

A Tale of Two States:

An Examination of the Impact
of Immigration in Iowa and Nevada

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Executive Summary

In the wake of the 2016 presidential election, immigration has become one of the United States' most divisive political issues, exacerbated by a candidate elected to office after having demonized Mexican immigrants as “rapists” and as villains “bringing crime” and “bringing drugs,” and after promising to build a massive wall along the country’s southern border to combat the arrival of refugees from Latin America. A “zero tolerance” policy was initiated after the election, leading to separations of families at the border and the retention of children in prison-like circumstances away from their parents.

Although these attitudes and policies have intensified the current political debate over immigration, they represent a long stream of nativism and isolationism that has flowed through the United States’ history from its beginning. However, inexorable demographic changes and economic interconnectedness among states, as well as between the United States and the rest of the world, make such attitudes and policies untenable.

In fact, immigrants have benefitted the United States in important ways, not the least of which is through the economy. Nationally, immigrants paid \$224 billion in federal taxes and \$105 billion in state and local taxes in 2014. In the same year, immigrant spending power reached \$927 billion (New American Economy, 2018). Educational attainment is a factor in how successfully immigrants integrate into the economy, and on the lower end of the scale, immigrants generally fall behind their native-born counterparts. But, on the higher end, immigrants arrive with significant educational achievement. Thirty percent of immigrants 25 and older have bachelor’s degrees, barely behind the 31.6% of native-born Americans with bachelor’s degrees (Krogstad & Radford, 2018). And, while immigration policy has remained a divisive issue in political campaigns, most Americans see the issue differently; 65%, or about two-thirds, see immigrants as beneficial to the country, while just 26%, about a quarter, see them as burdensome (Pew Research Center, U.S. Policy & Politics, 2017).

Immigration growth in coastal cities and towns and along the southern border is not new, but more recently interior states such as Iowa and Nevada have begun to feel the impact of expanding immigrant communities. Although those two states have distinctly different economies and cultural histories, they also share certain characteristics that make them attractive to immigrants, such as access to jobs that do not require mastery of English or high levels of educational attainment. Consequently, immigrants' impact on the economies of their respective states has been significant. Immigrant households in Iowa achieved \$3 billion in spending power in 2014 (American Immigration Council, 2017), and Nevada's larger immigrant community achieved \$10.3 billion in spending power for the same year (American Immigration Council, 2017).

These trends show no signs of declining. Thus, for Iowa and Nevada, and other states like them, to continue to move forward into the 21st century, understanding of the historical, social and economic impact of immigration growth is vital.

This paper was prepared for The Hispanic Institute by Charles B. Francher, Jr.

Introduction

The United States' immigration history is long and complex, hammered into shape by strokes of generosity and kindness – but also by blows of meanness and violence. It is a fertile history, seeded by the color and traditions of hundreds of cultures replanted under the American sun where it has grown into something new, something never before seen in human history, vibrant but fragile, and beautiful in ways that are unique in the eyes of each person who views it. It is neither a politician's nor a sociologist's tale of two Americas – of haves and have-nots nor of red and blue. Rather, it is a tale of *many* Americas, a rich plot that unfolds along multiple storylines, each one different from the next but rooted in the same soil.

There is one story that Americans like to tell to others, but also (and especially) to themselves. It is the saga of impoverished men, women and children risking everything to escape the old world for their first glimpses of the Statue of Liberty and its promise of freedom and prosperity to the poet Emma Lazarus' "huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Popular images that accompany this story are those of Irish and Italian Roman Catholics, Eastern European Jews, and Russian and Greek Orthodox Catholics, huddled cheek to jowl in New York City's Lower East Side tenements, scrapping for survival and struggling to achieve success for the next generation. Or, they are of stalwart Scandinavian farmers making their way to the Midwestern plains to coax wheat and corn from the earth and raise cattle for dairy and meat. Others are of tough Scots-Irish miners, their faces (not to mention their lungs) black with coal dust from tunneling into the West Virginia and Pennsylvania ground to earn a living for their families.

They might well have been among the images in the mind of Aaron Copland as he composed his iconic "Fanfare for the Common Man" as an intentionally patriotic, inspiring piece in 1942 in the midst of World War II (Jameson, 2018). They are also representative of the Americans to whom Louisiana Gov. Huey P. Long directed the populist lyrics of "Every Man a King," the 1935 campaign song co-written with Louisiana State University band leader Castro Carazo: *Why weep or slumber America/ Land of brave and true/ With castles and clothing and food for all....* (George Mason University, n.d.). The aspirations of those lyrics were at the heart of the American Dream that drew immigrants to the United States and undergirded their fierce determination to shrug off the shackles of old-world cultures to become Americans with no other obstacles than their willingness to work hard and to sacrifice.

America's Mixed Record on Immigration

Conventional wisdom over the years has been that immigrants are welcome on America's shores, but despite the Trump Administration's distinct, though historically not unique, hostility to illegal and legal immigration (Gomez, 2018), two-thirds of Americans, 65%, see immigrants as beneficial to the country, while just 26% see them as burdensome. Those who view immigrants positively cite immigrants' hard work and talents, but those who see immigrants negatively say they take jobs from other Americans and strain housing and health care systems. Not surprisingly, these attitudes appear to be reflected in political affinity: Just 12% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents view immigrants as a burden, while 44% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents see them that way (Pew Research Center, U.S. Policy & Politics, 2017).

Indeed, Presidential candidate Trump vowed in August 2016 to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, created by President Barack Obama to provide temporary legal relief for immigrant children brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents, and he has pursued the destruction of the program through the courts since his election (Valverde, 2018). In September 2018, the Administration moved to deny legal resident status, also known as green cards, to applicants who have legally used public services such as food assistance or Section 8 housing (Shear & Baumgaertner, 2018).

And, in a single week of October 2018, the Administration:

- Ordered more than 5,000 military personnel to the country's southern border to make a stand against a so-called "caravan" of asylum seekers from Latin America, insisting without evidence that the group had been infiltrated by gangs, terrorists from the Middle East and other undesirables (Shear & Gibbons-Neff, 2018). President Trump subsequently pledged to send 15,000 troops (Sonne & Ryan, 2018).
- Announced that through an executive order his administration would seek to end "birth right" citizenship, guaranteed by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which declares that "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." Noted legal scholars have scoffed at the assertion that the President has such power, and there has been bi-partisan Congressional opposition to the concept (Rizzo S., 2018).

The vision of America's arms open to immigrants often fails to adequately acknowledge the experiences of millions of immigrants of color and non-adherents of Judeo-Christian religious faith whose gifts of their labor, their intellect – and even their blood in times of war – have made them an undeniable part of the American story.

They include Latinos from Mexico, Central and South America as well as the Caribbean, who face discrimination when they arrive at the United States' southern border, including harsh family separations due to a Trump Administration "zero tolerance" policy of dubious legality (Katz & Lind, 2018). Asians from a multitude of countries and cultures have also had experiences that range from the indignity of the 19th century Chinese Exclusion Act (Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, n.d.) to the despicable internment of Japanese American families during World War II (Frail, 2017) to being held up as so-called "model minorities" to cynically undermine legitimate grievances of other groups (Guo, 2016). They also include Muslims from the Middle East, whose status in the minds of some Americans has devolved from merely different to suspicious in the wake of the 9/11 attacks by terrorists. There has been a dramatic increase in nativist sentiment, despite slight recent gains in public approval of Muslims (Pew Research Center, Religion & Public Life, 2017). Most recently, they have been the target of the Trump Administration's efforts to ban immigrants from majority Muslim countries.

And then there are the sub-Saharan Africans who initially arrived not as traditional immigrants, but as cargo packed inside 18th century slave ships, and later as voluntary immigrants from Africa, along with their descendants from the Caribbean. Notwithstanding the 21st century election of a Black man to two terms as President of the United States and the visible achievements of numerous other African Americans in a variety of fields, their status has been tenuous down through the generations (University of Michigan, 2012). Nevertheless, the struggles of each minority group – including those of Native Americans who arrived in North America about 15,000 years ago, long before the arrival of the Mayflower (Reich & et.al., 2012) – their experiences have enriched the quality of American life.

This paper seeks to detail the ways in which the country has been enriched by immigration by focusing on the impact of immigrants in two states, Iowa and Nevada, both of which are experiencing change as a consequence of increasing diversity. It provides statistics on the immigrant populations of each state, discusses the economic, social and political impacts of those communities, and describes the similarities and differences between the two states' experiences with immigrants.

First, however, it is important to understand the size and scope of the immigrant community across the country.

Background

In 2016, there were 43.7 million immigrants in the United States, or 13.5% of the total population of 323.1 million. In 2015, 76% of immigrants were legal residents of the United States, and 44% were naturalized citizens. Of this group, 27% were permanent residents, and 5% were temporary residents (Lopez, Bialik, & Radford, 2018). Altogether, 1.49 million immigrants entered the United States in 2016, and leading the list of the top five countries from which immigrants entered the U.S. were: India, with 175,100, China/Hong Kong, with 160,200; Mexico, with 150,400; Cuba, with 54,700; and the Philippines, with 46,600. Immigrants and their U.S.-born children comprised 27% of the total population, or 86.4 million people (Zong, Batalova, & Hallock, 2018).

Notably, in an era when the current U.S. Administration has vilified Mexico as the chief source of immigration-related woes, the United States' southern neighbor has slipped to third place behind India and China among the leading countries of origin for foreign-born residents (Chishti & Hipsman, 2015). Tavernise (2018) reporting in *The New York Times* on newly released U.S. Census data, notes that the trend continued in 2017: Forty-one percent of immigrants who arrived since 2010 were Asian, and 39% were Hispanic. By the year 2065, Asians are expected to comprise 38% of immigrants, followed by Hispanics at 31%, Whites at 20% and Blacks at 9% (Lopez, Bialik, & Radford, 2018).

Economic Impact of the Foreign-born

The economic impact of immigrants on the United States is massive, and often ignored by immigration opponents in policy debates. National statistics for 2014 compiled by the research and advocacy group New American Economy (2018) are impressive:

- Immigrant spending power was \$927 billion
- Immigrant household income was \$1.3 trillion
- Immigrants paid \$224 billion in federal taxes
- Immigrants paid \$105 billion in state and local taxes
- Immigrants contributed \$123.7 billion to Social Security and \$32.9 billion to Medicare

Americans also often fail to remember that historical luminaries such as Albert Einstein, developer of the theory of relativity; Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone; and Wernher von Braun, widely regarded as the father of American rocket science, were all immigrants, as were so many other highly educated foreign-born U.S. residents.

Immigrants impact the U.S. economy in other ways as well, ways that many Americans rarely consider. For example, some of the country's biggest companies, which affect the daily lives of millions of Americans, are headed by immigrants. Here are some examples:

Air Products, the gas and chemical corporate giant, is headed by Chairman, President and CEO Seifi Ghasemi, a native of Iran.

Chobani, a leading producer of strained Greek style yogurt, was founded by CEO and noted philanthropist Hamdi Ulukaya, a Turkish immigrant of Kurdish descent.

Google LLC, the corporation whose name has become virtually synonymous with internet search, is led by CEO Sundar Pichai, a native of India. Sergey Brin, one of Google's co-founders, was born in Russia.

News Corporation, the global media conglomerate that spun off two publicly traded companies, News Corp and 21st Century Fox, which include Fox Broadcasting Co., Dow Jones & Co., publisher of *The Wall Street Journal*, and Harper Collins publishing, was headed by CEO Rupert Murdoch, an immigrant from Australia.

Oracle Corporation, a leader in cloud computing and related technologies, is headed by CEO Safra Catz, a native of Israel.

PepsiCo Inc., manufacturer of the iconic Pepsi Cola and numerous other beverages and snack foods, was headed by Chair and former CEO Indra Nooyi, a native of India.

Pinnacle Group, a global human resources consulting firm, is led by co-founder, Chair and CEO Nina G. Vaca, a native of Ecuador.

Tesla, Inc., an energy storage company best known as a developer of innovative all-electric cars and as a leader in the private space technology industry, is led by its charismatic founder, Elon Musk, a native of South Africa.

YouTube, the international video-sharing website, was co-founded (with native-born Chad Hurley) by Steve Chen, born in Taiwan, and Jawed Karim, an immigrant from Germany.

It is certainly true that not all immigrants or children of immigrants become corporate CEOs, but their impact is nonetheless felt in the workplace. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), foreign-born residents comprised 17.1% of the civilian labor force in 2017, nearly half of whom, 47.9%, were Hispanic. The foreign-born participation rate in the labor force was 66%, compared to 62.2% for the native-born. Unemployment among the foreign-born was 4.1%, compared to 4.4% for the native-born. The Bureau of Labor Sta-

tistics report also notes that foreign-born workers earned less than native-born workers on average – \$730 per week vs. \$885 per week – but that among the better educated, those with at least a Bachelor’s degree, foreign-born workers earned slightly more than their native-born counterparts, \$1,340 per week vs. \$1,271.

Educational Attainment

A critical factor in the capacity of immigrants to participate in the economy is their level of educational attainment that rivals or, in some instances, surpasses that of native-born Americans. In 2016, the percentage of native-born Americans with a Bachelor’s degree, age 25 and older, was 31.6%, compared to the slightly lower 30.0% for foreign-born residents. However, the percentage of foreign-born residents from South and East Asia was a stunning 52.1%, followed by 46.6% from the Middle East, 43.1% from Europe and Canada and 40.0% from sub-Saharan Africa – all significantly higher than the percentage of native-born Americans with college degrees (Krogstad & Radford, 2018).

Percentages of Immigrants with Bachelor’s Degrees, 25 and Older

Country or Region of Origin	Percentages
U.S. Born	31.6%
Immigrants	30.0%
South and East Asia	52.1%
Middle East	46.6%
Europe and Canada	43.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	40.0%
All Other	33.7%
South America	32.3%
Caribbean	20.4%
Central America	9.2%
Mexico	6.2%

*Source: Pew Research Center; tabulations of 2016 American Community Survey data
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/14/education-levels-of-u-s-immigrants-are-on-the-rise/>*

Immigration Policy and Politics

From the beginning, addressing immigration was a high priority for the United States' founders. In 1786 – just 10 years after declaring their independence, three years after fighting a war to achieve it and two years *before* ratifying the constitution of the new republic – they moved to assert their hegemony over the land and the peoples who were here before them by establishing the first Native American reservation and treating each tribe as an independent nation (Library of Congress, n.d.). White men were in charge, and, as Starkey (2017) notes in writing about University of Kansas history professor David Roediger's book, *Working Toward Whiteness*, the understanding of who was White had to evolve. For many years, groups considered White today, including Irish, Italian and Polish immigrants, among others, did not have that status.

As the country has grown, so too have the politics of immigration, including the current U.S. Administration's efforts to ban Muslim immigration (Liptak & Shear, 2018). What follows is a timeline of selected events, laws and policies that have affected the composition of the American population and the status of various groups within it. The list is not comprehensive, but it provides insights into historical trends.

As the table suggests, U.S. immigration policy has often been driven by social or economic concerns with an overlay of ethnic awareness. For example, surges of immigration from Ireland, and later from Italy and Eastern Europe, resulted in institutional discrimination. Irish Americans still point to employment discrimination characterized by “No Irish Need Apply” signs of the 1850s as a measure of the social stigma the group had to overcome (A&E Television Networks, 2018). Over time, however, the Irish gained political and social acceptability – as did Southern and Eastern Europeans after them – while immigrants from China, Japan and Mexico faced harsher treatment enforced by laws. Hispanic immigrants, and especially Mexicans, continue to face much harsher treatment enforced by discriminatory political, social and legal conduct.

Important Events in U.S. Immigration History

Year	Action
1790	The federal government requires two years of residency for naturalization
1808	Congress bans importation of slaves
1819	Congress establishes reporting on immigration
1845	Potato crop fails in Ireland sparking the Potato Famine, which kills a million people and prompts immigration of nearly 500,000 to the U.S. over the next five years
1849	California gold rush draws first mass immigration from China
1860	Religious and economic turmoil prompts immigration of about 2 million Poles by 1914
1876	California Senate committee investigates "social, moral and political effect of Chinese immigration"
1877	U.S. Congress investigates the criminal influence of Chinese immigrants
1880	Economic and political upheaval sparks immigration of about 4 million Italian immigrants to the U.S.
1882	Chinese Exclusion Act passed
1907	"Gentlemen's Agreement" between the United States and Japan
1911	Dillingham Commission identifies Mexican workers as solution to Southwest labor shortage. Mexicans exempted from immigrant "head taxes" set in 1903 and 1907
1922	Supreme Court of the United States rules in <i>Ozawa v. United States</i> that first generation Japanese are ineligible for citizenship and barred from applying for citizenship
1924	Immigration Act of 1924 establishes fixed quotas of national origin and eliminates Far East immigration
1929	Annual immigration quotas made permanent by Congress
1942	Executive Order 9066 authorizing construction of "relocation camps" for Japanese Americans living on the West Coast signed by President Franklin Roosevelt
1942	The Bracero Program allows Mexican laborers to work in the United States
1943	The Magnuson Act repeals the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, establishes quotas for Chinese immigrants and makes them eligible for U.S. citizenship
1945	The War Bride Act and the G.I. Fiancées Act allows immigration of foreign-born spouses and children of U.S. armed forces personnel
1952	The Immigration and Naturalization Act allows individuals of all races to be eligible for naturalization. It also reaffirms national origin quotas, limits immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere but leaves Western Hemisphere immigration unrestricted; establishes preferences for skilled workers and relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens; tightens security and screening standards and procedures

Year	Action
1959	Cuban Revolution prompts mass exodus of more than 300,000 people within three years
1965	Immigration Act of 1965 ends existing quota system in favor of system with 20,000 per country limits. "Freedom Flight" airlifts for Cuban refugees begin. The Bracero Program ends after temporarily employing almost 4.5 million Mexican nationals
1966	The Cuban Refugee Act permits more than 400,000 people to enter the U.S.
1986	The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) legalizes undocumented persons residing the U.S. since 1982
1990	Immigration Act of 1990 increases the number and diversity of immigrants allowed into the U.S. A "lottery" system is introduced, along with special categories for priority workers and those found to have "extraordinary" or "exceptional" ability. It also limits the government's ability to deport immigrants for ideological reasons while expanding the aggravated felony categories.
1994	Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act expands the powers of the U.S. Attorney General to deal with certain crimes and increases funding for Border Patrol. Immigration and Nationality Technical Corrections Act of 1994 expands the list of aggravated felonies
1997	Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act adds new opportunities for relief from deportation for Nicaraguans, Cubans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans and nationals of former Soviet Bloc countries
1998	Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act provides relief from deportation for qualified Haitian nationals
2002	Department of Homeland Security created, encompassing three new agencies: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
2006	Congress fails to pass "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" and legislation that would have authorized building 700 miles of fence along the southern border
2007	The DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) Act fails to pass Congress
2008	ICE launches workplace enforcement operations at businesses suspected of employing large numbers of undocumented workers
2012	Obama Administration announces Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals initiative

From "Immigration Timeline" by The Library of Congress, n.d. (<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/timeline.html>) and from "Key Immigration Laws and Policy Developments Since 1986" by Migration Policy Institute, 2013 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/timeline-1986> and from Ballotpedia, https://ballotpedia.org/Immigration_Act_of_1990

The Hispanic Immigration Experience

Hispanic immigrants come from many different countries in the Western Hemisphere, but immigrants from Mexico represent the largest group in the United States. Despite being overtaken by India and China in 2016 as the largest group of immigrants to the United States that year – the result of a long-term downward trend in immigration from Mexico to the United States – Mexico by far remains the largest country of origin for immigrant residents in the U.S.: 11.6 million people, or 26% of all U.S. immigrants, compared to 6% from China and 6% from India, the next largest groups (Lopez, Bialik, & Radford, 2018). Much of the size of the Mexican immigrant population can be attributed to the shared southern border, historical American familial ties and a long tradition of business and personal cross-border interactions, such as the controversial 1942-1964 guest worker initiative known as the Bracero Program (The Dallas Morning News, 2002).

Mexican immigrants live throughout the United States, though most are concentrated in California, Texas and other states along the border, with the significant exception of the Chicago area (Zong & Batalova, 2016), as shown in the table below, compiled by the Migration Policy Institute:

Top Concentrations by Metropolitan Area for the Foreign Born from Mexico, 2010-14

Metropolitan Area	Immigrant Population from Mexico	% of Metro Area Population
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	1,735,000	13.3%
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	669,000	7.0%
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	606,000	9.8%
Dallas-Ft. Worth-Arlington, TX	601,000	9.0%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	562,000	12.9%
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	344,000	7.9%
Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ	337,000	10.6%
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	332,000	1.7%
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	250,000	5.6%
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	218,000	27.1%

Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2010-14 ACS.

It can be argued that Mexican immigration did not begin with their moving to the United States, but rather with the United States moving, initially, to them. With the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the United States acquired vast tracts of land that had previously been part of Mexico, including Texas, California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and

parts of Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming. The Mexican nationals living in those territories found themselves under the jurisdiction of the United States, but despite promises contained in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war, they did not immediately gain U.S. citizenship and often found their property rights violated (Griswold del Castillo, 2006).

In spite of Mexico's long relationship with the United States, Mexican immigrants lag behind immigrants from other countries in some significant areas, particularly in educational attainment. Although 29% of all immigrants, age 25 and older, arrive with less than a high school diploma, a much larger percentage of Mexican immigrants, 57%, have not completed high school. At the other end of the educational spectrum, 30% of all immigrants arrive with a Bachelor's degree or more, compared to a mere 6% of Mexican immigrants. Educational attainment for other Hispanics, Central Americans in particular, is only slightly better than for Mexicans (Lopez, Bialik, & Radford, 2018).

Low educational attainment (along with ethnic and racial biases) may be a critical factor in Hispanics' position in a variety of socioeconomic indicators. Unemployment among foreign-born Hispanics is 4.3%, compared with 4.0% for foreign-born Whites. Only foreign-born Blacks had a higher unemployment rate, at 5.6%. Unsurprisingly, foreign-born Hispanics' median weekly earnings, \$596, trail behind those of foreign-born Whites, at \$1,080; Asians, at \$1,076; and Blacks, at \$682 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Proficiency in English may also be a factor. Overall, 51% of immigrants 5 years old and older speak English, but just 32% of immigrants from Mexico and 33% of those from Central America speak the language (Lopez, Bialik, & Radford, 2018).

Unlike Cubans, who received preferential immigration treatment, including the so called "wet foot, dry foot" policy that allowed Cuban refugees to remain in the U.S. legally if they managed to make it to land without being apprehended by officials in the wake of the Fidel Castro-led revolution (Batalova & Zong, 2017), Mexicans have long borne the brunt of political hostility to immigration from Latin America, especially in the context of illegal immigration. In the 1950s and 1960s, they were derided as "wetbacks," a reference to swimming across the Rio Grande to seek work illegally in the United States (Korte, 2013), and in 2016, then-Presidential candidate Donald Trump infamously referred to immigrants from Mexico as rapists and drug smugglers (Reilly, 2016).

Despite the President's apparent antagonism toward immigrants from Mexico, and the heated rhetoric that suggests the southern border is overwhelmed by undocumented migrants, the facts paint a different picture. The number of Mexican immigrants living in the United States illegally dropped from 6.9 million in 2007 to 5.8 million in 2014, a decline

of more than a million. Fewer Mexicans seeking to cross into the United States illegally, 192,969, were apprehended at the border than non-Mexicans, 222,847, in 2016. By comparison, 1.6 million Mexicans were apprehended in 2000, a reflection of the decline in the number of Mexicans seeking to come to the United States in recent years (Gonzalez-Barra & Krogstad, 2017).

As noted elsewhere in this paper, immigrants live throughout the United States, many of them clustered in major urban areas, on the coasts and along the southern border. However, immigrant communities have also had an impact in the interior of the country, including the states of Iowa and Nevada.

The Asian Immigration Experience

In the case of the Chinese, who had begun to emigrate to the United States in significant numbers in the late 1840s and early 1850s, drawn by opportunities created by the California Gold Rush (WGBH Educational Foundation, 1996-2018), discrimination was rampant, especially as they competed with the Irish for work. That dynamic continued into the 1860s, as the Chinese were recruited to work on the Transcontinental Railroad, where they were ostracized by their Irish and other European counterparts, paid less and discriminated against in housing (Stanford University, 2018). Although, business owners were supportive of the cheap labor from China, public sentiment was against it, leading to an 1876 California Senate committee investigation and a U.S. Congressional investigation in 1877, and to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (Lutton, 1996).

Meanwhile, the Japanese had begun to arrive in the Western Hemisphere. Recruited to work in the sugar cane fields of Hawaii in 1868, they were firmly established as a community by the time the United States annexed the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1898. Two years later, in 1900, when Hawaii became a U.S. territory, the children of the original Japanese immigrants had grown into an educated, prosperous community of American citizens. Though they faced harsh discrimination and other indignities in the wake of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Japanese American community of Hawaii was not interned like Japanese Americans living along the West Coast of the mainland (Nordyke & Matsumoto, n.d.).

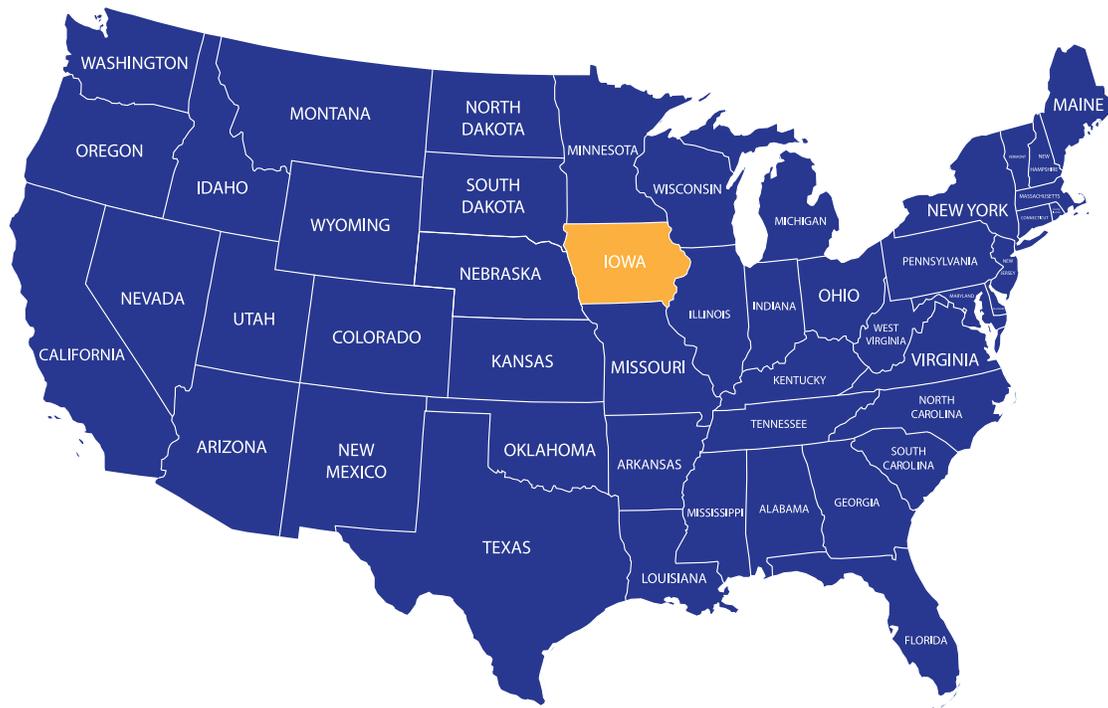
Like the Chinese before them, the Japanese immigrants to the United States mainland were prized by employers for their work ethic, but loathed by other employees with whom they competed. An 1894 treaty between Japan and the United States had provided for free immigration between the two countries, but political pressure to restrict Japanese immigration led to a decision by the Japanese government in 1900 to limit immigration by its citizens to the U.S. Anti-Asian sentiment continued to run high in the United States, however, leading

the school district of San Francisco to segregate Japanese and other Asian students in 1906. The school segregation, taken by the Japanese government as an insult, led to international tension that forced President Theodore Roosevelt Jr. to intervene. Negotiations led to the so-called “Gentlemen’s Agreement” in 1907, based on the end of school segregation and an agreement by the Japanese government to stop immigration of its citizens to the U.S. as laborers (History.com Editors, 2018).

The first half of the 20th century was marked by a succession of court rulings and legislative actions that demonstrated the United States’ conflicted views on immigration from Asia:

- The California Alien Land Act effectively bans Japanese from owning farm land in 1913.
- The United States Supreme Court rules in *Ozawa v. United States, 1922* that Japanese were ineligible for citizenship and could not apply for naturalization.
- The Immigration Act of 1924 fixes immigration quotas based on national origin and eliminates immigration from the Far East.
- The Magnuson Act repeals the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, but it sets immigration quotas while making Chinese persons eligible for citizenship.
- The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Oyama v. California, 1948* that aspects of California’s Alien Land Act abridged the plaintiff’s 14th Amendment rights.

Asian Americans generally enjoy broad acceptance in American society today, many of them as the beneficiaries of the policy disdained by the Trump Administration as “chain migration” (Jordan & Tavernise, 2018). Indian immigrants have been especially successful, due in large part to their arrival with higher educational attainment and high levels of English proficiency (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Nevertheless, Asians in this country sometimes still find themselves the targets of racial animus. During the economic recession of 1982, a White unemployed autoworker in Detroit who blamed Japanese automobile imports for the loss of his job, killed Chinese American Vincent Chin with a baseball bat, mistaking him for Japanese (Moore, 1987). More recently, a White Kansas man was sentenced to life without parole in the hate crime killing of an Indian tech worker and injuring two more, shouting “Get out of my country” as he opened fire (Rizzo T., 2018). Given the apparent motive of killing someone perceived to be “the other,” the killer’s assertion that he thought the men were Iranian seemed of little relevance.



Immigration Impact in Iowa

Iowa, admitted to the Union on December 28, 1846 as the 29th state, is the archetype of what has come to be known mockingly as “flyover country.” The state is widely known for two things: 1) the nation’s biggest producer of corn and pork, and 2) the site of the country’s first Presidential election primary every four years. The State of Iowa’s entire population, 3.1 million people, is even smaller than the 3.8 million population of the City of Los Angeles, and it is majority White, at 85%. The following ethnic and racial groups make up the remainder of the state population: Hispanics, 6.0%; Blacks, 3.8%; Asians, 2.6%; and Native Americans & two or more races, 2.6% (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/ia>). Although a small percentage, the Latino population is growing rapidly, and it is expected to increase to 13% of the state’s population over the next 30 years. Polk County, where Des Moines is located, is expected to be 20% Hispanic by 2050, and Crawford County, where Denison is located, will achieve a majority Latino population, at 57.9% (Kilen, 2017).

Iowa's earliest European settlers – Germans, Norwegians, Swedes and others – began arriving in the mid-1800s, pushing their way into land that had been home to Native Americans for centuries, including the Sioux, Winnebago, Ioway, Omaha and Meskwaki tribes. The immigrants continued to come, lured by opportunities based on the availability of vast tracts of agricultural land. In more recent years, the flow of immigration has become more diverse, including Bosnian Muslims (Kilen, 2016) who began arriving in the 1990s, and later, Somalis (Basu, 2017) fleeing violence in their homelands. Both groups have faced religious and ethnic discrimination, especially in the wake of 9/11, but their communities are becoming ever more established through successful economic and cultural integration.

The American Immigration Council (2017), a nonprofit immigration advocacy group, reports that about 5% of the state's residents are immigrants, 37% of whom have been naturalized. In 2016, 76% of those eligible had applied for DACA status. In 2015, immigrants comprised 9.6% of the workforce in manufacturing; 8.6% in accommodations and food services; 8.5% in professional, scientific and technical services; 6.6% in finance and insurance; and 6.3% in construction. In the area of educational attainment, immigrants in Iowa roughly match their native-born counterparts among those with a college degree or more – 27% for immigrants and 26.8% for native-born. Immigrants with less than a Bachelor's degree, however, fall far behind the native-born. For example, 32% of immigrants have less than a high school diploma, compared with 6.9% of native-born Iowans.

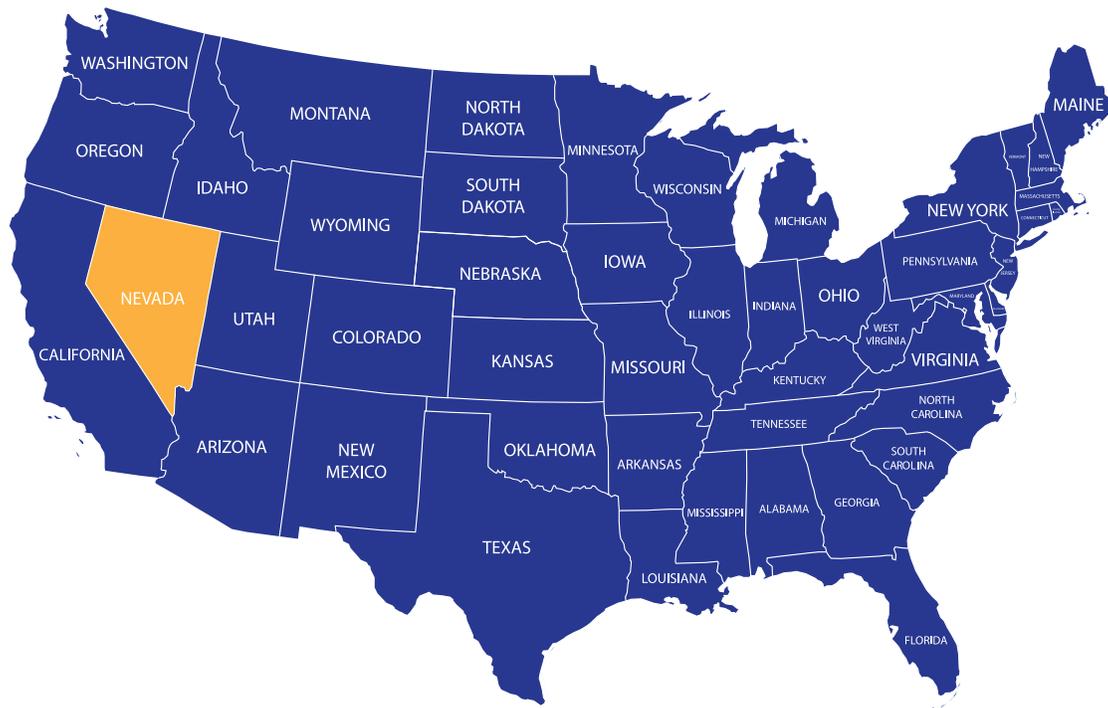
Even though their numbers are relatively small, the presence of immigrants in Iowa has had significant impact on the state's economy. The American Immigration Council (2017) also reports that:

- Immigrant-led households in Iowa paid \$820.3 million in federal taxes and \$348.9 million in state and local taxes in 2014.
- DACA recipients paid \$6.8 million in state and local taxes in 2016.
- Immigrant-led households had \$3 billion in spending power in 2014.
- Immigrant business-owners accounted for 2.5% of all self-employed Iowa residents in 2015 and generated \$54.6 million in business income.

Although Trump won the 2016 election in Iowa, promising to build a wall along the United States' southern border and to scuttle DACA, Iowans appear to be rejecting his hardline position on immigration. A *Des Moines Register*/Mediacom Iowa poll conducted in January 2018 indicates that 65% support a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented in the state and that 81% favor finding a way to extend citizenship to DACA recipients. The poll indicates that 93% of Democrats, 80% of Independents and 74% of Republicans support

extending citizenship to DACA recipients. In terms of age, 83% of Iowans under 35, and 84% of those over 65 see extending citizenship to DACA recipients as a worthy goal. Fifty percent of Iowans do not support building the wall along the southern border proposed by President Trump (Noble, 2018).

Iowans' compassionate and pragmatic view of immigrants in their state, as expressed in their responses to the *Des Moines Register*/Mediacom Iowa poll, would appear to stand in sharp contrast to their support of the Trump campaign in 2016 and the repeated reelection of Steve King to the U.S. Congress since 2003. King, a Republican who represents the Iowa 4th District, which includes Sioux City, has a long history of nativist positions and racist remarks (Coaston, 2018). However, the tension between those different points of view among Iowans may be emblematic of the conflicted positions and behaviors of voters in other parts of the country. These perceptions of immigrants, realistic or delusory, are that they change the complexion and culture of the community.



Immigration Impact in Nevada

If Iowa is among the least ethnically and racially diverse states in the Union, notwithstanding its ongoing demographic changes, then Nevada is among the most demographically diverse, with a rate of ethnic and racial change that is faster and more obvious than Iowa's. Non-Hispanic Whites are the single largest racial group, at 49.1%, but they are no longer the majority, comprising less than half of Nevada's population. At 28.8% of the population, Hispanics are the next largest group, followed by African Americans at 9.8% and Asians at 8.8% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

The state is distinctive in a variety of ways, including its internationally famous gambling and hospitality industry, its position as the world's fourth largest producer of gold, its Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park, a rich trove of *Shonisaurus popularis* ichthyosaur fossils, the largest site in the world; and as the location of the renowned Hoover Dam. Nevada is also the site of the fabled Area 51, the mysterious government site for development and test-

ing of secret military weapons (History.com Editors, 2018). Science fiction aficionados also know Area 51 as the suspected base for government secrets about extra-terrestrial contacts (Wootson, 2017).

Nevada is the seventh largest state geographically, with 110,572 square miles of land, 85% of it owned by the federal government. However, its population of about 3 million is only slightly larger than that of the city of Chicago, with its population of 2.7 million. Admitted to the Union in 1864 in the midst of the Civil War, Nevada was also the first state to ratify the 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, giving Black men the right to vote.

Nearly a fifth of the state's populations, 19.3%, are foreign born, the majority of them from Latin America, the largest group are from Mexico at 39.5%, followed by El Salvador at 5.2% and Cuba at 3%. Also represented among the top five countries of origin for immigrants are the Philippines, 14.3%, and China, 3.1%. Nearly half, 46.8%, of immigrants in Nevada had been naturalized as of 2015. In 2014, 36% of immigrants were undocumented. As of 2016, 87% of the 14,139 immigrants eligible to apply for DACA had done so. In terms of educational attainment, Nevada's immigrant population is similar to those across the country: 31.7% of immigrants have less than a high school diploma, compared with 8.5% of native born residents, and 18.9% of immigrants have a Bachelor's degree or more, compared with 25.2% of the native born (American Immigration Council, 2017).

The Nevada economy is sensitive to the presence of immigrants in ways that few other states experience. The immigrant population has risen from 9% in 1990 to its current level of over 19%, more than a 100% increase, due to the availability of jobs, many of them in the hospitality and construction industries (Messerly, 2016). Nearly 40% of the jobs in the hotel and food service industries are held by immigrants with more than a quarter in the entertainment business. Such jobs have been easily filled by immigrants with limited English language skills, as reported by the American Immigration Council (2017). It also reported these measures of the immigrant community's impact:

- Immigrant-led households in Nevada paid \$2.2 billion in federal taxes and \$733.5 million in state and local taxes in 2014.
- DACA recipients paid \$17.5 million in state and local taxes in 2016.
- Immigrant-led households had \$10.3 billion in spending power in 2014.
- Immigrant business-owners accounted for 25.1% of all self-employed Nevada residents in 2015 and generated \$556 million in business income.

Although the underpinnings of Nevada's economy – hospitality, entertainment and construction – provide especially attractive opportunities for immigrants of low educational

attainment or whose foreign professional and academic credentials have not been accepted in the U.S., it is particularly vulnerable to the fortunes of the national economy. Those industries were especially hard hit during the Great Recession of 2008, and as Messerly (2016) notes, the immigrant population in Nevada plummeted by 40,000 between the years of 2008 and 2010. However, immigration growth has resumed with the reemergence of the Nevada economy.

In many ways, Nevada represents something new in the story of immigration in the United States. For much of its history, the majority of new arrivals in the country have settled in the big cities of the East, along the southern border with Mexico, California and in a handful of Midwestern destinations. However, between 2000 and 2009, when immigration grew by 24% nationally, it grew by a remarkable 49% in fourteen of the so called “new-destination” states, including Nevada, where the rate of immigrant growth was 60%. More than a third, 35.5%, of the new-destination immigrants have come from Mexico, followed by India, 4.7%; the Philippines, 3.9%; China, 3.1%; and Guatemala, 2.8%, to round out the top five (Terrazas, 2011). For Nevada and the other 13 states – South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Delaware, Arkansas, South Dakota, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Wyoming, Idaho, Indiana and Mississippi – significant social and economic challenges and opportunities lie ahead.

Conclusion

Immigration to the United States is increasing, and it is genuinely global, especially as the percentages of immigrants coming from India and China have surged, even though Mexico remains the major country of origin for immigrants in the U.S. This increase in immigration brings complex new socio-economic and political issues that communities must confront and manage, and there are no simple answers to the question of how to do it. The United States' immigration history, replete with lurches from open arms to open xenophobia, illustrates how difficult it can be.

What, then, is the best way for any society to deal with the arrival of newcomers in ways that are unbiased and welcoming toward the immigrants and practical for the communities in which they will live?

One way is for states to consider the experiences of their counterparts and to seek to learn from them. Thus, it is helpful to reflect on the circumstances of the two states reviewed in this paper. They are significantly different. Iowa is a farm state with a relatively new, small immigrant population whose economic and social contributions to daily life are just beginning to be felt. Nevada, on the other hand, is a state with a diverse economy and a large immigrant population that affects daily life in diverse and significant ways. And yet, their situations with respect to their immigration populations are not dissimilar.

- Both states are attractive to immigrants because they offer employment opportunities that do not require high levels of educational attainment, or in many cases mastery of English – farm work in the case of Iowa and hospitality, entertainment and construction employment in Nevada.
- Both states have found that immigrants pull their weight by taking jobs native-born Americans disdain because of low pay and low status, by starting new businesses and by paying local, state and federal taxes.
- Both states have found that more of their residents support a more progressive approach to immigration, particularly the DACA program, than some of the politicians who represent them.

Thus, Iowa and Nevada provide a model starting-point for a process that can lead to a fair and equitable immigration policy. States like Iowa, as they embark on the road toward an inevitably more diverse demographic future, should look to the experiences of states like the already more diverse Nevada as they chart their own courses. So, too, should the elected officials who represent them in Washington and their state capitols. Immigration is one of the constants of American history and has repeatedly been shown to be a net positive for the United States. Making sound public policy to facilitate it should be a priority for all elected and appointed officials with involvement in the decision-making process.

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