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Immigration Reform and the Browning of America: Tensions, Conflicts and Community Instability in Metropolitan Los Angeles[1]

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Tensions, conflicts, and community instability associated with height-ened immigration – especially of nonwhite immigrant groups – threaten to balkanize America. This article highlights the root causes of the grow-ing opposition to both immigrants and U.S. immigration policy – the nativist backlash, presents a typology of the community-level conflicts that have arisen as a consequence of heightened immigration – legal and illegal – to the United States over the last 30 years, and outlines the con-ditions under which diversity can be brought to the forefront as one of society's strengths.

Our nation is in the midst of a rather dramatic demographic transformation that is radically changing all aspects of American society, including the racial and ethnic composition of our neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and social and political institutions. As a consequence of heightened immigration – legal and illegal – and high rates of birth among the newly arrived immi-grants, nonwhite ethnic minority groups are projected to surpass non-Hispanic whites to become, collectively, the numerical majority of the U.S. population by the fifth decade of the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately, the nation's emerging multiethnic, demographic realities are not welcomed or embraced by everyone. In fact, intolerance to immigra-tion-induced population diversity has become so intense that, in some states and cities, police departments are now required to record and maintain sta-tistics on the incidences of racially, ethnically and religiously motivated vio-lence (Johnson, Oliver and Roseman, 1989). Indeed, it has been argued that

one of the root causes of the Los Angeles civil unrest of 1992 was the failure of local elected officials to implement human relations policies to mitigate the widespread intolerance that had accompanied recent changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the Los Angeles population (Johnson *et al.*, 1992; Postrel, 1992; Luttwak, 1992; Johnson and Farrell, 1993).

We believe that the undercurrent of racial and ethnic intolerance that undergirds the nation's changing demographic realities strongly challenges, and may very well threaten, our ability to establish viable, stable, racially and ethnically diverse communities and institutions (Stanfield, 1994; Johnson, Oliver and Roseman, 1989; Rose, 1989; Miller, 1994; Schultz, 1993; Guthrie and Hutchinison, 1995; Teitelbaum and Weiner, 1995; McDaniel, 1995). To our way of thinking, the nation's growing antagonism toward racial and ethnic diversity, as evidenced by California initiatives like Proposition 187 and Proposition 209 and continuing efforts at the federal level to curtail benefits that currently accrue to tax paying legal immigrants (Bowermaster, 1995; Alarcon, 1995; Hing, 1993; Jost, 1995; Lee and Sloan, 1994; Valenzuela, 1995), is also bad for business and thus threatens the nation's competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Moreover, and perhaps most significant in terms of the future viability of U.S. cities, especially those port of entry communities where large numbers of newly arriving immigrants have settled (Roberts, 1994), these issues were altogether ignored in President Clinton's National Urban Policy Report, *Empowerment: A New Convenant with America's Communities*, released in July, 1995 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1995). If U.S. cities are to recapture their former premier status in American society, it is imperative, in our view, that we gain a fuller understanding of the nature and basis of this growing intolerance of demographic diversity and then develop strategies to resolve the underlying conflicts (Johnson, Oliver and Roseman, 1989; Johnson and Oliver, 1989; Johnson and Farrell, 1993).

Elsewhere, we have demonstrated how recent immigration reform policies have contributed to growing income inequality in the U.S. (Johnson and Farrell, forthcoming). In this article, we 1) highlight the root causes of the growing opposition to both immigrants and U.S. immigration policy – the nativist backlash; 2) present a typology of the community-level conflicts that have arisen as a consequence of heightened immigration – legal and illegal – to the United States over the last 30 years, and 3) outline the conditions under which diversity can be brought to the forefront as one of society's strengths.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Over the past 30 years, the origin, size, and composition of the legal immigration stream into the United States has changed dramatically, largely as a conse-

quence of the promulgation of the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 and more recent amendments to it, especially the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) and the Immigration Act of 1990. Between 1920 and 1965, legal immigration to the United States averaged about 206,000 per year, with the major flows originating in northern and western Europe. Since the passage of the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act, the volume of immigration has increased sharply, averaging over 500,000 per year between the mid-1960s and the mid-1990s, and the origins of the dominant flows have changed – they now originate in the Asian Pacific Triangle region (*see* Figure 1). Prior to 1965, immigration from the countries that make up this region was prohibited based on various unfounded theories about the racial and/or ethnic inferiority and cultural unassimilability of the indigenous population.

The immigrant flow has not been limited to those entering via the hemispheric quota and family/occupation preference provisions established in the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 and in more recent immigration reforms. The new arrivals, over the last 30 years, have also included a significant number of refugees, parolees, and asylum seekers who were fleeing political persecution in their home countries. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), approximately 2.2 million refugees, parolees, and asylees were allowed to settle in the United States between 1961 and 1993 (roughly 65,000 annually).

The flow also has included a substantial number of illegal aliens searching for jobs and an improved quality of life (Zolberg, 1995). The number of unauthorized aliens granted amnesty under the IRCA of 1986 is one useful indicator of the impact of illegal immigration on the size and composition of the U.S. resident population. Any illegal immigrant who could demonstrate that he or she had lived in the United States before 1982 was eligible to apply for citizenship under this Act. Three million undocumented aliens took advantage of this opportunity to become U.S. citizens (Lowell and Jing, 1994; Baker, 1997).

By granting amnesty to such a large number of people, who were residing in the United States illegally, the view was that these new legal workers would saturate domestic labor demand and thereby stem the illegal flow. Research shows, however, that IRCA 1986 has been largely ineffective (Andreas, 1994). At the completion of the amnesty program in October of 1988, there were 2.7 million illegal aliens who remained in the country to take advantage of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in the booming U.S. economy. According to Andreas (1994:231), "these [illegal] immigrant workers provided a more permanent base for the social networks that facilitate the arrival of new illegal immigrants." Over the last decade, according to the INS, another 2.4 million immigrants have entered the United States illegally (roughly 275,000 annually). The INS estimates that "as of October 1996 there were 5 million illegal aliens living in the United States" (Center for Immigration Studies, 1997b:1).

Figure 1.   Legal Immigration to the United States
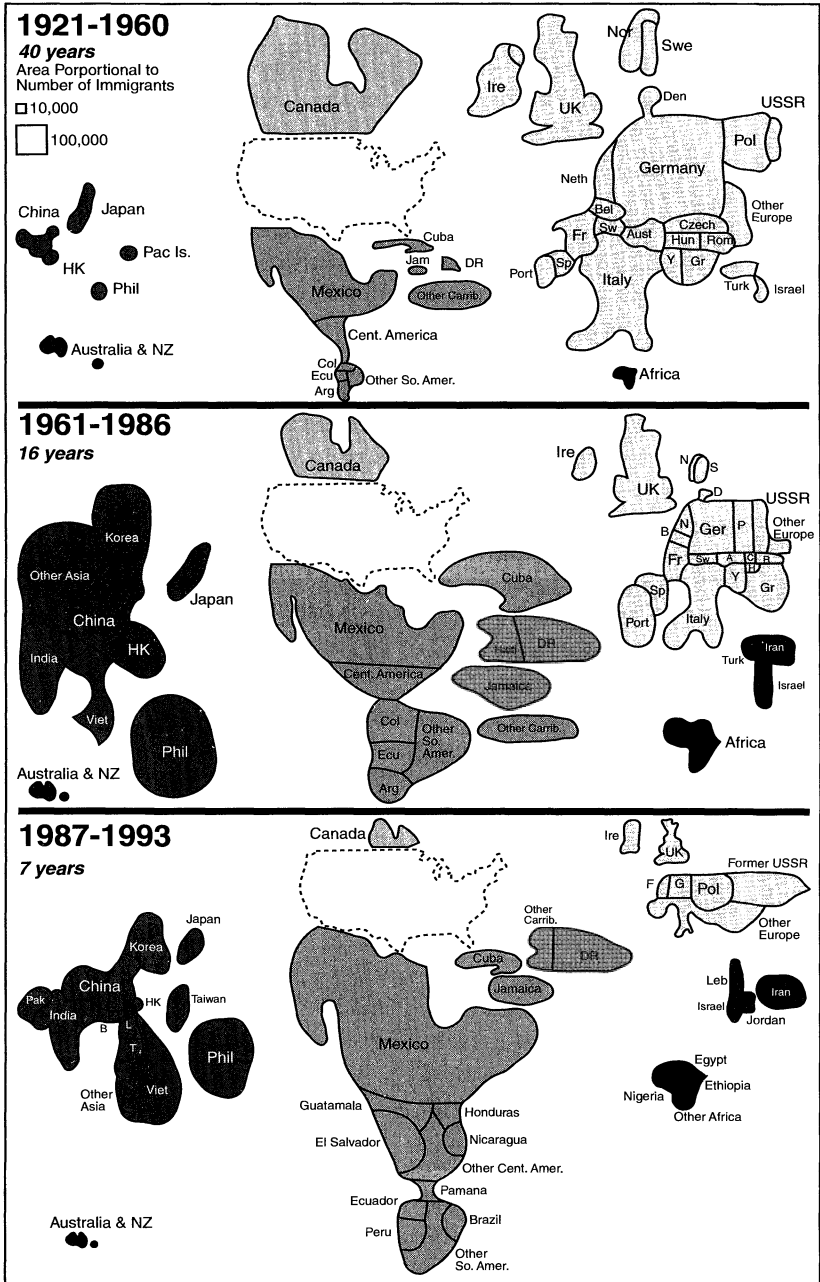
Source: Adapted from Johnson, Oliver, and Roseman (1989).

These changes in the origin, size, and composition of the U.S. immigrant population have contributed to what some have characterized as the "browning of America," a rather dramatic change in the racial complexion and cultural orientations of the American population (Johnson, Oliver and Roseman, 1989; Hing, l993; Chiswick and Sullivan, 1995). These so-called new immigrants – those arriving in the post-1965 period – are phenotypically and culturally distinct from the old immigrants arriving in the pre-1965 era, who more closely resembled Anglo-Americans in terms of their physical characteristics and cultural patterns (Johnson and Oliver, 1989). Moreover, research shows that the new immigrants are less inclined than the old immigrants to blend fully into American society. Most prefer, instead, to preserve and maintain their own cultural heritages and identities (Johnson, Oliver and Roseman, 1989).

Largely as a result of high rates of immigration from the Asian Pacific Triangle countries ushered in by these reforms, the nonwhite ethnic minority population (*i.e.*, Asians, Hispanics, and blacks) grew more than seven times as fast as the non-Hispanic white majority population during the 1980s (Frey, 1993). The Asian population doubled from 3.5 million to over 7 million. The Hispanic population increased by more than half – from 14.6 million to 22.3 million. And blacks added 3.5 million to their population, reaching a total count of almost 30 million in 1990. As a result of these increases, the nonwhite ethnic minority population is now comprised of 60.5 million people – almost a quarter (24.4%) of the total U.S. population (Frey, 1993).

The impact of these immigration-driven changes have not been felt evenly or uniformly in the United States; rather, they have fallen disproportionately on selected states and on selected communities within these states. Seven states – Arizona, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Texas, and California – have borne the brunt of this immigration (Charles, 1995; Center for Immigration Studies, 1995), and selected cities within these primary destination states have served as the primary ports of entry for the new immigrants: New York, NY; Phoenix, AZ; Newark, NJ; Chicago, IL; El Paso and Houston, TX; Miami, FL; and Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Ysidro and San Diego, CA (Johnson and Oliver, 1989; Rose, 1989).

Notably, Los Angeles stands out among these cities and appears to have replaced New York as the new Ellis Island (Andersen, 1983). In large part, as a consequence of large-scale immigration from Asia, Mexico, Central America, North Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean over the last three decades, the Los Angeles metropolitan area is now a Third World metropolis (Johnson and Oliver, 1989; Oliver and Johnson, 1984). According to the most recent census estimates, people of color constitute nearly two-thirds of the population of metropolitan Los Angeles.

Based on the demographic changes taking place during the 1980s, and assuming continued high levels of immigration, the U.S. population is now projected to grow much more rapidly and to become far more diverse in the future than was anticipated by the U.S. Census Bureau as recently as seven years ago. In 1988, the Census Bureau estimated that the U.S. population would continue to grow until 2010, when it would peak at around 300 million, and then remain relatively stable until 2050. But more recent projections indicate that U.S. population growth is not likely to peak in 2010; instead, the nation's population is projected to increase by 50 percent over the next 60 years, reaching 375 million in 2050.

The revised projections are based on the Census Bureau's realization that the U.S. population will not approach zero population growth (ZPG) in the foreseeable future, as assumed in its 1988 projections. Those projections were based, generally, on the assumption that the population growth rates of non-white ethnic minority groups would approximate the non-Hispanic white rate by the end of this decade, which currently approaches ZPG (that is, the average white family has about 1.7 children and thus is relatively stable). But more recent analyses based on the 1990 census and the annual Current Population Survey suggest that this was an unrealistic assumption.

Between now and the year 2050, the black population is projected to increase by 94 percent, the American Indian population by 109 percent, the Hispanic population by 238 percent, and the Asian and Pacific Islander population by 412 percent. By contrast, the non-Hispanic white population is projected to increase by only 29.4 percent over the next 60 years. What this means, of course, is that, largely as a consequence of continued high rates of immigration – legal and illegal – and high rates of natural increase among recently arrived immigrants, nonwhite ethnic minority groups will continue to be responsible for the majority of the nation's population growth over the next six decades (Holmes, 1995; Martin, 1995a, 1995b).

THE NATIVIST BACKLASH

How has the U.S. citizenry responded to the aforementioned demographic changes and population projections? Public opinion polls and other data indicate that there is a steadily increasing fear of the so-called "browning of America," a growing intolerance among native Americans (*i.e.*, those who were born in the United States of parents who were also born in America) of immigrants, and growing opposition to what is perceived to be the nation's open door immigration policy on the one hand and its seeming inability to stem the tide of illegal immigration on the other (Brimelow, 1995).

Perceptions of Impacts

At the most general level, U.S. citizens harbor negative views and beliefs about the impact of recent immigration on American society. In a recent *Newsweek*

poll, nearly half of those surveyed indicate that "immigrants are a burden on our country because they take jobs, housing and [consume] health care" (Adler and Waldman, 1995:18). Only 40 percent think that "immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents." In another *Newsweek* poll, two-thirds of the non-Hispanic whites (66%) and nearly half of the blacks (46%) surveyed say that the level of immigration to the United States should be decreased (Brownstein, 1995).

In California, one of the states that has borne the brunt of immigration, in a 1988 statewide poll, three-fourths of the whites (75%) and two-thirds of the blacks (66.9%) surveyed said they were worried about the changing make-up of California's population. Underlying their concerns was the belief that the immigration of people of Asian and Hispanic background "will make it hard to maintain American traditions and the American way of life" (Field Institute, 1988). A majority of both the whites and the blacks surveyed indicated that they thought that the place of English as our common language was being endangered and that the quality of education was being lowered by recent immigration, especially the influx of Hispanics (Field Institute, 1988).

In a more recent survey of a multiethnic sample of Los Angeles households (*see* Johnson, Oliver and Bobo, 1994), several questions were included to gauge the perceived political and economic impacts of continued high rates of immigration on American society. As Table 1 shows, the black and non-Hispanic white respondents are far more likely than the Hispanic, Korean, Japanese and Chinese respondents to perceive that continued immigration is likely to have a negative impact on their well-being. Roughly one-half of both the non-Hispanic white and the black survey respondents express the belief that they would either have less or a lot less political influence and economic opportunity than they currently have if immigration is allowed to continue at the present rate.

TABLE 1
PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF IMMIGRATION[a]

Respondent	Political Influence[b]	Economic Opportunity[c]
Black	52.1	56.8
Hispanic	16.9	33.2
Chinese	2.5	14.7
Korean	4.8	5.9
Japanese	10.9	12.7
White	51.8	46.7

Source: Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality.

[a] Reported percentage corresponds to the proportion of survey respondents who expressed the belief that they would either have "less" or "a lot less" political influence and economic opportunity than they currently have if immigration is allowed to continue at the present rate.

[b] If immigration to this country continues at the present rate, how much political influence do you believe people like you (R's group – white, black, Asian, Hispanic people) will have? 1) much political influence, 2) some, but not a lot more, 3) no more or less than now, 4) a lot less than now.

[c] If immigration to this country continues at the present rate, do you believe people like you (R's group) will probably have 1) much more economic opportunity, 2) some, but not a lot more, 3) no more or less than now, 4) less than now, 5) a lot less opportunity than now?

It is noteworthy that these perceptions are radically different from those of Hispanic, Chinese, Korean and Japanese survey respondents. No more than one-third of the respondents in any one of these groups share this view. Given that the latter groups are comprised of a high percentage of recently arrived immigrants, the difference in their perceptions and those of native-born blacks and non-Hispanic whites regarding the impact of continued high rates of immigration is not surprising.

Further insights into the nature of the concerns about immigration are evident in Tables 2 and 3, which also were derived from the recent Los Angeles survey. In addition to the rift that our immigration policy has created between the foreign born and the native born, it also has prompted considerable antagonisms among nonwhite ethnic minority groups. A majority of the blacks surveyed believe that the more influence Asians and Hispanics have in local politics the less influence they will have in local politics. As Table 2 shows, one-half of the Hispanics surveyed express similar concerns about Asians. A majority of the blacks surveyed also agree with the statement that more good jobs for both Asians and Hispanics would mean fewer good jobs for blacks (Table 3). In contrast, Hispanics only view themselves as being in direct competition with Asians for good jobs.

TABLE 2
THE MORE INFLUENCE MEMBERS (OF TARGET GROUP) HAVE IN LOCAL POLITICS,
THE LESS INFLUENCE R'S GROUP WILL HAVE IN LOCAL POLITICS (PERCENT AGREEING)

Respondent	Asian	Black	Hispanic
White	32.6	28.8	35.6
Asian	–	32.0	35.9
Hispanic	50.8	39.9	–
Black	60.5	–	51.4

Source: Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality.

TABLE 3
MORE GOOD JOBS FOR MEMBERS (OF TARGET GROUP)
MEANS FEWER JOBS FOR R'S GROUP (PERCENT AGREEING)

Respondent	Asian	Black	Hispanic
White	32.9	24.0	25.6
Asian	–	24.7	25.0
Hispanic	46.5	35.0	–
Black	68.8	–	61.1

Source: Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality.

This high level of opposition to immigration is partially fueled by native-born Americans' increasing economic insecurity due to massive layoffs and wage stagnation in the U.S. economy. It appears that no one is being spared, not even white males – traditionally the privileged and protected class in the employment arena – as U.S. businesses aggressively reengineer, downsize, or

right-size their operations in an effort to remain competitive in the twenty-first century global marketplace (Grimsley, 1995; Lee, 1995).

Also, it reflects opposition of native-born Americans to the current push for multiculturalism in all walks of American society (Graham, 1994), a movement perceived to be largely motivated by the recent wave of immigrants' unwillingness to fully assimilate – culturally and linguistically – into mainstream American society (Brownstein, 1995). And it is partly a response to the role of immigrants in recent, highly publicized events like the World Trade Center bombing, the shootings on the Long Island railroad, and the Los Angeles civil unrest of 1992 (Charles, 1995).

Intergroup Attitudes and Stereotypes

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the newly arrived immigrants bring with them from their host societies negative perceptions of and prejudicial attitudes toward native-born Americans, especially blacks. One author notes, for example, that "Mexican Americans have historically viewed blacks as 'black Anglo-Saxons' in the negative sense of being an inferior imitation of and having an affinity for Anglo culture" (Henry, 1980:224). Another author notes that "Spanish culture traditionally denigrated 'dark skin' and inferiorized its possessors" (Oliver and Johnson, 1984:66).

Chang (1988), a specialist in Asian-American studies, argues that Asians, on the other hand, are continuously bombarded with American media exports that contain negative images of blacks. What effect have such exports had on Asians' perceptions of blacks? According to Chang, Asians "have learned and accepted the stereotypes of blacks as criminals, welfare recipients, drug addicts, and/or lazy through American movies, T.V. shows, and American Forces Korea Network Programs."

Concerns about the enormous burden that the new immigrants, especially those who enter the country illegally, place on city services – hospitals, schools, the welfare system, and the criminal justice system – is one of the sources of public backlash against continued high rates of immigration (Valenzuela, 1995; Thom, 1995; Unz, 1994; Jost, 1995; Hudson, 1995). In addition, within many communities, newly arriving immigrants settle in formerly all-black residential areas, setting into motion a wide range of interethnic minority conflicts over jobs, housing, and access to other scare resources, which are rooted in stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes toward one another (Oliver and Johnson, 1984; Johnson and Oliver, 1989). Nowhere is this more apparent than in metropolitan Los Angeles (Johnson *et al.*, 1992).

The 1992 Los Angeles County Social Survey (LACSS), which focused on the theme "Ethnic Antagonism in Los Angeles," provides insights into the nature and magnitude of intergroup stereotyping and prejudice in a commu-

Figure 2.   Intergroup Stereotypes
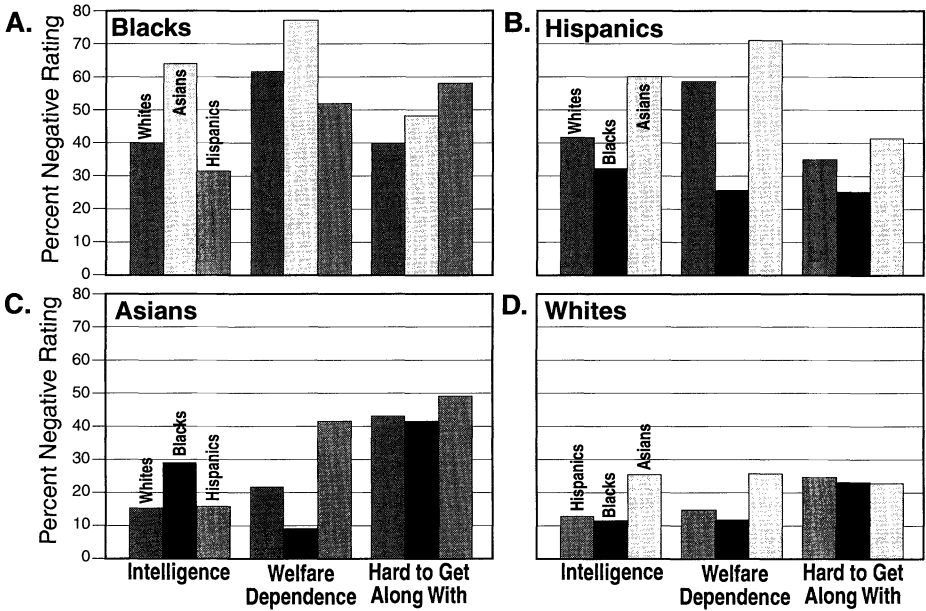
Source: Compiled by authors from the Los Angeles County Social Survey, 1992.

nity in which large numbers of immigrants have settled. The 1992 LACSS
was a random digit dial telephone survey of 1,800 adults living in Los Angeles
metropolitan area households (Bobo *et al.*, 1995a).

In the survey, respondents were asked to rank, on a seven point scale,
members of their own ethnic group and members of each of the other major
ethnic categories. The end points of the scales were defined in terms of three
key pairs of traits: intelligent to unintelligent, prefer to live off welfare to pre-
fer to be self-supporting, and hard to get along with to easy to get along with.
Thus, these data provide insights into the extent to which members of any
given group (*e.g.*, whites) rate members of other groups (*e.g.*, blacks, Asians
or Hispanics) more positively, the same, or more negatively than members of
their own groups.

For our purposes here, we focus on the degree to which members of a given
group rate members of the other groups more negatively than members of their
own group. We shall highlight only the most salient findings (*see* Figure 2).

How did non-Hispanic whites, Asians, and Hispanics rate blacks? As
Figure 2,A shows, blacks are viewed negatively with regard to intelligence and
welfare dependence, especially by Asians. Nearly two-thirds (63.4%) of the
Asian respondents view blacks as being less intelligent than members of their

group, and over three-fourths (76.8%) rate blacks as relatively more likely to prefer to live off welfare. Whites also rate blacks negatively on these two traits, but not nearly as negatively as their Asians counterparts.

A similar pattern emerges when whites, blacks, and Asians are asked to rank Hispanics, as Figure 2,B shows. Sixty percent of Asian respondents rate Hispanics as less intelligent than members of their group, and 71.9 percent rate Hispanics as more likely to prefer to live off welfare. As in the case of their ratings of blacks, whites also have negative ratings of Hispanics on these two traits, but they are not as strongly negative as the Asian respondents.

Figure 2,C shows that whites, blacks, and Hispanics all view Asians as difficult to get along with. Among the three groups, Hispanics are the strongest in their rating of Asians as being difficult to get along with. As we shall discuss below, Hispanics' negative rating of Asians with regard to this trait is one of the touchstones for the burning, looting, and violence that took place in Koreatown, and blacks' negative rating of Koreans was one of the touchstones for the conflagration in South Central Los Angeles during the 1992 civil disturbance in Los Angeles.

How do Asians, Hispanics, and blacks view non-Hispanic whites? In terms of intelligence and welfare dependence, Asians hold significantly more negative views of non-Hispanic whites than either blacks or Hispanics (Figure 2,D). Although much lower than their negative ratings of Blacks and Hispanics, roughly one-fourth of Asians rate non-Hispanic whites as less intelligent and more likely to live off welfare than their own group. Asians, blacks, and Hispanics all rate non-Hispanic whites similarly in terms of being difficult to get along with.

Data from the LACSS of 1992 also illustrate the extent to which Asians, blacks, Hispanics, and whites oppose or favor social contact of a prolonged or intimate nature with one another (Figure 3). To elicit feelings of this kind, two questions on social distance were included in the survey. The first asked the survey respondents whether they would favor or oppose living in a neighborhood where half of their neighbors would be members of each of the other groups. Responses to this question can be viewed as a test of openness to residential integration. The second question asked respondents whether "they would favor or oppose an interracial marriage that involved a close relative or family member."

Social distance feelings toward residential integration are depicted in Figure 3,A. The strongest opposition to residential integration emerge when the neighborhood is 50 percent black. Nearly half of the Asian respondents (46.2%) and roughly one-third of the Hispanic (32.8%) and the white (34.3%) respondents oppose a residential mixture of this proportion. These and other data in Figure 3,A are consistent with the results of contemporary studies of racial residential segregation (see Massey and Denton, 1992). Among the dominant ethnic groups, blacks are the most highly segregated.

Figure 3.   Intergroup Attitudes Toward Intimate/Prolonged Social Contact
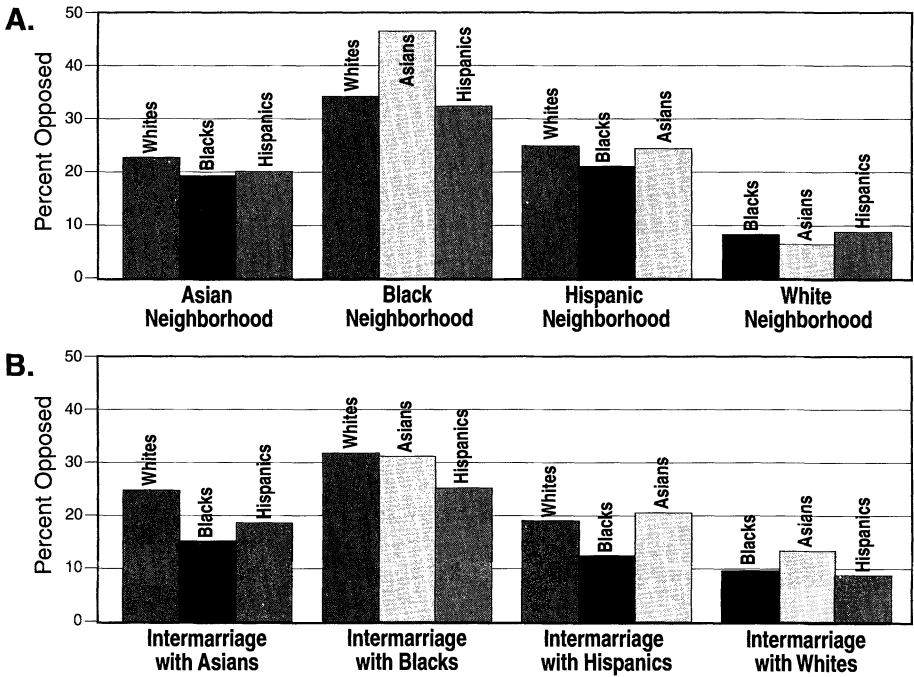
Source: Compiled by authors from the Los Angeles County Social Survey, 1992.

A similar response is evident in Figure 3,B, which depicts the percent opposed to intermarriage. Again, the strongest opposition is to intermarriage involving blacks. Roughly one third of the white respondents (32.8%) and one-third of the Asian respondents (31.8%) oppose an interracial marriage with a black.

In 1994, a much larger sample of Los Angeles County survey respondents (4,025) were asked to rate the members of other ethnic minority groups, on a seven point scale, in terms of a broader set of traits than were included in the 1992 LACSS. The specific traits are as follows: 1) tend to be unintelligent to tend to be intelligent; 2) prefer to be self-supporting to prefer to live off welfare; 3) tend to be hard to get along with to tend to be easy to get along with; 4) tend to speak English well to tend to speak English poorly; 5) tend to be involved in gangs and drugs to tend not to be involved in gangs and drugs; and 6) tend to treat other groups equally to tend to discriminate against member of other groups. In addition to the ratings of non-Hispanic white, black and Hispanic survey respondents, these data provide insights into how members of three distinct Asian groups – Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese – rate members of other ethnic groups.

As Figure 4, panels A and B show, the Asian groups, especially the Korean and Japanese respondents, are far more likely than the black, non-Hispanic white, and Hispanic respondents to think that almost all blacks and almost all Hispanics are unintelligent. Roughly half of the Korean and Japanese respondents and one-third of the Chinese respondents express this view about blacks and Hispanics.

Similarly, as Figure 4, panels A and B show, nearly three-fourths of the Korean respondents and nearly two-thirds of the Chinese and Japanese respondents rate most blacks and Hispanics as preferring to live off welfare rather than being self-supporting. Not unlike their Asian counterparts, a majority of the Hispanic respondents hold similar views of blacks (Figure 4,A). Interestingly enough, among this diverse sample of survey respondents, non-Hispanic whites are the least likely group to rate blacks and Hispanics negatively on this trait, although the percentage who did is not insignificant (*see* Figure 4, panels A and B).

The Asian results are reminiscent of the widely publicized negative remarks of two high-ranking Japanese officials several years ago regarding the intellectual abilities of U.S. blacks and Hispanics (*Jet*, 1988b). Further, the results go a long way toward explaining the international marketing by Japanese firms of black dolls with exaggerated physical features (*i.e.*, black sambo dolls) and of darkie toothpaste during the late 1980s (*Jet*, 1988a; *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1988).

Ratings on the next trait, the extent to which members of each group are perceived to be difficult to get along with, is emblematic of ethnic tensions that have arisen in Los Angeles and other urban communities that serve as ports of entry for large numbers of Third World immigrants. Nearly half of the black survey respondents rate Asians as difficult to get along with (Figure 4,C), nearly half of the Hispanics and roughly 40 percent of the Koreans rate blacks as being difficult to get along with (Figure 4,A). In addition to these negative ratings of nonwhite ethnic minorities, nearly 40 percent of the black and the Korean respondents and one-third of the Hispanic respondents rate non-Hispanic whites as being difficult to get along with (Figure 4,D).

A majority of the respondents representing each of the ethnic groups captured in the LASUI, except for the Chinese, agree with the statements that almost all Blacks and that almost all Hispanics tend to be involved in gangs and drugs (Figure 4, panels A and B). It is salient, as Figure 4, panels A and B show, that this view is not limited to the non-Hispanic white, Korean and Japanese survey respondents; a majority of the black and Hispanic respondents agree with these statements about members of their own groups and about the members of each other's group.

These findings are not surprising given the high degree of media attention devoted to gang warfare (much of which is drug-related) in inner city communities where newly arrived immigrants and native minorities share social space (Johnson and Oliver, 1989). Such findings are also consistent with

those of recent studies focusing on the reason whites and the black middle class are leaving port of entry communities in large numbers (Frey, 1995b; Johnson and Roseman, 1990).

A commonly held view, even among Hispanic survey respondents, is that almost all Hispanics tend to speak English poorly. Two-thirds of black survey respondents, roughly half of the Japanese and white survey respondents, and over 40 percent of the Korean and Hispanic respondents share this view (Figure 4,B). Also, nearly half of all black survey respondents view almost all Asians as tending to speak English poorly (Figure 4,C). None of these ratings are surprising given the enormous schisms that exist among Hispanics and Korean immigrants – who have established, respectively, residences and business enterprises within inner city ghetto neighborhoods – and native blacks, the long-term residents of these areas. These schisms have been exacerbated in part by language barriers.

Finally, a majority of the black, Hispanic, Korean and Japanese survey respondents express the view that almost all non-Hispanic whites are prone to discriminate against members of their respective group (Figure 4,D). Only the Chinese respondents are less inclined to express this view. On this trait, black respondents' perception of Asians is almost as strong as their views about non-Hispanic whites (Figure 4,C). Although lower than the ratings of blacks, a significant proportion of the Hispanic and white respondents also express the view that almost all Asians are prone to discriminate against members of their groups (Figure 4,C). Hispanic, Chinese and non-Hispanic white survey respondents perceive almost all blacks as being prone to discriminate against members of their respective groups (Figure 4,A).

Behavioral Responses

The foregoing negative perceptions of the impact of immigrants on U.S. society and the prejudicial attitudes and intergroup stereotypes uncovered in recent surveys have generated a wide range of responses to continued high rates of immigration to the United States. Three are highlighted here.

First, it has prompted a high degree of middle-class white and middle-class black flight from port of entry metropolitan areas (Frey, 1995a, 1995b; Johnson and Roseman, 1990). As shown in Table 4, which depicts metropolitan areas with the greatest 1980-1990 increases in total population, non-Hispanic whites and minorities, nearly half (43%) of the national nonwhite ethnic minority population growth was concentrated in five Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSA): Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Miami, and Houston. Los Angeles, alone, accounts for 20 percent of the growth (Frey, 1993).

Figure 4.   Interethnic Stereotypes

Proportion of a Race Negatively Rating Another Race
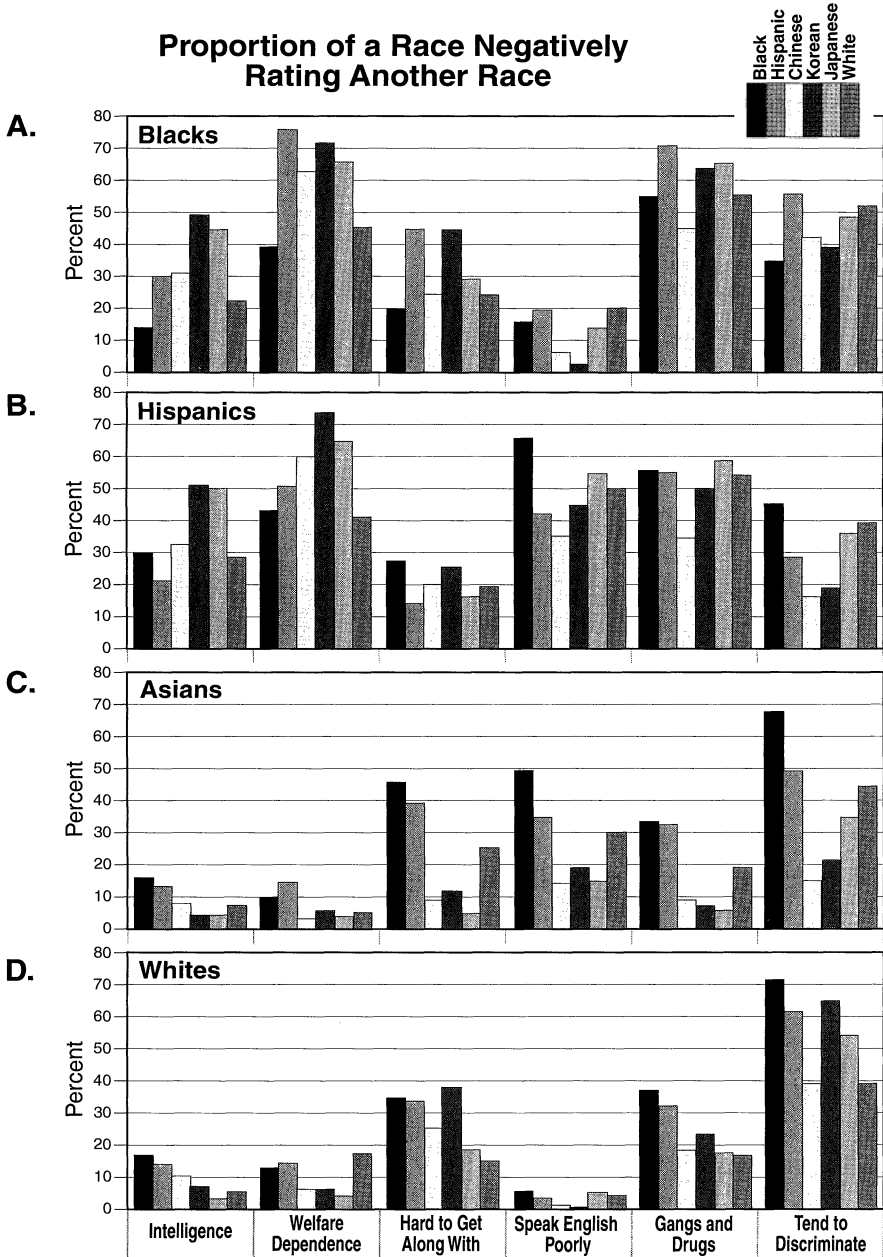
Source: Compiled by authors from the Los Angeles County Social Survey, 1994.

TABLE 4
METROPOLITAN AREAS WITH GREATEST 1980–90 INCREASES:
TOTAL POPULATION, NON-HISPANIC WHITES, MINORITIES

Metropolitan Area	Increase (1,000s)
I. Areas with Greatest Total Increase	
Los Angeles CMSA	3,034
Dallas-Fort Worth	955
San Francisco CMSA	885
Atlanta MSA	695
Washington, DC MSA	673
II. Areas with Greatest Increase	
Dallas-Fort Worth CMSA	487
Atlanta MSA	414
Phoenix MSA	412
Tampa-St. Petersberg MSA	345
Seattle CMSA	324
III. Areas with Greatest Minority Increase	
Los Angeles CMSA	2,795
New York	1,398 [a]
San Francisco CMSA	787
Miami CMSA	635 [a]
Houston	484

Source: Frey (1993).
[a] Area experienced gain in minority population and loss in white population.

Table 4 also indicates that there is a high degree of overlap between the areas with the greatest minority population increases and those with the greatest total population increases (Frey, 1993; 1995b). Research presented elsewhere suggests that these areas experienced net white outmigration, heightened black outmigration and, in some instances, net black outmigration during the 1980s (Johnson and Roseman, 1990; Briggs, 1995; Johnson and Grant, 1997). Thus, the overlap illustrates the pivotal role that immigration plays in minority population growth in these areas.

Non-Hispanic white population growth, as Table 4 shows, occurred in a geographically distinct set of metropolitan communities during the 1980s: Dallas-Fort Worth, Atlanta, Phoenix, Tampa-St. Petersburg, and Seattle. Research indicates that these communities were strong economic magnets, while those registering the greatest minority gains were economically distressed areas (Frey, 1993). What this means, of course, is that the 1980s was a period of increasing racial and spatial inequality in American society, with black poor and disadvantaged immigrants concentrated in the largest urban centers while middle-class and upper-class blacks and whites sought refuge in more hospitable and economically viable residential environments (Frey, 1993, 1995a, 1995b).

Second, arguing that immigration in general, and illegal immigration in particular, is a neglected federal problem that will no longer be tolerated at the state level, six states – Arizona, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Texas, and

California – have filed suits seeking reimbursement for the cost of services rendered to illegal immigrants (Charles, 1995). These states are home to 86 percent of all illegal immigrants and to 30 percent of all immigrants. The state of California has been most vociferous in this matter and has been most vigilant in its efforts to send a resounding message to Washington about its citizenry's feelings about immigration (Bowermaster, 1995).

   In addition to the lawsuit filed to recoup funds for services rendered to illegal immigrants, California voters, in the November 1994 elections, endorsed by a margin of 59 percent to 41 percent the controversial Proposition 187, which was placed on the ballot by the Save Our State Campaign. If affirmed by the Supreme Court, Proposition 187 would deny undocumented illegal aliens access to numerous services and increase the pressure to comply with new and existing laws. Because of legal challenges, Proposition 187 is currently tied up in the courts and may in fact be in litigation for years to come. Nevertheless, it has clearly laid the cards of at least one state on the table with respect to the illegal immigration problem. As we discuss below, it also has set the stage for substantial conflict among the various racial and ethnic groups in California (Valenzuela, 1995; Ross, 1994).

   Third, at the federal level, pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (the welfare reform legislation), illegal aliens and legal nonimmigrants, such as travelers and students, will be denied most federal benefits. In the case of legal immigrants, they, generally, will not be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and food stamps until they become citizens or have worked in the United States for at least ten years. Given their ineligibility for federal assistance, the financial status of the immigrants' sponsors will be weighed more heavily in decisions regarding who will be allowed to enter the United States (Katz, 1996:2193). Further, as part of President Clinton's omnibus spending package, funding has been authorized to improve border controls and fences, accelerate detention and deportation procedures, create new penalties for alien smuggling, and establish pilot programs aimed at identifying illegal immigrants in the workplace (Carney, 1996:3152).

A TYPOLOGY OF IMMIGRATION-INDUCED COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

In describing the kinds of conflicts which have accompanied the changing racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population as a consequence of heightened immigration over the last 30 years, we will draw upon case examples from metropolitan Los Angeles. As noted elsewhere, metropolitan Los Angeles is on the leading edge of a dramatic set of economic and demographic changes that are both driven and influenced by the rather large influx

of immigrants over the last two decades or so – changes that will ultimately envelop the entire U.S. urban system (Garcia, 1985; Johnson *et al.*, 1992). Furthermore, Los Angeles was the site of a major multiethnic rebellion in 1992 – the worst civil disturbance in this nation's history – whose root causes stemmed, in large measure, from the tensions and conflicts between native-born and foreign-born populations in the region (Johnson *et al.*, 1992; Johnson and Farrell, 1993; Bobo *et al.*, 1995a, 1995b).

In 1960, nearly two-thirds of the metropolitan Los Angeles population was composed of non-Hispanic whites (Oliver and Johnson, 1984). By 1990, largely as a consequence of heightened immigration and the substantial exodus of non-Hispanic whites, nonwhite ethnic minority groups (*i.e.*, Asians, blacks, and Hispanics) had become, numerically, the majority population of Los Angeles county, accounting for 58 percent of the total (Johnson *et al.*, 1992). Approximately one-third of the metropolitan population was Hispanic. Blacks and Asians each accounted for about 12 percent. Today, according to the most recent census estimates, over two-thirds of the Los Angeles population are members of nonwhite ethnic minority groups.

Nowhere was this ethnic change more apparent than in the so-called Alameda corridor of South Central Los Angeles, which extends from the downtown area southward along Alameda Boulevard to the San Pedro and Long Beach harbors (Oliver and Johnson, 1984; Johnson and Oliver, 1989). Two types of transition have occurred in this area.

The first was a black-to-brown population succession in the residential neighborhoods, which began in the 1960s and accelerated in the 1970s and the 1980s. In 1970, an estimated 50,000 Hispanics were residing in South Central Los Angeles neighborhoods, representing 10 percent of the area's total population. That number had doubled to 100,000, or 21 percent of the total population, by 1980 (Oliver and Johnson, 1984). Today roughly half of the population of South Central Los Angeles is Hispanic.

Concurrent with this black-to-brown residential transition, an ethnic succession also was taking place in the South Central Los Angeles business community. Prior to the Watts rebellion of 1965, most of the businesses in the area were owned and operated by Jewish shopkeepers. In the aftermath of these disturbances, the Jewish business owners fled the area and were replaced not by black entrepreneurs but, rather, by newly arriving Korean immigrants who opened small retail and service establishments in the area (Oliver and Johnson, 1984; Freer, 1995).

Paralleling these demographic changes, and driven in large part by government policies designed to create a deregulated business environment to increase the competitiveness of U.S. firms in the global marketplace (Grant and Johnson, 1995), the Los Angeles economy has undergone a rather dra-

matic transformation during the past three decades (Johnson and Oliver, 1992). The restructuring of the Los Angeles economy includes, on the one hand, the decline of traditional, highly unionized, high-wage manufacturing employment and, on the other, the growth of employment in the high technology manufacturing, the craft specialties, and the advanced services sectors of the economy. South Central Los Angeles – the traditional industrial core of the city – bore the brunt of the decline in heavy manufacturing employment, losing 70,000 high-wage, stable jobs between 1978 and 1982 and another 200,000 between 1982 and 1989 (Johnson and Oliver, 1992; Johnson *et al.*, 1992).

At the same time that these well-paying stable jobs were disappearing from South Central Los Angeles, local employers were seeking alternative sites for their manufacturing activities. Scott (1986) has shown that, as a consequence of these seemingly routine decisions, new employment growth nodes or "technopoles" emerged in the San Fernando Valley, in the San Gabriel Valley, and in El Segundo near the airport in Los Angeles County, as well as in nearby Orange County.

In addition, a number of Los Angeles-based employers established production facilities in the Mexican border towns of Tijuana, Ensenada, and Tecate. Between 1978 and 1982, over 200 Los Angeles based firms, including Hughes Aircraft, Northrop, and Rockwell, as well as a host of smaller firms, participated in this deconcentration process (Soja, Morales and Wolff, 1983). Such capital flight, in conjunction with plant closings, essentially closed off access to what were formerly well-paying, unionized jobs to the residents of South Central Los Angeles (Johnson and Oliver, 1989).

Elsewhere we have shown that, although new industrial spaces were being established in other parts of Los Angeles County, new employment opportunities were emerging in the Alameda corridor (Johnson *et al.*, 1992). However, unlike the manufacturing jobs that disappeared from this area, the new jobs are in competitive sector industries which rely primarily on undocumented immigrant labor and pay, at best, the minimum wage.

Juxtaposing the changes that occurred on the demand side of the Los Angeles labor market and the changes in composition of the local labor pool, residential communities, schools, and other social and political institutions which have accompanied the massive influx of immigrants into the region, what emerges is a community in which competition and conflict have become the rule rather than the exception (Johnson and Oliver, 1989; Johnson and Farrell, 1993; Hing, 1993). Here we focus on five types of conflicts: residential-transition induced, entrepreneurially induced, employer induced, linguistic induced, and Proposition 187 induced.

Residential-Transition-Induced Conflict

The growing penetration of the most disadvantaged members of the newly arriving immigrants into formerly all-black residential areas of South Central Los Angeles has been a major source of tension and a precipitant of a wide range of interethnic minority conflicts. Nowhere has this type of immigration-induced conflict been more apparent than in the city of Compton, California (McDonnell, 1994; Lee and Sloan, 1994).

A suburb of the city of Los Angeles, this formerly all white community experienced white-to-black population succession, and the new black majority ousted the longstanding white political leadership "in a heated battle that reflected the social tumult of the 1960s" (McDonnell, 1994:1A). During the 1970s, Compton was the most populous community west of the Mississippi where blacks held political sway; and although a significant proportion of the households were poor, it was, in the words of McDonnell, "a national symbol of political empowerment despite its persistent poverty" (1994:1A). Compton became known as a place where "refugees from the Jim Crow South acquired their piece of the American Dream, using the ballot box to overcome discrimination" (McDonnell, 1994:5A)

Over the past two decades, however, Compton has undergone yet another demographic transformation, popularly referred to as black-to-brown population succession. By 1990, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 55 percent of Compton's population of 93,500 was black. Hispanics, most of whom were newly arriving immigrants, accounted for the remaining 42 percent. Today, in all likelihood, Hispanics constitute the majority population in Compton.

Blacks have expressed concerns that the movement of Hispanic immigrants into their residential neighborhoods represents a displacement that is motivated by racism and economic gain (Johnson and Oliver, 1989). They claim that the pattern of residential succession is very similar to the kind of block busting that takes place when blacks move into a white neighborhood. Once a Hispanic family moves into an apartment building, the complex rapidly becomes Hispanic. Owing to their propensity to have multiple wage-earners in the household, blacks contend that landlords are forcing out black tenants and replacing them with Hispanics who pay higher rents (Oliver and Johnson, 1984). The negative sentiments that this process creates are not directed at the economic agents (*i.e.*, the real estate agents and the landlords), but rather toward the newly arriving Hispanic immigrants (Johnson and Oliver, 1989).

Likewise, the influx of new Hispanic immigrants has created resentment on the part of long-term black residents about the sharing of social services and dominant social institutions (Hernandez and Scott, 1980; Bobo *et al.*,

1995b). In particular, blacks express concerns about the high demand placed upon existing public services by the new immigrants. Because of the struggles that took place in the 1960s to establish them, blacks feel a sense of exclusive entitlement to some community institutions. They view the Hispanics, particularly undocumented workers, as free-riders, gaining all the benefits of public services without having paid the price to get them into the community (Oliver and Johnson, 1984; Johnson and Oliver, 1989).

During the 1980s, nearly three of every four babies born at Martin Luther King Hospital were Hispanic. One Compton resident complained about this by saying: "I don't think it's proper. When we built some of these facilities . . . we didn't find anyone to help us . . . if they want their share of services they should get active in the community" (Hernandez and Scott, 1980). The emotional intensity of such intolerance has only served to polarize the community (McDonnell, 1994).

On the other hand, the newly arriving Hispanics complain about the lack of access to municipal jobs and leadership positions in the local government, about staffing positions in the school system and the content of the curriculum, and about the problem of police brutality in a police department in which the chief and nearly all of the officers are black (Lee and Sloan, 1994; McDonnell, 1994).

While Hispanics make up more than half of Compton's 93,500 residents, "no Hispanic has ever held a seat on the city council and only fourteen of the city's 127 member police force are Hispanic" (Lee and Sloan, 1994:57). Moreover, Hispanics are grossly underrepresented in civil service jobs. Hispanic activists accuse blacks of being interested "only in preserving their own jobs in the face of changing demographics" (Lee and Sloan, 1994:57). Commenting on the city's black elected officials, one Latino city council candidate said "They hire people with our tax money. We subsidize our own discrimination" (Lee and Sloan, 1994:57). More generally, "some Hispanics in Compton complain that they are worse off today than blacks were in South Africa under apartheid" (McDonnell, 1994:1A). One Hispanic resident, Compton's only Hispanic elected official, said "they have been in power too long and they are in denial of the fact that they are no longer the majority" (McDonnell, 1994:1A).

In response to the Hispanic charges of oppression, blacks contend that Hispanics are disenfranchising themselves because few vote in local elections. Compton's mayor, who is black, has been quoted as saying: "African Americans fought for the right to vote. . . . Is it [our] responsibility to elect Hispanics?" (Lee and Sloan, 1994:57).

Further, black elected officials in Compton contend that "Hispanics don't grasp that African Americans struggled for years to win power in Compton or that city jobs are filled through the civil service process." Commenting on

the underrepresentation of Hispanics in civil service jobs, Police Chief Hourie Taylor, who is black, observed: "I'd like to see more Hispanics come in at whatever level . . . but you don't just walk up and fire people and replace them with somebody else" (Lee and Sloan, 1994:57).

In response to criticisms of their leadership and their seeming unwillingness to open up the city to the more recently arriving Hispanic population, black leaders are quick to paint Hispanic activists as "outside agitators," most of whom are U.S. born, mostly middle class, and do not live in Compton. By contrast, most of those who live in Compton are noncitizens and thus are unable to vote in elections.

Commenting on the fact that large numbers of Latinos in Compton are noncitizens, one black leader posed the question: "What does the African American do to empower them [Hispanics] when it's constitutionally illegal [for noncitizens to vote] . . . " (McDonnell, 1994:1A). Arguing that the city is caught in what he calls a virtual open door immigration policy that is beyond local control, he notes that "As they continue to come, schools become crowded, [and] dwindling resources in cities such as Compton become more sparse. Animosity and friction [are] the natural product of these things, and that's what we're seeing" (McDonnell, 1994:1A).

While black political leaders have resisted Hispanic calls for greater access to municipal jobs and leadership positions in Compton, some black clergymen have called on the politicians to open up the city to Hispanics. Said one minister, "We are today the entrenched group trying to keep out intruders, just as whites were once the entrenched group and we were the intruders" (McDonnell, 1994:1A). Agreeing with this observation, one Hispanic scholar noted that "some of the things black councilmen say about the Hispanic population sound like the kinds of things southern whites would have said about blacks in the 50s: 'We were here first. We're being pushed out. These are our jobs; how dare you [try to] take them away?'"

Not unlike their criticisms of the leadership of city government and the underrepresentation of Hispanics in civil service positions, Hispanic activists also have been similarly critical of the Compton public school system and its ability to educate Hispanic children. Paralleling changes in the city's residential communities, the composition of the Compton public schools has changed from predominately black to predominantly Hispanic. Today, 59 percent of the student body is Hispanic, while blacks make up the remaining 39 percent. Hispanic activists complain that, while the student body is majority Hispanic, only 5 percent of certified teachers are Hispanic (72% are black), and blacks occupy most of the administrative positions in the district. They have been especially critical of the black leadership of the district, which was taken over by the state in 1993 due to financial difficulties, persistently low test scores, and widespread allegations of mismanagement (McDonnell, 1994:1A).

Moreover, Hispanic students complain of being ridiculed and beaten by black teachers and security guards, and racially-charged fistfights are a constant source of disruption in the school system (Lee and Sloan, 1994). Some argue that these altercations are a product of turf wars between black and Hispanic gangs, but others contend that they reflect "the tensions among adults in the community" (McDonnell, 1994:1A).

Hispanic parents charge that the black-run school system in Compton discriminates against Hispanic children. Despite the fact that 100 of the last 160 teachers hired have been bilingual, Hispanic parents insist that there is an urgent need for more bilingual teachers. One Hispanic immigrant who has two children attending a Compton elementary school stated: "I'm afraid there are children who aren't even learning to read or write because they don't understand English" (Lee and Sloan, 1994:57). Most Hispanic parents believe that if more bilingual teachers were hired, their children would learn to read and write.

Many black leaders in Compton (and elsewhere) express opposition to bilingual education, questioning its veracity as an instructional tool (Headden, 1995a, 1995b). Moreover, as we discuss below, public school teachers who are not bilingual see the push for more bilingual instruction as a direct threat to their jobs (Headden, 1995a). Finally, Latino students criticize the Compton school system on another front; they characterize the curriculum as "misguided." Said one student, "I know more about Africa than I do about my own culture, about Mexico" (McDonnell, 1994:1A).

In an effort to head off trouble during the current academic year, city officials and religious leaders sponsored what they termed "unity" day. Such a proposal itself has been the source of tension: Hispanic activists have characterized the event as a "city-orchestrated effort to divert attention from Hispanic nonrepresentation" (McDonnell, 1994:1A). In response to the notion of a unity day event, one Latino activists said: "They can have all the rallies they want, but it doesn't mean anything until they recognize there's a problem. . . . Blacks are doing the same thing to Hispanics that was done to them" (McDonnell, 1994:1A).

Interethnic minority tensions in Compton might never have received national attention if a resident had not videotaped a black police officer beating a seventeen-year-old Hispanic youth on July 29, 1995 (McDonnell, 1994). To the chagrin of the police department, Hispanic activists compared the beating to the videotaped beating of Rodney King by the four white police officers in Los Angeles. The event led to "much-publicized allegations of racial prejudice, galvanizing Latino's demands for power in a city where blacks have a lock on city government, a beleaguered school system, and most municipal jobs" (McDonnell, 1994).

The videotaped beating has forced Compton's black leadership into the ironic position of having to respond to allegations of discrimination. Black leaders have responded "angrily to the challenge, dismissing allegations of discrimination while characterizing Latino activists [who issued the challenge] as a self-serving clique of nonresident merchants" (McDonnell, 1994:1A). The mayor, who is black, stated that "I see this as a well-constructed attempt to utilize the historical implications of the African American civil rights movement for the benefit of a few people, who in fact probably don't even consider themselves nonwhite. . . . This is really about power and privilege" (McDonnell, 1994:1A).

It should be noted here that not all blacks agreed with the mayor and other black leaders who were offended by the accusation of discriminatory behavior on the part of the Compton Police Department. Many blacks joined the Hispanics in protesting the beating. One said, "It could have just as easily been a black man who was beaten like that" (McDonnell, 1994:A1), indicating a view that heavy-handed tactics by police span ethnic categories.

In response to the foregoing issues, Latino activists have issued a set of demands to Compton's black leadership. They have called for the creation of a civilian review board to monitor police behavior, a federal investigation into racial and ethnic conflict in the city, and establishment of an affirmative action and job training program targeted toward increasing Hispanic participation. Blacks have not wholeheartedly embraced any of these issues. But the one that has generated the most intense debate centers around the question of whether immigrants who came to this country voluntarily or illegally, and subsequently were awarded legal status, should qualify for affirmative action (Fuchs, 1995; Brownstein, 1995).

Blacks see this move as being wrong (Brownstein, 1995). They acknowledge that ". . . Latinos suffered discrimination often backed by state action until the civil rights movement of the 1960s." However, black leaders are quick to add that ". . . no one has come up with a plausible reason why immigrants (and their children) who have come to America voluntarily in the last two decades should qualify for affirmative action" (Brownstein, 1995:C2). Obviously, this is a politically hot potato that is not likely to be easily resolved.

In the midst of these contentious issues, some blacks do recognize the need to find ways to accommodate the new Hispanic majority in Compton, even though it might weaken hard-won African American control. Given the depth of the tensions and contempt that the two groups hold for one another, this goal is likely to be a difficult one to achieve.

McDonnell (1994:1A) has summarized, most aptly, the Compton situation. He argues that

The black-brown dispute may provide a glimpse into the potential for future polit-
ical upheaval in many Southern California communities where immigration has
drastically altered the demographic mix. Compton is one test case in the politics of
the new Southland, an indication of bumpy times ahead as newcomers' demands
clash with established power blocs resistant to change.

Entrepreneurially-Induced Conflict

While many of the recently arrived immigrants, especially those from Mexico
and other parts of Latin America, have been able to secure employment in the
restructured American economy, others are more entrepreneurially oriented,
preferring self-employment over working for others (Ablemann and Lie,
1995). In Los Angeles, New York, and other port of entry communities,
Korean immigrants have been especially oriented toward the establishment of
small family owned and operated businesses, mainly in the black communi-
ty, and this has been the source of considerable conflict and controversy
(MacDonald, 1995).

Disadvantaged blacks in these communities see the Korean merchants as
"foreigners" who are taking advantage of them by charging high prices, by
refusing to invest any of the profits they earn either by employing local black
residents or otherwise aiding the community, and by being rude and dis-
courteous in their treatment of black customers. On the other hand, many of
the stereotypic views that Korean have of blacks are confirmed in their daily
interaction with some of the most disadvantaged residents of inner city com-
munities (MacDonald, 1995).

In Los Angeles, the relationship between members of the black communi-
ty and the Korean merchants has been and continues to be tense, in large
measure, because the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, the major black weekly in Los
Angeles, has kept a vigilant watch over the situation, reporting both the
important and the trivial incidents of Korean-black conflict (Cleaver, 1983a-
1983d, 1987; Aubry, 1987; Banks, 1985). Asian storekeepers have been
derided consistently for their lack of courteousness to black customers, rang-
ing from refusing to give a paying customer a cup of water to trying to keep
a $200 watch for the nonpayment of a $5 gas bill. Further, the *Los Angeles
Sentinel* has consistently questioned how Koreans are able to generate the cap-
ital to start or take over a business while willing black entrepreneurs are
unable to raise such funds (Cleaver, 1983a-1983d; Aubry, 1987; Banks,
1985). Blacks, in short, see the Korean family enterprises not as an econom-
ic accomplishment in the face of strong odds, but rather as an unearned
opportunity at their expense (Johnson and Oliver, 1989).

The Korean-black tensions came to a head during the Los Angeles civil unrest of 1992 (Johnson *et al.*, 1992). Although the verdict in the first Rodney King police brutality trial actually triggered the civil unrest, an earlier controversial verdict in the *Latasha Harlins* case also played a major role in the conflagration. A videotape revealed that Ms. Harlins – an honor student at a local high school – was fatally shot in the back of the head by a Korean shopkeeper following an altercation over a carton of orange juice. Although the jury found the shopkeeper guilty of felony manslaughter, the judge decided to place her on five years probation and required her to perform only six months of community service (Johnson *et al.*, 1992).

In part as a result of this incident, and partly as a function of the sentence handed down in the case, Korean businesses in South Central Los Angeles were strategically targeted in the burning and looting that ensued following the verdict in the Rodney King police brutality trial (Ablemann and Lie, 1995; Lee, 1995). Nearly half of the buildings either damaged or destroyed were Korean owned and/or operated.

The *King* verdict also brought to the fore what apparently was a brewing but previously hidden element of entrepreneurial conflict in Los Angeles – antagonisms between Hispanics and Koreans in Koreatown (Johnson and Farrell, 1993). While often viewed as an ethnic enclave demarcated by Korean control of businesses, Koreatown is actually a residentially mixed community with large numbers of Hispanic residents (principally Central American immigrants) and Koreans. It was in this area that Hispanic involvement in the civil unrest was most intense (Johnson and Farrell, 1993; Jackson, Johnson and Farrell, 1994). Postdisturbance surveys and focus group research indicate that, by looting and destroying significant numbers of Korean-owned businesses in Koreatown, Hispanics vented their anger and frustration about the disrespectful treatment and exploitation to which they were routinely subjected as customers and as employees in such establishments (Bobo *et al.*, 1995a; Freer, 1995).

In Los Angeles, local elected officials have long been aware that tensions between Koreans and blacks are potentially explosive. At both the city and the county levels of government, human relations commissions exist to deal with such problems (Kim, 1984). These agencies traditionally have been poorly funded, however, and they have been delegated little or no decisionmaking power or authority to develop policy to resolve the Korean-black conflict. As a consequence, both the city and the county human relations commissions have limited their actions to implementing educational programs that seek to change the stereotypical ways that blacks and Koreans view one another (Jackson, Johnson and Farrell, 1994).

For example, prior to the civil unrest, the City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission was instrumental in bringing black leaders and

Korean entrepreneurs in South Central Los Angeles together for "prayer breakfasts" (Johnson and Oliver, 1989). These sessions were supposed to offer an opportunity for the two groups to iron out their differences and promote mutual understanding. Unfortunately, neither this nor any of the other efforts sponsored by the human relations commissions have been very successful. In fact, realizing that little progress had been made in reducing the tensions between the two groups, black and Korean leaders recently agreed to stop holding such meetings (Jackson, Johnson and Farrell, 1994).

Employer-Induced Conflict

Over the past two decades, employers have made organizational changes in the way they do business, especially in the area of labor recruitment, in an effort to remain competitive in the increasingly global economy (Scott, 1986; Johnson and Oliver, 1992). Research shows that, in an effort to keep labor costs down and to maintain a lean but flexible operation, work, especially in the craft specialty and hospitality industries and increasingly in all sectors of the economy, is either farmed out to subcontractors or the demand for labor is met by preferential hiring practices (Scott, 1986; Soja, Morales and Wolff, 1983; Center for Immigration Studies, 1994; Waldinger and Gilbertson, 1994). The large-scale influx of immigrants – legal and illegal – into the U.S. labor market has afforded U.S. employers this added flexibility in terms of the way they organize and structure their business operations (Scott, 1986; Johnson and Oliver, 1992).

In Los Angeles and other port of entry communities, the large-scale influx of immigrants during the last 30 years has created labor surplus environments, that is, labor market conditions in which there are far more job seekers than there are available jobs (Freeman, 1991). In the low-wage sectors of the economy, this situation not only tends to depress wages, but it also affords employers maximum flexibility to pick and choose workers.

Studies by Kirschenman and Neckerman (1991), among others (Turner, Fix and Struyk, 1991), indicate that, in such environments, employers display a strong preference for immigrant workers over native workers in general and over black job seekers in particular. Black workers are perceived to be lazy, inarticulate, untrainable, and most importantly dangerous. Immigrant workers, especially those who are undocumented, are perceived to be more compliant and industrious workers and thus highly preferred in the workplace (Lowell and Jing, 1994; Oliver and Johnson, 1984; Johnson and Oliver, 1989; Johnson *et al.*, 1992).

Research shows that employers in such rapidly growing craft specialty industries as garment manufacturing and in hospitality services industries (*i.e.*, hotels, motels, restaurants, fast food outlets, taxi cab companies, etc.) in

Los Angeles (Silverstein and Brooks, 1994) satisfy their labor demands either by tapping into informal networks of immigrant workers directly, or they contract with firms who have access to such networks (Soja, Morales and Wolff, 1983; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995; Nomani, Rose and Ortega, 1995; Mueller and Espenshade, 1985; Jackson, 1995).

While there is considerable disagreement in the literature on the actual labor market impacts of immigrants (Borjas, 1987; Chiswick, Chiswick and Miller, 1985; Mueller and Espenshade, 1985), there is growing evidence that displacement is occurring (Jackson, 1995; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995). In a study, for example, Mines (1985) reports how employers in the high rise office district of Los Angeles contracted with firms who had tapped into a network of recent immigrants to hire janitors. In addition to displacing the black janitors with recently arrived immigrant workers, Mines shows that wage rates declined from $13 per hour to just over the minimum wage (Mines, 1985).

Other research suggests that similar displacement of veteran workers is occurring in such industries as garment manufacturing, frozen foods, construction and construction clean-up, and hospitality services (hotels, motels, restaurants, taxi-services, etc.), all of which are employment sectors that previously had large numbers of black workers. In the garment industry in Los Angeles, for example, an estimated 90 percent of the workforce is foreign born, mostly undocumented immigrants from Mexico (Andreas, 1994).

In a community where recently arrived Hispanic immigrants and disadvantaged blacks share the same residential neighborhoods, the fact that the former have been able to secure jobs and the latter have not has been a source of enormous tension and conflict (Johnson et al., 1992; Johnson and Farrell, 1993). A survey conducted by the Los Angeles Times revealed the depth of these concerns. Two-thirds of the Black respondents agreed that "undocumented Mexicans . . . take jobs away from American citizens" (Field Institute, 1988). Some poor blacks in South Central Los Angeles go so far as to argue that "undocumented workers, particularly Spanish-speaking ones, are principally responsible for the employment crisis among . . . young black men" (Mueller and Espenshade, 1985).

Research shows, however, that these perceptions are misplaced (Bobo et al., 1995b). The black male jobless problem stems from the discriminatory recruitment practices of employers who openly express disdain for black workers and a preference for undocumented Hispanic workers (Kirshenman and Neckerman, 1991; Turner, Fix and Struyk, 1991; Mueller, 1994), and from the U.S. government's efforts to create a deregulated business environment to increase the competitiveness of U.S. firms in the global marketplace, which allow employers to engage in illegal recruitment practices in the first instance (Grant and Johnson, 1995).

At the upper end of the labor market, employer-induced tensions and con-flicts also exist (Richards, 1995; Zachary, 1995). Here they are generated by employers' use of the temporary work visa and employment-based provisions of the immigration law to bring in foreign workers for professional level jobs that might otherwise go to native-born Americans. This is thought to be a common practice in the United States among multinational corporations, universities, and computer and movie companies (Zachary, 1995).

Current immigration law permits foreigners with specialized skills to work in the United States for six years. "The law even permits U.S. companies to fire American professionals and replace them with foreigners as a long as the foreigner are paid 'comparable' wages to the departing Americans" (Zachary, 1995:A3). However, enforcement is difficult because the federal government only acts when foreigners complain, which is something they rarely do. Thus, it is not known how many companies pay foreigners below market wages (Zachary, 1995).

One recent case handled by the U.S. Department of Labor illustrates how employers have used the law to the detriment of American workers (Zachary, 1995). Recently, a large insurance firm laid off its entire Management Information Services Department staff of 250 programmers and replaced them with foreign programmers brought here from India on H-1B visas. The firm that the insurance company contracted with to provide the computing programming services was accused of paying the 40 computer programmers from India below market wages (Richards, 1995).

To settle the case, the contractor was forced to pay $77,000 in back wages to the 40 foreign programmers, to hire 40 American programmers in the next year, and to spend $1 million to train U.S. workers in the latest software tech-niques. The company also agreed not to bring any more foreign programmers into this country for 90 days (Zachary, 1995).

Complaints about these kinds of practices have led a group of Austin, Texas programmers to form a political action committee to protect their jobs (Richards, 1995). These and other concerned groups have encouraged mem-bers of Congress to press for cuts in the number of such workers allowed entry into the United States under this provision from 65,000 to 30,000 annually. Moreover, there is one bill before the U.S. Congress that is designed to discourage the practice by requiring foreigners to be paid 10 percent more than their American predecessor (Zachary, 1995).

Linguistic-Induced Conflict

In U.S. communities where large numbers of immigrants have settled, lin-guistic diversity is now the order of the day (Keeler, 1995; Headden, 1995a, 1995b). In Los Angeles, more than 100 different languages are spoken in the

school system (Lee, 1995; Pyle, 1995). As a consequence of the large influx of immigrant children into the school system, the demand for bilingual teachers (Headden, 1995b) has skyrocketed. Nationally, there is an estimated shortage of 170,000 bilingual teachers. The situation has created tensions between monolingual teachers and their bilingual counterparts. The former are angry because they are either paid less money or laid off because their linguistic skills do not match those required in the schools. Commenting on the changing ethnic and linguistic composition of the Los Angeles public school system, an elementary school teacher of 30 years said: "There is no way I could get a job in the Los Angeles public schools today" (Headden, 1995a:41).

    This reality is an extremely bitter pill to swallow for monolingual English-speaking teachers. Due to the shortage of bilingual teachers, school officials are recruiting from abroad, which, in many instances requires that they waive some credential requirements, resulting in many teachers being employed who have limited English skills (Headden, 1995a, 1995b).

    Monolingual public school teachers are not the only group in the U.S. labor market to be disadvantaged by the linguistic diversity which has accompanied recent immigration to the United States. In Miami, blacks reportedly are losing tourism jobs to bilingual Cubans, and in Los Angeles, New York, and other port of entry communities, blacks are also losing jobs in the hospitality industry to immigrants who are bilingual (Jackson, 1995; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995; also *see*, Briggs, 1995; Estrada, 1995).

Proposition 187-Induced Conflict

That significant numbers in the black community voted for Proposition 187 has emerged as a source of black-brown conflict in southern California (Lee and Sloan, 1994). One author suggests that the vote reflects "long-running tensions between the black and Hispanic communities" (Ross, 1994:5B). Describing these tensions, Ross states that:

> There is fighting in the high schools and prisons, a tenuous gang truce in Venice, a power struggle in Compton. Each of these problems has strained relations between the two groups scrambling for the crumbs. Many black people don't care that Proposition 187 is being financed by racist organizations and that minorities are being pitted against one another. If the initiative creates a McCarthyite police state, the attitude is, 'So be it.' (1994:5B)

    Commenting on the more general tensions between blacks and Hispanics, Ross, who is deputy district attorney in Inglewood and political action chairman of the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP, stated:

Latino community leaders cannot have it both ways. They cannot expect the African American community to embrace their struggle while they disrespect ours. When studies came out about the lack of Latinos on television and in the news, many of the people interviewed focused more on the number of blacks on the air rather than the bigger problem of who holds the real positions of power. When accusations were made of Latino underrepresentation in U.S. Postal Service hiring, blacks were the focus of the attention, not the federal government. Attempts to rename Martin Luther King Hospital also was another example where Latinos have pitted themselves against African Americans. Now comes Proposition 187, and blacks are being told that they must join with their minority brothers to fight racism? For many, that is a big pill to swallow. (1994:5B)

He states further that:

The Latino community wants to have their cake and eat it, too, and black people are not having it. Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina cannot accuse fellow Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of being a racist for trying to resolve the problem of day laborers, then ask Burke's constituents to join hands with her and sing "Kumbaya" against Proposition 187. The $15 billion in federal aid this state receives due to the presence of illegal immigrants is still taxpayer money. And for those who insist on comparing African Americans with illegal immigrants, that only serves to further alienate potential allies. (1994:5B)

If there is one positive in the controversy surrounding Proposition 187, it is that it forced Hispanics to register and vote. It has been estimated that "about 1,000 new Hispanics voters were registered in Compton before election day." Said one Hispanic activist "We need to send [Governor Pete] Wilson a 'Thank You' note" for arousing a docile Latino electorate (Lee and Sloan, 1994:57). What does this portend for black-brown relations? Lee and Sloan (1994) surmise that, "despite all the rhetoric about how Proposition 187 will make life harder for Hispanics, Compton blacks could come to remember it as the issue that pushed them from political power."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The tensions, conflicts, and community instability associated with heightened immigration – especially of nonwhite immigrant groups – threaten to balkanize America (Frey, 1995a; Johnson, Farrell and Jackson, 1994). The yearly influx of immigrants – many of whom are illegal – from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean over the last three decades has resulted in a substantial browning of America. These new immigrants have tended to settle in selected cities on the east and west coasts, but recent studies indicate that they are also moving into small and medium sized U.S. cities in all regions of the country (Johnson-Webb and Johnson, 1997). Nationally, there is growing opposition to the massive influx of immigrants as

well as in local communities affected by this demographic transformation; tensions and conflicts have arisen between native majority citizens and the new arrivals and between native minority citizens and the recent immigrants.

The nativist backlash is fueled by the perception that: 1) their culture and traditions are being imperiled; 2) their level of education is being lowered; 3) their jobs and housing are being taken; 4) their political influence is being lessened; 5) English is declining as the primary language; and 6) social and health services are being overburdened (*see* Salin, 1997).

Concomitant with the economic downturn in the local and national economy during the late 1980s and early 1990s, all the worst fears and stereotypes of immigrants are manifested. The state of California, which had long been a primary destination point, responded with Proposition 187, a statewide referendum passed in November, 1994. It denied educational, health and social services to illegal immigrants. This initiative, which is being litigated in the courts, has served to exacerbate even further the tensions between native Californians and immigrants across racial lines. Moreover, the hostilities toward immigrants in California have been found repeatedly in a national cross-section of host communities where they have arrived in large numbers.

In addition, large and small businesses, particularly in the garment and hospitality industries, frequently exploit the newly arrived immigrants by paying them minimum and subminimum wages, subjecting them to harsh working conditions, and substituting them for more highly paid native workers. This strategy was specifically directed toward illegal immigrants who lack any legal recourse for fear of deportation. The influx of immigrants into many of the nation's urban centers also sparked a major exodus of middle-income native majority and minority citizens as they perceive a decline in their overall quality of life. Furthermore, immigrant succession in the local small business marketplace (*e.g.*, liquor stores. neighborhood corner groceries, etc.) only serve to heighten tensions even more. Language and cultural barriers are becoming more pronounced, and local governments are slow and/or ineffective in their responses.

Contemporary conflicts over immigration are not likely to abate as native Americans and immigrants interact with each other through a negative stereotypical prism and in a context of increased social, political and economic anxiety. Current trends suggest rather strongly that America is on the threshold of escalating racial and ethnic trauma as it attempts to come to grips with the rapidly increasing diversity of its population. The tremors at the local level – California being the foremost example – are harbingers of social turmoil yet to come unless comprehensive proactive programs of human and interpersonal relations are aggressively implemented. What steps must be taken in order to reduce the tension, conflict, and community instability that have accompanied immigration-induced population diversity? Two steps are highlighted here.

First, future immigration reform policy decisionmaking must not be based on political expediency, the strategy which seems to have characterized recent reforms (*see* Tichenor, 1994; Andreas 1994; Brownstein, 1995; Sun, 1995; Johnson and Farrell, 1997). Rather than trying to appease both the political left and the political right, the federal government must base future reforms on rigorous research and evaluation of the likely social, economic and environmental impacts of proposals, advanced by both pro- and anti-immigrant enthusiasts, on U.S. communities and native citizens.

The logical place to begin this kind of policy analysis and evaluation is the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (Carney, 1996) and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Katz, 1996), which reflect in many critical respects the recommendations of the Jordan Commission on Immigration Reform (Jenks, 1995; Krikorian, 1995). Such an analytical and evaluative approach, we believe, will provide a much stronger basis for immigration reform policymaking – irrespective of whether the goal is to curtail foreign immigration or to maintain a liberal, open-door immigration policy (*see* National Research Council, 1997).

Second, it is imperative to recognize that, even if the federal government were to curtail foreign immigration today, the U.S. population will become far more racially and ethnically diverse over the next 20 years or so through natural population increase alone. In other words, immigration-induced population diversity is here to stay. Thus, it is necessary to develop affirmative steps to ensure that the fruits of a diverse society will materialize in this country, especially in the current climate of economic instability, declining wages, and xenophobia. This will require strategies to be implemented at different levels of society.

At all levels of society, we need stronger enforcement of laws, rules, and regulations that prohibit discrimination and violence based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual preference. At the local government level, we must develop and implement human relations policies to mitigate the ethnic antagonisms that accompany demographic change. Human relations commissions have long existed to deal with such problems, but these agencies traditionally have been poorly funded; as well, little or no decisionmaking power or authority to develop policies to resolve the array of intergroup conflicts that are a part of life in diverse communities has been delegated to the human relations commissions. At a minimum, human relations commissions must be adequately funded and given the power and the authority to design and implement educational and intervention programs that seek to change the stereotypical ways in which whites, blacks, Asians, and Hispanics view one another.

At the local community level, especially in racially and ethnically transitional communities like South Central Los Angeles, perhaps the best strategy for overcoming negative stereotypes and resolving interethnic conflicts is to pursue coalition building and agenda setting around issues of common interest and concern. Three such issues come to mind immediately: the poor quality of education that minority children receive in the public school system, drugs and crime, and the lack of good jobs. These are what we term equal opportunity problems; one way or another, they touch the lives of everyone living in our cities. If the diverse groups of people that share these environments are unable to work together on these issues, then the prospects of a diverse America with viable multiethnic communities is indeed bleak.

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