Immigrant Inequality in U.S. Suburbia: Who Loses Out and Why?

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Abstract:

Contemporary U.S. immigrants are located in a more diverse set of residential contexts than at any point in U.S. history. These include new places (i.e. new immigrant destination communities) as well as new spaces (e.g. the majority of immigrants nationwide now live in suburbs). We use data from the New Immigrant Survey (NIS), supplemented with geocoded residential addresses to estimate a series of multilevel multinomial logistic models aimed at better understanding immigrant suburbanization among new legal permanent residents (LPRs). Our study demonstrates the inappropriateness of traditional assessments that rely on a simple binary suburban/urban divide. Accounting for heterogeneity in the quality of U.S. suburban neighborhoods reveals significant sub-group differences in immigrant access to advantaged suburbs, differences that persist even after accounting for individual and metropolitan-level variation. Our results suggest that any calls for the housing and zoning policies that regulate suburbanization to proceed more equitably, must also be extended to explicitly include our country's newest members.

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INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the middle half of the last century, metro America was irrevocably altered by two large-scale demographic changes. First, high rates of residential mobility resulted in dramatic increases in levels of suburbanization—a trend that continues to this day with over 85 percent of Americans residing in the suburbs or exurbs of major metropolitan areas (Cox 2017; Frey 2018; Kolko 2015; Lacy 2016). Second, a new post 1965-wave of immigration reshaped the ethnic/racial composition of the country and began to alter long-standing patterns of residential segregation (Alba et al 2000; Iceland 2009; Lacy 2016; Logan and Zhang 2010; Timberlake and Iceland 2007). By the 1990s, many immigrants were bypassing traditional immigrant enclaves located in the central city in favor of new immigrant destinations and increasingly suburban communities (Hardwick 2008; Singer 2008). Labeled "the new geography of immigration," immigrants at the beginning of the twenty-first century are located in a more diverse set of residential contexts than at any point in prior U.S. history (Parrado and Kandel 2008; Singer 2015). As a result of simultaneous changes in the metro form *and* in immigrant residential settlement patterns, contemporary immigrants find themselves living not only in new *places* (i.e. new metros) but also in new *spaces* (i.e. suburban rings) within those places.

It is precisely these geographic changes that some scholars have placed at the center of this country's current political polarization. For instance, Lichter (2013) argues that the spatial diffusion of immigrants to new destinations and into the country's suburban communities has reinforced the view that America's "fundamental character" is being threatened by immigration, which, in turn, makes voters more susceptible to nativist rhetoric. Key to the argument is the presence of newcomers in new places and communities around the country.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, we actually know very little about the individual-level processes underlying the new geography of immigration. Beyond broad aggregate patterns, we are lacking a more thorough accounting of the factors placing immigrants in new communities across the country. We know even less about the quality of those communities. This last point opens up another line of inquiry, one that is arguably more consequential from the perspective of immigrants, which is whether this "new geography" has created opportunities for improved

residential locations. While suburbanization has traditionally represented a final step in the immigrant spatial assimilation process, more recent changes in the nature of suburbanization, in particular the suburbanization of poverty, has called into question the relevance of this model for contemporary immigrant groups (Alba et al 1999; Friedman and Rosenbaum 2007; Lacy 2016; Logan et al 2002).

Against this backdrop, the present analysis aims to add to our understanding of the new geography of immigration in the case of immigrant suburbanization. Over 60 percent of immigrants residing in the largest metro areas now reside in the suburbs and, in 14 of the largest metros, immigrants are more suburbanized than the native-born population (Wilson and Svajlenka 2014). At the same time, poverty has also been on the rise in the suburbs, with the suburban share of poverty steadily increasing since 1980 (Howell and Timberlake 2014; Kneebone and Berube 2014; Kneebone et al 2011). By 2010, the suburban poor outnumbered the urban poor, with immigrants accounting for 1 out of every 5 poor suburban residents (Suro et al 2011).

Our aim is to focus explicitly on the immigrant experience and describe what are likely disparate patterns of suburbanization across immigrant subgroups, particularly in terms of differences in the *quality* of the suburban neighborhoods into which different immigrant groups are settling. A clearer understanding of the factors placing immigrants in suburban communities and the quality of those communities will provide important insights into disparate patterns of immigrant residential incorporation as well as speak directly to broader questions of political and social fragmentation.

BACKGROUND

If the dominant trend for U.S. cities in the second half of the twentieth century was sky rocketing rates of suburbanization, the trend characterizing the beginning of the twenty-first century is increasing social inequality within those suburbs (Howell and Timberlake 2014; Kneebone and Berube 2014; Lacy 2016; Timberlake et al 2011). This trend is particularly relevant for the immigrant experience, as suburban residence traditionally has been viewed as a key step in the immigrant spatial assimilation process. Originally forged out of the experience of prior waves of immigrants, the spatial assimilation model holds that immigrants initially settle in urban cores

and, with increasing wealth and acculturation, eventually move their families to suburban communities (Alba and Logan 1991; Logan and Alba 1993; Massey and Mullan 1984).

But with the contemporary immigrant wave (post-1965 immigrants), the social dynamics of suburbanization have become more complicated and less well understood (Lacy 2016). In the case of immigrants, different models are emerging to define spatial patterns that no longer adhere as closely to the traditional model of spatial assimilation (Singer 2008; Yu and Myers 2007). For instance, some immigrant groups immediately settle in suburban ethnic enclaves, completely bypassing urban cores. Li (1998) coined the term "ethnoburb" to describe this new form of suburban immigrant settlement, using as a case study the Chinese settlement in the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County (Li 1998). Also in Los Angeles, Logan et al. (2002) find that for some groups, e.g. Mexicans, Chinese and Japanese, ethnic neighborhoods are more likely to be found in suburban locations.

In the case of racial/ethnic minorities, other studies argue that the benefits of suburban residence have likely been overstated (Charles 2003; Lacy 2016). An analysis of the 2010 census found that even among affluent black and Hispanic Americans, the suburban communities they reside in have higher poverty levels than those occupied by their high status suburban non-Hispanic white counterparts (Logan 2014). In the case of higher status Hispanic households in the suburbs, Friedman et al. (2014) find that their neighborhood quality is worse than their white suburban counterparts. Consequently, these studies are more apt to invoke a place stratification model to understand patterns of suburbanization, particularly in the case of black Americans (Logan and Alba 1993; Logan and Molotch 1987; Logan et al 1996). This model emphasizes the role of racial barriers and discriminatory housing practices in limiting access to quality advantaged suburban communities.

Persistent race/ethnic gaps in suburban communities raise the question: are suburbs still emblematic of the good life for immigrants? Thus far, answers to this question have largely been arrived at indirectly, via aggregate-level analyses that focus on the relationship between immigrant suburbanization and metropolitan segregation levels. Using segregation from native-born whites as a measure of residential incorporation, these studies broadly find *lower* levels of segregation in suburban communities than in urban ones, both in the case of racial/ethnic minority segregation and immigrant segregation (Alba et al 1999; Farrell 2016; Iceland and Scopilliti 2008; Lichter et al 2010). In line with a segmented assimilation perspective, however,

which predicts divergent outcomes depending on different modes of incorporation (Portes and Rumbaut 1996), most studies also document persistent country-of-origin differences in segregation levels that are carried over into the suburbs. For instance, in the case of segregation from non-Hispanic whites, Farrell (2016) finds that in the suburbs, certain groups, e.g. Mexican, Caribbean, and Central American immigrants, are more segregated from non-Hispanic whites than are their Asian and European immigrant peers residing in the city. Similarly, in the case of immigrant neighborhood inequality, defined as the degree that immigrants reside in poorer neighborhoods than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, Farrell and Firebaugh (2016) find that suburbanization is not equally advantageous for all groups. Haitians, for instance, experience higher income inequality in the suburbs. These population-level assessments find echoes in the findings of several individual case studies (Brettell 2008; Odem 2008). For instance, in a case study of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Fennelly and Orfield (2008) find that most of the suburban communities that immigrants have moved into are "fiscally stressed" (205)(Fennelly and Orfield 2008). However, they also document signification variability in suburban neighborhood quality, with more disadvantages found among some groups, e.g. Laotian and Hmong, than others, e.g. Indian and other South Asian professionals.

The reasons behind these persistent immigrant disparities in suburban areas are more difficult to discern from aggregate-level data. Lacking information on immigrant socioeconomic position and acculturation level, we do not know the degree that the observed differences are a function of the characteristics of individual immigrants (Tienda and Fuentes 2014). This is a key omission because it lies at the crux of the spatial assimilation model of residential attainment, which holds that any inequalities in residential outcomes are due to differences along these individual-level dimensions (Massey and Mullan 1984; Tienda and Fuentes 2014). Individual locational attainment models are better poised than aggregate-level analyses to assess the critical role of individual-level differences. However, those that do exist are often focused on racial/ethnic contrasts instead of an explicit focus on immigrants, and additionally, do not assess differences in the economic context of suburban neighborhoods (Alba and Logan 1993; Alba et al 2014a; Logan and Alba 1993; Logan et al 1996).

One exception in the case of immigrants is an individual-level analysis by Friedman and Rosenbaum (2007) that uses data from the 2001 Panel of the American Housing Survey and indirectly captures neighborhood quality via proxy measures of neighborhood conditions (e.g.

the presence of trash, bars on windows etc.). They find that, among Hispanics, who have some of the worst neighborhood profiles compared to non-Hispanic whites, the foreign-born display poorer profiles than their native-born counterparts in the suburbs along most dimensions of neighborhood quality. In contrast, in the case of black Americans, a foreign-born advantage in neighborhood quality is observed in both the city and suburbs, but only among recent immigrants. Among black immigrants who have been in the U.S. longer, no neighborhood quality advantage is evident, irrespective of suburban residence. These patterns question the role of suburban residence as the great "equalizer" with respect to neighborhood quality. They also underscore the importance of distinguishing immigrant tenure and evaluating patterns of suburbanization soon after arrival.

Another limitation of existing assessments of immigrant suburbanization is that most individual-level analyses are unable to address the role of the broader ecological context in contributing to variation in suburban neighborhood conditions. We know from the aggregate-level segregation literature that metropolitan-level characteristics influence the extent of racial segregation and immigrant segregation (Farrell 2016; Fischer and Tienda 2006; Hall 2013; Iceland and Scopilliti 2008; Iceland et al 2014; Lichter et al 2010; Park and Iceland 2011). For instance, Farrell (2016) finds that immigrant segregation levels are elevated in metros that are more suburbanized, have higher vacancy rates, have larger black populations, and are home to a relatively larger share of recent immigrants. But with limited or no information on metro location, locational attainment assessments of immigrant suburbanization are unable to account for the role played by such place-to-place differences. One feature, in particular, deserves more attention. Recent studies of the new geography of immigrant have argued that the type of immigrant destination, i.e. established immigrant receiving areas versus new immigrant destinations, shapes the residential opportunities available to immigrants. However, the direction of influence is under debate. While some aggregate-level studies demonstrate higher levels of segregation in new immigrant destinations (Hall 2013; Lichter et al. 2010), others document the opposite (Park and Iceland 2011), and still others have found, in the case of Hispanics, lower levels of concentrated poverty in new immigrant destinations (Ludwig-Dehm and Iceland 2017). One individual-level assessment using data from the NIS documented improved residential locations for immigrants in new immigrant destinations (Frank and Akresh 2016). The

association between immigrant destination type and immigrant suburbanization patterns has yet to be assessed.

The present study seeks to answer the question: **do immigrant households experience access to equally good neighborhoods within the suburbs and, if not, why?** To our knowledge, no existing study has leveraged individual-level data to assess the economic context of the suburban communities into which immigrants are settling. Consequently, we do not know the extent that immigrant households differentially access more or less economically advantaged suburban communities. This question is consequential for new immigrants, particularly in light of the suburbanization of poverty and the increasing recognition that, "a monolithic model of suburbia is not sustainable" (Lacy 2016: 371).

Utilizing unique geocoded data from turn of 21st century (2003), we pose this question to a nationally representative sample of immigrants who recently received legal permanent residency (LPR). Doing so allows us to document and understand disparities in suburbanization close to the "starting gate," i.e. very soon after becoming a legal permanent resident in the U.S. We first document whether there are disparate patterns of suburbanization by region-of-origin, paying special attention to the quality of suburban neighborhoods. Leveraging the multi-level structure of the NIS data, we next unpack the reasons behind the observed patterns of immigrant suburbanization. Following in the locational attainment tradition, we determine the extent that region-of-origin differences persist net of individual-level factors, e.g. SES, acculturation, and other lifecycle factors. Next, drawing upon aggregate-level segregation analyses, we additionally identify and characterize the features of the metropolitan area that impact suburban neighborhood quality above and beyond individual-level factors.

DATA AND METHODS

The data come from the New Immigrant Survey (NIS) 2003. The NIS is a national probability-based sample of immigrants who received legal permanent residency between May and November 2003. The NIS represents the only national-level survey fielded exclusively to any broad subset of the U.S. foreign-born population, in this case newly authorized permanent residents. The data are uniquely suited for the analyses proposed here for several reasons.

First, the data appropriately capture the diversity of the post-1965 wave of immigrants and have sufficient sample size to specify nine different region-of-origin groups. This is a key

attribute given the substantial heterogeneity in the socioeconomic status of contemporary immigrants and our specific focus on the possibility of disparate suburbanization patterns. Second, the NIS contains a rich set of individual-level background factors specific to the immigrant experience, which allows us to more appropriately evaluate the spatial assimilation model in the case of disparate patterns of immigrant suburbanization (Tienda and Fuentes 2014). Third, our focus on immigrants who recently were granted a greencard always us to remove differentials by documentation status and instead focus on legal permanent residents who achieved that status just prior to the interview. This ability clearly involves a trade-off. Our estimates of region-of-origin differences will not be distorted by differences in documentation status across groups. But they will also be applicable to a sub-set of the foreign-born population, i.e. new legal permanents. The NIS does not include members of the current unauthorized population nor foreign-born individuals who have naturalized (some individuals may have begun their settlement in an unauthorized state but we are able to identify and control for this possibility in our multivariate models). Throughout the paper, we are clear that our findings are applicable only to the newly authorized population. Fourth, because the NIS is supplemented with geocoded residential addresses, we are able to conduct a multi-level analysis that focuses explicitly on individual-level models of immigrant residential attainment (in this case residence in advantaged suburban communities) at the same time that we are able to specify the role that characteristics of the metropolitan structure play in influencing differential access to suburban communities. The NIS contains sufficient variation in metropolitan location, with immigrants sampled from over 150 metropolitan areas.

Taken together, the attributes of the NIS data enable us to determine what neither locational attainment models nor aggregate analyses can do in isolation—namely, determine whether suburbanization is equally advantageous for all immigrants groups and, if not, identify the individual and metropolitan factors responsible for any documented gaps.

Dependent Variables
Our dependent variables come from tract-level data from the 2000 decennial census. We follow the conventional approach in our operationalization of suburban residence. We categorize the census tracts as suburban using the Geolytics PCMACC99 variable which indicates the percentage of the tract population residing in the central city or cities of a metropolitan area. If

the tract value on the PCMACC99 variable was less than 50 percent, we categorized the tract as suburban. The majority of tracts take values of 0% or 100% so measurement error is minimal. In order to account for heterogeneity in the quality of suburban areas we further distinguished suburban tracts by their poverty level. We chose a cutpoint of 15 percent, which is higher than the national average of 12.9 percent (in 2016) but is more in line with the supplemental poverty measure (SPM) which places the national poverty rate at 14 percent (Fox and Gotway 2018). If 15% or greater of the tract's population was below the poverty line we categorized the tract as a poor/disadvantaged suburban neighborhood. All other suburban tracts were categorized as advantaged/non-poor.

Individual-level Variables

Our focal independent variable is the respondent's region-of-origin. While the NIS samples includes respondents from over 169 different immigrant-sending countries, the individual country counts are frequently too small to focus on country-of-origin estimates (two important exceptions are for Mexico and India). Instead, we group the countries into 9 different region-of-origin categories. They include: Mexico (the reference category in all the models); Central America, South America, Eastern/Western Europe, East Asia, India, Other Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. We chose Mexico as our reference group for several reasons. First, it is the largest single origin immigrant group in the U.S., accounting for over one-quarter of all immigrants (Radford and Budiman 2018). It is also the single largest origin group in the NIS data. Combined with evidence of poorer residential outcomes and an ongoing focus on the fate of the Mexico-Origin population in stratification research, we chose to present models that use Mexican immigrants as the reference (Alba et al 2014b; Hall and Stringfield 2014; Telles and Ortiz 2009). Additionally, we ran all the models switching out the other region-of-origin groups and specify any differences when they emerge.

A key feature of this analysis comes from the locational attainment tradition whereby we are able to directly assess the individual-level predictors of suburban location. Our focus is on a set of indicators intended to capture immigrant socioeconomic status and acculturation level. For the former, we include indicators of education level (measured continuously in years), home ownership, and the socioeconomic status of the immigrant's childhood home in their origin

country. This last variable was constructed from a question that asked respondents to rate the relative income level of their family home when they were aged 16. If the respondent said that their household income was above average or far above average, they were coded as having a relatively high childhood SES. We chose not to include measures for earnings or occupational prestige given the large number of imputed cases for both variables (slightly more than half of the values for earnings had to be imputed while just under half of the occupational prestige values were). With respect to acculturation level, we account for whether the respondent reported that they are proficient in spoken English or not and their U.S. tenure (dichotomized to indicate whether they had been in the U.S. for more than one year). Additional demographic controls are also included for: age, female, married, number of household members under the age of 18, and whether they respondent reported taking a previous trip to the U.S. without a visa.

Metropolitan-level Independent Variables
Borrowing from the ecological tradition of residential segregation analyses, we also evaluate the impact of a set of metropolitan area features on immigrant suburbanization. To capture the role played by the relative presence of other immigrants we include a control for percent foreign-born. Additionally, we follow other scholars who have demonstrated the importance of immigrant destination type, which captures the extent and longevity of the foreign-born population's presence in the metropolitan area (Hall 2013; Park and Iceland 2011; Singer 2015). We define "established" immigrant areas as those where the percent foreign-born 1980 exceeded the mean percent foreign-born and where the absolute number of immigrants in a particular metro exceeded the mean foreign-born population size across all metros. For those metropolitan areas not classified as "established," we determined if they fit the criteria for a new immigrant destination. "New" refers to non-established metropolitan areas where the percent foreign-born in 1990 was larger than the average percent foreign-born across all metros and the foreign-born growth rate in the 1980s or the 1990s was at least two times the metro mean foreign-born growth rate across all metros during each respective decade. "Minor" refers to metros not classified as either established or new. As these categorizations span three decades, all boundaries have been normalized to match 2000 census boundaries.

Additionally, we assess the role played by the broader racial/ethnic minority context. First we include a measure of the percent non-white in a metro area. Second, we assess the role

metro area racial/ethnic residential segregation levels play in the immigrant surburbanization process. We do this for the three largest race/ethnic groups—Latino, Asian and non-Hispanic Black Americans. We use the dissimilarity index to measure segregation which indicates the percentage of one racial/ethnic group that would have to move to other census tracts in order to achieve parity between groups in their distribution across all tracts in the metro. All indices compare the distribution of each particular racial/ethnic minority group against non-Hispanic whites. Finally, we include three measures to account for the availability of different suburban neighborhood types. These include a measure of the extent of suburbanization (percent of the metro that is suburbanized), a measure of the poverty level of the metro, and a measure of housing availability captured by the new housing stock (the number of new housing structures divided by the total number of housing structures).

Analytic Method

Our work advances the existing literature on immigrant suburbanization which has largely been limited to aggregate-level analyses, by incorporating multi-level models that enable us to account for both individual and metropolitan-level contributions to disparate suburban patterns across different immigrant groups. In doing so, we follow a practice developed in the study of black and white residential attainment and take individuals as the level analysis while simultaneously addressing the cumulative impact of individual and metro-level factors on residential outcomes (South et al 2011a). We use hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to specify the association between immigrant region-of-origin and the type of tract an immigrant has settled in. Multilevel models allow for the inclusion of a random intercept at the metropolitan level, which corrects for the observational clustering within metropolitan areas and, additionally, allows us to model variation in tract-level outcomes as a function of both individual and metro-level factors.

We perform a series of logistic regressions. In the first, we model suburban residence using the traditional dichotomy of suburban/urban. Second, we distinguish suburban residence by neighborhood quality and use a multinomial logistic regression to contrast urban residence (reference category) with advantaged and disadvantaged suburban neighborhoods. Third, to account for differential rates of urbanization and directly compare those who have suburbanized, we switch out the reference category and perform an additional multinomial regression that

contrasts advantaged suburban residence (reference category) with disadvantaged suburban residence and urban residence.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the sample. Reflecting the extent of immigrant suburbanization nationally, the majority of the sample resides in suburban neighborhoods (56 percent). Of those that have suburbanized, the overwhelming majority reside in advantaged suburbs (81.7%), although nearly one-fifth find themselves in poor suburban communities (18.3%). Turning to the broader metropolitan context, the NIS respondents reside in metros where, on average, one-fifth of the population is foreign born (21.5%) and over one-third of the population belongs to a race/ethnic minority group (35.4%). The metros have high levels of black-white segregation (62 index of dissimilarity), on average, and comparatively lower levels of Latino-white segregation (49) and Asian-white segregation (42). The sample resides in metros that are majority suburban (60%) with poverty levels at the national average (12.6%). The sample is overwhelmingly located in established immigrant destinations (85% of the sample), with another 10 percent located in new immigrant destinations and those remaining located in minor destinations.

The NIS sample is fairly well-educated (12.9 years of education on average) but, reflecting the high variability in human capital among contemporary immigrants, the standard deviation is large, at nearly five years (SD=4.7). Slightly less than one-fifth of the sample report that the SES of their childhood home was relatively high (18.4%). Only around 15% of the sample reports owning their own home in the U.S., likely reflecting their early tenure in the U.S. Over two-thirds of the sample has been in the U.S. for less than five years (not shown) and nearly half have been in the U.S. for less than one year. A slight majority report that they are fluent in English (52%). The next step of the analysis is determining the degree that variability along these dimensions influences disparate patterns of immigrant suburbanization.

To what extent do patterns of immigrant suburbanization change once the quality of the suburban neighborhood is accounted for?

Figures A-D present the results from two different sets of models, focusing explicitly on the region-of-origin contrasts in the immigrant suburbanization process. Figure A comes from a

multilevel logistic regression model where the outcome is simply whether the immigrant household was located in a suburban area or not. Figures B-D come from of a series of multilevel multinomial models that distinguish the suburban community by its poverty level. In each Figure, for each region-of-origin group (on the vertical axis), three sets of bars are presented to facilitate direct comparisons in the odds ratios (ORs) across models. The top bar represents the odds of a specific residence type for each region-of-origin group and comes from the unadjusted model. The middle bar presents the odds ratios from the model sets that include the individual covariates. And the bottom bar adds the metropolitan controls.

Figure A presents the odds of suburban residence using the traditional distinction between suburban versus urban area. The results confirm the patterns outlined in prior aggregate level assessments which show higher rates of suburbanization among particular immigrant groups (Farrell 2016). Asian immigrants (East Asian, Asian Indian and Other Asian) are the only groups who are more significantly more likely to be suburbanized than Mexican immigrants. The contrast is largest between Mexican and Asian Indian immigrants, the latter of whom are over twice as likely to reside in a suburban tract as an urban one (OR=2.014). Switching out reference categories, Asian Indian immigrants are significantly more likely to reside in suburban tracts than any other immigrant group.[1] Reflecting their comparatively higher levels of urban residence, Central Americans are the only group who consistently display significantly lower odds of suburbanization than all other groups.

The next set of Figures B-D demonstrate that the region-of-origin patterning is highly dependent on the type of suburb that is being described. Once we distinguish suburban tracts by their poverty levels, the patterning changes dramatically.[2] While Mexicans were generally one of the immigrant groups least likely to be suburbanized (Figure A), they have higher odds than almost every other group of residing in a *poor* suburban tract, both when the reference is an urban area (Figure B) or a more advantaged suburban tract (Figure D). When predicting

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[1] The results that refer to changes in the reference category are not shown in the Figures but can be made available upon request or in an online appendix.

[2] The results presented in Figures B and C come from a multinomial model predicting residence in a poor suburban tract (Figure B) and non-poor suburban tract (Figure C), with the reference category as urban tract residence. Figure D comes from a multinomial model that makes non-poor suburban the reference category and predicts residence in a poor suburban tract (Figure D) and urban tract (results not shown given their close similarity to those presented in Figure B).

residence in advantaged suburban areas relative to urban ones (Figure C), Mexican immigrants are disadvantaged compared to nearly every group and the contrasts are substantially more pronounced than when a simple suburban/urban dichotomy is used (Figure A). For example, while Asian Indians are 2X more likely than Mexicans to be suburbanized (Figure A, OR=2.014), they are over 3X more likely to reside in an advantaged suburban tract (Figure C, OR=3.25). Switching out reference categories, Asian Indian immigrants are significantly more likely than all other groups to reside in advantaged suburban neighborhoods compared to urban ones. East Asian immigrants are also more likely than most groups to reside in advantaged neighborhoods, except in comparison to South Americans and Other Asians from whom they are not statistically different.

Central Americans generally stand out as an exception because they are more likely to be urbanized than Mexicans or, switching out the reference category, than any other LPR group. Once suburbanized, however, they not distinguishable from Mexican immigrants in their odds of residing in a poor tract (Figure D). Switching out reference category, the suburban disadvantage experienced by Central American and Mexican immigrants is clear, with both groups significantly more likely to reside in poor vs. non-poor suburban tracts than any other immigrant group. Equally clear is the suburban advantage exhibited by Indian, East Asian and European immigrant groups who, once suburbanized, are indistinguishable from each other in their higher odds of residing in advantaged suburban neighborhoods compared to poor ones. Switching out the reference category also reveals a third group of immigrants (South American, Middle Eastern, African and Other Asian) who are less likely than Mexicans and Central American immigrants to reside in poor vs. non-poor suburban tracts, but are more likely to so compared to Indian, East Asian and European immigrants.

To what extent are the region-of-origin differences in suburbanization among new LPRs due to individual-level differences in demographic or socioeconomic profiles?
The second set of bars in Figures A-D demonstrate how much of the region-of-origin differences in immigrant suburbanization persist after accounting for differences in socioeconomic status and acculturation levels. Returning to the traditional suburban/urban divide (Figure A), the entirety of the suburban advantage exhibited by East Asian and Other Asian immigrants compared to their Mexican counterparts is accounted for by differences in individual-level

characteristics. And while the Asian Indian suburban advantage remains significant compared to all groups, it is reduced substantially (e.g. when Mexican is the reference category it reduces from OR=2.013 to OR=1.537).

In contrast, the lower odds of suburban residence for African immigrants compared to Mexicans becomes slightly more pronounced and attains significance, largely due to the SES controls (i.e. years of education and homeownership). Switching out reference categories also demonstrates that the suburban advantaged displayed by African immigrants compared to their Central American counterparts is rendered insignificant with the individual-level controls. Absent their more positive SES profiles, African immigrants would be even less likely to reside in the suburbs than Mexican immigrants and display similar odds as Central Americans.

Figures B-D illustrate that the role of individual-level factors in accounting for differences in suburbanization is highly dependent on the type of suburbanization we are assessing. Similar to the case of the basic urban-suburban binary (Figure A), individual-level differences explain a significant portion of the suburban-urban divide when the focus is on an advantaged suburb versus an urban area (Figure C). Including controls renders insignificant the higher odds of advantaged suburban residence among Middle Eastern, European and South American immigrants compared to Mexicans. And while the higher odds observed among the Asian sub-groups all remain significant, they are substantially reduced. When assessing differential access to advantaged suburban communities against urban areas, SES differences are highly consequential in understanding disparate outcomes.

The individual-level controls are less effective in accounting for disparate location in poor suburban neighborhoods relative to either urban (Figure B) or non-poor suburban areas (Figure D). This is particularly the case when poor suburban neighborhoods are contrasted with urban ones (Figure B). In nearly all cases, the contrasts are virtually unchanged across the two models (Figure B, comparing the top and middle bars), irrespective of which region-of-origin group is used as the reference. The results demonstrate that the factors differentially funneling immigrants into poor suburban communities versus urban ones are not closely tied to socioeconomic or acculturative factors. Table 2 presents the results for the individual-level controls and we see that socioeconomic status does little to differentiate the two types of communities. Neither education, home ownership, nor any of the acculturative factors are significant predictors of poor suburban residence (relative to urban). An exception is in the case

of a pre-migratory trait-the socioeconomic status of the immigrant's childhood household. Higher childhood SES is negatively associated with residence in a poor suburban community, both relative to an urban neighborhoods (Table 2, Column 2) and advantaged suburbs (Table 2, Column 4). Overall, the minimal role of individual factors in distinguishing poor suburban and urban residence is supportive of research that demonstrates few differences in neighborhood quality between poor (often inner ring) suburban communities and urban ones (Hanlon 2009). Put differently, whatever distinguishes the bar for entry between these community types, it is not closely related to current socioeconomic status or acculturation levels.

Among those who have suburbanized (Figure D), individual-level factors are somewhat more successful in accounting for the lower suburban poverty levels of all groups vis a vis Mexicans immigrants, yet significant region-of-origin contrasts persist in all cases (excepting Central Americans who are not distinguishably different from Mexicans in their odds of poor suburban residence once urbanization levels are equalized). The next question is whether features of the metropolitan area are more consequential in explaining these persisting differences.

What role do the unique features of a metropolitan area play in influencing disparate suburbanization patterns among recent LPRs?

The third bar in Figures A-D presents the region-of-origin contrasts in immigrant suburbanization once differences in the metropolitan context are accounted for. If part of the reason that certain immigrant groups are shut out of advantaged suburbs is due to their lower SES profiles (Figures C and D), then a major reason for residence in poor suburbs versus urban areas is the metropolitan context in which these neighborhoods are embedded (Figure B). Comparing across the three bars in Figure B demonstrates that Mexican immigrants' higher odds of residing in a poor suburb versus an urban area are considerably more impacted by the broader metropolitan context than by their individual SES profiles. Switching out the reference category, the relatively larger impact of metro context on region-of-origin differences in the urban vs. poor suburb contrast remains true for nearly all groups, irrespective of the direction of the association. Table 3 demonstrates that metros with higher levels of poverty and higher levels of suburbanization predispose immigrants towards residing in poor suburban areas (vs. urban). An additional factor influencing residence in poor suburban communities is the immigrant

destination type of the metro area. Compared to metros that are categorized as established immigrant destinations, new immigrant destinations are associated with decreased odds of poor suburban residence relative urban communities (Table 3, Column 2) and to non-poor suburban ones (Table 3, Column 4). These patterns are suggestive of more positive residential outcomes in new immigrant destinations, at least to the extent that residence in these metros decreases the odds of residing in a poor suburban community.

With respect to metro-wide segregation levels, we observe a significant and negative impact of the black-white segregation index on the risk of poor suburban residence. On average, net of other metropolitan controls, new LPR immigrants benefit from higher levels of black-white segregation—with every one point increase in the white-black segregation index, immigrants display 2% higher odds of residing in a suburban community generally (OR=1.020), 3% lower odds of residing in a poor suburban tract (vs. a non-poor tract OR=0.970), and 3% higher odds of residing in an advantaged suburb (vs. an urban tract OR=1.030). Working in the opposite direction, higher levels of Asian-White segregation decrease the odds that immigrants reside in suburbs generally (OR=1.020), decrease the odds of residing in more advantaged suburban areas (vs. urban OR=0.961), and increase the odds that immigrants will reside in urbans tract (vs. advantaged suburban ones OR=1.030).

Among those who are suburbanized (Figure D), accounting for metropolitan context explains the higher odds of residing in a more advantaged suburban tract for several of the region-of-origin contrasts. Switching out the reference category, the number of groups who are mostly indistinguishable from one another in their higher odds of advantaged (vs disadvantaged) suburban residence expands to include Asian Indian, East Asian, Other Asian, European, and South American immigrants. At the other end of the spectrum, Central American immigrants remain disadvantaged compared to every group except Mexicans from whom they are indistinguishable in their odds of poor vs. non-poor suburban tract residence. Additionally, when the metro-level controls are included, the African immigrant advantage for avoiding a poor suburb (vs. a non-poor one) loses significance compared to Mexicans (Figure D) and, switching out the reference category demonstrates that African immigrants remain significantly more likely to reside in a poor (vs. non poor) suburb compared to most other LPRs.

In sum, relative to a traditional urban/suburban divide, differences in metropolitan context are considerably more consequential in accounting for immigrants' differential location in poor

suburban areas compared to urban ones, and to a lesser degree, poor suburban areas compared to non-poor suburban areas. And while the extent of suburbanization in a metro, its poverty level, racial segregation context, and type of immigrant destination, are all consequential in influencing patterns of immigrant suburbanization, none of these factors, either alone or in conjunction with individual-level background characteristics, sufficiently explains the disproportionate exposure to suburban poverty that Mexican, Central American, and to a lesser degree, African immigrants, experience relative to other new LPRs (Figure D).

DISCUSSION

A good deal of the motivation behind assessments of immigrant suburbanization patterns is for what they tell us about the potential for the suburbs to serve as either an integrating or fragmenting force as our country diversifies (Farrell 2016). From the immigrant's perspective, a related question is whether suburbanization continues to represent a step towards greater integration by offering improved neighborhood quality.

Most analyses so far have approached these questions indirectly and at the aggregate-level (Farrell 2016; Hall 2013; Lichter et al 2010). While the general pattern points towards greater integration in the suburbs, there are important caveats, particularly with respect to disparate outcomes across immigrant groups. Echoes of this assessment are also found in individual-level locational attainment models which emphasize persisting race/ethnic and nativity inequalities in the suburbs (Friedman and Rosenbaum 2007).

The focus of our analysis is on documenting and unpacking the disparate suburban outcomes that immigrants experience shortly after gaining legal permanent residency status. A key finding relates to the inappropriateness of traditional assessments that rely on a simple binary suburban/urban divide. A broad supra-suburban category ends up mischaracterizing what is a highly disparate process. Our results demonstrate that a simple suburban/urban classification reveals only relatively small differences in suburbanization levels across immigrant groups, and those that do exist are frequently accounted for by differences in socioeconomic status and acculturation levels. However, once we account for heterogeneity in the extent of poverty across suburban communities, the differences across immigrant groups become considerably more pronounced and, depending on the contrast, less responsive to individual-level explanations of difference. When we focus on what many envision as the stereotypical suburban community, i.e.

advantaged residential spaces with low levels of poverty outside urban areas, the differences across immigrant groups become considerably starker. Distinguishing suburban areas by poverty, we find more pronounced detriments, particularly for Mexican and Central American immigrants. While individual-level factors and differences in the metropolitan context are a large part of the explanation, persisting disadvantages remain, and, in the case of African immigrants, accounting for SES and metro context actually exacerbates their suburban disadvantage.

For the immigrants that are differentially moving into poor suburban communities, our success at understanding why remains fairly limited. When the contrast is with urban communities, part of the explanation concerns the broader metropolitan context, i.e. metros with higher levels of suburbanization, more poverty, and established immigrant destination, are all more likely to have immigrants residing in poor suburban neighborhoods instead of urban ones. But these factors remain insufficient for explaining the propensity for some groups to reside in poor suburban communities instead of urban ones. Even among those immigrants who suburbanized, Mexicans, Central Americans, and to a lesser extent Africans, are more likely than most other groups to reside in poor suburbs. And accounting for individual-level differences and metropolitan context fails to account for the gaps in nearly all cases.

These results are suggestive of barriers in access to advantaged suburbs for certain immigrant groups. Particularly after these groups have suburbanized, they remain less likely than other LPRs to reside in advantaged suburbs. In contrast, Asian Indians remain uniquely advantaged with respect to access to advantaged suburbs, especially in contrast to urban areas, and to a lesser degree compared to poor suburbs. These findings join those questioning the promise of suburbs to flatten residential disparities. Instead, our results are more in-line with the interpretation that suburbanization frequently translates into a repeat of old spatial inequalities rather than a step towards their elimination (Howell and Timberlake 2014).

Another key contribution is a better understanding of the role of broader contextual factors in patterning residential attainment, net of individual-level SES factors. Our results speak directly to the broader debate over how the new geography of immigration influences immigrant outcomes. We find support for the perspective that, with respect to suburbanization into advantaged areas and avoidance of poor suburban areas, new immigrant destinations are clearly preferable to established ones. What we were unable to evaluate, however, is whether these average metropolitan-level effects operate differently across immigrant sub-groups. For instance,

we find that racial segregation patterns are influential for immigrant suburbanization, with higher levels of black-white segregation associated with improved suburban outcomes but higher levels of Asian-white segregation associated with poorer outcomes. These are average impacts which may operate differently, particularly for those immigrant sub-groups, e.g. black and Asian immigrants, for whom the minority group in question consists of their native-born co-ethnics. Additionally, there may also be divergent impacts of individual-level factors. For instance, the NIS data suggest that, on average, higher levels of acculturation translate into more opportunities for advantaged suburban residence. However, in an analysis of American Community Survey data, Argeros (2013) documents that, in the case of black immigrants, the least acculturated are the most likely to suburbanize. Some of this difference is likely a consequence of differences in how suburban is measured. Whereas Argeros (2013) uses a traditional suburban/urban divide, the present analysis distinguishes suburban tracts by poverty level. But it may also be case that acculturation operates differently for different groups. For instance, it may be that overt markers of foreign birth allow immigrant blacks to avoid some of the stronger forms of housing discrimination routinely practiced by lenders, real estate agents, and landlords against native-born black Americans. While the sample size of the NIS is not sufficient to assess sub-group differences, the possibility that individual and metro factors may differentially shape individual attainment processes is a topic worthy of further analysis.

An additional limitation is with respect to the cross-national nature of the data. Our assessment provides a snapshot of suburbanization patterns among new LPRs. It adds much needed clarity to prior assessments, particularly with respect to addressing the quality of suburban neighborhoods, assessing disparate outcomes across a broad range of contemporary immigrant groups, and leveraging a multilevel approach to account for the joint roles of individual-level and broader contextual factors. However, the actual processes producing our moment-in-time snapshot are ongoing and involve movements into and exits out of different neighborhoods by immigrants and the native-born alike (Crowder et al 2012; Hall and Crowder 2014; Pais 2014; South et al 2005a, b, c; South et al 2008; South et al 2011b). Only geocoded longitudinal surveys can capture the complexity of these processes, and unfortunately, those that exist lack the diversity of the contemporary foreign-born population that is encompassed in the NIS. While the NIS fielded a second round of data, issues of sample size attrition have limited its

utility. The possibility of a subsequent follow-up with improved sample retention would be a valued and highly desirable development.

In general, the assets of the NIS data are always counterbalanced by the select nature of the sample. We have argued that there are benefits of having a circumscribed population that eliminates potential variability due to differential legal statuses across immigrant groups, but there are clearly limitations. The most consequential is our inability to speak directly to the experiences of the current undocumented population, which represents nearly a quarter of the larger foreign-born population (Radford and Budiman 2018). The way that their residential outcomes differ, and in particular their patterns of suburbanization, cannot be discerned from the NIS data. The undocumented are among one of the most vulnerable segments of the larger foreign-born population; increasingly so in this current period of restrictionist immigration policy and rhetoric. Consequently, the suburban disadvantages we observe for certain segments of the LPR population (e.g. Mexican and Central American immigrants), likely represent a lower bound that may be equally or more applicable to their undocumented counterparts.

Beyond these limitations, what remains clear is that a map of suburban inequality is clearly evident among contemporary LPRs, and its existence goes beyond individual-level differences in socioeconomic and acculturation background factors. Differentiating suburban communities by their level of (dis)advantage is an essential first step in understanding the nature of this inequality. Next steps are to focus on documenting the mechanisms funneling immigrants into different suburban communities, particularly determining the degree to which disparate patterns involve group preferences or discriminatory actions (Logan et al 2002). The fact that these suburban inequalities are evident net of major differences in socioeconomic status, acculturation levels, and metropolitan location, suggest the presence of powerful forces patterning their development.

To end, we return to the possibility poised by Lichter (2013) regarding the potential for the new geography of immigration to heighten racial boundaries and tensions. In present times, it seems increasingly likely that the boundaries have indeed brightened (Alba 2005; Waldinger 2018). However, an emphasis on the simple presence of immigrants in new spaces as a catalyst for nativist reactions is insufficient. We have documented that the new geography of immigration is proceeding unevenly and is marked by unequal access to advantaged suburban areas, even after equalizing differences across groups in socioeconomic status and acculturation levels.

Consequently, any explanation for the possibility of increasing fragmentation must foreground this inequality and give priority to examining the underlying processes generating it.

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Figure A. Odds of Suburban Residence [Reference: Urban]

[Ref: Mexico]

Africa	* / **
Oth Asia	*
East Asia	*
Middle East	
India	*** / ** / **
Europe	
C. Amer	*** / *** / ***
S. Amer.	

0.0   0.5   1.0   1.5   2.0   2.5   3.0

No controls   Indiv-level controls   Metro and Indiv-level controls

Figure B. Odds of Poor Suburban Residence [Reference: Urban]

[Ref: Mexico]

Africa	*** / *
Oth Asia	*** / *** / *
East Asia	*** / *** / **
Middle East	*** / *** / *
India	*** / *** / *
Europe	*** / *** / ***
C. Amer	*** / *** / ***
S. Amer.	*** / *** / *

0.0   0.5   1.0   1.5   2.0   2.5   3.0

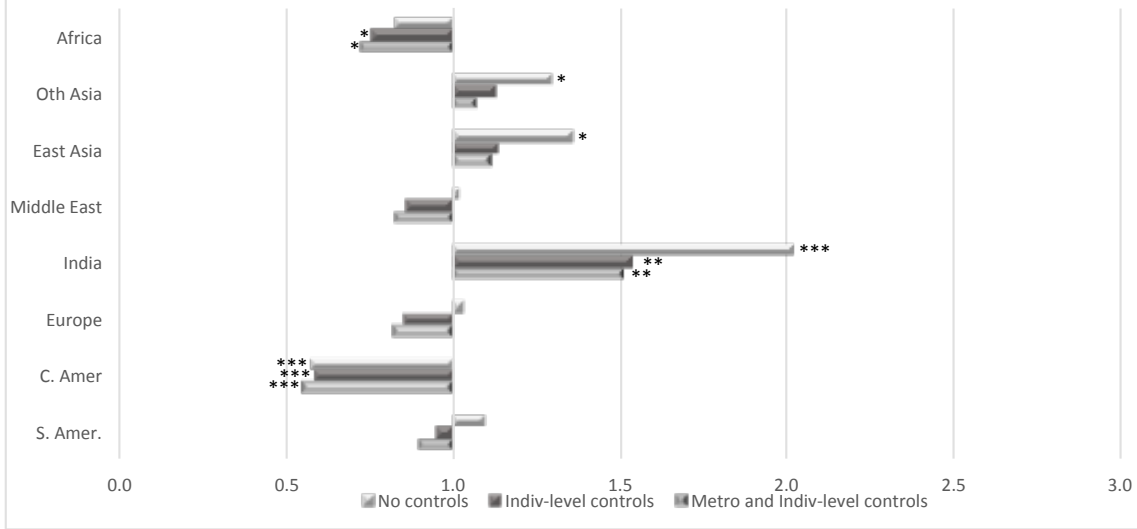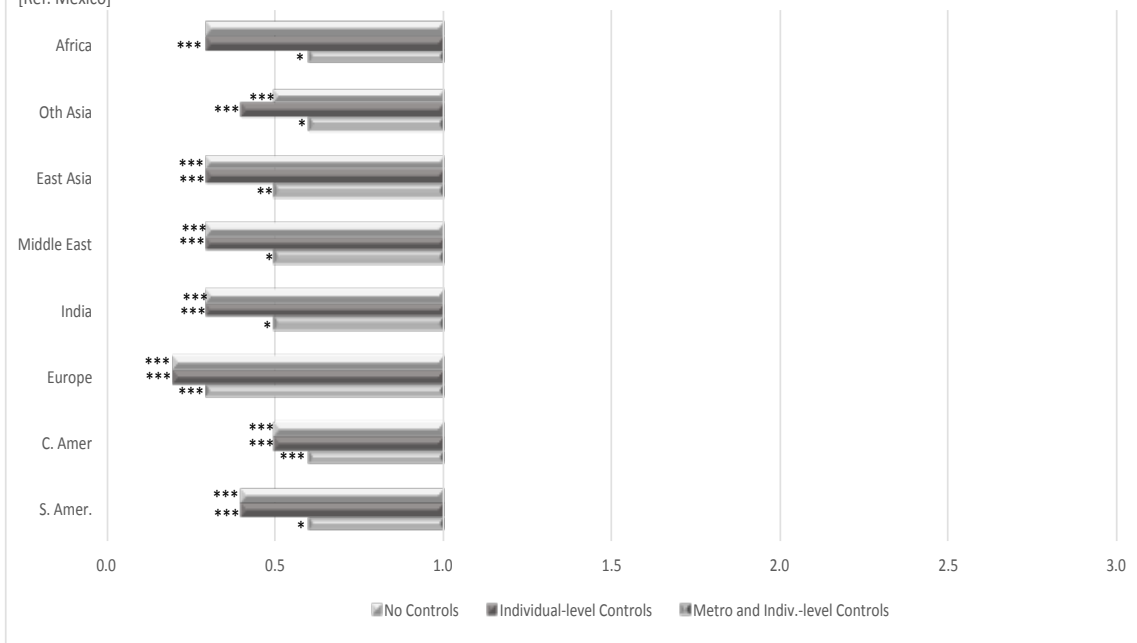No Controls   Individual-level Controls   Metro and Indiv.-level Controls

Figure C. Odds of Non-Poor Suburban Residence [Reference: Urban]
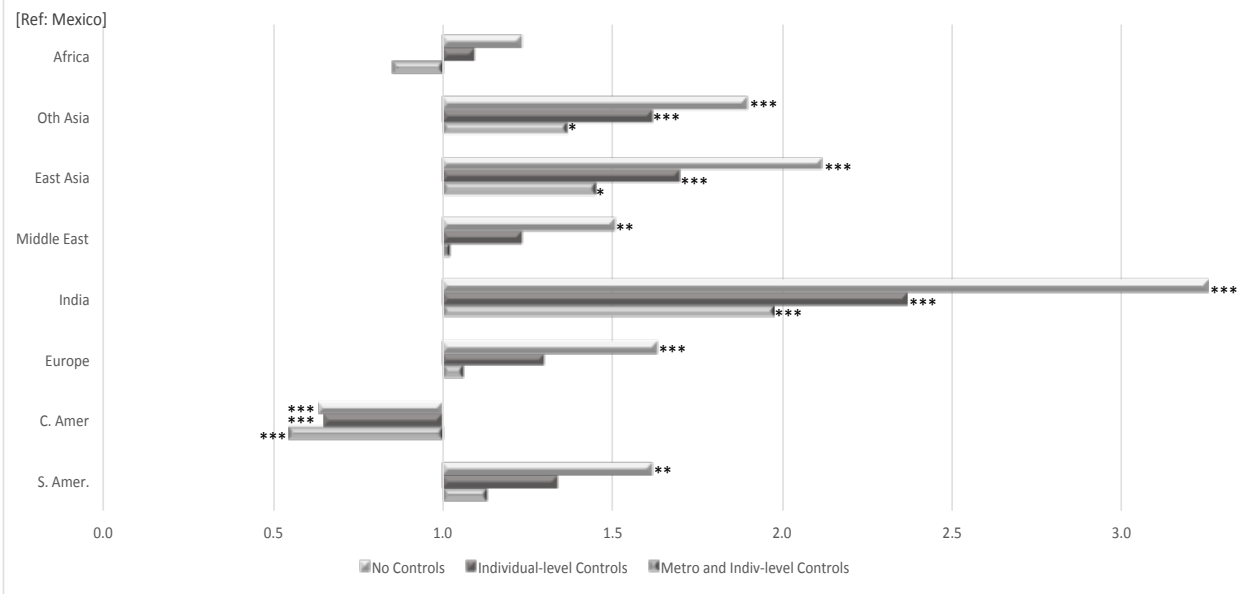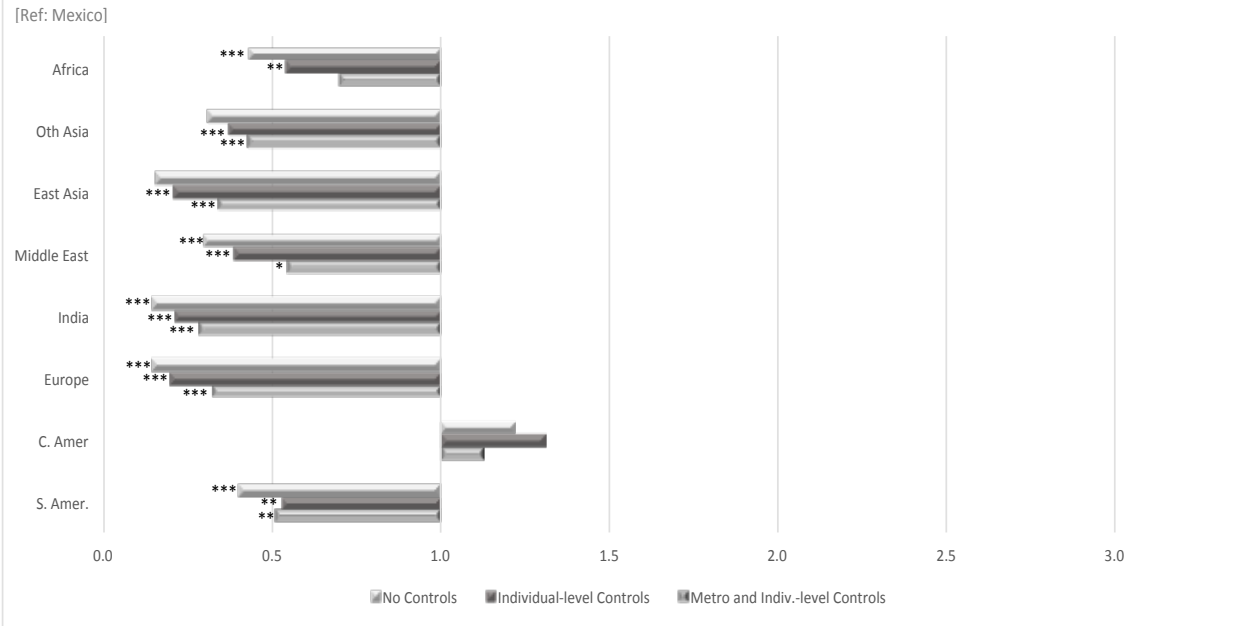
[Ref: Mexico]

Figure D. Odds of Poor Suburban Residence [Reference: Non-Poor Suburban]

[Ref: Mexico]

Source: New Immigrant Survey (NIS)
* significant at the 0.05 level, ** at the 0.01 level, *** at the 0.001 level.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable Name	Mean (SD) or Percent
Tract-Level	
Urban	44.06
Suburban	55.94
Suburban Poor	81.7
Suburban Non-Poor	18.3
Individual-level	
Region-of-Origin	
South America	5.94
Central America	15.58
Mexico	13.92
Western/Eastern Eur.	16.44
India	9.3
Middle East	6.13
East Asia	10.32
Other Asia	11.12
Age [Mean]	38.69 (12.94)
Female [Mean]	0.52 (0.50)
Married [Mean]	0.70 (0.46)
Number in Household under 18 [Mean]	0.94 (1.16)
Speaks English Well [Mean]	0.52 (0.50)
1+ Yrs in the US [Mean]	0.50 (0.50)
Years of Education [Mean]	12.95 (4.72)
Owns Home [Mean]	0.15 (0.36)
High Childhood SES [Mean]	0.18 (0.39)
Prior Trip w/out a Visa [Mean]	0.19 (0.39)
Metro-level	
Percent Foreign Born	21.57
Percent Non-white	35.36
White-Black Segregation	62.09
White-Hispanic Segregation	49.80
White-Asian Segregation	42.22
Immigrant Destination Type	
New	9.90
Minor	5.30
Established	85.00
Percent Suburban	60.42
Percent New Housing	14.62
Percent Poverty	12.63
Percent Foreign Born	21.57
Individual n	6868
Metro Area n	150

Data Source: New Immigrant Survey (NIS)

Table 2. Regression Coefficients for SES and Acculturation Predictors from Different Model Sets

	Model 1	Model 2		Model 3	
	Suburban [Ref: Urban]	Poor Suburb [Ref: Urban]	Non-poor Suburb [Ref: Urban]	Poor Suburb [Ref: Non-Poor Suburb]	Urban [Ref: Non-Poor Suburb]
Intercept	-0.51*	-0.63*	-1.24***	0.55	1.45***
	(0.22)	(0.30)	(0.23)	(0.30)	(0.22)
Acculturation					
Speaks Eng. Well	0.20**	0.09	0.22**	-0.22	-0.21**
	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.08)
1+ Yr in the US	0.02	-0.03	0.01	0.07	-0.03
	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.07)
SES					
Yrs of Ed.	0.02**	-0.01	0.03***	-0.05***	-0.04***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Owns Home	0.37***	-0.16	0.50***	-0.62***	-0.51***
	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.09)
Hi Childhood SES	0.03	-0.39**	0.1	-0.45**	-0.15
	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.08)

Data Source: New Immigrant Survey (NIS). Standard Error in Parentheses.
Each model includes additional controls for: Region-of-origin, age, female, married, Number in Household Under 18, Prior U.S. trip without a visa.
* significant at the 0.05 level, ** at the 0.01 level, *** at the 0.001 level.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients for Metro-level Predictors for Different Model Sets

	Model 1	Model 2		Model 3	
	Suburban [Ref: Urban]	Poor Suburb [Ref: Urban]	Non-poor Suburb [Ref: Urban]	Poor Suburb [Ref: Non-Poor Suburb]	Urban [Ref: Non-Poor Suburb]
Intercept	-4.89***	-6.11***	-4.28***	-1.47	4.65***
	(0.65)	(0.88)	(0.73)	(0.85)	(0.65)
Metro-level					
% Foreign Born	0.02	0.01	0.02	0	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
% Non-White	0.01	0.01	0.02*	-0.01	-0.01*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Segregation Indices					
White-Black	0.02**	0	0.03***	-0.03***	-0.02***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
White-Hispanic	0	0.01	0	0	0
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
White-Asian	-0.03**	-0.02	-0.04***	0.01	0.03**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Imm Destination Type [Ref: Established]	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
New	-0.15	-0.73**	-0.02	-0.67**	0.03
	(0.17)	(0.27)	(0.19)	(0.25)	(0.16)
Minor	0.25	0.19	0.3	-0.12	-0.29
	(0.22)	(0.33)	(0.24)	(0.30)	(0.21)
Metro % Suburban	0.06***	0.07***	0.05***	0.02***	-0.05***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Metro % New Housing	0.01	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)
Metro % Poverty	-0.01	0.11***	-0.11***	0.20***	0.08***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)

Data Source: New Immigrant Survey (NIS). Standard Error in Parentheses. Each model includes the full set of individual-level controls.

Appendix A. Regression Coefficients that Correspond to Odds Ratios Displayed in Figures A-D).

	Suburban [Ref: Urban]	Poor Suburb [Ref: Urban]	Non-poor Suburb [Ref: Urban]	Poor Suburb [Ref: Non-Poor Suburb]
Intercept	0.34*	-0.53***	-0.21	-0.56***
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.15)
Region-of-Origin [Ref: Mexico]				
S. Amer	0.09	-0.95***	0.48**	-0.90***
	(0.16)	(0.22)	(0.16)	(0.22)
Central Amer	-0.55***	-0.71***	-0.45***	0.2
	(0.11)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.15)
Europe	0.03	-1.65***	0.49***	-1.89***
	(0.11)	(0.19)	(0.12)	(0.19)
Middle East	0.70***	-1.18***	1.18***	-1.89***
	(0.13)	(0.23)	(0.14)	(0.22)
East Asia	0.02	-1.06***	0.41**	-1.19***
	(0.15)	(0.23)	(0.15)	(0.23)
Other Asia	0.31*	-1.13***	0.75***	-1.83***
	(0.12)	(0.20)	(0.13)	(0.20)
Africa	0.26*	-0.76***	0.64***	-1.17***

Data Source: New Immigrant Survey (NIS). Standard Error in Parentheses.

Each model includes additional controls for: Region-of-origin, age, female, married, Number in Household Under 18, Prior U.S. trip without a visa.