



Mark Macarro, chair of the Pechanga Luiseño Band of Mission Indians, was the spokesperson for Proposition 5 in television spots aired throughout the 1998 campaign. (*Courtesy of Winner/Wagner & Mandabach Campaigns, Santa Monica.*)

recognizing their right to operate casinos on tribally owned lands. Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger criticized his predecessor's actions but proceeded to sign additional agreements signifying the expansion of gaming into the state's major metropolitan areas. Harrah's and other gambling interests joined with the tribes to build new Nevada-style casinos featuring video slot machines and house-banked card games. Annual revenues from the casinos reached \$4 billion by 2004.

To protect their newfound prosperity, the California gaming tribes became major players in state politics. They formed political action committees and contributed millions of dollars to candidates for local and state offices. One observer calculated that the gaming tribes were contributing more money to political campaigns than any other interest group in the state. The advent of high-stakes Indian gambling not only transformed the lives of thousands of native people, it also had a profound impact on California politics.

The ethnic group experiencing the least growth in recent decades was the category identified by the Census Bureau as "non-Hispanic whites." The Anglo population actually *declined* by more than a million during the 1990s, having the lowest birthrate and the highest rate of out-migration. The Anglos' overall proportion in the population fell from two-thirds in 1980 to less than half by the beginning of the twenty-first century. The shrinking proportion of non-Hispanic whites was even more startling among the state's younger residents. Whereas Anglos constituted 47 percent of the general population in 2000, their proportion among residents under the age of 18 was a mere 35 percent. "What it all means," commented one demographer, "is that bigger changes are still to come."

One of the most salient characteristics of the Anglo population was its relatively high rate of political participation. As the non-Hispanic white population declined, its dominance within the electorate steadily diminished; yet Anglos continued to have the highest rate of voter registration and to hold the lion's share of elective offices. If current trends of civic engagement continued, non-Hispanic whites in 2040 would constitute only a third of the state's adult population and yet remain a majority of voters. Thus the steady decline of the Anglo population presented the state with a fundamental challenge. "It will test whether we can peacefully change,"

observed a spokesperson for California Tomorrow, "from a European-dominated society with minorities to a world society where everybody is a minority."

This challenge was already being faced in the schools of California, where no one ethnic group had been in the majority since 1988. Anglo students struggled to find ways to fit into a society increasingly defined in multicultural terms. Non-Hispanic whites at Anaheim High School stirred widespread controversy in 1992 by organizing a club for "European Americans." Critics feared that the club was racist, but the Anglo students argued successfully that the club was analogous to other campus organizations such as the Asian Club, the Black Students Union, and the Mexican American Engineering Society. Meanwhile, in 1992 the Berkeley campus of the University of California began requiring all its first-year students to take a class on "American cultures." The requisite cultures to be included were Native American, African American, Latin American, Asian American, and European American.

Demographers reported that African Americans were holding steady at between 6 and 7 percent of the state's population in the 2000s, having grown only modestly in recent decades. The areas of greatest growth were in suburban neighborhoods, rather than in the established black communities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Oakland. "Blacks are moving out of cities for the same reasons as whites," explained geographer James Johnson. "They want better housing and they want to get away from the negative things in the cities like gangs and poor schools."

Wherever African Americans resided, they continued to confront barriers of prejudice and discrimination. "There is more negative prejudice against blacks than against any other group," reported UCLA political scientist David Sears. African Americans in 2000 remained twice as likely as other Californians to report discrimination on the job. Acknowledging a widespread pattern of prejudice against black employees, a San Francisco jury rendered a multimillion-dollar punitive judgment against the nation's largest wholesale bakery. The pattern of discrimination included tolerating racial slurs, denying promotions, and assigning menial jobs on the basis of race. "This shouldn't be happening in the 21st century," commented the jury foreman.

The continuing racial divide in California was powerfully evident in an outbreak of violence in the spring of 1992, following the acquittal of four white Los Angeles police officers accused of beating black motorist Rodney King. Five days of violence, centered in South Central Los Angeles, destroyed property valued at more than \$1 billion and left at least 54 people dead. King's plaintive words were later widely reported: "People, I just want to say . . . can we all get along? Can we get along?" In terms of loss of life and destruction of property, the violence was far more devastating than the Watts riot of 1965. The underlying causes of both civil disturbances were the same; indeed, conditions in South Central had actually grown worse during the intervening quarter century. Some community leaders described the violence as a "revolt of the poor" and pointed out that black and Latino Californians were twice as likely to live in poverty as Anglo Californians and that their average income was one-third less. Jeffrey Lustig, director of the Center for California Studies, captured the larger significance of what was happening: "California is now a two-tiered society filled with rage."