

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Q:** Elections seem to emphasize divisions among voters: by race, income, heritage, gender, religion, marital status. Can these divided groups ever work together?

Dr. Raphe Sonenshein suggests, even in these contentious circumstances, that political coalitions can find common ground and work together on important issues. In his book, the author describes in detail how a coalition between blacks and white liberals in Los Angeles found common interests. That coalition, expanded to Latinos and Asian-Americans, was of sufficient strength and staying power to elect and retain a black Mayor, Tom Bradley, through five terms as Mayor of the City of Los Angeles.

The most significant test of Mayor Bradley's biracial coalition came in 1991 and 1992 with the Rodney King case, and with the Christopher Commission's conclusions in July 1991 and the subsequent not guilty verdict by the Ventura County jury in April 1992. The broad scope of the violence that followed hollowed-out the coalition and deeply eroded support for Mayor Bradley. However, Professor Sonenshein suggests that the passage of Charter Amendment F in June 1992, which increased civilian control of police officer performance, came at great cost to Mayor Bradley but may have been his greatest achievement. This result also suggests that coalition-building still has broad applications for Los Angeles.

## CITATION

*Author:*  
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*Title:*  
*Politics in black and white: race and power in Los Angeles*

*Year:* 1993

*Call #:* 352.0794 S698

*Author:*  
Deverell, William  
Hise, Greg

*Title:*  
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*Year:* 2010

*Call #:* 979.41 L881 Comp

