

Chapter 6

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Immigration and Demographic Balkanization

Toward One America or Two?

Current debates about the future of immigrant assimilation or an emergent multiculturalism in America overlook an important new demographic divide across the nation's geography.¹ This divide may soon supplant other well-known demographic divides across space: rural versus urban, city versus suburb, and the sharp racial cleavages across neighborhoods. The new divide is separating those regions of the country that continue to serve as immigrant gateways from the rest of the national territory in which the new immigration makes much smaller or negligible contributions to growth. The former areas are becoming increasingly younger, multi-ethnic, and culturally diverse—a demographic profile that shows little signs of spilling over into the whiter or white-black regions of the country with older and more middle-class populations.

The new demographic division has been exacerbated over the past decade and shaped by the larger numbers and increased dominance of immigrants with Latin American and Asian origins. This change in national immigrant stock, which is likely to continue, has roots in the formal and informal movements between Latin America and the United States that have evolved over several decades as well as in a fundamental change in American immigration policy beginning in 1965.² Legislation in that year overturned national origin quotas that favored European immigrants, replacing it with a more open system that emphasizes migrant family reunification. While the nationwide impact of this immigration policy has been subject to much scholarly and official conjecture, most of the debate has focused on its economic impact rather than its effect on the nation's social and political geography.³

Current immigration along with ongoing domestic migration forces are creating a demographic balkanization that portends increasing divisions across broad regions of the country. If the new trends continue, today's multi-ethnic immigrant gateway regions may very well turn into individual melting pots in which different Hispanic, Asian, African American, Native American, and Anglo groups coexist and intermarry while still retaining some elements of their own national heritage. Although this ideal image of "one America" may be approximated in these regions, it will be less achievable nationally. In the rest of the country, which will look demographically quite distinct, different political agendas will come to the fore, and there will be a lower tolerance for the issues and concerns of ethnically more diverse populations in other regions.

There is important evidence that demonstrates a new kind of demographic divide. It identifies key immigrant gateway regions of the country and how they are becoming distinct in terms of their racial/ethnic makeup, dual economy character, uniquely different poverty profiles, age-dependency characteristics, and patterns of interracial marriage. Current trends, if projected into the future, will imply why the ideal of "one America" nationwide might be difficult to maintain through the next century.

Immigrant Concentrations

For most of America's history, immigrants flocked to cities, attracted by jobs and the existence of like nationality groups that formed enclaves providing both social and economic support. These same cities also attracted large numbers of domestic migrants from smaller communities and rural areas, again because of the availability of jobs that tended to concentrate in immigrant gateways such as New York, Chicago, and Boston.⁴

Today's immigrants also cluster in major gateway areas; two-thirds of immigrants arriving between 1985 and 1996 located in just 10 of the nation's 280 metropolitan areas. Although this may seem natural and consistent with the past, it is inconsistent with the fact that the nation's employment opportunities and population in general have become much more dispersed across all regions of the country. Today, only about a quarter of the native-born U.S. population resides in these ten gateway areas.

The continued concentration of immigrants to the United States is an important ingredient of the emerging demographic balkanization. Despite the dispersion of jobs to other parts of the country, immigrants continue to concentrate in metropolitan areas. Evidence suggests that much of this concentration is influenced by the strong family reunification provisions of the post-1965 immigration law, which reoriented dominant immigrant origins toward Latin American and Asian nations. Family reunification immigration tends to

occur in chains that link family members and friends to common destinations.⁵ This is especially the case for lower-skilled immigrants since they are more dependent on social capital and kinship ties for assistance in gaining entry to informal job networks that exist in port-of-entry areas.⁶

Research by Borjas and a National Academy Panel points up an increasing gap in the education attainment of immigrants as compared with the native population.⁷ Although the education attainment of immigrants is bimodal, with higher percentages of Ph.D.s and high school dropouts than exist in the native population, it is the lower end of the educational distribution that dominates recent immigrant streams. Thirty-seven percent of working-aged immigrants over the 1985–1990 period had not completed a high school education compared with 15 percent of native-born working-aged residents.

The concentrating effects of Latin American and Asian origins as well as lower skill levels for recent immigrants are supported in a study by Liaw and Frey.⁸ The study examines state destination patterns for 20- to 34-year-old U.S. immigrants and finds that 76 percent of all Hispanic immigrants locate in just five states (California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois) and that 59 percent of Asians are similarly concentrated (California, New York, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois). Within each group, those with less than high school educations are the most highly concentrated: 81 percent of such Hispanics, and 64 percent of such Asians are located in just five states. This clustering is consistent with findings from an earlier study of immigrant destinations in the 1970s.⁹ Liaw and Frey's further statistical analyses show that the attraction of a state's racial composition (Hispanic, Asian, white, or black) as a proxy for the influence of friends and relatives is more important than the state's employment growth or income levels, and this is especially the case for immigrants with high school educations or less.

Not only do recent immigrants continue to select the same immediate destinations upon arrival, but they have a tendency to remain there. The strong influence of friends and relatives is particularly important for immigration from Latin America and Asia because of their native language commonalities. Massey makes the case that the new immigration differs from earlier periods in that it is more concentrated linguistically as well as geographically.¹⁰ Other studies show that when Hispanic and Asian migration within the United States does occur, it is highly channelized and follows the same race and ethnic networks.¹¹ The lack of a broad dispersal of foreign-born ethnic groups via internal migration is borne out in specific studies based on the 1980 and 1990 censuses.¹² These studies show that continued concentration is especially evident among foreign-born residents with lower education levels. Moreover, a plethora of recent research suggests that the post-1965 immigrants are not spilling into other

parts of the country at a very rapid pace. In fact, they remain largely confined to their original ports of entry.

Immigrant Magnets, Native Magnets

In contrast to the post-1965 immigrants, native-born Americans, especially whites and blacks, are far more footloose. That is, their economic and social circumstances do not as heavily constrain them to particular parts of the country, and their migration patterns are dictated much more strongly by the pushes and pulls of employment opportunities and, to some degree, by quality-of-life amenities.¹³ While for most of this century domestic migrants have been urbanizing and moving to the same metropolitan destinations as immigrants, this trend has changed in the past decade.¹⁴

Has the change occurred because domestic migrants are fleeing immigrants? Not generally, although this appears to be true for a segment of the population. (See my discussion later in this chapter.) Rather, it is because the focus of opportunities has shifted away from the more expensive, densely populated coastal metropolises such as New York and Los Angeles to less dense, faster-growing, more entrepreneurial regions of the country. These include large metropolitan areas in the southern Atlantic region and in western states surrounding California. They also include smaller-sized places in nonmetropolitan territory within these fast-growing regions. Because the current magnets and growth for domestic migrants are, largely, different from the immigrant gateway metropolises, it is possible to classify most states and many large metropolitan areas by their dominant migration source.

Table 6.1 shows the states and metropolitan areas that can be classed as either "high immigration" areas or "high domestic migration" areas for the first part of the 1990s. What is striking is that these areas are fairly easy to classify because recent population change in each is dominated by one kind of migration or the other. Exceptions for the early 1990s are the states of Florida and Texas and the Dallas metropolitan area. Florida, for example, is classed as a high domestic migration state because its domestic migration substantially exceeds its immigration levels. Within Florida, however, one can distinguish between the high immigration Miami metro area and high domestic migration metros such as Tampa and Orlando (not shown).

An important point to be made is that the high immigration states and high immigration metros in the 1990–96 period were the same states and metropolitan areas that received most immigrants during the 1980s and, in most cases, earlier decades.¹⁵ This is consistent with my previous discussion, indicating that post-1965 immigrants have continued to land and stay in these traditional port-of-entry regions. It is also important to emphasize that domestic

Table 6.1
Migration Classification of U.S. States and
Metro Areas, 1990–1996

State	Contribution to 1990–96 Change	
	Immigration	Net domestic migration
High immigration*		
California	1,571,491	(1,855,045)
New York	728,754	(1,225,379)
Texas	474,376	426,696
Illinois	232,612	(344,018)
New Jersey	225,023	(251,013)
Massachusetts	100,606	(200,884)
High domestic migration†		
Florida	363,389	714,224
Georgia	65,714	424,892
Arizona	73,629	380,719
North Carolina	35,598	354,236
Washington	84,208	296,331
Colorado	40,064	282,759
Nevada	27,986	280,655
Tennessee	17,298	265,136
Oregon	40,833	211,867

(continued)

migration for these immigrant magnet areas changes over time in accordance with the economic upturns and downturns of region-based economic growth. For example, although Texas shows a great deal of domestic migration gain in the 1990s, plummeting oil prices in the 1980s drove a sharp domestic out-migration from the state.¹⁶ In contrast, California's economy was relatively robust in the late 1980s but experienced a sharp downswing in the early 1990s as a result of defense cutbacks, a severe recession, and various natural disasters.¹⁷

Because of these economic shifts, the list of high domestic migration states and metro areas for the 1990s looks somewhat different from the way it did in the 1980s. While strong southern Atlantic job-generating engines such as Atlanta, Raleigh, and Charlotte attracted substantial domestic migration throughout, western and Rocky Mountain region metros such as Las Vegas, Phoenix, Portland, and Denver have improved their rankings. This resurgence of the west involved, in some cases, overcoming extractive industry declines of the late 1980s and the rise of new growth industries associated with computers, telecommunications, and entertainment/recreation.¹⁸ What these areas have

Table 6.1
Migration Classification of U.S. States and
Metro Areas, 1990–1996 (continued)

Metro Area	Contribution to 1990–96 Change	
	Immigration	Net domestic migration
High immigration		
Los Angeles CMSA	939,438	(1,305,950)
New York CMSA	930,783	(1,331,740)
San Francisco CMSA	311,092	(303,615)
Chicago CMSA	232,528	(28,455)
Miami CMSA	224,630	(339,470)
Washington D.C. CMSA	165,781	(121,675)
Houston CMSA	148,101	51,286
San Diego MSA	109,948	114,723
Boston NECMA	108,278	(182,216)
Dallas CMSA	95,249	(180,645)
High domestic migration		
Atlanta MSA	49,812	319,100
Las Vegas MSA	19,324	259,402
Phoenix MSA	43,581	239,096
Portland, Oregon CMSA	34,500	157,864
Denver CMSA	31,977	136,522
Seattle CMSA	16,163	111,837
Austin MSA	52,797	107,735
Raleigh MSA	9,139	105,490
Orlando MSA	23,889	93,376
Tampa MSA	8,952	91,423

SOURCE: Compiled from U.S. Census postcensal estimates.

* States with largest immigration (except Florida, where domestic migration substantially dominates).

† States with largest net domestic migration, substantially exceeding immigration.

in common is that they are growing, largely, from domestic migration; immigrants and most of the recent foreign-born population remain confined to the more traditional port-of-entry regions.

Another domestic redistribution trend that has come to the fore in the 1990s is the new rural renaissance, in which smaller communities and nonmetropolitan areas are experiencing a resurgence of growth.¹⁹ Unlike the rural renaissance of the 1970s, which resulted largely from the downsizing of urban manufacturing jobs and an OPEC-induced demand for oil, the current trend appears to be more permanent and sparked by advances in telecommunications, giving rise to more diversified economies in smaller places that tend to

be more amenity-laden and high-ranking on quality-of-life measures.²⁰ This trend, along with the regional and new metropolitan gains I have highlighted, is almost totally the product of domestic migration.

Race and Space

It is important to separate areas whose current demographic change is dominated by immigration rather than domestic migration because a host of demographic characteristics differs sharply between the two groups. Probably the most important of these attributes is the race-ethnic composition of the groups. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the combined legal immigration to the United States was largely comprised of persons of Latin American and Asian origin—estimated to be 85 percent.²¹ When illegal immigration is included, Mexico becomes the dominant country of origin of all immigrants. While it is true that the particular mix of national origins differs with each port-of-entry area, the non-Hispanic white component of immigrants to all of these areas is relatively small.

In contrast, domestic migrant streams among states and metropolitan areas are largely white or white and black. So areas that gain population mostly from domestic migrants are not increasing their multi-ethnic populations to a great degree via the migration component.

The high immigration parts of the country will show the most accentuated change in their race-ethnic composition. Of course, particular areas will have different mixes of race and ethnic groups, but it is clear that immigration and domestic migration patterns for the past two decades have clustered Hispanics and Asians into distinct regions of the country.

Immigrant Flight

The picture painted in the previous sections is one in which immigrants continue to be attracted to the same metropolitan regions based on the strong pulls of family and friendship networks that provide entrée to economic opportunities, which for them appear to be out of reach elsewhere. At the same time, domestic migrants are much more footloose and tend to follow the money, or at least job opportunities, coupled with amenities that may be available in any part of the country. In short, these patterns are portrayed as somewhat independent. While this is true to a large extent, the fact that most high immigration metros are also losing domestic out-migrants gives rise to the theory that some immigrant flight may be occurring.

In fact, research focusing on migration patterns from the 1990 census and for the 1990s indicates that immigration does provide a push for a significant segment of domestic out-migrants—those with lower skills and lower in-

comes.²² The accentuated out-migration of less-skilled native-born residents is a relatively unique phenomenon because domestic migration within the United States has typically selected from the *most* educated professional members of the work force, a group that tends to be well apprised of nationwide geographic shifts in employment opportunities.²³ Normally, areas that sustain economic downturns will see highest out-migration rates among their college graduates and white-collar workers. Similarly, areas that experience employment growth will see the greatest rates of in-migration among highly educated workers.²⁴

The fact that this standard model is not the case for high immigration states and metropolitan areas is new and noteworthy. It is consistent with the view that the concentrated influx of lower-skilled immigrants to these areas leads to their displacement from jobs as the immigrants bid down wages below those that native-born workers would accept.²⁵ This kind of pattern exists in almost all high-immigration metropolitan areas.²⁶ Moreover, statistical analyses that take into account other migration-inducing factors show that immigration exerts an independent effect on the net out-migration of less-skilled residents.²⁷

Frey and Liaw have conducted simulation analyses to investigate how increases or decreases in current immigration levels would affect domestic migration of low-skilled residents. They find that, in California, a 50 percent decrease in immigration would reverse the outward flow of low-skilled, working-aged residents.²⁸ The net out-migration of 59,000 persons with a high school education or less would become a gain of 44,000 under a reduced-immigration scenario. On the other hand, if immigration were doubled, net out-migration would increase to 249,000. Similar although somewhat less dramatic findings are shown in each of the high immigration states according to this analysis. The study also shows that within the low-skilled segments of these populations, the domestic out-migration responses to immigration are most heightened for persons in poverty, especially for poverty whites. This domestic migration response to immigration on the part of less-skilled and poorer native-born residents also appears irrespective of the overall economic conditions in the area.

There is another aspect to the immigrant-induced domestic out-migration from port-of-entry areas: the spillover effects as less-skilled and poorer residents are exported to other parts of the country. In the case of California, much of this spillover is directed to nearby states.²⁹ In fact, between 1985 and 1990, California exported a net of approximately 10,000 poverty migrants each to the states of Oregon, Washington, and Arizona and nearly 9,000 to Nevada. (During the same period, California actually gained 3,000 poverty migrants from the rest of the United States.) From the perspective of these destination states, California exports are a mixed blessing. For example, about a third of Nevada's

overall migration gains comes from exchanges with California, but 62 percent of its poverty gains comes from this exchange. Still, the domestic out-migration from California, Texas, New York, and other high immigration states is serving as a boon to growth, new jobs, and the repopulation of some areas that have been stagnant. Recent evidence suggests that a good part of the emerging rural renaissance is being fueled by working-aged, lower-skilled, lower-middle-income domestic out-migrants from the high immigration regions.³⁰

The major reason that most observers have given to explain this low-skilled demographic displacement in high immigration regions has been tied to the economic competition that recent immigrants represent.³¹ Still, job displacement is only one of several possible ingredients. Another impetus for moving may lie with a common public perception among residents in these states that immigrants are imposing an array of social and economic costs (including higher crime rates, watered-down services, and increased taxes) that are especially absorbed by poorer and middle-class residents. The appeal of California's Proposition 187, which restricts illegal immigrants' claim on state services, and anti-immigrant sentiments expressed in public opinion data suggest that there are broader concerns than simply job displacement.³²

Finally, racial and ethnic prejudice may also be operating for low-skilled domestic out-migration from the increasingly multi-ethnic regions. Prejudice against people from unfamiliar backgrounds has long been known to affect local moves across neighborhoods and between cities and suburbs—as when earlier immigrant waves entered port-of-entry cities and, in the 1950s and 1960s, as middle-class whites located away from black neighborhoods and central cities.³³ Since an increased multi-ethnic presence now encompasses entire metropolitan areas in today's port-of-entry regions, lower- and middle-class native-born residents who cannot afford to live in gated communities are engaging in a new form of white flight.³⁴

Consequences of Demographic Balkanization

The significance of this newly emerging demographic division across regions lies with the consequences it holds for the high immigration regions themselves and for new social and demographic cleavages that will develop across the nation.

Dual-Economy Gateways

One consequence of the focused immigration of a relatively large, unskilled population is the emergence of "hourglass economies" within major port-of-entry areas. That is, not only do the new immigrants take existing low-skilled service sector and informal economy jobs, but they have the effect of

creating more of these jobs as employers respond to the existence of large pools of relatively low-paid labor. By the same token, complementary effects are generated because the kinds of services and occupations taken by the new immigrants tend to benefit industries and administrative activities that tend to attract professionals (mostly native born). The emergence of world cities that serve as corporate headquarters in the global marketplace while also attracting unskilled immigrants has been written about elsewhere.³⁵

What is not as well appreciated is the ensuing race-class bifurcation that will emerge in these areas as middle- and lower-income domestic migrants elect to locate outside of these areas and the jobs at the lower rungs of the economic ladder become increasingly dominated by foreign-born and new ethnic minorities. In the past, less-skilled immigrants were able to bootstrap their way up the ladder by taking advantage of ethnic niches in the local economy in order to gain wealth and further advancement.³⁶ For some groups and highly motivated individuals, this process can still occur.³⁷ But the obstacles to such gains are likely to become more insurmountable for large numbers of unskilled residents residing in dual-economy metropolitan areas with financially strapped public education systems. In an economy in which education beyond high school is the key toward advancement, the prospects for breaking down this emerging race-class bifurcation in our large gateway regions is not promising.

Poverty Displacement

My earlier discussion of demographic displacement within high immigration regions indicated that the most affected groups were residents with low skills and low incomes. The implication that this holds for addressing the needs of poverty populations both in high immigration and low immigration regions is worthy of some discussion. State officials in high immigration regions are well aware that immigration contributes substantially to the size of the poverty population in their states, and the implications for federal welfare programs have been the subject of much debate.³⁸ Much less appreciated is how the demographics of the poverty populations in these high immigration regions will differ from other parts of the country as a result of both new immigrants in poverty who are arriving *and* poor domestic residents who are departing.

One group that is especially worthy of focus is the child poverty population. This population will continue to increase nationally, both because of the rise in the number of children and because of high rates of child poverty.³⁹ The geographic mobility dynamics of families with poor children are also important because they affect the sizes and demographic attributes of poverty children in different states.

There is a broad difference that is emerging between the child poverty

populations in high immigration versus other parts of the country, according to 1996 Current Population Survey data. Fewer than half (47 percent) of poor children living within the ten high immigration metropolitan areas were native born by native parentage compared with four out of five poor children in the rest of the country. Almost half of the former poor children (46 percent) were Hispanic compared with 20 percent in the rest of the country. In Los Angeles, more than half of the children living in poverty (51 percent) lived in married-couple families compared with only 22 percent in large metropolitan areas that were not one of the ten immigrant magnets. These distinct demographics emerging with the child poverty populations in high immigration regions of the country hold implications for the kinds of schooling and social services required to serve these populations in contrast to the child poverty populations in other parts of the country. In the former areas, greater emphasis might be given to assimilation and bilingual education in the schools. In the latter areas, special problems associated with female-headed families who are gaining access to schooling and jobs might be emphasized.

Population Aging: The Racial Generation Gap

One demographic attribute of the immigrant population that makes an immediate impact on its destination area is its younger age distribution. The lion's share of immigrants, at their time of arrival, is comprised of young adults and their children. In noting these patterns, commentators and scholars have suggested that continued immigration may lessen the impending age-dependency burden after the baby boomers retire in the year 2012, when a "nation of Floridas" is expected to emerge.⁴⁰ What would seem to be a sensible solution to the age-dependency crisis from a national perspective fails to consider two items. First, immigration's impact will be much more dominant in the high immigration regions, both in its magnitude and in how it affects the racial-ethnic composition of the future working-aged population. Second, ethnic minorities, which make up large shares of the new immigrant waves, may be less concerned about elderly dependency than they are about child dependency in light of their own demographic patterns.

It appears likely that, for the foreseeable future, Hispanics, Asians, and blacks will be more concerned about taking care of their children than their elderly. How willingly will working-aged Hispanics, Asians, and even African Americans contribute local, state, and federal funds to support the elderly population's welfare concerns? The sharp racial-ethnic demographic distinctions that are emerging in the working-aged populations *and* the voting-aged populations hold important implications for a variety of national issues that will take on strong region-based constituencies.

New Marital States

Discussions of immigrant assimilation adhering to the melting pot metaphor often point to the increased tendency of groups to intermarry as a signal that assimilation is taking place.⁴¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that commentators and academics are watching the extent to which the new immigrant minorities (Hispanics and Asians) have begun to intermarry with members of the largely native-born white and black population. Although mixed-race marriages for these groups are still quite rare, signs that they are increasing are taken as evidence that these groups are becoming part of the American melting pot.⁴² This "blending of America" has been characterized as a quiet demographic counterrevolution.⁴³ Recently, the National Academy Panel on Immigration observed that the boundaries between such groups may blur in the future and that the core American culture has absorbed a number of groups that were defined as racially different in the past and may do so again in the future.⁴⁴

Observations that some mixed-race marriages are occurring among Hispanics and Asians and that this may portend their further assimilation do not necessarily conflict with my view that distinctly different immigrant, foreign-born-dominant regions will develop apart from other areas of the country. Indeed, one might expect high levels of intermarriage between these and other groups *within* the high immigration regions of the country. Here, groups will be more likely to interact in school and workplaces and become more appreciative of their different backgrounds and life-styles. The kind of melting pot that one identifies with early twentieth-century immigrants in urban areas such as New York or Chicago may well replicate itself in much of California, Texas, and southern Florida. The question remains as to whether such intermarriage patterns will be both prevalent and acceptable in those parts of the country that remain largely white or white and black.

Clearly, the phenomenon of mixed-race marriages involving new immigrant groups is just beginning to emerge and undoubtedly will be the subject of considerable future research. The evidence that exists now makes plain that the vast majority of these marriages occur in California, the nation's premiere immigrant state, and that the remaining marriages are highly clustered in other immigrant magnets.

Toward One America or Two?

The incorporation of the nation's new immigrant ethnic minorities into a single "one America" melting pot will be forestalled by the continued clustering of immigrant groups within broad regions of the country that are no longer attracting large numbers of domestic migrants and longer-term

residents. The populations of these high immigration regions will become increasingly multicultural, younger, and bifurcated in their race and class structures. In contrast, regions that are gaining population largely from domestic migration and those with stagnating populations will become far less multicultural in their demographic compositions and will differ in other social, demographic, and political dimensions as well.

While immigrant minorities have historically clustered in individual neighborhoods or inner cities, the new demographic balkanization is significant because of its geographic scope. The emergence of entire metropolitan areas or labor market regions that are distinct from the rest of the country in their race-ethnicity, age, and class profiles represents a new dimension and one that is not likely to change in light of the nation's ongoing immigration and settlement patterns.

While this new demographic balkanization serves as a *regional* divide, my use of this term is not meant to imply that increased divisions will occur between different race and ethnic groups. In fact, the concentration of large numbers of new race and ethnic minorities along with whites and blacks within the high immigration regions should lead to a greater incorporation of these groups into new American melting pots that will emerge distinctly within these regions. The nature of this incorporation involving a large number of groups as diverse as Mexicans, Central Americans, Koreans, Indians, Vietnamese, and others may take a form different from the familiar patterns of the Irish, Italians, Poles, and Jews at the turn of the twentieth century. The higher levels of residential segregation for these new groups within port-of-entry regions, their entrenchment in well-defined occupational niches, and, for some groups, extremely low levels of political clout will make their road to full economic and political incorporation long and arduous.⁴⁵ Still, the increasing levels of intermarriage that appear to be occurring within high immigration regions and evidence that second-generation children are more likely to speak English well and identify as hyphenated Americans suggest a potential for acculturation and mobility beyond segmented residence and workplace environments.⁴⁶ The increased interaction between these groups and longer-term resident whites, blacks, and other racial-ethnic minorities will bring about conflict but also will create new melting pots that will exist *only* within these broader high immigration regions—and the mix will take different forms in each region.

In contrast, the rest of America will include booming economic growth engines that attract large numbers of domestic white and black migrants such as those that now exist in much of the southern Atlantic region and in the Rocky Mountain states as well as in other parts of the country that are experiencing stagnating growth. The demographic profiles of both will be largely

older, whiter, and more middle class than the more vibrant, younger, multi-ethnic regions I have described. New region-based political constituencies will emerge that place greater emphasis on middle-class tax breaks and the solvency of the Social Security system and that cast a wary eye on too much federal government regulation. Already these regions are becoming more conservative and more likely to vote Republican.⁴⁷ Their residents will become far less energized over issues such as preserving affirmative action laws, extending the federal safety net to new foreign-born generations, or maintaining bilingual education in the schools. Taking cognizance of this new geography, marketers will need to pay just as much attention to metropolitan and regional demographics as they do to local zip codes when targeting advertisements to consumers. More important, the new sensitivity to racial-ethnic blending that will begin to percolate in the high immigration regions will spill over only marginally, if at all, into this other America.

Some readers may view this new demographic balkanization with trepidation since it does not conform to the single "one America" ideal that we have held for much of the nation's history. They may wish to propose solutions to this "problem." Yet the most obvious solutions would take draconian measures that are almost impossible to execute in the realpolitik of today's America.

One such measure would be to drastically alter immigration to the United States in such a way that it would reduce the large number of less educated migrants who are most prone to become anchored in the low-skilled service and manufacturing economies of high immigration regions. This would mean either reducing the overall number of immigrants, changing the countries of origin of immigrants, or altering the preference system in such a way that low-skilled immigrants do not form a large segment of the immigrant pool each year. Although there may be some sentiment toward lowering the overall immigration levels, it is not likely that there will be a constituency willing to retreat from the more open country-of-origin provisions instituted in 1965. Likewise, there is little support to drastically alter the family reunification provisions of current immigration law that account for at least two-thirds of legal immigrants and has been purported to contribute to the declining relative education attainment of the overall immigrant flow.⁴⁸ Finally, illegal immigration has contributed significantly to the flow of lower-skilled immigrants, especially in California. Several legal mechanisms, most notably the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), have attempted to curtail illegal immigrants through employer sanctions, increased border enforcement, and other means. Nevertheless, the lack of strong enforcement and the availability of only modest government resources have rendered these measures relatively ineffective.

The simple fact seems to be that there are enough interest groups and

constituencies—employers, consumers, and co-ethnics—who are benefiting from existing inflows of low-skilled immigration so as to curtail measures that would substantially alter the provisions of legal immigration or drastically reduce illegal immigration.⁴⁹ Local political interests are also weighed. California governor Pete Wilson took an anti-immigrant stance for his largely white, native-born constituency in the mid-1990s; at the same time New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani took a pro-immigrant stance to receive support from his increasingly large foreign-born constituency. Beyond what may or may not be accomplished through changes in immigration laws or enforcement, an extended network of immigration is already established between selected origin and destination communities in Mexico and the United States, having evolved over decades with strong economic and social roots.⁵⁰ These flows are likely to expand over time rather than diminish in response to any token changes in U.S. immigration policy.

The second set of policy measures that would need to be enacted to curtail the demographic balkanization patterns now in place would involve Herculean federal efforts to prepare new waves of immigrant children for mainstream jobs that are available outside of their established ethnic enclaves and employment niches. Unlike large earlier immigrant waves, new immigrants and their children face a two-tiered economy in which a college education is essential for upward mobility. Yet the economies of immigrant regions are highly bifurcated. As has been shown, foreign-born workers fill well over half of all service and blue-collar jobs in the Los Angeles metropolitan region but hold fewer than one-fifth of professional or managerial positions. This picture will only change for future generations if drastic measures are introduced in local high schools and community colleges to prepare the children of the next generation to move not only upward but outward from the unique port-of-entry labor markets that surround them. Yet here again, the current political climate favors devolution of federal and even state responsibilities for education and social services to the local communities. Because these communities bear the greatest financial burdens and receive precious little of the financial benefits of new immigrant waves, measures to improve their upward mobility are not likely to be put into place any time soon.

It appears inevitable that the demographic balkanization scenario portrayed here will continue and become more entrenched over the decades ahead. The new high immigration zones will be distinct and constitute the twenty-first century version of America's melting pots—ensconced largely in California, Texas, and the southwest; southern Florida; the upper eastern seaboard; and Chicago. The cultural and demographic tapestry evolving in this America will differ sharply from the older, more middle-class, and whiter—indeed, more subur-

ban—America that exists elsewhere. The distinctly different social geographies of these two Americas are not widely appreciated by commentators and scholars. Both the recommendations of a bipartisan Commission on Immigration Reform and an influential book argue that the Americanization of new immigrants should get high priority, emphasizing greater efforts toward immigrant naturalization, English literacy, and the primacy of individual over group rights so as to achieve a common civic culture.⁵¹ Yet these pronouncements make no mention of the fact that much of mainstream America represents another America that lies well beyond the settlements of most new immigrants. To achieve these laudable goals and to understand the nation's evolving demographic realities of the twenty-first century, scholars and policymakers will need to reconcile how the two Americas portrayed in this chapter will relate to each other socially, economically, and politically.

Notes

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