

NODAL HETEROLOCALISM AND TRANSNATIONALISM AT THE UNITED STATES–CANADIAN BORDER*

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ABSTRACT. Since the late 1990s Wilbur Zelinsky's theory of "heterolocalism" has provided human geographers and other social scientists with a new approach to analyzing the spatial patterns and ethnic identities of recent immigrants in the United States. Zelinsky's heterolocal model suggests that, to a degree unknown in the past, new migrants in North American cities may choose to settle in widely dispersed places, rather than in more concentrated ethnic enclaves, while maintaining their ethnic identities. This article expands on and critiques prior work on heterolocalism in Oregon by examining the spatial patterns, ethnic and religious identities, and transnational relationships of two recent refugee groups in three urban areas in the Pacific Northwest. Using data from U.S. and Canadian census records, refugee resettlement agency files, survey questionnaires, structured and unstructured interviews, and participant observation with post-Soviet Russians and Ukrainians in the Vancouver, British Columbia, Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon metropolitan areas, I analyze the spatial patterns and related social networks that define the identities and residential and religious spaces of these groups to test the efficacy of relating heterolocalism and transnationalism across an international boundary. *Keywords:* Canada, heterolocalism, Pacific Northwest, refugees, transnationalism, United States.

Human geographers have become increasingly interested in studies of North American immigration patterns and processes during the past four decades. After the passage of new and more open immigration laws in the 1960s, the arrival of large numbers of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from Latin America, Asia, and Africa added new ethnic dimensions to geographical studies of the migration, settlement patterns, and adjustment experiences of new and ever more diverse arrivals in the United States and Canada. Of particular importance in recent years have been ongoing efforts to provide new ways of thinking about the relationship among the settlement patterns of new migrants, their adjustment and adaptation rates, and the maintenance of their ethnic identities (see Liberson 1961; Jaret 1991; Li 1998; Hiebert 1999; Roseman, Laux, and Thieme 1999). Critiques of classic Chicago School "acculturation-assimilation" models—focused on inner cities as places where poor, unassimilated, ghettoized minorities reside and on suburbs as places where new immigrants who are more assimilated into mainstream American or Canadian life live—continue to be debated in the scholarly literature. Today, many foreign-born migrants settle in multicultural suburbs located far from downtown neighborhoods (Portes and Jensen 1987; Thompson 1989; Zhou and Logan 1991; Omi and Winant 1994; Wright and Ellis 2000; Wright, Ellis, and Parks 2004).

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