WHO MOVES INTO WHAT KINDS OF NEIGHBORHOODS: SPATIAL SORTING AND INTEGRATION

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Studies of assimilation continue to be at the heart of demographic and sociological investigation of new immigrant residential patterns, a far from surprising observation as the immigration flows to the United States continue in size and complexity. An important part of the assimilation discussion is about the spatial outcomes of immigrant mobility, especially in large multiethnic cities. The study in this paper extends previous work on residential patterns of generations of new immigrants by exploring residential selection across space and over generations in the multiethnic context of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. This paper asks the question who moves into what kinds of neighborhoods and how much residential sorting is occurring in the context of a rapidly changing and ethnically diverse metropolitan area.

The paper goes beyond the usual analysis of whether immigrants move into more white or Anglo areas and examines residential selection across a typology of neighborhood types in Los Angeles. Data from the Los Angeles family and neighborhood survey (LAFANS) is used to examine the nature of segregation sorting and integration across both micro scale and meso-scale neighborhood geographies. It appears that unlike some research in the Canadian context both Asian and Hispanic groups demonstrate moderately strong relationships between their socioeconomic statuses and their neighborhood contexts. That said the assimilation process for the undocumented population is strikingly different from that of both longer resident Hispanic and legally admitted residents. Overall, the results suggests that spatial assimilation is still occurring in the Los Angeles metropolitan context though it varies by whether we examine this process at local or community level contexts. Geography and scale matter in how we interpret spatial assimilation and specific attention to scale is a critical element of understanding the process of assimilation.

As Fong and Hou (2009) note the integration of immigrants is one of the most discussed topics in the social science literature, and it continues to be important in our attempts to understand the way in which North American society will evolve in the coming decades. Will a new

blended society emerge or will there be greater separation across the residential landscape? As a result of the continuing flows of migration these are important questions not just in the academic sense, but for how the body politic will function and change as the United States becomes a majority Hispanic nation and Canada continues to evolve into a multiethnic society.

Specifically in this paper I analyze (a) the flows of racial and ethnic groups from their origins to neighborhood combinations of majority and minority groups across residential space, varying from majority one race to combinations of race and ethnicity and (b) the role of socio-economic status in the choices that we see in the residential landscape – just how much does economic status matter in the choices that we observe?

Previous work

The literature is still contested across a number of different issues, with respect to assimilation and acculturation. Do classical theories of immigrant adaptation still apply and does socioeconomic status matter in immigrant access and for the outcomes for the well-being of immigrants generally and children in particular? In fact what has emerged as a central issue is not the implications for the immigrants themselves but the implications for the outcomes for their children. As the children born in the United States of immigrants or immigrants themselves grow up to be the majority of the working age population where will they live and what will be their opportunities are a critical part of the continuing development of North American society

The debates about assimilation have ranged from whether it is even relevant (Is assimilation dead?) to discussions of segmented assimilation and different paths to acculturation. There is a thread of research which argues that the classic assimilation of the pre-1965 immigrants is very different from the opportunities for those who came in the second half of the 20th century. Gans (1992), Alba and Nee (1997) and many others suggest that because contemporary immigrants come from a much wider variety of backgrounds they begin at different places in the American class system. Some suggest that the earlier waves of migration between 1900 and 1920 were aided by the manufacturing-based economic expansion which set up a very different labor market context than the current service/ postindustrial economy where the work context is less favorable to the incorporation of new work workers. But yet others argue that the earlier European immigrant groups did not fully assimilate till several generations after they arrived. Thus, looking at todays' second-generation will not necessarily be a good guide to what's going to happen in the future. Waldinger and Feliciano (2004) argue that the Mexican immigrants seem

to be transitioning to the American working class in a similar manner to earlier immigrant groups.

There is also a question about whether or not the racial distinctiveness of new immigrants will be a long-term disadvantage and how mixed race households will affect the spatial patterns of assimilation (Ellis, et al.2011). Yet there is also the view that racial boundaries may be as fluid in the future as they were eventually to Irish, Italians and Jews. Thus, while some stress segmented and limited assimilation (Portes and Zhou) others question whether we need new theories for the current flows of immigration (Greenman and Yu, 2008). The debates throw into sharp relief questions about the way in which the spatial patterns of immigrants are changing and whether or not immigrants and their children are not only moving into better occupations with higher incomes but how this is being translated into changing spatial patterns. Socioeconomic advance often goes hand-in-hand with spatial change and from our perspective in this paper with a changing complexity of places and communities and that is at the heart of the present analysis.

Given the increase in ethnic neighborhoods and the growing complexity of the spatial structure of cities like Los Angeles, New York, Houston and Atlanta it is useful to re-examine the spatial mobility of immigrants to give us a better handle on what the future is likely to be with respect to spatial assimilation.

Two studies form the context for the current analysis one introduces the comparative nature of assimilation across generations, the other examines the spatial mobility of immigrants. The first of these studies examined the migration and spatial assimilation of Latinos who move between neighborhoods defined as census tracts. The question posed in that study relates to the mobility and determinants of Latino residential change between neighborhoods with various proportions of Anglos. The study found that overall residential mobility out of the census tract of origin was mostly determined by the conventional socio-demographic determinants of mobility that is age, marital status and tenure. Younger households are more likely to move married households less likely to move and homeowners and the number of children was negatively associated with moving out of the neighborhood.

With respect to neighborhood choice, the study affirmed some of the central tenants of classical assimilation theory. In general residential mobility out of origin neighborhoods and into the neighborhoods that have higher percentages of Anglos is greater among the later generations than first generations and is also related to increased human and financial capital and English-language use. Consistent with spatial assimilation Mexicans appeared " to follow most closely the path described by the

canonical account of assimilation" (South et al 2005). At the same time they show that Puerto Ricans are observed to move to tracts that are less Anglo than Mexicans a result which suggests segmented assimilation. That is not all groups move at the same rate and into similar neighborhoods.

As South et al. (2005) note, until their paper there was little research which directly examined the mobility behavior between neighborhoods and most of the studies looked at the aggregate spatial outcomes. The study called for a need to integrate conventional socio-demographic and lifecycle determinants of and for urban residential mobility more fully into models of it, especially assimilation. They also recommend considering other groups besides Hispanics and that we will need to deal with the growing complexity and temporal dynamics of US neighborhoods.

A second paper is also important for this research, a study of residential patterns across generations of new immigrant groups (Fong Hou, 2009). While this paper does not look at mobility per se it raises the important point that over time (and thus over generations) there are important changes in immigrant settlement patterns. By examining the neighborhood contexts of different generations of immigrants and the nature of residential attainment over generations Fong and Hou (2009) capture two important dimensions that underlie the question of whether or not residential attainment increases over generations and whether over generations they reside in neighborhoods with lower proportions of members of their own ethnic group. Underlying this argument and implied by the spatial assimilation perspective is the notion that there is a greater ability over generations to translate socioeconomic resources into spatial outcomes. Greater fluency in English, greater familiarity with the culture of the mainstream society and the ability to utilize social networks have all been identified as important parts of the increase in residential integration over generations.

Fong and Hou (2009) are able to show significant differences between the first generation and the 1.5 generation and second generation. The analysis shows that the three new immigrant groups South Asians Chinese and blacks steadily increased their residential contact with whites with one exception that of the third-generation South Asians. Socioeconomic resources are greater for the 1.5 and second generations but not for the third-generation overall. Overall, families with higher incomes or whose kids have higher education are most likely to reside in neighborhoods with higher proportions of whites and lower proportions of other visible minorities. The most important finding of the work is a reiteration, consistent with the literature, that resources are significant for full integration. However, their finding is in contrast with an earlier study

which suggested that Asian and blacks neighborhood attainments were not strongly related to socio economic status. Resolving the role and power of socio-economic status is a critical aspect of this investigation.

The guiding view in this analysis is that economic access was always central for new immigrants whether it was in the growing factories and mills of 19th century American or opportunities on farms they provided a way of gaining a foothold in their new society. There is no question that increased economic participation is a central element of creating full incorporation whether it is blended or otherwise. If one argues that in a pluralistic society the goal of incorporation is not to remove ethnic distinctions, but rather to find ways in which economic opportunities can be shared by all groups. Any policy which encourages its members to invest in shared human capital, a policy which is genuinely inclusive, that is welcoming ethnic diversity without encouraging separation would have the effect of encouraging the investment in shared human capital. The aim then, is not to erode all ethnic distinctions, but rather to increase the common culture and economic opportunities shared by all groups (Chiswick, 2006:24). These changes then should generate more complex residential patterns and complex flows between them.

The evidence on residential sorting and separation

Clearly, residential patterns matter. In a sense residential separation may be one of the strongest challenges to creating an incorporated society, multicultural or otherwise. To the extent that the immigrant groups create separatist lifestyles, enclave economies, and economic activities outside of the mainstream, and choose, or are relegated to, residentially separate locations, they may become the replacement underclass for African Americans. Hence the nature and extent of residential sorting, the process of spatial change, is important at all levels.

Two data sources are used in the analysis, survey data from the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (LAFANS) and tract and data from SF3 Census 2000. LAFANS is a household survey of families in 65 randomly sampled census tracts in Los Angeles County. Two waves of interviews with approximately 6000 residents in 3000 households have been completed. In addition to the publicly accessible data there are several special data sets that incorporate detail on the neighborhoods in which the respondent live and the neighborhoods from which they came if they moved. Data collection for wave 1 was initiated in April 2000 and completed in mid-January 2002. Wave 2 was initiated in 2006 and completed in 2008. Detail on LAFANS is available at www.rand.org/labor/lafans.

The sampling strata in the LAFANS design correspond to tracts that are very poor (those in the top 10 percent of the poverty distribution), poor (tracts in the 60-89th percentiles), and non-poor (tracts in the bottom 60 percent of the distribution). There was over-sampling of poor and very poor tracts (Sastry, et al., 2003). The data used in this analysis is drawn primarily from two modules: the household questionnaire and the adult questionnaire. The household questionnaire collected information on income of family members, and the adult questionnaire collects detailed information on the family background, educational history social ties, residential history, employment welfare and health status, as well as neighborhood information. It is possible using the codes for citizenship status to identify documented and undocumented immigrants. The data are geo-coded and were matched to tracts and census block groups from the 2000 Census.

As issues of resources are a critical element of our study we will examine not just generational differences between native born and immigrant Hispanics and Asians we will also consider the differences between documented and undocumented populations as we expect that the residential outcomes will be quite different depending on citizenship status. From the analysis of family income by status we can hypothesize that there will be greater spatial assimilation across legal status, as well as across generational status (Figure 1).
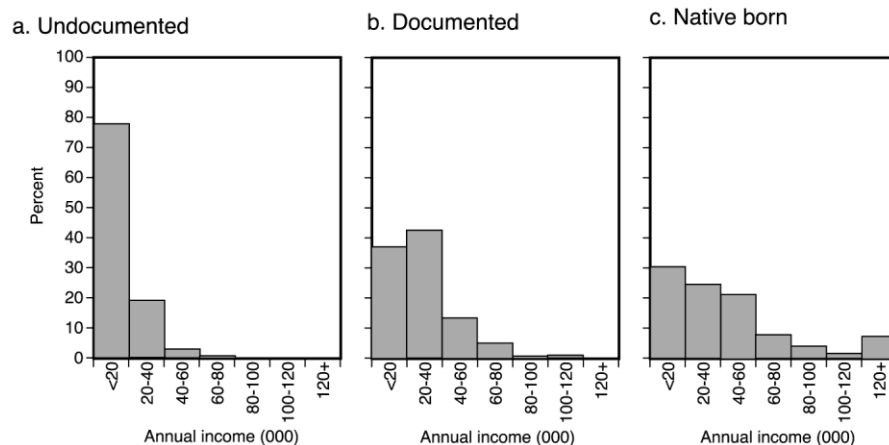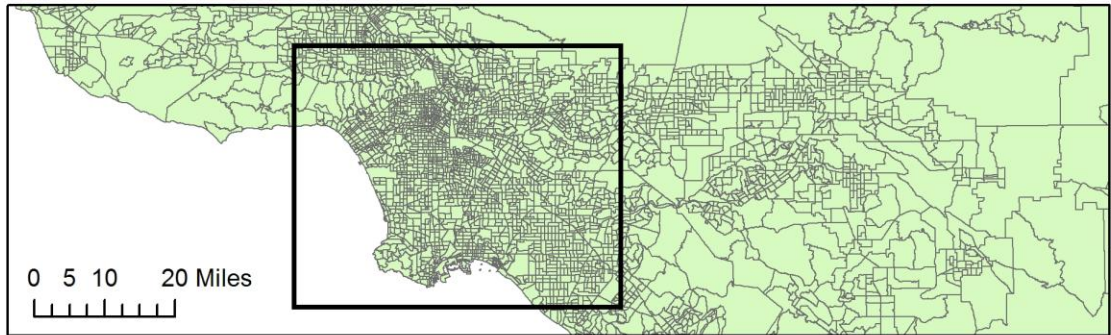

Figure 1: Family income by immigrants status. Source Los Angeles and Family Neighborhood Survey

The underlying geography for the analysis of residential moves is drawn from a factor analysis of census blocks in Los Angeles County and the construction of 20 different types of ethnic/racial combinations (Figure 2). The neighborhood types have been sorted into four groups: (a) three clusters with a strongly homogenous composition. In these clusters the dominating racial group constitutes around 70 % of the population or more (b) a second group with six clusters with one dominating racial group (White or Hispanic) and one more relatively large minority group (Hispanic or White), but low shares for Blacks and Asians (c) a third group with five clusters that have a significant presence of at least three races but with one group dominating (d) a fourth group which contains six clusters that can be designated as strongly mixed. In this group the largest racial group tends to have a population share below 50 %.
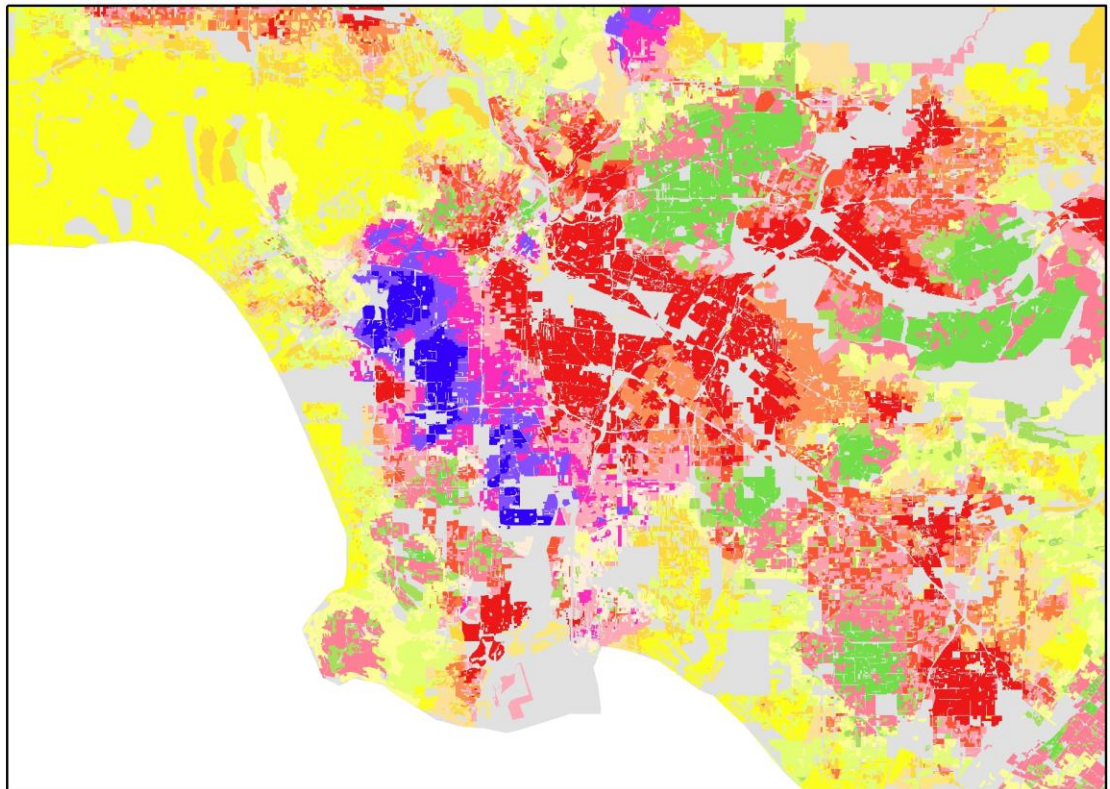
We also identify the way in which the clusters change across scales, from very small k (number of neighbors) values (local neighborhoods) to large k values representing communities. We use the term enclave is when a group is a majority for small k values but another groups becomes a majority for large k. A mixed enclave occurs when there are many groups in the local area but one group becomes dominant for large k. At local scales when one group is dominant but mixing increases at large k values we call that small scale homogeneous. We identify the clusters with a set of codes to capture the differences across the 20 clusters. Dominant groups (two-thirds of the cluster) are identified with UPPER case descriptions, lower case for other groups in the cluster, a slash between other groups indicates they are enclaves within the structure.

The actual moves between these clusters is a more revealing measure of the choices than simply measuring whether immigrants move into more "Anglo" neighborhoods.

MAPPED AREA IN LOS ANGELES

POPULATION CLUSTERS

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION CLUSTERS 2010

C15-HIS	C17-whi-his	C11-WHI-his	C5-HIS-whi/asi	C16-asi-whi/his
C7-BLA	C6-whi-his	C4-ASI-whi/hisp	C10-bla/his-mix	C2-his-whi/bla
C19-WHI	C14-whi-his	C9-WHI-hisp/asi	C18-his-bla/whi	C13-asi/whi/his
C20-WHI-his	C8-whi-his	C3-whi-his/asi	C1-his-asi/whi	C12-whi/his/asi/bla
				Other areas

Figure 2: Population clusters in Los Angeles (Source: Clark, Anderson, Malmberg, Osth, 2014)

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OBSERVATIONS ON INCORPORATION

The debate about incorporation is more than an academic debate about assimilation and incorporation it is a debate about the organization of society itself. It is clear from the map of neighborhood residential patterns that they are very different from even two decades ago in Los Angeles (and other multiethnic cities). While there are still clusters of majority white, African-American, Hispanic and Asian groups. The areas with only one race or ethnicity are declining and being replaced by combinations that very from place to place within the metropolitan area. The questions which are being asked in this research relate to who moves into these varying combinations of races and ethnicities and to what extent those movements continue the mixing or create enclaves and separate residential areas. The research also investigates the relationship of resources to the moves. The tentative evidence in this study is that the mobility is creating greater mixing across a variety of contexts. Views at any one point in time we will not give a true picture of the process of spatial assimilation and incorporation.

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