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Population Association of America 2004 Annual Meeting Paper Proposal

Choice 1: Session 601 New Patterns of Immigration and Settlement in the U.S. (Singer)

Choice 2: Session 503 Race, Assimilation, and Housing (Alba)

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Ethnicity, Immigration and Migration to Nontraditional Geographic Areas

Extended Abstract

This paper investigates immigrants' five-year residential mobility patterns across different types of labor market areas, paying particular attention to three types of nontraditional destinations: nonmetropolitan labor market areas, suburban, and areas of low coethnic population. Informed by social-psychological, economic, and sociological theoretical frameworks of race relations, social capital, and spatial assimilation, I examine how immigrants' decisions to move to classical versus nontraditional geographic areas are affected by local ethnic and immigrant composition, and how these effects vary by immigrant group and by duration of time in the U.S. Thus, this study shows whether classical spatial assimilation models fit the case of contemporary immigrants, as well as the extent to which contemporary immigrants exhibit new patterns of geographic settlement.

This study utilizes confidential information in the U.S. Census on residence in 1985 and in 1990 to compare the effects of local ethnic and immigrant composition on nontraditional choices at the labor market area and neighborhood levels. I define labor market areas as groups of counties that have substantial commuting ties (Tolbert and Sizer, 1996), while neighborhoods are measured as Census Tracts or Block Numbering Areas. Ethnic and immigrant composition are measured by percentage of people of the same ethnic group or nativity status, and, in separate analyses, by percentage of people of other ethnic groups or nativity status. Ethnicity is defined by nationality or geographic region. For instance, these ethnic groups include, but are not limited to, German, British, Irish, Canadian, Southern and Eastern European, Cuban, Mexican, Dominican, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Southeast Asian, Caribbean, sub-Saharan African, North African, Iranian, and Lebanese. I also utilize information on individuals' age, marital status, and education, as well as geographic context, such as local unemployment rates.

Statistical analyses of immigrants' migration behavior employ a sequential discrete choice model in which people are assumed to make two choices, in succession, between 1985 and 1990. At the top level, individuals choose a labor market area in which to live. The choices include all labor market areas in the U.S., including the mid-decade labor market area of residence. At the bottom level, people choose a neighborhood within the chosen labor market area. The model is nested because labor market areas provide economic opportunities and social resources that affect and may be accessed from any neighborhood within. Since the neighborhood is a smaller geographic unit than the labor market area, people are in closer spatial proximity to and more likely to experience personal interaction with their neighbors, compared to other residents in their labor market area. Thus, factors such as ethnic and immigrant composition are likely to be of greater importance for neighborhood rather than labor market area choice. The discrete choice model accommodates these different effects on choice, and can also model the unique status of the origin or current labor market area of residence from among all locations.

Generally, the discrete choice model is given by

$$Pr_{nl} = Pr_{n|l} * Pr_l$$

$$Pr_{n|l} = \frac{\exp(B * x_{n|l})}{\sum_n \exp(B * x_{n|l})}$$

$$Pr_l = \frac{\exp(A * z_l + t_l * I_l)}{\sum_l \exp(A * z_l + t_l * I_l)}$$

$$I_l = \ln(\sum_n \exp(B * X_{n|l}))$$

where l denotes labor market area, n denotes neighborhood, z_l are the attributes of the labor market areas, and $x_{n|l}$ are the attributes of the neighborhoods within each labor market area. A and B denote the coefficients for choosing a labor market area and a neighborhood within a specific labor market area, respectively. I_l is the inclusive value for the l^{th} labor market area (Greene, 2000), and can be interpreted as the aggregate effect of a labor market area's characteristics on all its neighborhoods within. The t_l parameter scales the effect of specific labor market areas on their neighborhoods. If all $t_l = 1$, then all labor market areas have the same effect on their neighborhoods.

The individual's labor market area (z_l), and neighborhood ($x_{n|l}$) characteristics will include the main traits of interest, the ethnic and immigrant composition, and geographic type, such as metropolitan status, suburban status, and low coethnic population, interacted with the individual's demographic and human capital variables. In addition, geographic characteristics include an indicator variable for whether or not the area is an individual's *origin*, plus interaction terms between individual characteristics and the area's ethnic and immigrant composition. The interaction terms allow for geographic characteristics to differ by individual characteristics. Using such interaction terms accommodates differences, for example, in the effect of local percentage Mexican on the probability that Chinese, versus Cubans or Mexicans, move into that area. Interactions between individual ethnic group and origin status allow the models to study immobility, or people who do not move away from their origin area.

After applying the models, I extract the probabilities that people of various ethnic or immigrant groups stay in or move to labor market areas or neighborhoods of different geographic type, such as metropolitan versus nonmetropolitan areas, central city, suburban, versus rural status, and areas of high or low coethnic population. These probabilities are examined separately for variation in local percentage of *own* ethnic group or nativity status, and of a single *different* ethnic group. Comparing probabilities across geographic types will show which immigrant groups tend to move to nontraditional destinations, what are the individual demographic characteristics that contribute to this pattern, and which local contextual factors appear to make nontraditional destinations more likely.

REFERENCES

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 Tolbert, C; and M. Sizer. (1996) U.S. Commuting Zones and Labor Market Areas: A 1990 Update. U.S. Department of Agriculture: Staff Paper No. AGES-9614.