

Diversity and Dissolution of the American Color Line: Patterns of Residential Segregation across American Places, 1990-2010

Extended Abstract

This paper addresses a straightforward question: Are higher levels of place diversity associated with lower levels of residential segregation? Immigration, intermarriage, high minority fertility, youthful age structure, and recent shifts in racial-ethnic identity have all contributed to an increase in diversity in the United States. This has been one of the most significant demographic trends in recent decades ushering in a new era of racial/ethnic relations beyond the traditional black-white divide. However, the implications of this increase in diversity on residential patterns of black and whites remain unclear.

In this study we use decennial census data for 1990, 2000, and 2010 to address the question of how higher diversity relates to patterns of residential segregation, especially between blacks and whites. We use census blocks as the geographic base to examine patterns of residential segregation within census defined places. We use constant places, and place boundaries are normalized based on the 2010 geographies. The term diversity is used to refer to the number and size of racial-ethnic groups that the population of a place comprises. We use the entropy index (E) to measure diversity, and calculate the index using the four main groups: black, white, Hispanic, and Asian. An E value of 0 implies that all members of the population in a place belong to one single racial-ethnic group, and therefore signifies complete homogeneity. In contrast, a value of 100 indicates complete heterogeneity, meaning each group comprises 25 percent of the place population. We use the index of Dissimilarity (D) to measure patterns of residential segregation within places.

Preliminary results show that the black-white segregation has declined over the three decades by over 10 points, but remains highest in central cities followed by nonmetropolitan places. Despite this decline, separation between blacks and whites still remains high when compared to the separation of Whites and Hispanics and Whites and Asians. At the same time, diversity overall has increased. Central cities remain the most diverse places followed by suburban and rural places, respectively. As expected, our results clearly show that, net of other factors, the higher the level of diversity of a place, the lower the levels of residential segregation. Our results also show that the increase of diversity in a place leads to lower levels of residential segregation.

Average Within-Place Segregation in Metro & Nonmetro Places, 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Black-White			
ALL	72.2	66.7	62.2
METROPOLITAN Central City	76.3	71.9	68.4
METROPOLITAN Suburban Place	58.7	53.8	50.2
NON-METROPOLITAN	74.5	67.4	62.2
Hispanic-White			
ALL	52.9	52.3	49.6
METROPOLITAN Central City	59.0	58.8	56.1
METROPOLITAN Suburban Place	41.3	41.3	40.0
NON-METROPOLITAN	55.1	53.9	51.4
Asian-White			
ALL	48.4	48.0	47.0
METROPOLITAN Central City	51.9	51.2	50.2
METROPOLITAN Suburban Place	41.3	42.1	41.7
NON-METROPOLITAN	59.8	60.9	61.1

Figure 1: Average Diversity in Metro and Nonmetro Places, 1990-2010

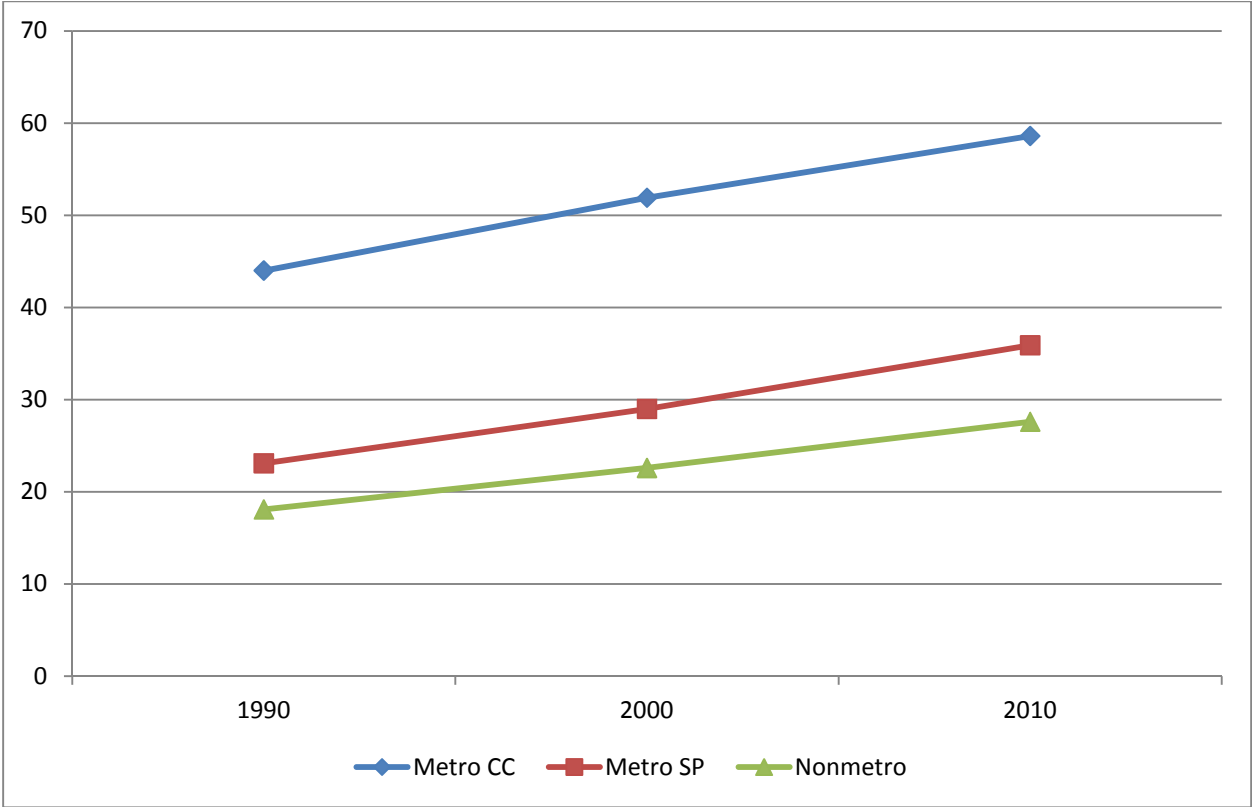


Table 2: Place Characteristics Associate with Segregation, 2010

	Black-White		Hispanic-White		Asian-White	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	20.572 ***	0.021	15.343 ***	0.016	35.778 ***	0.027
Diversity						
Diversity, 2010	-0.005 ***	0.001	-0.026 ***	0.001	-0.152 ***	0.001
Demographic Characteristics						
2010 Population, ln	3.802 ***	0.002	-0.009	0.001	1.804 ***	0.002
Percent Black	0.131 ***	0.001	3.382 ***	0.001	0.221 ***	0.001
Percent Hispanic	0.030 ***	0.001	0.124 ***	0.001	0.111 ***	0.001
Percent Asian	-0.092 ***	0.001	0.004	0.001	-1.148 ***	0.001
Minority Less White Growth Rate	-0.003 ***	0.001	-0.003 ***	0.001	0.000 ***	0.001
Ratio of Median Household Income	-12.364 ***	0.008	0.000	0.001	-1.782 ***	0.009
Percent Change in Housing Units, 1990-2000	-0.021 ***	0.000	-4.363 ***	0.004	-0.005 ***	0.001
Place Type (ref=Metro Central City)						
Metro Suburban Place	-3.919 ***	0.006	-0.026	0.001	-3.570 ***	0.006
Nonmetro Place	7.433 ***	0.009	-1.329 ***	0.004	10.047 ***	0.023
Spatial Location (ref.=South)						
west	-6.037 ***	0.008	3.454 ***	0.006	-2.293 ***	0.007
midwest	1.639 ***	0.005	4.663 ***	0.005	3.056 ***	0.009
northeast	4.368 ***	0.006	-6.734 ***	0.004	2.604 ***	0.008
Annexation						
Annexed Territory	0.317 ***	0.005	6.326 ***	0.008	1.487 ***	0.007
Functional Specialization						
Retirement	8.991 ***	0.017	6.062 ***	0.014	10.505 ***	0.038
Manufacturing	1.417 ***	0.008	0.618	0.006	2.161 ***	0.015
Government	-4.847 ***	0.014	-1.440 ***	0.014	-5.947 ***	0.028
School	0.291 ***	0.004	-2.844 ***	0.003	-0.650 ***	0.007
Military	-10.958 ***	0.012	-10.296 ***	0.016	-4.065 ***	0.024
<i>R</i> ²	61.1		58.3		54.8	

Table 3: Place Characteristics Associated with Changes in Segregation, 1990-2010

	Black-White	Hispanic-White	Asian-White
Constant	35.389	28.702	24.799
Segregation in 1990	-0.442	-0.454	-0.454
Diversity			
Change in Diversity, 1990-2010	1.273 ***	1.310 ***	1.564 ***
Diversity Index, 1990	0.008 ***	0.008 ***	0.009 ***
Demographic Characteristics, 1990			
1990 Population, ln	-0.222 ***	-0.040 ***	-0.031 *
Percent Black	-0.061 ***	-0.155 ***	-0.072 ***
Percent Hispanic	0.101 ***	-0.515 ***	0.124 ***
Percent Asian	0.008	0.104 ***	0.019 ***
1990-2010 Demographic/Economic Change			
Black Less White Growth Rate	0.062 ***	-0.003 ***	0.016 ***
Rate of Change in Ratio of black to white Mean Household Income	0.101 *	0.196 ***	0.042 ***
Functional Specialization, 1990			
Retirement	-0.002 ***	-0.001 ***	-0.001 ***
Manufacturing	-0.001	0.001	0.001
Government	-0.040 ***	-0.028 ***	-0.050 ***
School	1.781 ***	1.386 ***	1.484 *
Military	-0.273	-1.760 ***	0.805
Place Type (ref=Metro Central City)			
Metro Suburban Place	-1.496 *	-0.817 ***	-0.304 ***
Nonmetro Place	0.825 **	-0.910 **	-1.712 ***
Spatial Location (ref.=South)			
West	-0.791	-2.185 **	1.690 ***
Midwest	-3.574 ***	-4.797 ***	-1.042 *
Northeast	-1.844 **	-0.993 *	2.802 ***
Annexation			
Annexed Territory	1.708 **	-0.474 ***	0.398 ***
R2	1.800 ***	1.889 ***	1.990 ***
	0.079	-0.815 *	-0.193
	-0.071	-0.275	1.102
	41.6	41.1	49.9

