The Politics of a Majority-Minority Nation: Aging, Diversity, and Immigration

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SPRINGER PUBLISHING CO., 2018
“The dogmas of the quiet past are Inadequate to the stormy present... As our case is new, so we must think and act anew...”

- President Abraham Lincoln (1862)
Backdrop

• We live in interesting times... actually very interesting times
• Much in the news and the world about change, debates, and dilemmas
• Yet much hope, opportunity and acting on the future
Context

• Aging is a blessing and a longevity dividend
• Living longer, growing older, with fewer disabilities
  ▪ A gift
• Those who serve older persons and make up the “aging network”
  ▪ Are doing the lords work
• Those who advocate and those who preserve and protect our nation’s hard-won benefits
  ▪ Are to be commended
• Those who commit to serving others and to train to work in the field of aging – an exciting and multidisciplinary endeavor
  ▪ Will always be relevant, needed and important
The Authors’ Motivations, Points of View, and Preferences

• We believe: in public service, in partnerships with public and private entities
  ▪ That government can do good and be efficient
• That integrity, facts and reason matter
• That the common good transcends ideology, partisanship and SES class
The Headlines/Takeaways (if you need to leave early)

- The nation will change profoundly by 2050 aka “A Losing War on Demography.” (Frey, 2018)

- We will face in our lifetime an aging society becoming more diverse

- The need to prepare for a majority-minority society is now
  - The young, emerging and diverse populations are the future work force and taxpayers

- The debates and divisive rhetoric about immigrants, illegals, refugees and racial/ethnic groups are not healthy, but we’ve been through this before

- Those who are uncomfortable with change, diversity, immigrants and globalization are largely sincere and deserve our attention

- The U.S.A. is undergoing a crucible which in time can lead to a new social contract based on compassion, understanding and public and private support
Setting the Stage

• Momentous changes: by 2050, a doubling of the older population 65 and over (the aging of baby boomers) and minorities becoming the Majority (Latinos, Asians, African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants)

• Changing longevity and fertility rates
  ▪ Latinos and Asians living longer and having more children
  ▪ Non-Hispanic Whites reversing life expectancy and having fewer children

• The Politics of Aging
  ▪ 2008 and 2012: Obama wins every age group except for those aged 65 and over
  ▪ Trump voting base heavily White, older and less than college education

• What to make of all this?
A Conceptual and Reality Based Framework

• A) The Politics of Aging
• B) The Economics of Aging
• C) Diversity and Immigration politics
• A Divided America vs E Pluribus Unum
The Preconditions of Majority-Minority Nation

• We’ve been through this before with one big difference

• The history of immigration to the USA – Fear to Change to Acceptance
  ▪ The magic of assimilation and acculturation leading to the next Americas

• Lesson – Each group faces similar discomfort and resistance yet through Founding documents and democratic principles we recreate “Americans”

• America’s peculiar ideological values (reread Founding documents)
  ▪ Why Americans vote against their own interests
What All This Means for Today

• A) The Politics of Aging
  ▪ From age based to needs based?

• B) The Economic of Aging
  ▪ Economics and social disparities

• C) Diversity and Immigration Politics
  ▪ Myths and realities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.1</th>
<th>U.S. Population Racial/Ethnic Composition as Projected to Change by 2050</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>2010 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White*</td>
<td>64.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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*Percent may not sum to total due to rounding.

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<th>TABLE 4.1</th>
<th>Share of Families Aged 32–61 With Retirement Account Savings by Race, 1995–2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Non-Hispanic White (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>65</td>
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What All This Means for Today

FIGURE 2.3  U.S. life expectancy, in years, at age 65 by race/ethnicity and gender, 2006.
What Next: The Future of Aging, Diversity and Immigration

• The big challenges
  ▪ Fiscal Unsustainability (debts and deficits)
  ▪ Environment, technology and polarization

• The big advantages
  ▪ See above (diversity, legacy, history and democracy)
What Next: The Future of Aging, Diversity and Immigration

• The next steps
  1. Restructuring aged-based programs and entitlements to a 21st century business model
  2. Who will care for us? The Great Equalizer: Immigrants/foreign workers and long term care
  3. Recommit to newcomers and reimpose responsibility
  4. We are in this together – Our collective fate
  5. Rebuilding Coalitions, revising public narratives and renewing the social contract
This too shall pass --- Prepare, plan and invest in the next America
Sources and Acknowledgments


• Acknowledgments to Mitchell Kodama, UCLA student researcher, for invaluable editing and assistance of this presentation