



# Seeking Community In Global City: Guatemalans & Salvadorans In Los Angeles

*Nora Hamilton*

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## **Seeking Community In Global City: Guatemalans & Salvadorans In Los Angeles** Nora Hamilton

Driven by the pressures of poverty and civil strife at home, large numbers of Central Americans came to the Los Angeles area during the 1980s. Neither purely economic migrants, though they were in search of stable work, nor official refugees, although they carried the scars of war and persecution, Guatemalans and Salvadorans were even denied the aid given to refugees such as Cubans and Vietnamese. In addition, these immigrants sought refuge in a city undergoing massive economic and demographic shifts of its own. The result was and is a complex interaction that will help to reconceptualize the migration experience. Based on twenty years of work with the Los Angeles Central American community and filled with facts, figures, and personal narratives, "Seeking Community in a Global City" presents this saga from many perspectives. The authors examine the forces in Central America that sent thousands of people streaming across international borders. They discuss economic, political, and demographic changes in the Los Angeles region and the difficulties the new immigrants faced in negotiating a new, urban environment. They look at family roles, networking, work strategies, and inter-ethnic relations. But they also consider policy issues and alliances, changing expectations, shifting priorities, and the reciprocal effect of the migrants and the city on each other. Nora Hamilton is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Southern California. Norma Stoltz Chinchilla is Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at California State University, Long Beach.

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