The Integration of Immigrants into American Society

Committee on Population
Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

Audrey Singer
The Urban Institute
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Panel Members

MARY WATERS (Chair), Department of Sociology, Harvard University

RICHARD ALBA, Department of Sociology, Graduate Center of the City University of New York

FRANK D. BEAN, Center for Research on Immigration, Population and Public Policy, University of California, Irvine

IRENE BLOEMRAAD, Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley

MICHAEL FIX, Migration Policy Institute

NANCY FONER, Department of Sociology, Hunter College, and Graduate Center of the City University of New York

CHARLES HIRSCHMAN, Department of Sociology, University of Washington

DANIEL T. LICHTER, Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University

DOUGLAS S. MASSEY, Department of Sociology, Princeton University

CECILIA MENJIVAR, Department of Sociology, University of Kansas

S. KARTHICK RAMAKRISHNAN, Department of Political Science, University of California, Riverside

AUDREY SINGER, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institution

DAVID T. TAKEUCHI, Boston College School of Social Work

KEVIN J.A. THOMAS, Department of Sociology, Pennsylvania State University

STEPHEN TREJO, Department of Economics, University of Texas, Austin

RICHARD WRIGHT, Department of Geography, Dartmouth College

HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA, Department of Applied Psychology, New York University
Panel Charge

1. Summarizing what is known about how immigrants and their descendants are integrating into American society;

2. Discussing the implications of this knowledge for informing various policy options;

3. Identifying any important gaps in existing knowledge and data availability.
Integration

• Immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble each other.
  • Two-way exchange
  • Measured across time and intergenerationally
• Across various dimensions:
  • Socioeconomic outcomes & participation in social institutions
  • Social acceptance
  • Effects on well-being
Integration across Dimensions

- Socioeconomic—education, occupation, income, poverty
- Spatial—how does state, metro, city, suburb, rural matter?
- Sociocultural-language, crime, religion, attitudes, intermarriage
- Health outcomes
- Political-naturalization, civic participation
- Familial
Quick Summary

• Immigrants and their children (the second generation) represent one of every four U.S. residents.

• Immigrants and their descendants are integrating into American society across all dimensions; the pace and outcomes depend on very different starting points.

• On the whole, integration increases the well-being of immigrants and their descendants, e.g., in schooling, labor-market position, and residential situation. However, this is not true in every domain. Exceptions include health, crime and family form.
Areas of Concern

- Legal Status
- Racial and ethnic disparities
- Naturalization Rates
Legal Status

- Permanent Immigrants: 69.2%
- Naturalized Citizens: 41.8%
- Legal Permanent Residents: 27.4%
- Undocumented immigrants: 26.3%
- Temporary and discretionary legal residents: 4.5%
Racial & Ethnic Disparities

- Immigrant integration shaped by race & ethnicity
- Black immigrants & their children integrating more slowly with non-Hispanic whites despite higher human capital
- Some evidence of discrimination impeding Latino integration
- Racial discrimination or Undocumented status?
Demographic Change in Context

![Graph showing the number of immigrants and immigrants as a percentage of the U.S. population from 1850 to 2012.](image)

- **Number of immigrants**
- **Immigrants as a percentage of the U.S. population**

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Recent Shift in Immigrant Flows

**Latino Arrivals**

- 2000: 59%
- 2001: 51%
- 2002: 55%
- 2003: 51%
- 2004: 53%
- 2005: 53%
- 2006: 46%
- 2007: 44%
- 2008: 42%
- 2009: 37%
- 2010: 36%

**Asian Arrivals**

- 2000: 19%
- 2001: 23%
- 2002: 23%
- 2003: 24%
- 2004: 23%
- 2005: 23%
- 2006: 29%
- 2007: 32%
- 2008: 33%
- 2009: 32%
- 2010: 31%
Effects of Immigration on Society: Demographic Change

1970
- Non-Hispanic White: 83%
- Latino/Hispanic: 4.6%
- Black: 11%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 1%
- American Indian/Native Alaskan: 0.4%

2013
- Non-Hispanic White: 62.4%
- Latino/Hispanic: 17.1%
- Black: 12.3%
- Asian: 6%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.2%
- American Indian/Native Alaskan: 1.7%
English Speaking Ability of the Foreign-born Who Speak Language Other Than English at Home, 2012

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Interracial marriage

- Native-born and immigrant marriages increasing
- 1 in 7 marriages today interracial/interethnic
- More mixed race children
- Changing racial & social boundaries
Educational Attainment (age 25+), 2013

- Less than High School: 30.3% US Born, 10.0% Foreign Born
- High School Graduate: 28.9% US Born, 22.4% Foreign Born
- Some College or Associate’s Degree: 31.2% US Born, 19.0% Foreign Born
- Bachelor’s Degree: 16.4% US Born, 11.1% Foreign Born
- Graduate or Professional Degree: 11.8% US Born, 11.1% Foreign Born

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First- to second-generation educational shift (men)
Employment

- Immigrant men have higher employment rates than native born; immigrant women lower.
- Least educated immigrants much more likely to be employed than comparable native born men.
- Second + generation employment rates vary by race/ethnicity and gender.
Earnings by Nativity and Gender, 2013

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Poverty

- Poverty rates higher for foreign-born
- Poverty generally declines over generations, 18% → 13.6 → 11.5
- Racial & ethnic disparities:
  - First-gen Hispanics highest rates but progress between first & second-gens
  - Rise in black second-gen
  - Asian stalling between second and third-gens
Growth in the foreign-born population, 1990-2011
With the exception of San Francisco, the 20 largest immigrant destinations in 1900 were in the Midwest or Northeast.
By 2010, the immigration map has been redrawn with metros in the South and West rising as major destinations.
U.S. urban destinations of immigrants have shifted in the past century

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Audrey Singer (2013), “Contemporary Immigrant Gateways in Historical Perspective”
The geography of U.S. immigrant settlement is decidedly suburban
Declines in Well-Being

- **Health, Crime, and Children in Two-Parent Households**
  - Immigrants have better health outcomes, but less access to health care & insurance
  - LESS likely to commit crime, incarcerated at $\frac{1}{4}$ rate of native-born
  - Immigrants less likely to divorce, immigrant children more likely to live with both parents
  - Over time & generations these advantages decline as second and third+ gens converge with native-born
Data Recommendations

• Add birthplace of parents question to American Community Survey

• Test & add question about legal status on Current Population Survey

• Immigration legislation include longitudinal survey provision

• Administrative data at USCIS be linked to other gov’t data
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