

ISR Research Update

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Tools for Using Demographic Data

The Social Science Data Analysis Network (www.ssdan.net) creates demographic materials for policymakers, educators, the media and informed citizens. Directed by demographer William H. Frey at the Population Studies Center of the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, this resource includes CensusScope (www.censuscope.org), an easy-to-use tool for investigating Census 2000 and U.S. demographic trends at the national level or geographic levels closer to home. The Network has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Public Data Queries, Inc. and the U.S. Census Bureau.



THE CHANGING FACE OF U.S. IMMIGRATION

New patterns in immigration and nationwide residence of minority populations are raising national awareness of immigration issues and policy changes, according to ISR demographer William H. Frey, who spoke at a Capitol Hill briefing on the issue that has dominated the domestic policy agenda this spring. “In 1990, only 17 states had populations composed of at least five percent immigrants,” said Frey. “In 2005, 29 states had at least this proportion of foreign-born immigrants.”

The traditional immigrant magnet states of California, New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey and Illinois have been experiencing much slower growth in this segment of the population than the hot new immigrant destination states

State Immigrant Growth, 1990–2005

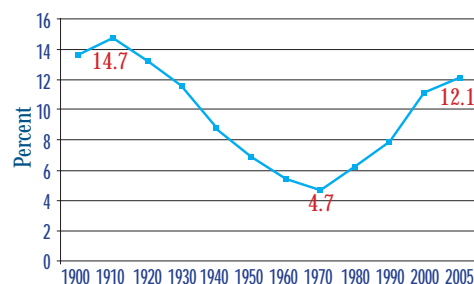


of North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Nevada, Arizona, Iowa, Nebraska and Colorado, where the immigrant population has grown 200 percent or more between 1990 and 2005.

The foreign-born who are attracted to these new destinations are likely to be more recent U.S. arrivals, Frey notes, who are less well-off financially and more likely to be undocumented than immigrants who settle in traditional magnet states.

As a result, attitudes toward immigration in the new state destinations tend to be more negative than attitudes in traditional magnet states, even though immigrants comprise relatively small shares of these states' populations. For example, Frey found that 57 percent of the residents of these new

Immigrant Share of U.S. Population



immigrant destination states interviewed in a CBS News Poll conducted in the summer of 2005 felt that levels of immigration to the U.S. should be decreased. This compares to 47 percent of the residents of traditional immigrant magnet states.

Overall, immigrants make up about 12 percent of the U.S. population, Frey points out—up from a low of less than five percent in 1970 but less than the peak proportion of nearly 15 percent in 1910.

Among recent immigrants, he adds, Hispanics account for slightly more than half of new arrivals. But they make up only 14 percent of the native-born U.S. population.

For more information, see www.frey-demographer.org.

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Q&A with William H. Frey

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Q. *What drew you to the field of demographics?*

A. Well, I was pretty good at math, so when I went to college, I was a mathematics major. I liked math because it was so logical and pristine. But I started to feel that it was too far removed from reality. Then I took a sociology course and really enjoyed it. Sociology is what led me to demographics, which is reality-based and relevant, but with a scholarly foundation.

Q. *How has the field changed since you received your Ph.D. in 1974?*

A. Formal demography tends to be concerned with life tables and other actuarial matters. There was some interest in broader population studies when I started my career, but not very much outside the academy. Then in the mid-'70s and '80s, people began to pay attention to some of the wide-ranging implications of the Baby Boom; its impact, for example, on what mortgage rates would be as the demand for housing started to increase dramatically.

Most people didn't fully understand the cohort phenomenon then. Now, the generational aspect of social phenomena has become commonplace but in the late '70s this was very different. I think if you did a Lexis-Nexis search of the term "demographics," you'd find a big increase in its use during this period.* Around that time *American Demographics* magazine began to publish and I became a regular contributor. Initially, there was something of a sense that the magazine was "retailing" scholarly work, but that view changed quite a bit. Unfortunately, the magazine is now defunct, perhaps because demographic topics are now so common in the mainstream media that a specialized outlet is no longer necessary.

Q. *What aspects of your work have had the greatest impact on the way the U.S. understands itself?*

A. My work on white out-migration from high immigration areas has received a lot of attention. Unfortunately, this work was also picked up in some of the acrimonious debates about immigration that were going on 10 years ago, by groups who tried to use the findings as "proof" that immigrants were scaring away whites. That is not at all what I meant, but that was how some of my work was used by certain advocacy groups. Still, I believe there's a need for research scientists who are willing to take a translational role, who make research understandable and accessible so that it can inform public policy.

Q. *What do you see as the major demographic challenges facing the U.S. in coming years?*

A. We're arriving at a stage where the aging of the Baby Boom population is bringing a host of challenges with it. A lot of industrialized nations are aging. But the U.S. is both aging and "young-ing" at the same time, the latter due largely to immigration. Both are occurring in very uneven ways in different regions around the country. "Young-ing" is most dramatic in the Southeast and in the West, whereas the Northeast and the Midwest are starting to lose young people and at the same time the older people who live there are aging in place. Because these trends have different racial and ethnic aspects, as well as the generational differences, the better we understand and anticipate what's going on, the more likely it is that we'll be able to anticipate service needs and avoid serious cultural clashes.

* A Lexis-Nexis search of U.S. magazines and journals found just one document that used the term "demographics" from Jan. 1970 to Jan. 1975. For the next five-year period, the total was 255; from 1980-1985, the search returned 504 documents, and from 1985 to 1990, the search was interrupted because it would return more than 1,000 documents.