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Immigrant Integration and Policy in the United States: A Loosely Stitched Patchwork

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A. Introduction

The United States is known, in the collective imagination of its citizens and by many around the world, as the quintessential immigrant nation, one that has successfully integrated millions of newcomers over its history. Today, the descendants of the massive waves of 19th and early 20th century European migrants are part of the American mainstream. Their incorporation was symbolized in the 1960s by the election of President John F. Kennedy, a Catholic Irish-American, over a hundred years after the Know Nothing movement advanced political candidates opposing Irish Catholic immigration. Some might read the 2008 victory of President Barack Obama, the son of a Kenyan-born father and Kansas-born mother, as a new chapter in the integration story, extended to non-white immigrants and their descendants. Given that the United States is often held up as a model, how does integration work?

We argue that the dominant view of the American public and the prevailing policy stance of the U.S. government is one of *laissez-faire* integration: immigrants are largely expected to use their own resources, family, friendship networks, and perhaps the assistance of local community organizations to survive and thrive in the United States.² There is no coordinated national integration policy, which also means that there is no

¹ Our thanks to Tomás Jiménez and Helen Marrow for their helpful feedback on an earlier draft of this paper.

² Schmidt (2007) also describes the U.S. approach to immigrant integration as “*laissez-faire*.”

official definition of “social integration” in the United States. We can, however, identify a widespread view of integration, or assimilation, from public and academic debates.

According to this common view, social integration is achieved when we see an absence of significant difference between immigrants and the native born in, for example, their language use, their labour market participation, or their political viewpoints.³

Beneath the dominant *laissez-faire* outlook, we do find examples of federal, state, and municipal policies aimed at immigrants’ integration. Indeed, the Migration Policy Index—an international survey of policies that effect immigrants’ labour access, family reunification rights, education, political participation, and access to nationality—scored the United States as 9th out of 32 highly developed countries on integration policy.⁴ In this paper, we examine some of the most salient national policies as part of the patchwork of government initiatives that affect immigrants’ ability to fully access the opportunities, rights, and services available to the native-born population. Because of limited action by the national government, local communities—including non-traditional and new immigrant destinations such as suburbs, rural areas, and new gateway cities in the South—have found themselves, *de facto*, confronted with the challenges of integration, often without the resources or know-how to address them. We argue that the patchwork of policies that exist do not, together, form a coherent response to the issue of immigrant inclusion. Immigrants can be treated very differently across political jurisdictions and regions of the United States. Furthermore, not all policies seek inclusion. Some aim to exclude the foreign born from social services, education, and jobs, all key pieces of social

³ Such views can be normative—immigrants *should* become like native-born Americans—or an empirical statement of inter-generational outcomes (e.g., Alba and Nee 2003). Usually, the former view also values immigrants’ cultural assimilation, whereas the latter envisions greater room for cultural and religious pluralism within a general pattern of economic, social, and political convergence.

⁴ See <http://www.mipex.eu/usa>.

integration. It appears that variation in local integration approaches is increasing and the move toward exclusion is intensifying.

Remarkably, despite public reservations about immigration and the national government's *laissez-faire* attitude, social scientists report that many immigrants and their children are integrating successfully into the labour market, education system, popular culture, and to a lesser extent politics. However, patterns of inclusion are heavily stratified by migrants' educational and economic resources, racial inequalities, and legal status, which prevent a significant proportion of immigrants from being fully included. Given evidence that official refugees in the United States—the only migrants who receive some concerted government assistance with integration—tend to have better outcomes than similarly situated non-refugees, we suggest that patterns of successful integration in the United States occur despite, rather than because of, the *laissez-faire* attitude. If more concerted policy action were taken, across all levels of government, we speculate that integration would be even more successful.

B. Immigration to the United States: Law and People

The popular image of the United States is one of enduring immigration. In reality, immigrants and issues of integration faded into relative insignificance for a large stretch of the 20th century. As Figure 1 shows, the ebbs and flows of migration to the United States have been dramatic. In 1890, the foreign born made up 15 percent of the population, but by 1970, this figure dropped to under 5 percent. In 2008, the United States was again an immigrant nation: 38 million foreign-born people constituted 12.5 percent of the country's 304 million residents, a proportion four times the global

average.⁵ Behind the numbers lies a complex history of immigration laws and U.S. military and foreign policy decisions, as well as the relative attraction of the American labour market, an attraction at times encouraged by U.S. employers seeking out immigrants.⁶ While the history of U.S. immigration law is well-covered elsewhere (Daniels 2004; Reimers 1992; Tichenor 2002; Zolberg 2006), its broad contours can be told as a story in four periods.

Figure 1 here: Foreign-born Population in the United States, 1850-2008⁷

1. The History of Migration to the United States

From its founding to the 1880s, the United States had an open-door policy with virtually no federal regulation of migration. Individual states sometimes regulated passenger ships and cities enforced residence requirements in poor laws. Both affected migrants' ability to enter or reside in particular places, but in general people were able to migrate with relative ease, and millions did.

Starting in the 1880s, the door gradually closed through a series of laws demonstrating the racial hierarchy informing American policy-making (Ngai 2004). Starting with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Congress first suspended, then effectively ended, Chinese migration to the United States. Legislators also denied Chinese immigrants access to U.S. citizenship through naturalization. Racial exclusion

⁵ The United Nations estimates that in 2005, 191 million people lived outside their country of birth, three percent of the world population (UNPD 2006). As with the global statistics, the U.S. percentage counts the proportion of all foreign-born individuals, regardless of legal status. Unless otherwise indicated, all U.S. statistics are from the American Community Survey (2007-09) available from the U.S. Census: http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

⁶ The legacies of American foreign policy and military actions loom large in explaining U.S. migration patterns. The United States has, at various times, controlled territories from the Philippines to the Caribbean, spurring migration from these countries, and it has given preferential entry to refugees fleeing Communism (such as Cubans, Vietnamese, Nicaraguans, and those from the former Soviet Union) while refusing asylum to those fleeing regimes supported by the United States (such as Salvadorians, Guatemalans, and Haitians) (Stanton Russell 1995; Zucker and Zucker 1992).

⁷ Data for Figure 1 are from Campbell and Lennon (1999), 2000 US Census of Population and Housing, and the 2007-09 American Community Survey, three-year estimate.

was extended to Japanese migrants under the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” of 1907-08, and then to the entire Asian continent with the imposition of an “Asiatic Barred Zone” in the Immigration Act of 1917. In 1921 and 1924, national origin quotas effectively ended mass migration from Eastern and Southern Europe, targeting Italians, Greeks, Russians, Poles, and other groups viewed as racially inferior by many Americans of the time.⁸

The national origin quota laws of the 1920s and the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, bookend the third period of “non-migration.” Few migrants were able to enter the United States, so the proportion of immigrants in the country declined dramatically. However, two types of migration served, in hindsight, as harbingers of the current period. After World War II, refugees—first from war-torn Europe and then from countries in which the United States had a foreign policy interest—were given entry outside the quotas. The U.S. government also entered into agreements, known as the *Bracero* program, with Mexico and Caribbean countries starting in World War II and continuing to 1964 to bring in temporary migrants to fill labour shortages. By the 1970s, special refugee admissions would explode, and with the end of bilateral labour agreements, temporary migration would transform into clandestine migration.

Today, the fourth chapter of the story is a dramatic rise in the number of new migrants. In 2008, nearly a third of all immigrants, 30 percent, had entered the United States in 2000 or later; barely two-fifths had lived in the country for more than two decades. The 1965 Hart-Celler Act ended national-origin quotas, ushered in a new era of mass migration, and changed the sources of immigration, as seen in Figure 2. Today,

⁸ Restrictions did not apply to the “Western Hemisphere,” which meant that Mexican and Canadian migration, in particular, could continue. The 1965 Hart-Celler Act instituted, for the first time, a cap on visas for the Western Hemisphere.

Europeans constitute a small minority of the total, while over half of all immigrants were born in Mexico, Central or South America, or the Caribbean, with Mexicans the largest group. Most of these migrants speak Spanish, so debates over linguistic inclusion and bilingual education focus heavily on the Spanish language, and perceptions of immigrants as a “cultural threat” often center on the feared displacement of English by Spanish (Zolberg and Woon 1999; Huntington 2004).

Figure 2 about here: Top 25 Countries of Birth of the US Foreign-born Population, 2008.

The 1965 Act still structures immigration today through a series of preference categories that determine admission. Only individuals sponsored by an immediate family member who is a U.S. citizen can avoid the quotas imposed by Congress, set between 416,000 and 675,000 per year by the 1990 Immigration Act. The preference categories emphasize family reunification as well, so two-thirds to three-quarters of those who enter the United States in any given year do so because they have family already in the country. The remainder of legal immigrants enter as economic migrants, usually as high-skilled workers sponsored by U.S. employers, or as refugees or asylees.⁹

The United States is also home to a significant undocumented population, migrants who enter the country clandestinely or overstay legal visas for tourism, study, or temporary work. It is estimated, as of 2008, that between 11.5 and 12 million people lacked legal residency papers, about 31 percent of all foreign-born individuals in the United States (Hoefer, Rytina, and Baker 2009; Passel and Cohn 2009). Undocumented, or “illegal,” migration has become a defining feature of American immigration debates.

⁹ U.S. immigration law distinguishes between refugees selected for resettlement outside the United States and asylees who make an asylum claim on U.S. territory.

Indeed, a majority of U.S. residents think most immigrants in the country are illegal.¹⁰ The prevailing belief, among the public and many policymakers, is that more border control is the best way to deal with undocumented migration, which encompasses calls for more border patrol officers, more fencing, and more high technology surveillance. Border enforcement was already a priority of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) before the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, but since 2003, when immigration and enforcement were transferred to the new Department of Homeland Security, policing borders has become deeply intertwined with national security.

2. Contemporary Integration Issues: How Are Immigrants Doing?

How well are these migrants fitting into American society? Statistical comparisons of foreign-born and U.S.-born residents provide some evidence of successful integration; labour market participation among immigrants is particularly high. But statistics also show that language access, policies related to children, income inequality, and poverty are particularly salient issues for the foreign born.

On language, Figure 3 shows that the overwhelming majority of foreign-born residents, 84 percent, speaks a language other than English at home, compared to only 10 percent of the native born. Of those who do not speak English at home, 52 percent report not speaking English “very well,” and probably a higher percentage have difficulty with written English. As we outline below, many immigrant-targeted policies deal with language issues, from integrative policies providing non-English speakers with access to public services, to exclusionary policies imposing English as the only language of government.

¹⁰ According to a 2009 survey, 51 percent of Americans think most immigrants are illegal, a slight increase from the 48 percent with a similar view in 2008 (German Marshall Fund of the U.S. 2009).

Figure 3 about here: Selected Characteristics of the Foreign- and Native-born US Population, 2007-09.

Child welfare and education policies also heavily affect immigrant families. Forty-four percent of immigrant families have at least one child under the age of 18 in the household, compared to only 29 percent of native-born families. Indeed, 23 percent of all children under the age of 18, 16.3 million children, live in a household with at least one immigrant parent. The overwhelming majority of these children are U.S. born and thus U.S. citizens. Scholars and policymakers often judge the success of this “second generation,” from their educational attainment to their living conditions, as an important indicator of integration and social inclusion, even if children born in the United States are citizens, and not technically immigrants.

The mixed legal status of many immigrant families, with children who are citizens but parents who are non-citizen legal residents or undocumented, generates fierce debates over whether such families should receive public benefits which, in the United States, are sometimes tied to citizenship or legal status. Such debates are consequential since 15 percent of immigrant families fall below the federal poverty line, compared to 9 percent of native-born families. At least one study claims that the problem is much worse; an alternative measure of economic deprivation reveals that nearly one-half of children in immigrant families live in poverty (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney 2009). Poverty measures are frequently used to determine eligibility for means-tested public benefits, from food aid to health insurance coverage.

Even when they do not fall below the poverty line, immigrant households—with or without children—have lower incomes than the native born. Median household

income was US \$4,200 less for immigrant families (US \$47,700) than native-born families (US \$51,900). This income difference is not because immigrants are not working. To the contrary, 68 percent of all immigrants are in the labour force, and only 4.7 percent report being unemployed, compared to 65 percent and 4.9 percent among the native born, respectively.¹¹ Rather, it stems from a substantial earnings gap: for example, a full-time male immigrant worker earned US \$34,600 compared to US \$47,800 for a native-born worker. The low level of schooling among a large proportion of immigrants explains part of the gap—32 percent of immigrants do not hold a high school diploma—but education does not account for the entire difference, raising questions about employment equity and discrimination. Evaluating immigrants' economic incorporation is thus a mixed bag: the foreign born work more, but they earn less and are more likely to live in poverty than those born in the United States.

The portrait of social inclusion sketched out in these statistics finds some response in the policies we discuss below. On the whole, however, we find these policies inadequate; there is room for additional policy intervention. Yet, to the extent that policy often flows from political pressure and voter preferences, the low level of citizenship among U.S. migrants—only 43 percent have naturalized—makes it hard to promote policies for the nearly 22 million foreign born shut out of the voting booth.¹² Without a direct political voice, non-citizen immigrants must rely on intermediaries such as community-based organizations and advocacy groups to promote their interests, or they

¹¹ These data were in part collected before the recession of 2008-09 hit the United States; there is evidence that immigrants were especially hurt by job losses, rendering their economic situation even more precarious (Orrenius and Zavodny 2009).

¹² With the exception of a very few municipalities, non-citizens cannot vote in the United States. Non-citizens include immigrants eligible for U.S. citizenship, but who have not applied, and almost 12 million individuals without legal residency who cannot access citizenship under their current status. Among those eligible for citizenship, there is some evidence of a slight increase in naturalization rate (Baker 2009).

can demonstrate and take their concerns to the street. These strategies have produced integration policies in certain localities (de Graauw 2008), but they are less likely to inspire comprehensive integration policies at the national level.

C. Philosophies of Integration: From Americanization to Laissez-faire

In the United States, immigrants' social integration is not the purview of the federal government. The word "integration" does not appear in the mission statement of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which is to "secure America's promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to our customers, granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system."¹³ At most, the main federal agency dedicated to immigration touches on civic integration: USCIS adjudicates citizenship applications and does some limited work to facilitate U.S. citizenship.¹⁴ Starting in 2009, for example, USCIS administered a competitive Citizenship and Integration Grant Program to fund local citizenship preparation efforts. With just \$1.2 million in its first year, and \$8.1 million in its second, the program can only serve a fraction of the nearly 22 million non-citizen immigrants (USCIS 2010). The White House puts slightly more emphasis on immigrants' economic contributions—"President Obama recognizes that an orderly, controlled border and an immigration

¹³ Available at: <http://www.uscis.gov/aboutus>. Like integration policy, many different federal agencies have jurisdiction over entry and deportation policy. See Davy, Meyers, and Batalova (2005) for a brief overview of this administrative maze.

¹⁴ To acquire citizenship, most applicants must demonstrate a basic command of English and knowledge of U.S. government and history. USCIS, and INS before it, have historically provided little support for citizenship training or other integration efforts. There are small signs of change in recent years. For example, in addition to the grants program, USCIS now publishes a short guide that gives newcomers basic information on topics like getting a social security number and finding childcare, available on the web: <http://www.uscis.gov/newimmigrants>.

system designed to meet our economic needs are important pillars of a healthy and robust economy”—but despite a Democratic President with a foreign-born father, immigrant integration is not on the executive agenda.¹⁵

We can read an implicit definition of integration in the formal documents used by government authorities to grant legal residence or U.S. citizenship. These documents assess whether applicants contribute economically (by working or going to school, paying taxes, and not using welfare); they evaluate immigrants’ “good moral character” by making sure they have committed no crimes (including hate crimes, terrorism, and bigamy); and they verify that men between the ages of 18 and 25 have signed up for the selective service (to be used in the event of a military draft). The implicit message from the official documents builds on that of the White House: integration means obeying the law and making an economic contribution to society. For those who want to become a citizen, naturalization also requires a basic knowledge of the English language, U.S. government, and American history. To the extent that the national “glue” holding the United States together rests on attachment to the U.S. Constitution, political values such as liberalism and democracy, and free-market capitalism, immigration officials reiterate these values in their forms and the naturalization exam.

The government response both reflects and influences public perceptions over appropriate policy responses. Many Americans are ambivalent about immigration—54 percent see immigration more as a problem than an opportunity—but concern centers

¹⁵ While this is in large part due to the belief that integration is not the purview of government, debates over legalizing the undocumented population and, more recently, concerns over terrorism also crowd out integration-related issues. For the White House position, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration>.

largely on illegal migration.¹⁶ Asked about *legal* immigrants, two-thirds to three quarters of Americans disagree with suggestions that newcomers are a burden on social services, increase crime, or increase the likelihood of a terrorist attack. When the question is framed as about *illegal* migrants, however, a majority associates illegal migrants with increases in terrorism and crime, and almost three-quarters see the undocumented as a drain on social services. Unlike in many European countries, immigrants' cultural and religious diversity does not raise as much concern. Two-thirds of Americans feel that immigration enriches the culture of the United States. When asked whether it is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions, 71 percent of Americans disagreed, a higher proportion than in eight other countries surveyed.¹⁷ The legal status of migrants—not their culture or work ethic—is the central public policy issue in the United States.¹⁸

Despite the lack of a coordinated or overarching federal integration policy, immigrants can benefit from programs seeking the social integration of all U.S. residents, and naturalized immigrants can access the same programs as citizens. The United States, with its history of slavery and second-class African-American citizenship, also has a

¹⁶ All opinion survey statistics, unless otherwise noted, are from the German Marshall Fund report, *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2009*, available at: <http://www.gmfus.org/trends/immigration/>.

¹⁷ The data on sharing customs and traditions comes from the Globus International Affairs Poll, conducted by AP-Ipsos Public Affairs in 2004, surveying residents in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The second highest level of opposition to the statement came from Canadians, with 58 percent disagreeing that it is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions. See <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/searchresults.aspx?search=GLOBUS>.

Concern over how immigration-induced diversity might undermine social capital or social cohesion, widespread in countries such as the United Kingdom, has not had much traction in the United States, either among academics or policymakers. This is perhaps surprising, given that some of the most cited research linking diversity with reduced social capital focuses on the United States (e.g., Alesina and La Ferrara 2000, 2002; Putnam 2007). The muted reaction reflects both disagreement about how robust the findings are, and the perception that any negative correlation in the United States occurs more due to the dynamics of race relations than immigration.

¹⁸ When it comes working hard, Americans hold similar views on legal and illegal immigrants, with about 9 out of 10 judging that migrants are hard workers.

range of policies and programs directed to ethnic and racial minorities, such as preferential hiring and contracting policies (affirmative action) and anti-discrimination protections in housing and the workplace. Many of these initiatives are extended to and used by immigrants if they are deemed an ethnic or racial minority. Indeed, in the MIPEX international comparison of integration policies, the United States stood out, with Canada, as having the strongest anti-discrimination infrastructure.¹⁹ Finally, as we outline below, some federal agencies oversee initiatives or implement laws directed to linguistically isolated individuals who do not speak English, a population overwhelmingly composed of immigrants.

Sub-national governments—sometimes states, but often municipalities—are also increasingly the site of integration debates, especially as a result of immigrants’ increased dispersion to new metropolitan and rural locales and after federal efforts at comprehensive immigration reform failed in 2007. This can be seen in the growing number of state bills and local ordinances proposed, and sometimes enacted, by policymakers (Laglagaron, et al. 2008). Some bills aim to facilitate immigrant integration; others seek exclusion. Media have also constructed immigrant integration as a problem for local government; one analysis of newspaper coverage finds that journalists’ accounts view integration as a policy “nonproblem” for federal officials (Abu-Laban and Garber 2005).

American society and government have not always been so “hands-off” regarding immigrants’ social integration. In the early 20th century, private groups of citizens, settlement houses, social workers, employers, schools, and some government agencies

¹⁹ See <http://www.mipex.eu/anti-discrimination>. The United States was noticeably weaker in other integration policy areas.

worked to “Americanize” newcomers. By encouraging immigrants to shed their Old World ways—from language to culture, political attitudes to ways of dress—these groups hoped to hasten immigrants’ transition into an industrial economy and a democratic political system (Gosnell 1928; Higham 1988; Ziegler-McPherson 2009). The U.S. Department of Education, for example, worked with local school boards to provide textbooks to teach children and adults about U.S. citizenship, and businesses such as the Ford Motor Company provided English-language classes to their workers (Smith 1926). While in some cases helpful, many of these initiatives also denigrated immigrants’ cultures of origin, promoting a unilateral and one-way process of assimilation.

The cauldron of World Wars I and II served as a further melting pot as war-time service brought soldiers from various ethnic backgrounds together to fight in common cause against a foreign enemy. Following World War II, these adult children and grandchildren of European migrants benefited from programs for war veterans, such as the G.I. Bill, which helped send a generation of young men to college, and mortgage programs that facilitated homeownership in the suburbs. While not frequently acknowledged in public discussions, such post-war social policies played a critical role in the social integration of 20th century European migrants and their descendants (Brodkin 1998; Katznelson 2005).²⁰

Today, academics in the United States debate whether the experiences of European immigrants and their children serve as a guide to contemporary migrants’ integration. Due to educational and language barriers, many first generation migrants will not achieve full integration in their lifetime, but the American belief in equality and

²⁰ Non-European veterans, including those of Asian and Mexican origin, faced barriers in accessing these benefits, as did native-born African American soldiers.

economic mobility imply that the experiences and outcomes of the second generation should be like those of other native-born peers. According to some, there are grounds for optimism: young adults with immigrant parents living in New York City do better than their parents (as measured by educational attainment and occupation), and better than U.S.-born peers of similar minority status (Kasinitz, et al. 2008). According to Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003), U.S. anti-discrimination policy and Americans' social acceptance of diversity ensure that the children and grandchildren of today's immigrants will become part of a mainstream where their background has little effect on their lives.

Such a view is disputed by other scholars who conclude that the prospects of today's second generation are mixed at best, and dim for many. Previously, a strong industrial sector with well-paying jobs offered an economic ladder to successive generations; it is argued that the post-industrial economy rewards those with high education, but traps migrants with less human capital in a low-wage service economy (Gans 1992; Portes and Zhou 1993). Economic obstacles are also aggravated by racism, which is still prevalent despite anti-discrimination legislation (Telles and Ortiz 2008). Some second generation Americans will succeed by integrating into the white mainstream or using their human, cultural, and social capital to get ahead, but a significant proportion faces limited educational success and bleak job prospects (Zhou 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Both viewpoints, whether optimistic or pessimistic, envision a minimal role for government policy. The "new" assimilation model of Alba and Nee underscores the role of anti-discrimination legislation and, implicitly, the public school system, but it is a model primarily driven by individual immigrants' decisions to get ahead, rather than

government policies promoting social integration. Those less optimistic highlight the importance of government in structuring different paths of legal entry—as refugees, economic, family, or undocumented migrants—but they place much of the blame for integration failures on global capitalism, racism, and a new hour-glass economy. As with public opinion and federal policy inaction, academics in the United States envisage no major role for government in immigrants’ social inclusion.

D. Contemporary Social Inclusion Policies: A Loosely Stitched Patchwork

The United States has a federal system of government, with power divided between a national (federal) government, 50 states, and close to 20,000 municipalities. The laws that the national government creates are, as stated in the U.S. Constitution, “the supreme law of the land.” Lower levels of government nevertheless have jurisdiction to set policy in certain areas, such as education and social programs, and to impose taxes. In the absence of a uniform national integration policy, this tiered political system has produced a patchwork of social policies that affect newcomers. Certain policies are targeted directly at immigrants; some of these aim for inclusion, but others at exclusion. Other policies are not necessarily framed with immigrants specifically in mind, but can facilitate immigrants’ integration. These policies often flow from the legacies of the 1960s civil rights movement, when native-born minorities led by African Americans mobilized for equality in law and practice.

It is thus impossible to identify a coherent government response to the issue of immigrant inclusion. Rather, we provide an overview of the most salient policies that affect immigrants in language, education, health care, and social benefits. We focus on

national policies current as of 2010, but occasionally we refer to notable developments at the state and local levels to reflect the increasing activity of sub-national governments around immigration. It is critical to underscore that our review does not cover all policies affecting or targeting immigrants, and that formal policy can be a poor guide to practice on the ground.²¹ We nevertheless try to provide a sense of how governments in the United States have tried to increase opportunities and access for immigrants and, increasingly, where they exclude the foreign born.

1. Language

The great majority of recent immigrants to the United States do not speak English as their native language. Because language ability affects integration into, or exclusion from, other aspects of U.S. society, language access and programs to learn English as a second language (ESL) are key policy arenas. There is a growing policy framework addressing linguistic access, but much more limited action on adult ESL instruction.

Immigrants with limited English proficiency enjoy some language access guarantees to government information and public services. These policies have their roots in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. A crowning achievement of the movement, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, includes Title VI, which prohibits discrimination

²¹ For example, we do not address the full range of anti-discrimination legislation; labour law, which in many cases protects undocumented workers; or policies related to the media and culture. U.S. governments provide little public funding for “ethnic” culture; there is no national multiculturalism policy for the preservation of immigrants’ cultural heritages. Here again we see a *laissez-faire* attitude, which allows immigrants to establish their own grassroots cultural groups as nonprofit organizations and allows companies to seek profit by serving cultural communities. Especially noteworthy is the vibrant Spanish-language media sector and entertainment industry that counts more than 700 Spanish-language newspapers in print, close to 900 Spanish-language radio stations, and approximately 200 television stations that broadcast in Spanish and that provides a rich range of products to Spanish speakers (Arbitron 2008; Latino Print Network 2008). On the disjuncture between law and practice, some recent scholarship examines “bureaucratic incorporation,” the actions taken by public employees to accommodate immigrants (de Graauw 2008; Lewis and Ramakrishnan 2007; Jones-Correa 2008). It is worth noting, however, that although some officials accommodate immigrants by stretching, bending, or even breaking the rules, such bureaucratic inclusion is delimited by existing legislation and policies, our focus here (Marrow 2009).

based on race, colour, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal funds. Although the courts have consistently rejected attempts to equate language with national origin, Congress and the President have used Title VI as a statutory basis to intervene in language issues, most notably requiring administrative agencies at various levels of government to hire bilingual personnel and translate forms, notices, and applications for limited-English proficient (LEP) individuals. Following complaints about spotty implementation, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” in 2000. This order, which President Bush reaffirmed in 2002, aims to improve the enforcement and implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act by requiring any agency or program that receives federal funding to provide meaningful access for LEP individuals. On the heels of this order, immigrant gateway cities such as San Francisco, Washington, DC, and New York have adopted their own, more expansive, language access policies. Mayor Bloomberg of New York, for example, signed Executive Order 120 in 2008, directing all city agencies to provide language assistance in the city’s six most commonly spoken foreign languages: Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Italian, and French Creole.

Language access also surfaces in discussions over immigrants’ access to the ballot box. Section 203 of the 1975 amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 requires officials to provide bilingual voting assistance in communities where a single language minority group makes up five percent of the voting-age population or has more than 10,000 voting-age citizens and is limited-English proficient. Section 203 applies to persons of American Indian, Asian, Alaskan Native, or Spanish heritage, the groups that Congress found to face barriers in the political process. Despite intermittent public

concern over the cost of Section 203—which was originally intended as a temporary measure—Congress has reauthorized these provisions five times, most recently in 2006 for 25 years. As of 2002, a total of 466 local jurisdictions in 31 states were legally required to provide voting information and ballots in non-English languages (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 2006).

In contrast to relatively robust language access efforts, the federal government has done little to create and fund programs that teach English to adult immigrants. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), enacted as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is the main national program for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. In fiscal year 2003-04, the federal government allocated US \$561 million for AEFLA, including nearly US \$70 million benefitting 1.2 million individuals who had enrolled in the English literacy and civics classes (U.S. Department of Education 2006). Due to inadequate funding, however, AEFLA has not lived up to its potential. The federal government allocates funds to states and localities based on the number of LEP adults without a high school degree. In 2005-07, the United States counted 21.6 million LEP adults, of which 10.4 million had not completed high school (Capps, Fix, McHugh and Lin 2009). Consequently, 11.2 million LEP adults who hold a high school diploma are excluded from the federal funding formula, even though they are eligible for AEFLA-funded programs and often enroll in ESL classes. The underfunding has resulted in a nation-wide logjam: providers of ESL classes report long waiting lists, sometimes up to three years, and overcrowded, understaffed classrooms (Tucker 2006).

The case of adult ESL language instruction illustrates well the American public's *laissez-faire* philosophy to immigrant integration. In an opinion survey conducted in

2009 by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, with partners in other countries, 91 percent of Americans polled felt it very or somewhat important that immigrants speak English. However, only 30 percent felt that the government should pay for English language classes for immigrants, a level of support lower than the 48 percent of Canadians and 39 percent of Europeans who supported publicly-funded language classes.²²

2. Education

In the United States, education is primarily the purview of individual states, but during the civil rights movement the federal government stepped in to enforce civil rights laws in education. To this end, Congress enacted the 1968 Bilingual Education Act (BEA), the first piece of federal legislation for minority language speakers. BEA, which expired in 2002, served as a remedy against discrimination of students who did not speak English and provided federal funding for programs taught in languages other than English. Controversy over the form and effectiveness of BEA-funded programs was ongoing during the 34 years the Act was in force, especially over whether it should provide only remedial or transitional English instruction, or whether it should also support the maintenance of minority languages and cultures, as favoured by supporters of multilingualism and cultural pluralism (Schmid 2001; Spolsky 2004).

The controversy over bilingual education has been especially heated in some states with large immigrant populations. California voters, for example, passed by a sweeping 61-39 percent margin Proposition 227, the “English for the Children” initiative,

²² Six European countries were polled: France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. A virtually identical proportion of residents in the other countries, 89 percent, felt it important that immigrants know the national language, but only respondents in the United Kingdom were less likely to support government language classes, at 25 percent, while Canadians, at 48 percent, were most likely to support public funding (German Marshall Fund of the U.S. 2009).

amid charges that bilingual school programs were ineffective and concerns that language diversity causes political disunity and the fragmentation of American culture. The 1998 initiative, which survived a federal court challenge, prohibits bilingual education programs for limited-English proficient students in the state's public school system and instead establishes one year of sheltered English instruction. Following California's example, voters in Arizona and Massachusetts adopted similar initiatives in 2000 and 2002, respectively, but voters in Colorado voted down a state ballot measure in 2002 attacking bilingual education.

When federal policymakers allowed BEA to expire, they replaced it with the English Language Acquisition Act (ELAA). Congress enacted ELAA in 2001 as Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act, a landmark educational reform that aims to reduce the achievement gap among U.S. primary and secondary schools through strict testing requirements and penalties for states and schools that fail to meet performance requirements in reading, math, and science. ELAA signals a clear departure in federal support for native-language instruction. The act contains no reference to "bilingual education" and prioritizes English-only instruction by measuring the success of school programs in English language proficiency alone. The change in teaching pedagogy that ELAA forces on states, some claim, will hurt the overall academic achievement of immigrant children and make it more difficult for them to adapt to life in the United States (England 2009).

Debate over school programs assumes that immigrant children have the right to attend public educational institutions. However, in 1975, the state of Texas challenged this assumption by enacting a law that denied funding to educate undocumented

immigrant children and allowed local school districts to prevent these children from enrolling. The law was challenged in court and was ultimately argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. In its 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision, the Court struck down the law, ruling that undocumented children, like children who are U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents, have a right to a free, public education.

As undocumented children have progressed through the school system, some immigrant advocates and policymakers have shifted their attention to the plight of undocumented young people after they finish high school. In higher education, debate has zeroed in on whether undocumented students should be allowed to pay in-state tuition, a lower rate of tuition that public colleges and universities charge residents of their state, or whether they may attend college at all. Currently, an estimated 50,000 undocumented immigrants are enrolled in U.S. colleges, but only ten states allow these students to pay in-state tuition (MPI 2006). Many worry about the career prospects of young people largely raised and educated in the United States but living without proper legal status. Such concerns have fuelled, since 2001, a series of legislative proposals for a “DREAM Act,” which would provide undocumented immigrants who have five years of continuous U.S. residency and a U.S. high school diploma with the ability to legalize their status by attending college or joining the U.S. military.²³ The Act would also allow states to provide, without penalty, in-state tuition and other higher education benefits to students regardless of documentation status. As recently as 2010, the DREAM Act failed to pass Congress yet again.

3. Health Care

²³ DREAM Act stands for “Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors” Act.

Congressional debates over health care reform in 2009-10 made clear that lack of health care coverage is an issue of national concern and one that affects substantial numbers of native-born and foreign-born individuals. The foreign born are, however, much more likely to lack health insurance. In 2007, 12.7 percent of the native-born population was uninsured, compared to 17.6 percent of immigrants who had naturalized, 43.8 percent of non-citizen immigrants, and 57.1 percent of undocumented immigrants (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith 2008; Passel and Cohn 2009). These percentages are perhaps surprising, since employment-based health insurance is the mainstay of the U.S. health insurance system and immigrants are more likely to work than their native-born counterparts. However, a series of private and public sector barriers hit immigrants particularly hard.

The majority of those with health insurance in the United States get coverage through their employers. As of 2009, however, no state or federal law requires private sector employers to provide health insurance benefits to their employees.²⁴ As health insurance plans become increasingly expensive, many small businesses and firms employing low-wage immigrant workers opt not to offer health insurance. The prohibitive cost of private health insurance also means that immigrants without employer-provided coverage cannot afford to buy insurance on their own.

These obstacles are aggravated by barriers to accessing public, government-funded health care programs, notably Medicaid, a federal/state funded health insurance program for the poor, and Medicare, the federal health insurance program that covers

²⁴ The state of Massachusetts adopted a law in 2006 requiring nearly all of its residents to obtain health insurance, but it does not require employers to provide insurance. In 2007, the city of San Francisco started a program, enacted the year before, to provide universal access to health care for residents, including undocumented immigrants. The program only requires employer contributions from large and medium-sized businesses.

most people age 65 and older. With few exceptions, undocumented immigrants have never been eligible for these programs, but legal immigrants previously had eligibility on par with U.S. citizens. In 1996, this equality ended with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), commonly known as the Welfare Reform Act.²⁵ PRWORA made legal immigrants who entered the country after 22 August 1996 ineligible for Medicaid and Medicare during their first five years in the United States, a restriction also applied to the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which Congress created in 1997 to provide health insurance for low-income children who have no health insurance and are ineligible for Medicaid. Several states have stepped in to fill the health insurance void by providing state-funded health care to some non-citizens, especially children and pregnant women, but a significant gap in insurance coverage and access to health care remains between immigrants and native-born Americans.²⁶

Current health care policy, despite passage of new legislation seeking to extend health insurance to millions of residents lacking coverage, does not make us hopeful about the future course of immigrant integration in the United States. Undocumented immigrants remain explicitly excluded. Legal immigrants eligible for public health programs tend to be confused about the complex eligibility requirements. Many avoid using Medicaid due to the mistaken impression that doing so would make them a “public charge,” possibly rendering them ineligible for U.S. citizenship (Feld and Power 2002).

²⁵ This landmark federal law affected U.S. citizens as well, by eliminating welfare as an entitlement, imposing time limits on public assistance, mandating that welfare recipients work, and increasing the power of states to administer welfare programs. Non-citizens were arguably the hardest hit, however.

²⁶ Federal law does mandate, however, that immigrants—regardless of citizenship, legal status, or ability to pay—cannot be denied medical services that protect their life and the health and safety of the public, including emergency services, immunizations, and diagnosis and treatment of communicable diseases.

Uninsured immigrants lack access to preventative services and often seek help only when they become critically ill, relying on costly emergency room visits to get medical care. Lack of linguistic and culturally competent medical services also affect the quality of care. All in all, health care barriers can have disastrous consequences for immigrants and result in an over-extended emergency medical system.

4. Public Benefits

The poor, elderly, and disabled are eligible for a number of federally-funded benefits that provide them with an important, though only minimal, government safety net. The major federal programs include food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI, a monthly income supplement to the aged, blind, and disabled), welfare assistance to indigent families (known as Temporary Aid to Needy Families, or TANF), Medicaid and Section 8 subsidized housing. Because many of today's newcomers are poorer than the native-born population, federal benefits can provide much needed assistance with integration.

Undocumented immigrants are not eligible to receive federally-funded public benefits other than emergency Medicaid. Legal immigrants used to be eligible for these benefits on the same basis as U.S. citizens, but PRWORA instituted a citizenship criterion in 1996, limiting non-citizens' eligibility. In its original form, the Act barred all legal immigrants from receiving food stamps and SSI, with the exception of refugees and legal immigrants with long work histories or military connections. The Act also devolved some policy decisions to states, including whether or not to use federal funds to offer TANF and Medicaid benefits to legal immigrants who arrived in the United States

on or before 22 August 1996, the date PRWORA was enacted.²⁷ PRWORA rendered immigrants arriving after enactment ineligible for TANF and Medicaid for their first five years in the country.²⁸ As of 2009, many of the exclusionary provisions of PRWORA still stand, but some benefits have been restored. Congress restored SSI payments to pre-enactment immigrants, and it restored food stamps to immigrant children and disabled immigrants, regardless of date of entry into the country, as well as pre- and post-enactment immigrants who have been in the country for at least five years.

The developments in welfare reform have two important consequences for immigrant integration. First, PRWORA shifted the burden of determining and financing social policy for immigrants from the federal government to state and local governments. These lower levels of government have not acted uniformly, thereby widening policy divisions between states and localities. In some jurisdictions, states stepped in to provide benefits for immigrants not covered in PRWORA, but in other places resentment over the new burden imposed by the federal government has combined with anti-immigrant sentiment and fiscal crisis to exclude non-citizens from social benefits. Second, current public benefit restrictions, at all levels of government, place the onus for help squarely on immigrants' families, friends, and a limited number of nonprofit social service agencies. Since new immigrants—especially those with low human capital—often need some assistance to get on their feet and adjust to life in the United States, the burden falls on these networks of support, and carry a significant psychological, social, and economic

²⁷ Only Alabama decided to exclude pre-enactment immigrants from TANF and only Wyoming decided to do so with regard to Medicaid (Fix, Capps, and Kaushal 2009).

²⁸ PRWORA did not change eligibility for housing assistance, and all low-income legal immigrants, regardless of when they entered the country, remain eligible for public housing and Section 8 rental subsidies from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

cost to immigrants and those around them. These developments do not bode well for the advancement of immigrants' social inclusion.

5. Social Exclusion

Our policy overview suggests that the trend in the United States is toward social exclusion rather than inclusion. Exclusion can be found at all three levels of government, and across policy domains. In the area of labour market access, for example, the federal government started the E-Verify program in 1997, requiring employers with federal contracts to check a government database to verify employees' legal authorization to work.²⁹ Undocumented workers also lost some protections they previously had under labour law—generally applied to all workers, regardless of legal status—in 2002. In deciding the case of *Hoffman Plastic Compounds Inc. v. NLRB*, the U.S. Supreme Court denied undocumented workers the right to sue for back wages, even when the employer was judged to use unfair labour practices.

Exclusionary policies are often a reaction to perceived problems associated with undocumented immigration, but not uniformly so, as our discussion of welfare reform at the federal level shows. The terrorist attacks of 2001 also spawned a series of laws undermining non-citizens' legal rights and their ability to carry out daily activities. For example, the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 restricts immigrants' civil liberties by creating new grounds for deportation and making it easier for federal officials to detain foreign-born individuals suspected of terrorist activities.³⁰ The REAL ID Act of 2005 requires

²⁹ Various states have subsequently enacted similar laws.

³⁰ USA PATRIOT Act stands for “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism” Act.

proof of lawful immigration status to get valid state-issued photo identification.³¹ This makes it impossible for undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license, which in the United States is commonly used as identification for everything from using the public library to opening a bank account.

At the sub-national level, we also find a growing number of exclusionary laws and policies. These range from the 28 U.S. states that have adopted—often by direct popular vote or referenda—policies that declare English the official language of government (English First 2010), to bills passed in 2007 by Arizona, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and West Virginia making it illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers (Laglagaron, et al. 2008). Such laws replicate existing federal legislation, passed in 1986, making it unlawful to employ undocumented migrants, but while the federal law has been largely unenforced (Brownell 2005), these states appear to be taking a more aggressive stance. Cities such as Hazleton (PA), Escondido (CA), and Farmers Branch (TX) gained national attention in 2006 when they adopted tough ordinances barring undocumented migrants from working and renting homes in their cities and making landlords responsible for verifying tenants' residence status. Other cities, such as Manassas (VA), have experimented with zoning laws that appear neutral, but in reality are tools to drive away undocumented migrants (Jonsson 2006; Romero 2008). Finally, a total of 77 states, counties, and cities had, by 2010, entered into agreements with the Department of Homeland Security, pursuant to Section 287(g) of the 1995 Immigration and Nationality Act, to help federal officials enforce immigration laws by apprehending undocumented immigrants in their jurisdictions (Chishti and Bergeron 2009). While

³¹ REAL ID Act stands for “Rearing and Empowering America for Longevity against acts of International Destruction” Act.

many of these laws and policies are being challenged in court, exclusionary federal, state, and local policies contribute to a climate of fear and, we contend, hinder immigrants' social integration, including those not directly targeted by legislation.

E. The Future of Immigrant Integration Policy in the United States

Some localities and states in the United States are formulating and implementing policies to promote the social integration of newcomers in their jurisdictions (de Graauw 2008). Large cities such as New York and San Francisco and towns like Littleton (CO), have developed programs to help immigrants access city services, benefit from social programs, and become active citizens of their communities. Yet while there are some bright spots in the picture we paint, the overall image is of gathering storm clouds threatening immigrants' successful integration. Governments at the federal, state, and local levels seem increasingly inclined to draw sharp distinctions between U.S. citizens (native and foreign-born) and non-citizens. Undocumented migrants, in particular, are painted as categorically unequal, not only ineligible for public benefits and services, but also increasingly denied housing and other basic necessities. Overall, we are pessimistic that this trend will reverse in the short term, especially as the United States grapples with high unemployment and large government deficits.³²

We nonetheless end this paper in search of a silver-lining for medium and long-term policymaking. It is important to emphasize that for many immigrants, and especially their children, the United States continues to be a land of opportunity, providing stable government under a rule of law, economic mobility for many, and a

³² Since the federal system facilitates policy "borrowing" between governments, we might see the diffusion of inclusive as well as exclusionary policies. Such borrowing, inclusive or exclusionary, will surely increase as immigrants increasingly settle in non-traditional destinations, including suburbs, rural areas, and new gateway cities in the South.

relatively open society that is generally tolerant of religious, cultural, and racial diversity. The general tolerance of diversity in the United States is not promoted by a national multicultural policy, but is woven into American history and educational curricula that celebrate minority groups. It means that, unlike in a growing number of European countries, U.S. policy makers have made no serious proposals for cultural integration or Americanization programs. While no paradise, many migrants move to the United States because it offers a better way of life than many other places in the world.

This does not mean that exclusionary, or even *laissez-faire*, policymaking should continue. We believe that immigrants' integration would be faster, easier, and more successful for both newcomers and the host society if the United States instituted a comprehensive set of settlement policies, though we think these should focus on language training and socio-economic security, not cultural instruction. Some question whether American political culture, and U.S. voters, would support government intervention, especially given Americans' individualist ethos, suspicion of government, and "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" mentality to economic mobility (e.g., Pickus 2005). While there is clearly some truth to this portrait, such depictions ignore important examples of government action around immigrant incorporation, most notably, federal policy towards refugees.

Indeed, it is possible to identify a coherent U.S. refugee resettlement policy, one accompanied by widespread agreement that the government should have a role in integrating refugees. Initially, federal involvement with refugee resettlement was *ad hoc* and fragmented in the years following World War II. Intervention grew modestly through aid to Cuban refugees in the 1960s, and then expanded further with the arrival of

Southeast Asians in the 1970s and through programs for East Bloc refugees. In 1980, the Refugee Act transformed this patchwork of domestic resettlement programs into a single program for post-arrival assistance to all refugee groups. It also institutionalized the public-private partnerships that had long existed between government, religious institutions, and voluntary resettlement agencies. Today, the federal government provides most of the funding, but civil society organizations engage in most of the service work that assists refugees with short-term settlement and longer-term integration.

Unlike other immigrants, refugees have also been protected in welfare reform. Refugees remained eligible for SSI and food stamps and they were exempt from the five-year bars on TANF and Medicaid. As of 2009, refugees are eligible for federally-funded public benefits immediately upon arrival in the United States and they retain eligibility over their first five to nine years in the country. Refugees also benefit from federal resettlement programs funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.³³

Refugees' integration consequently takes place in a context of public-private partnerships that is more welcoming than the one faced by other immigrants. These policies and programs, which take money from the public purse, were initially justified as in the national interest of the United States, since many refugees came from Communist countries. These policies are also defended, and increasingly so, on humanitarian grounds, a moral obligation to help people fleeing persecution in their homelands. Perhaps more consequential to tax-adverse Americans, we have evidence that refugee programs have improved integration outcomes for those who receive help, from better

³³ For example, the Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance programs are available for a period of eight months after arrival to refugees who do not meet the eligibility requirements of TANF or Medicaid.

outcomes in education and the labour market (Portes and Rumbaut 2006) to greater civic and political integration (Bloemraad 2006).

If immigrant, and not just refugee, integration were seen as in the national interest and an important humanitarian endeavour, it might be possible for the United States to develop a comprehensive national policy.³⁴ This would, however, require vigorous advocacy by civil society groups and vocal support by a significant group of voters. Thus far, immigrants' political incorporation has lagged. Levels of citizenship, in particular, are low among the immigrant generation, and few foreign-born people have succeeded in winning elected office (Bloemraad 2006; de Graauw forthcoming). Importantly, however, the United States has a longstanding tradition of *jus soli* citizenship, which ensures that all children born on U.S. territory—even the children of undocumented migrants—acquire U.S. citizenship at birth.³⁵ If this growing second generation is mobilized into political activity, and they take to heart the challenges faced by their parents, it is possible that the coming decades may witness change to U.S. policies and thereby ameliorate the process of immigrants' social inclusion into the country.

³⁴ See Jiménez (2007) for one attempt to make this case.

³⁵ In another example of intensifying anti-immigrant sentiment, some federal and state politicians, as well as advocacy groups, have proposed legislation that would strip birthright citizenship from the children of undocumented parents, and perhaps even from legal temporary residents (e.g., <http://www.cis.org/birthright-citizenship-for-visitors>). Since, however, birthright citizenship is enshrined in the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and constitutional change is very difficult, the probability of ending birthright citizenship is very remote. It is, nevertheless, an indication of the general animosity in some quarters against migrants in the United States.

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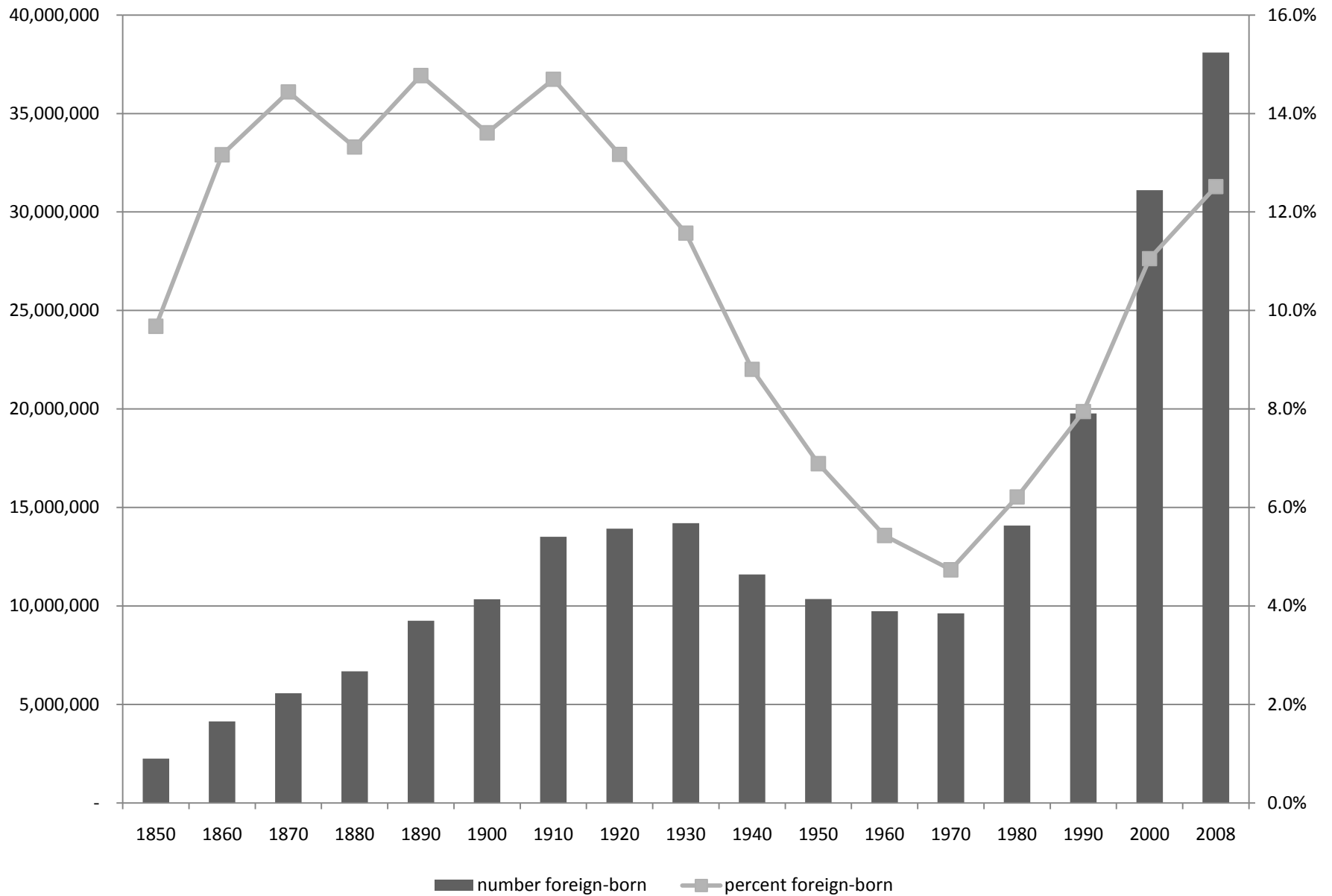
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Figure 1: Foreign-born Population in the United States, 1850-2008



Source: Gibson and Lennon (1999), 2000 US Census of Population, 2007-09 American Community Survey

Figure 2:
 Top 25 Countries of Birth of the US Foreign-born Population, 2008

Country of birth	Number	percent of all foreign-born
Mexico	11,498,849	30.2%
Philippines	1,693,963	4.4%
India	1,603,933	4.2%
China*	1,586,442	4.2%
Vietnam	1,128,775	3.0%
El Salvador	1,112,340	2.9%
Korea	1,023,297	2.7%
Cuba	980,156	2.6%
Canada	823,360	2.2%
Dominican Republic	768,535	2.0%
Guatemala	751,541	2.0%
United Kingdom	688,445	1.8%
Germany	633,879	1.7%
Jamaica	627,011	1.6%
Colombia	600,460	1.6%
Haiti	534,610	1.4%
Poland	467,821	1.2%
Honduras	457,872	1.2%
Russia	406,147	1.1%
Ecuador	404,889	1.1%
Italy	394,490	1.0%
Peru	392,150	1.0%
Brazil	348,754	0.9%
Taiwan	347,248	0.9%
Iran	340,120	0.9%

* China includes Hong Kong, not Taiwan

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-09 American Community Survey

Figure 3:
Selected Characteristics of the Foreign- and Native-born in the United States, 2007-09

	Foreign born	Native born
Total population	38,090,166	266,230,299
Families with children under 18 yrs	43.6%	29.1%
Language Ability (5 yrs+)		
Speaks only English at home	15.6%	90.2%
Speaks English less than "very well"	52.1%	1.9%
Educational Attainment (25 yrs+)		
Less than high school diploma	32.2%	11.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	27.0%	27.9%
Employment Status (16 yrs+)		
In labor force	68.2%	64.8%
Unemployed	4.7%	4.9%
Income & Earnings (2009 US dollars)		
Median annual household income	47,671	51,919
Male median earnings, full-time, year-round workers	34,558	47,750
Female median earnings, full-time, year-round workers	30,264	36,009
Poverty - families under poverty threshold	15.2%	9.0%
Housing		
Owns home	53.5%	68.4%
1.01 or more occupants per room	11.7%	1.7%
U.S. Citizenship	42.6%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-09 American Community Survey