THE IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLD AND SPATIAL ASSIMILATION: PARTNERSHIP, NATIVITY, AND NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATION[1]

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Abstract: Spatial assimilation theory asserts that immigrants disperse from ethnic neighborhoods as they translate socioeconomic gains into more housing space and better residential environs. Models of this process typically relate the characteristics of individual immigrants to a locational outcome. The research described in this paper also considers immigrants in neighborhood context, but asks to what extent partnership and household composition shapes neighborhood location. This move "scales down" spatial assimilation research from the neighborhood and "scales up" more general assimilation scholarship from the individual to consider the household as a key decision-making unit. A sizeable proportion of immigrants have partners of a different nativity and this paper builds on this observation. Immigrants who are not partnered with a member of the same national origin group are much less likely to live in ethnic neighborhoods. The results have implications for future work on immigrant assimilation, conceptualizations of immigrant households, and residential segregation. [Key words: spatial assimilation, partnership, households.]

INTRODUCTION

The central issue in assimilation research is the difference between immigrants and natives measured along social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Assessments of the extent and direction of the immigrant-native gap in employment, housing, language ability, scholastic achievement, health outcomes, and marital and religious behavior pepper the immigration literature. A smaller but no less energetic stream of scholarship addresses the question of where immigrants live in relation to natives and how the settlement patterns of immigrants correspond to their socioeconomic gains. Unsurprisingly, these appraisals of

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spatial assimilation generally conclude that immigrants are less likely to live in ethnic neighborhoods the longer they have lived in the United States, and as they make gains in education, income, and English language ability (e.g., Logan et al., 2002; Clark and Blue 2004). Missing from these accounts of residential choice, however, is a connection with literature that concerns partner choice. A sizeable proportion of immigrants are partnered with someone who is not from the same national origin group. Accordingly, this paper explores the effect of partner nationality on immigrant residential location.

Although we are by no means the first to consider household characteristics in a study of spatial assimilation, very few investigators include in their analysis the question of how difference in the birthplace of household members and their relationship to each other plays into broader patterns of neighborhood formation and, more generally, urban form (one notable exception is White and Sassler, 2000). Households are, and always have been, assorted and structurally diverse; this variability seems likely to affect processes of neighborhood-scale assimilation. For the most part, previous spatial assimilation analysis only captures this variability through measures of household size and the presence of children. The argument here augments the literature by adding whether or not households include partnerships of the same nativity and establishing what effect this household-scale mixing has on immigrant neighborhood geography.

This emphasis turns the attention of spatial assimilation away from assessments of individual socio-spatial differentiation toward considerations of how the lives of immigrants and others intertwine within the household and the effects those partnerships have on neighborhood choice. By infusing the household scale into a study of neighborhood process we seek to "re-scale" spatial assimilation theory and research. Put another way, we want to widen the view of spatial assimilation research from individuals in neighborhoods to relationships between individuals in households in their neighborhood context. Our study of immigrant settlement patterns in greater Los Angeles shows that by illuminating the diversity within households in their neighborhood context, we cast new light on immigrant assimilation, conceptualizations of immigrant households, and residential segregation.

THEORY

Research on the spatial assimilation of immigrants assesses the degree to which individuals, differentiated by nativity, share neighborhood space with other immigrants or the native born (Massey and Denton, 1985). At the heart of spatial assimilation theory rests the question: is the initial settlement of individual immigrants in immigrant-dominated neighborhoods a transitional moment in a longer-term sequence of residential adjustments or something more durable? Most new immigrants to urban centers settle initially with kith and kin in ethnic enclaves.[3] In the past, these enclaves have typically been in the central city, but increasingly such settlements now appear in suburban locations (Li, 1998a, 1998b). An assimilative trajectory holds that with time in the country, individual immigrants frequently translate social progress (measured in terms of income, or occupation,

[3]Philpott (1978) comments on the degree to which these enclaves are same group concentrations or mixes of different nationalities. While this important story contrasts the mixing of White immigrants in neighborhoods with the ghettoization of Blacks (cf. Peach, 1996), it remains silent on immigrant mixing *within* households.

or a shedding of their ethnic or racial distinctiveness) into improved residential location (Philpott, 1978; Newbold and Spindler, 2001; Clark, 2003; Clark and Blue, 2004). Further, these socioeconomic gains tend to diminish the need for geographic proximity to co-ethnic resources. Such spatial assimilation is also often characterized as a process of residential integration with the majority White population in a suburban context (e.g., Massey and Denton, 1985; Fong and Shibuya, 2000). The decades-old presence of a "Chinatown" or a "Little Italy" in a metropolitan area, however, signals that spatial assimilation is by no means universal in time and space (Pamuk, 2004). Some immigrants and their children remain concentrated in certain neighborhoods where dense social networks provide them with information about local housing and labor markets. This social fabric often also helps maintain transnational solidarities that connect the immigrant neighborhood with origin communities. A debate in the literature thus centers on the timing and geographies of immigrant residential dispersion (cf. Logan et al., 2002; Pamuk, 2004; Wright et al., 2005).

In this paper, we do not intend to choose between an enclave and an assimilative model of immigrant residential behavior (cf. Logan et al., 2002; Hiebert and Ley, 2003). We seek instead to transcend these canonical approaches by shifting attention from individuals (native- or foreign-born; minority or majority) in neighborhoods to households in residential space. This move begins by acknowledging that any mixing between groups that does occur happens not just within neighborhoods but also within households. Thus the main difference between our approach and that of previous research is the recognition that immigrant households are complex and diverse. To simplify matters, this study hones in on the nativity of partners within immigrant households and asks to what extent partnership choice affects neighborhood location.

Studying the effect of such household mixing on residential choice turns the established view of the relationship between residential space and partner choice (centered on predicting partner choice based on levels of segregation) on its head. Geographically oriented research on intermarriage and mixed-race partnership usually asks how space affects partnership between different groups. The well-established argument is that spatial proximity elevates the chances of contact leading to partnership (e.g., Bossard, 1932; Clark, 1952; Peach, 1980; Morgan, 1981; Cready and Saenz, 1997). Other factors that affect partner choice involve the heterogeneity of the community, the opportunity for intergroup interaction, and group size (Blau, 1977; see also Kalmijn, 1998; Houston et al., 2006). In contrast, rather than look at how the organization of neighborhoods by nativity or race fashions partner choice, we seek to understand how neighborhood choice is shaped by partnership and household composition. This move "scales down" spatial assimilation research from the neighborhood and "scales up" more general assimilation scholarship from the individual to consider the household as a key decision-making unit.

The idea that theories of neighborhood location should gravitate toward the household is not new. Residential mobility approaches to urban social geography, especially ones centered on the idea of a family life cycle (e.g., Rossi, 1955; Stapleton, 1980; Clark and Dieleman, 1996), foreground household-level decision-making. Such approaches, however, rarely take account of intra-household mixing by race, ethnicity, or nativity. Similarly, spatial assimilation models take into consideration household size, composition, income, etc., but the approach is one that gravitates to individuals—the household head and/or the head's spouse (e.g., Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001; Logan et al., 2002)

or all immigrants (e.g., Allen and Turner, 1996). In contrast, we widen the scope of inquiry to account for relationships between individuals. Thus the almost banal observation that individual immigrants often live collectively in *diverse* households in neighborhoods opens up a new research question.

White and Sassler's (2000) research comes closest to the goals of this paper. They measured neighborhood attainment (using a special tabulation of the 1980 census) with an emphasis on mixed-race partnering. They found for some Latino and Black native-born and immigrant groups that marriage to White spouses had a significant effect on neighborhood location, controlling for income or education. Non-White householders partnered with Whites were more likely to reside in higher-status neighborhoods than those partnered within group, controlling for family and personal characteristics. In contrast, marriage to someone not White (by Whites or minorities) led to residence in lower-status neighborhoods.

Echoing White and Sassler (2000), our study converges on the household as an intervening scale between the individual and the neighborhood. We situate our research in that subfield concerned with understanding the forces that lead newcomers to remain in or leave an immigrant residential concentration. Households, like neighborhoods, vary in terms of their internal constitution. We take account of partner variation by nativity to model the probability of living in an immigrant enclave in Los Angles. We hypothesize that partnering outside the group will lower the probability of enclave location.

The validity of this argument hinges on the scale and spaces of geographic proximity in partner choice. If an immigrant's propensity to partner with a co-national is largely dependent on whether or not s/he locates in ethnic neighborhoods, then the theory and models we present here have the causative arrow pointing in the wrong direction. Historically, neighborhood composition likely had strong effects on out-partnering rates because spaces of social contact beyond the neighborhood were limited. Today, however, there are very good reasons to question the strength of this linkage. Perhaps the most persuasive of these is the noticeable rise in rates of mixed-race marriage of late despite stable or only slowly declining levels of residential segregation. In 1960, 0.4 percent of all marriages were mixed race (excluding unions between Latinos and non-Latinos of the same race). In 1992, such marriages accounted for 2.2 percent of all marriages (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). The literature on mixed-race partnering may offer an even more compelling reason for questioning the long-held belief in the power of proximity, at least at the micro-scale of the neighborhood: neighborhoods account for only a small fraction of the spaces couples shared before they met. In one of the few studies to speak to the issue of where couples meet, Kalmijn and Flap (2001), for example, note that less than 10% of Dutch couples ever shared a neighborhood environment. Bozon and Heran (1989) reported that the importance of the neighborhood as a meeting place has declined steadily in 20th century France, falling to a remarkably low level of 5% in the 1980s (Bozon and Heran, 1989). In light of such findings Kalmijn (1998, p. 403) concluded that "[a]lthough it has not often been studied where couples meet… the settings sociologists analyze are *not* the most common meeting places" (our emphasis). Thus, the evidence in favor of a causal link between shared neighborhood space and partnership formation, although sparse, is weak at best. No doubt, the geographic region in which potential partners exist still encompasses the residential neighborhood, but it almost certainly ranges well beyond this limited space for the vast majority (see Houston et al., 2006, for a

review). The spatial assimilation implications of these partnership choices for immigrant neighborhood geography are what interest us here.

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Models and Data

This paper relies on information about individuals, aggregated into households and recorded by census tract, derived from the long form of the 1990 Census of Population and Housing. These data are confidential and are only accessible in secure facilities; their use requires prior approval by the Census Bureau. The data resemble the well-known Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS) and include the salient characteristics of individuals, such as their place of birth, "race," age, occupation, when they "came to stay"[4] in the United States, etc. Unlike the PUMS, they provide place of residence by census tract, units that usually range between 4,000 and 8,000 people, and are available in a much larger sample of one in six households (compared to the 1 in 20 sample of PUMS). This study focuses on immigrants to greater Los Angeles—the area comprised of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties—and on the residential patterns of the eight most numerous foreign-born groups in the Los Angeles metropolitan area (Mexicans, Salvadorans, Filipinos, Guatemalans, South Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Iranians).

The centerpiece of the analysis is a collection of multinomial logit models, predicting the likelihood of an immigrant living in a community disproportionately comprised of compatriots. More formally, we ask: what is the probability of an adult immigrant (i.e., foreign born, greater than 18 years old) of specific nativity living in a particular class of immigrant tract? For each group, we classify immigrant tract using location quotients. A tract location quotient is the ratio of two percentages: a group's percentage share of the tract population divided by its share of the Los Angeles CMSA population. After considerable exploration of the data to identify natural breaks that worked simultaneously for all eight groups, we chose to define a "highly clustered" tract as having a location quotient greater than 5, meaning that there are five times more people from a group living there than if the group's population dispersed evenly across LA. A "moderately clustered" tract in our scheme has a location quotient ranging between 1.5–5, and a "non-clustered" tract between 0–1.5. Logan et al. (2002) used a different classification procedure for neighborhood clustering based on spatial autocorrelation statistics, but in comparisons of that scheme with one very much like ours, they reported no substantive differences between the approaches.

We use the following independent variables: cohort of arrival, sex, age, English language ability, education, married or partnered, homeowner, children present, household income, and size of household. For example, we expect more recently arrived immi-

[4]When people "came to stay" may not reflect exactly how long they have resided in the United States. Circulation and transnational migration complicate what it means to "stay" as do immigration status adjustments. On average, those who report an earlier date at which they came to stay have probably been in the country for longer than those who report they came to stay later (Ellis and Wright, 1998).

grants to cluster more than those who have been in the country relatively longer. We also expect that immigrants who speak English well and/or are homeowners to be less likely to reside in a clustered tract. Children present and household size both act as controls. Two of our independent variables, however, are unorthodox: mixed household/partner (individual is partner living with household head of different national origin: yes = 1, no = 0), and mixed household/head (individual is household head living with a partner of different national origin: yes = 1, no = 0). These two variables measure types of mixing, dependent on whether the household head or the partner is a member of the immigrant group under investigation. As such they explore the role of ethnic mixing at the household scale on ethnic concentration in neighborhoods.

Our models are very similar to those used in previous investigations of immigrant neighborhood concentration in terms of the definition of concentration and the selection of independent variables (e.g., Logan et al., 2002; Clark and Blue, 2004). We depart from these existing specifications by choosing deliberately not to focus exclusively on household heads or individuals divorced from their household context. Using household heads has distinct advantages, simplifying the analysis and allowing us to exploit household data collected in the census. One problem, however, is that—as we will show—significant numbers of each immigrant group do not live in households comprised of people of the same nativity. Thus, households in which the household head is native born but other adults are immigrant become lost in analysis. Also, a household where the head is an immigrant but other members are native born is assumed by previous approaches to be singularly an immigrant household. In mixed households there may be a pull toward living in the residential concentration of all relevant groups; or, alternatively, perhaps a desire to move to neutral ground. The other weakness in this approach is that many more men than women identify as household heads on the census. Thus such an approach restricts the number of women considered unless researchers artificially assign some women as household head so that their characteristics and not that of their partners are used in analysis.

In response, this study uses individual adult immigrants as the observational unit, but with some important restrictions. We created samples for each immigrant group that included household heads and members of the group partnered (married or unmarried) with a household head from another group. We constructed two variables to distinguish mixing: mixed household/head is a dummy variable that identifies those persons who are heads of household and partnered with someone who is not a co-national; and a second dummy variable, mixed household/partner, which identifies those persons who are partners but in households where the head is not a co-national. The data set contains all adult group members who are single, or partnered with a member of the same group, or partnered with a member of a different group. With this sampling strategy we increase the number of women, which provides improved insight into gender effects on immigrant residential processes. The sample also incorporates some of the complexity of the immigrant family, allowing us to begin to ask questions about how immigrant household living arrangements relate to residential choice—specifically how mixed relationships affect the propensity to live in an immigrant cluster. The growth of mixed households leads to questions about their residential choice: do they choose neighborhoods associated with either partner's group? Or do they seek out a mixed neighborhood? Little is known on this

subject but it seems likely that mixing in the household reduces the propensity to live in an immigrant cluster associated with the group of either partner.

Results

Table 1 reports the means and proportions of the dependent and independent variables. All groups except Mexicans are distributed relatively evenly across the categories of residential concentration. Some immigrant groups are more likely to live in highly clustered tracts than others—the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Iranians stand out in this regard. In contrast, only a very small portion of Mexicans live in highly clustered tracts. Most Mexicans live in neighborhoods that have location quotient values between 1.5 and 5. This relative absence of highly clustered tracts for Mexicans stems from their very large population within the Los Angeles CMSA. In 1990, their population in the region was just shy of 1.7 million, over six times the size of the next largest immigrant group, Filipinos. With such numbers Mexicans disperse over many tracts; it is more difficult for highly clustered neighborhoods of Mexicans to emerge or be sustained. Nevertheless, most Mexicans live in what we define as moderate clusters.

Group differences in the distribution across cohorts of arrival reflect particular immigration histories. Mexicans are well represented in all arrival periods, as are Chinese and Filipino immigrants. Others, notably Salvadorans and Vietnamese, are not. (Their presence in the region grew substantially after 1975 when they began to flee their homelands in large numbers.) The proportion female is substantially less than 50% but it reflects the particular way we circumscribed our sample to assess mixed partnership effects: it is the fraction of women in each group who are either household heads or who are partnered with a household head who is not a co-national. The other individual variables, with the exception of partnership rates, conform to expectations of differences between groups in human capital and household resources/structure.

The overall rate of partnership is relatively even across groups ranging from 77.4% for Koreans to 68.6% for Iranians. Most interesting about these statistics, however, are the proportions of each group partnered with someone who is not a co-national (we call this "partnering out"), and how this varies by national origin. Figure 1 extracts these data and summarizes them visually. The proportion who partner out is lowest for Koreans at 13.2% (the sum of the two mixed bars) and highest for Guatemalans at 36.1%. Thus, there are more Guatemalans who partner with a non-Guatemalan than with a co-national. Group population size probably affects these proportions (Blau, 1977); but nearly a quarter of Mexicans, who we have already noted are a very large group, partner with non–co-nationals. In two of the groups—Mexicans and Iranians—there is a higher proportion of mixed relationships in which the head is partnering with someone who is not a co-national (mixed household/head); in the other six groups mixed relationships more likely involve a head who is not a co-national (mixed household/partner).

Who are the outpartners of these immigrants? The top panel of Table 2 charts outpartnering by race and ethnicity when immigrants are head of household; the bottom panel repeats this exercise when immigrants are the partner. To help navigation and interpretation of this table, we note the following three points. First, own immigrant group members are removed from the appropriate racial and ethnic groups delimiting foreign-born heads and partners. Second, observe that the grand totals in the rightmost column are

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR MODEL VARIABLES

	Mexicans	Chinese	Koreans	Filipina/os	Salvadorans	Guatemalans	Vietnamese	Iranians
Dependent variable								
LQ 0–1.5 (non-clustered) (%)	31.8	27.5	26.8	37.4	25.4	26.5	24.6	19.9
LQ 1.5–5 (moderately clustered) (%)	67.1	27.8	40.3	38.0	37.5	37.1	29.8	28.3
LQ 5 + (highly clustered) (%)	1.1	44.7	32.9	24.6	37.1	36.4	45.6	51.9
Independent variables								
1985–1990 (%)	12.2	19.1	22.6	15.8	14.0	19.4	14.0	27.6
1980–1985 (%)	16.7	24.6	29.5	25.1	42.9	34.2	38.2	19.5
1975–1980 (%)	21.4	19.1	22.2	19.0	25.6	20.5	42.7	35.3
1970–1975 (%)	19.5	12.5	16.1	17.4	11.2	14.6	3.4	8.0
Pre-1970 (%)	30.1	24.7	9.6	22.6	6.4	11.4	1.6	9.6
Female (%)	27.6	29.1	27.0	39.9	39.6	38.8	28.1	20.8
Age (years)	39	45	44	43	36	36	40	42
Poor English (%)	47.7	33.4	41.2	12.7	48.7	45.4	36.3	22.8
Education (years)	9	14	14	15	9	9	12	14
Partnered (%)	75.3	73.4	77.4	74.9	71.1	70.4	72.5	68.6
Mixed household/partner (%)	11.2	11.7	9.6	18.4	17.3	18.9	9.1	7.6
Mixed household/head (%)	12.3	10.0	3.6	7.4	13.9	17.2	6.0	14.7
Homeowner (%)	36.5	69.1	45.9	59.3	17.7	18.5	45.5	47.6
Number of children <18	1.9	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.5	0.8
Household income	$32,255	$52,780	$45,700	$54,625	$27,660	$28,847	$41,689	$48,132
Household size	4.9	3.3	3.4	3.7	4.6	4.5	4.6	3.1

Source: U.S. Census (1990).

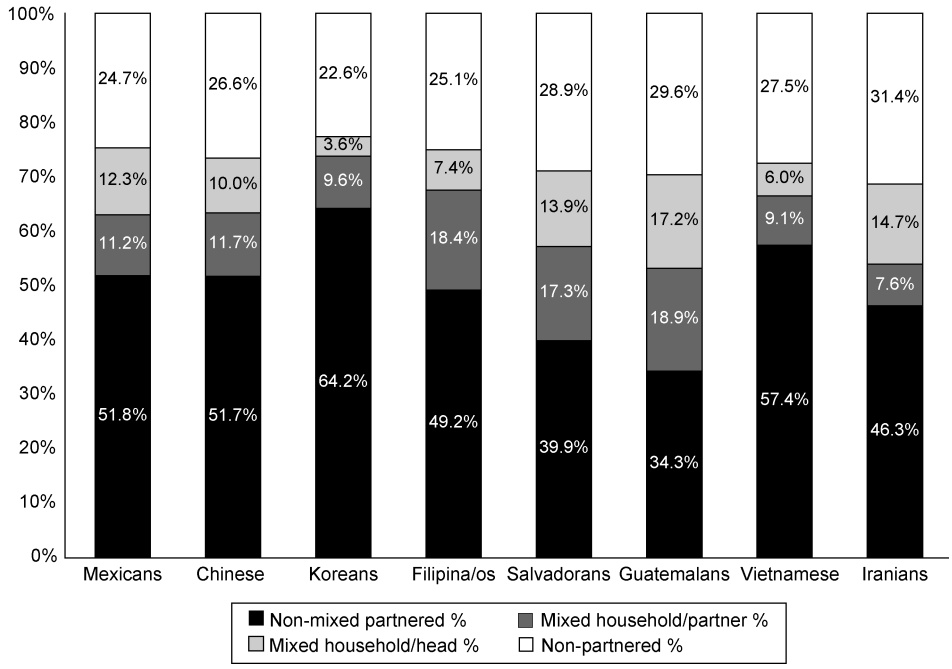

Fig. 1. Distribution of household partnership types for various immigrant groups, Los Angeles CMSA 1990. *Source:* U.S. Census (1990).

the sum of the foreign-born and U.S.-born totals and that they conform to the percentages of mixed household/head or mixed household/partner in Figure 1. And third, the three highest percentages in each row are highlighted to ease interpretation of trends.

Immigrant outpartnering most often stays within U.S.- or foreign-born race/ethnic groups or involves U.S.-born Whites. U.S.-born Blacks are highlighted only once in the table; as heads of household with Filipino partners. Less predictable is variation by immigrant group in the percentage split between U.S.- and foreign-born partners/heads. As partners and household heads, Chinese and Iranians both outpartner with U.S. and foreign groups in roughly equal proportion. Korean-born household heads do the same, but Korean partners are over twice as likely to outpartner with someone who is U.S.-born (mostly Whites) than foreign-born. Vietnamese reverse the Korean pattern; Vietnamese household heads are over twice as likely to outpartner with a foreign-born compared with a U.S.-born partner, whereas Vietnamese partners choose U.S.- and foreign-born household heads in equal proportion. Both Mexican and Filipino heads of household and partners are more likely to outpartner with a U.S.-born person than an immigrant; but Salvadorans and Guatemalans exhibit a reverse of this trend. Among other questions, these outpartnership combinations certainly raise questions about where in the metropolitan area these mixed households live. At this stage, however, we focus on an important but as yet unanswered precursor question: does partnering outside the national origin group (regardless of who it is with) have any impact on the group's residential concentration?

TABLE 2. MIXED HOUSEHOLD PARTNERSHIP COMBINATIONS FOR VARIOUS IMMIGRANT GROUPS, LOS ANGELES, 1990[a]

	Mixed household/head—Household head member of immigrant group												
	Foreign-born partners—Excluding own group						U.S.-born partners						
Head	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	FB total	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	U.S. total	Grand total
Chinese	5.19%	0.00%	0.25%	0.00%	0.43%	5.88%	1.88%	0.00%	0.28%	0.01%	1.98%	4.14%	10.02%
Korean	2.13%	0.00%	0.10%	0.00%	0.03%	2.25%	0.40%	0.03%	0.08%	0.00%	0.83%	1.35%	3.60%
Vietnamese	4.20%	0.05%	0.41%	0.00%	0.10%	4.76%	0.19%	0.00%	0.08%	0.00%	0.95%	1.23%	5.98%
Filipino	1.34%	0.00%	0.68%	0.00%	0.37%	2.39%	1.04%	0.25%	0.75%	0.13%	2.85%	5.01%	7.40%
Mexican	0.11%	0.01%	3.63%	0.01%	0.14%	3.89%	0.02%	0.08%	6.61%	0.07%	1.63%	8.41%	12.30%
Salvadoran	0.17%	0.00%	11.16%	0.02%	0.10%	11.46%	0.00%	0.14%	1.31%	0.07%	0.89%	2.40%	13.86%
Guatemalan	0.07%	0.14%	13.97%	0.06%	0.21%	14.46%	0.00%	0.24%	1.57%	0.00%	0.91%	2.72%	17.18%
Iranian	0.72%	0.00%	1.63%	0.00%	4.83%	7.19%	0.21%	0.00%	1.19%	0.12%	5.98%	7.51%	14.70%

	Mixed household/partner—Partner member of immigrant group												
	Foreign-born heads—Excluding own group						U.S.-born heads						
Partner	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	FB total	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	U.S. total	Grand total
Chinese	3.76%	0.04%	0.29%	0.06%	0.74%	4.90%	1.88%	0.31%	0.15%	0.07%	4.35%	6.76%	11.65%
Korean	1.98%	0.00%	0.26%	0.07%	0.38%	2.69%	0.72%	0.39%	0.38%	0.07%	5.32%	6.88%	9.57%
Vietnam	4.25%	0.00%	0.28%	0.04%	0.26%	4.83%	0.39%	0.16%	0.08%	0.06%	3.55%	4.24%	9.07%
Filipino	1.22%	0.05%	0.56%	0.12%	1.03%	2.98%	1.60%	1.46%	1.20%	0.40%	10.73%	15.38%	18.36%
Mexican	0.19%	0.02%	2.50%	0.06%	0.32%	3.09%	0.05%	0.15%	5.50%	0.08%	2.36%	8.14%	11.23%
Salvadoran	0.48%	0.08%	12.27%	0.16%	0.36%	13.35%	0.06%	0.37%	1.70%	0.21%	1.64%	3.97%	17.33%
Guatemalan	0.34%	0.05%	13.48%	0.14%	0.82%	14.83%	0.03%	0.11%	1.46%	0.16%	2.33%	4.09%	18.92%
Iranian	0.24%	0.00%	0.09%	0.08%	3.20%	3.61%	0.15%	0.14%	0.12%	0.21%	3.38%	3.99%	7.60%

[a]The three highest percentages in each row are highlighted.
Source: U.S. Census (1990).

The modeling results are summarized in two ways: first, by reviewing the coefficients for the predictor variables and second, by illustrating the effect of these coefficients on probabilities of clustering. Multinomial logit models use a base outcome category against which the coefficients for the remaining outcomes are estimated. Thus a three-category multinomial logit model produces two sets of coefficients. We selected "living in a non-cluster tract" as the base category, so the model yields one set of coefficients for the probability of living in a moderately clustered tract versus an unclustered tract (MC vs. U) and another for the probability of living in a highly clustered tract versus an unclustered tract (HC vs. U). As a result, Table 3 consists of pairs of columns for these sets of coefficients, one pair for each immigrant group. The table also divides less obviously into three sets of rows: The first set is associated with cohort of arrival, the second with individual level variables and the third may be broadly understood as pertaining to the immigrant household.

Results, of course, vary by immigrant group. This should come as no surprise given the different sizes of the immigrant groups, the different contexts of arrival, and the different histories of immigration to the United States. As expected, we found time since arrival (the focus of much spatial assimilation research) played a role in the chances of an immigrant living in an immigrant cluster, although not always in the expected direction. In most cases, immigrants who arrived more than 20 years ago are consistently less likely to live in a clustered tract than the most recent arrivals, although the effect is not significant for all groups. Time of arrival, however, has no relation to the probability of an immigrant living in a cluster for newcomers from El Salvador or Guatemala who arrived in the last 20 years or for native-born Chinese who arrived in the last 15 years. Of all eight groups, the model results for Iranians align most closely with expectations: Relative to 1985–1990 arrivals, Iranians generally show a decreasing likelihood of clustering with increased cohort vintage.

Mexicans follow an unusual pattern. Irrespective of cohort, they are more prone to live in a moderately clustered tract than a highly clustered tract (which is to be expected given the sparse distribution of highly clustered tracts for Mexicans). Surprisingly, those who have been in the U.S. longer than the 1985–1990 arrivals (the excluded category) are *more* likely to live in moderately clustered tracts than unclustered ones, an effect that is strongest for those who came in the early 1970s. Such an outcome is puzzling although consistent with the findings of Logan et al. (2002). One explanation is that the most recent arrivals were seeking out new residential environs, possibly because traditional neighborhoods had few housing opportunities (crowding) or because of weak network connections to Mexicans who had been in Los Angeles for some time.

In terms of the individual-level variables, the most successful predictors of living in an immigrant concentration are English language ability and education. Immigrants who can speak English well and who are educated are relatively less likely to live in an immigrant cluster. As others have noted (e.g., Logan et al., 2002), the effect of language on residential location may of course be reciprocal; residential clustering with others of the same nativity could beget poor linguistic acculturation. Nevertheless, the relationship between English language ability and immigrant cluster location is strong and quite consistent across groups.

The household-scale results vary across groups. Homeownership is strongly related to residence outside an immigrant neighborhood. The income results, however, suggest that

TABLE 3. MULTINOMIAL LOGIT REGRESSION RESULTS[a]

	Mexicans		Chinese		Koreans		Filipinos	
	MC v. U	HC v. U	MC v. U	HC v. U	MC v. U	HC v. U	MC v. U	HC v. U
1980–1985	0.082**	–0.094	–0.093	–0.071	0.028	–0.076	0.021	0.1
	0.031	0.127	0.088	0.076	0.093	0.093	0.074	0.088
1975–1980	0.244***	–0.504***	–0.0359	–0.074	–0.157	–0.418***	–0.08	0.099
	0.031	0.142	0.095	0.084	0.098	0.101	0.081	0.095
1970–1975	0.293***	–0.800***	–0.135	–0.257**	–0.358**	–0.715***	–0.184*	–0.117
	0.033	0.166	0.103	0.092	0.105	0.112	0.083	0.099
Pre-1970	0.125***	–1.327***	–0.364***	–0.727***	–0.939***	–1.340***	–0.364***	–0.234*
	0.035	0.206	0.096	0.087	0.127	0.145	0.085	0.102
Female	–0.005	–0.224	–0.012	–0.064	–0.267*	–0.451***	0.044	0.087
	0.024	0.135	0.087	0.076	0.107	0.112	0.068	0.079
Age	0.003***	–0.008	–0.009***	–0.004	0.005	0.010***	0.003	0.011***
	0.001	0.005	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.003	0.002	0.002
Poor English	0.457***	0.505***	0.394***	0.549***	0.195**	0.317***	–0.127	–0.212
	0.019	0.1	0.081	0.071	0.075	0.077	0.159	0.18
Education	–0.052***	–0.113***	0.006	–0.024***	0.027**	–0.005	–0.003	–0.025**
	0.002	0.011	0.007	0.006	0.009	0.009	0.008	0.009
Partnered	0.157***	0.187	0.315**	0.183*	0.028	–0.147	0.145*	0.368***
	0.024	0.124	0.092	0.081	0.108	0.111	0.073	0.084
Mixed household/partner	–0.709***	–0.903***	–0.693***	–0.760***	–0.533***	–0.775***	–1.000***	–1.533***
	0.033	0.235	0.111	0.099	0.136	0.155	0.089	0.113
Mixed household/head	–0.432***	–1.111***	–0.521***	–0.530***	–0.354**	–0.509***	–0.804***	–1.187***
	0.026	0.218	0.078	0.072	0.125	0.142	0.089	0.114
Homeowner	–0.235***	–0.275*	0.535***	0.022	–0.164*	–0.882***	–0.141**	–0.250***
	0.02	0.121	0.071	0.06	0.069	0.074	0.054	0.063
Number of children <18	0.013	0.106***	–0.004	0.023	–0.129**	–0.038	–0.039	0.003
	0.008	0.026	0.039	0.032	0.041	0.045	0.028	0.03
Household income	–0.006***	0.001	0.0002	–0.0006	–0.0003	0.0006	–0.002**	–0.001
	0.0003	0.001	0.0004	0.0004	0.0005	0.0005	0.001	0.001
Household size	0.072***	0.076***	0.099***	0.075**	0.128***	0.114***	0.096***	0.104***
	0.006	0.007	0.023	0.022	0.029	0.031	0.017	0.018
Constant	0.453***	–2.935***	–0.607**	0.738***	–0.226	0.382	–0.158	–0.931***
	0.05	0.237	0.189	0.165	0.206	0.2117	0.165	0.193
Model χ^2	6,769.94		838		963.22		838.28	
n	70,656		9,792		7,399		10,532	

TABLE 3. *CONTINUED*

	Salvadorans		Guatemalans		Vietnamese		Iranians	
	MC v. U	HC v. U	MC v. U	HC v. U	MC v. U	HC v. U	MC v. U	HC v. U
1980–1985	0.119	–0.124	0.099	–0.034	–0.192	–0.158	–0.034	–0.364**
	0.091	0.088	0.114	0.113	0.1265	0.117	0.152	0.136
1975–1980	0.188	0.001	0.128	0.072	–0.361	–0.410**	–0.345**	–0.779***
	0.1	0.099	0.129	0.132	0.129**	0.121	0.134	0.12
1970–1975	0.035	–0.02	0.059	–0.238	Suppressed		–0.138	–0.845***
	0.118	0.121	0.143	0.153			0.181	0.176
Pre-1970	–0.051	–0.771***	–0.289	–0.509**	Suppressed		–0.413*	–1.185***
	0.138	0.159	0.163	0.182			0.178	0.171
Female	–0.016	–0.044	–0.089	–0.029	–0.038	–0.281**	0.232	0.373**
	0.074	0.075	0.106	0.107	0.102	0.096	0.126	0.116
Age	–0.0001	0.003	0.00006	0.003	–0.002	–0.007*	0.0003	0.007
	0.003	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.003	0.004	0.004
Poor English	0.232***	0.254***	0.350***	0.514***	0.233*	0.331***	0.009	0.636***
	0.061	0.053	0.084	0.087	0.097	0.091	0.182	0.157
Education	–0.045***	–0.053***	–0.045***	–0.071***	–0.023*	–0.070***	0.003	–0.029*
	0.007	0.006	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.014	0.012
Partnered	0.160*	0.129	0.316**	0.387**	0.053	–0.007	0.337**	0.395**
	0.081	0.081	0.113	0.115	0.1	0.093	0.129	0.121
Mixed household/partner	–0.503***	–0.991***	–0.559***	–1.014***	–0.724***	–0.981***	–1.521***	–1.841***
	0.096	0.103	0.136	0.147	0.154	0.155	0.183	0.172
Mixed household/head	–0.472***	–0.893***	–0.513***	–0.653***	–0.314*	–0.625***	–1.003***	–1.511***
	0.08	0.089	0.109	0.118	0.153	0.154	0.126	0.129
Homeowner	–0.526***	–2.103***	–0.591***	–2.010***	–0.098	–0.406***	0.108	–0.421***
	0.058	0.104	0.092	0.139	0.087	0.084	0.099	0.093
Number of children <18	–0.051	–0.150***	–0.031	–0.158***	–0.079*	–0.181***	–0.239***	–0.175**
	0.03	0.032	0.04	0.044	0.036	0.035	0.068	0.065
Household income	–0.007***	–0.017***	–0.003	–0.016***	0.000	–0.002*	0.002*	0.003**
	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Household size	0.126***	0.114***	0.131***	0.151***	0.194***	0.265***	0.283***	0.271***
	0.021	0.022	0.027	0.03	0.026	0.025	0.051	0.049
Constant	0.418*	1.455***	0.165	0.841***	–0.118	1.162***	–0.569	0.602*
	0.159	0.169	0.221	0.227	0.242	0.225	0.3	0.275
Model χ^2	1,914.5		1,108.38		694.73		840.79	
n	9,572		5,096		5,566		4,310	

[a]The dependent variable has three categories: living in an unclustered (U), moderately clustered (MC) or highly clustered (HC) tract. See text for definitions of levels of clustering. Living in an unclustered tract is the base category (coded 0). First row reports coefficients, second row reports standard errors. Standard errors are adjusted for clustering in tracts. Excluded categories: 1985–1990 arrival cohort, male, speaks English well or very well, single, renter.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Source: U.S. Census (1990).

in only 6 of the 14 models do increases in household income significantly reduce the probability of living in a residential cluster. For Iranians, in fact, the reverse holds: Increases in household income add to the chances of a clustered residential pattern.

The primary variables of interest for this analysis are the partnership variables. On the whole, partnership increases the probability of living in a clustered tract, although for some groups the effect is not significant. The mixing coefficients, which must be offset against the overall partnership coefficient, show a clear relationship with neighborhood type; partnering with a person outside of the immigrant group, whether it is as a household head (mixed household/head) or partner (mixed household/partner), consistently and considerably decreases the probability of residing in an immigrant cluster. In fact, once offset from the aggregate partnership effect, the mixed partnership coefficients suggest that mixing yields a lower probability of living in a clustered tract than being single. Overall, the mixed household and mixed partnership variables produce the steadiest and strongest results in all of the models. The effect is always weaker in cases in which the head is a co-national but the partner is not (mixed household/head), as opposed to when the partner is a co-national but the head is not (mixed household/partner), although not by much for some of the groups.

To illustrate the impact of these partnership effects we calculated probabilities of enclave residence for all groups under three different partnership conditions: no mixing, mixed household/partner (abbreviated to mixed head), and mixed household/head (abbreviated to mixed head; Figure 2). In the calculations, all variables except those measuring mixed partnerships were set to their mean values. In the no-mixing case, both mixed partnership variables were set to 0; in the mixing cases the relevant partnership variable, mixed household/head or mixed household/partner, was switched to 1. To little surprise, the Mexican case stands out from the rest because the model predicts that few Mexicans will live in a highly clustered tract regardless of their household mixing condition. In all other groups, however, the probability of residing at each cluster level is substantial, although these estimates are very sensitive to partner choice.

For Iranians, the probability of living in a non-clustered tract more than doubles when they are partnered with someone who is not Iranian, regardless of whether the Iranian is head or partner in the household. Outpartnering also causes large jumps in the probability of living outside clusters for other groups, especially for Filipinos and Vietnamese. In the case of Filipinos, the probability of living in a non-clustered tract rises to a very high 0.65 when they are partnered with a head who is not a co-national. By comparison, this probability falls to 0.37 for Filipinos who do not have mixed partners. For immigrants from all groups, being the partner in a mixed relationship increases the probability of living in a non-clustered tract more than being the head. This difference is small for Salvadorans and Guatemalans but quite large for Vietnamese and Iranians. Accounting for the difference in mixed head vs. mixed partner effects within groups, as well as probing the reasons for between group variations in the strength of mixed partnership effects, is beyond the scope of this paper. The details of mixing (i.e., the specific group and gender of partners who are not co-nationals) are likely to play a role and we speculate briefly on these specifics in our suggestions for future research in the conclusions. The key finding is that immigrants choose partners outside their group at a high rate and that this choice has a substantial effect on where they live. As a result, appraisals of spatial assimilation without consideration of partner choice are incomplete.

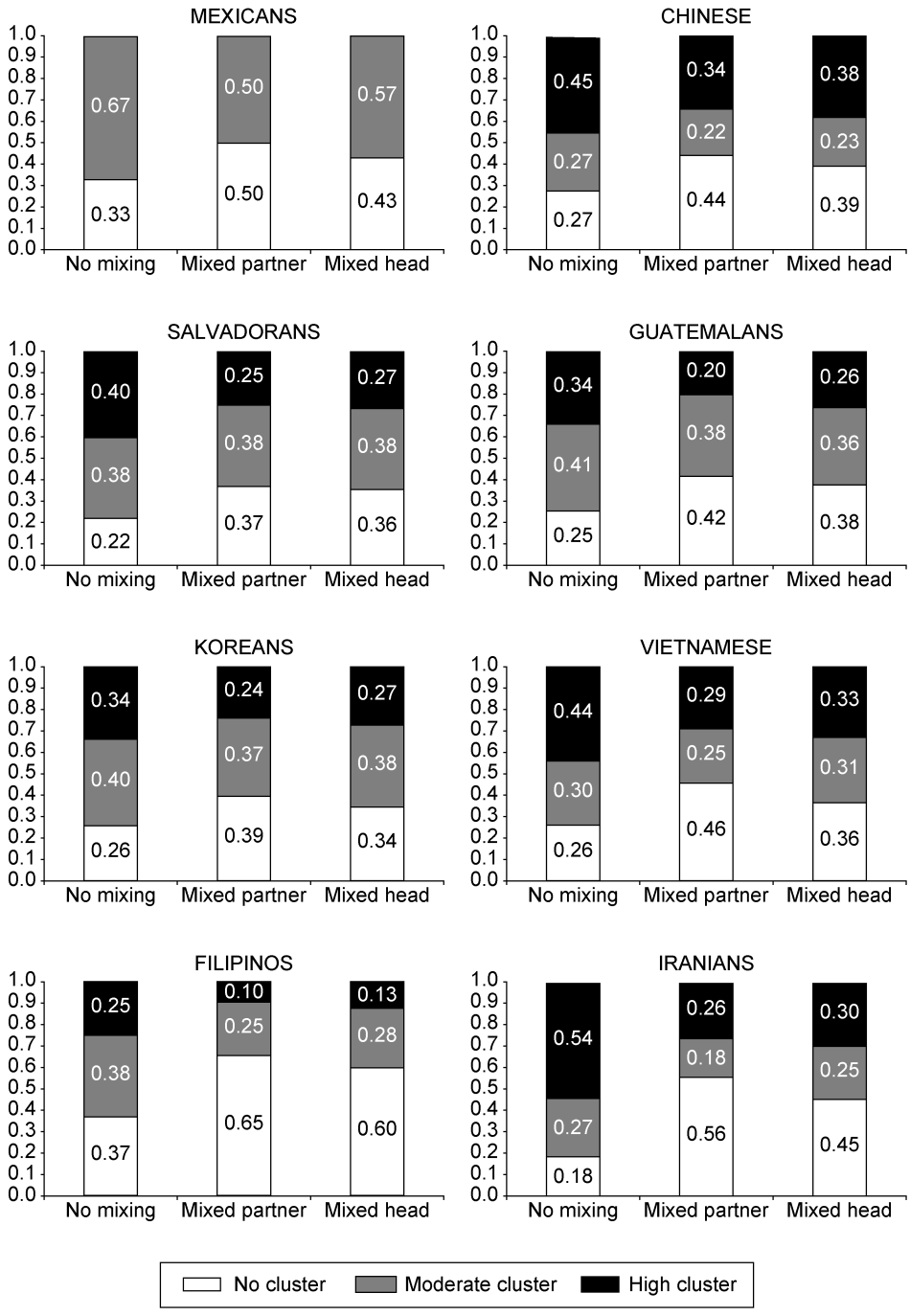

Fig. 2. Probabilities of living in an immigrant tract cluster under different partnership conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

Russell Kazal (1995, p. 439) argues that immigrant assimilation is all about understanding the processes that bring different ethnic groups together "creating a common ground among them, or between them and a socially dominant group." In this essay, we have begun to explore the "common ground" where immigrants and others come together at the intersection of what we conceive of as two spatial scales: the household and the neighborhood. Most studies of assimilation treat immigrants as individuals and look for ways to understand how individuals identify, progress, and "fit in." Our study suggests that the household provides an important key to understanding the geographies of neighborhood aspects of this process and allows researchers to fuse some research areas that until now have remained largely separate. Specifically, who immigrants partner with proves to be a robust predictor of their residential location. When immigrants partner with somebody outside their group the pull of the clustered immigrant neighborhood diminishes substantially.

This unsurprising but heretofore unexplored connection suggests that mixing within households affects immigrant concentration at the neighborhood scale. The causes of the high rates of out-partnering for immigrant groups are multifaceted, but no doubt bear some relation to the dismantling of social barriers and the possibility for contact with others beyond segregated neighborhoods: in the workplace, colleges, schools, etc. Mingling in these settings has the potential to disrupt ethnic neighborhood concentration as mixed couples seek homes away from immigrant clusters. In effect, we suggest that multiple sites ranging across contemporary Los Angeles provide the chance for partnership formation well beyond the neighborhood. Such opportunities elevate the odds of mixed partnership formation, at least in Los Angeles, and this is a key force in immigrant dispersion away from their own-group residential clusters.

Our analytical efforts here are a first cut in that we only considered whether immigrant partner choice involved a co-national. A more detailed future investigation should explore how specific group combinations of partners affect residential concentration. Race likely plays a role here given the patterning of partnering within and between the broad racial and ethnic categories. In a related vein, scholars consistently footnote or highlight weaknesses in the spatial assimilation model that center on race (e.g., Alba et al., 2000; White and Sassler, 2000; Freeman, 2002; Wright et al., 2005). They find that suburbanization or improvements in residential neighborhood occur least frequently for non-Whites. How then does immigrant partner choice by race affect neighborhood outcomes? This question opens a wider research agenda based on the infusion of race into studies of assimilation.

The concept of segmented assimilation, which recognizes that immigrants are positioned within the U.S. racial and ethnic hierarchy, provides some guidance here. Although segmented assimilation theory does not speak to mixed-race unions directly, it can be readily adapted to consider this issue. Essentially, this theory would predict that after one's own co-nationals, members of pan-ethnic or -racial groups are likely to be the next choice as partners. The residential patterns of couples formed across national groups, but within racial or ethnic categories, will probably resemble the neighborhood geography of people in these categories. But when the mixing crosses national group *and* U.S. racial and ethnic categories, the outcome is less certain. These couples are not only

traversing national identities but are also challenging U.S. racial and ethnic boundaries. For immigrants who choose a partner who is not a co-national, the degree of difference in that partner's national background and race or ethnicity will likely have something to do with the odds of staying in an ethnic neighborhood. For example, a couple comprised of a Salvadoran who partners with a native-born Latino of Mexican ancestry share Spanish and a racialization by others as "Latino/Hispanic." This couple, may feel more comfortable or "at home" in a Salvadoran neighborhood (or a Mexican neighborhood) than a Salvadoran/native-born White couple. Further, these effects could vary with the gender mix of these couples. At the moment these are little more than informed speculations, but our findings suggest they warrant investigation as a further effort to understand the relationship between household context and spatial assimilation.

We readily admit all the ideas in this paper require more theoretical reflection and empirical exploration. Some may find it hard to accept the notion that "marital assimilation" could precede "spatial assimilation" for this contradicts decades of sociological thinking about space and intermarriage. This accepted wisdom, though, is built on weak empirical foundations about the role of neighborhood proximity in partner choice, at least in contemporary society. Of course, the proverbial girl or boy next door is still available as a possible partner, and residential proximity no doubt continues to constrain partner selection to some extent. What differentiates today's urban world from that of the past, however, is that people now move daily beyond their segregated neighborhoods to relatively integrated sites at work, school/college, play, and on the Internet. These sites are "places of possibility" where encounters with members of other groups elevate the likelihood of mixed-union formation (Ellis et al., 2004; Houston et al., 2006).

The resulting mixed-union households have to live somewhere and our findings speak to the residential patterns and processes of a specific type of mixed-household: immigrants who partner across nativity lines. The residential geographies of these mixed-nativity households are distinctive enough to raise concerns about analyses of immigrant residence that do not account for heterogeneity in nativity group membership within households. Specifically, our investigation of the neighborhood patterns of same- and mixed-nativity partnerships in Los Angeles shows that immigrants who partner outside their nativity group have a much lower probability of residence in an own-group residential enclave. Consequently, future scholarship on spatial assimilation should move away from the (literal and figurative) mapping and modeling of immigrant bodies in neighborhoods (which serves to amplify the notion of immigrant distinctiveness from others) toward approaches that foreground more the measurement of how the lives of newcomers intertwine with those of other nativities in their households. This echoes a call we made recently for more household research on the geography of immigrants because mappings framed at this scale, as opposed to the individual, "can show some of the ways in which immigrants constitute 'us,' not 'them'" (Ellis and Wright, 2005, p. 6).

The household is the social unit through which people, immigrants or U.S.-born, experience neighborhoods and make residential location decisions. Further analysis of the rich data used in this paper will offer more insights into the household's role in immigrant socio-spatial incorporation. Specifically, after demonstrating how outpartnering diminishes the propensity to live in a residential enclave, the question turns to which sorts of neighborhoods do the specific combinations of mixed-nativity households described in Table 2 gravitate. Quantitative analysis of these outcomes is essential, but greater understanding

of how people come to partner outside their group, and how these mixed-partnerships make residential decisions, can only come from a combination of in-depth interviews and ethnographies of these couples.

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