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# Imagining Integration

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# **Imagining Integration**

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## Introduction

International immigration is undoubtedly one of the most pressing issues on the global agenda. As globalization has increased the flow of capital, goods, and labor across traditional national borders, human movement in the form of international migration has followed suit. The UN now estimates that there are upwards of 214,000,000 international migrants or equivalent to 3.1% of the world's population (UN DESA 2011). As a result, classical definitions of nationalism, state sovereignty, and citizenship cease to remain applicable.

Most of these individuals who migrate from one location to another are responding to multiple complex factors, the most significant being fluctuations in economic conditions in their home countries as well as the enticement of high wages and employment in receiving countries (Jenkins 1977). Rapid population growth, land scarcity, weak government systems, environmental degradation, and growing poverty and inequalities are also contributing factors for internal and international migration.

As a result, the United States has become a significant receiving country for international immigration and is currently the world's number one host country with a total of twenty percent of all international migrants residing within its borders (United Nations 2009). As of 2010, the number of international migrants in the United States is estimated to be 45 to 50 million or roughly 13.5% of the American population (United Nations 2009/UN DESA 2011).

Although the United States prides itself on being a country of immigrants and a country built on the ideals of democracy and freedom, it has nevertheless seemingly turned on these very roots and obsessively focused on difference and the vast heterogeneity of the

nation as a negative. As time has progressed and the demographic composition of international migrants has shifted from predominantly European in heritage to the current majority being non-European citizens of the developing world, America has reverted its open-door policies and slid into outdated modes of racialized perceptions of 'us' and 'them'. American citizens, with the help of the U.S. government and media propaganda, no longer see immigration as a contributing factor to their societies, but as a form of terror and uncertainty, which needs to be halted and kept controlled and monitored at all costs. America has in essence closed its societies off to these 'others' and worked aimlessly to create a divide to uphold the United States' sovereignty and classical, yet vastly outdated, definitions of citizenship.

Citizenship, which will be reiterated and re-conceptualized throughout this paper, has been a dominant force of exclusionary politics from its colonial beginnings to its present (Plascencia 2012). Never has the argument been so fierce and discriminatory than in the years following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. The fear of immigrants 'invading' the United States has gotten so out of hand that all fifty states have enacted varying degrees of exclusionary measures aimed at noncitizens, the most common being laws that enforce resource distribution to legal citizens only, despite the needs of other residents who become excluded and placed on the outskirts of society both theoretically and physically as we will see in the following research (Plascencia 2012).

Further issues have arisen as the United States has deemed immigration and undocumented immigration as a growing 'problem' that must be dealt with. While national legislation has increased security measures and immigration policies with the ultimate aim of keeping immigrants out, little has been done to tackle the root causes of migration itself

or integration measures and programs in receiving American communities. As a result of such national resistance and increased security, there has been a significant increase in recent years in undocumented immigration as migrants are unable to navigate the system legally and are therefore forced to migrate extralegally. Recent estimates show that there are now over 10 million undocumented immigrants residing in America (Hill et al. 2011, Fortuny et al. 2007). Latin American immigrants will be of particular interest in the following research as this population is moving toward becoming the dominant racial group of the United States.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Once immigrants have entered the United States with or without documents, many settle in the American Southwest, most notably Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. California alone has undoubtedly become the central hub of the nation with the largest immigrant population in the country with almost 10 million international immigrants as of recent estimates (Hill & Johnson 2011). Also remarkable, California holds the highest percentage of undocumented immigrants out of any state as well with almost 2.5 million as of 2004, which works out to approximately one-quarter of the nation's undocumented immigrants, as well as over ten percent of the states population (Hill et al. 2011, Fortuny et al. 2007).

Despite these high numbers, many Americans, especially in the locality of Southern California where immigration has been the most dominant, have not embraced the nation's changing landscape. According to recent estimates, there are about 1 million undocumented immigrants alone in Los Angeles, almost twice as many as any other U.S.

city, which makes up about one-tenth of the city's population of about 10 million inhabitants (Fortuny et. al 2007). The political climate of Los Angeles also tends to be much more exclusionary toward its foreign born population in Southern California than in any other part of the nation and instead a strong tendency of nativism and a seemingly apparent bias toward certain national origins versus others remains present in Los Angeles politics despite its vast immigrant populations, both Latin American and others (Keogan 2002).

As seen through these percentages and regional sentiments, there is a significant population that stands unaccounted for in Los Angeles County. As a result, immigrants are kept on the outskirts of society, unable to fully integrate themselves and participate in the community (Summers Sandoval Jr. 2008). Immigrant voices in society are then generally omitted from the equal access to resources that directly affect their livelihoods and comfort within that community.

For the purpose of the following research, I propose the following questions, which will move from the more theoretical to the practical: What is it like to be a minority immigrant in the United States today? What does being a 'citizen' mean in American society today and how do concepts such as this contribute to perpetuating cycles of racism and discrimination? To what extent are immigrants in fact integrating and what are some of their greatest impediments? Lastly, is it possible to shift local sentiment to one of inclusion and integration despite a lack of national acknowledgement and accountability?

## **Purpose of the Study**

This study came into being to challenge traditional ideals of American democracy, freedom, and citizenship as well as the need to hold localities responsible for integrating and upholding the rights and well-being of its immigrants, documented or undocumented. While national legislation continues to waver on sound immigration policies and integration measures, city and state governments are now responsible for more fully representing their true populations and integrating immigrant populations as well as implementing management and involvement strategies for receiving populations.

The purpose of this research is to provide an alternative to the current national rhetoric of illegality and exclusionary politics and instead initiate dialogue on the subject of immigrant integration into local communities, focusing on social and cultural practices and norms of the United States as a key factor for segregation and exclusion.

## **Components of the Research**

The research that follows will focus on Los Angeles County- one of the country's most densely populated regions of Latino immigrants, and will present a case study and in depth focus on Long Beach, California for detailed analysis, data collection and comparison, and general observations. Extensive database research regarding city statistics was conducted in order to show the realities of residential segregation and the lack of integration in the Long Beach area. General observations were also held within the city of Long Beach in order to oversee visible integration of the community's Latin American immigrant residents. Analysis was conducted in regards to the physical boundaries



dividing such residents, how this has affected further integration, and the reasons for such a continuing divide.

Long Beach, California was chosen as a specific spotlighted case study to characterize the greater Los Angeles County and the degree to which Latin American immigrants are or are not physically integrating into society and how this affects this marginalized group from culturally participating in the greater society and thus fully functioning in the societies in which they reside. This study on a broader scope also increases awareness of the necessity of integration measures as a platform for equality and universal rights across the United States.

### **Significance to the Field**

This research is important because it is relevant in the here and now. The issue of immigration is one that is increasingly pressing as American policymakers refuse to confront the issue and deal with the realities of a changing national landscape. Until national reform of immigration integration policies occurs, it is necessary to pressure local governments to account for and integrate their non-native immigrant populations. By focusing on local solutions, Los Angeles can become a prime representative model for other cities and states that are under similar stresses as California.

The following research will provide an in depth examination on social and cultural rights as a key integration measure for Latin American immigrants in the United States today. This study is a significant addition to the field because it pertains to the element of culture in the modern era of seemingly disintegrating cultures and homogenization. By focusing on the social and cultural rights of Latin American immigrants in the United States,

and more particularly Los Angeles, we are able to better understand the complexities of identification and self-awareness as an added element of integration. Previously, integration work has become dominated by the focus on economic and political integration, focusing largely on what immigrants can do to become part of society ultimately to benefit from and for that society. This study instead moves toward a more social approach and focuses on the well being and need for inclusion and belongingness of new immigrants.

As a result, this research will further contribute to current literature and add in this new element which will play a necessary role in redefining citizenship and accountability in America today as well as a better understanding of the importance of societal integration of immigrant populations and its contributions and effects on receiving communities.

### **Language Selections**

In the realm of immigration politics, terminology holds a very high importance. The image of the immigrant has been manufactured in the United States to create feelings of insecurity and fear in the native born population. The powerful discourse that surrounds immigration in the United States should instead allow for a more open interpretation as traditional notions of citizenship are ceasing to remain relevant.

Throughout the following paper, the distinction between 'illegal' and 'undocumented immigrant' is of importance because of the viewpoints, accuracy and opinions associated with each which criminalizes immigrants and regards their temporary state as a permanent feature of their identity and sense of self. The following research utilizes 'undocumented citizen' when pertinent as to maintain alignment with the following research and its objectives of disjoining the traditional concept of citizenship with its

requirement for documentation and the more modern notion of the individual as a global citizen who is seen as unofficially 'American' despite living and thriving in American society. This term allows for the immigrant to still be a citizen of the United States, but merely lacks documentation at the present moment in time. This term is specified here to provide clarity for readers as well as to avoid inaccurate implications and/or underlying meanings to the discourse.

Also of importance to the research is the focus on Latin American immigrants and native-born White populations. In order for the research to be reliable and as accurate as possible, no emphasis will be placed upon one's legal or political affiliation within the actual research methodology to follow. While citizenship will be a reoccurring emphasis throughout this paper, the focus remains on what the term 'citizen' implies in regards to culture, belonging and acceptance in the greater society rather than a political status. The methodology makes use of U.S. Census data as well as City-Data that was collected, compared, and analyzed. This data depicting residential variances within the city of Long Beach focuses on Latin Americans as a cultural group and will not be entering the realm of documented versus undocumented citizens as the U.S. Census does not make reference to one's standing but instead categorizes and statistically references nationalities. The focus here and throughout is on culture and feelings of inclusion/exclusion based on self and group identities and how these identities translate to observable divides in societies. Lastly, the term 'White' will be used to denote residents of the United States of European ancestry and those whom have identified as 'White/Non-Hispanic' in U.S. Census Data.

## **Theoretical Perspective**

While the traditional definition of citizenship, which will be defined below, is not the focus of this research, it is an important concept to understand and analyze in regards to how Americans today view their own. The term in the philosophical sense remains relevant to the research as it functions as a universal classification of inclusion and exclusion for those living in a specific nation-state. In addition to deconstructing traditional terminology of citizenship in the United States today, this section will dive into social identity theory by examining the constructed self and groups within the context of society and the means by which immigrants as well as native-born residents identify themselves. The following theoretical base will help in understanding what it means to belong in a society and what outdated boundaries are upheld in the United States that inhibit full integration of immigrants.

### **Relevance of Chosen Theories & Theorists**

In regards to the following theoretical base of this research, I have chosen to work predominantly with two theorists, Arjun Appadurai and Renato Rosaldo. The prior focuses on theories of modernity, globalization, the changing nature of citizenship, and what it means to be American in a world of disintegrating borders and boundaries. The latter, Rosaldo, situates the self within the context of culture, diversity, and difference. Rosaldo theorizes culture as a subjective, ever-changing embodiment of human nature and social forces, questioning its boundaries and its limits while focusing on its importance in dictating human behavior.

Additional theoretical support is extracted from theorists such as Yasemin Soysal, William Flores, Luis Plascencia, Stuart Hall, and Ashforth & Mael, all whom provide excellent additions to the theoretical work on matters of the self, identity, culture, belonging, and citizenship as a function of inclusion/exclusion.

### **Deconstructing Traditional Citizenship**

Primarily central to the discussion on immigrant inclusion in society is the definition, or rather changing definition, of citizenship in today's modern world. What does it mean to be a citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Are nation-states still a useful and meaningful function of identity? What does it mean to be 'American' today? How does this affect one's inclusion and integration into society?

Traditionally, the concept of citizenship includes a broad set of ideas, such as belonging, membership, identification, and social standing, and also overlaps with discourses related to nationality, nationalism, patriotism, and loyalty to one's nation (Plascencia 2012). This broad definition focused on belonging coincides with the much more commonplace and circulated legal/political definition that dictates who is 'American' and who is not, regardless of whom resides permanently or semi-permanently within the United States. This identification with the term 'citizen' holds important political and economic consequences in regards to the well being of individuals because historically the classification of being a citizen marks:

a position of privilege with reference to political actions (e.g., voting, serving on juries, holding elected office, testifying against accusers); property rights (e.g., owning land, receiving an occupational license, operating a business, being employed by the federal government); as well as a wide range of other privileges, such as receiving a federally subsidized education loan and the right not to be deported/removed (Plascencia 2012).

This form of identification allows for an accepted form of separation as to decipher who is one of 'us' and who remains an 'other'. This term 'other' has been embedded in United States policy on immigration since the country's creation and subsequent invasion and takeover of what is now current-day Mexico as well as the policies of Manifest Destiny and the infamous Monroe Doctrine that followed shortly thereafter which justified the country's inclusion of some and exclusion of others based upon ideas of superiority and discrimination. The discourse, which surrounds citizenship, thus inevitably focuses on issues of identity and self versus group association to accommodate this sense of belonging and solidarity. While this has been the norm since the creation of nation-states around the world, the term in the modern era fails to remain relevant. Because the modern forces of globalization, economies, societies, and cultures are able to transcend state borders making their physical realities irrelevant. The physical movement of bodies around the world as a subsequent result is also something most have recognized as irrefutable and impossible to reverse. This realization has forced nations to rethink traditional ideas of citizenship and inclusion of migrants.

Primarily, as a result of the unprecedented movement of migrant's worldwide, rights that once belonged solely to citizens of states are now expanding to include immigrants. Despite its pressing importance, many states continue to fight against this inevitable shift (Soysal 1994). Some states continue to develop systems that allow for the inclusion of some while excluding others. Other states instead move progressively toward opening up their borders and acclimating to the changing times and needs of residents within their borders.

As states develop sets of legal rules, discursive practices, and organizational structures, they are able to “define the status of foreigners vis-à-vis the host state” as well as “the forms and boundaries of their participation in host polity institutions” thus keeping immigrants from fully integrating into societies and settling amongst natives (Soysal 1994). It is by this comparison of the ingroup and outgroup that nations are able to categorize immigrant groups into wanted versus unwanted populations and maintain a barrier of division.

Once states actively create differences amongst its people and perpetuate notions of racism, the division works to “allay the uncertainties about identity that global flows invariably produce” and divert collective responsibility for undesirable outcomes of globalization, such as increased immigration (Appadurai 2006a). These immigrant minorities thus create mixed feelings about the mere notion of national citizenship and what it means to be a citizen and to belong, ultimately creating intense anxieties in receiving states of non-native populations. This uncertainty then creates a widespread lack of tolerance for any sort of collective stranger by host nations. Even in the cases where land and territory seem to be the issue at hand, more often than not, the real underlying issues involve fear and arguments over power, justice, and self-determination (Appadurai 2006b).

With this outdated logic of modern nation-states comes the very dangerous idea of national sovereignty that ultimately allows for the state to control who is allowed to immigrate and integrate into a society and who is not based on preference and interest rather than necessity and understanding (Appadurai 2006a). Because of this perpetuation of traditional notions of nation-states, states continue to recreate cycles of violence in their

societies and create atmospheres that foster hate, mistrust, and anxieties of the 'other'. In addition, an immigrant of the 'unwanted' group becomes the image placed on all members of that ethnicity. Moving from the immigrant himself/herself individually, any member belonging to that cultural group is now a target of discrimination and seen as 'unwanted'.

These widespread anxieties and stereotypes then become engrained in societal structures, creating an unbreakable cycle of violence based upon fear and exclusion of this 'other' (Suryanarana 2010). This leads to structural violence within a society of which elitism, ethnocentrism, classism, racism, and sexism are just some of the examples how its existence directly and indirectly harm people defined as outsiders. In regards to Latin American immigrants, regardless of legality, structural violence is constructed by preventing equal access to resources such as employment opportunities and pay, political participation and representation, education, health care, and legal standing (Suryanarana 2010). All of these are considered forms of structural violence aimed at keeping immigrant populations down and out in a society, which have now been engrained in the social and political institutions of American society. '

Immigrants have now begun to challenge these traditional concepts of citizenship and are finding their own ways to navigate around these exclusive systems to integrate themselves (Flores 2003). By continuing to challenge existing power structures and social relationships, Latino immigrants are working to fight for new rights that will ultimately result in a universal expansion of rights and freedoms for all. While Latino immigrants may not traditionally 'belong' to America, their hopes for inclusion, desires for community involvement, and need for representation express the desire to belong, and as a result, the discourse surrounding citizenship must be redefined (Flores 2003).



As traditional ideas of citizenship and citizen rights have evolved, immigrant populations have continued to be at the forefront of modern debate. Globalization and the free flow of people and goods across borders have undoubtedly created a world in need of changing perception. No longer are citizens and noncitizens polar opposites. Instead, today there is a free flowing continuum rather than a simple dichotomy of what it means to be a 'citizen'. As a result, self-identity and the meaning of belonging are now more blurred than ever (Plascencia 2012).

### **Cultural Citizenship & the Boundaries of Belonging**

With the necessary widening interpretation of citizenship from a traditional legal definition to a more broad concept of belonging comes the discourse surrounding culture and how cultural boundaries play an important role in self and group identity and integration.

Culture is a social phenomenon that encompasses every individual and aids in shaping his or her beliefs, values, and traditions. Culture is the main focus of theorist Renato Rosaldo, who describes rather poetically

“From the pirouettes of classical ballet to the most brute of brute facts, all human conduct is culturally mediated. Culture encompasses the everyday and the esoteric, the mundane and the elevated, the ridiculous and the sublime. Neither high nor low, culture is all-pervasive” (Rosaldo 1989).

As a result of such an inevitable acquisition, culture becomes a prime identifier of distinguishing social groups and their variances. One's cultural background becomes a significant part of their identity. Heavily intertwined with this cultural identity is one's ethnicity and heritage. Because of this, race relations in the United States have historically involved a constant blending of discrimination and assimilationist efforts to keep

minority/immigrant groups deemed 'different' on the outskirts and in their 'place' in American society (Rosaldo 1989).

The common idea that the United States is a 'melting pot' is not only completely inaccurate but inadvertently makes minority immigration the site of cultural stripping where the incoming immigrant, in order to assimilate and integrate into American society, must abandon his/her culture (Rosaldo 1989). Only when these groups are a culturally blank slate can they take on the dominant values of society and be seen as an accepted and loyal American.

As a result, those who refuse to abandon their culture upon arrival in the United States are seen as unwilling to assimilate and fully become 'American'. Retaining their heritage and culture from their homeland is seen as a threat to American traditionalism. Appadurai addresses this as he states "it has become widely accepted to see nationalism as a disease, especially when it is somebody else's nationalism" (Appadurai 2006b). In conceptualizing nationalism as a disease, Appadurai suggests that culture, which is at the base of nationalistic pride, is responsible for creating fear of outside, 'other' societies.

Relating to this desire for 'traditional' American values and ideology is the common assumption that the United States was 'pure', lacked minority immigrants, and at one point had an established tradition that was not centered around race. Among native-born residents of the United States, there remains a sense of nostalgia for the past when immigration either didn't exist or was more desirable in regards to its incoming immigrant population. Appadurai addresses this as a sort of 'nostalgia without memory' because the reality of history is that immigration, and even unwanted and undesirable immigration has always been a constant in the United States (Appadurai 2006b). The past, rather than a

lesson for the future, has been blurred and distorted into a false reality that is picked and chosen upon when needed to defend modern fears of heterogeneity and diversity. This concept of yearning for a past that didn't exist has in fact held back modern progressive thought in terms of integration measures due to the fact that many Americans are stuck in an outdated and unrealistic idea of what the United States is and should be in regards to racial composition and cultural backgrounds.

As a result of focusing on difference, one's culture has become a main identifier for their inclusion/exclusion. While it is in theory wrong to base judgment on the physical and cultural characteristics of others, generally one cannot help but feel threatened by an identifiable other. Human beings are socialized and culturalized to see difference, to understand its meanings and worry about its implications. We as humans are not, generally speaking, aided to see all as equal and to see the benefits of diversity due mainly to the fact that we are inscribed from birth into a specific set of cultural guidelines to which we assume and see as 'right'. Human beings cannot help but learn the culture of the community in which they grow up and as a result, there remains a lifelong struggle in translating foreign cultures and comparing them to our own (Rosaldo 1989). Elaborating further on this concept, Rosaldo describes

“[h]ome cultures can appear so normal to their members that their common sense seems to be based in universal human nature. Social descriptions by, of, and for members of a particular culture require a relative emphasis on de-familiarization, so they will appear- as they in fact are humanly made, and not given in nature. Alien cultures, however, can appear so exotic to outsiders that everyday life seems to be floating in a bizarre primitive mentality” (Rosaldo 1989).

By identifying that the norm is to see one's own culture as 'right' and 'universal', it becomes confusing and disorienting to see a more malleable and open interpretation of culture. This

then supports the fact that culture is not genetically encoded but is in fact learned and can be adopted in part or in full by anyone (Rosaldo 1989).

This realization unveils the fact that fixed cultural expectations and social norms do not suffice as a guide to human behavior (Rosaldo 1989). Culture is not only a false basis for social exclusion, but it is also a basic human attribute one cannot help but obtain and a human right one has the right to maintain. People and in this circumstance, immigrants, have a right to their heritage and culture regardless of their place of origin or destination. Instead it is up to the receiving population to accept and integrate this population and widen their social groups through progressive assimilation and social awareness and action.

### **Identifying the Cultural Self: Group Identity & Its Potential Consequences**

Questions of culture always seem to touch a nerve because they also bring up complimentary questions about one's identity (Rosaldo 1989). How exactly do we define who 'we' are and who 'they' are and what are some ways these perceptions and boundaries present some very dangerous consequences in society?

Author and theorist Stuart Hall states that identity is constructed based on common origins and/or shared characteristics with another person, group, or groups (Hall 1996). These group classifications then "help the individual cognitively segment and order the social environment, which allows them the means of defining others as well as aids in self location and definition in defining himself/herself in relation to others" (Ashforth & Mael 1989). As a result, we are able to pick up on social queues from those we deem similar to us on how to act and function in society.

Group membership and allegiance become potentially dangerous when as described above, the individual is blindly willing to accept any and all group preferences, beliefs, and practices without questioning them in relation to their own lived experiences and perceptions. Some of the consequences of self and group identity as explained by Ashforth & Mael, are the tendencies for individuals to choose activities that go along with preexisting patterns or standards as well as support for institutions that embody these ideologies (Ashforth & Mael 1989). This perpetuation of homogeneous attitudes then leads to stereotyping of the self and of others. Group members are then without individual acknowledgement as they are seen to exemplify the group (Ashforth & Mael 1989). These attitudes become accepted forms of racism especially in the context of Latin American immigrants due to the increasing numbers of undocumented migrants into the United States. Not only are Latin Americans seen as a minority group in the United States, but also now stand exemplified by their undocumented members as all being 'illegals' and criminals completely disregarding the vast majority who are in fact documented. It is not uncommon in the United States today to hear ignorant and racist comments about a Latino individuals and their legal status. In fact they are almost always mentioned in unison because of this false correlation and stereotyping of cultural groups as all the same.

Another unfortunate consequence of strict social groupings is the tendency of individuals to get stuck on one specific group as an embodiment of who they are overall, disregarding equally important aspects of their identity. In reality, an individual's identity is never unified and is constantly in a state of flux, always changing and depending on one's situation but because one ascribes to many different identities, one or a select few will tend to take dominance and overshadow the rest. Oftentimes these are surface characteristics

that are observable differences such as gender, age, and race. This leads to a role conflict as the individual determines which of their social groups are the most important in deciphering who they are in relation to the rest of society.

As a result of a classic history of racialization and discrimination in the United States, identifying oneself and others by race or ethnicity is commonplace and thus one of their primary forms of identification. As a result, Renato Rosaldo describes how white individuals are historically and culturally ingrained with a sense of “imperialist nostalgia” that they are the superior race who have a ‘mission’ to uplift savage peoples and as a result, these ‘savage’ societies become a stable reference point for defining civilized cultures (Rosaldo 1989).

## **Summary**

To conclude this theoretical framework on the cultural self and group identity, it becomes apparent (and necessary to remember throughout the following methodology) that self-identity is not an essentialist condition, but a strategic and constructed one to uphold and glorify boundaries and difference among individuals (Hall 1996). The following section will provide further evidence in the form of an extensive literature review in order to exhibit previous research done on and around the topic of integration.

## **Literature Review**

The following specific research on community integration and residential segregation has not been widely researched, especially in the context of a specific locality such as the city of Long Beach and such a specific minority immigrant community as Latin Americans. While identical research on this topic is very limited, there are many relevant fields, which provide necessary understanding of the dire problems American cities face in terms of realizing and integrating their populations, the most problematic being the unequal distribution of political, economic, and social rights and restricted access to resources such as jobs, education, and healthcare. The following sections will provide background on the current situation in terms of national acknowledgement and local integration measures. Primarily, this review will begin with how traditional definitions of citizenship have ultimately resulted in the national ‘problem’ of immigration in American society today. Following this brief review and analysis this section will take a look at current research on national, state, and local responses to immigrant settlement as well as the degree to which integration of this population has occurred. Lastly, the majority of literature will discuss residential segregation and its cause and effects. By reviewing these main categories, I will be able to better situate the following research within relevant fields, while simultaneously providing background information and insight into the importance of the topic of immigrant integration and residential discrimination.

### **The ‘Problem’ of Immigration**

Due to state formulated ideas of citizen and ‘other’ discussed in previous sections, the ‘problem’ of immigration has come to the forefront of U.S. sentiment in recent years as

many sectors of society, namely the far right conservatives, perceive the shift in the immigrant populace, which is now predominantly Latin American, rather than European ancestry, to be undesirable (Suarez-Orozco n.d.).

Controversially, dominant public sentiment influenced by this conservative ideology of maintaining sovereignty and thus physical and emotional divides from 'outsiders', believes this 'problem' of immigration to be just that: a problem that must be solved at any and all costs. Many of these opponents to immigration refuse to accept the positive attributes of immigrants to American society and to American ideology, calling this mass migration of Latin Americans "a major potential threat to the country's cultural and political integrity" (Huntington 2004). Yet the very sectors of American society who have proclaimed this so-called 'problem' of immigration have yet to acknowledge the reasoning for such increased levels of migrant activity: globalization. Globalization and the transnational characteristics of capital have today uprooted and forcibly displaced millions of people worldwide, with little to no regard for what happens to these refuge-seeking populations once their lives have been disrupted. It is this irreversible and seemingly inescapable process of globalization and economic liberalization which forces Latin Americans to mass migrate into the United States in hopes of a better life and employment (Bacon 2008). Disintegrating borders and the irrelevance of state sovereignty have threatened the United States. American fears of cultural homogenization, due in large part to government and media propaganda, spark an identity crisis amongst the general public, which lends itself to extremism on the part of clinging to one's social groups including race. As a result of this increased fear, immigrants then ultimately become the embodiment of globalization and the face of changing world.



Not all sides of the political spectrum feel this way though. Many progressive citizens are more open to alternative discourses surrounding immigration. In addition, states along the southwest border, including California, the focus of this study, which feel the impacts of Latin American immigration most, are much more in need and much more open to immigration reform and integration measures.

Nevertheless, ingrained in American civil society is a reluctance to accept outsiders as a result of anti-immigration hysteria reproduced by the U.S. government, which holds to the disillusioned belief that one group can only gain at the expense of another (Bacon 2008). In reality this could not be further from the truth. This particular immigrant sector of society will ultimately benefit all due to the fact that there will be an enhanced collectivity and unity amongst all residents as well as increased economic productivity and political participation. Instead of following through with such universal acceptance, the modern global economic system “has turned insecurity into a virtue, praising it as necessary to increased flexibility and competitiveness” and refutes this by asserting that working communities need a system that produces security and stability, not one which promotes and reproduces insecurity and inequality (Bacon 2008).

As globalization and expanding economic liberalization continue to uproot and displace large populations of Latin Americans as they are subjected to unstable political systems and limited employment opportunities in their home countries, they have almost no choice but to head north to the United States to seek employment and a chance at a better life. The following section will explore government responses to this immigrant settlement, which will ultimately allow for a deeper look at Los Angeles, California and why this county is one of the most pivotal in the country as a point of reference for present and

future integration and political representation responsibilities of other cities across America.

### **Political Response to Immigration**

In response to increased immigration, both documented and undocumented, states feel a threatened sense of sovereignty. Immigration directly challenges a nation's command over its territory, which presents a challenge to its authority and power to dictate who is included and who is not. This creates feelings of uncertainty and increases anxieties about national categorization and identity. As a result, national responses have been far and wide mainly due to the fact that raising these concerns creates problems of formulating coherent and consistent policies nationally (Doty 1996).

National legislation is thus split very broadly, reflecting that there is in fact no distinct consensus that exists in the government, within political parties, or in the public at large on the best solutions for the integration of such a large number of immigrants (Fortuny et al. 2007). Most immigration policy is federally based, but state and local governments are becoming more active in addressing immigration issues (Hill et a. 2011). Primarily, federal response in recent years has focused on border enforcement and although important, it is not enough to solve the 'problem' of immigration as any and all deterrence techniques are overwhelmed with the pull of jobs and family reunification desires. Other policies have focused on guest-worker programs, naturalization or family reunification reforms, but the constant proposed policies remain focused on border security.

Ironically and rather hypocritically, the U.S. government has spent an extraordinary amount of time, money and energy in recent years on security measures to keep

immigrants out, yet at the same time it has continued to implement a multitude of trade agreements without acknowledgement that these agreements are the very thing displacing the migrants. This being the typical response of the reigning capitalist system: open up foreign economic borders, but simultaneously keep its physical borders closed off to the then-displaced populations. Displaced people having nowhere to go, migrate legally or extralegally to more prosperous neighboring countries, as it becomes the only viable option for survival.

This lack of responsibility is also seen with how migrants are treated once they have migrated. Many who are displaced due to economic and political changing landscapes in their home countries become mere subjects to sovereign states to decide upon their fate as they are left deserted by their host countries and left to their own devices to navigate the system and integrate themselves in the midst of a foreign society that does not necessarily want them. Due to their exclusion, they ultimately find themselves placed, for long periods or in some cases forever, at the outer limits of life, where they are forced into a state of almost nonexistence waiting for others to decide upon their legal status and social and cultural integration (Agier 2008). Confined by their socially undesirable nature, displaced peoples and migrants seek to melt into the population as discreetly as possible, silenced by their controversial status (Agier 2008). They are not only forced outsiders, but become unable to break free of such national sentiments because of institutionalized segregation based on traditional ideologies linked to one's citizenship.

Shifting to state and local governments, responses have varied tremendously. The one common theme tying these widespread responses together being that most policies enacted are a direct result of failed federal immigration policies to establish necessary

measures of security, order, and/or integration. A contributing factor to the lack of consistency rests in the settlement patterns of immigrants described above. States/cities where immigrants are mostly heavily concentrated will undoubtedly have different sentiments toward policy reforms than states/cities that do not feel the effects of mass immigration as much or at all. States such as California and cities like Los Angeles will be much more pressed in their immediate future to initiate and enact local measures than non-border states/cities. While the degree may vary greatly, national legislation can not and should not be passively waited upon. These limited and varied attempts thus show the necessity for state and local governments to take immigration policy into their own hands.

### **Inadequate Integration Measures**

Social integration is defined as “a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities” (Immigrant Integration Toolkit 2006). The process implies the importance of both the incoming and receiving populations in integration efforts as well as providing multiple pathways as a means of connecting these two communities. As a result, the benefits of integration are a cohesive community and a more equal and just society.

The United States has historically taken two broad approaches to integration, the first being policies that actively encourage integration, and the second being a more *laissez faire* approach that relies on an absence of policies and intervention, ultimately leaving it up to the immigrants and state/local organizations to deal with integration measures (Jimenez 2011). Incoming immigrants to the United States are split into two categories: refugees seeking asylum from political persecution and everyone else coming for economic or social reasons. Refugees, which consist of roughly 15 percent of the incoming immigrant

population are able to obtain refugee status and remain the only beneficiaries of active, coordinated national policy to aid in their integration (Jimenez 2011). They are able to access expansive government agencies and nongovernmental organizations that are tasked with facilitating their smooth transition into American society while the remaining 85 percent of immigrants are left to their own devices to assimilate (Jimenez 2011).

Due to the lack of national programs, local and state governments, as well as individuals themselves, have now become more fully responsible for designing their own programs to encourage immigrant engagement. Depending on their immigrant population sizes, states like California, and in particular cities like Los Angeles, are generally ahead of the curve in responding to immigrant legislation most likely because of their dense population of immigrants, making them a necessary point of departure for future development (Bada et al. 2010).

Turning to an alternative point of view on integration measures is the importance of the receiving communities efforts in integration. Currently, immigrant integration efforts have typically focused on the immigrants themselves, but yet very little emphasis has been placed on reducing the anxieties of receiving populations or understanding identification groupings and the ways in which they perpetuate discrimination and exclusion. The question remains, “how can we expect immigrants to integrate successfully if they feel unwelcome or if their neighbors are not prepared to accept them?” (Jones-Correa 2011). Without inquiring into these social constructs and manufactured anxieties, there remains a very real potential of continuing forms of socially constructed and embedded forms of violence and racism in society, pushing communities further and further from fully integrating.

## **Residential Segregation: Cause & Effect**

One of the most obvious ways of identifying integration, or a lack thereof, in American society between native and non-native residents is by observing racial demographics and residential patterns. Racial inequality is a key aspect in residential segregation in American today, largely due to a long history of racism and ethnocentrism (Charles 2003). Traditionally, African Americans rank among the highest levels of residential segregation, with Latinos and Asians falling somewhere in the middle behind whites. Today with the massive increases in Latin American immigration, Latino segregation is quickly catching up with segregation levels of African Americans. This is a result of the intense stereotyping made by American media and politicians that create a fear based on the perception of their 'invasion' thus shedding an unfavorable light on their residency here in the United States.

Due to these increasing fears of foreign cultures, which spark questions of one's identity, native white residents have retreated into self-segregated isolated communities. Segregation does not arise randomly. Instead people choose the types of people with whom they wish to reside and oftentimes these are people who share a similar lifestyle, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and culture (Borjas 1997). This type of segregation is based on what is referred to as 'cultural violence' in a society, where one cultural group ultimately discriminates against another by providing justifications, accurate or not, to portray the other as less-than and backward. As these stereotypes of out-groups become increasingly unfavorable, as they have with Latin American immigrants, "preferences for those groups as neighbors decline and preferences for same-race neighbors increase" (Charles 2003).

In the United States, native Whites generally live in largely White neighborhoods regardless of their socioeconomic characteristics, while non-White residents' mobility is more confined by their circumstances, which aids in confirming "the persistence of an enduring system of racial stratification" as described above (Charles 2003).

Because racial segregation results from racial inequality, one's social class largely helps in shaping their socioeconomic potentials and their access to opportunities for social mobility. Due to the created divide between neighborhoods across the United States, minorities simply cannot afford to live in these desirable areas of predominantly White residents and are instead confined to areas of town that are more representative of their socioeconomic standing. As a result, current residential patterns across the United States are "the result of real and/or perceived differences in social class across racial groups" as well as a natural inclination to identify with others whom they perceive to be in the same position (Charles 2001). Minority immigrants are well aware of which communities are welcoming and which are not and this very much dictates their conscious choices to stay in closed off coethnic neighborhoods.

Not only are Whites segregating themselves in closed off communities and isolated neighborhoods, but larger national institutions such as education, healthcare, and the government are embedded with discrimination and preference. Within the current system of the United States, minority immigrants are made into victims as they struggle to find equal opportunity and a level playing field with native-born Americans. This institutional barrier adds to the hardships of incoming immigrants and minority residents, as they become victims of structural violence as well as cultural violence.

Dr. Suryanarayana defines violence loosely as “the expression of physical or verbal force against the self or other, compelling action against one’s will on pain of being hurt” (np). Violence is not only and always direct and physical, but is very often structural (embedded in institutions) or cultural (embedded in social norms and ideologies). ‘Violence’ as described here is considered to be a tool of manipulation, whereby one person/group/institution has power and privilege over another.

Structural violence, which harms people in an indirect but very noticeable way, is the result of elitism, ethnocentrism, classism, racism, and sexism in a society (Suryanarayana). Specifically, Latin American immigrants, regardless of documentation, are denied equal access to resources, political power, education, housing, employment, health care, and legal standing. All of these restrictions are considered forms of structural violence aimed at keeping this identifiable ‘other’ repressed in a society. Structural violence tends to be “slower, more subtle, more common, and more difficult to repair” and is usually the driving force behind direct violence and the result of cultural violence, especially when left to simmer for years and filter throughout a society (Suryanarayana).

This form of violence thrives on inequality in society (Rupesinghe). As a result, immigrants become prime targets for redirected anger and aggression, ultimately making them out as scapegoats for all problems that arise (30). In the modern era of increased globalization and the pertinent perceived threat of cultural homogenization, people fear losing their identity and manifest feelings of insecurity and ultimately end up clinging to these institutions and structures for guidance and information that reassure them (Rupesinghe 46).



One of the common ways in which minorities are denied equal opportunity includes access to housing. Not only do neighborhoods vary in prices and racial composition, but even as they achieve the same socioeconomic standing, out-group members are faced with constraints. The housing search process is often made much more limited and more unpleasant as they are on average required to make more visits and wait longer for call-backs and new viewings, receive far less assistance in the application process, and are more likely to be denied (Charles 2003). Seen in these circumstances, structural violence is thriving and while overt, blatant racism is argued to be decreasing, these hidden forms of discrimination are continually being upheld and even strengthened to maintain the divide in American society.

Interestingly enough, White individuals, although the ethnocentric backbone behind the cultural and structural ideologies that generate discrimination in American society, are believed (theoretically) to want immigrants to integrate more fully into society. Education and experience have a lot to do with the degree to which they are accepting of a more integrated community. Inevitably more educated individuals with a higher exposure to minority immigrant groups tend to be more accepting and/or open and honest about their explanations for their living preferences (Charles 2003). For the general White population though who may not be as educated or progressive in terms of dismissing traditional stereotypes, the great majority remains conditioned by the potential race of their neighbors (Charles 2001). As described briefly above, different racial backgrounds have different levels of acceptance in society, which make residential segregation not a matter of black and white but a multi-level, multi-ethnic complex structure composed of a history of embedded racial ideologies.

In regards to non-White immigrant minorities, studies conducted by Camille Zubrinsky Charles show that as a whole they desire significantly more integration in terms of residential location than whites (2003). Latinos were seen to be a significant point of interest and divergence from this study as they were generally more likely than any other ethnic group to desire an entirely same race neighborhood rather than an integrated mixed neighborhood (Charles 2001). This may reflect their increasing immigrant numbers as they share common experiences and common barriers in immigrating and fitting into the United States, but may also reflect personal discrimination and institutional exclusion (Charles 2001).

Integrated communities are possible but remain few and far between. Previous studies acknowledged by Camille Zubrinsky Charles find that “stably integrated communities tend to be economically diverse, including middle-class, college-educated homeowners with professional occupations, as well as low-income families in entry-level, service-sector jobs” (Charles 2003). They are able to blend seamlessly into one integrated community because these areas are aware of the need for universal access to resources, are made to feel secure and safe, and have strong community-based organizations to help promote and maintain diversity (Charles 2003).

Major conflicts arise when these groups are pitted against one another and have no means of interacting and getting to know this ‘other’ whom is really not so different from oneself. By segregating neighborhoods and communities by race and cultural differences, those negatively impacted are presented with a physical boundary between themselves and what they view as success in the United States. Wealth and socioeconomic status are upheld in society to be the picture of success and without such one is looked down upon as

a failure and as lacking a strong work ethic. These views fail to take into account that the system as described above is restricted and purposefully makes it harder for some rather than others to succeed based on social identity groups such as gender or race. Immigrant minority groups are then intimidated by this dual complex of individual and institutional discrimination and seclude themselves into coethnic enclaves because they inevitably perceive a group with little or no social class difference to be more 'like them' (Charles 2001). This segregation has serious implications for the future social mobility of these immigrants as they are denied not only access to the more desirable parts of town, but are also made to feel unwelcomed if they somehow succeeded in entering (Charles 2003). Not only are these out-groups forced to the outskirts, but they are now actively choosing to do so to avoid constant feelings of discrimination.

## **Summary**

Throughout this review of relevant literature, this section has discussed the issues at hand regarding integration in the United States. It began with an overview of the 'problem' of immigration itself and how this issue has paved the way for increased immigration policy on the national, state, and local levels. It then moved towards understanding the ways in which the resulting responses to immigration and integration have failed and inadequately addressed the issues of the receiving society and their role in the processes of inclusion. Finally, this section concluded with the most relevant literature to the following methodology on residential segregation and physical boundaries constructed around one's racial identity.

As this review of current literature has shown, California, and Los Angeles in particular, is a hotbed for the topic of Latin American immigration and is an appropriate

starting point from which to study points of segregation and resulting residential discrimination.

## Methodology

This study follows Latin American immigrants in the United States today and examines the extent to which they are integrated into their local communities. The following research focuses on residential segregation and its impacts on social integration of Latin American immigrants through a comparative analysis with White residents. The focus on residency was chosen as an observable and measureable point of analysis by which physical integration of these two groups can be determined. Throughout the following data and results, patterns of cultural and structural discrimination are apparent and lend to the overall research designed to uncover these realities, which remain strongly embedded within American society.

The research methodology ultimately remains focused on the key questions addressed throughout this paper:

- 1) To what extent are minority Latino immigrants in fact integrating into American society?
- 2) What are some of the greatest impediments for this Latino population in regards to integrating?
- 3) What is the extent of residential segregation in the Los Angeles area and what are the contributing factors for its perpetuation?
- 4) How does this embedded social divide contribute to perpetuating cycles of racism and discrimination?

These questions and more will be addressed throughout this methodology and the following data results sections while being interworked with the theoretical base of social identity theory and self/group identification processes as a means of embedded social divides.

The following methodology is divided into two sections. The first section will provide an in depth case study on the city of Long Beach, California. Data was collected and assigned into three main categories for analysis: racial composition, average household incomes, and average home values of the neighborhoods in question. The eleven zip codes of the city of Long Beach were then utilized to define the analysis by neighborhood to compare and contrast based on the three points. The results were then graphed according to the appropriate zip code. By graphing out the variances, consistent patterns began to take form that lend support to the overall hypothesis that socially embedded racial divides function to maintain a system of residential segregation and prohibit progressive integration.

The second section is a compacted correlational study comparing the city of Long Beach with the greater Los Angeles County. This secondary data provides references for the entire state of California as well to support the existing patterns seen on the local level to a much larger, state level. This correlation is relevant for two main reasons: first, to show the reoccurring patterns that provide evidence for residential segregation, socioeconomic disparity, and lack of integration among residents as seen in depth in the Long Beach case study. And second, this data also works to reiterate the importance and relevance of this study on a much broader scope that allows for other locales to benefit by observing demographic and settlement patterns that possibly persist in cities nation-wide.

By widening the scope of this methodology to incorporate larger scales of relevance, the persisting patterns that arise aid in understanding residential segregation and reverse integration as growing phenomena here in the United States. The following subsections will

detail the means by which this study was conducted as well as describe how research was accumulated and analyzed in more depth.

### **Research Setting**

In terms of setting, this study focused on Los Angeles County and more specifically the city of Long Beach, California, which is the southern most city of the greater Los Angeles area. Los Angeles County, with a total estimated population of 9,889,056 as of 2011, was chosen as the basis of this study as the city is home to one of, if not the highest concentrations of Latin American immigrant populations in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Research on this particular county proves particularly beneficial to future research as a model of replication in terms of how communities integrate their growing Latino populations. In order to get precise and specific research and to make relevant and necessary correlations, this analysis has focused in on the city of Long Beach, California, with an estimated population of 465, 576 residents and its specific neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Long Beach proves to be an excellent representative sample as there is a large Latin American immigrant population similar in ratio to that of the greater Los Angeles County overall as well as a similar pattern in residential segregation by neighborhood or region. Long Beach also boasts a higher than average Latin American population than California averages as well as an overall foreign-born population that far exceeds states overall percentages (City Data 2012).

The following maps aid in placing Los Angeles County within California as well as the city of Long Beach.

Figure 1.1

### California Counties

(Retrieved from Netstate at [http://www.netstate.com/states/maps/ca\\_maps.htm](http://www.netstate.com/states/maps/ca_maps.htm))



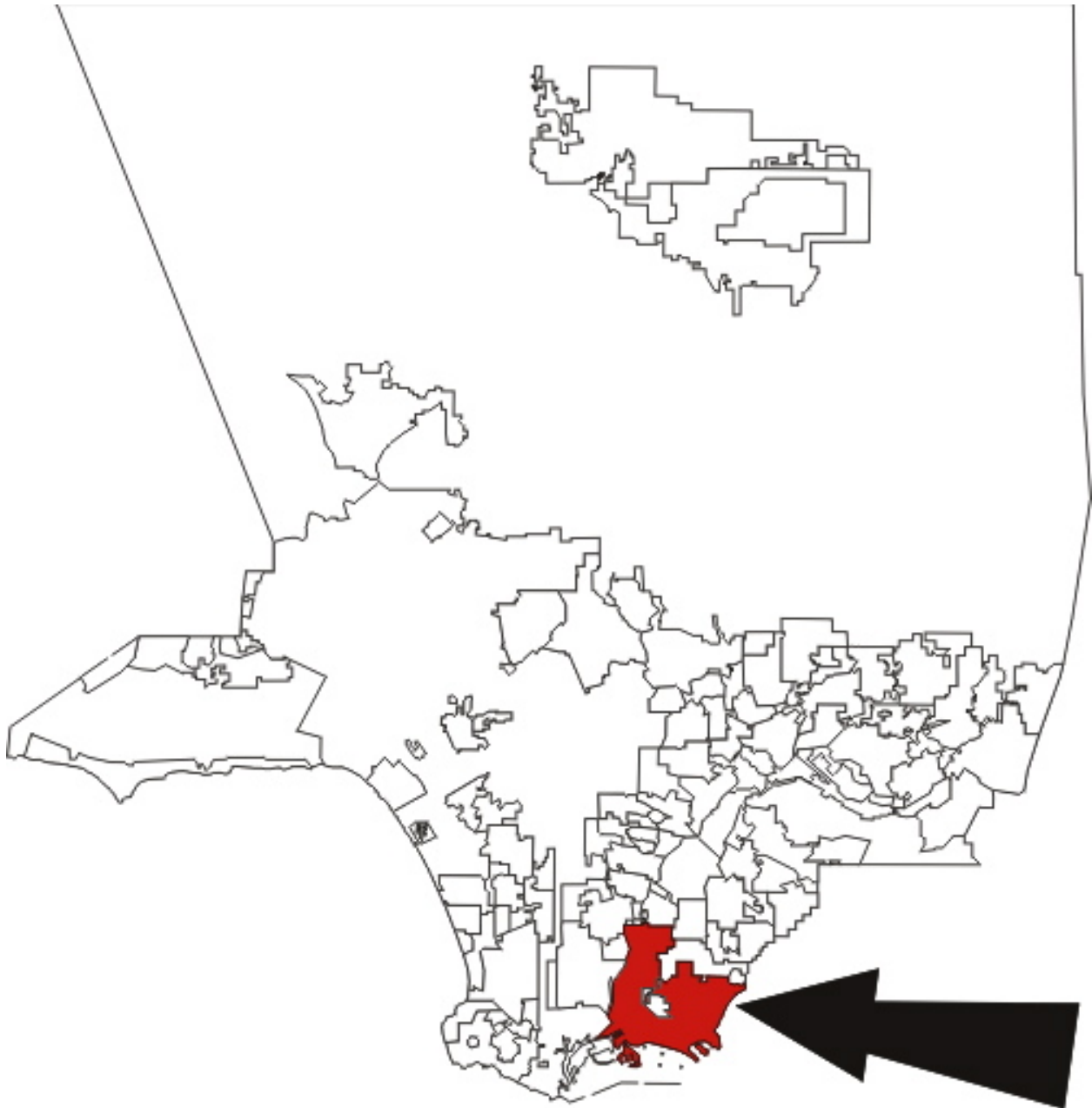




**Figure 1.3**

**City of Long Beach**

(Retrieved from the Los Angeles Almanac at  
<http://www.laalmanac.com/LongBeach/index.htm>)



## Population Sample

For the purpose of this focused study, only the Latin American immigrant community was selected for comparison against non-Latin White residents. This particular group was chosen as the sole focus point of this research due to this particular populations increasing presence in and around Los Angeles County. As seen in Table 1.1 below, peoples of Latino backgrounds comprise a sizable percentages of the city of Long Beach and as will be shown later, Los Angeles County and California as a whole as well.

**Table 1.1**

**Overall Racial Composition of Long Beach, Ca**

<b>White</b>	<b>29.4%</b>
<b>Latino</b>	<b>40.8%</b>

To reiterate an earlier point, no mention or differentiation was made throughout this methodology in regards to one's legal standing in the United States. The focus here and throughout this research is on cultural variations and ingrained socialized disparities between identity groups rather than one's documentation. While notions of citizenship have been continually revisited, these concepts remain relevant to the greater understanding of this research and its goals of integration and one's need for belonging in their resided community. Latinos in the United States, especially in recent times, have been routinely classified by their immigrant status as a means to discriminate and ostracize, regardless of their time of arrival or status of residence, many of whom are in fact native born Americans and/or are part of long lineage of native born Americans. This research aims to move beyond surface characteristics of varying identity groups and uncover hidden agendas of structural and cultural prejudices aimed at Latin Americans in the United States that persist and continue to thrive in American society.

## Data Collection

The primary form of research was an extensive analysis on current database statistics pulled from U.S. governmental Census Data as well as City Data. In addition to the division of Long Beach by zip code, a correlational study proposing a similar pattern on larger city scales using Los Angeles was proposed and examined mainly for the purpose of hypothesizing the patterns of residential segregation found in Long Beach, CA as a common and more widespread occurrence.

The purpose of this in depth case study on Long Beach is to understand the variations in the characteristics of the neighborhoods in question. In breaking up the city by zip codes, the underlying systems of inequality begin to expose themselves as the patterns become obvious rather than merely coincidental. These two specific statistical databases were deemed to be most accredited and accurate thus providing the most accurate portrayal of the presence of residential segregation and lack of integration between these two racial groups, Whites and Latinos.

Beginning with Long Beach, CA, eleven zip codes were chosen for analysis:

90802	90803	90804	90805
90806	90807	90808	90810
90813	90814	90815	

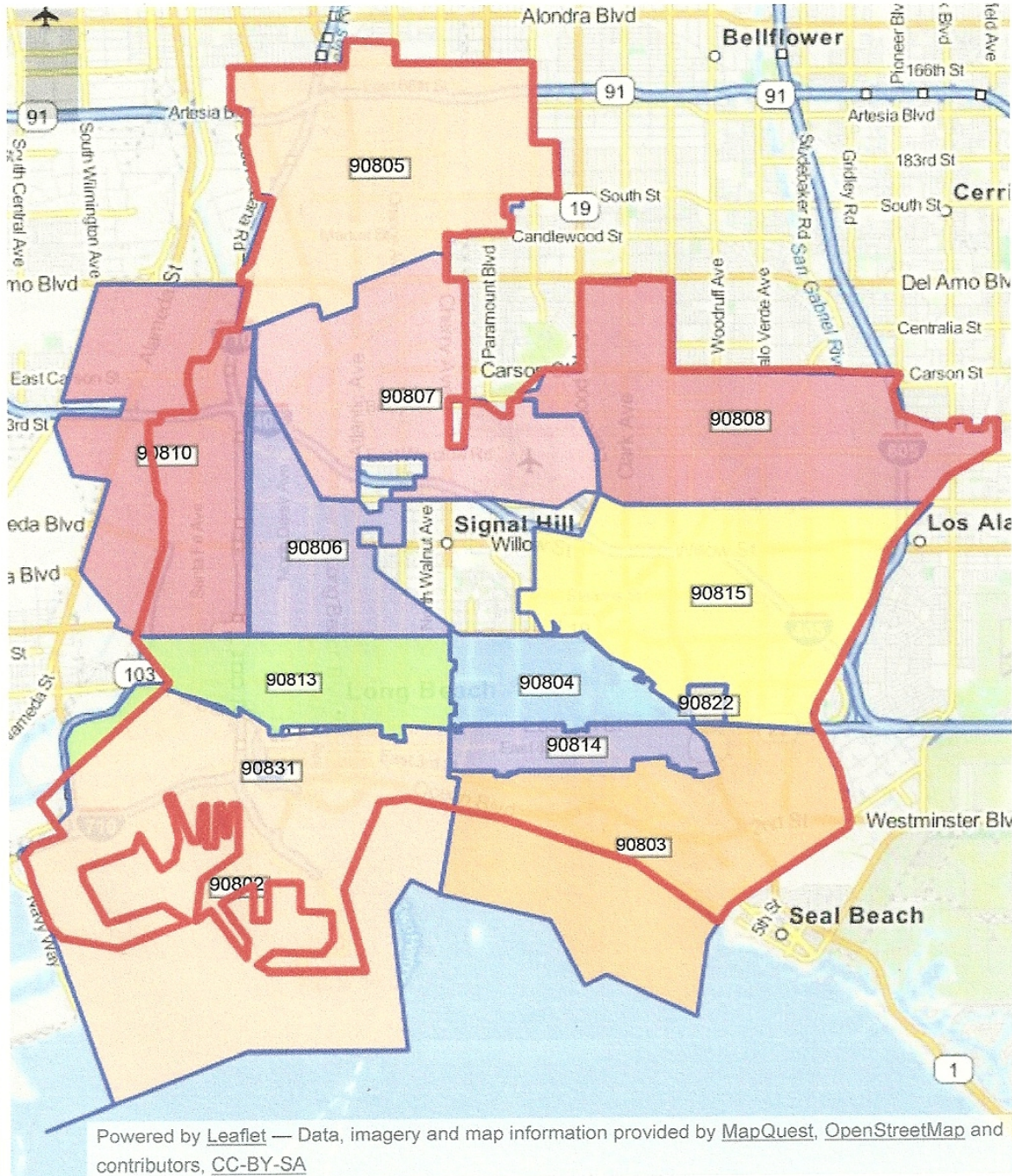
Figure 2.1 below shows approximate boundary lines of these zip codes. The red lines mark the city boundary whereas the blue lines mark the zip code boundaries. Zip codes represented that are absent from the above-mentioned list will be explained in the Limitations section at the end of this methodology.



Figure 2.1

### Zip Codes of Long Beach, CA

(Retrieved from <http://www.city-data.com/city/Long-Beach-California.html>)



Powered by Leaflet — Data, imagery and map information provided by MapQuest, OpenStreetMap and contributors, CC-BY-SA

- City boundary

- Zip Code boundaries

These eleven zip codes were broken down and compared on the basis of three principal factors:

- 1) Racial Composition
- 2) Average Household Income
- 3) Average Home Value

In regards to the city of Long Beach, racial composition was extracted from estimated 2011 U.S. Census Data. Individual zip code racial composition statistics were taken from City Data, which provides a more in depth breakdown by zip code. Only those who identified as White and those who identified as Latino were observed and taken for use in this specific study. Average household income and home values were analyzed through City Data, an independent research agent, which provides detailed analysis on individual city, county, and state statistics for use in such studies as well as business and government entities. For this case study, City Data was extracted from the citywide scale of Long Beach, which provides averages as a city, as well as averages, by each individual zip code listed above. By comparing and contrasting these statistics and graphing their numerical data, one is able to visually identify apparent patterns that may or may not have been proven to exist. These three indicators were chosen to hone in on the importance of one's race and corresponding socioeconomic status in relation to their place of residence and ultimately their potential for social integration.

To begin, Table 2.1 shows racial percentages by each zip code. These percentages are estimated as of 2010 City Data statistics and were calculated by dividing the number of White and Latino residents by the estimated zip code population. For example, zip code 90802 has an estimated population of 141,219 residents, with a White population of

47,019 and a Latino population of 54,735. By dividing these racial group populations by the estimated total, it is estimated that the zip code 90802 is 33% White and 39% Latino. Each zip code and its corresponding racial percentages are displayed below.

**Table 2.1**

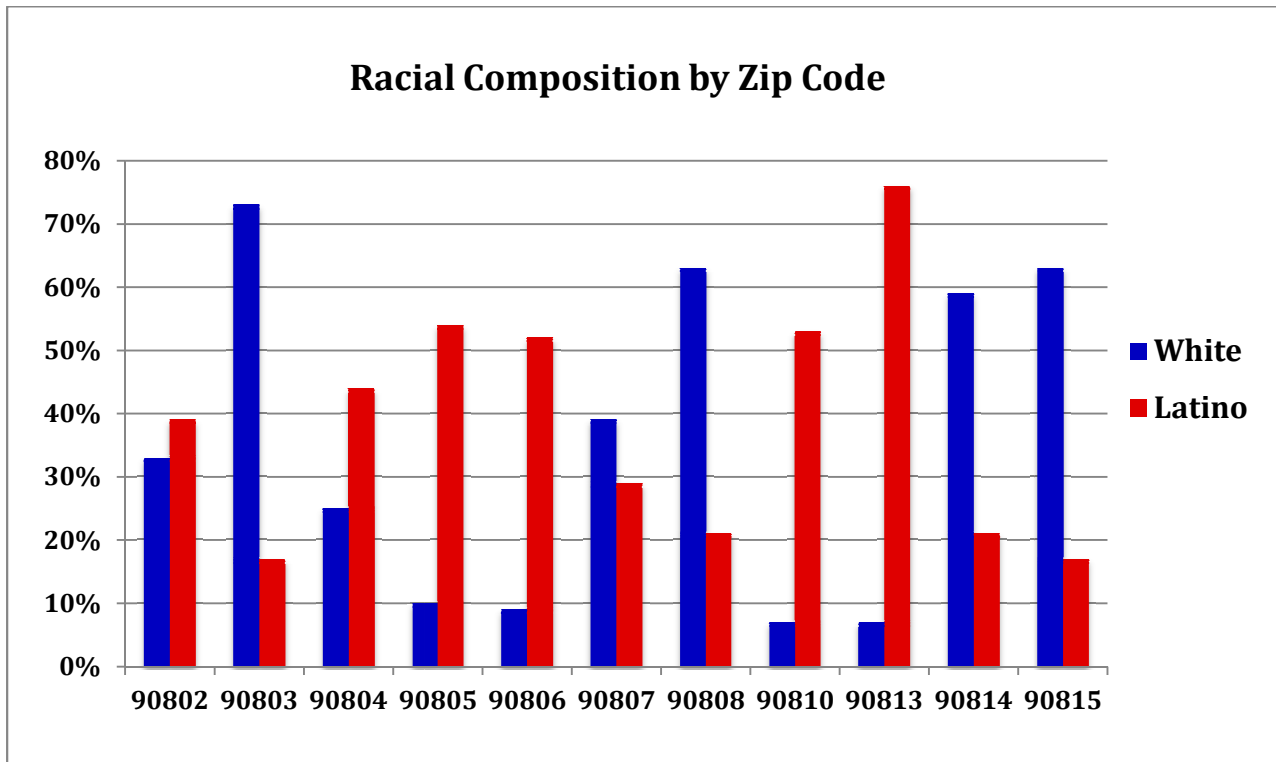
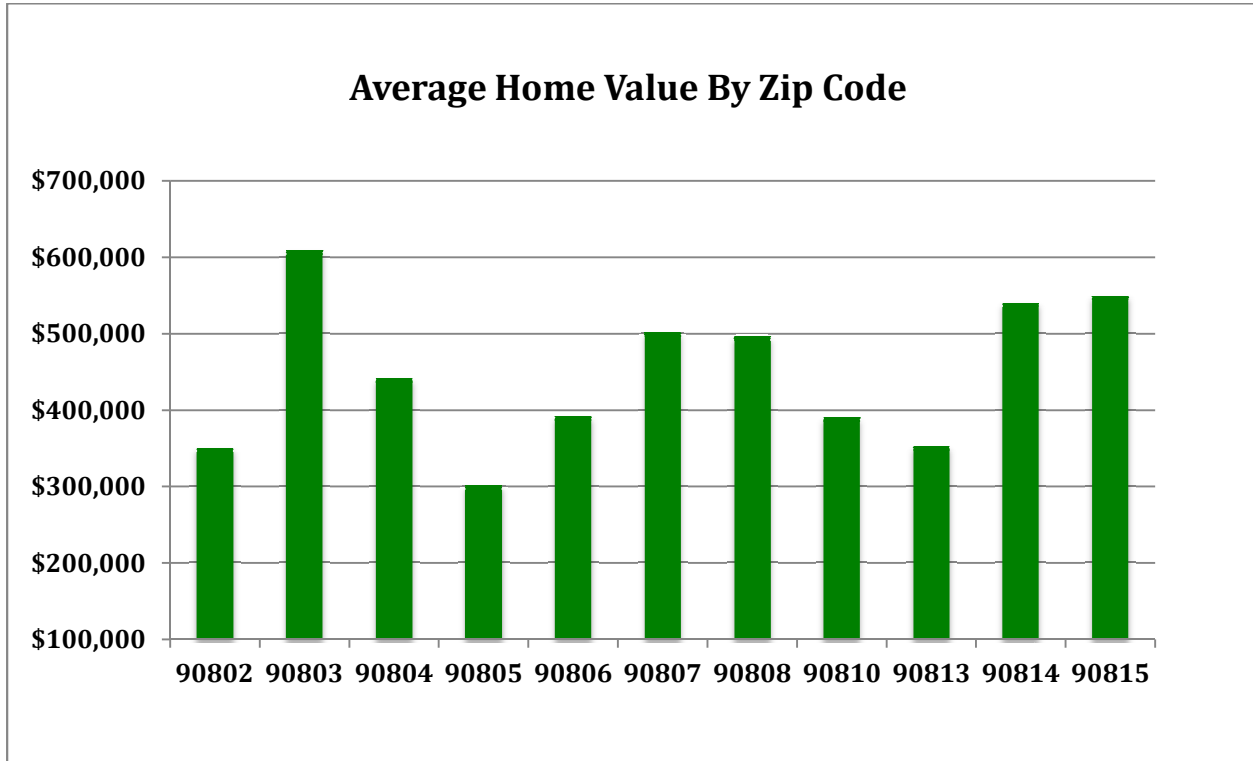


Table 2.2 below presents the secondary unit of analysis, which aids in creating a pattern of residential segregation by neighborhood or zip code. Taken from 2010 City Data statistics, the average home values were examined by individual zip code and graphed according to their price ranges. Many of the neighborhoods show a significant variation in home value. This provides a visual aid in observing varying degrees of standards of living as well as inhabitant's socioeconomic status.

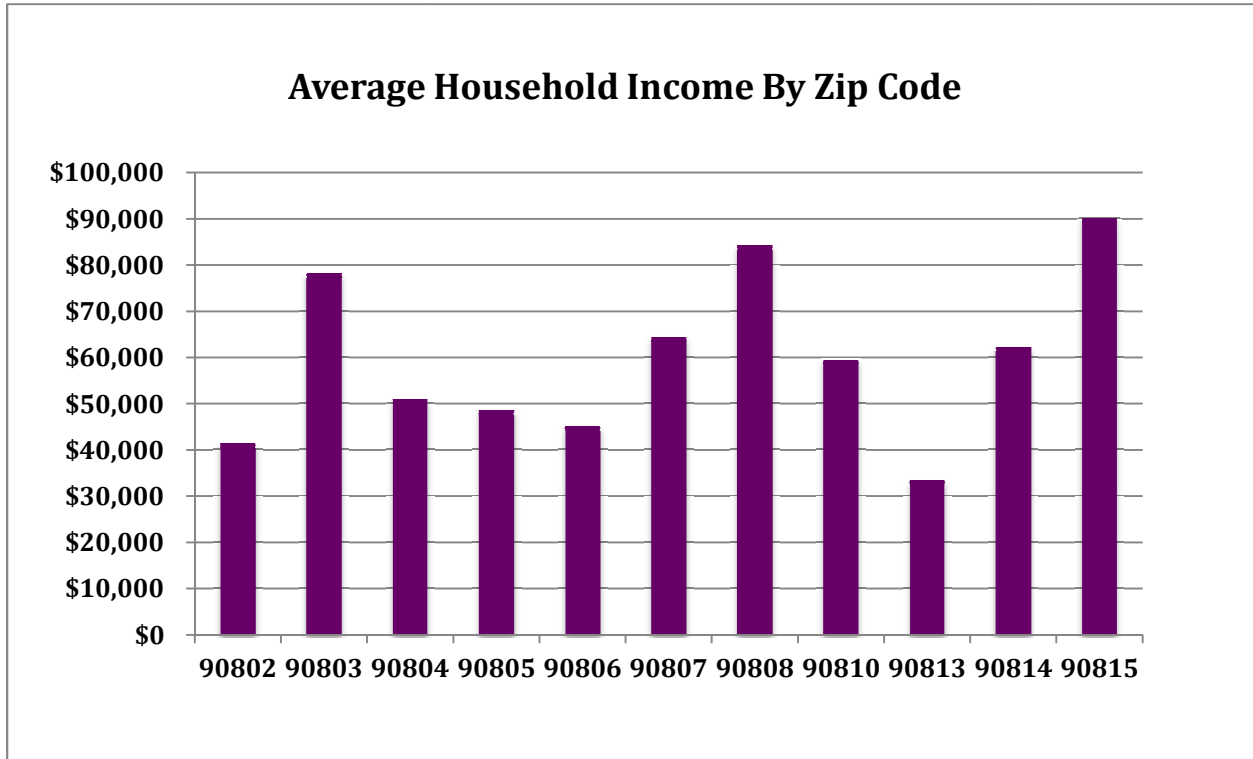
**Table 2.2**



Finally, Table 2.3 exhibits the third unit of analysis of average household income for each individual zip code of Long Beach, CA. As with the Table 2.2, Table, 2.3 below provides a secondary aid for correlating one's socioeconomic status with their racial background, which will ultimately function to suggest that residential segregation is not an accidental occurrence but a social and cultural norm that has become structured into society to maintain barriers based on difference. As with the previous statistics based on the various zip codes of Long Beach, average household incomes were extracted from 2010 City Data statistics. Findings show similar neighborhood patterns and maintain a fairly significant variation.



**Table 2.3**



As seen through comparison, each zip code follows a common pattern. If a given zip code is predominantly White (90803, 90808, 90814, 90815) in racial composition, the average home value and average household income of that zip code is typically much higher. On the opposite end of the spectrum, if a zip code is predominantly Latino in racial composition, the average home value and average household income drops significantly. While there is slight variation among each zip code, the pattern remains constant over the three units of analysis.

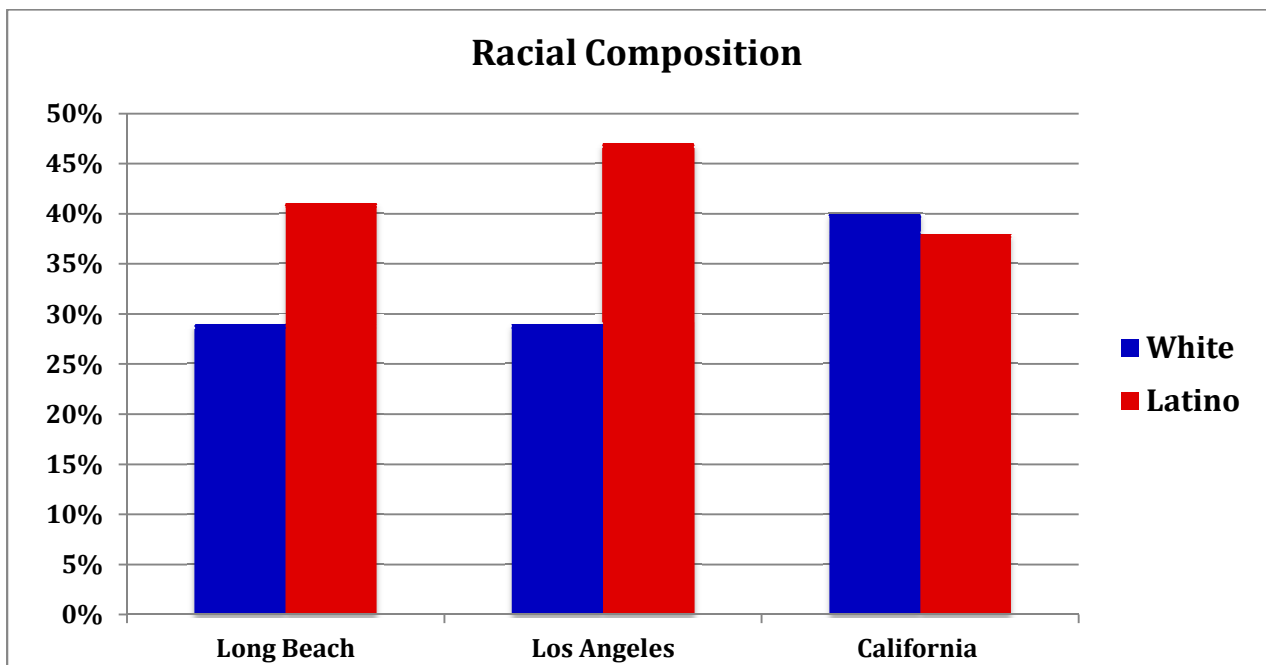
### **Relational Study: Long Beach vs. Los Angeles County**

In addition to the specific case study on the zip codes of Long Beach and residential segregation that becomes apparent, an addition relational study was conducted to ultimately prove the broader scope of this study and the presence of residential

segregation. The city of Long Beach was compared to Los Angeles County with comparable numbers shown for the state of California as a whole as a point of reference. This was done to propose a grander hypothesis that will undoubtedly extend beyond this specific research and will provide a basis for future, much larger studies on integration and residential segregation.

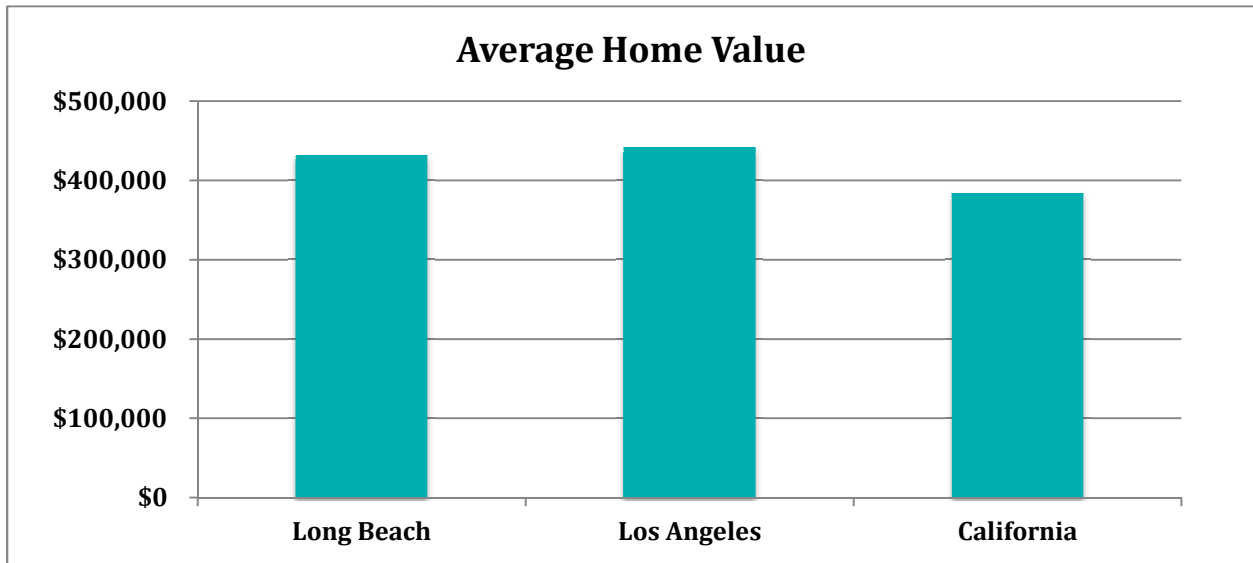
Principally, Table 3.1 demonstrates the racial composition of the three areas. The data was taken from 2009 and 2010 City Data statistics as well as 2011 U.S. Census Data and shows the similar racial composition of Long Beach and Los Angeles County. Long Beach holds an estimated White/Latino ratio of 29% to 41%, while Los Angeles County holds a ratio of 29% to 47%. California as a whole however still maintains a White majority with 40% to 38% ratio but is quickly beginning to resemble the patterns of Long Beach and Los Angeles County.

**Table 3.1**

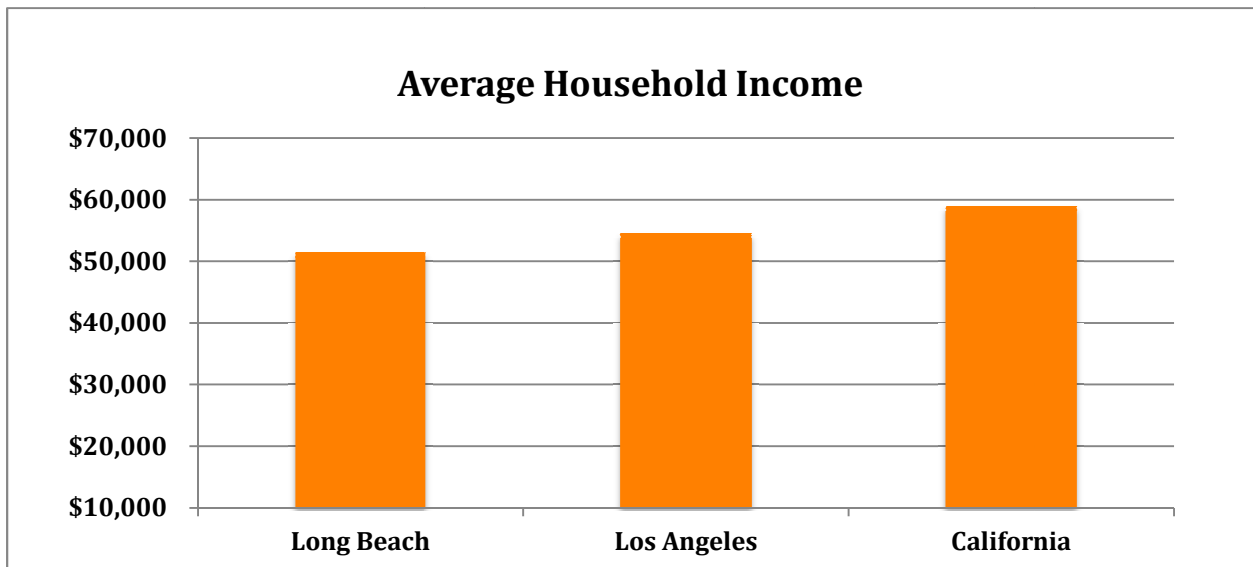


Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below follow the graphs in the previous case study on Long Beach to further reiterate the similarities between the small-scale city of Long Beach and the larger scale County of Los Angeles. Both the average home values and average household incomes were extracted from 2009 City Data statistics.

**Table 3.2**



**Table 3.3**



These graphs show that Long Beach is very similar to the greater Los Angeles County in terms of its racial composition, average home value, and average household income. This suggests the possibility that the patterns exemplified in the in depth case study on Long Beach, CA are probable predictor on a much grander scale for the overall County of Los Angeles as well as other major cities within the United States.

### **Limitations**

While the methodology above was conducted as reliably and soundly as possible, mention must be made of the possible variances in similar research studies. To begin, Long Beach does in fact have more than eleven official zip codes. These eleven were chosen because they represent the vast majority of the city's residents. The various other zip codes that are not represented consist of P.O. boxes, government buildings, the airport, and/or surrounding associated cities, which are classified under their own U.S. postal zip coding. These were not included in relevant analysis, as they do not hold any racial groups, housing incomes, or home values to cite and statistically analyze in comparison to the eleven zip codes of inhabited Long Beach within its true city borders.

The second limitation could be the data reference citations. These citations were constructed from 2009, 2010, and 2011 statistics. Future studies may make use of updated Census and City Data and may thus find higher/lower percentages of segregation in terms of varying amounts of racial composition as Latin American immigration in the Los Angeles County region are constantly changing as well as housing price increases, and real income depreciation in the area.

Finally, while at the present moment in time, this study is both relevant and estimated to be an accurate assumption of real percentages and statistics, there is debate

among real numbers in regards to racial composition of any given area within the United States. Since Latin American immigrants were the focus of this study, there is debate among accountability of documented versus undocumented in terms of available Census data and real percentages of Latinos in the region of focus for this particular study. Due to that fact that undocumented citizens are not generally accounted for in national statistical studies, there is inevitably a difficulty in estimating true numbers of this population. This study remains dedicated to the statistical data available and holds firm to the patterns that were uncovered as a generalized hypothesis for greater residential segregation. This study holds as a base study for future models and if nothing else, estimated Latin American numbers in the region are likely higher, not lower, than what was presented in this study, thus giving these patterns a probable more extreme variance and aid in suggesting the existence of segregation and lack of foreseeable physical integration.

## **Conclusions**

As a result of this case study on the city of Long Beach and brief corresponding correlational study on the greater Los Angeles County, patterns of residential segregation are apparent and aid in understanding the important role of race, cultural identity, and socially constructed ideologies within American society that prevent equal access to resources and equivalent standards of living. The following section will dive deeper into analyzing this data and put forth more explanations for its occurrence in society as well as return once again to answering some of this research's main questions of understanding the greatest impediments for Latino integration and how these challenges help to uphold a system of inequality and discrimination in the United States today.

## **Data Analysis & Results**

The methodology above provides invaluable evidence for residential segregation and suggests plausible correlations of one's race and culture to their socio-economic standing and settlement patterns in the Los Angeles area and more specifically within the city of Long Beach, California. The following analysis of the data is broken down into sections based on common themes and work to answer the research questions listed in the previous section and throughout this research.

### **Racial Demographic Patterns**

In regards to the city of Long Beach, California, there is an apparent and consistent divide between residents among the various neighborhoods as seen throughout the breakdown by zip codes in Table 2.1. In terms of almost all of the given zip codes there is a sizable majority of either Whites or Latinos. Only two of the eleven zip codes, 90802 and 90804 are relatively close in ratios to an equal integrated percentage. Some, such as 90803 and 90808 are almost entirely dominated by Whites whereas 90810 and 90813 by Latinos.

Long Beach, which had formerly been a conservative, primarily White suburban city nestled along the coast, has transformed into a majority Latin urban center (Davis 2000). Instead of assimilating efforts aimed at this incoming and increasing immigrant population, segregating and discriminatory patterns of settlement have been not only reconfirmed, but also strengthened as White residents recede further and further into particular neighborhoods. As seen in Figure 2.1, an overall divide takes shape. Eastern zip codes (90803, 90808, 90814, 90815), which hug wealthy Orange County cities Seal Beach, Los Alamitos, and Cerritos, are majority White, while Western zip codes (90805, 90806, 90810,

90813), which hug poorer cities of Compton, Carson, and Wilmington, are majority Latino. Of the three remaining zip codes, which maintain a more fairly represented populace of both ethnicities, 90804 and 90807 act as buffer zones between the eastern and western neighborhoods. It becomes easier to see why these neighborhoods have a more diverse composition. Lastly, Zip code 90802, while situated in the West, is in fact proportional in racial composition due to the fact that this zip code contains the downtown hub of government buildings, businesses, and the Port of Long Beach, which deals with both shipping and oil refineries off the coastline.

As is seen through these mappings and graphs, Long Beach maintains broader, more common themes of city planning and settlement patterns as well. Western Long Beach tends to be industry-heavy with many factories, as well as labor industrious jobs regarding oil and shipping in and around the Port of Long Beach. Eastern Long Beach, on the other hand tends to be more resource heavy with the Long Beach airport, Cal State Long Beach, Long Beach City College, and much of the waterfront coastline.

On a broader scale, Los Angeles County presents a very similar set of ratios of Whites and Latinos. Table 3.1 shows that across the board Long Beach, Los Angeles County, and the state of California have estimated equivalent percentages of each ethnic group. While the extended detailed data and analysis on the cities of Los Angeles is beyond the scope of this research, general observations and correlations can be made based on the similar characteristics of the city of Long Beach to the larger county of Los Angeles. The neighborhood/zip code break down of Long Beach works as a starting sample and suggests the possibility of a similar pattern of racial segregation to the larger scale of actual city by city research within Los Angeles County.

In terms of city planning and spatial patterns of residency, there is an apparent divide between the cities making up Los Angeles County. The Anglo-majority neighborhoods cluster near the beaches and inland in the foothills, while Latino and other minority groups overwhelmingly occupy the middle ground (Davis 2000). Los Angeles is also not unlike most other major U.S. cities in which the downtown, urban areas consist of primarily minority residents and outward sprawl and more suburban areas are more concentrated with Whites and/or individuals with higher socioeconomic status. Because of these consistent patterns of settlement and one's own racial background and cultural group, there is what is referred to as a 'city-within-a-city' layout that segregates specific areas to specific types of people with little to no intermixing and integration (David 2000). Mike Davis describes this type of city layout by stating that:

the spatial logic of this vast city-within-a-city, so mysterious on first examination, is easily revealed by overlaying a map of industrial land-use zoning. Latinos occupy almost all of Los Angeles and Orange County's traditional blue-collar housing tracts and suburbs adjacent to the three great corridors of industrially zoned land along Interstate 5, the 60 (Pomona) Freeway, and the Los Angeles River (Davis 2000).

Demographic settlement very much results from locations deemed desirable and undesirable, which are oftentimes linked to one's socioeconomic status and their type of employment. Latinos tend to occupy labor and service jobs, while Whites hold professional and managerial positions (Suarez-Orozco n.d.). This as well as the desire to be close to one's own cultural and ethnic group adds to the fairly distinct divides between cities of Los Angeles County.

Undoubtedly, there is what George Borjas refers to as "ethnic spillover" (1997). Ethnic spillover, which is ultimately the blending and blurring of distinct segregated boundary lines, can result from one of two possible scenarios. The first possibility occurs



when ethnic minority or immigrant individuals climb the socioeconomic ladder and move into the socially desirable neighborhoods despite the structural and cultural barriers that work to counter their efforts. Another possible cause of spillover occurs when neighborhoods or cities border one another on one or more sides, leaving a high chance of spillover as a natural blurring of boundaries takes form and overcrowding persists in a given area. It is also not uncommon in the Los Angeles area and especially in cases like Long Beach where 'ethnic spillover' occurs rapidly and within one or two blocks results in drastic differences of standard of living as the residences change from million dollar sprawling estates into overcrowded, run-down apartment complexes and rental properties.

As a result of increased immigration into the region and established chain migration patterns, there has been an explosion in the Latino population in Southern California in recent years. Because of this, Latinos are much more prone than another other immigrant minority group to being residentially segregated from Whites (Jimenez 2011). Instead of increased blending between Latinos and Whites, residential segregation in Long Beach and the greater Los Angeles County is becoming more widespread. Latinos show increasing isolation as well as declining exposure to White communities as they are both forcibly segregated as a result of cultural and structural violence as well as self segregated as a means to retain their heritage and constructed identity groups (Charles 2003). Also as a result of their increasing numbers in the region, isolation becomes much more possible and easier to do. Generally the smaller the minority group, the quicker they are able to assimilate into mainstream society. Larger groups, such as Latin Americans whom comprise almost half of the region's residents, are more easily able to seclude themselves

as well as are more prone to seclusion by others as integration and assimilation becomes harder and harder as Latinos move into the majority in the region (Charles 2001).

### **The Role of Social & Economic Inequality**

While race is the most obvious and important indicator for deciphering logic behind residential segregation, one's socioeconomic status plays a vital role as well. As seen throughout the above-mentioned methodology, household income and home values are valuable indicators of one's socioeconomic status. This becomes relevant when put into connection with race as the patterns once again prove to be consistent thus keeping in line with the hypothesis that racial discrimination continues to play a huge part in culturally and structurally denying immigrant minorities equal access to opportunity for improvement and success.

As seen in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3, Average Home Value and Average Household Income present almost identical patterns. Of interest is the consistency of race between these two graphs. In almost all of the high home values and high-income households, residents are White, whereas the low home values and lower household incomes are almost all Latino. This sparks the notion that there is more than just coincidence at work and that much deeper racial inequalities are at play.

All cities will inevitably have nice parts of town and not so nice parts. The issue at stake here is why this consistent divide is more than merely socioeconomic, but may very well be tied to one's race and chance at success and prosperity in American society.

One's income and ability to own a home are directly linked to their social capabilities and the impediments they face in that society. If a given ethnic or immigrant group is denied access to the same pool of resources and opportunities as another group,

there is undoubtedly little hope for integration among its residents as both are in constant competition with one another. In the case of this methodology and going back to previous discussions on the idea of the United States as a 'melting pot', Latinos and Whites are presented with an American society that is all encompassing and equal. The reality of the matter is that this assumption of equality in regards to one's socio-economic capability is completely inaccurate and this methodology works to aid in proving this significant point. The playing field is not in fact fair and marginalized Latinos, despite their vast numbers are still secluded in society and kept out of reach of equal education, employment, and other necessary resources that allow for one to succeed and climb the socioeconomic ladder.

Because of this, Latinos are unable to compete financially with a housing market that is consistently segregating as housing prices become and further and further out of budget. While it is inevitable that home value and housing prices depend on location, a certain level of equity should be available for all members of the community. In the present scenario, this is almost never the case. Because some individuals are willing to pay more to live in better areas, competition for housing is only increasing and neighborhoods are seeing more disparity then ever. As described above, matters of a few miles or even a few blocks can change drastically in regards to one's standard of living.

Further issues arise due to the fact that where an individual lives greatly affects their proximity to good jobs, educational quality, and safety from crime, as well as their quality of social networks to achieve a higher social status (Charles 2003). If Whites continue to opt out and purchase housing in segregated neighborhoods, Latinos and other immigrant minority groups will continue struggling to keep up. As it stands now and under the socio-economic status they are confined to, Latinos are simply unable to afford to live in

the same neighborhoods as Whites. A game of cat and mouse ensues as these areas (i.e. neighborhoods in the case of Long Beach and entire cities in the case of Los Angeles County) are seen as desirable and undesirable areas of town in which to reside. These then distinct areas become symbolic references to one's standing and status in society to be looked up to and strived for. As described by George Borjas:

persons in the least skilled groups wish to move to neighborhoods where they can benefit from contact with highly skilled groups, while persons in the most skilled groups want to segregate themselves in wealthier enclaves (1997).

This constant self-segregation by Whites and support for social structures that keep immigrant minorities excluded in society lead to a perpetual cycle of residential segregation as both groups have reasons for and against inclusion and integration.

While individual preferences do play a significant role in dictating segregation patterns, it is a much broader underlying problem of discriminatory practices within American society that works to maintain this divide. All levels of government, as well as the real estate, lending, construction industries are involved and play a critical role in creating and maintaining a dual housing market that constrains mobility options and socio-economic capability (Charles 2003). As a result of making it more difficult for minorities to purchase housing, "discrimination contributes to racial disparities in homeownership and wealth accumulation, which in turn fosters persisting suburban residential segregation" (Charles 2003). The cycle continues and residential segregation becomes just one of many indicators of this broader social problem.

## **The Struggle to Integrate**

While integration is for the most part hard to calculate, residential preferences may prove to be an exception. It is possible to see throughout the data and graphs provided in Tables 2.1-3.3 that the degrees to which integration has occurred thus far and the patterns that have resulted are relatively visible by examining where people live in relation to one another. It is an understandable and probable conclusion that “if over time immigrants and their descendants live in neighborhoods that are less defined by members of the same ethnoracial and national origin, then integration is generally considered to be taking place” (Jimenez 2011). And while immigrants do initially settle in immigrant dominant communities of same-race demography, over time there is visible integration and dispersion, especially as the immigrant increases their socioeconomic status. Also of importance to integration is an increased knowledge of the English language and familiarity with the culture and customs of the United States. These, along with increased (and albeit inevitable) exposure to Latino immigrants, Whites tend to be more accepting to residing within integrated neighborhoods. Whites in this particular case are also responsible for making active efforts to learn about Latin culture and work on addressing the underlying prejudices in their societies. The process of integration goes both ways and needs to be addressed at both ends of the spectrum for true integration to occur and for progress to be made in terms of residential segregation.

There are also dire consequences at risk if this population and others like it are not integrated and socially accepted by native-born White communities. One of the most pivotal, which is already becoming visible in Southern California, being an ever-more divided city that eventually becomes dominated by one group or another, therefore

creating distinct neighborhoods/cities based on race. Specific ethnic groups then becomes fearful of living in and around 'bad' areas and flee altogether further and further into segregated areas. Instead of working on both mental and physical integration, people choose to flee altogether. This creates a cycle as Whites flee to a given region, which then becomes the new desirable part of town only to be 'invaded' again by up and coming economically successful Latinos. This then perpetuates the cycle as Whites continue to flee to new neighborhoods constantly on the hunt for a new location to settle deemed 'safe'. This ultimately destroys hopes of community collectivity, leaves each racial group to compete against each other in the quest for resources, and perpetuates a game of cat and mouse as both groups continue to seek out a more desirable living situation.

Nevertheless, integration is undoubtedly a slow process and many steps must be taken before it is even possible in the minds of every American individual. While mass immigration is nothing new, the huge influx of primarily Latin immigrants is a fairly recent development. It is typical for processes of integration to take more than one generation and many if not most of current Latin immigrants in the Southern California region are in fact first or second-generation immigrants (Suarez-Orozco n.d.). Children of immigrants and future generations tend to outperform their predecessors in educational attainment, occupational status, wealth, and home ownership, narrowing the gap between the first and second generations, and rates of intermarriage between ethnic and racial groups increase (Jimenez 2011). Also in terms of the English language, "proficiency- a virtual requirement for full participation in US society- improves dramatically, and by the third and higher generations virtually all those with immigrant backgrounds speak good English" (Jimenez 2011). Over time, change and real progress at integration are possible, but the barriers of

cultural discrimination still play a major role. Until these barriers are broken down in a society, there is little hope for integration despite all the forward progress made by the minority immigrants themselves.

### **Breaking Down Barriers of Difference: An Individual Movement**

The question then remains, how do societies integrate in the face of these underlying prejudices, which are socialized into the behaviors, attitudes, and social and cultural structures of a community?

Author T. R. Jimenez describes how underlying social issues arise and how residential segregation is a pivotal point of departure for exposing structural and cultural violence in a society:

It is common for immigrants to settle in places where there is a high concentration of conationals. Immigrants often are drawn to these places because they have some connection- a family member, friend, acquaintance – upon whom they can rely for help in finding a social and economic foothold. If high levels of ethnoracial residential concentration persist across generations, however, then it is likely the case that this concentration is more of a function of socioeconomic and social exclusion than individuals' choices (Jimenez 2011).

By observing cross-generational patterns in relation to the data presented throughout this research, it becomes apparent that there are more than just coincidental consistent patterns in one's ability to succeed and be accepted into society. Granted full integration into a foreign society inevitably takes more than one generation as described above, progress among the United States' different immigrant groups is highly uneven with Latinos falling far behind Asian, African, and non-Latino white backgrounds (Jimenez 2011). This information suggests that the United States and more particularly the sub-

region of Southern California has targeted this minority group as a result of their increased immigration levels and the United States' propagated fear of their 'invasion'.

For integration to be possible, the barriers of difference that have been socially constructed in the minds of native Whites must be broken down and examined. Oftentimes, individuals are unconscious and unaware of the social processes that shaped and help form their belief systems and patterns of behavior as well as the social groups that influence them. These groups provide security, reliability, and safety from outsiders and the unknown, and keep one feeling as if they belong. More often than not though, individuals are completely unaware of the basis for their chosen identity. Self-inquiry and self-realization and actualization are absent and individuals tend to cling to what they believe themselves to be a part of regardless of what they may have favored if free from limitations and group influences. As famed author and social identity theorists Stuart Hall remarks, "what is at issue here is more the capacity for self-recognition and awareness than the 'natural' process of group inclusion and assignment" (Hall 1996).

Conscious behaviors and attitudes very much differ from embedded unconscious beliefs. Oftentimes, people may think they are open-minded and oppose prejudices in society, but on some layer of their unconscious they were in fact socialized to believe otherwise. The general public has always been taught that White, European immigrants founded the United States and are thus the 'real' Americans, regardless of the more encompassing notion that the country was built from immigrants from all over the world, as well as the individuals that were already residing on the land before it was 'discovered'. Nevertheless, this ingrained belief of White superiority and ethnocentric behavior has been passed through the generations. Now, in the modern era, the public is bombarded with



media images and government propaganda of the outside world and its peoples as barbaric, uncivilized, and the root of all its ills. Because globalization has brought these people to the doorstep of the United States, an all out identity crisis has erupted among many whom were made unprepared by their prior generations for a world of inescapable diversity. By bringing racial inequality back to its roots in the United States and in the individual mentality of every American, it is possible to see why even in the modern era such patterns remain prevalent in society today.

Integration is not possible until individuals see diversity as a positive rather than a negative contribution to their lives and their communities. Identity groups such as race do in fact symbolize difference, but this difference need not be ingrained in the minds of millions as something negative and unnecessary. Group disharmony ultimately exists because constructed groups focus on difference rather than shared characteristics and common aspirations. It's important to self analyze oneself and understand oneself outside of social constructs and groups to which one ascribes to. Integration is thus just as much of an individual process as it is a social movement. By individually breaking the barriers of self-assigned groupings, integration can better be achieved.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

This specific research followed Latino immigrants in the Los Angeles area, and more specifically the city of Long Beach, Ca and has evaluated their levels of integration. The methodology focused on three units of analysis to uncover patterns of residential segregation in the eleven zip codes of Long Beach, which work to represent neighborhood variances. Racial composition, average home value, and average household income statistics were collected, graphed, and evaluated to propose patterns of deeply ingrained social structures based on race which prevent physical integration in terms of residency from occurring in this region.

To follow up this specific case study, Long Beach was compared to generalized statistics of the greater Los Angeles County in regards to the same three units of analysis preciously listed. This brief correlational study found that in all three categories, similar ratios existed and thus works to hypothesize larger patterns of segregation that may very well exist in the greater Los Angeles County, which possibly lays the groundwork for future, larger studies.

This core methodology was interworked throughout with a theoretical perspective based in social identity theory and concepts of citizenship and redefining the boundaries of belonging. By focusing on what it means to be a citizen as well as constructs of race, self and group identities, and culturally and structurally embedded ideologies, this study was able to take a deeper look at the reasons behind not only residential segregation, but also the inadequacy of integration in the United States as a whole. This study worked to portray physical divides as a surface characteristic of a much larger social phenomena of ingrained traditional ideologies based in racial inequalities.

Theorist Stuart Hall (1996) noted that identification is one of the least understood concepts of the self. While everyone takes place in this natural process of identifying oneself, constructed groups based solely on differences amongst its members inhibit collectivity and ultimately integration. Until socially embedded cultural hierarchies are diminished and traditional concepts of citizenship are redefined, the greater society will continue to do what it can to uphold boundaries of difference and integration cannot be achieved on any scale.

Integration is a sign of a well-functioning society but remains remarkably absent in many, if not most circumstances. Immigrants, already in transition and adjusting to a new country and livelihood, are then confronted with the harsh realities that the land of opportunity has more social barriers than what was once perceived. Many, if not most immigrants uphold the image of the 'American dream' and utopian fantasies of the United States without precedents, but the unfortunate reality remains that American ideology goes very much against its proposition of freedom and equality for all (Rosaldo 1989). While integration involves the immigrant himself/herself, a large portion of integration involves the receiving community. This community must be accepting of diversity and ready to work with, not against immigrants to form a better society. This same community must also be willing to challenge long-held traditions that may or may not remain relevant in the modern world today. And while immigrants do have a responsibility to adjust to a certain degree of living in the United States, they are entitled to their culture and their heritage regardless of documentation and length of residency in the United States. Until a more fully integrated society takes shape, Latin American immigrants will continue to be considered foreign, cultured, different, and undesirable.

## **Integration Takes Imagination**

Now take a step back and imagine integration. Imagine a society that takes people for who they are and not what they are. A society that does not divide people because of the color of their skin, does not refer to immigrants by slanderous names despite the rough journey they have endured, and does not exclude them from society because they do not fit the outdated ideal of what an immigrant to the United States should be. Imagine including all people because everyone is seen as equal and deserves the same inalienable human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as well as economic and social success. Imagine integration regardless of race, socio-economic standing, and political status in full effect. Is this an unrealistic utopia or is this a seemingly necessary and achievable possibility?

Global interdependence has made it more and more clear that nothing and no one is neatly bounded and homogenized as it once was (Rosaldo 1989). This once foreign concept of a globalized, heterogeneous world is in essence inescapable and the United States is on the verge of a much delayed and much needed change in ideology in order to accommodate such a significant shift. Immigrant integration, or the lack there of, has become a dire issue in the United States. The overwhelming emphasis placed on documentation and border security and control of incoming immigrants is not only faulty but is proving to be utterly inadequate as immigrants of all backgrounds continue to flood the country looking for economic prosperity, safety from political persecution, and a chance at a better life. In matters of life and death and the well-being of one's self and one's family, documentation and national borders are becoming irrelevant. The United States can continue to pursue its current objectives of border security and deportation on the basis of documentation, but a

forward progression not only needs to be made, but will inevitably be inescapable. A shift toward integrative thinking is necessary to replace the continually perpetuated beliefs that the United States can somehow control and select its immigrants. The millions of Americans who refuse to accept these shifts in population demographics must realize this changing national landscape and its irreversibility and incapacity to be 'controlled'. Instead creativity and imagination must be evoked in order to deconstruct mental barriers that have worked to reinforce social divides and it must start with the self.

### **Returning to the Self**

*"In everyday life the wise guide themselves as often by waiting to see how events unfold as by plans and predications. When in doubt, people find out about their worlds by living with ambiguity, uncertainty, or simple lack of knowledge until the day, if and when it arrives, that their life experiences clarify matters. In other words, we often improvise, learn by doing, and make things up as we go along" (Rosaldo 1989).*

The United States will never know how to perfectly integrate its mass populace of immigrants. There can be no general law or rule that can force people to accept and respect others; it must come instead from individual will and desire. It is beyond an individual's capacity to fully understand and comprehend the lived experiences of others and thus each person can only do their individual best to educate themselves and train their own minds to consciously reject socially constructed prejudices and racial stereotypes.

It takes an open mind, a realistic expectation and acceptance of change, and a deep-seated compassion for others to see that all humans, regardless of race, deserve to be treated as equals. It is only possible to imagine integration if we start small and expand. If we work on the individual level to break down these socially constructed barriers of difference among people residing in the United States, we can effectively influence others

to identify and call out their outdated biases. This process presents no quick solution and will be a long and grueling task of education and training oneself to consciously recognize when biases and prejudices arise in everyday situations. Individuals also must ultimately question and even reject these socialized systems of thought that may be aiding in racial discrimination and stereotyping. It may be tough, but it is possible.

Segregation and discrimination can be voluntary or involuntary, conscious or unconscious, and the result of individual preferences or long upheld institutional structures, but as long as there is a large income gap, social, political, and economic inequality, and an inability for the receiving community to change their long-held perceptions of group identity to include others, there will continue to be segregation that roots itself in racial preferences and biases in the United States.

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