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Suburban Inequality

Part I

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VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1, FEBRUARY 2023

Suburban Inequality, Part I

ISSUE EDITORS
R. L'Heureux Lewis-McCoy, Natasha Warikoo, and Stephen A. Matthews

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Resisting Amnesia: Renewing and Expanding the Study of Suburban Inequality

R. L'HEUREUX LEWIS-MCCOY, NATASHA WARIKOO, STEPHEN A. MATTHEWS, AND NADIRAH FARAH FOLEY

Suburban inequality is the focus of this double issue of RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*. This introduction addresses the limited related scholarship, describes how inequality unfolds differently in suburban communities than in urban and rural communities, and draws attention to urgent issues related to stratification between and within suburban communities. We argue that inattention to the study of suburban space, methodological and disciplinary silos, and the changing nature of the suburbs have left large holes in our understanding of how inequality operates. This critical review covers areas such as measurement, forgotten suburban scholarship, demographic change, suburban poverty, social supports, race, immigration, education, politics, policing, and future directions for suburban studies. In our call for resisting amnesia, we also draw attention to forgotten suburban histories and studies of a diverse range of suburban communities.*

Keywords: suburbs, suburban inequality, race, ethnicity, immigration

Scholars and policymakers have explored the challenges that city residents and governments face, and the role cities have played in shaping contemporary American society. This grand attention to the city has meant that the study of suburbs has been neglected, despite a near majority of Americans (49 percent) living in suburbs today.[1] In fact, since 2000, population growth in the suburbs has outpaced population growth in the urban core (Parker et al. 2018). In

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1. Unless otherwise noted, statistics presented in this article are based on population estimates using a census-convenient definition of suburbs and drawn from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Censuses and the 2006–2010 and 2015–2019 American Community Surveys (U.S. Census Bureau 2020a, 2020b). We use 1990 geographies for consistency across years.

this introductory article, we shed light on what scholars of inequality have missed by overlooking suburbs, highlight work in the burgeoning field of suburban inequality, and suggest new directions for research on suburban inequality. The articles in this double issue of *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* demonstrate that more attention to suburban inequality will provide scholars with a better understanding of the nature, causes, and consequences of an increasingly unequal United States.

The suburbs are most commonly defined in contemporary social science as "the physical space beyond a city's boundaries, yet still within the metropolitan area" (Lacy 2016, 370). This definition, sometimes called the census-convenient definition (Airgood-Obrycki, Hanlon, and Rieger 2020), facilitates broad analyses comparing urban, suburban, and rural communities and provides a shared definition to scholars interested in the field. *Suburb* more colloquially invokes images of cookie-cutter single-family homes, manicured lawns, and residents who commute to the nearest city. This image, though, captures a declining portion of suburban life and has limited the attention scholars have paid to the places where nearly half of all Americans live today (Anacker 2015a; Allard 2017). Whereas research at the close of the twentieth century often portrayed suburbs as sites of the American Dream, more recent examinations suggest that they are better viewed as places to examine how inequality unfolds and shifts across space (Anacker 2015a; Allard 2017). Problems related to race, ethnicity, immigration, class, gender, and sexuality are all influenced by suburban terrain, but too little social scientific scholarship has addressed these topics outside cities.

The suburban population has changed dramatically in the past two decades. The share of Black Americans living in suburbs rose from 25 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2019. More than one-third of poor families live in suburbs today, a 30 percent increase over the past thirty years. Nearly half of Latinx Americans and a majority of Asian Americans and immigrant Americans live in suburbs. Finally, the percentage of suburban residents who are White declined from 82 percent in 1990 to 64 percent in 2019. These changes have drawn greater attention toward suburbs (for example, see Anacker 2015a; Allard 2017). Still, much more demands exploration, especially related to processes of inequality (Lobao, Hooks, and Tickamyer 2007).

The issue of food insecurity, for example, is highly influenced by suburban place and space. A sharp rise in poverty in the suburbs has coincided with an uptick in food insecurity in suburban communities (Remley et al. 2021). In suburban communities, however, service providers addressing food insecurity are fewer and farther apart, offering a less robust safety net (Murphy and Allard 2015). In addition, access to such sites often requires access to a car, which is financially burdensome; relying on walking long distances, which can be unsafe in suburbs with inadequate sidewalks; or using public transit, which is frequently more time consuming in the suburbs. These circumstances combine to make food insecurity a pressing problem in the suburban landscape. The same holds for other issues of contemporary concern. Some of the sparks of the Black Lives Matter movements, for example, came from the suburbs (Lung-Amam and Schafran 2019).

Suburban studies as a field is largely invisible in the academic landscape.[2] In leading social science general interest journals, papers are much more likely to focus on urban areas than suburban ones.[3] For example, in the past two decades the top two sociology journals published seventeen articles with the word *urban* in the title but just one with the word *suburban*

2. Suburban studies have remained most active in the policy realm with multiple publications by the Brookings Institution as well as some by the National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University.

3. To assess this, we searched the archives of top journals in several of the major social science disciplines: sociology (*American Sociological Review* and *American Journal of Sociology*), economics (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*), political science (*American Political Science Review*), and anthropology (*American Anthropologist*) for work published since 2000. Given the limitations of journal search functions, we looked at the titles of works, finding many more articles highlighting a focus on urban contexts than on suburban contexts.

(notably, a recent piece by Kiara Wyndham, one of the contributors to this double issue). In addition, from 2000 to 2018, 80 percent of articles in the flagship education research journal *American Educational Research Journal* were explicitly about urban schools; just 12 percent were about suburban schools (Diamond and Posey-Maddox 2020). None of the main professional associations in the social sciences have sections, communities, or member discussion fora related to suburbs or suburbia.[4] These gaps in scholarly attention and professional associations in turn have led to a lack of training of graduate students in the field of suburban studies.

This double issue begins to address the dearth of scholarship on suburban inequality, to draw attention to urgent issues related to disadvantage and stratification and how they unfold differently within and between suburban communities. Much theorizing of urban inequality concentrates on the role of poverty. The suburban context pushes us to consider not only experiences of disadvantage but also experiences of privilege. In addition, because ethnic, racial, and economic diversity (Douds 2021; Rastogi 2021) and segregation (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015) are high in the suburbs, the suburbs offer multiple opportunities to consider the relational dynamics of inequality.

Suburbs vary in their ties to central cities. Some suburbs have a symbiotic relationship involving urban growth, suburban development, and migratory patterns, many workers living around the extended metropolitan area but commuting to the center for work, social life, and familial connections (Rusk 1993; Florida 2017). Other suburbs, such as *satellite cities* and *boomburbs*—cities that are rapidly growing and that previously were seen as suburbs to larger metros—have become centers of their own commerce and labor, making them much more internally oriented, if not self-sufficient (Lang and LeFurgy 2007; Garreau 1992). Indeed, such places are connected not only to central cities but also to other suburbs within the larger region. As Daniel Lichter and his colleagues demonstrate in this double issue, the *suburban fringe*—the boundary between suburban and rural areas—has also grown and helps reshape not only boundaries but also demography. This means, as reflected in these articles, some questions about suburban inequality necessitate consideration of the larger geographic context.

In addition, important differences also exist between suburbs of the same urban center. Similar to kaleidoscopes that rearrange around a center, suburban inequalities too may cluster or be arranged differently around a shared metropolitan core. Take for example, the suburbs of New York City. The history of suburbanization in Westchester County, New York, has created a pattern of settlement in which five municipalities of the county's twenty-four are home to roughly 80 percent of the county's Black population, and the majority of municipalities have populations that are less than 10 percent Black.[5] In contrast, Essex County in New Jersey has a much more equal distribution of Blacks across its twenty-two municipalities, nearly half having 10 percent or more Black residents. These varying patterns of segregation between suburbs within metro areas may affect what we observe in social domains such as education, criminal justice, and neighborhood integration. They change over time as well; in this double issue, Kasey Zapatka and Van Tran analyze changes in neighborhood integration by immigration and race over the past two decades in the suburbs of New York City.

Size also matters; even within the same metro area, suburbs can vary from a few thousand residents to nearly a quarter million. For example, in the New York City metropolitan area, Yonkers is nearly two hundred thousand people and Alpine, New Jersey nearly 1,500. Analyses that are sensitive to local, regional, and national histories and geographies will help mark new ground in documenting in-

4. This includes American Economic Association, American Association of Geographers, American Planning Association, American Political Science Association, and American Sociological Association.

5. Authors' calculation using American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2016–2020 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020c).

equality and hopefully mark paths toward equity.

Although we call attention to suburban inequality as a particular form of inequality, we also remind scholars to avoid reductive thinking and recognize diversity across suburbs. The census-convenient definition, when used crudely, can treat suburbs as monolithic and fail to illuminate significant similarities between urban and suburban areas. Recent interventions in urban studies have challenged the notion of urban homogeneity, pointing out that no two urban poor neighborhoods are alike (Small, Manduca, and Johnston 2018). The same can be said of suburbs. In this double issue, we aim to avoid the pitfalls of previous scholarship on urban inequality, which has been critiqued for assuming homogeneity and developing theories of universal urban problems despite diversity in urban environments (Small, Manduca, and Johnston 2018). This does not mean that urban and suburban categorizations are without meaning. Instead, we must become more specific about their meanings and features in our scholarship and interventions.

Despite the vast and growing differences between suburban communities and issues related to suburban inequality, we nevertheless suggest suburban inequality is an important, understudied field. We hope this double issue will bring renewed attention to it. Our goal is to advance academic knowledge on U.S. suburbs with a focus on inequality within and between them and inequality between suburbs and other places connected to them (that is, both urban and rural areas). Taking cues from Alan Berger and Joel Kotkin (2017) who argue the study of suburbia cannot be bounded by a single discipline, we have brought together scholars from a wide variety of disciplines, including education, geography, history, political science, public policy, sociology, and urban planning. These scholars study diverse aspects of suburban inequality, facilitating a deeper understanding of how suburban inequality is both distinct from and similar to urban and rural inequality. Collectively, the authors utilize different data, measures, methods, and analytical approaches to help shed new light on different forms of suburban inequality in housing, education, organizations, and politics. These varied modes of inquiry across domains help us rethink the history of suburban space as well as better capture portraits of the suburban present. We hope these articles help define the state of our current knowledge on suburban inequality and inspire future research as well.

WHAT IS A SUBURB?

We would be remiss not to address a common question—what is a suburb? Suburbs, like all other typologies of place, are difficult to define, even if most people have an intuitive conception of suburbs. Where and when do they begin and end? In the popular imagination, suburbs are easily identifiable: cookie-cutter houses and cul-de-sacs. In reality, however, the demographics, development patterns, social life, and politics of suburbs are dynamic and complex. When it comes to conceptualizing suburbs, no agreed-upon rules are in place, though some conventions are accepted.

We offer key dimensions along which to define the suburban. Drawing on the census-convenient definition, proximity to the urban core emerges as a key variable. In addition, we maintain that the suburbs also have a particular *political* relationship with their nearby cities, although this relationship may look different in different parts of the country. In the South, where county boundaries more often span city and suburb, the relationship may be less fragmented; in other parts, such as the Northeast, the boundary between city and suburb is often a municipal boundary, a result of historical processes of exclusion and resisting annexation into the urban core. Racial and socioeconomic demographics also play an integral role in how both scholars and the public understand suburbs. We can think of suburbs in terms of their relationship to Whiteness (suburbanization as a racial project) or in their relationship to class (desirability and exclusivity as markers of the suburban). In some cases, suburbs are defined by their affluence (see "exclusive enclaves" in Frankenberg 2012). In others ("stable mixed-income" or "inner-ring transitioning"), they are defined in terms of their deviation from the ideal of a middle-class residential community.

Finally, we might think of suburbs in terms of suburban ways of living, also known as *suburbanisms* (Walks 2013). Markus Moos and Pablo Mendez (2015) use quantitative data from Canada to develop a set of dimensions to capture suburbanisms, including built environment or commute-mode, domesticity patterns, and social status, to help clarify what life in suburbs is like. In the United States, Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, Bernadette Hanlon, and Shannon Rieger (2020) suggest that these suburbanisms can better define suburbs than simply relying on the census-convenient definition. The usefulness of the suburbanisms metric is underscored by the fact that it is not uncommon to hear parts of cities referred to as suburban. Shawn Bucholtz, Emily Molfino, and Jed Kolko (2020) use machine learning to take up the challenge of understanding the mismatch and agreement between what demographers may label as urban or suburban and resident perspectives on their own neighborhoods. Using neighborhood level data, they find that, in central cities, 51 percent of residents call their neighborhoods urban and 47 percent call them suburban. The very idea of a suburban urban neighborhood demonstrates that what is meant by suburb and suburban is complex and not always neatly delineated by municipal boundaries (Clergé 2023, this volume, issue 1).

Scholars across disciplines have developed other typologies of suburbs, highlighting facets of suburbia ranging from proximity to the city (see, for example, inner-ring and outer suburbs in Lee and Leigh 2007; Hanlon 2010) to age (mature versus developing suburbs) to demographics (Anacker 2015b; Anacker, Niedt, and Kwon 2017). Some find this profusion of typologies indicative of the impossibility of defining *suburb*, and perhaps even the necessity of doing away with the term (Archer 2005); others suggest that replacing *suburb* with more specific language may be a generative path forward (Forsyth 2019). Rather than viewing these competing frameworks as in conflict with one another, however, we see them as illustrative of the dynamic nature of American suburbs. They highlight the number of axes to which one must attend when thinking about the suburban landscape. We maintain that the concept of the suburban remains important, insofar as suburban points toward particular constellations of physical and social dynamics of interest to social scientists—including historical trajectories, political economies, ways of being, sense of place, and demographics.

We do not hold that a singular definition is required for the term *suburb* to be useful. Rather than being prescriptive about a single answer to the question of what a suburb is, we instead affirm an ecumenical approach and call for specificity. We urge scholars studying the suburbs to make clear what characteristics, dynamics, and patterns they are pointing to with their use of the word *suburban*. Individually and collectively, the articles in these two issues recognize vast differences between suburbs, related to social and economic resources, patterns of settlement and immigration, access to the urban core, and more.

RESISTING AMNESIA

Many inquiries about the suburbs and the forms of inequality that proliferate within and around them suffer from *sociological amnesia*. Three decades ago, Herbert Gans (1992) lamented sociological amnesia, which he described as social scientists' penchant for "discovering" an area of study over and over again. One of the cases he cited was suburban studies, because scholars were describing the field as new without properly acknowledging previous work on the topic and using that knowledge to help build new insights. Gans's insight feels as fresh today as it did in 1992. To avoid amnesia, social scientific studies of the suburbs must draw from earlier studies, while crossing disciplinary boundaries to better understand what is happening in suburbs today.

Early twentieth-century scholarship on suburbs carefully delineated their prevalence and variety in a way that is uncommon today. For example, approximately eighty years ago, Chauncy Harris noted that "The study and classification of individual suburbs is a fascinating business" (1943, 7). Using 1930–40 data to describe suburban types and trends, Harris conveyed the importance of identifying variation in the processes shaping suburban growth. He described how the extent of development of suburbs varied by region, and he recognized

that the overall population size and functional typology of the central city (manufacturing, diversified, political, transportation, wholesale and retail centers, resorts, and mining) mattered. Harris was one of the first scholars to examine the composition of suburban populations (focusing on occupation) and the functional ties between places via a measure of commuting (that is, the ratio of employment within a suburb to the population of the suburb). Harris's work made important contributions to our knowledge of suburbs, identified how they can be studied, celebrated their diversity, and understood the nature of changing social and economic ties across space.

As the twentieth century unfolded, other scholars of the suburbs attempted to dispel notions of homogeneity (for example, Douglass 1925), highlighting the ways that the expansion of uniform housing in the postwar period did not mean uniform social relations (Gans 1967). Gans remarked that in the suburb of Levittown he saw "old lifestyles . . . on new soil." Through surveys and interviews, he found that people were not governed by competition as many sociologists suspected, but instead were often bound by the desire to create community. At the same time, he was careful to highlight that those forms of community were predicated on exclusionary building and lending practices. These early and mid-twentieth-century studies were often in-depth case studies of postwar communities that relied on qualitative and some quantitative data.

Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier* (1985) provided a history of the development of American suburbs while offering unifying characteristics, pointing to "population density, home-ownership, residential status, and journey-to-work" as traits defining quintessentially American suburbs (6). Although Jackson did not attempt to homogenize suburbs, rejecting stereotypes and taking pains to acknowledge the diversity between suburbs such as East St. Louis, Missouri, and Winnetka, Illinois, the text's reception in the field may have solidified suburbs as homogenized, curated places born out of discriminatory lending and homebuying.

Richard Rothstein (2017) reveals how zoning ordinances based on economic exclusion combined with government policies rooted in racial exclusion to make suburban residence all but impossible for Black families (see, for example, his discussion of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation's racially discriminatory practices, as well as the Federal Housing Authority's efforts to prevent residential, and therefore school, integration). Of course, some Black people did indeed find ways into the suburbs, but as Harold Rose (1976) argues, even as Black people moved from cities to the suburban rings, their settlement patterns reflected a continuation of processes of segregation and ghettoization. Kathe Newman and Elvin Wyly (2004) and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019), furthermore, point to how practices of predatory inclusion and subprime lending targeted Black people, locking them into center cities and less-affluent suburbs.

Despite these scholarly attempts at capturing the complexity of suburban life, the rapid expansion of suburbs helped solidify the image of the suburbs as homogenous, rigid, and antithetical to the city, which in contrast was viewed as diverse and cosmopolitan. This homogenized image of the suburbs coincided with less scholarly attention being paid to the suburbs throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

Andrew Wiese (2004) offers these words of caution: "Historians have done a better job excluding African Americans from the suburbs than even White suburbanites have." Wiese and several historians (see Kruse and Sugrue 2006) advocate for a new suburban history that acknowledges the presence of non-White suburbs and non-middle-class suburbs (Black, Latinx, Asian, and working class) that existed sometimes as a direct result of racially exclusive White suburbanization, and in other cases predated mass White suburbanization. The discipline of history's attempt to correct the misunderstanding of suburbs as monotonic and expand the record on their historical complexities has not yet been fully engaged by the social sciences. Through work in this double issue and other emerging scholarship, we hope to help contribute to the new suburban studies.

We argue that suburban amnesia has taken place through two dominant mechanisms: sub-

urban nostalgia and suburban erasure. *Suburban nostalgia* privileges a view of the suburbs as idyllic. In many popular narratives, the suburbs are spaces of respite from urban troubles and the domain of White middle-class nuclear families, where non-White, nonhetero, and nonmoneyed people were not seen. *Suburban erasure* occurs when the emphasis on racially and economically homogenous suburbs in popular media and in later twentieth-century social science actively erases the experiences of suburban residents of color, poor residents, and other marginalized communities.[6] Inattention to marginalized residents' experiences has allowed the White middle class to become the focus of suburban inquiry, which has emaciated scholarship on suburban life and inequality. These practices must be addressed to better refine our understanding of the suburbs, who is in them, and how inequality functions within and between them.

Suburban Nostalgia

Although the suburbs have diversified, especially in the last two decades, we urge scholars to resist overprivileging an easy narrative that positions suburbs' current diversity and dynamics as a 180-degree turn from their past. Suburbs were never landscapes of idyllic uniformity; assuming as much risks stigmatizing contemporary suburbs as having moved away from an imagined ideal that never was (Harris and Lewis 1998). To some extent, such stereotypes are built into the very genesis of the word *suburb*: as Richard Harris (2018) notes, the word arose in the late 1800s in Britain, where newly industrial cities were increasingly less desirable places to live, and those who had the means left the cities for outlying areas. In the United States, cities experienced "territorial stigmatization" (Airgood-Obrycki and Price 2018) and *suburb* quickly came to connote not just class exclusivity, but racial exclusivity as well. The suburb became the imagined antithesis of the city and seen as a refuge from its ills and inequalities. In the mid-twentieth century, hallmarks of suburbia included "mass consumerism: a car in every driveway, a fridge in every kitchen, and a TV in every living room" (Harris 2018, 32). The commute became the domain of male workers, the home the territory of suburban women. By the 1970s, this idealized vision led to feelings of suburban threat by residents, related to environmental toxins, crime, and morality. News media depictions heightened the moral panic felt among many suburban residents, who often responded by endorsing privatized protections bolstered by neoconservative culture and politics on the rise during the same period (Riismandel 2020).

Despite this suburban nostalgia, gendered oppressions and racial tensions have always been part and parcel of suburbs (Harris 2018; Coon 2014). Additionally, Harris (2018) reminds us that even in the period when the suburbs were imagined to be at their best, few suburbs would have lived up to the now taken-for-granted ideal; for example, postwar suburbs, being recently developed, would have lacked the mature trees and greenery that we so often imagine as suburban. The racial demographics of the suburbs already began to transition in the 1960s, and a decade later, Black people were moving to suburbs at a higher rate each year than White people (Airgood-Obrycki and Price 2018; Logan and Schneider 1984; Schwartz 1980; Stahura 1983). As we eschew suburban nostalgia, we would do well to heed Harris's guidance to consider that the truth lies somewhere between the positive and negative stereotypes of the suburban past. Nostalgia, inaccurate on its own, can be a launching point to a more honest reckoning with the suburbs, past and present. Media depictions in the past quarter century, such as *The Truman Show, Pleasantville,* and *Desperate Housewives,* have indeed criticized the illusion of the idyllic suburb (Coon 2014).

Suburban Erasure

Many histories of suburban expansion in the second half of the twentieth century carefully document the ways that government funding, state law, transportation technologies, and the

6. Walter Greason also uses the phrase "suburban erasure," in the title of his 2012 book, which chronicles how suburbanization quelled the civil rights struggle of Black residents in rural New Jersey. We use the term with a different meaning.

desire to escape the troubles of the city facilitated mass suburbanization as a largely racially exclusive project (Cohen 2003; Jackson 1985). Lending practices that bolstered White accumulation, coupled with interracial clashes, helped shape suburbs as racially and socioeconomically segregated, further cementing racial and economic divisions between the city and the suburbs across the United States (Freund 2007; Rothstein 2017; Sugrue 2009). However, that is not the full story of race and class and the suburbs in the 20th century.

Too often, a natural outgrowth of the nostalgia for an imagined suburban past is a failure to fully recognize the realities of the suburban present; our collective mental model of what *suburb* means and looks like has taken far too long to be updated. Even today, despite the fact that we know in the one hundred largest metro areas, the suburbs now house more Black, Latinx, poor, and immigrant residents than central cities (Frey 2018), headlines about "suburban voters" and "suburban women" continue to use *suburban* as a stand-in for White and middle class. And even when the presence in suburban space of racially and socioeconomically marginalized groups is acknowledged, the struggles they face are less often appreciated. Suburban schools are seen as "good" schools, understating the vast inequalities that persist within them (Lewis-McCoy 2014). Suburban neighborhoods are seen as safe neighborhoods, ignoring the fact that Black suburbanites still experience the threats of disproportionate policing (Boyles 2015).

The presence of economically disadvantaged residents is also minimized to the point of erasure. Although owning a single-family home is the suburban ideal, rates of homeownership vary significantly along race and class lines, and eviction is increasingly a suburban phenomenon (Rutan, Hepburn, and Desmond 2023, this volume, issue 1). Donors view suburbia as a place where poverty is not a problem and where social safety net service providers need not establish a presence (Allard 2008). The suburbs continue to be understood, in broad brushstrokes, as places of Whiteness and economic privilege, rendering less visible the experiences of disadvantage—both absolute and relative—and inequality that are an intrinsic facet of suburban life for many residents past and present.

In the following sections, we offer an overview of demographic changes that have reshaped the suburbs and their implications for institutions and processes of broad interest to social scientists.

POVERTY AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS IN THE SUBURBS

Research on U.S. poverty has tended to privilege either the inner city or the nation. As a result, certain geographical scales and different types of places—regional, county, and other subnational places as well as rural and suburban areas—have been neglected or treated as a residual or as an add-on (Lobao, Hooks, and Tickamyer 2007). In 1990, approximately 8.7 million people in the suburbs lived below the poverty line; today that figure, by our calculations, is 15.4 million. In fact, since 2010 in the hundred largest metropolitan areas more poor people live in suburbs than in central cities (Allard 2008; Kneebone and Berube 2013).

The suburban erasure of poverty has important consequences for understanding and addressing economic precarity. Challenges that urban poor residents face, such as gentrification and displacement, were previously thought to be created by the urban landscape but are now increasingly experienced by the suburban poor as well (Markley 2018; Hochstenbach and Musterd 2021).

Poverty in the suburban landscape is often invisible, in part because it tends to be clustered at local scales. The multifamily units and apartment buildings that do exist in suburbs tend to be lower in number and clustered in particular locations, invisible to residents in most other neighborhoods with single-family homes as the dominant housing stock (Girouard 2023, this volume, issue 1). Looking at the hundred largest metro areas, Alan Berube (2019) finds that between 2010 and 2014, 41 percent of poor suburban residents lived in a neighborhood where neighborhood poverty exceeded 20 percent. Public acknowledgment of increasing poverty by local politicians and media may be seen as negative by homeowners concerned about property values (Fischel 2001). These factors can lead to a suppression of

awareness of poverty and misrecognition of needs, problems with which Alexandra Murphy (2010) finds suburban social-support organizations struggle. Still, suburban poverty tends to be less concentrated than urban poverty.

Suburbanization in the postwar period led to communities whose features and amenities were more decentralized and often car dependent. This leads to unique issues for the suburban poor, such as lack of transportation and access to social services. Crucially, that decentralization is not just spatial, but also governmental; in a country where the safety net is often administered at the level of state or local government or via nonprofits, variation from place to place in the amount and quality of supports available to low-income suburbanites is considerable. Suburban residents struggling with poverty have less access to social service organizations and health care than those in urban areas both because of lack of organizations and because of lack of knowledge of pathways for remediation (Allard and Pelletier 2023, this volume, issue 2; Murphy and Allard 2015; Schnake-Mahl and Sommers 2017).

Support providers also find challenges in offering social services in suburban spaces. As Scott Allard (2017) finds, the decentralization of economically disadvantaged suburban residents—in contrast to the concentrated poverty more often found in central cities—presents several problems for provision of resources and support. First, pockets of the suburban poor can be so small that they are not readily visible at the county level (but see "overshadowed suburbs," Murphy 2010). In addition, support providers may struggle to secure funding for suburban locations, as many donors still hold an outdated idea of the suburbs as a place where poverty is not a problem. Finally, providers encounter exclusionary Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) attitudes when seeking space to operate because some suburbanites resist the presence of support organizations that they fear will attract more poor people to their communities (Allard 2008). Suburban support providers often stretch their services over a larger area, spanning multiple municipal and county boundaries (Allard and Roth 2010). These issues are compounded and complicated by ongoing racial inequalities; for example, Murphy and Danielle Wallace (2010) find that poor suburban neighborhoods, even more so than urban, tend to lack organizations supporting upward mobility, and that this paucity is particularly acute in neighborhoods where poor Black and Latinx children live.

More research on the comingling of wealth and poverty will be critical for future scholarship. Wealth is positively associated with homeownership, educational attainment, and a host of other indicators (Killewald, Pfeffer, and Schachner 2017). However, racial and ethnic inequality in wealth shows stark differences in accumulation (Oliver and Shapiro 2006; Maroto 2016) and in the ability to leverage wealth via homeownership (Conley 1999; Killewald and Bryan 2016). Few of these studies have interrogated the dynamics of suburban poverty and wealth in relationship to each other and the myriad ways these relational inequalities are complicated by race, gender, age, family structure, and other forms of difference.

The particular constellations of wealth and poverty in the suburban landscape also call for more research on suburban health infrastructure. Health infrastructure, like all infrastructure, should meet the needs of the public it serves today and will serve in the future. Population shifts—including moves to suburban counties—can create an infrastructural mismatch, with implications for population health (Schnake-Mahl and Sommers 2017). Health and infrastructure investment needs to keep pace with demographic shifts, recognize emergent issues, and formulate policies to address both new forms of inequality and any deepening inequities.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND IMMIGRATION IN THE SUBURBS

Postwar suburbanization occurred along racial lines, allowing White families access to better residential options while limiting access for Black families via measures ranging from restrictive covenants to segregated lending to interracial antagonisms (Freund 2007; Rothstein 2017). These processes allowed Whites with economic means to solidify racial rewards, hoard opportunities, and solidify racial identities (Geismer 2015; Kruse 2007; Lassiter 2013).

This history, paired with popular images of suburban space, demarcated the suburbs as White spaces in the American imagination (Coon 2014).

An emphasis on suburban spaces as historically and predominantly White remains a central feature of most studies of suburbs. However, in driving home the point of racial exclusivity, these discussions have led to suburban erasure of the racial and ethnic diversity that has long been present in suburbia (Kruse and Sugrue 2006). In addition, diversity has increased even more since the turn of the twenty-first century (Frey 2018). Recent studies are addressing this suburban erasure, noting the importance of place as it intersects with race in multiple arenas, including education (Lewis and Diamond 2015; Lewis-McCoy 2014; Posey-Maddox 2017a, 2017b; Warikoo 2022), real estate (Besbris and Faber 2017), public health (Johnson et al. 2019; Ray 2017), political economy (Geismer 2015), politics (Frasure-Yokley 2015; Smith and Greer 2018) and criminal justice (Boyles 2015).

Suburbs are in fact at the leading edge of American diversification and integration (Rastogi 2021); today, more than one-third of residents in American suburbs are people of color. Diverse suburbs are increasing in number: William Frey (2018) describes suburbs with significant numbers of multiple race groups as "melting pot" suburbs. The growth of such suburbs is driven by increasing numbers of Asian Americans and Latinx living in suburban communities. Both Asian Americans and Latinx experience significantly less housing discrimination than Black Americans do, providing greater access to suburban communities (Logan, Alba, and Leung 1996; Pew Research Center 2012). Still, when Whites move from one suburb to another, they tend to move from more to less racially diverse suburbs (Fowler, Lee, and Matthews 2016; Kye 2018; Parisi, Lichter, and Taquino 2019). These patterns of White migration help explain the diversification of some suburbs and the continued segregation of others.

As segregation levels have decreased between cities and their surrounding suburbs, segregation between suburbs has increased (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015). These forms of microsegregation are further complicated by the geography of land and settlement patterns. Early sociologists from the Chicago School assumed that all metros operated as concentric zones radiating out from the city (Burgess 1925), but the shapes and development patterns of some metropolitan areas challenge those theories (Rutan, Hepburn, and Desmond 2023, this volume, issue 1). The incorporation status of municipalities also shapes who lives where (Wyndham 2023, this volume, issue 2). Additionally, the distribution of ethnic groups varies significantly by region, which means that some metropolitan areas have large shares of particular ethnic groups and others have smaller shares (Douds, Lewis-McCoy, and Johnson 2021).

Recent scholars of Black suburban experiences have studied a range of suburbs, from working-class communities in small cities (Haynes 2001) to sprawling communities of affluence (Lacy 2007; Gordon 2019). Black suburban communities also feature regional variation. For example, recent patterns of reverse migration are helping reshape the landscape of the southern United States. Additionally, the wide range of Black suburban communities is further complicated and enriched by the presence of Black immigrants and their children, who have established themselves as a part of the cultural fabric in historically White and historically African American suburban communities (Clergé 2019).

Immigrants are also reshaping the suburban landscape, often revitalizing suburbs that have experienced population loss (Johnson 2017). They and their descendants have made homes in suburbs for decades, despite the racialized nature of postwar suburbanization (Singer 2008; Walker 2019). Since 2000, a majority of immigrants live in suburbs, most frequently suburbs of major cities (Hardwick 2008; Wilson and Singer 2011). In fact, suburbs are increasingly the place of arrival for immigrants rather than a destination after achieving socioeconomic mobility. Overall, the geographic landscape in suburbs where immigrants tend to live has also changed, leading Audrey Singer to coin the term "suburban metropolises—decidedly not cities, but for the most part large, loosely bounded, lower den-

sity, sprawling, auto-dependent metropolitan areas" (Singer 2008). Still, the major studies of immigrant assimilation have focused on cities (for example, see Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters 2004; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller 2005; Rumbaut 2008), leaving a lacuna in our understanding of immigrant incorporation. The increasing diversity of suburbs in terms of immigration, race, and class mean that these theories need updating.

Early theories of immigrant assimilation suggested movement to middle- and upper-middle-class suburbs as the ultimate measure of assimilation, based on the intergenerational mobility and movement of eastern and southern European migrants of the early twentieth century (Park and Burgess 1925). These theories of spatial (Massey 1985) or segmented (Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993) assimilation relied on suburban nostalgia: they took for granted an image of suburbs as well-off, predominantly White and middle class, and the ultimate sign of achieving the American dream. But suburban living no longer seems to require minority assimilation into a White identity; ethnographies of immigrants in suburban communities show that strong ethnic ties frequently persist alongside socioeconomic mobility (Agius Vallejo 2012; Clergé 2014; Imoagene 2012; Li 2009; Logan, Zhang, and Alba 2002; Warikoo 2022; Ocampo 2016). In addition, although immigrant communities have too often been erased from the suburban narrative, *ethnoburbs*, or ethnic enclaves outside central cities (Alba et al. 1999; Li 2009), have existed for decades. Sanjoy Chakravorty, Devesh Kapur, and Nirvikar Singh (2017) further describe suburbs with high numbers of immigrants who arrived to the United States through H1-B visas as "ethno-techno-suburbs," where parents often move for proximity to suburban technology firms as well as for highly reputed schools. Still, immigrants living in suburbs are less likely than their nonimmigrant suburban neighbors to live in single-family homes with a nuclear family. In fact, one in five immigrants in suburban communities lives in a multifamily home (Hardwick 2008). Suburban immigrant integration is not conflict free, either. Recent research in upper middle-class, previously predominantly White suburbs with growing numbers of Asian Americans has revealed new forms of ethnic conflict related to feelings of group threat among Whites as they watch Asian American neighbors attain academic and socioeconomic success (Jiménez 2017; Lung-Amam 2017; Warikoo 2022).

Along the lines of race, ethnicity, and immigration, the suburbs are more diverse than ever. As scholarship leaves behind the misconception that suburban means White and middle class, so too should it acknowledge that suburban households are departing from the mythologized nuclear family headed by a heterosexual couple. In addition to race and ethnicity, future work on the diversity of suburban residents should devote additional attention to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) populations, their rights and equalities, as well as group residential patterns. Indeed, paralleling other literatures on place, LGBTQ+ scholarship is moving beyond the urban core (for example, see Howard 2019). The urban gayborhood has received almost all of the attention (Ghaziani 2014) but its form and function may now have reached a plateau (Bitterman and Hess 2021). Reflecting other social and cultural shifts in society, literature is emerging on places, including suburbs, that are home to increasing LGBTQ+ communities (Podmore and Bain 2021). Exploring these intersections of identity and place may be a fruitful area for future research.

SCHOOLING IN THE SUBURBS

Schools are, in many ways, central to the suburban landscape. The growth of many suburbs goes hand in hand with Whites fleeing urban centers to avoid school desegregation. Thus many suburban schools grew as a direct result of Black exclusion and class segregation. Despite residential segregation between school districts, the U.S. Supreme Court disallowed mandated school desegregation across district boundaries in the 1974 *Milliken v. Bradley* decision, hardening the school segregation created by these patterns of settlement (Orfield and Eaton 1997; Geismer 2015; Hagerman 2018).[7] In

7. *Milliken, Governor of Michigan, et al. v. Bradley, et al.* 418 U.S. 717 (1974).

some southern districts, suburbs have seceded from the district altogether to create a better-resourced suburban district, exacerbating inequality (Siegel-Hawley, Diem, and Frankenberg 2018). Still, although Jonathan Kozol's narrative about "savage inequalities" (1991) between urban and suburban schools continues to hold some truth, it is only part of the story of spatial inequality in schools. As we emphasize throughout this review, not all suburbs are alike; the same is true for suburban schools. Many of the challenges that appear in urban schools also appear in suburban schools.

Like the suburbs they are embedded in, many suburban schools themselves are rapidly diversifying, a growing trend rendered invisible by suburban erasure. Today, a majority of students in suburban public schools are children of color, and just 6 percent of students attending suburban schools in large metros do so in schools that are predominantly (more than 90 percent) White (Chen et al. 2021). In addition, suburban schools serve increasing numbers of low-income children and English-language learners. Many suburban schools struggle to meet the needs of their less-advantaged students even though most White, middle-class native English speakers do quite well in those schools (Dondero and Muller 2012; Frankenberg and Orfield 2012; Shiller 2016).

School segregation within suburban areas is increasing, in part due to increasing numbers of low-income families of color living in suburban areas and White families moving out of them (Reardon and Yun 2001). In issue 2 of this volume, Erica Frankenberg and her colleagues and Willow Lung-Amam show how suburban school districts' redrawing of attendance zones, shaped by the influence of long-standing, predominantly White families and some middle-class Asian American families, leads to increasing segregation within districts alongside growing diversity. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007) prevents districts from addressing this segregation by using race as a factor in school placement.[8] In addition, during the 1980s, many court-ordered school desegregation plans ended, districts arguing that they no longer needed to be forced to integrate schools; this has led to further resegregation in southern schools.[9] In addition to racial inequalities, socioeconomic inequality has increased in schools in recent decades (Reardon and Owens 2014; Owens, Reardon, and Jencks 2016), driven in part by increasing class segregation within and between suburban and urban school districts (Owens and Rich 2023, this volume, issue 2). Shruti Bathia and her colleagues (2023, this volume, issue 2) show how these patterns have shifted for Latinx students in particular over the past two decades.

Families of color face unique challenges within suburban schools, even well-resourced ones (Lewis-McCoy 2014, Lewis and Diamond 2015; Posey-Maddox 2017a). School officials are often more responsive to White parents than to parents of color, especially when it comes to addressing issues of racial inequality (Lewis-McCoy 2014). This affinity between school staff and White parents stems in part from shared cultural repertoires between upper middle-class White parents and White school teachers and administrators (Warikoo 2022; Park 2020), benefiting not only the children of White parents who engage with the school, but other White children, as well, as school staff anticipate particular responses from all White parents and act accordingly (Lewis-McCoy 2014; Lewis and Diamond 2015). Black and Asian parents alike report experiencing microaggressions from school staff and White parents in suburban contexts (Warikoo 2022; Park 2020; Posey-Maddox 2017a). School staff frequently take a colorblind approach, ignoring issues of race (Pollock, 2004; Tyler 2016; Welton, Diem, and Holme 2015). In other schools, especially in liberal districts after the Black Lives Matter

8. *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 et al.*, 551 U.S. 701 (2007).

9. District size and school governance vary widely in the United States. For example, although both Florida and Pennsylvania are home to sixty-seven counties, Florida has seventy-three school districts but Pennsylvania five hundred. Whereas Philadelphia County is one district, a neighboring suburban county, Montgomery County, has twenty-three districts.

movement got under way, educators are more ready to address race, even though class remains salient but largely silenced, in part because suburban living implies being "not poor" (Foley 2021).

Black and Latinx students attending suburban schools often experience different treatment than their White and Asian American peers do, especially related to academic track placement and school discipline (Lewis and Diamond 2015; Tyson 2011; Tyler, 2016). Black girls face unique challenges, including greater scrutiny from and strained relationships with teachers (Eggleston and Miranda 2009). Asian Americans, in contrast, are often stereotyped as model minorities in suburban schools, given their high levels of academic achievement on average (Lee and Zhou 2015). Paradoxically, that positive stereotype can lead Whites to move out of suburbs with a growing presence of Asian Americans, given White perceptions in some locales that the racial order has flipped, leaving some Whites to perceive a decline in Whites' racial status (Jiménez and Horowitz 2013; Kye 2018; Warikoo 2022).

Many foundational ethnographic studies of immigrant and African American youth in schools took place in suburban communities (see, for example, Matute-Bianchi 1986; Carter 2005; Wun 2016), yet the spatial aspects of those schools and communities were not central parts of the analyses or subsequent discussions of the work. Similarly, more recent studies of suburban inequality raise questions about what make urban and suburban education distinct and whether the binaries should be challenged or clarified (Milner 2012, Posey-Maddox 2016). Following the lead of urban sociologists of education such as Carla Shedd (2015) and Eve Ewing (2018), scholars of suburban education should bring a "place-sensitive" lens to their work, investigating how the suburban landscape is not mere backdrop, but an active agent in the dynamics at play. This might look like considering how public transit (or lack of it) affects children's experiences or parental engagement or, as Angela Simms does (2023, this volume, issue 2), examining how the governance and political structures of suburban communities shape school boards and district policies.

POLICING IN THE SUBURBS

Suburbs are rarely the first terrain that people think of when it comes to police and crime. Decades of social scientific research and media narratives have cemented the idea that crime and police is part and parcel of inner cities. The association has led to an assumption that suburban spaces have little to no crime. For example, in the summer of 2020, amid the calls to defund the police, when Congressperson Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was questioned on what police abolition looked like she remarked, "It looks like a suburb." Ocasio-Cortez and others invoke images of the suburbs at the expense of the realities that many residents of suburbs face. The imagined or misremembered suburbs are largely affluent and White, and they feature very little police intervention; this suburban erasure renders invisible a growing number of suburbs and residents within them.

M. P. Baumgartner (1989) argued that suburbs were often governed by a moral order that valued avoiding confrontation, which resulted in high levels of social control. Scott Jacques and Richard Wright (2015) borrow from the "moral order of the suburb" theory to explore drug dealing in an ethnographic study in an affluent, predominantly White suburb. Despite drug use being comparable between cities and suburbs, drug dealing is often studied only in central cities, a form of suburban erasure that prevents a spatial understanding (Degenhardt et al. 2007). Jacques and Wright argue that drug dealing in suburban spaces looks and feels different because it is characterized by less violence than it is in cities, it is subject to less surveillance by police, and regulation of the market via social norms is greater. This analysis, however, likely reflects the experiences of White suburban residents more than the experiences of suburban residents of color. Andrea Boyles (2015), in her study of suburban Saint Louis, finds that Black residents were often subjects to police tactics and harassment similar to those used in central cities. Whereas Whiter sections of the suburb had less contact and more favorable experiences with police, Black residents in Blacker neighborhoods experienced strained relationships (see also Gordon 2019).

The 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin by the vigilante George Zimmerman in Sanford, Florida, and the 2014 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, by the police officer Darren Wilson set in motion the emergence of what would become the global Black Lives Matter movement. Both Sanford and Ferguson are suburbs, which for many would be an unlikely location to seed an antipolice violence movement (Lung-Amam and Schafran 2019). But the suburbs may be an important frontier for issues of police and inequity: Samuel Sinyangwe finds that between 2013 and 2019 the number of people killed by police nationally remained steady, but the number of killings in big cities declined and the number in suburban and rural areas increased (2020).[10]

Beyond police violence, suburban police often disproportionately ticket Black residents, an important source of revenue (for examples around the country, see Ordower, Sandoval, and Warren 2017; LaScala-Gruenewald, Adamides, and Toback 2020; Harris, Pattillo, and Sykes 2022). Josh Pacewicz and John Robinson (2021) find that these heavy fines and fees schemes are more likely to be found in majority Black suburbs. Brenden Beck (2023, this volume, issue 2) examines the nexus between suburban demography, fines and fees, and police killings and finds links between them. Taken together, these studies suggest that experiences with police in suburbia are deeply raced and classed.

Incarceration and its impact on suburban communities also demands greater scholarly attention. Mass incarceration is an increasing issue in the suburbs. In studies of Massachusetts, Jessica Simes (2018, 2021) finds that the highest imprisonment rates are now in small cities and the poorer suburbs of Boston and that the focus on our largest urban centers has diverted both scholarly and policy attention away from communities affected most by mass incarceration. The geographic distribution of the formerly incarcerated is also changing, bringing the challenges of reintegration to new types of places, including suburbs (Kirk 2019).

POLITICS IN THE SUBURBS

Suburban erasure is perhaps best exemplified in the field of suburban politics. Suburban politics is increasingly understood as a distinct area of study (Gainsborough 2001). For several presidential election cycles, suburban voters have been heavily covered in the news and their votes coveted by politicians because they are often assumed to be the voters on which candidates' fates turn. Reporters implicitly equate suburban voters with White middle-class voters, writing articles that frequently feature the voices of White female voters as the voices of suburbia (Kurtzleben 2018; Lerer 2020). In turn, in the 2020 presidential campaign Donald Trump suggested that Democrats desired to "abolish the suburbs" (Associated Press 2020) and "suburban lifestyle" (Karni, Haberman, and Ember 2020), appealing to suburban nostalgia among White middle-class voters.

Political scientists have discussed suburban politics through the lenses of residential choice, civic capacity and participation, and, more recently, access to political power. Charles Tiebout's (1956) public choice theory, commonly known as "voting with your feet," suggests that when potential residents look at places to live they choose their location based on the municipality that has the amenities they desire and a tax structure they find attractive. Mark Schneider (1989) furthers this perspective by arguing that competition between suburbs is not only for homebuyers but also for businesses, which undergo a similar searching process when deciding where to locate their facilities. Suburban residents' preferences for low tax burdens can make local government officials less willing to support a robust social safety net: William Fischel (2001) demonstrates that homeowners—more prevalent in suburbs than in cities—often vote for low local government spending, their goal being to maximize their property values. Although instructive in explaining much of suburban politics, these analyses focus on the experiences of propertied, White suburban residents, missing an increasing share of suburban politics.

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10. Sinyangwe defines urban, suburban, and rural using a measurement of density. Although it is not perfect, this method is increasingly used in journalist accounts and popular statistics (see Kolko 2015).

(2023, this volume, issue 2) use unique precinct-level data to examine voting patterns in suburbs and how they changed between 2016 and 2020. Through a careful analysis of multiple suburbs across the nation, they find that Whiter suburbs remained the least likely to have an increased Democratic voter share even though the suburbs overall voted more Democratic. They conclude that it was population change rather than changes in White suburban voters' party preferences that drove electoral result changes.

Theories of public choice also fail to account for how and when local governments do build social supports. For example, Lorrie Frasure-Yokley (2015), in a case study of an ethnically diverse suburb outside Washington, D.C., finds that local governments adopted programs and policies that extended social safety nets and assisted undocumented and other vulnerable communities. These new theories of politics in the suburbs are challenging the idea that suburbs are in and of themselves inflexible an incapable of adjusting to new and diverse residents, particularly Latinx residents. In addition, scholarship on Black suburbs and Black suburbanites (see, for example, Lake 1981, Johnson 2002) has raised key questions about suburban demography, the homebuying process for Black families, and the evolution of political representation and power. Still, Black suburbanites continue to experience limited political power, even while middle-class Black families receive more benefits and voice than lower- income Black families do (Haynes 2001; Lacy 2007).

The diversification of suburbs should lead us to rethink the politics of suburbia when it comes to resource allocation and incorporation (Lung-Amam 2017; Jiménez 2017). As immigrants become more of a presence in suburban spaces, immigration also increasingly shapes suburban political processes and suburbs become an increasingly important facet of the broader political economy (Jones-Correa 2006, 2019).

Whereas some studies (see Frasure-Yokley 2015) are finding collaboration between old residents and newcomers in ethnically diverse suburbs, that is not the case universally. Simms, in this volume, issue 2, returns to Prince George's County, Maryland—the hallmark of Black suburbia—to capture the dynamics of the ethnically diversifying county and the process of budgeting. In a case study of public hearings on school budgets, she finds that predominantly Latinx newcomers find themselves in competition with long-standing Black communities; larger issues of regional and structural inequity remain underdiscussed as solutions to funding limitations, as well.

As the suburbs and suburban voters increasingly become flashpoints for political battles during major election cycles, the need is urgent for more research on the everyday political economies of suburban spaces. One need look no further than the recent politicization and polarization of suburban school boards, which have been the target of critiques and even attacks as a result of a right-wing campaign purporting to oppose Critical Race Theory. These challenges to curriculum, leadership, and even funding are a way to push back against the embrace of equity and reckoning with racial and ethnic diversity. Given the centrality of suburban schools to suburban communities—indeed, the schools are often a significant reason why families move to the suburbs or choose to reside in a particular suburb—these battles over school boards should be understood not just as educational issues, but also as political ones.

Under the suburban politics umbrella, the environment is another important area for further research. The contemporary environmental movement is undoubtedly tied to suburbia, though scholars debate how this is so. Adam Rome (2001) looks at the environmental impact of suburbanization, which he argues propelled the need to protect the environment, whereas Christopher Sellers (2012) identifies suburbs as the very sites where environmental activism first ignited. In addition, Robin Leichenko and William Solecki (2013) lament the lack of attention to how residents in suburbs will be affected by climate change. They identify how key vulnerabilities and impacts associated with climate change (for example, flooding) vary widely across different types of suburban settlement zones (high, medium, and low-density suburbs) as do the factors that influence suburban adaptive capacity and resilience. Their

discussions also identify the interconnections between suburban places (upstream origins and downstream impacts). In a recent paper, Hannah Teicher, Carly Phillips, and Devin Todd (2021) extend the suburban and climate change discussion to discussions of governance that acknowledge the interconnections between urban cores and suburbs. They argue that suburbs should be a locus of climate action.

CONCLUSION

We would be remiss not to mention that this double issue was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has laid bare the depths and reach of societal inequalities. Accordingly, in a very short time span, volumes of papers have been written on systemic racism, social justice and injustice, and the structural inequalities of place in relation to COVID-19 prevalence, hospitalizations, death, and vaccine dissemination and uptake. We are also learning about place-based disparities related to the impact of COVID-19 on essential workers, children, the elderly, and other high-risk populations (Lewis-McCoy and D'Andrea Martinez 2020). Given the continuing demographic shifts out from the urban core, it is inevitable that suburbs will be part of an ongoing national conversation on all of these topics, and many more.

These two issues on suburban inequality were born from a desire to bring to together a range of scholars to collaboratively mark out what we know about the topic. Because suburbs have so often been overlooked by scholarship and overshadowed by urban inquiry, we were aware that a significant goal of this double issue would be to "sell the suburbs" as a site of study. Through this review of the extant literature and the contributions of this double issue, we are confident that we can resist amnesia and carve new space for a field of suburban inequality.

By way of conclusion, we offer three suggestions. First, we implore scholars to resist suburban nostalgia and to focus instead on the ways in which systems of inequality penetrate and are perpetuated within suburban communities. Relatedly, we call for an end to suburban erasure; scholars should recognize the diversity of suburban communities and the diverse histories of suburban communities as well. Last, scholars should resist social scientific amnesia, and excavate suburban inquires that can shed light on the suburban present. Recognizing that much of suburban studies is siloed into disciplinary and methodological tracts (just as many other fields are), we call for suburban scholars to reach across disciplinary boundaries for more illuminating studies of suburban inequality. We hope this double issue of the *Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* facilitates the next steps in this burgeoning field of study.

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PART I

Changing Suburbs

Racial Diversity and Segregation: Comparing Principal Cities, Inner-Ring Suburbs, Outlying Suburbs, and the Suburban Fringe

DANIEL T. LICHTER, BRIAN C. THIEDE, AND MATTHEW M. BROOKS

This article uses 2020 Census data to document recent trends in suburbanization, ethnoracial diversity, and residential segregation in the United States. It considers variation across inner-ring suburbs, outlying suburbs, and exurban areas at the metropolitan (metro) fringe. Suburbanization has recently continued, albeit more slowly than the 1990s and 2000s. Nearly two-thirds of all metro residents now live in the suburbs, fueled by change among ethnoracial minorities. For the first time, a majority of metro Blacks reside in suburbs. America's suburbs, especially inner-ring suburbs, have experienced extraordinary increases in racial diversity. Declines continue in metro segregation, and segregation remains lower in the suburbs than principal cities, especially in outlying and fringe areas. For suburban Asians and Hispanics, however, exposure to Whites has declined since 1990. The suburban fringe remains the least diverse component of metro America. The fringe is less segregated than other metro areas, but has experienced patterns (such as growing Black-White segregation) contrary to national trends.

Keywords: suburbs, exurbs, segregation, diversity, race

America's suburbs are on the frontline of racial and ethnic neighborhood change. Yet suburbs are typically treated as a monolith ("Chocolate Cities, Vanilla Suburbs"), as a safe haven from big city crime, congestion, and urban blight (Farley 2021; Lewis-McCoy et al. 2023). Suburbs symbolize the achievement of the so-called American Dream, a platform for gaining access

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to good schools, affordable housing, and high-earning jobs (Alba and Logan 1991; Lacy 2016; Lung-Amam 2023). Today, the conventional view may no longer apply. Whites are emptying out of diversifying inner-ring suburbs (Kye 2018; Parisi, Lichter, and Taquino 2019). Some have left for big-city neighborhoods, which have rebounded from widespread depopulation, urban blight, racial unrest, and high crime rates during the 1960s and 1970s (Hwang and Lin 2016). Many more have moved even farther from the metropolitan (metro) core, joining affluent, predominantly White neighborhoods and unincorporated developments with family-friendly housing and lower property taxes. All the while, urban growth has spilled over into the metro fringe, incorporating rural people, small towns, and land area. America's changing suburbs are racially differentiated, increasingly fragmented, and unequal.

Our fundamental goal is to evaluate whether growing ethnoracial diversity in metro areas has translated into residential integration or to greater fragmentation across cities and suburbs. We address three specific objectives to provide up-to-date estimates of trends in suburbanization, ethnoracial diversity, and neighborhood segregation in U.S. metro areas. First, we document shifts in the pace of suburbanization between the 1990 and 2020 Censuses. We develop a new typology of racially fragmented suburbs that places the spotlight on inner-ring and outlying suburbs, as well as the suburban fringe—variously called exurbia, urban sprawl, or peri-urban areas. The fringe is where rural and urban populations intersect, racial politics are often contentious, and cultural values collide (Lichter, Brown, and Parisi 2021; Nevarez and Simons 2020). Second, we produce updated national estimates of racial and ethnic diversity, as measured by Simpson's Diversity Index, over the past three decades. We show that unprecedented racial diversity in the nation's largest metro areas is the result of racially heterogeneous population changes in cities and across different types of suburbs. Third, we document post-1990 trends in racial and ethnic segregation within and between the nation's cities and suburbs. Even as diversity has accelerated and segregation has presumably declined in cities and inner-ring suburbs (Frey 2013; Steele et al. 2022), patterns in outlying suburban and fringe areas are both ambiguous and poorly documented. Indeed, we find considerable variation in the pace, and in some cases direction, of racial change and segregation across the metro landscape. Ongoing demographic change and spatial restructuring mean that analyses of suburban segregation require a temporally explicit, spatially granular theoretical and empirical approach. Such is our purpose.

Our study makes several specific contributions. First, we draw on recently released tract-level data from the 2020 Census. Second, we present a new typology of suburban America that recognizes nonmetro-to-metro reclassification as an important but unappreciated engine of suburban growth, racial diversity, and segregation. Third, we make key analytical assumptions, such as regarding weighting and defining the metro and suburban universes, transparent. Last, we supplement our national estimates of suburbanization, diversity, and segregation with local-area estimates contrasting heavily populated or outward expanding metro areas (such as Atlanta) with older post-industrial metro areas (such as St. Louis) that have experienced exceptional racial change and, in some cases, massive depopulation at the core.

BACKGROUND

Much of the current literature on suburbs has been inwardly focused and framed in relationship to the urban core. Yet today only about 30 percent of all Americans—and an even smaller share of White Americans—live in the principal cities of metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) (Gibson 2010). Cities and suburbs nevertheless represent flip sides of the same metro coin. Many of the nation's major cities—Chicago and St. Louis—have experienced depopulation over the last half century. For example, the population of St. Louis peaked at 857,000 in 1950 and has declined each decade thereafter. The 2020 Census revealed a population of almost three hundred thousand. The broader St. Louis metro area nevertheless continues to grow, its population topping 2.8 million in 2020. It is in suburbia where most metro growth and change has occurred (Frey

2013).[1] The implication is clear: suburbanization, including exurban growth at the fringe, is now driving overall changes in racial residential segregation in metro areas. America is at a demographic transition point, with suburbs leading the way.

Metropolitan Diversity and Suburban Segregation

Douglas Massey and Jonathan Tannen (2018) document the extraordinary suburbanization of the U.S. population over the past half century. They show that the share of the U.S. metro population living in suburban counties increased from 45.2 to 55.4 percent between 1970 and 2010. For the White population, the suburban percentages increased from 49.1 to 63.1 percent and the share of Black metro residents living in the suburbs grew even more rapidly, from 18.2 to 39.9 percent. The growing Black population produced an uptick in racial diversity across America's "melting pot suburbs" (Frey 2013), which were located mostly in inner-ring settlements around urban cores. Still, nearly 70 percent of America's suburban population overall remained non-Hispanic White in 2010, albeit down significantly from 92.5 percent in 1970 (Massey and Tannen 2018). However, as we show in this article, averages mask extraordinary variation across cities and different types of suburbs.

Changes in racial residential segregation have also been characterized by spatial heterogeneity within MSAs. In 1970, Black-White residential segregation was substantially higher in metro core counties—those containing principal cities—than in suburban counties. According to Massey and Tannen (2018), Black-White segregation, using the Index of Dissimilarity, in 1970 was 65.1 in the suburbs compared with 77.5 in central cities.[2] By 2010, Black-White segregation in both the suburbs and principal cities declined and converged (53.4 in the suburbs and 60.4 in central cities). Hispanic-White and Asian-White segregation in both the cities and suburbs has remained relatively constant between 1970 and 2010. Perhaps even more interesting is that the Hispanic-White Isolation Index increased in the suburbs from 19.3 to 42.8 between 1970 and 2010. This means that Hispanics, on average, lived in suburban neighborhoods that were 42.8 percent Hispanic in 2010, more than twice the average in 1970. Increases in Hispanic-White isolation in the suburbs contrast with the little change or even slight declines in suburban isolation among their Black (40.8 in 1970 to 36.5 in 2010) and Asian counterparts (23.6 to 20.8 from 1970 to 2010). Hispanics are suburbanizing, but seemingly in the form of new ethnoburbs lying outside the metro core. New data from the 2020 Census reveal continuing declines in racial segregation in America's metro areas (Logan and Stults 2021). However, how these changes have played out across different parts of U.S. metro areas, and how they correspond to changes in diversity, remain open and important questions.

Reevaluating the "American Dream"

Residential segregation is the "linchpin" of America's stratification system (Krysan and Crowder 2017; Massey 2020). Downward shifts in residential segregation may portend widespread racial residential integration, perhaps even an "end of the segregated century" (Glaeser and Vigdor 2012). However, whether suburbanization today remains a marker of upward social mobility and racial integration is unclear. Suburban segregation has in fact stagnated or drifted upward (Fischer 2008) even as metropolitan segregation overall has declined over recent decades. Whites have increasingly left diversifying inner-ring suburban neighborhoods for predominantly White suburban fringe communities or have returned to neighborhoods in the metro core (Parisi, Lichter, and Taquino 2019; Timberland and Howell 2022). America's burgeoning suburbs are in demographic flux (Lewis-McCoy et al. 2023).

Indeed, scholars have increasingly debated

1. Perhaps paradoxically, the majority (roughly 54 percent) of all rural people—those living in the open countryside or in small towns—live in metro counties, mostly in newly defined metro counties located in outlying peripheral areas (Lichter, Brown, and Parisi 2021; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2016).

2. This means that 65.1 percent of metropolitan Blacks (or Whites) would have to move to another census tract to achieve parity in the distribution of Blacks and Whites across all metropolitan areas.

the conventional wisdom—one that emphasizes increasing spatial integration of racial and ethnic minorities (Hwang and McDaniel 2022). Stephen Menendian and colleagues (2021, 4) claim that conventional approaches "are no longer capable of helping us gauge the extent of segregation in an increasingly diverse and multi-racial society." Recent studies have focused on, first, the changing spatial scale of racial segregation (Lee et al. 2008; Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015a); second, wide disparities from study to study in the universe of metro regions, counties, and places (Massey and Tannen 2018; Wright et al. 2014); and, third, appropriate weighting of different racial and spatial categories, that is, whether national figures represent averages of metro areas or averages of different metro populations (Iceland and Sharp 2013; Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015b). Each issue poses analytic and interpretative challenges for research on changing patterns of segregation in cities and suburbs.

First, most studies of neighborhood segregation are based on census tracts, but racial residential segregation occurs at many different spatial scales, from regions to census blocks (Parisi, Lichter and Taquino 2011; Wright et al. 2014). Additionally, tracts are usually larger in territorial size in less densely settled suburban areas than central cities, with tracts in formerly nonmetro counties at the suburban fringe typically the largest. These differences matter because residential segregation is inversely associated with the territorial size of spatial units (Hennerdal and Nielsen 2017; Lee et al. 2008). As such, neighborhoods are likely, quite mechanically, to have lower measured levels of racial segregation as urban development radiates outward from the metro core to older suburbs and beyond.[3]

Second, national-level estimates of metro segregation overall, and especially segregation in more racially homogamous suburban areas, are influenced by the number and population sizes of the metro areas included in the study. For example, Massey and Tannen (2018) examine 287 "consistently defined" metro areas "for which data on Asians, Hispanics, and African-Americans were available at all dates" (1594). This approach contrasts with John Logan and Brian Stults' (2021) national estimates from the 2020 Census focused on more than four hundred currently designated metro areas. Another study, based on the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Censuses, provided estimates of segregation based on the largest forty-three MSAs with populations of more than one million (Wright et al. 2014). This approach is quite unlike that of John Iceland and Greg Sharp's study (2013), which used different numbers of MSAs (between 333 and 366) over the 1980 to 2010 period and for comparisons across racial groups. The implication is that declines in metro segregation may be a methodological artifact, driven in part by adding newer and comparatively smaller and less segregated metro areas to the universe.

Third, national trends in diversity and segregation are affected by different weighting practices, such as whether each metro-specific estimate of segregation is weighted equally to reflect the average experience of America's metro areas (Menendian, Gailes, and Gambhir 2021) or instead is weighted by the size of the metro population or the ethnoracial group under consideration (Logan and Stults 2021). The latter two approaches have the benefit of highlighting the average experience of metro residents overall or by group rather than the average across metro areas of widely different population sizes.

These interpretive challenges are further compounded by the use of county-based definitions of metro areas, which vary in territorial size and are subject to substantial change over time. Results from some segregation studies

3. In response, recent studies have defined segregation using smaller spatial units (such as blocks) or have adopted multiscalar approaches that nest different-sized units of geography, one within another (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015a; Fowler, Lee, and Matthews 2016). Other studies compare segregation using different scales, based on the number of nearby neighbors or on the distance from specific focal units, such as housing units, blocks, or census tracts (Lee et al. 2008; Östh, Clark, and Malmberg 2015). These measures have their own problems, such as dealing with natural (rivers or mountains) and man-made barriers (highways) that restrict social interaction among different racial groups (Roberto and Korver-Glenn 2021).

are based on a fixed universe of MSAs and constituent metro counties defined at the baseline (see, for example, Rugh and Massey 2014). Estimates of metro segregation, however, may be influenced by the reclassification of rapidly growing nonmetro counties into the metro universe, either as entirely new MSAs or as new suburban fringe areas (Johnson and Lichter 2020). If the universe of metro counties is defined at the beginning of the study period, then newly reclassified metro suburban counties—often predominantly White—are wrongly excluded from the analysis. Alternatively, if metro areas and their underlying counties are defined at the end of the study period, the analysis will include newly reclassified suburban counties defined by the Census Bureau as nonmetro in earlier periods, when they were more rural than urban. Attention to these shifting boundaries is important for all analyses of the metro (and nonmetro) United States, but critical for studies of the suburbs, where much recent reclassification has taken place.[4]

THIS STUDY

Our study, first and foremost, provides up-to-date estimates of suburbanization, ethnoracial diversity, and neighborhood segregation in America's MSAs, including their principal cities and suburbs, since 1990. We show that suburbanization has continued its rapid upward trajectory at the expense of principal cities over the past decade. Racial integration is reflected in the rapid suburbanization of minorities, including Black populations. In the aggregate, residents of inner-ring and outlying suburban counties were, for the first time in 2020, less likely to be exposed to neighbors of the same race than of a different race. Yet, exposure to racial diversity remains highly uneven across America's racial hierarchy, which is revealed in newly emerging patterns of racial residential isolation and segregation—Asian and Hispanic ethnoburbs—in America's increasingly diverse but racially fragmented suburbs.

DATA AND METHODS

We use tract-level data from the newly released redistricting files from the 2020 Census, along with comparable tabulations from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Censuses.[5] We extract summary files using IPUMS-NHGIS (Manson et al. 2021). These data identify 100 percent population counts each decade by race and ethnicity. We use counts of all Hispanics or Latinos, regardless of race. For non-Hispanics, we distinguish among four mutuality exclusive and exhaustive race categories—White, Black, Asian, and all others, including multiracial populations—as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Our analyses are based on three hundred MSAs identified by the OMB in 1993. We nest our tract-level data within counties, which are the building blocks of all metro areas. MSAs include all territory and population within counties that either contain a core urbanized population of fifty thousand or more or are integrated with core counties by commuting flows. MSAs are excluded if they transitioned back to nonmetro status after 1990 or were newly designated after 1993.[6]

Typology

Our typology of principal cities and suburban areas is constructed on the basis of census tracts, which are viewed as proxies for neighborhoods (Hanlon 2009). We distinguish between census tracts located in principal cities and those located in all other areas (suburban areas) within MSAs. Specifically, we use GIS to overlay the boundaries of principal cities, de-

4. Despite being commonly overlooked or ignored, this issue is not arcane. Kenneth Johnson and Daniel Lichter (2020) show that 753 nonmetro counties were redefined as metro by the Office of Management and Budget between 1960 and 2017. Reclassification shifted nearly seventy million nonmetro residents to the metro side of the demographic ledger, which accounted for virtually all of the increase in the metro share of the U.S. population.

5. For the 2020 Census tabulations, the Census Bureau introduced a new disclosure avoidance technique to protect privacy. Known as differential privacy, this technique injects "noise" into the tabulations for specific areal units (such as individual tracts or racial groups) but seems unlikely to alter estimates of diversity or segregation for highly aggregated metro data such as ours (for a discussion of the issue, see Asquith et al. 2022).

6. These restrictions exclude only 3.3 percent of the 2020 metro population.

fined in 1993, on our tract-level data for each metro area. Constant principal city boundaries ensure that suburban areas and populations cannot be redefined as principal cities during the study period.[7]

Although the universe of MSAs is defined in 1993 (based on 1990 Census results), we use the most recent boundaries of each unit to account for the addition of new counties and constituent census tracts at the metro fringe due to reclassification.[8] For our analysis, we identify 1,034 consistently defined metro counties based on the 2013 OMB update from the 2010 Census.[9] Overall, 326 nonmetro counties were newly reclassified as metro counties between 1993 and 2013, 239 of them to become part of existing MSAs. For a summary of the number of MSAs, variously defined, along with the numbers of counties, tracts, and total population, see table A.1.

Our typology of suburban areas includes inner-ring suburbs, outlying suburbs, and fringe suburbs. We define inner-ring suburbs as the census tracts lying outside of principal cities but within counties that contain principal cities (core counties). The inner suburbs represent the built-up areas in close proximity to principal cities. The outlying suburbs are made up of tracts located outside the inner ring and that were defined as metro in 1993 or earlier. These suburbs are "mature" or older but removed spatially from principal cities (Hanlon 2009). Outlying suburbs are distinguished here from suburban fringe neighborhoods. We define the latter as tracts within counties that were reclassified from nonmetro to metro status after 1990. These newly added exurban neighborhoods are sometimes excluded from previous studies of segregation.

Measurement

Our analyses focus on three sets of outcomes: suburbanization, ethnoracial diversity, and segregation. Suburbanization is measured by the share of the metro population living in suburban tracts outside principal cities (Massey and Tannen 2018). Shares of suburban population are further disaggregated by race, which highlights racial variation in suburbanization since 1990.

Ethnoracial diversity is operationalized using the Simpson's Diversity Index (*SDI*) (Simpson 1949; see Steele et al. 2022, for discussion of measurement). The *SDI* captures the likelihood that any two randomly selected residents located in the same area (for example, MSA, suburban fringe) will be from different ethnoracial groups. Using the defined five-group ethnoracial typology, *SDI* ranges from 0 to 0.8.[10] If all persons from each of the five groups lived separately in their own racially homogenous tracts, the metro *SDI* index would be 0. An index value of 0.8 indicates maximum diversity, with each tract containing racial population shares that were exactly equal (Johnson and Lichter 2010).

Racial segregation is measured using the Index of Dissimilarity (*D*) and the Exposure Index (*E*). *D* is interpreted as the share of a group (such as the Black population) that would need to change neighborhoods to achieve the same

7. The boundaries of tracts and principal cities only match exactly when the years of the census data and delineations match (for example, when 1993 delineations are matched to 1990 Census data). We reconcile differences in boundaries for other years by defining any tract that falls, in whole or in part, within the boundaries of a principal city as such.

8. Our analyses reveal 302 principal cities in 1990. However, several metro counties without principal cities in 1990 split off from an existing MSA by 2020, and other MSAs were merged together. Coincidentally, the number of MSAs that split into two was identical to the number of metros that merged. Conceptually, new MSAs drawn from other existing MSAs are treated as a type of suburbanization.

9. To evaluate the sensitivity of our results to changes since 1990 in the universe of metro counties, preliminary analyses compared our results to results based on 795 metro counties defined by OMB in 1993 on the basis of the 1990 Census. These results are available on request.

10. Simpson's Diversity Index is defined as

$$SDI = 1 - \left(\frac{\sum n_i(n_i - 1)}{N(N - 1)} \right)$$

where n_i is the population for racial group i and N is the total population.

distribution as another group (such as Whites) across the spatial unit of interest (such as MSAs, principal cities, or types of suburb).[11] For example, John Logan and Brian Stults (2021) report a Black-White *D* of 55 in 2020 for U.S. MSAs. This figure implies that 55 percent of Black (or White) residents would have to move to another census tract for their populations to be similarly distributed over all census tracts in the MSA.

We also estimate the Exposure Index (*E*) to capture the exposure of each ethnoracial group to the White population.[12] For each major minority group considered here, *E* indicates the average White population share in the neighborhood. For example, a Black-White *E* of 40 indicates that Black metro residents, on average, live in a neighborhood that is 40 percent White. For comparative purposes, we also estimate the White–non-White *E*, which indicates the average minority share of the neighborhoods where Whites live.

Our national estimates are weighted to reflect the residential circumstances of the average resident and, for some analyses, the average resident from a specific ethnoracial group or spatial unit (for example, suburbs, central cities). By definition, more heavily populated MSAs account for a larger share of the U.S. metro population and, as a result, contribute disproportionately to estimates of suburbanization, diversity, and segregation. We also weight race-specific MSA-level estimates by the share of each racial minority's total metro population residing in a particular MSA.[13] In the case of White segregation from non-Whites, our estimates are weighted by White shares living in each MSA, following the approach of John Iceland and Greg Sharp (2013). A similar weighting scheme is applied when examining differences across principal cities, inner-ring and outlying suburbs, and fringe areas. That is, we weight national sub-MSA-level estimates by the share of the total U.S. population in a given MSA component (such as the U.S. suburban population) that resides in such places within a given MSA (such as the Atlanta suburbs).[14]

Finally, we draw on five case studies to illustrate the generality of our empirical approach and findings (figure 1). We compare three of America's most heavily populated metro areas (New York, Chicago, and Houston)[15] and two additional metro areas with histories of extraordinary inner-city racial change and either

11. The Index of Dissimilarity (*D*) is defined as

$$D = \tfrac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{n} \left| \frac{a_i}{A_T} - \frac{b_i}{B_T} \right|$$

where a_i and b_i capture the respective populations of groups *a* and *b* in subunit *i* (for example, tract *i*) and A_T and B_T capture the total populations of groups *a* and *b* in a given unit (such as an MSA).

12. The Exposure Index (*E*) measures exposure of one racial group to a different racial group defined as

$$E = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left(\frac{n_{ia}}{A_T}\right)\left(\frac{n_{ib}}{n_i}\right)$$

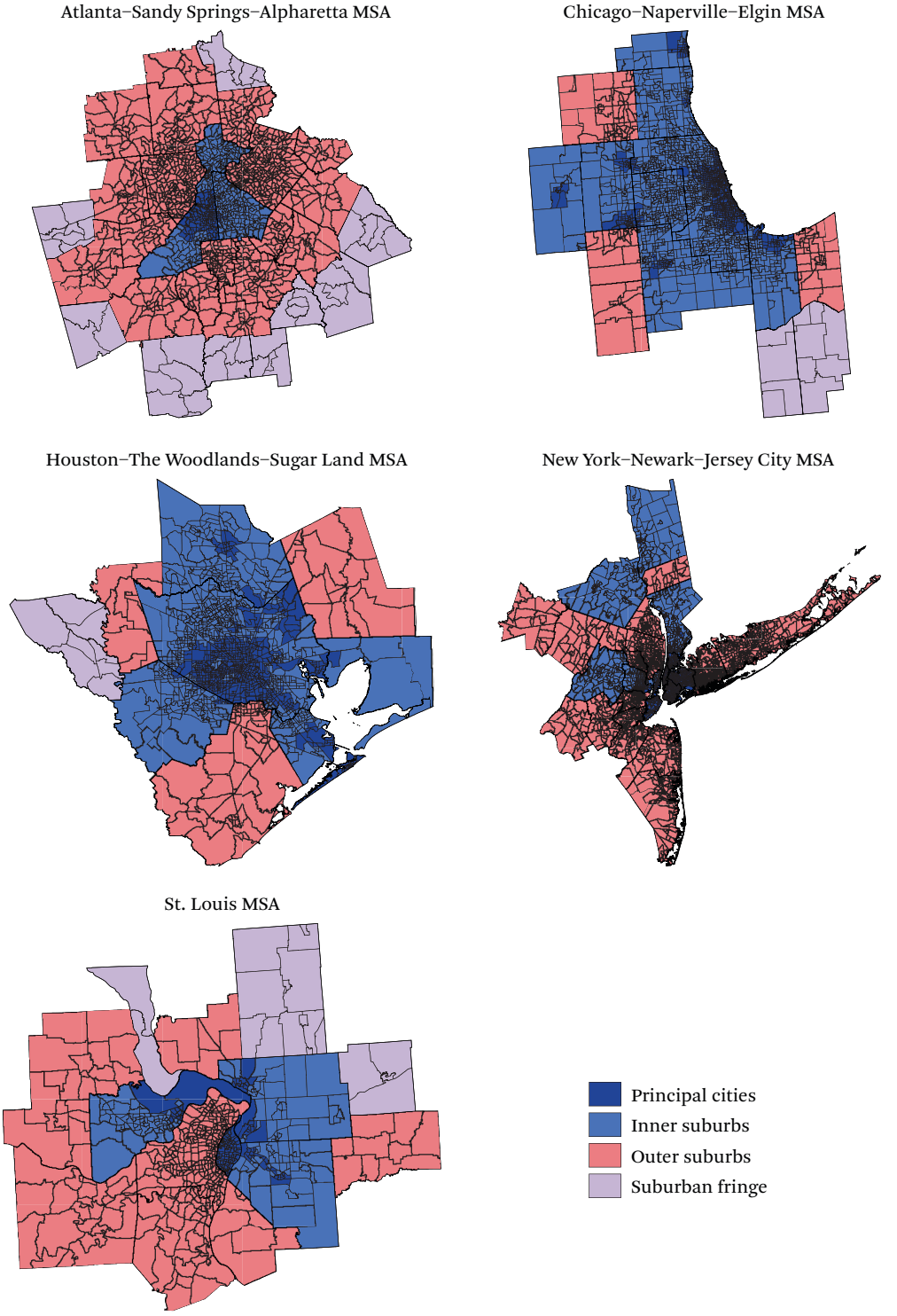
where n_{ia} and n_{ib} respectively capture the populations of groups *a* and *b* in a given subunit (such as tract *i*). A_T captures the total population of group *a* in the unit of interest (such as an MSA) and n_i captures the total population in a given subunit.

13. Race-specific metro estimates are weighted in proportion to the relative size of each racial group across MSAs. For example, we provide national race-specific estimates of Black-White segregation among the nation's Black population by giving greater weight to MSAs with the largest African American populations (see Logan and Stults 2021).

14. This empirical approach provides national estimates of suburbanization, diversity, and segregation for the nation's principal cities and suburban components, giving greater proportionate weight to components of particular MSAs that are larger in population (or minority population) size. Similarly, we estimate the average experiences of persons of a specific race rather than the average conditions of specific areas (such as principal cities) across the nation's metro areas.

15. We also initially considered Los Angeles as a case study, but its unique makeup of only two counties, and having no outlying or fringe suburbs, made it an outlier. In contrast, Atlanta is made up of more than a dozen much smaller counties, including nine "new" fringe counties added after the 1990 Census enumeration.

Figure 1. Typology of Cities and Suburbs, by MSA and Census Tract



Source: Authors' tabulation.

population decline (St. Louis) or explosive population growth, especially in suburbia and the fringe (Atlanta). The Atlanta MSA's population, for example, increased by 15.2 percent between 2010 and 2020, while the St. Louis MSA's hardly grew at all (that is, less than 2 percent over the past decade). The territorial size, morphology, and functional specialization of these metropolitan areas are very different.

RESULTS

We document the changing trajectories of suburbanization of White and minority populations since 1990. We then turn to issues of growing racial diversity and segregation across America's highly differentiated cities and suburbs, followed by presentation of metro case studies that highlight the generality of national patterns.

Suburbanization

We begin by estimating the changing share of the U.S. metro population, overall and by ethnoracial group, that resides in the suburbs. These estimates are provided in figure 2 (see also table 1 in the online appendix).[16] We find that the suburban population share increased by 6.9 percentage points between 1990 and 2020, from 59.1 to 66.0 percent. Most of these increases occurred between 1990 and 2010, when suburbanization increased by 5.4 percentage points. This change corresponds to a faster decadal rate of increase than the 1.5 percentage points between 2010 and 2020. Suburbanization has noticeably slowed over the past decade.

Although the share of the U.S. metro population living in the suburbs increased substantially between 1990 and 2020, the distribution of the suburban population across the inner ring, outlying suburbs, and the suburban fringe has remained relatively stable. In 1990, 64.3 percent of the suburban population resided in inner-ring suburbs, 31.6 percent in the outlying suburbs and just 4.2 percent in the suburban fringe. Changes through 2020 were only modest, showing a slight shift toward the inner-ring suburbs, where 66.1 percent of the suburban population now resides. The share in the outlying suburbs declined by 1.2 percentage points to 30.4 percent and the share in the suburban fringe declined from 4.2 to 3.5 percent.

We also examine suburbanization among different ethnoracial groups. Nearly three-quarters (73.1 percent) of the non-Hispanic White population lived in suburban areas in 2020. These figures contrast with comparatively low but rapidly increasing rates among ethnoracial minorities, especially among Black metro residents. The Black suburban population exceeded 50 percent (51.1 percent) for the first time in 2020. Although this population was least suburbanized, it experienced a 17.2 percentage point increase in the share suburban, which was the largest of any ethnoracial group. For the Hispanic population, the increase over the study period was 13.7 percentage points (from 44.1 percent to 57.8 percent); and for the Asian population, the share living in suburban tracts increased by 13.2 percentage points, from 49.3 percent in 1990 to 62.5 percent in 2020. The suburbanization of America's racial minorities far exceeded the 7.2 percentage point increase observed for the White population.

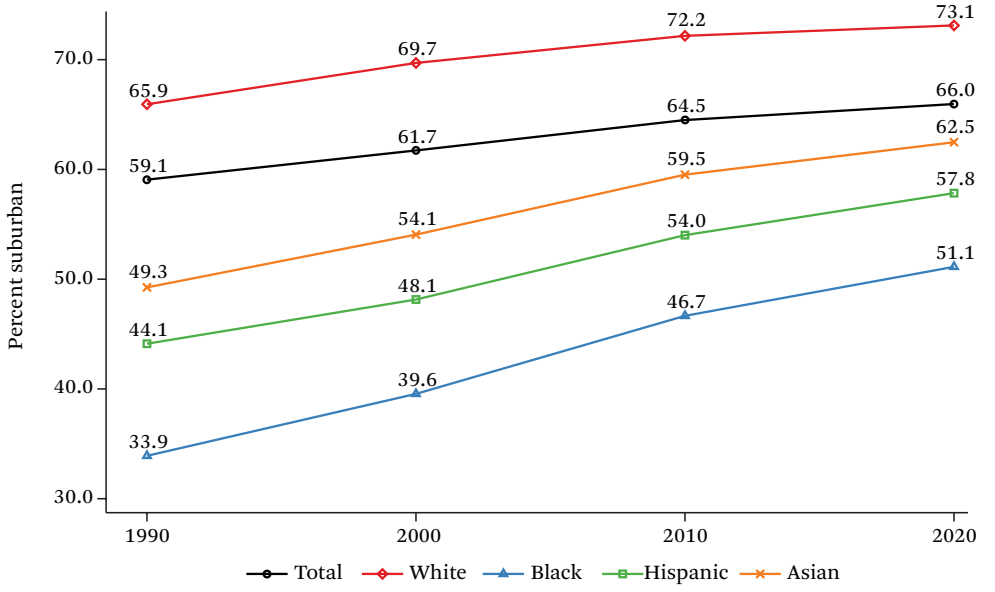
Ethnoracial Diversity

That the suburbanization of racial minorities is transforming America's suburbs is confirmed in figure 3 (for complete results, see online appendix table 2). We find clear evidence of growing diversity in MSAs, albeit with notable differences in the pace of change within the different components of MSAs considered here. The overall population-weighted average of *SDI*s across the three hundred MSAs in our analytic sample increased from 38.8 in 1990 to 57.2 in 2020. By 2020, the average metro resident—of any race and in any part of an MSA—lived in an MSA where the majority of coresidents were from a race or ethnicity other than their own. These increases represent a nearly 50 percent uptick from 1990, a remarkable change in just three decades. The 2020 Census clearly indicates that the so-called diversity explosion has continued apace over the past decade (Frey 2013).

Growing racial diversity in America's sub-

16. For the online appendix, see https://www.rsfjournal.org/content/9/1/26/tab-supplemental.

Figure 2. Percentage of MSA Residents in Suburban Tracts, by Race



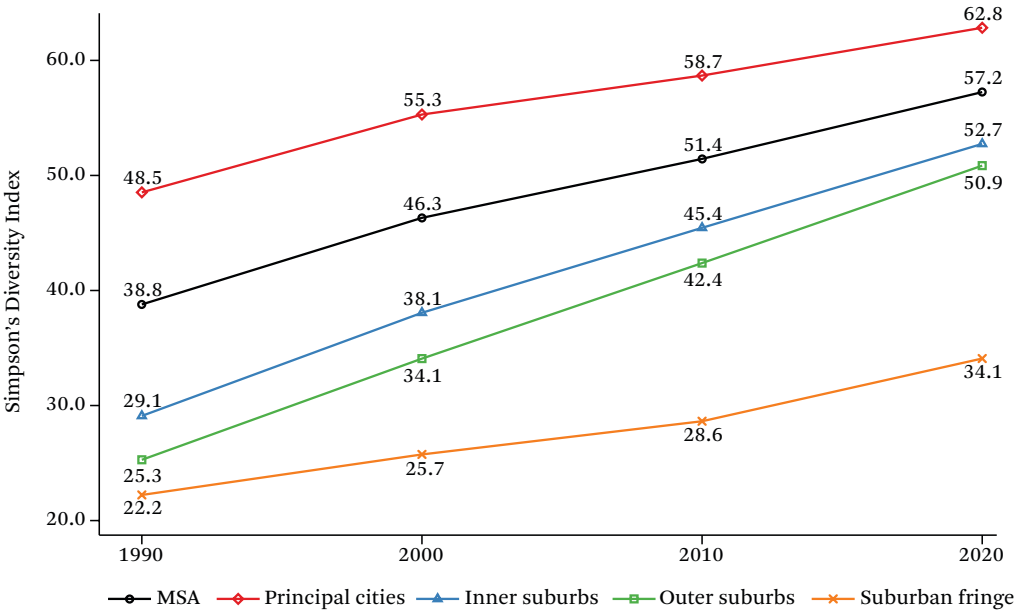
Source: Authors' tabulation.
Note: Estimates weighted by the share of each group's metropolitan population in each MSA.

urbs seems self-evident, yet exposure to diversity is much lower among Whites than minority populations. Our analysis (table A.2) shows that, overall, the Asian metro population is most exposed to diversity: Asian metro residents lived in MSAs with, on average, an *SDI* of 63.5 in 2020, up approximately 28.5 percent from 49.4 in 1990. The Hispanic metro population is exposed to the second-highest levels of diversity, with an *SDI* of 61.1 in 2020 (up from 51.0 in 1990); followed by the Black metro population, whose average member lives in an MSA with an *SDI* of 60.2 (up from 43.7 in 1990). White metro residents are least exposed to multiracial diversity. The *SDI* of the average White metro resident's MSA in 2020 was 54.3. Still, this figure is substantially higher—by almost 52 percent—in 2020 than in 1990, when it was just 35.8.

Figure 3 further disaggregates these trends across the different spatial components of metro areas. Today, principal cities are home to America's most diverse populations, with an *SDI* of 62.8 in 2020. If social interactions were random in principal cities, the 62.8 reported here means that nearly two-thirds of principal city residents are likely to interact with someone of a different race. The high level of racial diversity in principal cities was followed, in order, by successively lower diversity in inner-ring suburbs (52.7), outlying suburbs (50.9), and the suburban fringe (34.1); the population-weighted average across all suburban tracts was 51.9. In 2020, suburban fringe populations were markedly less diverse than those in the core areas of U.S. metro areas, which raises questions about whether White populations are fleeing diversifying metro areas for outlying areas. Alternatively, these data are also consistent with the emergence of racially homogenous ethnoburbs, especially if minority populations in principal cities are now being displaced by White gentrification or commercial development.

Each component of America's MSAs—principal city, inner-ring and outlying suburbs, and suburban fringe—experienced meaningful increases in ethnoracial diversity between 1990 and 2020. Large absolute and relative gains, however, were most pronounced in the suburbs. The *SDI* increased by 25.6 points in the outlying suburbs and 23.6 points in the inner-ring suburbs between 1990 and 2020, which

Figure 3. Average Simpson's Diversity Index, by Residence



Source: Authors' tabulation.

Note: Estimates weighted by the share of the U.S. metropolitan population in each MSA (MSA-wide estimates) or the U.S. MSA-component population (such as suburban fringe) in each component (component-level estimates).

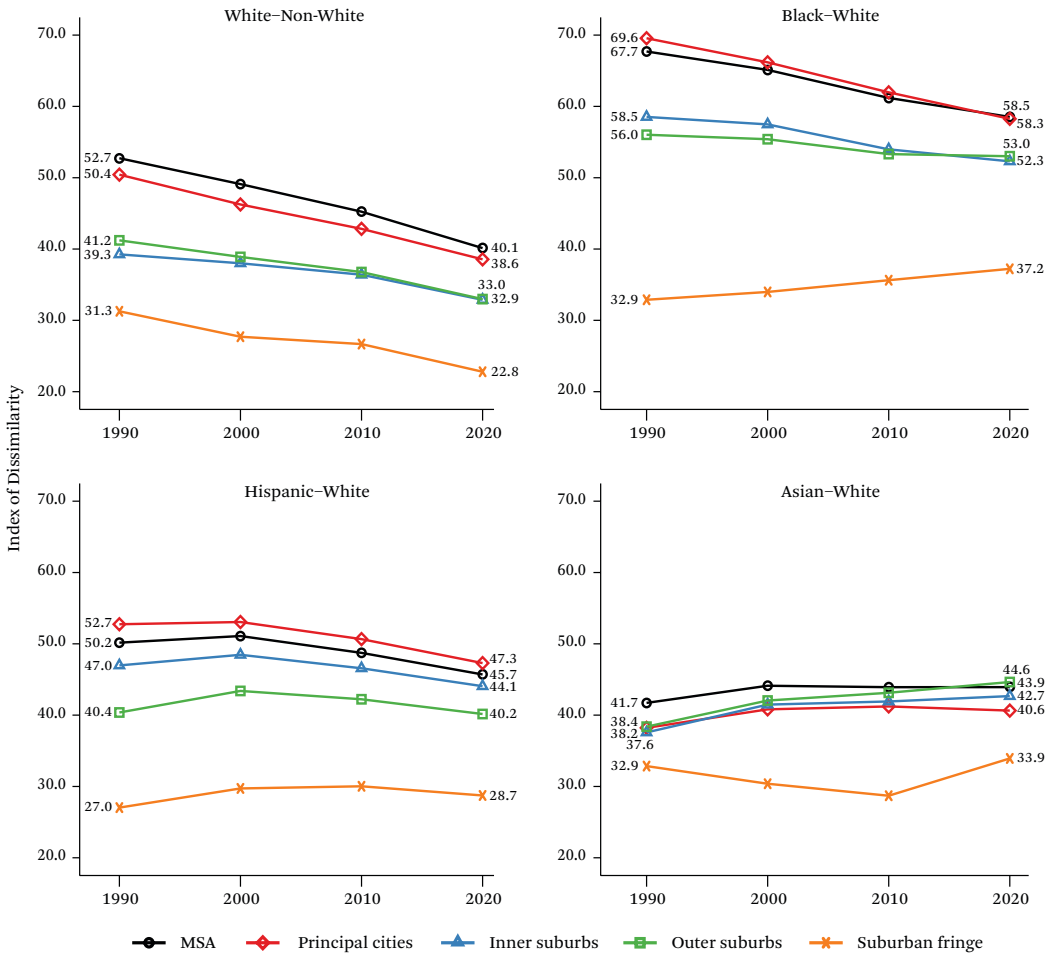
represented percentage increases of approximately 101 and 81 percent over baseline levels, respectively. A smaller but still nontrivial increase occurred in principal cities, where the *SDI* increased from 48.5 to 62.8 (14.3 points, or 29.5 percent). The smallest absolute increases occurred in the suburban fringe, where there was an 11.9-point increase in the *SDI*, from 22.2 to 34.1. This modest absolute increase nevertheless represents relative growth of 53.6 percent over 1990 levels.

Suburban minority populations are most exposed to racial diversity, and this is true across all types of suburban neighborhoods (see online appendix table 2). For example, in the inner-ring suburbs, the population-weighted average *SDI* was 60.5 for the Asian population, 59.2 for the Hispanic population, 58.0 for the Black population, and 48.6 for the White population. Exposure to diversity was qualitatively and quantitatively similar in the outlying suburbs. The Black and Hispanic populations were also exposed to relatively high levels of diversity in the suburban fringe, having average *SDIs* of 48.3 and 42.6, respectively, with Asian (36.1) and White (31.3) populations in the fringe living in less diverse areas. Although suburban White residents continue to live in the least diverse areas of the groups considered here, those places are nevertheless more diverse today than in the past. The *SDI* for the average White suburban resident overall increased from 25.1 in 1990 to 48.0 in 2020, an increase of nearly 23 points, or 91.2 percent.

Neighborhood Segregation and Exposure

Whether growing suburban diversity ultimately promotes spatial integration—less residential segregation and more exposure between racial groups—is an empirical question. Here we provide estimates of *D* (figure 4) and *E* (figure 5) for each racial pair of interest, within MSAs and their spatial components (for detailed results, see online appendix tables 3 and 4).

Figure 4. Average Index of Dissimilarity, by Residence and Race



Source: Authors' tabulation.

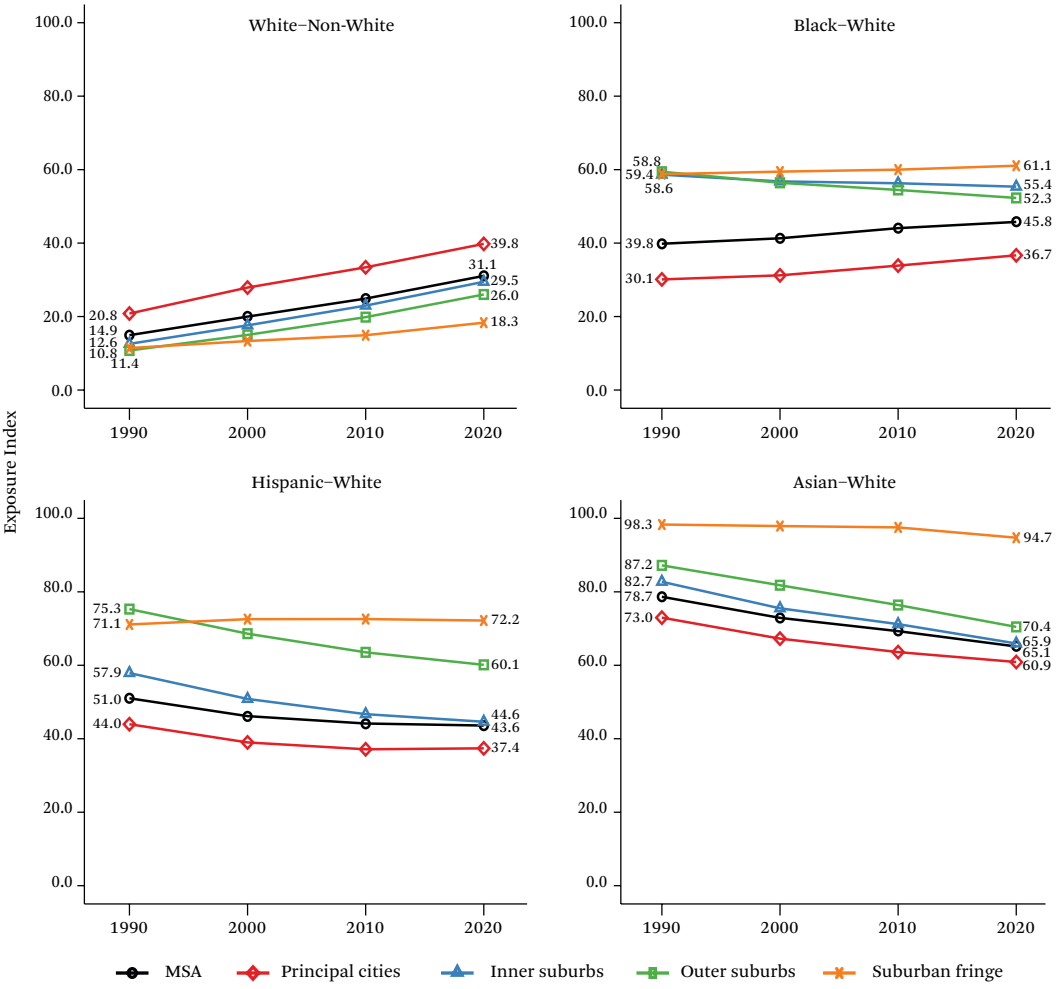
Note: Estimates weighted by the share of the reference group's metropolitan population in each MSA (MSA-wide estimates) or the reference group's MSA-component population (such as suburban fringe) in each component (component-level estimates). Reference groups are listed first in each pair.

Segregation Index

Estimates of *D* are reported in figure 4 and yield four main conclusions. First, Black-White segregation was highest among our estimates of MSA-level segregation. In 2020, Black-White segregation was 58.5, which tallies with Logan and Stults's recent estimate of 55 for all MSAs, including those added after 1990. Black-White segregation was significantly higher than the 45.7 observed for Hispanic-White segregation, 43.9 for Asian-White segregation, and 40.1 for White–non-White segregation. The exceptional levels of Black-White segregation are consistent across all four data points in our study.

Second, Black-White segregation was also highest within each of the MSA components examined here, but the levels of segregation and contrast with other groups vary by suburb type. In 2020, for example, Black-White segregation in the suburbs overall was 53.1 (online appendix table 3), only slightly lower than the

Figure 5. Average Exposure Index, by Residence and Race



Source: Authors' tabulation.

Note: Estimates weighted by the share of the reference group's metropolitan population in each MSA (MSA-wide estimates) or the reference group's MSA-component population (such as suburban fringe) in each component (component-level estimates). Reference groups are listed first in each pair.

metro-wide average of 58.5. Of course, variation was substantial by race and suburban type (figure 4). Black-White segregation in inner suburbs, for example, was 52.3, relative to 44.1 for Hispanic-White segregation and 42.7 for Asian-White segregation. White–non-White segregation was 32.9. In contrast, segregation was lowest in the suburban fringe but remained higher when comparing the residential circumstances of Black and White populations (37.2 in 2020) than any other group. In the suburban fringe, Asian-White segregation was 33.9 in 2020, followed by Hispanic-White segregation (28.7) and White–non-White (22.8) segregation.

Third, racial residential segregation declined, on average, between 1990 and 2020 for most groups. At the MSA level, declines were largest for White–non-White segregation, which fell by 12.6 points (or 23.9 percent) from a high of 52.7 in 1990 to 40.1 in 2020. This decline was nearly matched in absolute terms by reductions in Black-White segregation of 9.2 points (13.5 percent of baseline) and a more modest reduction of 4.5 points (9.0 percent) for

Hispanic-White segregation. In contrast, Asian-White segregation increased by 2.2 points (41.7 to 43.9), or 5.3 percent over 1990 levels.

Fourth, declining patterns of segregation within MSAs as a whole since 1990 were generally also observed across the suburbs. In the inner-ring suburbs, for example, White–non-White segregation decreased by 6.4 points (16.3 percent) between 1990 and 2020, which was comparable to the 6.2-point (10.6 percent) decline in Black-White segregation during this period. Hispanic-White segregation declined by 2.9 points (6.2 percent) in the inner-ring suburbs, and Asian-White segregation increased by 5.1 points (13.6 percent). Declines in White–non-White segregation were larger in the outlying suburbs than the inner ring, at 8.2 points or 20.0 percent of 1990 levels. In contrast, declines in Black-White (3.0 points, 5.4 percent) and Hispanic-White (0.2 points, 0.5 percent) segregation were muted, and Asian-White segregation increased (6.2 points, 16.1 percent).

Changes in segregation at the suburban fringe contrasted with the changes in the more traditional inner-ring and outlying suburbs. The fringe saw increases in all but White–non-White segregation between 1990 and 2020. Indeed, Black-White segregation at the fringe increased by 4.3 points (13.1 percent), Hispanic-White segregation increased by 1.7 points (6.3 percent), and Asian-White segregation increased by 1.0 point (3.0 percent). Only White–non-White segregation declined between 1990 and 2020—and substantially at that, from 31.3 to 22.8 points (or 27.2 percent of 1990 levels). Although segregation remains lower in the fringe than other parts of MSAs, it has ticked upward among racial minorities over the past three decades.

Exposure Index

Figure 5 illustrates population-weighted estimates of the Exposure Index, which summarizes each ethnoracial group's neighborhood exposure to Whites, or to the non-White population when the White population is the reference group. Complete numerical estimates are also reported in online table 4. We again highlight four main findings. First, at the MSA level, Asian-White exposure has typically been highest among the four groups of interest. On average, Asian metro residents lived in neighborhoods that were 65.1 percent White in 2020, more than 20 points higher than for the Hispanic (43.6 in 2020) and Black (45.8) metro populations. White–non-White neighborhood exposure was only 31.1, far below the exposure to White populations among any ethnoracial minority population.

Significantly—our second main finding—changes in exposure at the MSA level have been highly uneven across racial groups. For example, Asian-White exposure unexpectedly declined by 13.6 points (17.3 percent of baseline) since 1990 and Hispanic-White exposure declined by 7.4 points (14.5 percent). As America's Hispanic and Asian populations have increased (both from new immigration and the second-order effects of fertility), their neighborhood exposure to Whites has declined. In contrast, exposure of White metro residents to the non-White population increased by a remarkable 16.2 points, more than doubling (108.7 percent) during the same period. Black-White exposure also increased since 1990, but by only 6.0 points or 15.1 percent of 1990 levels. MSA-level Black-White exposure in 2020 was, for the first time, slightly higher than Hispanic-White exposure (45.8 versus 43.6 in 2020).

Third, the spatial "gradient" in minority-White exposure varied, as expected, across MSA components. Although Asian-White exposure was highest across all areas, on average, Black-White exposure was higher than Hispanic-White exposure in the inner-ring suburbs but lower in all other components. White–non-White exposure in principal cities in 2020 (39.8) was comparable to Hispanic-White (37.4) and Black-White (36.7) exposure there but dramatically lower in the suburbs and suburban fringe. In the fringe, for example, White–non-White exposure was only 18.3 in 2020. This compares to a Black-White *E* of 61.1, a Hispanic-White *E* of 72.2, and an Asian-White *E* of 94.7. For White metro residents, this simply means that these outer and suburban fringe areas have exceptionally large shares of Whites vis-à-vis other racial and ethnic minorities.

Fourth, and finally, changes in *E* have varied widely across components of metro areas and ethnoracial groups. For example, Black-White exposure increased in principal cities (by 6.6

points, 21.9 percent) and the suburban fringe (by 2.3 points, 3.9 percent), but decreased in inner-ring suburbs (by 3.2 points, 5.5 percent) and outlying suburbs (by 7.1 points, 12.0 percent). The Black population is largely being redistributed over time to disproportionately Black neighborhoods in established or older suburbs. Hispanic exposure to the White metro population decreased in principal cities (by 6.6 points, 15.0 percent), inner-ring suburbs (by 13.3 points, 22.9 percent), and outlying suburbs (by 15.2 points, 20.2 percent), increasing only slightly (by 1.1 points, 1.5 percent) in the suburban fringe. These results contrast markedly from those observed among the White population: White–non-White exposure increased, on average, across all types of suburbs and in principal cities. Among the Asian population, however, exposure to Whites decreased throughout all parts of America's metro regions, declines ranging from 3.6 points (3.7 percent) in the fringe to 16.8 points in both the inner-ring and outlying suburbs (20.3 percent and 19.3 percent of baseline levels, respectively). Still, Asian Americans' exposure to Whites exceeds that of any other racial minority group.

Metro Case Studies: A Coda to National Trends

As a final goal, we consider the generality of patterns of suburbanization, diversity, and segregation for a subset of MSAs: Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, New York City, and St. Louis. A summary of MSA-specific trends is shown in figures A.1 through A.4 (for detailed estimates by metro area, race, and suburban type, see online appendix tables 5 through 10).

Trends in overall suburbanization have generally slowed over time, even as large but declining racial disparities in suburbanization have unfolded across these metro areas (figure A.1). In general, the White and Asian populations had the largest shares of suburban population in 2020 in each of these MSAs and have generally exhibited slower percentage point increases in suburbanization since 1990. White suburbanization has slowed or even declined since 2000 in some MSAs, presumably a result both of urban neighborhood renewal, including White gentrification, and the movement away from diversifying suburbs. As in national estimates, each of these MSAs reveals high levels of suburbanization among the Asian and White populations, and the lowest suburbanization among Black metro residents. In the case of the Black population, suburbanization in these five MSAs has increased rapidly since 1990. Suburbs also account for comparatively small Black shares in densely populated, older, and racially segregated metro areas (such as New York and Chicago).

We also calculated estimates of racial diversity (*SDI*) for each MSA over time (figure A.2). The overall pattern is clear. Since 1990, ethnoracial diversity in these metro areas, their principal cities, and in inner-ring and outlying suburbs has increased substantially, regardless of population size, region, or recent growth patterns. Like national patterns, the suburban fringe of Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, and St. Louis is considerably less racially diverse than other parts of their respective metro areas, especially in comparison with principal cities. Interestingly, there are two MSAs (Atlanta and Houston) where inner ring suburbs are estimated to be more diverse than their corresponding principal city—an important departure from national trends.

We also document trends in residential segregation (figure A.3) and exposure (figure A.4). The metro segregation indices (based on *D*) reveal declines in White–non-White neighborhood segregation. Declining metro segregation is seemingly the result of increasing suburbanization and diversity as metro minority populations relocate from highly segregated principal cities to less segregated inner-ring and outlying suburbs. Moreover, in every case (except Atlanta), overall declines in metro segregation were larger than declines in principal cities. The overall picture, then, is one of declining residential segregation across metro areas and their suburbs, which largely mimics national patterns.

The only exception is Houston, where White–non-White segregation levels were largely unchanged between 1990 and 2020. However, there remain very large differences in segregation from Whites among the different minority populations considered here. In Houston, for

example, Black-White segregation in the outlying suburbs was 47.5 in 2020, which compares with a Hispanic-White *D* of 27.1 (see online appendix table 8). Among Asian residents living in Houston's outer suburbs, the *D* was much larger—62.1 in 2020, up from 40.2 in 1990. This suggests the presence of newly emerging Asian ethnoburbs in outlying suburban areas. Documenting national trends in racial residential segregation is useful, but also risks obfuscating diverging racial patterns at the local level.

Last, we estimate White–non-White exposure for each of these five metro areas (figure A.4). The growing exposure of White metro residents to racial minority populations is evident across different parts of these MSAs. In most cases, White exposure to non-Whites is greatest in principal cities and lowest at the suburban fringe. In 2020, Atlanta was unique in having more White exposure to minorities in both inner-ring and outlying suburbs than in principal cities. It also is unique in experiencing little if any decadal increase in White–non-White exposure at the suburban fringe. One implication, which requires additional study, is that White exurbanization is driven by growing diversity in other metro suburban areas.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Findings from the 2020 Census have revealed that America's suburban population has continued to grow at the expense of rural areas, expanding outward as new metro counties are added at the periphery (the suburban fringe). Our article is unusual in tracking diversity and segregation in metro areas and principal cities as well as America's rapidly changing suburbs: inner-ring suburbs, outlying suburbs, and the newly reclassified suburban fringe. We combined georeferenced data on current and historical boundaries of principal cities and MSAs in order to describe the demographic and residential characteristics of the nation's metro regions, placing the spotlight on spatial and racial heterogeneity within the suburbs. MSA-level estimates reveal slowly declining levels of Black-White segregation and little change among Asians and Hispanics. Black-White metro segregation continued to decline, that is, *D*s declined from 67.7 to 58.5 (online appendix table 3) over the past decade. However, America's suburbs—our emphasis here—have experienced uneven patterns of racial change nationally and from one MSA to another.

This article provides several general conclusions. Today, nearly two-thirds of all people living in metro America live in the suburbs. Significantly, the addition of newly reclassified metro counties at the periphery made little difference to estimates, which suggests that much of the growth of suburban areas (and suburbanization of metro areas) is endogenous rather than due to administrative reclassification. Indeed, additional analyses (results not shown) revealed population growth of 13.5 million (12.6 percent) within the inner-ring suburbs between 2010 and 2020, relative to 4.7 million (9.5 percent) in the outlying suburbs, and just 205,173 (3.3 percent) in the suburban fringe. Still, suburbanization slowed overall during the 2010s compared with earlier decades; this is true even among the previously rapidly suburbanizing Black and Hispanic populations. The White and Asian populations remain disproportionately concentrated in America's suburbs. Nevertheless, for the first time ever in 2020, the majority of America's metro Black population lived in suburban areas.

A second conclusion is that the extraordinary increases in Black, Hispanic, and Asian suburbanization since 1990 have changed the racial makeup of suburbia overall. Multiracial diversity is suffusing America's suburbs as never before. We showed, for example, that there is a 53 percent probability today that any two people randomly drawn from inner-ring suburban areas would be from different ethnoracial groups. Not surprisingly, the least diverse part of suburbia is its fringe—formerly rural—counties, where the average likelihood of drawing two people of different races is only 34 percent overall. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis, untested empirically, that the exurbs may be providing "refuge" for suburban Whites fleeing growing racial diversity (for discussion, see Parisi et al. 2019). As reported in this issue, suburbs are likely to be infused with racial politics over the foreseeable

future (Rastogi and Jones-Correa 2023). School boards and local communities are increasingly divided on issues of inclusion and exclusion, on the racial gerrymandering of municipal and school district boundaries (Frankenberg et al. 2023; Owens and Rich 2023), and on restrictive zoning laws on housing and commercial activities (Wyndham 2023; Girouard 2023, this issue). The suburbs are arguably at the frontline of America's "diversity explosion" (Frey 2013), where economic integration and cultural assimilation occur or are contested (Zapatka and Tran 2023, this issue).

Third, our results suggest that metro segregation (*D*) remains high among the Black population, although continuing to decline (slowly). The idea of "melting-pot suburbs" (Frey 2013), which signals residential integration, hardly seems apt. To be sure, the largest declines in Black-White segregation over the past decade were found in the suburbs. But any optimism from this result is countered by declines over the last decade in the Exposure Index between the Black and White populations in both inner-ring and outlying suburbs. That is, Black individuals are no more likely to be living with White neighbors today than in the past. In fact, Black exposure to Whites in the suburbs seems to have declined, at least in those parts of the suburbs where most of the metro Black population lives. One implication is that the suburban Black population is growing most rapidly in neighborhoods where Whites are declining in population size. The statistical paradox is that declines in Black-White segregation occurred even as Blacks have become less exposed to Whites. There is historical precedent for such trends, such as in Detroit, where Black exposure to Whites changed little over the past half century even as *D* declined (Logan and Stults 2021). This is because Whites for decades fled Detroit's inner-city neighborhoods for mostly White suburbs. Recent declines in Black exposure to Whites in the suburbs may portend a similar demographic process, but one rooted mostly in White depopulation rather than White flight since 2010.

A fourth and related general conclusion is that previously observed declines in suburban segregation among Hispanics and Asians seem to have stagnated, or even reversed, over the past decade. Because these are America's two most rapidly growing ethnoracial groups, this finding is potentially significant because it raises prospects of growing suburban fragmentation and spatial inequality (Wyndham-Douds 2021; Rastogi and Jones-Correa 2023). Suburbs may be less likely than in the past to connote entry into mainstream society or social mobility. Our findings suggest the formation of new ethnoburbs among the Asian and Hispanic populations—perhaps especially among first- and second-generation immigrants. Indeed, declines in Asian and Hispanic exposure to Whites in mature suburbs (those outside the principal city) suggest this possibility. Older suburbs may be undergoing a process of invasion-succession, especially if Whites are increasingly leaving for fringe or exurban housing developments or moving back to cities.

Finally, our study provides some potentially important methodological lessons. On the one hand, observed patterns of diversity and segregation seem to be remarkably robust to alternative universes of MSAs or to the metro counties they comprise (but see Logan and Stults 2021). Our initial concern was that the failure to include mostly White, newly reclassified metro counties would bias measures of diversity and segregation, wrongly suggesting a more positive picture of racial residential integration. However, whether the universe of metro counties was defined at the beginning or end of the study period did not materially affect our substantive conclusions. On the other hand, any sensitivity to alternative but conventional empirical approaches seems to merit additional study. This is reinforced by our case studies of heavily populated metro areas with very different demographic histories of inner-city neighborhood change and suburban growth of Whites and racial minorities. Counties at the fringe are, by definition, growing and becoming more spatially and economically integrated with the metro core. Whites are increasingly moving to exurbia and limiting their exposure to non-White minorities. Yet this demographic fact is not often illuminated using conventional approaches, where results are heavily weighted (and influenced) by demographic

change in principal cities and their inner-ring suburbs. This suggests the need for case studies that acknowledge qualitative and quantitative differences in the social, political, demographic, and economic makeup of each metro area and its neighborhoods.

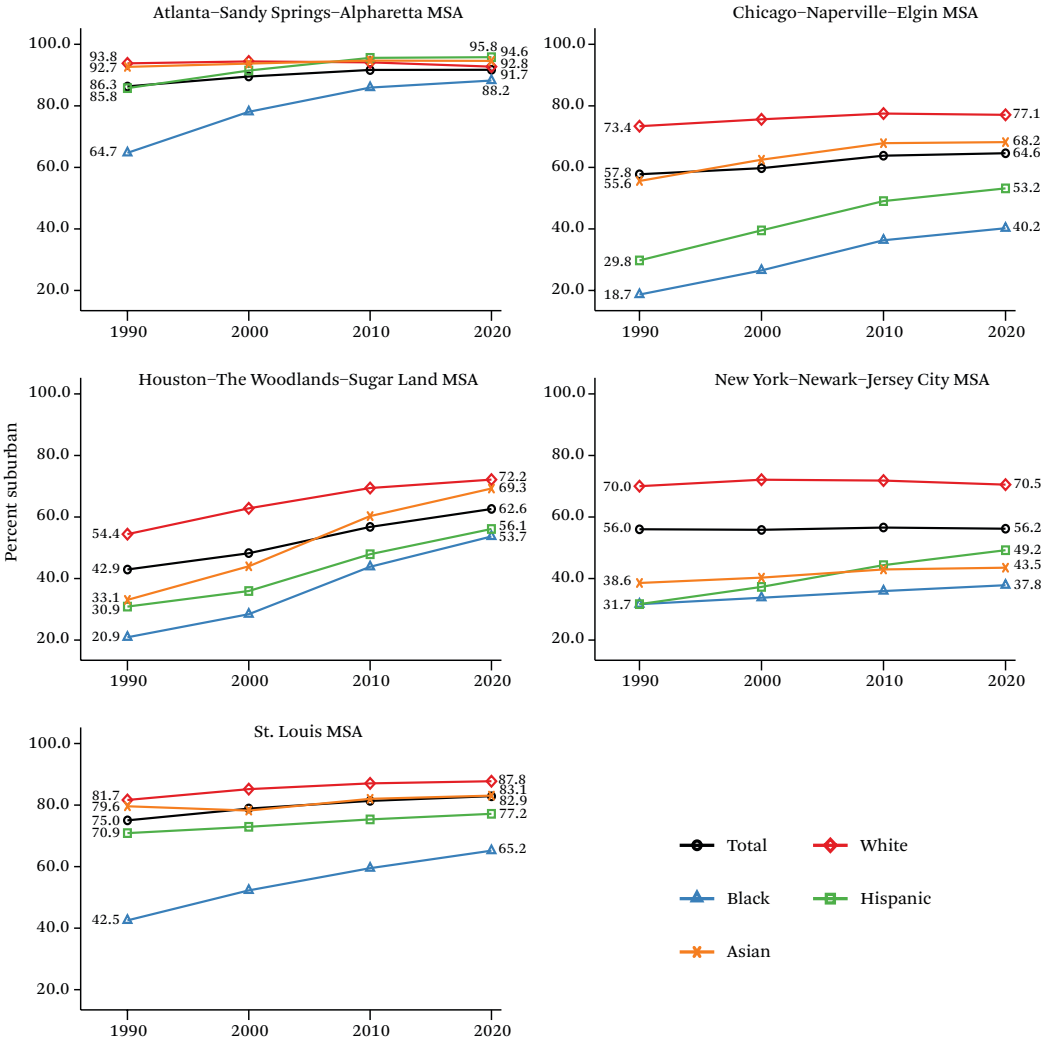
Our descriptive results based on the 2020 Census enumeration are a first step to a more complete understanding of racial dynamics in America's suburbs. Future research will require other, less conventional empirical approaches, including decomposing changes in metro segregation into their city-suburb components. Our findings also raise a number of related questions. For example, is the apparent slowdown of ongoing declines in segregation, say between the Black and White populations, due to offsetting changes in segregation within different parts of MSAs? It will also be important to develop new measures of multiracial segregation rather than rely on pair-wise comparisons based on *D* or *E*. Menendian and his colleagues (2021) in fact claim that racial residential segregation actually has increased since 1990 when all racial groups are considered simultaneously rather than separately. As the White and Black populations become smaller shares of the U.S. population, it will be increasingly important to focus attention on rapidly growing groups—the Asian and Hispanic populations—whose experiences are fundamentally shifting the usual story of continuing declines in segregation from Whites. Even in America's suburbs, we have shown that members of these two groups have generally become less spatially integrated over time with White populations. For the Asian population—America's most affluent racial group (if measured by income or earnings)—increases in suburban segregation from Whites may be rooted mostly in socioeconomic status as they separate themselves from less affluent groups, including working-class and poor Whites. For Hispanics, evidence of declining exposure to Whites, even in the suburbs, may also be rooted largely in economics (such as moving into older suburbs with affordable housing). A full assessment of competing expectations requires attention to the spatial heterogeneity of the suburbs, which vary dramatically from older, inner-ring suburban neighborhoods to the suburban fringe.

Table A.1. Summary of Administrative Units in the Analysis

	1990 Delineations				2010 Delineations			
Year	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990	2000	2010	2020
MSAs	303				300			
Metro counties	795				1,034			
Metro area								
Tracts	45,808	50,532	57,050	65,669	47,110	51,846	58,488	67,409
Population	194,746,736	222,058,320	246,075,136	268,136,112	199,649,456	227,715,424	252,185,408	274,432,384
Principal city								
Tracts	21,035	22,021	23,024	25,150	21,035	22,021	23,024	25,150
Population	81,782,776	87,123,864	89,509,024	93,403,848	81,782,776	87,123,864	89,509,024	93,403,848
Inner suburb								
Tracts	16,355	19,343	23,168	27,709	16,355	19,343	23,168	27,709
Population	75,738,136	90,981,456	106,261,480	119,673,184	75,738,136	90,981,456	106,261,480	119,673,184
Outer suburb								
Tracts	8,418	9,168	10,858	12,810	8,418	9,168	10,858	12,810
Population	37,225,828	43,953,004	50,304,628	55,059,080	37,225,828	43,953,004	50,304,628	55,059,080
Suburban fringe								
Tracts	—	—	—	—	1,302	1,314	1,438	1,740
Population	—	—	—	—	4,902,714	5,657,107	5,110,279	6,296,282

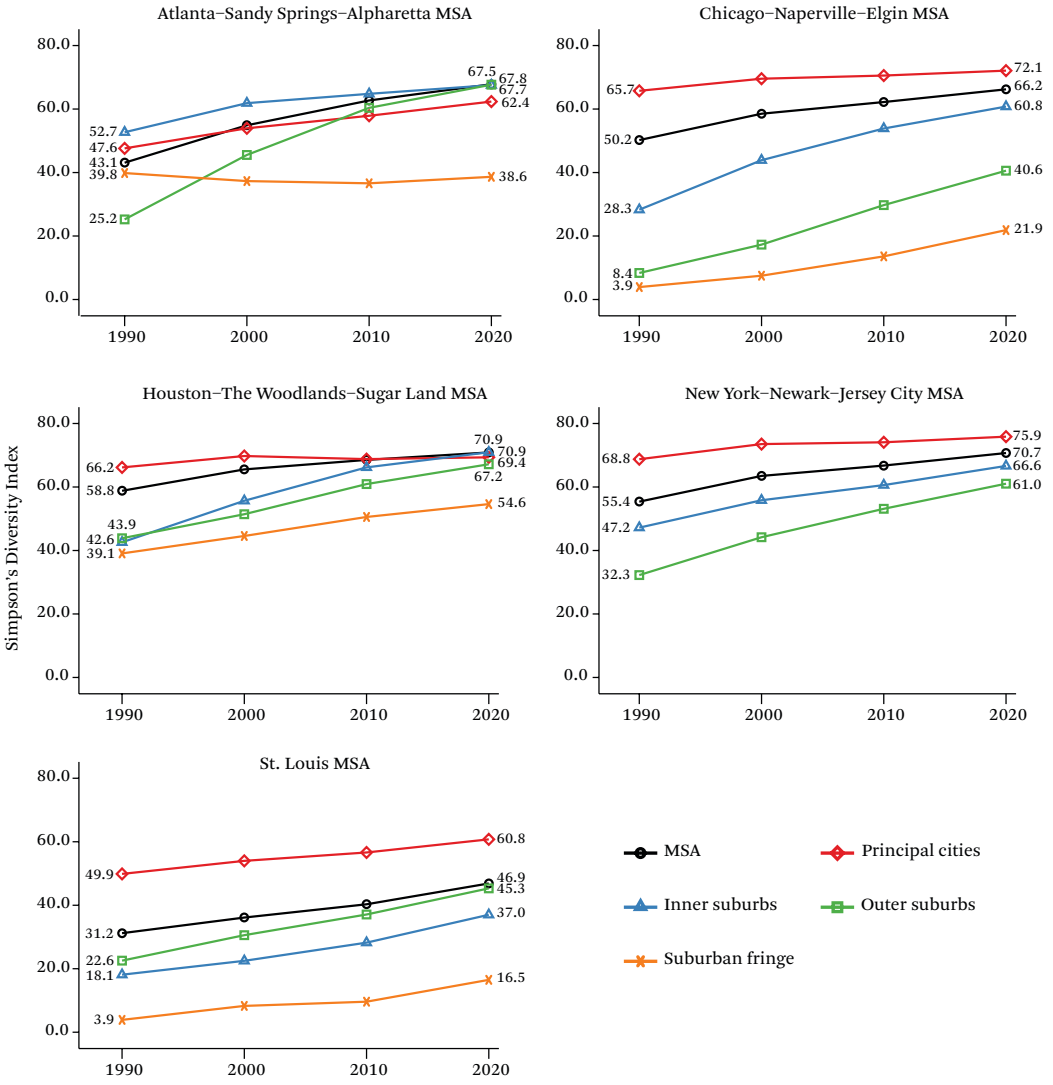
Source: Authors' tabulation.

Figure A.1. Percentage Living in Suburban Tracts, by Selected MSA and Race



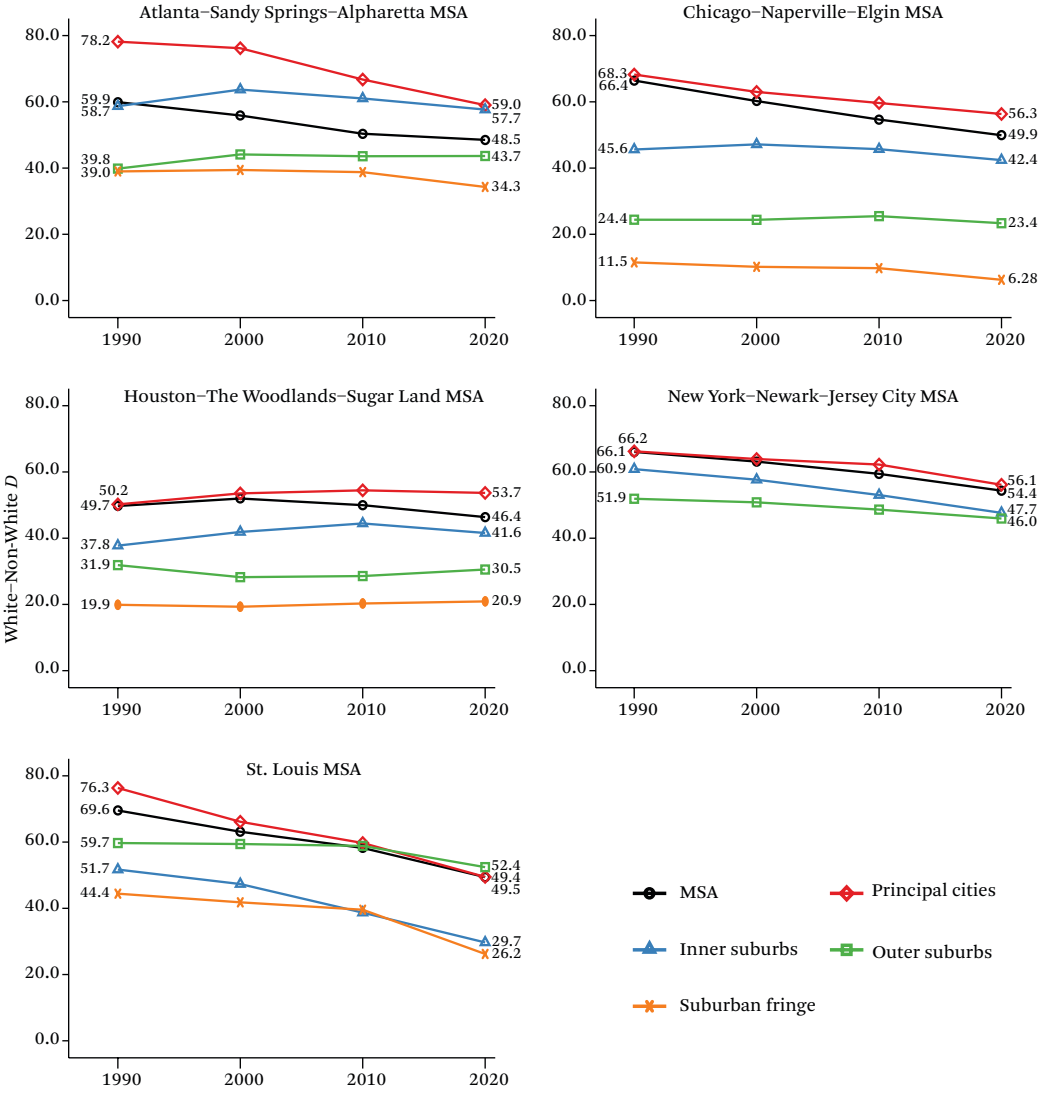
Source: Authors' tabulation.

Figure A.2. Average Simpson's Diversity Index, by Selected MSA and Residence



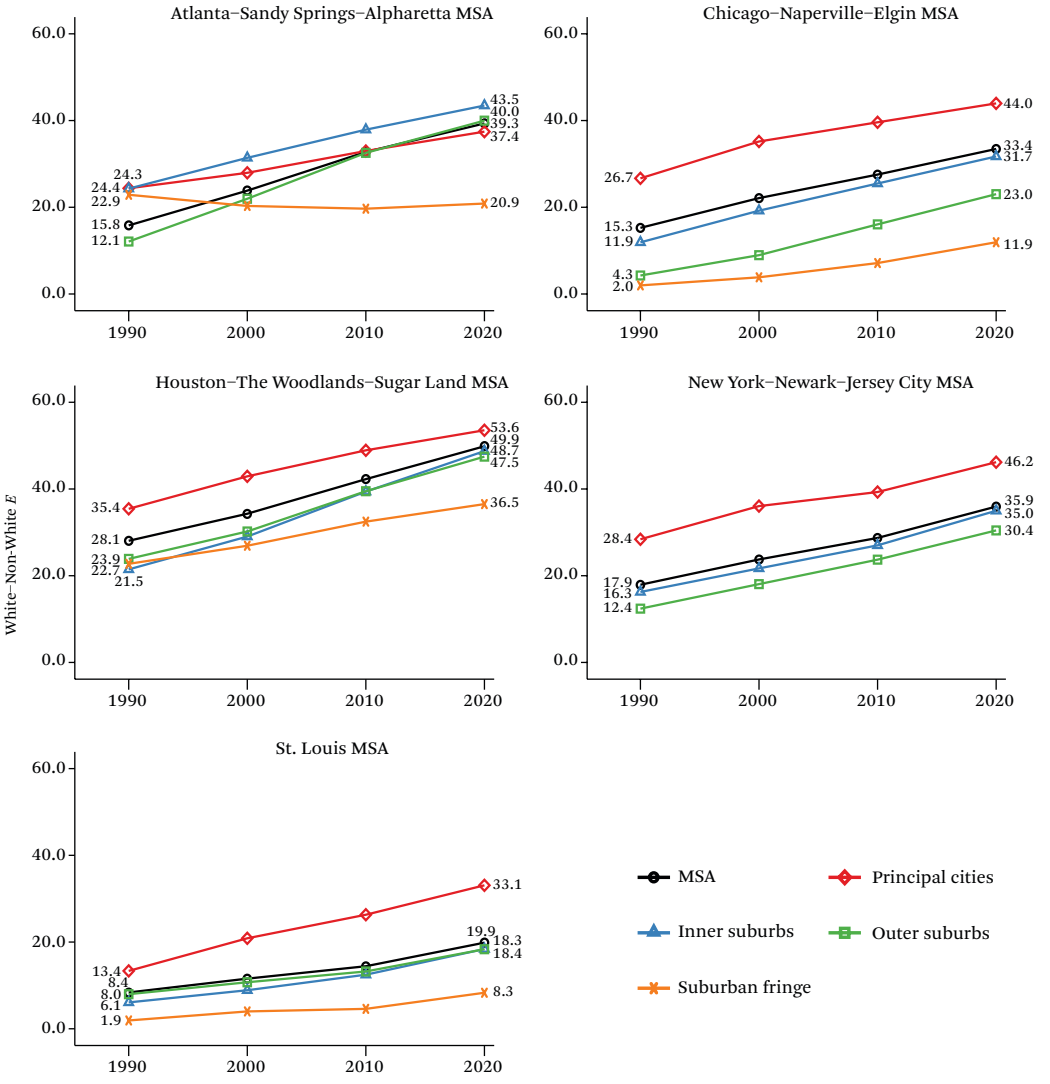
Source: Authors' tabulation.

Figure A.3. Average Index of Dissimilarity Between White–Non-White Populations, by Selected MSA and Residence



Source: Authors' tabulation.

Figure A.4. Average Exposure Index Between White-Non-White Populations, by Selected MSA and Residence



Source: Authors' tabulation.

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New Frontiers of Integration: Convergent Pathways of Neighborhood Diversification in Metropolitan New York

KASEY ZAPATKA AND VAN C. TRAN

This article examines the most recent trends on neighborhood racial integration in New York—the country's largest metropolitan area in 2019 with a total population of 19.2 million. We ask how the suburbanization of both immigration and poverty have transformed suburbs over the last two decades. We highlight four findings. First, ethnoracial diversification has led to a significant decline in nonintegrated neighborhoods and a sharp rise in integrated neighborhoods, but such a decline is more dramatic in suburbs than in cities. Second, White-integrated neighborhoods remain the most prevalent form of neighborhood integration in both cities and suburbs. Third, immigrant neighborhoods are more likely to be integrated in both suburbs and cities, but immigration's impact on neighborhood integration in suburbs was stronger in 2000 than in 2019. Finally, the impacts of concentrated immigration, affluence, and disadvantage on neighborhood integration are consistent across suburbs and cities, pointing to convergent processes over time.

Keywords: immigration, suburbanization, neighborhood integration, New York

In 2016, 55 percent of the U.S. population—175 million people—lived in suburban counties, relative to about ninety-eight million in the urban core. Among the country's major metropolitan areas with population above one million, annual growth rates in suburbs also surpassed the cities for the first time in 2016, signaling the resurgence of suburbs (Frey 2021). Beyond population growth, two major demographic trends have reshaped the ethnoracial composition of suburbs from New York to Los Angeles—the suburbanization of immigration and of poverty (Allard 2009; Lacy 2016; Brettell, Hardwick, and Singer 2008). The influx of immigrants and minorities into the suburbs since the mid-1990s have not only intensified racial diversification, but also generated social inequality in formerly homogenous communities (Frey 2021). In the suburbs, everything old is new again—residential segregation, spatial in-

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tegration, neighborhood inequality, White flight, and ethnic invasion and succession. This renewed interest has informed a burgeoning research literature focusing on the recent transformations of suburbs (Clergé 2019; Parisi, Lichter, and Taquino 2019; Kye 2018; Farrell and Firebaugh 2016).

This article examines recent patterns of neighborhood racial integration in New York—the country's largest metropolitan area, home to a total population of 19.2 million in 2019. A historic immigrant gateway, New York was the destination of immigrants from southeastern Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, when millions of German, Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants arrived in search of better opportunities for themselves and their children (Foner 2000). A global city with diverse thriving neighborhoods and dense ethnic communities, New York has received millions of Chinese, Dominican, Jamaican, and Mexican immigrants since 1965 (Foner 2013; Hum et al. 2021). A multiethnic metropolitan area, New York provides a unique case study for the process of neighborhood diversification and residential integration in the suburbs.

This work contributes to research on neighborhood racial integration in four ways.[1] First, we document key patterns of racial integration in the suburbs over two decades using data from the 2000 U.S. Census and 2015–2019 American Community Survey.[2] By comparing residential patterns in the suburbs and principal cities in one metropolitan area, the analysis considers how recent demographic transformations in suburbs might differ from those in cities. Second, we develop a new typology of neighborhood integration to summarize these patterns over time and to classify neighborhoods by level of racial integration. Third, in analyzing change over time, we highlight diverse pathways of neighborhood transition, providing a contrast among rapid diversification, stable integration, and persistent segregation. Fourth, we use five mutually exclusive ethnoracial groups (hereafter racial groups): non-Hispanic Whites, non-Hispanic Blacks, Hispanics, non-Hispanic Asians, and non-Hispanic Others.[3] Moving beyond the Black-White dichotomy, the analysis also includes integration patterns for Asians and Hispanics.

The article addresses the following research questions: First, how do ethnoracial groups sort themselves across the spatial landscape of New York and how have these patterns changed from 2000 to 2019? Second, what do demographic shifts reveal about pathways of neighborhood integration in suburbs and in cities? Third, which neighborhood characteristics are associated with declining segregation and increasing integration? Fourth, what implications do these trends hold for the future of residential integration? In addressing these questions, we compare spatial patterns for four of our racial groups—Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites—between cities and suburbs over the last two decades.

SUBURBS AS NEW FRONTIERS OF INTEGRATION

Historically, most immigrants first arrived in immigrant gateways—major urban centers. The 1990s saw a steep increase in the number of new immigrants who settled in the suburbs upon arriving in the United States (Brettell, Hardwick, and Singer 2008), fueling the rise of *ethnoburbs*—affluent, suburban ethnic clusters (Wen, Lauderdale, and Kandula 2009). This rise coincided with a growth in the suburbanization of poverty, as suburban counties experienced a sharp rise in poverty during the 1990s (Allard 2009). That the suburbanization of immigration has occurred alongside the suburbanization of poverty positions suburbs as the next frontiers of residential integration and neighborhood inequality (Lacy 2016).

Although many suburbs remain predominantly White, minority populations accounted

1. We use *racial integration* over *ethnoracial integration* for brevity.

2. Although the 2020 Census has been released, many socioeconomic and demographic variables on tract-level characteristics are available only in ACS. Given documented data quality concerns about ACS 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we prefer 2015–2019 ACS 5-year estimates over 2016–2020 ACS 5-year estimates.

3. Hereafter referred to as Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, Whites, and Others for brevity.

for 32 percent of suburban residents in 2016 (Parker et al. 2018). Immigration has been a key driver of suburban growth. From 2000 to 2014, both international and domestic migration added 11.7 million residents to suburban counties, each source accounting for about half of this growth. By contrast, urban counties added more than seven million residents from international migration while losing 5.4 million to domestic migration, resulting in a net gain of 1.6 million residents in the same period (Parker et al. 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. population growth has shifted farther away from urban centers to suburban destinations and small cities as a result of "the great reshuffling" and the rise of remote work arrangements (Frey 2021; Forman 2021).

In addition to new immigrant arrivals, spatial assimilation—the movement of immigrant groups from cities to suburbs over time—played a major role in diversifying suburbs beginning in the 1990s (Alba, Logan, and Stults 2000; Logan, Zhang, and Alba 2002). Focusing on immigrant gateways, prior research documents shifting patterns of residential integration—movements away from cities to surrounding suburbs in metropolitan areas from New York to Los Angeles (Alba, Logan, and Stults 2000; Logan, Zhang, and Alba 2002). Research on spatial assimilation shows that immigrants and their children have been relatively more successful in translating their socioeconomic gains into residential mobility in more advantaged neighborhoods in close proximity to Whites (Alba et al. 1999; Alba, Logan, and Crowder 1997; Farrell 2016; Tran 2020). Over the last decade, the coming of age of the post-1965 second generation—12 percent of the total U.S. population—has intensified existing patterns of spatial assimilation with sizable numbers reaching young and middle adulthood (Tran 2020; Brown 2007; Kasinitz et al. 2008).

Beyond quantitative and spatial analyses, many qualitative case studies have improved our understanding of suburban inequality by focusing on specific immigrant or minority groups in suburbs: East Asians (Lung-Amam 2017; Matsumoto 2018), Mexicans (Agius Vallejo 2012), West Indians (Clergé 2019), and African Americans (Lacy 2007; Haynes 2001). Alongside this general trend of increased residential integration for many ethnoracial groups, including Blacks, significant neighborhood inequality remains between U.S.-born Whites and immigrant groups in suburbs (Farrell and Firebaugh 2016). In addition, differences in suburbanization rates across immigrant groups are large—for example, Europeans and Asians (other than Chinese) reported the highest rates (Farrell 2016). Relative to coethnics in cities, immigrants in suburbs (except Caribbeans) also report lower levels of segregation from the majority group (Farrell 2016). Moreover, recent diversification has also led to suburban shifts in school compositions and occupational structures, redistributing opportunities and generating tensions over suburban resources between established residents and recent immigrants (Warikoo 2020; Zapatka, Mollenkopf, and Romalewski 2021). Although neighborhoods have become diversified and integrated over time (Logan and Zhang 2010; Parisi, Lichter, and Taquino 2019; Kim and White 2010; Hwang 2015; Ellen 2000; Maly 2005; Iceland 2009), such geographical proximity does not necessarily lead to social integration.[4]

CONVERGENT PATHWAYS OF NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRATION

By focusing on the last two decades, our analyses update earlier work by tracing residential integration over time with a focus on suburban transformation. Cities are characterized by social mixing and diversity, whereas suburbs are characterized by ethnoracial homogeneity. As a result, ethnoracial diversification in suburbs could trigger more dramatic transformations of previously White neighborhoods. Three decades of research in neighborhood racial integration has focused on cities, yielding important insights into the processes and mechanisms of neighborhood change (Logan and Zhang 2010; Kim and White 2010; Ellen 2000; Iceland 2009). These core conceptual

4. Social integration as a process refers to how newcomers to a neighborhood become integrated into formal social and cultural institutions and informal networks within the local community over time.

frameworks—theories of neighborhood racial integration—have amply documented the process of ethnic influx in which immigrant groups arrived in formerly White areas. Specifically, ethnic neighborhood succession occurred as declining White ethnics population was replaced by rapidly growing non-White immigrant populations. Moreover, that White flights often follow minority replacements also leads to the resegregation of former integrated neighborhoods, except in stably integrated neighborhoods where sizable Asian and Hispanic population serve as a racial buffer between Blacks and Whites. John Logan and Charles Zhang refer to these "global neighborhoods" as areas where "Hispanics and Asians are the pioneer integrators of previously all-white zones, later followed by blacks" (2010, 1069). Yet stably integrated multiethnic neighborhoods remain rare, and social buffering can also be temporary, many such integrated areas transitioning into ethnic enclaves, immigrant communities, or resegregated neighborhoods (Ellen 2000; Maly 2005).

Diverse metropolitan areas see five "pathways of neighborhood change" over time (Logan and Zhang 2010). The classic one of neighborhood invasion and succession—where aging White ethnics are replaced by minority populations—often leads to resegregation. Neighborhood revitalization presents an alternative, whereby new immigrant groups move into formerly minority neighborhoods, investing resources and starting businesses to generate "global immigrant neighborhoods" (Hum et al. 2021; Hum 2014). Neighborhood gentrification is a third possibility, in which educated White professionals move into disinvested minority (Freeman 2006) or recently revitalized immigrant neighborhoods (Hwang 2015). Neighborhood integration is a fourth, in which minority populations—especially second-and-higher-generation Asians and Hispanics—move into predominantly White neighborhoods, generating stably integrated areas. The buffering effect of Hispanics and Asians derives in part from these more assimilated individuals serving as "initial integrators of white neighborhoods" (Logan and Zhang 2010, 1072). A fifth common pathway in more distressed inner-ring suburbs involves the arrival of minority or immigrant populations that could result in stably segregated, high-poverty suburban communities (Kneebone 2017).

HYPOTHESES

The suburbanization of immigration has intensified as new immigrants began to settle directly in suburbs and the second generation became more spatially assimilated over the last two decades. Alongside the increasing influx into suburbs, immigration into cities continued unabated in the New York region until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 (Hum et al. 2021). We expect ethnoracial diversification to have divergent impacts on neighborhood integration in suburbs and cities. These trends point to two major sets of hypotheses. The first set examines how the process of neighborhood integration differs in suburbs and cities. The second examines how three key neighborhood indicators—concentrated immigration, concentrated advantage, and concentrated affluence—are associated with different types of neighborhood racial integration. Our focus on immigration and disadvantage as predictors of neighborhood integration follows a long tradition of research that documented how immigrant neighborhoods in cities are ethnic enclaves with dense networks of coethnics (Foner 2013; Hum 2014; Kasinitz et al. 2008) and how many disadvantaged areas in cities are hypersegregated, minority neighborhoods with high levels of concentrated poverty (Freeman 2019; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). Finally, our attention to affluence as a predictor of neighborhood integration follows research on the rise of ethnoburbs and the persistence of affluent White suburbs (Kye 2018; Lung-Amam 2017).

> Hypothesis 1a. The rise in racial diversification would lead to a decline in nonintegrated neighborhoods and an increase in integrated neighborhoods. This decline is more drastic in suburbs than in cities given higher levels of existing racial diversity in cities.
>
> Hypothesis 1b. In suburbs, nonintegrated neighborhoods are more likely to be White because of racial homogeneity. In inner cities, by contrast, nonintegrated neighbor-

hoods are more likely to be predominantly minority, specifically Black and Hispanic.

Hypothesis 1c. In suburbs, racial integration is more likely to result in White-integrated or fully integrated neighborhoods, whereas in cities minority-integrated neighborhoods are more prevalent.

Hypothesis 2a. Concentrated immigration is associated with higher levels of integration in suburbs and cities; however, the impact of immigration on neighborhood integration in suburbs is stronger in 2000 than in 2019, given the timing of immigrant suburbanization.

Hypothesis 2b. Concentrated disadvantage is associated with higher levels of minority integration (resulting in minority-integrated neighborhoods) in suburbs and cities because such neighborhoods often have higher concentrations of minority populations.

Hypothesis 2c. Concentrated affluence is associated with higher levels of nonintegration in suburbs and with higher levels of White integration in cities.

DATA AND METHODS

Data for our spatial and individual-level analyses come from two sources. The spatial analysis uses census tract-level data from the 2000 Census and the 2015–2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.[5] Our primary unit of analysis is the census tract—a proxy for neighborhood. Census tracts average between four thousand and five thousand people and are the smallest geographical unit for which reliable estimates can be obtained. We use 2000 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and 2015–2019 ACS data (U.S. Census Bureau 2020),[6] which were obtained using R's tidycensus package (Walker and Herman 2021). The individual-level analysis relies on census micro-data for the same years and comes from the University of Minnesota's IPUMS USA database (Ruggles et al. 2021), which provides variable harmonization and associated weights across surveys.

We limit the spatial scope for this project to the New York–Newark–Jersey City, New York–New Jersey–Pennsylvania Metropolitan Statistical Area (referred to as New York metropolitan area), given its centrality to immigration, its ethnoracial composition, and its diverse urban-suburban mix. To do this, we obtained a list of all core-based statistical areas (CBSAs) from the U.S. Census Bureau (2021b) and merged by state-county identifiers. We then filtered our data by metropolitan statistical areas. Because metropolitan areas change over time, we apply 2020 metro boundaries to both the 2000 decennial and the 2015–2019 ACS estimates.

To distinguish between central city and suburban neighborhoods, we rely on the Census Bureau's definition of principal cities that identify "the largest incorporated place or census designated place" within a CBSA, along with all other incorporated or census designated places that meet various population and worker thresholds (for more information, see OMB 2010). The six principal cities in the New York metropolitan area include New York City, Jersey City, Newark, New Brunswick, White Plains, and Lakewood. We spatially join geographic data on principal cities (Van Leuven 2020) with census tract data to assign each tract a suburb or city status. Following Richard Alba and his colleagues (1995), we limit our analysis to tracts with a population greater than five hundred.[7] We use *census tracts* and *neighborhoods* interchangeably throughout the article. In the final sample for 2019, 49 percent of all tracts were in suburbs ($N = 2{,}162$) and 51 percent of tracts were in cities ($N = 2{,}289$).

5. Although data from the 2020 U.S. Census has been released, its use is limited here because it does not provide key socioeconomic variables on tract-level characteristics. Although ACS estimates can have larger margins of error, we replicated our analysis using the 2020 Census and found similar results.

6. Because census tracts change over time, we obtained Social Explorer pre-harmonized census tract data (U.S. Census Bureau 2021a) that was harmonized using the Longitudinal Tract Database (Logan, Xu, and Stults 2014).

7. As a result of this criterion, we exclude ninety-four tracts from Census 2000 and eighty-two from ACS 2015–19.

Dependent Variables

Neighborhood integration is measured as a categorical variable with four categories from our classification schema: nonintegrated, White-integrated, fully integrated, and minority-integrated. We use the nonintegrated category as the reference group to compare to the other three forms of neighborhood integration since the nonintegrated group is the least integrated among the four categories. To classify neighborhoods, we adapt a classification typology that categorizes each neighborhood based on the proportion of group members who live there relative to each group's aggregate population share in the metro area (Logan and Zhang 2010). In other words, we empirically specify "how 'white' is an all-white tract" and "what representation of a group in a tract is enough to count the group as 'present'" (1079).[8]

This classification schema requires two steps. The first is to calculate the aggregate population shares for five mutually exclusive and exhaustive ethnoracial groups (Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Others), separately by year and by suburb-city status. By allowing the reference point to shift over time, this schema not only accounts for differential growth rates among the five racial groups over the study period but also benchmarks such growth as relative rather than absolute. We further differentiated between suburbs and cities, given different geographic distributions of racial groups (Logan and Zhang 2010). For instance, in 2019, 59.4 percent the total suburban population in the New York metro area was White, 9.4 percent Black, 20.5 percent was Hispanic, and 8.6 percent was Asian.

Second, we use the aggregate population shares by year and suburb-city status to classify each census tract based on the "specific combination of groups that are present in them" (Logan and Zhang 2010, 1082). Whereas Logan and Zhang (2010) rely on a 25 percent threshold to determine a population's presence, we adopt a more restrictive 50 percent threshold.[9] Given our threshold, whenever a tract registers at least 50 percent of their respective suburb or city share, a given ethnoracial group's population is characterized as present in that tract. So, for example, if the 2019 suburban share of Whites is 59.4 percent and a suburban tract is 32.1 percent White, that tract is classified as Whites being present because 32.1 percent is greater than the 50 percent threshold—29.7 percent.[10] Because more than one group can simultaneously exceed its respective 50 percent threshold, a tract can be characterized as containing more than one group.[11]

Table 1 presents the full classification schema and the distribution of tracts by integration type, separately for suburbs and cities in 2000 and 2019. Because this classification schema results in fifteen possible neighborhood classification types, we collapse them into four categories:

8. Prior research adopts two approaches to creating neighborhood typologies to capture varying levels of ethnoracial mixing—relative and absolute (see Farrell and Lee 2011). Most work follows the "absolute" approach by defining the presence or absence of a racial group using a specific population threshold (Crowder, Pais, and South 2012; Ellen 2000). Following Logan and Zhang (2010), our analysis adopts the "relative" approach, which better captures relative change over time. Our work is consistent with that of others who have adopted or modified a version of this typology (Parisi, Lichter, and Taquino 2015; Kye 2018).

9. Neighborhood classification is sensitive to the adopted thresholds. We find fewer nonintegrated neighborhoods using the 25 percent criterion and more nonintegrated ones using the 75 percent criterion. When we run models using the less restrictive threshold of 25 percent that overclassifies integration, we find minor differences between those and results using the 50 percent threshold. However, models using the even more restrictive threshold of 75 percent report substantively similar results as models using a 50 percent threshold. For this reason, we use the 50 percent threshold because it is more robust than the 25 percent threshold Logan and Zhang use (2010).

10. 59.42*0.5 = 29.71.

11. For parsimony, we use abbreviations to represent neighborhood types: W identifies a White-only tract, whereas WAB denotes a tract where Whites, Asians, and Blacks are all defined as present.

nonintegrated tracts in which only one racial group is present (W, B, A, or H)

White-integrated tracts where White is present along with one or more other groups (for example, WA, WH or WAH)[12]

minority-integrated tracts where more than one non-White group is present, without White presence (such as BH [Black-Hispanic] or BAH [Black-Asian-Hispanic])

fully integrated tracts where all four racial groups are present (WBAH).

In figure 1, we provide a visualization of the four neighborhood integration types for suburban tracts (for a visualization for New York City tracts, see figure A.1).

Independent Variables

The multinomial regressions use three sets of independent variables, measured at the tract level. First are three demographic control variables: total population, (logged) population density, and median age. Second are four variables on socioeconomic composition: concentrated disadvantaged, concentrated affluence, income inequality, and share of owner-occupied housing units. Third, three immigration-related variables are concentrated immigration, share of multigenerational households, and share of immigrants who arrived before 1990.

Our explanatory variables are three indices of concentrated immigration, concentrated disadvantage, and concentrated affluence, which capture different neighborhood dynamics. We construct these indices using principal component analyses separately for 2000 and 2019.[13] The concentrated immigration index is based on two tract-level measures: share of individuals who speak English at home and share of foreign-born residents.[14] Tracts with lower shares of English-speaking populations and higher rates of foreign-born residents are more likely to be immigrant neighborhoods. The index for concentrated disadvantage is based on three tract-level measures: share of individuals below 1.5 times the poverty line, share of households receiving public assistance, and share of households headed by single mothers with children under the age of eighteen.[15] Concentrated affluence index is based on three tract-level measures: share of residents with at least a college degree, share of residents in professional or managerial occupations, and share of households with annual earnings of more than $150,000.[16] This measure captures the consolidation of opportunities and advantages generally enjoyed by residents of more affluent tracts. All three indices are standardized to facilitate comparisons and we focus on them to examine how immigration, disadvantage, and affluence correlate with neighborhood integration.

The remainder are control variables. We include measures of total tract population, tract population density, and median age as neighborhood demographic controls. Tract population serves as an exposure offset to counter unequal influence of larger tracts; population density accounts for any undue weight of tracts with larger land areas; and median age controls for unequal concentration of neighborhood residents by age. We take the natural log

12. Although it is possible that neighborhoods classified as nonintegrated White could have higher aggregate minority populations than White-integrated neighborhoods, such a comparison misses that nonintegrated White neighborhoods do not include enough minorities to be classified as integrated neighborhoods and therefore are not classified as such using the relative threshold approach. Moreover, we find that the average nonintegrated White neighborhoods have larger White populations than the average White-integrated neighborhoods.

13. These indices are well established in neighborhood research (see Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997).

14. The concentrated immigration components have factor loading scores above 0.71 (2000) and 0.71 (2019), eigenvalues of 1.79 (2000) and 1.78 (2019), and standardized Cronbach's alphas of 0.88 (2000) and 0.88 (2019).

15. The concentrated disadvantage components have factor loading scores above 0.57 (2000) and 0.57 (2019), eigenvalues of 2.66 (2000) and 2.27 (2019), and standardized Cronbach's alphas of 0.94 (2000) and 0.84 (2019).

16. The concentrated affluence components have factor loading scores above 0.55 (2000) and 0.56 (2019), eigenvalues of 2.64 (2000) and 2.67 (2019), and standardized Cronbach's alphas of 0.93 (2000) and 0.94 (2019).

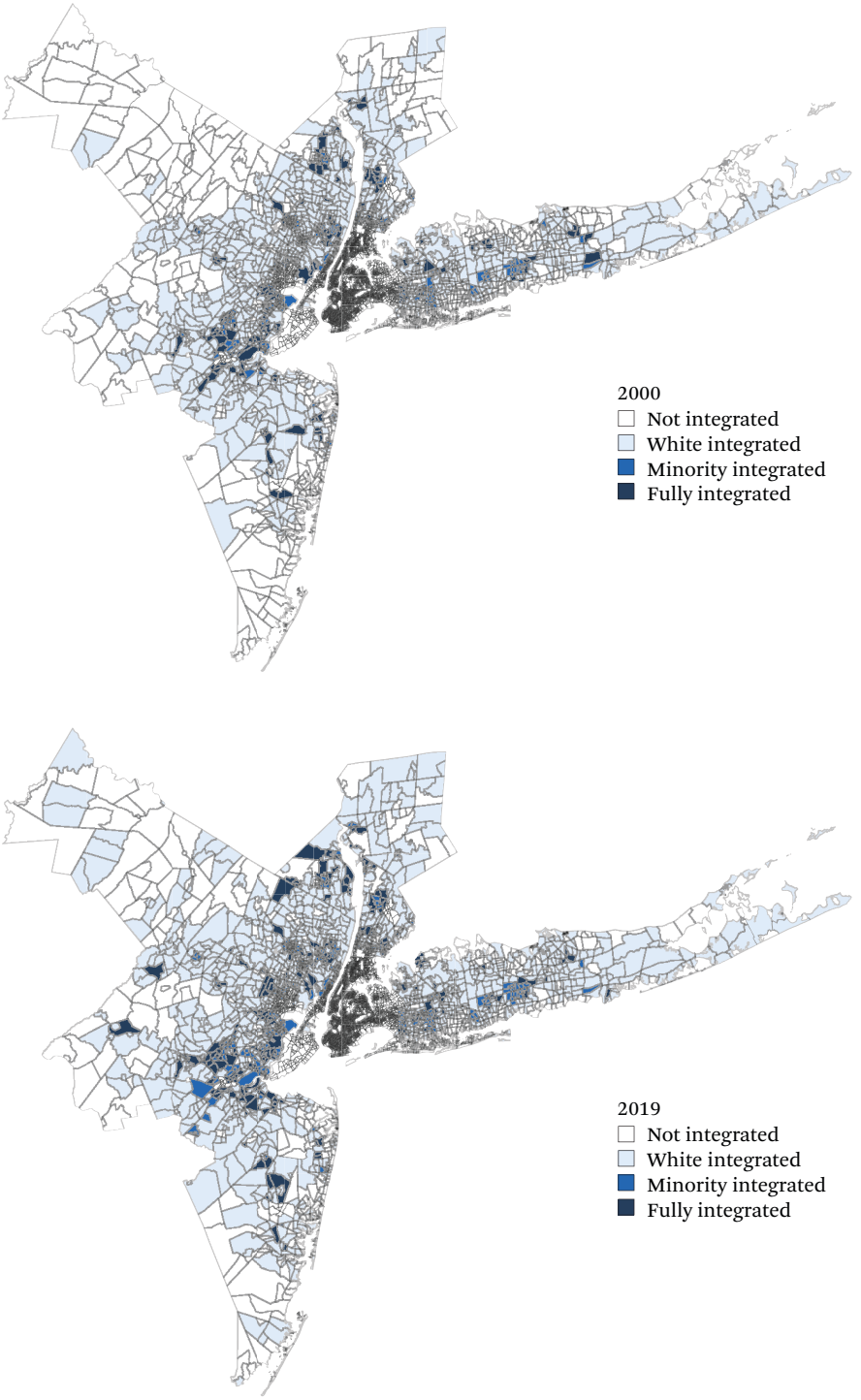
Table 1. Expanded Neighborhood Classification Typology in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019

		N		Percentage	
		2000	2019	2000	2019
Suburbs					
Not integrated	A	1	4	0.05	0.19
	H	25	47	1.16	2.17
	B	28	22	1.3	1.02
	W	496	347	22.97	16.05
White integrated	WA	468	343	21.68	15.86
	WB	28	52	1.3	2.41
	WH	117	199	5.42	9.2
	WHA	313	305	14.5	14.11
	WBA	79	81	3.66	3.75
	WBH	85	150	3.94	6.94
Minority integrated	BA	3	18	0.14	0.83
	BHA	83	90	3.84	4.16
	HA	19	20	0.88	0.93
	BH	173	213	8.01	9.85
Fully integrated	WBAH	241	271	11.16	12.53
	Total	2,159	2,162	100.00	100.00
Cities					
Not integrated	A	4	21	0.17	0.92
	H	38	35	1.66	1.53
	B	316	228	13.8	9.96
	W	201	154	8.78	6.73
White integrated	WA	402	363	17.55	15.86
	WB	35	54	1.53	2.36
	WH	101	146	4.41	6.38
	WHA	364	358	15.9	15.64
	WBA	26	23	1.14	1
	WBH	74	100	3.23	4.37
Minority integrated	BA	17	38	0.74	1.66
	BHA	98	128	4.28	5.59
	HA	99	133	4.32	5.81
	BH	424	411	18.52	17.96
Fully integrated	WBAH	91	97	3.97	4.24
	Total	2,290	2,289	100	100

Source. Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).
Note: Only tracts with population greater than five hundred.

of population density to induce normality. Homeownership rate varies significantly between the suburbs and cities in our sample—71 percent in suburbs and 38 percent in cities, and we control for homeownership rate because it functions as a marker of status attainment as well as relative neighborhood wealth and affluence across the New York metro (Agius Vallejo and Keister 2020). We use neighborhood Gini coefficients to control for inequality between tracts. Because Gini coefficients are not included in 2000 Census data, we create consistent Gini coefficient estimates from binned income data available in the U.S. Census using

Figure 1. Neighborhood Racial Integration in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019



Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

the mean-constrained integration over bracket command in *Stata* (Jargowsky and Wheeler 2018). We control for immigrant cohorts using a measure of the neighborhood share of residents who immigrated before 1990 because immigrant outcomes and demographics can vary dramatically by cohort of entry (Alba et al. 1999). Because immigrants are more likely to be in multigenerational households, we control for the share of households in a tract with either grandchildren or parents living with them (Kasinitz et al. 2008). All monetary values were inflation-adjusted to 2019 dollars using the consumer price index (CPI) for New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY–NJ–PA (BLS 2019a). We also use inflation-adjusted housing-related variables using all items less shelter CPI to not control away variation in housing costs across years (BLS 2019b).

Modeling Strategies

Our analyses proceed in four stages. First, for the individual-level analyses, we compare demographic and socioeconomic profiles for the four ethnoracial groups to provide a snapshot of their relative distribution in suburbs and cities for 2000 and 2019. We focus on seven indicators: education, household income, home ownership, employment, language proficiency, and housing affordability.[17] Second, we examine patterns of neighborhood racial integration based on the four neighborhood integration categories, focusing on how neighborhoods transitioned between 2000 and 2019. In addition to descriptive statistics, we use spatial visualization to highlight key trends. Third, we use multinomial logistic regressions to examine how key neighborhood characteristics are associated with neighborhood integration. Fourth, we use predicted probabilities to illustrate the key findings in both suburbs and cities.

Because the dependent variables are categorical, we use a series of multinomial logistic regressions with robust standard errors and report the relative risk ratios for all the coefficients. We use nonintegrated as the baseline category because we are interested in identifying major correlates that differentiate three forms of integrated neighborhoods from the nonintegrated one where only one racial group dominates. By design, multinomial logistic regressions estimate three distinct sets of coefficients. The first set compares the White-integrated and the nonintegrated neighborhoods, whereas the second and third sets contrast the fully integrated and minority-integrated neighborhoods with the reference category. The multinomial logistic regressions for these three paired comparisons are as follows:

$$log\frac{P(Y_i = White\ integrated)}{1-P(Y_i = Not\ integrated)} = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}D_i + \beta_{12}SES_i + \beta_{13}I_i \quad (1)$$

$$log\frac{P(Y_i = Minority\ integrated)}{1-P(Y_i = Not\ integrated)} = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}D_i + \beta_{22}SES_i + \beta_{23}I_i \quad (2)$$

$$log\frac{P(Y_i = Fully\ integrated)}{1-P(Y_i = Not\ integrated)} = \beta_{30} + \beta_{31}D_i + \beta_{32}SES_i + \beta_{33}I_i \quad (3)$$

where $P(Y_i = Not\ integrated)$, $P(Y_i = White\ integrated)$, $P(Y_i = Minority\ integrated)$, and $P(Y_i = Fully\ integrated)$ respectively denote the log odds of the probability of tract i being classified as one of the four neighborhood types (Y). D_i indicates the demographic control variables. SES_i denotes the socioeconomic variables and I_i immigration-related variables. The socioeconomic variables include the concentrated disadvantaged and concentrated affluence indices whereas the immigration-related variables include the concentrated immigration index.

Equation (1) estimates differences between White-integrated and nonintegrated tracts. Equation (2) estimates differences between minority-integrated and nonintegrated tracts. Equation (3) estimates differences between fully integrated and nonintegrated tracts. We fit a series of three nested models, separately for 2000 and 2019. The first model adjusts for demographic controls. The second model introduces socioeconomic variables. The third model further adjusts for three immigration-

17. For renters, we measure the share of rent-burdened households, whereas for owners we measure the share of mortgage-burdened households.

related variables. For brevity, we only present the final models for 2000 and 2019.

Our analyses have a few limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of our datasets limits our ability to make any causal claims on the strong associations between selected neighborhood characteristics and neighborhood racial integration. Although we can document change over time by identifying broad patterns of neighborhood racial integration, we cannot test the mechanisms underlying specific pathways of neighborhood transition. Second, our findings are limited to one multiethnic metropolitan area—New York. Although these patterns are not generalizable to other metropolitan areas, similar processes of neighborhood transitions are likely unfolding in diverse gateways across the country (such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, and others). Third, to focus on broad transformations in a major metropolis, we only examine integration by the four major categories—Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White—but do not document spatial patterns of ethnic or panethnic neighborhoods. Finally, our typology does not distinguish those tracts that have changed due to the influx of a new group (such as the transition of W tracts into WA tracts) versus the outflow of a current group (such as the transition of WAH tracts into WA tracts).

ETHNORACIAL DIVERSIFICATION IN SUBURBAN NEW YORK

Table 2 provides the demographic trends and socioeconomic profiles by racial groups, separately for suburbs and for cities. The suburban population grew modestly from 9.2 million in 2000 to 9.6 million in 2019. In 2019, Whites remain the largest racial group in the suburbs and accounted for 59 percent of the total population, followed by Hispanics (20.5 percent), Blacks (9.4 percent), and Asians (8.6 percent). From 2000 to 2019, the diversification of suburbs was driven by the substantial growth of Hispanic and Asian populations, alongside a decline in the White population, but the share of Blacks has remained virtually unchanged during the same period. Asians in the suburbs report the highest levels of socioeconomic outcomes, not only surpassing Whites, but also twice higher than Blacks and Hispanics in median household income and educational attainment. On home ownership, a majority from all four ethnoracial groups reported owning a home in 2019, including Blacks (53.6 percent) and Hispanics (54.7 percent).

Relative to suburbs, the city population grew from 9.1 million in 2000 to 9.6 million in 2019, but the demographic profiles vary dramatically. On racial composition, population growth is highest among Asians, followed by Hispanics, alongside modest declines for Blacks and Whites. In 2019, cities were 13.7 percent Asian, 22.3 percent Black, 28.8 percent Hispanic, and 32.2 percent White. Between suburbs and cities, the gap in socioeconomic profiles in highest among Asians and lowest among Whites. Across socioeconomic indicators, Asians are more advantaged than Blacks and Hispanics, but Whites remain the most advantaged group in cities.

Figure 2 presents shares of neighborhood by level of racial integration for 2000 and 2019. Suburbs saw a decline of nonintegrated neighborhoods and an increase in all three types of integrated ones. In 2019, 19.4 percent of suburban tracts remain nonintegrated (that is, predominantly White) versus White-integrated (52.3 percent), minority-integrated (15.8 percent), and fully integrated (12.5 percent). Cities saws a similar decline of nonintegrated neighborhoods and a rise in integrated neighborhoods save in the fully integrated category. In 2019, 19.1 percent of city tracts remain nonintegrated (that is, predominantly Black or predominantly White) versus White-integrated (45.6 percent), minority-integrated (31 precent), and fully integrated (4.2 percent).

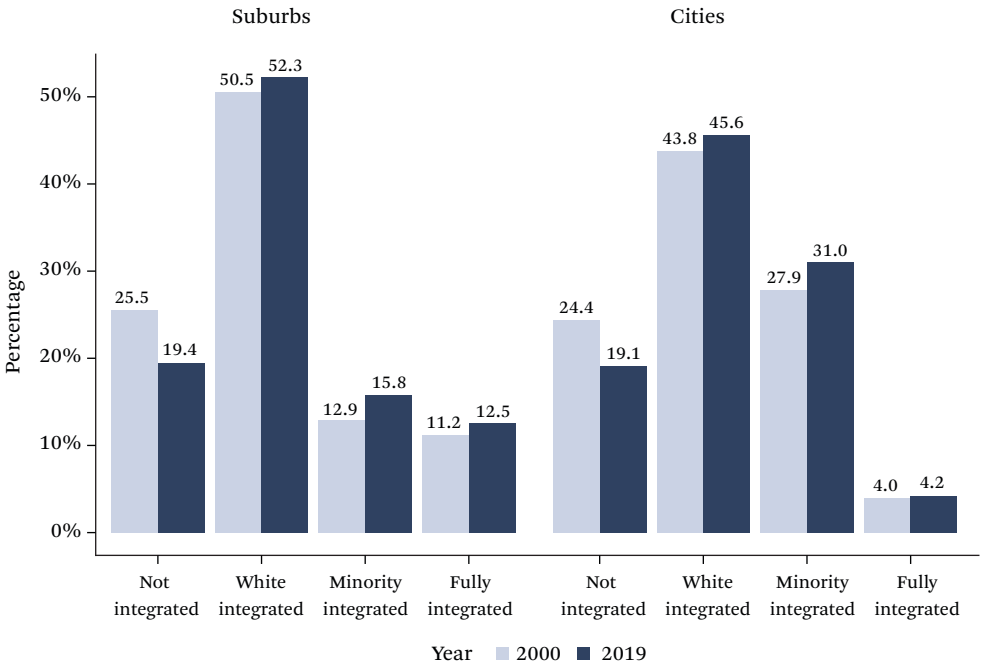
Relative to suburbs, cities are as likely to remain nonintegrated, with one in five tracts classified as such across both settings (19.4 percent versus 19.1 percent in figure 2). Whereas 83 percent of suburban tracts are predominantly White and only 5 percent are predominantly Black, 52 percent of city tracts are predominantly Black and 35 percent are predominantly White. This reflects the segregated nature of cities, especially for Black neighborhoods. Moreover, that White-integrated neighborhoods are the most prevalent in both cities and suburbs suggests that racial diversification over the last two decades has transformed sub-

Table 2. Socioeconomic Profiles by Ethnoracial Background in Metropolitan New York

	2000 Asian	2019 Asian	2000 Black	2019 Black	2000 Hispanic	2019 Hispanic	2000 White	2019 White
Suburbs								
Median household income	120,243	134,000	73,771	71,963	76,209	79,719	102,426	107,300
College degree	72.5	78.4	22.7	34.8	19.3	30.9	38.0	51.3
Homeownership	60.8	73.4	49.8	53.6	47.3	54.7	79.2	82.7
Rent burdened	31.3	34.6	42.0	52.8	42.4	54.8	38.8	48.0
Mortgage burdened	30.4	28.3	38.6	39.7	39.1	36.1	28.5	30.0
Low income	9.9	9.2	19.9	18.9	21.2	20.6	8.8	8.9
Employed	97.5	97.7	95.3	95.8	95.7	97.0	97.7	97.0
Speak English	99.1	99.3	100.0	99.9	94.2	96.3	99.9	99.9
% Total population	5.3	8.6	9.0	9.4	12.6	20.5	71.4	59.4
Total population	484,947	830,535	831,695	904,441	1,160,985	1,978,762	6,589,540	5,745,685
Cities								
Median household income	64,016	75,000	46,488	52,096	44,964	51,509	75,447	90,645
College degree	42.9	51.3	16.5	27.3	12.9	25.8	41.9	59.0
Homeownership	38.2	49.2	28.3	35.1	19.1	26.4	43.6	47.6
Rent burdened	44.5	51.4	42.8	54.9	44.8	54.1	39.6	43.8
Mortgage burdened	40.9	38.0	41.8	41.2	41.1	34.5	27.3	28.6
Low income	28.8	25.3	34.7	29.2	39.5	32.8	18.3	15.9
Employed	95.9	96.8	90.8	94.1	91.3	95.8	96.5	96.7
Speak English	92.3	94.6	99.9	99.9	93.3	94.2	98.8	99.4
% Total population	9.5	13.7	25.1	22.3	26.5	28.8	35.2	32.2
Total population	860,189	1,318,907	2,280,112	2,142,971	2,405,587	2,774,185	3,202,876	3,102,239

Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

Figure 2. Change in Neighborhood Racial Integration in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019



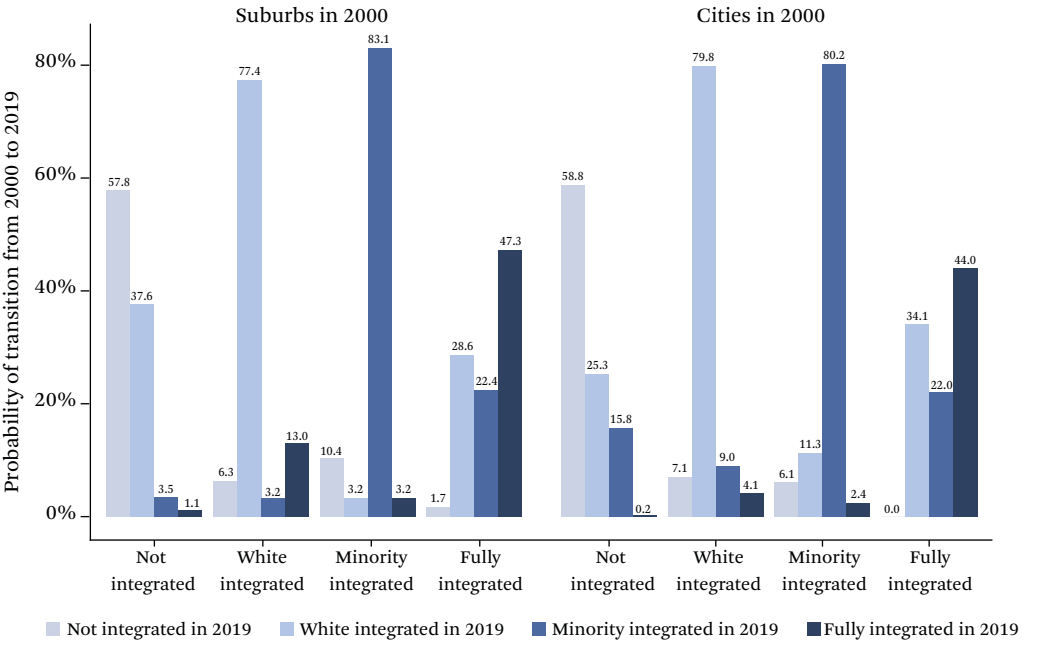
Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).
Note: For details on classification of tracts based on this typology, see the text of the article.

urbs, rendering suburbs more similar to cities. In 2019, the share of minority-integrated tracts is twice as high in cities (31 percent versus 15.8 percent), whereas the share of fully integrated tracts is three times higher in suburbs (12.5 percent versus 4.2 percent).

What are the major pathways of neighborhood racial integration in suburbs and cities? Figure 3 addresses this question by presenting the transition probabilities by integration types from 2000 to 2019. Among nonintegrated suburban tracts in 2000, the majority remained nonintegrated (57.8 percent) in 2019, but a third transitioned to White-integrated (37.6 percent). Among White-integrated tracts in 2000, 77.4 percent remained in the category in 2019, 13 percent diversifying into fully integrated neighborhoods, and another 6.3 percent transitioning back into nonintegrated—more homogeneous—neighborhoods. Among minority-integrated tracts in 2000, the overwhelming majority (83.1 percent) remained in this category in 2019 and another 10.4 percent transitioned into nonintegrated neighborhoods. Among fully integrated suburban tracts in 2000, about half remained in the category in 2019, 28.6 percent transitioned into White-integrated tracts, and 22.4 percent into minority-integrated tracts. Overall, minority-integrated suburban areas are most resistant to demographic change, whereas fully integrated neighborhoods are also most unstable, half transitioning into another category over the last two decades.

Among nonintegrated city tracts in 2000, the majority remained nonintegrated (58.8 percent) in 2019, with 25.3 percent transitioning into White-integrated and 15.8 percent transitioning into minority-integrated neighborhoods. Among White-integrated tracts in 2000, 79.8 percent remained in the same category in 2019, with 9 percent of these tracts diversifying into minority-integrated neighborhoods and 7.1 percent transitioning into nonintegrated neighborhoods. Among minority-integrated tracts in 2000, the overwhelming majority (80.2 percent) remained in this category in 2019, and 11.3 percent transitioning into White-integrated neighborhoods and 6.1 percent into noninte-

Figure 3. Probability of Neighborhood Transitions in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019



Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

grated—predominantly Hispanic or Black—neighborhoods. Among fully integrated tracts in 2000, 44 percent remained in this category in 2019, 34.1 percent transitioned into White-integrated tracts and another 22 percent into minority-integrated tracts.[18]

These findings yield surprising insights. First, pathways of neighborhood integration are remarkably similar in both cities and suburbs. Overall, the most important shifts occurred at the two ends of the continuum—nonintegrated and fully integrated areas. When these two forms of neighborhoods shift, they are most likely to become White integrated. Second, White- and minority-integrated neighborhoods are quite durable and resistant to change, more than 75 percent remaining in the same category in both cities and suburbs over time. In the suburbs, White-integrated tracts are likely to transition into fully integrated areas, but in cities they are more likely to transition into minority-integrated neighborhoods. This distinction points to the lower likelihood of White flight in the context of a minority influx in the suburbs, resulting in fully integrated neighborhoods. By contrast, Whites are less likely to remain in the same neighborhoods in the aftermath of minority population increases in cities, which contributed to the transitioning of White-integrated areas into minority-integrated ones. Third, fully integrated neighborhoods are the least stable form of integration. Such tracts tend to end up losing one or more of the four racial groups, resulting in White-integrated or minority-integrated neighborhoods—the two most stable forms of neighborhood integration.

Figure 4 provides a snapshot of neighborhood composition by types for 2000 and 2019. We calculate average racial composition by neighborhood types for categories with a minimum of 100 tracts in 2019. In 2000, the share of the White population in nonintegrated White tracts was 93.5 percent in suburbs, versus 88.3 percent in cities. In 2019, these proportions were reduced: 90.5 percent for suburban

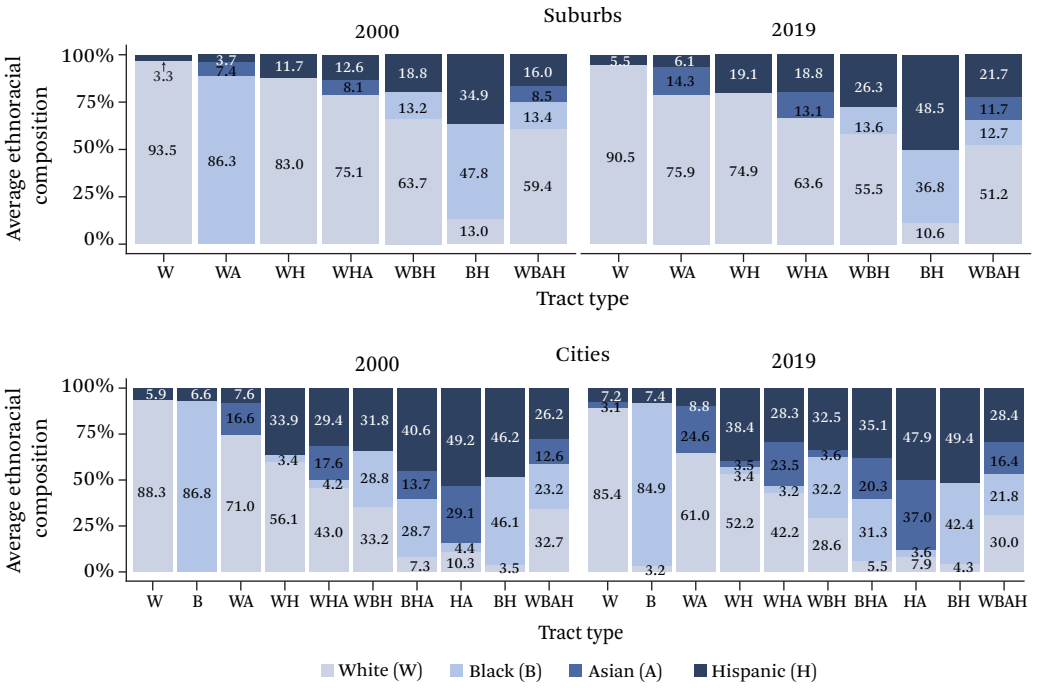
18. For detailed transition matrices, see tables A.1 and A.2.

tracts and 85.4 percent for city. This points to a roughly equal decline in the White share in such tracts for cities and suburbs. By contrast, the Black share in nonintegrated Black tracts in cities slightly decreased from 86.8 percent in 2000 to 84.9 percent in 2019. Among White-integrated areas in suburbs (WA, WH, WHA, and WBH), the share of White population over time declined dramatically, but Whites still accounted for the majority of population in these tracts in 2019, from a high of 75.9 percent in WA tracts to a low of 55.5 percent in WBH tracts. In cities, the decline of White population in White-integrated tracts was less dramatic, and Whites accounted for the majority of population in only WA and WH tracts in 2000 and 2019. Among other neighborhood categories, Whites accounted for a minority share of the population—42.2 percent in WHA tracts and 28.6 percent in WBH tracts in 2019.

In 2000 and 2019, minority-integrated neighborhoods (BH) in suburbs are predominantly Black and Hispanic, both groups accounting for 82.7 percent of the tract population in 2000 and for 85.3 percent in 2019. Notable here is the shift in composition, Hispanics averaging a higher share of the total in these tracts than Blacks in 2019 but not in 2000. In cities, minority-integrated tracts are not only more prevalent but also more diverse in racial composition, including various combinations of Black-Hispanic, Asian-Hispanic, or Asian-Black-Hispanic. The share of Asian population in minority-integrated tracts sharply increased from 2000 to 2019, reflecting Asians' rapid growth.

Finally, fully integrated areas further diversified over the same period in suburbs. White population share, however, remains the majority in such tracts in 2019, and the most significant growth was driven by Hispanic influx. By contrast, Whites accounted for only one-third of the population in fully integrated tracts in cities, the overall racial composition of such tracts remaining relatively stable over time.

Figure 4. Average Ethnoracial Composition of Tracts in Metropolitan New York, 2000 and 2019



Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

Note: Values less than 3 percent not displayed for parsimony.

HOW NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS MATTER FOR RACIAL INTEGRATION

How are neighborhood characteristics associated with racial integration types? We turn to multivariate analyses with neighborhood integration types as the independent variable, focusing on demographic, socioeconomic, and immigration-related drivers of neighborhood integration. Table 3 presents results for the three sets of paired comparisons for suburban tracts for 2000 and 2019. We focus on the coefficients for the three indices: immigration, disadvantage, and affluence. In 2000, neighborhood immigration and affluence are both positively correlated with integration. By contrast, neighborhood disadvantage is negatively associated with both White-integrated and fully integrated areas. Relative to nonintegrated tracts, a one standard deviation increase in concentrated immigration at the tract level in 2000 increases the likelihood of a neighborhood classified as White integrated by a factor of 8.1, as minority integrated by a factor of 18.3, and as fully integrated by a factor of 9.3 (see model 1). Similarly, a one standard deviation increase in concentrated affluence at the tract level in 2000 also increases the likelihood of a neighborhood classified as White integrated or fully integrated by a factor of 1.3, and classified as minority integrated by a factor of 2.0 (see model 1). A one standard deviation increase in concentrated disadvantage at the tract level in 2000 decreases the likelihood of a neighborhood classified as White integrated or fully integrated by a factor of 0.1; however, concentrated disadvantage is not a significant predictor of minority integrated (see model 1).

The patterns for these coefficients remain statistically significant and substantially similar in 2019 with two caveats (see model 2). First, disadvantage is now positively and significantly associated with minority-integrated neighborhoods but remains negatively associated with White-integrated neighborhoods. That concentrated disadvantage is no longer statistically associated with fully integrated neighborhoods and negatively associated with White-integrated neighborhoods in 2019 confirms that minority-integrated neighborhoods in suburbs are uniquely more disadvantaged. Second, affluence is no longer a significant predictor of minority-integrated areas, suggesting that minority-integrated neighborhoods have emerged as a distinctive category because they are not only more disadvantaged but also less affluent than the reference group.

That immigration is the strongest predictor of racial integration is significant. That this effect is positive and significant across all columns in table 3 points to its persistence. In both 2000 and 2019, immigrant neighborhoods are twice as likely to be classified as minority integrated than White or fully integrated. Moreover, coefficients for the concentrated immigration index are three to four times larger in 2000 (model 1) than in 2019 (model 2). This is consistent with the intensification of immigration in suburbs in the 1990s, setting the stage for ethnoracial transition at the neighborhood level, the most rapid shift being captured in 2000. That concentrated affluence is associated with integration in the suburbs suggests that suburban integrated neighborhoods are more affluent than nonintegrated ones except in the minority-integrated category. Finally, that concentrated disadvantage is positively associated with minority integration in 2019 but not in 2000 confirms that the presence and concentration of minority population in suburbs in more disadvantaged areas have solidified over time.

Table 4 presents results for tracts in cities for 2000 and for 2019. For 2000, concentrated immigration is positively correlated with neighborhood integration and this relationship remains substantially similar for 2019, albeit attenuated. Relative to nonintegrated neighborhoods, each one standard deviation increase in concentrated immigration at the tract level increases the likelihood of a neighborhood classified as integrated by factors of 2.5 to 4.0 in 2000 (model 1) and by factors of 2.2 to 3.0 in 2019 (model 2). Relative to nonintegrated neighborhoods, each one standard deviation increase in concentrated affluence at the tract level in 2000 and 2019 decreases the likelihood of a neighborhood classified as minority integrated by a factor of 0.4 in 2000 (model 1) and by a factor of 0.3 in 2019 (model 2). Moreover, affluence is not significantly correlated with White-integrated neighborhoods in 2000 but increases the likelihood of an area classified as

Table 3. Multinomial Logistic Regressions of Suburban Neighborhood Integration Types in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019

	2000			2019		
	White Integrated Model 1	Minority Integrated Model 1	Fully Integrated Model 1	White Integrated Model 2	Minority Integrated Model 2	Fully Integrated Model 2
Concentrated immigration	8.055***	18.302***	9.326***	2.044***	5.652***	2.863***
	(3.16)	(9.67)	(4.09)	(0.35)	(1.36)	(0.56)
Concentrated disadvantage	0.069***	2.571	0.129***	0.638*	2.203**	0.677
	(0.03)	(1.35)	(0.06)	(0.13)	(0.63)	(0.18)
Concentrated affluence	1.266*	1.992**	1.316*	1.611***	0.965	1.427*
	(0.13)	(0.47)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Population	1.000**	1.000***	1.000**	1.000***	1.000*	1.000*
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Logged population density	0.835	0.375**	0.557**	0.568***	0.382***	0.506***
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Median age	0.978	0.886**	0.963	1.000	0.940**	0.982
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Gini coefficient	0.196	0.000**	0.001**	0.156	0.003**	0.012**
	(0.28)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.20)	(0.01)	(0.02)
% Owner occupied housing	0.995	0.979	0.966***	1.003	0.993	0.990
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
% Multigenerational households	1.095	2.260***	1.382***	1.115**	1.434***	1.213***
	(0.08)	(0.29)	(0.13)	(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.06)
% Immigrated before 1990	0.965***	0.970**	0.956***	0.966***	0.967***	0.960***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intercept	80.750***	12,144.605***	4,296.363***	15.903***	323.699***	91.633***
	(69.07)	(22,949.89)	(5,208.14)	(12.73)	(455.15)	(100.17)
N of tracts		2,153			2,154	
AIC		3,549.3			4,007.9	

Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

Note: Reference group is nonintegrated tracts. Standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4. Multinomial Logistic Regressions of City Neighborhood Integration Types in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019

	2000			2019		
	White Integrated Model 1	Minority Integrated Model 1	Fully Integrated Model 1	White Integrated Model 2	Minority Integrated Model 2	Fully Integrated Model 2
Concentrated immigration	3.253***	4.010***	2.504***	2.979***	2.498***	2.194***
	(0.38)	(0.63)	(0.40)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.32)
Concentrated disadvantage	0.392***	2.856***	0.905	0.700**	2.185***	1.446
	(0.07)	(0.58)	(0.23)	(0.10)	(0.30)	(0.29)
Concentrated affluence	1.267	0.425***	2.182***	3.052***	0.254***	2.897***
	(0.16)	(0.10)	(0.42)	(0.47)	(0.06)	(0.61)
Population	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Logged population density	0.586***	0.835	0.258***	0.612***	0.977	0.320***
	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.15)	(0.06)
Median age	0.989	0.955	0.962	1.006	0.997	1.027
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Gini coefficient	0.015**	0.045	0.000***	0.265	0.500	6.083
	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.00)	(0.33)	(0.74)	(12.01)
% Owner-occupied housing	0.968***	1.000	0.954***	0.976***	1.003	0.971***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
% Multigenerational households	0.704***	0.987	0.849*	0.930**	1.100***	1.007
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)
% Immigrated before 1990	0.977***	0.988	0.978*	0.985*	0.981**	0.976*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intercept	3912.746***	9.525	28478.024***	66.315***	0.357	2.882
	(4,105.68)	(11.52)	(43,295.35)	(58.74)	(0.37)	(3.33)
N of tracts		2,284			2,278	
AIC		3,596.5			3,776.2	

Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).
Note: Reference group is nonintegrated tracts. Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

White integrated by a factor of 3.0 in 2019. Disadvantaged neighborhoods were at a lower risk of being classified as White-integrated areas in 2000 and 2019 but at a higher risk of being classified as minority integrated during the same period.

To underscore, immigration plays a similar role in fostering neighborhood integration in cities as it does in suburbs. That this effect is positive and significant in both models in table 4 points to a convergence between cities and suburbs. Concentrated disadvantage is consistently associated with minority integration in the city in both 2000 and 2019. This would suggest that the presence of minority populations in cities is concentrated in more disadvantaged and racially segregated neighborhoods. By contrast, the association between concentrated disadvantage and minority integration is a more recent development in the suburbs, where such an association was not significant in 2000. Moreover, that concentrated affluence is increasingly associated with neighborhood integration in cities over time, except for minority-integrated neighborhoods, points to the heterogeneity in the reference category—nonintegrated neighborhoods. Minority-integrated neighborhoods are less affluent than predominantly White neighborhoods, but more affluent than predominantly minority (Black) neighborhoods.

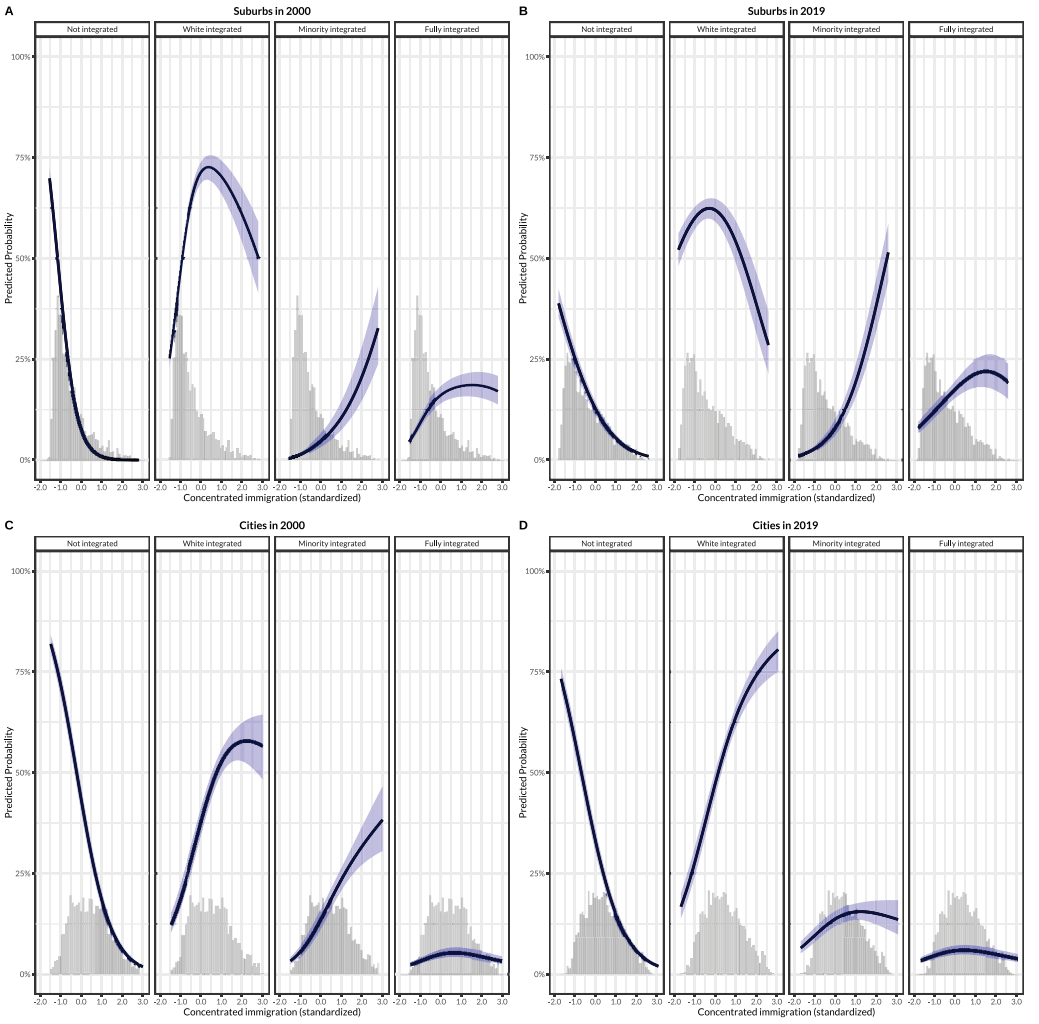
Predicted Probabilities by Concentrated Immigration, Disadvantage, and Affluence

Predicted probabilities by levels of concentrated immigration provide an intuitive way to interpret the magnitude of the difference in immigration's impact on neighborhood integration types in cities and suburbs and how this might change from 2000 to 2019. Figure 5 visualizes the predicted probabilities for concentrated immigration from tables 3 and 4, holding other covariates constant at their mean. It highlights the exceptional role that immigration plays in ethnoracial integration in New York. In both cities and suburbs, the predicted probabilities of neighborhoods classified as nonintegrated dramatically decline at higher levels of immigration. At the mean level of concentrated immigration, suburban neighborhoods were most likely to be White integrated (60 percent) and least likely to be minority integrated (6 percent) in 2019. City neighborhoods at the mean level were also most likely to be White integrated (44 percent) but least likely to be fully integrated (6 percent) in 2019.

Figures 6 and 7 present predicted probabilities based on tables 3 and 4 for concentrated disadvantage and affluence indices, holding other covariates constant at their mean. At the same level of disadvantage, neighborhoods are more likely to be integrated in 2019 than in 2000. This highlights neighborhood disadvantage's declining role in shaping segregation over time. At mean level of concentrated disadvantage, neighborhoods in suburbs were most likely to be White integrated (60 percent) and least likely to be minority integrated (7 percent) in 2019. At this mean level, city neighborhoods became most likely to be White integrated (60 percent) and least likely to be fully integrated (6 percent) in 2019. These patterns also point to a convergence in the role of neighborhood disadvantage in shaping racial integration in suburbs and cities. At higher levels of neighborhood disadvantage, however, neighborhoods are most likely to be minority integrated and least likely to be White integrated in both cities and suburbs. Put differently, the most disadvantaged neighborhoods are often the most segregated by race, regardless of suburban and city locations.

At a given level of affluence, neighborhood affluence's role in shaping racial integration is more consistent for city and suburban tracts in 2019 than in 2000. At a mean level of concentrated affluence, suburban neighborhoods were most likely to be White integrated (60 percent) and least likely to be minority integrated (5 percent) in 2019. At the same mean level, neighborhoods in cities were most likely to be White integrated (60 percent) and least likely to be fully integrated (6 percent) in 2019. These patterns once again point to a broad convergence over time. At higher levels of neighborhood affluence, neighborhoods are most likely to be White integrated and least likely to be minority integrated in cities and suburbs. Put differently, the most affluent neighborhoods are often ones with significant shares of Whites, regardless of suburban and city locations.

Figure 5. Marginal Effects of Concentrated Immigration in Metropolitan New York



Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: Histograms represent the distribution of observations. Figures represent the marginal effects of the change in concentrated immigration on neighborhood integration type, holding all other covariates at their mean level.

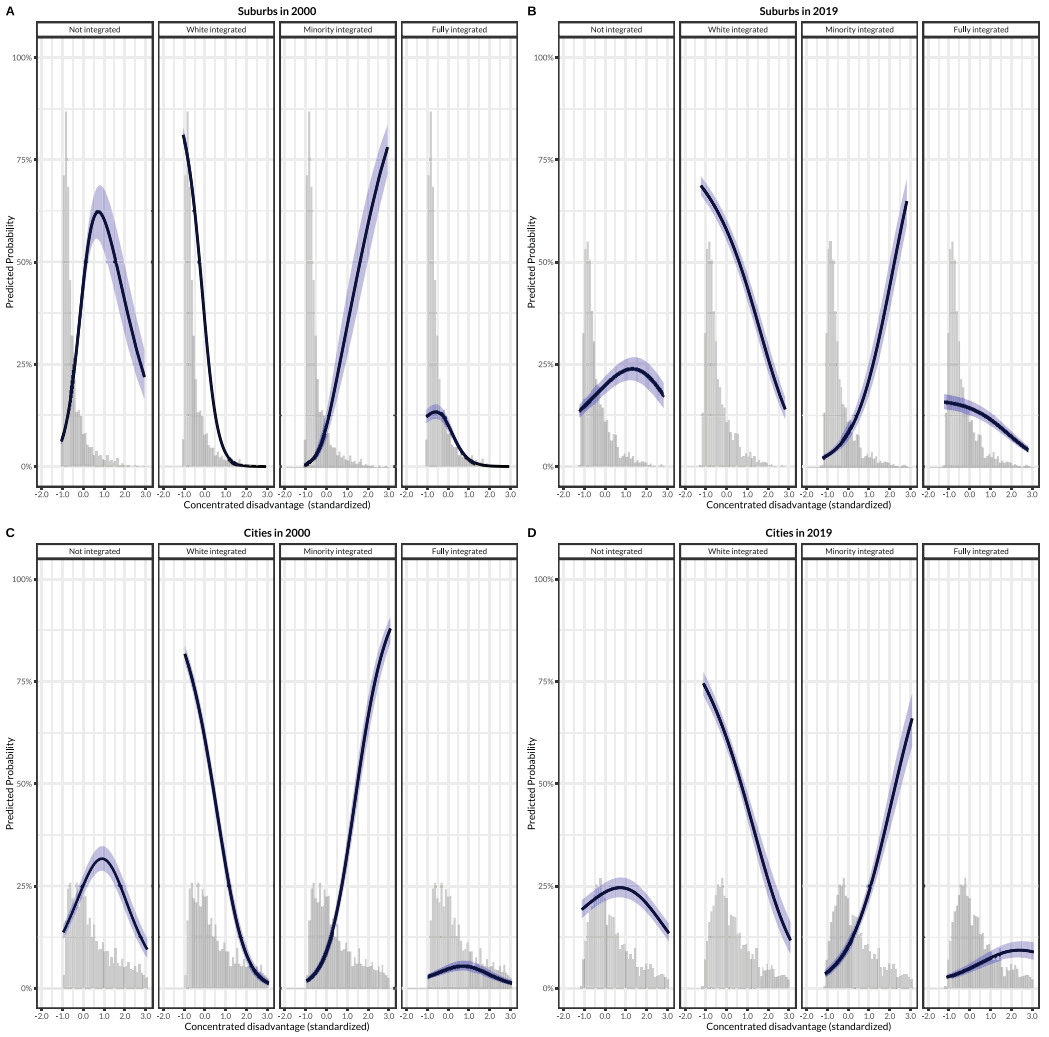
ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Because the ACS 5-year estimates use a smaller sample than the decennial census, the margins of error (MOEs) can be substantially larger for some selected variables. Specifically, an MOE is a measure of the possible variation of the estimate around the population value. This is especially true for variables such as income, race, and ethnicity (Spielman and Singleton 2015). The standard practice for evaluating the reliability of ACS estimates is to calculate coefficients of variation (CVs),[19] which standardize the errors across variables before dropping observations with CVs larger than a specific threshold, such as 10 or 12 percent (Spielman and Singleton 2015; Citro and Kalton 2007).

To test the reliability of the ACS estimates

19. The formula for calculating CVs is defined as CV = [MOE/1.645] / Estimate.

Figure 6. Marginal Effects of Concentrated Disadvantage in Metropolitan New York



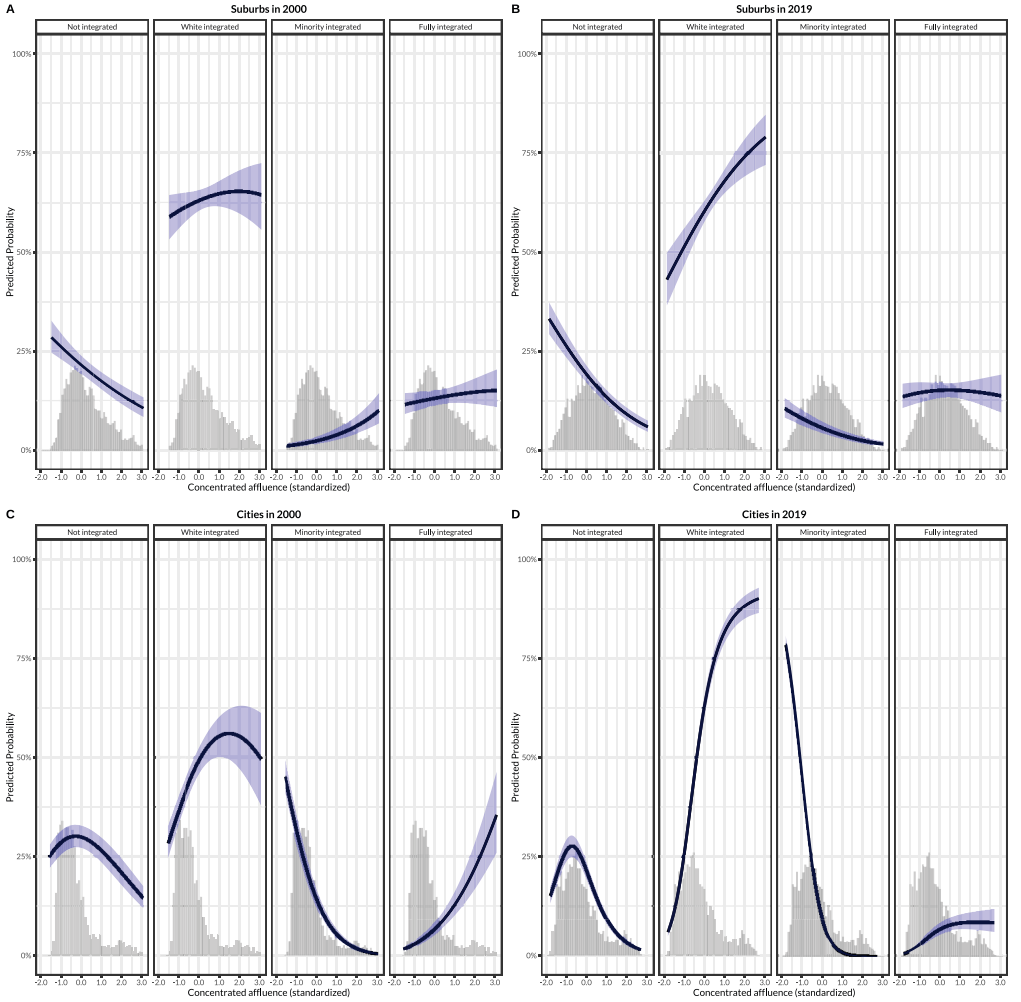
Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: Histograms represent the distribution of observations. Figures represent the marginal effects of the change in concentrated disadvantage on neighborhood integration type, holding all other covariates at their mean level.

used in our project, we calculated CVs for the race-ethnicity variables—percent White, percent Black, percent Asian, and percent Hispanic. Consistent with earlier work, we find many tracts with CVs above reliable thresholds. However, excluding such tracts with from analysis results in too few observations to create a meaningful neighborhood typology and estimate regression models.

As a robustness check, we run two additional analyses. First, we use the preliminary 2020 Census estimates to calculate race-ethnicity variables at the census tract level for the neighborhood typology. The distribution of neighborhood racial integration types based on data from the 2020 Census is presented in figure A.2. Relative to figure 2, based on data the 2015–2019 ACS, some minor differences are apparent but the two distributions are virtually identical, suggesting that findings from our

Figure 7. Marginal Effects of Concentrated Affluence in Metropolitan New York



Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: Histograms represent the distribution of observations. Figures represent the marginal effects of the change in concentrated affluence on neighborhood integration type, holding all other covariates at their mean level.

classification typology are robust.[20] Second, we estimate our multinomial models using the neighborhood typology based on 2020 Census rather than the 2015–2019 ACS (see table A.3). This replicates our main findings in table 3, with two differences. Concentrated disadvantage is not significantly associated with White-integrated suburban neighborhoods but is positively associated with fully integrated areas in the suburbs in 2020 (see the boldface coeffi-

20. Despite 2020 Census tract boundaries changes, we were able to match 92 percent of 2020 tracts to 2019 tracts in the New York metro area. The 2020 Census regression models show about four hundred fewer tracts than the sample based on the 2015–2019 ACS. This resulted in slight percentage distribution changes between figure 2 and figure A.2.

cients in table A.3). However, the differences are both minor and the findings are substantively similar.

Results may differ based on the relative threshold for neighborhood classification. According to Logan and Zhang, the 50 percent threshold is the "most demanding" and the "strictest" (2010, 1105–6). This is precisely why we use this higher threshold: it is a more conservative estimate of neighborhood integration. With a lower threshold, a census tract can be classified as integrated (White integrated, minority integrated, or fully integrated) despite having a lower share of a given ethnoracial group defined as being present. How robust are the findings in regard to the specification of this threshold? To address this concern, we calculate the neighborhood typology distribution based on Logan and Zhang's (2010) 25 percent threshold. We present these findings in figure A.3. Relative to figure 2, which is based on the 50 percent threshold, we see a high share of integrated neighborhoods—especially fully integrated tracts—and a lower share of nonintegrated ones for cities and suburbs in 2000 and 2019. Specifically, the 25 percent threshold results in more neighborhoods being classified as integrated, overstating the extent of neighborhood integration.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article examines recent trends in immigrant suburbanization emphasizing the spatial concentration of major ethnoracial groups in New York metropolis. Our contributions are both conceptual and empirical. First, we develop a neighborhood typology to capture racial integration and suburban diversification. Second, we document recent spatial trends in a major immigrant gateway metropolis in a period that witnessed significant immigrant suburbanization.

To be sure, the suburbs were never as homogenous as popular imaginations have made them out to be. As L'Heureux Lewis-McCoy and his colleagues (2023, this issue) convincingly argue, suburban nostalgia has contributed to this perception of suburbs as idyllic, and suburban erasure has rendered invisible the experiences of minority residents in the suburbs. Yet we find that ethnoracial diversification has intensified and spread across metropolitan New York, reshaping and reshuffling ethnoracial composition in both cities and suburbs. From 2000 to 2019, the number of nonintegrated tracts decreased dramatically, but this decline is similar in magnitude in suburbs and in cities in New York. This lends support for the first part of hypothesis 1a (overall decline of nonintegrated tracts), but not the second prediction—that such a decline would be more dramatic in suburban tracts. In 2000, one in four tracts in cities and suburbs were nonintegrated; by 2019, one in five tracts were.

In 2019, 83 percent of all nonintegrated suburban tracts were predominantly White. In contrast, nonintegrated city tracts were essentially split between Black (52 percent) and White (35 percent). These findings lend support for the first part of hypothesis 1b, but not the second part—that nonintegrated neighborhood in cities are more likely to be Black and Hispanic. Only 8 percent of nonintegrated tracts in cities are predominantly Hispanic. This is in fact surprising given the perceptions that cities are more integrated and that nonintegrated White neighborhoods have been on the decline for half a century. This might be true for many parts of New York City, but not for other principal cities in the New York metropolitan area.

In 2019, the majority of integrated suburban tracts were White integrated and one in eight integrated were fully integrated, lending support to the first part of hypothesis 1c, that integration in suburbs is more likely to result in White-integrated or fully integrated neighborhoods. In fact, the share of fully integrated suburban tracts is three times higher than that of fully integrated city tracts in 2019. However, we find mixed evidence for the second part of hypothesis 1c, that minority-integrated neighborhoods are prevalent in cities. Although the share of minority-integrated city tracts (31 percent) is twice as high as that of minority-integrated suburban tracts (15.8 percent), the surprise is the prevalence of White-integrated city tracts (46 percent)—the most prevalent type of integrated neighborhoods in cities.

The impacts of concentrated immigration, affluence, and disadvantage on neighborhood

racial integration are broadly consistent across suburbs and cities. This consistency suggests that mechanisms for neighborhood sorting, segregation, and integration are more similar across urban and suburb areas. Instead of divergent trajectories in cities and suburbs, we document significant convergences in neighborhood racial integration over time. Moreover, our findings point to three broad patterns.

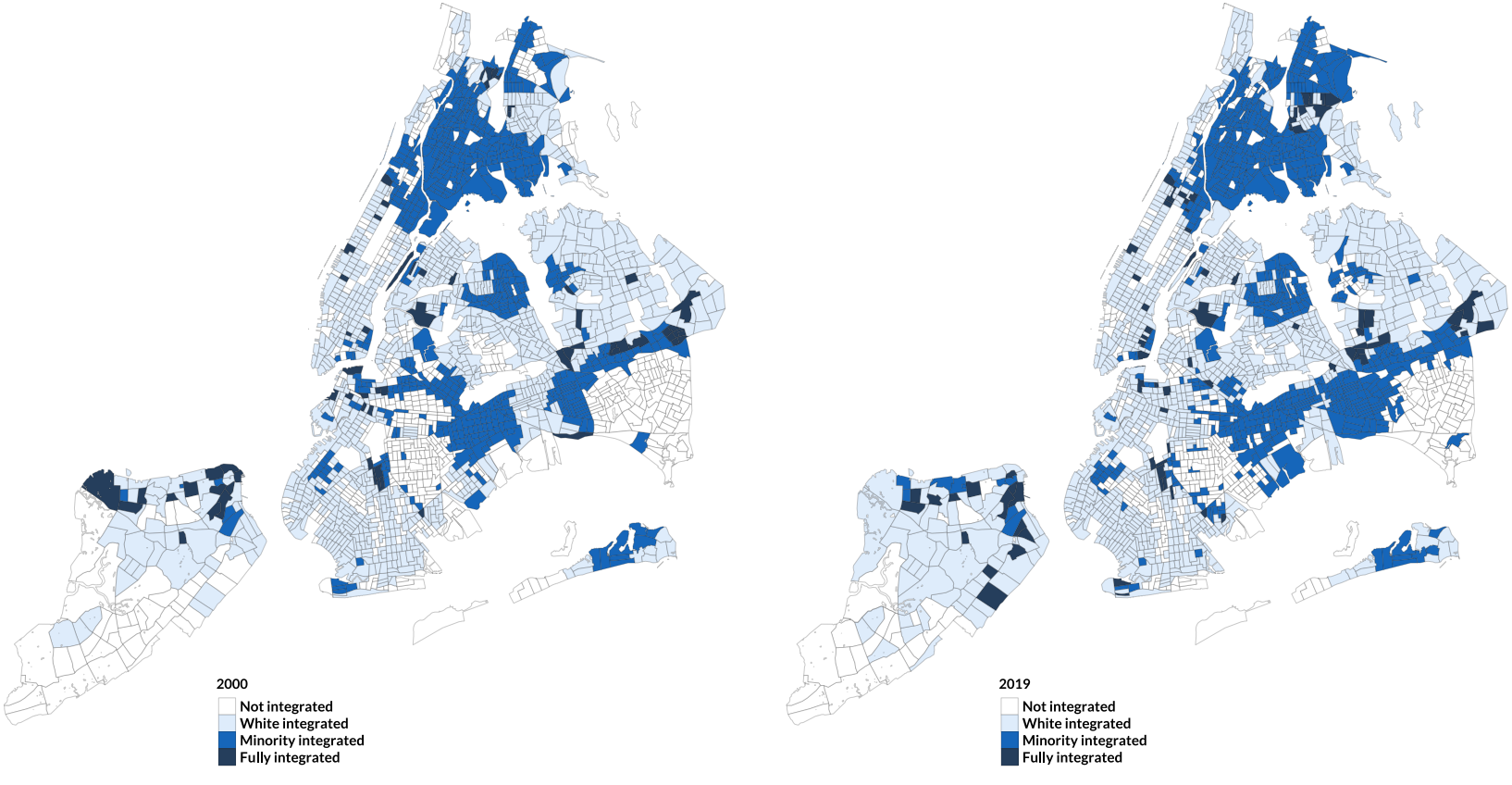
First, the role of immigration is the most consistent in both cities and suburbs. Beyond an initial surge of immigrants into suburbs that triggered significant demographic shifts there in the 1990s and early 2000s, cities and suburbs have seen similar declines in nonintegrated neighborhoods and increases in White-integrated neighborhoods over time. This lends support for hypothesis 2a—that concentrated immigration is associated with higher levels of racial integration in suburbs and cities, and that the impact of immigration on suburban neighborhood integration is stronger in 2000 than in 2019. Moreover, White-integrated areas in both cities and suburbs are the dominant form of neighborhood integration, neighborhoods being most likely to be White-integrated at mean levels of immigration, disadvantage, and affluence in 2019.

Second, neighborhood disadvantage and affluence reshape racial integration in opposite directions. At the highest levels of neighborhood disadvantage, neighborhoods are most likely to be minority integrated and least likely to be White integrated in cities and suburbs. The urban poverty literature has established that this pattern holds in cities, given the highly segregated nature of disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. That this pattern applies to suburbs confirms the recent spread of poverty and growth of disadvantaged areas from the more distressed suburbs to traditionally affluent suburban areas (Kneebone 2017). These findings support hypothesis 2b—that disadvantaged neighborhoods are often minority integrated in suburbs and cities, given higher concentrations of minority populations in such neighborhoods.

Third, the most affluent neighborhoods are often ones with significant shares of Whites, regardless of suburban and city locations. This lends support to the second but not the first part of hypothesis 2c, that affluent neighborhoods are more likely to be nonintegrated in suburbs whereas affluent neighborhoods are more likely to be White integrated in cities. Quite the contrary, we find that at the mean level of concentrated affluence, the probability of a given neighborhood classified as White integrated is very high in both suburbs (60 percent) and cities (60 percent).

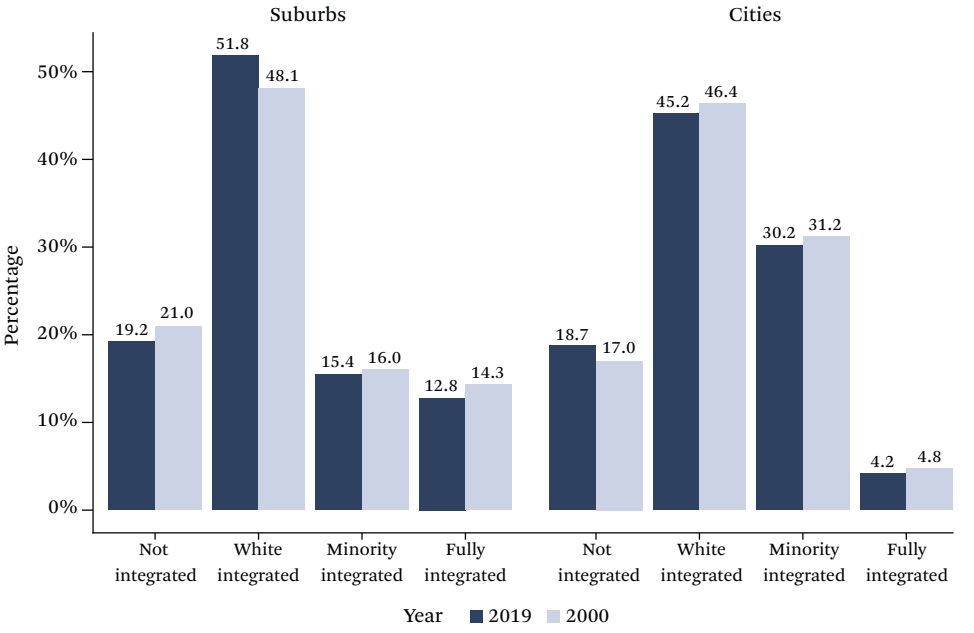
We end with suggestions for future research. Our typology for classifying neighborhoods by integration level is broadly applicable to other analyses of neighborhood change. A modified version of Logan and Zhang (2010), our typology is more parsimonious and helps identify spatial trends without missing the forest for the trees. Future research applying our neighborhood classification typology to other metropolitan areas with similar immigration patterns (such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston) might compare trajectories of neighborhood integration over time given the distinctive history of immigration and composition of immigrant flows in each region of the country (Lichter, Thiede, and Brooks 2023, this issue). As scholarship on suburbs increases, research could differentiate among types of suburbs—inner, outer, and fringe (Lichter, Thiede, and Brooks 2023, this issue) and examine differences in integration patterns between and within suburbs (Owens and Rich 2023). Finally, heterogeneity is significant in residential patterns by ethnicity within a given U.S. racial category. Future research on the concentrations of ethnic groups from specific origins among Asians, Blacks, or Hispanics could yield new insights into the overlapping and overlaying nature of ethnic, panethnic, and racial spatial integration in an increasingly multiethnic U.S. society.

Figure A.1. Neighborhood Racial Integration in New York City, 2000–2019



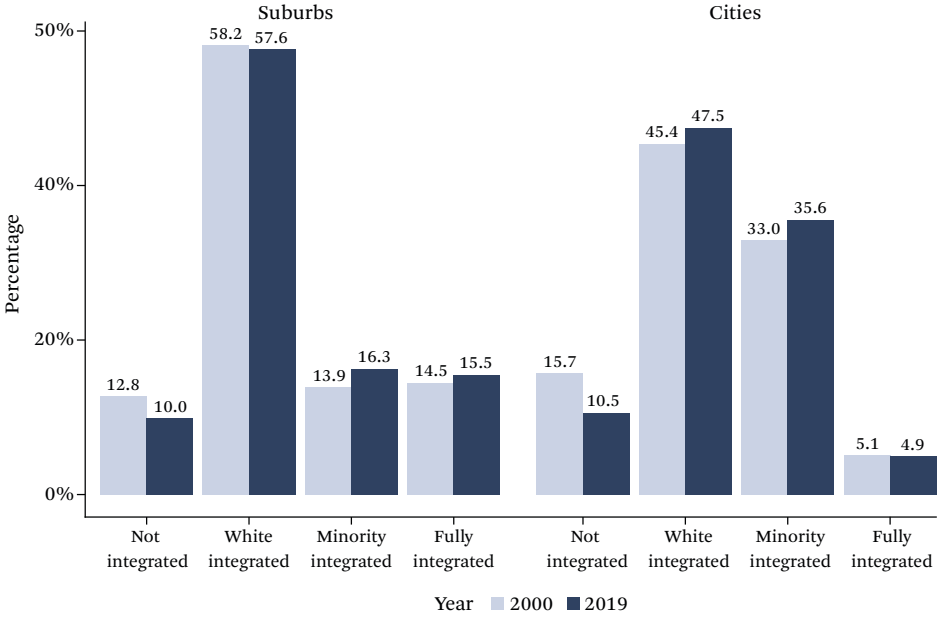
Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Figure A.2. Neighborhood Typology Comparison In Metropolitan New York, 2015–2019 ACS versus 2020 Census



Source: Authors' calculations based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003) and 2015–2019 ACS (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Figure A.3. Neighborhood Typology in Metropolitan New York Based on Logan and Zhang's 25 Percent Threshold, 2000–2019



Source: Authors' calculations based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and 2015–2019 ACS (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

Table A.1. Transition Matrix for Tract Racial-Ethnic Composition for Suburban Tracts in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019

Tract category in 2000	Tract Category in 2019															
	A	H	B	W	WA	WB	WH	WHA	WBA	WBH	BA	BHA	HA	WBAH	BH	Total
A	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
H	0	19	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	25
B	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	12	0	28
W	0	0	0	285	48	22	94	28	6	7	0	0	0	0	6	496
WA	0	0	0	39	263	6	18	89	27	6	1	0	1	0	18	468
WB	0	0	0	6	0	9	1	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	3	28
WH	0	2	0	7	2	2	46	19	1	29	0	0	1	0	8	117
WHA	0	4	0	1	17	0	24	151	4	16	0	3	9	0	84	313
WBA	3	0	0	4	9	5	1	2	27	1	8	1	0	0	18	79
WBH	0	1	0	2	0	4	7	3	0	46	0	2	0	9	11	85
BA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
BHA	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	33	1	35	6	83
HA	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	2	19
BH	0	9	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	11	0	138	1	173
WBAH	0	1	0	3	3	4	6	12	12	32	1	35	1	17	114	241
Total	4	47	22	347	343	52	199	305	81	149	18	89	20	212	271	2,159

Source: Authors' tabulation based on U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).
Note: Only tracts with populations greater than five hundred.

Table A.2. Transition Matrix for Tract Racial-Ethnic Composition for City Tracts in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019

Tract Category in 2000	Tract Category in 2019															
	A	H	B	W	WA	WB	WH	WHA	WBA	WBH	BA	BHA	HA	BH	WBAH	Total
A	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
H	0	12	0	1	0	0	12	1	0	2	0	0	2	8	0	38
B	0	0	197	0	0	25	0	0	5	9	15	12	0	51	1	315
W	0	0	0	115	36	2	36	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	201
WA	4	0	0	25	261	1	5	101	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	402
WB	0	0	10	0	0	9	0	0	3	5	3	0	0	3	2	35
WH	0	3	0	4	13	0	63	12	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	101
WHA	6	2	0	7	37	0	18	205	2	5	0	5	50	2	25	364
WBA	0	0	7	0	3	4	0	5	4	0	1	0	1	0	1	26
WBH	0	1	0	2	3	4	6	4	1	21	1	2	1	18	10	74
BA	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	4	0	2	0	17
BHA	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	8	58	7	13	6	98
HA	8	3	0	0	2	0	3	8	0	0	4	5	65	1	0	99
BH	0	10	9	0	0	6	2	3	0	43	2	28	2	309	9	423
WBAH	0	0	0	0	7	1	1	8	3	11	1	13	3	3	40	91
Total	21	35	228	154	363	54	146	358	23	100	38	127	133	411	97	2,288

Source: U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).
Note: Only tracts with populations greater than five hundred.

Table A.3. Multinomial Logistic Regressions of Neighborhood Integration Types in Suburbs in Metropolitan New York, 2000–2019

	Neighborhood Typology Based on 2020 Census		
	White Integrated	Minority Integrated	Fully Integrated
Concentrated immigration	1.766***	4.029***	2.416***
	(0.30)	(0.95)	(0.46)
Concentrated disadvantage	0.750	2.214**	0.499*
	(0.17)	(0.67)	(0.14)
Concentrated affluence	1.906***	1.050	1.410*
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.20)
Population	1.000***	1.000*	1.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Logged population density	0.591***	0.377***	0.582**
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.12)
Median age	1.008	0.929**	0.973
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Gini coefficient	0.216	0.011	0.038*
	(0.29)	(0.03)	(0.06)
% Owner-occupied housing	1.000	0.988	0.986*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
% Multigenerational households	1.141**	1.452***	1.242***
	(0.05)	(0.09)	(0.06)
% Immigrated before 1990	0.969***	0.961***	0.968***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intercept	6.802*	367.916***	70.850***
	(5.86)	(548.49)	(78.34)
N of tracts		1,898	
AIC		3,709.0	

Source: U.S. Census 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003) and ACS 2015–2019 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).
Note: Reference group is nonintegrated tracts. Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

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PART II

Housing

Intersectionality Matters: Black Women, Labor, and Households in Black Suburbia

ORLY CLERGÉ

The number of Black suburbs has expanded since the 1960s, however, research on gender and how Black women contribute to their formation is understudied. Grounded in an intersectional framework, this article places women at the center of the analysis of Black suburban life. Using a multisite ethnography conducted during the Great Recession, I make a case for a Black diasporic suburb model and analyze the labor and household practices Black women use to sustain their families' suburban lives. This article generates new insights into the heterogeneity of and Black suburbs in general, and the dynamic culture and economies of Black suburban women, in particular. Thus it contributes to new thought in Black feminist geography and the sociology of suburbs.

Keywords: Black suburbs, intersectionality, women, work, diaspora

This article examines understudied Black suburbs from the perspective of the middle-class Black women who shape them.[1] A new Great Migration is occurring (Wiese 2004). Black Americans and Black immigrants have been uprooted from unaffordable cities and migrated to older suburbs in the Northeast and Midwest and to newer suburbs in the South (Clergé 2019; Johnson 2014; Lacy 2007, 2016). Black suburbs range from low-income suburbs on the edge of urban centers to affluent exurban areas. Researchers have examined Black suburbs (Johnson 2014; Lacy 2007; Lewis-McCoy 2014), but few have investigated how gender and national origin intersects with race and class to shape Black women's experiences in suburbia.

Although stark racial and gender inequities persist in the U.S. economy, some Black women have attained a level of education and income that put them in the middle class (Malveaux 2013; Simms and Malveaux 1986), facilitating their and their families' suburbanization. Despite these economic and geographic shifts,

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1. By Black, I refer to women who identify themselves as belonging to the Black racial category and are the descendants of racial slavery in the United States and the Caribbean.

media coverage of the 2020 presidential campaign emphasized the significance of White suburban voters, particularly White suburban women, to the outcome of the election. Black suburbs and the women who live there were rendered invisible in this national conversation. Yet exit polls demonstrated that the margin of victory for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, the first Black and Asian woman vice president, came from Black women voters, who are the most loyal sector of the Democratic Party base, and from voters in suburbs of color in swing states such as Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Michigan (Lung-Amam 2020).

To encourage more attention to the unique experiences of Black suburban women with overlapping inequities of racism, sexism, nativism and classism, this article applies an intersectional framework (Collins 1990, 2015). Using a multisited suburban ethnography conducted in the wake of the Great Recession, this article places women at the center of the analysis of Black suburban life. It shows that their labor and housing practices are heterogenous, very few of them resembling the conventional models of White, native-born, and middle-class suburbanites. I make a case for a Black diasporic suburb model and analyze the varied occupational, entrepreneurial, and household formation strategies Black women use to sustain their homes, families, and communities in these suburban spaces. This article generates new insights into the heterogeneity of suburbs in general, and Black suburbs in particular. Consequently, it expands the sociology of suburbs and Black feminist geography.[2]

LITERATURE

As reflected in the literature, racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia all shape the configuration and meanings of space. These forms of inequality are at the core of how suburban space has been constructed in the U.S. Black feminist geographers (McKittrick 2006) have demonstrated that Black diasporic communities have taken up urban spaces originally designed to reproduce the power of the dominant White, heterosexual patriarchal order, turning them into sites of struggle. The theoretical lens of intersectionality unveils what is often hidden in these spaces: the experiences of Black women as they encounter racism, sexism, classism, and nativism on the ground. This framework was developed by Black feminist scholars Kimberlé Crenshaw (1990) and Patricia Hill Collins (1990, 2000). Crenshaw, a legal scholar who confronted laws forbidding discrimination on the basis of race, sex, or national origin rather than any combination of these factors, coined the term intersectionality in order to account for the complex, multidimensional forms of oppression experienced by Black women in a White patriarchal society. This analytical praxis reveals and challenges the multiple, overlapping systems of power that articulate and legitimize domination (Crenshaw 1990). According to Collins, intersectionality is the "critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (2015, 2).

Intersectionality offers a framework for examining interlocking systems of oppression as they manifest in suburban as well as urban spaces. I build on the Black feminist origins of intersectionality by placing the experiences of Black women in the center of the analysis of Black suburban life. Historically, Black women's experiences of work have encompassed their bodies, labor, and places of residence. Black women's long history in America began with their enslavement and exploitation as laborers and breeders for more than three hundred years. Then, under racialized industrial capitalism, they were employed and undercompensated mainly as cooks, cleaners and laundresses and seasonal laborers. They have continued to do care work in the neoliberal capitalist era, but those who have become

2. A Black feminist geography is the study of the distinctive intersecting racial, gender, and class inequities that shape the distribution of Black women across rural, urban and suburban geographical spaces. This study is also concerned with understanding how Black women engage in emancipatory practices to free themselves from these inequities.

middle-class professionals also do corporate mammy work (Collins 1990). As Black women labor has changed over time, so have their households and geography shifted.

Black Women's Suburban History

Black women's work, families and households, and location within the United States were radically transformed after the turn to the twentieth century. During the Great Migration (1910–1970), millions of Black men and women escaped the South. Large numbers of Black women left the violent racial and sexual abuses of Jim Crow and the dead-end work of sharecropping, field labor, and domestic servitude in the rural South (Hine 1997; Chatelain 2015). Northern migrants moved into jobs in industry and the service sector in growing cities such as Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago (Du Bois and Eaton 1899). During this period, Black women continued as domestics for White women, but more of them did day's work and lived outside rather than in their employer's household, so they attained greater autonomy from white coercion and abuse.

Black women also migrated to Northeastern and Midwestern suburbs during this prewar period, although this trend has often gone unnoticed. Andrew Wiese's (2004) study of Black suburbs, which places gender at the center of the analysis, argues that Black women had distinct suburban employment and migration patterns from Black men until the 1960s.[3] For example, industrial suburbs in the Midwest were initial magnets for migrant Black men, who became steelworkers in the 1920s. Black women, however, worked largely as domestics and lived in Black service- and working-class suburbs. These suburban areas were the home base of domestic workers employed by affluent suburban Whites seeking leisured lifestyles. Black families often built their own suburban homes and communities from the ground up in these segregated and unequal suburbs. This is in part the result of Blacks being denied access to loans, but also their desires to create suburban communities that resembles the extended family communities, large homes, and rural lifestyles they left behind in the South.

As suburban development expanded after World War II, public policies and private actions on the part of Whites combined to ensure that Black American families, both working-class and middle-class, were prohibited from buying into "lily White" suburbs. Racial exclusion from suburban housing was not simply an outcome of practices of developers like Levitt and Sons, who built Levittown on Long Island, but also a well-orchestrated strategy of local, state, and federal governments in cooperation with banks (Rothstein 2017). The denial of mortgages to qualified non-White buyers, legacies of racially restrictive covenants on land and houses, racist real estate practices, and White violence locked Black men and women out of suburbs and segregated them into small, densely populated areas near city centers. Those who worked in affluent suburbs were barred from living there. Instead, they were confined to inferior housing in unincorporated, neglected suburban areas adjacent to the White suburbs they serviced. Homeownership is the primary source of wealth accumulation in the United States. Therefore, racism in lending and access resulted in White Americans amassing an average level of wealth that is ten times higher than that of Black Americans overtime (Darity et al. 2018).

The civil rights movement's freedom fighters such as John Lewis and Diane Nash sought to dismantle the racial caste system that had relegated Black women and men to insecure, low-paying occupations, and demanded the desegregation of workplaces, schools, the ballot, and neighborhoods by organizing boycotts and mass demonstrations, bringing political pressure on federal and state lawmakers, and filing legal suits. The federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 barred racial discrimination in housing, challenging the exclusionary practices of suburban housing markets.[4] Larger numbers of African Americans attained college and professional or advanced degrees, and entered

3. As Wiese states, "If the shadow of race was clear in patterns of suburban settlement, the distinctive nature of Black employment also shaped a highly gendered process of suburbanization" (2004, 50).

4. Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq. (1968).

into previously all-white private and public sector employment. Although many Black women remained in service occupations, greater numbers earned college degrees and gained access to higher paying service or clerical jobs and to professional positions. In New York City, Black American women left domestic work and pursued public- and private-sector employment opportunities. Black immigrant women transitioned from work in homes to hospitals (Model 2008).

This post–civil rights movement advance in the incomes of some women while others were segregated into low-wage jobs reshaped Black urban and suburban geographies. The emergence of greater occupational diversity and class stratification in the Black community expanded the Black middle class and Black suburbs.[5] The majority of Black people in the United States today live in suburbs (Frey 2011). Black families move mainly to predominantly Black suburbs, or suburbs with substantial proportions of Black and Brown residents. In 2018, the hundred largest metropolitan areas included 418 Black suburbs, which made up "5 percent of all suburbs and [was] a fivefold increase since 1970" (Douds, Lewis-McCoy, and Johnson 2021, 1). For example, the proportion of Black families living within the New York City boundaries has decreased significantly. They have been uprooted by the high cost of living of urban areas, often as Black neighborhoods are gentrified, or seek larger homes and a better quality of life. They move to suburban settings on the outskirts of the city or to older suburbs in Nassau County (Clergé 2019). New York's suburbs saw a 30 percent increase in the number of Black families between 1990 and 2010.[6] These trends are a part of a national, decades-long suburban migration of Black families (Johnson 2014).

SETTINGS

The data for this article emerge from a multisite ethnography conducted between 2008 and 2016 in two areas I call Cascades and Great Park,[7] which are among the hundreds of middle-class suburbs where multinational Black communities have formed (Wen, Lauderdale, and Kandula 2009). I spent two and half years living in Cascades, in the borough of Queens, and Great Park, in Nassau County, carrying out participant observation and conducting interviews. Realtors advertise Cascades as a "suburb with city taxes," emphasizing its unusual combination of predominantly single-family housing with relatively low property taxes. I define Cascades as a suburb because its residents identify it as suburban and contrast it with the dense urban areas where many had previously lived. Its proximity to Nassau County blurs the lines between it and Long Island. In fact, many parts of eastern Queens were constructed as suburbs by developers interested in luring White families in Manhattan to their new suburban style communities in the mid-twentieth century and its suburban character has persisted with the arrival of Black diasporic families. Great Park, is an inner ring suburb. Nassau County operates independently of surrounding local governments, and its tax structure funnels capital into the municipality. The analysis that follows shows that Black women are central to the functioning of these areas.

Cascades: Suburb in the City

Cascades is a predominantly Black middle-class suburban area in the racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse borough and county of Queens. In 2008, when I started this project, the population of Cascades was more than 75 percent Black and 40 percent foreign born. Its residents were well educated; more than 25 per-

5. Despite these advancements, Black women across class remain underemployed, underpaid, and experience significant abuse on the job. As Collins reminds us, "U.S. Black women may have migrated out of domestic service in private homes, but as their overrepresentation as nursing home assistants, day care aides, dry cleaning workers, and fast-food employees suggests, African American women engaged in low paid service work is far from a thing of the past" (2000, 46).

6. The rate of increase varied by nationality: African Americans increased by 16.8 percent, Afro-Caribbean immigrants by 87.6 percent, and African immigrants by 74.9 percent (Logan and Stults 2021).

7. Cascades and Great Park are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of my interviewees.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Cascades, Queens County, Great Park, Nassau County, and New York City

	Cascades	Queens County	Great Park	Nassau County	New York City
Median household income (dollars)	70,174	56,780	82,315	97,049	51,746
Black (dollars)	71,148	58,527	91,872	81,215	41,589
Asian (dollars)	73,493	55,207	105,481	116,673	55,090
Latinx (dollars)	69,112	50,710	58,701	70,525	36,022
White (dollars)	54,848	62,491	89,526	102,404	71,851
College educated (percent)	27.0	29.9	31.6	41.4	34.0
Management-professional (percent)	29.3	31.3	35.5	43.2	38.1
Owner-occupied housing (percent)	66.2	44.5	74.1	81.3	81.3
Poverty rate (percent)	7.3	11.6	7.3	4.0	16.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2012b (2009 inflation-adjusted dollars).
Note: Poverty rate is the percentage with incomes below the national average.

cent of adults held bachelor's or associate's degrees (see table 1). Almost 30 percent were employed as professionals or managers. The median annual household income in Cascades was higher than that of White and Latinx residents of Queens and even higher relative to the median income of all U.S. households. The generations of Black families who moved from tenements or high-rise buildings in the boroughs to single-family homes here felt that they had significantly improved their situation. Residents work throughout the metro on various work shifts in diverse occupations and industries. Interviewees included nurses, engineers, transportation workers, postal workers, small business owners, accountants, service workers, and teachers.[8] Cascades is a hypersegregated space. Queens County was 17.7 percent Black, but more than 75 percent of its Black population was clustered in Cascades (U.S. Census Bureau 2012a). Immigrants made up a slightly lower proportion of Cascade's residents than in Queens County, but much higher than in New York City.

Great Park: Out on the Island

Over the past twenty years, as poor, low-income, middle-class, and affluent families of color have been pushed or chosen to move to the suburbs, Nassau County has experienced unprecedented racial and class segmentation (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2012). On paper, Great Park is a racially integrated space, with a population roughly one-third Black, one-third Latinx, and one-third White. However, its Black population is concentrated in the northern sections and is multinational. The White population has declined precipitously over the past twenty years. In 2012, the median household income of Great Park was higher than that of Queens and Cascades but lower than Nassau County as a whole. Relative to the national median household income, however, Great Park residents are affluent.[9] Great Park is considered a bedroom suburb; residents commute to work elsewhere in the county or in New York City. On workday mornings, Volvo Crossovers, Mercedes SUVs, and Honda minivans fly down the main street onto the highways heading west. Residents are

8. In the past, the Black middle class largely relied on public-sector jobs, such as with the U.S. Postal Service, but the Republican and neoliberal attack on government since the 1980s has led to a large reduction of these opportunities and a decline in the conditions of employment they offer. Being a postal worker was a solid middle-class job in the mid-twentieth century. It is no longer.

9. Some parts of Great Park are more affluent than others. In 2010, the western section's median household incomes were $99,872 and $95,673, and that of the eastern section was $69,081 (American Community Survey 2012).

employed in health care, public service, business, construction, and professional and managerial occupations. Black residents work in a range of fields: as technology specialists, nurses and doctors, engineers and small business owners and have earned associates and bachelors degrees at the city and state's public universities, which have enabled them to rise into the middle class.

For Black Americans and Black immigrants, owning a home in Great Park is the culmination of years of learning, earning, and saving. Parents work constantly to meet mortgage and tuition payments. Many are still paying off substantial debts for their own college educations well into their forties and fifties. What separates Great Park from Cascades is property taxes. Nassau County residents pay property taxes that can exceed $20,000 per year. The combination of high taxes and high mortgages prohibits many families from living here and puts financial pressure on those who do. What sets Black families apart from their White neighbors, however, is that they must pay what is colloquially called a Black tax: they have to earn more to live in a suburb where Whites earn less than they do, and many pay more to live in overpriced homes that they purchased as housing prices were rising before the 2008 housing market crash.

Over the course of ten years, I returned to these neighborhoods to remain in contact with residents and pay attention to the transformations occurring there. Thick descriptions of social practices in these spaces were complemented by sixty in-depth interviews with Black middle-class adults, the majority of whom were the parents of teenagers whom I also interviewed for a separate project. Forty-three of these interviewees identified as women. I was invited to social events and private parties but, most important for this article, into their homes where I witnessed and documented their living arrangements and activities of everyday life.

Although the participant observation phases of this research allowed me to be in gender-mixed or single-sex spaces, the interview settings were anchored in gender norms. I gathered more narratives from women than from men. I was a young woman in a world of middle-class men and woman, many but not all of whom were husbands and wives. When a woman "hangs out" with men, their conversation and interaction is perceived in socially defined ways (Lacy 2007). After explaining who I was and why I wanted to speak with them, men were reluctant to set up one-on-one conversations with me. Instead, they often told me that their wife had to be a part of the meeting, to which I readily agreed. At other times, I was instructed to get in touch with their wife and schedule a time to talk with her and their teenage child. "Take my wife's number," they said. Doing research on relations of family and kin, class, and race necessarily involves many sensitive subjects, and interactions proceed through unspoken rules which become clear only through encounters in the process of fieldwork. Although both women and men were busy juggling their jobs and family responsibilities, women more often made themselves available to me for interviews. In the next section, I outline my findings on Black diasporic suburbs, how Black suburban women navigate work and housing in them, and explain why we should use intersectionality as a tool for examining suburban inequality.

FINDINGS

Cascades and Great Park are what I theorize as Black diasporic suburbs. A view into the experiences of the Black women and mothers who encounter intersectional oppression based on race, class, gender, and national origin in these spaces points to their two key distinctive characteristics: the histories and legacies of anti-Black American racism, and Black immigrant exclusion.

Anti-Black Racism

The residents of Black diasporic suburbs inherit the legacies of anti-Black policies in housing and development. For Black Americans, who were the first to desegregate Cascades and Great Park, buying suburban homes was a part of a long, intergenerational journey from the rural South to urban New York and then to a segregated suburb. Sarai, a Black American mother of two in her forties who is employed

as a financial manager, grew up on Long Island and moved to Great Park after marrying her husband, Jesse. She was the child of the early wave of Black Americans to leave Harlem and Brooklyn for the suburbs in the 1970s. Sarai's father, a successful financier, purchased a single-family suburban home. When her family arrived, Sarai was the only non-White child in her kindergarten class. By the fourth grade, the White girls and boys she had befriended had disappeared one by one and were replaced by Black children. Her narrative underscores the fact that the suburbs were sites of covert racial violence against Black boys and girls during desegregation. As an adult, Sarai has observed similar patterns in Great Park. Her White neighbors avoid interacting with her and her children, she is treated with suspicion in White-owned stores, and her son has been harassed by police at a nearby neighborhood park.

Sarai's encounters with racism on Long Island and in Great Park exemplify the histories of exclusion and marginalization that characterize Black diasporic suburbs, and her observations resemble the testimonies of other Black women (and men) I interviewed. These legacies continue to matter today. Public authorities disinvested in these communities as Black families moved in. For example, many residents noted that Cascades and Great Park received inferior government services relative to the Whiter neighborhoods and towns adjacent to them. Garbage removal had become less consistent over time. Mothers often pointed to the underfunding of local schools and the targeting of their children within them. Emergency services, too, had declined. Madeline, a Jamaican nurse in her fifties who lives in Cascades, observed that during snowstorms the government quickly sent salting machines and snowplows to Whiter areas even as a passenger bus remained stuck on her street for days after a blizzard.

Black Immigrant Exclusion

Cascades and Great Park are shaped by the substantial presence of Black immigrant households. Much of the research on Black suburbs overlooks the extraordinary migration histories and practices of their residents. Shifts in immigration patterns since the 1960s mean that many more immigrants now bypass cities and move straight to suburbs on arrival in the United States than ever before (Lacy 2016). Cascades and Great Park provide ample evidence that segregated suburbs are also multicultural diasporic spaces. Queens County residents hail from more than a hundred countries and ethnic groups; more than half of them speak a language other than English at home. Caribbean immigrants are the most significant pan-ethnic group in Jamaica, Queens (Lobo and Salvo 2013). In 2000, 75 percent of Jamaica, Queens' population was Black. Black Americans made up just 50 percent of its Black residents and Caribbean immigrants almost 25 percent (Logan and Mollenkopf 2003, 52). Haitians and Jamaicans are the largest ethnic groups. Those who identify as Hispanic (who may be of any race) are primarily from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Columbian diaspora, all of which include people of African descent.

Black immigrant women who live in the suburbs navigate a host of interconnected racial, class, and gendered inequities, as do Black American women. As Collins points out, "Women of African descent are dispersed globally, yet the issues faced may be similar. Transnationally, women encounter recurring social issues such as poverty, violence, reproductive concerns, lack of education, sex work, and susceptibility to disease. Placing Black American women's experiences, thought, and practice in a transnational, Black diasporic context reveals these and other commonalities of women of African descent while specifying what is particular to African American women" (Collins 2000, 29). Collins emphasizes the shared position of Black women on the global scale to examine how Black American and Black immigrant women encounter the common and differing inequities of racism, classism, sexism, and nativism in the same suburban space. Diasporic suburbs provide a unique field for researchers and policymakers to compare the two groups in the same suburban space rather than across national borders or in different urban settings. As this study shows, Black women with American and Caribbean backgrounds develop similar creative strategies for survival and success.

An important gendered inequity that all

Black women encountered but was more acutely problematic for Black immigrant women than for their U.S.-born counterparts was the instability of their husband's work and its impact on their family's housing in suburbia. Windsome, a Jamaican immigrant wife and mother of two who was employed in the public sector, struggled to keep her home from going into foreclosure. Windsome and her husband, Jimmy, had lived in their home for five years, purchasing the house in Cascades after living in the basement of their relatives' house for years after arriving in New York from Kingston, Jamaica. The day of our interview, she was in tears because her teenage daughter and son had recently discovered the foreclosure notices that she had been receiving for months. "I've tried to hide mail from them. I keep getting these notices from the bank. I don't know what to tell them, we might lose our home. I've been trying to work extra hours and it is so hard for my husband. We don't want the children to worry, but we can't hide this anymore."

The 2008 foreclosure crisis had a severe impact on families in Cascades and Great Park. Some of the highest rates of home loss occurred within their zip codes. Subprime mortgages targeted not only Black Americans (Carr 2007), but also Black immigrants, who were often unfamiliar with U.S. mortgage lending practices. Windsome's home came into foreclosure because her mortgage costs increased dramatically because of a sudden, steep rise in the interest rate. At the same time, her husband lost his blue-collar job amid large-scale layoffs during the Great Recession, reflecting the adage that Black men are "the last hired, and the first fired." Collins (2000) remarks that one of the main economic challenges for urban Black middle-class women is that their status is lower and their positions poorly paid, and that their husbands or partners may be offered higher-paying yet insecure jobs. This pattern of racialized and gendered economic inequality persisted in suburban area. Like many other families in New York suburbs, Windsome confronted the intersectional suburban inequalities that Black women face but whose stories are hidden behind data derived from large surveys. Her efforts to "save her home" demonstrate the interconnected layers of inequality based on race, gender, national origin, and class that Black mothers must navigate on behalf of their families.

Political Place-Making

Black U.S.-born and immigrant women use a host of sociopolitical resources to navigate the matrix of race, class, and gender discrimination they face, and some organize and engage in political action to combat racism and nativism in their suburbs. Angela, a second-generation Jamaican immigrant in her forties, ran for office in Great Park. She explained that she was tired of "the same old Italian or Irish guy" dominating suburban politics and failing to serve their Black constituents. She sought to ensure that Black families who paid taxes in Great Park had their interests represented. She was aware that she faced barriers that White women politicians did not. As she explained,

> My running mate on the ticket was White, and it was funny because all of our people were Black. So it was culture shock for her, but she realized what nice people we were. I had to mention my credentials. She doesn't have any. She might have gone and taken a class in Nassau Community College; other than just a high school degree, that's it. But she's respected. I had to prove myself. Then during the race she had family members who got in trouble with the law, with the police. It was kind of kept hush hush. But they . . . didn't go crazy, overboard with it in the race. But if it had been my family. I was probably the more qualified candidate, but she's one of them, you know. She knew the players, I didn't know the players. But I wasn't really involved in that end of things, you know?

Actively participating in politics added responsibilities to Angela's very busy life as a mom of teenage children, the daughter of aging parents, and an active member of her church community. She exemplifies Black women's activism in suburbia as she seeks to create social and political change in a municipality with a persistent pattern of White, male political leadership despite substantial proportions of Black and immigrant residents. Sarai, Windsome, and Angela's stories reveal that

when we center the experiences of Black women in suburbs, we recognize the distinctiveness of Black diasporic suburbs relative to Black suburbs, White suburbs, and Asian ethnoburbs (Li 1998, 1999). Three issues define Black diasporic suburban life: anti-Black racism, nativism and xenophobia, and political action. The intersection of these realities in the lives of Black women makes them rich spaces for further sociological exploration of the diversity of suburban life.

WORK, OCCUPATIONS, AND INCOME IN DIASPORIC BLACK SUBURBS

Black American and Black immigrant women have a fundamentally different relationship to work and occupations than Black men, White women, and White men (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1990). Black American women labored first as enslaved people and then as domestic servants to White families. Black immigrant women from the Caribbean, too, emerge from histories of enslavement, colonialism, and postcolonialism, but they are relative newcomers to the United States. Since the 1960s, the work opportunities and occupational prospects of both have expanded as discrimination in employment has been outlawed, but persists.

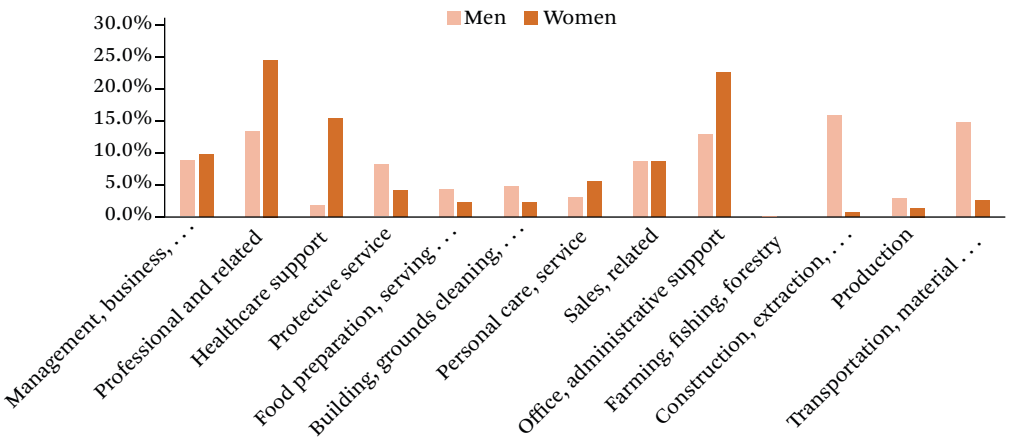
Black Women's Employment

Black women have more variegated occupational and earning profiles than ever before. They have made their way into jobs and professions in health care, finance, education, and nonprofit organizations that have made it possible for them (and often their partners) to buy into the suburban housing market in New York. But the numbers conceal salient features of Black suburban women's economic position. This study reveals two important findings about the world of work and occupations that animates Black diasporic suburbs. The first is related to gender and occupations, and the second to extending the notion of work to include what Black culture terms "side hustles" that Black suburban women engage in.

In terms of work, I found important dynamics between gender and occupation that differ from the typical model of the White middle class. The assumption is often that in middle-class suburban homes, the men hold blue-collar or white-collar jobs. As more White women entered the paid labor force in the 1980s, they, too, entered white-collar or pink-collar occupations. In Cascades and Great Park, however, the occupational patterns of Black middle-class men and women who were married or cohabitating were not straightforward. The occupations of Black women in Cascades and Great Park reported in the American Community Survey reflect the patterns I observed in the field. For example, women in Cascades were more concentrated in professional, health-care, and administrative occupations, and men largely in construction, transportation (see figure 1).

Family members in married, cohabiting, and intergenerational households often held jobs that might conventionally assign them to different classes. For example, in many cases women held white- or pink-collar jobs in gender-segregated fields while their husbands clocked in and out of blue-collar jobs every day (Vickerman 1999). For example, Paula, a Black American banker in her fifties, was married to Tony, a Black American school bus driver. Tony had worked for his bus company since the 1980s and recalled a time when the Irish dominated the occupation and Blacks in the city had a hard time "getting in." They have owned their home in Cascades since the 1980s, raised three children in their detached, single-family Tudor home, and were close to paying off their thirty-year mortgage. They planned to sell their house and move to Atlanta to join their eldest child after their youngest was settled in college. Other couples included the following wife-husband combinations: nurse and mechanic, counselor and foreman, and financial analyst and deliveryman. Given the gender differential in wages, some of the men with blue-collar jobs might have earned as much as or even more than their female partners with white-collar jobs. In an intergenerational Black American household, a grandmother was a teacher, a grandfather was a business owner, and a daughter was a banker. Through my observations and conversations, I realized that white-collar employment was too simple a requirement for being considered middle class. Instead, Black households gained middle-class incomes through complex combinations of varied occupations.

Figure 1. Occupation by Gender, Cascades, 2012



Source: Author's tabulation based on U.S. Census Bureau 2012b.
Note: The data presented is for all residents in Cascades. Because Cascades is predominantly Black, the assumption made is that the data largely reflects the experience of Black residents.

New York's leading economic position makes it a place where astronomical amounts of wealth are accumulated and circulated. As New York solidified its position as "richtropolis" where $25 million is considered "economy-class rich," Wall Street financiers and entertainers have become super rich. Across the Brooklyn and 59th Street Bridges, the managers and professionals who make up the city's middle class have incomes which have remained comparatively stagnant since the 1970s. This economic context has important implications for how we analyze occupation as a marker of status in Black diasporic suburbs. Although racial discrimination in the labor force has declined over the past fifty years, the racialized neoliberal economy has created new modes of exclusion along racial, gender, ethnic and class lines. This process is matched by chronic poverty and the reduction of pathways to mobility out of poverty such as public education and redistributive public policies.

In this context, Black suburbanites have found occupational and sectoral niches in order to get ahead in the labor market and to build and maintain their lives in some of the most expensive suburban counties in the country. The Black American middle class relies largely on public-sector employment. In Cascades, roughly a quarter of residents work in the public sector as teachers, police officers, and administration (see table 2), relative to 16 percent of the U.S. population as a whole (Hill 2020). The "good government job" has provided the incomes and security that have given Black families across the country a solid foothold in the middle class. This is largely the story of U.S.-born Blacks, though; their birthright citizenship has allowed them access to civil service occupations that are closed to noncitizen immigrants. Long waiting lists, the privatization of services, and attacks on unions decreases the prospects for public sector work for U.S.-born and naturalized Black people and their children.

The expansion of the private, nonprofit, and health-care industry since the 1970s has offered significant employment opportunities for Black New Yorkers. Black immigrant women have historically done care work in hospitals and homes (Foner 2001). Those working in hospitals have been able to secure well-paying, unionized jobs that allow them to enter the middle class and buy into the suburban housing market alongside their U.S.-born counterparts (Greer 2013). In 1990, among U.S.-born Blacks in New York City, one in four men and almost one in three women worked in the public sector (Model 2008). In contrast, more than

Table 2. Gender, Education, and Employment in Cascades and Great Park

	Cascades	Great Park
Gender		
Men	45.4	48.3
Women	54.6	51.7
College-educated		
Men	20.2	n/a
Women	26.8	n/a
Employed in public sector		
Men	24.7	16.1
Women	27.0	19.7
Employed in private sector		
Men	61.3	67.0
Women	53.9	63.5
Self-employed		
Men	6.8	11.6
Women	3.9	6.0

Source: Author's tabulation based on U.S. Census Bureau 2012.
Note: All figures are percentages.

one in three foreign-born Black women were clustered in health professions, and one in five worked in private hospitals as registered nurses, respiratory therapists, anesthesiologists, records managers, or chefs. By 2012, the proportion of foreign-born Blacks in health care had declined slightly.

Side Hustles and Entrepreneurship

The second important finding related to gender and work is that women in Black diasporic suburbs strategically engaged in side hustles to make ends meet. Although many outsiders assume that residents of middle-class suburbs typically hold one full-time, well-paying job, this was not the case for many interviewees. Examining singular occupations conceals the various streams of income that enable Black middle-class families to thrive in suburbia, particularly in expensive global cities like New York. Many mothers were working in formal positions, engaged in the unpaid, second shift at home, and also earned money from entrepreneurial activities.

If we rely on census data on those who report being self-employed, we miss the creative entrepreneurial labor of Black women in these suburbs, which in turn bolsters the culture and economy of their neighborhoods and towns. During my time in the field, I was invited to meetings that encouraged multiethnic Black families to engage in entrepreneurship and investment to liberate themselves from debt and gain financial freedom from their full-time jobs. "My goal is to become my own boss one day. I am starting with this small business on the weekends, and will see what I can do from there," said Katia, a nurse in her fifties who recently recruited women in her church as clients for her beauty and wellness business. My interviewees had one job that provided a regular income and benefits, but before the 2008 financial crisis their side hustles generated additional income to pay for home improvement projects, a newer car, private school tuition, sports or music lessons, summer camps, travel back home, or remittances.

Black American and immigrant women used their networks to recruit clientele for their small businesses. For example, Mary-Josette, a Haitian woman in her fifties, owned a beauty salon but was also did part-time social work. She provided informational support to newly arrived Haitian immigrants who were applying for Temporary Protected Status, and navigated online portals for others seeking to change their documentation status. She shared information about her services with those who came to her salon. Other parents held one full-time and another part-time job, worked multiple shifts at the same job, or engaged in seasonal work. One Jamaican mother was a real estate agent but also prepared tax returns from January to mid-April. Some nurses worked their regular hospital shifts but visited homebound sick and elderly patients on weekends through private agencies. Teachers taught summer or night school to upgrade their kitchen cabinets or "bless" their grandchild with a formal first communion celebration. Financial managers hosted investment meetings in their living rooms to present lucrative (sometimes pyramid) schemes to potential investors. I met a social worker, Renetta, who spent her evenings and weekends preparing cakes and catering desserts for birthdays, christenings,

anniversaries, graduations and showers of relatives, church family, friends, and a growing clientele in Brooklyn and Queens. "Baking has been my passion since I was a young girl. I learned many techniques from my grandmother when I visited her during the summers in South Carolina. Now I do it when I can, and make some extra cash," she told me. These side hustles often took place in informal, personal networks.

Cascades residents had easy access to their social networks, which were mainly local, whereas Great Park residents' networks more often centered in New York City proper. Cascades residents had more dense personal networks in their predominantly Black neighborhood and adjacent areas; Great Park residents lived in a racially integrated setting and often traveled longer distances to frequent neighborhoods and institutions in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Harlem, and Queens to connect with family, friends, and church family and complete tasks for their side hustles. Furthermore, a greater proportion of Cascades mothers were engaged in side hustles than Great Park moms. This was largely a function of income differences; mothers in Cascades earned significantly less than their counterparts in Great Park, and were more likely to have intergenerational and transnational households with significant financial needs.

Black suburban women responded to the limits of their take-home pay from formal work by harnessing their talents to earn more income in informal settings. This strategy was in part a response to the economic squeeze imposed by the Great Recession, but also belongs to a long tradition of making ends meet by Black women who have been historically locked out of well-paid, secure jobs. In Cascades and Great Park, Black families sought to maintain their homes and cars and often to pay for private school tuition, as well as other childcare and education-related costs. Their suburbanization was facilitated by the earnings from their main occupations, but their participation in side hustles helped them purchase material goods and services they would otherwise have to cut out of the family budget. For Black mothers in particular, who have always had to do the "patchwork" necessary to thrive in an anti-Black economy, the Great Recession required them to "work, work, work" to avoid falling out of the middle class and to pass their class status on to their children (Clergé 2022).[10] Although side hustles are not new among Black women, they would be seen as out of place in suburbs where residents are assumed to be comfortable financially. Although residential suburbs are seen as neutral spaces when it comes to employment and entrepreneurship, Black women's side hustles reflect both their marginalization in the job market and their ability to use their creative skills to generate additional income. Sometimes, their side hustles reflected their true passions, and their occupations were the jobs they did to earn "real income." Side hustles are a dynamic yet invisible labor Black women engage in, which has important implications for understanding suburban housing stability, cultural economies, and entrepreneurship for them, their families and communities.

BLACK DIASPORIC SUBURBAN HOUSEHOLDS

In addition to rethinking how we operationalize work and occupations in suburbia, we must also reconsider the household as a central category for Black middle-class families. When social scientists examine suburban households, they assume that the household is supported primarily by the labor of two adult spouses or partners, that their income is spent primarily to support the household and its dependent members, and that the nuclear family is the predominant household form. Black households in diasporic suburbs do not conform to this model because their extended kinship ties and practices of mutual aid, which are both economic necessities and cultural preferences, modify the boundaries and composition of households in significant and varied ways. Single parenthood, too, is not uncommon, but Black single parents often augment their households in ways that sustain the well-being of their children and relatives. The flexibility of family and household formation is a distinctive

10. This is a reference to the popular 2016 song "Work" by the artist Rihanna.

feature of Black suburban life as well as of Black urban life.

Remittances

In Cascades and Great Park, Black women's income from their occupations and side hustles were spent not only within their suburban household but also for households across borders. Black American women explained that they provided regular financial and material support to family members in other households within the United States, particularly the South. Black immigrant women, too, transferred money to lower-income family members in the Caribbean. These domestic and international remittances from Black suburban households demonstrate that these women have not left their households and families behind in their places of origin as they moved to New York and its suburbs, but instead have sustained financial ties with households elsewhere, forcing suburban scholars and practitioners to question the very category of the suburban household.

Black women whose families came from the U.S. South and Black women whose families came from the Caribbean employ similar ways of providing monetary and material support to their extended families. The need for remittances to family members in households across borders is well documented (Stack 1996; Cohen 2011; Bonner 2004; Itzigsohn 1995; Orozco 2002). Tara, a fifty-two-year-old Black American lawyer who lives in Great Park, sent money monthly to her grandmother in South Carolina to contribute to her transportation and medical expenses. When her parents were absent, Tara's grandmother raised and supported her in Harlem. When Tara graduated from the City University of New York, her grandmother returned South. Now that her grandmother needs help to make ends meet on her fixed income, Tara said, "I will do everything to help her. I would not be where I am today if it was not for my grandmother."

Black Americans' remittances to relatives elsewhere in the United States are the direct result of the racial wealth and wage gap that causes a higher proportion of Black Americans than Whites to need additional financial support to stay afloat. This assistance is facilitated by strong kinship and cultural ties within Black families, and greater financial responsibility is placed on upwardly mobile members of the family. "Informal forms of social support are important in the Black community. . . . Extended family members serve as key bastions of psychological and economic assistance, providing emotional support, money, childcare, housing and food to their relatives when necessary" (Chiteji and Hamilton 2002, 9). Researchers should analyze how money earned by suburbanites is distributed across households, calling into question the very idea of the independent household.

Cascades and Great Park's suburban commercial districts reveal that Black immigrant families engage in regular transfers of money and material goods to families and friends in the Caribbean. The institutions required to send capital and goods, such as Western Union, C.A.M., and shipping companies, are numerous in Black diasporic suburbs. For example, the Black woman–owned Marianni's Market sells Haitian spices, calling cards, music, and paysans-style clothing. The market is certified by C.A.M., the money transfer business for the Caribbean. Customers pay a nominal fee to wire money back home. The tools needed to facilitate the movement of material goods to the Caribbean such as large barrels are visible in grocery stores, convenience stores, and in some cases, on sidewalks in front of shipment businesses.[11] Although this is often assumed to be a urban immigrant phenomenon, my time in the field demonstrated that as Black immi-

11. Blue barrels are widely used by Caribbean immigrants to ship goods to loved ones in their home country. In these barrels, many of my interviewees packed blenders, foodstuffs, school uniforms, hair products, generators, and medical supplies for loved ones in Haiti and Jamaica. The crushing rates of inflation in Haiti and Jamaica make it too expensive to purchase basic goods in country. Suburban women and men pack these barrels a couple of times a year because it makes more economic sense for their transnational household structures, The sale of blue plastic bins and money transfer businesses in Cascades and Great Park facilitate a financial support system by which the diasporic Black middle class assists family members across borders.

grant women suburbanize, they continue to provide support to loved ones in the villages they left long ago, helping those households, communities, and countries remain afloat under crushing conditions of inflation, debt, political instability, and climate change.

Single-Parent Households

In addition to fostering households across borders, the women of Black diasporic suburbs formed and lived in single-parent and multigenerational households. The prevailing assumption in the scholarship and everyday life is that suburban households consist of conventional, two-parent, heterosexual families. In the field, however, I encountered Black mothers who were single, separated or divorced, and raising children. In Cascades, 37 percent of households were headed by married couples, 41.2 percent of household heads had never married, and 21.2 percent were separated, widowed, or divorced. Great Park had a higher proportion of married household heads (51 percent), and single women headed one in five households (U.S. Census Bureau 2012a). Lameek, a forty-four-year-old teacher and mother of one, was not married but had a good relationship with her child's father. She decided not to marry because of the many problems she faced while dating. She felt more comfortable and stable raising her daughter on her own because she felt that "men can be more trouble than they are worth. I have everything I need; so does my daughter."

These renderings of suburban household life in Black diasporic suburbia make sense if we see them through intersectional eyes. Collins reminds us that "in general, everything the imagined traditional family ideal is thought to be, African American families are not" (1990, 47). These patterns persist in suburbia. Single parenthood is often believed to be characteristically urban. Black poverty and inner-city ghettoization have often been blamed on the higher proportion of Black families headed by a single mother. My time in the field revealed that there is no one normative middle-class suburban household type. The diverse array of household composition requires us to forge new definitions of suburban families and households, which are altogether outside the culturally racist assumptions about Black families and Black women, in particular (Collins 2000).

Although postwar suburbs were designed to be spaces for White, middle-class, two-parent households, an intersectional lens on contemporary suburbs helps us recognize their heterogenous household structures. For example, almost one-third of the families I interviewed were unmarried adults with children. Their inheritances, incomes, and family organization facilitated middle-class lifestyles.[12] In Cascades and Great Park, single-parent families were most often headed by Black American and Black immigrant women, although I interviewed a few single and divorced fathers as well. For example, Avril, a forty-five-year-old college-educated high school teacher and the mother of a teenage son, owns the Cascades home her parents passed down to her. Juanita, a forty-eight-year-old divorced Black American tech manager, shares her Great Park home with her parents and three teenaged sons.

Multigenerational Households

Within diasporic suburbs, middle-class households were also intergenerational. In some cases, single mothers moved in with or took in their aging parents. Ayanna, a forty-eight-year-old Black American mother of two who works in the public sector, lived with her two parents in the Great Park home that she grew up in. She was married for ten years, but after her divorce and her father's bout with an illness, she decided it was best to move her and her sons in with her parents and take over responsibility for the home. Michelle, a fifty-three-year-old Jamaican financier and mother of two, purchased

12. The sociologists Lynda Dickson and Kris Marsh (2008) argue that declining rates of marriage and childbearing have created a larger number of Black middle-class households that consist of single persons living alone. The authors demonstrate that two-parent households with children are not always the norm. In 2000, for example, 11 percent of Black middle-class households were twenty-five to fifty-four-year-old single people living alone, nearly double the proportion in 1980. I argue that this redefinition of middle-class households should include both single-parent and multigenerational families.

a ranch-style home in Great Park so that she could accommodate her father, who was unable to use stairs.

Some two-parent families lived with grandparents as well. Antoinette, a Haitian nurse in her forties who resides in Great Park, flies her mother, Mary Paul, age sixty-five, in from Haiti once or twice a year. When Mary Paul arrives, she lives in the finished basement in their Tudor home. Mary Paul is able to go to the doctor for her annual checkup and watch over Antoinette's three children during school vacations while Antoinette and her husband are at work. In other households, adults share one- and two-family homes with their young children and aging parents year-round. The presence of grandparents not only shields the older generation from the financial stresses of aging and retirement, but also serves the needs of parents whose long hours or multiple jobs require them to spend a significant amount of time away from home. Coresident relatives are not only the most reliable source of childcare but also tend to share the parents' cultural values. Relying on a family member enables parents to avoid paying exorbitant sums for childcare and gives them more income to devote to their children's other needs. Single parents, one parent and an adult child, siblings, and cousins from urban areas come together to purchase homes and improve their residential situation.

The other significant household pattern among my respondents that calls for a rethinking of the dominant image of suburbia is the consistent presence of young adult children living with their parents.[13] The high costs of housing and college in New York meant that young adults who want to attend college or work in the city often stay at home well past the age of eighteen. Bernadette, a fifty-eight-year-old Haitian mother, allowed both her daughter and her son, who were in their twenties, to stay at home while they attended local colleges and started careers in the city. "It is not our culture to say 'oh you are eighteen, goodbye,'" Bernadette explained. The day I interviewed the family, her son was in between jobs, but was updating his room so it looked more suitable for an adult rather than a teenaged boy. After graduating, adult children continue to live in and contribute to the financial stability of the household. In other circumstances, their schooling or joblessness make them adult dependents. Nationally, one-third of eighteen- to thirty-six-year-olds live in their parents' homes; this arrangement is more common among Blacks than Whites (Fry 2016).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

If we see the socioeconomic and housing structures of suburbs through the eyes of Black women, what do we learn? First, Black women make significant contributions to Black diasporic suburbs. These suburbs are distinct from Black suburbs, White suburbs, and Asian and Latinx ethnoburbs because they have evolved from histories of anti-Black and anti-Black immigrant pattens of segregated labor and residence and are today occupied by Black Americans and Black immigrants seeking to claim suburban space. Black women use their cultural, economic, and political skills to maintain households within these suburbs as well as across regional and international borders. Black women maintain diasporic ties with families and households in the U.S. South, Haiti, and Jamaica, compelling sociologists of suburbs to rethink the category of the suburban household. My hope is the draw attention to the ways in which these labor and household patterns exist beyond the typical city.

Second, single-parent and multigenerational households are assumed to be concentrated in cities, and two-parent families are re-

13. In Cascades and Green Park, young adults who went away to reputable colleges and universities found lucrative jobs in the city or out of state. Others struggled to find jobs while in school or after graduation that would enable them to rent their own apartments. Many remained at home with their parents in order to manage the high cost of living in New York while getting started in their careers. This pattern is in sharp contrast with the middle-class American ideal of the transition to adulthood and intergenerational mobility. For Black as well as White families, this middle-class norm became increasingly impossible to achieve as the Great Recession and the student loan debt epidemic kept millions of high school and college educated young people from launching into adult independence.

garded as characteristic suburbs. However, Black diasporic suburbs encompassed heterogeneous household types. These households help Black suburban mothers and wives meet the needs of themselves and their family members for financial support and care. They help families to pool resources strategically so they can maintain financial and emotional stability. For example, living with grandparents allows mothers to save money on health-care and childcare. The larger square footage of suburban homes relative to city apartments make this arrangement feasible. Culturally, the suburban household is a domestic space where Black diasporic families can continue the practices of reciprocity, kinship, and community they share with Black diasporic groups globally. Black women and their families mold diasporic suburbs into places where they and their multigenerational families can survive and thrive, contribute to local economies, and pass on their class status and culture to their children.

In terms of work, households with married or cohabitating heterosexual couples often included individuals whose occupations were customarily associated with differing class positions. Many women worked in white-collar jobs in health care, primarily as nurses, or as educators; their husbands or partners were employed in blue-collar jobs in transportation and construction. This demonstrates that Black suburbanization is powered by families with a range of occupational backgrounds and flexible economic strategies. In terms of income, Black women's lives challenge assumptions about how middle-class suburbanites earn. Departing from the typical pattern of holding a single, full-time job, these women work multiple morning, day, afternoon, evening and night shifts to generate income. They also brought money into their households through side hustles, entrepreneurial activities related to producing and selling goods or services outside their formal occupation. The income allowed mothers, aunts, and daughters to purchase material goods for themselves or their homes that would otherwise be a luxury on their salary.

My hope is that by using a Black feminist frame, this article will help generate new paradigms of suburban life that reflect the intersectional lived experiences as well as political action to improve living conditions beyond the city. The findings presented here have important suburban, state, and federal policy implications. As evidenced by the dynamic work and household arrangements of Black suburban women, they and their families are balancing economic commitments, opportunities, and constraints inside and outside their suburban homes. A host of governmental and institutional supports are necessary to keep their households in suburbs and across borders afloat and thriving. Often suburbs are sites of political marginalization, overseen by small governments that lack the capacity or the political will to provide social programs that assist suburban residents (Johnson 2014). This article and issue aim to encourage urban and suburban governments to tailor policy and funding toward the needs of the growing Black migrant and immigrant communities whose diverse labor, earning, spending, entrepreneurship, families, households and cultures are integral to making suburbs more equitable.

The data explored in this article were collected before the election of Donald Trump as the forty-fifth president of the United States. Since then, I have remained in touch with Cascades and Great Park residents, and have seen firsthand not only the Black Lives Matter protests for racial justice, but also the attacks on Black and Brown immigrant communities by the Trump administration, the targeting of Asian Americans at the onset of COVID 19, and the pandemic, which has undermined the health of Black and Brown people and essential workers in suburban settings. Black suburban women have been crucial to ensuring that medical institutions stay open and their households and communities remain safe. They are the essential workers: transit workers, nurses and doctors, delivery people, grocers. They left their suburban homes in Cascades and Great Park to ensure that New York City and Long Island's vital institutions continued to function. Some, exposed to the virus on the job or at home, perished, now have long COVID, or have resigned. Therefore, as the federal government redesigns economic and social policies and local governments consider how to help families emerge from the economic and health devastation of the pandemic, we must look to socio-

economic needs of women of Black diasporic suburbs for blueprints of equitable and sustainable suburban futures.

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The Suburbanization of Eviction: Increasing Displacement and Inequality Within American Suburbs

DEVIN Q. RUTAN, PETER HEPBURN, AND MATTHEW DESMOND

The suburbanization of poverty in the United States coincided with surging housing costs and growing rent burdens. Although much of the existing literature on eviction focuses on housing insecurity and displacement in cities, there is good reason to suspect that it has become an equally common phenomenon in the suburbs. This study evaluates changes in the frequency of urban and suburban evictions over time across seventy-four large metropolitan areas. Multilevel models show that the number of suburban evictions has steadily risen over time, even as urban evictions have been stable. The cases of Cleveland, Seattle, and Tampa demonstrate that the increase in suburban evictions is concentrated in pockets of the suburbs. Additional analyses reveal large geographic and racial inequalities in suburban displacement.

Keywords: suburban poverty, eviction, neighborhood inequality, displacement

The geography of poverty in the United States has shifted dramatically over the last several decades. Whereas high-poverty neighborhoods were previously an urban phenomenon characterized by pockets of concentrated, often racially segregated disadvantage, poverty has since grown more diffuse. Most poor American households now live in the suburban periphery, particularly older inner-ring suburbs (Allard 2017). In this article, we analyze how the geography of eviction has and has not changed in response to these sociodemographic shifts. We ask three central questions. First, has eviction become more common in the suburbs as poverty rates have increased? Second, has the geographic concentration of eviction within suburbs shifted over time? That is, has there been a generalized shift in suburban eviction or is it concentrated in certain communities? Third, do Black and Latino suburban tenants face evic-

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tion more often than their White peers? Answering these questions allow us to both determine the trajectory of suburban evictions over time and, with an eye to the central theme of this volume, explore variation and inequality within and between U.S. suburbs.

To address these questions, we draw on the records of 5,611,800 eviction cases filed across seventy-four metropolitan areas between 2000 and 2016. We find that eviction counts have remained stable in urban spaces but increased significantly in suburbs. A sizable gap in evictions in typical urban and suburban neighborhoods in 2000 had narrowed by 2016. This has not played out uniformly across suburbs, however. Instead variation is considerable in the concentration of suburban eviction over time. We leverage the cases of Cleveland, Seattle, and Tampa to demonstrate how these patterns have played out differently across metropolitan contexts. We show that eviction cases have been increasingly concentrated in a subset of suburban neighborhoods, widening gaps between poor and affluent suburbs; we document large Black-White and Latino-White disparities in the risk of eviction in the suburbs. These disparities hold in many urban spaces as well but are as large or greater in the suburbs of many metropolitan areas in our sample.

Our findings bear implications for the study of poverty and housing stability. We offer evidence that those aiming to understand and address patterns of residential displacement in the United States must look beyond the urban core. Recent work has stressed the durable concentration of eviction in specific neighborhoods and even buildings (Rutan and Desmond 2021). This study offers a contrasting pattern: one in which sociodemographic shifts lead to changes in eviction patterns. The growing suburbanization of eviction calls for concerted, metropolitan-level policy response that aims to stabilize households at risk of eviction and mitigate growing inequalities between suburbs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The suburbanization of American poverty marks a fundamental sociodemographic shift in metropolitan population structure. Until the 1980s, low-income households were heavily concentrated in a small subset of urban neighborhoods (Jargowsky 1997; Massey and Denton 1993). The suburbs have always been more diverse than often presumed (Lewis-McCoy et al. 2023, this issue; Kruse and Sugrue 2006), but the suburban poor made up a relatively small share of overall poverty. Yet beginning in the 1990s, the suburban poor population began to grow substantially, both in absolute terms and as a share of all low-income metropolitan households (Kneebone and Garr 2010; Jargowsky 2003). Most poor individuals now live in American suburbs (Allard 2017). Although the growth in suburban poverty was originally more diffuse, the suburban poor are increasingly concentrated in certain neighborhoods, creating stark inequalities between pockets of poverty and affluence (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2012; Kneebone, Nadeau, and Berube 2011).

Despite clear evidence that suburban poverty has expanded, agreement is limited on why this may have occurred. Some scholars suggest that the decentralization of low-wage work has drawn poor households out from cities; others suggest that the phenomenon is driven primarily by households becoming poor in place as macroeconomic conditions deteriorate (Raphael and Stoll 2010; Cooke 2010). A third branch of thought points to the role that housing costs have played in pushing low-income households from high-cost urban markets and toward naturally occurring affordable housing in suburban communities (Rosenthal 2008; O'Flaherty 1996). The suburbs—particularly inner-ring suburbs with older housing stock—offer a potential reprieve from rising rents in cities. The draw of affordable housing is a particularly strong predictor of suburbanizing poverty in northeastern and midwestern metropolitan areas and among Black and Latino households (Howell and Timberlake 2014; Madden 2003). Yet tenants in metropolitan areas throughout the United States are experiencing record high levels of housing cost burden, including in places where incomes have fallen (Myers and Park 2019; Colburn and Allen 2018).

A growing number of suburban households are experiencing forms of material hardship that can pose unique challenges in these spaces—and that may put them at heightened

risk of eviction. Evictions are a form of residential displacement in which a landlord removes a tenant (renter) from their home, often through a legal court process. The millions of formal, court-ordered evictions that occur in the United States each year overwhelmingly stem from nonpayment of rent, meaning that they are a direct consequence of poverty and a dearth of affordable housing (DeLuca and Rosen 2022; Gromis et al. 2022). Eviction is a traumatic and destabilizing experience that can precipitate prolonged spells of homelessness and a series of downward moves into more hazardous housing and neighborhoods (Collinson and Reed 2018; Desmond and Shollenberger 2015). Losing one's home can cause absences from work, potentially leading to job loss and exacerbating instability and disadvantage (Desmond and Gershenson 2016). Eviction is associated with adverse health outcomes for everyone in the household, parents and children alike (Himmelstein and Desmond 2021; Hatch and Yun 2021). Displacement stresses not only individual households but also the surrounding community, amplifying threats to public health such as crime and infectious disease (Kirk 2021; Benfer et al. 2021). If eviction is indeed increasingly common in poor suburban neighborhoods, then it would likely intensify growing socioeconomic inequalities among suburban neighborhoods.

Most literature on the prevalence and consequences of eviction focuses on urban spaces (Desmond and Shollenberger 2015; Lundberg and Donnelly 2019). A handful of recent studies, however, have directly examined the prevalence of eviction in suburban communities. One national analysis found substantial heterogeneity across metropolitan areas in urban-suburban differences in eviction rates, showing that suburban eviction rates were greater than urban rates in roughly one in every five metropolitan areas (Hepburn, Rutan, and Desmond 2022). Analyses in Lexington, Kentucky, and metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, reveal suburban neighborhoods and buildings with large volumes of eviction filings, in some cases outnumbering filings from equivalent places in the urban core (Immergluck et al. 2020; Shelton 2018). Although these cross-sectional analyses reveal that displacement is common in some suburban spaces—on par with or even exceeding levels of eviction in urban communities—they reveal little about the ongoing process of the suburbanization of poverty and its relationship over time with eviction patterns. Have suburbs, often imagined as stable enclaves that fuel upward mobility, become more unstable and insecure over time, or have they always been precarious for tenants?

Reason to suspect that the suburbanization of poverty has resulted in more evictions in suburban communities is ample. The sprawl and street design of many suburbs requires households to own a car. This not only creates additional expenses that might stress household budgets but also makes a household more vulnerable to destabilizing events like job loss if their car breaks down (Roberto 2008). Low-income suburbanites are more likely to struggle with food insecurity than their urban peers, a problem exacerbated by the logistical challenges of reaching a more limited set of food pantries and nonprofits (Allard et al. 2017; Shannon et al. 2018). Poor suburban residents face much greater challenges accessing social service organizations, particularly those intended to alleviate hardship or promote upward mobility (Allard and Pelletier 2023; Murphy and Wallace 2010; Allard 2009). Indeed, most suburban towns lack a single social service nonprofit of any kind (Allard and Roth 2010). The suburban poor also face barriers in accessing health care and finding providers that offer affordable and effective care (Schnake-Mahl and Sommers 2017; Francis et al. 2009).

The challenges of suburban poverty may be compounded as poor households are increasingly sorted into poor places. Suburban municipal governments may be ill equipped to provide social services or alleviate rising levels of material hardship (Mattiuzzi and Weir 2020; Allard 2017; Simms 2023). Conversely, some towns, struggling to fund municipal services because of an eroding tax base, turn to punitive fines and fees to raise revenue. This strategy exacerbates the material challenges facing low-income households, especially those that are Black or Latino (Beck 2023; Pacewicz and Robinson 2021).

Sociodemographic change alone does not

necessarily lead to a shift in eviction trends, however. Research on eviction in urban spaces reveals eviction patterns to be relatively stable and unlikely to shift substantially over time. In many cities, a limited set of landlords within a community file a disproportionate share of evictions, anchoring displacement in place (Sims and Iverson 2021; Teresa and Howell 2021). The stability of eviction hot spots across time indicates that eviction is a durable feature of neighborhood inequality (Rutan and Desmond 2021). Further, if the expansion of suburban poverty has been driven by households seeking—and finding—affordable housing (Howell and Timberlake 2014; Madden 2003), then the suburbanization of poverty may not be accompanied by the suburbanization of eviction. This uncertainty over how the level of suburban evictions may have changed leads us to our first research question.

> Question 1. Has the frequency of evictions increased in suburban communities over time?

Suburban neighborhoods are heterogenous, both between and within metropolitan areas. Whereas some experience increasingly concentrated poverty, others have retained their affluence and exclusivity. Evictions and their consequences are likely distributed unevenly across suburbs, creating and reinforcing inequalities between communities. With this perspective in mind, we investigate geographic and racial dimensions of eviction that may have influenced the diverging destinies of suburbs over time.

In urban settings, evictions are often concentrated in space because a limited set of landlords account for large portions of all evicted households (Rutan and Desmond 2021; Teresa and Howell 2021). Although some work demonstrates that high volume eviction filers do operate in some suburban neighborhoods (Immergluck et al. 2020), it is not clear whether evictions would become more diffuse or concentrated over time. Suburban housing stock is different than urban housing stock in ways that make concentration appear less likely: suburban tenants are more likely to live in a single-family rental (SFR) than in a large apartment building in which many renters might face the threat of eviction. The relatively diffuse nature of suburban rental housing would seem to create a bulwark against the concentration of eviction.

Still, poor suburban renters are increasingly clustered in a subset of available neighborhoods (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2012; Kneebone, Nadeau, and Berube 2011). Even as most suburbs have become more diverse, many communities remain racially and ethnically segregated (Fowler, Lee, and Matthews 2016; Orfield and Luce 2013). Suburbs in some parts of the country—particularly the Sunbelt and Southeast—have been a target for corporate landlords looking to expand their investment in SFR properties (Fields, Kohli, and Schafran 2016). These corporate landlords turn to eviction more quickly than small operator landlords (Gomory 2022; Raymond et al. 2021), and their increased involvement in suburban markets may drive growing instability. Regarding the geographic inequalities between suburban neighborhoods, we ask,

> Question 2. Has the geographic concentration of eviction within suburbs shifted over time?

The threat of eviction disproportionally falls on Black and Latino Americans. Nationally, roughly one in every four Black renters lived in a county where the eviction rate for Black tenants was at least double that of their White peers (Hepburn, Louis, and Desmond 2020). At least part of this disparity may be explained by economic factors: relative to their White counterparts, Black renters on average have lower and more unstable incomes and more limited access to savings or other resources, such as family financial networks, that would allow them to weather financial hardships and avoid eviction (NLIHC 2022).

Understanding is limited on whether Black-White and Latino-White disparities in the risk of eviction are consistent throughout metropolitan areas or differ between cities and suburbs. On one hand, poverty and segregation are not as deeply interconnected in suburbs as they are in cities, which may alleviate some of the disadvantages that Black tenants experience (Massey and Denton 1993). On the other, land-

lords' discriminatory tendencies appear more pronounced in suburban areas, which may lead them to evict Black tenants more readily (Fischer and Massey 2004). There is also no reason to think that Black and Latino renters who have moved to the suburbs escaped the basic economic pressures that may lead them to fall behind on rent more often. This leads us to our third question about racial inequalities in suburban evictions:

> Question 3. Do Black and Latino suburban tenants face eviction more frequently than their White peers?

DATA AND METHODS

We analyzed patterns in evictions over time in metropolitan areas across the United States. An eviction is a moment of acute hardship and instability as tenants are forced from their home. We evaluated the prevalence of evictions based on the number of court-recorded eviction judgments, the final step in the court's eviction process when a judge has dispossessed a tenant of their rental housing.[1] We focused on eviction judgments as opposed to eviction filings because some landlords initiate the eviction process not to remove their tenants but to collect rent or exert power (Leung, Hepburn, and Desmond 2021; Garboden and Rosen 2019). Because eviction judgments are the final step in the legal process, we consider them to be a direct measure of displaced renter households. We examined forced moves among renter households and do not examine foreclosure or other proceedings against homeowners. Hereafter, we refer to evictions and eviction judgments interchangeably.

We drew on a large administrative dataset of eviction proceedings in court records provided by the Eviction Lab (Desmond et al. 2018). This dataset is constructed from individual-level eviction records that LexisNexis Risk Solutions collected from state and local courts between 2000 and 2016. Because these records are formal court procedures, they do not include either negotiated lease terminations between landlords and tenants or any illegal or under-the-table efforts that landlords make to remove their tenants. Research is limited on the prevalence of such informal evictions, although the distribution of informal evictions across neighborhoods appears highly correlated with the distribution of formal evictions, suggesting that eviction judgments are a strong representation of the moves that tenants are forced to make (Hepburn, Louis, and Desmond 2022; Desmond, Gershenson, and Kiviat 2015). The records were cleaned, stripped of duplicates and commercial cases, geocoded, and validated against publicly available data sources published by county- and state-court systems based on both case volume and case outcomes.[2] The records do not consistently specify the reason that a landlord initiated the eviction process, but the vast majority of evictions are for the nonpayment of rent (DeLuca and Rosen 2022).

The national dataset of eviction records is assembled from a patchwork of state and local courts. Eviction regulations and legal procedures differ from state to state, including in the steps landlords must take to initiate proceedings, the time that can elapse between each step of the eviction process, and the protections provided to tenants (LSC 2021; Hatch 2017). Subtle differences in court and eviction procedures do not appear to affect the likelihood that an eviction filing becomes an eviction judgment (Sudeall and Pasciuti 2021). Case dispositions and outcomes were standardized by the Eviction Lab to ensure consistency across these legal contexts and to address challenges associated with analyzing court records (Porton, Gromis, and Desmond 2020; Desmond et al. 2018).

1. The execution of an eviction writ is the last stage in the eviction process (Benfer 2021). However, reliable statistics on executed evictions are not widely available and, in many cases, tenants vacate the property after the judgment, which renders this stage moot (Desmond 2016).

2. County-year aggregate estimates were included if the total number of LexisNexis filings in a county fell between 87 and 114 percent of the courts' publicly reported total. When public data were not available, we extrapolated the most recent total a maximum of two years and applied the same criterion. We exclude county-years where more than 60 percent of LexisNexis cases were either dismissed or missing outcomes.

Sample Construction

We are interested in the changing prevalence of evictions within metropolitan areas. Thus we limited the Eviction Lab's data to counties within the two hundred largest metropolitan areas by population.[3] To ensure that our estimates were effective representations of eviction dynamics within metropolitan areas, we restricted our analytic set to years within metropolitan areas in which we observed valid eviction data for at least 50 percent of both the urban and suburban populations. We also required at least ten urban and ten suburban tracts in each metropolitan area. Further, because we intend to evaluate changes over time, we dropped counties with only one year of data. These three criteria restricted our analytic set to 234 counties across seventy-four metropolitan areas (1,373 county-years). We include a list of included metropolitan areas in the supplementary materials online.[4] For the median metropolitan area in our analytic set, we observed eviction data for seven years, for 100 percent of its urban and for 100 percent of its suburban population. In total, we observed 2,729,831 judgments from 5,611,800 cases.

We adopted Elizabeth Kneebone and Alan Berube's (2013) census-based definition of urban and suburban spaces. We considered tracts to be urban if they were contained within either the first principal city in the OMB name of the metropolitan area or any subsequent named city with a population greater than one hundred thousand. All other tracts in the metropolitan area were marked as suburbs. This definition is well suited to distinguish urban and suburban places as it is based on functional political boundaries that pertain to how space is governed (Terbeck 2020). Future research should explore alternative definitions that allow for distinctions between types of suburbs (Lewis-McCoy et al. 2023, this issue). In the current analysis, we aim to address the dearth of research on housing instability in suburbs broadly. Our analytic set included 6,279 urban and 10,689 suburban tracts.

Analytic Strategy

We analyzed changes over time in eviction judgments in cities and suburbs. We are primarily interested in evaluating the association between changes in neighborhood poverty and changes in evictions between 2000 and 2016. Because we do not have a complete panel of metropolitan areas across years, we cannot construct a simple descriptive measure of changes in suburban eviction counts. Instead, we fit a three-level negative binomial regression model in which tract-year observations were nested within tracts, which in turn were nested within metropolitan areas. This multilevel model allowed us to examine neighborhood level trends in eviction judgments, the differences between urban and suburban trajectories, and the influence of poverty change on eviction patterns. Multilevel models produce semi-pooled estimates that balance among the data where they exist; the multilevel framework is ideal for our data structure where longitudinal data are limited for some of the metropolitan areas (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Gelman and Hill 2007).

In building a model, we sought a parsimonious representation of change over time. We allowed for varying intercepts and coefficients and used a negative binomial model because the dependent variable was a count of eviction judgments.[5] We estimated an individual intercept and coefficient for time for each tract, thus essentially fitting a growth curve model (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). To ensure balance and promote model convergence, we centered the years in our analytic set in 2008, which means that any coefficients for the intercept should be interpreted as 2008 values. Formally, the level one model was as follows:

$$Y_{tij} = \pi_{0ij} + \pi_{1ij} YEAR_{tij} + e_{tij}. \quad (1)$$

3. This initial sample included 439 counties (2,786 county-years) that covered at least some portion of 142 metropolitan areas.

4. See the online appendix (https://www.rsfjournal.org/content/9/1/104/tab-supplemental).

5. Log likelihood tests confirmed a negative binomial distribution was more appropriate than a Poisson distribution.

The dependent variable (Y_{tij}) was the count of eviction judgments in year t in tract i of metropolitan area j. At level one, we simply modeled the change in eviction judgments over the years under analysis. The intercept (π_{0ij}) was the predicted count of evictions in 2008, and the slope coefficient (π_{1ij}) was the estimated rate of change in evictions between 2000 and 2016. We chose a loglinear parameter for time, as opposed to a curvilinear specification, because analyses with national data reveal largely stable levels of eviction over this period (Gromis et al. 2022).

At level two we allowed both coefficients (π_{0ij} and π_{1ij}) to vary as a function of tract characteristics. Formally, the model for the intercept was as follows:

$$\pi_{0ij} = \beta_{00j} + \beta_{01j}SUBURB_{ij} + \beta_{0kj}X_{kij} + r_{0ij}. \quad (2)$$

In equation (2), we modeled the number of evictions in the tract in 2008, the intercept-year in our data, as a function of suburban status ($SUBURB_{ij}$) and a vector (X_{kij}) of tract-level socioeconomic variables (ethnoracial majority, poverty rate, poverty rate squared, percent children, percent female headed households, percent foreign born, and percent high school graduates) and housing market characteristics (median rent, number of renter households, vacancy rate, percent of federally subsidized housing units, and median housing age) that have previously been associated with eviction. Aside from the subsidized housing measure, all covariate data were collected from the 2006–2010 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). We excluded 1,051 tracts for missing ACS data. We calculated the proportion of housing units that were subsidized in a tract based on property-level data from HUD's Picture of Subsidized Households (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development n.d.). We summed all subsidized units in a tract and divided by the total number of housing units in the tract.

Equation (2) distinguishes differences in eviction judgments across tracts at a single point in time. We also evaluated changes in eviction counts over time:

$$\pi_{1ij} = \beta_{10j} + \beta_{11j}SUBURB_{ij} + \beta_{1kj}Z_{kij} + r_{1ij}. \quad (3)$$

In equation (3), we modeled variation in a tract's change over time in eviction count as a function of its suburban status ($SUBURB_{ij}$) and a vector of covariates (Z_{kij}). The latter included the same covariates included in equation (2) but operationalized to reflect changes over time—between the 2000 Census and the 2012–2016 American Community Survey—to capture changing demographic and housing characteristics within the tract. Instead of an ethnoracial majority parameter, we measured change in percent of tract residents who identified as Black, percent who identified as Latino, and percent who identified as another race. We did not measure changes in the squared poverty rate or median housing age. We provide descriptive statistics for our sample and assess its representativeness in table A.1.

At the metropolitan area level (level three) we allowed for random variation—without predictors—for the terms for the intercept (β_{00j}), the time-invariant suburb term (β_{01j}), and the year term (β_{10j}). As an example, the equation for the intercept can be written as follows:

$$\beta_{00j} = \gamma_{000} + u_{00j}. \quad (4)$$

All other terms were treated as fixed across metropolitan areas. Substituting across levels, the model can be rewritten as

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{tij} = {} & \gamma_{000} + \gamma_{010}SUBURB_{ij} + \gamma_{100}YEAR_{tij} \\ & + \gamma_{110}(YEAR_{tij} * SUBURB_{ij}) + \gamma_{0k0}X_{kij} \\ & + \gamma_{1k0}(Z_{kij} * YEAR_{tij}) + e_{tij} + r_{0ij} + r_{1ij} \\ & + u_{00j} + u_{01j} + u_{10j}. \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

In this formulation, the intercept (γ_{000}) represents the predicted number of eviction judgments in the year 2008 in an urban tract with no racial majority and—because the predictors were mean-centered and standardized—average levels of the covariates in the vector X_{kij}. The γ_{010} and γ_{0k0} parameters adjust the baseline prediction up or down depending on the tract's suburban status and the covariates included in vector X_{kij}. For years other than 2008, the term γ_{110} represents the log change in the number of evictions in an average urban tract. The parameters γ_{110} and γ_{1k0} adjusted the time trend up or down depending on suburban status and the

values of the slope covariates. All of the coefficients can be interpreted as the percent difference in the count of eviction judgments when all other parameters are at their respective means.

Results from the regression model allowed us to determine general trends over time in eviction judgments in urban and suburban neighborhoods. However, they also elided variation between places. Appreciating the scale of this heterogeneity is, we argue, critical to both interpreting the significance of our regression findings and understanding the varying ways in which the geography of eviction shifted over time. To explore this variation more fully, we focused on three large metropolitan areas for which we had many years of eviction data. We chose Cleveland, Ohio, as an example of the thirty-three metropolitan areas where a majority of evictions occurred in the city early in the study period, but the suburban share of evictions increased over time. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Washington, (Seattle hereafter) was emblematic of the thirty-one metropolitan areas with a large suburban share of evictions throughout the period. Finally, we included Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida, (Tampa hereafter) to represent the fifteen metropolitan areas where the urban share of evictions increased over time. We calculated tracts' average eviction rate between 2000–2008 and again 2009–2016.[6] Then, we mapped the average eviction rates from the two periods and calculated Local Moran's I (Anselin 1995), a descriptive spatial statistic used to identify clusters of high and low values. In this application, high clusters represent areas of high instability and eviction. We describe how the geography of eviction shifted, if at all, from 2000 to 2016.

We further investigated the consequences of suburban evictions for tenants by evaluating two dimensions of inequality among suburban communities: geographic and racial.

We evaluated the extent to which the geography of suburban evictions has become more uneven over time by using a dissimilarity index to compare the distribution of eviction judgments to the distribution of renters across suburban neighborhoods. If all renters have a similar risk of eviction, then the index will be at a minimum. The index will be at its maximum (100), however, if evictions occur only within a few neighborhoods. We used our regression models to predict eviction counts in each tract-year. We used the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Censuses and the 2012–2016 American Community Survey estimates for renter households in 2000, 2010, and 2012–2016, respectively. We performed a linear interpolation to estimate the number of renter households in the intercensal years. We estimated the dissimilarity index (D) separately across all tracts (i) in urban and suburban places (p) in each of the metropolitan areas (m) and years (y) as

$$D_{pmy} = \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\left|\frac{Evictions_{ipmy}}{Total\ Evictions_{pmy}} - \frac{Renters_{ipmy}}{Total\ Renters_{pmy}}\right| \quad (6)$$

We evaluated racial inequalities in suburban evictions by estimating eviction rates by ethnoracial group in urban and suburban contexts. Eviction records do not record race or ethnicity but do include tenants' first and last names and their addresses, among other details. We applied Bayes' Rule to impute race-ethnicity based on tenants' last names and the racial composition of the neighborhood where the eviction occurred (Hepburn, Louis, and Desmond 2020; Imai and Khanna 2016). The imputation process estimated the probability that a tenant is non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian, non-Hispanic White, Latino, or of some other race-ethnicity. We estimated the total number of evicted tenants for each group by summing these probabilities. We used a linear interpolation of renter household heads by race—based on data from the 2000 and 2010 Censuses and the 2012–2016 American Community Survey—to calculate the denominator for these rates. Eviction records do not typically provide any information about household income, so we cannot adjust the estimated disparities for potential socioeconomic

6. We split the period into two discrete sections to evaluate net changes in the distribution of evictions over time. It is not a concern that the Great Recession falls during our cut point because analyses using national eviction data reveal only a very slight increase in evictions during the financial crisis (Gromis et al. 2022).

status differences among renters of different ethnoracial identities (for additional details of our procedure, see the online appendix).

RESULTS

We modeled the number of eviction judgments in urban and suburban neighborhoods between 2000 and 2016 using two versions of the regression model as detailed. In table 1, we present the results of these models. The first model included no control variables for either the tract's intercept or slope aside from the number of renter households. In this model, we predicted the number of eviction judgments in 2008 to be 39.3 percent lower in a suburban tract than in an urban one ($1 - e^{-0.500} = 0.393$). The coefficient for the year term in this model was near zero and not significant, indicating that the number of evictions in an average urban tract was expected to be relatively constant over time ($e^{0.002} = 1.002$). By contrast, eviction counts were predicted to increase significantly over time—by 1.3 percent per year ($e^{0.002+0.011} = 1.013$)—in the average suburban tract.

In model 2, we added an array of socioeconomic and housing market predictors as covariates. After controlling for these neighborhood characteristics, the gap in the number of eviction judgments between urban and suburban neighborhoods in 2008 was smaller. A suburban neighborhood was predicted to have 23.7 percent fewer evictions in 2008 relative to an otherwise similar urban neighborhood ($1 - e^{-0.270} = 0.237$). The coefficient for year in model 2 remained non-significant and near zero, again suggesting that the typical urban tract has a steady number of eviction judgments from year to year ($e^{0.003} = 1.003$). By contrast, the interaction term is again positive and significant ($e^{0.003+0.011} = 1.014$), indicating a 1.4 percent increase in eviction judgments in a suburban tract each year. In figure 1, we plotted the trend in eviction counts in the average urban and suburban neighborhood between 2000 and 2016.

Even in the early 2000s, when the gap in eviction judgments between urban and suburban neighborhoods was at its largest, evictions were not infrequent in the suburbs. We predicted, for the year 2000, 8.04 evictions in the typical suburban tract relative to 11.47 in the typical urban tract. Over time, counts in both contexts converged to 9.93 evictions in the typ-

Table 1. Multilevel Negative Binomial Regression Estimating Evictions in Urban and Suburban Contexts, 2000–2016

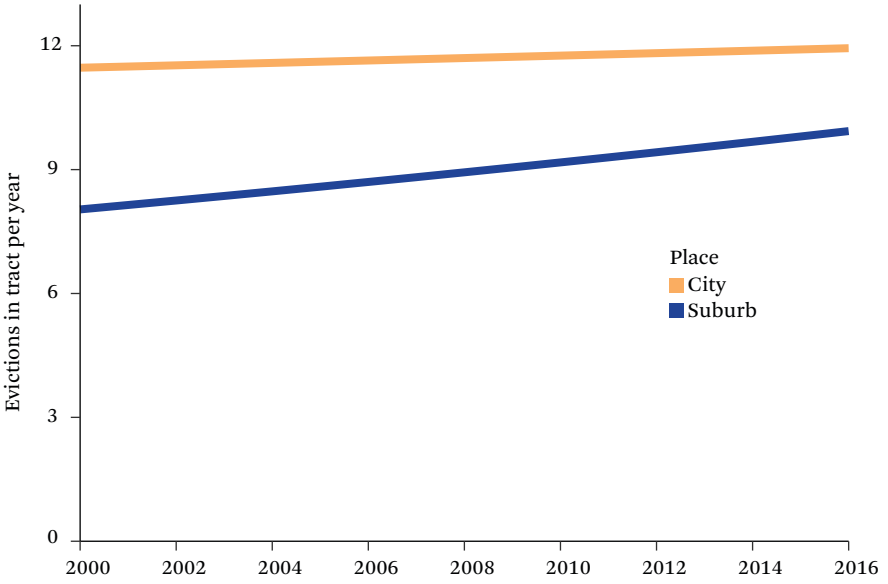
	(1)	(2)
Year	0.002	0.003
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Suburb	−0.500***	−0.270***
	(0.072)	(0.059)
Median rent 2008		−0.218***
		(0.009)
Percentage children 2008		0.152***
		(0.007)
Percentage female-headed households 2008		0.189***
		(0.009)
Majority Black 2008		0.321***
		(0.027)
Majority Latino 2008		−0.131***
		(0.036)
Majority none or Other 2008		0.259***
		(0.023)
Percentage foreign born 2008		−0.031**
		(0.010)

Table 1. (*continued*)

	(1)	(2)
Vacancy Rate 2008		0.056***
		(0.007)
Percentage high school graduate 2008		−0.128***
		(0.011)
Percentage poverty 2008		0.323***
		(0.023)
Percentage poverty sq. 2008		−0.357***
		(0.018)
Housing age		0.026**
		(0.009)
Renter households 2008	0.724***	0.595***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Percent HUD units		−0.036***
		(0.007)
Year: suburb	0.011***	0.011***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Year: rent change		0.004***
		(0.001)
Year: children change		0.005***
		(0.001)
Year: female-headed households change		0.006***
		(0.001)
Year: percentage Black change		0.007***
		(0.001)
Year: percentage Latino change		0.004***
		(0.001)
Year: percentage Other change		0.002***
		(0.001)
Year: percentage foreign-born change		−0.002***
		(0.001)
Year: vacancy rate change		-0.002**
		(0.001)
Year: renter households change	0.010***	0.010***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Year: HUD units change		−0.001
		(0.001)
Year: poverty change		−0.001
		(0.001)
Year: high school graduate change		0.001
		(0.001)
Intercept	2.668***	2.460***
	(0.092)	(0.074)
Observations (tract-years)	114,528	114,528
Log likelihood	−367,853.400	−364,764.300
Akaike information criterion	735,738.800	729,608.600
Bayesian information criterion	735,893.200	729,994.600

Source: Authors' tabulation.
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 1. Predicted Eviction Counts



Source: Authors' tabulation.

ical suburban tract and 11.94 evictions in the typical urban tract by 2016. This convergence is largely due to the increasing frequency of eviction in suburban neighborhoods rather than changes in urban neighborhoods.

We used results from model 2 to predict the proportion of each metropolitan area's total evictions that occurred in the suburbs in each year. We plot changes in the suburban share of evictions in figure 2. Between 2000 and 2016, the share increased in fifty-nine of the seventy-four metros in our sample. In 2000, 42.5 percent of evictions occurred in the suburbs in the median metropolitan area; this increased to 45.2 percent by 2016. Notably, even early in the period, in thirty-two metropolitan areas most evictions occurred in the suburbs. By 2016, this was true of thirty-four metropolitan areas. Housing insecurity and displacement have become common in both urban and suburban communities.

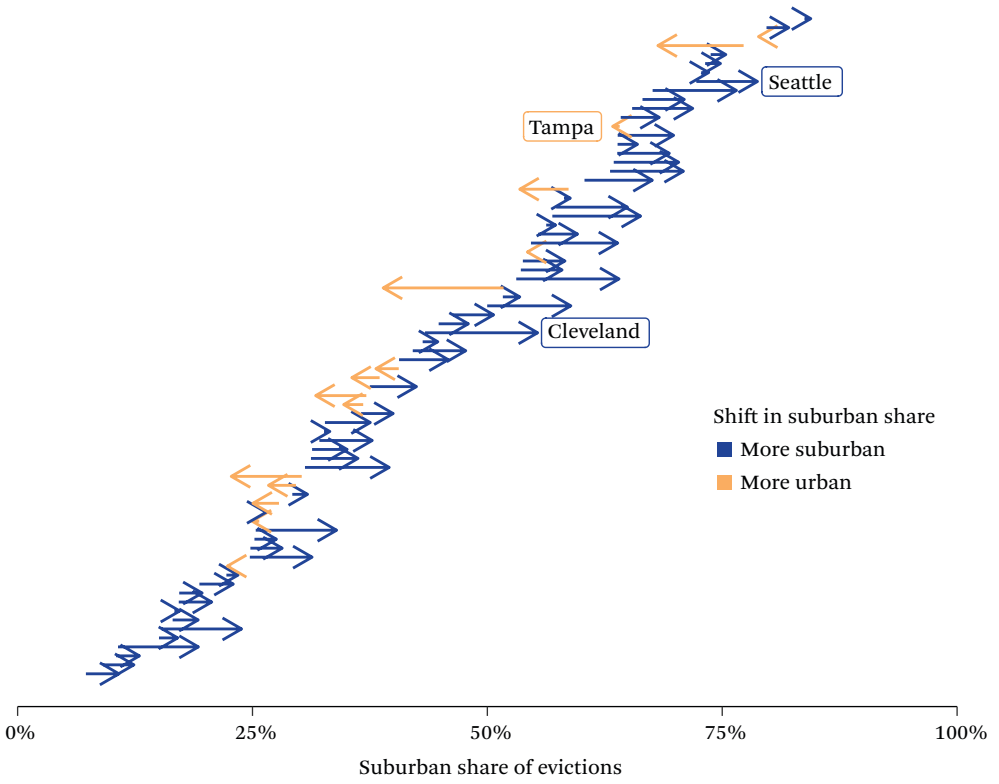
Case Studies

Although the regression results allow us to appreciate general trends across the United States, they fail to capture heterogeneity in how these trajectories played out across metropolitan areas. We now turn from general trends to closer examination of changes to the geography of eviction in three metropolitan areas: Cleveland, Seattle, and Tampa. These case studies demonstrate large variation in the patterns of suburban evictions.

Cleveland is a prime example of a metropolitan area that has undergone decades of transformation and yet remains beset by persistent racial and geographic inequalities. A legacy industrial powerhouse whose population and employment opportunities were gutted by deindustrialization, Cleveland has, like many other Rust Belt cities, experienced an uneven economic resurgence driven by investments in what are referred to as the Eds and Meds sectors (Nuemann 2016). Although this growth has benefited affluent workers, many lower-income households were shut out of high-opportunity industries such as education, financial services, and health care. Between 2000 and 2016, Cleveland experienced a pronounced, 9.6 percentage point increase in the share of poor population living in the suburbs.[7] Despite these transformations, Cleveland overall remains a

7. Authors' calculation based on the 2000 Census and 2012–2016 American Community Survey.

Figure 2. Shift in Suburban Share of Evictions, 2000–2016



Source: Authors' tabulation.

highly segregated metropolitan area (Krysan and Crowder 2017, 266).

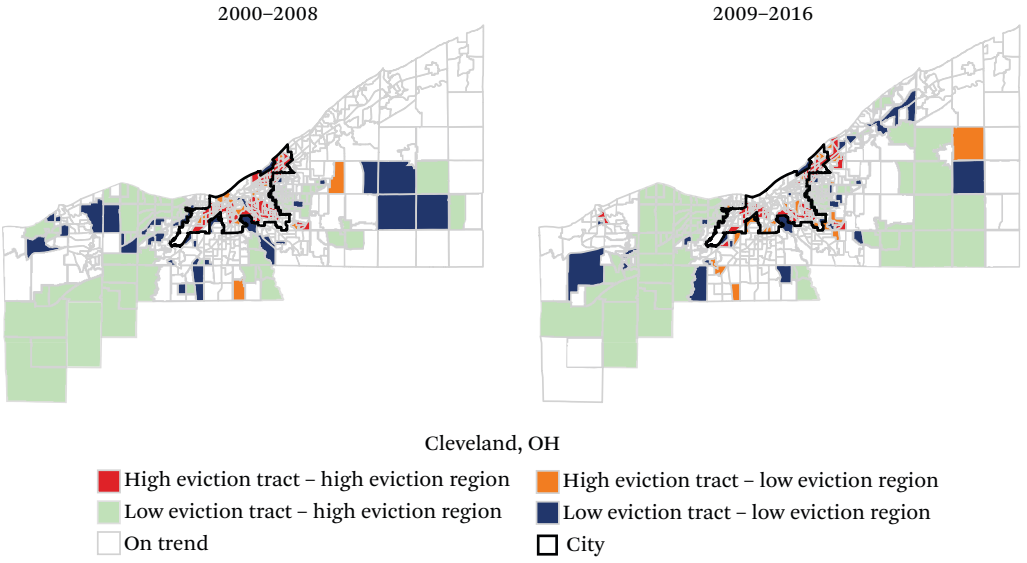
Across the metropolitan area, roughly 10,800 renter households were evicted each year. Beneath this stability, however, was a large shift in where evictions occurred: the share of evictions in the suburbs rose from 43.4 percent in 2000 to 55.3 percent in 2016. We map the changing geography of these evictions in figure 3, using cluster analysis to identify sets of high (or low) displacement tracts that are located near other high (or low) displacement tracts. These tracts are distinguished from the tracts that are on-trend and have eviction rates near the metropolitan average.[8] On the left side of the figure, which illustrates the geography from 2000 to 2008, are three clear clusters of neighborhoods with high eviction rates (above the metropolitan average), all almost entirely within the city of Cleveland. There are several prominent clusters of low eviction rates (below the metropolitan average), including the inner-ring suburbs of Rocky River and Fairview Park to Cleveland's west and Shaker Heights to its east.[9] These communities have relatively high median incomes and median property values and much lower levels of poverty than many urban neighborhoods. We could describe this map simply: unstable city, stable suburbs.

From 2009 onward, however, the geography of eviction in Cleveland was much more diffuse as eviction rates in many suburban communities rose and rates in many urban neighborhoods fell. On the right side of figure 3, the three high-eviction clusters are still present, but they each now include suburban neighbor-

8. The average eviction rate in the Cleveland metropolitan area was 4.1 percent in the early period and 3.9 percent in the later.

9. We include reference maps with place names in the supplementary materials (for Cleveland, see figure A.4).

Figure 3. Eviction Rate Clusters in Cleveland Metropolitan Area



Source: Authors' tabulation.

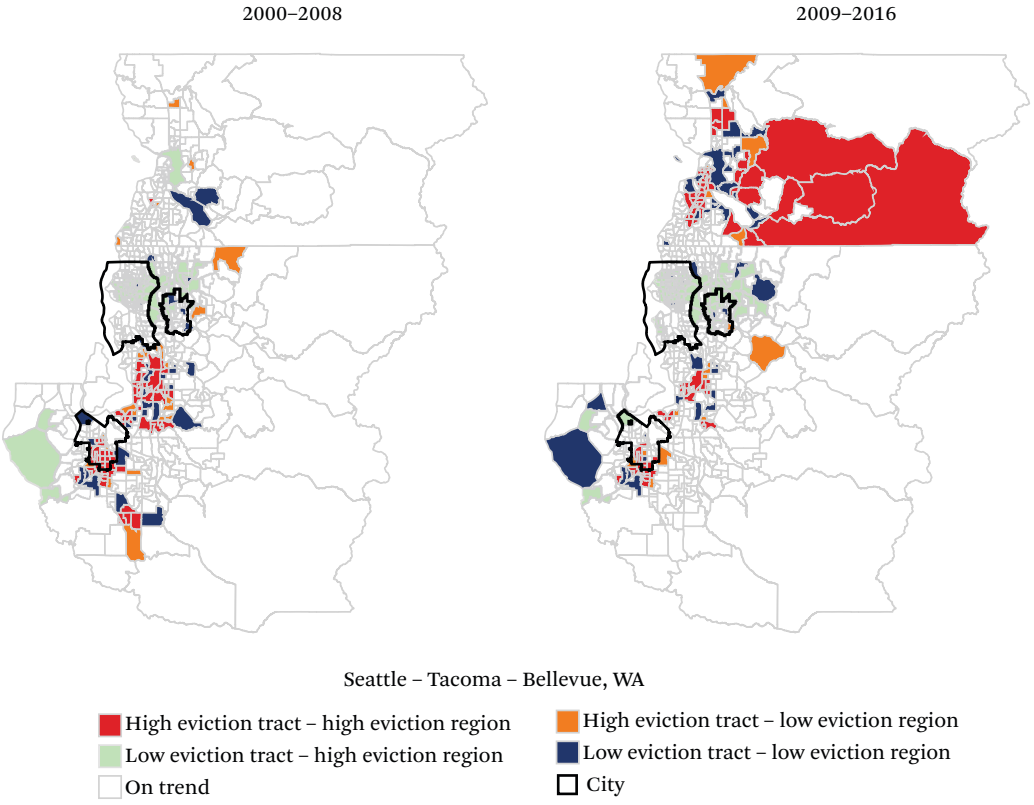
hoods, straddling the city line. Inner-ring suburbs such as East Cleveland, Euclid, and Warrensville Heights each witnessed large increases in eviction races. These communities had much larger shares of Black residents than neighboring communities did and experienced sharp declines in median incomes in real terms, from a drop of $9,500 in East Cleveland to one of roughly $17,500 in Warrensville Heights. After 2009, the portions of the high eviction clusters nearest downtown—previously experiencing exceptionally high eviction rates—saw levels of eviction at or below the metropolitan average. Although some suburban communities emerged as instability hot spots, other neighborhoods (such as Rocky River, Fairview Park, and Shaker Heights) experienced few evictions. This divergence in the fortunes of suburban neighborhoods suggests that intra-suburban inequality—inequality *between* suburbs—is rising within the Cleveland metropolitan area.

The suburbanization of poverty in the Seattle metropolitan area started earlier than in Cleveland and continued during the study period. A central hub of the booming tech sector, rents and home prices in urban Seattle rose dramatically during the 1990s (Glick 2008). This was associated with the rapid dislocation of Black residents from the Central District, many of whom settled in the suburbs. In 2000, 60.8 percent of poor residents in the metropolitan area lived in the suburbs. This proportion had increased by 6.1 percentage points by 2016. As lower-income households were increasingly pushed to the suburbs, so was the risk of eviction (Thomas et al. 2019).

As figure 4 makes clear, this process was already well under way in the early 2000s. Eviction rates were low throughout the city of Seattle despite a pocket of high eviction risk in urban Tacoma. It was the suburbs between these cities—the corridor encompassing Kent and Federal Way—that saw the most evictions in the first half of the study period, as well as a cluster south of Tacoma. Between 2009 and 2016, as eviction rates fell across the metropolitan area (Thomas et al. 2019), the geography of eviction risk changed dramatically.[10] The high-eviction area south of Tacoma largely disappeared, and the suburbs between Tacoma and Seattle experienced declining risk. Simultane-

10. The average tract's eviction rate in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metropolitan area fell from 1.2 percent to 0.9 percent during the period (for a reference map with placenames, see online figure A.5.

Figure 4. Eviction Rate Clusters in Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metropolitan Area



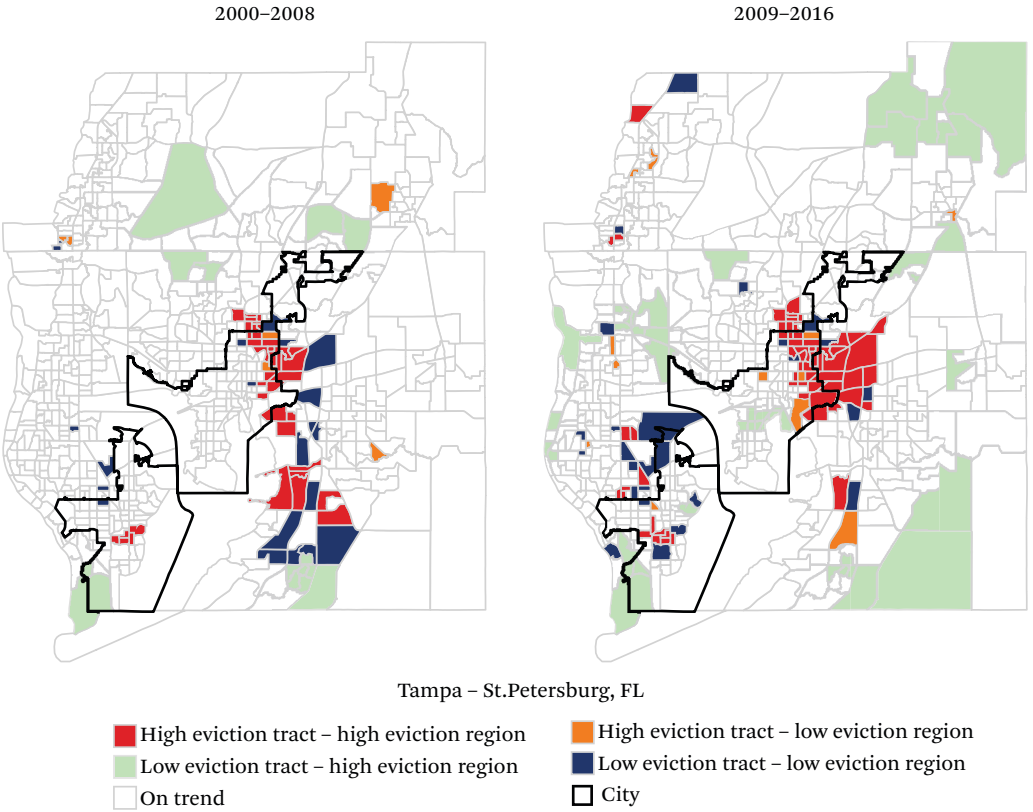
Source: Authors' tabulation.

ously, a new set of high-eviction areas developed north of Seattle in Snohomish County. This included a cluster of high-eviction tracts in Everett as well as a set of more rural high-eviction areas to the east. These high-eviction pockets had not existed in the earlier period. In Seattle, much of metropolitan eviction was already suburban, but the geography of displacement shifted markedly across suburbs over time.

Tampa is a rapidly growing and racially diversifying metropolitan area. From 2000 to 2016, its population grew by 24 percent, from 2.4 to nearly 3 million, and the share of the metro population identifying as non-Hispanic White fell from 74.8 percent to 62.7 percent. Although most poor households (62.6 percent) already lived in the suburbs in 2000, by 2016 the suburban share of the poor population grew by 7.3 percentage points. Rapid population growth has swamped the supply of affordable housing: Tampa has among the largest affordable housing shortfalls in Florida (Shimberg Center 2019). The percentage of renters who are cost burdened increased from two in five households (38.9 percent) in 2000 to one in two households (48.9 percent) by 2016. In 2000, nearly two-thirds of evictions (64.5 percent) occurred in suburban communities. The suburban share decreased by 0.7 percentage points to 63.8 percent in 2016.

Of the three case studies, the geography of eviction in Tampa was the most stable over time (figure 5). The left panel of figure 5 shows the two primary clusters of high-eviction neighborhoods early in the period: a small one centered in St. Petersburg and a large one stretching across Tampa's eastern border with several suburban communities, including University, Temple-Trace, and East Lake-Orient Park. Aside from a mix of high- and low-eviction rate neighborhoods to Tampa's south, few other patterns

Figure 5. Eviction Rate Clusters in Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Metropolitan Area



Source: Authors' tabulation.

are discernible. Most communities in the metropolitan area had eviction rates near the region's average, which shifted from 3.5 to 3.2 percent from the early years to the late ones. By the end of the period (right panel), the eviction clusters in both St. Petersburg and east Tampa grew considerably. The large cluster of high instability in eastern Tampa includes more urban and suburban neighborhoods. Although poverty rates grew in the suburban portions of these clusters, the increases in tract-level poverty were largest in the urban neighborhoods. Another notable change in the later period is the formation of more clusters of low instability suburban communities, creating a sharper contrast with the expanding instability along Tampa's inner-ring suburbs.

Dimensions of Intra-Suburban Inequality

Although eviction has become an increasingly common suburban phenomenon, it has affected metropolitan areas in different ways. As we saw in the case studies, small clusters of neighborhoods emerged as places with high levels of instability. Because evictions remained infrequent in many other suburban neighborhoods, the concentration of evictions within suburban hot spots may have increased during the study periods. To test this observation, we use the dissimilarity index to compare the distribution of evictions across suburban tracts with the distribution of renters. If all renters face a similar risk of eviction, the index will be at a minimum. If evictions are concentrated within just a few neighborhoods, however, then the index will be its maximum value, 100.

The results again demonstrate that how suburban eviction changed over time followed no single trajectory. In thirty-six of the seventy-four metropolitan areas, the dissimilarity index increased, at a median of 3.4 percent. In these places, evictions became more concen-

trated in a subset of suburban neighborhoods relative to the distribution of renters. For instance, several high-eviction suburban clusters emerged in the Cleveland metropolitan area even as large swaths of the suburbs still saw limited evictions. Because the increase in evictions was concentrated in those inner-ring pockets, the index for Cleveland increased by 23 percent, from 26.1 to 32.2. In the remaining thirty-eight metropolitan areas, however, the index declined. In many of these areas, the rising suburban share of evictions coincided with an expanding geography of eviction. Renters were evicted more frequently from in a greater number of suburban neighborhoods. This finding underscores the variety of metropolitan experiences with the suburbanization of poverty.

Eviction was not only increasingly common in some suburban communities, but also disproportionately experienced by Black and Latino tenants. By and large, racial disparities in eviction risk were largest for Black suburban tenants, who were 61 percent more likely to be evicted than their White peers in the median metropolitan area. Black suburban renters were evicted at higher rates than White renters in fifty-eight of the seventy-four metropolitan areas in our analytic set. These disparities were most extreme in the West, where Black suburban renters were evicted at nearly quadruple the rate as their White peers in the median metropolitan area (3.9 times in Seattle). Eviction rates were much closer to parity in Southern metropolitan areas. In the median metropolitan area (Durham, North Carolina), the eviction rate for Black suburban tenants was 7.1 percent higher than the rate for White.

The disparities in eviction rates were generally smaller between Latino and White tenants, although heterogeneity among metropolitan areas was substantial. In the median metropolitan area, Latino renters were evicted 23.6 percent more frequently than their White peers. Latino renters were more than twice as likely as their White counterparts to experience eviction in fifteen metropolitan areas. Yet, in twelve metro areas—most located in the South—White suburban renters were evicted twice as frequently as their Latino peers. In contrast to Black and Latino suburbanites, Asian renters generally experienced eviction at similar rates as White renters.

Ethnoracial disparities in eviction were typically larger within cities than within suburbs. In the median metropolitan area for urban disparities, Black renters were evicted nearly twice as often (86.1 percent higher) and Latino tenants were evicted 28.7 percent more often than their White neighbors. These disparities were not always larger in urban spaces, however. In fifteen metropolitan areas, including Cleveland and San Antonio, Black-White disparities in eviction rates were more extreme in the suburbs than in urban areas. Suburban disparities between Latino and White tenants were larger in thirty-one of the seventy-four metropolitan areas including metropolitan areas such as Des Moines, Iowa, and Phoenix, Arizona.

DISCUSSION

The suburbanization of poverty has fundamentally transformed the geography of households experiencing hardship and housing insecurity in the United States. We find that evictions have become more common in the suburbs, even as they have remained largely stable in urban spaces. Low-income households may have moved to suburban communities seeking relief from surging urban rents, but in many places, they have not found stability. The annual number of evictions in a typical suburban neighborhood increased steadily over time, approaching the level of evictions in a typical urban neighborhood by the year 2016. This shift has occurred throughout the United States, from the inner-ring suburbs of Cleveland to the outlying communities of Seattle. The suburban share of eviction increased during the study period in fifty-nine of the seventy-four metropolitan areas in our sample. Eviction has never been a uniquely urban problem, but many suburban communities now experience eviction as frequently as in similar urban neighborhoods.

This shift was, however, far from uniform across metropolitan areas. To explore heterogeneity among metropolitan areas in these trajectories, we describe the changing geography of eviction in Cleveland, Seattle, and Tampa. Evictions in the Cleveland metropolitan area steadily expanded into inner ring suburbs. Eviction was already heavily suburban in

Seattle at the start of the study period but became more frequent in outlying suburban communities that previously had relatively low levels of displacement. In Tampa, by contrast, the clusters of tracts with high instability remained anchored along its border with several suburbs, demonstrating a strong persistence in eviction hot spots. In each of these metropolitan areas, we also observed clusters of suburban communities where eviction was relatively rare. The suburbanization of poverty has not occurred uniformly across the United States and the rise in suburban evictions is no different. Just as is true within cities, understanding eviction risk and designing interventions that promote housing stability requires keen awareness of attention to these local particularities. One-size-fits-all solutions are unlikely to prove adequate.

The suburban shift in evictions may have either been spread evenly across suburban neighborhoods or concentrated in a few communities. We calculated dissimilarity indices to compare the distributions of evictions and renters in suburban areas by year. In about half of the metro areas in our sample, the dissimilarity index increased, suggesting that evictions were becoming more concentrated into a subset of suburban neighborhoods. Yet in the other half, the dissimilarity index decreased. In these places, instability was reaching a broader set of neighborhoods rather than becoming entrenched in a subset of suburban communities. Suburbs are not monolithic and even adjacent neighborhoods may have sharp differences in the risks of housing instability.

We find that Black suburbanites faced higher risks of eviction than their White peers in fifty-eight of the seventy-four metropolitan areas in the sample. Latino tenants also generally faced eviction more frequently than suburban White renters, but heterogeneity was greater between metropolitan areas: they were twice as likely as White renters to face eviction in fifteen metropolitan areas but half as likely in another twelve. Asian tenants faced generally similar levels of eviction as White tenants. As they grow and diversify, American suburbs are increasingly the site where ethnoracial disparities in poverty and housing are created and perpetuated. Housing access and stability has been a key driver of persistent ethnoracial inequalities in the United States since emancipation (Taylor 2019). Large ethnoracial disparities in eviction risk in the suburbs suggest yet another instance of these patterns, one that will only exacerbate inequalities given the severe and lasting negative consequences of eviction.

The growing concentration of eviction may place some suburban communities on a diverging trajectory from their peers. In each of the case studies, we observe suburban clusters of both high and low instability. Suburbs with large and increasing numbers of evictions must grapple with both the direct and indirect effects of displacement: heightened levels of need, unemployment, and homelessness; threats to public health and safety; schools with more absences and instability. The limited social service supports in these spaces may not be enough to meet increasing demand. Gradually, suburbs with large numbers of evictions may be forced to confront a cascading set of challenges that strain their political and financial capacity to respond. Meanwhile, other communities in the same metropolitan area may be able to maintain stability and see little change. Sharp inequalities, such as the ones we document in housing instability, may come to define American suburbs across several dimensions.

These challenges call for concerted policy responses across levels of government. Much of the tenant organizing capacity in the United States is concentrated in cities. If these organizations only pursue measures to address eviction and housing instability at the city level, such as through right to counsel or eviction diversion programs, then they are likely to leave suburban tenants, who have considerably less political power, behind. But no suburb—rich or poor—is an island: displacement and rising hardship have spillover effects.

Local governments that coordinate social services, develop equitable shares of affordable housing, and pass legislation to provide additional legal protections to tenants will be able to mount an effective regional response, stronger than any of them could manage on their own. Such an interjurisdictional approach requires a high level of cooperation. To avoid a patchwork response that would only amplify inequalities among tenants, county and state

governments can introduce legal reforms to the eviction process, such as changes to notice requirements or case filing fees, provision of legal representation, or mandatory diversion, and provide robust funding for affordable housing, which benefits urban and suburban tenants alike. Nongovernment actors, such as foundations and social providers can support these public measures by redirecting or bolstering outreach in suburban communities where the safety net is thinnest (Allard 2009). By providing a robust and coordinated response, governments and nonprofits can create regions which are stable, resilient, and equitable.

Regional policies that make it more difficult for landlords to pursue evictions or easier for tenants to find legal and material resources will likely reduce some of the substantial ethnoracial disparities observed in eviction risk. However, to simultaneously mitigate the risk of eviction for all tenants and alleviate the acute risks born by Black and Latino renters, local leaders must employ a targeted outreach strategy that brings anti-eviction measures directly to the people and places that experience eviction most frequently. Policymakers will need a comprehensive understanding of the particular issues facing tenants of color in their region to address ethnoracial disparities where they exist.

We suggest five areas for future research on suburban eviction risk and urban-suburban disparities. First, especially given heterogeneity between metropolitan areas, it will be important to both expand the scope of analysis and conduct more in-depth studies of single metropolitan areas. Although we were able to cover seventy-four metropolitan areas in our sample, we do not have enough data to include a number of large metropolitan areas with particularly significant suburban populations (for example, Atlanta, Detroit, San Francisco). Second, we encourage more research on the institutional role of landlords in creating inequality. Landlords hold the power to influence a community's trajectory: they choose where to invest, what to charge for rent, whom to offer a lease to, and when to evict. What role do they play both in the suburbanization of poverty—in drawing new populations to the suburbs—and to the growing number of evictions in these spaces? Given the significance of SFR housing in the suburbs, it is important for future research to evaluate the ways in which new types of financial instruments and the expanding portfolios of corporate landlords—far more prevalent in some metropolitan areas than others—have affected changes in suburban poverty and eviction. Third, further exploration of the characteristics of suburban eviction hot spots could help us better understand which areas are at particularly high risk of increasing eviction. What sets these areas apart, and what could local leaders do to plan accordingly?

Fourth, we need more research that explores how the lived experience of eviction plays out differently for suburban and urban tenants. Suburban tenants have far less access to the social service nonprofits that could help avoid eviction in the first place through financial or legal assistance or mitigate eviction's most harmful repercussions such as prolonged homelessness, job loss, and lasting health deficits (Allard and Pelletier 2023; Murphy and Wallace 2010). How does that affect their experience of the eviction process? How do suburban landlord-tenant courts process these cases differently? Fifth, we would encourage more research that examines how policies implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic affected urban-suburban disparities in eviction. For example, eviction moratoria implemented in response to the pandemic varied both between and within states (Benfer et al. 2022; Kneebone and Underriner 2022), cities being often more willing to implement additional protections than outlying areas. In addition, cities were able to directly access federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds whereas suburbs, due to their smaller populations, could not.[11] Although direct access to funds yielded

11. In some cases, large counties including both urban and suburban areas directly accessed funds. In several cases, this created odd political arrangements wherein both central cities and counties received direct funding and established nonoverlapping jurisdictions. For example, residents of the city of Dallas applied to a city-level rental assistance program; those in the inner-ring suburbs applied to a county-level program, and those on the periphery (outside Dallas County) applied to the Texas statewide program.

lower per capita funding, it did allow cities greater freedom in decision-making about how to distribute resources. Further research should explore how these variations in policy response and resource availability affected short- and long-term housing stability.

The last three decades have witnessed significant sociodemographic changes in suburban America as communities have become more diverse, poorer, and more unequal. We document here a further attendant change in housing stability: a growing number of suburban evictions. These evictions have been concentrated in a relatively small set of communities, places in which tenants may find few public or private supports as they face the risk of losing their home. These eviction cases have fallen more heavily on Black than on White renters and have resulted in an increasingly divided suburban landscape. These shifts have been more dramatic in some metropolitan areas than in others. Our findings highlight the need to confront poverty beyond urban spaces and to think of displacement as an increasingly suburban concern.

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Getting Suburbs to Do Their Fair Share: Housing Exclusion and Local Response to State Interventions

JENNIFER GIROUARD

Massachusetts has engaged in a fifty-year experiment in overriding local zoning to create affordable housing in the suburbs. Studying suburbs as sites of persistent resistance, this work interrogates a local decision-making process to reveal how structures and gaps in the law help to maintain, rather than challenge, the exclusionary status quo. Analysis is based on five years of observations of public hearings across four Boston suburbs. I argue that this decision-making process is characterized by participants' use of narratives and logics to resist, make sense of, and adapt to the law. Further, although the eventual decision is almost always to build housing, this study reveals a structural similarity between zoning and the law as well as a cultural process of sense-making that leads to minimal compliance and a reassertion of the local power over regional housing needs.

Keywords: housing policy, segregation, exclusionary zoning, narratives, institutional logics

In the context of an increasingly diversifying suburbia, this article looks at white affluent suburbs as sites of persistent resistance to race and class integration. Historically, local ordinances and exclusionary practices, such as zoning, have been used to maintain racial and economic exclusion in suburbs. Increasingly, scholars argue that this pattern of segregation was a federal, state, and local governmental practice designed to carve urban and suburban spaces into a racialized geography. By invoking an ideology of citizenship, private property, and market forces as rationales for enabling municipalities to restrict housing, these local land use and zoning ordinances became tools of racial exclusion while appearing "race neutral" (Faber 2020; Freund 2007; Rothstein 2018; Silver 1997; Trounstine 2018).

Against a backdrop of calls for regional coordination and federal and state interventions into these local exclusionary regimes, this study analyzes a longer than fifty-year experiment in overriding zoning to create affordable housing in the suburbs (Berube 2019; Rothwell and Massey 2009, 2010). In 1969, Massachusetts enacted Chapter 40B, a law that requires every town to have at least 10 percent of affordable housing stock—defined as developments re-

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stricted to families making under 80 percent of the area median income[1]—and provides a legal framework and local process to force compliance. Our goal in studying this attempt to override local exclusion is to better understand efforts to alter long-standing patterns of racial and economic segregation and those areas that persistently resist change.

The results produced by 40B and similar Fair Share approaches are mixed. In her thorough comparison of affordable housing programs addressing exclusionary zoning, the urban planning scholar Rachel Bratt studied Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, California, and Rhode Island. She finds that Massachusetts had the highest total, and annual, production of affordable units. Rhode Island (which adopted a version of the Massachusetts statute) had the highest number of municipalities producing affordable housing, and Massachusetts the next highest, showing the effects of requiring every town to participate (Bratt 2012). Indications are that 40B is effective at penetrating exclusive municipalities, given that some of Boston's most affluent suburbs have reached the 10 percent threshold (Bratt and Vladeck 2014).[2] However, Edward Goetz and Yi Wang (2020) provide an updated accounting of 40B, paying attention to the community-level correlates of housing responsiveness, and find whiter and more affluent municipalities were less likely to produce subsidized housing, the racial composition of a town being a strong predictor of performance. They also find that progress was slow: by 2017, only 18.5 percent of Massachusetts municipalities had reached the 10 percent threshold (466).

The scholarship's focus on policy design and outcome—essentially the inputs into the method of increasing affordable housing in the suburbs and its outputs—have left largely ignored the process by which Chapter 40B is locally understood and implemented. As a result, existing scholarship has understudied how residents and town officials engage with the law, its goals, and its implications for future engagement with affordable housing and exclusionary practices.

This research is the first of its kind on this Fair Share law that opens up the "black box of process" and asks two questions: How do towns make sense of the state law? How do participants in the 40B process interpret, debate, and negotiate the law's goals and mandates? Answering these questions offers two primary contributions to the scholarship on suburban exclusion and land-use policies: first, a better understanding of on-the-ground interpretation and implementation of Fair Share housing laws and, second, an accounting of how suburban spaces work to accommodate legal challenges while maintaining status quo exclusionary approaches. In this way, the work engages in the two axes for studying suburbs that L'Heureux Lewis-McCoy and his colleagues (2023) outline in this issue: a relational understanding in terms of physical proximity to an urban core with flows of people and capital, and the socioeconomic dimensions of inequality.

I first review the key elements of 40B's design, analyzing its structural similarity to the zoning tools it is designed to override, and then turn to the overlooked process, focusing closely on the cultural dynamics of four proposed 40B builds that, after lengthy public hearings and significant local agitation, were all approved. I find that participants in public hearings use stories and narratives to acclimate to and make sense of the legal intrusion of Chapter 40B into their town. Participants then engage in claims-making and -narrowing that, supported by the use of expert's logics, are transformed into a

1. Chapter 40B projects mix affordable and market-rate units. To qualify as affordable, the development designates at least 25 percent of units for those making less than 80 percent of area median income (AMI). Projects can increase affordability by setting aside 20 percent of units for those making 50 percent of AMI. When rental projects follow these guidelines, all units count towards a town's subsidized housing total. Homeownership projects only count affordable units. The 80 percent and 50 percent designations follow U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development measures for low-income and very low-income households, respectively.

2. A cross-state comparison is beyond the scope of this article. For an excellent resource on comparative analysis, I recommend Bratt and Vladeck 2014.

form that is acceptable to the builder, residents, and town, leading to an approved project. Through attention to this process, we can observe how the local zoning regime makes sense of and contains the legal challenge posed by 40B, ultimately returning to the status quo after the temporary disruption created by the law.

EXCLUSIONARY ZONING AND THE FAIR SHARE APPROACH

Scholarship largely focuses on the federal government's role in creating segregated neighborhoods, although recent attention has turned to how municipalities did this work through zoning (Trounstine 2018). Zoning practices are an extension of common law nuisance, which is based on the concept that no one may use their land in such a way as to interfere with their neighbor's rights. Zoning codified spatial practices that attempted to control nuisances by segregating uses and offering buffering zones. For example, an industrial use with its potential pollutant nuisances would not be located near residential uses. Zoning practices specifically relate to the problems of affordable housing by either outright prohibiting multifamily housing (a municipality is not zoned to allow it without exception) or indirectly excluding it through regulations that require large lot sizes and restrict building height. Zoning's history reveals patterns of use to control not only "noxious uses"—such as abattoirs—but also "noxious populations"—often based on race or immigrant status—and then later, as suburbs grew, to control based on class.[3]

In its 1969 attempt to increase affordable housing in the suburbs, Massachusetts lawmakers targeted zoning as an obstacle to their goal of racial inclusion, noting that many suburbs used zoning to restrict large builds, apartments, and multifamily housing in favor of single-family units. A 1965 report by the Massachusetts Special Commission on Low Income Housing assessed low-income housing problems in the state, finding that many units were substandard, rents were too high, urban renewal and highway development had displaced people, and racial discrimination was widespread (Bratt and Keyes 2003, 2).

The Massachusetts State Senate commissioned the Legislative Research Council to study the factors limiting affordable housing. The council definitively isolated the economic exclusion component of suburban zoning but could not substantiate that these practices were racially motivated, despite widespread belief that they were (Reed 1982; Stockman 1992; Roisman 2001). Although the publication of the Legislative Research Council's report coincided with the federal Douglas Commission's report and mirrored the same housing concerns, especially those influenced by suburban housing and land-use politics, Massachusetts' race-focused policy agenda shifted to identifying economic segregation as the main target for intervention. The report argued that "to the extent that inner suburban communities prohibit multi-family and apartment housing, or attached housing, or attach height or other restrictions which make such housing feasible only on a 'luxury' basis, the modest income housing problems of the entire metropolitan area are aggravated" (Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1968, 118).

Before Massachusetts could enact a law, the federal Fair Housing Act passed and states no longer felt as much pressure to directly challenge housing discrimination. Race was thus removed as an explicit subject when Massachusetts drafted Chapter 40B, but became a "hidden agenda," according to Housing Appeals Committee Chair Werner Lohe (2001).

Dropping race in Massachusetts seems to have been an attempt to contain a combustible political issue under the (presumed) larger umbrella of class: "Some members of the Massachusetts legislature . . . may have thought that they were cleverly disguising the bitter pill of racial integration in a coating of economic integration—coating that might not be regarded as sugar, but would be accepted more readily than racial integration." This proved to be false confidence given that "suburbs equated subsidized housing with minorities" (Roisman 2001, 81).

The 40B statute did not override zoning completely; it introduced a "housing appeals regime" that views affordable housing from a regional perspective and shifts the burden of

3. *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, 272 U.S. 365 (1926).

supply from the urban core to towns throughout the state (Krefetz 2001). Every municipality would have to do its "fair share." Given that a large majority of Boston suburbs were not even zoned to allow multifamily housing, 40B—and its ability to override that zoning—was a key mechanism to produce affordable housing in the suburbs. As a result, many early reports on 40B included the phrase "open up the suburbs," a term used much less frequently today because discussion of the law has changed to highlight the general need to create low- and moderate-income housing, especially rental options, but minimizes the more radical idea of spatial parity. Today, suburbs are still the primary locus for 40B activity, largely because urban cores already exceed 10 percent affordable housing and rural locales lack the frequent housing builds and appealing markets that would otherwise attract developers to towns beneath the statutory minimum.

On its face, the state pressure and intervention into local governance seem strong, especially in a state with a strong home rule tradition (Danielson 1976). In many ways, however, 40B did not overreach. The law asserts state control over land use and maintains that the police power resides at the state level, thus legitimizing the state's right to intervene, yet does not wholesale take over local control. It shifts jurisdictional control occasionally and only until a town reaches at least 10 percent affordable housing.[4] The policy design is incentive-focused rather than punitive, each town's goal being to reach the minimum threshold, immunizing them to state overrides of local decisions. A key feature that shapes implementation is that status quo local powers and practices continue between 40B applications and can continue indefinitely once the town has reached the 10 percent minimum. Similar to zoning itself, exemptions driven by 40B do not create precedent and do not accumulate as a challenge to local zoning powers.

The administrative aspect of zoning segregates land use through a set of bylaws and then creates a zoning board to allow exemptions. Crucially, these exemptions or variances are viewed as necessary only when hardship stems from the land itself—such as a sloping hill causing difficulty in meeting frontage requirements. Variances are not meant to create personalized exemptions based on economic hardship or preference. In this way, zoning administrators see their role not as addressing historical segregation or planning for inclusion, but as applying standardized tools with exceptions for property irregularities. As David Freund (2007) argues, zoning's legacy is built around de-raced language and administration by its focus on property rather than people. I pick up this theme to underscore how it reveals zoning legitimating its practices through a techno-rational logic that obscures its exclusionary roots, as well as structural similarity to the 40B law itself.

Legal interventions like Fair Share housing offer the potential to reframe local zoning as a barrier to regional spatial access (Cowan 2006). Examination of the law, however, reveals that although it does require towns to open up the suburbs for inclusion, it narrowly constructs the process, leading towns to quickly revert to established land-use approaches. I argue that slow compliance and local resistance are understood through an analysis of how the law structured the on-the-ground decision-making process. Because developers must bring their proposed affordable builds before the very local zoning boards that 40B overrides, the stage is set for a combustible public hearing process. Because the future residents of the affordable housing are not participants in the process, and because profit-interested developers frequently initiate 40B builds, no one represents the law's larger integrative and spatial equality aims. This allows proposed builds to be treated as one-off impositions to be managed as much

4. The law offers three categories of statutory minima, of which 10 percent of total housing is one. The others include land-area minima that occurs less frequently given that none of the cases studied or news accounts referenced towns using this approach. For example, by 2014, only four towns statewide met the 1.5 percent land-area standard (Citizens' Housing and Planning Association 2014). Additionally, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development does not keep an inventory of town information on this as they do with the subsidized housing inventory.

as possible according to local status quo terms and tools. I argue that attention to the mechanics of this decision-making process shows that although the eventual decision is almost always to build housing, the process is an unsettled arena that resolves itself with existing exclusionary tools: storytelling that reasserts the power of the local over the state and technorational logics about the property to resolve debates.

METHODS: ARE YOU A SPY?

During my observations, the time invariably came when a participant would ask, "Are you a spy?" or some variation of that. It was a useful moment of data collection. How participants responded to me, a new person entering the field, told me how the actors were arrayed and how they expected to interact with each other. For instance, during a short break in a public hearing, I passed by a developer's team, deep in conversation. One leaned in and half whispered, "Are you here to spy on us? Whose side are you on?" He laughed, appearing to use the line to ease tension while also gathering information. In another town, a citizen approached me during a hearing when she saw I was taking notes. After finding out that I was studying 40B, she asked what information I could share about other towns that could help her local case.

These interactions revealed the 40B public hearing setting as adversarial, fragmented, and lacking in information. Additionally, I interpreted the spy question as part of a vetting and credentialing process. Actors wanted to know my qualifications for being part of the 40B process and whether to engage in further dialogue. Vetting is a common issue when researching fields with actors of status. I was talking with distinguished lawyers, professionals, and town officials many years my senior. What increased rapport and trust depended on the participant and how they viewed my position: lawyers and experts assessed my academic credentials and were eager to have someone to debate minute aspects of 40B long after family and friends stopped caring; developers and town officials often viewed me as a friendly and objective ear to whom they could grouse about the difficulty of the process; citizens frequently began our interactions hoping I could help them during the hearing but continued inviting me to their homes and citizen meetings long after as one resident lamented, half-jokingly, "we thought you would be useful to us and that turned out not to be true!"

This article corrects the literature's inattention to process through a multi-town ethnography studying the 40B process over time and across multiple cases. This allows me to assess how residents interpret and act upon the state law, and to study town officials and local decision-makers, which is debated in the literature but not fully studied (Dillman and Fisher 2009; for an exception, see interviews with high-ranking local officials in Goetz and Wang 2020).

My analysis of 40B draws on five years (2011–2013, 2018–2020) observing public hearings across seven greater-Boston suburbs. Towns were selected for study based on the ability to watch the entire process from opening of public hearings to final decision. I observed more than 140 40B public hearings, and town and neighborhood meetings, totaling approximately 320 hours.

This article focuses on Norton, Norwood, Littleton, and Norwell, observed from 2011 through 2013. The later fieldwork, and three additional towns, were studied but not included here because the purpose was to confirm data saturation and seek examples or phenomena inconvenient to my analysis. This included attending hearings for 40Bs being revised, speaking to officials about processes different from my primary cases, and observing a "friendly 40B." In friendly 40Bs, towns and developers collaborate on the proposal to create a less-adversarial process for developers and grant towns more control over outcome. Thus, friendly 40Bs represent a proactive approach to the law and would not follow patterns seen here, though other research shows them to be protracted and complicated (for an account of Weston, see DeGenova et al. 2009).[5]

At the time of data collection, three towns

5. I did not observe any projects rejected by towns and appealed to the state. Scholarship indicates that this occurred more frequently in the early years of 40B. Goetz and Wang (2020) find one case in which a planner

were more than 90 percent white, according to the 2010 Census, with Norwood at 84 percent. All towns were above the state median household income, from just slightly above, around $80,000 (Littleton and Norwood), to $90,000 to $110,000 (Norton and Norwell). All proposed projects involved from 126 to 262 rental units. All four proposals were approved at reduced size or, in the case of Littleton, substantially revised to include a mix of apartments and single-family homes.

The majority of 40B projects proposed statewide, including the four studied here, originate with for-profit, limited dividend corporations. Public housing authorities propose 32 percent of projects; nonprofits only propose 15 percent (CHAPA 2003). During my research time frame, I was unable to find any projects proposed by nonprofits. Given the lack of data, the impact of nonprofit-origin projects on the process is ripe for further exploration.

The observed demographics of public hearing participants appeared to be almost all white, with participants frequently speaking as homeowners, matching what Katherine Einstein, Katherine Levine, David Glick, and Maxwell Palmer (2019) find in their larger quantitative study of participation in Massachusetts land-use public hearings. As a white researcher, my presence contributed to and did not challenge the hearings' racial homogeneity of the public hearings and likely facilitated interactions with participants.

Because these cases were chosen to reveal variations and patterns in public hearing discourse over time, I do not address town-level variation or generalize to all 40B cases. Instead, my research goal was to capture the full range of public discourse and decision-making to assess patterns in response to the law. Notably, for these process findings, no noteworthy differences emerged in the patterning across the four towns. Given the focus on interactions and claims-making through the process, it was the similarities that were striking, as I discuss.

The observation phase, I conducted thirty-one interviews with key participants, including developers, zoning board of appeals members, citizen participants, lawyers, and engineering and conservation experts. The data were collected and analyzed through open and thematic coding according to the principles of grounded theory whereby emergent codes were tested and refined throughout the research process (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006).

Public hearing participants do not have expectations of privacy and most towns' procedural rules include having each speaker state their full name and, if they are a resident, their address. However, to maintain confidentiality, I refer to participants using their role in the process (resident, zoning board member, developer, and so on) rather than by names or pseudonyms. Additionally, for analysis of patterns and themes across public hearings, it is not necessary to publicly identify the participants or analyze their individual contributions.

"Isn't This Just NIMBY?"

The most common question posed to me during my fieldwork was about being a spy, but by far the most frequent comment in academic settings was "Isn't that just NIMBY?" They meant simply that opposition to Chapter 40B could be explained as a case of Not In My Backyard, a term used to label citizen opposition to siting as defensive and regressive. I frequently struggled with NIMBY's presence, in popular and scholarly knowledge. I argue that NIMBY is not the end point of analysis, but merely the starting point for interrogation. Increasingly, scholars are refining or maneuvering away from this labeling (Gibson 2005; Lake 1993; Takashi 1997). It has long been assumed that town officials and residents are mobilizing against a build in their "backyard," but the explanations for why they do so lack depth and nuance. Crucially, focusing on the content and interactions in these settings can help explicate types of participation and its impact on the process (Goetz and Wang 2020).

Increasing attempts to better understand public hearing participation especially in land-use cases tell us more about the who of participation and the kinds of claims offered, as scholars often track comments supporting or

discussed a town with three 40B proposals. After accepting the first two, the town "had their fill of 40B" and resisted the third.

opposing proposals (see Einstein, Glick, and Palmer 2019; Whittemore and BenDor 2019). These scholars tend to rely heavily on large data sets of meeting minutes, which, though useful for identifying broad patterns, especially in terms of coding (many match my findings such as debates over density, neighborhood character, and impacts such as traffic), lack the dynamism that can only come from careful observation of the process over time. This includes the potential that claims made during public hearings can change and include multiple, contested meanings. For instance, Jeremy Levine (2017) observed public meetings in Boston and thus was able to track the complexity underlying the use of *community* in the public discourse, analyzing its different meanings when used by residents versus town officials. In this issue, Willow Lung-Amam (2023) describes the complexity underlying NIMBY in school board meetings where language barriers, information gaps, and lack of political acuity shaped how Asian immigrant claims were heard, negatively labeled, and frequently dismissed.

Understanding public hearing interactions requires close analysis of the structural and cultural forces affecting the 40B process. I analyze structural forces through how 40B's policy design arrays actors and shifts rules and procedures, noting its similarity to zoning, the very process the law is designed to override. The local actors then must make sense of the law and engage in interpretative work to mediate the state law with local, on-the-ground interaction. I analyze cultural dynamics through how actors draw on stories and institutional logics to both understand the law and navigate their position in the discursive site of the 40B public hearing.

WHEN LAW COMES TO TOWN

The 40B process is initiated when a developer submits a comprehensive permit application to build a housing development to a town zoning board of appeals (ZBA). This application brings with it the full force of Massachusetts statute and regulations. Chapter 40B confronts towns infrequently enough that zoning board members feel ill equipped to administer it and citizens generally have no previous knowledge of or experience with it, leading to uncertainty about how to interpret and apply the law. The law is experienced as a disruption and the public hearing participants engage over the course of many months to make sense of the law and learn how to maneuver within it.

I find that public hearings had certain, predictable patterns. They begin with outrage, featuring polarizing, adversarial, and seemingly intractable language. Attendance at early meetings is large and sometimes spurred on by local newspaper reports on the new housing project. Attendance diminishes over the next few months, dwindling to a core group that generally includes abutters to the property and town officials from various departments who do not vote on the project but sometimes provide recommendations or condemnations. In an interview, one citizen summarized this early temporal dynamic:

> At the beginning of the hearings, everyone is up in arms, everyone is fighting, you got the crowds! People were standing in the meeting room three rows deep with every seat full. [Our lawyer] said, "that is today and as it goes on, it gets less and less until you have your core group of fifteen to twenty and even that will wane at times." And he was right, that is exactly how it played out. I bump into people in town and they say, "well, that issue is dead. It died, right?" I tell them to come with me once a month to the meetings . . . [our lawyer] said don't get depressed about it, just keep that core group together.

Once the core group of citizens, developers, and town actors coalesce, a filtering or sorting process commences whereby broad claims and concerns, and many specific claims and concerns (largely from the economic, environmental, and social domains), are narrowed or discarded. The filtering process occurs through the interactions between the contentious mix of the ZBA, developers, citizens, and subject or domain experts. At this stage, information asymmetries are key, in that participants try to learn from developers and experts who, in most cases, have more familiarity with 40B. The tension over attempts to broaden deliberation or revisit previously narrowed topics, however, is constant.

In the final stages of the public hearing, de-

velopers, experts, town officials, and citizens collaborate on a draft decision that represents their arguments and contributions to the project. During interviews, citizens pointed to conditions in the decision that they shaped, as one citizen shared, with pride: "my name is actually in one of those conditions." The tinkering over the various conditions contributes to a public hearing process that includes not only the typically studied adversarial argumentation with self-interested strategic positioning, but also a good deal of group learning, coalescing around shared meanings and positions, and moments of collaboration and negotiation. Zoning boards then render their decision based on the negotiated conditions and mitigations for the town, usually allowing the housing build to proceed.

Let me return for a moment to the phrase "when law comes to town," which is a misnomer, though an intentional one. Law already exists, of course, in the form of various bylaws, statutes, and regulations governing housing and land use. However, this form of law is not "felt" by residents of the town. It is experienced as natural, part of the status quo, and is only brought into their awareness by the intrusion of a state law that challenges local law by redefining rules, procedures, and common understandings. As a research site, the public hearing offers the unique analytic perspective of an unsettled arena capable of revealing taken-for-granted beliefs previously unspoken, as well as tracking the contentious interaction of local actors as they attempt to make sense of and control the legal intervention. My findings show that to understand why the law has come to their town, how the law works, and how the town can contend with it, participants in the public hearing rely on stories and narratives.

PUBLIC HEARING EARLY STAGES: MAKING SENSE OF THE DISRUPTION

> "It's a farce!" "The deck was stacked against us from the start."
>
> —citizens on the 40B process

If you sit in 40B public hearings long enough, you are certain to encounter the phrase "the deck is stacked against us," or its alternate versions "it's all rigged" or "it's a shell game contractors and builders are playing" or "it's a farce!" Follow 40B coverage in the media and you will read a similar description of 40B as a trump card played by developers when they are denied construction permits. The game and card-playing metaphors are cognitive shortcuts used by residents to invoke the longer, more complicated analysis of the ways 40B has stripped the town of discretion and control and, in their view, unjustly privileged developer interests over local ones. The invocation of "the deck is stacked" usually comes early in the public hearing as citizens and town officials become cued to new constraints the law places on them.

Observation of the hearing process shows local narratives help make sense of the disruption of, and eventual return to, the status quo (Ewick and Silbey 2003). The dominant narrative that I coded as The Deck is Stacked prepares participants for the state's inevitable success in overriding local zoning regulations, emphasizing the power shift from local to state. My observations found discourse centering on a sense of victimization, towns becoming "vulnerable" to "predatory developers." These findings match Goetz and Wang's interview study in which town officials viewed the law as an intrusion into their governing process (2020). Crucially, this narrative sense-making occurs even in towns with other recent 40B projects, indicating that the law does little to change residents' and town actors' perception of the need for affordable housing or address exclusionary practices. In the majority of the towns studied, each new 40B permit and build was treated as the first encounter with the law and its aims.

Stories are a rhetorical device to provide explanations (Tilly 2006) but differ from other discursive devices in that they rely on the sequencing of events that link cause and effect (Polletta et al. 2011). Components of a narrative include temporally ordered events or sequencing, and character traiting, frequently along a good or evil axis whereby characters are linked to ongoing events, often in the context of opposition or struggle (Franzosi 1998; Ewick and Silbey 1995; Polletta 2006). The storytelling at the heart of 40B cases aligns closely with what

Steinberg and Ewick call origin stories: "They are narratives of inequity or injustice in which the identities of protagonists and antagonists are clearly distinguished and morally marked concerning an issue that requires resolution" (Steinberg and Ewick 2013, 156).

Additionally, an inversion or reversal is often essential to the story, in which the elements of the narrative are not just related by succession, but also transformation. In the case of 40B, a key reversal presents the situation as a legal injustice (the state overriding the town) rather than the amelioration of a prior social injustice (the town's exclusionary zoning rules) that moves toward greater justice (increased affordable housing). In narrative accounts, this inversion is put into motion through a disruption that upsets the status quo, thus requiring actors to explain the new situation, resolve the tension, and move toward a moral consequence (Franzosi 1998).

For example, public hearings across all the towns featured spirited discussions on limiting the height of buildings because all of the proposed builds exceeded local building-height zoning bylaws. This led to frequent explanations that 40B overrides local bylaws and that developers are not restricted to the lower height. Accepting a "stacked deck" seems similar to Erving Goffman's (1952) discussion of "cooling the mark out," or attempts to define a situation that allows one to accept a loss or an unjust experience. In this case, pronouncements that the deck is stacked against the town helped calm some of the early indignations, especially at meetings attracting two hundred angry citizens, and oriented them to the need to work toward accepting the build application with detailed conditions.

For suburban residents, an overall narrative coalesces to include a predatory or irresponsible developer taking advantage of the town through the law. In an interview, one citizen elaborated on the relationship between the main characters in the narrative: "They are predatory developers because they have full knowledge of everything—the rules, how the game is played—and they are going up against a bunch of innocents." Frequently, the story ended by emphasizing the high-stakes moral consequence of letting a developer radically change the character of their community, drawing on vocabularies of the severity and urgency of the situation (Benford 1993). As a citizen said when addressing the Zoning Board in one town's second public hearing, "I have lived in this town for many years and have seen nothing like this before. There are a lot of things to consider and the more I hear, the more I think 40B is being used for the wrong purposes. Take a deep breath and look at every issue. This will write another chapter in the historic landscape of [the town] and may not be reversible. Thanks for stopping irresponsible development. [loud clapping by participants]"

As others note, narrative elements are not created out of whole cloth, but instead resonate in larger discursive fields and systems of meanings (Polletta et al. 2011). Specifically, in this case, Massachusetts is a strong home rule state, where state intervention in town affairs and autonomy is generally disfavored. Additionally, the character traiting of suburban residents as elitist snobs reaches back to the early 1969 colloquial name for Chapter 40B: the Anti-Snob Zoning law. On the other side, casting developers as predatory and greedy is relevant in light of the 2008 housing crisis and economic downturn, popular discourse focusing on the housing market and those who profit from it.

Narratives are not entirely fabricated, and character traiting uses culturally available symbols and meanings. It is difficult for groups to work against this traiting because the alternative roles—developer as good neighbor, homeowner as representative of the larger public good—are not as culturally available. Although neither character position is absent, both are less common in the larger discursive field. Attempts by developers or citizens to move from profit to social good, or from polarized self-interest to public-mindedness, are contested and policed by the other group. This dynamic interaction and resistance to character traiting is the result of each group trying to legitimize their claims in the public hearing while delegitimizing the other's position.

Overall, narratives focus squarely on the law's relocation of power to the state and its statutory requirements rather than on its goal of spatial equity and overcoming exclusion.

This narrowed scope of sense-making is exemplified by participants' frequent invocation of the term *safe harbor*. This phrase is used by actors from all sides of the issue to indicate that a town has met the statutory minimum and thus is free from the "assault" of developer proposals. In one town, the board of selectmen sent a letter to the state in which they described being "under siege" by numerous 40B developments. Staying compliant, meaning that a town has met its 10 percent Fair Share obligation, is never guaranteed because once the town authorizes the 40B permit the project may not be built due to market changes or issues with the developer.

Each town studied here discussed this during public meetings and attempted to forecast population growth and housing growth. If a town can show reasonable progress toward compliance with a state-certified Housing Production Plan that sets aside land for affordable builds or beginning to build a small amount, the town moves into safe harbor. Otherwise, the town must struggle with not only reaching but also maintaining 10 percent subsidized housing stock, a target that can shift based on the ratio of subsidized to total housing. Because total housing stock can shift year to year, some towns feel that, in the words of one ZBA chair, "we are a train that just keeps chugging uphill for compliance and can't get there." This finding overlaps with Goetz and Wang's (2020) proposal that there was a 'threshold effect' impacting town orientations to 40B whereby minimal compliance—the statute's 10 percent target—was a dominant response.

I view "the deck is stacked" as a metaphor oriented to the disruption of law (rules, roles, procedure) and pragmatic action toward the immediate project, increasing the likelihood of a shared dialogue between public hearing actors. Specifically, a gaming metaphor is used as shorthand for how the law has reshuffled the rules and players, favoring developer control over local control. This helps explain to residents why local procedures and bylaws do not hold and why, if contested at the state level, they will be overturned. This narrative ends with the towns and residents understanding that although they cannot block this build, they can still influence the immediate outcome. The shock of the law is settled, the outrage is channeled into an affirmation of the local over the intruding state, and the participants turn their attention to the specifics of the proposal. As the public hearing moves beyond its early stages, and as participants accept the momentarily changed power dynamics of the stacked deck, participants shift from narratives to control over the agenda and decision-making.

MIDDLE TO LATE STAGES: FROM DEBATE TO DECISION-MAKING

> "Every project is a negotiated project."
>
> —ZBA chair

As local actors grapple with the new law and project, the start of the public hearing features the initial airing of concerns and grievances, which are likely to be both multidirectional (targeting developer, town, and state law) and inchoate, as well as too specific and irrelevant. Over the months of 40B meetings, these claims transform from arguments centered on experiential knowledge and concern over a changing neighborhood to actionable issues matching the legal and technical expertise of industry professionals.

To explain this process of transformation, I draw on new institutionalism in organizational sociology that studies the cultural work of organizations through their use of institutional logics to guide action (Friedland and Alford 1991; Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012). In general, this work frequently studies large data sets and adopts a macro perspective, such as when studying organizational processes of isomorphism or field mimicry to explain how organizations adopt others' practices in bids for legitimacy. Recent research by Chad McPherson and Michael Sauder (2013) tackles the micro-level of organizational action and analyzes how assumed institutional logics operate on the ground through everyday interaction, asking how, if organizations have internal scripts and vocabularies to make sense of their world, everyday actors enact these logics, especially in sites of contestation?

As a field, the actors in the 40B public hearings are arrayed in a contested site where, crucially, legitimacy is hard to come by. The zoning

board is forced to be multivocal for both the state law and its town. Because it is forced to speak simultaneously to these two audiences from seemingly opposing perspectives, the ZBA faces severe legitimacy challenges. Developers enter the arena as hybrid organizations containing both market and social welfare logics, given their argument that their housing serves a larger public good.[6] Citizens are keenly aware not only that the issues directly affect their backyard, but also that neighborhood logics will fall on deaf ears and are dangerous claims to make given that they can be rejected as snobbery or racial bias.

Take, for instance, the density of a proposed 40B project. Density is a common starting point for debate across all the observed towns as it was a stand-in for the ways that the proposed project was too large, incongruous with surrounding single-family homes, and overall out of place in the suburban neighborhood. In the scholarship of logics, this becomes a filtering moment of cognition: is the debate over density an issue of economic viability due to decreased total infrastructure costs or an issue of how a building fits in with the vernacular and feel of the surrounding community? For the former claims, an economic or market logic is deployed to make sense of the project; in the latter, a community logic is used. Logics are not used mechanically and an actor is not relegated to only using the reasoning and claims-making native to their stakeholder group, known as their home logic. Similar to other studies that find embedded actors shaping decision-making in settings with multiple institutional actors by manipulating choice points (Heimer 1999) or drawing on others' language and logic (McPherson and Sauder 2013), this study finds that those who are highly embedded in the affordable housing field (lawyers, engineers, consultants) play a crucial role in the public hearings.

Closely tracking the claims-making and debate across years of public hearings revealed that in this unsettled site of multiple logics, participants eventually coalesced around the techno-rational logics offered by professional experts focused on various industry standards: engineering, traffic, property management, environmental, and architecture. Notably, this is the dominant language, logic, and purview of the zoning board itself and reflects zoning's focus on property rather than on people. So, although the law aimed to override zoning by locating it within this board with many competing bids for legitimacy and no clear voice for an enlarged legal logic, logics coalesced around something the town administration was already well versed in.

Although all hearings included sustained focus on many topics of local concern—including the builds' impacts on schools, the environment, public services—we can observe the overall pattern of how logics shift and eventually move toward borrowing from the professional field of expert engineers through an extended example of debating traffic in one town's public hearing.[7] This process for citizens was the most difficult as they were often the least informed on these topics and not used to engaging in this mode. The data across towns revealed an overall pattern of citizens moving from a community-based logic supported with experiential knowledge and evidence, to challenging the experts, and then finally borrowing and adopting the expert language. In this case, the discussion of traffic increased after citizens and ZBA members shared their experiential knowledge of the problems of a street and the nearby highway entrance/exit ramps. The town hired a traffic peer reviewer to assess the devel-

6. The 40B permitting process can be used by nonprofit and for-profit developers, as well as local government agencies. All projects studied here were initiated by for-profit developers, the most common mode for 40B. I would anticipate that nonprofit developers or local agencies would be able to better deploy a public-good logic, though this is a question for future research.

7. Claims mentioned in this article, such as on traffic or density, are selected to demonstrate the process and are not comprehensive regarding the kinds of arguments put forward in the public hearing. Field notes recorded a range including environmental concerns, increased burden on town services and schools, and aesthetics. Following the pattern described, unless these claims could be addressed and translated by experts, they lost power throughout the process and had less impact on final decisions.

oper plans and traffic impact. About the resulting report, the reviewer said, "The developer did a standard traffic study. It is all appropriate. One other area of concern is sight lines—they are constrained at this point and when there is widening it will be better. You have to meet sight lines since it's a safety concern and at this point, it's hard to prove that they will be met. The peak hours they looked at were appropriate. The future projections were appropriate. They conducted their assessment the same way I would have done it."

With the peer reviewer offering an industry-standard logic, the citizens in turn alternated between drawing from experiential knowledge and neighborhood logics and attempting to engage in the industry-standard logic. For example, one citizen described how he gets off the highway ramp every day and sees the traffic backed up. His voice increased in volume and in an angry tone he said, "I'm concerned about my safety since my car is backed up onto the highway. Cars backed up onto the highway!" Another recalled witnessing a recent accident caused by cars coming off the overpass at a high speed. The mounting claims by citizens pressured the town to inquire about whether the traffic impacts should be studied beyond the surrounding neighborhood of the project. The peer reviewer reminded the hearing participants that her role was to assess only the developer's traffic study, not propose or conduct her own. Although citizens attempted to open the world of inquiry on traffic, the peer reviewer continued to narrow the relevant domain. As tensions mounted, the citizens argued that the ZBA was not listening to them and the developer sat back and occasionally rolled his eyes at members of his team. The ZBA chair stepped up to reaffirm the role of the peer reviewer:

ZBA CHAIR: No one is denying that there is going to be extra traffic because of this project. We are trying to drill into how much traffic, and if its effects move out beyond the radius of the 40B project. [The traffic peer reviewer's] job is to look at numbers and see if the methodology is correct. I don't want to put words in her mouth, but it's done right and it's livable.

CITIZEN [voice rising in volume and with an angry tone]: All the other building projects had to comply with town regulations. This one doesn't. We are presenting you with safety. There are not many issues under 40B that you can decide on, but one is safety. So if we bring this concern to you, you have the duty, the obligation to act on safety. We have elderly people here and that street is dangerous [audience claps].

The ZBA chair responded that he wanted to get additional traffic information, but expressed uncertainty as to whether it would alter the proposal given that the town could be viewed "as making harsh decisions in an unfavorable manner. If we denied this project on safety and the applicant appealed it—justifiably so—then we have the cost of litigation." This exchange reveals the complications of reconstituting 40B amid competing actors from different organizational backgrounds. The ZBA chair attempted to forecast the legal repercussions of pushing forward on this issue and eventually looked to the peer reviewer to help "close off" the issue by asking whether they could request from the developer more traffic information and expand the scope of their traffic flow study. Later, another ZBA member chimed in to support the chair and remind participants of the stacked deck, the risk of appeal, and their goal of a negotiated build.

Over time, citizens shifted from claims about traffic and the dangerous placement of the exit and entrance to the project to claims about water runoff and extensive discussion of improvements to the street, laying thicker sewer piping, and straightening the dangerous curve of the road. These shifting claims were facilitated by drawing on other circulating logics. In particular, citizens borrowed from the peer engineer's logics of industry standards and town administrative procedures; as one citizen asked, "What guarantees will the board have that the road will be straightened and flattened? Is there a way to bond this so if the board gives the developer the permit there is an assurance, they will do it?" This was received more favorably, the developer responding that "we understand and we are comfortable that this road is the price of admission and

we'll finish it before occupancy." The ZBA noted they would add that to the list of conditions for the project. In this way, citizens engaged in logic borrowing to increase their legitimacy while contributing to a narrowing focus of legal application to the technical specifications of the project. This finding is notable in light of Einstein and colleagues' (2019) assessment that public commenters in land-use meetings displayed a high level of knowledge of complex regulations. Their large data set of meeting minutes led them to assume this knowledge might be due to citizens' professional background (which I also found), but my close observation over time further revealed a process of learning and claim transformation due to expert presence in the public hearing and logic borrowing.

When a citizen group asked to make a formal presentation to the board, both the developer and ZBA were reluctant to accommodate the request. The ZBA wanted to move forward, a member saying they had "been at this for thirty years and [had] never seen citizens make formal presentations." The board chair added that he was "uncomfortable with the whole thing since you have been asking questions the whole time and don't need a whole block of time." The ZBA chair, however, ultimately agreed and the citizens borrowed logics and language from the developer and experts in presenting their concerns. The citizens' opening statements highlighted the shift away from broad, emotional claims: "We propose to bring new information, a new perspective, to amplify and provide new evidence that substantiates our concerns. I want to make it clear that we as a community are not opposed to the development in general, but we have specific concerns. We will discuss density, but it is not the focus of our presentation. Methodologically we aim to provide evidence and compare and contrast it with other bodies of facts."

The citizen presentation included many issues and cited state guidelines for a smart growth project to contest the developer's claims, as well as language from the Conservation Committee to critique the buffer size of a wetlands area. For the traffic issue focused on here, the ZBA responded by asking the traffic peer reviewer whether placing the buildings close enough to the road would naturally slow traffic. The citizen audience sighed loudly and expressed disapproval of the question, but the traffic engineer offered an industry logic that massing close to the road was a natural slowing mechanism. The engineer also noted that a guardrail could be put in place if a concern was identifiable but cautioned that guardrails are largely considered eyesores. Citizens picked up on this issue in future meetings and promoted an integrated stone wall barrier instead of a guardrail. This claim held currency throughout the process and, by the end, was translated into a slight setback of the buildings from the road and the addition of a row of trees to discourage residents from getting too close to the passing cars.

Over the course of the public hearings, citizens flexibly adjusted to incorporate expert discourse in their claims-making activity. I build on the institutional logics literature to show how it is advantageous for actors to borrow or hijack logics at different times. For example, appeals to scientific or industry standards and the efficiency or rationality of professions are mimicked by citizens trying to distance themselves from emotionality and snobbery and to appear legitimate before the board. The developer is similarly motivated to speak in the techno-rational language of experts because they not only employ their own experts and are well versed in this language but their attempts to use other logics are stymied. For example, developers frequently engaged in the neighbor logic of residents by noting how they would be good neighbors who would add to the community rather than harm it. Citizens heavily policed these claims. Developers were also reluctant to invoke a market logic because it seemed to harm their rationale for building size and design. They often tried to put forth a good engineering practice logic to defend these proposals, but were also often reluctantly pushed to acknowledge the market logic motivating their plans. In one case, the ZBA and the developer went back and forth for thirty minutes over lowering the second floor of a building plan. The developer offered reasons that reducing the height would call for a different roof that was less aesthetically appealing and would not fit in as well with the surrounding neigh-

borhood. An exasperated ZBA chair sighed, leaned across the table, and said, "This is about money, isn't it? It will cost you more and won't be as profitable if you reduce the height?" The developer then said that, yes, they would incur the same building and infrastructure costs, but with a reduced height could not offer additional loft spaces and would collect less rent.

My work complicates scholarship on the borrowing-hijacking process with data showing that actors also police the use of these nonhome logics. The main examples in the public hearing were the policing by citizens of the good neighbor logic used by developers and the developer policing town and citizens engaging in market logic. The contestation over developers' use of neighbor logic was policed in every 40B case under study and was often done by yelling directly at the developer and marshaling evidence that the developer would, in fact, not be a good neighbor due to the project's detrimental effects on other properties and not fitting in with the rest of the neighborhood. A crucial part of this policing is the argument that the developers are drawing from knowledge and legitimacy that are not a part of their group. Developers are not residents of that neighborhood and town and thus could not have the necessary experiential knowledge of the issues facing, and what is best for, the neighborhood. Part of the frustration for citizens was that they felt limited in their ability to use neighborhood logic to contest 40B and thus were quick to police the developer trying to use such claims. Additionally, both citizens and town officials pointed out the ways this nonhome logic for developers was actually at odds with and contradicted other developer logics, such as the market-economic logic that positions developers as profit-maximizing private entities who respond to shareholders, not to neighbors or the larger community. As the protracted public hearing moved to its later stages, the switching and contesting of logics transitioned to the professional industry logics of peer engineers and other experts. This domain of understanding and knowledge held both great legitimacy under the 40B statute and was within the purview of the zoning status quo. Drawing on the industry logic enabled the public hearing to move toward a refined and negotiated housing proposal that was accepted at the local level, leading the affordable housing to be built in all cases under study.

CONCLUSION: A RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO

> "I don't know, maybe we are all snobs."
>
> —town resident

Near the end of a lengthy interview that covered a complex analysis of the law, building proposals, and the interplay of claims through the public hearing, a citizen suddenly said, "I don't know, maybe we are all snobs." The individual was voicing frustration prompted by the distance between the law, its goals, and her practical experience. Sometimes she felt powerless in the public hearing; at others she felt empowered by the support of her fellow residents and town officials. Fighting the project seemed both hopeless and entirely possible. She accepted its inevitability but was also disgusted at how the developer could override local concerns for personal profit. In the end, all of the projects were accepted and, in the words of many participants, ended up as negotiated projects. This encapsulates the paradox of the law demonstrated by my fieldwork: local negotiation and approval contrasted with state-level indicators showing slow overall movement toward housing goals. The public hearing filtered discourse toward the specifics of the project but continued to animate frustration and disapproval of the law. The town largely accepted the stacked deck, maneuvered within it, and produced a bitter pill—the negotiated housing build—they were willing to swallow.

Citizens seemed to be largely unaware of the law before developers entered with their proposals, but within weeks, residents of all four towns were able to articulate and retell a similar version of the 40B story. I argue that the larger 40B narrative, with its cognitive shortcuts, enters the town with the law and is then used by the various actors to help make sense of this legal incursion. The law represents a disruption of status quo procedures and rules, creating an unsettled field of action. Local actors try to resettle the field with cultural tools, in-

cluding the dominant narrative, localized stories, and logic borrowing. Crucially, the larger the-deck-is-stacked injustice narrative proved incredibly durable given that it continued through to the end of the public hearing process even as negotiation and collaboration on the specifics of the project increased. A key finding is that these shared narratives do the important work of shaping understanding by emphasizing this is a momentary loss of local control.

Another significant factor shaping the process—a factor whose inclusion could alter the process and outcome of 40B public hearings, better accomplishing the fair share aims of the law—is the role for residents of the affordable units. In the case of 40B and its mechanism as largely a developer's tool, there is a complete absence of the affordable housing population. This population may be among the beneficiaries of the law, but they enter the 40B public hearings as a fictional, potential future population and thus are not present as a constituency in the process. Literature on law as a tool for social change emphasizes the necessity of effective mobilization of rights (McCann 2006; Rosenberg 1991), but the law's structural design and process provides no avenue for this population. I never encountered a potential resident in the hundred-plus meetings I attended. Their physical absence is mirrored in their absence from the public debate over the development; mobilization for their right to suburban space is nearly nonexistent. The debate instead moves from affordable housing as a public good with an inclusive suburban population to a mediated technocratic exchange between zoning board members, developers, citizens, and building and land use professionals. The high degree of collective sense-making about the law plus the degree of claims-shifting suggests the potential impact of increasing representation in the public hearings. Essentially, building into the process a stronger voice for the law's goals and beneficiaries would force the often-unanswered question of how we became vulnerable to be answered, rather than being merely rhetorical or used in service of a victim narrative.

The reliance on experts and logic switching also indicates room for offering alternative claims, such as those more focused on the need to address racial and economic exclusion or increase affordable housing. This potential was observed, though rarely, in the few times a town administrator or other official might report on the current lack of low-to-moderate-income housing or give specific examples of how the town is growing and thus needs more rental options. In these instances, the point went unrefuted but remained unelaborated. Without the presence of the law's beneficiaries or proponents to speak to the need, the response was the nodding of heads and resumption of the previous discussion. In some cases, the town set aside some units for local preference, meaning current residents in need of housing, family members of current residents, municipal workers, or employees of local businesses.

An enlarged role for advocacy groups could also counter the information asymmetry. One such group, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), works at state and community levels, testifies and meets with officials at the federal level, and is a source of training, informational materials, and studies by scholars. CHAPA was not an active participant in the hearings studied here, though further analysis could include how such a body might provide training and support for towns, and free the developer from being the untrustworthy representative of the law, thus potentially further reducing contentiousness and allowing room to acknowledge the law's equity aims.[8]

The larger absence of race from the process and discussion, however, is a thornier problem, as I argue that the absence is baked into not only the land-use practice of zoning but also the 40B law itself, thus enabling a silence that extends to the public hearing. Research has established this dynamic of elephants in the room as "conspiracies of silence" (Zerubavel 2006, 2018), in which actors engage in color-

8. CHAPA publishes fact sheets on 40B that are distributed to towns and can be a useful resource for citizens. Public hearing participants studied here could have used these materials, although they were not referenced in meetings or interviews.

blind discourse to minimize or disregard the impact of race through a repertoire of rhetorical moves (Bonilla-Silva 2002; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004; Mueller 2018; Pollock 2009). A one-on-one interview with a lawyer representing the developers confirmed the silence and avoidance of race observed in the public hearings. Seemingly more free to speak in this private setting, he noted that although "[the residents] will never say it . . . you can tell it is fear of the other, someone who is not like them, that the [affordable housing] residents will be a different color, religion, have too many kids and pushing strollers." Class status was occasionally broached and debated as towns moved toward decisions about affordable builds, but, as the lawyer suggested, race was never openly discussed and only occasionally observable through coded language (for a discussion on the rhetorical moves of coded racial language, see Lung-Amam 2023). A notable limitation of the scholarship thus far is its attention to what is actually spoken, usually by paying attention to the moments when the silence is breached and actors say what is otherwise not said. In other work, I track the "collaborative silence" around race where, despite contested debates around almost every issue (as seen in this article), the public hearing participants tacitly work to avoid addressing race. In that work, I argue that the discourse is dominated by elliptical gaps that involve active participation from listeners to fill in the unspoken gaps (Girouard 2021).

This collaborative silence is ever more relevant as suburbs become increasingly diverse in race and class (see Lewis-McCoy et al. 2023, this issue; Lichter et al. 2023, this issue). It is important to fully understand persistently resistant spaces and the tools used to maintain or control white, affluent neighborhoods (Murphy and Allard 2015; Goetz, Williams, and Damiano 2020; Wyndham 2023). My research suggests that override tools such as 40B create a momentary challenge to these exclusionary spaces that generate minimal compliance but continued resistance. The deraced nature of zoning and the strategic racial silence of 40B match white views that racial segregation is either a feature of the past or associated with individual prejudice, rather than reconciling the ways it is part of our everyday local governance (Hughey 2018). This can continue what Angela Simms (2023) calls "color callous" racism, that is, an ongoing evading of reckoning with the processes that facilitate white economic advantage.

Chapter 40B has driven the construction of affordable housing in suburban areas that otherwise would not allow it. In that respect, it is a success. However, my research asks us to pause as we consider interventions into regimes of local land-use exclusion. Chapter 40B maintains the local regime of inequality by leaving zoning ordinances untouched and uses a process that confirms the legitimacy of exclusionary zoning rather than challenges it. Fifty years on, towns treat Fair Share 40B as an exception, an imposition to be endured, rather than a way to create a fairer or more just locale.

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