A Field Guide to White Supremacy

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11 Fear of White Replacement

LATINA FERTILITY, WHITE DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE, AND IMMIGRATION REFORM

Leo R. Chavez

During the post-1965 wave of immigration, the reproduction and fertility of Latina and Mexican immigrant women became ground zero in a war waged not just with words but also through public policies and laws.[1] Indeed, anti-immigrant sentiment during the last fifty years has focused specifically on the biological and social reproductive capacities of Mexican immigrant and Mexican-origin (U.S.-born) women (Chavez 2004; Gutiérrez 2008). Their fertility has been represented as "dangerous," "pathological," "abnormal," and even as a threat to national security, as a key component of an "immigrant invasion" (Chavez 2013). In addition, much American nativist rhetoric about the decline of the white race has identified Mexican, and subsequently Latina women more generally, as largely responsible for the demographic changes underway in the United States since 1965.

In this chapter, I examine two prominent parallel narratives in public discourse about Latinos and immigration. The first, which I call the demographic narrative, is found in scholarly studies and U.S. Census reports on fertility, birthrates, and population statistics that show a continuous decline in fertility rates for all U.S. women, including Latinas. Second, the

References are provided at the end of this chapter.

immigrant/Latino threat narrative focuses on what it perceives as high Latina/Hispanic fertility and birth rates. This narrative is spread primarily by influential mainstream media pundits, writers, academics, and a host of conservative groups who seek to curtail immigration by invoking tropes of white decline, profound demographic change, and an ongoing Mexican invasion of the United States. I argue that this second narrative propagated anxieties over birthrates (too low for whites, too high for racial others) and notions of "immigrant invasions," "ethnic reconquests," "racial replacement," "racial dilution," and immigrants who refuse to assimilate, which have now become mainstream. I end with a reflection on how these views gained ascendency in President Trump's administration, which helps us understand his administration's immigration policies.

IMMIGRATION AND NATIVIST CONCERNS

The U.S. census began collecting data on nativity in 1850. As figure 11.1 indicates, the 1850 census counted about 2.2 million foreign-born residents, or immigrants, which accounted for about 10 percent of the U.S. population. While the total number of immigrants increased throughout the nineteenth century until it peaked in the 1920s, immigrants as a percentage of the U.S. population stayed relatively constant between 1860 and 1910, from about 13 percent to just under 15 percent, peaking at 14.8 percent in 1890 (Batalova, Blizzard, and Bolter 2020).

The increase in immigration after 1850 corresponds with the emergence of the nativist Know Nothing Party, which viewed Catholic immigrants as a particular threat to the nation (Gerstle 2004). Nativist groups in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often viewed the "new" immigration from southern and eastern Europe as unassimilable and racially different from the old-stock American population of northwestern European origin (Higham [1955] 2002). Eugenicists and nativists believed that the most efficient way to establish ethnic homogeneity and the supremacy of the "white race" was restricting immigration (Grant 1916). The Immigration Act of 1924 did just that, instituting racialized national origins quotas, which severely restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe in favor of northern and western Europe.

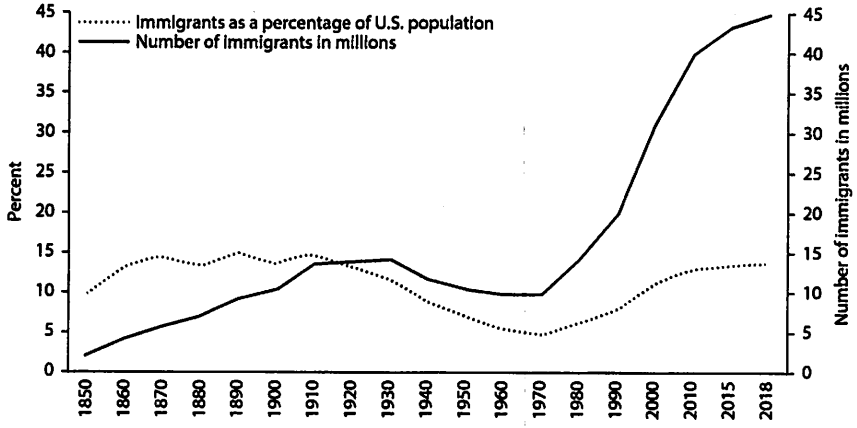

Figure 11.1. Size and share of the foreign-born population in the United States, 1950–2018. Source: Batalova, Blizzard, and Bolter 2020; Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010–18 American Community Surveys (ACS) and 1970, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census, MPI DATA Hub: Immigration Facts, States, and Maps. All other data are from Gibson and Lennon 1999.

Thus, for example, while between 1907 and 1924, 685,531 immigrants had entered the United States from southern and eastern Europe, only 176,983 had originated in northern and western Europe. By 1925 the United States only admitted 20,847 persons from southern and eastern Europe, while 140,999 come from northern and western Europe. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Japanese Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 had already curtailed Asian immigration (Gerstle 2004, 2001).

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 dismantled national origins quotas, instead capping the total number of immigrants admissible yearly at 290,000, allocating 170,000 to the "Old World," and 120,000 to the "New World." Asian and Pacific prohibitions were lifted. A system of preferences based mostly on kin ties, known as "family reunification," was put in place, exempting skilled workers from national numeric caps.

The 1965 immigration law soon fundamentally altered the geographic origins of subsequent immigrants. In 1960, 84 percent of all immigrants originated in Europe and Canada, 10 percent in Central and South America, 4 percent in South and East Asia, and 2 percent from Africa and the rest of the world. By 2017, Europe and Canada accounted for 13 percent of

immigrants, Central and South American 51 percent, South and East Asia 27 percent, and about 9 percent from the rest of the world (Radford and Noe-Bustamante 2019).

The 1965 Immigration Act also had a profound impact on the cross-border migration of Mexicans into the United States, mostly as temporary guest laborers. Between 1942 and 1964, approximately two million Mexican workers were entering the United States yearly to meet mostly agricultural labor needs in the American West and Southwest; about a quarter entered under bilateral treaties between Mexico and the United States, the rest without inspection or documentation. Because these regional labor needs remained, while Mexico was allocated only thirty thousand immigrant slots by the 1965 law, which was reduced to twenty thousand in 1976, the natural result was the rhetorical birth of the "illegal alien invasion," which increasingly fueled fears of white racial decline.

Since the passage into law of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which abolished the racial quotas that had been put into effect in the 1924 Immigration Act, nativists in the United States have constantly expressed their concerns about "immigrant invasions" and their rising fertility rates, which they fear will soon lead to the decline of the "white race." Such xenophobic views have a long history in America but, because of the demographic and economic changes that have been afoot in the republic since 1965, have grown in intensity and overt violence (Gerstle 2001).

Demographic change has fueled white nationalist movements and populist political campaigns in Europe and the United States, which includes Donald Trump's rise to power in 2016. These populist movements often fan the flames of anti-immigrant sentiment and a fear of white decline (Bangstad, Bertelsen, and Henkel 2019; Mazzarella 2019; Ahmed 2004; Stern 2019; Belew 2019; Shoshan 2016; Mahmud 2020). For example, Brenton Tarrant, the gunman accused of killing fifty-one Muslims attending Friday prayer services at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, on March 15, 2019, issued a manifesto which he titled "The Great Replacement." Therein he railed against "Islamic invaders . . . occupying European soil." The first sentence of the manifesto asked readers to scrutinize "the birth-rates," a phrase he repeated three times (Bowles 2019). Tarrant seemed to be echoing the white nationalists, neo-Nazis, and Klansmen who had gathered for the "Unite the Right" rally that turned lethal on August 11–12,

2017, in Charlottesville, Virginia. Marching through the campus of the University of Virginia carrying torches on Friday night, August 11, the women and men shouted "Jews will not replace us," with placards bearing Nazi symbols and one sign that read "Jews are Satan's children."

Patrick Crusius, the twenty-one-year-old gunman who killed twenty-two persons at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, on August 3, 2019, posted a manifesto online titled "The Inconvenient Truth," in which he claimed that his actions were to stop the "Hispanic invasion of Texas" (Romero, Fernandez, and Padilla 2019). The words *invasion* and *invaders* appear six times in the manifesto. One does not have to look too far for where Crusius got his inspiration. Between May 2018 and September 2019, President Donald Trump ran some twenty-two hundred Facebook ads using the word *invasion* (Zhao 2019).

A LOOK AT DATA ON FERTILITY RATES, BIRTH RATES, AND POPULATION

Fertility rates are important when considering population dynamics. Fertility rate is an indicator of population growth. It measures the average number of children a female could give birth to over her entire lifetime. Table 11.1 indicates that there has been a dramatic decline in fertility rates among all American women, from 2.48 children per woman in the 1960s to 1.89 in the 2010s ("Total Fertility Rate" 2015). The U.S. population essentially is at zero population growth. Although Hispanic fertility rates have dropped dramatically since the 1960s, these rates must be disaggregated by generation of residence in the United States. Statistics from 2015 show that by the third and higher generations, Hispanic fertility rates were at 1.98 children per woman and projected to equal white women's rates by 2060 ("Total Fertility Rate" 2015).

Emilio A. Parrado and S. Philip Morgan, in their comparative 2008 study of the number of children ever born to U.S. Hispanic and Mexican-origin grandmothers, mothers, and daughters over time, found that fertility differentials between Mexican-origin women in the United States and white women had decreased across generations. Fertility fluctuated in relation to changing socioeconomic conditions:

Table 11.1 Total Fertility Rate for Population Estimates and Projections, by Origin and Generation
1965–70, 2010–15, 2060–65

	Total			*First generation*			*Second generation*			*Third or higher generation*		
	1965	*2010*	*2060*	*1965*	*2010*	*2060*	*1965*	*2010*	*2060*	*1965*	*2010*	*2060*
	1970	*2015*	*2065*	*1970*	*2015*	*2065*	*1970*	*2015*	*2065*	*1970*	*2015*	*2065*
Total	2.48	1.89	1.90	2.59	2.58	2.06	2.59	1.84	1.88	2.47	1.76	1.85
White	2.37	1.71	1.86	2.31	1.76	2.00	2.43	1.78	1.90	2.37	1.70	1.86
Black	2.94	1.91	1.90	(z)	1.90	2.10	(z)	1.83	1.89	2.93	1.90	1.85
Hispanic	3.10	2.53	1.94	3.13	3.36	2.30	3.33	2.01	1.90	3.06	1.98	1.86
Asian	2.37	1.66	1.88	2.30	1.70	1.90	2.66	1.59	1.90	2.28	1.61	1.76
2 or more races	2.61	1.86	1.86	(z)	2.20	2.00	(z)	1.79	1.90	2.56	1.80	1.82

NOTE: z = Population too small to compute rate. Whites, Blacks, and Asians include people who claim only single-race non-Hispanics. Those who claim two or more races are classified as multiple-race non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any racial classification. "First generation" is foreign-born; "second generation" is people born in the United States with at least one foreign-born parent; "third and higher generations" are people born in the United States with U.S.-born parents.

SOURCE: PEW 2015.

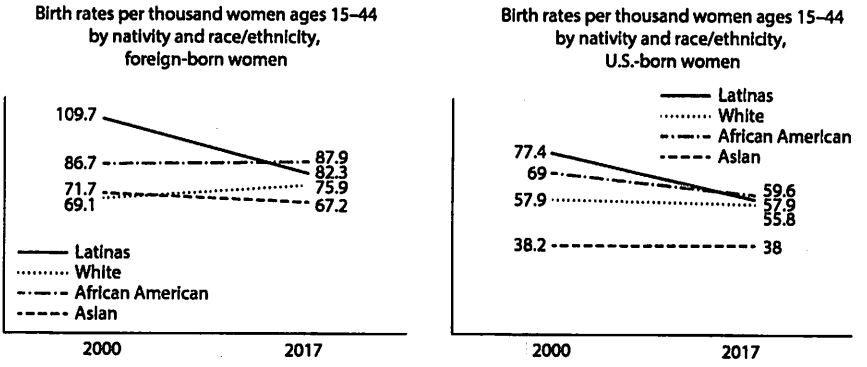

Figure 11.2. Birth rates per thousand women ages 15–44, by nativity and race/ethnicity. Foreign-born women and U.S.-born women. Note: Latinas are of any race. African Americans, Whites, and Asians include only non-Latinas. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data (Livingston 2019).

> Contrary to the idea that Hispanic fertility may be less responsive to improvements in human capital or socioeconomic conditions, either due to a cultural proclivity to high fertility or to blocked opportunities in the U.S., we find a strong negative effect of years of education on the number of CEB [children ever born] among Hispanic women that is actually slighter larger than that found among white women. This is especially the case among the third immigrant generation. (2008, 26–27)

Birthrates are also important for understanding population dynamics. Birthrates indicate the rate at which the births take place in a population and are usually given as "number of births per thousand women" for a specific time, typically a given year. The declining trend in birthrates fell to record lows in 2016 and 2017, according to the National Center for Health Statistics (Tavernise 2018). The Pew Research Center found similar dramatic declines in birthrates for Latinas between 2000 and 2017 compared to Blacks, whites, and Asians (Livingston 2019). As figure 11.2 indicates, foreign-born Latina birthrates declined from 109.7 to 82.3 births per thousand women ages 15–44 between 2000 and 2017. U.S.-born Latina birthrates also declined from 77.4 to 57.9 births per thousand women over that same period. Both foreign-born and U.S.-born

Latinas had birthrates similar to white and Black women in 2017. As this decline in birthrates became more apparent, the state of California revised its population projections because of an "unexpectedly large decline in the Hispanic birthrate" (Kelley 2004; Pitkin and Myers 2012).

THE LATINA/IMMIGRANT THREAT IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

In contrast to the demographic narrative, there is the immigrant-as-threat narrative. Latinos, especially people of Mexican origin, play a central role in this narrative. This second narrative, too, focuses on Latina/Hispanic fertility and birth rates, which are deemed too high.

Some of the early discussions of the demographic transformation of the United States appeared in *Time* magazine's January 11, 1960, issue. Its cover story presented the world caught in a Malthusian nightmare in which the darker populations of the world would soon biologically reproduce so quickly that they would overwhelm the world's whites.

> Long a hot topic among pundits, whose jargon phrase for it is "the population explosion," the startling 20th century surge in humanity's rate of reproduction may be as fateful to history as the H-bomb and the Sputnik, but it gets less public attention. Today two-thirds of the human race does not get enough to eat. And it is among the hungry peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America that the population explosion is most violent. In 1900 there was one European for every two Asians; by 2000 there will probably be four Asians for every European, and perhaps twice as many Americans living south of the Rio Grande as north of it. If by then, all that faces the growing masses of what is euphemistically called "the underdeveloped nations" is endless, grinding poverty, their fury may well shake the earth. ("Population" 1960)

This article's alarmist rhetoric was matched by this issue of *Time*'s cover, which depicted fourteen adult women of color and only one white woman, who appears relatively affluent with a shopping cart that also carries her two children and her consumer goods. Asian, African, and Latin American women are in working-class or traditional clothing, or simply naked, indicating a world much less affluent and backward than that of the white woman. These parts of the world would soon supply the

immigrants who would enter the United States after 1965. (See image at http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19600111,00.html.)

Undoubtedly influenced by the 1965 immigration law, Paul Ehrlich, a biologist at Stanford University, in 1968 published his influential book *The Population Bomb,* which boldly asked on its jacket cover, "Population Control or Race to Oblivion?" Ehrlich argued that fertility was a national and worldwide problem that would result in environmental degradation, famines, pestilence, and wars between rich and poor (Ehrlich 1968). "The birth rate must be brought into balance with the death rate or mankind will breed itself into oblivion," he wrote. "We can no longer afford merely to treat the symptoms of the cancer of population growth; the cancer itself must be cut out. Population control is the only answer" (Ehrlich 1968, 12).

A decade later, Ehrlich coauthored *The Golden Door: International Migration, Mexico, and the United States,* which argued that Mexico's population growth was a major problem for both Mexico and the United States because social inequalities and inadequate job creation produced intense pressures that could only be solved by emigration. Mexico's high fertility rate was the result of an "unusually pronatalist cultural tradition," which placed an abnormally high cultural value on having children. Because of machismo and Marianismo, men were dominant and women were submissive, and having more children increased the social status of both men and women, or so they argued. "Motherhood is viewed as the essential purpose for a woman's existence," Ehrlich and his colleagues opined, adding that these pronatalist values were reinforced by the Catholic Church (Ehrlich, Bilderback, and Ehrlich 1979, 235).

In *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Chavez 2013), I argued that the media popularized Ehrlich's population projections with alarmist articles about demographic change and high Latina birthrates, even though available data, such as that presented above, did not support their arguments. Mainstream news stories about immigration have reported on academic research and census data. Rather than objective reporting, news stories can evoke alarmist concerns about immigration, population growth, and demographic change, a trend that has continued from the 1970s until more recently (Chavez 2013, 2001; Massey and Sánchez R. 2012). A host of conservative groups (e.g., the alt-right, Federation for American Immigration Reform, the Center for

Immigration Studies, the Tea Party) also invoke the immigrant threat narrative to raise an alarm about white decline, profound demographic change, and an ongoing Mexican invasion of the United States. The immigrant threat also serves to promote their views on curtailing immigration. Into this volatile mix are more fringe groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, border militias, and the Proud Boys (Stern 2019; Belew 2019). At the core of this immigrant threat narrative are anxieties over birthrates (too low for whites, too high for racial others), "immigrant invasions," "racial replacement," "racial dilution," and immigrants who refuse to assimilate.

The mainstream media's representation of undocumented immigration in the 1970s is an example of alarmist journalism that evoked an immigrant-threat narrative. For example, the impact of the 1965 immigration law had barely started to be felt when *U.S. News & World Report* published "How Millions of Illegal Aliens Sneak into the U.S." as its cover story on July 22, 1974. Some six months later it followed up with "Rising Flood of Illegal Aliens: How to Deal with It," as its February 3, 1975, lead article. On April 25, 1977, *U.S. News & World Report* announced on its cover: "Border Crisis: Illegal Aliens Out of Control," followed by "Time Bomb in Mexico: Why There'll Be No End to the Invasion by 'Illegals'" on July 4, 1977. The "time bomb" was the foreign threat of Mexican women's fertility rates that would lead to massive emigration to the United States. On July 5, 1976, *Time* magazine told the nation that "the new immigrants . . . are changing the face of America," by which they meant more nonwhite faces and fewer white faces (Chavez 2001). These headlines used words such as "millions," "sneak," "flood," "out of control," "no end to the invasion," "time bomb," and "changing face of America," all of which signal threat and alarm. The image that is evoked in these news stories is one of countless uncontrolled immigrants sneaking into the country, or worse, invading, laying waste (flood) to the nation, and pushing the white majority into demographic decline.

These alarmist magazine stories did not go unnoticed by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), which has been concerned about the rising numbers of nonwhite immigrants entering the United States for more than a century (Belew 2019). On October 27, 1977, David Duke, then the twenty-seven-year-old Grand Dragon of the KKK, held a press conference to announce Klan Border Watch. His intention was to have the KKK patrol the U.S.-

Mexico border in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas ("That Time David Duke . . ." 2016). A photograph of David Duke, at the border, looking out of a car window with "Klan Border Watch" stenciled on the door circulated widely in the media at the time. Duke said, "We will be here as long as it takes to meet the response of the illegal alien problem" ("Klan's Border Patrols Begin" 1977). Duke's actions did not reduce undocumented immigration, but they did receive a great deal of media attention, underscoring the U.S.-Mexico border as a site of immigration political theatre, while simultaneously harassing and intimidating border crossers. In the next decades, many groups, such as the Minuteman Project, the United Constitutional Patriots, and others would engage in vigilante actions along the U.S.-Mexico border (Chavez 2013; Belew 2019; Gilchrist and Corsi 2006; Romero 2019). (See image at https://dangerousminds.net/comments/that_time_david_duke_and_kkk_patrolled_the_mexican_border.)

In addition to the "invasion" trope, news stories in the 1980s increasingly focused on the growth of the U.S. Hispanic population, which was often discussed in relation to the declining proportion of whites in the U.S. population. The stories also told of the decline in European immigrants (Chavez 2001). *Newsweek*'s January 17, 1983, issue reported that between 1970 and 1980, the Hispanic population in the United States grew by 61 percent, largely because of immigration and higher fertility rates and because since 1965 46.4 percent fewer immigrants had entered from Europe. Hispanic fertility again was tied to the "immigration invasion" narrative.

Latina fertility was also a focus of news stories. Both *U.S. News & World Report* (March 7, 1983) and *Newsweek* (June 25, 1984) published covers with photographs of Mexican women being carried across water into the United States. *U.S. News & World Report*'s cover announced, "Invasion from Mexico: It Just Keeps Growing," and *Newsweek*'s title read, "Closing the Door? The Angry Debate over Illegal Immigration: Crossing the Rio Grande." The message was that the invasion carried the seeds of future generations. Women would have babies, create families, and soon communities of Latinos who would remain linguistically and socially separate would be clamoring for a reconquest of the United States (Chavez 2013).

Apprehensions about the changing demographic profile of the U.S. population were newsworthy in the 1990s, with the "browning of America" idea gaining increasing currency in the press. By then, white European immigrants had radically declined in number, accounting for only 12 percent of post-1965 immigration. *Time* magazine mentioned this fact in 1990:

> The 'browning of America' will alter everything in society, from politics and education to industry, values and culture . . . The deeper significance of America becoming a majority nonwhite society is what it means to the national psyche, to individuals' sense of themselves and the nation—their idea of what it is to be American . . . While know-nothingism is generally confined to the more dismal corners of the American psyche, it seems all too predictable that during the next decades many more mainstream white Americans will begin to speak openly about the nation they feel they are losing. (Henry 1990)

In the early 1990s, the conservative magazine *National Review,* which arguably helped build the alt-right, carried essays by Peter Brimelow, John O. Sullivan, Lawrence Auster, and others who regularly railed against multiculturalism and "Third World" immigrants (Auster 1994; O'Sullivan 1994; Brimelow 1992; Nwanevu 2017). Peter Brimelow was at the forefront of these pundits, and his essay "Time to Rethink Immigration?" was a diatribe against the negative ways immigrants, especially Hispanics, were changing America, ideas which he expanded on in his book *Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster* in 1995 (Brimelow 1995, 1992). According to Brimelow, "Symptomatic of the American Anti-Idea is the emergence of a strange anti-nation inside the U.S.—the so-called 'Hispanics.' . . . Spanish-speakers are still being encouraged to assimilate. But not to America" (Brimelow 1995, 218–19). While concerned that nonwhite immigrants were changing America for the worse, Brimelow found that Hispanics were particularly troublesome because of biological and social reproduction issues. Brimelow targeted Hispanics as he railed against bilingualism, multiculturalism, multilingual ballots, citizenship for children of illegal immigrants, the abandonment of knowledge of English as a prerequisite for citizenship, the erosion of citizenship as the sole qualification for voting, welfare and education for ille-

gal immigrants and their children, and congressional and state legislative apportionment based on populations that include illegal immigrants.

A number of publications emphasizing similar themes soon followed. For example, books by Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Georgie Ann Geyer, Pat Buchanan, Samuel P. Huntington, Michelle Malkin, Victor David Hanson, and other conservative writers basically promoted a populist anti-immigrant and anti-Latino agenda (Schlesinger 1992; Malkin 2002; Buchanan 2002, 2006, 2011; Geyer 1996). Jeff Maskovsky and Sophie Bjork-James call such entreaties a "politics of rage," which "frame relatively privileged groups, especially those privileged along racial lines—as imperiled" (Maskovsky and Bjork-James 2020, 11). These publications spoke to people, particularly white American men, who felt displaced and resentful at being left behind by the "elites" who run the country in Washington, DC, and who control the media, who they felt often portrayed people like them as "rednecks" and ignorant, ignoring their pain resulting from their experiences of economic decline, government policies favoring the "elites," and perceived job competition from immigrants (Hochschild 2016; Mulligan and Brunson 2020).

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Understanding the appeal of the immigrant/Latino fertility threat to its intended audience requires us to consider a number of key factors. America experienced demographic trends, which began to develop in 1970 but accelerated during the Great Recession of 2008, that showed a decline in the proportion of the country's white population in relation to its total. Whites accounted for 79.6 percent of the U.S. population in 1980, but fell to 61.3 percent in 2016, and the Census Bureau projections indicate that the white population will constitute less than half (47 percent) of U.S. population by 2050 (Sáenz and Johnson 2018; Colby and Ortman 2014). Although Latina birthrates and fertility rates are often blamed, those rates have fallen significantly, as discussed above. But other important factors in white decline are also at play.

Low birthrates and fertility rates among U.S. white women, combined with an aging population, meant that in 2016 white deaths exceeded

births for the first time in U.S. history, according to an analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data (Sáenz and Johnson 2018). Whites have been dying faster than they are being born in California, Arizona, Florida, and twenty-three other states. Between 1999 and 2016, white births fell by 10.8 percent and the number of deaths rose by 9.2 percent, trends which influenced the decline of whites in the population (Sáenz and Johnson 2018). As Rogelio Sáenz and Kenneth M. Johnson (2018) noted:

> With significantly fewer white births and a rising number of deaths, natural increase (births minus deaths) actually ended in 2016. In that year, for the first time in U.S. history, data from the National Center for Health Statistics showed more white deaths than births in the United States. The white natural loss of 39,000 in 2016 compares to a natural gain of 393,000 in 1999. Both the growing number of deaths (up 180,000 between 1999 and 2016), and the declining number of births (down 252,000 between 1999 and 2016) contributed to the dwindling white natural increase and more recently to natural decrease. In 2016, whites accounted for 77.7 percent of all U.S. deaths, but just 53.1 percent of births.

An important factor affecting these trends is what some demographers are calling "deaths of despair." These deaths would include deaths by suicide, drug-induced deaths, accidental drug overdoses, and alcohol-related deaths. These deaths of despair have increased significantly among whites over the last decade (Sáenz and Johnson 2018). Drug overdoses, especially from oxycontin, the overconsumption of alcohol and cigarettes, and depression-induced suicides appear to explain part of this trend. But with fewer births than deaths, and an aging population, which means fewer women of child-bearing age, it is easy to see reasons for the decline in the white population. U.S. Census projections forecast that the non-Hispanic white population will shrink by about 19 million people by 2060, from 199 million in 2020 to 179 million in 2060 (Vespa, Armstrong, and Medina [2018] 2020, 3). By 2045, whites may no longer make up the majority of the U.S. population (Vespa, Armstrong, and Medina [2018] 2020, 7).

In addition, Douglas S. Massey and Magaly Sanchez R. (2012) have argued that the dramatic increase in economic inequality in the United States since the 1960s is an important reason for the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments. Figures 11.3 and 11.4 use data from the U.S. Census Bureau to update Massey and Sanchez R.'s tables on household income

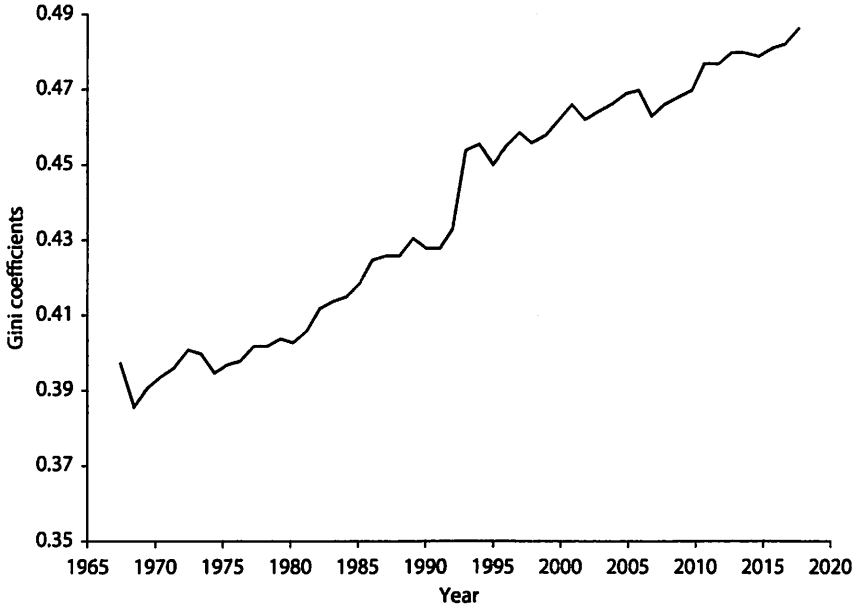

Figure 11.3. Household income inequality in the United States. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2019 (Semega et al. 2019). Note: The Gini coefficient summarizes the distribution of income into a single number. It ranges from zero, which is a perfectly equal distribution, to one, where only one person has all the money. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2019 (Semega et al. 2019).

inequality and the share of income earned by the top quintile and next two quintiles from 1967 to 2018 (their tables stopped at 2006) to show how inequality has continued apace since their important publication (Semega et al. 2019).

The Gini coefficient ranges from 0, which is a perfectly equal distribution of income, to 1, where only one person has all the money. As figure 11.3 indicates, in 1968, the Gini coefficient for income inequality was at a record low of 0.386. It would not be so low again. By 2018, the Gini coefficient had risen to 0.486, a 21 percent increase over five decades. The distribution of U.S. income in 2018 was more unequal than at any time since 1929, the beginning of the Great Depression (Massey and Sánchez R. 2012, 59).

Figure 11.4 presents the share of the income earned by the top quintile and next two quintiles taken together. We often hear that the rich keep

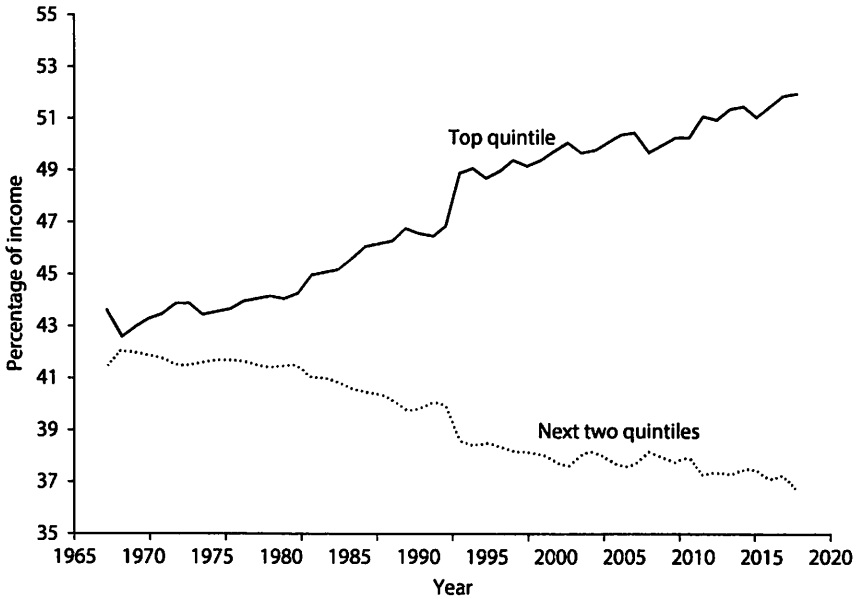

Figure 11.4. Share of income earned by top quintile and next two quintiles. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2019 (Semega et al. 2019).

getting richer, and this table shows that there is much merit to that view. In 1960, the top quintile earned 42.6 percent of the income, which was almost the same as the 42.1 percent of income earned by the next two quintiles. The middle and upper middle classes were not dissimilar to those at the very top at that time. But the fortunes of the top quintile continued to rise inexorably until they earned 52 percent of the wealth in 2018. In contrast, the next two quintiles saw their share of income plummet over the next five decades, to a low of 36.7 percent in 2018. Anti-immigrant rhetoric found its appeal in these wide income disparities. The first two years of the Trump presidency witnessed increases in earnings for the top earners and a decline in earnings for the rest.

Taken together, demographic change, white fertility decline, rising death rates, and economic decline can take their toll and create fertile ground for scapegoating immigrants and Latinos. As MIT political theorist John Tirman opined, these trends were "a key to the accumulating white anger that drives right-wing extremism to ever uglier heights. The

prospects for living as well as their parents, or fulfilling the dreams fostered by popular culture begin to unravel in one's forties, and the easy availability of alcohol, opiates, and other drugs is one release. So is fascistic political noise-making" (Tirman 2015).

In her essay titled "Dead, White, and Blue," journalist Barbara Ehrenreich argued that low-income whites perceived that they are losing ground in relation to other ethnic groups. "All of this means that the maintenance of white privilege, especially among the least privileged whites, has become more difficult and so, for some, more urgent than ever. Poor whites always had the comfort of knowing that someone was worse off and more despised than they were; racial subjugation was the ground under their feet, the rock they stood upon, even when their own situation was deteriorating" (Ehrenreich 2015).

Ehrenreich's observations from a left-liberal perspective were echoed from the conservative political Right by Tucker Carlson, the Fox News television program host. On March 19, 2018, he reflected on the demographic transformation that had occurred in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, between 2000 and 2016. Latinos represented 2 percent of the town's residents in 2000, but by 2016 were the majority.

> That's a lot of change. People who grew up in Hazleton return to find out they can't communicate with the people who now live there. And that's bewildering to people. That's happening all over the country. No nation, no society, has ever changed this much this fast... How would you feel if that happened in your neighborhood? It doesn't matter how nice the immigrants are. They probably are nice. Most immigrants are nice. That's not the point. The point is, this is more change than human beings are designed to digest. This pace of change makes societies volatile, really volatile, just as ours has become volatile. (Coaston 2018)

MAKING AMERICA GREAT AGAIN

I end this chapter with some reflections on how the immigrant/Latino threat narrative was articulated in immigration-related policies of Donald Trump's presidency. Scholars have argued that Trump's presidential campaign made explicit overtures to white nationalist ideology, that national identity should be built around white ethnicity and white people should

maintain a demographic majority, as a way to fire up his political base (Huber 2016; Taub 2016; Kaufmann 2019). Indeed, Trump and his supporters and key members of his staff and cabinet appear to adhere to the idea that immigrants are displacing the white ethnics who claim ownership of the nation that they allegedly founded.

For example, Donald Trump initiated his campaign for the American presidency on June 16, 2015, assailing Mexico and Mexican immigrants: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" ("Here's Donald Trump's Speech" 2015). During the CNN televised debate among the Republican Party's eleven presidential hopefuls on September 16, 2015, Trump emphasized assimilation. "We have a country where, to assimilate, you have to speak English . . . This is a country where we speak English, not Spanish" ("Wednesday's GOP Debate Transcript" 2015). This statement was soon followed up with another: "We also have to be honest about the fact that not everyone who seeks to join our country will be able to successfully assimilate. It is our right as a sovereign nation to choose immigrants that we think are the likeliest to thrive and flourish here" (Trump 2016).

White nationalists embraced Stephen K. Bannon's appointment as chief strategist after Trump's victory. Bannon's views as editor of Breitbart News expressed alt-right thinking, which some have criticized as making white nationalism palatable for mass consumption (Taub 2016). Jefferson Sessions, the former U.S. attorney general under President Donald Trump, offered his opinion that the 1924 National Origins Act, which established racial quotas, had been "good for America" (Bazelon 2017). Steven King, Republican congressman from Iowa and strong supporter of former president Trump, offered a very similar remark on May 12, 2017: "Culture and demographics are our destiny. We can't restore our civilization with somebody else's babies" (Schleifer 2017).

Stephen Miller, who began his Washington career as then senator Jeff Sessions's communications director, moved into the White House in 2016 as President Trump's architect of immigration enforcement and reform policies. Although it had long been suspected that Miller harbored

white nationalist sentiments, Miller's emails between 2015 and 2016 to the editors of Breitbart News, which were leaked in November 2019, showed that Far Right websites helped form his thinking on immigration. In his emails, Miller cited Peter Brimelow, founder of VDARE, an anti-immigration website, and whose views of nonwhite Americans, especially Hispanics, are discussed above. He also cited Jared Taylor, editor of *American Renaissance,* a white nationalist magazine, and others as sources for his views (Rogers and DeParle 2019). In his leaked emails, Miller makes arguments against the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, going so far as to indict Jeb Bush's support for DACA during the 2015 presidential campaign as a way to use "immigration to replace existing demographics" (Grenoble 2020). Miller also expressed his opposition to citizenship for the young undocumented immigrants known as DREAMers, as well as his opposition to birthright citizenship for the children of undocumented immigrants (Grenoble 2020).

The influence of the immigrant/Latino threat narrative can be seen in President Trump's relentless pursuit to eliminate undocumented immigration, drastically reduce refugee admissions, and promote the reduction of legal immigration in a way that would at the same time increase immigration from Europe. He also stigmatized the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants, whom he called "anchor babies," even to the point of denying them birthright citizenship (Chavez 2017). The goal of dramatically reducing future immigration in favor of Northern and Western Europeans, skilled laborers, and persons fluent in English was pursued vigorously on a number of fronts.

Although an extensive review of the Trump administration's immigration policies is beyond the scope this chapter, a brief list of important policies would include (Boghani 2019):

- banning people from majority-Muslim countries;
- reducing refugee admissions from 110,000 to 50,000, with even fewer in 2020;
- imposing a "wealth test" for immigrants, that denied entry to anyone the State Department believed would become a public charge, that is, might use public assistance or welfare in the United States;

- denying pregnant women temporary visas if the State Department believed they were traveling to give birth, an end run on the Fourteenth Amendment and birthright citizenship;
- adding to the backlog of pending green card applications, extending the processing time; and
- expediting deportations and deporting legal permanent residents who might have made errors in their applications.

The result of such policies was that legal immigration declined under President Trump. Persons obtaining legal permanent resident status fell from 1,183,505 to 1,096,611, a decline of 86,894 (–7.3%) between 2016 and 2018 fiscal years. The countries with significantly lower rates of immigration included Mexico, China, Vietnam, and South Korea (Anderson 2020). President Biden has reversed many of Trump's immigration policies, including the public charge policy that would have dramatically led to a decline in legal immigration from countries with low-income immigrants who might have at some future date relied on welfare assistance (NFAP 2020). Stephen Miller admitted that the Trump administration's temporary ban on immigration during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was to protect citizen workers from foreign competition, was part of a long-term strategy to curb legal immigration. In late April 2020, Miller told Trump supporters that the sixty-day ban was merely a pause, and that further restrictions on temporary workers were under consideration. Miller said, "The most important thing is to turn off the faucet of new immigrant labor . . . As a numerical proposition, when you suspend the entry of a new immigrant from abroad, you're also reducing immigration further because the chains of follow up migration that [sic] are disrupted. So the benefit to American workers is compounded with time" (Miroff and Dawsey 2020). Miller has been critical of the current family preference system for legal immigration, which he says results in chain migration. Miller clearly does not consider family reunification a good thing.

What I am calling the demographic narrative does not appear to have played a major role in recent immigration policies under Donald Trump. A debate over future immigration is possible, but the demographic narrative must be included, as well as the concerns of those who have experienced decades of growing economic inequality. Such a conversation would remind

those feeling aggrieved that perhaps the target of their anger is not immigrants and Latinos. Whites still earn more than Hispanics and Blacks at all steps of the income ladder. In 2016, whites in the 90th percentile of earners earned $133,529, compared to $76,847 for Hispanics. At the median percentile, whites earned $51,288 and Hispanics $30,400. And at the bottom 10th percentile, whites earned $15,094 while Hispanics earned $9,900. Between 1970 and 2016, whites gained in relative income compared to Hispanics, thus increasing economic inequality (Kochhar and Cilluffo 2018).

Also included in the conversation would be the importance of immigrant labor when the economy expands in order to continue that expansion. In addition, babies who grow up as educated members of society, with a path to citizenship if undocumented, are the future of the nation, not just the economy. However, immigration policies are often formulated not based on such conversations but on an ideology that values one type of people over others. Such policies could change American society dramatically. At the very least, they will alter who gets to come to America for the foreseeable future. A public discourse around immigration policies that emphasizes the threat narrative will only further stigmatize immigrants, Latina mothers, and children. It will also give license to intolerance and lead to divisive struggles over belonging and citizenship. Should the nation continue down this road, we are in for hard times indeed.

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