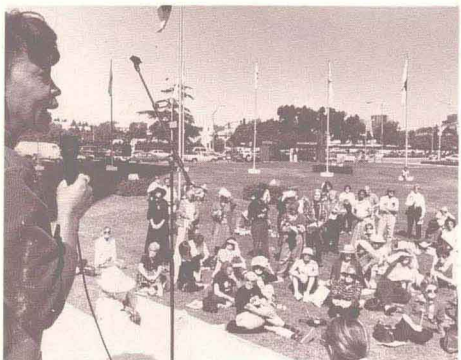


# Racial and Ethnic Politics in California



Edited by  
Byran O. Jackson  
and  
Michael B. Preston

# ***Racial and Ethnic Politics in California***

Byran O. Jackson and  
Michael B. Preston, *Editors*

IGS PRESS  
Institute of Governmental Studies  
University of California at Berkeley  
1991

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Printed in the United States of America.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Racial and ethnic politics in California / Byran O. Jackson, Michael B. Preston, editors.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-87772-328-1

1. Political participation—California. 2. Minorities—California—Political activity.
3. California—Politics and government—1951- I. Jackson, Byran O. II. Preston, Michael B.

JK8795.R33 1991

323'.042'09794—dc20

91-18676

***Racial and Ethnic Politics  
in California***

## ***Dedication***

**To Mary, Sherry, Sonja, Adrienne, and Rymicha. Also to my grandchildren, Anthony and Ashley.**

**—Michael B. Preston**

**To mama and daddy.**

**—Byran O. Jackson**

## ***Acknowledgements***

**We would like to thank Sherre Ballard, Jody Battle, Mary Clark, and Jesus Oliva for their support and assistance on this manuscript. A special thanks goes to the publication staff at IGS for a job well done.**

## *In Memoriam*

We at the IGS lost a beloved colleague when Byran Jackson passed away on November 10, 1992. I, in particular, will miss him. Byran was a co-author, a co-conspirator and most importantly, a dear friend. We collaborated on a paper with Elisabeth Gerber about black perceptions of multi-racial coalition prospects in L.A. and on this volume, *Racial and Ethnic Politics in California*. We were co-conspirators working behind the scenes to help L.A. city resolve its redistricting problems last summer. And we were friends who shared different perspectives but similar views of life and politics.

Byran was both a scholar and an activist. Much of his recent work was dedicated to the thesis that the performance of elected black officials could be calibrated and judged critically. This position is more mainstream now than it was five years ago, and his early work in this area tended to incite arguments from the audience. Byran's position was not that electoral politics was meaningless, but rather that there was a tendency, especially in the black community, to rally around elected officials for symbolic reasons and to overlook weaknesses in their records as incumbents.

In his studies of black mayors, especially L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley, Byran and his co-authors advocated a number of important ideas: First, that it was possible to get quantitative measures of a mayor's achievements in such areas as affirmative action hiring, city contracts, and economic development; second, that multi-racial coalitions continue to evolve after their initial successes, and that this can have important consequences for the directions an incumbent black mayor's policies take; and finally, that the African-American community is not monolithic and some parts of the community might benefit more from the policies of black officials than others.

Byran's activist side complemented his scholarship significantly. As a political consultant, Byran worked on state, county, and city redistrictings, and on several local political campaigns. Last summer, Byran served as a redistricting consultant to Rita Walters, an African-American member of the L.A. City Council. At the beginning of the process, there was much speculation in the press that Latinos and African Americans would quarrel bitterly over who would represent the downtown areas. Byran was instrumental just before his death in negotiating a compromise settlement that maintained black representation in the downtown areas but gave the Latino community a so-called growth seat in the Hollywood area.

Had he not died prematurely, I am sure that Byran would have written about the L.A. riots and his reflections on the future direction of voting rights in America. We will miss his insights on these subjects. He leaves behind many friends from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. We will remember fondly his humor, warmth, scholarly enthusiasm, and friendship.

Bruce Cain  
*Associate Director, IGS*  
*January 1993*



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# *I. INTRODUCTION*



## *Ethnic Politics in California: An Overview*

California is one of the most ethnically diverse states in the United States. With a total population of slightly less than 30 million people, it is rapidly approaching a nonwhite majority. By the year 2000, approximately 29 percent of all Californians will be of Hispanic origin while 13 percent will be Asian, and 7 percent will be of African-American descent. Unlike the immigration occurring during the turn of this century, which was primarily European, 40 percent of new immigrants are coming from Asian countries with the Philippines having the highest percentage. Another 40 percent are coming from countries in Northern and Central America and the Caribbean. Immigrants from Mexico make up the bulk of this group.

As the demographics change, there is an expectation that the political environment and political institutions will do so as well. How realistic is this expectation? If political change does take place, what form will it take? Will the increasing number of minority groups eligible to vote translate into more political representation at the expense of whites? How likely are these groups to form coalitions to protect their interests? What strategies will individual candidates and political parties use to appeal to them over the next two decades? Since most minorities are located in metropolitan areas while the greatest growth is in the suburbs, will they be able to protect their interest *vis-à-vis* the growth of suburban power? Will reapportionment over the next two decades help or hurt these new groups? What role will redistricting play in the political development of these groups? This book will examine these and other problems related to the broad array of political changes likely to take place in the state, county, and municipal levels of government brought on by California's minority groups as they search for political empowerment.

While this book focuses on racial and ethnic minorities in California, these issues illustrate the experiences that other large states with large minority populations are likely to encounter—especially Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New York. We should also note that while a book of this

nature emphasizes the political aspects of the changes these political institutions will encounter, we are aware that there are a number of other interrelated policy questions that also need to be addressed but cannot be in a volume of this nature. Among the policy-related questions likely to become significant issues in any future political equation: the aging and income of the population; changes in residential patterns; changes in labor needs; and the changing global demographic picture. While these are important questions, our attempt here is more modest—to draw out and examine some of the political implications of racial and ethnic change in a state that will be a barometer for the nation now and in the future.

The book opens with a critical assessment of the "concept of ethnic representation." In this chapter Bruce Cain explores the fragmentation of government brought on by the decline of political parties and the rise of interest groups. He also examines the political implications of the rise in ethnically related special interest groups and what this means for current and future political institutions.

The next four chapters are devoted to exploring both the historical and contemporary quest by Hispanic, Asian, black, and Jewish groups in their search for political equality in the golden state. Don Nakanishi's article attempts to explain why Asian political participation is different from other racial groups. Susan Anderson examines the history of African Americans (blacks) in California and looks at the attempts by blacks to seek inclusion into a political system that sought to exclude them from political involvement but could not preclude them from fighting back by establishing their own conventions and organizations. Harry Pachon's paper focuses on Latino participation in a state where Hispanics (or Latinos) have traditionally had limited political power. He explores what the growth of this population means for political empowerment in the future. Raphael Sonenshein does a superb job of showing how Jews gradually achieved political power and how their basically liberal stances on issues have led them into alliances with African-American politicians. He also discusses some of the current problems with old alliances and problems with emerging groups, such as Hispanics.

In section three, we examine the growth and development of minority political leadership. Fernando Guerra does an excellent job of describing chronologically how and when each racial group began to achieve elective office and what these changes may mean for the future. Larry Berg and C. B. Holman discuss the rise to power of Speaker Willie Brown and explain his changing constituency, shift on issues, and how he has survived in a diverse district in San Francisco and in the elite state legislature.

San Francisco and Los Angeles are the two largest and most ethnically diverse cities in the state of California. Richard DeLeon explores in detail how blacks, Asians, and Hispanics have contributed to political change in the city by contributing to a "Progressive Urban Regime," which has evolved

in San Francisco over the past decade. Byran Jackson in turn assesses ethnic voting cleavages in Los Angeles and demonstrates that not only is ethnicity important in determining ethnic political behavior, but that social class must be taken into consideration as well.

One of the key questions pondered by observers of ethnic politics concerns the involvement of ethnic members in party politics. While political parties are not as strong in California as perhaps in other states, they indeed play a significant role in minority group politics. William Middleton provides an analysis of minority group participation in political parties in California. He argues that political parties should be strengthened in the state through reform and that a strong party system provides an opportunity for minority group empowerment. Dwaine Marvick gives an insightful longitudinal analysis of minority participation in party organizations in Los Angeles county. Richard Santillan and Subervi-Vélez show the importance of the Hispanic vote in Republican politics in California.

No volume on ethnic politics would be complete without a discussion of the conflict as well as the opportunities for interethnic cooperation brought on by each group's quest for political empowerment. Charles Henry and Carlos Muñoz then look at whether a rainbow coalition is possible in California. Carol Uhlaner provides an excellent discussion on the role that prejudice and racism plays in politics. James Regaldo concludes this section by looking at the conflict over redistricting, especially in Los Angeles County. He shows why and how Hispanics were finally able to get the court to throw out the 1981 County Board of Supervisors' districts in Los Angeles that fractured the Hispanic communities and rendered them powerless to elect an Hispanic to the board. He also shows how Hispanics were able to do this without alienating black interest.

There are few books that cover the broad array of issues covered here, and we hope this volume will begin a discussion of the critical issues that will face the state in the 21st century.



