



Introduction to the Special Issue: Immigration Policy

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The world is in turmoil due to concerns over immigration. Conflicting attitudes have countries locked in ferocious internal struggles concerning current immigration flows and policies that govern the international movement of people. While many people stand fast to the idea that liberal immigration policies are desirable in order to allow people to escape violence or to expand perspectives which arise from cultural diversity brought on by immigration, there are equally strong calls for severely restricting immigration. The slow pace of assimilation of immigrants, fiscal stresses, and disruptions in the social order are referenced as costs associated with more open immigration policies.

One problem with the debates surrounding immigration is that, too often, they are based on incomplete information and empty rhetoric. Misinformation about immigrants' impacts is compounded by the reality that the gains from immigration are more likely to be realized in the longer run, whereas the cost associated with immigrants' adaptation to their new homelands is endured immediately upon the migrants' arrival to the host society. The fierce polarization that we observe today concerning the benefit of more open borders is, in part, due to the inability to reconcile the short and long run impacts of immigration, as well as the uneven diffusion of facts surrounding the immigrant experience.

In this special issue of the *Journal of Economics Race and Policy* (JERP), we make inroads into sharing information about the impacts of immigration and the policies that drive migratory flows. History points to the intense interest in the assimilation of immigrants. However, evidence-based facts about assimilation beyond first-generation immigrants are hard to come by. Is that because higher-ordered generations

of immigrants are fully assimilated and, therefore, difficult to identify? In "Employment among U.S. Hispanics: A Tale of Three Generations," Pia Orrenius and Madeline Zavodny find that, relative to non-Hispanic natives, the employment trajectories of Hispanic men and women differ across three generations of Hispanic immigrants. They caution about analyzing Hispanics, some foreign-born and others US-born, some second-generation and others third-generation, under a single lens. To understand Hispanics' assimilation in the USA, it is important to examine their employment trajectories across generations.

Understanding immigrant assimilation also requires a careful exploration of their marriage patterns. Intermarriage and assimilation tend to be linked, with the former being highly dependent on the scarcity of partners in one's cultural circle. Adriana Hernández Catañeda and Todd Sørensen provide us with further insights into the potential assimilation of immigrants in the USA by exploring how the male to female sex ratio has changed for immigrants across birth cohorts, as well as for new green card recipients. In "Changing Sex-Ratios among Immigrant Communities in the U.S.," they find that the male to female sex ratio is becoming more balanced across immigrant birth cohorts, as well as for new green card recipients. Through a number of policy simulations, the authors help us envision how immigrant assimilation trajectories could be impacted by policies influencing their sex ratio.

The next two selections in this issue are about visa policies. In "Visa Wait Times and Future Earnings: Evidence from the National Survey of College Graduates," Michael Coon and Miao Chi introduce a well-established finding—namely, the boost in earnings experienced by migrants transitioning to a permanent immigrant visa status (e.g., becoming green card holders). The authors also expose interesting earnings patterns conditioned on migrants' waiting times to obtain permanent residency status, helping us forecast how immigration policy introduced today may affect immigrants' earnings trajectories in the USA.

Immigration policies, like other policies, may have unintended or unsuspected consequences. In "Love isn't All You Need: Income Requirements for Visa Sponsorship of Foreign

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Family Members,” Madeleine Sumption and Carlos Vargas-Silva focus on a UK immigration policy that requires sponsors to meet strict income thresholds to petition for the immigration of family members. While the income requirements are intended to minimize the potential for an immigrant to become a public charge, such policies can disadvantage certain groups by limiting their ability to sponsor family members. Given their traditionally lower earnings, women serve as an example of this outcome. The authors thus emphasize the importance of examining the implications of this type of policy, which is not unique to the UK.

A final set of contributions in this special issue address a highly contentious issue today—unauthorized immigration. One contribution examines children brought without authorization to the USA, a second one explores the migratory patterns of unauthorized immigrants as interior immigration enforcement intensifies, and a final contribution proposes a method to identify a class of undocumented immigrants in household-level surveys.

What are the outcomes for immigrants brought to the USA without authorization as children? Many of these youth have spent nearly their entire lives in the USA; yet, they have limited access to work, school, and health care coverage. Faced with Congressional inability to pass an immigration bill that would provide relief for these youth, the Obama Administration created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Eligible childhood arrivals were granted a temporary reprieve from deportation, work authorization, and access to some higher education resources. However, DACA youth were not directly eligible to participate in health insurance exchanges, which complicated their employment and schooling decisions. In “DREAMers and their Health Insurance Dream: Employment, Schooling, and Public Health Coverage,” Mónica García-Pérez uses state-level differences in the ability of DACA recipients to access health care to further our understanding of their schooling and employment choices.

Next, Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes and Fernando Lozano explore the mobility consequences of intensified interior immigration enforcement in their contribution entitled “Interstate Mobility Patterns of Likely Unauthorized Immigrants: Evidence from Arizona.” While the literature has noted that ratcheted-up enforcement induces unauthorized migrants to relocate elsewhere in the USA, not much is known about where those population flows resettle. Using Arizona as a case study, the authors examine the relocation patterns of likely undocumented migrants leaving the state following the adoption of tougher immigration enforcement measures. Where did they go? Moreover, to what extent was interior enforcement, as opposed to macroeconomic conditions, driving their relocation choices? Answers to these questions are important given the costs and benefits associated with immigration.

Finally, economic research on the unauthorized is stymied by scant information on who are the unauthorized—information that is not available in official representative datasets. The literature has relied on a number of methodologies to identify the potentially unauthorized population. In “An Alternative Approach for Identifying a Hidden Immigrant Population,” Daniel Menigistu, Susan Pozo, and Todd Sarnstrom II compare the various approaches and propose a new methodology that relies on the Affordable Care Mandate, along with information on family structure, to identify unauthorized migrants. They apply their methodology to answer questions concerning the impact of immigration status on fertility and labor supply.

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