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The Armenians of Glendale: An Ethnoburb in Los Angeles's San Fernando Valley

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Abstract:

Glendale may house the most visible Armenian diaspora in the world; however, it remains among the most invisible in print. The following begins to shed light on this community by providing a brief background and demographic profile of Armenians in Glendale. The article then attempts to expand discussions of Chinese “ethnoburbs” by situating Glendale Armenians in these discussions. Despite scholars’ expansion of the concept, the ethnoburb has had limited application – largely, to international Chinese and a few other Asian immigrant communities. However, is the concept of the ethnoburb generalizable in contexts outside of Chinese immigrant settlements? In this article, I contend that the ethnoburb model is generalizable by situating Glendale’s Armenian community within this framework.

Keywords: *ethnoburbs, Armenian diaspora, Armenian Angelenos, political incorporation, transnationalism, globalization.*

Introduction

Scholars traditionally understood the habitation of urban spaces in fairly simplistic terms: the marginalized and poor inhabited ghettos; the marginalized and ethnic inhabited enclaves; the upwardly mobile and privileged inhabited suburbs, etc. However, in a post-civil rights era, migration has reconfigured many American urban spaces. Because of the new modes of urban occupation, new sociological frameworks have also emerged. Wei Li has formulated a framework for analyzing new urban spaces with the model of the “ethnoburb” (1998). According to Li, ethnoburbs are “suburban ethnic clusters of residential and business districts within large metropolitan areas. They are multiracial/multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and often multinational communities, in which one ethnic minority group has a significant concentration” (2009, 29). These ethnoburbs replicate aspects of both the ethnic enclave as well as the suburb. Li’s model offers the conceptual tools to understand the transformation of urban U.S. spaces over the last several decades.

Li’s model is based on her study of a specific type of urban settlement in a particular region. As she claims, “The establishment of the Chinese ethnoburb as a new type of ethnic

settlement in the San Gabriel Valley (part of the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area) has occurred within a framework of global, national, and place-specific conditions” (79). Subsequent scholarship has expanded upon this model to include various other aspects of international Chinese immigrant settlements (Chang, 2010; Chan 2012; Li, Skop, and Yu, 2016). To be sure, the Chinese are themselves an internally complex and diverse people and have unique settlement trajectories. However, their immigration to and settlement of the San Gabriel Valley come out of a series of shared global, national, and local events, movements, and policies. Under similar international circumstances, several other immigrant flows converged on the U.S. from the mid-1960s onward. Many arrived from a similar combination of geopolitical and socioeconomic factors, and their migrations, as a whole, transformed several urban spaces throughout the U.S. While most scholarship on the ethnoburb has examined the Chinese or other Asian cases (Lin and Robinson, 2005; Chang, 2010; Chan, 2012; Oh and Chung, 2014), Li’s conceptualization needs to hold up in diverse contexts if we are to think of it as a model. Towards that end this paper seeks: (1) to assess the generalizability of the ethnoburb model by comparing a culturally distinct group – the internally diverse Armenian community of Glendale, California; and (2) to analyze the ways in which the influx of the internally diverse Armenian immigrant population has transformed Glendale’s urban fabric. While the Armenian diaspora has received quite a bit of attention, scholars have neglected this new and important Armenian diasporic node.

Methods

I used mixed methods in collecting data for this article, including in-depth interviews extensive participant observation, demographic data analysis, and archival research. For interviews, I relied upon snowballing to generate a diverse sample. In addition, I networked in the community and partook of extensive participant observation. For example, I volunteered on

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the campaigns of local Armenian American political entrepreneurs and attended city meetings and events. These experiences brought me into contact with various members of the Armenian community: its businesspeople, politicians, commissioners, civil servants, educators, ethnic organizations and media. Through these experiences, I was able to meet and set up interviews with diverse members of the community as well as observe/participate in many community events.

Because Armenian American politicians publically supported my research, I was able to gain considerable access to community dynamics and events. As a non-Armenian with fluency in the Armenian language, I was uniquely positioned to acquire outsider perceptions while treated largely as an insider.¹ Given my familiarity with Armenian history, politics, and culture, I occupied the somewhat intermediate position of the quasi-outsider/insider. During my fieldwork, I spoke with hundreds of community members and formed several significant friendships with Armenian Angelenos. The nature of these friendships was quite in-depth. Indeed, I attended several Armenian ceremonies (birthdays, engagement parties, funerals, holiday celebrations). I spent consecutive days with friends and their families – my proficiency in Armenian and familiarity with many social practices often made me something of a spectacle among Armenian peers and their relatives. This intermediate position both gave me special access while also enabling me to remain somewhat intellectually distant. Needless to say, however, these personal experiences provided me profoundly in-depth insight into my case study.

Interviews also enabled me to develop a narrative of Armenians' historical immigration to and settlement of Glendale. I relied on oral histories of community members who had lived in Glendale since the 1960s and beyond. These interviews also provided me many insights into the community's internal dynamics. In order to gauge the generalizability of my interview data, I

mined IPUMS data and scoured archival sources (such as old newspaper clippings, etc.). For contemporary statistics, I used Census data from 2010. I did not rely on the more recent data set (2015 ACS), as the former contains a more representative 10% sample.ⁱⁱ For archival sources, I relied upon Glendale Central Library's archives and microfilm collections.

Theorizing Ethnoburbs

Ethnic minorities lived in suburbs before the modern formation of ethnoburbs. In the 1950s and 1960s, more affluent immigrants moved into suburban neighborhoods and formed “small-scale residential clusters” (Li 2009, 41). These clusters of individuals established roots in suburban communities. They bought homes, sent their children to the local schools, and worked in local businesses. The presence of these residential clusters did nothing to threaten the bedrock of American suburbia. And, as such, did not transform the overall suburban ecology. Rather, these suburban clusters, while distinct, served as the ethnoburbs' predecessors.

With the passage of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, a new flux of immigrants arrived in much greater concentration. They sought reunification with friends and family, several of which had formed the earlier residential clusters, especially those with the means to “leapfrog” inner-city settlement and establish roots immediately in suburban neighborhoods. This proved true in both the San Gabriel Valley and the San Fernando Valley, with large concentrations settling in Monterey Park and Glendale. As with the Chinese in Monterey Park, Armenians' concentrated settlement of Glendale in the 1980s and 1990s led to the community's restructuring economically, socially, and politically. As business and political entrepreneurs garnered increased success, these communities increasingly developed into a magnet for further co-ethnic migration.

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The increasing migration streams had several implications. It caused spillover in surrounding areas. For example, Armenian presence in the San Fernando Valley expanded out of Glendale to include Burbank, North Hollywood, Tujunga, Calabasas, and La Cañada. In San Gabriel, Chinese presence expanded out of Monterey Park to include Alhambra, Arcadia, Alhambra, Rosemead, and San Marino. These new residents disrupted pre-established Anglos' space and identity. As a result, tensions sometimes emerged. However, backlash did not deter the new groups in either location; rather, in a post-civil rights political atmosphere, it very likely led to greater ethnic cohesion and mobilization (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr, 2009). In addition, these increasing streams had political implications. After President Clinton's Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 gave only citizens access to welfare, many immigrants were incentivized to become citizens, which, in turn, empowered them to vote for their own representation. At the same time, increasing high skilled immigrant presence led to community reconfiguration. For example, many of Monterey Park's new residents partook of transnational business exchanges and investments, which transformed the local economy. In this dynamic and charged atmosphere, these suburban communities underwent fundamental changes. Increasing migration streams of high skilled immigrants transformed traditional, Anglo-dominated bedroom suburbs into the multicultural, multilingual, global economic ethnoburbs. But what exactly is an ethnoburb?

Defining an Ethnoburb

According to Li (2009), "ethnoburbs are fully functional communities, with their own internal socioeconomic structures that are integrated into both national and international networks of information exchange, business connection, and social activity" (42). As ethnic community members acquire an increasing number of businesses and real estate properties, more

co-ethnics swell the population of the pre-existing residential clusters. This incremental ingress reworks the socioeconomic and demographic infrastructure of the suburb thereby transforming it into an ethnoburb. This transformation does not take place seamlessly; the pre-existing population, invested emotionally, economically, and physically, often responds with vehemence and antipathy. This backlash, in turn, can increase the ethnic community's sense of cohesion, which can lead to the formation of ethnopolitical campaigns and the establishment of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs in office. These activities, in turn, lead to greater social and political integration into mainstream host society – indeed, until the mainstream society itself has fundamentally changed.

According to Li, ethnoburbs are a new type of urban ecology, but also one that combines the ethnic enclave and the suburb. She distinguishes ethnoburbs from ghettos and ethnic enclaves along the following lines: (1) “Dynamics”: Ethnic residents own a large portion of the local businesses in ethnoburbs as well as “participate in the globalization of capital and international flows of commodities and skilled, high tech, and managerial personnel” (46); (2) “Geographical locations and density”: ethnoburbs exist in larger geographical areas (this habitation may include several municipalities and unincorporated areas) and in lower demographic density as compared to inner-city ghettos and enclaves; and the ethnic community transforms the local population and business structure, with a distinctive ethnic slant; (3) “Internal stratification”: ethnoburban residents typically attribute considerable internal diversity – financially, ideologically, generationally, etc. These internal differences cause group stratification and internal conflict/tension. (4) “Functionality”: ethnoburbs act as new “ports of entry” – that is, ethnoburb residents are receptive to mainstream society and its institutional operations. As Li frames this last point, “Given this mixed environment and daily contacts with people of different

backgrounds, ethnic minorities in ethnoburbs are both inward and outward looking in their socioeconomic and political pursuits” (2009, 47). Ethnoburb residents are thus more likely to become involved with local political and community events than their co-ethnics in downtown districts. According to Li, these are the basic elements that distinguish an ethnoburb from ethnic enclaves and ghettos.

For Li, the ethnoburb challenges classical theories of assimilation: concentrated migration into suburban American cities reconfigures spaces and redirects movements of capital. Highly skilled immigrants bring both tangible and intangible resources to U.S. suburbs – such as money, skills, global networks, etc. These resources facilitate the settlement patterns of immigrants in ethnoburbs. From the outset, they enter and participate in global markets. Their global networks and resources enable them to acquire and transform the physical space and economy. Consequently, the suburb takes on a new, ethnic slant. These transformations involve the establishment and/or acquisition of local ethnic institutions (such as schools and churches), political and social organizations, businesses, real estate, and restaurants. As the community transforms and as new co-ethnics move in, the integration trajectories of newcomers alters. While such trajectories do not resist assimilation indefinitely, they certainly provide newcomers to ethnoburbs the means to preserve ethnic practices for an extended period of time.

As stated, however, this transformation disrupts the pre-existing community’s status quo and generates conflict with previously established (typically Anglo) residents. Suburbs haven’t the same histories as urban centers: Until recently, these communities have been little affected by the absorption of multi-ethnic newcomers. Past immigration waves assimilated immigrants through multiple generations before they resettled into suburban communities; ethnoburbs are demographically distinct in that the immigrant population hasn’t yet acculturated. As Zhou (et al)

articulate of Chinese ethnoburbs, “This phenomenon distorts the correlation between levels of acculturation and residential assimilation predicted by conventional assimilation theories. It opens up the possibility that immigrants’ initial place of residence is not simply a staging ground for somewhere better, but is in fact their final desired destination” (2008, 76). High skilled newcomers threaten middle class Anglos’ space and boundary making. Pitched confrontation results as immigrants become the targets of Anglo ire. As a result, rather paradoxically, concentrated immigrant settlement can engender “white flight” out of the suburbs.

Li and others, however, have a distinct region and population in mind – San Gabriel Valley’s Chinese. And, as such, they have created a model that most accurately defines Chinese migration of a specific sort. Scholarship has significantly expanded the conceptual forcefulness and regional distinctiveness of the ethnoburb; however, it is most often associated with Chinese immigration. While there are some exceptions (Wen, Lauderdale, and Kandula, 2009; Schneider, 2014), the generalizability of the model hasn’t yet been sufficiently demonstrated. As a result, its status as a model remains in question. The analysis below investigates its applicability to San Gabriel Valley’s northwest neighbor, the San Fernando Valley. The following pages test the generalizability of the model by applying a culturally distinct population to it – Glendale’s intra-ethnically diverse Armenian community.

Glendale Armenians and Monterey Park Chinese follow similar settlement trajectories. For example, Armenians’ historical immigration to Glendale took place along a similar tripartite trajectory: (1) From the late 1950s until the early 1970s, it began to experience a scattering of non-Anglo newcomers. Following the growth of suburbanization throughout the U.S., Armenians (as well as other groups) began moving to Glendale in small numbers. (2) Between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s, Armenians came in increasingly larger numbers. Unlike their

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predecessors who came largely from only a few locations, these newcomers were far more multi-local in origin. They came from the Soviet Union, Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, etc. These newcomers were also far more socio-economically mixed than their more affluent predecessors. At this time, Glendale began to become a significant Armenian port of entry. (3) From 1990 until today, Glendale has become a global symbol of the Armenian diaspora. It now attracts Armenians from every corner of the world and from every economic walk of life – including other places around the U.S. The following section provides brief overviews of Armenians’ recent history in Glendale as well as the changes in Glendale that enabled this migration stream to take place.

Backgroundⁱⁱⁱ

Armenians in Glendale

Armenian migration to the United States first peaked in the two decades of the 20th century. Early Armenian settlers had come principally from various parts of the Ottoman Empire, settling in Worcester, Providence, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Fresno, Pasadena, and others (Mirak, 1983). In the wake of persecution, massacres, and, ultimately, Genocide in Ottoman Turkey (1895-1922), newly displaced Armenians found refuge in scattered settlements throughout the world. Many came to the U.S. and settled where other Armenians had already established communities before subsequently dispersing. During the years of restrictive American immigration policies (1924-1965), Armenians from various locations continued to enter the U.S. For example, the Displaced Persons Act exempted several thousand Soviet Armenian refugees stranded in settlement camps following World War II (Bakalian, 1993, 11). Streams of Armenians fleeing upheaval in Bulgaria, Romania, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon Palestine, and Syria relocated to several American industrial cities (Mirak, 1983; Bakalian, 1993;

Fittante, 2017). But the largest waves of multi-polar Armenian migrations occurred from the mid-1960s onward.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s transformed not only many aspects of American society but also its immigration policies. Activists mobilized in response to the uneven distribution of access to fundamental rights. By seeking to redress this grievance, these activists forced the American political machine to reflect deeply on its treatment of groups who fell outside of the privileged class of white men. The militancy of specific groups compelled Congress to pass several legislative reforms, including the Hart-Celler Act of 1965. This reform lifted the restrictions on immigration to the U.S. on those coming from outside of Europe (which had been in place since the 1920s). The legislation eventuated in an unprecedented diversification of America with newcomers coming from places scattered throughout the world.

This legislation overlaps with several significant events in the recent history of the international Armenian diaspora. The movement of Armenians to Southern California in the latter half of the 20th century came in distinct waves and in response to international events. Armenians flocked to California from several places, the most numerically prominent among them Iran, Armenia, Iraq, and the former Soviet Union. They came in the wake of the political tumult of or leading up to the Lebanese Civil War, Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the economic crash of the Republic of Armenia, etc. While post-Genocide Armenians had established several communities throughout the U.S. before Los Angeles, Glendale would eventually become one of the most densely concentrated and diverse Armenian diasporic settlements in history.

The pre-revolution years brought to Los Angeles and Glendale a heightened number of students from Iran. Iran's economic upturn triggered increased migration to the U.S. even before

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the passage of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965. After years boycotting Iranian oil, the U.S. began reengaging Iran once the Shah had been restored in 1953. The early migration of Iranian Armenian students in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in further migration of other students and families later. Iran began to send thousands of students (several Iranian Armenian) to the U.S. Glendale became an educational option because, in part, of Iranian Armenians had already settled there. For example, during this period, Larry Zarian, Glendale's first Armenian mayor and, later, a successful developer, or the Shirvanyans, prominent owners of the Western Waste Industry, along with several others from their social networks settled in Glendale.

On account of the economic surge prior to arrival, Iranians and Iranian Armenians alike were a distinct sort of newcomer. Unlike traditional immigrants, Iranian Armenians came with significant intellectual and material resources. In the mid-1970s, Iran's oil revenues increased from \$4.4 billion to \$17.1 billion (Katouzian, 1981). Many of the first Iranian Armenians to settle Glendale, whether directly or indirectly, were the beneficiaries of these new revenue flows. As such, early Iranian Armenians, particularly those whose migrations pre-date the Shah's demise, could afford to buy homes in comparatively affluent neighborhoods as opposed to settling in densely concentrated urban centers. Compared to Hollywood, Glendale presented an appealing alternative to these student visitors and their relatives or social networks. And their selection conditioned their settlement patterns. Just as the Chinese in Monterey Park or Cubans in Florida (Eckstein, 2006) "leapfrogged" traditional immigrant pathways, early Iranian Armenians could afford to inhabit American suburbs. Iranian Armenians weren't the only Armenians to settle Glendale in the early 1970s. A smaller group of Iraqi Armenians, for example, also began to relocate to Glendale in the 1970s, as well. Together these early settlers formed what Li calls a "residential cluster."

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Armenians received backlash from various socioeconomic quarters: Anglos responded negatively to wealthy Armenians in the north for the elaborate designs of their homes (“mansionization”) and the less affluent Armenians for their dense concentration in the south. Development in Glendale had become negatively associated with Armenian overpopulation. Many Anglos marginalized Armenians for the cultural differences that disrupted their sense of identity and community. Ironically, the backlash most probably only helped create a sense of ethnic cohesion among an otherwise internally diverse and fragmented population. And this cohesion would have significant political implications – at present, Armenian Americans occupy a striking majority of electoral seats in Glendale. Although from diverse countries and cultures, Armenians often bring a strong sense of ethnic identity with them to the host society. Their organizational density (schools, churches, youth organizations, etc.) frequently inculcates a rather strong ethnic identity. Nonetheless, there existed little ethnic cohesion among immigrants from such a wide spectrum of regional backgrounds. Even though Armenians are officially classified as “white” in official records, Glendale’s Anglos frequently treated the growing number of Armenian newcomers as a distinct other. The backlash they received from the pre-existing community helped establish ethnic ties among an internally diverse and fractured population. As a result, Glendale’s Armenian community, which had been disregarded as politically insignificant throughout the 1980s, emerged in the late 1990s as a dominant political force. And its business and real estate endeavors, now commonplace throughout the expansive city, also saturated the market.

Changes in Glendale

Sociopolitical change in Glendale, too, was afoot. For many years, the sleepy, “bedroom” sundown town had been associated with prejudicial organizations and charters, such as the Nazi

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Party and the Ku Klux Klan. Glendale emerged as a comparatively more progressive community by the early 1970s. Changes in Glendale's city ordinances created opportunities for newcomers, and these opportunities overlapped with Armenian migration to Los Angeles. The co-occurrence of these phenomena also explains why Glendale became such a magnet for Armenian immigrants in the latter decades of the 20th century. Many prejudicial traditions remained rooted in Glendale throughout the 1960s and beyond. However, simultaneously, the 1960s also witnessed social and economic changes. As already discussed, civil rights reform swept the U.S. And these reforms penetrated not only U.S. national policies but also local communities. Protesters gathered around the Neo-Nazi headquarters in 1964 in order to oust the group from the city (Arroyo, 2006). The mid-1960s introduced new political discourse, governmental bodies, and policing organizations that protected minorities. While Armenians and other minorities remained largely absent from Glendale during this period, the community's response to the Nazi Party's presence and the emergence of a new platform set the stage for later, ethnically mobilized community members – most conspicuous to take advantage would become Armenians two decades later. In addition, the 1970s brought in many “outsiders”: People from all over Los Angeles flocked to Glendale to shop in its modern shopping centers. Also, businesses seeking to relocate outside of Los Angeles's frenetic city center found a receptive and welcoming local government in Glendale. To be sure, strides were made, but, as the example of housing above indicates, old prejudicial currents remained. Nonetheless, the 1960s and early 1970s set the stage for the significant demographic shifts Glendale would experience soon thereafter. These shifts established the foundation for community transformation.

Glendale began to bounce back from economic downturn in the latter 1960s by broadening its horizons on several fronts. As Cubans, Mexicans, Filipinos, and Armenians

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became increasingly visible, Glendale's leadership responded. In 1972, city manager, C.E. Perkins, spoke to the Glendale Rotary Club, and told them to prepare themselves, for Glendale no longer could remain cut off from the world changing around it (Arroyo, 2006, 82). Shortly thereafter, in 1974, the boldest construction and commercial venture broke ground: Glendale's massive shopping mall, the Galleria, transformed the landscape of the city center. Its commercial success catalyzed further developments, both of the Galleria itself and other commercial enterprises around Glendale. Housing options altered Glendale's aesthetics and demography: Even as early as the 1960s, Glendale's housing market was affected by the economic growth throughout Southern California. In an odd twist of fate, it was Glendale's rightist ethos that eventuated in its liberalist character of today: A conservative spirit guided Glendale's politicians to invite big business to come in and develop its commercial real estate market. This they did to stimulate economic growth.^{iv} As landowners moved out of Glendale, they often sold their properties to developers, who, in turn, populated this residential community with an overabundance of apartment complexes (Arroyo, 2006). These apartment complexes provided space for Armenians moving to Glendale from Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Egypt, etc.

Thus, Armenians and Glendale's histories begin to converge around the mid-1970s. As places like Encino and Hollywood began to experience more crime, Glendale emerged as a magnet for Armenians. The former outpost in Hollywood began to shrink in population size. As political conflict escalated in the latter end of the 1970s, early 1980s, the number of non-immigrant students declined. However, these non-immigrants' statuses were converted to immigrant status. In addition, large numbers of Iranian Armenians entered (via a third country) as refugees. They joined their kith and kin already living in the U.S. Many of these previously established Armenians, such as the Zarians and the Shirvansians, had already established

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Glendale as a potential port of entry (if not final destination via some other place, such as Hollywood). Thus, Armenian migration to Glendale swelled significantly through the 1970s and 1980s. By the latter decade's end, Glendale had become a visible site of Armenian migration from practically every continent. As a result of this migration increase, churches, schools, shops, organizations, and many others grew in number and necessity. But did the changes Armenians wrought constitute transformation of Glendale into an ethnoburb?

Findings: An Armenian Ethnoburb

With an increased Armenian presence, Glendale's economy demanded change. The community's political entrepreneurs and ethnic organizations established channels through which an expanded ethnic economy could grow. In addition, they sought recognition for their traditions and beliefs (to date, Glendale School District stands alone in hosting a national holiday on April 24 in recognition of the Armenian Genocide; there also exists dual immersion language programs in some of Glendale's public schools). And local Armenians' real estate ventures enabled Glendale's housing market to expand exponentially. For an ethnoburb to emerge, an ethnic business and residential sector must converge on one site. And this is precisely what took place in Glendale.

Demographic/Residential Profile

The San Fernando Valley occupies a large geographical area. Glendale itself is the third largest city in Los Angeles County. The geographical density, as compared to the older settlement in Hollywood, a neighborhood in the city of Los Angeles, is considerably lower. As indicated above, Armenians' concentration in Glendale has led to significant spillover in communities such as Burbank, Tujunga, Calabasas, and North Hollywood. In addition, Armenians own and operate a great many businesses in these communities. But the only

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community with a majority population is Glendale, where Armenians’ presence can be observed by the ubiquity of signage in the Armenian script, the concentration of services and stores that cater to the Armenian population, the number of publically advertised specialists with Armenian surnames, the unique architectural design of Armenian churches, and even the use of Armenian language on several city streets. The Anglo Republican bastion of the 1950s has become a multilingual, multicultural, multiracial/multiethnic community.

From 1970 onward, Glendale’s overall population grew at a rapid rate. Even as many Anglo residents moved out, newcomers far outpaced the rate of those leaving. Unlike surrounding towns, whose populations increased more gradually, census data for Glendale report a city population of 132,664 residents in 1970, but 201,020 45 years later in 2015. The Armenian community grew the most visibly. Because of Armenians’ multi-locality and categorization as “white” on official data, they are an especially elusive group to track demographically. Nonetheless, the data do afford insight into Glendale’s evolving demography. The table below reflects the sites of origin into Armenians’ increasingly intra-ethnically diverse population:

Table 1: Glendale’s Population Growth, 1990-2010

	1990 (identity/origin)	2000 (identity/origin)	2010 (identity/origin)
Iran	13,404 (17,126)	18,853 (25,123)	22,405 (27,480)
(Post) Soviet	7,549 (8,432)	16,327 (18,313)	28,616 (29,503)
Lebanon	2,114 (3,043)	2,540 (4,364)	2,094 (3,313)
Iraq	982 (1,284)	1,595 (2,280)	1,975 (2,811)
Syria	900 (1,266)	1,384 (1,796)	557 (1,583)
California	2,576 (54,561)	7,932 (58,385)	15,364 (60,773)
All Countries	29,996 (17% overall)	52,249 (27% overall)	74,511 (39% overall population)

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(self-identifying)	population)	population)	
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Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990, 2000, and 2010

The table above reflects the character of the Glendale Armenian community. The sites selected are not exhaustive. Armenians came to Glendale from various other countries in much smaller number (such as Turkey, Egypt, France, Syria, and Jordan). In 2010, the American Community Survey (ACS) reported that self-identifying Armenians listed over 16 countries as their birthplaces. The sites above, however, are the most numerically significant. They represent approximately 92%, 93%, and 95%, respectively, of all reported Glendale Armenians in each census report. Later migrations reflect geopolitical events in Armenian host societies, such as Syria and Iraq. In addition, Armenian immigrations from Armenia and the former Soviet Union spikes between the 1980s and the 2010s. These latter migration flows have diversified Glendale’s predominant Iranian Armenian population. But these numbers are not static: they fluctuate depending on various factors (political upheaval, immigration policies, and the like). Post-Soviet Armenian migration has also begun to increase to locations near Glendale, such as Burbank, Tujunga, and North Hollywood. In addition, the table reflects internal Armenian migration to Glendale. These internal immigrants previously lived in diverse locations throughout the U.S. The highest concentration of internal immigrants comes from within California – an increase of nearly 600% from 2,576 in 1990 to 15,364 in 2010. This reflects the growing visibility of Glendale as a distinctly Armenian hub or, as Li articulates, “port of entry” for newcomers and established Armenians alike. The table thus includes both the numbers of those who self-identified as Armenian as well as sites from which Armenians migrate to Glendale. These numbers set up a range of representation: For example, between 18,853 and 25,123 Iranian Armenians were living in Glendale by 2000. Of the 6,270 who reported Iranian origins, it is difficult to determine what percentage self-identifies as Armenian (Glendale has a

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relatively small Iranian population). Nonetheless, the tables indicate that Armenians represented at least 39% of Glendale's population in 2010.

Armenians weren't the only group to diversify Glendale's population. Glendale also contains relatively large concentrations of non-Armenian migrants; as of 2010, the largest groups include Mexicans (10,609), Koreans (9,708) and Filipinos (9,663). Glendale's foreign-born population is now about 55%. To be sure, many who move to Glendale are temporary residents. Glendale functions as a springboard location for many Armenians and non-Armenians, who relocate to other locations thereafter.

Socioeconomic Profile

In terms of profession, Glendale Armenians exist in every socioeconomic and professional sector. According to IPUMS ACS Sample 2010 data, 47% of Glendalians with an undergraduate degree were Armenians, and 29% of those who had obtained a graduate degree were Armenian. Glendale Armenians, therefore, obtain undergraduate and graduate degrees at significantly higher rates than the national averages (27% and 10.9%, respectively). Glendale Armenians also participate in every sphere of the local economy. Their business and cultural influence is omnipresent. Armenians own many prominent local businesses that serve the local economy, such as Pacific food Mart, Paradise Pastry, Lord Bakery, The Lahmajoun Factory, Carousel and Raffi's restaurants, the Tumanyan Khnkali factory, Charles billiard, Tavern on Brand, The Famous, Eden on Brand, etc. The following table represents Armenians some occupational trends in Glendale.

Table 2. Percent Armenian, Selected Occupations, Glendale, 2010

	Armenian representation
Occupation	
Chief Execs and Public Admins	32%

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Managerial Positions	36%
Salespersons	40%
Physicians	32%
Subject Instructors (HS/College)	37%
Teachers	23%
Supervisors	32%
Drivers (truck, delivery, tractor, bus, and taxi)	52%
Laborers (construction and otherwise)	42%
Computer systems analysts and scientists	33%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010 IPUMS ACS

Given their socioeconomic and educational diversity, Glendale Armenians show a visible presence in both high skilled and low skilled professions. They are especially prominent in managerial and high tech positions. Glendale also hosts several Armenian-founded international organizations, such as ServiceTitan or Kradjian Importing Company, which generate hundreds of millions of dollars for Glendale's economy. Armenian real estate and business investments have also contributed to Glendale's thriving economy and created jobs for Armenians and non-Armenians alike. These investments enrich Glendale with resources both locally and internationally. Local Armenian companies and businessmen are thus participating in the globalization of capital flows as well as the enrichment of the local economy.

But the Armenian community is an internally diverse population. Some sub-groups gravitate toward specific occupations more than others. However, many of these occupations overlap. The table below provides an overview of Glendale's three most prevalent Armenian sub-groups by birthplace: Iranian Armenians, Armenians from Armenia or the former Soviet

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Union, and California Armenians. According to the 2010 ACS, Glendale had 22,405 Iranian Armenians (30% overall Armenian population in Glendale), 28,616 Armenians from Armenia or the former Soviet Union (38% of overall Armenian population), and 15,367 California Armenians (about 20%). These three groups made up 88% of Glendale’s Armenian population (IPUMS 2010):

Table 3. Origins of Armenians Employed in Selected Occupations, Glendale, 2010

	Armenia and former USSR	Iran	California
Occupation			
Engineers	40%	60%	--
Physicians	71%	29%	--
Financial Manager	54.3%	9.6%	28.3%
Drivers	63%	37%	--
Customer Service	47%	53%	--
Teachers	49%	39%	--
Reg. Nurses	77%	23%	--
Nursing Aides	76%	17%	6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010 IPUMS ACS

Of the populations specified, each group has rather distinct reporting habits. Among California Armenians, 12,332 out of 15,367 (80%) did not report their occupation; among Iranian Armenians 9,518 out of 22,405 (42%) did not report their occupation; and among Armenians from Armenia or the former Soviet Union, 8,486 out of 28,616 (29%) did not report their occupation. Despite the fact that the disproportionately low rate among California-based Armenians skews their occupational representation, some general work-related distinctions can still be gleaned. For some occupations, there is a distinct majority: Iranian Armenians form a

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distinct majority among engineers, chief executives, and public administrators, whereas Armenians from Armenia or the former Soviet Union form a clear majority among financial managers, physicians, registered nurses, and nursing aides. But for many other positions, these occupations are fairly evenly divided among the different groups. The difference among teachers and customer service representatives, for example, is negligible. As such, the data do show clear professional divides among Armenians from different countries. They also show areas in which Armenians are absent: For example, Armenians represent small fractions among several industries in the public service sector, such as the police force or fire department (although census data indicate that they exhaustively represent the “protective services”). According to Glendale’s Workforce Demographics Report, 2003-2014, Armenians make up less than 9% of the police department and 6% of the fire department. That Armenians represent nearly 80% of all elected offices in Glendale but only about 15% of school principals reflects the uneven distribution of Armenian in civic positions.

Political Profile

One of the areas in which Glendale Armenians are the most visible is in local politics. Before 1999, only one Armenian, Larry Zarian, had ever been elected to public office in Glendale. Zarian proved a formidable local politician, serving in various capacities until 1999. By the end of his political career, however, a new generation of Armenian political agents (or ethnopolitical entrepreneurs) launched a series of campaigns that transformed this bastion of conservatism into a far more staunchly Democratic community. From the end of Zarian’s tenure until the present, Armenians have gradually saturated electoral politics. Their initiatives and reforms have led to more park spaces throughout Glendale, greater opportunities for businesses, and increased housing for the elderly. As of April 2017, Armenians hold about 80% of electoral

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seats. In addition, they sit on just over 50% of all commission boards. The tables below show their political representation:

Table 4. Glendale Commission Boards^v

	Armenian	Non-Armenian
Design Board	5	0
On the Arts and Culture Commission Board	4	1
Civil Service Commission	4	1
Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee	4	1
Building and Fire Appeals Commission	3	2
Commission on the Status of Women	3	2
Planning Commission, Transportation and Parking Commission	3	2
Audit Committee and the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commission	2	3

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Glendale Housing Authority board	1	1
Oversight Board for the Glendale Successor Agency	1	7
Glendale’s Water and Power Commission	1	4
Historic Preservation Commission	1	5
Vector Control District	0	1
Metropolitan Water District	0	1

Table 5. City of Glendale’s Electoral Seats

	Armenian	Non-Armenian
City Council	4	1
Board of Education	4	1
Glendale Community College Board	3	2
City Clerk	1	0
City Treasurer	1	0

Source: For current posts, please visit www.glendale.edu, www.gusd.net, and www.glendaleca.gov.

The tables reflect the extent to which the Armenian community has become an integral part of city governance. Armenians vote at relatively high rates in Glendale. And this mobilization results from the joint efforts of various actors, such as ethnopolitical entrepreneurs as well as

ethnic organizations and media. Even “unauthorized immigrants” (Cook, 2013) become involved by participating in civic life – town halls, demonstrations, etc. Relying on a highly mobilized population, those elected to office have organized campaigns and, with support from ethnic media, organizations, and financial donors, have successfully established majority of elected seats. At the time of my fieldwork, these initiatives only seem to be increasing along with Armenians’ electoral representation. As manifested in places such as Glendale or Monterey Park, direct electoral representation (by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs), is an integral yet unstudied aspect of the ethnoburb model.

Discussion

The apparent commonalities between the ethnoburb communities in Monterey Park and Glendale are quite striking: Just as the majority of early Taiwanese migrants of the San Gabriel Valley (Monterey Park) came with more financial and educational resources, so too, did Iranian Armenians seek out a middle-class community in which they could “leapfrog” into a comfortable suburb. In addition, as with the Chinese in Monterey Park, Iranian Armenian migrants in Glendale disrupted the previous residential and commercial sectors. They engaged in real estate acquisition thereby driving up the value of property and building multi-unit complexes. These developments, as before, opened up living opportunities for more newcomers and led to higher levels of density in certain districts. Both the Taiwanese and the Armenians (from Iran only?) became visible business owners in several economic sectors, with commercial merchandise and signage that clearly catered to co-ethnics. And, just as subsequent waves of migration significantly diversified the intra-ethnic character of Monterey Park’s Chinese community, Glendale Armenians splintered along several fault lines as political upheavals brought new Armenians from Lebanon, Iraq, Armenia, and Russia into the same site in subsequent decades.

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This upsurge of Armenian and Chinese residents undermined the previous dominance of white ownership and control – economically, commercially, and politically. And, as with the Chinese in Monterey Park, these expansions were responded to with vehement backlash and resentment from the old guard. This vehemence appeared in newspaper clippings, city council meetings, etc. And both communities experienced backlash over the establishment of houses of worship (Li 2009).^{vi} Also, as with the Chinese in San Gabriel Valley, who spread from Monterey Park to such adjacent communities as Alhambra and (blanking on name) Glendale Armenians have spilled over into the San Fernando Valley in places like Burbank, Tujunga, and North Hollywood, with the most affluent settling in the highly exclusive community of La Cañada (just as the affluent Chinese settled in wealthy San Marino). In addition to the demographic shift, Glendale Armenians and Monterey Park Chinese thus confirm Li’s assertion about the socioeconomic stratification of an ethnoburban community. Even the pattern of initial entrance into political office reflects the uncanny similarities between the two cases: Glendale’s first Armenian American politician, Larry Zarian, took office in 1983; Monterey Park’s first politician, Lily Lee Chen, was elected mayor in 1983. These vastly distinct cultural communities have experienced strikingly parallel incorporative experiences. Given the foregoing analysis, the Chinese San Gabriel Valley model Li has introduced can now be expanded to include a rather distinct population – the multi-polar Armenian population. This suggests that the ethnoburb model needn’t be confined solely to Asiatic populations but can be applied among other groups, as well.

The foregoing analysis, I urge, does situate Glendale into discussion of ethnoburbs. (1) Its internal “dynamics” reflect a distinctly Armenian consumer market yet one that is integrated into international socioeconomic contexts. Glendale Armenians have noticeable economic and

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political leverage. In addition, Glendale Armenians play key roles in globalizing capital and international flows of commodities and personnel. The concentration of Armenians maximizes their ability to create community, political, and financial networks. (2) Glendale has the “geographical locations and diversity” of the ethnoburb insofar as it exists in a suburb of large geographical area and lower density than that of the inner-city. It is surrounded by several unincorporated areas within San Fernando Valley. In addition, Armenians’ presence has transformed local residential and business aesthetics and practices. This concentration of Armenian organizations, churches, businesses, and residences suffuses all parts of Glendale, so much so that significant spillover has occurred throughout the San Fernando Valley in places such as Tujunga, North Hollywood, Calabasas, and Burbank. And, as such, its boundaries are porous and arbitrary. Also, (3) the tables above reflect the internal stratification of Glendale’s demographic composition. Armenians occupy every socioeconomic and professional stratum. Their national differences create distinct residential and economic strata in the north and south of Glendale. As the above analysis documents, the establishment of Glendale’s Armenian cluster in the 1970s and 1980s led to a significant increase in its population. These replenished numbers strengthen the socioeconomic structure and power cleavages of the group. Finally, Glendale’s (4) “functionality” is that of an ethnoburb inasmuch as it now operates as a “port of entry” (47): Glendale’s Armenian population has gone mainstream, particularly in certain sectors, such as local politics in which it represents nearly 80% of elected seats. As such, Glendale Armenians might be characterized as both “inward and outward looking in their socioeconomic and political pursuits” (47). Glendale Armenians engage with multiethnic populations and ensure the success of their community without sacrificing a sense of loyalty and commitment to their own ethnic community. And, as Li reflects of the Chinese ethnoburbs, the same holds for Glendale

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Armenians: “Although there are class differences and conflicts within the ethnic group, the group often unites in solidarity to fight for their rights wherever those rights are threatened. Cultivating an ethnic consciousness leads to growth and prosperity” (47). Consequently, Glendale can comfortably be situated in discourse of ethnoburbs. Their inclusion extends discussions of ethnoburbs and proves the generalizability of the model.

Nonetheless, several qualifications should be noted: The first relates to transnational business ventures and the globalization of capital. To be sure, Armenians participate in several industries that globalize capital. They also participate in the international circulation of high tech and personnel. Glendale hosts several prominent international organizations: Disney, Dreamworks, Nestle, etc. Armenians participate in several sectors of these global companies and globalize its capital. They also contribute with their own multi-million dollar companies. But Armenians come to the U.S. under rather distinct circumstances than those from Taiwan or Hong Kong. Dispossessed of their historical communities and without a financially stable home country economy, Glendale Armenians simply haven’t the same sort of transnational economic relationship with a home government or its financial institutions. This does not diminish their business contributions to non-Armenian corporations and banks, but it warrants reference. The second qualification pertains to group size. Armenian numerical representation worldwide is difficult to determine; however, it most probably does not exceed 11 million. In contrast, the Chinese global population exceeds 1.3 billion. These salient disparities reflect differences in transnational transactions, migratory trajectories, and potential replenishments.

Apart from these differences, Glendale and Monterey Park have been transformed from sleepy Anglo suburbs into multilingual, multicultural, and multiracial/multiethnic metropolitan ethnoburbs. But, from the snapshot gleaned of these dynamic and prosperous communities, what

does it tell us about their futures? These groups are in a constant state of negotiation with various factors. Their pre-migration differences and intra-ethnic diversity come into daily contact with local actors and factors. And these interactions produce varied results. While the ethnoburb model presents an important and dynamic analysis of how urban ecology has changed over the last several decades, it does not help us understand in what direction these communities are evolving. Nonetheless, it does present a snapshot of the circumstances out of which a new set of ethnic political agents have emerged – namely, ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. I urge that future research on immigrant political incorporation should incorporate the ethnoburb model, and, in turn, research on ethnoburbs should further unpack the political ramifications of ethnoburbs.

Conclusion

The foregoing introduces a brief history of Armenians' immigration to and settlement of Glendale. In addition, it provides a demographic snapshot of Glendale's Armenian community and situates this community into discussions of ethnoburbs. Li's ethnoburb model provides scholars with the tools for understanding why certain urban centers have undergone such radical changes in the past few decades. I contend that the model, established to analyze the Chinese of San Gabriel Valley, is generalizable to fit a diverse array of communities. As such, I have attempted to expand this discourse by situating Glendale and the San Fernando Valley into discussions of ethnoburbs. However, I have also attempted to introduce the ethnoburb model as an ideal one through which to study immigrant political incorporation. More specifically, I contend that future scholarship should think about the novel forms of political incorporation that take place in ethnoburban contexts. While the ethnoburb model has been expanded upon since its first publication, new analytical dimensions can enrich it further.

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ⁱ An extended note on positionality: During the academic year 2015-2016, I lived in Yerevan and worked as a guest lecturer at the American University of Armenia. During this time, I conducted research on North American Armenian return migration to Armenia (see Fittante, 2017). The experiences gleaned from this fieldwork also enriched my understanding of Armenian culture, perceptions, and language. I've also undertaken fieldwork of the Armenian diaspora in France, Moscow, Argentina, and Uruguay.

ⁱⁱ Nonetheless, it should be noted that migration to Glendale from various sites is a dynamic and fluctuating phenomenon. As such, the less representative 2015 data sets contain distinct numbers.

ⁱⁱⁱ Some parts of the background section are adapted and abridged content from the author's article, "But Why Glendale? A History of Armenian Immigration to Southern California" (Fittante, 2017).

^{iv} An article in the LA Times from June 16, 1996 makes a similar point. See the following:
http://articles.latimes.com/1996-06-16/opinion/op-15622_1_city-officials.

^v For listing of current board members, see <http://www.glendaleca.gov/government/departments/city-clerk/boards-and-commissions> (accessed on November 18, 2016).

^{vi} See also: and http://articles.latimes.com/1995-04-18/local/me-56083_1_historic-preservation-ordinance