

Examining Patterns in Ethnoracial Diversity in Los Angeles County Neighborhoods, 2016, Using Geographic Information System Analysis and Entropy Measure of Diversity

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Abstract : This study specifically examines patterns that define ethnographically diverse neighborhoods. Ethnoracial diversity is important as it facilitates cross-racial interactions within neighborhoods which have been theorized to be associated with such outcomes as intergroup harmony, the reduction of racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination, and increases in racial tolerance. Los Angeles (LA) is an ideal location to study ethnoracial spatial patterns as it is one of the most ethnographically diverse cities in the world. A large influx of Latinos, as well as Asians, have contributed to LA's urban landscape becoming increasingly diverse over several decades. Our dataset contains all census tracts in Los Angeles County in 2016 and incorporates Census and ACS demographic and spatial data. We quantify ethnoracial diversity using a derivative of Simpson's Diversity Index and utilize this measure to test previous literature that suggests Latinos are one of the key drivers of changing ethnoracial spatial patterns in Los Angeles. Preliminary results suggest that there has been an overall increase in ethnoracial diversity in Los Angeles neighborhoods over the past sixteen years. Patterns associated with this trend include decreases in predominantly white and black neighborhoods, increases in predominantly Latino and Asian neighborhoods, and a general decrease in the white populations of the most diverse neighborhoods. A similar pattern is seen in neighborhoods with large Latino increases- a decrease in white population, but with an increase in Asian and black populations. We also found support for previous research that suggests increases in Latino and Asian populations act as a buffer, allowing for black population increases without a sizeable decrease in the white population. Future research is needed to understand the underlying causes involved in many of the patterns and trends highlighted in this study.

Keywords : race, race and interaction, racial harmony, social interaction

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