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Responding to the New Diversity: A Resource Document For Presenters

Prepared For Human Relations Commission Staff And Others Working To
Improve Inter-Group Relations In NC Communities

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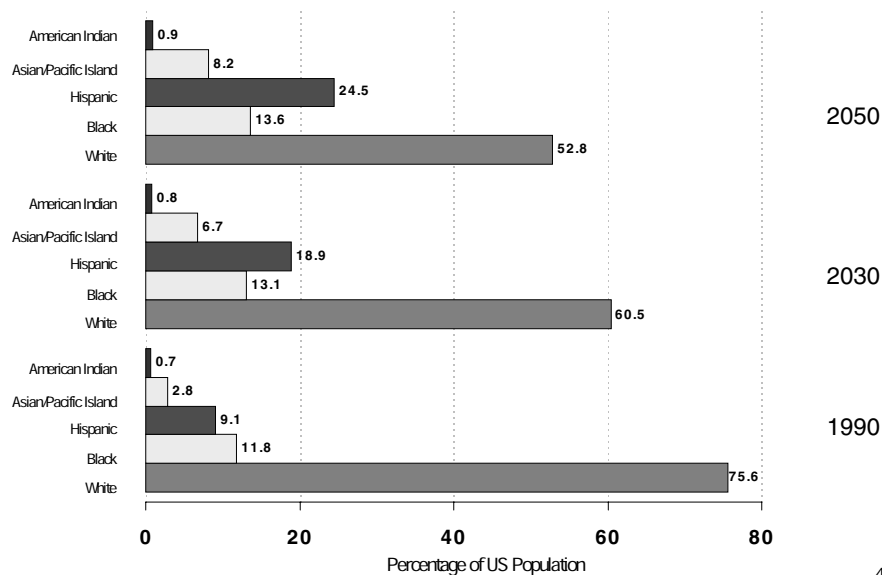
A. Introduction - The Changing Character of Our Communities

America is becoming more diverse. The trends show a steady increase in the rise of new minorities in the US including Hispanic Americans, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans. The Hispanic proportion of the population is rapidly increasing. In 1990, 75 out of 100 Americans were of White, mostly European ancestry. By 2030, that ratio will fall to 60 out of 100. Shortly after the year 2050, Whites from a European background will no longer be the majority of the population. (see Table 1)

Economic impact will presumably follow the demographic trends. It is estimated that African-Americans and Latinos had about \$515 billion in buying power in 1990 nationwide and about \$13 billion in North Carolina. Trend analysis suggests these figures may increase by well over 50% by the year 2000.

Table 1.

US Population Composition 1990 - 2050



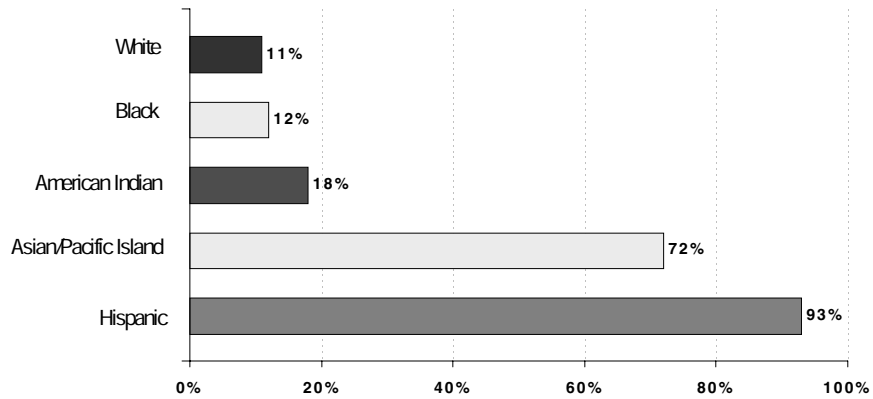
North Carolina is participating in these national trends. At four regional meetings (Wilmington, Rocky Mount, Greensboro, and Hickory) and one statewide meeting (Raleigh), all held in 1997, over 300 human services, local government, education, public safety, and government leaders, including representatives of North Carolina's 61 human relations commissions, gathered for an assessment of local developments in human relations.

Conference participants reported a variety of ethnic/racial/cultural groups coming into their communities. In general a large influx of Hispanic Americans (see Table 2 and Table 3) was observed, mostly poor people from Mexico who come to North Carolina to find work. There was also widespread observation of immigration from Asia, including Cambodia, India, Korea, and Vietnam.

Some of the communities have identified very specific migrations such as an African group called the Benedire, the Amish, Bosnian refugees, and those from the former Soviet Union. They also see immigration from the middle east and the growth of Muslim groups.

Table 2.

Growth Rate by Race in North Carolina 1990-1997

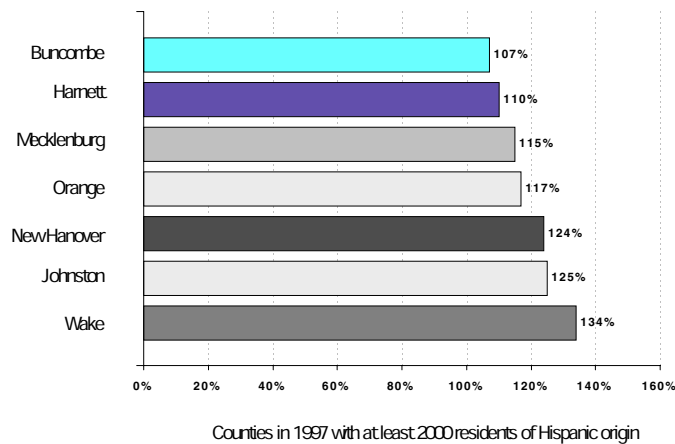


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Table 3.

NC Counties with Fastest Growing Hispanic Populations 1990-1997



Source: News & Observer, Friday, September 4, 1998 (p. 14A)

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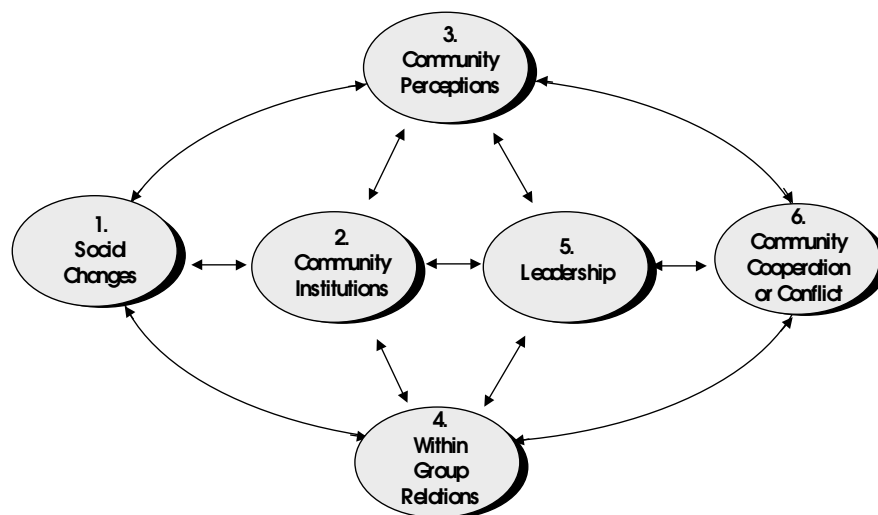
Some immigrants are wealthier than the average current resident, e.g., as when white out-of-state/wealthy "Yankee" professionals/retirees move into rural communities. Some noted also the growth of multi-racial, and bi-racial populations.

B. Six factors Influencing Human Relations in NC Today

These social changes represent a challenge and an opportunity for communities in NC. These social changes are a powerful factor in shaping community life in NC. How NC communities respond to these changes are shaped by five other variables (see Table 4).

Table 4.

Six Factors Influencing Human Relations in North Carolina Today



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In some ways, these population changes are the givens; they are beyond our control. However, there are other parts of the picture we can impact. These include **the impact and response of community institutions** such as policing, churches, schools, health systems, government, etc. Are our institutions proactive in solving problems or do they wait until we are overwhelmed with difficulty before they act?

These interactions with other groups in the public space lead to changing **community perceptions**, (e.g., whether a new group is perceived realistically or in stereotypes). Community leadership and the media have a big role to play in this.

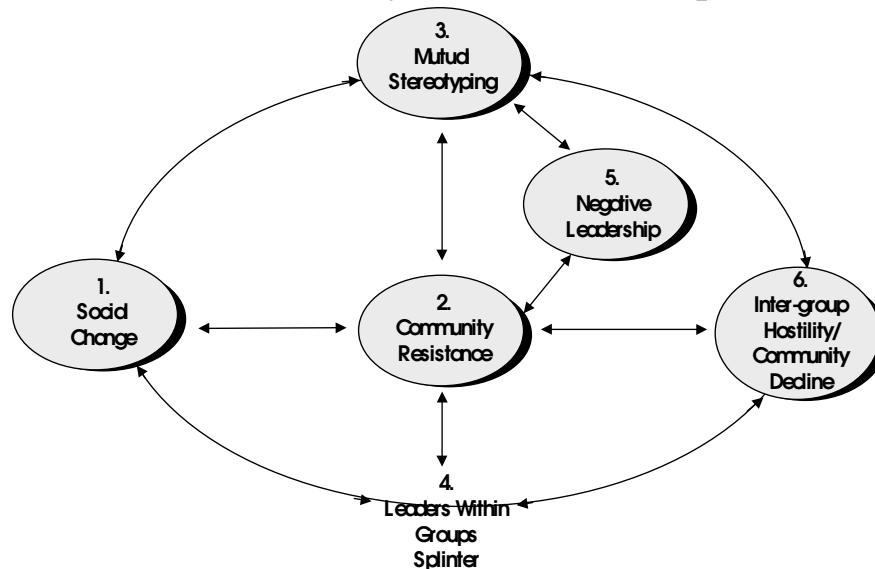
The fourth factor is the role of **within group relations** and **leadership attitudes**. Do leaders in groups make inter-group relations a way to gain power and leverage within their group and create hostility between groups? Do leaders within groups urge their followers to work out inter-group problems in good faith? Are leaders proactive in developing positive relationships within the community?

On such questions ride the fate of relationships between the races in NC in the 21st century. We choose the quality of inter-group relations by what we do or don't do as a community.

There is a danger that communities in NC could get into a vicious cycle of inter-group relationships. (see Table 5) In this negative cycle, these social changes will occur and will be felt in our community institutions, but we will not pay adequate attention to the need to educate people in the community about what is happening. People will draw their own conclusions, based on stereotypes and distortions. Community institutions will wait until there are major problems before responding, inflaming inter-group tensions. Leaders within groups will use those tensions to gain influence. Leaders will then play off of each other to create inter-group competition to maintain power and inter-group relations will remain competitive and hostile.

Table 5.

The "Vicious" Cycle of Inter-Group Relations



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When a community develops hostile inter-group relations it loses on several fronts: it is at a disadvantage in attracting investment and competing in the global economy; social resentments may result in an increase in crimes, and a decrease in safety. The quality of education declines because of the focus on tensions, not learning, and so on.

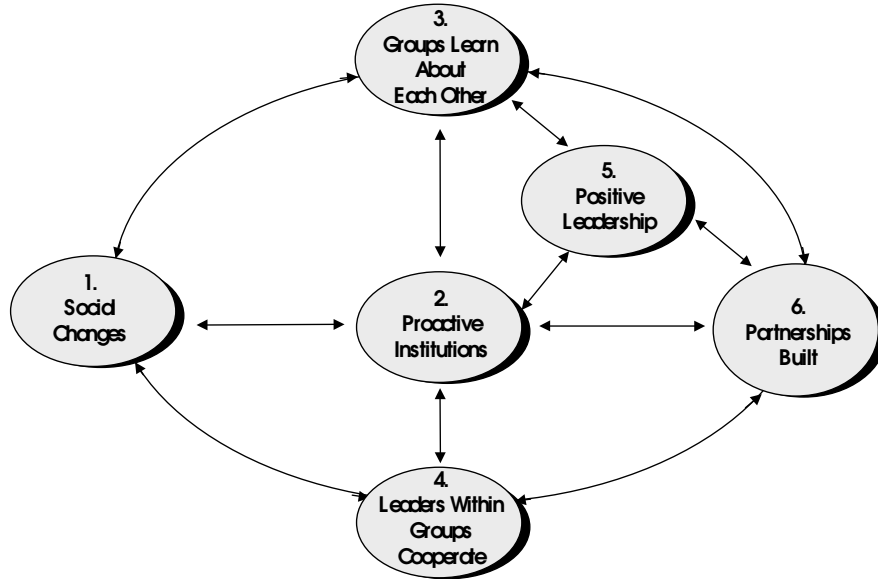
Companies looking for a new site to locate will evaluate the quality of the communities they seek out. If there are high levels of tension and hostility this will be a factor in their decision. The community's growth will be stunted; housing values will be affected along with a sense of community well being, and the general quality of life will decline

If on the other hand, (see Table 6) there is help for community institutions to respond systematically to change and work to serve all groups, and citizens and media cooperate to

help groups learn about each other and the changing community there will be more fact based knowledge and fewer fear-based stereotypes. If groups work out their internal differences without scapegoating outsiders; and leaders work to foster cooperation and problem-solving between groups then there be less inter-group tension. Then NC communities can contain conflict and build the partnerships which will strengthen good inter-group relationships.

Table 6.

The “Virtuous” Cycle of Inter-Group Relations

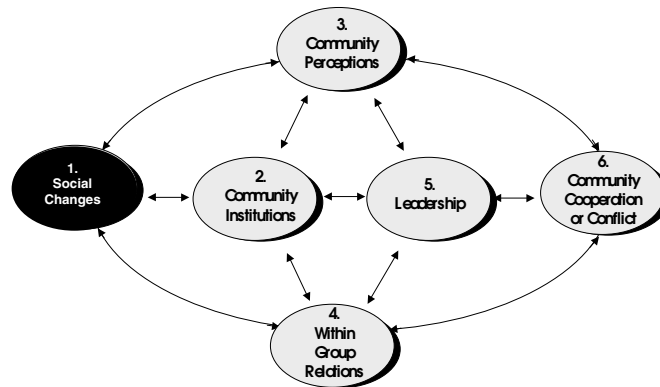


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When a community develops positive inter-group relationships, it has an advantage in attracting investment and competing in the global economy. The schools are free to focus on learning. There is a greater sense of personal and inter-group safety, and the quality of life for all is enhanced.

The recent report on the South published by the regional economic think tank MDC shows that since ending segregation and Jim Crow practices the South has grown faster economically than any other region of the country. They concluded this could not have happened without the improvement in race relations that has taken place over the last 30 years, because companies would have been less likely to take the risk of investing in a divided society.

1. Benefits and Costs of Social Changes



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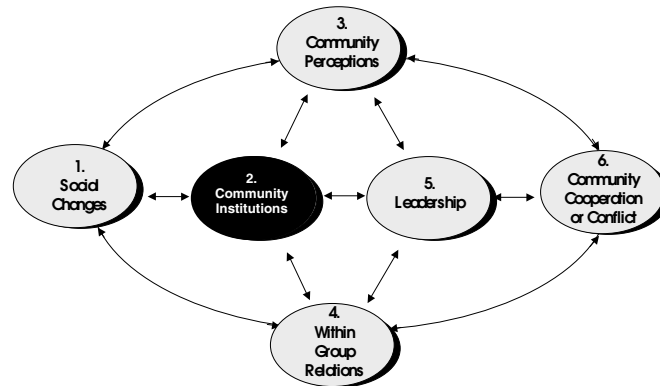
There are many benefits to this in-migration. Some newcomers are taking on many of the hard jobs in agriculture and industry that others have been unwilling to do, helping to create a robust economy. Other newcomers with some capital and entrepreneurial spirit are starting small businesses in their communities. Those who are coming to take white collar jobs in the cities are bringing new skills our companies need. The state is benefiting culturally as well as from a greater mix of traditions, customs, ceremonies, artistic traditions, and of course, ethnic restaurants.

However, this influx is also creating a number of social strains and stresses in our communities. A partial list of problems reported include:

- Housing: Lack of good housing stock for new immigrants or wealthier immigrants bidding up housing prices to the detriment of indigenous poor.
- Schools: Many students who do not speak English; costs of ESL programs competing with other needs; lack of adequate physical plant, classrooms, and teachers to accommodate new influx; rise of ethnic gangs in some areas.
- Government: New groups may not feel involved in decision-processes or understand how local government works.
- Employment: Inter-ethnic competition for jobs may increase. Exploitation of immigrant groups.
- Policing: Criminals may prey on the new populations. Relations with police may become strained because of a feeling of lack of protection, and because of language and cultural barriers.
- Human Services: Language, cultural barriers, lack of resources, and concern about immigration laws may prevent newcomers from accessing needed health, mental health, and social services.
- Intergroup Tensions: African-Americans, who have long felt discriminated against, may feel that the new groups are getting ahead of them in economics and education;

Native Americans may be threatened by the influx of Hispanics, and the prospect of being displaced as the state's second largest minority; White hate groups could become more activated in response to demographic changes (e.g., church burnings, etc.)

2. Community Institutions, Race Relations and Community Functioning.



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When new groups enter a community or social changes occur that affect existing groups, there can be a profound impact on community institutions such as schools, police, human services, churches, businesses, and the like. It is often in the interactions with these areas of public concern that the community first becomes aware that changes are occurring that require its attention.

At the five conferences held as part of the New Generations Project, participants were asked to identify how the changes in inter-group relations were affecting major aspects of community functioning, including business, child care, faith communities, education, human services, law enforcement, and government. Participants were asked to identify promising practices from their counties to improve social conditions for immigrant and disadvantaged minority groups. The following is a summary of the responses from these various meetings:

A. Business and Industry

Minority access to jobs and capital, building cooperation and understanding across diverse work forces, and outreach to minority consumers by businesses, are all front burner economic issues in race relations. Businesses in many communities are also involved in North Carolina's Work First Program to train welfare recipients for private sector jobs.

Community and business strategies include the establishment of minority business councils within chambers of commerce, the construction of economic development efforts within minority neighborhoods including the establishment of CDC's, transportation and job training programs, minority small business development programs, and diversity training within business organizations.

B. Child Care

In addition to the ever-present concerns about the availability, affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care, some localities are observing discriminatory practices as new racial and ethnic groups enter the area. In particular, it has been observed that child care providers have sometimes discriminated against Latinos and other immigrant groups by requiring that all parents applying for subsidies be citizens. At other times it has been observed that some groups have advertised their pre-school programs only in Spanish, thus excluding non-Spanish speaking groups.

Where this has occurred, there have been efforts to bring providers and parents together to help diverse groups learn more about each other's cultures, and to remove barriers to mutual understanding.

C. Churches, Synagogues, Faith Communities

Despite the fact that most faith communities advocate tolerance and brotherly love, the actual organizational work of the church may reinforce the separation and distance between racial and ethnic groups in the community. Congregations are largely separated by race. Unless churches make special efforts to reach out across racial lines through visitation programs, joint youth projects, collective social service projects like Habitat-for-Humanity, etc., they will be unintentionally reinforcing that separation and distance.

Some ministers in communities throughout North Carolina have recognized this and are taking action. As an initial step, ministers are taking time to get to know and dialogue with their colleagues in other denominations and other races. In addition, groups have been formed to work out programs that bring congregants together for exchange and projects across racial lines. Programs in Mooresville and in Charlotte were prominently mentioned at the conference in this regard.

D. Education

There is still a struggle in schools to assure racially balanced and representative student populations, and in some areas to have an adequate number of minority teachers as role models. In fact, some observers have noted a strong trend towards re-segregation in recent years. Within the teacher and administrative group, issues of racial favoritism and discrimination are still concerns in many areas. In addition, schools are facing an unprecedented influx of non-English speakers, largely Hispanic (note: 1991-97 enrollment figures for North Carolina show a 286% Hispanic population increase), but from other cultures as well. This increasingly heterogeneous student body is accentuating the challenges the schools face to reach all students with a quality education. The disparity in achievement and performance scores between Whites and Hispanic and African American minorities continues to widen along with differences in discipline and referral rates, creating a basis for concern and tension. There is also more opportunity for racial/ethnic separatism among the student body.

Immigrant parents have concerns about whether the school will serve their children, while parents who have been in the community may fear that attention given to newcomers will

distract from the quality of education for their child. Some of these concerns are acted out around funding ESL programs, and the need to hire interpreters or Spanish speaking teachers. Some groups have worried that charter schools were an attempt to create all-white schools within the public school system.

Efforts to deal with some of these issues have involved business and community partnerships, community education programs, and special staff development and diversity training efforts.

E. Human Services

Human services organizations in many localities have been particularly affected by the influx of new immigrants to North Carolina. The fact that many of the new populations coming in are non-English speakers has created problems for informing groups about available services and then actually providing services to these groups. Changes in service eligibility related to welfare reform and immigration reform have created additional challenges for the human service providers.

Newcomers often need a basic orientation to the culture, language training, and information and referral services that localities may not be organized to provide. There may be mistrust of public officials based on experiences in the United States or as a carryover of attitudes from the country of origin.

In addition, there have been cultural and historical circumstances complicating the delivery of services. For example, during the 1998 rubella outbreak among largely Hispanic groups in several counties, there were special problems in tracking cases because of immigration concerns, and problems in getting people to treatment because of differences in treatment approaches to the disease in the US and Mexico.

In some communities, human service organizations have joined forces and established special task forces to address the needs of the Hispanic and other immigrant populations.

Self-help groups have formed to work with human service providers to help them extend services to new groups. Some communities have developed welcoming fairs and festivals, involving members of immigrant communities and celebrating the culture in their countries of origin.

F. Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement is a major arena in which interracial/inter-ethnic dynamics come into play. There has been persistent and widespread criticism of treatment of minorities by white officers. Concerns have been expressed about the lack of minorities in police jobs and in command positions. The result of these sentiments has been a lack of trust and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and citizens of minority communities, which has made law enforcement more difficult and reinforced minority feelings of neglect or abuse.

Law enforcement agencies and communities are responding to these problems through the institution of community policing efforts which assign officers to local areas, work through local groups to solve problems, and attempt to be accountable and responsive to local organizations. Other solution components include the creation of citizen review boards, the hiring and promotion of more minority officers, diversity training for officers, and involving Spanish-speaking personnel and interpreters when Hispanic communities are served.

G. Local Government and Human Relations Commissions

Local governments contend with perceptions of inequality and favoritism in areas of public service delivery, planning and economic development (e.g., economic activity is being steered into "white areas"), and housing (e.g., minorities cannot get financing). Perceptions can include discrimination against minorities in terms of favoring white, more affluent neighborhoods with better services, or white perceptions that minorities or new immigrants are absorbing services without paying a proportionate share of taxes. Perceptions of employment and promotion opportunities in local government can also be sources of racial tension, (e.g., too much "affirmative action," or, alternatively, discrimination against minorities).

Human relations commissions may deal with specific discrimination complaints in the areas of housing, employment, education, and policing. New immigrants into the community create the potential for new competition in addition to the pre-existing tensions between blacks and whites. Attempting to accommodate differences in language and culture may place new strains on service delivery. Outreach to new groups may be difficult at a time when local government is trimming budgets, and federal and state funds to assist localities are declining, fostering perceptions of neglect.

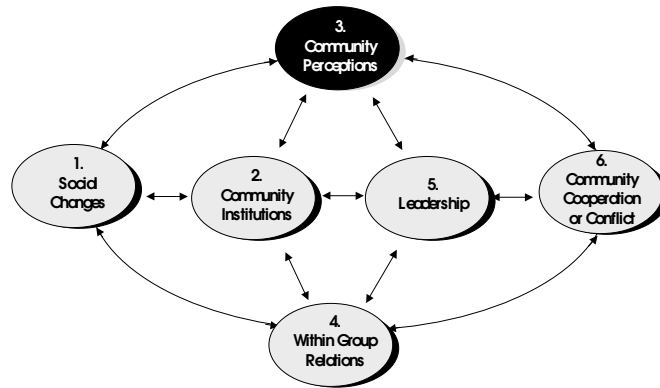
While some governments have resisted getting involved in solving these problems and have taken what some have criticized as a "head in the sand" approach, other governments and human relations councils have responded with a wide variety of initiatives. These have included:

- **Inter-group planning and involvement initiatives** which have been broadly inclusive of minority and majority groups: (e.g., Community Congress on Economics, community enterprise meetings and surveys, community health analyzed from a comprehensive perspective, including housing, economic development, etc.)
- **Special gatherings to specifically address racial and ethnic issues:** (e.g., "Racial Summit"), holding public forums to discuss racial/ethnic concerns, planning joint activities across agencies in touch with a variety of racial/ethnic groups; consideration of communications coordinator to disseminate information/gather feedback/be "cultural broker" among groups
- **Access to services initiatives:** Developing community-based groups to bring together the Latino/Hispanic population and the rest of the community and to address issues of new populations' access to resources; human relations commission-sponsored dialogue regarding new populations; task force to study welfare reform; training

government employees in conversational Spanish; and recruiting employees who can speak different languages to be more effective in providing services

- **Equal opportunity initiatives:** Fair employment workshop; conducting fair housing monthly workshop for education purposes; investigating/resolving equal opportunity complaints; hiring minorities into key government positions; civil rights ordinance to provide local enforcement of laws; developing a local human relations commission; prejudice reduction workshops; human relations task forces on specific issues
- **Public access initiatives:** Working to bring diverse communities together through meetings with governmental agencies widely circulating the strategic plan for community consideration making the budget process more open to community.

3. Community Perceptions: Different Realities, Poor Information; Emerging Fears



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We have all heard the statement “perception is reality” To a large extent, this is true at the community level. Whether or not a belief is “objectively true,” it can have profound influence on the way people relate to one another. Therefore, we need to focus on community perceptions as one of our major influences on race relations.

As groups experience problems with community institutions such as schools, policing, and human services, they may begin to build up negative stereotypes of each other. When such tensions exist there is good evidence that ethnic groups in communities will have vastly differing and perhaps distorted perceptions of what is happening to their communities. These perceptions are likely to heighten fears and to exacerbate mistrust

One of the most important shapers of perception is our shared history.

One reason such different perceptions exist is because of the different ways that ethnic groups in the US have viewed our common history. In fact there may not be a common history but a variety of interpretations of History as illustrated by the fact that in some parts of the country the War of 1861-65 is called the “Civil War” and in others, some people prefer to call it “The War Between the States.”

American History is filled with such watershed events which are viewed differentially by different groups. (see Table 7)

Table 7.

Selected Historical Events Reflecting Race Relations in the U.S.

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1619 | First Slave Ship comes to Virginia |
| 1836 | Trail of Tears |
| 1846 | U.S.-Mexican War |
| 1865-70 | 13th, 14th, & 15th Amendments to the Constitution |
| 1882 | Chinese Exclusion Act |
| 1890 | Massacre at Wounded Knee |
| 1896 | Plessy Vs. Fergusson: Jim Crow Laws |
| 1924 | End of Unrestricted Immigration from Europe |
| 1924 | Native Americans gain right to vote |
| 1942-45 | Internment of the ethnic Japanese by U.S. Government |
| 1954 | Brown Vs. Board of Education: School Desegregation |
| 1964-65 | Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act |
| 1968 | Death of Martin Luther King, Jr. |
| 1970-90 | Era of Affirmative Action |

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Since history is viewed differently by various groups at various times, is it any wonder that the present is also viewed differently.

A 1993 study conducted in North Carolina for the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation queried about 400 blacks and 400 whites and found that while about half those sampled felt that race relations had improved in the succeeding decade, and that blacks and whites overwhelmingly endorse the principle of non-discrimination and integration, there were still serious differences about how fair the community actually was to African Americans. In fact, the study concluded that blacks and whites "by and large see two different realities."

A 1993 Z. Smith Reynolds Study Found That:

- About 70% of blacks do not believe that blacks have as good a chance as whites in their communities "to get any kind of job for which they are qualified." 68% of whites think blacks do have an equal chance.
- About 64% of blacks believe that law enforcement officers are tougher on them, while 65% of whites say that "the officers treat them just the same."
- About 65% of black believe that "getting equal justice is a major problem," while 60% of whites believe that "blacks generally get equal justice."

- 74% of blacks feel it is more likely for qualified blacks to be denied scholarships, jobs, and promotions because of racial prejudice than for qualified whites to lose out because blacks get special preference. 40% of whites feel the reverse is true.
- 73% of whites agreed if "blacks try harder, they would be just as well off as whites. Whites tended see blacks, particularly young blacks as having a "victim attitude," lacking initiative, wanting preferential treatment, and blaming any shortcoming on racism. Most blacks on the other hand saw themselves desiring to earn what they get and wanted to be rewarded on the basis of individual merit.

A 1995 Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation poll of almost 2000 randomly selected adults across the US suggested the North Carolina findings are part of nationwide pattern. In this study Hispanics and Asians tended to agree more with African Americans than with about the conditions of blacks. The study findings were as follows:

1995 Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation poll

- 63% of blacks believe that the average African American is a lot worse off in terms of jobs than is the average white. Only 11% of whites feel the same way.
- 53% of blacks feel that the average African American is a lot worse off in terms of income. Only 20% of whites feel the same way.
- 84% of blacks see past and present discrimination as a major cause of social ills blacks face. Only 30% of whites agree.

In addition to differences of perceptions between ethnic groups, researchers have detected a potentially alarming pattern of misperception.

In the Kaiser survey, Whites, particularly those without a college education, tended to overestimate the percentage of Blacks actually in the population by 100%, the percentage of Hispanics by about 50%, and the percentage of Asians by about 300%. Whites tended to overestimate the income levels of Blacks, with most thinking that they had obtained parity with Whites.

Yet census figures show that Blacks still lag far behind in most measures of education, income, and wealth. The 1998, MDC State of the South study showed that median family for southern Blacks stands at 55% that of Whites. However, this figure hides the fact Black families with two wage earners are doing much better than black families with only one wage earner, particularly the single, female headed family. Southern Hispanics have 59% of the median income of Whites, and family structure does not seem to be as much a factor in predicting income.

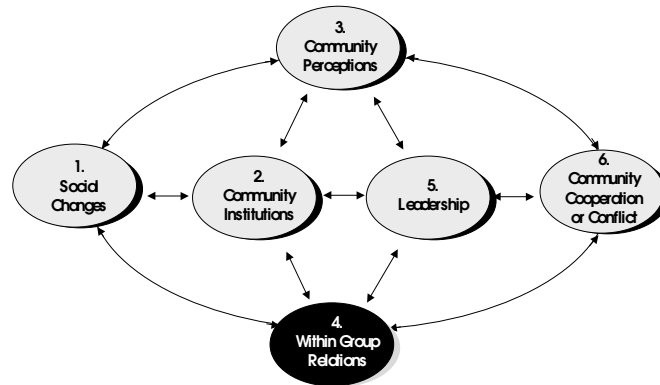
Some social psychologists interpret these findings to mean that economically vulnerable whites are becoming increasingly uneasy about the increasing numbers of minorities in the US. This might a warning sign of inter-group problems to come. The reality may be that Whites can point to numbers of Black families who have come a long way economically, they may be overlooking the millions of other black families who are struggling below the poverty level.

Nevertheless, there are some positive attitudes as well that we can build on to strengthen race relations. The five 1997 Race Relations Conferences sponsored by the NC Human Relations Commission concluded that, all racial and ethnic groups want essentially the same thing: good jobs, effective education for their children, affordable quality health care and housing, and an opportunity to move up the economic ladder.

In addition the Z Smith Reynolds study reported that substantial majorities of blacks and whites surveyed subscribed to the belief that there should be equal opportunity regardless of race and disagreed that any race was inherently superior. The egalitarian sentiments would not have been so widely distributed even one generation ago.

It may be fair to say that there is consensus among groups that all should have access to the “American dream.” Groups presumably can develop empathy with each other around these goals. The problem is the fear that there will not be enough to go around, and disagreement and misperceptions about how well various groups are doing in today’s economy, and therefore who needs a helping hand.

4. Quality of Relations within Groups: Recognizing group diversity



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One of the least understood and most complex aspects of inter-group relations is how the dynamics of leadership and followership within groups affects the ability of groups within the community to work together. One of the lessons from the 1997 New Generations of Human Relations Projects which brought together several hundred leaders from diverse groups throughout NC was that no ethnic group is monolithic, even though they all share concerns about basic issues such as health, housing, employment, education, policing, etc. Here are some representative comments from focus groups meeting at the conference.

African American leaders said: In order to work best with us you must "perceive African-Americans as individuals. We hold many different views and opinions which vary with age, education, economic status and other factors. We follow a variety of leaders. When it comes to racial dialogue, we have some who want to placate and not 'rock the boat,' some who want to negotiate, some who want to separate, and some who want to cooperate and develop partnerships."

Native American leaders said "Don't assume that all Indians are alike. There are over 400 different tribes and as many languages."

Latino leaders said: "Understand that Latinos have different views about racial dialogue: some want to assimilate, some want to remain separate, and many are just concerned about survival. Don't assume that we are all Mexicans. We are from about 30 different countries, and many different cultures within those countries, some of which are rural and others urban."

White leaders asked participants to "appreciate that whites differ in their attitudes toward racial dialogue: some are still separatists - even hostile, some favor positive inter-group relations but do not feel the need to get involved or change things, and some see the need for closer cooperation and interaction between groups. Whites seldom get together and talk about our differences toward racial dialogue. Appreciate that whites are a very diverse group politically, religiously, and ethnically. While some whites feel a sense of guilt and privilege, and are sympathetic to minority concerns, many others believe they 'did it on their own' therefore, resent minorities 'who they think want things given to them.'"

This diversity of viewpoints sets up leadership dynamics that complicate relations across group. One dynamic is who represents the minority group and the majority group when groups meet to work out problems and develop plans. Does the majority group choose those representatives of the minority groups it feels most comfortable with and are

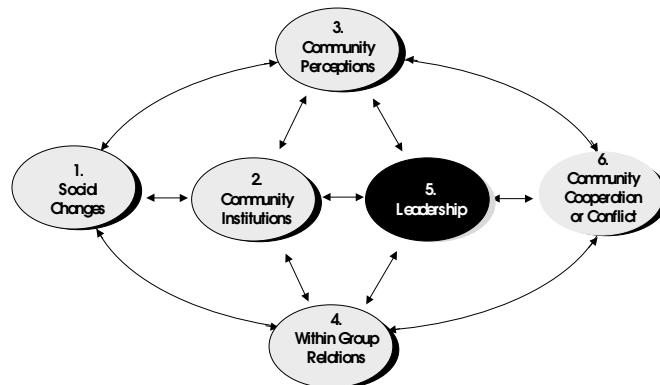
therefore more accommodating? As a result, is a large part of the minority community disenfranchised because their leaders have not been consulted?

Do minority groups put forward representatives who are the most confrontational and therefore leave out the viewpoints of those in the community who might take a more moderate approach?

Does the stance toward other groups become a political "football" in a way that is irrelevant to or destructive of inter-group relations, such as when George Wallace stood in the door way of the Univ. of Alabama in order to score political points with his segregationist constituency? Or When Louis Farrakhan visited to Libya and Syria in defiance of US Law, showing to his constituency that he was not going to be controlled by the "White Establishment?"

Is there a tacit understanding that only a few leaders will participate in any inter-racial dialogue and therefore community leadership positions are held tightly by a few over the long term and younger leaders do not feel involved enough in inter-group exchange?

5. Leadership For Building Positive Intergroup Relations in the Community



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Throughout the course of human history there has been a tragic drama that has been played and replayed. One political faction sees that it can gain an advantage by pitting one ethnic or racial group against another. The leaders of that political faction make speeches and write editorials demonizing the target ethnic group, blaming them for the problems and failures of their own group or playing on their fears of future loss of power, prestige, and economic and sexual opportunities.

The targeted ethnic group is often attributed special characteristics and talents that make it difficult for another ethnic group to compete with them, thus requiring some kind of restriction, segregation, displacement, or even extermination if the other ethnic group is to survive or prosper.

Using variants of the "big lie technique" this political faction's allies in the press pick up and distribute these messages arousing fears and anxieties throughout the population.

We have seen this pattern played out in recent years tragically in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

It is absolutely critical therefore for the community to have skilled, committed, and, above all, well-intentioned leadership, if inter-group relations are to be positive rather than negative. This positive leadership often comes in two distinct roles: *sponsoring leadership* and *facilitative leadership*.

Sponsoring leadership in human relations occurs when those individuals with high degree of political, economic, intellectual, or moral authority publicly and privately support efforts to build positive human relations. They provide legal authority such as executive orders, ordinances, moral support, etc. They also can provide tangible resources such as funds, places to meet, transportation, press coverage, etc. Governor Hunt provided sponsoring leadership when he called for a major conference on race relations recently. The Z Smith Reynolds foundation provides sponsoring leadership when it provided funds for the New Generation of Human Relations Project in 1997 and its ground breaking study of race relations in the state in 1993.

Facilitative leadership in human relations occurs when individuals with good inter-group relations and inter-group skills actually broker, organize, and facilitate meetings, programs, and projects that build positive inter-group relations on a person to person or group to group basis. Typically these people could be talented grass roots leaders, clergy, educators, or human service agency, government or business staff members. Sometimes the human relations council is called on to provide this kind of leadership in a community.

How to be a good Sponsoring Leader for Improved Inter-group Relationships

Some of the literature on managing change indicates that effective sponsoring leadership has some of the following characteristics:

The good sponsoring Leader for Improved inter-group relationships in a community:

- Has a strong belief that improved inter-group relations is important and has a sense of responsibility for bringing about that improvement.
- Has taken the time to understand, in depth, the benefits of such positive relationships and understands what it takes to bring it about.
- Has appreciation for those who are actively working in the community for positive change.
- Is able and willing to meet privately with key individuals or groups in order to convey his or her personal support.
- Realizes that his or her effort and commitment will be required from time to time and makes that commitment a priority.
- Enjoys considerable position and personal power to block or weaken forces working against positive inter-group relations and is willing to use that power to protect inter-group relations at critical junctures.

- Is willing to lead by example and clear, public signals where he or she stands on issues.

How to be a good facilitative Leader of positive Inter-group Relationships

The effective facilitative leader is one who has the special skills to help design, manage, or conduct programs that bring people of different races and ethnic groups together for educational, economic development, human services development, or relationship building purposes.

The effective facilitative leader has the following characteristics:

He or She:

- Understands the need for the building better inter-group relationships
- Understands their role and particular contribution.
- Has good rapport with the groups he or she is working with
- Can articulate the benefits of participation in the human relations effort
- Has the needed training and experience for the programs they are working with
- Has good trust and rapport with sponsoring leaders
- Has the time and energy to commit to the change effort
- Conveys confidence and optimism about the change effort

Conserving our Leadership Resources

Facilitating leaders are like bridge builders because they link groups together. When traffic is heavy, they and the bridges they build can get worn out. Communities can tend to over-use their facilitators, rather than developing a whole cadre of individuals who are committed to better inter-group relations.

It's hard to be a bridge builder when groups are in conflict. Bridge builders can be very vulnerable and people angry at situations may direct their anger toward the bridge builder. Building bridges is an art and a science. Often people need training in techniques and methods that have proven effective in relieving tensions. There is often a lack of recognition or support for the bridge builder. Supporters may want a quick fix, when the right answer is to "hang in there" while the community works things out. The bridge builder may be caught between rival factions within one or more groups in the process.

For all these reasons, it is important to look upon our bridge builders as a valued resource to be developed and renewed through training, recognition, support, and encouragement.

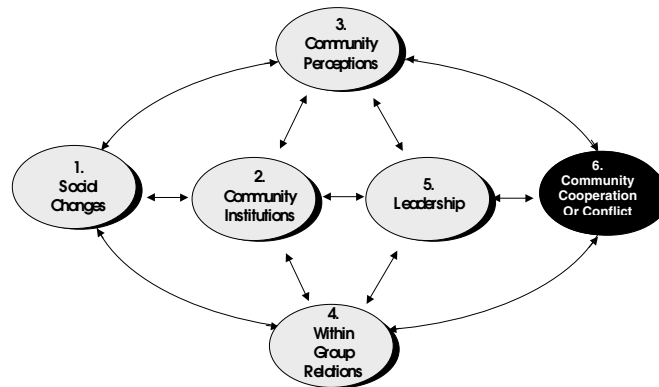
The special role of leaders in the public media

Leaders in the public media including both print , electronic, and broadcast media have a special leadership role to play in building positive inter-group relations. The media can

provide coverage to groups who are playing a positive role in building inter-group relations.

The media can provide accurate reporting about the state of inter-group relations. The media can provide background and facts so that individuals can understand the present state of inter-group relations. The media provide editorial support for leadership actions which promote positive inter-group relations and condemn those actions which harm inter-group relations.

6. Strengthening Inter-group Relations in the Community



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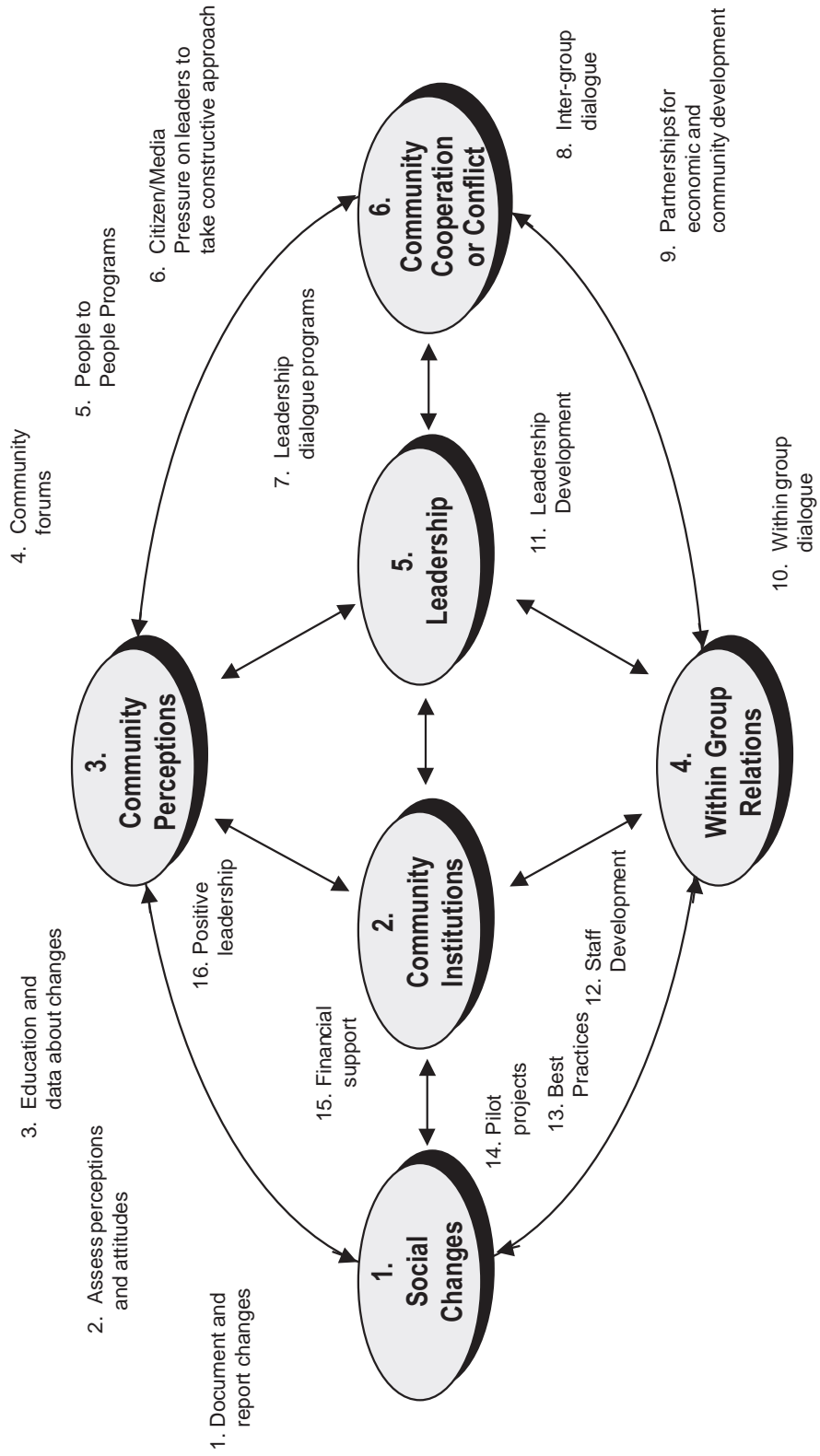
Based on our analysis of what makes for positive and negative inter-group relations we can begin to list the kinds of initiative every community needs to think about in order to promote positive intergroup relationships. (see Table 8) The following 18 items represent a beginning attempt at a comprehensive approach to strengthening inter-group relations in communities.

Inter-Group Awareness

1. Citizens need to be aware of the changes that occurring. This means that some group in the community needs to monitor and keep track of new comers and how they are faring in the community, and the media need to keep people informed.
2. We need to be aware of attitudes and perceptions that are developing, especially if they are turning negative. This will allow bridge-building efforts to occur while there is still time to prevent incidents

Table 8.

What Can We Do to Improve Inter-Group Relationships?



Inter-Group contact

3. We need to have opportunities to exchange views and perceptions across group about community changes, so a dialogue can continue, and bridges are built.
4. Individuals across groups need opportunities to interact with each other in positive ways to learn about each others cultures, concerns, and aspirations through various people-to-people programs.

Leadership & Media

5. The media needs to take a positive approach and exert pressure on leaders to do the same.
6. There should be opportunities for grass roots leaders and emerging leaders within various groups to learn the skills they will need to be effective inter-group dialogue and negotiation.
7. Leaders of various groups need opportunities to get to know one another and lay the ground work for working out inter-group problems and building constructive partnerships.

Inter-group Partnership Building

8. There needs to be opportunity for inter-group dialogue about issues of common concern such as economic development, education, recreation, policing, etc.
9. Ultimately such dialogue should lead to active partnerships across groups for mutual benefit.
10. There should be a strong effort to involve all groups in the political process and in community decision-forums, such as boards and commissions
11. There should be opportunities for all community institutions to assess and prepare for the multi-cultural populations they serve, including staff development programs, outreach programs, pilot projects.
12. Leaders of community institutions should have opportunities for training that will enhance their cross-cultural competence and sensitivity.

Community Action and Support

13. There should be a regular forum where groups can come on a regular basis and assess the state of inter-group relations and identify needs for action.
14. The community needs to develop continuing sources of financial support for programs to support cross-cultural sensitivity and positive inter-group relations
15. There should be programs of recognition, support and training for cross cultural bridge builders.

16. There should be a continuing search for best practices in cross-group relationship building and a commitment to continuous improvement in this area.
17. There should be vigorous efforts to effectively confront and dissuade hate groups within the community and vigorous prosecution of hate crimes.
18. There should a concerted effort to heal ethnic hurts and resolve conflicts with a win-win approach where possible.

Using these 18 criteria communities can assess themselves about the strengths and weaknesses of their current approach to building good human relations in their communities. Communities can then identify and build on their strengths and take steps to shore up areas where they are weak.

Conclusion: The Choice is ours

In North Carolina's past, the original settlers from Great Britain, and the slaves brought over from Africa, remained the major population groups along with the small population of Indians who survived the diseases and wars brought on by their encounter with Europeans.

Later, in the North and East, large migrations of Irish, German, Jewish, Italian, Polish, and other European immigrants have become part of the American mainstream.

On the West Coast, large numbers of Asians have become part of the American mainstream.

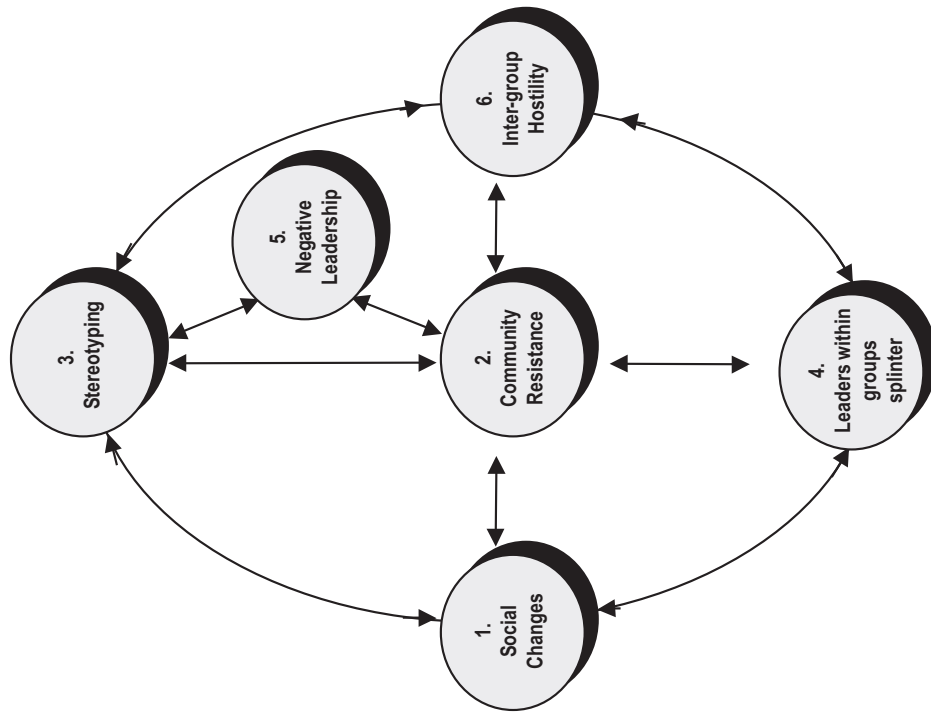
In the Southwest, Hispanic culture is part of American culture.

While other parts of the country have their inter-group problems to be sure, they suggest that increasing diversity, while new to the South and to North Carolina, is part of the American historical pattern.

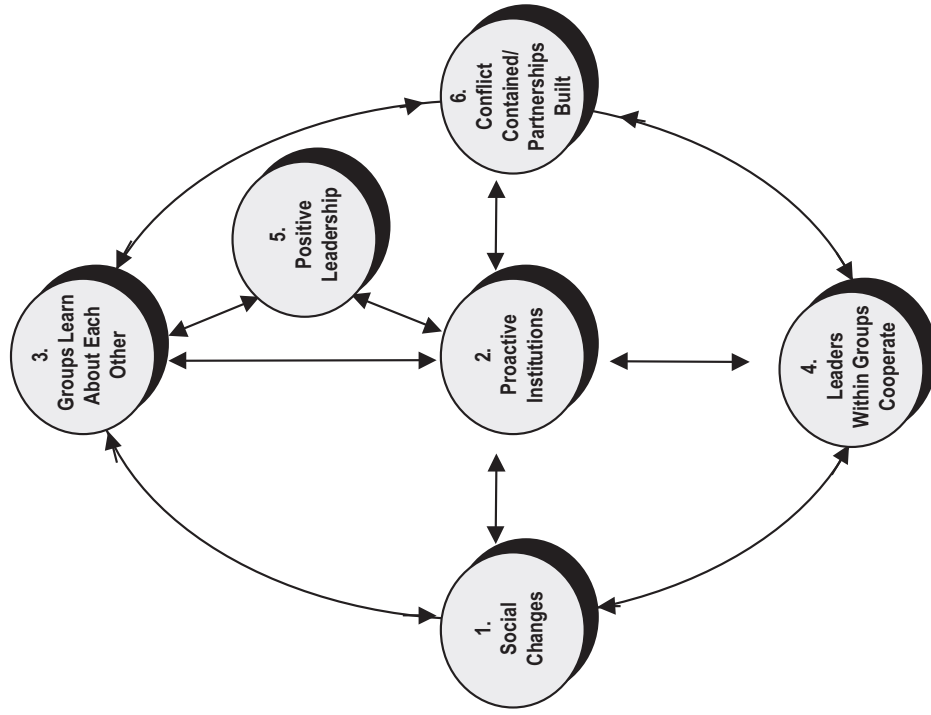
We in NC, have the opportunity now to build new, strong, diverse communities or to allow the human tendency to reject differences to limit the development of our communities. The choice is ours. (see Table 9)

Table 9.

The “Vicious” Cycle



The “Virtuous” Cycle



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