

WHITE FLIGHT, CLUSTERING BY CHOICE, AND THE MODEL MINORITY
RESIDENT: AN EXAMINATION OF THE WEST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY ETHNOBURB

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I. INTRODUCTION

Past the eastern limit of the city of Los Angeles, California, lies the San Gabriel Valley—one of the most ethnically diverse regions of the country. The San Gabriel Valley is largely known for its cluster of cities on the west side of the area, including Monterey Park, Alhambra, Arcadia, Temple City, Rosemead, San Marino, San Gabriel, Pasadena, Monrovia, and Sierra Madre. In contrast to traditional theories of immigration, assimilation, and acculturation, the West San Gabriel Valley is an anomaly. The Assimilation-Acculturation Model¹ typically predicts that immigrants will first settle in the inner city before moving out into the suburbs as they become more culturally and socioeconomically assimilated into mainstream society.

Yet, the West San Gabriel Valley was formed in direct conflict with these trends and can be understood as, what author and scholar Wei Li termed, an Asian ethnoburb.² In 2018,

1. The Assimilation-Acculturation Model posits that each immigrant group is expected to undergo a “race relations cycle” of “contact, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation” to the host society. This cycle is seen as “progressive and irreversible” so that all that remains is “symbolic ethnicity” with little social or psychological content. See WEI LI, *ETHNOBURB: THE NEW ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN URBAN AMERICA* 12 (Univ. of Haw. Press 2009).

2. Li suggests that ethnoburbs coexist with traditional ethnic ghettos and enclaves in inner cities of contemporary American societies. Unlike ethnic enclaves in urban, low-income environments, ethnoburbs are characterized as more affluent, suburban areas. Ethnoburbs emerged under influence of international geopolitical and global economic restructuring, changing national immigration and trade policies, local demographic, economic, and political contexts, and increasing transnational networks and connections. Ethnoburbs challenge the dominant view that assimilation is inevitably the ideal solution for immigrants and

over one-third of the Asians living in Los Angeles County (accounting for about 14.5 percent³ of the total Los Angeles County population), resided in the San Gabriel Valley.⁴ Of the over 525,000 Asians living in the San Gabriel Valley, 67 percent⁵ are foreign born. Rather than settling in inner-city ethnic enclaves, Asian immigrants see the San Gabriel Valley as a port of entry—a mechanism that assists recent migrants in assimilating into a new environment by “cluster[ing] with their own group in part to recreate the social milieu and find the consumer goods of their homeland.”⁶

In addition to being a tourist hotspot for visitors all throughout Asia, the West San Gabriel Valley can be identified by its renowned Asian cuisine and shopping malls, streets lined with Chinese and Vietnamese business signs, and its bilingual and bicultural residents. By the 1990s, Monterey Park was the first city in the continental United States to have a majority Asian population, becoming what author and professor of Ethnic Studies at California State University, Sacramento Timothy P. Fong termed “The First Suburban Chinatown.”⁷

Substantial changes in United States immigration law created this unique community of immigrants with dramatic variations in socioeconomic status in the West San Gabriel Valley. The United States Census Bureau reports significant increases in the Asian population in the West San Gabriel Valley beginning in the 1970s-1980s and continued, sustained growth in the decades after.⁸

This Article hypothesizes that the creation of the West San Gabriel Valley ethnoburb was caused by both white flight and a disproportionate Asian demand for housing generated by the desire to cluster by choice. To test this hypothesis, this Article will use census data

instead provide opportunities for ethnic minorities to resist assimilation into white cultural and social “norms” of societies. Ethnoburbs maintain multifaceted identities and establish distinctive communities, integrating into mainstream society via economic activities, political involvement, and community life. *See id.*

3. ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE LOS ANGELES, A COMMUNITY OF CONTRASTS: ASIAN AMERICANS, NATIVE HAWAIIANS, AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY at 5 (2018).

4. *Id.*

5. Leslie Berenstein Rojas, *Two-thirds of San Gabriel Valley’s Asian-Americans are Immigrants*, LAIST (Feb. 21, 2018, 10:00 AM), <https://laist.com/news/kpcc-archive/report-on-sgv-s-asian-americans-shows-two-thirds-a> [<https://perma.cc/W2N9-3ECZ>].

6. David M. Cutler et al., *The Rise and Decline of the American Ghetto*, 107 J. POL. ECON. 455, 475 (1999); *see also* RICHARD H. SANDER et al., *MOVING TOWARD INTEGRATION: THE PAST AND FUTURE OF FAIR HOUSING* 280 (Harv. Univ. Press 2018). [hereinafter SANDER, MTI] (finding that port of entry segregation that has long been experienced by recent immigrants to the United States provides advantages such as linguistic and cultural bridges to American Institutions).

7. *See generally* TIMOTHY P. FONG, *THE FIRST SUBURBAN CHINATOWN: THE REMAKING OF MONTEREY PARK, CALIFORNIA* (Temple Univ. Press 1994); Wendy Cheng, *The Changes Next Door to the Diazes: Suburban Racial Formation in Los Angeles’s San Gabriel Valley*, 39 J. URB. HIST. 19, 35 (2013) (“By 1970 . . . Monterey Park . . . had gone from almost exclusively white to “Majority Minority” (36 percent Latino, 10 percent Japanese American, and 5 percent Chinese American)”; LELAND T. SAITO et al., *THE NEW CHINESE IMMIGRATION AND THE RISE OF ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICS IN MONTEREY PARK, CALIFORNIA*, IN *NEW ASIAN IMMIGRATION* 233 (Temple Univ. Press 1995) (noting Monterey Park as the only city in the United States, outside Hawaii, that had a majority Asian population (57 percent in 1990)); LI, *supra* note 1, at 80.

8. *We the Americans: Asians*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (Sept. 1993), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1990/we-the-americans/we-03.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/79LY-XB7B>].

from 1970–2009 to analyze the correlations between the influx of Asian residents and the changes in median home value in a given tract in the San Gabriel Valley in accordance with the Economic Theory of White Flight,⁹ which will be elaborated on in later sections. The findings of this analysis will then be corroborated with observations and reports produced at the time of this racial transition. Finally, this Article seeks to comparatively examine the relatively quick entry of Asian residents and the comparatively slow entry of Black residents in the area, arguing that an exigent factor underlying the expedited entry of Asian residents is the racial positioning of the “Model Minority” resident.

II. HISTORY OF HOUSING SEGREGATION IN CALIFORNIA: THE RUMFORD HOUSING ACT OF 1964, THE FAILURE OF PROPOSITION 14, AND THE FAIR HOUSING ACT OF 1968

Prior to the passage of the Rumford Housing Act of 1964, California was not unlike the rest of the country in terms of housing segregation. In the three decades from 1900–1930, California’s expansion of the railroad and citrus belt industries led to an increase of Mexican, Black, and Asian immigration to Southern California.¹⁰ Alien land laws,¹¹ racial covenants, deed restrictions, and the threat of violence confined these immigrants of color to the state’s urban areas.¹² Most, if not all, Chinese residents in Los Angeles County were effectively pushed into the Los Angeles Chinatown.¹³

However, as California saw an influx of non-White residents, incumbent White residents responded by drawing stark racial lines in housing and neighborhood composition. After the United States Supreme Court declared racially restrictive city ordinances unconstitutional in 1917¹⁴, White residents in Southern California turned to private action. They organized en masse to exclude non-White people from their communities, citing concerns about safety or property depreciation.¹⁵

9. Cutler, *supra* note 6, at 455.

10. Ryan Reft, *How Prop 14 Shaped California’s Racial Covenants*, KCET (Sept. 20, 2017), <https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/city-rising/how-prop-14-shaped-californias-racial-covenants> [https://perma.cc/68G4-5JSV].

11. Mary Szto, *From Exclusion to Exclusivity: Chinese American Property ownership and Discrimination in Historical Perspective*, 25 J. TRANSNAT’L L. & POL’Y 33, 75–76 (2015); see also Keith Aoki, *Direct Democracy, Racial Group Agency, Local Government Law, and Residential Racial Segregation: Some Reflections on Radical and Plural Democracy*, 33 CAL. W. L. REV. 185, 197 (1997). In 1913, California passed Alien Land Laws prohibiting aliens ineligible for citizenship from buying agricultural land in fee simple absolute or leasing land for more than 3 years, preventing Japanese migrants at the time from settling and depriving incumbent Chinese-Americans from owning property. These laws remained in effect until 1952 when the Supreme Court of California found the laws in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. See *Fujii v. State*, 38 Cal. 2d 718 (1952).

12. Reft, *supra* note 10.

13. Szto, *supra* note 11, at 69–70. In the 1870s, around 200 Chinese were living in the Los Angeles Chinatown. The population grew to around 500 by 1880, and by 1890—of the 4,424 Chinese living in Los Angeles, more than two-thirds resided in the Chinatown.

14. *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60, 82 (1917) (declaring that a Louisville, Kentucky city ordinance prohibiting non-white people from moving into homes on majority white blocks exceeded the state’s police power and was in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment’s Due Process clause).

15. Reft, *supra* note 10.

Empowered by the California Supreme Court's holding in *Los Angeles Investment Co. v. Gary*¹⁶ in 1919, California realtors began instituting "Covenant Plans" on existing neighborhoods, such as Pasadena.¹⁷ Under "Covenant Plans," once 75% of owners in a neighborhood signed on[,], all non-white residents, including Black families who have lived in Pasadena for decades, could and would be effectively restricted from inhabiting their own homes.¹⁸ "Covenant Plans" were also used as marketing devices to draw in White families and solidify racial lines. People of color were effectively excluded from 95 % of housing, and by the end of the 1920s, the "invisible walls" of the racial ghettos in Southern California were firmly established.¹⁹

In the following decades, these "Invisible Walls" continued to be maintained through both state and private action. During the 1930s, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) created a neighborhood ranking system, known today as "redlining," that made it difficult for homeowners of color to get loans for their mortgages.²⁰ At the same time, realtors continued their efforts to keep neighborhoods all-white through "racial steering"—misrepresenting the availability of homes in white neighborhoods to minority buyers.²¹

Both "redlining" and "racial steering" were extremely effective in maintaining housing segregation in Southern California. Of the 125,000 units constructed under the New Deal's Fair Housing Act of 1949 in Los Angeles County from 1950–1954, less than 3 percent were accessible to non-white residents.²²

16. *Los Angeles Inv. Co. v. Gary*, 181 Cal. 680, 186 P. 596, 684 (1919) (holding that a deed provision restricting occupancy of a property to only residents of the caucasian race was valid enjoining Black defendant Alfred Gary and his wife from living in a covenanted home they purchased; *see also* *Janss Investment Co. v. Walden*, 196 Cal. 753, 754–55 (1925) (Where the holding in *Gary* was affirmed again over half a decade later, with the Court finding that covenant restricting occupancy of a home to individuals of the Caucasian race was valid and enforceable against a black man who was permitted to purchase the covenanted property.)

17. Gene Slater, *Op-Ed: How Los Angeles Pioneered the Residential Segregation that helped Divide America*, L.A. TIMES (Sept. 10, 2021, 5:00 AM), <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-09-10/racial-covenants-los-angeles-pioneered> [<https://perma.cc/UC4M-HX5Q>].

18. *Id.*

19. *Id.*

20. RICHARD ROTHSTEIN, *THE COLOR OF LAW: A FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF HOW OUR GOVERNMENT SEGREGATED AMERICA* 64–65 (Liveright Publ'g Corp. 2017) (noting that the HOLC redlining map continuously viewed communities with high populations of Black, Asian, Latino, and Jewish residents as "high risk" and thus more likely to default on loans); *see also* Price V. Fishback et al., *Race, Risk, and the Emergence of Federal Redlining* 1–3 (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 28146, 2020), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w28146>.

It should be noted however, there are arguments that redlining was not simply a scheme of racial composition and that race was only 1 factor in the creation of the HOLC map. Some Black homeowners were still able to secure conventional financing for their mortgages in the 1920s and 1930s. Additionally, while areas with high black presence were more likely to be downgraded from yellow to red, a black presence could also make neighborhoods more likely to be upgraded from "blue to green and from yellow to blue" in some cases. What is undeniable, though, is that regardless of the additional factors that created redlining, the map boundary lines had "significant effects on racial composition and economic outcomes for decades after their creation." SANDER, MTI, *supra* note 6, at 97.

21. Slater, *supra* note 17.

22. Reft, *supra* note 10.

Slight progress towards housing integration was made in 1948 with the United States Supreme Court's landmark holding in *Shelley v. Kramer*,²³ outlawing the practice of racially restrictive covenants in the country. Despite the expected progress the *Shelley* decision purported to make, it realistically did little to nothing to put an end to housing segregation for Black Americans. But for other non-Black minority groups, the elimination of racially restrictive covenants and explicit racial discrimination in housing markets meant the opportunity to capitalize on a newfound mobility. This was especially true for "middle-class Asian Americans, newly-arrived Asian immigrants, and middle-class Latinas/os" who were able to buy into swiftly appreciating housing markets in cities like Monterey Park, CA."²⁴

Against the backdrop of extreme housing segregation throughout the state, the state of California adopted the Rumford Fair Housing Act in 1964,²⁵ which prohibited discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, and ancestry in private housing.²⁶ If a property manager or homeowner was found to have refused rental or sale to potential tenants or homebuyers because of race or other forbidden reasons, the Act enabled California's Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to intervene.²⁷ In some cases, the FEPC had the ability to force property managers or homeowners to rent or sell to the potential tenants or buyers in question.²⁸ However, despite its symbolic move towards integration, the Act's provisions were relatively limited,²⁹ with its greatest impact on 738,000 apartment complexes of 5 or more units³⁰ in the state. By some estimates, the law covered only "25% of the over 3.7 million single-family homes in California"³¹ and "less than 5% of [California's] duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes."³²

23. *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1, 20 (1948) (finding that state court enforcement of a racially restrictive covenant constitutes state action that violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment).

24. Aoki, *supra* note 11, at 200.

25. The Rumford Fair Housing Act was not passed without resistance. On the last day to pass the bill before the California Legislature session was drawing to a close, the bill was still stalled in the Senate. At 9:50pm, the bill passed out of the Senate with amendments and went back to the Assembly. With 25 minutes to spare before midnight, the bill passed as amended in the Assembly and was immediately signed by Governor Jerry Brown. The bill passed with a straight party vote—no Democrats voted against it and only three republicans voted for it. See David B. Oppenheimer, *California's Anti-Discrimination Legislation, Proposition 14, and the Constitutional Protection of Minority Rights: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act*, 40 GOLDEN GATE U. L. REV. 117, 123 (2010).

26. *Id.* at 120.

27. Reft, *supra* note 10.

28. *Id.*

29. Historian and University of California, Berkeley professor Mark Brilliant points out, "Even with the Rumford Act, the bulk of California home and apartment owners remained free to discriminate on the basis of race when selling or leasing." In total, the Rumford Act would have opened up 950,000 homes to African Americans and other non-whites. See MARK BRILLIANT, *THE COLOR OF AMERICA HAS CHANGED: HOW RACIAL DIVERSITY SHAPED CIVIL RIGHTS REFORM IN CALIFORNIA, 1941–1978*, at 192 (Oxford Univ. Press 2010).

30. Reft, *supra* note 10.

31. DANIEL MARTINEZ HOSANG, *SUNBELT RISING: THE POLITICS OF SPACE, PLACE, AND REGION* 190 (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press 2011).

32. *Id.*

Despite this, many White Californians including San Marino residents and the San Marino Board of Realtors³³ rallied against what they called “forced” integration³⁴ and worked to put Proposition 14 on the ballots for Californians by November 1964.³⁵ The Proposition sought³⁶ to nullify the Rumford Fair Housing Act by, in effect, creating a constitutional right to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, or any other classification. Despite the limited scope of the Rumford Fair Housing Act and vehement opposition from minority voters,³⁷ Proposition 14 gained overwhelming support amongst White Californians and eventually passed with 65 percent approval statewide and 70 percent approval in Los Angeles County.³⁸

This victory, however, was short lived. In 1966, the Supreme Court of California struck down Proposition 14, finding that it violated the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause by requiring the state to become an agent of discrimination and rejected arguments that the initiative merely permitted private discrimination.³⁹ On review, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the state court’s decision in 1967 and reinstated the Rumford Fair Housing Act.⁴⁰

The goal of housing integration in California was further bolstered by the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, religion, and national origin. The Act was arguably received better than the state law, as the Department of Justice enforced the Act by bringing claims in the 1970s against rental agencies, building owners, building managers, and apartment associations in Southern California for Fair Housing Act violations.⁴¹ To be clear, neither

33. Merlin Chowkwanyun & Jordan Segall, *How an Exclusive Los Angeles Suburb Lost Its Whiteness*, BLOOMBERG CITY LAB, August 27, 2012. [hereinafter Chowkwanyun].

34. HOSANG, *supra* note 31, at 190.

35. *Id.* at 199.

36. Proposition 14 sought to include an amendment to the to the California State Constitution, providing that “[n]either the State, nor any subdivision or agency thereof shall deny, limit or abridge, directly or indirectly, the right of any person, who is willing or desires to sell, lease or rent any part or all of his real property, to decline to sell, lease or rent such property to such person or persons as he, in his absolute discretion, chooses.” See David B. Oppenheimer, *California’s Anti-Discrimination Legislation, Proposition 14, and the Constitutional Protection of Minority Rights: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act*, 40 GOLDEN GATE U. L. REV. 117, 124 (2010).

37. HOSANG, *supra* note 31, at 201–06.

38. Reft, *supra* note 10.

39. Relying on the United States Supreme Court cases *Burton v. Wilmington Parking Authority* and *Evans v. Newton*, the Supreme Court of California found that the private exercise of the right that would be created in Proposition 14 was a form of state action. The court also reasoned that Proposition 14 did not simply provide property owners with economic liberty, but instead assisted property owners in discriminating against racial minority groups through the power of state action. See *Mulkey v. Reitman*, 64 Cal. 2d 529, 544 (1966); see also *Burton v. Wilmington Parking Auth.*, 365 U.S. 715, 725 (1961) (finding that because a privately owned restaurant was renting space in a publicly owned garage, the restaurant’s policy of denying service to African Americans constituted state action in violation of the Equal Protection Clause); *Evans v. Newton*, 382 U.S. 296, 311 (1966) (finding that a racially segregated privately owned park was subject to the Fourteenth Amendment where the tradition of municipal control and public use of the park has been firmly established.).

40. *Reitman v. Mulkey*, 387 U.S. 369, 381 (1967).

41. Jonathan Zasloff, *Between Resistance and Embrace: American Realtors, the Justice Department, and the Uncertain Triumph of the Fair Housing Act, 1968–1978*, 61 HOW. L.J. 69, 83–84 (2017). (“By targeting prominent property owners and finding cases that implicate the practices of hundreds of landlords, the government seemed to get off to a strong start in enforcing the Fair Housing Act in Southern California.”).

the Rumford Fair Housing Act nor the federal Fair Housing Act eradicated housing segregation, racism, or discrimination entirely.⁴² But, as Professor Jonathan Zasloff argues—the law effected change from a policy and symbolic standpoint.⁴³ Zasloff explains how the law helped to alleviate pressures White homeowners received from neighbors and community members to not sell or do business with non-Whites.⁴⁴ Passage and enforcement of the law replaced exterior pressures with an “individual’s desire to maintain social order and carry no stigma” so that the desire to engage with non-Whites could be equated with the desire to not break the law.⁴⁵

Thus, working in tandem, both the state and federal Housing Acts granted opportunities for mobility to non-White residents—setting the scene for the changes in demographics in the West San Gabriel Valley communities once United States immigration policies and international geopolitical contexts permitted a large influx of Asian immigrants to resettle into the country.

III. PATTERNS OF ASIAN IMMIGRATION THAT HELPED FORM THE WEST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY ETHNOBURB

A large contributing factor to the creation of Ethnoburbs is the influence of international geopolitical and global economic restructuring, coupled with changing national immigration and trade policies.⁴⁶ Beginning with the Naturalization Law of 1979, which expressly declared that only free White immigrants were eligible for naturalized citizenship, Whiteness⁴⁷ became the standard by which United States citizenship was assessed.⁴⁸ Until 1965, sentiments of “Yellow Peril”⁴⁹ and “the Perpetual Foreigner”⁵⁰ fueled decades of exclusion by enacting racially discriminatory laws that severely curtailed Asian immigration. Despite a small population of Chinese male laborers who traveled to the West Coast with dreams of finding gold⁵¹ or seeking opportunities in railroad construction in the

42. *Id.* at 110.

43. *Id.* at 109–10.

44. *Id.*

45. *Id.*

46. LI, *supra* note 1.

47. Cheryl I. Harris, *Whiteness as Property*, 106 HARV. L. REV. 1709, 1711–12 (1993) (describing Whiteness as a property interest that serves as both a shield from slavery and source of certain privileges and protections—such as the ability to be a United States citizen).

48. *See In re Ah Yup*, 1 F. Cas. 223 (C.C.D. Cal. 1878) (holding that an individual of Chinese descent was ineligible to be naturalized); *Ozawa v. United States*, 260 U.S. 178, 198 (1922) (holding that a Japanese person who had resided in the United States for two decades was not white and thus ineligible for naturalization); *United States v. Bhagat Thind*, 261 U.S. 204, 215 (1923) (holding that a Hindu person of high social caste is not a white person as defined under the naturalization statute); *see also* Vinay Harpalani, *Racial Triangulation, Interest-Convergence, and the Double-Consciousness of Asian Americans*, 37 GA. ST. U. L. REV. 1361, 1373 (2021).

49. Harpalani, *supra* note 48, at 1372 (explaining that the influx of migrant workers from China and Japan was dubbed “Yellow Peril” and the sentiments of fear and anger expressed behind the term directly linked to incidents of racial violence as these Asian migrants competed with White Americans in labor markets).

50. *Id.* (“Asian Americans were seen as ‘perpetual foreigners’—an alien race that was incapable of assimilation and that could never truly be American.”)

51. Szto, *supra* note 11, at 45–49.

mid-1800s⁵², the Page Act of 1875⁵³ and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882⁵⁴ worked in tandem to ensure there was no real opportunity for Chinese immigrants to form a community for themselves for another century. From 1907 to 1934, the United States passed several pieces of immigration legislation⁵⁵ extending these same restrictions to immigrants from other Asian countries, including Japan, Korea, India, and the Philippines.

However, the 1960s brought about an era of interest convergence⁵⁶ tied to the United States's global interests. In the backdrop of an escalating Cold War and the launch of the Soviet Union's Sputnik 1, the United States sought to improve its image as a leader of the free world and saw a need for skilled professionals in scientific and technical occupations.⁵⁷ At the same time, countries such as China and India had an excess of scientists, physicians, engineers, and other professionals who had limited economic opportunities in their home countries.⁵⁸ These global interests, along with the American civil rights revolution, urged the government to reexamine its immigration policies and quotas⁵⁹. This brought a

52. *Id.* at 49–52.

53. The Page Act of 1875 prohibited the recruitments of laborers from “China, Japan, or any Oriental Country” who brought for “lewd and immoral purposes” and explicitly barred the “importation of women for the purposes of prostitution.” The racial undertones beneath the law effectively barred Chinese women from immigrating to the United States, creating a Chinese male bachelor society (coupled with American miscegenation laws) that stifled the ability of the Chinese male laborers to start families. *See* LI, *supra* note 1, at 54–55.

54. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 banned Chinese workers from entering the country and excluded Chinese immigrants already in the country from obtaining American citizenship. Congress continued to extend the Act's efficacy every decade from 1882 until 1942 when labor shortages created by World War II (coupled with anti-Japanese sentiments) necessitated the naturalization of Chinese Immigrants. *See id.* at 56–60; *see also* Harpalani, *supra* note 48, at 1373.

55. A brief timeline of legislation that continued to affect the ability of Asian immigrants to form communities in America after the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and before the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act:

1907 Gentleman's Agreement: restricted immigration from Japan and Korea

1917 Immigration Act: curbed all immigration from the continent of Asia by creating the Asiatic Barred Zone and explicitly denying entry to Asian Indians

1924 National Origins Act: explicitly prevented immigration from Asia and set quotas on the number of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe

1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act: added immigrants from the Philippines onto the list of groups excluded from immigration

See LI, *supra* note 1, at 33–39, 56–60; *see also* Harpalani, *supra* note 48, at 1373–74.

56. *See generally* Derrick A. Bell, Jr., *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma*, 98 HARV. L. REV. 518, 533 (1980).

Bell argues the theory of Interest Convergence as a mechanism to accomplish racial reform. That is, when the interests of powerful groups (such as the white majority of the United States) align with the interests of a less powerful group (such as the previously excluded Asian migrants), reform and racial progress is actualized. In this case, progress manifested in the form of Immigration Law that permitted the entry of Asians.

57. Harpalani, *supra* note 48, at 1374.

58. *Id.*

59. The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was not a standalone development, but rather the product of a culmination of a multitude of geopolitical factors. The globalization, decolonization, and newly found independence of many developing nations allowed these nations to gain a voice in the international arena. Additionally, with the United States becoming a leader of the free world after World War II, the country sought to improve its image as a democratic country that didn't discriminate within its own country—leading to civil rights legislations and revisions to discriminatory immigration legislations. *See* LI, *supra* note 1, at 33–39, 56–60.

resurgence of immigration from Asian countries that dissipated the sentiments of “Yellow Peril” and portended the Model Minority stereotype⁶⁰ that will be further discussed in the latter half of this Article.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 permitted, for the first time in American history, an equal annual maximum immigration quota of 20,000 people from every national group in the Eastern hemisphere.⁶¹ The 1965 Act divided all potential immigrants into two major groups: (1) immigrants seeking family reunification and (2) immigrants seeking opportunities based on their profession.⁶² The former gave preference to immigrants with families or spouses who were United States citizens or permanent residents, while the latter sought skilled professionals such as engineers and university professors or laborers in sectors where there was a shortfall of domestic labor.⁶³ This, in turn, opened up the door for a diverse Asian immigrant group—consisting of immigrants from a broad range of educational, socioeconomic, and language backgrounds.⁶⁴

Accordingly, soon after the passage of the 1965 Act, the United States saw a significant wave of Asian immigrants who were previously barred from entry.⁶⁵ Many came to Southern California, and it quickly became apparent that the Los Angeles Chinatown would not be able to accommodate these new immigrants.⁶⁶ Many began migrating to cities within the San Gabriel Valley—particularly Monterey Park.⁶⁷ While Monterey Park offered Asian immigrants a type of community that could not be found in other suburbs, this mobility was also notably reflective of the larger suburbanization process taking place throughout the country⁶⁸.

In the 1970s, the country, and the San Gabriel Valley in particular, saw an influx of Asian immigrants from vastly different backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses. By the mid-1970s witnessed the arrival of businessmen, entrepreneurs, and other extremely wealthy

60. Harpalani, *supra* note 48, at 1370.

61. Li, *supra* note 1, at 35–36.

62. *Id.*

63. *Id.*

64. *Id.*

65. *Id.* at 33–39, 60–62; *see also* Szto, *supra* note 11, at 85 (noting how the Immigration Act of 1965 marked a turning point in United States population composition by abolishing racial ancestry-based quotas that favored northern and western Europeans, allowing family members of new immigrants to immigrate without quota limits).

66. Li, *supra* note 1, at 60–62.

67. *Id.* at 83–85.

68. Author Wei Li hypothesizes five different reasons why Chinese immigrants opted to move to Monterey Park instead of other suburbs. First, the urban Chinatown was becoming too congested and too expensive for families to find affordable housing. Second, Monterey Park was uniquely accessible being bordered by three major freeways (I-10, I-710, I-60) that made it easy for residents to travel downtown for work or to Chinatown for groceries and other Asian businesses. Third, many immigrants had prior ties to Monterey Park and opted to move there to be closer to relatives and found reasonable housing prices. Fourth, there was relative diversity in Monterey Park by the late 1960s. Japanese families had resided in the area for generations, there was a sizable Hispanic population, and despite a predominantly white population, there was also a high proportion of Jewish families who, Li reasons, understood discrimination and were thus typically more tolerant of other minority groups. Finally, Li points out the superior *feng shui* of the city that likely appealed to superstitious Asian immigrants. According to Chinese folklore, hilly areas with better views such as the hilly Monterey Park, were considered to have better *feng shui* and would yield good luck to its residents. *See id.*

immigrants from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.⁶⁹ These immigrants invested in commercial developments that housed businesses catering to the Asian population—setting the stage for a booming local economy focused on Asian immigrant needs.⁷⁰ More flashy cars began roaming the streets of the San Gabriel Valley, and many of these wealthy immigrants had the spending power to purchase large homes in cash or build their own mansions in the Arcadia and San Marino areas.⁷¹ However, at the same time, the fall of Saigon in 1975 created a large wave of Southeast Asian refugees, including Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and ethnically Chinese families displaced by the Vietnam War.⁷² Most of these refugees arrived as a direct result of United States military activities in their home countries, and their resettlement was often the result of a forced evacuation.⁷³ Those who resettled in the San Gabriel Valley were not prepared to “assimilate” after losing their family, friends, property, and belongings in their home country.⁷⁴

By the 1990s, Asian businesses and residents were fully entrenched into the local economy of the San Gabriel Valley.⁷⁵ Nationwide, the Asian population doubled from 1980 to 1990.⁷⁶

IV. THE ECONOMIC THEORY OF WHITE FLIGHT

White Flight, or the large-scale migration of white people from areas that are becoming more racially or ethnoculturally diverse, typically has two mechanisms: (1) White residents stop moving in or (2) White residents already living in a particular neighborhood move away quickly as the community undergoes a racial transition.⁷⁷ However, racial transition can occur in the absence of white flight if non-white demand for housing in a particular area exceeds white demand.⁷⁸ This non-white demand can be characterized in many ways, the most relevant being the “port of entry” or clustering-by-choice processes.⁷⁹ Non-white residents, particularly immigrants, may prefer to self-segregate—living with their own group while developing familiarity with the majority culture, markets, and

69. Szto, *supra* note 11, at 85 (“Since [the 1965 Immigration Act], immigration from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia has increased exponentially. From 1960 through 1990, the Chinese population almost doubled in every decade. Political instability has driven this migration. In 1971, China was admitted to the UN; Taiwan lost its seat. . . . In 1997, Hong Kong reverted to China after being a British colony. Many from Taiwan and Hong Kong chose to leave. In 1979, the US and mainland China resumed diplomatic relations as part of China’s open and reform era. This has led to exponential migration within and from China.”).

70. FONG, *supra* note 7, at 35.

71. *Id.* at 51–54; LI, *supra* note 1, at 75.

72. FONG, *supra* note 7, at 51–54; LI, *supra* note 1, at 37; Szto, *supra* note 11, at 85 (“In the mid-1970s, after the Vietnam War, many ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia settled in the Los Angeles area.”).

73. LI, *supra* note 1, at 37.

74. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *supra* note 8.

75. CHENG, *supra* note 7, at 23.

76. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *supra* note 8.

77. SANDER, MTI, *supra* note 6, at 116–17.

78. *Id.*

79. *Id.* at 280.

language.⁸⁰ This may ease the process of assimilation⁸¹ in their new country, or serve as an opportunity to avoid assimilation entirely.⁸² Empirical studies have shown that the typical Asian American in Los Angeles in 1990 lived in neighborhoods that were mostly or (more often) predominantly non-Asian, making the San Gabriel Valley Asian Ethnoburb all the more interesting⁸³.

The Economic Theory of White Flight highlights two different sources of neighborhood segregation: (1) the desire for non-white residents to live amongst one another (“Port of Entry”); or (2) the desire for white residents to live with other white residents instead of non-white residents (White Flight).⁸⁴ The theory hypothesizes that if segregation is caused by “Port of Entry,” the increase in segregation will be driven by non-white demand that exceeds white demand for housing in a given neighborhood and, in turn, lead to an increase in median home values⁸⁵ in a given census tract.⁸⁶ Alternatively, if segregation is caused by White Flight—the opposite will be true.⁸⁷ White residents, seeing an urgency to leave their neighborhood and move to another that has a larger white population, will sell their homes quickly, leading to a decrease in median home values.⁸⁸

V. METHODOLOGY: TESTING THE ECONOMIC THEORY OF WHITE FLIGHT

Our analysis uses data collected by the United States Census Bureau in the years 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2009 regarding the White, Black and Asian populations, total tract population, and median home values of a given census tract. With assistance from statistician Henry Kim, I gathered data for seventy-six census tracts, covering the cities of Alhambra, Arcadia, Monterey Park, Rosemead, San Gabriel, San Marino, Temple City, Monrovia, Pasadena, and Sierra Madre. The tracts varied significantly in terms of the rate of which Asians entered the city.

Using the statistical software, Stata, my research team ran regressions using the information gathered from the census data to analyze the correlation between the increase of Asian residents in the San Gabriel Valley and the increase or decrease of median home values. These correlations are produced by comparing the changes in Asian population and median home values between the decades (i.e. tracking changes between 1970–1980, 1980–1990, 1990–2000, 2000–2009). I controlled for some factors that might influence changes

80. *Id.* at 116–17.

81. Richard H. Sander, *Fair Housing in Los Angeles County: An Assessment of Progress and Challenges, 1970–1995* at 18 (1996) (Commissioned by the City and County of Los Angeles).

82. Mark Arax, *San Gabriel Valley: Asian Influx Alters Life in Suburbia*, L.A. TIMES (Apr. 5, 1987, 12:00 AM), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-04-05-mn-351-story.html> [<https://perma.cc/3YP7-LMA3>]; SANDER, *supra* note 81.

83. SANDER, MTI, *supra* note 6, at 274.

84. Cutler, *supra* note 6, at 475–76.

85. Researchers David Cutler, Edward, Glaeser, and Jacob Vigdor’s research focused specifically on black migrants. However, this Article applies these research findings to non-white migrants in general. The research notes that this increase in housing cost will especially affect migrants coming into the neighborhood, more than incumbent non-white residents of the neighborhood. *See id.* at 480–81.

86. *Id.* at 479. Researchers David Cutler, Edward, Glaeser, and Jacob Vigdor note that this increase in housing cost will especially affect migrants coming into the neighborhood, more than incumbent non-white residents of the neighborhood. *See id.* at 480–81.

87. *Id.* at 479.

88. *Id.* at 479.

in housing price, such as the percent of Asian or Black residents in each tract and total population growth, and then observed the independent effect and increases in the Asian American population on housing prices. A positive coefficient on Asian population growth in a tract would support the conclusion that the segregation found in the San Gabriel Valley was a result of “Port of Entry” or clustering by choice. If an increase of Asian residents was associated with a decrease in median home value, the Economic Theory would posit that segregation was produced by White Flight.

It is important to note, however, that both the Economic Theory and the census data are not perfect. The median home value of a given tract is generated via self-reported census numbers. However, neither the Economic Theory nor the census data take into account blockbusting, or the practice of realtors persuading White homeowners to sell their property cheaply because of the fear of non-White residents moving into their communities, and subsequently reselling these same properties at a higher price to the non-White residents that desire entrance into a neighborhood.⁸⁹ While blockbusting is a byproduct of White Flight, this cannot be captured in the analysis here. There may very well be instances of White residents in the San Gabriel Valley who sold their homes quickly and cheaply and Asian residents purchasing those same homes at a significantly higher price. If the new Asian resident is self reporting their home value to the census as the price in which they purchased their home, the White Flight that produced this price is not captured under the Economic Theory.

VI. RESULTS

The regressions produced by Stata showed interesting correlations and predictions, but many without statistically significant⁹⁰ results. This further supports our hypothesis that the birth of the San Gabriel Valley ethnoburb could not be solely explained by just White Flight or Clustering by Choice and is likely a product of some mixture of the two (“Combination Theory”).

While the San Gabriel Valley saw a massive influx of Asian residents between 1970 and 1980, the regressions do not show a correlation between the increase in Asian population and increase in median home value.⁹¹ This suggests that this change in local demographic was not due to “Port of Entry” under the Economic Theory. However, this change also cannot definitively support the theory of White Flight either. Similar findings were made in the 1990–2000 analyses as well.⁹²

However, the 2000–2009 analysis did show a positive correlation between the increase in Asian population and an increase in median home value.⁹³ Interestingly, the same positive correlation could be found in the increase of the Black population as well—suggesting that Asian residents and Black residents were moving into the same tracts during this decade. As such, under the Economic Theory, a “Port of Entry” reasoning can be used to explain the

89. ROTHSTEIN, *supra* note 20, at 95.

90. A study result is considered statistically significant if the p-value of the data analysis is less than the prespecified alpha of 0.05. A statistically significant test result means the test hypothesis is false or should be rejected. The Stata regressions require a t value that is over 2 and a p-value under 0.05 in order to be determined statistically significant.

91. Data set created by Professor Richard H. Sander and Irene Quach (on file with author).

92. *Id.*

93. *Id.*

segregation seen in this decade. This finding could potentially be understood as a reflection of an already completed racial transition. Perhaps a “Port of Entry” reasoning is statistically supported from 2000–2009 because a majority of White residents had already moved in prior decades. By 1990, Asian businesses and residents were fully entrenched in local politics and in the local economy.⁹⁴ As such, Asian demand for housing in the area exceeded white demand, and as the “Port of Entry” theory explains, housing prices in a given neighborhood will increase when this occurs.⁹⁵

Additionally, while the changes in Asian population from 1980–1990 did not produce any statistically significant results, the *percentage* of Asian residents on the tested tract (compared to other tracts) in 1980 did. The regression noted a negative correlation of the percentage of Asian residents and the median home value—suggesting that the amount of Asian residents led to a decrease in home values. In accordance with the Economic Theory, this suggests the possibility of White Flight. This may be a reflection of the influx of Southeast Asian refugees and wealthy immigrants from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong solidifying their roots in the San Gabriel Valley after their entry in the mid to late 1970s.⁹⁶

As author Timothy Fong noted in his book about the development of Monterey Park, the influx of these new immigrants—particularly those with large amounts of capital, rapidly introduced Chinese owned and operated businesses, and many of these immigrants resisted assimilation.⁹⁷ Their investments into the development of shopping malls and plazas dedicated to these businesses caused regular disruptions in local life—with construction crews tearing up the city and starting new projects.⁹⁸ As the following section of this Article discusses, this resulted in increased racial antagonism against Asian residents perpetuated by incumbent White residents. Thus, it would make sense to see a correlation between the percentage of Asian residents and decreased median home value during 1980–1990.

Interestingly, though, this correlation disappeared in 1990. Perhaps this could be explained with the same reasons listed above—the racial transition in the San Gabriel Valley was nearly or already completed.

VII. SHORTCOMINGS OF THE ECONOMIC THEORY

In addition to being unable to capture instances of “blockbusting,” the Economic Theory is also unable to capture the unique socioeconomic positioning of the Asian immigrants entering the San Gabriel Valley. The regressions suggest that White Flight, as defined by the Economic Theory, did not occur because residential property values did not drop in a statistically significant way when there was an influx of Asian immigrants in the area. As discussed, many of the Asian immigrants coming into the San Gabriel Valley were middle to high income, and highly educated.

Author and law professor Keith Aoki hypothesizes that the lack of decline in residential property values could be attributed to the fact that these Asian immigrants had the financial means to buy homes and there were enough of them to keep property values from appreciating.⁹⁹ For example, real estate agents in the predominantly White

94. FONG, *supra* note 7, at 118–37.

95. Cutler, *supra* note 6, at 479.

96. Szto, *supra* note 11, at 85.

97. FONG, *supra* note 7, at 35.

98. *Id.* at 47–54.

99. Aoki, *supra* note 11, at 201.

neighborhood of San Marino documented “Asians, mostly Chinese . . . buying one of every five or six homes on the market in San Marino, often paying cash for houses priced at \$500,000 or more.”¹⁰⁰ In the 1980s, an assistant city manager in Rosemead noted a forty-one percent loss of White residents in his city—remarking “Asians were the only one who had the money” to buy up houses on larger lots and how many White homeowners, close to retirement, were encouraged by the hot real estate market and capitalized on the opportunity to “cash out.”¹⁰¹

This can also provide insight on the results found. More specifically, the regression cannot absolutely negate that White Flight still occurred.

VIII. COMBINATION THEORY: WHITE FLIGHT AND CLUSTERING BY CHOICE

While I argue that the San Gabriel Valley was created via Combination Theory, it is important to note that the regressions can also suggest what can be called “Passive Replacement Theory”—purporting that White residents did not flee neighborhoods that became more Asian, but were also not willing to pay a premium as the neighborhoods became more popular with Asian residents (and therefore were less likely to move in). However, I reject “Passive Replacement Theory” based on findings that incumbent White residents of the San Gabriel Valley were not very passive at all.¹⁰² To suggest that the influx of Asians had no effects on the mobility of White residents ignores the very real tensions, racial violence, and subsequent exodus of White neighbors observed and experienced by Asian Americans living in the area at the time.¹⁰³

In his research, sociologist Kyle Crowder found that the size of the neighborhood’s minority population had a direct and statistically significant effect on the likelihood of out-mobility among individual Whites,¹⁰⁴ finding that Whites living in predominantly minority neighborhoods had a sixty-four percent higher probability of moving out than Whites living in neighborhoods with no minorities present.¹⁰⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that as Asian immigrants began to move into the San Gabriel Valley and the community began to transform to cater to this new population, White residents began to move out. To be clear, Crowder’s findings do not suggest that White mobility was motivated by racial attitudes towards Asians in particular, but rather by the influx and homogeneity of these new, non-white residents in general.¹⁰⁶ This, in turn, created an opportunity for racial tensions to arise

100. Chowkanyun, *supra* note 33.

101. Edmund Newton, *Anglo Enclave Becomes an Ethnic Patchwork*, L.A. TIMES (Mar. 3, 1991, 12:00 AM), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-03-03-ga-560-story.html> [https://perma.cc/SA6Y-VL4K].

102. Chowkanyun, *supra* note 33; Arax, *supra* note 82; FONG, *supra* note 7, at 81-85, 96-106, 109-14; Szto, *supra* note 11, at 88.

103. Chowkanyun, *supra* note 33; Arax, *supra* note 82; FONG, *supra* note 7, at 81-85, 96-106, 109-14; Szto, *supra* note 11, at 88; CHENG, *supra* note 7, at 26-27.

104. Kyle Crowder, *The Racial Context of White Mobility: An Individual-Level Assessment of the White Flight Hypothesis*, 29 SOC. SCI. RSCH. 223, 239 (2000).

105. *Id.* at 246-47.

106. *Id.* at 245 (“Thus, it appears to be the size of the local minority population, largely regardless of the specific group composition of that minority population, that affects the mobility decisions of Whites.”).

against one racial group.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, this causal relationship was observed and documented by the community itself.¹⁰⁸

By 1987, the Los Angeles Times noted that “[f]or every one Asian newcomer who ha[d] resettled in the western San Gabriel Valley since 1980, roughly one white resident has either moved away or died. . . . The proportion of whites in the area ha[d] plummeted from 78% in 1970 to 56% in 1980 to an estimated 36% of the region’s 327,000 residents today.”¹⁰⁹

Between 2007–2009, author Wendy Cheng conducted 64 interviews with Asian and Latino/a residents residing in Monterey Park, Alhambra, San Gabriel, and South San Gabriel.¹¹⁰ The interviewees, many of whom were 2nd, 3rd, or 4th generation residents to the area, remembered a childhood with White friends and neighbors that slowly and steadily moved away¹¹¹ and remarked “literally seeing [white] people run out of [the area].”¹¹² The reasons departing White residents gave for leaving were rooted in nativist and anti-Asian sentiments, such as complaining about “bad driving,”¹¹³ accusing Asians of “taking over,”¹¹⁴ and calling the racial transition a loss for a community that could become “a model for the future.”¹¹⁵ Some residents expressed that they felt as though “[they were] in another country,” and that they “[didn’t] feel at home anymore.”¹¹⁶ Moving away became a statement of protest against a foreign invasion of immigrant neighbors who were perceived to be unwilling to “give up their traditions and settle into an American way of life.”¹¹⁷

The entrance of Asian immigrants who had the capital to transform the community and who refused to make concessions to the White suburban racial order quickly drew

107. Chowkanyun, *supra* note 33; Arax, *supra* note 82; FONG, *supra* note 7, at 81–85, 96–106, 109–14; Szto, *supra* note 11, at 88; CHENG, *supra* note 7, at 26–27.

108. Chowkanyun, *supra* note 33; Arax, *supra* note 82; FONG, *supra* note 7, at 81–85, 96–106, 109–14; Szto, *supra* note 11, at 88; CHENG, *supra* note 7, at 26–27.

109. Arax, *supra* note 82.

110. Cheng, *supra* note 7, at 17.

111. *Id.* at 25–27. In his interview, Bill Gin, a third generation Chinese American who has lived in Monterey Park since 1959 remembered a ‘big shift’ in the White population: “Over there it was basically all whites, until the kids grew up and didn’t want to live there, and they got older and they just suddenly sold out to the Asian population, and they moved too.” Japanese American Romy Uyehara, who was in elementary school in the early 1980s, observed how she had “a couple white friends” in elementary school, “but they all moved away as well, and ‘pretty much by the end of eighth grade, most of my friends were Asian.’” Anita Martinez, a fifth generation Mexican American and fourth generation Angeleno “recalled that their house, purchased in the late 1970s, was flanked by a Japanese American family behind, Koreans across the street, Mexican Americans on one side, and a white family on the other. In keeping with larger patterns throughout the area, the whites eventually moved away, and were replaced by Asians.”

112. *Id.* at 26. Japanese American Karen Toguchi stated, “We were very, very comfortable, until about 20 years ago, maybe? We had been here for [pause] at least 15 years and then things started to change. Chinese people started to come in, and it was like a locust descending on the land. And the next thing we knew . . . it was white flight. I’d never seen white flight. I read about it in books and the newspaper, but to truly be involved in it, it was almost shocking to the system. Literally seeing people run out of this place.” *Id.* at 25.

113. *Id.* at 26 (quoting Tony Gonzales). As more and more Asian immigrants entered the area, complaints about the “Chinese Driver” proliferated and it became common to see “I survived the drive through Monterey Park” bumper stickers, the labeling of Atlantic Boulevard as “Suicide Boulevard,” and hear jokes that it should be against the law to be caught D.W.C (Driving While Chinese). FONG, *supra* note 7, at 71–72.

114. Cheng, *supra* note 7, at 26 (quoting Tony Gonzales).

115. Arax, *supra* note 82 (quoting Captain Joe Santoro of the Monterey Park Police Department).

116. FONG, *supra* note 7, at 64.

117. *Id.* at 64–65 (quoting former Monterey Park resident Frank Rizzo).

tensions amongst White residents and students¹¹⁸—most notably in Monterey Park.¹¹⁹ The “Controlled Growth”¹²⁰ and “English Only”¹²¹ movements became platforms that White residents and politicians rallied around. The former aimed to restrict the development of new multiple use and commercial constructions and multi-unit dwelling developments that aimed to cater to the influx of new Asian residents,¹²² while the latter was in response to increased Chinese business signs and language assistance programs in the city.¹²³

IX. THE MODEL MINORITY RESIDENT

While various fair housing laws and court decisions paved the path for Asian Americans to enter into historically White communities¹²⁴, this newfound mobility created a sense of double consciousness¹²⁵—one where Asian residents were simultaneously reminded that while they were not white (and could point to the documented racial animosity towards them to prove it), they were also not Black (and thus able to enter into these neighborhoods in the first place).

In comparison to other, non-white groups, African Americans throughout the country did not experience the same access to housing opportunities even after explicit racial discrimination was outlawed via housing laws.¹²⁶ This holds true for the San Gabriel Valley

118. Chowkwanyun, *supra* note 33 (“In 1984, . . . a 17 year old Chinese youth was peppered with racial slurs and suffered a brutal attack at the hands of three white teenagers at Huntington Middle School, where he was playing tennis.”); Arax, *supra* note 82 (In 1987, “120 Chinese parents in Arcadia met with school officials and local police to express concern over two assaults on Chinese students. The campus had been the scene of a huge cafeteria brawl between Asians and whites a few years earlier.”).

119. FONG, *supra* note 7, at 109–17.

120. *Id.* at 81–85, 96–109; *see also* MIKE DAVIS, CITY OF QUARTZ: EXCAVATING THE FUTURE IN LOS ANGELES 159 (Verso Books, 1990) (“Slow growth . . . is about homeowner control of land use and . . . [is] the latest incarnation of a middle-class political subjectivity that fitfully constitutes and reconstitutes itself every few years around the defense of household equity and residential privilege.”).

121. FONG, *supra* note 7, at 109–17.

122. *Id.* at 84 (noting how Proposition A was rejected after an unauthorized claim that the proposed 150 condos would be “primarily Oriental, mostly Chinese.”).

123. Szto, *supra* note 11, at 88 (“In the late 1980s, there was also a backlash in Monterey Park. Reacting to the proliferation of Chinese signs in the city, Council members passed a resolution supporting English as the official language of the US.”).

124. BRILLIANT, *supra* note 29; Oppenheimer, *supra* note 25; *Mulkey v. Reitman*, 64 Cal. 2d 529, 544 (1966); *Burton v. Wilmington Parking Auth.*, 365 U.S. 715, 725 (1961); *Evans v. Newton*, 382 U.S. 296, 311 (1966); *Reitman v. Mulkey*, 387 U.S. 369, 381 (1967).

125. *See generally* W.E.B. Du Bois, *Strivings of the Negro People*, THE ATLANTIC, Aug. 1897. Du Bois describes double consciousness as the internal conflict experienced by subordinated groups in an oppressive society. Du Bois analyzes how Black Americans have dual identities—one where they look at themselves through the eyes of a racist white society and one where they look internally and reconcile the heritage, culture, and experience of being Black in America. In this context, Asian Americans also possess a double consciousness. One where they are viewed through the eyes of the white majority—shunned and antagonized for not being White, but also reconciling that with their experience of being Asian (and thus allotted certain privileges by not being Black) in the racial hierarchy of American society.

126. SANDER, MTL, *supra* note 6, at 272 (“But *Shelley v. Kraemer* arguably had an even larger effect upon Asian-American . . . mobility than it did upon African-Americans.”); *see also* Harpalani, *supra* note 48, at 1374–75 (“Although educated Asian American immigrants faced various forms of discrimination, they were also structurally situated for upward mobility and achievement. They often did not go through the more transient enclave status of many immigrant groups, or the long-term residential segregation experienced in many Black and Latina/o communities.”).

as well.¹²⁷ From 1960–1990, Asian Americans and Latina/os made significant inroads into the previously all-White residential housing market of Monterey Park.¹²⁸ Yet, the percentage of African Americans in the area remained at or below 1 percent.¹²⁹ Census tracts located in Alhambra, Arcadia, Rosemead, San Gabriel, and Temple City have similar findings.¹³⁰ For example, census tract 4336.02 in Rosemead saw an increase from 59 to 1509 Asian residents from 1970 to 2009.¹³¹ The number of Black residents in this tract remained at 0 from 1970 to 1990, increased to 7 in 2000, before falling back to 0 again in 2009.¹³² While the relatively high socioeconomic status of these Asian residents can be attributed to this disparity, an exigent factor of this Asian entry is the racial positioning of the Model Minority resident.

The Model Minority Myth began its construction long before Asian people were permitted to naturalize and has been utilized to create a racial wedge between racial groups. In the postbellum era, Chinese laborers were touted for their labor efficiency and deemed “far superior . . . physiologically and mentally”¹³³ to Black Americans to continue the subjugation of Black Americans and preservation of White dominance.¹³⁴ Since the mid-1960s, journalists, politicians, and scholars alike have continued this trend—simultaneously attributing “Asian cultural values”¹³⁵ as reasons for the Model Minority’s success while ignoring the long-term structural advantages the Model Minority receives simply by entering the country as an immigrant rather than as an enslaved person.¹³⁶ The underlying suggestion is explicit—“If Asian Americans can make it—why can’t Blacks?” thus¹³⁷ perpetuating the idea that minority groups that are not achieving the same levels of success in American society could only blame their own deficiencies. Asian Americans became a “racial group distinct from the white majority, but lauded as well assimilated, upwardly mobile, politically nonthreatening, and *definitively not-black*.”¹³⁸

127. Census Data (on file with author); Claire Jean Kim, *The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans*, 27 *POL. & SOC’Y* 105, 110-111 (1999).

128. SAITO, *supra* note 7, at 234 (Over the course of 30 years, Monterey Park shifted from an over 85% White suburb to 57.5% Asian/Pacific Islander. Additionally, the percentage of Latino residents climbed from 11% in 1960 to almost 30% in 1990).

129. Robert S. Chang & Keith Aoki, *Centering the Immigrant in the Inter/National Imagination*, 10 *LA RAZA L.J.* 309, 337 (1998) [hereinafter Chang]; *see also* SAITO, *supra* note 7, at 234.

130. KIM, *supra* note 127.

131. Census Data (on file with author).

132. Census Data (on file with author).

133. KIM, *supra* note 127.

134. *Id.* at 111.

135. William Petersen, *Success Story, Japanese-American Style*, *N.Y. TIMES*, Jan. 9, 1966 (valorizing the previously forcibly incarcerated Japanese Americans’ post WWII self generated success while casting doubt on the effort to help Black Americans through social programs); *Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.*, *U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP.*, Dec. 26, 1966 (purporting that Chinese Americans cultural values (embrace of education, diligence, family solidarity, discipline, self-sufficiency, respect for authority, thriftiness, and morality) undermined the claims of other minorities to government aid); *Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites*, *NEWSWEEK*, Jun. 21, 1971 (arguing that the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII motivated Japanese Americans to become better Americans and served as an example of how no amount of externally imposed hardship could keep a “good” minority down).

136. Harpalani, *supra* note 48, at 1374–76.

137. Kim, *supra* note 127, at 118.

138. ELLEN D. WU, *THE COLOR OF SUCCESS: ASIAN AMERICANS AND THE ORIGIN OF THE MODEL MINORITY 2* (PRINCETON UNIV. PRESS 2014).

Similar to the geopolitical forces pushing the United States to pass the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the Model Minority Myth allowed Asian and White interests to converge once again—this time in the realm of housing accessibility. The racial hierarchy of the United States is perpetuated and designed around the protection of “whiteness.”¹³⁹ That is, “whiteness”—initially identified by the privilege of not being enslaved¹⁴⁰—offers those who possess it certain benefits, including the ability to own property. Thus, when the law required property rights to be expanded past just those who were White, groups that were closest to “whiteness,” such as the Model Minority, were more easily accepted than Black residents.¹⁴¹ In other words, when compared to Black Americans, Asian residents of the San Gabriel Valley experienced a greater level of tolerance because of their perceived proximity to “whiteness” and the notion that the Model Minority resident would not drastically disrupt the pre-existing racial hierarchy in the suburbs.¹⁴²

In her study, sociologist and professor Camille Zubrinsky Charles found that White residents feel most comfortable with Asians and least so with Blacks.¹⁴³ In 1978, 25 percent of Detroit-area Whites reported that the presence of a single Black neighbor would make them uncomfortable, while 40 percent stated they would try to leave an area that was one-third Black.¹⁴⁴ Another study in 2001 reported that the presence of Hispanic and Asian neighbors has little effect on the housing preferences of Whites, while Black neighborhood compositions mattered significantly—with surveyed White respondents reporting they were unlikely to buy a home in a neighborhood that matched all their preferences if it was over 15 percent Black.¹⁴⁵

These same racial preferences are also relevant when analyzing the propensity of White residents to move into “majority-minority” census tracts—tracts that are largely comprised of racial and ethnic minority residents. In the 1970s, when much of these tracts throughout the country were predominantly Black, the chances of a White resident moving in were low.¹⁴⁶ By the 1980s, driven by the immigration and geopolitical factors discussed in the beginning of this Article, these “majority-minority” neighborhoods became increasingly Hispanic and Asian, and the White resistance to moving into these areas decreased significantly.¹⁴⁷ By the 2008–2013 period, more than 40 percent of over 18,000

139. Harris, *supra* note 47, at 1721.

140. *Id.*

141. See generally George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the “White” Problem in American Studies*, 47 AM. Q. 369, 387 (1995).

Lipsitz argues that the Possessive Investment in whiteness can be extended to racial groups who are presently classified as non-white. These groups also strive for the social and material advantages afforded by whiteness, even when they simultaneously claim other racial identities.

142. Camille Zubrinsky Charles, *The Dynamics of Racial Residential Segregation*, 29 ANN. REV. SOCIO. 167, 182 (2003) (“Whites use segregation to maintain social distance, and therefore, present-day residential segregation—particularly blacks’ segregation from whites—is best understood as emanating from structural forces tied to racial prejudice and discrimination that preserve the relative status advantages of whites.”).

143. *Id.* at 184; see also Crowder, *supra* note 104, at 228 (“While whites report limited tolerance for location near racial and ethnic minorities in general, they tend to rate both Asians and Hispanics somewhat more favorably than Blacks on a number of scales, including desirability as neighbors and report stronger preferences for neighborhoods containing Hispanics and Asians than for those containing Blacks”).

144. Charles, *supra* note 142, at 182.

145. *Id.* at 190.

146. SANDER, MTL, *supra* note 6, at 357.

147. *Id.*

“majority-minority” tracts experienced remarkable increases to their White population.¹⁴⁸ If White residents were primarily guided by their avoidance of non-White groups, the rapid increase in non-White residents should imply a declining number of Whites moving into these tracts, yet the opposite became true once the minority population consisted of non-Black residents.

These sentiments were noted in the San Gabriel Valley as well. In 1962, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) led a 35 day sit-in after a developer in the Monterey Highlands refused to sell a house to 29 year old African American physicist, Bobby Liley.¹⁴⁹ Yet at the same time, developers in the same area were encouraging Japanese American households to purchase property there.¹⁵⁰ Japanese American realtor, Kazuo Inouye remarked how the local real estate board in Monterey Park initially resisted his attempts to open a branch office, stating that “they were afraid [Inouye was] going to sell to blacks.”¹⁵¹ The racial identity of Asian Americans cannot be separated from the analysis of Asian entry into the San Gabriel Valley. Further studies should be conducted to assess just how much the racial positioning of the Model Minority factored into the creation of the ethnoburb.

X. CONCLUSION

The question “How was the San Gabriel Valley ethnoburb created?” is not one that can be answered simply. The unique socioeconomic status of the Asian immigrant population brought upon a set of circumstances that cannot be fully captured by the Economic Theory of White Flight. But this does not negate the possibility that White Flight did not occur or that the racial transition in the San Gabriel Valley was passive. Rather, racial tensions and animosity towards the influx of Asian immigrants, the preference of Asian immigrants to self-segregate and live with those of their own race and culture, the uncomfotability and exodus of incumbent White residents, the opportunity for White residents to capitalize on a “hot” housing market, and finally, the preference for the Model Minority resident over Black residents each played an individual role in shaping the identity of the San Gabriel Valley today. Racial prejudice and individual choice are critical components in the analysis of housing segregation and integration. In this way, the San Gabriel Valley is no different.

148. *Id.*

149. *Pickets Protest Alleged Discrimination at Tract*, L.A. TIMES, Feb. 23, 1962; *see also Sit-In Ends, Negro Buys Monterey Park Home*, L.A. TIMES, Apr. 6, 1962 (Bobby Liley, a 29 year old African American physicist attempted to purchase a home in the Monterey Highlands only to be told that there were no homes available. Yet, once Liley reported the incident to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), who sent in a white couple to the same tract as prospective buyers and who were told that seven houses were available).

150. Li, *supra* note 1, at 85; *see also Szto*, *supra* note 11, at 86.

151. Cheng, *supra* note 7, at 19 n.26.
