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The Filipino case: Insights into choice and resiliency among immigrants in Toronto

Canadian cities and regions are highly dependent upon immigration for their population growth. Immigrants make up 48 percent of the popu
in the Vancouver CMA (StatsCa
planning for immigration, case s
regional planning initiatives such
strategic transportation plans. In
that increasingly chooses public
and precarious labour markets.
CMA, the fastest-growing immigr
rental tenure, low spatial segreg
study examined how Filipinos m
immigrants have changed since
resiliency in postindustrial cities
may be used in analytical genera

This paper begins with an intr
used in this study. Following this
participation, transportation and
2006. Then the paper discusses
in Toronto between 1968 and 20
transportation and housing choi
prevalent trends of prolonged p
regional planners advocate bette
in their plans and policies, the re

polarized labour market. In 1986, 29 percent of Filipino immigrants in the Toronto CMA had Bachelors degrees, compared to only 7 percent of all immigrants and 11 percent of non-immigrants. By 2006, 28 percent of Filipinos had Bachelors degrees compared to 16 percent of immigrants and 17 percent of non-immigrants. In what has become a Canadian lament (e.g. Bauder 2003, Kelly et. al 2009), this high educational attainment is often not recognized by Canadian employers and professional associations. As a result Filipinos struggle to regain their professional status in Canada, and their story is one of income disparity.

Many authors have noted an increasing income gap between the highest and lowest income percentiles in Canadian cities (Hulchanski 2007, Hulchanski 2010, Pendakur and Pendakur 2011). Several authors have indicated the significance of income in housing choice (Murdie et al. 1999, Haan 2005, Hiebert 2006); presumably, income would also impact transportation choice. In 1986, Filipino immigrants had the same median individual income as immigrants in general, substantially higher than the median for non-immigrants. But over the twenty-year period, non-immigrants' incomes have increased steadily, while immigrants have not seen the same gains. The median individual incomes also mask much greater disparity. In 2006, Filipino immigrants' median income was 118 percent of the median income of immigrants in general and 87 percent of non-immigrants' median income. But at the seventy-fifth percentile, Filipinos made 95 percent of the income of immigrants in general and 71 percent as much as non-immigrants. And at the ninety-fifth percentile, Filipinos made 84 percent of the income of immigrants in general, and only 61 percent of non-immigrants' income.

And yet, Filipino immigrants consistently have a higher than average employment rate (see Figure 5). Unemployment has remained between 4 and 7 percent for Filipino immigrants, immigrants in general

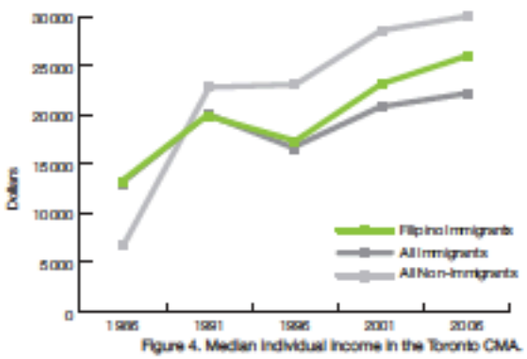

Figure 4. Median individual income in the Toronto CMA.

Data source: Public Use Microdata Files for Individuals, Statistics Canada.
Note: These median values include individuals living with non-relatives, multiple-family households, and non-Census families.

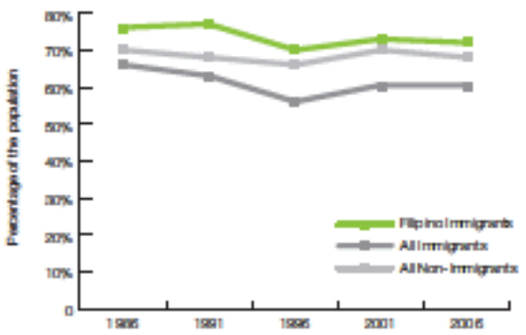

Figure 5. Employed population in the Toronto CMA.

Data source: Public Use Microdata Files for Individuals, Statistics Canada.

Resilience and housing choices among Filipino immigrants in Toronto

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Definitions of resilience

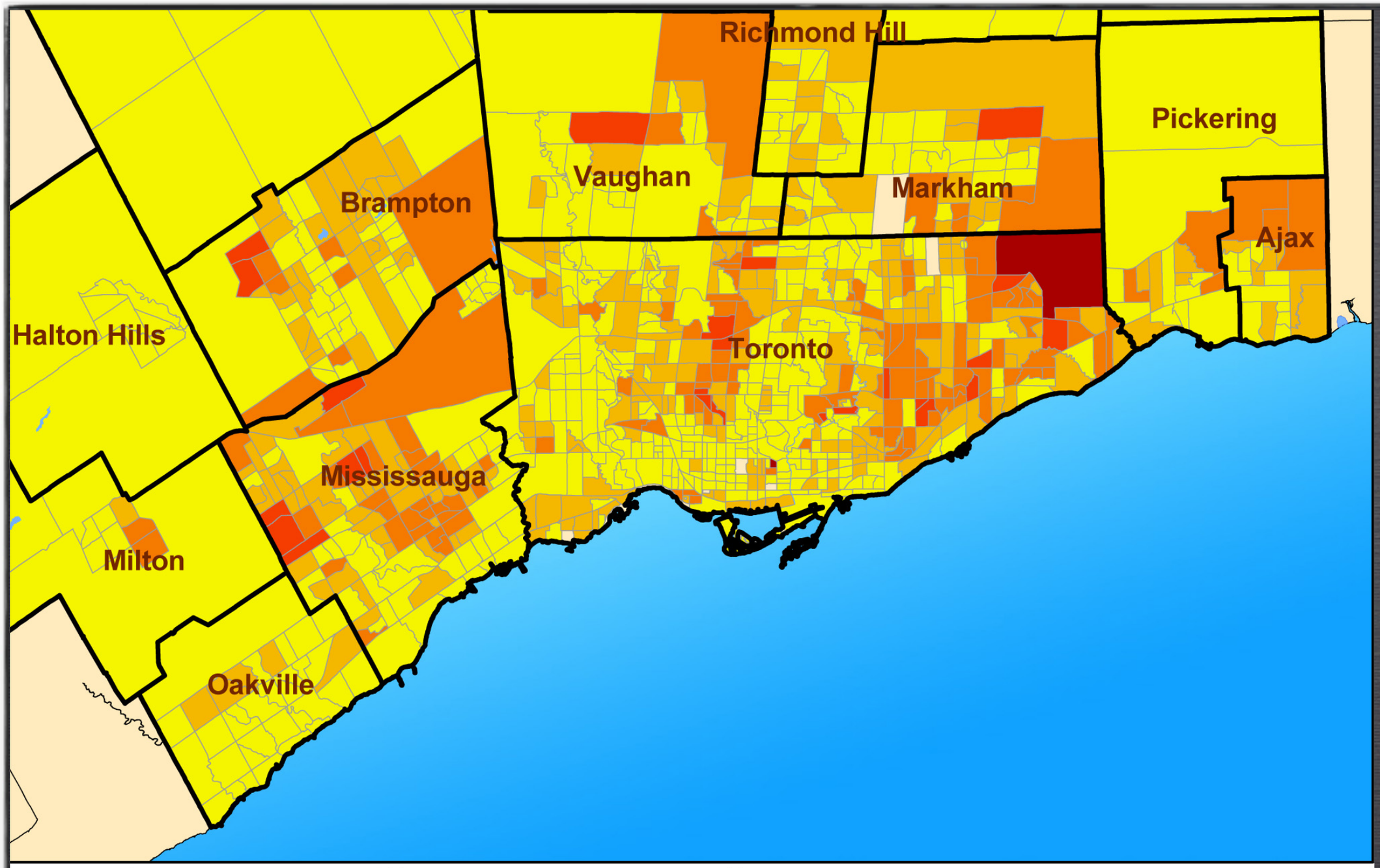
- Definitions of simple resilience and psychological resilience may help us understand ethnocultural differences in housing patterns
- Resilience metaphors have been applied to cities and to ethnocultural communities

  - **Simple resilience** (ecology, systems theory): the ability of a material to absorb energy when it is deformed elastically and, upon unloading, to have this energy recovered. Has been applied to cities, housing systems, public transit systems (e.g. Petrillo and Prosperi 2011, Florida 2008)
  - **Psychological resilience** (psychology, sociology): the positive capacity of people to cope with stress and adversity, the ability to bounce back to a previous state of normal functioning (e.g. Lamont 2009)

Housing and transportation choices among Filipino immigrants

- How do structural changes affect housing and transportation choices?
- How do Filipino immigrants make housing and transportation choices in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)?
    - choice (decision-making process) vs. preference (inclination)
    - first-generation individuals
- Census data (1986-2006), principal components analysis, interviews with 32 immigrants who arrived between 1968-2008

Filipinos in the Toronto CMA



Legend

Ethnic Origin - Filipino

- 0 - 130
- 131 - 335
- 336 - 670
- 671 - 1,570
- 1,571 - 3,195

N
W E
S

0 2 4 8 12 16 Km

TORONTO

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006;
Social Policy Analysis & Research

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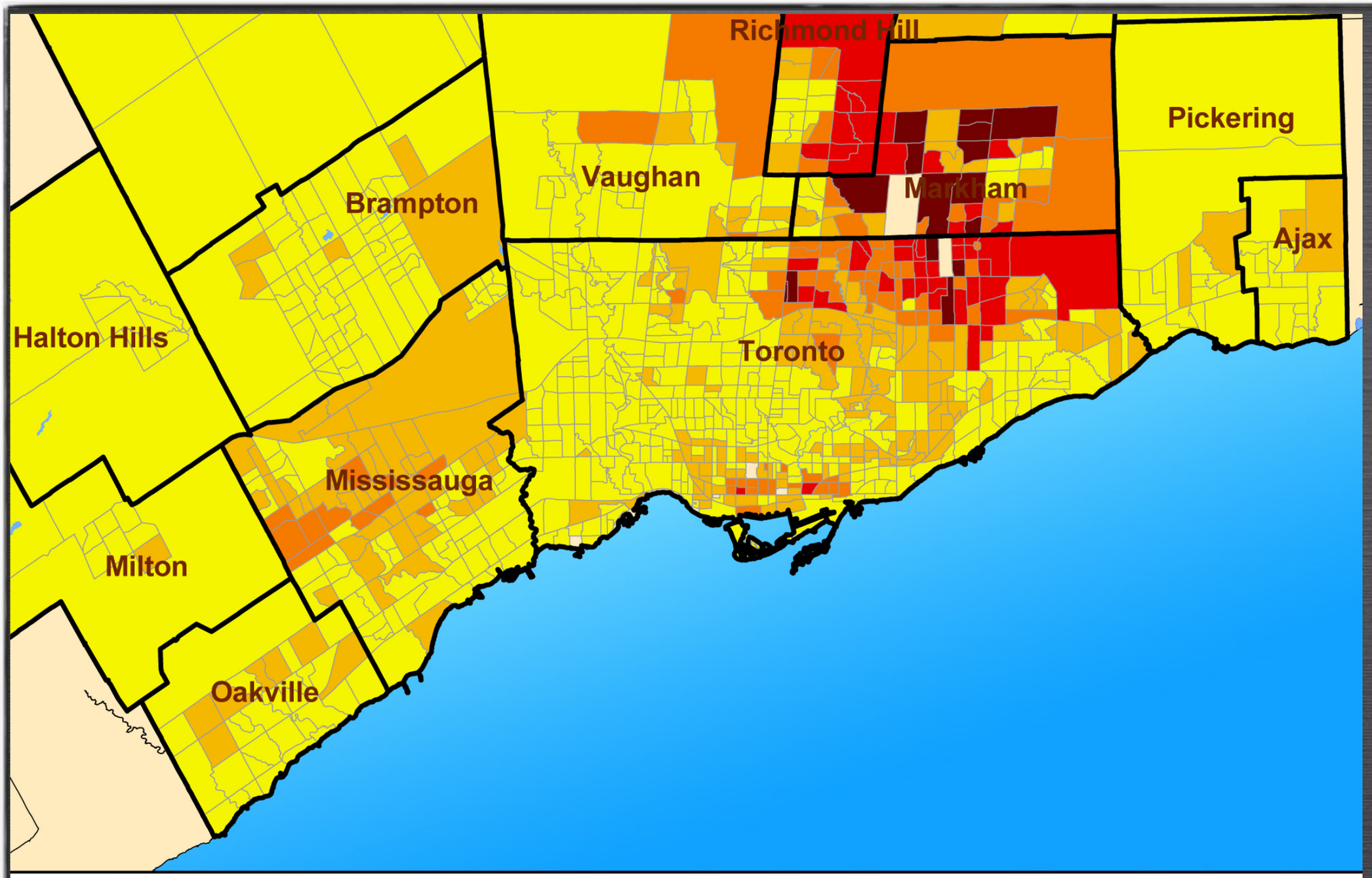
Publication Date: May 2008

Contact: spar@toronto.ca

Notes: CMA is Census Metropolitan Area. Data is by Census Tract. Ethnic Origins reflect Total Responses (Single and Multiple Responses combined) and therefore will not add up to 100%. See the Census Dictionary for full definition. N.I.E. = not included elsewhere.

Chinese in the Toronto CMA



Legend

Ethnic Origin - Chinese

- 0 - 365
- 366 - 1,020
- 1,021 - 2,005
- 2,006 - 3,695
- 3,696 - 6,480

N
W
E
S

0 2 4 8 12 16 Km

TORONTO

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006;
Social Policy Analysis & Research

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Research Results

- Filipinos have a decreased presence in higher-paying industries/ occupations since the late 1980s, higher rental rate, higher rate of transit use
- Filipino immigrants' choices have been shaped by structural changes in housing policy, immigration policy, and the labour market
- Strong histories of renting, transit use (jeepneys, tricycles), and living in mixed-use communities: sought this type of neighborhood in Canada
- Filipinos approach housing and transportation choices with a resiliency strategy–in 17 of 32 interviews, preference did not match choice

Factors in Housing Location

Reasons for Buying a Car

Discussion

- Choices can be flexible over time, which can help Filipinos navigate increasingly competitive housing market. Other groups use different resilience strategies (e.g. Chinese and South Asian). Retaining characteristics of the culture vs. adopting Neoliberal values (Lamont 2009)
- Housing can be seen as a component of a city system that can respond to internal or external threats through resilience (e.g. a variety of housing choice)
- Many Canadian neighbourhoods could be said to permanently altered through decades of immigrant settlement, and will not "bounce back" to their original monocultural form

Thank you

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