

RACE, IMMIGRANTS, AND RESIDENCE: A NEW RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.*

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ABSTRACT. This study examines the residential patterns of immigrant newcomers within a relatively new immigrant destination, Washington, D.C. Particular attention is given to how these patterns are shaped by the newcomers' race and ethnicity. Our analysis is based primarily upon data on immigrant flows from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service for the 1990–1998 period. Evidence from our study suggests a racial and ethnic hierarchy to the residential location of Africans, Asians, Europeans, and Latin Americans, providing some support for the pattern expected in the place-stratification model. When their residential patterns are compared with those of non-Hispanic blacks, we find that African newcomers are more likely to settle among blacks than are other regional-origin groups. However, Africans are also found to reside in multiethnic zip codes where large numbers of newcomers are concentrated. The findings suggest that race is an important but not exclusive factor in explaining the residential choices of recent immigrants. *Keywords:* immigrant newcomers, place stratification, race, Washington, D.C.

We went from a biracial city to an international metropolis. But Washington has not yet addressed the fact that race relations are multicultural.

—Robert Manning, quoted in Granat, 1996

Like many U.S. cities, especially in the South, the residential geography of Washington, D.C. has long been considered a highly segregated, biracial landscape of blacks and whites. This pattern began to be challenged by the arrival of a large and ethnically diverse flow of immigrants that started in the 1980s and continues today. Whereas, in the 1980 census, 94 percent of Washington's population was classified as either white or black, by 2000 the proportion of the population that was neither white nor black had grown to 18 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 1983, 2003).

The corresponding change can be tracked among the region's foreign-born population. In 1970, only one out of every twenty-two residents in metropolitan Washington, or 3.7 percent of the population, was born outside the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 1973). The 2000 census, however, reveals that one in six people, or 16.9 percent of the population, is foreign-born (Singer 2003). With this growth in foreign-born population, the metropolitan region, traditionally understood along

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