

political work because the difference in political status between undocumented immigrants and refugees often has created fissures between the two, thereby fracturing potential coalitions. A quick look at the list of member organizations reveals that this is no stovepipe institution: member organizations include among others the Association of Haitian Women, the Bosnian Community Center for Resource Development, the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights, the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, the Brazilian Immigrant Center, the Cambridge Portuguese Credit Union, the Cape Verdean Association of Brockton, the Irish Immigration Center, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and Jobs with Justice. The organization's ambition is to link fates of a diverse array of national origin groups through a federated institution capable of leading common political action.

Probing the coalition more deeply still, we wanted to know whether and in what ways MIRA saw contemporary struggles over immigrant rights as connected to earlier civil rights movements for African Americans. One of the organizers we interviewed moved easily among the languages of civil rights, immigrant rights, and human rights. However, when pressed on the linkages between race and immigration it became clear that there was a considerable gulf between speaking about the importance of civil rights and a more active bridging of the long-standing division between immigrants and African Americans (Hattam 2007, chaps. 3-4). When specifically asked about the connection between civil and immigrant rights, the interviewee noted that there had been a wonderful speech given by the Reverend Nelson at the Low Income Immigrant Rights Conference held on December 6, 2007 at the National Immigration Law Center in Washington, D.C.<sup>14</sup> While Johnson's speech is indeed powerful and makes the case for connecting immigration and racial issues, we were struck by the fact that the bridging figure was so far from home. No reference was made to similar instances of such linkage within MIRA or of events in Massachusetts.<sup>15</sup> Put simply, the link between civil rights and immigrant rights was there rhetorically, but was not apparent when it came to the daily business of MIRA's organizational work.

The absence of an active engagement with earlier civil rights organizations places a crucial limit on MIRA's coalition building. In MIRA's defense, one might argue that this is simply not MIRA's mission; after all, it is an immigrant not a civil rights organization. But simply to declare questions of race as beyond MIRA's jurisdiction misses the point, since it assumes a separation of immigration and race many believe the new immigration might be reworking. The pressing political question is whether new immigrants will identify by nationality, race, or some other term. How these identifications play out is the question and cannot be ruled out of court as beyond the organization's mission.

Across town, GBIO has been building a rather different coalition. It, too, has created an important umbrella organization bringing together 70 institutions representing approximately 50,000 members—"a diverse mix," the group claims, "economically, racially, geographically, and otherwise" united in their commitment to faith as a medium for social and political change. GBIO was established in 1996 by 45 clergy and community leaders who wanted to build a new organization that would transcend Boston's "historic divides" especially those of race and class.<sup>16</sup> Bridging racial division through faith has remained central throughout. The organization includes a wide range of congregations, including the Roxbury Presbyterian Church, Temple Emmanuel in Newton, Trinity Church in Back Bay, and the Catholic Sisters Collaborative.

Like MIRA, GBIO directs much of its energy toward changing policy at the state level. Matters of housing, health care, elder care, and education have been important areas of concern for several years. They have led to important victories, including passage of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts \$100-million Housing Trust Fund, winning a \$2 million increase for Boston Public School textbooks and supplies, and successfully supported the Justice for Janitors campaign to win significant pay and benefit increases. GBIO does not shy away from political engagement but rather draws on religious commitment as an impetus for political change. At the Delegates Assembly at Temple Emanuel in Newton, Massachusetts, held on April 8, 2008, GBIO invited Secretary of Elder

Affairs Michael Festa, and made him gather together in the front of the synagogue to commit to political change in the eyes of God.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, at the even larger tenth anniversary action held on Tuesday, May 27, 2008, Governor Deval Patrick was in attendance, with the same intention of having him commit in public to certain political change.<sup>18</sup> The policy demands in and of themselves are not enormous—the significance of their political work lies less in the policy changes sought than in their use of faith to build common cause across deep racial divides. For more than 13 years now, a diverse group of clergy and parishioners has come together creating connections where few existed before. Although the policy goals are modest, the underlying bridge building is impressive in its ambition to reconfigure previously divisive identifications.

At GBIO meetings, racial diversity is front and center. GBIO brings Black and white ministers and congregants together. The Delegates Assembly of April 8, 2008, for example, was led jointly by Reverend Hurmon Hamilton of the Roxbury Presbyterian Church and Abby Flam of Temple Emanuel in Newton, who shared duties throughout the service. The congregation was equally diverse, about half-Black and half-white. We estimate that there were also approximately 20 Muslims in attendance. Yet, questions of immigration are strangely absent.

As with MIRA, some colleagues have suggested that it is a mistake to expect GBIO to bridge race and immigration, since it is not itself an immigrant organization. From our perspective, such arguments again presume too narrow an historical frame for thinking about migration. After all, several Jewish congregations were founding partners of the interfaith organization and certainly have been deeply connected to issues of migration and ethnic difference (Hattam 2007, chaps. 3-4). More important still, we do not accept that immigration is beyond GBIO's mandate. Interestingly, GBIO might begin to be engaged in immigration through the Haitian Nursing Home Worker Campaign. A group of Haitian workers within GBIO presented four complaints: disrespect in the workplace, low wages, no health care, and poor staffing ratios. GBIO began by tackling the issue of disrespect and this then led to broader support for the health-care initiatives in Massachusetts.