Researcher

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Changing Demographics

Will the rising minority population benefit the economy?

he nation is undergoing one of the most important demographic transitions in its history. For the first time, minority babies outnumbered white newborns last year, and Census estimates predict that by 2042 non-Hispanic whites will no longer be in the majority. Already, more than a third of Americans are minorities, and non-whites accounted for 92 percent of population growth between 2000 and 2010, a trend driven by rising Hispanic immigration. Meanwhile, as millions of baby boomers retire, the nation is growing older. More than a fifth of Americans will be 65 or older by 2030, compared with one in eight today. Seismic changes also are occurring on the religious front: Protestants are no longer in the majority, and millions have abandoned religion altogether. And, in a striking trend of reverse migration, millions of blacks are moving back to the South.



Happy Citizenship Day! A youngster rests after joining other local children who attended a naturalization ceremony in Los Angeles on Sept. 19, 2012. Some 40 million Americans — about one in eight — are foreign-born.

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RECIPIENT OF SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE ◆ AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION SILVER GAVEL AWARD

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

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Changing Demographics

BY BILL WANLUND

THE ISSUES

he nation is undergoing a profound population makeover, a transformation so sweeping that just about every aspect of American life will be affected in coming years, from economic growth and electoral politics to social-welfare policies and religious affiliation.

Growing ethnic and racial diversity is the most striking sign of change. For the first time in U.S. history, minority babies outnumbered white newborns last year, a trend driven by rising Hispanic immigration. ¹ By 2042, non-Hispanic whites will cease to be in the majority. Already, more than a third of Americans are minorities, and non-whites accounted for 92 percent of population growth between 2000 and 2010. ²

The pace of demographic change in the nation, whose population has grown to about 315 million, has stunned even the experts. "It was always predicted that we would be diverse, but it's happened faster than anyone predicted," said

Cheryl Russell, former editor in chief of *American Demographics* magazine and now editorial director of New Strategist Publications. "Diversity and the rapid growth in diversity is one of the reasons we have a black president today. That's one thing that would never have been predicted." ³

Nowhere have the effects of diversity been more evident than in this month's presidential election. In his Nov. 6 victory over GOP contender Mitt Romney, President Obama garnered an estimated 71 percent of the



Hundreds of older Americans rally in Chicago on Nov. 7, 2011, against cuts in programs that benefit the elderly. Each day for the next 19 years, 10,000 baby boomers will reach the traditional retirement age of 65. By 2030, more than one in five Americans will be 65 or older, compared with about one in eight today. The number of older Americans is expected to more than double between now and 2050, to about 84 million.

Hispanic vote, according to election day polling by the Pew Hispanic Center. ⁴ Asian-Americans, who supported Obama by about 47 percentage points, made up 3 percent of the 2012 electorate, up a full point from 2008. ⁵ "The nonwhite vote has been growing — tick, tick, tick — slowly, steadily," said Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the nonpartisan Pew Research Center. "Every four-year cycle the electorate gets a little bit more diverse. And it's going to continue." ⁶

That diversity extends to Capitol Hill. Next year's 113th Congress will include 28 Latinos in the House of Representatives, the largest Latino class in U.S. history, and a third Latino will join the U.S. Senate. ⁷

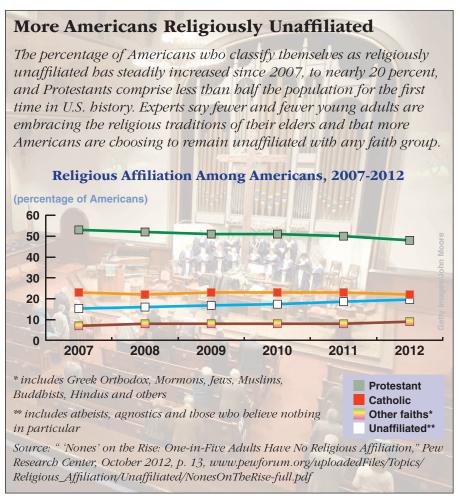
The nation's demographic evolution goes far beyond ethnicity, race and politics, however. For example:

- By 2030, more than one in five Americans will be age 65 or older, compared with about one in eight today. (*See chart, p. 996.*)
- More than one-fourth of Americans have left the religious denomination of their childhood and either joined a different faith or abandoned organized religion altogether.
- For the first time, Protestants are a minority in the United States: Only 48 percent of Americans identify themselves as Protestants down from 53 percent in 2007. 8 (See chart, p. 992.)

The nation's shifting demographic profile has huge implications for many facets of American life, noted Laura B. Shrestha and Elayne J. Heisler, researchers for the Congressional Research Service, which advises Congress on policy

issues. "There is ample reason to believe that the United States will be able to cope with the current and projected demographic changes if policy makers accelerate efforts to address and adapt to the changing population profile as it relates to . . . work, retirement and pensions, private wealth and income security — and the health and well-being of the aging population," they wrote. ⁹

Indeed, the rise in the average age of the U.S. population is among the benchmarks demographers and econ-



omists are watching most closely. The number of Americans 65 or older is expected to more than double between now and 2050 — from 40 million to 84.5 million. On Jan. 1, 2011, the first of the 78 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964 — the baby boomers — reached the traditional retirement age of 65. For the next 19 years, 10,000 more will cross that threshold every day, according to the Pew Research Center. ¹⁰

Experts note that as a nation's citizens age out of the workforce, its tax base declines, reducing the amount of money available for pensions and publicly supported medical and residential needs. What's more, older people generally spend less on consumer goods, putting less money into the economy.

Yet, while an aging U.S. population poses challenges for social-welfare programs targeted at the elderly, including Medicare and Social Security, experts say the nation retains an economic advantage over Europe, Japan and China, all of which are aging faster than the United States. 11 The reason for the U.S. edge, they say, is immigration. The Census Bureau estimates that 14 million immigrants came legally or illegally to the U.S. between 2000 and 2010 — the largest decennial influx in history. Some 40 million Americans — about one in eight — are foreign-born. 12

"If the U.S. depended on white births alone, we'd be dead," said Dowell Myers, a professor of policy, planning and demography at the University of Southern California. "Without the contributions from all these other groups, we would become too top-heavy with old people." 13

Myers noted that countries with low immigration rates, such as Japan, can end up with young, working-age populations too small to support the larger group of aging citizens.

Along with immigration, birth rates also are keeping America younger than other industrialized countries. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population — now the nation's largest minority — grew 43 percent, to more than 50 million, partly because the birth rate among Hispanics is 60 percent higher than among whites. The Asian-American population grew at about the same rate, reaching 17 million, while the black population rose 15.4 percent, to 42 million.

For some whites, predictions that minorities will grow to more than half of the U.S. population come as a jolt. They feel as though they had gone "from being a privileged group to all of a sudden becoming whites, the new victims," said Charles Gallagher, a sociologist at La Salle University in Pennsylvania who researches racial attitudes among whites. 14 In fact, a 2011 joint survey by the Brookings Institution and the Public Religion Research Institute, both in Washington, found that nearly half of whites believe discrimination against them is now as big a problem as discrimination against minorities. ¹⁵

Meanwhile, "non-affiliated" is now the fastest-growing category in the nation's religious profile. Twenty percent of Americans say they have no church affiliation — up from 15 percent five years ago, according to a study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released in October. "Young people today are coming of age at a time when they are less religious than at any time before in our polling," says Greg Smith, a lead researcher on the study. (See graphs, pp. 992, 993.)

In what Smith calls a "churn" taking place in American religion, 28 per-

cent of adults have left the faith in which they were raised to join another religion — or to practice no religion at all. Roughly 44 percent have either switched religious affiliation, rejoined a church after being unaffiliated or dropped out of organized religion altogether. ¹⁶

The Protestant decline marks an important transition point, says Randall Balmer, chairman of the religion department at Dartmouth College. But he adds, "The U.S. has always been a pluralistic country in terms of religion, and this is simply another indication that we are a religiously diverse people."

The Catholic Church has lost the most followers of any major denomination in the United States: Four Catholics leave the Church for every individual who converts to the faith. ¹⁷

Nevertheless, about 25 percent identify themselves as Catholic, a proportion that has remained steady for decades, Smith notes. "Immigration from Latin America is boosting the size of the Catholic population, and it's mostly responsible for the Catholic share of the population holding steady," he says.

As demographic changes bring sweeping changes to American society, here are some of the questions being debated:

Will changing demographics affect American values?

The late Harvard University political scientist Samuel P. Huntington feared that America was losing its way. He was particularly concerned about the influx of Hispanic immigrants, specifically from Mexico. Huntington feared that their sheer numbers and the rise of multiculturalism in the United States would be a challenge to America's "core culture." ¹⁸

But Joel Kotkin, distinguished presidential fellow in urban futures at Chapman University in Orange, Calif., took a different view of immigrants. "America's ability to absorb newcomers represents . . . a new paradigm, where

Religion and the 2012 Election

White evangelicals and white Catholics largely backed GOP contender Mitt Romney in this year's presidential election, as did most members of his Mormon faith. Black Protestants and Hispanic Catholics largely supported President Obama's re-election. Experts say the ethnic identity of minority voters, who traditionally support Democratic candidates, often trumps religious affiliation at the polls. Religiously unaffiliated voters overwhelmingly backed Obama.

Presidential Vote by Religious Affiliation and Race, 2012 (by percentage of voters)

Religion	Barack Obama	Mitt Romney
Total Percentage	50%	48%
Protestant/other Christian White Protestant/other Christian Born-again/evangelical Non-evangelical Black Protestant/other Christian	42 30 20 44 95	57 69 79 54 5
Catholic White Catholic Hispanic Catholic	50 40 75	48 59 21
Jewish	69	30
Mormon	21	78
Other faiths	74	23
Religiously unaffiliated	70	26

Source: "How the Faithful Voted: 2012 Preliminary Analysis," Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, November 2012.

race itself begins to matter less than culture, class and other factors," he wrote. "Rather than a source of national decline, the new Americans represent the critical force that can provide the new markets, the manpower, and, perhaps most important, the youthful energy to keep our country vital and growing. ¹⁹

Attitudes toward abortion and gay marriage are often seen as a yard-stick of religious values. Hispanics — many of whom are Catholic — are more conservative than the U.S. population overall on abortion, according to a 2012 survey by the Pew Hispanic Center. Slightly more than half of Hispanics believe abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, com-

pared to 41 percent of the general population.

Americans' support for same-sex marriage has been gradually increasing, and in 2011, according to the Pew Research Center, the public was evenly divided on whether gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to marry. A slim majority of Hispanics believes same-sex marriage should be legal. ²⁰

Pew also found that Asian-Americans' views on abortion and homosexuality largely mirror those of the nation at large. Like Hispanics, Asians are more likely to call themselves liberal — 31 percent do so — and less likely than the overall population to describe themselves as conservative. ²¹

"Another measure of Americans' acceptance of diversity is the increase in interracial marriage, which demographers typically interpret to mean that race relations are improving, says Cornell University sociology professor Daniel Lichter. "It means the things that promote inti-

macy between racial and ethnic groups — for example, residential proximity or economic equality or similar levels of education — have taken place," Lichter says.

A 2012 study by the Pew Research Center showed that about 15 percent of all new marriages in the United States in 2010 were between spouses of different races or ethnicity, more than double the 6.7 percent share in 1980. ²²

However, "This doesn't mean that we're in a post-racial society," Lichter says. "We've made great

strides, but we have an awfully long way to go before race doesn't matter in this culture." ²³

Twenty-eight percent of Asians married people of another race, the highest percentage of all ethnic groups. "The rate of intermarriage in the Asian-American, especially the Japanese-American, community is definitely having a cultural impact," says Lane Hirabayashi, a professor of Asian-American studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

However, Hirabayashi also notes that the rate of increase of Asian interracial marriage has slowed. "Increasing immigration from Asia gives immigrants a larger pool of potential partners from the same ethnic group," he says.

John Nieto-Phillips, a history professor at Indiana University who spe-

cializes in Latino studies, says, "Latinos are comfortable with marrying a person of another heritage or background. Latinos are less comfortable, however, defining their own identity by existing racial categories. The 'browning of America' by way of intermarriage portends



Worshippers at the First Church of Seventh-day Adventists in Washington, D.C., on March 31, 2012, pray for the families of slain Florida teenager Trayvon Martin and the neighborhood watch volunteer who killed him. More than a fourth of Americans have left the religious denomination of their childhood and either joined a different faith or abandoned organized religion.

the blurring of conventional racial boundaries, though it may not mitigate the social or structural inequalities that tend to sustain boundaries."

Pew found that 43 percent of Americans feel that having more interracial marriages has been a change for the better, and nearly two-thirds say it "would be fine" with them if a member of their own family were to marry someone outside their own racial or ethnic group. In 1986, only one-third viewed intermarriage as acceptable. ²⁴

Pew Research Center researcher Kim Parker, who worked on the intermarriage study, says increased immigration over the past 40 years has helped spur the attitudinal change. "With greater diversity, there's more opportunity for people of different ethnic backgrounds to interact," Parker says. "As people

get to know each other, the pool of 'candidates' becomes larger. And as an individual gains familiarity with people from different backgrounds, the degree of acceptance may rise."

It's difficult to generalize about baby boomers' impact on values. Some formed

their political consciousness during the turbulent anti-Vietnam War movement, while many others were influenced by the conservative "Reagan Rebellion" of the early 1980s.

In general, however, according to a 2011 Pew survey, boomers appear to be nudging the values needle leftward. On issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage, they are somewhat less conservative than their parents' generation but less liberal than their children. Still, Pew found, in recent years "more boomers have come to call themselves conservatives [and] many

... express reservations about the changing face of America. . . . Boomers' current attitudes bear little imprint from coming of age in an era of great social change." ²⁵ (See sidebar; p. 1002.)

American University communications professor Leonard Steinhorn, author of The Greater Generation: In Defense of the Baby Boom Legacy, believes embracing diversity may be the boomers' chief lasting contribution to America. "It used to be that the white men who ran our businesses could exclude women and minorities with a wink and a nod," he says. "That's no longer acceptable. [Boomers] have made diversity a moral value. And they have created a cultural norm that says prejudice and discrimination are immoral; they have created new norms, and the children they have raised under those norms have internalized them."

Still, says Brookings Institution demographer William Frey, "Demography marches on. It's the younger population that [will] be living, working and building communities with each other in a very different kind of America. They are developing a different set of values, in terms of their acceptance of diversity — from having more mixed race and racially diverse friends, dating partners, spouses - and are generally more accepting of new social trends including same-sex couples, alternative religions, etc. They will also be more globally conscious due to their associations with more new Americans and their greater ability to "network" across the country and globally through social media. . . . [A]s we move into the next decade or two we're going to be much more about the people who are under age 30 than the people who are over age 50."

Will the nation's demographic changes benefit the U.S. economy?

As the U.S. population ages, economists see both trouble and opportunity ahead.

The number of Americans 65 or older is expected to more than double by 2050, to about 84 million, and today's 65-year-old can expect to live another 20 years, up from 13 years in 1950. ²⁶

Increased longevity and a desire to remain active are spurring many older workers to remain in the labor force. But so too are economic pressures, stemming in part from the loss of trillions of dollars in retirement assets during the recent recession.

Researchers Frank W. Heiland and Zhe Li of Boston College's Center for Retirement Research found that nearly 23 percent of men over age 65 were working in 2010, compared to 16.8 percent in 1994. The participation rate for women over 65 nearly doubled, from 7.4 percent in 1988 to 13.8 percent. ²⁷

As more older workers remain on the job, some experts believe they may

be preventing younger workers from finding employment. One of the reasons [that young people can't find jobs is] because older people are not leaving the workforce," said Sung Won Sohn, an economist at California State University-Channel Islands. 28 But others disagree with the view that older workers are hurting the prospects of younger ones. There is "no evidence that increasing the employment of older persons reduces the job opportunities or wage rates of younger persons," said Alicia Munnell, director of the Center for Retirement Research. In fact, she said, "greater employment of older persons leads to better outcomes for the young in the form of reduced unemployment, increased employment and a higher wage." 29

"Younger workers come into the labor force with a different vintage of education, and they don't have work experience. So, you don't often find old and young workers clamoring for the same low-wage McDonald's job," said Jeffrey Zax, a professor at the University of Colorado who specializes in labor economics. Moreover, Zax said, "A senior worker with experience might allow a company to hire more junior employees because you have someone who can manage them." ³⁰

Inevitably, aging Americans will require medical care and specialized living and transportation accommodations — which will open up job opportunities for younger workers, says Sara Rix, senior strategic policy adviser at the AARP Public Policy Institute.

"The proportion of older people living in nursing homes is declining, but we are going to see a substantial increase in the 'very, very old' — people in their upper 90s and 100s — many of whom . . . will need assisted-living facilities." As a result, Rix says, construction workers will be needed to build and upgrade assisted-living facilities, and doctors, nurses and home health care workers will be needed to care for the elderly.

Even so, America's aging population poses deep challenges for the health care system. For example, a projected nursing shortage is expected to grow worse as baby boomers grow older and care needs grow. ³¹

As policy makers debate the implications of America's aging population, they also are studying the impact of immigration — particularly the influx of undocumented workers — on the economy.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a group in Washington that promotes reduced immigration, argues that by curbing illegal immigration, "there would be many more jobs available to native workers — jobs that paid higher wages and offered better working conditions." ³²

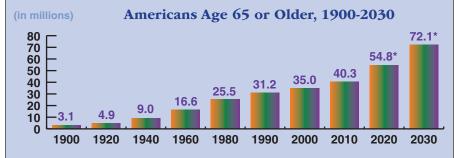
Pia Orrenius, an assistant vice president and senior economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, says illegal immigration might have some adverse effects on employment among specific groups — native-born teenagers, for example. "It looks like if employers have the choice of an undocumented, somewhat higher-skilled 23- or 24-year-old, they'll take that person over a 16-to 19-year-old." But, she adds, "the effects are modest."

Julie Hotchkiss, a research economist and policy adviser at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, researched undocumented workers in Georgia. "Our research shows that newly arriving undocumented workers appear to displace only earlier-arriving undocumented workers," she said. "This makes sense since undocumented workers are going to be the closest substitutes for each other." ³³

Many economists say that immigrant workers have a positive effect on the economy. "There is no evidence that immigrants crowd out U.S.-born workers in either the short or long run," wrote Giovanni Peri, an economics professor at the University of California-Davis. "The economy absorbs immigrants by expanding oppor-

Older Population on Rise

The number of Americans age 65 or older is projected to surpass 70 million by 2030. Experts cite two key reasons for the rise: the aging of the post-World War II baby boom generation and medical advances that have increased average life expectancy.



* projected

Source: "A Profile of Older Americans: 2011," Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011, p. 3, www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/aging_statistics/Profile/2011/docs/2011profile.pdf

tunities rather than by displacing U.S.-born workers. Data show that, on net, immigrants expand the U.S. economy's productive capacity, stimulate investment and promote specialization that in the long run boosts productivity." ³⁴

Moreover, Peri says in an interview, in the short run the loss of immigrant workers would cause an economic contraction. And while the economy might recover, the loss of immigrant labor could turn out to be "quite costly."

"If we don't have people picking vegetables and fruit in California, for example, we'll end up importing [those products]. Other jobs can't be outsourced — such as construction workers or waiters. We have seen very few natives taking these jobs, especially at the low end . . . a lot of businesses will have to slim down or substitute with imports or pay more wages."

Will changing demographics affect future U.S. elections?

Obama's victory in this year's presidential election was due, in the words of *The Hill*, a Washington newspaper that covers national politics, to "at least three concrete, demographic reasons"

— the president's "broad advantage among female voters," his negation of the erroneous view "that black enthusiasm for Obama would taper off this year" and the fact that "Latinos went for Obama by even bigger margins than they did in 2008." ³⁵

While Obama may be particularly popular among female, black and Latino voters, many experts view the influence of those demographic groups in the 2012 election as a harbinger of how demographics might shape political destiny in campaigns of the future.

Ruy Teixeira, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank in Washington, says a growing minority population and a shrinking white working class — a traditionally Republican-voting demographic — point to growing minority influence in future elections, a force he said would favor liberal candidates. However, he cautioned, "There is no guarantee that demographic trends will automatically lead to [electoral] dividends. . . . Parties always have to deliver." ³⁶

While the expected majority-minority tipping point for the general popula-

tion is still 30 years off, it will come by 2023 for the younger sector of the population, primarily because of the rapid growth in the Hispanic population, according to Census Bureau estimates. Among children under age 17, about 17 million, or 23 percent, were Latinos, a rise of 39 percent in a decade, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. ³⁷

Brookings Institution demographer Frey said minorities' electoral influence is just becoming apparent. He pointed to the relative youth of the minority population: Currently, only 44 percent of Hispanics, 69 percent of African-Americans and 53 percent of Asians are eligible to vote, compared with 78 percent of whites. "It's because they are disproportionately below age 18, and among Hispanics and Asians, are less likely to be citizens," he says.

Whites still comprise 71 percent of the electorate, Frey pointed out, and will outnumber minority voters "well beyond" the 2012 election. Nevertheless, he added, "the handwriting is on the wall." In coming elections, as today's minority children reach the voting age of 18, "minority votes will matter, and both parties need to pay attention," Frey observed. ³⁸

Alan Abramowitz, a political science professor at Emory University in Atlanta, predicts that the minority electorate, which stood at 13 percent in 1992, will comprise more than a third of voters by the 2020 election. ³⁹

Cornell University's Lichter, who also directs the Cornell Population Center, believes the divide between older and younger voters is an issue to watch. He says, "In the 2012 elections, we saw a large, aging, mostly white population voting in one direction, and a mostly minority population voting differently. The question is, how will an older, aging, white population vote and what will it support? When older people vote, are they going to vote to support children of people who might not share the same culture?

"In 15 or 20 years, today's minorities are going to be America's taxpayers and leaders," Lichter points out. "They're going to be replacing the white baby boom generation. Will they vote to support pension and health care programs for older, American, white baby boomers? And will boomers support the kind of education, employment and social programs that help make these groups good citizens?"

Raw numbers aren't the only measure of minority voters' influence; another is location.

Teixeira and Frey wrote that minorities are strongly influencing election outcomes in "swing states," where races are particularly hotly contested. Between 2008 and 2012, the minority share of eligible voters rose 9 percent in Nevada, 4 percent in Florida and North Carolina, 3 percent in Colorado and Wisconsin, 2 percent in Pennsylvania and Michigan, and 1 percent in Virginia. At the same time, the share of white voters in those states declined by between 1 and 3 percent. 40 And of those states, all but North Carolina voted for Obama in 2012. As for the electorate's changing religious makeup, some scholars say that just because Hispanic immigrants are predominantly Catholic does not mean they constitute a Catholic voting bloc. Indeed, said presidential scholar John Kenneth White, a professor of politics at Catholic University (CU) in Washington, the "Catholic vote" has effectively vanished. "For Hispanics, ethnic identity trumps Catholic identity," he said at a Sept. 27, 2012, forum at the university.



Pedestrians pass an American flag mural in San Francisco's Chinatown on June 19, 2012. In 2011, the number of Asian immigrants who came to the United States outnumbered Hispanics for the first time: 438,000 came from East and South Asia and the Middle East, compared with 404,000 who arrived from Central or South America or the Caribbean.

In 2004 more Catholics voted for George W. Bush, an evangelical Christian, than for Catholic John Kerry. William Dinges, a CU professor of religion and culture, agrees there is no such thing as a Catholic vote any more. "People are becoming more independent," he said at the CU forum. "They can support a candidate or party who supports ideas not consistent with teachings of the faith. And, the church hierarchy can't force votes the way it once could."

For example, the tide appears to be changing with regard to gay marriage, which Catholic leaders and evangelical Protestants have strongly opposed. After voters rejected samesex marriage in 32 state referendums since the late 1990s, a measure to legalize it passed on Nov. 6 in three states (Maine, Maryland and Washington), and a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman failed in Minnesota. 41

According to a Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life analysis of exit polls, traditionally Republican groups

such as white evangelicals and weekly churchgoers strongly backed Republican Mitt Romney, while traditionally Democratic groups such as black Protestants, Hispanic Catholics, Jews and the religiously unaffiliated backed Obama by large margins. Obama's support among white Catholics fell 7 percentage points from 2008 but gained 3 points among Hispanic Catholics. Meanwhile, his support among white evangelicals fell by 6 percentage points. 42

The apparent growing electoral support for same-sex marriage indicates to some analysts that the political power of white evangelicals

may be on the wane. Dartmouth's Balmer, an evangelical himself, says that while the religious right will continue to be a force in U.S. politics, its influence may be less apparent in coming elections.

"I think it's going to be a bit less forceful, less dramatic than it was in the 1980s and '90s and the first decade of the 21st century," Balmer says.

Background

Pioneering Blacks

The first blacks who came to North America hundreds of years ago were not slaves — far from it.

In 1613, João Rodrigues — son of a Portuguese sailor and an African woman — served as a translator on a Dutch trading ship that had sailed to the North American island known

as Manhatta. When the ship returned to Europe, Rodrigues stayed behind to start a trading post selling hatchets and knives provided by the ship's captain. He also served as an interpreter and facilitator for Dutch merchants who came to the island to trade with the Indians. That's how a black man became the first non-native American to live and do business in what was to become New York City.

A little over 150 years later, Jean Baptiste Point Sable — son of a French father and African mother and probably born in the Caribbean in what is now the Dominican Republic — established himself in North America as a trader at the mouth of a river in an area called Eschecagou. Point Sable, a black man, is regarded as the first non-Indian to set up permanent residence in present-day Chicago.

And in 1781, 26 full or mixed-race blacks were among the 44 Mexicans who settled the little pueblo that would become Los Angeles.

Far better known, of course, is the tragic history of the blacks who came to North America under extreme duress. England began taking captured Africans to serve as slaves in its Carolina colony in 1670. During the colonial period, an estimated 600,000 African slaves were brought to America. In 1808, Congress banned the importation of slaves, but the law was not seamlessly enforced. It did effectively end the transatlantic slave trade — though not the practice of slavery in the colonies. By 1860, the slave population in the United States was about 4 million.

With the end of the Civil War and ratification in 1865 of the 13th amendment abolishing slavery, blacks were granted citizenship. Black males gained the right to vote with ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870. The postwar Reconstruction period saw improved educational and economic opportunities for Southern blacks, and many even were elected to public office. In the Carolinas alone, nearly 100

black legislators were elected during Reconstruction, including 22 who were elected to Congress between 1870 and 1901. ⁴³ Tens of thousands of African-Americans living in the North moved south to become teachers or farmers or just to reunite with families.

By 1876, however, the federal government's commitment to protect the rights of black citizens was wavering. States enacted harsh "Jim Crow" laws that institutionalized racial segregation in schools and other public places, and black voting was blocked by fraud, intimidation or worse. In 1896, a nearly unanimous U.S. Supreme Court, in the infamous Plessy v. Ferguson decision, upheld the concept that state laws could require separate facilities for blacks and whites, as long as the facilities were equivalent. But equivalence was left undefined. The ruling in effect conferred constitutionality to the South's Jim Crow caste system.

Early Immigrants

In the first years of the democracy, immigration to the United States was relatively slight; even so, one of the early legislative acts of the cautious Founding Fathers was the Naturalization Act of 1790, which limited naturalized citizenship to "free white persons" of "good moral character."

Immigration gathered momentum in the early 19th century. During the 1820s, 143,000 immigrants were reported; in the following decade, immigration mostly by Irish and Germans - more than quadrupled. The 1840s recorded 1,713,000 immigrants, nearly half of them from Ireland escaping the 1845-49 potato famine. Politics also helped swell the immigrant tide, as unsuccessful European revolutions in 1848 spurred large numbers of intellectuals and political activists to flee their homelands. By 1850 foreign-born residents made up 9.7 percent of America's 23 million population.

While early post-colonial America was largely a Protestant nation, large numbers of Catholics were absorbed with the acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803, Florida from Spain in 1819, and territory in what is now New Mexico and California in 1847 as a result of the Mexican-American War.

The second half of the century saw the Catholic population triple, in large part the result of immigration from Europe — notably Ireland, Italy, and Poland. By 1906, there were 14 million Catholics in America, 17 percent of the total population. 44

Asian immigrants were rare in North America until 1849, when Chinese workers were recruited to work in the California gold fields, and later to help build the transcontinental railway system and work in other, mostly menial, jobs. As the Chinese population grew, racial prejudice and distrust increased among whites, and in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which ended immigration by Chinese laborers. The law also made Chinese immigrants already in the country ineligible for citizenship.

Expanding Equality

he 20th century saw the United I States experience major demographic changes. The start of World War I (1914-1918) helped spark the mass South-to-North movement of African-Americans, and the end of World War II (1939-1945) led to the birth of the baby boom generation — the largest population bulge in the nation's history. In addition, after the United States loosened immigration restrictions, a flood of new citizens dramatically altered the country's ethnic mixture. All these forces began to come together around the middle of the 20th century, ultimately changing the way Americans perceived each other and their own values.

Meanwhile, the black population, which had reached 8.8 million by 1900

Continued on p. 1000

Chronology

1600s-1700s

Slavery is introduced to North America.

1670-1783

England begins importing African slaves to its Carolina colony. Some 600,000 African slaves are brought to America during the colonial period.

1790

Congress restricts naturalized citizenship to "free white persons" of "good moral character."

1800s Slavery is abolished, and new rights are granted to African-Americans.

1808

Congress bans the transatlantic slave trade but not slavery.

1849

Chinese laborers recruited for California gold fields.

1863

President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring slaves in the Confederate states to be free.

1865

Thirteenth Amendment to Constitution is ratified Dec. 1, freeing all slaves.

1866

Congress enacts legislation giving blacks full citizenship.

1870

Fifteenth Amendment gives black men the right to vote.

1876

First "Jim Crow" laws in South mandate segregated public facilities.

1882

Chinese Exclusion Act forbids immigration by Chinese laborers.

1896

Supreme Court upholds "separate but equal" doctrine for whites and blacks in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

1900s-1945

Congress seeks "homogeneity" by favoring immigrants from northern and western Europe while severely restricting everyone else. U.S. blacks migrate northward for jobs and rights.

1915

Blacks begin "Great Migration" from the South to the North.

1924

Immigration Act of 1924 essentially limits citizenship to immigrants from northern and western Europe.

1943

Congress repeals Chinese Exclusion Act (but 1924 Immigration Act is still in force).

1946-2000 Post-

war baby boom creates buge population "bulge." Immigrant pool expands. Civil Rights Movement makes major advances.

1946

First of 78 million post-World War II baby boomers are born.

1963

March for Jobs and Freedom attracts up to 300,000 demonstrators to Washington in pivotal moment for the Civil Rights Movement.

1964

President Lyndon B. Johnson signs Civil Rights Act, outlawing segregation in public places.

1965

Immigration and Nationality Act opens citizenship to Asians, Hispanics, Africans and others largely excluded by the 1924 Immigration Act. The Supreme Court, in *Loving v. Virginia*, unanimously rules that restrictions on interracial marriage are unconstitutional."

1970s

Rev. Jerry Falwell and other leaders call on conservative Christians to become politically active; the Religious Right becomes political force.

2000S America contemplates "majority-minority" status. Baby boomers enter old age.

2001

U.S. Hispanic population reaches 37 million, making Latinos the largest ethnic minority.

2008

Census Bureau projects that by 2042 whites will no longer be majority in the United States.

2011

Minority births outnumber white newborns. . . . Net Mexican immigration to United States falls to zero, mostly in response to Great Recession that began in 2007. First baby boomers reach retirement age of 65.

2012

Religion survey indicates that for the first time Protestants comprise less than half of Americans.

Black Migration Makes a U-Turn

Millions fled the South, but many are returning.

emographers and historians call it the "Great Migration," an extraordinary exodus of blacks from the South to the urban North throughout much of the 20th century. Now that epic shift is reversing, bringing millions of African-Americans back to a region that once shunned or tormented them and their ancestors.

Between 1916 and 1975, an estimated 6 million African-Americans left the South in search of greater economic opportunity and social freedom in cities such as Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and New York. But in the 1990s demographers began to notice something remarkable: Millions of black Americans were leaving their homes and jobs in the North and returning to their roots in the South.

Census data released in 2011 show that 57 percent of American blacks now live in the South, the highest percentage since 1960. Michigan and Illinois, home to large concentrations of African-Americans, both lost black population for the first time, according to the 2010 census, and Atlanta replaced Chicago as the city with the second-largest African-American population, after New York. More than one million blacks now living in the South were born in the Northeast, a 10-fold increase since 1970. ¹

"This is the decade of black flight," Brookings Institution demographer William Frey told *The New York Times* last year. ²

Frey credited the return of many blacks to the South to an improved racial and economic climate there, along with "the strong cultural and economic ties that the South holds for blacks." Even so, he noted that "blacks, by and large, are not settling in the Deep South states that registered the greatest out-migration of blacks in the 1960s" and where discriminatory "Jim Crow" laws restricted blacks' freedom. ³

That out-migration began in earnest in the second decade of the 20th century, driven by the demand for workers in Northern munitions factories during World War 1. Between 1916 and 1919, half a million African-Americans came North.

Yet, jobs were far from the only lure for Southern blacks. Isabel Wilkerson, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning portrait of the Great Migration, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, frames the migration as a flight from racial hatred and abuse.

"This was . . . a defection from a system that had held [black] Americans in an artificial hierarchy that restricted their every move . . ," Wilkerson told *CQ Researcher* in an e-mail interview. "They were, in effect, seeking political asylum from a caste system that limited every aspect of their lives and [that] was enforced with such brutality that, in the two decades leading up to the Migration, an African-American was lynched in a public spectacle every four days for some perceived breach of that caste system."

The economic impact the South faced from the exodus of blacks wasn't apparent at first. Some Southerners gloated: "As the North grows blacker, the South grows whiter," the New Orleans $\it Times-Picayune$ wrote. $\it ^4$

Then, as the implications of the loss of so much of the South's agricultural workforce became clear, worry set in. Southern authorities tried to stem the hemorrhaging of cheap farm labor by invoking "anti-enticement" laws to discourage agents from northern companies from recruiting blacks. ⁵ But it was too late: The Great Migration was on. And it kept going long after the lure of Northern jobs ended following World War I.

"Those in the World War I-era wave of the Great Migration didn't see their move as permanent — they thought when the war was over, they'd go back home," says Lorenzo Morris, a political science professor at Howard University in Washington. "But when the war ended, although it was difficult to stay [in the North], to return was intolerable."

During the post-war 1920s, the industrial economy kept booming, and so did the migration: Nearly a million more blacks headed North during the decade, and nearly half a million more left the South during the Depression era of the 1930s.

Continued from p. 998

— 90 percent of whom lived in the South — began to change rapidly in the early to mid-1900s. Jobs were being created in the rapidly industrializing North, while the South's oppressive Jim Crow laws were spurring a mass exodus known as the Great Migration. Over six decades, an estimated 6 million blacks left the South for new lives in the North and West. (See sidebar: above.)

Mexican migration also began to

accelerate in the early to mid-20th century. It had begun in the late 1800s with the building of the railroads across the American Southwest. By 1900, half a million Mexicans were living in the United States. Though they weren't treated as well as Northern European immigrants, Mexicans didn't experience the same exclusion as Asians. All Mexicans living in territories acquired from Mexico were granted citizenship. In 1897, a U.S. district court ruled that the skin color of Mexicans should not

be a factor in determining eligibility for citizenship.

The vast majority, however, had no interest in citizenship. "Why bother to become an American citizen when the land one loved, the land of family, language and *la raza* (the people or race), was so close by?," wrote historian Lawrence H. Fuchs. ⁴⁵

But eligibility for citizenship didn't stop discrimination, of course. "The Mexican-American has been the black man of the Southwest," wrote Ronnie

The exodus continued -1.6 million in the 1940s, 1.4 million in the '50s, another million in the '60s. When the Great Migration began, one in 10 American blacks lived outside the South; by the 1970s, nearly one in two did. 6 Within the migration statistics is evidence of an evolution in American society, culture and politics. "Many leading figures in American culture from [writers] Toni Morrison and August Wilson to [performers] Miles Davis and Aretha Franklin to [sports



An estimated 6 million African-Americans left the South between 1916 and 1975 in search of greater economic opportunity and social freedom, settling in such cities as Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and New York. Today, many blacks are leaving the North and returning to their Southern roots.

figures] Jesse Owens and Jackie Robinson — are people whose names we likely would never have known had there been no Great Migration," Wilkerson said in the e-mail interview. "Each one of them was a child of this Migration, whose life chances were altered because their parents or grandparents chose to escape the restrictions of the South."

The Great Migration came to a close in the 1970s after its over-arching catalyst — a caste system sanctioned by law — ended with passage of landmark civil rights legislation during the previous decade. By the 1990s, the Great Migration had turned around. But its legacy lives on.

"Perhaps one of the least recognized effects of the migration was its role, unintended though it was, in helping bring the South into mainstream culture and ultimately helping it open up to the rest of the country," Wilkerson said in the email interview. "The upending of the caste system brought the South more in line with the rest of the country and made it

a more welcoming place for white Northerners and for immigrants who might never have considered living there under the old regime, as well as for the children and grandchildren of black Southerners who had fled in previous generations.

"The return migration of many of the children and grandchildren of the Great Migration is, in my view, one of the legacies of the Great Migration itself," Wilkerson continued. "The people who left, by their heartbreaking decision to leave, helped to change the region they had

been forced to flee and make it a more welcoming place for everyone, including immigrants from other parts of the world, for white Northerners who might never have considered living in the South and for the migrants' own descendants."

– Bill Wanlund

Lopez, executive assistant to former Arizona Democratic Gov. Bruce Babbitt. "There have been rapings and lynchings. . . . People's land was taken from them." ⁴⁶

The immigrant waves of the first quarter of the century brought another 750,000 legal immigrants from Mexico. The flow ebbed during the Great Depression, when many recent Mexican arrivals voluntarily returned to their homeland, and the United States tightened its immigra-

tion policy. Some 400,000 Mexicans — including many born in the United States — were deported. Mexican immigration to the United States picked up again — though slightly — in the 1940s, spurred by wartime labor shortages. In 1942, the nation initiated the "Bracero" guestworker program, under which large numbers of temporary workers were transported north. The program was supposed to end with the war but lasted until Congress refused to

renew it in 1964. The Mexican guest-workers — 4.8 million over the life of the program — worked in at least 38 states, mostly picking fruit and vegetables in the Southwest. ⁴⁷

By the 1960s, public sympathy for the Civil Rights Movement was spreading across the country, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969) the support he needed to push through the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which outlawed segregation in public places. A year later, Johnson signed the Voting

¹ Sabrina Tavernise and Robert Gebeloff, "Many U.S. Blacks Moving to South, Reversing Trend," *The New York Times*, March 24, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/us/25south.html?pagewanted=all.

² Quoted in *ibid*.

³ William Frey, "The New Great Migration: Black Americans' Return to the South, 1965-2000", The Brookings Institution, May 2004, www.brookings. edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2004/5/demographics%20frey/20040524_frey.
⁴ Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2010), p. 162.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

Boomers More Conservative but Still Feisty

Mistrust of government still spurs '60s generation.

Professional orty years ago, the anti-establishment protests of the baby boom generation helped end the Vietnam War. Today, many of those same boomers form the core of the conservative Tea Party movement.

The Tea Party phenomenon reflects a general move to the right by many of the 78 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964, pollsters and demographers say. In 2008, 12 percent of boomers identified themselves as liberal, compared with 30 percent in 1972, according to the American National Election Survey. Meanwhile, the percentage calling themselves conservative more than doubled, from 21 percent to 46 percent. ¹

Still, many experts say the ideological transformation of the boomer generation is not inconsistent with its formative ideals in the 1960s.

"Tea Partiers are mistrustful of authority," says Leonard Steinhorn, a communications professor at American University in Washington who has studied the boomers. "In many ways that distrust of any sort of power or authority is not so dissimilar to what so many boomers throughout the years have expressed against either unchecked power or illegitimate authority, which many felt was exercised during the Vietnam War."

The Pew Research Center, which tracks Americans' social

and political attitudes, says many boomers who pushed for sweeping societal change in the '60s are feeling uncomfortable with demographic and cultural shifts occurring in society today.

"Many boomers express reservations about the changing face of America," the Pew Research Center said in a report outlining the results of a survey on political views. "Boomers' current attitudes bear little imprint from coming of age in an era of great social change." ²

Citing the Pew report, William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank, noted boomers' attitudes on immigration. "[Twenty-three] percent of baby boomers regard the country's growing population of immigrants as a change for the better," he wrote. "Forty-three percent saw it as a change for the worse. Almost half of white boomers said the growing number of newcomers from other countries represented a threat to traditional U.S. customs and values." ³

The conservative shift belies boomers' popular image — honed by the counterculture of the 1960s — as left-wing idealists whose motto was "don't trust anyone over 30."

Under that banner, boomers challenged the "establishment" over issues such as the Vietnam War, racial and sexual equality and matters of faith. More than 60 percent left organized

Rights Act of 1965, significantly improving blacks' access to the polls.

The new laws were the crowning legislative achievements of the Civil Rights Movement and reflected its successful effort to mobilize public support for its cause. The movement's success also inspired other groups that felt they were treated unfairly. Feminist scholar Jo Freeman wrote, "During the fifties and early sixties, the Civil Rights Movement captured the public imagination and educated it on the immorality of discrimination and the legitimacy of mass protest For women, it provided not only a model for action but a very different world view from that of the 'separate spheres' [for women and men], which had been the reigning ideology for the previous century." 48

Lessons from the Civil Rights Movement also helped to frame the push for gay rights. Bayard Rustin, a civil rights leader and a key organizer of the landmark 1963 March on Washington, later turned the lessons he had learned to promoting gay rights. "Today, blacks are no longer the litmus paper or the barometer of social change," he said in 1986. "The new 'niggers' are gays. . . . It is in this sense that gay people are the new barometer for social change." ⁴⁹

The New Newcomers

The Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese and most other Asians from immigrating to the United States, was repealed in 1943, when China was an American ally in World War II. However, another strict law — the Immigration Act of 1924, which put annual quotas on the number of immigrants from each country who could be accepted into the United States — was still in effect.

In a later analysis, the State De-

partment historian's office wrote, "The most basic purpose of the 1924 Immigration Act was to preserve the ideal of American homogeneity." 50 To do so, the act tied the quotas to numbers from the 1890 census, in a thinly disguised attempt to limit a new flood of immigrants — many of them poor and uneducated - from Eastern and Southern Europe. So, while the law allowed immigration by about 51,000 Germans and 62,000 people from Great Britain and Ireland, it permitted fewer than 4,000 Italians and around 2,000 Russians to enter. In fact, 86.5 percent of the yearly immigrant quota of 164,667 was to come from northwest Europe and Scandinavia. 51

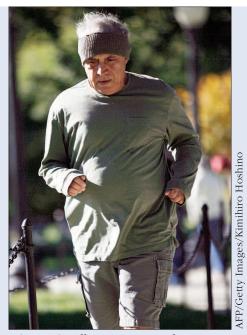
With only minor modifications, the act remained in force for 40 years. Then, reflecting the growing atmosphere of tolerance in the 1960s, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which abolished the national origins quota sys-

religion, most while in their teens or early 20s, though about a third of those eventually returned. ⁴

A 2009 survey by pollster John Zogby found that 36 percent of boomers thought their generation would be remembered for its self-indulgence, compared with 31 percent who said its legacy would be social change. ⁵

Still, in gauging the boomer generations' legacy, it's important to see the nation's transformation in the past four decades in a positive light, Steinhorn says.

"We are a far better, more inclusive, more equal, more free, more environmentally conscious and less bigoted and prejudiced society than we have ever been in our nation's history," he says. "And given that our nation's original sin was built on



Some 78 million Americans, known as the baby boom generation, were born between 1946 and 1964. In 2008, 12 percent of boomers identified themselves as liberal, compared with 46 percent who said they were conservative.

bigotry and discrimination . . ., we have come a very long way in just a few decades."

– Bill Wanlund

¹ Survey cited by Karlyn Bowman and Andrew Rugg, "As the Baby Boomers Turn," *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 12, 2011, www.latimes/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-bowman-baby-boomers-more-conservative-20010912,0,4867587.story.

² "The Generation Gap and the 2012 Election," Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Nov. 3, 2011, p. 11, www.people-press.org/2011/11/03/the-generation-gap-and-the-2012-election/3.

³ William Frey, "Baby Boomers Had Better Embrace Change," *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2012, www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/06/08-baby-boomers-frey.

⁴ Research by Prof. Wade Clark Roof, cited in Leonard Steinhorn, *The Greater Generation* (2006).

⁵ John Zogby, "The Baby Boomers' Legacy," *Forbes.com*, July 23, 2009, www.forbes.com/2 009/07/22/baby-boomer-legacy-change-consumer-opinions-columnists-john-zogby.html.

tem. The new law limited to 170,000 the total number of immigrants allowed into the country but eliminated regional quotas and tied immigration to immigrants' skills and family relationships with citizens or U.S. residents.

"This is not a revolutionary bill," President Johnson said at the time. "It does not affect the lives of millions. . . . It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives or add importantly to either our wealth or our power." ⁵²

Johnson may have underestimated the impact of the law, or he may have been understating the case to ease the fears of nervous nationalists. In any event, 30 years after the law went into effect, the United States had admitted more than 18 million new immigrants, more than three times the number who had entered over the previous three decades.

This time, instead of northern Europeans, immigrants from Latin Amer-

ica topped the list. While European immigrants made up nearly 60 percent of the United States' total foreign population in 1970, they accounted for only 15 percent by the end of the century. The percentage of immigrants from Latin America, however, grew from less than 19 percent to more than 50 percent in the same period. ⁵³

In recent years the United States has admitted more than a million new immigrants annually. Today, Hispanics make up the lion's share of the immigrant population. Nearly 22 million, or around 55 percent of foreign-born Americans, came from Central or South America or the Caribbean; about 404,000 arrived in 2011 alone, or about 37 percent of the total.

However, in 2011, for the first time, Asian immigrants outnumbered Hispanics: Some 438,000 came from East and South Asia and the Middle East, representing 41 percent of new immigrants. About 8.4 percent of American immigrants came from Europe, another 9.1 percent from Africa and the remainder, around 5.1 percent, from "other regions" — principally, Canada and Oceania. ⁵⁴

Overall, the U.S. population is aging. In 1950, when the baby boom was just getting under way, 8.2 percent of Americans were 65 or older; now, with the boomers reaching that age, 13.3 percent are in that age bracket. ⁵⁵ Meanwhile, the birth rate is declining: The United States recorded 4 million births in 2010, down 3 percent from the previous year, continuing a recent trend. ⁵⁶

These factors, along with increasing longevity (expected life span in the United States now is about 78.5 years), pushed the median age of Americans to 37.2 in 2010 — up from 35.3 in 2000. "The aging of the baby boom population, along with stabilizing birth rates and longer life

expectancy, have contributed to the increase in median age," according to the Census Bureau. ⁵⁷

CURRENT SITUATION

Immigration Standstill

O nce a flood, the flow of immigrants from Mexico into the United States has come to a halt.

In April, the Pew Hispanic Center

reported that since 2007 net immigration from Mexico — the single largest source of immigrants to the United States — had dropped to zero. Mexicans are still emigrating to the United States, the center said, but just as many, and maybe more, are returning home.

"The standstill appears to be the result of many factors, including the weakened U.S. job and housing construction markets, heightened border enforcement, a rise in deportations, the growing dangers

associated with illegal border crossings, the long-term decline in Mexico's birth rates and broader economic conditions in Mexico," Pew said. ⁵⁸

Audrey Singer, a senior fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, believes the decline is due largely to developments in Mexico. "They've been sending labor to the U.S. for one or two generations, but now they have a shrinking supply themselves. Fertility rates are dropping, and they have a birthrate close to ours. Moreover, Mexican education levels are rising, and people are deciding not to come who may have taken a chance before."

The immigration pause is not likely to continue, however, she says. "We can probably assume that when our economy begins to pick up, immigration from Mexico will resume."

Even with the recent slowdown, America has about 12 million Mexican immigrants — more immigrants than from all other countries combined. Roughly 10 percent of people born in Mexico currently reside in the United States. ⁵⁹

Getty Images/Kevork Djansezian

Young people at the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles on Aug. 15, 2012, hear about a new federal program under which eligible undocumented young people can avoid deportation and obtain work permits. Many economists argue that immigrant workers have a positive effect on the economy, but others contend that curbing immigration would leave more jobs for U.S.-born workers.

However, more than half of the Mexicans in the United States are undocumented, according to the Department of Homeland Security, a fact that stirs heated debate, especially in the Border States. ⁶⁰ Cities and states have adopted a variety of measures to deal with illegal immigration, including a controversial law adopted by Arizona in 2010 aimed at driving illegal immigrants

away. Known as SB 1070, the measure requires law enforcement officials to check the immigration papers of suspected undocumented workers. ⁶¹

Under challenge in the courts, SB 1070 is regarded as at least partly responsible, along with high unemployment rates, for a sharp decline in the number of undocumented immigrants in Arizona, from 560,000 in 2008 to 360,000 in 2011. ⁶²

"The greatest effect of the bill is its deterrent effect," said Republican state Rep. John Kavanagh, a sponsor of SB 1070. "It probably scared a lot of illegal immigrants from coming here in the first place or staying if they were here." Kavanagh said the loss of illegal im-

migrants opened up job opportunities for U.S. citizens and legal immigrants at a time when the state's unemployment rate is 9.5 percent. "So losing 100,000 or 200,000 workers who were undercutting legal workers and depressing wages is a big plus, as far as I am concerned," he said. "Good riddance." 63

But the Center for American Progress, a liberal Washington, D.C., research organization that opposes the legislation, estimates that if all undocumented workers were expelled from Arizona, the state would lose \$29.5 billion in pre-tax salary and wage earn-

ings, \$4.2 billion in tax revenue and more than 500,000 jobs for both legal and undocumented workers. 64

Dayton Model

I n some places, especially cities far removed from the Border States, **Continued on p. 1006**

At Issue:

Is large-scale immigration good for the U.S. economy?



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WRITTEN FOR CO RESEARCHER, NOVEMBER 2012

The typical way of viewing immigration's impact on the economy is through costs and benefits derived from their presence in the labor market.

While economists debate how best to address this issue, there is some agreement that immigrants are a net benefit as measured by national GDP.

A benefit of a steady flow of immigrant workers to the United States is that they are responsive to labor-market changes and can go where workers are needed. This is especially so for newcomers, who tend to be most flexible on where to locate. The plateauing of immigration to the United States in response to declining jobs following the recession is an important illustration at the national level; many local areas mirror this trend.

It is not surprising, then, that the greatest economic impact of immigrants is at the state and local levels, where the brunt of costs to schools, health care systems and law enforcement is borne.

In the past two decades, immigrant settlement patterns have shifted significantly. Between 1930 and 1990, half of all immigrants in the United States lived in just five metropolitan areas, primarily in the Northeast and Midwest. Since then, the share in the top five places has declined to 40 percent, as immigrants have found opportunities in new places, particularly in the South and West.

Areas with new immigrant streams are more focused on the costs of immigration because, at least in the pre-recession economy, these areas attracted low-wage undocumented workers at a fast pace.

Estimates summarized by the Congressional Budget Office in 2007 show that in the aggregate and over the long term, tax revenues paid by immigrants are greater than the services they use. However, unauthorized immigrants use more state and local services than they pay for because of the types of services provided and because of the eligibility rules.

For example, while the percentage of school-age children of unauthorized immigrants is small nationally, this population tends to be concentrated at the very local level, and thus its impact can be swift.

The long-term view brings an important economic benefit into focus. Most of the future growth of the U.S. labor force will come from immigrants and their offspring. This next generation of workers will support the large cohort of baby boom retirees that now looms large. This is a reward that the United States should reap — with proper investments — as the next economy and workforce take shape.



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he assertion that large-scale immigration is good for the U.S. economy implies that more immigration is inherently better than less. This is not necessarily true. The types of immigrants a country has — and whether their skills meet U.S. labor market needs — arguably matters much more than raw numbers.

Most economists believe that immigration to the United States has raised average incomes (albeit recognizing the gains are not universal), and that immigrants — through their tax contributions — make it easier to provide public services without raising tax rates. Other research suggests immigrants have contributed disproportionately to innovation and productivity. But these findings come with caveats.

First, not all immigration is the same, and the benefits of some types of immigration are more clear-cut than others. The greatest economic gains come from highly skilled immigrants, many of whom compete for the tiny share of permanent visas available for employment-based immigration. (Most U.S. green cards are issued on the basis of family ties, not prospective economic value.)

Low-skilled immigrants bring some economic benefits, such as lower prices for goods and services like food and child care. But these overwhelmingly low-paid workers also draw on public services such as education. More selective policies to admit and retain the low-skilled workers best able to support themselves might help shift this calculus. Balancing current costs and benefits, the overall economic impact of low-skilled workers today is probably close to zero.

The green card lottery, known as the diversity visa, is also likely to have a low economic return, since its annual 50,000 beneficiaries fare relatively poorly in the U.S. labor market. A similar argument applies to some refugees and to the parents and adult siblings of U.S. citizens. These types of immigration are almost certainly not economically detrimental, and there are plenty of noneconomic arguments in their favor (like the value of family unity and the moral obligation to protect people fleeing persecution). The economic arguments, however, are not particularly compelling.

Immigration policies are adopted with more than economic benefit in mind — and for good reason. But if the goal is purely economic gain, simply opening the immigration spigot is not the best strategy. Rather than a bottom-line focus on numbers, a more reliable approach for making immigration an engine for economic growth would be to create more thoughtful, predictable and transparent policies to select the immigrant workers who will succeed here.

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public officials are encouraging immigration instead of discouraging it.

For instance, the once-thriving manufacturing center of Dayton, Ohio, started losing population in the 1970s after businesses began relocating to Sun Belt states with cheaper, non-union labor. General Motors closed a large assembly plant in 2008, eliminating 2,400 jobs; NCR, born in Dayton in 1884 as the National Cash Register Co., moved to Atlanta in 2009, eliminating another 1,000 jobs. Dayton's population plunged 42 percent between 1970 and 2010, sinking to 141,000. Unemployment is currently over 10 percent.

Hoping to end the downward spiral, civic leaders in 2011 introduced the "Welcome Dayton" initiative to attract immigrant entrepreneurs and workers. Welcome Dayton serves as a catalyst for public institutions such as police, libraries and community-service organizations to help brand the city as immigrant-friendly. For instance, the city's teachers are offered classes in Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and Swahili to make it easier for them to work with immigrant students.

Dayton also helped to establish a center to provide education, recreation and other services to immigrants for the region's Ahiska Turkish community. Officials plan to authorize grants to help immigrants establish businesses, and the city's First Annual World Soccer Tournament, held in September, featured local adult and youth teams representing the international community.

Tom Wahlrab, who retired in January as director of the city's Office of Human Rights, says, "Two things are fueling Welcome Dayton: The need for economic development and the human factor. Many of those who are coming are refugees with a lot of needs. Unless we recognize those needs and do what we can to help them gain a foothold in our community, they're going to be a burden. They won't be productive, and they're going to cost

the community in terms of the social services we'll need to provide."

It's too early to measure concrete results, although Dayton in 2011 added 600 new residents, Wahlrab says — a small gain, but the first population increase after 40 years of steady decline. Still, other localities are taking notice. Financially strapped Detroit, which launched "Global Detroit" in 2010 with the slogan, "Welcoming and Connecting the World to Our City," invited Wahlrab to come and discuss Dayton's experiences. "There is a certain elegance and opportunity in the plan that Dayton has put together," said Steve Tobocman, director of Global Detroit. "They've done certain things so profoundly right that I think we have a lot to learn from it." 65

Aging in Place

A s cities and states try to adjust to immigration trends, they also are beginning to taking steps — albeit haltingly in some cases — to accommodate the transportation, housing, health and other needs of the aging population. In eight years, one-fourth of residents in half of Ohio's counties will be at least 60 years old, and Arizona and Pennsylvania are projecting that a quarter of their residents will top age 60 by 2020. 66

Some cities are stepping up to the challenge. For example:

• New York City, where more than one in eight residents are over 60, established Age-Friendly New York City, which officials describe as "promoting an 'age-in-everything' lens across all aspects of city life. The initiative asks the city's public agencies, businesses, cultural, educational and religious institutions, community groups and individuals to consider how changes to policy and practice can create a city more inclusive of older adults and more sensitive to their needs." The effort, formed in 2009, is part of a broader

Age-friendly Cities project sponsored by the World Health Organization. 67

In Atlanta, where one-fifth of residents will be over age 60 by 2030, the Atlanta Regional Commission created a Lifelong Communities Initiative aimed at promoting housing and transportation options, encouraging healthy lifestyles and expanding information and access to services tailored to older residents. ⁶⁸

Still, many localities are ill-prepared to accommodate the coming wave of older residents, experts say. A 2005 survey of communities by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging found that while many communities had some programs for older people, "few had undertaken a comprehensive assessment to create a 'livable community' for all ages." A 2011 follow-up survey found "only limited progress" toward that goal, the group said. Indeed, as a result of the recent recession, "most communities have been able only to 'hold the line' — maintaining policies, programs and services already established," the association said. "They have not been able to move forward to the degree needed to address the nation's current 'age wave.' " 69

"The bottom line is, the baby boomers are hitting," Charles Gehring, president and CEO of LifeCare Alliance, an agency that serves seniors in central Ohio, told the *Columbus Dispatch*. "Are communities prepared for this? No." ⁷⁰

OUTLOOK

Political Changes

The 2012 presidential election underscored in dramatic fashion the crucial role that demographic changes are having in political and policy circles. Experts expect that role to grow even stronger in coming years as the profile of the electorate continues to evolve.

Many analysts believe the Republican Party fared poorly in this year's election in part because it did not do enough to address the interests of the nation's burgeoning Hispanic population. "The Hispanic population will grow faster than any other demographic, meaning this political problem is growing for Republicans," GOP strategist Matt Mackowiak told *The Hill* after the Nov. 6 elections. "We need more Hispanic candidates, more Hispanic outreach and less bellicose language on immigration." ⁷¹

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who served in the administration of Republican George W. Bush, said Republicans had sent "mixed messages" on immigration and women's issues and must do a better job of adapting to changing U.S. demographics.

"Right now for me, the most powerful argument is that the changing demographics in the country really necessitate an even bigger tent for the Republican Party," she said. "But when you look at the composition of the electorate, clearly we are losing important segments of that electorate, and what we have to do is to appeal to those people not as identity groups but understanding that if you can get the identity issues out of the way, then you can appeal on the broader issues that all Americans share concerns for." ⁷²

The demographic challenges facing policy makers in coming years cross party lines, however. Dealing with the burgeoning ranks of seniors and adequately funding Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid — which pays for nursing home care for low-income elderly people — are among the biggest challenges.

More than 56 million Americans now receive Social Security benefits, and 23 percent of married couples and about 46 percent of unmarried persons who are 65 years old or older rely on Social Security for 90 percent or more of their income. ⁷³

In 2010, for the first time, Social Security collected less in taxes than it paid

out in benefits. The Social Security Board of Trustees told Congress that the combined assets of the two trust funds from which Social Security benefits are paid will be exhausted in 2033. ⁷⁴

Meanwhile, some question whether Obama's re-election, along with the growing prominence of minorities in the nation's demographic profile, means that policy makers no longer need to pay the same degree of attention to race and ethnicity as in the past.

Brian Smedley, vice president of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington-based research organization dealing with minority public policy issues, doesn't think so.

"One of the most significant challenges for the Civil Rights Movement today is to somehow tackle the notion that the United States is now color-blind or post-racial," he says. He fears the nation is in danger of leaving behind the ideals of racial equality.

"There are many who believe that because we have [elected] an African-American president, and people of color are leading *Fortune* 500 companies, etc., race no longer matters in our society. Of course, we've made tremendous progress in race relations in the United States over the past 50-plus years, and that should be celebrated," he says. "It's remarkable that we have created a society that is much more egalitarian, and we're moving closer to our ideal as a nation where people truly are judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin.

"However," he continues, "many people of color still face profound inequities across a host of dimensions . . . such as health, wealth, educational status, income, home ownership, you name it. It's more critical than ever that we focus the nation's attention on these problems because the demographic shifts that are coming suggest that we need to be very mindful of what our nation will look like and how the inequities will hurt everyone in this country unless we solve them."

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The Next Step:

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