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New Destinations and the Changing Geography of Immigrant Incorporation

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Abstract

While nearly three decades of “new immigrant destination” research has vastly enriched our understanding of diversity in contexts of reception within the United States, there is a striking lack of consensus as to the implications of geographic dispersion for immigrant incorporation. We review the literature on new destinations as they relate to ongoing debates regarding spatial assimilation and segmented assimilation; the influence of co-ethnic communities on immigrant incorporation; and the extent to which growth in immigrant populations stimulates perceived threat, nativism, and reactive ethnicity. In each of these areas, the sheer diversity of new destinations undermines consensus about their impact. Coupled with the continuous evolution in immigrant destinations over time, most dramatically but not limited to the impact of the Great Recession, we argue for the need to move beyond the general concept of “new destinations” and focus more directly on identifying the precise mechanisms through which the local context of reception shapes immigrant incorporation, where the historical presence of co-ethnic communities is but one of many dimensions considered, together with other labor, housing, and educational structures.

Keywords

Immigration; new destinations; geographic dispersion; status attainment; immigrant incorporation; internal migration

INTRODUCTION

The emergence and rapid growth of “new immigrant destinations” is one of the most striking demographic trends of recent decades. Once confined to a handful of states and gateway cities, immigrant dispersion began in the 1990s and accelerated sharply, transforming communities large and small across the United States (Massey 2008; Singer 2004; Zúñiga & Hernández-León 2006). While shifts in Mexican immigrant destinations received the most scholarly and media attention, similar patterns were evidenced among other Latinos, Asians, and other regions of origin as well. New destinations garnered copious research attention not only because they were novel, but also because they represented what Waters and Jimenez described as a “golden opportunity to build our empirical and theoretical understanding of immigrant assimilation” (2005, p. 122). The influence of context of reception on immigrant incorporation is a foundational concept in migration scholarship (Rumbaut & Portes 2001). Originally leveraged to explain differences across national origin groups or broad historical periods, the emergence of new destinations provides an entirely new dimension of variation

to consider. By definition new destinations lack established co-ethnic populations and institutions oriented towards helping newcomers adapt. Moreover, the patterns of selection into new and traditional destinations differ sharply, as do labor markets, the compositions of local native populations, racial hierarchies, and contours of immigration policy enforcement (Marrow 2011; Massey 2008). Finally, the sheer diversity of new destinations, which range from small towns and rural areas with previously declining populations to large, rapidly growing cities in the Sunbelt and Deep South, further invites study and comparison.

Researchers were quick to seize on this “golden opportunity.” To date, dozens of books and countless articles have been written on the subject. Methodologies range from qualitative studies of individual communities to census-based comparisons of status attainment across new and traditional gateways. The population under consideration is also highly variable, including individual national origin groups, broad pan-ethnic categories, and analyses that include all foreign born. There is even a nascent literature on the second generation in new destinations. Finally, the outcomes under consideration run the gamut from residential segregation to educational and labor market outcomes, homeownership, health, political participation, identity formation, and exposure to native hostility.

For all of the richness and diversity of the burgeoning literature, there is a noticeable lack of consensus as to the impact of dispersion on immigrant incorporation. Results contrast sharply even among studies of the same outcome, and evidence suggests that the impact of new destination residence has shifted over time. One aim of this review is thus to summarize research findings across outcomes to identify potential sources of disagreement. We focus on new destinations in the United States, due to the massive scope of this literature and because a recent review addressed non-U.S. new destinations (Winders 2014). We also focus on outcomes among immigrants themselves, rather than their impact on local areas, though the latter has also received significant attention (Gouveia & Stull 1997; Hyde et al. 2015; Ramey 2013). Our review also evaluates the utility of new destinations as an organizing principle of incorporation research, suggesting possible alternatives. With nearly three decades of research laying the foundation, we argue that research should move away from broad categorizations to focus more precisely on identifying the mechanisms through which context shapes outcomes, where factors such as the historical presence, size, and composition of local co-ethnic populations are but one set of contextual predictors of incorporation. This would help avoid over-simplified conclusions that have contributed to contradictions in the literature and help develop analytical and methodological tools applicable to multiple immigrant-origin groups. At the same time, the enhanced diversity in the local context of reception should become a standard component of research on immigrant incorporation and the geography opportunity more broadly. In many ways, the literature is already moving in that direction.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

New destination scholarship provides insight into some of the most persistent debates about the prospects for incorporation among contemporary immigrants. Hailing from Latin America, Asia, and Africa, immigrants today enter a labor market that is far more bifurcated than that of their European predecessors at the turn of the 20th century, potentially making

social mobility more difficult within and across generations. Contemporary immigrants are also racialized as non-white and subject to both interpersonal and institutional discrimination. And, policies towards immigrants have grown increasingly restrictive and punitive over time. While these elements of the context of reception bode poorly for incorporation, immigrants' contexts of origins are also more diverse today than in the past, with some national origin groups negatively selected and relatively low-skilled and others hyper-selected with higher educational and occupational attainment than the U.S. average. Thus, the extent of resources within co-ethnic communities is itself an important aspect of the context of reception (Alba & Nee 2003; Rumbaut & Portes 2001). While the vast majority of research on how contexts of origin and reception interact to shape immigrant incorporation focus on explaining differences across national origin groups, the emergence of new destinations opened the door to explore how local context of reception contributes to variation *within* groups. Sociologists have long emphasized the link between geographic and social mobility; where one lives both reflects and reinforces their social position. Factors such as earnings and wealth prescribe where one lives, and location shapes subsequent opportunities within and across generations. This raises questions as to the forces driving new destinations, and the extent to which migration to these areas is selective, either positively (reflecting social mobility) or negatively (signaling an attempt to overcome place-based disadvantage). Another important aspect of the implications of dispersion for social mobility hinges on residential segregation. A key argument in segmented assimilation is that as racialized minorities, new immigrants face impediments to spatial assimilation not faced by their European predecessors. Many traditional gateways are large urban areas where immigrants tend to settle, at least initially, in ethnic enclaves in the city. The proximity of these enclaves to areas of concentrated disadvantage, coupled with high levels of residential segregation that prevent the upwardly mobile from accessing higher opportunity neighborhoods, has been framed as a major risk factor for downward assimilation, particularly across generations. New destinations, in contrast, tend to be smaller, more suburbanized and sprawling metro and nonmetro areas with lower levels of residential segregation. Even recent arrivals often bypass central cities and move directly to suburbs, with immigrant settlements developing in a patch-work formation, rather than large, contiguous clusters (Donato et al. 2006; Flippen & Parrado 2012; Odem 2008; Price et al. 2005; Singer et al. 2008). As such, dispersion to new destinations holds the potential to facilitate neighborhood-level spatial assimilation, *if* they do not reproduce the history of exclusion and concentrated disadvantage faced by racialized minorities as ethnic populations grow. This potential stimulated research comparing patterns and trends in residential segregation in new and traditional destinations.

The emergence of new destinations also stimulated research on how local contexts of reception impact markers of status attainment. Earlier waves of European immigrants benefited from concentration in the Northeast and Midwest, where industrial employment provided a ladder to relative security and mobility (Waldinger 2007). While industrial restructuring transformed the U.S. economy, deindustrialization played out differently across regions, making local labor markets a key aspect of the context of reception that varies across new and traditional destinations (Parrado & Kandel 2008). New destinations also provided a new analytic approach to examining how co-ethnic communities shape

incorporation. Much of the previous literature centers either on variable levels of community resources across national origin groups or the consequences of living in ethnic enclaves. While neighborhood clustering is argued to help newcomers pool resources and share information, buttress against larger discrimination, and build informal and formal institutions of social support, it is also frequently marked by saturated labor and housing markets, exploitation by co-ethnics and others, and poor overall conditions (Xie & Gough 2011). New destinations allow researchers to examine within-group variation at a larger scale.

Finally, new destinations also offer an additional vantage point from which to explore the impact of native response on incorporation. For generations, traditional gateways served as “assimilation machines” for the nation, as well-developed institutions promote integration against a backdrop of native-born populations accustomed to newcomers. At the same time, geographic concentration buffered the vast majority of Americans from contact with immigrants. New destinations, in contrast, lack institutional support for immigrants in educational, public service, medical, and other settings. They also experience sharp and sudden increases in immigrant populations, factors that are argued to trigger perceived threat and racism/nativism on the part of the majority (Flores 2014). New destinations could thus present less hospitable contexts of reception than traditional gateways (Massey & Capoferro 2008), particularly for non-white immigrants who are also rendered “hyper visible” by the overall lack of diversity (Vaquera et al. 2014). On the other hand, many new destinations are marked by a rigid black-white boundary, and inexperience with Latino and Asian immigrants could translate into fewer preconceived notions about them, and more permeability in boundaries between non-blacks (Winders 2007). As such, research has examined how local variation in reactions to immigrants, especially patterns of immigration policy enforcement, shape exposure to discrimination and ethno-racial identity (especially reactive ethnicity) in new relative to traditional destinations.

THE EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF NEW DESTINATIONS

Three broad explanations, more complementary than competing, have been offered to explain the emergence of new destinations. Among lower-skilled workers, particularly Latinos, the first, and best documented, focuses on explosive growth in the demand for labor in new destinations, coupled with excess labor supply in traditional gateways. The combination of mass legalization under IRCA and large-scale entry from abroad during the 1990s fueled immigrant growth in traditional areas, especially California. The resulting overabundance of workers drove wages down and rents up in immigrant-intensive fields and communities (Heer 2002), motivating out-migration. At the same time, the relocation of manufacturing and meat processing to lower wage, right-to-work states coupled with population growth created demand for construction, low-skill service, and factory labor throughout the South and Great Plains, including many rural areas (Hernández-León & Zúñiga 2000; Kandel & Parrado 2005; Kaushal & Kaestner 2010; Winders 2013). While overt labor recruitment from traditional gateways was common in the early phases of new destination development, once fledgling communities were established social networks and support set off a cycle of cumulative causation, including direct migration from abroad (Johnson-Webb 2003; Parrado et al. 2009). Finally, immigration policy and enforcement at

both the local and federal levels also contributed to the shift. In the 1990s, California became openly hostile to immigrants with a series of local and state-wide policies, most notably Proposition 187. Stepped-up border enforcement also selectively “hardened the border” in the Southwest, pushing crossings, and settlement, further east (Bohn & Pugatch 2015; Massey 2008).

While far less research examines settlement trends among higher-skilled immigrants, they too increasingly dispersed after 1990. Evidence suggests that rising demand for skilled labor in new destinations was the primary force driving dispersal. Concentrated in healthcare, education, technology, and other professional industries, skilled immigration has grown in recent decades, increasing labor supply in gateway cities. Healthcare organizations, universities and colleges, and corporate research and development all expanded their operations in rural areas, small towns, and Sunbelt cities, increasing the demand for skilled immigrant labor in non-traditional areas (Kritz et al. 2013). Immigration policy also contributed to the increased supply of skilled immigrants through the expansion of H-1B and EB-5 programs, and several cities, particularly in the Midwest, created policies to attract high-skilled and entrepreneurial immigrants as part of their efforts to bolster flagging economies (Harwood & Lee 2015; McDaniel et al. 2017).

At least implicitly, the new destinations literature assumes that once formed, communities will continue to hold and attract immigrant-origin populations. However, studies show that out-migration tends to be substantially higher from new than traditional destinations (Kritz et al. 2013), and that this pattern was exacerbated by the Great Recession. Precipitated by a collapse in the housing market, the Great Recession undercut demand for construction labor, with a concomitant sharp drop in new entrants from abroad, especially Mexico. It also dramatically reduced internal migration, upon which new destinations were far more dependent for growth than traditional gateways. The shift towards harsher policy enforcement was also more severe in new destinations, potentially further undermining their populations relative to traditional gateways (Arriaga 2017; Chavez & Provine 2009; Parrado 2012), many of which became sanctuary cities. Indeed, studies documented a sharp rise in out-migration (Parrado & Flippen 2016) and overall slowdown in dispersion to new destinations in the late 2000s (Kritz et al. 2013). While metropolitan job loss spurred immigrant out-migration between 2007 and 2008, immigrants were less likely to leave metros with longer-settled immigrant populations, suggesting new destination decline was about more than just employment demand (Calnan & Painter 2017).

Numerous studies document that both in- and out-migration from new destinations is highly selective (Goodwin-White 2018), with additional variation across internal and international migrants even in the same receiving areas (Duane 2010). Latino immigrants in new destinations are disproportionately more recently arrived to the United States, with lower levels of human capital and English skills, and are disproportionately undocumented and unaccompanied men (Flippen & Parrado 2012; Hofmann & Reiter 2018). Better educated immigrants are also most likely to leave these areas, potentially contributed to further concentrated disadvantage over time (Kritz et al. 2013).

NEW DESTINATIONS AND SPATIAL ASSIMILATION

The potential for geographic dispersion to promote spatial assimilation motivated a spate of studies comparing patterns of residential segregation across different types of immigrant destinations. Findings have been surprisingly contradictory, and sensitive to the classification scheme used to distinguish new and established destinations, the geospatial units of analysis, and whether segregation indices were based on all immigrants, pan-ethnic labels, or individual national origins. Fisher and Tienda (2006) and Park and Iceland (2011) found that segregation levels were consistently lower in new than traditional destinations for both Latinos and Asians. However, Latinos in new destinations experienced significant increases in segregation between 1980 and 2000, suggesting a convergence across destination types. Lichter and colleagues (2010), in contrast, found that Latinos were highly segregated in new destinations in 2000, often at levels greatly exceeding those in traditional gateways. Wahl et al. (2007) similarly found higher segregation in new than traditional micropolitan destinations, though they emphasized that overall levels were low in both. Research suggests that Native-born White out-migration from neighborhoods (Hall & Crowder 2014) and school districts (Hall & Hibel 2017) with growing immigrant and Latino populations contributed to rising segregation in new destinations. However, disaggregating pan-ethnic Asian and Latino populations reveals a complex picture in which segregation was considerably lower in new destinations than traditional gateway for Chinese, Filipino, Jamaican, Haitian, and Dominican immigrants, while it was the same or slightly higher for the Vietnamese, Mexicans, and Salvadorans (Hall 2013).

Across studies, scholars emphasize that selective migration contributes to higher segregation in new destinations but remains even after accounting for compositional differences across locales (Hall & Stringfield 2014). Other indicators, however, point to spatial assimilation. Across destination types, Latinos and Asians are substantially less segregated from Whites than Blacks; segregation falls with income and is lower among the native born than among immigrants (Lichter et al. 2015; Park & Iceland 2011; Wahl et al. 2007). Moreover, segregation in new destinations does not seem to imply the same concentrated disadvantage and spatial mismatch in new as traditional destinations (Wahl et al. 2007), and in general concentrated poverty is far lower in new destinations (Ludwig-Dehm & Iceland 2017). However, Latino suburbanization and higher incomes are no guarantee of spatial assimilation and declines in Hispanic-Black segregation exceed declines in Hispanic-White segregation, potentially suggesting racialization (Crowley et al. 2015). Among Latinos, the effect of nativity and income is larger in traditional gateways, suggesting that spatial assimilation may be weaker in new destinations (Park & Iceland 2011). Finally, the dispersion of Latino migrants to new destinations has implications for the residential mobility patterns of native-born, non-Latino residents. There is evidence that among native-born Whites, there are high rates of mobility away from areas with concentrations of immigrants, particularly in those areas with rapid growth in the immigrant population (Hall and Crowder 2014). Research also shows that White residents selectively to residential areas with school districts that have smaller populations of Latino immigrants (Hall and Hibel 2017).

In addition to methodological differences, part of the disagreement in this literature centers on the level of optimism or pessimism in the interpretation. Latino immigrant segregation is especially high in “other” destinations with relatively small Latino populations (Fischer & Tienda 2006; Hall 2013). Some of the negative tone in the literature relates to how scholars view this finding, which by definition reflects places where few Latinos live. It is also unclear whether residential segregation has the same meaning and detrimental impact for recent immigrants as for African Americans, upon whose experience much of the extant literature is based. More work is needed comparing residential segregation among adult native-born Latinos and Asians across destinations, to see whether segregation in new destinations reflects enclave formation or exclusion, as well as into whether residential and school segregation are equally correlated across contexts.

NEW DESTINATIONS AND STATUS ATTAINMENT

The potential for geographic dispersion to promote social mobility, as well as questions regarding how co-ethnic communities influence incorporation, motivated numerous studies of status attainment in new destinations, as well as comparisons of educational, labor market, homeownership, and health outcomes across destination types.

Education

Schools are a particularly key institution of support and integration for immigrant-origin children. Resource levels inside and outside of school, levels of educational segregation, and the overall effectiveness of education as a tool for social mobility vary tremendously within and across U.S. regions (Chetty et al. 2014), potentially rendering geographic dispersion consequential for a wide array of educational outcomes. Empirical assessments are decidedly mixed, however, in part due to methodological and measurement differences, but also due to the extreme variation in context across metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, and challenges in accounting for selection by age, race, and migration histories.

One aspect of this research examines school resources as a driver of educational outcomes. While many new immigrant destinations are located in relatively well-resourced metropolitan centers, others, particularly in rural areas, lack the equipment, funding, and preparation to meet the needs of growing immigrant populations (Bohon et al. 2005a; Hernández-León & Zúñiga 2003; Jones 2019; Marschall et al. 2012; Terrazas et al. 2009). This heterogeneity makes it very difficult to separate the impact of immigrant destinations from that of educational resources. As English proficiency is strongly associated with immigrant educational attainment (Stamps & Bohon 2006), one of the primary concerns in this literature is the degree to which schools respond to rising immigration by promoting linguistic support to students and their families. While some scholars argue that Latino students in the South benefit from greater exposure to native-born and English-speaking residents than in traditional destinations, findings are fairly consistent that schools in new destinations offer fewer linguistic support services than those in traditional gateways (Atiles & Bohon 2003; Bohon et al. 2005b; Dondero & Muller 2012).

Findings are mixed as to whether new destinations expose or shield immigrants from nativism and discrimination, within and outside of schools, and how such exposure shapes

educational outcomes. Latino students often face difficulty incorporating into schools that previously had only White and Black students (Kandel & Parrado 2006), and new destination schools are generally less accommodating for immigrant students than those in traditional gateways (Griffith 2008). However, in an ethnographic study of a North Carolina high school, Silver (2015) finds that while both Latino and Black students experience comparable levels of discrimination outside of school, Latino students receive strong institutional support from ethnic-identity clubs in school, helping shield them from the negative effects of discrimination. Another study found that, in spite of discrimination, Latino immigrant students in North Carolina were more academically motivated than those in traditional gateways (Perreira et al. 2010). However, other scholars emphasize that growing Latino populations are associated with educational tracking, which creates “de facto” segregation in new destination schools, lowering resources available to immigrant students and increasing the disparity with native-born students in standardized test scores and dropout rates (Fischer 2010; Wainer 2006). Additionally, several regional case studies indicate that White-Latino educational segregation in both public and private schools increased sharply in new destinations, sometimes to levels higher than Black-White segregation. These patterns were confined to urban school districts, however, as White-Latino school segregation did not rise appreciably in rural areas (Clotfelter et al. 2020). More time is needed to see how patterns evolve as families become more established.

Disagreement as to how educational contexts differ across destinations is mirrored by contradictory assessments of educational outcomes across locales. Stamps and Bohon (2006) are optimistic, finding that educational attainment is higher among Latino immigrant students in new than traditional destinations, though most of the advantages are limited to those most recently arrived. Similarly, Potochnick (2014) found the same pattern for math and reading test scores, though differences did not persist after accounting for the demographic differences between destinations. Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2012) are also optimistic, finding that Latino students in North Carolina public schools perform comparably to native-born peers of the same socioeconomic background, at least among those who reside in the state for several years. However, Fischer (2010) finds a less promising pattern, that immigrants’ risk of dropping out is high in new destinations, and that immigrant children who arrive after the age of nine are particularly vulnerable compared to native-born non-Hispanic teens living in new destinations. Complicating this narrative is the contrasting experience of Asian students. Much of the scholarship on Asian achievement in traditional destinations emphasizes the benefits of well-resourced co-ethnic communities, which could imply that dispersion to new destinations would undermine educational outcomes. However, research finds that Asian students do well in new destinations and are less likely than other groups (including native-born non-Hispanic Whites) to drop out of high school, in part bolstered by family resources and parental support (Fischer 2010). However, the work on Asian educational attainment is not comparative across contexts, so it may be that without the advantages of longstanding co-ethnic communities, they do less well than their peers in traditional gateways.

Labor market outcomes

By definition the emergence of new destinations reflects immigrants' search for economic opportunities, and thus could be expected to have positive labor market implications. However, if the demand for immigrant labor stems from deteriorating work conditions that repel native workers, then dispersion may not signal opportunity. This could be particularly true if migrants are negatively selected, or for those in rural areas (Kandel & Cromartie 2004).

Studies explicitly comparing labor market outcomes among similar immigrants in new and traditional destinations are surprisingly rare. A handful of studies compare broad economic indicators (particularly poverty, which reflects both wages and family structure) and trends across contexts, largely focusing on rural areas. While several ethnographic studies highlight the impediments to mobility in new rural destinations, newcomers typically felt that relocation enhanced their employment opportunities and standard of living (Chaney 2010; Marrow 2012; Price & Chacko 2009; Shultz 2008). In some ways, social mobility in rural new destinations compares favorably to traditional gateways. Traditional rural immigrant destinations, particularly Latino gateways in the Southwest, are characterized by agricultural employment and pockets of concentrated poverty (Kandel et al. 2011). Migrants in new rural destinations, in contrast, often work in construction, manufacturing, and meat processing, where low-skill wages are relatively high (Crowley et al. 2006; Kandel & Cromartie 2004). And, while many Latinos enter rural economy at the bottom of the occupational distribution (Adelman & Tsao 2016; Turner 2014), they often manage to transfer to better jobs over time (Dunn et al. 2006; Griffith 2012; Rich & Miranda 2006), including opening small businesses catering to growing co-ethnic populations (Hernández-León & Zúñiga 2000).

However, there is also evidence that conditions in new rural destinations eroded during the 2000s (Crowley et al. 2015; Koball et al. 2008), especially relative to urban areas. While some of the disadvantages of rural residence are offset by lower costs of living and greater access to homeownership, those advantages also tended to decline over time (Kandel et al. 2011). Studies on metropolitan areas show a similar pattern; the lower poverty in new relative to traditional areas (Crowley et al. 2006) diminished after 2000 (Ellis et al. 2013). It is important to note, however, that many of these studies are descriptive and do not account for compositional differences across contexts. There is also evidence that wage differentials across destination types vary between movers and stayers (Goodwin-White 2018), further complicating assessments of the impact of dispersion. Likewise, more research is needed on how dispersion affects status attainment among the second generation. Goodwin-White (2016) shows that second generation wage and educational outcomes are positively related to the size and education levels of immigrants in the same city a generation ago, with the effects increasing over time. While not a direct assessment of contemporary new destinations, the results suggest that dispersing to areas with lower wages and higher immigrant disadvantage may have negative implications for the second generation.

Few studies compare labor market outcomes in new and traditional destinations among higher-skilled groups or disaggregate by specific national origins. Those that do, however, find complex patterns that defy easy characterization. Puerto Rican dispersion to Central Florida seems to have undermined economic outcomes (Vélez & Burgos 2010), while low-

skill Chinese restaurant workers average higher wages in new destinations than New York City (Liang et al. 2018). Shin and Liang (2014) show that the impact of metropolitan context varies considerably across Asian national origin groups, owing to unique immigration histories and socio-demographic profiles. Likewise, Flippen and Kim (2015) find that for less advantaged Asian-origin groups (namely, Korean, Vietnamese, and other Asians), wages and occupational status are lower outside of traditional gateways, net of human capital and demographic characteristics. However, these disparities emanate from differences in labor market conditions across destinations rather than from the influence of ethnic context per se. For more advantaged national origin groups (Chinese, Japanese, Indians, and Filipinos), residence outside of traditional gateways is associated with higher wages and occupational status (as well as a lower gap with similarly skilled non-Hispanic Whites), particularly among men. Asian women, however, receive a lower return to internal migration than their male peers.

Homeownership

Latino and Asian concentration in expensive and high-density housing markets has long been recognized as an impediment to homeownership (Borjas 2002; Flippen & Kim 2015). Thus, dispersion to more affordable, suburban regions (with more new, single-family, and owner-occupied housing) could be beneficial, especially for Latinos, whose limited access to credit renders high housing values a greater impediment to homeownership relative to non-Latino Whites (Flippen 2001). Likewise, lower levels of residential segregation in (some) new destinations could further enhance homeownership, as it tends to undermine both the investment value and supply of housing in minority neighborhoods (Flippen 2001, 2004). On the other hand, traditional gateways have numerous institutions oriented towards helping immigrants navigate the path to homeownership, and concentration lowers the fixed costs of targeting real estate and lending services to immigrant populations. New destinations' lack of these institutions could undermine immigrant homeownership.

Previous studies suggest that the negative effect of lacking institutional resources outweighs the positive impact of more accessible housing stock in new destinations, though there is some variation across groups and between metro and nonmetro areas. Borjas (2002) found that homeownership among immigrant Latinos was enhanced not only by the size of the co-ethnic community in 1980 but also by its rate of growth between 1980 and 2000. Flippen (2010) found that Latino homeownership is higher and inequality with Whites smaller in traditional gateways than new destinations, even net of metro differences in residential segregation. A similar pattern was found for African Americans and Asians (Flippen & Kim 2015), whose new destinations do not overlap geographically with Latino destinations, supporting the idea that the effect was driven by something unique about co-ethnic communities, rather than unobserved metropolitan characteristics. There is evidence that the effect may vary across national origin groups, however, among both Latinos (Sánchez 2019) and Asians (Flippen & Kim 2015). Far less work has examined variation across locales in housing appreciation, though Anacker (2013) shows that while traditional and new destinations enjoyed robust appreciation in recent years, places with relatively few immigrants performed poorly.

There is also a growing recognition of the uneven impact of the Great Recession across immigrant destinations. Both subprime lending and the subsequent foreclosure crisis were highly spatialized at both the local and regional scales. Historically, immigrant and minority neighborhoods have suffered exclusion from conventional sources of financial capital, which took the form of “reverse redlining” during the subprime boom as segregated minority neighborhoods were targeted for predatory lending. These communities then bore the brunt of the foreclosure crisis. Because many highly segregated minority communities were in traditional gateways, the impact of the crisis could have been higher there. Here, too, evidence is mixed. Lee and Greenlee (2020) found that continuous immigrant gateways experienced lower foreclosure risk relative to other areas for both Latinos and Asians, implying that dispersion heightened exposure to housing market volatility. Painter and Yu (2014), in contrast, showed that Latino and Asian immigrant homeownership declined less in new than traditional gateways, and research tentatively suggests that new destinations helped shield some Black immigrants from the negative impact of the recession on homeownership and housing values (Tsfai 2017). Overall, however, new vs. traditional typologies do a poor job of capturing the spatialized impact of the foreclosure crisis, which was particularly acute in the “Sunbelt and Sand” states (Rugh 2015) containing both new and traditional destinations, especially for Latinos.

Health

Scholarship on immigrant health more consistently shows a disadvantage associated with new destination residence. Relative to the dense networks of social and structural support around healthcare in established gateways (Casey et al. 2004), immigrants in new destinations average lower insurance coverage and access to quality healthcare (Asamoia et al. 2004; Derose et al. 2007; Gresenz et al. 2012; Korinek & Smith 2011; Monnat 2017; Viruell-Fuentes et al. 2011). However, there is important temporal and spatial differentiation among new destinations, with outcomes generally better in earlier- than later-emerging communities (i.e., those with rapid immigrant growth in the 1990s vs. those that emerged after 2000), and in metropolitan than rural areas.

Newly emerging Latino destinations differ systematically in terms of occupational distributions and employer-provided health coverage, as well as state-level differences in immigrant-eligibility for social service and welfare programs (Burton et al. 2013; Graefe et al. 2019; Monnat 2017). In early new destinations, health insurance rates are consistently lower than in traditional destinations (Derose et al. 2007). In new (particularly rural) destinations Latino immigrants are concentrated in industries least likely to offer employer-sponsored insurance (Flippen 2012). For more recent new destinations, health insurance coverage rates in metropolitan areas were comparable to traditional destinations, while rural new destinations lagged significantly behind (Monnat 2017).

Few comparative studies directly examine specific physical health outcomes in new destinations, though there is evidence that Latino immigrant health and mortality outcomes differ by destination type and legal status. There is evidence that there is lower health care utilization, and self-reported health in new immigrant destinations (Derose et al. 2007; Korinek & Smith 2011), driven in part by the disproportionate concentration of

undocumented and other noncitizens, particularly in rural areas (Monnat 2017). In terms of overall mortality rates, Latinos appear to have a considerable mortality advantage over Whites across the board. However, this advantage is smaller in established gateways (Brazil 2017). However, these findings differ by generation status, as health outcomes are worse for native-born Mexican-Americans in new destinations (Gresenz et al. 2012). More research compares mental health outcomes across destinations. Immigration itself is a process associated with increased stress, fear, and uncertainty (Gutierrez-Vazquez et al. 2018), which is often exacerbated in new destinations. Latino immigrant youth growing up in new immigrant destinations suffer from worse mental health than their peers in traditional gateways, including higher levels of daily depressive and anxiety symptoms (Abrego & Gonzales 2010; Brietzke & Perreira 2017; Portes & Fernández-Kelly 2008; Potochnick et al. 2012; Stone & Han 2004). Scholars link these patterns to the increased risk of raids, arrest, and deportation, reduced social- and health-service utilization, and increased isolation due to mistrust and fear (Cavazos-Rehg et al. 2007; Hardy et al. 2012; Padraza & Zhu 2015; Rhodes et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2019; Watson 2014). There is a dearth of research focusing on how immigration enforcement impacts the mental and emotional well-being of non-Latino immigrant-origin populations.

NEW DESTINATIONS AND NATIVE RESPONSE: ENFORCEMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND (REACTIVE) IDENTITY

The third mechanism linking geographic dispersion to immigrant incorporation relates to the threat hypothesis, which posits that as minority group size increases, it heightens the perceived economic and political threat posed to the majority, stimulating discrimination and undermining the life chances of minority group members (Chavez & Provine 2009). The rise of new destinations, which were marked by rapid population growth, coincided with increasingly punitive immigration enforcement, experiences of discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiment, and reactive identity formation.

The increasing criminalization of immigration, often aimed at redistricting movement, access to services, and rights has been well-documented (Arriaga 2017; Chacón 2012; Donato & Rodríguez 2014). While this is true at all levels of government, the general paralysis in federal legislation has encouraged a “devolution” of policy and enforcement to state and local actors, and attendant location-specific variation in enforcement context, and in particular a “process of exclusion worked upon Latinos in many southern communities” (Coleman 2012; Winders 2005, p. 685). Earlier spatial patterning of immigration enforcement along the U.S./Mexico border has shifted to the interior in recent years (Coleman & Kocher 2011), with restrictive federal and local-level policies and practices, clustered in new destinations, serving as a type of social control (Armenta 2016; Donato & Rodríguez 2014; Jones 2019). Scholars have sought to assess whether the geographic pattern of anti-immigration enforcement relates to demographic change, as the threat hypothesis suggests, or to other factors. However, several studies (Chavez & Provine 2009; Lewis et al. 2013; Shihadeh & Winters 2010; Stewart 2012) found that demographic, economic, criminal threats do not fully account for state-, and local-level adoption of anti-immigrant legislation

and enforcement practices, and suggest instead that conservative citizen ideology appears more determinative.

Intensified immigration enforcement and criminalization have far-reaching impacts on immigrant populations in new destinations (Hagan et al. 2011), as well as spillover consequences for native-born and legal permanent residents (Aranda et al. 2014). In the area of housing, Rugh and Hall (2016) have linked intensified immigration enforcement through 287(g) agreements with high Latino foreclosure rates. There is also research suggesting that the increased immigration enforcement also contributes to heightened fear and distrust of law enforcement, producing a “chill effect” of reduced willingness to contact police or assist in solving crimes that undermines public safety (Lewis & Ramakrishnan 2007; Ridgley 2008). Additionally, the particularly intense enforcement practices in new destinations have been blamed for worse mental health outcomes, including distress, vulnerability and anxiety (Hagan et al. 2011). While Latinos in new destinations report a deep mistrust of healthcare services and a tendency to delay seeking care compared with their non-Latino counterparts (Rhodes et al. 2015), immigration enforcement policies, such as Secure Communities, are argued to have a “chilling” effect on health care utilization. However, the strength of the effect is debated, and moderated by generation and legal status (Padraza & Zhu 2015).

The implementation of immigrant enforcement policies has also shaped local native-born sentiment towards immigrants in new destinations. Flores (2014) argues that new destination anti-immigrant ordinances (even those that are symbolic) may motivate nativist activism, hardening views of Latino immigrants and heightening fear of crime. As such, local- and state-level enforcement practices may negatively affect trajectories of incorporation. Given the dramatic increase in open hostility and hate crimes against Asians in recent decades, but especially during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, the virtual absence of research on local policy climate and Asian incorporation is highly problematic. While much enforcement is highly racialized and targeted toward to Latinos, the underlying nativist animosity propelling these policies could also affect Asians, as well as Africans and other Black immigrants.

There is a growing body of work examining immigrants’ perceptions and experiences of discrimination and racism in new destinations. Scholars largely agree that, due in part to heightened enforcement over time and specifically in new destinations, Latino immigrants face a more hostile climate in which to navigate identity, ethnicity, and racialization but findings vary with methodological approaches. Few studies explicitly compare the experiences of immigrants in new and traditional gateways, focusing instead on case studies of selected new destinations (Flippen & Parrado 2015; Marrow 2009a; Silver 2015; Smith & Winders 2008). Many scholars point to similarities between Black and Latino experiences of racialized discrimination (Almeida et al. 2016), suggesting that local context matters greatly in determining how immigrants experience discrimination in the wake of anti-immigrant legislation. Ebert and Ovink (2014) argue that exclusionary ordinances, rather than co-ethnic share alone, drives reports of discrimination, but that the presence of co-ethnics has a magnifying effect on immigrants’ perception and experiences of discrimination. Scholars argue that Latino immigrants in the “new South” also face multi-faceted racialization that focuses not just on perceived economic threat but also perceived criminality and negative

media coverage often similar to the experiences of African Americans (Brown 2013; Brown et al. 2018).

These experiences, and regional context more broadly, also shape racial identity formation and sense of belonging among Latinos (Vasquez-Tokos 2019). Scholars argue that in new destination racial hierarchies, Latino immigrants occupy an ambiguous space between Whites and Blacks. Marrow (2009b) argues that Latinos' status as a largely undocumented, darker-skinned, and lower socioeconomic status group positions them at a greater social distance from Whites. However, this experience is at odds with some Latinos' own perception of the U.S. racial hierarchy, including their own "anti-Black stereotypes, observations of Whites' unique stigmatization of Blacks, and (mis)perceptions of 'discrimination' by Blacks" (Alcalde 2016; Marrow 2009b, p. 1047; McClain et al. 2006) which often leads Latino immigrants to identify more strongly with Whites, and contributes to a self-identification that is in-line with a black/non-black conception of racial boundaries. In contrast, Jones (2012) suggests that these meanings evolve over time. She argues that as anti-immigrant legislation, economic competition, and demographic change became starker in new destinations, Mexican immigrants often assert a race-based Latino identity that derives from their perceived similar experience with discrimination as African Americans. In line with Jones, Winders (2007) argues that although there is a tenuous, Black-Latino identification in new southern destinations, the politics of identity are complex. Research examining Asian exposure to discrimination and racial identification in new destinations remains virtually nonexistent.

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In their 2005 assessment of the literature on immigrant incorporation, Waters and Jimenez noted that much of the literature on new destinations was divorced from broader theoretical debates on immigration and assimilation. Ten years later, the National Academies of Sciences Panel on the Integration of Immigrants into American Society similarly concluded that "current research-based understanding of the local context of reception is regrettably incomplete and often superficial" (Waters & Pineau 2016, p. 208). Methodological challenges associated with new destinations research has been a major limitation to more decisive theoretical and empirical advances. Assessing the implications of geographic dispersion for immigrant adaptation and incorporation is an inherently comparative project, and yet much of the work in the area is either not directly comparable to research in traditional destinations or fraught with definitional challenges. Numerous qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods case studies have sought to describe conditions and incorporation processes in new destinations. While rapidly growing, immigrant populations in new destinations are relatively small, and non-random or targeted random sampling strategies are common, potentially failing to capture the whole range of experience in these areas (Parrado et al. 2005). While this work compliments the wealth of information on more traditional gateways, it is not directly comparable and is thus only suggestive of whether dispersion promotes integration. Efforts to assess change over time in new destinations also seldom have the benefit of longitudinal data, and it is not clear whether growing pessimism reflects actual deterioration in conditions specific to those areas, or a more general, national shift.

Work that is more directly comparative faces other challenges. Often based on Census or other nationally representative data, these studies rely heavily on typologies of destination types, comparing outcomes and trends across them. However, studies based on all-immigrant or pan-ethnic patterns mask significant heterogeneity in average resources and settlement histories across groups, including important shifts in recent years. Specifically, the sharp drop in low-skill labor demand associated with Great Recession, coupled with demographic change and economic growth in Mexico, resulted in dramatic change in national origins among Latin American migrants in favor of Central America, particularly El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, where violence and political instability continue to spur out-migration. The extent to which Mexican concentration benefits Hondurans, for example, is obscured by the reliance on pan-ethnic labels.

At the same time, studies distinguishing between national origins struggle to identify common criteria for identifying new and traditional destinations. Most definitions use some combination of “base” and “pace” (Singer 2004). That is, traditional areas are expected to have large base populations prior to 1990, while new destinations are expected to lack this base *and* have a rapid pace of growth over time. However, thresholds that are useful for identifying new and traditional gateways for small groups tend to work poorly for larger groups. Likewise, while traditional Mexican gateways include a wide array of urban *and* rural destinations, other groups were historically far more concentrated in a handful of large cities. For example, in 1970 fully 70 percent of Puerto Ricans lived in New York City alone, and even today one-third of Asians live in just three cities (New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco). While there were also historic Puerto Rican communities in Honolulu and Miami, Chinese communities in Mississippi, and Vietnamese communities in Louisiana (Bankston III 2007; Joshi & Desai 2013), traditional areas for many groups are far less diverse than for Mexicans, making it difficult to compare new and traditional destinations of similar sizes and economic bases. Moreover, some groups, like West Indians, remain highly concentrated and only very recently show tepid signs of dispersion (Kritz et al. 2013), and conventional conceptions of traditional gateways may not be appropriate at all for many African immigrants, who only entered the United States in large numbers in recent years.

Given these challenges, future work should move beyond the blunt instrument of destination typologies to delve deeper into the mechanisms linking immigrant geography and opportunity, taking care to account for selective in- and out-migration. This includes distinguishing between the impact of co-ethnic communities per se from those of aggregate labor and housing markets, educational structures, and so on. We also need to more precisely identify which aspects of co-ethnic communities matter for incorporation, beyond historical presence. Community-level social capital is potentially reflected in the educational composition; share foreign born; share of immigrants with longer periods of U.S. settlement, English language fluency, and legal status (Goodwin-White 2016; Ludwig-Dehm & Iceland 2017); and level of ethnic entrepreneurship (Shin & Liang 2014). Similarly, levels of co-ethnic isolation or concentrated disadvantage may be more important than when communities formed in shaping outcomes (Vélez & Burgos 2010). Finally, a more direct measure of both institutional resources and policy context is an important goal. For instance, Wong and Garcia (2016) show that state-level variation in immigrant-serving organizations positively predict youth applying for DACA. Likewise, studies seeking to understand the

enactment of anti-immigrant policies have developed methods to quantify local ordinances and policies (Parrado 2012; Varsanyi 2011). More could be done to link these measures to variation in incorporation outcomes.

Future research should also do more to understand and analyze the impact of dynamism in new destinations. Some temporal variation was already incorporated in Singer's 2004 typology, which distinguished between earlier- and later-emerging new destinations and also continuous gateways such as New York City and those that emerged after World War II, such as Los Angeles. However, less attention has been paid to subsequent change. With the Great Recession, some new destinations continued to grow while others languished, and even newer communities continued to form (Ellis et al. 2014). While these patterns may be more of a setback than a permanent reversal of new destinations' fortunes, continued change is inevitable. The geography of employment is subject to both short- and long-term variation, as are patterns of migration from abroad. It remains to be seen how new destinations evolved during the 2010s, especially in light of the sharp drop in net migration from Mexico following the Great Recession and shift in immigrant composition in favor of Asians and other Latin Americans. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic reminds us that major unanticipated reconfigurations in the geography of jobs and settlement are possible. It is thus especially important to develop tools and methodological approaches that can capture the diversity in immigrant destination trajectories, and their implications for influence of local opportunity structures on immigrant adaptation.

The literature on new destinations, and immigrant incorporation more broadly, would also benefit from greater application of intersectionality theory. In particular, both selectivity into new destinations and the impact of context of reception differ by gender (Flippen 2014; Flippen & Kim 2015; Hofmann & Reiter 2018) and yet systematic analysis of gendered differences in the link between immigrant dispersion and opportunity remain rare. For some outcomes, particularly relating to family behavior and gender roles, the sex ratio or other gendered aspects of migration flows could be important for outcomes, particularly among women. The literature would also benefit from more sustained attention to how race/phenotype, social class, and legal status intersect with the context of reception to structure immigrant outcomes.

Another critique of new destination research centers on identifying the most appropriate reference group, and whether it is simply too soon to adequately evaluate their impact. Spatial assimilation theories posit that immigrants cluster in enclaves when they first arrive and need cultural and institutional support and move out as they move up socioeconomically. As sites with both recent and long-settled immigrants, as well as multiple immigrant generations, traditional gateways offered meaningful settings in which to test these theories. The extension to new destinations, whose growth was fueled by direct migration from abroad and internal migration of the least established members of traditional gateways, is thus complicated. These communities by definition lack the diversity in U.S. experience that you would expect to structure locational attainment. There is evidence that even in traditional gateways, spatial assimilation is not substantial until the third generation (Brown 2007), so it is perhaps neither surprising nor necessarily alarming that newcomers cluster in new destinations. The real impact on incorporation will not be known until populations in

these communities mature, and even more importantly, until their children come of age. The fact that many new destinations are in regions where social mobility is relatively low (Chetty 2014) suggests potential headwinds in terms of intergenerational advancement, though it is important to note that assessing the impact of dispersion on long-term mobility prospects will be further complicated by the fact that the second generation may not be content to stay in the new destinations (Ellis & Goodwin-White 2006). Disentangling the implications of dispersion for second and later generations' educational attainment from that of their career trajectories, that are potentially less geographically bounded, is thus of paramount concern.

Finally, the overwhelming majority of studies on new immigrant destinations consider absolute measures of incorporation. Some scholars emphasize the lower cost of living, lower crime, and potentially better living conditions in new destinations relative to large traditional gateways (Flippen 2010; Kandel et al. 2011; Ramey 2013). But aside from potential "quality of life" considerations, future research could also do more to consider the implications of geographic dispersion for relative social position. Internal migration, and dispersion more broadly, can result in higher social standing relative to others, even when it does not raise absolute wages (Flippen 2013). Many traditional immigrant gateways average high incomes, but also high levels of inequality. Dispersion to lower inequality areas could result in a better relative position and lower relative deprivation than in traditional gateways. While a handful of studies consider the position of Latino immigrants relative to African Americans in selected new destinations (Adelman & Tsao 2016; Crowley et al. 2015), more systematic attention is needed to understand how geographic dispersion shapes immigrants' position in local ethno-racial and income hierarchies.

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