UNDERSTANDING RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS ACROSS ASIAN ETHNIC GROUPS AND U.S. METROPOLITAN AREAS

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This paper explores the residential patterns of the six largest Asian ethnic groups – Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese – across fifty-seven U.S. metropolitan areas, which are categorized into seven types of immigrant gateways. Using 2010 U.S. decennial census data, I discover that the application of multiple residential segregation measures, each of which captures a unique aspect of residential experiences, leads to diverging results across subgroups and across places. On the basis of the dissimilarity index, Vietnamese are the most segregated; Chinese and Asian Indians are the most segregated when using the isolation index; and Filipinos are the most segregated along the clustering dimension. Older and more traditional immigrant gateways experience higher dissimilarity scores than newer gateways, while destinations that have received a high share of the foreign-born population in the second-half of the 20th century, namely after the enactment of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, contain more clusters. These findings underscore the importance of examining residential patterns at a more granular level than the broad, pan-ethnic grouping of Asians; beyond the oft-studied large metropolitan areas; and with more refined differentiation of immigrant gateway types than the dichotomy of new versus traditional immigrant destinations. Importantly, the results reveal that settlement dynamics of Asian groups need to be understood at the intersection of a group’s immigration route and a metropolitan area’s ecological structure as an immigrant destination. Finally, I identify a new neighborhood model, characterized as a “socially constrained resurgent community,” which broadens the role that ethnic neighborhoods play in the settlement experiences of Asian groups and highlights the need to refine traditional theoretical ethnic neighborhood models in the literature.

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Status of Research: Completed/published
Research Type: Graduate Masters Theses
Related Fields: Immigration Neighborhoods Race and Ethnicity Residential Mobility and Migration Residential Segregation South Asian Southeast Asian