

The Social Health of Nevada

Leading Indicators and Quality of Life in the Silver State

Immigration and Ethnic Diversity in Nevada

Tiffany Howard, *Center for Migration, Demography and Population Studies, Department of Political Science, University of Nevada Las Vegas*

Roman Lewis, *Department of Political Science, University of Nevada Las Vegas*

Introduction

In a few decades, non-Hispanic whites will constitute a majority in the United States. If current demographic trends continue, the Hispanic/Latino population will double or even triple in size by 2050, the Asian population will double, and the African-American population will grow at a faster pace than non-Hispanic whites. The last group is expected to start declining by 2025. These developments promise to bring profound changes to the country's ethnic and racial landscape.

Nowhere in the U.S. are national population trends more evident than in the state of Nevada. Within the last decade, Nevada has experienced the largest population increase of any other state in the country. As a consequence, Nevada is one of the most demographically diverse and geographically concentrated states in the nation. With forty-seven percent of Nevadans classified as non-white, and Hispanic/Latinos accounting for 27.5 percent of the total state population, within

Highlights

- Between 2000 and 2010, Nevada had the country's fastest growing overall minority population – 78%.
- As of 2016, Clark County was approximately 43.6% non-Hispanic white, 30.9% Hispanic/Latino, 12.2% non-Hispanic black, 10.3% Asian, and 0.8% American Indian.
- Of the foreign born, in 2016, 56.7% were from Latin America, 30.3% from Asia, 7.7% from Europe, 3% from Africa, 1.9% from Canada, and 0.5% from Oceania.

How to Cite this Report

Howard, Tiffany and Roman Lewis. 2017. "Immigration and Ethnic Diversity in Nevada." In *The Social Health of Nevada: Leading Indicators and Quality of Life in the Silver State*, edited by Dmitri N. Shalin. Las Vegas, NV: UNLV Center for Democratic Culture, <http://cdclv.unlv.edu>

five years Nevada is projected to become a state with a majority minority population.

The present report seeks to provide an overview of immigration and ethnicity in Nevada. After a brief historical overview, the discussion follows the 2010 U.S Census data and utilizes other more recent data sources that shed light on the situation in Nevada. Since more research has been conducted on immigration and ethnicity in Clark County than in the rest of the state, the main focus of the report will be on the current trends in the Las Vegas Valley.

Historical Overview

Immigration has been central to U.S. history. With the exception of the indigenous American population, the entire U.S. population is the product of immigration, voluntary or forced. Africans arrived as slaves until the slave trade was legally ended in 1808. Prior to the Civil War, the great majority of immigrants emigrated from western and northern Europe. Immigration increased after the war and the regional origins of immigrants began to shift to southern and eastern Europe. Small numbers of Mexicans and Asians, primarily Chinese, complemented the Europeans. However, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and quotas imposed in the 1920's slowed immigration, and the Great Depression and World War II ensured this steady but marginal flow of immigrants.

The pace of immigration has quickened in each decade since the 1950s.

- In the 2000's, the greatest decade of immigration in American history, over 13 million foreign born came to the United States.
- In 2010, nearly 40,000,000 people, or 12.9 % of the U.S. population, were born abroad.
- These 40 million people were counted by the U.S. census. Several millions entered the country without legal authorization and evaded the census takers. [SEP]

In contrast to historical immigration patterns – which involved primarily European immigrants, a modest number of Mexicans, and immigrants from a handful of Asian countries – recent immigrants have come from around the world. Contemporary immigration flow to the U.S. is primarily driven by poverty, poor economic performance, demographic conditions, ethnic clashes, conflict, state terror and repression, and genocide such as seen in Guatemala in the 1980's and Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990's. The pull factors endemic to the developed world are a demand for cheap labor, economic opportunity, consumerism, and democratic political systems that minimize repression. Today, social media and mass communication brings home to even the remotest communities the vast gap between life on the periphery and life at the center of the world economy, propelling millions of people onto the path toward a better life.

Two important publications attest to the diversification of immigration patterns in recent decades. The *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, published in 1980, listed 106 groups, from Abkhazians to Zoroastrians. But people from several countries, such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Sudan, were subsumed under the category “Africans” and immigrants from most Latin American countries were listed as “Central and South Americans.” The 1997 *American Immigrant Cultures* listed 161 groups, including Circassians, Igbo, Vlachs, and Punjabi Mexicans. Any such work published today would undoubtedly identify dozens of additional ethnic and immigrant communities.

These two publications underscore the inadequacy of U.S. Census categories for portraying the reality of racial and ethnic groups. They tell us that we are already extremely demographically diverse and that coming changes will be profound. The Hispanic population today, for example, consists of people from every Latin American country, most of which, in turn, are ethnically diverse. The same is true of Asian immigrants, and of a growing population in the United States and Nevada, African immigrants. In coming decades, if not now, the number of ethnic and immigrant groups will greatly surpass the 161 identified in *American Immigrant Cultures*.

Immigration and Diversity in Nevada

Nevada has been racially and ethnically diverse from its beginnings. When it achieved statehood in 1864, the United States had begun to diversify its immigration sources, and that trend was reflected in Nevada’s population. The 1870 Census found that 44.2% of the new state’s population was foreign-born, the highest figure of any state, and over three times the national percentage of immigrants. This figure dropped to 41.2% ten years later. In the heyday of the Comstock Lode, Virginia City’s population was an assortment of nationalities. Of the 2,770 men employed there in mining in 1880, only 770 (27.8%) were native-born.

- Chileans were present in Nevada as early as 1870. Chinese constituted 8.6% of Nevada’s population in 1880. Greeks made up 5.8% of the state’s population in 1910 and 10% of White Pine County’s residents.

Today, Nevada mirrors national trends in immigration and ethnic diversification, and in several categories, leads the country.

- Nevada had the fastest growing Asian population in the 1990s: 207.4%.
- Nevada had the country’s second fastest growing Hispanic population in the 1990s: 217%.
- In 2000, Nevada ranked 6th nationally in percentage of Asian and Pacific Islander (4.9%).
- Nevada’s had the country’s fastest growing overall minority population between

2000 and 2010 (78%).

- In 2016, Nevada's percentage of foreign born was 19.3%, compared to the national figure of 13.2%.
- Of the foreign born, in 2016, 56.7% were from Latin America, 30.3% from Asia, 7.7% from Europe, 3% from Africa, 1.9% from Canada, and 0.5% from Oceania.
- In 2016, 53.3% of the foreign-born population in Nevada were not U.S. citizens. This number has declined when compared to US census figure data from 2010, where 58.2% of the foreign-born population in Nevada were not U.S. citizens and 10% in 2000. [SEP]

In broad categories, 2016 ACS Demographic figures for Nevada's and the country's populations are as follows:

- The white populations were close—68.1% for Nevada and 73.3% for the U.S., but the gap has widened when compared to the 2010 Census figures where the white populations were essentially equal (72.9% for Nevada and 74.2% for U.S.).
- Nevada had over half the total U.S. African American population—8.6% compared with 12.6%. [SEP]
- Nevada had greater than average American Indian and Alaska Native population – 1.1% versus 0.8%. [SEP]
- Nevada was 7.8% Asian, compared with the U.S. figure of 5.2%. [SEP]
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders constituted 0.6% of Nevada's residents, compared with only 0.2% of the U.S. population. [SEP]
- Hispanics/Latinos made up 17.3% of the national population, while they accounted for 27.8% of Nevadans.

Nevada's two largest population centers, Clark and Washoe Counties, are federally designated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). Not surprisingly, they are the areas that have attracted the greatest number of immigrants and are the most ethnically diverse. In the fifteen counties outside Washoe and Clark, ACS Demographic Estimates (2012-2016) ethnic makeup and immigration status vary as follows:

- Eureka (county seat Eureka) has the highest percentage of white population (98.7%) and Mineral (Hawthorne) the lowest (62.7%).
- Pershing (Lovelock) has the highest percentage of African Americans (4.8%), while the least populated county, Esmerelda (Goldfield), has the lowest (.0%), not

a single person.

- Mineral has the highest percentage of American Indian and Alaskan Native population (23.5%), and Eureka the lowest (1.2%).
- Mineral has the highest percentage of Asians (3.3%), while Esmerelda (Goldfield) and Eureka both have none (.0%).
- Pershing has the highest percentage of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (0.7%), while Esmerelda, Eureka, Humboldt (Winnemucca), Lincoln (Pioche), and Mineral all have none (.0%).
- Humboldt has the highest percentage of Hispanics (25.9%) and Eureka the lowest (0.5%).
- Lander (Battle Mountain) has the highest percentage of foreign born (12.3%), Eureka the lowest (0.3%).

The most salient demographic feature of the fifteen counties is the Latino population. Given the large influx of undocumented Mexican and Central American migrants to the United States, it is likely that the Hispanic population in these areas is considerably larger than the 700,000 that the 2010 Census revealed. Service industries, ranching, and mining have attracted Hispanic/Latinos in growing numbers. One increasingly hears Spanish spoken and sees Spanish language signs in small town and rural Nevada. School districts in these areas are increasingly challenged by growing enrollments of non-English speaking students. Census figures for 1990, 2000, and 2010 indicate that the Reno MSA, which is defined as Washoe County, is rapidly diversifying.

- In 1990, 9.2% were foreign born; in 2000, the figure had risen to 14.1%; and by 2010 it rose another percentage to 15.1%. In 1990 and 2000, nearly half the foreign born had immigrated within the previous decade. ^[L]_[SEP]
- In 2000, Reno ranked 49th among the country's 367 MSAs in its percentage of foreign-born residents. By 2010, however, immigration only accounted for a little over 18% of the area's total population increase. ^[L]_[SEP]
- Of its 421,407 residents in 2010, Washoe County was 76.9% white, 22.2% Hispanic, 2.3% African-American, 1.7% American Indian and Alaska Native, 5.2% Asian, and 0.6% Hawaiian Native and Other Pacific Islander. ^[L]_[SEP]
- In 2016, of its 453,616 residents, Washoe County was 63.4% non-Hispanic white, 24.2% Hispanic, 2.6% non-Hispanic African-American, 0.7% American Indian and Alaska Native, 5.9% Asian, and 0.7% Hawaiian Native and Other Pacific Islander

Washoe County's diversity is reflected in a vibrant ethnic scene: organizations, festivals, restaurants, markets, media, and other businesses serving many of the area's peoples and cultures.

Ethnic Diversity in Las Vegas and Southern Nevada

The Las Vegas Valley is not only Nevada's and the country's fastest growing area; it is also the state's most ethnically diverse, and the destination of most immigrants bound for Nevada. The present diversity of the peoples residing in Las Vegas and Southern Nevada is based on internal growth, migration, and immigration. Las Vegas has been more ethnically diverse from its inception than is commonly assumed, and the gradual growth of early populations of Southern Paiutes, African Americans, Chinese, Mexicans, and various European groups has contributed to today's mix. Migration from within the United States has been important to Las Vegas's diversification. Offering jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, reasonable costs of living, and retirement with sun and entertainment, Las Vegas has attracted white 'ethnics', such as Irish, Germans, Italians, as well as other European Americans, from eastern and northern cities, Midwestern and southern towns and farming communities; Mexican Americans from the Southwest; Hawaiians from the islands; and African Americans and Native Americans from around the country.

Las Vegas is a magnet for immigrants, whether the city is their original destination or their port of entry (usually Los Angeles) is different. The economic boom from the 1990s through 2007 created tens of thousands of service and construction jobs that were filled by persons without skills or knowledge of English. While beginning salaries rarely exceeded the minimum wage in most jobs open to immigrants, and sometimes failed to reach that level, persistence and the acquisition of skills led to substantial improvement in salary, if not in benefits. The most prized jobs have been in the hotel casinos, particularly those that have contracts with the Culinary Workers Union, local 226. Since the beginning of the "Great Recession" in 2008, employment in hospitality, residential construction, and other services has sharply declined. The anecdotal evidence suggests that some immigrant workers have been displaced as a result of these trends. However, as the economy continues to recover, it is likely that Nevada will see net migration inflows from abroad once again.

While immigration does not account for all recent ethnic diversification in Las Vegas, it is a major factor in the valley's new look. People in native dress (full or partial), automobiles with decals identifying their owners' countries of origin, signage in Spanish and numerous Asian languages, a proliferation of ethnic restaurants and markets, soccer leagues with over three hundred teams, the emergence and growth of a distinct Latino enclave in northeast Las Vegas, and the expansion of a pan-Asian "Chinatown" in the near west – these and other signs reveal a Las Vegas Valley critically transformed over the past few years. Statistics support the impression of rapid ethnic transformation.

- In 1980, Las Vegas' population was approximately 82.5% white, 9.8% black, 7.4% Hispanic, with a few thousand Asians and American Indians rounding out the

local demography. [L][SEP]

- The ethnic diversification that became noticeable in the 1980s exploded in the 1990s. Nevada experienced the greatest percentage growth among the states in its Asian population during the 1990s, and the second highest in Hispanics, with the greatest numerical gains occurring in Clark County. [L][SEP]
- Between 2000 and 2010, the Clark County population grew 41.8% to 1,951,269. [L][SEP]
- In 2010, Clark County was approximately 60.9% white, 29.1% Hispanic, 10.5% non-Hispanic black, 8.7% Asian, and 0.7% American Indian. [L][SEP]
- As of 2016, Clark County was approximately 43.6% non-Hispanic white, 30.9% Hispanic/Latino, 12.2% non-Hispanic black, 10.3% Asian, and 0.8% American Indian. [L][SEP]

Clark County School District, statistics on ethnicity reveal a deeper change in the school age population than in the community at large.

- Currently, the Clark County School District has the 3rd largest English Language Learner population in the nation (1st being Los Angeles Unified School District, 2nd New York City). [L][SEP]
- Between the 1992-94 and the 2000-2001 school years, the number of students enrolled in the English Language Learner program increased 245%, to 35,296, while total district enrollment grew 59%. [L][SEP]
- In 2010, of the total 299,854 enrolled students in the Clark County School District, 90,295 were enrolled in the ELL program, with an annual growth of 3.44%. The ELL students represent 134 languages and 150 various countries of origin. The District has 325 ELL staff members. [L][SEP]
- Data provided by the Nevada State Department of Education indicate that in the 2016-2017 academic year, 46% of all students enrolled in Clark County School District were Hispanic, while 25% were white, 14% were African American, 6% were Asian, 2% Pacific Islander, and less than 1% (0.38) were Native American or Alaskan Native.
- According to the Migration Policy Institute, when looking at the share of children with immigrant parents compared to the state's total child population, in 2016 Nevada ranks second after California.

Immigration, Naturalization, and Linguistic Diversity

Important information can be gleaned from the Clark County Census data. Looking at the county's ACS 2016 population data,

- 19.3% were foreign born, compared to 13.2% of the U.S. population.
- Of Las Vegas' foreign born, 64.5% were from Latin America, 24% from Asia, 7.4% from Europe, 1.8% from Africa, 1.7% from North America, and 0.3% from Oceania in 2016.
- Reflecting the impact of immigration, 30.3% of Clark County's population of over five years of age spoke a language other than English at home, compared to 21.1% for the U.S.
- Las Vegas ranked 23rd in leading metropolitan destinations of Legal Permanent Residents 2001-2006.
- In 1990, the Las Vegas MSA ranked 44th among the 331 U.S. metropolitan regions for its number of "new" immigrants – those who arrived in the last decade. In 2000, Las Vegas ranked 26th.
- The Las Vegas MSA ranks 17th among all MSAs in total immigrant population.
- The Las Vegas MSA largest population group excluding non-Hispanic white in 2010 was Hispanic.
- The Las Vegas MSA is the 30th largest in the continental United States.

Naturalization, or the conferring of U.S. citizenship on immigrants, provides further insights – although only a small proportion of immigrants take this step.

- There were 3,578 immigrants naturalized in Nevada in the 1970s and 24,736 in the 1990s, a large majority of them in Las Vegas. ^[1]_[SEP]
- By 2009, there were only 6,791 immigrants naturalized in Nevada, with 5,724 of them in Las Vegas.
- The number of naturalizations in Nevada represented only 1.0% of all total naturalizations in the United States in 2009. ^[1]_[SEP]
- In 2015, 558,170 immigrants comprised 19.3% of the state's population.
- Nearly half of all immigrants in Nevada are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- As of 2015, 261,316 (46.8%) of immigrants to Nevada had naturalized and 102,609 immigrants were eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens in 2015.

Although more research is needed on this subject, it is possible that the steep increase in government filing fees for both green cards and naturalization in 2007 likely caused a decline in petitions for naturalization in Nevada and nationwide.

Over a longer period of time, one can see a change in naturalization rates that parallels the national trend away from Western Europeans and toward Latin Americans, Asians, Africans, and Eastern Europeans. After comprising a major proportion of naturalized citizens in the 1960s and 1970s,

- Western Europeans represented only 8.9% of those naturalized in Las Vegas in the mid-1980s and only 2.9% in 1999-2000.
- The leading Western European supplier of new citizens, the United Kingdom, ranked 14th in 1999-2000, and only three other European countries – Germany, Italy, and France – ranked in the top 40. ^[L]_[SEP]
- The greatest number of Las Vegas' new citizens in 1999-2000 came, in descending order, from Mexico, the Philippines, El Salvador, China, and Cuba.
- The top countries of origin for immigrants to Nevada in 2015 were Mexico (39.5%), the Philippines (14.3%), El Salvador (5.2%), China (3.1%), and Cuba (3%).

Further evidence of diversification fueled by immigration is found in the records of the Clark County Court Interpreter's Office, established in 1975.

- A total of 1655 court cases (138 per month) required interpreters during 1981-82, and 25 languages were used.
- In 1994, 12,317 cases (1,026 per month) required interpreters; by 2000, the number had grown to 26,773 (2,231 per month), a 1,617% increase over the 1981-82 workload, and the office drew from a pool of 320 certified interpreters. ^[L]_[SEP]
- In the seven years between 1994 and 2000, interpreters were used for 79 languages, including four spoken in Ethiopia, four from the Philippines, as well as native Hawaiian, Goshute, and Afghani. ^[L]_[SEP]
- The number of court cases requiring interpreters grew by 33% between 2000 and 2002 and continues to climb.
- In Fiscal Year 2010, there were a total of 67,286 interpreter related requests between the Regional Justice Center and Family Court (50,114 and 17,172 respectively) for Spanish or Spanish Creole interpreters.

By comparison, Los Angeles County, one of the country's largest and most ethnically diverse counties, employed 580 court interpreters of 104 languages.

Public Services

The extent to which non-citizen immigrants have access to public services, is reflected in their ability to enroll in state healthcare programs, receive in-state tuition at state universities, and obtain a driver's license.

- According to data from Medicaid, as of 2016, Nevada did not allow lawfully residing immigrants to enroll in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Non-immigrant citizens living in Nevada who are in need of medical care primarily receive it through emergency visits and stays at hospitals and at federally funded health centers that do not require citizenship verification to administer health services.
- As of 2016, 20 states in the U.S. provide in-state tuition to individuals residing in the country without legal permission. Nevada has not established a state policy providing in-state tuition to individuals residing in the state without legal authorization.
- As of 2015, 12 states including the District of Columbia enacted legislation allowing non-citizen immigrants without legal permission to obtain a driver's license. Nevada is among this group of states that allow unauthorized immigrants to obtain a driver's license.

Specialized Services

The rising presence of immigrants in the Las Vegas population is reflected in the growth of specialized services.

- Las Vegas had only 1 full-time specialist in immigration law in the early 1980s. In 2003, Las Vegas had 35 members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, half of whom were dedicated primarily or exclusively to immigration law. By 2011, there were 54 members of the association. ^[L]_[SEP]
- In 1987 Las Vegas was served 1 week per month by a single immigration judge based in Phoenix. In 1996, Las Vegas got its own immigration court with 1 full-time position, and 2 full time judges. Currently there are 4 full time judges with 1 or 2 clerks depending on caseload.
- After serving since its inception as a branch of the Phoenix office, the Las Vegas office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) became its own office in 2001 and is currently serving as a field office.

Las Vegas has immigrants from every Latin American country, but Mexico and Central America have contributed the greatest numbers due to proximity, severe economic problems in Mexico

and civil wars and repression in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s. Filipinos constitute the largest Asian population in Las Vegas, followed by Chinese and Koreans.

Refugee Resettlement

Refugee resettlement has played a major role in the diversification of Southern Nevada population since the 1970s. Under the auspices of several local social service agencies, foremost among them Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada, thousands of people with official refugee status have made Las Vegas their home. The flow of refugees reflects the spread of war and repression around the globe. It also reflects U.S. Cold War policy of offering haven to anyone leaving a communist regime, which is still in effect. Refugee resettlement and the secondary migrations that it fuels are responsible for the establishment and/or growth of several sizeable groups found in Las Vegas, including Cubans and Vietnamese in the 1970s, Ethiopians in the 1980s, and Bosnians in the 1990s.

- Between 1995 and 2000, Catholic Charities resettled 5,168 refugees from 32 countries in Southern Nevada. ^[1]_{SEP}
- Over half were Cubans. Bosnia (1,192), Iran (209), Vietnam (164), Sudan (127), Serbia (95), and Somalia (75) were the largest suppliers of refugees. Angola, the Czech Republic, Rwanda, Togo, Uzbekistan and Zaire (2 persons each), and Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Tunisia (1 person each) provided the least.
- Roughly 2,575 refugees resettled in Nevada in 2017. The top five nationalities are Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Eritrea, and Iraq.
- In 2017, 132 Syrian refugees were resettled in Nevada, a more than 50% increase from the 60 Syrian refugees resettled in FY 2016.

Though accounting for less than 1% of Las Vegas' population growth during that period, the impact of refugee resettlement on the Valley's diversification is much greater than that figure might suggest. Refugees from Kosovo, Uzbekistan, and Burundi were probably the first Las Vegans from those countries; and given the general pattern of immigrants settling in locales where they have family, acquaintances, countrymen, or co-ethnics, these small numbers launched migration streams, however small, of family members, refugees initially resettled elsewhere in the United States, and undocumented compatriots. Given the multiethnic composition of many refugee-sending countries, particularly in Africa and Asia, the impact of refugee resettlement on Las Vegas' diversification is considerably greater than is reflected in the figure of thirty-two countries. Trends that were in place in 2000 have continued.

- Hispanics in 2005 approached a quarter (25%) of Las Vegas' population, their numbers swelled by immigrants. ^[1]_{SEP}
- Between the 2000-2001 and 2004-2005 school years, whites dropped from

49.9% to 41.5% of Clark County School District's students, while the Hispanic percentage climbed from 28.8% to 35.2%, and the Asian percentage from 6.6% to 8.2%. As noted previously, these trends continued. By the 2010-2011 school year, 42% of all students enrolled in the Clark County School District were Hispanic/Latino, while white and Asian students represented 32% and 7%, respectively. For the 2016-2017 school year, 46.2% of all students enrolled in the Clark County School District were Hispanic (a rise of 4.2% from 2010-2011), 25.2% students were Caucasian (a drop of 7.2% from 2010-2011), 13.8% black/African American, and 6.4% Asian.

- Africa House, a new specialized refugee resettlement agency, reflects the continuing diversification of immigration to Las Vegas.

Urgent Problems and Prospects for the Future

Immigration has created special needs that are not adequately met in Las Vegas. Education facilities for adults are inadequate. Healthcare insurance, except for members of the Culinary Union and some other casino workers, is difficult to obtain. Housing for many immigrant workers is substandard. Many immigrants are marginalized and hampered by virtue of being undocumented. Poverty is a growing problem for immigrants:

- While the Hispanic population grew by 217% in the 1990's, poverty among Hispanic children increased by 251% – many of whom presumably were immigrants. Figures from the Census Bureau's population estimates program suggest that poverty continued to be a challenge for this community throughout the decade of the 2000s.
- In 2015, 64% (167,867) of Hispanic children in Nevada lived in low-income families.

With an estimated ten to twelve million undocumented immigrants in the United States, immigration is quickly becoming a major political issue. This is most evident at the national level. Beginning in 1986 with the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which permitted the initiation of deportation proceedings for any immigrant convicted of a deportable offense, the federal government has since enacted a series of punitive legislation, which now criminalizes non-violent immigration offenses. This legislation was followed by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) and the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) which strengthened the INS by expanding their authority to arrest, detain, and deport non-citizens, even if the individual has native-born children, is a long-time settled resident, and is not a violent crime or felony offender. After September 11, the U.S. Patriot Act was passed which transformed the discussion of illegal immigration from that of a criminal offense to a threat to national security. This heightened level of scrutiny was further sanctioned by the joint DHS and DOJ initiative, Operation Streamline, which although it was passed in 2005, it wasn't fully implemented until 2010, under President

Obama, which prompted much of the criticism that Obama was the “Deporter-in-Chief” because a record number of unauthorized immigrants were deported under his administration. Under President Trump, figures released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) indicate that the total number of deportations has declined between FY 2016 and FY 2017—to the lowest level seen since 2006. However, deportation has become less selective since Trump took office. Despite the overall decline in removals, more long-time settled residents in the United States were deported in fiscal year 2017 compared with 2016. With President Trump’s demand for a border wall between Mexico and the U.S., the as yet undetermined fate of the DACA program and thousands of ‘Dreamers’, and talk of broader immigration reforms, such as ending the ‘catch and release’ program as well as the visa lottery, immigration to the United States is poised to remain a salient issue at the heart of a national debate.

Immigration also remains central and controversial at the regional and state-level. In 2005, the governors of Arizona and New Mexico declared border emergencies and demanded increased federal help to secure their borders. In a controversial and highly publicized move, an organization of volunteers, called the Minutemen Project, joined the U.S. Border Patrol to dramatize the situation as well as to aid in apprehending undocumented border crossers. Frustrated by the increasingly anti-immigrant rhetoric in U.S. politics, Latinos and Latin American immigrants in Las Vegas and other cities mobilized in 2006 and demanded immigration reform. More recently, “restrictive” immigration legislation (e.g., SB 1070) adopted in Arizona and other states have generated political debate and legal challenges in federal courts.

Similarly, in Nevada, the Nevada Prevent Sanctuary Cities Initiative has been proposed and could end up on the voter ballot as an initiated constitutional amendment as early as the November 2018 election. The Nevada Prevent Sanctuary Cities Initiative was designed to effectively prevent the enactment of laws by the state legislature, county commissioners, and city councils that would make Nevada a sanctuary state, as well as any city or county in Nevada. If the initiative qualifies for the 2018 ballot and is approved, it would need to be approved by voters again in 2020 to be enacted into law.

As the statewide and national debate continues, immigration policy will continue to be an important issue in Nevada, although the salience of the issue will likely vary by party affiliation and other demographic factors. In December 2016, for example, a Politico and Harvard University poll for Trump voters, the presence of undocumented immigrants was a big deal — 90 percent of them thought it was a “very serious problem” or a “somewhat serious problem.” The general public overall was less concerned — 30 percent considered it a “very serious problem,” and an additional 27 percent thought it was a “somewhat serious problem.”

Conclusion

The 2000 Census was a wake-up call for Nevadans. It confirmed that Nevada is rapidly being transformed by immigration and by migration of ethnic populations from within the United States. The new realities call for major research efforts not only in the population centers but throughout rural Nevada.

One such initiative, sponsored by the Boyd School of Law at UNLV, was launched in 2003. Its purpose was to assess the immigrant presence in Las Vegas and determine the policies and services that may be needed. In more recent years, scholars affiliated with the Center for Migration, Demography and Population Studies at UNLV have continued research on immigration, with a focus on improving public policy formation in this area. The outcome of this research will be most welcome in a city that depends on immigrant labor and, barring dramatic change, will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Data Sources and Suggested Readings

Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

American Migration Council, *Immigrants in Nevada Fact Sheet*.
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-nevada>

Daniel D. Arreola, *Hispanic Spaces, Latino Places: Community and Cultural Diversity in Contemporary America*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004.

Clark County Census data, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/32/32003.html>.

Clark County School District, <http://www.ccsd.net/>.

Clark County School District, "Fast Facts 2016-2017."
<http://static.ccsd.net/ccsd/content/media-files/fast-facts-2016-17.pdf>.

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/chinex.htm>.

Culinary Workers Union, local 226, <http://www.culinaryunion226.org/>.

Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.

David Damore. "The Impact of Density and Diversity on Reapportionment and Redistricting in the Mountain West." *Brookings Institution: Issues in Governance Studies*. 2012. January. No. 43. 2.

David W. Haines and Carol A. Mortland, eds., *Manifest Destinies: Americanizing Immigrants and Internationalizing Americans*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001.

David W. Haines, *Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Reference Handbook*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996.

James Lee, "Characteristics of Major Metropolitan Destinations of Immigrants: Fact Sheet February 2009." dhs.gov.
<https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Metro%20Destinations%20of%20Immigrants%202006.pdf>.

Jerry L. Simich and Thomas C. Wright, eds., *The Peoples of Las Vegas: One City, Many Faces*. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005.

Jerry L. Simich and Thomas C. Wright, eds., *More Peoples of Las Vegas*. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2010.

John P. Tuman and Dawn Gearhart, "The Guatemalans," in *More Peoples of Las Vegas* eds. Jerry L. Simich and Thomas C. Wright, eds., Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2010.

John P. Tuman, *Latin American Migrants in the Las Vegas Valley: Civic Engagement, Political Participation, and Challenges Facing Migrants*. Washington, D.C. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2009.

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Las%20Vegas%20Eng_0.pdf.

Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, State University of New York at Albany. Numerous publications and web site at

<http://www.albany.edu/mumford/>.

Migration Policy Institute, "Children in U.S. Immigrant Families." migrationpolicy.org.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/children-immigrant-families?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>.

Migration Policy Institute, "ELL Fact Sheet 2015." migrationpolicy.org.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/states-and-districts-highest-number-and-share-english-language-learners>.

National Center for Children in Poverty, "Nevada Demographics of Low Income Children." http://www.nccp.org/profiles/NV_profile_6.html.

National Immigration Forum. *Polling Update: Public Attitudes on Immigration and Trump Administration Immigration Initiatives*. July 2017.

https://immigrationforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Polling-Update-Attitudes-on-Immigration-Spring_Summer-2017-Final.pdf.

Nevada Accountability Portal, "Demographic Profile: Year 2016-2017."

nevadareportcard.com.

http://nevadareportcard.com/di/report/reportcard_1?report=reportcard_1&scope=e7.y14&organization=c2272&fields=309%2C310%2C311%2C313%2C318%2C320&hiddenfieldsid=309%2C310%2C311%2C313%2C318%2C320&scores=1026%2C566%2C567%2C568%2C569%2C570%2C571%2C572%2C573%2C574%2C575%2C805%2C576%2C577%2C806&num=160&page=1&pagesize=20&domain=demoprof&.

Nevada Department of Education, *Research Bulletin: Student Enrollment and Licensed Personnel Information*. Volume 51. Carson City, NV: Nevada State Department of

Education, 2011, <http://www.doe.nv.gov/Resources/Bulletin-FY2011.pdf>.

Pew Hispanic Center. *Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S., Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065*, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-population-growth-and-change-through-2065/>.

Ryan D. King, Michael Massoglia, and Christopher Uggen, "Employment and Exile: U.S. Criminal Deportations, 1908–2005," *American Journal of Sociology* 117, no. 6 (May 2012): 1796-1799.

Supreme Court of Nevada, Administrative Office of the Courts. "Nevada State Court Language Access Plan (Revised on 12/24/2013)." [nv.courts.gov](http://www.nv.courts.gov).
https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=2ahUKEwj5yKPAvpDaAhUV12MKHULdD1gQFjAEegQIABBS&url=https%3A%2F%2Fncourt.s.gov%2FAOC%2FPrograms_and_Services%2FCourt_Interpreter%2FDocuments%2FNevada_State_Court_Language_Access_Plan%2F&usg=AOvVaw0d75uKU3WvO8y0-hXCmYVX.

Tiffany Howard. 2011. "The Perceptions of Self and Others: Examining the Effect Identity Adoption Has on Immigrant Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action Policies in the United States." *Immigrants & Minorities*, 29 (1): 86–109.

U.S. Census Bureau. 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 Census of population.

U.S. Census Bureau, various years. American Community Survey and Population Estimates Program.

Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and their Interpreters*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970.

Community Resources

The Boyd School of Law has an immigration clinic that offers free services on matters such as residence status, visas, deportation, and citizenship. The Immigration Clinic has an outreach program, the Nevada Immigrant Resources Project, which educates immigrants about their rights and trains social workers, police, and other service providers about immigration law and resources for immigrants.

The Citizenship Project is sponsored by the Culinary Union, and it provides legal

assistance to immigrants who are eligible for U.S. citizenship who desire to become U.S. citizens. While it serves citizens as well as non-citizen immigrants, Nevada Partners, a culinary training institute funded by the Culinary Union and resorts with which the union has contracts, is an important vehicle for immigrants to upgrade their skills and secure jobs in resort hotels.

Services for immigrants

Washoe County:

Nevada Hispanic Services, 3905 Neil Road, Reno, NV 89502. Tel. 775-826-1818, <http://www.hsreno.org>.

Washoe Legal Services, 650 Tahoe Street, Reno, NV 89509. Tel. 775-329-2727, <http://www.washoelegalservices.org>.

Nevada Hispanic Services, 637 South Stewart Street, B, Carson City, NV 89701. Tel. 775-885-1055, <http://www.hsreno.org>.

Clark County:

Thomas and Mack Legal Clinic, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, William S. Boyd School of Law, P.O. Box 71075, Las Vegas, NV 89170-1075. Tel. 702-895-2080, <http://www.law.unlv.edu/clinic.html>.

Citizenship Project, 710 W. Lake Mead Blvd., North Las Vegas, NV 89030. Tel. 702-868-6002, <http://www.culinaryunion226.org/citizenship.asp>

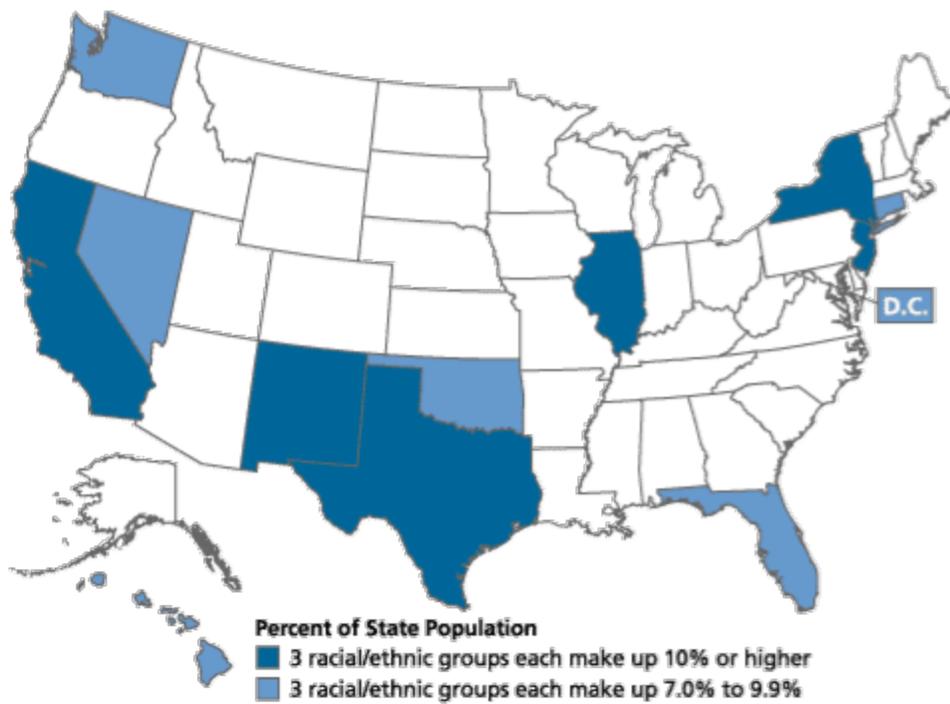
Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada, Migration and Refugee Services, 1511 Las Vegas Boulevard North, North Las Vegas, NV 89101. Tel. 702-383-8387.

Rafael Rivera Community Center, 2900 Stewart Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89101. Tel. 702-229-4600, www.lasvegasnevada.gov.

Appendix

Figure 1.

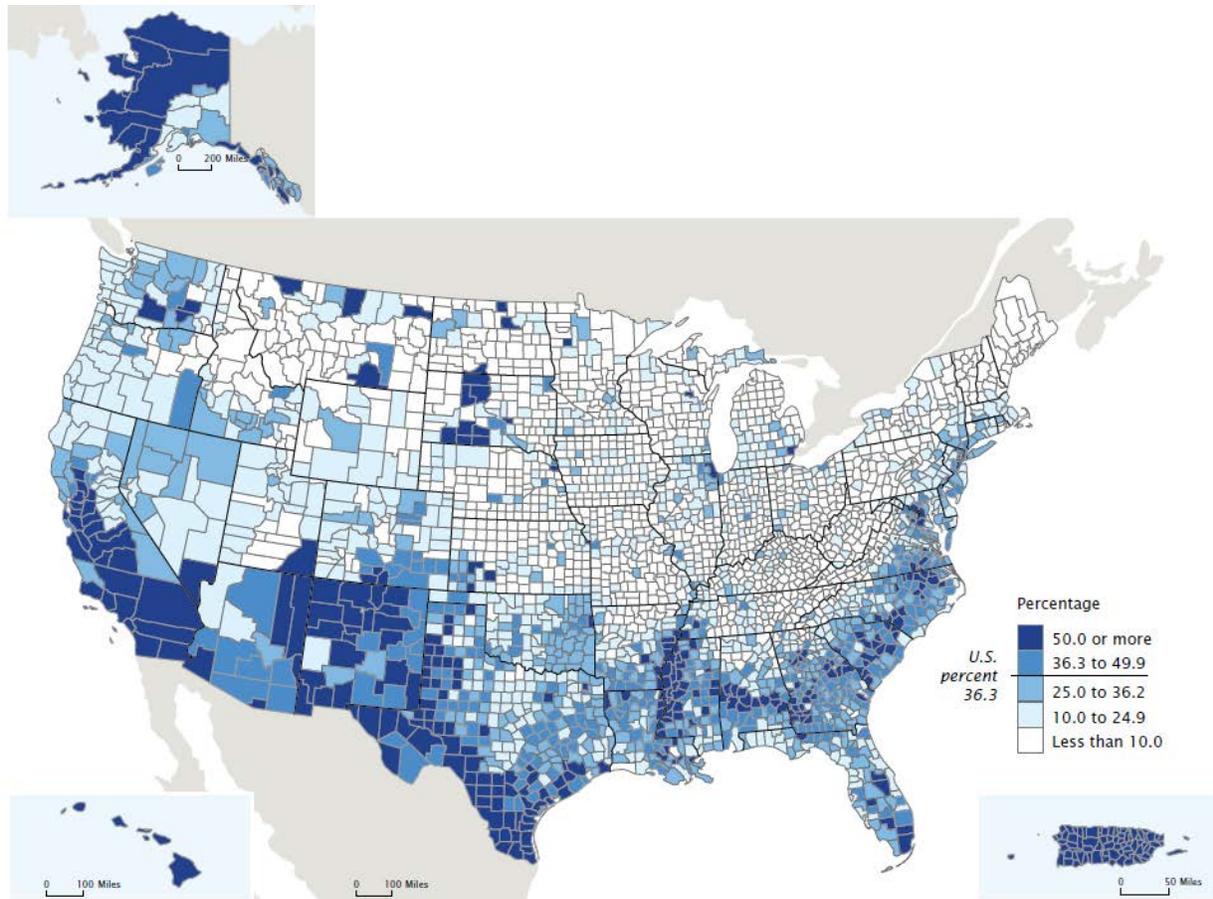
New Diversity States, 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000.

Figure 2.

**Minority Population as a Percentage of County Population:
2010.**

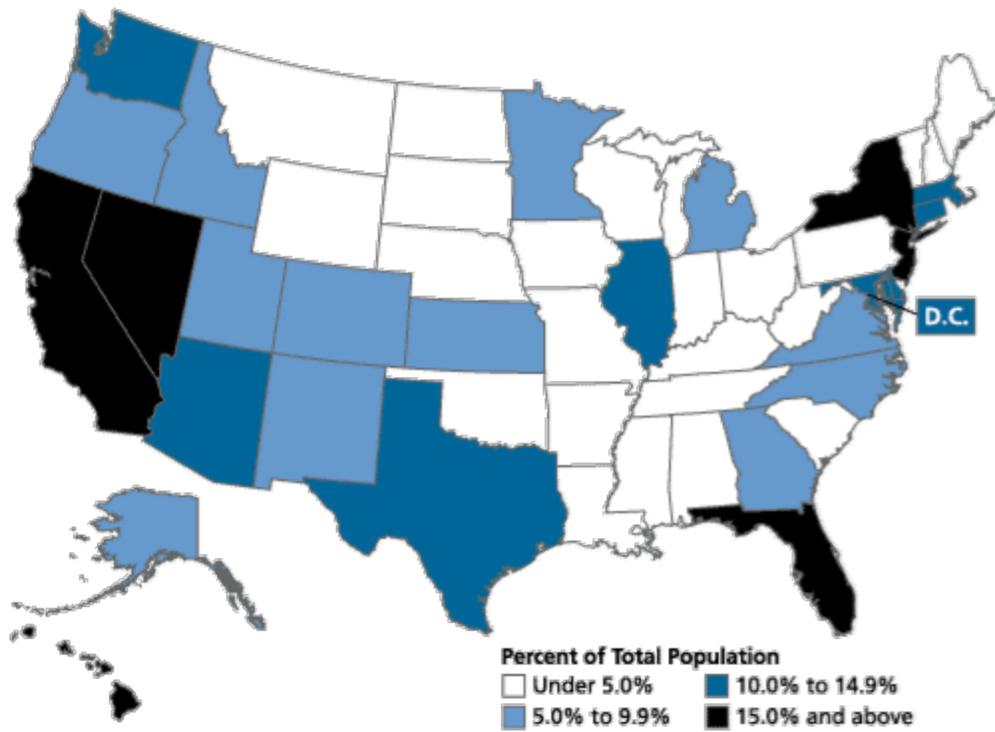


Note: Minority refers to people who reported their ethnicity and race as something other than non-Hispanic White alone in the 2010 Census. For information on confidentiality protection, non-sampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/p194-171.pdf

Source: U.S. Census 2010.

Figure 3.

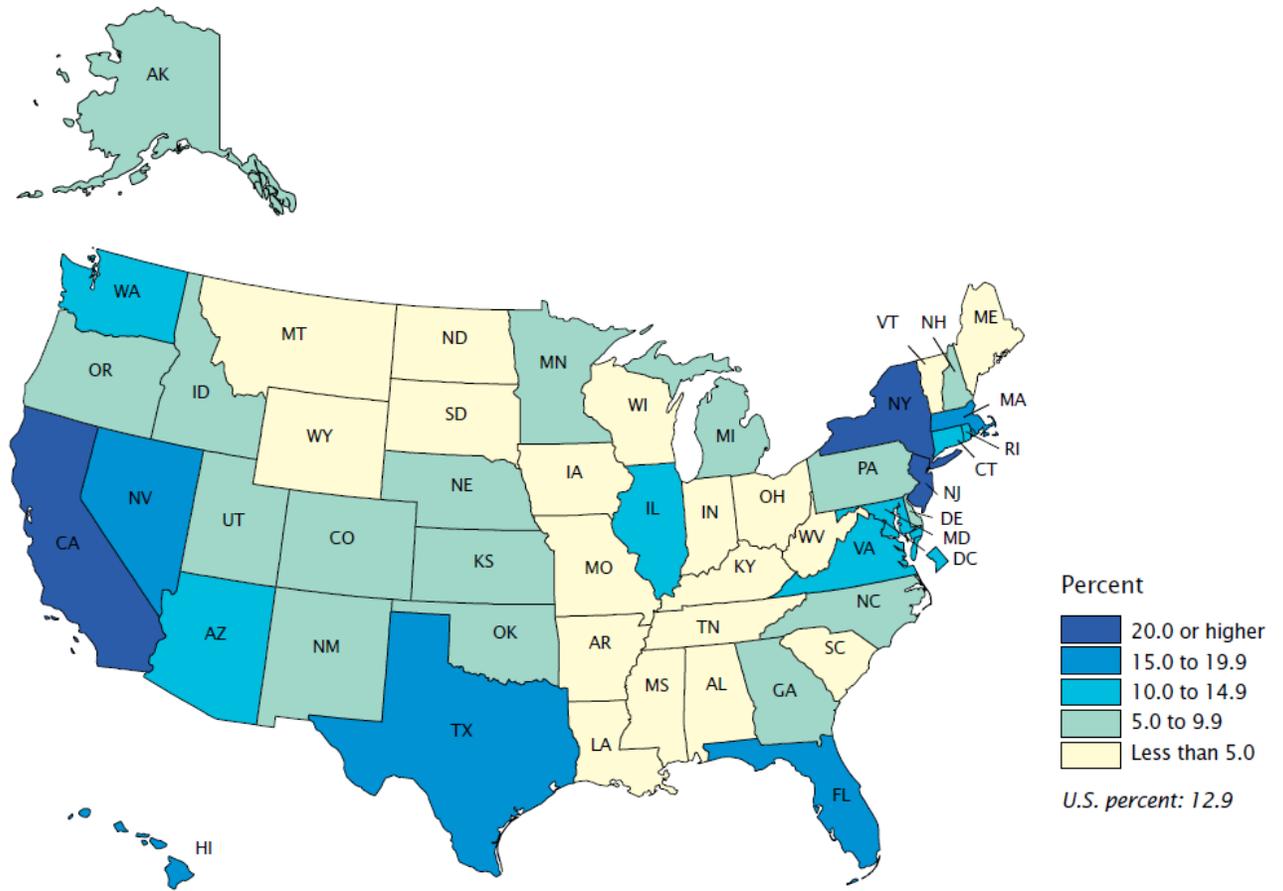
Percent Foreign-Born, United States, 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000.

Figure 4.

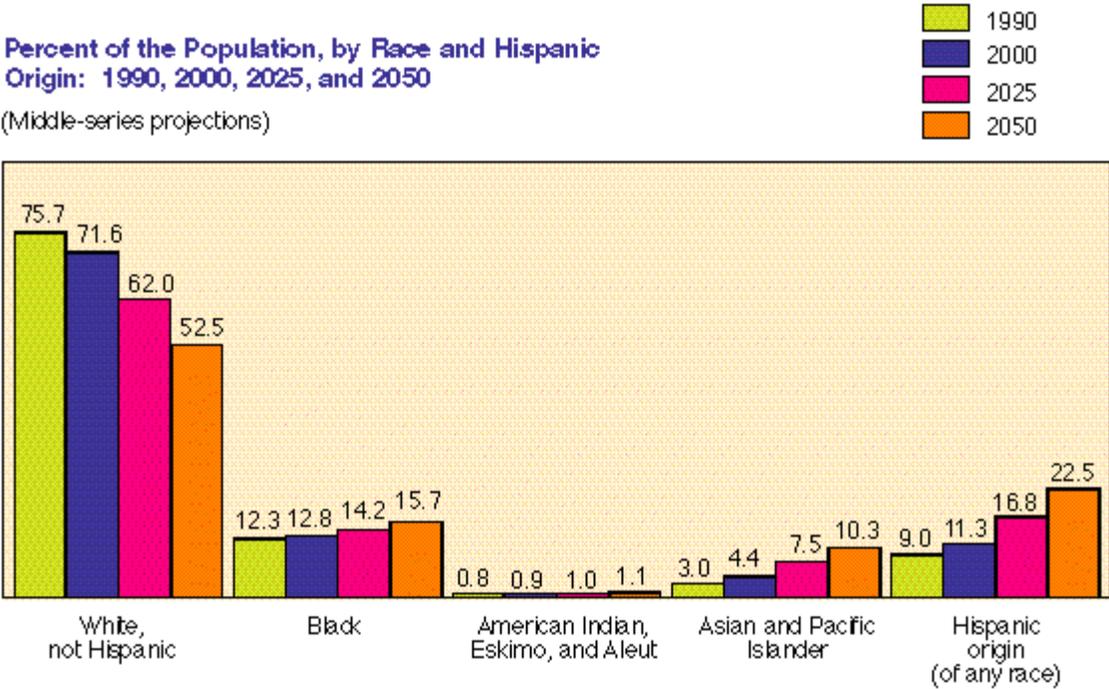
Percent Foreign-Born, United States, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010.

Figure 5.

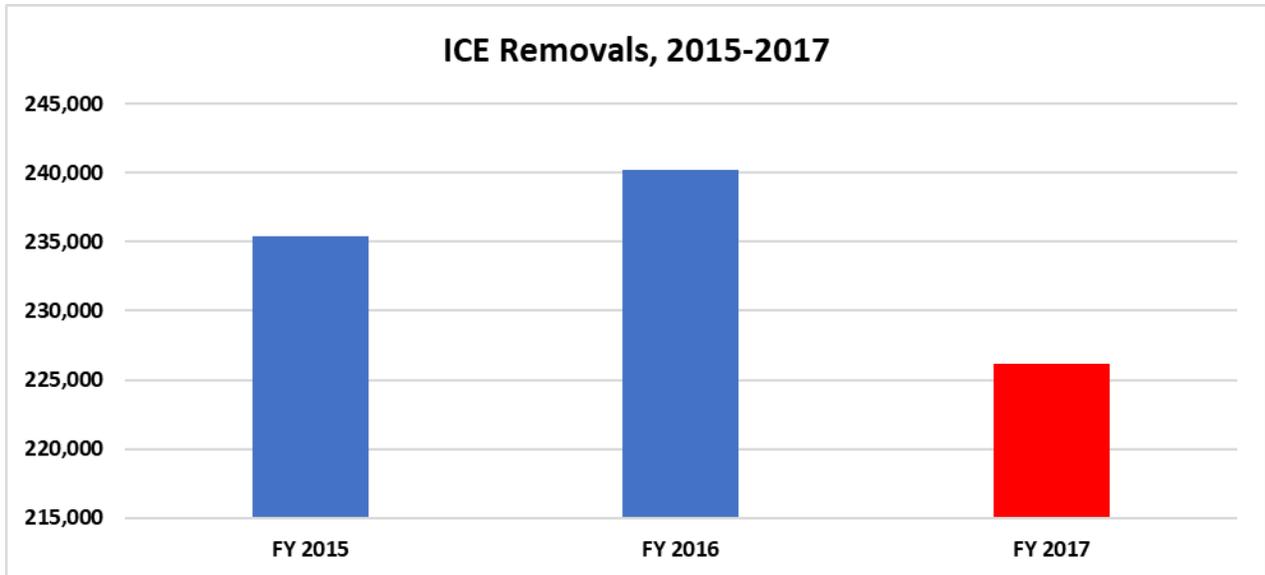
U.S. Population Projection



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

Figure 6.

ICE Removals under Obama and Trump Administration

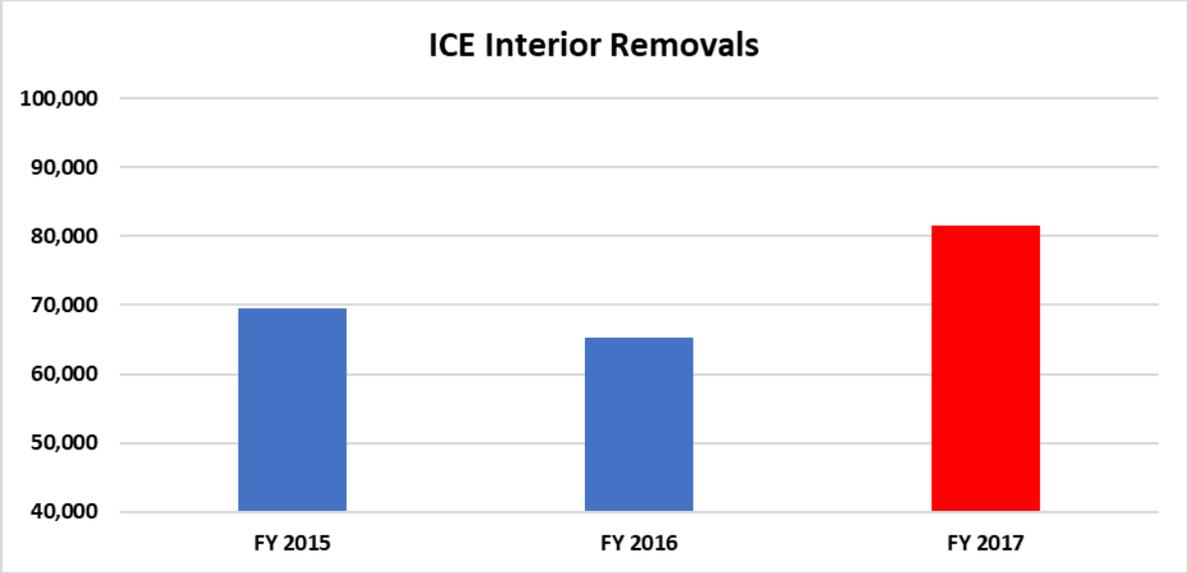


Note: This includes individuals arrested by ICE in the interior of the country and individuals apprehended by immigration officials at the border and turned over to ICE for removal

Source: U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement.

Figure 7.

ICE Interior Removals under Obama and Trump Administration

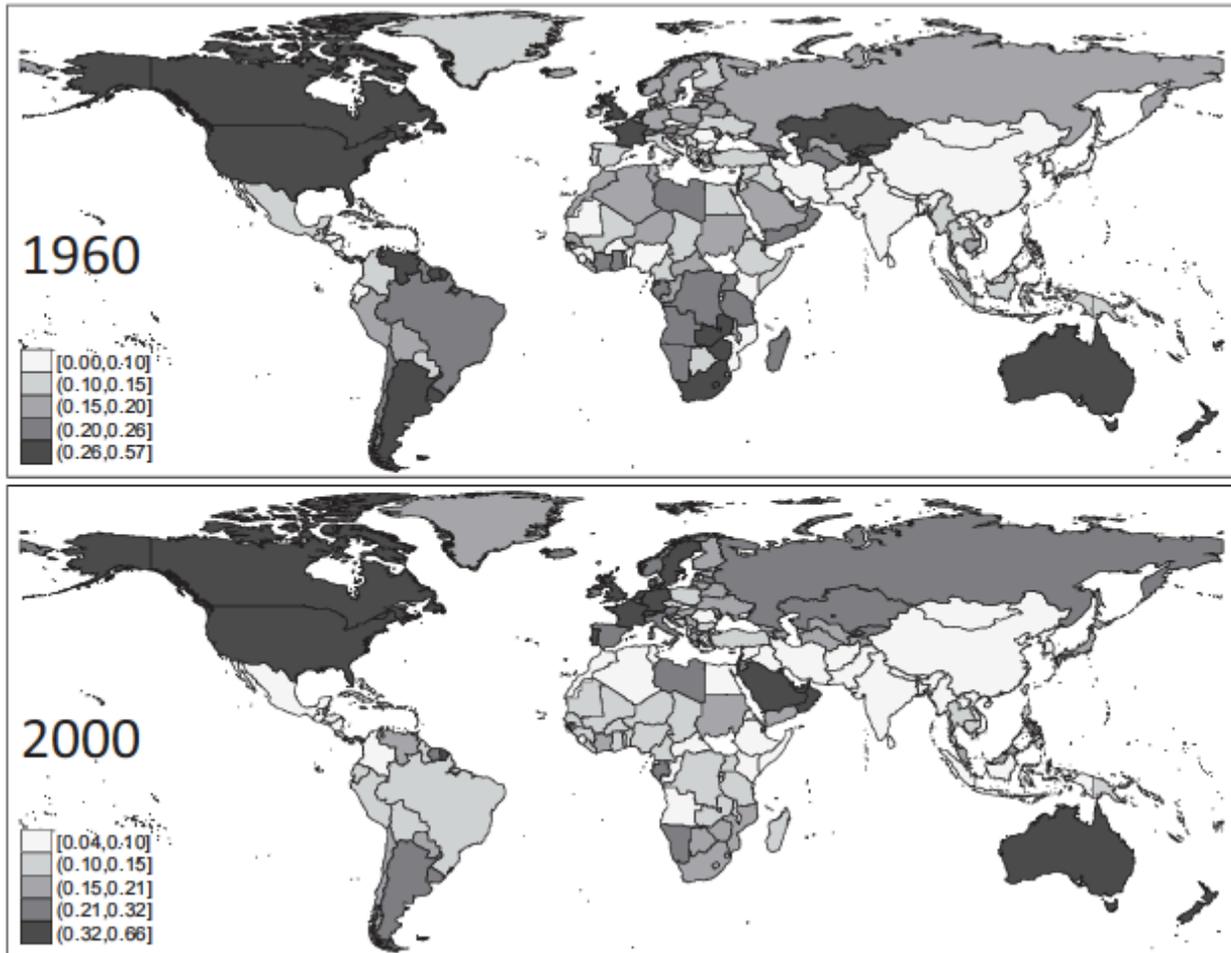


Note: This includes the deportation of people who have already lived in the United States, excludes deportations of people detained at the border.

Source: U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement.

Figure 8.

Global Immigration Diversification, 1960 and 2000



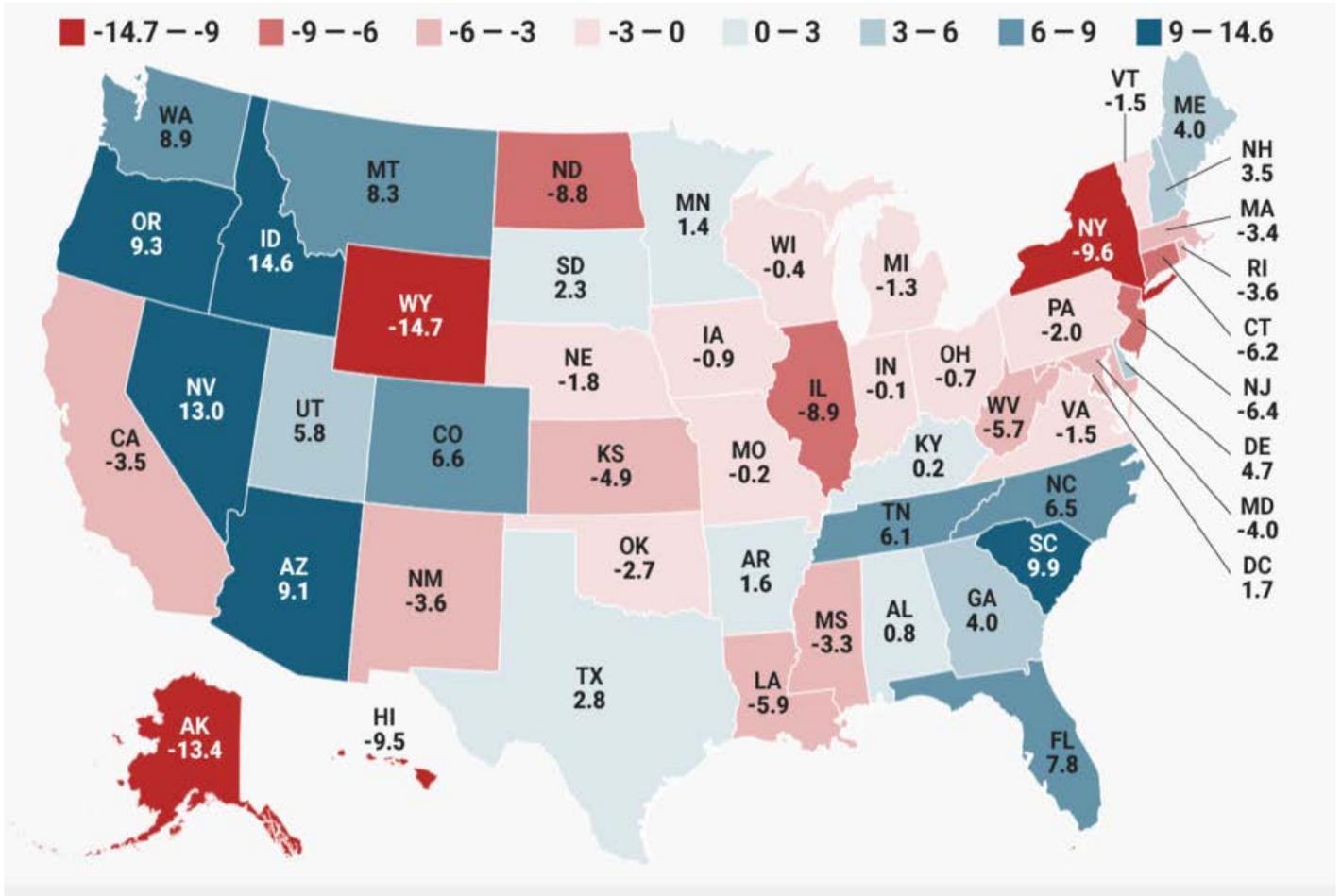
Source: Czaika, Mathias, and Hein Haas. "The globalization of migration: Has the world become more migratory?."

International Migration Review 48, no. 2 (2014): 283-323.

Note: The term 'immigration diversification' refers to immigrants from non-European origin countries; the figure reveals increasing non-European origin migration to Europe and North America and declining migration and settlement in Latin America and Africa.

Figure 9.

**Net Domestic Migration Per 1,000 Residents, July 1, 2016-
July 1, 2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.