

CHANGES IN LOCATION AND CONCENTRATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE
WESTERN UNITED STATES, 1980-2000

An Abstract of

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ABSTRACT

This study contributes to the understanding of immigrant settlement and assimilation patterns within ethnic enclaves of urban areas in the western United States between 1980 and 2000. This research investigates two questions: First, how has ethnic enclave composition changed over time? Second, what factors influence ethnic migration within the United States? This study focuses on the metropolitan and primary metropolitan statistical areas of the western United States as defined by the Census Bureau for the census years 1980, 1990, and 2000.

An examination of the changes in location and concentration of ethnic groups in the western United States between the years 1980 and 2000 shows clear patterns of concentration and distribution for each ethnic group. Based on the results of this research, Cubans, Filipinos, Guamanians, Hawaiians, Japanese, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Samoans are assimilating at an increasing rate. Alaska Natives, Native Americans, Asian Indians, Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese are becoming more segregated over time. While Asians as a group are more segregated than Hispanics, this trend does not hold for all individual ethnic groups.

A regression analysis was designed to present which factors influence residential choice and migration of immigrants as a whole. The three independent variables most successful at predicting the variations within the dependent variables were the regions of origin for Central America, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Immigrants from these regions showed a greater likelihood of settling within certain enclave structures and showed a moderate to strong probability of movement between enclave structures.