between Hispanics and Jews in Miami-Dade is fairly common at the elite level. For example, the county mayor, Alex Penelas, is Cuban-American, and the chair of the County Commission, Gwen Margolis, is Jewish. The president of Florida International University, Modesto Maidique, is Cuban-American, and the provost, Mark Rosenberg, is Jewish. Miami-Dade Community College has a Cuban-American president, Eduardo Padron, and, until recently, a Jewish chair of the board, Martin Fein.

Joe Carollo, a Cuban-American, served as mayor of Miami for several years from 1996 to November 2001, and, for part of that time Donald Warshaw (Jewish, with a Puerto Rican wife) was city manager. Carollo frequently fought with Warshaw, and fired him after Janet Reno’s directed armed seizure of Elian Gonzalez on April 22, 2000. Warshaw had refused Carollo’s order to fire the Irish-American police chief for not informing Carollo about the secretly-planned seizure of Elian Gonzalez. When Carollo was defeated for reelection on November 6, 2001, he acknowledged that his firing of Warshaw had caused

him to lose support among “Anglos.” Warshaw, the only top Jewish official in the city, and the police chief, were both replaced by Cuban-Americans. Several months later Warshaw would go to prison for financial improprieties. Carollo has had some strong Jewish supporters over the years, and his actions have not been aimed at Jews, but at many, including other Cuban-Americans, with whom he disagreed. In 1986, for example, tensions reached such a level over a business deal that Jorge Mas Canosa, founder of the powerful Cuban-American National Foundation and a revered leader in the Cuban-American community, challenged Carollo to a duel. Carollo defused this situation by choosing water pistols as the weapon of choice.

Carollo was defeated for reelection on November 6, 2001, and on November 13, Manny Diaz, a young Cuban-American who has worked closely with all ethnic groups, was elected mayor. While the voting was heavily along ethnic lines (there were no Jewish candidates), Diaz promised to bring the community together. The *Miami Herald* noted, “Unlike Carollo, who was viewed by many people as the city’s Cuban mayor, Diaz seems likely to be a mayor who is Cuban.” As younger Cuban-Americans become more willing to vote for non-Cubans, the day might even come when a non-Cuban Jew can be appointed to a top position or even (possibly, but not likely) be elected to office in Miami. Meanwhile, in Miami Beach on November 13, David Dermer, a young American Jew, defeated another Jewish candidate largely because Dermer received heavy Hispanic support. Miami Beach has clearly set the example in Miami-Dade County for mutual respect and cooperation between Jews and Hispanics. Miami Beach has a Jewish mayor (with a Cuban-Jewish wife), three Jewish commission members, one of whom is both Cuban and Jewish, and four Cuban-American commission members (including the one who is both Cuban and Jewish, and one who is married to a Jewish man). The last two city managers, José Garcia Pedrosa, Sergio Rodriguez, and Jorge Gonzalez, have been Cuban-Americans, including one, Garcia Pedrosa, who has a Jewish wife. Lawrence Levy, Jewish, also served as acting city manager between Rodriguez and Gonzalez. The county Democratic Party until recently had a Jewish chair, Joe Geller, and a Cuban-American executive director, Gus Garcia, a protege of Democratic Congressman Robert Menendez of New Jersey. The American Civil Liberties Union until recently had a Cuban-American president, John DeLeon (and now has a Colombian-American president, Lida Rodriguez-Taseff), and a Jewish executive director (the state director, located in Miami-Dade), Howard Simon.

Even during the highly tense fight over Elian Gonzalez, 12 attorneys

worked for the Gonzalez family in Little Havana, and about half of the attorneys were Jewish. Aaron Podhurst, former president of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation and a personal friend of Reno, was the negotiator on hold on the telephone with Reno when the federal raid took place. Norman Braman, now president of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, was one of the prominent non-Cuban Americans who strongly urged more sensitivity toward the Cuban-American position. Many additional examples of positive interactions between Jews and Hispanics, the specific people constantly changing, could be cited.

Although Jews were not treated with complete equality in Cuba, their treatment compared favorably with their experience in Europe and some Sephardic areas. Jews in Cuba identified as both Cubans and Jews, and brought the Cuban culture and language with them to Miami. As Seymour Liebman noted in 1969, "Their adherence to Spanish as the language of the home was remarkable.... Spanish was spoken with pride by all who came to South Florida from Latin America. This was quite unlike the reaction to Yiddish by first-generation Americans, who wanted their parents to discard Yiddish.... the Jew found Cuban acceptance of him as a citizen a most heart-warming experience. His gratitude to that country was expressed by adherence to its tongue."²⁹ More than three decades later, Liebman's observations remain mostly accurate.

Individuals who are both Cuban and Jewish (or Hispanic and Jewish) have played a quiet but significant role in Miami-Dade in helping to bridge the gap between Hispanics and Jews, mostly at the elite or professional level. Prominent business people who are both Hispanic and Jewish and have provided a connection between the two communities include Jack Chester, George Feldenkrais, Salomon Garazi, Salomon Gold, Abel Holtz, Juan Matalon, Isaac and Nieves Olemberg, and Nathan Rok. In publishing, Ezequiel Muhtar, a writer for the Israeli consulate and several local newspapers, and Manolo "Manny" Warzsavski, editor of a small bilingual newspaper and a political activist, have helped bridge differences between the Jewish and Cuban communities. In the academic arena, Luis Glasser is provost at the University of Miami, and Raul Moncarz is vice provost for academic affairs at the Biscayne Bay campus of Florida International University. Jaime Suchlicki is director of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami, and Mark Szuchman is associate dean of arts and sciences at Florida International University. José Mitrani is a department chair at Florida International University, and Clara Waldman is director of Exceptional Student Education at Barry University. A number of other individuals fill academic positions.

Dual identities also lessen political differences between Jews and Hispan-

ics, especially Cubans, and provide opportunities to bridge communities. A study of Miami Beach in 1991 found that “Cuban-born Sephardim are 32.1 percent Democratic and 58.3 percent Republican, while Cuban-born Ashkenazim are 48.8 percent Democratic and 38.1 percent Republican. Non-Cuban-born Sephardim are 57.1 percent Democratic and 30.5 percent Republican, while non-Cuban-born Ashkenazim are 82.6 percent Democratic and only 11.7 percent Republican.”³⁰ Cuban-born Jews are more Republican than are U.S.-born Jews, but more Democratic than non-Jewish Cuban-Americans.

As among other immigrant groups, significant differences are arising among different generations of Cuban-Americans with regard to cultural identity, values, and public policy. As noted by Perez, unlike their elders, younger Cuban-Americans increasingly perceive of themselves as members of an ethnic minority within the American pluralistic mix, and not as exiles.³¹ Younger Cuban-Americans are also more flexible on policy toward Cuba than older Cuban-Americans. In a 1997 poll of Cuban-Americans, only 36 percent of the elderly (65+) and 44 percent of the 45-64 age group favored dialogue between the United States and Cuba, but 60 percent of the 30-44 age group and 77 percent of the 18-29 age group favored it.³²

The generational divide has also been apparent in attitudes toward the recent protests around the Elian Gonzalez controversy. Hispanics over 50 supported the disruptive protests by a margin of two and a half to one. However, Hispanics under 50 were evenly divided. Portes notes that “... rifts are growing among Cuban-Americans tired of marching one day in Miami to urge strengthened sanctions against Castro and lining up the next day to send money and goods to friends and family on the island.”³³

Differences between the generations play out in other areas as well. In a 1989 poll by Mason-Dixon Opinion Research, 34 percent of Cuban-Americans responded that abortion should be left to the woman or her doctor, whereas the response was 76 percent for non-Cuban Hispanics, 73 percent for Jews, 71 percent for non-Jewish whites, and 61 percent for blacks. However, Cuban-American opinion was sharply divided by generation. Cuban-Americans under 30 would leave the decision to the woman and her doctor by 79 percent to 21 percent.³⁴

Generational changes are also occurring among Jewish Americans, of course, but they appear to be moving in the opposite direction, with younger Jews being somewhat less liberal than older ones. Little empirical data exist on these changes in Miami-Dade, but a 1992 study of political affiliation in Miami Beach showed that among the elderly (65+), 87 percent were Democrats and 9

percent were Republicans. Among the middle-aged (40-65), 74 percent were Democrats and 18 percent were Republicans, and among the younger generation (18-40), 67 percent were Democrats and 22 percent were Republicans. The sizable Hasidic and ultra-Orthodox community in Miami Beach tends to be young and Republican, but this fervently religious cohort constitutes a general exception within the broader Jewish community, and their number, while growing, remains comparatively small.³⁵

Though these changes are noteworthy, the American Jewish community is now almost one hundred years removed from the last major migration and is thus more stabilized. Thus generational changes within the Jewish community probably will be smaller than among Cuban-Americans, who will be evolving, over the next few decades, from an exile group into a more integral part of American's multicultural mix. Clearly, the movement toward the political center and away from opposite ends of the ideological continuum by the younger generations of both Cuban-Americans and Jews will probably lead to more common interests and less political distance.

Social and political distance can also be narrowed through a common civic agenda, as well as the shared challenges that Jews and Cuban Americans face as ethnic minorities. On such meat-and-potatoes local issues as governmental corruption, population growth, urban sprawl, and traffic congestion, debate increasingly cuts across ethnic lines.

The experience, memory, and symbolism of Diaspora have shaped the identities of Jews and Cuban-Americans, and this common thread has made some Jews particularly sensitive to the Cuban experience of exile. In a 1997 address to a group of Cuban-Americans, Stuart Eizenstat, President Clinton's envoy regarding policy to Cuba, stated that, as a Jew, "I have a particular empathy [with Cubans] I have a very deep and abiding respect for them as a member of a minority group whose community has been exiled for 2,000 years from their homeland."³⁶

In December 1999, Jorge Mas Santos (son of the late Jorge Mas Canosa, founder of the Cuban-American National Foundation), owner of the Freedom Tower, announced plans to restore the building in downtown Miami as a museum for exiles. (The Freedom Tower was the place where many Cuban exiles were processed when they arrived from Cuba.) He stated: "What I want to elicit is the same emotion you feel when you go through the Holocaust Museum [in Washington, D.C.], so you can identify with what a people have gone through. ... I want it to touch people."³⁷ The Jorge Mas Canosa Freedom Fund gave a \$1 million donation to restore the building, and a \$250,000 donation came from

Norman Braman, whose Jewish parents emigrated from Europe. Braman remarked, "The Freedom Tower is a symbol of freedom not only for Cuban-Americans, but for everyone."

Although Castro has not discriminated against the Jews in Cuba, he has consistently taken a strong stand against Israel over the years. As Edmundo Amuchastegui has noted, "Cuba continues to destabilize the policies of the United States in the Middle East and North Africa in different ways..."³⁸ In Castro, both Cuban exiles and Jews who support the survival of Israel have a common enemy, but this bond has largely been overlooked or been difficult to build on because of Jewish opposition to the right-wing tactics employed by a vocal minority of extremist Cuban-Americans.

Negative Factors

Despite these areas of cultural commonality and of common interest, there are a number of significant factors that might hinder the improvement of Jewish/Cuban-American relations. These include residential segregation and resultant ethnic segregation in public schools, little ethnic interaction among college students (the future leaders of the community), little social interaction outside of the workplace, and Hispanic unity.

Residential separatism plays an enormous role in maintaining social division. Miami-Dade's neighborhoods are largely ethnic enclaves, with limited interaction among individuals from different backgrounds. Some areas, especially those with large numbers of elderly condominium dwellers, are in transition from being almost uniformly Jewish to uniformly Hispanic, but most residential family neighborhoods are largely segregated. Jewish-Hispanic interaction is also minimal because many Jews have already moved out and headed north, with a resultant ethnic imbalance in the county: Cuban-Americans constitute 35 percent of Miami-Dade's population, all Hispanics 59 percent, and Jews only about 8 percent.

As is the case in the overwhelming majority of America's urban school systems, the student body of the Miami-Dade public schools is almost entirely Hispanic or black, with only a small percentage of Anglo or Jewish students. Hence, Jewish and Hispanic students seldom interact, and the popularity of religious and secular private schools creates further division.

There also is little interaction on the college level between Hispanic and Jewish students, which is particularly unfortunate because college students are to a large degree the future leaders of the community. Florida International

University (FIU), the state university in Miami-Dade County, is over half Hispanic, and would be an ideal meeting place for a younger generation of future leaders to develop friendships. But most Jewish students attend universities in Tallahassee or Gainesville, or out of state, with only a small percentage attending FIU. The University of Miami has a large number of local Cuban-American students as well as a large number of Jewish students, but most of the Jewish students come from out of the state and leave the area after graduation.³⁹

As two highly educated groups, Jews and Cuban-Americans do interact professionally, especially younger adults, but because of residential segregation, cultural distinctiveness, and group loyalties, social segregation remains the norm. The sociological “five o’clock shadow,” the syndrome whereby diverse individuals interact in a friendly manner at work but go their separate ways when the workday ends, is still strong. Leisure-time activities and forms of entertainment (music, dancing, etc.) also are different enough to lessen potential interaction, even for the young. Younger Jews generally follow standard American tastes in popular culture, which sometimes includes major Latin stars such as Ricky Martin and Carlos Santana, but young Cuban-Americans are very much more into the Latino scene in entertainment.

In a period of about three decades, Cuban-Americans passed from being an exile group with little concern about or awareness of the local community to a largely excluded minority group to the dominant political force in the area. Spending only a short period as an excluded minority group and knowing that changing demographics would soon give them political dominance, many Cuban-Americans saw little need to build alliances with other minority groups. Miami Beach, with large numbers of both Jewish and Hispanic voters, has been a major exception.

Even if the Cuban-American community changes its historical orientation and comes to recognize the need to build intergroup alliances in the future, there is no guarantee it will choose the Jewish community as a partner. Despite complaints among members of the growing non-Cuban Hispanic population of exclusion by Cuban-Americans, shared language and, to some degree, shared Latin culture and religion make them more likely candidates. As noted earlier by Perez, younger Cuban-Americans, as they start to expand beyond the Cuban-American community, will be especially attracted to other Hispanics. In a 1998 survey commissioned by the *Miami Herald* and NBC’s Channel 6, members of four groups—blacks, Cubans, other Hispanics, and white non-Hispanics (including Jews)—were asked with which group other than their own they felt comfortable. Blacks split their answers (17 percent Cubans, 29 percent other

Hispanics, 17 percent non-Hispanic whites, and 38 percent no answer); and white non-Hispanics split their answers (21 percent blacks, 21 percent Cubans, 23 percent other Hispanics, and 36 percent no answer). Other Hispanics had some division (8 percent blacks, 44 percent Cubans, 25 percent non-Hispanic whites, and 23 percent no answer), but clearly favored Cubans. Cubans had the least mixed responses, clearly preferring other Hispanics (60 percent), with 6 percent preferring blacks, 15 percent for non-Hispanic whites, and only 19 percent undecided.⁴⁰

Thus far, with the exceptions noted, Cuban-Americans have paid scant attention to their relationship with the Jewish community, but the Jews have not felt the same luxury of indifference. With many centuries of experience as a persecuted minority, Jews feel a much greater need to heed which way the winds are shifting and to try to build alliances, but given the major difference in the size of the two communities, this will take time. As is the case with historic black-Jewish relations, where Jews have often felt the sting of unrequited mutual interest, for the foreseeable future there will likely be an imbalance between strong Jewish interest in a relationship with Hispanics and a tepid Hispanic response.

Some of the distance felt by Cuban-Americans toward other Americans, Jews included, stems from resentment at what is regarded in Cuban-American circles as a colonialist U.S. foreign policy and mentality toward Cuba during the first half of the twentieth century. Jews are caught in an attitudinal catch-22; while their liberalism has made them more likely to be critical of American colonialism than other white Americans, the same liberalism brands them as insufficiently tough against Castro. In an analysis of the *Miami Herald's* failure to appeal successfully to Cuban-Americans, Swartz notes the newspaper "misjudged the insular passions of the exiles and their bitter distrust of Americans, who they felt had betrayed the anti-Castro cause."⁴¹

While Jews may be more open to alliance, they are also uncomfortable with seminal aspects of Cuban-American culture, especially its religiosity. Many Jews are leery of fervent Christians because of the church's historic anti-Semitism. The historic Spanish Catholic Church has a strong tradition of anti-Semitism and *limpieza de sangre* (purity and superiority of non-Jewish Spanish blood), and the Spanish crown excluded Jews from Cuba before 1881. Spanish priests continued to play a major role in Cuban Catholicism, and, particularly in rural areas, Catholic priests in pre-Castro Cuba still taught that Jews had killed Christ. As Levine and Szuchman have noted, "Jewish families in the provinces fared worse than those in Havana. Good rural schools were rare and were often run by the Catholic Church. In many cases, parish priests across Cuba did not

dissuade their students from taunting their few Jewish classmates with epithets like Christ-killer.”⁴²

Although not as strong as in some other Latino communities, there is a growing Evangelical-Pentecostal movement among some Cuban-Americans, but this has produced mixed results regarding interactions with Jews. The Evangelical-Pentecostals are likely to strongly agree with Jews on support for Israel, but strongly disagree with Jews on social issues such as abortion, feminism, and gay rights.

A strong secularist tradition in Cuba somewhat mitigated the impact of Spanish Catholicism, but Cuban nationalism also spawned anti-Semitism. Kaplan, Moncarz, and Steinberg note that “the general weakness of identity exhibited by Cuba’s elite, the island’s unofficial colonial status and its newness as a republic” facilitated the assimilation of immigrants, including Jews, into Cuban society.⁴³ But the same factors led to periods of nationalistic oppression that aimed to solidify a Cuban identity. In 1932, for example, President Gerardo Machado outlawed all Jewish cultural, social, and religious activities. Jews were not allowed to become citizens until the late 1930s (partly due to U.S. pressure to minimize the immigration of Jews into the United States), and the 1939-40 Cuban constitution had a prohibition (passed following a discussion of Jewish immigration) against immigrants practicing law or medicine. Four of the “big five” exclusive country clubs did not allow Jews as members (one allowed Jews only from the United States). Restrictions were changed as new administrations came into power, and generally anti-Semitism in Cuba has been blamed on outside forces such as the Nazis and the Falangists in the 1930s and 1940s, and Arab and PLO instigators since then. Historically, Jews in Cuba kept a low profile and did not get involved overtly in politics and other visible activities. As Levine and Szuchman note, “Jews were not explicitly barred from influential occupations and endeavors, but it was understood that Jews were not welcome in the most prestigious clubs, in high society, or in the banks, corporations, and the government.”⁴⁴

Although most Cuban Jews lived in Cuba only several decades before going into exile after Castro’s rise, and did not achieve the economic success and visibility achieved by Jews in most of Latin America, they were generally perceived as middle- or upper-middle class rather than as victims of oppression. Hence, like other non-Europeans, most Hispanic non-Jews have an inadequate understanding of the enormity of the Holocaust and its impact on Jewish thought and behavior. In pre-Castro Cuba, school textbooks did not mention the Holocaust, and there was an almost total lack of information about Jews and

Judaism. Because Hispanics were not taught about the immensity of Jewish suffering stemming from historic powerlessness, they have not recognized this deep-rooted source of the Jewish drive to achieve sufficient political power to avert further catastrophe.⁴⁵

Conclusion

American Jews and Hispanics, especially Cuban-Americans, have frequently been at opposite ends of the ideological and political spectrum in Miami-Dade. There has been little overt bitterness between the groups, despite these differences, but neither has there been much political or social interaction. However, the gap is beginning to narrow somewhat with time and generational change. The groups share characteristics and concerns that could form the basis for building a better relationship. On a national level, while Jews remain liberal on lifestyle issues, they are moderate on crime and the death penalty. Jews continue to support public education, public culture, and the generous provision of social services, but they are not supporters of large wealth-redistributing programs. Cuban-Americans share their moderation on crime, the death penalty, and wealth redistribution. As noted earlier, the two Cuban-American members of Congress from South Florida did not support the Contract with America, and Clinton got a significant part of the Cuban-American vote, partly because Cuban-Americans are beginning to emphasize issues other than Castro. With more attention to domestic policies, the Republican Party's opposition to immigration, support for denying welfare benefits to noncitizens, and support for English-only initiatives will close the gap between Jewish and Cuban-American voting patterns. As Peter Beinart has written, "Jews, like Latinos, see in the Buchanan-Reed wing of the GOP a threat to the American cosmopolitanism on which, as conspicuous minorities, they both rely for acceptance."⁴⁶ (*See page 8*) Cuban-Americans probably will not reach the level of liberalism traditionally held by American Jews, but, as noted, generational changes on lifestyle issues (e.g., abortion) also will help build more similarities between the groups.

Because Cuban-Americans for several decades were largely limited to the enclave in Miami-Dade, and as the enclave expanded they came to exercise much political power in the area, they have felt little need to build alliances. Jews, as a centuries-old minority, have long understood the pragmatic need for alliances. To the extent that a Jewish agenda will remain, Jews in the United States need allies even more because of the shrinking size of the Jewish community due to a low birthrate and intermarriage. Latinos are the demographic wave

of the future, and Jews need alliances with them over shared values. But Jews also have significant political power because of their high degree of political awareness derived from their history of oppression, their major campaign contributions resulting from their economic success, and their presence and voting patterns in key states. Latinos also have strong presences in key states, and together Latinos and Jews could play a major role in advancing a less fundamentalist and more open society. The strong Jewish presence in prestige universities, the professions, and the media have been used to help broaden American society and, to some degree, to sensitize other Americans to Latin concerns and needs, but this influence should be used even more.

Jews and Hispanics need to help each other understand what makes the other tick, to learn more about and be more sensitive to the other's history, problems, concerns, values, and aspirations. To that end, the educational mandates about teaching about the Holocaust and about the Hispanic contribution to American culture in Florida's public schools should be enforced. Hispanics should know about the Jewish historical disasters that have taught Jews the necessity to acquire allies and political power; and, despite the undemocratic tactics of some anti-Castro Cuban-Americans, Jews need to recognize more fully the Cuban catastrophe. To date, these fundamental understandings remain elusive.

Endnotes

1. Although the Ku Klux Klan was outlawed and replaced by other anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, and anti-black groups, it did not totally disappear from the area or Florida. In 1980, Cuban refugees at Eglin Air Force Base in northern Florida were greeted with an airplane flying a banner that said, "K.K.K. is here." The Ku Klux Klan also had held anti-Cuban rallies in Arkansas when some Cuban refugees from the Mariel Exodus rioted while being detained in an Arkansas prison because of questions about criminal pasts in Cuba. The controversy over these refugees was a factor in Governor Bill Clinton's defeat for reelection.

2. Debra Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

3. Morton Lucoff, "Metro Votes to Create Division of Bilingual, Bicultural Affairs," *Miami Herald*, Apr. 17, 1973, p. 5A.

4. Fredric Tasker, "Bilingualism: A History of Social Change," *Miami Herald*, Nov. 3, 1980, p. 1B. Beginning in 1978, Benes was shunned by the Cuban-American community in Miami-Dade County because he met with Castro in Havana in an effort to get some political prisoners released, but his Jewishness did not overtly become an issue. See Helga Silva, "Those Called 'Soft' Are Often Shunned: Hardliners Say There Can Never Be Negotiations with Castro," *Miami Herald*, Dec. 11, 1983, p. 15M.

5. David Holmberg, "The Final Days Turn Bitter in Dade Gay Rights Conflict," *Miami Herald*, June 1, 1977, p. 4A.

6. Dick Holland, "Heavy Turnout for Vote on Gay Rights," *Miami News*, June 7, 1977, p. 1A.
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More Than Passing Acquaintances: Latinos and Jews in Chicago

Louis DeSipio

An examination of Jewish-Latino relations in Chicago offers several perspectives on the tentative, evolving relationship between the communities throughout the United States. Some local characteristics undoubtedly reflect the state of Jewish-Latino relations nationally; others are perhaps more particular to Chicago, although components of the nexus between Jews and Latinos in Chicago are likely paralleled elsewhere.

Both communities have resided in the city for many years. Segments within each share common needs, and mutually supportive and even cordial relations have developed among their leadership elites. Yet, at the grassroots level the communities are distant. Survey research suggests that Latinos show little affect for Jews. While there are no data on the basis of which to measure Jewish attitudes toward Chicago Latinos, Jewish residential concentration in the suburbs, combined with the high share of recent immigrants among city Jewish residents, suggests that Jews know little of Chicago's Latinos. Despite this distance, there seems little likelihood of intergroup conflict. Instead, elite cooperation allows community leaders to tap the resources that each community can bring to the table and to lobby in coalition to address common needs. Though economic, cultural, social, and religious differences between the communities carry the potential for future rivalry, at present Chicago's Jews and Latinos can be understood as distant allies.

Migrants in Multiethnic Chicago

Jews and Latinos are just two of Chicago's many ethnic populations. Although their spans of residence vary in length, both communities have followed a common pattern of roots in immigration, internal divisions that needed to be overcome, exclusion from the political machine and economic opportunities, and, eventually, political and economic successes that came with greater internal cohesion. Latinos are a more recent addition to Chicago's mosaic and continue

to experience high levels of growth resulting from immigration (and migration in the case of Chicago's Puerto Ricans). As a result, their unity, as well as their political and economic successes, is more tentative. Chicago's Jews have also experienced extensive suburbanization, a phenomenon that also appears in Chicago's Latino community, though on a smaller scale.

Jews from German-speaking regions of central Europe began to migrate to Chicago in the late 1830s, and initially their numbers were small. Chicago's Jewish population reached just 10,000 by 1880 (out of 500,000 citywide). Over the next twenty years, the historic heyday of Eastern and Southern European immigration to America, the population surged with an influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. By 1900, Chicago's Jewish population had grown to 80,000, and by 1930 to 275,000 (out of 3.4 million citywide). The Eastern European Jewish immigrants who dominated the immigrant stream after 1880 were poorer than their predecessors, lived separately from them, and were regarded as less assimilable both by Jews already resident in Chicago and by the larger society. A rich network of ethnic and nonethnic service agencies emerged, in part, to assimilate the Eastern European Jews. The funders of these agencies included Jews who had migrated before the 1880s.

Beginning in the 1920s, with the decline in new immigration resulting from the National Origin Quotas Immigration Laws, Chicago's Jewish population stopped growing (it numbers just 260,000 region-wide today) and began to move within the city and into the suburbs. This halt to new migration began a process that allowed the distinctions between the German and Eastern European-origin Jewish populations largely to erode. By the 1950s, traditional centers of Chicago Jewish population—Lawndale, Kenwood, and South Shore—disappeared with a steady process of suburbanization. The Jews who remained moved to areas north of the loop along the lakefront (Lake View, Uptown, and Rogers Park) and to the northwestern part of the city. The majority of the region's Jewish population now resides in the suburbs. By the 1990s, just 90,000 Jews resided in the city, making up less than 3 percent of the population.

Chicago's Jews have remained outsiders to the city's political machine and politically distant from Chicago's other white European ethnic populations. Politically active Jews are generally more liberal than the machine and, with isolated exceptions, have not been recruited to its inner circles. As a result, Jewish areas have traditionally supported reform—anti-machine—candidates. Because of their relatively small numbers, Jews have not been the primary concern of machine leaders. Thus, the machine's efforts to divide Chicago ethnic populations have not had the effect in Jewish populations that they have in some of

Chicago's larger immigrant ethnic populations. As I will indicate, the machine has more successfully divided Latino communities.

The suburbanization of Chicago's Jewish population leaves a bifurcated population in the city itself. The community includes wealthy professionals and young recent college graduates, but also a sizable elderly population that includes many in poverty as well as a slowly growing immigrant population with origins in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Estimates suggest that immigrants may make up as much as 10 percent of the Chicago area's Jews. These concentrations of elderly and immigrant Jewish populations shape one area of potential alliance with Chicago's Latinos, specifically support for social services and immigrant settlement assistance. The small size of Chicago's Jewish population, however, diminishes its importance in electoral politics.

Chicago's Latinos first appeared in large numbers in the city in the 1920s. Mexican immigrants recruited for agricultural labor in the Midwest often stopped in Chicago and established small communities. In the 1940s, Chicago's Mexican-Americans were joined by Puerto Ricans to make the nation's first true Latino community in the sense that more than one Latino national origin group resided there in sizable numbers. But for most of that time, the city's Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans lived apart. They did not begin to see themselves as part of a single community until the 1970s. Mexican-Americans were concentrated southwest of the loop and Puerto Ricans to its north.

Beginning in the 1970s, however, community leaders began to identify common needs and to develop a pan-Latino agenda around such issues as anti-discrimination, access to jobs, improving the quality of education, and electoral empowerment. It was also at about this time that Chicago's Democratic machine began to take notice of the Latino community and to selectively recruit Latinos into its networks. For the most part, though, the machine kept Latinos at a distance. It took federal lawsuits over redistricting in the mid-1980s to provide the true foundation for Latino office-holding.

High levels of immigration in the wake of the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 have spurred a dramatic increase in Chicago's Latino population. Growing from approximately 110,000 in 1960 to almost 550,000 in 1990, Latinos now make up more than 20 percent of the city's population. Latinos make up a much smaller share of the population of Chicago's suburbs. (Only Aurora, a distant suburb, has a high concentration of Latinos.)

Chicago's Latinos are predominantly working class. In 1990, just 44 percent had graduated high school and more than 20 percent lived in households

below the poverty line. These characteristics, related, in part, to the high numbers of immigrants in Chicago's Latino households, are important when considering the political world of Chicago's Latinos. The issues of central concern in these communities revolve around economic opportunity, immigrant settlement, and education. At the same time, the likelihood of political influence through electoral mobilization is greatly reduced in communities with these characteristics.

The politicization of Chicago's Jews and Latinos followed similar paths. Immigration spurred community growth. Differences based on national origin initially limited their options, but over time each community created an ethnic politics. The size of the Latino communities guarantees them a voice in Chicago's politics, though, as I suggest, it is dampened by Chicago's political machine. While Chicago's Jews cannot assert a similar place in the city's politics, they do share some policy needs with Latinos that can create the foundation for issue-based alliances.

Communities Apart

Though both communities have been part of the city's ethnic mosaic for several generations, members of Chicago's Jewish and Latino communities have little contact with each other at the mass level. As a result, to the extent that such attitudes can be measured, Chicago's Latinos have little affect for Jews. Although their attitudes are not negative, Chicago Latinos feel much closer to other ethnic and racial populations. They are also more likely than the American population as a whole to hold negative stereotypes about Jews. No comparable data exist on Chicago Jews' attitudes toward Latinos, though, again, their lack of contact with Latinos may well generate neutral feelings.

A 1989 survey of Latino attitudes nationally (the Latino National Political Survey—LNPS) offers unique insight into Latino attitudes toward other ethnic and racial populations in the United States. The survey asked Latino respondents about their feelings of closeness to eight ethnic populations, of which Jews were one. Five of the ethnic groups probed in the survey were components of the Latino community (e.g., Mexican immigrants, Mexican-Americans, Cuban Americans, U.S. Puerto Ricans, and Island Puerto Ricans). The non-Latino populations were Jews, blacks and Asians. Of these eight groups, Latinos nationally felt the least close to Jews and Asians—roughly at the mid-point of a scale from 1 (very distant) to 100 (very close). Chicago Latinos were slightly closer to Jews than Latinos nationally (56 compared to 54), but the pattern

remained of Jews being the ethnic group that Latinos reported the least closeness to; U.S. Cubans were next with an average ranking of 60. Chicago's Latino U.S. citizens report slightly more positive feelings toward the Jewish community (59), but Jews remain the group for which Chicago Latino citizens have the lowest affect. These results should not be interpreted as distance; in each case they are above the midpoint score of 50.

The LNPS offers some insight into how Latinos come to these feelings. One possible resource to develop alliances between the communities (and one that is tapped among elites in each community) is a shared perception of discrimination. At the mass level, however, Latinos do not perceive that Jews experience a great deal of discrimination. The LNPS asked Latinos about their perceptions of discrimination experienced by seven populations, three Latino—Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban-Americans—plus blacks, Jews, Asians, and women. Of these seven groups, Latinos reported that Jews experienced the lowest levels of discrimination. On a scale from 1 (high levels of discrimination experienced) to 4 (none experienced), Latinos scored discrimination against Jews as 2.9. In comparison, they ranked discrimination against blacks as a 2.0 and against Mexican-Americans as a 2.1. Chicago Latinos saw this gap as wider—1.9 for blacks and Mexican-Americans versus 3.0 for Jews. Unlike the measures of affect, these findings bode ill for a mass foundation of a Latino-Jewish alliance in Chicago. A potential area for alliance between Jews and Latinos is in fighting discrimination. Yet these data would suggest that, at the mass level, there is little perception that Jews experience discrimination.

The basis of these Latino beliefs about Jews has not been surveyed, though there is some evidence from a national survey—*Taking America's Pulse* conducted by the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1992—that Latinos are somewhat more likely to hold negative stereotypes of Jews and less likely to hold positive stereotypes than are whites. Although this survey does not allow for the disaggregation of Chicago Latino respondents, there is no reason to believe that their views would differ considerably from those of Latinos nationwide. In terms of negative stereotypes, *Taking America's Pulse* found that Latinos were about 50 percent more likely than whites to agree with the statements that Jews will choose money over people and that Jews have too much control of business and media. In neither case did the majority of Latinos hold these positions. In terms of positive stereotypes, the majority of Latinos reported that Jews value education and enrich life in the United States, though they are between 15 and 20 percent less likely than white respondents to hold these views. A minority of Latinos, on the other hand, agreed with the statement that

Jews back social justice for others—42 percent of Latinos nationally agreed with this statement compared to 63 percent of whites. Neither this survey nor others has investigated the origins of these beliefs and the reasons for the difference between Latinos and whites in attitudes toward Jews. No survey, for example, has measured Latino awareness of the history of anti-Jewish discrimination in the United States or knowledge of the Holocaust.

This discussion is admittedly one-sided. Without comparable survey data on Chicago's Jews, it is not possible to measure their attitudes toward Latinos. The geographic separation of these communities in Chicago, however, makes it likely that Jews are equally neutral about Latinos and, perhaps, unaware of issues of key importance to them.

As I will suggest later in this article, this distance at the mass level between Chicago's Latinos and Jews is not duplicated among Chicago's Latino and Jewish elites. On the contrary, leaders in each community have recognized the advantages for both groups of cooperation on issues of common interest. In part, this reflects leaders' assessments of the strengths that each group brings to the table. Latinos bring numbers and the promise of steadily increasing electoral influence in city politics. The city's Jews bring institutional power. The communities share policy needs—particularly in terms of delivery of social services and immigrant settlement—that can better be accomplished by working together. This elite recognition of the common interests in cooperation may, over time, reduce the distance between the communities at the mass level.

Jews, Latinos, and Chicago Machine Politics

Neither Latinos nor Jews have been central to Chicago's machine. To the contrary, they have more often been outsiders. The machine so dominates Chicago politics, however, that even the outsiders must play by its rules and can see how their political destinies are shaped by its machinations. The tensions associated with Harold Washington's two successful campaigns for mayor drove Latinos and Jews to opposite camps. The legacy of these campaigns and the reconstruction of the machine leave Latinos internally divided and Jews still on the outside.

Harold Washington's campaigns polarized Chicago's whites and blacks. In 1983, he won almost all black votes, but could win no more than 12 percent of the white vote citywide. This failure with white voters extended to Chicago's Jews, who might in many cases have agreed with Washington's positions on a

number of issues. In the first campaign, Washington's Republican opponent was himself Jewish, perhaps explaining the low share of the Jewish votes for Washington (no more than one third of the vote in white lakefront wards). In Washington's reelection bid (1987), his opponent was not Jewish, but he still won only a minority of the white liberal and Jewish votes (42 percent in the lakefront wards). This white support in the lakefront wards was substantially higher than white support elsewhere in the city (estimated to be in the mid-teens), but Washington supporters saw this failure to make greater inroads among the city's Jews and other white liberals as a disappointment and evidence of the durability of the polarization between Chicago's whites and African-Americans.

Latinos, on the other hand, were enraptured with the Washington candidacy and provided his margin of victory in 1983. Initially, Washington had little appeal to Latinos. In the 1983 Democratic primary, he received just 15 percent of the Latino vote. Extensive outreach and the inclusion of Latinos in key roles in the campaign grew this Latino support to more than 80 percent. Equally importantly, Latino turnout reached 62 percent, which is likely an all-time record. The high levels of Latino support for Harold Washington continued in the 1987 race.

Perhaps unexpectedly, the legacy of the Washington campaigns is not a stronger electoral power base in the Latino community. Instead, their great importance in the Washington victory made them a target for both machine and reform camps in the Chicago Democratic Party. With Washington's death, some Latino community leaders moved to the restructured machine under Richard Daley and others joined the reform (anti-machine) camp. Jews mostly returned to their traditional political affiliation, the reform camp.

Though most Chicago Jews and Latinos are Democrats, the fractures in the city's Democratic Party prevent it from offering a foundation for partisan alliance. Because of residential separation, Latinos and Jews are not jointly present in many electoral districts. This is arguably advantageous as it eliminates a possible source of tension. The machine often uses candidate selection and redistricting to divide ethnic populations in Chicago politics.

Latino-Jewish Alliances and Organizations

Despite the distance between Chicago's Latino and Jewish communities, issues can and have united community leaders. Among these, the four most pressing and ongoing are immigration, immigrant settlement, social service delivery, and

combating discrimination. These four issues are central to the political agendas of each community and serve as a bridge between community leaders and organizations for interethnic cooperation.

The growth of the Latino community and the diversification of the Jewish community are the result of liberal U.S. immigration laws. Estimates suggest that as many as 25,000 Soviet Jews reside in the metropolitan Chicago area, making up fully 10 percent of the region's Jewish population. Chicago's Latino community grows by approximately 10,000 each year due to legal migration from the Spanish-speaking nations of Latin America and the Caribbean (with approximately 80 percent migrating from Mexico). The immigrants are supplemented by an uncountable number of migrants from Puerto Rico, as well as undocumented immigrants from the Americas. In most cases, the Jewish and Latino legal immigrants migrate under the family preference provisions of U.S. immigration law. These are the most-often challenged components of the immigration law and link the policy needs of Latinos and Jews, nationally and in Chicago.

Immigration, of course, is only the beginning of the story. The arrival of large numbers of immigrants in any community spurs the need for immigrant assistance in the form of education (particularly adult education), job training, English-language training, and assistance with immigration difficulties and naturalization. While traditionally these immigrant adaptation services were provided by Chicago's machine, neither Chicago's Jews nor Latinos have received much machine help. Jews have been more successful at building community-based service agencies to address immigrant needs. Few organizations, however, serve large numbers of both Latino and Jewish clients. The creation of such multiethnic service agencies offers a rich opportunity for leaders to translate the benefits of their collaboration on the mass level.

Discrimination is an ongoing problem for each community. Discrimination, in large part, forced each of these communities to unify internally. Today, each faces exclusion based on identity. While community elites have spoken in unison on this issue, there is little evidence at the mass level that Latinos or Jews see their fates as linked. As a result, while both groups face discrimination, it seems unlikely this issue will form the basis for political alliance.

Both Chicago's Latino and Jewish communities have concentrated populations in poverty, dependent on the social service delivery system. Estimates suggest that as many as eight percent of Chicago area Jews live in households below the poverty line; for Latinos the comparable figure is approximately 20 percent. The populations in poverty are most common among the elderly and immi-

grants. Latino households are more likely to have children in poverty. Unlike discrimination, there is a much greater foundation for cross-community politics to address social service delivery. This became particularly apparent after the passage of the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill. Policy organizations in each community documented the potential impact of the bill—and not just on their own population—but on other groups as well.

Each of these four issues offers opportunities for alliances between Jews and Latinos. As has been noted, however, these alliances are primarily found among community elites and have not reached the mass level. The most notable of these efforts at coalition politics is the Alliance of Latinos and Jews. Formed in 1994, the Alliance was founded to facilitate communication between the communities by State Senator Miguel del Valle and businessperson and philanthropist Jeff Levine. To a lesser degree, it has also served an important role in breaking down barriers within communities. Jewish and Latino organizations that were sometimes at odds with other organizations within their own communities were represented on the Alliance.

Unlike many similar organizations, the Alliance was not formed in response to a crisis between the communities, but was created, instead, to build on the strengths of each community—numbers in the case of Latinos and political connectedness in the case of Jews. In addition to offering a forum for networking, the Alliance has hosted public meetings on topics of interest to both communities, such as education and social services. It has also focused attention on some issues of specific interest to Chicago's Latinos, most notably economic development. Finally, it was able to secure support from the Chicago Community Foundation to hire a long-term planner who had previous ties to neither community. Despite its many successes, the Alliance must be recognized as an elite organization. At the mass level, distance characterizes the communities, despite some common needs.

Efforts to link the delivery of services have been less successful. The Latino Institute and the Jewish Federation tried to establish a bridge among social service agencies serving the communities. These tentative efforts, however, collapsed with the demise of the Latino Institute in 1997.

As important as issues can be in linking the political agendas of Chicago's Latino and Jewish populations, it is important to recognize that there are also substantive policy differences between these populations. The LNPS offers insights, at least from the Latino perspective, into one aspect of these differences. It found that Latinos feel no particular affect for Israel. The LNPS measured attitudes toward 10 countries, including Israel. The survey used a "feeling

thermometer” which asked respondents to rate closeness on a scale from 1 (distant) to 100 (close). Among Chicago Latinos, Israel was ahead of only Russia and Cuba with an average ranking of 43. Even Nicaragua was rated more highly at 50. Highest on the list was respondents’ affect for the United States at 92. This lack of Latino affect for Israel may again reflect the distance between these communities, but it precludes the development of an issue-based alliance around a key foreign policy issue for American Jews.

It should be noted that whatever affect Latinos feel for Latin American countries has not translated into concrete policy demands. The primary focus of Latino communities in Chicago and nationally is domestic economic and social welfare policy. To the extent that they hold beliefs about their countries of origin, they share biases of the U.S. population as a whole. For example, the majority attribute Mexico’s problems to internal corruption and not to U.S. policies. As a result, despite feeling no particular closeness to Israel, they are broadly supportive of U.S. foreign policy objectives. To the extent that leaders speak in terms of Israel’s significance to U.S. strategic objectives, it will receive support from Latino communities.

The feelings of American Jews toward Latin America are not the focus of national surveys. There has been no evidence, at least among national Jewish organizations, of any effort to influence U.S. policy toward the Americas.

Several domestic issues also have the potential to divide Latino and Jewish communities. Education is consistently identified by Latinos as the most important issue facing the nation and the cities where they reside. Among the strategies that receive some Latino support are voucher programs and other forms of school choice that could potentially include proposals of public funding for parochial schools. Admittedly, these programs are little understood in Latino communities (and by survey respondents in general), but raise many more concerns in Jewish communities. Another dimension of church-state relations, religion in the public schools, should be of less concern to Jewish and Latino leaders seeking points of convergence. Despite their high religiosity, there is no evidence that Latinos support prayer in the public schools.

Social issues also have the potential to divide these communities in the future, though they seem unlikely to shape community relations in Chicago. As best as can be read from available public opinion survey data, Latinos are sufficiently divided in their opinions on such issues as abortion, gay rights, feminism, and family values that these issues are not likely to become contentious. This is particularly the case among Chicago’s Latinos and Jews: Chicago Latino attitudes are closer to those of Jews than are national Latino attitudes.

Conclusions

Distance can offer opportunity. Because Chicago's Latinos and Jews are geographically separated and the numbers of Jews (in the city, at least) are small, the potential for conflict between the communities is low. Their geographic distance is particularly important. Chicago's machine has a long history of fracturing potential alliances between racial and ethnic groups in the city. By allocating resources such as candidates and electoral districts, it can set community against community. Latinos and Jews will not face such potential conflicts in the foreseeable future, at least with each other.

The future, then, of Chicago Latino-Jewish relations will be built on efforts within these communities to address common needs. But because these efforts will take place primarily among elites and out of the sight of the vast majority within each community, they will be unlikely to break down the distance and lack of affect between Latinos and Jews.

When Ideologies Agree and Interests Collide: What's a Leader to Do? Prospects for Coalition in Los Angeles

Raphael J. Sonenshein

To gain a foothold in American society and secure their rights and interests, minority groups historically have had to choose among several paths of political action: Should they go it alone, join forces with other minorities against the majority, or forge alliances with elements within the majority group? And on what basis should these alliances be forged?

Some believe that common beliefs or ideology are the best grounds for coalition. Others see self-interest as the glue and view coalitions as, at best, short-lived arrangements between or among self-interested groups. What should be paramount: good will or cold calculation?

My research on coalitions suggests that shared political beliefs are the firmest foundation for interethnic and interracial coalitions. But each group's perception of what constitutes its most immediate interests can build or destroy these coalitions, and even when groups share beliefs, their leaders have the capacity to push interests toward alliance or conflict.¹

For Latinos and Jews, two pivotal groups in urban America, these questions have special currency and arise within a paradoxical sociological framework: It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find two other groups whose current political behavior so resembles each other's, but whose social circumstances differ so enormously.

Jews and Latinos in Urban Coalitions

These questions about the nature of coalitions hold particular importance for Jews and Latinos in major American cities in general and in Los Angeles in particular. The 2000 Census revealed that 46.5 percent of the city's residents were Latino, 29.7 percent were white, 11 percent were African-American, and nearly 10 percent were Asian American. The Latino "sleeping giant" began to stir in response to the anti-immigrant politics of Governor Pete Wilson that reached

their high-water mark with the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994. In 1993, Latinos cast 10 percent of the votes in the mayoral election. In 1997, Latino voters constituted 15 percent of the total, paralleling a nationwide increase in Latino political participation that had been increasingly visible since 1994. Then, in the 2001 Los Angeles mayoral election, Latinos cast 22 percent of all votes.²

As the Latino population has increased, so has its political power, though that power is still far from commensurate with the growing size of the Latino community. With the decline of the African-American community as the primary driving force of progressive urban politics, and with cities becoming more and more diverse, new options appear possible for Latinos. Restive with their secondary role in the black-white coalitions that long dominated cities, Latinos may play a different hand than ever before, and how they play it will have a major impact on politics and governance throughout the nation.

Some in the Latino community believe that pursuing its political agenda within a coalition of nonwhite minorities is the best path. They note that demographic change in America is turning big city minorities into majorities. Conversely, conservatives believe that Latinos are on the road to assimilation along the classic lines of earlier immigrants, and that to favor coalitions with “people of color” is to segregate Latinos from the mainstream, an act that would be both sociologically incorrect and strategically foolish.

Still others are drawn to a more nationalistic identity politics that envisions Latinos mobilizing their numbers to impose ethnic succession. Finally, there is the possibility that Latinos could forge ties with whites, particularly those liberal whites (including Jews) who had been previously drawn into alliance with African-Americans.

For a variety of reasons, some Latino leaders and policy analysts have made the mistake of seeing whites as either irrelevant to urban coalitions or as the inevitable common enemy of communities of color. But whites remain very influential in city politics and governance, as seen by the emergence of white-supported mayoralties in America’s four largest cities, and they can be allies.

If whites have been misunderstood in debates about coalitions, Jews have been doubly misunderstood. Most Jews are white, but Jewish political behavior doesn’t look at all like that of non-Jewish whites.

Jews have been crucial participants in the history of Los Angeles coalitions, playing a central role in the development and stability of the twenty-year Tom Bradley coalition.³ Jews represent a pivotal constituency in urban politics. Particularly in New York City and Los Angeles, and to a lesser degree in other

cities, Jews participate in political life at very high levels and have a history of joining intergroup coalitions. In Los Angeles, Jews represent an estimated 6 percent of the population, but participate at more than twice that rate. According to a *Los Angeles Times* exit poll,⁴ Jews cast 19 percent of the votes in the 1993 mayoral runoff.

One of the most remarkable features about contemporary Los Angeles is that while whites have been declining, Jews have not. Casting 19 percent of the votes in the 1993 mayoral election, Jews cast 18 percent in 2001. With whites declining from 72 percent to 52 percent of the vote between 1993 and 2001, Jews went from one-fourth of all white voters to one-third.

Latinos and Jews in Los Angeles are at different points in their political evolution: Latinos are moving up, and Jews are already an established force in the city, despite predictions of a long-term decline in influence. What are the prospects for coalition and conflict between them?

Ideology: "...and vote like Puerto Ricans"

According to Peter Beinart, "At the ballot box, if not yet in the minds of politicians and community activists, Latinos and Jews are in political alliance. In city after city, state after state, the two groups vote the same way. What they do not do—to the great surprise of leaders in both communities—is vote like African-Americans."⁵ Beinart's observations are mostly on target, though the two groups are not as politically distant from African-Americans as he suggests.

In Los Angeles as well as in other cities, a discernible pattern has emerged. Despite predictions to the contrary, Latinos and Jews vote Democratic in state and national elections by great majorities. Alone among whites, Jews oppose measures to roll back civil rights gains. While Jews support civil rights measures, they have been more ambivalent toward quota-based policies. And in a number of cities, including New York City and Los Angeles, Latinos and Jews voted for mayoral candidates less liberal than their predicted choices. Despite their continuing loyalty to the Democratic Party, many Jews and Latinos broke ranks with African-Americans, voting to elect and reelect Richard Riordan in Los Angeles and Rudolph Giuliani in New York City. In Los Angeles, roughly two-thirds of Latinos and Jews voted to reelect Riordan in 1997.

Centrists and neoconservatives thought they saw something deeper in this willingness of Jews and Latinos to stray from the liberal community. Some found both in Jews and Latinos the roots of a proentrepreneurial coalition far different from the progovernment orientation of the coalitions that had linked

minority aspirations with white liberals. As Jim Sleeper wrote, "The more genuinely multicultural and racially diverse a city becomes, the less 'liberal' it is."⁶ Some felt that there might indeed be an emerging Latino-Jewish coalition, but that its political foundation would be moderate or conservative.

When Nicholas Valentino of the University of Michigan and I examined the 1993 Los Angeles mayoral election, however, we found evidence of persistently distinctive Jewish voting behavior.⁷ Our analysis of exit polls conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*, which included an unusually large sample of Jewish voters, found that despite significant Jewish support for Riordan's candidacy, Jewish distinctiveness from non-Jewish whites on ideological, racial, and partisan measures remained very strong.

Jews were nearly twice as likely as white non-Jews to call themselves Democrats. Even though 49 percent of Jews supported Riordan, this backing was dwarfed by the 72 percent of non-Jewish whites that voted for him. A commonly-used measure of racial attitudes is whether one believes that the problems of racial minorities are due to racism or personal responsibility. Jews were twice as likely to select the liberal position on race and to describe themselves as liberal. There also appeared to be no difference among the generations; younger Jews were no less likely than their elders to be Democrats with relatively liberal attitudes on race.

A strong minority of Latinos supported Riordan, while the community remained overwhelmingly Democratic. Latinos were less liberal than Jews with regard to issues of race, but were very similar to Jews in their belief that the problems of urban minorities largely result from racism rather than lack of personal responsibility. When Riordan ran for reelection in 1997, he was supported by large majorities of both Latinos and Jews.

In fact, the election results seemed to indicate that more than even he imagined, Himmelfarb was right when he said that "Jews live like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans."⁸ If we substitute Latino for Puerto Rican, Los Angeles Jews maintain the tradition.

Jewish voting behavior combines broad liberalism with selective conservatism.⁹ In partisan elections, when there is a choice between Democrats and Republicans, Jews comprise a distinctively progressive bloc of whites. But with regard to such threatening issues as crime, Jews are prepared to break ranks with classic liberal doctrine. As Earl Raab wrote in his study of Bay Area Jews, "Scratch a Jewish voter and you will find a Democrat; but you will not always find a liberal."¹⁰

Latinos have not moved to the right. Not surprisingly, they resemble Jews

Table 1. Descriptive differences between Jews and non-Jewish whites.

Characteristic	Jews (%)	Non-Jewish Whites (%)
Education		
High school or less	14	20
Some college	24	29
College graduate	63	50
Family income		
Less than 20K	11	12
20K to 60K	40	48
More than 60K	49	40
Issues important in respondent's vote*		
Jobs/The economy	51	53
Taxes	2	4
Age		
18-29 years old	6	10
30-49 years old	36	42
50 years or older	58	48
Union membership		
1 or more members of house in union	23	28
No member of house in union	77	72
Retrospective financial trend		
Worse off than four years ago	39	41
Same as four years ago	41	40
Better off than four years ago	20	20
Mayoral vote		
Woo	51	28
Riordan	49	72
Party registration		
Democrat	82	48
Independent	4	8
Republican	14	44
Ideology		
Liberal	45	25
Moderate	44	43
Conservative	11	33
Problems of urban minorities caused by:		
Racism	37	21
Personal responsibility	26	40
Both/neither	37	39
Total N=	540	1606

Note: Entries are percentages. Percentages for each variable may not add up to 100 due to rounding. *Respondents were asked: "Which issues—if any—were most important to you in deciding how you would vote today? (Check up to two issues)._" Entries are percentages of respondents who chose economic issues in either the first or second position. The list also included education, the environment, homelessness, race relations, rebuilding LA, crime, illegal immigration, and improving the police department.

Source: Sonenshein and Valentino, 2000.

in that, with the exception of certain issues, they are frequently on the same side as African-Americans. Those who hope that Latinos and Jews are becoming an illiberal constituency are unlikely to be vindicated, at least in the near future. In their attitudes toward crime and welfare, Latinos resemble Jewish voters; they are prepared to exercise selective conservatism within a hearty broad liberalism and Democratic loyalty. While majorities of Jewish voters favor civil liberties, they also expect strong government efforts to suppress crime. While they favor government aid to the poor, they are much less supportive of welfare programs. There are comparable profiles among Latinos. For example, polling in Los Angeles has consistently shown that Latinos are significantly more likely than African-Americans to believe that police treat their community fairly.

The political behavior of the two groups is remarkably similar. That does not mean the two groups reach that common point by the same path. In fact, broader analysis of the attitudes of Jews and Latinos reveal vast differences, almost chasms, on some underlying attitudes. Jews are highly secular and strongly support reproductive rights. Latinos are far more traditional and oriented toward religious values in public life, and are much less likely to support abortion rights. What is striking then is that two groups with different social standing and different philosophical underpinnings end up in the same general area politically. Part of the oddity may be explained by the great durability of the appeal of the Democratic Party to once and future disadvantaged groups, and to the failure of Republicans to expand their ranks to include those who have experienced racial and ethnic discrimination.

Interest: "Live like Episcopalians"

Despite the similar political behavior of Jews and Latinos in Los Angeles (even in the face of obvious differences in the underlying approaches and philosophies of each group), there is little evidence of Latino-Jewish coalition in Los Angeles politics. In fact, the indications are that intergroup conflict is at least an equal, if not more likely possibility. On a number of issues in Los Angeles politics, Jewish and Latino leaders have been on opposite sides. But if the two groups are in a de facto voting coalition already, what is keeping a strong alliance from forming? The answer to this question lies in the area of group interest.

Himmelfarb's aphorism is often highlighted for its second part, about similarities in voting behavior between Jews and Puerto Ricans. What is crucial to understand is the neglected first part, which highlights the differences in how people live. In Los Angeles, while Jews and Latinos vote alike, they could not

lead more different lives. This has important consequences for the prospects for coalition. And there are increasing opportunities for political competition, fostering conflicts among the very leaders who will be needed to bridge the gap between the two groups.

The socioeconomic divide between Jews and Latinos in Los Angeles is far greater than that which prevailed between Jews and African-Americans during the formative years of the biracial Bradley coalition. In that relationship, I found that middle-class African-Americans active in progressive politics lived in general proximity to their Jewish allies, also middle-class liberal activists.

According to Waldinger and Bozorgmehr, Jews and Latinos represent the top and bottom of the economic pyramid.¹¹ An analysis of *Los Angeles Times* exit polls found Jewish voters ranking ahead of white non-Jews in key socioeconomic factors.¹² Latinos lagged far behind. Consider also that Latino voters themselves are at the top of the Latino social pyramid.

In the *Times* poll, nearly half of Latino voters had no college education compared to only 15 percent of Jews and 31 percent of African-Americans. Sixty-two percent of both Jews and Asian-Americans were college graduates, compared to only 30 percent of Latino voters. Income differences were also marked. Only a quarter of Latino voters had family incomes over \$60,000 compared to half of Jews and Asian Americans.

There is a dimension beyond class difference that further complicates the prospects for a coalition of Latinos and Jews. As middle-class or wealthy residents of Los Angeles, Jews share in the complex bargain of immigration. Latinos represent a significant proportion of a massive service class that serves the daily needs of middle-class Los Angeles. In affluent areas of the Los Angeles Westside and San Fernando Valley, Latinos care for the children of the middle class, clean their houses, wait on them at restaurants, and mow their lawns.

Jews and Latinos are poles apart on the socioeconomic scale, and they most frequently relate to each other in the context of the direct, personal relationship of paid service. As a result, the growing and increasingly professional Latino middle class has not yet interacted on a broad basis with their Jewish peers. As Waldinger and Bozorgmehr's study shows, these dynamics reflect a bifurcated Los Angeles economy in which the most dynamic markets exist for well-educated middle-class people, and for those who provide personal services to them.¹³ In turn, the Latino community is bifurcated between an insecure group of recent immigrants holding low-paying jobs and a more established group of native-born Latinos with middle-class or professional jobs, but with a difficult path to higher status.

The impact of major class division on city issues undercuts the ability to build coalitions on the basis of political like-mindedness. An extended battle over leaf-blowing machines pitted Westside environmentalists and home owners against Latino gardeners. Crews of Latino gardeners who work on many homes use gasoline-powered leaf-blowers to speed their work, but the machines are noisy and generate pollution. An influential, largely white constituency lobbied to place restrictions on the leaf-blowers, while Latino leaders in Los Angeles and Sacramento fought to limit the regulations.

In the area of mass transportation, the countywide Metropolitan Transportation Authority has become another source of conflict between Latino and Jewish politicians. When a line into North Hollywood had been nearly completed, opposition developed to a new path to Pasadena that would pass through the Latino Eastside.

In April 1998, County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky launched a drive for a ballot initiative that would prevent the MTA from completing any additional below-ground train lines. The impetus for the initiative was based on a combination of cost and environmental considerations, as well as the skepticism of federal transportation officials about the viability of the rail program in Los Angeles. The impact of the initiative would be to block a controversial route to the Eastside and Pasadena, heavily supported by key Latino politicians. The controversy drew into the fray Latino members of Congress, who announced that they would block the completion of the North Hollywood line if the Eastside did not receive its share.

At the level of political life, there are opportunities for Jews and Latinos to interact as equals, but also for intense political competition. A special state senate election in 1998 revealed just how bitter Latino-Jewish political competition can be, when Richard Alarcon narrowly defeated Richard Katz. (*See Kamasaki, pg. 49.*) Both sides in this San Fernando Valley battle used very harsh campaign materials, with fallout extending to both Latino and Jewish communities. Latinos bitterly resented Katz for using print materials with a photograph of dirty hands, suggesting that Alarcon was allied with dirty politics. To some Latinos, the underlying message was that they are a dirty, working-class community that is unsuited for leadership. Alarcon was bitterly resented by many Jews for using materials that falsely connected Katz to intimidation of Latino voters, the complete opposite of Katz's actual position and actions. In a very close race decided by a tiny margin of votes, Alarcon defeated Katz.

While the damage was considerable, both communities also received an object lesson in the pitfalls of letting political candidates and their ambitions

represent two very sensitive communities just getting to know each other. As the San Fernando Valley becomes a site for political ambition for both Latino and Jewish politicians, there is danger of intergroup conflict over elected positions.

What's a Leader to Do?

It should be obvious why intergroup relations between Jews and Latinos can be confusing: Rarely can one find such a clear gap between political behavior and the interests shaped by daily life. This gap presents a singular challenge for leaders, who must decide whether the ideological affinities and mutual needs of these groups will bloom into full-blown coalition or whether the social gap and political competition will lead in the opposite direction.

Biracial coalition politics had both a pragmatic and a moral dimension. Biracial coalitions were formed to reach concrete goals; the partners trusted each other, and there was a widespread belief that coalition behavior itself improved the community. The question now is not just who will have power, but who will make the community more equitable and more governable?

Both Jews and Latinos are seeking to protect their group interests and advance their beliefs, and it will be very difficult for either group to achieve its goals without friendly relations with the other. Jews continue to play a major civic role in Los Angeles, hard-won after a half century of exclusion between 1900 and the 1960s. But Jews are an older demographic group, and they will not always represent a disproportionate share of the electorate. Alliance with Latinos would help prevent the development of a siege mentality that could easily become the mindset of a vital community that feels it is losing its place. A positive tie to Latinos could continue to keep the Jewish community at the center of the city's life.

Conversely, Latino leaders are wrestling with the enormous gap between the Latino population and political empowerment. Someday Los Angeles will be a Latino-dominated city, but that moment has not yet arrived. Even after a great surge of political interest among Latinos, they still represent only about one-fifth of the electorate. Once drawn to the notion that they could make it alone in Los Angeles, Latino leaders are quickly realizing that no group can succeed independently in a city so diverse.

One reason that mutual interests have been slow to emerge is that each group has options other than alliance with the other. The paramount political priority of Los Angeles Latinos for some time to come will remain the mobilization of a cohesive Latino community comprising Mexican-born immigrants, U.S.-born people of Mexican origin, and the large block of recently arrived

Central Americans in Los Angeles.

While preoccupied with building this internal cohesion, Latinos are likely to be puzzled by calls for coalition building with whites, and specifically for alliances with Jews. In fact, rejecting such coalitions may be politically expedient in the short term by building internal unity through treating outsiders as impediments to Latino advancement. Latinos may decide to push toward the day when their political impact is commensurate with their population, or to seek alliance with African-Americans in a coalition of minorities. Of course, neither of these options is mutually exclusive, but an emphasis on one or the other will profoundly shape the availability of the others.

Jewish leaders may face a parallel situation. For the foreseeable future, it may be enough to unify whites around a middle-class agenda that emphasizes order, stability, and good government. A majority of the city's registered voters are white. Representing a significant share of the electorate, Jews will continue to be crucial participants in building winning citywide coalitions.

Jews and other middle-class whites can rely on their existing political strengths for a while longer. Distinct patterns of political mobilization evidenced in two city council districts with roughly equal population underscore the gap in participation. The First District, comprised of Latinos and low-income non-Latinos, had 41,895 registered voters in 1997. The affluent Fifth District, with the largest Jewish population in Los Angeles, had 137,471 registered voters. How long it will take for these differences, which are now smaller than they were several years before, to disappear is anyone's guess.

Recent Los Angeles Elections: Where the Ballots May Fall

These considerations frame several remarkable Los Angeles elections. In the spring 1997 primary election, Mayor Richard Riordan won a majority of both Jews and Latinos on his way to an easy victory. On the ballot in the general election was Proposition BB, a bond issue to provide air conditioning and other physical repairs in the city's schools. In a previous election, the measure had failed to garner the required two-thirds majority of the vote.

If there is one issue that provides the basis for a potential Latino-Jewish coalition, it is public education. The educational system represents the potential for upward mobility for the children of working-class immigrants. Jews have always had a high degree of commitment to public education, even when their children no longer attend the public schools in great numbers.

Strikingly, the coalition that propelled Proposition BB to victory with well over a two-thirds majority was comprised of Latinos and Jews, with strong sup-

port from African-Americans. The BB coalition, which also received the endorsement of Mayor Riordan, was one of the most hopeful signs of potential coalition behavior in recent years, in an area critical to the success of the Latino population.

The intense interest of the Jewish community in a public education system, most of whose students are Latino, creates opportunities for alliance, as well as the potential for group conflict. A number of Jewish leaders have actively supported the movement for school reform in Los Angeles that led to the election of a new school board majority in 1999. Backed by Mayor Riordan, this reform effort has drawn widespread support, but has also alienated key Latino leaders. Without careful work on both sides, the common interest in public education could become a site for intergroup conflict.

Another case was the June 1999 election on charter reform. When a vast rewrite of the Los Angeles City Charter was placed before the voters, prospects for its passage were unclear. The mayor strongly supported it, but a majority of the City Council and municipal unions opposed it on the grounds that the reform would concentrate too much power in the mayor's office. A number of leading Latino and African-American elected officials joined the opposition.

The proposed city charter contained an array of innovations to expand local democracy, symbolized by a system of advisory neighborhood councils. It also included a strengthened system of civilian oversight over the Los Angeles Police Department and a living wage requirement for firms doing business with the city. It was the first comprehensive rewrite of the city charter since its implementation in 1925. It was widely assumed that the opposition of leading Latino politicians would doom the charter among working-class Latino voters.

In June 1999, the new charter was approved with a 60 percent majority. It drew heaviest support in areas of the Westside and San Fernando Valley with large Jewish populations. But it also did extremely well in the low-income Eastside districts where Latinos predominate. The charter received three-quarters of the votes in the Jewish Fifth District, and two-thirds of the votes in the Latino First District. Charter reform lost only in the African-American community, where Mayor Riordan had been extraordinarily unpopular and where there is a high representation of city employees.

The 2001 Mayoral Race: Almost a Latino Mayor

In 2001, a direct test of the possibilities of a Latino-Jewish alliance emerged in the tightly contested election to succeed Riordan as mayor. While many

observers had believed that Latinos were at least one mayoral election away from having a chance to win the mayor's office, events moved much more swiftly than expected. There were two Latino candidates, former Speaker of the Assembly Antonio Villaraigosa and Congressman Xavier Baccerra, and there were strong white candidates who seemed certain to make the nonpartisan runoff between the top two finishers. City attorney James K. Hahn, heir to the one of the few political dynasties in Los Angeles, was the clear front-runner.

The chemistry of the race was dramatically changed by Villaraigosa's ability to create a new coalition model that bore a strong resemblance to the Tom Bradley coalition. With strong support from the state Democratic Party organization and Democratic Governor Gray Davis, as well as the county AFL-CIO, Villaraigosa went directly after the support of the Jewish voters he had been cultivating for years. He was clearly the most liberal candidate in the race, and the most oriented to multiracial coalition building.

In a major surprise, Villaraigosa finished first in the April primary with 30 percent of the vote, to Hahn's 25 percent. The *Los Angeles Times* exit poll reported that Villaraigosa had made a better showing than Hahn among whites and among Jews.¹⁴ The two Jewish moderate candidates, Steven Soboroff, a Republican, and Joel Wachs, an independent, also did better than Hahn with these groups. Hahn made it into the runoff because of his overwhelming support from African-Americans. If Villaraigosa could retain and expand his support among whites, particularly Jews, he would win the election.

Although the Jewish population was only 6 percent of the city, Jews cast 18 percent of all votes in the primary and general election. In 1993, they had cast 19 percent. While white non-Jews were leaving the city, Jews were staying. In 1993, Jews cast one-fourth of all white votes; in 2001, they cast one-third. As Latinos replaced non-Jewish whites in the electorate, Jews were holding their steady role.

With Jews more liberal than white non-Jews, Villaraigosa's hopes rested largely with Jewish voters. Among liberal Jews, he developed strong support. In fact, columnist Marlene Adler Marks wrote in the *Jewish Journal*: "Is it going too far to say that Villaraigosa is really the Jewish candidate this time out?"¹⁵ Villaraigosa himself campaigned heavily with Jews and won the support of liberal rabbis and other community leaders. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, the most popular Jewish politician in Los Angeles, whose conflicts with Latino leaders over transportation called for some bridge-building, endorsed Villaraigosa. Yaroslavsky recalled that Villaraigosa had refrained from joining in the attacks on him by Latino politicians during the transportation battles.¹⁶ Those

Jews who supported Soboroff or Wachs were more likely to be moderate voters who preferred the unknown.

The campaign ultimately turned on Hahn's ability to portray Villaraigosa as too liberal on crime issues, contrasting his own efforts as City Attorney to fight gangs with the former Speaker's call for preventive programs to stop gang violence. Hahn hurt Villaraigosa badly with his law-and-order campaign. The final blow was a Hahn ad using Villaraigosa's letter to President Clinton asking for the pardon of a convicted drug dealer to argue that Villaraigosa could not be trusted. Hahn was able to counterbalance the liberal leanings of Jewish voters with their instinct for security and self-preservation.

When the final votes were counted, Hahn had defeated Villaraigosa 54 percent-46 percent. According to the *Times* exit poll, white voters went heavily for Hahn. Jewish voters were split, with 52 percent for Hahn, and 48 percent for Villaraigosa. Westside Jews, historically the most liberal, went for the Latino candidate. Valley Jews, historically more moderate or conservative, went for Hahn. Jews as a whole were more likely to vote for Villaraigosa than were non-Jewish whites, but a majority were clearly not ready to take the step of electing a liberal Latino to the mayoralty. In this case, liberal ideology was not strong or intense enough to overcome threats to self-interest or community interest.

The Villaraigosa campaign showed both the potential for Latino-Jewish alliance and the obstacles that stand before it. Had Villaraigosa been better-known locally, and were he less vulnerable on the crime issue, he might well have won enough Jewish votes to defeat Hahn. Bradley, after all, was a well-known city councilman and former police officer who found a way to blunt the crime issue, and won huge Jewish support.

Yet even though Los Angeles was becoming more Democratic (Republicans cast only 18 percent of the vote in 2001, compared to more than 30 percent in 1993), it was not becoming more liberal. Local candidates who are seen as liberal on the issue of crime and public safety still suffer with Jewish voters. Despite their liberalism and Democratic loyalty, Jews are susceptible to law-and-order campaigns against an officeholder whose record is less well-known.

The very fact that Latinos and Jews are both Democratic constituencies that are not always predictably liberal, and that both communities are attuned to their own interests, makes it difficult to construct the sort of liberal biracial alliance that Jews had with African-Americans.

In addition to the mayor's race, the battle for city attorney between a liberal Jewish city councilman, Michael Feuer, and a moderate Latino mayor's staffer, Rocky Delgadillo, was illuminating. Like the liberal Villaraigosa, the

moderate Delgadillo won more than three-quarters of Latino votes. Feuer won the support of three-quarters of Jews, a constituency that in the mayor's race had chosen the moderate candidate over the liberal one. In other words, both Latinos and Jews not only voted their ideologies, but also their ethnic loyalties.

Los Angeles politics are changing as the aspirations of Latinos are becoming incorporated into city politics, and as Jewish voters continue to represent key white swing voters. The Bradley coalition is one of the competing models for Latinos and Jews, in which shared liberal and Democratic values join with ethnic identification to create a liberal biethnic alliance. But the liberal biethnic model must compete with moderate coalitions or ethnic-centered alliances. In the mix-and-match world of Los Angeles coalition politics, Latinos and Jews are still likely to find that with their combination of Democratic identification and ideological moderation, they are the pivotal points of Los Angeles politics, if not always on the same side of the political fence.

Beyond Electoral Politics

Leaving Latino-Jewish relations to the realm of electoral politics will make it difficult to build a sustained relationship. There are likely to be electoral battles between Latino and Jewish Democrats. Community leaders will have to make their presence known.

There are a number of leadership activities currently aimed at fostering Latino-Jewish leadership coalitions. Rabbi Gary Greenebaum, western regional director of the American Jewish Committee, has been an indefatigable and trusted link between Jews and the emerging Latino political stratum. He mediated a graceful endgame to the Alarcon-Katz feud, and has helped remind leaders in each community that they only have to walk down the hall to talk with their counterparts in the other community. The Anti-Defamation League has been promoting dialogue between Jews and Latinos. Research is being done on ways to expand Latino-Jewish relationships.¹⁷

To take the relationship to another level, leaders in both the Jewish and Latino communities should consider taking these concrete steps:

- Get out the word in both communities about their shared political affinities, as evidenced in voting behavior and polling data. Statements should be candid about the great gaps in social philosophy between the two groups; political like-mindedness is even more remarkable in that context. How many people really understand the degree of political affinity between the two groups?

- Seek out settings of political and social equality for intergroup meetings to overcome the barriers to mutual understanding.
- Issue public statements condemning divisive intergroup tactics in political campaigns through leading religious spokespersons in both communities.
- Try to identify common issues, based on past and current elections and legislation.
- Try to identify issues that are vital to the other community that each can support without harming its own interests. This proactive approach expands the range of alliance settings.

Implications

In the aftermath of the decline of the old interracial urban coalitions, it is easy to forget how difficult they were to forge. For many years, conflicts of interest prevented alliances between groups sharing ideological affinities. Sometimes the process was retarded or blocked by the failure of a group to develop internal cohesion; sometimes demagogues alienated potential allies. Sometimes clever politicians split potential allies through offers of political spoils or through effective threats.

Despite the long odds against them in a racially and ethnically polarized society, coalitions emerged because they came to be seen as pragmatically useful, ideologically consistent, and even morally right. They offered a mechanism to address long-festered problems in the community, became the points of entry for long-excluded groups into the governance of cities, and provided vehicles for equity and opportunity. As a result, even the virtually impenetrable barriers of class and race yielded to more or less strong alliances for social change.

Latino Los Angeles and the Los Angeles of middle-class whites are much further apart than the Los Angeles of African-Americans and that of their allies in the Jewish community decades before. These distances make the task of coalition-building a formidable one.

Were Jews to withdraw from the civic culture into a defensive mode, and Latinos to forswear the politics of coalition, Los Angeles would be a far less productive and progressive city than one in which the two groups worked together for the common good.

The issues that preoccupy middle-class whites often seem worlds away from the worries of the city's large and growing Latino population. For the city to make real progress, for genuine coalitions to form, the middle classes of each community will need to form leadership relationships of equality and trust. To

achieve those goals, the potential of political affinity can be harnessed to a common purpose that can open up and improve Los Angeles.

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Latinos and Jews : “The Inescapable Network of Mutuality”

Ann V. Schaffer

*On the old highway maps of America, the main routes were red
and the back roads blue. Now even the colors are changing...*

William Least Heat-Moon, *Blue Highways*, 1982

This is the tale of two peoples who sought refuge and a better life than the one they had known in the countries of their birth. Their respective immigrations could be seen as “parentheses” around a century of demographic and social change in America—concentrated waves of Jews arriving in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and the most extensive influx of Latinos in American history in the last two decades. Each group brought “luggage” that far exceeded their small, battered bags and suitcases: a cultural heritage, familial and religious loyalties, and a strong work ethic. Each in turn had their individual and communal lives, their worldview, and their political agenda shaped by their immigration experience.

It is an opportune moment, at the beginning of a new century, to examine the common ground between these two peoples and to ponder their relationship. Jews are in a place of unprecedented security and success, yet they spend a lot of time and energy worrying about safeguarding their places in American society. The history of the last century has provided them with mental antennae that are finely attuned to any sign of friendship or hostility, underscoring a pervasive sense of insecurity, regardless of their material well-being and political status. It is therefore not surprising that, at a time when all indicators show that anti-Semitism is on the decline in America, current surveys of Jewish public opinion reveal that it is still perceived as threat #1.

The reasons for Jewish engagement in such issues are not only negative. Consciously or not, Jews have absorbed the injunctions of their tradition to “contribute to the welfare of the city” in which they live and to “repair the world.” While this may find expression in social and political activism that

varies in its degree of consistency and intensity, it emerges and cannot be separated from Jewish religion, community, and history. The search for allies and coalition partners is not only seen as a bulwark against danger; it has the positive value of facilitating the realization of important policy goals.

Jews have a substantial advantage in having almost one hundred years of know-how in the development of their organizational structures, resources, and social and political status. They may be three or four generations removed from their forebears' immigration experience. Many Latino organizations are overwhelmed by the need to provide social services to recent immigrants whose income levels are low even when they find steady work, whose English language skills are poor, and whose healthcare insurance is nonexistent.

On the one hand, Jewish activists are frequently puzzled and even irritated by what they see as the lopsided initiatives and energy emanating from each group. On the other hand, Latino groups are frustrated by what they see as the failure to translate talk into action. Each side may frequently have unrealistic expectations of the other. This inherent imbalance, coupled with an absence of personal, ongoing relationships among members of the two groups, can be the source of annoyance to both Jews and Latinos. But irritations and frustrations are the stuff of squabbles between friends or family; they are not, or should not, be impediments to building and sustaining ongoing alliances. This paper will assert that such alliances are beneficial to each and serve to further the democratic process in America.

Immigrant Stories

The Jewish immigration to America was largely of a refugee people of whom Emma Lazarus must have been thinking when she wrote, "those huddled masses yearning to breathe free." In 1870 there were approximately 250,000 Jews in the United States, some of Spanish, Portuguese, Polish and Russian origin, but by far the greatest number German Jews who had left the anti-Semitism of their homeland in the latter part of the nineteenth century. A sudden change took place between 1881 and 1900 when, driven by harsh social and economic conditions and the brutal pogroms that began in Kishinev in 1881, more than 600,000 Jews from Poland, Lithuania, and Russia arrived in New York, the gateway to America. By 1903 there were 1.5 million Jews in America, and that number more than doubled by 1925. In 1925 there were 1.75 million Jews in New York City, nearly one third of the total population.¹ Subsequently Jews moved to many cities and towns of America. At the beginning of the twenty-

first century, they number approximately 5.5 million or 2 percent of the total population.²

The explosion of the migration rate of Latinos to America occurred in the last two decades. Although foreseen by some,³ the 2000 Census figures indicating 35.3 million Latinos or one in eight Americans, represented an astonishing leap of 57.9 percent in just one decade. Now catapulted into parity with African-Americans (34.7 million), Latinos are expected soon to become the new “majority minority,” as they are already in California. This has profound implications for all of America’s minorities, including Jews.

From every country in Central and South America, the Latino immigrants have come, the majority to escape unemployment and poverty, desperately seeking any job that would help support their families, but also many professionals and business people who have come in search of political stability and economic opportunity. This phenomenal growth has been felt in gateway cities such as Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and Phoenix, but also in suburban areas such as New York’s Long Island. Even states not usually considered destinations for immigrants have shown huge growth—up 107 percent in Wisconsin, 153 percent in Iowa, and 166 percent in Minnesota. One half of all Latinos live in two states—California and Texas. One third of all Californians are Latino, and non-Latino whites are now officially a minority in that state. Less than one fifth of the growth was from immigration; the rest came from births outnumbering deaths in that community.

Shaped by the key factors of national origin, ethnicity and language, religion and culture, the character of the respective Jewish and Latino immigrations of the twentieth century are very different. Demographically, one group is growing rapidly while the other is static. Jews have had close to a century to shape or be shaped by their American destiny, while Latinos are very much in the early stages of doing so. Despite the difficulties, America has always represented hope and opportunity for Jews; for many Latinos, that vista is still clouded by the difficult realities of their lives. Jews cut their national ties to an inhospitable Old World when they came to the New World; most Latinos have linguistic, familial, cultural or economic ties with their countries of national origin. Jews have a strong link with Israel, even though for most it is not their country of origin, but the depth and complexity of this connection is not fully understood by Latinos or other minorities. There are differences in both substance and style. There are significant economic disparities between the groups. While the leadership of the two groups has intersected many times in political coalitions, there is as yet very little social interaction at the grassroots level. This means that a sufficient degree of mutual trust has not yet formed. These and other factors create a complex

matrix of experiences and expectancies that each group brings to the table.

Yet the trajectories of these two twentieth-century immigrations have some notable parallels, even though Jews have had a long head start and much success to show for it. Primarily they have shared a long and difficult immigration experience during which they were considered the outsiders or foreigners who failed to assimilate and become “American.” Worse yet, they have endured charges that they will “take over” the country—by dint of their numbers in the case of Latinos, or because of their affluence and power in the case of Jews. Thus both groups have a vested interest in building respect for a diverse society.

For decades, many residential areas, boardrooms, social clubs, and universities remained closed to Jews, and this reality provided the impetus for building their own colleges, hospitals and clubs. Although anti-Semitism has been a leitmotif of American Jewish life, its prevalence and virulence has certainly abated in the latter half of the twentieth century as Jews gained access to mainstream American life.

Stereotypes of Latinos are still prevalent. The National Latino Children’s Institute points to the association of Latinos with “negative characteristics such as criminal behavior, laziness, apathy, and low economic status.” While acknowledging that the industry has made an effort to include more Latinos in the media, this advocacy group expresses deep concern that the images of two-dimensional characters such as maids, janitors, drug lords or gang members “encourage young people in the community to form negative images of themselves and their peers—they feed destructive stereotypes and help perpetuate the cycle of resentment and discrimination that currently threatens the future of young Latinos.”⁴ Latino groups should have natural allies for combating such bigotry in a Jewish community that has had its own long experience with prejudice.

Paradoxically, each group has struggled to integrate fully into American society while retaining its particularity. Those Latinos and Jews who have successfully integrated have often done so with some diminution of their cultural and religious identity, once critical to their communal lives. Latinos and Jews have strong family ties and cultural traditions. Generally they value education and hard work as the keys to upward mobility. Both groups have grasped the first rungs of the economic ladder with an entrepreneurial energy that has enabled the majority of Jews and a small but growing number of Latinos to move into the middle class. Each has understood the importance of the political process, entering at the grassroots level and working their way up into elective office.

A Rationale for Latino-Jewish Relations

Early in the twentieth century Jewish communal leaders recognized and acted on the premise that the core of any group's concerns was the need to ensure its own security and advance its own well-being. In a pluralistic society where no minority group can further its goals alone in the political arena, the necessity of seeking partnerships becomes clear and inevitable. Not inconsequentially, the outcome of such efforts to find common ground is that, along with reinforcing the viability and vitality of the disparate groups, there is a strengthening of the American social contract. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called this the "inescapable network of mutuality."⁵

Advocacy coalitions are a Jewish necessity because a small minority, even with political access, needs friends and allies to pursue common political views. Jews must build the relationships that matter now and for the long-term, in what is certain to be an era of increasing Latino political power. It is clear that Jewish leaders have begun to allocate personnel and programmatic resources to support such relationships. After the attacks on America on September 11, 2001, and the continuing violence in the Middle East, some alliances may shift and be less dependable than they were previously for the Jewish community. On a host of issues ranging from immigration, education, civil rights, bigotry, electoral reform, media stereotyping, anti-terrorism, to support for Israel, Jews need to build coalitions with the Latino community.

What is the benefit to Latinos of such a political partnership? On a similar list of issues ranging from immigration, education, civil rights, bigotry, electoral reform, and media stereotyping, Latinos can look to Jews for support. In a more recent development, Latinos are becoming engaged in Latin American issues and can appeal to Jewish interest, experience, and connections in foreign affairs. Charles Kamasaki, vice president of the National Council of La Raza, has written that Jews represent "an almost ideal cultural model," a minority group that has "made it" into the American mainstream without losing all vestiges of religious and ethnic particularity (*see page 45*).

Another asset that Jews bring to the table is a history of institutional activism and coalition-building since the first decades of the twentieth century, when the major Jewish political organizations were formed.⁶ They have honed their skills in policy development, acquiring access to elected officials, and getting their people out to vote. Jews are actively engaged as elected officials at every level of government, visible in major think tanks, and prominent as high-level media commentators. They also "put their money where their mouths are"

by contributing generously to causes and candidates. Thus they have succeeded in leveraging their numbers so as to be a significant factor, particularly in major urban centers, in the democratic process.

A Bit of History

Jewish involvement in the American experiment is testimony to a vision of its unprecedented opportunities. This positive perspective is counterweight to some of the pessimism of other ethnic groups, based upon their experience of historical wrongs and current difficulties.

The civil rights coalitions of the 1960s were characterized by close working relations between Jews and African-Americans on issues such as affirmative action, civil rights, and public education. Latinos played a less prominent role in those early coalitions because their limited numbers at the time meant that the issues affected their communities differently. Coalition activities of the 60s had both a moral and a pragmatic basis, and many of those involved were buoyed by a sense of their power to change history. Perversely, it was in part that excitement about the possibilities of historic change that set the stage for so intense a degree of disappointment when the partnership began to unravel in later decades.

The experience of the African-American-Jewish relationship, nevertheless, is the prism through which most Jews view intergroup ties—a fact that explains some of their reticence in this area. Not that all efforts have died: In pockets around the country there are promising and exciting partnerships between Jews and African-Americans, such as coalitions for legislative advocacy and programs to address economic empowerment issues. Some of these bilateral coalitions have already been extended to include Latinos.

The Latino-Jewish relationship has not been characterized by that driving transformational energy. Nor is it a tabula rasa. The two groups have worked together pragmatically for the past three decades in coalitions on mutual concerns in the public policy arena, with a notable absence of rancor. Furthermore, the absence of anti-Semitic expressions that roiled the black-Jewish relationship has carried great weight in the Jewish community. A case in point: a virulently anti-Semitic website was denounced by Raul Yzaguirre, president of the National Council of La Raza, in a press release in May 2001. This was exactly the kind of spontaneous, public, and proactive response that Jews always hope to hear from African-American leaders, and seldom do.

The American Jewish Committee (AJC) was the pioneer among Jewish

groups in developing Latino-Jewish relations, both locally and nationally, during the 1970s and 1980s. There were solid policy achievements in strengthening the Immigration Reform Act, resulting in a more generous allowance of incoming immigrants. There were new measures to support protections for guest workers; prevent discrimination against immigrants and undocumented workers; provide help for Salvadoran and Nicaraguan asylum seekers; and oppose changes in the immigration system that would cap admissions, reduce entry preferences for family members, and establish categories based on the immigrant's skills.

In addition, AJC chapters organized ethnic sharing dialogues and coalition-building workshops with Latinos, and participated in joint press conferences. There were also joint efforts to establish multi-ethnic education programs. AJC's bias-reduction program for high schools, Hands Across the Campus, was initiated. Opportunities were created for Latino leaders to meet Israeli elected officials, scholars, and artists, and to visit Israel. During this period, the organization supported the Civil Rights Restoration Act that broadened anti-discrimination laws, supported transitional bilingual instruction, opposed the English Only movement, and organized English Plus, which argued for English plus other languages

Similarly, in the 1990s, there were numerous examples of AJC-led outreach efforts and projects with the Latino community. A few examples, by no means comprehensive, are listed here:

- AJC created an Ethnic Institute in Atlanta, which exposed professionals and lay leaders from all Jewish agencies to each of five ethnic communities; two of the five sessions focused on the Latino community.
- A long-developed relationship between Latino leaders and AJC in Los Angeles involved the two groups in working on issues such as affirmative action, Proposition 187, and immigration. In 1997, AJC co-sponsored a leadership summit in Los Angeles with the National Association of Latino Appointed and Elected Officials (NALEO); and it continues to build close ties with leaders of that organization and with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF).
- In Houston, AJC joined Latino organizations recently in a successful effort to defeat an affirmative action initiative on the local ballot. AJC also participated in a press conference organized by NALEO to call on Congress for resources to allow the Immigration and Naturalization Service to reduce the backlog of applicants for naturalization.

These efforts and many others continue around the country. Much more than mere symbolism, they have created the conditions for joint action on poli-

cy concerns. Both groups appear to have both the will and the necessity to continue cooperative policy initiatives in the foreseeable future. The questions remain, however. How much effort will each side devote to building a warmer, more personal set of relationships at the leadership level, and extend those connections to the grassroots level? Is it possible to build something sufficiently strong so as to endure, and sufficiently elastic so as to withstand differences on particular issues?

Finding Common Ground

Jewish and Latino leaders understand that building relationships with other groups with shared interests can work to achieve communal and public policy goals. As previously observed, Latino-Jewish coalitions have not fallen apart, even when there has been disagreement or disappointment. If this is indicative of a mature relationship, it will serve the two communities well when other differences inevitably arise in the future. Kamasaki writes that Latinos and Jews seem to share a common progressive agenda and that “even differences (except church-state differences) come from highly contextual, not fundamentally policy-oriented, philosophical disputes” (*see page 54*).

The most recent comprehensive expression of that agenda was a joint Declaration of Principles developed in conjunction with a Latino-Jewish Leadership Summit held in Washington, D.C., in March 2001. Coordinated primarily by B’nai B’rith International and NALFO, the event was co-sponsored by a number of groups including AJC. The declaration lists a number of issues for joint action, including advocating for generous and equitable immigration policy, work on refugee policies, public education, economic empowerment of minorities, eliminating stereotype images in the media, and foreign policy. It calls for the establishment of a network of leaders who are “fostering systemic change” in their communities, joint leadership programs, and information-sharing forums, and states that an effort to encourage civic participation, voluntarism, and activism would be initiated.

There are no real surprises here. What is instructive is what was omitted from each side’s wish list in the final document. In the preamble, Latino and Jewish groups that signed the declaration agreed “to further discuss” each other’s excluded policy issues and asserted that “we recognize that [these] issues are of ‘special importance’ to the other community.”

Latinos asked for support for bilingualism; developmental day care for every preschool child; no “limitations on financial aid based on immigration sta-

tus”; support for national amnesty for residents in the United States since 1986; assistance in eliminating underrepresentation of Latinos in the media and entertainment industries; and the “use of ethnic, socio-economic and geographic diversity as a legitimate factor” in college admissions.

The issue of providing assistance to eliminate the underrepresentation of Latinos in the media and entertainment industries was high on the Latino list of priorities, but was not included in the final document. The success of Jews in these industries has given rise to a persistent anti-Semitic canard of “Jewish control of the media.” Although no one has ever uncovered a coordinated Jewish plan to manipulate the media in some sinister way, the phrase gets repeated periodically as if it means just that. Jewish sensitivity to this issue, however, should not prevent an awareness of the need for leaders of every group in that field to make a greater effort to move Latinos and other minorities into middle and upper management roles.

Several items under the heading “Economic Development and Philanthropy” were also excluded. There were requests for efforts to establish and endow Latino foundations, increase philanthropic support for Latino organizations, and facilitate the availability of investment capital for Latino and other entrepreneurs. Since it is highly unlikely that any nonprofit organization can or will raise funds for other nonprofit organizations, this expectation was unrealistic. Hundreds of Jewish organizations are in competition with each other and a variety of other important social causes. The result is a constituency of donors overwhelmed by requests, with all organizations struggling to meet their own financial obligations.

Jews asked for an increase of private rather than governmental support for institutions that “promote a strengthening of cultural and religious identities,” i.e., for separation of church and state; investment of the then-current budget surplus in “assistance programs to vulnerable sectors of the population”; provision for “a strong and secure Israel”; and “support for efforts to counter terrorism worldwide.” These priorities represent huge and complex issues that could not necessarily be dealt with within the framework of the Latino-Jewish leadership summit, but are at the core of the Jewish agenda.

This listing of hot-button issues for each side provided a useful road map for future action. Are these rejected items the potential trouble spots in the Latino-Jewish alliance? It is possible that Jewish groups could ultimately support some form of the issues raised by the Latino organizations. The AJC, for example, as a Jewish organization in the forefront of intergroup relations, is not opposed to bilingualism, developmental day care, affirmative action in the

media and college admissions, and immigration amnesty. It may be far more difficult, particularly since the events of September 11 and the deteriorating Middle East conflict, to garner Latino sympathy for key Jewish concerns about support for Israel. Similarly, one would be hard-pressed to see Jewish groups giving in on the issue of church-state separation as it plays out in voucher systems, charitable choice, and school prayer.

While direct financial assistance or sharing of donor information is not likely, nevertheless, groups like the AJC have initiated significant activities that support the economic empowerment of African-Americans, which can and are being extended to include Latinos. Three examples give a sense of the scope of the work. In Boston, the AJC chapter has developed an African-American-Jewish Economic Roundtable that has had some success in creating networks, developing skills, and opening doors for entrepreneurs. In Washington and Atlanta, AJC is sponsoring Project REAP, a real estate apprenticeship program that brings African-Americans into middle-management jobs in that industry. Chicago's Alliance of Latinos and Jews works to expand and deepen ties between the two groups, particularly in facilitating networks between businessmen and often hosting social events that help build personal relationships.

Three Policy Areas Dissected

The interests of Jews and Latinos converge or diverge in complex ways on many issues, and it is instructive to examine three—immigration, public education, and foreign policy—that will continue to engage both groups for the foreseeable future.

Immigration policy has been of foremost interest and carries powerful symbolic value for Latinos and Jews. In large part, the dramatic growth of the Latino population emanates from people escaping political unrest and economic hardship in Central and South America. They have entered the United States with widely disparate levels of education, job skills, resources, and English language acquisition. Jews have a strong communal memory of their forebears who, fleeing persecution in Europe, were denied access to America's shores. More recently, they fought long years for the right of Jews to leave the former Soviet Union. When they were finally able to do so, the Jewish community accepted the responsibility of ensuring support for their housing, social services, language immersion, and employment needs in the United States.

Latino communal organizations face continuing challenges in the areas of immigration policy, securing jobs, improving education, and ensuring health

benefits. These are crucial needs for a population that, according to the 2000 Census, has a poverty rate three times that of the non-Latino whites. With the Latino high school dropout rate at 26 percent for girls and 31 percent for boys,⁷ the resources and energy of organizations are clearly stretched. Raphael Sonenshein observes that the Latino community has had difficulty building internal coalitions because it is “bifurcated between an insecure group of recent immigrants with low-paying jobs, and a more established group of native-born Latinos with middle-class or professional jobs but with a difficult path to higher status” (*see page 119*).

There is little doubt that the unresolved issues of undocumented immigrants, INS policies and practices, employer sanctions, family reunification, and refugee asylum, among others, are being felt with particular intensity by the largest immigration group. The Latino community’s challenge to absorb continuous waves of immigrants has differed from the experience of the Jewish community, which received large influxes at discreet times—from 1890-1924, after the Holocaust, and with the opening of the former Soviet Union—but had time to integrate the newcomers in between waves.

These experiences have led Latino and Jewish organizations to advocate for generous and fair immigration policies. In June 1990, AJC along with La Raza and the Organization of Chinese Americans signed a document entitled *A Consensus Plea for Increased Immigration*. Referring to the unfounded fears about immigrants, the signatories agreed that “the cornerstone of immigration reform should be to increase the number of newcomers admitted to the U.S. each year.”

Tom Smith, a University of Chicago researcher, documents in his survey *Intergroup Relations in a Diverse America*, based on data from the General Social Survey (GSS) 2000, a decline in public concerns about immigration. Those calling for decreasing immigration fell from 62 percent in 1994 to 42 percent in 2000, and concerns that immigration was likely to hurt national unity declined from 69 percent to 53 percent in that same period. Jews, along with Asian-Americans and Latinos, are the least likely to believe that immigration will have a negative impact on American society and will lead to job loss for native-born Americans. Jews are the least pessimistic of all groups surveyed on issues such as the possibility of increased crime related to immigration. This positive attitude toward immigration may have been due at least in part to the strength of the economy between 1994 and 2000. Attitudes towards immigration are susceptible, however, to economic fluctuations and increased competition for fewer jobs.

Even in this most natural area of policy confluence, there are some possible storm clouds on the horizon. Despite the official positions of their advocacy

organizations, 42 percent of Jews (similar to 45 percent of other whites)⁸ believe that total immigration should be decreased. Since advocacy groups both lead and reflect the mainstream opinion of their membership, their leaders may need to hew more closely to that opinion in the future. Not surprisingly, only 29 percent of Latinos and 11 percent of Asians agree that immigration should be decreased.⁹ This suggests that the gap between ethnic groups on attitudes toward immigration may be widening down the road. In addition, there is another potentially divisive issue that may have to be addressed—that of fairness in immigration policy. America treats Cubans differently than Haitians, and Russians are welcomed more readily than either Latino group. Finally, the protracted length of time needed to resolve or reform many of the long-outstanding immigration issues listed above has been further exacerbated by post-September 11 antiterrorism concerns, thus prolonging the unresolved status of so many immigrants, their access to basic services, and their ability to fully integrate into the American mainstream.

Latinos and Jews share the belief that a public education has been the gateway to integration, democratic values, and upward mobility in America. Each successive wave of immigrants has benefited from the nation's free schools, which have served to inculcate core national values in the midst of great diversity. Jews not only passed through public school doors as students, they also returned in large numbers to teach new generations of Americans. Support for public education has been always been a solid cornerstone of Jewish public policy, and both groups have partnered on many educational legislative initiatives.

Unquestionably, America now has two school systems—"separate and unequal." AJC's Public Education Statement (June 2000) states that "the extreme disparity in resources—including quality personnel, facilities and funding—between many schools serving minority, immigrant, and economically disadvantaged children and those serving middle-class and affluent communities...must be narrowed." This largely suburban-urban divide reflects the de facto residential segregation that continues to prevail in America, particularly in its urban centers, and underscores the economic disparity between Jew and Latino.

Addressing this inequity without lowering financial support and standards for high-functioning, largely suburban, public schools will be an ongoing challenge. Campaigns for fiscal equity are active in some urban centers such as New York. According to the Los Angeles Jewish Population Study of 1997, 10 percent of age-eligible Jewish children in the Los Angeles area are in Jewish day schools, 15 percent are in non-Jewish private schools, and 64 percent are in pub-

lic schools. As the number of Jewish children in urban public schools declines, the Jewish voice in public school issues may diminish. Nevertheless, despite this absence from the classroom, Jews in general and Jewish organizations specifically maintain strong support for a healthy public school system as the bedrock of American democracy.

A clear difference exists, however, between Latinos and Jews on the subject of government vouchers for private or parochial education, as indicated earlier. Minority parents and community leaders are pinning their hopes on vouchers, as they agonize over exceptionally low achievement and high dropout rates, and are seeking a way out of their failing urban schools. With the exception of Orthodox Jews (approximately 10 percent of the total Jewish population) seeking relief from high parochial school costs, the majority of Jews have consistently opposed vouchers because of their concerns about maintaining church-state separation and the dilution of funding for public schools. There is little indication that there will be a change in the prevailing Jewish view of vouchers in the foreseeable future. Acknowledging the need for alternative solutions, however, some Jewish organizations have not opposed the establishment of charter schools, as non-traditional public schools, but have called for safeguards to prevent discrimination and protect First Amendment rights.

The area of foreign policy is one in which Jews have been involved since the turn of the century. Latino advocacy has been mostly concentrated in domestic policy to date, but this is changing. While not yet a consistent or powerful lobby, Latinos are increasingly interested in and concerned about foreign aid to their national homelands. With ease of travel and communications that exists today, many in this community are maintaining strong links with their countries of origin. Money flows back to the extent that it has become an integral part of those economies. Retirement homes are built to await the return of those who supported their families and their country by spending their working years in America. They have a vested interest in the viability of Latin America.

Latino foreign policy advocates have already bumped up against what they consider a disproportionate amount of foreign aid going to Israel. This is of particular concern to them in a period when the foreign aid budget has been cut dramatically. Jews have argued that it should not be a zero sum game and that the total foreign aid budget should be increased to provide sufficient aid for other countries, especially those that are the homelands of U.S. citizens and those more needy, such as sub-Saharan Africa.

David Harris, executive director of AJC, has noted that as the distinctions between domestic and international issues are increasingly blurred, one cannot

be isolationist today. Jews have an obligation to Israel and to Jewish communities worldwide, while Latinos will continue to have strong ties to Latin America. Jewish advocates would welcome support for a larger foreign aid package and increased American involvement in the international arena. Charles Kamasaki argues that that “while acknowledging the fundamental truth of this argument, some Latino leaders are suspicious of this approach. The concern is that Hispanic support for foreign aid provides ‘political cover’ for the largest current recipients of such aid without altering the fundamental dynamics of the process” (*see page 51*)

At the time of writing, we observe some developing areas that will have an impact on foreign affairs. In many ways, the dust has not yet settled from the terrorist attacks of September 11, and the Middle East is embroiled in successive waves of terrorism. The way in which these issues play out and are perceived will affect who sits at and what is placed on the coalition table. There is already some evidence of fluidity in the alignment of minority groups. A new phenomenon is that Muslim American organizations, some of which have in the past supported Middle East terrorist groups, are more routinely included in various coalitions, and this poses a major problem for Jewish organizations. Many ethnic organizations have deep concerns about threats to civil liberties as anti-terrorism measures are put into place. Jewish civil rights organizations share those concerns and are actively working to protect those rights, but also understand that extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures.

Social Distance

The GSS Survey 2000 indicates that long-term trends in intergroup relations are more positive, and that, in general, Americans are increasingly accepting of a multicultural society. Negative images of all minority groups receded slightly during the last decade. The usual barriers to intergroup contact are falling. Most ethnic groups were less likely to object to neighborhood integration in 2000 than in 1990, and opposition to immigration has also declined. Nevertheless, despite those overall trends, there is no perceptible commitment to achieving intergroup equality of status. Support for affirmative action remains low, ethnic images of many minority groups continue to be negative, and intergroup interaction is still limited.

The experience of American Jews has been that, as they moved from their immigrant ethnic enclaves into middle-class communities, they became, literally, the person next door with children attending the same schools and playing on

the same soccer field. They looked and behaved in ways that were similar to their non-Jewish neighbors. Greater acceptance followed.

The GSS Survey shows that while most Americans do not object to living in a neighborhood with a nonwhite majority, they are far less likely to object to living with Jews than with blacks, Latinos, or Asians. Not surprisingly, Jews are much less likely to object to living in an integrated neighborhood than is the population at large. But while Jews express more positive attitudes than others to residential integration, most, in fact, live residentially separate from Latinos. This is more likely to be caused by economic disparities than by racism, but the outcome is clear: There is a wide social distance between Jews and Latinos.

If Latinos and Jews live on different sides of the city, they also worship in different religious institutions. It is not clear how much the Catholic Church's edicts since Vatican II have filtered into the local parish churches, and how Latino views of Jews and Judaism have been shaped by those churches. Large numbers of Latinos are now joining the Pentacostal Church, which on the one hand has not yet revised its ways of relating to Judaism, but on the other hand is very supportive of Israel. The implications of this have yet to be seen.

Most Latinos get their information from different media sources than do Jews. A *Washington Post* survey in 2000,¹¹ asked Latinos the language of their television programs. Thirty-one percent of first-generation Latinos mainly watched Spanish programs, and 42 percent watched both English and Spanish equally. Interestingly, by the third generation, 88 percent of Latinos watched English programs, pointing to the persistence of Spanish even with the acquisition of English. In an era of highly segmented programming, these facts indicate a balkanization of news sources, impacting a large percentage of Latinos. If Latinos and Jews by and large acquire their understanding of the world and their knowledge of current events through different lenses and filters, this can only serve to maintain a distance between the perceptions and related actions of each group.

The questions on ethnic images in the GSS Survey indicate a high degree of mutual respect between Jews and other groups, but this does not necessarily translate into a perception of common interest between them. This contradiction is especially striking between Latinos and Jews. The survey shows that Jews are quite likely to know personally and be close to members of other groups, particularly African-Americans and Latinos, and to a lesser degree with Asians. No Jews indicated that they had the most in common with Latinos, and almost 30 percent responded that they had the least in common with Latinos. Similarly, only 5 percent of Latinos mentioned having the most in common with Jews,

compared, for example to 33 percent in common with whites, 16 percent with African—Americans, and 8 percent with Asian-Americans.

In general, Americans are split about evenly between those who believe groups should maintain their own distinct cultures, those who believe they should blend into larger society, and those who endorse a middle ground. Only 26 percent of Jews and 21 percent of Latinos, however, believe that groups should blend in, as opposed to 34 percent of the population at large. This interesting statistic from the GSS Survey suggests a unique meeting point between the two groups.

Ironically, while Jews have secured a high measure of success, the cost of this assimilation is seen in new generations who have chosen to “blend into the larger society” and are distanced from Judaism. The question of the continuity of the Jewish people is of great communal concern. Charles Kamasaki acknowledges the “concerns about Jewish continuity,” but says that “to the extent that these are also indicators of social acceptance and economic success, one suspects that at least some Latino leaders would welcome this ‘problem’” (*see page 56, note*).

The diversity of the Latino and Jewish communities further complicates the issues. While other groups in America see Jews as an affluent and influential community that successfully balances particularism with pluralism, there is little understanding of the diverse and often divisive range of religious practice, cultural identity and political affiliation within the Jewish community. Similarly, it behooves the Jewish community to understand the distinctions between, for example, Americans of Cuban, Columbian, Mexican, Salvadoran, and Argentinian backgrounds. There are significant socio-economic and cultural differences between first- and third-generation Latinos; between the status and well-being of legal and undocumented immigrants; and between the educated elites and others in the Latino community.

The Political Winds of Change

Peter Beinart in his seminal *New Republic* article (August 1997) writes of a “structural shift in alliances” (*see page 3*). It would have taken rare insight five years ago to predict that voting patterns of Jews and Latinos around the country would become more similar than those of African-Americans and Jews. He describes the demise of the old liberal, pro-government coalition in local and state elections. Analyzing the confluence of Latino and Jewish voting patterns, Beinart points to a similar fiscal conservatism coupled with a cultural cos-

mopolitanism. Jews and Latinos share concerns, albeit with different emphases, about immigration, cultural pluralism, crime, the radical religious right, public education, and stereotyping, while differing on abortion, gay rights, and church-state issues such as vouchers.

While Jews are still basically socially liberal in their voting patterns, the last decade's mayoral elections of Rudy Giuliani in New York, Richard Riordan in Los Angeles, and Richard Daley in Chicago garnered sufficient support from the Jewish vote as to assure their success. Issues of crime and racial politics played a significant role in these urban settings, factors that are also of concern to upwardly mobile Latinos.

What is clear is that each group brings considerable and different assets to the political table. Latinos are increasingly contributing the power of their numbers that will only increase as citizenship drives and voter registration efforts become more widespread and sophisticated. It is, of course, much more than a numbers game. Latinos are flexing their economic muscle and contesting elections. Furthermore, as the party affiliation patterns of Cuban-Americans and Mexican-Americans will attest, various Latino groups do not necessarily vote as a political bloc. Democrats and Republicans appeal to different segments of the Latino community in such places as New York, California, Texas, Florida, and Illinois. As other writers in this volume describe, recent high-profile local and state races have demonstrated a complex dynamic of ethnic politics, sometimes pitting Jew against Latino, or Latino against African-American, and creating new alliances. This pattern promises to be further complicated by the redistricting required by the findings of the 2000 Census.

As indicated earlier, Jews have long been engaged in the political process. Their experience in policy development, access to elected officials, and getting out the vote, together with their ability to contribute to causes and candidates, will ensure that they will continue to be a significant factor in the democratic process, particularly in major urban centers.

Looking Forward

Political coalitions have an ebb and flow. New issues are emerging that may either strengthen or weaken alliances between Latinos and Jews at any given time. Despite many points of confluence, there is also the possibility of inter-group competition and conflict. Yet as the two groups need to protect their own interests and advance their agendas, their mutual need is greater than reasons to oppose or ignore each other. At its core the rationale is this: Latinos must achieve social integration along with economic and political empowerment;

Jews must assure their future voice and influence despite a declining population.

The challenge to both sides will be to negotiate in good faith and with mutual respect on issues where there is common ground, and agree to disagree on others. There are some important lessons to be learned from past coalition experiences. It is critical that both groups seek and ensure equality and reciprocity in decision-making, leadership and action—the reality and the perception cannot be that one side is doing all the pulling. Mutual expectations must be realistic and understood. Inevitable differences about issues or candidates should not automatically be imputed to racism or anti-Semitism, although that is not to deny that prejudice exists each community and must be fought at every turn. Each group must make a serious effort to identify those issues that are vital to the other, and to search actively for ways to support them without compromising any core values or policies. One additional lesson is worth mentioning: It is surely better to communicate both positive and critical messages directly between groups and not through the media.

So long as the social and residential distance between Latinos and Jews persists, the challenge of building understanding will remain. In the American tradition of ethnic succession, and as Jews did before them, Latinos will continue to move from ethnic enclaves to middle-class communities and achieve greater integration and acceptance. In the meantime it is at the leadership level that most of the interaction takes place, and it is clear that Jewish and Latino leaders bring sufficient capacity and commonality to build viable alliances at both local and national levels.

The potential difficulties of the Latino-Jewish relationship are far outweighed by the positives. There appears to be the will and the need for the two groups to travel the road of cooperation and coalition. What is not clear is how fast and how steadily the route can be traversed. Coalitions come about because of shared interests and the contribution of different strengths. The evolution of this journey will depend as much on mutuality of interests, as on understanding and trust in the intentions and actions of the other group. The shades and shapes of the routes are changing, and there is much work to be done together for the sake of each community that must travel down them together. The old “luggage” that immigrants brought, it turns out, enriched the country in untold tangible and intangible ways. The new itineraries are full and complicated, yet rewarding. These continuing efforts can only strengthen an America that has the potential of bestowing its benefits generously and equitably upon all of its residents.

Endnotes

1. Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Schocken, 1988).
2. *The American Jewish Yearbook* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001).
3. A 1988 report by the late David Roth, Midwest Director for the American Jewish Committee's Institute for American Pluralism, using 1980 Census data, showed Latinos numbering just 14.5 million (6.4 percent) of the total population. Roth predicted that the Latino population "is expected to reach 25 million by 1990 and to outnumber America's black population by 2000."
4. *El Futuro Newsletter*, National Latino Children's Institute, Sept. 1, 1999.
5. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (Stamford, CT: Overbrook Press, 1968).
6. B'nai B'rith (1843), American Jewish Committee (1906), American Jewish Congress (1916).
7. *New York Times*, March 25, 2001.
8. *General Social Survey 2000* in James Davis, Tom W. Smith, and Peter V. Marsden, *General Social Survey, 1972-2000, Cumulative Codebook* (Chicago: NORC, 2000).
9. *General Social Survey 2000*, *ibid.*
10. P. Herman, *Los Angeles Jewish Population Study 1997* (Los Angeles: The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, 1997).
11. The *Washington Post*/Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University, National Survey on Latinos in America (Kaiser Family Foundation, May 2000).

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