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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

A Community in Conflict:
Race, Class, and the Struggle for Educational Equity in San Diego City Schools,
1954-1985

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Gloria Kim

Committee in charge:

Professor Nayan Shah, Chair
Professor Luis Alvarez
Professor David Gutierrez
Professor Natalia Molina
Professor Rebecca Plant
Professor Meg Wesling

2013

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The Dissertation of Gloria Kim is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for
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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2013

DEDICATION

For my mother and father
in gratitude for their countless sacrifices
and
for Adam
who supported me every step of this journey

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Community in Conflict:
Race, Class, and the Struggle for Educational Equity in San Diego City Schools,
1954-1985

by

Gloria Kim

Doctor of Philosophy in History

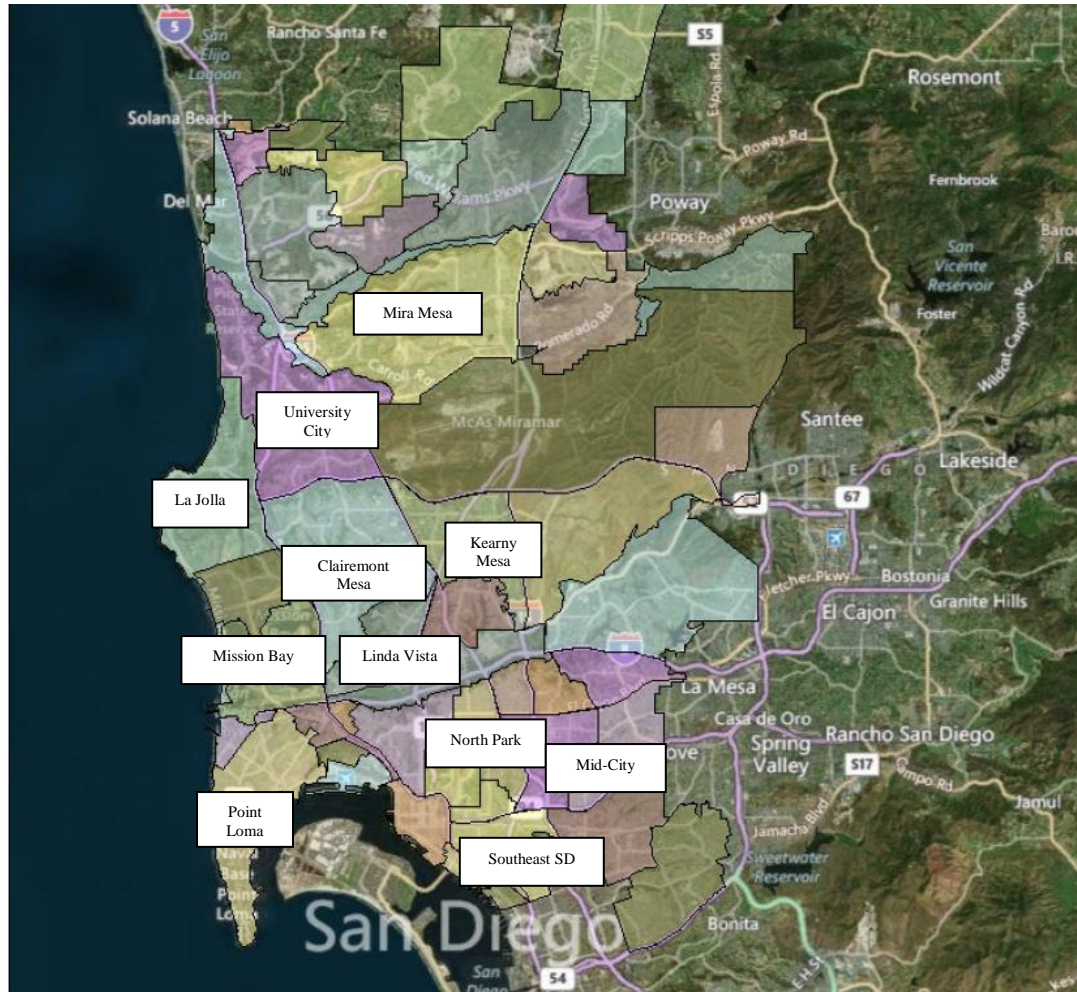
University of California, San Diego, 2013

Professor Nayan Shah, Chair

This dissertation explores local debates in the city of San Diego between and amongst African American, Asian American, Latino, and white community members of divergent socioeconomic backgrounds, over the meaning of educational equality, equity, and disparity from 1954 to 1985. It argues that no universal consensus existed within or across racial groups regarding what constituted educational justice for all children

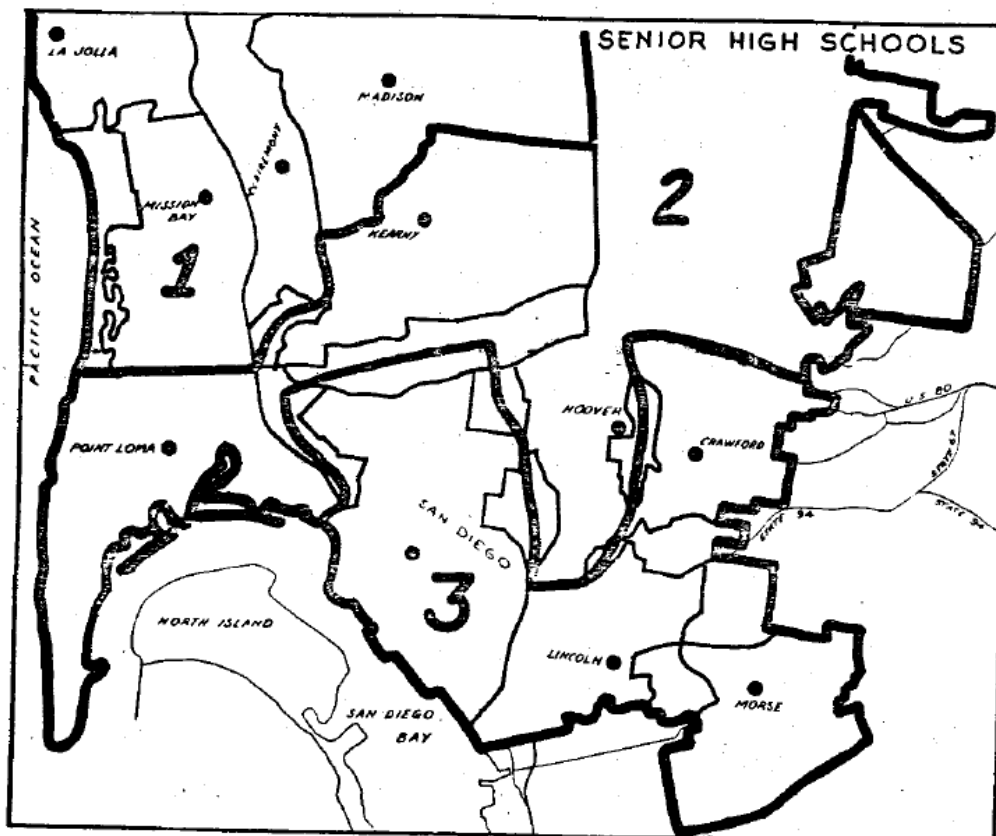
enrolled in the San Diego Unified School District. During the age of ascendant neoliberalism and shifting demographics in the 1960s and 1970s, individuals from diverse racial backgrounds who supported civil rights educational programs, such as racial integration and bilingual and bicultural education, clashed with a multiracial group of parents, students, and community members who believed that such programs perpetuated educational disparity and injustice for their children, wasted tax payer dollars, and/or unnecessarily allowed the government to intrude in local school district affairs. Thus, this dissertation argues for the importance of listening to individual voices within the African American, Asian American, Latino, and white populations, as parents, students, and community members lay claim to divergent understandings of educational justice based on their racial and ethnic identity, socioeconomic position, cultural values, and political ideologies. This multiracial study not only explores community tensions over the expansion of educational equity and civil rights, it also examines the contradictory multiracial visions of educational justice that resulted from clashes between civil rights and neoliberal ideologies.

MAPS



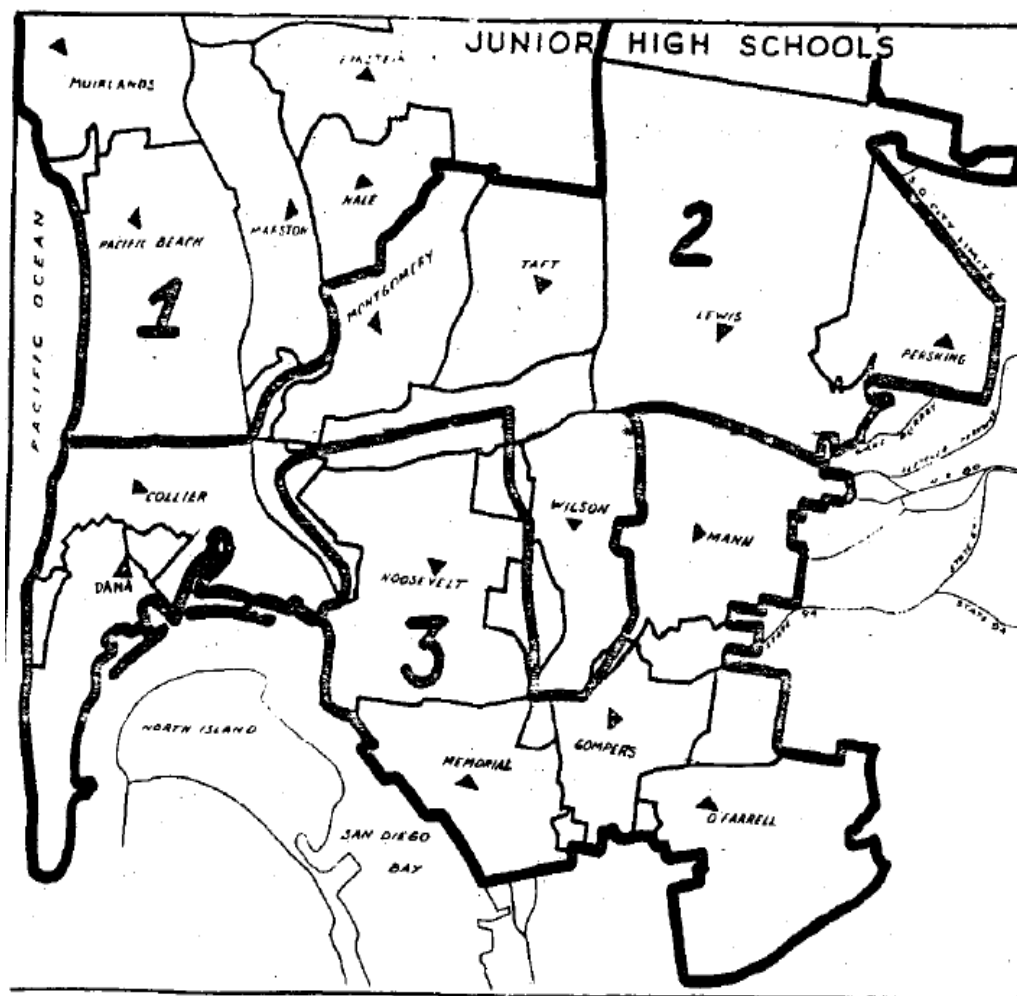
Map 1: San Diego Neighborhoods

Source: City of San Diego Map Gallery, www.sanGIS.org



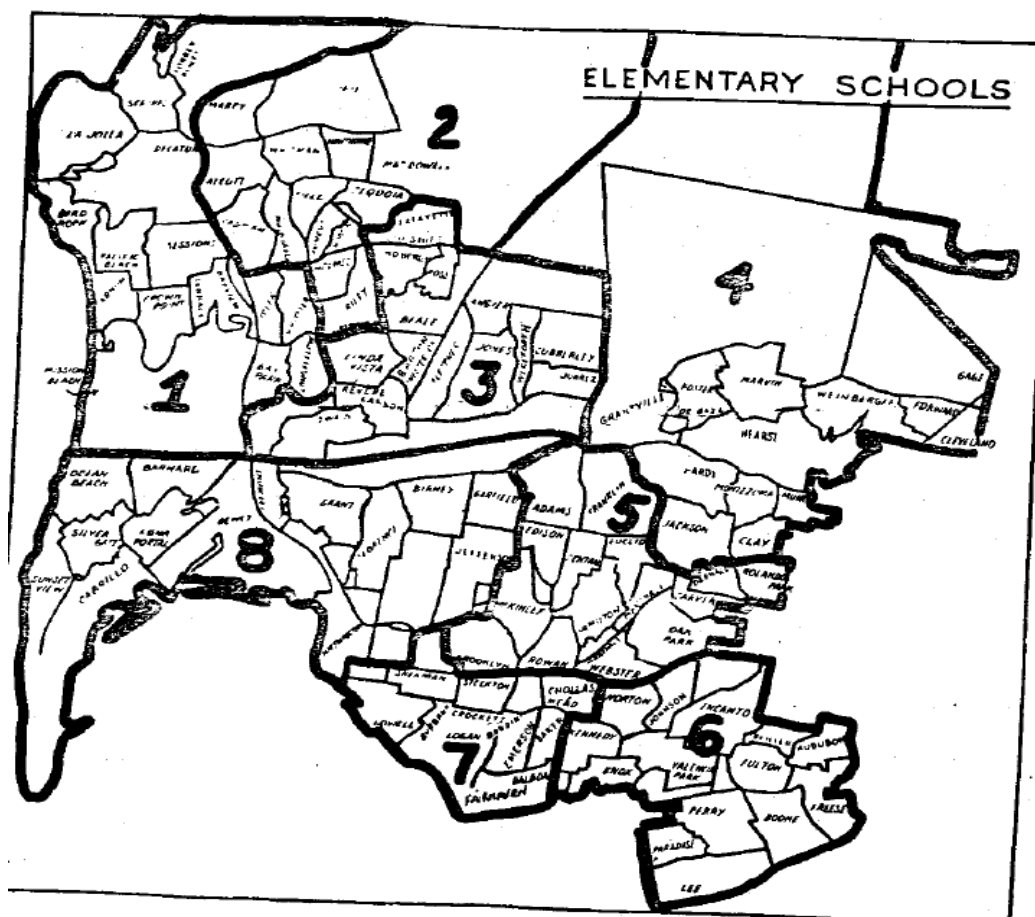
Map 2: San Diego Unified School District, High School Zones 1967-1968

Source: Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment, 1967-1968 (San Diego City Schools, November 1, 1967)



Map 3: San Diego Unified School District, Junior High School Zones 1967-1968

Source: Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment, 1967-1968 (San Diego City Schools, November 1, 1967)



Map 4: San Diego Unified School District, Elementary School Zones 1967-1968

Zone 1: Bay Park; Bayview Terrace; Bird Rock; Crown Point; Decatur; Farnum; La Jolla; Longfellow; Mission Beach; Pacific Beach; Scripps; Sessions; Toler; Torrey Pines; Whittier.

Zone 2: Alcott; Anderson; Cadman; Curie; Field; Hawthorne; Holmes; Macdowell; Marcy; Riley; Sequoia; Stevenson; Whitman; Wiggin.

Zone 3: Angier; Barton; Beale; Carson; Chesterton; Cubberley; Fletcher; Jones; Juarez; Lafayette; Linda Vista; Lindbergh; Revere; Ross; Sunshine; Twain; Wegforth.

Zone 4: Clay; Cleveland; De Anza; Forward; Foster; Gage; Grantville; Hardy; Hearst; Jackson; Marvin; Montezuma; Muir; Weinberger.

Zone 5: Adams; Brooklyn; Carver; Central; Darnall; Edison; Euclid; Franklin; Hamilton; Marshall; McKinley; Oak Park; Rolando Park; Rowan; Webster.

Zone 6: Audubon; Boone; Encanto; Freese; Fulton; Horton; Johnson; Keiller; Kennedy; Knox; Lee; Paradise Hills; Perry; Valencia Park.

Zone 7: Baker; Balboa; Bandini; Burbank; Chollas; Crockett; Emerson; Fairhaven; Logan; Lowell; Mead; Sherman; Stockton.

Zone 8: Barnard; Birney; Cabrillo; Dewey; Florence; Fremont; Garfield; Grant; Jefferson; Loma Portal; Ocean Beach; Silver Gate; Sunset View; Washington.

Source: Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment, 1967-1968 (San Diego City Schools, November 1, 1967).

Introduction

Rethinking Educational Equity in the Age of Neoliberalism

The United States Supreme Court's unanimous decision in the case *Brown v. Board of Education* forged an enduring bond between racial desegregation of public schools and the ideology of educational equality.¹ Over the next two decades, civil rights activists across the nation took to the streets, to their state legislatures, and especially to the courts, championing the argument that without racial desegregation and integration, there was no equality or justice for racialized and socioeconomically disadvantaged students who were denied access to decent teachers, curriculum, and facilities. Meanwhile, as Limited-English-Speaking (LES) and Non-English-Speaking (NES) immigrant and refugee children from Latin America and Asia enrolled in public schools in greater numbers during the 1960s and 1970s, their parents and community advocates contested the equation of racial integration with educational equality. Advocates for LES and NES students argued that even if a monolingual English-speaking classroom was racially integrated, there was no equality for students who lacked proficiency in English. For the LES and NES student population, educational equity took shape in the creation and implementation of bilingual and bicultural education. Both racial integration and bilingual education were touted as civil rights triumphs by politicians, lawmakers, and

¹ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* was decided on May 17, 1954. For readings specifically on the Brown decision, see Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975); Waldo E. Martin, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martins, 1998); Mark Whitman, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Documentary History* (Princeton NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004). For books that discuss *Brown's* unfulfilled promises, see: Peter Irons, *Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision* (New York: Viking, 2002); Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton, eds., *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: New Press, 1996); James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

educators, but the question persists: did ordinary community residents, parents, and students, accept either of these measures as representations of educational equity?

Statement of argument

This dissertation explores local debates in the city of San Diego between and amongst African American, Asian American, Latino, and white community members of divergent socioeconomic backgrounds over the meaning of educational equality, equity, and disparity from 1954 to 1985. It argues that no universal consensus existed within or across racial groups regarding what constituted educational justice for students enrolled in the San Diego Unified School District. During the height of civil rights activism in the 1950s and 1960s, the promotion of racial integration and bilingual education as equity was led by a multiracial coalition of people of color and white liberal allies who faced off against an obstinate, conservative, white opposition. In San Diego, the most visible push for civil rights educational justice took shape in 1967 with the multiracial class action lawsuit, *Kari Carlin et al. v. Board of Education San Diego*. Yet during the age of ascendant neoliberalism and increased frustration among people of color toward the civil rights movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, multiracial supporters of civil rights educational programs increasingly clashed against a multiracial group of parents, students, and community members who believed that racial integration and bilingual education not only perpetuated educational disparity and injustice for children attending public schools, but also wasted tax payer dollars and allowed the government to intrude in the affairs of the local school district. By examining individual voices within San Diego's African American, Asian American, Latino, and white communities, this dissertation demonstrates that the divergent personal understandings of educational

justice were not just rooted in personal experiences in a racially, socioeconomically, and culturally stratified society, but also in the politics of the 1970s which generated greater parental demands for personal control over their children's education, and an increased focus on individualistic rather than societal achievement.

As this dissertation argues, San Diego is an important space to explore competing visions of educational equality, equity, and disparity during the ascendant neoliberal age. San Diego's geographic location as a US/Mexico border town, its active US military presence, and its identity as an Anglo American vacation destination, ensured the city would maintain a diverse population with divergent social, political, and economic interests. As this dissertation demonstrates, San Diego's demographic shifts facilitated the expansion of civil rights educational programs to include both racial integration and bilingual education for children enrolled in the San Diego Unified School District. In addition, San Diego's diverse population ensured that the city became a site where traditional understandings of the objective of public education would be simultaneously contested and reinforced. While many San Diegans believed the purpose of public education was to assimilate all students into mainstream society by teaching Anglo American cultural values and immersing LES and NES students in monolingual English language classrooms, this dissertation demonstrates how multiracial community organizations and individuals contested the status quo by pushing for new educational goals that embraced linguistic diversity, contested social disparities, and promoted racial, ethnic and cultural diversity as an educational asset, rather than a liability.

Methodology, sources, and terminology

This dissertation investigates the multiracial debate over educational equity and disparity by attending to the diverse individual and organizational voices that emerged from the local and the state level. By utilizing the archival sources housed at San Diego State University's Special Collections, the California State Archives, the San Diego Historical Society, and the San Diego Public Library, as well as government publications, census records, newspapers, and magazines, this dissertation becomes an exploration of how a socioeconomically, racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse group of students, parents, and community organizations at the grassroots level responded to top-down enforcements of educational policies designed to address educational disparities. These archival sources acknowledge that the locus of power rested with the state, the school board, attorneys, and middle class white residents, but the sources also demonstrate that the ability to create and influence educational policies emanated from multiple sources and flowed in multiple directions between the State Department of Education, the California Legislature, the San Diego School Board, and the diverse population of San Diego residents.

The materials stored at San Diego State University's Special Collections proved essential to my investigation of local debates over educational equity and disparity, and the majority of sources for this dissertation were derived from my research at SDSU. Through a close examination of the Carlin Integration Case Records, the School Integration Task Force Records, Reverend George W. Smith Papers, Leon Williams Papers, Harold K. Brown Papers, Samuel I. Hayakawa Papers, League of Women Voters Records, Chicano Federation of San Diego County Records, Citizens United for Racial Equality Records, and the Union of Pan Asian Communities Records, I was able to

examine hundreds of correspondences, letters, speeches, and interviews made by students, parents, community members, and public officials as they debated the parameters of educational equity. Additionally, these collections contained minutes and reports issued by the San Diego School Board; newsletters, minutes, and correspondences of San Diego grassroots organizations; court documents, correspondences, and media related to the *Carlin* case; and reports issued by the San Diego Integration Task Force regarding the status of racial integration programs in public schools throughout the city. In addition to the sources at SDSU, local voices were also uncovered by an examination of interviews conducted through the San Diego Historical Society's Oral History Program. Newspapers and government publications housed at the San Diego Public Library's Central Library branch also proved invaluable to my research.

My research at the California State Archives in Sacramento proved necessary in determining the role the California State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction played in shaping policies designed to provide California children an equitable experience. I sifted through letters, correspondences, and government publications found in the files of Superintendents of Public Instruction Max Rafferty (1963-1970) and Wilson Riles (1971-1982). I also searched through materials found in the state Bilingual and Bicultural Task Force Papers, which proved essential to unpacking the contestations over bilingual educational policy at the state level.

As the sources reveal, historical actors sometimes used the terms "equality" and "equity," or "integration" and "desegregation" interchangeably. Throughout this dissertation, these terms are used with specific intent, except when quoting directly from a source. Educational equality means that every person of a similar age, regardless of his

or her background and beliefs, should have access to the same education, or an education of a comparable quality.² Both civil rights activists and conservative opponents used the language of equality for their own political purposes. Equity, on the other hand, calls for educators to recognize differences between students' backgrounds and abilities, and to tailor an educational program to their particular needs. The method and the distribution of resources differed, but the final outcome produced students with a comparable or equal skill set and basis of knowledge. Racial "integration" and "desegregation" were also conflated with one another, to the chagrin of supporters and opponents of racial integration efforts. In the strictest sense, desegregation meant the legal reversal of de jure segregation in schools. The practice of racial integration takes desegregation one step further by encouraging school districts to facilitate contact between two or more segregated parties.

Additionally, educational "disparity" is referenced frequently throughout my dissertation. I use disparity to indicate the existence of differences in educational opportunities and outcomes between students of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.³ Disparities existed due to discriminatory treatment, a negative learning environment, and/or the absence of equal or equitable educational resources and instruction. Yet as this dissertation demonstrates, many parents argued that disparities

² Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, "Putting Educational Equality in its Place," *Education Finance and Policy* 3, no. 4 (2008): 444-466; Larazo Moreno Herrera, "Equity, Equality and Equivalence: A Contribution In Search for Conceptual Definitions and a Comparative Methodology," *Revista Espanola de Educacion Comparada* 13 (2007): 319-340.

³ The American Psychological Association defines educational disparity as differences in educational outcomes which result from "differential or biased treatment of ethnic and racial minority students; differences in socioeconomic status; different responses to educational systems or different sets of educational needs." See <http://www.apa.org/ed/resources/racial-disparities.pdf>.

existed because of the prescriptive programs implemented by the school district, such as busing, magnet schools, and bilingual education.

Intervention in existing literature

My research intercedes in existing histories of public school racial desegregation and integration by examining how a shifting multiracial, multiethnic, and diverse socioeconomic demographic altered conversations and policies on educational equality and equity. Yet my research is greatly aided by the numerous existing historical studies of racial desegregation, integration, and the legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education* in relationship to black, Latino, and/ or white populations. Following the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 2004, there was a flurry of publications drawing attention to the weaknesses of the Supreme Court's 1954 decision. Kevin Gaines and other scholars participating in a *Journal of American History* roundtable argued that *Brown* and subsequent racial desegregation and integration policies established a paradoxical standard of symbolically attacking segregation by allowing black and white children to sit next to each other in the same classroom, but doing very little to attack the social and economic sources of inequality that continued to divide black and white communities.⁴ Contrary to arguments made by scholars such as Gary Orfield and Susan

⁴ Kevin Gaines, Clayborne Carson, Mary L. Dudziak, Adam Fairclough, Scott Kurashige, Daryl Michael Scott, Charles M. Payne, and Lani Guinier, "Round Table: *Brown v. Board of Education*, Fifty Years After," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (June 2004): 19-118. In his introduction Kevin Gaines references the paradoxical, rather than celebratory legacy of the *Brown* decision, particularly given the continual structural and educational inequalities that persist in American society; Clayborne Carson explores how proponents of *Brown* overestimated the ideological support for desegregation; Mary L. Dudziak explores the implications of *Brown* in a Cold War setting; Adam Fairclough explores the tensions within the black community as they responded to desegregation; Scott Kurashige explores how a coalition of black and Japanese American Los Angeles residents contested the notion of "integration" beyond the individual and towards the structural equalization of resources for racialized communities; Daryl Michael Scott argues that *Brown* had historical roots in scholarly calls for cultural pluralism and multiculturalism during the interwar period; Charles M. Payne explored how contemporaries during the *Brown* era

Eaton, articulations of a critical stance towards *Brown*, racial desegregation, and integration were not necessarily equated with a desire to resurrect the “separate but equal” standard which originated from *Plessy v. Ferguson*.⁵ Many scholars believed it necessary to contest the grip that desegregation and integration had on the ideology of educational equality and the practice of equity, in order to open the door to different methodologies to ensure that as many students as possible had access to quality education.

According to historians examining the critical intersections of race, class, and *Brown v. Board of Education*, the weakness of the court decision was due to three overlapping factors. First, as Derrick Bell argued, *Brown* brought about a “transformation without real change.” The Supreme Court decision inspired a widespread ideological commitment to equality in the courts and in politics, but provided no instruction regarding how equality should be attained. The only instruction *Brown* gave was that desegregation should occur with “all deliberate speed.”⁶ Second, as Bell and Lani Guinier maintain, *Brown’s* appeal was limited to an elitist coalition of middle class blacks, northern liberals and southern moderate whites.⁷ Third, as Guinier and Clayborne Carson contend, *Brown’s* emphasis on segregation’s toll on black psychology and the solution of desegregation came at the expense of those African Americans who

overestimated the power of the law, and underestimated the deep, sociohistorical roots of racial oppression; Lani Guinier examined how the ideologies within *Brown* diverged from actual interests of a multi-class group of African American and whites.

⁵ Orfield and Eaton, 23-51.

⁶ Earl Warren, “Ruling on Relief, May 31, 1955,” in *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Waldo E. Martin Jr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 198; Derrick A. Bell Jr., *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6.

⁷ Lani Guinier, “From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004): 94; Derrick A. Bell Jr., “*Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” *Harvard Law Review* 93 (Jan 1980): 523.

preferred to implement tangible reforms in their schools. Desegregation also risked angering poor whites who felt their concerns were neglected by the coalition of blacks and progressive whites.⁸ Carson argued that Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP's focus on black children's psychological mindset, with singular attention to desegregation, placed previous efforts of tackling the deteriorating conditions of segregated, all-black schools on the backburner.⁹ In the years following *Brown*, integration itself was minimal or non-existent for the majority of black students. As conditions in segregated all-black schools continued to deteriorate, black leaders responded by "prioritiz(ing) the improvement of black schools over school desegregation."¹⁰ Carson insists that because of its narrow focus on black psychology, *Brown* established an unnecessary choice between desegregation and the necessity of improving segregated schools. Carson argued, "Rather than having to choose between overcoming racial barriers and improving black community institutions, we should be able to choose both."¹¹

Historical analyses of the African American-white divide over school desegregation and integration in cities across the nation are numerous. From Thomas

⁸ Guinier, 102. As Guinier writes, "Many poor and working class whites saw themselves as victims. Second, they saw desegregation as downward economic mobility. To poor whites, compulsory association with blacks brought no added value and endangered the sense of autonomy and community they did have." Unfortunately the socioeconomic concerns of poor, working class whites were overshadowed by the concerns of the white middle class. Historical scholarship by David Roediger, Matthew Frye Jacobson, and Neil Foley explore how whiteness had been socially constructed to placate poor and working class whites, by framing white identity as a "public and psychological wage," despite their continual existence near the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. The idea was that while they may be poor, at least they were white. David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 2007); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁹ Clayborne Carson, "Two Cheers for *Brown v. Board of Education*," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (June 2004): 28-29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

Sugre's investigation of northern cities and suburbs, Kevin Kruse's study of white flight in Atlanta, Carl Bankston and Stephen Caldas's analysis of the failures of integration in Louisiana, Daniel Perlstein's study of New York City, and Ronald Formisano's work on the volatile tensions in Boston over busing, these authors highlight the friction between black and white communities. The friction also exploded into fierce disagreements within the white and African American communities, respectively, regarding their support or opposition to desegregation and integration.¹² Additionally, a significant body of scholarship outlining white discontent, and the failures of desegregation and integration, fomented an intense scholarly debate, with ardent pro-integrationists like Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton on one side, and critics of desegregation and integration like Bankston and Caldas, Christine Rossell, David Armour, and Raymond Wolters on the other.¹³ While white discontent and African American contestations of the uneven legacy of desegregation and integration have received the most attention within the scholarship of educational equality, numerous examples of Chicano and Latino activism against segregation in the southwest also feature prominently in desegregation and integration literature, particularly the works of Guadalupe San Miguel, Ruben Donato,

¹² Carl L. Bankston III and Stephen J. Caldas, *A Troubled Dream: The Promise and Failure of School Desegregation in Louisiana* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002); Ronald Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Daniel Perlstein, *Justice Justice: School Politics and the Eclipse of Liberalism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003); Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).

¹³ Christine H. Rossell, *The Carrot or the Stick for School Desegregation Policy: Magnet Schools or Forced Busing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Christine H. Rossell, David J. Armor, and Herbert J. Walberg, eds., *School Desegregation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Prager, 2002); Raymond Wolters, *Race and Education 1954-2007* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008).

Gilbert Gonzales, and M. Beatriz Arias.¹⁴ In Arias's case study of school integration in San Jose, CA, Arias examines how Latino parents, students, and community members found little satisfaction with school integration efforts, particularly since "under the district's plan, minority students not only would be forced to do most of the busing, but they would also lose many of their neighborhood schools."¹⁵ As Arias explains, Latino community members were virtually ignored in school board negotiations over the mechanisms used to integrate San Jose's schools.¹⁶ Once Latino community members became more active in local politics and policy making during the 1990s, the school board developed a series of programs that directly addressed the needs of a diverse Latino population, such as bilingual education, ESL classes, goal setting programs, increased access to magnet school programs, extracurricular activities, gifted programs and special education.¹⁷

In cities such as San Jose, Denver, or San Diego where multiple, statistically significant racial and ethnic groups lived in close proximity to one another, a one size fits all approach towards educational equality fails to address the disparate needs of the student population. As Yen Le Espiritu explained, racial and ethnic groups experienced "differential inclusions" into the nation's economy, culture, and identity, despite shared

¹⁴ Ruben Donato, *The Other Struggle for Equal Schools: Mexican Americans During the Civil Rights Era* (Albany: State University of New York, 1997); Gilbert G. Gonzales, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press, 1990); Guadalupe San Miguel, "Let All of Them Take Heed:" *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Guadalupe San Miguel, *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 2001); Richard Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts: The Mexican American Legal Struggle for Educational Equality* (New York: New York University Press, 2008);

¹⁵ M. Beatriz Arias, "The Impact of *Brown* on Latinos: A Study of the Transformation of Policy Intentions," *Teachers College Record* 107, no. 9 (September 2005): 1982.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1983.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1990.

local experiences of discrimination and exclusion from jobs, housing, education, and social services.¹⁸ Therefore, many societal problems that troubled African American communities differed from Latino communities, particularly around topics of language, citizenship, and naturalization. Using African Americans and Latinos living in Denver as an example, both Arias, and Orfield reference the Supreme Court recognition in *Keyes v. School District no. 1 Denver* (1973) that “Negroes and Hispanos in Denver suffer identical discrimination in treatment when compared with the treatment afforded Anglo students.”¹⁹ Yet Arias and Orfield both insisted that the Supreme Court erred in calling for a sweeping solution to alleviate segregation of both African Americans and Latinos.²⁰ As Arias contended, “By equating Chicanos and Blacks and affirming that both should be accorded the same rights, the Court did not address important differences between the two groups- such as language acquisition needs.” She concludes, “This lack of clarity has allowed remedies designed to address the racial isolation of African Americans to be applied to Latinos without regard for the different aspects of language and culture that distinguish the educational needs of each group.”²¹

Neil Foley and Emily Straus’s recent research examines the racial tensions between African American and Latino community members, as they struggled for access

¹⁸ Yen Le Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Espiritu, along with Lisa Lowe and David G. Gutierrez argue that Asian and Mexican immigrants were considered important for US economic stability, and so were included as low wage, easily exploitable labor force, but they were also marginalized and made perpetually foreign for the maintenance of white citizenship. David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

¹⁹ *Keyes v. School District no. 1 Denver*, 413 U.S. 189 (1973).

²⁰ Arias, 1980; Gary Orfield, *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1978).

²¹ Arias, 1980.

and control over their children's education. Foley's book *The Quest for Equality* offers a nuanced look at tensions between African Americans and Mexican Americans during the era of *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), as Mexican American groups argued for desegregation on the basis of being legally white, while they simultaneously insisted their success could easily be translated into victories for other racial minorities.²² As long as Mexican Americans laid claim to a white identity, tensions would persist between Mexican Americans and African Americans in their legal tactics. Yet Foley points out that when Mexican Americans began to develop their identity as "brown" people, we see increasing moments of solidarity and coalition building between the two groups.

Historian Emily Straus's article on African American and Latino living in Compton, CA demonstrates how widespread discrimination by the white establishment availed blacks and Latinos a very limited number of jobs and resources, which fostered competition rather than cooperation between the two groups.²³ As increasing numbers of Latinos arrived in Compton and enrolled in public schools, African Americans began blaming the newcomers for the scarcity of resources and decreasing economic prospects, rather than focusing on the failures of the state, and the government's budget shortcomings. Consequently, as Latinos began to clamor for bilingual instruction, and increased access to jobs in the education sector, African American school district employees and government officials emulated the actions of white community members

²² Neil Foley, *The Quest for Equality: The Failed Promise of Black-Brown Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

²³ Emily Straus, "Unequal Pieces of a Shrinking Pie: The Struggle Between African Americans and Latinos over Education, Employment, and Empowerment in Compton, California," *History of Education Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (November 2009): 507-529.

who previously launched discriminatory actions against them, to deny Latinos access to educational remedies.²⁴

Historical research on educational equality and equity has predominantly focused on the disparities faced by African American and Latino populations, or the tensions between African Americans and whites. A few scholars have presented histories of Asian American educational disparity, although the historical scholarship is largely confined to Chinese American and Japanese American students in California or Hawaii during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Charles Wollenberg, Victor Low, Roger Daniels, and John Hawkins describe the experience of ethnic Chinese and Japanese students during the era of “yellow peril,” as their children were segregated into “separate but equal” schools due to de jure segregation written into the California Educational Code.²⁵ These authors, along with Eileen Tamura and David Yoo, discuss the adaptive strategies used by ethnic Chinese and Japanese communities as they created their own language schools to ensure their children received an education that promoted their native language and cultural values.²⁶ Thomas James shifts the focus of Asian American educational disparities by examining the educational experiences of Japanese Americans

²⁴ Ibid., 522.

²⁵ Charles Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed: Segregation and Exclusion in California Schools, 1855-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Charles Wollenberg, “‘Yellow Peril’ in the Schools,” in *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students*, eds. Don T. Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida. (New York: Routledge, 1995): 3-12; Victor Low *The Unimpressible Race: A Century of Educational Struggle by the Chinese in San Francisco* (San Francisco: East West Publishing Company, 1982); Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle of Japanese Exclusion* (New York: Atheneum, 1967); John N. Hawkins, “Politics, Education and Language Policy: The Case of Japanese Language Schools in Hawaii,” *Amerasia Journal* 5 no. 1 (1978): 39-56.

²⁶ Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); David Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation and Culture Among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

during WWII and internment.²⁷ L. Ling-Chi Wang pushes the conversation forward in time and explores the legal fight by Chinese Americans in San Francisco as they pushed the school board to create a bilingual program for their children, ultimately resulting in the *Lau v. Nichols* decision in 1974.²⁸

A majority of research articles on Asian American educational issues focus on contesting the model minority thesis, expanding Asian American representation in the curriculum, and/or pushing for a broadening understanding of Asian and Pacific Islanders as a diverse group with divergent educational needs.²⁹ It is in this body of scholarship that authors explore the disparities faced by a diverse group of Asian American, immigrant, and refugee communities. Don Nakanishi describes the ramifications that the demographic shifts of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s had on teaching pedagogy, as educators, parents, and community members began to push for curricular reform and greater attention towards the social and linguistic differences of immigrant and refugee

²⁷ Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans 1942-1945* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Thomas James, "Life Begins with Freedom: The College Nisei, 1952-1945," *History of Education Quarterly* 25 (Spring/Summer 1985): 155-74.

²⁸ L. Ling-Chi Wing, "Lau v. Nichols: History of a Struggle for Equal and Quality Education" in *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students*, eds. Don T. Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida. (New York: Routledge, 1995): 59-91.

²⁹ Articles and chapters by Ki-Taek Chun, Bob Suzuki, and scholars examine the negative consequences of the model minority thesis, as it obscured the academic and social needs of vulnerable student populations. See Ki-Taek Chun, "The Myth of Asian American Success and its Educational Ramifications," in *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students*, eds. Don T. Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida. (New York: Routledge, 1995): 95-112; Bob H. Suzuki, "Education and the Socialization of Asian Americans," in *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students*, eds. Don T. Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida. (New York: Routledge, 1995): 113-132. For additional readings, see Tina Yamano Nishida, "Selected Annotated Bibliography on Asian/Pacific Americans and Education," in *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students*. eds. Don T. Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida. (New York: Routledge, 1995): 373-390.

students.³⁰ In their study of Southeast Asian refugee students' academic disparities, Kenji Ima and Ruben Rumbaut questioned the inclusion of Southeast Asian refugee students under the general "Asian American" rubric, arguing their educational needs diverged dramatically from other Asian immigrant and resident students.³¹ In addition to sociological and historical analyses of Asian American educational disparities, studies by Laura Pulido, Karen Umemoto, and Yen Le Espiritu explore how Asian American students in the late 1960s played an active role in contesting social and educational injustices, and pushed for institutional reform in their university classrooms and in the greater Asian Pacific Islander community.³² By examining the body of available historical and sociological scholarship on Asian American education, it is clear that divergent strategies of equity were, and continue to be, necessary to ensure that Asian Americans, immigrants and refugees receive a fair education.

Finally, recent historical scholarship on multiracial community struggles for racial equality are particularly relevant for my dissertation, especially the works of Mark Brilliant, Daniel Martinez HoSang, and Shana Bernstein. These authors shift the focus of grassroots community struggles for justice and fairness in education away from the North, East, and South, and beyond the black-white binary, to explore the fragile civil

³⁰ Don Nakanishi, "Growth and Diversity: The Education of Asian/Pacific Americans," in *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students*, eds. Don T. Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida. (New York: Routledge, 1995): xi-xx.

³¹ Kenji Ima and Ruben Rumbaut, "Southeast Asian Refugees in American Schools: A Comparison of Fluent English Proficient and Limited English Proficient Students," in *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students* eds. Don T. Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida (New York: Routledge, 1995): 180-197.

³² Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Karen Umemoto, "On Strike: San Francisco State College Strike 1968-69: The Role of Asian American Students," *Amerasia Journal* 15, no. 1 (1989): 3-41; Amy Tachiki et al. eds. *Roots: An Asian American Reader* (Los Angeles: Continental Graphics, 1971).

rights coalitions built between African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and progressive whites, or to question why such coalitions had difficulty gaining widespread support.³³ Bernstein situates her multiracial study of civil rights activism during the height of the Cold War, and argues that the politics of a specific historical moment were absolutely influential in shaping the objectives of civil rights coalitions. In Brilliant's chapter entitled "To Break Up Coalitions of Minority People," he meticulously argues that racial integration victories for African Americans did not easily translate as a triumph for Chinese Americans and Latinos. As the San Francisco branch of the NAACP lobbied for the school district to uphold racial integration initiatives such as busing, Chinese Americans and Latinos protested the "forced" removal of their children, arguing they would be better served in separate bilingual classrooms.³⁴ In his book *Racial Propositions*, HoSang examines several California ballot initiatives tackling discrimination in employment, housing, education, language, affirmative action, and privacy from 1946 to 2003. He argues that multiracial debates over each proposition were instrumental in the creation of racialized political communities, and formation of public contestations over race.³⁵ As Californians debated over busing, bilingual ballots, bilingual education, and whether to make English an official state language, opponents and proponents of each proposition laid claims to the ideology of fairness. As Civil Rights advocates pushed for equality and equity for all interest groups, conservative

³³ Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁴ Brilliant, chapter 8.

³⁵ HoSang, 4.

politicians and community members positioned themselves as racially innocent victims of an overreaching state that sought to take what they imagined belonged to them, whether it was tangible or ideological, and distribute it to undeserving recipients.

This dissertation makes critical interventions in the existing histories of educational equality, equity and disparity, as well as the history of civil rights activism and multiracial community studies. First, regarding the histories on education, this dissertation expands the conversation of educational equality beyond a black-white or Latino-white binary, and explores how a multiracial group of community members with diverging socioeconomic interests endorsed or contested the mandate issued by *Brown v. Board of Education* to desegregate and racially integrate public schools in the name of equality. Additionally, this research demonstrates how the actions of a multiracial, multiethnic group of immigrants and refugees from Latin America and Asia were central to broadening the conversation of equality and equity to include bilingual and bicultural education. This project also contests the assumption that the implementation of bilingual and bicultural education ensured an equitable educational experience for all immigrant and refugee students. As this dissertation demonstrates, bilingual and bicultural education programs, like racial integration programs, were plagued with inconsistencies in their execution and uncertainties over their ultimate objectives.

Regarding the history of civil rights and multiracial community studies, this dissertation situates the multiracial struggle for educational justice not just in the civil rights moment, but also during the age of transition from civil rights to neoliberalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. While this dissertation examines the multiracial civil rights debates over conflicting visions of educational equity and justice, this project also

complicates the correlation of multiracial community studies with civil rights activism. Many African American, Asian American, Latino, and white community members contested legislative and judicial interventions into local school district affairs, arguing that racial integration and bilingual education programs violated their rights as parents and tax paying community members to select their children's classmates, teachers, and curriculum, and to dictate how their tax dollars should be spent. Thus, this dissertation not only explores tensions within a multiracial community over the expansion of educational equity and civil rights, but also the contradictory multiracial vision of educational justice within a civil rights and neoliberal framework.

Chapter organization

This dissertation explores competing ideas of educational equality, equity and disparity within a multiracial and socioeconomically diverse community over the course of three decades. This dissertation is divided into two major sections, with chapters one and two exploring the multiracial community debates over racial desegregation and integration, and chapters three, four, and five examining community tensions over bilingual and bicultural education and national identity. The chapters on racial integration precede the chapters on bilingual education in order to demonstrate the impact that demographic shifts had on the multiracial debate over educational equality and equity, even though community debates over racial integration occurred simultaneously with debates over bilingual and bicultural education in the late 1970s. Each section begins with a discussion of multiracial civil rights activism on behalf of racial integration or bilingual education during the 1960s, and concludes by examining the multiracial

struggles over divergent understandings of educational justice in the age of political, economic, and social conservatism.

Chapter one situates the dissertation in the city of San Diego during the civil rights era, and explores racial and class disparities in education, housing, and job opportunities for people of color. It then investigates the civil rights struggle for racial desegregation and integration, by examining the debate between the plaintiffs and the defendant in the class action lawsuit *Carlin et al. v Board of Education San Diego*. This chapter also explores black and Latino student activism, as they presented an alternate vision of educational justice based on improvements in their local school, racial self-reliance, and community control.

Chapter two deconstructs the anti-integration stance of African American, Asian American, Latino, and white San Diego parents during the 1970s, which was a decade marked by ascendant conservative and neoliberal politics, and heightened economic anxiety. While parents' racial and socioeconomic statuses produced divergent forms of discontent with the school district's integration program, this chapter argues that the anti-integration stance of middle-class parents, and parents living in southeast San Diego, were based on a common belief that busing and magnet schools were a source of disparity and injustice. Rather than wasting time and tax dollars on unpopular civil rights programs, these parents argued that improvements to neighborhood schools and programs would produce favorable educational results for their children.

Chapter three examines the dramatic demographic changes taking place in San Diego as more immigrants arrived from Latin America and Asia beginning in 1965. This chapter situates the emergence of bilingual and bicultural education in the civil rights

movement for educational equality, due to the activism of ethnic Mexican and Chinese community members, parents, and politicians. Yet, as this chapter demonstrates, the existence of bilingual education did not guarantee equity, particularly if the program itself was plagued with bureaucratic barriers, inconsistencies, and disorganization.

Chapter four focuses on the educational and social disparities experienced by a rapidly growing, heterogeneous Southeast Asian refugee population, and examines the tensions over bilingual education. The San Diego Unified School District implemented a transitional bilingual program to move LES and NES students into monolingual English classrooms as quickly as possible. Yet members of San Diego's Union of Pan Asian Communities presented an alternative vision of bilingual education, which prioritized the maintenance of the student's native language, cultural practices, and histories as a permanent part of the curriculum.

Finally, chapter five examines the reactionary anti-bilingual and bicultural education stance by a multiracial group of San Diegans during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Opponents of bilingual and bicultural education, led by the San Diego County Grand Jury and California Republican Senator S.I. Hayakawa, argued that both programs promoted educational and social disparity for LES and NES students, as they allegedly blocked them from learning the English language and from equal participation in mainstream American society. Furthermore, opponents argued that the teaching of native language and cultures paved the way towards racial separatism and anti-Americanism. In response, a multiracial group of San Diegans defended the district's transitional bilingual education program, stating that opponents willfully misconstrued its purpose, and it was the anti-bilingual stance that was the source of separatism and educational disparity.

Conclusion

Commonly held understandings of educational equality connote parity in resources, curriculum, quality of instruction, and opportunities for academic advancement, for students of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Following the passage of *Brown v. Board of Education*, civil rights leaders promoted racial integration as a means to attain educational equality, and thus implement educational justice for racial minority groups that had been marginalized and denied the same resources and quality of instruction as middle class whites. Yet, as this dissertation demonstrates, a multiracial group of San Diegans eschewed racial integration as a means for educational equity, arguing the programs perpetuated educational inequalities and social antagonisms. A diverse group of immigrants and refugees from Latin America and Asia also contested parity as a form of educational justice, pointing out that if LES and NES students could not understand their lessons, it did not matter how equal the resources were. For community advocates and parents of LES and NES students, bilingual education was an equitable form of instruction. Yet, just as a multiracial group of San Diegans protested racial integration, a diverse group of residents condemned bilingual and bicultural education, instead promoting English language immersion as the most equal and equitable educational program for LES and NES immigrant and refugee students.

Following an examination of diverse voices of students, parents, and community members, this dissertation demonstrates that what constituted educational equality or equity differed according to the values of individuals or groups, formed by their differential inclusions into a racially, socioeconomically, and culturally stratified society,

and influenced by the politics of a given historical moment. Therefore, this dissertation argues that no singular program, whether it was racial integration or bilingual education, could lay claim to a universal understanding of equality and equity. While some groups, due to their political connections and socioeconomic position, had a greater chance than historically marginalized groups to ensure their preferred program became policy, this dissertation reveals that formal or informal coalitions of residents at the local level could also effectively compel changes in policy based on their commonly held understanding of equality and equity. The existence of multiple understandings of educational equality and equity ensures that San Diego would remain a community in conflict. Yet in the ongoing struggle to determine which educational programs served students best, it is imperative that the voices of every community member be heard.

Chapter 1

Trouble in Paradise: San Diego's Racial Landscape and the Call for School Integration 1954-1969

On Tuesday morning, May 18, 1954, the day after the Supreme Court issued its landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the San Diego *Union*'s headlines blared "Segregation Illegal, Says High Court: Supreme Tribunal's Decision Unanimous for Public Schools." Despite the shocking headline, San Diegans brushed aside calls for desegregation, believing the struggle was only relevant to the American South. In the 1950s, letters to the editor of the *Union* reflected this nonchalant attitude: "The South will accept the decision calmly and without much disappointment," one *Union* reader wrote.³⁶ "The Southern states will eventually accept a responsibility placed only on them," wrote another.³⁷ As southern states defiantly refused to acquiesce to the demands of the Supreme Court, white San Diegans maintained a position as distant observers of the debate, believing they had no racial problems in their public schools. Yet by the 1960s San Diegans themselves would be embroiled in their own heated debate over desegregating and racially integrating the city's public k-12 schools. While many white residents argued that San Diego schools already provided a good education for all children, a multiracial subset of community members demanded that the school district begin to rectify long existing historical inequalities resulting from school racial segregation.

This chapter examines the divergent strategies utilized by proponents of educational equality for students of all racial backgrounds, and argues that conflict

³⁶ Victor Yarros, "Moral Progress Slow but Inevitable," *San Diego Union*, May 22, 1954.

³⁷ George Sokolsky, "South Deserves Every Kind of Help," *San Diego Union*, May 28, 1954.

originated from the different ways the African American, Latino and white communities believed educational justice should be obtained.³⁸ In San Diego, the most visible attack on racially segregated schools was through the court system with the class action lawsuit *Kari Carlin et al. v. Board of Education San Diego Unified School District*. In this suit, a group of white, African American, Latino and Asian American parents sued the school district, charging that their children were not receiving equal educational opportunities because the schools were racially segregated, and the school board was deliberately appeasing a segment of the white population that wanted to uphold the status quo. The unique multiracial composition of the Carlin case marshaled together the support of a diverse group of parents, advocates, politicians, and community organizations. Together this coalition insisted that racial integration was the best way to tackle ongoing systemic inequalities in the educational system. While they posed that it was important for children of different racial backgrounds to interact with each other, the unspoken assumption was that the close proximity of non-white bodies with white bodies would result in the sharing of resources, teachers, and funding which were necessary steps towards educational equality.

³⁸ A note on terminology: In this study, “Latino” is used to generally refer to residents of Latin descent, regardless of American citizenship status. While the majority of Latinos in San Diego were Mexican and Mexican American, it is important to recognize the presence of small but growing populations originating from Central and South America and the Caribbean. I use the term “Latino” not to homogenize, or to dismiss the gendered nature of “Latino” v “Latina,” but to recognize potential political and economic allegiances between people who have encountered similar racialization. For additional discussion on etymology and politics surrounding the term “Latino” and “Hispanic,” see Nicholas De Genova & Ana Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2003), chapter 1; Carlos Munoz Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement* (New York: Verso, 1989), 17-28.

The term “white” also carries historical complications. The US Census has categorized individuals of Latin descent as white, despite their exclusion from social and political participation in the US mainstream. Furthermore, ethnic groups such as the Irish and Jewish are contemporarily categorized as “white,” but historically they were barred from the privileges of whiteness. For this study, “white” will be used to refer to groups of European origin, or the dominant Anglo American population.

While the Carlin legal team championed racial integration, other community members questioned how non-white children sitting next to white children in a classroom would promote equality for educational opportunities and outcomes. The Carlin legal team understood that with the existing neighborhood schools system, better schools existed where white families lived. Residents living in middle-to-upper class neighborhoods had better funded schools, since property tax dollars were a key source of revenue for local schools. Historically, white individuals had greater access to economic capital and economic opportunities compared to non-white persons, and could afford to live in more affluent neighborhoods. By implementing racial integration, the expectation was that revenue for schools would be dispersed more evenly throughout the district. While it provided a short-term solution to the racial segregation crisis in the district, racial integration privileged and made use of middle class economic capital without challenging the social conditions that caused racial economic disparity. On these grounds, some African American and Latino community leaders rejected calls for racial integration and argued that educational equity required improvements in the quality of teaching and curriculum.

In juxtaposition to the assumptions that African American and Latino students had to sit next to white, middle class students in order to receive a quality education, in April 1969, African American and Latino students attending Lincoln High School presented an alternative vision of educational equality and justice. A group of black and brown students calling themselves the Central Committee submitted a list demanding 22 changes in the school's administration and curriculum. Among their demands was the insistence that African American and Mexican American history and culture be

recognized as part of the curriculum. Nowhere in their demands for equity did the students express belief that their education would improve if they attended schools with more white students in the city. The students protested peacefully, but their acts of demonstration drew accusations of violent radicalism by the city establishment. Even white community leaders who were sympathetic to the plight of Lincoln High School students expressed concern that student demands might lead them down the path towards racial separatism.

The Carlin legal case and the Lincoln High School student protest represented two responses to the challenge implicit in the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling: if separate was not equal, how does one achieve equality in the schools? By applying a multiracial lens on the struggle for educational justice, complimentary as well as contradictory solutions adopted by white, African American, and Latino community members to improve their local schools are revealed. They shared a common frustration with the San Diego School Board of Education, who was eager to appease an anxious white population by maintaining the status quo. Yet their proposed solutions addressed the problems encountered through their different socio-historical and racial experiences living in San Diego, a city that prided itself in its pro-military, Anglo American vacationland image. Living in a city where the majority of white residents believed that racial tensions did not affect their town, African American, Latino, and white proponents of educational equity and justice constructed solutions that specifically tackled concerns expressed by their ethnic or racial community, even placing potential allies in opposition with one another.

Mapping San Diego

Throughout the 20th century, San Diego boosters worked hard to present the city's image as a progressive, all-American, west coast vacation destination with a Spanish fantasy past.³⁹ In sunny San Diego, all the problems that plagued cities in the east, such as systemic racism, class division, and labor conflict were swept under the metaphorical carpet. San Diego was an Anglo American sanctuary, "a new Anglo American bourgeois utopia," attracting thousands of new residents every year.⁴⁰ Yet demographic changes challenged the city's image as an Anglo paradise. Between 1940 and 1970, the general population of the city would triple in size, from 203,341 to 693,931 people. While the number of individuals who identified themselves as "white" continued to retain numerical dominance, the Census reveals that the "nonwhite" population, which included African Americans and persons of Chinese, Japanese and Filipino ancestry, also experienced growth. As demonstrated in Table 1, according to figures from the 1940 and 1970 Censuses, the African American population grew from 4,143 to 52,925 persons, Chinese from 451 to 2,616 persons, Japanese from 828 to 3,839 persons, and Filipinos from 799 to 9,058 persons. Even the category "white" also requires careful examination, as individuals of Latin ancestry were counted as part of the "white" population in the Censuses from 1940-1970, though they did not have the same legal and social standing as Anglo "whites." Even though a separate "Spanish Surname" category was used in the 1950 and 1970 Censuses, it does not preclude the counting of Latinos as part of the "white" population.

³⁹ Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew and Jim Miller, *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See* (New York: New Press, 2005).

⁴⁰ Miller, 162.

To understand the reasons behind San Diego's demographic shifts, it is necessary to discuss San Diego's relationship with the United States military, and unpack its history as a racial and geographic borderland. Throughout the 20th century, San Diego boasted its connections with the United States military, with Coronado Naval Base nestled in the south, Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base in the north county, and Miramar Marine Corps Air Station located approximately ten miles north of downtown. During World War II, San Diego had eight Navy and Marine facilities throughout the county.⁴¹ Employment in the military, the aircraft industry and the government attracted a diverse group of job seekers to the city. During World War II, African American job seekers tripled the city's African American population from 4,143 to 13,136 people.⁴² The pattern of growth would continue and by 1970, African Americans would become the most visible minority group in the city, numbering approximately 8% of the population.

The US Navy also played a central role in the settlement of Filipinos into San Diego's neighborhoods. The United States and the Philippines shared a long and tumultuous history following the Spanish American War of 1898, and the Philippine American War of 1899-1902, in which the former Spanish colony unwillingly became a colony of the United States.⁴³ As the United States embarked on a project of empire building in the Pacific, they established military bases and recruited Filipino men to work

⁴¹ Leroy E. Harris, "The Other Side of the Freeway: A Study of Settlement Patterns of Negroes and Mexican Americans in San Diego, California" (PhD diss. Carnegie Mellon University, May 1974), 43.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴³ For additional reading on US imperialism in the Philippines, the US colonizing mission abroad through military might and education, and the effects of colonization on US soil, see Paul A. Kramer, "Race-Making and Colonial Violence in the U.S. Empire: The Philippine-American War as Race War," *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 2 (April 2006): 169-210; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples At Home and Abroad 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), part 3; Meg Wesling, *Empire's Proxy: American Literature and U.S. Imperialism in the Philippines* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

Table 1-1: Population of Select Groups, San Diego City, 1940-1970

	1940 Census	1950 Census	1960 Census	1970 Census
Total Population	203,341	334,387	573,224	693,931 (urban)
Black	4,143	14,904	34,435	52,925
White	196,946	316,023	528,512	616,796
“Spanish Surname”	n/a	15,490	X	88,201
Filipino	799	X	3,615	9,058
Chinese	451	X	1,290	2,616
Japanese	828	X	2,535	3,839

Sources: Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Number of Inhabitants, vol. 1, *Population of Cities of 10,000 or More From Earliest Census to 1940* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942); Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Nativity and Parentage of the White Population, *White Population by Nativity, Parentage and Sex for Cities of 100,000 to 500,000 Inhabitants 1940 and 1930* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943); Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Characteristics of the Nonwhite Population by Race, *Nonwhite Population By Race for Cities of 100,000 or More* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943); Census of the Population: 1950, Number of Inhabitants, *Population of Urban Places of 10,000 or More From Earliest Census to 1950* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952); Census of the Population: 1950, Census Tract Statistics San Diego California and Adjacent Area, vol. 3, part 4, *Characteristics of the Population by Census Tracts, 1950* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952); Census of Population: 1950, Persons of Spanish Surname, vol. 4, part 3, *Citizenship and Country of Birth of White Persons of Spanish Surname For Counties and Urban Places of 10,000 or More in Selected Southwestern States* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953); Census of the Population: 1960, Characteristics of the Population, California, vol. 1, part 6, *Characteristics of the Population for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963); 1970 Census of the Population: Characteristic of the Population, California, vol. 1, part 6, *Population of Places 1970 and 1960; Race by Sex for Areas and Places; General Characteristics of Persons of Spanish Language or Spanish Surname for Areas and Places 1970* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

in the Navy, largely as stewards and mess boys.⁴⁴ Even after the Philippines was granted independence in 1946, the US Navy continued to recruit Filipino citizens, at a rate of two

⁴⁴ Yen Le Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 28.

thousand persons per year, for a period of four to six years.⁴⁵ As Yen Le Espiritu documented, a large segment of the Filipino immigrant community in the United States had direct ties to the Navy, and many of them settled in naval cities such as San Diego. While the Asian American population in San Diego was often overlooked due to their relatively low numbers, the small community of Chinese and Japanese Americans, and the growing numbers of Filipinos establishing roots in the city set the stage for the oncoming wave of Asian family chain migration which would take place after the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, further discussed in chapter 3.

In addition to being a 20th century United States military stronghold, San Diego's identity is also rooted in its long history as a cultural and geographic borderland. Geographically speaking, San Diego's proximity to Tijuana, Mexico carried many economic advantages, as Mexican migrant laborers crossed the border daily seeking work, and employers were eager to exploit this work force, regardless of their legal status. Simultaneously, US corporations took advantage of the cheap working conditions of the maquiladoras in Tijuana, using Mexican factory laborers to make electronics and clothes to be bought by the American consumer.⁴⁶ Also crossing the border daily were a steady stream of tourists and visiting family members, pouring money into the local economies of both cities. Despite the economic advantages San Diego derived from its relationship with Tijuana, the sister city across the border was labeled as a dangerous space, rampant with crime, drugs, prostitution, and teeming with potential "illegal" immigrants all clamoring to cross the border, take away "American" jobs, and take

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Mayhew, 273.

advantage of tax payer funded social resources. The vilification of the city of Tijuana and its residents did not emerge from thin air, but was based on a long history of Anglo American anxiety and prejudice against a racialized “other.”

To contextualize cultural and racial tensions between Latinos and Anglo Americans in San Diego, it is important to view San Diego through the lens of time and space. Since the 18th century, San Diego was a space of racial and cultural conquest, beginning with Spanish colonization of indigenous peoples. Following the defeat of the Spanish by Mexico, San Diego came under Mexican rule, which ended when Mexico ceded its territory north of the Rio Grande to the United States following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Mexicans living in the newly acquired US territory were placed in a racially ambiguous position, as they were recategorized as US citizens, aka “white,” but could exercise none of the privileges of whiteness.⁴⁷ Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Anglo Americans expanded westward, enclosed land, established their own system of land taxation and political rule, and implemented a system of legalized social, cultural, and religious suppression. Mexicans with roots in the American Southwest were stripped of their economic and political power, restricted from the vote, and eventually labeled as foreigners in their ancestral land.⁴⁸

Despite its complex history as a space of conquest and cultural repression, many San Diego residents who identified themselves as white believed that little racial tension existed in their hometown, and expressed surprise at any mention of structural

⁴⁷ According to Article VIII of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, “Those who shall prefer to remain in the said territories may either retain the title and rights of Mexican citizens, or acquire those of citizens of the United States.”

⁴⁸ David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), chapter 1.

inequalities based on race or class. Norman B. Foster, a white San Diego banker, argued in 1968, “San Diego isn’t a racist society. They are wrong. We have no racial tradition here. We have lived with minorities a long time and I am a little shocked and surprised by such charges. I don’t know of any businesses here that aren’t open to them.”⁴⁹

Minority community members might encounter economic hardship and discrimination in the job, education, and housing sectors, but the solution was not to seek government assistance, but to buckle down and try harder to get what they wanted. Prominent San Diego banker and industrialist Anderson Borthwick stated, “The jobs are there, I know of no industry that wouldn’t welcome them. But they must take the initiative.”⁵⁰ The implication behind such statements was that if racial minority community members suffered, it was because they lacked the personal drive to improve their own situation.

Non-white residents held a more cynical view of opportunities available to them, arguing that regardless of their personal initiative, racial discrimination made it extremely difficult for them to get the jobs or houses they desired. Attorney Robert Ward Jr. described San Diego as “a redneck, cracker town where the whites view blacks as inferior.”⁵¹ Carroll Waymon, executive director of the non-profit Citizens Interracial Committee (CIC), San Diego’s human relations agency, called the city the “Mississippi of the West.”⁵² Reverend Dwight Kyle of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church condemned the city, calling it the “worst place on the coast in discrimination practices... The powers that want to whitewash the situation, make everything here

⁴⁹ John C. Waugh, “San Diego Whites Deny Racism,” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 23, 1968.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Harold Keen, “San Diego’s Racial Powder Keg: The Fuse is None Too Long,” *San Diego Magazine*, July 1963, 90.

⁵² “Conversation with Carroll W. Waymon,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 26, 1969.

appear ideal.”⁵³ Tom Johnson of the local NAACP branch noted that while white community leaders encouraged African Americans to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and engage in the democratic process, “they cut most Negroes off from those democratic processes.”⁵⁴ Throughout the 1960s and 70s, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans were repeatedly shut out of job opportunities or denied promotions. For example, according to Waymon, African Americans were rarely hired as cab drivers, and in downtown San Diego, major restaurants refused to hire African American waiters and waitresses.⁵⁵ Reverend Kyle cited the 1960 Census, stating that the unemployment rates for African Americans was 9.9% of their total labor force; “We have more unemployment among Negroes and fewer employed Negroes in proportion to the population in Los Angeles and San Francisco.”⁵⁶ In another example of occupational discrimination, Mexican American staff members at University and Fifth Clinical Services office were suddenly laid off because “Dr. Mandel ‘did not want any more minorities hired.’”⁵⁷ The systematic practice of excluding minorities from job opportunities revealed a persistent attitude of prejudice that contested San Diego’s promoted reputation as a progressive city.

Residential segregation was another serious problem faced by racial minorities in San Diego. Restrictive housing covenants were commonly written into real estate deeds

⁵³ Keen, “San Diego’s Racial Powder Keg,” 90.

⁵⁴ Waugh, “San Diego Whites Deny Racism,” 3.

⁵⁵ Carroll Waymon to the Fair Employment Practice Commission of the State of California, statement, “Some Conditions Affecting Equality of Opportunity in Housing and Employment for Minority Group Persons in the San Diego Area,” November 9, 1965. Leon Williams Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University (hereafter cited as Leon Williams Papers).

⁵⁶ Keen, “San Diego’s Racial Powder Keg,” 90.

⁵⁷ Chicano Federation News Release, August 1971. Citizens United for Racial Equality Records, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University (hereafter cited as CURE Records).

throughout the 20th century. The intent was to purposefully shape or maintain a particular racial, class, ethnic and religious composition of the neighborhood in question.⁵⁸ For example, an elaborate clause from the Valencia Park neighborhood in the southeastern part of San Diego stipulated that “no lot shall ever be lived upon or used or occupied by any person whose blood is not entirely of the Caucasian race, be it being agreed for the purpose of this paragraph that no Japanese, Chinese, Mexican, Hindu, or any person of the Ethiopian, Indian or Mongolian races shall be deemed a Caucasian,” with the exception of servants or employees of the resident.⁵⁹ A more simply worded clause from City Heights stated that “this property shall not be sold, leased, rented or occupied by any person other than one of the Caucasian Race.”⁶⁰ Racially restrictive clauses were highly effective in preventing African Americans from moving into particular neighborhoods, and essentially corralling them into neighborhoods in the southeastern portion of the city, such as Logan Heights, Chollas Park, Encanto West, and Encanto East. By 1970, most of the African Americans in the city lived in “a contiguous area roughly seven miles long and two miles wide.”⁶¹ Mexican Americans were comparatively more dispersed

⁵⁸ For further reading on the history of residential segregation and the shaping of urban and suburban populations see: James H. Carr and Nandinee K. Kutty, eds., *Segregation: The Rising Costs for America* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, eds., *The New Suburban History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Charles Lamb, *Housing Segregation in Suburban American Since 1960: Presidential and Judicial Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Douglas S. Massey, “Residential Segregation and Persistent Urban Poverty,” in *Redress for Historical Injustices in the United States: On Reparations for Slavery, Jim Crow and Their Legacies*, eds. Michael Martin and Marilyn Yaquinto. (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 331-347; Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long As They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); Guy Stuart, *Discriminating Risk: The US Mortgage Lending Industry in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁵⁹ Harris, 176, 180.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 176.

⁶¹ Larry Ford and Ernst Griffin, “The Ghettoization of Paradise,” *The Geographical Review* 69, no. 2 (April 1979): 149. See also Harris.

throughout San Diego County than African Americans, residing in the South Bay cities of Chula Vista, National City, Bonita, San Ysidro, and Imperial Beach, but within the city limits of San Diego, the “heaviest concentration of Mexican Americans was still in southeast San Diego in 1970.”⁶² One notable exception were African American, Latino, and Asian American servicemen and their families who lived in neighborhoods outside of southeast San Diego due to the construction of federally sponsored family housing. The Linda Vista neighborhood in particular was hastily built to accommodate the flood of working class military and defense contract workers that flooded into the city during WWII.⁶³ Racial restrictions had not been placed on government housing, “and after the units became privately owned, it continued to be the one area outside of southeast San Diego to house significant numbers of Negroes,” and other racialized groups.⁶⁴

Federal and state efforts had limited success in overturning the practice of using restrictive covenants against racial minorities. In 1948, the Supreme Court issued a decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, arguing that restrictive covenants were illegal and unenforceable due to its violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Racial discrimination continued to be upheld though, as defiant real estate agents, developers, mortgage bankers, and renters continued to steer customers towards particular neighborhoods based on their race and ethnicity. The maintenance of racially segregated spaces by realtors was done for two specific reasons: to fulfill racist motivations of keeping white neighborhoods white, but also because “the promotion,

⁶² Harris, 117; Mayhew, 272.

⁶³ Christine Killory, “Temporary Suburbs: The Lost Opportunity of San Diego’s National Defense Housing Projects,” *The Journal of San Diego History* 39, no. 1&2 (Spring 1993): <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/93spring/suburbs.htm>.

⁶⁴ Harris, 24.

preservation and manipulation of racial segregation [was] central [to] their profit generating strategies.”⁶⁵ In San Diego, complaints filed by residents to the CIC revealed ongoing practices of racial discrimination by realtors and renters. African American families were denied apartment rentals despite the fact that vacancies existed, or came across listings that said “for whites or Caucasians only.” Additionally African American families had rent checks returned to them when landlords discovered they were black.⁶⁶

In California, efforts to implement fair housing practices in the legislature resulted in the passage of the Rumford Fair Housing Act on June 21, 1963, which Governor Edmund “Pat” Brown quickly signed into law. Broadly speaking, the act deemed that the use of restrictive race covenants against buyers and renters was illegal. The Rumford Act was not all encompassing, only assisting Californians with the fiscal means to buy or rent single family homes or apartments, and was not intended to assist Californians who could not afford to buy or rent a space in their desired neighborhood. As Daniel Martinez HoSang summarized, “the Rumford Act was not intended to bring about widespread integration or solve the endemic housing crisis.”⁶⁷ Despite the limited scope of the Rumsford Act, the backlash by realtors was immediate, and the campaign to repeal the act took shape when Proposition 14 was placed on the November 1964 ballot. Considering the statewide shift in favor of civil rights, Proposition 14 supporters were careful not to brand their campaign as favoring racial segregation. Instead, Proposition 14 was marketed as protecting homeowners’ freedom of choice to sell, lease, or rent to

⁶⁵ Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 59.

⁶⁶ NAACP, “Report and Recommendations on the Study of Major Grievances and Immediate Requirements of Southeast San Diego,” June 26, 1963. Leon Williams Papers.

⁶⁷ HoSang, 63.

whomever they chose.⁶⁸ Assisted by its colorblind rhetoric, Proposition 14 passed in California by a large majority of the vote, 65% approval to 35% opposition.⁶⁹ In the city of San Diego, Proposition 14 passed with 68% approval.⁷⁰ The California Supreme Court would eventually overturn Proposition 14 in May 1966, because it involved the state in an act of legalized discrimination, yet the impact of the act revealed a deep sense of anxiety among the populace that their personal liberties were under attack in the name of civil rights. As HoSang described, Proposition 14 “helped valorize a set of racial propositions about the ‘rights’ particular homeowners possessed,” even if that was a right to discriminate.⁷¹ The colorblind political movement gained further traction across the nation into the 1970s, as people at the local, state and national level increasingly vocalized their opposition to any act of educational improvement that could possibly threaten their personal interests.⁷²

Race and class segregation in neighborhoods and schools

Racially segregated neighborhoods played a key role in the formation of racially imbalanced neighborhood schools. In 1965, the San Diego League of Women Voters published a booklet titled “Dimensions of Discrimination,” in which they observed:

⁶⁸ Ibid., 65, 69.

⁶⁹ *California Statement of Vote, 1964 General Election*, (Sacramento: California Secretary of State, 1964), 25.

⁷⁰ *Supplement to the California Statement of Vote, 1964 General Election*, (Sacramento: California Secretary of State 1964), 74.

⁷¹ HoSang, 88.

⁷² The rise of colorblind politics as an oppositional rhetorical tool against racial integration programs such as busing is discussed further in chapter 2. HoSang utilizes the term “liberal antiracism” and “racial innocence” to describe “the self-possessed individual who decided to free him/herself from the narrow trappings of prejudice and bigotry and fully accept American notions of equality and fair treatment,” yet simultaneously endorsed the status quo as a matter of personal choice and liberty (HoSang, 31). See also Michael K. Brown, et al., *White-Washing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) for a comprehensive analysis of colorblind politics and its persistence in the marketplace, schools, the legal system, employment, and political involvement.

All schools with 35% or more Negro enrollment are located in the Southeast San Diego area, where census figures indicate the highest concentration of Negroes. If the high concentration of Mexican-Americans living in this area were considered, the schools would reflect an even higher percentage of minority-group student enrollment. One elementary school with 88% Negro enrollment actually has 100% minority enrollment.⁷³

In the excerpt above, “Negro” and “Mexican American” were combined under the category “minority enrollment.” While the term “minority” commonly referenced race in the everyday vernacular, “minority” also combined race with the working class and poor. The majority of African American and Latino residents lived in southeast San Diego, which the League of Women Voters described as an area of economic “deprivation.”⁷⁴ Their overarching concern was that students belonging to a lower socioeconomic profile “perform less well academically than do children of a middle-class background.”⁷⁵ As the League of Women Voters concluded, the concentration of poor racial groups in southeast San Diego schools was troublesome, particularly since individual aspirations to escape impoverishment through academic performance diminished in proportion to the increased rate of racial and socioeconomic isolation.⁷⁶ The existence of racially segregated schools was confirmed with the publication of the “Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment” figures by the school district in 1966. The census clearly demonstrates the correlation between the racial composition of schools and the neighborhoods in which they are located. For example, La Jolla High School, which was 96% white, was located in an affluent middle to upper class white suburb. Conversely,

⁷³ League of Women Voters, “Dimensions of Discrimination: A Preliminary Survey of San Diego’s Community Problems with Discrimination,” (February 1965): 21.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

the enrollment percentages of Lincoln High School, which was located in southeast San Diego, were 74% African American, 17% Latino, and 3% white.⁷⁷

While the racial and socioeconomic composition of a neighborhood played a critical role in the racial makeup of a public school, several community members contended that the San Diego school district also contributed to the existence of racially isolated schools. Schoolteacher Larry Carlin and his attorney William Gavin argued that the school board was responsible for racial segregation due to school zone gerrymandering. They pointed out that in 1967, Lincoln High School and Crawford High School were located no more than four miles apart in southeast San Diego. However, Crawford was 96% white and had an enrollment of 3,474 students, while Lincoln had 91% African American and Latino enrollment and plenty of room to accommodate additional students, since its population only reached 1,297 students.⁷⁸ Carlin argued that if the district wanted to rectify overcrowding in Crawford and address racial imbalance, they could adjust district lines. Yet he suspected that school board members preferred to comply with the status quo. Carlin remarked, “The school board is in a beautiful position. They simply have to do nothing. They don’t have to overtly do something to maintain segregation. They simply have to be passive- do nothing- and the present system remains.”⁷⁹ For Carlin and Gavin, the school board’s inactivity was evidence of their desire to allow racial segregation to continue unencumbered,

⁷⁷ *Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment* (San Diego: San Diego City Schools, November 1, 1966).

⁷⁸ Handwritten note, October 18, 1967, Carlin Integration Case Records, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University (hereafter cited as Carlin Records). The note identified the Lincoln/Crawford boundary, as well as boundaries between Horace Mann Junior High/ Gompers Junior High and Central Elementary/ Hamilton Elementary. See also *Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment*, Nov. 1, 1966.

⁷⁹ Conference Notes, October 18, 1967, Carlin Records.

Table 1-2: Student Enrollment of Select Schools According to Race & Ethnicity⁸⁰

School	Total Enrollment	Spanish Sur-Name		Other White		Negro		Chinese, Japanese, Korean		American Indian		Other Non White	
Clairemont High	1,928	73	4%	1,826	95%	6	< 1%	14	< 1%	6	< 1%	3	< 1%
Crawford High	3,474	101	3%	3,319	96%	23	< 1%	16	< 1%	1	< 1%	14	< 1%
La Jolla High	1,030	17	2%	992	96%	10	1%	11	1%	0	--	0	--
Madison High	2,342	47	2%	2,268	97%	6	< 1%	9	< 1%	0	--	12	< 1%
Mission Bay High	1,260	44	4%	1,197	95%	10	< 1%	6	< 1%	1	< 1%	2	< 1%
Point Loma High	2,210	148	7%	2,036	92%	16	< 1%	3	< 1%	1	< 1%	6	< 1%
Mann Jr. High	2,562	154	6%	2,306	90%	44	2%	39	2%	1	< 1%	18	< 1%
Pacific Beach Jr. High	1,430	33	2%	1,373	96%	10	< 1%	8	< 1%	0	--	6	< 1%
Roosevelt Jr. High	1,518	259	17%	1,184	78%	45	3%	25	1%	0	--	5	< 1%
Morse High	1,895	268	14%	1,214	64%	311	16%	74	4%	3	< 1%	25	1%
San Diego High	2,016	511	25%	970	48%	450	22%	61	3%	0	--	24	1%
O'Farrell Jr. High	2,607	327	13%	1,602	61%	594	23%	55	2%	3	< 1%	26	1%
Encanto Elem.	999	242	24%	633	63%	82	8%	32	3%	1	< 1%	9	1%
Lincoln High	1,297	220	17%	40	3%	962	74%	59	5%	0	--	16	1%
Gompers Jr. High	1,032	144	14%	78	8%	766	74%	23	2%	0	--	21	2%
Memorial Jr. High	1,574	550	35%	66	4%	890	57%	33	2%	3	< 1%	32	2%
Balboa Elem.	514	67	13%	9	2%	410	80%	14	3%	0	--	14	3%
Johnson Elem.	377	9	2%	10	3%	352	93%	0	--	0	--	6	2%
Logan Elem.	683	222	33%	12	2%	439	64%	1	< 1%	1	< 1%	8	2%
Sherman Elem.	806	348	43%	89	11%	353	44%	5	< 1%	2	< 1%	9	1%

Source: Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment (San Diego City Schools, Nov. 1, 1966)

⁸⁰ The San Diego School District placed students into six different categories:

Spanish Surname: Mexican Americans, other Latin Americans, persons of Spanish descent.

Other White: All Caucasians not counted under Spanish Surname.

Negro: Those recognized visually as of African or Negroid descent.

Chinese, Japanese, Korean: recognized visually or by surname as of descent from those Asian groups.

American Indian: Those known to be of Indian descent and so identified in school and community.

Other Nonwhite: Filipinos, Polynesians, or Asians other than Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.

Schools marked in blue indicate a racial imbalance towards the "Other White" student population. Schools marked in green indicate a racially balanced or "tipping" school. Schools marked in red indicate racial imbalance combining the "Negro" and "Spanish Surname" student population.

even if it meant leaving unaddressed the enrollment imbalance. Their suspicions were confirmed when the school district's legal advisor Thomas Shannon spoke on behalf of his clients, stating, "I do not believe that a school district is under a legal compulsion to effect complete segregation of its schools immediately, regardless of cost, disruption of the school program and adverse impact on the general welfare of many pupils occasioned by an abrupt change of schools."⁸¹

Inactivity by the San Diego school district was unsurprising given past attitudes towards school racial integration throughout the county. In 1931, the ethnic Mexican community in Lemon Grove, CA, a city located eight miles east of San Diego, sued the Lemon Grove School District so they could keep their children enrolled in the same public schools as Anglo children, based on their contention that they were also "white."⁸² Ethnic Mexican parents living in Lemon Grove argued their children had regularly attended school with Anglo Americans, and they protested the sudden expulsion of their children from the Lemon Grove Grammar School. The Lemon Grove School Board and members of the PTA argued that segregation was necessary to alleviate overcrowding and give Mexican American children the opportunity to "Americanize" before integrating with Anglo students. Yet the sudden action taken by the school board had foundations in a virulent anti-Mexican sentiment, as Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans were homogenized and racialized as unwanted "aliens" stealing jobs from American citizens

⁸¹ Harold Keen, "De Facto Segregation in San Diego: The White Community Faces A Tough Decision on Schools," *San Diego and Point Magazine*, August 1966, 54.

⁸² Roberto R. Alvarez Jr., "The Lemon Grove Incident: The Nation's First Successful Desegregation Court Case," *The Journal of San Diego History* 32 no. 2 (Spring 1986): <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/86spring/lemongrove.htm>; Paul Espinoza and Frank Christopher, *The Lemon Grove Incident* (New York: Cinema Guild, 1985); Richard R. Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts: The Mexican American Legal Struggle for Educational Equality* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 19-22.

and corrupting American society via their alleged racial inferiority and moral depravity.⁸³

While the ethnic Mexican community would launch a successful lawsuit against the school board, and their children would be allowed to attend classes on the same campus as their Anglo American peers, their victory was limited in scope. The Lemon Grove case did not contest the legalized segregation of black, Asian, and Native American pupils, and de jure and de facto segregation continued to be enforced throughout San Diego County.

In a separate account of publicly sanctioned segregation in San Diego in 1952, Anglo community members howled with anguish when an African American teacher was assigned by the school board to teach at an all white Pacific Beach neighborhood school. Parents verbally attacked the school board and demanded the immediate removal of the teacher. This integration attempt caught the attention of Mid City neighborhood resident, Robert Flemming, who had lived in San Diego since 1909. Flemming believed himself to being neutral in matters of race, while simultaneously using racially charged language to push for the removal of the African American teacher in the name of community peace. He confronted a school board member and stated, “If you are determined to continue your obstinate course, you are merely adding fuel to the flames of racial hatred which will embroil our citizens in a nasty mess... put Mr. Darcy in a school where there is a preponderance of Negroes, Mexicans and Orientals. He will understand and be understood by his colored pupils and their parents.”⁸⁴ Flemming argued that racial harmony could only be maintained if the races were kept separate: “Mr. Darcy” should

⁸³ Alvarez, “The Lemon Grove Incident.”

⁸⁴ Robert E. Flemming to Dr. Harold L. Wilson, June 8, 1956. Reverend George W. Smith Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University (hereafter cited as George W. Smith Papers).

only teach students of color, and white teachers should teach white students. He continued to berate “foolish” men who did not seem to understand that the natural state of race relations was to remain segregated. The Board quickly reversed its decision and transferred the teacher out of the school.

This incident demonstrated the willingness of the school board to appease white community members and soothe their racial anxieties. It also revealed a prevalent attitude that social unrest was the fault of individuals who dared to disrupt the status quo. Flemming’s letter also revealed a casual correlation made by ordinary residents regarding race, class, and mainstream social acceptability: that to be considered a good, God fearing “Negro,” one had to be a person of exceptional ability. Flemming referenced individuals such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, and Ralph Bunche, who were nationally lauded for their achievements in education, science and politics.⁸⁵ African Americans who failed to live up to the standard of Ralph Bunche risked becoming a bad “Negro:” characterized by being “‘backwoods,’ or ‘slum’ negroes, who are either on ‘welfare’ or who make an insufficient living to properly care for their families.”⁸⁶ Flemming characterizes their offspring as “the chief trouble makers among the newer and younger elements in San Diego.”⁸⁷ This dichotomy of “good negro” and “bad negro” was used to praise middle class respectability and assimilationist thinking on the one hand, while denouncing uncooperative individuals as depraved and economically destitute on the other hand. The figure of the impoverished and obstinate black student

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

would eventually become a significant rhetorical device used by opponents of school racial integration.

Following the passage of *Brown v. Board* in 1954, national action to desegregate public schools followed a slow and arduous path. The vagueness of the 1954 court decision, particularly with regard to when and how schools should desegregate, pushed the Supreme Court to issue a second desegregation decision in May of 1955. In *Brown II*, the Supreme Court urged local federal courts to encourage local school districts to desegregate “with all deliberate speed.” Two years later, the first school to desegregate in the nation was Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas on September 25, 1957, under federal protection.⁸⁸ In California, de jure segregation found itself on the defensive in *Jackson v. Pasadena City School District* (1963), where a local high school was ruled to be racially segregated and inferior due to the district’s deliberate use of gerrymandering to encourage de jure segregation.⁸⁹ Additionally, in 1963 the ACLU filed the case *Mary Ellen Crawford et al. v. Board of Education of Los Angeles*, with plaintiffs charging that the school district consciously endorsed de jure segregation.⁹⁰

In San Diego, it was not until late 1965 when the school board decided to address the problem of racial segregation. Feeling pressure from recent unwanted attention directed towards the school district by a United States Commission on Civil Rights study,

⁸⁸ For additional material on desegregation in Little Rock, see Frances Lisa Baer, *Resistance to Public School Desegregation: Little Rock, Arkansas and Beyond* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2008); Jon Else, et al., *Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Moment* (Atlanta: PBS Home Video, 2006).

⁸⁹ For a concise history of *Jackson v. Pasadena*, see Charles Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed: Segregation and Exclusion in California Schools 1855-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), chapter 6.

⁹⁰ The *Crawford* case would not reach a verdict until 1982. See HoSang, chapter 4.

District Superintendent Ralph Dailard assembled a committee composed of community members from different racial backgrounds and life experiences to investigate factors contributing to racially segregated schools, the extent of racial and ethnic segregation in public school classrooms, and the degree to which racial segregation hampered student prospects for future success. The Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities (henceforth referred to as “Committee”) was chaired by Judge Byron Lindsley and composed of two representatives from the eleven high school zones in the district. Committee members included white, black, and Latino men and women, with occupations including teachers, dentists, doctors, bankers, realtors, lawyers and clergymen. Additionally, Earl B. Gilliam, the first African American Superior Court Judge in San Diego, John W. Johnson, director of the San Diego Urban League, Clayton H. Brace, general manager of KGTV Channel 10, and a member of the Child Welfare Services were active in the proceedings.⁹¹ The racial, gendered, and socioeconomic background of each Committee member was of great importance, as each member was responsible for collecting and interpreting data from the district administration, from educators who provided insider knowledge of the district’s efforts to obtain educational equality, and from community members at a series of five public hearings held at

⁹¹ *Report of the Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities*, (San Diego: Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities, August 1966), 2. Members of the Committee included Rev. Edgar L. Robinson, Charles W. Froelich Jr., Dr. Shirley Phelps, Richard Silberman, Mrs. C.J. Widman, Mrs. William B. Pierce, Mrs. Robert Simon, *Frank Alessio, *Dan Castro, Dominic J. D’Agnostino, Narmad M. Dave, Ruben Dominguez, Chester A. Dorman, Rev. Quentin P. Garman, Vernon H. Gaston, Donald B. Gordon, Dr. Charles H. Hampton, Carl E. Hartnack, James A. Hawes, Dr. Robert S. Heighton, Mrs. Glen Hensely, Mrs. Robert Keetch, Rev. George D. McKinney, J. Warren Mooers, Mrs. Aileen Mundy, Robert Peer, ** Kenneth Pennington Jr., *Robert S. Regan, Mrs. Donald E. Rucker, Mrs. Walter Sellers, Rev. Ansle T. Severston, Dr. Rodman A. Sharp, Dwight E. Stanford, Clyde M. Thompson, Rabbi Melvin Weinman, Mrs. Eric R. Woods. * resigned, ** Moved out of city.

different school campuses throughout the district.⁹² While the Committee as a whole contained a mix of intersectional identities on the basis of race and gender, with regard to class, the occupations of the Committee members indicated that the majority of them belonged to the middle-to-upper class.⁹³ This limited class perspective may have affected their interpretation of data. Indeed, much of their analysis, while valuable, was conducted through the singular lens of racial discrimination, with virtually no mention of class disparity.

In August of 1966, the Committee published their observations on the status of the San Diego Unified School District, and their testimony became known as the Lindsley Report. In the report, the Committee plainly states “Racial/Ethnic imbalance exists in the San Diego City Schools. The number of schools which are racially/ethnically imbalanced is substantial. Most students in the school system attend an imbalanced school.”⁹⁴ What the Committee meant by “imbalance” was threefold. First, “imbalance” was used in reference to the widening disparity in student enrollment based on race, particularly as schools trended toward becoming all-white or all-black-and-Latino.⁹⁵ The second use of “imbalance” by the Committee was in reference to the achievement gap between students of different races. The correlation between student achievement and the severity of racial segregation was a major concern to the Committee. According to their report, Committee members utilized data from the Sequential Test of Education Progress to support their argument that students enrolled in minority isolated

⁹² *Report of the Citizens Committee*, 6, 7.

⁹³ For more on the theory of intersectionality, see Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, “Mapping The Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43 no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299.

⁹⁴ *Report of the Citizens Committee*, 11.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

schools did not perform as well as students enrolled in majority white schools.⁹⁶ The persistent gap in academic achievement was attributed to their argument that minority students received an inferior education compared to white students. The third use of “imbalance” referred to concerns over psychological harm. The Committee argued that segregated schools harmed all students enrolled in the district regardless of race because they “deprived children of a realistic concept of the country and the world... they hope to survive.”⁹⁷

The quality of instruction was of particular concern to the Committee, whose members identified three general factors that distinguished white dominated schools from minority dominated schools. First, teachers assigned to African American and Latino dominant schools were less experienced and tended to last a short time at the school. A letter between Carl Rachlin and Charles Collins of the San Diego Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) noted this discrepancy, as Rachlin wrote, “The less experienced teachers, often times temporary and not licensed, are supplied to the Negro schools. It is very common for a teacher, after gaining a certain seniority or tenure to apply for and receive a transfer to a so-called white school.”⁹⁸ According to the Committee’s findings, teachers starting their careers at African American and Latino dominant schools “have been reported to ‘come to the school with feelings of anxiety and fear.’”⁹⁹ These teachers develop an attitude that segregated schools “are not ‘as good as’ other schools,” and consequently “they do not have the same rapport with the children, the parents or the

⁹⁶ Ibid., 19, 20. The negative relationship between race, poverty and test scores is further supported in Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: New Press, 1996), 53.

⁹⁷ *Report of the Citizens Committee*, 12.

⁹⁸ Carl Rachlin to Charles Collins, March 7, 1966. Carlin Records.

⁹⁹ *Report of the Citizens Committee*, 61.

local neighborhood,” due to an unwillingness to cultivate a relationship with neighborhood residents.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, students received poor instruction from fearful educators, and it became more difficult to cultivate enthusiasm and pride among students in their studies and school.

A second concern expressed by the Committee was the quality of the curriculum and the availability of courses for students in minority dominant schools. The Lindsley Report indicated that minority dominant schools had fewer course selections than white dominant schools. This inequality is exemplified by comparing the available curriculum between Crawford High and Lincoln High:

Crawford has 114 course offerings, Lincoln has 104. Crawford has 17 foreign language courses (including Latin) while Lincoln has seven. Administrators state that the difference exists because more Crawford students requested Latin and advanced language courses. This may, however, be a surface explanation for the evidence also suggests that the result of inadequate counseling may discourage, or at best fail to motivate students to make such requests. An unstated underlying reason is that students from middle-class, Anglo-Caucasian home and community environments are more likely to be informed of the value of Latin study.¹⁰¹

As the Committee report deduced, “equal educational opportunity does not exist so long as courses offered at one school are not available at another on the same level.”¹⁰² The Committee urged counselors to avoid using preconceived notions of educational ability based on racial and gender identity to track students into particular courses and career paths. The Committee also voiced concerns regarding the lack of representation of minority groups in textbooks. Their examination of a social studies textbook revealed “indefensible omissions of minority-group roles in United States History... Beautifully

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 75.

¹⁰² Ibid.

illustrated books were found to be ‘all-white.’”¹⁰³ The Committee urged the school board to avoid including materials with “misleading and inaccurate historical and social data” in the curriculum.¹⁰⁴

A third area of concern of the Committee was the structural conditions of the school buildings. While the Committee concluded that most school buildings were adequate, they also pointed out that older schools in San Diego needed the most improvement.¹⁰⁵ Run-down facilities could result in the departure of teachers from those schools, and encourage white families, who tended to have greater economic capital, to relocate to a neighborhood with a more attractive school. One school with inadequate facilities was Encanto Elementary School, located in one of the few racially and economically mixed neighborhoods in the city. The neighborhood was described as “an older, semi-rural community located two miles east of Lincoln High School, in the southeast San Diego area.”¹⁰⁶ Deficiencies at Encanto Elementary included inadequate nursing facilities and an overabundance of portable classrooms spread across the neighborhood. Thirteen portables were “crowded in among residential homes.” There was no school playground, and students had to play on a city recreational field. “Students in bungalows must walk nearly two city blocks to go to the cafeteria, lunch arbor and auditorium. There is no telephone or intercommunication system between the bungalows and the main office.... No running water in the portable bungalows... only one restroom for boys and one for girls for the 400 students in the bungalow area.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Ibid., 76.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 105

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 109.

Warren Heyer of the Encanto Neighbors Organization worried that the poor conditions would result in white flight and an exodus of teachers. “Our fear is that without attention to the physical problems of Encanto School, those excellent teachers who now teach our children will go elsewhere. We fear that the white residents of Encanto will see the deterioration of the educational program and they will go elsewhere.”¹⁰⁸ The Committee agreed with Heyer and expressed concern that the remaining minority population would experience further isolation, and the school would be unable to attract experienced teachers to the area.

Following the publication of the Lindsley Report, members of the Committee urged the San Diego School Board to immediately begin the process of desegregating the district. Quick action was necessary, they argued, because the situation was getting worse, and there was “no logical or legal justification for delay.”¹⁰⁹ Their suggestions were numerous, but could be summarized in three overarching points: first, the Committee suggested that interaction between white and minority students should be encouraged. This could take place by pairing classrooms in a majority white school with a minority dominant school, redrawing district lines to encourage redistribution of students, embracing the educational park model where students would be bused into a central location, rebuilding older schools, refraining from constructing new schools that might alter district lines and inadvertently segregate students, and eliminate optional school zones.¹¹⁰ Second, the Committee suggested improvements in the quality of teaching, curriculum and instruction, “to include factual data on racial/ethnic

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 106.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 134.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 120-122, 127.

contributions to world civilization and to American society.”¹¹¹ They encouraged an even distribution of experienced and inexperienced teachers in schools throughout the district, racial sensitivity training for teachers and administrators, recruitment of minority faculty members, and improved counseling services.¹¹² Third, the Committee urged the district to take on a more active role in gathering statistical information regarding the racial composition of the schools, applying for and accepting federal and state funding, and writing a long term plan for improving racial balance in public schools.¹¹³ The Committee concluded by arguing it was a legal and moral obligation of the entire community to correct racial imbalance, but it was also the responsibility of the school board to take on a leadership position to ensure that children received equal educational opportunities.¹¹⁴

George W. Smith and the San Diego Board of Education

Despite the fact that the San Diego Board of Education originally commissioned the Committee to conduct a study on the district, they largely ignored the recommendations made in the Lindsley Report. Board members Louise Dyer, Gene French, Frank Lowe, Arnold Steele, and George W. Smith, the first African American elected to the school board, publicly opposed racial segregation, but they argued that the action already taken by the board was adequate for the district’s needs. George W. Smith pointed out that in southeast San Diego, various programs such as pre-first grade classes for socially handicapped students, adjustment classes, remedial reading classes, extra nursing, extra visiting teacher services, Head Start programs “for culturally deprived pre-

¹¹¹ Ibid., 126.

¹¹² Ibid., 123-125, 128.

¹¹³ Ibid., 119, 125.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 134, 136.

kindergarteners” and a multimillion dollar federally funded compensatory education program had been implemented.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, Smith argued that Lincoln High School students received over \$200,000 in scholarships, won the oratorical championship, had the best high school band and orchestra and won the CIF championships in football and track.¹¹⁶ Despite the persistence of racial segregation, the school board argued that the quality of education and the attention directed towards racially segregated schools ensured that minority students in San Diego were given the same opportunities as white students. Minority student underachievement was not the fault of de facto segregation or neglect by the school district, but as Smith argued, the problem stemmed from “underachievement by Negro and Mexican-American children who come from a socially and culturally deprived home environment.”¹¹⁷ Integration would hurt these students, as they would be thrown “into a school whose program is geared to the comprehension and experience of white middle class youngsters.”¹¹⁸ Using this logic, Smith believed the best remedy was to institute “compensatory education” targeting students with low achievement, rather than an educational curriculum that truly pushed their intellectual potential.¹¹⁹

As the only racial minority, and the first African American elected to the San Diego Unified School District school board, George W. Smith’s perspective of the racial imbalance in the district was of particular interest to the greater San Diego community. It was particularly advantageous to a majority-white school board to have a highly visible

¹¹⁵ Keen, “De Facto Segregation in San Diego,” 54.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 110.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 112.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

African American community leader endorse the district's policies. Smith's rags-to-riches personal story was pertinent to the school board's message that it was up to minority students to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Smith was no stranger to racial discrimination or poverty, having grown up the third of eleven children in Alabama on a sharecropper plantation, "only a step above slavery."¹²⁰ Smith realized early in life that the only way he could escape poverty was to get an education: "I knew there was a way out [of the plantation]. That's the only reason I went on to school."¹²¹ Originally planning to pursue a career in medicine, Smith readjusted his plans when he discovered that African Americans were forbidden from attending medical school in his native state of Alabama. Smith taught in a mission school for two years before attending seminary through the Presbyterian Church.

Smith's arrival in San Diego in 1956 as a pastor for Golden Hills Presbyterian Church gave rise to racial hatred that mirrored the Deep South. An extensive letter writing campaign rose in an effort to remove Smith and his family from the neighborhood. Golden Hills parishioner Violet Beck spearheaded a letter writing campaign, insisting that the arrival of a black family would drive out white neighbors and degrade the quality of the community. Despite the racial hardships and animosity he faced throughout his life, Smith maintained an optimistic belief that African Americans could find social acceptance if they could somehow integrate themselves into the system. Smith became active in the community, becoming involved in the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Episcopal Community Service, County Grand Jury, Board of Education Citizens

¹²⁰ George Walker Smith, interview by Ruth V. Held, February 15 and 22, 1989, San Diego Historical Society Oral History Program, San Diego History Center.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Study Committee, YMCA, Mental Health Commission, Civil Service Oral Review Board, and Kiwanis Club. Smith was quoted saying, “The only way a Negro can integrate in American society is to be identified with and involved in the policy-making power structure of the community.”¹²² He ran for a seat on the school board and emerged victorious in November of 1963, his victory hailed as a triumph for race relations in San Diego.

Smith recognized that being the first African American elected to the school board meant that heavy expectations were placed on his shoulders to advocate for the needs of impoverished minority communities in the city. Yet Smith often found himself at odds with African American residents who derisively referred to him as “Uncle Tom” for collaborating with white city leaders. Smith defended himself by arguing, “You don’t get anything accomplished for the minority groups by sitting back and hollering... I believe I have been able to gain more benefits for my race by demonstrating to the white community, after the initial shock of my election, that I wasn’t going to get in there and wreck things.”¹²³ Among his most controversial stances was his unwillingness to attack de facto segregation, based on his presumption that in “no large metropolitan area in the US has a plan to eliminate de facto segregation worked effectively.”¹²⁴ Smith had previously characterized African American and Latino students as socially and culturally deprived underachievers. By promoting the trope of the delinquent minority student, he placed the blame of their educational failures on poor and working class students and parents themselves, rather than acknowledging that the school district, or the entire

¹²² Keen, “De Facto Segregation in San Diego,” 113.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 112.

educational system needed repairs. Regarding how he dealt with anger and pressure from the black community, Smith recounted, “When you know you’re right or when you believe you’re right according to your own sense of integrity, you have no trouble withstanding no kind of pressure.”¹²⁵

George W. Smith, along with the rest of the school board, dismissed the recommendations suggested in the Lindsley Report, arguing that school pairing, educational parks, and shifting school borders was too expensive, radical, and would require the district to bus students, which was unpopular in the city.¹²⁶ Instead, on August 23, 1966, the Board announced plans to implement the Voluntary Enrollment Exchange Program (VEEP), where a student from an ethnically imbalanced school “may be transferred upon his request to any other school where his enrollment will not contribute to the ethnic imbalance of the receiving school.”¹²⁷ In other words, African American, Latino and white students may request to leave their current school where they were part of the racial majority, and be bused to a different school where they would statistically belong to the racial minority. For the school district, a voluntary plan was advantageous because it allowed parents the choice to decide where to send their children to school. Furthermore, Smith points out that if students were “educationally deprived” prior to forced busing, how were they expected to catch up by going to a different school? Students should only participate in the voluntary transfer program when they and their parents determined they could handle the change.

¹²⁵ Smith, interview.

¹²⁶ Harold Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” *San Diego Magazine*, July 1969, 46-47.

¹²⁷ *Desegregation and Integration of Schools: A Status Report* (San Diego: San Diego City Schools Office of the Superintendent, March 1972).

Community members against the Board of Education

The school board hoped that the creation of a voluntary ethnic transfer program would appease agitated community members calling for a more aggressive integration plan, yet by the summer of 1967, disgruntled San Diegans argued that VEEP was ineffective, and that racial segregation was actually increasing. On June 13, 1967 community member Jacquelyn Meshack spoke in front of the school board to urge them to take immediate action to desegregate the school district on moral, ethical and legal grounds, and to help simmer the boiling racial tensions rising in the city. Meshack spoke on behalf of a community action group called the Inter Organizational Committee for School Integration (IOC). She described the IOC as comprised of black, brown and white community members; lawyers, laborers, doctors, gas station attendants, teachers; rich and poor, and “totally committed to our stated purpose: to attain quality integrated education for all children in the San Diego Unified School District.”¹²⁸ According to Meshack, the IOC wanted the school board to implement the suggestions from the Lindsley Report, and to take advantage of any offers of assistance by the federal or state government to come up with an effective desegregation plan.

The IOC urged the school board to implement changes while there was still time for calm discussion. They were desperate to avoid a racial uprising in San Diego like the Watts riot in Los Angeles, August 1965. The Watts riot was a culmination of frustration and anger among African Americans, resulting from deep-rooted structural inequalities in housing, education, employment, and police brutality. Meshack argued, “It is imperative

¹²⁸ Jacquelyn Meshack, statement on behalf of the Inter Organizational Committee for School Integration, June 13, 1967. Carlin Records.

that we take advantage of the time which we have been given and begin now to eliminate segregation of our schools. It may be too late after a Watts.”¹²⁹ Thomas McJunkins, the assistant to the Superintendent for Intergroup Education stated that in San Diego, “We still haven’t built up the interracial hostility that exists in many large cities, but how long can we be sure of this? Our school system is still quite fluid and it is capable of halting and reversing de facto segregation without causing a complete upheaval.”¹³⁰ San Diego’s African American community was not as complacent as Anglo residents wanted to believe. Even before the Watts riot to the north, African American leaders in San Diego vocalized frustrations in 1963, warning the city there was “tough talk in Logan Heights, and you hear it from young intellectuals and ministers, as well as from the Chollas Democratic Club, the NAACP and CORE.”¹³¹ Meshack and McJunkins recognized that dissatisfaction among minorities in San Diego was quickly approaching a critical juncture, and one of the ways to alleviate a potential racial incident was to make changes to the educational system.

The IOC accused the school district of exhibiting a lack of leadership promoting racial integration and preparing the community for the changes that were necessary for integration to be successful.¹³² In addition to the pressures applied by the IOC to the school board, a group of parents and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) attorneys began to mount a legal case against the district to push them to pursue a more aggressive integration plan. Larry Carlin, a white schoolteacher and member of the Citizens

¹²⁹ Meshack, statement.

¹³⁰ Keen, “De Facto Segregation in San Diego,” 107.

¹³¹ Keen, “San Diego’s Racial Powder Keg,” 90.

¹³² Bulletin, “Notes About School Desegregation,” (San Diego: Inter Organizational Committee for School Integration, Sept. 22, 1967). Carlin Records.

Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities, began discussions with ACLU attorney William Gavin. Between October and December 1967, Carlin, Gavin, and his team of attorneys began formulating a plan of attack against the school district's voluntary integration plan.¹³³ They recognized that in order to gather as much community support for a potential lawsuit against the school district, and to combat potential accusations that a white parent was crusading for minority children without their parents' consent or input, it was important to get African American and Latino parents involved with the lawsuit. Carlin and Gavin began an extensive search for potential plaintiffs, and were joined by other parents affiliated through the multiracial IOC. As part of a class action lawsuit, Larry Carlin was joined in December 1967 by white parents Lillian Herzberg and Melba Margolis, African American parents Fred Patterson and Joyce Pennington, Latino parent Pedro Frausto, and Asian American parent Donna Obata. Judith Katz, Meriot Green and Robert Fowler also joined the lawsuit. The occupations of the parents included three teachers, two engineers, a furniture craftsman, a phone company employee, a post office employee and a member of the Urban League.¹³⁴ Their children's ages ranged between five and twelve years, and they attended different schools in the southern and eastern neighborhoods of the city.¹³⁵ While these parents were relative strangers to each other, they all agreed that their children attended racially and economically segregated schools, and the school district was responsible for perpetuating structural inequality. They charged that "illegal segregation and illegal discriminatory

¹³³ The ACLU team included attorneys Peter Clarke, Luther Goodwin, Irwin Gostin, Mary Harvey, J. Perry Langford and John Porter.

¹³⁴ John Valleau, "The School Board is Alive and Listening: First Breakthrough in De Facto Segregation," *San Diego Magazine*, July 1968, 84.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53

conditions were intentionally created” by the board and the rights of equal opportunity education was denied to the plaintiffs.¹³⁶ While they all agreed that the San Diego Unified School Board of Education behaved egregiously, questions remained over how they would address racial discrimination in the district, and how to present their message without alienating a majority of the public.

The Carlin legal team gained support and gleaned advice from a diverse group of San Diego based organizations, all of which expressed alarm over the ongoing racial segregation in the district, but had different ideas of how to tackle the situation. The organizations included the ACLU, the Chicano Federation, the Ecumenical Conference, the League of Women Voters, the San Diego chapter of the NAACP, the San Diego County Human Relations Commission, the Union of Pan Asian Communities, the Urban League, the YWCA, and the grassroots founded Citizens United for Racial Equality (CURE); Together these organizations formed the Committee to Support the Carlin Case (CSCC). Some organizations were more involved with supporting the Carlin lawsuit than others, due to available time, resources, and manpower.

The CSCC insisted that VEEP was ineffective and even psychologically harmful to the student participants. According to a study conducted by the League of Women Voters in 1972, the majority of VEEP participants were students of color, many of them who were the brightest students in their neighborhood school.¹³⁷ Conversely, very few white families volunteered to have their children relocate to a predominantly African American and Latino populated school. The burden of desegregation disproportionately

¹³⁶ Kari Carlin et al. v. Board of Education San Diego Unified School District, Superior Court of the State of California for the County of San Diego.

¹³⁷ League of Women Voters of San Diego, “Perspectives on School Integration,” (Fall 1972): 15.

fell on the shoulders of African American and Latino children, and as it will be explored in the next chapter, this burden was one of the reasons why many African American and Latino community members opposed busing and the voluntary integration program. If the district was unwilling to adjust school boundaries or build an educational park as suggested by the Lindsley Report, mandatory busing became the most viable solution to ensure integration involved the entire city, not just busing minority students.

The Carlin legal team and the CSCC recognized the necessity of treading lightly on the topic due to its controversial nature. As the CSCC stated in a news conference, “We do not say that busing is the only solution,” but if it helps to integrate schools, “we say let it be done because it is the best way to improve learning.”¹³⁸ Despite their attempt to present a united front, differences in addressing the topic of busing emerged within the CSCC. The Urban League published a strong endorsement in favor of busing, stating, “It is our feeling that busing for racial integration, toward equality of opportunity, is desirable and imperative.”¹³⁹ The League of Women Voters was less eager to fully commit to busing, but they acknowledged that “unquestionably, some busing would be required to desegregate San Diego City schools.”¹⁴⁰ CURE was careful to insist that none of its members and directors thought “busing was the best way to combat racism,” and they recognized that busing was an emotional issue that needed to be de-fused.¹⁴¹ But they supported busing “if it is the best way to integrate a given school system

¹³⁸ Committee to Support the Carlin Case, news release, September 1975. Carlin Records.

¹³⁹ San Diego Urban League, “A Position Paper on Busing,” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 7 no. 6 (January 1975).

¹⁴⁰ League of Women Voters of San Diego, “Perspectives on School Integration,” 9.

¹⁴¹ “Education Special,” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 5 no. 2 (March 1972).

because we support integration and we believe in integration because we believe in the brotherhood of man.”¹⁴²

Contrasting visions of educational equity

A quick look at the major players involved in the Carlin integration case and the CSCC revealed that a majority of them were white community members representing a multiracial city. This raised an important question of whether white community members, African American, Latino, and Asian American community members were motivated by the same reasons to attain integration, and whether Larry Carlin and William Gavin could accurately represent the interests of non-white children in their lawsuit, and all children attending segregated schools. The most active and vocal organization in the CSCC was CURE, which had a majority white, middle class membership. Articles published in CURE’s monthly newsletter aggressively called for the end of racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, and drew attention to incidents of police brutality, poverty, and legal injustice that disproportionately affected the African American and Latino community. Yet while much of their efforts were directed towards advocating on behalf of minority communities, CURE members pointed out that their primary goals were directed towards raising awareness in the white middle class community.¹⁴³ As CURE board member Dorothy Lloyd stated, “We do not go into the minority community and try to change matters. We try to communicate with the majority community about the problems and concerns of our city- to concern the unconcerned.”¹⁴⁴ CURE’s mission was to educate white families that racial segregation in public schools blunted their

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Nancy Ray, “Local Group United for Race Equality,” *San Diego Union*, March 1, 1970.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

children's capability of thriving in a diverse society, as much as it was detrimental to the future prospects of students of color.

White parents who supported racial integration argued that regular interaction between children from diverse racial, social, and economic backgrounds was the best way to raise young people to become well-rounded individuals. As parent Muriel Brodshatzer commented, her daughters would be attending Crawford High School, which was predominantly white, and as she described, "deprived." "This deprived school will not prepare my daughters with a real view of our world or of themselves as citizens of this world," Brodshatzer said. "It will continue to provide this distorted image of self which every deprived white child has, unless he has the opportunity for a more real picture with his friends and family. If the home has started this questioning, the school must help to penetrate the myths we live with."¹⁴⁵ Brodshatzer's perspective reflected a progressive white middle class world-view, where their primary concern was to ensure their children's exposure to diversity. African American and Latino students attending schools in poorer, racially isolated neighborhoods pointed out their concerns were much more stark. In their point of view, desegregation for its own sake was not enough to ensure a quality education. Basic instructional services needed improvement, in the form of experienced teachers, new textbooks and equipment, additional counseling support, and a new curriculum. While the Carlin legal team, the CSCC, and sympathetic white parents continued to reprimand the school board through legal channels, African American and Latino students at Lincoln High School decided to take drastic action to push for reform. On Friday, April 11, 1969, students at Lincoln High School stormed out of their classes

¹⁴⁵ Keen, "De facto Segregation in San Diego," 111.

to protest the long-standing inequalities and inconsistencies they saw in their education. Educational equality was not necessarily about diversity in the classroom: in their case, they wanted to acquire tools to thrive outside of the high school classroom.

Student activism and the Lincoln High School walkout

In April 1969, Lincoln High School in southeast San Diego was a racially segregated school. Students themselves were not ignorant of the problems that contributed to racial segregation and educational inequality. Talks of a student boycott had begun the previous November, and one year before the walkout, long time faculty members issued a report to the district assistant superintendent commenting on systematic problems, low morale, and high tensions among students and staff at Lincoln.¹⁴⁶ Two weeks before the student walkout, student body president Reese Jarrett made a personal appeal to the school board and pushed for drastic changes in curriculum and teacher attitudes towards students. Jarrett argued that the disciplinary tactics used by teachers dismissed voices of students with legitimate concerns. “Too often students are suspended before they have a chance to discuss a problem with their counselor. Students should be dealt with on a more personal basis.”¹⁴⁷ Jarrett called for hiring more “black and brown teachers and administrators” who could relate with the interpersonal issues of students of color.

Jarrett’s plea to the school board transformed into a list of twenty-two demands to the district administration made by a student group calling themselves the Central Committee. In many respects, the student demands resembled the suggestions made in

¹⁴⁶ Harold Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” *San Diego Magazine*, July 1969, 48.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

the Lindsley Report issued three years earlier, except in their list of demands, students used their voices to specifically speak to issues concerning African American and Latino concerns. Believing that a quality education was being denied to them, students called for “higher educational standards at Lincoln,” and “an education that is relevant to black and brown students” such as African American and Latino history courses.¹⁴⁸ They wanted graduation credits towards black and brown studies, more school activities, greater access to school equipment, and better food standards in the cafeteria. Students wanted Lincoln High to “end the practice of taking the cast off books of other schools.”¹⁴⁹ Students also criticized the course offerings at Lincoln, as it geared them towards blue-collar vocational work, rather than preparing them for college and further academic study. For example, students asked why Lincoln High was the only school that offered “culinary arts,” where students essentially learned how to be waiters and waitresses.¹⁵⁰ Latino students specifically wanted the right to speak Spanish on campus without fear of punishment, and they advocated “that immigrants on visas not be forced to return to Mexico because of being dissatisfied with this education system.”¹⁵¹ Latino students’ concerns were based observations that “teachers, principals and counselors who in fact know and understand Mexicans are rare. Few educators can speak Spanish,” and counselors were found to be unsympathetic.¹⁵² African American and Latino students

¹⁴⁸ Lincoln High School Student Demands, 1969. Leon Williams Papers.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Minutes of meeting to provide the opportunity to hear the black and brown side of the Lincoln School Problem, April 21, 1969. CURE Records.

¹⁵¹ Lincoln High School Student Demands.

¹⁵² Yolanda Araiza, “The Mexican American’s Search for Identity.” CURE Records.

called for the end of the extended day program “because we feel that we shouldn’t have to come at night to get the education we should be receiving during the day.”¹⁵³

In addition to curriculum changes, students desired a more influential voice in school events and proceedings. They called for the “right to bring in speakers that we want to hear instead of someone who will tell us only what the administration wants us to hear.”¹⁵⁴ They wanted “the right to put up posters that we feel are relevant to the students” without needing administrative approval. Students also called for student representation “on all the teacher organizations concerning students.”¹⁵⁵ Regarding campus security, students demanded that police be removed from campus, and when they needed assistance, they should be able to call their parents or other respected community members. Students called for the abolishment of hall monitors, and a change in disciplinary actions in the school. As students argued, they did not want to worry about harassment by authority figures. When Reese Jarrett stood in front of the school board on March 25th, he stated, “Unless our requests are met, we will do whatever our collective minds will provoke us to do in this situation, by whatever means necessary.”¹⁵⁶ Ultimately if the demands by the Lincoln High School students were left unaddressed, they would walk out of class on Monday, April 14th.

On Friday, April 11th, a student was sent to the vice principal’s office for being late to class; reacting in frustration, the student shattered windows and display cases,

¹⁵³ Lincoln High School Demands

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Harold Keen, “Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” 74.

triggering a student walk out three days ahead of schedule.¹⁵⁷ The following Monday, students gathered in the patio in continuation of the walkout, and several parents and community members were present at the students' request. The protest was peaceful until approximately 80 plain-clothes police officers arrived on campus. According to community member Jose Becerra, police officers began to restrain and apply force to students when they refused to leave the patio. As Becerra stated, "The police were very open in their actions and didn't care who saw the rough treatment they were using. Then some order was established. Four [students] were arrested and the remaining 26 that were detained would be released."¹⁵⁸ The walkouts continued on Tuesday after Latino students were told by Principal Henry Lawrence not to wear buttons displaying slogans from the Chicano movement.¹⁵⁹ Throughout the walkout, African American and Latino students stood in solidarity with one another, articulating shared frustrations that had built up for many years.

Community control and community reaction

Student protests at Lincoln High School in April of 1969 was a significant moment where African American and Latino students laid out a vision of meaningful education that contrasted with the goals presented by the Carlin team and their allies. The Carlin legal team focused on using the court system to pressure the school district to mandate a racial integration plan. Yet the African American and Latino community grew tired of listening to promises made by the white majority, and waiting for meaningful changes to occur. Carroll Waymon of the CIC described how African Americans

¹⁵⁷ "Lincoln Students Walk Out: Charge Inferior Education," *Citizen's Interracial Committee Newsletter*, April 1969. Leon Williams Papers.

¹⁵⁸ Minutes of meeting, April 21, 1969.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

embraced the idea of “do[ing] something about the black community itself” instead of waiting for change to happen.¹⁶⁰ As Harold Keen of *San Diego Magazine* reported, African American and Latino community members in San Diego told district administrators, “You had the responsibility to integrate but didn’t fulfill it. We’ve given up on you. Now we’ll take our segregated school as it is and make the best of it according to our idea of what black and brown kids need.”¹⁶¹ John Johnson of the Urban League claimed that the African American community “is no longer interested in integration. The Black community is now saying ‘were going to assume responsibility for our destiny.’”¹⁶² Students at Lincoln High agreed with local leaders who made calls for community control and ethnic pride. By calling for curriculum and staff changes in their 22 demands, students “believed that by enhancing self pride and identity through ethnic studies and by contact with teachers sensitive to their cultural uniqueness, they will be motivated toward educational attainments now beyond their reach.”¹⁶³

The Lincoln High School walkout was met by a resounding condemnation by many San Diegans, who accused the students in participating in a radical, violent movement spurred on by “outside agitators.”¹⁶⁴ In an editorial published in the *San Diego Union*, a community member described the walkout as an act of anarchy, led by young and impressionable students who used violence, harangue and hookey as part of

¹⁶⁰ “Conversation with Carroll W. Waymon,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 26, 1969.

¹⁶¹ Harold Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” 47-48.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁶⁴ Accusations of the presence of “outside agitators” in local affairs had a long history in the civil rights movement, particularly when eight Alabama clergymen attacked “outsider” Atlanta, Georgia native Martin Luther King Jr. of stirring up trouble in Birmingham in 1963. King famously repudiated accusations of being an outside agitator in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” when he wrote that he could not afford to stand idly by in Atlanta, because “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

their arsenal to attain their goals, “some of which are ridiculous.”¹⁶⁵ The writer lambasted the aggressive use of a bullhorn, and howled against the presence of “outside agitators” who “joined the pupils in challenging authority even before the first dust settled.”¹⁶⁶ In San Diego, allegations of outside interference was based on the assumption that African American and Latino students at Lincoln were content until troublemakers came into the school and put misguided ideas in their heads. Several Lincoln High teachers anonymously speculated that the San Diego Black Panthers played a key role in the walkout.¹⁶⁷ They argued that Black Panthers were selling their newspapers near the Lincoln High School campus, that the clothing of the students had a “militant look” reminiscent of the Black Panthers, and most of the trouble was being stirred up by a small minority of “hard core organizers.”¹⁶⁸

Not all opponents of the students’ demands framed their disapproval with fear-mongering tactics. Judge Byron Lindsley, who chaired the Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities, recognized that “the separatist movement is one of frustration,” particularly since African Americans and Latinos observed that nothing was being done to combat segregation.”¹⁶⁹ Yet Lindsley disagreed with calls for community control, believing “it simply offers an opportunity of further solidifying the hostile attitudes of diverse groups in the community. If you have local control in one area, why not in another area of the city.” But at the same time, he realized the importance of

¹⁶⁵ “School Authorities Draw the Line,” *San Diego Union*, April 19, 1969.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Harold Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” 74.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

providing an education that cultivated a sense of dignity and pride among students of color.

Community members and organizations supporting the Lincoln High School walkout recognized the importance of keeping the channels of communication open between students, allies, and the city at large, to combat distortions or misrepresentations of their agenda. As community members observed, many “inaccurate, distorted or insufficient” rumors circulated throughout the city, strengthening the opposition. Charles Shufford Swift of CURE complained about the editorial portrayal of the student walkout in the San Diego *Union*. Swift argued that the student movement was being misrepresented, and such wrongful portrayals served to “aggravate the situation, polarize the community and confounds your call for support of the schools.”¹⁷⁰ Swift condemned the theory that “outside agitators” were influencing student behavior, asking who the “outsiders” were, and whether local tax paying parents were labeled as such.¹⁷¹

Community members defended students, describing them as model citizens, “demonstrating their maturity in dealing with the problems they face daily in their schools.”¹⁷² Lincoln High School parent counselor Barbara Anderson argued that the media portrayal of the student walkout was largely exaggerated and false: “The Lincoln students had acted in a mannerly, orderly, constructive way in trying to get things settled and make them better.”¹⁷³ Student DiAnna Toliver rejected accusations that the walkout was anything but student-led: “Students simply saw the need for change and when there

¹⁷⁰ Charles Shuf Swift to E. Robert Anderson, May 2, 1969. CURE Records.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Minutes, Sunday April 20, 1969. Leon Williams Papers.

¹⁷³ Statement, “Community Meets to Support Lincoln High Students,” April 14, 1969. Leon Williams Papers.

was not response, they decided to boycott.”¹⁷⁴ The students who were most critical of the administration “were not a Black Panther dominated organization,” Toliver argued. “It was formed by a group of black and brown students” who wanted more input in decisions that affected their schools.¹⁷⁵

The walkout resulted in limited victories for the Lincoln High School student body. In a first for the school district, Superintendent Jack Hornback appointed Dr. Ernest Hartzog as the first African American principal at Lincoln High School, replacing Henry Lawrence. Student DiAnna Toliver saw this as a positive move by the district, observing that while Lawrence expressed concern over student discontent, it was his unwillingness to challenge the status quo that made it difficult for students to trust in his leadership. Toliver observed that the mood among students lightened with the appointment of Hartzog, who they believed could understand the moods and attitudes of students of color.¹⁷⁶ Additional changes would be implemented at Lincoln, according to social studies teacher Robert Gennette. Teachers would be required to undergo sensitivity training, new qualifications for hiring would be taken into consideration, and the curriculum would be revamped for the following school year.¹⁷⁷ Yet despite these changes, tensions continued to mar the interaction between teachers, students and the greater community. Faculty members complained that the “more militant youth” displayed “certain arrogance,” and an attitude of invincibility.¹⁷⁸ Approximately 60% of the faculty at Lincoln requested transfers for the following year, and while there was

¹⁷⁴ Harold Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” 74.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 75.

¹⁷⁷ “Lincoln: Racial Crisis in San Diego Schools?” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 1 no. 2 (May 1969): 4-5.

¹⁷⁸ Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” 75.

hope that the positions would be filled with African American and Latino teachers, the number of actual minority candidates was scant.¹⁷⁹

Despite the limited success and continuing tensions resulting from the student walkout, student protesters embraced the possibilities of an alternative method for addressing ongoing racial segregation in San Diego's public schools. Rather than waiting for the courts to rule on whether the San Diego Unified School District had an obligation to implement a integration plan, African American and Latino student movements were borne from a sense of urgency and unwillingness to wait any longer for changes to occur. Rather than calling for integration, the black and brown student movement pushed for self-determination and community control. As long as the district continued to ignore calls for change from the poorest neighborhoods in the city, and as long as the neighborhoods remained racially and economically segregated, African American and Latino activists would continue to seek changes that would benefit their immediate community.

Conclusion

Despite differences in methodology and objective, the Carlin legal team and the Lincoln High student protesters agreed that the San Diego Unified School District failed to provide children of all races an equal education. There were many overlaps between the Lindsley Report, which had the support of the Carlin legal team, and the 22 demands made by the Lincoln High School students. Both the Carlin lawsuit and the student protests unleashed deep seeded racial insecurities harbored by many white San Diegans who were uncomfortable with what they believed was forced racial interaction, or felt

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 76.

their own zones of privacy were under siege. Yet despite the multiracial composition of the Carlin plaintiffs, they had a difficult time gaining wide support among African American and Latino communities who pushed for faster and more drastic action to correct discrepancies in their children's education. As the next chapter will demonstrate, calls for educational self-determination grew even more forceful, as African American and Latino community members contended that integration for integration's sake caused psychological harm to students of color and violated their community's interests.

The Carlin lawsuit would remain on the court docket for nine years, and a ruling would not be reached until 1977. During this delay, support for the Carlin lawsuit began to lose traction, as opposition to school racial desegregation grew in tandem with national attitudes regarding neoliberal colorblind politics. The implementation of an effective racial integration program would become even more difficult as San Diegans of every racial background vocalized their opposition to any effort that was perceived as forcing children to attend a particular school against their parents' wishes. As long as the mechanisms used to obtain educational justice for children were attacked as something that violated individual political and economic interests, desegregation efforts would face forceful opposition by whites, African Americans and Latinos alike.

Chapter 2

“We Will Take Our Children Off the Bus:” Politics of San Diego’s “Anti-Integration” Stance 1970-1979

In March of 1972 George Stevens, director of the San Diego branch of CORE, wrote an article in a local newsletter printed by the grassroots organization Citizens United for Racial Equality (CURE). In his article titled “Ketchum Negroes,” Stevens stated, “It is hard for me to believe that there are blacks who want their children to go to school to achieve integration. I hope their interest is to provide a good education for their children, and sitting beside a white kid in a classroom is not necessary for a black child to learn. It is certainly wrong to ask a black child to balance a situation that a racist white has unbalanced.”¹⁸⁰ Stevens’s remarks reiterated a position held by many African Americans that it was not their children’s responsibility to integrate with a white population who resisted racial interaction. In his point of view, white residents were responsible for sustaining segregation when they fled the neighborhoods in which African American families had moved. As Stevens argued, “why should I send my child by bus to catch up with the white child that has just moved from the neighborhood? Had his family remained in my neighborhood, the question of busing would not be necessary.”¹⁸¹

George Stevens’s outright opposition to busing is part of a larger critique by a multiracial group of San Diego residents regarding the San Diego Unified School District’s racial integration policies. This chapter explores the complexity behind the

¹⁸⁰ George Stevens. “Ketchum Negroes,” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 5 no. 2 (March 1972).

¹⁸¹ “Black Leaders Comment on Petition to School Board,” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 2 no. 1 (July 1969).

extensive “anti-integration” stance held by San Diegans during the 1970s. Many sociological and historical studies on resistance to public school racial integration programs focused on the motivations behind white resistance, placing their reasons into two camps: racism or self-interest.¹⁸² This chapter challenges the simple dichotomy that white residents were against racial integration, while non-white residents favored it. In a city with a racially diverse population such as San Diego, it is important to recognize that African American, Latino, and Asian American residents also identified an array of ideological and methodological problems with the school district’s integration plan. This chapter highlights parental concerns expressed at school board meetings, as well as in letters written to school administrators, to the San Diego desegregation task force, and to the editors of local newspapers and newsletters. These sources revealed that regardless of an individual’s racial and socioeconomic status, the “anti-integration” position essentially boiled down to a desire for personal agency and control over one’s future. Parents wanted to choose where they could send their children to school, and they argued that the mechanisms used to achieve racial integration, such as busing and magnet programs, infringed on their personal freedom and subjected their children to greater educational disparity. Calls for parental choice grew particularly insistent during the 1970s, a decade marked by economic instability, mainstream fatigue from the civil rights movement, and mainstream acceptance of a neoliberal political ideology which prioritized individualism over civil rights.

¹⁸² Carl L. Bankston III and Stephen J. Caldas, *A Troubled Dream: The Promise and Failure of School Desegregation in Louisiana* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002); Christine H. Rossell, *The Carrot or the Stick for School Desegregation Policy: Magnet Schools or Forced Busing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Christine H. Rossell, David J. Armor and Herbert J. Walberg, eds., *School Desegregation in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

Growing ambivalence towards school integration

In order to understand the aversion towards public school racial desegregation and integration programs across the nation, it is necessary to examine three national trends that gave rise to widespread antagonistic feelings towards educational egalitarianism, the first being the rise of neoliberal political opposition to government interventions during the 1960s. The growing popularity of neoliberalism among middle and working class white families made it possible for politically conservative opponents of school integration to avoid sounding racist by framing their resistance in seemingly race-neutral terms of individual and parental choice. While neoliberalism is a term often used to describe shifting economic philosophies away from Keynesian government intervention policies and towards Hayekian free market practices, neoliberalism also manifested itself in social and political realms as a reaction to the tumultuous social shifts that arose during the 1960s.¹⁸³ In a society that long championed the dominant ideology of the “American Dream” and prided itself in a Horatio Alger-esque, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps individualism, government health and welfare programs, civil rights legislation, and Supreme Court rulings that expanded the definition of “liberty” were seen by neoliberals as unquestionably un-American.¹⁸⁴ The Republican Party of the 1960s, led by men such as Barry Goldwater, George Wallace, and Richard Nixon played a critical role in promoting a neoliberal agenda by convincing the electorate that the federal government’s

¹⁸³ For more on the rise of neoliberalism, see David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Nicholas Wapshott, *Keynes Hayek: The Clash that Defined Modern Economics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).

¹⁸⁴ Controversial Supreme Court rulings which expanded the government’s role in enforcing civil rights include *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483 (1954), *Baker v. Carr* 369 U.S. 186 (1962), *Griswold v. Connecticut* 381 U.S. 479 (1965), *Miranda v. Arizona* 384 U.S. 436 (1966), *Loving v. Virginia* 388 U.S. 1 (1967), and *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

push for civil rights reform did more harm than good to the nation's wellbeing. As Thomas and Mary Edsall explain, the Republican Party's rejuvenation from its nadir during the 1960s was based on creating a coalition between white working class voters and the business elite, who historically stood on opposite ends of the political spectrum.¹⁸⁵ The success of the Republican Party was based on capitalizing on white populist anxieties surrounding taxation and race relations, without appearing to be overtly racist themselves.¹⁸⁶

It was no easy feat for Republicans to woo white working class voters away from the Democratic Party. As Bruce Schulman points out, during the 1960s, the conservative movement was "weak, poorly organized and lacked respect by ordinary voters."¹⁸⁷ The key was to build a coalition among unlikely bedfellows. Many working class whites were loyal labor union members who voted Democrat in keeping with the Roosevelt New Deal coalition.¹⁸⁸ These voters had little in common with members of the affluent, business elite. Yet despite being on opposite ends of the economic and class spectrum, leaders of the conservative movement managed to unite the two over a couple of common

¹⁸⁵ Thomas Byrne Edsall, with Mary Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992).

¹⁸⁶ Edsall, 3-4. See also Dan T. Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution 1963-1994* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement From the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009).

¹⁸⁷ Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), 8.

¹⁸⁸ Kazin, 224. In contrast to the argument of a dominant New Deal labor coalition, Meg Jacobs's *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005) argues that the "New Deal" coalition was based on the "purchasing power" of the American middle and working class. To sustain habits of consumption, it was necessary to regulate prices as well as wages. Alice Kessler-Harris also argues that 20th century citizenship is based on the rights of consumption: *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

concerns: shared racial anxieties made visible by a restless black underclass and a shared hatred of federal taxation and government regulation.¹⁸⁹

Many blue collar whites felt they had very little in common with the identity politics espoused by African American, Latino and Asian American community members, particularly those affiliated with the Black, Brown and Yellow Power movements of the mid to late 1960s. As Democrats and liberals aligned their political goals with the civil rights movements of the sixties, conservative politicians recognized the disconnection and frustration expressed among white Americans, particularly individuals who worried that their voices were ignored by elected officials who were busy catering to the racial “other.” As federal funding was directed towards programs intended to assist working class racial minorities such as school busing, open housing, job creation and welfare, working and middle class white Americans argued that the government was intruding on their ability to live as they saw fit, just as their tax dollars were used to fund programs for a seemingly ungrateful and undeserving population. The Watts Riots in Los Angeles which lasted for five days in August of 1965 contributed to a mainstream perception that African Americans were ungrateful for the rights bestowed upon them via the recent passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Conservative aggravation was accentuated with the growth of the feminist movement, anti-war activism, the fight for gay and lesbian civil rights, and a wave of beatniks and hippies who contested the dominance of the white, Protestant, heterosexual, patriarchal nuclear family as the core of society. The country was arguably headed in the

¹⁸⁹ Edsall, chapter 1.

wrong direction and according to a rising conservative coalition forged by the Republican Party, a course correction was desperately needed.

By 1968 the national scene was primed for a conservative, neoliberal ascendancy. A resurgent Richard Nixon, who in 1960 was handily defeated by John F. Kennedy for the presidency, was the Republican's candidate of choice. Nixon and his campaign team recognized that the key to his victory was to win the hearts and minds of the white suburban "silent majority" by exploiting their uneasiness over school desegregation and busing.¹⁹⁰ Just as Barry Goldwater had done during his presidential campaign in 1964, Nixon was careful not to espouse outwardly racist language when explaining his opposition to federally sponsored civil rights programs. The key to a conservative victory was not to use outwardly racist commentary, but to emphasize a colorblind rhetoric that could tap into a popular national sentiment of equal opportunity based on individual merit. Nixon masterfully blended white American beliefs in equality and freedom with a growing opposition to judicial and legislative efforts to implement racial integration in public schools.¹⁹¹

Colorblind language was a powerful weapon used by opponents of social welfare and school integration efforts. According to Tim Wise, colorblind politics ignored past racial injustices and dismissed efforts to increase racial diversity and address the needs of

¹⁹⁰ The "silent majority" was a politically constructed, targeted group of middle class, suburban dwelling white voters who, according to Matthew Lassiter, subscribed to a center-right colorblind ideology of merit-based success. The silent majority rejected the argument of sociohistorical discrimination and structural racism as the cause of residential and school segregation. Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹⁹¹ Edsall, 75.

a diverse student population.¹⁹² Rather than recognizing how sociohistorical inequalities shaped which educational and economic opportunities were available to individuals based on their race, conservative politicians utilized colorblind language to argue that economic struggle and educational underachievement were due to a lack of effort by people of color. By embracing colorblind ideology, white middle class parents and community leaders envisioned themselves as respectable citizens who were victimized by an overzealous federal government eager to disregard their rights in the name of social equality. These parents had done everything “right:” they got the right job and lived in the right neighborhood, but their children were forced to attend a school outside of their attendance zone. Nixon employed colorblind language to sympathize with angry suburban white parents, telling them “there is no reason to feel guilty about wanting to enjoy what you get and get what you earn, about wanting your children in good schools close to home, or about wanting to be judged fairly on your ability.”¹⁹³ Nixon assured voters that there were “wrong” ways of resisting integration, and there were “right” reasons for doing so.¹⁹⁴

Nixon’s victory in 1968 represented the national ascent of conservatism and a perceived mandate on attacking school integration policies such as busing. For conservative politicians, the problem was clear: busing was the mechanism that the federal government used to infringe on the private decisions of families. According to Edsall, “No other issue brought home so vividly to whites the image of the federal

¹⁹² Tim Wise, *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equality* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2010), 18-20.

¹⁹³ Lassiter, 5.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

government as intruder and oppressor.”¹⁹⁵ Court ordered busing in cities across the nation “would demand some of the largest changes in habit and custom” among working class residents of large cities and would prove to polarize district neighborhoods.¹⁹⁶ Nixon adopted a forceful stance against busing, stating in August of 1971, “I am against busing as that term is commonly used in school desegregation cases. I have consistently opposed the busing of our nation’s schoolchildren to achieve a racial balance, and I am opposed to the busing of children simply for the sake of busing.”¹⁹⁷ In 1972 Nixon would further expand his position by stating, “The school bus ‘once a symbol of hope,’ had become a symbol of social engineering on the basis of abstraction... it has become a symbol of helplessness, frustration and outrage- of a wrenching of children away from their families, and from the schools their families may have moved to be near, and sending them arbitrarily to others far distant.”¹⁹⁸ Nixon argued that opposition to busing was not just a problem for “white” Americans: “The great majority of Americans, black and white, feel strongly that the busing of school children away from their own neighborhoods for the purpose of achieving racial balance is wrong.”¹⁹⁹

The national push against busing reached new heights in 1974, on the streets of Boston and in the Supreme Court. During the autumn of 1974, the nation watched riveted as working class and middle class whites from the Boston neighborhoods of West

¹⁹⁵ Edsall, 87.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Richard Nixon. “Statement About the Busing of Schoolchildren,” August 3, 1971. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3098>

¹⁹⁸ Richard Nixon, “Special Message to the Congress on Equal Educational Opportunities and School Busing,” March 17, 1972. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3776>.

¹⁹⁹ Richard Nixon, “Address to the Nation on Equal Educational Opportunities and School Busing,” March 16, 1972. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3775>.

Roxbury, South Boston and Charleston vehemently and violently protested the busing of their children to schools in the mostly black neighborhood of Roxbury. White resistance to busing was undeniably racist, but as Ronald Formisano argued, it would be more accurate to understand anti busing through the lens of “reactionary populism,” and a desire for personal agency. As Formisano writes, anti busing frustrations were rooted in “rampant citizen alienation from impersonal government, drawing on an ingrained, deeply felt sense of injustice, unfairness, and deprivation of rights.”²⁰⁰

As Bostonians took to the streets to protest against perceived educational injustices, a battle against desegregation and integration was being waged in the Supreme Court. Since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, the Supreme Court had exercised its judicial authority in support of desegregation and the use of busing to achieve integration.²⁰¹ Yet on July 25, 1974, the Supreme Court ruled in *Milliken v. Bradley* that the Detroit Board of Education had no obligation to bus students across district lines to desegregate majority black schools, unless it could be proven that the district deliberately segregated the students. According to Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton, the *Milliken* decision in 1974 began a trend of decreased judicial involvement to compel districts to desegregate and integrate their schools. Federal intervention via Supreme

²⁰⁰ Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 3.

²⁰¹ In *Green v. New Kent County, VA* (1968), the Supreme Court rejected New Kent County’s “freedom of choice” school plan as an inadequate method to achieve desegregation. *Green* is sometimes characterized as the enforcing arm of *Brown*, as it urged school districts to actively work to desegregate its schools. In *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenberg Board of Education, NC* (1971), the Supreme Court required the school district to implement a desegregation plan, and stated that busing could be used to facilitate integration. In *Keyes v. School District no. 1 Denver* (1973), the Supreme Court ruled that (1) the enrollment of Latinos and Blacks in the same school did not constitute integration; (2) if complainant could prove de jure segregation in one portion of the district, then it was enough to assume that the entire district was segregated; (3) the burden of proof was on the school district to prove that other portions of the school district were not segregated. In turn, *Keyes* mandated the desegregation of its schools.

Court rulings would come to an end with the 1991 decision in *Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* and the 1995 decision in *Missouri v. Jenkins*. Consequently, as local districts assumed control of the racial integration process, school districts across the nation began the march towards resegregation.²⁰² During the 1970s, the conservative neoliberal argument against desegregation and integration gained the upper hand over arguments for civil rights, as anti-integrationists had mainstream public opinion, the President of the United States, and the Supreme Court on its side.

The second reason for rising national discontent towards school desegregation and integration policies is directly related to the growing frustrations among people of color with the mainstream civil rights movement. As white residents grew exasperated with the ceaseless racial and social tensions that dominated national political attention, African American, Latino, and Asian American community members expressed frustration that promises of systemic changes in governance, housing, job opportunities and educational access made during the civil rights movement remained unfulfilled for so many households. In response, people of color advanced a separatist agenda, arguing that slow-moving integration programs were counterproductive to the overall objective of empowering black, brown, and yellow youth, instilling them with a sense of racial pride, and providing them with a meaningful education that opened the gateway towards upward economic mobility.

The Black Power movement, which emerged in the late 1960s, exemplified the call for racial self-sufficiency and community control in juxtaposition to the civil rights

²⁰² Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: New Press, 1996).

call for inclusion and integration. Nationally, the two most visible advocates for racial autonomy and self-help were Malcolm X and members of the Black Panther Party, which was founded in Oakland, California in 1966. In the city of San Diego, the Black Panthers and the Black Muslims of the Muhammed Mosque staunchly promoted strength and pride in one's racial identity. Having given up on the idea that whites and African Americans could ever cooperate on social issues, the Black Muslims rejected efforts to promote school racial integration. Henry Purifoy, minister of the Muhammed Mosque argued, "Integration is a modern form of slavery... school integration is not good because it is still basically a white man's curriculum. That is why we have our own schools."²⁰³ Their position was labeled as separatist, racist and dangerous by the mainstream, but Purifoy insisted the ultimate objective was to exercise self-determination and control over their own life. Advocates of Black Power dismissed African Americans who supported integration as middle class "Uncle Toms" who have largely forgotten the needs of the working class and the poor. Jimmy Johnson, leader of the San Diego Black Panthers, rebuked organizations such as the NAACP, the Urban League, and CORE because "they can't relate to the black man in the gutter, the drunk and the dope users. But the Panthers can and can help these black people."²⁰⁴ Despite the allure of the Black Power movement, counterhegemonic groups like the Black Panthers and Black Muslims failed to reach widespread acceptance, for reasons of fear of affiliation, or ideological disagreements. Since no single movement or leader represented the collective interests of the majority of African Americans living in San Diego, no single stance could embody

²⁰³ Melvin Steinfield, "In San Diego New Evidence of Growing Black Power and Black Unity," *San Diego Magazine*, January 1967, 65.

²⁰⁴ Russel Pierce and Charlotte Insko, "San Diego Panthers Articulate Philosophy," *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 2, no. 6 (January 1970): 1, 4.

the feelings African Americans held towards the district's school desegregation program. Yet the growing acceptance of Black Power ideology during the civil rights era indicated there was a sympathetic audience for the message of community control of their children's education, and a hardening stance towards the school district's efforts to integrate their school campuses.²⁰⁵

The third explanation for public anger with school desegregation and integration is attributed to the impact the economic crisis of the 1970s had on attitudes of working and middle class families.²⁰⁶ The 1970s was a decade of growing economic insecurity, which contrasted with the years of relative prosperity in the decade prior. According to Jefferson Cowie, the post World War II years prior to 1973 were considered to be among the most economically egalitarian time in United States history, but the national mood would quickly shift following the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973.²⁰⁷ The oil embargo exposed the United States' over-dependence on foreign fuel. When OPEC decided to embargo oil sales as a punishment for the United States' support of Israel, the price of gas and heating oil skyrocketed, and the most visible symbol of the crisis was the long lines at the gas pump. As Bruce Schulman explained, "The world's greatest superpower seemed suddenly toothless, helpless, literally and metaphorically out of gas."²⁰⁸ The Nixon and Ford administrations did little to prevent another embargo from happening, and by the time of Jimmy Carter's presidency, the United States was stuck in a proverbial hole. Stagflation stalled economic growth, and gas prices climbed back up between 1977

²⁰⁵ Steinfield, 88.

²⁰⁶ See Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*; Jefferson Cowie, "Vigorously Left, Right, and Center: The Crosscurrents of Working-Class America in the 1970s" in *America in the Seventies*, eds. Beth Bailey and David Farber. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 75-106.

²⁰⁷ Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 12; Schulman, 125.

²⁰⁸ Schulman, 125.

and 1979. Due to a second oil embargo, long lines at the gas pump returned, and over 60% of gas stations nationwide had to shut down due to fuel shortages.²⁰⁹

Simultaneously, cities in the United States faced increasing disrepair following rapid deindustrialization and globalization of the work force.²¹⁰ Consumer spending was slashed due to income stagnation and rapid inflation, and angry homeowners were unwilling to pay higher property taxes, which were used to help fund public schools.

Economic anxiety translated as populist anger towards seemingly wasteful government programs such as school busing. In San Diego, residents argued that busing made little sense during an economic recession and a gas shortage, particularly when integration programs had little support and generated citywide animosity. San Diego residents of various racial backgrounds argued that integration was a waste of tax dollars. Gordon Wang's blunt statement to the Task Force echoed sentiments of other San Diego families: "Do you know there is a gas shortage around? Why don't we stop school busing and save some gas."²¹¹ Another parent wrote, "Keep property taxes down, get rid of all those busses. No accidents. No risks for children in busses."²¹² Another parent retorted, "With the gas situation as it is, it's real stupid to bus at all."²¹³ Graciela Contreras wrote the Task Force stating, "The program is a waste of money that could be used to improve the schools. They should just let the kids go to the school closest to them instead of making them go across town when the school is just a couple blocks

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 140.

²¹⁰ Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 12.

²¹¹ Gordon Wang to San Diego School Integration Task Force, May 10, 1979. School Integration Task Force Records, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University (hereafter cited as SITF Records).

²¹² Eleanor Klein to San Diego School Integration Task Force, May 14, 1979. SITF Records.

²¹³ Mary Ann Bischel to William Kolender, May 16, 1979. SITF Records.

away! With the gas prices the way they are it just seems so insensible.”²¹⁴ Underlying Contreras’s preference for neighborhood schools was a widely shared assumption that the district’s misguided support for busing prevented real progress from being attained. Parents believed that if the school district simply focused their attention to improving schools, there would be no need to bus students across the city.

The fight over “forced busing” in California

As President Nixon led the national charge against busing through the use of colorblind rhetoric, battles were being waged at the state level in the courts, in state legislatures, and at the ballot box. In California, opponents of busing directed their energies towards overturning California Education Code 5002-5003, also known as the Bagley Act, which passed in the California legislature in 1971. The Bagley Act required school districts in the state to address racial imbalance, and to present a plan to the State Department of Education to integrate their schools. Opponents of busing advanced their cause by using the language of equal opportunity and parental choice. Anti-busing politicians like State Assemblyman Floyd Wakefield from Los Angeles stated that his “purpose as a representative is to promote quality education for all students of all races.”²¹⁵ Wakefield denounced the Bagley Act as “forced integration,” arguing that it authorized the government to violate the rights of parents, and the rights of school districts to determine their own policies.²¹⁶ In 1972, Wakefield led a wide-scale effort to reverse the Bagley Act by challenging its constitutionality and placing Proposition 21 on

²¹⁴ Graciela Contreras to San Diego School Integration Task Force, date unknown. SITF Records.

²¹⁵ Floyd Wakefield to Wilson Riles, February 3, 1971. Department of Education Records, California State Archives (hereafter cited as Dept. Ed. Records).

²¹⁶ Floyd Wakefield’s stance is outlined in greater detail in Daniel Martinez HoSang’s *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010), chapter 4.

the November ballot. Proposition 21 was known as the “Wakefield initiative,” the “anti-busing initiative,” the “neighborhood school initiative,” and “the student school assignment initiative,” and it stipulated the following: first, to prohibit the assignment of pupils to schools based on race, creed or color; and second, to repeal statutes enacted by the State Legislature and adopted by the State Board of Education which prioritized achieving and maintaining pupil racial balance in California’s public schools.

On the surface Proposition 21 appeared to endorse educational equality on the basis of race, calling for a colorblind system of assigning students to their respective schools. Yet closer analysis revealed tactics of exploiting white voter anxieties over the loss of the neighborhood school system. Daniel Martinez HoSang described a Proposition 21 advertising storyboard where a helpless white mother told her terrified daughter, “The government says you and your little friends can’t go to school anymore in the neighborhood honey.” The girl would then ask, “Aren’t we people too?”²¹⁷ The advertisement would conclude with the phrase “Restore Freedom of Choice.” HoSang argues that it was Wakefield’s intent to exploit white frustrations at the expense of non-white residents.²¹⁸ While segregated schools were an unfortunate consequence of de facto segregation, Wakefield argued that the segregation occurred organically, and integration was an unnatural and artificial remedy.²¹⁹

Opponents of Proposition 21 faced an uphill battle as they attempted to persuade Californians that busing would not harm their children’s educational prospects or infringe on their individual rights. Members of the California School Boards Association,

²¹⁷ HoSang, 100.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid. 101.

Association of California School Administrators, California Teachers Association, and California Federation of Teachers were joined by local organizations including Citizens United for Racial Equality (CURE), and the San Diego chapter of the ACLU, in arguing “Proposition 21 is racism in sweet talk clothing.”²²⁰ Even the San Diego Unified School District expressed umbrage at the prospect of having their voluntary racial balance program threatened.²²¹ As Thomas Shannon, attorney for the school district stated, Proposition 21 threatened to encroach on every local school board’s authority to “devise programs to meet local needs and solve local problems,” particularly the district’s prized Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program (VEEP).²²² For all opponents of Proposition 21, the danger of the Wakefield Amendment was that “it pretends to be absolutely color blind, but its consequences would be to freeze hundreds of thousands of minority children in the inferior segregated schools to which they are now assigned.”²²³

San Diego grassroots organization CURE urged the public to keep a cool head over the issue of busing. CURE members made a special point to debunk statements that integration was unpopular among people of color by pointing out that prominent African American community leaders, including members of the Congressional Black Caucus “strongly affirm our support of busing as one of the many ways to implement the constitutional requirement of equal opportunities in education.”²²⁴ CURE also railed against the suggestion made by Nixon and Wakefield that all families had a wide range of

²²⁰ Californians Against Unequal Schools and Education, “No on 21,” November 1972. CURE Records; David Irving, “Cause Formed to Fight Anti-Integration Initiative on Ballot,” ACLU News San Diego (October 1972), CURE Records.

²²¹ Thomas A. Shannon, “Statement on Proposition 21,” October 30, 1972. Carlin Records.

²²² Shannon, statement.

²²³ Californians Against Unequal Schools and Education, “No on 21.”

²²⁴ “Education Special,” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 5 no. 2 (March 1972).

choices regarding the neighborhood in which they could live, and consequently the school to which they could send their children.²²⁵ CURE argued that many non-white families were prevented from moving into their first-choice neighborhood “because of racially segregated housing patterns. These people certainly did not choose to live near inferior schools.”²²⁶ CURE reiterated its stance that while busing was not the best or most popular way to combat racism, it was a crucial tool that districts needed to use to facilitate integration.²²⁷

On November 7, 1972, California voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 21 with a vote of 4.9 million (63%) in favor and 2.9 million (37%) against.²²⁸ In the city of San Diego, the measure passed with 186,864 (66%) in favor and 96,251 (34%) against.²²⁹ Voters signaled a rejection of “forced” integration, yet what troubled the “No on 21” campaign was how decisively voters across California rejected any effort to prevent and eliminate racial and ethnic segregation in public schools. Proposition 21 alleviated the school districts from any responsibility of keeping track of racial imbalance and of developing plans to remedy segregation.²³⁰ As HoSang documented, Proposition 21’s reach was felt immediately, as the Pasadena and Inglewood school districts attempted to overturn their court ordered desegregation programs, and the state auditor began to monitor school districts to ensure they complied with the new initiative.²³¹ Yet immediately after its success at the ballot box, the NAACP and the ACLU filed a suit

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ *Supplement to the Statement of Vote, 1972 General Election*, (Sacramento: California Secretary of State, February 1973), 206

²²⁹ Ibid., 201-202.

²³⁰ *Statement of Vote, 1972 General Election*, (Sacramento: California Secretary of State, February 1973), 31.

²³¹ HoSang, 104.

against Proposition 21 on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. In January of 1975, the California State Supreme Court overturned the initiative on the grounds that it violated federal and state laws that prohibited discrimination, and unlawfully relieved school districts from their legal responsibility to desegregate.²³² Despite the unconstitutionality of Proposition 21, its overwhelming approval by voters signaled a discontented electorate that was possessive of their individual rights, and wary of any initiative that appeared to take away their parental choice, even if it was in the name of civil rights and redress.

Following the passage of Proposition 21, San Diegans who advocated for racial integration in public schools realized their arguments were failing to convince the electorate that integration was imperative to their children's educational success. Community members who supported the plaintiffs in the city's class action lawsuit *Carlin v. Board of Education* urged San Diegans to recognize that while it was not necessary for children of color to sit next to white children in order to learn, "they may have to sit next to majority children in order to be taught, because whites elect a majority of the school board and whites will continue to be complacent about education of minority children as long as they are segregated."²³³ In 1974, members of the San Diego Urban League argued that African American and Mexican American students in particular "received inferior instructional services in segregated schools."²³⁴ San Diego Urban League members believed that a mandatory integration program utilizing busing

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Carlin plaintiff handout, date unknown. Carlin Records.

²³⁴ San Diego Urban League, "A Position Paper on the Subject of Busing for Racial Integration," (1974). Carlin Records.

was a “desirable and imperative” means to remedy the gap.²³⁵ Yet by the time a verdict was reached in the Carlin case in 1977, a survey conducted by Professor Oscar Kaplan of San Diego State University revealed that 81% of parents surveyed opposed plans that included mandatory busing to achieve integration.²³⁶ As Mary Ehrlander further explains, amongst the 81%, 52% of parents indicated they would withdraw their children from public school and enroll them in private schools if mandatory integration via busing was enforced, and the only group that expressed support for busing was the African American community. Yet as I will explain later, African American support for busing was far from universal, especially when their responses were examined through the lens of class. All racial groups, including middle class African Americans, indicated their opposition to busing hinged on whether their children would be transported to schools in southeast San Diego, which was one of the more economically deprived neighborhoods in the city.

The Carlin verdict and court ordered desegregation in San Diego

After nine years, numerous delays, and failed attempts at settlement, Judge Louis Welsh delivered his verdict on *Carlin et al. v. Board of Education San Diego* on March 9, 1977.²³⁷ Welsh ruled that 23 schools in the San Diego Unified School District were

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Cited in Mary Ehrlander, *Equal Educational Opportunity: Brown's Elusive Mandate* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2002), 151.

²³⁷ The class action lawsuit *Carlin et al v. Board of Education San Diego* was originally filed in December 1967. A ruling in the case was delayed due to the court's desire to wait for a decision on *Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, which itself faced a protracted appeals process since its initial filing in 1963. The Crawford case was originally filed in 1963 when African American and Mexican American community members pushed for racial desegregation in the Los Angeles Unified School District. In 1970, Judge Alfred Gitelson of the California Superior Court ruled that the district had deliberately segregated schools based on race. He ordered them to desegregate immediately. The district challenged the ruling, and after numerous appeals, the case reached the Supreme Court in 1982. See Rebecca Tembrock. *The*

racially segregated, and the district should be placed under court supervision and immediately implement a racial desegregation and integration plan. Welsh dismissed the defense's argument that because racial segregation had occurred naturally due to residential segregation, the district should not be compelled to desegregate. While Welsh himself favored proposals made in the Lindsley Report, which suggested a limited mandatory reassignment program, educational parks, or school pairing, in his ruling the district was allowed to choose the method to integrate students.²³⁸ To the chagrin of the Carlin plaintiffs, the San Diego Unified School District chose to intensify their efforts in promoting the Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program (VEEP), which only bused interested students from their neighborhood school to a school in the district in need of racial balancing. Additionally the district aggressively promoted their Magnet School program which offered a specialized curriculum designed to attract white students to African American and Latino segregated campuses. Magnet and non-magnet students would share the same campus but attend separate classes, have different teachers and different resources for their use.

In order to supervise the district's activities, Judge Welsh authorized the creation of a School Integration Task Force in 1978, led by San Diego Police Department Chief William Kolender. The Task Force recruited community members to act as school monitors, tasked with visiting schools for three to four hours minimum, once a week. During their site visits, monitors were expected to develop a relationship with administrators, teachers, students, and parents to gather a complete picture of daily

Carlin Integration Case: The Struggle for Desegregation in San Diego Schools. MA Thesis, San Diego State University, 1993; chapter 2.

²³⁸ Tembrock, chapter 2.

business at their assigned school. Monitors made note of student attitudes toward new curriculum, whether teachers acclimated to the influx of new students in their classroom, and whether teachers effectively adjusted their teaching approach if new students were at a different academic level from their new peers. Using their observations, monitors filed a report to the Task Force offering praise or raising concerns as they saw fit.²³⁹

Additional information on conditions in the district was provided to the Task Force by parents writing letters expressing approval or disapproval with the integration efforts.

The combination of monitor reports, parent letters, and commentary in newspapers and community newsletters revealed overwhelming frustration and disapproval of the district's integration efforts by San Diego residents of all racial backgrounds.

White criticisms of school integration

The most vocal opponents to racial integration in San Diego were white community members who broadcast their discontent at school board meetings and in letters to district and state officials. An examination of these sources reveals many white San Diegans expressing either subtle or blatant feelings of racial prejudice against African American and Latino students, and resistance toward court ordered integration. In an article for CURE's newsletter, community member Keith Robinson observed that "whites who fear integration are those who themselves were educated in segregated schools; hatred and fear grow out of ignorance and the failure of society to promote understanding."²⁴⁰ These San Diegans argued that the presence of white children in the classroom was necessary for schools to sustain a high level of instruction, while the

²³⁹ Bill Kolender to the community, Fall 1978. SITF Records; Monitor Guidelines, date unknown. SITF Records.

²⁴⁰ Keith Robinson, "School Crisis Worsens: CURE Confronts Apathy," *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 5 no. 3 (June 1972).

presence of non-white children lowered educational standards and the quality of the school overall. Community member Alexander Von Storch complained in a letter to the State Superintendent that in his daughter's third grade classroom, "Caucasians represent too small a number to permit adequate educational opportunities for my girl."²⁴¹ Ann Zimmerman wrote to the San Diego School Integration Task Force denouncing the rowdy behavior of black children and the proliferation of "black speech patterns" at Benchley Magnet School, which her six-year-old daughter attends.²⁴² Susan Kennedy, who attended Mission Bay High School, complained about the behavior of Mexican American students, and the lack of effort by the staff to reprimand them. Kennedy wrote to the Task Force stating Mexican American students "feel they are better than other students and are out to prove it... by being loud, obnoxious and using intimidating behavior... they also deface school property by using indelible ink on lunch tables, school walls and anything else they can get their hands on. There are other things, but the worst part is they get away with it because the teachers are too scared to do anything about it."²⁴³ She bluntly concluded, "I resent my school hours being turned into a battle ground because adults feel integration can be legislated."²⁴⁴

Although racism is often framed as the culprit for anti-integration agitation, these white community members believed they were fighting against a form of educational disparity. For many white community members who espoused racially prejudicial beliefs, it was an injustice to permit disruptive, low achieving, non-white students to remain in their, or their children's classrooms. For parents like Alexander Von Storch, it

²⁴¹ Alexander Von Storch to Max Rafferty, October 4, 1969. Dept. Ed. Records

²⁴² Ann K. Zimmerman to School Integration Task Force, date unknown. SITF Records.

²⁴³ Susan Kennedy to San Diego Integration Task Force, date unknown. SITF Records.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

was the presence of white, middle class students that fostered an “adequate,” or equitable educational environment. Conversely, the presence of “loud, obnoxious, intimidating” non-white students hampered the chances of white students from receiving a quality education. Community members like Von Storch, Zimmerman, and Kennedy insisted that the presence of racial minorities lowered academic standards and transformed the campus into a racial battleground, which was disruptive to the learning process.²⁴⁵ To simply summarize their position, racial integration did not produce educational equity, it only advanced the course of educational injustice.

White community members who eschewed blatant expressions of racism also saw themselves as victims of a misguided integration program. Like their more openly racist neighbors, white parents who had proudly identified with and sympathized with an anti-racist ideology argued that busing exposed their children to badly behaving black and Latino students. These “anti-racist” parents insisted their protestations towards desegregation and integration were not based on racism, but on their observations that integration was making their children racist.²⁴⁶ Parents reported having discussions with their children about keeping their minds and hearts open to students being bused in, reasoning that it was difficult to be removed from their neighborhood schools and endure

²⁴⁵ Supporting the claims of negative correlation between racial integration with white academic achievement see Stephen J. Caldas and Carl L. Bankston III, “The Inequality of Separation: Racial Composition of Schools and Academic Achievement,” *Educational Administration Quarterly* 34 no. 4 (October 1998): 533-557; Stephen J. Caldas and Carl L. Bankston III, *Forced to Fail: The Paradox of School Desegregation* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), 201. In contrast, Erica Frankenberg posits that desegregation has narrowed the achievement gap between white and black students, and has not negatively affected white achievement: Erica Frankenberg, “Introduction,” in *Lessons In Integration: Realizing the Promise of Racial Diversity in American Schools*, eds. Erica Frankenberg and Gary Orfield. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 15-16.

²⁴⁶ The term “anti-racist” parents is my way of distinguishing between white parents who professed to embrace racial tolerance, from parents who openly expressed racially prejudicial views. These parents did not describe themselves as “anti-racist” in the source material.

a long commute to a new school.²⁴⁷ Carolyn Raehow recalled telling her sons, “they should realize how difficult it must be to be bused out of your own neighborhood to a school where you may not feel welcome.”²⁴⁸ Yet parents reported that their children would come home complaining, “black kids are late, black kids always cause or get into trouble, black kids are wild, black kids are mean.”²⁴⁹ According to Raehow, her children “started with an open mind towards integration... but then within a week’s time my sons were asking me ‘why do blacks act so tough? Why are they always harassing us? Why do they get away with stealing and the teachers just pretend like they don’t know anything about it?’”²⁵⁰ Raehow concluded, “all the integration of Lewis Jr. High has done for my family is to instill a frustrated, angry feeling towards these kids who don’t seem to even want to be part of the school, but just an irritant to other students.”²⁵¹

By blaming school racial desegregation and integration for turning their children racist, some anti-racist white parents accused the school district of interfering with their parental lessons of racial tolerance. One parent bluntly stated, “No, I do not feel that busing is working in San Diego. My son, who goes to Patrick Henry, has not been raised to have bad feelings toward any person regardless of color. But since busing has started he has made some remarks that make me sad. Busing brings people together against their will and causes tensions that would not be there if the government would leave our children alone.”²⁵² Another mother who prided herself in raising her children in an anti-racist manner wrote a scathing letter to the district. “I taught them that they should not

²⁴⁷ Diane Sweeney to William Kolender, May 17, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁴⁸ Carolyn Raehow letter, May 10, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁴⁹ Sweeney to Kolender, May 17, 1979.

²⁵⁰ Raehow, May 10, 1979.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ann G. to San Diego School Integration Task Force, May 18, 1979. SITF Records.

judge a person because he was a different color or religion or nationality... I really thought I had succeeded, as the children had developed friendships with black and Mexican children and children of all religions. That is I was successful until your school integration program began. Now I offer you a big, sarcastic thank you, because your integration program has managed to undo everything I have worked so hard to instill in my children.”²⁵³ A third parent, Judith Dickinson, argued that her son already played with a racially diverse group of family and friends, and did not need the district’s help in adjusting his attitudes about race. “My son has three cousins of Japanese American descent, three more cousins of French-Vietnamese American descent, and his baby sitter and her son are black Americans. I do not feel that, at this time or any other, frankly my family needs any assistance in familiarizing ourselves with integration in any form, in school or not.”²⁵⁴ As parent Diane Romito succinctly states, “I think this year’s program has caused my children to become more prejudiced against blacks.”²⁵⁵

According to these anti-racist white parents, educational disparity was marked by the increasingly racist beliefs expressed by their children, due to their participation in a failing integration program that was forced upon them by misguided authorities. These parents blamed the unjust integration program for undoing all the lessons they imparted on their children. Part of their critique was directed towards teachers and administrators who appeared to be unable to handle the behavior problems of the bused students. One mother complained her children’s school created a two-tiered discipline program “one for bused in students- the school doesn’t want to discipline them because the school fears

²⁵³ Concerned Mother of Teenagers to San Diego Integration Task Force, May 8, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁵⁴ Judith Dickinson to Mr. Brown, May 14, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁵⁵ Diane Romito to San Diego Integration Task Force, May 9, 1979. SITF Records.

non compliance with the ‘integration’ program.”²⁵⁶ Yet these anti-racist white parents also excoriated bused-in, undisciplined, black and Latino students as the cause for educational inequity. Resident students informed their parents that their teachers were afraid of the bused students, stating, “teachers are afraid to discipline them (bused students) because they value their own safety.”²⁵⁷ “Teachers would look the other way-literally when any harassing is going on.”²⁵⁸ While anti-racist white parents insisted that their attitudes towards race have evolved from the more base racial beliefs espoused by some white community members, both “anti-racist” and “racist” whites identified undisciplined, “mean black kids” as the source of educational disparity. If teachers were too afraid of disciplining misbehaving non-white bused students, then the classroom environment was unsuitable for learning, thus ostensibly affecting the educational opportunities of resident white students.

From their perspective, teachers and staff members observed that desegregating school campuses did not lead to meaningful interactions between bused and resident students, or produce educational equality for either group of students. Counselor John McKeown noted that during the early years of the district’s voluntary integration program at Point Loma High School, “integration did not take place. All the blacks eat together, talked together, ate lunch together and very little communication took place between whites and blacks.”²⁵⁹ James F. Moore, vice principal at Marston Junior High remarked that “a casual observance in the classrooms and on the lunch court will show that the black students tend to congregate with other black students, the Mexican American

²⁵⁶ Concerned Mother of Teenagers to San Diego Integration Task Force, May 8, 1979.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Raehow, May 10, 1979

²⁵⁹ John McKeown to William Kolender, 8 May 1979. SITF Records.

students tend to congregate with other Mexican American students, and the resident students tend to congregate together.”²⁶⁰ Staff members further argued that resident white students resented bused black and Latino students because of the perceived favors granted to them. For example, students bused from southeast San Diego were excused from tardiness. Yet according to McKeown, “whites resented the blacks getting away with tardiness and absenteeism” so they began to be tardy themselves. Diane Sweeney, a volunteer at Silver Gate Elementary, observed that bused students were granted special favors to help facilitate their adjustment, and consequently resident students viewed them in a negative light.²⁶¹ As teachers and staff members professed, the continued segregation of students by their own accord, and the growing resentment of resident students towards bused students, made it impossible to create a collegial learning environment. If a primary indicator of educational equality was the development of cross-racial interactions between students, then according to these educators, the district’s racial integration program was coming up short of their goal.

White parents and teachers offered a few suggestions to the San Diego Integration Task Force regarding what they believed would foster educational equity for all students. Diane Sweeney believed that teachers and parents were central to diffusing resentments among the students: “White and black adults are needing to learn new strategies in dealing with children of a cultural background different from their own. We need a school wide plan of social standards and problem solving.”²⁶² In other words, educational equity was possible by reforming the program itself, and the way that adults

²⁶⁰ James F. Moore to School Integration Task Force, May 8, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁶¹ Diane Sweeney to William Kolender, May 17, 1979.

²⁶² Ibid.

interacted with the students. Yet while some parents suggested reform, others bluntly suggested that the school district give up on integration, in the name of equity. As one mother suggested to the school board, “concentrate on the neighborhood school. Give each community school the best teachers and facilities and programs you can afford. Build strength within each community then let these children face the world with a good education behind them. Thus armed, they can ‘integrate’ each on their own level.”²⁶³ Community member Janet Marx also supported improving the neighborhood school system, writing to the Integration Task Force, “Our country’s educational system was founded on the neighborhood school and although many things have changed over the years I do not think this is one system that should be changed.”²⁶⁴ John McKeown also urged the abandonment of integration in the name of equity and racial harmony. As he wrote the Integration Task Force, “Let’s forget integration. Most blacks do not want to leave their comfortable environs and the same applies to whites. Integration will eventually do a lot of harm and no good.” Echoing the concerns of anti-racist white parents, McKeown believed the greatest harm that arose from an unjust educational system was the growing racist attitudes of white children. He observed that because of a misguided program intended to foster equality and equity, white youth have “developed a serious dislike for blacks that will rival any Archie Bunker type of generation.”²⁶⁵ If an unjust integration program were allowed to continue in any form, a new generation of bigots would come of age and set back all forms of racial progress made in the city.

Multiracial apprehensions towards integration

²⁶³ Concerned Mother of Teenagers to San Diego Integration Task Force, May 8, 1979.

²⁶⁴ Janet Marx to School Integration Task Force, May 23, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁶⁵ McKeown to Kolender, May 8, 1979.

Despite wide scale national support within communities of color for desegregating public schools, a vocal contingency of African American and Latino community members expressed skepticism that San Diego's integration efforts actually resulted in equity for their children.²⁶⁶ Distrust towards racial integration programs was part of a historical trend among African American communities. According to historian Adam Fairclough, many African American teachers, particularly those in the South, were ambivalent or hostile towards integration efforts.²⁶⁷ Rather than universally embracing the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board*, many school employees feared that desegregation jeopardized their job security and the relative autonomy they held in their classrooms. While there would be some improvements in facilities, curriculum, textbooks, and equipment after *Brown*, African American teachers pointed out the benefits of operating within a segregated school district. African American teachers played a leadership role in designing the curriculum and cultivating a sense of race pride and camaraderie within the African American community. Teachers and students had formed close relationships during the era of segregation, and many people feared that bond would be lost.²⁶⁸ Even the NAACP, who backed the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, recognized that it would be difficult to win the favor of black teachers in the march toward school integration. According to Fairclough, "the national leadership of the NAACP knew full well that integration would jeopardize the livelihood of black teachers... the merger of dual school systems in the south would mean fewer teaching

²⁶⁶ *Desegregation and Integration of Schools: A Status Report* (San Diego: San Diego City Schools Office of the Superintendent, March 1972).

²⁶⁷ Adam Fairclough, "The Costs of Brown: Black Teachers and School Integration," *Journal of American History* 91 no. 1, (2004): 43-55.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 44

positions and black teachers would almost certainly bear the brunt of those job losses.”²⁶⁹

Very few black teachers openly demonstrated against the NACCP and *Brown*, but “in private, many teachers regarded the future with foreboding,” particularly since their jobs could be placed in the hands of white administrators who were staunch segregationists.²⁷⁰

In San Diego, there was recognition that not all racial minorities supported desegregation. The Carlin legal team recognized early in their lawsuit that it would be difficult to garner the support of black educators. Attorney Louis Katz recalled his encounter with a black teacher who “indicated that the whole idea of desegregation has worked only to the detriment of the blacks and has caused fewer black educators to reach positions of prominence than had been the case prior to *Brown v. Board of Education*.”²⁷¹ San Diego schools’ lackluster efforts in hiring non-white educators and administrators did little to inspire confidence that black and Latino employment numbers would improve in the near future. According to the 1965 district Ethnic Survey of Employees, the ratio of minority employees working for the district was disproportionate to the percentage of minority students enrolled in the district. While 21% of the enrolled pupils were African American, Latino, and Asian American, only 5.5% of certificated employees and 7.7% of classified employees were counted as racial or ethnic minorities. To inverse the figures, 92.3% of classified, and 94.5% of certificated employees were counted as Anglo-Caucasian.²⁷² In 1966, David Thompson of the CIC had called out the district’s

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 50.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 52.

²⁷¹ Louis Katz to Michael Pancer, March 31, 1975. Carlin Records.

²⁷² Certificated employees include administrators, teachers, and nurses. Classified employees include clerical workers, secretaries, custodians, maintenance workers, and cafeteria workers. See *Report of the Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities*, (San Diego: Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities, August 1966), 52.

notoriously uneven hiring practices stating that “out of a total of over 3400 employees under the classified schedule, fewer than 18 are negro... with school districts with a total minority population of 10% or over, the San Diego school district ranks lowest in the number of minority group persons hired for non teaching positions.”²⁷³ The district would hire its first African American principal only after a tumultuous student-led protest in April 1969. Even with non-credentialed jobs such as teacher’s aide, janitor, and office staffer, people of color were virtually shut out of contention. The pattern of under-employing people of color continued through the next decade. In 1977, a couple months before the Carlin decision, Asian American community members noted that out of the 248 elementary and secondary school principals and vice principals, only three were of Asian descent.²⁷⁴ A letter from San Diego district superintendent Thomas Goodman to Floyd Pierce, director of the Office of Civil Rights, validated community concerns over minority job retention following school desegregation. As Goodman related to Pierce, “By the fall semester of 1977-78, each school in the district must have a minority teacher percentage which is plus or minus five percent of the district’s minority classroom teacher percentage.”²⁷⁵ Goodman continued to clarify the district’s stance: “If the school’s percentage of minority teachers exceeds the district range, a reduction of the number of minority teachers must be made to come within the district range.”²⁷⁶ By this

²⁷³ David H. Thompson to the Equal Education Committee of the San Diego Unified School District, statement “Equality of Educational Opportunities in the San Diego Public Schools,” February 15, 1966. CURE Records.

²⁷⁴ Beverly Yip to School Board of Education Members, January 25, 1977. Union of Pan Asian Communities Records, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University (hereafter cited as UPAC Records).

²⁷⁵ Superintendent Thomas Goodman to Mr. Floyd L. Pierce, Director Office for Civil Rights, region IX, September 3, 1976. Carlin Records.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

account, desegregation could lead to greater unemployment among minority educators.

Multiracial critique of VEEP

Adding to widespread concerns regarding the impact desegregation could have on the job security of educators of color, African Americans expressed apprehensions over the effects of the district's Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program (VEEP). Yet African American critiques of VEEP should not be limited just to analysis via race, as an exploration of the issue through a class perspective reveals divergent opinions on what constituted educational equity. As indicated in the previous chapter, an overwhelming majority of African Americans resided in the working class and poor neighborhoods of southeast San Diego throughout the 1960s and 70s. Yet during the 1960s, a small number of middle-class African Americans managed to buy homes beyond the enclave of Logan Heights, and the Race and Pupil Ethnic Census conducted by the School District in 1966 revealed that small number of black, Latino and Asian children attended majority white neighborhood schools prior to the district's implementation of VEEP, implying that non-white families lived within the attendance zones of majority white schools.²⁷⁷ There was also the possibility that additional black middle class migration out of southeast San Diego occurred following the passage of the Fair Housing Act in April 1968, which was intended to usher in an era of equitable real estate practices.²⁷⁸ As Karyn Lacy and Mary

²⁷⁷ *Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Enrollment* (San Diego: San Diego City Schools, November 1, 1966).

²⁷⁸ The Fair Housing Act of 1968 made it a federal crime to refuse to rent or sell a home to any person on the basis of race. It was unlawful for realtors to mislead prospective buyers or use discrimination in advertising. It prohibited realtors from making comments about the race of the buyer moving into a neighborhood. Yet as Douglas S. Massey and Nancy Denton reveal, the Fair Housing Act itself was weak because it removed the federal government's ability to enforce compliance with the law. As Massey and Denton stated, "the fundamental weakness of the 1968 Fair Housing Act was its reliance on individual efforts to combat a social problem that was systemic and institutional in nature (198)." Residential segregation continued to persist following its passage. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy Denton, *American*

Jo Wiggins argued, it was incorrect to assume that the lives and concerns of middle class blacks mirrored that of middle class whites, yet in many respects, middle class concerns were universal, particularly the “desire for safe housing in good neighborhoods, good public schools, social distance from the poor and public housing, and respectful treatment from public officials.”²⁷⁹ The desire for social distance from the poor was evident in Oscar Kaplan’s 1977 survey of residents regarding the busing of children into southeast San Diego neighborhood schools. As Mary Ehrlander reported, among the parents living outside of southeast San Diego, 72% of whites, 62% of Latinos, 62% of Asians and 50% of African Americans refused to allow their children to be bused to southeast San Diego for the purposes of integration.²⁸⁰ Racial integration would be less reprehensible for these San Diegans if their children were bused to schools outside of southeast San Diego.²⁸¹ For the middle class, busing their children into the neighborhoods they deliberately avoided was a form of educational disparity.

Parallel to the middle class desire to keep their children out of southeast San Diego schools, parents living in southeast San Diego denounced VEPP due to the transfer of their brightest students away from their neighborhood schools. Southeast San Diego residents argued that VEPP created a “brain drain” of talented students “from the schools

Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²⁷⁹ Karyn R. Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 32; Mary Jo Wiggins, “Race, Class and Suburbia: The Modern Black Suburb as a Race-Making Situation,” *Journal of Law Reform* 35, (2001-2002): 749-808. For additional readings and analysis on the growth of the black middle class, middle class consciousness and middle class experiences, see E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: The Free Press, 1957); James E. Teele, ed., *E. Franklin Frazier and Black Bourgeoisie* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002); Charles T. Banner-Haley, *The Fruits of Integration; Black Middle-Class Ideology and Culture, 1960-1990* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994); Joe R. Feagin and Melvin P. Sikes, *Living With Racism: The Black Middle Class Experience* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

²⁸⁰ Ehrlander, 151.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

that most need this type of example, influence and leadership.”²⁸² According to former Lincoln High School Principal Henry Lawrence, VEEP fostered educational inequity: “We have lost some two hundred of our brightest black students... This lowered not only the academic but the leadership level.”²⁸³ By luring the smartest students away from southeast San Diego schools, students with lower academic ability and motivation remained, which created a vacuum in student leadership, and contributed to growing educational inequality.²⁸⁴

Additionally, African American and Latino parents from southeast San Diego denounced VEEP because “the burden of busing in the VEEP program is upon them.”²⁸⁵ As statistics indicated, over 3,600 minority students participated in VEEP, but only a little over 20 white students volunteered to be bused.²⁸⁶ Furthermore, voluntary busing was overwhelmingly one way, with 90% of participants being black and Latino students bused out of southeast San Diego, and a miniscule number of white students being bused in.²⁸⁷ As Lawrence observed, at Lincoln High School, voluntary integration “actually worsened the racial imbalance, made the school blacker than ever...only three white students transferred into Lincoln.”²⁸⁸ As Lawrence and these parents argued, VEEP only contributed to growing inequality, particularly if white students refused to be bused in to desegregate majority black-and-Latino schools in the southeast at the same rate that black and Latino students were bused out to desegregate majority white schools.

²⁸² Committee to Support the Carlin Case Statement news release, September 1975. Carlin Records.

²⁸³ Harold Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” *San Diego Magazine*, July 1969, 76.

²⁸⁴ Professor Norman F. Dessel to Louis Welch, February 7, 1978. Carlin Records.

²⁸⁵ William Kolender et al., “Integration Task Force Report,” June 7, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Minutes of the Community Education Committee, December 7, 1978. Carlin Records.

²⁸⁸ Keen, “The Hard Lessons of Lincoln High,” 76.

Some community members condemned the treatment that bused minority students received in their new schools. *Carlin* case attorney Veronica Roeser revealed that within VEEP receiving schools, African American and Latino students were placed in segregated classrooms because their academic levels differed from white students.²⁸⁹ For example, in Muirlands Junior High, “VEEP students are heavily concentrated in some classes, one social studies class having more than 70% minority students.”²⁹⁰ Einstein Elementary School also reported difficulty in placing students of differing academic ability into the same classroom.²⁹¹ If educational equality was based on racial integration and student interaction, as argued by the *Carlin* plaintiffs, then the segregation of bused students at their new campus signaled a resounding failure of VEEP. Yet even if bused students were separated from resident students due to differing academic ability, the question was whether they were receiving a quality education. As a June 1979 Integration Task Force report noted, southeast San Diego parents were more concerned about the district’s commitment to educational quality than busing and racial interaction.²⁹²

Yet for many community members, the facilitation of racial interaction was a critical component of educational equality and equity, and these VEEP critics argued that the daily schedules of bused students were not conducive to facilitating interaction. Mercedes Ritchie, the first African American district supervisor recalled that students bused into Stanley Junior High from southeast San Diego did not mingle with their new peers: “Okay, they’d get off the bus, run to the classrooms and then they’d go through the

²⁸⁹ Letter from Veronica Roeser to William Kolender, 4 December 1978.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ “Integration Task Force Report,” June 7, 1979.

²⁹² Ibid.

day and as soon as the bell rings, they'd run back to the bus. They really were not in touch with the community."²⁹³ Community members also reported a lack of psychological services available to help bused and resident students adjust to each other's presence. According to Ambrose Brodus of the San Diego Urban League,

There is little evidence of a plan to provide in-depth counseling aid to minority and majority students who find themselves in peculiar kinds of situations as a result of their involvement in desegregation. On more than one occasion we have spoken of the need to help minority students and even the parents of these students as they have been involved in VEEP. Many of these youth are suffering through no real fault of their own, and help is not yet on its way.²⁹⁴

While VEEP helped facilitate the desegregation and integration of school campuses on paper, the district still had a long way to go if the program was to be successful. As one community member stated, "The reality and experience of the children was that they were still all by themselves."²⁹⁵

From the perspective of San Diego Integration Task Force members, they agreed that the district's commitment to a race and human relations program was lackluster. Even though schools adhered to racial desegregation and integration on paper, in reality "several schools simply have not done what they wrote in their plans; these schools seem to believe that writing the plan is enough."²⁹⁶ For critics, it seemed the district was complacent with settling for VEEP and one-way busing. The school district conceded that VEEP would most likely remain disproportionately a minority participation program,

²⁹³ Mercedes Ritchie, interview by Art Casey, March 31, 1993, San Diego Historical Society Oral History Program, San Diego History Center.

²⁹⁴ Ambrose Brodus to Board of Education, San Diego City Schools, February 2, 1978. Carlin Records.

²⁹⁵ Mercedes Ritchie, interview.

²⁹⁶ "Integration Task Force Report" June 7, 1979.

despite their efforts to recruit white parents and children.²⁹⁷ Yet they insisted that VEEP was only one aspect of their overall integration effort. San Diego Unified School district placed huge expectations on the success of the magnet school program.

Problems with magnet schools and learning centers

According to the School Integration Task Force, “the San Diego Unified School District has obviously chosen magnet programs as one of its prime tools in the effort to racially integrate its schools.” The district described the magnet programs as “essentially and primarily integration programs which seek to attract participants by providing an educational option,” meaning the primary purpose of magnet programs was to integrate student populations, while also offering “specialized quality educational options.”²⁹⁸ From the start, the school district committed itself to creating nine different elementary magnet programs within sixteen different schools, and six magnet programs in seven secondary level schools.²⁹⁹ Each magnet program emphasized a different academic specialty: for example, Knox Elementary in southeast San Diego was designed as an intercultural French language magnet program; Lowell Elementary, west of the Logan Heights neighborhood was designed as a bilingual Spanish magnet program; Roosevelt Junior High and Gompers Junior High were creative and performing arts magnets. Most magnet programs were strategically located on school campuses with large African American and Latino populations, and its programs were intended to attract white students to attend minority-isolated schools.

²⁹⁷ Defendant response to Integration Task Force Report of June 7, 1979. SITF Records.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ “Integration Task Force Report,” June 7, 1979.

While some magnet programs were designed as “full magnet” schools integrating an entire campus, other magnets were structured as “schools within a school” which minimized interracial interaction.³⁰⁰ Additionally, the creation of “learning centers” on predominantly minority campuses resulted in no interaction between white and “minority” students, and increased feelings of resentment among resident students and community members. African American School Integration Task Force monitor Roland Holmes wrote an impassioned letter to Judge Welsh and Police chief William Kolender on March 23, 1979, bemoaning the negative psychological effect that the busing of white students to magnet programs and learning centers had on resident black and Latino students. Using the example of Chollas Elementary School, Holmes argued that magnet school busing created “a negative psychological impact... on the black and brown students, not to mention confusion created for the young whites.”³⁰¹ From Holmes’s point of view, there appeared to be a lack of concerted effort by teachers and administrators to encourage cross-racial dialogue. Furthermore, he noted that the white bused students played, ate, and studied together and “there was no interplay with the resident black and browns.” To make matters worse, Holmes observed that learning center students were given new equipment and toys that resident students were not allowed to touch. “The resident students play with 1 or 2 balls for some 42 students, those who are bused in play with 1 ball for every 5 or 6 kids, then those balls are left in plain sight behind chains and locks and the resident students are told ‘you can’t play with those.’”

³⁰⁰ The four secondary magnet schools within a school were Gompers Jr. High, Memorial Jr. High, Morse High and O’Farrell Jr. High. The two elementary schools were Horton and Lowell.

³⁰¹ Roland Holmes to Louis Welsh and William Kolender, March 23, 1979. SITF Records.

Holmes argued that the psychological impact of separating magnet and resident students on the same campus would give rise to jealousies and resentments that “may never be repaired in some of these youngsters.” As he posited, “I can understand why parents are up in arms over busing, it serves no purpose. A continuation of this program as it is now would only be breeding grounds for tomorrow’s bigots, black, white and brown.” Community member Eileen Yates supported Holmes’s claims about the program. “I have had many conversations with a very literate eleven year old who is bused to Chollas school,” Yates wrote. “There appears to be truth in the fact that there is very little interplay and that the children who are bused are told a great deal about how they are especially blessed with expensive equipment. I am afraid that even more bigotry may be the result from the way the magnet school is conducted.”³⁰² Task Force member Beverly Yip acknowledged that there existed “a lot of evidence of resentment on the part of minority parents at Chollas,” as well as strong evidence of student resentment on that campus.³⁰³ As these community members indicated, the resentment felt by students and parents was a sign of educational disparity. As the magnet school attendees were segregated from the resident students, feelings of inferiority and anger among students, parents, and even the teachers worked against the development of a healthy learning environment.

The Integration Task Force seriously questioned whether magnet programs and learning centers did more harm than good. In a report to William Kolender, members asked, “To what extent the minority children not enrolled in magnet programs on their

³⁰² Eileen Yates to Mr. Kolender, March 28, 1979. SITF Records.

³⁰³ Beverly Yip to Bill Kolender, March 27, 1979. SITF Records.

campus benefit from the presence of majority children in the magnet program? Does the presence of majority children enrolled in a magnet school within a school provide the non-enrolled children with an integrated educational experience?”³⁰⁴ The Integration Task Force responded strongly in the negative, that the school within a school program was not an effective solution, and conversely it increased race-based resentment. As they reported:

The problem is accentuated when the magnet program has new or unusual and highly visible equipment or better surroundings than the regular program on site. Gompers situation is a classic example of this: the overall good achieved by having forty non resident majority students on the Gompers campus is, undoubtedly, far more than offset by the resentment engendered in the non magnet program students and the surrounding minority community. School within a school programs also have a strong tendency to create divisions among and morale problems within faculties and staffs.³⁰⁵

Professor Norman Dessel of San Diego State University also argued that transforming a campus into a school-within-a-school resulted in minimum interaction between separate student groups. “It is not at all clear how the school within a school plan will evolve into an integrated campus.”³⁰⁶ What also remained unclear was whether the school within a school plan could provide a quality education for all pupils on campus.

Parents accused the school district of being more interested in fulfilling racial quotas via their magnet program than offering a quality education. Asian American parent Evelyn Sam expressed her frustration about her attempts to enroll her daughter in a creative and performing arts magnet program at Gompers Junior High, and a Bilingual magnet program at Spreckels Junior High. Twice, Sam attempted to enroll her daughter

³⁰⁴ “Integration Task Force Report,” June 7, 1979

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Dessel to Welsh, February 7, 1978.

into a magnet program, yet she was denied entry and told “she was not the ‘right minority’ and that only Hispanic speaking minorities qualify for the program.”³⁰⁷ Sam accused the district of not being interested in “true integration,” which she defined as “the coming together of people of different racial and ethnic groups,” as opposed to simple desegregation based on the fulfillment of racial quotas. As Sam argued, “to prescribe racial quotas in the composition of schools and to use it for determining admission is to subscribe to a form of discrimination which however well meaning is inequality by virtue of race.”³⁰⁸ Pat Tirado, a parent of two Mexican American children accused the district of prioritizing the fulfillment of racial quotas over the educational needs of the children. Tirado expressed interest in enrolling her children into a magnet program at Foster Elementary School. In response, the district explained that Cadman Elementary, where they were currently enrolled, was itself trying to attract minority students, and they refused Tirado’s request to relocate her children to Foster. “I was told the only option was transferring them to another school... where the racial balance was the same as Cadman’s,” Tirado recalled. “I think the integration program is too interested in shifting statistics without concern for the people.”³⁰⁹

Despite evidence that magnet programs contributed to growing resentment in the community, the School District continued to champion the magnet school and learning center approach as an effective means to achieve integration. Responding to criticism of the magnet-within-a-school, the district acknowledged, “there is no doubt that non magnet resident students experience less integration.” Yet they continued to support the

³⁰⁷ Evelyn Sam to Mike Madigan, February 1, 1982. SITF Records.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Pat Tirado, letter, May 8, 1979. SITF Records.

magnet program because “the non magnet students do interact with members of other racial and ethnic groups to such an extent that they are no longer isolated.”³¹⁰ The district acknowledged that while feelings of resentment and elitism are “an unfortunate but perhaps an inescapable side effect of a magnet type voluntary integration program,” resident students still had resources available to them if they desired a more integrated education.³¹¹ In what could be perceived as a slap in the face to resident parents who had argued that southeast San Diego schools lacked the same resources as schools in wealthier residential neighborhoods, the district pointed out that their children could always enroll in VEEP or participate in special gifted programs within their own school. The district defended its decision saying, “It is far from accurate to suggest that non-enrolled resident students at a program within a school lack reasonable educational options.”³¹²

Community proposals to improve education

While some African American and Latino parents searching for an equal educational opportunity for their children enrolled them in the district’s integration programs, other parents believed that educational equity could be obtained through other methods. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, African American and Latino students in the late 1960s pushed for higher educational standards within their neighborhood schools, and community members went as far as to push for community control of schools. During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s adamant rejections of integration became increasingly more commonplace among San Diegans of color. As

³¹⁰ Defendant response to Integration Task Force Report of June 7, 1979.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² “Integration Task Force Report,” June 7, 1979.

Keith Robinson reported for the CURE newsletter, “Many nonwhites have become so disgusted with federal housing policies, civil service hiring policies and the staggering reluctance of school boards to move towards integration that they have convinced themselves that integration isn’t necessary.”³¹³ African American community members had argued after the Lincoln High School strikes in 1969 that if white San Diegans wanted integration to happen, then the responsibility should be placed on their shoulders, not on the shoulders of African American and Latino youth. After all, according to George Stevens of CORE and Hope Logan of San Diego State College, neighborhood school segregation only existed because white families fled their old neighborhoods in the first place.³¹⁴ Principal Ernest Hartzog of Lincoln High School remarked, “White people control the system, and if they really want integration they can bring it about. The whole question boils down to how strong your convictions are.”³¹⁵ The CURE editorial board summarized, “the whites created the problem and the law. If the whites are sincere in wanting to solve the problem, let them simply live up to the law. (We) don’t want (our) children used as pawns to reduce white separatism.”³¹⁶

Pro integration advocates recognized they had to persuade black and Latino community members that local control of schools could coexist with an effective district integration program. Carrol Waymon of the CIC argued that within a racial integration framework, “blacks and browns still had the freedom to choose, it did not preclude all local control of given school communities, and it still allowed for teaching of materials

³¹³ Keith Robinson, “School Crisis Worsens: CURE Confronts Apathy,” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 5 no. 3 (June 1972): 1.

³¹⁴ “Black Leaders Comment on Petition to School Board,” *Citizens United for Racial Equality Newsletter* 2 no. 1 (July 1969).

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

relevant to minorities.”³¹⁷ African American community leader Geraldine Rickman reassured residents that, “As a black person involved in education, I see no conflict between the law and the black community’s being able to make a choice for local control.”³¹⁸ Plaintiffs from the *Carlin* lawsuit tried to persuade community members that the district’s desegregation and integration approach was destined to fail because of the voluntary nature of integration and busing. They argued if the school district required integration be mandatory for all pupils, racial integration stood a better chance for success.

While community control remained an attractive alternative for many black, brown, and yellow activists, most African American and Latino parents believed equity could be obtained by pushing the school district to implement educational reform in their neighborhood schools. As members of the Integration Task Force observed in 1979, African American community members strongly indicated they “were not interested in busing students as much as they were in quality education at Lincoln.”³¹⁹ These parents indicated that “specialized advanced classes such as algebra, trigonometry, etc. were not offered at Lincoln, thus the number of students going on to college from Lincoln was minimal.”³²⁰ Since equity was measured by the similar educational outcomes of all students in a district, then it was imperative to improve the neighborhood schools so all students who desired to attend college would have the opportunity to do so.

Latino and Chicano community members also rejected calls for mandatory busing and pushed for improvements in their neighborhood schools. According to Chicano

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ “Integration Task Force Report,” June 7, 1979.

³²⁰ Ibid.

Federation Education Committee chairperson Leonard Fierro, “Chicano parents are against any forced busing of their children.”³²¹ Stated in slightly different ways, Latino community members were “steadily opposed to mandatory busing,” or they “opposed busing that involved only minority children.”³²² For many Latino parents, time and effort should not be wasted on busing when changes could be made in their neighborhood schools. As a community member wrote in the Chicano Federation newsletter, “Quality education should be the main issue. If minority schools do not have the requirements and special programs which are needed for college transfer or just to advance the student, then maybe it would be wise to invest money in these specific areas to upgrade the education quota.”³²³

Conclusion

During the 1970s, political and economic criticisms of racial integration at the national and state level played an influential role in shaping San Diego’s opposition to programs like busing and magnet schools, which were designed to promote educational equality between students of different racial backgrounds. Many white San Diegans adopted the neoliberal, colorblind rhetoric used against desegregation and integration, while many African Americans echoed calls for self determination and community control promoted by black power groups. Furthermore, a diverse group of San Diegans protested busing on the grounds that it was a waste of taxpayer money, a timely argument in concert with the economic anxieties that plagued the decade. Yet a detailed examination of multiracial resistance to busing and magnet school programs revealed that

³²¹ “Carlin Case,” *Chicano Federation Newsletter* 7 no. 4 (May 1977): 2

³²² “White Schools Are Racially Segregated Too!” *Chicano Federation Newsletter* 7 no. 5 (June 1977): 5.

³²³ Ibid.

local adherents of the “anti-integration” stance did more than reiterate national talking points. This diverse group also developed their opposition to racial integration based on individualized racial and socioeconomic experiences.

Throughout this chapter, I examined the rhetoric used by white, African American, Latino, and Asian American community members, against the district’s integration program. As middle and working class whites and blacks fought against perceived educational injustice, little cross-racial or cross-socioeconomic agreement existed regarding what constituted a quality education. For racially prejudiced white community members, a quality education required the presence of middle class white students, yet for both anti-racist and racist whites, quality education required the absence of misbehaving, low achieving minority students from southeast San Diego. Within the African American population, some families from the southeast enrolled their children in VEEP and bused their children in the name of educational equity. Also, a small number of middle class African Americans found housing outside of southeast San Diego, and enrolled their children in majority white schools in order to provide them with the best possible education. Yet for the majority of African Americans living in southeast San Diego, equity meant access to advanced educational programs, the expansion of curriculum in the neighborhood schools, access to higher quality of instruction, and retention of their brightest students in neighborhood schools. They argued that VEEP and magnet schools distracted from structural and curricular reforms, generated educational disparity by busing the smartest students away from the southeast, and created hostile educational environments by segregating resident students from magnet students.

With this chapter and the previous one, I argued against the widely accepted binary that whites opposed integration on the grounds that it was unfair, while African Americans desired integration based on a hope that it would foster educational equality. In the first chapter I discussed San Diego's multiracial support for racial integration in the name of equality and equity. In this chapter, I discussed how a multiracial group of San Diegans opposed the district's plan, believing it promoted educational disparity. While little agreement existed between San Diegans regarding the best course of action for their children, parents of different racial and socioeconomic identities shared common desires: to maintain control of where they sent their children to school, to ensure their children received a quality education, and to protect their children's psychological wellbeing. San Diego parents were adamant that they would take matters into their own hands if the situation were to get out of control. As one parent stated, "We refuse to be victims of integration plan that is not working. We will not accept compromise or deals because our experience has taught us not to accept empty words. If successful programs are not placed in minority schools... we will take our children off the bus."³²⁴

³²⁴ Unknown to Judge Louis Welsh, 1977. Carlin Records.

Chapter 3

Demographic Shifts and the Politics of Bilingual Education 1960-1980

In the 1974 Supreme Court decision for the class action lawsuit *Lau v. Nichols*, Justice William Douglas wrote that approximately 1,800 children of Chinese descent, with limited to no English language abilities, were being denied a “meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program” offered by the San Francisco Unified School District. Douglas invoked section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which stated that acts of discrimination were banned on the basis of “race, color, or national origin” in “any program or activity receiving federal assistance.”³²⁵ Furthermore, in 1968 and 1970, the district was also found in violation of guidelines stipulated by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), which mandated that “students of a particular race, color or national origin are not denied the opportunity to obtain the education generally obtained by other students in the system,” and school districts that received federal funding were required to rectify any language deficiencies among students demonstrating need.³²⁶ San Francisco Unified was ordered to use its resources to “deal with the special language skill needs of national origin minority group children” as soon as possible.³²⁷

While Chinese immigrant parents in San Francisco were the primary complainants in *Lau v. Nichols*, the court’s order to “deal with the special language skill needs” and provide a “meaningful opportunity to participate” was applicable to all pupils of limited to no English speaking abilities throughout the country. In San Diego, this

³²⁵ Lau et al. v. Nichols et al., 414 US 563 (1974)

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid.

included the rapidly growing Spanish-speaking Latino student population, as well as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino students enrolled in public school. During the time that *Lau* was decided in January of 1974, the San Diego Unified School District was experiencing a surge in enrollment of Limited English Speaking (LES) and Non English Speaking (NES) students due to the dramatic demographic shifts sweeping the city. Yet it was not entirely clear to local school districts, the state department of education, or the federal government what providing a “meaningful educational opportunity” for a diverse LES and NES population actually entailed. According to Asian and Latino community activists, educational disparity manifested itself through the suppression of cultural and linguistic differences of the immigrant LES and NES student population; therefore, educational equity required school districts to address those injustices. As this chapter argues, it was through the concerted efforts of ethnic Mexican and ethnic Chinese community leaders at the local and state level that bilingual and bicultural education became the primary method to tackle educational disparity faced by LES and NES students. By teaching the LES and NES student in their native languages until they developed English fluency, and by acknowledging LES and NES students’ heritages within the primary and secondary school curriculum, bilingual and bicultural education was perceived to be the best method to ensure LES and NES students received a meaningful educational opportunity.

Demographic shifts in San Diego

In order to understand how and why bilingual and bicultural education became part of the vernacular of educational equality and equity, it is necessary to explore the demographic shifts taking place in the city of San Diego during the 1960s and 1970s.

Table 3-1: San Diego Total Population, 1960-1990³²⁸

	1960	1970	1980	1990
San Diego total population	573,224	693,931 (urban) 2,838 (rural)	875,538	1,110,549
Negro/Black	34,435 (6%)	52,925 (7.6%)	77,700 (8.9%)	104,261 (9.4%)
Asian & Pacific Islander	10,227 (1.8%)	21,963 (3.2%)	125,910 (14.4%)	130,945 (11.8%)
Spanish Surname/ Spanish Origin/ Hispanic Origin	Unknown	88,201 (12.7%)	130,613 (14.9%)	229,519 (20.7%)
White	528,512 (92.2%)	616,796 (88.9%)	666,863 (76.2%)	745,406 (67.1%)

Sources: Census of the Population: 1960, *Characteristics of the Population, California*, vol. 1, part 6, *Characteristics of the Population for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963); 1970 Census of the Population: *Characteristic of the Population, California*, vol. 1, part 6, *Population of Places 1970 and 1960; Race by Sex for Areas and Places; General Characteristics of Persons of Spanish Language or Spanish Surname for Areas and Places 1970* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973); 1980 Census of the Population: *Characteristic of the Population, General Population Characteristics*, vol. 1, chapter B, part 6, *Persons by Race; Total Persons and Spanish Origin Persons by Type of Spanish Origin and Race* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982); 1990 Census of the Population: *General Population Characteristics, California*, section 1 of 3, *Race and Hispanic Origin* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

According to the 1960 Census of Population, the total number of residents in the city of San Diego numbered 573,224 persons. As demonstrated in Table 3-1, individuals who

³²⁸ The figures for San Diego in the 1970 Census were divided by urban and rural figures. My chart calculates only the urban/city population. In the 1980 Census of Population, persons of "Spanish Origin" were distinguished by "type," and "race." "Type" denoted an individual's national origin such as Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and "other Spanish." Persons of "Spanish Origin" could choose which "race" they belonged to: "white" "black" or "other races." Thus many Latinos and Chicanos were included under the "white" category. The African American population was called "Negro" in the 1960 and 1970 Census, and "black" in the 1980 and 1990 Census. The 1970 and 1980 Census used the categories "Spanish Surname," "Spanish Origin," and "Spanish Language," to refer to the Latino/a population, while the 1990 Census used the category "Hispanic." As stated in the 1970 Census, "A person was classified as being of Spanish origin or descent if his or her entry for this question was any of the following: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish." See Appendix B- "Definitions and Explanations of Subject Characteristics," *1970 Census of Population, Characteristics of the Population, California* v. 1, part 6, section 2 (April 1973), app-11.

identified themselves as “white” far outnumbered those who were categorized as “nonwhite,” at a rate of 528,512 persons to 44,712. African Americans were the most populous racial minority, with a population of 34,435 persons. African American visibility, compared to Asian Americans who were less than 2% of the city’s population, and Latinos, whose population count was unknown due to being subsumed into the “white” category, helped explain the leading role that African Americans played in the debate over educational equality in San Diego throughout the 1960s. Yet during the 1970s and 1980s, as the city’s population grew to over 1.1 million residents, the African American population would remain proportionally stagnant, hovering between 7% and 9%, and the white population would experience slight but steady proportional decline. In contrast, the growth in San Diego’s overall population would be fueled by the rapid expansion of the Latino and Asian groups, and by the 1980 Census, Latino and Asian groups combined would account for nearly 30% of the city’s population, with Asians eclipsing African Americans as the second largest racial minority, behind Latinos.

Upon close examination of the Census figures from 1960 through 1990, Asian and Latino populations themselves underwent dramatic demographic changes. As Table 3-2 demonstrates, during the 1950s and 1960s, individuals of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Indian descent were the most predominant ethnic Asian communities in San Diego. Throughout the 1970s, the Asian population grew to be approximately 14% of the city’s population, with greater numbers of immigrants from Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the Pacific Islands, and the Philippines adding a new layer of racial, ethnic, and class complexity to the category of “Asian American.” With respect to the Latino population, Census figures verified the demographic dominance of ethnic Mexicans in San Diego,

and as Table 3-3 reveals, the Latino population included a growing population of Puerto Ricans, Cubans and “other” Latin Americans of divergent socioeconomic backgrounds during the 1970s and 1980s.

Table 3-2: Shifts in San Diego’s Asian and Pacific Islander Population, 1960-1990

1960 Census		1970 Census		1980 Census		1990 Census	
Chinese	1,290	Chinese	2,616	Chinese	5,343	Chinese	14,076
Japanese	2,535	Japanese	3,839	Japanese	6,099	Japanese	8,673
Filipino	3,615	Filipino	9,058	Filipino	33,084	Filipino	63,381
Indian	1,083	Indian	2,247	Asian Indian	1,046	Asian Indian	3,166
Other	1,754	Other	6,450	Korean	1,449	Korean	3,644
				Vietnamese	5,536	Vietnamese	17,060
				Hawaiian	1,189	Cambodian	3,918
				Samoan	1,164	Hmong	1,577
				Guamanian	2,297	Laotian	6,261
				Other	68,703	Thai	600
						Other Asian	2,437
						Hawaiian	1,643
						Samoan	1,528
						Guamanian	2,643
						Other Pacific Islander	338

Sources: Census of the Population: 1960, *Characteristics of the Population, California*, vol. 1, part 6, *Characteristics of the Population for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963); 1970 Census of the Population: *Characteristic of the Population, California*, vol. 1, part 6, *Population of Places 1970 and 1960; Race by Sex for Areas and Places* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973); 1980 Census of the Population: *Characteristic of the Population, General Population Characteristics*, vol. 1, chapter B, part 6, *General Characteristics for Selected Racial Groups for Areas and Places* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982); 1990 Census of the Population: *General Population Characteristics, California*, section 1 of 3, *Race and Hispanic Origin* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

Table 3-3: Shifts in San Diego's Latino Population, 1970-1990³²⁹

1970 Census		1980 Census		1990 Census	
Persons of Spanish Language or Spanish Surname	88,600	Mexican	106,274	Mexican	194,400
		Puerto Rican	2,943	Puerto Rican	5,337
		Cuban	887	Cuban	1487
		Other Spanish	20,509	Other Hispanic	28,295

Sources: 1970 Census of the Population: Characteristic of the Population, California, vol. 1, part 6, *General Characteristics of Persons of Spanish Language or Spanish Surname for Areas and Places* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973); 1980 Census of the Population: Characteristic of the Population, General Population Characteristics, vol. 1, chapter B, part 6, *Total Persons and Spanish Origin Persons by Type of Spanish Origin and Race* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982); 1990 Census of the Population: General Population Characteristics, California, section 1 of 3, *Race and Hispanic Origin* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

Despite the simultaneous growth of the ethnic Asian and Latino populations in San Diego, the history and politics surrounding their migrations created differentiations in their inclusion in mainstream society and in their access to basic social services. The Hart-Cellar Immigration Act of 1965 played a central role in opening the doors for greater Asian migration, but it also created the mechanisms for distinguishing Asian immigrants from Latino immigrants around the language of legality and illegality.³³⁰ As

³²⁹ The discrepancies in terminology referring to Latinos, i.e., Spanish Language or Spanish Surname, Other Spanish, Other Hispanic, is attributed to the terms used in the Census for that specific year.

³³⁰ For readings on the historical tensions surrounding Asian immigration to the United States, see Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America 1882-1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle of Japanese Exclusion* (New York: Atheneum, 1967); Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988); Joan Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Charles McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle Against Discrimination in Nineteenth Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Mae

Mae Ngai and Eithne Lubheid argued, the Hart-Cellar Act was celebrated as a progressive piece of legislation, yet categories of exclusion continued to be used under so-called neutral selection criteria.³³¹ In addition to the differentiations created by the 1965 Immigration Act, variations in US military and economic interventions in Asia, Latin America, and Caribbean nations also led to uneven forms of inclusion for Asian and Latino immigrant populations. Since the start of the 20th century, the United States had embarked on imperialist expansion to secure an active military and corporate presence in nations such as the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, Japan, and South Korea, and to open up markets in Asia and Latin America for the unregulated production and exchange of goods.³³² Yet while the US unabashedly reinforced its military and

M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 67-92; Lucy Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Laws* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

Powerful agricultural employers argued that their capitalist enterprise required a sustained flow of inexpensive and easily exploitable laborers in the American southwest. For readings on the historical tensions surrounding Mexican immigration and recruitment of immigrant labor force, see: Richard Craig, *Bracero Program: Interest Groups and Foreign Policy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), chapter 5; Gilbert G. Gonzales, *Guest Worker or Colonized Labor?: Mexican Labor Migration to the United States* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2006); David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Bracero Experience* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1979); Robert L. Mize and Alicia C.S. Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), chapter 4; Mark Reisler, *By the Sweat of their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States, 1900-1940* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1976);

³³¹ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Eithne Luibheid, "The 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act: An "End" to Exclusion?" *Positions* 5, no. 2 (Fall 1997), 510-511.

³³² In an effort to protect its corporate interests, the US propped up unstable military dictatorships, and assisted empires and oligarchies in their attempts to suppress local unrest. For readings on US economic policies and interventions in Latin American government affairs, see Peter Chapman, *Bananas: How the United Fruit Company Shaped the World* (Edinburgh, Great Britain: Canongate Books, 2007); Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote: A Parable of the Cold War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993); Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005);.

corporate presence abroad, immigrants from those nations faced a seemingly arbitrary, yet deliberate set of immigration laws that attempted to control who could or could not enter.³³³ As Luibheid argued, even if restrictive immigration laws were suddenly overturned, “immigration control would still reproduce social hierarchies” because the system of immigration control had deep roots in a history of racism, sexism, imperialism, and exploitation.³³⁴

Even with the differences in national origin, immigration status, culture, and language ability, immigrants shared similar general concerns with each other and with non-immigrant residents once they arrived in the United States.³³⁵ In a 1976 survey conducted by a coalition of pan-ethnic community organizations in San Diego, 257 Latino, Black, Anglo, Asian, Filipino, Native American, and “other” respondents from “low income” areas in San Diego agreed that their top five survival-related concerns were

For readings on the relationship between US capitalism and Asian migration, see Edna Bonacich and Lucie Cheng eds., *Labor Immigration Under Capitalism: Asian Workers in the United States Before World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Dorothy Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Lisa Lowe, “Epistemological Shifts: National Ontology and the New Asian Immigrant,” in *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora*, eds., Kandice Chuh and Karen Shimakawa. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Paul Ong, Edna Bonacich, and Lucie Cheng, eds., *The New Asian Immigration in Los Angeles and Global Restructuring* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

³³³ Examples of uneven enforcement of immigration restrictions based on national origin and race include the ban of Asian immigration due to the 1924 Immigration Act, with the exception of Filipinos who were categorized as US nationals; the immigration of Asian war brides, despite the limitations within the McCarran Walter Act of 1952; the sponsorship of Southeast Asian refugees by the federal government in the late 1970s, with the simultaneous rejection of Central American refugees. See Ngai, Luibheid, Yen Le Espiritu *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003);

³³⁴ Eithne Luibheid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 53

³³⁵ For example, historian Gary Orfield describes the diversity within the Latino population, beyond national origin. Some Latinos were monolingual Spanish speakers, some were fluent in English, some were illiterate in one or both languages. Some Latinos had deep, multigenerational family connections in the United States, while others had no known family connection. See Gary Orfield, “Hispanic Education: Challenges, Research and Policies,” in *American Journal of Education* 95, no. 1 (November 1986): 1-25. See also David Gutierrez ed., *The Columbia History of Latinos In the United States Since 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) for a broader historical perspective of various Latino populations and issues pertaining to immigration, transnational identities, politics, education, cultural consumption.

centered around employment, income, transportation, education, and housing.³³⁶ Within the category of education, commonly identified concerns were racial and ethnic discrimination, language barriers, and the lack of economic opportunities due to an inadequate education.³³⁷ There was widespread consensus that systematic changes were necessary to ensure that children and adults were receiving an equitable education. While members of different ethnic and racial communities generally agreed that changes were

**Table 3-4: Number of Enrolled LES/NES Students
San Diego Unified School District, 1978**

	Actual Number of LES/NES students, December 1978	By language percentage of total LES/NES population	Difference in LES/NES student enrollment between Dec. 1977 and Dec. 1978
Spanish	4,160	76.2%	+ 7.9%
Vietnamese	491	9.0%	+ 18.3%
Lao	187	3.4%	+ 20.3%
Tagalog (Filipino)	173	3.2%	+ 64.7%
Farsi (Iranian)	139	2.5%	+ 95.7%
Portuguese	69	1.3%	+ 30.4%
Japanese	38	0.7%	+ 31.6%
18 other languages combined	235	4.3%	--
Totals	5,492	100.6%	--
Total District Enrollment, 1977- 78	118,460		

Sources: *Report of the Superintendent, Bilingual Education Program* (San Diego City Schools, Office of the Superintendent; February 7, 1979) 2; *Pupil Ethnic Census 1977-78* (San Diego City Schools, November 1977).

³³⁶ The community organizations included Union of Pan Asian Communities, Black Federation, Chicano Federation, Community Congress, and American Indians for Future and Traditions. Other identified concerns in order were health/dental care, recreation, emotional/personal needs, community organization, dependent care, protection, substance abuse, food, mental/physical disabilities. "UPAC Planning Component Second Quarterly Report," April 1976. UPAC Records.

³³⁷ Ibid.

**Table 3-5: Number of Enrolled LES/NES Students
San Diego Unified School District, 1980**

	Actual Number of LES/NES Students, 1980	By language, percentage of total LES/NES population
Spanish	4,448	64%
Vietnamese	933	13%
Lao	624	9%
Tagalog	153	2%
Persian	151	2%
Cantonese	108	1.5%
Cambodian	105	1.5%
30 other languages combined	431	6.2%
Total	6,953	
Total District Enrollment, 1980	110,731	

Sources: *Bilingual Education Progress Report for Program Year 1979-1980* (San Diego City Schools, July 1980); *Pupil Ethnic Census 1980-81* (San Diego City Schools, December 9, 1980).

needed in curriculum, staffing, pedagogy, and facilities, Latino and Asian community activists specifically identified two major, intersecting concerns that negatively impacted immigrant and refugee LES and NES students' academic progress: the language barrier and the suppression of the histories and cultural practices of non-white, racialized populations.³³⁸

Due to the demographic growth of San Diego's LES and NES population, as seen in Table 3-4 and Table 3-5, it became increasingly urgent to address the educational disparities endured by non-white students with limited or no English language capability. After the school district began to regularly track the LES and NES student population in the late 1970s, statistics reveal the statistical dominance of LES and NES students

³³⁸ I recognize that many educational problems faced by Asian and Latino communities go beyond language. As Orfield argued in his overview of Latino educational needs, it is important to seek educational solutions beyond bilingualism, as many Latino students already spoke English, and encountered a variety of educational inequities such as overcrowding, low test scores, high drop out rates. See Orfield, "Hispanic Education: Challenges, Research and Policies," 6.

speaking Spanish, followed by Vietnamese, Lao, and Tagalog. Due to the overwhelming number of Spanish-speaking LES and NES students, the school district designed a bilingual and bicultural education program intended to tackle their disparate needs, and as the next chapter will show, the school district would grapple with educating the rapidly growing Southeast Asian LES and NES student population with mixed results.

According to a statement issued by the Office of the Superintendent in 1979, “Through this bilingual education process, the non- and limited- English speaking students are provided an equal opportunity to acquire the same skills, knowledge, and concepts required of all students in the district.”³³⁹ While school district officials presented a matter-of-fact attitude toward the implementation of bilingual and bicultural education as a form of educational equality, their words masked a contentious debate which spanned two decades at the local, state and national level over whether bilingual and bicultural education was even necessary to educate immigrant and refugee students. It was the political activism of the Mexican American community across the state, and the Chinese American community in cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, that were essential in shaping a bilingual and bicultural educational policy that tackled the dual suppression of language and culture in the classroom.

Vagueness in federal bilingual legislation

A glimpse of the history of bilingual education shows that it has been used in schools across the United States since the 18th century, maintained by immigrant

³³⁹ *Report of the Superintendent, Bilingual Education Program* (San Diego City Schools, Office of the Superintendent, February 7, 1979).

communities seeking to promote their language and culture with the next generation.³⁴⁰

Yet much of the 20th century was defined by intense repression and/or eradication of foreign languages and cultures, motivated by xenophobia and executed under the guise of Americanization.³⁴¹ As new immigrants began to arrive during the 1960s, there was an increased need to provide some form of equitable education, and bilingual education emerged as a possible method. Carlos J. Ovando links the “rebirth” of bilingual education to the activism of Cuban exiles living in Dade County, Florida, as they were able to establish a successful bilingual education program at Coral Way Elementary School in 1963.³⁴² Yet many factors worked in the Cuban community’s favor that did not necessarily exist for other immigrant communities across the nation: according to Ovando, Cuban education activists had wide support of their community; eligible bilingual instructors were available to teach; the Cuban exiles had funding and support from the federal government through the Cuban Refugee Act; and the general public sympathized with the plight of the refugees.³⁴³ While the Cuban exile community’s success is often cited as a trailblazer for the bilingual education movement throughout the nation, their success did not ensure that bilingual education would be implemented in other cities across the nation.

³⁴⁰ Carlos J. Ovando, “Bilingual Education in the United States: Historical Development and Current Issues,” in *Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education* 27, no. 1 (2003): 1-24; Richard Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 153-158;

³⁴¹ Ovando. Additionally, Jonathan Zimmerman reveals that European immigrants sustained the use of local dialects of their native language within their communities, even as public schools banned their instruction in the classroom during the early 20th century. See Jonathan Zimmerman, “Ethnics against Ethnicity: European Immigrants and Foreign Language Instruction, 1890-1940,” *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (November 2002): 1383-1404. The Americanization movement will be discussed in Chapter 5.

³⁴² Ovando, 7; Valencia, 162; Maria Cristina Garcia, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); 89.

³⁴³ Ovando, 7.

A close examination of federal policies and the language surrounding bilingual education policies indicated uncertainty around whether bilingual education would become the primary method to educate LES and NES students.³⁴⁴ Even with the passage of the “Bilingual Education Act” in 1967, which was also known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), bilingual education was not explicitly mandated to address educational inequality. With Title VII, the federal government recognized that racial and ethnic minorities might need scholastic interventions for reasons other than desegregating schools. Title VII allowed school districts nationwide to apply for grants to address the educational needs of a diverse group of students. Yet it did not specifically define or stipulate the use of bilingual instruction, and as James Crawford points out, the vagueness of the act raised questions of what Title VII should accomplish.³⁴⁵ Was it supposed to foster bilingualism among students? Was it supposed to heighten students’ cultural awareness and encourage social equality? Or was the end game to assimilate students into an English-only speaking, Anglo American society? Furthermore, what organization was responsible for enforcing Title VII? While state education departments were supposed to review Title VII grant applications, they did not have the ability or funds to supervise local school district activity. Eight years after the passage of Title VII, Gilbert Martinez of the California State Department of Education pointed out that school districts had very little supervision on how funds were supposed

³⁴⁴ Guadalupe San Miguel provides a general overview of the rise and fall of federal funding for bilingual education in *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States 1960-2001* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2004).

³⁴⁵ James Crawford, “Language Politics in the United States: The Paradox of Bilingual Education,” in *The Politics of Multiculturalism and Bilingual Education: Students and Teachers Caught in the Cross Fire*, eds. Carlos J. Ovando and Peter McLaren. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2000), 106-125. For more information on the weakness of federal policy, see San Miguel, *Contested Policy*, chapter 1.

to be spent, resulting in an “inordinate amount of waste by funding school districts, which may not be ready to install bilingual programs.”³⁴⁶

A Memorandum issued by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) on May 25, 1970 did little to quell concerns over the structure of a bilingual curriculum. What the memorandum did issue was the following statement:

Where the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.

The intentions behind the phrase “affirmative steps” in the HEW Memorandum remained unspecific. The fuzziness in policy would persist following the passage of *Lau v. Nichols* in January 21, 1974. The *Lau* decision did not specify any particular methodology to educate LES and NES students, and school districts were allowed to continue using problematic English immersion or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to educate LES and NES, rather than requiring them to create a workable alternative.

It was not until 1975, when the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued the Lau Remedies to compel school districts across the nation to take seriously the government’s call to educate LES and NES students, that districts nationwide began to wholeheartedly develop bilingual education programs. The Lau Remedies explicitly stated that for elementary age LES and NES students, ESL courses or English immersion courses were unacceptable. Instead, acceptable plans of action included a transitional bilingual program, a bilingual and bicultural program, or a multilingual and multicultural program.

³⁴⁶ *State Administration of Bilingual Education: Si O No?* (California Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, June 1976), 25.

For high school students, ESL courses could be taken in conjunction with courses in their native language until they were ready to transition into English speaking classrooms.³⁴⁷

According to the Lau Remedies, compliance was necessary if school districts wanted to continue to receive federal funding. As James Crawford points out, while the threat of restricting funding was not carried out, the Lau Remedies did motivate over 500 slow-moving school districts to adopt a bilingual program to educate students in need.³⁴⁸

Chinese American activism in San Francisco and Los Angeles

Bilingual education is commonly associated with Mexican American students, but the Chinese American and immigrant community in San Francisco played a central role in compelling the federal government to recognize the unique educational needs of limited and non English speaking pupils. As L. Ling-Chi Wang described in his study of *Lau v. Nichols*, Chinese American and immigrant students and parents contested the widely parroted argument by the San Francisco Unified School District that Chinese Americans were given equal educational opportunities because “they received the same education made available on the same terms and conditions to the other tens of thousands of students in SFUSD.”³⁴⁹ Chinese Americans in San Francisco argued that sameness might technically be equal, but it was not equity. Therefore, as historian Mark Brilliant demonstrated, the Chinese American suit against the school district was not a contestation against segregation. Instead, “for the non English speaking students

³⁴⁷ Office for Civil Rights, Appendix B, *Task Force Findings Specifying Remedies Available for Eliminating Past Educational Practices Ruled Unlawful under Lau v. Nichols* (Washington D.C.: Office for Civil Rights, 1976).

³⁴⁸ James Crawford, “Summing up the *Lau* Decision: Justice Is Never Simple.” *Languagepolicy.net/articles/summing.htm*

³⁴⁹ L. Ling-Chi Wang, “*Lau v. Nichols*: History of a Struggle for Equal and Quality Education,” in *Asian Americans and the Law: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives volume 1*, ed Charles McClain. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc), 422-445.

represented in *Lau*, integration was the problem- integration, that is, into classes where English was the sole language of instruction.”³⁵⁰ In San Francisco, the Chinese (and Latino) struggle for bilingual education would situate their children in opposition to organizations such as the NAACP, which called for busing for the purposes of racial desegregation.³⁵¹ Yet the Chinese American community remained insistent that separate bilingual education classes were necessary to ensure educational equity for their children.

Bilingual education was also a concern for Chinese American parents and students in Los Angeles during the same time period. Prior to the Supreme Court’s unanimous *Lau* decision in January of 1974, members of the Chinese American community in Los Angeles testified in a hearing, unrelated to the San Francisco case, for the California State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights on November 30, 1973. May Chen, a teacher in the Pasadena Unified School District, argued that bilingual education was the desired form of education because “we feel that bilingual teachers, counselors, and vocational trainers can help us bridge the cultural gap between Asia and America more effectively” than English as a Second Language.³⁵² For ethnic Chinese students, educational disparity was not simply a matter of language; a disconnect existed between students and teachers due to different cultural values. Chen noted that bilingual education would also benefit teachers who reported being frustrated with their inability to understand their LES and NES students: “One Nightingale (Middle School) teacher reports, ‘I feel most teachers are ignorant of Asian

³⁵⁰ Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform In California 1941-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 246.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, chapter 8.

³⁵² May Chen testimony, *California State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Los Angeles Asian American and Pacific Peoples Public Hearing vol. 2* (November 30 and December 1, 1973), 405-412.

cultures and therefore do not understand their Asian students as well as they should.”³⁵³ Angelina Yu, a parent living in Los Angeles believed that bilingual education would play a key role in improving test scores of Chinese LES and NES students. Yu attributed their poor performance to a “lack of sufficient curriculum materials in the Chinese bilingual and ESL program” and lack of training for Chinese bilingual and ESL teachers.³⁵⁴ “In order to alleviate the deficiencies of the students, we really need a lot more Chinese bilingual teachers, more classrooms, more appropriate curriculum materials, and a university training center for Chinese bilingual and ESL teachers.”³⁵⁵ As Chen and Yu testified, by acknowledging students’ cultural identities and using their native languages as educational tools, bilingual education would allow students to learn in an equitable educational environment.

Mexican American activism in California

In states across the US southwest, Mexican American community members and political leaders were at the forefront of a statewide crusade to implement bilingual education as a tool for educational equity. As Guadalupe San Miguel observed, following the passage of Title VII in 1967, Mexican Americans began to concentrate their support toward bilingual education for two general reasons. First, bilingual education “purported to use a pedagogically sound, language based” method towards educational equity. Second, bilingual education was thought to be “a means to eliminate certain discriminatory school practices,” particularly the exclusion of Mexican American

³⁵³ Ibid., 410-411.

³⁵⁴ Angelina Yu testimony, *California State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Los Angeles Asian American and Pacific Peoples Public Hearing* vol. 2 (November 30 and December 1, 1973), 414-415

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

cultural histories and practices.³⁵⁶ In California, discussions to use bilingual education to educate Spanish speaking LES and NES students began as early as the 1965-1966 school year to mixed success. Over the next five years, the Mexican American Education Research Projects team, under the direction of the California State Department of Education, utilized a number of tactics to address the scholastic needs of Mexican American students. Their efforts included enrolling students into summer enrichment programs and ESL courses, holding conferences for Mexican American educators, participating in teacher exchanges with Mexico, developing bilingual curriculum and testing materials, and addressing communication problems between school officials and community members who expressed distrust toward board members and administrators.³⁵⁷

For Mexican Americans in California, support for bilingual education centered around a concern among educators and parents regarding the educational achievement levels of Mexican American pupils. California had the largest population of Mexican Americans in its public schools, with Texas a close second.³⁵⁸ According to a 1974 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, educational achievement levels among Mexican American students had consistently remained lower compared to Anglo American students.³⁵⁹ Across the southwest, only 60% of Mexican American students graduated from high school, compared to a graduation rate of 90% for Anglo Americans.

³⁵⁶ Guadalupe San Miguel, "Let All of Them Take Heed:" *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Quality in Texas, 1910-1981* (Austin: University of Texas, 1987), 192-194.

³⁵⁷ John T. Chandler, "Bilingual Education Unit," in *Strengthening the California State Department of Education. Narrative Reports of Projects conducted by the California State Department of Education, 1970-71 under Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Dept. Ed. Records.

³⁵⁸ *Mexican American Education Study: Report I: Ethnic Isolation of Mexican Americans in the Public Schools of the Southwest* (United States Commission on Civil Rights, April 1971), 21-38.

³⁵⁹ *Towards Quality Education for Mexican Americans: Report VI: Mexican American Education Study* (United States Commission on Civil Rights, February 1974), 1.

A majority of Mexican American students were reading below grade level by the time they reached the 12th grade. They were twice as likely to have to repeat a grade, and were seven times as likely to be over age for their grade level.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights study demonstrated how educational policies had failed the Mexican American student. The pedagogical and philosophical approach of teachers played a critical role in shaping “the culture and values of its students by presenting favorably certain lifestyles and customs.”³⁶⁰ Public schools across the nation had long catered their curriculum to a middle-class, English-speaking, white Anglo-Saxon population, deliberately suppressing cultural values, linguistic diversity, and divergent histories of persons of different races and ethnic backgrounds in the name of Americanization, assimilation, and nationalism.³⁶¹ In the state of California, English was required to be the medium of instruction since 1890, and the “English only” provision remained in place until 1967.³⁶² English-only policies particularly affected Mexican American students who predominantly spoke Spanish and embraced a cultural identity different from the Anglo American child. The use of the Spanish language and the teaching of divergent histories was banned on many school campuses, playgrounds as

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.

³⁶¹ The history of foreign language suppression in elementary and secondary school curriculum extends back to the post-Civil War era, gaining strength during WWI, and WWII. For additional reading, see Victor Low, *The Unimpressible Race: A Century of Educational Struggle by the Chinese in San Francisco* (East West Publishing Company Inc, 1982); San Miguel, “*Let All of Them Take Heed*,” Judith Rosenberg Raftery, *Land of Fair Promise: Politics and Reform in Los Angeles Schools, 1885-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

³⁶² *Towards Meaningful and Equal Educational Opportunity: Report of Public Hearings on Bilingual-Bicultural Education* (Special Committee on Bilingual-Bicultural Education of the California State Assembly, July 1976), 4.

well as classrooms across the southwest, impressing on Mexican American students the message that their language and culture were incompatible with academic success.³⁶³

In addition to having to endure any culturally or racially biased attitudes exhibited by teachers and administrators, students with limited English proficiency faced additional barriers in achieving scholastic success due to cultural biases within the curriculum and in standardized testing. Classroom curriculum was designed on the assumption that students shared comparable knowledge in English, with little consideration given to students who struggled with subject materials due to a lack of English proficiency. Standardized testing, which was used to measure a student's scholastic aptitude, also worked to the disadvantage of students who did not possess command over the English language. The US Commission on Civil Rights reported claims of bias, revealing that the neglect of linguistic and cultural differences, as well as the absence of Mexican American teachers, administrators, and counselors who could serve as advisors and role models, contributed to the struggles of the Mexican American student.³⁶⁴ If school districts were sincere in giving them a chance to succeed in the classroom, it was necessary to develop a more flexible and accommodating curriculum.

Mexican American activists pressured state Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles to commit to bilingual education as the primary methodology to educate LES and NES students. Great concern was expressed by community activists such as Salvador Cordova from San Francisco, Rene Cardenas from the Berkeley City Schools, and Dr. Sanchez, a member of the San Francisco City School Board. They argued that

³⁶³ *Towards Quality Education for Mexican Americans*, 5.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 67-69

State Superintendent Wilson Riles was not truly committed to bilingual education, and actually intended to fire Latino members of the State Department of Education. They sent Riles a telegram on January 16, 1971, which included a message to “every member of the Mexican American Latin community, parents, teachers, churches, every political member, etc to write in support of the bilingual education in the state of California.”³⁶⁵ California State Senator David Roberti echoed the message of Cordova, Cardenas, and Sanchez in his letter to Riles on March 2, 1972. Roberti wrote, “in order for a Mexican American child, whose first language is Spanish, to learn English properly, he must study it as a foreign language in the early school years. His Spanish should be reinforced in school by teaching him Spanish in his mother tongue. With this background, the Mexican American youngsters will be more apt to have the tools and incentives to finish high school.”³⁶⁶ These public figures saw bilingual education as a solution to remedy the language gap, and to address issues of self-esteem and alienation, which played a factor in the high drop-out rates among discouraged students.³⁶⁷

Riles responded to community concerns by reiterating his commitment to bilingual education for the LES and NES student population. During the 1970-71 school year, the Mexican American Education Research Projects team was renamed the “Bilingual Education Unit,” which focused on the development of bilingual curriculum, bilingual testing and assessment, and bilingual education projects proposed by Title VII

³⁶⁵ Ad hoc committee to State Board of Education, telegram, January 16, 1971. Dept. Ed. Records.

³⁶⁶ David A. Roberti to Wilson Riles, March 2, 1972. Dept. Ed. Records.

³⁶⁷ Bilingual-Bicultural Task Force, “Review of the literature related to variables and hypotheses of possible concern to the bilingual evaluation study,” Draft for Bilingual Advisory Panel Meeting, October 28-29, 1974. Dept. Ed. Records

of the ESEA for all linguistic minority students.³⁶⁸ To reassure Mexican Americans who worried about Latino representation in the department, Riles hired Gilbert Martinez in 1971 to lead the newly formed Bilingual-Bicultural Task Force.³⁶⁹ Addressing Roberti's letter in April 1972, Riles stated that a major priority of the department was to develop a state-wide master plan for bilingual education. "The need is so great that we feel a comprehensive, systematic approach to the problem is needed."³⁷⁰

Wilson Riles and members of the Bilingual Task Force recognized that state leadership was necessary to encourage slow-moving or reluctant local school districts to create a bilingual program, train current teachers, and hire new staff. Riles and his team heeded a suggestion made by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights which argued that the state Department of Education should adopt a more hands-on relationship with local districts to encourage the adoption of bilingual education. As suggested in the report, states should "play a more direct and authoritative role. The States have a constitutional responsibility to provide education to all students. Their broad authority over educational policy can serve as a strong force for instituting needed changes."³⁷¹ One way the state Task Force could take action was to throw its support behind legislation to finance bilingual education. The Task Force recognized that in order for bilingual education to become viable, state funding was needed to invest in local programs and initiatives.

³⁶⁸ John T. Chandler, "Bilingual Education Unit."

³⁶⁹ According to Gilbert Martinez the task force employed 9 professionals and 4 clerical workers, and oversaw the bilingual education, Indian education and foreign language programs for the state of California. The task force was stretched thin as they had to oversee programs funded by AB 116, AB 2284, AB 2817, SD 1258, AB 2264 and Title VII of ESEA. The majority of the effort was focused on AB 2284 and Title VII. *State Administration of Bilingual Education: Si O No?*, 22-23.

³⁷⁰ Wilson Riles to David A. Roberti, April 17, 1972. Dept. Ed. Records.

³⁷¹ *Towards Quality Education for Mexican Americans*, 70.

In 1972, the California State Assembly passed the Bilingual Education Act of 1972 (AB 2284), which was proposed by San Diego Assemblyman Peter Chacon. The act allocated \$1 million to school districts for the duration of the 1972-73 school year, and set aside nearly \$4 million for bilingual education for the 1973-74 school year. If districts wanted to be eligible for funds for the 1973-74 school year, they were required to transition their English-only instructional programs into bilingual programs. Each district that chose to participate needed to file a letter of intent and a preliminary proposal by March 1973 to the Department of Education. The Bilingual-Bicultural Task Force would review each proposal and select the districts that would receive funding. Riles urged school districts to specifically use state funding to hire bilingual teachers and aides, purchase bilingual teaching materials and special equipment, and alleviate the cost of training and staff development.³⁷² As he pointed out, “the primary goal of such programs shall be to develop in each student competence in two languages.”³⁷³

In addition to supporting the passage of AB 2284, the Bilingual-Bicultural Task Force finally released the “California Plan for Bilingual Education” in 1973, to create a uniform, state-wide policy guideline for local districts regarding the ultimate purpose of bilingual and bicultural education. The California Plan recommended LES, NES, and monolingual English speaking students be integrated in the same classrooms and taught in English as well as the primary language of the LES and NES student. The California Plan intended to prepare all students to interact comfortably in two cultures for the duration of their educational careers. It included concrete plans for staff development,

³⁷² Wilson Riles letter to city, county and district superintendents of schools, January 9, 1973. Dept. Ed. Records.

³⁷³ Ibid.

training, a discussion on philosophical goals of bilingual and bicultural education, and the creation of new lesson plans. The Task Force also called for greater involvement of community members and parents in defining problems and new priorities for their children.³⁷⁴ Yet upon closer look at the relationship between the state department and local school districts, patterns of non-compliance and dysfunction were evident among administrators and teachers at all levels of the hierarchy. While state officials expressed support for bilingual and bicultural education, little effort went into implementing the recommendations in the California Plan. The state's half-hearted approach only served to reinforce the lackadaisical attitudes among local school districts in developing new programs for LES and NES students.

Patterns of non-compliance and non-enforcement

Throughout the 1970s, bilingual and bicultural education programs were thwarted by bureaucratic disorganization and inaction. The 1972 Bilingual Education Act offered very few guidelines to the state regarding protocol or measures for evaluating effectiveness. While members of the state Task Force were expected to observe and offer technical support to the 167 separate school districts that requested funding for bilingual education, a California Advisory Committee study for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reveals that the Task Force failed to strictly monitor the activities of the school districts. Gilbert Martinez argued that the Task Force was understaffed and overworked, and staff members conducted site visitations only when the office received a direct invitation, or when they were following up on a complaint issued against a particular

³⁷⁴ *The California Plan for Bilingual Education* (Department of Education: Bilingual-Bicultural Task Force, 1973).

school district.³⁷⁵ When a Task Force staff member did visit a district, they used a personally devised system of observation, due to the lack of official guidelines for the review process.³⁷⁶ The California Advisory Committee argued that due to the lack of a systematic review, “the task force staff was unable to tabulate the findings of their field investigations. Consequently, the task force cannot accurately measure statewide program effectiveness and compliance.”³⁷⁷

In addition to the lack of standardization in evaluating school district performance, another serious barrier to the success of any district’s bilingual and bicultural educational program was the hiring of under-qualified personnel and the use of biased or inaccurate tests of student performance. One serious oversight of the Bilingual Education Act of 1972 was that it did not require teachers of bilingual programs to actually be bilingual. The majority of teachers in programs funded by the state were monolingual English speaking teachers, and many of the staff did not take training for bilingual education seriously.³⁷⁸ In the 1972 legislation, a loophole granted each school district a two-year waiver from hiring a bilingual teacher, as long as they put forth a “diligent” search effort to find a bilingual instructor.³⁷⁹ While this released districts from hiring an instructor with the proper linguistic abilities, for LES and NES students, they unfortunately continued to receive instructions in a language they could not understand. Even if a bilingual aide was in the classroom, the continued presence of a monolingual

³⁷⁵ *State Administration of Bilingual Education: Si O No?*, 30

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* There were 31 members of the California Advisory Committee hailing from major cities throughout the state. The Committee was chaired by Herman Sillas Jr. of Sacramento. Their recommendations were based on public testimonies conducted on June 26 and 27, 1975.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 36, 45

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 32

English-speaking teacher hindered the learning experience of LES and NES students, since teachers were responsible for creating the curriculum and ensuring that students met the instructor's expectations.³⁸⁰

Inconsistencies in testing also contributed to an inaccurate evaluation of LES and NES student performance and capabilities. For example, some LES and NES students were tested in English rather than their primary language, leading to the belief that their academic and cognitive abilities were far below average. On the other hand, some teachers tended to overrate the LES and NES student's ability. Some students were able to respond to simple requests such as selecting the blue pencil from the desk, or naming their family members, but these test questions did not necessarily indicate that the student possessed more advanced linguistic and cognitive abilities.³⁸¹ As one former Spanish-speaking LES student from the San Diego Unified School District recalled, teachers contributed to the problem by advancing students to higher grade levels, even if the student was not ready to move forward: "The trouble is that monolingual teachers or administrators sometimes tend to judge that a student is ready to be transferred from their primary language studies because the child can handle simple conversations in English. If they are transferred too soon such students will find by junior high school that they did not have sufficient depth of cognitive development... this may be all right out in the street but it does not give sufficient background for more thoughtful school studies or for gaining employment in higher level jobs."³⁸²

³⁸⁰ *Toward Meaningful and Equal Educational Opportunity*, 17.

³⁸¹ *State Administration of Bilingual Education*, 39, 44.

³⁸² John McLevie and Thomas Nagel, *Analysts' Report on the Spanish Bilingual Program* (San Diego Board of Education, March 31, 1981), 1.

Community leaders expressed dissatisfaction at the State Department of Education for their lack of leadership and insufficient monitoring of local districts. State Assemblyman Peter Chacon lamented the poor oversight of the bilingual and bicultural program by the Department of Education, and community member Ling Chi Wang further argued that bilingual and bicultural programs were often dismissed as an inferior program by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.³⁸³ The California Advisory Committee concluded that the State Department of Education failed “to provide strong leadership for ensuring equal educational services for language-minority children.”³⁸⁴ If bilingual and bicultural education was going to be taken seriously statewide, the following improvements were deemed necessary by the Advisory Committee: a standardized definition of bilingual and bicultural education, an accurate census count of LES and NES students to determine need, a more accurate method to test student ability, the use of bilingual personnel to test students, stronger enforcement by the state Department of Education of district responsibilities, and the centralization of authority to reduce confusion.³⁸⁵

In response to the ongoing issues arising from the non-enforcement of the 1972 Bilingual Education Act, in 1976 the California legislature passed the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act (AB 1329) in order to recommit the state to establishing and supporting bilingual and bicultural programs.³⁸⁶ Inspired by the Lau Remedies, and frustrated with the loopholes from the previous 1972 legislation, the

³⁸³ *State Administration of Bilingual Education*, 83, 84.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 88-95.

³⁸⁶ The Chacon-Moscone Bilingual Bicultural Education Act of 1976 is found in the California Education Code, Section 52160-52178.

Chacon-Moscone Act forcefully stated that LES and NES students were entitled to “receive instruction in a language understandable to the pupil, that recognizes their primary language and teaches them English.”³⁸⁷ School districts were permitted to develop several types of bilingual programs: first, a basic bilingual education program that emphasized development of reading, writing, and listening skills in English while also providing instruction in the student’s primary language; second, a bilingual and bicultural education program that required the use and development of English and the primary language, as well as developing an appreciation of the diverse history and cultures of the United States and California; and third, an experimental bilingual program which emphasized the use of innovative management styles, team teaching, and individualized curriculum for students.³⁸⁸

The Chacon-Moscone Act established the following guidelines for the state and local districts to ensure compliance in the law. First, each district was required to conduct an annual survey of its pupils to determine the number of LES and NES students.³⁸⁹ Once the census has been completed, Chacon-Moscone required that among students in kindergarten through sixth grade, if a school had more than ten LES and NES students who spoke the same primary language in the same grade level, they must receive full bilingual or bilingual and bicultural instruction. If students in kindergarten through twelfth grade were not enrolled in bilingual or bilingual and bicultural education due to a lack of program availability or to the low number of eligible students, then the LES and

³⁸⁷ California Education Code, Section 52165

³⁸⁸ California Education Code, Section 52163

³⁸⁹ California Education Code, Section 52164

NES student was entitled to an individualized program following consultation with parents, teachers, and the student.³⁹⁰

In an effort to close any loopholes pertaining to teacher qualifications, the Chacon-Moscone Act stipulated that school districts would only receive bilingual education funding from the state when their instructors could demonstrate fluency in the student's primary language and sensitivity to cultural diversity. Teachers were expected to have proper bilingual education credentials and complete training to expand their methodology and expertise in working with language minority students. Additionally, teachers' aides were given the opportunity to obtain a certificate or credential in bilingual and bicultural education. If a district was unable to find teachers who had the necessary language qualifications, the district could still receive state funding, provided that the instructor was actively enrolled in a credentialing program or learning the language in question.³⁹¹

The Chacon-Moscone Act also addressed the issue of accountability that was lacking from previous legislation on bilingual and bicultural education. At the state level, the Department of Education was in charge of administering, reviewing, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of bilingual and bicultural programming. The state was instructed to develop a universal assessment for measuring the strengths and weaknesses of each district program seeking funds. If a district's program was deemed adequate and the personnel were in place, the Superintendent of Public Instruction was in charge of distributing funds.³⁹² To increase accountability at the local level, school districts with

³⁹⁰ California Education Code, Section 52165

³⁹¹ California Education Code, Section 52178

³⁹² California Education Code, Section 52177

more than fifty limited English speaking students would be required to create a District Advisory Board; additionally, schools that had more than twenty LES students were required to form a School Advisory Board.³⁹³ The District Advisory Board would consist of parents who would advise the district in the creation of a district master plan regarding the needs of the students, the goals of bilingual education, the steps each school was expected to make, and matters of compliance. The School Advisory Board would consist of parents who would advise the principal and staff members on the district's master plan, student needs, and the administration of the annual school census.³⁹⁴

The 1976 Chacon-Moscone Bilingual Bicultural Education Act was a significant step forward to ensure that LES and NES students obtained the educational services to which they were legally entitled. For the thousands of LES and NES students who spoke Spanish in California, the Chacon-Moscone Act pushed stalling school districts to design or re-design their Spanish-English curriculum, and ensure there were qualified bilingual Spanish-English instructors in the classroom. Yet the weaknesses of the Chacon-Moscone Act became particularly visible as it pertained to students who spoke uncommon languages, since it only mandated bilingual and bicultural education when there were more than ten students in the same grade level speaking the same language. While ten may seem like an insignificant number, as Peter Chacon himself admitted, this potentially underserved the linguistically diverse group of Asian students who were

³⁹³ California Education Code, Section 52176

³⁹⁴ California Education Code, Section 52176

geographically dispersed, and frequently found themselves culturally and linguistically homogenized with other students of Asian ancestry.³⁹⁵

Following the passage of the *Lau* Remedies in 1975 and the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual Bicultural Education Act in 1976, school districts throughout the state of California began to comply with federal and state orders, though compliance was not without controversy. In school districts across the state teachers and community members blasted Chacon-Moscone and bilingual education as “un-American.” Three years later, members of the San Diego County Grand Jury would argue that Chacon-Moscone conflicted with the stipulations made in the original *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision, as well as Supreme Court decisions in *Serna v. Portales Municipal Schools*, *Aspira of New York Inc. v. Board of Education of City of New York*, and *Keyes v. School District no. 1 Denver, CO*: “In none of these cases has the court mandated a bilingual education”³⁹⁶ The Grand Jury stated that Chacon-Moscone contradicted Supreme Court precedent because “AB 1329 requires bilingual and bicultural education. *Lau* does not.”³⁹⁷ Despite the protests, school districts conformed to the mandates to maintain their eligibility for state and federal funding. As noted in a report from the Superintendent of San Diego city schools, the school district designed a comprehensive bilingual program explicitly for LES and NES students in July 1977.³⁹⁸

San Diego’s bilingual and bicultural program

³⁹⁵ Peter Chacon in *The Role of Cultural Heritage and Public Policy: Pan Asian Search* (Union of Pan Asian Communities of San Diego County, November 1978), 6.

³⁹⁶ *Bilingual Education in the Public Schools of San Diego County: The 9th Interim Report of the San Diego County Grand Jury, 1978-79* (San Diego County Grand Jury, April 1979), 6.

³⁹⁷ San Diego County Grand Jury, 6.

³⁹⁸ *Report of the Superintendent, Bilingual Education Program*, 4.

Bilingual education was not new to the San Diego Unified School District in July of 1977. The district was chosen by the State Board of Education in 1971 to design a bilingual education pilot program at six different elementary schools for Spanish speaking students and awarded \$425,000 by the state. From academic year 1972-73 until academic year 1974-75, the district implemented an English as a Second Language program for Spanish speaking students; sequential Spanish-to-English programs in math, science, and social science; and a Spanish as a Second Language program for English speaking children.³⁹⁹ The district also utilized bilingual magnet programs as part of its racial integration efforts throughout the 1970s to limited success. For example, a bilingual magnet program was housed at Lowell Elementary School in the Logan Heights/Barrio Logan neighborhood to attract white monolingual English speaking students. Collier Junior High and Point Loma High also hosted a bilingual center where non-resident LES and NES students would integrate with resident fluent English speakers.⁴⁰⁰

Following federal and state mandates to specifically educate LES and NES students, the San Diego Unified School District designed a transitional bilingual program that would combine English as a Second Language instruction with primary language instruction “until the transition can be made to English language classes.”⁴⁰¹ The district utilized three types of programs, depending on the size of the LES and NES student population, and the language spoken. First, the Full Bilingual Program was used in elementary and secondary schools with significant numbers of LES and NES, and they

³⁹⁹ Wilson Riles to State Board of Education, August 23, 1975. Dept. Ed. Records. The six schools were Balboa, Brooklyn, Burbank, La Jolla, Mead, and Sherman Elementary Schools.

⁴⁰⁰ *Secondary Bilingual Center at Collier/Point Loma*. SITF Records.

⁴⁰¹ *Report of the Superintendent, Bilingual Education Program*, Feb 7, 1979

would be provided daily instruction in ESL and the primary language. Some examples were San Diego High, Memorial Junior High, Burbank Elementary, and Lowell Elementary for Spanish; Paradise Hills Elementary for Tagalog; and Cabrillo Elementary for Portuguese.⁴⁰² Second, In-School Language Centers were used in elementary schools with minimal numbers of LES and NES students. These students were taught in their primary language in language arts and math by a traveling team of bilingual personnel. These students were also given ESL instruction. Third, the district created Multilingual centers which required LES and NES students to be bused from outlying schools to schools such as Beale Elementary and Montgomery Junior High School for Southeast Asian students. These students were taught in their primary language in math, language arts, and/or social studies as well as given ESL instruction. With respect to the teaching staff, the district required that all bilingual instructors be certified as bilingual teachers, and monolingual English teachers would be trained to teach in ESL classrooms.

Limitations to San Diego's bilingual program

Despite the district's interest in bilingual education throughout the 1970s, San Diego community members questioned whether the district was truly committed to educational reform, and whether they were willing to listen to the advice made by parents and community members. For example, following the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1972, members of the Chicano Federation of San Diego accused the school district of violating the terms and the spirit of the legislation. The Chicano Federation vehemently criticized the district's hiring of thirteen monolingual teachers to teach in the

⁴⁰² Union of Pan Asian Communities Report, *Bilingual and Multicultural Programs in San Diego* (1978). UPAC Records.

bilingual education program.⁴⁰³ The Chicano Federation argued that the employment of “thirteen monolingual teachers to teach in bilingual classes completely ignores the criteria for quality Bilingual and bicultural program.”⁴⁰⁴ The district demonstrated a propensity to ignore the suggestions of the Latino and Chicano community, and consequently their children were victimized by the perpetuation of inequality in instruction.

In addition to critiques from the community, San Diego District analysts John McLevie and Thomas Nagel reported that the bilingual program suffered from chronic disorganization and a lack of administrative leadership. Bilingual instructors expressed unhappiness over the prevailing attitude among school principals and teachers that bilingual education added little value to the school. As a study on the quality of education for LES and NES students throughout the district revealed, “Those teachers participating in the program were often ostracized, criticized and were subjected to unwelcome and often hostile remarks. Many of the teachers interviewed felt that they were not assisted or rewarded for the extra effort required for them to translate materials.”⁴⁰⁵ Furthermore, the district was unable to measure the program’s strengths and weaknesses due to the inconsistent implementation of the curriculum. There was a lack of continuity from school to school, and even within a single campus variations in lessons and goals existed between classrooms. It was reported that while some of the curriculum itself was translated from English to Spanish, the translation was inaccurate,

⁴⁰³ “Unified School District Breaks Promise,” *Chicano Federation of San Diego County Inc. Newsletter* 3 no. 2 (March 1974): 1-2.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰⁵ Memorandum, “Quality of Education for the Limited English Speaking and Non-English Speaking (LES/NES) Child,” 2. UPAC Records.

incomplete, or too literal to be comprehended.⁴⁰⁶ It was also reported that “each school is doing its own thing in ESL.”⁴⁰⁷

According to bilingual instructors, district-wide support for bilingual education was lackluster at best.⁴⁰⁸ Bilingual classroom teachers specifically expressed frustration “because there was a lack of materials available to teach science and absolutely no training on how to teach it with the material that they themselves had to research.”⁴⁰⁹ District analysts McLevie and Nagel noted that some teachers bought their own materials from Tijuana, due to the lack of materials provided from the district. Teachers complained that there was a lack of proper training and materials provided by the district. Yet according to the district, while the central bilingual office was tasked with developing the program, it was the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendents to enforce it. Unfortunately, the Assistant Superintendents demonstrated a lack of commitment to bilingual education, and the central office was unable to hold them accountable for their inaction.⁴¹⁰

While variations in the pace and content of the curriculum were largely attributed to a teacher’s abilities and the district’s management skills, district officials were quick to point out that discrepancies between classrooms and schools also existed based on the academic abilities of the students themselves. According to school district officials, Spanish speaking LES and NES students came from diverse households where family members had different linguistic abilities in their native language and placed different

⁴⁰⁶ McLevie and Nagel, 4.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁰⁸ “Quality of Education,” 2.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

values on education. The quality of Spanish spoken at home corresponded with student achievement in the classroom.⁴¹¹ Socioeconomic and geographic origin also contributed to the amount of English the Spanish-speaking child was exposed to prior to enrollment in public schools. Students who were born in the United States or arrived from border cities such as Tijuana had a greater chance of possessing some English language ability, compared to those who migrated from a town further from the border.⁴¹² Educators also indicated that some students expressed an unwillingness to learn English, whether it was due to peer pressure, or the influence of siblings who “urged their younger brothers and sisters not to speak English out of school.”⁴¹³ Thus, while the Bilingual Program largely suffered from disorganization among teachers and administrators, the school district argued that student success hinged on the abilities and the desire of the students themselves.

Conclusion

The pressure exerted by ethnic Chinese and Mexican politicians and community members across California ensured that bilingual and bicultural education became the primary method to educate all LES and NES students. As this chapter demonstrated, the language of federal and state policies such as Title VII, *Lau v. Nichols*, and California’s Bilingual Education Act of 1972 failed to specify what constituted “meaningful educational opportunity,” and states and local school districts were trusted to design an equitable program using federal and state dollars. To the chagrin of bilingual education activists, local school districts used their funding to invest further in ESL or immersion

⁴¹¹ McLevie and Nagel, 13.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

programs, which only perpetuated the disparities that worked against non-white, limited English speaking immigrant students. Yet persistence paid off for bilingual education advocates during the 1970s, as they convinced lawmakers that educational equity for LES and NES children required school districts to concurrently address the language gap and the suppression of immigrant cultures and histories.

According to the San Diego Unified School District's bilingual analyst, "the district's bilingual program is designed to provide equity in the learning process for bilingual students and to support them in making their way successfully to all levels of our society."⁴¹⁴ Yet as this chapter also revealed, San Diego Unified School District's bilingual program suffered from many inconsistencies, such that student participation in the program was no guarantee that LES and NES children were receiving an equitable education. As the next chapter will demonstrate, members of San Diego's pan Asian community would further challenge the district's claim to equity, especially with respect to the growing Southeast Asian refugee student population referenced earlier in this chapter. According to pan Asian community activists and their allies, if the purpose of bilingual education was to challenge inequities faced by LES and NES students, then the school district's transitional bilingual education approach was inadequate. For them, a truly meaningful education would ensure the maintenance of LES and NES students' languages and cultures for the duration of their primary and secondary schooling.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 1.

Chapter 4

Southeast Asian Refugee Students and Contesting Visions of Bilingual Education 1975-1981

On February 18, 1978, San Diego's Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC) sponsored an education conference, inviting academics, politicians, grassroots community members, activists, and parents throughout San Diego County to collectively air grievances and make suggestions on how to improve the bilingual educational services directed at a diverse ethnic Asian population. In his keynote speech to conference attendees, Professor Rolando Santos queried the audience, asking what they thought the end goal of bilingual education should be. Was it to ensure that students learn English and quickly transition into mainstream classrooms? Or should the goal be a continual maintenance of native languages, histories, and cultures, while also learning English and Anglo American cultural values? "The question is, which model, transitional or maintenance is viable for the diverse Pan Asian communities?" Santos argued the decision rested with each community.⁴¹⁵

After the wars in Southeast Asia came to an end after 1975, and Southeast Asian refugee students began to enroll in San Diego city schools, it became painfully clear to teachers and community members that the educational needs of refugee students differed from other student populations, including other Asian immigrants, as they suffered from the trauma of war; culture shock; racial and ethnic discrimination from white, black and Latino peers; a poorly designed curriculum; and a language barrier that the school district

⁴¹⁵ Rolando Santos, "Multilingual/ multicultural education for the Pan Asian Community," in *The Role of Cultural Heritage and Public Policy: Pan Asian Search* (Union of Pan Asian Communities of San Diego County, November 1978), 2.

seemed unable to address. For members of UPAC, it was obvious that educational equity for the first and second waves of Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, Lao, Hmong, and Khmer required flexibility from educators and community members alike. While all refugees suffered trauma due to war and displacement, this chapter reveals that trauma was manifested differently between ethnic groups, and each ethnic group deployed different cultural strategies of survival. Therefore, I argue, in order to address educational disparities of each refugee student group, it was necessary for community organizations and the school district to address the refugees' diverse social, psychological, economic, and educational needs inside and outside the classroom. While community organizations such as UPAC's Indochinese Youth Corps responded to concerns of youth in the greater community, in the schools it was imperative that the district design a dynamic curriculum that responded to the diverse and constantly shifting needs of the Southeast Asian refugee student population. Rather than having refugee students fit into the rigid mold of a transitional bilingual program, pan Asian community members insisted that refugee students be enrolled in a multilingual, multicultural maintenance program. By adjusting to the educational needs of the Southeast Asian refugee population, rather than forcing vulnerable students to assimilate into the mainstream, community members argued that Southeast Asian refugee students had a greater chance of attaining success in the classroom and beyond.

UPAC and profiling Southeast Asian refugees

The Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC) was founded in 1972 and incorporated in 1973, becoming the first pan Asian community organization in the city of

San Diego.⁴¹⁶ Their mission was to draw attention to the needs of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, immigrants, and refugees, and actively improve their quality of life by increasing their access to quality housing, education, health care, mental health services and employment. While numerous ethnic Asian and Pacific Islander organizations existed throughout San Diego county, many of these groups were unable to address the needs of their constituencies due to a lack of funding, personnel, expertise, or experience.⁴¹⁷ UPAC founder Beverly Yip argued that due to a better ability to find funding and pool resources and manpower, a pan Asian coalition could better shine a spotlight on the plight of all Asian American, Pacific Islander, and immigrant groups.⁴¹⁸ While some community members expressed concern that pan Asian organizing did little to help group-specific causes, UPAC reasoned that problems specific to a particular ethnic group like the Vietnamese or Filipinos had a greater chance of resolution if social and political resources were shared across ethno-religious-national groups.⁴¹⁹ While pan Asian coalitions potentially obscured the needs of less populous ethnic groups, supporters of UPAC argued that pan-ethnicity would not overshadow the needs of a single ethnic group, but augment it.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ The first seven organizations incorporated under UPAC included the Chinese Social Service Center, Council of Pilipino-American Organizations, Guamanian Alliance, Chamorro Nation, Sons and Daughters of Guam Club, Japanese American Citizens League, and the Korean Association of San Diego. Later the House of China, Vietnamese Alliance Association, Vietnamese Community Foundation, Cambodian Association of San Diego, Malaysian American Society, Philippine American Community, Thai Association of San Diego, Hui-O-Hawaii, Laotian Friendship Association and Samoan Senior Citizens Club became members. See Linda Vo, *Mobilizing an Asian American Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 38-39.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 36.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 47.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 224-225. See also Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

As San Diego County's first pan Asian organization, UPAC believed it was necessary to raise the profile of each ethnic Asian and Pacific Islander community living in the greater San Diego area. The creation of a profile for each Southeast Asian refugee community became imperative after they began to settle in the city. Between 1975 and 1989, over 850,000 refugees fled their native country in the name of survival. By the end of the 1980s, Southeast Asians in San Diego numbered over 28,000 persons, up from a count of 5,500 at the end of the 1970s.⁴²¹ While the Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, Lao, Hmong and Khmer populations were interconnected with each other and the greater Asian (and Latino) immigrant community through a legacy of US imperialism, war, globalization, immigration restrictions, and racial discrimination, the immediate needs of each refugee population required specialized attention. In order to best service each ethnic community, it was necessary to avoid homogenizing Southeast Asian refugees as one monolithic group, or subsume them into a pan Asian organization.⁴²² Therefore, it became necessary to unpack their histories and identify cultural and ethnic differences within the Southeast Asian refugee community.

US military intervention and refugee migration

While many immigrants cited family reunification and economic opportunity as reasons for migration, for the thousands of Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, Laotians, Hmong, and Cambodians, their migration was spurred on by war, political persecution,

⁴²¹ 1980 Census of Population: Characteristic of the Population, General Population Characteristics, vol. 1 chapter B, part 6, *General Characteristics for Selected Racial Groups for Areas and Places* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1982); 1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, California, Section 1 of 3, *Race and Hispanic Origin* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

⁴²² A note on terminology: At risk of homogenization, I refer to Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, Lao, Hmong and Khmer as "Southeast Asians" or "Southeast Asian refugees" or "refugees" for the purposes of brevity. The term "Indochinese," a term originating from French colonialization, is also used in this chapter only when referencing a primary source.

and US military and economic intervention in their homelands. The presence of Southeast Asian refugees in the United States after 1975 is deeply connected with US military involvement overseas, which had begun nearly a quarter century earlier. The US military came to the aid of French allies in February of 1950 as they struggled to re-colonize “French Indochina” after having to cede it to the Japanese Empire during WWII. The United States was initially reluctant to get involved, but following the success of the Communist Party in China in 1949, the United States grew alarmed that communism would spread to other nations. Military and government officials believed a continued European presence in the region would encourage stabilization, which was favorable to the economic interests of the United States and its allies Great Britain, France, and Japan. Thus, the United States argued it was in its best interest to support the French effort.⁴²³

What begun as a financial investment in France’s war in Southeast Asia from 1950 to 1954 quickly evolved into an active American military presence in various points across Asia to fight the spread of communism. Seeking to add to their already dominant military presence in Japan and South Korea, the United States found an opportunity to exert their influence in the affairs of Southeast Asia following the defeat of France to the communist Vietminh in 1954. According to the Geneva Accords in 1954, Vietnam would be divided at the 17th parallel until elections could be held in 1956 to unify the country. To the consternation of the Americans, it was expected that Ho Chi Minh, the wildly popular, anti-colonial leader of the Vietminh, would carry the election and reunify the country under communist rule. As French forces withdrew from Vietnam, members

⁴²³ David L. Anderson, “Introduction: The Vietnam War and Its Enduring Historical Relevance,” in *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War*, ed. David L. Anderson. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 24-25.

of the Eisenhower administration decided to throw their support behind Ngo Dinh Diem to ensure that the communist North did not gain total control over the entire nation. A devout Catholic in a majority Buddhist nation, Diem lacked the charisma of Ho Chi Minh, but not the ambition for power. In order to maintain control of South Vietnam following a sham election in 1955, Diem ran a government that functioned on bribes, arrests, imprisonments and executions, as well as blatant favoritism towards family members and loyal Catholic supporters. The United States itself did not look favorably upon Diem's tactics, but they "felt compelled to give him financial assistance or otherwise risk the collapse of his fragile nation."⁴²⁴ While American officials intended the money to be directed toward economic reform, 80% of the funds went toward supporting the South Vietnamese military. As public resistance and guerilla warfare against the US-funded Diem regime escalated, the Kennedy administration decided to increase military aid and presence as part of a counterinsurgency campaign. A military coup resulted in the assassination of Diem on November 1, 1963 and suddenly South Vietnam's autonomy was threatened by internal forces that sought compromise with the North. Lyndon Johnson, who found himself suddenly thrust into the presidency following the assassination of Kennedy on November 22, 1963, made the decision to follow the example set by his predecessors, and defend US military interests in Vietnam no matter the costs. Johnson escalated aerial attacks and authorized a surge in ground troops, entrenching the United States in an undeclared war that would last until 1975, and cost millions in dollars and in human lives. Vietnamese refugees that eventually made it

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 32.

to the United States were assigned to a refugee camp, and awaited sponsorship so they could enter society and start to build a new life for themselves.

As the United States' involvement in Vietnam escalated, attention was also directed toward political unrest in the neighboring country of Laos. Laos had a long history of colonial conquest and tribal conflict between rival clans. In keeping with the policy of containment, the CIA covertly began training a mercenary army comprised of ethnic Hmong to fight the spread of communism in Laos. The US launched an aggressive air campaign to assist the Hmong ground effort against the Pathet Lao, a political movement that allied with the Vietminh, and to destroy the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was being used by the North Vietnamese to funnel supplies to their soldiers in the South. As a consequence of the secret war in Laos, 600,000 refugees would be displaced from their homes, two million tons of bombs would be dropped, and two-thirds of the country would be bombed by 1970.⁴²⁵ Following the defeat of Saigon in 1975, and the subsequent victory of the Pathet Lao, a genocidal campaign was launched against the Hmong. By 1978, nearly 10% of the Hmong population was killed, while others fled their homelands on foot, making their way to refugee camps in Thailand, and eventually the United States.⁴²⁶

Divergent journeys to the United States

US military involvement in Southeast Asia played a direct role in facilitating the migration of thousands of refugees to the United States. Southeast Asian refugees arrived

⁴²⁵ Paul J. Strand and Woodrow Jones Jr., *Indochinese Refugees in America: Problems of Adaptation and Assimilation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), 16; Sucheng Chan, *Hmong Means Free: Life in Laos and America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 39.

⁴²⁶ For additional readings about the Hmong, see Sucheng Chan's introduction in *Hmong Means Free: Life in Laos and America*.

in the United States in two distinct waves, and the contrast between them regarding their lives prior to migration, and the manner in which they left their homeland, could not be more dissimilar. The first wave of refugees left their homeland as the Vietnam War's conclusion became imminent in April of 1975.⁴²⁷ A large number of first wave refugees had worked for the South Vietnamese government and military, had connections with American military personnel or the US Embassy, and many of them were practicing Catholics. They feared for their lives under a communist regime, believing that their occupational or religious affiliations would attract retaliation. As one refugee commented, "Being an educated, high ranking officer attached to the police state, I was afraid I would die by Communists' hands."⁴²⁸ Another woman recalled, "My husband is a high ranking civil servant, trained in the US, and working with the Americans in Vietnam. We were afraid of reprisal and death."⁴²⁹ Vietnamese Catholics expressed anxiety over a communist takeover, as people whispered amongst each other, "Catholics would not have a chance to survive under the Communists."⁴³⁰

Following the end of the Vietnam War in April of 1975, and the evacuation of the US military and government officials, North and South Vietnam were reunified under communist leadership. Yet political instability continued to plague Southeast Asia. On April 17, 1975, Cambodia's capitol city Phnom Penh was captured by the communist Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot. Tensions remained high along the Cambodian-Vietnamese

⁴²⁷ Gail Paradise Kelly, *From Vietnam to America: A Chronicle of the Vietnamese Immigration to the United States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977); William T. Liu, Maryanne Lamanna, and Alice Murata, *Transition to Nowhere: Vietnamese Refugees in America* (Nashville, TN: Charter House Publishers Inc., 1979).

⁴²⁸ Liu, 19. Additional interviews regarding the fear of communist reprisal can be seen on page 34.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 19.

⁴³⁰ Liu, 19; Kelly, 13-14.

border as Cambodian refugees continued to cross into Vietnam in search of asylum. Following a pre-emptive attack ordered by Pol Pot on Vietnam, the Vietnamese countered by invading and capturing Phnom Penh in January of 1979. The Chinese, who sided with Pol Pot, retaliated by invading northern Vietnam, thus triggering the Sino-Vietnamese War. Due to escalated instability and violence, a second wave of refugee migration out of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam began in 1978 out of Southeast Asia and continued into the 1980s.

The phrase “boat people” was attributed to the second wave of refugees because many fled their country by boat, stocked with a compass and several days’ worth of food, water, and gasoline for the boat’s engine. Their survival depended on luck, in addition to skill and sheer willpower to survive. Some refugees were fortunate only to be at sea for a few days, blessed with good weather, and a well maintained vessel. They would reach their destination safely, whether it was Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Macao, or Hong Kong; or they would be rescued by a US Naval vessel which would take them to the nearest refugee encampment. Unfortunately, a great number of boat people endured a difficult, even deadly voyage on the high seas. The longer they were out in open water, the less their chance of survival became. As food and water supplies dwindled, many suffered dehydration and starvation, and descended into madness and grief. Refugees also recounted the horror of believing their salvation had arrived after sighting another vessel, only to be robbed or raped by sea pirates, or passed by US naval ships who refused to rescue them from their predicament.⁴³¹

⁴³¹ The documentary *Bolinao 52* provides a harrowing look at the experiences of the boat people. Duc Nguyen, *Bolinao 52* (San Francisco: Center for Asian American Media, 2009).

The contrast between the first and second wave of refugees also extended to variations in their socioeconomic standing, educational background, and prior exposure to English. As Paul Strand and Woodrow Jones remarked, Southeast Asian refugees had “dissimilar cultures, experiences and expectations,” despite all of them being “forced migrants.”⁴³² For example, regarding the amount of education obtained prior to migration, the first wave Vietnamese refugee was noted for their high educational attainment and occupational abilities. Nearly 75% of the male heads of household had secondary education, if not some university or post-graduate training. Over 70% of the heads of household knew some English, and many others were either fluent or proficient in French, which reflected their education in private French colonial schools.⁴³³ Prior to evacuation, adult family members held jobs in the medical, technical, managerial, or administrative professions, which contrasted with the nearly 60% of the Vietnamese population who worked in the agricultural industry.⁴³⁴ As William T. Liu and Gail Paradise Kelly observed, the first wave of Vietnamese refugees “by all accounts were a young, relatively well-educated and skilled segment of the population.”⁴³⁵

In contrast, the second wave of refugees received comparably less formal education than members of the first wave. Even among the second wave, the number of years in formal education depended on one’s ethnic background and whether they came from an urban or rural background. Among the refugees who settled in San Diego, Vietnamese adults averaged nine years of formal schooling, followed by ethnic Chinese adults who averaged seven years. Both of these groups came largely from urban

⁴³² Strand and Jones Jr., 2.

⁴³³ Liu, 49; Kelly 51.

⁴³⁴ Kelly, 53.

⁴³⁵ Liu, 61.

backgrounds, as did 75% of the Lao. The Khmer and Lao parents averaged about five years of formal schooling, while Hmong parents often averaged just above a first grade education.⁴³⁶ Over half of the Cambodians and 90% of the Hmong came from rural backgrounds which played a significant role in the access and quality of education they received in their homeland.⁴³⁷ Parental educational attainment played a significant role in their ability to find and maintain employment in the United States. Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese from Vietnam generally had more success finding gainful employment than Lao, Khmer and Hmong refugees, though it is also important to keep in mind that first-wave refugees from Vietnam resided in the United States longer, and had more time to look for jobs.⁴³⁸

Southeast Asian refugees in San Diego

First wave Vietnamese refugees bound for the United States were assigned to one of four military bases across the nation: Camp Pendleton in San Diego County; Fort Chafee, Arkansas; Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Refugees began streaming into the gates of Camp Pendleton beginning on April 29, 1975, and they stayed until the camp closed in December of that year. The purpose of Camp Pendleton was twofold: to allow cities to physically and mentally prepare for the influx of refugees, and to help refugees themselves acclimate to life in a foreign country.⁴³⁹ Refugees could only leave Camp Pendleton after they found a sponsor, which they were encouraged to do as quickly as possible. Refugees would select a resettlement agency,

⁴³⁶ Ruben G. Rumbaut and Kenji Ima, *The Adaptation of Southeast Asian Refugee Youth: A Comparative Study*. Final Report to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, (San Diego State University, 1988), xi-xii.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., xii.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ For additional reading on refugee life in Camp Pendleton, see Liu, et al., *Transition to Nowhere*.

also called a VOLAG, which was contracted by the government to match refugees with a sponsor.⁴⁴⁰ A sponsor could be an individual, church, civic organization, state or local government, or other organization. Their responsibilities included assisting the refugee with finding employment, enrolling children in public schools, and providing shelter, food, and clothing until they could provide for themselves.⁴⁴¹ While the sponsorship program was designed to ensure that refugees relocated to cities throughout the United States rather than one geographic location, 66 to 80 percent of refugees surveyed at Camp Pendleton indicated they would live in California if given the opportunity.⁴⁴²

Thousands of Southeast Asian refugees would eventually make a home for themselves in Southern California after leaving Camp Pendleton. Within San Diego County, the cities of San Diego, Oceanside, Fallbrook and Vista became popular choices for refugee resettlement. Within the city limits of San Diego, the centrally located neighborhoods of Linda Vista and North Park saw a drastic increase in the Southeast Asian population, with nearly 5,000 refugees settling there by 1978.⁴⁴³ Residents of San Diego found themselves struggling to adjust to the presence of Southeast Asian refugees in their neighborhoods, while the refugees themselves also struggled with acclimating to life in urban and suburban spaces. Deep seeded anger over the Vietnam War, and cultural misunderstandings made it difficult for refugees and resident San Diegans to sympathize with one another, while linguistic barriers prevented productive

⁴⁴⁰ VOLAGS, or agencies contracted through the government included United HIAS, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Tolstoy Foundation, International Rescue Committee, Church World Services, American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, United States Catholic Conference, Travelers Aid International Social Service and Council for Nationalities Service.

⁴⁴¹ Liu, 157.

⁴⁴² "Most Vietnamese indicate they would like to stay in California," *San Diego Union*, May 8, 1975.

⁴⁴³ Minutes of the Family Service Association of San Diego County, December 6, 1978. UPAC Records.

communication. From the perspective of longtime San Diego residents, they believed refugees received favors at the expense of longtime residents. For example, Linda Vista residents complained that landlords were evicting long time tenants from their apartments in order to obtain government subsidies that came with providing housing to refugees.⁴⁴⁴ Yet refugees complained they were unfairly charged a higher rent, and were threatened with expulsion if they refused to comply.⁴⁴⁵ Community members accused Southeast Asian refugees of urinating in public, eating domesticated dogs and cats, and attracting gang violence to their neighborhood.⁴⁴⁶ Southeast Asian community leaders, in turn, complained of discriminatory treatment by resident San Diegans. According to Tien Trieu of UPAC's Indochinese Youth Corps, public intimidation and discriminatory practices were one of many reasons why Southeast Asian refugees had a difficult time integrating in the United States. Regarding the youth, "because of many difficulties that they are facing in adjusting to their new life in the United States, they are hesitant to participate in any social activities that the native teenagers usually enjoy."⁴⁴⁷

While tensions between refugees and non-refugees made refugee adaptation into San Diego society difficult, internal psychological turmoil also profoundly impacted an

⁴⁴⁴ General Meeting, Linda Vista Coalition of Human Care Services, November 20, 1978. UPAC Records.

⁴⁴⁵ Minutes of Family Service Association of San Diego County.

⁴⁴⁶ General Meeting, Linda Vista Coalition of Human Care Services. A statewide attempt to ban the consumption of domesticated dogs and cats was introduced into the California legislature by Assemblyman Larry Kapioff (D-San Diego) and Senator Marz Garcia (R-Menlo Park) in 1981. Due to the persistent stereotype that Asians ate domesticated dogs, Senate Bill 49, otherwise known as the "dog and cat food bill," unjustly exposed Asian immigrants and refugees to ridicule and attacks. Southeast Asian students at Jefferson Elementary School in San Diego endured taunts from their peers who accused them of being "dog eaters." Bok Lim Kim of UPAC expressed her frustration at SB 49, pointing out that "It is hard enough to deal with racism and the Indochinese refugees don't deserve any more legislation which could contribute to further prejudice and discrimination." To the pan Asian Community's relief, SB 49 was rejected on the state senate floor. Yet the existence of the bill only emphasized the distrust and cultural misunderstandings that continued to be directed towards Southeast Asian refugees. See Luu Van Tran, "Vietnamese Community" in *Pan Asian Bulletin: A Publication of the Union of Pan Asian Communities*, July 1981.

⁴⁴⁷ Tien Trieu to Manager of the Sports Arena, July 20, 1981. UPAC Records.

individual's or family's ability to adjust to their new surroundings. Using the Khmer as an example, approximately 50% of the Khmer surveyed by sociologists Ruben Rumbaut and Kenji Ima had female-headed households, and 25% of those women were widows.⁴⁴⁸ According to Savanthy Um, a member of the Cambodian community in San Diego, traditional, patriarchal two parent households enforced a top-down system of authority.⁴⁴⁹ Yet trauma from the Pol-Pot era challenged family stability, resulting in breakdowns in authority. Divorce, which was typically uncommon, began to escalate as couples had trouble adjusting to a sense of normalcy following war, death, broken family structures, and forced relocation.⁴⁵⁰ Survivors of all ages experienced "frequent nightmares, inability to forget those terrible days, breaking into a cold sweat whenever they hear unfamiliar sounds."⁴⁵¹ Parenting was negatively affected, as depression and post-traumatic stress resulted in a perception of inattentiveness and a lack of care for children. Depression among mothers in particular directly affected their children's psychological wellbeing and scholastic achievement levels.⁴⁵²

Parental strategies of survival

Southeast Asian refugees utilized cultural survival strategies in an attempt to maintain a sense of normalcy and control in their lives and the lives of their children. Between ethnic groups, survival strategies differed based on cultural practices. Among the Vietnamese, churches and extended family connections played a central role in the

⁴⁴⁸ Rumbaut and Ima, 91.

⁴⁴⁹ Savanthy Um personal testimony for UPAC, June 28, 1977. UPAC Records.

⁴⁵⁰ Rumbaut and Ima, 91.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

social organization of their communities.⁴⁵³ Buddhist temples and Catholic churches were spaces where Vietnamese could socialize and continue the practice of Vietnamese cultural customs such as ancestor worship.⁴⁵⁴ Vietnamese Catholic churches also provided adult supervision for unaccompanied or orphaned children, which Rumbaut and Ima noted, was a local practice not typically done in Vietnam.⁴⁵⁵ Regarding family relationships, the Vietnamese often housed extended family members under one roof, and familial authority was highly regimented, hierarchical, and patriarchal, where the young were expected to show deference and filial piety to their elders. Vietnamese parents utilized collective strategies to push their children toward academic success.⁴⁵⁶ Studies demonstrate the effectiveness of familial pressure since the Vietnamese on average attained high levels of success in the classroom. One in four high school valedictorians and salutatorians in San Diego were Vietnamese, even though they only represented 7% of the graduating seniors in their respective high schools.⁴⁵⁷ Vietnamese students made it clear that their ambition was to obtain a college education and a professional degree, particularly in science and math driven fields like medicine, engineering, computer science, and business.⁴⁵⁸

Community structures among the Hmong resembled the Vietnamese, particularly regarding the patriarchal, hierarchal nature of their relationships. Yet more so than the Vietnamese, the Hmong in San Diego “appeared to be the most successful in retaining its

⁴⁵³ Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III, *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998), 98.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁵⁵ Rumbaut and Ima, 87.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

traditional forms of organization, including family and clan.”⁴⁵⁹ The Hmong frequently incorporated orphaned or unaccompanied minors into their family structure, as a means of providing guidance, and maintaining control over vulnerable youth.⁴⁶⁰ Hmong parents relied heavily on the advice of elders in their community to control their children’s behavior. Yet in their eagerness to prevent youthful indiscretions, Hmong adults employed parenting strategies considered taboo in mainstream American society, particularly corporal punishment and shaming. As one Hmong parent elaborated, “We parents must be strong about our children. If they do wrong, we punish them by hitting them or by not giving them favors. We don’t make empty threats. The children know what is right and what is wrong.”⁴⁶¹ Despite their heavy handed parenting tactics, the Hmong believed their children’s high attendance records, high GPA and low drop out percentages reflected the effectiveness of maintaining rigid control over their youth.⁴⁶²

In comparison to the Vietnamese and Hmong, the Lao and Khmer communities were less rigid with regard to parental control, and less prone toward maintaining a communal style of parenting. Compared to the patriarchal Vietnamese and Hmong communities, Lao and Khmer family structures tended to be “neo-local, bilateral and female-centered.”⁴⁶³ Furthermore, while Vietnamese and Hmong families included extended family members and even orphaned children as part of their household, the Lao and Khmer maintained separate nuclear homes and preferred to keep family concerns

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid., xviii, 88.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 75.

contained within the nuclear family.⁴⁶⁴ For example, one Lao parent lamented, “Our children no longer respect us.”⁴⁶⁵ While Hmong parents consulted with elders in their community regarding how to discipline misbehaving children, Lao parents chose not to discuss their family’s shame with each other. “We are embarrassed to let others in our community know about our children who do wrong,” the same Lao parent revealed. “We don’t talk about those things with each other.”⁴⁶⁶ With respect to Lao and Khmer academic performance, they tended to perform below the GPA average; among all Southeast Asian students, the Khmer had the highest dropout rates.⁴⁶⁷

Southeast Asian students and social and educational disparity

Southeast Asian adults found their ability to parent their children challenged by external stressors such as language barriers, culture shock, unemployment, and racial discrimination, and internal stressors such as depression, broken families, and youthful rebellion. Southeast Asian youth also struggled with adapting to their new lives in a country where very few spoke the same language and understood their customs. In the United States, parents experienced displacement over local social, political, and economic practices, and had a feeling of helplessness over seemingly mundane tasks. Southeast Asian refugee youth found themselves suddenly dealing with role reversal as older family members became dependent on the younger generation for English translation assistance on tasks such as navigating the city via public transportation, finding housing, filling out job applications, and purchasing items at the grocery store. According to a report on refugee youth, “The youth back in the old countries were not

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., xiii, xv.

used to decide [sic] what is good for them to do. They depended on their parents who were considered as wise and very experienced in life.”⁴⁶⁸ Suddenly, young people found themselves juggling their new role as providers, adhering to the expectations of filial piety and obedience, all while enduring racial harassment and taunting at their new schools.

Like their adult counterparts, resident and refugee youth struggled with adapting to each other in public spaces. As enrollment numbers of refugee students quickly swelled in a short period of time, particularly at Kearny High School, Montgomery Junior High School, and Linda Vista Elementary School in the Linda Vista neighborhood; Adams Elementary School and Birney Elementary School in the mid-city neighborhood; and Euclid Elementary School and Mann Junior High School in the eastern neighborhoods of the city, feelings of resentment and jealousy among resident white, African American and Latino students increased correspondingly.⁴⁶⁹ Many resident students harbored angry feelings towards Southeast Asian people due to the Vietnam War. Principal Walter Marshall of Montgomery Junior High School also speculated that tensions existed between Southeast Asian students and the rest of the student population due to a desire amongst students to establish a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority between residents and refugees.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁸ IYC Report to Beverly Yip, October 1980. UPAC Records.

⁴⁶⁹ John McLevie, *Analyst's Report on the Instructional Program for Indochinese Students* (San Diego Board of Education, March 24, 1981), 3; *Pupil Ethnic Census 1980-81* (San Diego City Schools, December 9, 1980).

⁴⁷⁰ IYC Report to Beverly Yip, September 1980. UPAC Records.

Table 4-1: Enrollment Percentages of Asian Students in Linda Vista Area Schools⁴⁷¹

	Percentage of total enrollment 1975-1976 school year	Percentage of total enrollment 1980-1981 school year
Linda Vista Elementary	2.6% (20 out of 761)	58.5% (610 out of 1,046)
Montgomery Junior High	3.5% (68 out of 1,958)	33.5% (353 out of 1,052)
Kearney High School	3.1% (94 out of 3,008)	22.3% (441 out of 1,979)

Sources: *Pupil Ethnic Census 1975-76* (San Diego City Schools, December 1975);

Pupil Ethnic Census 1980-81 (San Diego City Schools, December 1980).

Many Southeast Asian refugee students encountered educational disparity in the form of racial harassment and bullying, particularly at the junior high and high school levels. Resident students racially harassed Southeast Asian refugee students, while simultaneously expressing interracial solidarity between whites, African Americans and Latinos. Students were reported saying “Get rid of the Cambodians;” “I think black and whites get along great but it’s the Vietnamese we can’t stand;” and “They could be more fair to the white, black and Mexican people because they treat Vietnamese more special because they’re from another country and I don’t think that’s very fair.” Students also attacked Southeast Asian students by indiscriminately using racial slurs directed towards Asians as a whole, stating “Kick the yangs out of the school;” “Send some of the chinks out of this school to other schools;” “Get rid of all the Vietnamese, Chinese and Japanese. They cause too much trouble with the rest of us. Please send them back to Vietnam, China and Japan. Thank you;” and “Get rid of Yangs and get a new location. Get more blacks, Mexicans, Whites and Pilipino.”⁴⁷² Refugee students were subjected to constant name calling by resident peers, the most common being “Yang,” “Nip,” “Chink,” and

⁴⁷¹ According to the school census, the category “Asian” included students of East Asian, Pacific Islander and Filipino descent.

⁴⁷² Rumbaut and Ima, 59-60.

“Jap,” all of which are derogatory anti-Asian racial slurs.⁴⁷³ The conflation of the Vietnamese with Chinese and Japanese students revealed unwillingness to distinguish between various Asian ethnicities, as well as an overall anti-Asian attitude among students enrolled in San Diego schools.

While educational disparity was typically defined by inequalities in the curriculum or in the quality of instruction, racial bullying also negatively blocked a refugee student’s ability to succeed in the classroom.⁴⁷⁴ Refugee students constantly found themselves having to stay alert and on guard to avoid negative confrontations with their peers. Some refugee youth sought protection and friendship by joining an ethnic gang.⁴⁷⁵ Most students attempted to ignore any form of provocation, but if the bullying persisted, refugee youth would “blow up” in order to “save face.”⁴⁷⁶ Due to an increase in altercations with non-refugee students, the rates of refugee student suspensions correspondingly went up. With the Vietnamese and Lao students in particular, the rates of suspension due to fighting increased 47% from the 1983-84 school year to the 1984-85 school year.⁴⁷⁷ As stated earlier, many Vietnamese students were successful in the classroom. Yet their academic success should not overshadow those Southeast Asian students who struggled academically due to the effects of a hostile learning environment.

In addition to racial taunting and bullying, Southeast Asian youth encountered educational disparities due to the language barrier between themselves and their instructors and peers. The San Diego Unified School District, which already struggled to

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., xvi.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 65-66. See also Zhou and Bankston.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 55.

provide a sound education for a diverse Spanish speaking population, proved to be slow in providing an equitable education for Southeast Asian refugee youth. Following the arrival of Southeast Asians, the district had to expand the program to educate students who spoke one of five different Asian languages: Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, Hmong, and the Chinese dialects of Cantonese and Mandarin. As district specialist John McLevie pointed out, “the burgeoning Indochinese languages program added a massive additional task which could not be completed by the existing resource personnel.”⁴⁷⁸

School district officials emphasized that part of the difficulty in providing Southeast Asian students with a equitable education lay in their struggle to find enough credentialed teachers and aides who spoke the student’s language. As one school district memo indicates, “The fact that these Indochinese LES and NES students speak five different languages has compounded the problem of providing quality bilingual programming for these children. The greatest need is the lack of bilingual teachers and teachers’ aides. It has been said that there are only 17 Indochinese teachers and 78 aides, not all of who are bilingual.”⁴⁷⁹ Much of the problem was attributed to the fact that many potential bilingual educators had only recently arrived in the United States themselves.⁴⁸⁰ Classroom resource aides employed by the district could only offer limited services to the students. Furthermore, some aides “cannot relate, don’t understand the American educational system.”⁴⁸¹ Aides might know the language but not the methodology practiced in the classroom. Most bilingual aides simply functioned as translators, rather

⁴⁷⁸ McLevie, *Analyst’s Report on the Instructional Program for Indochinese Students*, 7.

⁴⁷⁹ Memo, “Bilingual Program for Indochinese Children,” May 31, 1981. UPAC Records.

⁴⁸⁰ McLevie, *Analyst’s Report on the Instructional Program for Indochinese Students*, 9.

⁴⁸¹ Beverly Yip, Bonnie Yamamoto, et al. “Summary: Bilingual Discussion Group I.” CCHPP Education Conference, February 18, 1978. UPAC Records.

than help students comprehend complex ideas.⁴⁸² Furthermore, most classroom aides did not remain employed by the district for a very long time due to poor financial compensation and their need to earn a living wage to support their families.⁴⁸³

Indochinese Youth Corps and social adjustment of refugee youth

In order to address the social and educational disparities faced by Southeast Asian refugee youth, UPAC members recognized that it was imperative to actively engage with the youth. UPAC believed that peer-to-peer interaction was the best method to reach troubled youth and help them solve their personal problems. In 1980, UPAC created the Indochinese Youth Corps (IYC), through funding from the California Department of Youth Authority, to serve refugee youth living in North Park and Linda Vista. One of the goals of the IYC was to provide refugee youth with positive social tools to deal with problems in their personal lives and in their community. According to Prom Cong Tuong, the IYC's Vietnamese Youth Organizer, refugee youth struggled with a wide range of physical and psychological issues including poverty, hunger, unemployment, racism, the language barrier, depression, loneliness, and a lack of parental guidance.⁴⁸⁴ Yet rather than encouraging Southeast Asian refugee youth to try and deal with their problems alone, IYC members argued that refugee youth would benefit tremendously through collective action and interaction with other young people. As Tuong described his role at the IYC,

We set up the Indochinese Youth Corps to solve these problems and reinforce their values. We help them in improving their communication, seeking career for their future, education, cultural...I provide them to

⁴⁸² Yip, Yamamoto, et al.; John Waterhouse, Kathy Do et al. "Summary: Mixed Discussion Group 2." CCHPP Education Conference, February 18, 1978. UPAC Records.

⁴⁸³ Nguyen Van Nghi to San Diego Board of Education, January 1, 1978. UPAC Records.

⁴⁸⁴ Prom Cong Tuong, date unknown. UPAC Records.

make more friends at school and around the community. Providing recreational activities and job information are also my duty. Each month we organize a youth meeting. Its goal is to share ideas, bring out many problems which the youths cannot solve by themselves.⁴⁸⁵

Another IYC supporter agreed with Tuong's call for collective action, stating, "Refugees that are just coming into the US are having difficulties adjusting to the new way of life. They need support and guidance. The Indochinese youths need to be involved in activities to get them acquainted with new surrounding."⁴⁸⁶

The IYC provided a number of services to assist Southeast Asian youth in their daily concerns, but also encouraged them to interact with other refugees and non-refugee young people through peer group meetings and service projects. According to an IYC monthly report dated July 30, 1981, over 300 young people participated in the IYC in North Park alone, and between Linda Vista and North Park, approximately 750 youth participated in peer group sessions, youth council and community service projects.⁴⁸⁷ A sample of the projects included inviting Vietnamese-speaking community members to help Vietnamese students apply for financial aid, and helping Southeast Asian youth find part-time jobs. The IYC also provided English language interpretation and translation, helping families find housing, and helping the newest arrivals acclimate to life in the city.⁴⁸⁸ The IYC encouraged Hmong youth to tutor other Hmong in English and math, and they encouraged young people to volunteer for the community Free Lunch Service at the Linda Vista Recreational Center.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Anonymous letter, date unknown. UPAC Records.

⁴⁸⁷ Monthly Report, July 30, 1981. UPAC Records.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

The IYC also sought to address community wide problems of vandalism, theft, fighting, drinking, and drug abuse. They urged Southeast Asian youth to deal with their problems in a rational manner, rather than letting feelings of frustration overwhelm their judgment in a heated situation. In an effort to address cross-racial tensions between Southeast Asian youth and other racial minorities who also lived in the same area, the IYC hired African American youth such as David Pitts and Natosha Plousha, and Chicano youth such as Robert Tom and Michael Turner to work for their organization and demonstrate to newly arrived refugee youth that cross-racial friendships based on mutual trust and appreciation were possible.⁴⁸⁹ According to IYC employee Chue Chang, David Pitts, Vietnamese youth organizer Tuan Phan, and Chinese-Vietnamese youth organizer Minh Ta worked closely together to plan recreational projects for young people affiliated with the IYC.⁴⁹⁰

The IYC also established connections between their organization and local schools which had a high enrollment of Southeast Asian students. On September 17, 1980, IYC members met with Principal Henry Lawrence of Kearny High School to offer their services if any trouble arose with Southeast Asian refugee students. While Lawrence indicated that the school was obligated to use their own counselor to address any of the student's personal concerns, he agreed that the IYC could establish informal group counseling services to Kearny High School's refugee students.⁴⁹¹ The IYC also contacted Principal Walter Marshall at Montgomery Jr. High School who agreed to let

⁴⁸⁹ IYC Roster, July 1981. UPAC Records.

⁴⁹⁰ Minutes of Meeting, Chue Chang, July 21, 1981. UPAC Records.

⁴⁹¹ IYC Report to Beverly Yip, September 1980.

them speak at student assemblies and organize peer group sessions in the school auditorium.⁴⁹²

Southeast Asian youth acknowledged the positive influence the IYC had in their lives, and indicated that the organization played an instrumental role in helping students integrate smoothly in their schools and communities. According to an IYC monthly report, “we have feedback from our youth organizers that they are getting along quite well with each other in IYC, at Kearny High school, and in their community.”⁴⁹³ Tuan Pham, a Vietnamese youth, discussed how his involvement with the IYC resulted in new friendships, a new spirit of self-improvement, and a desire to assist friends with their difficulties in math and English.⁴⁹⁴ Pham Cong Tuan also credited the IYC for his work ethic and his desire to help his fellow peers.⁴⁹⁵ In a letter to the IYC, Tuan wrote, “Although I have homework very much, but I always try working better than first time. About activity of school, I helped many friends how to get happy when they lost a certain game, or whey they try to do something and they get F score in class. I hope to help many friends better and for them understand more about community which we are living. I always try now to work better.”⁴⁹⁶ Another young person praised the IYC, writing “Through the short time working for IYC, I found it very interesting and educational for me because IYC is made up of youths from so many ethnic backgrounds and by working with them I learned about their cultures. I think IYC is described to do that because our

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ IYC Monthly Report, January 1981. UPAC Records.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Pham Cong Tuan, January 1981.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

goal is to reach out and help the youths and the best way to help them is to understand their cultures and know them better.”⁴⁹⁷

Members of the IYC recognized that Southeast Asian youth needed special attention due to the dramatic changes in their lives. As IYC members wrote to UPAC leader Beverly Yip, “We feel that the most difficult part in adjusting to the American society is not only that the Indochinese youths have to learn English, to compete with American students in class, but also the very different nature of the American society.” By encouraging Southeast Asian youth to seek new friendships, volunteer in their community, and directly confront their personal demons, the IYC believed it was helping refugees “adjust to their new life in a more effective pace.”⁴⁹⁸ As IYC members testified, satisfaction in their personal lives was correlated with increased motivation to try harder in their studies. As refugee students gained confidence and skills necessary to confront social and educational injustices, they became better equipped to find success inside the classroom.

SDUSD and transitional bilingual education

The Indochinese Youth Corps addressed some of the societal concerns of refugee youth after it was founded in 1980, yet as a community organization with limited funds and even less mainstream social and political clout, they were not able to address the discrepancies in refugee students’ education. Unfortunately for Southeast Asian refugee youth, the debate over educational equality and disparity for refugee students was a prolonged and contentious affair, as school district and community members argued over

⁴⁹⁷ Anonymous Letter, date unknown. UPAC Records.

⁴⁹⁸ IYC Report to Beverly Yip, October 1980.

the objective of bilingual education. On their part, the San Diego Unified School District insisted upon sustaining the transitional bilingual approach. According to the school district, “the goal of district bilingual education for non-and limited-English-speaking students is to teach English language skills which will enable students to participate fully in the total district instructional program.”⁴⁹⁹ Southeast Asian refugee LES and NES students were expected to receive instruction in their primary language in concurrence with English as a Second Language (ESL) courses until a “student’s language skills are sufficient to benefit from regular instruction in English.”⁵⁰⁰ Once a student demonstrated a level of competency in English, they were expected to end their involvement with the bilingual program. As a school board resolution indicated, while it was in the student’s best interest to develop “respect, understanding and appreciation of traditions, values and languages of students with differing cultural backgrounds,” the “acquisition of English language skills and competence in basic skills in reading and math are essential for all students in the district.”⁵⁰¹ According to school district officials, the faster students could integrate into a mainstream English speaking classroom, the better it would be for their long-term educational prospects.

The school district created a schedule to help transition the LES and NES student into the mainstream classroom within three years from their initial enrollment. During their first year, the LES and NES student’s school day would be blocked off into three

⁴⁹⁹ San Diego City Schools Office of the Superintendent, “Report of the Superintendent: Bilingual Education Program,” (February 7, 1979), 1.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. Bilingual Magnet or Intercultural Exchange Programs which provided enrichment opportunities to fluent English speakers were not the focus of this report.

⁵⁰¹ Board of Education San Diego Unified School District. “Resolution in the matter of the school district bilingual education program,” June 16, 1981. UPAC Records.

sections: instruction in the primary language, ESL, and instruction in mainstream classes with non LES and NES students.

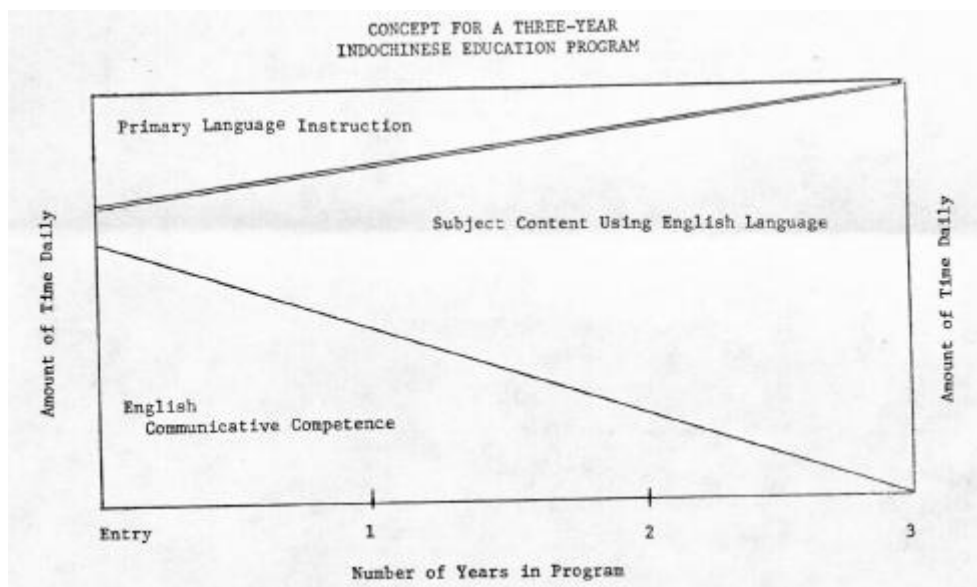


Figure 4-1: "Concept For A Three-Year Indochinese Education Program"

Source: Instructional Program for Indochinese Students (San Diego City Schools Office of the Superintendent, May 5, 1981). UPAC Records

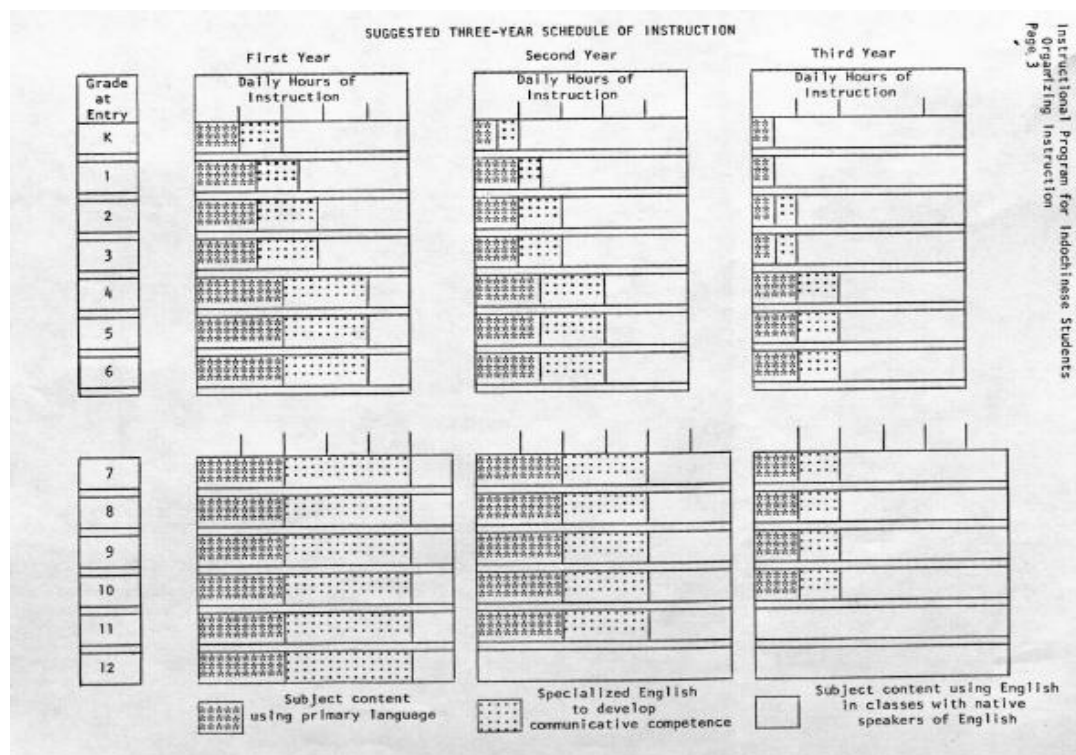


Figure 4-2: "Suggested Three-Year Schedule of Instruction"

Source: Instructional Program for Indochinese Students: Organizing Instruction (San Diego City Schools, 1981). UPAC Records.

The time spent in each block depended on the grade level of the student when they first enrolled in the district. As demonstrated in Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2, instruction in the primary language would be phased out over three years in favor of instruction in English. While the overall objective of the district was to integrate LES and NES students into mainstream classrooms, it was important to pace the student's exposure to English based on their age and ability. As stated in a report from the Office of the Superintendent, "appropriateness of subject content is related to the level of children's cognitive development and to the complexity of the subject."⁵⁰² For example, the content in a fourth grade social studies class might be too difficult for an LES and NES student to

⁵⁰² "Instructional Program for Indochinese Students," March 24, 1981. UPAC Records.

comprehend. In contrast, the curriculum in a kindergarten social studies class would be easier for the LES and NES student to understand due to the simpler nature of the material. Furthermore, lessons in social studies or history classes, which rely heavily on language comprehension, may be more difficult than lessons in a math class that is primarily based on computation and numbers.⁵⁰³ Yet regardless of the age and grade at which the LES and NES student entered public school, the expectation was that through capable instruction by competent teachers they would be able to function in a monolingual English speaking classroom within three years.

Criticisms of the district's bilingual program

Some San Diego community members greeted the district's bilingual program with consternation. Two vocal opponents of the district's program were Nguyen Van-Nghi and Tran Xuan Canh, both of Vietnamese descent. In a letter to the School Board of Education, Nguyen, a member of the Vietnamese Community of San Diego, blasted the district's program, proclaiming "As far as Vietnamese students are concerned, no real bilingual program has been established to help them in San Diego District Schools."⁵⁰⁴ He argued that the officials in charge of the district's "Vietnamese" Bilingual Program "have no knowledge in Vietnamese language, nor in Vietnamese culture."⁵⁰⁵ Nguyen pointed out that no Vietnamese teacher had been hired by the district, and while 30 instructional aides were initially hired in 1975 for the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian students, in 1976, only 10 aides worked for the district, paid \$3.09 an hour to help more than 1,100 students. With respect to the instructional program, Nguyen argued

⁵⁰³ "Instructional Program for Indochinese Students, appendix," March 24, 1981, 2.

⁵⁰⁴ Nguyen Van Nghi, January 1, 1978.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

that the refugee student's English acquisition was shallow. While they could communicate verbally, students were unable to comprehend and express complex academic ideas in any language: "Many of them, asked about the meaning of a word, cannot explain it either in English or in Vietnamese. Then higher are the class levels, harder it will be for Vietnamese children to compete with their classmates enjoying a more favored program."⁵⁰⁶ Nguyen urged the school board to actively seek the advice of Southeast Asian community members in order to facilitate an exchange of ideas and come up with an equitable educational plan.

Tran Xuan Cahn, a Vietnamese bilingual specialist at SDSU who had lived in the United States since 1973, excoriated the district's transitional bilingual program. His wife and two daughters joined him in San Diego in 1979, during the second wave of Southeast Asian migration. His children were bused to Beale Elementary School and later to Montezuma Junior High School. He recounted the difficult transition his daughters faced upon first enrolling in their new school, as well as their struggles in developing a relationship with their monolingual English teachers:

My children, of course, speak the language which is different from the language of the school. They acquired the knowledge of a different world which could hardly be applied to the new situation. The child and the regular teacher are themselves two different worlds which are unable to communicate and understand each other... Instruction is merely an impossibility in such circumstances.⁵⁰⁷

As Tran argues, it was preferable if both teachers and students worked to learn a new language. Ideally, monolingual teachers would take the time and effort to learn the primary language of their LES and NES pupils while students learned English. For Tran,

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Xuan Canh Tran, "What are the refugee teachers and children doing at schools?" UPAC Records.

this was desirable because of the limited number of bilingual instructors employed by the district. When teachers learned the students' language, it meant the burden to make adjustments did not simply rest on the shoulders of the students themselves, but that instructors attempted to bridge the cultural and linguistic gap and become more effective teachers by adapting to the needs of students.

Tran argued the day-to-day schematics of the transitional bilingual program did little to enhance his children's critical thinking skills. He describes his daughter's typical day at Beale where her schedule was blocked off into three major sections: 12% of her time was spent in ESL with other LES and NES students where only English is spoken; 25% of her time she was given instruction in the primary language; and 63% of her day was spent in regular classrooms with other students where instruction was given in English. Overall, the majority of her day was spent submersed in a monolingual English setting, and it was unclear whether she comprehended her lessons, or received any meaningful instruction. As Tran points out, when his ten-year-old daughter was "immersed" in English language classrooms, she was "assigned to coloring books, copying simple words and doing some activities of that level after 18 months of schooling. Those activities take place in the regular class where the child spends 60% of her time."⁵⁰⁸ Therefore, rather than learning anything substantive, 60% of his daughter's school day was spent doing simplistic activities. For Tran's daughter and other students like her, there was no equity sitting in a monolingual English classroom doing simple exercises, as she was not interacting with her teachers or her peers in an educationally stimulating manner, nor was she being intellectually challenged in her studies.

⁵⁰⁸ Xuan Canh Tran.

Coexisting alongside Tran's criticism of the district's transitional program was his corresponding disapproval of the district's desire to racially integrate her into a mainstream classroom. As it was argued in the previous chapter, efforts to racially desegregate and integrate the students enrolled in the school district collided with efforts to provide LES and NES students with a meaningful education. Since LES and NES students from Southeast Asia were considered to be a racial minority, the district deemed it was important to integrate them into mainstream classrooms when possible: as Tran noted, "It is mandated that the child should not be segregated from the general student population more than 25% of the time."⁵⁰⁹ Unfortunately it became clear that language minority children were not benefiting from sitting in the same classroom with monolingual English students, regardless of their racial or ethnic background. As Tran points out:

Desegregation in this case is implemented at the expense of the non English speaking child who is obliged to sit and remain inactive in the class with other children of different backgrounds and abilities where instruction is deliberately delivered to the majority language group at the expense of the minority language child.⁵¹⁰

For the LES and NES student, a fair and equitable education rested not in integrating them into a mainstream classroom before he or she was ready, but in allowing students to remain in the bilingual classroom for a longer period of time, which would allow them to learn materials at a faster pace.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

Multilingual and Multicultural educational possibilities

San Diego's pan Asian organization UPAC played an active role in attempting to persuade public officials and community members of the necessity of implementing an equal and fair education for vulnerable student populations. As Beverly Yip, Bonnie Yamamoto, and other community members noted, the Southeast Asian population needed special attention due to their unique circumstances as refugees.⁵¹² Community members who attended UPAC's education conference on February 18, 1978 vocalized a vision of bilingual education that contrasted with the district's transitional approach. The purpose of bilingual education should not be a quick transitioning of the LES and NES student into a monolingual English classroom. Instead, the LES and NES student would be best served through a multilingual and multicultural educational approach where students were encouraged to maintain their cultural and linguistic diversity as they learned English. As one community member proclaimed, "There is a need to preserve cultural values of our past because this is a pluralistic society."⁵¹³ Another community member encouraged a radical rethinking of bilingual education not as a "special" program, but part of the "core" curriculum: "They ought to be 'core courses which replace the dominance of the traditional views. This means that education ought to be pluralistic without giving one position dominance over the other.'"⁵¹⁴ In a UPAC conference community workshop, participants agreed that multilingual and multicultural education needed to become the norm, not the exception: "It should be the goal of education systems throughout the country to become truly multicultural and acknowledge and

⁵¹² Yip, Yamamoto, et al.

⁵¹³ *The Role of Cultural Heritage and Public Policy: Pan Asian Search*, eds. Sam Il Moon, Kenji Ima, Bonnie Yuriko Yamamoto (Union of Pan Asian Communities of San Diego County, November 1978), 9.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

respect the cultures which have been brought to this country by routes other than Western Europe.”⁵¹⁵ Yet in order to truly embrace multilingual education, UPAC conference attendees pointed out that it was necessary for the San Diego Unified School District to first take the necessary step of separating the “Indochinese” bilingual program from the Spanish bilingual program. If the district were serious about addressing the needs of a diverse Southeast Asian refugee population, then it would behoove them to not simply mimic the objectives intended for a diverse and divergent Spanish speaking population.

Due to the strong advocacy by Mexican American activists to implement bilingual education in the city’s schools, bilingual education was popularly equated with Spanish-English education, and the majority of the district’s bilingual programming was designed to educate the Spanish speaking LES and NES student population. UPAC conference attendees argued that an important step toward creating an equitable situation for Southeast Asian refugee LES and NES students was to support the creation of a separate Southeast Asian student program, and to hire new personnel to focus solely on the refugee students. Otherwise the linguistic needs of Southeast Asian refugees would continue to be overlooked or pushed to the side. As Nguyen Van-Nghi observed, “In some schools, Vietnamese and other Indochinese students were assigned to social studies classes taught in English and Spanish, thus creating additional problems to the already hard language barriers.”⁵¹⁶ Southeast Asian community members despaired that their

⁵¹⁵ Roberta Peterson, Tets Kashima, et al, “Multicultural Workshop 2.” CCHPP Education Conference, February 18, 1978. UPAC Records.

⁵¹⁶ Nguyen Van Nghi.

children's needs would only be addressed after the district "got its Spanish/English programs funded and operational."⁵¹⁷

According to UPAC conference attendees, the very act of separating the Spanish bilingual program from the Southeast Asian bilingual program would signal to the general public that the school district recognized the divergent educational needs of the refugee students in comparison to other LES and NES student populations. As community members observed, "Not only was the multicultural education of Pan Asians being overshadowed by Spanish/English, but it was also an overlooked fact that Pan Asian multicultural education was multi-culturo-lingual across many cultures and many languages. In San Diego, not only would many bi-lingualities need to be addressed, but also many dialects of many languages."⁵¹⁸ UPAC conference attendees were not suggesting a complete overhaul of bilingual education: instead, multilingual and multicultural pedagogy was seen as the next step up from bilingual education. Students themselves would continue to receive instruction in a bilingual environment, using their native language and English. Yet at the same time, the district would recommit itself to recognizing and celebrating the multilingual and multicultural character of its student body.

According to UPAC conference attendees, a major benefit of multilingual and multicultural education for the refugee student was how it shifted the burden of adjusting to change from the students to the teachers and administrators. Under the district's current transitional bilingual system, students were entirely expected to do the work of

⁵¹⁷ Waterhouse, Do, et al.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

assimilating into the mainstream classroom within a three-year time span. The current system also sent the message that the refugee's language and culture were not an asset to higher learning, and had to be replaced as quickly as possible. Under a multilingual and multicultural system, the responsibility of adjustment was shifted onto the shoulders of teachers and administrators, as it became increasingly necessary to recognize the diversity of the student body in order to effectively teach to a new population.⁵¹⁹ As sociologist Hugh Mehan argued, "Teachers must not force children into some behavioral mold, but rather they should encourage diversity of expression, and foster acceptance of diversity among all students."⁵²⁰ By transforming the curriculum to embrace the student's native language, culture, and history, both teachers and students would benefit. Yen Lu Wong further touted the psychological and educational benefits of multilingual and multicultural education for LES and NES students, explaining that an understanding of one's cultural heritage gave students the confidence to take charge of their education. As Wong stated, "To know your own cultural identity with confidence and certainty, enables you to interact as equals with other cultures."⁵²¹

Other community members touted the benefits of multilingual and multicultural education for teachers and administrators who commonly made the mistake of viewing Southeast Asian refugee students as one monolithic group, or homogenizing them with the greater Asian American population. With the current system, "difficulties can arise

⁵¹⁹ Ayda Lucero, Gail Nakatsu, et al. "Mixed Discussion Group 1 Summary." CCHPP Education Conference, February 18, 1978, 1. UPAC Records.

⁵²⁰ Hugh Mehan, "Teachables and Learnables in Multicultural Education" in *The Role of Cultural Heritage and Public Policy: Pan Asian Search*, eds. Sam Il Moon, Kenji Ima, Bonnie Yuriko Yamamoto (Union of Pan Asian Communities of San Diego County, November 1978), 7.

⁵²¹ Yen Lu Wong, "Cokes and Fortune Cookies" in *The Role of Cultural Heritage and Public Policy: Pan Asian Search*, eds. Sam Il Moon, Kenji Ima, Bonnie Yuriko Yamamoto (Union of Pan Asian Communities of San Diego County, November 1978), 7.

both because the teacher is unlikely to understand the child and also because of different culturally determined expectations of appropriate behavior.”⁵²² Under a multilingual and multicultural pedagogy, teachers could use their newfound cultural understanding to more effectively educate a multifarious student population.⁵²³

If multilingual and multicultural education were to have a chance at success, then the involvement and participation of community members and parents were central to the process of educational reform. According to Rolando Santos, parents needed to get involved with their children’s education and pressure the school district to make necessary changes. State Assemblyman Peter Chacon and Beverly Yip of UPAC called for the formation of a pan Asian and Latino coalition to push for equity for LES and NES students. Chacon argued that a common desire existed between Mexicans, Filipinos, Chinese, Portuguese, Guamanians, Samoans, Vietnamese and Koreans: “All the groups listed above want the young to learn English, but they also cherish their own language and culture and want to preserve their mother tongue and customs and traditions that mean so much to them.”⁵²⁴ He attempted to rally fellow community members, stating “I believe that it is time... that language minority groups in the San Diego area organize a coalition... to promote, defend and speak up for multicultural education on behalf of each and all of the language minority groups.”⁵²⁵ While it was the responsibility of the school district to implement changes, Chacon, Yip, and Santos argued that everyday members of society must adopt an active role to ensure that their children received an equal and equitable education.

⁵²² Xuan Canh Tran.

⁵²³ Santos, 3.

⁵²⁴ Peter Chacon, March 14, 1978. UPAC Records.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

Strictly from a linguistic standpoint, Southeast Asian refugee students faced similar educational injustices as non-refugee LES and NES students. Yet due to their experiences as refugees, they had to face a myriad of obstacles to which resident and even immigrant students could not relate. Refugee youth had to deal with the psychological and physiological trauma of war, separation from family members and friends, as well as culture shock and a language barrier. While attending class, refugee students faced virulent anti-Asian racism, and some were suspended for fighting back. Refugee youth also faced inequalities in instruction, due to the lack of Southeast Asian bilingual instructors, and a poorly designed transitional program which integrated LES and NES students before they were ready. While some Vietnamese students were able to succeed academically due to strong familial pressure, other refugee students needed additional assistance just to get from one day to the next.

Southeast Asian community members and members of UPAC argued that in order to ensure Southeast Asian refugee students received an equitable education, it was necessary for the school district to embrace multilingual and multicultural education. The existing transitional bilingual model was not adequate enough to address the diverse needs of the refugee population. Unfortunately, calls for multilingual and multicultural education, in addition to calls for a cross ethnic, pan-Asian-Latino coalition, did not gain traction. As the next chapter reveals, a diverse group of San Diego community members rejected bilingual, multilingual, and multicultural education as a producer of educational equity, instead advocating that all LES and NES students be immersed in monolingual English classrooms from the start. As the battle over cultural and linguistic pluralism

waged during the late 1970s and 1980s, Southeast Asian residents, like individuals from other ethnic and racial communities, found themselves divided over what constituted the best method to help their children find success in the classroom and beyond.

Chapter 5

“A Crisis Similar to the Separatist French Canadians:” Americanization, S.I. Hayakawa and the Anti-Bilingual Education Movement 1978-1982

On April 30, 1979, the San Diego County Grand Jury issued a report following its assessment of the San Diego Unified School District’s bilingual and bicultural education program. Led by the Grand Jury’s Education Committee chairperson Louise Dyer, and jury foreman Frank J. Kilcoyne, the Grand Jury strongly recommended that funding for bilingual education be reduced, and that bicultural education in the district be eliminated altogether. As the Grand Jury’s report bluntly stated, “The responsibility of the public schools is to educate all children to be fully functional in English. Mastering English and learning to function in the American way of life are the obligation of every immigrant who chooses to live in this country.”⁵²⁶ In a press conference following the release of the Grand Jury’s recommendations, Dyer reaffirmed the Grand Jury’s decision, proclaiming, “We do not feel it is the responsibility of the public schools to teach the culture of another society. Their families have chosen to live here, and therefore they will have to learn how to live here and function here.”⁵²⁷

The recommendations of the Grand Jury amplified an ongoing debate throughout the city of San Diego, as residents argued over whether educational equality and equity for immigrant and refugee students necessitated the assimilation of pupils into a monolingual English speaking Anglo American classroom, or the utilization of a bilingual and bicultural curriculum which allowed students to embrace their cultural and

⁵²⁶ *Bilingual Education in the Public Schools of San Diego County: The 9th Interim Report of the San Diego County Grand Jury, 1978-79* (San Diego County Grand Jury, April 1979), 27.

⁵²⁷ Robert Welkos, “S.D. Grand Jury Fires Blast at Bilingual Public School Education: Interim Report Urges Reduced Funding, End to Programs,” *Los Angeles Times*, San Diego County Edition, May 1, 1979.

linguistic differences.⁵²⁸ This chapter examines the workings of the anti-bilingual and bicultural education movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s and argues that despite their championing of monolingual English instruction as a form of educational equity for immigrant and refugee students, the anti-bilingual and bicultural education stance was based on a nativist and xenophobic campaign that sought to repress their ethnic and linguistic diversity in the name of national unity. Yet rather than simply mimicking the nativist movement that dictated educational policy in the early 20th century, opponents of bilingual and bicultural education attempted to disguise its exclusionary stance by softening their rhetoric. They argued that a commonly shared language would allow children of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to share their diverse histories and cultures and help promote multicultural appreciation. By embracing Japanese American US Senator S.I. Hayakawa as the leader of the English-only agenda, opponents of bilingual and bicultural education hoped to dodge accusations of cultural and linguistic prejudice by having an Asian American son of immigrants at the forefront of their movement.

Despite attempts to give the anti-bilingual and bicultural education stance a softer image, the xenophobic rhetoric behind the monolingual English movement could not be ignored. Opponents of bilingual and bicultural education, including Hayakawa, were particularly alarmed by the rapidly growing Latino population, and the use of Spanish in schools and other public spaces. They argued that if bilingual and bicultural education were allowed to continue unchallenged, the very fabric of the nation would be torn asunder by immigrants who refused to adapt to life in the United States, and share the

⁵²⁸ A note on terminology: throughout this chapter I primarily use the term “bicultural” rather than “multicultural” in keeping with the language from the primary sources, despite differentiations in its prefix, and the more common use of the term “multicultural” in the secondary literature. With respect to the usage of “bicultural” by every day residents, it was not to the exclusion of “multicultural” education.

same language. They insisted that immersion in a monolingual English language classroom would teach immigrant students how to become “true” Americans, and integrate into mainstream society. Opponents of bilingual and bicultural education contended that if parents and students truly wanted to retain their cultural and linguistic heritage, it should be done in the privacy of the home, or within the ethnic community. They argued that federal and state funding should not be used in public school classrooms to encourage ethnic and racial separatism.

In response to accusations that bilingual and bicultural education promoted ethnic and national separatism, some community members argued that both bilingual and bicultural education were quintessentially American. Unlike community activists who pushed for a maintenance model of bilingual and bicultural education, as described in the previous chapter, a large number of supporters argued that the true purpose of the program was to transition students into monolingual English speaking classrooms. In response to the anti-bilingual and bicultural education movement, proponents argued it was not bilingual and bicultural education that promoted separatism, but it was the rhetoric used by the opposition that fomented divisions within society.

As this chapter reveals, proponents and opponents of bilingual and bicultural education claimed to have the best interest of immigrant and refugee students in mind. Yet unlike community activists who argued that educational equality and equity required school districts to place immigrant and refugee students’ native languages and cultures on equal footing with English and mainstream American culture, adherents of the anti-bilingual and bicultural education stance argued that educational equality and equity required the complete elimination of cultural and linguistic differences. By glossing over

a long history of racial and socioeconomic discrimination directed towards racialized immigrant populations, these opponents recycled historical arguments that through assimilation, immigrant students could better participate in their schools and their greater communities.

The San Diego County Grand Jury Report

In November of 1978 Louise Dyer and Frank Kilcoyne sent a letter to the San Diego County Superintendent of Schools, M. Ted Dixon expressing their concern over a lack of comprehensive data on the various bilingual education programs used throughout the county. They informed Dixon that the Grand Jury would take it upon themselves to conduct a county-wide survey about bilingual and bicultural education programs, compile information, and “make meaningful recommendations” which hopefully would “have some impact at the state and national levels on the philosophy towards and funding of bilingual education.”⁵²⁹ After several months of information gathering, the Grand Jury issued the following recommendations in April of 1979. First, bilingual education should be transitional and limited in scope, and ineffective bilingual programs should be discontinued. Second, bicultural education should be discontinued without hesitation. Third, funding for bilingual education programs should be restructured and reduced when possible. Fourth, school districts should rethink their criteria determining when an LES and NES student could be mainstreamed, emphasizing “language proficiency” rather than “language dominance.” Fifth, enforcement of bilingual education should shift from federal and state governments to local authorities, who should then take it upon

⁵²⁹ Louise Dyer and Frank Kilcoyne to M. Ted Dixon, November 29, 1978, in *Bilingual Education in the Public Schools of San Diego County: the 9th Interim Report of the San Diego County Grand Jury, 1978-79* (April 1979).

themselves to actively monitor and coordinate district bilingual education programs.⁵³⁰ The Grand Jury warned that if their recommendations were ignored, “the consequences will be severe- wasted potential of LES and NES students, wasted funds, and political and educational conflicts creating separatism” would remain rampant across multiple districts.⁵³¹

The Grand Jury argued that due to growing public resistance, drastic measures were needed to maintain peace in the city. They argued that “backlash against bilingual education is so severe that compromise and moderation must prevail.”⁵³² Public frustrations towards allegedly wasteful educational programs intensified in California following the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. Proposition 13 was a wildly popular measure among California voters, having passed with over two-thirds of the vote. For home owners, it cut property taxes in half, locked in all property assessments at one percent of the purchasing price, and limited the yearly increases in property taxes that homeowners were expected to pay.⁵³³ Proposition 13 had the additional requirement that any future proposed tax increase, even those that could produce revenue for public education, required the support of a two-thirds majority in the state legislature. Yet Proposition 13 proved disastrous for California’s public schools, as revenue plummeted dramatically due to the reduction of property taxes that funded them. The loss of property tax revenue forced the state government to bail out desperate school districts. Over the course of one year, per pupil spending in California compared to other states

⁵³⁰ San Diego County Grand Jury, 29-30.

⁵³¹ Ibid., 29.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Envision Film, “The Legacy of Proposition 13” (KPBS Public Broadcasting Project, March 28, 2010) <http://www.kpbs.org/videos/2010/mar/28/4710/>

would drop from 14th in the nation to 22nd in 1979.⁵³⁴ Proposition 13's passage ensured that controversial programs such as bilingual and bicultural education, and busing for racial integration, faced greater public scrutiny.

Feeding off taxpayers' anxieties that state tax dollars were being misapplied towards ineffective school programs that only benefited a small segment of the population, the Grand Jury report stated that all children deserved "their rightful share of the educational dollar," and bilingual and bicultural education was deemed "too costly and time consuming" to sustain.⁵³⁵ San Diego Unified School District had LES and NES pupils that spoke over 30 different languages, the top four languages being Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Lao. Due to the budget shortfall, the Grand Jury argued, "it is almost impossible for San Diego County school districts to find sufficient qualified bilingual teachers and money to teach in the 30 languages other than English spoken by students."⁵³⁶ Despite the fact that federal and state money was given to school districts that applied for funding specifically to fund bilingual and bicultural education, the San Diego Grand Jury insisted the program was fiscally unsustainable.

Supporters of the Grand Jury conceded that the viewpoints presented in their report could be conceived as a representation of "the dominant view of the county's Anglo majority."⁵³⁷ Yet the Grand Jury itself went out of its way to argue that not all minorities supported bilingual and bicultural education. Based on their own survey of the Mexican American population, support for bilingual and bicultural education split along generational lines. Second and third generation Mexican Americans were likely to favor

⁵³⁴ Ibid. In 2010, California ranked 43rd in the nation for per pupil spending.

⁵³⁵ San Diego County Grand Jury, 27, 28.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁵³⁷ "Bilingual Backlash Threatens Program," *San Diego Tribune*, May 4, 1979.

bilingual and bicultural education, based on their desire for their children to learn about their ancestry. The Grand Jury points out that multi-generational Mexican Americans “usually are the people who have become successful here and are now interested in their cultural roots for themselves and their children.”⁵³⁸ In contrast, the most recent arrivals desired a more intensive English immersion methodology. “Those who were born in Mexico frequently favor stressing proficiency in English and as rapidly as possible. These are parents hoping for a better life for their youngsters in this country and who view English as absolutely vital.”⁵³⁹

The Grand Jury argued that the promises made by proponents of bilingual and bicultural education were not coming to fruition. They believed that very little proof existed that bilingual and bicultural education had any effect in alleviating the high dropout rate among Latino high school students.⁵⁴⁰ Additionally, the Grand Jury suspected that bilingual programs played a role in delaying fluency in English.⁵⁴¹ “Several monolingual English teachers and classified employees reported that LES students and parents insist in speaking Spanish if there is a Spanish speaking person available, rather than communicate with a monolingual employee. These teachers frequently feel the motivation to function in English is not sufficiently stressed.”⁵⁴² Educators also expressed frustration with the increased quantity of paperwork, which was viewed as a waste of time and money.⁵⁴³ The Grand Jury questioned why bilingual education was maintained, stating, “If a student can get a meaningful education by

⁵³⁸ San Diego County Grand Jury, 23.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 9

⁵⁴² Ibid., 23.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

attending classes in English then he is not being deprived of his rights even if he is more proficient in other languages.”⁵⁴⁴ According to their logic, there was no need to continue funding an unpopular program, particularly if members of the target demographic did not see value in it.

Revisiting nativism and Americanization in the early 20th century

While the Grand Jury’s anti-bilingual and bicultural recommendations were a product of the late 1970s moment, the Grand Jury’s proclamation that immigrants had an obligation to master English and function in the American way of life matched sentiments expressed during the early 20th century. The anti-bilingual education movement of the 1970s had origins in nativism and Americanization which flourished in the late 19th and early 20th century. In *Strangers in the Land*, John Higham defined nativism as “intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (ie. un-American) connections... While drawing on much broader cultural antipathies and ethnocentric judgments, nativism translates them into a zeal to destroy the enemies of distinctively American way of life.”⁵⁴⁵ Nativists called for the exclusion of immigrants, their language and their culture, from American society. Similar to the nativist movement, Americanization shared anxieties over the consequences of mass immigration during the early 20th century. Yet rather than supporting exclusion, advocates for Americanization argued that it was possible to assimilate so-called racially inferior immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America into mainstream

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁴⁵ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 4. The formation of violent, racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, the passage of tighter immigration restrictions, and the sanctioning of exclusionary legal practices in land ownership and employment were all a product of nativism.

American society. Private homes and community centers such as the YMCA and YWCA became spaces where immigrants learned to repress “undesirable” racial and ethnic character traits, and learn how to be “proper,” “civilized” Americans.⁵⁴⁶ Public schools were particularly important spaces for the mission of “rehabilitating” non-white young people, due to the influential role teachers played in shaping the beliefs of the next generation.⁵⁴⁷ The California Political Code stated that schools were an important space where people learned about national culture, where untrained bodies and minds learned “the principles of morality, truth, justice and patriotism,” learned to “avoid idleness, profanity and falsehood,” were instructed “in the principles of a free government” and trained to comprehend “the rights, duties and dignity of American citizenship.”⁵⁴⁸

To show proper American pride, students were required to speak English exclusively and learn about Anglo American culture, to the exclusion of their own ethnic histories and native language. Across the US Southwest, Mexican immigrant and Mexican American students were singled out in their classrooms as needing special

⁵⁴⁶ Progressive Era reformers went to the homes of immigrant mothers to preach the virtues of Americanization. In the American Southwest, Mexican American mothers were the target of such lessons, because it was believed that mothers had the greatest influence over husbands and children. The mother was best able to monitor the diet, health and cleanliness of her family. Therefore it was important to teach her the American way of running a household. Americanization helped solidify traditional gender roles of all women, the reformer and the subject, as homemakers and carriers of culture. For additional readings on the Progressive Era Americanization movement see Pearl Idelia Ellis, *Americanization Through Homemaking* (Los Angeles: Wetzel Publishing Co., 1929); Gayle Gullett, “Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California 1915-1920,” *Pacific Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (February 1995): 71-94; Higham, 234-263; Natalia Molina, “Illustrating Cultural Authority: Medicalized Representations of Mexican Communities in Early Twentieth Century Los Angeles,” *Aztlan* 28, no.1 (2003): 129-143; Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); George Sanchez, “Go After the Women: Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant Woman 1915-1929,” from *Unequal Sisters: A Multi-Cultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, eds. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L Ruiz. (Routledge, 1994), 284-297.

⁵⁴⁷ Judith Rosenberg Raftery, *Land of Fair Promise: Politics and Reform in Los Angeles Schools, 1885-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 14.

⁵⁴⁸ James H. Deering, ed. *The political code of the state of California, adopted March 2, 1872, with amendments up to and including those of the forty-ninth session of the legislature, 1931* (San Francisco, Bancroft-Whitney, 1932), Section 1702.

attention to ensure they did not speak Spanish on school grounds.⁵⁴⁹ Chicana poet Gloria Anzaldua wrote about her childhood: “Being caught speaking Spanish at recess- that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for ‘talking back’ to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. If you want to be American, speak ‘American.’ If you don’t like it, go back to Mexico where you belong.”⁵⁵⁰ Anzaldua’s personal account is enhanced by Vicki Ruiz’s description of the practices of an inflexible English immersion program at schools. “Even on playgrounds, students were enjoined from conversing in their native Spanish. Admonishments such as ‘Don’t speak that ugly language, you are an American now,’ not only reflected a strong belief in Anglo conformity but also denigrated the self-esteem of Mexican American children.”⁵⁵¹ Both Anzaldua’s personal story and Ruiz’s historical study revealed how Americanization was used as a tool for cultural and linguistic suppression, as teachers kept a close eye on Mexican American students for potential misbehavior. Mexican American students in these accounts were treated with suspicion, yet in telling these stories, Anzaldua and Ruiz

⁵⁴⁹ Native Americans living across the US Southwest were also targets of assimilation campaigns throughout the 19th and 20th century, as children were forcefully placed into boarding schools, given Anglo names, taught in English, and educated to become contributing members of mainstream society. Upon leaving, many Native Americans reported feeling unsure about their identity, unable to integrate into mainstream Anglo American society, but not quite fitting in with their tribe. See Michael Coleman, “The Responses of American Indian Children and Irish Children to the School, 1850s-1920s” *American Indian Quarterly* 23, no. 3 & 4 (Summer-Autumn 1999): 83-112; K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, “When Tribal Sovereignty Challenges Democracy: American Indian Education and the Democratic Ideal,” *American Educational Research Journal* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 279-305; Pablo Mitchell, *Coyote Nation: Sexuality, Race and Conquest in Modernizing New Mexico 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), chapter 2; Robert A. Trennert, “Educating Indian Girls at Nonreservation Boarding Schools, 1878-1920,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (July 1982): 271-290.

⁵⁵⁰ Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Book Company, 1987), 53

⁵⁵¹ Vicki L. Ruiz. “Star Struck: Acculturation, Adolescence and Mexican American Women 1920-1950” in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America 1850-1950*, ed. Elliott West and Paula Petrik. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 64.

were reclaiming their histories away from dominant narratives of delinquency or victimization, and including them as part of a complex legacy of conquest and personal agency.⁵⁵²

Japanese Americans also had a complex and paradoxical relationship with Americanization in the pre-WWII historical moment. While historians such as Eileen Tamura and Eiichiro Azuma depict the tensions within the Japanese American community over the practice of Americanization in Hawaii and the west coast, many Nisei, second generation Japanese Americans, willingly embraced the philosophy behind Americanization and earnestly applied it to their everyday view of the world.⁵⁵³ Florence Akiyama, a Nisei student who went to high school in Sanger, California delivered a valedictorian speech expressing her support for Americanization in education. “High school education means the absorption of the American spirit. I mean not only the attitude toward America but also the customs and the innate ability to speak and think in the English language... Although a student of foreign nationality is taught to be a loyal citizen, he misses the opportunity of true American surroundings in the home, and so must acquire his American speech and attitude in school.”⁵⁵⁴ Another Japanese American high school student, Jimmie Chikao Hamasaki implored his fellow graduates to “prove that we are the stuff of which the best citizens are made,” through a display of

⁵⁵² Adding to the complexity in Mexican American history, many members of the pre WWII Mexican American organization LULAC (League of Latin American Citizens) also attempted to reclaim their identity by embracing the trope of assimilation. LULAC promoted Americanization by excluding immigrants from their ranks, and fiercely coalescing around their identities as American citizens. See David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), chapter 3.

⁵⁵³ The contrast between the use of love and fear in Americanization is explained further in Higham, 237-238.

⁵⁵⁴ Florence Akiyama, “What High School Means to a Japanese Girl,” in *Nisei Voices: Japanese American Students of the 1930s- Then & Now* ed. by Joyce and Paul T. Hirohata (Oakland: Hirohata Design, 2004), 107

loyalty “to ourselves, to our class and to our school... to every larger claim that the American nation can demand of the most efficient of her sons and daughters.”⁵⁵⁵

Within the Japanese American community, statements by Akiyama and Hamasaki reflected the generational tensions between immigrant parents and American born children. Members of the Nisei led Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) did their best to cultivate an American identity, while the Issei, first generation, worked tirelessly to maintain their connections with their homeland and instill a sense of ethnic pride in their Nisei children.⁵⁵⁶ Yet members of the JACL grew particularly insistent that Issei and Nisei shed their Japanese identity and become “110% American.” This display of Americanization was done strategically to appease anxious whites who expressed concerns about Japanese American loyalty, particularly as tensions between the United States and Japan escalated during the 1930s. Despite the Nisei generation’s adherence to Americanization, Japanese Americans living on the west coast were unceremoniously ordered into internment camps during World War II, and members of the JACL collaborated with the US government and instructed Japanese Americans to comply with internment orders in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States.⁵⁵⁷ Sadly,

⁵⁵⁵ Jimmie Chikao Hamasaki, “Citizenship” in *Nisei Voices: Japanese American Students of the 1930s-Then & Now* ed. by Joyce Hirohata and Paul Hirohata (Oakland CA: Hirohata Design, 2004), 136.

⁵⁵⁶ The Japanese American experience with reconciling a dual identity as Japanese as well as American born are documented in Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979); David Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-1949* (University of Illinois Press, 2002).

⁵⁵⁷ For additional readings on the JACL, the Nisei generation and Americanization, see Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Bill Hosokawa, *JACL In Quest of Justice* (New York: W. Morrow, 1982); Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival in Los Angeles 1943-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Jere Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana:

Americanization could not protect Japanese Americans from having their civil liberties completely disregarded, as they were interned as enemies of the state.

While Americanization was envisioned as a tool to help immigrants assimilate, Americanization did more harm than good. Americanization was used as a tool by Anglo Americans and by immigrants themselves to police the behavior of newcomers or long-term racialized residents. The Americanization movement as an expression of nationalism had lost traction by 1920, but its message continued to thrive in the classroom throughout the 20th century, particularly during times of national insecurity and war. It would rise in full force once again in the late 1970s, as residents worried about the effects the growing Latino population would have on American society, and the impact that bilingual and bicultural education would have on the nation's sense of identity. Yet during a decade where cultural pluralism and multicultural education had considerable standing in many classrooms, the new Americanization movement could not afford to be affiliated with racism. Therefore, it was necessary to find a representative who could appear to speak across racial and ethnic lines. Just as the Nisei promoted the virtues of Americanization prior to and during World War II, the new Americanization movement of the 1970s would be championed by a Japanese American who styled himself as a racial middle man: Republican Senator S.I. Hayakawa of California.

S.I. Hayakawa: self-designated racial middle man

Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa was born to Issei parents in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1906. Throughout his childhood he rarely interacted with other children of

University of Illinois Press, 1994); David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation and Culture Among Japanese Americans in California 1942-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

Japanese ancestry, and in his own recollection, he did not consider himself to be a member of the Japanese-Canadian community.⁵⁵⁸ Hayakawa earned his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin in 1935 and taught in the English department before moving to Chicago. Living in the midwest, he was fortunate to avoid the injustice that 120,000 Issei and Nisei Japanese Americans living on the west coast endured when they were rounded up and incarcerated in camps during World War II. Instead, during the war Hayakawa began writing for the *Chicago Defender* in 1942. The *Defender* was a newspaper noted for denouncing racism in American society, and reporting on issues that concerned the African American community, such as spectacle lynching, rapes, and vigilante assaults. Through his writings, Hayakawa's theory regarding racial problems in the United States emerges. He argued that racism stemmed from thoughtlessness and ignorance, and the solution was to encourage an attitude adjustment among those expressing prejudice.

Hayakawa's background as a semanticist played a significant role in his understanding of human interaction. Hayakawa believed semantics, or the precise use of words and languages could be the solution to social problems and misunderstandings. He believed people needed to change their attitudes towards language in order to become more understanding readers and listeners. Hayakawa writes that, "Fundamental, doctrinal disagreements which seem to admit of no solution are due not to stupidity, or stubbornness, not even to an unscientific attitude towards the problems involved, but to an unscientific attitude towards language."⁵⁵⁹ Language wields tremendous power in its ability to influence people, and Hayakawa believed that by properly using language,

⁵⁵⁸ "An Interview with S. I. Hayakawa: President of San Francisco State College," in *Roots: An Asian American Reader* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1971), 19.

⁵⁵⁹ S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Action* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1939), 13.

arguments could be avoided. By being aware of one's feelings, one can maintain impartiality and "knowing in advance that any argument on the subject will be both endless and futile, we can avoid getting into fights about it."⁵⁶⁰

Unfortunately Hayakawa's belief that social tensions were simply rooted in language and behavior failed to take into account greater structural factors that played a role in perpetuating ongoing forms of racial and economic inequality. As Daryl Maeda noted, "Hayakawa's theory of general semantics ignored questions of power, such as who gets to define terms and to whom are they applied... ignored the extent to which economic exploitation and social oppression convey benefits to some at the expense of others."⁵⁶¹ Rooting social problems in semantics ignored the process of political exclusion and violence practiced by Anglo-Americans towards people of color and linguistic minorities. It ignored how government and law were used to create separate and unequal spaces of habitation and education. It failed to take seriously how economic competition historically intertwined with xenophobic attitudes to prevent racial minorities from climbing the job ladder or giving them the choice of living as part of the middle class.

Hayakawa's lack of understanding towards structural inequalities, and his frustration towards racial politics and criticisms of the status quo became evident in 1968 when he became the acting president of San Francisco State College during a period of intense student protest. From November of 1968 to March of 1969, a coalition of African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American students, led by the Third

⁵⁶⁰ Hayakawa, *Language in Action*, 48, 63.

⁵⁶¹ Daryl Maeda, "S.I. Hayakawa: Asian American Radicalism and the Dilemma of American Liberalism," in *The Human Tradition in California*, eds. Clark Davis and David Igler. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), 197.

World Liberation Front and the Black Student Union, went on strike to the protest low enrollment of students of color, the miniscule presence of faculty and administrators of color, and a university curriculum that failed to address the histories and concerns of minority groups.⁵⁶² When their calls for redress were ignored, students walked out in protest. Hayakawa received his appointment in the midst of the strike, and he believed his role was to act as a racial mediator between a black student body and white faculty. As he stated, “In a profound sense, I stand in the middle. I’m not white and I’m not black. I’m appealing to my oriental friends that I might be a channel to bring black and white together.”⁵⁶³ Hayakawa commented that previous experiences with racism allowed Japanese Americans to be sympathetic to all sides.⁵⁶⁴ Hayakawa’s statement unfortunately obscured the fact that student unrest was not just a black and white issue. Student protesters were comprised of a multiracial coalition that also included Asian American students. Yet rather than engaging in dialogue with the students, he dismissed them as radical troublemakers.

Hayakawa’s hard-line approach towards student protesters gained him notoriety among progressives, and admiration from conservatives. The image of a 5’6” mustached Japanese American man with black rimmed glasses and a tam-o-shanter perched on his head, pushing his way through a crowd, ripping the cords off of a loudspeaker, climbing on top of a makeshift podium-truck and participating in a shoving match with a student

⁵⁶² Mike Murase, “Ethnic Studies and Higher Education for Asian Americans,” *Counterpoint: Perspectives on Asian America* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1976), 205, 206.

⁵⁶³ “Hayakawa’s Role – Man in Middle,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 27, 1968.

⁵⁶⁴ “AJAs as Racial Intermediary urged,” *Pacific Citizen*, March 7, 1969.

was fodder for the media, and Hayakawa earned a reputation as a no-nonsense guy.⁵⁶⁵ He backed up his actions with words, as he accused students of mimicking “goon squads behaving like Brownshirts in Hitler’s Germany in the 1930s.”⁵⁶⁶ In order to fight the “neo-Nazi” tactics used by students, Hayakawa declared the campus was in a state of emergency and announced to the public that “police will be available to the fullest extent necessary to maintain and restore peace when school opens.”⁵⁶⁷ Police presence on campus only aggravated the situation, and in Hayakawa’s first full week as president, violent scuffles between police and students led to 41 arrests and nine injuries. While Hayakawa’s behavior during the first weeks of his tenure solidified his image as a hard-line administrator, “he alienated a wide spectrum of students and faculty, including many who opposed the strike, with a drum-fire of get-tough remarks.”⁵⁶⁸ Hayakawa’s penchant towards hyperbole did not end with his acting-presidency at San Francisco State College, but would be amplified on the national stage during his campaign for a seat in the US Senate.

Campaign for Senate and tenure as senator

After retiring from San Francisco State in 1972, Hayakawa channeled his energies towards a political campaign for the US Senate. Despite being a registered Democrat for many years, Hayakawa switched parties in 1973 due to feeling abandoned by liberals

⁵⁶⁵ Jerry Carroll, “Sound and Fury at SF State: Hayakawa Strikes Back,” *San Francisco Chronicle* December 3, 1968.

⁵⁶⁶ S. I. Hayakawa, “Protest, Pigs and Power Politics,” *Liberal Education* 56, no. 1 (1970): 18.

⁵⁶⁷ “S.F. State Opens Today – Stiff Rules,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 1968.

⁵⁶⁸ William H. Orrick Jr., *Shut It Down! A College in Crisis: San Francisco State College October 1968-April 1969* (San Francisco State College Study Team, 1969), 58.

who condemned his actions at San Francisco State.⁵⁶⁹ Hayakawa promised Republican voters that he would fight overtaxation and overregulation, but his biggest political asset was not his political stance. It was his reputation as an unorthodox, no-nonsense man who stood up to radical activists. Images of Hayakawa confronting students and ripping the cords out of the loudspeakers were featured prominently in his campaign literature.⁵⁷⁰ Hayakawa's Senate campaign was fueled by an intense grassroots organizational effort, and a rehabilitation of his image from a well-learned semanticist to a folksy, in-your-face populist. Hayakawa promised voters that if he were elected, it would not be business-as-usual in Washington D.C.⁵⁷¹ Largely by the force of his personality, and an anti-Washington mood among voters, Hayakawa defeated the incumbent Democrat John Tunney, and was elected to the United States Senate in 1976.

During his single term in the US Senate, Hayakawa's primary mission was to ensure that English became the official language of the United States. His most recognizable act was to bring an "English Only" amendment to the floor in 1981. His passion for an official language would extend beyond his Senate term, as he would later become the spokesperson for U.S. English, an organization that sought to pass a California amendment making English the official language. Hayakawa's Japanese American identity was used as a tool by the English Only movement to deflect charges of racism and xenophobia. Through his involvement to make English the official language of the United States, Hayakawa returned to the familiar position of "racial middleman," putting a face to the message that if all immigrants worked hard enough to learn English,

⁵⁶⁹ Gerald Haslam and Janice E. Haslam, *In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S. I. Hayakawa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 322.

they could attain the American dream. Nowhere was it more important to ensure that immigrants learned English than in public school classrooms.

According to Hayakawa, immigrants historically had responded well to English immersion, therefore it should be reprioritized in the classroom. He argued that previously, “The great majority of language minority children who were in school received no special consideration. Nevertheless all these children made their way.”⁵⁷² Thanks to English immersion, students “succeeded in their respective fields of endeavor and many of them were later found among America’s most prominent citizens.”⁵⁷³ With regard to *Lau v. Nichols*, Hayakawa agreed that LES and NES students should receive a meaningful education, but contrary to the plaintiff’s call for bilingual education, Hayakawa argued “meaningful education” meant teaching all students in English, regardless of language capability. As he reasoned, children under the age of ten were entirely capable of picking up new languages quickly, therefore “they will learn English almost effortlessly, without the sense of undergoing a difficult experience.”⁵⁷⁴ Hayakawa firmly stated, “I think these programs should be restricted to helping minorities learn English. There should be little if any emphasis on preserving the minority person’s native language or teaching that language.”⁵⁷⁵ Immigrants had long recognized the necessity of learning English in an English-speaking country, so why should the current

⁵⁷² S.I. Hayakawa floor statement, August 23, 1978. S.I. Hayakawa Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University (hereafter cited as Hayakawa Papers).

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ S.I. Hayakawa, *Memorandum on Bilingual Education*, October 10, 1980. Hayakawa Papers.

⁵⁷⁵ S.I. Hayakawa to Frank Kilcoyne and Louise Dyer, January 22, 1979. Hayakawa Papers

generation be treated any differently?⁵⁷⁶ Hayakawa argued that if bilingual and bicultural education were allowed to proceed unchallenged, immigrants would choose a path of cultural isolation and failure in the classroom and workforce.

Hayakawa's critique of bilingual and bicultural education was also based on his belief that federally sanctioned programs interfered with parental rights to choose their children's educational path. Hayakawa argued that the 1975 Lau Remedies, the 1978 revision of the federal Bilingual Education Act, and the proposed 1980 Lau Regulations "deprived local schools of their flexibility to determine the best method of instruction for their particular immigrant group."⁵⁷⁷ If local school districts were given the choice, they would prioritize English immersion over continued lessons in the student's native language.⁵⁷⁸ According to Hayakawa, bilingual and bicultural education was a result of "educational busybodyism" which interfered with a process of learning "that has occurred naturally throughout the course of human history with the conquest and dissolution of empires and the migration of peoples."⁵⁷⁹ The United States' position as the most powerful nation on Earth relied on the unity of its people, and the endurance of a singular language. The federal government's support of bilingual education "open[ed] the door to a federally sponsored maintenance of a second culture," potentially leading the nation down the dangerous path towards separatism.⁵⁸⁰

At the heart of Hayakawa's detestation of bilingual and bicultural education was his belief that if it was allowed to proceed unchecked, the fundamental culture and values

⁵⁷⁶ David Hoffman, "Hayakawa Drafts English-Only Amendment: Would Eliminate Bilingual Ballots," press telegram, April 14, 1981. Hayakawa Papers.

⁵⁷⁷ "Hayakawa Introduces 'Improved' Language Bill," *Asian World*, May 1-15, 1982. Hayakawa Papers.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ S.I. Hayakawa, *A Memorandum on Bilingual Education*, October 10, 1980. Hayakawa Papers.

⁵⁸⁰ S.I. Hayakawa floor statement, August 23, 1978.

of the United States would be under attack, leading to the creation of a linguistically and culturally segregated society. The first sign of impending doom would be the growth of “linguistic and cultural ghettos” inhabited by immigrant parents.⁵⁸¹ The second sign would be the purposeful rejection of the English language and American values by immigrants. Hayakawa warned, “The emphasis on cultural preservation of a minority language results in an almost deliberate neglect of the first duty of any immigrant, that is, learning the language of his or her new country.”⁵⁸² The third sign would be the actual creation of a separatist state. Using Quebec as an example, Hayakawa bemoaned, “I fear the United States could face a crisis similar to the separatist movement of French Canadians unless we change the focus of our bilingual program.”⁵⁸³ For the bilingual and bicultural education naysayer, signs of an impending linguistic apocalypse already existed, particularly regarding the growing usage of Spanish in California public schools.

Hayakawa’s fear of a separatist society reflected conservative anxieties regarding the impact the growing Latino population had on US society, politics, and economy. Hayakawa phrases his disapproval of bilingual and bicultural education in universal terms, but a close examination of his words reveal that his anxiety is specifically directed towards Spanish speaking communities. On the Senate floor he warned, “Demographic research tells us that ten or twenty years from now in some of our states, there will be a majority of individuals with Spanish background.”⁵⁸⁴ With federal and state government support of bilingual and bicultural education, “It seems to me that we are preparing the

⁵⁸¹ S.I. Hayakawa, *A Memorandum on Bilingual Education*.

⁵⁸² S.I. Hayakawa to Frank Kilcoyne and Louise Dyer, January 22, 1979

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Hayakawa floor statement, August 23, 1978.

ground for permanently and officially bilingual states.”⁵⁸⁵ It was imperative to prevent English from becoming a second language to “Spanish in government proceedings and documents.”⁵⁸⁶ As he gloomily prognosticated, “As the Spanish speaking population of, let us say, California or Florida increases, the time is going to come when they are going to say ‘city council meetings got to be held in Spanish as well as English...’ they may try it in Miami, they may try it in San Diego, you don’t know when its going to happen.”⁵⁸⁷ Hayakawa quickly admitted that “none of this is imminent today,” but it was critical to tackle the problem today “before it becomes a problem.”⁵⁸⁸ The unchecked usage of Spanish in California could prove disastrous: “Looking into the distant future, you could have a situation where, as in Quebec, English is practically outlawed.”⁵⁸⁹

Despite his divisive rhetoric, Hayakawa insisted that his stance was not intended to attack Latinos exclusively, but to provide all immigrants a means of sharing different cultures by using a single language.⁵⁹⁰ As Daniel Martinez HoSang remarked, Hayakawa engaged in the practice of “racial innocence,” viewing himself as part of an American liberal tradition of equality and fairness, while also attacking language differences as dangerously anti-American.⁵⁹¹ “How can you contribute, let’s say, your knowledge of karate or flower arrangement if you’re purely Japanese speaking,” Hayakawa reasoned. He expressed surprise when he was told his stance offended the Latino community. Regarding his English Only amendment, Hayakawa insisted, “All the Hispanics I know

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ David Hoffman press telegram.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ William Osborne, “Hayakawa Fears Language Strife in US, Cites Quebec as Example,” *San Diego Tribune*, April 17, 1981.

⁵⁹¹ Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 31, 153-154.

of... have said that's a great idea."⁵⁹² It was his mission to prevent any linguistic group from gaining too much power. "Any group, the Cantonese or these Hispanics, become large enough of a bloc in this state, and that's conceivable, lets say by the year 2000 or 2020, then someone could come along and start politicizing the thing and pitting people against each other... this can happen with any group."⁵⁹³ By making English the official language of the United States, Hayakawa believed he was preventing ethnic groups from "pitting people against each other" over their language differences.⁵⁹⁴ Yet at the same time, Hayakawa remained willfully blind to the politically antagonistic methods of the English Only movement, and to the possibilities that his actions contributed to the enforcement of a culturally splintered society.

San Diego opposition to bilingual and bicultural education

Following the release of the San Diego County Grand Jury's report in April of 1979, public commentary quickly flooded the local media, effuse with praise for Louise Dyer and the Grand Jury's stance towards bilingual and bicultural education. San Diego residents thanked the Grand Jury for giving a voice to their previously repressed criticisms: "Three cheers for Louise Dyer and her committee... In the United States, English must be everyone's first language;" "A bow to the present Grand Jury for its stand against bilingual school programs;" "Congratulations to the county Grand Jury for its courageous and strong criticism of the bilingual and bicultural school program;" and "The Grand Jury has spoken! It reflects the views of a previously apathetic silent

⁵⁹² Osborne, "Hayakawa Fears Language Strife"

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

majority towards bilingual education as presently applied in public schools.”⁵⁹⁵ Other residents echoed Dyer’s comments from April 30, 1979, when she stated, “Anyone who chooses to live in this country should learn English and our culture so they can fit in with the American way of life.”⁵⁹⁶ Claude Barnett of Oceanside wrote to the *Union* insisting, “To become a good US citizen and supporting member of our society, a legal immigrant must necessarily learn our native language and laws of the land as rapidly as possible.”⁵⁹⁷ San Diego city resident Jesse Canale proclaimed, “Our schools have no place for foreign culture. Those that attend our public schools from foreign countries should be made to learn our culture. After all, many foreigners did just that, so why change our schools?”⁵⁹⁸ Other residents adopted a more apocalyptic tone, fearing that “bilingual education has become a vehicle of instruction in Spanish,” as well as a means to “teach the culture of Mexico to children of Mexican ancestry and also to other children.”⁵⁹⁹ For these residents, it was time to reverse this dangerous trend and “return to basics in the classroom- the teaching of English.”⁶⁰⁰

Other public criticisms attempted to steer away from blatant xenophobic commentary by blending their racial anxieties over bilingual and bicultural education with an argument of fiscal responsibility. Rancho Bernardo resident V. Albert Moller wrote to the San Diego *Union*, stating, “Bilingual education in schools, whether it is Spanish, Japanese or Chinese, is a waste of funds and is depriving the children of foreign

⁵⁹⁵ Leona Palmer, Jesse C. Canale, V. Albert Moller, Claude E. Barnett, “Our Readers Write: English Should be the Language of Our Public Schools,” *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1979.

⁵⁹⁶ Michael Scott-Blair, “Grand Jury Hits Bilingual School Plans,” *San Diego Union*, May 1, 1979.

⁵⁹⁷ Claude E. Barnett, “Our Readers Write: English Should be the Language of Our Public Schools,” *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1979.

⁵⁹⁸ Jesse C. Canale, “Our Readers Write: English Should be the Language of Our Public Schools,” *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1979.

⁵⁹⁹ “Bilingual Backlash Threatens Program,” *San Diego Tribune*, May 4, 1979.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

origin of the opportunity to learn the English language which they will need for their future success in this country.”⁶⁰¹ He reasoned that immigrants in the past had not received bilingual education “in, say, German, Polish or Italian, yet they learned our language and became part of the American mainstream.”⁶⁰² New York native John Miller argued that many immigrants helped keep their heritage alive by sending their children to church-run private schools, which were taught in French, Italian, and Polish. Yet if parents wanted to send their children to public schools, they “should not expect favors that were not bestowed upon the Greeks, the Dutch, the Germans, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Polish, the Africans, or any of the thousands of nationalities that have found new homes here.”⁶⁰³ El Cajon resident Kay Bagley embraced the “melting pot” that comprised US society, and recognized that many languages were spoken. Bagley encouraged immigrants to display their diversity through easily consumable cultural celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo, Vietnamese Tet festival, Chinese New Year Dragon Dances, and showcases of dance, costumes, food, and customs. She also expressed the importance of “speaking the old tongue” to elders who have yet to learn English. Yet Bagley also argued, “if an immigrant is to become an American citizen... the ability to speak and understand English is a requirement. In other words, it is a part of the American way of life to speak English- no other language is recognized as a substitute. Our culture is based upon English being spoken all across the country.”⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰¹ V. Albert Moller, “Our Readers Write: English Should be the Language of Our Public Schools,” *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1979.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ John J. Miller, “Our Readers Write: English Should be the Language of Our Public Schools,” *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1979.

⁶⁰⁴ Kay Bagley, “Our Readers Write: English Should be the Language of Our Public Schools,” *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1979.

One strategy to increase public animus towards bilingual and bicultural education was to label racial and ethnic communities who pushed for bilingual and bicultural curriculum reform as delinquent, and to label people who supported English immersion as hardworking model minorities. This dichotomy of “good” and “bad” minority is an extension of the model minority stereotype, which used a specifically crafted image of Japanese American middle class success to represent the experiences of all Asian American, immigrant and refugee groups, regardless of the dramatic socioeconomic and psychological contrasts between ethnic groups.⁶⁰⁵ According to the model minority stereotype, Asian Americans had achieved tremendous educational and financial success in the face of extreme discrimination and adversity due to their work ethic and family values. Asian Americans were “model” minorities because they allegedly did not rely on government assistance, require legal assistance, or ask for public sympathy. In deliberate contrast to the “model minority,” Latinos were stereotyped as “illegal immigrants,” regardless of their citizenship status. They were depicted as surviving off welfare, and mooching off a public school system funded by hard working white American taxpayers. While the trope of “model minority” and “illegal immigrant” were gross

⁶⁰⁵ William Peterson published an article in 1966, in the New York Times Magazine called “Success Story: Japanese American Style.” Peterson argued that despite discriminatory actions directed towards Japanese Americans throughout history, they were able to persevere and become model minorities through their own hard work and determination. The damage caused by the model minority stereotype was considerable. The hardships faced by diverse Asian immigrant and refugee groups were obscured by the common belief that Asian American students excelled in the classroom and in the work force. The commonly held belief that Asian Americans did not require or seek government assistance obscured the needs of vulnerable Asian populations, including refugees and the elderly who did need help, but had difficulty obtaining it. The depiction of the Asian model minority also obscured the problem of chronic under-employment and under-representation in politics. San Diego resident Forrest Hong argued that the needs of the Asian American community continued to be unmet, “either through ignorance, design or benign neglect.” Forrest Hong, in *California State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Los Angeles Asian American and Pacific Peoples Public Hearing*, vol 2. (November 30, December 1, 1973), 536, 537. For more critiques on the model minority myth, see Theodore Hsien Wang and Frank H. Wu, “Beyond the Model Minority Myth,” in *The Affirmative Action Debate*, George Curry, ed. (Reading, MA; Addison-Wesley, 1996), 191-207.

misrepresentations of actual lived experiences of ethnic Asian and Latino peoples, the stereotypes were used to powerful effect by politicians and community leaders seeking to advance a political idea. Senator Hayakawa himself used the model minority stereotype to pit “Asians” against other groups, arguing that “the Japanese never tried to duck the problems of learning English.”⁶⁰⁶ Carl Cannon, a staff writer for the *San Diego Union*, claimed that the Chinese American community in San Francisco, where *Lau v. Nichols* originated, showed disinterest in the issue. “There had not been a concerted push by many Chinese parents to have bilingual education, however. Many of them were against it.”⁶⁰⁷ A San Diego resident argued that “Bilingual education is divisive, it polarizes, and leaves one to wonder if perhaps the Latinos consider themselves slower than other nationalities in the learning process.”⁶⁰⁸

Even ethnic Asian groups that were excluded and rendered invisible by the model minority stereotype vocalized their doubts about the San Diego Unified School District’s bilingual program. Southeast Asian refugee students, along with Latino students, were the target demographic for bilingual education in San Diego city schools. Yet several Southeast Asian refugee parents repudiated the district’s use of bilingual education, arguing that the refugees themselves never asked that it be implemented on their behalf. One particularly vocal community member was Tran Van Luu, a Vietnamese refugee who in June 1980, was employed as an instructional aide at Jefferson Elementary School in the North Park neighborhood. In an article written for the *San Diego Union*, Tran

⁶⁰⁶ *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 20, 1981.

⁶⁰⁷ Carl M. Cannon, “What is Fate of Bilingual Education?” *San Diego Union*, June 24, 1980. Cannon’s statement ignored the fact that Chinese Americans in San Francisco did push for bilingual education

⁶⁰⁸ V. Blackburn, “Proficiency Tests Are Desirable- and Students Should Learn In English,” *San Diego Union*, July 6, 1980.

remarked, “I have never heard of any refugees demanding what Americans might call an ‘equal opportunity education’ with respects to language. Nor do the refugees believe they are being ‘oppressed.’”⁶⁰⁹ Unlike some Southeast Asian community members who argued that their experiences as refugees necessitated specialized educational attention, Tran argued that most refugees were grateful for the educational choices made available by the school district: “Coming from communist countries, they surely have a good idea of what real oppression is. Here, they are free to choose the school and education program of their choice for their children.”⁶¹⁰

In addition to his argument that refugee community members never asked for bilingual education, Tran also repudiated the notion that bilingual education served as a form of educational equity for refugee students. He theorized “small children are hurt if they have to learn in two languages at school at the same time. Their time, their energy, and their minds will be divided.”⁶¹¹ Another refugee, Luu Trong Tuong supported Tran’s thesis: “From the view of a refugee, I see no advantage to teach children bilinguage (sic). I agree with Tran Van Luu that small children could learn English quickly and easily. Bilingual education could make them confused and slow down their progress.”⁶¹² Tran pushed the theory that bilingual education was harmful based on his observations as a bilingual instructional aide: “Even those refugees who work in the bilingual program in the schools are free to enroll their children in the regular curriculum taught only in English. That many do exactly that shows their lack of confidence in bilingual education

⁶⁰⁹ Tran Van Luu, “Bilingual Education At Home,” *San Diego Union*, June 29, 1980.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Luu Trong Tuong, “Proficiency Tests Are Desirable- and Students Should Learn In English,” *San Diego Union*, July 6, 1980.

and helps explain the program's failure."⁶¹³ Both Luu and Tran believed that it was important for refugee students to maintain their cultural traditions and language, but that was the responsibility of parents or ethnic community members, not the school district. As Luu stated, "We believe that no one would force us to stop speaking our language; nor could we ask other taxpayers to provide us funds to teach our children our own language."⁶¹⁴

Opposition to the San Diego County Grand Jury report

Despite the overwhelming community support for Louise Dyer and the San Diego Grand Jury report, a multiracial group of San Diego residents defended bilingual and bicultural education, and accused the opposition of engaging in divisive, anti-American attacks. Reverend James R. Anderson, the Associate Pastor of St. Mary's Church in National City scathingly accused Louise Dyer of bigotry and ignorance.⁶¹⁵ San Diego Assemblyman Peter Chacon, co author of the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual Bicultural Education Act of 1976, accused Dyer of promoting "an un-American, narrow minded, parochial view, unmindful of the rights of children with a different background."⁶¹⁶ Chacon also condemned Hayakawa's call for a singular national language stating, "Senator Hayakawa is completely off base. I believe our Founding Fathers were purposefully silent on the issue of a singular legal language in our land in order to include rather than exclude all newcomers."⁶¹⁷ Jess Haro of the Chicano Federation of San Diego argued that feelings of racial separatism did not originate from the bilingual curriculum,

⁶¹³ Tran, "Bilingual Education at Home."

⁶¹⁴ Luu, "Proficiency Tests are Desirable."

⁶¹⁵ Rev. James R. Anderson, "Our Readers Write: English Should be the Language of our Public Schools," *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1979.

⁶¹⁶ Michael Scott-Blair, "Grand Jury Hits Bilingual School Plans," *San Diego Union*, May 1, 1979.

⁶¹⁷ William Osborne, "Hayakawa Fears Language Strife."

but from the program's opponents as they attempted to gather support for their side. Haro accused Hayakawa of deliberately stoking racial anxieties of an alleged "Hispanic" takeover, observing "[Hayakawa's] remarks can only contribute to further polarization between racially and ethnically different communities. His statements warn of political consequences when 'these people' get political power. He seems to view the attainment of political power by Hispanics as an ominous eventuality."⁶¹⁸

Several community members, including employees of three different school districts in San Diego County, accused the Grand Jury of promoting its own selfish interests, while deliberately ignoring the benefits of bilingual and bicultural education. Reverend James Anderson criticized members of the Grand Jury, remarking that it was comprised of "retired, wealthy, powerful arms of strong selfish interest. They do not represent a cross section of the general population and all too frequently they are too much out of touch with the realities of the problems they attempt to tackle."⁶¹⁹ Linda Stetson, who was employed with the San Diego Unified School District's bilingual program pointed out that as far as she knew, "none of the members of her association was interviewed by the Grand Jury."⁶²⁰ Beverly Crown, a bilingual specialist with the nearby Sweetwater Union High School District also noted that Grand Jury members had "failed to visit any classrooms in her district."⁶²¹ Both Stetson and Crown implied that the Grand Jury report was woefully incomplete. James Slant, a high school teacher in Oceanside challenged the notion that retaining one's culture or language was un-American, asking "what is so wrong with retaining your past? It is not un-American to hold onto cultural

⁶¹⁸ Jess D. Haro, "An Official Language and Singular Thought," *San Diego Union*, May 1, 1981.

⁶¹⁹ Rev. James R. Anderson, "Our Readers Write."

⁶²⁰ "Grand Jury Report Criticized: Bilingual Education Classes Backed," *San Diego Union*, May 3, 1979.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

traditions.”⁶²² Community member Stanley Levenson agreed, explaining, “Multicultural concepts are included in the curriculum out of the realization and awareness that our country is made up of many cultural, ethnic and religious groups. The sooner we are willing to recognize and accept these facts, the better off we will be.”⁶²³

Bilingual and bicultural education as a tool for integration

While community members debated the merits or demerits of bilingual and bicultural education, scholars also engaged in a vigorous debate spanning several decades, arguing whether bicultural education, also called multicultural education, was a valid tool for educational equity. Scholars in this discussion are divided into two major categories: supporters and critics of multicultural education, with critics themselves split into diametrically opposite schools of thought. Thomas J. LaBelle and Christopher R. Ward argued that multicultural education was a force for educational equity. Not only did it require teachers to rethink their methodology and reform their curriculum, multicultural education “prepares students to promote cultural diversity and to challenge structural inequality.”⁶²⁴ By teaching students how to recognize social differences, they would be better equipped to tackle inequalities in the public and private spheres from a position of knowledge. In opposition, scholars like Diane Ravitch and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. insisted they did not object to cultural pluralism per se, but they feared that if multicultural education was taken too far, it would evolve into “cultural

⁶²² James E. Slant Jr., “The Positive Picture of Bilingual Classes,” *San Diego Union*, August 31, 1979.

⁶²³ Stanley Levenson, Ph.D., “Purposes,” *San Diego Union*, May 14, 1979.

⁶²⁴ Thomas J. LaBelle and Christopher R. Ward, *Multiculturalism and Education: Diversity and its Impact on Schools and Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 26.

particularism.”⁶²⁵ Ravitch and Schlesinger warned that excessive racial and ethnic pride would threaten the existence of a common national identity and national culture. Another group of scholars worried less about the loss of a national culture, and more about how schools promoted shallow celebrations of cultural differences. According to scholars like Christine Sleeter and Julie Kailin, multiculturalism taught students to associate culture to a dance, a holiday, or a delicious ethnic dish. One-dimensional celebrations of multiculturalism in the classroom failed to get students thinking about conditions of educational and economic disparity for ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities. As Kailin argues, multicultural education failed to “challenge the institutional arrangements in a capitalist system or the economic roots of the historical development of racism and class exploitation.”⁶²⁶ Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield observed, “A good deal of what is ‘core’ to American culture, including the benefits of capitalist democracy, was unchallenged by multiculturalism’s emphasis on cultural respect... Behind the celebration of diversity, then, lurked an ambivalent attachment to *e pluribus unum*, with *unum* regaining command when white-majority rule was disrespected or challenged.”⁶²⁷

Many local supporters of bilingual and bicultural education recognized that what most Americans found threatening about the program was its potential to spread a counter-hegemonic ideology amongst the most impressionable members of society. Therefore, in an attempt to increase public support, community members endeavored to present bilingual and bicultural education as a benign, harmless celebration of diversity.

⁶²⁵ Diane Ravitch, “Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures,” *The American Scholar* 59, no. 3 (1990): 337-354; Arthur Schlesinger Jr. “A Dissent on Multicultural Education,” *Partisan Review* 58, no. 4 (1991): 630-634.

⁶²⁶ Julie Kailin, *Antiracist Education: From Theory to Practice* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2002), 50.

⁶²⁷ Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield, “Introduction” in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, eds. Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4-5.

Supporters argued that not only did bilingual and bicultural education teach LES and NES students how to speak English, the true purpose of bilingual and bicultural education was to teach students to love the United States. Unlike community activists who called for an expansion of multilingual and multicultural education, some San Diegans strategically focused their defense on the merits of bilingual education, with little mention of bicultural education. For example, as San Diego Chicano Federation member Jess D. Haro remarked, Latinos were acutely aware that “not speaking English can exclude one from opportunities and the mainstream of American life.”⁶²⁸ In her appeal to the general public, San Diego resident Elizabeth Hughes explained bilingual education did not mean monolingual Spanish instruction.⁶²⁹ Rather, “bilingual education is the best method, bar none, of teaching English to Spanish speaking children.” Hughes argues that bilingual education was necessary to prevent students from falling behind in their studies as they learned English: “While the main thrust is learning English, children are simultaneously acquiring knowledge, i.e. arithmetic in Spanish so that they will not fall behind in the regular curriculum while learning English.”⁶³⁰ San Diego resident Stanley Levenson attempted to correct what he believed was the San Diego Grand Jury’s willful misrepresentation of the goals of bilingual education. He stated, “The major purpose of bilingual education is to teach the students English... Another purpose is to help students survive in subject matter content classes while they are learning English.”⁶³¹ These community members argued that bilingual and bicultural education was not an instrument

⁶²⁸ Haro, “An Official Language and Singular Thought.”

⁶²⁹ Elizabeth Hughes, “For Bilingual education,” *San Diego Union*, May 12, 1979.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ Stanley Levenson, Ph.D., “Purposes.”

of separatism, but a method to teach immigrants and refugees English at a reasonable pace.

School district employees also lent their voices in defense of the bilingual education program, urging the general public to see the importance of teaching students in their native language as they improved their English proficiency. As *San Diego Union* writer Carl Cannon pointed out, most educators employed in bilingual programs throughout the county supported the mission. Elvia Rucker, a bilingual teacher at Encanto Elementary School, referenced her personal experiences as an immigrant to convince doubters of the necessity of bilingual education. While Rucker learned English and attended college, “she remembers the ‘suffering’ and the lack of self esteem she had when she had to repeat the first grade” at the age of six.⁶³² According to Rucker, the best method to teach LES and NES students was through a combination of English and their native language. After all, she reasoned, “it’s only normal that a child should be taught in a language he’s been conceptualizing in for five years.”⁶³³

James Slant, an instructor at El Camino High School in Oceanside systematically responded to specific charges made against bilingual education in an article for the *San Diego Union*. While some residents reasoned that immigrants in the past had survived without bilingual education, Slant responded “does that necessarily make it wrong to have them today? Would our forefathers have turned down the opportunity to attend such classes if they had existed?” Regarding accusations that “there is no place in the public education system for teaching a foreign language,” Slant replied, “Think about

⁶³² Carl M. Cannon, “Bilingual Classes Stir Hot Dispute,” *San Diego Union*, June 22, 1980.

⁶³³ Rucker quoted in Carl M. Cannon, “Bilingual Classes Stir Hot Dispute,” *San Diego Union*, June 22, 1980.

your classes in German, French and Spanish in high school. Were you taught culture during these classes? You bet!” Slant also responded to rumors that bilingual education was forced upon children by simply stating that bilingual education was voluntary, parental permission was required to enroll their children in such classes, and children could be removed at any time.⁶³⁴ Slant argued that contrary to common arguments against the bilingual education program, parental choice in their children’s education was still intact, as they could choose to enroll their children in monolingual English classrooms if they wished.

In their comments, these community members positioned transitional bilingual education as a tool for equity, which would result in LES and NES students’ integration into mainstream society. These community members were not calling for a radical overhaul of the capitalist system, an overthrow of the English language, or the suppression of Anglo American culture, as Hayakawa, Dyer, and the San Diego Grand Jury feared. They simply wanted immigrant and refugee children to receive an equitable education as they learned to speak English. They argued that immigrant and refugee LES and NES students could become better Americans if they were permitted the use of their native language and study of diverse cultures and ethnicities in the classroom as they transitioned into speaking English. As San Ysidro Elementary School preschool teacher Lydia Rodriguez described, bilingual instruction was integral to preparing young children for future educational success in the English language. The bilingual program “helps the children so much to prepare for the English spoken in the classroom. It is so important for the youngsters to understand English by the time they get into kindergarten, so that

⁶³⁴ James E. Slant Jr., “The Positive Picture of Bilingual Classes.”

they won't be frightened when their lessons are taught to them in English.”⁶³⁵ Their assimilation into mainstream schooling was made possible through bilingual education.

The continuing struggle over bilingual and bicultural education

Efforts to frame bilingual and bicultural education as an innocuous choice for LES and NES students to obtain a meaningful education proved ineffective in the face of growing disapproval throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. Many San Diego community members, including parents of LES and NES children, agreed with statements made by the San Diego Grand Jury that bilingual and bicultural education was anti-English and anti-American, and community peace necessitated the school district to reform bilingual education and eliminate bicultural education altogether.

The shifting political, economic, and social conditions of the 1980s played a central role in strengthening the anti-bilingual and bicultural education stance. The presidency of Ronald Reagan ushered in an era dubbed the “new federalism,” which combined the neoliberal ideologies of deregulation with individual choice.⁶³⁶ Federal support for bilingual education decreased during the Reagan era, as the administration backtracked on the federal commitment to the Lau Remedies, and reduced spending on Title VII programs. Decreased federal support for bilingual education was coupled with increased social restlessness over difficult economic conditions. The continuation of deindustrialization and globalization in the 1980s resulted in massive unemployment and underemployment for the working class and poor, exacerbating long existing racial and

⁶³⁵ Linda Kozub, “Bilingual Preschool In Crisis,” *San Diego Union* June 1, 1980.

⁶³⁶ Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); 30. See also San Miguel, chapter 3.

class tensions in urban and suburban spaces.⁶³⁷ Yet perhaps the most crucial element in shaping the language of the anti-bilingual and bicultural education movement was the growth of anti-immigrant sentiment, and what George Sanchez called a new, late 20th century version of nativism.⁶³⁸

Coinciding with the growth of the Latino immigrant population across the United States, tensions began to mount as Americans competed over limited resources made even more scarce thanks to rescinding government assistance and dwindling economic opportunities. The “new” nativism had three central characteristics which reflected the anxieties of the 1980s and early 1990s: a fear that English would be overrun by a “foreign” language; a fear that multicultural education and affirmative action gave unfair advantages to “non-Americans;” and a belief that “illegal” immigrants took advantage of valuable public resources funded by taxpaying citizens.⁶³⁹ The “new” nativism blended arguments of fairness and equity with xenophobia, expressed not just by conservative whites, but racial minorities as well. In the face of widespread anti-immigrant sentiment, the anti-bilingual and bicultural position would emerge victorious when California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 227 in 1998, by a margin of 61 to 39 percent.⁶⁴⁰ Proposition 227 virtually ended bilingual education throughout the state, as LES and NES students were placed into accelerated English immersion classes. Yet community

⁶³⁷ For readings on deindustrialization, see Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott eds, *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca: ILR Press, 2003); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁶³⁸ George Sanchez, “Face the Nation: Race, Immigration, and the Rise of Nativism in Late Twentieth Century America,” *International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1997), 1013. According to Sanchez, what distinguished the “new” nativism from its early 20th century predecessor was the absence of a primary antagonist. While many white Americans espoused nativist, xenophobic sentiments in the late 20th century, so did African Americans, and American-born persons of Latin or Asian ancestry.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 1020.

⁶⁴⁰ HoSang, 233.

members would continue to push for bilingual and bicultural education, arguing that without it, LES and NES students were deprived of a chance for obtaining educational and social equality.

Conclusion

In an article for the *San Diego Union* on October 19, 1980, Charlie Ericksen announced, “Its official. Bilingual education has become the busing issue for the 80s.”⁶⁴¹ Throughout the 1970s, bilingual and bicultural education, like racial integration and busing, was defended in the name of civil rights and educational equity, yet by the end of the decade, community members insisted upon dismantling all educational programs that appeared to be a waste of tax payer money, as well as a form of affirmative action for an undeserving demographic. In response to the growth of Americanization and nativist sentiment in the late 1970s and early 1980s, community members argued that bilingual education was a tool to help immigrants learn English and adapt into the mainstream, and that anyone who argued otherwise failed to comprehend the purpose of bilingual and bicultural education. Members of the anti-bilingual and bicultural movement accused their opponents of promoting social disparity because bilingual and bicultural education allegedly promoted racial separatism and cultural particularism. Yet in the face of such accusations, defenders of bilingual and bicultural education asserted that the maintenance of both programs was essential to fostering educational and social equity for students on the social, economic, and racial margins, especially LES and NES students, immigrants, and refugees. Therefore, as defenders of bilingual and bicultural education asserted, it

⁶⁴¹ Charlie Ericksen, “Bilingual Education Takes the Spotlight,” *San Diego Union*, October 19, 1980.

was not the advancement but the elimination of bilingual and bicultural education that would usher in the separatism that opponents claimed to fear.

Conclusion

Ongoing Struggles Against Educational Disparity After 1985

On May 21, 1985, Judge Franklin Orfield issued a Statement of Decision commending the San Diego Unified School District for their dedication to the 1977 Superior Court order to desegregate its public schools, following the court's ruling in *Carlin v. Board of Education San Diego*.⁶⁴² According to Judge Orfield, the school district made great strides during the 1984-85 school year, which was marked by increased student participation in the district's Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program (VEEP) and magnet school program. Additionally, thanks to a district-wide initiative to improve standardized test scores at African American and Latino isolated schools, it appeared that the achievement gap was narrowing between middle class white students, and working class students of color.⁶⁴³ As Orfield relayed in his report, African American and Latino students who were administered the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) between April 24 and May 9, 1984 demonstrated improvements in reading and language, and "In math, the improvement was the most pronounced, and in most

⁶⁴² Statement of Decision, *Kari Carlin et al v. Board of Education, San Diego Unified School District* no. 303800 (San Diego Superior Court, 21 May 1985).

Franklin Orfield replaced Judge Louis Welsh in 1980, following his resignation from the case. Plaintiff and defendant attorneys argued that Welsh's participation in ex-parte meetings with members of the school board was inappropriate and violated the purview of the court. Welsh voluntarily stepped down from the case to avoid further controversy. Mary Ehrlander, *Equal Educational Opportunity: Brown's Elusive Mandate* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2002), 157.

⁶⁴³ The San Diego Unified School District in 1980 launched the Achievement Goals Program (AGP) for elementary, junior high, and high schools with predominantly African American and Latino student populations. The purpose of the AGP was to boost students' standardized test scores by emphasizing test taking skills and utilizing a curriculum that was centered on standardized test subject matters. The district initially developed AGPs in English and math, and later translated the materials for use in Spanish bilingual classrooms. Since the achievement gap was quantified by standardized test scores, it appeared that by 1985, the achievement gap was narrowing. Yet as many district employees attested, intellectually challenging curriculum was being sacrificed for test taking and rote memorization. Therefore AGP was discontinued, and a curriculum emphasizing higher level thinking skills was emphasized. Unfortunately the achievement gap would widen once again by the 1990s. See Ehrlander, chapter 9.

instances has substantially exceeded set goals.”⁶⁴⁴ Judge Orfield optimistically reported, “Again this year, of great encouraging significance, is the substantial reduction of the degree of difference between the scores in minority isolated and non-minority isolated schools, especially at the elementary and junior high school levels.”⁶⁴⁵ While the school district was still required to report annually to the presiding judge their progress on VEEP, the magnet program, district-wide efforts on race and human relations programs, and district-wide results of student performance on standardized tests, Judge Orfield decided it was no longer necessary to tightly monitor the school district’s efforts. He ordered that “the court will terminate its annual review and monitoring of district integration activities by the court’s Integration Task Force... the court feels that the district should function without such monitoring.”⁶⁴⁶ Thus the Integration Task Force, which had been created in 1978, was disbanded in 1985.

Judge Orfield’s 1985 decision to relax the court’s supervision of the San Diego Unified School District was based on an optimistic belief that the district no longer required firm guidance to deal with ongoing educational disparities. Yet many of the inequalities related to students’ socioeconomic status, language ability, and cultural background, alongside budget cuts and ongoing unevenness in the curriculum, quality of instruction, and learning environment continued to negatively impact students’ academic performance. While 1985 was a year of optimism for the district due to an apparent narrowing of the achievement gap, all signs of progress would disappear by 1990.⁶⁴⁷ In 1993, San Diego Superintendent Bertha Pendleton observed that while overall scores

⁶⁴⁴ Statement of Decision, *Carlin v. Board of Education*.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Ehrlander, 160.

showed improvement for African Americans from the early 1980s, “If you look at today’s picture, they’re not good scores to talk about. They’re flat.”⁶⁴⁸ In 1994, school board members expressed bafflement at the dramatically lowered scores for limited English speaking Latino and Asian student populations.⁶⁴⁹ As Pendleton commented, “I don’t know whether it has something to do with transition from being limited-English speaking to (fluent) English, or whether there’s something (else) there that we need to look at.”⁶⁵⁰ Regardless of the reason, the persistent achievement gap became even more worrisome as the district’s African American, Latino and Asian immigrant student population continued to grow at exponential rates.

The school district’s shifting demographics compounded community concerns that the achievement gap would persist between African American, Latino, and white students. According to the school district’s Pupil Ethnic Census, the student population shifted from being majority white (64%) in 1977, which was the first year of court supervision, to a slight majority of Latino, African American, and Asian (53.7%) students in 1985, to a Latino, African American, and Asian dominant student population by 1995 (70%).⁶⁵¹ With the growth of African American, Latino, and Asian immigrant student populations, which historically achieved lower scores on standardized tests, it became even more crucial for the school district to ensure that all students received an equitable education.

⁶⁴⁸ Jeff Ristine, “Blacks lag in scores on ASAT in schools,” *San Diego Union Tribune*, September 1, 1993.

⁶⁴⁹ Jeff Ristine, “City School Test Scores Show Wider Racial Gaps,” *San Diego Union Tribune*, August 30, 1994.

⁶⁵⁰ Ristine, “City School Test Scores.”

⁶⁵¹ All statistics are from the Pupil Ethnic Census (San Diego: San Diego City Schools) from 1977 to 1995. Carlin Records. The Asian Pacific Islander student population combined ethnic groups under one category until 1985. During the 1985-86 school year, the pupil ethnic census deconstructed the Asian Pacific Islander demographic, and revealing that the gains in the “Asian” population are driven by the growth of the Filipino and “Indochinese” student population.

**Table 6-1: Population by Race and Ethnicity,
San Diego Unified School District, 1977-1995**

	Total Student Enrollment	Latino	White	African American	Asian Pacific Islander
1977	118,460	17,356 (14.6%)	75,770 (64%)	17,594 (14.8%)	7,413 (6.3%)
1985	112,264	22,905 (20.4%)	51,998 (46.3%)	18,052 (16.1%)	18,987 (16.9%)
1990	118,619	30,405 (25.6%)	46,212 (39%)	19,272 (16.2%)	22,157 (18.7%)
1995	131,858	44,254 (33.6%)	39,328 (29.8%)	22,260 (16.9%)	25,118 (19.1%)

Sources: Pupil Ethnic Census, San Diego City Schools, 1977, 1985, 1990, 1995.

Despite the persistence of ongoing educational disparities between students of different socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, the 1980s and 1990s were marked by a general retraction of legislative and judicial support for educational equity programs. At the national level, the Reagan administration quickly began to overturn the progress made in school desegregation cases across the country. According to Reagan's Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights William Bradford Reynolds, desegregation programs such as busing allegedly demonstrated racial bias in favor of blacks and Latinos, violating the conservative belief in a "colorblind" application of the law; thus it was imperative that the Department of Justice (DOJ) "refrain from seeking race-conscious remedies such as court-ordered busing, solely for the purposes of achieving a particular racial balance."⁶⁵² Instead the DOJ began openly supporting school districts that contested court mandated desegregation orders, rather than backing minority

⁶⁵² William Bradford Reynolds, *Equal Educational Opportunity Strategies for Today's Realities*, presented at the National Project on Desegregation strategies Workshop of the Education Commission of the States, (Chicago, IL, Sept 27, 1981) (Washington DC: Department of Justice)

plaintiffs or civil rights organizations.⁶⁵³ Additionally in 1981, Reagan signed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, which eliminated funding for federal aid programs that allowed federal dollars to be used in local school desegregation efforts.⁶⁵⁴

In addition to the Reagan administration's actions, the Supreme Court, led by Reagan appointee William Rehnquist also played a critical role in overturning lower court injunctions that required local school districts to racially integrate their schools. In particular, three Supreme Court decisions, *Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* (1991), *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992) and *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995) weakened the lower court's ability to compel a school district to unitarily desegregate and integrate their schools. In *Dowell*, the Supreme Court ruled that if a school district had demonstrated a willingness to desegregate its schools "in good faith," then federal court injunctions should be lifted and the district returned to local control. In *Freeman*, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that a school district could be released from federal supervision in incremental steps, arguing "a district court need not retain active control over every aspect of school administration until a school district had demonstrated unitary status in all facets of its system." In *Jenkins*, the Supreme Court ruled that a district court had overstepped its authority when it required the Kansas City, Missouri School District to create magnet programs and institute across-the-board pay raises as part of its desegregation injunction. All three of these decisions paved the way for local school districts to regain control over their affairs, regardless of whether they met every stipulation in their desegregation injunction. As Rehnquist wrote in *Jenkins*, "[We]

⁶⁵³ Chinh Q. Le, "Racially Integrated Education and the Role of the Federal Government," in *North Carolina Law Review* 88, no. 3 (2010): 742.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid. 739. In particular funding for the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) of 1972 had been cut by Reagan in 1981.

recognize that local autonomy of school districts is a vital national tradition, and that a district court must strive to restore state and local authorities to the control of a school system operating in compliance with the Constitution.”⁶⁵⁵

In addition to the retraction of desegregation and integration programs and funding by the Reagan administration and the Supreme Court, bilingual and bicultural education programs, which were implemented to provide Latino and Asian immigrant and refugee student an equitable education, also faced elimination in the late 1990s and early 2000s at the California state and federal level. Much of the opposition to bilingual education coexisted alongside the anti-immigrant rhetoric that gained steam since the 1970s. Yet while the attacks against undocumented immigrants were fraught with racism and xenophobia, as demonstrated by the campaign for California Proposition 187 in 1994, California opponents of bilingual education marketed their campaign as “pro-children,” and actively sought Latino spokespeople to tout the necessity of English immersion in education.⁶⁵⁶ In 1998, California Proposition 227, which banned bilingual education in public schools, passed with a comfortable margin of 61% to 39%.⁶⁵⁷ California’s rejection of bilingual education would soon be accompanied by the federal government’s revocation of Title VII of the ESEA, with Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This move eliminated bilingual education as a tool to educate LES

⁶⁵⁵ *Missouri et al v. Jenkins et al*, 515 U.S. 70 (1995)

⁶⁵⁶ HoSang, 233. California Proposition 187 prohibited undocumented immigrants from gaining access to services such as health care, education, and other public social programs. While Prop. 187 was ruled unconstitutional by a federal court in 1997 (and removed from the appeals process by newly elected Governor Gray Davis in 1999), it revealed an overwhelming sentiment among the California voting public that “illegal” immigrants were responsible for the economic and social crisis plaguing the state. See HoSang, Chapter 6.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

and NES students, now referred to as English Language Learners (ELL).⁶⁵⁸ Bilingual education programs were replaced with English immersion programs, and students are subsequently mainstreamed into monolingual English classrooms as quickly as possible.

For ardent proponents of racial integration and bilingual education programs, mainstream rejection of their vision of educational equity dealt a devastating blow to many years of hard work and struggle to ensure that marginalized students could receive a quality education. To the dismay of scholars, community leaders, and parents, the withdrawal of federal and community support resulted in the resegregation of schools along racial and socioeconomic lines.⁶⁵⁹ Yet despite the backlash against traditional integration programs and bilingual education at the federal and state level, community members and parents at the local level continued to contest educational disparity, and encourage the local school board to respond to the diverse needs of the student body. Beginning in the 1980s, San Diego Unified School district began the process of retooling many of its magnet programs, eliminating the school-within-a-school model and offering total magnet programs in math, science, creative and performing arts, bilingual language immersion, and International Baccalaureate, among others. In 1994 African American parents, working together with the San Diego Urban League demanded that Johnson, Knox, and Kennedy Elementary Schools and Lincoln High School in Southeast San

⁶⁵⁸ Guadalupe San Miguel, *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States 1960-2001* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2004), Google Play E-Book, 9.

⁶⁵⁹ See Gary Orfield and Erica Frankenberg's most recent edited works: *Educational Delusions: Why Choice can Deepen Inequality and How to Make Schools Fair* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); *The Resegregation of Suburban Schools: A Hidden Crisis in American Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education, 2012); *Lessons in Integration: Realizing the Promise of Racial Diversity in American Schools* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); and with Chungmei Lee, *A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools: Are We Losing the Dream?* (Cambridge, MA: Civil Rights Project, 2003).

Diego be transformed into a charter school.⁶⁶⁰ While that specific venture failed to gain the necessary support to convert the campus into a charter program, other schools in the southeast such as Gompers Junior High and O’Farrell Junior High were eventually converted into charter schools. Additionally, the school district renamed its Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program (VEEP) into the Voluntary Enrollment Exchange Program (still VEEP), and while busing was not permitted for the purposes of racial desegregation, the school district continued to use busing for the purposes of “neighborhood” integration, with full understanding that many neighborhoods continue to be segregated by race and socioeconomics.⁶⁶¹

San Diego Unified School District’s current offerings are not without their challenges, or their detractors. Admission into charter schools is based on a lottery system, and enrollment in magnet programs requires parents fill out an application for a limited number of spots. While many language magnet programs offer students a bilingual curriculum, students enrolled in neighborhood schools are immersed in English language classrooms. Additionally, a disproportionately high number of students from southeast San Diego continue to participate in VEEP for the purposes of “neighborhood” integration, while many neighborhood schools that are not magnet or charter schools in Southeast San Diego continue to face disparities related to personal or structural inequities. Finally, the use of an across-the-board standardized test to measure achievement levels penalized students who came from disadvantaged backgrounds, had

⁶⁶⁰ Sharon L. Jones, “Charter Schools Get an Incomplete,” *San Diego Union Tribune*, November 4, 1994.

⁶⁶¹ As it was reported, “Students now enroll in the program based on their neighborhood, not their race. But in San Diego, neighborhood has served as an effective proxy for race, which allows integrative busing to persist.” See Emily Alpert, “Three Decades Later, Busing is Revered, Resented and Routine,” *Voice of San Diego*, April 14, 2008, http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/education/article_089f05ee-0d01-5fd0-a2b4-72abdc15fb4e.html.

different learning abilities, struggled with the English language, or received less than useful instruction from their teachers. Therefore even with adjustments in primary and secondary education programming, new and familiar forms of disparity continue to haunt the school district.

Despite the continued difficulties encountered by parents, students, and school personnel, this dissertation emphasizes the importance of community dialogue and participation in the ongoing struggle against educational disparity. In San Diego, a multiracial group of community members, parents, and students played a central role in directing attention towards the personal circumstances that impacted a student's academic performance, and the structural inequalities which allowed discrepancies to persist between majority white schools in middle class neighborhoods, and majority African American and Latino schools in Southeast San Diego. It is the pressure exerted by parents, students, and community members in a variety of mediums, including letters, newspaper editorials, school board meetings, community conferences, and through the courts, that compelled local governments and school districts to respond to ongoing educational disparities based on race and language ability. Following the implementation of the voluntary integration and transitional bilingual programs, community members once again played a crucial role in revealing how these programs created new forms of disparity or exacerbated existing forms of injustice.

Historically, the voices of ordinary community members were overshadowed by the posturing of powerful individuals. Additionally, not all suggestions found a receptive audience among local politicians and school board members, and some community voices unjustly had more influence than others due to historically situated structural

inequalities and personal prejudices among people with political power. Yet it was imperative that community members continued to advocate for innovative educational opportunities for students, even when initiatives were mired in conflict and inconclusive debate. In a city with a constantly shifting demographic, it was the students, parents, and community members who were best attuned to the negative consequences that ongoing disparity had on children's educational opportunities. It was ordinary residents who have closest and most intimate knowledge with how school districts were failing their children's pursuit of a quality education. Without community pressure, public education policies become stagnant, irrelevant, or even harmful to a student's future academic, economic, and emotional wellbeing. Therefore in a city which possesses a constantly shifting student population with divergent educational needs, it is local residents who can directly identify everyday injustices, hold the school district accountable for their actions, and champion the welfare of all students in order to ensure equity in resources and the achievement of more just educational outcomes for all members of the public.

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