

*Race
Contours
2000*

Study

*A University of
Southern California
and*

University of

Michigan

Collaborative

Project

Multiracial Patterns in California by County

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- California (4.7%) has almost twice the percentage of its population who are multiracial as the United States (2.4%).
- In California, there is a “multiracial belt” with a concentration of the highest percent multiracial in the center of the state.
- The percent of blacks who are multiracial is lower when the size of the black population is larger. The same pattern holds true for Asians.

INTRODUCTION

The 2000 Census was the first to enable respondents to self identify with more than one race. As one of the most diverse states in the country, California has some very interesting and telling multiracial patterns. It has one of the highest percents of multiracials in the United States with 4.7%, surpassed only by Hawaii (21.4%) and Alaska (5.4%).

Solano County (just west of Sacramento County, home to the state capital) has the highest percent multiracials at 6.4%, while Mono County (in the Sierra Nevada/Foothills area) has the lowest at 2.2%². Los Angeles County, the largest county with approximately a third of the state’s population, has 4.9% multiracial, which is just slightly above that of the state.

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² Detailed population and multiracial data for each county can be found in Table 1.

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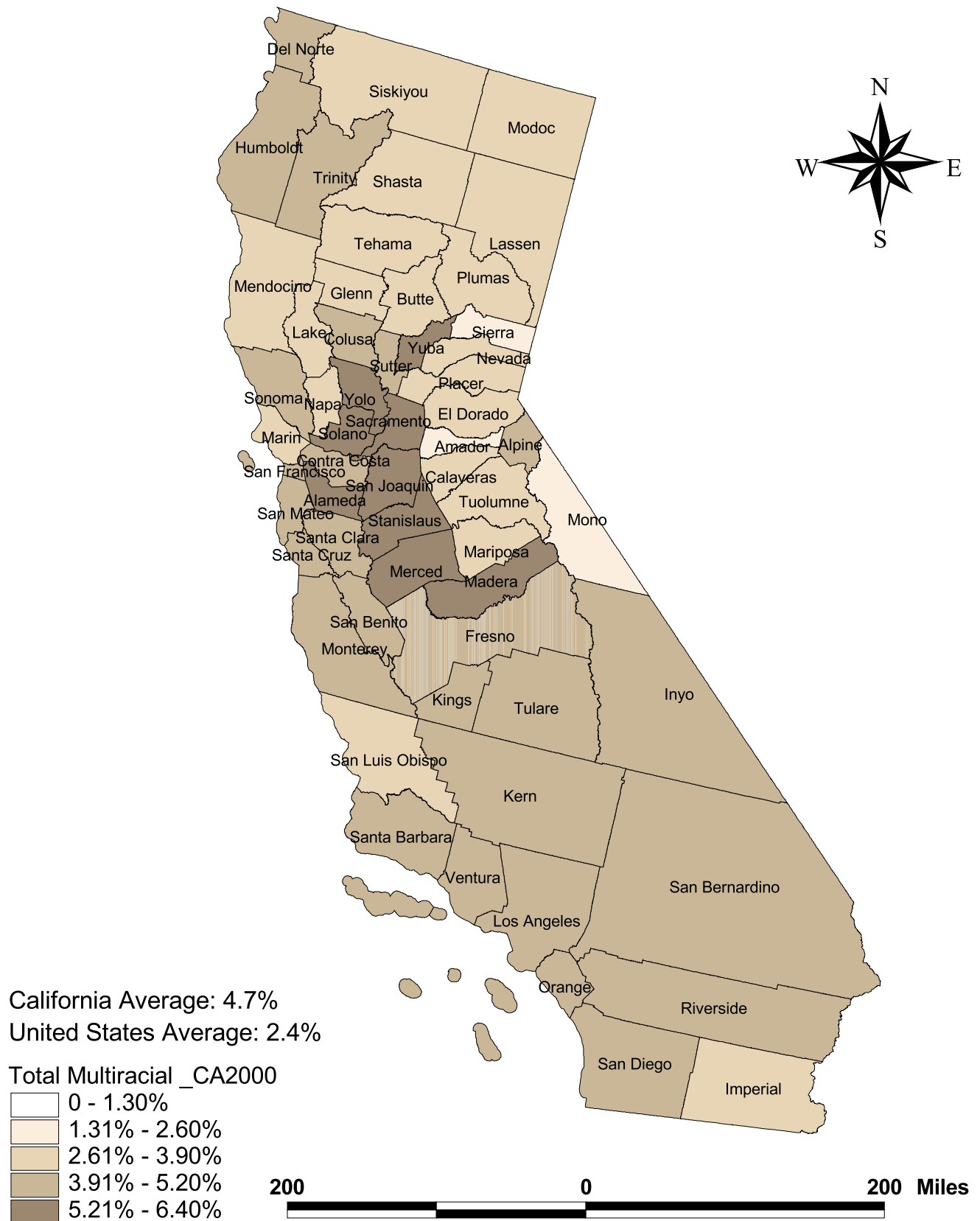
THE MULTIRACIAL BELT

As seen in the “Multiracial Belt” map of California, a unique multiracial pattern emerges when the state is examined at the county level. We see that there is a concentration of counties with higher percent multiracials in the Central Valley and the Greater Sacramento regions, including the following counties: Yuba, Yolo, Sacramento, Solano, San Joaquin, Alameda, Stanislaus, Merced, and Madera). The percent multiracials in this region range from 5.2% to 6.4% with Solano County coming in with the highest percent multiracial.

It might seem surprising that the concentration of multiracial residents is in the Central Valley and the Greater Sacramento regions rather than in the coastal metropolitan regions (i.e. the Bay Area or Los Angeles). This seems to go against the popular assumption that the higher concentrations of multiracials would be in the more diverse metropolitan regions. The higher concentration of multiracials in these counties is even more striking because they are directly surrounded to the north and to the east by counties with relatively low percentages that are multiracial. Prior to the release of the 2000 census data, our research suggested the following forces that would shape the percentage multiracial in the population. First, places with more diverse populations could be expected to have a higher percentage of residents who are multiracial themselves. In addition, places with smaller populations in each racial group could be expected to have a social environment that encourages inter-group relations. A final factor is the prevalence of newly arrived immigrants who might be expected to socialize only within their own group even though they increase the measured diversity in the locale. The Multiracial Belt appears to meet the hypothesized criteria.

The Multiracial Belt

Percent Multiracial of County Population, California 2000



Source: Dowell Myers, Race Contours 2000, a collaborative USC-U.Michigan project
<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

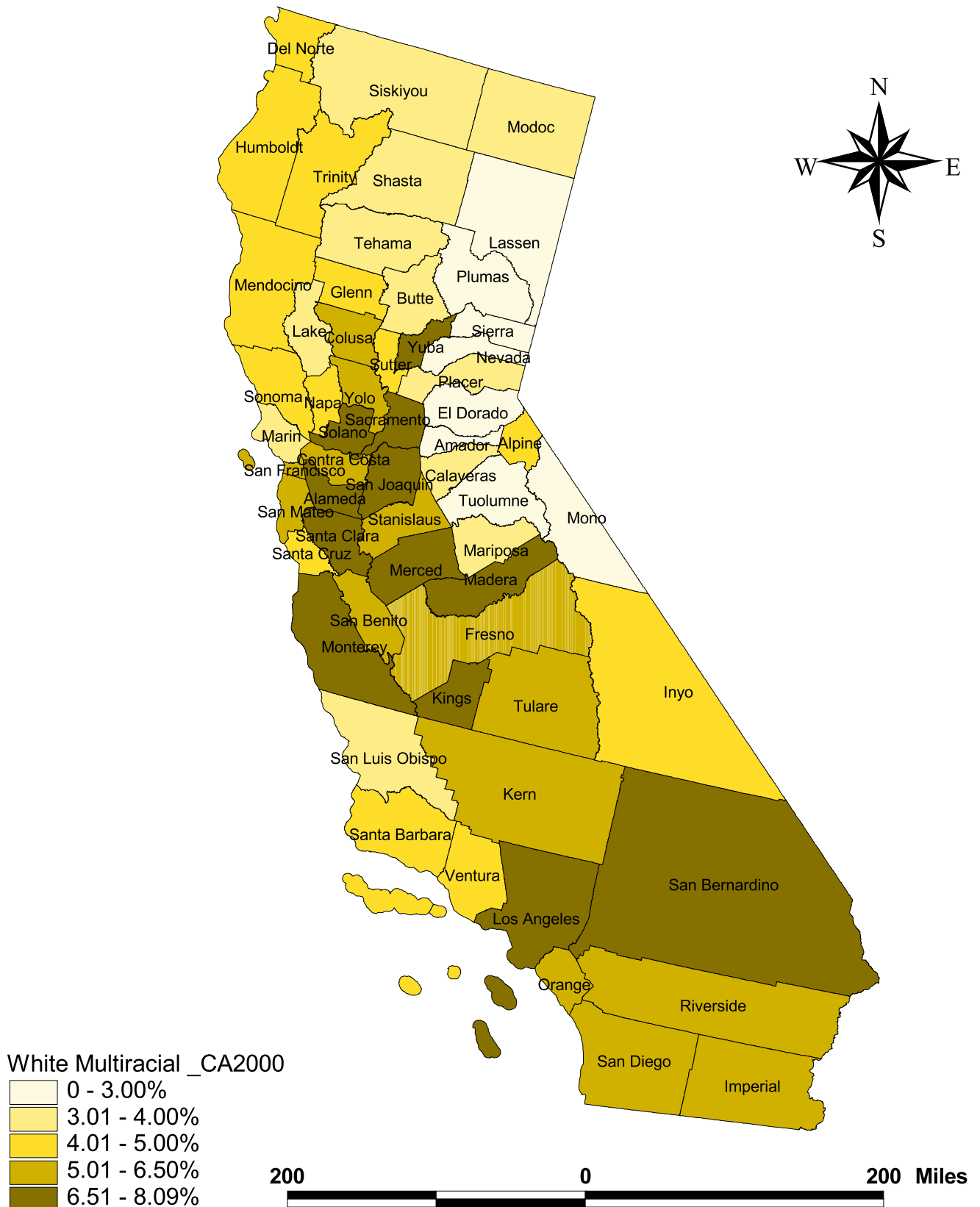
WHITES³ WHO ARE MULTIRACIAL

Some of the patterns seen in the multiracial belt map can also be seen in the “Percent Whites who are Multiracial” map. Many of the Greater Sacramento and Central Valley counties have higher percent whites who are multiracial as does one county in the Bay Area. In fact, the two counties with the higher percent whites who are multiracial are in these regions (Alameda with 8.1% and Solano with 8.0%). However, there are some counties outside of these regions with higher percent white multiracials as seen in Monterey (6.8%), Kings (7.2%), San Bernardino (6.6%), and Los Angeles (7.7%).

There is also a very distinct concentration of counties with some of the lowest percent whites who are multiracials in the northeastern counties of the Northern California and Sierra Nevada/Foothills region. Mono County (2.3%) and Sierra County (2.5%) have the lowest percent white multiracials.

³ We define the racial groups by their “maximum” definition, i.e., including all persons who selected a given race alone or in combination with other races.

Percent Whites who are Multiracial By County Population, California 2000



Source: Dowell Myers, Race Contours 2000, a collaborative USC-U.Michigan project
<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

BLACKS WHO ARE MULTIRACIAL

As the “Percent Blacks who are Multiracial” map shows, the same kind of multiracial belt pattern does not hold for the black population⁴. For the black population, many of the counties in the Northern California and Sierra Nevada/Foothills regions have the highest percent black multiracials. Nevada County (43.6%) and Mendocino County (39.1%) have the highest percent blacks multiracials⁵. The concentration of counties with higher percent blacks who are multiracial in these regions is again counterintuitive in that multiraciality is generally assumed to be more prevalent in metropolitan areas.

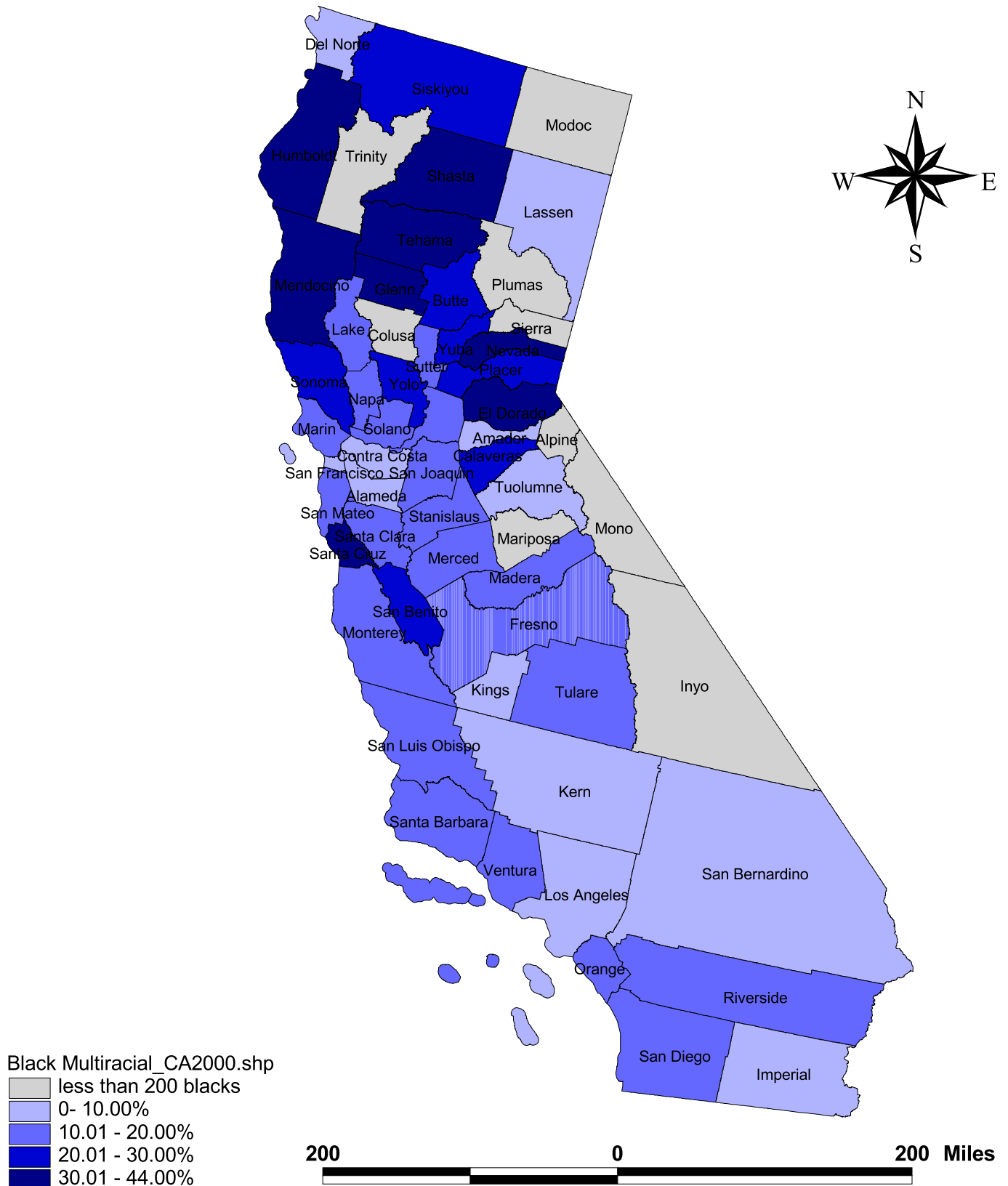
One way to explain this concentration pattern of black multiracials is a long held theory in the sociology literature that the size of a race group is negatively correlated with inter-racial marriages (hence multiracial children). In other words, it is believed that the larger the size of a race population, the smaller the percent of multiracials. In order to test this hypothesis, we created a scatter plot of percent black multiracials by size of the black population (see first scatter plot graph) with a dot representing each county. Generally, the inverse relationship between size of the racial group and the percent multiracials seem to hold true.

For example, in Los Angeles County, with close to a million blacks, 6.9% of blacks are multiracial. Whereas in the smaller El Dorado County, with 1,818 black population, 32.6% of black residents are multiracial. As mentioned above, Nevada County and Mendocino County have the highest percent black multiracials. They also happen to be in the smaller counties (that meet the 200 or more blacks threshold).

⁴ “Black” population is composed of all persons who selected the black or African American racial category alone or in combination with other categories.

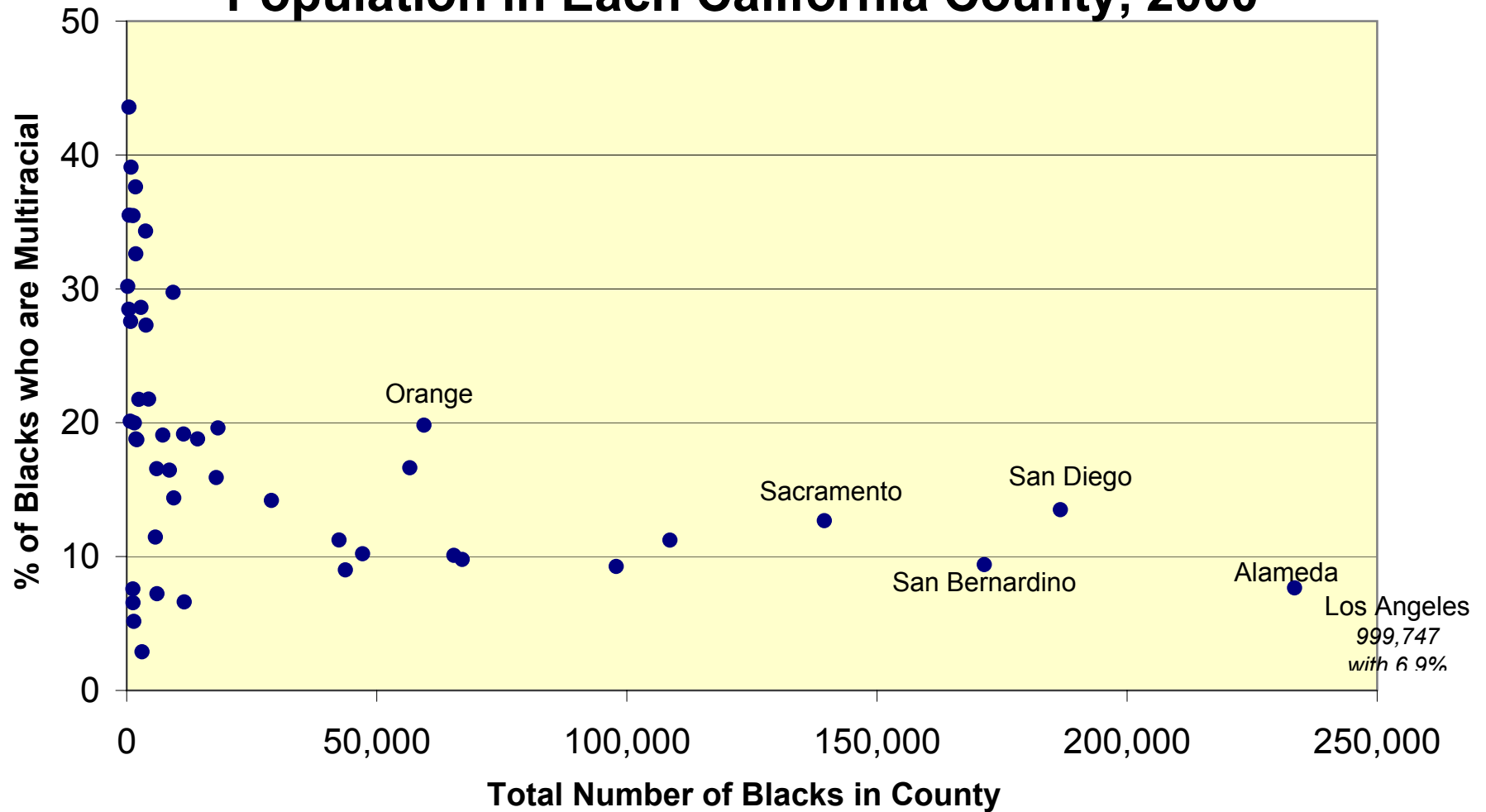
⁵ A county is shaded gray if it contains less than 200 blacks.

Percent Blacks who are Multiracial By County Population, California 2000



Source: Dowell Myers, Race Contours 2000, a collaborative USC-U.Michigan project
<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

Percent Multiracial Blacks by Size of Black Population in Each California County, 2000



Source: Julie Park, Race Countours 2000
<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

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ASIAN WHO ARE MULTIRACIAL

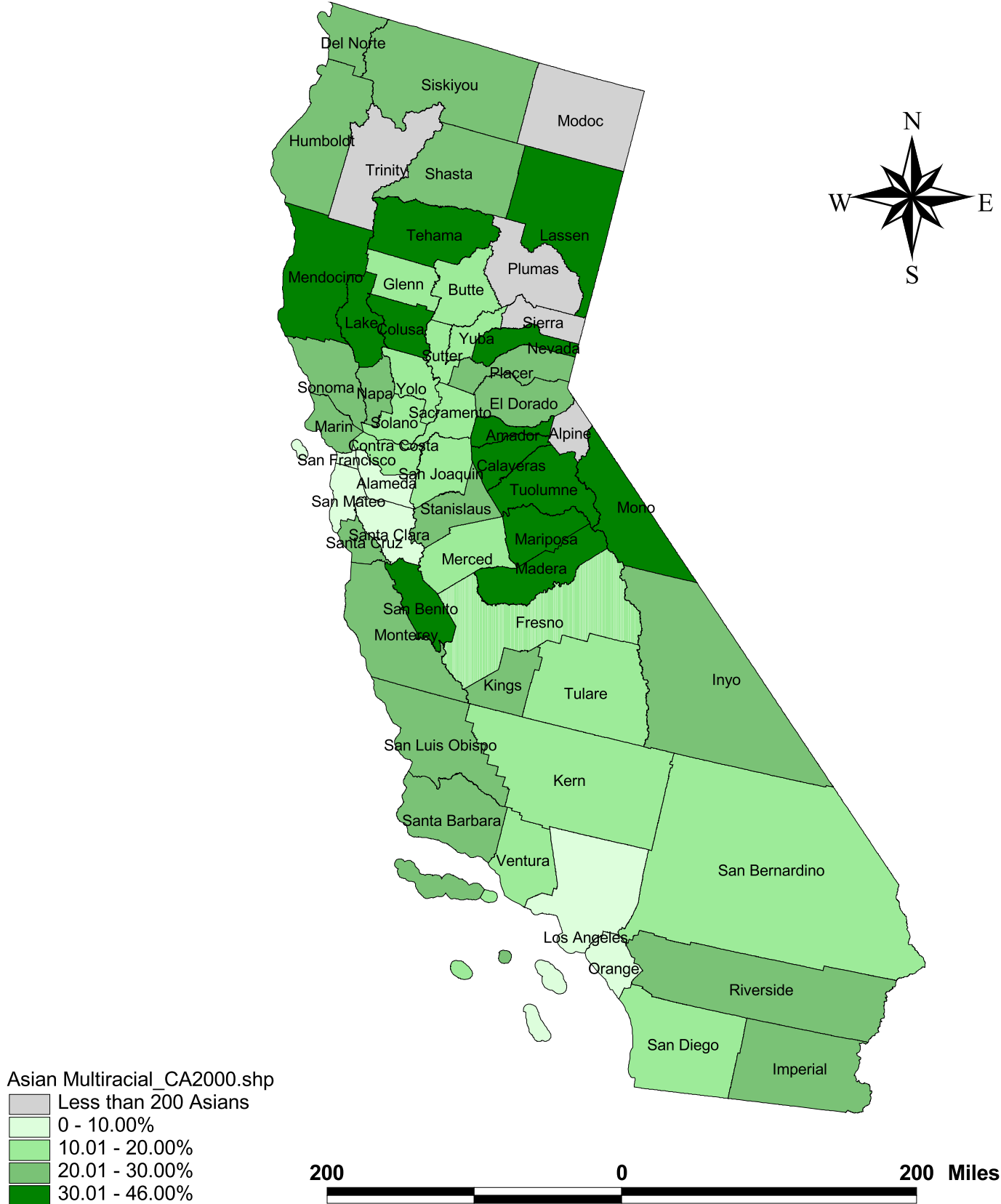
For Asians, it is a more difficult to distinguish a multiracial pattern⁶. The highest percent Asian who are multiracials in the counties of the Sierra Nevada/Foothills and Northern California regions. Nevada County (39.9%) and Tuolumne County (39.4%) have the highest Asian multiracials⁷. Besides the high concentration of Asian multiracials in these regions, it is also interesting to note which counties have the lowest percent Asian multiracials. In the counties of the Bay Area (San Francisco, Alameda, and Santa Clara) and Southern California (Los Angeles and Orange) region, we find some of the states lowest percent Asian multiracials, with San Francisco County having the lowest at 5.4%.

It is of particular interest that these Bay Area and Southern California region counties have such low percent Asians multiracials because these are the same counties with the largest Asian populations. Los Angeles County have the largest Asian population—over 1.2 million—with the closest second largest population in Santa Clara County with 462,261 Asians. The same kind of relationship between the size of the race population and the percent multiracials can be seen for Asians (see second scatter plot graph).

⁶ Define like for blacks.

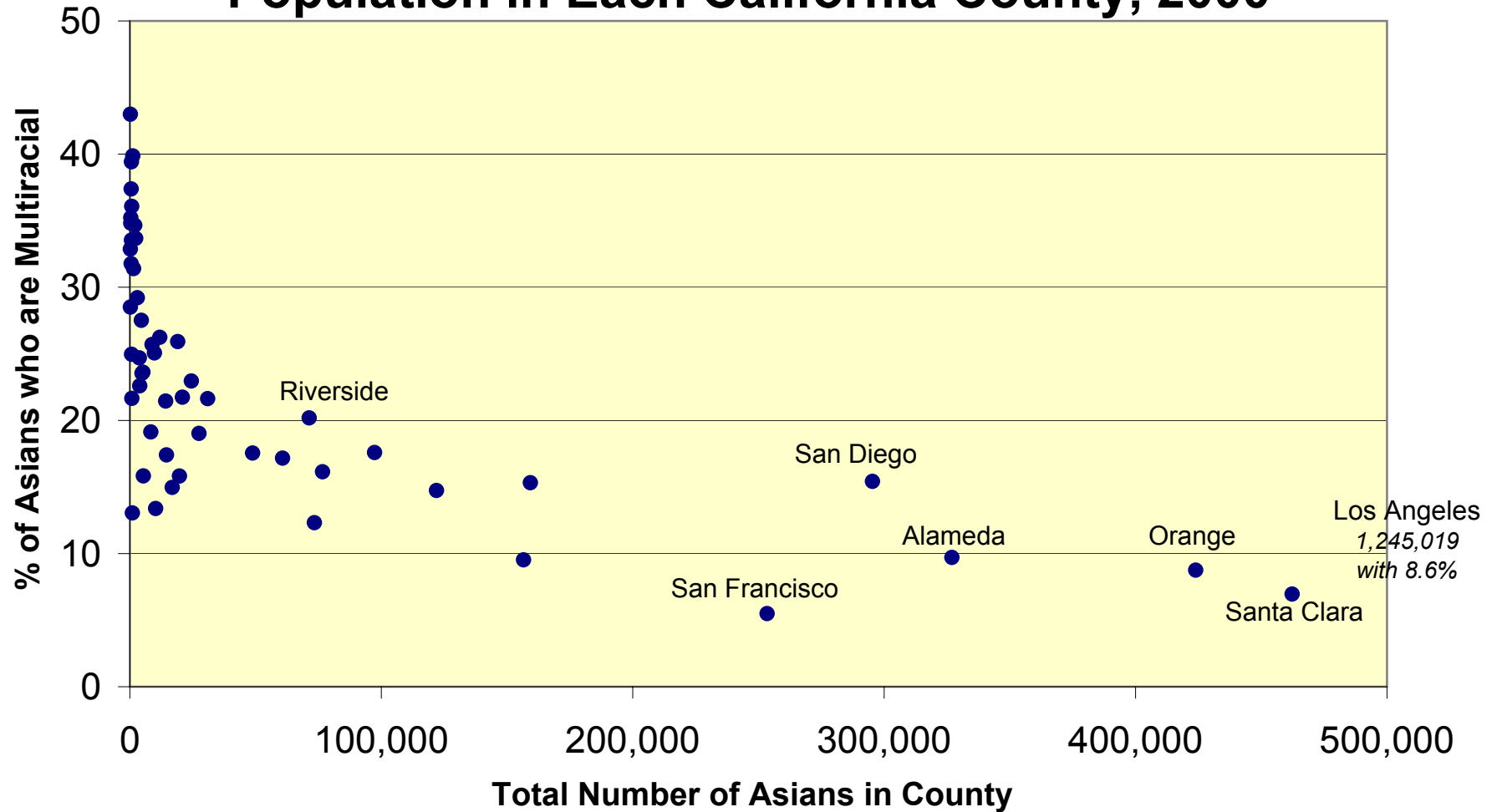
⁷ A county is shaded gray if it contains less than 200 Asians.

Percent Asians who are Multiracial By County Population, California 2000



Source: Dowell Myers, Race Contours 2000, a collaborative USC-U.Michigan project
<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

Percent Multiracial Asians by Size of Asian Population in Each California County, 2000



Source: Julie Park, Race Countours 2000
<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

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CONCLUSION

Through a more detailed geographical view of multirace in California, we can glean a much richer and more comprehensive understanding of multiracial concentrations and their relationship to the size of the underlying race populations. We see that, although California may have one of the highest percent multiracials, the multiracials are concentrated in very specific regions. This kind of geographic pattern would have been very difficult to tease out of the data without the use of data at more detailed geography levels (beyond the state level) and the use of maps.

Beyond the mapping of the percent multiracials, it is also of interest to see the relationship between the size of a particular race population and the percent multiracials. We see that there is a definite inverse relationship for blacks and Asians, in that the larger the race population, the lower the percent multiracials.

Table 1: Race and Multirace Data for California County Populations, 2000

County FIPS code	County	Total Population	% Total Multiracial	Whites Total Pop.	% Whites Multiracial	Blacks Total Pop.	% Blacks Multiracial	Asians Total Pop.	% Asians Multiracial
	CALIFORNIA	33,871,648	4.75	21,490,973	6.15	2,263,882	9.91	3,697,513	11.03
1	Alameda	1,443,741	5.63	766,316	8.09	233,484	7.66	326,949	9.71
3	Alpine	1,208	5.05	931	4.40	14	50.00	18	77.78
5	Amador	35,100	2.41	30,889	2.51	1,433	5.16	513	31.77
7	Butte	203,171	3.90	178,739	3.92	3,873	27.29	8,349	19.13
9	Calaveras	40,554	3.31	38,223	3.25	425	28.47	551	37.39
11	Colusa	18,804	4.54	12,812	5.64	131	21.37	352	35.23
13	Contra Costa	948,816	5.13	661,457	6.04	97,879	9.26	121,969	14.74
15	Del Norte	27,507	4.08	22,725	4.54	1,267	6.55	813	21.65
17	El Dorado	156,299	2.96	144,481	2.96	1,260	35.48	4,591	27.51
19	Fresno	799,407	4.73	463,687	6.39	47,153	10.21	73,403	12.32
21	Glenn	26,453	3.86	19,912	4.64	222	30.18	1,027	13.05
23	Humboldt	126,518	4.39	112,350	4.60	1,781	37.62	2,954	29.21
25	Imperial	142,361	3.65	74,568	5.74	6,062	7.23	3,766	24.69
27	Inyo	17,945	4.15	15,037	4.46	66	56.06	228	28.51
29	Kern	661,645	4.14	430,745	5.38	43,735	9.00	27,500	19.03
31	Kings	129,461	4.79	74,887	7.20	11,508	6.61	5,211	23.62
33	Lake	58,309	3.50	52,135	3.54	1,541	19.99	754	36.07
35	Lassen	33,828	2.69	28,169	2.96	3,081	2.89	382	34.82
37	Los Angeles	9,519,338	4.94	5,022,646	7.68	999,747	6.88	1,245,019	8.64
39	Madera	123,109	5.25	82,108	6.69	5,728	11.45	2,361	33.67
41	Marin	247,289	3.47	215,479	3.56	8,549	16.46	14,263	21.45

Source: Julie Park, Race Contours 2000

<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

Table 1 (continued): Race and Multirace Data for California County Populations, 2000

County FIPS code	County	Total Population	% Total Multiracial	Whites Total Pop.	% Whites Multiracial	Blacks Total Pop.	% Blacks Multiracial	Asians Total Pop.	% Asians Multiracial
43	Mariposa	17,130	3.38	15,776	3.44	143	20.28	214	42.99
45	Mendocino	86,265	3.90	72,715	4.19	880	39.09	1,513	31.39
47	Merced	210,554	5.65	128,172	7.66	9,418	14.38	16,841	14.96
49	Modoc	9,449	2.78	8,374	3.03	90	27.78	93	37.63
51	Mono	12,853	2.25	11,074	2.31	94	35.11	213	32.86
53	Monterey	401,762	4.98	241,131	6.82	17,895	15.90	30,939	21.64
55	Napa	124,279	3.71	103,561	4.02	2,024	18.73	4,831	23.54
57	Nevada	92,033	2.64	88,228	2.58	459	43.57	1,189	39.87
59	Orange	2,846,289	4.12	1,945,080	5.16	59,426	19.82	423,911	8.76
61	Placer	248,399	3.21	227,397	3.23	2,845	28.61	9,765	25.07
63	Plumas	20,824	2.61	19,630	2.63	171	23.98	190	42.11
65	Riverside	1,545,387	4.37	1,070,541	5.33	108,620	11.23	71,355	20.18
67	Sacramento	1,223,499	5.84	837,945	6.53	139,495	12.68	159,302	15.32
69	San Benito	53,234	5.14	37,059	6.38	791	27.56	1,954	34.65
71	San Bernardino	1,709,434	5.03	1,077,973	6.59	171,461	9.40	97,340	17.59
73	San Diego	2,813,833	4.69	1,979,176	5.42	186,679	13.50	295,346	15.42
75	San Francisco	776,733	4.28	411,427	6.25	67,076	9.78	253,477	5.49
77	San Joaquin	563,598	6.05	353,443	7.31	42,459	11.23	76,656	16.14
79	San Luis Obispo	246,681	3.44	216,293	3.51	5,995	16.56	8,839	25.69
81	San Mateo	707,161	5.02	448,881	6.28	28,947	14.19	156,605	9.53

Source: Julie Park, Race Contours 2000

<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>

Table 1 (continued): Race and Multirace Data for California County Populations, 2000

County FIPS code	County	Total Population	% Total Multiracial	Whites Total Pop.	% Whites Multiracial	Blacks Total Pop.	% Blacks Multiracial	Asians Total Pop.	% Asians Multiracial
83	Santa Barbara	399,347	4.31	305,228	4.85	11,374	19.16	20,886	21.75
85	Santa Clara	1,682,585	4.66	969,182	6.55	56,596	16.63	462,261	6.96
87	Santa Cruz	255,602	4.37	201,777	4.88	3,771	34.31	11,916	26.24
89	Shasta	163,256	3.47	151,083	3.48	1,818	32.62	3,938	22.60
91	Sierra	3,555	2.45	3,433	2.48	12	41.67	22	72.73
93	Siskiyou	44,301	3.65	40,074	3.75	726	20.11	701	24.96
95	Solano	394,542	6.39	241,714	8.00	65,428	10.09	60,724	17.17
97	Sonoma	458,614	4.09	390,660	4.21	9,282	29.73	19,030	25.92
99	Stanislaus	446,997	5.44	330,141	6.13	14,187	18.79	24,464	22.96
101	Sutter	78,930	4.60	56,027	4.88	1,858	18.78	10,256	13.38
103	Tehama	56,039	3.39	49,324	3.66	493	35.50	662	33.53
105	Trinity	13,022	4.38	12,120	4.51	67	13.43	114	46.49
107	Tulare	368,021	4.60	228,348	6.39	7,231	19.07	14,551	17.41
109	Tuolumne	54,501	2.84	50,228	2.94	1,240	7.58	652	39.42
111	Ventura	753,197	3.93	552,424	4.65	18,240	19.61	48,856	17.55
113	Yolo	168,660	5.23	121,479	6.05	4,378	21.77	19,737	15.82
115	Yuba	60,219	5.94	45,559	6.63	2,433	21.74	5,369	15.83

Source: Julie Park, Race Contours 2000

<http://www.usc.edu/sppd/census2000>