

THE DYNAMICS OF THE POLITICAL ALLIANCES
OF BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS IN
THREE LOCAL GOVERNANCE **BODIES**
IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

BY

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AN APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT (POLITICAL SCIENCE 5397)
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF **POLITICAL SCIENCE**
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY; IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS OF PUBLIC **ADMINISTRATION**

(SUMMER, 1997)

FACULTY APPROVAL:

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Chapter I

Introduction and Statement of Research Questions and Problem

The purpose of this research is to study the black/Latino elected leaders of Austin, Texas, particularly those who have served or are serving on the city council, the county commissioners court, and the school board. More specifically, this study is concerned with whether sharing minority status brings about convergence, cooperation and coalitions, or separation and indifference. A starting assumption is that no elected official can consider himself successful if he fails to get the minimum number of votes casts to get his issues passed. This study explores how well this goal is accomplished through alliances with colleagues and what negotiating styles help or impede this goal. In addition, this paper explores the specific issues that bring about convergence and divergence, the influence of constituents on the decision-making of minority officials, and the consequence of elections-at-large vs district elections for the effectiveness of minority office holders.

The Political Dilemma

The previous research focus on minority officials has been on "access", that is, on gaining office. Thus the reform politics of the 70's, 80's and 90's inspired a number of the studies on black candidates for public offices. Such studies have explored the effect on election procedures on "access" (e.g., MacManus 1978; Davidson and Korbel 1981; Engstrom and McDonald 1981; Karnig and Welch 1982; Zax 1990; Welch and Kamig 1990). The more intriguing studies on "access" are perhaps those that consider the "black political culture" as a determinant of "gains" in office holding (e.g., Preston et al. 1987).

Throughout the present decade the three selected governing bodies in Austin, Texas - the city council, the school board, and the county commissioners court - have each had two minority representatives - one Hispanic and one black. (There

were two exceptions - two Hispanics served on the Austin school board on two different occasions.) The numbers will probably not increase because the school board and the commissioners court members are elected by districts. Since minorities in Austin are concentrated geographically, one would not expect minority representatives to emerge from the other districts (minority candidates have not had broad crossover appeal in this city).

In contrast, city council members are elected at-large rather than by districts. Since whites constitute the majority of Austin voters, they, in reality, determine who the minority council representatives are. In fact, it is perhaps only by a "gentlemen's agreement" that any minority is elected to the city council. Places 5 and 6 are "reserved" for a black and a Hispanic by unwritten agreement. Under the "gentlemen's agreement" at-large system of Austin, minority candidates whose platforms are dominated by minority-related issues can easily experience defeat at the polls since these issues do not appeal to the predominantly white voters. Although many local minorities favor district elections for council members, there is not likely to be a change because the white majority repeatedly votes against district elections. Moreover, the courts have ruled that the at-large system in Austin does not discriminate against minorities as long as they have representation on the council. Since other large cities in Texas elect their council members by districts, Austin does not represent a general pattern.

Superficially, these two methods- district and at-large- seem equivalent since the number **of** minority representatives that emerge are similar. The single-member district election method more easily enables minority politicians to champion minority issues, but the two candidates usually end up losing the vote. Since officials representing the other districts do not need minority votes to swing an election, they will rarely compromise in district elections as they do in at-large elections. This voting pattern occurs **often** on the Austin school board. For example, both the Hispanic and African American board members wanted more

money budgeted for the schools in their districts because of the large number of low achieving students. Their majority colleagues saw no need to increase the expenditure in this manner.

The frustration of being outvoted so often produces a hostile climate that is not unique to Austin. In Dallas, Black Panthers have been dragged from the school board meetings and arrested by the police. The black elected officials have begun to boycott meetings. When the black mayor reprimanded his fellow blacks about their behavior, the NAACP and Black Panthers under the leadership of County Commissioner John Wiley Price started a demonstration outside the mayor's home. They plan to continue the demonstration until the mayor retracts his criticism (Dallas Morning News 1996, June 27:A8). On the Dallas School Board, the blacks and browns are not allied, and the blacks usually lose on votes. On the Austin School Board, the black and brown elected officials often formed alliances, yet lost nevertheless.

Both district and at-large systems fail to permit the minorities to succeed in getting their issues passed. Consequently, there is a feeling of ambivalence among many African Americans about both the at-large and the district elections. Both have their limitations especially for a minority population as small as that of African Americans in the Austin metropolis. Since the local Hispanics are increasing population so rapidly, they would profit from an at-large system if they should start voting in larger numbers.

Research Questions

This research provides answers as to how local minority office holders feel about this dilemma. How do they view the consequences of their election system? Do minority council members feel they are predisposed to de-emphasize racial politics because they must depend on the predominantly white voters to get elected? What is the governing style of minority office holders in the three governance

bodies, especially as relates to minority issues? Do minority elected officials believe that it really makes a difference to the minority community if persons of the same racial/ethnic group are representing them? Of course, there can be psychological gains; minorities can have a greater sense of identity with the governing body because of the presence of a member.

The present researcher became interested in this topic from having observed what he considered to be gross inequities in the distribution of resources in East Austin where the majority of black and brown minorities live. How had their representatives allowed this to occur? Were they frustrated? Did they feel like voices crying in the wilderness?

One public official reported that there is a general expectation for the facilities to be inferior in East Austin. For example, when a clinic in his precinct burned, the replacement was superior to all the clinics in the other precincts. Some of his political and civic colleagues seem uncomfortable with the location of the best clinic being in East Austin. Also, many minority residents are so cynical that they do not believe that the lavishly planned East Austin Entertainment Center will ever be constructed, as voted following heated debate by the city council.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two in this report addresses the literature on black elected officials and their alliances and on governing styles that promote or impede their governing successfully. This might be dichotomized into promoting the cause of the entire city, county, or district versus promoting the cause of one's ethnic/racial group. Chapter Three provides an overview of the three selected governance bodies in Austin, stressing the duties of the members and the sources of their power. Chapter Four addresses the methodology of the study - principally interview and questionnaire surveys. The survey questions and their relationship with the variables of the study are explored. Chapter Five provides an analysis of the

interview results. Since the elected officials are discussed in chronological order of the years of service, this chapter provides a historical sketch of the alliances of African American and Hispanic officials as they are perceived by the officials and a few politically astute observers of these officials. Chapter Six concludes this study by offering the reader insights into the present status of the relationships between black and brown elected officials on the three governance bodies in Austin and speculates on the future and how broadly the results can be interpreted.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Overview

This literature review encompasses coalition studies, especially those of African Americans and Latinos although the black-Jewish liberal coalitions have sometimes been more historical and more effective in getting bills passed. The office holders' negotiating styles such as the degree to which they are confrontational or conciliatory have also been explored in addition to the types of issues that they raise: representational vs. deracialized. This review leads into the conceptualization of the variables and the hypotheses to be tested.

A review of the literature on U.S. black elected officials reveals that despite their increasing numbers--8,015 in 1993 (JCPES,1994:xi), there has been a dearth of literature devoted to the research problem stated in the previous chapter. The most neglected area of research has been the study of black officials at the county level, although there are 913 office holders on this level across the nation (JCPES, 1994:xv). Most of the available studies of black elected officials focus on mayors and congressmen; in contrast, council and school board members have been neglected as subjects of research just as county commissioners have been.

Most of these studies are equally limited in their focus--gaining access to office has been the most widely researched area. The assessment of post election accomplishment has been neglected. One of the most popular topics for both study and litigation has been the relationship between methods of city council election and city council racial and ethnic membership. These studies conclude that at-large elections reduce the share of blacks among city council members below that which blacks would attain under ward or district elections. Zax's 1990 research in Houston demonstrates that since black segregation is almost always more extreme

than that of Hispanics, the ward or district system is more effective for blacks:

"Hispanic 'under-representation' while more severe than that of blacks is relatively insensitive to differences in election methods because Hispanic segregation is much less than that of blacks" (Zax 1990:354).

African American and Hispanic Coalitions

Since the two minorities--Hispanics and blacks--are usually under-represented on governance bodies, they can become a numerical majority in some cities if they form coalitions. For example, according to Tedin (1994:775), blacks and Hispanics account for 55 percent of the population of Houston. "These numbers suggest the logic for a black-Hispanic coalition since together they could mount a strong challenge to Anglo (i.e., non-Hispanic white) political control" (Tedin, 1994:775).

Having pointed out that Latinos will be the nation's largest minority group by the year 2010, Rudolf de la Garza (1993:141-142) sees Latinos becoming a formidable political force in the future as being partially dependent on the two ethnic groups forging alliances. There are, however, some major issues that divide them:

1. **Resentment** among many blacks over Latino access to affirmative action programs that blacks believe were designed for them.
2. Tension because of the perception that immigration results in job displacement and the reallocation of public resources to Latinos rather than to blacks.
3. Tensions resulting from Latino population growth that produces majorities in schools that previously had black majorities, administrators, and staff. Latino demands for curricular reform and staffing thus leading to Latino-black competition. Similar results occur because of the Latinization of police forces and the charges of police brutality that follow.
4. Battles over reapportionment and redistricting of legislative seats since Latino population growth greatly exceeds black population

Rudolf de la Garza concludes that Latino and Black leaders will need to be diligent to avoid the divisiveness that could result from exacerbating these differences.

Jennings (1992:161) could foresee one scenario of the two minority groups acting together and significantly influencing politics in the United States:

The blacks and Latinos joining to push a common political agenda, as was witnessed in the Harold Washington mayoral campaign in Chicago, the Mel King mayoral campaign in Boston in 1983, and the David Dinkins mayoral victory in New York City.

In contrast, there were other scenarios:

There are also local instances of mayors attempting to utilize one group of black or Latino citizens to counter the political influence of the other group. Former mayors Kevin White in Boston and Edward Koch in New York City were accused of attempting such strategies at various times during their administrations(162).

Jennings(1992:162) concluded by pointing out the consequences if conflict rather than cooperation becomes the dominant mode of behavior of these two ethnic groups:

If conflict between blacks and Latinos becomes the political norm, then we should not expect much progress toward a public policy that responds to the economic and social needs of the poverty - level and working class strata in each of these communities. If blacks, Latinos. and people of Asian descent do support common political agendas and coalitions, then it may mean that the have-not interests could develop stronger platforms by which to challenge actors representing and benefiting from the economic and wealth status within America(162).

Since the research that will be developed from this review of the literature will look more closely at the minority elected officials as they make alliances after they have been elected to boards or commissions rather than at the coalitions that helped them get elected, the brief essay by Jennings(1992) was valuable as background for the proposed study. He included some exceedingly relevant questions in his suggestions for further research:

First, what is the history of black and Latino political relationships in different cities and regarding various policy issues?

What conditions or factors lead either to political cooperation or competition between blacks and Latino activists?

Under what conditions have multiracial coalitions led to the election of black, Latino, or Asian candidates?

What characteristics are found in those places where black and Latino political cooperation has been evident?

What political or social tools or processes contribute to cooperation and competition, and what is the role of the mayor in the American city as far as this question is concerned?

And what kinds of demands upon governments will emerge as a result of political collaboration between blacks and Latinos?

Will these demands be different from the traditional benefits sought from local government?

These questions will become more significant as both blacks and Latinos continue to dominate numerically in increasing numbers of American cities.

In most institutions containing both black and non-black membership, the early pattern of alliances across the nation was that of blacks and liberal whites (usually Jews), as stated above. Recently, Jews and blacks have become estranged in many American communities. One would expect now that the bonds be forged between blacks and Hispanics since many are sharing the same space (barrios and black ghettos are becoming one), and many share common experiences of oppression, discrimination, and poverty. McClain and Stewart (1995:126-127) claim pragmatic interests versus a group empowerment ideology is at the heart of the debate over a theory of biracial alignment. When blacks and Latinos make political gains, the gains of one group may be perceived as being at the expense of the other group, despite the fact that these two minorities may profess that they are committed to empowerment and liberation.

Nevertheless, the literature review revealed a general lack of trusting relationships between many blacks and Latinos. Often they compete for the economic "crumbs" because in practice, they view life as a zero-sum game:one

group gains at the expense of the other. Also, Hispanics often found the more militant style often characteristic of African-Americans to be too abrasive and confrontational. Latinos see blacks who have been the dominant minority for such a long time as being unwilling to relinquish the claim even though there is a great demographic shift - Hispanics are becoming the dominant minority. On the other hand, blacks often see Hispanics as being unwilling to struggle for equality.

Thus many of the studies of Black-Hispanic alliances conclude with a pessimistic view (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb, 1984). It seems that most black-Hispanic voter coalitions have only short term success. A case in point was the black-Hispanic coalition that elected Harold Washington mayor of Chicago but ceased to hold together during the first election following his death. The belief in the zero-sum political pie adds to the disincentive. Still another factor, according to Tedin (1994), is "Anglos tend to side with Hispanics when faced with the possibility of black-Hispanic coalitions." The conflict currently raging among school board members in Dallas is a case in point (Applebome, 1996:A8).

Coalition Research Methods

A review of the literature of the research on minority coalitions, mostly voter coalitions, reveals two approaches: The first is a case study of specific constituencies (usually cities) and a documentation of the success or failure of biracial coalitions focusing mostly on events and elite-level actors (Henry 1980, Falcon 1988, Sonenshein 1989). The second is a statistical analysis of a number of constituencies with the purpose of identifying those factors which predict the success or failure of biracial coalitions (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb, 1984; Meier and Steward, 1991).

Tedin (1994) used the case study approach, which was limited to one metropolitan area--Houston--believing that if the mass public does not in principle support cooperation, it will be difficult to maintain the coalition. He used the

broader sample--the community--for study rather than limiting his subjects to politicians. First, the study stressed the marked differences in the experiences of the two minorities. For example, Hispanics are more optimistic and satisfied than are blacks with the local economic operation. Tedin's (1994:782) pessimistic conclusion of the possibility of coalitions for Hispanics and blacks was the following:

What we see among blacks is that the most educated, those with the highest incomes, and those registered to vote are least supportive of biracial coalitions. The pattern for these variables in the Hispanic sample is substantially the same. Education and income are strong predictors of opposition to biracial coalitions.

To add to the pessimism that the most affluent and educated are less supportive was the robust negative relationship between political efficacy and support for biracial coalitions; that is, those most likely to believe that they can influence politics are most likely to oppose biracial cooperation.

Although other coalitions have been studied, such as the black-Jewish-liberal coalition, primarily from the perspective of getting candidates elected to office, coalitions on governance bodies have been somewhat ignored. That is, no one seems to be researching how minority elected officials persuade or appeal to their colleagues, act and align informally, maintain or enhance cooperation with peers, settle or resolve disputes. These areas are in dire need of research.

Representation vs Deracialized Politics

This literature survey further reveals a shift in the emphasis of minority politics during the last decade. Theories centering on the protests and confrontational politics of activists are becoming outdated. Instead, there is increasing discussion of the "pay-offs" for minority political participation or governmental responsiveness to the needs of the minority community; more specifically, the focus is being placed on electoral politics as an empowering strategy. Does having a minority on a board or council result in more decisions

favorable to the black community or the community as a whole"? Sometimes minority officials are treated as mere tokens resulting in their feeling the frustration of always being an outsider.

According to the "representation theory," minority politicians are expected to represent a fairly identifiable sub-population. This is race specific or identity politics as opposed to coalition politics.

In contrast, Wright (1995:752) points out that a policy of deracialization (as opposed to race-specific politics) implies race-neutrality, i.e., ignoring racial issues "in favor of those that are common concerns of both minority and white voters" (751). This puts forth a more non-threatening political image. One assumed benefit of such a strategy is to make it easier to form political coalitions. Wright notes wisely that coalitions may be intra-racial or interracial.

Giles and Jones (1995:622) focus on the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) as an example of an intra-racial coalition. This coalition maximizes the bargaining leverage through cohesive voting behavior. The present study focuses on inter-ethnic/racial coalitions since in most instances only one Black official is on the Board or commission.

Protest Is Not Enough by Browning et al (1984) launched an attack on protest politics and stressed the importance of coalitions. Their data are based on the study of ten California cities.

Black Power by Stokely Carmichael (now Kuame Ture 1967:84) and Charles Hamilton is an early attack on coalition politics in which three coalition myths or major fallacies are singled out:

First, the interests of black people are identical with the interests of certain liberal, labor and other reform groups.

The second myth is the fallacious assumption that a viable coalition can be effected between the politically and economically insecure.

The third myth assumes that political coalitions are or can be sustained on a moral, friendly, sentimental basis by appeals to conscience.

Carmichael and Hamilton (1969:84) conclude that there can be no viable coalitions between blacks and whites until whites can accept blacks as co-equal partners. They did not perceive this as being possible at the time of their publication.

In contrast. Bayard Rustin, as a contributor to Commentary (1966), wrote that the "Irish, Jews, and Italians did not win power by sticking together but through alliances." He advocated a liberal-labor-civil rights coalition that works to make the Democratic Party truly responsive to the aspirations of the poor and the reconstruction of American society in the interests of social justice.

"Deracialization" is a term that goes back to the 1970s (Charles Hamilton 1973), but it was given new impetus in connection with the elections of November 7, 1989, a watershed event in American politics: Individuals of African descent won unprecedented mayoral elections in New York City; New Haven, Connecticut; Seattle, Washington; Durham, North Carolina; and Cleveland, Ohio. Also on this day was the landmark election of L. Douglas Wilder as governor of Virginia, the only occasion in the history of the country that an African-American has won a gubernatorial election (McCormick and Jones 1993). These African-American candidates won their victories in majority white districts, having attracted a wider range of white electoral support. For example, 19 percent of Wilder's voter support came from white voters who identified themselves as conservatives.

There have been varied interpretations of this "Black Tuesday," when so many blacks won elections in predominantly white districts. Some saw it as a sign of maturation and sophistication of African- American politics. The winning politicians with their political pragmatism and savvy were models worthy of emulation. The counter thesis was that instead of being the maturing of black politics, it was its death (McCormick and Jones 1993).

It is important in the present research paper to make a distinction between the use of deracialization as an agenda setting strategy and its use as an electoral strategy. Will the deracialized electoral strategy carry over as a post-election

strategy of governance? The extent to which the African American community is politically organized and prepared to make race-specific demands on these officials is a determining factor.

To what extent should African American elected officials who are elected in predominantly white political jurisdictions openly pursue race-specific public policy options after winning office? Many African American leaders respond that race-specific policies are needed to mitigate the impact of racism on both the African American middle class and the urban underclass. To do otherwise, would be a true oxymoron, deracialized black politics. McCormick and Jones (1993:80) conclude their discussion of the new wave of crossover politicians: "One hopes they will not lose focus on the problems that black people face, for if they do, they will have gained the prize, but will have lost their souls."

Georgia Persons' Dilemmas of Black Politics (1993:10) continues a discussion of the troubling new politics of racial reconciliation. Above all, there is concern that the plight of the black underclass is neither recognized nor addressed by the new black politics of racial reconciliation. Persons (1993) concludes that deracialization will likely become the preponderant pattern of black electoral politics while civil rights organizations will take the other track of black advocacy politics.

The concept of deracialization was investigated by Pierannunzi and Hutcheson (1991) in the context of an election in which all major candidates were black. They analyzed Maynard Jackson's successful candidacy as mayor of Atlanta. He was able to draw support across race and class lines, while running a deracialized campaign, stressing residential and quality of life issues.

Thus the question is whether deracialization as a campaign style leads to a deracialized governance strategy. Marable's (1990:20-21) negative views have been widely quoted: "Their election can be viewed as a psychological triumph for African Americans, but they represent no qualitative resolution to the crises of black

poverty, educational inequality, crime, and unemployment." One response to **Marable** was that black officials should not be expected to solve all of the intractable problems of the black underclass. Also, **Perry** (1991) gave several examples of black elected officials who had held deracialized campaigns, then later implemented vigorous affirmative action programs.

As stated previously, the literature is replete with articles on the marked increase in black elected officials, but the study of the effects of that increase has been neglected. This is surprising in light of researchers such as Scavo (1990) who have observed that black and white decision-makers have different political agendas as they enter office. Must blacks become less race-specific and more universal in their agendas if they want to have cross-racial appeal? What bargaining and negotiating behaviors are most useful in helping the lone black office-holder be effective on his/her council or board?

This review of the literature below analyzes some theoretical models of bargaining among members of governance bodies and then proceeds to summarize studies of the impact of minority office holders.

The Bargaining Concept and Leadership Styles in Politicized Situations

Personal styles and strategies of public officials have not been widely researched although black officials are often viewed as confrontational. Recently, Jew Don Boney, "a fiery-eyed African-American" community activist in Houston, found that it was easy for his image to be caricatured as 'an agitator' and 'outsider' when he was elected to the City Council." Thus he found it necessary to present himself as a much more conventional politician (Nicholas 1996). In contrast, personal styles of white political leaders do not get the focus that is given to those of blacks, with a few exceptions such as the "confront-and-then compromise approach" of New York mayor Rudolph W. Guiliani (Firestone 1995). Even in this rare instance, there was no condemnation.

Johnson and Secret (1996) dichotomized black governance style as trustee and delegate. The former is characterized by the representative applying his/her own judgment to determine policy needs and the latter being based on cues from the constituency. The writers found more minority legislators acting as trustees rather than delegates.

Bargaining behaviors have relevance for the study of leadership styles. Inherent in the bargaining process is the procedure of compromise; Du Tort's 1991 research deals with bargaining relationships and negotiations. Studies on dispute resolution such as those by Jennings (1994:111) also have relevance. Special problems are posed in situations of racial and ethnic conflict. Although minority office holders and their colleagues engage in conflict on many occasions, the dynamics of these political conflicts have not been analyzed.

Danzberger (1994:37) has looked at shortcomings of many school boards that grow out of these strategies of interaction associated with political conflict:

A governing board - particularly a board created through political process will not govern well if its members cannot, through healthy debate, develop consensus about the role of the board: The purpose of the institution governed, the constituencies to which the board is accountable, how the board will relate to its constituencies, the goals and strategies needed to achieve the expected results, and how the board defines its role in relation to that of the superintendent.

Danzberger (1994) concludes that without such consensus, school boards will focus on the short-term micro management of the school system and will respond to special interests, factions, and specific complaints of individual constituents. He makes it clear that achieving effective governance is not an easy task. The research, however, fails to look at special problems faced by minority board members. Minority politicians after gaining public office must evolve a myriad of tactics and strategies to be effective. The role dynamics and subgroup alignments in local governance of school boards where there are minority officials are worthy of academic study.

Stone (1989:7) points out three questions in studying the governance of cities:

1. Who makes up the governing coalition?
2. How is the coming together accomplished?
3. What are the consequences of the who and how?

He adds that cooperation can never be taken as a given. It is usually achieved by some degree of reciprocity. He emphasizes the biracial character of Atlanta's urban regime. Consequently, it is interesting to study this cooperation across racial lines, particularly since race is often a chasm rather than a bridge.

When conflicts did occur in the relationship of the two groups, Andrew Young is credited with healing the break between Atlanta's black political leadership and the city's white business elite. Part of that healing is attributed to Young's own easy going style and his strong personal inclination to cooperate with the city's monied interests(Stone 1989:144).

Alperin (1992) explores the motives underlying political cooperation. In attempting this exploration, political scientists have used a variety of methods, including formal modeling, experiments, and studies of actual political phenomena. In Alperin's study, rhetorical analysis is conducted of the discourse of blacks and Jews based on two case studies - one based in the twin cities of Minneapolis/St.Paul, a group called Black and Jewish Women in Dialogue and the other - an African American/Jewish Council in Chicago. The motives are self interest, principle, and close identification. Sometimes there are multiple motives, competing or intertwined.

The Impact of Minority Representation

In addition to bargaining styles of leadership, the impact of minority officials is a final topic of concern. This literature search yielded few studies in this area. Eisinger (1982a, 1982b, 1983), Meier and colleagues (1984), Dennis (1990), and Beauregard (1990) and Rich (1996) have shed some light on this subject; however,

the picture is mixed as to whether black representation in the formal bodies is really consequential. In other words, is there a difference in policy outcomes?

Eisinger (1982a, 1982b, 1983) argued that the election of black mayors has promoted a new-style post-machine patronage politics involving the adaptation of rationalistic, reform techniques to the long-standing racial goal of income advancement. To produce income opportunities, most black mayors have also pursued a strategy of an alliance with white economic power ---- although the consequences for black incomes are not yet clear.

Meier and England (1984) sought to fill this research void by examining 82 of the largest central city school districts in the United States, focusing on the percentage of black-held seats on the school board. Several measures were created as policy outcomes that are relevant to race. The researchers predicted that black access to school board seats would correlate with a higher representation of black teachers, a larger proportion of black students attending college, fewer blacks suspended or dropping out, fewer in vocational training and special education classes, and more in gifted and enriched classes. Simple correlation scores generally supported the hypothesis, but only modestly so.

Meier and England (1984) outlined some preconditions that must be met before school board members could affect school policies. Two that seemed especially relevant to this research were 1) issues important to blacks must be on the board agenda, and 2) black members must be able to persuade nonblack members to vote for favorable policies.

In a later study, Stewart, England and Meier (1989:300) examined the relationship between minority board representatives and minorities in administrative and teaching positions. Multiple regression analysis showed "a developmental sequence exists where black board representation leads to black administrative representation, which in turn leads to greater representation for black teachers."

Dennis (1990) used parish-level data in Louisiana. The percentage of the

parish school board members who were black was calculated from a 1981 national roster of black elected officials. Black representation was negatively and significantly associated with each of three measures of discrimination against students....corporal punishment, placement in an educable mentally retarded program, and suspension. The data on the percentage of blacks in these categories were taken from a survey compiled by the U.S. Office of Education. Unfortunately, the data did not permit a test linkage of the impact of minority board representation on the employment of black personnel in the education system as considered in Meier's research.

Beauregard (1990) used the Philadelphia case to illustrate that minority coalitions in city governance are limited in achieving redistributive policies that favor minority constituencies. The data failed to show that the election of minorities meant that there would be a coordination of the interests of officials and voters.

Rich (1996) states that when he started his book, Black Mayor and School Politics, he was searching for some evidence that black politicians were changing the status quo. "What I found were highly political school systems, continuing the status quo but in deep denial"(xi). He concludes that black politicians have not helped in the school reform of inner city schools. The major question of Rich's research was "Do black mayors make a difference for schools?" If not, why? He admits, however, that many mayors do not have formal control over schools, even those who appoint board members, but argues that their informal control can be potentially significant. He states:

There is no evidence that the poor are better off under black-led school boards. The governing school boards are not free to introduce new curricula or change personnel policies. State laws protect the traditions, rules, and norms of the *ancient regime*.

"Outcomes" of minority office-holding deserve more scholarly attention, especially with respect to how the office holders link, or fail to link, with colleagues in attacking issues. Event or decision-making analysis and role theory, as in Rich's

study, may be helpful approaches to identifying the dynamics of the linking.

Since interviews have been the major method of data gathering for case studies of city governance boards, the present reviewer focused on these studies. Stone(1989) interviewed ninety-seven individuals, a few more than once. They were categorized by race, sex, and community role: business, public official, and community-board. Appendix C of Stone's book is a note on methods.

In reviewing the literature, the present researcher found a case study on the city of Houston by Thomas and Murray(1991) to be one of the most valuable models for the present study using the case study method of research. In their study entitled *Progrowth Politics: Change and Governance in Houston* they wrote: "For most of its 150 years, Houston espoused unabashed and unremitting progrowth policies of pushing business and industrial development and profit... with seemingly little concern for environmental, aesthetic, cultural, and social consequences" (xviii).

Conceptual Framework of Study

This research proceeds from two underlying assumptions: First, that on the American political scene the minority office holders, in each of the three governance bodies being investigated, lack power bases of strength on the boards to which they are elected, all other things being equal. Second, that minority elected office-holders, especially black office holders, have the challenge of assessing the appropriateness of race-specific representational or identity politics versus deracialized or race-neutral politics. According to the former perspective, black politicians are expected to represent a fairly identifiable and self-conscious sub-population. Their black constituents have the expectation that these officials will tackle problems that critically impede the progress of the black community. They are concerned with outputs or "payoffs" for minority political participation. "Deracialization" conveys the notion of ignoring racial issues in favor of those that are common concerns of both the minority and dominant group voters (Hamilton,

1992:175-178).

Given these assumptions then, we raise three basic set of analytic questions:

- I. Are minority elected officials inclined in actual practice to de-emphasize racial politics and group identity in formulating and implementing political agendas relative to their office? That is, do they have significantly different interests and perceptions of political issues and agendas than do their peers? (One researcher concluded from a study of black women state legislators that black women elected officials have greater similarities with their black male colleagues than with their white female colleagues in defining issues, thus supporting the contention that race transcends gender. (Barrett 1995).
2. Are there operating styles that contribute to the minority elected official's effectiveness as a group member on the governance boards? That is, once the official has been elected, what manner of operating vis-a-vis peers or of resolving, bargaining, and aligning with colleagues makes a difference in gaining significant support on issues, especially on issues most relevant to the minority community? And with whom are they most likely to bargain and align?
3. Have resulting alliances, if any, been similar or different for black or Hispanic officials across local governance bodies in the same communities?

This research seeks to identify the ways that black and brown elected officials in the city of Austin, Texas, view themselves (as representational and/or deracialized) and how their self-perceptions influence their aligning behaviors with their peers in the three selected local governance bodies. A cursory review of the local news accounts of the council proceedings and observation of council sessions reveals that Austin is greatly polarized into “business” and “environmental” segments that have modified racial/ethnic alignments on the council. This polarization, however seems to have recently permeated only the city council chambers, excluding the school board and commissioners' court. Thus, for more than a decade, black and brown city council members, have formed coalitions with white business factions; however the present Hispanic council member is aligned with the environmental coalition. This proposed research systematically tests apparent current black/brown divisions. In addition, the study explores areas of the dynamics of cooperation between blacks and browns and blacks and whites.

Cooperative interactions may range from spontaneous agreement, to situational bargaining, to sustained coalitional activity. We speculate more non-threatening politics of the strategy of deracialization in agenda-setting makes it easier to form political alliances, across racial/ethnic groups, especially the more stable coalitions.

According to the Dorsey Dictionary of American Government and Politics, "coalition" is defined as a temporary joining of political actors to advance legislation or to elect candidates. Legislative coalitions are used as examples to develop the definition. Similarly, related studies deal with coalitions formed to get minority candidates elected such as Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. This present study forges a new direction for coalition studies. No similar study was found looking comparatively at three bodies-city council, school board, and county commissioners' court. In previous research, black mayors have been the noticeable topic. Black city council persons have been noticeably understudied, and black county commissioners have been ignored even more so. Thus, the present study deviates from the research trend of focusing on the minority politics of the mayoral office rather than on the minority politics of local boards, councils, and commissions.

By way of summary thus far, a major demographic change - the marked increase in minorities on the political scene - has created a new context for relationships among the various racial/ethnic groups which may take the form of coalition politics, bargaining as a political strategy, political conflict or mutual nonrecognition (based on a discussion by McClain and Stewart 1995:125). Conflict between groups may be pursued on an "enemies always" basis or on a "not permanent enemies" stance (Eisinger 1976:17-18).

Working Hypotheses

Probing questions and observations such as those above have led to the formulation of the following hypotheses relative to the Austin, Texas political scene:

- WH #1: In the three governing bodies under study, the alliances between minority elected officials and their colleagues -even other minority peers - are precarious and not necessarily sustained because relations are not grounded in an empowerment/liberation ideology.
 - #1a: In large part, pragmatic considerations of issues by the elected minority official are relevant to the quality of interaction between the official and his/her peers - even other minority colleagues.
 - #1b Bargaining according to specific situations is the more apparent approach of minority elected officials in interacting with peers.
- WH #2 Minority elected officials sometimes adopt race or ethnic-specific postures relative to agency or board decision-making on issues - even when there is likelihood of defeat on an issue - because the officials perceive strong endorsement and/or a compelling drive from minority constituents.
 - 2a Minority officials adopt a less deracialized role when the issues are clearly race or ethnic-oriented.
 - 2b Alliances and conflicts between minority officials and their peers vary among the three Austin governing bodies not only according to the issue but also in light of the method of election (i.e., election at-large vs. by district).

Note that this research focuses on, as the dependent variables, peer relationships and negotiating role performance in agenda making and agenda implementation. Relationships will be typed eventually as precarious if cooperative interactions between minority officials and their peers are not consistently sustained. Roles will be typed eventually as race specific or de-racialized. A limitation that is acknowledged here is that the weight of personality variables is not significantly noted in the hypotheses. Although the potential impact of personal style is not denied, it is to be considered only secondarily in the nature of the bargaining dynamic. The next chapter explores the setting of the research.

Chapter 3: Research Setting

Chapter 3 examines the research setting or the organizational environments in which the research occurred. A major purpose is to familiarize the reader with the major functions of the three governance bodies of the study. In addition this chapter traces, the development of the three governance bodies.

Austin City Council

Austin was incorporated in 1840 when a state-granted charter provided for the mayor-aldermanic form of government. From 1840 to 1846 the mayor plus eight aldermen were elected for a term of one year. In 1846, the number of aldermen was reduced to six. In 1857, the number was again increased to eight.(MacCorkle, 1973:62)

Under the commission form of government Austin had four councilmen and a mayor. This same number was retained when the council-manager government was adopted in 1926, and this number remained until 1967 when the charter was amended increasing the number to six councilmen and the mayor (MacCorkle 1973:63).

The Austin City Charter authorizes (and the courts have held) that powers granted to the city and not conferred upon any particular office belong to the council (MacCorkle 1973:70). The council not only fomulates policy but also has the responsibility to see that the policy is carried out. It passes the budget, it fixes the tax rate, it incurs debts, it makes contracts, its annexes and zones territory and the like. It is primarily a legislative body, but its control over administration is by no means slight. It appoints and removes the city manager at will. The council's primary duty is not to execute policy. This is an administrative function for which the city manager is responsible. The present mayor, Bruce Todd, who is completing

his term of office, advocates a strong mayor form of government rather than the mayor/city manager form. This change, however, is not likely to occur soon. The Austin City Council is required to meet in regular session at the municipal building at least once each week, or at such time as may be prescribed by ordinance (MacCorkle 1973:69).

Austin Independent School District

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) is presently made up of nine members of the board of trustees; two are elected at-large and seven by districts. In order to avoid litigation, AISD had to go to the nine member board since a state law required nine when the district's average daily attendance reached the 64,000 mark. Requirements by the Justice Department also had to be met in devising the district plan. Without these outside pressures, the trustees probably would not have warmed toward the present district plan. The Austin American Statesman used pressure to pursue single member districts in its editorials:

The need for single member districts for trustee elections is unquestioned. Some parts of the city dominate school board elections. It is commendable that they vote in greater numbers, but the result is a board that is not always as inclusive as it should be. When one side of town exercises more clout at the ballot **box** than other areas, some areas of town find that their needs receive less attention from the district (Austin American Statesman1991:A8)

This editorial concluded that minorities were rightly seeking to amplify their voice within the district.

The powers of the Board of Trustees of AISD provide for a school system and establish policies in keeping with the needs of the community and the requirements of the applicable law. The responsibilities of the board are the following:

1. Select the Superintendent and support him or her in the discharge of duties.
2. Approve school personnel upon nomination and recommendation of the Superintendent.

3. Consider and act on policies for the District.
 4. Establish District boundaries and school attendance areas.
 5. Require and evaluate the reports of the Superintendent concerning the progress and the financial status of the District.
 6. Advise with the Superintendent on recommendations for the District.
 7. Assist in presenting to the public the needs and progress of the educational system.
 8. Perform the specific duties imposed upon the Board by statutes.
- (This information was furnished by the Board secretary)

The current board prepares a budget for 75,000 students in 93 schools.

Travis County Commissioners Court

The basic structure of Travis County government and the functions it carries out are prescribed by the State of Texas. Among their many functions, the Court:

- Sets the tax rate
- Adopts the annual budget
- Approves new programs and changes existing ones
- Adopts regulations and policies
- Approves and manages County facilities.

The court carries out these and other duties by meeting in Voting Sessions. The Voting Session of the Court normally meets on Tuesday at 9 am. Decisions of the Court require a majority vote of its members.

The Travis County Commissioners Court is made up of four commissioners: who are elected by district (precincts), and the county judge, who is elected at large. The primary job of the county commissioners court is to create the budget which pays for the courts, the jails, sheriffs deputies and constables, rural health clinics, and the largest number of county-maintained roads in a Texas metropolitan county. The Health and Human Services Department is operated jointly by the City of Austin and Travis County.

The most recent Travis county budget overseen by the Commissioners Court was \$294 million. The two minority commissioners- a black and a Hispanic - represent Districts 1 and 4, respectively.

Intergovernmental Activities

On rare occasions the three governance bodies do come together as a forum. Austin Mayor, Bruce Todd, conceived of such a meeting, a town-hall format also including the Austin Community College Board of Trustees.

Mayor Todd has for years been a proponent of consolidating the City of Austin and Travis County bureaucracies into one metro government to eliminate duplication and improve coordination of services. Some services have been consolidated such as health and some jail operations. But complete consolidation, an idea that counties statewide have resisted, has been shot down several times.

The editor of the Austin American Statesman, Rich Oppel, has also called for turning the county over to the City of Austin. Bill Aleshire, Travis County Judge of the Commissioners Court, answered this minimizing of the duties of county officials in an op-ed piece:

The difference between county elected officials and elected officials in the city is that county officials actually run the government. County officials are policy makers and public administrators... full-time workers. Unlike city government, where elected officials are mere ornaments, and the real decisions are controlled by very well-paid staff (Austin American Statesman Sept. 26, 1996:A15).

Aleshire, having witnessed an outcry of citizens against a request for a rather marked increase in salaries for members of the Commissioners Court, continued his defense of the roles of the commissioners:

We do meat-and-potatoes government. We clean up messes for the community from law enforcement to courts, in which our judges make difficult, sometimes momentous decisions; to settling civil disputes from small claims to billion-dollar cases; to keeping the official community records for property, probate, and marriages; to dealing with juvenile delinquents, drug addicts, and the mentally ill; to providing help to the very poor; protecting elderly persons, estates and operating the morgue. We have challenging duties in operating and expanding parks and in building and maintaining bridges and more road miles than any other large county in Texas (A15).

This lengthy quotation has been included because the county judge has been motivated to spell out concisely the Commissioner's roles and duties, in his effort to defend the worth of the County Commissioners courts. Since Travis county is growing at a rapid rate as Austin residents flee urban sprawl, high taxes, a high crime rate, and a school system of mediocre quality, the county's role will probably increase rather than diminish.

Three tables are included to provide a chronology of the African American and Latino participants on the three governance bodies. Berl Handcox, the first African American on the City Council, was the lone minority for two terms because somehow John Trevino, a Hispanic, lost his first election in spite of his having been the gentlemen's choice. When Trevino did win, he served six terms. It seems that incumbency plays a significant role in re-elections.

Jimmy Snell served three terms, and Charles Urdy served five terms. Robert Barnstone, who identified himself as Hispanic, served only one term because he attempted to become mayor and was defeated. Gus Garcia, having served two terms, won a third in Place 2 instead of Place 5. Eric Mitchell is seeking a second term, and is presently in a runoff for Place 6.

The County Commissioners Court has also had few changes among its black and brown members since Richard Moya, a Hispanic, served several terms as well as Jimmy Snell after he transferred from the City Council to the Commissioners Court. Snell was followed by Sam Biscoe who is presently serving as the commissioner for Precinct 1. The other Hispanics on the court included Henry Gonzales, Marcus de Leon, and Margaret Gomez, who is presently serving.

Wilhelmina Delco became the first black to serve on the school board

followed by Marvin Griffin, Steve Ferguson, Bernice Hart, and Loretta Edelin. On the Hispanic side there have been more persons elected with two serving at the same time in two instances. Among the Hispanics have been Gus Garcia(first), Abel Ruiz, Manual Navarro, Lidia Perez, Beatriz de la Garza, Diana Castaneda, and Rudy Montoya. A description of the methodology is the content of the following chapter.

TABLE 3.1
THE CHRONOLOGY OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC' REPRESENTATION
ON THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL,

	PLACE 5	PLACE 6
1971 -	<i>Jeff Friedman</i>	<i>Berl Handcox</i>
73		
1973 -	<i>Jeff Friedman</i>	<i>Berl Handcox</i>
75		
1975 -	<i>John Trevino</i>	<i>Jimmy Snell</i>
77		
1977 -	<i>John Trevino</i>	<i>Jimmy Snell</i>
79		
1979 -	<i>John Trevino</i>	<i>Jimmy Snell</i>
81		
1981 -	<i>John Trevino</i>	<i>Charles Urdy</i>
83		
1983 -	<i>John Trevino</i>	<i>Charles Urdy</i>
85		
1985 -	<i>John Trevino</i>	<i>Charles Urdy</i>
88		
1988 -	<i>Robert Barnstone</i>	<i>Charles Urdy</i>
91		
1991 -	<i>Gus Garcia</i>	<i>Charles Urdy</i>
94		
1994 -	<i>Gus Garcia</i>	<i>Eric Mitchell</i>
97		
1997 -	<i>?????????????</i>	<i>?????????????</i>
2000		

TABLE 3.2
THE CHRONOLOGY OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC REPRESENTATION
ON THE TRAVLS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

	PRECINCT I	PRECINCT IV
1971 -		<i>Richard Moya</i>
75		
1975 -		<i>Richard Moya</i>
79		
1979 -	<i>Jimmy Snell</i>	<i>Richard Moya</i>
83		
1983 -	<i>Jimmy Snell</i>	<i>Richard Moya</i>
87		
1987 -	<i>Sam Biscoe</i>	<i>Henry Gonzalez</i>
91		
1991 -	<i>Sam Biscoe</i>	<i>Marcos DeLeon</i>
95		
1995 -	<i>Sam Biscoe</i>	<i>Margaret Gomez</i>
Present		

TABLE 3.3
THE CHRONOLOGY OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC REPRESENTATION
ON THE AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (AISD) BOARD

	AFRICAN AMERICAN		MEXICAN AMERICAN
1968 - 1974	<i>Wilhelmina Delco</i>	1972 - 1978	<i>Gus Garcia</i>
1974 - 1980	<i>Rev. Marvin Griffin</i>	1979 - 1985	<i>Manual Navarro</i>
1980 - 1984	<i>Steve Ferguson</i>	1982 - 1988	<i>Abel Ruiz</i>
1984 - 1991	<i>Bernice Hart</i>	1984 - 1988	<i>Lidia Perez</i>
1991 - Term Expires (1998)	<i>Loretta Edelen</i>	1988 - 1994	<i>Beatriz de la Garza</i>
		1992 - 1996	<i>Diana Castenada</i>
		1996 - Term Expires (2000)	<i>Rudy Montoya</i>

Chapter 4 :Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research procedures and the focus of the study. The data gathered for the study were derived from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources included minutes of meetings, observations of meetings of the three governance bodies including live and delayed telecast or videos, and news accounts in both the *Austin American Statesman* as well as the small weeklies published by African Americans, Anglo Americans, and Latinos.

Unstructured but focused interviews were used as the main source of primary data. The same questionnaire with only minor variations for the officials and the astute observers of the political scene was utilized. The interviews were designed to allow the respondents to "speak their minds" freely, thus the data confirming, repudiating and/or supplementing the data that had been collected from secondary sources.

The case study method is used to study the political alliances and styles. It is appropriate, according to Yin (1991:20), because "how" and "why" questions are asked about a set of contemporary events over which the investigator has little control. The present study meets these criteria.

This study begins with the year 1968 (when the first minority - an African American named Wilhelmina Delco - was elected to the Austin School board) and continues to the present. The research purpose is mainly exploratory.

METHODOLOGY

Three principal steps were undertaken.

1. For each governance body, governance issues were identified as relevant to the minority community. These issues were delineated through minutes, newspapers, and interview commentaries of minority officials who are in office or have left office and white officials who were known for close ties

with minority officials. Also commentaries were gathered from a few knowledgeable observers of each racial/ethnic group.

- z. For each governance body, the material in step one was reviewed to determine the similarity of expressed opinions and votes of members of the governance body, relative to the salient issues identified above.
- 3. Each black and brown elected official in each of the three governance bodies was interviewed, so as to describe in depth the self-perceived roles and bargaining strategies of the officials relative to their cooperative interactions. The interview was designed to determine when race and ethnicity matter in forming alliances, especially black-brown alliances.

Interviews began with biographical information. Facts which contributed to the respondents political careers were highlighted. The interviews stressed the roles and relationships in specific decision-making events. Finally the respondent were asked to discuss their:

- a. perceived constraints/barriers/obstacles to alliances in their situations
- b. unexpected opportunities for alliances, if any, in the past
- c. the most successful instances of alliances, if any
- d. problematic or "sticky" instances of alliances
- e. guiding values, rules by which they play, and roles they perform in seeking support or handling requests for support
- f. "tried and true" bargaining strategies, if any, recognized by the official

More specifically, the officials were asked for narrative constructions of their roles and relationships in particular cases, especially those that have been identified earlier as salient. In addition, their general assessments of the alliance phenomenon included their perceptions of the advantages as well as difficulties of alliances with other minority officials. The archival data were used as background data to help focus the issues that were explored in the interviews.

Unfortunately, the interview methodology has a significant limitation. It is dependent on perceptual data obtained through the interviewing process that is

time-consuming for the respondents.

Although interview quotations are interspersed throughout the narrative, confidentiality or anonymity is adhered to when statements might lead to conflict. The interview questions are in the appendix as well as a list of the persons interviewed.

Table 4.1 operationalizes the **hypotheses**: WH#1 deals with how precarious rather than sustained are the relationships. #1a seeks the basis of the alliance - a liberating ideology or a pragmatic concern. #1 b deals with how the officials bargain. WH#2 relates to deracialized or race specific approaches and seeks **racial/ethnic** differences as well as differences across the three governance bodies.

Summary

This chapter provided descriptions of the methodology used to analyze the governing styles and alignments of black and brown elected officials in Austin, and their effectiveness as leaders as perceived by themselves as well as a few observers, as well as the factors influencing effectiveness. The results obtained from the application of these methodologies will be discussed in the next chapter.

Table 4.1

Operationalizing the Hypotheses

Sources of Evidence

Hypotheses	Interview Questions	Documents
WH#1 #1a	Q 1-3	Videos on Meetings Minutes Newspaper articles Journal articles
WH#1b	Q 4 - 6	Videos on Meetings Minutes Newspaper articles Journal articles
WH#2	Q10 - 13	Videos on Meetings Minutes Newspaper articles Journal articles
WH#2a	Q14 -16	Videos on Meetings Minutes Newspaper articles Journal articles

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter discusses the results of the survey of the secondary and primary (interview) sources on the black and brown representatives on the three governance bodies in Austin, Texas. The results of the interviews are presented in narrative form in the following order - city council, AISD, and county commissioners court. After the presentation of the separate narratives, the results are integrated into an analysis based on the hypotheses of this study.

THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL

"Gentlemen's Agreement"

According to a position paper by Bobbie J. Enriquez (1997: 3-4) Austin's council was once comprised of the top five vote getters, who would then select the mayor among themselves. This changed after an African American named Arthur DeWitty came within a hairsbreadth of winning a seat in the early Fifties. A "horrified gentry" led by UT super regent Frank Erwin revamped the system into the current at-large plus run-off structure.

Enriquez (1997: 4-5) then traced the development of a "Gentlemen's Agreement" in the late 1970s that evolved from a meeting of a group of Anglo businessmen, including Roy Butler, Ed Wendler, Sr., and Lowell Lebermann. Since this agreement designated Place 5 and Place 6 as the Hispanic and Black seats, respectively, persons having been elected to these two seats throughout the years were interviewed for this study with the exception of Robert Barnstone because of his questionable Hispanic identity (to be discussed later).

Berl Handcox (1971-1974)

In the 1971 election, Berl Handcox broke the color barrier when he was

elected to Place 6 on the city council. A significant point here is the fact that the "gentlemen" (primarily Anglos) chose Berl Handcox, an African American, for Place 6. Handcox, an IBM Executive and a non-native Austinite, was clearly not chosen to represent the African American community. Although most African Americans in the early seventies, lived in East Austin, he lived in a predominantly white section of Austin.

Handcox was not available for an interview; however, a few facts about his term of office, 1971-1974, have been gleaned from other interviews and the secondary literature. There was no other minority on the council with whom he could make alliances since Jeff Friedman, a liberal Anglo, served in Place 5 during Handcox's term of office. Most observers characterized his governing style as conciliatory as one would have expected. After all, "the gentlemen" would certainly not have chosen a confrontational type. Instead, they chose one of their own - an IBM executive who lived in their neighborhood and attended their clubs. Some observers of the political scene attributed a marked increase in paved streets in East Austin to having occurred during Handcox's term; however, sources of funding were from federal funds designated for poverty areas rather than from the city budget. The council continued its practice of an inequitable distribution of funds across districts during Handcox's term. Although Handcox did not make waves, he, nevertheless, should be credited with easing the way for other minorities to serve on the council. Since council members were not paid at this time, Handcox, like his colleagues on the council, should also be credited with giving many hours of service in addition to maintaining their employment. He still had to put in his forty-hours each week at IBM.

John Trevino (1973-1988)

The first time John Trevino's name was placed on a ballot for Place 5, he lost; however, he became the first Latino elected to the council two years later,

serving one of the longest periods from 1973-1988. He was the first Latino mayor pro tem in 1987. During his more than fifteen years in office, he served with two African Americans in Place 6 - Jimmy Snell (1975-1981) and Charles Urdy (1981-1994).

Trevino reported that he and his African - American colleagues achieved a stable alliance because they saw themselves as representing East Austin, where there was a great need--social welfare services in the area of housing, employment, and health. Although he and his African American colleagues were concerned with the environment, their greatest concern was with economic development because they thought the latter would provide more jobs for East Austin minorities. He pointed out that he had experienced working with a liberal majority council as well as being a minority on a council with a conservative majority; thus he experienced frustration in getting appropriations for East Austin when he and his African American colleagues were in the minority.

The present researcher found Trevino to be a very warm person. It was difficult to conceive of his ever having been confrontational rather than conciliatory. One Hispanic who was interviewed for this study because he had been a close observer of Austin's political scene for more than three decades singled out an incident where the black and brown candidates split on their vote. When the council was considering whether to grant a parade permit to the Ku Klux Klan, Charles Urdy, the black councilman, voted "no" while Trevino voted a reluctant "yes." The Hispanic observer viewed Trevino's vote as a sellout against principle rather than as an instance of giving highest value to free speech.

Jimmy Snell (1975-1979)

Having endured a lengthy illness that terminated in his death on October 25, 1996, Jimmy Snell was not interviewed for this research. He entered the political arena in 1974 when he ran to fill the unexpired term of Councilman Berl Handcox

and won re-election in 1975. He served as mayor pro tem from 1975-1977. Not having interviewed Snell, the present researcher had to ferret out his negotiating style from secondary sources. Carol Keaton Rylander, one of the mayors with whom Snell served on the council, said, "He fought for East Austin, but he cared deeply about all of Austin. He had a good balance." Others stressed that there was no feuding between Snell and the other council members.

Since those who wrote Snell's obituaries emphasized his boots, neckties, and other features (he was a natty dresser), one would have concluded that issues had not been that important to him. Other respondents quickly corrected that assumption, especially when the issues dealt with the black community. Of course, his council colleagues did not always give him what he sought. For example, on his final day as a councilman, he failed in his last repeated attempt to have June 19, Emancipation Proclamation Day, declared a holiday for city workers (Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the day blacks in Texas learned that they were freed from slavery, two and one-half years after Abraham Lincoln's proclamation).

In contrast to this failure to garner enough votes, he fought a bitter fight to get Nineteenth Street renamed Martin Luther King Boulevard. So bitter was this struggle that Huston-Tillotson College's president, Dr. J.J. Seabrook (a black), had a fatal heart attack in the council chambers while fighting for this cause. Thus, the assumption that Jimmy Snell was rarely confrontational during his five years on the city council proved to be inaccurate. Snell's name will appear later in this study when we analyze the county commissioners court because he decided to run for County Commissioner of Precinct 1 and won. The salary difference possibly was a motivating factor for his leaving the city office for the county office.

Charles Urdu (1981-1994)

A chemistry professor at Huston-Tillotson College, Charles Urdu, won the black council seat after Jimmy Snell moved to the county court. John Trevino and

Charles Urdy continued the close bonds that had existed between Trevino and Snell. They both tried to represent their minority constituents; they viewed the two minorities as having common problems. They shared low key, conciliatory negotiating styles. Urdy claimed that most of his negotiating went on in work sessions. He already knew where the votes were before the council meeting; consequently, he did not have to contend for issues on the dais. One respondent, who had not been an elected official, commented that Urdy's leadership style did not keep his troops motivated. Thus, in 1993 Dr. Urdy experienced a very close election with Terry Davis, another black, and may have been motivated not to run again because he realized his troops had lost their fervor.

Urdy spoke warmly of the close friendship that he shared with Trevino and how rarely they took separate directions on issues. Above all, Urdy found the animosity on the present council absent from his council colleagues. They tended to have trust. He found the coalition between blacks and Hispanics not only present among council members but also in the community. He felt that just as many members of the Hispanic community came to him as they did to Gus Garcia, Trevino's successor. He felt that the press often tried to divide the two minorities as they did with the plans to build a shopping mall at Eleventh Street and IH 35. The press played up the division expressed by the small Hispanic Guadalupe neighborhood rather than the large number of Hispanics who supported the shopping center.

Although Urdy and Garcia moved further apart on issues, again there was no animosity. In fact, Urdy seemed to sense Garcia's "betrayal" much less than one of the outside observers who described Garcia as having locked in with Bruce Todd to oppose the Eastside Mall and having made a commitment to roll back the zoning. He also related that Urdy had also started a housing project called SKIP II that was later stalled by Garcia. Instances such as these led one observer to say that the divisions were there without blaming the media for creating them. More will be said

about Gus Garcia in a section devoted to him. Although the Eastside Recreational Center passed under Council member Eric Mitchell, who followed Urdy after he resigned from his council position, Urdy must be credited with having initiated the plan after an East Austin girl died a victim of a drive-by shooting. Housing for lower socioeconomic East Austinites was given a great stimulus by Urdy. He credited the securing of minority franchises as having been an outgrowth of his collaboration with Garcia. On most other issues, Urdy had such a close alliance with three Anglo council persons that the acronym RULE was coined to designate their union-Reynolds, Urdy, Larsen, and Epstein. By the next term the pro-environment coalition became the majority with Reynolds being the only one of the four remaining on the council.

During Urdy's long tenure on the council, he worked with three persons in Place 5 - John Trevino, Robert Barnstone, and Gus Garcia. Since we have already discussed his cordial relations with John Trevino and emphasized that they sought solutions to the similar problems encountered by their black and brown constituents, let's briefly explore his relations with Barnstone.

Robert Barnstone (1988-1991)

Barnstone's Hispanic identity was questioned by Hispanics. (He claimed that his mother was Hispanic, and his Anglo name could be attributed to an Anglo father). When he won the Place 5 election, he defeated Sam Guzman, who had the support of the Hispanic community. Barnstone was defeated later when he became a mayoral candidate. During his campaign, he announced that he would be the first Hispanic mayor of Austin if he should win. Dr. Urdy merely chuckled when he was asked during the interview about his relationship with Barnstone while they were council colleagues. Somehow he never developed trust with Barnstone, finding him unpredictable. He also thought Barnstone's Hispanic identity to have been a mere convenience for staying within the "gentlemen's agreement" for Place 5. Of

course, Urdy concedes that Bamstone would have given his usual retort, "Tell that to my mother."

Gus Garcia (1991-to present)

Since Gus Garcia served as the first Hispanic on the AISD board before coming to the city council, he will be mentioned again (but briefly) when the relations of browns and blacks on the school board are examined.. A retired certified public accountant, Garcia is presently serving as mayor pro tem, and he recently won election to the council in Place 2 rather than the protected brown seat - Place 5.

During Garcia's six years on the council, he garnered his highest approval rating in recent polls (Austin American Statesman, Jan. 26, 1997: B1). What accounts for this high approval rating? Some attribute it to Garcia's style. Alex de Marban of the Austin Chronicle singled out Garcia's stately disposition which is characterized by the ability to disagree without attacking his colleagues. Garcia is quick to boast that he has friends everywhere. He rode a crest of popularity into an uncontested re-election bid in 1994. Before he decided to seek Place 2 in the 1997 election, he was on everyone's short list for the mayoral bid. Bragging about his strong support in the African American community, Garcia said. "African Americans have consistently given him a little less than 95% of their votes. Hispanics voted for him a little less than 85% of the time (Nokoa 1997:1). Although two African American newspapers -*NOKOA* and *The Villager* - endorsed a moderate white female candidate rather than Garcia, he still garnered more than half of the the black vote.

At the same time that the new mayor pro tem thanked the Austin African-American community for its support at the polls, he announced that he and Mitchell were working on an initiative to unite the black and Latino communities (La Prensa, June 14, 1995:3). One can only take a pessimistic view on the future of

this initiative since a schism has recently developed between the black and brown councilmen. East Austin 2000 was a joint plan to designate \$2.8 million in orphan federal housing money to various East Austin causes . Grassroots Hispanic groups discouraged this scheme of cooperation between Hispanic and blacks. Earlier there were some cooperative ventures between the two council members; for example, they called a closed door council session concerning a shortage of police lieutenants to supervise street officers, and both showed concern with the shortage of minority lieutenants (Austin American Statesman Dec. 10, 1996: B7). But these cooperative ventures became rarer.

In addition to the growing schism with the black councilman, Garcia has had many complaints from the Hispanic community as he embraces a deracialized agenda instead of focussing on Mexican American political causes.

Sometimes the Hispanic cause has been in conflict with causes promoted by the African American councilman. For instance, Garcia promised Hispanic residents that he would jettison the SCIP II project (Scattered Cooperative Infill Housing Project) that would create 100 low income houses in an East Austin neighborhood. The Hispanic residents disliked the plan because it proposed primarily rented homes rather than home ownership, a situation that threatened neighborhood stability. When Garcia failed to help jettison the project after having promised that he would, he was perceived as lacking credibility.

Saltillo Plaza, a vision for bringing people from the other side of town to the Mexican American restaurants in East Austin along Six and Seventh Streets, is another project dear to the hearts of the Mexican American community. Garcia took a political beating for his lack of involvement, although the ground has now been broken. Still another project dear to the hearts of the Mexican American Community is the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC). "We do not have a champion on the council," says one MACC activist, "Gus was never supportive of it" (Austin Chronicle May 1. 1996:15).

He has often been accused of not achieving as much for the brown community as Eric Mitchell achieves for the black community. Lori Renteria of the United East Austin Coalition said, "Latinos have been pissed because Eric Mitchell got \$9 million for the redevelopment of East Eleventh and Twelfth Streets and what did we get ? Very little in comparison" (Austin Chronicle, May 1, 1996:15). In this same article, it was questioned if the "Great Brown Hope" was becoming the "Great Brown Dope." On the other hand, it is unfortunate that the Latinos of East Austin do not identify with Eric Mitchell-sponsored projects and the blacks with the Garcia-sponsored project.

The city council and the community are driven apart by debate on a single issue --growth management. This issue divides the community into business and environmental camps. In the past, the black and brown councilmen have been on the pro-growth side. Since our present black and brown councilmen are in opposite camps, we can usually predict their votes on related issues.

Even when councilman Garcia wants to mend the social fabric (a catch phrase for keeping youth out of trouble), he forms alliances with council member Beverly Griffith, an Anglo, rather than with a fellow minority, Mitchell. (Austin American Statesman: 1996, Aug.31:B1). Mitchell has similarly bonded with an Anglo Council member- Ronney Reynolds--which is discussed more fully later. Garcia, a former trustee for AISD, and Griffith, a former teacher, are contending for more money for crime prevention for our youth rather than for adding more policemen.

Council member Garcia seems to also take a deracialized view of the environment, focusing on Barton Springs, aquifers, salamanders, etc., rather than East Austin's environment which has become the dumping ground for Austin's largest polluters. African Americans in East Austin have not given as much attention to the environmental racism that plagues their community as have the Eastside Hispanics, who have called for a 180-day moratorium on the industrial development in Central East Austin and the removal of the Holly Street Power Plant which has had several explosions.

Garcia's environmentalism draws support from a strong political force in

Austin. This so-called "liberal" coalition that supports Garcia has shown its voter strength. Daryl Slusher, a staunch environmentalist who had been a political unknown, fell short by 1,340 votes of unseating Mayor Todd and subsequently won a council seat during the next election.

Thus, with his high popularity in the polls, it is expected that Garcia will continue to get Hispanic and black votes, and have the support of the environmentalists. Hence, Councilman Garcia decided to test the "gentlemen's agreement." After six years in Place 5, he decided to run for Place 2, no longer feeling the need of the protected seat for himself, yet still feeling that Place 5 should remain a protected seat for Hispanics. Having won Place 2, Garcia must await the fate of a Latino who is in a run-off with an Anglo for Place 5 before concluding that the "Gentlemen's Agreement" is dead.

Eric Mitchell (1994-present')

East Austin's years of neglect seemed to have been coming to an end with the election of Eric Mitchell, the African-American who won Place 6 in 1994. Mitchell's residence was not in East Austin. (He is a resident of Oak Hill in Southwest Austin). Neither did he win a majority of the votes in East Austin. Nevertheless, he has pursued a variety of projects for this **ghetto/barrio** section of Austin- the Central City Entertainment Center, that will include a cinema, a skating rink, a bowling alley, and a live theater; the Scattered cooperative Infill Housing Project for low income families; and the rehabilitation of Eleventh and Twelfth Streets that once had thriving businesses but are now wastelands in many sections.

Mitchell had the developers' financial support when he was a candidate; therefore, he consistently backs their agenda. Charles Miles, an African-American publisher of the Capitol City Argus and a staunch opponent of Mitchell's, accuses him of serving two masters, "When Mitchell votes out millions for the developers' interests in the suburbs, little is left for the decaying infrastructure of East Austin." Miles is further dissatisfied with Mitchell's inconsistently in to rounding up the needed four votes in council sessions.

Mitchell, however, boasts that on the issues that really matter the most to him, he does manage to get the minimum four votes. During the interviews, he singled out as his most important issues those that relate to public safety which can be characterized as deracialized issues. Yet since crime is exceedingly high in certain sections of East Austin (he is presently seeking funds for walking street policeman in East Austin); public safety, in this instance, has an ethnic/racial or representational slant. In addition, there is a deracialized element in the enthusiastic endorsement that Councilman Mitchell received from Austin's predominantly white police department, since Blacks tend to be suspect of white policemen because of their numerous bad encounters. Thus Mitchell consistently argues for more spending on public safety. For example, he recently chided the council with its environmental bias for spending millions on the Balcones plan and the Barton Creek Wilderness Park, "Do public safety things first and the nice to do things later." Voting against the city's \$1.2 billion budget for 1996-97, he said, "It included too much money for energy conservation and not enough for police equipment."

Possibly his biggest victory was winning council approval for the \$9.6 million Rosewood Entertainment Center and the other measures relating to the redevelopment of East Austin. During the interview, however, Mitchell, singled out minority contracting and Affirmative Action initiatives as areas of disappointment. When contracts for the airport were being granted, Mitchell dissented to protest the lack of minority and women-owned businesses in the contract (Alex Marban, "Council Watch", Austin Chronicle: Aug 4, 1995:19).

This somewhat extensive review of Mitchell's programs reveals that he is an unusual black office holder in his balancing of deracialized and representational agendas. He exhibits a great deal of political savvy, although his formal higher education has been limited to two semesters in Criminal Justice at Florida A&M University. On the council he is known for doing his home work, on several occasions having discovered large sums of money in the city coffers of which other council members were unaware. Some East Austin residents credit Mitchell with having worked harder in one year than his predecessor Urdy had

done in eight years. Even those who despise his incendiary politics have found respect for the dedication and energy he has shown over the past year: "Despite his contentious *modus operandi*, his ability to get his way gives him a cachet that few council members can claim"(Alex Marban, August 4, 1995:19).

Some of his colleagues have called his style "race-baiting" to win over the rest of the council. According to them, he launches into accusatory tirades after not getting his way, charging council members with a lack of sincere concern for East Austin residents. He has publicly called some environmentalists "assholes."

Mitchell's constituents admire the fact that he is never afraid to pick a fight. For many African-Americans throughout the city, he has become a messiah: "He's what we hoped and prayed for; he's the most dynamic councilman we've had," said Dorothy Turner, the president of the Black Citizens' Task Force.

One of Mitchell's town hall meetings with two hundred plus constituents was described as lasting two and one-half hours and having the favor of a Southern revival. He was, of course, preaching to the converted (Austin Chronicle, Nov. 5,1995:19).

When Mitchell was asked to shift from a chair on one end of the dais to one on the opposite end during council meetings, he was not pleased with the request. To appease his wounded feelings, some of his constituents decided to buy him a \$1,300 "Relax the Back" swivel chair and presented it to their beloved councilman before the next meeting got underway. Moved by the gesture, Mitchell promised to continue to fight for the whole city, and black males, especially, no matter where he sits (Austin Chronicle: July 21, 1995:17). Mitchell's interests in the cause of black men was revealed in his having participated in the "Million Man March" in Washington D.C. and urging other black men to join him (Starita Smith 1995: Austin American Statesman Sept. 8: B1).

Praise of his accomplishments comes not just from African Americans. The Austin Chronicle that seems to plan a weekly attack on Mitchell, wrote that his success can be summed up in seven words: "What Eric Mitchell wants, Eric Mitchell gets" (June 23,1995:15).

In contrast, there are those who say that his combative, rude behavior on the dais has not done much for his coalition building. Critics have said that he pushes through initiatives without the benefit of cooperation. Mitchell, however, has made most of his alliances with an Anglo member of the council- Ronnie Reynolds. So close have been their voting patterns that they have been named the ER tag team by the *Austin Chronicle* (Alex de Marlan. 1996. The Fight of His Life. *Austin Chronicle*: DEC 6:26).

Reynolds, an incumbent trailed so far behind Kirk Watson, his opponent that he decided to forgo a run-off. This raises the question: Does a white political office holder pay a political price for a close alliance with a black one?

Mitchell has also been charged with excluding opposing voices. For example, the Mexican-Americans in the Guadalupe neighborhood (GAIN) complain that they are not notified of his town meetings, and Mitchell has been charged with aggravating the tensions between Hispanic and black neighborhoods. On the other hand, his black constituents blame the GAIN Hispanics with causing the rift by fighting all of Mitchell's initiatives. Recently the *Austin Chronicle* reported that Mitchell had been asked to leave a GAIN meeting that he had attended to clarify some charges that had been made against him.

Shortly before Mitchell was interviewed for this research, an incident occurred that caused the severing of ties with Garcia. While Mitchell was talking during a council session, the aide of another council member and two of his friends were laughing and making sneering, derisive remarks during his presentation. Mitchell beckoned to the aide to join him in the back room where he confronted him. Mitchell defended the confrontation, "As a council member, I feel that another council member's aide who is on the city payroll owes me respect." Instead, the council member's aide made the private conversation subject matter for numerous articles and editorials demanding that Mitchell apologize.

Since the aide reported that Mitchell had used terms derogatory toward gays, many homosexuals have begun to complain against Mitchell's alleged

homophobia. Mitchell's reelection seemed a certainty before this incident; consequently, one wonders if this is not a political ploy to enable a weak opponent supported by the environmentalists to defeat Mitchell.

Speaking of his negotiating style, Mitchell said during the interview: "I have tried everything- being calm, conciliatory, and talking through. What is the result?-being ignored. I can be calm or confrontational, whatever is called for at the time. I had to let them know that we each have one vote. They will not run over me. Confrontation is the only way to get heard. He often relates his early experiences as a gang member in Atlanta.

Many Black political officials seem to be undergoing vehement attacks throughout the country. Many are destroyed in the process. The May 3 runoff election will determine Eric Mitchell's fate. It seems as if the environmentalists are determined to make a clean sweep of the six council seats and the mayor- whatever the cost to an individual.

The few council members interviewed expressed the belief that blacks and Hispanics should form coalitions. Their reasons for the two groups forming alliances varied from Garcia's going back to Mexico's having been a refuge for slaves to our common cultural links in music (the African beat in Latin music). Others expressed common problems of oppression and poverty, but the one who justified the black-brown coalitions on their empowering value was Eric Mitchell, who added that the 12% vote potential of blacks to the 24% vote potential of Hispanics totaled 36% (a number that can be used very effectively to swing elections).

Austin Independent School District

Wilhemina Delco (1968 - 1974)

Wilhemina Delco was the first African American elected to the Austin Independent School District Board. She was a mother of children in the public schools and had given many hours of service to PTA's and other community groups. An exceedingly articulate, very personable woman from Chicago, and Houston, she was residing in Austin with her husband who was a college

professor studying for his Ph.D. at the University of Texas. Some, however, attribute her victory to the election's occurring simultaneously with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Grief, guilt, and other emotions possibly attributed to some whites voting for the first African American trustee. During her term in office AISD had to desegregate its schools under court order. Integration was not questioned during this period; African Americans, however, were critical later that Anderson High School was closed and a new school was named Anderson in northwest Austin with none of the traditions of the old school being transferred-school colors, mascot, school song, etc. Although a similar change in schools occurred later at Austin High School, all of the traditions were transferred. Blacks soon learned that the entire burden of busing was borne by them. Since there were no other minorities with whom Delco could coalesce during her term, she was the conciliatory type who could make alliances with her white colleagues while standing firm on some race-related issues.

Preserving the name of the predominantly black high school became one of her biggest challenges. The other members of the board were opposed to keeping the name because they thought it would serve to polarize the new school; however, they were willing to compromise and name the school after another African American. When Delco made her motion to continue the name, she hardly expected a second. When the board voted unanimously to keep the name, she learned the importance of holding one's ground.

Delco had a role that many other board member did not have -mediating racial conflicts on integrated campuses. One case in point was a race riot that occurred at Reagan High School. The white youth called home for rides, but the principal forgot to call for the buses for the African American youth. Since only the latter were around when the police arrived, they were taken to the Gardener House for delinquent youth in large numbers. Of course, Delco had to bring greater equity to this situation.

She recalled having observed the black youth preparing for the white youth to be transferred to the old Anderson as they planned to share leadership in extra curricular activities. When the judge canceled the transfer ruling in less

than a week and decided to close the predominantly black high school, she saw the hostility that greeted the black youth who were bused to McCallum High. Another role that she assumed as a board member was helping black youth find the funds required to buy uniforms so that they could participate in extra curricular activities.

Mrs. Delco, one of the most seasoned politicians in this study, has a very pessimistic view of the future of black-brown coalitions, although she believes in their importance. Her pessimism stems from the fact that Hispanics believe that blacks have had their day -the 1960s. Now it is their turn. In addition, they are aware of their numerical superiority. Consequently, there is a lack of equity in these coalitions, according to Delco, as exemplified by Interfaith, a coalition of black and brown churches. Most of the African American churches have withdrawn or participate only minimally because Hispanic dominate the agenda.

Mrs. Delco searched diligently for a black to run for the board when she decided to move to the state legislature rather than serve another term. She credits herself with having found Rev. Griffin, whose term was characterized by more friction than hers with some factions in the black community who had grown more disenchanted with integrated schools and more nostalgic about the schools that had been closed. They saw their neglected trophies left in the abandoned school. Later Mrs. Delco found storage for them in Doris Miller Auditorium. She has never felt conflict for having participated in the closing of the old Anderson because she saw how neglected the school had become. High achieving black youth had transferred to the former white schools. Anderson became the school for youth who could not compete or were having discipline problems in the predominantly white schools and a school very neglected in resources.

Rev. Marvin Griffin (1974-1980)

A Baptist minister who was equally acceptable to many whites became the second black on the board. In a written communication, he too recalls having had amenable relations with the white trustees. The newly organized Black

Citizens Task Force under the leadership of Dorothy Turner was constantly attacking Rev. Griffin at board meetings. By this time, many members of the black community had become very disenchanted with having lost their community high school. In addition, they did not seem to put a great deal of faith in Rev. Griffin, although he pastored one of the largest churches in East Austin. His residence was not in East Austin, and he did not have children enrolled in the public schools.

Gus Garcia(1972-1978)

Garcia, who has been discussed earlier as a member of the city council, became the first Hispanic to serve on the board. Garcia reports having formed alliances with his black colleague, who shared with him concern for the low achievement of many of the youth of East Austin. Garcia became the first minority to serve as president of the board 1977-1978.

Steve Ferguson(1980-1984)

The above candidates, though elected at large, were considered representatives of East Austin. This changed when the courts ordered cross-town busing of white children. No longer would all of the burden of waking up exceedingly early, and standing in the cold rainy weather be borne by blacks. This angered the white voters who proceeded to find a black candidate who would be compatible with their goals. They backed the candidacy of Steve Ferguson, whose opponent, college professor Dr. June Brewer, received 95 percent of the East Austin votes but lost the election. Since this was an at-large election, Ferguson was able to win without the support of the black community. On occasion, trustees are expected to appoint persons from their constituency to committees. Ferguson, in most instances, appointed whites to these committees, and this further alienated the black community from AISD. They had a black trustee with whom they did not identify.

Bernice Hart(1982-1991)

When Steve Ferguson resigned before the completion of his term, Bernice Hart, a retired school teacher was elected to the board. She later served another term. Although she can be quite confrontational based on comments by colleagues, she won their esteem to the extent that they elected her president of the board. The issue of power is often raised when minorities are in leadership roles. Some minorities, both black and brown, assumed that on occasion Hart was co-opted by her white colleagues. For instance, she was faced with the decision of dismantling busing on the elementary school level and returning to the concept of neighborhood schools. Some viewed this as a return to segregation. Others saw it as a relief from having young black and brown children standing at bus stops at early hours in the morning. The minorities did get something out of this trade off: sixteen schools where student performance was low were apportioned millions of dollars in order to increase the quality of education and the achievement level of the pupils attending these schools. Black and brown trustees were somewhat cohesive in promoting these priority schools. Lidia Perez, however, did not want to return to neighborhood school because she valued integration highly and so did Diana Casteneda, who wanted master teachers to improve these schools by having and training principals through academics.

While Bernice Hart was serving as president of the board, she committed a faux pas - she used "wet back" in a quotation that appeared in the daily newspaper. Hart was frustrated that the AISD single-member district voting plan would not lead to more black representation because the Hispanic population in East Austin was increasing markedly while the black population was decreasing. Although Hart apologized, Hispanics demonstrated in front of her home, demanded her resignation from the board. Three Hispanics who served as board members but who were not interviewed for this study got into this black/brown controversy, according to newspaper accounts. Abel Ruiz tried to assure Hart that Hispanics will vote for black candidates because they have many common interests. Ruiz, who had served with Hart for several years on the board, said it was "no excuse" for her, although she was in her early 70's, to have used this

derogatory term: "I tend to believe that Bernice has been on a school board in which those types of terms and attitudes have been so prevalent that it transferred to her. She is the head of an organization that still may have those kinds of feelings but just don't express them." (Austin American Statesman:Sept. 7,1991:A1). This quotation shows that Abel Ruiz left the board feeling that it was a racist institution. He conceded, however, that he could still work with Hart as a leader.

At the time the derogatory term was used, Beatriz de la Garza, the other Hispanic on the AISD board, also showed shock: "I am quite taken aback at the fact that an elected official would use that term. **Wetback** is pejorative, no longer used by enlightened people. 'Undocumented aliens' is the appropriate term." De la Garza was elected president of the board, but was never given the power that usually accomapies the office. Hart also served with another Hispanic, Lidia Perez, with whom there were very rare occasions for alliances, according to Hart. The two had somewhat hostile relations. Perez, however, did have the respect of the black community as evidenced by the NAACP, giving her its award on one occasion possibly rewarding her for her strong stance on intergrated schools, valued similarly by the Civil Rights organization.

Diana Castenada (1992-1996)

Diana Castenada was a grassroots politician who came to the board as a bonafide representative of her district rather than as an at-large candidate. Castaneda saw the board renege on its promises to spend extra money on the priority schools **after** the crosstown busing was discontinued. Castaneda claimed good relations with the black community, communicating well with conservative black groups such as the NAACP as well as with more radical groups such as the Black Citizens Task Force. She served with Bernice Hart, whom she forgave for the "**wetback**" faux pas, and Loretta Edelen, current black trustee. They fought valiantly for the cause of East Austin youth but found themselves a minority of two opposed by a majority of seven on many occassions. On most issues, dealing with the budget, the hiring of a superintendent, and increasing the

achievement scores of minority youth, they "stood alone."

Castaneda characterizes her negotiating style as very honest and strident. She believes her strident style moves the board more in her direction even when she does not win. She says that she was rarely divided from the minorities with whom she coalesced on critical issues.

Having served two terms, she lost her position to "a much more traditional Hispanic, Rudy Montoya." She realized how the white majority on the board felt about her when she was not invited to the next meeting after her defeat to receive accolades for her service, as is customary. She also found the locks changed on the door of the board room. Castenada, however, felt that she had stood for the pupils with the greatest needs and at budget time she consistently thought of the classified workers rather than the top-heavy administrators.

Loretta Edelen (1991-term expires May 1998)

Trustee Edelen is in her third year as the first African American elected to District 1. She too has fought for adequate funding for the lowest socioeconomic level students. She proposed a Six-Point plan to address the academic needs of these students. Although the plan had wide-spread community support, the board refused to support it. She is presently working on school-to-work opportunities for students in her district.

Both Edelen and Castaneda expressed frustration with being on the minority side of the vote so often. Minorities had previously preferred the district plan of elections, but now they are questioning its merits. This frustration has been even more marked for minorities in the Dallas Independent School District where the three black members in Dallas are often outvoted 6 to 3 with Hispanic members forming alliances with Anglos(Applebome, 1996, A1).

Although Edelen has had strong support from the black community at board meetings and the support of former board member Wilhemina Delco, her mother, nothing seems to matter with the "slam-dunk" style of the majority. She is not forming alliances with regularity with Rudy Montoya, Castenada's

replacement, whose term will end in 2000.

The Capitol City Argus (May 2, 1997:7) published Loretta Edelen's personal press release that took issue with the press release of the AISD Board majority praising the Superintendent for having made marked progress in the school district. More specifically the majority trustee statement found "substantial progress in academic achievement, campus leadership, professional development ... within AISD."

After having criticized the Board majority for having failed to include a dissenting opinion, Edelen provided her personal evaluation of the Superintendent:

The district still has the largest number of low performing schools in the State of Texas. Overall TAAS scores remain dismal. Only 28% of students at Johnston High who took the most recent TAAS test passed. Little is being done on the part of the District to employ successful strategies such as collaborating with noted educators like Marva Collins to correct the situation. It appears that we will again lead the state in the number at low -achieving schools (Capital City Argus:May 2, 1979:7).

Edelin stood alone at this press conference since Diana Castenada with whom she had formed numerous coalitions in the past was no longer on the Board. Rudy Montoya, the other minority on the board, did not join in Edelin's dissent. It can be predicted that they will fail to form alliances on many other issues.

Travis County Commissioners Court

Jimmy Snell (1981 -1988)

Snell has already been discussed relative to his service on the city council prior to his moving to the county court where he was the first Black elected official of Travis County. He was defeated for re-election to the Commissioners court in 1988 after an investigation of money spent on Webberville Park. Snell, however, was never implicated in the investigation although his aide was. As previously stated, his long illness and recent death made it impossible to interview him. His negotiating style was much more apparent on the city council because so much of the work on the commissioners court is administrative rather

than legislative.

Sam Biscoe (1989 to present)

Commissioner Biscoe followed Jimmy Snell. Having had an extensive legal career, representing the NAACP in many of its school desegregation cases, Biscoe brings many of the skills of a lawyer as he negotiates to get his three votes. On most human services-type issues he and his Hispanic colleague usually are in accord. Since Judge Aleshire usually joins them, there is a often three-vote majority. In addition, his precinct and that of his Hispanic colleague have much in common in the quality of soil, types of bridges, etc. This is another bonding factor. One of Biscoe's most significant projects is the newly constructed Travis County Community Justice Center. Here the emphasis is on rehabilitation rather than punishment. In an interview with the researcher, Commissioner Biscoe described vividly his negotiating style that includes quid pro quo as well as compromise. He recently stood alone in voting (4 -1) against a 36.5 percent pay raise for the commissioners. However, the community became so incensed that the pay raise had to be dropped. Of course, Biscoe became the darling of the community as revealed by comments at the court meeting and letters to the editor. His colleagues possibly have some covert animosity toward him. Since he has aspirations to run for county judge, they may have perceived his negative vote as being politically motivated. The decision to run for county Judge will require his resigning from the commissioners court with three years remaining on his term. Although he would perhaps have no problems in winning Precincts 1 and 4, the predominantly black and Hispanic districts, he might not be as successful in the other two that are predominantly white. Biscoe seems almost overqualified when you compare his credentials with those of his colleagues. He has a nonconfrontational style. These qualities may not, however, guarantee his election as county judge. Biscoe's winning would represent a first for a black.

Marcos de Leon (1991-1995)

Unfortunately, de Leon was not available for an interview. His style was somewhat confrontational in that he was more of a grass roots politician. He lost the second election to a more traditional political leader --Margaret Gomez.

Margaret Gomez (1995 -present)

Many persons feel that Gomez is a more competent commissioner than was de Leon; however, her negotiating style is possibly the major difference. She has had many years in county government, having been the aide of the first Hispanic on the court, Commissioner Richard Moyer, as well as a constable for many years.

She describes her own negotiating style as very quiet. She warned this researcher that her quiet manner is not to be equated, however, with agreement and conciliation. Gomez states that she believes that blacks and browns should form coalitions because of common problems. She and Commissioner Biscoe coalesce on many issues. Some of her views on blacks and browns seem to the researcher to be somewhat cliched rather than fresh and genuine.

Now that the narratives about the minority participants have been presented, we will move to an analysis of the data in the remaining part of this chapter.

Analysis of Results

WH#1

Working Hypothesis I stated that the alliances would be precarious and indeed they were in the majority of instances. They had been better in earlier years and continued to be more visible on some boards or councils rather than on others. The most precarious was that of the two current minority councilmen, interviewed during the most heated campaign period. It is possible that those negative feelings will level off after the politicking is over. Similar by the alliances between the two minority school board members have been fewer than those of the past. The officials expressed ideological reasons for collaborating, but each collaboration seemed for pragmatic reasons in the majority of instances. Only one council member was adamant in viewing coalitions as empowering and

liberalizing.

WH#1b

This hypothesis dealt with bargaining styles and proved to be the most difficult question to get the interviewees to comment on. Maybe they are not used to discussing bargaining styles. Sam Biscoe was the exception; therefore, more specific question rather than open-ended ones should have been included to elicit more direct responses.

WH#2

All of the interviewed respondents indicated that they experienced little personal conflict between making decisions that were for the city, district, or county as a whole as opposed to those decisions that favored their minority constituents. This seemed hardly true of one elected official who was being badgered by his fellow minority constituents for not producing adequately for them. The at-large city council elections certainly had a deracializing effect.

It did seem that black officials were more race-oriented than were whites or Hispanics. Again, the most stress seemed to have been coming from the African Americans rather than from the Hispanics. Only two respondents labeled their styles as confrontational although all of the officials and observers were less critical of confrontation than the researcher had expected. Many expressed the view that without confrontation the majority often ignored the minority. The black elected officials seemed to welcome their constituents' speaking at meeting even when they were confrontational.

Chapter 6

Summary

One shortcoming of the study stems from the conceptualization of deracialization. Although much has been written about the term (in fact, papers from a symposium devoted to the topic have been published), this does not satisfy this researcher's criticism that the term has been treated in too simplistic a manner. It is too easy to divide the issues that minority politicians face into being either representational or deracialized. There are many nuances that such a dichotomy overlooks.

It is difficult to determine if the results can be generalized beyond this study. One must always be cautious in generalizing case study data, especially when there are so few cases; however, to reconstruct this area of Austin's history has much value. Then too, we must question the role of personality variables, which seem to transcend race, age, and class. A different mix of personalities would have produced very different results.

The wide variety of evidence used in this study adds to the consistency of the picture revealed in the research. The present researcher regrets that several former office holders were not available for interviews. Of course, it is difficult not to be biased in case study research; however, the present researcher sought evidence from a variety of sources to gain more objectivity. For example, much of the information on Eric Mitchell came from the Austin Chronicle that attacks him weekly.

Since this was election time when tempers were flaring, the city council hostility among its members was possibly aggravated by the clash in politics. To some degree it may be temporary and situational. The weakened council relations grow out of the deep divisions between the pro-growth and the pro-environmental forces. This debate is not carried out fortunately with such rancor in other branches of government. It is difficult to explain these findings beyond Austin since the bitterness is less apparent in most other Texas cities.

Since the interviewer was African American, he sometimes sensed that the

interviewees responding in the expected manner; for example, the strong accord among Hispanics that blacks and browns should form alliances is not in keeping with the results of other studies.

A coalition conference program that the present researcher helped to organize at Huston-Tillotson College is included in the appendices. This program helps to reveal his passion for the topic. It also explains his pessimism when he sees so many blacks and browns not interested in forming alliances. This study reveals that much needs to be done to stimulate groups to form coalitions. The Dos Culturas Program at Huston-Tillotson College with which he works is a model of teaching young people the importance of getting together to strengthen one another. The Coalition Conference was filled with inspirational speeches, but there was no follow-up in behavior. In fact black and brown relations seem to be getting more tenuous. For instance, the two black weekly newspapers-NOKOA and The Villager- refused to endorse Gus Garcia's candidacy for City Council; this will possibly cause some Latino groups to refuse to vote for African American candidates in the future. This cycle can go on and on. It was also depressing to learn that the Interfaith Coalition of church groups was losing its members. Since the Coalition Conference will be repeated, this research will assist in the planning.

This case study of minority members of these governance bodies has been helpful in identifying their success in getting the minimum number of votes needed to get issues passed and how well they accomplish this through alliances. When one of the major criticisms against Eric Mitchell, the black city councilman, has been how often he has missed casting his vote on the dais, one wonders if the futility of voting with the losers too often may lead to this type of response.

Of course, we can not conclude that the gentlemen's agreement is dead just because a Hispanic has won a place other than the "protected one." Since Garcia is a very popular candidate, the seat may revert to whites at the end of his term.

After the run-off for city council, which is scheduled just two weeks away,

the environmentalists may make a clean sweep resulting in a peaceful council with no more rancor and discord. Many African Americans will identify less with their city government with their **firebrand** councilman gone. Consequently, a peaceful, quiet meeting should not be our only criterion of good government. A vibrant democracy requires that all citizens of various ethnic groups feel a sense of involvement through their leaders.

Future research directions should include a continuation of the study of the three Austin governance bodies to see what will happen if Mitchell's opponent wins. Since he has a far different governing style, will he be able to get more resources for East Austin?

If the gentlemen's agreement is dead since a minority has won a place other than the "safe" one, will single member districts be next for the city council? How will the changing demographics-the marked increase in the Latino population-impact on **black/brown** alliances? The preponderance of evidence in the literature leads us to expect fewer rather than more **black/brown** alliances. Is this an accurate prediction? We must continue to monitor boards and councils of other cities even though the relations vary from city to city. For example, the San Antonio city council now has a majority of Hispanic members. How will this shift affect the racial ethnic alliances? Dallas, having achieved a majority of women with its most recent election, is predicting a different work climate as a result of this feminization.

The present researcher plans to move from the case study to a more controlled research design as he continues the study of minorities on these three governance bodies. Since the minorities are forming alliances with Anglos as often as with other minorities, the Anglo perspective must be included in future research.

Finally, what should be the role of educators in grooming black youth for politics? Should they be made aware of the price they may have to pay for a confrontational style? Huey Perry (1990:144) contrasted the style of Richard **Arrington**, mayor of Birmingham, with that of Ernest **Morial**, former mayor of New Orleans. The former is a consensus builder who has cooperative

relationships with whites. They feel comfortable with him. In contrast, Morial , whose style is more confrontational, makes whites feel threatened. One Hispanic leader who was interviewed for this research pointed out two confrontational local Hispanic leaders whose upward mobility has been in marked contrast to his own. Of course, it would be to the advantage of all if the white majority would look for qualities more substantive than style, but until they do, youth need to be warned that style can pose political barriers. Educators can reinforce this awareness.

Appendices

Person Interviewed

Time/date

Charles Urdy
Former City Councilman
now employed at LCRA

February 17, 1997

Margaret Gomez
Travis County Commissioner

March 3, 1997

Diana Castenada
Former member of School Board
Student at Huston-Tillotson College

March 4, 1997

Sam Biscoe
Travis Count Commissioner

March 7, 1997

Charles Miles
Editor-Capital City Argus

March 12, 1997

Tommy Wyatt
Editor -The Villager

March 12, 1997

Paul Hernandez
Long time observer of Politics in Austin

March 15, 1997

Loretta Edelen
Member of AISD
Employed-Austin Community College

April 15,1997

Eric Mitchell
Austin City Council

April 14, 1997

Gus Garcia
Austin City Council
Employed-University of Texas Publisher

April 15, 1997

John Trevino
Former member of City Council

April 16, 1997

Wilhelmina Delco
Former member of AISD
Former member of Texas House of Representatives

April 18, 1997

March 12, 1997

Mr. John Treviho
FAX: (512) 471-2851

Dear Mr. Treviho:

I am doing research on the effectiveness of minority leadership on three governance bodies in Austin.- the City Council, the School Board, and the Commissioners' Court. I am trying to interview all of the past and current minority members. In addition, a few persons knowledgeable of Austin politics are being included. I hope that my research will lead to a publication.

Since I have a limited time for producing a first draft, I would like to get your input in any manner that is most convenient for you. I have enclosed a copy of the interview questions that can be used with much flexibility.

If it is possible for you to devote an hour to being interviewed, I can schedule the time and place at your convenience.

On the other hand, you might prefer writing answers to the **questions(as** informally and casually as you choose). Or, if you prefer to tape record your answers, I can provide a tape recorder and tape. In addition, we could have a brief **interview** by telephone along with a combination of one or two other communication options.

I will be most grateful if you can assist me in this project. Expect a call from me soon to see if you can assist me with the project.

If you have questions, please call me:

505-3115(H-T office)

If I am not in the office, the phone will switch to the secretary's office where a message can be left.

477-7022(Home where there is always someone to take messages).

Again, I shall be most grateful for your participation and especially an early response.

Very truly yours,

Don D. Henderson

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(Basic structure allows for variation)

Since "alliances" are the focus of this study please reflect on the voting patterns of your board, council, or commission.

1. Begin by singling out some legislation or bills that have been passed by you and colleagues that are especially significant to you.
2. What alliances made it possible for the bills to pass?
3. What are the usual alliances? Do they vary a great deal from issue to issue?
4. Do minorities tend to vote together on certain issues? If so characterize those issues?
5. Are you often frustrated because you are in a minority voting block'?
6. What issues usually generate a great deal of controversy?
7. Do you think Latinos and Blacks should form alliances or coalitions'?
8. If so, why?
If not, why?
9. To what extent do you think that minorities elected to office affect the decisions related to the minority community? In other words, has having minorities on the board resulted in more decisions favorable to the minority community? To what extent should minority votes be race neutral?
10. Reflect on the personal styles of your colleagues. Can confrontational styles serve as barriers to the formation of alliances?

11. Do you think the community supporters who appear in behalf of issues that you support can be helpful when their manner is confrontational?
12. What is the history of black and Latino political relationships in Austin'?
13. What conditions or factors lead either to political cooperation or competition between blacks and Latinos?
14. How do you feel about the "Gentleman's Agreement" in relation to place 5 and 6 on the City Council'?
15. Do you think that moving to single member districts (AISD) has had a positive influence?
16. Do you favor single member districts for the city council?



"Can We All Get Along?"

A Political Coalition Conference

Saturday, April 27, 1996

9:00 A M

Huston-Tillotson College

900 Chicon Street

Administration Bldg. Auditorium

Dr. June Brewer

General Conference Chair

Judge Harriet Murphy

Conference Co-Chair

Dr. Mary DeFerreire

Conference Co-Chair



Session I
9:15 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

Dr. Mary E. DeFerriere - Presiding

Welcome & Introductions

Speakers:

Reverend Sterling Lands
Greater Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
Dr. Ricardo Romo
Deputy Provost, University of Texas at Austin

Session II
9:45 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.

Jridge Harriet Murphy - Presiding

Prospectus & Discussion Speakers

<i>Ami Mok</i>	<i>Asian Americans</i>
<i>David Mintz</i>	<i>Jewish Americans</i>
<i>Albert Black</i>	<i>African Americans</i>
<i>David Bob</i>	<i>Native Americans</i>
<i>Gus Garcia</i>	<i>Hispanic Americans</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem</i>	
<i>Diana Castaneda</i>	
<i>N S D School Board Member</i>	

Other Discussion Members

David Brown
President, Austin CLC
Linda Von Quintos
President, Austin Women Political Caucus

Bernice Hart
Former AISD School Board President
Tarrynce Robinson
Huston-Tillotson Student

Session III
11:20 a.m. - 12:10 a.m.

Dr. Mary DeFerriere - Presiding

"Can We All Really Get Along?"

Introductions

Trestey Martin

Nakisha Ham's

Speakers:

Paril Hernandez
Community Activist
Honorable Wilhemina Delco
Former Texas State Representative

Luncheon Programme
12:15 p.m.
Dr. June Brewer - Presiding

Invocation

Welcomes

Dr. Joseph McMillan
President, Huston-Tillotson College

Lirnda Sorrells
President, ABLA
Deputy Director, NBA Region I

U. Lawrence Boze
President Elect, National Bar Assoc.

Remarks

Joya Hayes
President, H-T Student Body

Oscar dela Torre
LBJ School of Public Affairs
University of TX at Austin

Introduction of Speaker

Linda Von Quintos
Austin Black Lawyers Assoc.

Keynote Speaker
The Honorable Judge Morris Overstreet
Texas Coan of Criminal Appeals

Closing Remarks

L. Gerome Smith
Director, NBA Region I

Session IV
7:00 p.m.

Student Union Bldg.
Judge Harriet Murphy - Presiding

Recognition of Guests

Introduction of Speaker

Keynote Address

Victor Morales

Texas Democratic Candidate for the US Senate

Closing Remarks

Conference Steering Committee

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Co - Chair

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Special Thanks to:

Irma Harris, Secretary, Departments of Humanities & Natural Sciences
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