New Asian Destinations: A Comparative Study of Traditional Gateways and Emerging Immigrant Destinations

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Kenneth Kuk, National Opinions Research Center

Daniel T. Lichter, Cornell University

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I. Introduction

Previous literature on new immigrant destinations has been overwhelmingly dedicated to American's Hispanic population (Massey, 2008). Despite the large inflow of Asians in non-traditional settlement areas, virtually no work has been done to examine Asian's settlement patterns. Other studies on housing market discrimination and residential segregation also focus mostly on Hispanic and African Americans (Zubrinsky & Bobo, 1996; Massey et al, 1987; Ross and Turner, 2005). Often known as the "model minority," Asian Americans have not drawn the research attention that they deserve.

In this paper, we use data from decennial censuses and the *American Community Survey* to (1) develop a typology of new and established Asian destinations; (2) provide comparative socio-demographic profiles (e.g., ethnic and nativity mix) of traditional ethnic enclaves and new destination counties; and (3) present multivariate analyses of economic well-being and poverty in new and established Asian settlement areas. From a theoretical perspective, this paper also attempts to reexamine America's migration patterns and provide insights into the new spatial patterns of contemporary assimilation.

II. Literature Review

A. Settlement Patterns of Asian Americans

Asian Americans are a very diverse population with very different experience in the US. They also have a very large foreign-born population. Depending on their experiences in their home countries, the socioeconomic outcomes of Asian immigrants vary significantly across ethnic groups (Rumbaut, 2001). Asians are also a very interesting group to study because they seem to do a lot better than the average American (US Census Bureau, 2009). They are typically high

achievers at school and are more proficient in English than other racial minorities (Kao & Thompson, 2003; Xie & Goyette, 2004).

Due to the differences in culture, religion, and socioeconomic background, Asian ethnic groups tend to residentially segregate themselves from one another, forming ethnic enclaves on the basis of national origin. Previous research has shown that Asian residential segregation varies across national origin groups (Massey and Denton, 1992; Frey & Farley, 1996). These ethnic enclaves also provide a platform for immigrants to gain social upward mobility. Specifically, these immigrants may be looking for social connections for employment opportunities (Sanders, Nee, and Sernau, 2002). Essentially, upwardly mobile Asian immigrants have another option: move into more affluent and less segregated neighborhoods in the suburban area (Logan & Alba, 1993; White & Sassler, 2000).

The emergence of substantial suburban ethnic enclaves seems to indicate a new era of Americanization, where immigrants have more choices of where and how to settle when they enter the country. Essentially, the barriers to direct settlement in the suburbia have become much lower than before (Logan et al, 1999). In line with immigrant suburbanization, recent trends show that immigrants have shifted away from established immigrant gateway states to non-traditional states like Georgia and North Carolina (Massey, 2008). In fact, the number of immigrants entering non-traditional states has been growing at an astounding pace (Singer, 2004).

Besides suburban areas in the vicinity of ethnic enclaves, trends show that recent immigrants are also moving into non-traditional states in the South and the Midwest (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). In this regard, almost all recent studies have been dedicated to understanding new Hispanic destinations. For instance, recent research has found that Mexican families are not as concentrated in the Southwest as they used to be (Lichter et al, 2006). Over the past few

decades, Hispanic populations in non-traditional Hispanic settlement states, such as Georgia, Iowa, and South Carolina, have witnessed substantial growth (Fry, 2008). The Hispanic case can certainly provide insights into explaining the immigration experience of Asian Americans.

B. Hypotheses

Based on the literature, we will test three hypotheses in this paper. *Hypothesis 1:* We expect to find new Asian destinations disproportionately concentrated in the Southern and Midwestern states, whereas established Asian areas more concentrated in the West and the Northeast. *Hypothesis 2:* We anticipate that there will be an income differential among Asians across new destinations, established settlement areas, and other Asian settlement areas. We expect that the average household income in new Asian destinations will be significantly higher than that of established and other Asian settlement areas. *Hypothesis 3:* We postulate that locational setting itself has an effect on income net of the differences in county-specific economic structure.

III. Data & Methods

We use county-level data in decennial censuses 1990 and 2000, as well as *American Community Survey (ACS)* 3-year estimates (2006-2008). We plan to update our analysis when the *ACS* 5-year estimates (2005-2009) are released in December, 2010. All contiguous states and District of Columbia will be included in the data. To keep the dataset consistent, only counties that are sampled in *ACS* are included. Also, we only include counties with more than 500 Asians in 1990 or 1,000 Asians in 2000 from the data because growth rates can be exaggerated by small population size.

The first part of our study involves defining the three different types of Asian settlement

areas: (1) new Asian settlement areas, (2) established Asian settlement areas, or (3) other Asian areas. To qualify as a new Asian settlement area, a county's percentage of Asian population cannot exceed the national average in 1990. Furthermore, the county has to have at least undergone a 200% growth in Asian population between 1990 an 2008, and the growth rate has to be at least 4 times higher than that of the general county population. On the other hand, established Asian areas are counties with Asian populations that exceed the national average by at least 50% in 1990, and in either 2000 or 2008 (*ACS* 3-year estimates). All remaining counties are then defined as other Asian areas.

Next, we perform multivariate analysis to estimate the association between living in a new Asian destination and economic well-being. In this model, logged median household income is used as the dependent variable. Two binary variables, new Asian destinations and other Asian settlement areas, will serve as the independent variables of interest, leaving established Asian settlement areas as the reference group. The model also includes a number of control variables including county demographics, labor market structure, and other socioeconomic indicators.

IV. Preliminary Findings

A. Different Types of Asian Settlement Areas

Within the 492 counties we sample, 47 are defined as new Asian settlement areas, 40 are defined as established settlement areas, and the remaining 405 are considered other Asian areas. Consistent with our hypothesis, new Asian settlement areas are mostly located in Southern and Midwestern states, whereas established Asian settlement areas are concentrated in the West and the Northeast. Over the past two decades, the large influx of Asian immigrants has changed the demographic composition of the emerging Asian receiving states dramatically. In 1990, Asians only made up 1.3% of the populations in the 47 new Asian settlement counties . In 2008, the

number has risen to 4%. Of all new Asian destinations, Gwinnett County, Georgia, Loudoun County, Virginia, and Collin County, Texas are considered the three most prominent new Asian destinations in the US.

Also consistent with our hypothesis, established Asian settlement areas are mostly located in Pacific and Northeastern states. In 1990, Asians made up 8.6% of the populations in the 40 established Asian settlement counties; in 2008, this number has risen to 13%. The increase in Asian populations in these areas means that Asians are not abandoning their ethnic enclaves. More likely, these areas have continued to serve as the center of ethnic economic activities as new immigrants constantly replenish the labor markets of these enclave economies.

The definition of different types of Asian settlement areas used in this study is certainly imperfect. In fact, any attempt to classify areas based on demographic composition is somewhat arbitrary because there exists no absolute theoretical benchmark. To compensate for such arbitrariness, we also examined "other" Asian areas to see whether our definitions have failed to capture some of the significant new Asian settlement areas. Interestingly, we find that in states that are not classified as new Asian gateways (e.g. South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Louisiana), we see trends of significant Asian population inflow. It seems that spatial dispersion of Asians is likely to continue in these incipient new Asian destinations.

B. Multivariate Regression Outcomes

Six preliminary models are created based on the variables described in preceding sections. In *Model 1*, logged median household income is only regressed on the type of area dummies. The results show that Asian households in new destinations are associated with 12.6% higher income, but the statistical correlation is only significant at the .1 level. In other Asian settlement areas,

Asian households are associated with 16.3% lower income. The negative income effect of other Asian areas is supported by strong statistical evidence (t = -2.93); the correlation between other Asian areas and income is significant at the .01 level.

Model 2 includes three new variables: logged total county population, percentage of Asians, and the median age of Asians in the county. As a proxy for metropolitan status, logged county population is associated with 5% higher median household income, suggesting that Asians in more populated areas tend to be economically better off. *Model 3* introduces another two new variables that account for the differences in demographic characteristics and economic structures: percentages of Hispanics and Blacks with respect to total populations. Regression results reveal a negative correlation between minority (Hispanics and Blacks) percentage and Asian household income. While the income effect of other Asian areas remains insignificant, the new destination dummy retains a strong and positive effect on household income. Asian households in new destinations on average earn 35.5% more than those in established settlement areas.

In *Model 4*, more variables are introduced to control for the differences in economic structures. While the strong, negative effect of unemployment is significant at the .1 level, median household income is also strongly correlated with the occupational distribution of the counties. Once these economic structures variables are controlled, however, the coefficient on the new destination dummy drops from .353 to .286, indicating that the locational income effect is reduced by the newly introduced controls. However, thanks to the relatively high standard error, the decrease is statistically insignificant. This finding suggests that the income advantage of Asians in new destinations is not created entirely by the differences in the economic scale and labor market structure of the counties.

In *Model 5*, another control is introduced: percentage of foreign-borns among Asians. Not

surprisingly, being foreign-born is associated with a significant and negative effect on household income. Consistent with the literature and straight-line assimilation, foreign-born Asians have much lower income than their native-born counterparts. As for the locational income effect, Asians in new destinations are still associated with 29.3% higher income after controlling for nativity status. Such effect remains significant at the .01 level.

Finally, educational attainments and marital status are introduced in *Model 6*, with the hopes of explaining the effects of new destinations on earnings. As suggested in previous research, higher percentages of college graduates and more people being married are positively correlated with median household income. Introducing these two variables also takes away a large part of the locational income effects, causing the coefficient on the new destination dummy to drop from .293 to .151. However, it is still positive and significant at the .05 level. This finding supports our hypothesis that location itself has a considerable effect on income; living in new destinations is associated with 15.1% higher income after controlling for demographic factors, county-specific economic conditions, nativity status, education level, and marital status. The statistical evidence presented here is fairly strong.

Table 1A:
List of new Asian destinations

Count	County	State	% Asians 90	% Asians 00	% Asians 08	Growth (90-08)*
1	Washington County	AR	0.92%	1.54%	2.24%	315.34%
2	El Dorado County	CA	1.95%	2.13%	4.54%	223.94%
3	Placer County	CA	2.20%	2.95%	5.61%	389.83%
4	Douglas County	CO	0.84%	2.51%	3.60%	1,817.32%
5	Broward County	FL	1.36%	2.25%	2.99%	206.51%
6	Hillsborough County	FL	1.36%	2.20%	2.99%	207.41%
7	Barrow County	GA	0.77%	2.20%	2.98%	770.18%
8	Cobb County	GA	1.77%	3.06%	4.11%	257.03%
9	Fulton County	GA	1.29%	3.04%	4.18%	393.63%
10	Gwinnett County	GA	2.90%	7.20%	9.39%	606.62%
11	Henry County	GA	0.56%	1.76%	2.75%	1,445.59%
12	Kane County	IL	1.41%	1.81%	3.07%	241.31%
13	Lake County	IL	2.44%	3.90%	5.74%	222.20%
14	McHenry County	IL	0.71%	1.45%	2.64%	540.91%
15	McLean County	IL	1.26%	2.05%	3.10%	211.70%
16	Will County	IL	1.34%	2.21%	3.81%	434.01%
17	Bartholomew County	IN	0.96%	1.90%	2.76%	237.70%
18	Hamilton County	IN	1.09%	2.44%	3.76%	724.29%
19	Johnson County	KS	1.64%	2.83%	3.77%	238.72%
20	Frederick County	MD	1.01%	1.67%	3.58%	430.20%
21	Anoka County	MN	1.20%	1.69%	3.71%	310.94%
22	Carver County	MN	0.93%	1.56%	2.49%	395.05%
23	Dakota County	MN	1.69%	2.89%	4.08%	242.24%
24	Scott County	MN	0.92%	2.17%	5.07%	1,094.76%
25	Washington County	MN	1.13%	2.14%	4.36%	496.48%
26	Hillsborough County	NH	1.14%	2.00%	3.12%	227.44%
27	Atlantic County	NJ	2.13%	5.06%	6.49%	261.04%
28	Hunterdon County	NJ	1.29%	1.92%	3.31%	207.93%
29	Warren County	NJ	0.82%	1.22%	2.53%	271.22%
30	Schenectady County	NY	1.22%	1.97%	4.09%	237.82%
31	Burke County	NC	1.05%	3.48%	3.36%	276.45%
32	Catawba County	NC	0.70%	2.93%	2.76%	416.87%
33	Durham County	NC	1.78%	3.29%	4.23%	234.40%
34	Guilford County	NC	1.07%	2.44%	3.25%	303.73%
35	Mecklenburg County	NC	1.65%	3.15%	3.90%	297.75%
36	Delaware County	OH	0.58%	1.54%	3.52%	1,367.27%
37	Warren County	OH	0.55%	1.26%	2.95%	855.34%
38	Chester County	PA	1.08%	1.95%	3.20%	280.96%
39	Brazoria County	TX	1.02%	2.00%	4.38%	553.85%
40	Collin County	TX	2.83%	6.92%	9.79%	855.61%
41	Williamson County	TX	1.32%	2.64%	3.91%	687.76%
42	Henrico County	VA	2.00%	3.60%	5.02%	232.72%
43	Loudoun County	VA	2.44%	5.35%	12.34%	1,529.89%
44	Roanoke County	VA	0.81%	1.61%	2.23%	211.32%
45	Harrisonburg City	VA	1.53%	3.11%	4.41%	311.73%
46	Skagit County	WA	0.98%	1.49%	2.37%	252.30%
47	Waukesha County	WI	0.89%	1.49%	2.44%	241.65%

*** Indicates real Asian population growth from 1990 to 2008**

Table 2:
List of established Asian settlement areas

Count	County	State	% Asians 90	% Asians 00	% Asians 08	Growth (90-08)*
1	Alameda County	CA	15.05%	20.45%	24.60%	86.16%
2	Contra Costa County	CA	9.58%	10.96%	13.37%	76.54%
3	Fresno County	CA	8.58%	8.05%	8.68%	35.84%
4	Los Angeles County	CA	10.77%	11.95%	12.94%	33.26%
5	Merced County	CA	8.48%	6.80%	6.79%	9.39%
6	Monterey County	CA	7.83%	6.03%	6.39%	-7.02%
7	Orange County	CA	10.34%	13.59%	16.10%	92.87%
8	Sacramento County	CA	9.25%	11.03%	13.48%	93.18%
9	San Diego County	CA	7.94%	8.88%	10.18%	52.26%
10	San Francisco County	CA	29.13%	30.84%	31.29%	18.43%
11	San Joaquin County	CA	12.42%	11.41%	13.78%	54.10%
12	San Mateo County	CA	16.82%	20.04%	23.68%	52.47%
13	Santa Clara County	CA	17.46%	25.56%	31.29%	100.77%
14	Solano County	CA	12.76%	12.75%	13.88%	30.10%
15	Sutter County	CA	9.44%	11.26%	12.44%	86.61%
16	Yolo County	CA	8.44%	9.85%	12.00%	95.40%
17	Yuba County	CA	8.44%	7.50%	7.15%	4.11%
18	Champaign County	IL	4.64%	6.45%	8.09%	93.83%
19	DuPage County	IL	5.07%	7.88%	11.21%	129.69%
20	Howard County	MD	4.32%	7.68%	11.21%	277.17%
21	Montgomery County	MD	8.19%	11.30%	13.13%	99.77%
22	Suffolk County	MA	5.05%	7.00%	7.49%	62.01%
23	Ramsey County	MN	5.10%	8.77%	9.14%	83.87%
24	Bergen County	NJ	6.64%	10.67%	14.08%	129.06%
25	Hudson County	NJ	6.65%	9.35%	11.35%	83.35%
26	Middlesex County	NJ	6.68%	13.89%	18.48%	222.69%
27	Somerset County	NJ	4.39%	8.38%	12.46%	279.84%
28	Kings County	NY	4.84%	7.54%	9.08%	107.38%
29	New York County	NY	7.44%	9.40%	10.70%	57.06%
30	Queens County	NY	12.21%	17.56%	21.42%	104.78%
31	Richmond County	NY	4.47%	5.65%	7,55%	115.29%
32	Tompkins County	NY	5.47%	7.19%	10.04%	96.35%
33	Multnomah County	OR	4.68%	5.70%	5.94%	51.95%
34	Washington County	OR	4.31%	6.68%	8.12%	214.47%
35	Fort Bend County	TX	6.36%	11.20%	14.48%	413.46%
36	Arlington County	VA	6.76%	8.625	8.91%	57.95%
37	Fairfax County	VA	8.47%	13.00%	15.83%	129.67%
38	Fairfax City	VA	7.18%	12.17%	15.56%	157.13%
39	King County	WA	7.88%	10.81%	13.02%	102.87%
40	Whitman County	WA	5.45%	5.55%	8.23%	60.56%

*** Indicates real Asian population growth from 1990 to 2008**

Table 3:

Summary of variables in the regression model, by type of area

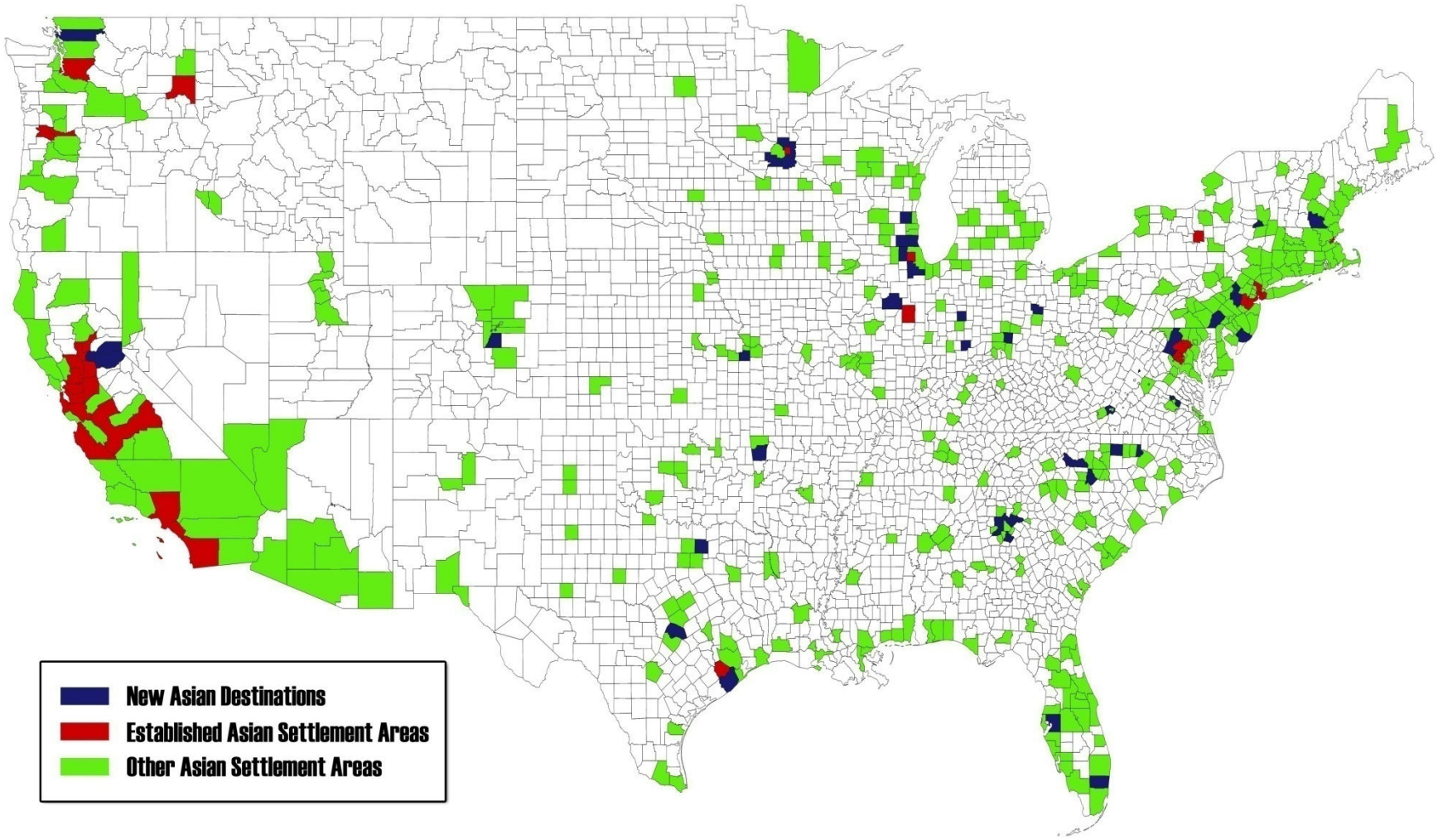
	New Destinations			Established Destinations			Other Asian Areas		
Variables (n=492)	Obs.	Mean	s.d.	Obs.	Mean	s.d.	Obs.	Mean	s.d.
Dependent									
Median household income	46	79,476.35	21,839.12	40	71,541.4	24,188.9	396	60,261.6	19,327.16
Logged median household income	46	11.2426	0.2978	40	11.1166	0.3687	396	10.9536	0.3353
Demographics									
Total Population	46	379,166.9	331,518.9	40	1,097,039	1,614,526	404	391,937.2	499,991.9
Total Population (logged)	46	12.5379	0.7959	40	13.272	1.2207	404	12.4817	0.8257
Percentage of Asians	47	4.06	1.9679	40	13.028	6.0207	405	2.5674	1.521
Median Age of Asians	47	32.0106	3.7769	40	34.22	5.018	405	33.3807	4.7634
Percentage of Blacks	46	0.0989	0.1071	40	0.0895	0.0687	404	0.1256	0.1314
Percentage of Hispanics	45	0.0958	0.0685	39	0.2202	0.1284	380	0.1155	0.1414
Education & Marital Status									
Percentage of college grads or higher among Asians	45	0.5514	0.1811	39	0.5042	0.1712	376	0.4798	0.1576
Percentage of Asians that are married	41	0.67	0.0623	39	0.5767	0.0977	347	0.6007	0.0892
Economic Structure									
Unemployment rate	47	0.041	0.0123	40	0.0491	0.018	305	0.0474	0.0145
% of people in managerial or professional occupations	45	0.3966	0.0647	37	0.4151	0.0966	394	0.3478	0.0593
% of people in production or related occupations	45	0.1067	0.0445	37	0.094	0.0329	394	0.1217	0.0401
% of people in farming or related occupations	45	0.0033	0.006	37	0.0127	0.0271	394	0.0065	0.0149
Nativity Status									
% of Asians that are foreign born	47	0.6875	0.0697	40	0.6667	0.071	394	0.6828	0.0646

Table 4:
Regression table of the effects on logged median household income by county

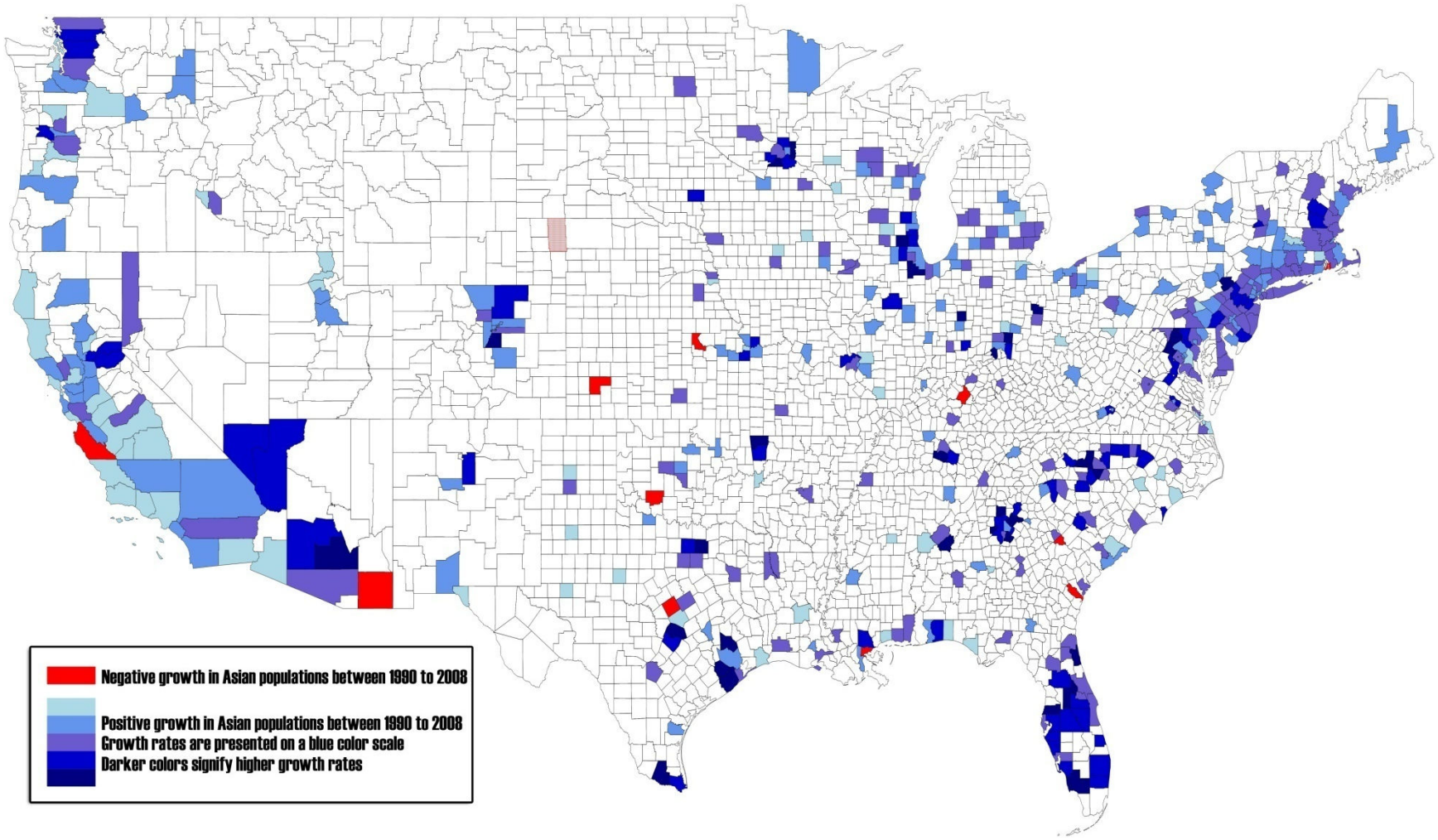
Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
n = 492	482	482	482	482	482	482
Adjusted R-squared	0.0669	0.2542	0.2755	0.3445	0.3743	0.508
Intercept	**11.1166	**10.1499	**10.1504	**10.2861	**10.0835	**10.5962
	[0.0529]	[0.2436]	[0.2407]	[0.2478]	[0.2510]	[0.2325]
New Destination Dummy[a]	*0.1260	**0.3783	**0.3533	**0.2855	**0.2927	*0.1512
	[0.0724]	[0.0843]	[0.0836]	[0.0816]	[0.0797]	[0.0721]
Other Asian Area Dummy[a]	**-0.1630	-0.0940	0.0846	0.0669	0.0758	0.0373
	[0.0556]	[0.0799]	[0.0793]	[0.0765]	[0.0748]	[0.0664]
Total population (logged)		**0.0497	**0.0659	**0.0730	**0.0787	*0.0458
		[0.0172]	[0.0186]	[0.0200]	[0.0196]	[0.0184]
Percentage of Asians with respect		**0.0189	**0.0177	0.0035	0.0015	0.0079
to total population		[0.0062]	[0.0062]	[0.0063]	[0.0061]	[0.0055]
Median age of the Asian		**0.0264	**0.0271	**0.0305	**0.0348	**0.0253
population		[0.0031]	[0.0031]	[0.0031]	[0.0032]	[0.0034]
Percentage of Blacks with respect			**-0.4084	†-0.2238	-0.1571	0.0032
to total population			[0.1126]	[0.1207]	[0.1196]	[0.1071]
Percentage of Hispanics with respect			*-0.2569	0.0712	-0.0464	-0.0023
to total population			[0.1116]	[0.1332]	[.1302]	[0.1165]
Unemployment rate				†-2.1056	*-2.4995	†-1.9375
				[1.2296]	[1.2113]	[1.0889]
Percentage of people in the managerial				**2.1972	**2.4234	**1.4292
or other professions				[0.3590]	[0.3538]	[0.3491]
% of people in production, transportation,				**1.9728	**2.2082	**1.8043
or related occupations				[0.5076]	[0.4982]	[0.4472]
Percentage of people in farming,				1.3924	1.0508	1.4930
fishery, or related occupations				[1.0695]	[1.0472]	[0.9349]
Percentage of Asian population					**-0.9629	**-1.5621
that are foreign born					[0.2112]	[0.1996]
Percentage of Asians of age 25						**0.6208
or above with bachelor or higher						[0.1005]
Percentage of Asians of age 15						**1.4654
or above that are married						[0.1643]

[†]Significant at .1 level; * Significant at .05 level; ** Significant at .01 level
Numbers in parentheses are standard errors
[a] Established destination as reference group
All coefficients presented in the table are the interaction variables (*HaveValue * X*).

Appendix I: US County Map by Type of Area



Appendix II: US County Map by Asian Population Growth Rate 1990-2008



Appendix III: US County Map by Asian Population Growth with respect to Total County Population Growth 1990-2008