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Title: Network Saturation and Internal Migration of U.S. Immigrants to and from Leading Gateway Cities

Extended Abstract Submitted for Presentation at the 2006 annual PAA meeting[1]

INTRODUCTION

Observers have long recognized links between immigrants' spatial distribution and incorporation. In the early 1900s, academics and policymakers stated matters succinctly: Speranza (1904:128) proclaimed that, "The problem of immigration is...essentially one of distribution;" Norton (1904:161) explained that, "Since we cannot depend on immigrants to scatter, means must be taken to diffuse them throughout the country;" and President Teddy Roosevelt (1903) advocated policies by which "...undesirable immigrants shall be kept out entirely, while desirable immigrants are properly distributed throughout the country" [see Willcox 1906 for full citations.] Eighty years later, Lieberson and Waters (1988:53) codified these issues in their classic study of racial and ethnic groups in 20th Century America: "Location is not a trivial question....We are not merely dealing with a fundamental fact about ethnic and racial patterns in the nation; spatial concentrations also affect assimilation, intermarriage, political power, visibility, and interaction with others."

To date research on immigrant concentration and redistribution through gateway centers has enjoyed two intellectual histories. The first emerged during the early 1900s, when demographers began analyzing internal migration data to dispel conventional wisdom that immigrants entered and rarely left leading port cities (e.g., Willcox 1906). The second occurred sixty years later when historians revisited this demographic fact in efforts to understand the links between spatial and economic mobility among these early immigrant populations (e.g, Thernstrom 1964). A central lesson from both bodies of research is that the U.S. is not just a nation of immigrants but also a nation of migrants and that by failing to consider immigrant flows beyond initial ports of entry, research on immigrant distribution and incorporation can produce partial and distorted views of both processes.

Recently, social scientists have ignored this lesson and, instead, focused on how it is that

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[1] Please note that this submission may be incomplete due to problems with dislocation resulting from Hurricane Katrina. If you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact me by phone (919-619-4781) or by new email address (jimevac@hotmail.com). Thank you.

immigrants continue to cluster and find jobs in leading gateway cities where many native-born minorities, particularly blacks, appear to be slipping into a jobless "underclass." The answer, researchers now agree, lay with networks: Immigrants tend to follow the paths of ethnic predecessors, who channel them not only into gateway cities but also into particular sectors of the local economy, wherein they use their local ties to "capture" jobs and create self-sustaining "ethnic economies" (e.g., Waldinger 1996). As a result, an expanding but ethnically divided immigrant workforce has emerged in gateway cities over recent decades, challenging a canonical assumption of mainstream social science: that modern capitalism dissolves the ethnic bonds of traditional, or pre-modern, capitalism.

As a result of these developments, we know little about the extent and organization of immigrant churning through today's gateway centers to other U.S. destinations. This gap is noteworthy in light of past lessons and the fact that over twice as many foreigners now migrate within U.S. borders as across them. The thesis examined in this research, which offers one redress of this gap, runs as follows: (1) After the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, immigrant "pioneers" began entering leading gateway cities. (2) Thereafter, friends and family followed, facilitating the development of local ethnic economies reflective of group talents, local demands, and competition with other ethnic groups in the area. (4) As friends and family continued to arrive to the gateway city via ethnic networks, opportunities in the local ethnic economy became increasingly saturated, "pushing" newcomers to look for jobs in other U.S. destinations. (5) Lacking full information about jobs available elsewhere, out-migrants use information and influence obtained through local ethnic economies to pursue similar jobs elsewhere.

This thesis builds from a central tenet of contemporary immigration theory–that chain migration is cumulative–to investigate what happens when this cumulative process saturates local opportunity structures. Conceptually, it will draw attention to how immigrant job networks, once established in gateway regions, can develop across space, as well as time. Empirically, it will move beyond comparisons of "traditional" and "new" immigrant destinations to examine connections that develop between the two via internal migration: To what extent have they connections emerged over recent decades? Who contributes to them? And what types of places and jobs do they link?

PRIOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Studies of ethnic/immigrant economies in gateway cities began to accumulate in the 1980s, and since then most quantitative research on the subject has adopted a measure consistent with Lieberson's (1980) "special niches," which refer to large, persistent employment concentrations in particular sectors of metro economies. The presumption, supported by ethnographic accounts, is that such concentrations, typically measured at the level of local industrial and/or occupational groupings, reflect the operation of ethnically bound networks that provide access to jobs and strengthen group identity and distinctions between ethnic "insiders" and "outsiders" in the process. Light and Gold (2000) estimate that forty percent of the "average" ethnoracial group in the U.S. works in a local ethnic economy. Waldinger and Der-Martirosian (2001) estimate that

rates are considerably higher for foreign-born workers in leading gateway cities, often reaching close to sixty percent.

By the mid-1990s it had become axiomatic to conceptualize these ethnic economies as emerging from an "interaction" of group- and gateway-specific characteristics. The methodological implication is that to fully understand the extent and specialization of ethnic economies in gateway cities, researchers must vary both the groups under investigation and the locations in which they are observed. Since this time, scholars have applied this multi-group/multi-location design with mixed success (e.g., Light and Rosenstein 1995; Waldinger 2001). They have also exposed an important methodological weakness in its conventional application, namely, that it treats multiple locations, usually metro areas, as simply a means of varying demand-side conditions rather than as a means of understanding how cities are connected within a broader spatial settlement system–a fundamental tenet of urban and regional studies.

One field of research that illuminates these connections, but still only indirectly, focuses on patterns and correlates of internal migration among U.S. foreign-born residents. A common methodological approach, dating to the early 1970s, is to include measures of local group size in statistical models of migratory behavior as indicators of "friends and family" effects. To date, the consistent finding has been that immigrants are more likely to move to, and less likely to move from, places with large coethnic populations and that this tendency is stronger for newer arrivals than older arrivals, both at the individual and group level. Studies have also shown that after statistical controls for individual-level factors and nativity concentration, immigrants are more likely than native-born workers to migrate across state boundaries, often in response to deteriorating economic conditions in their state of residence (e.g., Gurak and Kritz 2000; Wright et al. 1997). The implications seem to be twofold: ethnic concentration exerts a positive "pull" on immigrants already in the U.S., but this "pull" is insufficient to stop immigrants from seeking employment elsewhere when local job prospects decline, which may help to explain why only a third of foreign-born inter-metro migrants moved to areas of greater nativity concentration during the late 1980s (Newbold 1999:272).

A related but less developed field of research focuses on the growth and adjustment of immigrant populations in nontraditional, or "new," destinations outside leading, or "traditional," gateway cities. Common methodological approaches in this literature include the use of net population statistics to document foreign-born settlement in unfamiliar destinations (e.g. Frey 2003), formal classification of different types of "new" and "old" immigrant destinations to help organize this information (e.g., Singer 2004), and application of case-study methodology to provide detailed accounts of immigrant incorporation in local labor markets with little or no recent history of immigrant settlement (e.g., Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga 2002). These efforts have provided key insights into immigrant dispersion, but to date they have documented rather than *explained* this dispersion, with two limited exceptions.

One exception comes from Massey and colleagues, who argue that new federal efforts to restrict foreign-born flows across the U.S. southern border have "...[transformed] circular flows of short-

term [Mexican] migrants entering just three states into a nation-wide diaspora of long-term residents settling within all states of the Union" (Massey et al. 2002:126). The second exception comes from Light and Johnston (2004), who argue that network maturation, not government policy, is driving the current redistribution of immigrants to "new" destinations. By network maturation, they mean declines in wages and increases in rents presumed to occur in traditional gateway cities as a result of continuous, network-driven immigration to these areas. Although cursory, these studies signal a new and important line of research into the causes and consequences of U.S. immigrant redistribution. The proposed paper will contribute to this line of research by extending the multi-group/multi-location design to formalize and test specific hypotheses regarding internal migration and the spatial development of "local" ethnic economies among leading and "secondary" immigrant destinations.

GATEWAY SELECTION

New York and Los Angeles are ideal laboratories for this purpose because they constitute the country's leading gateway centers by far and the sites where we know the most about immigrant incorporation in the labor market. According to the 2000 census, these two Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs) accounted for over 10 million first-generation immigrants (a third of the national total) and over three-quarters of those entering the United States during the 1990s (Statistical Abstract of the United States 2002). New York and Los Angeles also differ in several key respects. New York has a longer history of immigration, and its foreign-born population is proportionally more diverse than Los Angeles's immigrant population with respect to ethnicity and skills. Los Angeles, by contrast, has only recently emerged as a major immigrant gateway and is ethnically dominated by Mexicans, who account for roughly half of the region's foreign-born population. Based on prior research, I expect outmigration and spatial extension of local ethnic economies from these two regions to be roughly similar and examine this expectation empirically.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Populations of Interest and Sampling Procedures

Foreign-born workers who established substantial ethnic economies in Los Angeles and New York following the 1965 Immigration Reform Act are the primary populations of interest for several reasons. First, we know a great deal about these groups from prior research; however this knowledge remains truncated. Research on their incorporation via ethnic economies has disregarded spatial dispersion, and research on their spatial dispersion has disregarded the role of local ethnic economies in shaping the size and organization of outflows to other U.S. destinations. Focus on these groups will help to synthesize prior research while adding new empirical insights. Second, comparison of multiple groups across more than one gateway center will strengthen assessments of generalizability across groups and gateway centers, contributing to broader understanding of immigrant incorporation. Third, limiting analyses to the top foreign-

born groups in the nation's two preeminent gateway centers will help to ensure sufficient sample sizes for statistical analyses over time and moves these analyses away from the study of spatial redistribution, in general, to gateway churning and its causes and organizational forms, in particular. While inclusion of more gateway centers and/or foreign-groups could be beneficial, it would risk conflating the unique standing of New York and Los Angeles with other gateway centers and produce less precise insights into their roles in foreign-born redistribution and incorporation generally. Fourth, contemporary investigation of the top groups in leading gateways places will allow comparisons with historical research on immigrant churning and employment in leading gateway centers a century ago, affording better understanding of the historical consistency of current processes.

In New York, these groups will include Afro-Caribbeans (from English-speaking West Indies and Haiti), Dominicans, Cubans, Chinese, Asian Indians, Koreans and Filipinos. Puerto Ricans will not be included because Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory and because most Puerto Ricans arrived to New York prior to 1970, representing a different era of immigrant incorporation than that under investigation. In Los Angeles, groups will include Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos and Vietnamese. In light of Portes and Rumbaut's (1996) well-known ethnic/immigrant typology, we can interpret Koreans and Japanese as entrepreneurial migrants; Indians and Filipinos as professional migrants; Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Dominicans, and Afro-Caribbeans as labor migrants; and Cubans and Vietnamese as refugee migrants. Chinese, by contrast, tend to straddle two immigrant types, with those in New York being more proletarian and those in Los Angeles being more entrepreneurial/professional. The fact that three groups in each gateway region are the same–Chinese, Koreans, and Filipinos–will provide insight into possible "interactions" between places and groups in the determination and organization foreign-born dispersion.

Because primary interest lies with labor market incorporation of first-generation foreign-born residents, samples will be restricted to working-age adults (ages 25-65) who were born abroad to non-U.S. citizens and who where not enrolled in school or in the military at the time of the census.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework is outlined in the figure at the end of this subsection. In simplest terms, it can be expressed as three sets of hypotheses. The first set (1.1 and 1.2) concerns the establishment and eventual saturation of ethnic niches in the local gateway center; the second set (2.1 through 2.3) concerns whom, among local foreign-born residents, is most likely to leave the gateway region for other U.S. destinations and what contextual factors, if any, influence the types of jobs obtained; the third set (3.1 and 3.2) concerns to the extent to which foreign-born outmigration recreates "local" niches in new destinations.

Hypothesis 1.1: Over time, the influx of foreign-born workers to the gateway region will rise relative to new job opportunities available in the group's local ethnic economy, contributing to

conditions of network saturation.

Hypothesis 1.2: As network saturation increases, more foreign-born workers will migrate from the gateway region to other U.S. destinations.

Hypothesis 2.1: Recent arrivals will be more likely than earlier arrivals to migrate from the gateway region to other U.S. destinations, reflecting patterns of immigrant churning more than longer-term spatial assimilation.

Hypothesis 2.2: Foreign-born workers who leave the gateway region for other U.S. destinations will be more likely than those who stay to reproduce "local" job concentrations over time (because those who leave will rely heavily on information and training in the gateway niche to learn about and pursue jobs elsewhere).

Hypothesis 2.3: The size, density, and skills base of ethnic-gateway niches will influence the employment outcomes of gateway out-migrants more than labor market conditions at destination (because informal information and training obtained through gateway niches are more influential for finding jobs in new destinations than formal information pertaining to these destinations.)

Hypothesis 3.1: Within new destinations, foreign-born in-migrants from gateway regions will be more likely to work in gateway-niche sectors than native-born workers and counterparts arriving directly from abroad.

Hypothesis 3.2: This type of "niche extension" from gateway regions is more likely to occur in local sectors with high rates of native-born minority and female participation than in local sectors with low rates of such participation.

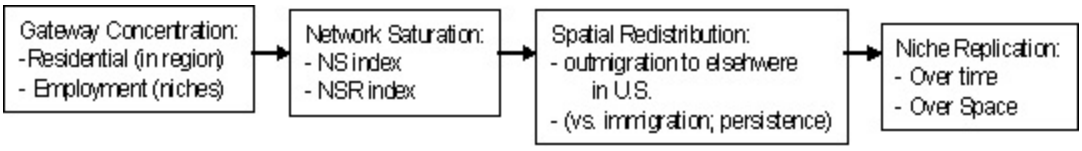

Figure: Conceptual Framework