In this chapter we synthesize some of the larger distributions from the maps of specific ethnic groups. First is a summary map that identifies by color the predominant or numerically largest ethnic group in each census tract (Figure 7.1). Next, we focus on ethnic diversity and mixing. Tracts in which Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians are somewhat evenly mixed are considered highly diverse whereas other tracts that have high proportions of just one or two ethnic groups and very few members of the other groups are not diverse (Figure 7.2). We also look at the completely new multiracial data from Census 2000 and examine variations in proportions of tract residents who identified themselves as having more than one race (Figure 7.3).

These maps plus those presented in previous chapters allow one to see both the general pattern of group distributions and the details of ethnic settlement in specific neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the maps are too detailed to permit quick summaries of comparative distributions and their trends.

To obtain convenient summaries of the patterns, we introduce in the third section a statistic that has been widely used in the social sciences for this purpose. This statistic—the index of dissimilarity—measures the level of residential segregation or spatial separation between two groups. However, the word "segregation" conveys a powerfully negative connotation that was appropriate to the blatant and rigid racism of three or more decades ago. At that time Whites attempted to enforce residential segregation on minority peoples, and Blacks were often described as living in ghettos because they were not permitted to move into White neighborhoods. Although some maps show a few effects of those days, in the last thirty years the social situation has become much more open and fluid. Today, "segregation" seems an unduly harsh term for describing modern patterns of group spatial distinctiveness in Southern California. For this reason, we have substituted the milder term "separation," meaning spatial or geographical separation, for what other scholars have called "segregation."

**Predominant Ethnic Group**

The residential patterns of Whites, Latinos, Blacks, and Asians can be synthesized and summarized in a single map (Figure 7.1). The color conveys the numerically largest group in each tract, and the shade of the color identifies the proportional strength of that group.

Very evident is the large portion of Southern California in which the largest group represents over 70 percent of the total population. This indicates the importance of ethnic differences from place to place. It confirms our belief that the ethnic character of Southern California is impossible to understand without examining it geographically.

**Latinos and Whites.** In 2000 Whites and Latinos were almost equal in population: 6.5 million Whites and 6.6 million Latinos. Despite similar numbers, the large areas of the map shown in green reflect White predominance in both the more expensive, low-density outer suburbs and large tracts in mountain areas, where there are few residents. In contrast, most of the Latino-plurality tracts are clearly urban and contain higher population densities.

To obtain convenient summaries of the patterns, we introduce in the third section a statistic that has been widely used in the social sciences for this purpose. This statistic—the index of dissimilarity—measures the level of residential segregation or spatial separation between two groups. However, the word "segregation" conveys a powerfully negative connotation that was appropriate to the blatant and rigid racism of three or more decades ago. At that time Whites attempted to enforce residential segregation on minority peoples, and Blacks were often described as living in ghettos because they were not permitted to move into White neighborhoods. Although some maps show a few effects of those days, in the last thirty years the social situation has become much more open and fluid. Today, "segregation" seems an unduly harsh term for describing modern patterns of group spatial distinctiveness in Southern California. For this reason, we have substituted the milder term "separation," meaning spatial or geographical separation, for what other scholars have called "segregation."

The most notable exceptions to this are the Santa Clarita Valley towns of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru along Route 126 in Ventura County. This rural area has been home to both Whites and Mexicans, the latter having arrived originally as workers in the citrus orchards and farms. Clearly, Whites who have moved in more recently seeking lower housing prices and scenic amenities have not come in sufficient numbers to change the Latino majorities.

The different locations of White and Latino concentrations result primarily from differences in historical settlement locations and income differences between the two groups. Where White and Latino concentrations occur close together, the two areas differ substantially in housing prices, with Whites occupying the more expensive homes. Such ethnic and economic transitions occur in many places—between mostly White Costa Mesa and Latino Santa Ana, between mostly White Glendora and mostly Latino Azusa, and in Oxnard. Even small areas are explained in the same ways, such as the two Latino pockets in the generally White west San Fernando Valley. In all these places, the situation is likely to result in heightened ethnic-class awareness and tensions.

**Black and Asian enclaves.** Figure 7.1 provides the most up-to-date indication of the changing ethnic balance between Blacks and Latinos. It is clear that almost the entire area east of Interstate 110 and north of Interstate 105, including Watts, is predominantly Latino now. To the south, most of
The color designates the group that is numerically largest in each tract. The intensity of the color indicates the percent of that group in the tract population.
Willowbrook, western Compton, and northern Carson remain mostly Black. To the west of Interstate 15, Latinos predominate east of Vermont Avenue and in the Lennox area west of Crenshaw Blvd. Although in general the Black enclave remains an area of poverty, on the western side are many middle- or upper-class neighborhoods, home to many leaders of the Black community.

The situation of older Asian enclaves depends on the relative numbers of other groups settling in the area. Most tracts in Koreatown have Latino pluralities because most Koreans live in the suburbs. However, enough Chinese and other Asians have continued to live in Chinatown so that its major tract is over 70 percent Asian.

Most of the larger Asian enclaves were established after 1970, many in affluent neighborhoods. These include the large enclaves of Vietnamese in Little Saigon and Chinese in Monterey Park, as well as multiethnic Asian enclaves in Cerritos and the east San Gabriel Valley. Enclaves originating after 1970 cannot be explained by residential restrictions prior to the 1960s, and the higher status enclaves appear to result from voluntary choice on the part of many Asians.

### Ethnic Diversity

With greatly increased immigration from many different countries and cultures since about 1970, Southern California has become much more ethnically diverse. Everyone is aware of this increased diversity. Many people extol the virtues of this diversity—its stimulating effects on culture and the economy and its jarring of Southern Californians out of traditional attitudes of ethnocentric complacency. Many others point to problems represented by the many languages spoken, culture conflicts, and frequently divided loyalties between countries of former residence and the United States. In this book we do not attempt to assess the contributions of this diversity.

We do, however, measure and map this diversity as an indication of the varied levels of residential mixing found in different neighborhoods. 1 Because Southern California as a whole is becoming more diverse, studying contemporary ethnic group relationships in those localities that are most diverse can give indications as to how increasing diversity is likely to play out elsewhere in the region.

Diversity is usually measured by the entropy index (also called the diversity index), which summarizes the relative evenness in proportion of different ethnic groups in any area. 2 For Figure 7.2 we calculated diversity in terms of the four largest ethnic groups: non-Hispanic Whites, non-Hispanic Blacks, non-Hispanic Asians, and Latinos. Although American Indians are also one of the basic ethnic categories in the census, they are so much smaller in numbers and so highly dispersed that we did not include them in calculating diversity.

The lowest possible diversity, with a value of 0, occurs when only one group is represented in a census tract. Because calculations of the index frequently exceed 1 in high-diversity areas, we have proportionately normalized the values. Normalization assigns a value of 1 to perfect diversity, in which the four groups are equally represented. The relative diversity of a tract can then be more easily understood in comparison to a situation of maximum possible diversity.

**High diversity in older areas.** Places that are more diverse in terms of ethnic residential mixing do not necessarily have a great deal of social contact between the groups. However, it seems likely that conversations, mutual assistance, and friendships among neighbors and children of different groups are much more common in such places than in low-diversity places.

Highly diverse areas tend to have housing prices that are moderate—neither extremely low nor extremely high. This means that each of the different groups has reasonably good opportunities to live in those neighborhoods. In the central part of Los Angeles County they appear as a ring that mostly encircles the lowest-cost housing areas east and south of Downtown L.A. Inside the ring are very high proportions of either Latinos or Latinos and Blacks. This is often because many members of these groups cannot afford better housing elsewhere.

Most of the high-diversity ring itself contains somewhat better-quality housing. Depending on the area, either Asians or Whites, or both together, may be dominant, but usually some combination of Latinos and Blacks is also present. Thus, the ring represents an ethnic and economic transition zone. Similar situations occur in the middle of the San Fernando Valley and in northern Orange County, both of which are moderately priced older suburban areas dating from the 1950s and 1960s.

**Highly diverse newer suburbs.** Many of the outer-most suburbs are also highly diverse because the low prices of homes built there since about 1970 have attracted people of moderate means from all ethnic groups. This can be seen in Palmdale and Lancaster and in most newer sections of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Some of ethnic diversity in those areas represents families, particularly Black or Latino, who came to these areas through service in the armed forces. Families stationed in the 1980s at either George Air Force Base north of Victorville, Norton A.F.B. in San Bernardino, or March A.F.B. south of Riverside usually lived off the base, and strong social ties with the local population were often made over the years. The high ethnic diversity on and near military installations is clearly the result of early desegregation of the U.S. military soon after World War II and non-discriminatory recruitment practices. Before Census 2000 all these military facilities in Southern California had been either closed or, in the case of March A.F.B., converted to a reservist base. The diversity of earlier military times persists because of marriages with local people and some preferences for retirement in the local area.

The eastern San Gabriel Valley has been attractive to Whites and Asians. When some Latinos or Blacks also reside in the area, the diversity is increased substantially. Homes in upscale Walnut and Diamond Bar were mostly constructed in the 1980s and have been sought after by more affluent families of all ethnic groups. Relationships between groups in the city of Walnut seem to be amicable with much close social mixing of children of different ethnicities in schools. 3 Walnut can be considered a test case of interethnic relationships in an affluent suburb of modern America. The situation in Cerritos has been similar, although...
The diversity index is a measure of the evenness in the proportion of the four major ethnic populations (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Latino). The index ranges from 0 (low diversity meaning only one group is present) to 1 (meaning an equal number of all four groups is present).
that city has become less diverse in recent years as the homes of Whites, Latinos, and Blacks who moved out have been regularly bought by Asians.

**Poor areas of low diversity.** Diversity is unusually low in the poorest and richest areas of Southern California. The poorer areas were formerly more diverse, but during the 1980s and 1990s Latino in-movement was unusually strong. Blacks had previously been most numerous in many of these poor areas, but low-income members of other groups were sometimes present also. When Latinos largely replaced these other groups, the area became low in diversity.

This process has taken place south and east of L.A.’s central area. Once ethnically diverse Boyle Heights has become highly Latino, as have Bell, Huntington Park and nearby cities such as Maywood and South Gate. The same change has occurred in Santa Ana in Orange County and in the East San Fernando Valley, where the poorest sections of the city of San Fernando and the adjacent Pacoima area of Los Angeles City are now mostly Latino. Older neighborhoods in the central parts of cities like Oxnard, Corona, Riverside and San Bernardino also have low diversity because their low-cost housing has attracted poor Latinos but few others.

**Affluent areas of low diversity.** At the other extreme are areas in which housing is so expensive that it is affordable to some Whites but few members of the other groups. These areas usually have attractive environmental settings, such as in the mountains, in canyons, or close to popular beaches. Such high-status areas are in the Santa Monica Mountains and nearby Beverly Hills and along the coast at Malibu and Manhattan Beach and in the coastal communities of Orange County like Laguna Beach.

**People of Multiracial Heritage**

Because of increasing intermarriage between members of different ethnic groups and the growing number of mixed-race children, this new census category will become more important in the future, particularly in California. In the United States 2.4 percent of the population reported more than one race. However, the mixed-race percentage was 4.7 in both the state of California as a whole and the five-county Southern California area. The only state with a higher percentage of mixed-race people was Hawaii, where 21.4 percent of the residents marked two or more races.

**Table 7.1. Largest Mixed-race Populations, 2000: Los Angeles CMSA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Non-Latino Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White-Some Other Race</td>
<td>389,701</td>
<td>101,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-Asian</td>
<td>98,873</td>
<td>89,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-American Indian</td>
<td>62,779</td>
<td>43,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-Black</td>
<td>43,589</td>
<td>36,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-Some Other Race</td>
<td>36,830</td>
<td>23,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-Some Other Race</td>
<td>25,787</td>
<td>9,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mixed-race</td>
<td>770,483</td>
<td>378,088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2002b).

Of the 770,000 people in Southern California who reported more than one racial identity, 51 percent identified themselves as White and Some Other Race (Table 7.1). Other combinations were much less common. Because many people with mixed-race identities are Latino, we distinguish between Latino and non-Latino mixed-race numbers. For example, 74 percent of the group reporting themselves as both White and Some Other Race were Latino. It is likely that most of these Latinos had a primary identity as Latino and found it difficult to fit themselves clearly into the census race categories.

The value of mapping specific mixed-race combinations is diminished by the small number of people in each mixed-race combination and their widespread distribution. At the same time, the pattern of areal variations in mixed-race percentages is difficult to interpret because so many different group combinations are included (Figure 7.3). The largest areas indicated as multiracial are in the San Fernando Valley and in Glendale. Many people reporting more than one race were undoubtedly Latinos who marked both “White” and “Some Other Race.” In addition, because Glendale is home to so many Armenians, it seems likely that the mixed-race concentration in Glendale represents primarily Armenians, who checked “White” and “Some other Race” but wrote in “Armenian” as the other race.

Some other tracts with high proportions of people reporting two or more races are associated with military installations, where relations between Blacks and Whites have often been closer than in the civilian world. In Ventura County the Port Hueneme Seabee Battalion stands out, as does the Orange County tract near the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, which was closed in the late 1990s.

**Describing Levels of Residential Separation**

At this point we change from maps as indicators of the geography of ethnic distributions to a statistical measure that summarizes how similar or different any two ethnic distributions are.

**The index of dissimilarity.** This statistic, also called the segregation index, indicates the degree of residential separation or segregation between any two groups by measuring how much the two distributions differ. The index, referred to as D, provides a convenient summary statement of the extent to which two groups live in different neighborhoods. It is particularly useful for comparing levels of spatial separation over time, differences between groups, and differences between places.

The index ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 representing complete segregation—where neither of the two groups occupies any of the same neighborhoods or tracts. A score of 0 indicates that the two groups are distributed in all the same tracts and that their proportions in each tract equal their proportions in the entire metropolitan area. Any specific value of the index can be thought of as the percentage of one group’s members that would have to be redistributed in order to create the same distribution as the other group. For example, the D value of .38 for Black/White separation in Orange County in 2000 means that 38 percent of either Blacks or Whites would have to move to different census tracts if the two distributions were to be made equal (Table 7.2).
than most other places in California. Black-White separation and Latino-White separation were higher in Los Angeles County than in any other metropolitan area in the state. Asian-White separation in California was highest in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento, which were essentially equal in their indexes of dissimilarity.

These observations are consistent with much research comparing metropolitan areas nationally. Separation is typically higher in larger metropolitan areas than in smaller ones and higher where the ethnic group being compared to Whites comprises a greater proportion of the total population. In addition, separation levels tend to be lower where there are higher proportions of newer housing, most commonly in rapidly expanding suburbs.

In Southern California the greater separation in Los Angeles County is understandable when one considers that the ethnic and social class character of many of its neighborhoods were established decades ago, when housing discrimination was legal and ubiquitous. In contrast, the four outlying counties contain greater proportions of newer suburban housing, into which Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians have been able to move during recent decades. Within those four outlying counties, separation has been somewhat less in neighborhoods where levels of income and educational attainment are higher.

With respect to Black-White separation, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties have clearly lower levels of Black-White separation than the U.S. average, with separation particularly low in Orange County. Ventura County, with a population of only 753,000, is less segregated than the average middle-size metropolitan area, for which the index of dissimilarity was .57. These lower levels of Black-White separation are related to the newer suburban developments and the historically smaller Black populations in outlying counties.

Latino-White separation in Los Angeles County is clearly greater than the average found in larger metropolitan areas. Of the fifty largest metropolitan areas in the United States, and Los Angeles County and Milwaukee were tied as the second most segregated. The 1960 index of dissimilarity for Los Angeles County was .90. Since then, segregation in Los Angeles County has declined more rapidly than in other large metropolitan areas so that Black-White separation now equals the average of all large metropolitan areas.

The reduction in Black-White separation in Los Angeles County is striking when compared to the current higher levels for well-known Eastern and Midwestern metropolitan areas. Whereas Los Angeles County's segregation index value in 2000 was .67, that for Detroit was .85 and Chicago, Gary, Milwaukee, New York, and Newark all had values of .80 or higher. A major factor in the declining Black-White separation of the four outlying counties has been Black settlement in the newer suburban developments of those counties. In many such places home prices are much lower than in Los Angeles County, and nowadays discrimination against Black potential renters or homeowners is much less than it was in the 1970s and earlier.

The above trends are fairly typical of metropolitan areas across the country. Nationally, Black-White separation during the 1990s

### Table 7.2. Residential Separation, 1980, 1990 and 2000: Counties in Los Angeles CMSA

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black - White</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ventura</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Average (large metro areas)</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.68</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino - White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.50</td>
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<td>Riverside</td>
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<td>San Bernardino</td>
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<td>Ventura</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Average (large metro areas)</td>
<td>.53</td>
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<td>.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Islander - White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.27</td>
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<td>San Bernardino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ventura</td>
<td>.37</td>
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<td>.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Average (large metro areas)</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.43</td>
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Notes: U.S. large metro averages are based on the 61 metropolitan areas with over one million population in 2000. These contain 65 percent of the population in U.S. metro areas and 52 percent of the total U.S. population. For Southern California counties in 2000, people reporting more than one race were fractionally assigned to the appropriate groups, as explained in chapter 2. Differences between our dissimilarity indexes and those of others who included all mixed-race Whites in the non-White race totals (McConide and Orm 2001; Houston et al. 2003) were insignificant—less than .01.


**Place differences in levels of separation.** Levels of separation in 2000 between Whites and the other groups were clearly higher in Los Angeles County than in the four surrounding counties. Moreover, separation in Los Angeles was higher than most other places in California. Black-White separation and Latino-White separation were higher in Los Angeles County than in any other metropolitan area in the state. Asian-White separation in California was highest in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento, which were essentially equal in their indexes of dissimilarity.

These observations are consistent with much research comparing metropolitan areas nationally. Separation is typically higher in larger metropolitan areas than in smaller ones and higher where the ethnic group being compared to Whites comprises a greater proportion of the total population. In addition, separation levels tend to be lower where there are higher proportions of newer housing, most commonly in rapidly expanding suburbs.

In Southern California the greater separation in Los Angeles County is understandable when one considers that the ethnic and social class character of many of its neighborhoods were established decades ago, when housing discrimination was legal and ubiquitous. In contrast, the four outlying counties contain greater proportions of newer suburban housing, into which Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians have been able to move during recent decades. Within those four outlying counties, separation has been somewhat less in neighborhoods where levels of income and educational attainment are higher.

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The reduction in Black-White separation in Los Angeles County is striking when compared to the current higher levels for well-known Eastern and Midwestern metro areas. Whereas Los Angeles County's segregation index value in 2000 was .67, that for Detroit was .85 and Chicago, Gary, Milwaukee, New York, and Newark all had values of .80 or higher. A major factor in the declining Black-White separation of the four outlying counties has been Black settlement in the newer suburban developments of those counties. In many such places home prices are much lower than in Los Angeles County, and nowadays discrimination against Black potential renters or homeowners is much less than it was in the 1970s and earlier.

The above trends are fairly typical of metropolitan areas across the country. Nationally, Black-White separation during the 1990s...
continued the decline that began in 1970 and is now lower than at any time since 1920. The largest declines during the 1990s occurred in more rapidly growing areas with smaller Black populations. Black-White separation also decreased more rapidly in metropolitan areas that have been receiving the most immigrants, that is, where Hispanic and Asian proportions have been growing.

Trends in Latino-White separation. Although Blacks have traditionally been the group most segregated from Whites, in some areas Latinos have become more segregated than Blacks. In 2000 Latinos and Whites in both Orange and Ventura Counties were more segregated than Blacks and Whites. In Los Angeles County, Black-White separation was only slightly higher than Latino-White separation.

Latino-White separation has risen somewhat in all five counties, with the largest increase in Orange County. In Los Angeles County Latino-White separation has increased slowly since 1960, when the index of dissimilarity was .55. The increase in separation in Southern California mirrors national trends in areas with higher percentages of Latinos. In the 1990s Latino separation increased slightly in those metropolitan areas that were over 10 percent Hispanic.

Riverside County’s trend of separation was unusual because it was lower in 1990 than in either 1980 or 2000. The increased Latino-White separation as of 2000 may have been related to the great expansion of new home construction during the 1990s. It is possible that during the 1980s Latinos were moving into many mostly White neighborhoods, but in the 1990s many Whites left these areas. Homes in a greater range of prices may have become available so that Whites with their higher average income levels were able to buy more easily the more expensive homes in the county.

Trends in Asian-White separation. The measured increase in separation in Los Angeles County reflects the increased Asian settlement in enclaves. The increase was greater in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties and is presumably related to the growing Asian populations settling there. The decline in Ventura County may reflect the earlier high level of separation of Japanese and Filipinos in enclaves in the Oxnard area compared to the greater suburban dispersal of more recent Asian arrivals to the county.

Explaining the Persistence of Residential Separation

The patterns and trends presented so far have been discussed mostly in terms of demographic characteristics—the size of metropolitan populations and their ethnic proportions—as well as proportions of new housing in different metro areas. These describe but do not explain the widespread persistence of moderately high levels of residential separation.

To better understand forces behind changes in levels of separation, certain influences must be examined. We discuss first the attitudes and perceptions of members of the different ethnic groups toward their own and other groups, which some believe is the most important explanation of continued separation. Then we look at ethnic group differences in financial resources and ethnic discrimination in the housing market.

Ethnic attitudes. Many people wish to live among people of their own ethnic group. This means that they prefer ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods but that they feel more comfortable where members of their group are commonly found. Such an attitude is widespread and somewhat more frequently found among recent immigrants, who often depend on nearby friends, relatives, and ethnic institutions to help them in their adjustment. To the extent that people choose where to live on the basis of an own-group preference, the index of dissimilarity will show higher values.

Two major studies of Los Angeles County residents, one in 1987 and the other in the early 1990s, investigated group attitudes carefully and in much greater detail than can be reported here. All ethnic groups reported a preference for their own group as neighbors, and a degree of ethnic cohesion is undoubtedly the reason. Certain preferences suggest the possibility of a tipping point, a percentage value at which Whites or others will tend to move out of their neighborhood. However, no such point has been identified, and it would clearly differ depending on the groups involved.

The early 1990s research found that homeowners, foreign-born Latinos, and foreign-born Asians preferred fewer Black neighbors than did Whites, renters, and U.S.-born Latinos and Asians. Both Blacks and U.S.-born Asians accepted larger proportions of Latinos in their neighborhood than did Whites. Latinos wanted a high proportion of their group in the neighborhood but were willing to move into a mixed neighborhood if the other residents were White. Because such attitudes continue to be important in people’s choice of neighborhoods, the persistence of residential separation should not be surprising.

Financial resources. Ethnic differences in income and wealth are also factors in separation. Because White and Asian households have higher incomes than the average Black or Latino household, these greater financial resources make it possible for Whites and Asians to rent or buy in somewhat higher-priced neighborhoods (Table 7.3).

Moreover, increased Latino-White separation since 1980 may be partly explained by the fact that the income gap between the two groups has been growing wider over the last few decades. This means that, on the average, fewer Latinos can afford to live in the same neighborhoods as Whites than was the case forty years ago. In other words, housing markets for the two groups may have become increasingly separate for economic reasons alone.

The fact that Asians and Whites are moderately separated even though their average incomes are similar suggests the importance of noneconomic factors in maintaining separation.

Federal policies and discrimination. Since World War II policies of the federal government regarding taxation, transportation, and homeownership have tended to promote homeownership in new suburbs that were nearly all White rather than in older areas where minorities usually lived. To the extent that Whites benefited disproportionately from those policies, central cities had higher proportions of minorities and suburbs had higher proportions of Whites than they otherwise would have had.

As for discrimination in the sale or rental of housing in the suburbs, it has diminished a great deal since the 1960s. However, there is evidence that housing discrimination continues nationally and in Los Angeles despite being illegal.

Disiscrimination affecting home sales seems to occur most commonly when potential buyers are hoping for approval of their
mortgage application by the lender. Approval of home loans, including those federally insured through the FHA, is less likely for Latinos and Blacks than for Whites, both in Southern California suburban counties and in Los Angeles County. In addition, Blacks and Latinos are more likely than Whites to seek mortgages from subprime lenders, who charge higher interest rates and occasionally excessive fees. Discrimination in apartment rentals is no longer just a matter of White landlords refusing to rent to Black, Latino, or Asian tenants. Members of many ethnic groups, frequently immigrants, own or manage apartment buildings, and their own ethnic biases clearly affect their treatment of prospective tenants. In many cases they try to replace the often ethnically diverse tenants with members of their own ethnic group, probably for better control. Although such practices presumably lead toward the greater ethnic homogeneity of residents of individual apartment buildings, at the census tract level they may have little impact on residential separation. In addition, some realtors may subtly steer their clients to neighborhoods where the client’s own ethnic group is better represented. Such a practice acts to increase ethnic separation.

### Explaining Small Recent Shifts in Separation Levels

The prior section explained the factors behind generally moderate or high levels of ethnic residential separation in Southern California and the United States. However, small changes in the levels of separation observed since 1980 can be best understood as shifts in the balance between those factors promoting and other factors diminishing separation. The tension between these opposing influences produces a net effect, which is measurable each decade.

#### Factors favoring ethnic residential mixing.

Cultural change, assimilation, and higher income levels tend to increase ethnic dispersal from enclaves and reduce residential separation. Also, attitudes toward other groups can become more favorable over time, leading toward less discomfort with more mixed neighborhoods. This may have occurred to some extent since the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the Los Angeles data on ethnic and neighborhood attitudes reported earlier in this chapter was collected. Other factors tending to diminish residential separation are the cultural assimilation of immigrants and their children, the desire to escape the problems of poor areas, and greater income that may make the move possible. We expect that the desire to move out of a low-income ethnic enclave is prompted more by economic considerations than by ethnic attitudes.

Rates of crime are probably higher in poor enclaves, and schools there are often of lower quality. Many Blacks, in particular, have wanted to leave Black enclaves—the old ghetto areas into which they had been forced earlier by White society. Civil rights laws, improved education and earnings, and shifts in social attitudes have made departure much more possible in recent decades.

#### Factors favoring ethnic separation.

New immigrants frequently locate near friends and relatives who can help them adjust, leading frequently to the growth of ethnic enclaves. Thus, if the number of new immigrants is very large, as it has been in Southern California, this tendency toward ethnicneighborhood concentration may more than balance the countervailing tendency of the more assimilated and successful members of the group to move out of those enclaves. Also, some people with the economic means to move out of enclaves may choose not to do so because they are more comfortable in neighborhoods where their group is well represented. In some cases, this may reflect concerns about their treatment by members of other groups.

#### The net balance.

For Blacks in Southern California, declining separation seems clearly related to rising social and economic opportunities in recent decades, exemplified by growing numbers of middle-class Blacks. For Latinos and Asians the trends are more problematic. The small increase in Asian-White segregation during the 1990s is consistent with the growing proportion of most Asian groups living in enclaves (Table 6.2). Many Asians leave ethnic enclaves, but they are more than balanced by others who move in. As explained near the end of chapter 6, most of the Asian enclaves are not in poor areas. It appears, then, that the increased residential separation of Asians reflects a widespread desire to live within a clearly Asian neighborhood.

In the case of Latinos, increased separation from Whites is best explained by the large number of poor immigrants who arrived during the 1990s and the growing White-Mexican income gap. This gap is closely related to a growing spread during the 1990s between the incomes of the poor and the more affluent in California. These factors appear to have outweighed slightly the strong countervailing tendencies of dispersal associated with cultural and economic assimilation.

### Notes

1. For a detailed analysis of the changing levels of ethnic diversity in different Southern California cities (rather than neighborhoods), see Myers and Park (2001).

2. The method of calculation and properties of the entropy index compared to other statistics are explained in White (1986).


5. In addition to the patterns on the map, tract 9200.27 (east of Bouquet Canyon, north of Santa Clarita) was also 20 percent multiracial. However, the tract contained only 3 mixed-race people out of a total population of 15. Because it would be distracting and highly misleading to show this large area in the intense high-percentage category, the tract appears on this map in the lowest percent category.

6. The calculation and properties of the dissimilarity index compared to other statistics are explained in White (1986) and in Massey and Denton (1988).


10. Logan (2001a), Houston et al. (2001b).

11. Houston et al. (2001b).


18. One study by Clark (1992) used a 1987 telephone survey of over 2,600 households. The other by Charles (2000a, b) was based on interviews in 1993-1994 with a sample of over 4,000 residents. We suspect that attitudes toward other groups may have improved somewhat since the early 1990s, a period of severe recession in Los Angeles with ethnic tensions resulting from the 1992 riots.


23. Aikana and Dymoki (2001), Weiden (2001). Research on possible discrimination by mortgage lenders often makes use of federal Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data, which does not include information on the credit history and debts of applicants. Nevertheless, research by Reibel in Los Angeles County as of 1990 found strong indications of discrimination against Black applicants. Moreover, “there is evidence that Black and Hispanic applicants are treated more favorably when they apply for mortgages in predominantly Black areas, and Hispanic applicants also receive more favorable treatment when they apply in predominantly Hispanic areas” (Reibel 2000, 58). Such discrimination tends to reinforce ethnic residential separation.


27. Clark (1992); Charles (2000a, b).