

“IMMIGRATION, RACE AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION”

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Introduction

Immigration has re-emerged as a pivotal issue in American life and public policy. Rising interest in immigration has given it greater priority by the media, foundations and government agencies. Consequently, conflict over U.S. immigration and social policy has intensified, heightening tensions between contending social and political groups. Among some groups, immigration evokes cultural and economic anxieties as well as raises concerns about the use of public resources, while others see renewed immigration providing a myriad of benefits and new opportunities for America, including and especially for its urban centers. Responses to contemporary demographic changes range from nativistic and xenophobic reactions of alarm to a multiculturalist sense of inevitable triumph. We see proposals for immigration restriction, hear controversies over the lines that should be drawn between aliens and citizens, and witness explosive tensions between immigrants and natives as well as among the increasingly variegated groups of immigrants themselves. Emerging patterns of immigration are reshaping group relations, creating new political fault lines with the potential to alter the balance of social and political power. Evolving relations between immigrants and the native born are, in many respects, remaking America and what it means to be American. Yet, we know little about how contemporary immigrants are being incorporated into the U.S. political system.

Ethnicity and race have played a decisive role in shaping immigration policy and politics throughout U.S. history. The main contours of U.S. immigration policy reveal distinct racial, ethnic and economic considerations. Although immigration law and policy has varied substantially and has long been a site of political struggle throughout American history, important continuities are evident. For example, U.S. immigration policy tends to reflect economic interests that need cheap and abundant labor or particular professionals and skills. In addition, the racial and ethnic breakdown of immigrant groups permitted in and excluded from the U.S. roughly correspond to the make-up of dominant European groups already in the U.S., reflecting the latter's racial biases and capacities to shape immigration policy. The hand of such dominant groups is also reflected in changes to federal, state and local government policies that make available a range of services and benefits to immigrants, or deny them access. Such policies have had important and lasting impacts on American social and political development, particularly on its poor and minority populations and urban centers.

These developments simultaneously pose challenges to urban revitalization as well as open up new opportunities and possibilities to develop strategies for more effective urban renewal efforts. Thus, immigration issues are intimately linked to the overall purpose of the Roundtable's project to identify and analyze the racial/ethnic obstacles to the success of urban revitalization efforts and to develop strategies for overcoming them.

Approaches to Immigration Issues

“Immigration Studies” is a relatively new and emerging field in the social sciences, though many of its main currents have roots in nineteenth and early twentieth century experiences. The familiar narratives about “assimilation” and “incorporation” of the numerous waves of immigrants into the “mainstream” is so well established that it often passes for history. Much of this literature contains perspectives and stereotypes that reflect biases, which many newer scholars seek to address and to rectify. For example, America as “melting pot” and “cultural pluralism” are concepts bound up with historical and contemporary debates over what is “America” and who are “Americans.” They are as much description as political project. Recent studies help to clarify assumptions made about the past and also point to past lessons in forming contemporary policy. They also raise new issues particular to contemporary conditions.

The traditional assimilation model described a trajectory toward incorporation into the mainstream. Immigrants made a “clean break” with their country of origin and became “American.” Their states of identity, as it were, would shift. This model not only inadequately describes the fullness of past immigrant experiences, but it is also ill equipped to describe contemporary immigrant life. Today, immigrants are more “transnational,” involved in a myriad of links between their home communities and states. Such links affect not only the kinds of attachments they retain and the politics of those home states but also the process and meaning of becoming and being an “American.” In short, the meaning of identity and assimilation is changing as “globalization” proceeds and America becomes more multicultural.

The literature on immigration is as extensive as it is varied. Scholars and researchers employ widely different analytic approaches in discussing a range of diverse issues concerning immigration and official immigration policies, generating much debate and disagreement about the facts and statistics about immigrants and immigration as well as about viable policy alternatives. Even agreement about facts does not imply policy agreement.

Much of the literature is data driven. Case studies often focus on particular immigrant groups or regions, or on patterns of settlement and adaptation. Some studies focus on differences between immigrant groups, as well as differences within and between regions and cities. Other studies emphasize similarities and continuities that exist among immigrant groups and experiences, generating typologies or general propositions. The latter studies highlight important structural factors that shape immigrant experiences and immigration policy, both historically and contemporarily. These various studies use different levels and modes of analysis, possess differing sets of assumptions, and hold divergent perspectives about what drives change and processes—all of which can lead to widely different policy prescriptions.

Interestingly, common issue areas and a generally accepted factual base are emerging in some recent research, providing a useful starting point for discussion and debate about different policy alternatives. For example, many studies focus on documenting specific ways recent immigration and their incorporation affects native born populations and inter-group relations more generally, including studies that focus on how immigrants impact on urban populations and blacks. While significant differences remain, such studies offer a sound basis for policy formation that can meet different goals. Since making common cause among immigrants—and with other

minorities and the urban poor—is crucial to forge a progressive and comprehensive urban agenda, an approach which simultaneously is sensitive to differences among immigrants and immigration policies while at the same time explains critical continuities is desirable.

This essay attempts to summarize several threads of the vast research on immigrants and immigration from such a perspective with respect to the Roundtable’s questions and overall project goals: How has race affected U.S. immigration policy in this century? What have been the impacts of immigration laws on the political and economic status of the urban poor? How have changes in “alien” voting laws and practices changed? In short, what is the role of immigration in relation to race and community revitalization?

U.S. Immigration and Immigrant Policy

A useful distinction is sometimes made by analysts between “immigration policy” and “immigrant policy” (Fix and Passel, 1994). U.S. “immigration policy” determines which immigrant groups are permitted to enter the U.S. and in what numbers. A distinct but related set of “immigrant policies” refers to federal, state, and local laws and policies that influence the integration or the treatment of immigrants after they have arrived. The federal government sets U.S. immigration policy. U.S. immigrant policy is comprised of various state and local provisions and programs, which are less consistent and coherent than federal policy. Of course, both immigration policy and immigrant policy flow from the larger formal and informal rules and processes that shape governance and operate in economic and social life more generally.

Many analysts also make a distinction between three parts of U.S. immigration policy: (1) legal immigration, (2) humanitarian admissions, and (3) illegal immigration. Failure to keep these domains separate can be a source of confusion, which is evident in current national debates. The distinction is helpful because the three domains are governed by different legislation, administered by different bureaucracies, and involve different administrative functions—functions that range from paramilitary operations to apprehend illegal aliens, to language training, and a host of benefits that serve either to facilitate or impede immigrant integration. The various parts of immigration policy are motivated by different goals and associated with distinct political constituencies. Both the numbers and types of immigrants allowed into the country and who return or are deported have fluctuated substantially throughout different periods of American history. Similarly, federal, state and local support for programs that serve immigrants has fluctuated, with current levels declining for most programs.

Strong voices for and against immigration have always co-existed in American history. But the traditional categories of “liberal” and “conservative” or “left” and “right” are ill equipped to adequately discuss or explain U.S. immigration policy. For example, throughout most of U.S. history, organized labor has been and continues to be largely anti-immigration (although often identified with progressive politics). Comprised and led by primarily ethnically dominant U.S. workers, unions have perceived immigrant labor as undercutting their hard won gains. Similarly, blacks and other “native” groups have often perceived newer immigrants as a threat to them, particularly low-wage and low-skilled immigrants or groups perceived as “different” or “ill-fitted” to dominant American culture.

Business interests, on the other hand, have historically been more pro-immigration, viewing the acquisition of particular types of labor as valuable resources, whether as cheap labor or highly skilled labor or both, depending on changing economic conditions. Ideological advocates of free trade see immigration restrictions as a fetter on a free market capitalist system whose requirements are ever changing. Similarly, advocates of human and civil liberties also believe in providing open and free migration and refuge from a humanitarian perspective or from a view that values family unification. This makes analysis and discussion of immigration policy complicated.

Nativist and xenophobic groups—from the Know-Nothings in the early nineteenth century to the KKK in the early twentieth century to a host of overtly racist groups today—have been successful in shaping U.S. immigration policy. Since the founding of the U.S., such groups have perpetrated and perpetuated certain themes about immigrants: they have portrayed newcomers as being genetically and/or morally inferior; possessing cultural “habits” and language barriers which make them unable or unwilling to “assimilate” into the “mainstream” of American culture; to being prone to criminal activity or just plain lazy—all of which has pervaded the rhetoric and policy surrounding immigration. But while groups such as the KKK played an integral role in the passage of the 1924 legislation that dramatically curtailed immigration and tied it toward European immigrants,¹ the civil rights and black power movements were significant in producing expansionary changes to U.S. immigration law in the 1960’s. (Heer, 1996)

Liberalization of U.S. immigration law—coupled with increased mass migration associated with globalization—have led to significant demographic changes. Research data project a decline in the proportion of the American population that is white and the emergence of a non white majority in some geographic areas, as well as eventually for the U.S. as a whole. Moreover, the portion of the population which is African-American is projected to rise only very slightly or even fall if the black share of current immigration is curtailed.

Given such scenarios, how will social identity change among groups? Will hierarchical relations between groups be affected? Will some immigrant groups incorporate into the mainstream more easily than other groups? How will their paths be shaped by race? What are the impacts that immigration and immigration laws have on the political and economic status of the urban poor, especially upon African-Americans? What are the current and likely impacts of immigration on the balance of political power? As immigrants naturalize and second and third generation immigrants come of age, how might current political alignments and arrangements shift? What structural factors (laws, institutions) and practices inhibit or might facilitate the political incorporation and political participation of immigrants and the forging of progressive political alliances?

¹ Curran, 1975:143; Challmers, 1965:283; Miller, 1998. A 1924 House of Representatives Report acknowledges this fact (Report #350, 68th Congress, 1st Session, II, pp 4-5).

Milestones of U.S. Immigration and Immigration Policy²

Who Immigrates

While the *number* of foreign-born persons currently in the United States is higher than at any time since the turn of the century, the *share* of the population that is foreign-born—8% in 1990—is much lower than it was throughout the 1870–1920 period, when close to 15% of the total population (about 1 in 7 Americans) was foreign born. Moreover, the majority of the foreign-born living in the United States—over 85%—are in the country legally. Fully one-third are naturalized citizens and nearly half are legal permanent residents. The United States receives more immigrants than all other advanced industrial nations combined.

The first major in-migration began in the late 1840's and peaked in the 1880's, a decade during which somewhat more than 5 million immigrants arrived on U.S. shores. The majority came from northern and western Europe, mainly from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia, following revolutions, famine, and upheavals in Europe. The next immigration wave peaked in the first decade of this century, when 9 million immigrants entered the country. Southern and central Europe were the main sources of new entrants in this period, as huge numbers of Italians, Poles, and eastern European Jews flocked to the United States. Restrictive legislation of the 1920's and the Great Depression virtually cut off immigration in the period leading up to World War II. Following the war, immigration began to build again and has since increased steadily. Immigration in the 1980's reached almost 10 million, the highest numerical peak in U.S. history. More than 10 million immigrants (legal and illegal) are likely to enter the United States during the 1990's, in part as a result of the 1990 Immigration Act. Most of the immigrants who make up this latest wave come from Latin America and Asia.

Perhaps the most striking immigration trend has been the shift in primary sending countries resulting from the 1965 legislative changes. Of the countries sending legal immigrants to the

² Summary data for this section is presented in a series of tables and maps in the Appendix. There are two main sources of summary data on immigrants: the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS); and the U.S. Bureau of the Census. It is important to note, however, that while the census includes legal immigrants, refugees, and undocumented immigrants, it does not differentiate among these groups. This limitation must be kept in mind when examining immigrant characteristics, since they often differ by admission status. For example, incomes of illegal immigrants, formerly illegal immigrants, and refugees are much lower than those of other immigrants. Consequently, if census data are interpreted as including only legal immigrants, the data will portray them as being much worse off economically than they are. Aggregate data from the census would also then understate legal immigrants' human capital endowments and overstate their welfare use because they cannot be distinguished from illegal immigrants and refugees (Fix and Passel, 1994). Moreover, the (CPS) conducted by the Bureau of the Census yearly is based upon sampling methods which pose additional problems in analyzing immigration--the sample sizes are small, particularly for minorities and certain ethnic groups and within urban geographic areas, thus making the data of limited use in estimating population changes.

U.S. in 1960 and 1990, the only country among the top ten in both years is Mexico. In 1960, 7 of the 10 countries were European, and Canada was also on the list. In 1990, 6 of the top 10 sending countries were Asian. Canada no longer appeared, and the only European country on the list was the Soviet Union, principally because of its refugee flow. Europe, which accounted for two-thirds of legal immigrants in the 1950's, added only 15% in the 1980's. The increase in Asian immigration has been the most dramatic, up from 6% in the 1950's to 45% in the 1980's. Latin America's share of legal immigrants increased from the 1950's to the 1960's, but not since then, although the absolute numbers have continued to increase.

Though the majority of new immigrants come from Latin America and Asia, steadily rising immigration—coupled with per country limitations on legal flows—has increased the diversity of the immigrant population. The top 10 countries accounted for 65% of the legal immigrant flow in 1960, but only 52% in 1990. And the number of countries with at least 100,000 foreign-born residents in the U.S. increased from 20 in the 1970 census to 27 in 1980 to 41 in 1990.

Although the largest number of immigrants living in the U.S. are still of European/Canadian origin, that number is declining—in sharp contrast to Mexicans, other Latin Americans, and Asians, whose numbers have all virtually doubled in the last 10 years. In fact, more foreign-born residents are now Asian than are Mexican. The Philippines alone accounts for almost 1 million foreign-born residents, more than any single country except Mexico. Large numbers also come from Vietnam, China, Korea, and India—each contributing about half a million to the foreign-born population.

Overall, the pattern of recent immigration reflects three main features: 1) the proximity to the U.S. 2) penetration of sending countries economies by the U.S. economy 3) historical patterns of chain migration (Massey et. als, 1993; 1998). The newer immigrants are highly heterogeneous. Over a third of recent immigrants come from Mexico, Central America, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic and go predominantly to California, South Texas, Southern Florida, and New York City. Another nearly 20% come from Asia, China and Philippines especially, and are concentrated on the West Coast and in New York. Western Europe and Canada still send significant number (more than 15%), while the former Soviet bloc and Caribbean countries send over 5% each. (Data and geographic patterns of settlement are presented in maps and tables in the appendix.) Similarly, the level of education and income varies substantially between these groups.

Impacts on Ethnic/Racial Composition of the U.S.

Shifts in immigrant origins are having a profound impact on the racial and ethnic composition of the country. In 1900, more than 85% of the U.S. population was white and non-Hispanic. By 1990, the white, non-Hispanic share of the population had dropped to 75%. The Black share of the population, 12%, has not changed much over the century. Both the Hispanic and Asian populations increased dramatically. The Hispanic population increased numerically 34 fold to 22 million in 1990, or from 0.9% of the population to 9.0% to 30 million by 1997 up to 11% of U.S. residents. (Source: "The Hispanic Population in the United States," March, 1997, PPL-105.) A 30 fold increase in Asians to more than 7 million raised the Asian share of the total U.S. population from 0.3% in 1900 to 2.9% in 1990, still a small proportion of the total.

While African-Americans still outnumber Hispanics—there were 34 million African-Americans in the US in 1997, or about 13% of the US population—the Census projects that Hispanics will surpass the Black population in the next decade. In fact, in July 1998, the federal government reported that, for the first time, the number of Hispanic children surpassed the number of African-American children; 10.5 million compared to 10.4 million.

Immigration affects the racial-ethnic composition of the U.S. population as a whole in two ways: directly through the addition of new people and indirectly through immigrants having children. Both the increased immigration and higher fertility rates among Hispanics and Asians have contributed to their increased shares of the population. Immigration's influence will continue to be felt on the U.S. population's composition through fertility, regardless of changes in admissions policies.

It is important to note that the geographic origins of immigrants cannot simply be extrapolated into traditional racial and ethnic groups, because there is substantial racial diversity within regions and sometimes countries as well as changing patterns of self-identification. For example, 14% of the U.S. immigrants born in Asia are white, as are 40% of the immigrants from Africa. Of all immigrants from Latin America, 86% considers themselves Hispanic.

Geographic Concentration of Immigrants

Throughout U.S. history, the majority of immigrants have settled in only a handful of locations in the United States, following friends and family who had gone there before. At the peak of the recent previous wave (1970's and 1980's), about 57% of the foreign-born population lived in six states. Geographic concentration, a defining feature of contemporary immigration, is even greater today.

Analysts estimate that 76% of all immigrants entering the U.S. in the 1980's went to six states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey (in that order). California and New York alone attracted over 40%. California is the largest, home to over one third of all immigrants to the U.S. with New York second in line and Florida third. (Smith and Edmonston, 1997.)³ A 1998 study by the Urban Institute showed that New York has a foreign-born population of 3.4 million, second only to California, which has 8.0 million. Immigrants in New York represent 17.7% of the state's population, again trailing only California, where immigrants represent 25.1% of the state's population. Importantly, these states play a large role in determining political representation both in congress and in the Electoral College for the presidency.

³ It is important to note that although the share of immigrants going to other parts of the country remains small, even less-traditional gateway states and cities are also receiving increasing numbers of immigrants and acquiring sizable foreign-born populations. Massachusetts, for example, has over one-half million foreign-born residents, close to 40% of whom entered between 1980 and 1990. Even such traditionally "nonimmigrant" states as Georgia, North Carolina, and Minnesota have over 100,000 foreign-born residents, about half of whom entered in the last decade (Fix and Passel, 1994).

An even larger share (85%) of undocumented immigrants lives in these six states, but are distributed unevenly. For example, New York's 200,000 refugees represent a smaller share of the state's foreign-born population (5.9%) than refugees do in the United States as a whole (10.7%). Unlike the rest of the country, where Southeast Asians dominate the refugee population, most refugees in New York are from the former Soviet Union. New York's undocumented population of 40,000 represents 16% of the state's immigrants—a lower percentage than in any of the other five large immigrant states except New Jersey. Nationally, undocumented immigrants represent 20% of the total immigrant population. Thus, legally present immigrants make up a greater percentage of New York's immigrants than in California, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and the United States as a whole.

The majority of immigrants settle in metropolitan areas. In 1990, 93% of the foreign-born population lived in metropolitan areas versus only 73% of natives. About half of all immigrants entering the United States during the 1980's—and nearly 60% by 1997—live in eight metropolitan areas: Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Anaheim, Chicago, Washington D.C., Houston, and San Francisco. The impact of immigration on individual metropolitan areas can be profound. For example, the Miami metropolitan area is 46% foreign-born; Los Angeles is 33% foreign-born; and Jersey City, which ranks third in the country, is 29% foreign-born.⁴ The potential demographic impact of immigrants varies considerably depending on whether an area is gaining or losing population independent of immigrants. For example, although nearly one million New York residents moved out of the city during the past decade—including a significant portion of the black middle class—over another million moved into the city for a net gain (NYC Department of City Planning Department.)

The racial and ethnic composition of states and cities is correspondingly shifting. In 1994, about 72% of the nation's 26 million Latinos live in five southwestern states, plus Florida. 80% of the Latinos in the southwest came from Mexico, compared with 60% for the U.S. as a whole, with over one half of Mexicans residing in California and Texas. Latinos overwhelmingly reside in metropolitan areas: 80% of Mexicans, 98% of Puerto Ricans, Cubans and South and Central Americans. In 1990, Latinos constituted about one-third of the population of eight large Sunbelt cities (though proportions vary from 62.5% in Miami to 15% in Tampa-St. Petersburg). Asians are the fastest growing ethnic group in the country, with the metropolitan regions of Los Angeles (1,339,000), San Francisco (927,000), and New York (873,000) having the largest Asian

⁴ Internal migration patterns also appear to affect concentrations of immigrants. The combination of immigration from abroad and the resettlements of immigrants from one state to another has increased the concentration of the foreign-born in the top four states of settlement: California, New York, Florida and Texas. High educational attainment and English fluency increased the probability that an immigrant would move between states, while those same characteristics decreased the probability that a foreign-born migrant would choose California, New York or Florida as his destination. Foreign-born migrants in general were strongly attracted to states that already had large immigrant populations from the same country, but highly educated immigrants tended to move within the United States without regard to the presence of other immigrants. (Immigrants on the Move: How Internal Migration Increases the Concentration of the Foreign Born, by June Marie Nogle.)

communities. In San Francisco, Asians accounted for the largest proportion of immigrants in 1993, while most of the new immigrants to Miami in the same year came from the Caribbean and Latin America, one-third from Cuba alone. (See map in appendix.)

While metropolitan areas such as LA and NY have long been the main destinations for immigrants of all kinds, areas such as Washington D.C have recently seen dramatic increases in immigrants. The foreign-born population in D.C metro area is up from one in 22 residents in 1970 to one in six today. (The foreign-born population rose from 4.5% in 1970 to 8% in 1980 to 12% in 1990 and to 17% in 1998.) Moreover, nine out of 10 immigrants choose to settle in the suburbs of Maryland and Virginia first, not the city itself. About half of all immigrants settling in the region during the last 13 years (1983-96) came from 10 countries.⁵

Indeed, many immigrants—especially those with more economic and social capital—move directly into the suburbs, or subsequently move out to the suburbs, while those with less resources more often move into central cities, driven by the search for affordable housing, jobs, and accessible transportation. The new immigrant communities are quite complex in social and economic characteristics, similar in many respects to turn of the century metropolises. Rates of naturalization, levels of education, income, and ability to speak English vary substantially. For example, foreign-born whites tend to naturalize quickest, followed by Asians, blacks and Hispanics. Ethnic enclaves in metropolitan regions are plenty and visible (Koreatown in LA, “little Havana” in Miami, Chinatown or Flushing NY)—as are concentrations of poor blacks—which are often adjacent to ethnic enclaves, or merge into them. Although the latter areas are where the poorest immigrants live, many immigrant neighborhoods are also economically diverse, made up of immigrants of various backgrounds and occupations. Between 1990 and 1996, 43 counties changed from being “majority white” to “majority minority” (Frey, 1998).

Importantly, common experiences between the diverse immigrant groups are evident. The transition into the U.S. entails some measure of being an outsider—experiencing social pressures that often include discrimination or hostility—and struggling to establish a place to survive and flourish within constrained opportunities. In addition, many immigrants do not arrive with the ability to speak English and share similar experiences which that lack entails.

Yet, sharp racial and class divisions persist between immigrants and native born citizens. No where is this more evident than in patterns of residential segregation. Douglass Massey and Nancy Denton conducted analysis of 60 metropolitan areas and found that the degree of residential segregation between groups has intensified along class and race lines. They found that blacks are as twice as segregated as Latinos and Asians, though as middle class blacks moved into the suburbs in the 1980’s this abated somewhat. At the same time, however, the concentration of poor blacks into poverty areas increased, creating what they called an “American Apartheid.” (Massey and Denton, 1993.) This concentration of poverty can intensify racial and ethnic tensions and conflicts between these groups.

⁵ The 10 countries are: El Salvador -- 27,510; Vietnam -- 24,714; S. Korea -- 23,431; India -- 19,257; Philippines -- 16,006; China -- 13,946; Iran -- 13,022; Ethiopia -- 9,862; Jamaica -- 8,756; Pakistan -- 8,170 for a total of 164,674. Washington Post, August 31, 1998.

As federal “devolution” and the contraction of public resources at state and local levels accelerates—coupled with fundamental economic restructuring that increases the exposure of states and cities to “economic blackmail” by corporations who seek more favorable investment climates—competition between Asians and Latinos with native-born blacks for both public and private resources is likely to increase. As one observer has noted, today Martin Luther King’s dream of an integrated nation seems not only remote but undesirable to many black and white Americans (Smith, 1997:1).

Indeed, animosities among Asians, Latinos and African-Americans have escalated in recent years. During the 1980’s, riots broke out in black neighborhoods in Cuban-dominated Miami four times (each associated with the killing of a black man by Latino or non-Latino white police officers.) Riots erupted in Washington D.C. when a Salvadoran immigrant was shot or some Latino men were arrested by a black female police officer. In Brooklyn, violence flared in 1991-1992 between African-Americans surrounding a Korean greengrocer, as well as street confrontations with Hasidic Jews. The LA riots resulted in the destruction of approximately 4,000 businesses of which 30% were Latino-owned but targeted a much greater percentage of Korean-owned shops (Judd and Swanstrom, 1998:150).

Thus, since immigration is reshaping urban America, urban politics will likely revolve around issues of race and ethnicity. New immigrants increasingly compete with blacks for political power and jobs. Over the next few years, political competition is likely to intensify in metropolitan areas with sizable black populations, including eight sunbelt cities where African-Americans account for 16% of the population. Indeed, given that the Latino population is increasing at a much faster rate than non-Latino whites and blacks in the Sunbelt, and probably will become the dominant ethnic/racial group in a large number of such cities. Whether competition between such groups is worked out through emerging forms of cooperation or produces heightened conflicts, the challenge of forging alliances is urgent and is likely to be strained.

Demographic Projections

Future migration patterns are uncertain, especially since legislation and global events can change the scale and characteristics of the immigrant flow at any time. Yet, mass migration can be expected to continue, and some projections into likely future trends are possible.

The Census projects there to be 36 million Hispanics and 36 million Blacks in 2005; the Hispanic population is expected to surpass the Black population after 2005 because of immigration and relatively high birth rates. About 44% of Hispanics and 10% of all US residents were born abroad. If these projections hold, the Hispanic population will have doubled in the 25 years between 1980 and 2005. According to the Census projections, Hispanics of all races will represent 25% of the US population in 2050, up from 11% in 1997. Asians will account for 9%, up from 3% in 1995. The non-Hispanic white population will decline to 50% from 75% over the same period, while the Black population will rise slightly to 14% from 12%.

Currently, about half of the nation’s population growth can be attributed to immigration and to the children of immigrants. According to Urban Institute, this figure will rise gradually to about

60% over the next several decades if immigration continues and the U.S. population's overall growth rate declines. The impact of these changes will be felt throughout the age distribution, but for children and institutions serving them, the projected changes will be especially noticeable. For example, the total school-age population is projected to grow by over 20%, from 34 million in 1990 to 42 million in 2010. Well over half this growth will be children of immigrants (i.e., foreign-born children and native-born children with at least one foreign-born parent). The number of children of immigrants will increase from 5 million to 9 million and represent about 22% of the school-age population.

Similarly, immigrants will continue to add to the diversity of the U.S. labor force. The foreign-born share of the labor force will rise from almost 10% in 1990 to 12% in 2000 and 14% in 2010. An additional 6 million new immigrants will join the labor force in each of the next two decades, accounting for about one-third of the labor force change in each decade, up from one-quarter in the 1980's. The composition of the labor force will also continue to change, with white, non-Hispanic male workers shrinking from 42% to 36% in 2010. White males and females will still constitute a large majority (about two-thirds) of labor force entrants, but because they are relatively older than other groups, they will account for over 80% of those who leave the labor force through retirement and death.

Thus, racial-ethnic minorities will increase from 22% of the labor force in 1990 to 26% in 2000, to 30% in 2010. The largest relative increases will be a doubling of Asian representation from 3% to 6% and an increase in Hispanics from 8% to 12%. However, the dimensions of these changes could be substantially different, depending on patterns of both intermarriage and ethnic self-identity.

Status: Legal and "Illegal" Immigrants

Almost one-third of the 8.8 million legal permanent residents, about 2.8 million persons, was formerly illegal but attained legal status under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). Six percent of all foreign-born (1.1 million persons) entered the country as humanitarian admissions. Most of these do not remain in refugee and asylee status, but rather "adjust their status" to legal permanent residents as soon as they are eligible, which is one year after arrival. About 184,000 are currently in refugee status; 3,000-4,000 are in asylee status.

In addition to the more than 16 million foreign-born who are citizens or legal permanent residents, between 500,000 and 800,000 immigrants are living in the United States in a variety of non-green-card statuses, including students, businessmen on temporary visas, and persons living under "temporary protected status." The other foreign-born group living in the United States consists of undocumented immigrants. This group totaled about 2.5 million in 1990, roughly 13% of the immigrant population. Slightly more than 1.1 million immigrants arrive each year. About 700,000 are legal permanent residents, with family-based admissions accounting for almost three-quarters of this flow. Refugees and other humanitarian admissions add another

100,000-150,000 each year. Undocumented immigration contributes about 200,000-300,000 net additions annually, less than 30% of the immigrant flow.⁶

Only about one-third of the undocumented population is from Mexico, with slightly fewer from Central America and the Caribbean. European and Asian countries also contribute significant numbers. Only 4 out of 10 undocumented aliens cross the border illegally or enter without inspection. Six out of ten undocumented immigrants enter legally—as visitors, students, or temporary employees—and become illegal by failing to leave when their visas expire.

Outmigration

Roughly 200,000 former immigrants leave each year, reducing the net inflow and the size of the immigrant population. The emigrants are thought to come disproportionately from recent entrants. Thus, the foreign-born population grows by about 700,000 each year, due to the combination of entry (legal and illegal), exit, and death. Immigration accounts for about one-third of the country's net annual population growth.

U.S. Immigration Policy

While many of the core elements of our immigration policies were adopted in the colonial era (such as the exclusion of poverty-stricken migrants likely to become public charges), comprehensive, congressionally enacted immigration policies did not emerge until the end of the 19th century. The first broad modern assertion of the federal regulatory power in the immigration area was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Chinese immigrants had been imported to work during the labor shortages of the 1840s, but became increasingly reviled during the recessionary times of the 1870s, which was to a lesser extent also true of other immigrant groups, such as Irish and German. In response to popular pressure, the Chinese Exclusion Act suspended immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years, removed the rights of Chinese entrants to be naturalized, and provided for the deportation of Chinese in the United States illegally. It was not until 1943 that the Chinese exclusion laws were repealed.

Successive waves of immigration during the nineteenth century culminating in the high water mark early twentieth century. Nativist reaction—often coinciding with periodic economic recessions—led to the passage of several pieces of federal legislation designed to curtail immigration in the 1920's. The growing numbers and strength of Catholics provoked a reactive social movement among Protestants (including the aforementioned role of the KKK). The new legislation produced a precipitous drop in immigration and cast the ethnic character of future

⁶ Immigrant admissions remained relatively constant through 1990 and then rose about 25% as a result of the 1990 Act. INS data on immigration are unclear on this point, however, leading to serious misperceptions of immigration levels on the part of the media and the public. In calculating total immigration, the INS counts IRCA legalizations in the legal immigrant totals at the point when those with temporary status convert to legal permanent resident status. As a result, the official figures on “immigrants admitted” erroneously appear to have tripled between 1987 and 1991 followed by a 50% drop in 1992. The IRCA group masks the actual trend, which is a steady, incremental rise in admissions.

immigrants decidedly toward Europeans. In addition, from 1882 until 1924 national immigration policy focused on excluding persons on *qualitative* grounds—criminals, prostitutes, the physically and mentally ill, and in 1917, illiterate (a literacy test was established for immigrants), who were considered likely to become “paupers.” In 1903, “anarchists” were added to the list of excludables that were further strengthened and extensively used after 1917 and in the 1950’s, with the McCarran-Walter Act (Heer, 1996:27-71).

The first general, permanent *quantitative* or numerical restriction on immigration was imposed in 1924, when the National Origins Act was passed. The law placed a ceiling of 150,000 per year on European immigration, completely barred Japanese immigration, and provided for the admission of immigrants based on the proportion of national origin groups that were present in the United States according to the census of 1890. Because this census preceded the large-scale immigrations from southern and eastern Europe, this provision represented an explicit effort to ensure that future immigration flows would be largely composed of immigrants from northern and Western Europe.

The national origins quota system would not be over-turned until 1965. By the 1960’s such a blatantly biased/racist formula became increasingly challenged. The power of the civil rights movement made elements within two Democratic administrations more sympathetic to its concerns and provided the impetus for change.⁷ The Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments (Hart-Cellar Act) of 1965 replaced the national origins quota system with a uniform limit of 20,000 immigrants per country for all countries outside the Western Hemisphere. This essentially put all countries on an equal footing and granted a high priority to family reunification. With Cold War tensions heightened, it also expanded special provisions for political refugees from socialist and communist countries. These developments allowed immigration to swell well beyond expectations, and the ethnic composition of immigrants changed rapidly. 80% to 85% of post-1960 immigrants came from the Caribbean, Central and South America and Asia, with Asians counting for about 46% of the total (Winnick, 1990).

At the same time, however, the 1960’s legislative changes placed a limit for the first time on immigration from the Western Hemisphere (most notably on Mexico). The law contained within it the seeds of the massive shift away from European immigration that would subsequently occur. It can also be seen as setting the stage for expanding illegal immigration from the Western Hemisphere into the United States, particularly from Mexico and Central America.

The next major milestones in U.S. immigration policy occurred during the period from 1980 to 1990. During this decade three major pieces of immigration legislation were enacted, each representing, for the most part, a major liberalization of national immigration policy. The decade began with passage of the Refugee Act of 1980. The law expanded the definition of “refugee” beyond those fleeing from communist countries and entitled refugees to certain federally reimbursable social and medical services. Along with the 1965 Act, the Refugee Act’s

⁷ President Kennedy, an Irish Catholic, had written *A Nation of Immigrants*, who denounced the national origins quota system. LBJ and the Congress enacted the landmark Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965 (Fuchs and Forbes 1985).

implementation has had the effect of increasing the representation of non-European countries in the immigration flow.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), which addresses the issue of illegal immigration, followed the Refugee Act. The law introduces penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. At the same time, though, it creates two large programs to grant legal status to illegal immigrants. The decade culminated with the Immigration Act of 1990, which, among other things, revises legal immigration policy. While the law was purportedly a compromise between exclusionary and inclusionary forces, in fact, it represents a major liberalization of legal immigration policy, as total admissions were increased by 40% or to 700,000 per year. Much of the increase, though, is allocated to highly skilled immigrants, doubling the number of visas granted to immigrants with job skills needed in the U.S. economy. It also allowed the highest number of European-origin groups into the country since the Hart-Celler Act of 1965.

What are the driving forces behind U.S. immigration policy? One way to examine the question is to look at what goals immigration policies seek to achieve. Fix and Passel (1994) point to several related but often divergent goals that underlie U.S. immigration policy which vary in priority depending on the period and particular piece of legislation: a) the *economic* goal of increasing U.S. productivity and standard of living; b) the *social* goal of family unification; c) the *national security* goal of preventing illegal immigration; d) the *cultural* goal of promoting diversity; e) the *moral* goal of promoting human rights.

The economic goal involves three potentially conflicting objectives: (1) promoting the nation's competitiveness in the global economy, (2) minimizing the burden placed on employers, and (3) protecting the wages and employment conditions of U.S. workers. For example, the rhetoric of making immigration policy more responsive to the nation's labor force needs was central to the politics of the 1990 Immigration Act, which almost tripled admissions for highly skilled workers and their families, raising the number admitted from 58,000 to 140,000 annually. Similarly, recent congressional legislative action is designed to increase the number of temporary work visas (H1B) for highly skilled workers (primarily computer programmers, health professionals and college professors), which have been passed with strong business support. (Impacts on wages and jobs are discussed in more detail below, as are issues of illegal immigration.)

The social goal of family unification has strong and sustained support in large part from the fact that its main beneficiaries are concurrent U.S. citizens—a politically endowed constituency—but one that has been largely European in nature until more recently.

Between 1945 and 1990, one-quarter of all immigrants entering the United States were admitted on “humanitarian” grounds, primarily guided by foreign policy criterion. The current legislative framework for humanitarian admissions policy is set out principally in the 1980 Refugee Act, which seeks to accomplish three goals. First, to base humanitarian admissions on internationally recognized criteria (United Nations) that depart from the largely ideological, anticommunist grounds that previously prevailed. Second, to create a predictable, manageable flow of refugees. Third, to include a program for resettling refugees—involving cash, medical support, and social services.

The 1990 Act included a new “diversity” category, added to bring in immigrants from countries that had sent few immigrants to the U.S. in recent decades. The varied objectives behind this policy included (1) increasing European immigration, (2) increasing the skills of new entrants, and (3) intensifying the role immigration plays in promoting pluralism within the U.S.

Other scholars have pointed to more explicitly political considerations of elites who have shaped U.S. immigration policy. Rogers Smith (1997), for example, argues for a “historical institutionalist” approach to understanding U.S. citizenship laws and statutes. Smith maintains that lawmakers structured U.S. citizenship in terms of illiberal and undemocratic racial, ethnic and gender hierarchies—white male Anglo-Saxon Protestant—for reasons rooted in basic, enduring imperatives of political life. Political elites forge citizenship laws and policies which legally incorporate and empower (or exclude and disempower) their likely constituents, as well as offer symbolic support for civic ideologies or myths of civic identity that foster a sense of peoplehood for dominant groups. Thus, the most successful political actors have been those which mix liberal (individual personal freedoms) and democratic (prosperity for all citizens) ideologies with ascriptive notions of which groups are most American and “worthy.” Political actors use these various traditions of political discourse about civic identity to protect or alter citizenship arrangements or justify or oppose laws in light of changing political conditions. Smith organizes his view of American life around distinct periods of party realignment. Conflicts that emerge in each period reflect the balance of power among the system’s participants, and they structure the terrain and content of later conflicts.⁸

Economy, Jobs, Revenues and Expenditures

Thus, immigration policy is driven by several inter-related factors: the need by businesses and employers for an abundant and elastic supply of cheap and an increasingly skilled labor force; concerns over the potential negative impacts of immigration on the employment and wage prospects of U.S. workers; ethnic and racial considerations; and political calculus. The recession of the late 1980s and the jobless recovery of the early 1990s—particularly severe in CA—brought immigration issues to a new level of prominence, and has been a major impetus behind the wave of anti-immigrant policy. Immigrants—like other minorities—are vulnerable and visible targets for scapgoating.

Contemporary national debate about issues of immigration revolves around several overarching economic and social considerations. Do immigrants take or create jobs? What is the impact of immigration on urban labor markets? Similarly, why or how do some new immigrants manage to do well or better compared other immigrants, and compared with native minorities? Another

⁸ Smith’s approach is useful in showing how political elites both respond to and manipulate popular discourse and shape law and policy. But while his admittedly top down approach sheds light on elite behavior—and thereby law—it downplays important pushes and pulls from popular mobilizations or changing economic conditions that elites must also respond to that may also be at work. Nevertheless, Smith’s approach is a useful model that sheds light on recent and current immigration and citizenship law and policy.

frequently raised question concerns immigrant use of public resources. Do immigrants use more in governmental services than they contribute in tax revenues?

The economic well being of each immigrant group is related to the conditions that group faced in their home country. Poor economic conditions and political repression—sometimes fostered by U.S. economic and military actors and policy—have “pushed” most immigrants from their homes while economic opportunity in America has exerted a necessary “pull.” For example, the minimum wage in the U.S. is about six times the prevailing wage in Mexico, where wages are higher than in most other Latin American countries (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990). Although many immigrants work in poorly paid jobs, it may still be an “improvement” upon their previous conditions and status. Moreover, quite a few immigrants come into the U.S. to work in professional and technical occupations. The proportion of such immigrants consistently exceeds the average for U.S. workers as a whole (*ibid.*).

Asian-Americans as a group have tended to do well, often achieving educational credentials and succeeding at small businesses, while Latinos as a group have not fared as well, falling below the general U.S. population on all indicators of economic of well-being. Latino median family income in 1995 was \$22,860, only 61.5% of the \$37,178 median income for non-Hispanic white families. Similarly, Latinos have lagged on educational attainment. Yet, African-Americans as a group are even more disadvantaged, with higher unemployment rates and lower family incomes despite having a higher level of educational attainment. Nevertheless, since the early 1970’s, neither blacks nor Hispanics have made significant gains in comparison with non-Hispanic whites. (Judd and Swanstom, 1998.)

Given the continuing wage gap between blacks and whites, the historical tendency for some immigrant groups to do better than particular native populations and the corresponding tendency for native laborers to be wary of immigrant competition, questions about the role of immigrants on poor native minorities are particularly pressing. Moreover, relations between newer immigrants and the experience and perceptions of blacks that continue to feel the effects of social and economic exclusion remains central to any efforts at urban revitalization.

An enormous amount of research has been done on the impact of immigration on U.S. labor markets.⁹ Much of the literature finds that the effects of immigration on wages and jobs—measured by both aggregate data and specific labor markets—varies and is minimal. Most studies that analyze aggregate data show no overall effect. However, studies of specific labor markets show negative effects on low-skilled workers in stagnant local economies with high concentrations of immigrants (but not in other types of economies where growth is occurring). Thus, impacts of immigration on the wages and jobs of native-born Americans within a specific community vary over time depending on the local economy. Where economies are growing, immigration increases the labor market opportunities of low skilled workers. In economies that

⁹ Fix and Passel (1994), for example, conducted a survey of the major findings of such studies up to that point—both of aggregate statistical studies of the labor market and case studies of local labor markets and specific industries—much of which is summarized and included in the discussion below. Similarly, T. Paul Schultz (1998) also reviewed and analyzed the available and recent literature.

are declining or stagnant, immigration may diminish them slightly. (The typical focus of such studies is on job displacement within a firm or industry and less on wage suppression.)

While on the whole studies show that new immigrants contribute to the strengthening of urban economies and the revitalization of decayed neighborhoods, they tend to depress wages in declining cities. One line of research studies the effect of unskilled immigrants on the employment of unskilled natives. Immigration appears to have, on balance, contributed somewhat to the declining fortunes of low-skilled workers, although the scale of the estimated effects varies from study to study. Consequently, while they may help boost urban economies—and the comparative advantage of the U.S. economy more generally as well as keep down the rate of inflation—they may also be contributing to heightened inequalities between groups and the degradation of work more generally (Fainstein, 1994). Studies show that there may be some job displacement and substitution effects in particular occupations, industries and work sites, especially given the rapid changes in many sectors of the economy.

Similarly, although studies show immigration has no negative impacts for black workers taken as a whole, less-skilled black workers and black workers in high immigration areas with stagnant economies are negatively affected. Native blacks in areas of high immigration have fared better than native blacks in low immigration areas in terms of wage and employment growth. In high-immigration areas, however, native black wages often do not keep pace with the rising wage trends that immigration brings for Anglos and Hispanics (Enchautegui 1993).

Given the far higher unemployment rates of African-American males than white males, it is not surprising that this is one of the most frequently examined issues in the research. Immigrants increase the labor market opportunities of African-Americans in strong local economies but reduce them where labor demand is weak (Bean, Fossett, and Park 1993). Immigration increases the percentage of the overall labor force that is employed but reduces the weekly earnings of less-skilled African-American men and women (Altonji and Card 1991). Thus, increased immigration may hurt African-Americans in recessionary periods and help them in periods of growth (Waldinger, 1986; Bailey, 1987; Waters, 1994).¹⁰ Some explain such findings by pointing out that many immigrants arrive with higher education levels, skills and resources. Most such studies, however, do not highlight that the “problem” is not the new immigrants themselves per se but a set of other related structural and contextual factors, including the unequal international division of labor, an insufficient supply of jobs that pay a living wage, a growing skills/jobs mismatch, racism, and so on.

Yet on balance, studies support the popular belief that immigrants adversely affect low-wage native-born Americans, especially those with low skill and education levels who tend to be concentrated in cities, many of which are black. In addition, studies of particular industries or areas found that some employers discriminate against blacks in unskilled work sites, preferring to hire immigrants (Kerschenman & Necherman, 1991; Muller, 1993; Waldinger, 1989;

¹⁰ These findings appear to be somewhat at odds with the results of two studies of high-immigration regions—New Jersey (Espenshade 1993) and Miami (Card 1990)—which found no effects.

Fainstein, 1994). Thus, studies confirm the belief among many native blacks that they are losing jobs to immigrant workers (Waters, 1994; Fuchs, 1990; Diamond, 1998).

Some studies find that employers rely on informal networks when looking for new hires in immigrant-dominated sectors of the economy, which may adversely affect native-born and minority Americans. Use of immigrant networks reduces the employer's recruitment costs at the same time that it effectively excludes African Americans and other non-immigrants from the hiring process (Waldinger 1993; 1996).

Roger Waldinger's study of New York City (1996) illustrates this process. He analyzes how urban public and private labor markets have absorbed the large increase in immigrant workers over the last generation, and the impact of this increase on African-Americans. He argues that most immigrant groups have succeeded economically by finding particular occupational niches from which they can then consolidate their economic gains. One of the most common ways in which immigrant groups have sought economic gains is by reserving access to their occupational niche to only members of their ethnic group. He documents the fact that inter-ethnic or racial conflict is evident in establishing occupational niches, or when ethnic groups are competing for the same niches (often in public sector employment or competitive private sector fields, such as construction or the garment industry), or in protecting an established niche from access by other ethnic groups seeking a foothold. Thus, Waldinger highlights ethnic conflicts that may result from employment-related issues. Similar processes and conflicts are also evident at the political level (discussed below).

Waldinger examines whether high black urban unemployment is more a result of declining industrial and manufacturing jobs, or of intense low-wage immigrant competition and racial discrimination. He also examines whether the often-blamed weakness of African American educational and training capabilities could account for their seeming inability to adjust to the changing local economy as efficiently as recent immigrant groups. He finds that the assumption that African-American workers suffer disproportionately higher urban unemployment than immigrants because of less education or skills simply is not true. He argues that African-Americans should have a competitive advantage over most immigrants because of blacks' generally higher educational attainment and better English skills, which suggests other factors are at work.

Waldinger points out that African-Americans are concentrated in public sector work because of extensive racism and barriers to their participation in both the private and public sectors going back over many generations. African-Americans never were able to establish niches in New York City's manufacturing sector because largely white immigrant groups controlled it. As large numbers of European immigrants abandoned these positions when better opportunities became available in the private sector and in the suburbs—coupled with political mobilizations surrounding the campaigns of Jesse Jackson and the election of local black officials—African-Americans developed a niche in certain New York City government jobs. Yet, racial barriers continue to limit African-American advancement in both public sector niches, such as the New York City Fire Department, and private sector niches, such as the construction industry. Indeed, as public sector resources have contracted at nearly every level, there is more competition for existing jobs in state and city agencies, public schools, and so on.

In comparing the experiences of African Americans and immigrants in New York City, Waldinger notes that many immigrants enter the United States with a labor market advantage over African Americans because they can benefit immediately from the already established immigrant occupational niches. Furthermore, many immigrants arrive with the knowledge that they can depend on the established immigrant community as clientele for a successful small business operation. Thus, the absence of African American small businesses is an additional barrier to blacks' entry into private sector economic niches.

By contrast, studies of middle class blacks in gateway cities such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles show they experienced upward mobility into professional or managerial sectors at higher rates than they do in cities without immigrants (Borjas, 1990; Muller, 1993). Similarly, studies of more highly skilled occupations, (e.g. registered nurses), find no strong evidence of job displacement (Levine, Fox, and Danielson 1993). Further some argue that without immigration to the major gateway cities urban America would probably have suffered even further population decline and neighborhood deterioration (Muller, 1993; Winnick, 1990; Fainstein, 1994). Others claim that immigrants do not compete with natives who are overrepresented at the lower end of the skill distribution, and may even begin businesses that then create jobs for native workers (Simon, 1989).

The group most clearly and severely disadvantaged by newly arrived immigrants is other recent immigrants who are, in the final analysis, the closest substitutes for newcomers. Interestingly, the few labor market studies of illegal workers do not find dramatic impacts (Fix and Passel, 1994).

Black Attitudes about Immigration

Historically, blacks have been divided on the issue of immigration (Diamond, 1998). On the one hand, racism and their weaker socioeconomic position relative to many immigrant groups throughout American history has often negatively impacted on blacks. Arriving immigrants frequently displaced African-Americans, and in other cases potential opportunities for advancement that periods of economic expansion brought were lost. On the other hand, many blacks' attitudes towards immigration and immigrants has historically viewed their advancement as linked to the acceptance by the dominant culture of notions of fairness and justice, including regarding immigrants and their struggles to similarly escape poverty and oppression.¹¹

Blacks were largely opposed to Asian and Mexican immigrants during the early twentieth century (Fuchs, 1990:296), and nearly half the African-Americans who voted for California Proposition 187 voted in favor. The preponderance of evidence suggests that from the early days of the country's founding, free and then emancipated blacks competed and were often displaced by arriving waves of immigrants. During periods of heavy immigration and economic decline, employers pitted blacks and immigrants against each other in order to bid down wages and break

¹¹ For example, black leaders condemned the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Yet, during the great wave of immigration at the turn of the century, black opinion did follow white opinion in becoming increasingly restrictionist, with important exceptions such as W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen.

emerging unions. Blacks were largely displaced and locked out of most unions. But it was not only unions and Jim Crow that drove blacks out of jobs. In 1870 almost 32% of all black males in Cleveland were employed in skilled trades, but by 1910 only 11% were. Similarly, in New York, black workers were steadily forced out of employment during the same period. The Pullman Company hired relatively well educated Filipino workers in the 1920's over blacks, partly in an effort to destroy A. Philip Randolph's attempts to organize black workers (Fuchs, 1990:295-6).

Similarly, political machines dominated by immigrants, particularly Irish and then Italians marginalized blacks. Again, in many cases, blacks lost ground to newcomers or never realized possibilities for advancement, particularly in cities where immigrants tended to settle. While relatively few immigrants came to the South where the vast majority of blacks resided, the massive migration of blacks to the North—and particularly to its urban centers following the World Wars—altered the political terrain and slowly began to alter the balance of political power.

Differences between the attitudes of black elites and mass black opinion are evident. While black organizations and leaders have divergent positions on immigration policy, on balance they are among the most liberal on immigration policy. The mass black public, however, as reflected in survey research and studies of black media, varies more substantially. Arguments for restricting immigration are more often made in reference to the vulnerability of blacks and other minority groups to competition with newer arrivals. But while a substantial portion of blacks, for example, apparently favor restricting immigration, the African-American community taken as a whole is not restrictionist, especially in comparison to whites (Diamond, 1998).

Contemporary political alliances—and conflicts—between black leaders and organizations and the leadership of increasingly powerful Latino and Asian communities point to possible future developments. For example, during the 1980's black and Hispanic/Latino groups helped to defeat immigration reform measures in the early 1980's. Jesse Jackson and the Black Congressional Caucus joined Hispanic leaders in opposing several pieces of legislation, such as the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill, which contained employer sanction provisions aimed at curbing illegal immigration that more recently have been strengthened. The Immigration and Reform Act of 1986 split members within and between both the Hispanic caucuses and the Black Caucus, while the Immigration Act of 1990—which raised the limit on legal immigration 500,000 to 700,000—was approved unanimously by the Hispanic caucuses and all but one member of the Black Caucus. Throughout most of the 1990's, both caucuses drew closer together. Indeed, the Black Caucus opposed several anti-immigrant pieces of legislation by a greater proportion than the Hispanic Caucus, perhaps in part to the expansion of the number of Republican and conservative Hispanic members.

Yet, these leaders and representatives at the state and local levels battle over districting issues, patronage resources and the like. These conflicting tendencies within minority communities will likely continue to shape black attitudes and relations toward immigration policy. Thus, an important area for continuing investigation concerns what strategies and policies might enhance and expand progressive political alliances and foster multi-racial coalitions among these contending forces.

The Economic Contribution of Immigrants

Studies that estimate labor market effects of immigrants often fail to account for the job creating effects of immigrant businesses and spending. In fact, not only is self employment higher among immigrants than among native-born Americans, generally leading to higher incomes, spending by immigrants on food, clothing, housing, and other goods creates jobs.

In contrast to the comparatively developed literature on the impacts of immigrants on labor market opportunities of natives, the literature on the economic contribution of immigrants is sketchy. Little has been published in professional journals, and much of the work that has been done has not been replicated for verification. Yet, some findings suggest that contributions of immigrants to the U.S. economy are substantial. Borjas (1993 and forthcoming) has shown that immigrant labor “greases the wheels” of the American economy, providing millions of dollars to the economy and capital accumulation.

One source of the positive employment effects of immigration is the retention of industries that would otherwise have moved overseas. For example, if no Mexican immigration to Los Angeles County had occurred between 1970 and 1980, 53,000-production jobs, 12,000 high paying non-production jobs and 25,000 jobs in related industries would have been lost (Muller and Espenshade 1985).

Another source of job creation is the entrepreneurial activities of immigrants themselves. In 1990 almost 1.3 million immigrants (7.2%) were self-employed, a rate marginally higher than natives (7%). In addition, the longer immigrants are in this country the more likely they are to be self-employed. During the 1980s, immigrant entrepreneurship increased dramatically. In 1980, 5.6% of immigrants living in the United States were self-employed, but by 1990 the same group of pre-1980 immigrants (who had now been in this country for an additional decade) had a self-employment rate of 8.4%. Self-employment, as defined by the census, covers a wide range of possibilities—from a businessman or professional practitioner to a domestic worker, casual laborer, or someone who drives a gypsy cab. The evidence points to the self-employed as among the most economically successful immigrants. Average incomes for self-employed immigrants (slightly over \$30,000 a year, according to the 1990 census) exceed those of all other classes of immigrant workers by a substantial amount and are about the same as the average incomes of native entrepreneurs (Portes and Rumbaut 1990).

Lastly, another way in which immigrants contribute to employment and overall economic growth is through their effect on aggregate demand for goods and services. Immigrants own and rent properties, buy groceries, clothes, shoes, and the like. Their spending ripples through the economy, creating jobs and generating revenues for businesses and governments. Total immigrant income in 1989—\$285 billion according to the 1990 census—represented about 8% of all reported income, equal to immigrants’ share of the population (7.9%). While a substantial portion may be repatriated to host countries’ families, much of this income is spent on U.S. goods and services and also to large and growing ethnic markets such as newspapers, magazines, and radio and TV stations serving immigrant communities. In addition, some foreign capital apparently has been attracted to regions in which immigrants are concentrated (Miami, New

York, Los Angeles). Enchautegui (1992) found that recent immigrants from abroad create as much employment growth as internal migrants from other areas of the U.S.

To put current concerns about the labor market impact of immigrants into historical perspective, it should be noted that immigrants entering the country in the early part of the century had a much greater impact on the U.S. labor market than the numbers entering today. This difference in scale occurs because the U.S. population was only about one-third its current size. In 1907 alone, for example, immigrants added about 3% to the U.S. labor force. To have an equivalent labor market impact today, immigration would have to reach at least 9 million per year, 10 times current levels.

Debate about Findings

Differing explanations for these findings have generated heated debate. While some studies approach the above research questions from perspectives hostile towards immigrants and blacks alike, others grapple with the issues regarding current patterns of racial and ethnic inequalities, suggesting directions for future research. (Portes & Zhou, 1992:498; Sassen, 1988; Waters & Eschbach, 1995.) For example, how can the paradox of rising labor market marginalization of native born blacks and Puerto Ricans along side growing numbers and employment of new third world immigrants be adequately explained? Why do immigrants have higher rates of entrepreneurialism and labor force participation and lower rates of unemployment than do blacks and Puerto Ricans in the nation's cities? Are they endowed with better qualities or possess more resources of various sorts?

The classical economic approach to such questions usually begins by examination of individual level data on human capital endowments such as level of education, language ability and the like and then correlates wages and earnings to these variables. The longer immigrants are present in the labor force, this line of reasoning goes, the more their initial earnings disadvantage is overcome, crossing over to equal or surpass natives at about 15 years. Variations between groups in cross sectional data are used to support the thesis.

But such approaches have been roundly criticized on several grounds. First, the assumption that there has been a convergence between foreign born and native-born wages, which is often equated with assimilation, is faulty theoretically and empirically. When immigrants enter the labor force, they alter economic conditions for themselves and for natives. Moreover, larger economic dynamics also shape such outcomes. Immigrant workers may reach income parity with native-born groups because of structural contextual variables, such as economic restructuring and loss of manufacturing jobs rather than reflecting individual level variables (Waters & Eschbach, 1995). Others have also argued that the mode of incorporation or context of reception that different national origin groups face—as well as structural barriers and discrimination which native minorities face—must be taken into account to adequately explain such differences (Tienda, 1983; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990).

*Public revenues and expenditures*¹²

Contrary to much public perception, immigrants on balance pay more in taxes than receive in direct subsidies or than they cost in services received. For a small sub-set of immigrants, refugees, however, this is not the case. In fact, except for refugees, immigrants who arrived in the past decade receive public assistance at significantly lower rates than native-born Americans do. Moreover, when refugees are excluded, immigrant use of public benefits actually decreased during the past two decades. Welfare use among working-age (15 to 64 years), non-refugee immigrants is very low. Most transfer payments going to immigrants consist of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for elderly immigrants. The public sector benefits of immigrants also vary, but are generally higher than costs. Revenues paid to the federal government by immigrants represent a net gain (state-level impact varies by state).

It is only at the local level that “costs” of immigrants—and of the native-born—exceed taxes paid, with the major cost being education of immigrant children. Ultimately, of course, increased levels of education—for both immigrant children and native children—translates into higher earnings and taxes paid, thus offsetting such “costs” over the long term. Both immigrant incomes and taxes paid rise with length of time in the United States. In fact, the National Research Council study showed that foreign-born naturalized citizens pay an average of \$6,580 taxes per year compared with \$5,070 for U.S. born-only families. The study also shows that immigrants as a whole have higher incomes and immigrant businesses contribute substantial economic and fiscal net gains for U.S. citizens, constituting a “fiscal bargain.” Most immigrants (70%) arrive in the U.S. in the prime of their working years and with fair to high levels of education, meaning that the cost of education and upbringing were born by the sending countries, not American taxpayers. They calculate that the value of the net windfall gain is an enormous \$1.43 trillion, a transfer of wealth from the rest of the world to the U.S. Similarly, immigrants are huge net contributors to Social Security and Medicare programs. (Total net benefit of taxes paid over benefits received for the 1998-2022 period will be \$500 billion.)

Notwithstanding the high average incomes of legal immigrants, one of the most striking trends over the past decades has been the increase in immigrant poverty. Household poverty has increased for nearly all groups, but the increase was much greater for immigrant households than for native households. Between 1980 and 1990, the percentage of the population concentrated in poverty areas that is foreign-born rose from 7.2% in 1980 to 10.1% in 1990 (Fix and Passel, 1994). This trend—that also corresponds to increases in urban poverty—has accelerated in the 1990’s (partly due to recent changes in U.S. immigrant and social policies) and has led to a modest increased use by immigrants of welfare benefits, such as food stamps and Supplemental Security Income.

Yet, welfare reform—and other social policy changes at all levels of government—represents a sharp reduction in the safety net available to current and especially future immigrants. It reflects a fundamental shift in immigrant policy and its governance. Legal immigrants in the U.S. are no

¹² The following discussion draws upon studies conducted by the Urban Institute (Fix and Passel, 1994) and the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences (1998), which conducted the most comprehensive study to date.

longer treated the same as citizens in many federal and state benefit programs, creating a new official policy of immigrant exceptionalism. Future immigrants are not only excluded from SSI and food stamps, they will be barred for at least five years after entry from Medicaid, TANF, and any other programs defined by the attorney general as federal means-tested public benefits.

At the same time, welfare reform fragments immigrant policy by transferring much of its formulation, funding, and enforcement from the federal government to the states. Devolution means that the public resources dedicated to immigrants' integration will be largely determined by the states and counties in which they live and pay taxes. Because states are granted far greater power than before to deny public benefits to noncitizens, welfare reform not only redefines noncitizens' membership in society but also puts them at greater risk, given their relative political powerlessness. Similarly, other social policy changes enacted or pending (bi-lingual education, affirmative action, etc.), also threatens the status of America's urban poor and poses serious challenges to progressive politics.

These developments raise a number of research and policy questions: How will the acrimonious national political debate over immigration transfer to the state and local levels along with the transfer of decisionmaking? How well will the interests of noncitizens, most of who are "minorities" and who cannot vote, be represented at the state and local levels? Will immigrants—or particular immigrant groups—secure more generous spending policies in places where they are concentrated and where their impacts may be more forcefully felt? Or will they continue to disproportionately suffer from their relative lack of political power? Will states and the urban counties—that bear greater financial responsibility for such benefits—where immigrants are concentrated have the fiscal capacity to extend benefits, even if they are politically inclined to do so?¹³ (These questions directly bear on the discussion on noncitizen voting rights below).

Finally, regarding the small number of refugees and asylees who tend to receive more public benefits initially than do the native born are often, in large measure, directly or indirectly products of U.S. foreign policy. U.S. military aid and actions, fiscal and economic development policy of the U.S. led IMF and World Bank, and investment patterns and capital flows of U.S. corporations and banks have huge impacts upon migration trends globally (Sassen, 1988; Massey, 1998).

Becoming "White" or "Black"?

Differing approaches diagnosis different "problems" and suggests correspondingly different prescriptions to address them. For example, the establishment and maintenance of immigrant "enclaves" has been seen as integral to successfully overcome barriers, as well as obtaining access to various resources, such as for small business entrepreneurialism. This allows some immigrants to find employment that brings a better return to their human capital than would be

¹³ In fact, devolution will drive immigration politics to lower levels of government, generating divergent immigrant policies not just across states but across counties. Because immigrants, and in particular poor immigrants, are highly concentrated in central cities, financially strapped urban counties will find it particularly difficult to increase expenditures on newcomer populations.

found in the secondary labor markets outside of enclave economies, beneficial to both workers and employers (Portes, 1994). To be sure, this line of reasoning suggests that staying within ethnic enclaves is more beneficial than the assimilationist version of social mobility, which has generated debate, including about whether such an emphasis generates an “ethnic trap” (Sanders & Nee, 1992; Portes, 1994). Critics contend that while some employers may be better off in their ethnic enclave economy, workers may instead be subject to exploitation by some of their co-ethnic employers. Similarly, native-born minorities often find themselves in exploitative arrangements within their own communities.

Moreover, because many new immigrants are predominantly nonwhite, their success or failure relative to native minorities leads to intriguing questions about the future. Will the second and third generation immigrant children follow similar strategies and achieve some of the same kinds of relative gains that their parents did, or will they experience downward social mobility as they join America’s native nonwhite minorities in disproportionate poverty, low skilled work, and unemployment? Which immigrants will become “white” or “black” or will the meaning of such categories or the categories themselves change?

While studies of recent second generations immigrants have been only preliminary and not wide scale or comprehensive, findings from several case studies have produced interesting and thoughtful hypotheses, suggesting likely developments and strategies for policy formulation.

Some argue that in contrast to the children of European immigrants earlier in the century—when the U.S. experienced unprecedented and sustained economic growth and possibilities for social mobility—the likely scenario for the second generation of the post 1965 immigrants may well be to experience continued decline relative to their parents. Children of non-white immigrants may not possess sufficient resources or have the choice to “assimilate” as groups before did, no matter how acculturated they become. Gans (1990; 1997) presents findings that make this case, arguing that the opportunity structures in American and global economies have significantly changed. Labor segmentation and racial segregation remain predominant and may be accelerating. Similarly, Portes and Zhou (1994) argue that the segmented character of immigrant incorporation—where some groups experience more decline than others—might be explained by distinctive features of the social contexts that both first and second generation newcomers encounter that makes them vulnerable to downward assimilation: color, location and declining mobility ladders.

Racial prejudice has long marginalized and channeled “immigrants of color” along exclusionary paths of incorporation—such as darker skinned Jews and Italians—giving rise to a notion of “segmented assimilation” described by many scholars. Some contemporary analysts argue that newer Asians, Latinos, Chicanos, and Caribbeans are similarly being segmented and channeled into similar subordinate niches. As we enter the twenty first century, many descendants of today’s Asian and Hispanic immigrants especially will enter the mainstream, intermarry and become sociologically “white” just as Caribbeans and some other groups may become sociologically “black.” In short, “assimilation” appears to work differently for different groups. Put another way, racial identification remains an important means to establish and maintain social differentiation and inequalities, exclusion and inclusion.

For example, Zhou (1997) suggests that the interaction between immigrants and dominant groups in the host society may lead to a downward path of incorporation. Those facing the limits of declining inner-city job and wage markets may instead be incorporated into the minority “underclass” and “oppositional” culture of the urban poor. Zhou describes—and appears to advocate—a strategy of remaining tied to ethnic economies and subcultures as a means of avoiding this downward spiral. By retaining cultural practices and remaining aloof from U.S. racial minorities into which they are at risk of assimilating, the argument goes, the children of immigrants may enjoy a better chance at economic success and perhaps social acceptance.

Moreover, some newer immigrant groups have never experienced discrimination in their home countries and encountering it in the U.S. can have a politicizing affect. The location of immigrants concentrated in cities gives rise to greater interaction with native minorities. Immigrants are concentrated in the most distressed cities in the nation along with most minority groups, though they are also growing in the least distressed cities and places (James, 1997:22). Similarly, blacks continue to be more residentially segregated than Latinos and Asians, but both Latino and Asian segregation have increased (Frey and Farley, 1996). Multiethnic areas (defined as places where two or more minority groups make up the greatest share of a neighborhood or the metropolitan region) have been increasing—particularly in the West and Southwest—and provide greater potential for fostering potentially positive intergroup dynamics. As in the past, proximity raises the possibilities of affecting socialization processes and “identity,” which can also help combat social and political isolation of each. Socialization processes—including the exposure of children of immigrants to the adversarial subculture that marginalized native minority youth develop to cope with discrimination and hardship—may occur even if first generation parents move ahead economically.

Finally, important changes in the economy have eliminated many of the traditional ladders for social mobility, including the further decline of manufacturing sectors and the growth of poorly paid service sector job. Immigrants are concentrated in three sectors of urban economies: low cost, low skill sectors such as apparel manufacturing and restaurants; industries which produce good and services which immigrants themselves own or run and have a need for; and entrepreneurial or small business sectors of cities. (James, 1997).

Globalization and Immigration

Forces driving migration patterns are as complex as they are powerful, and are the subjects of much theorizing and debate. Policies aimed at promoting economic growth (NAFTA, EEU, GATT, and WTO) in part reflect attempts by capital and governments to address economic stagnation, especially in Europe and the U.S. The neo-liberalist free market model that is embodied in such trade agreements aims to reduce the role of states to promote investment (reduce tariffs, privatize state owned enterprises, decrease subsidization of state supported enterprises, reduce or eliminate a range of social welfare policies, etc.), which both facilitates freer and more rapid movement of capital and labor—accelerated by new and rapidly changing communications technologies—and mass migration (Sassen, 1988). These trends have also placed downward pressure on wages and undermined the power of unions in many places, particularly in the developed world.

These policies perpetuate social and economic inequality between developed and developing countries and are closely intertwined with policies aimed at migration control. Thus, while NAFTA the EEU, GATT and the WTO were being hammered out, the U.S. and many countries in Europe simultaneously passed legislation to control immigration, including in Germany, France, and Scandinavia. (Zolberg, 1989; Hollifield, 1992; Freeman, 1995; Brubacker, 1995; Massey, 1998; Kuttner, 1998.)

In the U.S., for example, pressure mounted on Congress to stop the influx of new immigrants which led to the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). But the law produced some unintended consequences. First, as a compromise to immigrant advocates, the bill provided amnesty to illegal immigrants who either had entered the U.S. before 1982 or had worked in the fields for a total of 30 days between 1985 and 1986. Far more migrants qualified for amnesty than Congress expected in part though the use of fraudulent documents. Under the farmworker program, 1.2 million received amnesty (nearly one million more than expected). Similarly, another 1.6 million received amnesty under the other provisions. The net result was that 2.8 million former illegal immigrants—many of which were Mexicans—were given the right to permanently settle in the U.S, which also gave them the right to bring relatives who then could also apply for citizenship.

The bill also provided loopholes that undermined its intent to cut down on illegal immigration. For the first time, the bill imposed fines on employers who hired undocumented workers. But employers were not obligated to verify whether documents workers showed as proof were valid (any one of 29 types of identification could be shown, many which could be falsified). Moreover, employers had incentives to look the other way, benefiting from cheaper labor that they also might not provide benefits. The INS had little capacity to enforce the provisions, until more recently. (Congress doubled its allocation to the INS in 1993 primarily for enforcement from \$1.5 billion to \$3.1 billion at a time when most federal agencies' budgets were being slashed.) Sweatshop conditions increased substantially in many parts of the U.S. At the same time, rapidly changing global economic conditions and an expansion of free market practices following the wake of the collapse of the Soviet bloc helped advance new international trade policies and agreements (NAFTA, GATT).

The case of relations between Mexico and the U.S. is illustrative and not unique. Although NAFTA's proponents claimed that it would reduce incentives for Mexicans to migrate to the U.S.—by creating new jobs and prosperity in Mexico—it instead increased unemployment and displaced small farmers, business owners and other workers.¹⁴ Slower job growth and an increase in the wage gap between Mexico and the U.S. ended up creating greater pressures on Mexicans to migrate north.

Thus, taken together, U.S. immigration and economic policy have produced contradictory results (Massey, 1998). U.S. immigration policy has almost exclusively focused on border control which ignores the economic forces that push many migrants to leave their country in the first place—poverty—and the lure of jobs in the U.S. It is ironic that U.S. economic policy—and an

¹⁴ NAFTA did aid part of the Mexican economy: large industry and agribusiness by accelerating capital investment and boosting trade.

increasingly globalized economy—create the pushes and pulls that its immigration policy tries to curtail. Even such immigrant policies as welfare reform (which initially cut off benefits to all immigrants) and Proposition 187 scared record numbers of legal immigrants into becoming citizens, not only making more immigrants eligible for benefits but also allowing them to bring additional family members into the U.S.

The point here is that the processes of economic “liberalization” go hand in hand with mass migration—and control—and must be viewed as such in forging a rational immigration policy and effective urban revitalization efforts. In the end, it may be that the best “deterrent” to legal and illegal immigration is a truly effective economic development policy for the Third World that would reduce the gap in wealth and wages. The allies and enemies of any such redistributive policies are obvious.

Inter-Group Relations and Strategies for Progressive Public Policy

Addressing such structural sources of inequalities is critical to develop effective strategies and policies for comprehensive solutions. These multiple processes simultaneously occur and produce interactive effects. Immigrants available to perform work at lower wages or contract work in small businesses affect unionized workers and public work sectors alike. Assumptions that blacks might have done better absent immigrants is based upon the belief that minorities and other low-wage sector workers could have done without such work or possess labor strength to bid-up wages. In periods of economic growth, employers can be forced to raise wages when the labor supply is low, which then could attract native workers. Investment and divestment patterns by corporations and banks affect local and global economic conditions. Similarly, the degree to which different locales and economic institutions employ or can establish policies and practices such as “living wage” agreements and affirmative action and minority contact programs—let alone the degree of racial and ethnic discrimination that is operative—will also affect such outcomes.

At the same time there are various resources that may ease assimilation of contemporary immigrants into either the dominant society, or conversely, into subcultures. Immigrants who are classified as political refugees (including Cubans, and many Southeast Asians, and Eastern European and former Soviet Jews) have had access to a variety of governmental resources and programs, such as educational loans, etc. In the case of white immigrants, phenotypical and cultural affinity to dominant groups makes their reception more welcoming (eg. Irish immigrants during the 1980’s and 90’s). Ethnic subcultures afford access to mutually shared resources and options (such as family and kin ties, entrepreneurial resources and private schools oriented toward ethnic groups) not available to blacks and other native minorities. Yet, residential segregation can slow the integration of immigrants, as can the non-acquisition of the English language (Miller, 1996). Whatever the terms of their incorporation or accommodation to the dominant society—as well as their relations with minorities—immigrant relations will play a potentially important role in future developments.

While the color line remains the major fault line in American society, some argue that race is a shifting category the future of which may allow for some groups to assimilate in similar ways to earlier ethnic immigrants. The categories of whom were considered “white” or “dark” has shifted

over time. DeWind and Kasinitz (1997) remind us that many of the pre-1924 immigrants were not regarded as “white” at the time of their arrival, but became so as a result of social conflict and a particular historical processes (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991; Saxton, 1990). They also note, however, that some groups were not seen as immigrants at all and are still not considered “white”, such as Haitians that migrated to Louisiana. Thus, what specific processes and patterns that unfold for particular groups and for second and third generation immigrants will prove decisive. The thirty years of renewed immigration is not long enough to adequately assess the process of incorporation or assimilation¹⁵ and definitively answer the question: how are immigrants and their children being incorporated into the fabric of American life?

Although raising these questions and gathering relevant data are still the primary tasks for researchers, there are some means for making tentative evaluations. Given there are many common immigrant experiences that the diverse immigrant groups share—coupled with recent research—certain threads and tendencies are evident and may point toward likely future developments. For example, all immigrants share the often-wrenching experience of making the transition into the U.S. They share the experience of being an outsider, feel social pressures to conform (often within their group and from the dominant society)—which may also include discrimination or hostility—struggle to establish a place to survive and flourish within constrained opportunities, generally without the ability to speak English very well, and so on.

Generally, Hispanic immigrant groups, with the exception of Puerto Ricans and Cubans have arrived to the U.S. in the past ten to twenty years and naturalize at relatively lower rates than most other immigrants (except Caribbean). On the whole, they tend to be younger, come with relatively low levels of educational attainment and English language ability, and take low-skill jobs with low wages. East Asians are similar in most respects—are poor peasant or working class individuals—but have a greater proportion who are well educated (even in schools where they learn English) and possess higher skill levels and tend to earn higher incomes. These kinds of characteristics also hold for many Caribbean immigrants. European and former Soviet bloc immigrants tend to be better off and more easily assimilate.

Immigrant groups adapt to American society, but they also have an impact on it. Immigrants change to fit into American life and simultaneously remake America. They may feel the affects of dominant social and economic structures as well as nativist reactions, but, in turn, immigrants redefine social identity, transform group relations, and reshape alliances and conflicts. In short, they can affect the balance of economic and political power of contending groups.

While powerful economic forces and changes affect social and political relations in the larger culture, immigrant group solidarity simultaneously provides mechanisms for survival and group cohesion, as well as shapes inter-group relations. Immigrant groups historically have used such group—and class—solidarity as a basis for political struggle that transformed important parts of

¹⁵ Previous social scientists had the benefit of several generations. Assimilation studies of Warner and Srole as well as Milton Gordon drew on observations of second, third and sometimes fourth generation descendents of the turn of the century immigrants in positing notions about assimilation and the like.

American economic, social and political life. Immigrants organized unions, political clubs, and social movements in ways which affected political alignments, party competition and voter participation, sometimes translating into lasting public policies. Jews and their allies, for example, broke into previously insulated institutions of higher education and economy in part by political action. Italians made inroads into trade associations and political organizations. Similarly, the civil rights and black power struggles of the 1960's represent an alternative model to the assimilationist theorists who posit a gradual and almost subject-less process of social change. Asians' recent advances in higher education may have benefited in part from these earlier struggles, aside from their own mobilization in the 70's and 80's.

The process of immigrant assimilation highlights the important role of immigrant groups' collective action and political struggle, which has helped shape their incorporation and has left their imprints on the American landscape. It suggests efforts that foster collective political action can be critical to produce fairer terms of incorporation and social mobility. At the same time, this model of assimilation also highlights powerful structural barriers and political counter mobilization that also has severely hampered immigrant and minority incorporation on more egalitarian terms.

Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that greater worker solidarity across racial and ethnic lines has long been one of the most difficult challenges to achieve, but promises a powerful means of overcoming such deep seated and structural barriers. Although attempts at fostering worker solidarity have been disappointing—being fraught with many potential pitfalls—there are some recent signs for modest hope. Mobilization of groups across racial and ethnic lines is evident in some cases and new forms of organizing are emerging. For example, some labor unions—prompted by changes in the economy and corporate behavior as well as mobilization by the changing demographics of the work force and efforts of progressives within unions—have begun to diversify and tilt labor in a more progressive direction in some cases. Community and labor coalitions have emerged in some areas—as well as across borders—which provide promising models of organizing, such as the campaigns launched around NAFTA, The Gap, Nike, and Disney by immigrant groups, human rights organizations and labor unions. Their struggles have produced improvements and working conditions and wages in Haiti, Central America, and Indonesia.

Similarly, coalitions of community based organizations, which while often short-lived, periodically form around issues (such as welfare reform, health care, education, housing, etc.) that can foster effective working relations between diverse groups. Some successful innovative coalitional efforts point to possible strategies and policy goals. For example, the twin cities of Minnesota; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Dudley Street in Boston; and counties in Oregon State provide promising examples of regional planning strategies for effective job creation to overcome inequalities of funding and services, such as “living wage” legislation and minority contract arrangements.

To the extent that the “objective” and “subjective” interests of immigrant groups and natives minorities converge—comprising not only the bulk of the urban poor and the numerical majorities in most cities, but increasing parts of entire metropolitan regions which still contain most state's majorities—their fates become intertwined. Effective coalitional efforts among them

can help forge mutual self-help. In order to design and implement effective comprehensive solutions for America's urban poor, it will be critical to foster effective multi-ethnic working relationships and institutions that can forge their shared interests into a social and political force.

A key to the success of such strategies that challenge racial, social and economic stratification must entail commitment to developing strong independent institutions in minority and new immigrant communities as well as building bridges between them. Financial and other support by foundations and unions could strengthen a broad range of immigrant and non-immigrant civic organizations and community-based organizations, progressive unions, churches, and local political organizations, as well as build new formations. Civic institutions that are controlled by groups themselves better afford real and meaningful discussion and development of respect and trust which are vital to find common cause and maintain effective and ongoing coalitional work. Such groups would be better capable of articulating reasons for developing alliances, and launch strategic campaigns that effectively capture public media attention, which in turn, could help identify leadership at all levels which can be prodded into action to participate in progressive public campaigns. Ultimately, the deepening of such struggles to achieve the promise of democracy will serve to guide and build multi-racial alliances. They will be better able to pressure formal governmental institutions, which remain overwhelmingly dominated by whites and elites and who benefit from inequalities built into the basic fabric of the society, to be more accessible and accountable to common citizens and more racially inclusive.

One concrete policy goal to advance such progressive politics might entail the expansion of democratic political rights and participation.

The Appearance and Disappearance of Noncitizen Voting Rights

Over the course of American history, the acquisition of political rights has been a vital tool for every disempowered group to their success in battles for economic, social and civil rights.¹⁶ Barriers to political participation have long limited the attainment of political power and such rights for previously disenfranchised Americans (people without sufficient taxable property, African-Americans, women, youth). This fact helps explain much about U.S. political development, particularly for poor and minority communities. Because legislative bodies confer rights, possessing the capacity to influence and/or select representatives is critical to obtain rights.

Therefore, attainment of political rights by immigrants is a crucial pre-requisite to their success in battles for economic, social and civil rights. The story of the establishment and disappearance of noncitizen voting rights in state and local elections for significant portions of the population during much of American history is a neglected aspect of immigrant law. The elaboration of this story is important not only because it provides insight into the history of immigrants—as well as helps account for the plight of cities and the urban poor—but suggests a strategy for structural reform to advance the rights and conditions of America's immigrants and its urban poor.

¹⁶ Chilton Williamson, 1960, *American Suffrage From Property to Democracy, 1760-1860*; Kirk H. Porter, 1968, *A History of Suffrage in the United States*; Judith Shklar, 1991, "American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion."

Before World War I, aliens voted in local, state and even national elections in twenty-two states and federal territories.¹⁷ As late as 1926, noncitizen immigrants held public offices, such as alderman, coroner and school board member. (The Declaration of Independence was even signed by several aliens!) During the colonial period noncitizen voting was widely practiced and not extraordinarily controversial, as voting rights were predominantly tied to race and property. The emerging republicanism and liberalism embodied in slogans such as “no taxation with out representation” made noncitizen voting a logical democratic practice and difficult to assail.¹⁸ During the Civil War era and westward expansion, however, the issue increasingly became more contentious. Northern states thought alien suffrage more in line with basic rights and the “progressive spirit of the age”—as well as likely political supporters—while Southern states saw immigrants as hostile to slavery and thus as a threat. Indeed, nearly 25% of the Union Army were foreign born during the Civil War (Raskin, 1993:1410).

After the Civil War and during Reconstruction, alien suffrage spread in the South and West. With a growing need for new labor and to attract settlers, immigration expanded and aliens came to figure more in the politics of many states that used alien suffrage as an incentive and a pathway to citizenship (not as a substitute). Illinois and Wisconsin, whose formula entailed aliens “declaring” their intent to become citizens, became the model for other states. Congress passed acts enabling the territories of Washington, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Dakota, Wyoming and Oklahoma to allow noncitizen voting, and after achieving statehood most preserved the practice. At least thirteen new states adopted declarant suffrage. By the time of the close of the nineteenth century, nearly one-half of all the states and territories had some experience with voting by aliens, lasting for more than half a century for many of them.

With the advent of the twentieth century and an increase of darker, more Mediterranean and politically suspect immigrants, however, anti-alien passions flourished that halted and reversed these developments. The loss of noncitizen voting rights during the first part of this century—coupled with the malapportionment of cities—came at the same time when the population of urban America reached and even exceeded the populations in much of the rural and suburban parts of the country. The timing of immigrant disenfranchisement—and other poor and minority groups through means such as restrictive voter registration procedures, literacy tests, poll taxes and the like—was not coincidental. Just when the potential for a more progressive politics was coming into being, a host of restrictive measures were enacted, in part aimed at limiting the growing power of working class immigrants.¹⁹ The legacy of such restrictions has shaped

¹⁷ Much of the following historical overview draws upon the excellent work of Jamin Raskin, (1993).

¹⁸ It is important to note that early tolerance of alien suffrage was perfectly compatible with exclusion of others (women, men without property, and blacks/slaves). Alien enfranchisement on that basis buttressed the privileging of propertied white male Christians (Raskin, 1993:1401).

¹⁹ Piven and Cloward, 1988, make a compelling case for this argument. They and others note that elite “reformers” and other opponents to noncitizen voting helped to popularize turn of the century population projections showing that America would become mostly non-white within fifty years. (At the time, the bulk of Eastern and Southern European immigrants arriving were

important features of American political development by precluding or limiting more progressive politics and policy.

It is important to note that none of the principle previously excluded groups in American history gained access to the franchise by way of judicial action. Social contracts made by citizens themselves are more durable than those negotiated through judicial power. Rather, they fought their way in through political agitation, albeit sometimes by using the courts as well and with the support of certain sectors of the society. Ultimately though it is the standing citizenry and their representatives that decide through the political process to extend voting rights to the previously disenfranchised, after hearing their case. It was after all, agitation that led the propertied to enfranchise the property-less; whites to enfranchise blacks; men to enfranchise women, and so on. Why not also for noncitizen immigrants? Recounting past practice and articulating a rationale for contemporary reinstatement of noncitizen voting rights are important first steps.

Arguments for Noncitizen Voting

While voting by noncitizens was not and is not precluded by law, its elimination from political practice has been eviscerated from the national memory. Yet, neither the Supreme Court nor any lower federal court or state court ever found the practice of noncitizen voting unconstitutional. Rather, courts explicitly or implicitly sanctioned it.²⁰

A strong case can be made that non-citizen immigrants—and even undocumented or “illegal aliens”—be allowed to vote in state and local elections. In fact, most efforts to expand the franchise to previously excluded groups—blacks, women, youth—have mounted more or less similar arguments. There are three primary arguments.²¹

The first emphasizes the rights of immigrants themselves as members of democratic communities. Basic democratic principles hold that a community can only bind members by its laws and require their support through taxes if it allows them to participate in its politics. Governmental authority is legitimate only with the consent of the governed. If all those subject to the laws have not in some way consented to them (such as by voting), tyranny or anti-democratic results are possible, even likely if history is any indication. The proper measure of membership in democratic communities is residency, not nationality per se.

States and local governments already treat noncitizens—both legal permanent residents and undocumented people—like other community members in most respects. The most obvious

not considered “white” in the popular and academic taxonomy of the time.) It is interesting to note contemporary parallel projections—and fears—in current popular debate.

²⁰ Raskin, 1993:1417. Raskin reviews the legal history of noncitizen voting. See also Jennifer Gordon, “Let Them Vote” *Boston Review* (199?). For New York, see Shimmelman, 1992.

²¹ The following arguments and counter arguments draws upon Raskin, 1993; Shimmelman, 1992 and Gordon, 199?, as well as upon the civil rights tradition, suffragette movement and literature of various liberation struggles.

example is that all residents must pay income taxes regardless of their immigration status.²² Immigrants are subject to the range of other laws (and then some) that govern social and economic life. Noncitizens use and support a range of government services, including police, sanitation, health agencies and the like. Noncitizens participate in community life in typical ways—in religious institutions, schools, and in the economy—as members, consumers and as workers and owners. Moreover, most immigrants are long-term or permanent residents. The argument is that noncitizens have the same stake and interest in a community's political decisions as that of any citizen. Moreover, people tend to become involved and invested—whether in their schools or in their polities—if they are given a voice and means of participating in them. Voting is an important means of becoming incorporated and engaged in a polity, not merely the outcome of becoming integrated/assimilated.

A second argument refers to issues of discrimination and bias. Noncitizens are at risk of bias in majoritarian electoral systems because they lack voting rights and politicians can ignore their interests. Discriminatory districting schemes as well as a broad range of legislation and practices (in employment, housing, education, healthcare, etc.) are inevitable by-products, not to mention xenophobic political campaigning. Arguments for fair treatment and justice in civil and political society can be made. Standard democratic and civil rights principles can be marshaled to advance the case for the enfranchisement of noncitizens. Noncitizens have legitimate interests in a community's political processes and need protections within it.

A third argument stresses the benefits that would accrue to other community members, including communities of color, poor and working class communities, and urban and metropolitan residents more generally. Aside from boosting civil and political rights for all groups, noncitizen voting strengthens potential to win electoral contests and influence public policy. Highlighting the numerous cases where an enlarged electorate would have decided the outcome of a close election of import to such communities would drive home the potential benefits of noncitizen voting to forge progressive political majorities.²³ Finally, underscoring the common social and economic interests that exist between such groups suggests a political agenda that could unite them, especially in the face of the present conservative reaction.

²² As stated earlier, most immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits (except refugees) and than the average American. Moreover, immigration laws require proof of tax payment for the five years prior to becoming legal. As a result, many undocumented immigrants go out of their way to pay taxes, often without receiving a refund to which they are entitled because some payments are made under false Social Security numbers.

²³ In New York, for example, George Pataki (R) defeated Mario Cuomo in the 1994 gubernatorial election by a mere 173,798 votes out of more than five million votes cast; Alphonse D'Amato sank Bob Abrams by only 124,838 votes in 1992; and in New York City, Rudolph Guiliani defeated David Dinkins by only 50,000 votes out of nearly two million cast in 1993, with over five million voting age adults residing in the city. Today, nearly one million New Yorkers are noncitizens. The 1%-2% margins of victories could quickly vanish if noncitizens were more than potential voters. Similarly scenerios exist across the nation in dozens of gubernatorial and congressional races were closely lost in 1994, as is likely again in 1998.

There are several counter arguments that can and must be addressed. One counter argument contends that since noncitizens have not sworn a loyalty oath to the U.S., they can not be trusted to vote in the best interests of this country, as opposed to their own interests or those of their country of origin. Proponents of this argument ignore the fact that people born in the United States are not required to swear allegiance to the Constitution. Ostensible proof of noncitizen commitment and loyalty to the U.S. would be their naturalization. One flawed assumption is that not only are native born residents “loyal” but that noncitizens are not “loyal.” In addition, this argument overlooks that immigrants are, in fact, already community members. Further, a measure of noncitizen commitment and loyalty is evident in their choice of coming and continued presence here. Indeed, in numerous and multiple ways noncitizens demonstrate their commitment and loyalty daily, such as in participating in a voluntary organizations or opening a small business. In an earlier period of American history, it was widely believed that allowing declarant noncitizen immigrants voting rights would encourage acquisition of knowledge about the U.S. and hasten integration and naturalization. To make their right to participate in the management of public affairs dependent upon renouncing citizenship to their home country—which might preclude their right to return to that country—amounts to a denial of the latter right. Given the magnitude of what this might entail—not seeing family and loved ones—many immigrants don’t naturalize and live in the U.S. for decades, yet are denied full political membership. Finally, acquiring citizenship is no longer as easy as it used to be. Aside from the near two-year backlog that exists for those who have been here for five years, hundreds of thousands of legal immigrants with temporary work permits are not even eligible to naturalize at all, yet live in the U.S. for years.

Another counter argument is that noncitizens lack sufficient knowledge of and feeling for the political institutions and issues to make informed voting decisions. First, specific knowledge is not a prerequisite for political participation. If it were, many native born citizens would fail tests of even basic political knowledge, as survey research has consistently shown. Second, most “education” on campaign issues often occurs in the few weeks and months before an election, not years prior, and is all too often done by the media and candidates. Even conceding that political education has long-term components it is not safe to assume that large differences would exist between the two populations. And even if it were proven that statistically noncitizens were more politically “ignorant” than citizens, it is still not a legitimate basis for barring all noncitizens as a class from political participation. Because non-citizens have chosen this country, rather than being born into it, and are in the process of learning about its language and culture, they often pay more attention to the events around them than many disaffected citizens do. Foreign-language television, radio, and newspapers in most immigrant communities keep people up to date on politics here as well as abroad. If it is the politics of immigrants that opponents dislike or fear, that is the issue that must be exposed as such and publicly debated.

Worse, it may be argued, noncitizens would tip the political balance in a state or community by voting in their own interest. For example, noncitizens could vote to grant state public assistance to undocumented people, or permit bilingual instruction in the public schools. While it may be true that many noncitizen immigrants might vote for such policies, native born citizens also vote their own interests. Both groups, however, are not homogeneous. It is not exactly clear how noncitizens would actually vote and what impacts they would actually have on the political balance of power. Indeed, this is an area that requires more research. Some contend that what

little is known about the voting patterns of newly naturalized U.S. citizens—as well as noncitizen voting in Europe—suggests only modest shifts, if any, would occur (DeSipio, 1998). More likely is that all classes of voters would increase their voter participation rates, given the likely impact of invigorating electoral dynamics that the enfranchisement of new blocs of voters would have on the political system. Indeed, social and political conflicts might be able to be worked out at the ballot box instead of the streets.²⁴

A final counter argument is that allowing noncitizen voting would increase electoral fraud. Unethical immigrants or dishonest politicians might use corrupt voting practices to compromise the integrity of the ballot. But immigrants are logically no more likely to be bought or sold than citizens, nor to commit fraud. Moreover, there is little hard evidence of vote fraud, both historically and contemporarily, contrary to some popular misconceptions (Hayduk, 1996). Finally, strong anti-fraud measures are in place that can detect and deter fraud.

To be sure, there are practical problems of managing the simultaneous voting of different classes of electors while preventing double voting and the like which need to be solved. Decisions will need to be made about whether, for example, to restrict voting to legally admitted noncitizens who have been residing in a jurisdiction for a certain period of time (months, years?), and whether to require voters to prove this at poll sites or during the registration process with identification papers, and the like. In order to reduce potential for erecting other cumbersome barriers as well as costs and confusion, the fewer the distinctions between classes of voters and procedures that are required, the better.

Non citizen voting rights could be won several ways. Legislatively, state legislatures could pass enabling laws enfranchising resident noncitizens, or, allow localities to pass such resolutions. Apparently, most state constitutions do not prohibit noncitizen voting (Raskin, 1993). States and localities that decide to extend the vote to immigrants would likely withstand court challenges. As previously mentioned, the Constitution permits noncitizen voting and the courts have uniformly upheld local laws granting nonresidents the right to vote in local elections.

Despite their exclusion from the formal political process, foreign-born populations have contributed to the lives of their states and cities in all the same ways as other citizens. But their taxation without representation represents a challenge to the legitimacy of America's democratic form of government. It also presents a rationale and opportunity for organizing a progressive political majority. An appeal on the basis of such democratic and moral claims can be elaborated to mobilize both noncitizens and likely allies. The inauguration of noncitizen voting rights would provide immigrants an important means not only to defend against nativist attacks, but also to forge allies with other minorities and build a progressive voting block that can advance their mutual interests.

The Political Arithmetic of Noncitizens

²⁴ This was one of the arguments used in the campaign for noncitizen voting rights in Washington D.C. following riots in a majority Latino neighborhood (Adams Morgan), according to Jamin Raskin.

Depending on the estimate, there are some 10 to 12 million legal aliens living in the U.S, which are completely disenfranchised (approximately 8 to 10 million arrived during the last decade and another 6-7 million during the prior decade). The Census reported that in the 1996 elections 15.5% of the people who did not vote were noncitizens.²⁵

The major immigrant-receiving states and cities have districts that contain large portions of the voting age population that is barred from the political process because they are not citizens. In the two largest immigrant receiving states, California and New York, some districts contain noncitizen populations that approach a third to a majority of the district. In New York, noncitizenship prevents one out of every six adults from participating in state and city politics. In some neighborhoods—such as Washington Heights and Flushing—this ratio rises to a nearly a majority. (Mollenkopf, 1993; Olsen and Levitt, 1997; Census reports and the NYC Planning Department.) This is also true of California where roughly one in five residents is a noncitizen. Similarly, parts of Los Angeles, Alameda County and the Bay Area have high concentrations of noncitizens in many districts (Alvarez and Butterfield, 1998).

Although large immigrant receiving states disproportionately gain influence in Washington—because of how seats are apportioned on the basis of the census—immigrants themselves go largely underrepresented. A study by the Center for Immigration Studies²⁶ examined the effect that population growth caused by immigration has on the apportionment of seats in the House and found that a total of 13 seats changed hands in 1990 or will do so in the next census because of recent immigration. Seven states²⁷ will lose a seat or fail to gain one in the 2000 Census because of immigration, 98 % of the residents are citizens. In contrast, high immigrant states—such as California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois—benefit from the seats lost by other states. Since a state's influence in the House of Representatives and the Electoral College is determined by the size of its delegation, immigration is not simply redistributing seats—it is also

²⁵ Of those individuals, 13.5% were white, 9% were black and 53% were Hispanic (there was no category for Asians). CPS, table 4.

²⁶ “Remaking the Political Landscape:How Immigration Redistributes Seats in the House of Representatives,” by Steven Camarota, et. als., October 6, 1998. The study notes that a total of 31 seats changed hands in 1990 or are likely to do so in 2000. 13 of those seats redistributed are attributable to immigration. The authors note that estimates in the report may understate the effects of immigration because they do not attempt to measure the effect that the children born to recent immigrants have on congressional apportionment. If such estimates were included, the impact of immigration probably would be even greater. It is worth noting that none of the states expected to lose seats as a result of the 2000 census is losing net population; they are merely growing more slowly than the high-immigration states.

²⁷ Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin will each lose one seat that they currently have and Colorado and Kentucky will both fail to gain a seat that they would otherwise have gained had there been no immigration after 1990. Six states lost a seat in the House in 1990 as a result of immigration in the 1980s: Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, and Ohio, while Georgia and Kentucky both failed to gain a seat they would otherwise have gained had there been no immigration after 1980.

redistributing political influence at the national level. Yet, those same immigrants (which remain noncitizens) are precluded from selecting who will represent their state at the national level.²⁸

Recent naturalization of immigrants has accelerated, precipitated in part by legislation blocking legally resident aliens from federal and state benefits²⁹ and the granting of dual citizenship by several countries (most notably Mexico), increasing the pool of potential and active voters. Coupled with the coming of age of the immigrant second generation, these developments create another challenge and opportunity to the political systems of immigrant receiving metropolises. As native blacks and Latinos of the large cities continue to become politically incorporated, the relative growth of new immigrants in the electorate is likely to increasingly affect the prevailing patterns of minority political representation. While native and immigrant minority groups have made common political cause in certain circumstances, the potential for competition and conflict is also substantial. In Los Angeles County, Latinos and Asians jockey with blacks for representation, and Dominicans challenge Puerto Ricans in New York City. Immigration has introduced new political fault lines both across broad racial and ethnic groupings. As the make up of black, Spanish-speaking, and Asian populations becomes more heterogeneous, political conflicts shift to “black versus brown.”

These trends exemplify the ways in which immigration is complicating the patterns of racial succession in urban America. As Latin American, Asian, and Caribbean immigrants populate central cities while some African-Americans and Latinos experience upward and outward mobility, many cities that had experienced a political succession from whites to blacks are now seeing different minority factions compete with one another for votes from the white minority. Many electoral districts (city council, state legislative and congressional) have been designed to make a “minority majority” but are increasingly now comprised of new immigrants who potentially contend for power. As these trends accelerate, how will current patterns of political representation change? The future of a progressive urban politics will revolve around the kinds of multiracial and multiethnic coalitions that can develop in cities.

These developments challenge scholars, the immigrant and voting rights policy communities, and political and community leaders alike to find workable answers. Several important research questions need to be addressed: What factors promote or impede citizenship and political participation among new immigrants? How do they compare to—and interact with—native-born minority political participation? What impact is the dramatic growth in new electoral constituencies having on the political situation of native born minorities? Under what conditions will these different groups find common cause, and what factors accentuate competition and

²⁸ Unequal representation also holds, of course, at the state and local levels. The authors—who advocate for reducing immigration to the United States—argue that immigration distorts our democracy by taking away seats from states composed almost entirely of citizens to create new districts composed largely of non-citizen immigrants who cannot vote. The unstated but equally true other side of this story of distorted democracy is that immigrants within such districts do not select representatives who make policy that affects them. The authors conclude that if immigration policy and patterns remain constant, immigration will continue to redistribute seats inequitably into the foreseeable future.

²⁹ A backlog of one to two years, however, has slowed the naturalization rate.

conflict among them? Some scholars are beginning to piece together the data to address such questions, but no comprehensive study exists.

Research suggests that, so far, most new immigrant adults that naturalize register and vote at slightly lower rates than natives as a whole, but particular groups' rates vary substantially (Lien, 1998; DeSipio & Jerit, 1997; 1998; Olsen and Levitt, 1997; Mollenkopf et.als. forthcoming). Louis DeSipio (1998) has found that "the new urban citizen" (newly naturalized urbanites) vote at lower rates than natives. But, a preliminary report of a national study of the 1996 elections showed that black and Hispanic foreign born individuals who became citizens voted at higher rates than native citizens from the same background. The rate among Asians was even lower (Mollenkopf et. als, forthcoming). A study of New York City found that Jamaicans voted at higher rates than Chinese or Ecuadorians in the 1992 and 1993 elections (Olsen and Levitt, 1997). Dominicans voted at rates below Jamaicans but above Chinese and Ecuadorians. Immigrants in Los Angeles similarly vote at lower rates than natives, with Mexicans voting more than Koreans, Salvadorans and Chinese.

These studies point to the typical factors that influence voter participation of the general population: higher levels of education, income, partisanship, being older; the nature of party systems and electoral competition; the ease or difficulty of administrative procedures involved in registering to vote; and the presence or absence of bi-lingual materials and interpreters. Demographic trends suggest, however, that the foreign and native-born children of immigrants will soon constitute a near majority of the youth population and may yet manifest higher turnout rates which may prove decisive in electoral contests.³⁰

Partisan and political preferences of immigrants and how they compare with native-born voters—especially voters of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds, and urban and minority groups in particular—is less clear. Exit polls and surveys provide some indication, but no comprehensive data is available.³¹ White immigrants were less likely to vote in 1996 for

³⁰ For example, there is some indication that more advantaged second generation white and Asian immigrants vote at higher rates than the first generation, while less advantaged second generation black and Hispanic immigrants vote at slightly lower rates (Mollenkopf et.als., forthcoming). Of course, election specific variables should be factored in to interpret any such data.

³¹ A 1985 National Research Council report, Immigration Statistics: A Story of Neglect, concluded that the current information system could not produce reliable, accurate and timely statistics that allowed rational decisionmaking about immigration policy, including immigrant attitudinal data. The Council recommended that Congress make "profound and basic" changes, providing a long list specific recommendations. These recommendations were never acted upon. More recently, the Rand Center for Research on Immigration Policy (funded by the Ford Foundation) published a compelling case for why a comprehensive approach to surveying immigrant communities nationally was needed, and more importantly, recommendations for how to go about it. The report, Surveying Immigrant Communities:Policy Imperatives and Technical Challenges, 1994, among other things, conducted a pilot study and calculated the costs of a comprehensive study. The National Latino Immigrant Survey (Pachon and DeSipio, 1994) and the Latino National Political Survey, studies by the National Association of Latino Elected

President Clinton than all other immigrant groups on the whole. Immigrants of color (Blacks, Hispanics and Asians) were also more likely than their native counterparts to vote Democratic. In 1996, Latinos gave 71% of their votes to Clinton (16% more than in 1992, probably due to the anti-immigrant initiatives of Republicans). Asians also gave Clinton a solid majority. In New York City, Asians gave Clinton 75% of their votes.³² Yet, Asians voted 2 to 1 for Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in 1993 over David Dinkins, New York's first African-American mayor. In Los Angeles, a coalition of blacks and liberal whites held sway until recently, repeatedly electing Mayor Tom Bradley. Meanwhile, Mexican-Americans struggled to gain a foothold in the City Council and LA County Board of Supervisors. Although they provided modest electoral support for former Mayor Bradley, who did not actively promote the rise of Hispanic politicians, Mexican-American voters swung to back Richard Riordan against Tom Hayden in 1997. (Michael Woo, an Asian-American who earlier ran against Riordan and was backed by Bradley, did receive a slim majority of Mexican-American support.)

Surveys and ethnographic studies show that recent Latino immigrant' public policy agenda does not differ substantially from the Latino population as a whole (DeSipio, 1998). Compared to the population as a whole, however, recent Latino immigrants advocate a larger role for government in their lives, including in education, housing, employment, health care and child services, language issues, and crime and drug control.³³ There is some evidence that a disjuncture exists between elite and mass opinion, at least in Latino immigrant communities in Southern California and in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan region. Studies of elites find higher levels of concern about the quality of delivery of municipal services, particularly police services, and are more likely to report discrimination. Latinos as a whole report higher levels of trust in government and are willing to pay more taxes for services.³⁴

While most incumbents yield nothing without a fight or something in return, New York's political system has accommodated Dominicans and West Indians who hold seats in the city council and state legislature. Asians hold a few seats on local school boards. Black and Latino leaders have made rhetorical gestures to forging a "gorgeous mosaic" and sometimes worked effectively together. Moreover, they are likely to look to certain immigrant populations to bolster their vote totals. Similarly, white liberals continue to depend on their alliances with minorities and are also likely to look to new immigrant groups. In Los Angeles, Mexican-Americans continue to jockey with others for power—including Mexican immigrants and other Hispanics such as Salvadorans—while at the same time they are played off other groups (blacks and Asians) by dominant white politicians. The much smaller Asian population appears to be incorporating into the white Democratic establishment.

Officials (NALEO), exit polls of Voter News Surveys and others do provide data on political attitudes and voting behavior of immigrants.

³² Asian immigrants as a group hold weaker partisan preferences (Republican, Democrat or Independent) compared to native-born Americans.

³³ It should be noted that large national surveys of Latino group responses are driven by Mexican-Americans, and Asians by Chinese-Americans.

³⁴ Caution should guide any interpretation of such data. Aside from issues regarding the preliminary nature of these studies, regions and populations vary substantively. New York is not Los Angeles, both in terms of population and political systems.

The record thus far of newer immigrant political incorporation in such places as New York and Los Angeles suggests that established native minority elected officials and leaders will forge alliances with immigrant groups which are more closely ethnically and racially related, much as was experienced by previous waves of immigrants. Thus, inter-ethnic conflict is likely to continue in such jurisdictions. Opportunities to make common cause and strike bargains to cooperate may develop and engender voter mobilization—such as various anti-immigrant or anti-urban initiatives (Prop 187, welfare reform)—but minority political fragmentation and immigrant heterogeneity largely remains. So does the task of building political alliances to galvanize progressive majorities by promoting viable alternative programs and strategies.

Voting in urban America has long reflected ethnic patterns. Some scholars have claimed that an ethnic analysis of the number and direction of votes cast by group “explains electoral results with more power and consistency than any other form of analysis.” (McNickle, 1993:2) Turn of the century political machines successfully used “balanced tickets,” comprised of candidates of each major ethnic group, to ensure broad voter appeal and electoral dominance, simultaneously responding to and shaping such ethnic voting patterns. For example, in the 1930’s when three-quarters of New York City residents were foreign born or first generation, politicians needed to forge a voter coalition made up of Jewish and Italian voters in order to capture City Hall.

Yet, contrary to much of the received wisdom about machine politics, immigrants were not readily politically incorporated. Nor did they swiftly climb up the ladder of social mobility into mainstream middle class America. Erie (1988) shows that political machines, which were dominated by the Irish and who consolidated their power at the turn of the century, had fewer resources (jobs, services, contracts, and franchises) than generally assumed and “jealously guarded them, parsimoniously accommodating the later-arriving Southern and Eastern Europeans and blacks.” Erie portrays the newcomers as constantly struggling with their Irish political overlords. Their anti-Irish insurgency took varied forms: third parties, reform movements, and revolts within the machines. For the later ethnic arrivals, integration into urban machines was a hard-won, delayed, and ultimately of limited accomplishment.” (Erie, 1988:6-7.) In fact, Erie shows that most Irish immigrants themselves did not as a whole substantially benefit economically from Irish political consolidation. (It would be WWII and the post-war economic expansion that pulled many Irish, Italian and Jews into the middle class.)

Political mobilization of new ethnic groups by machines entailed substantial risks. Newly enfranchised voters could demand more than machines could offer, especially as state legislatures and rival factions moved to limit public resources available to them. Erie argues that the secret of the machines’ longevity was bringing electoral demand into balance with limited resource supply. Machines managed political conflict by lowering voter expectations and demobilizing their base as well as those of the new comers. The challenge for contemporary minority political leadership is to overcome such powerful tendencies.

Just as the civil rights movement sought to extend the franchise to African-Americans and others who had been barred from voting to attain equitable representation, a renewed movement for human rights would further extend the franchise to new Americans. Indeed, as the population of the U.S. becomes more diverse, forging more diverse electoral coalitions beyond a “politics of

black and white” and “black versus brown” will be necessary to achieve a progressive majority. To the extent this might be accomplished along class lines, racial and ethnic political conflict might be sidestepped. A crucial step in forging such progressive urban and metropolitan regional alliances is the establishment of a truly universal franchise, which would provide for noncitizen immigrant voting.³⁵

Toward that end, further elaboration of the history and rationale of the renewal of noncitizen voting rights is a crucial. Planning and launching specific campaigns can draw upon the lessons from history as well as from recent (even successful!) developments. Recent campaigns include: the establishment of noncitizen voting rights in Tacoma Park and five other counties in Maryland (Raskin, 1993); the efforts to form a multi-racial coalition and introduce legislation to re-establish noncitizen voting in the New York State Legislature and New York City Council in the early 1990’s (Shimmelman, 1992; Jordan, 1993); and similar preliminary efforts in Los Angeles (Siegal, 1997). Each of these campaigns witnessed leaders and politicians of dominant minority groups that were lukewarm about noncitizen voting rights—some even quietly opposed it—because they feared loss of their seats or share of political power. Yet, working alliances and coalitions were forged. Such political minefields will need to be traversed wisely and gingerly.

Europe also provides compelling arguments and examples of noncitizen voting rights. The Maastricht Treaty granted all Europeans the right to vote in European countries other than their own, expanding what has been practiced for years in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands to the rest of Europe. Analysis of such laws and their benign impacts will provide further ammunition to a campaign for noncitizen voting. Lastly, the increasing number of countries that provide for dual citizenship and absentee voting could also prove useful.

Several other steps to further such ends might include:

- 1) Deepen networks of researchers and practitioners (academics, policy practitioners and the immigrant and voting rights communities) who possess knowledge about issues of political identity, political participation, and coalition formation within immigrant and minority communities.
- 2) Conduct collaborative research on the major immigrant receiving metropolitan areas and cities, analyzing existing survey research and public opinion data, census data, INS data, and registration and voting data to determine, by racial group and national origin factors that limit and/or facilitate political participation and cooperation among immigrant and native born minorities.
- 3) Conduct surveys, interviews and/or focus groups among foreign born and native-born minority populations and political elites concerning the above.
- 4) Analyze and publish reports that summarize findings.
- 5) Launch organizational efforts and campaigns to attempt to re-establish noncitizen voting rights, or a truly universal franchise.

³⁵ Of course, other electoral reforms are crucial to affect not only the scope and bias of the electorate but also the nature of the parties, such as effective campaign finance reform, ballot access reform, and the inauguration of alternative representational schemes (along the lines of if short of proportional representation), if more democratic electoral politics and outcomes are to be achieved.

The dominant political parties are increasingly turning their attention towards immigrants.³⁶ It would be wise for progressives to beat them to the punch.

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³⁶ The recent congressional session ended with the provision of new money (\$171 million) to help clear the citizenship backlog, more than 140,000 temporary visas for high-tech workers, and residency for as many as 50,000 Haitian refugees. (Haitians were excluded from last year's law that granted residency to Cuban and Nicaraguan refugees. Black leaders in Florida had made Haitian refugees a priority and some Florida Republicans, particularly gubernatorial candidate Jeb Bush helped with the final push on the Haitian legislation. The Dallas Morning News, October 19, 1998.) Moreover, House Speaker Newt Gingrich has pledged that his party would reach out to Hispanics and other new minorities. During this session, the speaker's staff began translating many of his news releases into Spanish. In the Senate, the immigration subcommittee is now under the control of Spencer Abraham (R-Mich) who is considered more sympathetic to immigrant issues than his predecessor Alan Simpson (R-Wyo) who has tried to cut immigration. The Democrats have worked to maintain their immigrant friendly image. Democratic leaders of the Hispanic Caucus released a scorecard on Oct 16 of congressional votes on twenty-four key issues to their community, with House Democrats supporting 89% of Hispanic goals while House Republicans supported only 20%. The Hispanic Caucus also staved off an effort to kill sampling in the next census and won an increase in funding for Hispanic-oriented colleges (ibid.)

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APPENDIX: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA