

New York and Los Angeles as Immigrant Destinations: Contrasts and Convergence

Nancy Foner and Roger Waldinger

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Los Angeles and New York are the two major immigrant centers in the country. Despite the growing dispersal of the immigrant population to new destinations in the South and Midwest in the last decade, Los Angeles and New York remain the nation's immigrant behemoths; the two metropolitan areas contain almost a quarter of the U.S. foreign-born population. In 2008, 18 percent of the nation's immigrants lived in New York City and Los Angeles County alone (only a slight decline from the 20 percent figure in 2000).¹ As of 2009, a little over a third of the population in metropolitan Los Angeles, and almost thirty percent of the population in metropolitan New York, was foreign-born.

If Los Angeles and New York are the nation's premier immigrant areas, there are also marked differences between them in the origins and characteristics of the immigrants who have moved there, their immigrant histories, and their economic, social, and political institutions, which have a wide-ranging effect on the foreign-born. Earlier comparisons of New York and Los Angeles, including work by the authors of this chapter and George Sabagh's and Mehdi Bozorgmehr's contribution to the first edition of *New York and Los Angeles*, have emphasized the contrasts (Foner 2005, 2007; Sabagh and Borzorgmehr

¹ Our estimate for 2008 is an average based on pooled samples from the 2007-09 American Community Survey.

2003; Waldinger 1996). The contrasts remain significant, and they are the subject of the first part of this chapter.

But another theme in this chapter is convergence and parallels between Los Angeles and New York. There has been a surprising degree of convergence between New York and Los Angeles as immigrant centers, which has become more prominent since 2000, particularly when we compare the two metropolitan areas rather than simply focus on the two major cities within them. This is the case, not only in terms of characteristics of the two regions' immigrant populations, but also relating to features of the regions' social and political contexts and responses to newcomers. To a large degree, this convergence, as we will argue, is due to the declining impact of geography and history. By now, both Los Angeles and New York have been receiving massive numbers of immigrants for nearly half a century so that large-scale immigration is not a new phenomenon in either region, as it was for Los Angeles a few decades ago. While geography continues to play a role in attracting different immigrant flows to the two regions, it has become less significant in the context of a large population of settled immigrants.

In our comparison, the primary focus is on the Los Angeles and New York metropolitan areas, the first containing almost 13 million people, the second containing almost 19 million people, as of 2009. These areas -- and our tables -- refer to the Los Angeles and New York Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), meaning Los Angeles and Orange counties on the west coast, and, on the east coast, New York City, the older, inner suburbs of Bergen, Hudson, Passaic, Westchester, and Rockland counties, as well as the Newark-Union, Edison, and Suffolk-Nassau MSAs.

While comparing the two regions is not ideal, it is preferable to the alternative of just comparing New York and Los Angeles cities. Looking only at the two cities is problematic for reasons that mainly have to do with Los Angeles' peculiar geography, which straddles areas that are sociologically and topographically suburban as well as urban in character and leave out much of what would normally be considered core urban functions. As a political unit, the city of Los Angeles is far less self-contained than New York City, receiving services from the county and sharing a school district with other municipalities. Moreover, immigrants in Los Angeles have never been as concentrated within the area's biggest city's boundaries, in contrast to New York area settlement patterns; much of the Asian population, for example, has settled in a series of small municipalities east of the City of Los Angeles. And the area's long-established, largest Latino concentration -- East Los Angeles -- is an unincorporated section of Los Angeles County, left out of the City of Los Angeles in the earlier twentieth century precisely because the city fathers preferred to keep Latinos living in East Los Angeles outside of municipal boundaries.

Contrasts <1>

Los Angeles and New York, as the chapters in this volume make clear, are remarkably different in many ways, and at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the contrasts in their immigrant populations and the effects of immigration remain striking.

Characteristics of Immigrants <2>

The differences in the immigrant flows and characteristics of immigrants are immediately apparent in the following tables for the New York and Los Angeles

metropolitan areas, which use census data for 1980, 1990, and 2000, and merged 2007-09 American Community Survey data to document changes that have occurred in recent years. What they point to is the role of geography in influencing the different origins in immigrant populations with proximity accounting, in part, for the flow of Caribbean migrants to New York and of Mexicans (and later Central Americans) to Los Angeles, and location accounting for the relative differences in trans-Atlantic vs. trans-Pacific flows. Because migration is a path-dependent process, the historical experience of immigration increases the likelihood that current newcomers will resemble their predecessors. Once immigrants establish a beachhead in a particular location, friends and relatives tend to follow. For example, New York City had a significant wave of West Indian migration in the first few decades of the twentieth century, which helps explain why West Indians headed there when mass migration again became possible after 1965 U.S. immigration legislation changes; in the current period, one reason West Indians continue to flock to New York is owing to its large and vibrant West Indian community. Los Angeles has long had a substantial Mexican population -- indeed, it was once part of Mexico!

In a continuation of a pattern prominent in the last few decades, the tables show the much greater diversity of the New York metropolitan area's immigrant population -- and the overwhelming preponderance of Mexicans and other Latin Americans in Los Angeles.

[Insert Tables 10.1 through 10.7 about here]

In Los Angeles, from 1980 through 2007-09, Mexicans have been consistently -- and by far -- the largest immigrant group, representing 40 percent or more throughout this

period, and a little over 40 percent as of the present. No other group comes close. The next largest national foreign-born group is Salvadorans, who, in 2007-09, comprised six percent of Los Angeles's immigrants. Altogether Mexicans and immigrants from the "Other Americas" comprised almost three-fifths of the Los Angeles metropolitan area's foreign born population.

While in Los Angeles, the top five immigrant source countries in 1980 are the same as those in 2007-09, this is not the case in the New York area. Reflecting the New York area's longer history of large-scale immigration, in 1980 three European groups (Italy, Germany, and Poland) were top source countries -- mostly made up of older immigrants from the massive waves earlier in the twentieth century. By 2007-09, the European groups were no longer in the top five. Nor were Cubans, a sizeable group as of 1980, owing to large numbers who came to live in New Jersey after the huge influx of refugees from the Cuban revolution. Mexicans, who were practically invisible in New York in 1980, were five percent of the New York region's foreign born in 2007-09.

What stands out is that no one sending country -- or even two or three -- dominates in the New York area the way Mexicans do in Los Angeles. In 2007-09, the top two groups in the New York area -- Dominicans and Chinese -- made up 15 percent of the region's foreign-born. No other country accounted for more than five percent. Altogether Mexicans and immigrants from the "Other Americas" represented about 50 percent of the New York area's foreign-born, but the composition of the "Other Americas" group was very different from its makeup in Los Angeles. Many in the "Other Americas" category in the New York area are from the English-speaking Caribbean and

Haiti who immigrated in huge numbers in recent decades. In Los Angeles, these groups are tiny in number.

In 2007-09, the New York and Los Angeles metropolitan areas had fairly similar proportions of Asian immigrants -- a little over 30 percent in Los Angeles and 26 percent in New York -- although the percentage growth between 1980 and 2007-09 was a good deal greater in New York. The main Asian groups differ as well, as the tables on the top five source countries indicate. In 2007-09, Koreans, Vietnamese, and Filipinos were the Asian groups in the top five in Los Angeles, while in the New York area, the Asian groups who had this rank were Chinese and Indians.

Origins are not destinies, but they are influential because of their strong association with social class. Los Angeles's preponderance of Mexicans and other Latin Americans has tilted the immigrant profile there toward those with lower skills and training, more so than in the New York area. Altogether, just over a fifth of immigrants in the New York area had less than a high school education compared to 36 percent for Los Angeles.

The same pattern shows up at the higher ends of the scale too. In 2007-09, a third of immigrant adults in the New York area had a college degree or more, as opposed to a quarter in Los Angeles. In both places, Asians were at the top of the scale -- on both coasts about half of the Asian immigrants had a college degree or more.

The preponderance of Mexicans in Los Angeles has another consequence, and that has to do with the unauthorized population. The large Mexican and Central American presence in Los Angeles has meant there are a far greater number and a higher proportion of undocumented immigrants there than in the New York area. In 2004, Los Angeles

County's undocumented population was an estimated one million, which was almost twice the size of New York City's, the heart of the metropolitan area with the next highest number of undocumented immigrants in the United States. To put it another way, more than a third of Los Angeles County's foreign-born population was undocumented compared to about a sixth in New York City (Fix et al 2008; Hinojosa-Ojeda and Fitz 2011; Lobo and Salvo forthcoming).²

Other Differences <2>

The data in the tables do not, of course, tell the whole story of New York-Los Angeles contrasts. A combination of broader demographics, history, and institutional contexts also help to account for the different immigrant experiences -- and reactions to immigrants -- in New York and Los Angeles.

In general, historical responses to earlier waves of migration affect the circumstances under which later migrants are received, as well as the opportunity structures they encounter. Here the contrast between the two major cities in each region is relevant. (New York City, with 8.2 million people in 2010 was home to less than half of the New York metropolitan area's population; the City of Los Angeles with 3.8 million people, had about one-third of the metropolitan area's total.) New York is America's quintessential immigrant city, and has been shaped by successive, large waves of immigration, including a massive inflow of Italian and eastern European Jewish immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century (Foner 2000). By contrast, the City of Los Angeles in the early and mid-twentieth century was populated by internal, mostly white, migrants who were trying to get away from the type of racially diverse city exemplified

² In 2004, an estimated 583,000 undocumented immigrants lived in New York City, in 2010, 499,000 (Lobo and Salvo forthcoming).

by New York, producing a political culture and structure that made for lower receptivity to the newcomers of the past four to five decades.

New York's history has defined it as an immigrant city, generating a popular self-identity and political culture that is one source of its "immigrant friendliness." New York City's political culture bears the stamp of earlier European immigration, and sanctions, indeed encourages, newcomers to engage in ethnic politics. Indeed, ethnic politics is sometimes said to be the lifeblood of the city's politics, with no group finding "challenge unexpected or outrageous" (Glazer and Moynihan 1970: xxx). For many years, politicians made ritual visits to the "three Is" -- Israel, Italy, and Ireland -- the touchstones for so many Jewish and Catholic voters. By 2003, after two years in office, Mayor Michael Bloomberg had already visited the Dominican Republic three times.

As compared to the City of Los Angeles, New York's political structure has been more open to aspiring immigrant politicians, as well as recognizing claims from immigrants. Among other things, New York City has a larger number of political positions up for grabs (including a 51-member New York City Council and numerous state legislative offices), a more traditional, partisan political system, and a long history of balancing ethnic interests and managing ethnic competition. Paradoxically, however, political and cultural factors that have provided opportunities for immigrant political incorporation in New York City, especially on the city council, have also made it hard for immigrant groups (and indeed native minorities) to attain political success at the citywide level, most notably the position of mayor. Los Angeles was able to elect an African American mayor, Tom Bradley, for a record twenty years (1973-93) and a Mexican American mayor in 2005, while New York City had only a one-term African American

mayor, David Dinkins (1989-93) and, so far, no Latino or Asian. Among other things, John Mollenkopf and Raphael Sonenshein (2009) argue that the greater strength of New York City's mayor in relation to other officeholders has increased concerns of white voters (still a plurality in both cities) about the ethnoracial background of the mayor and contributed to greater white unity against immigrant minority empowerment than in Los Angeles. At the same time, white voters in Los Angeles are divided more by ideology than ethnicity, and thus more likely to back a minority mayoral candidate whose ideology they support than voters in New York, where strong ethnic divisions among whites, rooted in the city's immigration history, can cut into support for aspiring minority mayors

The legacy of the past operates in another way. New York City, unlike Los Angeles, is home to many social service organizations and institutions that were founded a hundred years ago during the huge wave of eastern and southern European immigration, including settlement houses and Jewish social welfare agencies, that in their modern guise provide services and assistance to many new arrivals (Foner 2011). Owing in good part to union organizing efforts by earlier European immigrants and their children, contemporary immigrants in New York City have benefited from living in a more consistently strong union town (at least since the mid-twentieth century) than Los Angeles.

Another contrast has a lot to do with demographics. The city and county of Los Angeles have seen a rise in African American-Latino competition and conflict as Latinos have grown to far outnumber African Americans in the population (especially in areas of historic African-American concentration, such as Compton in south Los Angeles) and Latinos have become the important minority group; in 1970 the city of Los Angeles was

17 percent black and 18 percent Hispanic, whereas in 2000, blacks had declined to 10 percent while Hispanics were up to 47 percent. Several studies of Compton describe how the public schools became a setting for conflict, as blacks felt their core educational institutions threatened and Latinos resented that a heavily non-Latino black teaching and counseling staff were not meeting their children's needs (Mindiola et al. 2002: 115; Camarillo 2004; Johnson et al. 1999). In New York City, African American-Latino tensions have been reduced in salience and seriousness for three main reasons: (1) a large black, as well as Latino, immigration has created a demographic balance between the two groups (in 2009, non-Hispanic blacks were 24 percent of New York City's population, Hispanics, 28 percent); (2) no one Latino group dominates in New York City the way Mexicans do in Los Angeles and the different Latino groups (including Puerto Ricans, who had earlier access to political power and political clout) are sometimes at odds with each other rather than in conflict with native blacks ; and (3) owing to the large number of dark-skinned Puerto Ricans and Dominicans with some African heritage, many Hispanic New Yorkers identify themselves as black, at least in some contexts.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the different built-environments in Los Angeles and New York City, which have implications for established residents' comfort with immigrants -- and newcomers' comfort with people in other immigrant groups. Compared to car-dependent and sprawling Los Angeles, New York City is a place, as a *New York Times* editorial put it, "where the world rubs shoulders on subways, stoops and sidewalks, where gruff tolerance prevails and understanding thrives" (New York Times 2010). New Yorkers may simply bump into each other on the street and subway, yet even this fleeting and superficial contact exposes them to people of different racial groups and

cultures on a regular, often daily, basis in a way that is much less likely to happen in Los Angeles.

Parallels and Convergence <1>

The immigrant story in Los Angeles and New York is not just a case of contrasts that have persisted throughout the last forty years. There are also parallels and some trends toward convergence. Changing demographics and the recent historical experience of the past few decades are among the factors involved in understanding these trends.

In both Los Angeles and New York, the historical experiences of the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries now seem less important the further these periods recede into the past. At the same time, the impact of recent -- post-1960s history -- is of great significance. At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the so-called “new” immigration in Los Angeles and New York is relatively old, with its impact first detected by the late-1960s, if not earlier. New York and Los Angeles now share a relatively long history of ongoing immigration for more than four decades -- inflows that are likely to continue for the foreseeable future and appear to have produced quite similar responses.

As tables 2 and 4 show, immigrants make up an increasingly settled population in both the Los Angeles and New York metropolitan areas: by 2007-09 the average number of years in the United States for all immigrants in both places was about the same, a little over 20 years.

The tables on naturalization show a similar kind of convergence, no doubt reflecting the settlement trends. The proportion of the Los Angeles area’s naturalized immigrants rose from 28 percent in 1990 and 38 percent in 2000 to 45 percent in 2007-

09, approaching the proportion in the New York area, which has hovered around the 50 percent line for the past thirty years. The growing proportion of naturalized immigrants in the Los Angeles metropolitan area suggests that the area's historically greater attraction for undocumented immigrants is of diminishing impact, as many recent arrivals have headed elsewhere and the earlier settled immigrants have found a route to citizenship. (Naturalization rates are lower among Mexicans in New York than Los Angeles, undoubtedly because most Mexicans in New York are very recent arrivals compared to Los Angeles's longer-settled Mexican population.) Geography, in short, has become less important in both places as the immigrant population has put down roots, thereby not only continuing to attract compatriots from the same countries in a network-driven process, but also providing the material, social, cultural, and political resources needed for movement beyond these two capitals of immigrant America.

There is another trend toward convergence as Los Angeles has become a more immigrant-hospitable environment, and the stark dichotomy of an immigrant-friendly New York vs. an immigrant-unfriendly Los Angeles becomes increasingly dated. By now, Angelenos have become used to immigration, much like New Yorkers, and the growing immigrant population and increasing political clout of Latinos in Los Angeles have also had decided effects.

In the political realm, the city of Los Angeles elected a Mexican-American mayor in 2005, a time when New York City's mayor was Michael Bloomberg (a third-generation Jewish American). Indeed, the size of the Latino (largely Mexican) community in the city of Los Angeles means, as Mollenkopf and Sonenshein observe in

their chapter, that the rise of Latino office holding there is “inexorable, even if it was long delayed.”

New York City’s political structure may present fewer barriers of entry to immigrant political entrepreneurs than the City of Los Angeles, but a regional focus highlights that the smaller cities in the Los Angeles region into which so many immigrants have moved -- whether east of Los Angeles City, as among Asians, or south of Los Angeles City, as among Latinos -- have provided relatively easy entry points to a variety of municipal positions. The best known of these cases is Monterey Park where Chinese immigrants have been politically influential for over two decades. In the New York area, too, it should be noted, immigrant politicians have won electoral office in cities, towns, and villages outside the five boroughs -- for example, a Jamaican-born mayor of Mount Vernon (in Westchester) in the 1980s and 1990s and, more recently, a Dominican mayor of Passaic and a Korean mayor in Edison (both in New Jersey).

Scholars, including one of the authors of this chapter, have pointed to the City University of New York (CUNY), the largest urban public university system in the nation, as an example of an exceptional New York institution -- rooted in the city’s immigrant history -- that has long provided an avenue of mobility for first- and second-generation immigrants (Foner 2007). In 2010, CUNY had about 262,000 students, including full-time and part-time enrolled undergraduate and graduate students; 43 percent of the undergraduates at CUNY’s eleven senior and six community colleges were born outside the United States mainland, and CUNY boasts that its undergraduates can trace their ancestries to 205 countries. Yet, there may be more parallels than differences between the Los Angeles and New York areas when it comes to opportunities for college

and university education. It is not clear that CUNY (and the State University of New York and equivalent New Jersey systems with campuses in the New York metropolitan area) really provide superior access to higher education than do their counterparts on the west coast. The Los Angeles metropolitan area includes two campuses of the University of California (UC) system (enrolling about 50,000 students), six California State University (CSU) campuses, and a large number of community colleges. In many respects, the UC system has become an immigrant university: as of the mid-2000s, over a quarter of the undergraduates at UCLA were themselves immigrants; and another 40 percent had at least one immigrant parent (Brint et al. 2007: 10). While the immigrant origin student body is itself highly diverse with respect to national and social class origins, many are of very modest backgrounds, as reflected in the large proportion of UCLA undergraduates (35 percent in 2009-10) receiving federal Pell grants provided to low-income students.³ Ever since 2008, the California financial crisis has had a severe negative impact on public higher education, yielding significant tuition increases in the UC and CSU systems with slightly later, somewhat less drastic, increases in the community colleges. Nonetheless, as both the UC and CSU systems have sought to offset tuition increases with greater financial support for low-income students, it seems likely that public higher education in California remains an important ladder of upward mobility for today's immigrants and their children.

Immigrants and labor unions are also an area of convergence as Los Angeles emerges as a center of labor movement dynamism and innovation to rival New York -- and older patterns in Los Angeles are of steadily diminishing importance. Immigrants in New York City profit from the fact that labor unions have been consistently strong and

³ Data on Pell grants from <http://www.aim.ucla.edu/publications/main.asp>, accessed May 21, 2012

politically influential for many decades. Indeed, in 2009-10, 25 percent of all wage and salary workers in New York City were union members, a proportion higher than any other major U.S. city; among the foreign-born in New York City, the unionization rates of those who had become U.S. citizens and entered the United States before 1990 were comparable to or higher than those of U.S.-born workers (Milkman and Braslow 2010). This is also the case in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, but the overall unionization rates there are significantly lower than in New York City -- 15 percent for all wage and salary workers in 2006 (Milkman and Kye 2006). Despite these lower unionization rates, Los Angeles is moving, one might say, in a New York City direction. Once known as an anti-union town, in recent years Los Angeles has emerged as a “crucible of labor movement revitalization,” in large part because of the huge Latino immigrant influx (Milkman 2006: 3).

Union membership in Los Angeles went into steep decline starting in the late 1950s, but organizing drives since the 1990s have begun to reverse this downward trend (Milkman 2006). By one account, the city’s labor movement has been adding workers at a remarkable rate by focusing on immigrant workers -- with unions organizing part-time school aides, home-care workers, food service workers, park and recreation workers, and, most famously, office janitors after a strike in 2000 in which the public donated more than \$2 million for food and the city’s Roman Catholic archbishop embraced the janitors’ cause (Greenhouse 2001). Highly publicized marches of chanting Latino janitors drew attention to the maintenance workers’ low wages, which were called unjust in a city with such high living costs. In the end, the janitors, nearly all of whom were Latino immigrants, won a 25 percent salary increase over three years. *The New York Times*’

Steven Greenhouse (2001) writes that in general, Los Angeles's union movement is now looked to as a model for labor movements in other American cities and in 2001, the national AFL-CIO "arranged for Los Angeles labor leaders to hold what was essentially a tutorial for New York labor leaders." Or as sociologist Ruth Milkman puts it, Los Angeles is one of the few bright spots for the beleaguered U.S. labor movement and a proving ground for strategic organizing innovation (Milkman 2006: ix).

Less happily, evidence from media reports indicates that the growing Mexican presence in New York City has created tensions with black residents in at least one neighborhood that is new to immigration, where they have developed in a manner that has similarities to strains reported in formerly African American-dominated communities in Los Angeles that have become heavily Latino. The summer of 2010 witnessed a series of attacks on Mexican immigrants by young black men in Staten Island's Port Richmond neighborhood. A predominantly black area in the 1980s and early 1990s, Port Richmond has recently seen a sharp rise in the Mexican population. By 2008, 8,400 people of Mexican descent lived in the police precinct that includes Port Richmond, up from 950 in 1990, and the student body at the local elementary school, once mostly black, had become nearly all Latino and heavily Mexican. In a time of high black unemployment, blacks complained that Mexicans and other Latinos took jobs that should have been theirs (Semple 2010).

Los Angeles is often thought of as a cauldron of anti-immigrant sentiment, dating to the early 1990s when 56 percent of the voters in Los Angeles County supported the state-wide Proposition 187; had it been implemented, Proposition 187 would have made undocumented immigrants ineligible for government-funded social and health services.

(The law was found to be unconstitutional in federal court.) New York, by contrast, has a reputation as a city that is relatively welcoming to the undocumented. Around the same time that Proposition 187 was passed in California, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani issued an executive order protecting undocumented immigrants from being reported when they used city services.

Yet, since the early 1990s, the city and county of Los Angeles have become more New York-like in the warmth of their welcome to immigrants. In the City of Los Angeles, as in New York, immigrant-friendly politics is good politics, especially at the citywide level. This is not surprising given the large number of first- and second-generation immigrants who represent a growing proportion of the electorate. Right after Arizona enacted a harsh law against undocumented immigrants in 2010 (which, had certain provisions not been blocked by the courts, would have allowed police to detain people on the suspicion that they were in the country illegally and made the failure to carry immigration documents a crime) New York City's Mayor Bloomberg was quick to attack it, saying that with this law "we are committing national suicide... This is not good for the country. We love immigrants here" (Sherman and Lisberg 2010). In Los Angeles, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa went even further, backing a boycott of Arizona in response to the immigration crackdown (Villaraigosa 2010).

Beyond electoral politics, Los Angeles churches, civic agencies, and trade unions have sought to remedy poverty among Latino immigrants through organized action. In 2006, the demonstrations for the rights of undocumented workers were much larger and played a more significant role in Los Angeles than in New York City. According to some estimates, the March 2006 protests over US immigration policy reforms drew half a

million people in Los Angeles, as compared to 10,000 in New York City a few days later in a march across the Brooklyn Bridge to Foley Square, and 70,000-125,000 in an April demonstration in front of New York's City Hall. This difference is partly linked to the much larger proportion of undocumented immigrants in Los Angeles than in New York. Also, organizing efforts in Los Angeles may have been more effective because they were mainly pitched to one group -- Mexicans, who make up the overwhelming majority of the undocumented there. In New York City, one reason the mobilization was slower to develop is that the undocumented population (like the immigrant population generally) is so incredibly diverse, with large numbers of West Indians, Central and South Americans, and Asians, as well as Mexicans, making it more difficult to mobilize across cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic lines (see Zepeda –Millan 2011).

There is still another way that the New York and Los Angeles regions appear to be converging as immigrant destinations. New York City continues to be a relatively welcoming city for immigrants; at the turn of the twenty-first century, the City of Los Angeles largely resembles New York in this respect. However, in both regions, the environment in the many towns and cities with a more recent immigration history is aversive, if not more hostile -- in many ways, reminiscent of the City of Los Angeles in the early days of the post-1960s inflow. As in Los Angeles in this earlier period, recent immigration, since the early 1990s, in many New York towns and cities represents a sharp growth spurt. (This is in contrast to New York City, where the post-1965 inflow was a gradual increase, since the proportion of foreign-born was already substantial there throughout the twentieth century.) The presence of large numbers of nonwhite, often low-skilled, Latino immigrants in many formerly all or nearly all white suburban and

outer-rim New York communities has been a radical change -- and a jolt. Many of the new arrivals outside of New York City are Mexican -- indeed, the advent of Mexican immigrants as a major immigrant group in the New York area is an additional sign of convergence between the two regions.

Not only is the dispersal of immigrants to native white suburban regions in the New York metropolitan area a dramatic change, but established residents often moved there precisely to flee the problems and ethnoracial diversity of the inner city. Tensions are frequently rife between established white residents and newcomers, particularly when the new arrivals are low-skilled, poorly-educated, and often undocumented Latinos who have come in search of low-level work. Bitter conflicts have arisen over day-labor sites and overcrowded immigrant housing in towns in Westchester County and on Long Island. Two hate crimes on Long Island in Farmingville, a largely white community in Suffolk County about fifty miles from New York City, attracted national attention; in 2000, two Mexican day laborers were beaten nearly to death by two men from nearby towns, and three years later, four Farmingville teenagers burned down the house of a Mexican family who barely escaped alive.

Eight years later, in 2008, a stabbing attack of an Ecuadorian immigrant nearby in Suffolk County by a gang known as the "Caucasian Crew" also indicated the animosity of many white long-established residents toward Latino newcomers. The teenagers on trial for murdering the Ecuadorian spoke of getting together to hunt down and hurt Hispanic men -- what they called "beaner hopping," a reference to the staple Hispanic dish of rice and beans. One teenager told a reporter: "These guys, these Mexicans, everyone has a hatred for them. Downtown Patchogue used to be nice, and now they

make it all dirtbaggish” (Algar, Crowley, and Alpert 2008). While these crimes are extreme, they are indicative of a deep anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiment and reaction that have not occurred (or at least been sharply curtailed and contained) in New York City.

Before he fell from political grace and anti-immigrant politics became a liability in California, former California Governor Pete Wilson’s support for Proposition 187 helped give him a landslide win in his reelection campaign in 1994. More than ten years later in the New York area -- outside of New York City -- some politicians have taken up the anti-undocumented banner. Most prominent has been Steve Levy, a two-term County Executive of Suffolk County, the fast-growing eastern half of Long Island with some 1.5 million residents that has witnessed a dramatic growth in its foreign-born, mostly Latino, population in recent years. Levy’s crusade against undocumented immigrants helped make him virtually unbeatable in the mid-2000s. Elected as a Democrat in 2003 in a county dominated for years by Republicans, Levy won re-election four years later with cross-party endorsement, receiving 96 percent of the vote.⁴ Among other things, he lent county police officers to town building inspectors for raids to shut down rooming housing, and he increased arrests of unlicensed contractors and immigrant checks on prisoners in the county jail. In 2007, he supported a bill, dubbed “Standing While Latino,” which, had it passed the county legislature, would have banned day laborers from seeking employment along county roadways.

Conclusion <1>

⁴ Under fire for corruption charges regarding fundraising, Levy announced in March 2011 that he would not seek a third term.

At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, after nearly fifty years of large-scale immigration, New York and Los Angeles have come to resemble each other as immigrant destinations in many ways owing, in good part, to the very fact that they are both now major, long-term immigrant centers. The historical legacy of the early twentieth century remains important in understanding the institutions that greet the new arrivals, especially in New York City, but what is increasingly relevant is the weight of the more recent past that has led to large settled populations of immigrants.

Predicting the future is a risky business, yet it seems likely that convergent trends will become more prominent in the years ahead in the context of continued immigrant inflows, while at the same time, huge numbers of the children of post-1965 arrivals will come of age. As long as the United States keeps on receiving hundreds of thousands of immigrants each year, the New York and Los Angeles metropolitan areas will continue to attract large numbers if only, as we have mentioned, because of the networks that link newcomers to settlers. Some longer-term immigrants, as well as many in the U.S.-born second generation, will move elsewhere; yet, sizable numbers will remain in the Los Angeles and New York areas. By dint of their number -- and the social and economic successes of a substantial proportion -- first- and second-generation immigrants in the two regions are bound to have a greater influence on a broad range of institutions in the coming years, an impact that is also likely to be similar in many ways.

This does not mean that differences between the New York and Los Angeles areas will fade away. Far from it. The characteristics of immigrants who move there in combination with distinctive institutional contexts (themselves shaped by the historical

experience of immigration) will undoubtedly sustain and reinforce contrasts between the regions as immigrant centers . The particular contexts of the Los Angeles and New York metropolitan areas will, in short, continue to matter. We have identified some of the contrasts and convergences that have already developed, but more research is clearly needed to deepen our understanding of these dynamics in the present period. Moreover, as we look ahead, one of the challenges of the future will be to explore the parallels and differences that persist or emerge in the years to come.

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LOS ANGELES REGION

NEW YORK REGION

Table 1: Region of birth

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9		1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Mexico	40%	40%	44%	41%	Mexico	0%	2%	4%	5%
Other Americas	12%	16%	16%	16%	Other Americas	33%	41%	45%	44%
Canada/Europe/Australia	20%	11%	9%	7%	Canada/Europe/Australia	47%	30%	23%	20%
Asia	21%	27%	30%	33%	Asia	12%	20%	24%	26%
other	6%	6%	1%	3%	other	8%	8%	3%	50%

Table 2: Years in US

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9		1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Mexico	9.8	11.8	15.5	21.2	Mexico	11.5	8.4	8.9	12.8
Other Americas	10.0	11.1	16.2	21.1	Other Americas	10.9	13.1	15.7	20.2
Canada/Europe/Australia	20.4	22.3	24.2	25.2	Canada/Europe/Australia	21.8	24.7	24.7	27.6
Asia	8.0	10.7	15.4	20.0	Asia	9.7	11.0	13.6	17.7
All immigrants	11.7	12.5	16.3	22.0	All immigrants	16.2	16.1	16.9	21.8

Table 3: Percent less than high school

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9		1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Mexico	78%	69%	63%	60%	Mexico	55%	56%	56%	55%
Other Americas	43%	45%	44%	42%	Other Americas	44%	30%	27%	27%
Canada/Europe/Australia	21%	11%	6%	5%	Canada/Europe/Australia	41%	27%	15%	12%
Asia	18%	14%	11%	10%	Asia	24%	17%	15%	15%
All immigrants	46%	41%	39%	36%	All immigrants	40%	26%	22%	22%

Table 4: Percent college educated or more

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9		1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Mexico	2%	3%	3%	5%	Mexico	12%	11%	6%	6%
Other Americas	13%	10%	10%	13%	Other Americas	10%	12%	14%	18%

Canada/Europe/Australia	22%	29%	41%	49%
Asia	39%	40%	44%	51%
All immigrants	17%	19%	21%	25%

LOS ANGELES REGION

Table 5: Percent citizens

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Mexico	15%	18%	23%	28%
Other Americas	22%	21%	33%	40%
Canada/Europe/Australia	62%	53%	55%	61%
Asia	27%	37%	56%	64%
All immigrants	30%	28%	38%	45%

Canada/Europe/Australia	17%	24%	36%	44%
Asia	43%	45%	48%	47%
All immigrants	18%	24%	28%	33%

NEW YORK REGION

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Mexico	30%	18%	10%	11%
Other Americas	34%	33%	43%	51%
Canada/Europe/Australia	73%	66%	57%	66%
Asia	37%	38%	45%	54%
All immigrants	54%	44%	45%	52%

Table 6: Top sending countries: 2007-9 ranking

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9		1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Mexico	40%	40%	44%	41%	Dominican Republic	5%	8%	10%	9%
El Salvador	3%	6%	6%	6%	China	3%	4%	5%	6%
Philippines	4%	5%	6%	6%	India	2%	3%	4%	5%
Korea	3%	4%	4%	5%	Mexico	0%	2%	4%	5%
Vietnam	2%	4%	5%	5%	Ecuador	2%	3%	4%	5%

Table 7: Top sending countries: 1980 ranking (New York only)

	1980	1990	2000	2007-9
Dominican Republic	5%	8%	10%	9%
Italy	11%	2%	2%	3%
Poland	5%	6%	4%	2%
Cuba	5%	3%	2%	1%
West Germany	5%	3%	3%	1%