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Post 1965 Immigration to the United States

Xóchitl Bada

Latin American and Latino Studies Program, University of Illinois at Chicago

Introduction

The United States has seen two massive waves of immigration since the late nineteenth century: 27.6 million immigrants arrived between 1881 and 1930, and then, after a slow down of immigrant flows of more than three decades due to restrictive immigration policies of the 1920s, the Depression era, and the II World War, a modern immigration wave doubled the immigrant population compared to that of the early twentieth century. By 2015, fifty years after the passage of the immigration law that reconfigured U.S. immigration policy, nearly 59 million immigrants have arrived, reconfiguring the social and economic landscape of urban and rural places across the United States.

In 1960, the foreign born population represented about 1 in 20 residents, mostly from countries in Europe who had settled in the Northeast and Midwest. By 2015, the foreign born population reached 14 percent of the total population with 45 million, the vast majority (53%)

coming from Latin America, mostly from Mexico, El Salvador, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Guatemala.[1] Among post 1965 immigrants, one quarter came from Asia. As a consequence of new foreign-born arrivals and their U.S. born children, the Latino share of the U.S. population rose from 4 percent in 1965 to 18 percent in 2015. Asians also saw their share rise, from less than 1 percent in 1965 to 6 percent in 2015.

The nation´s Latino population, which was 35.5 million in 2000, grew 43 percent over the past decade. The Latino population accounted for most of the nation´s growth -56%- from 2000 to 2010.[2] This population is still heavily concentrated and 76 percent live in nine states with long-standing historical communities (Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York and Texas) although the share living in other states is growing.[3] While for some observers, population concentration may seem to facilitate the integration of Latino immigrant communities, the dramatic demographic shifts in many of these states have led to the racialization, anti-immigrant narrative, and "raid mentality"[4] that now permeates national political conversations in the race to win the next presidential election.

While the United States is facing these difficult but important conversations about immigration management and governance, it is important to remember that by 1980, eighteen of the twenty-five most populous cities in 1950 had lost residents. Of the twenty-five biggest cities in 1980s, seventeen gained residents over the subsequent thirty years. Undoubtedly, the single largest factor in this population trend reversal has been a rapid increase in the population of Latinos, who often times remained tied to central cities. Of the twenty-five biggest U.S. cities, twelve have populations that are more than one-quarter Hispanic, including eight over one-third and two that are majority Latino.[5]

Among conservative politicians and their audience, one of the major hurdles to achieve comprehensive immigration reform is the resistance to offer a path to legalization to those who entered the United States without authorization. For conservatives, allowing the undocumented to pay a fine and be offered an opportunity to regularize their status if they have not violated any other laws is completely unacceptable while liberal politicians are more likely to agree that a path to legalization is a fair solution to bring millions of undocumented out of the shadows. By and large, the successful incorporation of different racial and ethnic minorities is one the biggest challenges that the United States has faced in the last century.

The Second Great Migration

In his book *Dream Chasers*, John Tirman compares African American internal migration with Latin American migration. In fact, post-1965 immigration from Latin America bears important similarities with the Great Migration and Tirman suggests to consider it as "the Second Great Migration." Between 1915 and 1970s, a massive similar but internal labor migration happened from the old Confederacy to the North and the West mainly during six decades of the 20th Century. As Isabel Wilkerson vividly reminds us, over these six decades, approximately six million African American southerners left their birthplaces and spread across the country for an uncertain journey. They moved to New York, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and smaller, equally "foreign" cities for them such as Syracuse, Oakland, Milwaukee, Newark, and Gary.[6]

Each of those places turned into a land of new opportunities and African Americans took lots of risks as Jim Crow laws persisted well into the 1960s and they had to face perils that many blacks found intimidating, including detention and other harassments. The African American

were accepted, at least conditionally, as inexpensive labor in the Northern Industrial Cities. During that period in the Midwest, employers brought African Americans and Mexican immigrants as strike breakers to undermine the organizing efforts of previous waves of European immigrant workers in meatpacking, steel manufacturing, and railroad construction. Yet, the new found job opportunities and social conditions of African Americans were better than in the South and within time, the power of social networks would make sure that African Americans dispersed across the United States.

The Great Migration, which was encouraged by the continued mistreatment of former black slaves and their children in the South, changed the racial compositions and the social and cultural dynamics of Chicago, Detroit, New York, and other Northern cities. In Chicago alone, the black population increased from around 44,000 at the start of this migration to more than one million at the end of it. [7] In comparison, the Latino migration, mainly from Mexico but also from Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republican, has been equal or larger in scale and as significant in reshaping parts of the country demographically, as well as US politics and American culture. Comparing the two sheds light on the cultural resistance to Latino immigration. After half a century of official desegregation policies and civil rights laws to bring equal opportunity to all regardless of skin color, African Americans are still marginalized and discriminated, with similar poverty and educational attainment rates as many recently arrived immigrants from Latin America. Yet, statistics show that in the last 75 years the incomes of blacks have increased substantially relative to those of whites, and that a black middle class has taken root. Compared to Jim Crow South, the progress is slow but undeniable.

While African Americans were fleeing sharecropping traps, grinding agricultural labor, debt peonage, scarce educational opportunities, and absence of government services and formal segregation, many Latin American immigrants were also fleeing deteriorating economic conditions, agricultural disinvestment, dictatorships, civil wars, and natural disasters; following the lure of readily available jobs in the United States. For those immigrants, the promise of a better future has also been largely fulfilled despite persistent lags. The second generation of Latino immigrants already advances beyond its parents but it lags behind the native-born majority of the same age and occupation. This socioeconomic disadvantage creates challenges for the social mobility of entire minority immigrant groups. For example, the poverty rate for Latino children, at 35 percent, is almost as high as it is for black children.[8] There´s no question that some sectors of the second generation are experiencing social mobility and integrating in the mainstream but much remains to be done to improve the social mobility of immigrants and their children and avoid pushing them to a permanent underclass.[9]

In this work, we present a brief overview of the post-1965 immigration to the United States, including the challenges and potential opportunities that immigrants offer to the revitalization of metropolitan regions in need of advancing their positions in diverse labor markets. The aging of the baby boom population and the need to increase productivity while keeping labor costs under control will eventually lead to the reform of current federal immigration policies, which no longer reflect the economic needs of economic sectors such as agriculture, that are still facing shortages of low cost, non-skilled jobs.

The nation´s immigrant population increased sharply from 1970 to 2000, though the rate of growth has slowed since then. Still, the U.S. has the world´s largest immigrant

population, with one-in-five of the world´s immigrants. Between 1965 and 2015, new immigrants, their children and their grandchildren accounted for 55 percent of U.S. population growth. They added 72 million people to the nation´s population as it grew from 193 million in 1965 to 324 million in 2015.[10]

It is important to stress that the recent profile of the immigrant population 25 years and older reveal new trends suggesting a higher intensity in the growth of the population of skilled immigrants. For example, between 2006 and 2012, the immigrant population 25 years and older without a university degree increased 15 percent while the immigrant population with a university degree of the same age group -the so called qualified or skilled immigrants- increased 22.4 percent in the same period.[11] New immigration trends also suggest a feminization of the qualified migrant group as the female percentage of qualified migrants increased 27 percent. The profile of the Mexican immigration to the United States is also changing. For example, a select group of wealthy Mexicans seeking to escape the violence at home have attained EB-5 visas to gain entry into the United States.[12] The number of Mexicans participating in the EB-5 program, albeit still small, has increased significantly over the last several years, with Mexico ranked seventh worldwide in EB-5 visas in 2010.[13]

South-North Migration and Its Causes

In the last thirty years, most of the anti-immigrant narratives and legal regulations have focused on policies aimed at deporting those already here and controlling future immigration flows while less attention is paid to the incorporation of immigrants and their children and addressing the root causes that lead to economic migrations. The current climate of anti-immigrant sentiment among certain sectors of the U.S. population may be explained by the

substantial differences in the past immigration waves with the post-1965 one mostly because both of the U.S. immigration waves in the mid-19th century and early 20th century consisted almost entirely of European immigrants.

Thanks to the vibrant associational culture and the assimilationist ideology of various immigrant settlement houses across the U.S., successive waves of late 19th/early 20th century European immigrants had different opportunities for incorporation. Interestingly, the role of local governments in the immigrant integration process has been a historically important variable. For example, during the Great Depression years, the city of Chicago did not experience a coercive repatriation program because Cook County officials denied the INS access to the relief lists. In that period, an estimated 20 percent of relief recipients were foreign-born in Cook County, and Mayor Antonín Josef Čermák, the foreign-born Bohemian American mayor, refused to cooperate with the INS to facilitate the repatriation of low-wage Chicago immigrants.[14]

While it is true that southern Europeans were not as easily incorporated as western and northern Europeans, the majority of European immigrants and their U.S. born children eventually achieved successful incorporation. In the case of Italians, a survey of 3,000 families in Chicago in 1920 by the Illinois Health Insurance Commission found that 58 percent of Italian American families sampled had some form of life insurance, and at least half of these policies were held in Italian mutual aid societies.[15] Competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation— the four necessary steps that sociologist Robert Park devised to understand immigrant adaptation to the new society— were eventually accomplished by European immigrants. In fact, the classical assimilation process in the United States was mostly described

using examples from European migrant communities that transformed into hyphenated ethnic Americans when their emigration flows to the United States considerably decreased.

In contrast, post-1965 immigrants have had limited opportunities to pursue social incorporation due to the limited availability of necessary social services. The growing inequalities and disempowerment that have accompanied the implementation of neoliberal agendas have resulted in the disappearance of public funds to support economic integration for disadvantaged groups living in working class neighborhoods. A severe decline of public responsibilities and the increased privatization of critical social services have slowed down the successful incorporation of post-1965 immigrants compared to previous immigrant waves. With the exception of migrant-led hometown associations[16], very few organizations have been able to fill the void left by Hull House and other immigrant settlement houses after some of these institutions transformed their mission and devoted their energies to addressing the needs of refugees and other economically disadvantaged populations after the decline of Western and Northern European immigration to the United States.

The social distance emerging from racial, ethnic, and class distinctions between past waves of European immigrants and their descendants and the current one bring a mix of prejudices including blaming the victim attitudes, exhortations about white superiority, and the manipulation of the rules of the game for economic advantage. Latino Immigrants are changing the American dream, the culture of the Protestant white Europeans who according to their own narrative, built the country. In this narrative, immigrants from Latin America are fundamentally at odds with supposedly quintessential American traits such as English language ability, hard work ethic, and patriotism.

The United States Immigration Act of 1965 increased the possibilities of emigration from Latin American countries to the United States due to the elimination of the blatantly discriminatory national-origins quota system, which since the 1920s had favored migration from Northern and Western Europe and excluded Asians altogether.[17] However, the 1965 legislation also imposed a one-size fits all regulation where all countries would be limited to no more than 7 per cent of the total each year, thus opening the door to a large exodus of migrant workers from Latin America countries, many of them without authorization.

It is not a coincidence that the largest share of Latin American migrants came mostly from countries that had experienced U.S. military interventions and occupations throughout the 20th century. In fact, the United States was more than these migrants´ destination because it also played a role in creating the conditions that led them to migrate in some of those countries. The exile produced by the Cuban Revolution, the chronic underemployment in Puerto Rico, the 1965 U.S. military intervention in Dominican Republican, the U.S. Congress military support to the Salvadoran Army war against the opposition groups in the 1980s, and the agricultural unemployment created by the North American Free Trade Agreement in the mid 1990s, are considered some of the push factors leading workers and families to migrate to the United States in the last 50 years.[18]

With few exceptions, the multiple waves of post Second World War Latin American migrants came to the United States and settled in the West and the South, finding different contexts of reception when joining previously established immigrant groups. Immigrant incorporation processes of diverse groups have been largely determined by legal status, racial identification, country of origin, and varied local contexts of reception. Many Latin American

immigrants, especially Mexican and Central American, came with comparatively low levels of education and fulfilled the demand of jobs in manufacturing and the service sector economy.

In Latin America, the failure of the import-substitution economic model[19], the debt crisis of the 1980s, and growing income distribution inequality created many workers in search of better economic opportunities.[20] While economic liberalization and free trade agreements were taking shape in Latin America, the United States was experiencing a transformation of the manufacturing sector that had provided the working class with the basic means of survival at the end of the Second World War, thanks to a pact between the state, workers, and unions. This pact had established an increase in productivity in exchange for sharing a small fraction of the profits with workers. However, as competitive capitalism transformed to monopoly capitalism and U.S. corporations lost their competitive advantage to Germany and Japan in the early 1970s, low-skill jobs were increasingly exported to countries with surpluses of low-skill workers in peripheral regions of international capitalism, in the corporations´ search of low wages and higher profits.

In the 1980s, the agricultural peasant economy in Mexico experienced disinvestment, civil wars in Central America intensified, and growing inequality in the Caribbean and the rest of Latin America created a labor export system that functioned as a form of self-financed private insurance against unemployment, poverty, and civil war conflicts. In sum, in the last half century, millions of Latin American workers relocated temporarily or permanently to the U.S., crossing multiple ethnic, class, cultural, colonial, and state borders.[21] These crossings have reconfigured gender and family roles, community politics, civic engagements, ethnic identities, and survival strategies in the multiple locales these immigrants inhabit.

Mexican and Central American Immigration

According to available official data, the Mexico–United States border is the largest migration corridor in the world. In 2014, more than 11.7 million Mexican immigrants resided in the United States, accounting for 28 percent of the 42.4 million foreign-born population—and by far the largest immigrant origin group in the country.[22] Today, there are more than 3 million Central Americans living in the United States, including a quarter of all Salvadorans. The vast majority of Central Americans arrived since the late 1970s, when social unrest and civil wars in their home countries encouraged large-scale migration.[23]

In terms of family remittances, Mexico was among the top-10 receiving countries with the largest volume, obtaining $22.6 US billion per year by 2010. As a percentage of national GDP, Honduras and El Salvador are among the top remittance receiving countries with 19 per cent and 16 per cent of their GDP being generated from family remittances respectively.[24] These monies have supported the social reproduction of millions of low-income households in Latin America. Mexico comes in third place among the top 10 remittance-receiving countries, following India and China.[25]

In an effort to protect the labor rights of its nationals who live in the United States and the vast remittances that they send back to support millions of Mexican households, the Mexican government, taking advantage of its extensive consular network in the United States, has created extensive partnerships with U.S. labor regulatory agencies, labor unions, workers' rights groups, and hometown associations (HTAs) to increase the wellbeing of Mexican workers who live abroad.[26] Faced with the lack of progress to achieve a congressional bipartisan agreement to fix the broken federal immigration system and the June 23 of 2016

announcement of the Supreme Court deadlock in a case challenging President Obama´s immigration plan to regularize the status of millions of undocumented immigrants, the possibilities of social incorporation for many of these workers lies in the scarce services provided to them by their consular networks and civil society organizations advocating on their behalf.

A large number of these immigrants generally come with low levels of formal education according to US norms and often end up in low-wage jobs.[27] A sizable proportion of these immigrants lack legal status, and the children growing up in homes where parents lack legal status have been shown to be disadvantaged even when they themselves have been born in the US and are therefore citizens.[28] It is important to note that the profile of these migrants has changed in recent years. Between 2006 and 2012, Mexico showed the most important growth among Latin American and Caribbean nations in its share of migrants with a university degree living in the United States, going from 440 thousand to 593 thousand qualified Mexican migrants, representing a 35 percent increase in that six-year period. [29]

Undocumented Migration Trends

Despite the persistent weight of Mexican immigrants as a percentage of the total foreign-born, Mexican unauthorized immigration rates are decreasing. As Ana González-Barrera and Jens M. Krogstad from the Pew Research Center explain in their latest calculations, "the number of Mexican immigrants living in the U.S. illegally has declined. In 2014, 5.6 million unauthorized immigrants from Mexico live in the U.S., down by about 1 million since 2007. Despite the drop, Mexicans still make up about half (49% in 2014) of unauthorized immigrants."[30] Due in part to the violence produced by the war against drugs, Mexican

demographers find that Mexican municipalities with the highest levels of insecurity are less likely to migrate both to the U.S. and even internally.[31]

Despite negative portrayals in the media as a burden to local economies, undocumented workers pay state and local taxes including personal income taxes, property taxes, and sales/excise taxes, collectively paying an estimated $11.64 billion a year according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Contributions range from almost $2.2 million in Montana with an estimated undocumented population of 4,000 to more than $3.1 billion in California, home to more than 3 million undocumented immigrants. If granted legal status under comprehensive immigration reform, they would be paying $2.1 billion more in taxes.[32] In a 2010 Briefing before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, held in Washington, D.C., a panel of economists agreed that "illegal immigration to the United States in recent decades has tended to depress both wages and employment rates for low-skilled American citizens," although the panelists couldn't agree on whether the effect was "modest" or "significant."[33]

New survey research on undocumented migration to the United States by sociology and law professor Emily Ryo shows that perceptions of availability of Mexican jobs and the dangers of border crossing are significant determinants of the intentions to migrate without documents while certainty of apprehension and the severity of punishment are not significant determinants of the intent to migrate illegally. These findings suggest the significance of procedural justice and fairness perceptions. Due to the moral ambiguity that frequently characterizes immigration law, social and institutional tensions exists to decide the kind of policy that is appropriate when it comes to unauthorized migration. As Ryo explains, “to many would-be migrants, as well as U.S. citizens, there is a lack of moral credibility to a law perceived

as preventing individuals from working to support their families. For many, there is also no moral credibility to a law that seems to punish individuals for satisfying the demands of U.S. households and corporations for cheap foreign labor."[34]

The decline of Mexican migration to the United States is also correlated to multiple well-identified factors: changes in the demographic profile including lower fertility rates, decreased circularity, higher levels of education, dramatic increases in the costs of crossing, higher unemployment paired with slower demographic growth in the border region, the long Great Recession of 2007, and decreased family remittances to finance new migrations.[35] Besides, tenure insecurity and restrictions on land markets (especially rentals) are still important barriers to migration both internally and internationally, especially in rural areas.[36]

In the last eight years, the administration of president Obama has returned and/or removed a record 2.4 million immigrants using fairly punitive measures. As deportation historian Adam Goodman explains, "removal comes with an automatic five- or 10-year ban on applying to re-enter the country; if apprehended a second time, migrants could face incarceration and a 20-year or lifetime ban from re-entry"[37] The increase in deportations are largely a consequence of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIIRIRA), signed by former president Bill Clinton in 1996. This law expanded the number of deportable offenses, called for the mandatory detention and removal of legal permanent residents convicted of aggravated felonies, limited discretionary relief from deportation, and established bars on returning to the United States after being in the country without authorization. Between 2004 and 2013, more than 2.4 million Mexicans migrants without legal authorization have been deported to Mexico.[38] In an attempt to call the national attention to

the disturbing consequences of family separations due to deportations, several grassroots across the United States have emerged with a single policy objective — legalization for unauthorized immigrants — and a single tactic— halting deportations using tactics of civil disobedience with some modest results.[39]

The deterrence effects of the massive deportations during the administration of president Obama has effectively quadrupled the number of returned migrants to Mexico with significant U.S. labor experience between 2007 and 2012. This number now reaches 1 million. In the last 10 years, the population born in the United States and living in Mexico has duplicated and there are 773, 000 people living in Mexico that were born in the United States. Yet, the decline in migration from Mexico has been followed by an increase of Central Americans fleeing violence and attempting to enter the United States as refugees. In the last five years, the U.S. government has requested aid from the Mexican government to jointly deport 800,000 refugees to Central America, including 40,000 children.[40] These families with young children are being forced to return to deteriorating conditions of violence. They came fleeing Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, where drug mafias and criminal gangs drove them out and will likely target them upon their return.

By and large, the increase in deportations has not produced the desired deterrence effects in the targeted region. According to Marc Rosenblum, Deputy Director of the Migration Policy Institute´s U.S. Immigration Policy Program, "between 2011 and 2014, the number of Central American unaccompanied children (UACs) and "family units"—parents traveling with young children—who arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border increased rapidly, reaching a peak of 137,000 in fiscal year 2014."[41] This massive emigration of UACs from Central America is

attributed to a combination of crime and violence affecting youth in the region, economic concerns, poor educational systems, and a desire to reconnect with family members.

Temporary Work Visas

Regardless of visa category, employment sector, race, gender or national origin, internationally recruited workers face disturbingly common patterns of recruitment abuse, including fraud, discrimination, severe economic coercion, retaliation, blacklisting and, in some cases, forced labor, indentured servitude, debt bondage and human trafficking.[42] Many of these temporary work visas lack the necessary government oversight to make sure that employers comply with state and federal labor laws.

Today, in addition to the roughly 56,000 temporary agricultural workers admitted through the H2A program, the United States admits more than a half-million international workers each year to perform jobs across an increasingly wide range of employment sectors. Internationally recruited workers are employed as landscapers, domestic workers, carnival workers, forestry workers, seafood workers, hotel workers, maids, janitors, herders, computer programmers, engineers, nurses, and public school teachers.

One of the temporary visa programs that have recently attracted attention and criticism is the H1-B visa program. Capped by Congress in 2014 at 85,000 annual visas per year, this program was created by the Immigration Act of 1990. Reserved for those in "specialty occupations" requiring at least a bachelor's degree, the H-1B has become a useful recruitment tool to bring engineers for the information technology sector but also is used to bring doctors, teachers, scientists, and university professors.[43] Recent journalist reports have documented how large outsourcing and recruitment companies have gamed the system as a mere 13

outsourcing companies based in India capture one third of the H1-B visas, frequently paying below market rate for comparable occupations in the U.S. labor market.[44] In 2016, a small group of technology workers who had been displaced by H1-B visa holders have brought lawsuits in federal courts against Disney World in Florida, Abbot Laboratories in Illinois, and two global consulting companies, HCL and Cognizant. According to Professor Hal Salzman, a labor force expert at Rutgers University, global consulting and recruitment companies have taking advantage of loopholes in the temporary visa rules.[45] As a consequence, tens of thousands of American workers have been replaced by foreign workers holding H-1B and other temporary visas in the past five years.[46]

Yet, the United States is highly dependent on recruited labor in agriculture, a critical sector of the economy that has helped to maintain reasonable low prices of fresh produce available to the middle class. According to a recent study commissioned by the Chicago Council of Global affairs, there´s a severe employment shortage in the agricultural sector. “Over the last century, roughly three million migrant and seasonal farmworkers, on average, were in the U.S. at any one time. But as of 2012 that number had dropped to 1.06 million, including part-time and full-time workers, according to the Farm Labor Survey conducted by the US Department of Agriculture´s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service.” In the Midwest, there are 57,000 legal immigrants with work visas in agriculture, livestock raising and food processing; however, this sector needs another 80,000 workers immediately. In fact, half of the 440 U.S. counties that depend on agriculture are located in the Midwest.[47] This imported labor force is needed due to the identification of farm labor in the United States as an “immigrant job category” over

the last few decades, which created an stigmatization of that type of work among native-born Americans, making it unattractive to many even as an employment opportunity of last resort.[48]

Filling up agricultural positions, both temporary and year-round will require innovation in the agricultural industry as labor shortages are predicted to continue. Economists Edward Taylor, Diane Charlton, and Antonio Yúñez-Naude have analyzed panel data from rural Mexico and their evidence suggests that the same shift out of farm work that characterized U.S. labor history is well under-way in Mexico. In the future, U.S. agriculture will compete with Mexican farms for a dwindling supply of farm labor. According to these economists, "since U.S. domestic workers are unwilling to do farm work and the United States can feasibly import farm workers from only a few countries in close geographic proximity, the agricultural industry will eventually need to adjust production to use less labor."[49] Meanwhile, the tightly regulated contract-worker migration among contracted (H2A)[50] agricultural workers in the US forces many parents to leave their children for seven months of the year. In other cases, migrant parents are unable to bring their children because the parents are undocumented. Each year, thousands of migrants have to accept these restrictive contracts that will provide a higher salary while effectively preventing family reunification or regular travel since those contracts do not lead to legal permanent settlement.

Social Inclusion

Many residents in metropolitan regions across the U.S. now recognize the positive impact immigrants have made in the economic revitalization of their communities. They acknowledge the reliability of the immigrant workforce and the ways in which immigrants contribute to local economies by establishing households, starting small businesses, and paying

taxes. Some employers express a preference for immigrant workers, whether because of the lower wages they often demand or because they are a more pliable work force compared to native-born workers. Under the guise of hard work ethic and the undocumented status of millions of low-wage immigrant workers, many immigrant workers are still vulnerable to exploitation, the violation of their civil and labor rights, and the threat of deportation. Therefore, collective efforts to increase the possibilities of social integration are crucial to improve their chances of social mobility. Besides the opportunities to carve unique social spaces in cities and neighborhoods, full social inclusion of immigrant communities implies recognition as a legitimate part of the national community, parity of critical life chances, including the right to obtain a post-secondary credential or raise one's children in a racially integrated neighborhood with good schools and safe streets.[51]

To achieve successful social integration outcomes, state and city governments with large immigrant populations need to understand the benefits of full incorporation. With Republican elected officials frequently leaning in an anti-immigrant direction, the challenge of integrating immigrants can often involve coalitions of odd bedfellows. Therefore, it is important to incorporate businesses and labor groups as important allies in discussions for immigrant integration and understand why these two groups are more likely to end up in the pro-immigrant side rather than the anti-immigrant side. Immigrant incorporation is key to reduce the negative impacts that increases in the share of immigrants might have such as the growth of low-wage labor, poorly regulated suburban development, and declining labor standards. Observing how metropolitan leaders manage the mix of costs and benefits is important for immigrant integration but also to improve regional governance and resilience.[52]

Local leaders need to have access to best practices that might offer good opportunities for replication. For example, using demographic and violence information at the neighborhood level for a representative sample of 87 large cities, a recent study reveals that favorable immigrant political opportunities reduce violent crime in neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrants. Researchers speculate that this positive relationship happens because "favorable political contexts bolster social organization by enhancing trust and public social control within immigrant neighborhoods."[53]

The individual trajectories of specific locales in the realm of immigrant incorporation and national political debates also influence the degree of local receptivity. Areas that had already developed substantial immigrant communities by the mid-1980s benefited from Republican president Ronald Reagan's support for integrating the undocumented. Right after the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, large metropolitan areas benefited from a $4 billion investment in federal funds to support immigrant paths to legalization and full inclusion via naturalizations.[54] Since then, no other similar federal effort has been undertaken to incorporate immigrants and few state governments have tried to fill the gap. With the exception of modest federal spending on adult education, the integration-related costs of civic education, cross-cultural communication, learning English, and legal aid have been borne either by the immigrants themselves or by private institutions and local governments. As Janet Murguía and Cecilia Muñoz put it:

> Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about the integration of immigrants in this nation of immigrants is just how much it is being done by the immigrants themselves, with a minimum of effort by government or society at large. Despite widespread hand-wringing that today's immigrants are not learning English or becoming "like us" as they used to, the traditional indicators—English-language acquisition, workforce participation, homeownership, military service, civic participation, and intermarriage—

> make it clear that immigrants continue to do what they have always done: become Americans relatively quickly. We're getting an enormous return on a tiny investment.[55]

Considering the scant public investment for immigrant integration, it is not surprising that naturalization rates vary greatly by state even for the same national groups because the civic organization landscape looks very different in Phoenix, Arizona, an anti-immigrant state; compared to that of Chicago, Illinois, a more pro-immigrant state. Past research indicates that the naturalization rates, at least among Mexican Legal Permanent Residents vary by a factor of two, both across and within states.[56]

Notwithstanding the small public investments in immigrant integration, there are some examples that point towards best practices. In 2008, the National League of Cities (NLC), a coalition representing 19,000 cities across the nation, launched the Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration (MAII), a program aimed at assisting local officials in managing the challenges posed by immigrant integration. The two main components of the program are city-level naturalization campaigns and citizenship community initiatives to help local officials develop tailored action plans for immigrant integration. As journalist James Fallows discovered in his 52,000 miles journey around the US in a single engine plane, one of the 11 characteristics that can predict the future success of a city is that they make themselves open, trying to attract and include new people, including foreigners and refugees.[57]

Since its inception, MAII has successfully implemented 20 initiatives that showcase best practices for immigrant integration. These 20 cities are very diverse, ranging in size from large to small, and from varying geographic locations. The practices are good examples of public and private partnerships, advisory initiatives, and action-oriented programs. Many of the cities have

multiple programs addressing multiple issues, while others focus on one specific issue or topic. They represent a wide variety of states including places with long-standing immigrant populations such as New York City and Los Angeles, as well as newer emerging destinations in the South such as Chattanooga, TN and Durham, NC.

Taken together, these 20 city-level programs recognize the challenges and opportunities posed by immigrant incorporation and issue several recommendations to improve immigrant incorporation outcomes across cities facing challenges to incorporate diverse immigrant populations. Some of those are worth highlighting:

1. Local governments should play a role in the development of a nationwide strategy for immigrant integration.
2. Partnerships with state governments should be strengthened and the relationship between state and local law enforcement agencies needs to be clear.
3. Engagement with civil society organizations in the host community including immigrant-organizations, faith-based organizations, and the business sector should be encouraged.
4. Establish mayoral advisory boards and immigrant affairs offices.
5. Eliminate language barriers and promote adult literacy.[58]

To illustrate the important role that state and local governments should play in immigrant incorporation, the experience of Illinois is good example of virtuous circles between public-private partnerships and robust immigrant-led grassroots organizations. In 2005, Illinois enacted the New Americans Initiative, a bipartisan initiative aimed at facilitating immigrant integration. The initiative encourages citizenship acquisition among eligible permanent residents, provides funds for English-language instruction, and established an Office of New Americans to coordinate policies, actions, planning, and programs of state government with respect to immigrant integration and the impact of national immigration policies.[59]

The nationally recognized public-private partnership established through the New Americans Initiative led to the creation of Illinois Welcoming Centers, government-supported institutions that have assisted over 50,000 immigrants in attaining citizenship and thousands more in gaining access to services and benefits. Through its multi-ethnic advisory board, the City of Chicago´s office of New Americans (ONA), has been able to address language access through a new city ordinance and create greater accessibility to city programs and resources. In 2012, ONA set the goal of helping 10,000 immigrants to become U.S. citizens in three years by encouraging them to independently initiate their naturalization process. In partnership with the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), 58,160 immigrants became naturalized citizens in the 2005-2012 period. To support the full incorporation of immigrants, ONA also hosts the New Americans Small Business Series, a quarterly event that fosters small business growth in immigrant communities throughout Chicago.[60] The same year, mayor Emanuel introduced a Welcoming City Ordinance by incorporating basic protections for undocumented Chicagoans who have not been convicted of a serious crime and are not wanted on a criminal warrant.

Similarly, the city of San Jose California, which is encompassed by the county of Santa Clara, has so many municipalities with large immigrant populations that the county government has become a significant pro-immigrant actor. San Jose has innovative policies to integrate immigrants, including a cultural proficiency initiative initiated by the Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations. Since 1996, the county has offered immigrant integration services, including free citizenship days, educational programs, and a cultural proficiency initiative. In 2008, a free citizenship day was offered in nine different languages, including Spanish. The

Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations began offering a loan program using funds from local private foundations to cover the citizenship application costs for eligible low-income permanent residents after they observed a drop in applications when naturalization fees increased.[61]

While these accomplishments are important to highlight, the continuation of these initiatives is highly dependent on financial support from public funds. Continued access to public funds to finance immigrant integration is in peril amidst current budgetary concerns in the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois but considering the enormous social and economic benefits that naturalization brings to immigrant communities, funding for these programs should be a priority.

Citizenship Trends

While immigrants have varying motivations regarding the citizenship process, access to supportive institutions may be a key factor allowing those who are motivated to move forward. Nevertheless, national origin is the most common key variable used to explain citizenship acquisition among those eligible. Surprisingly, there is no consensus among pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant advocates on the importance of encouraging full citizenship for those already eligible. When reading national statistics on naturalization of legal permanent residents, a casual observer might conclude that this is a loyalty competition determined by national origin and “national political culture”, a highly voluntaristic model of naturalization decision-making that does not account for the role of institutional barriers.[62]

As political scientists Jonathan Fox explains,

> “the conventional approach to analyzing variation in naturalization patterns focuses on differences across national origin. This approach suggests that differences in national

> political cultures are a key factor in explaining naturalization decisions. While citizenship decisions certainly are influenced by the political cultures that immigrants bring with them, their perception of access to the citizenship process may also be strongly influenced by their level of formal education. Indeed, the citizenship exam is a de facto literacy test. Command of the English language is also relevant, which in turn is influenced by social class and access to quality language instruction. Access to reliable legal support is also crucial for immigrants to trust that they can navigate the process successfully. Indeed, researchers know remarkably little about what factors determine applicant success rates. While there is official data on success rates in the citizenship test, these figures underestimate the overall non-completion rate, which is likely to be substantially higher."[63]

Observing differences in institutional barriers at the local level help explain state variations in citizenship rates even among the same national origin groups.[64] Context matters to determine the availability of resources needed to promote naturalization at the state and county level. Promoting citizenship among legal permanent residents contributes to the economic and cultural vitality of cities and increases global competitiveness. Compared to non-citizen immigrants, naturalized immigrants have incomes that are 14.6 percent higher, and poverty rates that are 9.9 percent lower.[65] Increasing the numbers of naturalized citizens helps expands the tax base and reduces reliance on city services. Citizenship also increases the quality of American democratic life by enfranchising thousands of residents to vote in local, state, and national elections. In addition to the right to vote, naturalized immigrants are eligible to participate in federal programs, gain a number of legal rights and become eligible for federal employment.

According to Pew Hispanic Center estimates, the share of all legal foreign-born residents who have become naturalized U.S. citizens rose to 56 percent in 2011; the highest level in three decades and an 18-percentage point increase since 1990. The population of naturalized U.S. citizens reached 15.5 million in 2011.[66] While Latin Americans historically had lower rates of

naturalization than immigrants from other regions, for reasons that are still not well understood, their numbers have increased sharply. For example, proposition 187 in California, Mexico´s Dual nationality Law of 1996, and the tightening of the immigration laws in 1996 encouraged many to become citizens. Mexico's official recognition of the legitimacy of dual nationality has made U.S. citizenship more attractive to those immigrants who want eventually to return.[67]

As of 2011, 9.7 million immigrants were eligible for naturalization but had not yet naturalized; of these, more than a third were Mexican immigrants. Compared with other immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexicans still have the lowest rate of naturalization—36 percent versus 61 percent in 2011. In July 2007, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services nearly doubled the fee for naturalization processing and added a biometric fee. The new cost has effectively prevented low-wage immigrant workers to have access to naturalization and few loans are available from private institutions.

While the numbers of new citizens have been growing faster than the numbers of new permanent residents, a huge backlog of eligible immigrants persists. Nationwide, in the five months up to January of 2016, average requests for citizenship reached 65,000 per month, with half the applicants being Latino. In a regular year, some 650,000 green card holders are granted citizenship. In this electoral year, due in large part by the anti-immigrant narrative that the GOP has orchestrated against Latino immigrants,[68] a number of Latino-led organizations have the goal of naturalizing eligible Latino immigrant in higher numbers. In the words of Rocío Sáenz, a national leader of the Service Employees International Union, "there is a sense of urgency as a result of the hateful rhetoric about mass deportations, building walls, calling us criminals – this

is personal for us."[69] Ms. Sáenz, a Mexican immigrant and a veteran of the Justice for Janitors Campaign, is part of a coalition that has helped 12,781 Latinos apply for citizenship in more than 300 "naturalization workshops" around the country.

The evidence presented here suggests the need for a broad reassessment of the determinants of citizenship decisions and the availability of programs aimed at encouraging citizenship. Those interested in promoting citizenship among permanent residents could use new research tools that could address not only motivations, but also perceived barriers in the naturalization process. Available evidence suggests that the context within which immigrant make naturalization decisions matters. The prospects for closing the gap between eligible legal residents and new citizens depends heavily on whether or not the federal government makes immigrant integration a policy priority. New immigrant minorities who have played by the rules need to have access to the same opportunities afforded to other immigrant and ethnic minorities in the past. For immigrant social inclusion to succeed, it is necessary to increase the opportunities for immigrants and their descendants to obtain equal opportunities in a society, as well as social acceptance, through participation in major institutions such as the educational and political system and the labor and housing markets without discrimination.

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