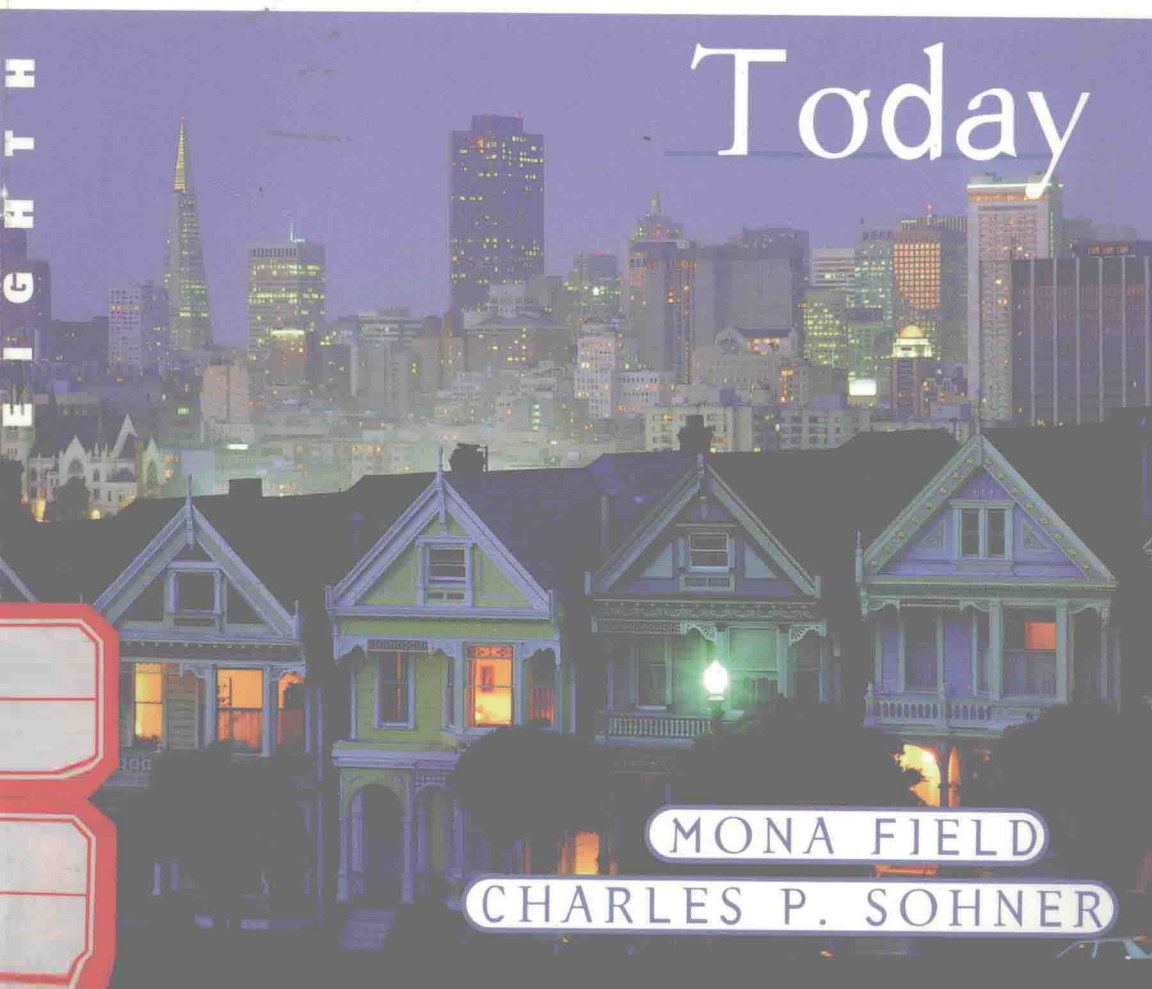


EDITION
EIGHTH

California Government and Politics

Today



MONA FIELD

CHARLES P. SOHNER

California Government and Politics Today

Eighth Edition

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Glendale Community College

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Preface

Since the time of earliest explorers and conquistadores, California has held a mystique of golden potential for people from all over the world. Today's California is a reflection of its own past as well as a complex, ever-changing mosaic of the future. It is a destination for many, even as others are choosing to leave. California today is a "salad bowl" of ethnicities, classes, and cultures, all of whom must coexist despite their many differences.

It is this text's goal to present the complexity not only of the political process but also of the social and economic circumstances in California today. The concise (yet thorough) exploration of these themes is designed to give readers many opportunities to reflect on their experiences living here and to consider ways in which they can become part of the process.

A number of features make the text accessible to readers: opening quotations for each chapter; charts and maps; and appendixes, including a glossary defining each word that appears in italics in the text, a list of useful addresses on the World Wide Web, and a list of political organizations accessible to students. In addition, each chapter closes with "Questions to Consider," designed to help readers evaluate the material through their own personal reflections and critical thinking.

Special emphases of this edition that add to its currency are the issues relating to numerous ballot initiatives the courts are evaluating, the long-awaited turnaround in the state's economy, the continuing increases in population and in social and cultural diversity, and the expansion of the electorate to include new citizens eager to vote. As always, the book pays close attention to demographic and economic indicators and their political implications.

Supplements

Instructor's Manual/Test Bank. Written by Mona Field, this resource includes test questions as well as a brief study guide for students that instructors can copy and distribute. The study guide can also be downloaded through the Longman Web site at <http://longman.awl.com>. To access the study guide from the home page, click on "search our catalog,"

type "Field" in the author section, and choose *California Government and Politics Today*, Eighth Edition. The study guide will be available through the product information sheet for the book.

Acknowledgments

The authors' highest aim is to enlighten and inform the readers while gently reminding them that the fate of our Golden State is in our hands. If we do not participate, who will? We hope our efforts are successful, and we are grateful to those who made this book possible. We thank our editor, Peter Glovin. We would also like to recognize the contributions of our reviewers: Lyndelle Fairlie, San Diego State University; Gerald R. Farrington, Fresno City College; David Meneffee-Libey, Pomona College; Stanislav Perkner, Humphreys College; and Paul Schmidt, California State University, Long Beach. Finally, of course, we thank our families, who understand our periodic disappearances into our offices.

We remain fully responsible for our work, both the positive aspects and any omissions or errors it may contain.

Please read, reflect, and consider joining us in a long-term commitment to make California the very best it can be.

MONA FIELD
CHARLES P. SOHNER

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Chapter

1

California Politics in Perspective

The goose is laying her golden eggs again.

—Forbes

After a rocky start to the decade, Californians seem to be approaching the close of the century with a renewed sense of satisfaction and hope. The economy has emerged from a long, painful recession that began when the Cold War ended. Today's California is booming with new or revived industries, including high technology, biomedical research, entertainment, telecommunications, and tourism. The state is still number one in the country in agricultural production¹ and boasts the nation's two busiest ports (Long Beach and San Pedro) in terms of export-import traffic.² If California were a separate nation, it would rank eighth in the world in its gross domestic production.

In addition to the booming economy, California still leads the nation in population, with hints that by the year 2010 the state will be home to about 37 million Americans, of whom more than half will be "minorities." California's influence on the national scene will continue to be enormous, and individual Californians with the right education and skills will continue to do very well. Some of the *scapegoating* and *polarization* of the early 1990s may have run their course, leaving room for a more inclusive, generous approach—now that the economy is better, tax revenues are higher, thus allowing politicians to spend more money on essential public services or to cut taxes, depending on which path California voters support. As the good news of California's economic recovery spreads, even some of the "refugees" who left the state during the early 1990s are returning to California, having realized that the grass was not greener in Montana, Oregon, or Arizona.³

Yet despite the overall strength of the economy and the related improvements in public services, California still remains a *two-tier* state in which those without adequate education remain caught in low-wage, no-benefits jobs or have no jobs at all. The state's public schools rank 47th

in the nation in terms of textbook spending,⁴ while personal bankruptcy filings are at record levels in part due to underemployment.⁵ California is still a land of extremes between rich and poor, and the governor who will lead the state into the next century will have to guide California toward increased opportunities for everyone yet preserve some form of public support for those who have not yet achieved the “California dream.”

National Impact: Setting Trends for the Country

In the year 2000, California celebrates its sesquicentennial (150th anniversary of statehood) as perhaps the most powerful state in the nation. Because national political power is directly linked to population, and because California has remained the most populous state for several decades, California maintains its enormous clout in the national scene. Two of the last six presidents, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, came from California, and of the nine justices currently on the U.S. Supreme Court, four were either born or educated in California. The state has 52 of the 435 members of the House of Representatives, 11 more than any other state, and 54 *electoral votes*, one-fifth of the 270 necessary to elect a president.

California’s national importance flows largely from three traditional sources of political power—money, publicity, and population. Even during the prolonged economic slump of the early 1990s, California remained the home of one-fifth of the nation’s wealthiest people.⁶ Although the rich are a tiny minority of the population, they can have enormous influence on politics, both through campaign contributions and through their own political activism. The emerging custom of wealthy individuals using their own money to run for office resulted in the election of Richard Riordan as mayor of Los Angeles and fueled the *gubernatorial* race of Al Checchi.

Along with dollars, media and publicity also play a key role in political outcomes. During both good times and bad, California gets an ample share of attention in the national media. The state still gets international media coverage for happy events such as the annual Tournament of Roses Parade as well as less favorable attention when its residents suffer the ravages of earthquakes or major fires. Because California is home to people from all over the world, events in Los Angeles or San Francisco may be front-page news in Manila, Ho Chi Minh City, Seoul, Hong Kong, or San Salvador.

It is sheer numbers, however, that contribute most to California’s political might. Table 1.1 shows how the population has grown. California’s 32.5 million people⁷ earn the state both the largest congressional delegation and the largest bloc of electoral votes and also, under most circumstances, enable it to receive more federal grants and government contracts than almost any other state. It is no surprise that presidential candidates often visit California more times than any other state as they campaign for those electoral votes, and it is no wonder that high-level California politicians are often mentioned as future presidential contenders.

Table 1.1**California's Population: Growth Since Statehood**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1850	92,597
1860	379,994
1870	560,247
1880	864,694
1890	1,213,398
1900	1,485,053
1910	2,377,549
1920	3,426,861
1930	5,677,251
1940	6,907,387
1950	10,586,223
1960	15,717,204
1970	19,971,069
1980	23,667,902
1990	31,400,000
1997	32,609,000
projected 2005	38,200,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Finance.

The State and Its People: Power Blocs in Conflict

Despite California's prominence in national affairs, the daily lives of its people are affected more closely by the politics of their own state. The state determines the grounds for divorce, the traffic regulations, public college tuition fees, penalties for drug possession, and the qualifications one needs to become a barber, psychologist, or lawyer. It establishes the amount of unemployment compensation, the location of highways, the subjects to be taught in school, and the rates to be charged by telephone and gas and electric companies. Along with the local governments under its control, it regulates building construction, provides police and fire protection, and spends about 15 percent of the total value of goods and services produced by California residents.

The policy decisions made in these and other areas are influenced by the distribution of political power among various groups with competing needs and aspirations. Some of the power blocs reflect the same conflicts of interest that the nation experiences: labor versus business, landlords versus tenants, environmentalists versus oil companies. But, as in so many things, these battles are fought on a grander scale in California. With its incredibly complex array of local governments, including over 6,000 *special districts* to provide everything from street lights to public

education, California's political system almost defies understanding. No wonder that voters have shown their overall mistrust of elected officials and turned to *ballot initiatives* to make new laws and even to amend the state constitution.

These ballot initiatives, or *propositions*, deal with everything from medical use of marijuana to patients' rights, from "three strikes and you're out" to affirmative action. While political experts bemoan the use of initiatives to set public policy, the voters keep signing petitions to place these items on the ballot. The outcome of these initiative battles usually depends on such factors as money, media, and the public mood.

The State and the Federal System: A Complex Relationship

Like the other states, California is part of the American federal system. *Federalism* distributes power to both the national and state governments, thereby creating a system of dual citizenship and authority. It is a complex arrangement designed to assure the unity of the country while at the same time permitting the states to reflect the diversity of their people and economies. Although national and state authority overlap in such areas as taxation and highway construction (examples of what are known as concurrent powers), each level of government also has its own policy domain. The U.S. Constitution gives the national government its powers, including such areas as interstate commerce, foreign policy, national defense, and international relations. The states are permitted to do anything that is not prohibited or that the Constitution does not assign to the national government.

Within each state, the distribution of powers is *unitary*. This means that the cities, counties, and other units of local government get their authority from the state. States and their local bodies generally focus their powers on such services as education, public safety, and health and welfare.

Just as California has a mighty impact on the country as a whole, the national government exerts reciprocal influence on the states. Federal funds often come with strings attached. The federal welfare reform statutes of 1996 created demanding new requirements for every state that wanted to continue to get federal funds for welfare recipients. California's elected officials were forced to create innovative programs and new limitations on public assistance in order to meet federal regulations. Such federal *mandates* continue to cause debate over *states' rights* and the proper role of the federal government, with recent trends suggesting that *devolution*, or the passing of authority from federal to state and local governments, will continue.

However, federal funds do not always come directly to government itself. For nearly fifty years, between World War II and the end of the Cold War, California's private defense industry relied heavily on federal contracts to create a thriving military-based economy. Major corporations, such as Lockheed, Hughes, Rockwell, and many others, enjoyed

high profits and provided well-paying, secure jobs to engineers, managers, secretaries, and assembly-line workers. When the Cold War ended in 1989, this entire military contract system crashed abruptly, leaving a large hole in the California economy. The layoffs and their ripple effects into the affected communities have continued throughout the decade, creating both economic and emotional stress for tens of thousands of individuals. Fortunately, in recent years, the economies of areas hit hard by *demilitarization* have found new ways to grow. San Diego's "Wireless Valley," Southern California's South Bay emphasis on international trade and San Francisco's Presidio Park are good examples of creative responses to the loss of military dollars. Retraining, education, and job creation continue to be themes for California as it recovers from its long-time dependence on the federal defense budget.

While relations between the federal government and each state are complex and significant, the relations between states are also important. The U.S. Constitution requires every state to honor the laws of every other state, so that marriages and other contracts made in one state are respected in all states and criminals trying to escape justice cannot find safe haven by leaving the state in which they have been convicted.

Federalism is perhaps America's greatest political invention. It permits states to enact their diverse policy preferences into law on such matters as gambling, prostitution, trash disposal, and wilderness protection, and thus encourages experiments that may spread to other states. California has become known as a place of experimentation, and new political ideas from this state often spread across the nation. Conservative themes such as tax revolts, anti-immigration sentiments, and the backlash against affirmative action all began as successful ballot propositions in California, while liberal ideas such as legalization of marijuana for medical purposes and legal protections for gays and lesbians also began here.

Because federalism allows states great autonomy, and because California has developed a complex web of local governments, the average California voter must make numerous decisions at the ballot box. Each Californian, whether a citizen or not, lives in a number of election jurisdictions, including a congressional district, a state Senate district, an Assembly district, and a county supervisorial district, plus (in most cases) a city, a school district, and a community college district (Figure 1.1 lists officials elected by voters). This array of political jurisdictions provides many opportunities to exercise democracy. It also creates confusion, overlaps, and many occasions on which voters feel unable to fully evaluate the qualifications of candidates or the merits of ballot propositions.

Other problems linked to federalism include outdated state boundaries that have created some "superstates," with land masses and populations that may be ungovernable, and the differences in resources between states. California's size has certainly caused numerous controversies over whether the state should be divided somehow. Meanwhile, variations in states' resources perpetuate inequality in schools, public hospitals, and

Partisan Offices			
National Level	Elected by	Term	Election Year
President	Entire state	4 years	Years divisible by four
U.S. Senators	Entire state	6 years	Every six years counting from 1992
			Every six years counting from 1994
Members of Congress	Districts	2 years	Even-numbered years
State Level			
Governor ¹	Entire state	4 years	Even-numbered years when there is no presidential election
Lt. Governor ¹			
Secretary of State ¹			
Controller ¹			
Treasurer ¹			
Attorney General ¹			
Insurance Commissioner			
Members of Board of Equalization ¹	Districts	4 years	Same as governor
State Senators ¹	Districts	4 years	Same as governor for even-numbered districts
			Same as president for odd-numbered districts
Assembly members ²	Districts	2 years	Even-numbered years
Nonpartisan Offices			
State Level			
Superintendent of Public Instruction	Entire state	4 years	Same as governor
Supreme Court justices	Entire state	12 years	Same as governor
Court of Appeal justices	Entire state	12 years	Same as governor
Superior Court judges	Counties	6 years	Even-numbered years
¹ Limited to two terms by Proposition 140			
² Limited to three terms by Proposition 140			

Figure 1.1 Federal and State Officials Elected by California Voters.

Source: League of Women Voters.

other government facilities at a time when the nation as a whole is concerned about how to provide these services. The federal system also promotes rivalry between states as they compete to attract new businesses (and jobs) or keep existing ones. Among the tactics used in this struggle are tax breaks, reduced worker compensation, and relaxed environmental protection standards. Nevada, with its lower taxes, attracts some California enterprises, while Utah offers a highly educated workforce and relatively low crime rates as primary incentives for businesses to relocate. On a larger and more complex scale, the appeal of relocating across the border in Mexico has been enhanced by the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which eliminates import tariffs and encourages American companies to open factories where wages are low and worker protection is minimal. In the global economy of the new millennium, California faces tremendous challenges in providing decent jobs, education, health services, and, in general, the high quality of life that the state has always promoted as its chief claim to fame.

Questions to Consider

Using Your Text and Your Own Experiences

1. What are some of the pros and cons of life in California? Do these depend in part on whether you live in a rural or urban area?
2. What are some of the challenges facing the state as it enters the new millennium? What can elected officials do to resolve these challenges? How do you fit into the challenges facing our state?
3. Take a class survey. How many students were born in California? How many are immigrants, either from another state or another nation? Team up so that an "immigrant" is paired with a "native" Californian. Teams or pairs can discuss the different experiences of those born here versus those who immigrated.

Notes

1. Dave Leshner, "Officials Crow About State's Farm Economy," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 July 1997, p. A3.
2. Tim W. Ferguson, "California's Comeback," *Forbes*, 20 November 1995, p. 141.
3. Lisa Taylor, "We're Ba-aack!" *Los Angeles Times*, 30 March 1997, p. K1.
4. U.S. Department of Education, Association of American Publishers, as cited in "In a Book Bind," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 July 1997, p. A1.
5. Patrice Apodaca and Don Lee, "Personal Bankruptcies Climbed in State," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 February 1997, p. D2.
6. "Bill Gates Tops List in Forbes Ranking of Richest in U.S.," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 October 1994, p. D1.
7. Robert A. Rosenblatt, "Strong Growth Projected for California," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 January 1997, p. D2.

Chapter

2

The Californians: Land, People, and Political Culture

There will always be a California dream . . . but it won't come with mere wishing. . . . We must all become "dreamers of the day," exploring the future with eyes and hearts wide open.

—A. G. Block, journalist

The political process in California, as in other states, is conditioned by many geographic, *demographic*, and cultural influences. While geography changes only slowly, population shifts and cultural influences can rather suddenly inject new and unpredictable threads into the complex web that forms the state's identity and future prospects.

Geographic Influences: Where Are We?

With an area of 156,000 square miles, California is larger than Italy, Japan, or England and is the third-largest state, following Alaska and Texas. It is shaped like a gigantic stocking, with a length more than twice its width. If California were superimposed on the East Coast, it would cover six states, from Florida to New York.¹ The enormous size of the state as well as recurrent battles over water supplies and financial resources have resulted in periodic proposals that the state be divided into two or even three separate states, with the presumption that the Northern, Central, and Southern regions could each stand alone as political entities.²

While California's size has contributed to its political dynamics, its location has been at least as important. As the leading state on what is called the Pacific Rim (those states bordering the Pacific Ocean and facing the Far East), 70 percent of California's international trade takes place with Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.³ The state is also one of only 15 that border a foreign nation. In part as a result of proximity to Mexico,

Californians of Mexican descent have become the largest ethnic minority in the state, one that includes both first-generation Mexicans and “Chicanos” whose parents or ancestors originally came from Mexico.

Two other geographic influences command attention: rich natural resources and spectacularly beautiful terrain. Between the majestic Sierra Nevada range along the eastern border and the Coast Range on the west lies the Central Valley—one of the richest agricultural regions in the world. As a result, California leads the nation in farm output, although agriculture’s political influence has diminished as urban residents and environmentalists have begun to win the water supply wars.⁴ While over 40 percent of the state is forested, battles over environmental standards and redwood preservation have somewhat reduced the power of the lumber industry and caused lengthy litigation.⁵ California has plentiful oil, yet even the once invincible petroleum industry has occasionally been prevented from building pipelines through urban areas by *grassroots* organizations concerned about safety. While agriculture, timber, and oil remain economically important as well as environmentally controversial, another natural resource is also the subject of continual political debate over how much to exploit it: California’s landscape. Ranging across arid deserts, a thousand-mile shoreline, and remote mountain wilderness, the terrain itself has become a battlefield between conservationists and commercial recreation developers. About 45 percent of all land is government owned (including 6 national parks and 17 national forests) compared with less than 34 percent in the entire nation.

Demographic Influences: Who Are We?

In recent years, California’s population patterns have fluctuated. In contrast to the 1980s, when the state’s population boomed, the 1990s have seen a slowing of population growth.⁶ When the recession hit in 1990, many laid-off Californians set a pattern of *outmigration* by moving away from the state, yet foreign immigration continued to expand. By the mid-1990s, demographers began to project a return to higher growth as news of the economic recovery spread. Long-term predictions suggest that the state will have nearly 50 million people by the year 2025, with 60 percent of them being Latino or Asian.⁷ Figure 2.1 breaks down the workforce by ethnic group. Meanwhile, despite brief periods of slowed growth, California remains the most populous state, with over 12 percent of the nation’s people.⁸

The migration patterns of the 1990s have created interesting demographics. Those leaving the state tend to be white while those arriving are from all over the world, contributing to the extraordinary racial and cultural diversity of the state. The special needs of foreign immigrants for education, health care, transportation, and other services created fierce debates during the recession when government revenues were

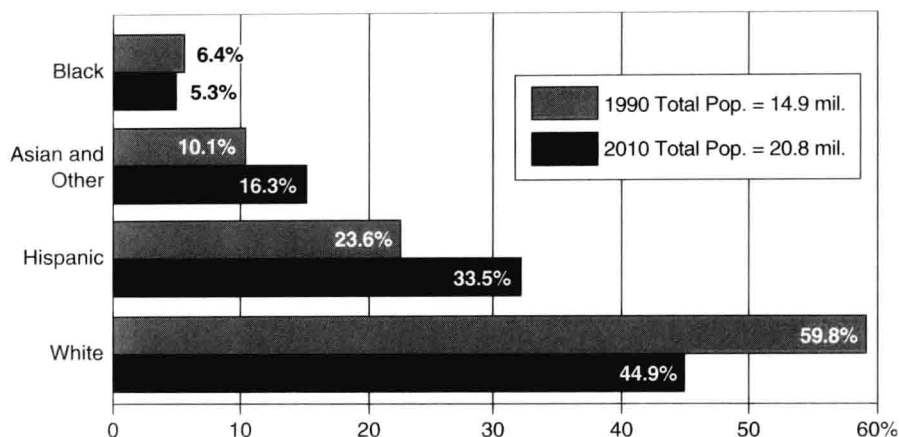


Figure 2.1 California Labor Force by Ethnic Group, 1990–2010: Percentage of Labor Force Population.

Source: Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy.

tight. To a certain extent, that debate continues as the economy improves, but with more focus on the relationship between federal and state responsibility for immigrants. This competition over scarce resources certainly contributed to the 1994 victory of Proposition 187, a largely unconstitutional attempt to deny public services to undocumented immigrants and their children, many of whom are U.S. citizens.

The racial and ethnic diversity of the state's population will probably continue to increase. Many of the foreign immigrants come from Mexico, Central America, and the Asian Pacific region, with substantial numbers arriving from Russia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean.⁹ Unlike their predecessors of other eras, recent immigrants do not necessarily settle in urban areas but are increasingly integrating formerly "white" suburbs such as Santa Clarita and parts of Orange County.¹⁰ During their *assimilation* into California's culture, immigrants can choose whether to become citizens and thus potential voters. Because of changes in federal law as well as the fear created by the passage of Proposition 187, *naturalization* rates are climbing as immigrants realize the value of becoming U.S. citizens.

Whether they are citizens or residents, immigrants have already altered the social and political landscape in many California communities. Out of choice or necessity, ethnic enclaves develop wherever immigrant groups put down roots, their presence reflected in the language of storefront signs, distinctive architecture, and types of food available. Daly City is called "Little Manila," and Fresno is home to 30,000 Hmong, members of a Laotian hill tribe. Stockton has 35,000 refugees from several areas of Indochina; Glendale has a substantial concentration of Armenians; Westminster, in Orange County, is known as "Little Seoul,"

and Monterey Park, the first city in the continental United States with an Asian majority,¹¹ is 56 percent Chinese. About 3 million Hispanics, mostly of Mexican descent, live in Los Angeles County, and the school-children there speak 80 different languages.¹²

While the debate over the role of immigrants continues, American-born ethnic minorities are often mistakenly lumped into the same categories as the newcomers. Because they share the same ethnic heritage as their immigrant relatives, American-born Latinos and Asians may be subject to similar prejudices and discrimination. Despite being U.S. citizens, many Latinos still face enormous obstacles in achieving adequate educations, while Asian Americans have often been stereotyped into "perfect student" roles that place burdens on those who do not fulfill that expectation. Recent studies show that newly arrived immigrant youth have the highest appreciation for education, while second-generation Americans of minority descent show signs of losing faith in their ability to achieve the California dream through hard work.¹³ (See Table 2.1.) This may suggest that *acculturation* is a mixed blessing for immigrant children. Meanwhile, African Americans, the third-largest ethnic minority group, continue to see their numbers decline in proportion to the fast-growing Latino and Asian communities, with resulting concerns about how blacks can compete successfully for educational and political opportunities as other ethnic groups begin to dominate numerically.

Population diversity, of course, embraces far more than ethnicity. Collectively, Californians seem to embody virtually the whole range of

Table 2.1

**Ranking of Average Income Among 30-Year-Old California Workers
(Overall Average \$32,861)**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Income</u>
White males	\$39,279
Asian male citizens	\$35,361
Hispanic male citizens	\$34,554
Black males	\$30,842
White females	\$28,938
Asian female citizens	\$28,046
Black females	\$26,588
Hispanic female citizens	\$25,488
Asian male immigrants	\$24,713
Hispanic male immigrants	\$21,191
Hispanic female immigrants	\$19,392
Asian female immigrants	\$19,202

Source: McLeod, Ramon G. "White Women, Young Minorities Make Pay Gains," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 September 1993, p. 13.