

Finding Common Ground: Racial and Ethnic Attitudes in California

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2001

PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hajnal, Zoltan, 1968–

Finding common ground : racial and ethnic attitudes in
California / Zoltan Hajnal, Mark Baldassare.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN: 1-58213-033-7

1. California—Race relations—Statistics. 2. California—Ethnic
relations—Statistics. 3. Minorities—California—Social
conditions—Statistics. 4. Minorities—California—Attitudes.
5. California—Social policy. I. Baldassare, Mark. II. Title.

F870.A1 H35 2001

305.8'009794—dc21

2001016228

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Foreword

In 1998, the Public Policy Institute of California made a major commitment to develop and implement an ongoing PPIC Statewide Survey of public opinion under the leadership of Mark Baldassare. The decision was made for three reasons. First, the dramatic growth and diversification of California's population over the past 20 years meant that we knew little about the people whose interests were presumably being served by public policy decisionmaking throughout the state. Lack of objective information about changing public policy preferences, if indeed they were changing, was needed to offset clichés and glib characterizations of special interests. Second, the increased use of the initiative process to form public policy in the state highlighted how little we really knew about public attitudes toward the initiative process, about governmental credibility in general, and whether there was some way to “fix” aspects of ballot-box decisionmaking that many felt were detrimental to the smooth and efficient running of a modern government. California had led the nation in using the initiative to make public policy decisions, and yet we knew very little about why and how that phenomenon came about. And third, the emergent minority population of California raised the question of whether we were, or are, due for a major shift in policy priorities as reflected in the profile of elected representatives, preferences revealed in voting on ballot initiatives, and the role and strength of the state legislature under term limits. For these reasons and more, 15 waves of the PPIC Statewide Survey have been conducted since early 1998, with a database that now includes the responses of more than 20,000 Californians over a three-year period. This report by Zoltan Hajnal and Mark Baldassare is just one of many products of the Statewide Survey.

The surveys tell us that California is not undergoing dramatic shifts in public policy preferences. No matter which racial or ethnic group is being characterized, issues that have always mattered in California

continue to be at the top of the list—education, crime, jobs, and the economy. Second, we face a major public policy challenge in bringing Latinos fully into the new high-tech economy of California. Education is the *sine qua non* of intergenerational improvement in socioeconomic status, and if Latinos are unable to acquire the skills needed to access the new high-tech economy, they are in danger of slipping further behind.

Yet the surveys reveal that Latinos are confident of success and, as a group, “are even more optimistic than others about their own futures and the future of the state.” Finally, there is little reason to believe that we face a future of political fissures in California that would make a goal of consensus insurmountable. In fact, given the convergence on key topics such as education and jobs, and a widely held respect for the role of direct democracy in making key decisions, there is every reason to be optimistic about California’s public policy prospects. But as the authors conclude on the basis of the Statewide Survey findings, “proposed programs and issues will have to be shaped very carefully, if the divisiveness of past racial politics through the California initiative process is to be avoided.” If Californians “focus their energies on basic public policy issues . . . where racial and ethnic differences are less sharp, then the future of race relations in the state will be much more promising.”

There is definitely a job to be done by leadership, and it will not be easy; but the authors show that—as always in California’s history—there is substantial room for consensus.

David W. Lyon
President and CEO
Public Policy Institute of California

Summary

California's population is undergoing dramatic racial and ethnic change as it evolves from a largely white state to one with a much more diverse population. In 2000, the U.S. Bureau of the Census designated California a majority-minority state, as the proportion of the state's population that is white fell below 50 percent. The California Department of Finance estimates that by the year 2020, half of the state's population will be Latino and Asian American. In 40 years, whites are expected to represent only one-third of the population, while Latinos, African Americans, and Asians will account for two in three California residents.

As California's racial and ethnic minorities grow in numbers, their effect on the state's political landscape is becoming much more pronounced. Latino, Asian, and black voters are becoming an ever-larger proportion of the state's electorate, sometimes providing the necessary margin of victory for ballot initiatives and elections for state and local elected offices. There are now more than twice as many Latinos and Asians holding elected office than there were 20 years ago. Moreover, racial and ethnic minorities themselves have become the center of policy debates as citizens' initiatives have surfaced on the questions of restricting bilingual education, ending affirmative action programs in government, and denying public services to illegal immigrants.

As the political effect of these racial and ethnic groups increases, it is important that we understand more about their interests, concerns, and political activities. In this report, we provide answers to a number of critical questions about California's racial and ethnic groups through an analysis of social, political, and economic attitudes in California. Specifically, we examine the implications of race and ethnicity across four domains: (1) race and ethnic relations, (2) policy preferences, (3) political orientation, and (4) economic well-being. The goal is to provide an overview of the similarities and differences, and areas of

agreement and disagreement, between the state's major racial and ethnic groups, that is, whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians. From this analysis, the extent to which Californians share a common ground for a dialogue about the state's future will emerge.

To measure racial and ethnic differences in California politics and policy preferences, we combine the data from ten PPIC Statewide Surveys conducted between April 1998 and May 2000. Altogether, more than 20,000 California adults completed telephone interviews on a range of political, social, and economic attitudes. A number of questions were repeated across survey waves. By aggregating the survey responses over this two-year period, we provide large samples for each of California's four major racial and ethnic groups. We are thus able to measure the actions, interests, and views of each group across a wide array of issues. To supplement the PPIC survey findings, we also examine recent data on racial and ethnic differences in voting on citizens' initiatives, using data analyzed from statewide elections and voter exit polls.

We present our major findings below.

Race and Ethnic Relations

Most Californians are well aware of changes occurring in the racial and ethnic composition of the state, and most of the members of each of the four racial and ethnic groups perceive race and ethnic relations as going well in their regions. However, the racial and ethnic groups have difficulty finding common ground when it comes to policy responses to racial and ethnic change and immigration. Specifically, whites and non-whites tend to sharply disagree over the correct course on affirmative action, immigration, and bilingual education. African Americans tend to be the most supportive of programs to aid minorities, and whites are often the most opposed. Latinos and Asian Americans fall in the middle, with Latinos usually closest to blacks and Asians usually closest to whites.

Policy Preferences

On most of the policy preferences we examine, the racial and ethnic similarities are striking. Whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians tend to agree

more often than not on a wide range of issues confronting the state today. All four of these groups agree on what the major problems in the state are. All see education, crime, and jobs, and the economy as the state's most critical policy arenas. There is also some real agreement on solutions to these problems. For example, all four groups are willing to increase money for education. Other areas with fairly widespread agreement include the environment and crime. Racial and ethnic divisions are, however, somewhat larger for other policy issues, such as spending for the poor.

Political Orientation

In terms of political interest and participation, we find a sharp divide between Asians and Latinos on the one hand and African Americans and whites on the other. Specifically, Asians and Latinos are not as politically engaged as others. For Latinos, the gap is largely explained by their lower socioeconomic status, lack of citizenship, and language barriers. However, Asian Americans appear to be disengaged for reasons other than socioeconomic status and citizenship. California's racial and ethnic groups are not especially divided by political ideology. There are significant differences in political party affiliation, with blacks being by far the most likely to register as Democrats. Latinos are also disproportionately Democratic, and Asians and whites tend to be evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats.

Economic Well-Being

Latinos not only lag far behind other groups in terms of their socioeconomic status, they also lag far behind every other group in important measures of participation in the "new economy"—computer and Internet use. The "digital divide" between Latinos and others seems to be largely explained by education and income differences. However, despite their relatively low socioeconomic status and limited involvement in the new economy, Latinos are more confident than others about their own economic futures and more optimistic about the future of the state. Overall, most Californians across all of the racial and ethnic groups think

that the state is going in the right direction and few feel that their own economic situation will worsen in the near future.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Overall, this research suggests that California's racial and ethnic groups are not deeply divided. California's racial and ethnic differences are complex, and in each of the arenas of politics and public policy that we study, we find racial and ethnic differences, and racial and ethnic similarities.

In many instances, socioeconomic status is the primary dividing line in California. If Latinos are able to improve their educational levels and economic standing, then some of the most serious racial and ethnic differences that are emerging in California are likely to disappear.

Often much of the political and social divide between Latinos, Asians, and others can be explained by immigrant and citizen status. As immigrants spend more time in the United States and become citizens, their views and actions often become more similar to those of the rest of the state.

Some of the political and policy differences that are evident between the racial and ethnic groups are a result of differences in party affiliation. At this point, most Latinos and blacks are registered as Democrats, and their views reflect more liberal tendencies toward issues such as spending and taxes. Whites and Asians are more divided in their party allegiances. If current trends continue, the rapid growth of the Latino population could fundamentally change the political landscape of the state.

This report raises three areas of real concern for the future of California. First, the fact that Latinos lag far behind today in socioeconomic status and Internet use does not bode well for the future economic achievement of this group. If Latinos are to be able to compete and improve their currently weak socioeconomic position, the digital divide will have to be closed. Second, the limited political interest and political participation of Asians and Latinos means that these groups may have a difficult time gaining influence in the politics of the state. If these two immigrant groups are to have their voices counted equally, they will have to become much more actively involved. Third, the more that explicitly racial issues are at the center of the state's politics, the

more likely it is that California will be a deeply divided state along racial and ethnic lines. There is some room for agreement even on these explicitly racial issues, but proposed programs and issues will have to be shaped very carefully if the divisiveness of past racial politics through the California initiative process is to be avoided.

Careful and sensitive political leadership is critical as California becomes a more racially and ethnically diverse state. If Californians can avoid racial politics and can focus their energies on basic public policy issues such as education, crime, and the economy where similarities across racial and ethnic groups are common, then the future of race relations in the state will be more promising.

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Acknowledgments

The idea of writing a report about the similarities and differences in attitudes among California's racial and ethnic groups was inspired by a series of conversations that the authors had with staff members and participants in the Lieutenant Governor's Commission for One California. We thank Philip Garcia, Xandra Kayden, and Marc Carrel for their enthusiasm and interest in this project. We received helpful comments on an earlier draft from Michael Teitz, Hans Johnson, and Max Neiman. A PPIC report on race and ethnicity in California, edited by Belinda Reyes, was also a useful resource document. We are grateful to Joyce Peterson, Gary Bjork, and Abby Cook for their editorial suggestions and substantive comments. Ana Maria Arumi and Jon Cohen provided research assistance on the PPIC Statewide Surveys in 1998 and 1999 and in preparing the chapter on race and ethnicity in Baldassare's book, *California in the New Millennium* (2000), all of which proved to be influential in writing this report. Hugh Louch prepared the aggregated dataset, analyzed the precinct-level data using ecological inference, and worked with Zoltan Hajnal in the analysis concerning race and ethnic relations and policy preferences. Eric McGhee and Mina Yaroslavsky worked with Mark Baldassare in the analysis and wrote earlier drafts for the sections on political orientation and economic well-being, and they provided a careful reading of the text and tables when the report was completed. We are indebted to the Statewide Database at the Institute of Governmental Studies and the University of California, Berkeley, for providing data on voting patterns in initiative elections as well as to the *Los Angeles Times* for providing exit poll data. Although this report reflects the contributions of many people, the authors are solely responsible for its content.

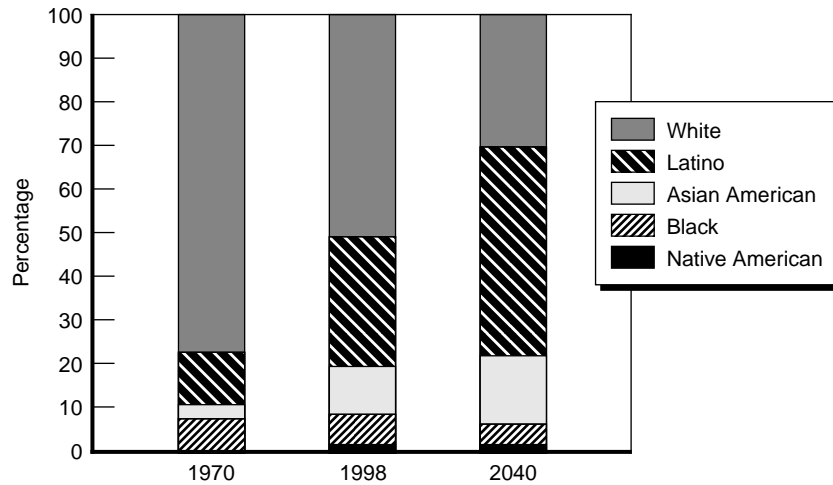
1. Introduction

Racial and ethnic change is one of the most powerful demographic forces at work in California today. The state is moving from a largely white society to a much more racially and ethnically diverse population. Between 1970 and 2000, the non-Hispanic white population shrank from 77 percent of the state's population to approximately 50 percent.¹ Over the same time period, the Latino population grew from just 12 percent to over 30 percent of the population. The Asian American share grew less dramatically, but Asian Americans now represent 11 percent of the state's population. The African American population remained stable at 7 percent (Baldassare, 2000; Reyes, 2001).

In the future, whites are likely to continue to lose ground to other racial and ethnic groups at an ever-accelerating rate. This demographic trend will result primarily from a rapid increase in the number of Latinos, while the Asian and black populations will undergo less dramatic change. By the year 2020, half of the state's population is expected to be Latino and Asian.² By 2040, the Latino population is expected to constitute nearly half of the state's population (Figure 1.1). Whites, on the other hand, may fall to only one-third of the population of California by 2040 (Baldassare, 2000; Reyes, 2001). Obviously, these developments are being closely watched. This amount of demographic change could radically alter the social, economic, cultural, and political context of the state.

¹In this report, "white" refers to those respondents who identified themselves as white and not Hispanic.

²The term "Latino" is used for those who identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic; "black" or "African American" is used interchangeably; "Asian" or "Asian American" is used for those who described themselves as Asian American or who named a specific Asian nationality (e.g., Chinese, Korean).



SOURCE: Reyes (2001).

Figure 1.1—Racial and Ethnic Makeup of California

What implications do the growing numbers of racial and ethnic minorities have for elections, politics, and public policy in California? Are Latinos, Asians, and blacks moving the state to the left or to the right on the political spectrum? Or do these groups have little effect on the policy leanings in the state?

Is a growing Latino, African American, or Asian population noticed by whites, and have racial and ethnic changes increased intergroup tensions? Or are California's racial and ethnic groups getting along well? What is the political, economic, and social climate in California as it becomes the country's first large majority-minority state, and what is it likely to be in the future as whites become an increasingly small minority in the state?

These questions have, as of yet, very few clear answers. On the one hand, there are some signs from the political arena that a growing nonwhite population has heightened racial and ethnic tensions in the state. In the past decade, three highly controversial citizen's initiatives related to race and immigration were put on the ballot. In 1994, voters passed Proposition 187, which sought to deny public services to illegal

immigrants and their children. Two years later, Proposition 209, an anti-affirmative-action initiative, also passed. And in 1998, voters passed Proposition 227, a measure that cut the state's bilingual education programs. All three passed with wide support from white voters, but there was equally widespread opposition from nonwhite voters. All three initiatives sparked intense debate and highlighted important racial and ethnic divisions in the state. Earlier in the decade, the Los Angeles riots illustrated the multitude of racial and ethnic divisions lurking beneath the surface and showed how quickly and how devastatingly they could be ignited (see Baldassare, 1994). Moreover, growing income inequality in the state, especially between its long-term white residents and the immigrant population, suggests that these problems are not likely to go away and that they may, in fact, grow more serious over time (Reed, 1999).

At the same time, there are reasons to believe that racial and ethnic tension may subside and that white and nonwhite Californians tend to agree more than they disagree over what direction the state, their cities, and their neighborhoods should take. As the economy improved in the 1990s, and as new jobs and budget surpluses swelled, immigration was no longer a major issue on voters' minds. Groups representing blacks, whites, Latinos, and Asian Americans have worked together on a variety of issues and campaigns. Multiracial coalitions recently helped to elect Cruz Bustamante as the state's first Latino Lieutenant Governor and to reelect Willie Brown as mayor of San Francisco. Tom Bradley came into power and stayed in power as mayor of Los Angeles for two decades with the support of a rainbow coalition of voters in that city. Many observers readily point to the economic assimilation of second- and third-generation Latinos as evidence that racial and ethnic differences are on the wane (Rodriguez, 1998). Asians are experiencing similar paths of assimilation, albeit from a generally higher starting point (Ong, 1994). Black wages and employment have also increased markedly, and poverty rates have declined during the recent economic expansion (Healy, 2000).

One thing is clear: California's traditional minorities are gaining in political power and influence. There are now over 2.3 million Latino registered voters—over one million more than there were just ten years ago (Baldassare, 2000; Marinucci, 2000). Similarly, Asian voter

registration has increased by about 300,000 in the past decade. Candidates throughout the state now run television commercials in Spanish. In the last gubernatorial election, both candidates used Spanish in a debate hosted by the Latino media. And in key contests at all levels across the state, minority voters have provided the margin of victory for their preferred candidates. Minority officeholding has skyrocketed in the state. As of 1998, there were 789 Latino elected officials across the state, compared to 460 in 1984. Asians officeholding has increased by almost 500 percent, rising from 106 officeholders to 503 in the past 20 years (Reyes, 2001). Although fewer in number, blacks have been very active and hold over 200 elected offices in the state. In short, Latinos, Asians, and African Americans are major players in the politics of this state.

In this report, we provide answers to a number of critical questions about the state of race and ethnic relations through an analysis of social, political, and economic attitudes in California. As the state's voter profile becomes more demographically diverse, it becomes more important for us to understand the interests, concerns, and political activities of different racial and ethnic groups. There has been intense interest in this topic among social scientists and journalists. Our work is preceded by many recent publications on the topic of race and ethnic relations and immigration and its implications for politics in California, including books such as *The Color Bind* by Lydia Chavez (1998), *The California Cauldron* by William Clark (1998), *The Coming White Minority* by Dale Maharidge (1996), *Paradise Lost* by Peter Schrag (1998), and *The New California* by Dan Walters (1992), as well as a number of journal articles and reports (see, for instance, Cain and Kiewiet, 1986; Cain et al., 1991; Cain et al., 2000; Huo and Tyler, 2000; Lee, 1998; Pachon, 1998; Segura et al., 1996; Stiles et al., 1998; Tolbert and Hero, 1996; and Uhlaner and Garcia, 1998).

In this report, we provide a detailed look at racial and ethnic attitudes in California. Specifically, we examine the implications of race and ethnicity across four arenas: (1) race and ethnic relations, (2) policy preferences, (3) political orientation, and (4) economic well-being. In each case, we will determine where similarities and differences exist, where differences between racial and ethnic groups are most pronounced, and which groups tend to have the most conflictual views. Another goal

of the report is to compare the effect of race and ethnicity to socioeconomic differences and political characteristics. Is race the most important factor, or are other factors such as education and political party more important in dividing and defining Californians? We also examine differences *within* each racial and ethnic group. Specifically, we focus on how citizenship status and foreign-versus-U.S. birth affect the attitudes of Latinos and Asian Americans. It is hoped that all of this detail will provide the reader with a clear, thorough account of racial and ethnic differences in California politics.

Most of the results presented in this report are based on a unique survey of California's racial and ethnic groups. Between April 1998 and May 2000, the Public Policy Institute of California conducted ten statewide telephone surveys with a combined total of over 20,000 respondents. In many instances, questions were repeated in two or more waves of the surveys. The large sample sizes allow us to examine the political, social, and economic attitudes of each racial and ethnic group in an in-depth and accurate manner. The survey methodology is discussed in the appendix.

For several statewide propositions, we present results derived from *Los Angeles Times* exit polls. When no exit polls are available, we present racial voting patterns based on analysis of precinct-level voting returns. The *Los Angeles Times* poll analysis and the precinct-level analysis are described in the appendix.

One important limitation of the survey data is that racial and ethnic groups are not disaggregated by country of origin. Asian subgroups and Latino subgroups often hold divergent views and political preferences (Tam, 1995, Garza, 1992). This limitation is less of a constraint in the analysis of Latinos, since most Latinos in California today are of Mexican descent. However, Asians are highly heterogeneous in terms of country of origin, making it difficult to generalize about this group.

In this report, we use demographic details gathered by the PPIC Statewide Surveys to examine differences in survey responses of self-defined whites, Asians, Latinos, and blacks. We also compare Latinos and Asians who describe themselves as noncitizens, foreign-born citizens, and U.S.-born citizens. This analysis within ethnic groups provides a glimpse into the possibilities of racial and ethnic similarities evolving over

time and generations. We use regression analyses to determine if racial and ethnic differences are in fact explained away by socioeconomic status, age, gender, and citizenship. This allows us to determine the likelihood that racial and ethnic differences that are apparent today might disappear with economic progress over time.

2. Race and Ethnic Relations

This chapter focuses on public attitudes toward race and ethnic relations in California. First, we look at how Latinos, Asian Americans, blacks, and whites perceive changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the state. We begin by asking if California's residents are aware of the major shifts occurring in the population. We then ask what Californians think about these changes and the state of race relations. Do they see immigration and racial and ethnic change as a benefit to the state or as a burden? Do they think California's racial and ethnic groups are getting along well or poorly? We then examine the attitudes of each group toward a variety of economic and social policies that have been proposed to address the reality of the growing minority populations in California. What are their views on the controversial initiatives relating to minorities, such as ending affirmative action, restricting services for illegal immigrants, and limiting bilingual education?

Our analysis indicates that most Californians across racial and ethnic groups are well aware of changes occurring in the racial and ethnic makeup of the state. There are differences of opinion between racial and ethnic populations over whether this change is good or bad. There are also large racial and ethnic divisions over most policy questions in the arenas of immigration and racial and ethnic relations. Time and time again we see a clear ordering, with blacks being the most supportive of programs to aid minorities, whites being the most opposed, and Latinos and Asians in the middle (usually with Latinos closest to African Americans and Asians closest to whites). The racial and ethnic differences that do exist persist, even when we control for other demographic characteristics such as education, income, age, and gender. Especially on questions about the effect of immigrants and the merits of affirmative action, California is divided along racial and ethnic lines. We do, however, find that the views of U.S.-born Latinos and Asians on

these issues are more like those of whites than the views expressed by foreign-born Latinos and Asians.

Finally, there appears to be some agreement on a number of more specific policy issues related to race and immigration. Even on issues as divisive as affirmative action, illegal immigration, and bilingual education, there are potential programs such as outreach to identify qualified minority applicants or discretion for individual schools on bilingual education that are widely popular. If proposed policies are framed carefully, then, there is room for consensus even on these controversial issues.

Perceptions of Racial and Ethnic Change

Californians are keenly aware of the change occurring in the state's population. Only 10 percent think that the racial and ethnic composition of their region has not changed in the past few years. The great majority of all four racial and ethnic groups think that the composition of their region has changed, and nearly four in ten residents believe it has changed a lot.¹

Californians are also very aware of the growth in the state's immigrant population, with 82 percent believing that the immigrant population has been increasing. Few have perceived a decline. Across groups, there are few differences in views of the pace of immigration. Latinos see the least change, but even among Latinos, 71 percent believe the immigrant population is growing. More whites than anyone else see immigration increasing (85%), whereas blacks (81%) and Asians (81%) fall in the middle (Table 2.1).²

There is little variation on these views across demographic groups or within the Asian American and Latino populations. Surprisingly, given the different effect of immigration on different regions of the state, there is also little variation in Californians' views by region. Large majorities in

¹After controlling for the socioeconomic status of the respondent (age, education, income, gender, and homeownership) in an ordered logit, Latinos, blacks, and Asians are no more or less likely than whites to see changes in the racial and ethnic makeup of their region.

²These differences are not significant, however ($p < 0.05$), after controlling for socioeconomic status in an ordered logit regression.

Table 2.1
Perceptions of Racial and Ethnic Change

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
In the past few years, do you think the racial and ethnic makeup of your region has been changing . . .					
A lot	38%	40%	32%	30%	42%
Somewhat	32	33	31	35	28
Very little	20	19	23	25	19
Not at all	10	8	14	10	11
Number	3,841	2,433	905	196	217
In the past few years, do you think that the overall immigrant population in California has been increasing, staying about the same, or decreasing?					
Increasing	82%	85%	71%	81%	81%
Staying about the same	12	10	19	11	12
Decreasing	6	5	10	8	7
Number	3,821	2,488	841	194	213

all regions see their immigrant population growing and are aware of changes in the racial and ethnic makeup of their region.

Effect of Racial and Ethnic Change

Most Californians (57%) believe that changes in the racial and ethnic makeup of their region have made no difference. For those who think the change has made a difference, as many say it is good (23%) as say it is bad (20%). Latinos (30%) and blacks (33%) are the most positive, and whites (19%) and Asians (25%) tend to be somewhat less likely to say that racial and ethnic change has been good. Few Californians say racial and ethnic change has been bad. Fewer than one in six African Americans, Latinos, and Asians believes that racial and ethnic changes have had negative effects. Whites are again the most negative. Only about one in four sees racial and ethnic change as bad (24%) but this is still slightly more than say the change has been good (19%).

Racial and ethnic divisions are more pronounced on the question of whether immigrants have been a benefit or a burden. Although most think that immigrants are a benefit (57%), a slight majority of whites

(53%) feel that immigrants are a burden. In contrast, majorities of the three racial and ethnic minority groups see immigrants as a benefit to the state.³ As one might expect, Latinos (78%), who make up the bulk of the immigrants, are the most positive. Asians (71%), who are also largely an immigrant population, generally also feel that immigrants have helped California because of their hard work and job skills. Blacks are more ambivalent, with 55 percent seeing immigrants as a benefit (Table 2.2).

Within racial and ethnic groups, some interesting patterns emerge on these questions. Latinos who were born in the United States are more like the rest of California than immigrant Latinos and especially noncitizen Latinos. Noncitizen Latinos are almost twice as likely as U.S.-born Latinos to think racial change is good (47% versus 25%). The same division appears over the effect of immigration: 91 percent of noncitizen Latinos feel that immigration is beneficial, whereas

Table 2.2
Effect of Racial and Ethnic Change

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Overall, would you say that the change in the ethnic and racial makeup is good or bad for your region or does it make no difference?^a					
Good	23%	19%	30%	25%	33%
No difference	57	57	57	62	53
Bad	20	24	13	13	14
Number	1,682	1,034	403	81	81
Which of these two views is closest to yours? (a) Immigrants today are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills. (b) Immigrants today are a burden to California because they use public services.					
Benefit	57%	47%	78%	71%	55%
Burden	43	53	22	29	45
Number	5,696	3,652	1,314	304	307

^aThis question was asked in only one PPIC Statewide Survey. Small sample sizes for Asians and blacks.

³These differences persist even after controlling for socioeconomic status in a logit regression. Blacks, Latinos, and Asians are all significantly less likely than whites to see immigrants as a burden ($p < 0.05$).

only 70 percent of U.S.-born Latinos think so.⁴ The question on the effect of immigrants also seems to divide Latinos with few resources from those who are more advantaged and more entrenched in American society. Among Latinos, those who are wealthier, more educated, older, and English speakers are more likely to see immigrants as a burden than are Latinos with less income and education and those who are younger and Spanish speakers.

When we look at differences within the Asian American population a similar pattern emerges. Those who are U.S.-born (37%) are more likely than are naturalized citizens (28%) or noncitizens (15%) to think that immigrants are a burden.⁵ These particular numbers, however, are based on small sample sizes and so should be considered somewhat preliminary.

For non-Latinos, a fairly clear pattern emerges with respect to the types of Californians who hold a negative view of racial/ethnic change and immigration. Those who are older and poorer and those who are unemployed or who rent rather than own their homes are more likely to view immigrants as a burden and to see racial and ethnic change as bad. Conservatives and Republicans are more likely than liberals and Democrats to view racial change negatively and to think immigrants are a burden. There are few differences, however, across regions in how Californians view their changing population.

Perceptions of Race and Ethnic Relations

Some politicians and policy experts may worry that racial and ethnic conflict in the state is increasing, but this is not the experience of most members of the public. Eight in ten Californians think that racial and ethnic groups are getting along very well or somewhat well in their region. Over 80 percent of each racial and ethnic group believe that race relations are good. At the same time, a minority of Californians perceive

⁴U.S.-born Latinos are significantly ($p < 0.01$) more likely to see immigrants as a burden than are noncitizens in a logit regression that controls for socioeconomic status.

⁵These differences do not persist, however, after controlling for the socioeconomic status of respondents in a logit regression.

real problems. Roughly 20 percent of whites, Latinos, and blacks believe that race relations are going badly, compared to 14 percent of Asians.⁶

Here, differences in views about race and ethnic relations are more likely to be related to social class than party registration, political ideology, or citizenship status. Well-educated, wealthy homeowners are more apt to be positive about the current state of race relations than are less-educated, poor Californians and those who rent.

When asked about the future, Californians tend to be optimistic about racial and ethnic relations. Over 60 percent of whites, Asians, and Latinos believe that racial and ethnic relations will improve. African Americans are the most pessimistic, with 46 percent saying that they expect racial and ethnic relations to get worse over the next two decades (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3
Perceptions of Race and Ethnic Relations

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Overall, how would you say that the racial and ethnic groups in your region are getting along these days—very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?					
Very well	22%	23%	18%	26%	25%
Somewhat well	59	58	63	60	55
Somewhat badly	14	15	13	10	13
Very badly	5	4	6	4	7
Number	3,861	2,447	905	200	217
Looking ahead to the year 2020, which is more likely to happen in your region: (a) race and ethnic relations will improve (b) race and ethnic relations will get worse?^a					
Improve	64%	64%	66%	71%	54%
Get worse	36	36	34	29	46
Number	1,848	1,192	417	100	108

^aThis question was asked in only one PPIC Statewide Survey. Small sample sizes for Asians and blacks.

⁶After controlling for the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents in an ordered logit, Asians are slightly more likely than whites ($p < 0.05$) to believe that racial groups are getting along, and the views of blacks and Latinos are no different from those of whites.

Older Californians tend to be more pessimistic. Republicans (41%) are also slightly more pessimistic about the future than are Democrats (33%). Among Latinos and Asian Americans, being a citizen or being born in the United States seems to make little difference. There is also little variation across region. Regardless of where Californians live, they are much more likely to expect positive than negative changes in race relations.

We also asked Californians whether they thought it would be better if different racial and ethnic groups change “so that they blend into the larger society” or if they thought that “racial and ethnic groups should maintain their distinct cultures.” Whites (72%) favor the idea of racial and ethnic groups assimilating rather than maintaining their separate identities. Majorities of Latinos (58%) and blacks (53%) agree. Asians (48%) are the least supportive of racial and ethnic assimilation.

Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action

One of the most divisive racial issues in California and the nation in recent decades has been affirmative action. It continues to divide Californians today: 41 percent of Californians would like to see affirmative action programs continued, 26 percent would like to see them ended now, and another third would like to see these programs phased out over the next few years. Californians are slightly more opposed to affirmative action than the rest of the country. A CBS/*New York Times* survey in 1997 found that only 12 percent of Americans wanted affirmative action programs to end immediately, and 41 percent wanted them to continue.

Californians’ attitudes towards affirmative action vary by race and ethnicity. Whites generally want the programs ended immediately (33%) or phased out (39%); only 27 percent would like to see affirmative action programs continued. By contrast, 78 percent of blacks want affirmative action continued; only 4 percent would like to see the programs ended immediately. Latinos’ views are closest to those of blacks. Sixty-six percent of Latinos would like to see affirmative action continued and 13 percent would like it to end now. Asians are the most divided group on the issue of affirmative action. Forty-nine percent

want it to continue, and 51 percent would like to see it phased out or ended now.⁷

Race is not the only dividing line on affirmative action. Party identification also strongly divides Californians on this issue. Democrats strongly endorse affirmative action with only 16 percent in favor of ending it now. Republicans almost unanimously favor ending affirmative action, with 45 percent preferring it to end immediately and 38 percent preferring to see it phased out over time.

These same sharp divisions are reflected in the actual vote on Proposition 209, a 1996 ballot initiative that sought to end the state government's affirmative action programs. Our analysis of *Los Angeles Times* exit poll data indicates large divisions between racial and ethnic groups. Although 76 percent of Latinos, 74 percent of African Americans, and 61 percent of Asians opposed Proposition 209, it passed by a large margin among whites (63%). Proposition 209 passed because three in four California voters were white in the 1996 statewide election (Baldassare, 2000).

These racial and ethnic divisions do not exist, however, for every aspect of affirmative action. When Proposition 209 passed, many public officials vowed that affirmative action programs would be replaced by special outreach programs that sought to identify qualified minority applicants and encourage them to apply to colleges and public employment. This partly race-based policy is one that the majority of Californians in all racial and ethnic groups are willing to support. Statewide outreach programs receive 63 percent support in the PPIC Statewide Survey. Yet we do see, once again, the same pattern of blacks being the most supportive, whites being the most opposed, and Latinos and Asians in the middle. The overwhelming majority of blacks (87%) favor outreach programs, followed closely by Latinos (79%) and Asians (71%). There is much lower support among whites (54%). This question on outreach programs suggests that there may be some room for agreement, but it also indicates that it matters very much how we define

⁷Even after controlling for citizenship status and socioeconomic status in an ordered logit regression, blacks, Latinos, and Asians are significantly more likely to favor affirmative action programs than are whites ($p < 0.01$).

affirmative action and how we shape the programs that are being proposed (Table 2.4).

Another highly charged racial issue in California and elsewhere is racial profiling. Critics argue that police have been using race to identify and target suspects. Evidence of such racial profiling has emerged in several states, but Californians are not sure how widespread the problem is in their state. Fifty-three percent believe that racial profiling is widespread, and 47 percent think it is not. These statewide figures once again mask great differences of opinion across groups. Blacks (82%) and Latinos (65%) are the most likely to believe the practice of racial profiling is widespread. Although most Asian Americans also feel that racial profiling occurs, 42 percent feel that it is not widespread. Whites (43%) are the least likely to believe that racial profiling occurs.

Table 2.4
Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
What do you think should happen to affirmative action programs—should they be ended now, should they be phased out over the next few years, or should affirmative action programs be continued for the foreseeable future?^a					
Ended now	26%	33%	13%	19%	4%
Phased out	33	39	21	32	19
Continued	41	27	66	49	78
Number	1,865	1,132	458	86	111
Estimated vote on Proposition 209^b					
Yes	51%	63%	24%	39%	26%
No	49	37	76	61	74
Do you favor or oppose employers and colleges using outreach programs to hire minority workers and find minority students?^a					
Favor	63%	54%	79%	71%	87%
Oppose	37	46	21	29	13
Number	1,888	1,142	464	94	112

^aThis question was asked in only one PPIC Statewide Survey. Small sample sizes for Asians and blacks.

^bSource: *Los Angeles Times* exit poll, 1996.

Attitudes Toward Illegal Immigration

What do Californians think of illegal immigration from Mexico? In general, their views are negative. Eighty-five percent of all Californians believe that illegal immigration is either a big problem or somewhat of a problem. Perhaps surprisingly, there is a fair amount of agreement on this point even among racial and ethnic minorities. Whites are the most concerned about the issue. Ninety-one percent see illegal immigration as a problem but the vast majority of African Americans (86%), Asians (80%), and Latinos (67%) agree that it is at least somewhat of a problem.⁸

There are important divisions, however, within racial and ethnic groups. In particular, we see a divide between U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinos, as well as between citizens and noncitizens. As one might expect, very few noncitizen Latinos see illegal immigration as a big problem (17%). In contrast, U.S.-born Latinos are almost twice as likely to see illegal immigration as a serious problem (33%).⁹ Other aspects of the assimilation process affect the views of Latinos as well. English-speaking Latinos tend to view illegal immigration more negatively. Socioeconomic status matters as well among Latinos. Wealthier, better-educated Latinos are also more likely to see illegal immigration as a problem. Nativity and citizenship do not divide Asians' views to the same extent. Among Asians, education is the most important factor, with the college educated viewing illegal immigration slightly more negatively.

The general consensus among racial and ethnic groups that illegal immigration is a problem breaks down when Californians begin to think about how government should deal with the problem. Proposition 187 sharply divided the state's racial and ethnic groups. Analysis of a *Los Angeles Times* exit poll indicates that the proposition, which sought to cut off social services to illegal immigrants and their children, passed by a

⁸Ordered logit regression analysis indicates that only Latinos hold views that are significantly less negative than those of whites ($p < 0.01$) after controlling for socioeconomic status and citizenship.

⁹This difference persists even after controlling for socioeconomic status in an ordered logit regression.

relatively comfortable ten-point margin (55% to 45%), but the overall support once again masks racial and ethnic divisions. The vast majority of Latinos (77%) and most blacks (53%) and Asians (53%) opposed the measure. However, because white voters were strongly in favor of the proposition (63%), and three in four California voters were white in the 1994 statewide election, Proposition 187 ultimately passed (Table 2.5).

Yet even on an issue as controversial and divisive as illegal immigration, there are areas where different racial and ethnic groups do agree. One of the most controversial aspects of Proposition 187 was that it would prohibit the children of illegal immigrants from attending public schools. Few Californians in the PPIC Statewide Survey of any race or ethnicity were supportive of this aspect of the measure. Whites (27%) and Asians (22%) were more likely than Latinos (14%) and blacks (10%) to say that illegal immigrant children should be excluded from public schools, but the vast majority of each group were against this provision.

Table 2.5
Attitudes Toward Illegal Immigration

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
In the past few years, do you think that illegal immigration from Mexico to California has been a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?					
Big problem	44%	53%	25%	32%	46%
Somewhat of a problem	41	38	42	48	40
Not a problem	15	9	33	20	14
Number	3,874	2,480	896	216	201
Estimated vote on Proposition 187^a					
Yes	55%	63%	23%	47%	47%
No	45	37	77	53	53

^aSource: *Los Angeles Times* exit poll, 1994.

Attitudes Toward Bilingual Education

The most recent racially and ethnically charged issue to be addressed through California's initiative process was bilingual education. In June 1998, California's voters were confronted with Proposition 227, a

measure that abolished the state’s existing bilingual education program. Proposition 227 passed by a healthy margin of 20 points, but there were major divisions across racial and ethnic groups. These racial and ethnic divisions were not as severe as they had been on Proposition 187, but the initiative nevertheless did seem to once again pit most whites on one hand against most Latinos and blacks on the other. According to *Los Angeles Times* exit poll data, most whites (67%) and Asians (57%) wanted to eliminate the state’s program of bilingual education. By contrast, most Latinos (63%) and African Americans (52%) voted to maintain the existing program (see Table 2.6).

Even though Californians passed the measure by a large margin, most of the survey respondents indicated that they were in favor of a somewhat less severe measure that would allow local school districts to decide whether to keep their bilingual education programs. Overall, 60 percent felt that local school districts should be able to decide. This support for local control existed across all racial and ethnic groups. Large majorities of blacks (71%), Asians (69%), and Latinos (65%) thought that local districts should decide. However, whites were less supportive of the idea of local control (56%).

Table 2.6
Attitudes Toward Bilingual Education

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Do you approve or disapprove of allowing local school districts to decide whether or not to keep their bilingual education programs?^a					
Approve	60%	56%	65%	69%	71%
Disapprove	40	44	35	32	29
Number	1,810	1,207	405	89	109
Estimated vote on Proposition 227^b					
Yes	60%	67%	37%	57%	48%
No	40	33	63	43	52

^aThis question was asked in only one PPIC Statewide Survey. Small sample sizes for Asians and blacks.

^bSource: *Los Angeles Times* exit poll, 1998.

3. Policy Preferences

In this chapter, we move from explicit questions about racial and ethnic issues to a broad range of policy topics. Although much of the concern over racial and ethnic relations in California stems from a small number of ballot propositions and policies that directly focus on nonwhite minority groups, it is important to remember that *nonracial* policy decisions can and often do have dramatic and disproportionate effects on racial and ethnic minorities. For instance, half of California's public school children are now Latino or Asian American (Betts et al., 2000); thus, any new educational policy inevitably affects these two groups disproportionately. Similarly, given that blacks and Latinos make up both the majority of those victimized by crime and those incarcerated in the state's correctional facilities (Reyes, 2001), any new criminal policy measure is likely to affect these groups more than other racial and ethnic groups.

Our analysis indicates that there are more similarities than differences of opinion between whites, Latinos, blacks, and Asians on most public policy issues. All four of California's racial and ethnic groups generally agree on the most important problems facing the state. They also often agree on the policies that should be enacted to address those problems.

However, we did find a distinct racial ordering on many of the issues we asked about. African Americans tend to be the most critical of current conditions. They often see big problems and want to spend more to address those problems. The views of Latinos tend to be similar to those of blacks, although somewhat more moderate. Whites and Asians often see many of the same problems as blacks and Latinos but are generally a little less willing to support spending to alleviate those problems. It is important to remember that on the issues that racial and ethnic minorities think are the most important, whites and nonwhites are much more apt to agree than disagree.

We find that factors such as party registration, political ideology, and socioeconomic status often matter more than race and ethnicity on a wide range of policy concerns. Among Latinos and Asians, we also see important differences between immigrants and U.S.-born residents, with the latter tending to hold views that are more similar to those of whites.

Most Important Policy Issue

The front-and-center policy issue on Californians' minds these days is the public education system. In an open-ended question, 26 percent of those interviewed cited schools and education as the most important policy issue facing California—more than twice as many as mentioned any other topic. There was almost no variation across racial and ethnic groups: Whites (26%) were as likely to name education as were Latinos (28%), Asians (27%), and African Americans (28%).

Next to schools and education, crime and gangs was the most important policy problem on people's minds. Across the state, 13 percent considered crime and gangs as the most important policy issue. And again, there was little variation across racial and ethnic groups. All four groups mentioned crime much more often than anything else other than education (Table 3.1).

Currently, other issues are markedly less important to Californians. No other issue was mentioned by any racial or ethnic group more than 9 percent of the time.

Nevertheless, there is consensus across groups on the next three most mentioned issues. Among Latinos, Asians, and blacks, the same three issues—jobs, immigration, and poverty—rounded out the top five. Whites had slightly different concerns. Fewer whites saw jobs or poverty as a primary concern. Jobs and the economy ranked sixth and poverty ranked seventh among whites. Instead, whites were more concerned about the environment (fourth) and taxes (fifth).

Race and ethnic relations and racial discrimination were rarely mentioned by any racial or ethnic group as being the state's most

Table 3.1
Most Important Policy Issue

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
What do you think is the most important public policy issue facing California today?^a					
Schools, education	26%	26%	28%	27%	28%
Crime, gangs	13	12	16	14	13
Jobs, the economy	5	4	6	6	9
Immigration, illegal immigration	6	7	5	6	4
Environment, pollution	4	5	2	3	2
Poverty, the poor, the homeless, welfare	3	3	4	3	5
Number	13,691	8,801	3,145	708	755

^aNot all answer categories are shown, so the columns do not add up to 100 percent.

pressing problem. Racial issues ranked seventh for Latinos and only fifteenth for blacks and seventeenth for Asians.¹

Evaluation of K–12 Education

Race and ethnicity do not have much effect on evaluations of the quality of education in public schools. Very few Californians in any group think educational quality is not a problem. African Americans and whites are the least likely to be positive, with only 14 percent of blacks and 10 percent of whites feeling that there isn't much of a problem. But Asian Americans (16%) and Latinos (27%) are not far behind. Overall, 86 percent of Californians feel that education is at least somewhat of a

¹This ordering should not be taken as a definitive ranking of issues for each racial and ethnic group. Results are complicated by the fact that respondents could mention only one issue when they might have felt that two or more issues were of utmost importance. These rankings are also likely to vary over time as circumstances changes and different issues come to the fore.

problem and a majority of black (56%) and white (57%) Californians feel educational quality is a big problem.²

Across all groups, Californians seem to think that insufficient educational spending is part of the problem. Seventy-one percent believe that not enough money is going into public education. Even among whites, who are the least supportive of increased spending, 68 percent think that the current level of state funding is too low. Asians (71%), Latinos (73%), and blacks (88%) have a greater interest in increased spending.³ The larger differences on this measure, though, were by party. Whereas 80 percent of Democrats thought that spending needed to be increased, only 57 percent of Republicans thought so (Table 3.2).

Those Latinos who speak English, who were born in the United States, or who are naturalized citizens are more likely than other Latinos to find fault with the educational system. Furthermore, as income and

Table 3.2
Evaluation of K-12 Education

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How much of a problem is the quality of education in kindergarten through twelfth grade public schools in California today? Is it a . . .					
Big problem	52%	57%	38%	45%	56%
Somewhat of a problem	34	33	35	39	30
Not much of a problem	14	10	27	16	14
Number	3,685	2,341	841	186	238
Do you think the current level of state funding for your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?					
More than enough	8%	10%	6%	4%	5%
Just enough	21	22	21	25	7
Not enough	71	68	73	71	88
Number	3,712	2,399	850	182	199

²Ordered logit regression analysis indicates that Latinos (but not Asians) hold less negative views than whites ($p < 0.01$) after controlling for socioeconomic status (age, education, income, gender, and homeownership) and citizenship.

³After controlling for socioeconomic status and citizenship in an ordered logit regression, blacks are the only racial group that is significantly more likely than whites to believe that current spending is insufficient ($p < 0.01$).

educational attainment increase among Latinos, ratings of the quality of education decline. A similar pattern is evident among Asians, although the small sample size must make any inferences somewhat preliminary. U.S.-born Asians in the sample are much more likely to see education as a problem than are Asian immigrants who have not become American citizens (59% versus 27%).

Although not as pronounced, a similar pattern exists on the question of spending on education. U.S.-born Latinos and Asian Americans are slightly more likely to say spending is not enough than are immigrants from each group.⁴ Again, the small sample size for Asians limits the strength of this conclusion.

How do these attitudes toward education translate into policy preferences at the ballot box? Over the past few years, Californians have been faced with a number of propositions on education. Our surveys asked about two of the most prominent: Proposition 1A in the 1998 general election—a \$9 billion bond for educational facilities and class-size reduction—and Proposition 26 from the March 2000 ballot, a measure that would have reduced the vote requirement to pass local school bonds from a two-thirds majority to a simple majority vote.

Proposition 1A passed with 63 percent of the vote and Proposition 26 lost by a slim margin (49% to 51%). In both cases, patterns of support and opposition were similar. Racial and ethnic divisions were fairly small, but Latinos were the most supportive and whites were the least supportive. Eighty-six percent of Latinos planned to vote for Proposition 1A, and 71 percent planned on supporting Proposition 26. Seventy percent of whites were in favor of Proposition 1A, and 57 percent were in support of Proposition 26. Asians (78% on 1A and 68% on 26) and blacks (81% on 1A and 62% on 26) fell somewhere in between. As we saw above on the general spending question, party was a more important factor than race. Democrats planned to support Proposition 1A and Proposition 26 by wide margins (82% and 65%),

⁴For both Latinos and Asians, the U.S.-born are significantly more likely to see educational quality as a problem ($p < 0.01$) than are noncitizens in ordered logit regressions controlling for socioeconomic status. For neither group is there a significant difference between U.S.-born and noncitizens on the question of educational spending once socioeconomic status is taken into account.

whereas Republicans were much less supportive of either proposition (60% and 52%).

Perceptions of Crime

Crime is an important issue in California for all racial and ethnic groups. Across the state, 95 percent of residents perceive crime to be either a big problem or somewhat of a problem. Blacks (65%) and Latinos (64%) are the most likely to say that crime is a big problem, although most whites (58%) and almost half of Asians (46%) feel the same way. Within groups, these views do not vary much by income, education, or citizenship and immigrant status.

Region played a much larger role than race and ethnicity in how Californians evaluate crime. On one extreme, crime is seen as a big problem by 67 percent of Central Valley residents. At the other extreme, only 46 percent of Bay Area residents view crime as a big problem. In Los Angeles (62%) and the rest of Southern California (59%), about six in ten residents think that crime is a major problem.

Despite evidence of a prolonged decline in the incidence of serious crimes in the state (Lichtbau, 2000), Californians have mixed views of changes in the crime rate. Roughly one-third see crime increasing. Another third see it decreasing, and another third feel that it has stayed about the same. There is little variation in these views across racial and ethnic groups.⁵

This relative consensus across racial and ethnic groups on crime was not, however, reflected in the vote on Proposition 184 (Three Strikes), which increased sentences for criminals convicted of a second or third felony. When Californians passed Proposition 184 in 1994, fairly large racial divisions emerged. Whereas whites (71%) and Latinos (80%) were strongly in favor of the measure, only 47 percent of African Americans supported it (Table 3.3).

⁵Ordered logit regression analysis indicates that the views of blacks, Latinos, and Asians on both crime questions are not significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from those of whites after controlling for socioeconomic status.

Table 3.3
Perceptions of Crime

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
In your opinion, how much of a problem is crime in California today? Is it a . . .					
Big problem	60%	58%	64%	46%	65%
Somewhat of a problem	35	37	29	47	27
Not a problem	5	5	7	7	8
Number	3,827	2,469	830	199	247
In the past few years, do you think the crime rate in California has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?					
Increased	38%	36%	42%	29%	41%
Stayed about the same	31	32	30	34	32
Decreased	31	32	28	37	27
Number	3,793	2,412	863	193	243
Estimated vote on Proposition 184 (“Three Strikes” law)^a					
Yes	72%	71%	80%	–	47%
No	28	29	20	–	53

^aEstimate derived from precinct-level voting. No figures for Asians. See the appendix for details of the analysis.

Jobs and the Economy

California is in the midst of a prolonged economic expansion, and these good economic times are reflected in Californians’ thoughts on employment and the economy. Majorities of every racial and ethnic group are satisfied with the economic opportunities in their region. Seventy-four percent of residents in the state feel satisfied with job opportunities in their region. Perhaps in response to these favorable circumstances, most Californians are fairly happy with how local government is handling local jobs and economic development. Overall, 77 percent are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with local government actions. We also find widespread confidence in the future. Statewide, 61 percent of respondents see job opportunities and economic conditions improving (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Jobs and the Economy

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How do you feel about the job opportunities that are available in the region you live in? Are you . . .^a					
Very satisfied	26%	29%	23%	25%	10%
Somewhat satisfied	48	47	50	58	53
Not satisfied	26	24	27	17	37
Number	1,692	1,087	382	89	100
How satisfied are you with the way your local government is handling local jobs and economic development?					
Very satisfied	22%	25%	18%	13%	13%
Somewhat satisfied	55	53	58	72	43
Not satisfied	23	22	24	15	44
Number	1,938	1,304	409	97	101

^aThis question was asked in only one PPIC Statewide Survey. Small sample sizes for Asians and blacks.

However, there are some clear racial and ethnic differences in attitudes. Blacks are the least satisfied with job opportunities in their region (37% are not satisfied), the least happy with local government handling of the employment sector (44% are not satisfied), and the most pessimistic about the future (only 58% see job opportunities improving). Conversely, Asian Americans are the most satisfied with current job opportunities in their region (83% are satisfied), the most happy with local government handling of jobs and economic development (85% are satisfied), and the most optimistic about employment in the future (73% see conditions improving). Finally, whites and Latinos fit somewhere in the middle.⁶

Attitudes Toward Poverty Programs

There is relatively little sympathy for the poor across racial and ethnic groups. Statewide, 78 percent agree that poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs. Even among

⁶This racial pattern generally persists in regression analyses after controlling for socioeconomic status.

African Americans, traditionally the group with the most liberal attitudes when it comes to social services, 69 percent either completely agree or mostly agree that the poor are overly dependent. However, blacks are only half as likely as whites to completely agree with the statement (16% versus 31%).

General agreement across racial and ethnic groups in attitudes toward the poor does not extend to consensus on policy solutions. On each of the policy questions we examined, there are significant divides between some of the racial and ethnic groups. Blacks are by far the most liberal on the question of how much the government should spend on programs for the poor: Only 17 percent think government spends too much money on the poor. By comparison, 46 percent of whites and 47 percent of Latinos think that the government is too generous with the least well-off. Asians are the only group in which a majority feel that the government is spending too much on the poor (57%).⁷

Blacks were also the most supportive of Proposition 210, a 1996 initiative that increased the minimum wage in the state. In fact, 92 percent of African Americans supported the measure. Latinos were also very favorable toward Proposition 210, with 87 percent supporting an increase in the minimum wage. Whites, on the other hand, were much more ambivalent: Only 57 percent supported the measure (Table 3.5).

Environmental Issues

Despite the fact that whites are more likely than nonwhites to mention the environment as the state's most important policy issue, whites and nonwhites tend to have quite similar perceptions of specific environmental concerns. Generally, about one-third to one-quarter of each racial and ethnic group sees pollution as a big problem in their region. Blacks (32%) were most apt to see pollution as a big problem,

⁷Further analysis shows that blacks are less likely ($p < 0.01$), and Asians are more likely ($p < 0.05$) than whites to believe that the government is spending too much on programs for the poor after controlling for socioeconomic status. By contrast, blacks, Asians, and Latinos all hold views that are not significantly different from whites on the question of whether the poor are too dependent once socioeconomic status is taken into account in ordered logit analysis.

Table 3.5
Attitudes Toward Poverty Programs

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs.					
Do you . . . ^a					
Completely agree	30%	31%	26%	37%	16%
Mostly agree	48	48	50	43	53
Mostly disagree	17	18	16	17	18
Completely disagree	5	3	8	3	13
Number	1,936	1,218	463	91	104
The government is spending too much money on programs to help the poor.					
Do you . . . ^a					
Completely agree	13%	12%	15%	21%	9%
Mostly agree	32	34	32	36	8
Mostly disagree	38	39	34	38	42
Completely disagree	17	15	20	5	41
Number	1,948	1,195	459	92	102
Estimated vote on Proposition 210 (minimum wage)^b					
Yes	61%	57%	87%	—	92%
No	39	43	13	—	8

^aThis question was asked in only one PPIC Statewide Survey. Small sample sizes for Asians and blacks.

^bEstimate derived from precinct-level voting. No figures for Asians. See the appendix for details of the analysis.

but they were followed very closely by Latinos (30%), Asians (28%), and whites (26%). A plurality of each group sees pollution as somewhat of a problem. About three in ten from each group do not view pollution as a problem.

Racial divisions were similarly muted when it came to opinions about population growth and development. Whites (29%) tend to be slightly more likely to see population growth as a problem than blacks (23%), Asian Americans (21%), and Latinos (19%), but the differences are not pronounced.

When asked whether stricter environmental laws are worth the costs that they often entail, two in three residents statewide offered a pro-environment response. Large majorities of every racial and ethnic group felt that stricter environmental laws were worth it. Among African

Americans and Latinos, support was a little lower, but the differences were once again not very large (Table 3.6).⁸

On environmental policy issues, socioeconomic status and party divisions are stronger than racial and ethnic divisions. Democrats and respondents with higher incomes and higher educational attainment were much more willing to enact stricter environmental laws than were Republicans and residents with lower incomes and less education. Regional differences also emerged: 73 percent of San Francisco Bay Area residents favored stricter environmental laws versus only 53 percent in the Central Valley. Latinos and Asians born in the United States were

Table 3.6
Environmental Issues

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How much of a problem is air pollution, water pollution, and other forms of environmental pollution in your region?					
Big problem	27%	26%	30%	28%	32%
Somewhat of a problem	42	43	40	45	40
Not a problem	31	31	30	27	28
Number	3,850	2,445	870	211	233
How much of a problem is population growth and development in your region?					
Big problem	26%	29%	19%	21%	23%
Somewhat of a problem	39	39	39	44	35
Not a problem	35	32	42	35	42
Number	3,823	2,430	866	208	231
Do stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy, or are stricter environmental laws and regulations worth the cost?					
Cost jobs, hurt the economy	37%	35%	41%	30%	40%
Worth the cost	63	65	59	70	60
Number	3,681	2,356	823	187	233

⁸Latinos are somewhat less likely than whites to see population growth and development as a problem ($p < 0.05$) after controlling for socioeconomic status and citizenship in ordered logit regression analysis but that is the only significant difference that emerges between racial and ethnic groups on these environmental questions after taking socioeconomic status and citizenship into account.

slightly more likely than noncitizens from either group to see pollution and growth and development as problems, but they were not more supportive of stricter environmental laws.

Social and Religious Issues

Many political and policy issues raised in California involve morality and religion as well. We might expect racial and ethnic divisions on these types of issues, because the groups vary along religious lines. Among the subjects we examined were gay marriage and the role of religion in politics.

Most Californians are opposed to recognizing gay marriage. When Proposition 22, a measure that defined marriage as a union only between a man and a woman, was put before the voters, it passed by a margin of 61 to 39 percent. Few major racial differences emerge on this subject. In our survey, of those who had decided how to vote, most Asians (60%), whites (62%), blacks (65%), and Latinos (72%) intended to vote yes.⁹

We also asked Californians if they approve of political candidates talking about religious values when they campaign for office. Blacks (61%), who throughout their history in the United States have used the church as an avenue to organize politically, are highly supportive of a role for religion in politics. In contrast, whites (49%), Latinos (49%), and Asians (47%), by a narrow margin, disapprove of discussions of religious values during political campaigns¹⁰ (Table 3.7).

On these social and religious issues, other demographic factors greatly affected preferences. Political ideology strongly influences opinions, with most liberals opposing Proposition 22 (58%) and strongly disapproving of religion in politics (65%). In contrast, few conservatives intended to oppose Proposition 22 (17%) and few disapproved of religion in politics (37%). Region and education also mattered: Bay Area residents and college graduates are less supportive of Proposition 22

⁹However, after controlling for socioeconomic status and citizenship status, both blacks and Latinos were significantly ($p < 0.05$) more likely than whites to intend to support the proposition.

¹⁰Blacks are the only group that significantly differed from whites in their views on religion in politics after taking into account socioeconomic status ($p < 0.01$).

Table 3.7
Social and Religious Issues

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Proposition 22—the “limit on marriages” initiative on the March 2000 ballot— adds a provision to the family code providing that only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 22?					
Yes	64%	62%	72%	60%	65%
No	36	38	28	40	35
Number	7,447	4,846	1,679	389	413
What is your opinion about political candidates who talk about religious values when they are campaigning for office? Do you approve or disapprove?					
Approve	49%	49%	49%	47%	61%
Disapprove	51	51	51	53	39
Number	3,586	2,301	815	175	203

and more disapproving of religion in politics than those with less education and those from other regions.

We also found some interesting differences between U.S.-born and noncitizen Latinos and Asians. In general, immigrants tended to be significantly more conservative on these social issues. The vast majority of noncitizens Latinos (83%) and Asian Americans (72%) supported Proposition 22. Fewer U.S.-born Latinos (65%) supported Proposition 22, and only a minority of U.S.-born Asians (46%) indicated that they would support the measure. For Asians, the differences between those U.S.-born and noncitizens were almost as large on the question of whether religion should play a role in politics. Most U.S.-born Asians disapproved of candidates talking about religion (59%), whereas most non-citizens approved (57%). Among Latinos, nativity and citizenship also mattered, but the differences between groups were less stark.¹¹ These findings for Asians are tentative, however, because of small sample sizes.

¹¹After controlling for socioeconomic status, only the differences on Proposition 22 remained significant. Here, U.S.-born Latinos and Asians were clearly less supportive ($p < 0.01$) of the measure than were noncitizen immigrants in each group.

4. Political Orientation

In this chapter, we examine the views of California's racial and ethnic groups on the political system. How interested and involved are they in politics at either the national or state level? What are their partisan preferences? Where do they fit on the conservative-liberal ideological spectrum? To what extent do they distrust government and believe it is wasteful? Finally, how do they rate officials from the president and Congress to the governor and state legislature?

On these basic measures, several important patterns emerge. We find that Asians and Latinos are not as involved in elections or as interested in politics as whites or African Americans. For Latinos, lower participation rates are largely explained by their lower socioeconomic status, but this is not generally the case for Asian Americans.

There are also real differences over partisan identification. Blacks in the state are overwhelmingly Democratic, and Latinos also lean heavily toward the Democrats. Asians and whites are more evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats in their party affiliation.

Racial and ethnic differences are modest on most of the other political indicators, including trust in government, assessment of government wastefulness, and ratings of most officials. Latinos and Asians are slightly more trusting of government than whites and blacks. Blacks tend to rate the governor and the state legislature more negatively, but these differences are fairly marginal.

Voting Participation

Eight in ten California adults in our surveys report being registered to vote. Latinos (62%) and Asians (65%) are much less likely than whites (87%) and African Americans (84%) to say that they are registered to vote. About half of Californians say they always vote in elections. Here, again, there are differences between racial and ethnic groups. Over half of the whites (56%) say that they always vote,

compared to 45 percent of blacks, 34 percent of Latinos, and 33 percent of Asians. It is important to note that there is a tendency in surveys for respondents to overstate their voter registration and their tendency to vote in elections; however, the differences between racial and ethnic groups are large and significant (Table 4.1).

The racial and ethnic differences in voting are only partly explained by citizenship status. Almost one in five Asian Americans and Latinos are not citizens and are thus not eligible to vote. Among Latinos and Asian Americans who are citizens, those born in the United States are more likely than naturalized citizens to register to vote. However, even among U.S.-born Latinos and Asians, voter registration and frequent voting lag behind the participation rates for blacks and whites (Table 4.2).

We used regression analysis to see if racial and ethnic differences persist when we control for other factors. After taking into account socioeconomic factors, age, gender, and citizenship, Asians still have lower voter registration rates than other groups. However, after controlling for the same demographic and socioeconomic factors, Latinos actually have higher voter registration rates than other racial and ethnic groups.¹

How do voter participation rates among Latinos and Asians compare with other demographic groups? Adults under age 34 (67%), renters (68%), and those with annual household incomes below \$20,000 (65%) are similar to Latinos (62%) and Asians (65%) in voter registration, and those without a high school degree (49%) actually have lower voter registration rates than Latinos and Asian Americans. Also, renters (32%) and those with annual household incomes under \$20,000 (35%) are as likely as Latinos (34%) and Asians (33%) to say they frequently vote, and

¹Logit regression analyses indicate that Asians ($p < 0.01$) have lower voter registration rates than others after we control for citizenship status and socioeconomic factors (age, income, education, homeownership, and gender), but Latinos do not. In fact, Latinos are *more* likely to be registered ($p < 0.01$) once we control for the same factors. Accounting for socioeconomic factors and citizenship, the two groups also differ in the extent to which they vote frequently. Asians ($p < 0.001$) are still more likely than others to vote infrequently, and Latinos are no more or less likely than others to say they vote frequently.

Table 4.1
Voting Participation

	All				
	Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Are you certain you are registered to vote?					
Registered to vote	80%	87%	62%	65%	84%
Not registered	20	13	38	35	16
Number	19,222	12,367	4,373	1,001	1,079
How often would you say you vote?					
Always	49%	56%	34%	33%	45%
Nearly always	23	25	17	21	25
Part of the time	11	9	16	15	12
Seldom	5	5	7	11	7
Never	12	5	26	20	11
Number	19,433	12,539	4,377	1,009	1,100

Table 4.2
Voting Participation by Citizenship Status

	Latino		Asian	
	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
Are you certain you are registered to vote?				
Registered to vote	79%	68%	80%	75%
Not registered to vote	21	32	20	25
Number	2,502	915	389	433
How often would you say you vote?				
Always	41%	40%	41%	32%
Nearly always	21	16	23	26
Part of the time	16	18	14	18
Seldom	7	5	10	11
Never	15	21	12	13
Number	2,524	922	397	440

adults under age 34 (29%) and those without a high school degree (27%) are even less likely to vote frequently. U.S.-born residents (86%), those 55 and older (92%), college graduates (88%), homeowners (87%), and residents with annual household incomes of \$80,000 or more (88%)

have the highest rates of voter registration, and these demographic groups also have the highest rates of frequent voting in the state.

Political Party Affiliation

There are significant differences in party registration across racial and ethnic groups. Two in three African Americans are registered as Democrats compared to 38 percent of Latinos, 34 percent of whites, and only 26 percent of Asian Americans. More whites report being registered as Republicans (38%) than do Latinos (13%), Asians (20%) or blacks (6%).

Table 4.3 shows the results for all adults (many Latinos and Asians report not being registered to vote).² When *only* registered voters are considered, Democrats outnumber Republicans by a large margin among blacks (79% to 7%) and Latinos (61% to 21%), and by a smaller margin among Asians (40% to 31%), and Republicans narrowly outnumber Democrats among whites (44% to 39%).

Table 4.4 shows the party affiliation of Latinos and Asians who were born in the United States and those who are naturalized citizens. Among those who are registered to vote, citizenship status is not significantly related to party affiliation. Considering only those Latinos who are registered to vote, those born in the United States (61%) are as likely as naturalized citizens (62%) to call themselves Democrats. Likewise, registered Asian voters born in the United States (40%) are as likely as naturalized citizens (39%) to be registered as Democrats.

After controlling for demographic variables and socioeconomic factors, Latinos are still more likely to be registered as Democrats than as

²We tested these results using multinomial logit regressions that allowed us to compare Republicans and Democrats to Independents, controlling for socioeconomic status. The results suggest that Latinos are more likely to be Democratic than Independent ($p < 0.001$) and more likely to be Independent than Republican ($p < 0.05$). By extension, then, they are much more likely to be Democratic than Republican. The same comparisons with the same controls indicate that Asians are much less likely to be Republican than Independent ($p < 0.001$), and no more or less likely to be Democratic. This means that Asians are about equally likely to be Independent or Democratic but less likely to be Republican.

Table 4.3
Political Party Affiliation

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Democrat	36%	34%	38%	26%	65%
Republican	29	38	13	20	6
Other	15	15	11	19	13
Not registered	20	13	38	35	16
Number	19,222	12,367	4,373	1,001	1,079

Table 4.4
Political Party Affiliation by Citizenship Status

	Latino		Asian	
	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
Democrat	48%	42%	32%	29%
Republican	16	15	24	25
Other	15	11	24	21
Not registered	21	32	20	25
Number	2,502	915	389	433

Republicans. Asians are equally likely to be registered as Independents and Democrats and less likely than others to be registered as Republicans.

Political Ideology

When asked to define their political ideologies, more Californians (34%) say that they are middle-of-the-road and fewer say they are either somewhat liberal (21%) or somewhat conservative (26%). It is rare for Californians to describe themselves as either very liberal (9%) or very conservative (10%).

The differences in political orientation across racial and ethnic groups are modest. Asians are split evenly between liberal (34%), conservative (34%), and middle-of-the-road (32%). Other groups lean either to the left or to the right in their politics. More whites define themselves as conservative (36%) than liberal (28%), but many also say that they are middle-of-the-road (36%). Among Latinos, 39 percent say they are conservative, 30 percent are liberal, and 31 percent are middle-

of-the-road. For African Americans, 40 percent say they are liberal, 30 percent are conservative, and 30 percent are middle-of-the-road (Table 4.5).³

Citizenship status has a slight effect on political ideology. U.S.-born Latinos are more likely than Latinos who are naturalized citizens to describe themselves as liberals (34% to 28%) and are also less likely to say they are conservatives (33% to 40%). For Asians, the pattern is different: the U.S. born are more likely than naturalized citizens to describe themselves as middle-of-the-road (37% to 29%) and are less likely to say they are conservative (30% to 33%) or liberal (33% to 38%) (Table 4.6).

After accounting for socioeconomic and demographic factors and party registration, Latinos are somewhat more conservative than the California population as a whole, and Asians are no different.

Table 4.5
Political Ideology

	All	White	Latino	Asian	Black
	Adults				
Very liberal	9%	8%	9%	8%	14%
Somewhat liberal	21	20	21	26	26
Middle-of-the-road	34	36	31	32	30
Somewhat conservative	26	26	28	27	18
Very conservative	10	10	11	7	12
Number	17,226	11,186	3,816	909	958

³The results of an ordered logistic regression that controls for socioeconomic status and party registration suggest that Latinos ($p < 0.01$) but not Asians are more conservative than the rest of the population. That said, the effect of ethnicity on ideology is very small compared to the effect of party registration. Without controlling for party, Asians appear somewhat more liberal ($p < 0.05$) and Latinos appear no different from the rest of the population. This reflects the fact that, controlling for demographics, both groups identify more often as Democrats, thus making them appear more liberal overall than they would if compared only to fellow partisans.

Table 4.6
Political Ideology by Citizenship Status

	Latino		Asian	
	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
Very liberal	10%	7%	8%	8%
Somewhat liberal	24	21	25	30
Middle-of-the-road	33	32	37	29
Somewhat conservative	24	27	24	25
Very conservative	9	13	6	8
Number	2,178	814	360	388

Political Interest

Two in three Californians report having a great deal or fair amount of interest in politics. A solid majority of whites (69%) and blacks (62%) have a great deal or fair amount of interest in politics, compared to about half of Latinos (55%) and Asian Americans (54%). Similar trends are evident when we look at who is most likely to follow what is going on in government and public affairs: four in ten whites follow politics most of the time, compared to 35 percent of blacks and just under one in four Latinos and Asians (Table 4.7).

The political disinterest found among Latinos and Asians is not totally explained by citizenship, since the patterns found among all group members—which includes noncitizens—are similar to the responses of both U.S.-born and naturalized citizens (Table 4.8).⁴

Asians show less interest in politics than other Californians, even after accounting for socioeconomic and demographic factors. However, Latinos are no different from others after taking into account factors such as age, education, income, and citizenship status.

⁴Ordered logistic regression indicates that Asians are less likely than other groups to express an interest in politics ($p < 0.001$) and to closely follow public affairs ($p < 0.001$) after controlling for socioeconomic factors and citizenship. However, Latinos are no different from others in the level of political interest or in following public affairs after adding in the same controls.

Table 4.7
Political Interest

	All	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How much interest would you say you have in politics?					
A great deal	17%	18%	13%	11%	18%
A fair amount	48	51	42	43	44
Only a little	29	26	36	40	30
None	6	5	9	6	8
Number	19,534	12,567	4,429	1,023	1,103
Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs . . .					
Most of the time	36%	40%	24%	24%	35%
Some of the time	41	41	43	44	36
Only now and then	14	12	19	20	18
Hardly ever	7	6	10	9	8
Never	2	1	4	3	3
Number	15,638	10,074	3,532	822	878

Table 4.8
Political Interest by Citizenship Status

	Latino		Asian	
	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
How much interest would you say you have in politics?				
A great deal	12%	15%	13%	10%
A fair amount	46	41	44	43
Only a little	33	35	37	41
None	9	9	6	6
Number	2,546	929	397	447
Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs . . .				
Most of the time	26%	26%	26%	22%
Some of the time	43	41	42	48
Only now and then	19	17	20	21
Hardly ever	9	11	10	7
Never	3	5	2	2
Number	2,040	725	328	341

Political Information

About half of all Californian adults were closely following the 2000 presidential election news before the March primary. About half of whites (54%) and African Americans (50%) were closely following the election news compared to fewer Asians (42%) and Latinos (38%). Even Latinos and Asians who are citizens still lag well behind whites and blacks when it comes to following news about the 2000 presidential election (Table 4.9).

In general, Californians are more likely to rely on television (42%) than newspapers (33%) as their primary source of political news. Whites list television (38%) and newspapers (36%) about equally as their top source for political news. Asian Americans (46%) and Latinos (53%) are similar to blacks (54%) in naming television as their main political news source. Latinos who are born in the United States or who are naturalized citizens are equally likely to get their political news primarily from television. Asians born in the United States rely on newspapers a little

Table 4.9
Political Information

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How closely have you been following news stories about candidates for the 2000 presidential election?					
Very closely	11%	12%	10%	9%	14%
Fairly closely	38	42	28	33	36
Not too closely	36	32	45	42	34
Not at all closely	15	14	17	16	16
Number	5,852	3,825	1,267	310	332
Do you get most of your information on what's going on in politics today from . . .					
Television	42%	38%	53%	46%	54%
Newspapers	33	36	27	30	24
Radio	10	11	7	6	6
Internet	4	4	2	8	3
Other	11	11	11	10	13
Number	5,816	3,773	1,294	287	347

more often than those who are naturalized citizens; however, both groups rely strongly on television news (Table 4.10).⁵

Asians follow political news less closely than other Californians, even after accounting for socioeconomic and demographic factors. However, Latinos are no different from others after taking into account factors such as age, education, income, and citizenship status. Latinos are more likely than others to receive their political news from television, after other factors are considered, and Asians are no different from the rest of the population in their reliance on television for political news.

Table 4.10
Political Information by Citizenship Status

	Latino		Asian	
	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
How closely have you been following news stories about candidates for the 2000 presidential election?				
Very closely	8%	12%	10%	7%
Fairly closely	33	27	33	36
Not too closely	38	48	38	42
Not at all closely	21	13	19	15
Number	599	289	128	146
Do you get most of your information on what's going on in politics today from . . .				
Television	49%	50%	36%	49%
Newspapers	30	29	40	27
Radio	6	9	6	8
Internet	3	1	11	7
Other	12	11	7	9
Number	756	280	91	136

⁵Ordered logistic regression indicates that Asian Americans are somewhat less likely ($p < 0.05$) and Latinos are not less likely than others to follow the presidential elections after controlling for socioeconomic factors and citizenship. Binary logistic regression, however, indicates that Latinos are more likely than others to receive most of their political news from television ($p < 0.001$), and Asian Americans are no different from others after controlling for the same factors.

Distrust of Government

Most Californians are distrustful of government. Fewer than three in ten say that they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always (5%) or most of the time (24%). Most Californians also think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes (62%) (Table 4.11).

Latinos are the most likely to trust the government to do what is right. Four in ten Latinos (41%) say that they can trust the government in Washington always or most of the time, compared to 34 percent of Asians, 28 percent of blacks, and 26 percent of whites. U.S.-born Latinos (36%) have less trust in government than those who are naturalized citizens (48%). Nevertheless, U.S.-born Latinos are still more likely to express trust in government than are either whites or African Americans.

Table 4.11
Distrust of Government

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?					
Just about always	5%	3%	10%	4%	4%
Most of the time	24	23	31	30	24
Only sometimes	62	65	52	59	60
Never	8	9	6	5	11
Don't know	1	0	1	2	1
Number	9,656	6,210	2,170	485	577
Do you think that the people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?					
A lot	62%	64%	55%	52%	70%
Some	33	33	32	43	27
Don't waste very much	4	3	10	2	3
Don't know	1	0	3	3	0
Number	3,854	2,505	851	188	215

Blacks (70%) and whites (64%) are more likely than Latinos (55%) and Asian Americans (52%) to say that the government wastes a lot of money. Latinos and Asians born in the United States are more likely than those from either group who are naturalized citizens to think that the government wastes a lot of money. In this case, U.S.-born Latinos and Asians are similar to whites in their assessments of government waste.⁶ Note, however, that sample sizes are small in the comparisons of Asian subgroups (Table 4.12).

Latinos and Asians are more likely to trust the government to do what is right, after controlling for socioeconomic and demographic factors. Although Latinos are also less likely to say that the government

Table 4.12
Distrust of Government by Citizenship Status

	Latino		Asian	
	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?				
Just about always	5%	15%	3%	4%
Most of the time	31	33	26	30
Only sometimes	57	46	63	59
Never	7	5	7	5
Don't know	0	1	1	2
Number	1,240	479	196	219
Do you think that the people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?				
A lot	60%	51%	64%	39%
Some	34	31	33	53
Don't waste very much	5	13	1	4
Don't know	1	5	2	4
Number	484	189	86	78

⁶Ordered logistic regression indicates that Latinos ($p < 0.001$) and Asians ($p < 0.01$) are more likely than others to trust the government to do what is right after controlling for socioeconomic status and citizenship. Although Latinos are also less likely to believe that the government wastes money ($p < 0.05$), when we take into account the same control factors, Asians are no more or less likely than the rest of the population to hold such views.

wastes money after controlling for these same factors, the views of Asian Americans are similar to other Californians when taking into account factors such as age, income, education, and citizenship status.

Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

The majority of Californians (57%) give President Bill Clinton excellent or good ratings for his job performance, and one in three gives positive marks to the U.S. Congress (34%) (Table 4.13).

Following the trends in party registration across racial and ethnic groups, blacks (82%) and Latinos (71%) give the Democratic president much better ratings than do Asians (57%) and whites (50%). However, departing from their partisan leanings, Latinos (42%) also give the Republican-controlled U.S. Congress higher grades than do Asians (35%), blacks (31%), and whites (30%).

Table 4.13
Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How do you rate the job performance of President Bill Clinton?					
Excellent	21%	16%	30%	20%	42%
Good	36	34	41	37	40
Fair	23	24	19	31	14
Poor	19	25	9	10	4
Don't know	1	1	1	2	0
Number	11,767	7,461	2,779	607	676
How do you rate the job performance of the legislative branch of the federal government, including the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives?					
Excellent	4%	2%	8%	5%	4%
Good	30	28	34	30	27
Fair	44	46	41	46	45
Poor	19	22	13	15	22
Don't know	3	2	4	4	2
Number	9,810	6,229	2,311	516	570

For both Latinos and Asians, naturalized citizens are at least somewhat more likely than those born in the United States to give better ratings to the president and the Congress. This trend is most evident when comparing the differences among the Latinos' ratings of Congress (Table 4.14).⁷

Latinos still express more positive attitudes than other Californians toward the president and Congress, even after taking into account socioeconomic and demographic factors and political party. However, Asians are similar to others, after we control for the effects of socioeconomic, demographic, and political factors such as income, age, education, and citizenship.

Table 4.14
Ratings of Federal Elected Officials by Citizenship Status

	Latino		Asian	
	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
How do you rate the job performance of President Bill Clinton at this time?				
Excellent	27%	35%	13%	24%
Good	42	39	41	34
Fair	20	18	33	31
Poor	11	7	11	10
Don't know	0	1	2	1
Number	1,610	585	236	267
How do you rate the job performance of the legislative branch of the federal government, including the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives?				
Excellent	5%	11%	3%	6%
Good	33	37	25	28
Fair	44	37	50	48
Poor	15	10	20	12
Don't know	3	5	2	6
Number	1,318	491	186	240

⁷In ordered logistic analysis, Latinos give the president better ratings than others ($p < 0.001$) after controlling for citizenship, socioeconomic status, and political party. Similar regression analysis indicates that Asian Americans are not more favorable in their ratings of the president than others. Latinos are somewhat more positive ($p < 0.05$) and Asian Americans are no different from others in their ratings of Congress after taking into account the same factors.

Ratings of State Elected Officials

Almost half of Californians (47%) give Governor Gray Davis either excellent or good ratings for his job performance, and one in three gives positive marks to the California legislature (34%) (Table 4.15).

The Democratic governor receives the lowest level of support from the most Democratic group—African Americans (38%)—and about half of Asian Americans (49%), whites (48%), and Latinos (47%) give positive evaluations of Governor Davis. Latinos (44%) give the Democratic-controlled state legislature higher grades than do Asians (37%), blacks (31%), and whites (31%).

Latinos who are naturalized citizens are more generous in their assessment of the governor and state legislature than are those born in the United States. The trends are the same, though not as dramatic, when

Table 4.15

Ratings of State Elected Officials

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
How do you rate the job performance of Governor Gray Davis at this time?					
Excellent	9%	8%	12%	7%	7%
Good	38	40	35	42	31
Fair	32	33	29	39	36
Poor	16	14	18	7	21
Don't know	5	5	6	5	5
Number	11,742	7,582	2,633	599	674
How do you rate the job performance of the California legislature at this time, including the state senate and assembly?					
Excellent	3%	1%	6%	2%	2%
Good	31	30	38	35	29
Fair	46	47	41	47	50
Poor	12	13	7	6	14
Don't know	8	9	8	10	5
Number	11,739	7,581	2,634	597	674

comparing Asians who are born inside and outside the United States (Table 4.16).⁸

Latinos are more favorable in their evaluations of the governor and state legislature, after controlling for demographic, socioeconomic, and political factors. Asians are no different in their ratings of state elected officials after taking into account other factors.

Table 4.16
Ratings of State Elected Officials by Citizenship Status

	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen
How do you rate the job performance of Governor Gray Davis at this time?				
Excellent	9%	15%	4%	7%
Good	34	37	41	43
Fair	34	25	39	40
Poor	19	19	9	6
Don't know	4	4	7	4
Number	1,369	588	241	264
How do you rate the job performance of the California legislature at this time, including the state senate and assembly?				
Excellent	3%	9%	1%	3%
Good	34	42	31	33
Fair	49	35	50	46
Poor	8	6	8	6
Don't know	6	8	10	12
Number	1,368	589	239	264

⁸Ordered logistic regression indicates that Latinos give the governor ($p < 0.001$) and state legislature ($p < 0.001$) better ratings than others after controlling for socioeconomic status and political party. Asian Americans are no more favorable in their ratings of state officials than others when we control for these same characteristics.

5. Economic Well-Being

This chapter examines racial and ethnic differences in economic well-being and attitudes. We look first at basic measures of socioeconomic status, including income, education, and homeownership. We then look at differences in computer and Internet usage. This is followed by a series of more general and more subjective measures of each group's involvement in the economy. Do members of each racial and ethnic group believe that they are financially better off or worse off than in the past? What are their expectations for their personal financial situation in the future? Where do they believe the state is going as a whole? Throughout this analysis, we are primarily interested in the extent to which members of different racial and ethnic groups are participating in California's "new economy" and are enjoying the benefits of the strong economy in the state.

In terms of socioeconomic status, Latinos and African Americans lag far behind whites and Asian Americans. Among Latinos, immigrants are far worse off than U.S.-born Latinos. In terms of the digital divide, there is a large gap between Latinos and all other racial and ethnic groups. Latinos use computers and the Internet at only half the rate of others. For immigrant Latinos, the gap is even larger.

However, despite their relatively low socioeconomic status and limited access to computers and the Internet, Latinos are fairly happy with their recent economic progress and are generally optimistic about the future. In fact, Latinos tend to be even more positive than other groups, who also generally feel that their personal economic fortunes will continue to improve and that California, as a state, is going in the right direction.

Socioeconomic Status

A socioeconomic divide is evident when we analyze racial and ethnic differences in annual household income, education, and homeownership

in California. Two in three Latinos (67%) and a majority of blacks (57%) report having annual household incomes of less than \$40,000 per year, while one in three Asians (36%) and whites (37%) are in the lower-income categories. Moreover, only one in six Latinos (16%) and one in five blacks (21%) have annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more, compared to four in ten whites (40%) and Asians (42%).

A similar racial and ethnic divide exists in education. One in four Latinos reports not having a high school diploma (24%) compared to 5 percent of whites, 3 percent of Asians, and 9 percent of blacks. In another stark contrast, many Asians (58%) and whites (43%) have college degrees, whereas one in three African Americans (32%) and only one in six Latinos (17%) have attained this education level. Other studies indicate even lower rates of education among Latinos (Reyes, 2001).

Homeownership rates also vary by race and ethnicity. Nearly seven in ten whites surveyed own their current residence, compared to 55 percent of Asians, 44 percent of Latinos, and 42 percent of blacks (Table 5.1).

A divide exists as well within Latinos, with U.S.-born residents and naturalized citizens in a much stronger socioeconomic position than noncitizens. For instance, most noncitizens (58%) earn less than \$20,000 a year compared to fewer U.S.-born residents (23%) and naturalized citizens (31%). In terms of educational attainment, just over half of noncitizens (52%) have not graduated from high school, compared to 26 percent of naturalized citizens and 13 percent of U.S.-born Latinos. Homeownership rates are very low among noncitizens (24%), while half of naturalized citizens and U.S.-born residents say they own their own homes. Still, even Latinos who are U.S.-born are less likely than whites earn \$60,000 or more (21% to 40%), have college degrees (22% to 43%), or own their homes (51% to 69%) (Table 5.2).

Digital Divide

There is a great deal of interest in the existence of a “digital divide” in California, defined by the lack of access to computers and the Internet

Table 5.1
Socioeconomic Status

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Income					
< \$20,000	19%	13%	32%	14%	26%
\$20,000–\$39,999	27	24	35	22	31
\$40,000–\$59,999	21	23	17	22	22
\$60,000–\$79,999	14	16	8	17	11
\$80,000+	19	24	8	25	10
Number	17,891	11,318	4,199	950	1,039
Education					
No high school diploma	9%	5%	24%	3%	9%
High school diploma	22	19	32	12	23
Some college	32	33	27	27	36
College graduate	37	43	17	58	32
Number	15,636	10,101	3,528	831	854
Home Ownership					
Own	61%	69%	44%	55%	42%
Rent	39	31	56	45	58
Number	11,522	7,541	2,526	599	617

by certain population groups. In the state's new economy, of course, strong computer skills are essential. A digital divide in Internet use exists between those age 18 to 64 and those age 65 or older (67% to 27%), those with household incomes under \$20,000 and those earning \$60,000 or more (29% to 85%), and those with no college education and those who are college graduates (34% to 80%). Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (70%) are the most likely, and those in the Central Valley (57%) the least likely, to use computers and the Internet.

A digital divide also exists across racial and ethnic groups. Latinos (61%) are less likely than others, especially Asian Americans (91%), to use computers. Moreover, 39 percent of Latinos report using the Internet, compared to 81 percent of Asians, 66 percent of whites, and 61 percent of blacks (Table 5.3).

Table 5.2
Socioeconomic Status of Latinos by Citizenship Status

Measure	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	Not a Citizen
Income			
< \$20,000	23%	31%	58%
\$20,000–\$39,999	35	36	33
\$40,000–\$59,999	21	19	5
\$60,000–\$79,999	10	8	2
\$80,000+	11	6	2
Number	2,397	903	890
Education			
No high school diploma	13%	26%	52%
High school diploma	32	32	31
Some college	33	26	12
College graduate	22	16	5
Number	1,988	742	785
Home Ownership			
Own	51%	49%	24%
Rent	49	51	76
Number	1,336	549	633

Table 5.3
Digital Divide

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Use computer					
Yes	75%	78%	61%	91%	77%
No	25	22	39	9	23
Number	7,848	5,173	1,689	408	433
Use Internet					
Yes	61%	66%	39%	81%	61%
No	39	34	61	19	39
Number	7,848	5,173	1,689	408	433

An even more dramatic digital divide across racial and ethnic groups exists when we compare Californians who report using computers and the Internet often. Frequent computer and Internet use is least common among Latinos. Whereas 61 percent of whites, 60 percent of blacks, and 78 percent of Asians report using computers frequently, only 36 percent of Latinos do. Frequent use of the Internet is also less common among Latinos, with 22 percent reporting that they go online often, compared to 42 percent of African Americans, 50 percent of whites, and 64 percent of Asians.

Among Latinos, computer and Internet use varies by citizenship status. Three in four U.S.-born Latinos report using computers and 56 percent use the Internet, compared to much lower use by naturalized citizens and noncitizens. Moreover, the digital divide is also greatly diminished for Latinos with higher household incomes and college degrees. Still, Latinos born in the United States (56%) use the Internet less than Californians as a whole. Similarly, Latinos with college degrees (76%) and annual household incomes of \$60,000 (80%) use the Internet less than college graduates as a whole (80%) and residents as a whole who have incomes of \$60,000 or more (85%) in California (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4
Digital Divide of Latinos by Citizenship Status

	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	Not a Citizen
Use computer			
Yes	77%	60%	35%
No	23	44	65
Number	810	383	487
Use Internet			
Yes	56%	38%	13%
No	44	62	87
Number	810	383	487

Even after controlling for income, educational level, gender, age, homeownership, and citizenship, Latinos use computers and the Internet less than other racial and ethnic groups.¹

Consumer Confidence

Californians have been upbeat about their own finances in recent years. Whereas half say their finances have remained the same in the past year, more people believe that their finances have improved rather than gotten worse. Moreover, almost half say that they expect their finances to improve in the next year.

Latinos are more optimistic about their finances than other groups, despite their relatively low socioeconomic standing. Latinos (41%) are more likely than Asians (37%), blacks (35%), and whites (32%) to say that they are financially better off now than they were a year ago. More than half of Latinos (55%) and blacks (57%) think that they will be financially better off in a year than they are today, compared to only 38 percent of whites and 43 percent of Asians.² In fact, after controlling for socioeconomic differences, Latinos still have the most confidence in their current and future finances (Table 5.5).

Moreover, despite the fact that Latino immigrants have lower socioeconomic standing than U.S.-born Latinos, they express a similar level of confidence in their financial situation (Table 5.6).

Overall Mood

Most Californians (61%) think that things in California are generally going in the right direction, and majorities across all racial and ethnic groups agree.

However, there are racial and ethnic differences in attitudes toward the state of the state. Fifty-one percent of African Americans think that

¹The digital divide between Latinos and other groups persists in regression analysis that controls for socioeconomic status (age, income, education, gender, homeownership, and citizenship status). Even after controlling for these factors, Latinos have lower computer use ($p < 0.001$) and lower Internet use ($p < 0.001$) than others.

²Latinos are more optimistic than others about their current finances ($p < 0.01$) and future finances ($p < 0.01$) than others, even after controlling for socioeconomic status in regression analysis.

Table 5.5
Consumer Confidence

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Would you say that you and your family are financially better off or worse off or just about the same as you were a year ago?					
Better	35%	32%	41%	37%	35%
Worse	12	13	10	10	14
Same	53	55	49	52	51
Don't know	0	0	0	1	0
Number	11,763	7,482	2,758	597	674
Looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be financially better off or worse off or just about the same as now?					
Better	43%	38%	55%	43%	57%
Worse	6	7	4	6	6
Same	48	53	39	48	35
Don't know	3	2	2	3	2
Number	9,807	6,282	2,286	501	535

Table 5.6
Consumer Confidence of Latinos by Citizenship Status

	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	Not a Citizen
Would you say that you and your family are financially better off or worse off or just about the same as you were a year ago?			
Better	40%	43%	41%
Worse	10	10	9
Same	50	46	49
Don't know	0	1	1
Number	1,690	568	486
Looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be financially better off or worse off or just about the same as now?			
Better	54%	53%	57%
Worse	4	4	6
Same	40	39	33
Don't know	2	4	4
Number	1,425	457	390

things are going in the right direction, compared to 68 percent of Asian Americans, 65 percent of Latinos, and 60 percent of whites. Asians are the least likely to think that things are going in the wrong direction, and blacks (40%) are the most likely to hold that opinion.

Three in four Californians predict good financial times in the next 12 months and, again, majorities in all racial and ethnic groups agree. Once again, blacks (64%) are less likely to have positive views about the state than Asians (83%), whites (77%), and Latinos (70%).

Three in four think that the quality of life is going well in the state, and most in each racial and ethnic groups agree. Blacks (65%) are the least likely to say that things are going well, and Asians (79%) are slightly more positive than Latinos (76%) and whites (75%) (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7
Overall Mood

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?					
Right direction	61%	60%	65%	68%	51%
Wrong direction	31	32	28	21	40
Don't know	8	8	7	11	9
Number	17,559	11,262	4,026	906	998
Do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?					
Good times	75%	77%	70%	83%	64%
Bad times	19	17	25	12	28
Don't know	6	6	5	5	8
Number	5,911	3,886	1,288	307	321
Overall, thinking about the quality of life in California, do you think things are going very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?					
Very well	16%	16%	17%	15%	11%
Somewhat well	59	59	59	64	54
Somewhat badly	18	18	16	16	24
Very badly	6	5	6	2	11
Don't know	1	2	2	3	0
Number	3,892	2,482	878	199	248

Remarkably, given the differences in socioeconomic circumstances, Latinos' perceptions of the state do not vary much by citizenship status. Views about the direction of the state and the quality of life in California are similar across the three Latino groups. Noncitizens have the least positive outlook on the California economy, although even most in this group expect good times (Table 5.8).³

After controlling for socioeconomic factors, Latinos and Asians still express more positive attitudes toward the direction of the state than others, but they are no different from others in views about the state's economy or quality of life.

Table 5.8
Overall Mood of Latinos by Citizenship Status

	U.S.-Born	Naturalized Citizen	Not a Citizen
Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?			
Right direction	64%	67%	65%
Wrong direction	30	25	24
Don't know	6	8	11
Number	2,286	856	862
Do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?			
Good times	71%	75%	63%
Bad times	24	20	30
Don't know	5	5	7
Number	618	278	384
Overall, thinking about the quality of life in California, do you think things are going very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?			
Very well	15%	19%	19%
Somewhat well	61	57	58
Somewhat badly	17	16	14
Very badly	5	7	6
Don't know	2	1	3
Number	459	217	201

³Logistic regression analysis indicates that Latinos ($p < 0.001$) and Asian Americans ($p < 0.01$) express more positive attitudes about the direction of the state than others after controlling for socioeconomic status. However, after controlling for these same demographic factors, Latinos and Asian Americans are no different from whites and blacks in their views about the state's economy in the next 12 months or the state's quality of life.

6. Conclusions and Policy Implications

Will a diverse population be able to find common ground as California enters a new era as a majority-minority state? Our study shows that it is hard to predict the answer to this question, largely because there are many promising similarities, and at the same time some major differences, in the attitudes and experiences of Asians, blacks, Latinos, and whites in California today.

Because of the multiethnic composition of the state and the varying effects of immigration and socioeconomic status, there are complex patterns with respect to differences and similarities. Nevertheless, as we look at the results from these large and recent statewide surveys on racial and ethnic attitudes, policy preferences, political orientation, and economic well-being of California's racial and ethnic groups, several important themes emerge.

Overall, it is evident that Californians are not deeply divided in their racial and ethnic attitudes. Whites, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans are all keenly aware that immigration and racial and ethnic change are under way, and most seem to be comfortable with the results thus far. Most Californians feel that race and ethnic relations are going well in their region. Few report that racial and ethnic change is a negative development. Most also think that racial and ethnic relations will improve in the future.

However, there are areas of fairly strong disagreement in the realm of racial policies. In fact, some of the largest divides between the four racial and ethnic groups are over racial and ethnic policy issues, such as ending affirmative action, denying social services to illegal immigrants and their children, and restricting bilingual education. These trends are most evident in racial and ethnic voting patterns in recent initiatives in statewide elections. Whites tend to sharply disagree with Asians, blacks,

and Latinos over what policies to pursue, if any, as the state's public institutions seek to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse population. Most whites may be comfortable with immigration and racial and ethnic change, but many resist the idea that special efforts should be made by the government to accommodate the needs of specific groups. On the other hand, Asian Americans, blacks, and Latinos have overwhelmingly opposed racially oriented ballot measures. A continuation of such voting patterns could disrupt the racial harmony that is otherwise evident in most other measures of public opinion in this state.

There are many areas of agreement across racial and ethnic groups in the arena of state policy preferences. Asians, blacks, Latinos, and whites have reached basic consensus on how they define the state's most critical public policy issues and how government ought to approach many of these problems. All four groups perceive education, crime, and jobs and the economy as their most important policy concerns. All four groups agree on the basic solutions on a broad range of issues, including improving education, protecting the environment, and decreasing the crime rate.

We also find that on many policy preferences, political party and socioeconomic status, not race and ethnicity, most divide Californians. However, since the racial and ethnic groups vary in their Democratic and Republican registration patterns, and in degrees of poverty and wealth, there are some strong differences of opinion across the racial and ethnic groups in key policy domains. For instance, whites show less interest in government programs aimed at poverty, whereas African Americans and Latinos are more likely to favor government activities that will benefit the poor. As the gap between the rich and poor has persisted, if not grown, in this era of prosperity, this is an important area of policy concern that could divide rather than unite California's racial and ethnic groups.

Politics is also an area in which there is reason for concern. In terms of both participation and interest, there is a sharp divide between Asians and Latinos on the one hand and blacks and whites on the other. Asians and Latinos are significantly less politically engaged in California's elections. For Latinos, the gap is largely explained by their lower socioeconomic status, lack of citizenship, and language barriers. But this

is not true for Asians, since relatively low voting and political interest persist even after accounting for socioeconomic differences. If these two immigrant groups are to have their voices counted equally in the politics of the state, they will need to become much more actively involved.

A political divide is also evident when it comes to partisan politics. Latino voters are increasing in numbers, and Latinos are joining African Americans as overwhelmingly registering to vote as Democrats. Asians are leaning toward the Democratic party, but not by as wide a margin, and whites are splitting their party allegiances. The tilt of new Latino and Asian voters toward the Democratic party is changing the political landscape of the state and has corresponded with a string of losses for Republican candidates in recent statewide elections. Indeed, California could, over time, take on the character of a one-party dominant state if current registration patterns among newly registering Latinos and Asian Americans continue, and this could alter California elections, political leadership, and policy choices in fundamental ways.

On many issues of political orientation, race and ethnicity are not the most important factors. For instance, education, political party, and geographic region often supersede race as the primary dividing line in measuring political ideology, such as liberal and conservative views. However, the Latino population may play a significant role in the future with respect to opinions about government. In an era when most Californians are cynical about their government and elected officials, Latinos show a higher degree of trust in government than others do. If current trends continue, and trust in government does not seem to be explained away by socioeconomic factors or citizenship status, then this increasingly large group of California Latinos could reshape attitudes toward government in a positive fashion.

Another real concern that emerges from our analysis is the large gap we find in some of the measures of economic well-being. Latinos lag far behind whites and Asians on every indicator of socioeconomic status. Moreover, computer use and Internet use, and frequency of computer and Internet use, are far lower for Latinos than for others. If Latinos are to be able to compete in the new economy and improve their currently weak socioeconomic position, educational attainment must improve

dramatically in the decades ahead, and the digital divide in computer use will have to be closed.

Given California's strong economic growth over the past few years, it is perhaps not surprising, yet is important to note, that Californians of all racial and ethnic groups tend to be positive and optimistic when asked about matters of economic well-being. They are happy with the economic condition of the state, and most are content with their own financial situation. Overall, where we do find racial and ethnic differences is in survey questions that ask about the current state of affairs or ask for predictions about the future. Here, again, Latinos and Asians tend to be the most positive, despite the fact that Latinos are less affluent. Blacks are the most critical, and whites fall somewhere between.

As we think about California's future, we find many reasons for optimism. Often much of the divide between Latinos, Asian Americans, and others can be explained by immigrant and citizen status. As immigrants spend more time in the United States and become citizens, their views and actions often become more similar to those of the rest of the state. In particular, the political participation gap is much smaller for U.S.-born Latinos and Asians, and the digital divide is much smaller for U.S.-born Latinos.

Given the diversity of patterns outlined in this report, however, predictions for the state's future are extremely difficult to make. The potential for racial and ethnic conflict still does exist. Much of what will happen depends on which issues come to the fore. To the extent that explicitly racial issues achieve prominence, California is likely to be a deeply divided state. But if Californians can focus their energies on basic problems such as education, crime, and the economy, then racial and ethnic differences are likely to be much less severe. The actions of California's political leaders may well play an important role in determining the future direction of the state.

Appendix

Demographic Profiles

A number of important demographic differences across racial and ethnic groups should be considered when reviewing the findings in this report.

With regard to citizenship, whites (94%) and blacks (95%) are much more likely to say that they were born in the United States than Latinos (58%) and Asians (39%). More Latinos (21%) than Asians (17%) are noncitizens, and more Asians (44%) than Latinos (21%) are naturalized citizens.

Reflecting the higher proportion of immigrants, Asians and Latinos have younger populations than whites and blacks. Half of Latinos (55%) and Asians (50%) are between age 18 and 34, compared to 23 percent of whites and 38 percent of blacks. About one in ten Asians (9%) and Latinos (10%) is age 55 or older, compared to 34 percent of whites and 21 percent of African Americans.

Latinos (57%) are much more likely to have children living at home than are blacks (44%), Asians (38%), and whites (31%). Again, reflecting age differences, whites are the least likely to be employed, and Latinos and Asians are the most likely to be working.

Asians are the most likely to be recent residents of the state, with only 39 percent reporting being in California for longer than 20 years. Most Latinos report having lived in California for more than 20 years (62%). Three in four whites (77%) and a similar percentage of blacks (77%) surveyed have lived in California for that long.

There are strong differences in the regional distribution of racial and ethnic groups. Two in three Latinos live in Southern California, with most residing in Los Angeles County (42%) and one in four living in the Southern California counties outside Los Angeles (22%). Two in three Asians live in the urban coastal regions, with one in three living in Los Angeles County (35%) and one in three in the San Francisco Bay Area (32%). Two in three blacks live in Los Angeles County (45%) and the

Table A.1
Demographic Profile

	All Adults	White	Latino	Asian	Black
Citizenship					
U.S.-born	83%	94%	58%	39%	95%
Naturalized citizen	10	5	21	44	4
Not a citizen	7	1	21	17	1
Number	19,529	12,573	4,421	1,022	1,103
Age in years					
18–34	33%	23%	55%	50%	38%
35–54	41	43	35	41	41
55 +	26	34	10	9	21
Number	19,477	12,533	4,411	1,023	1,101
Children at home					
Yes	38%	31%	57%	38%	44%
No	62	69	43	62	56
Number	19,531	12,568	4,423	1,024	1,104
Employment status					
Self-employed	13%	14%	10%	9%	10%
Employed by others	58	54	66	70	63
Not employed	29	32	24	21	27
Number	19,511	12,551	4,421	1,024	1,104
Years in California					
< 5	5%	5%	4%	13%	4%
5–9	6	5	9	14	8
10–19	17	13	25	34	11
20 +	72	77	62	39	77
Number	3,886	2,466	888	193	250
Region					
Los Angeles County	26%	18%	42%	35%	45%
San Francisco Bay Area	18	19	10	32	18
Central Valley	20	22	17	9	12
Other Southern California	26	28	22	19	21
Other regions	10	13	9	5	4
Number	19,569	12,585	4,444	1,024	1,104

rest of Southern California (21%). Relatively few of the state's Asians, Latinos, and blacks live in the Central Valley at this time.

Whites are not so concentrated in Los Angeles County as are Asians, Latinos, and African Americans. Whites are distributed similarly through Los Angeles County (18%), the San Francisco Bay Area (19%),

and the Central Valley (22%); however, more whites live in the Southern California suburbs outside Los Angeles (28%) than in any other region of the state.

Survey Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, a senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, with research assistance from Eric McGhee and Mina Yaroslavsky. The findings in this report are based on ten telephone surveys, each of which interviewed approximately 2,000 California adult residents. The surveys were conducted at regular intervals between April 1998 and May 2000. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers, ensuring that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to five times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing by using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. Maria Tello translated the survey into Spanish.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with the characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to U.S. Census and state figures.

Questions that were asked in two or more surveys were merged into one large dataset (see also Baldassare, 2000). The total sample contains 20,116 respondents. By aggregating data across all of the surveys, we are better able to provide separate estimates for the black, Latino, and Asian subpopulations. The entire sample contains 4,444 Latinos, 1,104 African Americans, and 1,024 Asians. Each individual survey contains roughly 400 Latino respondents and about 100 African Americans and 100 Asian respondents. In a few instances, a single survey is used and there is a notation of small sample sizes.

The sampling error for the total sample of 20,116 adults is ± 1.0 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 1.0 percentage point of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sample size for Latinos is ± 2 percent, and for blacks and Asians it is ± 3.5 percent. The sampling error for subgroups, such as noncitizens, is larger. Because not all questions were asked in every survey, the margin of error varies; thus, we report the sample sizes for all adults and racial and ethnic groups in the tables in this report.

Demographic Variables

The race and ethnicity variable used throughout this survey is based on the self-reported categories of Asian or Asian American, black or African American, Latino or Hispanic, white and not Hispanic, or other. We do not analyze the smaller number of responses of those who defined themselves as “others.” We also break down opinions on the basis of nativity and citizenship. All respondents were asked if they were born in the United States and, if not, whether they were U.S. citizens. Of the Asians in the surveys, 39 percent are U.S.-born, 44 percent are naturalized citizens, and 17 percent are not citizens. For Latinos, the figures are 58 percent U.S.-born, 21 percent naturalized citizens, and 21 percent noncitizens. The surveys included many other demographic variables, including age, income, education, homeownership, gender, and years at current residence.

We contrast the opinions of Democrats and Republicans with “other” or “independent” registered voters. This third category includes those who are registered to vote as “decline to state” as well as a smaller number who say they are members of other political parties. Liberals are those who identify as “very liberal” or “somewhat liberal.” Conservatives are those who identify as “very conservative” or “somewhat conservative.”

Throughout the report, we refer to four geographic regions. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los

Angeles County, and “Other Southern California” includes the mostly suburban regions of Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. These four regions were chosen for analysis because they are the major population centers of the state, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population; moreover, the growth of the Central Valley and “Other Southern California” regions has given them increasing political significance.

Regression Analysis

For many of the questions, we employ multiple regression analysis (binary or ordered logistic) to see if racial and ethnic differences are, in fact, due to a racial and ethnic divide or whether differences in opinion and behavior can be explained by differences in other demographic characteristics across groups. In these regression models, we always include measures for the socioeconomic status of the respondent (age, income, gender, educational level, and ownership status (renter or homeowner)). Where noted, we also control for the nativity (born in the United States or not) and citizenship status (U.S. citizen or not) and sometimes for political party. In each case the regression models include dummy variables representing the race and ethnicity of the respondent. We consider racial and ethnic differences to be statistically insignificant if they are below a threshold of $p < 0.05$, the same standard used to calculate the margin of error for the tables. Where the results from the regression analysis differ significantly from those of the bivariate analysis, they are noted explicitly in the report.

Ecological Inference

Ecological inference (King, 1997) is used to estimate the vote by race and ethnicity on two propositions where exit-poll data are not available. To get these estimates, we combined the precinct-level vote in each election with Census data on the racial demographics of each precinct. Ecological inference proceeds in two stages. In the first stage, we used ecological inference to estimate turnout by race in each precinct, based on total turnout in each precinct and the proportion of each race in each precinct. These estimates as well as the overall vote in each precinct are

then used in the second stage of ecological inference to get estimates of the vote by race in each precinct. These precinct-level estimates are then aggregated to produce an overall state-level estimate. The analysis presented here uses King's computer application, EzI, to produce the estimate of the vote by race for each ballot measure. For a detailed description of the methodology and its biases and limitations, see King (1997). We are indebted to the Statewide Database at the Institute of Governmental Studies and the University of California, Berkeley, for providing the merged precinct-level data.

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