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The Power of ZIP Codes: Segregation in Southern California, Reexamined

Introduction

The continued persistence of segregation in the United States can sometimes be thought of as a bygone phenomenon that met its demise through rosy media portrayals or historical depictions of the Civil Rights Movement. However, vestiges of institutional racial discrimination continue as seen through the persistent ethnically homogenous isolation black and brown groups face as their neighborhoods have been sectioned off from their more socioeconomically stable and mobile white counterparts. The media narratives which occasionally focus on this issue tend to gravitate towards the end results of segregation but frequently altogether ignore the ways it continues to be, at this point, a nearly quintessential facet of American life. Despite being one of the most cosmopolitan and liberal regions in the world, Southern California is no exception to the occurrence of racial segregation, which continues to bedevil succeeding generations of minorities here as well. Of particular note geographically, the region within Southern California that will be focused on most here is known as the Inland Empire (IE, see Page 16 for map) which comprises Riverside and San Bernardino Counties that exist to the East of the other more well-known and affluent Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

The implications of segregation to be explored in this study vary, given the wide range of negative impacts caused that undercut both quality of life and socioeconomic mobility for affected minority communities. The primary focus here will be on Latino and Black

communities in particular with an additional exploration of how both of these historically marginalized groups' experiences differ in Southern California. Variables of special interest include: disparities contributing to vast contrast in educational and professional outcomes for youth in sub-par minority-majority public school systems, the correlation between levels of criminality/juvenile delinquency among urban youth and their upbringing in segregated neighborhoods and consequences for quality of life vis-à-vis access to affordable healthcare (especially in the COVID era). The above facets of segregation will be explored through a comprehensive analysis of existing scholarly literature on the various forms which segregation take in adversely affecting communities of color. In addition, later utilization of RStudio software will be used to depict and characterize data correlations taken at the census-tract level from the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2019 across many unique variables juxtaposed between whites, Blacks and Latinos. Comparing these statistical observations from both minority groups to their white counterparts can be quite telling regarding the potential severity of segregation suffered in communities of varying ethnic concentrations which will be explored more later.

The ultimate aim of this study is to explore and deconstruct the myriad causes which contribute to segregation's persistence, even when no longer mandated by law as it was only a few generations ago. Within the nation that sees itself as the global embodiment for liberty and equality, the effects of segregation are not fading stains but rather perpetually open wounds that mar this republic. In reflecting on these issues, one should rightfully feel compelled to ask: why has this continued and how can the principal causes be directly addressed? Institutional and socially internalized racism have in many respects proven to be the root of much evil in the United States. It is particularly apparent despite the vast research and continued, data-driven

examinations on the stubborn persistence of racist phenomena like segregation, so we must ask ourselves how the global lodestar of liberalism and justice tacitly refuses to recognize or wholeheartedly tackle these issues that besiege their communities of color.

Literature Review

In considering the issue of segregation in its current and persistent iteration in American society, one cannot do without at least some historical context in which to better understand this persistent American phenomenon. We also cannot discuss the most contemporary iterations of segregation without retrospectively acknowledging the historical groundwork laid in 20th century America that has made uprooting this system all the more difficult. Given the legacy of institutional racism being deeply internalized in socio-racial relations, this “imagination conditioned by racial domination, nonwhites always come to, but never are from, America” (Desmond, Emirbayer 202). We may often notice our differences before our similarities, but when combined with scare tactics that took advantage of this induced fear amplified the extent to which whites in America loathed efforts at integration. After the official ending of de jure racial segregation, “whites reacted to the racial integration of their neighborhoods in two ways: by picking up and moving or slugging it out” (Desmond, Emirbayer 211).

The sharp “otherness” associated with those who may not look like ourselves is especially apparent in the “white flight” which occurred in the 1960s, with white homeowners in areas seeing influxes of nonwhite neighbors fleeing due to ignorant propaganda detailing drops in property values, the emergence of crime and generally “immoral” activities (Desmond, Emirbayer 213). One of the more malignant consequences perpetuated societally from intergenerational racial separation is best captured by the contact hypothesis. Without

opportunities for intergroup contact among different racial and socioeconomic groups, we unknowingly undercut our ability in a cosmopolitan society to “include reducing prejudice and stereotype development, increasing empathy, and increasing the willingness to live in racially diverse settings as adults” (Kuscera et al. 536-537). This problem is particularly salient in the ensuing discussion of the effects segregated schools have on emerging generations of Americans who cannot combat intergenerational biases through their own interracial associations, or lack thereof.

Suburban homeowners’ associations frequently weaponized “a combination of restrictive zoning, realtor steering, and discriminatory mortgage lending to exclude Black and Hispanic residents,” practices that are now outlawed but whose legacies still impact marginalized communities of color (Landis 66). Dissimilarity indices (DI) measuring the contrast between levels of segregation among different ethnic groups or geographic areas tend to support the prevailing scholarly narrative that segregation in many cities have not only declined at an extremely slow rate generally but rather has increased in severity for Latinos. To understand dissimilarity indices, the way in which they are measured is on a -1 to 1 scale where the greater the values, the stronger the indicator of segregation present in the areas in question and vice versa. California is much more cosmopolitan in nature than Midwestern or Eastern cities that remain hyper-segregated, but dissimilarity indices nationally have risen as Latino population sizes have expanded since 2000. Despite this, the DI for Latinos living in the Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA metropolitan area has only fallen by .01 between the 2000 Census and 2016 data from the American Community Survey (Landis 69). However, over this same time period using the same data measurements looking at the Black-White Dissimilarity Index, we see a substantial drop in the Los Angeles-Long Beach metro area (which remains one of only three western cities

in the top 25 highest black-white segregation list in 2000) “by an impressive 19 points between 2000 and 2016, from .64 to .45” (Landis 77).

The consequences for individual outcomes associated with living in segregated neighborhoods proves especially true in the inner-city schooling context (Landis 65). Southern California schools are still highly segregated both on ethnic and socioeconomic boundaries which leads to vastly different outcomes for minority students in underserved communities compared to their whiter, more affluent peers in bordering neighborhoods. The contact hypothesis mentioned earlier is hugely influential in diverse settings, where “social networks are shared...studies have shown that these settings are associated with higher academic achievement for minority students (with no corresponding detrimental impact for White students)” (Kuscera et. al 537).

This may have a profound impact on minority students throughout Southern California, where Latinos “make up more than one out of every two Southern California schoolchildren, but are most heavily concentrated in Los Angeles and the inland counties of Riverside and San Bernardino,” which with the exception of Los Angeles comprise the Inland Empire region (Kuscera et al. 546). Black students on the other hand “overall represent 7% of the Southern California student population” but whose numbers are concentrated in San Bernardino and Riverside, which “suggest a substantial black migration to the far reaches of the Inland Empire” (Kuscera et al. 545). These two groups are especially overrepresented in extremely segregated minority schools at much higher rates than their other peer groups like Asians or whites. Such segregated institutions are almost synonymous with greatly decreased educational and professional outcomes; yet “more than two out of five Latino students and nearly one third of all Black students in the region enroll in these intensely segregated learning environments” (Kuscera

et al. 547). This starkly differs from the mere 4% of regional Asian students and less than 2% of regional whites who do the same—despite whites making up 24% of the overall population (Kuscera et al. 547). It is also extremely concerning that, despite the nearly doubled rates of high school dropouts between whites and Blacks, in contrast most of their Latino counterparts do not complete high school at all (Desmond, Emirbayer 317).

Outside of the narrow scope of segregation within educational institutions serving underrepresented minority communities, there is also the dearth of social capital for youth to take advantage of as well. A distinct lack of neighborhood human capital can be hugely influential to youth outcomes later in life stemming largely from adults in their social orbit being able to “shape their access to conventional role models and the mainstream social networks that facilitate social and economic advancement” (Stein et al. 59). This neighborhood or coethnic capital can certainly be disrupted or inhibited in the presence of violence in these areas, where it may be “estimated that neighborhood violent crime rates account for half of the association between neighborhood disadvantage and high school graduation” (Stein et al. 61).

Crime and juvenile delinquency play a prominent role in the often more malicious side which comes along with segregation for minority communities. As neighborhood violence yields many negative consequences for all members of these afflicted communities who deserve a safe and dignified life, we see violence is particularly influential in driving rates of juvenile delinquency. Living in a safe community is especially undercut by what some scholars refer to as “benign neglect,” which “refers to the notion there is less pressure put on police to ‘do something’ about crime occurring in racially segregated communities, because the residents have fewer resources and are less able to marshal those resources to put pressure on the police” (Eitle and Eitle 437). There may also be a distinct difference in the impact residential segregation as

opposed to school segregation may yield in predicting criminality and actual arrests among youths. Part of what may drive the tendency to engage in criminal activity in both instances of segregation may be explained by the relative deprivation theory. It posits that groups within these institutionally unequal and marginalized structures “contributes to a collective feeling among isolated blacks that such inequality is based on their ascriptive status;” thus, the resulting feelings of anger, frustration and anxiety can be seen to produce “relatively high rates of violence” in response (Eitle and Eitle 438).

A more modern and still unfolding aspect of contemporary segregation has emerged in the face of the current COVID pandemic regarding the equitable distribution of vaccines, especially in Southern California. Amidst the upheaval involved in administering the vaccine to designated populations throughout the state, in Los Angeles there have been new revelations regarding which communities have begun receiving vaccinations relative to their vulnerability to the virus. While Sacramento has maintained that vaccinations should be given first to those in the highest and most at-risk age groups, Los Angeles County’s Department of Public Health revealed early this year data “showing a significantly lower rate of vaccinations for healthcare workers who live in South L.A., home to large populations of Black and Latino residents, compared with other regions” (Cosgrove et al.). Even when one factors in the general vaccine distrust prevalent among minority communities, the age-based vaccination priority plan adopted by the state largely overlooks higher concentration of essential workers comprising many of these vulnerable minority communities who are especially at risk of infection from their work. Criticisms of Gov. Gavin Newsom’s age-based plan “has sparked concerns from groups representing some essential workers and disabled people who may now have to wait longer,”

which may reflect frightening realities for many hailing from these segregated, poor or working-class communities in the quality of their healthcare (Cosgrove et al.).

The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital in South L.A. near the city of Compton has been one of the hardest hit and overwhelmed hospitals in the entire state. The severity of the virus's impact in communities like the one M.L.K. Community serves is startling: "eight out of ten of those who died at M.L.K hospital were Hispanic, a group with the highest COVID-19 death rates in Los Angeles County, followed by black residents" (Fink). M.L.K. also does not offer specialized treatment methods that are more commonplace at other hospitals throughout the city, or simply chooses not to publicize any like convalescent plasma therapy because "'if we publicize it,' said Dr. K. Kevin Park, a vice president for medical affairs, 'we wouldn't be able to handle' the volume if many people showed up" (Fink). The expectation that the small hospital may be overwhelmed with COVID patients seeking the limited special treatments options available is also likely exacerbated by the types of healthcare most patients possess. Only a tiny minority of patients who go to M.L.K possess private health insurance "which typically reimburses at higher rates than public insurers," a potent enough consideration for many other hospitals in the city to turn publicly insured patients away for (Fink).

Methodology

The primary region of interest when conducting research is Southern California generally along with the Inland Empire (see pg. 16 for map), a vast area comprising Riverside and San Bernardino Counties immediately East of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Other sources presenting observations related to the variables of interest in this study had interesting implications but, ultimately, these other geographical regions rendered their observations less

useful in the unique Southern California context. Despite Southern California being a largely cosmopolitan region rich with peoples of all cultures, backgrounds and ethnicities, one may naively assume that all these diverse groups live and thrive heterogeneously among one another; however, this is not the case. What spurred the decision to primarily focus the data analysis on the census tract level for the Inland Empire was the data presented by Social Explorer, an online database that geographically depicts the various concentrations of poverty and other associated variables down to the census tract all over the US.

As such, the literary approach through the research involved combing various databases such as JSTOR, Project MUSE, EBSCO, and the Washington and Lee University Library. These databases were by far the most useful because of the wide-ranging nature of sources they offer relating to this topic in particular. There is a plethora of scholarly information available on segregation, but the real challenge in this study was finding sources who specifically spoke to the Southern California region I chose to zero in on. The topics of particular salience pursued on segregation's multifaceted nature included keyword correlations between subjects of interest that are listed in full detail in the concluding Appendix. Throughout the literature, the most important factor which determined a source's usefulness proved to be the date of publication since this study is aiming to analyze segregation in its most relevant and modern aspects as possible. It is for this reason that recent media publications on issues touched on earlier like currently ongoing COVID vaccine distribution inequities were especially helpful in unpacking these critical problems at the forefront of current political and social discourse.

In keeping with the Southern California focus, the media outlets with the most robust information and reporting are undoubtedly the New York Times and The Atlantic but especially the Los Angeles Times due to their comprehensive and detailed reporting on more niche aspects

pertaining to this research. These media sites were useful because some concepts presented in their reporting covering more obscure sides of segregation, like the compounding effects of different financial manifestations of poverty (cost of healthcare and living expenses with fewer job opportunities in segregated areas), inspired me to look for data corroborating their observations (White). Other types of literary sources which contributed to this work include various academic journals and scholarly organizations ranging from the *American Sociological Association*, *The Sociological Quarterly*, and the *American Academy of Political and Social Science* among others.

With respect to the conduct of data analysis, I have now adopted data taken from Social Explorer covering various facets of state and county level socioeconomic and racial characteristics. The information taken reflecting the entire state of California and the primary Inland Empire counties and census tracts of interest (Riverside and San Bernardino) possess different variables handpicked to be telling indicators of segregations' correlative consequences for communities of color. Such variables measuring the characteristics of communities in these areas include but are not limited to race, health insurance trends, school dropout rates, and unemployment rates which have proven extremely telling inference points for interracial disparities.

The data analysis portion was conducted using RStudio software with datasets taken from the Social Explorer database, which contains a plethora of various types of census information and observations pertaining to different aspects of American socioeconomic life. Instead of relying on map interpretations of data-based observations, the raw datasets from the American Community Survey from 2015-2019 was imported into RStudio. The American Community Survey (ACS) is similar to the U.S. Census but instead of being conducted every decade, the

ACS gathers data every five years “down to the Census Block Group geography” on any number of variables. Within this study the variables of interest chosen among many others are as follows: “households by race of householder,” “educational attainment for population 25 years and over,” “school dropout rate for population 16-19 years,” “employment status for total civilian population 16 years and over (also disaggregated by white, black and Hispanic/Latino races),” “average household income by race,” “white vs. non-white homeowners,” “gross rent as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months,” “Gini Index” measurements, “poverty status” by age group (children under 18, adults from 18-64, and elderly at 65+), “health insurance status,” and “poverty status in the past year by educational attainment and employment status.”

A control group was not used to compare these data findings with because there is no other group within the state population that can reliably be considered free from the effects of segregation in some form. The state of California’s rates of ethnic distribution cannot reliably serve as such a control measurement because, given the prevalence of residential racial separation throughout the state, the contrast it would present with these findings would not be notable. Such a control group would be skewed towards higher segregation rates as opposed to providing a contrast that more equitable residential racial distributions should show. The state of California with its notable racial diversity and socioeconomic features throughout its population is set apart from other states, so using some more localized region as a control group there could be the next plausible solution. But still, the prevalence of segregation would remain an issue when attempting to compare Southern California and the Inland Empire with other similarly urbanized, diverse and densely populated regions in the state. The closest to a control group that is used to compare the data below could be considered the white portion of the population

because they face fewer obstacles to attaining certain standards of living that their minority counterparts do not. What needs particular attention is this difference between the two groups because how those inequalities exist may be representative of the kind of life one might expect to live based on your skin color and where you live.

The model by which analysis was conducted primarily involved taking measurements of the above variables, disaggregating them by race and juxtaposing them side by side between whites, Blacks and Latinos in scatterplots. The relationships and correlations between the groups, or lack thereof, was quite visually striking in this format and highlighted disparities present between these groups lived experiences through these variables. The disaggregation of the racial groups is key to understanding these contrasts in equal access to opportunity that has very real ramifications for marginalized groups; the differences in severity relating to racial correlations between certain variables lends credence to some of the implications of segregation touched on in reviewed scholarly literature. After selecting all the variables of interest, download the data files with output percents automatically included along with the “data dictionary” file which serves as the “code key” to identify the variables above when they appear with cumbersome and cryptic names in the actual data file.

Once the relevant data has been downloaded from Social Explorer, the next step is to import the data file into RStudio. When the data file has been successfully imported and the “tidyverse” library package has been activated, then the process of renaming each individual variable to a more readily identifiable name must be completed using the data dictionary file. Following this step begins the real data analysis using a variety of graphical tools to display the data’s contents whether via scatterplots, histograms or other means depending on the particular variable(s).

This methodological approach combining existing prominent literature on segregation with original ACS data analysis from its most recent recording is the most effective means of analyzing segregation's modern manifestations because it combines an array of different sociological approaches to the same problem. The plethora of academic literature available on the subject is extremely informative with expert research on various nuanced perspectives and omitting such important work in this field would be to arbitrarily exclude vast insights and unique points of reference. Dedicating most of the research presented in this analysis of segregation to literary synthesis from many established intellectuals was done because, as the effects of segregation are extremely multifaceted and interdisciplinary, so must the works that accurately reflect its many varied consequences on diverse American communities. Given the fact that the IE is very densely populated by Black and Latino communities compared to neighboring counties, this often-overlooked region should get the critical attention it needs through examining the nature of how segregation uniquely afflicts it. It should also be emphasized that unlike the Los Angeles metro area, there is much less data and academic literature available on the state of the Inland Empire, which renders this limited analysis of segregation conditions there all the more important and novel.

Analysis

Segregation, by whose very nature keeps races separate, continues to perpetuate the problems of "racial otherness" via separation itself and only exacerbates the effects of lacking contact between these different groups. Intergroup contact can be hugely socially enriching and reduce the pronounced effects of prejudice and stereotyping that pervade American society, but without it we may see increased unwillingness to live in multicultural settings while

simultaneously denying the cosmopolitan nature of the society we live in. Whether this occurs in segregated schools or in institutionally induced, racially homogenous neighborhoods, the externalities have compounded with each subsequent generation of Americans. The compounding nature of the different opportunities certain communities should reasonably share commensurate with their white peers, over time and building on one another, have left minorities less educated, affluent, healthy, and safe. The disparate factors pertaining to inequalities minority communities must endure and live with do not comprise “segregation” in of itself. Poorer quality schools or hospitals, fewer economic opportunities conducive to socioeconomic mobility and others mentioned earlier are symptoms of persistent racial inequalities, but more importantly they are all pathways by which segregation is maintained. These did not suddenly appear but were piecemeal efforts over time that kneecapped minorities to the advantage of whites.

More significantly, there are more palpable effects that malign minority communities outside of the social realm, with consequences of segregation extending themselves onto the actual bodies of communities of color. The social effects notwithstanding, there are other more concrete negative effects such communities have sustained in their quality of life, especially in healthcare. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the weaknesses segregation has allowed to fester in the healthcare system. Accompanying institutional racism further highlighted how minorities are frequently not treated equally, let alone prioritized based on decreased access and capabilities, in the face of a global pandemic. Vaccine distribution rates have been hampered by doubt sown in the efficacy of vaccines that are justifiably driven by the legacy of Tuskegee, among other things; but they have paid the cost with their lives. Whether there is a lingering doubt on the effects of vaccines or not, these communities have been dying at higher rates

because of a combination of factors. The higher prevalence of workers classified as essential and lower rates of health insurance (as will be discussed later in the data analysis portion) have produced significantly higher mortality rates in these racially isolated regions in Los Angeles especially. Wealthier areas with demonstrably more minimal needs vis-à-vis vaccines compared to working class communities of color can likely be attributed to access to more robust resources like better quality hospitals, healthcare, and treatment methods not necessarily made available to their predominantly minority counterparts.

Data Analysis of California's Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, 2019):

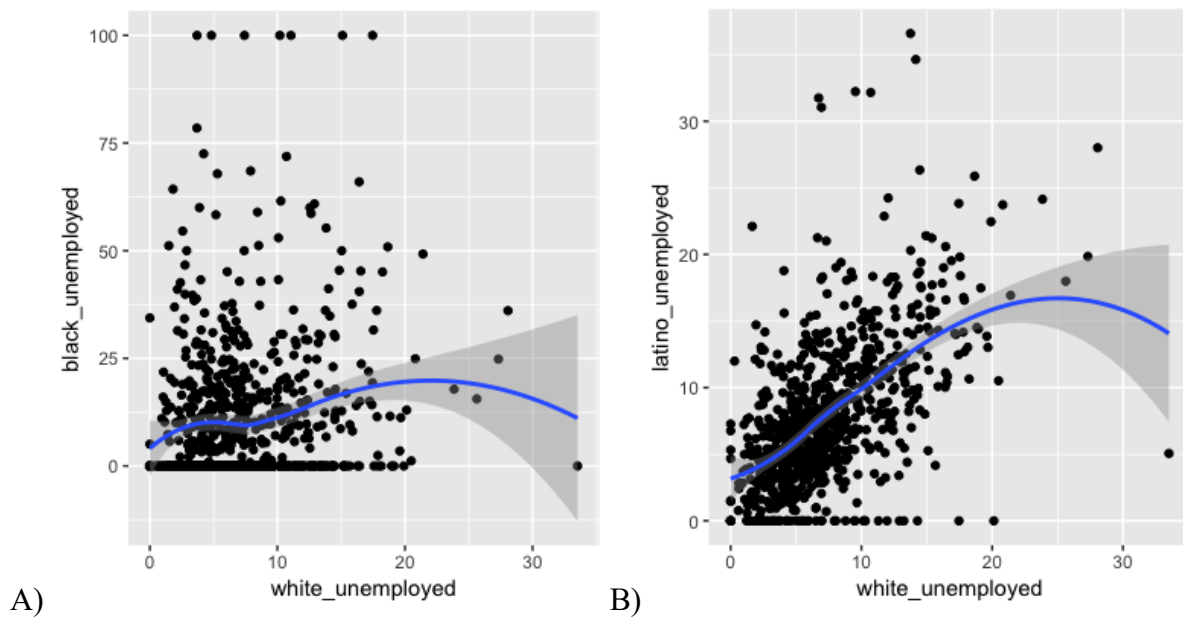


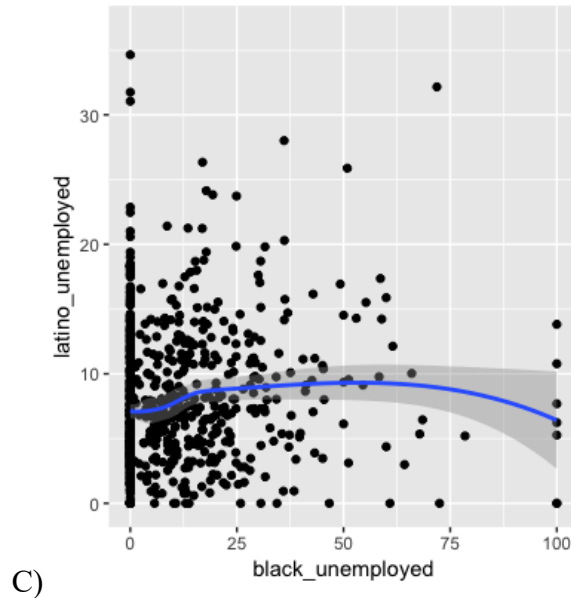
Note: the purpose of the following data analysis is threefold: to statistically compare different indicators of inequality and subsequent geographic racial inequality, to juxtapose these different correlations between the key racial groups in question (whites as the “control group” alongside Blacks and Latinos), and to discuss the more in-depth implications stemming from these inequalities. The unit of analysis for this data is measured at the census-tract level for greater precision closer to the neighborhood level as opposed to entire cities or counties. To understand the variables being measured, refer to the axis and following graph descriptions for clarification.

In addition, it is important to avoid the “ecological fallacy” in regard to the story this data illustrates about communities versus the individuals that comprise them. The data is not merely a “predictor” of what individual persons will do or how they are likely to behave on a very micro level. Instead, the data is meant to illustrate broader trends on what these communities,

specifically those that occupy the census tracts being plotted, are more likely to endure within the parameters of the variables that are measured and compared below. These groups are heterogenous and non-monolithic; keeping this crucial detail in mind, we are better served understanding these data observations as reflections of the general “ecology” within these census tracts in the context of segregation.

Comparing Rates of White, Black and Latino Unemployment

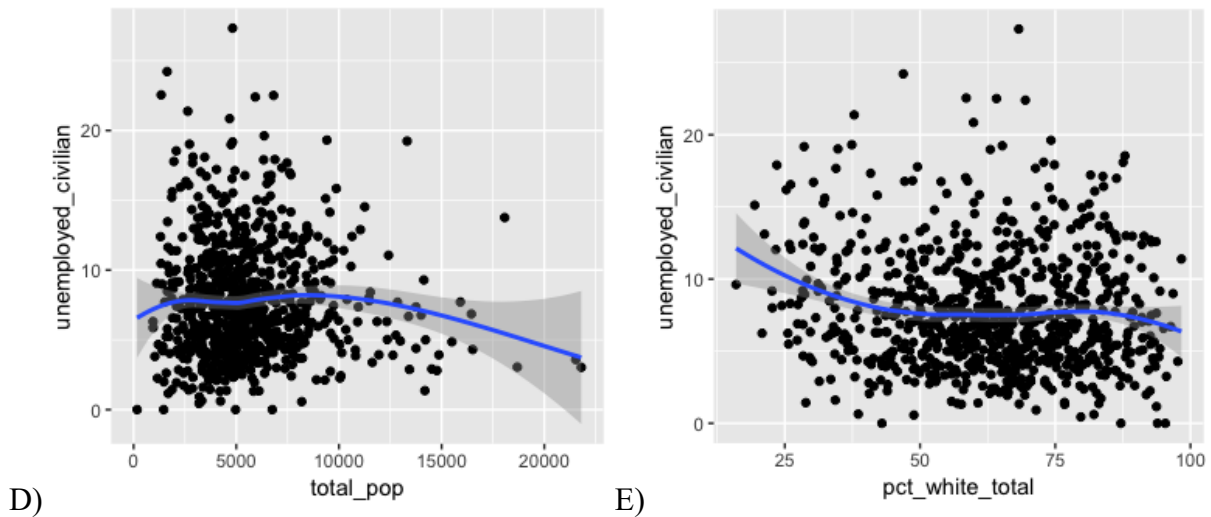


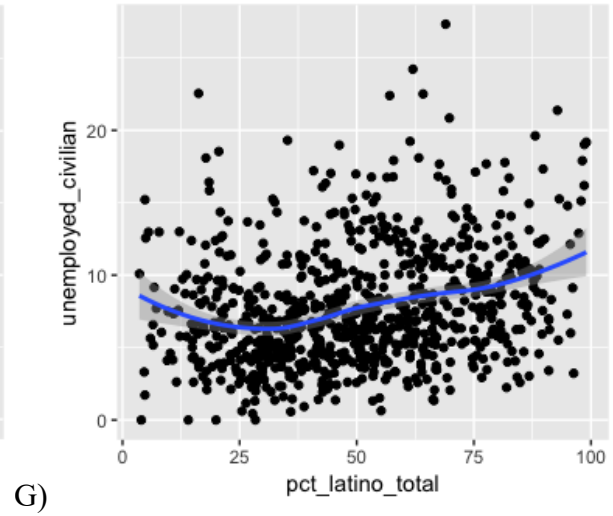
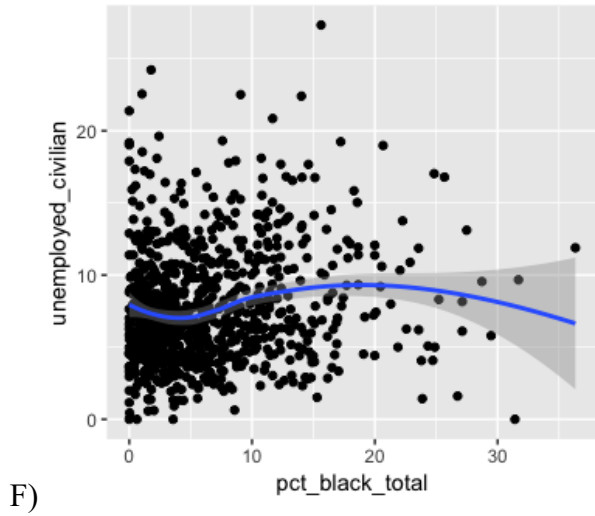


Here we are comparing rates of unemployment between whites, Blacks and Latinos relative to each other in order to better understand any differences in the employment rates these groups face. Graph A above depicts a weakly positive relationship between Black and white unemployment rates within the Inland Empire whereas Graph B presents a strong, positive correlation between white and Latino unemployment. This means that there is less indication of a relationship between higher rates of unemployed whites versus similarly increasing rates of unemployed Black residents, which contrasts between the white-Latino relationship in this unemployment rate measurement. The latter observation is quite notable and can be indicative of a greater degree of employment disadvantage which Latinos experience compared to whites, but to test this hypothesis Graph C compares Black and Latino rates of unemployment. In Graph C, there exists no relationship pertaining to unemployment in the Black and Latino communities. This is significant because it may suggest there are comparable rates of unemployment between the groups, thus signifying a similar effect via regional disadvantage these groups may face.

To further highlight the unemployment rate disparities of the above groups, the graphs below compare their individual unemployment trends compared to those of the total population

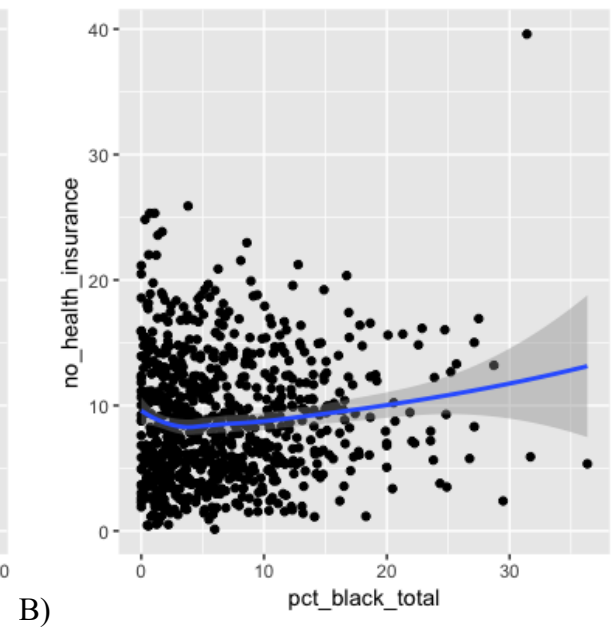
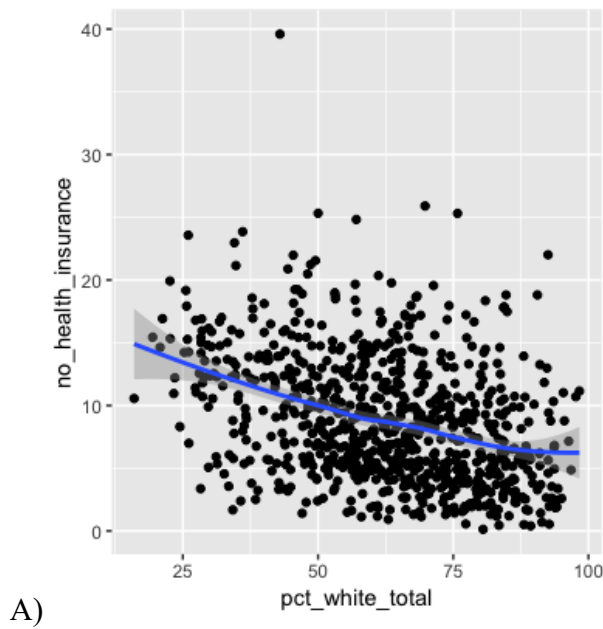
(total_pop) of the IE. D compares the total civilian unemployment rate to that of the general population of the entire IE, showing that it is stable. Notice that D and E (general civilian unemployment vs. total white unemployment) more closely mirror each other than D does with either F or G which compare the general IE unemployment rate with Blacks and Latinos respectively. Black unemployment seems to be higher than the regional average and gets closer to the 10% mark than for whites while Latinos show even higher rates of unemployment. Given the homogeneity among residential areas and their census tracts, this shows that whites are much better off and less likely to be unemployed compared to the regional average rate. However, Blacks and Latinos suffer from higher rates of unemployment relative to the total regional rate, which can present challenges for household income that in turn can compound other complications arising from ensuing poverty or other measurements of disadvantage.

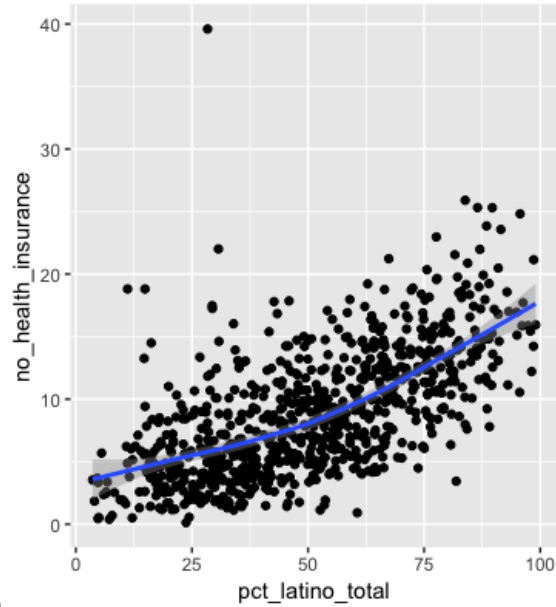




Race and Health Insurance Rates

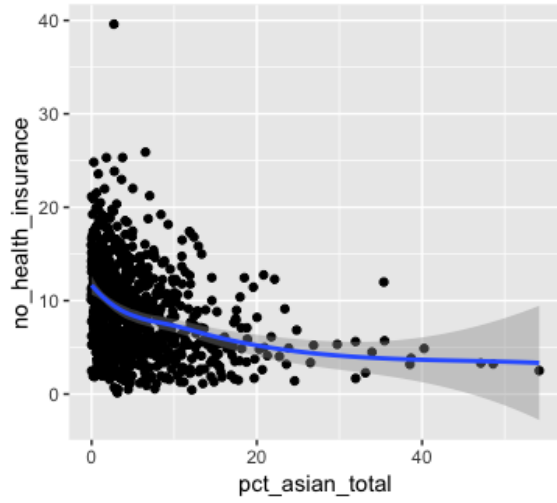
Those without health insurance:





C)

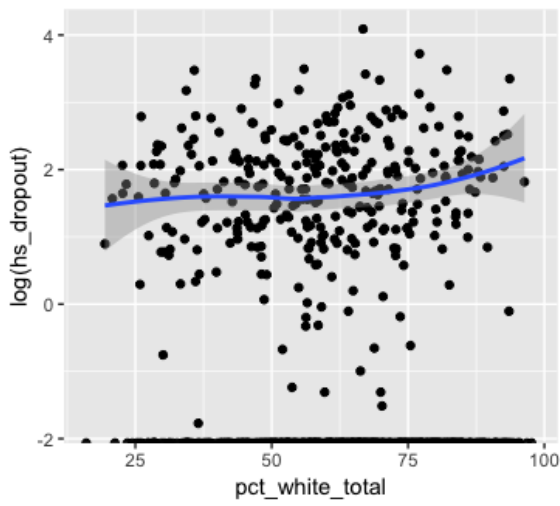
Whites in A indicate that they are statistically less likely to lack health insurance coverage, whether public or private, in a distinctly negative graphical correlation. However, the opposite can be said for Blacks and Latinos living within these regional census tracts. Blacks in B have a less pronounced but slightly positive uninsured rate while their Latino counterparts possess a very strong likelihood to be uninsured overall as indicated in the pronounced upward trend in C. To test these prevailing trends in B and C as existing among minority groups in the IE, the rates of insurance among Asians were also tested in a similar manner but they did not conform to the aforementioned trends. As seen below (D), Asians have a clear trend between their racial group and possessing some form of health insurance as seen by their downward graphical slope that is almost the complete opposite of those seen in B and C. This may indicate there exist additional challenges black and brown communities face in the acquisition of health care coverage that are not shared by other similarly predominant minority groups in the region.



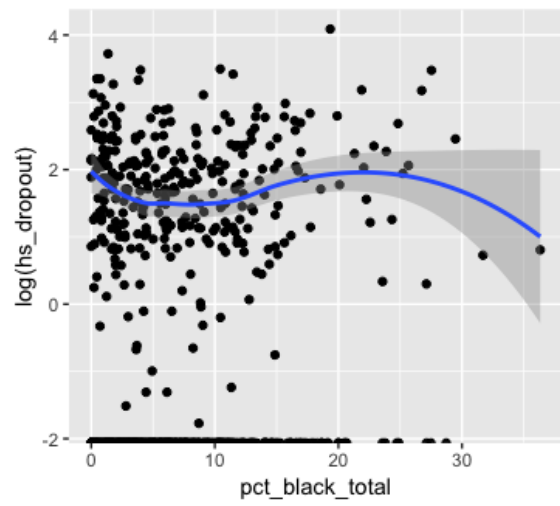
D)

High School Dropout/Graduation Rates by Race

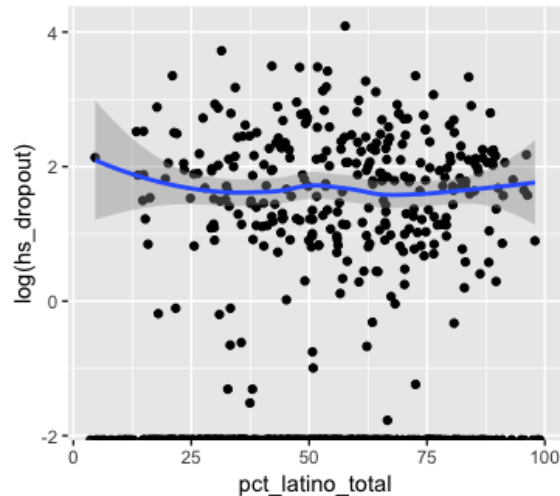
Dropout Rates:



A)



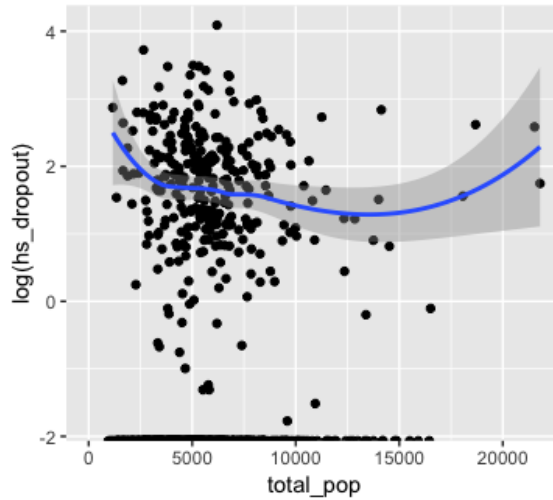
B)



C)

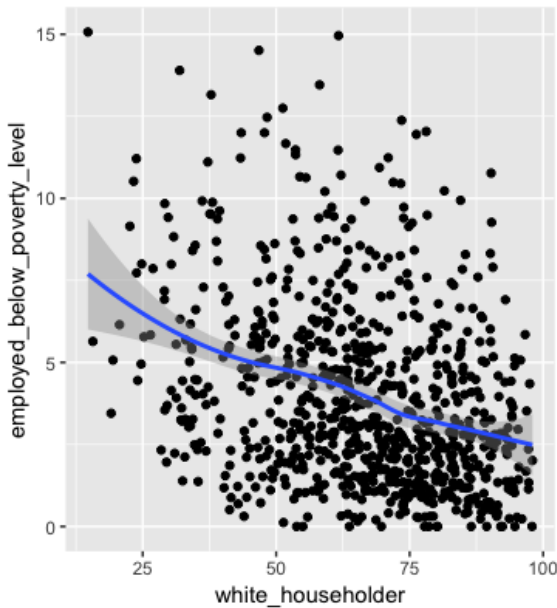
Here we are comparing high school drop-out rates for each of the racial groups of interest. The drop-out rate on the y axis has the log taken from it, which for our purposes means it only changes the way the spread of the data points appears in the graphs. Otherwise, they are too closely clumped together for more meaningful observations of the points plotted; it is for this reason as well that there are many points appearing below 0 on the x axis which should be overlooked for the sake of simplicity here. What we do need to pay special attention to are the rest of the points and the lines of best fit graphed between them that show their general trajectory. Generally, the drop-out rates are quite comparable and not nearly as divergent as the other displays were; whites were unsurprisingly stable and possessed low dropout rates which were similar to those sustained by Latinos. Blacks fluctuated with a slightly higher dropout rate but still maintained a consistent rate somewhat similar to those of the other groups. However, the regional total population average shown below illustrates that Latinos still have a marginally higher dropout rate. The “confidence band” of the total population’s dropout trend is noticeably wider than those for A, B and C for some yet unknown reason. The “confidence band” is the shaded area surrounding the graphed lines revealing the potential accurate range of observations, so the graph’s suggested trend shown should be taken with a grain of salt. Assuming the Latino

dropout rate is really higher than the regional average, we can perhaps attribute this to the higher concentration of Latino's living in the Inland Empire compared to other minority groups. If this is the case, then something can be said about Latinos subsequently facing greater disadvantage in their high school completion rates based on which census tract they occupy which is extremely concerning but requires more in-depth research.

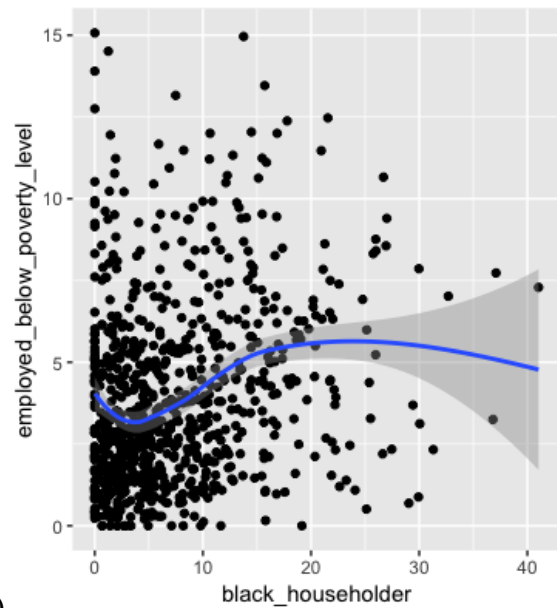


D)

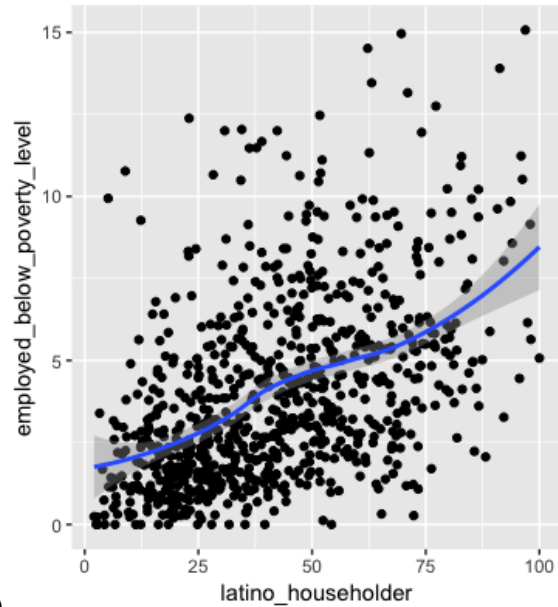
Householders by Race vs. Employment Below Poverty Level



A)



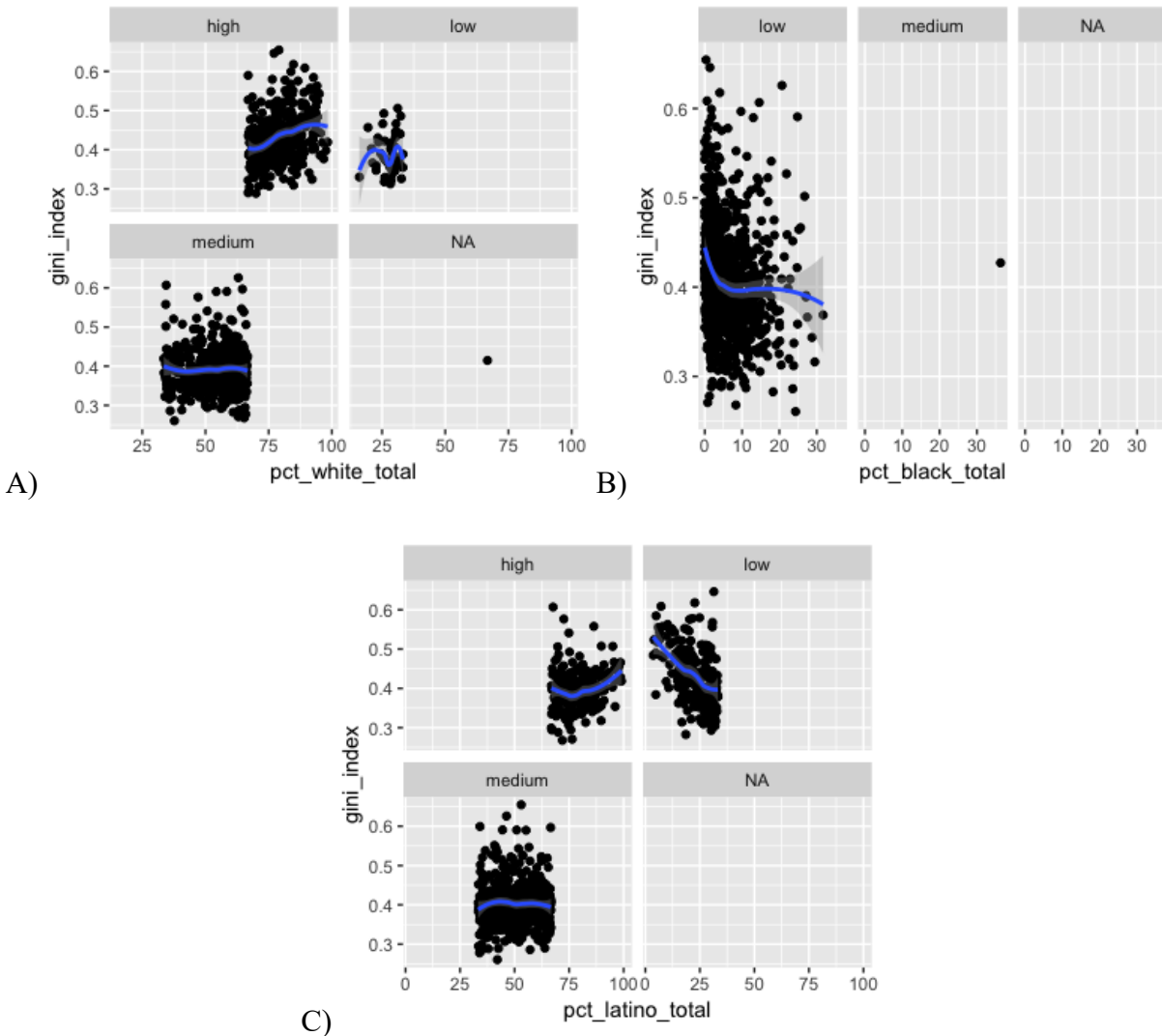
B)



C)

Householders in this context are defined as heads of households in their places of residence. The other variable being compared with the latter describes individual employment one may have but still receiving a wage or income that would otherwise relegate them to below the poverty level threshold. Thus, they are employed but are still classified as “poor” for falling below the poverty level on this income measurement. A depicts a distinct negative trend for white householders’ employment rendering them below the poverty level, thus indicating that if you are white and have a job then you may be less likely to be “poor.” The opposite can be said for black and Latino householders who are more likely to be impoverished despite having employment. Graph B displays an overall weakly positive correlation between these two variables, but Graph C illustrates a much stronger positive association for Latinos.

Gini Index of Income Inequality by Race and Group Density by Region



The Gini Index is a measurement of income distribution throughout a society which serves more specifically as a way of gauging income inequality. It is measured from a scale of 0 to 1, where 0 is perfect equality among all citizens' incomes whereas 1 is maximized inequality where very few individuals receive the majority share of that society's income. For perspective, the United States Gini Index measurement is 0.42, which is relatively high (Investopedia). In comparison, nations with relatively low levels of income inequality like Switzerland and Canada have Gini Indices of 0.32 and 0.34 respectively (Investopedia). Some of the nations with the world's worst

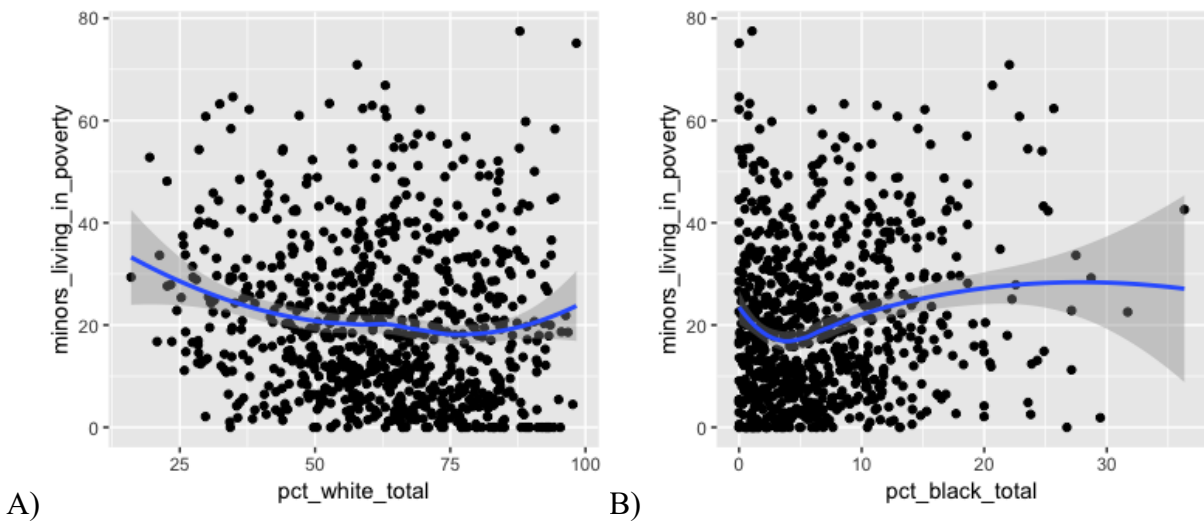
cases of income inequality like South Africa or Brazil on the other hand have Gini measurements of 0.63 and 0.53 in that order (Investopedia). The graphs above depict measurements of Gini Index trends but are disaggregated among the various racial groups (denoted by their axis) based on “high,” “low,” or “medium” geographic densities or concentrations where they may live. The thresholds used here for each of these different concentrations are divided into thirds, where “low” concentrations have a ceiling of 33%, medium up to 66% and so on. Thus these census tracts plotted on the graphs are separated by the proportion of racial groups who inhabit them, with some having 33% or less of a certain group being placed in the “low” subgroup, those between 33% and 66% of a certain group placed in the “medium” subgroup and so forth.

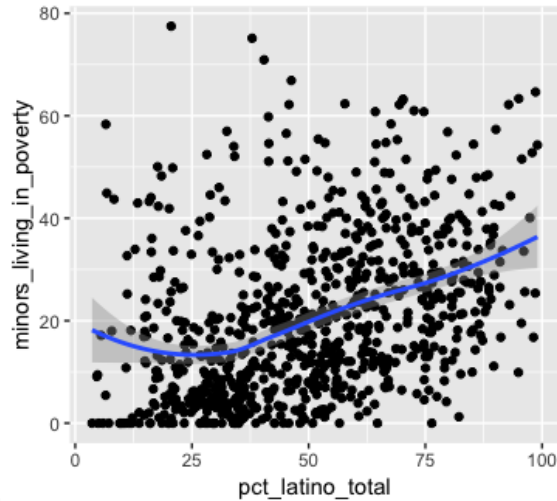
In Graph A where whites are depicted, areas with “high” concentrations of whites tend to have higher levels of income inequality whereas areas with “medium” concentrations have stable levels of inequality relative to national averages. This may be due to these census tracts having high levels of socioeconomic diversity in these areas but may still be ethnically homogenous and reap the benefits of lacking additional barriers to socioeconomic mobility their minority counterparts may face. Graph B illustrates Black areas in graphically divided levels of population densities but there are few to no regions where Blacks make up more than 33% or 66% of the local population in the census tract. As such, the areas where Blacks are represented at “low” densities show they possess high initial rates of income inequality but may present an unclear correlation due to the expanded “confidence band.”

In Graph C, we see more diverse observational results for Latino groups across the different population density groups. It can be hypothesized that areas with “low” Latino population densities suggest that they live among wealthier white residents, perhaps causing either the data to be skewed to minimize the appearance of measured income inequality or these

Latinos tend to be of a wealthier minority within their ethnic group. Notably, the areas with “high” Latino concentrations possess increasingly steeper Gini measurements which shows that those living in increasingly homogenous Latino neighborhoods are more likely to be faced with greater income inequality and the subsequent compounding consequences of poverty mentioned earlier. To better understand what these Gini measurements between the different racial groups entail in the severity of inequality, it is helpful to use the other national Gini Indices above as a point of reference.

Poverty Status Among Children by Race





C)

Depicted above are graphed correlations showing levels of childhood poverty for minors aged below 18 that has been disaggregated by race. Graph A shows this relationship among the white IE populace which illustrates a weak but negative and declining relationship between that group's children and rates of poverty they suffer from. The weakness of the correlation between white children and slightly lower rates of poverty they live in could suggest little relation between the two, which is in of itself a notable takeaway that differs from their other ethnic peers who do not share this characteristic among their youth. Graph B shows a slightly higher rate of poverty that Black youth suffer from, with observations' accuracies tapering off as the "confidence band" widens towards the right of the graph. The average rate for Blacks tends to be higher than the ~20% average that whites in Graph A experience. Also, in Graph C there is a much higher rate of childhood poverty for those in the Latino community that is confirmed by the positive correlation between the two variables in question. The average rate from Graph C would be at least 30% or higher based on the plotted observations and linear trend between the points. As for why these rates are so noticeably higher among Latinos than Blacks or whites remains unclear when ascertaining a singular definitive explanation. But some reasonable conjectures regarding this disparity could stem from the wider distribution of Latinos throughout

this region, outweighing other minorities, which may reinforce the statistical prevalence of these higher poverty rates if similarly seen across many other census tracts.

Data Summary

Of the many other variables included in the dataset procured from Social Explorer's ACS data from 2019, these listed above are the most salient in terms of their observations thus far. Many of these observations are relevant to the analysis of Inland Empire segregation because, given that many of its various census tracts are not particularly integrated, shows by and large a general trend confirming the micro and macro inequalities black and Latino communities are faced with. The negative trends exhibited by whites' relationship with employment below the poverty level, health insurance status, and unemployment are reversed for these aforementioned minority groups. It can be difficult to exactly attribute each and every factor that contributes to the formation of these trends, but the data undoubtedly confirms the greater obstacles Blacks and Latinos face in their census tracts which are not nearly as severe in many cases compared to their white counterparts.

Discussion

The extent to which racism is so deeply baked into American institutions and our social fabric is perfectly encapsulated by Desmond and Emirbayer's mentioned survey observation asking what the perfect neighborhood composition would be when asked of Blacks and whites; Blacks saw an equal racial composition between the two groups as their ideal vision whereas whites overwhelmingly indicated their preference was almost complete white homogeneity (Desmond, Emirbayer 220). At first, this may seem surprising; but with vast groups of minorities who have

forcibly been relegated to second-class status for generations, is it really? The ongoing social conditioning caused by segregation, despite its pernicious origin, has made us perhaps too unknowingly comfortable with living in de facto racially homogenous settings, a consequence of discriminatory institutions that largely made this all possible.

The anxiety some groups like whites feel may be a tacit and unconscious acceptance of their racial domination while minorities feel similarly perturbed for accepting this horrendous status quo. It then is no small wonder why other minority groups may sometimes prefer to live in homogenous communities as well, where they revert to in-groups to avoid feelings of “otherness” or “unbelonging” amidst others in our allegedly cosmopolitan society. The true extent of America’s “original sin” vis-à-vis race relations, or the equitable lack thereof, should not be underestimated even over one hundred and fifty years after the abolition of slavery or a half century following the passage of the Civil Rights Act. There is likely no “band-aid” short term fix for segregation through legislative action because resolving some of the underlying factors contributing to this quasi-racial caste system runs much deeper than what a bill could do. True equality can never be achieved if all groups including the dominant majority cannot even agree or recognize the common humanity we all possess, irrespective of the color of our skin.

As the socially, economically and politically dominant majoritarian group in American society, the power to change this malignant and enduring status quo rests to a large extent with whites. Efforts to right some of these wrongs by anguished minority groups generation after generation have only brought about incremental change that clearly has not uprooted segregation and discrimination. There have undoubtedly been improvements in the dire conditions these minority communities have faced in this regard, yet the grandchildren of those who fought in the Civil Rights Movement continue struggling to overcome similar issues their forefathers

confronted. The only difference in contemporary segregation is we simply call many of these aforementioned issues from the same institutional problems by a different name other than what they really are. Clearly, measures meant to mitigate the extremely slow rates of desegregation across even the most diverse cities like Los Angeles with orthodox policies in place under the political status quo is not working fast enough (Landis 77). Desegregation is not necessarily the problem in of itself that we should concern ourselves with. The more malignant and deeply impactful consequences arising from racism and segregation's existence that affects the lives of minorities socially, physically, politically, economically, educationally and beyond are what truly gives this system of oppression the claws which prevent their advancement or mobility.

Conclusion

In America, there is a common belief recognizing that we have “come a long way” from the dark days of legally enforced segregation and justified “separate but equal” institutions meant to keep races separate apart. We in fact have made some progress towards achieving justice and equality, but the specter of segregation is not some ancient and foregone evil that haunts us from the past; it remains persistent in the present as well. Minorities have consistently been maligned by segregation's institutional perpetuation whose eradication through policy has failed for many years following its de jure abolition. Scholarly literature and analysis of data over successive decades have only affirmed the same conclusion: segregation presents a variety of negative consequences which stunt the potential outcomes minorities could achieve had they lacked obstacles their white peers do not face. There are a variety of pathways of disadvantage, like unequal access to healthcare or schooling to name a few, that all ultimately lead to or are caused

by this unjust system of racial separation that dominates American ethnic distributions across space.

Through national resistance to acknowledge its existence or general apathy, segregation for now appears here to stay for some considerable time. At this point it is as American as the sports played in the Oakland Coliseum or the Atlanta Mercedes Benz Stadium, especially when considering how segregated the neighborhoods surrounding these glitzy arenas are (Trubey). The selective yet purposeful ignorance to segregation's continuation in the political arena remains an implicit indication that non-white lives are simply not equally valued, despite the egregious efforts over time to malign their lives which we should seek to rectify. For the sake of America's inherently cosmopolitan character whose historical diversity we often credit as one of our national strengths, it is time we explicitly address and remedy the longstanding wrong that segregation has presented for our disadvantaged communities.

The late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said “we shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice” (Smithsonian Institution). He may be right, but after such dismal and marginal progress (relative to professed American values) after the end of the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, what do we have to show for it? Segregation along with its many accompanying ills still plagues and torments communities of color across the country generation after generation. If King's observation is as prophetic as we may like to believe, we may not see the actual end of segregation in this lifetime. Our children or grandchildren may still have to contend with its varied and dangerous consequences. If so, America with its righteous conception of itself needs to take a long hard look in the mirror and search our soul for the justice we grant freely to some in the hopes we may deem all people worthy of it as well.

Methodology Appendix: Search Criteria Key Words and Phrases

“Benign neglect”

“Inland Empire segregated schools/neighborhoods”

“Policing segregated neighborhoods”

“Riverside/San Bernardino, California segregation”

“Segregation and crime”

“Segregated communities relative deprivation theory”

“Segregated healthcare”

“Segregated schools dropout rates”

“Understanding the Gini Index”

“Youth and segregation”

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