The Great Immigration Turnaround

New Facts and Old Rhetoric

Dowell Myers

USC Sol Price School of Public Policy
Overview

Where is immigration growing fastest?

Divided opinion and fears about immigration

The turnaround between Old and New outlooks on immigration

Examining the Four Myths

Rediscovering intergenerational connection
Divided Opinion
Old and New Stories
About Immigration
Are Immigrants a Burden or a Benefit?
Percent of Calif. White Voters Who Believe Immigrants are a Burden

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Source: Immigrants and Boomers, Chapter 7 & Table B.3; PPIC Statewide Survey

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Four Myths About Immigration — Recognizing the New Trends

1. The number of immigrants is accelerating out of control

2. Immigrants are all newcomers

3. Immigrants are like Peter Pan, never changing over time no matter how long in America

4. Immigrants are an unwanted burden, especially given our fiscal crisis

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1. Is immigration accelerating out of control?
Record High Immigration — but slowing drastically

Total foreign-born = 39.9 million

1990s  57.4% growth (11.3 million)
2000s  28.8% growth ( 8.8 million)

NOT evenly spread across the nation

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Share of National Arrivals
During Last 5 Years, 2010

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Growth of Immigrants in Old Gateways
Percentage Increase in Annual Arrivals Since 1980

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Growth of Immigrants—New Destinations

Percentage Increase in Annual Arrivals Since 1980

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2. Are all immigrants newcomers?
Foreign Born % of State Population in 2010
By Decade of Arrival

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Foreign Born Population by Duration Since Entry to U.S
1970-2010, and Projected to 2040

Pitkin-Myers 2011 Generational Projections
Helping Hands
Ratio of Long-Settled to New

California

Mexico

Korea

Vietnam

China

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Retaining Homegrown State Residents
The 10 Most Attractive States

1. Texas 75.1
2. North Carolina 70.7
3. Georgia 69.0
4. Wisconsin 67.2
5. California 66.9
6. Tennessee 66.0
7. Michigan 65.8
8. Minnesota 65.4
9. Utah 64.9
10. South Carolina 64.6

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3. Are immigrants like Peter Pan?
Rising Immigrant Status with Longer Residence
Attainment for 1985-1989 Immigrant Arrival Cohort

Myers & Pitkin,

Dowell Myers, USC Price
English Proficiency
By Age at Arrival in the 1985-89 Immigrant Wave

Soaring Immigrant Homeownership
For Each Immigrant Wave Arriving Before 1970, 80, 90, 2000

Data Source: Dowell Myers & Cathy Liu, Urban Policy and Research, September 2005
Change in Homeownership
For Successive Waves of Immigrants Arriving Before 1970, 80, 90, or 2000

Data Source: Dowell Myers & Cathy Liu, Urban Policy and Research, September 2005

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Percent Newcomers of Latino Immigrants

Percent of Mexican Immigrant Residents Who Arrived 2000-2008

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Home Ownership Rate of Latino Immigrants is Higher in States with Higher Shares of Settled Immigrants

r = 0.45
Samuel Huntington’s
Great Peter Pan Error
Huntington’s Thesis

From Who Are We: The Challenges to America’s National Identity

Fear of cultural bifurcation

Due to growing use of Spanish

California is epicenter

New immigrants arriving faster than assimilation

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Huntington’s Thesis
From Who Are We: The Challenges to America’s National Identity

• For assimilation, Huntington prefers use of English instead of Spanish

• He views rising Spanish use as anti-assimilation and a cultural threat to America
Percent of California Population that is Latino

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<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>1.44</td>
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<td>25-34</td>
<td>39.3</td>
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Rising Latino Share Equals Rising Spanish Dominance???
We can improve on the naïve expectation if we have two pieces of information:

1. A profile of language preference by length of US residence, *not just Latino ethnic membership*

2. A projection of population by length of residence, *not just Latino ethnic membership*
Percent Spanish Users by Immigrant Generation
For Latinos in the U.S., 2002

Source: Pew Hispanic Center

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Population Composition by Years in U.S. & Generation
For Latinos Age 25-34 in California

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>0-9 Yrs</th>
<th>10-19 Yrs</th>
<th>20+ Yrs</th>
<th>2nd Gen</th>
<th>3rd Gen</th>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
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Pitkin & Myers '10
CDF 9-7

Dowell Myers, USC Price
Percent Spanish Users Among Total Age 25-34

Rhetoric
Huntington
Reasoning?
Myers

2000
2030

Pitkin & Myers '10
CDF 9-7

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How Likely is Samuel Huntington’s Vision of the Future America Divided along Language Lines?

not
4. Are immigrants needed?
Opposing Forces on Immigration

Strict enforcement  ↔  Immigrant rights

Are immigrants wanted & needed?

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## Are Immigrants a Burden or a Benefit?

Percent of Calif. White Voters Who Believe Immigrants are a Burden

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Baby Boomer Tsunami
The Soaring Ratio of Seniors to Working Age
65+ per 100 ages 25 to 64

Source: Calif. Department of Finance, Census Bureau, and Authors’ calculations, 2010.

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The Trigger of Many Crises

- Social Security Crisis
- Medicare/Health Insurance Crisis
- Workforce Replacement Crisis
- Taxpayer Replacement Crisis
- The Home Seller Crisis
Likely Responses…

- Reduced growth in GDP
- Delayed retirement by seniors
- Reduced or delayed senior benefits
- Higher taxes
- Greater reliance on immigrant workers
- **Rediscovery of neglected minority youth**
Can Immigration Help?
The “Strict Enforcement” Narrative: Not at all
- Cannot reverse aging
- Immigrants get older too

The “Rights” Narrative: It shouldn’t matter

The “Our Needs” Narrative: Yes, one-quarter to half
- Next 20 years are the most crucial
- Compared to 0 immigration, the current volume reduces the rise in the senior ratio by 29% in 20 years and 47% in 40 years

Passel and Cohn (2008: Table 3a, Figure 26), Pew Research Center
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Conclusions
Conclusions about the Myths:
Are Immigrants…

1. Accelerating out of control?
2. Just all newcomers?
3. Frozen like Peter Pan?
4. Not needed?

1. Level, steady state or even declining
2. More long-settled
3. Rising achievements and assimilating
4. Future workers & taxpayers Essential to balance the rising senior ratio

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Rediscovering The Generational Partnership

Children $$
educational investments

Adults $$
new workers
new homebuyers
new taxpayers

Seniors $$
health care
home sales
pensions

Mature Adults $$
Prime working age
Strong support for children & seniors

the cycle of roles

Dowell Myers, USC Price
Thank You

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<dowell@usc.edu>

For more information
search for “popdynamics”
Publications Referenced in this Presentation


Myers, Dowell and John Pitkin, “Assimilation Today: New Evidence Shows the Latest Immigrants to America are Following in Our History’s Footsteps,” Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C., September 2010.


NOTE: most publications are available at http://www.usc.edu/schools/sppd/research/popdynamics/