



Houston Region Grows More Ethnically Diverse, With Small Declines in Segregation

A Joint Report Analyzing Census Data from 1990, 2000, and 2010

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A report of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research &
the Hobby Center for the Study of Texas

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Houston's population grew substantially between 1990 and 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, the Houston metropolitan area added more people (over 1.2 million) than any other metropolitan area in the United States.

That growth has brought important changes to the region. This report focuses on two such changes—the changes in racial/ethnic diversity and in residential segregation between the four major racial/ethnic groups.

Analyzing the 1990, 2000, and 2010 censuses, the Houston region has grown dramatically more ethnically diverse over the past 20 years, such that every ethnic group is now a demographic minority. As of 2010, Houston is the most ethnically diverse large metropolitan area in the nation.

The growth of ethnic diversity has occurred throughout the region. Houston City is more diverse in 2010 than it was in 1990. So too is every other city analyzed in this report (all of those in the region with 2010 populations greater than 50,000), and every county analyzed in this report. Yet, for the first time, as of 2010, Houston City is no longer the most diverse city in the region. Missouri City and Pearland are now the region's most ethnically diverse cities.

As the region has grown in ethnic diversity, what has occurred to levels of segregation between the racial/ethnic groups? The overall trend is a slight decline in segregation between groups over the 20 year period. There are exceptions, and these are explored in the report.

The analysis also finds that (1) Houston City is substantially more segregated than other areas of the region, (2) Black-Latino segregation in the region has declined most rapidly, (3) Blacks are most segregated where they represent the largest absolute and relative numbers, (4) the smaller the percentage Anglo in an area, the greater their segregation from other groups, and (5) Asians live closest to Anglos, and continue to be significantly segregated from Blacks and Latinos.

Ultimately, harnessing the regions burgeoning ethnic diversity is a central challenge for the Houston region and a signature opportunity to lead the nation in the transition to a fully inclusive, unified multiethnic region.

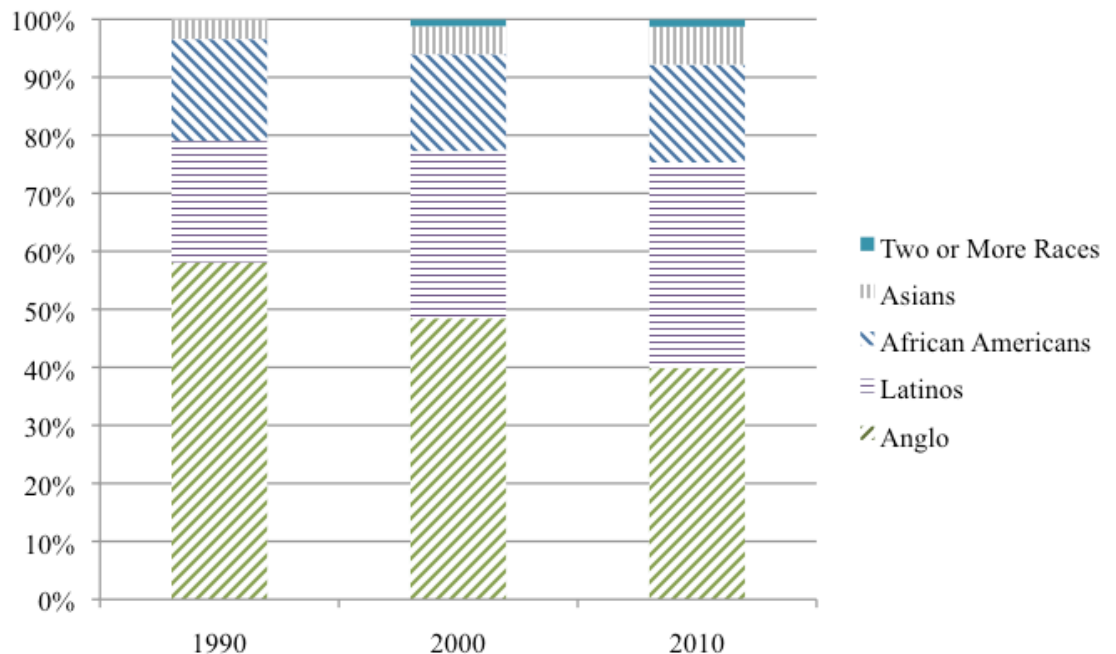
The Racial/Ethnic Diversity of the Houston Region

The Houston metropolitan region is becoming more diverse. Over the past two decades—from 1990 to 2010—the balance between the four major racial/ethnic groups has increased across the multiple county metropolitan region (Figure 1)¹. The Anglo population represents a declining share of the Houston metropolitan area. In 1990, Anglos were more than half the population (57.9%), but by 2000 they decreased to slightly less than half the total population (48.2%), and by 2010 they were only 39.7% of the metropolitan population.

Meanwhile, the percentage of Latinos has increased from one fifth of metropolitan residents (20.8%) in 1990 to more than one third (35.3%) in 2010, only slightly smaller than the Anglo population. At current rates of population change, Latinos are poised to become the Houston region’s largest ethnic group sometime within the next few years.

Other racial/ethnic groups in the metropolitan region have either increased, though to a smaller degree than Latinos, or remained the same. The percentage of Asians in the Houston metropolitan region has increased from 3.4% in 1990, to 4.8% in 2000, to 6.5% in 2010. African Americans have remained relatively stable across this time period, representing 17.5% in 1990 and 16.8% in 2010. Houstonians selecting two or more races, a group only tracked since 2000, accounted for 1.2 percent of the Houston region population in 2000 and 1.3 percent in 2010.

Figure 1. Houston Metropolitan Racial Demographics 1990-2010



¹ We define the Houston region in this report as the population living in five counties—Harris, Ft. Bend, Montgomery, Brazoria, and Galveston. The total population in these five counties as of 2010 is 5.74 million.

How does Houston's racial diversity compare to the racial diversity of other large metropolitan areas?

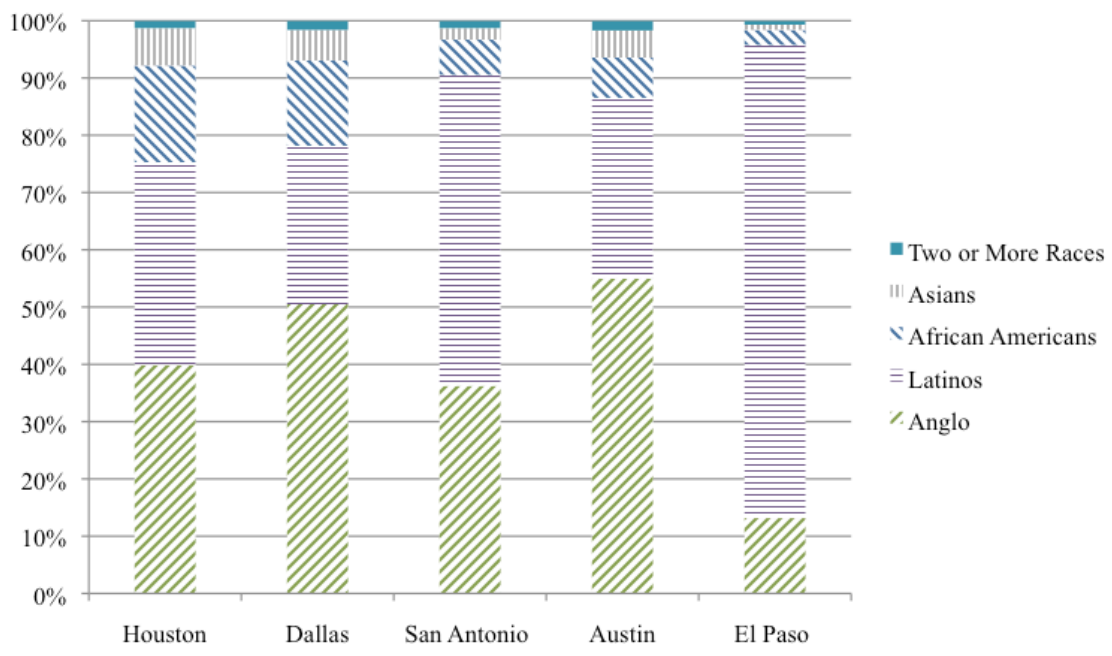
The Houston metropolitan area is the most racially diverse.

Among the five most populous metropolitan areas in Texas (Figure 2), Houston stands out for having no racial majority and nearly equal percentages of the two largest race/ethnic groups (Latinos and Anglos).

Dallas-Fort Worth and Austin, by contrast, are majority Anglo, though Anglos represent only 50% and 55% of the residents, respectively. All other groups occupy smaller shares than in Houston. In Dallas, Latinos are 27.5 % (Houston: 35.3%) and African Americans are 15 % (Houston: 16.8%). In Austin, African Americans represent a dramatically smaller share of the population, at 7%.

The San Antonio and El Paso metropolitan areas, by contrast, are majority Latino and have relatively small African American and Asian populations. El Paso, where more than 80% of the residents are Latino, has the highest percentage Latino of the large Texas metropolitan areas.

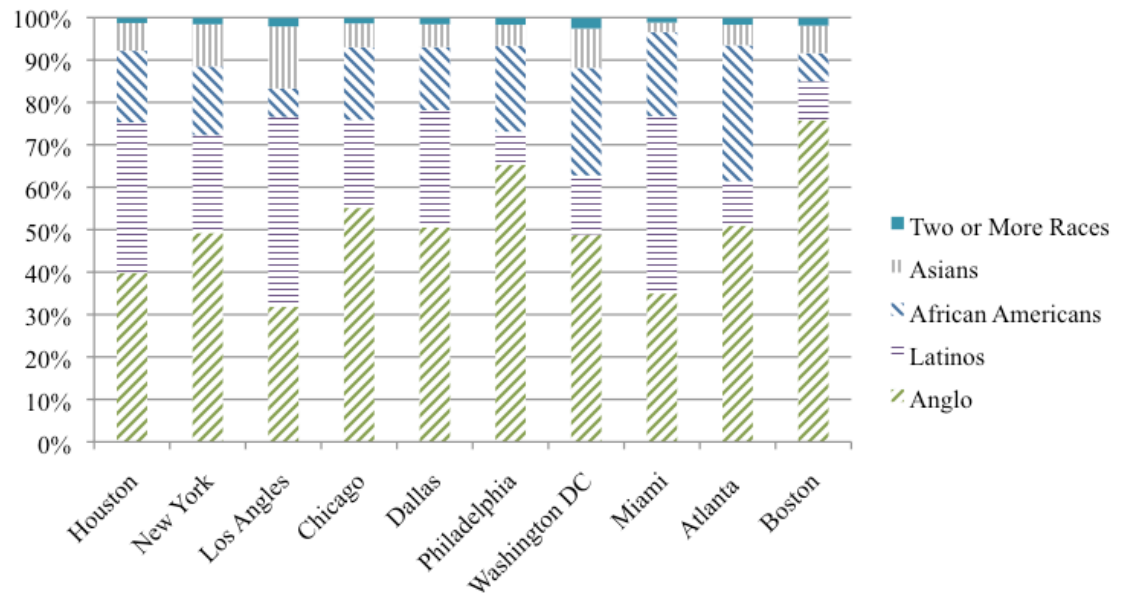
Figure 2. Texas' Largest Metropolitan Areas Racial Demographics 2010



Houston is one of the most racially diverse metropolitan areas in the nation as well. It is the most diverse of the ten largest U.S. metropolitan areas. Unlike the other large metropolitan regions, all four major racial groups have substantial representation in Houston with the Latinos and Anglos occupy roughly equal shares of the population. The Anglo population in New York, the country's largest metropolitan area, is 48.9 percent compared to Houston's 39.7. Los Angeles and Miami, by contrast, have relatively large Latino populations, 44.4 and 41.6 percent respectively. Atlanta, Washington DC and Philadelphia, have proportionately larger black population than Houston, 31.9, 25.2, and 20.2 percent respectively compared to Houston's 16.8, yet they all have substantially smaller Latino populations; 10.4, 13.8 and 7.8 percent.



Figure 3. Ten Largest US Metropolitan Area Racial Demographics 2010



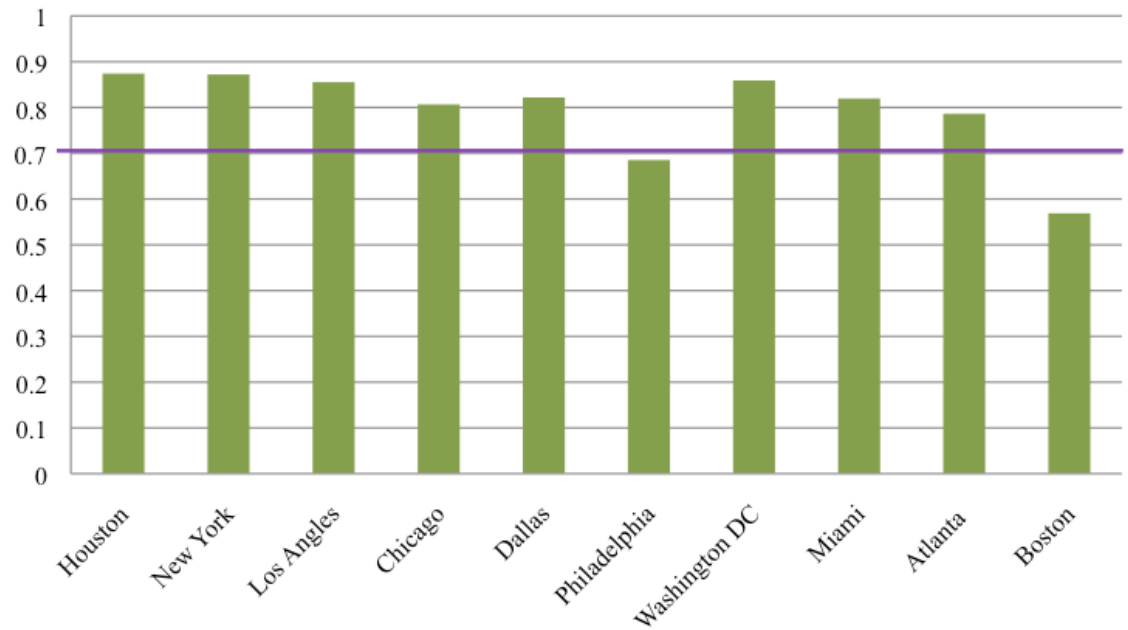
We can measure and compare diversity across areas by using a measure called the Entropy Index (Thiel 1972). We can think of racial diversity in two ways:

1. *The number of groups that live in the area.*
2. *The relative size of each group.*

For example, consider 2 metropolitan areas that each have 4 racial groups. By the first criteria, they are equally diverse. But if the first metropolitan area is 90% of just one racial group, while the second metropolitan area's population is 25% of each group, then by the second criteria the second metropolitan area is more diverse. It is more diverse because the percentages of each group are more even. The Entropy Index is designed to measure, in one summary value, both the number of groups and their evenness.

The standardized Entropy Index measures how close a total population is to sharing balanced percentages across its racial groups. If one subgroup is 100 percent of the population, then the standardized index score will be 0. If the four racial groups are each 25 percent of the population the score would be one. Houston has the highest entropy score of the ten largest metropolitan areas, 0.874. New York is a close second with a score of 0.872. All but two of the ten largest metropolitan areas, Boston and Philadelphia, have a higher entropy score than the national average of 0.709, meaning that in general the large metropolitan areas are more diverse than the nation as a whole.

Figure 4. Ten Largest USA Metropolitan Area Entropy Index

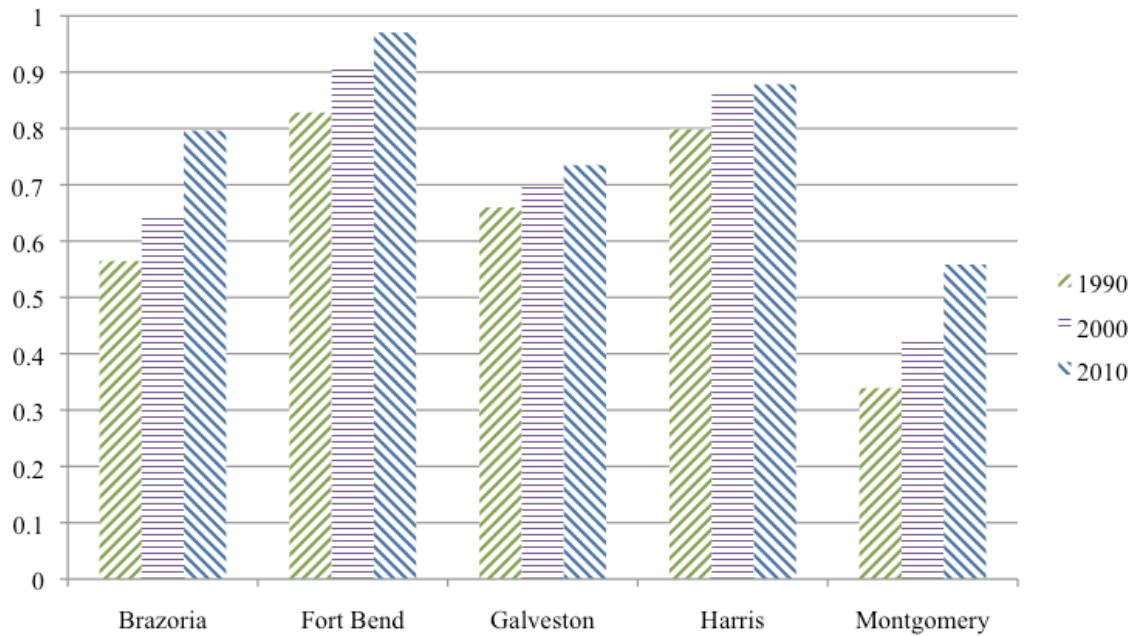


Note: The purple line is the national average of 0.709

Diversity by County

Our analysis found significant variation across the Houston region. When examining the five most populated counties with the Houston metro, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, and Montgomery. All five have increased in diversity over the 20 year period, as shown by their increasing entropy indexes (again 0 means no racial diversity, 1 means equal representation of all four racial groups). Throughout this time Fort Bend has remained the most diverse county in the area with an entropy score of 0.970 in 2010. The diversity of Fort Bend County in 2010 is approaching the highest possible score. Montgomery County, with easily the highest percentage Anglo in the region as of 2010 (71.2%) is substantially less diverse than the other highly populated Houston metropolitan counties. But like the other counties, it is growing more diverse. Harris County has remained second most diverse while Brazoria has replaced Galveston County as the third most diverse county.

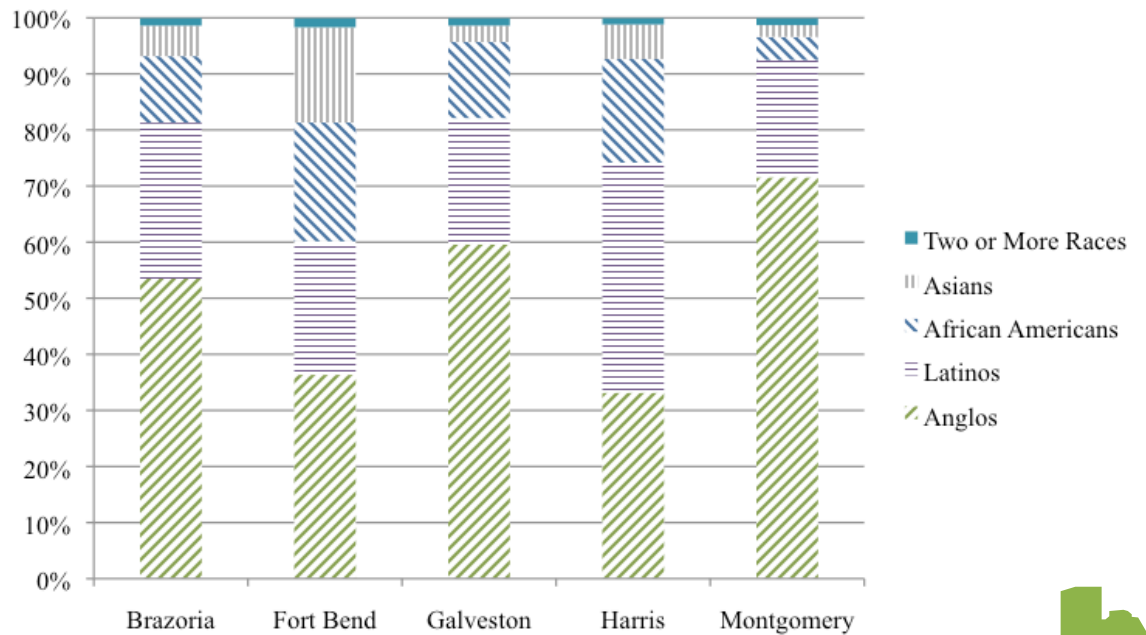
Figure 5: County Entropy Index 1990-2010



The differences in the counties demographics demonstrate that although all four racial groups are present in the entire region they are not equally distributed.

All five counties have a similar ordering of their largest to smallest group. Except for Harris County, Anglos are the largest racial/ethnic group in all the counties, followed by Latinos, then African Americans and finally Asians. In Harris County, Latinos are the largest group, making up 40.8 percent of the population, followed by Anglos who are 33.0 percent, then African Americans consisting of 18.4 percent and finally Asians with 6.1 percent of the population. African American and Asians are the smallest percentage in Montgomery County where Anglos make up 71.2 percent of the population and the largest percentage in Fort Bend, the county with the highest Entropy index.

Figure 6: County Racial Demographics 2010



Diversity by Metro Cities of 50,000+ Population

We also examined the diversity of all cities in the Houston region with populations of 50,000 or greater. There are 12 such places. For the first time (see Figure 8), two suburbs—Missouri City and Pearland—are more diverse than the city of Houston. Both of these suburbs have higher percentages Asian than does Houston city, and significant percentages of African Americans, Anglos, and Latinos (see Figure 7).

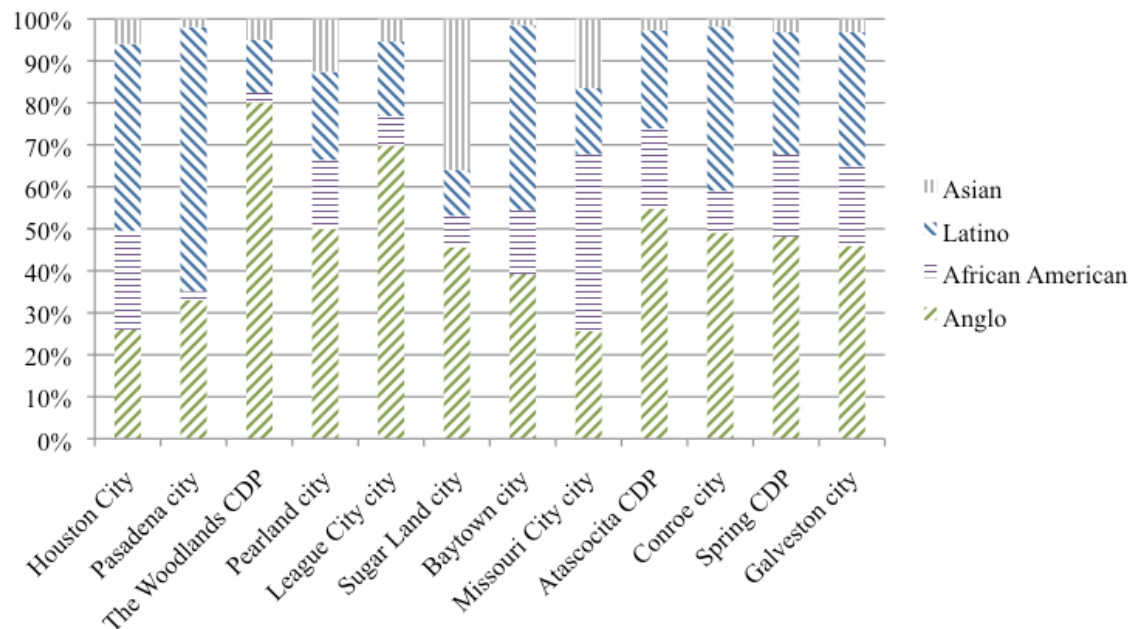
With three exceptions (Atascocita, League City, and the Woodlands), Anglos are less than half the population in each of the areas of 50,000 plus population. The smallest percentages Anglo—at a quarter of the population—are in Houston and Missouri City.

Five areas have in percentage terms, small black populations. These areas are Pasadena, the Woodlands, League City, Sugar Land, and Conroe. Only two cities are more than 20% African American: Houston (23%) and Missouri City (41%).

In contrast, none of the large cities in the Houston region has less than 10% Latino, and 7 of the 11 have populations that are at least 20% Latino. Baytown and Houston are 44% Latino, and Pasadena is now 62% Latino.

Asians, though growing rapidly, remain relatively small in percentages terms. However, there are significant exceptions. Pearland (12%) and Missouri City (16%) both have sizable Asian populations in percentage terms. But they pale in comparison to Sugar Land where 35% of its residents are now Asian.

Figure 7: Houston Metro 50,000+ Cities Racial Demographics 2010

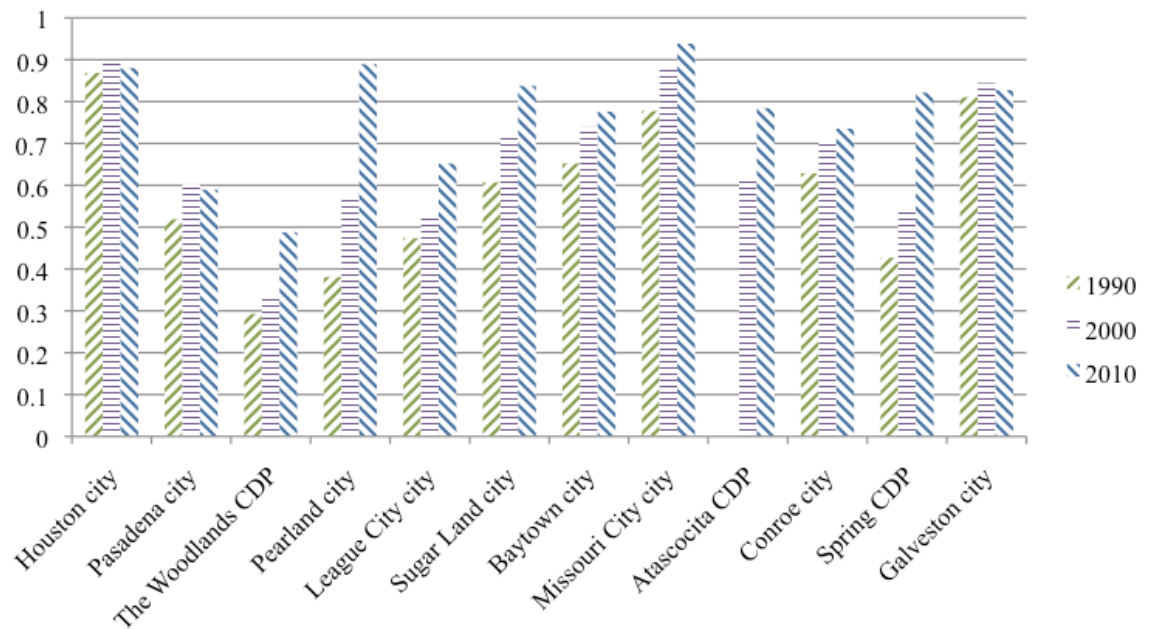


Note: Cities are ordered largest to smallest.



All the cities in the region have increased in their diversity over the last 20 years. Houston and Galveston, the oldest most established cities, saw the smallest change. This is juxtaposed to Pearland and Spring that experienced the largest increases in diversity. Pearland went from being the second least diverse city in 1990 to the second most diverse city in 2010, only trailing Missouri City. While the distribution of all four racial groups across the 12 cities in the region demonstrate that the races are not completely segregated by city it still does not necessarily mean that the groups are actually residing next to each other within these cities.

Figure 8: Houston Metro 50,000+ Cities Entropy Index 1990-2010



Note: Atascocita CDP was not Census Designated Place 1990 and thus there are no data for that year.

Diverse Yes, But Do We Live Together?

While Houston is one of the most diverse metropolitan areas in the country, the question remains whether the racial/ethnic groups are living in the same or separate neighborhoods. Where we live relative to one another has profound impacts on a range of outcomes, such as access to services, the extent of friendships that form within and across groups, how people view one another, and even the average level of poverty in our neighborhoods.

We turn then to an analysis of residential segregation by race, that is, we measure where members of the various racial/ethnic groups live in the Houston region relative to one another. To do so, we use a measure of segregation call the Dissimilarity (D) index. This is a two-group measure, meaning that D's are shown for pairs of racial/ethnic groups.

The measure has a clear interpretation: its value is the proportion of people of one group who would have to switch neighborhoods to end segregation. The D-value can range from 0 (complete integration) to 1 (complete segregation—the racial groups live in separate neighborhoods and never overlap). In reality, neither value is ever realized, given the dynamic nature of cities, with people moving in and out. Thus researchers have created guidelines for interpreting the values: 0-.39 are considered low segregation, values of .40-.59 moderate segregation, and value .60 and greater high segregation.

Metro-Level Trends

In Figure 10, we calculated the level of segregation for the Houston region. Again, we define the Houston region in this report as the population living in five counties—Harris, Ft. Bend, Montgomery, Brazoria, and Galveston.

We show the extent of segregation for each pair of racial/ethnic groups for 1990, 2000, and 2010. Over the past 20 years, there have been modest to moderate declines in segregation involving Anglos. We observe a decline in segregation between Anglos and Blacks, from 0.70 in 1990 and 2000 to 0.64 in 2010. As of 2010, 64% of Anglos or Blacks would have to strategically change neighborhoods to achieve complete integration. We can view the change in segregation between Anglos and Blacks over the past 20 years as the glass half full and half empty: segregation between these groups has declined, but remains in the “high” segregation category.

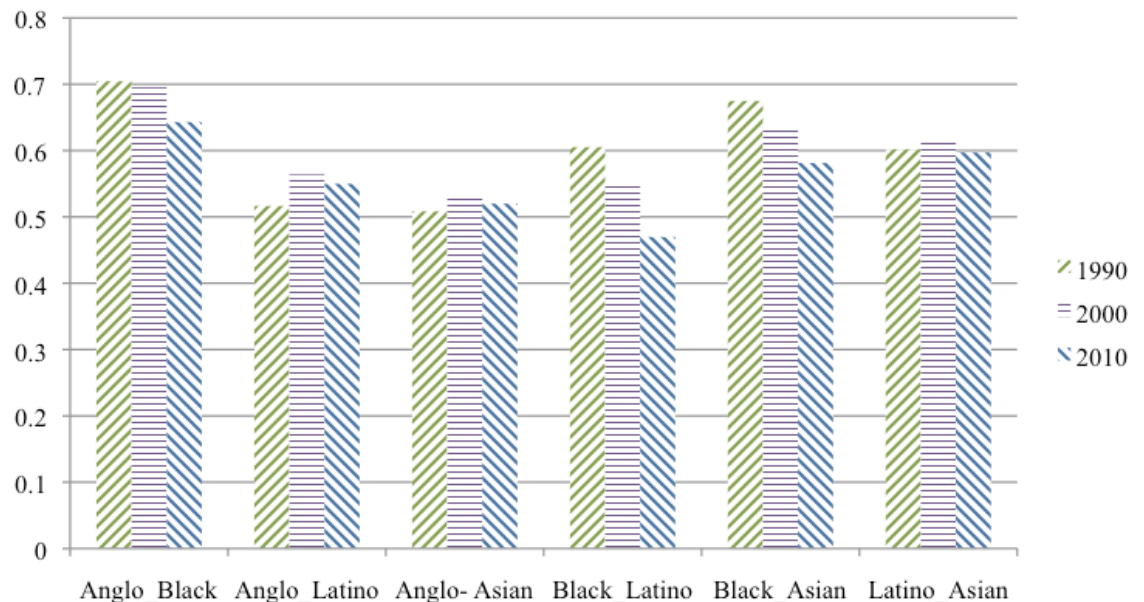
Segregation between Anglos and Latinos seems stalled, and is higher than it was in 1990. In 1990, the segregation score was .52, but has risen slightly so that in 2010 it is .55. The large influx of Latino immigrants and the substantial growth of the Latino population in the Houston region may account for some of this segregation pattern. Recent experimental research² has also found that holding other factors about neighborhoods constant—such as housing values, educational quality, and

2 See Valerie Lewis, Michael O. Emerson, and Stephen Klineberg. 2011. “Who We’ll Live With: Racial Composition Preferences of Whites, Blacks, and Latinos.” *Social Forces* 89(4): 1385-1408.

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crime rates—Anglos in the Houston area are less likely to say they would buy homes as the percentage of Blacks or Latinos in the neighborhood increases. They did not say this about Asians—Anglos were no less likely to say they would want to buy a home in a neighborhood with a high percentage Asian than with a lower percentage Asian.

Figure 10: Houston Region Overall Segregation 1990-2010



Perhaps the above experimental finding explains in part the somewhat lower segregation between Anglos and Asians. Despite the substantial growth of Asians over the past 20 years, Anglo-Asian segregation levels have remained essentially unchanged over the 20 year period, at about .52, and are lower than Anglo-Latino segregation and substantially lower than Anglo-Black segregation.

In an important indicator of the possible restructuring of neighborhoods in the Houston region, the largest decline in segregation over the 1990-2010 period was between Blacks and Latinos. In 1990, these two groups were highly segregated from one another (.61), but by 2010 their segregation score had declined well into the moderate category (.47), with the largest drop coming over the past 10 years.

Black-Asian segregation also declined, though less than that of Black-Latino segregation. In 1990 and 2000, Blacks and Asians were highly segregated from each other, but by 2010, their score (.58) had dipped into the “moderate” category of segregation.

Finally, Latino-Asian segregation, like Anglo-Asian segregation, has remained essentially unchanged over the 20 year period, staying at about .60, or “high segregation.” In fact, as of 2010, only Anglo-Black segregation surpasses Latino-Asian segregation across the Houston region.

City-Level and County-Level Comparisons

The metro-wide trends in segregation are but one part of the story. Segregation can and does vary across various parts of the region. We undertook a comparison of segregation within the area's twelve most populated cities (those of 50,000) and each of the five most populated counties. We proceed by showing how specific ethnic/racial groups are segregated from all others, beginning first with Anglos.

The first finding is important: segregation is higher in the city of Houston than in any other area of the metropolitan region (see Figure 11). Why? First, Houston has much larger absolute numbers of each group, and group size is associated with greater segregation. But this is not the whole story. If it were, segregation would be even higher for Harris County.

Houston also has older, more established neighborhoods and a disproportionate share of the region's poverty. Both of these factors are associated with greater segregation between racial groups. Suburban areas have much newer housing and neighborhoods with no historic tradition of belonging to one racial group or another. While outlying areas may over time develop such neighborhoods, their relative newness means not many such neighborhoods have yet developed. What is more, while it is a myth that suburbs are filled with nothing but middle class professionals, they do have less economic and class diversity than does Houston proper.

What follows are the other key conclusions from our analysis of racial segregation across the largest cities of the region.

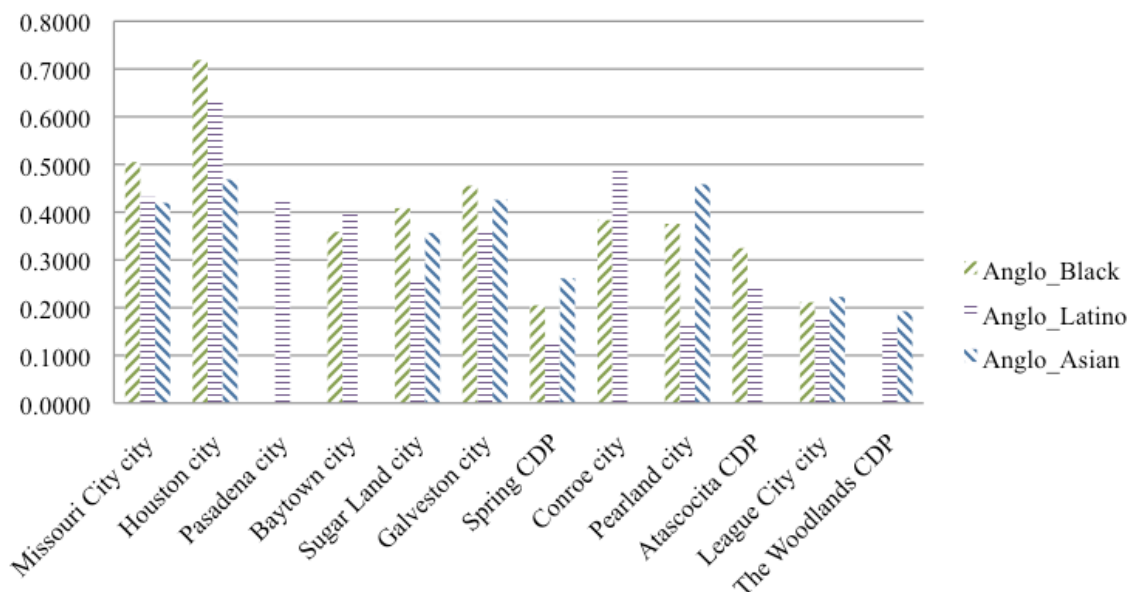
1. Anglos living closest to groups in least diverse spaces

The graph below (Figure 11) shows the index D for each Anglo/non-Anglo pair for 12 Houston cities. We make every attempt to show the segregation for all pairs, but some groups are too small to show reliable estimates. If a group comprises less than 3 percent of a city or county, then the D becomes less reliable. We therefore show only the level of segregation between pairs of groups when each group comprise at least 3 percent of the cities' or counties' population.

The first finding is important: segregation is higher in the city of Houston than in any other area of the metropolitan region.



Figure 11: Anglo Segregation By City (2010)
(Ordered from Low % Anglo to High % Anglo)



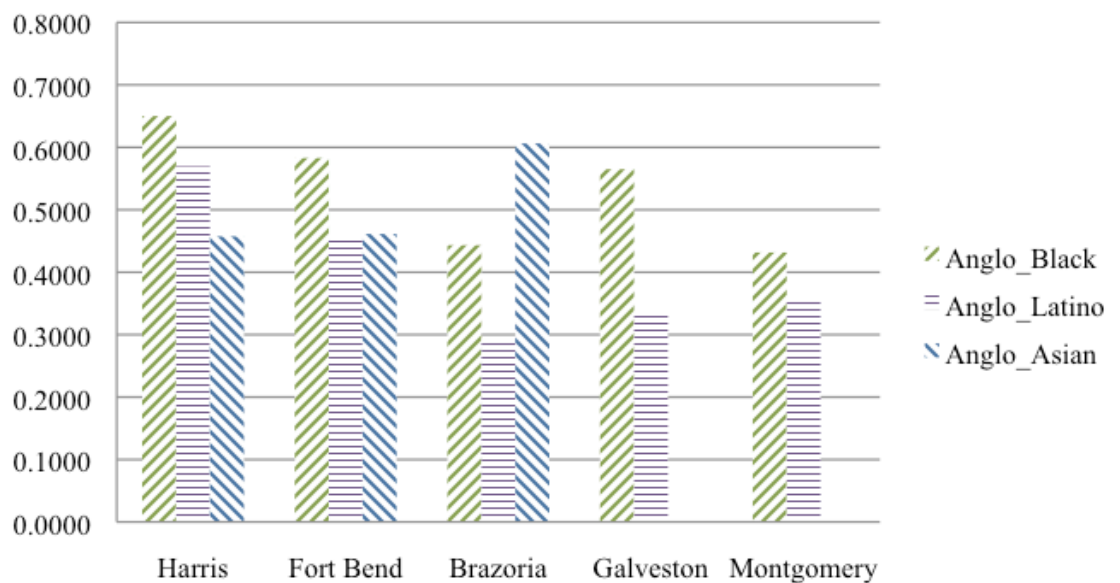
- We can observe how segregation between Anglos and other groups is related to size of the Anglo population.

Overall, Anglos are more segregated from Blacks than they are from Asians or Latinos in five of the ten cities that we have measures of Black-Anglo segregation. We also find that Anglos are less segregated from Latinos than from either Asians or Blacks within seven of the eleven cities we observe. To organize these patterns, we present these levels according to size of the Anglo population, ranging from Missouri city and Houston city proper, where Anglos represent only one quarter of the population, to League City and the Woodlands where they represent 68 and 78 percent of the residents, respectively. Ordered this way, we can observe how segregation between Anglos and other groups is related to size of the Anglo population. We find the largest levels of segregation between Blacks and Anglos and Latinos and Anglos is in Houston and Missouri City, where Anglos represent relatively small shares of the population. Meanwhile in places where Anglos are a larger percent of the population, segregation between Anglos and Latinos, Asians, and Blacks is exceedingly low, at or less than a 0.2. Exceptions to this pattern can be found in the newer boom suburban areas of Spring and Pearland where Anglos comprise 47 and 48 percent respectively of the population but experience very little segregation from any group, particularly in Spring.

The county-level view is similar, in that Anglos in Harris County, where their percentage is the smallest, show the most segregation from Blacks and Latinos compared to all other counties (see Figure 12). Again, we observe higher levels of segregation in areas with smaller percentages of Anglo populations. Also similar to the city segregation is the larger Anglo-Black segregation juxtaposed to the Anglo-Latino or Anglo-Asian segregation levels. The one exception to this is in Brazoria County, where the Asian population is highly segregated from the Anglo population (above 0.6) while the Black and Latino populations have moderate and low levels of segregation from Anglos respectively.

As more multi-ethnic metros emerge, demographers are asking how do residents organize themselves within an increasingly diverse landscape. While other cities demonstrate a pattern of high segregation between Blacks and Anglos and lower levels between Anglos and Asians, we see more variety within the diverse cities and counties of the Houston metropolitan area. While Harris county and Houston city proper show this pattern, we also see areas where the level of segregation is higher between Anglos and Asians or Anglos and Latinos than between Anglos and Blacks. Furthermore, the larger the size of the Anglo population (and thus the less diverse the context) the less segregated groups are from each other.

Figure 12: Anglo Segregation by County (2010)
(Ordered from Low % Anglo to High % Anglo)



2. Blacks living closer to Latinos, Asians and Anglos yet still living at a distance

We now turn to segregation between Blacks and other groups. As we said earlier, the level of Black segregation from Anglos, Asians, and Latinos has declined somewhat in the past 20 years, with the greatest declines in Black-Latino segregation. Looking across cities (Figure 13), we see that Blacks are more segregated from Anglos than Latinos and Asians in five of the cities presented, with the most segregation in Houston City. Blacks are also highly segregated from Asians in three cities, Houston, Missouri City, and Galveston, and in the latter two, Blacks are more segregated from Asians than any other group. Segregation between Blacks and Latinos never reaches a “high” level in any city. The highest Black-Latino segregation occurs in Houston (0.55); however in every other city, segregation between Blacks and Latinos is low, never surpassing 0.4, and in 7 out of the 10 cities it is below 0.32.

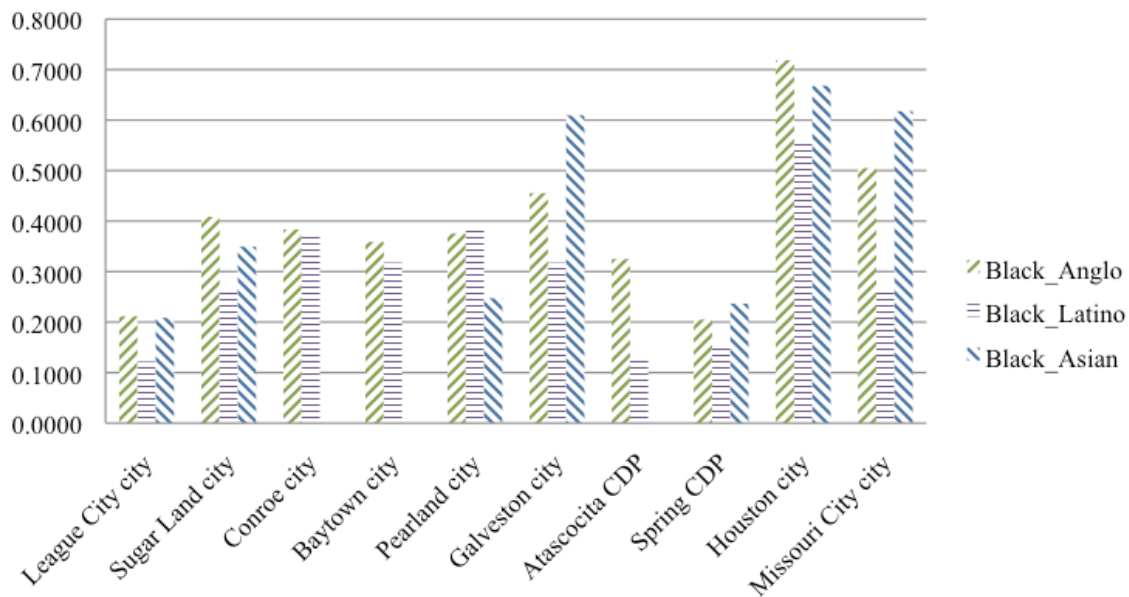
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We present the segregation levels for each of the 10 cities with a Black population over 3 percent, ordered by the relative size of the Black population. We see that places where Blacks are less numerous, like League City and Sugar Land (where less than 8 percent of the populations are Black), segregation is low or moderate. Conversely, in places like Houston and Missouri City where the Blacks represent 23 percent and 41 percent of the city's population respectively, segregation is far higher between this group and Anglos and Asians, with levels ranging between 0.50 and 0.72, and low between Blacks and Latinos in Missouri City (.26).

The general trend seems to be that as the relative size of the Black population increases so too does Black segregation from other groups, which is opposite the pattern for Anglos. The exception appears to be Spring, where segregation of African Americans is very low regardless of the comparison, despite having a relatively large Black population (19%).

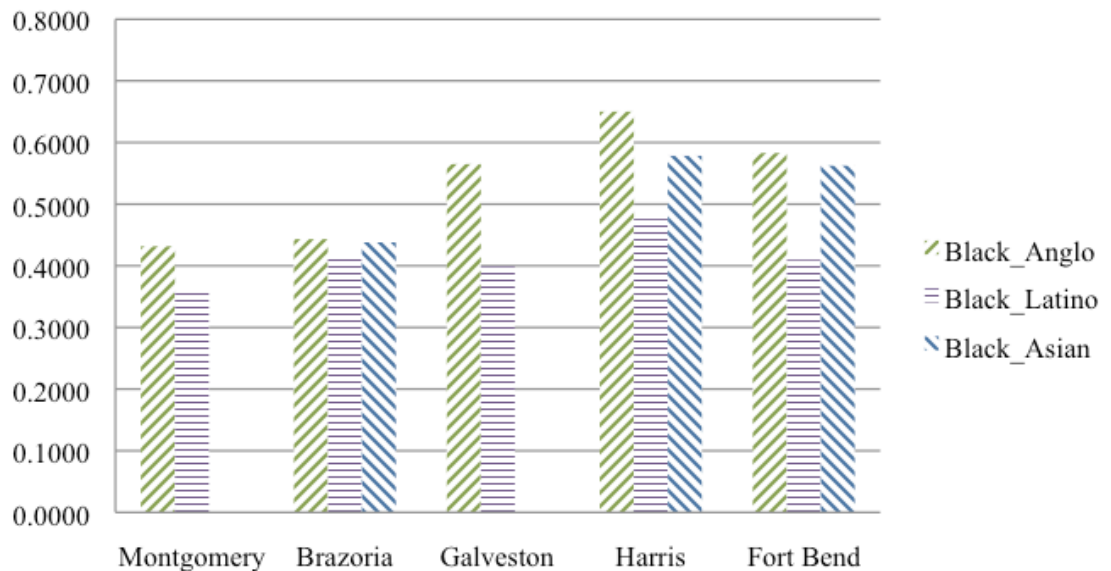
It is important to note that over half of the region's black population lives in Houston or Missouri City, so the segregation levels experienced in those two cities are more typical of the "average" black segregation level than are the levels in the other cities.

Figure 13: Black Segregation by City (2010)
 (Ordered from Low % Black to High % Black)



The dynamics described above are reflected at the county level as well. Across all counties, Blacks are more segregated from Anglos than they are from Asians or Latinos, with the highest segregation in Harris County, undoubtedly reflecting patterns in Houston city. Segregation between Blacks and Asians are either comparable to segregation between Blacks and Anglos, as is the case in Brazoria County, or slightly lower than segregation from Anglos, which is the case in Fort Bend and Harris Counties. Blacks and Latino are less segregated from each other, with levels never surpassing 0.5. Overall, we find that relatively large Black populations coincide with higher levels of segregation, specifically between Blacks and Anglos and Blacks and Asians.

Figure 14: Black Segregation by County (2010)
(Ordered from Low % Black to High % Black)

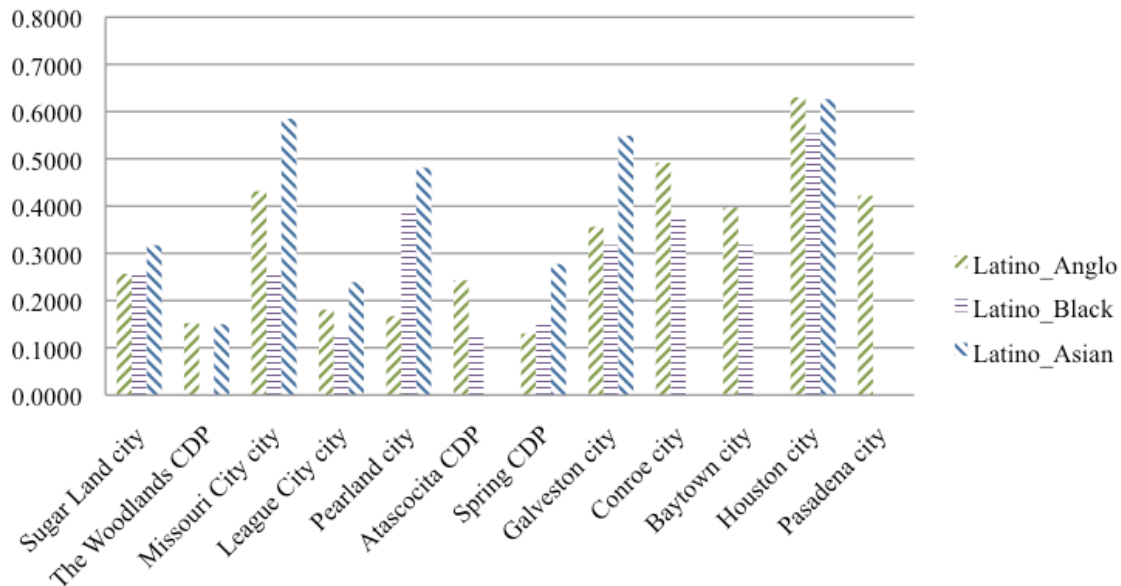


3. Segregation and Latinos: Large Communities with Few Interethnic Neighbors

Overall, Latinos are not highly segregated from any group. Segregation levels exceed 0.6 (the high segregation cutoff) in only two instances (see Figure 15). When ordered according to size of Latino population, the level of segregation for Latinos operates more like the pattern for Blacks than for Anglos. That is, in cities where Latinos make up a smaller relative share of the population, as in Sugarland and the Woodlands, they are fairly evenly distributed across the city. However, as their numbers increase beyond 30 percent (e.g., Galveston), segregation levels rise from low to moderate. Segregation only passes the threshold for “high” in Houston, where Anglo-Latino and Asian-Latino segregation is at 0.6. The only other city where the Latino percentage is larger than in Houston City is Pasadena. There, where Latinos represent over 60 percent of the population, Anglos are the only other group numerous enough to measure, and segregation between Latinos and Anglos is at the moderate level.

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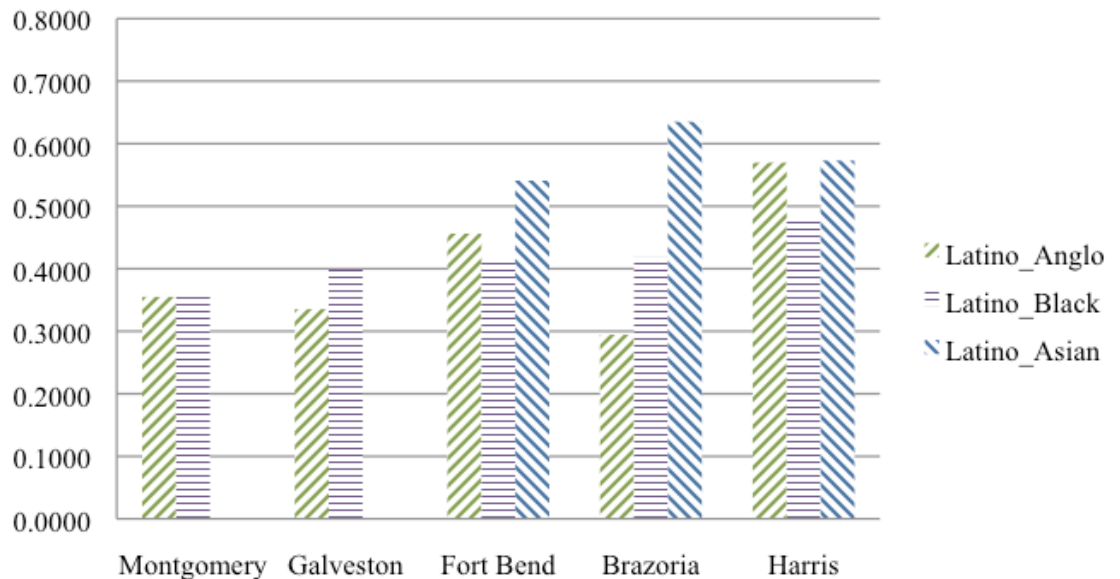
Figure 15: Latino Segregation By City (2010)
(Ordered from Low % Latino to High % Latino)



Between the extremes of cities with large and small Latino populations, segregation levels seem to bounce around. Spring continues to stand out for its low segregation and relatively small numbers of Latinos (they comprise about 28 percent of the population). Latinos experience the most segregation from Asians, not Blacks or Anglos, as levels come or surpass a 0.6 level in Missouri City, where the Latinos population is fairly small, and Galveston, where it is .56.

The county-specific picture shows a similar trend, where counties with smaller relative size of the Latino population have lower levels of segregation from Anglo compared to places with larger relative Latino populations (see Figure 16). Segregation between Blacks and Latinos never exceeds 0.5; it is lowest in Montgomery County (0.36) and is somewhat higher in Harris County (0.48). Latino-Asian segregation was only calculated in three counties (the Asian population in the other two counties was below 3%). The segregation between Latinos and Asians is the only segregation pairing that surpasses the cut point for “high” 0.6, which occurs in Brazoria, home of Pearland.

Figure 16: Latino Segregation By County (2010)
(Ordered Low % Latino to High % Latino)



4. Asians: Living Close to Anglos, Far from Blacks, and Latinos Somewhere in the Middle

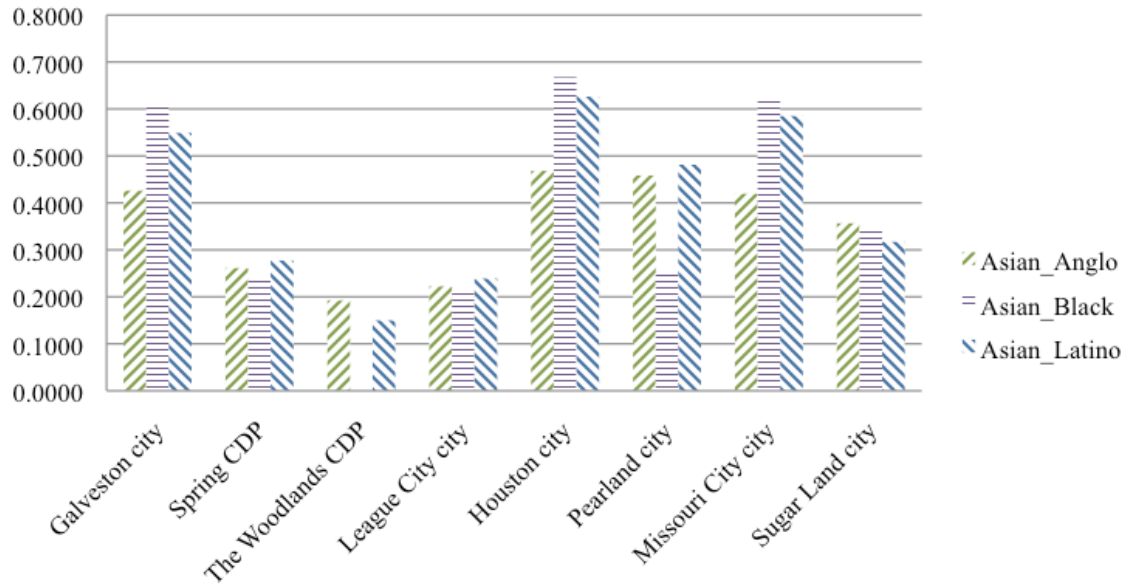
Asians, as the previous graphs have shown, are generally not highly segregated from either Anglos or Latinos, regardless of the city. The exception is Houston, where levels of segregation between Asians and Latinos meet the cut point of “highly segregated.”

Blacks and Asians are highly segregated in three cities: Galveston, Houston, and Missouri City (see Figure 17). In the remaining cities, the level of segregation between Asians and any other non-Asian group does not exceed 0.5, meaning that in most cities, less than half of the Asian population would have to move to achieve complete integration.

When organized by size of the Asian population (the size ranges from 3.1 percent in Galveston to 35 percent in Sugarland) the pattern is more variable than for the previous three groups. In Galveston, where Asians represent a very small share of the city’s population, they are highly segregated, particularly from Blacks. They are less segregated as their share of the city increases, until we consider Houston, where they represent close to 6 percent of the residents and are highly segregated from Latinos and Blacks (levels exceed 0.6).

In other cities where their share exceeds 12 percent, levels of segregation are moderate; however, in Sugarland where Asians are the second largest race/ethnic group behind Anglos, segregation between Blacks, Anglos, and Asians is low, between 0.3 and 0.35. Interestingly, Sugarland, like the Woodlands, has relatively small Black and Latino populations, comprising less than 20 percent of the area’s residents. As in the case for Anglos, large population size corresponds to less

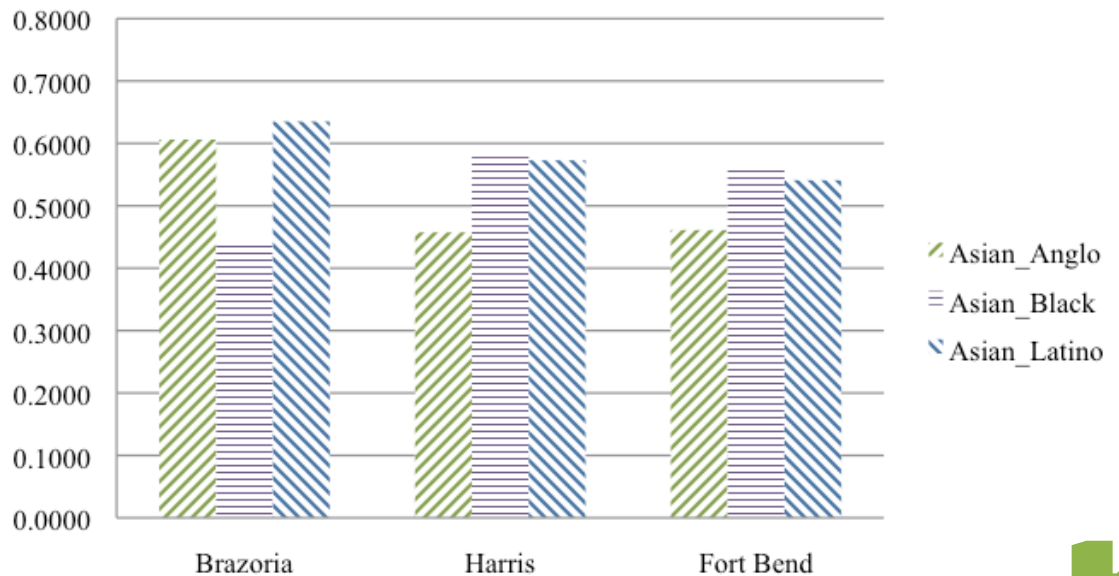
Figure 17: Asian Segregation By City (2010)
(Ordered from Low % Asian to High % Asian)



segregation for Asians, but in a context where other ethnic groups occupy exceedingly small shares of the city.

We present segregation for the only three counties, those with an Asian population greater than three percent. Examining segregation from the county-level suggest greater separation than is apparent when looking at the cities (see Figure 18). For each county, in two of the three possible comparisons, Asian segregation is above .50, and in Brazoria County, is in the high level (.60+) for the Asian-Anglo and Asian-Latino comparisons.

Figure 18: Asian Segregation By County (2010)
(Ordered from Low % Asian to High % Asian)



As in the case for Anglos, large population size corresponds to less segregation for Asians, but in a context where other ethnic groups occupy exceedingly small shares of the city.

Conclusion

Houston's racial diversity has grown dramatically over the last twenty years. This increasing diversity has occurred throughout the metropolitan area, from Houston proper to all cities and counties examined in this report. While the absolute number of Anglos has declined in Houston City and Harris County, it has increased in the metro region as a whole. But African Americans, Latinos, and Asians have increased even more rapidly, producing the burgeoning diversity of the region.

The growth in diversity has been largely uniform in that it has occurred across all analyzed counties and cities of the Houston region. The most diverse county is Fort Bend County, and it now contains the most diverse city in the region—Missouri City. Pearland, the fastest growing city over the past decade, has also surpassed Houston, and is now the region's second most diverse city, followed by Houston City.

So substantial is the Houston region's diversity that it has become the nation's most racially diverse large metropolitan area. It is more ethnically diverse than the metropolitan regions of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, and the others.

One way to examine that diversity is to look at where members of racial groups live relative to other groups. With a few exceptions, segregation between groups has declined somewhat over the twenty-year period. Segregation is highest in Houston City. For several comparisons, segregation is considering extreme in Houston City: between Blacks and Anglos, between Anglos and Latinos, and between Asians and Latinos.

Outside of Houston City, segregation levels between groups are generally moderate or even in some cases low. In only a few instances are segregation levels high: Black-Asian in Missouri city and Galveston City, Anglo-Black in Harris County, and Asian-Anglo and Asian-Latino in Brazoria County.

We found some general patterns to the levels of segregation. For Anglos, they are more segregated from other groups when their percentages are small. When the percentage Anglo is large—and on the flipside, when the percentage of other groups is small—Anglos are less segregated. Thus, for example, Anglos are proportionately smallest in Houston and Missouri City, and it is also in these cities that they are most segregated from other groups.

A potential new racial/ethnic pattern of neighborhoods is emerging, as the greatest declines in segregation between any two groups is between Blacks and Latinos. Whether this signifies the rise of more Black/Latino neighborhoods, or is simply a reflection of some of the Houston region's Black neighborhoods transitioning to Latino neighborhoods remains to be seen. What is known is that Blacks continue to live substantially apart from Anglos and Asians, whereas Anglos and Asians are generally more likely to share neighborhoods with each other than with other groups.

In the final analysis, the findings in this report suggest that harnessing the burgeoning ethnic diversity is a central challenge for the Houston region and a signature opportunity to lead the nation in the transition to a fully inclusive, unified multiethnic region. How Houston handles this transition will go far in shaping the vitality of its future.