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To

The National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
Still Separate and Unequal: The State of Fair Housing in America

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Introduction

Scholars and policymakers have long viewed residential segregation by race as a core aspect of racial inequality, implicated in both intergroup relations and in larger processes of individual and group social mobility. Indeed more than a century ago, W.E.B. DuBois (1903) recognized the importance of neighborhoods—the “physical proximity of home and dwelling-places, the way in which neighborhoods group themselves, and [their] contiguity”—as primary locations for social interaction, lamenting that the “color line” separating black and white neighborhoods caused each to see the worst in the other (1990, pp. 120-21). Indeed, students of racial inequality, from Myrdal (1944) to Taeuber & Taeuber (1965), believed segregation was a major barrier to equality, asserting that it “inhibits the development of informal, neighborly relations,” “ensures the segregation of a variety of public and private facilities (Taeuber & Taeuber 1965, p. 1) and permits prejudice “to be freely vented on Negroes without hurting whites” (Myrdal 1944, p. 618). More recently, Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1993) illustrate how racial residential segregation “undermines the social and economic well-being” of individuals and groups, irrespective of personal characteristics (pp. 2-3).

Whether by choice or by constraint, persisting racial residential segregation has serious implications for both present and future mobility opportunities. Where we live affects our proximity to good job opportunities, educational quality, and safety from crime, as well as the quality of our social networks and our physical and mental health. And, more than one hundred years later, we remain a nation separated by “color lines” that enhance perceptions of groups as “different,” “alien,” and “undeserving,” while at the same time reinforcing the perception that “their” problems are not “ours.”

As one of the most racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse cities in the world, Los Angeles offers important lessons for understanding patterns of residential segregation by race as well as the factors—both individual and structural—that influence aggregate-level neighborhood patterns. There is a long history of African American settlement here. Moreover, as a top destination for new immigrants, the school system here offers instruction in nearly 100 languages, boasts the largest Latino/a and Korean populations in the country, and is home to first majority-Chinese suburb (Monterey Park). As one of nearly 40 majority-minority metros, Los Angeles offers a glimpse of the future of America.

Rapid changes in population composition associated with massive immigration from Latin America and Asia (e.g., in 2000, about one-third of LA County residents were foreign-born, up from 22 percent in 1980); economic restructuring and persistent economic inequality along racial-ethnic lines (e.g., in 2000, nearly one-quarter of blacks and Latinos lived in poverty, compared to less than 10% of whites and 14% of Asians); and patterns of intergroup tensions and often negative racial attitudes (e.g., uprisings in 1965 and 1992, increasing black-brown tensions) all contribute to—and are consequences of—persisting residential segregation by race.

In terms of trends in racial residential segregation since 1980, Los Angeles is one of a very few large metros that embodies several national trends. A newer city located in the West—where segregation tends to be lower—it is among the most diverse, thanks to high-volume immigration. Still, like many older cities of the Midwest and Northeast, blacks are hypersegregated—exhibiting extreme isolation on at least four of five standard measures of

residential distribution.¹ And, in a new twist, Los Angeles is one of only two cities (New York is the other) as of the 2000 Census to see its Latino population become hypersegregated.² Equally important, despite reports of declining black-white segregation since 1980, there has been virtually no increase in blacks' exposure to whites in their neighborhoods; both Latinos and Asians have experienced substantial declines in their exposure to whites since 1980 as well. To the extent that racial residential segregation is deeply implicated in persisting racial economic inequality and tenuous intergroup relations, and in as much as trends in Los Angeles point to our national future, it is an optimal location for a consideration of the future of fair housing.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

In general, social scientists debate the relevant importance of three factors—real and/or perceived social class disadvantage, neighborhood racial composition preferences, and housing market discrimination—as primary contributors to persisting racial residential segregation. While economic inequality between racial/ethnic groups remains a pressing problem, objective differences in social class status cannot account for persisting racial residential segregation. Analyses of the housing market also reveal persisting discrimination against African Americans, Latinos, and Asians in both the owner and rental markets.³ Here, I focus on the role of neighborhood racial composition preferences—and in particular the factors that motivate preferences—as critical for understanding not only aggregate housing patterns, but the role that fair housing legislation can play in creating and maintaining stable, racially/ethnically integrated communities in light of current patterns and trends in racial attitudes (including preferences).

Neighborhood Racial Composition Preferences: A Brief Summary⁴

Over the last two and a half decades, there has been meaningful change in the neighborhood racial composition preferences of whites, shifting toward increased tolerance for sharing neighborhoods with more than token numbers of blacks and other minorities. At the

¹ Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1989. "Hypersegregation in U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Black and Hispanic Segregation Along Five Dimensions." *Demography* 26(3): 373-91. Studies of residential segregation generally rely on one or more of six measures, each of which captures a different dimension of the spatial distribution of groups. *Evenness*, measured as the index of dissimilarity (D), describes the degree to which a group is evenly distributed across neighborhoods or tracts. A score over 60 is interpreted as extreme segregation between two groups, indicating the percentage of either group that would have to move to another neighborhood or tract to achieve within-tract population distributions that mirror those of the metro area. *Isolation* (measured as P^*_{xx}) is interpreted as the percentage of the same race in the average group member's neighborhood or tract; scores of 70 or more, indicating that the average person lives in an area that is at least 70 percent same-race, are considered extreme. The inverse of isolation is *exposure* (P^*_{xy}), interpreted as the average probability of contact with a person of an other-race comparison group (usually whites). These are the most commonly reported measures. On three other measures—*concentration* (a group's degree of density), *clustering* (proximity to the central business district), and *centralization* (the contiguity of their neighborhoods)—a group is extremely segregated if it scores over 60. A group is hypersegregated if it scores in the high range on at least four of these measures.

² Wilkes, Rima and John Iceland. 2004. "Hypersegregation in the Twenty-first Century: An Update and Analysis." *Demography* 41(1): 587-606.

³ National Fair Housing Alliance. 2006. *Unequal Opportunity—Perpetuating Housing Segregation in America*. Washington, DC: Turner, Margery Austin and Stephen L. Ross. 2003. *Discrimination in Metropolitan Housing Markets: National Results from Phase II HDS 2000*. Washington, DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Turner, Margery Austin, Stephen L. Ross, George C. Galster, and John Yinger. 2002. *Discrimination in Metropolitan Housing Markets: National Results from Phase I HDS 2000*. Washington, DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁴ This section is adapted from Charles, Camille Zubrinsky. 2006. *Won't You Be My Neighbor? Race, Class, and Residence in Los Angeles*. New York: Russell Sage.

same time, a clear majority of blacks remain willing to live in areas where their group is in the minority, and show a clear preference for 50/50 neighborhoods. Nonetheless, substantial differences remain in both the meaning and preferred levels of racial integration across racial categories. For many whites, a racially integrated neighborhood is one that is majority-white. To put it plainly, whites are *willing* to live with small numbers of blacks, Latinos, and/or Asians, but *prefer* to live in predominantly same-race neighborhoods. Non-whites, on the other hand, all prefer substantially more racial integration and are more comfortable as a numerical minority compared to whites. Still, the same-race preferences of non-whites exceed whites' preferences for integration. Moreover, patterns of neighborhood racial composition preferences follow a predictable racial hierarchy: whites are always the most-preferred out-group and blacks the least-preferred; Asians and Latinos, usually in that order, are located in between these two extremes.

As part of the 1993-1994 *Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality*,⁵ I developed a major innovation on existing methods of testing preferences by using a single item in which all respondents are asked to draw their ideal multiethnic neighborhood.⁶ An important task in the development of the project—and this experiment—was the ability to tap attitudes toward residential integration in a truly multiracial-multiethnic environment. To accomplish this goal, we presented all respondents with a blank neighborhood showcard and asked them to specify the racial composition of their ideal neighborhood.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The measures of preferences resulting from this experiment—percentage white, percentage black, and so on—are simply the sum of each group represented on a respondent's completed card, divided by the total number of houses (including the respondent's own), and then multiplied by 100.

Table 2 summarizes responses for all respondent- and target-group pairings; results are broken down by nativity-status for Latinos and Asians due to their markedly different attitudes and experiences. Patterns of neighborhood racial composition preferences suggest that Los Angeles-area residents would tolerate more racial residential integration than they currently experience, while simultaneously expressing substantial aversion to integration with certain groups. All of the racial and nativity-status groups tend to prefer both substantial integration and same-race representation exceeding that of any single out-group. Other distinct patterns are also evident. First, while all groups prefer neighborhoods dominated by coethnics, this preference is strongest among whites: their average ideal neighborhood was over half same-race (53%).

⁵ The Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality is a large, multifaceted survey research project designed to examine crosscutting explanations for racial inequality broadly defined and to provide fresh data from one of the largest and most racially diverse metro areas in the country. A major goal of the project was capitalize on the multiracial character of Los Angeles in three important ways: 1) large numbers of respondents from each of the four major racial/ethnic groups were included; 2) content moved beyond the traditional black-white dichotomy; and 3) survey-based experimental design allowed the examination of various types of integrated living arrangements and permitted a direct assessment of whether individuals react in uniformly racially discriminatory ways. Interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, and Cantonese to capture the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of the large immigrant population. For more details, see Charles (2006, chapter 1).

⁶ The original Farley-Schuman methodology asks a different series of questions depending upon the race of the respondent. Whites are asked about 1) their comfort with and 2) willingness to enter neighborhoods with varying degrees of integration with blacks. Black respondents are asked 1) to rate neighborhoods of various racial compositions from most to least attractive and 2) to indicate their willingness to enter each of the areas. In both cases, scenarios represent realistic assumptions regarding the residential experiences and options of both groups (For details, see Farley et al. 1978, 1993).

Following just behind whites, however, were foreign-born Latinos and foreign-born Asians (48 and 46 percent, respectively). The ideal neighborhoods of blacks and native-born Latinos were just over 42 percent same-race, and native-born Asians seem least interested in coethnic neighbors, expressing a preference for an average ideal neighborhood that is just over one-third same-race.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Whites also stand out as the group most likely to prefer an entirely same-race neighborhood (12%)—a rate three to four times that of native-born Latinos (4%) and African Americans (3%), and more than 16 times that of native-born Asians (less than one percent). Only the foreign-born groups come close to having same-race preferences similar to those of whites, however this may have more to do with immigrant-specific needs for the comfort and familiarity of compatriots (and chain migration patterns) than with anti-out-group sentiments. Note too that blacks are always the least-preferred out-group neighbors. This is seen in two ways. First, blacks were the most likely to be completely excluded from the ideal neighborhoods of other groups. One-fifth of whites and nearly as many native-born Latinos preferred neighborhoods without any blacks; native-born Asians were least likely to do so, yet still nearly 15% did. Still, this is not nearly as startling as the 38% of foreign-born Latinos and 44% of foreign-born Asians who drew ideal neighborhoods without a single black household. Latinos also appear to be less desirable neighbors, particularly among whites and foreign-born Asians—more than 18% of the former and about 30% of the latter exclude Latinos entirely, compared to less than 10% of blacks and native-born Asians. And, despite their status as least-preferred neighbors, blacks are among the most open to integration with all other groups, rivaled only by native-born Asians. Finally, all non-white groups, irrespective of nativity-status, prefer integration with whites to other-race minorities.

What Drives Preferences—Classism, Ethnocentrism, or Prejudice?⁷

A variety of factors shape residential decision-making: cost and affordability, the quality of the housing stock, preferences for particular dwelling amenities, proximity to work or other important destinations, stage in the life course, the quality of the public schools. Consequently, aggregate-level residential outcomes are the result of a multitude of individual-level attitudes and behaviors. In analyses of patterns of racial residential preferences, however, three hypotheses are typically considered:

1. **Classism.** Perceived differences in socioeconomic status that heavily coincide with racial-ethnic boundaries contribute to racial residential preferences.
2. **Ethnocentrism.** Members of all social groups tend to be ethnocentric, that is, to prefer to associate with coethnics.
3. **Prejudice.** More active out-group avoidance is at the root of neighborhood racial composition preferences.

The expression of prejudice can take a variety of forms, including negative racial stereotypes, perceptions of social distance, and the belief that one or more groups pose a competitive threat to one's own groups. Also important, though not typically considered, are

⁷ This section is adapted from Charles, Camille Zubrinsky. 2006. *Won't You Be My Neighbor? Race, Class, and Residence in Los Angeles*. New York: Russell Sage.

minority-group beliefs about the prevalence of discrimination; these beliefs may influence the preferences of minority-group members for whites or for same-race neighbors.⁸ The patterns of neighborhood racial composition preferences presented in Table 2 are not evidence of classism, ethnocentrism or racial prejudice in and of themselves. To understand what drives neighborhood racial composition preferences requires systematic testing of the various hypotheses, preferably the simultaneous examination of said explanations.

Tables 3 through 6 present—for whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians respectively—selected results from a detailed, multivariate analysis of the extent to which classism, ethnocentrism, and/or racial prejudice explain neighborhood racial composition preferences. Results are shown for all respondent and target group combinations. *Classism* is measured as perceived “social class disadvantage,” and measures the degree to which an out-group is believed to be economically disadvantaged relative to one’s own group. The *ethnocentrism* (“birds of a feather flock together”) hypothesis is tested using a measure of “in-group attachment” or common fate identity: the extent to which respondents believe that “what happens to my group happens to me.”

Three items capture variants of *prejudice*. Racial stereotyping is an important aspect of traditional prejudice or simple, out-group hostility. The measure used here is a summary of four traits—intelligence, preference for welfare dependence, English-language ability, and involvement in drugs and gangs. Social distance is the degree to which respondents believe that an out-group is “difficult to get along with socially” relative to his or her own group. Both are difference scores: ratings of out-groups relative to respondents’ perceptions of their own group; as such, these measures capture another dimension or type of prejudice: prejudice as a sense of group position. Rather than simple out-group hostility, this form of prejudice is fueled by a commitment to a specific group status or relative group position rather than simple out-group hostility. What matters most is the magnitude or degree of difference from particular out-groups that in-group members have socially learned to expect and maintain. Beliefs about racial-group threat or competition offer another lens through which to examine feelings of racial hostility—the degree to which an individual believes that more opportunities (economic and/or political) for an out-group results in fewer opportunities for one’s own group. Finally, minority-group members’ beliefs about whites’ attitudes toward them and/or the prevalence of racial discrimination is captured in a general perception of whites as “tending to discriminate” against minority groups.⁹ In each instance, positive scores reflect “more” of the attitude under consideration (e.g., more classism, more negative stereotypes, more ethnocentrism), and a

⁸ For important exceptions, see Krysan, Maria. 2002. “Whites Who Say They’d Flee: Who Are They, and Why Would They Leave?” *Demography* 39(4): 675-96. See also, Timberlake, Jeffrey M. 2000. “Still Life in Black and White: Effects of Racial and Class Attitudes on Prospects for Residential Integration in Atlanta.” *Sociological Inquiry* 70(4): 420-45.

⁹ Scores for the social class disadvantage, racial stereotyping, and social distance measures range from -6 to +6: negative scores indicate the perception that an out-group is economically advantaged relative to one’s own group; positive scores represent the perception of an out-group as economically disadvantaged relative to one’s own group; a score of 0 means a respondent perceives no difference in the economic position of an out-group and his or her own group. Scores for common fate identity range from 0 (no sense of common fate) to 3 (a strong sense of common fate). Perceived racial group competition is a scaled item indicating respondents’ beliefs that more 1) economic opportunity and/or 2) political power for an out-group (black, Latino, or Asian) means less for their own group; scores range from 0 (no threat) to 8 (substantial threat). The perception of whites as “tending to discriminate” is an absolute measure ranging from 1 (whites tend to treat members of other groups equally) to 7 (whites tend to discriminate against members of other groups).

negative association confirms the hypothesis: as each attitude becomes more salient, preferences for neighborhood racial integration with a target-group decline. In the case of preferences for same-race neighbors, the result is a positive association: increasingly negative attitudes and perceptions of out-groups (positive) result in increasing preferences for same-race neighbors. **Results indicate that classism and ethnocentrism play, at best, marginal roles in individuals' residential decision-making—with the clear exception of Asians, but even for this group class concerns appear to be much more salient for immigrants than for the native-born. In most cases, any evidence that supports these explanations pales in comparison to evidence that supports explanations rooted in the various forms of racial prejudice.**

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Table 3 summarizes multivariate models of whites' preferences for black, Latino/a, Asian and same-race neighbors, testing the relative importance of classism (perceived social class disadvantage), ethnocentrism (in-group attachment), and the three measures of racial hostility. Results clearly illustrate two main points: First, classism and ethnocentrism play no meaningful role in understanding the neighborhood racial composition preferences of whites. This is true irrespective of the race of the target-group—out-group or same-race. Second, negative racial attitudes exert consistently significant effects on preferences, and in the anticipated direction—reducing preferences for residential integration (negative coefficients) and increasing preferences for residential isolation (positive coefficients).¹⁰ To the extent that whites perceive non-whites as relatively economically disadvantaged, this perception has no meaningful effect on their neighborhood racial preferences. Nor does ethnocentrism significantly impact whites' preferences. It should also be noted that almost none of the social background characteristics (not shown here) exert any consistent impact on preferences. **Simply put, whites' preferences for neighborhood racial integration are best understood as motivated by prejudice, not classism or ethnocentrism.**

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

Table 4 presents results from comparable models of blacks' neighborhood racial composition preferences. Again, results offer no support for the influence of perceived social class disadvantage or ethnocentrism. Class attitudes are very marginally significant regarding blacks' preference for white neighbors, and more strongly associated with preferences for same-race neighbors. In each case however, the impact of "classism" contradicts the hypothesized relationship, increasing preferences for white neighbors and decreasing preferences for same-race neighbors. Together, the marginal statistical significance and low relative importance (based on the beta values) leads to the conclusion that classism is unimportant for understanding blacks' neighborhood racial composition preferences. The influence of ethnocentrism also runs counter to expectations. Those blacks with a moderate amount of ethnocentrism prefer significantly more white neighbors and significantly fewer same-race neighbors. This association between ethnocentrism and preferences is consistent with what has been called an "assimilationist" orientation. That is, "making it" in America is associated with moving "up and out" of segregated communities and into the predominantly white suburbs. Although a high

¹⁰ To interpret, the slope values (B), one would multiply the coefficient by a score on the independent variable. The result represents the change in preferences (measured as a percentage) for every one-unit change in the measure of prejudice. The standardized coefficients (Beta) allow a comparison of the relative importance of each variable, since they are measured in similar units across explanatory variables that are measured in different units.

degree of ethnocentrism is associated with slightly higher preferences for same-race neighbors, this association is, again, only marginally significant. Overall, results suggest that, if anything, ethnocentrism enhances blacks' preference for white neighbors and dampens preferences for same-race neighbors.

Out-group directed racial attitudes stand out as powerful predictors of blacks' neighborhood racial preferences. When potential neighbors are white or Asian, each of the prejudice-based measures—stereotyping, social distance, and the perception of whites as discriminatory—exhibit the anticipated effect on preferences (as attitudes become more negative, preferences decline). Negative stereotypes and perceived social distance also significantly increase preferences for same-race neighbors. Perceptions of competitive threat from Asians is marginally associated with decreased preferences for this group as neighbors; perceived racial competition also slightly increases blacks' preference for same-race neighbors. Once again, the most powerful predictors of **blacks' neighborhood racial composition preferences is racial prejudice—whether negative racial stereotypes, the perception of whites and Asians as socially distant, the perception of whites as tending to discriminate against them, or the fear that more jobs and political power for Asians means less for them. Neither concerns about avoiding poverty or some “innate” desire to stay “with my own kind” are influential.**¹¹

Tables 5 and 6 summarize similar analyses for Latinos and Asians, respectively. An important difference, however, is the careful consideration of immigration-related characteristics—national origin, nativity status, length of time in the US, and English language proficiency. These characteristics are particularly important for understanding preferences for same-race neighbors, as well as the role of racial attitudes.

[TABLES 5 AND 6 ABOUT HERE]

Latinos' neighborhood racial composition preferences (Table 5) are intricately linked to their immigration-related traits. Among the foreign-born, both the accumulation of time in the US and the acquisition of English-language skills increase preferences for integration with whites and diminish desires for close residential proximity to co-ethnics; this is particularly true for the most recent arrivals. In addition, racial attitudes are influential. In some instances, the impact of racial attitudes is mediated by immigrant characteristics. Specifically, negative racial attitudes (stereotyping and social distance) are less influential for the most recently arrived and in-group attachment is more so. These patterns are consistent with models of immigrant adaptation and the notion that internalizing a US-specific racial ideology is part of the acculturation process. For Latinos, the 5-year mark is an important one: at that point, immigrant and native-born Latinos are similar with respect to associations between racial attitudes and preferences. Finally, it is evident that, despite the importance of immigration, Latinos have much in common with blacks, particularly when potential neighbors are white or same-race. That is, **Latinos' neighborhood racial composition preferences are motivated primarily by prejudice and perceptions of whites as discriminatory; perceptions of blacks as economically disadvantaged play a very minor role, as does ethnocentrism when potential neighbors are Asian or same-race.**

¹¹ For more on this, see Maria Krysan and Reynolds Farley (2002) “The Residential Preferences of Blacks: Do They Explain Persistent Segregation?” *Social Forces* 80:937-980.

Finally, Table 6 shows selected results for Asian respondents. For this group, out-group-directed racial attitudes are generally less influential, but still matter in important ways for understanding their neighborhood racial composition preferences. Racial stereotyping and perceived social distance are consistently important when potential neighbors are other minority groups; each of these attitudes, in addition to perceptions of whites as discriminatory, motivates Asians' preferences for white neighbors as well. Overall, and contrary to the view of immigrant adaptation that includes the internalization of a specifically American racial ideology, the influence of these attitudes do not vary much by nativity status. And, although class-based attitudes emerge as an important factor among Asians, clearly racial attitudes matter as well, particularly when potential neighbors are other-race. Yet none of the attitudinal characteristics was as important as immigration-related characteristics for understanding Asians' neighborhood integration preferences. Clearly, understanding neighborhood racial composition preferences is more complicated for groups characterized by massive immigration and a "one-size-fits-all" approach should be avoided.

In summary, neighborhood racial composition preferences are primarily a function of racial prejudice; for blacks, Latinos and, to a lesser extent, Asians there is the added concern about hostility directed toward them by whites. Assertions that preferences are driven primarily by either "classism" or ethnocentrism are simply not supported by the evidence. These results are entirely consistent with several previous multivariate analyses detailing whether and how race matters at the individual level.¹² Moreover, the current analysis improves upon prior studies, with the inclusion of multiple indicators of prejudice that capture several dimensions of out-group hostility as well as minority-group concerns about white hostility toward them. Along with measures of ethnocentrism and beliefs about social class differences, this is the most thorough analysis of the factors that motivate neighborhood racial composition preferences to date.

Where do we go from here?¹³

My goal here was to elucidate patterns of neighborhood racial composition preferences and the forces that drive them, and to situate racial preferences within the broader context of historic and contemporary American race relations. The good news for the future of public policy related to housing opportunity, housing choice, and inequality more broadly is that whites are increasingly *willing* to live in close proximity to racial minorities and a sizable number of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, remain *willing* to live in predominantly white areas. To capitalize on this willingness, however, requires being always mindful of the way that race continues to shape both our day-to-day interactions and our overall worldview.

The bad news, both for public policy and the nation, is that most whites still prefer predominantly or overwhelmingly white neighborhoods, while most nonwhites prefer more same-race neighbors than most whites are willing to tolerate. Most Americans—irrespective of race, ethnicity, or nativity status—continue to embrace anti-minority stereotypes, including many

¹² Farley et al (1994). "Stereotypes and Segregation: Neighborhoods in the Detroit Area." Timberlake, Jeffrey M. (2000). "Still Life in Black and White: Effects of Racial and Class Attitudes on Prospects for Residential Integration in Atlanta." *Sociological Inquiry* 70(4):420-445. Bobo, Lawrence D. and Camille L. Zubrinsky (1996). "Attitudes on Residential Inegration." Charles, Camille Zubrinsky (2000). "Neighborhood Racial Composition Preferences." Charles, Camille Zubrinsky (2003). "The Dynamics of Racial Residential Segregation."

¹³ Adapted from Charles, Camille Zubrinsky. 2006. *Won't You Be My Neighbor? Race, Class, and Residence in Los Angeles* (New York: Russell Sage), and Charles, Camille Zubrinsky. 2005. "Can We Live Together? Racial Preferences and Neighborhood Outcomes," chapter 3 in *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America*, edited by Xavier de Souza Briggs (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press).

who are willing to share residential space with racial minorities. Conversely, most blacks, Hispanics, and Asians have a keen sense of their subordinate positions relative to whites, and of whites' negative attitudes; this often leaves them suspicious of overwhelmingly white areas (a sort of "better safe than sorry" mentality).

Across racial groups, patterns of neighborhood racial composition preferences reveal a clear and consistent racial rank-ordering of out-groups as potential neighbors: whites are always the most preferred out-group neighbors, and the most likely to prefer entirely same-race neighborhoods and/or only limited contact with nonwhites—especially blacks. Blacks are always the least-preferred out-group neighbors, and the most open to substantial integration with all other groups. Asians and Hispanics, respectively, are in between these extremes. To varying degrees, all groups express preferences for *both* meaningful integration and a strong coethnic presence, yet preferences for the latter appear to depend on the race of potential neighbors, and are strongest when potential neighbors are black.

Available evidence indicates that active, present-day racial prejudice plays a particularly important role in driving preferences, always more important than either social class concerns or ethnocentrism. In many instances neither of these factors matters at all. And, although the evidence supports both variants of racial prejudice, it is particularly persuasive with respect to the sense of group position hypothesis. This is especially true for whites, the group at the top of the status hierarchy: maintaining their status advantages and privilege necessitates a certain amount of social distance from nonwhites—particularly blacks and Hispanics, who occupy the lowest positions on the aforementioned hierarchies. More than token integration with these groups signals an unwelcome change in status relationships. Indeed, the racial pecking order is so widely known that Hispanics and Asians—many of them unassimilated immigrants—mirror (and, arguably exaggerate) it in their preferences for integration.

Conversely, with whites clearly in the most privileged positions of the economic, political, and prestige hierarchies in American society, nonwhites have traditionally associated upward social mobility with proximity to them. That many nonwhites hold negative stereotypes of whites but are still interested in sharing residential space with them is indicative of this orientation. At the same time, nonwhites' beliefs about discrimination and hostility from whites, combined with an awareness that whites are not "on the same page" may cause some minority homeseekers to limit their housing searches to areas where they feel welcome, or to decide not to search at all.¹⁴ Thus, a neighborhood's racial composition acts as a signal for homeseekers: areas with substantial coethnic representation are viewed as welcoming; overwhelmingly white neighborhoods can evoke concerns for nonwhites about hostility, isolation, and discomfort—both psychological and, sometimes, physical; and, for whites, racially mixed or majority-minority neighborhoods signal at least a perceptual loss of relative status advantage, particularly when there is a sizable black and/or Latino community. Thus, for all groups, preferences for same-race neighbors have more to do with aversion to others than with in-group solidarity.

These clearly racial concerns cut across class lines. Indeed, studies of the attitudes and experiences of middle class blacks suggest that, paradoxically, this subset of blacks may be 1) most pessimistic about the future of race relations, 2) most likely to believe that whites have negative attitudes toward them, and 3) increasingly less interested in predominantly white

¹⁴ Charles, Camille Zubrinsky. 2001. "Processes of Residential Segregation." In *Urban Inequality: Evidence from Four Cities*, edited by Alice O'Connor, Chris Tilly, and Lawrence Bobo (New York: Russell Sage). Yinger, John. 1995. *Closed Doors, Opportunities Lost: The Continuing Costs of Housing Discrimination* (New York: Russell Sage).

neighborhoods.¹⁵ Thus, the most upwardly mobile blacks may be among the most suspicious of whites and least interested in sharing residential space with them. For this group, affordability is not nearly the obstacle that whites' racial prejudice is, and this is due, in no small measure, to the fact that most whites—irrespective of their own social class status—adhere to negative racial stereotypes, deny the persistence of pervasive racial prejudice and discrimination, and are quite likely to oppose race-targeted social policies.

Whites' racial prejudice—and minority responses to it—poses a more obvious, but equally difficult challenge for improving the housing options of the poor, including those who participate in public housing programs. For many, the obvious material benefits clearly outweigh concerns about and/or day-to-day experiences of prejudice and discrimination.¹⁶ For a nontrivial few, however, fears of isolation and hostility will prevail and participants will return to the ghetto and others will opt out entirely when confronted with the reality of moving to a potentially hostile environment.¹⁷ While not at the bottom of the status hierarchy, Asians and Hispanics are also subordinate groups grappling with similar racial issues. As we increase our knowledge of Asian and Hispanic racial attitudes, a similar paradox may emerge within these groups as well.

As we move headstrong into the 21st century and continue to struggle with racial inequality in all areas of American life, we must be ever mindful that race still matters, and it matters over and above social class characteristics. In so doing, we must also be mindful of how and why race matters. White objections to race-targeted social policy point to the necessity for well-crafted, universal housing policies that will gain widespread public support but also manage to address issues more directly tied to race. Potentially useful strategies for encouraging whites and nonwhites to share residential space come from studies documenting the characteristics of stably integrated neighborhoods. Residents of these communities often work together on community betterment projects (e.g., building playground equipment for a park or working to have street lights installed) or general community building efforts that bring people of varied racial backgrounds together, working toward a common goal. Such activities, particularly when they become part of the larger neighborhood culture, can fundamentally alter attitudes on both sides of the racial divide by highlighting what residents share in common, helping to build trust, and potentially reducing stereotypes.

Another common strategy emphasizes aggressive public relations campaigns that sing the praises of particular communities. Some of these may stress the value added by diversity; others highlight desirable neighborhood amenities, services, and community events that make the area generally attractive, those that do both might ultimately be the most successful.¹⁸ Aggressive marketing strategies seem particularly beneficial when neighborhoods can be advertised as among “the best” in a particular metropolitan area. Positive marketing might also help to attract blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, to overwhelmingly white communities by informing these groups that they are open to and interested in creating stable, friendly, and racially diverse communities.

¹⁵ See, for examples: Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin P. Sikes. 1994. *Living with Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience* (Boston: Beacon); Hochschild, Jennifer. 1995. *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press); Sigelman, Lee and Steven A. Tuch. 1997. “Metastereotypes: Blacks’ Perceptions of Whites’ Stereotypes of Blacks.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61:87-101.

¹⁶ Briggs, Xavier de Souza. 2005. *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press).

¹⁷ Rubinowitz, Leonard S. and James E. Rosenbaum. 2000. *Crossing the Class and Color Lines: From Public Housing to White Suburbia* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

¹⁸ See Ellen (2000).

Active, diligent enforcement of antidiscrimination laws is also both appropriate and necessary. This, however, is likely to be a far more difficult and potentially less rewarding task. As it stands, the burden of proving discrimination is placed on the victim, yet empirical evidence suggests that present-day discrimination is often so subtle that few victims are likely to suspect that their housing choices are being constrained.¹⁹ Add to this the gulf of racial misunderstanding separating whites and racial minorities: where blacks see “a racist moment,” whites see “an isolated incident,” or a “misinterpretation of events,” or, even worse, they argue that blacks are “overreacting.” In response, blacks become increasingly distrustful of a system that is supposed to protect them, pessimistic about the future of race relations, and increasingly less inclined to incur the psychic costs associated with filing a complaint.

To give teeth to antidiscrimination enforcement, we need “a new enforcement strategy that builds the capacity of local, state, and federal civil rights agencies to conduct widespread, ongoing” audit studies as a credible deterrent.²⁰ Tests could be of randomly selected real estate agencies and of those suspected of discrimination; those agencies found to consistently evince fair treatment could be publicly rewarded, while those shown to discriminate could be sanctioned, both publicly and financially. In the lending market, where audit studies are more difficult, regular analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data presents a method for charting the practices of lenders. Such strategies have the potential to create meaningful deterrents. Furthermore, with regular monitoring, there are published records of documented discrimination that could 1) help to alter whites’ beliefs about inequality and discrimination and 2) be used by victims as evidence in complaints, documenting systematic mistreatment. Together, these benefits could help move us toward better racial understanding as whites have the “proof” they need to believe what blacks and other racial minorities “just know”.²¹

Without such efforts, and given the state of race relations more generally, it seems unlikely that we can “live together” in the near future. It has been argued that increasing racial diversity might create a “buffer” for blacks, creating opportunities for residential mobility and contact with whites. Yet Hispanics and Asians are at least as likely to hold negative stereotypes of blacks as whites are, and more likely to object to the prospect of sharing residential space with them. Furthermore, while whites hold negative stereotypes of both Hispanics and Asians, they tend to be less severe than their stereotypes of blacks. Thus, whites are likely to view blacks as culturally deficient, while perceiving largely immigrant Hispanic and Asian populations as culturally distinct. Similarly, stereotypes of immigrants working hard at menial jobs and complaining less may further fuel anti-black sentiment, fostering the belief that blacks “push too hard” or “are always looking for a handout.” Hence, rather than operating as a “buffer” or source of greater options and acceptance for blacks, increasing racial diversity may simply add to the climate of resistance to blacks as neighbors, and further complicate efforts at achieving either greater racial understanding or more equitable housing outcomes.

¹⁹ See Yinger (1995), and Galster, George C and Erin Godfrey. 2003. “By Words and Deeds: Racial Steering by Real Estate Agents in the US in 2000.” Paper presented to the annual meetings of the Urban Affairs Association, Cleveland, OH (March).

²⁰ Galster and Godfrey (2003), pg. 24.

²¹ Briggs (2005).

APPENDIX A

Table 1. Black, Latino/a, and Asian Segregation From Whites in Los Angeles and for the 50 Largest Metro Areas by Regions, 1980-2000

Metro Area	BLACKS			LATINOS			ASIANS		
	Dissimilarity (80-00 Δ)	Isolation (80-00 Δ)	Exposure (80-00 Δ)	Dissimilarity (80-00 Δ)	Isolation (80-00 Δ)	Exposure (80-00 Δ)	Dissimilarity (80-00 Δ)	Isolation (80-00 Δ)	Exposure (80-00 Δ)
Los Angeles/Long Beach	68(-14)	34 (-26)	16 (0)	63 (+6)	63 (+13)	17 (-17)	48 (+1)	29 (+14)	31 (-17)
Western Area Average	52 (-11)	18 (-12)	41 (-7)	47 (+9)	36 (+13)	42 (-20)	42 (+3)	24 (+13)	48 (-19)
Midwestern Area Average	74 (-7)	59 (-8)	34 (+4)	46 (+4)	16 (+7)	65 (-12)	41 (+3)	7 (+4)	75 (-12)
Southern Area Average	61 (-10)	53 (-10)	35 (+2)	43 (+10)	19 (+10)	54 (-18)	39 (+1)	6 (+4)	62 (-18)
Eastern Area Average	72 (-6)	46 (-8)	33 (-2)	57 (+3)	28 (+10)	48 (-14)	42 (+3)	12 (+7)	68 (-13)
Overall Average	62 (-10)	41 (-12)	37 (+1)	48 (+6)	27 (+10)	51 (-16)	40 (+3)	11 (+6)	62 (-16)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and The Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research.

Notes: Due to space limitations, indices and changes are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 2. Summary Statistics, Neighborhood Racial Composition Preferences by Respondent and Target-Group Race

Target Group Race	Respondent Race/Nativity Status					
	Whites	Blacks	NB Latinos	FB Latinos	NB Asians	FB Asians
<i>White Neighbors</i>						
Mean %	----	21.52%	26.18%	24.50%	27.52%	30.62%
No Whites	----	8.71	5.67	15.81	0.74	8.34
<i>Black Neighbors</i>						
Mean %	14.91%	----	15.39%	11.74%	16.29%	9.38%
No Blacks	20.04	----	18.97	38.07	14.83	44.44
<i>Latino/a Neighbors</i>						
Mean %	15.82%	19.83%	----	----	19.76%	13.54%
No Latinos	18.46	9.36	----	----	8.76	29.38
<i>Asian Neighbors</i>						
Mean %	16.29%	16.25%	16.05%	15.71%	----	----
No Asians	17.78	16.78	18.61	25.12	----	----
<i>Same-Race Neighbors</i>						
Mean %	52.97%	42.39%	42.37%	48.04%	36.43%	46.46%
All Same-Race	12.35	3.02	3.84	8.39	0.74	8.13

Source: 1993-94 Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality

Notes: $p < .001$.

Table 3. Selected OLS Regression Coefficients, Effects of Various Racial Attitudes on Whites' Preferences for Black, Latino/a, Asian, & Same-Race Neighbors

	Black Neighbors			Latino/a Neighbors			Asian Neighbors			Same-Race Neighbors		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Racial Attitudes												
Social Class Disadvantage	0.44	0.30	0.05	-0.14	0.28	-0.02	-0.42	0.47	-0.04	0.35	0.89	0.02
In-Group Attachment												
None/Low (ref)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Medium	0.17	0.89	0.01	0.68	0.39	-0.03	-0.89	0.83	-0.04	0.66	2.00	0.01
High	0.30	0.85	0.01	-1.19	0.85	-0.05	-0.89	0.74	-0.04	1.66	1.61	0.03
Racial Stereotyping	-1.92***	0.46	-0.19	-1.36***	0.34	-0.15	-2.23**	0.71	-0.15	5.00***	1.11	0.18
Social Distance	-0.75**	0.27	-0.11	-0.69*	0.31	-0.10	-1.15**	0.36	-0.15	1.95**	0.68	0.11
Racial Group Threat	-0.56*	0.22	-0.10	-0.62**	0.18	-0.12	-0.61**	0.21	-0.11	1.83***	0.40	0.16
Constant	25.12***	2.87		18.53***	2.72		18.67***	2.56		28.63***	5.23	
R-Squared		0.28***			0.16***			0.16***			0.23***	
N							705					

Notes: Models control for sex, age, education, income, political ideology, home ownership status, public housing experience, household structure, and the presence of target-group members in actual neighborhoods. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Table 4. Selected OLS Regression Coefficients, Effects of Various Racial Attitudes on Blacks' Preferences for White, Latino/a, Asian, & Same-Race Neighbors

	White Neighbors			Latino/a Neighbors			Asian Neighbors			Same-Race Neighbors		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Racial Attitudes												
Social Class Disadvantage	0.33 [†]	0.19	0.06	-0.09	0.35	-0.01	0.51 ^{**}	0.15	0.10	-1.11 ^{**}	0.33	-0.09
In-Group Attachment												
None/Low (ref)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Medium	1.82 ^{**}	0.60	0.08	-0.14	0.65	0.01	-0.00	0.56	-0.00	-1.97 [*]	0.97	-0.05
High	-1.20	0.76	-0.05	-0.60	0.88	-0.02	-0.50	0.82	-0.02	2.47 [†]	1.61	0.06
Racial Stereotyping	-0.72 [*]	0.35	-0.08	-1.06 [*]	0.46	-0.09	-0.53 [*]	0.26	-0.06	2.68 ^{***}	0.60	0.13
Social Distance	-0.73 ^{***}	0.19	-0.14	-0.32	0.20	-0.05	-0.54 ^{**}	0.14	-0.12	1.11 ^{**}	0.34	0.11
White Discrimination	-0.50 [*]	0.26	-0.07	----	----	----	----	----	----	0.26	0.34	0.02
Racial Group Threat	----	----	----	-0.16	0.13	-0.04	-0.28 [†]	0.15	-0.07	0.45 [†]	0.24	0.06
Constant	20.37 ^{***}	2.02		19.00 ^{***}	2.15		13.97 ^{***}	1.47		43.92 ^{***}	4.33	
R-Squared		0.12 ^{***}			0.06 ^{***}			0.09 ^{***}			0.13 ^{***}	
N							1,038					

Notes: Models control for sex, age, education, income, political ideology, home ownership status, public housing experience, household structure, and the presence of target-group members in actual neighborhoods. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. [†] $p < .10$.

Table 5. Selected OLS Regression Coefficients, Effects of Immigration-Related Characteristics and Various Racial Attitudes on Latinos' Preferences for White, Black, Asian, & Same-Race Neighbors

	White Neighbors			Black Neighbors			Asian Neighbors			Same-Race Neighbors		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Immigration-Related Characteristics												
Mexican (reference)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Central American	3.53*	1.42	0.09	0.89	0.78	0.03	-0.34	1.00	-0.01	-3.74*	1.44	-0.07
US-Born (reference)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
FB—5 years or less in US	6.28*	2.84	0.14	-0.78	1.96	-0.02	-3.68*	1.65	-0.11	13.97***	3.40	0.24
FB—6-10 years in US	5.33*	2.05	0.12	-2.65	1.85	-0.08	-0.02	1.76	-0.00	2.46	3.13	0.04
FB—Over 10 years in US	4.59**	1.40	0.14	-2.92*	1.24	-0.12	0.44	1.38	0.02	6.65	3.77	0.15
English Proficiency	0.89	0.52	0.08	0.94**	0.33	0.11	0.10	0.43	0.01	-0.26	1.06	-0.02
Racial Attitudes												
Social Class Disadvantage	0.18	0.29	0.02	-0.65*	0.32	-0.07	-0.21	0.21	-0.03	-0.18	0.47	-0.01
In-Group Attachment												
None/Low (ref)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Medium	0.00	1.18	0.00	0.19	0.89	0.01	2.35*	0.33	0.09	-2.79†	1.46	-0.06
High	-0.63	1.05	-0.02	0.36	0.86	0.01	-0.96	0.92	-0.04	2.63†	1.46	0.06
Racial Stereotyping	-1.40**	0.49	-0.11	-0.50	0.34	-0.04	-0.81*	0.36	-0.07	0.65	0.52	0.03
Social Distance	-0.72***	0.21	-0.11	-0.90***	0.22	-0.18	-0.44**	0.18	-0.08	1.17***	0.32	0.10
White Discrimination	-0.66*	0.27	-0.08	----	----	----	----	----	----	0.74*	0.33	0.06
Racial Group Threat	----	----	----	0.06	0.20	0.01	-0.32	0.24	-0.05	0.31	0.44	0.03
Interactions												
5yrs or less in US*English	2.82*	1.35	0.09	----	----	----	----	----	----	-5.61***	1.08	-0.13
GT 10yrs in US*English	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-2.80**	1.06	-0.15
5yrs or less*Stereotyping	3.21***	0.91	0.17	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
5yrs or less*Class Disadv.	----	----	----	1.55*	0.61	0.09	----	----	----	----	----	----
5yrs or less*High In-Grp	----	----	----	-5.60**	1.80	-0.15	----	----	----	----	----	----
5yrs or less*Social Distance	----	----	----	0.98*	0.44	0.11	----	----	----	----	----	----
Constant	13.27***	3.91		13.15***	2.58		10.43***	2.59		41.62***	6.95	
R-Squared		0.19***			0.15***			0.14***			0.23***	
N												

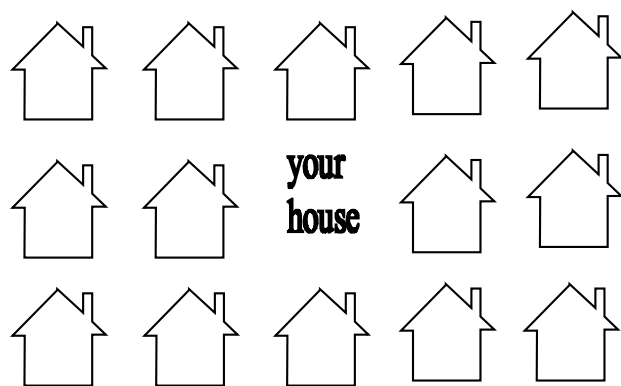
Notes: Models control for sex, age, education, income, political ideology, home ownership status, public housing experience, household structure, and the presence of target-group members in actual neighborhoods. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. † $p < .10$.

Table 6. Selected OLS Regression Coefficients, Effects of Immigration-Related Characteristics and Various Racial Attitudes on Asians' Preferences for White, Black, Latino/a, & Same-Race Neighbors

	White Neighbors			Black Neighbors			Latino/a Neighbors			Same-Race Neighbors		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Immigration-Related Characteristics												
Japanese (reference)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Chinese	-2.92	2.16	-0.08	-1.42	1.02	-0.08	-2.31*	1.07	-0.11	2.70	2.15	0.06
Korean	16.68*	6.74	0.43	-9.44***	2.56	-0.49	-11.86**	4.21	-0.54	6.97*	2.95	0.14
US-Born (reference)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
FB—5 years or less in US	0.79	4.37	0.02	-3.42*	1.54	-0.15	-2.76†	1.49	-0.10	7.91†	4.73	0.14
FB—6-10 years in US	8.35**	3.16	0.18	-3.34*	1.62	-0.14	-6.08***	1.75	-0.23	5.42	3.40	0.09
FB—Over 10 yrs in US	6.62**	2.30	0.18	-4.05**	1.33	-0.22	-3.62**	1.35	-0.17	-4.25	2.92	-0.09
English Proficiency	0.82	0.81	0.06	0.38	0.39	0.06	0.73	0.40	0.10	-1.94*	0.87	-0.12
Racial Attitudes												
Social Class Disadvantage	0.47	0.57	0.03	-0.82***	0.23	-0.12	-0.44†	0.25	-0.05	1.21**	0.48	0.05
In-Group Attachment												
None/Low (ref)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Medium	1.40	1.23	0.04	-1.02†	0.57	-0.05	0.05	0.82	0.00	-0.13	1.51	-0.00
High	-2.78†	1.46	-0.07	1.09	0.67	0.06	-0.81	0.70	-0.04	3.40*	1.31	0.07
Racial Stereotyping	-0.15	0.78	-0.01	-0.79**	0.29	-0.08	-0.89*	0.39	-0.08	0.53	0.90	0.02
Social Distance	-0.70†	0.38	-0.07	-0.41**	0.14	-0.08	-0.96**	0.31	-0.16	0.36	0.53	0.02
White Discrimination	-0.83†	0.45	-0.07	----	----	----	----	----	----	0.70	0.46	0.04
Racial Group Threat	----	----	----	-0.25	0.18	-0.05	-0.08	0.22	-0.01	0.05	0.35	0.00
Interactions												
Korean*5yrs or less in US	-15.56*	7.34	-0.23	10.41***	2.81	0.30	11.31*	4.41	0.29	-8.98*	4.18	-0.10
Korean*6-10 yrs in US	-20.66**	7.59	-0.34	12.87***	2.47	0.42	15.64***	4.37	0.45	-11.10**	4.27	-0.15
Korean*GT 10 yrs in US	-19.72**	7.11	-0.39	9.92***	2.75	0.40	12.02**	4.36	0.42	----	----	----
Chinese*GT 10 yrs in US	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	8.03*	3.10	0.15
5yrs or less*English Ability	3.61*	1.47	0.17	----	----	----	----	----	----	-4.16**	1.46	-0.15
6-10 yrs in US*High In-Grp.				-4.25**	1.35	-0.16	----	----	----	----	----	----
6-10yrs in US*Social Dist.	----	----	----	----	----	----	1.00*	0.47	0.08	----	----	----
GT 10yrs in US*Social Dist.	----	----	----	----	----	----	0.91*	0.46	0.11	----	----	----
Constant	27.51***	4.93		18.41***	2.54		17.58***	2.82		34.26***	6.02	
R-Squared		0.22***			0.20***			0.15***			0.31***	
N							1,014					

Notes: Models control for sex, age, education, income, political ideology, home ownership status, public housing experience, household structure, and the presence of target-group members in actual neighborhoods. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. † $p < .10$.

Figure 1. Multiethnic Neighborhood Experiment Showcard



Source: 1993-94 Los Angeles Survey of Urban Inequality