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## Immigration Composition and Population Policy

Recent changes in immigration policy and composition  
have implications for proposals to alter immigration.

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The reports of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future increased public awareness of the impact of immigration on the United States. The commission reported that about 20 percent of current population growth in the United States is due to immigration (1). This is about half the amount that contributed to population growth in the peak immigration years before World War I, but greater than the contribution during the period of the baby boom following World War II. The increased importance of immigration in U.S. population growth, therefore, reflects the effects of changing birth rates as well as the amount of immigration. But the point was driven home by the population commission. Immigration is not just a marginal phenomenon whose importance for American society ceased with the restrictive legislation of the 1920's.

Since the final report of the population commission was made, debate on immigration policy has been increasing, centering primarily on the size of net alien immigration, including the separate problem of illegal entrants. The roles of immigration policy in drawing foreign-trained professionals to

the United States, in the retention of foreign students, and in the American labor market in general have also been argued, but these concerns are clearly subordinate to the growth issue. Public discussion is beginning to mirror the hotly contested debate of the population commission (2).

The lines seem to be clearly drawn between two value positions. The encounter centers on whether the population effects of immigration will overshadow the economic, social, and humanitarian values which have only recently emerged as the major influences in immigration policy. Those interested in achieving a stationary population for the United States are among the leading proponents of the view that immigration, legal and illegal, is a growth factor and, therefore, to be negatively valued. In effect, they argue that the population question is of such magnitude that population effects ought to be the paramount criteria in developing immigration policy. In this perspective, other criteria ought to play a part, but they should be subordinate to a policy of achieving a stationary population.

The opposition argues that it is yet to be demonstrated that immigration is

a major contributor to whatever population problem the United States has. They maintain that the rates and percentages quoted by the no-growth advocates in advancing their argument that immigration is a major cause of population problems are, to a not insignificant extent, statistical artifacts (3). Citing one of the papers prepared for the population commission, this view maintains that there is no indication that drastically reducing legal immigration will appreciably affect the speed with which the United States achieves zero population growth (4, pp. 589-603). Illegal immigration is a different issue, they maintain, and legally admitted aliens ought not to be made the scapegoats of law enforcement failures due to understaffing of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

In exploring these issues and evaluating these contentions, I shall review the current policy and the results of that policy on demographic and economic characteristics of recent immigrants. I shall also analyze and evaluate the quality of data on immigration.

### Current Immigration Policy

The Immigration Act of 1965 ended a 44-year policy of using national origin as one of the major criteria for admitting immigrants. The development of the restrictive policy in the United States has a long and involved history dating back to the Chinese Exclusion Acts of the 1880's at the beginnings of federal immigration policy. Over the years, many devices have been used to limit the amount of immigration, including the quota system, numerical ceilings, and outright racial exclusion. In addition, mechanisms for

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Table 1. The visa preference system according to the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (19).

<i>First preference</i>
Highly skilled immigrants whose services are urgently needed in the United States and the spouse and children of such immigrants (50 percent of the visas plus any not required for second and third preference)
<i>Second preference</i>
Parents of U.S. citizens over the age of 21 and unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens (30 percent of the visas plus any not required for first and third preference)
<i>Third preference</i>
Spouse and unmarried sons and daughters of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence (20 percent of the visas plus any not required for first or second preference)
<i>Fourth preference</i>
Brothers, sisters, married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and an accompanying spouse and children (50 percent of the visas not required for first three preferences)
<i>Nonpreference</i>
Applicants not entitled to one of the above preferences (50 percent of the visas not required for first three preferences, plus any not required for fourth preference)

selection, such as the visa preference system, literacy tests, and health, criminal, and moral criteria of admissibility have also been employed (5, 6).

The Immigration Act of 1965 introduced major changes into immigration policy (7; 8, pp. 179-204; 9). The most significant change was the elimination of the national origins system. This was accomplished over a 31-month period (December 1966 to June 1968) during which the national origins quota system remained in effect. However, unused visa numbers from undersubscribed countries were put into a visa pool for use by preference immigrants from nations with a waiting list. The Asia-Pacific triangle was immediately abolished and, with it, the last vestiges of a policy which discriminated against those of Asian birth or ancestry. Beginning with the fiscal year 1969, immigrant visas were distributed on a first-come, first-served basis regardless of country of origin. A total of 170,000 visas per annum was established for non-Western Hemisphere countries with the proviso that no one country could use more than 20,000 visas a year. In the Western Hemisphere, a ceiling of 120,000 visas per annum was imposed beginning in the fiscal year 1969, with no per country limitation. The traditional policy of no annual ceiling in the Western Hemisphere was continued through the fiscal year 1968.

The second major change involved the making of family reunions a major goal of immigration policy. Change of the visa preference system was the primary means of attaining this goal. The visa preference system is a procedure whereby a proportion of visas are reserved for applicants who are related to U.S. citizens or resident aliens or who possess needed work skills. If the reserved visas exceed the qualified applicants, they are then made available to other applicants in a prescribed order (Tables 1 and 2). Previous quota legislation contained comparatively simple systems favoring relatives, veterans, and skilled agricultural workers. The elaborate system in the 1952 act (Table 1) was intended as a mechanism of economic selection and was applied to each country's quota (6, p. 168).

The 1965 act altered the visa preference system so that 74 percent of visas were reserved for close relatives of citizens and resident aliens (Table 2). Under the provisions of the 1965 act, the new preference system applied to each Eastern Hemisphere (the entire world except North and South America and the Caribbean Islands) country during the transition period (1966 to 1968) and after that to the entire 170,000 visas allotted to the Eastern Hemisphere. No preference system exists for natives of the Western Hemisphere. The family reunion goal is further underscored by the fact that the parents, spouses, and unmarried children of U.S. citizens are exempted from the numerical ceilings in both hemispheres.

The third area of important policy change in 1965 focused on manpower provisions of immigration law. The new preference system makes a distinction between members of the professions (third preference) and other workers whose services are needed in the United States (sixth preference, Table 2). However, all immigrants with a worker preference and nonpreference immigrants are subject to the new policy of labor certification introduced in the 1965 act. Under this program the Department of Labor certifies before a visa is granted that there are not sufficient able and qualified workers for the immigrant's prospective occupation and that the alien will not adversely affect the prevailing wages and working conditions. It is important to note that because of the peculiar legislative history of the 1965 act,

Table 2. The visa preference system according to the Immigration Act of 1965 (19).

<i>First preference</i>
Unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens (not more than 20 percent of the visas)
<i>Second preference</i>
Spouse and unmarried sons and daughters of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence (20 percent of the visas plus any not required for first preference)
<i>Third preference</i>
Members of the professions and scientists and artists of exceptional ability (not more than 10 percent of the visas)
<i>Fourth preference</i>
Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens (10 percent of the visas plus any not required for first three preferences)
<i>Fifth preference</i>
Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (24 percent plus any not required for first four preferences)
<i>Sixth preference</i>
Skilled and unskilled workers in occupations for which labor is in short supply in United States (not more than 10 percent of the visas)
<i>Seventh preference</i>
Refugees to whom conditional entry or adjustment of status may be granted (not more than 6 percent of the visas)
<i>Nonpreference</i>
Any applicant not entitled to one of the above preferences (any numbers not required for preference applicants)

immigrants from the Western Hemisphere (except the parents, spouses, and children of citizens and resident aliens) are subject to labor certification.

As could be expected, these changes with regard to national origin, the distribution of visas, and the manpower provisions had an impact on the size and characteristics of the immigrant population. The characteristics of the immigrant population are of at least equal importance as is its size for two reasons. First, the population impact of immigration is not influenced just by the initial size of an immigrant cohort. The age structure, stage in the family life cycle, and other socioeconomic variables are related to the fertility of the immigrants and their offspring and, thus, to their long-term impact on population size and composition. Second, immigrants are not just numbers. Their age, education, work skills, and other characteristics affect their contribution to society and their demands on the resources of the nation. Different combinations of characteristics in immigrant groups of the same size can result in very different costs and benefits.

It should be emphasized that the policy changes briefly outlined here are only the major factors influencing immigration. Immigration law and administration are rather complex. In addition to the major changes in policy outlined, a number of technical changes contained in the 1965 act, subsequent legislation, and administrative practices have also affected immigrant characteristics.

### Data on Immigration

A major problem in understanding the impact of international migration on the U.S. population size and composition is the availability and quality of data. Data on annual immigrants are collected, tabulated, and published by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the Department of Justice. The INS is basically a law enforcement agency that gives information on immigrant characteristics a low priority.

There is no study available from the INS on the quality of the data processed or the accuracy of the procedures used to obtain or process information. Immigration data are collected mainly for a descriptive, administrative document, the *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (10). The kind of details normally presented in population statistics are often not given in these annual reports and definitions of terms and explanations of procedures are lacking. Special computer tabulations of a simple nature, such as more detailed age breakdown or cross tabulations, are prohibitively expensive and, in fact, cannot be performed on data prior to 1970 without major changes being made in the data format. The United States has been granting permanent residence to approximately 375,000 people per year between 1966 and 1972 and we know little about these people and even less about their subsequent histories.

The United States has not collected emigration data since 1958. Estimates are made by the Bureau of the Census from reports of other countries who receive U.S. citizens as immigrants. The return of aliens resident in the United States to their home country or their migration to a third country can usually be only grossly estimated in the absence of emigration data. It is safe to say, therefore, that annual

net immigration is presently unknown and grossly estimated at best.

Illegal immigration is a growing problem. Its magnitude can only be guessed at by reference to the number of illegal aliens apprehended in the United States. These figures can be misleading since they may reflect a change in enforcement activity and can include multiple departures. Therefore, while data on apprehensions must be cautiously interpreted in determining trends, they do give some indication of the number of illegal entrants. The number of apprehensions has been increasing and amounted to over half a million persons in the fiscal year 1972, of whom 430,000 were Mexican (10, tables 23 to 28). Thus the present analysis focuses on legal permanent immigrants because data are available on which to base policy-related judgments and because legal immigration is amenable to direct policy measures.

Two other major sources of data on the immigrant population are the annual alien address reports and the census of population. Each January, aliens are required by law to fill in an address report. No check on the quality of the data is made (11). Simple counts by country of origin and state are made and reported in the INS annual reports (10, tables 34 to 36) and the data are stored. What this means is that the United States collects data annually on about 4.5 million people who are not citizens and tallies geographically the total numbers of persons registering. One does not have to advocate "big brotherism" to suggest that it might well be advisable to obtain more information on group characteristics of these aliens. On the other hand, one could suggest that perhaps the whole process of data collection and storage, and the related expense, might be done away with as a holdover of wartime xenophobia.

Along with the data collected on the general population as part of the 1970 census, data unique to the foreign born was also requested as part of the extended questionnaires given to the 5 percent sample of the population. Census data contain a host of social, demographic, and economic characteristics which allow for measurement of the integration of immigrants into society (12). Of course, information on immigrants who have left the United States is missing and an important aspect of the immigration and adjustment process is therefore lacking.

Data for the following analysis of legal immigration are drawn from the INS annual reports (10) for the years 1961 to 1972. For purposes of discussion, data on recent immigration have been divided into three periods: the last 5 years (1961 to 1965) under the McCarran-Walter (Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952) regulations; the transition period (1966 to 1968) during which the quota system was phased out; and the years of the posttransition period (1969 to 1972) for which data are available.

### Immigrant Characteristics

What then has been the effect of legislation on immigration to the United States? Are recent immigrants different from their predecessors? Are there trends or developments of importance for the growing debate on the immigrant component of population policy? These questions are explored on the basis of comparisons of characteristics of immigrants. Data on the size, country of origin, age-sex composition, marital status, occupational levels, and labor-related characteristics are presented.

The Immigration Act of 1965 resulted in an increase in total immigration. The "annual average" columns in Table 3 show an increase of about 31 percent or 90,000 immigrants a year between the McCarran-Walter and transition periods. The figures for the transition period are somewhat misleading since special legislation in 1966 allowed nearly 100,000 Cuban refugees to be granted immigrant status in 1968. But even excluding this number, the transition years had an annual average of 56,000 immigrants, or an average of 19 percent more per year than during the McCarran-Walter period of the early 1960's. Under the full provisions of the 1965 act (1969 to 1972), the annual average was 27 percent (80,000 immigrants) greater than during the McCarran-Walter period and about 7 percent (25,000 immigrants) higher than in the transition period.

This increased volume of immigration was to be expected. During the transition, visas unused by undersubscribed countries were available to preference holders from oversubscribed nations. In the posttransition period, the Eastern Hemisphere ceiling of 170,000 visas per annum was about

12,000 larger than under the national origins quota system. The only ceiling on an individual country was 20,000 visas. Therefore, visas which would have been unused under the national origins system were almost totally allocated during both periods under the 1965 act. The number of relatives who were exempt from ceilings increased, especially in the period 1969 to 1972, inflating that total even further (10, table 6).

The number of immigrants in the fiscal year 1973 is reported at more than 400,000 (13). This figure indicates that immigration is not about to decline. Rather, it would seem that the fiscal year 1973 may be the beginning of a new stage of immigration as the immigrants under the 1965 act attain citizenship and thus qualify relatives for immigrant status under the preference system and in the exempt categories. Data on the country of origin of persons naturalized in 1972 by year of entry show large increases in naturalization from previously low quota

countries (10, report for 1972, table 44). This suggests that a large proportion of recent immigrants are applying for citizenship as soon as the prescribed 5-year waiting period is met.

The increased volume of immigration was accompanied by other important changes. The origin of immigrants also changed (see Table 3). The leading role of Europe as a major source of immigrants diminished. Within Europe, the bulk of immigrants switched from northern and western countries to the Mediterranean area and eastern Europe (14). The percentage of Asians increased, due largely to the contributions of China, Hong Kong, India, and the Philippines (14). In the Western Hemisphere, the proportion of immigrants dropped (if we discount the unusual Cuban situation of 1968). The number of immigrants from North and South America changed slightly and in different directions. The percentage drop for both continents reflects primarily the increases in the numbers of immigrants

from other areas of the world. The small changes in volume in the Western Hemisphere were due to the labor certification requirements imposed in 1966 and to the ceiling of 120,000 visas per annum (except for the close relatives of citizens) beginning in 1969. The intended purpose of both policy changes was to limit immigration from the Western Hemisphere because it was feared that the absence of checks on the visas allotted to countries in this hemisphere would result in the United States suffering the effects of a population growth in Latin America and the Caribbean Islands (7).

There was also a shift in the area of origin within the Western Hemisphere, with the natives of the West Indies accounting for an increased proportion of immigrants (even excluding the special Cuban case in 1968) and with immigration from Canada and South America declining (10, report for 1972, table 14). In fact, U.S. citizens going north to Canada now outnumber the Canadian immigrants to the United States by two to one (15).

The change in the sources of immigrants resulted in changes in other demographic characteristics. The age distributions in Table 4 indicate shifts which could be of significance for the future. Immigrants in the early adult years decreased both proportionately and absolutely (10, table 10). The proportion of 18- to 24-year-olds decreased from the 24 percent level in the McCarran-Walter period to 17.8 and 17.5 percent of the total in the two later periods, respectively. At the same time, the proportion between 30 and 44 years of age increased slightly. The older age categories (45 to 64 years, and 65 and over) had small increases during the transition and returned to near their previous levels.

The increase in the proportion of both dependent children (0 to 14 years) and those over 65 years of age under the 1965 act led to a higher dependency ratio. The dependency ratio for 1969 to 1972 increased 21 percent over the ratio for the McCarran-Walter period (Table 5). In short, the age distribution of immigrants shifted, leading to an increase in the proportion of those in dependent age groups, a decrease in the proportion of those in the early stages of labor force participation and family formation (18 to 24 years), and a slight increase in the middle age ranges (30 to 44 years). The same trends held

Table 3. Annual average and percentage distribution of immigrants by region of origin: The three periods, 1961 to 1965, 1966 to 1968, and 1969 to 1972 represent, respectively, the last 5 years under the McCarran-Walter regulations, the transition period during which the quota system was phased out, and the years of the posttransition period for which data are available. Data from (10, reports for 1965, 1970, 1971, and 1972, table 14).

Region	Period							
	1961 to 1965		1966 to 1968		1966 to 1968*		1969 to 1972	
	Annual average	Per-cent	Annual average	Per-cent	Annual average	Per-cent	Annual average	Per-cent
Europe†	122,155	42.1	132,841	35.0	132,841	38.3	105,142	28.3
Asia†	21,611	7.5	53,956	14.2	53,956	15.6	98,770	26.6
Africa	2,564	0.9	4,150	1.1	4,150	1.2	6,844	1.8
Oceania	1,307	0.5	2,245	0.6	2,245	0.7	3,012	0.8
N. America	118,804	41.0	165,179	43.5	132,075	38.1	136,507	36.7
S. America	23,609	8.1	21,443	5.7	21,443	6.2	21,490	5.8
Other	13		5		5		3	
Total‡	290,062	100.0	379,820	100.0	346,716	100.0	371,767	100.0

\* Excluding 99,312 Cubans adjusting their status under the Act of 2 November 1966 (Public Law 89-723). † Adjusted total to include Turkey in Asia from 1961 to 1970 for comparison with later years. ‡ Slight differences due to rounding.

Table 4. Age distribution of immigrants by sex. For the period 1961 to 1965,  $N = 1,450,254$ ; for 1966 to 1968,  $N = 1,139,429$ ; 1969 to 1972,  $N = 1,487,049$ . Data from (10, table 10).

Age	Period								
	1961 to 1965			1966 to 1968			1969 to 1972		
	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F
0-14	22.5	11.4	11.1	24.6	12.5	12.1	25.8	13.0	12.8
15-17	4.6	2.1	2.5	5.2	2.6	2.7	5.4	2.7	2.7
18-24	24.1	8.4	15.7	17.8	5.5	12.3	17.5	6.3	11.2
25-29	14.7	6.8	7.9	13.3	5.8	7.5	15.1	7.2	7.9
30-44	21.7	10.5	11.2	23.1	10.8	12.3	23.4	11.9	11.5
45-64	10.3	4.5	5.8	12.9	5.5	7.4	10.4	4.7	5.8
65+	2.1	0.8	1.3	3.0	1.1	1.8	2.4	1.0	1.4
Total*		44.5	55.5		43.8	56.2		46.7	53.3

\* Slight differences due to rounding.

for both the males and the females (Table 4).

The proportion of males to females changed notably in the 1969 to 1972 period. The sex ratios for the three periods are, respectively, 80.2, 78.1, and 87.6 males per 100 females. Of particular note are the shifts in the proportions of males in the adult, prime labor forces ages (25 to 29 and 30 to 44) (Table 4).

The data on shifts in the age distribution provide insights into the data on marital status (Table 6). The shifts in age were accompanied by a decrease of single persons and an increase in those married. This helps to explain the increased number of dependent children and the decrease in young adults. Apparently, older persons with higher occupational levels who were married and had already begun families made up for the loss of younger, unmarried, and lower-skilled immigrants who were affected by the labor certification procedures. Possible implications of these demographic shifts will be discussed later.

The changes in labor-related provisions of the U.S. immigration law in 1965 resulted in shifts in the types of occupations of immigrants. Table 7 shows the occupational distribution for the three periods (16). Three trends are notable in the labor force and occupational distribution. The first is the increase in the percentage of professional level immigrants. The proportion in this level increased by 50 percent between the McCarran-Walter and post-transition periods. Since the level of immigration increased between these two periods, this change in proportions represents a numerical increase from an annual average of about 26,000 to 46,000 professional level workers.

The second shift is the decrease in the "clerical, sales and kindred workers" category. Especially hard hit were applicants in clerical occupations who were generally denied labor certification by the Department of Labor. Substantial numbers of clerical workers entered from undersubscribed countries prior to 1966. The ending of the quota system at the close of 1968 made entry even more difficult since large numbers of immigrants from previously oversubscribed countries had higher priorities in the waiting list under the first-come, first-served system. The situation of England illustrates the process. During the final year of each of the periods (1965, 1968, and 1972), the numbers

Table 5. Immigrant dependency ratios for the three periods 1961 to 1965, 1966 to 1968, and 1969 to 1972. Ratios were determined from the numbers of immigrants in the age groups as follows: youth =  $(0-14/15-64) \times 100$ ; aged =  $(65 \text{ and over}/15-64) \times 100$ ; dependency =  $0-14 + 65 \text{ and over}/15-64 \times 100$ .

1961 to 1965	1966 to 1968	1969 to 1972
<i>Youth (0 to 14 years)</i>		
29.8	34.0	36.0
<i>Aged (65 years and over)</i>		
2.6	4.1	3.4
<i>Dependency</i>		
32.5	38.1	39.4

of clerical workers from the United Kingdom were 4436, 2707, and 633, respectively. The trend was duplicated in other countries, such as Germany and Canada, which had contributed substantial numbers of clerical workers. (In the case of Canada, the major cause for the decrease in immigration of clerical workers was labor certification, but the annual ceiling of 120,000 visas allotted to the Western Hemi-

sphere seems also to have had a depressing effect on overall immigration from Canada, similar to the ending of the quota system for northern Europe.)

The third shift is the increased immigration of people with no reported occupation. This category includes spouses, children, students, retirees, and those whose occupation is unknown. As seen already, the number of children is important here. The numbers of immigrants in the other categories remain relatively constant in all three periods (10, table 10A).

These changes in labor force participation and occupational distribution are consistent with previous data on origin, age, sex, and marital status. The increase in professionals can quite logically be associated with an increase in the number of older immigrants, the percentages of married immigrants, and the number of children. The decrease in clerical workers is mirrored in the decreases in the young adult ages, an increased sex ratio, and a decrease in the percentages of single

Table 6. Marital status of immigrants by sex. For the period 1961 to 1965,  $N = 1,450,312$ ; for 1966 to 1968,  $N = 1,139,460$ ; for 1969 to 1972,  $N = 1,487,068$ . Except during the period 1961 to 1965 when the numbers of males whose marital status was unknown was 0.1 percent, the numbers of immigrants in each category whose status was unknown was less than 0.1 percent. Data from (10, table 10A).

Marital status	Period								
	1961 to 1965			1966 to 1968			1969 to 1972		
	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F
Single	52.2	57.2	48.2	49.0	53.0	45.8	47.1	51.9	42.8
Married	44.2	41.4	46.5	47.1	45.5	48.4	50.3	47.0	53.2
Widowed	2.3	0.7	3.6	2.7	0.8	4.2	1.9	0.6	3.0
Divorced	1.2	0.7	1.7	1.2	0.7	1.6	0.8	0.5	0.9

Table 7. Labor force participation and occupational level of immigrant workers. For the period 1961 to 1965,  $N = 1,450,312$ ; for 1966 to 1968,  $N = 1,139,460$ ; for 1969 to 1972,  $N = 1,487,068$ ; these numbers refer to labor force participation only. Data from (10, table 10A).

Occupational status	Period		
	1961 to 1965	1966 to 1968	1969 to 1972
<i>Labor force participation</i>			
Reported occupation	45.6	43.0	41.9
No occupation reported*	54.4	57.0	58.1
<i>Occupational level</i>			
Professional, technical and kindred workers	19.8	24.6	29.6
Farmers and farm managers	1.5	1.8	1.4
Managers, officials and proprietors, except farm	4.7	4.9	4.0
Clerical, sales and kindred workers	21.1	14.6	10.2
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	13.3	13.1	15.4
Operatives and kindred workers	10.0	11.8	11.7
Private household workers	7.0	10.9	7.8
Service workers, except private household	7.3	8.1	7.6
Farm laborers and foremen	4.8	3.2	3.4
Laborers, except farm and mine	10.1	7.0	8.9

\* Includes spouses, minor children, students, retirees, and occupation unknown.

persons. The larger proportion of young children, the increase in married and older persons (and, therefore, the probability of mothers with young children) shows up in the larger "no occupation" category.

It is not possible to test directly for the suggested relationships among immigrant characteristics, given the format of immigration data in both its published and unpublished forms. Nevertheless, the demographic and occupational trends are compatible and can be explained by the changes in policy, particularly the ending of the national origins quota system, the new hemispheric ceilings, and the labor certification requirements.

One other labor-related aspect has generated discussion, and that is the use of "adjustment of status" provisions in the law for those in the United States on student and exchange visitor visas. The provisions are in the law for humanitarian reasons. Adjustment of status is a process whereby a person in the country as a nonimmigrant or a refugee may apply for an immigrant visa. If the would-be immigrant is otherwise qualified, he is not required to leave the United States and return to his home country (or a third country) just to apply at an overseas U.S. consulate for a visa. This privilege is denied natives of the Western Hemisphere. The adjustment procedure was used, for example, under special legislation by a large number of Cuban refugees in 1968 who had been previously airlifted to the United States. Such provisions also allow the parent of a U.S. citizen to come to the United States on a visitor's visa and apply here for a permanent resident visa. Such a method avoids delays in the processing of papers for the parent in a foreign country, permits the U.S. citizen to help a probably aged parent in the bureaucratic process, and generally speeds up and eases family reunion, which is the purpose of exempting close relatives from the numerical ceilings.

Such uses of the adjustment of status provisions are not the major object of concern. What is the target of criticism are cases in which change of status is job related. The question of a possible "brain drain" is frequently mentioned. Included in this objection is the person who comes as a visitor with every intention of remaining, who works illegally and applies in the meantime for adjustment of status. The other major

targets of concern are the student and exchange visitors who come to the United States for training but change their status to immigrant at the completion of study. In the case of ostensibly temporary visitors, there used to be an informal policy of the INS to ignore the violation if the person was of professional status and eligible for a third preference visa. Such discriminatory and selective enforcement has reportedly ceased (8, p. 194).

The use of the adjustment of status mechanism by students has proportionately declined during the years for which appropriate data are available (1967 to 1972). The proportion of adjustments given to exchange visitors has increased. These two education and training categories combined have consistently accounted for a little over 20 percent of adjustments for the last 5 years (10, tables 6B and 6C).

Thus, while the use of adjustment of status procedures accounted for about 23 percent of immigrant visas in 1972, almost half of these (47 percent) were for persons exempt from ceilings (immediate relatives) or eligible for a relative preference. Adjustment by foreign students and those in advanced training as exchange visitors has remained relatively steady. Adjustment of status provisions, therefore, have not become mainly a subterfuge for gaining immigrant status on the part of foreign students and trainees. Policymakers concerned about adjustment procedures must carefully weigh humanistic values, the purposes and goals of training foreign students, labor needs, and the effects of adjustment procedures on developing nations.

## Discussion

Despite the problems with immigration data, it is possible to document some of the results of the changes in policy established by the Immigration Act of 1965. Immigration is increasing and the composition of the immigrants is changing. The abolition of the quota system and labor certification have affected the size, origin, age composition, sex ratio, marital status, and skill levels of immigrants. These interconnected changes in turn affect the contribution of immigration to the population dynamics of the United States. The influence of immigration on achieving the goal of population

stabilization depends not only on when stabilization is desired and on fertility patterns in the United States, but also on the size and composition of the immigrant component.

Models of paths to stabilization in which actual values of immigrant numbers and characteristics are used are not yet available. Characteristics such as the age structure, marital status, and stage in family life cycle all affect the fertility behavior of current immigrants and thus also indirectly affect future population trends through their offspring's demographic behavior. The higher occupational levels of immigrants may well result in lower fertility than was true of immigrants in the recent past. Foreign-born women have recently had lower fertility rates than native-born women (17). The decrease in the proportion of young adult immigrants lessens the addition to the native group in the prime fertility years, which is now rather large in the United States because of the children of the baby-boom era entering their child-producing years. It is not clear whether the youngest immigrants (0 to 14 years of age) will more closely resemble their parents or the native population in their future fertility rates. Since compositional factors, especially age structure, are important properties in population dynamics (growth, decline, and stabilization), the actual values of size and characteristics of immigrants ought to be taken into account in projections of population and in estimations of the direct and indirect contributions of immigration.

The reason for developing models of paths to population stabilization is to provide insights into the impact of actual immigration. Reaching this objective is complicated by the fact that there currently are bills before the U.S. Congress to make further major alterations in immigration law. The effects of the proposed changes on the size and composition of future immigration would further affect both the direct contribution of immigration to future population growth and its indirect contribution through the children and grandchildren of immigrants. Ultimately, the question involves a basic value decision. Coale concluded in his technical report for the population commission that immigration at current levels does not greatly modify the fertility level necessary to bring about zero population growth. Yet immigration equaling 10 percent of annual



births would mean a larger stationary population (about 6.6 percent larger) (18). Some persons are of the opinion that such a result is unacceptable and that, contrary to Coale's conclusion, we should abandon the tradition of welcoming immigrants.

Nevertheless, immigration continues to play an important role in the political, social, and economic life of the United States. The immense interest in and out of Congress whenever important immigration legislation is considered, the dependence on foreign-trained medical personnel, and the large numbers of professional and skilled workers entering the American labor market are indicative of the impact of immigration on important segments of society. Only recently has attention been turned to the role of immigration in population dynamics. The flurry of proposals to alter immigration in view of its role in population growth and composition are unfortunately tenuously related to any current immigration rates and characteristics. A radical decrease in immigration is probably not politically feasible at present, and no one has systematically examined the implications of such a cut were it to occur. The effects on medical delivery, labor shortages in various sectors of the economy, and the human hardship of separations are a few of the situations which would need examination in view of current practice and pending applications for admission. From a population perspective, the effects of reductions in immigration on shifts in the age structure along the paths to stabilization need to be examined. The economic, social, and environmental costs of realigning resources to serve a population whose age structure undergoes changes in the proportion of older and younger persons may be large. The costs may well be greater than the price of a somewhat larger population making a smoother transition to population stabilization.

To put it succinctly, precipitous action may be worse than no action. But this should not be an excuse for our not examining the implications of current immigration levels and characteristics. Social, demographic, economic, and political (domestic and foreign) implications need to be investigated and weighed in the formulation of policy. The population dimension of immigration, which has recently en-

tered the public consciousness, should be included in future policy development but to have it overshadow other factors to their virtual exclusion would be costly.

To investigate the demographic effects of immigration, however, brings us back to the quality of immigration data. As suggested above, immigration data, like much information on social phenomena, have some major inadequacies, largely because of the underfinancing of what has been seen as a low priority activity of a law enforcement agency. Perhaps the current awareness of the population effects of immigration will result in the allocating of resources needed to provide better data on immigrants. Such information could help in setting immigration and population policy and is necessary for measuring the effectiveness of policies and programs in achieving desired goals.

#### References and Notes

1. The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future used an estimate of net civilian immigration made by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, which included estimates of net arrivals from Puerto Rico, net arrivals of civilian citizens, conditional entrants, estimated emigration, and an adjusted net alien immigration. The net civilian category is broader in scope than the usual meaning of immigration (alien immigration).
2. L. Westoff, *New York Times Magazine*, 13 September 1973.
3. For example, it is misleading to state that the percentage of population growth due to immigration (about 22 percent in 1972) is an estimate of the amount of immigration relative to births. In computing the contribution of births and immigration to population growth, these two components are treated differently. A net natural increase is used for the birth component, that is, population losses from deaths are subtracted from all births and the remaining excess of births over deaths is the birth component of growth. An estimate of emigration is sometimes subtracted from immigration. These procedures ignore the fact that immigrants are among those that died and native born are among those who emigrate. Thus, what is, on the surface, a set of comparable procedures (if emigration is even subtracted from immigration), in fact glosses over some important dynamics. In effect, it means that immigration is treated almost entirely as a growth factor and births as a combination replacement and growth mechanism. There is no inherent logical or theoretical reason to do this. It is a convention stemming from the quality and format of the data. By stating the proportion of immigration to live births one obtains a very different picture of the relative size of immigration (8.5 births to 1 immigrant in 1972).
4. A. J. Coale, in *Commission on Population Growth and the American Future: Research Reports*, vol. 1, *Demographic and Social Aspects of Population Growth*, C. F. Westoff and R. Parke, Jr., Eds. (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1972).
5. The development of immigration policy from 1860 to 1952 is outlined in J. Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (Atheneum, New York, 1963); W. S. Bernard, Ed., *American Immigration Policy* (Harper, New York, 1950). See also Divine (6).
6. R. A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952* (Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn., 1957).
7. C. B. Keely, *Demography* 8, 157 (1971).
8. ———, in *Commission on Population Growth and the American Future: Research Reports*, vol. 1, *Demographic and Social Aspects of Population Growth*, C. F. Westoff and R. Parke, Jr., Eds. (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1972).
9. Special issue of *Ann. Am. Acad. Polit. Soc. Sci.*, E. P. Hutchinson, Ed. (1966), p. 367.
10. U.S. Department of Justice, *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1961-1972). Data from the following tables in the annual reports were used: table 6, immigrants subject to and exempt from limitations by country and region of birth; tables 6B and 6C, characteristics of aliens adjusted to permanent residence (care should be exercised in analyzing these data because of the unusual situation of large numbers of Cuban refugees adjusting status in 1967 and 1968); table 10, immigrants admitted by sex and age; table 10A, immigrants admitted by sex, marital status, median age, and major occupation group (detail on "no occupation reported" category omitted in 1972 annual report); table 14, immigrants admitted by country and region of birth; tables 23 to 28, aliens apprehended, deported, and required to depart; tables 34 to 36, alien registration; table 44, persons naturalized by country and region of birth and year of entry. Some of these tables include data for a series of years. In such cases, data from the latest appropriate year are used and this is indicated in the reference in the text of this article. In all other cases data from the table in each annual report are used.
11. An estimate of error of occupational reporting in the alien address report is contained in a study commissioned by the Department of Labor [D. S. North and W. G. Weissart, *Immigrants in the American Labor Market* (National Technical Information Service, Washington, D.C., 1973), pp. 195-196]. North and Weissart point out a number of deficiencies in the alien address report forms and in the use of the data obtained with these forms.
12. A. F. Taeuber and K. E. Taeuber, *Demography* 4, 798 (1967).
13. U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, unpublished data for the fiscal year 1973.
14. See C. Keely (7). The same trend continued in the period 1969 to 1972 (see 10, report for 1972, table 14).
15. *New York Times*, 11 November 1973, p. 9.
16. Data on occupation as published by the Immigration and Naturalization Service are misleading and difficult to interpret. "Occupation" in most cases means the occupation listed on the visa application—that is, the would-be immigrant's job before entrance. Spouses and dependent children, who might have been in the work force in the home country and may legally enter it in the United States, can legitimately be listed as not in the labor force. For those who have labor certification, "occupation" means the job in the United States for which they have been certified. Thus, "occupation" includes information on job classification in both the old country and the United States and labor force participation probably understates the number in the labor force both before and after entrance to the United States.
17. R. Irwin and R. Warren, in *Commission on Population Growth and the American Future: Research Reports*, vol. 1, *Demographic and Social Aspects of Population Growth*, C. F. Westoff and R. Parke, Jr., Eds. (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1972), pp. 176-177.
18. See Coale (4, pp. 598-603). One school of thought holds that the U.S. population problem is not one of numbers per se but of population distribution and organization of the economy. For a discussion of recent immigration in this context, see C. Taeuber, *Int. Migration Rev.* 6, 7 (1972).
19. Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, *Report of the Visa Office, 1968* (Department of State, Washington, D.C., 1968), p. 68.
20. The research reported here is supported by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations Program in Support of Social Science and Legal Research on Population Policy. I thank S. Goldstein and A. Speare, Jr., for their comments on earlier drafts of this article.