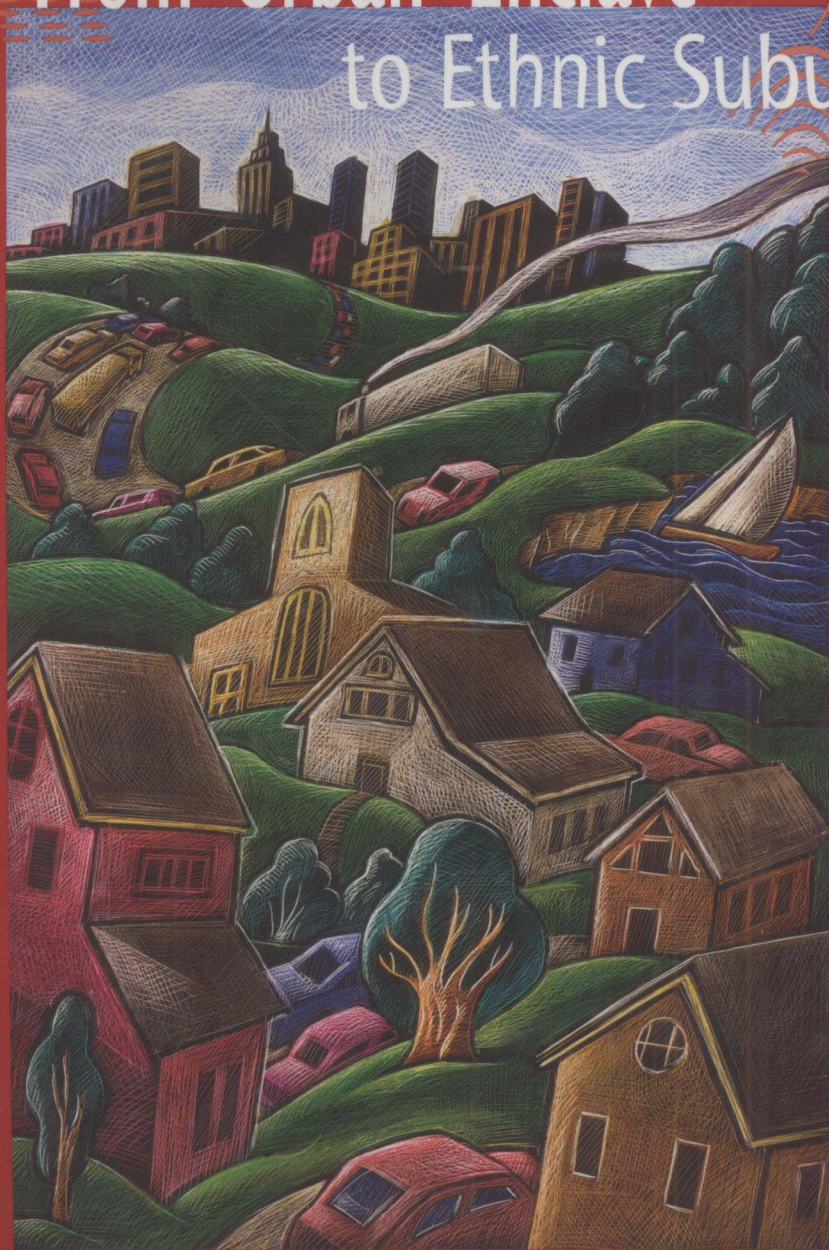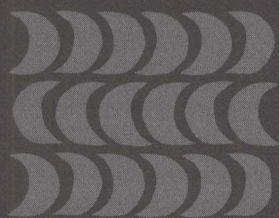# From Urban Enclave
to Ethnic Suburb

*New Asian Communities in
Pacific Rim Countries*

Edited by Wei Li

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HAWAI'I

To my late parents, Li Linmo and Chen Chan

To all Asian immigrants who live and work in urban and suburban areas across the Pacific Rim and who made this book possible

▓▓ Acknowledgments

am today. I am also deeply grateful for the Asian immigrants to whom I belong, whose presences and involvements in the eight metropolitan areas have brought fundamental changes not only to the suburbs where they live and work but also to the metropolitan areas and beyond. So I dedicate this book to all of them: They made this book possible.

—Wei Li

⬚ Contents

Asian Immigration and Community in the Pacific Rim

Wei Li

Traditional scholarship in immigration study views immigration largely as the result of "a unidimensional process of uneven economic exchange between states of origin and destination" (Zolberg 1981, 4). Immigrants are viewed as mostly uprooted manual laborers, often people with poor educations and minimum job skills, seeking job opportunities in the destination countries along with their families. Their residential areas often take the form of ghettos and ethnic enclaves and are located in run-down neighborhoods, mostly inner cities. Numerous classic studies have been done on such immigrant neighborhoods and leave a rich legacy, describing immigrants' adaptation, assimilation, and integration to the destination countries (see, for instance, Bolaria 1984; Kwong 1987, 1996; J. Lin 1998; M. Zhou 1992). At the same time, white middle-class families—composed of a working dad, a stay-at-home mom, and their children—dominate the traditional suburbs in metropolitan areas, especially those in North America. In cases where racial and ethnic minorities, Asians included, do achieve their dream of social and economic upward mobility by suburbanizing, they are expected to be, and likely are, spatially dispersed and socioeconomically assimilated into the mainstream society. As a result, within an ethnic group those who live in inner-city enclaves are usually poor, less educated, spatially concentrated, and more likely to be low-skilled workers in an ethnic job market, whereas residents of the suburbs are well off, are professionally trained, and live in racially or ethnically mixed residential areas—as portrayed by the two traditional spatial models of ethnic settlements, the "invasion and succession" and "downtown versus uptown" models (Park and Miller 1921; Kwong 1987, 1996).

Such images, however, belie reality: In recent decades many suburban areas have transformed to multiracial and multicultural ones under the influence of international geopolitical and global economic restructuring,

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changing national immigration and trade policies and local demographic, economic, and political contexts. Many new immigrants with higher educational attainment, professional occupations, and financial resources settled directly into the suburbs without ever having experienced life in the inner city. This is different from prior generations of immigrants, who normally settled in inner-city neighborhoods first and moved out to the suburbs only after they moved up socioeconomically. This pattern—as described in the 1920s by scholars of the Chicago school of sociology (Park and Miller 1921)—has been accepted widely and is deeply rooted in people's minds. Today, demographic characteristics, social and economic structures, and residential and commercial landscapes are undergoing drastic changes in the suburban areas of many large metropolitan areas across the globe. This book presents observations and interpretations by scholars, primarily geographers and other social scientists, on such changes brought in by the new Asian immigrant or refugee streams, their impacts, and their imprints on eight different metropolitan areas in four major immigrant receiving countries in the Pacific Rim (the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand).

Changing Global Economy, Geopolitics, and Immigration/Refugee Policies

The histories of the four countries under consideration have always been closely associated with those of immigrants. In turn, domestic and international economic conditions, geopolitical changes, and their countries' strategic interests historically have influenced immigration policies. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Asian immigrants to all four countries faced de jure and de facto discrimination, ranging from restrictive policies to exclusion laws. In the second half of twentieth century, all four countries have changed their immigration laws to nondiscriminative or selective ones that accommodate, if not encourage, various immigration flows from Asian countries.

Evolution of Immigration Policies: From Restrictive/Exclusive to Nondiscriminative/Selective

Historically, immigration legislation in these countries has discriminated against groups that are not of Anglo-Saxon origin (Table 1-1; W. Li 1997; P. S. Li 2003; Lo this volume; Fernald and Li 2000; Murphy 2001; Takaki 1998). Individuals from ethnic minority groups were not given the same opportunities as their white, European counterparts. For instance, the U.S.

Naturalization Law of 1790 specified that only free "White" immigrants would be eligible for naturalized citizenship. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 aimed at barring Chinese labor from entering the United States. The 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement restricted Japanese and Korean immigration. The Immigration Act of 1917 denied entry to Asian Indians and created an "Asiatic Barred Zone," which essentially curbed all immigration from Asia. The National Origins Acts of 1924 gave no quotas for any group that was ineligible for citizenship, a category that included all the previously mentioned groups. The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 added Filipinos to the list of excludables. These immigration restrictions prevented Asian groups from entering and legitimized the discriminatory actions taken against these groups by denying them the right to become naturalized citizens. The Immigration Act of 1910 in Canada conferred on the Cabinet the authority to exclude "immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada." The Canadian government also singled out immigrants of "Asiatic origin" requiring they have $200 in cash at landing time. Then Canada passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2000; P. S. Li 2003). In Australia, one of the first pieces of legislation passed by the Australian government at federation in 1901 was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which initiated the "White Australia Policy." Several components of this act were written to severely limit the ability of Chinese and other Asian groups to migrate to and settle in Australia. New Zealand also passed a Chinese Immigrants Restriction Act 1881, which imposed a poll tax of ten pounds and a tonnage restriction of one Chinese passenger for every ten tons of cargo.

It was World War II that changed global political maps: The war prompted the countries in question to lift restrictions, at least symbolically, against immigrations from Asian Allied countries. The United States passed the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 and ended restrictions against Filipinos and Asian Indians in 1946, granting all three groups the right to become naturalized citizens while offering symbolic immigration quotas (about 100 for each group). Canada ended its Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947, although only allowing wives and children to join their husbands and fathers in Canada. The Australian government extended temporary residency for Chinese war refugees and seamen. New Zealand introduced the Finance Act of 1944, which finally abolished both poll tax and tonnage restrictions on Chinese. The "White New Zealand Policy," however, was still in effect until the 1980s. A 1953 external affairs memorandum, for instance, stated, "Our immigration is based firmly on the principle that we are and intended to remain a country of European development. It is in-

Table 1-1 Policies toward Asian Immigration in Four Pacific Rim Countries

United States	Canada	Australia	New Zealand
Exclusion (1882–1943) 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement 1917 "Asiatic Bar Zone" 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act	**(1910–1947)** 1910 $200 in cash for "Asiatic" immigration 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act	**Restriction (1901–1955)** 1901 Immigration Restriction Act (dictation test; Foundation for White Australia policy)	**(1881–1944)** 1881 Chinese Immigration Restriction Act (£10 poll tax; tonnage restriction)
Transition (1943–1965) 1943 Repeal of 1882 CEA 1946 Naturalization rights for Filipino and Indian immigrants 1952 "Asia-Pacific triangle" (~100/country → 2,000 total)	**(1947–1967)** 1947 repeal of 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act (only allows entry of wives and children)	**(1955–1972)** 1955/1958: Migration Act (abolishes dictation test; citizenship after fifteen years of residency)	**(1944–1980s)** 1944 Finance Act (abolishes poll tax and tonnage restriction against the Chinese)
Nondiscriminative (1965–) 1965 Immigration & Nationality Act (family reunion, 80 percent; professional, 20 percent; citizenship after five years)	**(1967–)** 1967 establish "points system"; allows Asian immigrants to bring families for the first time in history	**(1972–)** 1972 "Multiculturalism" policy (abolishes "White Australia" policy; nondiscriminatory points policy; citizenship after three-year residency)	**(1980s–)** "Multiculturalism" policy
Selective (1990–) 1990 Immigration Act (140,000 employment-based, 10,000 employment creation: invest $1 million; diversity) 1998 ACWIA: H-1B visa 65,000 → 190,000 (2000–2003)	**(1978/1986–)** 1978 Entrepreneurs stream 1986 Investor stream (C$400,000)	**(1981–)** 1981 Business migration program (BMP) launched 1990s Emphasis on skilled migration, in favor of those with English skills and not settling in Sydney/Melbourne	**(1970s/1986–)** 1970s Entrepreneurs Immigration policy 1986 Business Immigration policy

evitably discriminatory against Asians. . . . we do everything to discourage [immigration] from Asia" (cited in Murphy 2001, 88).

The negative impacts of such exclusionary or restrictive policies on Asian immigrant communities cannot be overlooked. Asians were not allowed to immigrate to these countries legally in large numbers, and their families could not join them. This caused severe gender imbalance, therefore it was almost impossible to form self-perpetuating communities. Discrimination and violence from mainstream society often forced Asian immigrants to retreat to their own social world in limited geographic areas, which started the inner-city Chinatowns or Japantowns in run-down sections.

It was not until the changing international and domestic contexts (since the 1960s) that such restrictive immigration policies eventually were fully dismantled. Globally, the decolonization and independence of third-world countries became a worldwide movement in the 1960s, making the voices of such countries heard in the international arena. Moreover, the moral victory of World War II and the economic prosperity enjoyed by the United States made it the leader of the free world, while the rise of Eastern Bloc socialist countries changed the geopolitical map, giving rise to the cold war. In order for the United States to win the cold war and improve its image as a democratic country and a world leader that did not discriminate against nonwhite groups in its own country and in the international community, it was necessary to revise its traditional, discriminatory immigration legislation. Within the United States, the 1960s was the decade of the civil rights movement, which resulted in passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Minority groups, led by African Americans and Chicanos, fought for political rights and economic power.

In the wake of nationalist movements overseas and the civil rights movements at home, Congress passed the historic Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Espiritu 1992; Hing 1993). This act has been seen as a landmark change in U.S. immigration policy. For the first time in U.S. history, every national group in the Eastern Hemisphere (Asian nations included) was granted an equal annual maximum immigration quota of 20,000 people, which did not include those immediate family members of U.S. citizens, who are admitted on a nonquota basis. The 1965 legislation divided all potential immigrants into two major types: family-reunification-based and profession-based, with a total of six different preference categories. A similar law was passed in Canada in 1967 to establish a nondiscriminative points system, while allowing Asian immigrants to bring their families for the first time in history. In Australia, the Immigration Restriction Act was slowly

dismantled between 1956 and 1972 in regard to non-European immigrants. A policy of "multiculturalism," adopted by the Australian government in 1972, was entrenched in the late 1980s. Similarly, the New Zealand government adopted a "multiculturalism" policy in the 1980s. These immigration legislations have resulted in large immigration waves from Asia to these destination countries, and chain migration has kept immigration momentum going over the years.

Global Economy and New Selective Immigration Policies

Economic restructuring has changed the global economic map and relations in recent decades. In the contemporary world, a nation's economy has to be more competitive in order to keep, or increase, its global market share. Intense competition has been the norm between the United States, Japan, Germany, and other countries since World War II. At the same time, the economy of many industrial countries has been marked by declining manufacturing sectors and increasing new high-technology and service sectors. This leads to polarized reindustrialization of both high-tech, high-wage sectors and low-tech, low-wage sectors. On one hand, the high-tech industries of computers and advanced communication equipment firms have gained greater importance in the overall economy and have become increasingly dependent on highly skilled immigrant professionals. On the other hand, increasing numbers of technologically unsophisticated industries have emerged or are flourishing, such as the highly agglomerated, vertically disintegrated garment industry. These low-wage industries are especially prevalent in large metropolitan areas with high proportions of immigrants (Scott 1988; Storper and Walker 1989). The trend toward polarized reindustrialization not only offers jobs for highly skilled professionals (both domestic and immigrants) but also provides opportunities for ethnic entrepreneurs/subcontractors and semiskilled and low-skilled job seekers.

Changing trade policies worldwide, such as the establishment and growth of the World Trade Organization (WTO), have contributed to the globalization of the economy as well. The passage of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which created a free-trade area embracing over 360 million people and more than $6.5 trillion in annual economic activity, offers tremendous opportunities for foreign multinational corporations to take advantage of free trade among the three countries by establishing branch firms in low-wage Mexico and then exporting the finished goods to the United States and Canada. The Pacific Rim has emerged as a new economic power—for example, U.S. trade with the Asian Pacific Eco-

nomic Cooperation Forum (APEC), which includes all three North American countries, Australia, New Zealand, and thirteen Asian Pacific and Latin American nations, has been thriving. U.S. exports to APEC member countries amounts to $128 billion annually, accounting for 5.3 million American jobs; in comparison, U.S. sales to Europe total $102 billion annually, accounting for 4.2 million jobs (Grayson 1995). These international trade agreements at regional and world levels not only lower trade barriers between countries but also inevitably promote globalization of capital, information, high technology, managerial personnel, and labor. In so doing, they accelerate global economic restructuring.

Moreover, although globalization processes have undermined the sovereignty of nation-states, the importance of nation-states has not diminished as predicted by the "end of geography" argument in financial globalization debates, nor the "ungrounded empire" theme in cultural anthropology, which suggested that nation-states no longer matter much in a globalization era (Carnoy and Castells 2001; Ong and Nonini 1997). Just as national immigration policies traditionally and continuously serve as legal barriers to screen out certain types of immigrants by race/ethnicity, nationality, and class, contemporary immigration policies in many Western countries seek to recruit both capitalists and highly educated, highly skilled "mental laborers" to strengthen their respective positions in the global economy. In 1980, the British government revised its policy to issue work permits primarily to professional, managerial, and technical staffs and to investors who would invest at least £150,000 and create full-time jobs for the British. This provision discouraged immigration of petit bourgeois who intended to establish small businesses. The Canadian government implemented similar immigration policies to lure business immigrants by establishing an immigrant category in the "entrepreneur stream" in 1978 and introducing the "investor stream" in 1986. While an entrepreneur immigrant had to establish or buy a business and create at least one job outside his or her family in Canada, an investor immigrant had to invest at least C$400,000 and have a minimum net worth of C$800,000. The U.S. Immigrant Act of 1990, an effort to catch up with other Western nations, allocated 140,000 immigrant visas to "employment-based" categories, including 10,000 for "employment creation," which requires, with certain exceptions, at least a $1 million investment and the creation of ten new jobs. In addition, in nonimmigrant categories, both L-1 and H-1B visas also intend to promote managerial personnel migration and resolve the shortage of high-tech professionals. The L-1 visa (offered to "intra-company transferees") also encouraged multinational corporations to invest and set up branches and to

bring transnational managerial personnel to the United States as potential immigrants. These L-1 visa holders are eligible to apply for permanent residency after successfully operating their businesses in the United States for a whole year. In recent times, Congress—under pressure from American high-tech companies to recruit highly educated and skilled foreign professionals—had repeatedly and significantly increased the limit of H-1B visas. The bill passed on October 3, 2000, raised the number of H-1B visas from 115,000 to 195,000 in each of the next three years until October 2003. During the six-year term of their valid status, H-1B visa holders are also eligible to apply for permanent residency.

While family reunion was favored in Australia between the late 1970s and into the 1980s, it was in the 1990s that the business and skilled category regained priority. The current government favors caps or limits on the number of visas granted for family reunion subcategories (such as parental or aged family reunion). Meanwhile, the Coalition (Liberal Country parties) has promoted certain job qualifications and the choice of initial residence, notably not Sydney or Melbourne, as priority approvals for admission. Similarly, an "Entrepreneur Immigration Policy" introduced in New Zealand in the late 1970s was in turn transformed to a "Business Immigration Policy" in 1986 to encourage business immigrants and their investments. This policy is seeking business immigrants who are "expected to succeed because they were suitably qualified or of proven ability in business, or industry, or managerial or technical fields" (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2000; Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2001b; Ley 2000; W. Li 1997; Lowell 2000; Macdonald 1987).

It is obvious that in addition to stressing family reunion, recent policies in all four countries promote employment-based immigration and capital investment to accommodate the increasingly globalized process of economic restructuring. These new immigration regulations have greatly altered the socioeconomic characteristics of immigrant populations, especially those flows from rapidly growing third-world countries and areas such as the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs, or the four Asian "Little Dragons/Tigers": Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and mainland China. They offered new opportunities for well-educated professional people and skilled managerial personnel. Unlike traditional immigrants, these new immigrants normally are not only well educated and professionally trained but are also often wealthy, with portable assets. Because of industrialization and phenomenal economic growth, many people in these countries accumulated wealth and were ready to move out of their countries of origin

due to various geopolitical and economic reasons, forming large pools of potential emigrants from Asia.

On the other hand, some of these new immigrants may not necessarily have high-level English proficiency or be willing to assimilate completely into the white mainstream. While some English proficiency is sufficient to handle their businesses, English skills are not prerequisites for business success. The new immigrants often choose big cities with large populations of their coethnics in order to maintain and develop their transnational businesses and personal networks. Since many of these immigrants deal with international trade or finance involving their home countries, host countries, and beyond, blending into host societies does not have to be their first priority. Instead, developing transnational or global ties are the key. The latest immigration policies breed sojourners who are as comfortable crossing oceans and countries as they are crossing main streets of host countries (Kotkin 1991).

Geopolitics and Immigration/Refugee Policy

U.S. military involvement in foreign countries also had important consequences in changing specific immigration policies and situations (such as the Korean War, which resulted in immigration from Korea). More than a decade of U.S. military involvement in Indochina[1] not only caused casualties for both the United States and the Indochinese countries but also created huge refugee waves, especially after the fall of Saigon in 1975. In order to accommodate this refugee population—the largest in U.S. history—Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980, which removed refugees from the regular quota system. Under this act, the president, in consultation with Congress, decided how many refugees were to be admitted annually. The three other countries have similar refugee policies to address the sudden surge of Indochinese refugee waves since the late 1970s.

Unlike typical immigrants, refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia had not planned to move to other countries before the war and were not ready to "assimilate" into hosting societies. Their arrival was the direct result of U.S. military activities in their home countries; therefore, their resettlement largely involved forced evacuation. These Southeast Asian refugees lost everything during the war and their long journey to the receiving countries—their families, friends, properties, and belongings. They had to settle and reestablish themselves in a country completely different from their own. Although many acknowledged the opportunities offered by the United States and other recipient countries, adjustment was often more

difficult for them than for "ordinary" immigrants (Hein 1991; Ong and Liu 1994). Moreover, that there were no preexisting communities to aid their transitions—as most other Asian immigrant groups have, notably the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indians—constituted an added burden on these refugees and their families; the transitions were so difficult that sometimes even the immigrants' offspring were affected.

The Hong Kong situation is another good example of the impacts of international geopolitics on immigration. The governments of the People's Republic of China and the United Kingdom started negotiating the future of Hong Kong in the late 1970s. The joint declaration signed in 1984 concerning the return of Hong Kong to China's rule in 1997 triggered large emigration waves from Hong Kong in the late 1980s and 1990s.[2] These emigrants, after years of largely stable economy and politics (with the exception of the turbulence in 1967, see Lo this volume), were generally well off and considered "reluctant exiles," and they favored the Commonwealth countries due to colonial ties and economic connections. It may not simply be a coincidence that both Canada and New Zealand significantly strengthened their business immigrant programs respectively to accommodate, if not lure, these Hong Kong emigrants, who were the people sought most eagerly for admission into these four countries. The U.S. Immigration Act of 1990, for instance, treated Hong Kong as "a separate foreign state, and not as a colony or other component or dependent area of another foreign state" (U.S. Congress 1991, 4985) and provided an annual immigrant quota of 10,000 to Hong Kong for fiscal years 1991, 1992, and 1993.

The impacts of these contemporary immigration and refugee legislations on various localities, however, have been uneven. As in the past, Asian immigrants continue to concentrate in large metropolitan areas rather than rural areas. The large cities with traditional immigrant concentrations (e.g., Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, Vancouver, and Sydney), therefore, have experienced disproportionably higher concentrations of the new and more diversified immigration according to census data. Additionally, these metropolitan areas are more likely to be at the center of globalized capital, commodity, information, and personnel flows. In these favored global cities, changing structural conditions at the international scale offers economic opportunities, especially for new entrepreneurs (such as subcontractors and entrepreneurs specializing in international trade, finance, and manufacturing, including high-tech products) and specific segments of the labor force (including both the high-wage, high-skilled workforce and low-wage, low-skilled laborers).

Such metropolitan areas provide ideal geographic locations and stages for