Is Southern California a multiethnic society—a single society whose people simply vary in their ethnic heritage? If this is the case, then the similarities and social integration of the different ethnic groups outweigh their differences and separatist leanings. Or, is Southern California essentially a collection of separate ethnic societies? This conception means that different ethnic groups are weakly interconnected economically in their work, shopping, and other public activities. However, they are not really integrated residentially, culturally, and socially.

In this chapter we attempt to determine the essential unity or pluralism of Southern California by approaching the question from several different directions. First, we summarize in three different ways the distributions of the larger groups that we covered in detail in chapter 3 through chapter 5. To assess this residential geography we use maps of the leading (largest) ethnic group in each tract, statistics on the level of residential segregation between specific groups, and a table and a map showing variations in ethnic diversity across Southern California. Then we compare ethnic groups with respect to aspects of social class or socioeconomic status. The relative acculturation and recency of the ethnic groups’ immigration are examined next.

Last, we look at Southern California as a crucible for creating a multiethnic society. Apart from public and work-related situations, are members of ethnic groups really intermixing? To examine this question, we make use of a very stringent measure of social mixing: intermarriage between ethnic groups. We also look at areal variations in selected intermarriage rates, because the locations of higher intermarriage rates constitute the frontier of what may be an emerging multiethnic society.

### The Leading Ethnic Populations

A map of the numerically largest ethnic group in each census tract portrays an important aspect of place-to-place differences in Southern California (Fig. 9.1). It is a simplified version of the ethnic spatial structure. Because the numbers of whites and people of Mexican origin are so large, most tracts show one of these as the leading group. In many such tracts other ethnic groups are also numerous and important, and a map of the second leading ethnic population in each tract helps to show these patterns (Fig. 9.2). Together these summarize some of the most significant spatial patterns of race and ethnicity in Southern California.

In some areas neither whites nor people of Mexican origin are the largest group. The two maps show the larger enclaves of other groups, such as Chinese in Chinatown and Monterey Park, Japanese in Gardena, Vietnamese in Westminster and Garden Grove, Salvadorans in Westlake, and Filipinos in Carson. Blacks are most numerous in a large area that stretches from north of Crenshaw through Compton. Within Koreatown, people of Mexican origin outnumber Koreans in most tracts, but the second map shows the importance of Koreans in Koreatown as well as in several suburban areas.

### Residential Segregation

Different ethnic groups living near each other can be described as unsegregated or having a low level of residential segregation. Conversely, groups with very different residential distributions are highly segregated. It is possible to summarize the differences with a useful statistic, the index of dissimilarity.
Meaning and measurement. Comparison of ethnic distributions is of more than just direct geographical interest. Differences in distribution are thought to result from other differences among the groups—usually cultural, social, economic, or some combination thereof. Ethnic groups of similar income levels presumably live closer to each other than do groups that differ in economic status. Likewise, two groups that share a religious or other cultural heritage are expected to be less segregated from each other than are other groups that have no cultural affinity.

The index of dissimilarity, or $D$, measures the differences between any two distinct groups. It ranges between 0, meaning no segregation, and 1, which indicates complete segregation. The higher the index of dissimilarity, the greater the presumed social separation or socioeconomic status differences between the two groups. Index values of less than .30 are considered low; those between .30 and .60, moderate; and those over .60, high. The index cannot tell us the reason behind the differences in the two distributions, but the varying income levels, language skills, and cultural affinity of groups provide some clues.

Because the index works best with larger populations and because ethnic populations are larger in Los Angeles and Orange Counties than in the other counties, we measured segregation only in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Moreover, we studied only those groups that numbered more than 30,000 in those two counties (Table 9.1).

The degree of segregation of a group is often measured in comparison with non-Hispanic whites, because whites usually represent the cultural and economic standard. However, we provide index values for all pairings of groups as indirect geographical indicators of the degree of economic and cultural differences between any two of the groups.

Levels of segregation. Segregation indexes for Los Angeles County are shown in boldface type for each pairing of ethnic groups, in order to distinguish them from Orange County (Table 9.1). Levels of segregation vary over Southern California but are substantially higher in Los Angeles County. That county contains older minority areas and has been the leading destination for immigrants. Differences in segregation are dramatically illustrated by black-white segregation values in Los Angeles ($D = .73$) compared to Orange County ($D = .38$). Although Orange County once had a small black ghetto in Santa Ana, black out-movement and Hispanic in-movement during the 1980s, plus the suburbanization of middle-class blacks, have resulted in a low-moderate level of segregation.

At the same time, Orange County has higher rates of Mexican–white segregation than black–white segregation. This situation is unusual in the United States, where blacks have long been the group most highly segregated from whites. It is clearly due to the rapid growth of Orange County’s barrios in areas where whites tend not to live.

In Los Angeles County, a major change in relative segregation has also occurred. Blacks are no longer the most highly segregated group. Although part of the explanation involves lower levels of black–white segregation since 1970, an equally important factor was the arrival of poor and unaculturated immigrant groups during the 1980s. By 1990, the great concentrations of Cambodians in parts of Long Beach and of Salvadorans in Westlake made those the groups that were most segregated from whites.

The moderate segregation between various Hispanic groups (such as Mexicans and Cubans) and between various Asian groups (Koreans and Japanese, for example) is a reminder that the social networks of these specific ethnic groups are essentially separate and that their economic status may be quite different. The fact that Asian Indians and Puerto Ricans are least segregated from whites is entirely consistent with their highly dispersed distributions, as shown in Figures 7.6 and 8.5.

Among the white ethnic (ancestry) groups, the degree of segregation from the various Hispanic and Asian groups is high. Because recently arrived white groups have often formed their own enclaves, it is not surprising that their levels of segregation are some of the highest in Table 9.1. Because none of the white ancestry groups has a low median income, segregation between them reflects group differences in social networks and residential preferences much more than group differences in economic status.
Table 9.1 Residential Segregation Between Ethnic Groups, Los Angeles and Orange Counties, 1990

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Notes: Los Angeles County values shown in bold type and Orange County values shown in regular type. Tabled values are calculations from the index of dissimilarity, D, which measures the distributional differences between any two distinct groups. It ranges between 0, meaning no segregation, and 1, which indicates complete segregation. Data are for groups with at least 30,000 persons.
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Figure 9.1
Leading Ethnic Population
1990

- County Boundary
- City Boundary

20 Miles
Figure 9.2
Second Leading Ethnic Population
1990

Number of Tracts
Second Leading Ethnic Population

349 Non-Hispanic White
182 Black
1 Asian Indian
130 Chinese
20 Filipino
45 Japanese
55 Korean
18 Vietnamese
5 Other Asian
96 Guatemalan-Salvadoran Origin
1413 Mexican Origin
60 Other Hispanic Origin
15 No Second-Leading Population

County Boundary
City Boundary

20 Miles
Ethnic Diversity
1990

Diversity is the relative evenness in the proportion of five groups (Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks, American Indians, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics) within census tracts. Diversity is measured by the entropy index. If there were equal numbers of all five groups within a tract, the diversity index would equal 1 (maximum diversity possible). If a tract contained people from only one group, the diversity index would be zero (lowest possible diversity). Classes are based on standard deviations (0.173) from the mean diversity score of 0.507.

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<td>.508 - .680</td>
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<td>.681 - .853</td>
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</table>
| 9                | .854 - .872| High

Figure 9.3

20 Miles
Figure 9.4
Asian and Black Populations in Central Los Angeles 1990

One dot represents 50 persons

- Black
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Japanese
- Korean

0 2 Miles

Hancock Park
Koreatown
Mid-City
West Adams
Los Feliz
Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood Blvd.
Wilshire Blvd.
Western Ave.
Pico Blvd.
Alameda St.
Jefferson Blvd.
Pico-Union
Chinatown
Koreatown
Westlake
Temple-Alvarado
Echo Park
Civic Center
Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
Boyle Heights
Civic Center

Figure 9.4 shows the distribution of Asian and Black populations in Central Los Angeles in 1990. The map uses dots to represent individuals, with one dot representing 50 persons. The areas marked include Hancock Park, Koreatown, Mid-City, West Adams, Los Feliz, and others. The map highlights the relative concentration of different ethnic groups in various neighborhoods.
Hispanic and White Populations
in Central Los Angeles
1990

Figure 9.5

One dot represents
50 persons

Armenian Ancestry
Russian Ancestry
Other N-H White Mexican
Guatemalan or Salvadoran
Figure 9.6
Socioeconomic Status, 1990
Difference in Percent from White

Non-Hispanic White Values
Percent College Graduates 27.6
Percent Managerial and Professional 36.5
Median Household Income $41,464
Percent Homeowners 62.7

Note: Data are for the Los Angeles CMSA.

Figure 9.7
Acculturation, 1990
Difference in Percent from White

Non-Hispanic White Values
Percent U.S.-Born 88.5
Percent of Immigrants Arriving before 1980 74.3
Percent of Whites Speaking English Only or Very Well 96.5

Note: Data are for the Los Angeles CMSA.
Figure 9.12
Persons Immigrating 1980-1990
Percent of Foreign-Born Persons 1990

Number of Tracts
Percent of Foreign-Born Persons Immigrating Between 1980 and 1990

- 256: 0 - 24.0
- 289: 24.1 - 59.4
- 129: 59.5 - 65.8
- 110: 65.9 - 70.9
- 22: 71.0 - 80.0

0 - 24.0
24.1 - 59.4
59.5 - 65.8
65.9 - 70.9
71.0 - 80.0
80.1 - 100

County Boundary
City Boundary

Scale: 20 Miles
Ethnic Diversity

Another way to examine ethnic distributions is to look at the extent to which members of several different groups live in the same area. Where ethnic groups are more mixed residentially, there is greater potential for social contact between groups. Such areas are normally described as ethnically diverse.

Measuring diversity. The statistic used most commonly to measure diversity in different places is the entropy index, or $H$. The value of $H$ increases as the groups approach more even proportions. It reaches its maximum when all measured groups are represented in equal numbers in a place, whereas diversity is zero when the area contains members of only one group. We measure diversity in terms of the relative proportions of five groups: non-Hispanic whites, blacks, American Indians, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. The relative diversity of places is what is important, not the absolute value of the index.

We look first at the diversity of different cities and other urban places (Table 9.2). Then we examine the relative diversity of neighborhoods by calculating the same statistic for census tracts (Fig. 9.3). Entropy index scores were standardized so that if the numbers of each ethnic group in a place are equal, the entropy score for that place would be 1. If only one ethnic group is present, the score would be 0.

Cities and other urban places. In order to set our Southern California findings in a larger context, we calculated entropy indexes for all urban places and for counties in the United States as of 1990. Out of more than 3,100 counties in the United States, all the counties of Southern California are among the 100 most diverse. Los Angeles County was the fourth most diverse in the United States. Among Southern California cities—the focus of this chapter—there are often only small variations in the index of diversity scores. This means that the detailed position of a city in the ranking is usually of little or no significance. However, those few listed at either end of the ranking—as the most diverse or the least diverse—have index values that are clearly higher or lower than those of nearly all others (Table 9.2).

Ethnic diversity is greatest in the cities and older suburbs near industry in the southern part of Los Angeles County and in the newer suburbs of the eastern San Gabriel Valley. The first area’s proximity to employment in oil refining and other harbor-area activities has attracted whites and minorities for several decades. The five most diverse cities in Southern California are in this area, and Carson’s score shows it to be the most ethnically diverse city in the entire United States. The second area has attracted immigrants, especially from Asia, as well as Americans of all origins who can afford homes in that valley’s suburbs, most of which have been built since the early 1970s. Walnut, West Covina, and Rowland Heights are places in the San Gabriel Valley which are particularly diverse.

The least diverse places are either white or Hispanic concentrations. East Los Angeles and the places immediately to its south and southwest are part of the very large, poor Latino barrio that expanded farther to the southwest into Huntington Park and

Table 9.2 Most and Least Ethnically Diverse Urban Places, 1990

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<tr>
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<th>Entropy Index</th>
<th>Urban Place</th>
<th>Entropy Index</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carson</td>
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<td>West Covina</td>
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<td>Commerce</td>
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<td>Long Beach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>Cudahy</td>
<td>.294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The higher the index, the greater the diversity. Our analysis included all urban places in Southern California with populations of at least 10,000. Calculations are based on five groups: non-Hispanic whites, blacks, American Indians, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. Scores are standardized so that a value of 1 represents the maximum diversity possible: equal proportions of all five groups.
Walnut Park during the 1990s. Just the opposite are the affluent Orange County cities of Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, and Seal Beach—all of which are strongly white. They are places of white retreat from older or deteriorating neighborhoods or from poorer or ethnically different people.

An alternative way of measuring ethnic diversity defines groups in terms of more specific ethnic categories. Instead of aggregating all Asians or all Hispanics together, as in Table 9.2, we now define diversity in different places as the relative proportions of fourteen groups. Because Asian ethnic groups are so sharply separated by language and identity, this measure accentuates that diversity. The fourteen ethnic groups are blacks, American Indians, the largest six groups from Asia, and three white and three Hispanic groups.

We do not present a table of diversity scores for the method using fourteen groups, but when diversity is measured in this more complex way, most of the cities listed in Table 9.2 appear again. However, the city of Cerritos emerges as the most diverse in the entire United States—a position it also held in 1980. In addition, Walnut is ranked second nationally in diversity, and Diamond Bar and La Palma (adjacent to Cerritos) now appear among the ten most diverse urban places in the United States. In all of these places, diversity among the Asian populations is pronounced.

Neighborhoods. Members of different ethnic groups who live in the same neighborhood are more likely to talk and become acquainted than if they did not live nearby. In addition, neighborhoods are often fairly uniform in housing costs, so their residents probably have a similar economic status. All this means that the potential for social contact between ethnic groups is greater when different groups reside in a neighborhood. Census tracts are the areal unit closest to the concept of neighborhood.

Neighborhood differences in ethnic diversity are striking (Fig. 9.3). The lowest diversity is found in areas which are most homogeneously white or Latino. Thus, the very high proportions of whites in the Santa Monica Mountains, the Seal Beach and Newport Beach areas, and parts of southern Orange County make those areas less diverse. A similar low diversity characterizes Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles, parts of Pacoima, and the Huntington Park area because their Hispanic proportions are so high. Diversity is somewhat greater in much of South Central, where tracts have few if any Asians and whites but where blacks and Latinos have similar proportions.

Many of the urban places previously noted in Table 9.2 as highly diverse are evident on the tract-level map. Within such places more diverse sections can be easily found (Fig. 9.3). For instance, the older, central parts of Long Beach and West Long Beach are much more diverse than is eastern Long Beach, but in Lakewood the two easternmost tracts are highly diverse. This was due to the settlement of black families during the 1980s and the expansion of both Asians and Latinos out of their adjacent enclaves in Cerritos and Hawaiian Gardens.

Central Los Angeles. Neighborhoods in the central part of the city of Los Angeles contain several ethnic enclaves as well as moderate or high ethnic diversity. This makes the area worth investigating in more detail, not by means of an entropy index but by detailed distributions of specific groups (Figs. 9.4 and 9.5). Two maps are necessary for readers to be able to distinguish the colored dots that together represent ten different ethnic groups. The map shows the degree of areal mixing of groups in different sections although the actual residential mixing is probably somewhat less than shown on the map. This is because dots representing tract populations of groups are placed randomly within census tracts by the computer. In reality, there is some ethnic clustering by blocks and probably even smaller areas, like sections of blocks and apartment buildings, which cannot be shown here.

Nevertheless, the maps portray effectively the major areal variations in ethnic composition. Armenian and Russian Jewish settlements, white settlement associated with the University of Southern California, and the long-lived Japanese community in the Crenshaw area are easily distinguishable. Also evident are variations in the degree of ethnic homogeneity between enclaves such as Chinatown, Koreatown, Westlake, Boyle Heights, East Hollywood (Armenians), and Temple-Alvarado (Filipinos). For instance, the low-cost housing in Westlake has as many people of
Mexican origin as Salvadorans and Guatemalans although that area is best known as a Central American barrio.

Over most of the past half century, it was almost predictable that zones lying between strongly white and strongly black neighborhoods were in transition from white to black. However, it is unlikely that these processes of white-black racial transition and resegregation will continue or advance into new areas. This is because of the slowing growth of the black population, its dispersal to nonadjacent suburban areas, and the arrival of so many Latino immigrants. 10

**Comparative Socioeconomic Status**

The next two sections of this chapter present basic socioeconomic and acculturation characteristics of the larger ethnic groups. Two graphs summarize these characteristics (Figs. 9.6 and 9.7).

Because social class or status can be measured in several different ways, our graphic description of the relative status of ethnic groups uses four important indicators. Each of these was explained in chapter 1. We generally selected ethnic populations of more than 70,000 for these analyses. However, Cambodians were also included because of their unusually low status and Guatemalans were omitted because their status position was so close to that of Salvadorans. Because the same status indicators are presented on the maps for all 34 ethnic groups, the positions of groups not included on this graph can be approximated by the reader.

The position of groups on different indicators varies substantially (Fig. 9.6). For example, the income of Koreans is relatively low compared to the group’s standing on other indicators. Also, the percentage of homeowners among Armenians, Chinese, Vietnamese, people of English ancestry, and people of Mexican origin is higher than is suggested by other indicators. This may be due partly to cultural emphases on the value of homeownership, although the rapid increase in home prices since the mid-1970s makes group differences in the timing of home purchases also a factor.

Contrasts among the groups in socioeconomic status are striking. The general high status of whites, Asian Indians, Filipinos, and Japanese is clear, as it is for people of English and Russian ancestries. The high percentage of college graduates among Asian Indians, Iranians, Filipinos, and people of Russian ancestry make these groups very different from American Indians, blacks, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and people of Mexican origin. Exceptionally low median incomes and homeownership characterize Cambodians and Salvadorans; and Cambodians, Salvadorans, and people of Mexican origin do stand out in their low percentages in managerial and professional occupations.

**Comparative Acculturation**

Because acculturation, or cultural assimilation, is increased by time spent in the United States, we first characterize ethnic groups in terms of their recency of immigration and then look at their relative English-language proficiencies. 11 We also look at the relative incomes of immigrants compared to U.S.-born members of the same ethnic groups as an indicator of acculturation. Our expectation is that immigrants have lower incomes than those born in the United States. 12

Figure 9.7 makes clear some important distinctions among groups in the importance and timing of immigration. Adults in the American Indian, white, black, and English- and Russian-ancestry groups are all less than 15 percent foreign-born. This contrasts sharply with Salvadorans, South Americans, people of Iranian ancestry, and all of the Asian groups except Japanese. In all of these groups, more than 90 percent of the adults in 1990 were foreign-born, and in many groups the figure is more than 97 percent. Moreover, more than half of the foreign-born people in several groups immigrated to the United States during the 1980s. Together, these findings show that ethnic groups differ substantially in the timing of their immigration.

Cambodians are exceptional because such a high percentage arrived in the United States during the 1980s. Recency of immigration is probably the most important reason behind their very low level of English-language skills. This may also account for poorer language skills among Koreans, Vietnamese, Chinese, Armenians, and Salvadorans, so many of whom settled here in the 1980s. At the same time, the high level of English-language
skills among groups with low percentages of immigrants is entirely expected.

Groups do differ in the relationship between immigration timing and English proficiency. For example, a high percentage of Jamaicans speak English very well despite being more than 80 percent foreign-born. This is because English is widely spoken in Jamaica, especially among middle-class Jamaicans, who are more likely to immigrate. Similarly, most Filipino and Asian Indian immigrants gained much experience in English before coming to this country because English is an important language of advanced instruction in their countries.

On the other hand, ability to speak English very well is less common among people of Mexican origin than one would expect, given their immigration history. Immigrants constitute only 63 percent of the adults, and the percentage that arrived in the 1980s is only 35 percent—relatively low compared with many groups. Nevertheless, only 49 percent of Mexican-origin adults speak English very well. It appears that the very large number of Spanish speakers in Southern California reduces acculturation and, perhaps, the incentive to learn English well.

With respect to income differences between immigrants and U.S.-born members of an ethnic group, immigrants generally have somewhat lower incomes. Armenian and Russian immigrants are exceptional, however, in that their very low incomes contrast sharply with the much higher incomes of U.S.-born members of the groups. These are real differences between immigrant generations—differences that may be sources of intragroup tension.

Foreign-born American Indians have substantially lower incomes than do others born in the United States. Almost all of the foreign-born American Indians are from Canada, Mexico, or Guatemala. Their lower incomes are probably due to the especially low educational and occupational status of those who arrived from Mexico and Guatemala, some of whom fled persecution in their home areas. The income differential between immigrant and U.S.-born people of Mexican origin was discussed and documented for specific occupations near the end of chapter 7. On the other hand, among blacks and people of English and Arab ancestries, the incomes of immigrants and the U.S.-born shows little or no differences.

**Spatial Patterns of Acculturation**

Spatial patterns of acculturation differ among groups depending on their status and on the location of their enclaves. For this reason, we examine selected groups whose patterns of acculturation can be compared with distribution maps in earlier chapters. On the quarter-page maps, acculturation is shown only for PUMAs containing at least 200 members of the ethnic group, to avoid misleading impressions that might result from very small samples.

**Percentage foreign-born.** Among whites, the percentage of foreign-born is highest in Glendale and Hollywood because of the strong concentrations of Armenians in both places and of Russian Jews in the latter area (Fig. 9.8). The foreign-born make up somewhat smaller percentages of whites in the Westside, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the southern San Fernando Valley. In these areas the largest numbers of immigrants are Jews (Russian, Iranian, and Israeli), Iranians, and Armenians, but the same areas are also attractive to immigrants from many parts of Europe.

Black immigrants tend to live outside the larger black settlements (Fig. 9.9). In more expensive areas like Brentwood, Westwood, and the Santa Monica Mountains they are scattered among a largely white population. The percentage of immigrants among blacks is even higher in areas of more moderate income areas, like northern Orange County, San Gabriel, Temple City, Glendale, and the Sunland-Tujunga section of the eastern San Fernando Valley. In addition, a few clusters of Jamaican and Nigerian immigrants in middle-income black areas like Inglewood show up in Figures 3.14 and 3.15.

The fact that foreign-born blacks, compared with all black adults, tend to live outside areas of black settlement in Los Angeles and Pasadena may well reflect their social distance from the black American community. African immigrants view America as the land of economic opportunities and do not focus on the elimination of white racism as a necessary prerequisite to black advancement. Black immigrants also see American blacks as culturally more like Americans and Europeans than like themselves, whereas American blacks often deride the more Negroid
features of recent immigrants from Africa. All these perceptions suggest that many African immigrants see little reason to live within a black settlement area. The low number of immigrants in high-status black areas, such as View Park and Ladera Heights, may also be related to these differences between U.S.-born and immigrant blacks.

Immigrants from Mexico have shown a tendency to settle outside the traditional, large Mexican barrios (Fig. 9.10). This is most clearly seen in the fact that the large barrio of the Mexican Eastside (Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles) has lower proportions of immigrants than do nearby areas to the south: South Central, Huntington Park, South Gate, and Bell Gardens. The reason for Mexican-immigrant settlement beyond the older barrio is very different from the situation among black immigrants. Poor Mexican immigrants, particularly during the 1980s, faced a shortage of housing in the old barrio, but they found that housing was available not far away and that rents were even lower. The same process took place elsewhere. For instance, immigrants moved into inexpensive and often run-down houses and apartments in Westlake and Koreatown. In the eastern San Fernando Valley, new immigrants settled not so much in the large San Fernando–Pacoima barrio but in less-crowded adjacent areas, where blacks and whites had been living: Arleta, North Hills, Van Nuys, and North Hollywood.

Among the Japanese (Fig. 9.11), the percentages of foreign-born are lowest in the long-established Japanese American enclaves: Crenshaw, Culver City, the Sun Valley section of the eastern San Fernando Valley, and Gardena. In contrast, the most distinctive area for foreign-born Japanese is the expensive Palos Verdes Peninsula, where managers of Japanese companies often live while spending a few years on temporary assignment in Southern California.14

**Recent immigrants.** The locations of the foreign-born who arrived in the United States during the 1980s compared with all of the foreign-born show somewhat similar general patterns, although the areal unit permits more detail (Fig. 9.12). Recent immigrants are often quite localized in specific census tracts. This results from personal-contact networks which direct new arrivals to the locations of friends and relatives. As word of housing and work opportunities spreads, newcomers pile into many of the same apartment buildings and census tracts. Unusually high proportions of recent immigrants in certain neighborhoods also suggest that these may be pockets of very low acculturation and English-language proficiency.

The largest portion of 1980s immigrants are from Mexico and Central America. As we noted in the previous section, recent immigrants settled less in Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles, San Fernando, Pacoima, and other older barrios because that housing was already intensely occupied by older immigrants and Mexican Americans. Instead, some of the cheapest available housing was in adjacent or even somewhat distant neighborhoods, often near industrial areas. This is the case in the Harbor City section of Los Angeles City and in the section of Downtown that houses the garment district and produce market. In the San Fernando Valley, a similar area lies between Van Nuys Airport and what was a General Motors automobile plant in Van Nuys.

The pattern is similar among the poorer immigrants from other groups. A large, low-rent area evident in Figure 9.12 is the Westlake-Koreatown area, in which many thousands of immigrant Koreans, Mexicans, and Salvadorans settled in the 1980s.

**English-language ability.** Immigrants who live in enclaves in which English is rarely spoken feel less need or pressure to improve their skills in English. In contrast, those with the ability to speak English very well tend to live outside ethnic concentrations. This is entirely expected and is consistent with previous research and theory, which has stressed the support provided to new immigrants in an ethnic enclave.15 Areal patterns reflect both the reduced acculturation in areas of ethnic concentration and the past in- or out-movement of people based partly on their level of acculturation.

The general pattern is well illustrated by Mexican immigrant adults (Fig. 9.13). Low English proficiency characterizes the large area of recent immigration, which extends from Hollywood south into Hawthorne and Lynwood. Other large areas of unusually low English-language skills are the eastern San Fernando Valley, Santa Ana, and Anaheim. Despite the cultural homogeneity of
the Mexican Eastside barrio, its residents have somewhat better English because many of them were born in the United States.

Still greater proficiency in English is found among Mexican-born adults who live outside the major enclaves and in places with moderate or expensive housing—Simi Valley, Palos Verdes, Torrance, Redondo Beach, San Dimas, and Glendora. In these areas most of those who speak English very well are second- or third-generation Mexican Americans, although in some areas they are live-in nannies, domestics, and gardeners. Among Guatemalans and Salvadorans, too, the low level of English speech found in the larger concentrations is entirely expected (Fig. 9.14). In contrast, many who live and work as housekeepers, nannies, and aides in Malibu, Santa Monica, and Beverly Hills developed better skills in English because of close contact with wealthy families.

Chinese immigrants in the area from Chinatown through most of the San Gabriel Valley have less ability in English than do Chinese in most other places (Fig. 9.15). This area contains so many Chinese people that it is possible to live an almost completely Chinese-oriented life. Similarly, Koreans in and near Koreatown have less ability to speak English than is found among Koreans in most of the outlying areas, where contact with English-speaking Americans is much greater (Fig. 9.16).

**Compartmentalization, Social Integration, and Structural Assimilation**

People tend to have most of their highly personal ties with others in the same social class and ethnic group. This social compartmentalization occurs even when people are substantially acculturated in terms of language ability and other aspects of culture. However, when people choose close friends from ethnic and class groups other than their own, compartmentalization weakens and social integration begins.

Social integration proceeds much more slowly than does acculturation. Most of the children of immigrants are perfectly fluent in English, for instance, but their own ethnic identity remains a powerful influence on whom they select as their close friends and spouses.

There is no established threshold that divides groups who are socially integrated from those that are ethnically compartmentalized. Only a continuum stretches between complete compartmentalization (social contact only within an ethnic group) and complete social integration (close friendships primarily with people in other ethnic groups).

**Measuring social integration and structural assimilation.** The best indicator of an ethnic group’s relative compartmentalization and social integration is the rate at which its members marry outside the group. This is known as intermarriage. In intermarriage the spouse can be from any other ethnic group. High rates of intermarriage demonstrate weak compartmentalization and strong social integration.

Because most people are married to someone in their ethnic group, rates of intermarriage are generally low. Whites in the United States have very frequently married outside their European-ancestry groups, but the spouse is usually white. Moreover, analyses show that ethnic identity is still important in the choice of marriage partners—even for people whose families have lived in this country for several generations.16

Because whites are culturally and socially dominant in the United States, they are the group toward which others shift during structural assimilation. Thus, we measure the degree of structural assimilation of a non-white ethnic group by its rate of intermarriage with non-Hispanic whites. Groups with higher rates intermarriage with whites are more structurally assimilated.

**General factors affecting rates of intermarriage.** The likelihood of a person marrying outside one’s ethnic group depends on the number of available mates within the group.17 If the ethnic group is small in numbers or the sex ratio very unbalanced in any area, some people who would prefer to marry within their group will be unable to find a suitable mate from the group, so intermarriage rates will be high. On the other hand, members of large groups have little trouble finding mates within their group, so rates of intermarriage tend to be low. Also, ethnic intermarriage is uncommon among immigrants but increases with subsequent, U.S.-born generations.
More opportunities for social contact outside the ethnic group are found in Southern California than in countries of immigrant origin. Thus, intermarriage should be more common among younger members of immigrant ethnic groups because younger people are more likely to have married in Southern California. Here, too, increasing social receptivity concerning other ethnic groups may play a role in increased intermarriage. For these reasons, we also calculated rates of intermarriage for younger couples by selecting all married householders under the age of 35 and their spouses.18

We could not determine the cumulative effect of low levels of past mixing of ethnic populations. Presumably, many people who checked one racial response on the census were themselves of multiracial background. This means that there has been slightly more mixing than the rates suggest (Table 9.3).

**Group differences in intermarriage rates.** Rates of intermarriage are generally low—reflecting substantial social separation between groups (Table 9.3). Smaller, more acculturated ethnic groups have higher rates of intermarriage.

Younger couples have consistently higher rates of intermarriage, but age differences are usually not large. Among blacks and whites, the higher rates of intermarriage among younger people do indicate more recent weakening of compartmentalization and greater social integration. Younger Japanese, Samoans, and Cubans show much higher intermarriage rates than older members of their groups. This could reflect either marriage in the United States or a change in cultural attitude among younger people toward intermarriage. In either case, the large age difference in intermarriage rates suggests recently increasing social integration but also a likely source of intergenerational family tension.

Rates of intermarriage between groups should be greater among groups which share a cultural affinity, as has been demonstrated at the national level.19 This is seen most clearly in the high rates of intermarriage among Hispanic groups, all of whom share a Spanish-language heritage (Fig. 9.17). Cubans and Puerto Ricans marry people of Mexican origin almost as often as they marry non-Hispanic whites. Guatemalans and Salvadorans are married to people of Mexican origin at four times the rate that they are married to whites. This can be explained partly by their shared culture, but also important are the low status of both groups and their residential proximity.

The high degree of ethnic compartmentalization evident for Cambodians and Vietnamese is consistent with their high percentage of immigrants and their exceptionally low level of English-language skills. In addition, it seems reasonable that Cambodians, Vietnamese, and other groups in which refugees constitute a large proportion of the immigrants have low rates of intermarriage because their past experience has shown the importance of preserving a tight community to help guard against an uncertain future.

The fact that whites have a low intermarriage rate is partly due to the presence of so many whites as potential marriage partners for other whites. However, history suggests that some sense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.3 Ethnic Intermarriage Rates, 1990</th>
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<tr>
<td>Moved Persons in Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage Married Outside Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Married to Non-Hispanic Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Persons Under Age 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Married Outside Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cambodians | 3.6 | 1.1 | 5.5 |
Vietnamese | 6.5 | 3.6 | 8.3 |
Non-Hispanic whites | 6.6 | 93.4 | 11.1 |
Koreans | 6.7 | 4.5 | 10.2 |
Blacks | 8.7 | 5.0 | 12.3 |
Asian Indians | 8.9 | 5.8 | 14.1 |
Chinese | 10.3 | 5.9 | 15.8 |
Mexicans | 14.0 | 9.9 | 14.8 |
Samoans | 17.1 | 10.4 | 30.2 |
Filipinos | 18.7 | 12.3 | 27.4 |
Guatemalans-Salvadorans | 22.2 | 3.3 | 23.3 |
Japanese | 25.1 | 17.8 | 42.7 |
Thais | 30.7 | 19.1 | 31.7 |
Cubans | 34.2 | 15.5 | 62.5 |
Puerto Ricans | 58.2 | 25.3 | 69.4 |
American Indians | 79.1 | 60.6 | 82.1 |

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1992).*
of racial exclusiveness may also be operating. Strong white concerns about racial mixing and negative attitudes toward other races are still with us.

On the other hand, more than half of the Puerto Ricans and American Indians and almost a third of the Cubans are married to someone outside their ethnic group. All of these groups are small in numbers and widely scattered throughout Southern California, making intermarriage more likely. Their high degree of social integration is a striking contrast to that of whites and some of the Asian groups.

Among most groups, half or more of all intermarriages are with whites. This is because whites are such a large population and because some people gain status by marrying a white. The groups which have been most strongly assimilated with the white population are American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Thais, Japanese, and Filipinos; but people of Mexican origin and some other groups have rates that are not much lower.

**Relationship between acculturation and structural assimilation.** A correlation analysis permits us to better understand how certain variables introduced earlier in this chapter relate to intermarriage rates with whites—the indicator of structural assimilation. To what extent do groups’ average level of acculturation and status correlate with structural assimilation?

The Spearman rank-correlation technique is useful in examining these relationships (Table 9.4). The correlation coefficient, \( r \), varies between 1 and \(-1\). The former indicates that a group is ranked exactly the same on two variables while the latter indicates an opposite ranking. Correlations closer to zero show weaker associations between the variables.

The analysis demonstrates certain relationships quite clearly. First, structural assimilation is highly correlated with total intermarriage rate because marriage with whites is the most common type of intermarriage. Second, the correlation between level of residential segregation and the rate of intermarriage with whites is not statistically significant, although it is in the expected direction. This is because the close social relationships of people extend far beyond their neighborhoods of residence.

Especially significant is the fact that the relative status of ethnic groups in terms of educational attainment, occupation, and income gives absolutely no indication of the level of structural assimilation of immigrant groups. On the other hand, the associations between aspects of acculturation and structural assimilation are strong and statistically significant. Those ethnic groups with better English proficiency and those who immigrated less recently were much more likely to be intermarried with whites. This analysis suggests indirectly that social linkages between immigrant groups and whites can be expected to increase with greater acculturation of the immigrant groups. Conversely, residential location and status will probably have little effect on structural assimilation.

**Trends and Spatial Patterns of Intermarriage**

Because intermarriage between whites and other racial groups was prohibited by state law from 1901 until 1948, it makes little sense to measure interracial marriage before 1948 except in the case of Filipinos, who until 1933 were permitted to marry whites.20

**Table 9.4** Structural Assimilation and Related Characteristics, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Spearman’s ( r )</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rate of total intermarriage</td>
<td>.86(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential segregation from whites</td>
<td>-.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults foreign-born</td>
<td>-.81(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of foreign-born immigrating in 1980s</td>
<td>-.96(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults speaking English very well</td>
<td>.76(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic status variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent college graduates among adults</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent in managerial-professional occupations</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1992).*

*Notes: Structural assimilation is defined as the rate of intermarriage with non-Hispanic whites. \( N = 13 \) ethnic groups.*

\(^a\)The correlation is statistically significant (\( p < .01 \)).
Of the blacks who applied for marriage licenses in 1959, 2.2 percent in Los Angeles County and 2.7 percent in Orange County married outside the black community. Thus, the 12 percent intermarriage rate for Southern California blacks who were married as of 1990 represents a major increase in social integration since about 1960. It may result from diminishing criticism of racially mixed couples by blacks and whites since that time, but it could also reflect a greater tolerance for such marriages in Southern California than elsewhere.

A different trend appears, however, for people of Mexican origin in Los Angeles County. In this case, rates calculated for four periods show rising rates of intermarriage during the period from the 1920s through 1963 but a likely decline in intermarriage since 1963. Of Mexican-origin people who applied for marriage licenses in Los Angeles County between 1924 and 1933, 9 percent married outside their ethnic group. Among Mexican immigrants who applied for naturalization before 1940, 17 percent were married to non-Hispanic whites. Marriage-license applications for 1963 show that 25 percent of people of Mexican origin were marrying outside their group. As expected, immigrants had lower rates of intermarriage and the grandchildren of immigrants had much higher rates. The period of the early 1960s seems to represent the high point of a trend toward increasing social integration of the Mexican community with the larger population in Southern California.

By 1990, however, only 14 percent of all married people of Mexican origin were married to someone from another group. This reversal of what had been a trend toward greater intermarriage among people of Mexican origin is most directly explained by the much larger numbers of Mexican immigrants who have arrived in Southern California. Most unacculturated immigrants have settled primarily in Mexican concentrations; as a result, the level of residential segregation has increased, and the general level of acculturation of Southern California’s Latino population has decreased. These geographical and cultural trends are consistent with the decreased social integration measured by intermarriage rates.

Between 1924 and 1933, 70 percent of the Filipinos who applied for marriage licenses in Los Angeles County married outside their ethnic group, and most of these married whites.
unusually high rate of intermarriage during those years is directly explainable by the shortage of Filipino women in California at that time.

**Spatial patterns.** People who have married outside their group are more likely to live outside the group’s geographical concentrations. The presence of different ethnic groups in the same neighborhoods and regions within Southern California should enhance the opportunities for contact which can lead to intermarriage. On the other hand, areas of ethnic homogeneity presumably reduce the likelihood of intermarriage, because contact between different groups is less common. In addition, ethnic groups which are highly segregated from each other can be expected to have low rates of intermarriage.

Patterns of varying rates of intermarriage support these expected relationships. Intermarriage rates are higher outside each group’s areas of concentration and where ethnic social structures are weaker and more fluid (Figs. 9.18–9.21). For example, in comparison with all whites, intermarried whites tend to live in the poorer, more central parts of Los Angeles. Intermarried blacks are most likely to live in moderate- to high-income areas, such as Hollywood, Brentwood, and Mar Vista. Many blacks in lower-income Venice are also intermarried. Almost all Chinese living in the major settlement area from Chinatown through Hacienda Heights and Diamond Bar are married to other Chinese; outside this area, intermarriage is much more frequent.

We believe that the maps show the leading areas where close relationships are cultivated between people in different ethnic groups. The residents of these areas have been the most active in reducing the ethnic compartmentalization of contemporary Southern California. These areas are the geographical frontier of social change.

**Is Southern California a Multiethnic Society?**

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the answer to this question is no. Rather than a multiethnic society, Southern California is better described as a collection of ethnic societies. On the surface—in the public and commercial arenas—the ethnic groups work together. Only in a superficial sense can the people who mix in malls and schools and on the job be described as constituting a single multiethnic society. A deeper look must acknowledge that most ethnic societies are highly compartmentalized, moderately separated residentially, and in some cases not well acculturated to the dominant English-speaking culture.

No more than a quarter of the married adults in most ethnic groups are married to anyone outside the group. It appears that only American Indians and Puerto Ricans live in a truly multiethnic society, because less than half the married people in those groups are married to someone in their same group. Cambodians, Salvadorans, Vietnamese, and Koreans have very low rates of both English proficiency and intermarriage.

Most ethnic groups are moderately segregated, but a few—Cambodians, Salvadorans, and blacks—are very highly segregated. Acculturation and economic progress have operated to reduce residential segregation over time, and even the traditionally high rate of black-white segregation has diminished.

The recent arrival of immigrants is a major impediment to acculturation and social integration of ethnic groups. Immigrants account for over 90 percent of the adults in many groups; and in several, more than half the immigrants arrived after 1980. Because of massive immigration, the residential segregation of people of Mexican origin has increased since 1960. Also, in 1990 the segregation of Cambodians and Salvadorans was higher than that of blacks because immigration into ethnic enclaves has overwhelmed the processes of assimilation.

It is encouraging that acculturation increases over time. In addition, our finding that social integration is somewhat greater among people under the age of 35 suggests that the social barriers between ethnic societies are weakening. The cities and neighborhoods with greater ethnic diversity will provide more opportunities for close social contact among groups, and geographical zones between ethnic concentrations are the areas of both greater diversity and greater intermarriage.

For acculturation and social integration to take place, the pace of the immigrant influx must slow. Then, those immigrants already here and their children can have greater opportunities for
acculturation and integration. If new immigrants continue to arrive in the large numbers that settled here in the 1980s, Southern California will remain as compartmentalized as it is today—a set of separate societies rather than a single society of varied ethnic identities.

**Notes**

1. D is the most commonly used of a group of indexes known as segregation indexes. For its properties compared with others, see White (1986).

2. The index does not distinguish between economic and cultural differences as the primary reason behind residential segregation. However, it is possible to control for economic differences between groups by measuring the segregation of households within a limited income range. In an earlier 1990 study of Los Angeles County we found that black and white households with incomes over $50,000 were almost as segregated from each other (D = .71) as were low-income black and white households (D = .75). This shows that black-white segregation cannot be explained by the groups’ different income distributions (Allen and Turner 1996a, 20).

3. Comparative figures for Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties can be found in Clark (1996).


5. The entropy index and its properties are explained in White (1986).

6. Our results for 1990 can be compared with those for 1980 using the same methods (Allen and Turner 1989).

7. Only New York City’s Queens County, an Aleutian Island borough in Alaska, and San Francisco County are more ethnically diverse than Los Angeles County.


9. For an analysis and a map of percentage Koreans by block within Koreatown, see Allen and Turner (1995).

10. Black dispersal during the 1980s is shown clearly on maps of the changing distribution of blacks (Turner and Allen 1991).

11. The best evidence for the acculturation and economic progress of immigrants in Southern California is Myers (1995), especially chapters 4 and 7. In contrast to most analyses of immigrant adaptation, Myers tracked specific white, Asian, and Latino immigrant cohorts from one decade to the next. In this way the 1990 characteristics of immigrants who arrived in the 1970s are not confounded by the arrival of new immigrants during the 1980s. For measures of the very rapid language shift toward English among children of immigrants in Miami and elsewhere, see Portes and Schauffler (1994).

12. This income comparison is inappropriate, however, where there are very few U.S.-born adults because nearly all the U.S.-born are much younger than is the average immigrant. For that reason alone they could be expected to be earning lower incomes. Thus, no median personal income is shown for groups in which more than 85 percent of the adults are foreign-born.


15. See Massey (1985) and Allen and Turner (1996b) for the theory and research results.


18. Because men were four times more likely than women to be designated the householder and are more apt to marry younger women, a high proportion of the married people in our under-35 sample are under the age of 35.


20. In 1948 the California Supreme Court ruled, in *Perez v. Sharp*, that the state’s law prohibiting interracial marriage was unconstitutional.


22. Panunzio (1942), 693.


25. The inclusion of the four outlying counties in the 1990 sample had probably no significant effect, because the area contains both large Mexican concentrations and dispersed, suburban Mexican Americans, as does Los Angeles County.
