



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

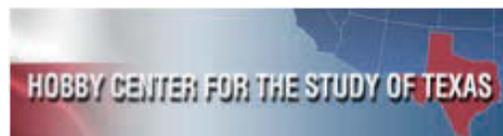
A Joint Report Analyzing Census Data from 1990, 2000, and 2010

Houston Region Grows More Racially/Ethnically Diverse,  
With Small Declines in Segregation.  
A Joint Report Analyzing Census Data from 1990, 2000, and 2010

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

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Harnessing the region's burgeoning racial/ethnic diversity is a central challenge for the Houston region. Future research that investigates the underlying factors contributing to the increased diversity and continual segregation has the opportunity to illuminate how Houston can lead the nation in the transition to a fully inclusive, unified multiracial/multiethnic region.

## The Racial/Ethnic Diversity of The Houston Region

The Houston metropolitan region is becoming more diverse. Over the past two decades—from 1990 to 2010—the balance between the four major racial/ethnic groups has increased across the multiple county metropolitan region (Figure 1)<sup>1</sup>. The Anglo population<sup>2</sup> represents a declining share of the Houston metropolitan area. In 1990, Anglos were more than half the population (57.9 percent), but by 2000 they decreased to slightly less than half the total population (48.2 percent), and by 2010 they were only 39.7 percent of the metropolitan population.

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

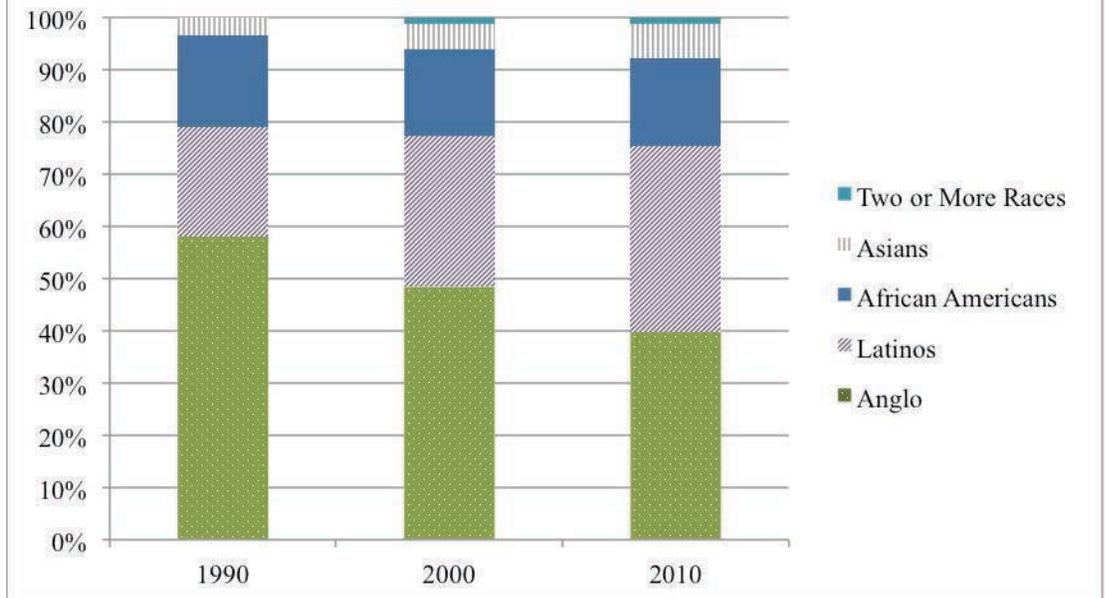
Other racial/ethnic groups in the metropolitan region have either increased, though to a smaller degree than Latinos, or remained the same. The percentage of Asians in the Houston metropolitan region has increased from 3.4 percent in 1990, to 4.8 percent in 2000, and to 6.5 percent in 2010. African Americans have remained relatively stable across this time period, representing 17.5 percent in 1990 and 16.8 percent in 2010. Beginning with the 2000 U.S. Census, individuals were able to define themselves as multiracial. For the past two decennial censuses, about the same proportion of the population chose this option (1.2 percent in 2000 and 1.3 percent in 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> In order to compare the Houston metropolitan area across different time periods and with other metropolitan areas, in this first section of this report we use the Houston-Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each decennial Census. We do not normalize the boundaries of the MSA but use the definition for each decennial Census year.

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Census collects data on race and Latino ethnicity. We use categories that combine race/ethnic backgrounds in ways consistent with tables presented by the U.S. Census. Latinos, an ethnic group that may be of any race, are placed in one category and all other persons not of Latin origin are assigned to their respective racial categories. The resulting categories are: Latinos, (non-Latino) Whites referred to as “Anglos”, (non-Latino) Blacks referred to as “African Americans”, (non-Latino) Asians referred to only as “Asians”, and those non-Latino persons selecting two or more races, referred to as “Two or More Races.” For ease of presentation, we show race/ethnic information for only the four most demographically prominent race/ethnic groups. We exclude non-Latino persons whose race is “Some other Race”, “American Indian/Alaskan Native”, or “Pacific Islander”.

Figure 1. Houston Metropolitan Racial/Ethnic Demographics 1990-2010



How does Houston’s racial/ethnic diversity compare to the racial/ethnic diversity of other large metropolitan areas? The Houston metropolitan area is the most racially/ethnically diverse. Among the five most populous metropolitan areas in Texas (Figure 2), Houston stands out for having no racial/ethnic majority and nearly equal percentages of the two largest race/ethnic groups (Latinos and Anglos).

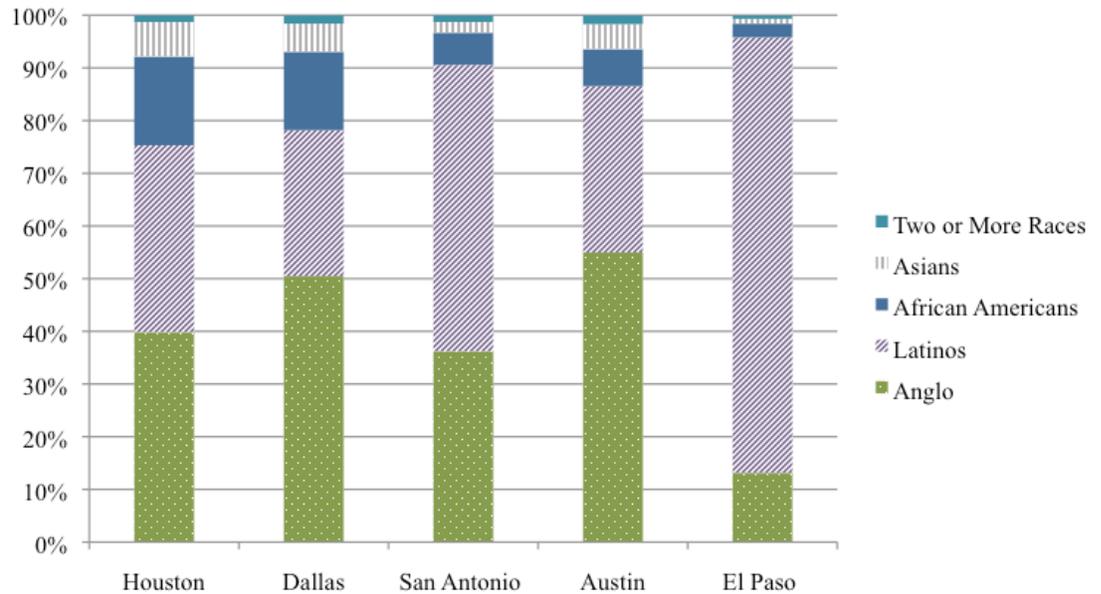
Dallas-Fort Worth and Austin, by contrast, are majority Anglo, though Anglos represent only 50 percent and 55 percent of the residents, respectively. All other groups occupy smaller shares than in Houston. In Dallas, Latinos are 27.5 percent (Houston: 35.3 percent) and African Americans are 15 percent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

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

How does Houston’s racial diversity compare to the racial diversity of other large metropolitan areas?  
The Houston metropolitan area is the most racially diverse.

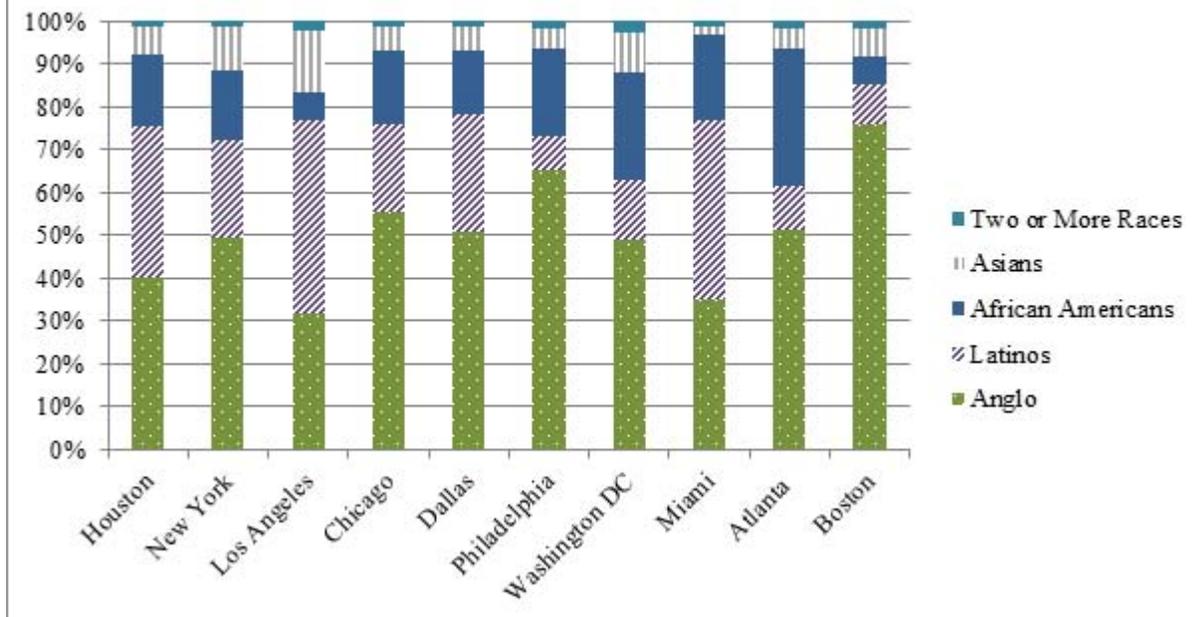


Figure 2. Texas' Largest Metropolitan Areas Racial/Ethnic Demographics 2010



Houston is one of the most racially/ethnically diverse metropolitan areas in the nation as well. It is the *most diverse* of the 10 largest U.S. metropolitan areas. Unlike the other large metropolitan areas, all four major racial/ethnic groups have substantial representation in Houston with Latinos and Anglos occupying roughly equal shares of the population. The Anglo population in the country's largest metropolitan area, New York, is 48.9 percent compared to Houston's 39.7. Los Angeles and Miami, by contrast, have relatively large Latino populations, 44.4 and 41.6 percent respectively. Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, have proportionately larger African American populations than Houston, 31.9, 25.2, and 20.2 percent, respectively, compared to Houston's 16.8 percent, yet they all have substantially smaller Latino populations; 10.4, 13.8 and 7.8 percent.

Figure 3. Ten Largest U.S. Metropolitan Area Racial/Ethnic Demographics 2010



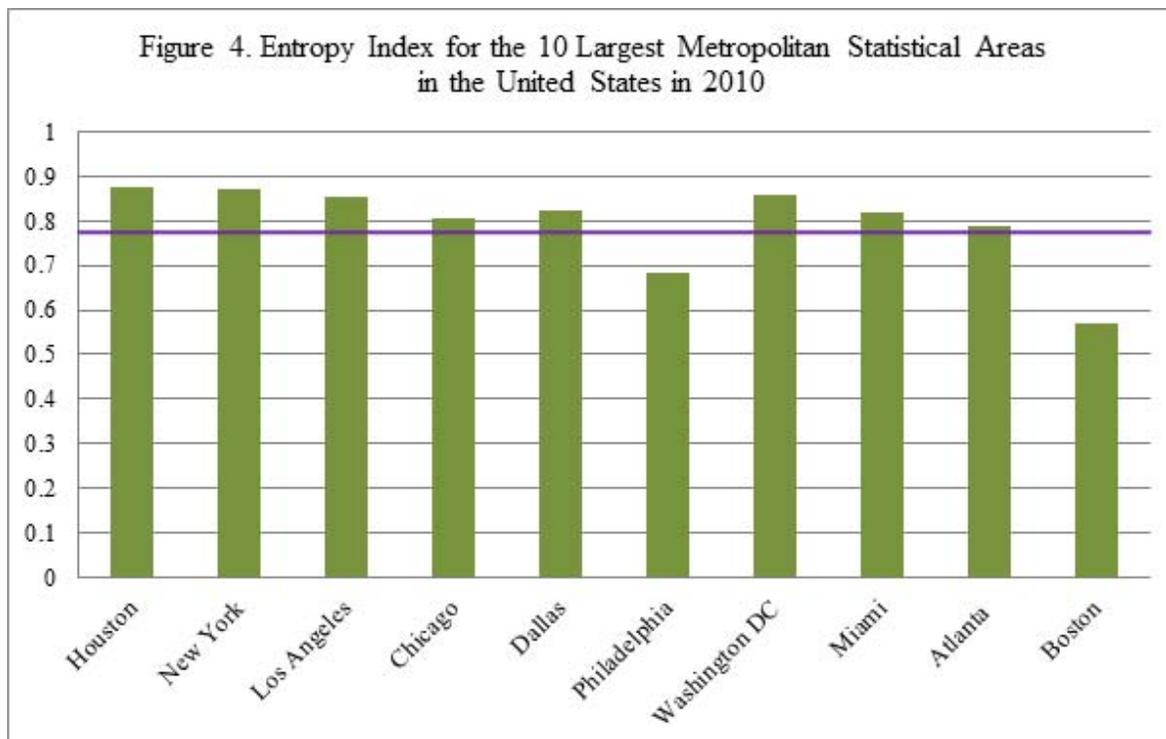
We can measure and compare diversity across areas by using a measure called the Entropy Index.<sup>3</sup> We can think of racial/ethnic diversity in two ways:

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

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

The standardized Entropy Index measures how close a total population is to sharing balanced percentages across its racial/ethnic groups. If one subgroup is 100 percent of the population, then the standardized index score will be 0. If the four racial/ethnic groups are each 25 percent of the population the score would be one. Houston has the highest entropy score of the 10 largest metropolitan areas, 0.874. New York is a close second with a score of 0.872. All but two of the 10 largest metropolitan areas, Boston and Philadelphia, have a higher entropy score than the national average of 0.709, meaning that in general the large metropolitan areas are more diverse than the nation as a whole.

<sup>3</sup>Theil, Henri. 1972. Statistical decomposition analysis. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company.



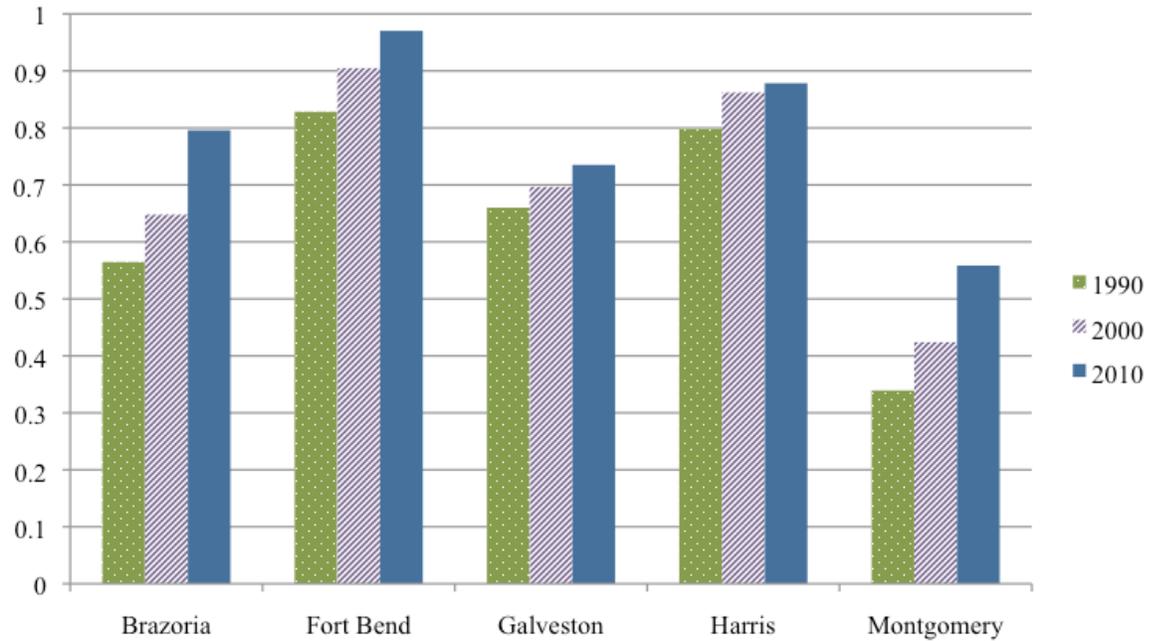
*\*\*Note the purple line is the national average of 0.709*

### Diversity by County

Our analysis found significant variation across the Houston region. When examining the five most populated counties within the Houston metropolitan area, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, and Montgomery<sup>4</sup>. All five have increased in diversity over the 20-year period, as shown by their increasing entropy indexes (again 0 means no racial/ethnic diversity, one means equal representation of all four racial/ethnic groups). Throughout this time Fort Bend has remained the most diverse county in the area with an entropy score of 0.970 in 2010. The diversity of Fort Bend County in 2010 is approaching the highest possible score. Montgomery County, with easily the highest percentage Anglo in the region as of 2010 (71.2 percent) is substantially less diverse than the other highly populated Houston metropolitan counties. But like the other counties, it is growing more diverse. Harris County has remained second most diverse while Brazoria has replaced Galveston County as the third most diverse county.

<sup>4</sup> We define the Houston region in this report as the population living in these five counties—Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery, Brazoria, and Galveston. The total population in these five counties as of 2010 is 5.74 million. Since the MSA's population is largely concentrated in these five counties we concentrate our analysis on these counties.

Figure 5: County Entropy Index 1990-2010

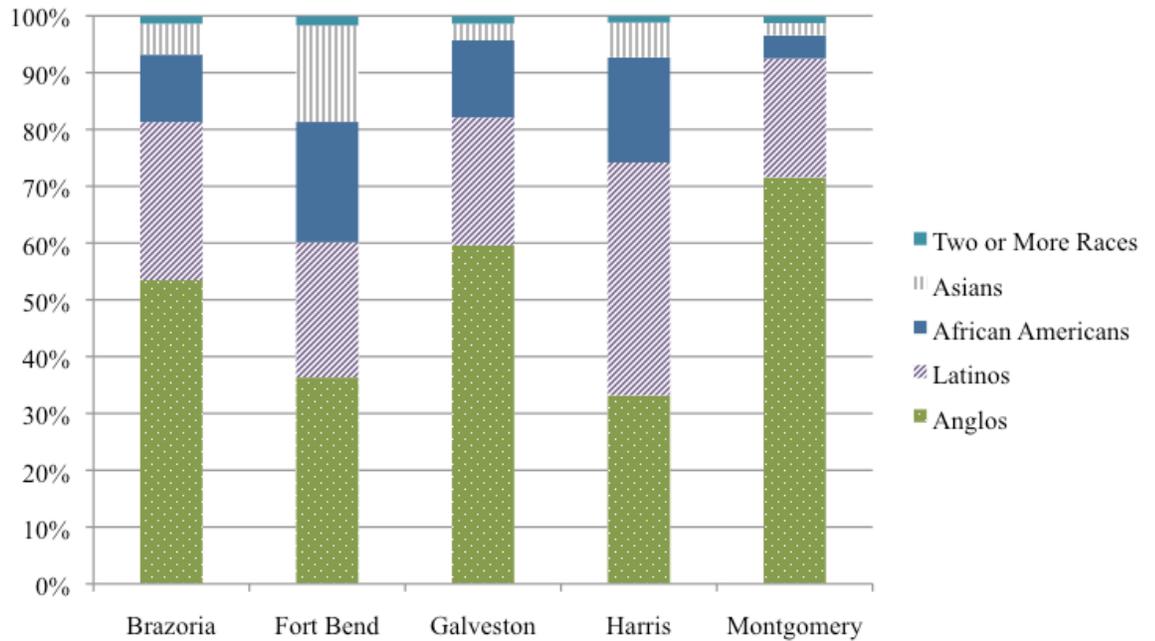


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All five counties have a similar ordering of their largest to smallest group. Except for Harris County, Anglos are the largest racial/ethnic group in all of the counties, followed by Latinos, then African Americans and finally Asians. In Harris County, Latinos are the largest group, making up 40.8 percent of the population, followed by Anglos who are 33.0 percent, then African Americans consisting of 18.4 percent and finally Asians with 6.1 percent of the population. African American and Asians are the smallest percentage in Montgomery County where Anglos make up 71.2 percent of the population and the largest percentage in Fort Bend, the county with the highest Entropy Index. The differences in the counties demographics demonstrate that although all four racial/ethnic groups are present in the entire region they are not equally distributed.



Figure 6: County Racial/Ethnic Demographics 2010



Diversity by Metro Cities of 50,000+ Population

We also examined the diversity of all cities in the Houston region with populations of 50,000 or greater in 2010. There are 12 such places<sup>5</sup>. For the first time (see Figure 8), two suburbs—Missouri City and Pearland—are more diverse than the City of Houston. Both of these suburbs have higher percentages of Asian than does the City of Houston, and significant percentages of African Americans, Anglos, and Latinos (see Figure 7).

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

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

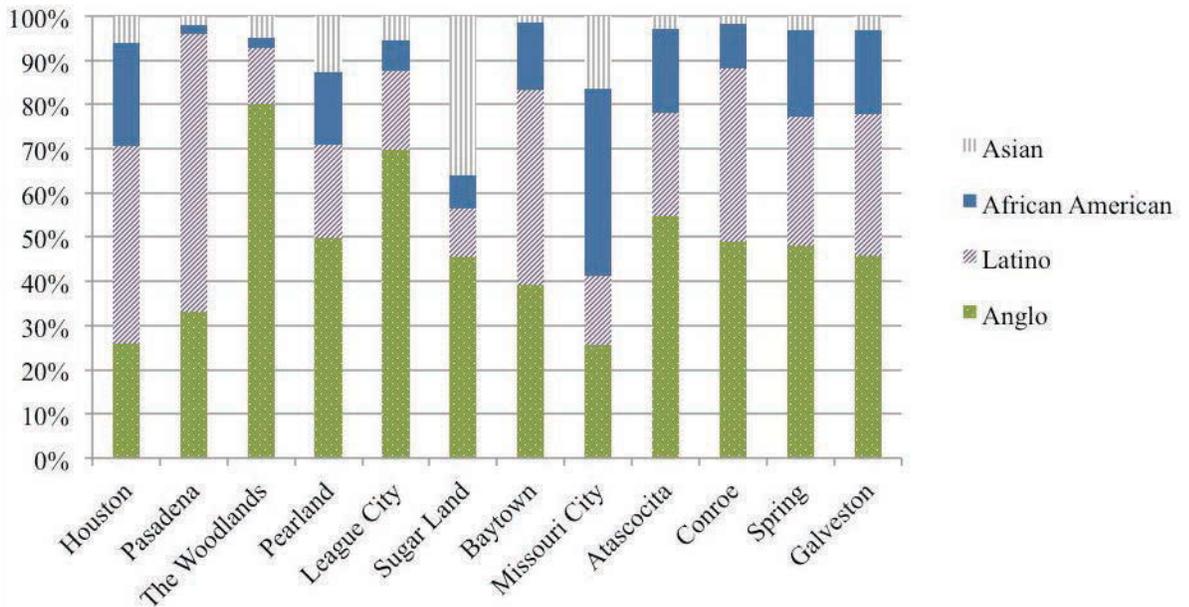
In contrast, none of the large cities in the Houston region has less than 10 percent Latino, and seven of the 11 have populations that are at least 20 percent Latino. Baytown and Houston are 44 percent Latino, and Pasadena is now 62 percent Latino.

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

<sup>5</sup> Of the 12 places in the Houston region that have a population of 50,000, nine of them are incorporated cities and three of them, including Atascocita, Spring, and The Woodlands, are census designated places. We refer to all 12 of these locations as cities in this report. In addition, we included Galveston in this report because of its historical significance even though the population was less than 50,000 in 2010.

For the first time, two suburbs—Missouri City and Pearland—are more diverse than the City of Houston.

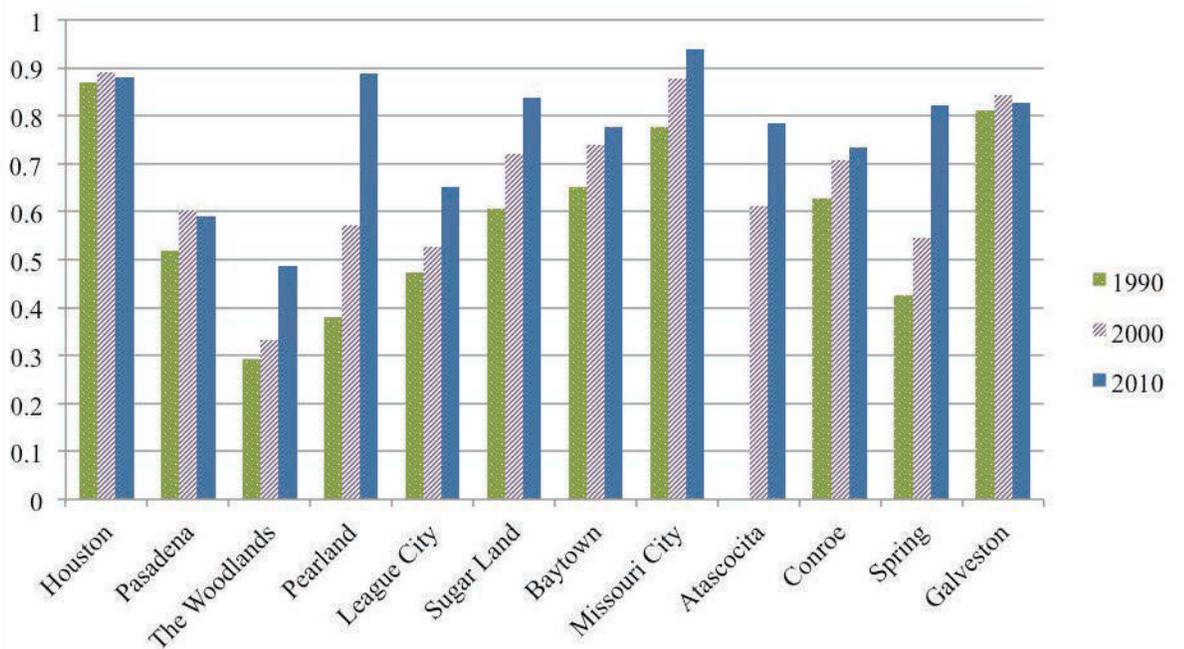
Figure 7: Houston Metro 50,000+ Cities Racial/Ethnic Demographics 2010



Note: Cities are ordered largest to smallest.

All the cities in the region have increased in their diversity over the last 20 years. Houston and Galveston, the oldest most established cities, saw the smallest change. This is juxtaposed to Pearland and Spring that experienced the largest increases in diversity. Pearland went from being the second least diverse city in 1990 to the second most diverse city in 2010, only trailing Missouri City. While all four racial/ethnic groups are represented to some degree in each of the 12 cities, this does not imply that the groups are residing next to each other within these cities.

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



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

## Diverse Yes, But Do We Live Together?

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

We turn then to an analysis of residential segregation by race/ethnicity, that is, we measure where members of the various racial/ethnic groups live in the Houston region relative to one another. To do so, we use a measure of segregation called the Dissimilarity (D) Index. This is a two-group measure, meaning that D's are shown for pairs of racial/ethnic groups.<sup>6</sup>

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

### Metro-Level Trends

In Figure 9, we calculated the level of segregation for the Houston region. Again, we define the Houston region in this report as the population living in five counties—Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery, Brazoria, and Galveston.

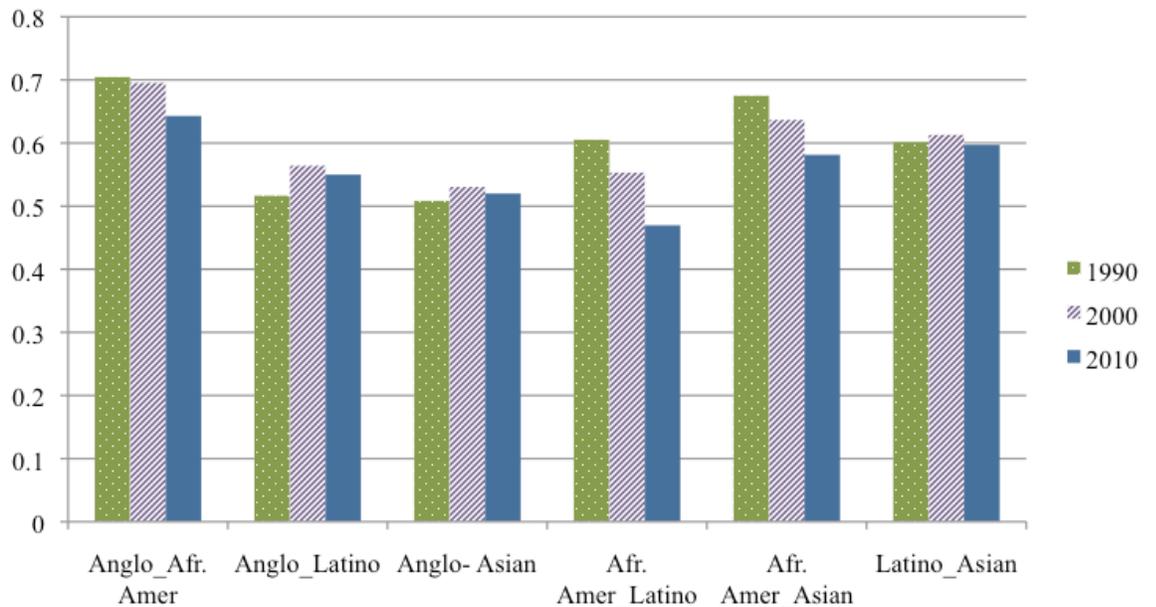
We show the extent of segregation for each pair of racial/ethnic groups for 1990, 2000, and 2010. Over the past 20 years, there have been modest to moderate declines in segregation involving Anglos. We observe a decline in segregation between Anglos and African Americans, from 0.70 in 1990 and 2000 to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

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

<sup>6</sup> We calculate the Dissimilarity Index using block groups, as designated by the census. The census block groups are combinations of Census Block, which are roughly equivalent to city blocks. Typically, census block groups contain between 600 and 3,000 people, with an optimal size of 1,500 people. The categorization of segregation a low, medium or high comes from: Massey, Douglas S. and Denton, Nancy A. 1988. “The Dimensions of Residential Segregation.” *Social Forces* 67(2): 281-315.

neighborhoods constant—such as housing values, educational quality, and crime rates—Anglos in the Houston area are less likely to say they would buy homes as the percentage of African Americans or Latinos in the neighborhood increases. They did not say this about Asians—Anglos were no less likely to say they would want to buy a home in a neighborhood with a high percentage Asian than with a lower percentage Asian.

Figure 9: Houston Region Overall Segregation 1990-2010



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

In an important indicator of the possible restructuring of neighborhoods in the Houston region, the largest decline in segregation over the 1990-2010 period was between African Americans and Latinos. In 1990, these two groups were highly segregated from one another (.61), but by 2010 their segregation score had declined well into the moderate category (.47), with the largest drop coming over the past 10 years. African American-Asian segregation also declined, though less than that of African American-Latino segregation. In 1990 and 2000, African Americans and Asians were highly segregated from each other, but by 2010, their score (.58) had dipped into the “moderate” category of segregation.

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

## City-Level and County-Level Comparisons

The metro-wide trends in segregation are but one part of the story. Segregation can and does vary across various parts of the region. We undertook a comparison of segregation within the area's 12 largest cities and each of the five most populated counties. We proceed by showing how specific racial/ethnic groups are segregated from all others, beginning first with Anglos.

The first finding is important: *segregation is higher in the City of Houston than in any other area of the metropolitan region* (see Figure 10). Why? First, Houston has much larger absolute numbers of each group, and group size is associated with greater segregation. But this is not the whole story. If it were, segregation would be even higher for Harris County.

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

### 1. Anglos living closest to groups in least diverse spaces

The graph below (Figure 10) shows the index D for each Anglo/non-Anglo pair for 12 Houston area cities. We make every attempt to show the segregation for all pairs, but some groups are too small to show reliable estimates. If a group comprises less than three percent of a city or county, then the D becomes less reliable. We therefore show only the level of segregation between pairs of groups when each group comprise at least three percent of the city's or county's population.

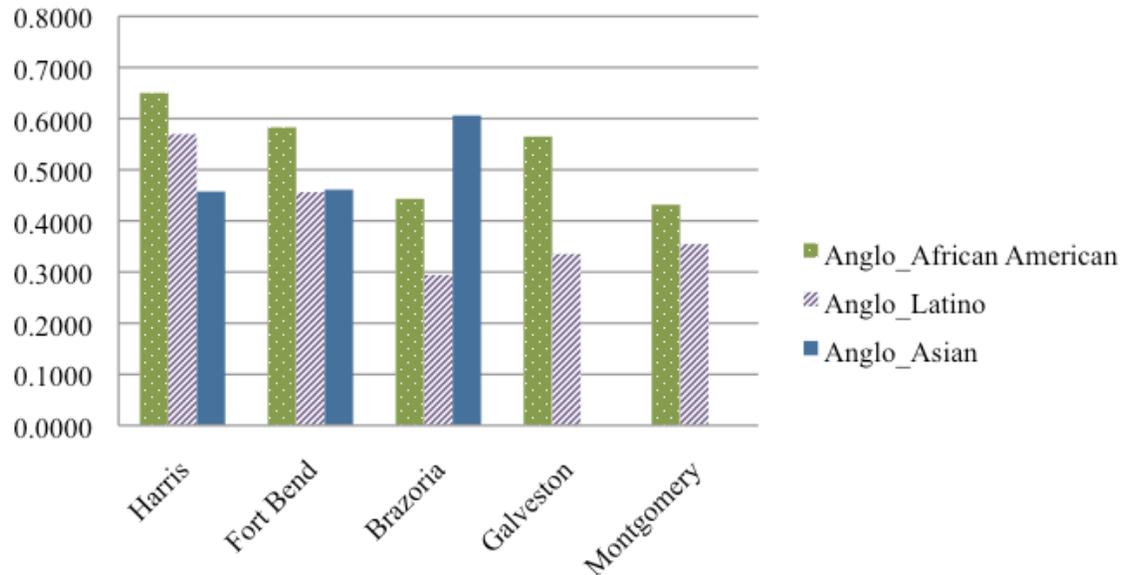
Overall, Anglos are more segregated from African Americans than they are from Asians or Latinos in five of the 10 cities that we have measures of African American-Anglo segregation. We also find that Anglos are less segregated from Latinos than from either Asians or African Americans within seven of the 11 cities we observe. To organize these patterns, we present these levels according to size of the Anglo population, ranging from Missouri City and the City of Houston proper, where Anglos represent only one quarter of the population, to League City and The Woodlands where they represent 68 and 78 percent of the residents, respectively. Ordered this way, we can observe how segregation between Anglos and other groups is related to size of the Anglo population.

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of segregation is higher between Anglos and Asians or Anglos and Latinos than between Anglos and African Americans. Furthermore, the larger the size of the Anglo population (and thus the less diverse the context) the less segregated groups are from each other.

Figure 11: Anglo Segregation by County (2010)  
(Ordered from Low % Anglo to High % Anglo)



## 2. African Americans living closer to Latinos, Asians and Anglos yet still living at a distance

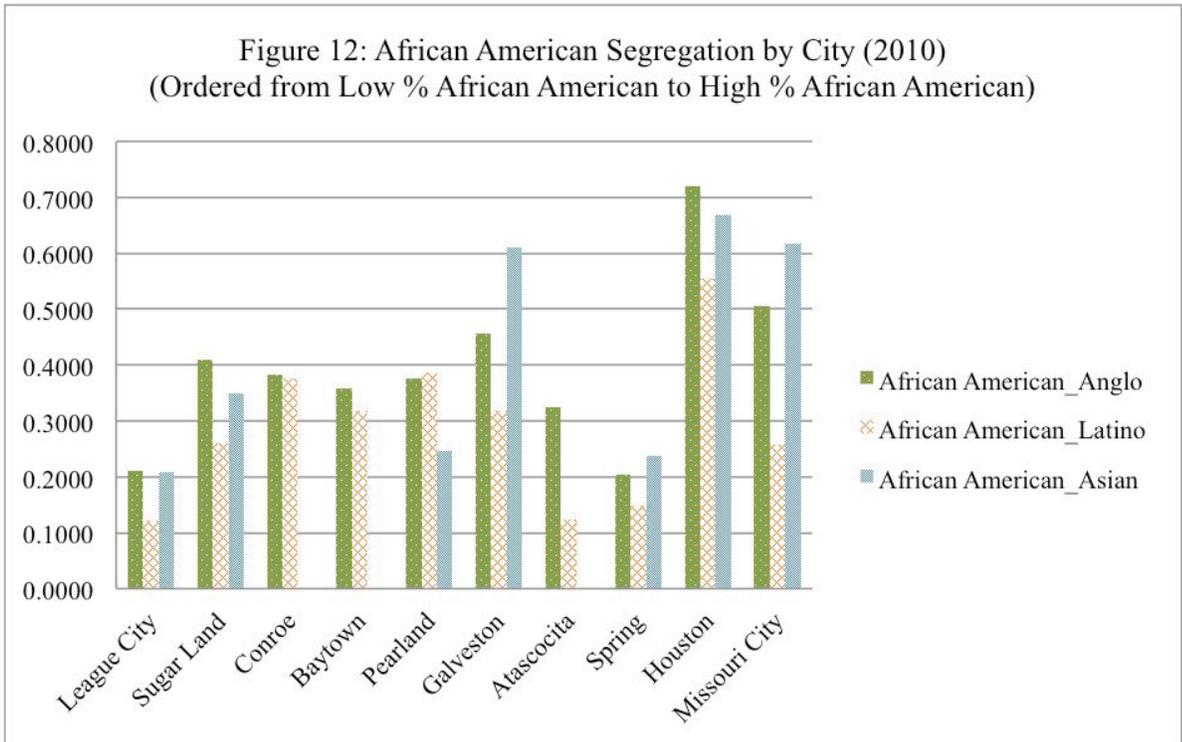
We now turn to segregation between African Americans and other groups. As we said earlier, the level of African American segregation from Anglos, Asians, and Latinos has declined somewhat in the past 20 years, with the greatest declines in African American-Latino segregation. Looking across cities (Figure 12), we see that African Americans are more segregated from Anglos than Latinos and Asians in five of the cities presented, with the most segregation in the City of Houston. African Americans are also highly segregated from Asians in three cities, Houston, Missouri City, and Galveston, and in the latter two, African Americans are more segregated from Asians than any other group. Segregation between African Americans and Latinos never reaches a “high” level in any city. The highest African American-Latino segregation occurs in Houston (0.55); however in every other city, segregation between African Americans and Latinos is low, never surpassing 0.4, and in seven out of the 10 cities it is below 0.32.

We present the segregation levels for each of the 10 cities with an African American population over three percent, ordered by the relative size of the African American population. We see that places where African Americans are less numerous, like League City and Sugar Land (where less than eight percent of the populations are

African American), segregation is low or moderate. Conversely, in places like Houston and Missouri City, where African Americans represent 23 percent and 41 percent of the city’s population respectively, segregation is far higher between this group and Anglos and Asians, with levels ranging between 0.50 and 0.72, and low between African Americans and Latinos in Missouri City (.26).

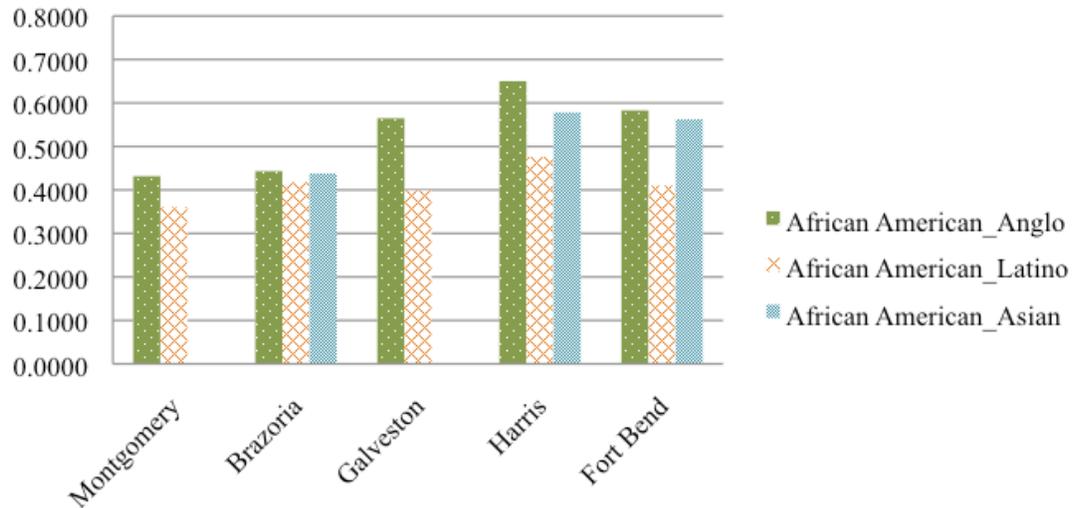
The general trend seems to be that as the relative size of the African American population increases so too does African American segregation from other groups, which is opposite the pattern for Anglos. The exception appears to be Spring, where segregation of African Americans is very low regardless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

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



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

Figure 13: African American Segregation by County (2010)  
 (Ordered from Low % African American to High % African American)

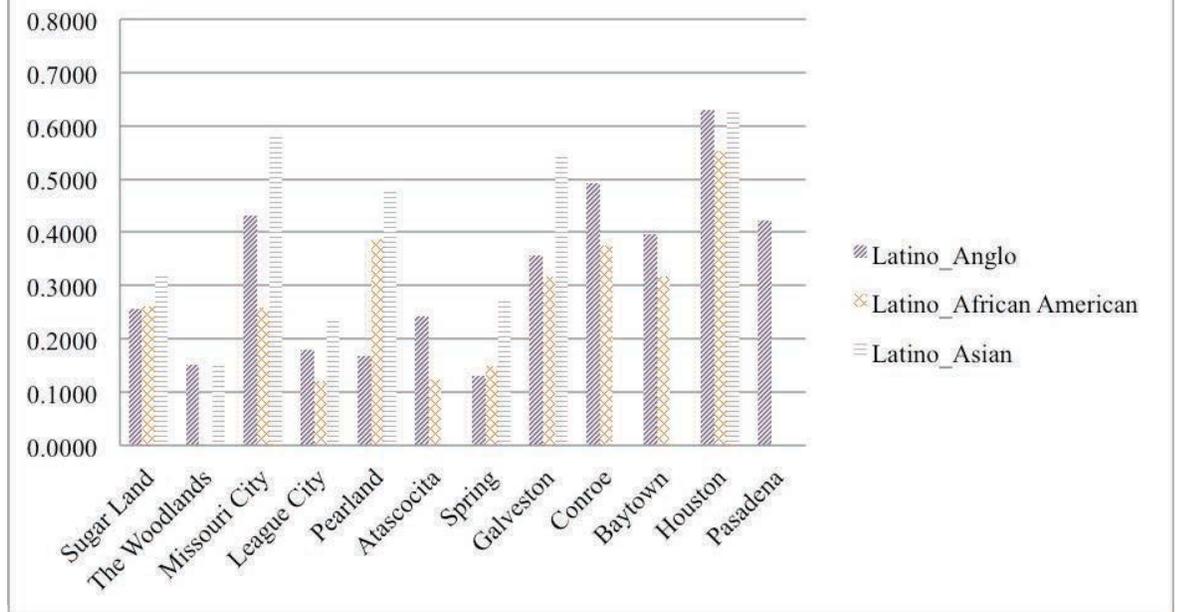


### 3. Segregation and Latinos: Large Communities with Few Interethnic Neighbors

When ordered according to size of Latino population, the level of segregation for Latinos operates more like the pattern for African Americans than for Anglos.

Overall, Latinos are not highly segregated from any group. Segregation levels exceed 0.6 (the high segregation cutoff) in only two instances (see Figure 14). When ordered according to size of Latino population, the level of segregation for Latinos operates more like the pattern for African Americans than for Anglos. That is, in cities where Latinos make up a smaller relative share of the population, as in Sugar Land and The Woodlands, they are fairly evenly distributed across the city. However, as their numbers increase beyond 30 percent (e.g., Galveston), segregation levels rise from low to moderate. Segregation only passes the threshold for “high” in Houston, where Anglo-Latino and Asian-Latino segregation is at 0.6. The only other city where the Latino percentage is larger than in the City of Houston is Pasadena. There, where Latinos represent over 60 percent of the population, Anglos are the only other group numerous enough to measure, and segregation between Latinos and Anglos is at the moderate level.

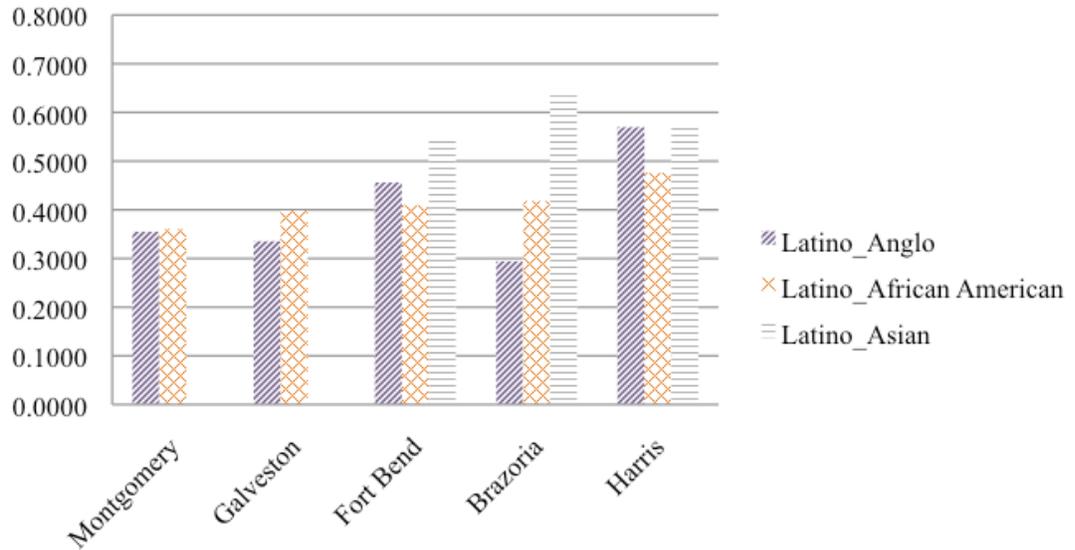
Figure 14: Latino Segregation By City (2010)  
(Ordered from Low % Latino to High % Latino)



Between the extremes of cities with large and small Latino populations, segregation levels seem to bounce around, but never reaching higher than 0.5. Spring continues to stand out for its low segregation and relatively small numbers of Latinos (they comprise about 28 percent of the population). Latinos experience the most segregation from Asians, not African Americans or Anglos, as levels surpass a 0.6 level in Missouri City, where the Latinos population is fairly small, and Galveston, where it is 0.56.

The county-specific picture shows a similar trend, where counties with smaller relative size of the Latino population have lower levels of segregation from Anglo compared to places with larger relative Latino populations (see Figure 15). Segregation between African Americans and Latinos never exceeds 0.5; it is lowest in Montgomery County (0.36) and is somewhat higher in Harris County (0.48). Latino-Asian segregation was only calculated in three counties (the Asian population in the other two counties was below three percent). The segregation between Latinos and Asians is the only segregation pairing that surpasses the cut point for “high” 0.6, which occurs in Brazoria, home of Pearland.

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

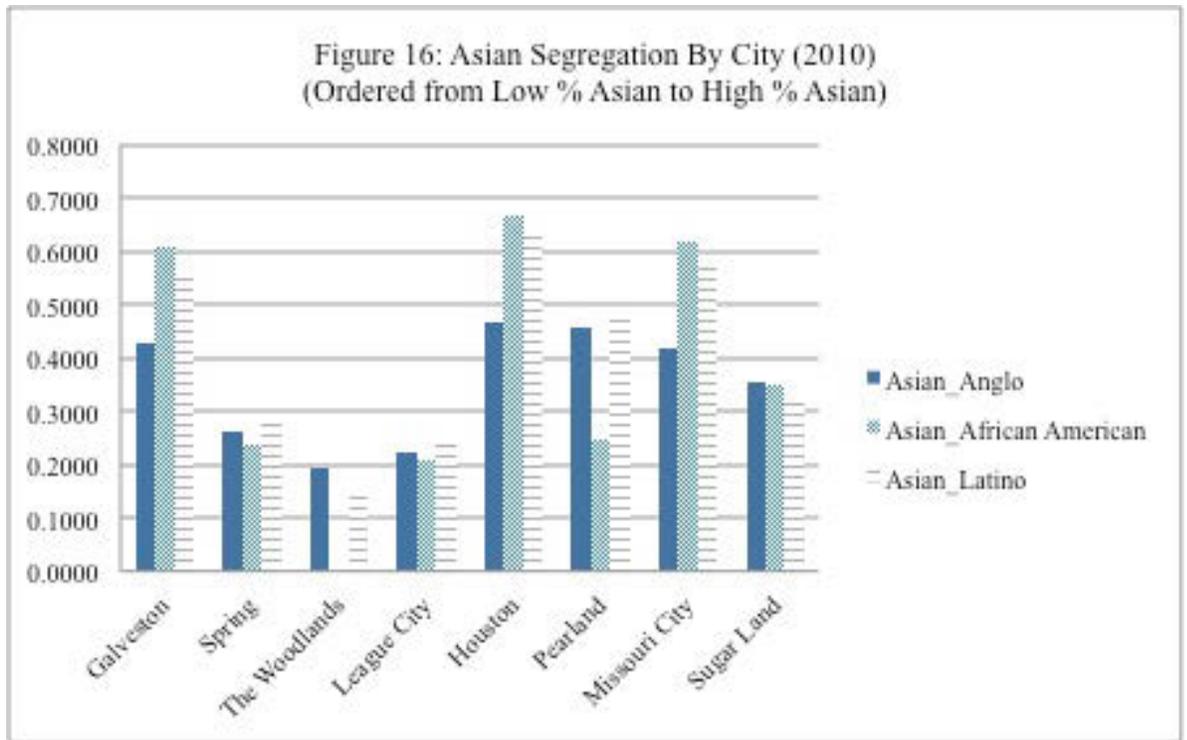


#### 4. Asians: Living Close to Anglos, Far from African Americans, and Latinos Some where in the Middle

Asians, as the previous graphs have shown, are generally not highly segregated from either Anglos or Latinos, regardless of the city. The exception is Houston, where levels of segregation between Asians and Latinos meet the cut point of “highly segregated”. African Americans and Asians are highly segregated in three cities: Galveston, Houston, and Missouri City (see Figure 16). In the remaining cities, the level of segregation between Asians and any other non-Asian group does not exceed 0.5, meaning that in most cities, less than half of the Asian population would have to move to achieve complete integration.

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

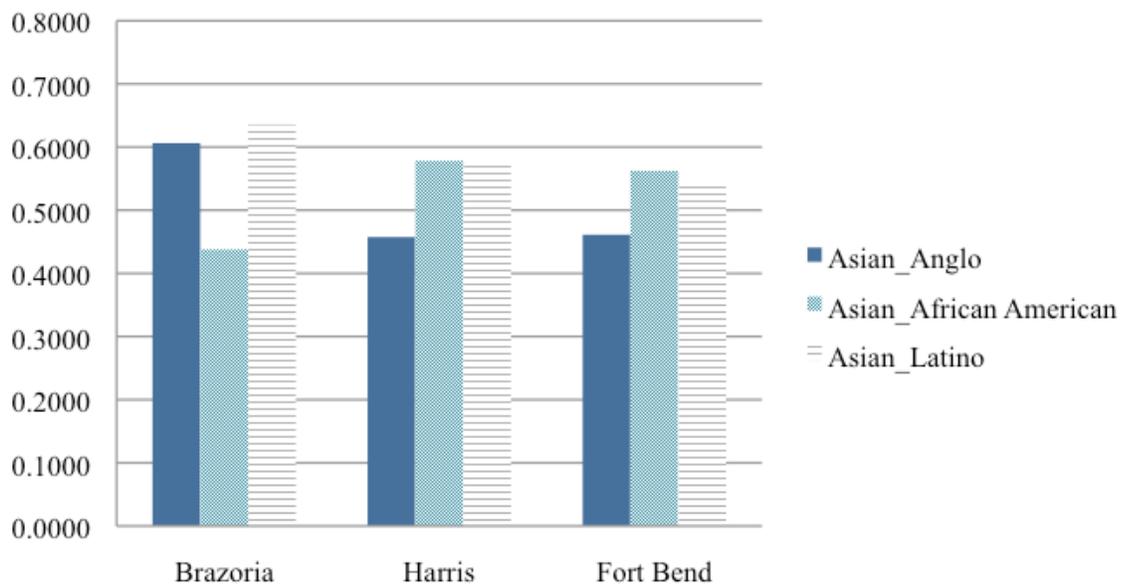
In other cities where their share exceeds 12 percent, levels of segregation are moderate; however, in Sugar Land where Asians are the second largest race/ethnic group behind Anglos, segregation between African Americans, Anglos, and Asians is low, between 0.3 and 0.35. Interestingly, Sugar Land, like The Woodlands, has relatively small African American and Latino populations, comprising less than 20 percent of the area’s residents. As in the case for Anglos, large population size corresponds to less segregation for Asians, but in a context where other racial/ethnic groups occupy exceedingly small shares of the city.



We present segregation for only three counties, those with an Asian population greater than three percent. Examining segregation from the county-level suggest greater separation than is apparent when looking at the cities (see Figure 17). For each county, in two of the three possible comparisons, Asian segregation is above 0.50, and in Brazoria County, is in the high level (0.60+) for the Asian-Anglo and Asian-Latino comparisons.

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

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



## CONCLUSIONS

Houston's racial/ethnic diversity has grown dramatically over the last 20 years. This increasing diversity has occurred throughout the metropolitan area, from Houston proper to all cities and counties examined in this report. While the absolute number of Anglos has declined in the City of Houston and Harris County, it has increased in the metro region as a whole. But African Americans, Latinos, and Asians have increased even more rapidly, producing the burgeoning diversity of the region.

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

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

One way to examine that diversity is to look at where members of racial/ethnic groups live relative to other groups. With a few exceptions, segregation between groups has declined somewhat over the 20-year period. Segregation is highest in the City of Houston. For several comparisons, segregation is considered extreme in the City of Houston: between African Americans and Anglos, between Anglos and Latinos, and between Asians and Latinos.

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

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

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

In the final analysis, the findings in this report suggest that harnessing the burgeoning racial/ethnic diversity is a central challenge for the Houston region. Future research is needed to investigate the underlying factors contributing to the increased diversity and continual segregation and conclude the best approaches for Houston to be able to lead the nation in the transition to a fully inclusive, unified multiracial/multiethnic region. How Houston handles this transition will go far in shaping the vitality of its future.