

# The New Suburbia

How Diversity Remade Suburban Life in Los Angeles after 1945

"The New Suburbia' is a revelation. Becky Nicolaides's detailed historical research shows how the suburbs have morphed and changed over the past century."

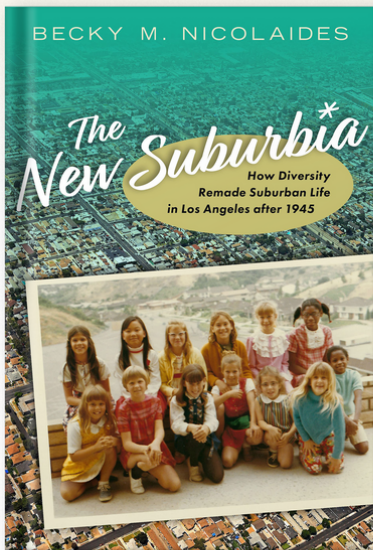
—Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*

"Becky Nicolaides offers a sprawling, detailed, and nuanced history that complicates our notion of what the suburb was, what it is now, and what it will be in the future."

—Manuel Pastor, co-author of *South Central Dreams*

"Nicolaides accomplishes a remarkably discerning assessment of how to see and understand the diversity of US suburbs today through vividly drawn stories of politics and social life in four very different LA suburbs."

—Wendy Cheng, author of *The Changes Next Door to the D'iazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California*



America's suburbs have been transforming. The conventional story of suburbs as bastions of white, middle-class homeowners no longer describes the suburbs of America's cities. Today they house a more typical cross-section of the nation—rich, poor, Black American, Latino, Asian, immigrant, the unhoused, the lavishly housed, and everyone in between. Stories of everyday suburban life, in the process, have taken on new inflections.

Nowhere are these changes more vivid than in Los Angeles. In this suburban metropolis and global powerhouse, lily white suburbs have virtually disappeared, and over two-thirds of the County's suburbs have become majority minority. Examining this vanguard of change from the postwar to the present, *The New Suburbia* follows the Asian Americans, Black Americans, and Latinos who moved into white neighborhoods that once barred them. They bought homes, enrolled their children in schools, and began navigating suburban life. They faced a choice: would they remake the suburbs, or would the suburbs remake them? In places like Pasadena, San Marino, South Gate, and Lakewood, suburbanites faced the challenges of living together in difference. Historian Becky Nicolaides explores a range of community experiences, from internal resegregation to suburban poverty, an embrace of

law-and-order culture to police brutality, friendly neighbors to social withdrawal. In some communities, diverse residents continued longstanding habits of exclusion and perpetuated metropolitan inequality. In others, they embraced more inclusive, multicultural suburban ideals. Through it all, the common denominators of suburbia remained—low-slung landscapes of single-family homes and families seeking the good life.

An authoritative work based on a half-century of quantitative data and unpublished oral histories and interviews, *The New Suburbia* explores vital landscapes where the American dream has endured, even as the dreamers have changed.



**Becky Nicolaides** is a historian and consultant specializes in the history of suburbs, metro areas, and Los Angeles. She is the author of three books on suburban history, and her writing has appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and other outlets. She served on the LA Mayor's Office Civic Memory Working Group and is a lifelong Angeleno.

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