

IMMIGRATION DRIVES U.S. POPULATION GROWTH

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U.S. population, 322 million by late 2015, is growing by over 2.5 million per year. According to one study, the country can sustain a population of only 200 million, and that’s only if we cut energy consumption by half¹.

The key to population stability is a sustained drop in fertility to the “replacement rate” level, where births and deaths offset one another. In fact, Americans achieved replacement rate fertility in the early 1970s, and our native-born population has remained at or below replacement for much of the subsequent period. Yet population hasn’t leveled off, and isn’t expected to level off any time this century. The reason: extraordinary rates of international immigration.

Rising immigration levels, coupled with a declining rate of natural increase (births minus deaths), mean that immigration accounts for a larger share of U.S. population growth now than in any decade since 1900-09:

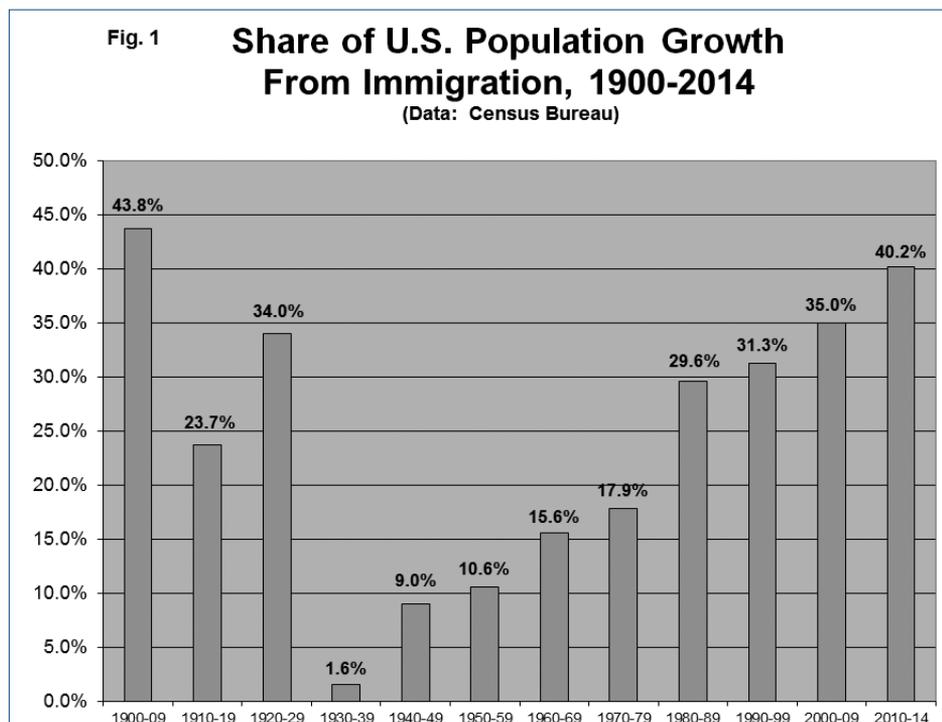
The chart shows that in the 1960s, first-generation immigrants (annual new arrivals) accounted for 15.6% of the increase in U.S. population. During the 2000 to 2009 decade that figure averaged 35.0%, and from 2010 to 2014 new immigrants accounted for 40.2% of all U.S. population growth.

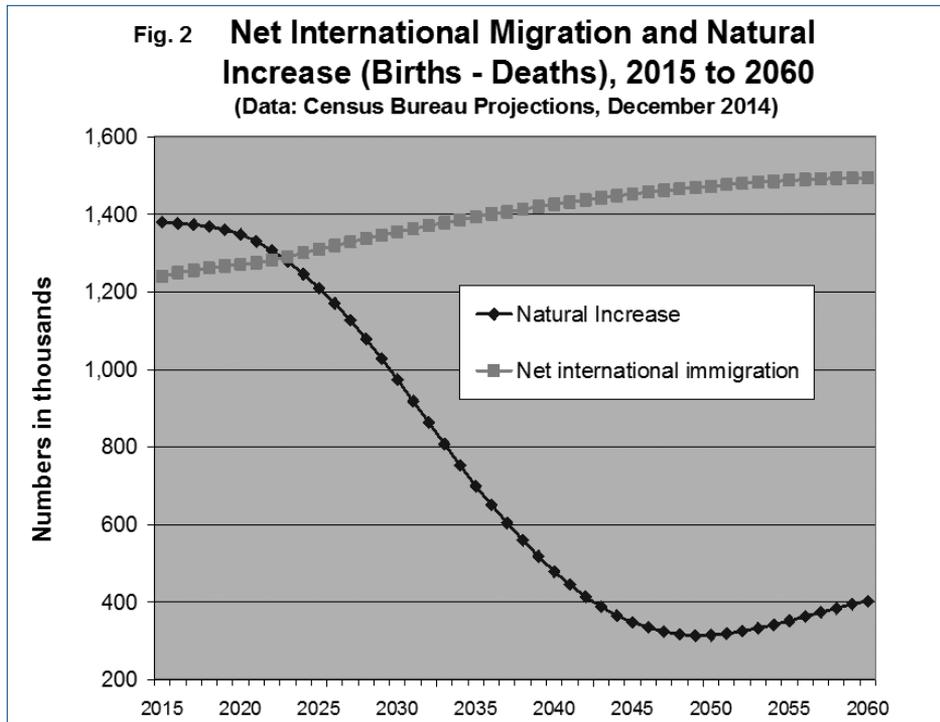
Two points must be made at the outset. First, these figures understate the true impact of immigration by not including the U.S.-born children of immigrants who arrived during these many decades. As is brought out below, immigrant women give birth to a disproportionate share of babies born in the U.S.

The second, and perhaps more important lesson to be gleaned from the table, is that immigration doesn’t just “happen” – it is influenced by public policy. The sharp drop in the immigration component in the 1930s reflects policies enacted in the 1920s. In 1921 Congress imposed the first quantitative restrictions on immigration, limiting foreign arrivals to 3% of a country’s foreign-born population living in the United States. In 1924, immigration was cut again. By 1929 only 279,678 persons were granted lawful permanent status, less than half the 805,000 admitted in 1921².

Amazingly, only about 700,000 legal immigrants were admitted during the whole of the 1930s, and only about one million entered in the 1940s – including World War II refugees.

Immigration restrictions remained in place until 1965. That year’s Immigration and Nationality Act “capped” legal immigration at 300,000 per year, but the cap was waived for persons who had relatives





Wave” of mass immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

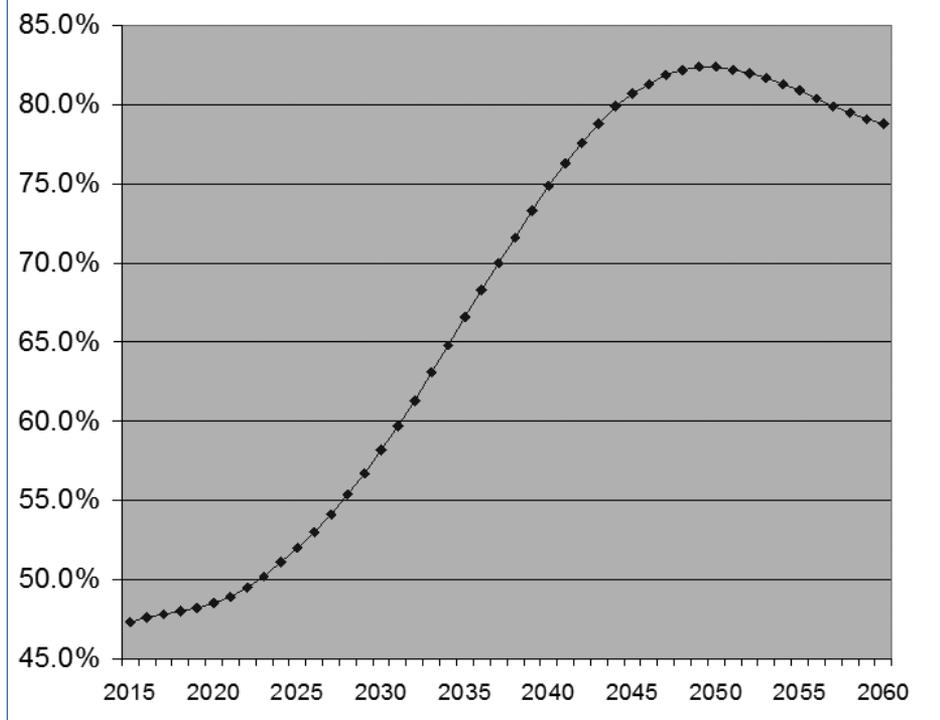
The latest Census Bureau population projection—published in December 2014—has net international migration adding 1.241 million to U.S. population in 2015, about 140,000 less than the 1.380 million added via natural increase. By 2023 these components are expected to change places.

In 2023 net immigration is projected to add 1.291 million to the U.S. population, exceeding natural increase, which will add 1.279 million. The gap widens dramatically in the 2030s and 2040s, so that by 2050 net international immigration is expected to be five-times larger than natural increase: 1.473 million versus 315,000³.

Put differently, by 2050 immigration will account for 82% of total U.S. population growth.

As is clear in Figure 2, the spike in immigration’s share of population growth does not come about because of a jump in immigration. Annual net immigration is projected to grow slowly over the projection period. It is the collapse of natural increase that pushes immigration’s share of population growth to record levels. Natural increase is projected to fall from 1.380 million in 2015 to a low of 314,000 in 2049, before rising

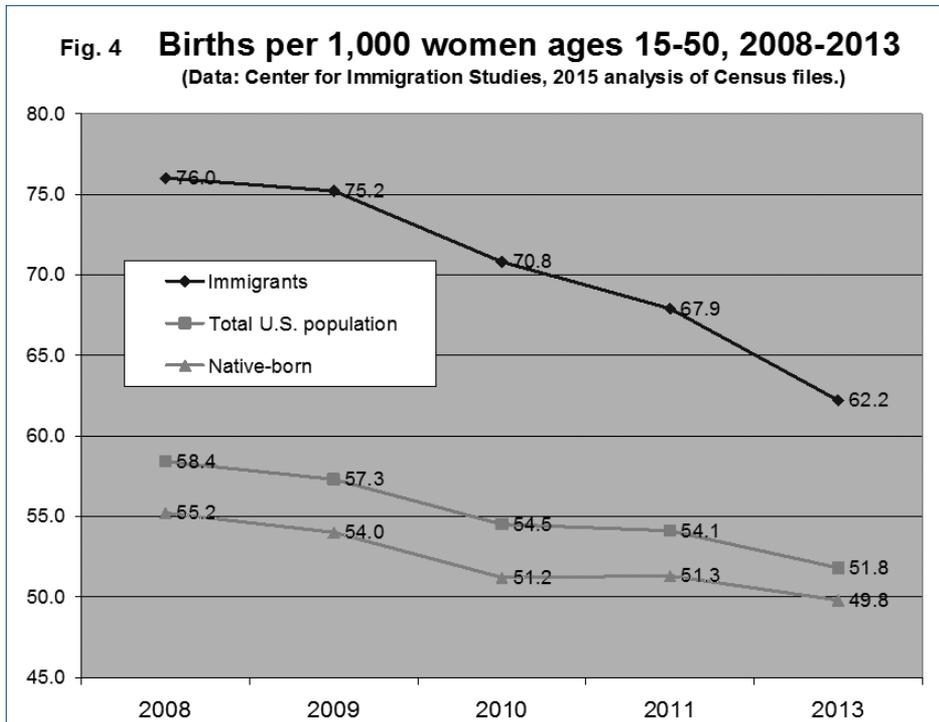
Fig. 3 The Share of U.S. Population Growth From Net International Immigration, 2015-2060
(Data: Census Bureau, December 2014 projections)



already living in the United States. The focus on family reunification was little noted at the time, but it triggered the resumption of mass immigration into the U.S. As a result, immigration’s share of population growth today rivals that of “The Great

to 403,000 in 2060.

Why the decline? It reflects a sharp, and largely unexpected, drop in U.S. fertility rates coupled with a rise in projected net international migration.



of 2.1 throughout the 2015 to 2060 period. By contrast, TFRs for native-born mothers are expected to remain in the range of 1.6 to 1.8, portending an eventual decline in this population⁴.

Despite the recent birth rate decline, immigrant mothers continue to have a disproportionate share of the nation’s newborns. The 23% share of babies born to foreign-born mothers in 2010 was higher than the 13% of the immigrant share of the U.S. population, and higher than the 17% share of women in childbearing ages (15 to 44) who are immigrants⁵.

The Census Bureau’s 2014 national projections are the first to incorporate separate assumptions about the fertility of native and foreign-born women. Birth rates have declined for both immigrant and native-born women.

Birth rates for women in their reproductive years declined more than twice as much for immigrants as natives between 2008 and 2013. Immigrant women of reproductive age had, on average, 14 fewer births per 1,000 over that period, while U.S.-born women had 5 fewer births per 1,000. (The Census Bureau reports a problem with the fertility rates variable in 2012.)

The economic turmoil commencing in the fall of 2008 undoubtedly contributed to the birth rate decline in 2009 and later years, although the Census does not mention this in its analysis.

A different measure of fertility, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), also fell during this period. The TFR is an estimate of the number of children a woman will have over her reproductive lifetime. As with birth rates, the TFR of immigrants has declined more rapidly than that of natives since 2008. However, immigrant TFRs are projected to remain above the so-called “replacement level”

While birth rate projections were cut, projections for net international migration were increased. In its 2014 projections the Census Bureau changed the methodology used to project immigration by estimating rates of emigration from sending countries. Compared to earlier projections, this approach shifts the focus from the receiving nation (the U.S.) to the source countries by incorporating information on population and economic trends in those regions.

In the short run, these refinements do not matter much. By the end of the projection period, however, they produce quantum differences in the components of U.S. population change.

In 2012 the U.S. Census projected that natural increase – the excess of births over deaths –

Table 1
Census Bureau Projections of Population and Components of Population Change, 2060
(Numbers in Thousands)

	2012 Projections(a)	2014 Projections	Change	% Change
Population, 2060	420,268	416,795	-3,473	-0.8%
Population Change, 2059-60	2,106	1,898	-208	-9.9%
Natural Increase, 2059-60	891	403	-488	-54.8%
Births	4,930	4,519	-411	-8.3%
Deaths	4,039	4,116	77	1.9%
<u>Net International Migration, 2059-60</u>				
Number	1,215	1,495	280	23.0%
Share of Population Change	57.7%	78.8%	21.1%	36.5%

a. Middle net international migration series.
Data sources: 2014 projections: <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/data/national/2014/summarytables.html>;
2012 projections: <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/data/national/2012/summarytables.html>

would be 891,000 in 2060. Just two years later, this was slashed by more than half to 403,000 – mainly because Census revised its birth projections downward for the 2015 to 2060 period. Over the same period, however, Census Bureau increased its net international migration projections. Projected net international immigration for 2060 rose by 280,000, or 23%.

While projected 2060 population does not change much, falling by 3.5 million or 0.8%, the role of immigration increases substantially. In the Census Bureau's 2012 projections, net immigration accounted for 58% of 2060 population change; in projections published just two years later, immigration accounts for 79%. Immigration's rising share portends ever increasing ability for immigration policy to influence future population growth.

Components of U.S. Population Growth, 2014 to 2060

Total U.S. population is projected to increase by 98.1 million, or by 31%, between 2014 and 2060. In numeric terms, population will rise from just under 319 million in 2014 to just under 417 million in 2060. This corresponds to an average increase of 2.1 million people per year.

Population growth is driven by two broad components: natural increase (births minus deaths) and net international immigration. In theory, either – or both – of these components can turn negative, causing population to decline. This has not occurred at any point in our history, however. Total births have always exceeded total deaths, and net immigration has always been positive – i.e., more immigrants have entered the country than have left.

The components of U.S. population growth over the next 45 years are projected to be as follows.

Total population growth of 98.1 million is the result of natural increase of 34.0 million (196.6 million births less 162.6 million deaths) plus net immigration of 64.1 million.

Net international immigration will account for about two-thirds (65.3%) all U.S. population growth over the next 45 years. As seen in Figure 3, by the 2050s as much as 82% of annual population growth will be from this component. The impact of immigration is also reflected in births to immigrant mothers, which are projected to total 39.8 million over this period. Owing to their above average fertility rates, births to immigrants mothers will account for 20.3% of all births over this period, a larger share than their share of the female population of child bearing ages.

The Foreign-Born Population

The foreign-born population in 2014 – 42.4 million – is 3 times larger than it was in 1980. At the peak of the Great Wave in 1910, only 13.5 million immigrants lived here. Our total population has grown, of course, but the immigrant share of U.S. population is currently at levels not seen since before restrictionist legislation was enacted in the 1920s.

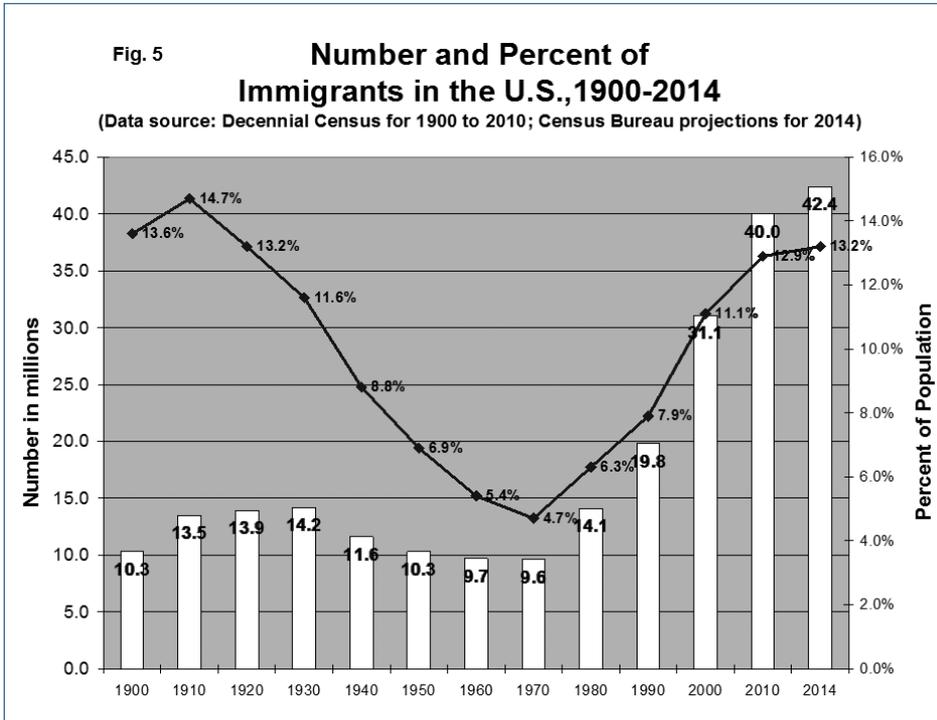
The immigrant share of the U.S. population has increased 2.8-fold since 1970, when it was 4.7%. The above chart shows that only in 1900 and 1910 was the foreign-born percentage of population higher than is today, while it has been lower in every Census since them.

The bars on the chart also demonstrate a dramatic 11.3 million increase in the number of foreign-born between 1990 and 2000, and an equally significant 8.9 million rise between 2000 and 2010. In fact, these figures understate the actual number of persons entering the United States during those decades. Of the 40 million immigrants in the country in 2010, 13.9 million reported to the American Community Survey that they

Table 2 **Components of U.S. Population Growth, 2014 to 2060**
(Numbers in Millions of Persons)

	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Natural Increase (Births Minus Deaths)	34.0	34.7%
Births	196.6	200.4%
to foreign-born mothers	39.8	40.6%
to native-born mothers	156.8	159.8%
Deaths	-162.6	-165.7%
Net International Immigration	64.1	65.3%
Total Population Change, 2014-2060	98.1	100.0%

Data Source: Census Bureau 2014 Projections



to 78 million.

The foreign-born population is expected to grow nearly 4 times faster than the native-born population, reaching 19% of total population in 2060 – up from 13% in 2014.

The Second Generation

These numbers capture only part of the impact of immigration on America’s population. In 2012 second generation immigrants – U.S.-born persons with at least one immigrant parent – accounted for 12% of the U.S. population. At 35.7 million, they are nearly as large a group as the foreign-born themselves.

arrived in the U.S. in 2000 or later. That is, 13.9 million immigrants say they arrived here during a decade when the foreign-born population rose by “just” 8.9 million. The gap reflects the fact that roughly 5 million immigrants either died or went home during the 2000 to 2010 decade⁶.

The 2000 Census also asked respondents the year they arrived in the United States. It found that 13.2 million immigrants arrived during the 1990 to 2000 decade. The difference between the two figures is statistically significant. This means that, despite the economic turmoil of 2008 and 2009, more immigrants entered the country in the 2000 to 2010 decade than in any other decade in U.S. history.

From 2014 to 2060 the foreign-born population is expected to grow by another 36 million, or 85%,

The combined 1st and 2nd generation immigrant population is called the “foreign stock.” The Pew Research Center projects that 37% of the U.S. population will be immigrants or the children of immigrants in 2050 – the highest level in modern history. Second generation immigrants will account for more than half of growth in the foreign stock between 2012 to 2050.

That projection also shows that, because of the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, virtually all (93%) of the growth in the working-age population over this period will be accounted for by immigrants (43%) or their U.S.-born children (50%). By 2050 the nation’s foreign stock could reach 162 million, more than double the 76 million of 2012.

Table 3
U.S. Population by Nativity, 2014 to 2060
 (Population in Thousands)

Year	Total	Foreign-Born		
		Native-Born	Number	% of Total
2014	318,748	276,396	42,350	13.3%
2020	334,503	286,611	47,892	14.3%
2030	359,402	302,545	56,857	15.8%
2040	380,219	315,103	65,116	17.1%
2050	398,328	326,030	72,299	18.2%
2060	416,795	338,564	78,230	18.8%
Change, 2014-2060				
Number	98,047	62,168	35,880	5.5 %pts.
Percent	30.8%	22.5%	84.7%	41.4%

Data Source: Census Bureau, *Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060*, Table 1, March 2015.

An Immigration Moratorium

What is an immigration moratorium? In its most extreme form, it is a total cessation of both legal and illegal immigration into the U.S. It is rare that such a proposition is made in this country, and implementing such an extreme measure might prove to be impossible. But for research purposes, a zero immigration

Table 4

Projected Growth in the Foreign Stock, 2012-2050

(Numbers in Millions, unless otherwise noted)

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2050</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>% increase</u>
Immigrants (1st Generation)	40.0	81.3	41.3	103.3%
2nd Generation	35.7	80.6	44.9	125.8%
Foreign Stock	75.7	161.9	86.2	113.9%
(% of U.S. Population)				
Immigrants (1st Generation)	13%	19%	6 %pts.	46.2%
2nd Generation	12%	18%	6 %pts.	50.0%
Foreign Stock	25%	37%	12 %pts.	48.0%

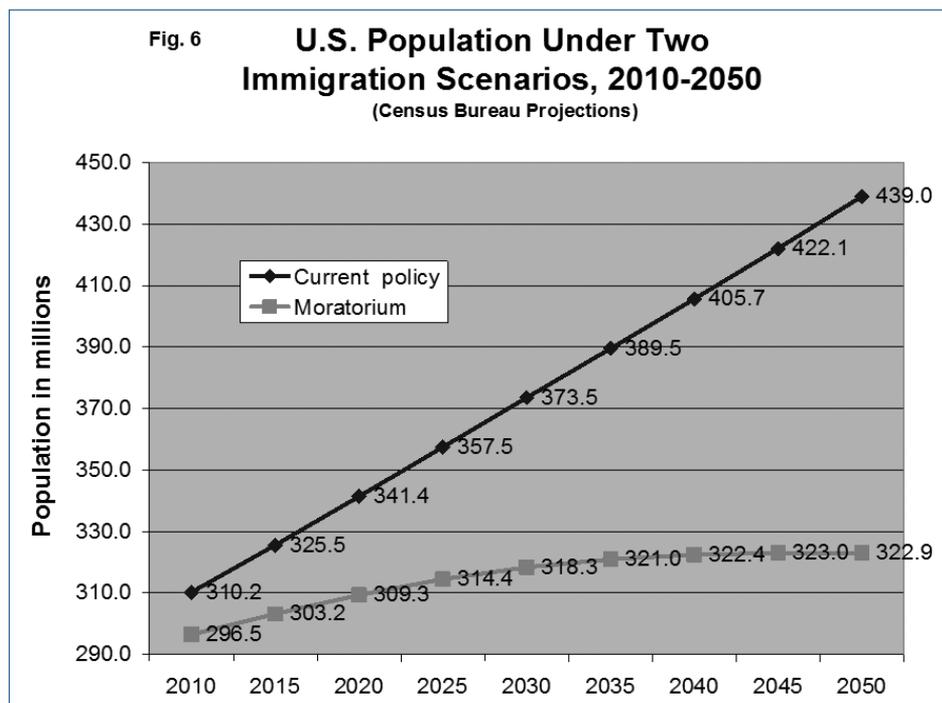
Data source: Pew Research Center, *Second-Generation Americans: A Portrait of the Adult Children of Immigrants*, February 2013.

scenario is useful. It provides an upper bound to the impact that a restrictionist policy can have on future population growth.

Population growth is complicit in most economic, fiscal, and environmental problems facing the United States. For this reason, it is worth comparing future populations under two scenarios: immigration, and no immigration.

The Census Bureau last examined the annual implications of a zero net immigration variant in a series of population projections released in late 2009. The government agency projected U.S. population from 2010 to 2050 under several immigration scenarios, two of which are particularly relevant to us: a moratorium and current immigration policy.

Population projections under each scenario are shown in Figure 6.



Under current U.S. immigration policy, the nation’s population was projected to reach 439 million by mid-century⁷. Under this scenario annual net immigration would rise steadily, from 1.3 million in 2010 to 2.0 million in 2050.

Under a moratorium U.S. population was projected to peak at 323.0 million in 2047, before descending slowly to 322.9 million in 2050.

Since those projections were made, the expectations for both immigration and natural increase have declined. The 2014 national projections, for example, put net international immigration at 1.5 million in 2050 – 25% below the 2.0 million forecast for that year in 2009. The latest projections put U.S. population in 2050 at 398 million, about 10% less than what had been projected in 2009.

Neither the 2012 nor the 2014 Census Bureau projections contained a zero net immigration variant. However, a 2013 Census blog item updated the impact of international immigration beyond the 2009 projections. The update projects the difference a cessation in international migration over the 2012 to 2060 period would have on 2060 population.

The Census bloggers project U.S. population in 2060 will be 420 million under current immigration policy, versus 341 million if an immigration moratorium were enforced throughout the 2012 to 2060 period. That implies that immigrants arriving over the next 45 or so years, and their U.S.-born children, will add 79 million to U.S. population.

Conversely, a moratorium will reduce U.S. population by 79 million, or 19%, below what it would have been under

Table 5

U.S. Population in 2060 with/without an Immigration Moratorium

Age Group	2012	2060	
		Current Immigration Policy	Moratorium (Zero Immigration)
Numbers in Millions			
Total	314	420	341
0 to 17	74	89	69
18 to 64	197	239	187
65 and older	43	92	85
Percentage Distribution			
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
0 to 17	23.5%	21.2%	20.3%
18 to 64	62.7%	56.0%	54.7%
65 and older	13.7%	21.9%	25.0%

Data: Census blog: <http://blogs.census.gov/2013/08/21/the-difference-international-migration-makes-in-projections-of-the-u-s-population/>

today's immigration policy. For context, 79 million is equivalent to the combined 2013 populations of these 29 states: Colorado, Alabama, South Carolina, Louisiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Oregon, Connecticut, Mississippi, Iowa, Arkansas, Kansas, Utah, Nevada, Nebraska, New Mexico, West Virginia, Idaho, Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, Montana, Rhode Island, Delaware, South Dakota, Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.

In addition to total population, the table shows population by three broad age groups: the youth population, defined as those 0 to 17; the working-age population, defined as those ages 18 to 64; and the senior population, those 65 and older.

Because immigrants tend to be younger adults, the impact of a moratorium is most noticeable for the population under age 65. Under current immigration policy the working age population is expected to increase from 197 million in 2012 to 239 million in 2060. By contrast, a zero immigration policy would reduce the working-age population to 187 million in 2060.

The senior population is expected to essentially double under both variants, while the youth population would fall by 5 million under a moratorium and increase by 15 million under current policy.

The national dependency rate increases under

a moratorium. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of potential dependents – people in the youth and senior age groups – by the number of persons in the working-age population, and then multiplying by 100. The dependency rate in 2012 was 59.3%. In 2060 it is projected to be 77.0% under current immigration policy, and 82.8% under a moratorium.

Population projections alone cannot capture the true dependency rate story, however. Working-age immigrants are poorer, pay less in taxes, and are more likely to receive government benefits than native-born persons in the same age-group. Immigrant youth are far more likely to need expensive remedial education than their native-born counterparts. The often touted notion that immigration can save Social Security is belied by the rapid rise in senior population under both immigration scenarios. We address these issues below.

States of Immigration

As things stand now, immigration will be the major driver of U.S. population growth to 2060. However, the degree to which immigration impacts population growth will vary among the states. While traditional immigration gateways such as New York and California are home to the largest immigrant populations, their immigrant populations are not growing as fast as less traditional venues. From 2000 to 2010, for example, Alabama, South Carolina and Tennessee saw their foreign-born populations grow by more than 80% – three times the national average – while immigrant populations in New York and California grew at about half the national average over that time.

Seven of the top 10 immigrant growth rate states in the 2000 to 2010 decade were in the south. None can be considered a traditional immigrant destination.

The total foreign-born population grew by 28% between 2000 and 2010, or at less than half the 57% growth rate recorded in the 1990 to 2000 period.

Alabama, the top ranked state, saw a 92.1% rise

**Table 8 Author's Projected State Populations, 2015-2060:
Current Immigration Policy v. Immigration Moratorium
(Numbers in Millions of Persons)**

State	Current policy			Moratorium		
	2015	2060	% Change	2015	2060	% Change
Alabama	5.07	8.69	71.5%	5.07	8.40	65.7%
Alaska	0.88	1.10	25.3%	0.88	0.89	1.8%
Arizona	6.97	12.55	80.0%	6.97	10.39	49.1%
Arkansas	2.97	2.84	-4.3%	2.97	2.57	-13.6%
California	38.91	52.12	34.0%	38.91	38.42	-1.3%
Colorado	5.37	8.34	55.2%	5.37	7.56	40.6%
Connecticut	3.64	3.87	6.4%	3.64	3.06	-15.8%
Delaware	0.89	1.29	44.8%	0.89	1.05	17.6%
DC	0.68	0.61	-10.5%	0.68	0.50	-27.3%
Florida	20.10	32.07	59.5%	20.10	24.63	22.5%
Georgia	10.25	13.69	33.6%	10.25	11.73	14.5%
Hawaii	1.46	2.82	92.5%	1.46	2.69	83.7%
Idaho	1.61	1.37	-15.1%	1.61	1.12	-30.6%
Illinois	12.95	12.99	0.3%	12.95	10.13	-21.8%
Indiana	6.64	7.37	10.9%	6.64	6.54	-1.6%
Iowa	2.93	1.50	-48.8%	2.93	1.25	-57.2%
Kansas	2.94	3.61	22.8%	2.94	3.08	4.6%
Kentucky	4.29	2.86	-33.2%	4.29	2.53	-40.9%
Louisiana	4.75	8.01	68.6%	4.75	7.29	53.4%
Maine	1.40	2.38	70.7%	1.40	2.28	63.2%
Maryland	6.07	9.04	49.0%	6.07	7.14	17.7%
Massachusetts	6.68	7.69	15.1%	6.68	5.42	-18.9%
Michigan	9.88	9.49	-3.9%	9.88	8.12	-17.8%
Minnesota	5.58	8.90	59.3%	5.58	7.61	36.3%
Mississippi	2.94	2.28	-22.5%	2.94	2.11	-28.4%
Missouri	6.26	9.30	48.5%	6.26	8.71	39.0%
Montana	1.15	1.28	11.3%	1.15	1.04	-9.6%
Nebraska	2.09	2.24	7.2%	2.09	1.82	-13.0%
Nevada	2.94	4.54	54.1%	2.94	3.47	17.8%
New Hampshire	1.34	1.34	0.3%	1.34	1.13	-15.1%
New Jersey	9.01	10.73	19.1%	9.01	7.20	-20.0%
New Mexico	2.03	1.18	-42.1%	2.03	0.91	-55.3%
New York	19.65	21.41	9.0%	19.65	15.27	-22.3%
North Carolina	10.13	14.77	45.7%	10.13	12.87	27.0%
North Dakota	0.82	0.74	-9.4%	0.82	0.60	-26.4%
Ohio	11.71	13.10	11.9%	11.71	11.98	2.4%
Oklahoma	3.85	4.18	8.6%	3.85	3.61	-6.2%
Oregon	3.85	2.98	-22.8%	3.85	2.33	-39.4%
Pennsylvania	12.51	9.25	-26.1%	12.51	7.56	-39.6%
Rhode Island	1.04	0.78	-24.2%	1.04	0.62	-40.6%
South Carolina	4.92	7.52	52.9%	4.92	6.72	36.6%
South Dakota	0.91	1.01	10.5%	0.91	0.82	-10.3%
Tennessee	6.70	10.18	51.9%	6.70	9.14	36.4%
Texas	27.43	52.32	90.7%	27.43	41.16	50.1%
Utah	2.96	4.10	38.6%	2.96	3.43	15.9%
Vermont	0.63	0.56	-9.9%	0.63	0.52	-16.5%
Virginia	8.42	11.66	38.4%	8.42	9.60	13.9%
Washington	7.12	10.61	49.0%	7.12	8.14	14.4%
West Virginia	1.72	0.52	-69.4%	1.72	0.47	-72.6%
Wisconsin	5.75	5.61	-2.5%	5.75	4.83	-15.9%
Wyoming	0.58	0.61	5.2%	0.58	0.54	-8.0%
U.S.	321.37	420.00	30.7%	321.37	341.00	6.1%

Data Source: Census Bureau and American Community Survey (2015); Census Bureau blog (2060 national projections); author's extrapolations of 2000-2013 state population trends for native-born and foreign-born (2060 state projections, current policy and moratorium).

Table 6 **Foreign-Born Population, 2000-2010**
(States Ranked on % Growth)

Rank	State	2000	2010	% Change
1	Alabama	87,772	168,596	92.1%
2	South Carolina	115,978	218,494	88.4%
3	Tennessee	159,004	288,993	81.8%
4	Arkansas	73,690	131,667	78.7%
5	Kentucky	80,271	140,583	75.1%
6	North Carolina	430,000	719,137	67.2%
7	South Dakota	13,495	22,238	64.8%
8	Georgia	577,273	942,959	63.3%
9	Indiana	186,534	300,789	61.3%
10	Nevada	316,593	508,458	60.6%
	Total U.S.	31,107,889	39,955,854	28.4%

Data Source: Census Bureau

in its immigrant population. In the prior decade, Alabama's foreign-born population more than doubled – it rose by 101.6% – yet that was only good enough for 17th place. Conversely, North Carolina – the top of the pack with a whopping 274% foreign-born population growth during 1990 to 2000 – slipped to 6th place, with 67.2% growth in the 2000 to 2010 period.

By comparison, California and New York ranked 46th and 50th, respectively, in foreign-born population growth over the 2000-2010 decade.

The tendency of immigrants to move “off the beaten track” is even more pronounced in the 2010 to 2013 period.

North Dakota, West Virginia, Wyoming, and South Dakota were the top four states for foreign-born population growth in 2010 to 2013. South Dakota is the only state that makes the “Top 10” list in both 2000-2010 and 2010-2003.

Table 7 **Foreign-Born Population, 2010-2013**
(States Ranked on % Growth)

Rank	State	2010	2013	% Change, 2010-2013
1	North Dakota	16,639	21,107	26.9%
2	West Virginia	22,511	26,321	16.9%
3	Wyoming	15,843	18,029	13.8%
4	South Dakota	22,238	24,459	10.0%
5	Nebraska	112,178	123,182	9.8%
6	Idaho	87,098	95,525	9.7%
7	New Hampshire	69,742	75,175	7.8%
8	Wisconsin	254,920	274,687	7.8%
9	Pennsylvania	739,068	798,159	7.7%
10	Iowa	139,477	149,122	6.9%
	Total U.S.	39,955,854	41,348,066	3.5%

Data Source: U.S. Census (2010); American Community Survey (2013)

The Census Bureau has never projected foreign-born populations by state. In recent years, it has also discontinued its projections for total state populations. In the following table, I present my own projections for 2060 state populations under two immigration scenarios: current immigration policy, and an immigration moratorium.

“Current Policy” projections were calculated by extrapolating 2000 to 2013 average annual population growth rates for each state to 2060.

The resulting shares of each state's 2060 population (adding to 100.0%) were then multiplied by 420.0 million – the Census Bureau's Current Policy projection for the total U.S. population shown in Table 4.

“Moratorium” projections employed a similar methodology, only here I extrapolated each state's native-born population growth rates instead of its total population growth rates. The resulting state population shares (adding to 100.0%) were multiplied by 341.0 million, the Census Bureau's moratorium population projection for 2060.

Twenty-eight states are projected to lose population under a 45-year immigration moratorium: West Virginia (-72.6%); Iowa (-57.2%); New Mexico (55.3%); Kentucky (-40.9%); Rhode Island (-40.6%); Pennsylvania (-39.6%); Oregon (-39.4%); Idaho (-30.6%); Mississippi (-28.4%); D.C. (-27.3%); North Dakota (-26.4%); New York (-22.3%); Illinois (-21.8%); New Jersey (-20.0%); Massachusetts (-18.9%); Michigan (-17.8%); Vermont (-16.5%); Wisconsin (-15.9%); Connecticut (-15.8%); New Hampshire (-15.1%); Arkansas (-13.6%); Nebraska (-13.0%); South Dakota (10.3%); Montana (-9.6%); Wyoming (-8.6%); Oklahoma (-6.2%); Indiana (-1.6%); and California (-1.3%).

Fifteen of these states would have lost population even under current immigration policy: West Virginia (-69.4%); Iowa (-48.8%);

New Mexico (42.1%); Kentucky (-33.2%); North Dakota (-26.4%); Pennsylvania (-26.1%); Rhode Island (-24.2%); Oregon (-22.8%); Mississippi (-22.5%); Idaho (-15.1%); D.C. (-10.5%); Vermont (-9.9%); North Dakota (-9.4%); Arkansas (-4.3%); Michigan (-3.9%); and Wisconsin (-2.5%).

For the other 13 states, “Moratorium” projections convert what would have been a population increase over the 2015 to 2060 period into a decline.

In four states – California, Texas, Florida, and New York – “Moratorium” projections show a significantly reduced 2060 population, more than 5 million below levels that would have been reached under current immigration policy. (California’s population alone would drop by 13.7 million.) At the other extreme, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming were projected to see population declines of about 40,000, 50,000, and 80,000, respectively.

Keep in mind that these are somewhat rudimentary projections – they are not forecasts. Population forecasts are predictions of future population levels. A good forecast of state population takes into account many different factors, including future birth rates, cost of living, whether the state’s economy will grow faster or slower than that of nearby states – as well as national immigration policy.

These projections, on the other hand, assume that immigration policy is the only variable that changes over time – everything else is “held constant.” The goal is to highlight the impact an immigration moratorium could have in alleviating many of the economic, fiscal, and environmental problems that accompany population growth under current U.S. immigration policies.

Every economic, fiscal, and social problem we face is negatively impacted by immigration. Here are brief immigration impact statements for several of them:

Wages

Harvard economist George Borjas has quantified the native wage loss arising from post 1965 immigration. Among his research findings:

- Immigrants arriving between 1980 and 2000 reduced the average annual earnings of native-born men by about \$1,700 or roughly 4%.

- Among high school dropouts, who roughly correspond to the poorest tenth of the workforce, the impact was even larger – a 7.4% wage reduction.
- Wage losses of native-born Blacks and Hispanics are significantly larger than whites, because a much larger share of those minorities directly compete with immigrants.
- Native-born college graduates are not immune; their income was 3.6% lower due to two decades’ worth of competing immigrants.

In general, native incomes fall as the foreign-born share of the employment rises. Borjas’ rule of thumb: a 10% rise in immigrant workers in a particular skill group reduces the wage of native-born workers in that group by 3.5%⁸. This translates to an average wage loss of \$2,470 per full time native worker in 2014 – money that would have been theirs, but for the presence of foreign-born competitors in the workforce.

Welfare Dependency

The poverty rate for foreign-born persons, 18.5% in 2014, was considerably higher than that of native-born persons (14.2%). The welfare system is designed to help low-income workers – especially those with children, and this describes many immigrant households. It should not be surprising, therefore, that welfare dependency is considerably higher for the foreign-born than for persons born in the U.S.

More than half – 51% – of households headed by an immigrant reported that they used at least one welfare program in 2012, compared to 30% of native households. The figures are from a recent analysis of data from the Census Bureau’s Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)⁹. Welfare in this study includes Medicaid, cash, food and housing benefits.

Both new arrivals and well-established immigrants depend on welfare at greater rates than natives. Of households headed by immigrants who have been in the country for more than two decades, 48% receive welfare according to the study.

K-12 Education

Nearly 50 million students are enrolled in U.S. public schools, and about one in 20 is an immigrant. U.S.-born children of immigrants represent an even larger portion – 14 percent of total enrollment. This means that nearly 10 million public school students are immigrants or the children of immigrants. This total includes an estimated 1.1 million illegal immigrant children, according to the Urban Institute¹⁰. (In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled that illegal immigrant children are entitled to the same education benefits available to U.S. citizens.)

The federal government requires public schools to provide special programs for non-English speaking students. In the 2012-13 school year, an estimated 4.4 million students – about 9.2% of total K-12 enrollment – were enrolled in classes for “English Language Learners” (ELLs), according to Department of Education statistics¹¹. In California, 22.8% of public school enrollment consisted of ELLs in 2012-13.

These classes are significantly more expensive than mainstream English classes. Personnel costs include specialized teachers who supplement instruction provided by the mainstream English teacher, and professional development to strengthen the skills of teachers working with ELLs. The federal government also requires states to test ELL students annually in order to gauge the success of the specialized English instruction provided to immigrants. On a per student basis, ELL programs cost several thousand dollars more than mainstream English instruction.

This added expenditure might be acceptable if it narrowed the achievement gap between immigrant and native-born students. Unfortunately, no such convergence is evident. The 8th grade reading test score gap between white and Hispanic students is about the same now as it was before ELL programs were introduced¹².

Social Security

It is sometimes said that immigration can “keep America young” and thereby “save Social Security.” Immigrants tend to be young adults; many have children after they arrive. And they generally have larger families than natives. But – surprise, surprise

– immigrants age at the same rate as natives. So do their children.

A rise in the ratio of elderly to working-age population is baked into the system. In the short run, it is driven by the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. In the longer run, it reflects increased life expectancy and declining birth rates – for both immigrants and the native-born. Like everyone else, immigrants eventually become part of the Social Security problem.

For immigration to permanently alleviate Social Security’s funding woes would require bringing in an ever-increasing number of working age immigrants to fund benefits for the ever-increasing numbers of elderly immigrants and native-born. This would turn U.S. immigration policy into a Ponzi scheme – a scam that would send population through the roof, erode the environment, and increase dependency among working age natives displaced by immigrants. The cure would be worse than the disease.

Modest increases in the payroll tax, coupled with a means-test for eligibility, can close Social Security’s funding gap with far less economic downside.

Conclusion

With fertility rates falling and Baby Boomer deaths soon to be rising, immigration will surpass natural increase as the major driver of U.S. population growth within ten years. By the 2040s immigration will account for more than 80% of annual population growth, a far larger share than during the Great Wave prior to World War I. While restrictionist legislation cut that earlier influx to a fraction of its previous level, no such initiative is in sight today.

Under current immigration policy, U.S. population is projected to hit 417 million in 2060 – an increase of 98 million, or 31%, from 2014. Immigrants and their U.S.-born children will account for about three-quarters of the population gain over this period, according to Census researchers. This implies that an immigration moratorium imposed today would cut population in 2060 by more than 70 million below what it would be under current policy. That reduction is equivalent to the combined current populations of more than 20 states. The economic,

fiscal, and social benefits stemming from this would be enormous.

Immigration may be the most important political issue of our time. Unfortunately, most of the debate involves the disposition of illegal aliens already in the country. Turmoil in the Middle East and eastern Europe, along with high rates of population growth in low income countries, has vastly increased the number of migrants seeking to enter this country legally. Absent a change in our policies, immigration is likely to be the major driver of U.S. population growth for the rest of the 21st Century.

Endnotes

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NOTE: The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of NPG, Inc.



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