

Introduction

Comparative Approaches to Changing Interethnic Relations in Cities

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IN 2000, the United States Census Bureau announced that first-generation immigrants—those born abroad—constituted 10.4 percent of the American population. This figure represents the highest proportion since the 1940s and is more than double the 1970s level of 4.7 percent. In the 1990s, 8.6 million immigrants came to America, adding to the 8.3 million who arrived in the 1980s and the 11.5 million who arrived before 1980 (Jaret 1991; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Waldinger 1989). As the population grows, almost one out of every two new Americans is an immigrant. Yet even though the number of immigrants to the United States since 1965 is approaching—if it has not already surpassed—the levels of the last great wave of immigration between 1880 and 1920, few studies have undertaken to examine how contemporary immigrants are adapting to and becoming incorporated into the U.S. political system. Given such numbers, however, it is clear that an understanding of immigrants and their political incorporation is essential for an understanding of American politics.

This is particularly true when it comes to urban politics. Recent immigrants to the United States, like their predecessors around the turn of the twentieth century, have settled overwhelmingly in urban areas. Over a third, in fact, live in the New York and Los Angeles metropolitan areas alone (Waldinger 1996). Urban areas provide immigrants' first sustained experience of the American government and its institutions. In the cities where they settle, immigrants see the gov-

ernment at work in policing, housing, health care, education, and the job market, to name just a few areas. The impressions created are formative and lasting: immigrants' participation in a local context—forming advocacy groups, voting, and running for and holding office, among other things—provides them with the tools and skills of citizenship, leads to management of their relationships with their neighbors, and serves as a gateway into participation in the larger national polity.

Moreover, in addition to raising questions about when and how these new immigrants will be incorporated into American politics, the changing demographics of American metropolitan areas also raise questions about the shape of urban politics itself. How have these new urban residents affected existing urban political regimes? Are they entering the system as partners in existing governing coalitions, or are they forming new ones? Is the new urban ethnic mix characterized by cooperation or competition? If there is competition among new and old ethnic and racial groups, what are its characteristics? And how do the answers to these questions vary from city to city, region to region?

To some extent, these questions have been addressed with regard to particular cities and for particular ethnic groups. Mollenkopf (1988), for instance, has addressed some of these issues in the context of New York City, as has Sonenshein (1993) in Los Angeles, and Portes and Stepick have begun exploring these questions in Miami (Portes and Stepick 1993; see also Grenier and Stepick 1992). Jackson and Preston brought together a number of key articles in their volume on California politics (Jackson and Preston 1991). Nevertheless, there have been remarkably few comparative studies that bring this locally specific work together in one place. Peter Eisinger's work dwelt on the themes of ethnic succession and competition, but its focus was on the black-white racial struggles of the 1960s and 1970s (Eisinger 1976, 1980). Browning, Marshall, and Tabb's *Racial Politics in American Cities* began the task of assessing the dynamics of contemporary ethnic relations, but didn't address the role of new immigrants in American urban politics (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1990). Furthermore, although volumes edited by Rich (1996) and Jennings (1994) brought together new work on interethnic coalitions and conflict in U.S. cities, these collections address immigration only indirectly and make but rudimentary attempts at generating comparative urban theory. As it stands, Paula McClain's work is almost unique in its comparative overview of ethnic competition across major American metropolitan areas (McClain 1996; McClain and Karnig 1990) and in its effort to discern broader patterns among these individual cities.

This book seeks to contribute to this burgeoning literature on race

and ethnic relations by focusing on recent immigration and its impact on urban politics in cities across the United States.

Immigrants in Cities

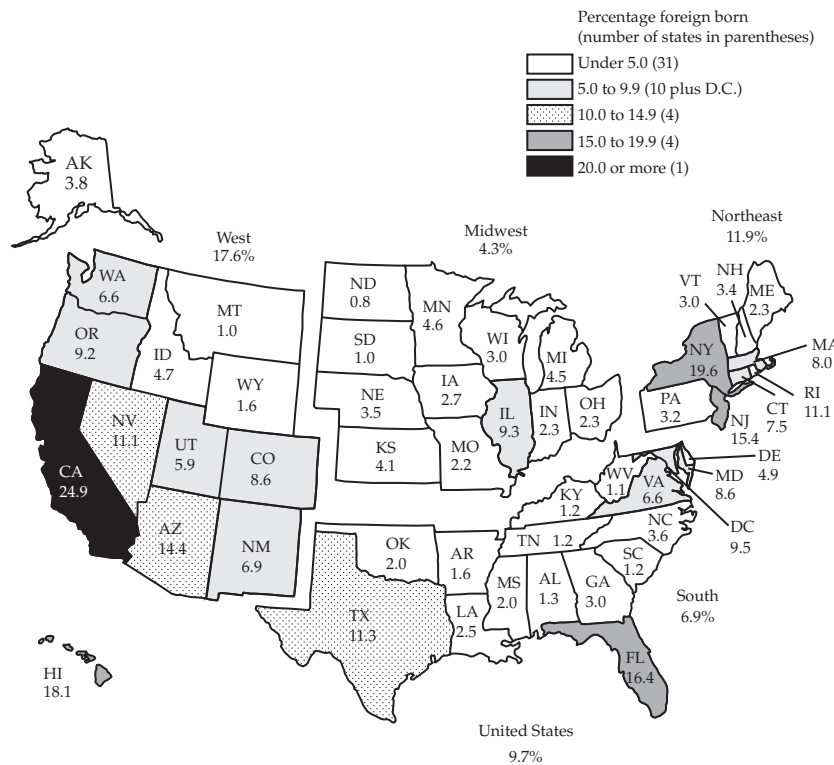
In 2000, the foreign-born population in the United States was estimated by the Census Bureau to be 28.4 million, the largest in American history and an increase of 43 percent over the 1990 census figure of 19.8 million. The foreign-born population is expected to keep growing by about a million people a year. In relative terms, the percentage of immigrants in the American population, at 10.4 percent, is not far below the peak of 14.7 percent, reached in 1910 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001).

The most recent wave of immigration is geographically concentrated. Six states had estimated foreign-born populations of 1 million or more in 2000, and together these states accounted for 71 percent of America's total foreign-born population. California led the nation in foreign-born inhabitants with 8.8 million, followed by New York (3.6 million), Florida (2.8 million), Texas (2.4 million), New Jersey (1.2 million), and Illinois (1.2 million). California's population is now about 26 percent second-generation immigrant, while New York's is 20 percent. Over 10 percent of the populations of Florida, Hawaii, New Jersey, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Texas are made up of immigrants. At the other extreme, twenty-six states had foreign-born populations under 5 percent in 2000; these included most of the states in the Midwest and South.

Yet whether large or small, immigrant populations in every state center on large metropolitan areas. Ninety-five percent of second-generation immigrants live in metropolitan areas, versus 79 percent for the native born population. Immigrants also compose an increasing percentage of the populations in these areas: first-generation immigrants and their children make up 56 percent of metropolitan Miami, 53 percent of metropolitan Los Angeles, and 41 percent of metropolitan New York and San Francisco. Differences in place of residence between foreign- and native-born are accounted for entirely by their differing proportions in central cities: 48 percent of the foreign-born population live in central cities, while only 29 percent of the native-born population does.

The figures in table I.1 indicate that immigrants are much more likely than the native born to live in central cities rather than suburbs or outlying municipalities. About 60 percent of immigrants are concentrated in eight major metropolitan areas: Los Angeles (4.8 million), New York (4.6 million), Miami (1.4 million), San Francisco (1.4 million), Chicago (1.1 million), Washington, D.C. (677,000), Boston (610,000), and Houston (539,000) (Schmidley and Gibson 1999, 16).

Figure I.1 Foreign-Born Population for States, 1997
(Civilian Noninstitutional Population Plus Armed Forces Living Off Post or With Their Families on Post)



Source: Schmidley and Campbell 1999.

Note: A metropolitan or “metro” area as defined by the Census Bureau is an urban concentration containing a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. A “central city” is the largest population nucleus in the metro area. For a further discussion of definitions, see: www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/aboutmetro.html.

This book focuses on the central cities of these metro areas—the areas which have received most of the new immigration into the United States.¹

Immigrants as Minorities

Most of America’s most recent immigrants have come from either Asia or Latin America. In 2000, 14.5 million, or 51 percent, of the

Table I.1 United States Population by Nativity and Metropolitan Residence, 1997

	Percentage Native-Born	Percentage Foreign-Born
Metro areas	78.9	94.4
Central cities	28.2	46.7
Outside central cities	50.7	47.7

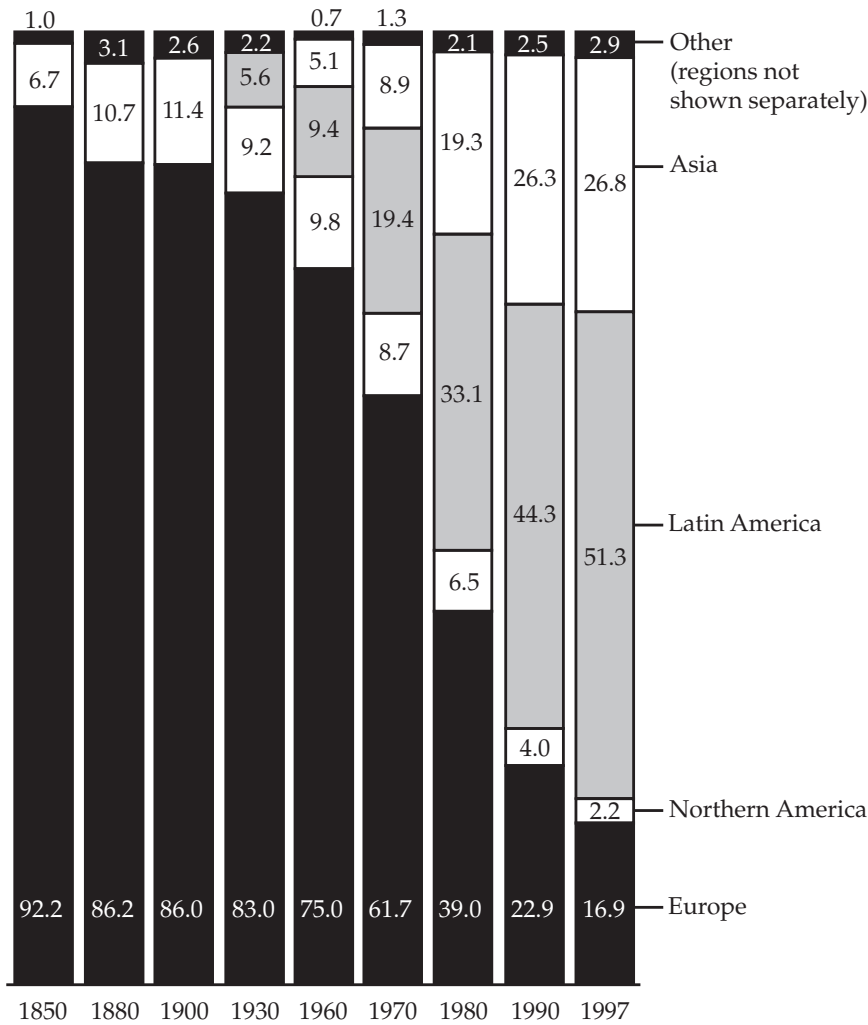
Source: Schmidley and Gibson 1999, table 5-2, "Population by Nativity and Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Residence: 1997."

foreign-born population was from Latin America, and an additional 24 percent, or 6.8 million people, were from Asia (see figure I.2). The top ten countries of immigrants' origin in descending order (Mexico, China, Philippines, India, Vietnam, El Salvador, Korea, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Colombia) are all found in these two regions (Schmidley and Gibson 1999, 2). Immigrants from Mexico alone accounted for about 29 percent of the foreign-born population; first-generation Mexican Americans are about six times as numerous as the next highest foreign-born population.

The fact that these immigrants are people of color adds another factor to the patterns of interethnic relations in this country. Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 primarily in response to the long-term exclusion of African Americans from full participation in the political, economic, and social spheres of American life. However, the courts have ruled that immigrants arriving to the United States from Asia and Latin America following the opening created by the 1965 Immigration Act are covered by this civil rights legislation as well. This certainly benefits these immigrants—but it also indicates that immigrants of color were and are seen through the prism of black-white race relations in the United States (Jaynes 2000, 9).

Extending civil rights protections originally targeted at African Americans to immigrants has sparked a debate on the parameters and purpose of government programs intended to assist minorities. Should immigrants be included in programs for affirmative action in education and civil service hiring, minority-business set-asides, or electoral representation? The answers to these questions are not easily determined (Jaynes 2000). Clearly Latino and Asian immigrants are often discriminated against—but by whom and for what reasons? Are they discriminated against due to their race or for reasons of language? Is this discrimination at the hands of native-born whites, African Americans, or other ethnic minorities? In an era of limited commitment of public resources to social problems, how and to whom

Figure I.2 Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth: Selected Years, 1850 to 1997



Source: Schmidley and Gibson 1999.
 Note: Percentage distribution excluding region not reported. For 1960 to 1990, U.S. resident population. For 1997, civilian noninstitutional population plus armed forces living off post or with their families on post.

should these resources be distributed? As the implementation of social policy is increasingly relegated from the federal to the state and local level, these questions have a direct bearing on discussions about urban policy, local immigrant politics, and competition and cooperation among ethnic groups in cities.

The Provenance of This Book

This volume presents the findings from “Governing American Cities: Inter-Ethnic Coalitions, Competition, and Conflict,” a conference sponsored jointly by the Russell Sage Foundation and the Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University. Held on April 17 and 18, 1998, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the conference sought to bring together scholars engaged in original research on immigration and urban interethnic relations and to have them address key questions raised by the changing demographics of American metropolitan areas.

The meeting amply demonstrated the tremendous intellectual energy and breadth of original scholarship dedicated to interethnic relations in American cities. The gathering of expertise from different cities also helped to emphasize the usefulness of conversations that cross boundaries—geographic as well as disciplinary—and address the issues of immigration, ethnic relations, and urban politics in the United States in a more systematically comparative fashion than any discussion limited to one region or discipline can on its own.

Each chapter in this volume results from this collaboration. The findings presented are comprehensive and address a number of critical areas: immigrant participation in the political process, the relationship between newcomers and established residents, the impact of immigrant enclaves on both immigrant organization and interethnic relations, competition between newer and established groups over jobs and elected positions, the possibilities of either ethnic conflict or cooperation, the ideological and generational differences facing coalition organizers and partners, and the role of interests and leadership in coalitional strategies. Together, these contributions furnish an overview of key issues surrounding and responses to what has emerged as the central dynamic in many American cities: the complex political negotiations between new immigrants and established residents as neighborhoods adjust to this most recent ethnic succession.

New Actors in Cities

Though immigrants today constitute a substantial portion of the American population and have made a particular impact on urban

demographics, they have as yet to have a similar impact on politics. The most obvious reason for this is that recent immigrants have been slow to naturalize and, once naturalized, to exercise their rights as citizens. While the number of naturalized citizens increased by 46 percent (from 6.2 million to 9.0 million) between 1970 and 1990, the percentage increase in the total number of noncitizens living in the United States was markedly greater: 373 percent (from 3.5 million to 16.7 million) (Schmidley and Gibson 1999, 20). Even when naturalized, it appears that immigrants' political participation as voters is less than that of the native born (Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2000; Bass and Casper 1999; DeSipio 1996). In chapter 1, "Immigrant Political Participation in New York and Los Angeles," John Mollenkopf, David Olson, and Tim Ross delineate participation patterns in these two cities that receive most of today's immigrants. Mollenkopf, Olson, and Ross break down voter turnout by neighborhood and nationality group to obtain a much more detailed, refined view of participation than that offered by previous studies. They find that there are important differences in participation among various immigrant groups as well as between the cities, findings that hold considerable portent for the future. Yet while immigrants may be lagging in their political activity now, their influence will only increase over time.

What are the mechanisms by which immigrant participation is constrained? In chapter 2, "Ethnic Subcontracting as an Impediment to Interethnic Coalitions: The Chinese Experience," Peter Kwong argues that for immigrant mobilization to occur, immigrants must surmount constraints from within their communities as well as from without. He points to New York's Chinatown as an example of an ethnic enclave where class divisions within immigrant communities often cripple immigrant political mobilization. In his rich case study of the difficulties of labor organizing among Chinese immigrants, Kwong finds that the enclave masks class cleavages and economic exploitation in the community. He finds Chinese entrepreneurs, for example, appealing to ethnic solidarity to dissuade their co-ethnic employees from organizing unions or bringing poor workplace conditions to the attention of city officials. Kwong's chapter highlights the importance of class in the analysis of ethnic-group dynamics and serves as a cautionary addendum to the generally positive view of the immigrant ethnic enclave as portrayed in the literature on the subject (Portes and Bach 1985).

Similar issues are addressed in chapter 3, "Korean Americans and the Crisis of the Liberal Coalition: Immigrants and Politics in Los Angeles," in which Edward J. W. Park and John S. W. Park examine internal differences in immigrant communities to explain trends in political participation and attitudes toward ethnic coalition building.

Where Kwong's analysis focuses on class, however, Park and Park emphasize generational divisions within immigrant groups. In the Parks' analysis, these divisions were brought into sharp relief for Los Angeles's Korean community by the 1992 civil unrest in the wake of the Rodney King verdict. These events had an enormous impact on Korean-American political involvement, spurring the mobilization of both conservative and liberal actors within the community. In addition to deepening ideological cleavages among Korean Americans, the events of 1992 accelerated generational change among the Korean-American leadership. The so-called 1.5 generation, born in Korea but raised in the U.S. since childhood, became more visible to the media and other actors outside their ethnic community, eclipsing other leaders of the community who had immigrated as adults. As the Parks trace generational and ideological divisions within the Korean community, they underscore the fact that no new immigrant population may properly be seen as homogeneous. Such communities contain complex internal politics that have implications for their willingness and ability to enter into partnerships with other ethnic and racial groups.

These two opening chapters, then, introduce immigrants as new actors in cities and highlight differences among and within nationality groups. As immigrants begin to make their way into the political arena, class and generational cleavages within their communities greatly influence the manner in which they are incorporated into the political process and the possibilities for coalition building.

Competition and Conflict

Given the changing composition of urban areas, one might expect to encounter tensions as new and old minority groups compete for public resources, jobs, and political positions. As Edward J. W. Park and John S. W. Park note in chapter 3, immigrants often emerge as new actors in political arenas where other minorities, notably African Americans, are already established players. What consequences do the political and economic resources held by one ethnic or racial group have on the outcomes for other communities? Do the successes of one group come at the expense of others, or can these successes be complementary? In chapter 4, "Racial Minority Group Relations in a Multiracial Society," Paula McClain and Steven Tauber provide an overview of the arenas of interethnic rivalry in cities across the United States. They find that while tensions are not present in every arena and among every set of actors, such tensions are particularly common in the electoral arena. The negative effects of competition is greatest in cities dominated by a single ethnic group.

These findings fit in with Guillermo Grenier's description of rela-

tions between blacks and Latinos in Miami in chapter 5, "Blacks and Cubans in Miami: The Negative Consequences of the Cuban Enclave on Ethnic Relations." Like Kwong in chapter 1, Grenier challenges the view that the ethnic enclave offers unmitigated benefits. Miami's Cuban-American population exerts considerable influence on virtually every aspect of life there, and while acknowledging that that community—centered around the enclaves of Little Havana and Hialeah—has accelerated the incorporation of Cubans and other Latin American immigrants into Miami's economic and political life, Grenier nevertheless points out that it has also created or at least reinforced structural barriers segregating the city's Latino community from African Americans. These two ethnic groups are thus now locked into hostile competition, in spite of sporadic attempts at cooperation. This hostility was not preordained: Grenier shows that black perceptions of Cuban Americans have worsened over time, while Cubans have largely ignored black points of view. The case of Miami is not a hopeful one, and while the conflict there might seem more intense and its sources more intractable than in other regions of the country, national trends identified by Grenier suggest that relations between African Americans and Latinos may well follow the Miami model. Growing Latino populations, combined with urban decay, could lead to increased tensions between Latinos and blacks, many cities' two largest ethnic minorities.

Sources of tension between groups are often easily determined; more difficult to pinpoint is what accounts for the forms by which such tension are expressed. When are tensions expressed as peaceful protest and when as outbursts of violence? In chapter 6, "Protest or Violence: Political Process and Patterns of Black-Korean Conflict," Patrick Joyce grapples with these questions by examining the tensions between African Americans and Korean Americans in cities across the United States. The 1980s and 1990s saw clashes between blacks and Koreans in a number of cities, with hostilities ranging from boycotts to outright violence. Joyce finds different causal processes shaping each of these expressions of tension. While the sociological dimensions of economic competition may account for violence, the emergence of boycotts is best explained by the character of local political systems. Overt, nonviolent conflicts, in the form of black-led boycotts of Korean stores, take place more often in cities where traditional political organizations have strong roots and where African Americans have greater political representation. Organization and representation lend structure to community political life and facilitate the grassroots organization that enables one group to engage others in protest. Although violence and boycotts are related to each other to a degree, these two forms of intergroup conflict follow different causal dynamics.

When conflicts do erupt, what happens in their aftermath? How are interethnic relations renegotiated, reestablished? In chapter 7, "Structural Shifts and Institutional Capacity Possibilities for Ethnic Cooperation and Conflict in Urban Settings," Michael Jones-Correa lays out four broad structural changes that took place in American cities in the 1980s and '90s: immigration transformed urban populations, significant portions of the middle class of all ethnic and racial groups left for the suburbs, urban economic bases shifted from manufacturing to service industries, and the federal government scaled back its financial support for urban areas. These structural shifts set the stage for a new round of interethnic tensions, culminating in serious civil disturbances in four cities. In the aftermath of these civil disturbances of the 1980s and '90s, urban institutional frameworks mediated and shaped the reconfiguration of interethnic relations. Jones-Correa argues that cities respond differently, and in fact, have different capacities to respond, depending on their institutional configurations. Some cities, such as Los Angeles, turned to the private sector to address interethnic relations, while others, among them New York, responded through political channels. In either case, the institutional framework present in these cities was key, as it set the parameters for policy responses. Jones-Correa discusses the implications that these institutional frameworks have for those seeking to ease the incorporation of new urban actors into the political process and encourage interethnic coalition building.

These middle chapters of the volume establish a theoretical groundwork for when we might expect conflict and competition to occur and for the forms that such conflicts might take. Competition in the political arena seems to be more intractable than that in the economic sphere, but on the other hand, political institutions can channel tensions into nonviolent, and perhaps more effective, forms of protest; in the absence of such institutional channeling, violence is more likely to erupt.

Cooperation and Coalition Building

While interethnic tensions exist and may be a fact of life, conflict and competition are not the only outcomes or expressions that they may take. The third section of *Governing Cities* focuses on avenues for cooperation and coalition building.

The difficulties confronting interethnic political coalitions are discussed by Raphael Sonenshein in chapter 8, "When Ideologies Agree and Interests Collide, What's a Leader to Do? The Prospects for Latino-Jewish Coalition in Los Angeles." What, he asks, would it take for a coalition to form between two actors in the urban polity who, on

the one hand, share a surprising number of policy positions, but on the other, have little social overlap? Latinos and Jews have been seen by some as constituting a new moderate alliance in big-city politics; their common support for mayoral candidates opposed by African Americans in three cities has been cited as evidence to that effect. Other evidence, moreover, shows a broad compatibility in political beliefs and voting behavior between the two groups. In contemporary Los Angeles, however, there is but limited evidence of any emerging Latino-Jewish coalition. Despite an ideological basis for alliance, there are conflicts of interests that complicate political coalition. These obstacles to coalition building raise the question of how the goal of equity can be reached in big-city politics when the interests of immigrants conflict with those of "old" residents. The task for intergroup leadership in Los Angeles and elsewhere is to redirect urban issues away from zero-sum battles. Sonenshein's case study discusses the interplay between ideology and interest, mediated by leadership, in the formation of coalitions across racial and ethnic lines.

"Interethnic Politics in the Consensus City," Matthew McKeever's study of Houston, is the final chapter of *Governing Cities*. In his study, McKeever notes that in Houston, as in many cities in the West and Southwest, African Americans no longer compose the largest minority group, just as whites no longer are the majority of residents or voters. However, the ability to translate demographics into political power is variable, and greatly depends on the city's political traditions, the strength of its minority communities, and the strategies pursued by politicians. Blacks, Latinos, and whites are all significant players in Houston's complex local politics, and, McKeever points out, their interactions have rarely erupted into violent conflict. Houston, in fact, has a reputation as a "consensus city," or a city in which interethnic relations have historically been managed by elites who have kept the city relatively free of great tension or violence. Focusing his study on Houston's 1997 mayoral election, McKeever concludes that the key to a successful mayoral candidacy in a multiethnic city is a "multi-ethnic" rather than a "de-racialized" campaign. In multiethnic politics, race and ethnicity are acknowledged by all, but offer privilege for none.

Chapters 8 and 9, then, point to the possibilities of cooperation among urban ethnic and immigrant groups while at the same time recognizing the difficulties facing anyone attempting to forge genuine coalitions. There is a fine line between acknowledging ethnic differences and falling prey to ethnic chauvinism, but the balance can be reached, as the authors here argue, given the right combination of leadership and shared interests. And while this balance may be easier to find in the nitty-gritty of economic life or neighborhood concerns, it can also be achieved in politics on the larger metropolitan scale.

The influx of immigration into the United States, and particularly its metropolitan areas, has led to rapid demographic shifts in its urban areas. While the broad outlines of these changes in population are becoming ever more clearly defined, the corresponding political changes in governing regimes, ethnic alliances and competition, and urban politics remain understudied and little understood. These changes in the urban political context have important implications not just for the governability of American metropolitan areas, but ultimately for our understanding of American politics as a whole. The scholars represented in this volume together lay the foundation for a national, cross-city theoretical perspective on these significant long-term social and political changes in urban areas, which can serve as a springboard for more collaborative cross-city research in the area of ethnic and urban politics in the United States.

Note

1. Though the focus here is on these eight urban areas, this is not to imply that other urban areas are not also experiencing change. Indeed, cities in other parts of the country, such as Atlanta, Georgia, or Madison, Wisconsin, may be experiencing greater *relative* change. However, the focus of this book is on those cities experiencing the greatest *absolute* change: Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Houston, and the others listed.

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