

Partnering 'Out' and Fitting In: Residential Segregation and the Neighbourhood Contexts of Mixed-Race Households

Steven R. Holloway,^{*1} Mark Ellis,² Richard Wright³ and Margaret Hudson¹

¹Department of Geography, University of Georgia, 204 GG Building, Athens, GA 30602, USA

²Department of Geography and Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, Box 353550, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195

³Department of Geography, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755-3571

ABSTRACT

This analysis considers how racial segregation affects the residential geographies of households headed by mixed-race couples. We also become interested in assessing whether diverse households live in diverse places. To measure neighbourhood diversity, we develop a new index of diversity based on the exposure index. The analysis of 12 large US metropolitan areas finds that race (in tandem with status markers like income) and nativity provide some of the best understandings of the neighbourhood geographies of mixed-race households. The study also reveals that instead of fitting into and thus reinforcing the existing racialised urban spatial structure, some households formed by 'partnering out' live in spaces characterised by their racial diversity. We focus on the mixed-race household because such a collective constitutes a scale at which mixed-race contact takes place and a site for identity construction of individuals, partners, and the surrounding neighbourhood. Copyright © 2005 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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*Correspondence to: S. R. Holloway, Department of Geography, University of Georgia, 204 GG Building, Athens, GA 30602, USA. E-mail: holloway@uga.edu

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INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth Adams (a white woman) and Gould (an African or Native-American man whose first name is unknown), and their mixed-race descendants, founded the eighteenth century community of Gouldtown, New Jersey. The community soon attracted other mixed-race partners and their households. The Pierces, for instance, had West Indian – Dutch heritage and the Murrays claimed Native American and Swedish forebears. The Cuffs descended from the union of a white slave-owning widow and her house slave (then husband). The children of the Gould, Pierce, Murray and Cuff families all married across racial lines (Steward and Steward, 1913:62–3, 115), some to whites and others to multiracial people (often cousins). Throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, the town was known as a mixed-race community whose inhabitants often asserted a mixed-race (known then as mulatto or coloured) identity.

The restrictive laws and harsh, often violent, social reaction against mixed-race relationships that stimulated Gouldtown's founding are now either absent or are fading fast. Key questions about Gouldtown's early history remain unanswered. How did Elizabeth and Mr. Gould (and their descendants) create a safe space for mixed-race families? How did other families find out

about Goultdown in the face of strong sanctions? Foremost among these sanctions were widespread laws designed to keep racial mixing to an absolute minimum – especially between blacks and whites, and subsequently also between Asians and whites (Kennedy, 2003). It took until 1967 for state sanction against mixed-race marriages to end with the Supreme Court's *Loving v. Virginia* decision. Taboos against mixing, while still active, are today less extreme than they once were (e.g. Sollors, 2000; Moran, 2001; Root, 2001; Kennedy, 2003).

Unsurprisingly, recent decades have witnessed growing rates of mixed-race marriages. Marriage across racial lines, excluding interethnic unions between Latinos and non-Latinos of the same race, accounted for 2.2% of national marriages in 1992, up from 0.4% in 1960 (US Bureau of the Census, 1998). Rates more than doubled again to 5.2% in 2000 (US Bureau of the Census, 2003).¹ What, then, structures the contemporary neighbourhood geography of mixed-race households (where the race of the household head differs from that of his/her partner or spouse)? Do such mixed-race households today, like the Goulds and the Murrays 250 years ago, seek out other similar couples and settle near one another? Do the processes that generate and sustain segregation, as we currently comprehend them, apply to such mixed-race households? Do mixed-race households live in segregated neighbourhoods dominated by one group or another? Does this depend on the race of the male partner or the female partner? Do the social class positions of the partners affect the couple's residential geographies? These are new questions in the social science literature. To begin to provide some answers, this essay invokes theories of racial segregation in an empirical examination of mixed-race households' residential patterns at the census tract scale for 12 large metropolitan regions, using confidential 1990 Census long-form data.

Although the neighbourhood locations of households headed by differently raced partners have heretofore gone unexamined, previous research has incorporated residential geographies to explain how mixed-race unions arise. Such studies often argue that residential proximity elevates the chances of contact that lead to partnership and/or marriage (e.g. Bossard, 1932; Peach, 1980; Alba and Golden, 1986; Lieberman and Waters, 1988; Wong, 1998b, 1999; Liang and

Ito, 1999). Instead of using residential space to explain mixed-race partnership, however, this study starts with the *existence* of mixed-race couples and thinks through, theoretically and empirically, where their households reside in US metropolitan areas. Our main interests lie in interpreting the effect of racially segregated spaces on the residential geographies of mixed-race households, and in beginning to connect diversity within the household to diversity within neighbourhoods. To this end, we match traditional measures of neighbourhood segregation (the dissimilarity index and the exposure index) with a new index designed to capture the exposure of individuals or partners to neighbourhood diversity.

Mixed-race² or multiply racialised identities can be theorised and experienced at a variety of scales, from the individual, to the household, to the region, to the nation-state (Wright *et al.*, 2003). This study builds on the idea that the mixed-race household constitutes one such context. The mixed-race literature, however, bypasses this level of analysis; mixed-race research mostly concerns the complexities, paradoxes and ambiguities of an individual's racial identity. As the household scale rarely enters into explanation, the importance of context for individuals jumps scale straight to the neighbourhood or places of work, the mall, school, and so on (Tyner, 2002). Other literature demonstrates (e.g. Cooke, 2001), though, that the neighbourhood choice of households headed by partners takes place jointly. More generally, residential mobility theories, especially those built on family life-cycle notions (Rossi, 1955; Stapleton, 1980; Clark and Dieleman, 1996), have long highlighted household-level decision-making. This tradition goes back at least to Homer Hoyt (1939), who articulated his influential notions of filtering and vacancy chains based on his observations of how households move between neighbourhoods over time. We build on these insights to analyse the outcomes of such decisions for households headed by two partners who claim different racial heritages.

Households are not only important because of the way that mobility studies theorise and operationalise them, but also because they constitute an analytical scale where mixed-race contact and the production of identities (for individuals, partners, and the surrounding neighbourhood) takes

place (cf. James and Tucker, 2003). Most previous research on neighbourhood segregation misses this. The dominant ways of thinking about and measuring residential racial mixing focus on the ecology of neighbourhood integration and/or segregation. Almost all such assessments derive from counting individuals in space, since most of the typical indices are computed from tallies of individuals in neighbourhoods, not counts of households. The argument of this essay taps the rich tradition of urban ecological analysis in the social sciences, but focuses on the *neighbourhood* locations of types of *households*, both of which we differentiate according to their internal racial mixture. By considering residential segregation and diversity in the household and the neighbourhood, we begin to unpack diversity by scale (cf. Wong 1998b). We see how race mixing at one scale affects mixing at others, and thus the paper, more generally, adds dimensionality to taken-for-granted meanings of 'segregation'.

The paper begins with a discussion of racial hierarchies and the mixed-race household. We next place race in tandem with status markers and nativity to think through neighbourhood geographies and provide a backdrop for understanding mixed-race household residential patterns. The empirical portion of the paper reveals how race mediates mixed-race household neighbourhood location, and that, using a new measure of neighbourhood racial diversity, mixed-race households, especially black-white couples, appear to be unusually concentrated in diverse neighbourhoods. Given the aggregate and preliminary nature of this inquiry, the conclusions start to describe an agenda for future study.

RACIAL HIERARCHIES, MIXED-RACE PARTNERS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD GEOGRAPHIES

The empirical work on mixed-race partnering measures factors that increase (or decrease) the propensity of individuals to partner 'out', focusing on variables that mark social distance, such as race, nativity, economic standing and education (e.g. Qian, 1999; Kalmijn, 1998; Kalmijn and Flap, 2001; Model and Fisher, 2001; Fu, 2001; Qian and Lichter, 2001; Rosenfeld, 2001). This literature forms part of a significant current in sociology that focuses on the relative status of partners

and their social separation. Status equivalence approaches contend that mixed-race partnering is prompted by similarity in the status of the two partners, whereas status exchange theories assert that lower status majority group members are more likely to marry a minority group member if they provide higher socio-economic status.

We emphasise that mixed-race partnering must be understood in the light of ongoing processes of racial formation (Omi and Winant, 1994) and stratification (e.g. Jordan, 1968). Whiteness has its advantages and shapes a hierarchy of privilege in US society. The normalised form of this racial hierarchy has important ramifications for the analysis of mixed-race partnering. Indeed, the history of this hierarchy is replete with laws and events proscribing mixing between blacks and whites (and between other groups), with the likelihood of social isolation and violent consequences for the parties involved (e.g. Sollors, 2000; Tyner and Houston, 2000; Kennedy, 2003). The particularity of this experience for blacks is evident today in the relatively low rates of partnering with whites, relative to those between whites and other groups.

The racial organisation of housing markets is part and parcel, indeed the 'linchpin', of race relations in the US (Bobo, 1989; see also, for example, Anderson and Massey, 2001). Race, mediated by wealth (e.g. Fisher, 2003), provides the key to understanding the neighbourhood social geographies in US cities. Massey and Denton (1993) and Yinger (1995) convincingly demonstrated that institutional forces continue to segregate and ghettoise large portions of the black population. Other racialised minority groups suffer from institutional racism, but not to the same degree as blacks.

Preferences for and against neighbourhoods based on their racial composition helps to maintain segregation, but the literature is marked by considerable disagreement about how exactly this plays out. Schelling (1971, 1972) sparked these ideas with his notions of racial tipping points. In neighbourhoods facing racial transition during the 1960s, white residents tolerated very limited integration before moving out, fuelling so-called 'white flight'. While some were more tolerant than others, very few whites wanted to live in areas with more than nominal integration (often pegged at 15 or 25% non-white), thus ensuring the inevitable transition of

neighbourhoods to predominantly black. Several show-card studies (Farley *et al.*, 1978, 1993, 1997; Zubrinsky and Bobo, 1996) confirmed that whites strongly prefer predominantly white neighbourhoods and tolerate only limited degrees of racial integration. For example, Farley *et al.* (1997) found, in their study of four metropolitan areas using the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI) data, that the willingness of whites to move into a neighbourhood was inversely related to the density of blacks living in that place. In contrast, blacks tended to prefer to live in more integrated neighbourhoods, but ones where blacks still had significant representation. Since blacks prefer evenly integrated neighbourhoods that whites will not tolerate, segregation is maintained as a function primarily of white preference and prejudice.

Some recent studies question conventional accounts of racial preferences. Clark (2002) and Krysan and Farley (2002) noted the tendency of black MCSUI respondents to select neighbourhoods with substantially greater numbers of black families as their second choice. Clark (2002) argued that own-group neighbourhood preferences hold, with some variation, across different ethnic and racial groups. He concluded that racially neutral ethnocentric preferences thus constitute a primary mechanism for maintaining segregation. On the one hand, Patterson (1997) shared this view, especially for middle-class blacks. Krysan and Farley (2002), on the other, drew different conclusions from the MCSUI data. Blacks were averse to pioneering all-white neighbourhoods due to fears of white hostility, rather than choosing to stay in black neighbourhoods because of racial solidarity or neutral ethnocentrism. Moreover, blacks were willing to move into neighbourhoods with a wide range of black-white mixtures, including majority white neighbourhoods with at least a few black families. Krysan and Farley concluded that white preferences continue to play a crucial role in maintaining segregation.

Harris (2001) complicated the picture with his finding that in Chicago, blacks and whites were *both* averse to living in predominantly black neighbourhoods. He contended that because both sets of respondents associated such places with high levels of poverty, crime and other social problems, racial preferences shown in surveys are proxies for non-racial attributes of

neighbourhoods and thus not responsible for maintaining segregation. He concluded that 'those who are interested in ending racial residential segregation should stop looking to neighborhood preferences for solutions and instead focus their energies on institutionalized forms of discrimination' (Harris, 2001:114).

Broadening the discussion beyond the black-white divide to consider preferences in the context of multiple racial groups, Zubrinsky and Bobo (1996) reported that whites consider blacks to be least desirable as neighbours, Asians the most desirable, and Latinos as intermediate. This is consistent with earlier work suggesting that blacks remain substantially more isolated from whites than Asians and Latinos, with only slight improvements between decadal census years (Farley and Frey, 1994). Latinos and Asians, unlike blacks, seem better able to translate socio-economic gains into improved residential mobility (Denton and Massey, 1989; Alba and Logan, 1993). Recent analyses of Census 2000 data (Glaeser and Vigdor, 2001; Lewis Mumford Center, 2001) show continued reduction in the segregation of blacks. The segregation of Latinos did not change, but due to the rapid increase in the size of the population, Latinos were more likely to live in neighbourhoods with other Latinos in 2000 than in 1980. In addition, recent work on school choice found 'Latino flight' from public schools into private schools in response to the presence of black schoolmates (Fairlie, 2002). Poulsen *et al.* (2002) also found differences in relative segregation by race in selected US cities, as well as significant variation between those places. The literature thus points to race-based preferences for neighbourhoods being hierarchically organised with whites the most preferred, blacks the least, and Asians and Latinos occupying a middle position.

For mixed-race households, 'mixed race' has not usually constituted a salient group identity. Yet is there currently an emergent mixed-race identity (Dalmage, 2000: Chap. 4) that finds geographical expression like nineteenth-century Goultdtown? If so, 'mixed race' may be comprehended as a group identity that members seek to establish and solidify in part through their choices to be geographically proximate to other mixed-race households. Preferences could play out in the following ways. Mixed white/non-white households may be drawn to live in

predominantly white neighbourhoods more than mixed-race households in which both partners are non-white. In contrast, mixed-race households involving blacks may ultimately find themselves confined to predominantly black neighbourhoods. Some mixed-race households with neither black nor white partners may live in the communities of either partner, whereas others may gravitate to 'whiter' neighbourhoods. Or, instead of fitting into and reinforcing the existing racialised spatial structure of the city, some mixed-race households may seek to create or live in existing spaces that defy easy categorisation. Based on interviews, Dalmage (2000:95) reported that black-white mixed-race families 'desire racially mixed neighbourhoods because there they can have a sense of safety and comfort and not face repeated acts of border patrolling and racism'. She prefaces her claim by documenting the difficulties that black-white families have in predominantly white and predominantly black neighbourhoods. This may be part of a broader oppositional stance towards being placed within hierarchical singular racial categories.

Such spaces could be predominantly black or white, but they could also be diverse or mixed in specific ways. Diversity need not be the diversity drawn from a pluralistic view of space (where such neighbourhoods would monolithically comprise mixed-race households), but rather a diversity derived from measures of different proportions of racialised groups in the locality. More broadly, we speculate that mixed-race households respond to and contribute to the contemporary restructuring of the social geography of cities. This project examines this possibility by centering the empirical analysis on the racial make-up of the neighbourhoods where mixed-race households reside.

DATA AND METHODS

The study hinges on the use of the confidential 1-in-6 sample of households from the 1990 Census. These data can be used only with permission from the Census Bureau under strict oversight in a secure facility. The individual- and household-level data were matched to their census tract locations. We selected 12 large metropolitan areas for detailed examination – the Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs) of

Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Diego, San Francisco and Washington, DC. Drawn from several different regions of the US, these CMSAs provide a geographical balance. They also offer contrasting histories of settlement by whites and racialised minorities. We combined the standard race and ethnicity questions on the long-form data into a single set of mutually exclusive 'racial' categories – white, black, Asian, Indian, Other and Latino. We treated Latinos as one of the mutually exclusive racial groups for the purposes of our analysis, even though the Census treats Latinos as an ethnic group that can be of any race. Although households are complex social formations, we identified 'mixed-race households' when the head of household and partner were identified in different racial categories. We initially examined all such households, including unmarried opposite-sex partners and same-sex partners. For much of the following analysis, however, we restrict our analysis to married and unmarried opposite-sex partners to simplify the analysis. To ease the presentation we selectively refer to mixed-race opposite-sex households as MROS and same-race opposite-sex households as SROS.

Our analysis of mixed-race households required the computation of a variety of indices to measure segregation, exposure and diversity. We used the ubiquitous Dissimilarity index (D) to capture unevenness in residential distributions between mixed-race and same-race households:

$$D = 0.5 * \sum_{j=1}^J \left(\left| \frac{w_j}{W} - \frac{x_j}{X} \right| \right) \quad (1)$$

where j indexes census tracts, and w and x index two racial groups. W and X are the total populations of groups w and x , respectively, across all tracts, and w_j and x_j are tract counts of the respective groups. Almost all applications of D use counts of individuals. We deviated from this practice by using counts of households in our computations. For example, we compute the dissimilarity between all mixed-race households and non-mixed-race households.

We also applied the suite of P^* isolation and exposure indices popularised by Lieberson (1981):

$${}_w P_x^* = \sum_{j=1}^J \left(\frac{w_j * x_j}{W * t_j} \right) \quad (2)$$

where j indexes census tracts, w and x index racial groups, and t is the total population of all racial groups. W is the total population of group w across all tracts, while w_j , x_j and t_j are tract counts of the respective groups. Standard interpretation states that ${}_w P_x^*$ represents group x 's population share in group w 's typical tract, or commonly, the residential exposure of group w to group x . For example, a white–black index value of 0.23 indicates that whites live in neighbourhoods where blacks constitute, on average, 23% of the tract's population. The index can be computed for each racial group in the population (including group w 's residential exposure to itself – or group w 's residential isolation), and the resultant values sum to 1.

The focus on mixed-race households affects the implementation of P^* because either w or x , or both, represent counts of households rather than individuals. For example, when we computed the residential isolation of mixed-race households, both w and x are household counts. We also calculated the neighbourhood exposure of individuals in the standard racial categories to mixed-race households; in that case w represents counts of individuals and x represents counts of households. Much of our analysis, however, focuses on the neighbourhood exposure of mixed-race households to individuals in the standard racial categories: w represents households and x represents individuals.

Finally, to explore our suspicions that neighbourhood racial and ethnic diversity plays a significant role in shaping the neighbourhood geographies of mixed-race households, we devised a new index built on the foundation of the P^* indices. Like P^* , our Neighbourhood Diversity Exposure (NDE) index captures a characteristic of the 'typical' census tract of a particular group.³ Whereas P^* is computed for pairs of groups (e.g. the typical residential exposure of whites to blacks), our NDE indexes the amount of racial diversity in the typical neighbourhood of a particular group. In other words, the NDE index measures a group's exposure to racial diversity in their typical residential neighbourhood. The entropy measure of diversity (Theil and Finizza, 1971) was scaled to range between 0 and 1. The proportional distribution of the group in question was then combined with the neighbourhood scaled measures of diversity.

The standard entropy diversity measure for each tract is:

$$E_j = s * \sum_{k=1}^K \left(\frac{k_j}{t_j} * \ln \frac{k_j}{t_j} \right) \quad (3)$$

where k indexes the racial groups. The maximum value of E_j is obtained when tract j 's population is evenly divided between the k racial groups. The number of racial groups limits the magnitude of the maximum value, so we include a scaling constant s so that E_j ranges between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 1. For our computations, we calculated E_j based on individuals in the six standard racial groups discussed above.

The modification of P^* results in an index that represents the racial diversity for group w 's typical tract.

$$NDE = \sum_{j=1}^J \left(\frac{w_j}{W} * E_j \right) \quad (4)$$

If group w disproportionately concentrates in census tracts with high racial diversity, NDE will take on a large positive index value, and conversely, if group w disproportionately concentrates in tracts with low racial diversity, NDE will take on a small positive value. To illustrate, imagine a city with four tracts with computed scaled-entropy values of 0.15, 0.3, 0.45 and 0.6. The NDE will be 0.375 for a group evenly distributed across the tracts (i.e. 0.25 of the group's population resides in each tract). If the group disproportionately resides in *less* diverse tracts (e.g. 0.4, 0.3, 0.2 and 0.1 in the order presented above), the NDE drops to 0.3. If the group disproportionately resides in *more* diverse tracts (e.g. 0.1, 0.2, 0.3 and 0.4 in the order presented above), the NDE increases to 0.45.

BASIC PATTERNS

We limit most of our analysis to the six largest types of mixed-race households (white–Latino, white–Asian, white–black, white–Indian, Asian–Latino and black–Latino) because they constitute the vast majority of all mixed-race household types in all of our metropolitan study areas. Table 1 provides counts and proportions of mixed-race households in the 12 metropolitan areas under investigation. Overall, mixed-race households constitute only a small share of all households (3.7%), yet the numbers – 133,511

Table 1. Mixed-race opposite-sex households.

Metropolitan area	All mixed-race households		White-Latino ^a		White-Asian		White-black		White-native		Black-Latino ^a		Asian-Latino ^a	
	<i>n</i>	% of HHs	<i>n</i>	% of MR ^b	<i>n</i>	% of MR ^b	<i>n</i>	% of MR ^b	<i>n</i>	% of MR ^b	<i>n</i>	% of MR ^b	<i>n</i> ^c	% of MR ^b
Atlanta	2,138	1.63	976	45.65	424	19.83	303	14.17	246	11.51	97	4.54	**	**
Chicago	9,219	2.44	5,501	59.67	1,498	16.25	985	10.68	520	5.64	301	3.26	**	**
Dallas	6,538	3.39	4,005	61.26	797	12.19	480	7.34	834	12.76	161	2.46	**	**
Detroit	4,653	1.84	2,163	46.49	673	14.46	714	15.34	799	17.17	132	2.84	**	**
Houston	6,035	3.60	4,152	67.68	654	10.66	332	5.41	433	7.06	174	2.84	**	**
Los Angeles	37,631	6.14	22,354	59.40	7,153	19.01	2,060	5.47	2,033	5.40	1,021	2.71	**	**
Miami	5,586	3.98	4,219	75.53	421	7.54	308	5.51	139	2.49	242	4.33	**	**
New York	21,407	2.61	12,576	58.75	3,030	14.15	2,133	9.96	486	2.27	1,776	8.30	**	**
Philadelphia	4,898	1.69	2,030	41.45	950	19.40	944	19.27	340	6.94	323	6.59	**	**
San Diego	8,537	7.82	4,492	52.62	2,115	24.77	504	5.90	516	6.04	201	2.35	**	**
San Francisco	20,354	6.96	10,339	50.80	5,568	27.36	1,335	6.56	1,070	5.26	338	1.66	**	**
Washington, DC	6,515	3.28	2,608	40.03	1,737	26.66	1,086	16.67	355	5.45	300	4.60	**	**
Total	133,511	3.72	75,415	56.44	25,020	18.73	11,184	8.37	7,771	5.82	5,066	3.79	3,620	2.71

Source: Calculated by authors from confidential 1-in-6 long-form Census data, 1990.

^aLatino includes all racial categories.

^bMR refers to all mixed-race opposite-sex households.

^cAsian-Latino sample counts for individual metropolitan areas are suppressed according to Census Bureau rules because some cell counts are less than 75.

sample households – translate into approximately 800,000 households in the total population of these metropolitan areas. West Coast areas have higher shares of mixed-race households (cf. Wong, 1999). Households with a Latino and a white partner are by far the most numerous, constituting over half of all mixed-race households in these metropolitan areas as a whole, and never less than Washington, DC's 40%. In Miami, such pairings represent over three-quarters of all MROS. White–Asian partners are the next most numerous (with San Francisco, San Diego and Washington, DC possessing the largest shares), followed by white–black partners (in which East Coast metropolitan areas exceed the average). Residential dissimilarity (Table 2) between mixed-race and same-race households is uniformly low, indicating that mixed-race households are not overly dissimilar in their residential distributions from the majority of households in each of the 12 places in this study. There is little difference in the values between all non-mixed-race households (including singles and same-sex partners) and opposite-sex same-race households (including only those households with a partner or spouse).

Mixed-race households typically exhibit very low residential isolation (Table 2). The average isolation of 5 is just slightly larger than mixed-

race households' typical share of metropolitan populations (less than 4%). Isolation index values vary somewhat between metropolitan areas. San Diego's isolation index value of 10 is the largest of the metropolitan areas in our sample. Places where mixed-race households constitute a larger share of the total population exhibit larger isolation index values. In each of the 12 areas, isolation index values exceed the mixed-race household share of metropolitan population (column 5 of Table 2), which suggests a limited degree of geographical concentration. San Francisco's isolation index value is only 21% greater than the area's mixed-race household share, whereas Philadelphia's isolation index value is 80% greater than expected. In other words, relative to other places in our study, Philadelphia might be closer to having residential concentrations of mixed-race households. Mixed-race households are not numerous enough in our 1990 sample, though, to see anything other than these faint signs of residential clustering. Evidence for or against the residential clustering of MROS may be more conclusive with use of the larger sample of MROS households that we expect will be available for the 2000 data.

Table 3 examines the exposure of individuals in the standard racial groups to mixed-race households. Across all metropolitan areas,

Table 2. Exploring the formation of mixed race space – dissimilarity and exposure of opposite-sex mixed-race households.

Metropolitan area	Dissimilarity of MROS ^a			Exposure / isolation of MROS ^a		
	vs. all other households	vs. SROS ^b	% MROS ^a	Isolation of MROS ^a	Isolation-% Ratio	Exposure to SROS ^b
Atlanta	23.96	24.49	1.63	2.21	1.36	60.42
Chicago	24.70	26.48	2.44	3.41	1.40	57.43
Dallas	19.75	19.97	3.39	4.20	1.24	60.00
Detroit	24.98	25.82	1.84	2.63	1.43	57.42
Houston	21.54	20.41	3.60	4.59	1.27	59.87
Los Angeles	21.37	19.44	6.14	7.67	1.25	54.62
Miami	28.50	26.27	3.98	5.80	1.46	54.30
New York	23.42	25.76	2.61	3.56	1.36	55.36
Philadelphia	29.07	30.56	1.69	3.05	1.80	59.12
San Diego	21.10	19.19	7.82	9.78	1.25	53.57
San Francisco	19.34	17.33	6.96	8.43	1.21	52.31
Washington, DC	22.91	22.30	3.28	4.43	1.35	57.88
Average	23.39	23.17	3.78	4.98	1.32	56.86

Source: Calculated by authors from confidential 1-in-6 long-form Census data, 1990.

^aMROS: opposite-sex mixed-race married and partnered households.

^bSROS: opposite-sex same-race married and partnered households.

Table 3. Standard racial groups' neighbourhood exposure to mixed-race households.

Metropolitan area	% MROS ^b	White		Black		Asian		Indian		Other		Latino ^a	
		Index ^c	Ratio ^d	Index	Ratio	Index	Ratio	Index	Ratio	Index	Ratio	Index	Ratio
Atlanta	1.63	1.80	1.11	1.20	0.74	2.07	1.27	1.99	1.22	2.08	1.28	1.99	1.22
Chicago	2.44	2.59	1.06	1.42	0.58	2.94	1.21	3.11	1.27	3.36	1.38	3.19	1.31
Dallas	3.39	3.62	1.07	2.45	0.72	3.87	1.14	3.93	1.16	3.54	1.04	3.57	1.05
Detroit	1.84	1.95	1.06	1.36	0.74	2.09	1.14	2.38	1.29	2.39	1.30	3.15	1.71
Houston	3.60	4.01	1.11	2.57	0.71	4.43	1.23	4.13	1.15	3.55	0.98	3.52	0.98
Los Angeles	6.14	6.89	1.12	4.51	0.74	6.40	1.04	7.23	1.18	5.74	0.93	5.24	0.85
Miami	3.98	4.48	1.12	2.89	0.73	5.68	1.42	4.99	1.25	4.91	1.23	4.23	1.06
New York	2.61	2.67	1.02	2.38	0.91	2.92	1.12	3.29	1.26	2.83	1.08	2.61	1.00
Philadelphia	1.69	1.68	1.00	1.69	1.00	2.10	1.24	2.31	1.37	2.15	1.28	2.51	1.49
San Diego	7.82	7.75	0.99	9.03	1.16	9.95	1.27	9.07	1.16	8.22	1.05	8.59	1.10
San Francisco	6.96	7.19	1.03	5.84	0.84	7.18	1.03	7.84	1.13	7.21	1.04	7.42	1.07
Washington, DC	3.28	3.65	1.11	2.42	0.74	3.88	1.18	3.61	1.10	3.69	1.13	3.62	1.10
Average	3.78	4.02	1.06	3.15	0.83	4.46	1.18	4.49	1.19	4.14	1.09	4.14	1.09

Source: Calculated by authors from confidential 1-in-6 long-form Census data, 1990.

^a Latino includes all racial categories.

^b MROS refers to all opposite-sex mixed-race households.

^c Index values are the exposure of the racial group indicated in the column to all opposite-sex mixed-race households.

^d Ratio of the exposure index to the metropolitan-level % mixed-race households.

Asians and Indians are most likely (index values of 4.46 and 4.49 respectively), and blacks are the least likely (with an index value of 3.15), to encounter a mixed-race household in their neighbourhood. San Diego is the only place where blacks are more likely to encounter a mixed-race household than expected (relative to the metropolitan share of the population), perhaps because of the dominance of military bases in the area.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RACIAL COMPOSITION AND MIXED-RACE ENCOUNTERS

The graphics that follow portray the typical racial composition of several groups based on *P** indices. Figure 1 shows that mixed-race and same-race households are each more likely to encounter whites and less likely to meet blacks in their typical neighbourhoods than is suggested by the overall composition of the population.

Mixed-race households are slightly more likely to come across non-white populations than same-race households. While these aggregate differences are small, the analysis reveals significant group-specific patterns. In particular, we find considerable differences in neighbourhood racial exposures between mixed- and same-race household types, with position in a racial hierarchy playing into the patterns. Of the mixed-race pairings, black-Latino households are the most likely to encounter blacks, and the least likely to meet whites. White-Indian households are most likely to encounter whites. All the mixed-race household groups studied, however, show more moderate patterns of racial residential exposure than the same-race household groups. Residential contact with members of other races is substantially less likely for people in same race households – reminding us yet again that metropolitan areas remain highly segregated by race.

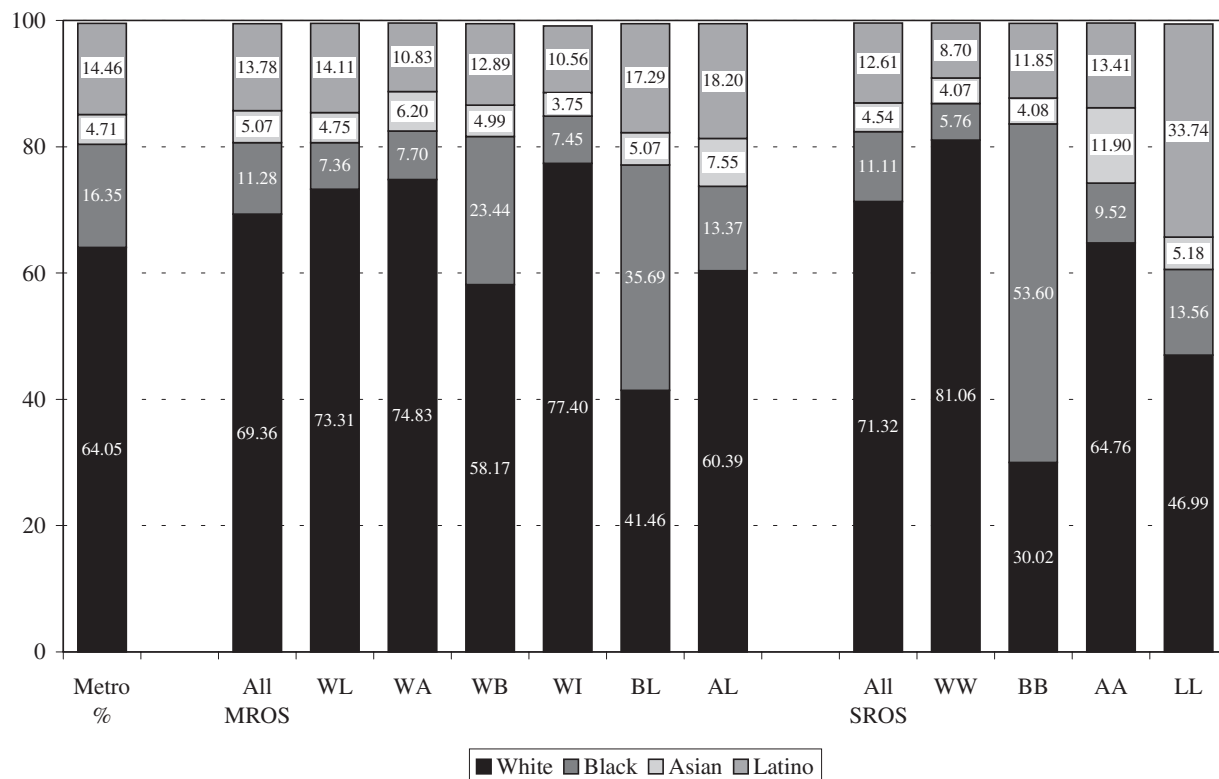


Figure 1. Neighbourhood racial exposure of mixed- and same-race opposite-sex households. Note: Exposure to 'Indian' and 'Other' racial categories are not shown because of small numbers. Values shown are averages across the 12 metropolitan areas. MROS indicates all opposite-sex mixed-race households: WL, white-Latino mixed-race households; WA, white-Asian; WB, white-black; WI, white-Indian; BL, black-Latino. AL, Asian-Latino. SROS indicates all opposite-sex same-race households: WW, white-white same-race households; BB, black-black; AA, Asian-Asian; LL, Latino-Latino.

Figure 1 also allows us to compare the typical neighbourhood racial compositions of mixed-race households with those of the same-race households that constitute their reference groups. In all cases, we see that mixed-race households display patterns that lie to some extent in between those of their reference groups. For example, white–Latino households are more likely to encounter whites in their typical neighbourhood than Latino same-race households, but less so than white same-race households. The same holds for white–Asian, white–Indian, Asian–Latino and black–Latino households. White–black households, however, deviate from this pattern; these households are more likely to come across Latinos in their residential neighbourhoods than are either white or black same-race households. White–black households are also the least likely of all white-partnered mixed-race households to live in neighbourhoods with whites.

Household Status Markers

Residential attainment theory posits that as households approach socio-economic parity with the dominant group, they will tend to occupy the same neighbourhoods. The calculation of P^* indices by a series of typical household status markers, income and home ownership, explores this possibility further.⁴

Income

Figure 2 uncovers the impact of household income on typical neighbourhood racial compositions. We define income in relation to metropolitan area median household income. Low-income households have less than 75% of the metropolitan area median household income, moderate-income households have between 75 and 150% of area median income, and high-income households have greater than 150% of area median income. Consistent with expectations, mixed-race households with higher income were more likely to share residential spaces with whites than non-whites. Based on analyses not shown here, same-race household residential geographies seem more sensitive to income than mixed-race households. The difference in exposure to whites between high- and low-income households is over 17% for same-race households, and less than 14% for mixed-race house-

holds. Put differently, high-income MROS are more likely to be exposed to minorities than high-income SROS.

Figure 2 also exposes considerable differences between the specific mixed-race household types in the impact of income on neighbourhood racial exposures. When one partner in a mixed-race household is white, the impact of household income is unambiguous – higher income MROS encounter a typical neighbourhood racial composition more similar to same-race white households than low-income households. The higher exposure to Latinos by white–black households noted above is apparent only for low- and moderate-income households. High-income white–black households are also less exposed to Latinos than same-race black households.

When both partners are non-white, however, the patterns become more complex. Black–Latino households across all income bands, for example, are more likely than black same-race households to share residential neighbourhoods with Latinos. Conversely, black–Latino households are much more likely to share neighbourhoods with blacks than Latino same-race households, regardless of income. High-income Asian–Latino households are more exposed to whites than either Latino or Asian same-race households. Low-income Asian–Latino households typically meet blacks in their residential neighbourhood more often than either Latino or Asian same-race households.

Among the specific mixed-race opposite sex households, household income matters most for the neighbourhood racial composition of white–black and Asian–Latino partners. In each case, higher-income households are much more likely to share neighbourhoods with whites, and much less likely to do so with blacks and Latinos. There are interesting differences in the effect of household income on mixed-race households' neighbourhood exposure to whites relative to that of relevant same-race households (specific analysis not shown). For example, higher income has a much greater effect on the likelihood of white–Latino households coming across whites in a residential tract than it does for same-race white households. This effect is even stronger for Latino same-race households. Mixed-race households involving a black partner illustrate a different pattern. White–black households appear more sensitive to household income than either

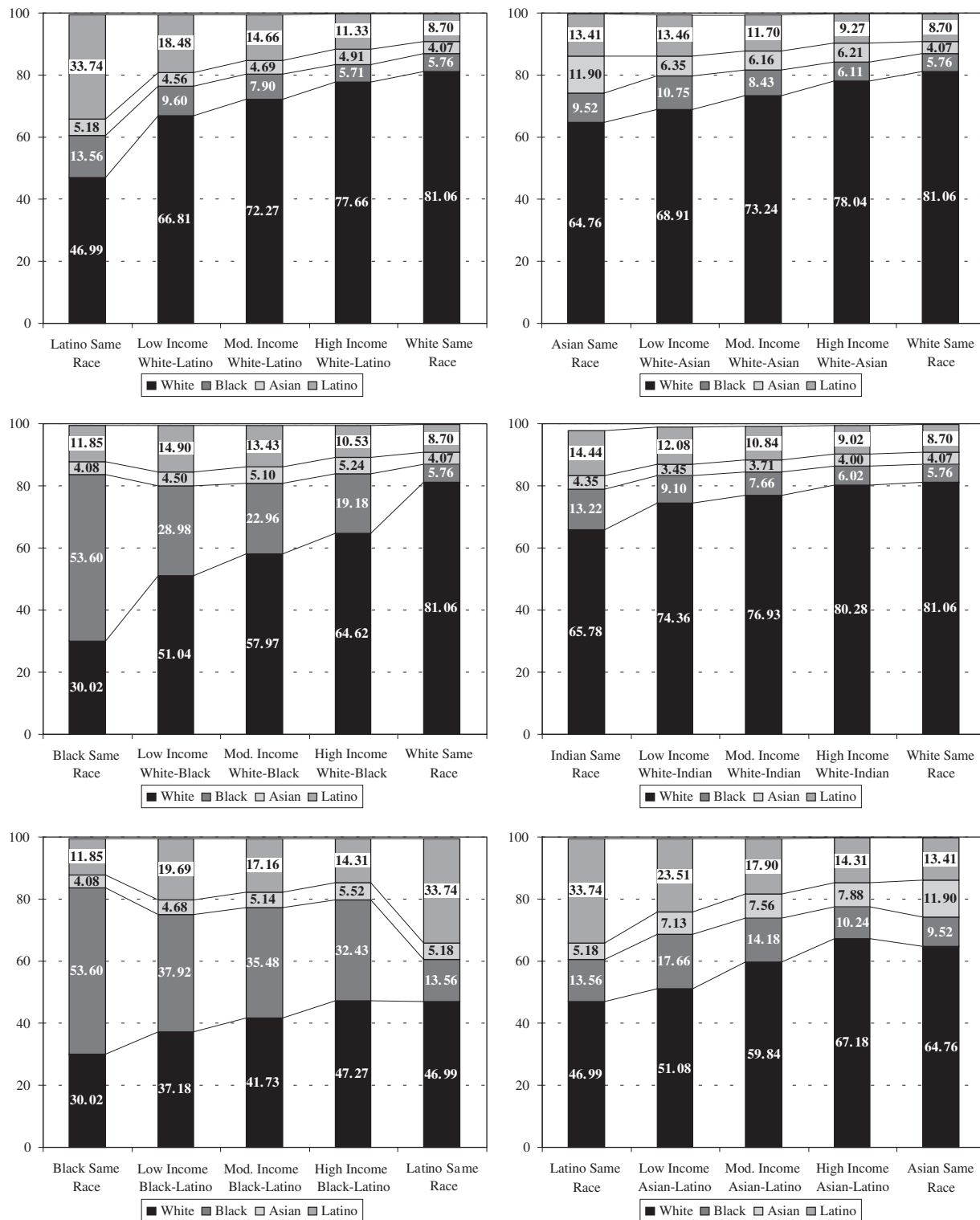


Figure 2. Impact of household income on neighbourhood racial exposure for specific mixed- and same-race household types.

Note: Based on exposure indices – exposure to ‘Indian’ and ‘Other’ racial categories not shown for clarity. Values are the average of the 12 metropolitan area values.

white or black same-race household types. In particular, increases in household income result in larger increases in exposure to whites for white–black households than for either white or black same-race households.

Home-ownership

Patterns of home-ownership reflect both status (income and wealth) and demographic considerations (children, age, etc.). Home-ownership affects the typical neighbourhood racial composition for mixed-race households (Fig. 3), although the effect is somewhat stronger for same-race households (analysis not shown). Households that rent are more likely to meet non-white groups in their residential neighbourhoods than home-owners. Interestingly, same-race households are more exposed to whites than mixed-race households overall and when they are home-owners, but not so when they rent. Among renters, same-race opposite-sex households are less exposed to whites, and more exposed to blacks and Latinos, than mixed-race households. This may reflect lower home-ownership rates among non-white groups.

When contrasted with their relevant same-race reference groups, individual mixed-race household types demonstrate considerable variability (Fig. 3). Home-owning mixed-race households more closely resemble the patterns of white same-race households than renting mixed-race households. White–Asian and white–Indian households produce a progressive stair-step pattern: owners in these two MROS pairings are more exposed to white same-race household types than MROS renters, who in turn are more likely to encounter whites than the relevant same-race household type. For white–Latino households, the neighbourhood racial composition of both owning and renting households are more similar to white than Latino same-race households. For white–black households, there is little difference between renters and owners, except that, interestingly, renters are slightly more likely to come across Latinos and Asians and slightly less likely to encounter blacks. Among the mixed-race groups, home-ownership seems to have the greatest impact on neighbourhood racial exposure for Asian–Latino households. Residential racial composition for Asian–Latino home-owners closely resembles that of Asian same-race households, except that

they are more isolated from Asians and less isolated from Latinos. Asian–Latino renters are more likely to encounter Latinos and blacks, and much less likely to encounter whites, than are Asian–Latino home-owners.

Consistent with other results, white–black households who own or rent are distinct from other MROS with a white partner in their relatively low contact with white same-race households. Of particular note, black–Latino home-owners are more similar to black same-race households than renters – this is the only group for which this pattern holds (white–black owners are slightly more likely to encounter blacks than white–black renters). Apparently, home-ownership anchors mixed-race households with a black partner into more black neighbourhoods. We cannot say if this reflects preferences among these mixed-race households for proximity to blacks (culture, economic ties, opportunities, etc.) and/or intensity of discrimination in the housing market against households with a black partner.

Household Demographic Markers

Nativity

Nativity overlays with household-level racial mixing in intricate ways. Averaged across groups, mixed-race households where both partners are foreign-born are almost 9% more likely to encounter whites (and approximately 8% less exposed to Latinos) than same-race households where both partners are foreign-born. Alternatively, when only one partner is foreign-born, same-race households have a greater chance of residential exposure to whites and no greater chance of exposure to blacks or Latinos.

When mixed-race households are compared with their same-race reference group households (Fig. 4), the impact of nativity depends on the race of the foreign-born partner. When the black partner in a white–black household is foreign-born, the chances of sharing neighbourhoods with whites is substantially higher, and with blacks much lower, than when the black partner is native-born. The patterns for black–Latino households are even more multifaceted. As with white–black households, black–Latino households with foreign-born black partners have greater exposure to whites, and less exposure to blacks, than when the black partner is native-

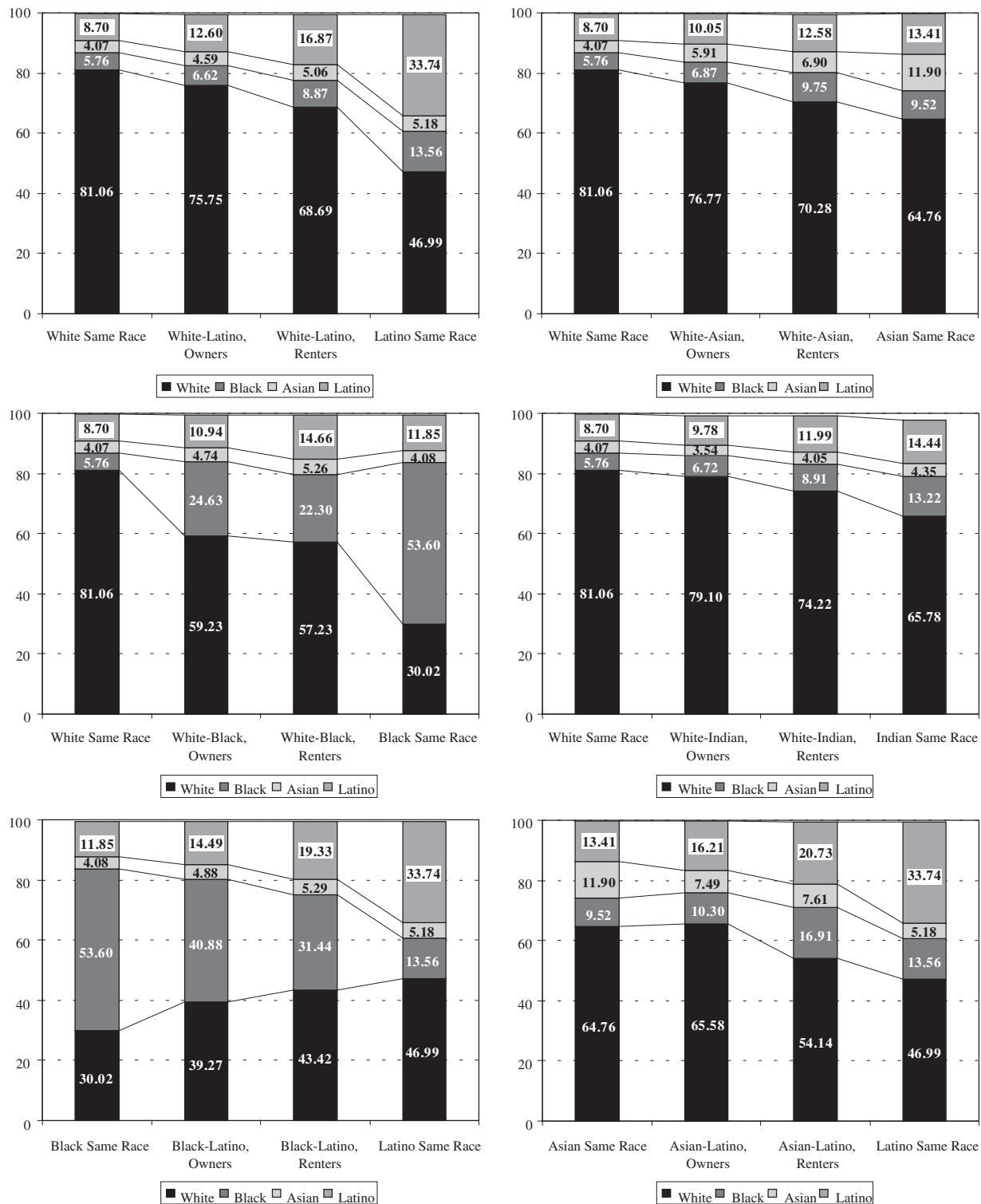


Figure 3. Impact of home-ownership on neighbourhood racial exposure for specific mixed- and same-race household types.

Note: Based on exposure indices – exposure to ‘Indian’ and ‘Other’ racial categories are not shown for clarity. Values are the average of the 12 metropolitan area values.

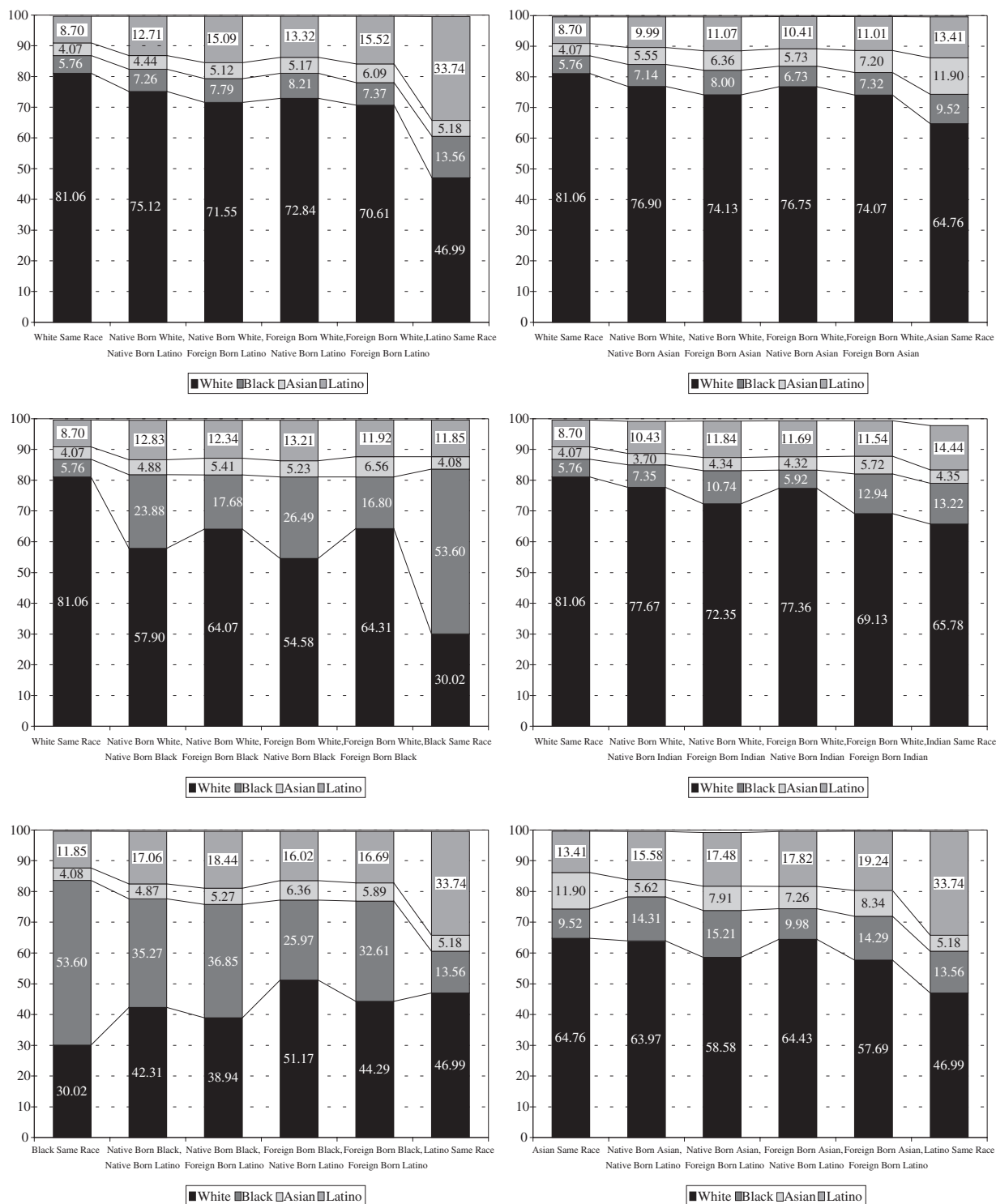


Figure 4. Impact of nativity on neighbourhood racial exposure for specific mixed- and same-race household types.

Note: Based on exposure indices – exposure to ‘Indian’ and ‘Other’ racial categories are not shown for clarity. Values are the average of the 12 metropolitan area values.

born. But the magnitude of the relationship depends on the nativity of the Latino partner – when the Latino partner is native-born, the nativity of the black partner has a greater impact than when the Latino partner is foreign-born. The Latino partner's nativity also matters, although not to the same extent. Black–Latino households with a foreign-born Latino partner have a greater residential exposure to whites and lesser exposure to blacks than households with a native-born Latino partner.

Age Cohort

Differences in the typical residential racial composition of mixed-race households occur in conjunction with the partners' ages. To gain a preliminary view, we categorised households based on the age of the younger partner (<35, 35–55, and >55). Among same-race households, older cohorts are more exposed to whites and less to blacks or Latinos (analysis not shown). For mixed-race households, however, older cohorts are *less* exposed to whites, while the middle-aged cohort is the most likely to encounter whites. This might reflect an income effect, where the middle-aged cohort is in the prime of their earnings potential. It might also reflect greater historical barriers to integration for older cohorts experienced during periods when discrimination was more intense, overt and sanctioned. Young households are probably lower-income and not home-owners.

Of the specific mixed-race household types (Fig. 5), those that contain a black partner appear to be most affected by cohort. For white–black and black–Latino households, the older cohort is substantially more likely to share neighbourhoods with blacks, and less likely to share neighbourhoods with whites, than the younger cohorts. This undoubtedly reflects the prominence of racially discriminatory housing markets in previous decades. Especially noteworthy are older black–Latino households who are less likely to encounter whites and more likely to meet Latinos than black same-race households.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DIVERSITY

Mixed-race couples may seek residential contexts where their identities, and the identities of their children, are less likely to be constrained or judged by a dominant population who, for the

most part, operates within singular racialised categories. To this end, we speculate that the most racially diverse neighbourhoods in a city may provide some degree of insulation from the conflicts and difficulties of interacting with a society built on categorical notions of racial identity. These sites may also be places where one can resist categorisation within the existing racial hierarchy, or at least attempt to subvert that categorisation. The NDE (Neighbourhood Diversity Exposure) index, which assesses a group's exposure to racial diversity at the neighbourhood scale, measures this possibility. Mixed-race households reside in more diverse neighbourhoods (NDE = 37.5) than the population as a whole (NDE = 34.4) and same-race opposite-sex households (NDE = 32.1).

Figure 6 reveals that white-partnered mixed-raced households (except white–black households) encounter higher levels of neighbourhood racial diversity than white same-race households, but lower levels than their non-white same-race reference groups. White–Latino households, for example, encounter more diversity than white same-race households, but less than Latino same-race households. Black–Latino and Asian–Latino households live in neighbourhoods about as racially diverse as Latino and Asian same-race households. White–black households show a different pattern – they encounter more neighbourhood racial diversity than either white or black same-race households. This difference is significant. On the one hand, most of the mixed-race households involving a white member generate an 'in-between' pattern – that of living in less diverse neighbourhoods than their non-white same-race peers and in more diverse neighbourhoods than white same-race households. On the other hand, however, white–black and non-white MROS do not reveal this 'in-between' pattern. The difference is most dramatic for white–black households: they are more likely to live in diverse neighbourhoods than white or black same-race households.

Table 4 displays the clear association between household income and neighbourhood exposure to racial diversity. Increases in household income result in reductions in NDE for mixed- and same-race households. The income effect appears to be stronger for mixed- than same-race households. Nevertheless, at each household income level, mixed-race households encounter higher levels

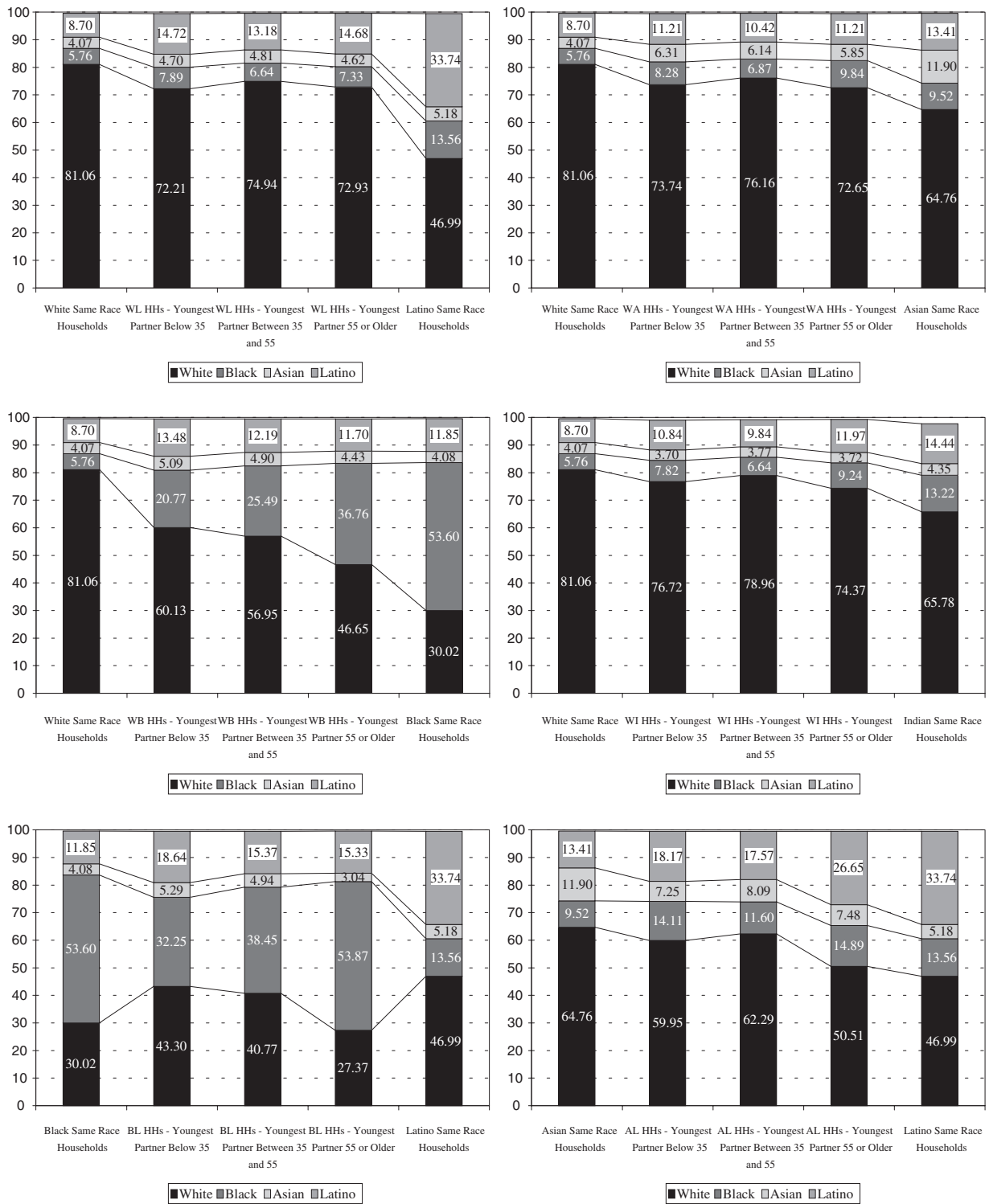


Figure 5. Impact of age on neighbourhood racial exposure for specific mixed- and same-race household types. Note: Based on exposure indices – exposure to 'Indian' and 'Other' racial categories are not shown for clarity. Values are the average of the 12 metropolitan area values.

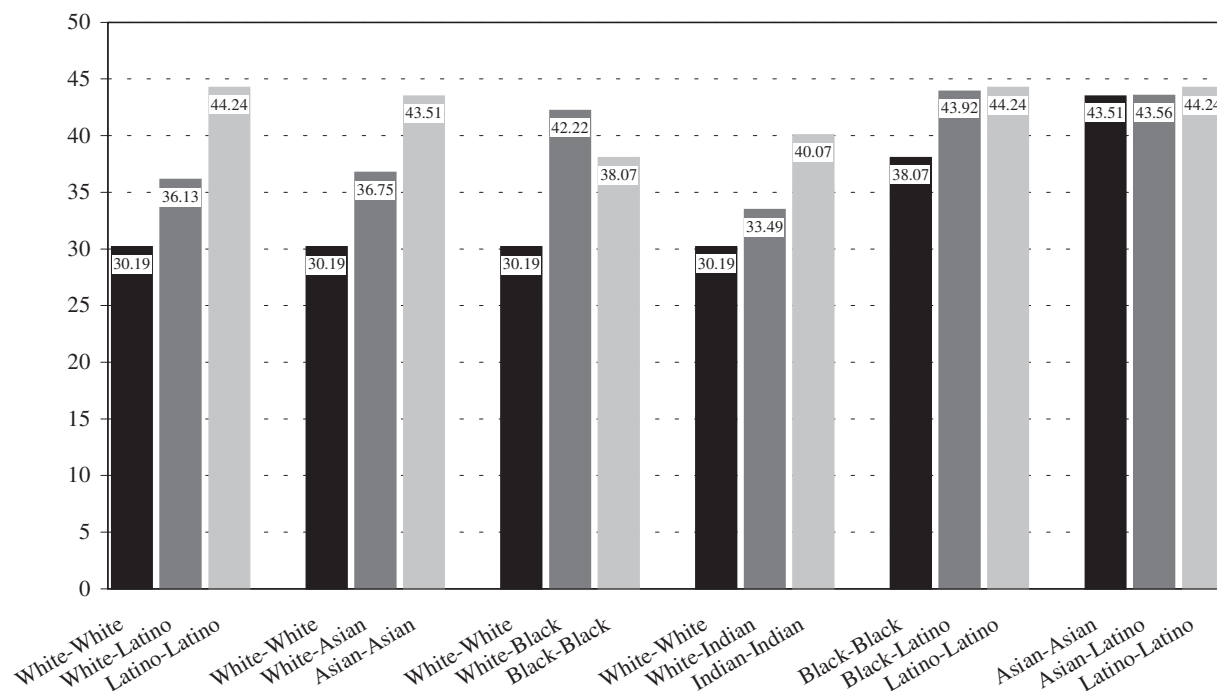


Figure 6. Neighbourhood diversity exposure (NDE) for specific mixed- and same-race opposite-sex household types. *Note:* Values displayed are averages across the 12 metropolitan areas in the study.

Table 4. Impact of household income on neighbourhood diversity exposure (NDE) for mixed- and same-race opposite-sex households.

Household income	MROS	SROS
High (>150% of MSA median)	34.4	29.9
Medium (70–150% of MSA median)	38.4	33.1
Low (<70% of MSA median)	41.0	34.8

Source: Calculated by authors from confidential 1-in-6 long-form Census data, 1990.

of NDE than same-race households. Moreover, even at high levels of income, MROS enjoy as much neighbourhood racial diversity as low-income SROS.

The impact of income on neighbourhood racial diversity hinges on the specific mixed-race group (Fig. 7). White-Latino, white-Asian, white-Indian and Asian-Latino households each show the typical pattern where higher levels of household income are accompanied by less neighbourhood diversity. The two mixed-race household types that include blacks present a modified pattern: moderate-income white-black and black-Latino households do not encounter lower

levels of neighbourhood racial diversity than their low-income peers. Black-white households at all income levels live in more racially diverse neighbourhoods than either black or white same-race households. Black-Latino households at all income levels experience more neighbourhood racial diversity than black same-race households, and about the same degree as Latino same-race households. Low-income Asian-Latino households live in more racially diverse neighbourhoods than any other income-specific group of mixed-race households.

Educational attainment (results not shown, but available on request) generally acts like the other status markers (income and home-ownership) – a progressive impact on diversity. In each case, households where both partners have not graduated from high school live in the most diverse neighbourhoods. Households where both partners have graduated from college live in the least diverse neighbourhoods. This relationship is slightly stronger for mixed- than same-race households.

Nativity is important in complex ways (Table 5). Nativity matters most for same-race households, among whom the foreign birth of both

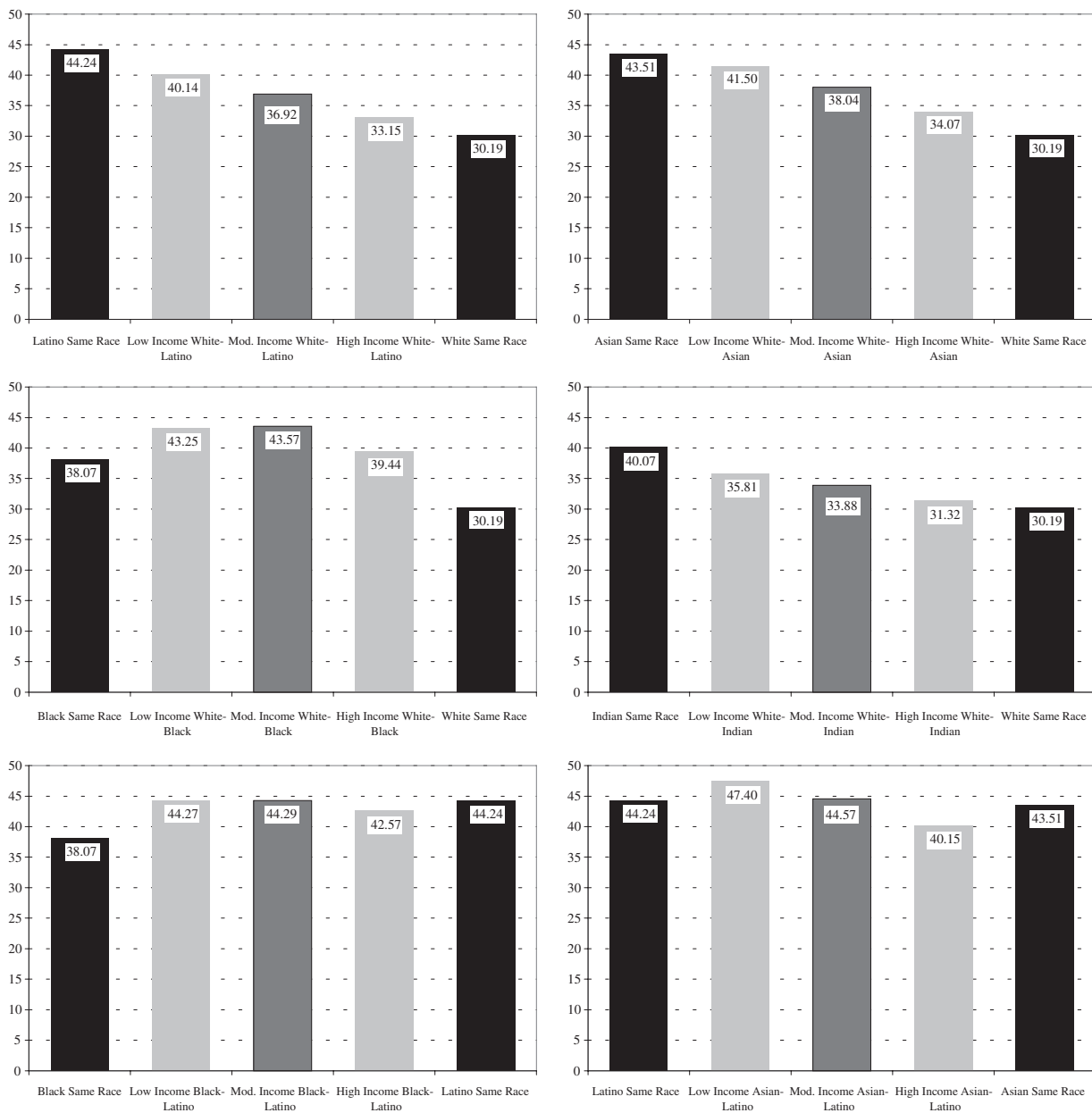


Figure 7. Impact of income on neighbourhood diversity exposure (NDE) for specific mixed- and same-race households.

Note: Values displayed are averages across the 12 metropolitan areas in the study.

partners leads to residence in more diverse neighbourhoods than any other nativity configuration. This is unsurprising as a majority of partners in foreign-born same-race households are either Latino or Asian. For mixed-race households, there are small increases in neighbourhood racial diversity when both partners are foreign-born. Race/nativity patterns are most

interesting for black-Latino, Asian-Latino and white-black households (Fig. 8). Foreign-born black/native-born Latino and foreign-born Latino/native-born Asian households live in more racially diverse neighbourhoods than the other nativity-specific mixed-race households.

Table 6 illustrates the impact of age (cohort) on neighbourhood diversity exposure. Both mixed-

Table 5. Impact of nativity on neighbourhood diversity exposure (NDE) for mixed- and same-race opposite-sex households.

Nativity	MROS	SROS
All	37.1	31.4
Both native-born	36.7	30.8
One partner foreign-born	38.3	33.8
Both foreign-born	39.6	40.4

Source: Calculated by authors from confidential 1-in-6 long-form Census data, 1990.

and same-race households live in much more diverse neighbourhoods when the youngest partner is less than 35 years old than when the youngest partner is older than 55. The magnitude of the age effect is approximately equivalent for same- and mixed-race households. Among the specific mixed-race household types (Fig. 9), NDE is most sensitive to age cohort for black–white households (almost 5 percentage points difference between the youngest and oldest households) and black–Latino households (almost 10 percentage points difference). It has the least effect on Asian–Latino households. Across all groups, the greatest difference appears to be between the youngest households and the middle-aged group.

CONCLUSIONS

While this analysis emphasises the household in neighbourhood context, previous analyses of segregation typically viewed the neighbourhood geography of the city in terms of the spatial organisation of monochrome bodies and singly racialised neighbourhoods. Such studies ignored the organisation of individuals into households for good reason: relatively few households historically were mixed (the law had proscribed such mixing in many states). Moreover, published data reported almost exclusively the counts of singly raced persons in neighbourhoods. Accordingly, social scientists have yet to thoroughly analyse, theoretically or empirically, the questions that accompany the rise in the number of mixed-race households and multiracial people. Furthermore, scholars have yet to synthesise the implications of these trends for future urban morphologies, particularly racial segregation and racial diversity.

Table 6. Impact of age on neighbourhood diversity exposure (NDE) for mixed- and same-race opposite-sex households.

Age	MROS	SROS
All	37.3	32.1
Youngest partner <35	39.1	34.7
Youngest partner 35–55	35.9	31.4
Youngest partner >55	35.1	30.2

Source: Calculated by authors from confidential 1-in-6 long-form Census data, 1990.

This research is a first pass at these problems. It questions the way we come to understand diversity at different scales – individual, household and neighbourhood – and how interactions amongst these scales affect the social geography of the city. Our results offer a systematic look at the neighbourhood geography of mixed-race households aggregated across several metropolitan areas. The Census data derive from 1990, and as such they miss the mushrooming rate and geographical expressions of mixed-race partnering of the last decade. Nevertheless, we discern a number of interesting and potentially important spatial trends (which may come into sharper relief with equivalent data from 2000). Higher income mixed-race households are more likely to mingle residentially with whites than low-income mixed-race households. A similar effect occurs with years of education. Home-ownership generally increases the likelihood of mixed-race households sharing neighbourhoods with whites – with the important exception of pairings involving a black partner. Gender, the presence of children, and other demographic factors have weaker and more inconsistent effects than we initially anticipated.

By considering specific mixed-race groups we find that partnerships involving a black partner or between individuals from two non-white groups often generate patterns that, at the very least, complicate the broader trends observed for white–Latino and white–Asian households. For example, home-ownership *increases* the exposure of white–black and especially black–Latino households to blacks. Native-born blacks in mixed-race partnerships are more likely to share neighbourhoods with blacks than mixed-race households involving foreign-born blacks.

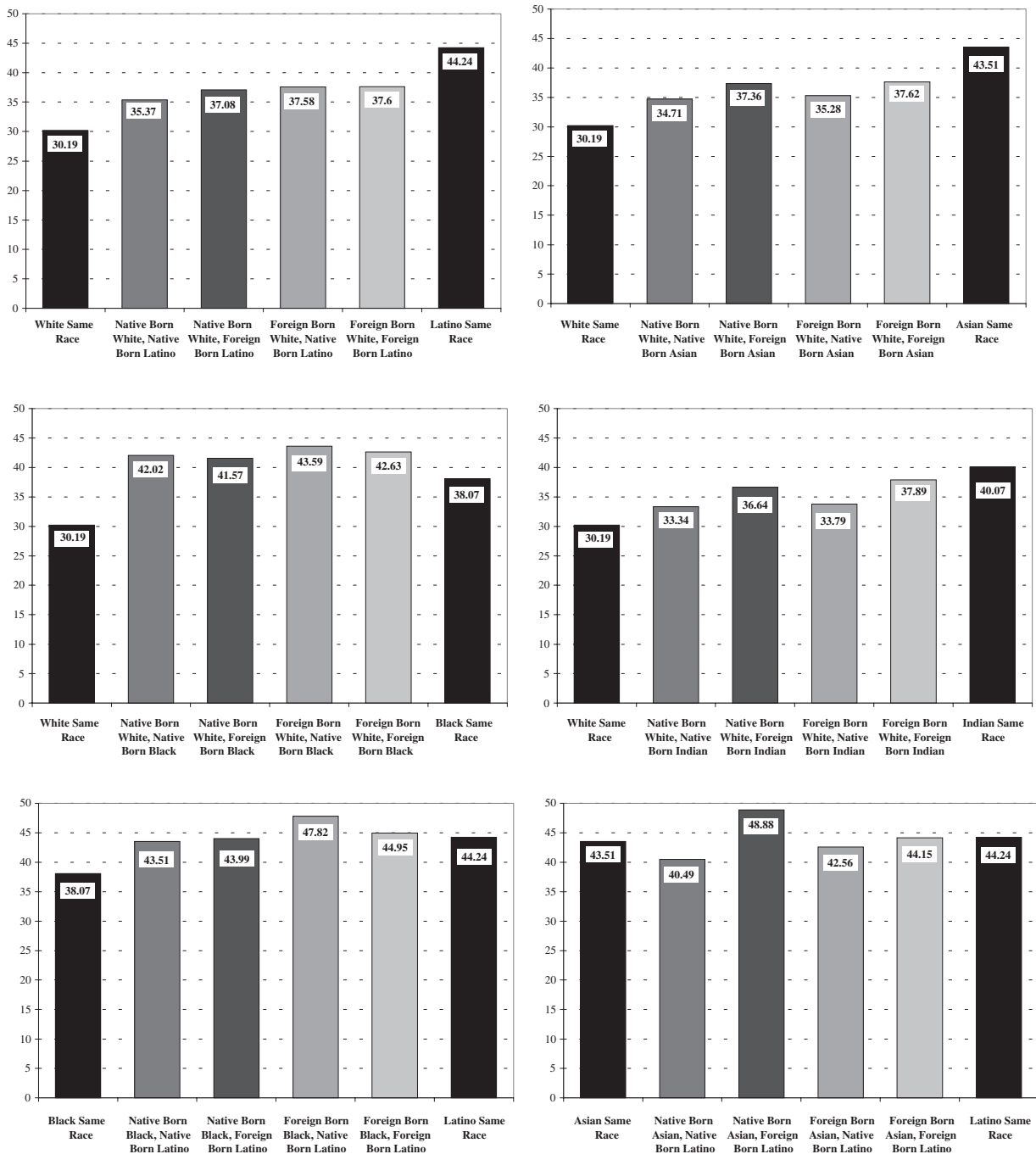


Figure 8. Impact of nativity on neighbourhood diversity exposure (NDE) for specific mixed- and same-race household types.

Note: Values displayed are averages across the 12 metropolitan areas in the study.

Perhaps the most interesting result emerges from the measurement of exposure to neighbourhood diversity. The index we introduced measures the degree to which various same-

and mixed-race households live in neighbourhoods with racially diverse populations. All mixed-race household types are more likely to live in diverse neighbourhood settings than

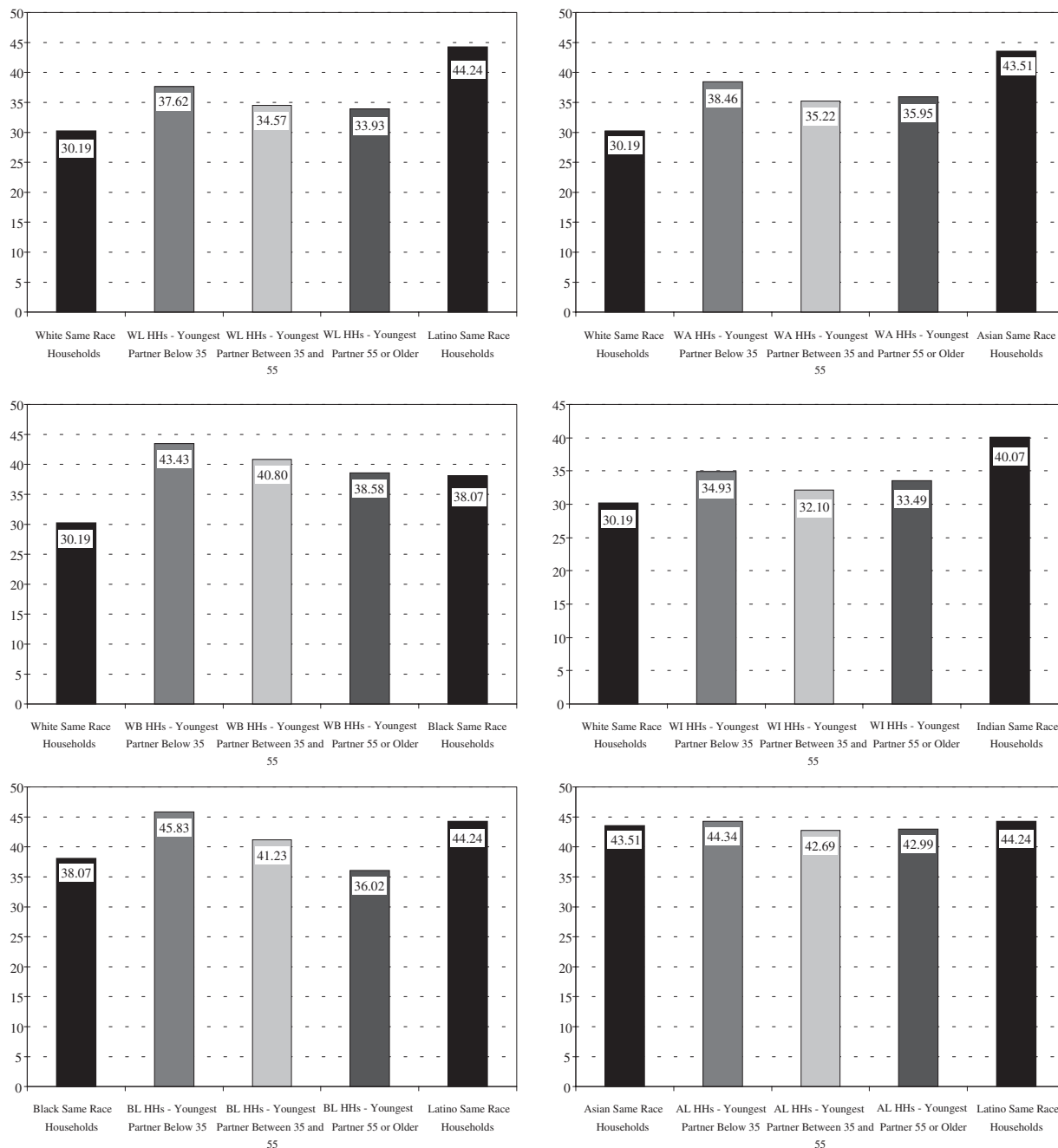


Figure 9. Impact of age on neighbourhood diversity exposure (NDE) for specific mixed- and same-race household types.

Note: Values displayed are averages across the 12 metropolitan areas in the study.

same-race households. The situation becomes more complicated when we examine specific racial partnerships relative to their same-race reference groups: mixed-race households tend to experience higher levels of neighbourhood racial

diversity than white same-race households, but lower levels than non-white same-race households. Black–white pairings are an exception – they live in more diverse neighbourhoods than the black population in general. No doubt this

partly reflects the concentration of blacks in non-diverse, highly segregated neighbourhoods, and the desire of black–white households to find spaces of relative freedom from the negative reactions they experience in predominantly white or black neighbourhoods (Dalmage, 2000).

The empirical analysis produces the impression of the ‘in-betweenness’ of the residential geography of mixed-race partnerships. Mediated somewhat by the usual status markers, these households are not found exclusively in the neighbourhood terrain of one group or the other. Instead there is some evidence of their congregation in diverse local settings. This analysis of mixed-race household geographies directs us toward a future in which mixed-race households (and multiracial individuals) form an important element of the population of (diverse) neighbourhoods. In this view, mixed-race households seek out locations in which they can avoid association with places marked as the terrain of one group or the other (Dalmage, 2000: Chap. 2). The racial uncertainty of these places provides cover for the ambiguities displayed by mixed-race households. Such a prospect aligns with recent critical social theory that stresses the roles of context and location on the polyvalent and performative nature of mixed-race identities (e.g. Mahtani, 2001, 2002). The consequence for neighbourhoods that attract mixed-race households is that they become characterised as diverse because of mixing between *and* within households – a case of interaction between spatial scales yielding new urban geographies of diversity.

Our study is by no means an exclusive celebration of diversity or a foretaste of possible urban futures where hyper-segregation is a thing of the past. Among other outcomes, the results point also to the stubbornness of the hyper-segregation of blacks and the cruel power of the ‘one drop rule’. Just as Gouldtown is no longer known as a mixed-race place and is now remembered by many as a historically black town in southern New Jersey, the analysis presented here suggests a possible reinscription of blackness in urban space. Partnerships with blacks, as compared with partnerships with other minorities, increase the likelihood of residential encounters with blacks. This result requires much extra study. Mary Waters’ (1999) work demonstrated that the children of black–white mixed-race

partnerships often racialise as ‘black’. Does our research point to an expansion of the boundaries of ‘blackness’ (literally and metaphorically)? Or is the category of ‘whiteness’ reforming, as it has in the past, to be inclusive of certain minority groups but not others?

What we are *not* seeing is an erasure of race or the racial hierarchy in US society. Rather, our study points to complications in, and a potential re-forming of, some racial borders. This restructuring varies by group and will surely vary by metropolitan area. These contingencies call for future empirical and theoretical work on particular groups within and across their metropolitan contexts. Topics for future analysis also include more detailed investigations of the geographies of selected mixed-race household types. In particular, black–white pairings should be studied more because of their historical importance and because their patterns in this analysis are often so different from those of the other groups. Latino–white pairings also need greater study because of their numerical dominance but relative invisibility in the mixed-race literature. Future analysis should also more thoroughly examine the linkage between household-scale mixing and neighbourhood level desegregation.

Anderson and Massey’s (2001) synopsis of trends in the sociology of race over the course of the last century described the ebb and flow of the importance of context to the dynamics of the American racial hierarchies. Until about the 1970s, Robert Park’s dictum, that social relations were spatial relations, shaped the research agendas for many scholars. In race matters, context mattered. Anderson and Massey argued that in the 1970s and 1980s, however, interest in status attainment modelling grew to dominate understandings of social stratification. Times change, and Anderson and Massey went on to describe how the pendulum has now swung back in favour of research that embraces space and context. Our analysis of mixed-race household geographies straddles both these research trends. It fuses, for the first time, the scholarly practices of mixed-race research that emphasise the relative status components of such partnering, with the more venerable research tradition in social ecology of racial segregation analysis. It also begins to sketch the outlines of a large and exciting agenda for research centred on the mixed-race household.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

- (1) The addition of a new race category and multiracial reporting in the 2000 Census makes direct comparison of intermarriage rates with earlier census single race categories problematic. To facilitate a comparison we first aggregated Asians and Pacific Islanders together to conform to the 1990 joint Asian–Pacific Islander category. We then treated *most* marriages as mixed if they involved couples who reported a different single or multiple race grouping from their partner. The exception was for partners who identified themselves differently but both included the same *non-white* group as a component of their race. For example, a person who is black and married to a person who identifies as black and white is not considered mixed for the purpose of calculating the intermarriage rate; whereas a person who is white married to a person who is black and white is considered mixed. The assignment of these ‘partially mixed’ households to the non-mixed category had a very small effect on the estimate of intermarriage rates. Without it, the intermarriage rate would rise by 0.15%.
- (2) There is much debate, often contentious, on appropriate terminology. Some prefer the term multiracial because mixed in their view has a pejorative connotation (see Wright *et al.*, 2003). The existence

of multiracial individuals, however, ‘presumes differently racialized parentage’ (Ifekwunigwe, 2001: 46), or as Tyner and Houston (2000: 390) phrase it, ‘multiracialized sexual relations’. We refer to a union of two differently racialised individuals as mixed-race because it linguistically centres attention on the process of ‘mixing’ within families or households. However, we note that Haslanger (2005) recently suggested the term mixed-race be extended to non-mixed couples who adopt transracially. Of course, the racial categories usually deployed in analyses and discussions are problematic in their own right – when we ‘mix’ the categories, we multiply the confusion.

- (3) Maly (2000) introduced a neighbourhood scale index of racial diversity with a similar name: the Neighbourhood Diversity (ND) index. His index is not based on entropy – rather, he compares the racial composition of each tract to that of the city as a whole. A tract is then defined as maximally diverse if its racial composition is equivalent to that of the city. As he admits, his index cannot be standardised and is not appropriate for cross-sectional or intertemporal analyses.
- (4) A parallel analysis of educational attainment reproduced the results we found for income and so is not reported here. It is, however, available from the authors. An analysis of household demographic factors such as nativity and age comes later in the paper. In analyses not presented here, gender, marital status, and the presence and ages of children in the household were found to have weak to moderate effects. We do not discuss them further here in order to streamline our discussion – these results are also available upon request.

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