



Koreans in the Hood: Conflict with African Americans

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Conflict between Korean Americans and African Americans attracted national attention in the aftermath of the 1992 Rodney King trial in Los Angeles. The news media seized upon the violent riots and depicted Korean shop owners as gun-wielding exploiters of the African American poor. Absent from the barrage of media coverage was the Korean American point of view and experience of the inner city economy and racial relations. This new volume of essays written largely by Korean American scholars adds substantially to our understanding of interracial, multiethnic conflict by examining relations between the Korean American and African American communities in three major American cities: Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

Edited by sociologist Kwang Chung Kim, the book brings together similar yet contrasting studies of Korean American and African American conflict. Korean Americans find themselves economically powerful, but weak politically. African Americans, however, wield considerable political clout even though they may have little economic power. *Koreans in the Hood* offers the Korean American perspective on coexisting with African Americans in some of the poorest areas of American cities. Each chapter focuses on a particular city and experience, offering a unique opportunity for inter-city comparison as the contributors explore three overt forms of Korean American and African American confrontation: interpersonal dispute, boycott, and mass violence.

The first part of the book examines Korean American experience of the conflict in Los Angeles. It then details the social, political, and economic tensions arising from the African American boycott of Korean fruit and vegetable merchants in New York. The final chapters concern the Korean American experience of conflict in Chicago. Throughout, the authors rely on empirical data and seek to trace the roots of conflict, the consequences, and future directions of relations between the two groups. What emerges is an unique account of Korean Americans caught between the poor African American population and the larger, more affluent white population.

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