
Chapter 11: San Antonio and Fruitvale

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Oakland, California's, history is replete with notable contributions and accomplishments: architectural, political, literary, and economic, among others. From a thriving and bustling city in the 1930s and 1940s when it was the fastest growing industrial city on the west coast, Oakland stumbled into decades of decline, its magnificent architecture towering over abandoned streets, boarded-up shops, and scarce pedestrians. The city has struggled for years to revive and thrive. However, even as residents lament the city's economic decline, the crime rates, and the failure of one plan or another to rejuvenate the city, they point proudly to what they consider Oakland's most enduring asset: its racial and ethnic diversity. "It has been said that Oakland is the most integrated city anywhere," boasts the Oakland Unified School District annual report (1993). "According to the 1990 census, the population of Oakland is composed of at least 82 language and ethnic groups." Many residents hope that this asset, unlike others, will in fact be preserved and that its diversity does not fall victim to the economic vagaries that have ravaged the city. By identifying the factors responsible for promoting or undermining Oakland's diversity, it may be possible to ensure that it will remain an asset rather than become a liability. This article represents a preliminary attempt to identify those factors through an examination of the experience of the city's two most diverse community development districts: San Antonio and Fruitvale.

Stable, diverse communities that have defied the trend of resegregation or open conflict are rather anomalous. Identifying factors that are responsible for such successful cases of diversity—the objective of this project—is the challenge. Yet defining diversity itself is no simple matter. A barebones definition might be: members of different racial/ethnic groups sharing a geographic space. When assessing success, however, questions regarding requisite numbers of each group; the size of the area and length of time to be considered; and, of course, the meaning of *sharing* itself become problematic. Moreover, is the absence of overt conflict evidence of successful diversity or of successful pacification? Conversely, is the presence of conflict an indication of the failure of diversity? An examination of Oakland's experience of diversity may help to illuminate these issues.

The examination begins with an overview of the history of Oakland's diversity, followed by a contemporary demographic profile of the city and the districts of San Antonio and Fruitvale. From there the examination turns to the institutional and organizational factors that are deemed significant in promoting or undermining diversity at the city and community levels. Finally, an attempt is made to view diversity through the eyes of residents at the individual level. A number of questions are explored:

- To what extent does integration exist?
- What are the forms and levels of interaction?
- How harmonious are relations among the various groups?
- How stable are the communities?
- What are the institutional and communal supports and obstacles to their stability?

It is hoped that insights gained from Oakland's experience will influence policymakers to design more effective interventions aimed at promoting diversity in America's cities more generally.

Oakland: Background of Diversity

The area's indigenous people—the Ohlone Native Americans—were displaced by Spanish forces early in the 19th century. Spanish rule was followed by Mexican and then American rule, which was asserted in 1846. The Gold Rush of 1849 expanded the population as people from every corner of the world converged on the area. Gold fever precipitated a westward push of mostly Whites from the continent, expanding the existing community of traders who had arrived by ship earlier in the century. This westward push was facilitated by the construction of the first transcontinental railway. The largely Chinese laborers who constructed the railway settled in the area following its completion in 1869. The railroad also brought the first Black settlers, who were employed as train stewards and dining car chefs. As the gold disappeared, prospectors remained and turned to farming and establishing businesses of various types. Others were drawn by the industrial and commercial expansion that accompanied the opening of the railway. The 1906 earthquake that devastated San Francisco expanded the population further as large numbers of mostly working-class Europeans crossed the Bay to set up their new residences.¹

In the 1930s, Oakland was an expanding and thriving industrial city. During World War II, the city became an important site for a number of military and defense-related industries because of its strategic location. Oakland's port was expanded for shipbuilding and repair, eventually supplanting San Francisco as the Bay Area's most active port. An acute labor shortage at this time stimulated active labor recruitment, particularly in the Southern States of the country. As a result, the Black population of Oakland tripled within 5 years, with Blacks accounting for nearly 1 in 10 of Oakland's residents in 1945, and growing steadily thereafter (Rhombert, 1996; Hausler, 1995).² Two decades later, White flight would just as steadily alter the city's demography: Between 1960 and 1990 the White population was more than halved (Stallone, 1993). Since the 1970s, substantial numbers of immigrants have added new population groups to the city. Compelled to emigrate from their home countries by economic hardship and/or civil war, large numbers of Central American and Mexican immigrants have chosen to settle in Oakland. Significant numbers of these Latino immigrants endure a precarious existence as undocumented immigrants. Similarly, the number of Asian refugees fleeing war in Southeast Asia has been substantial. In 1983 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services identified 18 counties across the Nation that were "highly impacted" by refugees (*"18 Counties Listed As Too 'Impacted' To Take More Refugees,"* 1983). "Highly impacted" counties were those with high refugee-per-population ratios and a high percentage of refugees receiving welfare payments. One-half of the counties identified were located in California and three were Bay Area counties, including Oakland's Alameda County. More recently, the Chinese incorporation of Hong Kong has stimulated a sizable new wave of Chinese immigrants to Oakland and the Bay Area (Snyder, 1992).³

Oakland is the second-largest city in the nine-county Bay Area dominated by San Francisco—a major international economic and tourist center that is a mere 20-minute drive across the Bay.⁴ The links between Oakland and San Francisco have played an important part in Oakland's history. Until the completion of the Bay Bridge in 1936, thousands of workers were ferried daily across the Bay between the two cities. Since 1974 the two cities have been linked through the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) subway system, with eight stations serving Oakland.

The centuries-long process behind Oakland's current diversity was far from smooth; population groups often competed fiercely for jobs and places to live. Racism and discrimination directed at non-Whites and non-Protestants were not confined to the 1920s when the Ku Klux Klan was an important force in city politics (Rhombert, 1996). During World War II, as labor force demographics changed, Blacks in particular were targeted. Black labor, which was so eagerly sought and exploited during World War II, was as eagerly terminated and discarded when industries moved out or shut down. However, a 14-year struggle—led by C.L. Dellums, a Black Oaklander—culminated in California's adoption of its Fair Employment Act in 1959.⁵ Many of the city's White residents had imagined the Black population would leave the area at the end of the war. This did not happen. In the postwar economic decline, with jobs scarce, temporary war housing deteriorating, and the population growing while the housing stock for Black residents remained stagnant, Oakland's Black population endured many deprivations. As late as 1966, housing discrimination and poverty continued to relegate 70 percent of the Black population to the city's West Side. Only gradually were Blacks able to secure residence in East Oakland, which became another Black ghetto. Blacks, however, were not the only group to endure overt residential discrimination. Residential restrictions on the Chinese community outside of Chinatown were in force until they were gradually permitted to purchase homes in a small section of San Antonio, which was referred to thereafter as China Hill.

The backdrop to the city's tensions and struggles over residence and jobs has been the city's steady postwar economic decline. Oakland, like other cities across the Nation, was affected by postwar economic trends: "Conversion from a manufacturing-based to service-based economy competition between central cities and burgeoning suburbs, and decreasing investment in infrastructure and education have all had discernable impacts on the city's economy"(City of Oakland, 1995). Not unlike other cities across the country, Oakland was ravaged by the flight of industries, businesses, and middle-income residents to the suburbs. In 1955, Federal Government attention rendered the San Antonio district of Oakland the site of the first urban renewal project West of the Mississippi (Isabel, 1984). In the 1960s and 1970s, major sections of freeway were cut through communities, forcibly relocating residents and undermining local businesses as commuters now bypassed these areas as they headed to suburban malls. Indeed, since World War II, the Bay Area economy—once centered in San Francisco—has expanded and decentralized to cities outside the Bay Area's nine counties, bypassing Oakland in the process (City of Oakland, 1995). In the early 1980s, California entered a period of economic expansion. Oakland, however, benefited the least from the South Bay-centered Silicon Valley's high-technology boom (Troutt, 1993). Indeed, between 1981 and 1986, as the U.S. economy grew by 8 percent and Alameda County's economy grew by 16 percent, Oakland was the only major Bay Area city to lose jobs and experience a decline in growth of approximately 1 percent (Applied Research Center, 1996). Oakland's economic woes worsened as the State entered a recession in the middle and late 1980s and the area suffered the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 and the Oakland Hills fire in 1991. During that 3-year period, Oakland's housing stock sustained more damage from natural disasters than any other city in the country (City of Oakland, 1992).⁶

Demographic Characteristics

The 1990 census counted 372,242 residents of Oakland, representing an increase of 9.7 percent from 1980 (City of Oakland, 1994).⁷ The increase marked Oakland's first recorded population growth since World War II. Between 1950 and 1980, the city experienced a net decrease of more than 45,000 residents. Even by 1990, 12,300 fewer residents lived in Oakland than had 40 years earlier. Though notable, Oakland's population growth from 1980 to 1990 remained considerably smaller than that of Alameda County (15.7 percent) or the State of California (25.7 percent) as a whole.

To characterize Oakland as a Black city misses the extent of the city's diversity. In 1990 African-Americans and Whites accounted for 43.9 percent and 32.4 percent of Oakland residents, respectively.⁸ However, both groups' share of the population decreased during the preceding decade as Whites continued to leave and other groups expanded relative to the African-American population. Indeed, from 1980 to 1990 the fastest growing population groups were Asians and Latinos, who accounted for 14.1 percent and 13.9 percent, respectively, of Oakland's population in 1990. Other groups combined, including Native Americans, formed nearly 1 percent of the population in 1990 (Oakland Housing Authority, 1993).

From 1980 to 1990 employment in manufacturing and retail declined by 20.2 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively, while it increased in the service sector by 34.7 percent. Over the decade, Oakland experienced an 8-percent increase in jobs. By 1990, however, employment in manufacturing and wholesaling, "once the backbone of the city's economy," had dropped to 15.7 percent of the labor market (Snyder, 1992). The plant closure project found that more than 500 companies in the Bay Area, most of which were East Bay companies and Oakland's main labor market, have closed or relocated since 1981. Only 60 percent of those who found themselves unemployed by the business closures secured alternative employment; 66 percent secured jobs at significantly lower salaries (Oakland Housing Authority, 1993).

In 1990 Oakland's median per capita income was \$14,676, compared with \$17,547 for Alameda County and \$16,409 for the State. Oakland's median household income was even lower relative to county and State averages: Oakland, \$27,095; Alameda County, \$37,544; and California, \$35,798. The lower income reflects—at least in part—higher unemployment. Even though Oakland's reported unemployment rate was lower than the State's as a whole—Oakland, 5.9 percent; Alameda County, 4.1 percent; and California, 6.6 percent—the figures are deceptive. The proportion of "persons not in the labor force"—that is, those who had given up looking for a job—was significantly higher in Oakland: 40.5 percent compared with 31.4 percent in Alameda County and 33 percent in California (City of Oakland, 1994).⁹ Excluding these persons and those in military service produced an unemployment rate of 9.5 percent for Oakland. But for most minority groups, the rate was even higher: African-Americans, 14.4 percent; Latinos, 11.8 percent; Native Americans, 10.7 percent; Asians, 7.5 percent; and Whites, 4.4 percent (Urban Strategies Council, 1995).¹⁰

Poverty has remained relatively stable—18.8 percent of Oakland's population was living below the poverty line in 1990, a rate that is higher than both county (10.6 percent) and State (12.5 percent) averages.¹¹ Twenty years earlier, Oakland's poverty rate was somewhat lower at 16.5 percent; however, Oakland ranked as the city with the highest rate compared with Chicago, Denver, New York, Philadelphia, and Seattle. In 1990 the rate had increased to 18.8 percent, but Oakland now ranked fourth among those cities.

Alameda County statistics indicate that 17 percent of Oakland's population was receiving

some form of public assistance in June 1990. Low incomes and high unemployment translate into poor quality of life: In 1988, while the infant mortality rate in the United States was 10.7 per 100,000 births, the rate was 20.6 for African-Americans in Oakland. Six years later the infant mortality rate among African-Americans in Oakland had been reduced to 12.5, but it remained high relative to the citywide rate of 9.1 that year.

Project Sites: San Antonio and Fruitvale

The San Antonio and Fruitvale community development districts (CDDs) are contiguous areas lying in the flatland area east of Lake Merritt—the largest artificial salt lake in the country. In the 19th century, San Antonio was a thriving lumber town that depended on the harvesting of redwoods in the Oakland Hills. Lumber was shipped from San Antonio's shore until the 1860s when all the redwoods had been felled (Bagwell, 1982). San Antonio was annexed to Oakland in 1852 (Chumsai, 1992). The area lies roughly east of the city center, across Lake Merritt. Its boundaries extend to MacArthur Boulevard (Highway 580) in the north toward the Oakland Hills, Fruitvale to the east, and the Bay to the south. The community is largely residential and has many turn-of-the-century homes interspersed with apartment complexes in various states of disrepair.¹² Ubiquitous liquor stores mar many neighborhoods. The quality of housing improves the further away one moves from the Bay and the closer one moves to the hills—areas of predominantly White residence. San Antonio's proximity to the city's business district and the Lake renders its northern sections likely targets for continued gentrification. San Antonio is currently undergoing a change in its racial and ethnic composition as a result of Asian movement from Chinatown and of Latino movement from Fruitvale (Snyder, 1992).

Named by a German immigrant who planted an orchard of cherry trees in the mid-1800s, Fruitvale was once a major fruit-growing and canning center. Historically a center of Latino community and culture, the area was annexed to Oakland in 1909 (Gust, 1988). The orchards that made this area a favorite resort for affluent weekend visitors are long gone. The district today is dominated by four main commercial strips. The residential areas are laid out in a grid. For the most part, it is a rather unattractive region of Oakland. However, two main arteries host a visibly vibrant community life. Like San Antonio, the quality of residences improves as one moves toward the hills. In the 1980s, the departure of middle-class homeowners and businesses for the suburbs had a detrimental effect on the district's commercial and residential status (Oakland Housing Authority, 1993). Its distance from the city's business district, plus its flat and unattractive topography, render Fruitvale a less-likely target for gentrification than San Antonio.

San Antonio and Fruitvale share similar socioeconomic characteristics, including their rank as the two most diverse of Oakland's nine CDDs.¹³ They differ, however, in the extent of community-based organizational activity: San Antonio's historically limited community-based efforts contrast markedly with Fruitvale's vigorous and extensive community-initiated activities. These similarities and differences render San Antonio and Fruitvale particularly well suited for a study of the impact of community-based organizations on promoting and sustaining diversity.

Middle-class liberalism as the basis of multicultural/ethnic diversity should not be sought here. These are predominantly working-class communities with a rich racial and ethnic mix, sharing a reality of limited economic resources. While predominantly working class, these communities have retained within their boundaries many well-off residents and have managed to avoid the deprivation of some of the city's other CDDs. But these two districts are unique in yet another respect: Between 1980 and 1990 nearly one-half of the city's population increase occurred in San Antonio and Fruitvale.¹⁴ Such relatively high

rates of growth began during the 1970s when these districts' populations grew despite Oakland's 6.1-percent overall population decrease during the decade. One factor is the large segment of recent immigrants and refugees who have located in these two CDDs. Indeed, more than one-half of the 18,000 persons who came from abroad and settled in Oakland since 1985 did so in Chinatown, San Antonio, and Fruitvale. Census tract data reveal that noncitizens in San Antonio and Fruitvale comprise between 16.8 percent and 43.6 percent of the residents, with the majority having in-migrated within the previous decade (City of Oakland, 1993).

Demographic Characteristics

According to census data, in 1990 San Antonio's population was 59,080 and Fruitvale's was 35,722 (Chumsai, 1992; Alozie, 1992). The racial and ethnic composition of the combined population of nearly 95,000 residents was 30.5 percent African-American, 27.7 percent Asian-Pacific Islander, 25.4 percent Latinos, 15.4 percent White, and 1.0 percent Native Americans/Others (Urban Strategies Council, 1995). Compared with the rest of the city, these two CDDs have a lower proportion of African-Americans and Whites and higher proportions of Asians and Latinos. Thus the two fastest growing groups—Latinos and Asians—are expanding specifically in these two CDDs. In fact, over time these districts have become more diverse: In 1980, 6 of 18 census tracts had a majority ethnic group; 10 years later, only 3 census tracts had a single ethnic group that comprised more than 50 percent of the tract's population (City of Oakland, 1994).

There are notable differences between San Antonio and Fruitvale as well. In San Antonio, the two largest groups are Asians and African-Americans, each accounting for nearly one-third of the population. In Fruitvale, Latinos comprise more than one-third of the population, followed by African-Americans, who account for slightly more than one-fourth. The trend is evidently toward a larger Asian population in both districts, and a possible Latino majority in Fruitvale. Public elementary school enrollment data for Fruitvale reveal that the Latino student population ranged from 17 to 89 percent in the district's six schools, with Latino pupils accounting for at least 55 percent of enrollment in five of the schools in 1994 (Oakland Unified School District, 1994). Similarly, that year the number of Asian students in San Antonio's five public elementary schools ranged from 22 percent to 68 percent of enrollment, with Asian pupils accounting for at least 55 percent of enrollment in three of the schools.

The growing Asian community in both districts, but particularly in San Antonio, has brought definite economic benefits. An enormous sign at the San Antonio border of East 14th Avenue—a commercial street that traverses both CDDs—announces the “New Chinatown.” Asian businesses that were eager to escape the high rents, limited parking, and competition of Chinatown set up shop in San Antonio and, in doing so, have helped to revive the district's ailing economy (Lee, 1989). A survey found that these small, predominantly Southeast Asian-owned and -operated businesses comprised approximately one-half of the businesses in San Antonio in 1988.¹⁵ Some evidence of their success is noted by the Chinatown branch of the Bank of Canton, which reported an increase in deposits from \$8 million in 1981 to \$30 million in 1987, attributed to the rapid increase in Southeast Asian businesses (O'Toole, 1988). Though relatively successful, the small businesses that dot the commercial arteries of the district remain marginal; they depend on family labor and experience high turnover. Many of the businesses are operated by refugees who, in 1980, obtained some technical assistance for small, startup businesses through refugee assistance programs (Lee, 1989). Despite the relative success of some, however, significant segments of the Asian refugee population remain impoverished and

depend on government support, face problems related to illiteracy and navigation in an English-speaking country, and endure poor and overcrowded housing.¹⁶ Ironically, a 1989 report noted that the revitalization of the area by Southeast Asian businesses has contributed to real estate speculation that threatens to increase housing costs even more.

Relative to other Oakland CDDs, housing in San Antonio and Fruitvale is considered affordable. Despite similar socioeconomic characteristics, however, there are some substantial differences in the quality and cost of housing in the two CDDs. In 1990 the median home value in San Antonio (\$181,500) was 38.9 percent higher than in Fruitvale (\$110,900) (Chumsai, 1992; Alozie, 1992). Census tract data revealed that homeownership ranged from a high of nearly 50 percent to a low of 7.5 percent of housing in the two CDDs. The median monthly rent in San Antonio (\$553) was 6 percent higher than in Fruitvale (\$520). These statistics reflect the high rents and high-cost homes in the northern sections of San Antonio overlooking Lake Merritt where young, upwardly mobile adults are purchasing and renting homes. Indeed, although only 5.2 percent of San Antonio's population resides in the northwesternmost census tract, 22.9 percent of the district's holders of graduate degrees and 13.1 percent of its professionals live in this community. Moreover, it is the only census tract in which Whites are the largest single group (39.9 percent) and where median home value (\$236,000) is more than double that in other tracts. This area can in no way be considered integrated into the rest of the district; it is a world apart from it. To a certain though lesser extent, the same may be said of the area directly adjacent to Lake Merritt as well as the three tracts bordering the lower hills. Excluding these five tracts, median home values range from \$85,100 to \$136,400 (City of Oakland, 1993).

There is tremendous variation across and within Oakland's CDDs in terms of incomes and living standards. In 1990 the combined median household income in San Antonio and Fruitvale was \$27,179, compared with a high of \$61,066 for Oakland Hills and a low of \$15,265 for West Oakland. The same median household income was reported for both CDDs in 1990. Fruitvale experienced a 32.6-percent improvement and San Antonio experienced a 29.4-percent improvement in median household income between 1980 and 1990; these increases were substantially higher than those of the city as a whole, where median household income had increased by 17.3 percent.¹⁷ Yet there are notable differences within the districts. Per capita income by census tract reveals a low of \$6,562 and a high of \$18,176. Again, higher incomes are predictably found in the tracts adjacent to the Lake and the lower hills. Similarly, in 1990 the percentage of persons living below the poverty line ranged from a low of 10.6 percent to a high of 40.0 percent.

In May and June 1995, the city of Oakland's Office of Planning and Building conducted a series of community workshops to identify community needs. A joint workshop was conducted for San Antonio and Fruitvale, from which a composite profile of the two communities may be drawn (San Antonio/Fruitvale Community Workshop Summary, 1995). The participants expressed the following concerns:

- A "checkerboard pattern" of well-maintained homes and dilapidated residences.
- Poorly maintained rental properties.
- Too many vacancies in some commercial areas, while some areas are underserved commercially.
- Crime and safety, with the complaint that "the city's policing activities simply attempt to move crime from one area into the next."

Elsewhere a need for open space and parks was expressed, and it was further noted that San Antonio and Fruitvale have the least amount of open space per capita in the city.

Participants also identified the communities' strengths:

- Existing homes are historic and architecturally interesting.
- The areas enjoy good public transportation, including a state-of-the-art BART station.
- The areas' infrastructure is good, even though schools and services are overstrained.
- Some commercial areas are accessible to pedestrians.

A desire to attract new residents of moderate and upper income levels was expressed, which, participants recognized, would require, among other things, improvements in public schools and safety and the elimination of blighted sections of the districts.

Diversity in Practice

In the spring of 1992, the residents of Oakland expressed pride in the fact that the city had managed to remain calm during the tumultuous days of the Los Angeles riots that followed the acquittal of the four White police officers charged in the brutal beating of Rodney King.¹⁸ Cool heads and communication among community leaders were credited for averting a potential crisis—a testament to Oakland's success in the realm of race relations under extraordinary circumstances. The question that remains, however, regards Oakland's success under the more ordinary, yet no less consequential, stresses and strains of a city endeavoring to forge a better future. There are three levels on which to evaluate: city, community, and individual. The following presents a preliminary examination of relations at all three levels, while attempting to identify the institutional and organizational mechanisms behind San Antonio and Fruitvale's successful diversity.

City Politics and Community Diversity

City politics and policies are simultaneously the consequence of existing diversity and consequential for its future prospects. With the election of Oakland's first African-American mayor, Lionel Wilson, in 1977, political power in the city is considered to have passed from Whites to Blacks.¹⁹ Under Mayor Wilson, however, the city continued to be dominated by predominantly White business interests. The 1990 election of Elihu Harris introduced an element of change. Harris appeared to have been elected at least in part for his promise to alter the city government's focus from the downtown to the neighborhoods (O'Brien, 1993). Evaluations are mixed regarding his success (Stallone, 1993). Nevertheless, during his tenure there has clearly been more interest in engaging communities and their organizations; several citywide, community-based organizations have proved capable of asserting themselves within the city's agenda. Community organizations have pressed the city council to address quality-of-life concerns, such as police accountability, housing, and jobs, rather than merely business concerns, such as development, zoning, and taxation (HoSang, 1995).

Although city politics is now regarded as dominated by African-Americans, Latino and Asian community leaders have recently begun to demand a stronger voice as their share of the city's population grows. The eight-member city council (excluding the mayor) is composed of three African-Americans, three Whites, one Latino, and one Asian. Latino and Asian leaders contend that, having struggled for decades to wrest their fair share of the city's resources and political power from the White establishment, the African-American establishment—composed largely of Black elected officials, businessowners,

city administrators, and church leaders—should now demonstrate sensitivity to Latino and Asian demands. Latino community leaders have already expressed disappointment at the Black response to the November 1994 statewide passage of Proposition 187, which denies social services to undocumented immigrants. Although African-Americans in Oakland by and large did not vote in favor of the proposition, the Latino community contends that they are not sensitive enough to its implications. “It’s our civil rights movement,” one prominent Latina activist explained (Palacios, 1996).

The challenge Latino and Asian leaders pose to Blacks is complicated by the persistent and glaring economic gap between Whites and minorities, which shows no signs of narrowing. Although between 1980 and 1990 the mean household income for Blacks in Oakland rose from \$16,908 to \$28,439, Whites’ mean household income increased from \$27,534 in 1980 to \$48,097 in 1990. Thus Blacks can argue that, while they have indeed asserted themselves in the city’s political establishment, in terms of economic power they remain at a definite disadvantage and, therefore, Latino and Asian grievances with the current administration are not analogous to those that African-Americans have with the White establishment.

The Latino and Asian communities are hampered by other factors in their attempts to assert their political and economic interests. First, a sizable percentage of the Latino population is undocumented, which prevents them from translating their numbers into political clout through elections.²⁰ Under such circumstances, community mobilization and organization become important alternative avenues for a political voice. Second, those who do obtain citizenship are not necessarily eager to exercise their right to vote. A 1990 study revealed very low voter registration among Asians and Latinos in Oakland: one-fourth of eligible Chinese Americans and less than one-half of Japanese Americans, considerably lower than the city’s population as a whole. In Latino districts, voter turnout for the 1990 mayoral election was approximately 30 percent less than for the city as a whole. Reasons for low voter rates have been attributed to immigrants’ negative political experience in their country of origin, their preoccupation with survival demands, and their fears of triggering a mainstream backlash if they seek to assert themselves politically (Jung, 1991). As a new generation of U.S.-born citizens with Latin or Asian heritage reach voting age, greater participation in electoral politics may occur.²¹ There is no reason, however, to expect monolithic voting blocs from either community. One report notes, for example, that cultural, linguistic, and class divisions within the Asian electorate result in a split of their votes between the various contending political parties.²² Nevertheless, both communities are beginning to assert themselves in city politics.

Redistricting became an issue for the first time in 1993 as Latino and Asian leaders sought to enhance their communities’ political clout. Struggles over district boundaries were acrimonious as race and ethnicity were thrust overtly into the center of the political stage. Following a series of disputes over various map proposals, a compromise was reached that addressed Latino and Asian concerns (Cogan, 1993). The flurry of newspaper editorials during this period reflected the diversity of opinion regarding the relationship between race and politics in Oakland. Some argued that redistricting was creating a problem in race relations in Oakland. Others insisted that redistricting was long overdue and was needed to reflect the fact that Oakland’s politics was no longer Black/White but multi-racial. Still, others argued that, in reality, Oakland politics had gone beyond race to class, which the redistricting battles largely ignored.²³ Evidence that confounded the notion of voting along racial/ethnic lines was presented to support the latter view: in the three districts represented by White council members, the school board members are non-Whites (Stewart, 1993); and in the past, Asians have been elected in predominantly Black council districts.²⁴ Yet there is no denying that race and ethnicity resonate for Oaklanders. The

mayoral race in 1994 between the African-American incumbent and an Asian-American challenger revealed this.

One journalist observing the mayoral race in 1994 described it as having taken on a “low-key but race-conscious edge” while remaining “surprisingly free of overt race-baiting (“Politics of Color Plays in Oakland,” 1994). Discussions and debates abounded regarding the acceptability versus the need for constituents to vote along lines of race and ethnicity. Many prominent African-Americans feared their community’s loss of political power if the Black mayoral incumbent lost the race to the Asian challenger. Other African-American community leaders, as well as Asians, crossed ethnic lines to endorse the candidate of their choice. Indeed, for many the more salient difference between the candidates lay elsewhere: although both were Democrats, the incumbent represented a commitment to multiculturalism and an activist government while the challenger represented fiscal conservatism and business interests (DeVecchio, 1994). The elections ended with the reinstatement of the Black incumbent, but not before race/ethnicity had been forcefully asserted once again in Oakland’s politics.

Friction and tensions lie very much near the surface of ethnic and race relations at the level of the communities’ political and business elites. This became evident during the struggles that erupted over the allocation of lucrative public works contracts in 1993. A journalist reported on three separate occasions within a 2-week period during which ethnic interests clashed vocally and forcefully (DeVecchio, 1993). Noting that, although struggles between Blacks and Whites over economic and political power have had a long history in Oakland, rarely have there been such struggles among Blacks and Latinos and Asians. Within this period fierce competition surfaced over hiring, public works contracts, and management positions, areas in which Latinos and Asians as well as Blacks are poorly represented, but in which Blacks are improving their positions at faster rates than other minority groups. The confrontations revealed the extent to which African-American community and business leaders feel the incongruence between their political and economic powers in the city. In a BART board meeting held to award two construction contracts with alleged “minimal Black participation,” a Black representative in attendance threatened: “You pass this, you’ve only heard the beginning.... You look at L.A., and then you take a good hard look at Oakland.” Another Black leader in attendance called for the city to hold a summit on economic equity among the disadvantaged groups (DeVecchio, 1993). It is not clear whether such struggles are more likely to occur when the amount of resources involved are so great or when they are so meager. The journalist reporting the events suggested that “because of the prolonged recession, any major opportunities that arise for public jobs and money come with higher stakes than would be the case if the economy were expanding” (DeVecchio, 1993). What is clear, however, is that new and potentially volatile fissure lines between minority groups have begun to appear, while economic power continues to be dominated by Whites. How were the three decisions resolved? Both the BART board and the Oakland Port Commission postponed their decisions, while the School District reached a compromise by granting three contracts to members of three different ethnic groups.

Another means through which city government has an influence on the stability of ethnically and racially diverse communities is through the role of the police force. The city has sought to improve police/community relations and has adopted community policing programs. Its image, however, is tarnished by its record of excessive force and virtually non-existent accountability processes and procedures. Indications are that conditions have deteriorated rather than improved over the past 5 years (1991–96).²⁵ It may be argued that Oakland’s police force is hampered by policies that are not conducive to good relations between officers and the communities they are meant to serve. In 1994 only 8.7 percent

of the city's police officers resided in Oakland, compared with 34.5 percent of officers in San Francisco and 56 percent of officers in San Jose (Staats, 1994). Reasons cited by police officers for residence outside the city are poor housing and schools and fear of retaliation. Besides the fact that some of the city's best paid public employees are taking their incomes elsewhere, nonresidence could be argued to detract from sensitivity to or identification with the communities. Of course this would have to be tested. In addition, the force's policy of seniority for determining assignments means that the most seasoned police officers are likely to take the soft beats, while the more difficult areas are left to rookies. Areas such as Fruitvale, which has a high number of calls for service, would probably not be the first choice of most experienced officers (Horton, 1995). Since 1973 more than 60 percent of Oakland's new recruits have been minority group members ("Oakland Bid for Black Police Chief," 1993). However, Black officers make up a disproportionately low percentage of the force. In 1993, 24.8 percent of police officers were Black when the city's Black population was 43 percent. It is not merely a matter of race, however: The White police chief who had held office since 1973 was replaced in 1992 by a Black chief (Fimrite, 1992). Already established institutional norms—to which all new recruits regardless of race/ethnicity are socialized—are undoubtedly much more enduring (HoSang, 1996).

At a meeting of the city council held on February 15, 1996, to address the issue of police accountability, members of community organizations and a variety of leaders and residents, led by the People United for a Better Oakland (PUEBLO), forcefully and effectively presented their case. That class was a factor was striking: Mostly working-class people of color, addressing a city council composed of a majority of people of color, spoke of their abuse at the hands of the city's police officers. Indeed, the very complex relationship between class and race appears repeatedly to baffle everyone. Of course in a city where the unemployment rate for persons of color is between 3 and 10 percentage points higher than that for Whites and where poverty is strikingly skewed—23.9 percent of African-Americans, 22.8 percent of Asians, and 21.7 percent of Latinos compared with 9 percent of Whites²⁶ (Urban Strategies Council, 1995)—race and class are easily confounded, and so too are racism and classism. Yet the association between race/ethnicity and class is not nearly as close as it was historically. Members of every minority group have experienced social mobility in Oakland, a fact that complicates attempts to read politics in Oakland through a racial lens.

One example is the dispute between the middle-class, Black-dominated school board and the White-dominated teachers' union that played out in the nearly 6-week-long teachers' strike in the spring of 1996 (Slater, 1996). School district officials, the Oakland National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Reverend J. Alfred Smith of Allen Temple Baptist Church—the largest and most influential Black church in Oakland—infused the dispute with race by claiming openly that the striking teachers' union represented the interests of White teachers who were trying to discredit the predominantly Black district administration and school board (Slater, 1996; Campbell, 1996). Only 38 percent of Oakland school teachers are Black, and they make up only 10 percent of the teachers' union—the Oakland Education Association. However, Advocates for African-American Students, a coalition of Black teachers and parents, felt compelled to call a press conference in defense of the striking teachers. As one speaker put it: "Culturally, I was raised to believe that you don't air your dirty laundry in public. But Oakland's diversity is one of its strengths and we cannot let it divide us" (Slater, 1996). In fact, Black teachers who are members of Smith's congregation felt torn by their loyalties to both the union and the church. School board candidate Gerald Sanders, an African-American, went further in criticizing Smith, insisting that the divisions in the school district had more to do with class than race: "There's a Black working class and a Black

petit bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie is mainly who has been feeding at the public trough” (Slater, 1996). Union officials charged that, while teachers had received no salary increase in 5 years, the school district wasted resources on too many overpaid administrators—resources better spent on reducing Oakland’s classroom congestion and raising teachers’ salaries. Yet the extent to which the conflict can be viewed as one of race or class is open to debate. While explaining that union membership involved a major time commitment, one union member insisted that at his school there was “a big division but it’s not Black/White. It’s male/female. The men stayed out on strike and the women went in to work. The women are mainly single wage earners” (Slater, 1996). Once again, class—and in this case even gender—confounds a racial reading of the conflict.

Another example that defies simple categorization in terms of race relations is the almost perennial confrontation between the police and the city’s Black youth. In the summer of 1994, the annual Festival at the Lake was marred by rioting Black youth. The following summer, the festival passed without incident largely because festival organizers had made the effort to integrate programs of interest to the youth into the festival’s program. But by the end of the summer Lake Merritt was the site of another major confrontation between the city’s Black youth and police. Black teenagers congregating on Sunday afternoons, listening to music and meeting friends, were deemed menacing by both White and Black passersby. Residents and store owners filed complaints and a confrontation ensued. Youth are no longer permitted to congregate in large numbers at the lake. To what extent was this a matter of race, class, or generation as the city’s Black, working-class youth struggle to carve a niche for themselves? This, like other aspects of diversity in Oakland, warrants greater investigation.

Community Organizations and Sustaining Diversity

There are a number of contexts within which members of different ethnic groups mix visibly and regularly in Fruitvale and San Antonio: schools, public transportation, shops, parks, churches, and healthcare facilities, among others. Most people spend a significant proportion of their time in such contexts. For example, in a citywide survey, two-thirds of San Antonio and Fruitvale residents stated that they depended on the parks for their primary recreational activity (Hardy, 1993).

Schools are multiracial. The example of Hawthorne Elementary School, the largest public elementary school in Fruitvale, is typical: 1994 enrollment was 62 percent Latino, 21 percent Asian, 14 percent African-American, 1 percent White, and 1 percent Native American. The low White enrollment may be due to the enrollment of White pupils in private schools.²⁷ Schools, particularly high schools, have been sites of racial and ethnic clashes between members of rival youth gangs that are ethnically homogeneous. In response, youth organizations, among them the East Bay Asian Youth Center and the Student Empowerment Project (STEP), a Latino organization, have recently come together at a number of high schools to address racial/ethnic conflicts among youth in schools where administrators have failed to resolve such conflicts among students.

Conflict resolution is being initiated by many different types of organizations. Coalition Forums of Oakland (CFO), for example, is active in community-based dispute resolution and provides training for mediators. According to the program director, 85 percent of the cases brought to CFO are neighborhood matters, such as noise, pets, trespassing, and property lines (Bostick, 1996). She adds that rarely have such disputes been based on blatant racial animosity, and very few exhibit any sign of racial/ethnic overtones.

Another organization involved in conflict resolution, Sentinel, a fair housing community organization, experienced an increase in landlord/tenant disputes in Fruitvale between 1993–94 and 1994–95, from 6 to 11 percent of their cases, respectively.²⁸ Sentinel staff could not account for the increase, so it is unclear whether the additional cases are due to the appearance of new problems, increased awareness of the existence of the organization, or some other reason. Interestingly, the Sentinel organizer, who for the past 4 years has provided weekly consultation services in Fruitvale through the Spanish Speaking Unity Council, notes that increasingly cases are about neither race nor ethnicity but rather about the rights of disabled tenants, sexual orientation, welfare mothers, and children as tenants (Toolsie, 1996). She further noted that race/ethnicity cases tended to come from other areas, where Whites predominate or are a sizable proportion of the population.²⁹

There are a number of notable examples of accommodation. A church in San Antonio declares in seven languages, “This Christian Church Welcomes Everyone.” Down the block, another now has three priests regularly conducting Sunday morning mass in three, 1.5-hour shifts in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. An enormous struggle revolving around the church as community terrain preceded the introduction of Vietnamese in 1993. At present, the same church is shared by three different groups, even as they remain separated. This is perhaps a good metaphor for much of the experience of diversity in these communities: disengaged assembly or segmented integration.

Other examples of accommodation and cooperation exist. The Chinatown-based East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) has initiated a number of development projects in San Antonio that serve community members regardless of their race. One project, which was implemented jointly with the San Antonio Development Corporation, is a high-quality affordable housing development (Kilorin, 1995). In 1995 the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce (OCCC) committed \$10,000 to the Allen Temple Baptist Church Federal Credit Union—a community-based credit union in East Oakland that primarily serves African-Americans. OCCC is a small organization but has launched a number of initiatives aimed at cooperation with other ethnic groups, including joint events with its African-American and Latino counterparts. But the donation to the credit union was an exceptional gesture because it marked “the first time an Asian group has reached out across the city to an African-American church with a monetary gift of that size.”³⁰

Numerous hard-fought battles have been conducted to accommodate the substantial numbers of non-English speaking members of San Antonio and Fruitvale, as well as Oakland as a whole. As noted, census data reveal that immigrants make up a significant proportion of the population of both CDDs. A notable achievement in this regard was the successful 1992–93 PUEBLO-initiated campaign to provide multilingual translation services at Highland Hospital in San Antonio—the only county hospital in Oakland.

The role of community-based organizations in bringing such concerns to the fore and mobilizing residents to work for desired changes within their communities cannot be overemphasized. They criss-cross a multitude of interest groups, ensuring that virtually every interest is accommodated within one or another community-based body. Very broadly speaking, key community-based organizations in the two CDDs may be categorized as follows:

- Ethnic organizations address the needs of a specific ethnic community, in many cases evincing a particular concern with intergroup diversity (that is, diverse national or linguistic groups). Latino and Asian communities are highly diverse internally in

terms of national origin and culture as well as in terms of immigration status and class.

- Numerous organizations are church-based and, although they advocate the principle of cross-racial/ethnic unity, in practice they are often mono-racial/ethnic.
- Community services organizations abound to compensate for inadequate city and county health and social welfare services. While often emerging from a particular ethnic community, their doors remain open to others where need is the criterion for access.
- Community organizations that advocate activism and community empowerment are most clearly cross-racial/ethnic in practice even while they may not explicitly seek to promote diversity. By addressing specific nonracial/ethnic concerns that affect communities irrespective of the race or ethnicity of their residents, such organizations identify bases for common concern and action that transcend race and ethnicity.

In short, a rich matrix of community organizations exists, particularly in Fruitvale.

Many of Fruitvale's community organizations and leaders participated in the protest movements of the 1960s when the area's Chicano and Native American activists worked closely with the civil rights movement. A significant number of these seasoned activists remained in the district and now head community organizations devoted to assisting and/or empowering their communities. In 1993 the density of community-organizations produced the Fruitvale Community Collaborative (FCC), a consortium of 16 organizations, churches, schools, business and homeowner's associations, and research and planning groups. FCC has recently ceased to operate as a collaborative, but it remains a testament to the critical mass of organizational efforts characterizing the area (Herranz, 1995). Moreover, it was a multiracial/ethnic effort that brought Asian, African-American, Native American, and Latino organizations together. It continues today as a distinct organization.

Something we have merely assumed in our examination thus far is the notion of *community* itself. To what extent can we say that either CDD constitutes a community? As applied to Fruitvale, the term *community* would not be contested: Residents readily identify with Fruitvale, as do residents of Chinatown. This is not the case in San Antonio. Indeed, when contacted by this researcher, many San Antonio residents and institutional personnel were hard-pressed to identify San Antonio as a district. Moreover, as noted, a substantial section of the CDD is quite distinct from the rest in regard to class measured by income, housing, and education. Most socioeconomic indicators would show the lakefront sections of San Antonio and the sections adjacent to the MacArthur Boulevard in both San Antonio and Fruitvale to be more like the adjoining communities of Oakland Hills. For many residents, particularly African-Americans, the more meaningful terms and distinctions are the *hills* and the *flatlands*.³¹ Moreover, there are indications that Asian residents identify more with Chinatown, which they frequent regularly for shopping and social services, than with San Antonio.³² A similar relationship holds for Latinos to Fruitvale regardless of their residence. Asian residents gravitate to the well-developed social services networks in Chinatown, while Latinos turn to a similar network in Fruitvale. In both cases, language is an important reason. Thus the organizational and institutional life of Fruitvale is meant to serve more than the community residing within Fruitvale, while San Antonio's limited social services and organizational network may be a result of its prior establishment in Fruitvale, Chinatown, and, in the case of the African-American community, East and West Oakland. Thus the concept *community* must be investigated further as it is applied to both Fruitvale and San Antonio.

Yet another dimension that must be addressed with regard to community is the relationship between those who live and those who work within a particular locale. In 1992, 90 percent of Fruitvale's employed residents worked outside Fruitvale (DeVecchio, 1992). Likewise, most San Antonio and Fruitvale business owners and landlords do not live in the CDD. The relationship between employment and residence is raised repeatedly. Examples already cited—police and teachers—reflect a sense of frustration over incomes being spent elsewhere rather than within the community. The relationship between residence and employment and its contribution to community identification and diversity deserve further investigation.

Finally, members of different racial and ethnic groups can mix without necessarily interacting. To determine the extent to which shared residence involves shared experiences, we need to examine relations at the individual level.

Diversity and People's Experience

The individual level is one of the most difficult to grasp, and yet very indicative of how diversity is actually experienced daily. It is exceedingly difficult to generalize at this level: People's experiences are so varied and their interpretations of them so subjective. Indeed, in virtually every problematic encounter between individuals from different groups, that which is explained as racial/ethnic bias or bigotry may equally lend itself to clarification by class, gender, generation, and/or some other explanation. To gain a glimpse into this level of experience, a focus group with residents of Oakland—Fruitvale, East Oakland, and San Antonio—was conducted in March 1996 with the assistance of PUEBLO. The nine-member group was diverse in composition; members from the four main racial/ethnic groups participated.³³ The diverse mix is a testament to PUEBLO's reach within the community. From the informal chatting that preceded and followed the focus group session it was clear that common community concerns such as police accountability, programs for youth, and environmental health had brought these ethnically diverse individuals together within PUEBLO.³⁴

The ease with which the participants spoke about their views on diversity and experiences with members of other racial/ethnic groups was notable. It indicated that they had engaged in questioning and self-reflection as they encountered others. Yet generalizations such as "there are good and bad in all groups" were also common as both "good" and "bad" experiences were identified. The "good" aspects or benefits of diversity offered by participants revolved largely around the appeal of variety that the existence of different cultures made possible in terms of food, music, clothing, and customs. Diversity in this sense was a learning experience. Such interactions include an element of distance or safety, as they take place through some medium—notably food and music. The negative aspects or "bad side" that participants raised involved the misunderstandings and misinterpretations that were experienced in the course of their daily lives in shops, at bus stops, or with neighbors. These encounters were largely blamed on lack of communication and language barriers. The dangers of crime were associated—although very reluctantly and apologetically—with some racial/ethnic groups. This gradually came out as participants cited their own experiences with harassment or crime.

Some stereotypes were articulated but attributed to others: "Some think that Asians are taking over economically." And at least to some extent participants attributed actions to race/ethnicity: "Everybody in the neighborhood knows he [White, Jewish] hates Blacks." They did, however, catch themselves: "Who knows, it could be he's just nasty by temper." One cannot say with certainty whether this is an indication of what is considered

an appropriate response or whether it reflects a meaningful advance in the level of understanding regarding “the other.” I suggest that it reflects at least to some extent the latter. This view is supported by an incident that occurred during a discussion of intermarriage. Responding that his family would have no problem with an interracial marriage—provided the woman was economically well-off—one participant found himself in somewhat of a bind answering a question from another participant. Asked how his family might react to his marriage to a man, the participant’s response reflected not only his family’s anticipated consternation, but his own lack of ease with the subject. Indeed, reactions by the participants as they considered their responses to the question ranged from vocal expressions of “they couldn’t handle that” to self-absorbed silence. The evident discomfort the question evinced contrasted markedly with the animated and engrossed discussion surrounding racial/ethnic intermarriages. This example would indicate that, while stereotypical responses abounded regarding interracial marriages, a level of acceptance has developed over time that can be contrasted to that regarding new issues that now test people’s tolerance. All participants agreed that racial/ethnic intermarriage was not a problem for their families—and in most cases supported this with at least one example in their family of such a marriage. They all agreed, however, that in terms of religion, lack of acceptance remained the norm.

The six participating residents of Fruitvale expressed a very strong sense of community. As one participant put it, there is a “sense of oneness” that comes from sharing the experience of this place. Non-Latino participants who reside in Fruitvale rejected the notion that it is associated with Latinos: “It’s not like Chinatown in that way.” And there is a sense of people being “more friendly, down to earth, ordinary, as compared to Berkeley.”³⁵ The comparison to Berkeley is revealing: It was undoubtedly offered as a contrast in terms of class. “Here,” a participant explained, “people on the street look you in your eyes.” Another added: “You see people like you.” The latter comment is particularly interesting given the visible racial and ethnic mix in Fruitvale. Indeed, as one participant stated: “Although we’re from different backgrounds, when you’re living in the same area ... you end up becoming similar.” That the similarity alluded to is one of class appeared in a number of statements. In the course of the discussion, someone made a reference to a particularly ostentatious home in Fruitvale. Participants could not agree on who actually lived there. When one participant suggested that it was owned by a Filipino family, another participant, herself Filipina, rejected the notion outright: “No Filipino family with that kind of money would stay here!”

Finally, asked to identify the race/ethnicity of their neighbors in four directions, in every case neighbors were of a different race/ethnicity in at least two of the four directions. It is perhaps revealing that participants could readily identify the race/ethnicity of their neighbors.

Conclusion

A multitude of factors have contributed to making Oakland a racially and ethnically diverse city, many of which can be expected to persist. Given the tendency for new immigrants to join already established family members or other compatriots, the Latin American and Asian immigrant populations of San Antonio and Fruitvale can be expected to grow. They are likely to continue to do so as long as factors compelling emigration from their countries of origin and prospects of a better life at their desired destination persist. San Antonio and Fruitvale can be expected to remain attractive destinations as long as affordable housing can be found. But resegregation is very likely as Whites continue to leave, the African-American population does not expand, and the immigrant populations increase within these two CDDs.

Even as it exists today, what diversity precisely is being preserved and promoted? As elsewhere, Oakland's diversity is one of tremendous inequity in opportunities, life chances, and standards of living. Data on income, unemployment, and housing reviewed in this report reveal the extent of inequality that exists by race and ethnicity. San Antonio and Fruitvale demonstrate that it is not particularly difficult to create diversity among the poor. It has always been the wealthy who have had the means to exclude others. Racial and ethnic diversity develops where affordable housing exists, where developers and investors do not covet the space inhabited by the poor, and where the city's well-off do not begrudge them that space. Most sections of San Antonio and Fruitvale fall into those categories. In other words, making racial and ethnic diversity happen is not difficult; making it less poor, less vulnerable, and less of a struggle for survival is. This is the challenge for policymakers seeking to promote stable, diverse communities; it is a question that is fundamentally one of economics.

Economics and a scarcity of resources are the backdrop of the competition and tensions among racial and ethnic groups in Oakland. White control over economic power, however, is a given; redistribution is not on any public policy agenda. This must be stated clearly and explicitly because it means that improvements for people of color—and for poor Whites—are evidently to be accomplished with the very limited economic resources that are made available for that purpose. Is that achievable? Countless attempts across the country to improve conditions for the majority of people of color thus far give little reason for optimism. Instead, some room has been made for those at the top of each group as they wrest a chance to succeed within the system. African-American, Latino, and Asian business and political leaders compete with one another for just those sorts of limited opportunities. Oakland's politics reflect this as we now see people of color pitted against other people of color while the basic structure of economic power remains unaltered and firmly in White control. In turn, business and political leaders often use the mass base of their ethnic constituencies as leverage in their battles with each other—battles only those at the top will gain from directly or substantially. As a result, racial and ethnic identifications and mobilization are reinforced despite the fact that their benefits to the mass base are often negligible, if not questionable. In the process, fissures along lines of race and ethnicity are preserved and magnified.

The correspondence between race/ethnicity and class has exacerbated intergroup tensions. As noted, color is associated with poverty, poor housing, high unemployment, and high infant mortality rates. In a city dominated politically by people of color, the limitations of political power bereft of substantial economic power become obvious. Yet color and class do not correspond as closely as they once did. Ironically, as some members of disadvantaged groups experience social mobility, class rather than race and ethnicity will come to be seen as the principal impediment to the improvement of conditions for the majority. Even as race and ethnic tokenism give way to more substantial numbers experiencing social mobility, the persistent and glaring disadvantage faced by the working poor and the underclass will raise the question of class increasingly to the fore. Evidence already exists showing that the erosion of the relationship between race and class is beginning to alter Oakland's politics: Communities' struggles with a city council dominated by people of color and teachers' struggles with a Black-dominated school board reveal that new alignments and conceptions of community are being formed that transcend racial and ethnic lines.

Finally, Oakland enjoys a wealth of community organizations. One would be hard pressed to find a community-based organization that does not advocate support for diversity and good relations among the groups that comprise the city. They advocate support for diversity and good relations because it is in their interest to do so given that they live and/or

work in a diverse area. Passive acceptance of others, however, is not necessarily a success story. It is, moreover, potentially unstable. It is very likely that community-based organizations that transcend race and ethnicity to address community concerns and needs are more generally the best hope for promoting both racial/ethnic diversity and economic diversity. By addressing community concerns that cross groups, they create contexts for cooperation between members of these groups. In such contexts, diversity is practiced, not merely preached, as people from diverse backgrounds act and interact on common interests and concerns. Of course, limits must be acknowledged. The only economic diversity one can hope to achieve is between the lower middle class and the working class. Members of advantaged classes enjoy options enabling them to find solutions that do not require their cooperation with others: private schools to avoid public education, cars to avoid public transportation, or moving out to avoid neighborhood deterioration.

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Notes

1. This section is based on a number of sources, including Beth Bagwell (1982).
2. In 1940, the 8,462 Black residents formed less than 3 percent of Oakland's population; within 5 years, the population had increased to 37,327.
3. Bill Snyder (1992) notes that money from Hong Kong has contributed to the substantial expansion of Chinatown. In 1980 Chinatown was an area of a few blocks with only 29 businesses; now the Asian population has nearly doubled and is composed of a variety of nationals who operate approximately 180 businesses within the old core area.
4. To the north, Oakland shares a boundary with Berkeley, a prosperous liberal community centered on the University of California. To the south, Oakland is bounded by San Leandro, a predominantly White suburb that is becoming increasingly diverse.
5. C.L. Dellums is the uncle of Representative Ron Dellums.
6. The report notes further that the firestorm destroyed more than 2 percent (3,500 units) of the city's housing stock.
7. City officials filed a lawsuit claiming that the 1990 count was too low by approximately 20,000. Proposition 187 has been blamed for making the enumeration of undocumented residents considerably more problematic. (Ronningen, 1995.)

8. Between the 1980 and 1998 census, the percentage of African-Americans decreased from 46.9 to 43.9 percent, despite a small increase in absolute terms, and the percentage of Whites decreased from 38.6 to 32.4 percent of Oakland's population.
9. The report notes that while "persons not in the labor force" includes retirees, homemakers, and seasonal workers, these alone cannot account for the glaring differences between figures for Oakland and those for the county and the State.
10. In addition, there is a very high rate—12.8 percent—among those categorized as "other," which includes persons of mixed race who did not identify themselves as belonging to any of the main racial/ethnic categories. The rate also varied by gender, with 10.4 percent among males and 8.6 percent among females. Unemployment in 1990 also varied substantially by Community Development District, with a high of 19.78 percent in West Oakland and a low of 2.3 percent in the Upper Hills, as compared to the 9.5-percent unemployment rate for the city as a whole (Snyder, 1992).
11. At the time of the 1990 census, the poverty line was defined nationally as \$12,674 for a family of four, or approximately \$1,050 a month. As with other statistics for Oakland, the population of undocumented immigrants should be kept in mind. These people are not likely to be included in census data, and they can be assumed to be faring worse than those who are.
12. Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) is the State's third largest housing authority; it owns and operates approximately 3,000 apartments throughout the city and subsidizes another 8,000 through section 8 and Turnkey programs. Only one of the 12 largest OHA projects located in the San Antonio/Fruitvale area. (Li, 1994.)
13. The city's nine community development districts are: the Upper Hills, the Lower Hills, North Oakland, West Oakland, Chinatown/Central Oakland, San Antonio, Fruitvale, Elmhurst, and East Oakland.
14. The two districts experienced a net population increase of 16,000 residents over this period.
15. Another study cites different figures: between 1983 and 1991, Asian ownership in the area increased from 8 to 32 percent (Applied Research Center, 1996, p. 54).
16. In 1989, African-Americans and Asians ranked as the two most likely groups of "poor" to rely on Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC). Figures by race/ethnicity were as follows: African-Americans, 96.9 percent of the 38,549 who counted as poor were on AFDC; Asians, 80.3 percent of the 12,456; Latinos, 29.0 percent of the 10,547; Whites, 20.2 percent of the 10,603 (Urban Strategies Council, 1995, pp. 25,26 and Table 2–6).
17. This is in contrast to West Oakland and Chinatown/Central, which experienced decreases of more than 10 percent (Urban Strategies Council files, 1992).
18. See, for example, Peggy Stinnett, 1995.
19. The city's first Black councilmember was elected in 1964. (Wyman, 1987.)

20. One indication of undocumented immigrants may be noted from the small percentage of Latinos who are citizens of voting age in District 5, which covers Fruitvale and a section of San Antonio. Although in 1993 Latinos accounted for 37.9 percent of residents of District 5, they comprised only 19.8 percent of the citizens of voting age. This difference cannot be attributed solely or even largely to age; the comparable figures for other groups were as follows: African-Americans, 30.1 percent and 45.8 percent, respectively; Whites, 11.2 percent and 22.3 percent; Asians, 19.6 percent and 10.8 percent. (Scherr, 1993.)
21. In actuality, only a small percentage of the Asian population is of voting age: 17.2 percent of Asians in Alameda County in 1990 (Jung, 1991).
22. In fact, neither group is ethnically homogeneous, although Chinese Americans make up the largest single group among Asians in Oakland (49 percent), and Mexican Americans the largest group among Latinos (74.9 percent) (Applied Research Center, 1996, p. 45).
23. For the various viewpoints see Pearl Stewart (1993); Brenda Payton (1993a); and William Wong (1993).
24. Ray Eng represented West Oakland in the 1960s and Frank Ogawa originally represented East Oakland (“Politics of Color Plays in Oakland,” 1994).
25. Between fiscal years 1988–89 and 1991–92, the Oakland police had to pay \$1.4 million in police misconduct lawsuits; between 1992–93 and 1995–96 (as of February 13, 1996) the payments were \$5.3 million (ACLU, 1996).
26. Poverty in Oakland worsened steadily: 1966, 13 percent; 1970, 16 percent; 1980, 18 percent (Oakland Housing Authority, 1993, p. 6).
27. One report indicates that students of color comprise 91.5 percent of Oakland public school students: 56.6 percent, African-Americans; 18.9 percent Asians; 15.8 percent Latinos. Only 8.4 percent of the students are White although Whites account for nearly one-third of the city’s population (Applied Research Center, 1996, p. 45).
28. In 1993–94, the organization served 4,396 individuals/families; the following year the number increased to 4,572. The percentage of cases in the San Antonio district was approximately the same in both years—12 and 13 percent, respectively. (Sentinel Fair Housing, annual Community Development Program Proposals, 1993–94, p. 5; 1994–95, p. 4.)
29. The examples cited were Rockridge in Oakland and the adjacent cities of Piedmont and Alameda.
30. See, for example, Stinnett (1995).
31. See, for example, Rick DelVecchio (1994).
32. This phenomenon was pointed out by two community activists. It was later corroborated by informal questioning of residents and by focus group participants.
33. The group comprised 4 Latinos, 2 African-Americans, 2 Asians, and 1 White. Six of the participants speak a language other than English.

34. For two excellent studies on PUEBLO see Gary Delgado (1993) and Millie Thayer (1995).
35. Other reasons cited for living in Fruitvale: family's residence, great weather, easy access to transportation. Interestingly, shopping centers, health-care facilities, and religious institutions frequented most by the participants were not necessarily located within Fruitvale; participants travel regularly to Berkeley, the nearby malls, and San Francisco for their various needs.

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