Social Science Research 40 (2011) 1521–1533

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Social Science Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ssresearch

Reexamining the ethnic hierarchy of locational attainment: Evidence from Los Angeles

David A. Cort

Department of Sociology, W37A Machmer Hall, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Amherst, MA 01003, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 22 November 2010
Revised 23 June 2011
Accepted 15 July 2011
Available online 30 July 2011

Keywords:
Locational attainment
Segregation
Spatial assimilation
Documentation status

ABSTRACT

Because of a lack of data, the locational attainment literature has not incorporated documentation status into models examining group differences in neighborhood quality. I fill this void by using the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey, which permits the identification of undocumented respondents, allowing a reexamination of the ethnic structure of locational attainment in this important immigrant-receiving city. Results first suggest that while undocumented Latinos live in the poorest quality communities, blacks live in neighborhoods that are similar to native-born Latinos and better than foreign-born Asians and Latinos. Second, the effects of education are strongest for blacks, allowing the highly educated an opportunity to reside in communities that are of better quality than educated Latinos and Asians. Thus, undocumented Latinos replace blacks at the bottom of the locational attainment hierarchy, allowing educated blacks in Los Angeles to reside in better neighborhoods than blacks in the nation at large.

1. Introduction

Over the last 15 years, scholars have focused on the patterns and determinants of residential segregation among whites and minorities (Farley and Frey, 1994, 1996; Iceland, 2004; Logan et al., 2004; Quillian, 2002), generally concluding that between 1990 and 2000, black segregation levels somewhat declined (Iceland et al., 2002; Massey and Denton, 1992, 1993), while Latino segregation has been steadily rising (Massey and Fischer, 1999; Wilkes and Iceland, 2004). These patterns accompany a dramatic surge in immigration to the US, where migrants are visible minorities from Asian, African, West Indian, and Latin American nations. Importantly, a nontrivial proportion of Latin American immigrants are undocumented (Passel, 2006; Passel and Cohn, 2008), an impediment which likely complicates a journey towards socioeconomic incorporation and residential integration, goals which are already difficult to achieve for darker-skinned documented immigrants (Denton and Massey, 1989; Massey and Bitterman, 1985; Massey and Denton, 1992).

While there has been an intense focus on the type or quality of neighborhoods in which native and foreign-born whites, blacks and Latinos currently reside and move to, a lack of survey data has prevented an examination of how undocumented Latinos fare in this quest for high quality neighborhoods. Including undocumented Latinos in studies of neighborhood quality is important because they make up a significant proportion of the fastest growing immigrant population in the United States and because once here, many participate in the same activities their documented counterparts participate, such as forming families and raising children who attend neighborhood schools. Since school quality is directly related to neighborhood quality, results focused on undocumented Latinos' locational attainment outcomes have potentially important implications for how well the next generation of an important and growing segmented of the population are educated. Examining the

E-mail address: dcort@soc.umass.edu

0049-089X/$ - see front matter © 2011 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2011.07.003

contexts in which important activities such as living and schooling occur for such a vulnerable population is therefore a worthwhile, but understudied research activity. In this paper, I begin to fill this void in the literature.

Scholars (Friedman and Rosenbaum, 2007; South et al., 2005, 2008; Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001) have examined group differences in segregation outcomes between native-born whites and other native and foreign-born minorities. Their goals are twofold. Using models collectively known as *locational attainment* (Alba and Logan, 1991, 1992, 1993; Alba et al., 1999; Logan and Alba, 1993; Logan et al., 1996), they first seek to determine the extent to which native and foreign-born minority groups have access to the same desirable neighborhoods (most often defined in the literature as a majority white neighborhood) as their native-born white counterparts, net of critical characteristics. Second, they wish to determine the extent to which minority groups receive lower or higher locational returns to their human and financial capital endowments than whites, and whether these relationships vary by nativity status. Their results collectively suggest an ethnic gradient with regard to locational attainment: whites have access to the best neighborhoods, followed by Asians, native-born Latinos, foreign-born Latinos, and then blacks (Alba et al., 1994; Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001). In addition, analysts more or less agree that the ethnic gradient extends to the role of socioeconomic resources in minimizing or expanding these group differences. Whites, Asians, and Latinos are better able to leverage their economic and human capital resources to access the best neighborhoods than native-born blacks (South et al., 2005, 2008).

While illuminating, these findings are largely based on national data and therefore represent an average of many place-specific results. The ethnic hierarchy of locational attainment noted above may look very different in a city like Los Angeles where the immigrant population is larger, more socioeconomically diverse, and where residential location is partly determined by place-specific structural factors. For example, Los Angeles is a city that contains a diverse set of immigrants (i.e. many impoverished undocumented Latinos as well as many financially stable Blacks, Latinos and Asians). It also contains Latinos who have stated preferences for living in their own communities, while being averse to living among native-born blacks (Charles, 2006). It is also a place where new immigrants likely desire neighborhoods near co-ethnics who can help ease the transition to a new environment (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). Moreover, even though Los Angeles contains segregated neighborhoods, it also has many integrated neighborhoods, giving residents ample opportunities to live alongside people with varying backgrounds (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr, 1997). Place-specific structural factors may thus rearrange the ethnic gradient in locational attainment detected in national-based samples, allowing native-born blacks to perform as well or perhaps even outpace many of their minority counterparts.

A reexamination of the nature of this ethnic gradient in Los Angeles is therefore potentially revealing. Such a case-study would provide a valuable update to the literature regarding blacks' performance vis-à-vis vulnerable groups such as undocumented Latinos, while clarifying our theoretical understanding of groups' placement in the attainment hierarchy. I begin to fill these theoretical and empirical voids using the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (LA–FANS), a newly available data source from Los Angeles that allows for the identification of undocumented immigrants and a city specific analysis of ethnic gradients in neighborhood mobility patterns.

This study goes beyond prior work in two ways. First, analysts who study locational attainment have consistently focused on racial (Adelman, 2005; Alba and Logan, 1993; Alba et al., 2000; Massey and Denton, 1993), ethnic (South et al., 2005, 2008), and nativity status differences (Friedman and Rosenbaum, 2007; Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001) in neighborhood quality outcomes. However, given the rapid influx of undocumented Latinos into the United States (Passel, 2006; Passel and Cohn, 2008), documentation status is potentially an important understudied background factor in the locational attainment and status attainment processes more generally. Second, part of the locational attainment literature (Logan and Alba, 1993; South et al., 2005, 2008) involves examining the extent to which groups differ with regard to the effects of socioeconomic status on neighborhood quality outcomes. Logan and Alba (1993) developed the theoretical apparatus for this exercise, and are joined by Scott South and colleagues (South et al., 2005, 2008) in empirically testing these ideas. I add to this body of work by examining how the effects of socioeconomic status on neighborhood quality outcomes for undocumented Latinos differ from their documented black, white, native, and foreign-born counterparts.

2. Background and theory

2.1. Spatial assimilation

Analyses focusing on group differences in ethnic residential segregation are generally organized around two theories of locational attainment: spatial assimilation and place stratification. The spatial assimilation model (Massey, 1985) is used to describe and explain groups' placement in the spatial hierarchy. It is conceptually similar to the status attainment model (Blau and Duncan, 1967) in that both are concerned with the social process by which individuals convert their ascribed and achieved statuses into placement in a social hierarchy. However, while the status attainment model is concerned with individuals' placement in high status occupations, the spatial assimilation model focuses on individuals' placement in high quality neighborhoods. As argued in this literature, an important part of moving up the socioeconomic hierarchy involves attaining residence in a desirable community. As such, when individuals leave undesirable neighborhoods for more desirable ones, this is a social process similar to earning more education, income, or job status, and is therefore an important topic for social analysis.

The spatial assimilation model posits that members of minority groups such as blacks and Latinos seek to turn their financial and human capital endowments into geographic proximity to whites and into residence in middle class neighborhoods (Massey, 1985). They do so because white neighborhoods and those whose residents earn middle class incomes generally have the best schools, the highest property values, better quality groceries, lower crime, and better social amenities in general, making them more desirable to residents.[1] These are exactly the resources that are desirable to individuals and families. In a meritocratic society when minorities acquire more human and financial capital, their chances of living in these desirable neighborhoods should increase. Therefore, any gross differences between whites and minorities in locational attainment outcomes may be explained by individual-level resources such as income, educational attainment, and wealth. These factors, once controlled, should eliminate gross minority-white differences (Alba and Nee 1997, 2003).

The model has also been used to examine nativity and intra-ethnic differences (Friedman and Rosenbaum, 2007; Logan et al., 2002; Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001; South et al., 2008). Scholars recognize that upon arrival, immigrants initially reside in ethnic residential enclaves where co-ethnic minorities aid in socioeconomic assimilation by assisting them with housing and employment.[2] However, those who are native-born do not need such assistance and can therefore be conceptually considered an advantaged group relative to their foreign-born counterparts. They are expected to live closer to whites and reside in wealthier communities than the foreign-born. Moreover, some ethnic minorities like Cubans receive more structural assistance for assimilation (Portes and Bach, 1985; Portes and Stepick, 1985; Portes et al., 1986) than other groups like Mexicans (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). As such, specific immigrant and minority groups may be better able to acquire residences in desirable communities than others. But once more, controls for financial and human capital should diminish nativity status differences. In short, differentials in human and financial capital explain nativity status differences in locational attainment, just as they explain minority-white differences.

Scholars have concluded that an ethnic hierarchical structure in locational attainment exists (Friedman and Rosenbaum, 2007; Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001; South et al., 2008). Whites have the best chances of accessing the most advantaged neighborhoods, followed by Asians, native-born Latinos, foreign-born Latinos, and then blacks. In short, not only does race and ethnicity serve as an impediment to acquiring safe neighborhoods, but so does being foreign-born. This ethnic gradient surfaces using nationally-based samples (see South et al., 2008) as well as in New York (Friedman and Rosenbaum, 2007; Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001). While these results are clear and consistent, place-specific factors in cities may mean that this pattern likely look different within certain cities than in the nation on a whole.

Los Angeles is a place that contains city-specific factors that could produce different patterns than the nation on a while. Four such factors may make Los Angles special and capable of producing anomalous local ethnic gradient. First, Los Angeles is a city that contains a diverse set of immigrants. There are many impoverished undocumented Latinos as well as many financially stable Latinos and Asians. Second, within the city, Latinos are noted as having strong preferences for living in their own communities, while being averse to living among native-born blacks (Charles, 2006). Moreover, the city's immigrants likely desire neighborhoods near co-ethnics who can help ease the transition to a new environment (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). As such, undocumented Latinos may be likely to live near their more financially secure documented counterparts instead of residing in the poorest black communities alongside native-born blacks. Third, even though Los Angeles contains segregated neighborhoods, it also has many diverse neighborhoods, giving residents ample opportunities to live alongside people with varying backgrounds (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr, 1997). For example, the city is home to many neighborhoods where specific ethnic groups may be the majority, but where strong pluralities of other ethnic groups also reside. As such, the city likely contains neighborhoods that are racially and ethnically diverse, while also containing many of the desirable amenities that middle-class whites seek out. Fourth, Los Angeles was and still is a very expensive housing market, pricing many middle-class families out of the rental and housing markets in predominantly white neighborhoods. As such, these families may well make certain housing compromises, living in neighborhoods that are more diverse than they would have otherwise considered. These realities may ease whites' reluctance to live alongside minorities. It may also provide blacks with opportunities to reside in communities outside of those in the poorest sections of the inner-city.

Collectively then, these four factors may indeed produce an ethnic locational attainment hierarchy that is quite different from the nation on a whole. However, a lack of survey data within Los Angeles that permits the ability to estimate documentation status has prevented scholars from testing this logic. If the ethnic pattern of locational attainment is replicated in Los Angeles, then this would provide strong evidence that it is a finding that is robust to city of residence, regardless of the factors that exist within cities. However, if the pattern is rearranged, then this would provide evidence that national results are likely to vary from place to place for locally-based reasons. Such city-specific structural factors may produce a rearrangement of the ethnic gradient detected in past work. However, whatever the nature of these differences, the spatial assimilation theory predicts that they are likely explained by individual-level differentials in financial and human capital. Using the logic of the spatial assimilation model, I pose the following hypothesis to test the model within Los Angeles:

[1] It is important to stress that although this model has been used extensively in past scholarship, the logic undergirding it is not without problems. Specifically, the idea that moving to a white neighborhood is preferable to another type of neighborhood indirectly supports an argument suggesting that to improve neighborhoods, one needs to make them "whiter" because, as the theory argues, white neighborhoods have more resources, better schools, and more amenities in general. Indeed, analysts and theorists would be wise to consider whether the-taken-for-granted assumptions undergirding spatial assimilation theory ought to be reexamined.

[2] Alba et al. (1999) also argue and demonstrate that first-generation immigrants are increasingly settling in suburban areas, which contain higher concentrations of non-Hispanic whites.

H1: Initial group differences between whites and minority groups (including undocumented Latinos), between native-born and undocumented Latinos, and between blacks and Latinos exist. However, these differences are likely to be eliminated once controls for financial and human capital are applied.

2.2. Additive processes of place stratification

While the spatial assimilation model is concerned with the individual-level factors that account for group differences in locational attainment outcomes, the place stratification model (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Logan and Alba, 1993; Charles, 2003) focuses on the structural factors responsible for group residual differences. According to this model, places are hierarchically ordered and are therefore associated with more or less favorable life chances for those who reside in them. Because desirable neighborhoods are scarce resources, advantaged groups like whites do what they can to protect access to those places. To do so, they actively prevent minority groups such as blacks and Latinos from attaining residence in desirable neighborhoods through discrimination. The structural mechanisms linked to this discrimination include acts of violence (Farley et al., 1994), restrictive zoning (Shlay and Rossi, 1981), and lending and housing discrimination (Squires and Kim, 1995; Yinger, 1995). Scholars also point to the possibility that whites stereotype minorities and actively resist living near them (Emerson et al., 2001; Farley et al., 1994; Krysan and Farley, 2002). Together, these structural factors increase minorities' psychological, social, and economic costs of living in predominantly white communities. All told then, proponents of this model argue that the individual-level factors implicated in the spatial assimilation model will not eliminate gross differences in locational attainment between whites and other minorities.

The conceptual arguments undergirding the tenets of the place stratification model and findings related to tests of the model (Alba et al., 1994; Logan and Alba, 1993; Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001) suggest that whites are expected have the best opportunities to live in the communities that are wealthier and where they are the majority. While this logic and the empirical expectations derived from them are clear, no work has established whether undocumented Latinos join their documented minority counterparts (i.e. blacks and native-born Latinos) in failing to gain access to neighborhoods of the highest quality relative to whites. It stands to reason that the same structural factors that prevent other minority groups from attaining parity with whites would also disadvantage undocumented Latinos, but this has never been empirically verified.

As I previously noted, analysts have found that whites have access to the best neighborhoods, followed by Asians, Latinos, and then blacks. However, the extent to which this pattern is replicated in Los Angeles is an open question. I mentioned that there are several city-specific reasons why the ethnic pattern in locational attainment detected in national work would be different in Los Angeles. As such, whether Los Angeles blacks continue to underperform their Asian and Latino counterparts, as well as their undocumented counterparts is an unanswered question in the literature. Los Angeles blacks could underperform their Latino, as past research finds, they could underperform only selected Latino groups such as the undocumented, or they could actually over perform all types of Latinos. This seems plausible because the central demographic distinction in Los Angeles is not black–white but Latino–white. As we will see in a few moments African American's are advantaged even relative to Native Latinos on a number of socioeconomic dimensions in Los Angeles.

Again, proponents of spatial assimilation theory would argue that any ethnic hierarchical pattern of locational attainment detected in Los Angeles should be explained by controls for financial and human capital. However, proponents of the place stratification model argue that regardless of the pattern of group differences, the differences themselves will be maintained in the face of controls for these theoretically relevant controls. Using the logic of the place stratification model, I hypothesize that:

H2: Initial group differences between whites and minority groups (including undocumented Latinos), between native-born and undocumented Latinos, and between blacks and Latinos exist. These differences are likely to remain, even after controls for financial and human capital are applied.

2.3. Non-Additive processes of spatial assimilation and place stratification

The spatial assimilation model, on the one hand, explains how controls for socioeconomic resources and other important individual-level characteristics could equalize groups with respect to residence in desirable communities. On the other hand, the place stratification model proposes mechanisms that might be responsible for any net or leftover racial and ethnic differences in locational attainment outcomes. Framed in this way, both of these theories are useful for understanding additive processes of residential segregation. However, Logan and Alba (1993) also discuss ways in which groups could differentially utilize their socioeconomic resources to gain access to desirable communities, even if they are statistically similar on all other factors. Thus, using elaborations of the spatial assimilation and place stratification models, they develop empirically testable scenarios under which non-additive or interactive relationships between group status and socioeconomic resources occur. These scenarios rest on two foundational assumptions. First, even after socioeconomic resources are controlled, minorities lag behind their white counterparts. Second, all groups receive positive locational returns for their socioeconomic status endowments (i.e. the effect of socioeconomic status is positive for everyone). If these two situations occur, then, Logan and Alba (1993) theorize three testable scenarios.

In the first scenario, whites with few socioeconomic resources live in communities that are substantially more desirable than minorities with few resources. However, as both groups attain more resources, whites' disadvantages disappear. This is so because minorities' returns to socioeconomic status are so strong that they are able to erase differences with whites, a scenario that supports spatial assimilation theory. Logan and Alba (1993) term the second scenario the "strong" version of the place stratification model. Here, minorities receive lower locational returns than whites for their socioeconomic status endowments, preventing them from successfully converting this valuable resource into desirable neighborhoods. As such, the effects of socioeconomic status on locational attainment outcomes are expected to be weaker for minorities than whites. In the third scenario, termed the "weak" version of the place stratification model, minorities receive locational returns to their socioeconomic status that are larger than whites' returns. However, because they start out at such a disadvantage and because their returns are not large enough, minorities never catch up to their white counterparts. In this scenario, the slope lines for minorities are greater than those for whites, but minorities' slopes are not steep enough to allow them to close the gap with whites.

2.4. Elaborations to theory: returns to socioeconomic status

These theoretical possibilities have produced clear pathways for tests of the models. Analysts examining the locational attainment returns to socioeconomic status for blacks and whites have found that indeed, blacks' returns are substantially greater than their white counterparts (Alba and Logan, 1993; Bayer et al., 2004; Crowder et al., 2006; Iceland et al., 2005; Iceland and Wilkes, 2006). However, while blacks need substantial amounts of education and income to gain access to white communities, whites do not. As such, although educated blacks are able to close the locational attainment gap with whites, they are not able to completely erase it. Importantly, even when all groups, including Latinos, have high levels of education, the ethnic structure of locational attainment is still preserved (South et al., 2008), with educated whites living in the best neighborhoods, followed by Asians, native-born Latinos, and then blacks. While these results are clear, no work has examined whether undocumented Latinos (the conceptual disadvantaged group) who have substantial socioeconomic resources at their disposal would still lag behind their documented counterparts (the conceptual advantaged group) who also have such nontrivial resources. Moreover, no work has specifically examined whether the ethnic hierarchical pattern of locational attainment mentioned above is maintained when it is reexamined for groups who have high levels of socioeconomic status within immigrant-receiving cities such as Los Angeles. The extensions of the spatial assimilation and place stratification theories provide a means of testing these ideas as they relate to undocumented Latinos' and blacks' returns to socioeconomic status in Los Angeles. Several possible results could surface from these analyses.

First, while one could reasonably expect that undocumented Latinos' returns would be far smaller than all other documented groups, it is quite possible their returns could match those of foreign-born documented Latinos. This could happen because those who grant access to higher quality neighborhoods (i.e. landlords) are unable to differentiate between foreign-born documented and undocumented Latinos. In such an immigrant-rich environment like Los Angeles, landlords may treat all foreign-born Latino applicants as equivalent. As such, regardless of socioeconomic status, these two groups' returns could be identical. Second, it is possible that undocumented Latinos' returns could be higher than their foreign-born documented Latino counterparts. This could happen because the drive or desire to utilize these resources is greater in undocumented Latinos than the documented, given that undocumented Latinos understand the precarious nature of their own disadvantage. This result could also surface because undocumented Latinos who have substantial socioeconomic resources are able to enter neighborhoods that are less segregated, but still relatively diverse. That is, although they may still live among their documented and undocumented Latino counterparts, they are able to use their education to enter communities where the neighborhoods are of better quality.

Third, it is possible that in Los Angeles, blacks' returns also exceed whites' returns. However, even though blacks' higher returns may not be enough to allow them to surpass whites, it may be sufficient to rearrange the ethnic hierarchical structure, such that blacks with substantial socioeconomic resources are able to live in higher quality neighborhoods than their educated minority counterparts. As such, educated blacks would no longer be at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchical structure, they would be near the top. This could occur because even though Los Angeles has segregated neighborhoods, it also has many neighborhoods that are ethnically diverse, containing many of the amenities that families desire. This gives blacks with many resources more options within Los Angles than has been observed in national samples.

Hypothetically then, support for the elaboration of the spatial assimilation model would be found if the returns to socioeconomic status for undocumented Latinos and blacks exceeded those of their more advantaged counterparts and if those returns (i.e. the slope lines for socioeconomic status) were sufficient to eliminate locational attainment disparities with advantaged groups who have substantial socioeconomic resources. Support for the weak version of the place stratification theory would be found if blacks and undocumented Latinos' slope lines for socioeconomic status were steeper than advantaged groups' slopes, but because undocumented Latinos and blacks start out at such disadvantages, they are never able to catch up to their more advantaged counterparts, even if their socioeconomic resources are substantial. Finally, support for the strong version of the place stratification theory would be found if the returns to socioeconomic status for blacks and undocumented Latinos are weaker than those of their advantaged counterparts.

3. Data, variables, and methods

3.1. Data

The data come from Wave 1 (2000–2001) of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (LA–FANS). The LA–FANS is a representative sample of neighborhoods and the families (i.e. households, adults, and children) who lived in 65 randomly selected census tracts within Los Angeles County.[3] Beginning in 2000 and ending in 2002, interviewers went into the homes of randomly selected Los Angeles families, collecting current and retrospective information from adults, children, and caregivers. Retrospective information included questions about events that occurred in respondents' lives for the two years prior to the interview date. These retrospective questions, contained in an Event History Calendar, allowed me to identify the neighborhood of respondents current (at the time of interview) neighborhood of residence. Interviewers also queried adult and primary caregiver respondents about their citizenship. Specifically, respondents were asked a series of questions that I used to estimate documentation status. For example, interviewers asked respondents whether they were citizens, had a green card, refugee status, a student visa, or any other form of documentation permitting residence in the US. If respondents answered in the negative to *all* of these filter questions, I assumed that they were undocumented. All other respondents who had some form of documentation permitting legal residence were treated as documented Los Angeles County residents. In all, my analytical sample contains 2513 randomly selected adults and adults who are also the primary caregivers of children in the household. I use census tracts as my analytical definition of neighborhoods. Through the use of restricted LA–FANS data, I merge census tract data from the 2000 census onto the individual-level LA–FANS, allowing me to create neighborhood-level dependent variables and model them as functions of individual-level covariates.[4]

3.2. Variables

My dependent variables are the percentages of non-Hispanic whites and the median household income in the census tract of respondents' neighborhood of current residence, variables that have been used extensively in locational attainment research (Logan and Alba, 1993). Although these variables have been used extensively, results may not be necessarily identical. It is quite possible that certain ethnic groups, such as native-born Latinos, could live in neighborhoods that contain fewer whites than the city on average, but also contain residents whose median incomes are at or above average. Moreover, Los Angeles contains many non-white, non-poor communities (i.e. Filipino Eagle Rock, Asian Alhambra, and black Baldwin Hills), making the care with which the subsequent results are interpreted extremely necessary.

The independent variable of interest is a classification measuring race, ethnicity, and documentation status. I group respondents into one of nine categories: native-born non-Hispanic whites, foreign-born non-Hispanic whites, native-born non-Hispanic blacks, native-born Latinos, foreign-born documented Latinos, undocumented Latinos, foreign-born Asians, native-born others, and foreign-born others.[5] I use native-born whites as the reference category in all the main analyses and include three sets of control variables. Demographic controls include age and sex. I also include a group of variables measuring family structure which include the presence of children in the household and marital status. Finally, I measure socioeconomic status using five variables: educational attainment, family income (measured in thousands of dollars), employment status, use of public assistance, and homeownership status.[6]

3.3. Methods

To explore the cross-sectional relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables of interest, I adopt two models used extensively by past scholars of locational attainment (Alba and Logan, 1991, 1992, 1993; Alba et al., 1999; Logan and Alba, 1993). The first model can be specified as follows:

$$Y_j = a + b_1 X_{1ij} + b_2 Y_{2ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

The first model states that individuals, subscripted by "*i*" are clustered within neighborhoods, subscripted by "*j*". Second, the model says that the dependent variable, Y_j, is modeled as a function of a set of dummy variables (X_{1ij}) measuring race, ethnicity, and documentation status, with "*a*" representing the omitted category. Third, the effects of these group characteristics are explained by a set of individual-level variables (Y_{2ij}) measuring demographic factors, family structure, and socioeconomic status. Importantly, in analyses that follow, I wish to contrast the experiences of whites to all other minorities,

[3] The data contain a weight to ensure that the data are representative of Los Angeles County. Specifically, although the respondents in the sample reside in only 65 census tracts, the cluster sampling design ensured that residents in all Los Angeles neighborhoods had equal chances of entering the sample. Furthermore, the data contains respondents from poor, near poor, and non-poor neighborhoods. The weight included with the data ensure that even though the sampling techniques are complex, the data are representative of the entire county. In all subsequent analyses, I include this weight.

[4] The LA-FANS data contain 1990 tract boundaries. To utilize 2000 census data, I ensured that the census tracts that switched boundaries between censuses matched the LA-FANS data.

[5] The data contain very small numbers of foreign-born blacks and only 16 native-born Asians. I respectively group these people into the foreign-born and native-born other categories.

[6] In preliminary models, I include time spent in the US as a measure of assimilation. This variable produced results that were identical to controlling for age. Given that I do not run separate models for nativity status, I control for age instead.

blacks to all Latinos, native-born Latinos to foreign-born Latinos, and foreign-born documented Latinos to the undocumented. To do this, I utilize four separate reference categories: non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, and native-born Latinos, and foreign-born documented Latinos. The use of whites as the reference category is standard in the locational attainment literature, while the use of blacks, native-born Latinos, and especially undocumented Latinos serves as an update to the literature and is in line with the conceptual framework outlined above.

When I examine the locational returns to socioeconomic status, I use the following non-additive model:

$$Y_j = a + b_1X_{1ij} + b_2Y_{2ij} + b_3Z_{3ij} + b_4XZ_{4ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

The model states locational attainment (Yj) is modeled as a function of the non-additive effects of dummy variables for group status (X_{1ij}), controls for demographic factors and family structure (Y_{2ij}), a measure of socioeconomic status (Z_{3ij}), and interaction effects between socioeconomic status and group status (XZ_{4ij}). In this non-additive model, Z_{3ij} represents the effect of socioeconomic status for whites (the omitted category), while XZ_{4ij} represents the additional effects of socioeconomic status for individual groups.

Finally, I follow Adelman (2005) and Rosenbaum and Friedman (2001) in recognizing that spatial autocorrelation can occur in models of locational attainment. The problem is that when the dependent variable is an aggregate measure and the covariates are individual or household-level measures, respondents within the same "context" or neighborhood in this case, have the same value on the dependent variable, potentially producing correlated error terms. This may be an important issue in analyses of only one city were the number of contexts is appreciably less than in the nation as a whole. Spatial autocorrelation can underestimate or overestimate the size of regression coefficients and standard errors in analytical model, depending on the number of respondents within the context. To address this issue, I utilize feasible generalized least square regression analysis to estimate the models. This technique produces coefficients and standard errors that account for spatial autocorrelation.[7]

My analytic plan is straightforward. First, I describe the bivariate differences in spatial proximity to whites, and then discuss the extent to which these differences are attenuated by controls for demographic factors, socioeconomic status, and family structure. Second, I ascertain whether the relationship between socioeconomic resources and the spatial proximity to whites and Latinos varies by race, ethnicity, and documentation status. Specifically, I directly compare the size of the locational returns to socioeconomic status for blacks and all Latino groups. In all, I pay attention to group differences that have not been emphasized in past work and point out the extent to which results support the various hypotheses previously outlined.

4. Results

4.1. Bivariate analyses

In Table 1, I present means for all dependent and independent variables for each racial and ethnic group. Most of these descriptive results have been highlighted in previous work and are therefore not surprising. However, since this study is the first to examine issues of locational attainment for undocumented Latinos, those results are worth noting. Undocumented Latinos live in communities that have the next to lowest concentration of whites and the lowest household median income. Specifically, they live in communities that are almost 35% less white and where the median household income is roughly $27,000 less than native-born whites. In addition, undocumented and foreign-born Latinos live in communities that are very similar, suggesting that undocumented Latinos may be living in communities where they can find support and help from peers, as suggested by Clark (2002).[8] All told, bivariate analyses suggest that this group appears to reside at the bottom of the locational attainment hierarchy in Los Angeles. It is also important to note that similar to national findings, blacks reside near the bottom of the locational attainment hierarchy, depending on the measure of locational attainment used.

Bivariate findings also suggest that there indeed appears to be an ethnic and nativity status gradient with respect to locational attainment. However, this ethnic locational hierarchy depends on the measure of locational attainment examined. On the one hand, if percent white is used as the measure of neighborhood quality, all Latinos live in neighborhoods that are less white than blacks. On the other hand, if the median household income is used, all groups except foreign-born Latinos live in neighborhoods that are wealthier communities than blacks. As such, although blacks tend to reside near the bottom of the locational attainment hierarchy, their gross outcomes are roughly similar to native-born Latinos, but better than foreign-born Latinos.

These results for Los Angeles contrast with past findings (Alba et al., 1994; Logan and Alba, 1993; South et al., 2008) in two ways. First, foreign-born Latinos, including those who are undocumented, live in the poorest quality communities

[7] I estimated preliminary models using standard OLS techniques with no cluster adjustment. I re-estimated those models, this time using FGLS estimation techniques. Results showed that parameter estimates across techniques were similar, but not identical. However, the level of statistical significance across the models varied, primarily because of differences in the standard errors. While most of the older literature relies on simpler OLS models, I have fairly strong theoretical reasons for using FGLS models. As such, I prefer coefficients and standard errors that are estimated with those techniques.

[8] Follow-up analyses indicated that foreign-born documented Latinos and undocumented Latinos live in communities that have very similar percentages of Hispanics. The former group lives in neighborhoods that are on average 68.43% Hispanic, while the latter group lives in communities that are on average 67.28% Hispanic.

Table 1
Means, Los Angeles adults. Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey, wave 1.

Variables	Everyone	NB NH Whites	FB NH Whites	FB Asians	NB NH blacks	NB Latinos	FB Doc. Latinos	Undoc. Latinos	NB others[a]	FB others
Dependent variables[b]										
Percent White	31.41	48.75	53.80	30.80**	24.47**	19.46**	13.33**	13.98**	30.56**	28.28**
Median Household Income	46789.58	59829.11	52914.98*	47823.36	40686.14**	41148.72**	34922.65**	32427.91**	45296.35**	42647.45**
Family structure										
No children	.62	.73	.52**	.54**	.65	.65	.44**	.53**	.72	.48**
Children 0–5 years	.16	.10	.13	.16	.15	.17	.22**	.28**	.12	.24
Children 6–17 years	.22	.17	.35**	.30*	.20	.18	.34**	.19	.16	.28
Married	.51	.54	.65	.67	.30**	.40**	.58	.42**	.47	.62
Socioeconomic status										
Education (years)	13.06	14.92	15.02	15.38	13.94**	12.82	9.10**	8.74**	14.82	14.26
Family income (thousands)	52.17	79.26	69.58	54.92*	38.66**	38.59**	29.05**	17.66**	58.32	37.36**
Employed	.67	.65	.69	.59	.61	.74	.67	.74	.70	.79
On public assistance	.04	.03	.05	.004	.07	.04	.03	.03	.04	.11
Home is owned	.48	.64	.48	.53	.41**	.55	.41**	.07**	.53	.42
Demographic factors										
Males	.51	.52	.47	.46	.47	.49	.51	.62	.53	.43
Age	40.94	45.89	46.00	43.92	40.42**	33.49**	40.92**	29.04**	38.60**	41.17
Weighted sample sizes	2513	845	101	223	226	246	404	264	123	81

$P < .05$; $P < .01$ (two-tailed tests for differences from native-born whites' means).
* $P < .05$.
** $P < .01$.
[a] Contains sixteen (16) native-born Asians.
[b] Measures neighborhood quality of current neighborhood of residence.

in Los Angles. Second, while past analyses show that whites have access to the best neighborhoods, followed by Latinos and then native-born blacks, findings here suggest that at least preliminarily, blacks appear to be holding their own in Los Angeles. Their initial access to quality neighborhoods consistently outpaces *most* types of Latinos, except those who are native-born. As such, the preliminary evidence suggests that separating Latino groups by documentation status and examining patterns specifically for Los Angeles matters. Doing so is likely to lead to different conclusions than those reported in past work concerning the ethnic hierarchy of access to high quality neighborhoods. In subsequent analyses, I confirm whether differences between blacks and Latinos remain even after theoretically relevant controls are applied. It is also the case that Native Blacks have much higher educational attainment than all three Latino groups. Although their family incomes and rate of home ownership are similar to native born Latinos, they are less likely to be married.

4.2. Additive processes: access to desirable neighborhoods

Multivariate analyses are meant to determine whether these patterns remain in the face of control variables. I present these results in Table 2. The table contains additive and multiplicative results and is divided by type of dependent variable. For each dependent variable, the first model contains fully specified additive equations which are meant to ascertain the nature of net group differences in Los Angeles. The second set of models are meant to ascertain the differential effects of education on the dependent variables, while the third set of models are meant to estimate the differential effects of family income on the dependent variables. Importantly, the first set of models for each dependent variable, I report coefficients that treat blacks, native-born Latinos, and foreign-born Latinos as the omitted categories.[9]

To begin, I examine, in the first set of models, net white-minority and intra-minority differences in the spatial proximity to whites and the median household income in neighborhoods. Three theoretically important results are noteworthy. First, significant differences between whites and minorities, between blacks and foreign-born Latinos, and between native-born Latinos and foreign-born Latinos exist, even after theoretically relevant controls are applied. While significant attenuation does occur relative to the gross differences described in Table 1, these results provide strong support for the tenets of place stratification theory and hypothesis #2, implying that structural factors are still responsible for enduring patterns of segregation in Los Angeles.

[9] I do not report the coefficients for control variables from models containing these additional group contrasts because they do not change.

Table 2
Effect parameters for additive & non-additive feasible generalized least square regression equations of neighborhood quality.[a]

Independent variables	Percent White additive		Percent White education interactions		Percent White income interactions		Median HH income additive		Median HH income education interactions		Median HH income income interactions	
	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.
Group status[b]												
FB NH Whites	−1.63	1.78	25.99**	6.24	−5.09**	2.05	−6886.12**	1619.10	1819.97	5797.06	−9849.09**	1881.18
FB Asians	−15.98**	1.27	4.24	5.57	−17.50**	1.47	−11728.33**	1162.38	104.86	6099.55	−13330.48**	1347.51
NB NH blacks	−10.53**	1.15	−34.60**	6.49	−14.93**	1.61	−6346.04**	1046.25	−18027.24**	6026.76	−7497.84**	1474.68
NB Latinos	−10.69**	1.15	.58	4.86	−12.69**	1.68	−6402.97**	1046.66	−936.53	4513.62	−7824.20**	1533.52
FB Doc. Latinos	−19.53**	1.26	−.65	3.15	−19.76**	1.58	−13381.36**	1145.92	−3400.33	2918.80	−13176.45**	1437.17
Undoc. Latinos	−19.38**	1.42	−.81	3.47	−19.09**	1.80	−12673.36**	1295.14	−4325.45	3216.32	−12018.99**	1646.99
NB others[c]	−9.46**	1.33	12.20	8.38	−9.62**	2.25	−712539**	1214.52	2521.04	7784.44	−7534.76**	1753.24
FB others	−16.98**	1.77	.80	7.19	−16.95**	2.26	−12886.40**	1614.11	−6812.56	6680.93	−14459.95**	2065.70
Socioeconomic status												
Education (Years)	.76**	.00	1.71**	.18	.77**	.09	438.69**	83.83	902.29**	163.39	446.81**	85.55
Income (Thousands)	.02**	.004	.02**	.004	.01**	.004	17.76**	4.01	16.83**	4.00	11.41**	4.57
Family structure[d]												
Children 0–5 years	−.22	.88	−.50	.87	−.05	.89	−568.65	806.82	−732.69	805.89	−516.79	813.51
Children 6–17 years	−1.76*	.76	−1.98**	.75	−1.62*	.76	−1365.62*	693.97	−1512.98*	695.78	−1244.18	697.58
Interaction effects												
FB NH Whites			−1.91**	.41	.05**	.01			−607.29	378.75	45.87**	14.60
FB Asians			−1.36**	.42	.02	.01			−795.22*	393.32	28.48*	13.58
NB NH blacks			1.73**	.44	.09**	.03			838.24*	416.83	20.40	23.81
NB Latinos			−.75*	.45	.04	.03			−369.10	327.18	28.29	26.81
FB Doc. Latinos			−1.48**	.23	−.01	.03			−812.27**	216.36	−20.74	25.94
Undoc. Latinos			−1.48**	.28	−.05	.06			−644.42**	261.36	−61.43	57.45
NB others			−1.50**	.56	.002	.02			−675.93	520.38	5.29	21.42
FB others			−1.22**	.49	−.01	.04			−421.37	455.40	35.75	34.47
Intercept	30.93**	1.79	18.01**	2.29	31.27**	1.82	43452.38**	1629.11	37179.85**	2590.85	43685.55**	1668.87
Blacks as reference												
NB Latinos	−.16	1.38					−56.93	1262.04				
FB Doc. Latinos	−9.00**	1.49					−7035.32**	1359.16				
Undoc. Latinos	−8.85**	1.61					−6327.31**	1467.17				
NB Latinos as reference												
FB Doc. Latinos	−8.84**	1.49					−6978.39**	1355.40				
Undoc. Latinos	−8.69**	1.61					−6270.38**	1461.33				
FB Doc. Latinos as reference												
Undoc. Latinos	.15	1.15					708.00	1046.19				
Sample size	2513		2513		2513		2513		2513		2513	

* $P < .05$.
** $P < .01$.
[a] Models contain controls for sex, age, employment status, public assistance status, home ownership status, and marital status. Coefficients from these controls are largely non-significant and omitted to preserve space in Table 2.
[b] Native-born non-Hispanic whites omitted.
[c] Contains a few native-born Asians.
[d] Those with no children omitted.

Table 3
Explaining locational returns to family income and educational attainment.[a]

Groups	Education categories					Income percentile categories				
	Returns to Education	9 Years	12 Years	16 Years	Change	Returns to Income	24 Ptile	50th Ptile	75th Ptile	Change
Percent White in neighborhood										
NB NH Whites	1.71**	32.92	38.05	44.89	11.97	.01**	41.05	41.19	41.47	.42
FB NH Whites	−.20**	41.72	41.12	40.32	−1.40	.06**	36.36	37.42	39.11	2.75
FB Asians	.35**	24.92	25.97	27.37	2.45	.03	23.82	24.22	25.06	1.24
NB NH blacks	3.44**	13.89	24.21	37.97	24.08	.10**	27.32	28.64	31.45	4.13
NB Latinos	.96**	26.75	29.63	33.47	6.72	.05	28.90	29.56	30.96	2.06
FB Doc. Latinos	.23**	20.25	20.94	21.86	1.61	.00	21.16	21.16	21.16	.00
Undoc. Latinos	.23**	18.79	19.48	20.40	1.61	−.04	21.30	20.77	19.65	−1.65
Median household income in neighborhood										
NB NH Whites	$902.29**	$48,899	$51,606	$55,215	$6316	$11.41**	$53,045	$53,195	$53,516	$471
FB NH Whites	$295.00	$45,253	$46,138	$47,318	$2065	$47.28**	$43,805	$44,562	$46,171	$2366
FB Asians	$107.07**	$41,847	$42,168	$42,596	$749	$39.89*	$40,092	$40,620	$41,741	$1649
NB NH blacks	$1740.53*	$38,416	$43,637	$50,599	$12,182	$31.81	$45,818	$46,238	$47,132	$1314
NB Latinos	$533.19	$44,640	$46,240	$48,373	$3733	$39.70	$45,596	$46,121	$47,237	$1641
FB Doc. Latinos	$90.02**	$44,988	$45,258	$45,619	$631	−$9.33	$39,593	$39,469	$39,207	−$386
Undoc. Latinos	$257.87**	$38,774	$39,547	$40,579	$1805	−$50.02	$40,210	$39,549	$38,143	−$2067

* $P < .05$.
** $P < .01$.
[a] Non-additive models used to calculate predicted outcomes.

Second, foreign-born Latinos (including those who are undocumented) have the largest locational attainment disparities with whites, living in communities that are on average 20% less white and $14,000 less wealthy. Statistically, these groups live in communities that are virtually identical, suggesting that in Los Angeles, they are the ethnic groups that are most segregated from whites. Third, the ethnic structure of locational attainment in Los Angeles appears to be quite different to the one detected nationally. I find that not only do blacks reside in communities that are of similar quality to native-born Latinos, but their locational attainment outcomes are significantly *better* than foreign-born Asians. For example, across both measures of locational attainment, blacks outperform foreign-born Latinos and Asians.[10] This result suggests that while blacks may lag behind most ethnic groups nationally, they appear to be more than holding their own in Los Angeles. The ethnic hierarchical structure of locational attainment is such that native and foreign-born whites have access to the best neighborhoods, followed by blacks and native-born Latinos, Asians, and foreign-born Latinos.

Collectively, these additive findings bring two pieces of new knowledge to the literature. First, the ethnic hierarchy in locational attainment outcomes detected in past scholarship does not appear in Los Angeles. Blacks are no worse off than native-born Latinos with regard to their access to the best quality neighborhoods, and are better off than foreign-born Asians and Latinos. Second, while this finding may appear to be good news for blacks, it suggests foreign-born Latinos, are more isolated from other ethnic groups In Los Angeles. The evidence suggests that they live in poor communities that are largely poor and highly segregated. This finding raises serious questions about the degree to which these newcomers, especially the undocumented, can associate with other ethnic groups and find pathways to socioeconomic incorporation.

4.3. Non-additive processes: access to desirable neighborhoods

Logan and Alba (1993) suggest that the locational returns to socioeconomic status are likely to vary by race and ethnicity. Past work has demonstrated that whites are better able than minorities to leverage their socioeconomic resources to access better quality neighborhoods. Moreover, Latinos are also better able than blacks to utilize their socioeconomic status to achieve residence in desirable communities. However, we don't know how undocumented Latinos fare in this regard, nor do we know if blacks in Los Angeles lag behind all Latinos in utilizing their socioeconomic resources to access better communities.

To answer these questions, I estimate, for both dependent variables, models that include interaction terms between group status and socioeconomic status and present them in two tables. Again, these models are shown in the second and third columns of each panel in Table 2. Importantly, I present the parameter estimates from these non-additive models primarily to determine the statistical significance of interaction effects. I directly compare the size of groups' locational returns to socioeconomic status in Table 3. I calculate each group's return to socioeconomic status (i.e. the actual effect of socioeconomic status) by adding the main effect of socioeconomic status (i.e. family income or educational attainment) to the interaction effect for each group. In addition, I calculate, for each group, the predicted outcome for theoretically meaningful categories of family income and educational attainment (using the non-additive models for all calculations) and also calculate the differ-

[10] Significance tests for black-Asian differences not shown but are available upon request.

ence or change between extreme predicted values of each category of family income and educational attainment. Presented in this way, these results help to understand the extent to which increases in educational and financial resources alter the ethnic hierarchical pattern of locational attainment detected in additive models. For example, I wish to demonstrate whether increases in these resources widen or diminish the gaps between whites and other groups, especially undocumented Latinos or whether they magnify intra-ethnic disparities that were eliminated by theoretically relevant controls.

Three findings surface from the non-additive results presented in Table 2. First, results suggest that the differential effects of educational attainment appear to be stronger than the differential effects of family income. Quite simply, educational attainment is the resource that matters more for helping groups gain access to desirable communities. Consequentially, many more statistically significant interaction effects for education are evident than interaction effects for family income. Second, native-born whites appear to benefit universally from both types of socioeconomic resources (as reflected by the "main effects" for family income and completed education). For example, a one-year increase in educational attainment is associated with a 1.71% increase in whites' spatial proximity to their own ethnic group and a $1141 increase in the median household income of the neighborhoods in which they live. Third, undocumented Latinos also appear to benefit from increases in educational attainment. However, these effects are weak. For every year increase in the educational attainment of undocumented Latinos, their spatial proximity to whites increases by .23% (1.71–1.48) and the median income of their neighborhoods increases by $90 ($902.29–$812.27). As such, the returns to education for whites and undocumented Latinos are both statistically significant, but education matters much more for whites than it does for undocumented Latinos, a finding that supports the tenets of the "strong" version of the place stratification model.

While additive findings indicate significant intra-minority differences in locational attainment outcomes which alter the ethnic structure of locational attainment in Los Angeles, the evidence presented in Table 3 indicates that increases in socioeconomic resources further alter this ethnic hierarchical pattern and the patterns detected in past work. In fact, results suggest that for the most part, native-born blacks' locational returns to socioeconomic status are stronger than every other ethnic group, *including* native-born whites. In short, socioeconomic resources help blacks much more than they do for all other groups, but are unable to completely erase black–white gaps. This finding provides support for the weak version of the place stratification model.

For example, blacks' spatial proximity returns to education are almost ten times larger than Asians, four times larger than foreign-born Latinos, three times larger than native-born Latinos, and twice as large as native-born whites. In addition, blacks' median household income returns to education are nineteen times larger than foreign-born documented Latinos, sixteen times larger than Asians, seven times larger than undocumented Latinos, three times larger than native-born Latinos, and again, twice as large as whites. Put differently, the black–white gap in spatial proximity to whites for poorly educated blacks and whites is 19.03 percentage points, while it is 6.92% points for highly education blacks and whites. Similarly, the gap in median household income for poorly educated blacks and whites is $10,483, while it is $4.616 for highly education blacks and whites. These findings pertaining to black–white differences in the locational returns to education are similar to those reported by other scholars, who find similar results for locational returns to household wealth, parental wealth, and family income (Crowder et al., 2006; South et al., 2008).

These results are especially important in the context of past findings which report significant black disadvantages relative to most other ethnic groups. While past work suggests that native-born blacks lag behind whites and Latinos in their ability to access to desirable neighborhoods, results from Los Angeles are quite different. Because the effects of education are so much stronger for blacks than other groups, highly educated blacks are able to outpace their foreign-born Latino and Asian counterparts in gaining access to desirable communities. As such, poorly educated blacks are near the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy of locational attainment, falling sixth or seventh in line when both measures of locational attainment are examined. However, blacks with 16 or more years of education are actually second or third in line in the ethnic hierarchy of locational attainment, behind whites, but slightly ahead of native-born Latinos and significantly ahead of foreign-born Asians and Latinos.

Collectively, these non-additive findings update our understanding of the ethnic hierarchical pattern of access to advantaged neighborhoods, as it pertains to Los Angeles. While blacks appear to reside at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchical structure of locational attainment nationally, undocumented Latinos replace blacks at the bottom in Los Angeles. Educated blacks appear to be holding their own in the quest for access to quality neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Furthermore, they are able to utilize their human capital resources to alter their placement in the locational hierarchy. As such, although blacks still lag behind their white counterparts, educational attainment provides them a special benefit, allowing them to outpace many of their Latino and Asian counterparts and close gaps between themselves and whites.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1. Discussion

The goals of this paper were twofold. First, I sought to bring documentation status into the fold of background factors that scholars use as explanations of locational attainment outcomes. Indeed, past work has examined racial, ethnic, and documentation status differences in locational attainment outcomes, but no work to my knowledge has examined these processes by race, ethnicity, nativity status, *and* documentation status. I argue that such an examination is important because undocumented Latinos are a growing segment of the population. Moreover, locational attainment is a social process intricately linked to status attainment. As such, determining how undocumented Latinos, an arguably vulnerable population,

fare in this process is a worthwhile research endeavor. Second, I sought to determine whether the ethnic hierarchical pattern of locational attainment detected in nationwide studies is replicated in Los Angeles, a city where place-specific factors could well produce an alteration of the ethnic structure of locational attainment detected for the nation as a whole.

Bivariate results indicated that even though blacks, foreign-born documented Latinos, and undocumented Latinos underperform their white counterparts across both measures of locational attainment, controls for individual-level factors were sufficient to rearrange the ethnic structure of locational attainment detected in past literature. Net of controls, blacks and native-born Latinos reside in similar communities, while blacks reside in whiter and wealthier communities than all foreign-born Latinos and Asians. All told, my findings imply that in Los Angeles, undocumented Latinos replace blacks at the bottom of the ethnic locational hierarchy. While scholars (Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2001; South et al., 2008) report that white households live in the best neighborhoods, native-born blacks in the worst, and native and foreign-born households in the middle, I find that blacks are equal to native-born Latinos and better off than foreign-born Latinos and Asians. They appear to be holding their own in a housing market that is increasingly competitive, yet historically segregated. Therefore, while the majority of the attention in the literature has been on black–white differences, evidence from Los Angeles suggests that undocumented Latinos merit the attention of scholars and policy experts who wish to equalize access to the best types of neighborhoods. Simply, they deserve just as much attention as native-born blacks have received in past scholarship.

While the additive results point to a residential landscape that still segregates whites from all other minorities, non-additive results imply that despite this segregation, native-born blacks in Los Angeles are in a strong position to utilize education as a resource to escape segregated neighborhoods. Specifically, blacks' locational returns to education are substantially stronger than the locational returns to education for all other groups, a result that strongly supports the arguments put forth by proponents of the weak version of the place stratification model (Logan and Alba, 1993). Highly educated blacks are therefore able to minimize net disparities with whites and are also able to acquire residences in better communities than their foreign-born Latino and Asian counterparts. Thus, the evidence once again suggests that Latinos do not consistently do better than native-born blacks in accessing high quality neighborhoods. Los Angeles blacks who have a college education have opportunities to significantly narrow gaps with their more advantaged white counterparts.

5.2. Conclusions

Collectively, these results indicate that living in poor neighborhoods is a fate disproportionately borne by minorities. Indeed, they are segregated into neighborhoods that are poorer and spatially further away from whites. As such, academics and policy experts should be concerned because a growing body of work suggests that residing in neighborhoods lacking in resources can compromise the assimilation prospects of minorities, especially new immigrants. However, the results provide empirical support for spatial assimilation theory: native-born blacks and Latinos in Los Angeles who are able to obtain an education place themselves in positions to escape the most segregated communities.

While my results are clear, I am only able to make educated guesses concerning the place-specific factors responsible for Los Angeles blacks' improved position relative to blacks in the nation on a whole. As I previously noted, Los Angeles contains many neighborhoods that are not only ethnically diverse, but economically diverse. As such, blacks with higher than average socioeconomic resources may be able to find neighborhoods that are less segregated than those found in the inner-city, and contain many of the amenities they require for their children. These types of neighborhoods are likely more numerous in Los Angeles than in the nation on a whole.

I also find that the returns to socioeconomic status for foreign-born documented and undocumented Latinos are virtually identical. I suggested that this might happen because those who have the ability to allow access to higher quality communities (i.e. landlords) are unable to differentiate between the two groups. This explanation, in addition to the one posed for blacks' returns to socioeconomic status, are indeed plausible. However, I am only able to suggest that these mechanisms might be at play, I am unable to prove that this is the case. I suggest that future research might push this line of thinking further, by including measures of proposed these mechanisms in statistical models.

Importantly, my findings are able to show strong associations between ascribed characteristics and locational attainment outcomes, they are unable to answer questions regarding the types of neighborhoods to which residents move. While there may be racial, ethnic, nativity, and documentation status differences in the neighborhoods in which residents currently reside, unless I can address issues related to changes in neighborhood quality, my ability to identify causal connections between the variables is highly compromised. However, results serve as a precursor to that type of analysis. They are important because they provide foundational results that can be verified as causal in future work.

Finally, I regard this article as a first step toward incorporating documentation status in models of locational and status attainment. In addition to examining issues related to neighborhood mobility, future work ought to interrogate the idea that documentation status is an ascribed factor, something that can change over time. With the release of Wave II of LA-FANS, not only will there be possibilities of examining changes in neighborhood quality, but the data release will permit analysts to treat documentation status as a factor that changes over time, adding valuable information and insight to the current literature.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for support through their Pre-Tenure Career Enhancement Fellowship. I also thank Samantha Friedman for providing valuable guidance during

the fellowship period. Finally, I acknowledge the contributions of Joya Misra, Emily Rosenbaum, Donald Tomaskovic-Devey, and three anonymous reviewers who provided valuable insight into the preparation of this article.

References

Adelman, R.M., 2005. The roles of race, class, and residential preferences in the neighborhood racial composition of middle-class blacks and whites. Social Science Quarterly 86, 209–228.
Alba, R.D., Logan, J.R., 1991. Variation on two themes: racial and ethnic patterns in attainment of suburban residence. Demography 28, 431–453.
Alba, R.D., Logan, J.R., 1992. Analyzing locational attainments: constructing individual-level regression models using aggregate data. Sociological Methods and Research 20, 367–397.
Alba, R.D., Logan, J.R., 1993. Minority proximity to whites in suburbs: an individual-level analysis of segregation. American Journal of Sociology 98, 1388–1427.
Alba, R.D., Logan, J.R., Bellair, P., 1994. Living with crime: the implications of racial and ethnic differences in suburban location. Social Forces 73, 395–434.
Alba, R.D., Logan, J.R., Stults, B.J., 2000. How segregated are middle-class African-Americans? Social Problems 47, 543–558.
Alba, R.D., Logan, J.R., Stults, B., Marzan, G., Zhang, W., 1999. Immigrant groups and suburbs: a re-examination of suburbanization and spatial assimilation. American Sociological Review 64, 446–460.
Alba, R.D., Nee, V., 1997. Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration. International Migration Review 31, 826–874.
Alba, R.D., Nee, V., 2003. Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
Bayer, P., McMillan, R., Rueben, K.S., 2004. What drives racial segregation? New evidence from census microdata. Journal of Urban Economics 56, 514–535.
Blau, P., Duncan, O.D., 1967. The American Occupational Structure. Free Press, New York.
Charles, C.Z., 2003. The dynamics of racial residential segregation. Annual Review of Sociology 29, 167–207.
Charles, C.Z., 2006. Won't You Be My Neighbor? Race, Class, and Residence in Los Angeles. Russell Sage Foundation, New York.
Clark, W.A.V., 2002. Ethnic preferences and ethnic perceptions in multi-ethnic settings. Urban Geography 23, 237–256.
Crowder, S., South, S.J., Chavez, E., 2006. Wealth, race, and inter-neighborhood migration. American Sociological Review 71, 72–94.
Denton, N.A., Massey, D.S., 1989. Racial identity among Carribean hispanics: the effect of double minority status on residential segregation. American Sociological Review 54, 798–808.
Emerson, M.O., Yancy, G., Chai, K.J., 2001. Does race matter in residential segregation? Exploring the preferences of white Americans. American Sociological Review 66, 922–935.
Farley, R., Steeh, C., Krysan, M., Jackson, T., Reeves, Keith, 1994. Stereotypes and segregation: neighborhoods in the Detroit area. American Journal of Sociology 100, 750–780.
Farley, R., Frey, W.H., 1994. Changes in the segregation of whites from blacks during the 1980s: small steps toward a more integrated society. American Sociological Review 66, 922–935.
Frey, W.H., Farley, R., 1996. Latino, Asian, and black segregation in US metropolitan areas: are multiethnic metros different? Demography 33, 35–50.
Friedman, S., Rosenbaum, E., 2007. Does suburban residence mean better neighborhood conditions for all households? Assessing the influence of nativity status and race/ethnicity. Social Science Research 36, 1–27.
Iceland, J., 2004. Beyond black and white: residential segregation in multiethnic America. Social Science Research 33, 248–271.
Iceland, J., Sharpe, C., Steinmetz, E., 2005. Class differences in African American residential patterns in US metropolitan areas. Social Science Research 34, 252–266.
Iceland, J., Weinberg, D.H., Steinmetz, E., 2002. Racial and ethnic residential segregation in the United States, 1980–2000. US Census Bureau, Special Report Series, CENSR-3. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office. Retrieved November 18, 2010.
Iceland, J., Wilkes, R., 2006. Does socioeconomic status matter? Race, class, and residential segregation. Social Problems 53, 248–273.
Krysan, M., Farley, R., 2002. The residential preferences of blacks: do they explain persistent segregation? Social Forces 80, 937–980.
Logan, J.R., Alba, R.D., 1993. Locational returns to human capital: minority access to suburban community resources. Demography 30, 243–268.
Logan, J.R., Alba, R.D., Leung, S., 1996. Minority access to white suburbs: a multiregional comparison. Social Forces 74, 851–881.
Logan, J.R., Alba, R.D., Zhang, W., 2002. Immigrant enclaves and ethnic communities in New York and Los Angeles. American Sociological Review 67, 299–322.
Logan, J.R., Molotch, H., 1987. Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place. University of California Press, Berkeley.
Logan, J.R., Stults, B.J., Farley, R., 2004. Segregation of minorities in the metropolis: two decades of change. Demography 41, 1–22.
Massey, D.S., 1985. Ethnic residential segregation: a theoretical synthesis and empirical review. Sociology and Social Research 69, 315–350.
Massey, D.S., Bitterman, B., 1985. Explaining the paradox of puerto rican segregation. Social Forces 64, 307–331.
Massey, D.S., Denton, N., 1992. Racial identity and the segregation of Mexicans in the United States. Social Science Research 21, 235–260.
Massey, D.S., Denton, N., 1993. American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
Massey, D.S., Fischer, M.J., 1999. Does rising income bring integration? New results for blacks, hispanics, and Asians in 1990. Social Science Research 28, 316–326.
Passel, J.S., 2006. The Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the US: Estimates Based on the March 2005 Current Population Survey. Pew Hispanic Center Papers, Washington, DC.
Passel, J.S., Cohn, D., 2008. Trends in Unauthorized Immigration: Undocumented Inflow Now Trails Legal Inflow. Pew Hispanic Center Papers, Washington, DC.
Portes, A., Bach, R.L., 1985. Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States. University of California Press, Berkeley.
Portes, A., Rumbaut, R., 1996. Immigrant America, second ed. University of California Press, Berkeley.
Portes, A., Rumbaut, R., 2001. Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation. University of California Press, Berkeley.
Portes, A., Stepick, A., 1985. Unwelcome immigrants: the labor market experiences of 1980 cuban and haitian refugees in South Florida. American Sociological Review 50, 493–514.
Portes, A., Stepick, A., Truelove, C., 1986. Three years later: the adaptation process of 1980 (Mariel) cuban and haitian refugees in South Florida. Population Research and Policy Review 5, 83–94.
Quillian, L., 2002. Why is black–white residential segregation so persistent? Evidence on three theories from migration data. Social Science Research 31, 197–229.
Rosenbaum, E., Friedman, S., 2001. Differences in the locational attainment of immigrant and native-born households with children in New York City. Demography 38, 337–348.
Shlay, A.B., Rossi, P.H., 1981. Keeping up the neighborhood: estimating net effects of zoning. American Sociological Review 46, 703–719.
South, S.J., Crowder, K., Chavez, E., 2005. Exiting and entering high-poverty neighborhoods: Latinos, blacks, and Anglos compared. Social Forces 84, 873–900.
South, S.J., Crowder, K., Pais, J., 2008. Inter-neighborhood migration and spatial assimilation in a multi-ethnic world: comparing Latinos, blacks, and Anglos. Social Forces 87, 415–443.
Squires, G.D., Kim, S., 1995. Does anybody who works here look like me? Mortgage lending, race, and lender employment. Social Science Quarterly 76, 823–838.
Waldinger, R., Bozorgmehr, M., 1997. Ethnic Los Angeles. Russell Sage Foundation, New York.
Wilkes, R., Iceland, J., 2004. Hypersegregation in the twenty-first century. Demography 41, 23–36.
Yinger, J., 1995. Closed Doors, Opportunities Lost: The Continuing Costs of Housing Discrimination. Russell Sage Foundation, New York.