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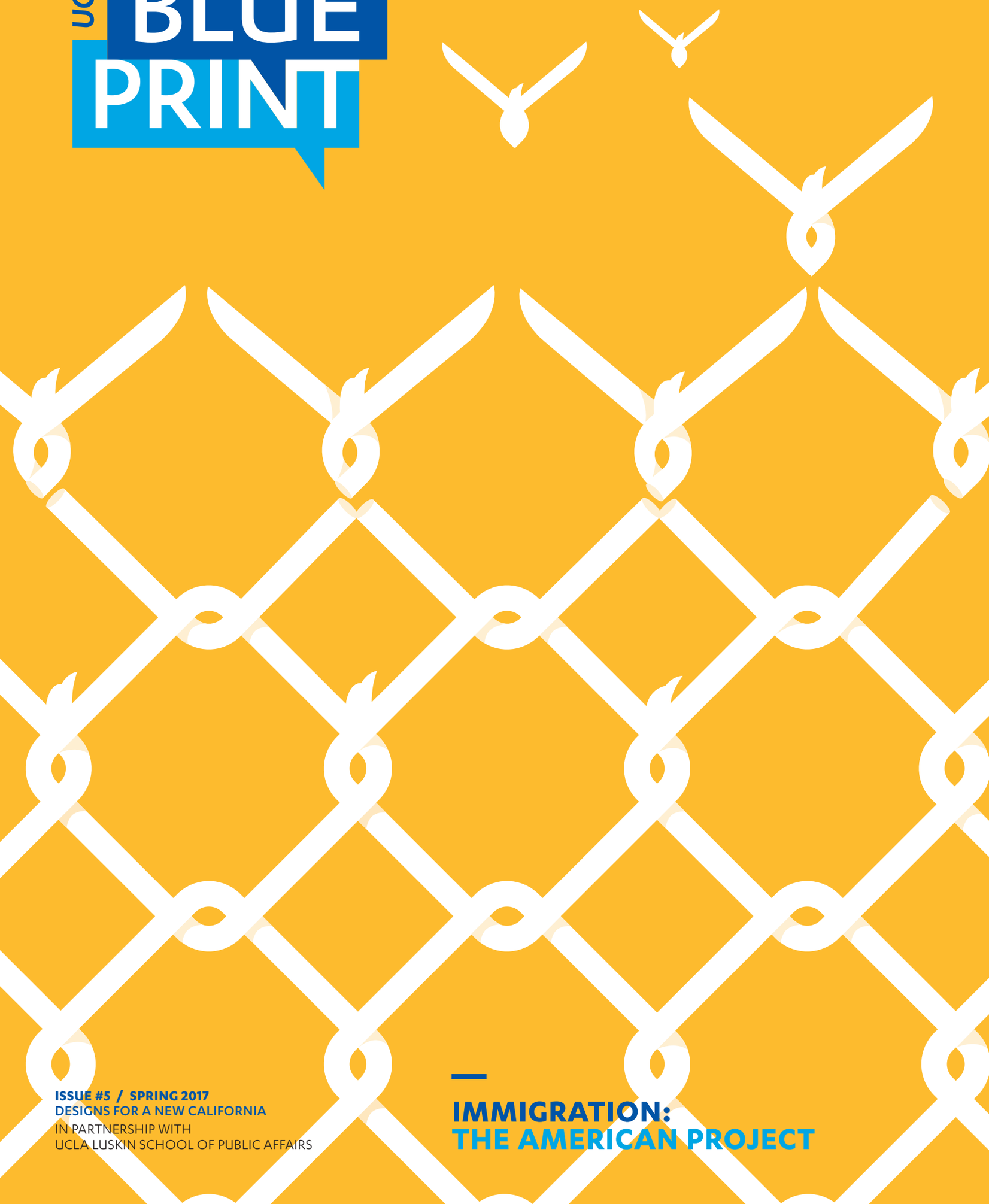


ISSUE #5 / SPRING 2017
DESIGNS FOR A NEW CALIFORNIA
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
UCLA LUSKIN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

IMMIGRATION: THE AMERICAN PROJECT

EDITOR'S NOTE

BLUEPRINT
A magazine of research, policy, Los Angeles and California

THERE ARE FEW MORE COMBUSTIBLE ISSUES IN AMERICA today than immigration. It suffuses arguments about a proposed wall along the Mexican border; about temporarily banning people from predominantly Muslim countries and refugees from around the world; about the status of sanctuary cities — and about the larger question of how best to encourage immigrants to come to the United States legally without demonizing those who, despite having entered without authorization or overstayed visas, have become valued members of our society. In this, as in so many debates, California has much history to draw upon and many experiences — some positive, others not — to guide us.

From its inception, California has been an attraction for immigrants, but its history of assimilating those immigrants has been mixed. The gold fields drew Chileans and Chinese; the railroads were built by foreign labor; the exclusion and internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II was a shame shared by many, not least Californians. As the Infographic in this issue of Blueprint demonstrates, foreign-born residents have always been a bigger part of California than of the nation as a whole.

Yet California's lessons are as complicated as they are contradictory. The same state that approved draconian limits on services for illegal immigrants in the form of infamous Proposition 187 (In retrospect, does anyone still believe it was smart to deny immigrant children vaccinations?) now offers more services to immigrants than any other place in America. Today, an immigrant in California without documentation can approach the police in many cities to report a crime without fear of deportation, can acquire a driver's license, can send children to school and can live in relative security. That's not true in many other places. Today in the nation's capital, many would seek to deny undocumented immigrants all of those privileges, regardless of their ties to communities, and would send them away to countries where they have not lived for decades, even at the cost of separating them from their children born here.

Indeed, California and the federal government are moving in such conspicuously opposite directions on immigration that the issue is a prime motivator of Sacramento's growing resistance to federal authority altogether. Far from knuckling under to the notion that California should reverse course and crack down on those who are here illegally, officials in Sacramento and many California municipalities and school districts are tacking in the other direction, vowing to defend students and workers and crime victims. A reckoning seems inevitable.

It is easy to imagine that these times are unique, that something is so terribly amiss in Washington that it reveals an aberration of America itself — or, at least, that it represents a wave of distrust that cuts profoundly against modern trends in California. In one sense, that is true. Washington and Sacramento today offer dramatically contrasting examples of how to greet and incorporate foreign-born residents into our society.

And yet, it is also true that President Donald J. Trump and his allies have created an illusion of surging American antipathy toward immigrants. There are pockets of this nation where suspicion of immigrants runs high, but Americans overwhelmingly agree that immigrants are "more of a strength than a burden" to society (63% in a recent Pew Research poll). And here is a thought to consider: In 2016, at the height of a presidential campaign in which Trump's proposed border wall was a centerpiece, 30% of Americans said they were satisfied with the present level of foreigners coming to the United States. As of January 2017, those who were satisfied with the level of immigration had grown to 41%, an all-time high. This is a nation, like most, that can fall victim to purveyors of alarm, but it is not one that reviles immigrants.

JIM NEWTON
Editor in chief

INSIDE BLUEPRINT

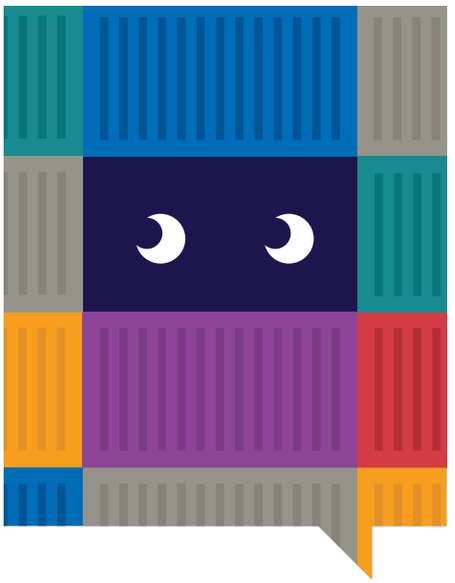
ISSUE #5 / SPRING 2017

LANDSCAPE

PROFILE

INFOGRAPHIC

FEATURED RESEARCH



MAP

TABLE TALK

CLOSING NOTE

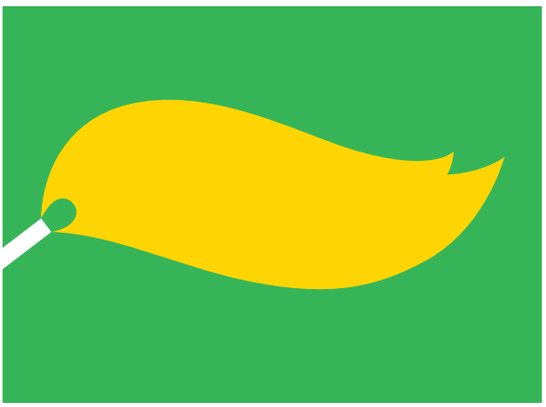
PAST ISSUES OF BLUEPRINT CAN BE FOUND AT **BLUEPRINT.UCLA.EDU**

FOR THE RECORD

In Issue #4 of Blueprint (Fall 2016), an article about Eric Hoek, professor of environmental engineering, stated inaccurately that UCLA scientist Richard Kaner won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. The error was repeated in a photo caption. Kaner is the recipient of many other awards, including the Materials Research Society Medal (2015).

In the same issue, a map entitled "California's Major Rivers and Water Projects" was drawn inaccurately, omitting some rivers. In the legend, the proposed WaterFix tunnels were mislabeled the California Water Project, and the map incorrectly included the All-American Canal and Salton Sea as part of the Central Valley Project.

LANDSCAPE



STUDENTS AND POLITICS: UNEASY PROTEST

Week one of Donald Trump's presidency was week three of winter quarter for most of the University of California. Even as students were signing the covers of exam books for early midterms, the president was busy with executive orders moving forward with Keystone XL and the Dakota Access Pipeline, commanding the construction of the border wall and banning refugees from entering the United States.

For the next few weeks, Westwood grumbled. Elementary school students from the UCLA Lab School marched around campus with their families. Students walked out of classes and joined a crowd of over 200 protesters on Inauguration Day. Two student government offices funded buses to take students to the Women's March in downtown Los Angeles. Someone posted advertisements for the white supremacist group American Vanguard; someone else tore them down. The "alt-right" was mocked.

UCLA's Bruin Republicans celebrated Trump's inauguration, but they may have been feeling pressure from the near-constant demonstrations around campus. On January 23, the club canceled an event scheduled for early February at which former Breitbart editor Milo Yiannopoulos was to speak. In a letter shared on the group's Facebook page, leaders cited an inability to "accommodate the long list of requirements" Yiannopoulos and his team provided. They also referred to recent protests at Yiannopoulos' events on other college campuses, declaring that students' and attendees' safety was their primary concern. Over a thousand Facebook users had indicated that they were prepared to protest Yiannopoulos' appearance but, thanks to the cancellation, that demonstration never got off the ground.

On other UC campuses, things played out differently. A week earlier, Yiannopoulos was set to speak at UC Davis alongside pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli. Protests outside the campus venue forced the Davis College Republicans, also referencing safety concerns, to cancel the event only half an hour before it was set to begin. Reports of property damage circulated but were refuted by campus police, and no physical violence occurred.

At UC Berkeley, it was rougher. On the evening of February 1, the night Yiannopoulos was scheduled to speak, 1,500 protesters gathered on campus. The demonstration veered quickly toward a riot as a smaller group joined a larger, peaceful crowd and began throwing rocks. The agitators set barricades on fire and smashed windows, starting fights and threatening nearby Trump supporters. Yiannopoulos' event was canceled, and Trump lashed out, tweeting, "If U.C. Berkeley does not allow free speech and practices violence on innocent people with a different point of view — NO FEDERAL FUNDS?"

The tweet raised eyebrows among students, administrators and onlookers — could Trump really defund a UC campus, or possibly the system as a whole? The answer, in short, is no. According to the university's current operations budget for the 2017-2018 academic year, federal funding made up less than 10% of the previous year's budget. This sliver of funds went toward research contracts, grants and facilities; financial aid for students; and Medicare and Medi-Cal at UC medical centers. Without federal appropriations, the UC system would need to adjust, but tuition, medical revenue and state funds would allow operations to continue.

Regardless, there is a pervasive sense of disquiet on UC campuses. Students worry about their health care, the environment, the travel ban in all its modifications. The UC Office of the President, headed by former Homeland Security director Janet Napolitano, recently issued guidance for international students and faculty from the six countries affected by Trump's revised executive order on entry to the United States, which the office called "anathema to advancing knowledge and international cooperation." Many of these students, along with their undocumented peers, must now decide between being able to pursue their educations in America or visiting their families and homes abroad.

Undocumented students face still greater stress. Students currently protected under President Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals risk deportation if Trump discontinues the program, as many of his supporters demand. In February, UCLA students met with legislators and staff in Washington, D.C., on a trip led by the Undergraduate Students Association Council's external vice president, Rafi Sands. Students visited both Republican and Democratic offices, and Sands praised a DACA student who shared personal stories that helped make immigration issues tangible, especially for those who had never met an undocumented student before. Asked about moving forward, Sands said, "My goal for the entire campus is to work harder to share these personal narratives and lived experiences. It's increasingly important for students to share their own stories, rather than lobbyists and staff sharing on our behalf."

Since those tumultuous weeks of February, an uneasy calm has settled over UCLA's campus. Once-abstract issues have been made all too real, yet the quarter system moves on. Most students have laid down homemade protest signs and returned to classrooms, labs and libraries, but many in Westwood seem to be waiting, both nervously and defiantly, for the Trump administration's next move.

– Katherine Molyneux

TOM STEYER RAISES A NEW VOICE IN CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO — For Tom Steyer, everything changed with the election of Donald J. Trump as president.

"I can't think of a thing that he has done that I don't find offensive. Really, not a thing," said Steyer, casually dressed in a blue sweater and corduroys on a rainy afternoon. "But it's not enough to oppose Trump. I'm for building a much better system so that people are healthier and have higher wages. I'm for a different vision of the future."

Steyer isn't just talk. In 2012, the billionaire founder of Farallon Capital Management gave up his lucrative career at the investment firm to start NextGen Climate, a nonprofit organization with a straightforward mission: "to prevent climate disaster and promote prosperity for every American." More recently, he's added "protecting fundamental rights for every American" to the mission statement.

To that end, he's willing to fight for his vision — one built around people coming together to engage on issues and bring about change — by devoting time, energy and money. A lot of money. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that tracks money in politics, Steyer spent about $75.4 million in the 2014 midterm elections and about $91 million in the 2016 elections, making him the largest single donor of any political party to candidates, propositions and issues nationwide.

"Look, we made the assumption at the beginning of 2013 that the rights of Americans were inviolate — and they're not," Steyer said during an interview in a brightly lit conference room in NextGen Climate's San Francisco office. "If they're able to go after people's civil liberties in general and take away the rights of Americans, then everything is going to go by the boards, too. We don't think we can address any of these things separately. We're trying to be an organized force pushing for the good of working people and American families."

If his words sound straight out of a stump speech, others have noticed — some happily, some nervously. Steyer has long been considered a potential candidate for statewide office — California governor in 2018, for instance, or another political office as the state shifts from the Jerry Brown/Barbara Boxer/Dianne Feinstein generation to a younger cohort that will follow. But on this day, just weeks into the Trump presidency, he insists he hasn't made a decision.

"I really thought that [Hillary Clinton] was going to win, so I wasn't sure what I was going to do. People would ask me, and I'd say, 'I'm not sure, let's see what happens,'" he says. "When Trump got elected ... people said, 'Is it changing the way you're thinking?' Well, of course it's changing the way I'm thinking. The world just changed in a way no one, including me, expected."

He leans back in his chair, poker-faced. "I haven't said, honestly, what I'm going to do."

The youthful, 59-year-old married father of four first dipped his toes into the world of politics when he began working on behalf of Sen. John Kerry in his bid to unseat President George W. Bush. "At the time I thought, this man is driving us off the cliff, and when my grandkids ask me what did you do, if my answer is I was too busy making money to do anything, I'm going to feel really bummed. So I'm going to take a bunch of time and effort and work to try to get this guy from being re-elected because he is a disastrous and bad president," he says. "And you know, that really grew and that's why I quit my job."

He went on to co-chair the No on Proposition 23 campaign, fighting a ballot initiative that would have repealed a state law aimed at curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Proposition 23, which had the backing of large oil companies, was defeated by a nearly 23 percentage-point margin. In 2012, the same year he launched NextGen Climate, Steyer became the leading sponsor of Proposition 39, which was intended to close a tax-credit loophole for out-of-state corporations and direct half of the funds raised for alternative energy and energy-efficient public projects. He contributed nearly $30 million to the successful effort, an unprecedented amount at the time. And in 2016, he successfully shepherded Proposition 56, the cigarette tax initiative that passed overwhelmingly.

His efforts were hardly anonymous. Steyer appeared in a series of television ads — in English and in Spanish — encouraging action on climate change and clean-air laws and urging voter registration, all against a backdrop of clips of Trump's more incendiary campaign comments. He continued his efforts this year with ads targeting Trump cabinet picks Rex Tillerson and Scott Pruitt.

And though the recent presidential election didn't turn out as he had hoped, Steyer makes no apologies for his efforts or money spent on that front.

"If you look at what we did in 2016, we overwhelmingly worked on what I would describe as 'direct democracy,'" he said. "I think we're going to find that engaging in the direct engagement

PHOTO BY **CHRISTA RENEE** FOR **UCLA MARKETING**

of voters — the voter-to-voter contact — is really valuable and worthwhile, and we're totally committed to it."

For NextGen, that meant fanning out to 370 college campuses across the country to register millennial voters and spread the word about climate change and other issues. "We registered over 800,000 people of all ages, around the state," he said. "With partners in the labor movement, we knocked on 11 million doors. We worked with over 100 community groups inside California and outside."

In February, he invited the public, via the group's Facebook page and website, to offer suggestions on how next to fight Trump. Within days, he says, they received more than 10,000 responses.

"We believe that what we're doing is incredibly necessary and important," he said. "If we keep our mouths shut, if we're silent, then they get their hall pass. We can't be silent for a second. There is no day that we don't have to come in and oppose. There is no day we don't have to come in and try and fight for a better future."

– Lisa Fung

LOS ANGELES PURSUES 2024 OLYMPICS

When Peter V. Ueberroth reflects on the legacy of the 1984 Olympics, he remembers the tens of thousands of volunteers who spent memorable weeks bringing the disconnected communities of Southern California together.

Ueberroth, a corporate executive and entrepreneur with an eye for marketing, was picked by Los Angeles leaders to organize and run the games. The Olympics were becoming a white elephant, but Ueberroth saved them. He put the games on a sound financial footing by using existing facilities, such as the Memorial Coliseum, and by persuading corporations to pay for sponsorships, which gave them the privilege of using the Olympics in their advertising. The '84 games were a uniquely privatized event; no public funds were spent. The games ended with a surplus, some of which is still being used for youth sports in Southern California.

Now Los Angeles is bidding to host the 2024 Olympics and the accompanying Paralympics for athletes with disabilities. L.A. is in stiff competition with Paris. The Los Angeles Olympics Committee has proposed the Ueberroth plan to use existing facilities, including UCLA and USC, and private funds. The International Olympic Committee will pick the winner in September. (President Thomas Bach hinted that the IOC might award hosting rights to both the 2024 and 2028 games at once. The Los Angeles committee said it had heard nothing formally and was bidding only on 2024. Paris 2024 co-chairman Tony Estanguet said: "We can't accept '28. It's not possible.")

David Wharton has reported in the *Los Angeles Times* how games chairman Casey Wasserman, grandson of entertainment tycoon Lew Wasserman, helped raise $30 million to begin the 2024 L.A. campaign. Wasserman lined up support from state and local officials, who embraced the idea of privately financed games. They would be paid for by the sale of tickets and broadcast rights, the licensing of Olympic products, and by a significant contribution from the International Olympic Committee. A study by Beacon Economics and the UC Riverside School of Business predicts huge gains in business and tax revenue from the games, and foresees ticket sales of between 10 million and 12.5 million — a record.

Winning International Olympic Committee support might be difficult. "Olympic politics can be unpredictable," Wharton wrote, "with decisions made by an odd mix of bureaucrats, former athletes and royalty." Paris, like Los Angeles, has venues and other facilities ready to go. International betting sites favor Paris to win.

Public support in Southern California seems strong. A February 2016 poll by the Loyola Marymount University Center for the Study of Los Angeles showed that 88% of those surveyed supported bringing the games to L.A. Those who are not Olympics fans, however, doubted if putting together a successful bid was worth such an intense campaign.

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I wondered what Ueberroth, who isn't part of the current effort, had to say about the benefits of the '84 games. I reached him by phone at the Newport Beach offices of the Contrarian Group, an investment firm he heads. We hadn't talked in years. "The lasting impact of the '84 games was that the citizens took them over — 30,000 unpaid volunteers," he said. "When you have a major event and you get leaders from every part of the community, when you walk down the street with people like that, you are assured of success.

"We had a spirit of hospitality to visitors and an unbelievable ability to work together," Ueberroth added. For example, he said, drivers at the events were "unemployed college students or retired veterans, all happy to participate."

The 1984 games, Ueberroth said, were inspired by the 1948 Olympics in London, known as the "Austerity Games." The city was poor and battered by World War II and the Blitz. King George VI brushed aside pessimists and insisted the games would be a sign that Britain was recovering from the war.

London in 1948 was not Los Angeles in 1984. But L.A. was having its troubles, too. Aerospace, the heart of its industrial might, was beginning to decline. Southern California needed a morale boost, Ueberroth said, and the games provided it.

The world today is much different than it was in either 1948 or 1984. Donald Trump is president, and he and his administration are hostile, or at

least unwelcoming, to immigrants, particularly Muslims. Not only does Trump's immigration plan target those from Muslim-majority countries but customs officers seem to be singling out Muslim scholars, business people and family visitors.

Trump has said he supports L.A.'s bid for the Olympics. "They wanted to have an endorsement from me," Trump told Westwood Radio One, "and I gave it to them very loud and clear. I would love to see the Olympics go to Los Angeles. I think that it'll be terrific."

Mayor Eric Garcetti said he doesn't think Trump's immigration policies will hurt L.A.'s bid. Garcetti, who strongly disagrees with Trump on climate change and immigration — and who supports the LAPD's refusal to enforce federal immigration laws — told the *Jewish Journal* that the president is "very supportive of the Olympics ... [and has said] that he will make sure that athletes could come in."

Los Angeles' greatest obstacle is Paris. It is offering Olympic sites throughout the city — all but a few of them already built — including the 81,338-person capacity Stade de France for opening and closing ceremonies and track and field events.

Security will be an issue in both cities, but most of that focus is likely to be on Paris. One night in 2015, suicide bombers attacked the Stade de France during a football match and the Bataclan theater during a concert, as well as restaurants and bars throughout the city. A total of 130 people were killed and several hundred more were wounded, as many as 100 of them critically.

In Paris, the venues would be linked by accessible public transportation, including the Paris Metro and driverless electric buses.

Los Angeles is improving highways and expanding public transportation with previously planned projects, including an extension of the light rail Green Line to Los Angeles International Airport.

If L.A.'s bid wins, the Olympics could leave a surplus, just as they did in 1984. That money provided funds to create the LA84 Foundation, which has used millions of dollars to pay for playing fields, tennis courts, coaches and equipment for young people whose parents could not have afforded youth sports otherwise.

"We've helped 3 million Southern California kids," said Renata Simril, president of the foundation. "We've supported 2,200 nonprofits, trained nearly 80,000 coaches and restored soccer fields and pools, all for underserved kids."

Among them were Venus and Serena Williams, who learned tennis in Compton and were helped in their early years by the Southern California Junior Tennis Association, a beneficiary of the LA84 Foundation.

If Los Angeles hosts the 2024 games, this generation of Olympians might leave a legacy just as fine.

– Bill Boyarsky

UCLA POLL FINDS FEAR FOR IMMIGRANTS

This is what fear does.

In late March, Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck announced that reports of sexual abuse and domestic violence by Latinos in Los Angeles had dropped dramatically since the first of the year — alleged sexual assaults were down by 25%, and reports of domestic violence decreased 10%.

It's possible, of course, that those decreases are good news, that warnings about violence have gotten through at last, and that predators are rethinking their ways. But why only among Latinos?

A recent poll by UCLA's Luskin School of Public Affairs — the annual Los Angeles County Quality of Life Index undertaken by former County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky — unearthed some unsettling truths about life in this county: More and more residents complain of commutes so long that they degrade the overall quality of life; housing costs, particularly for the young, are an increasingly stressful burden; a shocking number of people worry about becoming homeless or being forced to go without a meal.

But among those disturbing findings, one stood out in particular — and it sheds light on the crime statistics: 37% of those living in this community, and more than half of all Latinos, said they are afraid that a friend or family member could face deportation at any moment; of those, 80% said they would worry about advising a friend to enroll in any government program because of that risk. This, in a county where most residents feel good about race relations, even relations with police. A national cloud, a stigma about immigration, has descended even over the relatively strong community ties being bound in California.

Set aside goodwill for a moment, and consider in this regard just the grind-it-out basics of racial self-interest. Is it in the best interests of a third-generation Anglo-American, a white man driving an American car to his American home in his American, suburb to have his Latino neighbor keep the details of her sexual assault to herself? Where will her assailant strike next? Is it good for that white man to have his Latino co-worker avoid vaccinations or child support? Will the poverty or disease of his co-worker's children help or hinder his own? Will his life be better because his neighbors' lives are worse?

These are not the questions of a civilized society. They are the questions created by fear and division. Latinos are no more likely than any other group to commit or suffer domestic violence or sexual abuse; they are only, these days, the least likely to reach out for assistance — for fear that their government will punish them for seeking help and exposing harm.

That should shock us all.

– Jim Newton

PHOTO BY **DAVID SPRAGUE**

THE FORCE OF LABOR

MARIA ELENA DURAZO AND A LIFE OF ACTIVISM

WRITTEN BY
JIM NEWTON

MARIA ELENA DURAZO IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.

In 1992, as Los Angeles was desperately trying to attract tourists, Durazo's hotel workers union warned about a "city on the edge," a dystopian admonition to stay away because of crime and violence. Durazo and her allies distributed the videotaped warning to chambers of commerce across the country. Mayor Tom Bradley was aghast. It was a reminder to the L.A. hotel industry that Durazo could affect its fate. The industry caved, and her union members got the contract they were seeking. Five years later, when Mayor Richard Riordan was in office, Durazo helped champion a "living wage" proposal requiring firms with city service contracts to increase pay for employees, including janitors, security guards and parking attendants. Riordan vetoed the measure, only to have the city council pass it over his veto. The workers got their raise.

Durazo, the first woman to head the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, is now the vice president for immigration, civil rights and diversity of UNITE HERE, a nationwide union for restaurant, hospitality and casino workers. She is a mother, grandmother and widow. Her life has included large helpings of joy and struggle. Through it course two closely connected certainties: That this is a

nation of immigrants, and that labor unions have provided those immigrants with homes and jobs, community and self-sufficiency.

Immigrants, their well-being and their dignity are under assault at the moment. The offensive is coming from the White House. That is formidable. But so is Maria Elena Durazo.

I recently met with her at the Miguel Contreras Learning Center, just west of downtown Los Angeles. It is named for her late husband. The place was teeming with young people, mostly Latinos and blacks, some heading to workouts, others huddled with homework. They nodded and smiled at Durazo, a face as familiar to this generation as to the last. Above her was a mural — a tribute to the Los Angeles labor movement, featuring, among others, her.

She is not the central figure of this painting. That honor goes to Miguel. In addition, off to one side in the mural is a tiny cabin being approached by a pickup truck, its headlights cutting through the dark. This captures one night on a farm where Miguel, his brothers and father worked decades ago. The owner of the farm appreciated Miguel's father but had learned that he was a follower of Cesar Chavez — a "Chavista" — and so fired him and ordered him off his land. The family gathered its belongings that night and left.

Durazo tells that story with reserve and appreciation. She does not point to another prominent figure in the mural. There, in the foreground but without fanfare, is Maria Elena, pushing a baby carriage through a demonstration.

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Durazo, 64, does not seem like a hardened activist. She's cheerful, easygoing and kind. But her broad smile, inviting laugh and soft eyes turn steely when she grows angry. No elected official on the receiving end has ever forgotten the moment. When we sat down, she gave me a high five and a hug. This is the same person who has marched with hotel workers and janitors and organized farmworkers and laborers. Few people are more determined to achieve justice and able to appreciate joy.

She may find that tested next year, as Durazo recently announced her intention to run for a seat in the California State Senate in 2018, replacing termed-out Senator Kevin de Leon. Already backed by her friend and former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and sure to attract labor support, Durazo is considered a strong contender.

In the late 1980s, she led a challenge to the leadership of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11. She alleged corruption. Contreras, an experienced labor leader, was brought in to figure out what was going on. In one sense, at least, he did: By 1988, he and Durazo were married. In 1994, Contreras ascended to the leadership of the county labor federation. Eleven years later, at age 52, he died of a heart attack. After a brief stewardship by Martin Ludlow, Durazo took over the top job.

Led by Contreras and Durazo, the Southern California labor movement underwent a transformation. Working with such allies as Fabian Núñez, later to become speaker of the State Assembly, and Madeline Janis, co-founder of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, they stitched bonds among labor, environmental and religious leaders, focused on those at the bottom of the pay scale and aggressively demanded change from local leaders.

By the mid-1990s, there was no school board member, no member of the Los Angeles City Council or of the county Board of Supervisors, no elected official at any level who pondered a major decision without considering the ramifications for organized labor. I have covered Los Angeles politics for more than 20 years, and no one has wielded greater influence over that period than Durazo. Harold Meyerson, one of the great chroniclers of the late-20th-century labor movement, described Contreras and Durazo as a modern "power couple." *The New York Times* viewed the labor movement in Los Angeles as the most effective in the nation.

Historically, that was an aberration — one that distinguishes modern Los Angeles from its past. Throughout its early years, Los Angeles defined itself as a haven from organized labor, a free-market alternative to San Francisco, with its powerful dock unions. During that period, Los Angeles presented itself as the businessman's option, a place where small businesses could thrive in the absence of labor pressure on wages and benefits — an alternative fiercely endorsed in the pages of its largest newspaper, the *Los Angeles Times*. As late as the 1980s, organized labor's political power was limited and conservative, concentrated in the building trade unions and the Los Angeles Police Protective League, with their respective interests in development and public safety.

Then came Durazo, Contreras and their colleagues. They refocused labor's energy toward immigrant communities and low-wage workers. Their volunteers joined political campaigns, walked precincts and made phone calls. They rewarded those who supported them and punished those who did not. Today there is no more powerful force in local and state politics than organized labor.

Not all of the results have been good. California's pension obligations are staggering. Raises for city workers, especially under Mayor Villaraigosa, exceeded the city's capacity to pay, and recession forced him to make dramatic cutbacks, sometimes over the objections of his former allies. Mayor Eric Garcetti, who was opposed by the county labor federation, has made peace with it — but he boasts of holding down city salaries and pensions. Regardless, here is what is most telling about today's labor movement in Los Angeles: Some cheer labor's influence. Some bemoan it. But no one denies it.

"IT'S UP TO EMPLOYERS TO DEFEND THEIR EMPLOYEES. DON'T WE WANT STABILITY IN OUR ECONOMY? DEPORTING PARENTS OR DIVIDING FAMILIES DOESN'T BRING STABILITY."

PHOTO COURTESY OF **UNITE HERE LOCAL 33**

ABOVE: ACTIVISTS FROM UNITE HERE'S NEW HAVEN CHAPTER. **BELOW:** DURAZO DESCRIBES THE CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR IMMIGRANTS AND LABOR.

PHOTO BY **DAVID SPRAGUE**

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Is President Donald Trump a racist?

There are many ways to field that question. His supporters say: Of course not; he speaks his mind and is unrestrained by political convention — "political correctness," to use the hackneyed term. His critics may privately believe that he is, but they often answer in bromides: His language is inflammatory (a Mexican-American judge can't be fair because of his ethnicity; Muslims pose a special threat to American values), but it is hard to know another person's heart — or words to that effect. Those are the hedged critiques of politicians schooled in semi-commitment.

Ask that question of Durazo, and she won't equivocate. "Yes," she said, adding that Trump's father was, too.

So, with the election of Donald Trump, Durazo's mission has turned to challenging a sitting United States president over policies that, in her view, demonize immigrants and harm labor — policies that give racism new purchase on ground long assumed to have been won.

Evidence of growing anger and division are all around. Durazo recalled a recent meeting of the county Board of Supervisors where she and other immigrant-rights advocates arrived to urge members to help pay for a defense fund for those accused of being in America illegally. As her group approached the meeting room, it was confronted by protesters.

"They were screaming: 'Go back to your country!'" recalled Durazo, who was born in the United States. "It was ugly. It was like they wanted violence."

Still, she and labor prevailed that day, and now she is seeking support from employers who see Trump's accelerated deportations and restrictions on entry as hindrances to their business, violations of human rights, or both. If federal agents arrive at a workplace demanding records, executives typically call lawyers and work toward an agreement, Durazo said. She is asking the executives not to roll over to authorities; they may have the right to examine business records but not to mill about on factory floors or demand papers from employees.

"It's up to employers to defend their employees," she said. "Don't we want stability in our economy? Deporting parents or dividing families doesn't bring stability."

Similarly, she is urging cities to gain the trust of immigrants so they will help police investigate crimes, and she is lobbying all schools, including universities, to protect their students. Trump might threaten funding, but his leverage is limited; the Supreme Court has held that the federal government cannot use funding to push around local governments.

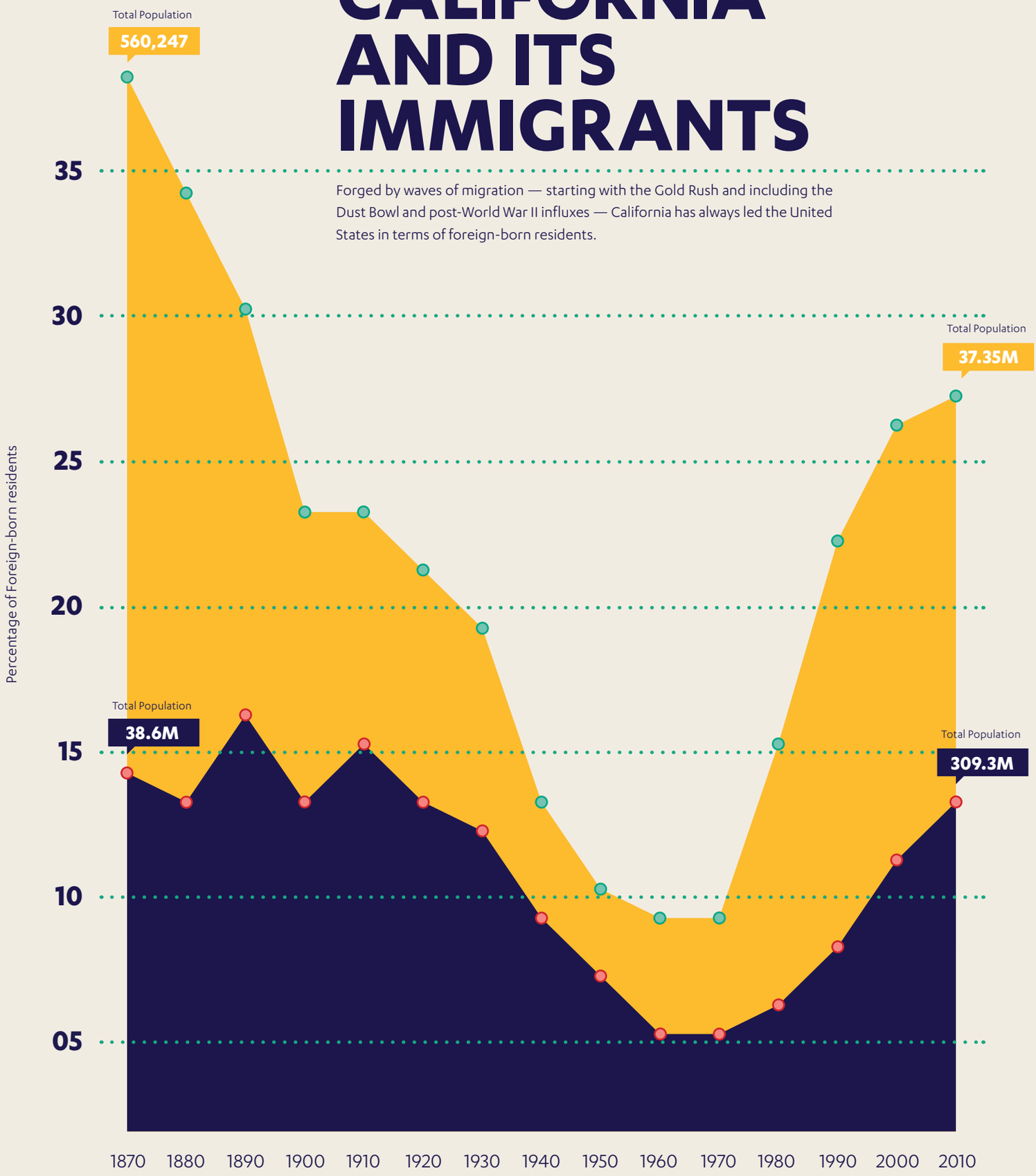
"We aren't going to be blackmailed," Durazo said (For more on this question, see this issue's Table Talk with California Attorney General Xavier Becerra).

Durazo envisions labor returning to its roots — as a welcoming institution for new immigrants: Polish, Irish, Italian, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Mexican. "It was always the union movement that immigrants looked to to do better in their lives," Durazo said. "They knew that it was only through a union that they were going to get safer working conditions and better treatment....

"Unions have had a very clear role in this country. Without unions, immigrants would not have been able to fulfill their dreams." ◤

CALIFORNIA AND ITS IMMIGRANTS

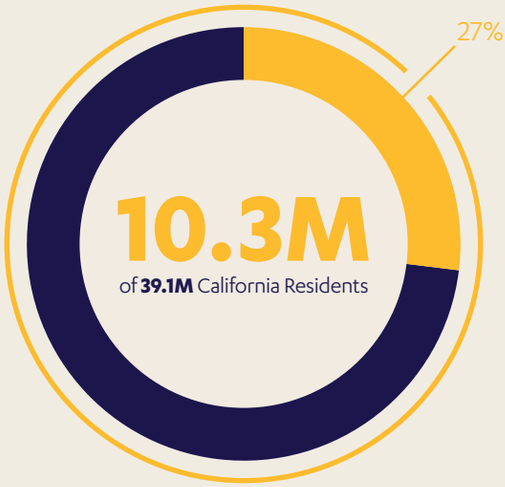
Forged by waves of migration — starting with the Gold Rush and including the Dust Bowl and post-World War II influxes — California has always led the United States in terms of foreign-born residents.



Sources: US Census Bureau, Public Policy Institute of California

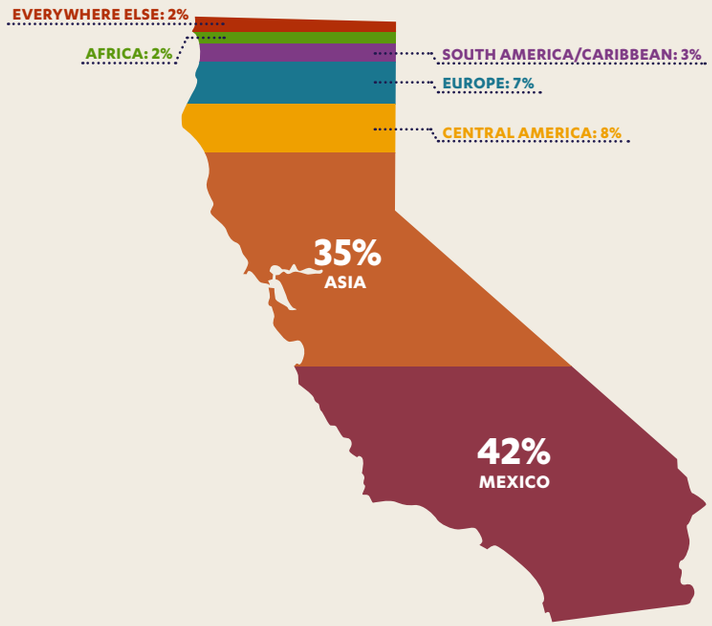
CALIFORNIA TODAY

CALIFORNIA'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION



Of those, approximately **2.2 million** are undocumented
Approximately **5 million** are citizens

WHERE DO IMMIGRANTS COME FROM?

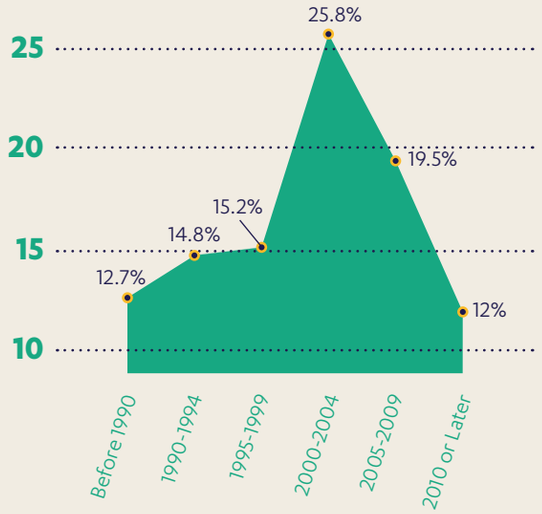


WHAT DO IMMIGRANTS DO?

Source: "Resilience in an Age of Inequality," California Immigrant Policy Center

OF THOSE WHO LACK IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS, WHEN DID THEY ARRIVE?

Contrary to popular opinion, neither California nor the United States is experiencing a wave of illegal immigration. Below are estimates for the state's illegal immigrant population by period of arrival.



Source: "Undocumented Immigrants in California," Public Policy Institute of California, March 2017

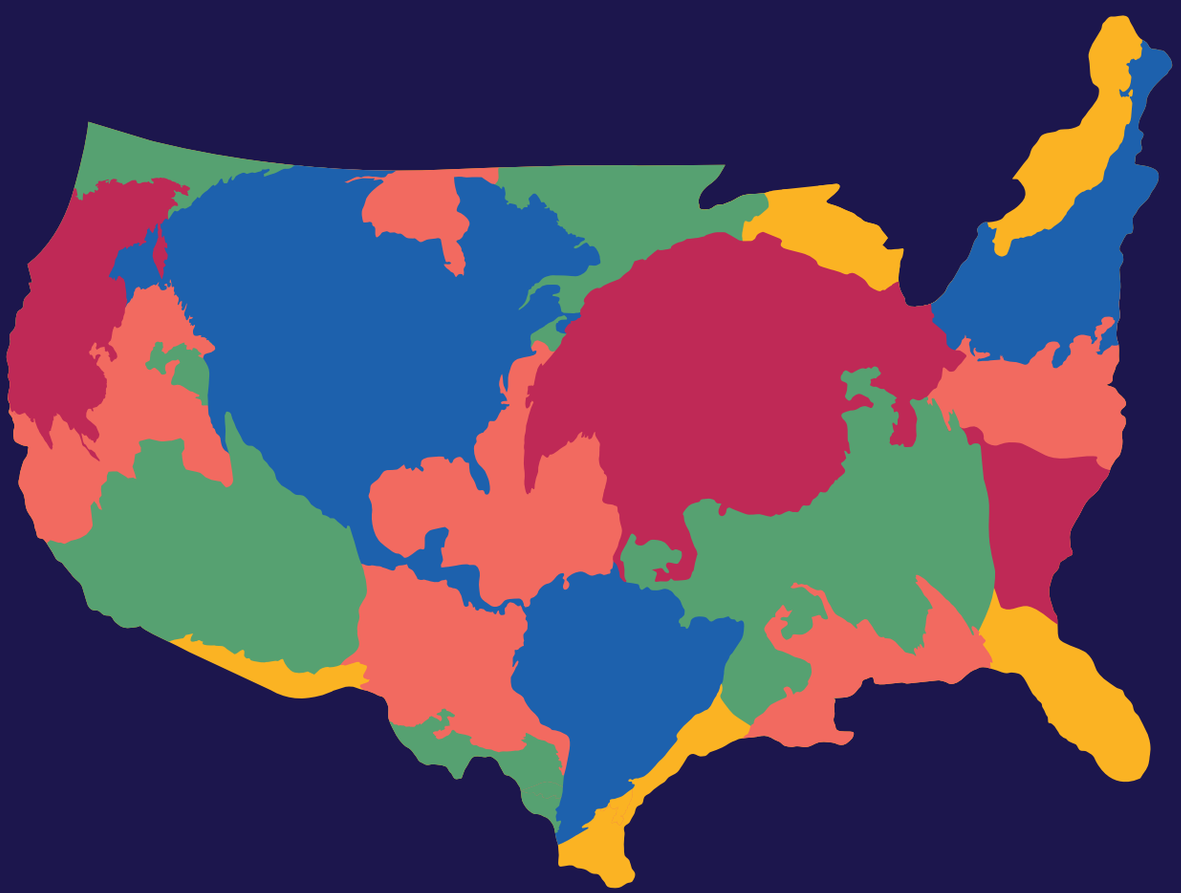
IMMIGRANTS AND TAXES

It is a myth that undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes. The Social Security Administration estimated that in 2010 unauthorized immigrants and their employers contributed $13 billion in payroll taxes that year. They also, of course, pay sales and property taxes, and some pay federal income taxes as well. A study by the conservative Heritage Foundation in 2013 concluded that "households with unlawful immigrant heads" paid $10,334 each in state, local and federal taxes.

Sources: Social Security Administration, Actuarial Note Number 151, April 2013. "The Fiscal Cost of Unlawful Immigrants and Amnesty to the U.S. Taxpayer," May 6, 2013.

AMERICANS ON IMMIGRATION

PROTECT BORDERS



WELCOME THOSE HERE

WRITTEN BY
RICHARD E. MEYER

THEY FEARED THEY WOULD BE KILLED, so Roger Waldinger's grandparents fled. His father's parents came to America in 1938. They brought a son. He was 15. Waldinger's maternal grandparents landed in 1941. They brought a daughter. She was 14.

Hitler was marching across Europe. Both families were Austrian, and they were Jewish. "My grandparents conveyed their desperation about whether they could get out," Waldinger remembered. "This phenomenon is personally meaningful to me." The two teenagers went to high school and college in the United States. They met as graduate students at Columbia University. They married, and Roger Waldinger, their son, has dedicated his life to studying migration. "I'm the first American born on both sides of my family. It was deeply implanted in me as a child that both my parents and grandparents were recent immigrants." More than anything, that fact had the biggest impact upon his future. "That was probably the most powerful influence."

In a series of interviews around a book-strewn table in his office and at Lu Valle Commons, a campus eatery, Waldinger, distinguished professor of sociology at UCLA and director of the UCLA Center for the Study of International Migration, spoke of the relocation of people among nations as a global phenomenon with political, economic and sociological implications. He said the strength of America's core belief in immigration is evident from the difficulty President Trump has encountered in temporarily closing the nation's doors to people from several predominantly Muslim countries as well as to refugees from around the world. "Immediately lawyers mobilized against his efforts," Waldinger said, "and it wasn't just the American Civil Liberties Union; it was a broad range of groups. The states of Washington and Hawaii took his entry ban to court, joined by many others, including Microsoft, Facebook and Google."

He focused his concern, however, on unauthorized immigrants already within the United States, many of whom are feeling the lash of Trump's aggressive deportation policies. Waldinger, who has recently finished his ninth book, which studies the American born or raised children of immigrants, said the undocumented face immense uncertainties in the era of Donald Trump. In the immigration debate, Waldinger is a welcome rarity: an intellectually honest analyst who sees both the benefits of immigration and the dangers of open borders, a scholar willing to acknowledge that the evidence in this divisive conversation sometimes favors one side and sometimes the other.

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Research shows that American public opinion supports legalization — even citizenship — for the unauthorized, Waldinger said. "If you look at polls, what's striking is that people are much more strongly in favor of controlling immigration — having fewer immigrants, or not increasing their number. But there's no question that the public is open to legalization [for migrants who are already here] — and if not legalization, then long-term authorization and a route to citizenship. Inside our borders, in effect, it's one people. Whether they have citizenship or not, they're part of the community. They're part of the social fabric.

"There is an undocumented students program at UCLA," Waldinger said. "There is one at every UC campus." In the main hallway of the Sociology Department, near Waldinger's door, is a rack where copies are available of a "Statement of Principles in Support of Undocumented Members of the UC Community." It says: "The University of California welcomes and supports students without regard to their immigration status." Short of a court order or other judicial demand, the university says, "we will not release immigration status or related information in confidential student records, without permission from a student, to federal agencies...

"No UC campus police department will join those state and local law enforcement agencies that have

"NO UC CAMPUS POLICE DEPARTMENT WILL JOIN THOSE STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES THAT HAVE ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (ICE), OR UNDERTAKE OTHER JOINT EFFORTS WITH FEDERAL, STATE OR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, TO INVESTIGATE, DETAIN OR ARREST INDIVIDUALS FOR VIOLATION OF FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAW."

— Statement of Principles in Support of Undocumented Members of the UC Community

entered into an agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), or undertake other joint efforts with federal, state or local law enforcement agencies, to investigate, detain or arrest individuals for violation of federal immigration law."

Not only polls or policies, but ethical considerations, as well, distinguish between immigrants already in the United States, regardless of status, and migrants seeking to enter, Waldinger said. "There's a difference between the outside and the inside, which relates to the books I've been working on. Outside is different. In other words, 'Who should we let in? They're not our neighbors. They're not our friends. They're not our coworkers.' The ethics of 'who should we let in' is a big mess. But on the inside, the ethical solution is easier. The ethical solution on the inside is to give unauthorized migrants a route to citizenship."

It is also ethically right, Waldinger said, to facilitate their access. "It costs more than $675 to file for naturalization, and that's going to go up. This is a significant sum for a family of four. And you have to put together a tremendous amount of paperwork. If we want these people to become Americans, why are we putting roadblocks in their way?"

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Roger Waldinger was born in New York City. He is 63 years old, tall, serious but easy-going, with a self-deprecating sense of humor. ('You can't hear it? I'm a New Yorker.") He grew up in Washington Heights, surrounded by immigrants. "Everybody's parents spoke with an accent." He attended Brown University, then worked three years for labor unions, including the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, which was built by immigrants.

During graduate work at Harvard, he took a course from an MIT professor writing a book about migration, who offered him a job as a researcher. Waldinger's work grew into a dissertation for a Harvard doctorate. For eight years, he taught at City College of New York in West Harlem, where many students were immigrants or the children of immigrants. He came to UCLA in 1991, where he directed the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, then became chair of the Sociology Department. He has served as interim associate vice provost for International Studies. For the past 10 years, he has been instrumental in creating the Center for the Study of International Migration.

"Our goal is to generate an interdisciplinary community of migration scholars," he said. Interest is high. "The rooms for our talks are filled to capacity. I think we connect with a significant audience."

Two years ago, Waldinger published The Cross-Border Connection: Immigrants, Emigrants, and Their Homelands. The book has growing contemporary significance. It shows how migration knits societies together. Many scholars of U.S. immigration stand with their backs to the border and study what happens to migrants after they arrive. "What they're forgetting," Waldinger said, "is that immigrants are also emigrants, and they have very significant ties to the places and people left behind." He calls it inter-societal convergence. Money goes back. The migrants go back and forth. Information goes back and forth. So does political activism. "The things that go back foment more migration. 'I'm a success!' And others come. It's one of the things that makes migration hard to stop. Societies get intertwined."

The Cross Border Connection also shows how migrants become changed by their new countries. Migration causes inter-societal divergence, as well. "Migrants get turned into people who are different than the ones left behind," he said. "And it's often a source of conflict." Sending states see their citizens abroad as potential assets: a source of remittances, a provider of returning skilled labor, an ethnic lobby. "We usually talk about immigration policy," Waldinger said, "but, in fact, there's emigration policy, in which the states of emigration connect with their citizens abroad." Some policies seek what sending states can gain from their emigrants. "But other policies try to protect them," Waldinger said. "After all, the emigrants, when they land, are aliens and non-citizens — but they retain their citizenship from their place of origin."

Last year, Waldinger published A Century of Transnationalism, a collection of case studies of migrations

around the world, edited with Nancy L. Green, a history professor at The School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in France. One study, by historian Monica Raisa Schpun, is a stark account showing how a migration can have unexpected consequences.

World War II caused a split among Japanese immigrants in Brazil. Kachigumi, or "victory groups," believed in the invincibility of the Emperor and were convinced that news of Japan's defeat was American propaganda, Schpun wrote. Makegumi, or "defeatist groups," recognized the fall of Japan. One victory group, the Shindo Renmei, viewed some of their countrymen as traitors to Japan. The Shindo Renmei "committed a score of assassinations of members of the [Japanese immigrant] community," Schpun said, "and left a much greater number wounded."

Waldinger's current book, After Migration: The Making of the Second Generation, focuses on the children of immigrants. Included are those with only one U.S-born parent and children who came to the United States when they were younger than 12, some without authorization. Waldinger calls them the 1.5 generation. He is writing the book with two of his former graduate students. They are Renee Luthra, now a senior lecturer at the University of Essex in England, and Thomas Soehl, now an assistant professor at McGill University in Canada. The book is based on large-scale surveys done at the City University of New York and at UC Irvine.

"One of the things we try to do," Waldinger said, "is to show the ways in which differences in home-country cultures and home-country orientations affect a range of outcomes, including socio-economic achievement, political behavior, etc.... The important thing that we show is that coming from societies where secular rational values are more important is positively associated with educational and occupational achievement."

In the immigrant 1.5 and second generations, Waldinger said, "there is a progressive disconnection from the places from which their parents come. The kids are shifting to English. Even the kids who speak the foreign language well, they prefer English."

Another sign of Americanization is that "the children of immigrants believe in immigration control. They're not in favor of open borders."

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Borders, however, can't be made leak-proof. "Given the incredible amount of interna-tional travel and traffic, there are always going to be people who are going to enter without authorization and are going to stay without authorization," Waldinger said. "The idea that we're going to end unauthorized immigration — even if we build a wall — it's not going to happen. . . .

"So you have to learn to live with it."

One option, of course, would be to open America's borders entirely.

"I think open borders would be economically and socially disruptive," Waldinger said. "So if we can't let everybody come, then we have to decide who. How are you going to select? And there is where it gets messy. There isn't an ethically satisfying solution. You can think about an ethically preferable migration system, but not one where you say, 'Well, that would really solve the problem....'

"I'm obviously in favor of immigration. [But] all of the economic research has shown that it's basically a wash.... There's a lot of disagreement about this. People have been working very hard to show that it's a net benefit or a net loss. But it's a wash....

"One of the things that has facilitated American economic growth has been the dynamism in the labor market, in part induced by the fact they we're pulling people from the outside. [But] they may be competing with American workers... And there are social costs. Low-wage workers use services. Their children require education..."

On the other hand, Waldinger said, "the smartest people in the developing world come here. Developed societies benefit from high-skilled migration.... An incredible proportion of U.S. Nobel Prize winners are foreign born. One study shows that a disproportionate share of patents have been earned by Indian-born scientists in the United States. Going back to the influx of Jewish refugees [during World War II], it had an incredibly positive impact on American science and a bad impact for German science."

If you can't end immigration, Waldinger said, then the question is: "Can you manage it?" The United States, he said, could manage immigration more realistically.

One way might be a temporary migration plan, like the Bracero Program. "We let people come in, but we also make it possible for them to go home.... The craziness of building a wall is you make it so difficult for people to cross it that once they come in they don't go home."

A second way might be a version of a 2013 bill passed by the Senate. "It was legalization with a long road to citizenship. It was a bipartisan bill. I think Republicans in the House might have gone along without the road to citizenship." That would have made it a long-term work authorization program, Waldinger said, and it would have unleashed people with a lot of talent, a lot of energy and a lot of determination.

But the House, controlled by Republicans, rejected it. "In retrospect, it would have been better if it would have passed, because look at where we are now."

A third way might be a variation of the Dream Act, which died in Congress, but would have provided conditional residency, then permanent residency. "The Dream Act," Waldinger said, "had a lot of support....

"Immigration is always going to be a mess. But it can be a better mess.

"With fewer human costs." ◤

FINDING WORK

WRITTEN BY
JON THURBER

PHOTO BY **CHRISTA RENEE**

TALK TO PROFESSOR ABEL VALENZUELA JR. about day laborers, and the conversation turns to work as an obligation.

"I would ask myself, what would compel somebody to look for work in public spaces or put themselves in jeopardy of injury to land a job that's dangerous on the face of it," he said, sitting in a leather chair during an interview in the UCLA Faculty Center's billiards room. "All the workers I talked to had a profound connection to this principle: This is what you do. You work.

"You do it to take care of your child, you take care of your family. That would invariably lead to me thinking about the work ethic that many of us are brought up to believe in. When you apply that to immigrant workers, it gives them, if you will, more agency, and it counters the narrative that these men are somehow taking other people's jobs."

Valenzuela, 53, a warm, engaging man given to khakis, oxford shirts and sports jackets, has been a pioneer in his specialty since the late 1990s. In 2003, he published the first survey of day laborers in Los Angeles, which enhanced his status as an expert in a field that had been untilled in academia.

Now the director of UCLA's Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, Valenzuela is also co-chair of UCLA Chancellor Gene D. Block's recently formed Immigration Advisory Council, a panel that will offer recommendations on appropriate responses to the restrictions on immigration put forth by the Trump administration.

There was serendipity to Valenzuela's focus on day labor. He was just completing his dissertation when he happened upon a newspaper story recounting the concerns of residents in a Northern California community who were upset that scruffy men were hanging around a public park waiting for day work.

"One of my fascinations has always been the world of space," Valenzuela said. "The geographic context, but also in a broader sociological, political, racial context. How do people inhabit different spaces at work, but also in their search for work? In urban centers, space is really important in terms of the interactions and the exchanges that we have on a day-to-day basis, but also increasingly with regards to work and different types of services."

He decided to survey day laborers. He wanted to understand their lives and the challenges they faced. He was interested in their levels of education and their citizenship status, how they found their work, how they bargained for wages, whether they were always paid, how they were treated on the job and by the surrounding community while they waited for work and if their day labor led to permanent employment.

His survey and subsequent studies in New York and Chicago broke ground in the broader understanding of day labor. It took issue with many long-standing ideas, including that undocumented workers take the jobs of American citizens, especially in the construction trades where many day laborers are employed. Valenzuela has written that this is false because it assumes that job growth in these industries is fixed.

Other research he has done suggests that immigrant workers generally complement workers born in the United States. If there is a negative impact on jobs, it occurs in industries that are already on the decline and heavily populated by minority workers.

Workers gathering in public spaces to find jobs is nothing new. It has a long tradition in this country, as well as in other countries including Japan and South Africa. In the U.S. it dates to the late 1700s, when men, and sometimes women, largely from immigrant populations who had yet to become accepted in the broader society, congregated in town squares to find pick-up employment. In those days, workers found jobs cutting wood, sweeping chimneys and driving carts. Today, day labor is generally focused on construction work, landscaping, painting, woodwork, loading and unloading trucks, and moving household belongings.

Valenzuela's research shows there are an estimated 22,000 day laborers in the Los Angeles area and 120,000 throughout the United States. An estimated 25% to 36% of them are in the country legally. Forty-two percent have nine years or more of schooling, either in the U.S. or in their countries of origin.

Valenzuela's surveys have found that their work is sporadic and that their wages vary greatly but are not generally good, placing most day laborers among the working poor. Their work is often dangerous, and safety standards are lax. The idea that day labor is a draw for immigrants to cross the border illegally doesn't stand up to scrutiny, Valenzuela has written, noting that his research has found that 78% of survey respondents learned about day labor sites only after they arrived in the United States.

"The idea that immigrants would travel thousands of miles, pay thousands of dollars and risk their lives crossing a desert to look for work on street corners is preposterous," he said.

Lately, Valenzuela has become interested in the vendor economy, which he said doesn't differ significantly from day labor. "On the most basic level, you can think of day laborers as street vendors. In this context, they're selling their labor power, their hands.

"In Los Angeles to this day, we continue to struggle about how to regulate space and workers. Day laborers have had to deal with the sort of regulation that mostly bans their search for work, as opposed to regulating their search.... Many of the bans have been overturned as either being unconstitutional or unworkable. If you talk to local law enforcement, they usually become upset [because] they would much rather go after the real criminal as opposed to a worker looking for work in a public space."

Street vending, Valenzuela said, "has become an important way to earn income in big cities. It shares a very similar spatial configuration [with day labor] that people don't usually talk about when they talk about day laborers. Space is super important."

In late January, the Los Angeles City Council moved to decriminalize street vending, but the details may take months to be ironed out.

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Valenzuela was born in Boyle Heights. His parents, both from Mexico, were immigrants, his father an upholsterer and his mother a preschool teacher.

Valenzuela said his interest in the kinds of work he wanted to understand came partly from watching his father reupholster and reassemble chairs. "Taking a chair apart isn't hard. But rebuilding one, that's a bit more complicated. It might involve breaking the chair down to the basic frame and sometimes reassembling that frame, tightening it up and adding new springs. It required the use of his hands, and he's very talented."

From his parents, he learned the value of education and hard work in the classroom. His mother grew up in Ciudad Juarez. As a child, she crossed the border daily to attend elementary school in El Paso until Valenzuela's grandmother could get documentation for the family to move to the United States. Border crossing for school has been going on for decades, but it might face new challenges from the Trump administration.

Valenzuela earned his bachelor's degree at UC Berkeley and his master's in city planning, as well as a Ph.D. in urban and regional studies at MIT. All of his siblings have advanced degrees. A brother teaches political science and Chicano studies at Princeton. One of his two sisters is a public defender in Los Angeles, and the other is a school psychologist, also in Los Angeles. Valenzuela and his wife have three sons. She is an administrator with a health care company that focuses on underserved communities in Southern California.

Valenzuela has been at the Westwood campus since 1994, shortly after completing his Ph.D. He was hired as one of the founding members of the Chicana/Chicano Studies Department and a year later joined UCLA's Department of Urban Planning as a joint appointment. In addition to his current position, he retains positions in both Chicana/Chicano studies and urban planning.

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The Institute for Research on Labor and Employment is the oldest organized research unit at the University of California. It has two independent research centers, one at UC Berkeley and the other at UCLA, where Valenzuela has been the director since July.

The UCLA center has four primary functions, he said. They are to:

> Train workers in occupational health and safety.

> Provide a human resources roundtable that offers opportunities for executive MBAs and former MBAs who are in government and in the private sector to come back to campus and learn the best practices in human relations.

> Conduct a teaching program that trains undergraduates in labor studies and applied research.

> Operate a labor center, which does policy-driven research.

Valenzuela's goal for the institute is for it to become much more of a player in driving public policy by working with key stakeholders in Los Angeles and around the state.

"The research has to matter. It has to mean something for California and its residents," he said. He sees new challenges to that effort in the current atmosphere emanating from Washington.

"The work that we do as social scientists, I think, is going to be increasingly attacked, if the past few months are any indication of how we see future conversations about the value of what we do at this university and at public universities in particular," Valenzuela said.

"I think doubling down on empiricism, on data and how we collect that data," is extremely important, he said. "Enhancing it, vetting it, making it accessible, so there's some transparency — these are some basic sorts of academic processes that I'm re-emphasizing, because I think, in this day and age, that's being blurred and attacked.

"We can't let that happen."

Going forward, Valenzuela hopes to study how unemployment and the search for work affect mental health; the demise of public sector unions; temporary work, known as the gig economy; and African-American employment in Los Angeles.

"THE IDEA THAT IMMIGRANTS WOULD TRAVEL THOUSANDS OF MILES, PAY THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS AND RISK THEIR LIVES CROSSING A DESERT TO LOOK FOR WORK ON STREET CORNERS IS PREPOSTEROUS."

But he always comes back to workers at the lower end of the economic scale, the ones he has placed at the center of his academic focus. He speaks eloquently on their behalf and against the notion that many of them are looking for a handout.

"Many of the workers at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy that I study will often reference their labor with pride," he said.

"There isn't a lot of glamour to, say, picking up debris from a construction work site.... When you interview workers about that, they'll talk about the work. They'll describe it in detail, and they'll speak about their job with pride. Though it's a lousy, lousy job, it's the entire process of fulfilling the obligation to work, and then getting paid for it, and then being able to feed the family or pay the rent... [that] elevates and makes them a part of the social fabric....

"It's a way, I think, of integrating immigrants into our American belief system of work." ◤

TRADE AND IMMIGRATION: THE HISTORY OF A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

WRITTEN BY
KATHLEEN KELLEHER

BEFORE ATTENDING GRADUATE SCHOOL, Margaret Peters spent six months in Qatar modernizing its court system from pen and paper to computers. The experience was pivotal.

"It was 90% migrants," she said. "I worked with Egyptians, Sudanese, Somalis, Jordanians and Pakistanis. I almost never worked with a Qatari. It was super weird, coming from the United States."

Peters was so intrigued by the multinational workers who had come to that tiny nation, on the northeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula, that she switched her grad school focus from international development to migration. It would grow into a sustaining passion.

Among other things, she learned that immigration and trade are pieces of a complex foreign-policy puzzle. For the past decade, she has been unraveling that complexity. Only rarely have trade, immigration and the ability of companies to move to other countries for cheaper labor all increased or decreased in tandem.

"When I was in grad school, I was thinking about how trade was more restricted in the 19th century but is really open today," Peters said. "We would have tariffs of 20, 30, 40 percent on goods. Today we have very few tariffs, and they are not very high. But we saw the reverse with immigration. In the 19th century, anybody could come. Today there are many more rules."

We spoke in her campus office, where she had been answering emails from students beset by midterm nerves. Peters, 37, an assistant professor of political science at UCLA, said she had been intrigued at Stanford, where she earned her Ph.D., by the perplexing history of trade and the immigration of low-skilled workers — and, more broadly by the political economy of migration. It became the focus of her award-winning dissertation as well as her forthcoming book, *Trading Barriers: Immigration and the Remaking of Globalization*.

Peters' expertise is particularly timely. She is studying trade and immigration when both are under intense political pressure from deeply divided interests. Immigration and trade policies, she said, are helping to drive the disruptive politics of a rapidly changing world.

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Peters could be mistaken for a student. She is thoughtful and informal; she goes by Maggie. She speaks with range and ease about her field and laughs at ironies as she draws on her expansive knowledge. Her appreciation for political issues dates to high school, when she took an Islamic history class and learned some Arabic. She earned her undergraduate degree in political science at the University of Michigan. Before going to graduate school, she worked for a Washington, D.C., consulting firm, which sent her to Qatar. At Stanford, she earned not only her doctorate in political science but also a master's degree in economics. She taught at Yale and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison before coming to UCLA last year.

Trade and immigration are highly charged issues that have been central to the platforms of populist, ethno-nationalist candidates in Europe and Great Britain and at the heart of Donald Trump's victory in his campaign for president of the United States. At the same time, hard-right, nationalist, anti-immigrant movements have swept through nearly every Northern European country, including Sweden.

"The breakdown of Syria has created this huge migration crisis," Peters said. "Europeans have taken in maybe 1 million of the 11 million Syrian refugees, while Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan have taken the rest. I am sure those countries [look at Europe and] are like, 'What are you complaining about?'"

Pressure from the refugees, combined with migration from European Union countries in Eastern Europe, seemed threatening in British communities where there was generalized economic anxiety over diminishing jobs, Peters said. When even a few Polish plumbers showed up in some British villages, they experienced anti-immigrant attitudes. Small British towns voted to leave the EU, she said, like Rust Belt towns in the United States voted for Donald Trump.

"If you look at the voting on Brexit [the June decision by the British to exit the EU], there were all these commentators talking about [either] immigration or trade," Peters said. "But, as I argue in my book, those things are closely tied together."

Areas in Britain decimated by trade voted for Brexit by larger margins, she said. That should not have been surprising, she added, because those areas do not have businesses with substantial needs for immigrant labor. "As long as business doesn't help keep nativists in check, the nativists win.

"Nativists have always been around," Peters said, "but for the most part, people are more tolerant of immigrants today than they were 100 years ago." The U.S. Immigration Act of 1917, for example, was known as the Asiatic Barred Zone Act and as the Literacy Act, the latter because it imposed a literacy test. It was the strictest immigration law of its time. The act barred "undesirables," including "idiots, imbeciles, epileptics, alcoholics, poor, criminals, beggars and any person suffering attacks of insanity...."

By contrast, a Pew Research survey late last year found that 63% of Americans said immigrants strengthen the United States, while just 27% described them as a burden. Meanwhile, just 52% of

Britons voted to leave the European Union while 48% voted to remain.

"What you are seeing is a very vocal, relatively small set of the population that really cares about this," Peters said.

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Businesses and their labor needs are the primary drivers of immigration policy, Peters said. Without business lobbyists or, in many European countries, social economic councils and employer associations that lobby for labor needs, policymakers put restrictions on immigration, she said. "Businesses really do have an outsized voice, in part because they have a lot of money, but also because they have jobs. It's like Bill Clinton said: 'It's the economy, stupid.' All politicians, even ones in autocracies, have to respond to that."

When Peters researched immigration and trade policies of 19 nations from the 19th through the 21st centuries, she found that both trade policy and the ability of businesses to move to countries with cheaper labor directly affected immigration policy in labor-scarce countries. Political support for immigration of low-skill workers relies upon restrictions on both trade and the ability of companies to decamp to nations with cheaper laborers.

Her research showed that policymakers have either eased immigration and restricted trade and business mobility or vice versa. There might be snapshots in time when all three were open, she said, but those periods never lasted. Open trade and freedom for businesses to move for cheaper labor usually undercut support for immigration.

Peters' findings counter what some economists argue, that it doesn't matter what form openness takes: Whether it's goods or people, capital or corporations, it has the same effects.

"But that is not what happens," Peters said.

Except when Nordic countries joined the European Union, the EU always opened trade and cross-border investment first, then opened migration later, she said. The idea was that wealthier countries would invest in poorer countries, create more jobs and raise wages — and low-level workers would stay at home.

But free trade upset that model, Peters said. Low-skilled immigrant labor-intensive companies moved to cheap labor countries to compete with an overproduction of products flooding the market from China or other countries. Domestic companies unable to compete closed down, she said, or mechanized to cut labor costs, shrinking low-skilled jobs even more.

At the moment, Britain is grappling with how to leave the European Union. Withdrawal negotiations will include whether to guarantee the right of nearly 3 million EU nationals to continue to live in the United Kingdom, an outcome that would affect the 1.2 million U.K. nationals living in Europe. Brexit is expected to take two years and cost U.K. taxpayers $120 billion. Peters said it will be difficult for Britain to get the exit deal it wants, which would be to close its borders to EU migrants but keep trade and cross-border investment open to maintain a robust economy.

"EU members like Romania and Poland," she said, "for whom half the benefit of being in the EU is having [emigrant] workers send remittances back home..., may say, 'No, you cannot trade with us unless you take our people.'"

.....

Forging a balance of policy in trade, immigration and company mobility is not how most countries approach policymaking, Peters said. "Policymakers almost don't even think of immigration policy as foreign economic policy." Instead, they see immigration as a matter of domestic policy. The only time they consider it otherwise, she said, is when they think making trade agreements with another country will result in that country sending fewer job-seeking migrants.

"The whole thing behind NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico]," she said, "was that if we gave Mexico this trade deal and Mexico developed, then fewer Mexicans would come to the United States."

But migration, Peters said, has always been a way for people to escape poverty and death. For centuries, it has allowed millions to flee famine, drought, persecution and war. Immigrants are a small minority in most of their host countries and have generally benefited those countries by bolstering economic growth, increasing innovation and bringing rich cultural change.

At the same time, she said, migrants have spread democratic ideals to their home countries, sent remittances back and increased trade networks, foreign investment and foreign aid. Migration is the most powerful and effective means of development for less wealthy nations, she said, but it is nowhere on most countries' agenda for development or foreign policy.

Governments should approach immigration as foreign economic policy, Peters said, rather than domestic policy alone, affected by domestic politics and economic interests. Similarly, immigration advocates need to create new and broader coalitions based on mass political support, she said, rather than narrow economic interests, which are the province of business lobbyists and commercial coalitions.

More simply, immigration proponents would do well to reframe immigration as a human right, Peters said. "Think of all the great civil rights movements," she said. "As feminists, we don't win by saying, 'As feminists, we can make a lot of money for our country and our families.'

"We do it by appealing to norms of fairness."

"IF YOU LOOK AT THE VOTING ON BREXIT, THERE WERE ALL THESE COMMENTATORS TALKING ABOUT IMMIGRATION OR TRADE. BUT, AS I ARGUE IN MY BOOK, THOSE THINGS ARE CLOSELY TIED TOGETHER."

— Margaret Peters


PASSPORT

CHANGE COMES TO LOS ANGELES COMMUNITIES

FOR AT LEAST A CENTURY, immigrants to Los Angeles have gravitated to distinctly ethnic areas — Boyle Heights, Highland Park, Chinatown, to name three. Although these new Angelenos often had to contend with high crime and poor access to public transit, they established close-knit communities, and many built thriving small businesses.

However, as these communities rapidly gentrify, spurred in part by extension of the region's rail network, soaring rents are pushing out the newest generation of immigrants and threatening their businesses.

WRITTEN BY
MOLLY SELVIN

Upscale restaurants that cater to hipsters now dot Figueroa Avenue in Highland Park, a street only recently of largely Latino businesses. The trendy eat-in food stalls in downtown's renovated Grand Central Market have crowded out nearly all of the immigrant produce and meat vendors who long dominated the space.

While the national immigration debate is focused on border control, UCLA Luskin Professor Paul Ong and his colleagues see an equally pressing challenge for Los Angeles and other major cities: helping those immigrants already here to remain and thrive in the neighborhoods that first welcomed them. Their work is a reminder that immigration is not just about crossing a border; it's about establishing a new life in a foreign country and adapting to its customs and progress.

"The goal is not to stop gentrification," Ong said, "but to ensure that progress is fair and just."

When a new transit line opens or another stretch of the Los Angeles River is cleaned up, "The market will give the benefits to those with the economic resources to take advantage of them — including developers and home buyers," Ong said.

Governments have a responsibility "around the equity part," Ong said, to "make sure everyone has fair chance to benefit," and that small businesses and established residents have a chance to stay. This means the region's long-term economic prosperity depends on supporting lower-income newcomers and their families rather than displacing them.

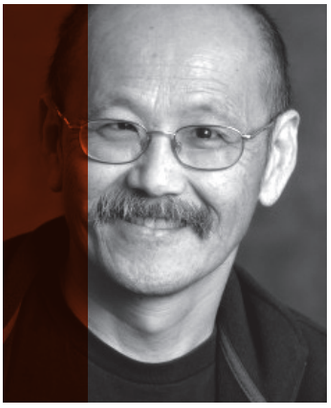


PHOTO BY **DAVID SPRAGUE**

UCLA LUSKIN PROFESSOR PAUL ONG

Toward that end, Ong and his UCLA colleagues have teamed with officials in Los Angeles and other cities, analyzing neighborhood-level data on urban change that allows those officials, with public input, to design new tools and policies that better support both residents and businesses. The L.A. Business Portal (www.business.lacity.org), launched last September, is an online personal concierge of sorts, a platform that walks residents with a business idea through the process of finding a location, negotiating a lease and securing a business loan. The site also provides free, custom-tailored guidance on how to manage and grow an enterprise.

Many local small business owners are immigrants like Kofi Effah, 32, an ebullient native of Ghana who came to Los Angeles six years ago. After working in coffee shops to pay his bills, Effah struck out on his own, opening Coffee by Kofi. Originally a high-end coffee catering service, Effah has since focused on his coffee shop in the Reef, a downtown building that houses small manufacturers, technology and other start-up ventures.

"I just had a passion," Effah recalled, "and got started." That was four years ago, before the city opened the online portal. But he's now about to launch a second business, selling placemats, coasters and other items he makes from buttons; he commends the new business portal, which helped him register his business name and obtain the required permits and certificates.

"Every day is still a challenge," he said, "but I've been progressively moving one step at a time."

"Home for Renters" is the city's new online tool aimed at supporting vulnerable residents, many of them immigrants. Los Angeles' existing Rent Stabilization Ordinance covers 624,000 apartments, which house one of every two L.A. families; it allows landlords to earn a reasonable return on their investments while protecting tenants from excessive rent increases and some kinds of eviction. Yet a recent survey found that only a third of families living in units covered by the ordinance understood their rights.

So the city upgraded the Housing and Community Investment Department's existing website with expanded information for renters (http://hcidla.lacity.org/home-for-renters), and launched the "Home for Renters" campaign last summer in an effort to close that information gap, reaching out to tenants and landlords in several neighborhoods with pamphlets and door hangers in multiple languages about the rent ordinance.

These new city initiatives emerged in part from the ongoing Urban Displacement Project, a joint effort by UCLA and Berkeley researchers with funding from the California Air Resources Board. Ong, along with Luskin professor Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, leads the UCLA team, which has collected data on how mass transit lines are altering residential and business patterns in six L.A. neighborhoods: the 103rd Street-Watts Tower community, Chinatown, Highland Park, the neighborhood around Hollywood and Western, Mariachi Plaza

> ***"THE GOAL IS NOT TO STOP GENTRIFICATION BUT TO ENSURE THAT PROGRESS IS FAIR AND JUST."***
>
> *— Paul Ong*

and Vermont near the new Expo Line. (The Berkeley team has focused on nine Bay Area communities; the joint report is due in the coming months.)

The project team has found that L.A.'s expanding transit network is prompting what Ong calls "a lifestyle shift," encouraging upper-income and younger residents to move downtown, where they are less car-dependent, as well as to surrounding, predominantly immigrant communities. This shift can breathe new life into sagging neighborhoods. But it also can lead to "a widening divide between haves and have-nots in terms of purchasing power," Ong said, causing more "contesting around the neighborhoods that are changing." In Boyle Heights, for instance, protests from longtime residents fearful that newcomers would push up rents caused a popular gallery space that drew artists from around the city to close in February.

Ong was born in Sacramento, but his academic passion emerged from his family's experience as Chinese immigrants and his childhood in Sacramento's Chinese and African-American neighborhoods. Now bespectacled and mustachioed, Ong earned his Ph.D. in economics from UC Berkeley and taught at UC Santa Cruz before joining UCLA's faculty in the late 1980s.

The 67-year-old speaks quietly but with a fierce conviction that there is a direct line between income inequality and ethnic tensions surfacing in Los Angeles today. Moreover, past legal discrimination against African-Americans, Asians and Latinos has left lasting scars, but ones that Ong argues enlightened local leaders can address and even heal.

That view animated Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's decision in 2015 to convene the Innovation Delivery Team, a group of experts in City Hall focused on improving housing and preserving small enterprises, particularly in transitional neighborhoods. A $2.55 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies funds the multiyear team effort here; Los Angeles is one of 14 cities with similar challenges to win the grant.

Amanda Daflos leads the Los Angeles team. Before Garcetti tapped her, she was a senior manager at Deloitte Consulting who worked with federal, state and local governments on organizational design and change management. Daflos' team spent its first year gathering data and listening to local residents and urban experts, including from Ong's Urban Displacement Project team, before creating the business and housing tools.

"Our goal is to make a visible difference in the lives of Angelenos," Daflos said, "but we understand that we can't solve these problems alone."

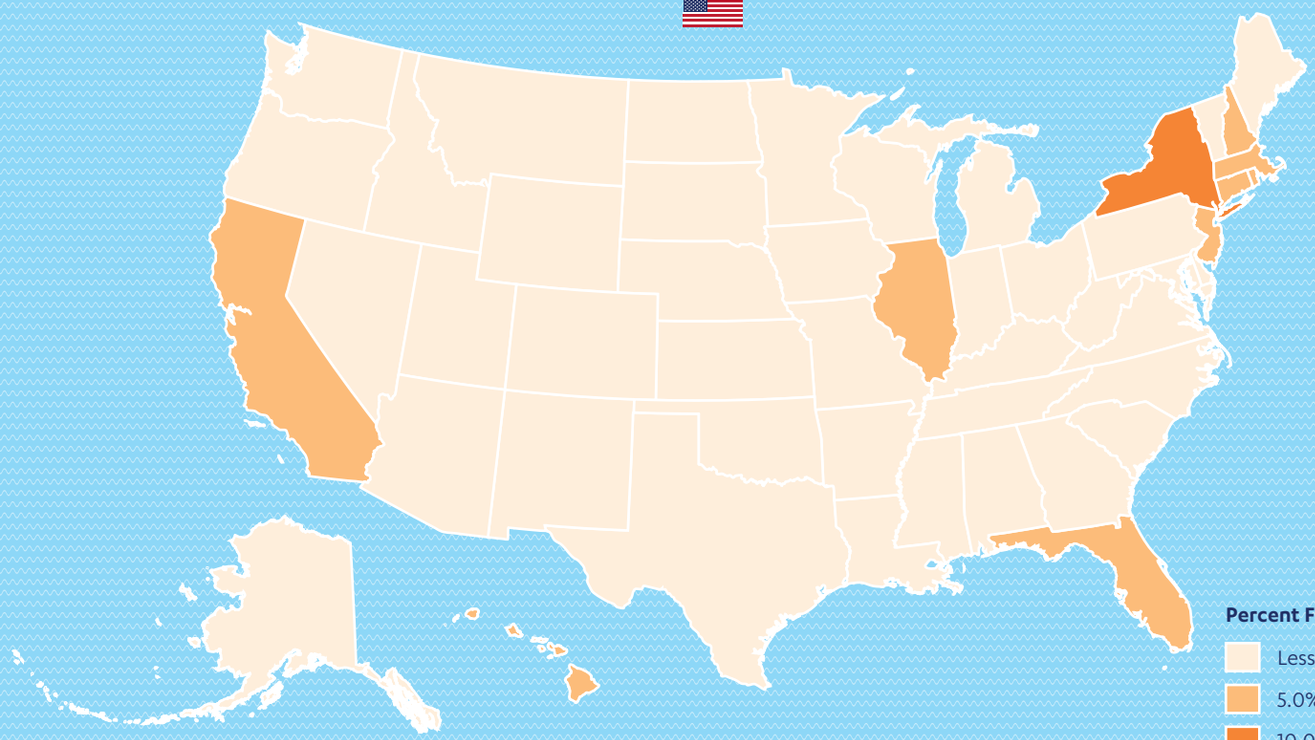
Granted there are limits to the team's capacity, but to Ong, government is a significant part of the answer. "Government has a responsibility to make sure everyone has a fair chance to benefit from a rising economy," he said. With that help, he added, small family businesses can grow and longtime residents can remain in the communities they love, even as those communities grow more prosperous. ◤

AMERICA: NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

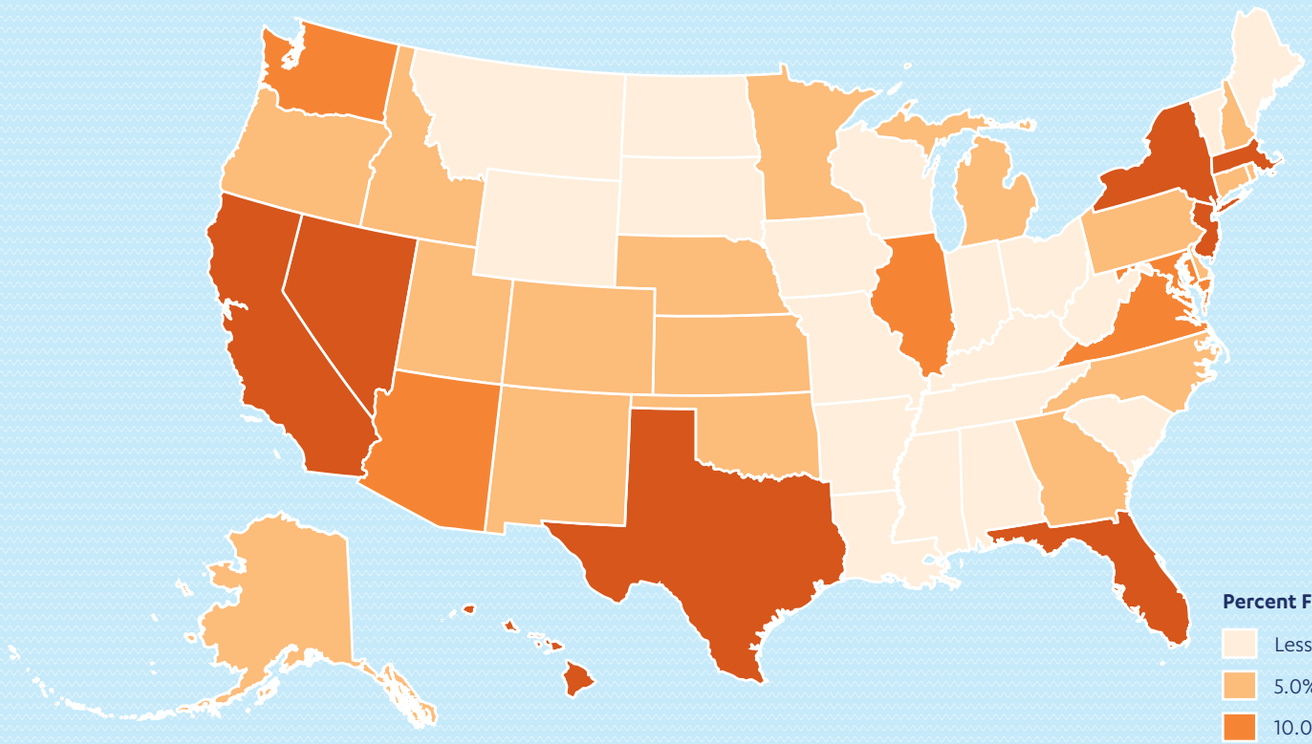
Research by NONA YATES

FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION AS PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION

1970



2010



Percent Foreign Born

- Less than 5.0%
- 5.0% to 9.9%
- 10.0% to 14.9%
- 15.0% and over

Sources: The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010, Elizabeth M. Grieco, et al, US Census Bureau; Migration Policy Institute

In 1970, nearly all U.S. immigrants came from Europe, but by 2010 no European countries were among the top 10 sending nations, which now included India and El Salvador. What changed? Economics. Population growth. Politics. National identity. The United States, for instance, ended quotas that had favored Europeans. In 1970, the Soviet Union ranked seventh among sending nations; but by 2010, the Soviet Union no longer existed. At the same time, total immigrants climbed from 4.7% of the U.S. population to 12.9%. In 1970, only one state — New York — was more than 10% immigrant. By 2010, more than a dozen states were. California led at 27.2%.

TOP TEN LARGEST U.S. IMMIGRANT GROUPS

1 **ITALY**
Europe
1,008,533

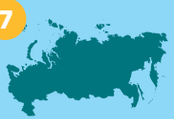
2 **GERMANY**
Europe
832,965

3 **CANADA**
North America
812,421

4 **MEXICO**
Latin America
759,711

5 **UK**
Europe
686,099

6 **POLAND**
Europe
548,107



7 **SOVIET UNION**
Europe
463,462

8 **CUBA**
Latin America
439,048

9 **IRELAND**
Europe
251,375

10 **AUSTRIA**
Europe
214,014

REGIONS — *Europe* — *North America* — *Latin America* — *Asia*

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965

The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which eliminated national origin quotas largely based on race and ethnicity, changed the face of America. Scholars say it "changed the ethnic portrait of the United States."

1 **MEXICO**
Latin America
11,711,103

2 **INDIA**
Asia
1,780,322

3 **PHILIPPINES**
Asia
1,777,588

4 **CHINA** (exc. Hong Kong and Taiwan)
Asia
1,608,095

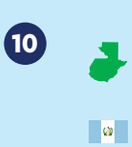
5 **VIETNAM**
Asia
1,240,542

6 **EL SALVADOR**
Latin America
1,214,049

7 **CUBA**
Latin America
1,104,679

8 **KOREA**
Asia
1,100,422

9 **Dominican Republic**
Latin America
879,187



10 **Guatemala**
Latin America
830,824

RESIST

LAW AND POLITICS IN THE ERA OF TRUMP

IF CALIFORNIA IS THE SPEAR OF RESISTANCE against Washington's new determination to deport illegal immigrants and pull back on climate change, Attorney General Xavier Becerra is the point of that spear. Appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to fill the vacancy created when Kamala Harris moved to the U.S. Senate, Becerra now is California's top law enforcement officer, empowered to defend its residents and their values against even the federal government.

Becerra is well-suited to the job. Friendly and unflappable, he's also piercingly intelligent and ever-conscious of the life this country has given him. His father, as he notes, was a ditchdigger in Mexico who has lived long enough to see his son rise to the highest levels of American government. With the full-throated support of Brown and the state leadership, it is Becerra who will lead California through what may become a treacherous course. He's ready and eager.

Becerra and Blueprint editor Jim Newton met recently in the attorney general's Los Angeles office.

TANCE

PHOTO BY **DAVID SPRAGUE**

Blueprint: You've been a member of Congress; you've made federal law. Now, you're the attorney general of California. What are your responsibilities if and when federal and state law collide?

Xavier Becerra: You know, the founders gave this a lot of thought. In fact, they erred on the side of giving the state much more power than the federal government. You always resort to the Constitution. It's the best defense for states.

For me, for California, it helps to know that the founders really wanted the federal government to do those things that the states were not capable of doing, or at least not capable of doing well. We feel we're pretty good at a number of things. You don't become the sixth-largest economy by failing.

BP: That's part of the paradox here, right? This is an economy that clearly could survive on its own.

XB: Yes. We know that it's a team effort, that we need to do things with the federal government, [and that] we need to work closely with all our local governments. But we know that we could do these things. For California, it's more a matter of, "Can we find partners?" We're a very forward-leaning state. We are doing things that some states won't do for a generation.

Do we want to stop that? No.

BP: Do you accept the principal that the federal government has the right to set certain national standards — air quality, for instance?

XB: It's a given.

BP: If the federal government sets a standard for air quality, why shouldn't a state be required to adhere to that standard?

XB: Not only should we follow federal mandates — we must follow federal mandates. Think of it as the floor. We can do anything that we want so long as we're respecting what the federal law says is applicable to the states on matters that the federal government has the right to weigh in on.

Typically, when we want to go in a slightly different direction, we need to seek clearance from the federal government.

BP: So just to pose a hypothetical that might not be too hypothetical: Let's say the Trump administration were to say: "Emission standards in the Air Quality Act are hurting job growth in this country. We therefore want to lower emission standards." California, of course, is already exceeding those standards. Could the administration require California to lower its standards to meet the new federal rule?

XB: If California were exceeding a particular standard ... any particular federal standard, any particular federal law, if the federal government thought we were in violation of that federal law, it could move to take action against the state on a pre-emptive basis.

In some cases, we will work with the federal government and say, "The federal law says this. We'd like to do something that we think is consistent with the federal law, but it may go in a slightly different direction — higher, lower, whatever. Can we work together so that we're still fulfilling not just the letter but the spirit of the federal law?" That's where we have gone, principally in the area of the environment, air quality ....

If we want cleaner water than the federal government requires, it doesn't mean we're violating the law by giving our consumers cleaner water. But we may have to get clearance to do that because it may impinge on other aspects of the federal law.

BP: I'm sure you noted that LAPD Chief Charlie Beck recently announced that there had been a decline in the number of reported domestic violence and sexual assaults by Latinos in Los Angeles. Not totally clear what's going on there, but his speculation, and it seems sensible, is that there's some fear of contacting authorities in this deportation-heavy environment. In light of that, could Trump or his administration say to Los Angeles: "You must deport everyone you believe to be here illegally in order to receive federal funds, even if you don't think it's in your best interests to do so?"

XB: The way you just said it, no. They cannot tell us that we must deport. We are not the federal government. We don't deport. We don't enforce immigration law. And so, they can't tell us to do something that we're not either obligated or permitted to do.

> ***"THEY CANNOT TELL US THAT WE MUST DEPORT. WE ARE NOT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WE DON'T DEPORT. WE DON'T ENFORCE IMMIGRATION LAW."***

BP: Is there some level of cooperation that they are legally entitled to insist upon?

XB: It depends on what kind of cooperation they're insisting on.

BP: Well, use this example: If it came to the attention of LAPD that someone who had called in as a victim of a crime or a witness to a crime ... that that person was not in the country legally, could the federal government require the officer to share that information with ICE?

XB: Under current law, I would say no. Could the federal government change the law and require the officer to do so? That's dubious. On what basis under the U.S. Constitution would the federal government have the ability to enact a law to coerce a state to do something?

BP: There was a time when the federal government made receiving highway funds contingent on raising the drinking age to 21 or lowering the speed limit to 55. There was a nexus between highway fatalities and those requirements, but it was a condition of receiving the federal money. Could you imagine a situation where Congress enacted a provision that said: In order to receive law enforcement support, you must promise to turn over anyone you believe to be here illegally?

XB: I don't think that would pass constitutional scrutiny.

BP: What's the difference?

XB: It's the nexus. It's the relationship of the requirement to the activity. What's the purpose served? Is that the only way to do it? Is it appropriate to [make] a state do something ... by extorting them to do it.

BP: I'm reluctant to bring this up because it almost treats it too seriously, but you remember the Berkeley protest recently where demonstrators violently objected to the Breitbart editor speaking, and Trump, the following day, suggested that in retaliation the government should consider cutting university funding? Is there any way legally for an administration to react to an event by cutting funding?

XB: If our Constitution had been written by adolescents, and if government activity and laws were executed by adolescents, and if the Supreme Court were populated by adolescents, I guess I could see that. Having raised three children, having been one myself, I can understand how the mind of an adolescent can work that way. But we have grownups.

BP: Presumably we have some grownups.
XB: We need grownups.

BP: What would happen if some city in California decides that we really want clear out every findable undocumented immigrant, that we want to help the federal government as much as we can? Do you have an obligation to help that city help the federal government?
XB: You're talking about the Sheriff Arpaio situation?

BP: Exactly. We could have one here.
XB: If our state laws were not clear, perhaps a Sheriff Arpaio-type could try to get away with it, explaining his or her actions that way. But California law is pretty explicit on how our local law enforcement authorities should conduct themselves when it comes to enforcing our public safety laws. And so that would not, should not, happen in California — and as the attorney general for the state of California, I'll do everything to make sure it will not happen here.

BP: There's been some talk of legislation to, in effect, declare all of California a sanctuary for undocumented persons. Obviously, there's a lot of confusion about what "sanctuary" means. But would that be helpful to you to have that kind of statewide mandate, or do you have enough authority as it is?
XB: Clarity in the law is always good. Having laws that are clear in how we can protect our people and our interests ... are always good. At this stage, where we have a federal government, an executive, that seems intent on forcing states to do things that the Constitution does not require us to do — ban people from coming into the country based on their religion — it helps when your laws are clear with regard to what you as a state are entitled to do under the U.S. Constitution. So I think there's always value in providing clarity, not just to the federal government, but also to our state and local authorities — in this case our law enforcement — about what we can and cannot do...and what the state requires and permits.

BP: In your new job, you work with a lot of different authorities: The governor and state officials, mayors, etc. Do you feel as if California is fairly united on these issues?
XB: You know, I've met with most of the sheriffs — we've got 58 counties. I've met with many of the police chiefs, at least of the major cities. I have met with probably more than half of the DA's, many of the city attorneys, many of the city mayors.

In California, I think this is a pretty settled issue. Most of our chiefs and sheriffs will say: "We're not trying to enforce immigration law." They want people to know that they are there to protect state and local public safety laws.

BP: What are the likely points of conflict that you see legally between the state and federal government over the next few years?
XB: As I said, California is a forward-leaning state. We're doing things that many parts of the country won't do for quite some time. We think that has helped us. We are creating jobs. We do have a growing economy. We are continuing to educate our people. People continue to come to California.

So someone would have to explain to me why we should change what we're doing. We have the sixth-largest economy in the world. We have a growing high-tech community. Innovation makes California its home. People still look at California as a golden state. My suspicion is that California is not going to change direction anytime soon.

The only reason we would have conflict with anyone, including the federal government, is if they think success is a bad thing. If they do, we're going to try to do what we can to prove them wrong and do everything we can to keep them from stopping us.

BP: I was recently going through some poll numbers that Zev Yaroslavsky put together, and a couple things came through: One was that an overwhelming majority of Los Angeles County residents are happy with race relations here, a finding you certainly wouldn't have gotten 20 years ago. Another was that a very large number, particularly of Latinos, would be worried to recommend that a friend or family member seek help from a federal agency for fear that they could face deportation. How do you square those numbers?
XB: I'm from a family of immigrants, and it's hard for me to be a pessimist. I think that if you work hard, you are going to get ahead. For me, there are better days ahead for my country.

For some people, though, it's them or us, and we have to separate ourselves from the "them." My sense is in California we've gotten past that. We've realized how much like us the "them" really are. When we work together as a team — wow! — we've become the sixth-largest economy in the world. And so the inclusion that you see in California, where people want to protect their neighbors, I think it comes from experience.

The example I always use is that less than a generation ago we saw in America that a majority of folks still did not believe that it was appropriate for people of the same sex to marry ....

BP: Yes, that's changed in my adult lifetime...
XB: And if you got AIDS, you were being punished by the Lord. But then all of a sudden they found out: "Wait a minute: My nephew? My sister? My neighbor? My golfing buddy?" All of a sudden, it was no longer them, it was part of us.

I think that's what's going on. In California, we've experienced diversity in such a great degree — with immigration; with having people from all walks of life, whether you were an Okie from Oklahoma, or whether you were, like my parents, from Mexico, or wether you were from India or Poland or wherever — it's no longer them. It's all us ....

For us, it works.

For others, maybe they're still feeling the pain of economic anxiety. There's no longer this opportunity to be in the middle class. And you're looking for the culprit, and you're saying: "It's them," whoever the "them" might be.

In our state, we look at it differently. It's not: "Don't Tread on Me," "Stay out of our way." It's more: "Join us. Try it."

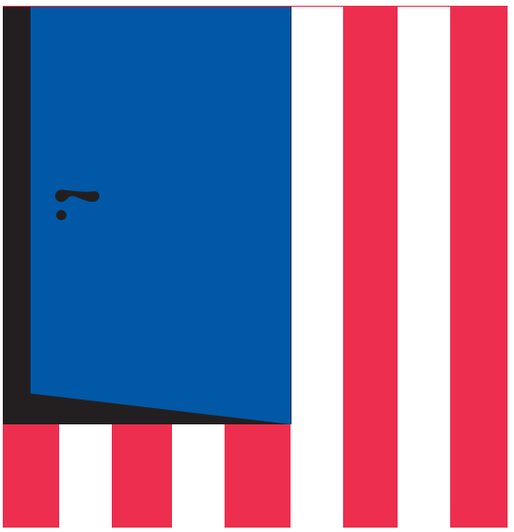
That's why, perhaps, I don't see [what] the federal government or the new administration is doing as necessarily them vs. us. The adolescent has yet to become a grownup.

BP: Last question, do you take California secession seriously?
XB: I love being part of the United States of America. A guy with the name of Xavier Becerra, and I'm as American as it gets. (He reaches for a photograph of his parents flanking President Clinton.) My dad was a ditch digger. My mom didn't come to this country until she was 18, and she married my dad. And they got to meet the President of the United States.

Why would a ditch digger get to meet the President of the United States? Because his son became a member of Congress. Why would I want to divorce myself from a country that let my mom and dad meet the most powerful person in the world?

To those in California who say secession, I get it. They feel like maybe other parts of the country don't want to join in our success and are trying keep us down. But rather than think that the only way to resolve this is to divorce ourselves from the rest of the country, I'd rather take my lead from Abraham Lincoln and say we're better off if we're united. ◤

CLOSING NOTE:
From Assumptions to Facts on Immigration



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO EXAMINE IMMIGRATION. One bad way is through assumptions. Many assume — and claim — that immigrants do not pay taxes. That's incorrect (see our infographic). Many assume that immigration is a recent phenomenon and is driven almost exclusively by Latin American migration. Wrong. Many, including some in Washington, assume that illegal immigrants arrive in the United States principally by sneaking across a lightly protected border. Wrong again.

Then there are those who study immigration, as do the researchers featured in this issue. They don't start from positions of hostility — immigrants take jobs that should go to Americans or they absorb government benefits. These researchers start by looking at life itself. How do immigrants arrive? How and where do they live? What persuades them to come to the United States and to stay here, sometimes longer than they had intended. When — and only when — we have answers to those questions will it be possible to fashion sensible, humane policies for regulating immigration.

Professor Roger Waldinger, for instance, has broken American feelings toward immigrants into categories. He notes that Americans are protective of our borders and troubled by people who enter illegally, but that once immigrants are here, those attitudes turn protective, because most Americans recognize the contributions of their immigrant neighbors, no matter how they got into the country. These dual attitudes may suggest policies that regulate entry but discourage deportation.

Or consider the work of Margaret Peters. By examining the longstanding and global connections between immigration and trade, phenomena liked Brexit and the rise of Donald Trump are more explicable. Paul Ong, meanwhile, gives us a detailed map of where immigrants settle after they arrive in the United States and how developments such as gentrification affect their work and livelihoods. Finally, there is Abel Valenzuela, asking whether immigrants take existing jobs or create new ones, a vital distinction at the heart of how working class communities can or should welcome newcomers.

Policy rooted in research — rather than fear or nativism — is not only likely to be more humane, but it also is likely to be more enduring and efficient. If we bar young engineers from this country on the mistaken assumption that they will take American jobs, we will simply deny America the benefit of their work. If we engage in mass deportations, we may sunder families and undermine neighborhoods without getting anything in return. If we discourage people who are in this country illegally from contacting police, we all may be more vulnerable.

Smart research does not guarantee intelligent policy, and the pieces featured here may or may not guide policymakers toward rational ends. What is certain, however, is that without research we are left with only gut feelings and untested assumptions. That's a guaranteed route to irrationality.

– Jim Newton

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– Jim Newton

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