

**ASIA COMES TO MAIN STREET AND MAY LEARN TO SPEAK SPANISH:
GLOBALIZATION IN A POOR NEIGHBORHOOD IN WORCESTER**

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers how and why an Asian enclave of small businesses has appeared in a poor neighborhood characterized by Puerto Rican and other Latino immigration in the post-industrial city of Worcester, Massachusetts. We begin by examining the role of the US in the world system, and argue that the US hegemonic role and specific political economic aspects of global capitalism (ie. deindustrialization) account for some of the migration stream. Next, using socio-economic and historical data, interviews, and observations, we outline the history of Worcester's economy and immigration patterns. We demonstrate that the increasing economic inequality leaves few promising employment options for newcomers to Worcester. Drawing on existing literature on immigrant entrepreneurs and ethnic enclaves, we argue that some aspects of the literature appear to shed light on the Vietnamese enterprises which have so visibly appeared (e.g., ethnic niches), while others, (e.g., middle-man minority theory) are not now reflected in local conflict. We conclude by considering the prospects for immigrants to this neighborhood in light of its political economic context.

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