

Census analysis: Nation's diversity grows, but integration slows

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Despite increased racial and ethnic diversity, American neighborhoods continue to be segregated, and some of the progress made toward integration since 1980 has come to a halt this decade, according to a new report by Brown University sociologist John Logan. The report, co-authored by Florida State University sociologist Brian Stults, marks the launch of the US2010 project, a program of research on changes in American society, supported by the Russell Sage Foundation and Brown University.

"This is a surprising result," said Logan, director of Brown's Initiative in Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences and director of US2010. "At worst, it was expected that there would be continued slow progress. The growth of the black middle class, the passage of time since fair housing legislation was enacted, and the evidence from surveys that white Americans are becoming more tolerant of black neighbors all pointed in that direction."

Logan and Stults analyzed data from the American Community Survey (ACS) released for the first time yesterday by the U.S. [Census Bureau](#). The ACS gives estimates on social, economic, housing, and demographic statistics for every community in the nation. Until now, small geographic areas had to rely on outdated 2000 census figures for detailed information about the characteristics of their communities.

Logan and Stults' main findings:

- The average non-Hispanic white person continues to live in a neighborhood that looks very different from those neighborhoods where the average black, Hispanic, or Asian lives. The average white person in metropolitan America lives in a neighborhood that is 77 percent white. Still, this represents growing diversity compared to 1980, when the average was 88 percent white.
- The average black American in metropolitan areas lives in a census tract that is majority black. It appears the same will soon be true for Hispanics. On average, 48 percent of their neighbors are Hispanic and this value is growing steadily.
- Blacks continue to be the most segregated minority, followed by Hispanics and then Asians. Another surprise in the new data is that while black-white and Hispanic-white segregation is almost the same today as in 2000, segregation of Asians from whites has begun to increase. It is now almost as high as segregation of Hispanics.
- Progress in residential segregation between blacks and whites since 2000 was even less than in the 1980s. Segregation peaked around 1960. Between 1980 and 2000 it declined at a very slow pace, but analysts have been hoping for a breakthrough since then. The new data show that there is very little change.

To analyze segregation, Logan and Stults used the Index of Dissimilarity, which measures how evenly two groups are spread across neighborhoods. The lowest possible value is zero, which indicates that the percentage of each group in every neighborhood is the same as their overall percentage in the metropolitan areas. The highest value of 100 indicates that the two groups live in completely different neighborhoods.

By this measure:

- Black-white segregation averaged 65.2 in 2000 and 62.7 now.
- Hispanic-white segregation was 51.6 in 2000 and 50 today.
- Asian-white segregation has grown from 42.1 to 45.9.

Led by Logan, US2010's 14 research teams from across the country will tackle a broad range of topics that impact all areas of American society. Over the next two years, they will release short briefs and a chapter-length report on their research areas, which include immigration, [segregation](#), economics, education, aging, and the changing American family, among others. The US2010 project will culminate with a book incorporating all these chapters, published by the Russell Sage Foundation, which has a 50-year tradition of publishing respected, authoritative, census-based research.

"The special feature of US2010 is that it tackles questions of change in American society not from the perspective of one scholar or one topic, but with the expertise of a nationwide team of scholars who were brought together for this purpose," Logan said.

More information: More information is available on the project webpage: www.s4.brown.edu/us2010

Provided by Brown University

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