



The Environmentalist's Guide to a Sensible Immigration Policy



FAIR

FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM



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ORIGINAL RESEARCH BY JEFF GELLNER
WRITTEN BY SCIPIO GARLING AND IRA MEHLMAN
UPDATED BY ERIC RUARK, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND ERIK WALENZA-SLABE

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F E D E R A T I O N F O R A M E R I C A N I M M I G R A T I O N R E F O R M

introduction

Why Read This Book?

A lot has been written lately about the environment and the cause of environmentalism. So, why did we feel the need to add another voice to the mix? Because **E=I²: THE ENVIRONMENTALIST'S GUIDE TO A SENSIBLE IMMIGRATION POLICY** makes the connection between one of the most important issues facing Americans in their everyday lives — urban sprawl — and its principal cause: immigration-related population growth. All too often, so-called environmentalists pretend as if this connection does not exist.

Can you imagine discussing the U.S. trade deficit without mentioning China? Or analyzing the looming Social Security crisis with no mention of retiring baby boomers? Well, that's what is happening when environmentalists discuss the problem of urban sprawl or efforts to reduce U.S. CO₂ emissions without mentioning immigration and its enormous impact on population growth.

The Census Bureau projects that today's immigration of over one million persons a year will drive the current U.S. population of 308 million to 439 million by mid-century, with no end in sight. **E=I²** not only shows the relationship between today's mass immigration and our skyrocketing population growth, but also how immigration is reshaping where and how Americans live.

Immigration is the primary factor that fuels demand for new housing construction as secondary migration, spurred by record-setting levels of immigration into existing cities, spawns urban and suburban sprawl. Real estate developers have come to rely upon immigration-driven population growth as they claim more and more agricultural and wilderness land for new subdivisions. We argue that it is futile to support anti-sprawl initiatives that ignore immigration.

Finally, this publication lays out the key policies that environmental organizations can adopt to rein in U.S. population growth, preserving our prime farmlands, forests, and wetlands, and reducing our consumption of natural resources. Any credible population policy must address immigration. Environmentalists looking for a population policy compatible with their goals for a sustainable ecological future will find it here.

We are not newcomers to this issue. This is an updated revision of a 1999 publication. And our organization has been the leading voice calling attention to the connection between immigration, population growth, and the environment for over 30 years. Hopefully with so much renewed focus on the environment, policy makers will finally acknowledge the truth of what we've been saying all along: that we ignore the connection between immigration and the environment at our own peril.

growing like crazy

Is It Getting A Little Crowded Here?

With each passing day forests are being felled to make way for shopping centers, green meadows plowed under for new subdivisions, and quiet meandering country lanes turned into eight-lane highways. Along both coasts, the outlying exurbs of one city run seamlessly into the creeping edges of the next. In the interior of the country, small farming towns suddenly find themselves turned into bedroom communities for big cities that, until recently, seemed light years removed both geographically and culturally.

Rapid population growth is a worldwide phenomenon. Its effect on the environment is evident from the diminishing rain forests of South America, to the barren plains of Africa, to the desiccated river beds of China. We should do our utmost to promote conservation and family planning in countries suffering from overpopulation and ecological degradation. But the fact that some nations are experiencing intense population growth is no reason to ignore the overpopulation of the United States. We cannot rationalize America's current immigration policy by pointing to overpopulation in India or Mexico. We cannot sacrifice our national security and local ecosystems in a misguided attempt to alleviate the problems of other nations. We must act responsibly and plan for the long-term, while helping others to do the same.

But we have not been acting responsibly. Instead we have surrendered to industry lobbyists who favor low wages, and to ethnic special interest groups who see the growth of their constituencies as a path to political power. As a result, the U.S. adds three million people to its population every year and ecosystems across the nation are feeling the pressure.¹

While anti-environmentalists, like the late Julian Simon, have tried to dismiss our rate of population growth as insignificant because it represents a smaller percentage of our total population than in years past, it is the actual numbers that matter. Our current population growth rate is only about 1 percent a year, but we have gotten so big that 1 percent really means something. When your net worth increases by 1 percent, it's not such a big deal, perhaps. When Bill Gates' net worth increases by 1 percent, we're talking real money. In population terms, America is entering Bill Gates territory. Our 1 percent growth rate means that the U.S. will double its current population in just 70 years.

What is happening all across our country is a result of many factors: our culture of consumption and waste, our reliance on non-renewable resources, and, most crucially, our rapidly growing population. There are simply more of us than ever before, taking up more space and leaving our footprints on nature as never before.

Immigration: The Engine That Drives Population Growth

Immigration is the dominant force driving population growth in the U.S. In 1996, a Census Bureau report stated that “natives of other lands who have settled here since the 1970s and their offspring account for half the population increase we have experienced in the last quarter century.” The report went on to predict that, “the effects of immigration will be even more dramatic in the future: by 2050, more than 80 percent of our annual growth will be attributable to immigrants who have settled here since the early 1990s.”² A 2008 report by the Pew Research Group confirms this projection, finding that by 2050 the U.S. population will reach 438 million, with 82 percent of the increase consisting of post-2005 immigrants and their descendants.³

Whether the resources are renewable or nonrenewable, as the U.S. population increases, the strain on all our natural resources will increase. Most Americans support environmental protection and believe that the federal government has a responsibility to preserve the nation’s natural resources for future generations. Most Americans also support immigration reduction.⁴ However, many Americans do not make the crucial link between immigration, population growth and the sustainability of the nation’s natural resources.

Table One shows the population numbers for the 10 states that have seen the most population growth from 2000 to 2008. Among the 10 states, the foreign-born growth rate averaged 23.1 percent, far surpassing the average native-born growth rate of 8.3 percent. As a result of the rapid increase in immigrant population, five of the 10 states had larger populations by 2008 than a 1997 Census Bureau projection anticipated for 2015.⁵ The U.S. population is growing much faster than demographers predicted a decade ago.

Leading the Race to Population Ruin

The U.S. had the fastest annual rate of population growth among G8 industrialized nations in 2008.⁶ With a growth rate of 0.98 percent, the U.S. is expanding 20 percent faster than Canada, which is the next fastest growing country. Meanwhile, the populations of Germany, Italy and Japan all decreased in 2008.⁷

TABLE ONE

Population in High Growth States

(2000–2008)

	Population Growth (thousands)	Percent Increase	2008 Population (thousands)	2050 Population Projection (thousands)
TEXAS	3,475	16.7%	24,327	43,229
Native-Born	2,407	13.4%		
Foreign-Born	1,068	36.8%		
CALIFORNIA	2,885	8.5%	36,757	72,324
Native-Born	1,717	6.9%		
Foreign-Born	1,168	13.2%		
FLORIDA	2,346	14.7%	18,328	31,499
Native-Born	1,414	10.6%		
Foreign-Born	932	34.9%		
GEORGIA	1,679	20.5%	9,866	15,227
Native-Born	1,327	15.1%		
Foreign-Born	352	61.0%		
ARIZONA	1,370	26.7%	6,500	12,531
Native-Born	1,013	19.0%		
Foreign-Born	357	54.4%		
VIRGINIA	691	9.8%	7,769	11,478
Native-Born	426	6.5%		
Foreign-Born	265	46.5%		
WASHINGTON	655	11.1%	6,549	10,305
Native-Born	436	8.3%		
Foreign-Born	219	35.7%		
NEW YORK	514	2.7%	19,490	27,033
Native-Born	129	0.9%		
Foreign-Born	385	10.0%		
ILLINOIS	482	3.9%	12,902	18,861
Native-Born	-80	-1.7%		
Foreign-Born	562	19.1%		
MARYLAND	337	6.4%	5,634	8,663
Native-Born	127	2.7%		
Foreign-Born	210	40.5%		

Source: The 2000 and 2008 population figures come from the U.S. Census Bureau. The 2050 projections are based on Census Bureau data and recent immigration trends and can be found in Jack Martin and Stanley Fogel, *Projecting the U.S. Population to 2050: Four Immigration Scenarios* (Washington, D.C.: Federation for American Immigration Reform), March 2006.

The anomalous population growth of the U.S. is further highlighted by a comparison with the rate of natural increase (RNI) for the countries of Europe. The rate of natural increase includes all population factors except migration; note the huge difference that migration makes in our growth rate. Our RNI is .56, our growth rate is 0.98; the difference (growth rate minus RNI) is 0.42. By comparison, Europe averages an RNI of -0.01, a growth rate of 0.09, and a difference of 0.11. The U.S. accepts far more immigrants as a percentage of our population than do the nations of Europe. As a result, the U.S. population is burgeoning at 1 percent per year, while Europe has reached relative stability at 0.1 percent.⁸

TABLE TWO
Foreign-Born in Slow Growth States
(2000–2008)

	Population Growth (thousands)	Percent Increase	2008 Population (thousands)	2050 Population Projection (thousands)
MASSACHUSETTS	149	2.3%	6,498	11,592
Native-Born	-15	-0.3%		
Foreign-Born	164	21.2%		
PENNSYLVANIA	167	1.4%	12,448	13,902
Native-Born	15	0.1%		
Foreign-Born	152	29.9%		
CONNECTICUT	96	2.8%	3,501	4,881
Native-Born	12	0.4%		
Foreign-Born	84	22.7%		
OHIO	133	1.2%	11,486	12,616
Native-Born	45	0.4%		
Foreign-Born	88	25.9%		

Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Ohio show a different scenario (see **Table Two**). These states show little or no growth in the native-born population but rapid growth in the foreign-born population. Between 2000 and 2008, about 90 percent of the population increase in these four states was from the increase in the foreign-born population. These states lost nearly 100,000 residents to net domestic outmigration. Thus, they act as conduits, shifting their native population to other states, while increasing their own populations by approximately half a million persons due to immigration.

The relationship between immigration and internal migration is discussed at greater length in Chapter Three.

Why Is the U.S. Population Growing?

The answer, in a word, is immigration.

Population growth is a function of four variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, and net immigration. Which of these variable can we control? Birth rates among non-immigrants have stabilized at the replacement rate (annual births equal annual deaths). However, our population keeps rapidly increasing due to immigration. Not only does immigration directly add to our population, immigrants also tend to have higher fertility rates than do native-born Americans. Immigration stands alone as both the primary cause of U.S. population growth and the one variable over which Americans have direct control.

In 2009, the Bureau of the Census estimated the effect of immigration on population by providing different population projections. The U.S. population in 2050 was projected to be anywhere from 322 to 458 million persons, depending on our level of immigration.⁹ Meanwhile, a recent Pew report projects a U.S. population of 438.3 million in 2050, with 82 percent of the growth due to post 2005 immigration.¹⁰ Natural growth and longer life expectancies will contribute to population growth for several decades more, but the extent and duration of U.S. population growth will depend primarily on national immigration policy.

Table Three is a compilation of the U.S. Census Bureau population projections with four different scenarios. The zero-net assumption is that immigration balances emigration (out-migration). The low-net scenario is based on a constant rate of net immigration slightly higher than at present. The medium and high immigration scenarios assume an increasing rate of immigration over the duration of the projection.

TABLE THREE

Population Projections Under Various Immigration Scenarios

(millions)	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
zero net	296.5	309.3	318.3	322.4	322.9
low (constant 995,000)	307.9	334.1	358.4	379.6	398.5
medium (rising 1.2 to 1.8M)	308.3	336.8	365.7	393.9	422.6
high (rising 1.6 to 2.4M)	312.5	346.7	382.6	419.4	458.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009

The large effect immigration has on population is obvious. Compared to the zero-net scenario in which immigration would become neutral in population change, it is projected to add 75.6 million persons over the next 40 years with constant immigration at about the current level, or nearly 100 million with medium-rising immigration, or about 135 million persons with high-rising immigration.

The Child Multiplier

The U.S.-born children of immigrants act as an invisible multiplier, greatly increasing the impact of immigration on the U.S. population. From 2010 to 2050, 79.5 million additional immigrants are projected to take up residence in the U.S. in the Census Bureau's high-immigration scenario; yet the difference in projected population size in 2050 between the high-immigration scenario and net-zero immigration scenario is 135 million. Why the difference? Because the population is also growing from natural increase (births minus deaths) and that, too, is influenced by immigration. The additional 55.5 million increase in population by 2050 results from the excess of births over deaths. Thus, the higher fertility rate of the 79.5 additional immigrants mean that immigration's impact on population growth is much greater than it might seem at first glance.¹¹

Perspective

Demographers tell us that if we would have had zero net immigration since 1995 the U.S. population would now be less than 290 million, would have peaked at 310 million in the year 2040, and stabilized around 307 million by 2050.¹² The population of the United States now stands at approximately 308 million and is currently growing by nearly three million persons a year. Instead of approaching population stability, the U.S. is growing rapidly with no end in sight.

Because of our immigration policies during the last 40 years, the population of the United States is projected to now grow to at least 368 million by 2050 even if we immediately adopted a zero-net migration policy.¹³ As distressing as this figure may be to environmentalists it is better than the alternative scenario of 438 million if we maintain our current immigration levels, or a much higher figure if we allow immigration levels to rise. Our population will grow over the next 40 years; whether the increase is 56 million, or 132 million, or a still greater number, is entirely up to us and the immigration policies we adopt.

Managing population growth is a global priority, not just a domestic concern of the United States. However, even modest population growth in this country has enormous global ramifications. The

United Nations Human Development Report shows why America's 1 percent annual growth rate is a more serious threat to the global environment than in less developed countries population growth rates that can exceed 3 percent annually. Americans comprise 5 percent of the world population but account for 30 percent of global consumption and waste.¹⁴ In the long run we must work to reduce Americans' consumption and waste production, but we must also face the fact that the most expedient way to reduce the growth in our collective ecological footprint is to minimize population growth in the U.S.

Reading the Blueprint for an Ecologically Sound Future

In 1996, the President's Council on Sustainable Development issued a report which laid out its blueprint for a healthy U.S. economic and ecologic future. The report listed ten interdependent goals that the Council considered essential to promoting prosperity, social equity, and environmental protection. Eighth on the list was the imperative that we "move toward stabilization of the U.S. population."¹⁵

The report noted that the U.S. population was growing at a rate more than double that of the industrialized nations of Europe. In the decade since the report was issued the discrepancy in growth rates has increased. Industrialized Europe and Japan are now stabilizing their populations, while the U.S. is moving towards 40 percent population growth by mid century. An environmentally sustainable and economically viable future is very much in doubt for the U.S. "Problems arise when the number of people and the scale, composition, and pattern of their consumption and waste generation combine to have negative effects on the environment, the economy, and society," states the Council's report.¹⁶

Given the U.S. levels of consumption in 1996, the Council asserted that "efficiency in the use of all resources would have to increase by more than 50 percent over the next four or five decades just to keep pace with population growth."¹⁷ In the decade following the Council's report, per capita CO₂ emissions rose 8 percent, while the U.S. population increased 12 percent.¹⁸ Neither U.S. consumption patterns nor population size show any indication of waning in the near future.

A 50 percent improvement in the efficiency of our resource use is a formidable challenge, and there is a significant likelihood that we might fall well short of that objective. But given the expansion of our population, this herculean effort will be directed entirely at preserving the status quo, not at making any meaningful reduction in our nation's ecological footprint. Unless we simultaneously reduce our per capita resource consumption and hold the line on population growth, we cannot reduce our

impact on the global environment. Although the Council avoided the politically charged issue of immigration reduction, the report noted that “addressing immigration is an important aspect of the broad question of population stabilization in this country.”¹⁹

Conclusion

On both a global and national scale, achieving U.S. population stability is an important environmental priority. As the most consumptive nation on earth, each addition to our population has a disproportionate impact on global ecology. U.S. population growth strains world resources, and is degrading the fragile ecosystems of our own country. Whether one's environmental focus is global or local, reining in U.S. population growth is a prerequisite to achieving a healthier, more sustainable environment.

Immigration is the key factor determining future population growth. Moreover, it is the sole factor determined by national policy. It is important to emphasize that the purpose of reducing immigration is not to sustain the overly consumptive American lifestyle. However, it is naïve to believe that the American public will quickly and radically alter its lifestyle habits. Thus, we must pursue an immigration policy that stabilizes our population, even as we promote efficiency and moderate consumption.

choice or consequences

Confronting Population Growth

In his seminal 1948 book, *Our Plundered Planet*, Fairfield Osborne wrote that, “by the end of this century there may be still another half-billion people on the earth and that the world population in a hundred years may considerably exceed the three billion mark.”

Osborne was wrong. Global population has actually grown to twice the size in half the time that he predicted. Osborne would be astounded, not just by the speed with which human population has increased, but that a global population of 6.8 billion can be sustained, albeit with considerable consequence to the environment. Like Thomas Robert Malthus a century and a half earlier, Osborne did not anticipate advances in agricultural productivity and improvements in technology.

The miscalculations of Malthus and Osborne have unfortunately given credence to those who recklessly argue that human population growth is limitless. Such a perspective is logically absurd. If we maintained our current annual growth rate of 1 percent, the U.S. population would reach 5.5 trillion by the year 3000. Clearly perpetual growth is unsustainable. The question is, at what point has our population exceeded the carrying capacity of our environment? No responsible person can specify an exact point. But if we continue to test the limits, we will eventually suffer the consequences of environmental ruination.

Looking beyond the technical limits of population growth, we must also consider the very concept of growth. Quality of life is directly linked to population size and we must decide what the size of our population should be. More people means fewer resources for each individual. Will there be enough land, food, and water for everyone to fully satisfy their needs? How will flora and fauna extinctions accelerate as we develop every suitable acre of land to meet humanity’s growing need for food and shelter — and strip malls? Such questions must be part of any discussion of the desirability of continued population growth.

The United Nations Fund for Population and Development projects that the world’s population will surpass nine billion by 2050. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the U.S. population could reach 458 million by that time. Advancements that we cannot anticipate today may make these levels

Fairfield Osborne's observations influenced later thinkers, including Paul Ehrlich and Garrett Hardin. In books like *The Population Bomb* and *Living Within Limits*, these scientists have warned of the consequences of rapid population growth. They further suggested that as population size increased, there would be a tendency for migration to accelerate in size and speed.

And that is exactly what is happening. Sudden migration in hotspots around the globe is now large, unpredictable, and likely to inflame local passions. There is a general movement of people from overcrowded, high growth regions to wealthier, more stable regions. These trends will accelerate as global population approaches 10 billion and natural resources, particularly fresh water, cannot keep up with growing demand.

technically sustainable, but at what cost? The desire of Americans to preserve open space and protect the natural wonders that enrich our lives cannot be reconciled with the demands of a constantly increasing population.

Malthus and Osborne are wrong in 2009. In 1798 and 1948, when they penned their predictions, they were correct in their forecast of impending crisis. Our current global population of 6.8 billion people could not have been sustained at the time that Malthus or Osborne were writing. Technical advancements have made larger human populations possible, but we can not take for granted that in another century the earth will be able to sustain its rapidly growing population. Even if this is the case, Americans' desire to live in a country that is less crowded will not disappear because of a hypothesis that hundreds of millions of more people "technically" can subsist in the United States.

Whether or not they belong to so-called environmental organizations like the Sierra Club or the Audubon Society, most Americans want to preserve a certain quality of life. Environmentalism, at its core, is an expression of preferences — preference for open space over shopping malls, pristine beaches over waterfront condominiums, clean air over smog. These are the preferences of the majority of Americans — even those who shop at malls, and live in highrise apartment buildings.

Population Growth: It Really Is Our Choice

FAIR operates under two basic convictions:

- (1) Population stabilization is the preference of most Americans.
- (2) The preferences of American citizens should determine our future population.

The ultimate size of our population will be determined by the choices we make. This is why dealing with U.S. population and immigration can be so difficult: We actually can do something about it by our personal choices and by the public policies we support. In some ways, it is much more comfortable to get involved in global population matters because our ability to affect the outcome is minimal, and consequently, so is our responsibility.

If we are serious about changing course then there are three factors that must be addressed as determinants of future population growth in the United States: life expectancy, fertility, and net immigration. It is both moral and desirable to maximize the first factor, life expectancy. The remaining two factors are determined by personal and societal choices that we are free to make (or not to make).

Since the end of the baby boom era in the mid-1960s, Americans have individually and collectively made the decision to limit the number of children they have. The fertility level of Americans who were in the U.S. prior to 1970 is roughly at the replacement level of an average 2.1 children per woman. Though the desire to achieve a stable population size is not the only reason for this phenomenon, Americans have made reproductive choices that, absent immigration, would lead to population stabilization.

It is the third factor, immigration, that has been driving population growth in the United States for the past 40 years. Unlike extended life expectancy, Americans do not desire high levels of immigration. And, unlike the personal decisions most Americans have made in lowering our fertility levels, the dramatic increase in immigration has been a result of external forces and narrow special interests rather than a reflection of the national will.

Immigration is not only the largest contributor to U.S. population growth, it is also the most controllable because it is a discretionary policy. We could, by legislative action, dramatically cool this engine of population growth. However, many Americans have immigrant friends, coworkers and ancestors, and may not be comfortable supporting the actions necessary to stabilize the U.S. population. But if we avoid this responsibility we will leave a legacy of pollution, sprawl, congestion, and ecological degradation to our children and grandchildren. And, if we are not prepared to accept responsibility for a sensible immigration policy, we also lose the right to complain about the consequences.

Still, the choice to reduce immigration is not easy. Advocates of immigration reduction must take responsibility for the inevitable consequences of this difficult decision. Ending the era of mass im-

migration will deprive millions of decent, hard working men and women all over the world the opportunity to move to the United States. The alternative, of course, is to continue allowing unprecedented immigration to swell our population and overwhelm our environment, without bringing about any significant reduction in world population or global poverty.

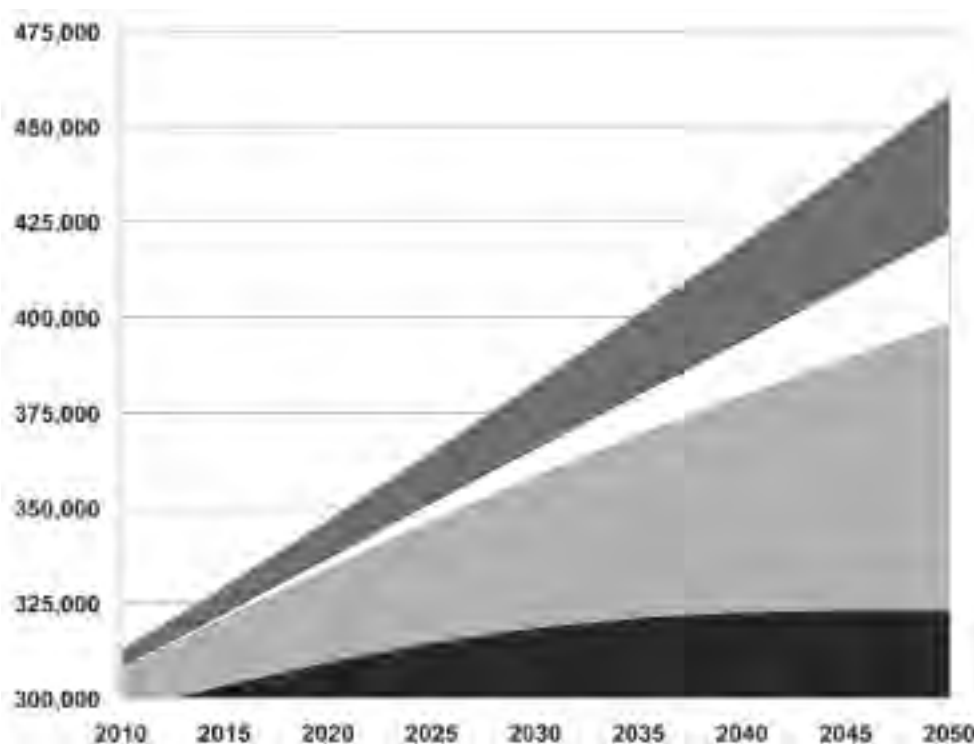
There is, unfortunately, no consensus on an ideal course of action. For people who want to protect the environment and maintain quality of life for future generations, the best course of action is population stabilization. Stabilizing our population unavoidably means limiting immigration. It will not absolve us of our responsibility to offer economic and family planning assistance to people throughout the developing world. Nor will it curb our rapacious appetite for scarce resources, which also must be addressed. It is, however, the single most important thing Americans can do right now so that future generations do not face the stresses of overpopulation.

The Skyrocketing U.S. Population

Chart One shows the U.S. Census Bureau's 2009 population projections under the high, middle, low, and zero-net immigration scenarios.

CHART ONE

Population Projections (*High, Medium, Low and Zero-Net Immigration*)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Table 2. Projections of the Population from the 2008 National Projections and High, Low, Constant, and Zero Net International Migration Series for the United States: 2010 to 2050 (NP2009-T2).

The four scenarios correspond to varying levels of net immigration. Net immigration is the actual increase in the number of immigrants added to the population each year according to this simple equation: $\text{Net Immigration} = (\text{Legal Immigration} + \text{Illegal Immigration} - \text{Emigration})$.

Because of emigration and illegal immigration, net immigration is not the same as legal immigration. Zero-net immigration occurs when legal and illegal immigration equal the number of residents permanently moving abroad, i.e., total emigration. Clearly, none of those scenarios leads to a stabilized population within the foreseeable future. However, the zero-net immigration projection shows the U.S. population approaching stability by 2050.

Present immigration policy, with more than one million immigrants admitted annually, has put the U.S. on the path to a having a population of between 440 and 450 by 2050, 43 percent to 47 percent higher than today.²⁰ Keep in mind that this projection only includes legal immigrants and their offspring. Between 2000 and 2008 the illegal alien population increased by an average of 475,000 per year. Future levels of illegal immigration are difficult to predict, but if the recent trend continues U.S. population could top 500 million by 2050.

Chart Two shows the zero net immigration projections from 2005 to 2050. If zero net immigration had started in 2005, the U.S. population would be nearing stability at 362 million by the year 2050. Yet every year that goes by without adopting a zero-net immigration policy means a higher future population and puts the goal of population stability farther off.

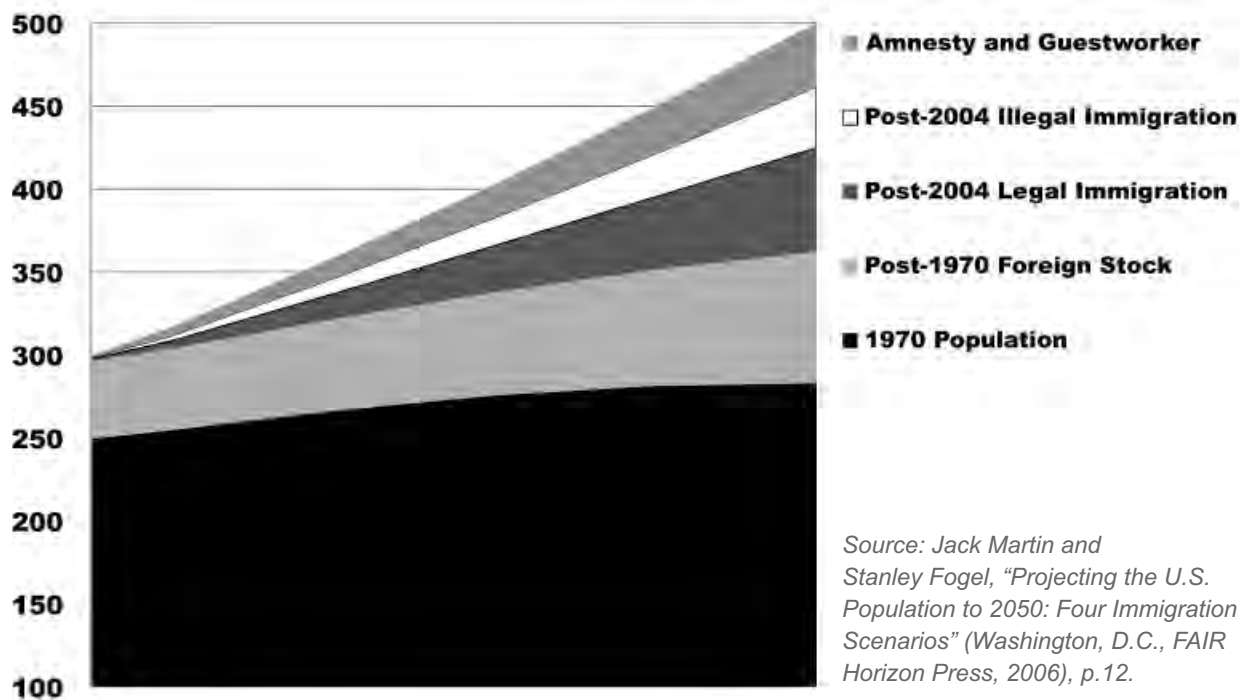
Choosing a Population Future

Since the greatest threat to the U.S. environment is population growth, immigration quotas should be set at 300,000 per year, the level required to achieve zero-net immigration. This is a 70 percent reduction in immigration from the Census Bureau's mid-level immigration assumption of a yearly influx of 995,000 immigrants and a still greater reduction from our current average intake of more than one million immigrants per year.²¹

What level of immigration constitutes zero-net immigration? Because the annual number of emigrants from the United States is uncertain, it is difficult to be precise. When the U.S. Census Bureau made its 1996 projections the annual emigration level it used was 220,000. Today the Census Bureau estimates an emigration level of 300,000. So, for our purposes, the annual level of immigration that corresponds to zero-net immigration is 300,000 immigrants a year.

CHART TWO

U.S. Population Projections (2005–2050)



Such a substantial reduction in immigration would not be a dramatic departure from tradition; it is the present level of immigration that greatly exceeds historical precedent. In fact, an annual quota of 300,000 is more in line with the overall trend of immigration to the United States. When people rightly state that America “is a nation of immigrants” they often wrongly imply that immigration to the U.S. has always been at its present level.

Current high levels of immigration arose from a profound policy change in 1965. For the 50 years before that, average annual legal immigration to the United States was approximately 220,000. Had we not drastically altered immigration law in 1965, we would already be well on our way towards population stabilization and ecological sustainability.

Because immigration policy is controversial, touching on difficult issues pertaining to national sovereignty and cultural identity, most environmental organizations have chosen not to address it. The emotional nature of the debate was apparent in 1998 when the Sierra Club voted on a member-generated ballot measure that would have reinstated the club’s traditional view that immigration levels should be low enough so as not to fuel U.S. population growth.²² The measure was proposed in response to a Sierra Club Board decision to adopt a position of neutrality on immigration reform.

The debate leading up to the vote pitted the club leadership against leading environmental scholars like Edward O. Wilson, Lester Brown, Gaylord Nelson, as well as the membership rank and file. The Board of Directors argued that regardless of the impact immigration and U.S. population growth have on the environment, the political costs of supporting reduced immigration were too high. In the end, the measure lost 60–40 percent, but the contentious nature of the debate, and the resulting exit of prominent members, suggested that immigration policy will always be a contentious issue for environmental groups.

Many committed environmentalists remain unsure how to approach the immigration question. Common reactions include:

- Won't we be viewed as elitist?
- Can we build membership coalitions among minority groups and support immigration cutbacks at the same time?
- Can we really keep out those who want to come to the U.S.?
- Is it moral to do so?
- Don't we have an obligation to try to absorb people from less fortunate regions of the world?
- Doesn't immigration help the sending countries?
- Doesn't the U.S. have lots of room comparatively?
- Isn't the real issue global population growth?

These are common sentiments, and understandable ones. But in many cases, they represent “first blush” reactions, not the final conclusions one would reach in a frank policy analysis. Over the years, many immigration reform advocates have struggled with these questions and have come to these conclusions:

- 1. WE NEED POPULATION STABILITY.** There is a general consensus that population stabilization is in the national interest. According to the Audubon Society, “If we do not stabilize our population, progress on every other environmental front will be undone by the steady unchecked growth in human numbers.”²³ We need to develop a national population policy to regulate immigration levels according to the nation's needs.

Without the adoption of zero net immigration — about 300,000 per year — the U.S. population will grow indefinitely. Keep in mind that today's immigration levels are NOT consistent with our immigration traditions. Today's numbers are far in excess of the averages over 200 years of immigration. A traditional level is closer to 300,000 a year, not one million plus.

Four sources worth consulting for thoughtful answers to these questions are *More: Population, Nature, and What Women Want*, by Robert Engelman (Island Press, 2008); *Immigration, Energy and the Environment*, by Jack Martin (FAIR, 2009); “An Environmental Choice,” a video featuring Roy Beck’s demonstration of population growth factors, available on NumbersUSA.com; and “U.S. Population Projections: 2005–2050,” by Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008).

2. **CHAIN MIGRATION IS TO BLAME.** Because of changes made to the immigration laws in 1965, Congress has set off “chain migration” at a time when population growth worldwide is unprecedented. In chain migration, one immigrant sponsors several family members for admission, who then sponsor several others, and so on. In 2008, 43 years after the 1965 changes to immigration policy, the number of immigrants who are immediate relatives sponsored by U.S. citizens — many of whom were immigrants who became naturalized citizens — was 15 times higher than in 1965; and the number of secondary family members sponsored by immigrants residing in the United States was 17 times higher than in 1965.
3. **THE UNITED STATES IS OVERPOPULATED NOW.** From the standpoint of environmental sustainability, the U.S. is already overpopulated. As a result of population growth, we are losing indispensable farmland and irreplaceable habitats for plants and wildlife. Some parts of the country are facing severe water shortages, and overcrowding is a serious problem in many metropolitan areas. Regardless of the precise limit of sustainability, indefinite population growth means greater demand for water, more erosion, expanding sprawl, new roads, heavier traffic, overcrowded cities and expanded suburbs, high levels of pollution, lost habitat, greater dependence on foreign energy supplies and reduced biodiversity. Unless we stabilize our population we will not meet our ecological goals for controlled and managed growth, wilderness protection, habitat protection, farmland preservation, clean air, pure water, and a healthy biosphere.
4. **WE CANNOT SAVE THE WORLD THROUGH IMMIGRATION POLICY.** The global population is growing by about 75 million annually.²⁴ No practical U.S. immigration policy could admit more than a tiny fraction of the annual worldwide increase in population. Nor is the benefit of remittances immigrants send back to their home countries — money that is taken out of the U.S. economy — significant enough to justify high immigration. The most important form of foreign aid the U.S. can offer the world is to encourage technically-trained, talented people to return to, or remain in, their home countries.

5. THE PROBLEM IS NOT IMMIGRANTS THEMSELVES, BUT THE OVERALL NUMBERS OF IMMIGRANTS.

In an avalanche, each individual snowflake, with good reason, pleads 'not guilty.' Americans should not blame immigrants for trying to better themselves and their circumstances. Most immigrants are making a rational decision to move, based on an explicit understanding that friends and employers will help them get jobs and settle in the U.S. The problem is that the federal government allows in far too many legal immigrants each year and fails to adequately combat the presence of millions of illegal aliens.

6. IT IS LEGITIMATE FOR AMERICANS TO HAVE CONCERNS IMMIGRATION LEVELS.

Most Americans welcome immigrants to the U.S. and want immigration to continue but recognize that our immigration policy is unsustainable and detrimental to the national interest. David Brower, the first executive director of the Sierra Club pointed out, "Overpopulation is a very serious problem, and over-immigration is a big part of it. We must address both. We can't ignore either."²⁵

7. IMMIGRATION HARMS THE POOR THE MOST.

Immigration cutbacks would most benefit today's struggling American workers. Studies demonstrate conclusively that the less-educated and less-skilled American workers are the most directly impacted by high immigration. Real wages, i.e., wages adjusted for inflation, and workplace conditions have declined in the wake of mass immigration, and the bargaining posi-

If one accepts the premise that limiting immigration is justified by the moral imperative to stabilize U.S. population size, we must then establish a legislative course for carrying out this goal. The best approach is to identify the most important factors influencing overall numbers. Keep several key points in mind:

Most immigration legislation is the product of narrow special interests that seek to gain from the population dynamics caused by mass immigration. These forces include industry and ethnic lobbies, foreign governments, and labor unions seeking to boost membership. To counter this battalion of lobbyists, environmental organizations need to support legislation resulting in zero net immigration.

Current immigration law has set off chain migration, long backlogs, extraordinarily high annual immigrant admissions, and an increasing U.S. fertility rate. This will continue until those with the power to set immigration policy are held accountable for its consequences.

As participants in a democracy, we have the absolute right to decide how large our population will grow through immigration. We have an obligation to guide Congress on annual immigration limits just as we do on other issues of immediate concern. But right now we are allowing our decisions to be made by special interest groups and the tens of thousands of illegal aliens crossing our borders each year.

tion of workers in the U.S. is at its lowest point since the nineteenth century, the last era of mass immigration.

- 8. IT IS BOTH MORAL AND CORRECT TO UPHOLD NATIONAL BORDERS.** The American people have the right to self-preservation. Nation-states still matter in a globalized world. They are the foundation upon which most human activity is organized. The United States' system of government, although less than perfect, still represents the most successful embodiment of the ideals of self-determination, democracy, and the rule of law. Its continued success is of great importance worldwide. U.S. citizens have the duty to preserve the nation for future generations. As President Theodore Roosevelt said: "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value."²⁶

Bound By a Chain of Migration

Regaining control of our immigration policy and reducing population growth requires us to make logical, yet compassionate, decisions about who to admit. Virtually everyone who has been assigned a mandate to examine our immigration policy has concluded that to restore any semblance of discipline to the system, we must end chain migration.

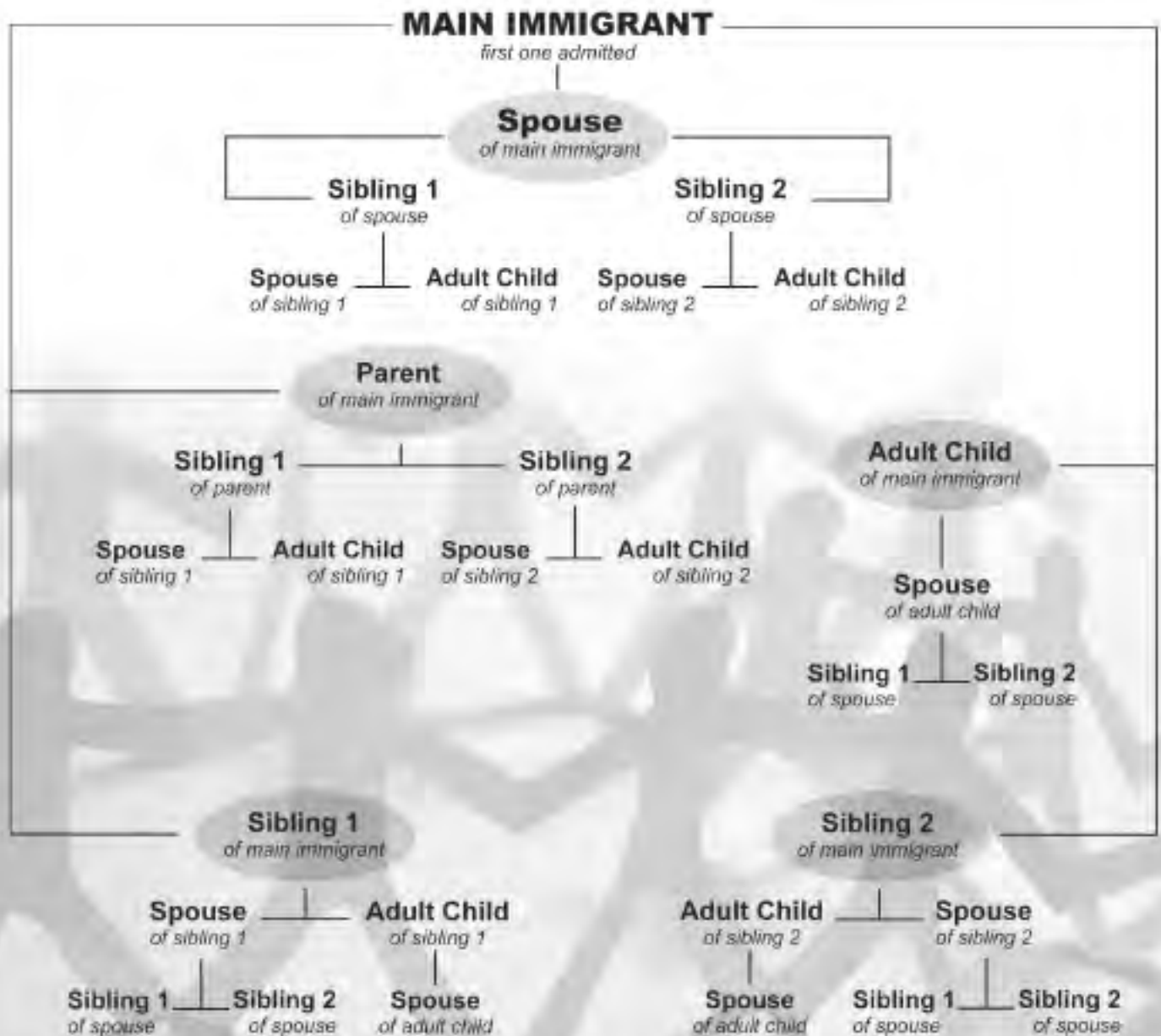
Under the current law, immigrants are entitled to bring to this country not only their spouses and unmarried minor children, but extended relatives as well. The most problematic of these extended family immigration entitlements is the one that permits people to petition for their adult siblings. These brothers and sisters, who generally arrive with their own families, can then bring in-laws, who eventually are entitled to bring their extended families. In other words, a single immigrant who is admitted for needed job skills, or out of humanitarian concerns, or for any other reason, can become the first link in a never-ending chain of family migration.

The power of immigrants to effectively determine our immigration intake through family-sponsored immigration is poor public policy by any standard. It removes control of the selection process from the American people and their elected representatives, it is self-perpetuating, and it leads to dramatic population growth. Each time we admit a legal immigrant to the United States today, the queue of people who are entitled to follow grows longer, not shorter. Despite nearly doubling the number of annual legal admissions since the start of the 1970s, the backlog of would-be immigrants who have applied to come here has grown to nearly 3.5 million as a consequence of our policy of chain migration.²⁷

While we respect other cultures that view extended family differently than our own, it is neither prudent nor possible to promise every person who chooses to settle here the right to bring their entire extended family, plus additional relatives of those extended family members. In the first place, it is the initial immigrant who divides a family. And each succeeding immigrant in the chain breaks up another extended family. In perpetuating what sounds like a high-minded policy, we are chasing an objective that can never be met and triggering an environmentally destructive increase in our population.

CHAIN MIGRATION

The Multiplier Effect — From One, Many



Breaking the Chain of Migration

Goal #1: Support a change from chain migration to nuclear family migration (spouse and unmarried, minor children). The major change required to impose a manageable ceiling on overall immigration numbers is the adoption of a policy of family reunification that does not extend beyond the spouse and minor children of an immigrant.

In 1995, a Presidential-Congressional commission headed by the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan studied this problem and came to an important conclusion: extended family preferences “have no credibility.” Continuous extended family preferences inevitably create unmanageable backlogs, long waiting times, and rising immigration levels. The commission recommended both eliminating chain migration and advising the millions of extended family members already in the waiting list that the waiting list was abolished and they no longer had an entitlement to a U.S. immigrant visa.

FAIR calls on environmental groups to support the Jordan Commission recommendation of moving toward a system of “nuclear family” migration by enacting an end to chain migration through the elimination of brother/sister/parent preference visas and the adult son/daughter preference visas.

Goal #2: Support a reduction from more than one million immigrants per year down to 300,000. Chain migration has produced structural problems that make zero-net immigration difficult to reach in the short term. There are currently nearly 3.5 million people in backlogs waiting to come in. We have “over-promised” what we can deliver by granting millions of relatives — brothers, sisters, parents and adult offspring — a future right to enter. These backlogs would take years to eliminate even if no new applications were filed. Therefore, FAIR recommends a moratorium on immigration, with exceptions for legitimate refugees and the spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens. After we eliminate the backlogs we can get a fresh start. This would have a similar effect to the Jordan Commission recommendation to abolish the waiting list.

It may sound drastic to suggest a time-out on immigration. But keep in mind that throughout most of the 20th century, immigration levels rarely exceeded 300,000. Over the past 45 years, Americans have been asked to accept the imposition of an extraordinary high level of immigration. So the question is: why not try to attain population stability for five or ten years? If massive immigration is vital to the nation's interests, that will become apparent during that period. To achieve the stabilization of the U.S. population, we need to try a course different from the one we are charting today.

Goal #3: Support a cap on immigration that is sustainable and definite. In addition to restoring the principle of nuclear family preference, we also need to set a genuine cap on immigration. Of course, setting an annual cap at 300,000 is ineffective unless it can be enforced. One can support visas for any deserving person so long as the ground rules are (a) that the person can only bring in a spouse and unmarried, minor children, and (b) that any new visa program be offset by corresponding reductions in other areas. In other words, we need an immigration “balanced budget” and the discipline to live within it.

There must be discipline in the system. Right now, every time a special interest group comes to Congress demanding visas, the policy response is just to raise the visa cap, or to create a new visa category entirely. Like a license to print money, Congress’s power to “print visas” can be and has been abused.

There should be no new visa programs without corresponding reductions in other areas. The only way to counter the abuse of “special interest” programs is to set a cap that requires numerical trade-offs so the cap is not exceeded. For example, if Congress wants to raise the number of admissions from one country, it must offset future visa numbers from that country to compensate. This is one of the biggest legislative challenges in retaking control of the overall immigrant admission numbers. But those concerned with population growth must take a stand opposing special immigration programs. It must be clear to legislators that visas (or amnesty) cannot be traded for political favors or votes.

Conclusion

While it is true that technological advances have increased food supplies and access to other resources, the critical question for our long-term survival is whether any apparent increase in America’s human carrying capacity is truly permanent. Or, will the associated ecological costs of population growth undermine the ability of the North American continent — the area the Audubon Society has referred to as “the most overpopulated ... on Earth” — to sustain our numbers for the long term?

We won’t know the limit of population growth until we exceed it, and then it will be too late to avoid the consequences of overpopulation. In order to preserve our remaining natural habitat, our precious resources, our threatened animal and plant life, as well as the future of our grandchildren, we must restore moderation to our immigration policy?

sprawl city, usa

Cause and Effect: Immigration and Sprawl

For most Americans, environmental degradation brings to mind the brown layer of smog hanging over their city, or the reek of a fetid river that can no longer support life. But perhaps the most serious environmental problem facing America is sprawl. As human populations increase, they spread out and interfere with ecosystems that are vital to the health of the planet.

Cities have traditionally been built in close proximity to agricultural areas or along the coasts. Thus, when these population centers begin to sprawl, they encroach upon prime farmland or ecologically sensitive coastal land, or both.

California's great Central Valley is a prime example of an area overwhelmed by suburban sprawl. The Central Valley is not only America's fruit and vegetable basket, but it also generates billions of dollars in export revenue. Today the valley is under siege as immigration swells California's population. Nearly 100,000 acres of farmland were lost in the 1990s alone, and another 900,000 are threatened with development.²⁸ The continuation of this trend will change the face of California and threaten American agricultural independence.

Fresno County, in the heart of the valley, is the most productive agricultural county in the nation today. But like other cities in the heart of the Central Valley, Fresno is now experiencing faster population growth than even Los Angeles County. Residents of Fresno have reason to worry. As the American Farmland Trust reminds us, it was only 65 years ago that the most productive agricultural area in America was Los Angeles County.

Urban and suburban sprawl do more than just mar the landscape. Sprawl results in the most productive and ecologically valuable lands in the world being paved over for roads, tract houses, and shopping malls. The amount of land is significant; from 1997 to 2007, the U.S. lost 32.6 million acres of farmland to sprawl.²⁹

Moving In, Moving Out: Secondary Migration

One of the common arguments put forth by proponents of immigration is that much of the sprawl that threatens ecologically sensitive or agriculturally vital lands is a result of internal migration of Americans, not the influx of new immigrants. That may have been true in the past, but immigration patterns have changed significantly. In recent years, 40 percent of immigrants have moved directly from their native country to U.S. suburbs.³⁰ Nonetheless, many counties are still affected by the phenomenon known as secondary migration. The intense population growth these regions experience occurs as people leave crowded urban areas in search of more room.

To some degree, this would be happening with or without immigration or population growth. The expansion mentality has always been a part of our national character. It is to be expected that people would want to leave the run-down urban centers for areas that offer fresh air and safer communities. Today, despite efforts to attract population back into inner cities, millions of Americans choose to relocate to traditionally lesser populated areas, and these areas are becoming overpopulated with the resulting environmental damage.

In addition, modern technology is eliminating the necessity for many people to live in, or near urban areas. As telecommuting becomes more common it has given people the freedom to move to less densely populated locations. These developments are also, in part, responsible for the growth of exurbia. People seek the advantages of the outlying areas, while still being close enough to enjoy the amenities of the big city. The unfortunate result of these trends is that each individual takes up much more space than in a well designed city.

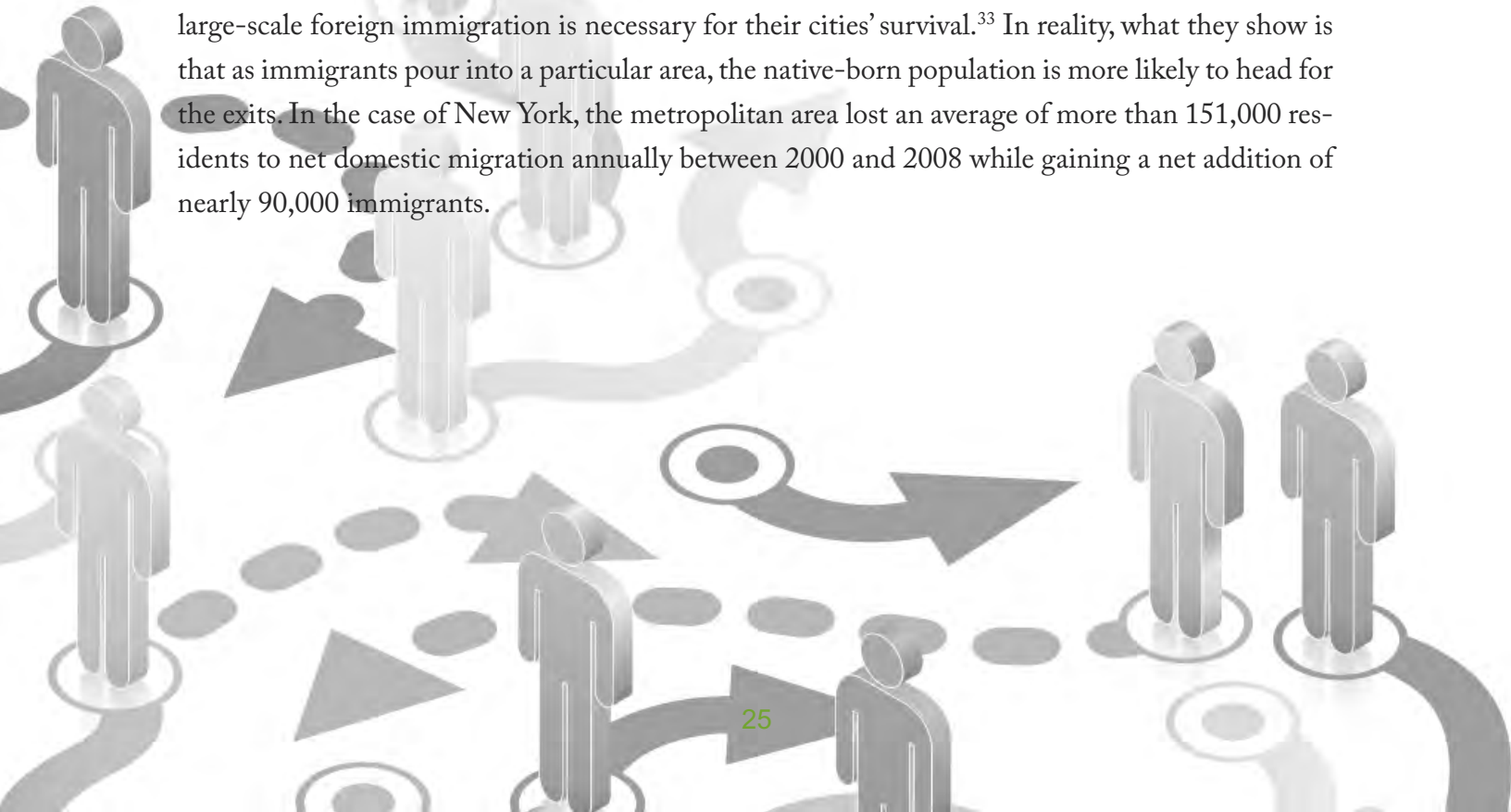
Just as there are commonly accepted “push” and “pull” factors that drive international migration, demographers also recognize “push” and “pull” factors as part of the phenomenon of internal migration. No doubt, the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest or the Rocky Mountains draws Americans from other parts of the country. But, as University of Michigan demographer William H. Frey has observed, the influx of large numbers of foreign immigrants into some areas of the United States has also fueled a migration of the native population to other areas of the country.

In a 1994 article, Frey wrote that “Immigrants exert a powerful influence on the U.S., but only in a handful of states.”³¹ However, Frey and other demographers detect a ripple effect that impacts much of the nation. “As [immigrants] moved in, large numbers of whites moved away from these areas....A somewhat different group of states, most of which are located in the South Atlantic, Pacific and Mountain regions, are magnets for internal migrants.” In subsequent studies, demographers have noted a “black flight” phenomenon as well. American-born blacks have been leaving the old industrial cities of the Northeast, Midwest, and California, and returning to the areas of the South that their grandparents left in the early part of the 20th century.

Census Bureau data support Frey’s assertion of a direct cause-and-effect relationship between immigration and internal migration among the established U.S. population. A 1998 article in the *New York Times* reported:

“The Census Bureau today offered fresh evidence of the impact of immigration on the country’s population in this decade, reporting that several metropolitan areas — notably New York, Los Angeles and Chicago — grew strongly even as many longer-term residents left for other parts of the country ... Growth in those regions was also aided by high numbers of births, another side effect of immigration because immigrant families are more likely to be of child-bearing age, and immigrant women tend to have higher birth rates than their American-born counterparts.”³²

These facts are cited by some big city mayors, like New York’s Michael Bloomberg, as evidence that large-scale foreign immigration is necessary for their cities’ survival.³³ In reality, what they show is that as immigrants pour into a particular area, the native-born population is more likely to head for the exits. In the case of New York, the metropolitan area lost an average of more than 151,000 residents to net domestic migration annually between 2000 and 2008 while gaining a net addition of nearly 90,000 immigrants.



Desperate Gamble: Las Vegas, Nevada

Las Vegas was America's second fastest growing city from 2000 to 2008, increasing its population by more than 35 percent from 2000 to 2008.³⁴ Las Vegas also happens to be situated in the middle of an inhospitable desert. As Las Vegas mushroomed from a small gambling mecca into a sprawling metropolitan area of more than 1.8 million people, it has left a giant footprint on the sensitive desert ecology and strained water resources all over the western United States. If ever there was an area not intended for large-scale human inhabitation, it is Las Vegas, Nevada.

The fastest growing segment of the city's population is Hispanics, who now comprise nearly 25 percent of the population. While Las Vegas features a significant and growing foreign-born population, the bulk of the Hispanic increase is not due to current immigration. Rather, it is the natural result of a baby boom among young Hispanic immigrants of the past decade. The reason, reports the Carsey Institute, is that most of the Hispanics who immigrated to the area "were young adults on the cusp of parenthood, and many started families. The natural increase that resulted from this has now taken center stage in explaining Hispanic growth in the twenty-first century."³⁵



The boom has also been fueled by domestic migration. Much of the population explosion in Las Vegas is a result of internal relocation of Americans from other parts of the United States, primarily Southern California. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 40 percent of the new residents who settled in the state between 1995 and 2000 moved there from California. California is simultaneously experiencing a high influx of immigrant newcomers.³⁶

No doubt some “pull” factors, especially job opportunities, induced large numbers of Southern Californians to relocate to the Las Vegas region. But Frey sees “push” factors at work here as well. He speculates that “low-skilled and low-income whites and blacks are leaving some major cities in the face of increased competition for jobs from immigrants, or when they see economic opportunities elsewhere ... This is what happens to the native born ... They have other options. When they see increased competition, they go elsewhere.”³⁷

Environmentalists would be hard pressed to think of a worse metropolitan area to be among our nation’s fastest growing than Las Vegas, smack in the middle of the water starved Mojave Desert. Yet until immigration-driven population growth ends, or the region just runs out of water, population growth is likely to continue.

The Great Wall: Portland, Oregon

Unlike Las Vegas, water is not a problem for another of America’s fastest growing cities, Portland, Oregon. In the Pacific Northwest, protection of the surrounding forests and rivers is the most pressing ecological concern as the area’s population explodes. Recognizing that the area’s environment was its most precious asset, city planners took steps in the late-1970s to manage growth. The plans of two decades ago are now confronting the realities of population growth.

In 1979, Portlanders drew an imaginary line in the forest beyond which they would not allow the city to expand. That line, which encompasses 364 square miles, has been breached. This has not been the desire of Portland natives. “Portland’s residents value its small town feel, its human scale, and its community connectedness — the feeling that we know and care for one another,” stated Portland’s long-term plan, Vision into Action, “yet in the future, Portland’s population is expected to grow into that of a much larger city.” Since 1980, shortly after the plan was adopted, the metro area population has increased by more than 863,000 residents (65%) through 2008. Indeed Portland Metro estimates that an additional million people will live in the region by 2030, a further 50 percent increase in little more than two decades.³⁸



Bowing to the realities of a population that is growing by more than 35,000 new residents a year, more than one-third of which resulted from net-immigration, local authorities were forced to approve an expansion of what is sometimes called “The Great Wall of Portland.” From 1998 to 2005, 27,719 additional acres of land were turned over to developers for the construction of residential housing and other facilities to accommodate the additional population.³⁹ The line having been breached, there is little reason to expect that it will not be expanded again and again, as the region attempts to cope with a fast-growing population.

While the idea of trampling on still more of the Northwest’s undeveloped areas is anathema to environmentalists, the alternative seems unfathomable to most politicians. In this conflict of interests, it is not difficult to guess who will prevail. The price of holding the line on Portland’s outward expansion as the population continues to grow is causing skyrocketing real estate costs, the overcrowding of parks and schools, and greater urban congestion.

Quite simply, it is unrealistic to expect Portland’s population to stop growing as long as the U.S. population continues to grow rapidly, and as long as immigration continues to serve as a “push” factor driving people to seek better places to live. While some environmentalists argue that the best way

to stop the immigration-driven expansion of the U.S. population is to address the “push” factors in the immigrants’ homelands, they ignore the national “push” factors that are swelling the population of cities like Portland.

Unlike the problems that make people want to pick up and leave Mexico, Pakistan, or the Philippines — over which we have very little control — we can affect one of the most significant push factors that is driving people away from New York and Los Angeles. One of the primary factors, of course, is the influx of immigrants into these areas, which is leading Americans to relocate to places like Portland.

Lot Full: Seattle, Washington

“We exceeded the capabilities of our natural environment and our infrastructure long ago. [It’s] time to hang out the ‘lot full’ sign on the gates of Seattle,” said a long-time Seattle resident at a citizens’ forum on the city’s explosive population growth.⁴⁰

Like its neighbor to the south, Seattle is experiencing intense growing pains. Metropolitan Seattle grew by an annual average of more than 27,000 residents from 2000 to 2008, and it is bracing for an onslaught of nearly a million additional residents by 2020, much to the chagrin of those who treasure the spectacular natural beauty of the Puget Sound region.

Hoping to stave off the inevitable, local communities are making a last ditch effort to discourage further development. In 1999, Redmond, home of Microsoft, declared a yearlong moratorium on commercial development after learning that tax revenue was not keeping pace with the costs of urban expansion. More recently, in nearby Issaquah, voters rejected a \$53 million bond issue that was earmarked for school construction. Issaquah residents were hoping that if they don’t build them, they won’t come. But they keep coming anyway and the town’s population has more than doubled since 2000.⁴¹

Like other rapidly-growing areas, Seattle is a victim of both its own welcoming environs and of immigration. Even if the United States had a stable population size, there would still likely be internal migration to that part of the country. However, immigration is exacerbating the internal migration trend and directly adding to Seattle’s growth woes. According to DHS data, Seattle is the 14th most popular destination of newly arriving immigrants from other countries, attracting about 15,000 such newcomers each year.⁴² And, like Las Vegas and Portland, Seattle is a very popular refuge for stressed-out Californians.



As in Portland, Seattle is attempting to hold the line on urban sprawl. But a growing population within fixed boundaries is sure to become politically problematic. With roads and freeways choked with traffic, local taxpayers are being asked to ante-up billions of dollars for road construction and mass transit. However, even that is likely to be only a temporary fix, as history has taught us that new roads and transportation only encourage new development and settlement, which necessitates still further expansion.

The simple reality is that Seattle is going to continue to grow. The only real questions are, how much, how fast, how far — and how great an impact will this growth have on the surrounding estuaries, rivers, streams, and rain forests that are so vital to the ecology of the area. The answer depends on whether America chooses an immigration/population policy that leads us to aim at stabilizing our population at about 368 million in the 21st century, or whether we continue down a path that is leading our population to 440 million or more by the middle of the century, with no end to growth in sight.

Ground Zero: Washington, D.C.

Communities all across the United States worry about how to keep Washington at a distance. For most of the country, the problem is figurative. To many Maryland and Virginia residents, the encroachment of Washington is literal. While people in the rest of the country try to hang on to local autonomy in the face of an expanding Washington bureaucracy, folks in surrounding counties are simply being swallowed up by the capital's sprawl.

Like other metropolitan areas experiencing rapid growth, the D.C. area suffers from a population chain reaction. From 2000 to 2008, the foreign-born population increased by 37.3 percent, compared to a less than 7 percent increase in the native-born population. During these six years the metropolitan area was the destination of a net influx of 312,400 new immigrants, or over 37,600 each year.⁴³ The actual impact of immigration is even greater, as a significant portion of the increase in the native-born population consists of children born to recent immigrants. Meanwhile, most of the secondary migration within the expanding metropolitan area is a result of people seeking to escape the social conditions that accompany mass immigration. Take away immigration from the Washington area, and much of the open space slated for development over the next decade could be spared.



Having experienced an earlier episode depicted as “white flight,” the District has a largely black population, with whites having settled in nearby Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties in Maryland, and Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax Counties in Virginia. With a wave of new immigrants from Central America and Asia moving into the city and the immediate suburbs, many inner city blacks have now moved in Prince George’s County, while white suburbanites have moved even farther out into what used to be rural areas of Maryland and Virginia. The “odd man out” in this game of demographic musical chairs is the rural dweller who has seen open space, farmland, and a centuries-old way of life quickly transformed into residential subdivisions and strip malls.

In metropolitan D.C., sprawl is partly a result of the desire of more affluent residents to escape the consequences of immigration. These deteriorations in the quality of life include urban congestion and declining standards of public education as schools are overwhelmed by large numbers of non-English-speaking children. Over the past decade, enrollment in D.C. public schools decreased overall while the number of children whose first language is not English increased.⁴⁴ Likewise, in both states surrounding the capital, the enrollment of non-English-speaking students is increasing rapidly, with most of this increase affecting the suburban counties.⁴⁵

The response of many long-time residents to these immigration-related burdens is to seek tranquility in the far-reaches of Washington’s exurbia. Wilderness and farmland in the region are being converted for residential and commercial use at a pace of 73 acres per day. Between 2000 and 2030, it is estimated that 800,000 acres will be paved, bulldozed, or built over to accommodate the area’s burgeoning population.⁴⁶

Rural Loudoun County, a region of rolling green hills and bridle paths in northern Virginia, is the latest area to be swept over by an ever-expanding metropolitan area. In the past two and a half decades, this once bucolic county has seen its population quadruple and the county continues, since 2000, to increase its population by an average of 14,500 residents each year. In 2004 it was given the dubious honor of being named the country’s fastest growing jurisdiction of its size. The county is now struggling to accommodate its burgeoning population. In recent years residents have waged campaigns against municipal construction in an effort to maintain the character of neighborhoods strained by overpopulation.⁴⁷

In addition to the prodigious pace of urban sprawl, the growth of the Washington metropolitan region places further stress on the ecologically fragile Chesapeake Bay. Already, some 40 percent of the Bay’s surrounding forests have succumbed to developers’ bulldozers, and the area’s population growth threatens still more of this important ecosystem. The Bay is the largest estuary in the United

States, sustaining countless plant, animal, and marine species, and serves as a natural filtration system for numerous streams and rivers extending from New York to Southern Virginia.⁴⁸

Conclusion

It is impossible to assign an exact weight to the role immigration plays in the phenomenon of urban sprawl that is affecting many areas of the country. Nor is it possible to deny that immigration is a significant factor either in the actual growth of an area, or as a cause for secondary migration. It is fair to assume that, even with a stable population, people would move from one part of the country to another in search of better economic opportunities, better schools, better climates, better housing values, and a better quality of life.

The additional factors of rapid population growth, and the social, cultural, and economic displacement that goes along with high immigration are making it impossible to hold the line on urban sprawl, even in communities where there is an overwhelming public desire to do so. If our population continues to hurtle toward 400 to 500 million by the middle of this century, it will become politically (and probably physically) impossible to preserve the land, the ecology, and the natural resources of forests, deserts, and coastal areas.

As we will see in the next chapter, our immigration policy results not only in rapid population growth, but also cultural values that will make the cause of conservationism ever more difficult.

the growthmongers

Constructomania: The Growth of Sprawl

As the last chapter illustrates, the phenomenon of urban sprawl is the result of a combination of factors, not the least of which is population growth. The more people who live in an area, the more houses and apartments will be required. To environmentalists, this population growth translates into an assault on open space, wildlife habitat, and air and water quality. To real estate developers, building contractors, landscapers, tax collectors, and others, population growth means business, revenue, and jobs.

Not surprisingly, lobbyists representing real estate and construction trade groups were an integral part of a coalition of interest groups that scuttled immigration reductions in 1996, and they have continued to take up the cause of maintaining high levels of immigration.⁴⁹ The headlines from various news outlets illustrate the mindset that profits for a few are more important than the long-term interests of American citizens. The “fix” for the housing bubble is not to continue to artificially drive up housing prices by enlarging our population. But this is the wish of those developers, who, like one of the authors of *The Wall Street Journal* article listed on the right, see profit in unchecked growth.

Big Builder Online, an advocacy mouthpiece for the construction industry, reported in 2006 that, “Without [immigration], two out of every five households formed in the past 10 years would be nonexistent. Translation: 4.6 million fewer housing starts since 1995,” and concluded, “Immigration fuels economic growth by providing the nation with low-cost labor that is willing to work jobs many native-born Americans shun.”⁵⁰

WHO'S PUSHING URBAN SPRAWL?

- Immigrants Can Help Fix the Housing Bubble
The Wall Street Journal
March 17, 2009
- Plan to Solve Crisis: Let Immigrants Buy Houses
Yahoo! Finance
March 19, 2009
- Immigrants Could Help End the Housing Glut
The Dallas Morning News
April 19, 2009
- Let Immigrants Fix the Housing Mess
MSN Money
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- Immigrant Demand May Help Revive U.S. Housing Market
Bloomberg
September 21, 2006

The environmental battle to protect the wilderness from the steady march of real estate developers is no different from previous efforts to institute improved emissions standards. The response of the construction industry to proposals to limit immigration and, therefore, population growth, has been strikingly similar to that of the auto industry when the idea was first proposed that they improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions. General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler insisted that it was impossible to make cleaner burning, more fuel efficient cars that were affordable to the public. Likewise, developers decry the death of their industry if immigrant-driven population growth is halted.

Now, the American auto industry is losing ground to international competition that is doing the “impossible”, and thriving. Americans today drive foreign cars that are more fuel efficient, less polluting, and less costly. And the American auto industry is struggling to adapt itself to the new market demands. The reality is that both industries must adapt in order to thrive. The construction industry must embrace the future of population stability by focusing on home improvement, rather than lobbying for unsustainable population growth. But the industry will not adapt unless environmentalists stand up and demand an end to “business as usual.”

Stanley Duobinis, the director of forecasting for the National Association of Home Builders, believes immigration is vital to the health of his industry. When Americans made the decision in the mid-1960s to have fewer children and move toward population stabilization, it was not good news for the building construction industry. “We expected the housing market to be considerably smaller because of the baby-bust generation. Luckily, we’re finding that more immigrants are filling the hole. It’s really critical,” Duobinis said.⁵¹

The industry is taking special pains to cater to unique characteristics and desires of the emerging immigrant home-buying market. With millions of immigrants pouring into the United States, all chasing their own versions of the American Dream, builders are anxious to do business. According to a 1998 analysis by the Ernst & Young Kenneth Leventhal Real Estate Group, the present rate of immigration will necessitate the construction of 19.5 million homes and 10.5 million rental units by 2050.⁵² U.S. immigration policy, in a sense, has become a full employment guarantee for the real estate and construction industries. “It is a sleeping giant that’s waking up,” observes Dowell Myers, a demographer at the University of Southern California. “We now have in place a population that is going to push up housing prices regardless of what happens in the global economy.”⁵³ Woe to the middle class home buyer.

The search for affordable housing is a direct factor in the sprawl of metropolitan areas, as middle income Americans are forced to move farther and farther away from the urban core. “After running up against rising home prices, droves of Southern California home buyers are heading inland

into bone-dry valleys and wind-swept desert areas in search of affordable new housing,” the *Los Angeles Times* reported a decade ago.⁵⁴ That great migration has proved to be a disaster, both ecologically and economically, but the call for more development continues unabated.⁵⁵

As long as America maintains rapid population growth the construction industry will not be forced to discipline itself, as other industries have in the interest of preserving the environment.

Moving toward population stabilization need not spell doom for the home building industry. Rather, it can be an opportunity to profit, even as the outward drift of suburbs and exurbs is checked. Instead of focusing on accommodations for an expanding population, the construction industry could find virtually unlimited opportunity in replacing and retrofitting older housing and commercial buildings. One of the chief complaints that environmentalists have about Americans’ wasteful lifestyles is the inefficiency of our homes that results in our disproportionate consumption of the world’s energy resources and emission of greenhouse gases.

So long as the construction trades can profit by building inefficiently and ever outward, there is no incentive for them to turn their attention to sustainability. Moving toward population stabilization would not only slow the sprawl of urban areas, it would result in better building practices as the construction industry learns to profit by updating existing buildings with more efficient features.

Sprawl Goes Multicultural

One of the obstacles that has kept environmentalists from advocating immigration reduction is the idea that it is elitist. Environmentalists tend to be white, well-educated, and more affluent than the rest of the population, while immigrants today are less-educated and come mostly from poorer, non-white countries. There is, understandably, a fear among environmentalists that calls for immigration reductions might be maligned by advocates of increased immigration levels as rooted in baser motives.

There are, however, cultural aspects to consider. In some cases it is more than just population growth that creates pressure to expand the bounds of a city. Deep-seated cultural values that some immigrants bring with them must also be reckoned with. Real Estate Directions, Inc., a market research company in San Diego, has found that nearly a quarter of Asian immigrant home buyers will only consider buying brand new homes, compared with only 8 percent of the general public.⁵⁶ This preference for new homes may help explain why 40 percent of immigrants now move directly to suburbs, as reported by the *New York Times*.⁵⁷ Whole new development projects, stretching farther

and farther afield, have been undertaken to meet the particular needs of immigrant home buyers. Each time this happens, a little more open space disappears; water and sewage hook-ups have to be extended and commercial infrastructure must be developed to serve the new communities.

There are also the cultural values of our own society with which we must reckon. Part of the American dream is the aspiration of owning a home with a small plot of land. This aspect of our culture is now threatened by rapid population growth. Unless we successfully stabilize our population, this aspiration will cease being part of our American heritage. “Southern California must rethink its attitudes about housing density,” writes *Los Angeles Times* business columnist James Flanigan. “Many of its communities have a virulent not-in-my-backyard syndrome of not wanting multifamily housing — much less rental properties — built amid their ‘single-family culture.’”⁵⁸ At lower population levels the single-family, detached home culture was environmentally sustainable. But with each annual increase of 3 million people, the ecological need for housing density increases.

While advocates of population stabilization are often accused of elitism, it is in fact the advocates of unrestrained growth, like Flanigan, who embody the elitist ideology. They demand that middle income Americans — who already struggle to afford to purchase a home — change their expectations of a good life, or bury themselves deeply in debt. What they are saying is that industry’s desire to profit from population growth must take precedence over the desire of ordinary citizens to own an affordable home with a modest backyard.

Developers’ Gain, Our Loss

Polls consistently show that Americans believe the U.S. population should stop growing — sooner rather than later — but the special interests that rely on population growth have prevented a national dialogue on how and when. Every immigrant who arrives in this country is a worker or a potential worker, and a consumer. Employers and marketers may privately bemoan the negative effects of population growth, but they have become institutionally dependent on the population influx. Their perspective is short-term profitability; ours is the long-term vitality of our ecosystems and the maintenance of high living standards.

In the short-term, the interests of those who benefit from a growing population are not illegitimate. To the owner who struggles to maintain an obsolete business model in the global market, the low-cost labor provided by immigrant workers provides the margin between viability and bankruptcy. To the teacher whose classroom is filled with immigrant children, those kids are a livelihood. To

the real estate developer, an expanding population translates into a demand for new home construction and rising property values.

In 1965, Congress altered immigration policy with the unforeseen consequences of high immigration and rapid population growth. Since then a constituency for perpetual mass immigration has emerged. Vital industries have come to depend on a growing supply of labor and demand for products that unsustainable immigration provides. Even those who best understand the urgent need for population stabilization must acknowledge that the immediate results will have an economic and financial downside for some. So it is with all necessary reform. Transitory discomfort must be balanced, however, against the disastrous long-term consequences of perpetuating unsustainable population growth.

Environmentalists must be long-term thinkers; they have to understand trade-offs. No honest environmentalist will deny the economic price to be paid for treating sewage, controlling emissions, saving endangered species, or preserving natural resources. Their response has always been that a few hundred dollars more on the sticker price of an automobile to reduce emissions is a price worth paying. Short-term sacrifices yield dividends in long-term living standards and ecological sustainability that may not have a price tag but have an incalculable value.

Similarly, confronting immigration and population growth will require the embrace of short-term sacrifices for long-term sustainability. No one can deny that curtailing immigration will not be in the interest of prospective immigrants and the industries that rely on their labor and consumption. Plans will be disrupted, just as when environmentalists won legal battles to prevent cutting in old growth forests. Some loggers lose their jobs when forests are protected. Some sawmill workers can't make mortgage payments when the timber stops rolling. We need not feel good about these consequences to understand that they are necessary for the long-term viability of our ecology. What is right is not always the easiest thing to do.

Stopping America's rapid population growth is the right thing to do. The immediate and tangible interests of the constituency for population growth must be weighed against the long-term national interest in preserving open spaces and natural resources.

Who Benefits From Mass Immigration?

It is important to understand the constituency for mass immigration. The various pro-immigration, pro-population growth interests cannot be cavalierly dismissed.

• THE IMMIGRANTS THEMSELVES

Immigration benefits immigrants. People do not leave their homelands and move to a new and sometimes bewildering society unless there is a substantial pay-off. More than any other concern about ending mass immigration, humanitarian concern for the immigrants gives the environmental community the greatest trouble.

When people choose to leave their homelands and settle in the United States, most do so in order to achieve greater economic prosperity for themselves and their families. There are sometimes life and death circumstances that make it necessary for people to migrate and the U.S. has always recognized this. However, relatively few seek to escape despotic governments or have to flee imminent threats to their persons. With an annual cap of 300,000, the U.S. will be able to accept most immigrants who have a legitimate reason to leave their native countries.

• BUSINESS INTERESTS

We live in a highly competitive global economy. American businesses no longer merely vie with competitors across town, or in the next state; they now must confront challenges from businesses all around the globe. Global competition is likely to intensify in the coming years. An abundant supply of immigrant labor is a valuable asset to U.S. industries that compete with producers in the developing world. While the profit margins of faceless businesses do not evoke the same sort of sympathy as individual immigrants, these concerns must also be weighed.

• SERVICE AND COMMODITY PROVIDERS

Immigrants have the same needs as native-born Americans. They need houses to live in, cars to drive, roads to drive on, health care when they get sick, schools for their kids, and countless consumer goods. All of these needs provide work and profits for the businesses and institutions that render the products and services that immigrants consume. A growing population is both a threat to ecological vitality and an expanding customer base for countless corporations.

Expanding consumerism must concern environmentalists seeking to combat sprawl and limit consumption. Human consumption is at the root of environmental degradation. As our population grows it consumes more of everything while producing ever increasing amounts of waste. This is not an effort to blame immigrants for these problems, but rather a statement of fact. Immigration is the leading cause of population growth in the United States. Population growth results in increased consumption, which is the leading cause of environmental degradation.

One or the Other, or Both: The Ways to Preserve Our Environment

There are only two possible options for curbing the erosion of America's environment and resources. We can either reduce per capita consumption, or we can limit the growth of our population. Better yet, we can do both. Per capita consumption and the total population are the only factors that matter. If we reduce one factor but the other grows more rapidly our total Ecological Footprint will continue to expand.

Americans have reduced consumption and waste emissions in some areas. We use less fossil fuel per capita than we did 35 years ago, but because of population growth our aggregate use of these fuels is roughly the same.⁵⁹ Better emissions and effluent standards have resulted in notable improvements in air and water quality. We recycle more now and have cut down on per capita production of solid waste. These are all achievements to be proud of, although we can still do better.

In other respects, our rapidly growing population has made things far worse. There are strains on the environment caused by population growth that cannot be offset by conservation. People require space. As our numbers increase our use of land for human habitation expands as well. Often, this expansion takes place on prime agricultural land, diminishing our capacity to provide food for a growing population. Water is another resource that faces increasing chronic shortages due to population growth. Environmental waste also necessarily increases with population growth.

While many environmentalists believe that it is incumbent upon Americans to drastically reduce consumption and emissions, there are also the political realities that must be confronted. Governmental restrictions on where people can live, their use of resources, and other personal freedoms do not sit well with voters. Changing the lifestyle choices of millions of Americans is a slow process and is not easily legislated.

The other option is to take action to limit population growth in the United States. Compared with reforming the personal habits of over 300 million Americans, changing our immigration policy to admit fewer people is a far more feasible, sensible, and immediate possibility. Bringing immigration back to moderate, sustainable levels will not be easy because of opposition by beneficiaries of the status quo. However, a roll-back of immigration levels is achievable with minimal disruption to the economic and social constituencies that today depend on immigrant labor.

A vigorous policy of conservation that reduces consumption, emissions, and sprawl to the greatest degree politically attainable, and a reduction in immigration levels to the point where they will no longer drive today's rapid population increase, would provide the best long-term scenario for achieving environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

The United States has developed a constituency for high immigration and urban sprawl. We have large numbers of new people settling in this country, necessitating an increase of our housing stock and the sacrifice of open spaces to development. Coupled with direct immigration-induced sprawl, there is a pattern of long-term residents moving away from congested urban centers. And, finally, there are huge profits to be made from never-ending population growth. Billions of dollars are at stake for the businesses that build the new houses, roads, and commercial centers needed to accommodate a growing population.

Policy measures adopted by our government can alter these factors. By taking steps to reduce immigration, we can apply the brakes to population growth in our country and lessen the desire of city dwellers to sprawl out into the surrounding countryside, consuming new lands and resources. Meanwhile, we can redirect the legitimate profit motives of the construction industry. With gradually slowing population growth, this important sector of our economy will turn its attention to upgrading current residential housing and commercial building stock, making it more efficient and more environmentally friendly. Ironically, the resulting reduction in American demand for energy and other resources might reduce the desire of people in other countries to leave their homes in the first place.

Recommendations

Immigration reduction is essential to stabilizing U.S. population. As controversial as this fact might be, it is, nonetheless, a fact. Immigration now accounts directly for about 40 percent of the population increase in this country, and according to the Census Bureau, when births to immigrants are considered, immigration will account for more than 80 percent of U.S. population growth over the next half century. Establishing a replacement rate immigration level of roughly 300,000 per year is the first necessary step towards population stability.

Ending large-scale immigration need not be draconian or arbitrary. We can and should follow a course that is rational, morally defensible, and sustainable in the long-term. Our course requires three broad policy reforms that environmentalists should embrace. If these policy reforms are implemented over a reasonable period of time, America can escape a future of endless population growth, urban sprawl, and environmental degradation.

The next big battle to preserve the ecology of our nation will be fought over the growth of our population. The environmental movement must make the case against immigration levels which fuel unsustainable population growth.

1. END CHAIN MIGRATION

Chain migration occurs when extended family members follow a relative to the United States and then petition to bring their own extended families here as well; the process repeats indefinitely. Chain migration now accounts for more than three quarters of legal immigration to the United States (and probably a substantial portion of illegal settlement). The idea behind extended family reunification is well-intentioned, but the resulting growth is unsustainable and was not intended when the policy was drafted in the late 1960s. In practice, chain migration is neither fair, nor good public policy.

Chain migration is not fair. In a society that styles itself as a meritocracy, selecting prospective immigrants solely on the basis of family relations is indefensible. The admittance of immigrants should be based on the United States' need for the individual's skills, with suitable allowance for the admission of genuine refugees. No aspiring immigrant should be denied simply because he lacks a relative who recently immigrated. In addition, fairness does not require our country to provide a mechanism for reuniting extended families that the immigrants themselves divided by leaving home.

The most obvious place to begin cutting chain migration is by eliminating the immigration entitlement for adult brothers and sisters. Adult siblings constitute the most remote links in the family chain, and add the most to the backlogs. Along with each adult sibling very often comes a spouse and children. Thus, for the adult sibling that is reunited with a brother or sister in the United States, we may have to also absorb three or four additional people who are part of a separate nuclear family.

Finally, the core objective of extended family reunification is unachievable. Every time one extended family is reunited, another is separated. The chain of relatives is virtually unending.

Chain migration is bad public policy. It is not only the prospective immigrants who have a stake in immigration policy. The American people have the principal stake in seeing to it that immigrants who settle here are likely to be economic assets and can make the social and cultural transition to life in this country. This cannot be assured when immigration visas are an “entitlement” based on family connections, rather than a privilege based on an objective set of criteria.

Chain migration is unsustainable. Not only does the United States now admit more than one million legal immigrants annually, we have accumulated an enormous backlog of more than three million relatives waiting to come. Each immigrant that is admitted can add to that queue by petitioning for other relatives, either while still an immigrant or after becoming a U.S. citizen. To alleviate the pressure that has resulted from family-based immigration entitlements, we have gradually admitted more and more immigrants, speeding up the growth of our population and its impact on the environment.

It is neither unreasonable nor uncompassionate for America to establish rigorous conditions for immigration, as do other nations. People are confronted with difficult choices in every aspect of their lives. Choosing between immigrating to the United States or remaining with one’s extended family is a difficult decision, just as an American who is offered a job opportunity in another state or country has a difficult decision to make. Unlike fifty or a hundred years ago, modern transportation and communications make it possible for families to keep in touch, even if they are living on opposite sides of the world.

A clear policy that limits admission to the immediate nuclear family (i.e., spouse and unmarried minor children) is a reasonable condition of immigration to the United States. It is also sustain-

able. A system of nuclear family migration would end the current open-ended chain migration system that has led to a never-ending escalation in immigrant admissions.

2. SUPPORT MEANINGFUL REDUCTIONS IN IMMIGRATION LEVELS

Demographers estimate that to achieve zero-net immigration we would have to scale back to about 300,000 immigrants a year. At this point, annual immigration would equal annual emigration, resulting in population stability. Given where we now stand, 300,000 cannot be reached immediately. However, by implementing Step 1 — eliminating chain migration — we can arrive at replacement level immigration over a period of time.

Over time, our “essential” immigration needs could be met with limits of about 300,000 annually. By shifting from a policy that serves the demands of would-be immigrants to one that promotes the social, economic, and environmental goals of the nation, we could achieve long-term sustainable levels. Essential immigration would include nuclear family members, a small number of people with highly specialized skills, and refugees who are in imminent peril and who are unlikely to be able to ever safely return to their homelands.

Americans are honorable people, and one of the emotional obstacles to reducing immigration is that we have tacitly promised tens of millions of people the right to eventually come here. Dramatically decreasing immigration levels, therefore, feels almost like reneging on a commitment. But, by adopting policies that do not foster unrealistic expectations among people around the world, we will, in essence, stop promising things we cannot deliver, and which would contribute to further irreparable environmental damage if we tried.

3. SUPPORT A DISCIPLINED IMMIGRATION POLICY

We have reached the point where we are now because we have failed to adopt a national population policy and refused to impose discipline in our immigration policy. Each time we have been presented with a compelling reason to admit a particular category of immigrants, we have done so without examining the rest of the immigration process to see where these special cases could be offset by less essential immigration.

Making choices in immigration admissions has never been required. We have not lived within an immigration “budget.” The consequence of this lack of discipline has been immigration “inflation,” resulting in rapid population growth. In the name of environmental sustainability, environmentalists must now unite in support of population stabilization.

A legitimate need to admit a particular group of workers or refugees will emerge from time to time. But these special circumstance admissions must be offset by reductions in other areas, or from the following year's immigration budget. Furthermore, increases based on an immediate need must be temporary. Too often we have responded to a short-term shortage of a particular type of worker with a permanent increase in the immigration quota. We have responded to humanitarian emergencies with special immigration categories that continue long after the crisis that made them necessary. The time has come to reestablish discipline in our immigration policy.

Environmentalists must choose between two scenarios for the future:

STAY THE COURSE

- Continue a policy of self-perpetuating chain immigration entitlements.
- Surrender to the inexorable upward rise in immigrant admissions.
- Grant periodic amnesty programs and special category quotas for special interests.
- Live with the consequences of rapid population growth.

CHART A NEW COURSE

- Limit familial entitlements to members of an immigrant's nuclear family.
- Reduce immigration to replacement level—roughly 300,000 per year.
- Create the political discipline to live within an immigration budget.
- Enjoy the benefits of population stability.

Your To-Do List for Preserving the Environment

The environmental movement has confronted powerful interests in the past...and won. The oil companies flexed their considerable muscle when they desired access to environmentally sensitive areas. Environmentalists fought them, and protected these areas. The timber industry protested when it was suggested that the ecological importance of old growth forests superceeded short-term profitability. As a result of efforts by environmental groups, some of our ancient forests have been spared.

The next battle to preserve the ecology of our nation will be fought over the growth of our population. Population growth is not an isolated phenomenon; it directly contributes to every category of consumption, waste, and ecological degradation. "If we do not stabilize our population," de-

clared the Audubon Society, “progress on every other environmental front will be undone by the steady unchecked growth in human numbers.” The environmental movement has a responsibility to make the case against runaway population growth.

1. **RAISE THE ISSUE FOR DISCUSSION AT LOCAL MEETINGS.** Many environmentalists already believe that limiting immigration for the purpose of stabilizing the U.S. population is essential. But, because of intimidation by defenders of open-borders and mass immigration they have been reluctant to speak out. Local chapters of the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, and other environmental organizations are legitimate forums for raising these issues.
2. **ADOPT LOCAL RESOLUTIONS ON IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION GROWTH.** If your local environmental group recognizes the impact of immigration-generated population growth on your region, go on record in support for reducing immigration. Send a resolution supporting immigration reduction as a means to population stabilization to your organization’s national headquarters and press for it to be considered by all its members.
3. **SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS THAT ADDRESS REDUCING POPULATION GROWTH.** Curbing population growth is a fundamentally important environmental priority facing the United States. If an environmental group is unwilling to address this issue, it isn’t serious about protecting the U.S. environment.
4. **EXPLAIN WHY URBAN SPRAWL IS HAPPENING.** All across the country, environmentalists are appearing before zoning boards, city councils, county boards of supervisors, and other agencies to oppose urban sprawl. Make the connection between the pressure to expand city boundaries and immigration.
5. **LET YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS KNOW YOU ARE CONCERNED.** Meet and discuss the issue of immigration and population growth with as many local, state, and federal officeholders as you can. Support those who favor responsible immigration and population policies.
6. **USE THE MEDIA.** Write op-eds and letters to the editor, and make calls to radio talk shows. Explain how immigration policies made in Washington are responsible for the stresses of population growth in your area.
7. **BECOME A PUBLIC SPEAKER ON THIS ISSUE.** Raise the need for immigration reform before civic and religious organizations in your community.

8. **FORM YOUR OWN LOCAL GROUP.** If local environmental groups aren't making the connection between mass immigration and the environment, you can form an organization to do so yourself. Hundreds of citizens just like you have created such local groups. A list of local organizations working on immigration reform is on FAIR's website, www.fairus.org in the "Take Action" section. For more information, please contact FAIR at 202-328-7004.

resources

Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)
25 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 330 • Washington DC 20001
(202) 328-7004 • www.fairus.org • info@fairus.org

Californians for Population Stability (CAPS)
1129 State Street, Suite 3-D • Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 564-6626 • www.capsweb.org • caps@capsweb.org

Carrying Capacity Network (CCN)
2000 P Street NW, Suite 310 • Washington DC 20036
(202) 296-4548 • www.carryingcapacity.org • ccn@us.net

Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy (CASSE)
5101 S. 11th Street • Arlington, VA 22204
(541)602-3097 • www.steadystate.org • info@steadystate.org

Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)
1522 K Street NW, Suite 820 • Washington, DC 20005
(202) 466-8185 • www.cis.org • center@cis.org

Negative Population Growth (NPG)
2861 Duke Street, Suite 36 • Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 370-9510 • www.npg.org • npg@npg.org

Numbers USA
1601 N Kent Street, Suite 1100 • Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 816-8820 • www.numbersusa.com

Progressives for Immigration Reform
888 16th Street NW, Suite 800 • Washington, D.C.
202-543-5325 • www.progressivesforimmigrationreform.org

Pew Hispanic Center
1615 L Street NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20036
(202) 419-3600 • www.pewhispanic.org • info@pewhispanic.org

United Nations Population Division • www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm

United States Census Bureau • www.census.gov

recommended reading

“The Environmental Argument for Reducing Immigration into the United States,”
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Brian Czech, University of California Press, 2002

More: Population, Nature, and What Women Want
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Better Not Bigger: How to Take Control of Urban Growth and Improve Your Community
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How to Win the Immigration Debate
Scipio Garling, FAIR Horizon Press, 1997

Elephants in the Volkswagen: Facing the Tough Questions About Our Overcrowded Country
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The New Case Against Immigration: Both Legal and Illegal
Mark Krikorian, Sentinel, 2008

Projecting the U.S. Population to 2050: Four Immigration Scenarios
Jack Martin and Stanley Fogel, FAIR Horizon Press, 2006

Green, Inc.: An Environmental Insider Reveals How a Good Cause Has Gone Bad
Christine MacDonald, Lyons Press, 2008

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