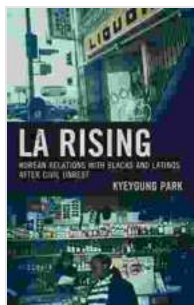


# Korean Relations with Blacks and Latinos after Civil Unrest



## LA Rising: Korean Relations with Blacks and Latinos after Civil Unrest (Korean Communities across the World) by Kyeyoung Park

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English  
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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
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The civil unrest that erupted in Los Angeles in 1992 following the acquittal of police officers who brutally beat Rodney King, a Black motorist, had a profound impact on Korean communities in the city. The violence and destruction disproportionately affected Korean-owned businesses, and the subsequent tensions between Korean and Black and Latino residents laid bare the complex and often strained relationships between these communities.

In the aftermath of the riots, numerous studies and reports sought to understand the causes and consequences of the violence, and to propose solutions for improving inter-ethnic relations. This article draws on this body of research, as well as personal experiences and interviews, to provide a

comprehensive examination of the relationships between Korean communities and Black and Latino communities in the wake of civil unrest.

## **Historical Context**

The history of Korean immigration to the United States dates back to the late 19th century, but it was not until after the Korean War that significant numbers of Koreans began to settle in the country. Many of these immigrants came from rural areas of South Korea and had little experience with other cultures. They often faced discrimination and prejudice from white Americans, as well as from other minority groups.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Koreans began to establish their own communities in cities across the United States. These communities were often located in areas that were already home to large Black and Latino populations. As Koreans opened businesses and bought homes in these neighborhoods, they often encountered competition and resentment from existing residents.

The tensions between Korean and Black and Latino communities were exacerbated by a number of factors, including economic inequality, cultural differences, and language barriers. In some cases, these tensions boiled over into violence, as was the case in the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

## **The 1992 Los Angeles Riots**

The 1992 Los Angeles riots were a watershed moment in Korean-Black relations. The violence began after a jury acquitted four white police officers who had been videotaped brutally beating Rodney King, a Black motorist. The acquittal sparked outrage in the Black community, and led to days of rioting and looting.

Korean-owned businesses were particularly hard hit by the violence. Over 2,000 Korean-owned businesses were damaged or destroyed, and many Korean families lost their homes and livelihoods. The riots also led to an increase in anti-Korean sentiment, and many Koreans reported being harassed and threatened.

## **Aftermath of the Riots**

In the aftermath of the riots, there were numerous efforts to improve relations between Korean and Black and Latino communities. These efforts included community meetings, dialogue groups, and economic development initiatives. However, tensions between the communities persisted, and further incidents of violence occurred.

In 1995, a Korean shopkeeper named Soon Ja Du was shot and killed by a Black teenager named Latasha Harlins. The killing sparked outrage in the Korean community, and led to further protests and demands for justice. Harlins was eventually convicted of voluntary manslaughter, but the incident left a deep scar on the relationship between the two communities.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

The relationships between Korean communities and Black and Latino communities remain complex and challenging. There are a number of factors that contribute to these challenges, including:

- **Economic inequality:** Korean communities are often more affluent than Black and Latino communities, which can lead to resentment and mistrust.

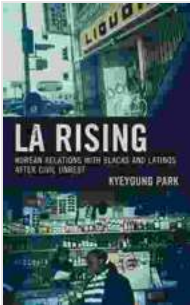
- **Cultural differences:** Korean culture is very different from Black and Latino cultures, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflict.
- **Language barriers:** Many Koreans do not speak English fluently, which can make it difficult to communicate with Black and Latino residents.
- **Historical trauma:** The 1992 Los Angeles riots and other incidents of violence have left a deep scar on the relationships between Korean and Black and Latino communities.

Despite these challenges, there are also a number of opportunities for improving relations between these communities. These opportunities include:

- **Community engagement:** There are a number of organizations working to promote dialogue and understanding between Korean and Black and Latino communities. These organizations host community meetings, workshops, and other events that bring people together.
- **Economic development:** Korean businesses can play a key role in revitalizing Black and Latino communities by investing in local businesses and creating jobs.
- **Education:** Schools and universities can help to promote understanding between different cultures by teaching about the history and experiences of different ethnic groups.

The relationships between Korean communities and Black and Latino communities are complex and multifaceted. These relationships have been shaped by a number of factors, including historical events, sociological factors, and personal experiences. While there are a number of challenges

to improving relations between these communities, there are also a number of opportunities for dialogue and understanding. By working together, Korean, Black, and Latino communities can build stronger and more just communities for all.



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