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Even when affluent, minorities live in poorer neighborhoods

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The average affluent black or Hispanic household lives in a poorer neighborhood than does the average working-class white household, showing that higher incomes do not always translate to upward residential mobility, according to a new analysis of census data.

Researchers with US 2010, a project on recent American demographic changes, found that with only one exception – affluent Asians – minorities at every income level live in poorer neighborhoods than their white counterparts. The analysis, released today, looks at how minorities fare in major metropolitan areas, including many in California.

Neighborhood poverty is associated with disparities in health, environmental quality, safety and public schools.

"More is at work here than simple market processes that place people according to their means," US 2010 Project Director John Logan said in the report. "There is a substantial component of segregation that cannot be accounted for by income."

Take, for example, affluent households – those whose annual income is above \$75,000. From 2005 to 2009, the average affluent white resident lived in a neighborhood where 8.9 percent of

households were poor (making less than \$40,000 a year). But for affluent blacks and Hispanics, neighborhood poverty was 13 percent or higher.

These figures reflect the racial and ethnic isolation in which minorities live, researchers said. Across the United States, black, Hispanic and Asian households live in neighborhoods with higher proportions of their own race and ethnicity than are in their greater metropolitan regions. The average black household, for example, lived in a neighborhood where 40.7 percent of residents were black, even though blacks made up 19 percent of the metropolitan region.

"Residential segregation is not benign," Logan said in the report. "It does not mean only that blacks and Hispanics, Asians and whites live in different neighborhoods with little contact between them. It means that whatever their personal circumstances, black and Hispanic families on average live at a disadvantage and raise their children in communities with fewer resources."

The report looks at the metropolitan regions with the largest black, Hispanic and Asian populations; many are in California.

In the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale and Oakland-Fremont-Hayward metropolitan divisions, for example, affluent blacks' exposure to poverty is 1.44 times greater than that of average whites. Nationwide, only in Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario and in Las Vegas-Paradise, Nev., are affluent blacks exposed to less poverty than average whites.