

Taking the Oath: An Analysis of Naturalization in California and the United States

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Foreword

Over the past 30 years, the number of immigrants in the United States who have chosen to become citizens has increased dramatically—from 100,000 in 1969 to over a million in 1996. Yet, in spite of this large number, over half of all immigrants are not citizens—and the naturalization rate is even lower in California. Four of PPIC’s researchers decided to find out why, and they present their results in this report.

The authors find two primary reasons for California’s lower naturalization rates. First, many of the state’s immigrants are ineligible for naturalization because they have entered the country illegally; second, many of the eligible immigrants have characteristics that are associated with lower rates of naturalization.

The good news is that over the past several years, naturalization rates in California have been picking up. The authors attribute this to the amnesty offered to unauthorized immigrants in the late 1980s and perhaps to the political environment of the early 1990s. In 1994,

California voters passed Proposition 187, seeking to prevent illegal immigrants from receiving social services, such as schooling for their children. There was talk about restricting services and benefits for legal immigrants as well. In the latter case, immigrants who were eligible for naturalization may have realized that the best way to protect themselves from such legislation was to become citizens.

These and other findings in this study provide a much richer picture of immigration and naturalization in California than has been painted to date. This portrait, combined with earlier PPIC research estimating the undocumented immigrant population, identifying the scale of return migration to Mexico, and measuring the consequences of immigrant flows for the state's income disparity, suggests that there is still much to be learned about the process of immigration to California. It is very clear, however, that strident characterizations of the state's economy either as being in imminent decline due to immigration flows or as having an infinite capacity to absorb each new wave are much too simplistic and unrealistic for serious policy debate. This analysis suggests that there is still much fine-tuning to be done before the picture is brought into focus.

David W. Lyon
President and CEO
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Summary

Citizenship in the United States is no longer based on membership in a specific national or ethnic group but is instead conferred on all people born in the United States as well as on legal immigrants who meet certain requirements. Naturalization—the conferring of U.S. citizenship on immigrants—merits analysis for several reasons:

- Naturalization is an indicator of an immigrant’s level of identification with and adaptation to life in the United States.
- Naturalization confers the right to vote.
- Citizenship status determines eligibility for certain government programs.
- Naturalization affects future legal immigration flows into the United States.

With the arrival of large cohorts of immigrants to the United States during the past two decades, immigrant adaptation and assimilation have become key areas of concern for policymakers and researchers. In her statement to Congress as Chair of the U.S. Commission on Immigration

Reform, Barbara Jordan described the “civic incorporation of newcomers” as an essential part of immigration policy and claimed that “naturalization is the most visible manifestation of Americanization.” Although naturalization is neither a prerequisite for participation in civic life nor confirmation of economic success, it does serve as an indicator of an immigrant’s level of identification with and adaptation to life in the United States. In addition, since naturalization confers the right to vote, it alters the political landscape of the nation. Furthermore, citizenship status has been used in recent legislation passed in Washington to restrict access to various government programs. Finally, because U.S. immigration law gives priority to family reunification of U.S. citizens, trends in naturalization affect future patterns and levels of immigration.

Despite its importance, naturalization has received little attention from policy researchers at the state level. In a state like California, with large numbers of noncitizens, the lack of such research is particularly problematic.

Study Objectives

In this report, we examine the naturalization of immigrants in California and the United States. We seek to understand naturalization behaviors of immigrants in California and in specific California counties by comparing patterns and trends in naturalization rates in the state with those in the rest of the country. Our objective is to answer the following questions:

- What factors are associated with naturalization?
- Do California immigrants have a different propensity to naturalize? If so, why?

- How and why do naturalization rates vary across counties in California?
- How has the propensity to naturalize changed over time?
- What role should the state and local governments play in encouraging immigrant naturalization?

Research Approach

We used numerous data sets and several analytical techniques. Data used in the study include the 1990 Census Public Use Microdata Sample, the March Supplements of the Current Population Survey (CPS) for 1996 and 1997, and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) data on annual naturalizations and legal entries. We also conducted a survey of county welfare offices in November and December 1997 to identify county efforts to encourage naturalization among immigrants receiving welfare.

With the census and CPS, it is impossible to identify whether immigrants are legal or unauthorized residents of the United States. Some of the people in the sample may not be eligible for naturalization. This is especially problematic for Mexican immigrants, since Mexico has a large number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States. However, in a previous PPIC report on immigrants from Western Mexico, Reyes (1997) found that most unauthorized immigrants return to their country of origin soon after migration. Only about one-third stay in the United States for longer than five years. Hence, restricting the sample to those who have resided in the country for longer than five years should eliminate a large proportion of unauthorized immigrants from the sample. We also restricted the sample to foreign-born people

who were older than 18 at the time of the survey, since that is the minimum age required for naturalization.

Even with their limitations, the census and the CPS provide the most comprehensive set of socioeconomic and demographic variables available for all foreign-born persons in the United States at a particular moment in time. These data sets are also large nationally representative surveys, allowing for a careful analysis of naturalization. In the absence of longitudinal data on legal immigrants, these are the best data sets available to study naturalization.

We used logistic regression models and 1990 census data to estimate factors most strongly related to naturalization in the United States, California, and the counties of the state. We used logistic regression models with the 1996 and 1997 CPS data to estimate recent temporal trends in naturalization propensities. We used survival models and INS administrative data to evaluate long-term trends.

Findings

- Even though the number of immigrants naturalizing in the United States has increased over time, the naturalization rate among eligible immigrants declined substantially from a high of 75 percent in 1970 to 55 percent in 1995. Most of the decline can be attributed to a decrease in the length of time of residence in the United States. In the past few years, however, naturalization rates have increased. The large surge in naturalizations in the 1990s may have been a response to perceived anti-immigrant policies, which might have mobilized some immigrants to naturalize and participate in the political process. The surge in naturalizations is also the result of an increase in the population eligible to naturalize as a result of the

amnesty program of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

- The likelihood of naturalization strongly depends on the immigrant's level of adaptation to the United States, but this is mediated by his/her social networks.
- California has one of the lowest rates of naturalization in the nation for two reasons: a greater ineligibility of its immigrant population because of a high concentration of unauthorized immigrants, and a population of legal immigrants having characteristics associated with low naturalization rates.
- Naturalization rates vary more across California counties than across states. This is largely explained by differences in the characteristics of the immigrant population between counties.
- Most California counties engaged in some effort to naturalize their immigrant populations after the passage of welfare reform in 1996. However, there is a great deal of variation across counties in terms of naturalization activities, based on each county's immigrant population, perceived impact of welfare reform, and the number of community-based organizations.

California's low naturalization rates are not surprising, given the characteristics of the state's immigrant population, particularly its high proportion of unauthorized immigrants. Nevertheless, the very low rates do suggest that California faces unique challenges. With the largest immigrant population in the United States and the second lowest naturalization rate among the states, California has a very large disenfranchised population. The vast majority of noncitizen immigrants in California are legal residents of the United States. The inability of many Californians to participate in the political process means that

public policies in the state, especially policies established through the initiative process, do not adequately represent the views of all Californians.

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1. Introduction

Citizenship in the United States is no longer based on membership in a specific national or ethnic group but is instead conferred on all persons born in the United States as well as on legal immigrants who meet certain requirements.¹ Naturalization—the conferring of U.S. citizenship on immigrants—merits analysis for several reasons. In the context of immigration research, naturalization is important because it serves as a measure of an immigrant’s adaptation to and participation in broader American society. From a political standpoint, naturalization is important because it confers the right to vote. Naturalization also affects future patterns and levels of immigration because U.S. immigration law gives priority to family reunification of American citizens. Finally, citizenship has taken on new importance as it now determines eligibility

¹At one time, people of certain nationalities could not become citizens. For example, the Chinese Exclusionary Act of 1882 banned Chinese immigrants from U.S. citizenship.

for certain public assistance programs following welfare reform legislation passed in 1996.²

Despite its importance, naturalization has received little attention from policy researchers in California. In a state like California, which has large numbers of noncitizen immigrants, the lack of such research is particularly problematic, because a substantial proportion of the state's population is disenfranchised from the political process, underrepresented, and unable to qualify for many social services. We do not understand why so many immigrants in California have not naturalized, and thus we have limited knowledge of what can or should be done to encourage naturalization. In this report, we seek to understand naturalization behavior by comparing patterns and trends in naturalization in California with those in the rest of the country. Our objective is to answer the following questions:

- What factors are associated with naturalization in the United States, and how do these factors operate in California?
- How has the propensity to naturalize changed over time?
- How and why do naturalization rates vary across counties in California?
- What role do state and local governments play in encouraging immigrant naturalization?

In the next chapter, we discuss in greater detail the social and political importance of naturalization. Chapter 3 presents our data and

²Naturalization provides immigrants with other benefits as well. For example, students qualify for financial aid only if they are U.S. citizens; Social Security payments for noncitizens living abroad are reduced by 15 percent; many public safety and government positions require citizenship; and there are even restrictions on the types of tax deductions for surviving spouses of noncitizens.

methods. Chapters 4 through 6 present our findings—Chapter 4 identifies immigrant characteristics associated with the propensity to naturalize, Chapter 5 evaluates temporal trends in naturalization rates, and Chapter 6 identifies the ways in which the state and county governments have encouraged naturalization. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the findings and how they relate to policy.

2. Why Does Naturalization Matter?

Researchers believe that as immigrants adapt to life in the United States, expand their families, and improve their social and economic standing, they become more attached to U.S. society. This, in turn, encourages them to participate in the political process and to become more socially integrated, leading to naturalization (Bernard, 1936; Liang, 1994). Thus, naturalization serves as a measure of an immigrant's adaptation to and participation in broader society. Low rates of naturalization could indicate that a significant portion of the country's and the states' population is isolated from mainstream society, disenfranchised from the political process, and underrepresented.

With the arrival of large numbers of immigrants during the past two decades, immigrant adaptation has become a key area of concern to policymakers and researchers. In its report to Congress, the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform stated that naturalization is "the most visible manifestation of civic incorporation as well as a crucial

component of the Americanization process” (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997). In her letter to Congress, Barbara Jordan, Chair of the Commission, urged Congress to “provide full support for efforts to encourage and facilitate the naturalization process” (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997).

Although naturalization is neither a prerequisite for participation in civic life nor confirmation of economic success, it does serve as an indicator of an immigrant’s level of identification with and adaptation to life in the United States. In California, which has a large number of immigrants, naturalization patterns and trends provide an important measure of the extent to which all Californians choose and are able to fully participate in the life of the state.

Because naturalization confers the right to vote, increases in naturalization alter the political landscape of the nation and especially the state. Large increases in immigrant naturalization and voting have been cited as important factors in the outcomes of some recent California elections.¹ The importance of changes in California’s voting population is apparent to political parties in the state. For example, an internal report by the staff of the Assembly Republican caucus notes that the decline in registered Republicans is “indicative of the GOP’s inability to come to grips with the state’s changing demographics, economics, and political trends” (*Los Angeles Times*, Sunday, August 17, 1997). Both the 1998 Democrat and Republican gubernatorial nominees opposed the June 1998 initiative that restricted bilingual education in the state, seeking to capture the immigrant vote.

¹Latino and immigrant votes have been cited as key factors in Loretta Sanchez’s win over Robert Dornan in an Orange County congressional district race in 1996 and in the passage of a \$2.4 billion school bond for the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1997.

Naturalization also has implications for immigration trends in the future (Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1986). Although recent proposals have called for a reduction in the importance of family reunification in U.S. immigration law, current law still gives priority to family reunification. For example, in recent years a large proportion of the immigrants who were granted legal permanent residency status in this country were related to a U.S. citizen. Once an immigrant naturalizes, the immigrant's spouse, parents, children, and siblings are eligible to immigrate to the United States and are exempt from any numerical limitation.

Recently, naturalization has taken on added importance, because citizenship status is now used to determine eligibility for certain social benefits. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 is the first legislation in decades to make a distinction between citizens and noncitizens in terms of eligibility to receive certain social services. Although the legislation mandated significant cuts in benefits to immigrants, most benefits were reinstated for current immigrant groups (those who entered the United States before August 22, 1996). However, except for refugees, new entrants are no longer eligible to receive most federally funded social services until after naturalization or after 40 quarters of employment in the United States. This could eventually affect county programs such as general assistance, because counties will become the providers of last resort for immigrants no longer eligible for federally funded social services. Some counties in California responded to the 1996 legislation by encouraging naturalization, seeking to shift the burden of providing benefits back to the federal government.

Finally, naturalization is especially important in California, the state with the largest immigrant population in the country. California is home to close to one-third of the adult immigrant population in the United States. Although the vast majority of the immigrant population in the state are legal immigrants, most of them have not naturalized (see Table 2.1). Furthermore, naturalization rates for immigrants in California are substantially lower than those for immigrants in the rest of the nation: California ranks 49th of the 50 states in terms of naturalization rates. With the notable exception of Texas, in other high-immigration states (New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Illinois) over 50 percent of the immigrant population has naturalized, compared to 43 percent in California. One reason for this low rate of naturalization is the large number of unauthorized immigrants. Other reasons are less obvious. We explore this in Chapter 4.

Table 2.1
Immigrants by State and Naturalization Status

State	Noncitizens	Naturalized Citizens	Total Immigrants	% Naturalized
<i>U.S. Total</i>	<i>6,437,336</i>	<i>7,149,008</i>	<i>13,586,344</i>	<i>53</i>
Montana	2,434	7,841	10,275	76
South Dakota	1,326	3,649	4,975	73
West Virginia	3,425	8,972	12,397	72
Pennsylvania	77,234	196,731	273,965	72
Ohio	55,071	139,284	194,355	72
Delaware	4,886	11,327	16,213	70
Missouri	17,552	40,349	57,901	70
Vermont	4,275	9,585	13,860	69
Alaska	4,886	10,905	15,791	69
Hawaii	36,884	81,860	118,744	69
Indiana	22,859	47,238	70,097	67
New Hampshire	10,560	21,786	32,346	67
Alabama	9,299	19,115	28,414	67

Table 2.1 (continued)

State	Noncitizens	Naturalized Citizens	Total Immigrants	% Naturalized
North Dakota	2,255	4,635	6,890	67
Nebraska	6,283	12,388	18,671	66
Kentucky	6,998	13,614	20,612	66
Michigan	94,551	182,530	277,081	66
South Carolina	11,760	22,446	34,206	66
Maine	10,844	19,730	30,574	65
Wisconsin	29,539	53,396	82,935	64
Mississippi	5,319	9,303	14,622	64
Connecticut	78,520	133,388	211,908	63
Arkansas	6,533	10,892	17,425	63
Iowa	10,662	17,528	28,190	62
New Jersey	263,121	431,482	694,603	62
Kansas	14,665	23,801	38,466	62
Utah	15,106	24,143	39,249	62
Minnesota	27,803	44,021	71,824	61
Tennessee	15,429	23,655	39,084	61
Washington	89,001	133,764	222,765	60
Oregon	36,990	54,747	91,737	60
Colorado	39,903	58,986	98,889	60
Wyoming	2,500	3,604	6,104	59
Massachusetts	166,020	237,266	403,286	59
New York	855,359	1,160,260	2,015,619	58
Idaho	7,920	10,696	18,616	57
North Carolina	32,613	43,617	76,230	57
Virginia	85,287	111,753	197,040	57
Louisiana	26,787	34,287	61,074	56
Oklahoma	19,010	24,058	43,068	56
Maryland	92,536	116,655	209,191	56
Illinois	300,354	374,322	674,676	55
Rhode Island	30,072	36,960	67,032	55
Georgia	49,118	59,226	108,344	55
Nevada	33,230	39,165	72,395	54
Florida	572,110	662,319	1,234,429	54
Arizona	91,111	94,910	186,021	51
New Mexico	28,446	28,578	57,024	50
California	2,396,853	1,777,807	4,174,660	43
Texas	612,107	445,423	1,057,530	42

SOURCE: Authors' tabulations from the 1990 census.

NOTE: Immigrants in the United States less than five years or younger than 18 years of age are excluded.

3. Research Approach

We examined numerous data sets and employed several methods to evaluate naturalization rates in California and the United States. To identify factors related to naturalization, we used descriptive statistics and regression models with 1990 census data. To evaluate temporal trends in naturalization, we used Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) administrative data and 1996 and 1997 Current Population Surveys (CPS). To evaluate naturalization patterns across California counties, we relied on 1990 census data. Finally, to identify county efforts to encourage naturalization, we conducted our own survey of the state's 58 counties.

Data Sources

To estimate and analyze naturalization rates and recent trends, we used the 5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) for the 1990 census, and the 1996 and 1997 CPS March Supplements. The census and the CPS contain information on individuals and households, as well

as region-specific data. We attached aggregate data on the country of origin and some characteristics of the destination to the individual records. In addition to detailed social, economic, and demographic characteristics for all members of a household, census and CPS data contain information on period of immigration, country of birth, and citizenship status.

The census and CPS are the largest and most recent nationally representative samples of the nation's population. However, these data are not without limitations. The naturalization status of immigrants is overreported in censuses (Passel and Woodrow, 1984; Passel, 1996; Warren and Passel, 1987) and it is progressively worse for earlier decennial censuses, rendering unreliable 1970 census data and any census estimates of long-term trends in naturalization. For this reason, we used only the 1990 census to identify factors related to naturalization. We used the 1996 and 1997 CPS data to evaluate the large increases in naturalization that occurred between those surveys, and we used administrative data to estimate long-term trends in naturalization. We could not use earlier years for the CPS because respondents were not asked about their citizenship status in the CPS until 1994, and there are substantial problems with the 1994 and 1995 CPS (Passel, 1996).

Census and CPS data do not include information on the timing of naturalization, only whether or not immigrants had naturalized by the time of the census or survey. Hence, the causal order between naturalization and such factors as marriage, childbirth, education, occupational status, self-employment, and home ownership is ambiguous. The fact that these factors are strongly associated with naturalization does not necessarily mean that they are important determinants of naturalization. They may be consequences of

naturalization or may be jointly determined by some other unmeasured factors. For example, home ownership and naturalization are strongly positively correlated. It is plausible that home ownership predates naturalization and represents a long-term investment in the United States, leading to increased propensities to naturalize. On the other hand, home ownership might postdate naturalization and might be partly a result of an enhanced sense of security in the United States that is a consequence of becoming a citizen. Finally, home ownership and naturalization might both reflect an improvement in socioeconomic standing and thus be jointly determined by some other factor. Despite such problems, our models do allow us to determine the relative importance of the relationship between naturalization and a host of personal, institutional, and geographic characteristics. Identifying factors strongly associated with naturalization are at least suggestive of the determinants of naturalization.

Finally, with the census and CPS it is impossible to identify whether immigrants are legal or unauthorized residents of the United States. Some of the people in the sample may not be eligible for naturalization. This is especially problematic for Mexican immigrants, since a large number of them are unauthorized. However, in a previous PPIC report on immigrants from Western Mexico, Reyes (1997) found that most unauthorized immigrants return soon after migration. Only about one-third remain in the United States for longer than five years. Hence, restricting the sample to those who have been in the United States for longer than five years should eliminate a large proportion of the unauthorized immigrants in the sample. We also restricted the sample to foreign-born people who were older than 18 at the time of the survey,

because this is a requirement for naturalization (INS, 1991; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990).¹

Even with their limitations, the census and the CPS provide the most comprehensive set of socioeconomic and demographic variables available for all foreign-born persons in the United States at a particular moment in time. These data sets are also large nationally representative surveys, allowing for a careful analysis of naturalization. In the absence of longitudinal data on legal immigrants, these are the best data sets available to study naturalization.

We use CPS data to evaluate short-term recent changes in naturalization trends, and we use INS administrative data to identify long-term temporal trends in naturalization. The INS administrative data provide aggregate information on naturalization and legal immigration to the United States over a long time period (1907–1996). Unfortunately, the data on naturalizations do not include information on year of immigration to the United States, so we are unable to conclusively estimate naturalization rates for successive cohorts of legal immigrants (the methodology section that follows discusses our estimation technique). The data also do not provide individual socioeconomic or demographic characteristics beyond place of destination for legal immigrants admitted to the United States and place of residence of persons naturalizing.

Finally, we conducted our own survey of counties in California to identify county efforts to encourage naturalization. The survey was

¹To qualify for naturalization, an immigrant must be at least 18 years of age, must have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, and must have lived in the country continuously for at least five years (three years in the case of the spouse of a U.S. citizen) and six months in the state from which he or she is applying for citizenship.

conducted in October and November 1997; participants were designated by each county welfare office in the state. The survey is discussed in Chapter 6, and the response rate of the participants is discussed in Appendix C.

Variables

Several hypotheses have emerged to explain differences in immigrants' propensities to naturalize. Some studies have focused on the influence of immigrants' adaptation experiences and demographic characteristics (Bernard, 1936; Krassowski, 1963). Others emphasize the influences of immigrants' cultural, economic, and structural assimilation into the host society (Barken and Khokhlov, 1980). Another set of studies argues that it is also important to examine the influences of country of origin and country of destination characteristics in the naturalization process (Portes and Mozo, 1985; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1986; Yang, 1994b). Despite their differences, all of the studies view naturalization as an outcome of immigrants' successful integration into the host society.

We examine the effect on naturalization of three different sets of factors:

1. Adaptation-related variables

- demographic characteristics (gender, age at time of migration, marital status, and whether or not the immigrant has children living in the same household), and years in the United States;
- socioeconomic characteristics (education, English proficiency, labor force status, income, and whether or not the person is receiving public assistance);

2. *Measures of social and physical capital* (percentage foreign-born at the community level, whether or not the spouse and children are U.S. citizens, spouse's order of arrival, whether or not the country of origin is a border country, and whether or not the person owns a house); and
3. *Location-specific characteristics*
 - characteristics of the country of origin (whether or not the immigrant is from one of the leading countries of origin, whether or not the country of origin allows dual citizenship, and per capita income in the country of origin);
 - characteristics of the destination at the community level (unemployment rate, mean income, and whether or not the immigrant resides in a high immigration state).

All of these variables are described in Table 3.1.

The first set of variables captures socioeconomic, demographic, and length-of-stay differences across immigrants. Researchers believe that as immigrants spend time in the United States, become more educated and more familiar with the culture and language, and are able to succeed economically, they are more likely to adapt in other aspects of life, such as naturalization and intermarriage (Liang, 1994). The likelihood of naturalization rises with improvements in socioeconomic status, and differences in naturalization across groups are the result of differences in duration, education, occupation, family income, and other personal characteristics (Bernard, 1936).

The second set of variables measures social and physical capital. Social networks are important factors in the naturalization decision and process. Immigrants who have family members or friends who have naturalized have easy access to information about naturalization. Naturalized citizens know more about the benefits and procedures of

Table 3.1
Definitions of Variables

Education	
GRADE8	=1 if person has fewer than 8 years of education, otherwise=0
NOHS	=1 if person has between 9 and 11 years of education, otherwise=0
HS	=1 if person graduated from high school, otherwise=0
SOMECOLLEGE	=1 if the person has some college education, otherwise=0
COLLEGE	=1 if the person graduated from college, otherwise=0
English proficiency	
ENGLISH	=1 if person speaks only English, otherwise=0
ENGVWELL	=1 if person speaks English very well, otherwise=0
ENGWELL	=1 if person speaks English well, otherwise=0
ENGNOTWELL	=1 if person does not speak English well, otherwise=0
ENGNONE	=1 if person does not speak English, otherwise=0
Labor force status	
EMPLOYED	=1 if the person was employed the week before the census year, otherwise=0
UNEMPLOYED	=1 if the person was unemployed the week before the census year, otherwise=0
Income	
INC10	=1 if earnings are less than \$9,999, otherwise=0
INC10-19	=1 if earnings are between \$10,000 and \$19,999, otherwise=0
INC20-29	=1 if earnings are between \$20,000 and \$29,999, otherwise=0
INC30-39	=1 if earnings are between \$30,000 and \$39,999, otherwise=0
INC40-49	=1 if earnings are between \$40,000 and \$49,999, otherwise=0
INC50UP	=1 if earnings are \$50,000 or more, otherwise=0

Table 3.1 (continued)

Public assistance	=1 if the person was on public assistance, otherwise=0
Gender	=1 if male, otherwise=0
Age at migration	
ARV18	=1 if immigrant younger than 18 when moved, otherwise=0
ARV18-35	=1 if immigrant between 18 and 35 when moved, otherwise=0
ARV36-53	=1 if immigrant between 36 and 53 when moved, otherwise=0
ARV54UP	=1 if immigrant older than 54 when moved, otherwise=0
Married	=1 if immigrant married at time of survey, otherwise=0
Children	=1 if immigrant has children living in the United States, otherwise=0
Years in U.S.	Continuous variable for years in the United States
Years in U.S. squared	Square of the number of years in the United States
Percent foreign	Percentage of SMSA ^a who are foreign-born
Citizen spouse	=1 if the immigrant's spouse is a U.S. citizen, otherwise=0
Citizen children	=1 if at least one child is a U.S. citizen, otherwise=0
Spouse's order of arrival	
FIRST	=1 if the immigrant's spouse arrived first, otherwise=0
SAME	=1 if the immigrant's spouse arrived at same time, otherwise=0
AFTER	=1 if the immigrant's spouse arrived afterward, otherwise=0
Citizen spouse	This variable is a interaction of the citizenship status of the immigrant's spouse and his or her order of arrival into the United States
Spouse's order of arrival	
Border country	=1 if country of origin is in North or Central America or Caribbean, otherwise=0
Home ownership	=1 if immigrant owns a home at time of survey, otherwise=0
Dual citizenship	=1 if country of origin has dual citizenship, otherwise=0
Per capita income	Per capita income in country of origin in 1990

Table 3.1 (continued)

Country of origin	A set of dummy variables for the leading countries of origin (Canada, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Laos, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam, and the rest of the world).
SMSA-unemp	Unemployment rate at SMSA
SMSA-income	Mean income at SMSA

^aStandard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

naturalization, and they can relieve immigrants' fears of the INS, thereby making the naturalization process easier. Marriage to a citizen makes the process quicker for immigrants, since it reduces the residence requirements of naturalization from five to three years. Hence, the greater the number of social ties, and the stronger the connections to naturalized immigrants or U.S. natives, the higher the propensity to naturalize.

Possessing physical capital in the United States may also increase people's propensity to naturalize. For example, purchasing a house is a long-term investment; it indicates an immigrant's determination to stay for a substantial period of time in the host country, which may lead to naturalization. It is difficult to determine the direction of causation, however. The accumulation of physical capital might partly be a consequence of naturalization rather than naturalization being a consequence of the accumulation of physical capital.

Other researchers emphasize the importance of residential segregation patterns in explaining differences in naturalization (Blau, 1977; Marston and Van Valey, 1979; Massey and Denton, 1987). Residential segregation affects naturalization primarily by reducing the

chances for social contact with mainstream society, but it also reinforces within-group rather than between-group interactions (Blau, 1977). The more within-group interaction immigrants have, the more likely their ethnic identity will be reinforced and the less likely they will become U.S. citizens (Portes, 1984). This hypothesis also predicts that the more contact immigrants have with sending countries the less likely they are to naturalize. Immigrants with relatively easy access to their countries of origin, and therefore more possibilities for frequent visits, have a lower propensity to naturalize.

Finally, the characteristics of the origin and the destination have implications for naturalization. Immigrants from different countries may have different incentives to naturalize. For example, immigrants from wealthy countries with generous social services packages may be less willing to give up those benefits for those available in the United States. And, as proposed above, proximity to country of origin could reduce immigrants' propensity to naturalize. Other characteristics of the country of origin—whether the country allows dual citizenship, its economic opportunities, and its political stability—could influence immigrants' loyalty to their home country and the social and economic costs of naturalizing in the United States. Finally, the economic conditions of the destination might affect not only the opportunities for social mobility for immigrants but also the immigrants' desire to naturalize.

Methodology

We employ various methods with a number of data sets to answer the questions posed in Chapter 1. In the first part of the analysis, we use descriptive and econometric techniques in conjunction with 1990 census

data to determine the factors associated with naturalization. In the econometric analysis, the decision to naturalize is modeled in a set of logit equations as a function of a set of variables described below, with the dependent variable being whether or not an immigrant has naturalized by the survey year. Through these models, we are able to simultaneously evaluate the relative importance of each factor on the probability of naturalization and determine which are strong predictors of naturalization. For example, we are able to determine whether Latinos have low rates of naturalization because they tend to have characteristics associated with low rates of naturalization (i.e., short stays in the United States, low levels of education, poor English proficiency, and low earnings) or whether there is something else about Latino immigrants that leads them to naturalize at lower rates.

We develop a second set of logit equations based on the 1990 census to study naturalization propensities in California compared to those in the rest of the nation, as well as differences between California counties. Using 1996 and 1997 CPS data, we develop a third set of logit equations that include a year dummy interacted with other variables to identify and specify groups most likely to have naturalized between March 1996 and March 1997. The results of the logit equations are presented in Appendix A. To more clearly present the results of the multivariate analysis, we simulate the probability of naturalization for an “average” immigrant, using the mean value of all independent variables in the model times their respective coefficients in the logit model (see Appendix A, Table A.1). The probability of naturalization generated from these simulations is not the rate of naturalization for the whole population but a propensity to naturalize for an “average” immigrant with a particular set of characteristics. These simulations allow us to show the percentage

change in naturalization that we would expect for an average individual when we change one variable at a time, *holding all other factors constant*, and are presented in Chapters 3 through 5.

To determine naturalization trends in California and the United States, we examine INS administrative data on the number of people naturalizing every year since 1907 and the number of legal immigrants entering the United States every year since 1902. In this work, we estimate annual naturalization rates among legal immigrants from 1960 through 1996. To estimate the population of legal immigrants, we age the immigrants who were admitted to the United States in a particular year by making assumptions about their rate of return (emigration) and mortality rates.² This generates annual estimates of the population eligible to naturalize, by years since legal admission.³ We age naturalized populations using a similar approach, generating annual estimates of the number of naturalized immigrants, by time since naturalization. Finally, to determine time in the United States for those naturalizing, we assume a schedule of naturalization rates, by U.S. duration.⁴

²We assumed emigration rates of five per 100 for the first five years since legal admission, and two per 100 for the next five years. The number of emigrants suggested by these rates is consistent with INS estimates. We assumed mortality rates of two per 1,000 for the first 15 years since legal admission, five per 1,000 for the next 10 years, 11 per 1,000 for the next 10 years, 28 per 1,000 for the next 10 years, and 85 per 1,000 for subsequent years. These mortality rates are based on 1980 mortality schedules by age and implicitly assume that legal immigrants are young adults at the time of their admission to the United States.

³To ensure that we have considered the large majority of immigrants in our annual estimates, we present our findings only for 1960 and later. By 1960, our estimate of legal immigrants includes those who have been in the United States for 58 years or less, and our estimate of the naturalized population includes those who have naturalized in the past 53 years.

⁴The schedule was estimated by combining INS estimates of cumulative naturalization rates over time in the United States for legal immigrants admitted in 1977 and 1982 with our own estimates of emigration and mortality. Contact the authors for details.

4. Factors Associated with Naturalization

The propensity to naturalize depends on a complex set of factors. In this chapter, we identify factors that are most strongly associated with naturalization in the United States and in California. This identification provides us with insight into the decision to naturalize, and allows us to specify groups that have been especially unlikely to naturalize.

Specifically, we seek to answer the following questions:

- What factors are associated with naturalization?
- Do California immigrants have a different propensity to naturalize? If so, why?
- How and why do naturalization rates vary within California counties?

To determine which factors are most important, we consider three sets of variables: measures of immigrants' human capital and adaptation, variables that capture immigrants' social and physical capital, and variables that consider the characteristics of immigrants' country of

origin and place of destination. In this chapter, we first discuss the factors most strongly related to naturalization and then examine California's naturalization rates and patterns.¹

Factors Associated with Naturalization in the United States

We find that the most important predictors of naturalization are those associated with immigrant adaptation and immigrant social capital. Immigrants who have been in the United States for long periods of time and who have high socioeconomic status are more likely to naturalize. We hypothesize that the importance of social capital is due, in part, to information sharing; that is, immigrants with social networks that include citizens are more likely to have knowledge about the process and benefits of naturalization.² The importance of adaptation and social capital suggests that policies that both accelerate immigrants' economic progress and integration into U.S. society and provide information about the requirements, process, and benefits of naturalization may lead to greater naturalization. However, independent of immigrants' personal characteristics, socioeconomic outcomes, and the characteristics of their destinations, there are substantial differences in the rate of naturalization by country of origin.

¹Except where noted, all of the tables and figures in this chapter exclude immigrants who have been in the United States less than five years and immigrants younger than 18 years old.

²The positive correlation between social capital and naturalization might also be the result of selectivity: Immigrants with certain characteristics may be more likely to both choose to naturalize and marry citizens. Hence, a greater propensity to naturalize by those married to citizens may be due not necessarily to information sharing about the benefits of naturalization but to some other factor not considered in this model (factors other than education, income, English proficiency, age, gender, country of origin, etc.) that make people both marry citizens and naturalize.

Immigrant Adaptation

The most important determinant of naturalization is time in the United States: The longer an immigrant has resided in this country, the more likely he or she is to naturalize, holding constant for age at time of arrival.³ As shown in Table 4.1, recent immigrants are less likely to have naturalized than immigrants who have resided in this country for some time. The rate of naturalization increases fairly steadily, with 65 percent of the immigrants who have been in the United States for 25 to 30 years becoming naturalized. Controlling for other factors, we still find that time in the United States is one of the most important predictors of naturalization, as shown in Figure 4.1. An immigrant who has been in the country for 20 years is almost twice as likely to naturalize as an otherwise similar immigrant who has been in the United States for only nine years.

Table 4.1
Naturalization Rates by Length
of Stay in the United States

Years in the United States	Naturalization Rate (%)
5–8	20
9–10	28
11–15	41
16–20	50
21–25	57
26–30	65
31–40	77
Over 40	90

SOURCE: 1990 census.

³Part of the increase in naturalization rates with time spent in the United States might result from a selection effect, as immigrants who are less successful or less attached to the United States (including those less likely to have naturalized) may be more likely to leave.

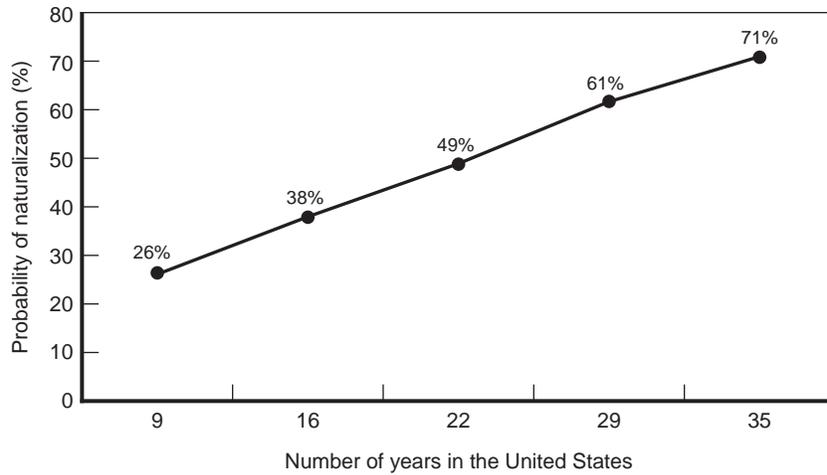


Figure 4.1—Simulated Probability of Naturalization by Length of Stay in the United States

In addition to length of stay in the United States, immigrants’ socioeconomic characteristics have a significant effect on naturalization.⁴ The ability to speak English, high levels of educational attainment, and higher incomes are all associated with higher rates of naturalization. Of these variables, the ability to speak English appears to be the most important predictor of naturalization. This is not especially surprising, because English proficiency is a requirement of naturalization.⁵ Even immigrants who speak only a little English are more likely to become naturalized than immigrants who do not speak English at all (see Table

⁴Many of these socioeconomic indicators are positively correlated. Thus, it is impossible to completely disentangle their individual effects on the probability of naturalization. For this reason, each indicator appears to have a small individual effect on naturalization, even though the socioeconomic standing of the immigrant is a strong predictor of naturalization.

⁵Under INS regulations, some immigrants are allowed to take their naturalization exam in their native tongue.

4.2). Controlling for all other factors, we still find that the ability to speak English is an important predictor of naturalization (see Figure 4.2). The average immigrant who speaks English well or very well or speaks only English is almost twice as likely to have naturalized than an otherwise similar immigrant who speaks no English. Even an immigrant who does not speak English well is 50 percent more likely to naturalize than an otherwise similar immigrant who does not speak English.

Table 4.2
Naturalization Rates by Ability to Speak English

	Naturalization Rate (%)
Speaks only English	66
Speaks English very well	60
Speaks English well	52
Speaks English not well	32
Does not speak English	16

SOURCE: 1990 census.

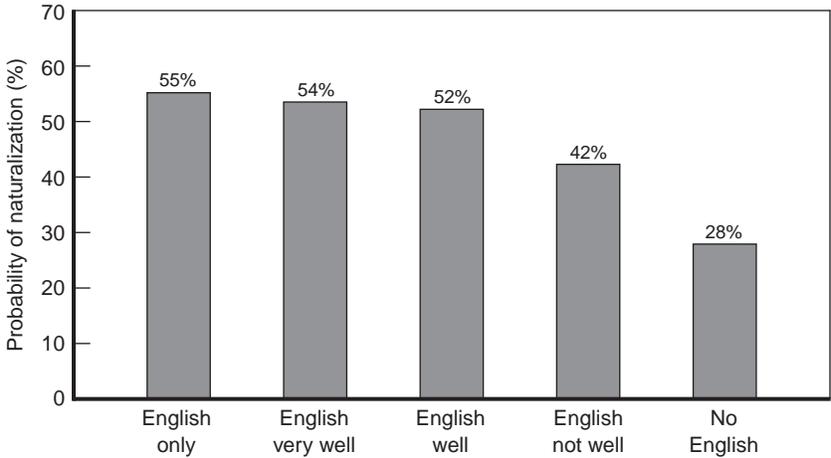


Figure 4.2—Naturalization Rates by English Proficiency, Controlling for Other Factors

Clearly, a major obstacle to naturalization for many immigrants is their lack of proficiency in English.

Relatively well-educated immigrants are more likely to naturalize than immigrants with little education (see Table 4.3). However, much of this effect can be attributed to other characteristics of well-educated immigrants—for example, proficiency in English rather than education itself. As seen in Figure 4.3, controlling for all other factors in our model, there is little variation in the probability of naturalization by education.

Similarly, immigrants who earn higher incomes in the United States are more likely to naturalize (see Table 4.4). Workers who earn more than \$50,000 per year are 50 percent more likely to have naturalized than those who earn less than \$10,000 per year. However, when we control for all other factors, the income effect is not quite as strong (see Figure 4.4).

Although they may not be particularly strong individually, the combined effect of these measures of adaptation is very strong.⁶

Table 4.3
Naturalization Rates by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Naturalization Rate (%)
8th grade or less	40
Some high school	47
High school graduate	56
Some college	59
College graduate	63

SOURCE: 1990 census.

⁶This discussion assumes that interactions among these variables are not significantly negative.

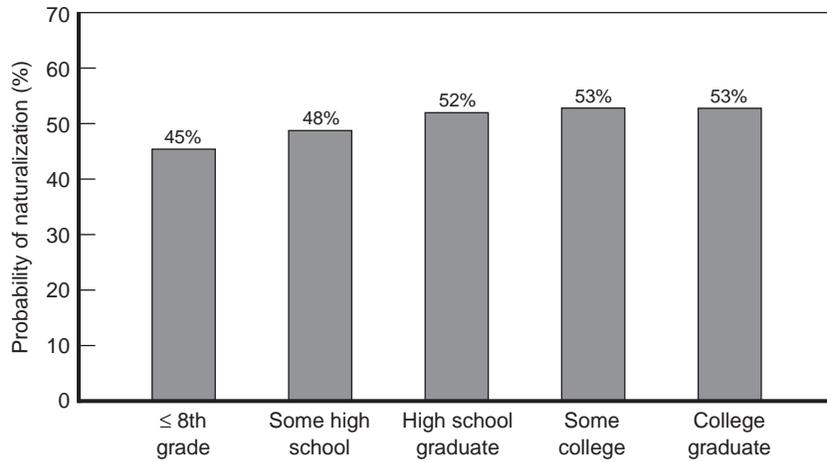


Figure 4.3—Naturalization Rates by Education, Holding Other Factors Constant

**Table 4.4
Naturalization Rates by Income**

Income (1989)	Naturalization Rate (%)
<10,000	46
10,000–19,999	50
20,000–29,999	58
30,000–39,999	64
40,000–49,999	68
50,000+	71

SOURCE: 1990 census.

Figure 4.5 shows that an immigrant who is a college graduate, speaks English very well, and has an income between \$30,000 and \$40,000 is close to two and one-half times more likely to naturalize than an otherwise similar immigrant with six years of education, who does not speak English well, and has an income of between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

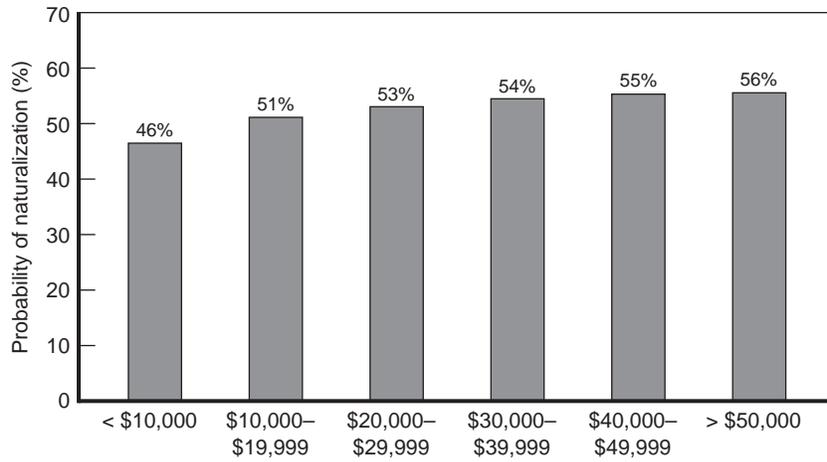


Figure 4.4—Naturalization Rates by Income, Controlling for Other Factors

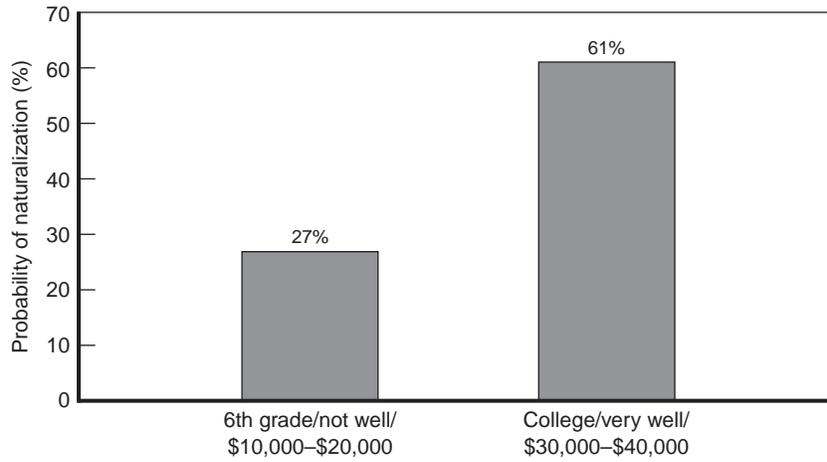


Figure 4.5—The Combined Effect of Education, English Proficiency, and Income on the Probability of Naturalization

One socioeconomic variable of particular current interest—the receipt of public assistance—is especially instructive in identifying potential motivations for naturalizing. Public assistance might be positively related with naturalization if we think that immigrants naturalize to apply for and receive benefits. On the other hand, public assistance might be negatively related with naturalization if we think that it is a measure of a lack of adaptation.⁷ We found that receipt of public assistance had a small negative association with naturalization. As shown in Figure 4.6, immigrants who received public assistance have naturalization rates about 5 percent *lower* than otherwise similar immigrants who did not receive public assistance. In other words, compared to other low-income, poorly educated immigrants who have

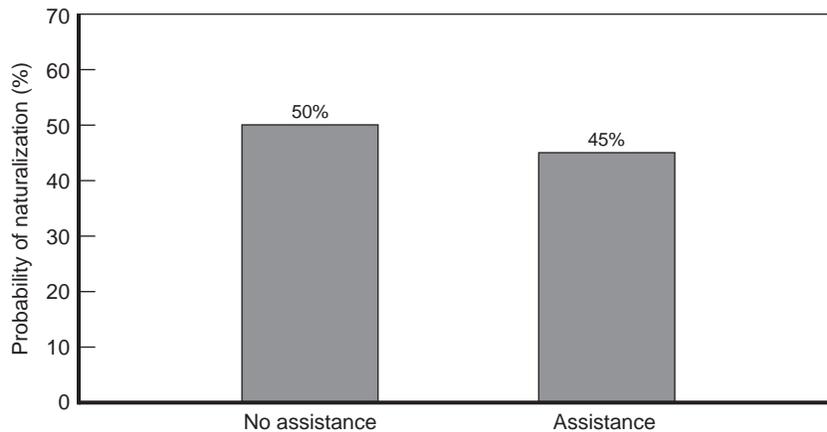


Figure 4.6—Naturalization Rates by Use of Public Assistance, Controlling for Other Factors

⁷Noncitizen immigrants may be less likely to apply for public assistance for fear of becoming a “public charge.” Many noncitizen immigrants who have received or who are receiving public assistance could theoretically endanger their legal permanent residency status by declaring themselves on public assistance.

been in the United States for similar amounts of time, those who received public assistance were less likely to naturalize.⁸

Social Capital

One of the most important findings of this study is that an immigrant's social capital is a powerful predictor of naturalization. Immigrants with close ties and contacts with U.S. citizens are much more likely to become naturalized than otherwise similar immigrants. We hypothesize that this is because immigrants with close ties and contacts to U.S. citizens gain a better knowledge of the naturalization process and its benefits.

Social capital, as measured by the presence and citizenship status of family members, is a particularly important factor in predicting naturalization. Marriage to a citizen suggests that an individual has a strong commitment to the United States and that such an immigrant may be more integrated into U.S. society. This might also imply that the immigrant has access to information about the process and benefits of naturalization, as noted above. Marriage to a U.S. native in particular could be expected to enhance contact with mainstream society and encourage naturalization, in addition to making the process quicker for immigrants, because it reduces the residential requirements of naturalization from five to three years. As shown in Table 4.5, immigrants married to U.S. citizens are much more likely to have become naturalized than unmarried immigrants. On the other hand,

⁸These findings are based on 1990 data and are, therefore, prior to welfare reform. However, we ran this same model with the most recent CPS data and obtained results similar to those described in this paragraph. We also interacted the 1997 dummy variable with public assistance to see if there was an increase in naturalization after welfare reform for those receiving public assistance. The variable was insignificant.

Table 4.5
Naturalization Rates by Marital Status

Marital Status	Naturalization Rate (%)
Not married	50
Married	54
Married to U.S. citizen	74
Married to noncitizen	24

SOURCE: 1990 census.

immigrants married to noncitizens are even less likely to naturalize than people who are not married. This may be because they have fewer interactions with mainstream society and little knowledge of the naturalization process. Marriage to a noncitizen might also indicate strong and continuing ties to the country of origin. These results hold when we control for other factors (as shown in Table A.1, Appendix A).

In addition to the citizenship status of an immigrant's spouse, the timing of the arrival of the spouse is also strongly predictive of naturalization, especially for immigrants with noncitizen spouses (see Table 4.6). Immigrants who have sent for their spouses are more likely to naturalize than immigrants whose spouses moved before or at the same time as they did. Naturalization makes the migration process easier for other family members. Hence, people who plan to move their families to this country may naturalize to resettle other family members without restrictions and waiting periods. Sending for a spouse also implies a strong commitment to permanent residence in the United States. Massey et al. (1987) argue that as immigrants acquire experience in the U.S. labor market and are able to secure stable employment, they send for their families and settle permanently in the United States.

Table 4.6
Naturalization Rates by Marital Status and
Timing of Arrival of Spouse

	Naturalization Rate (%)
Married to U.S. citizen	74
Arrived in U.S. before spouse	85
Arrived in U.S. at same time as spouse	85
Arrived in U.S. after spouse	63
Married to noncitizen	24
Arrived in U.S. before spouse	47
Arrived in U.S. at same time as spouse	15
Arrived in U.S. after spouse	14

SOURCE: 1990 census.

Similar findings emerge with regard to the presence and citizenship status of children. Immigrants with noncitizen children in the U.S. are substantially *less* likely to naturalize than immigrants with children born in this country (see Table 4.7). Such immigrants are even less likely to naturalize than immigrants without children or with children not living in the same household. But if their children are U.S. citizens, immigrants are at least as likely to naturalize as immigrants without children or with children not living in the same household. Holding constant other variables in the model, we find that immigrants with

Table 4.7
Naturalization Rates by Presence and
Citizenship Status of Children

	Naturalization Rate (%)
No children	55
With U.S. citizen children	54
With noncitizen children	13

SOURCE: 1990 census.

citizen children are almost twice as likely to have naturalized than are immigrants with noncitizen children.

The combined effect of these variables is even more dramatic than their individual effect, as we can see in Figure 4.7. An average immigrant who is either single or has no spouse present and has no children (or no children in the household) has a 28 percent probability of naturalization, compared with an 8 percent probability of naturalization for an immigrant with the same characteristics but who has a noncitizen wife and noncitizen children. However, holding all else constant, an average immigrant with children and a spouse who are U.S. citizens has an 82 percent probability of naturalization.

Less immediate social networks can be explored by considering populations that an immigrant might have contacts with. From the

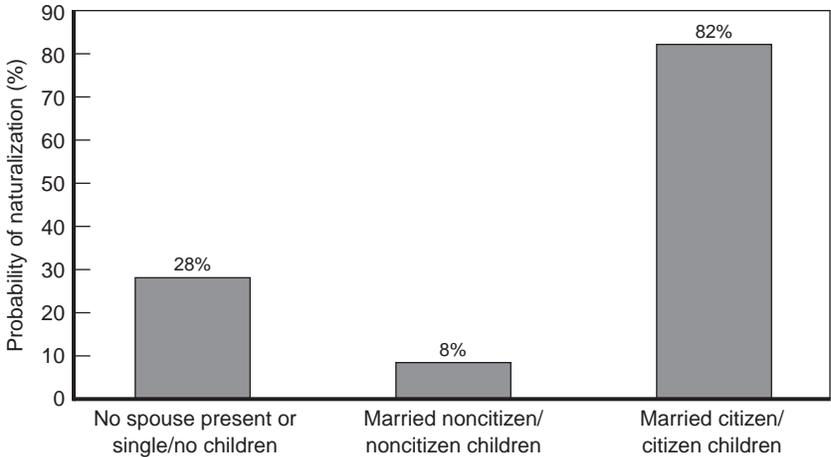


Figure 4.7—The Combined Effect of Spouse and Children’s Citizenship Status on the Probability of Naturalization

1990 census, we can identify substate populations in the area of destination for an immigrant. These areas, known as PUMAs (Public Use Microdata Areas) serve as a proxy for communities. They are often smaller than counties, although they are much larger than neighborhoods.⁹ These communities can give us some sense of the people that an immigrant is likely to encounter in his or her daily life, in a social or work context. We find that immigrants in communities with relatively few immigrants are more likely to have naturalized than immigrants in communities with relatively high concentrations of immigrants. However, most of the effect of immigrant concentration on naturalization disappears when we control for other factors in the model. The reason for this could be a high correlation between immigrant concentration and other variables in the model. Latino immigrants, recent migrants, immigrants with low levels of education, and immigrants who move to California tend to move to neighborhoods with a high concentration of immigrants. Such immigrants have low naturalization rates primarily because they have characteristics that are associated with low naturalization rates and only secondarily because they live in neighborhoods with a high concentration of immigrants. Furthermore, it is difficult to determine whether living in a community with large numbers of immigrants reduces the probability of naturalization without taking into account migration out of the neighborhood. Immigrants who naturalize may be more likely to move out of communities with high concentrations of foreign-born persons, explaining the lower rates of naturalization in those neighborhoods. We

⁹In California, the average PUMA consists of about 100,000 people.

also examined the effect of living in a community with large numbers of coethnics, but it makes little difference in naturalization.

Destination and Sending Country Characteristics

The decision to naturalize could also depend on the characteristics of the immigrant's sending country as well as characteristics of the destination. We find that some characteristics of the destination and the country of origin, as well as specific countries of origin, are important predictors of naturalization. Of the destination characteristics, only the community's unemployment rate affects the probability of naturalization, and the effect is small. The lower the unemployment rate at the destination, the more likely the immigrant is to naturalize. Of the characteristics of the origin country, only the rules concerning dual citizenship seem to have an effect on naturalization in the United States. Immigrants from countries that allow dual citizenship are more likely to have naturalized than otherwise similar immigrants from countries that do not allow dual citizenship. We find that per capita income in the origin country and return migration, as measured by a migration index,¹⁰ have little effect on naturalization, once we control for specific countries of origin and other factors.

We do find significant differences in naturalization rates for specific countries of origin (see Table 4.8). Less than a third of the immigrants from El Salvador, Laos, Guatemala, Cambodia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Haiti have naturalized by 1990, whereas two-thirds of the immigrants from Italy, Ireland, Germany, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and France naturalized by 1990. Some of the differences in naturalization rates are

¹⁰We developed a return migration index from separate census questions on period of immigration and place of residence five years earlier. Contact the authors for details.

Table 4.8
Naturalization Rates by
Country of Origin

Country	Naturalization Rate (%)
Italy	78
Ireland	77
Germany	77
Hong Kong	74
Philippines	71
France	66
China	64
Panama	64
Canada	60
Vietnam	58
Taiwan	58
South Korea	58
United Kingdom	58
Cuba	55
India	50
Japan	50
Thailand	42
Honduras	38
Iran	38
Dominican Republic	36
Haiti	33
Nicaragua	29
Mexico	29
Cambodia	29
Guatemala	25
Laos	23
El Salvador	22

SOURCE: 1990 census.

NOTE: Immigrants in the United States less than five years and immigrants younger than 18 years of age have been excluded.

due to the characteristics of the immigrants who move from each country and not to something specific about the countries. For example, most immigrants from Italy have been in the United States for a considerably longer period of time than most immigrants from El Salvador. When we hold all other factors constant, immigrants from the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, Laos, Guatemala, and Mexico have lower naturalization rates than would have been expected, given their characteristics, whereas immigrants from Cambodia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Italy, and Germany have higher naturalization propensities than would have been expected given their characteristics (see Table A.1, Appendix A).

Holding all other factors constant, immigrants with the highest propensity to naturalize are either the more recent European immigrants—the Italians and the Germans—or immigrants from East or Southeastern Asia. And with the exception of Laotians, immigrants with the lowest propensity to naturalize are from either countries with close ties to the United States or Latin American countries. On the one hand, Ireland, Canada and the United Kingdom are English-speaking, developed countries with close ties to the United States. Travel between these countries and the United States is relatively easy, and the social and cultural distance between them and the United States is relatively small. Thus, these immigrants might not feel a strong need to naturalize. On the other hand, proximity, strong connections to their countries of origin, and substantial return and circular migration may discourage Latino immigrants from naturalizing. Immigrants from Latin America are also more likely than immigrants from other countries to be undocumented and thus ineligible for naturalization.

In summary, we find that immigrants are more likely to naturalize the longer they remain in the United States. Immigrants with higher

socioeconomic status are also more likely to naturalize. In addition, immigrants' social capital greatly affects the probability of naturalization. Being connected to a diverse network in terms of not only ethnicity but also citizenship status may provide the immigrant with information not only about the benefits of naturalization but also about the process of naturalization. Such immigrants may also be more exposed to mainstream society and be “better” integrated into U.S. society than immigrants with limited social capital or who live in communities with high proportions of immigrants. However, even after holding constant for personal and socioeconomic differences across migrants and the characteristics of the place of destination, there are substantial differences in the rate of naturalization by country of origin.

Do California Immigrants Have a Different Propensity to Naturalize?

Among the 50 states, California ranks 49th in terms of naturalization rates (see Table 4.9). Some of this difference can be explained by differences in the composition of the immigrant population in California as compared to the immigrant population in the rest of the United States. For example, since California has a disproportionate number of recent arrivals, we would expect the rate of naturalization to be lower than in a state with more long-term immigrants. In this section, we explore whether low naturalization rates in California are due solely to this and other composition effects or whether there is something particular to California that leads to lower naturalization rates in the state.

Table 4.10 presents the characteristics of the immigrant population in California and the rest of the United States. California immigrants are

Table 4.9
Immigrants by State and Naturalization Status

State	Noncitizens	Naturalized Citizens	Total Immigrants ≥18 in United States at Least Five Years	% Naturalized
<i>U.S. Total</i>	<i>6,437,336</i>	<i>7,149,008</i>	<i>13,586,344</i>	<i>53</i>
Montana	2,434	7,841	10,275	76
South Dakota	1,326	3,649	4,975	73
West Virginia	3,425	8,972	12,397	72
Pennsylvania	77,234	196,731	273,965	72
Ohio	55,071	139,284	194,355	72
Delaware	4,886	11,327	16,213	70
Missouri	17,552	40,349	57,901	70
Vermont	4,275	9,585	13,860	69
Alaska	4,886	10,905	15,791	69
Hawaii	36,884	81,860	118,744	69
Indiana	22,859	47,238	70,097	67
New Hampshire	10,560	21,786	32,346	67
Alabama	9,299	19,115	28,414	67
North Dakota	2,255	4,635	6,890	67
Nebraska	6,283	12,388	18,671	66
Kentucky	6,998	13,614	20,612	66
Michigan	94,551	182,530	277,081	66
South Carolina	11,760	22,446	34,206	66
Maine	10,844	19,730	30,574	65
Wisconsin	29,539	53,396	82,935	64
Mississippi	5,319	9,303	14,622	64
Connecticut	78,520	133,388	211,908	63
Arkansas	6,533	10,892	17,425	63
Iowa	10,662	17,528	28,190	62
New Jersey	263,121	431,482	694,603	62
Kansas	14,665	23,801	38,466	62
Utah	15,106	24,143	39,249	62
Minnesota	27,803	44,021	71,824	61
Tennessee	15,429	23,655	39,084	61
Washington	89,001	133,764	222,765	60
Oregon	36,990	54,747	91,737	60
Colorado	39,903	58,986	98,889	60
Wyoming	2,500	3,604	6,104	59
Massachusetts	166,020	237,266	403,286	59

Table 4.9 (continued)

State	Noncitizens	Naturalized Citizens	Total Immigrants ≥18 in United States at Least Five Years	% Naturalized
New York	855,359	1,160,260	2,015,619	58
Idaho	7,920	10,696	18,616	57
North Carolina	32,613	43,617	76,230	57
Virginia	85,287	111,753	197,040	57
Louisiana	26,787	34,287	61,074	56
Oklahoma	19,010	24,058	43,068	56
Maryland	92,536	116,655	209,191	56
Illinois	300,354	374,322	674,676	55
Rhode Island	30,072	36,960	67,032	55
Georgia	49,118	59,226	108,344	55
Nevada	33,230	39,165	72,395	54
Florida	572,110	662,319	1,234,429	54
Arizona	91,111	94,910	186,021	51
New Mexico	28,446	28,578	57,024	50
DC	19,930	15,011	34,941	43
California	2,396,853	1,777,807	4,174,660	43
Texas	612,107	445,423	1,057,530	42

SOURCE: Authors' tabulations from the 1990 census.

NOTE: Immigrants in the United States less than five years or younger than 18 years of age are excluded.

more recently arrived in the United States, have slightly lower levels of education, are less proficient in English, are more likely to be married to other noncitizens, and are more likely to come from Latin America, especially Mexico, than immigrants in the rest of the United States. All of these characteristics are associated with lower probabilities of naturalization. Hence, on the basis of these characteristics, we would expect lower naturalization rates in California than in the rest of the nation. From our simulations, we find that most of the gap between the nation and the state disappears when we account for immigrants' characteristics (see Appendix A). However, a gap still remains between

Table 4.10
Average of Independent Variables in the Model

Variables	California	United States
Education		
GRADE8	32%	28%
NOHS	17%	17%
HS	16%	19%
SOMECOLLEGE	14%	14%
COLLEGE	21%	22%
English proficiency		
ENGONLY	14%	23%
ENGVWELL	32%	32%
ENGWELL	24%	21%
ENGNOTWELL	20%	17%
ENGNONE	10%	7%
Labor force status		
EMPLOYED	94%	95%
UNEMPLOYED	6%	5%
Income		
INC10	46%	45%
INC10-19	25%	25%
INC20-29	13%	13%
INC30-39	7%	7%
INC40-49	4%	4%
INC50UP	5%	6%
Age at migration		
ARV18	36%	33%
ARV18-35	50%	51%
ARV36-53	11%	13%
ARV54	3%	3%
Public assistance		
Male	49%	47%
Children	52%	50%
Married	65%	66%
Years in U.S.	19	22
Percent foreign	29%	21%
Border country	53	48
Home ownership	54%	62%
Citizen spouse	31%	40%
Citizen children	46%	44%

Table 4.10 (continued)

Variables	California	United States
Spouse's order of arrival		
FIRST		
SAME	25%	52%
AFTER	52%	48%
Spouse citizen arrival		
CITIZEN*FIRST	86%	84%
CITIZEN*LAST	10%	12%
CITIZEN*AFTER	4%	4%
Country of origin		
France	.5%	.9%
Germany	3%	6%
Ireland	.4%	1%
Italy	1%	5%
United Kingdom	3%	5%
Cambodia	.9%	.6%
China	4%	3%
Hong Kong	1%	.9%
India	2%	3%
Japan	2%	2%
South Korea	4%	3%
Laos	1%	.8%
Philippines	9%	6%
Vietnam	5%	3%
Canada	4%	6%
El Salvador	5%	2%
Guatemala	2%	1%
Mexico	43%	26%
Cuba	1%	6%
Dominican Republic	.07%	2%
Haiti	.06%	1%
Rest of world	8%	16%
Dual citizenship	14%	22%
Per capital income, 1990	\$4,586.73	\$6,407.08
Destination		
California		34%
Texas		9%
New York		12%
New Jersey		5%

Table 4.10 (continued)

Variables	California	United States
Illinois		5%
Florida		9%
Rest of United States		26%
SMSA_income	\$14,870.00	\$14,949.00
SMSA_unemp	7%	7%

SOURCE: Authors' tabulations from the 1990 census.

NOTE: Immigrants in the United States less than five years or younger than 18 years of age are excluded.

the rate of naturalization of immigrants in California and those in the rest of the country, even when we control for a host of immigrant characteristics.

The gap between the nation and the state may be because immigrants with certain characteristics are less likely to naturalize in California than in the rest of the United States. When we tested this hypothesis, we found that immigrants with fewer than eight years of education are less likely to naturalize in California than in the rest of the nation. Figure 4.8 shows the ratio of the probability of naturalization in California to that in the United States. A value of one implies that immigrants have the same probability of naturalization in the United States and California. A value greater than one implies that California immigrants have a higher propensity to naturalize than those in the rest of the United States, whereas a value lower than one implies lower naturalization in California than in the rest of the United States. Immigrants at all levels of education are less likely to naturalize in California than in the rest of the nation. But immigrants with fewer than eight years of education are substantially less likely to do so. These

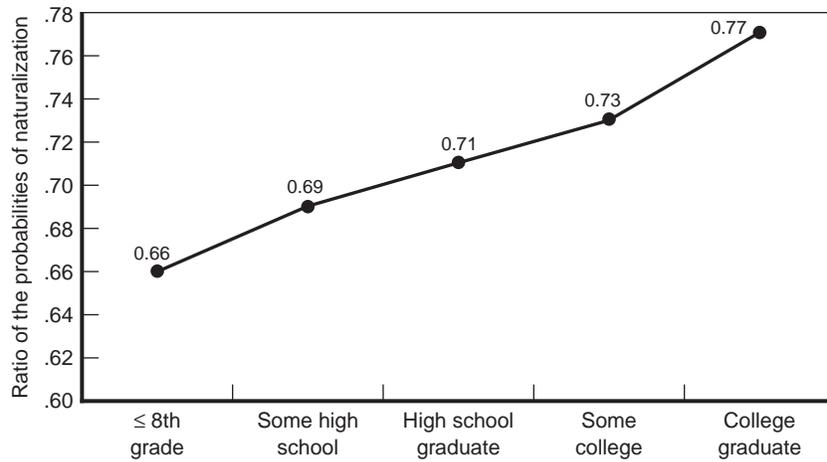


Figure 4.8—Ratio of the Probability of Naturalization in California to That in the United States by Education

immigrants are only two-thirds as likely to have naturalized as similarly educated immigrants in the rest of the nation.

Also, immigrants with poor English proficiency, immigrants who have been in the United States for long periods of time, immigrants from Mexico, immigrants who are single or without a spouse present, and immigrants with a noncitizen spouse are less likely to naturalize in California than in the rest of the nation (see Appendix A, Table A.2). Hence, California immigrants are not only less educated, less proficient in English, more likely to have a noncitizen spouse or spouse not present, and more likely to be from Mexico but also are less likely to naturalize than those in the rest of the nation.

The explanation for the lower propensity to naturalize for immigrants with certain characteristics in California than for those in the United States could be the unauthorized population. The number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States has been increasing

substantially since the late 1960s, and California is home to over 40 percent of the country's unauthorized immigrants. Because it is impossible to exclude unauthorized immigrants from census data below the state level, estimates from the census overstate the difference in eligible immigrants' naturalization rates between California and the rest of the United States. We attempt to capture the effect of the unauthorized population on the rate of naturalization by estimating the percentage of the total immigrant population who have naturalized and then estimating the percentage of the legal population (foreign-born population excluding unauthorized immigrants) who have naturalized.¹¹ Estimating the naturalization rate among eligible immigrants leads to a greater increase in naturalization rates in California than it does in the rest of the United States, reducing the gap between the state and the rest of the nation from 14 percent to only 4 percent (see Figure 4.9). Thus, many of the characteristics that are associated with particularly low naturalization rates in California, as compared to the nation, might simply reflect greater proportions of unauthorized immigrants with those characteristics in California, compared to the nation.

In conclusion, three interrelated factors play an important role in explaining the difference in naturalization rates between California and the United States. First, California has a disproportionate number of

¹¹In the previous figures, and throughout the report, we restricted the sample to immigrants adults who have been in the United States for longer than five years. In those tables, we could not exclude unauthorized immigrants, because the census does not ask immigrants about their immigration status. In Figure 4.9, we use the total foreign-born population in the United States and California without exclusions for age and duration of stay. From this population, we subtract estimates of unauthorized immigrant population in the country and the state to estimate the legal immigrant population. We also excluded the population amnestied under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), since they were not eligible to naturalize in 1990.

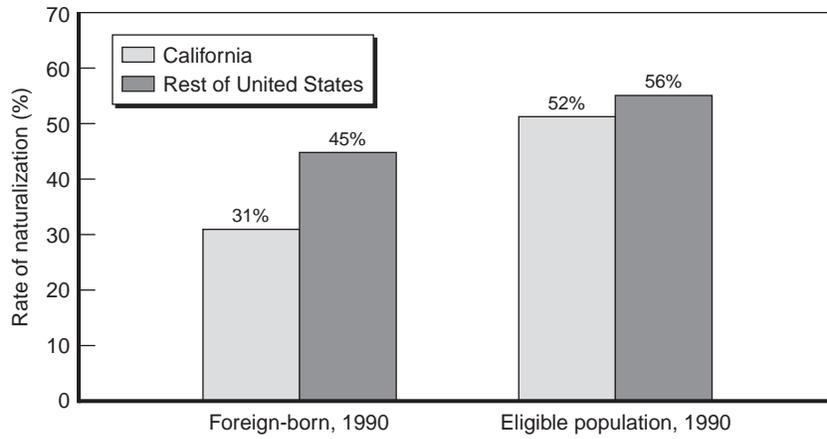


Figure 4.9—Percentage of Unauthorized Foreign-Born and Eligible Foreign-Born Population Who Have Naturalized

immigrants having characteristics associated with low naturalization rates—low levels of education, poor proficiency in English, immigrants married to other noncitizens, and Latino immigrants. Second, these immigrants are less likely to naturalize in California than in the rest of the nation, holding other characteristics constant. Finally, there is a greater proportion of unauthorized immigrants in California who are not eligible for naturalization than in the rest of the nation. Unauthorized immigrants tend to have low levels of education and poor English proficiency and are disproportionately Latinos, which may explain the lower rates of naturalization for those immigrant groups in California.¹²

¹²Although most unauthorized immigrants and temporary migrants stay in the United States for fewer than five years, some stay for longer than five years and may have been included in our immigrant sample.

How and Why Do Naturalization Rates Vary Within California Counties?

We found that naturalization rates vary even more widely across California counties than they do across U.S. states (see Table 4.11). Trinity County has the highest rate of naturalization at 70 percent, whereas only 13 percent of immigrants in Colusa County have naturalized. In general, counties with low concentrations of immigrants tend to have high naturalization rates. In the nine counties with the highest naturalization rates, fewer than 5 percent of the population are foreign-born. The counties with low naturalization rates are those in which agriculture figures prominently and also a few large urban counties with large immigrant populations. Los Angeles County had among the highest concentration of immigrants in the state (33 percent of the county's population) and the lowest naturalization rate of any large urban county in the state (only 27 percent of the county's immigrants had naturalized by 1990).

To analyze differences in naturalization rates across counties, we developed logistic regression models (see Table A.4 in Appendix A). Because of data limitations, we were restricted to considering only the largest 23 counties in California.¹³ All of the other counties—most of the northern counties, the Sierra Nevada, and the Sierra foothill counties—were grouped into a “rest of California” category. However, most of the immigrants in California in 1990 were located in the 23 counties we were able to consider.

¹³Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Merced, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Solano, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Ventura.

Table 4.11
Immigrants by County and Naturalization Status

	Noncitizen Immigrants	Naturalized Immigrants	% of Immigrants Naturalized	% of Immigrants in Population
Alameda	140,529	89,846	39	18
Alpine	9	9	50	2
Amador	526	593	53	4
Butte	7,050	3,796	35	6
Calaveras	307	623	67	3
Colusa	2,926	437	13	21
Contra Costa	58,883	48,177	45	13
Del Norte	1,000	493	33	6
El Dorado	4,502	3,260	42	6
Fresno	90,523	28,586	24	18
Glenn	2,551	678	21	13
Humboldt	2,262	2,354	51	4
Imperial	23,676	7,892	25	29
Inyo	531	325	38	5
Kern	45,637	20,504	31	12
Kings	9,744	4,586	32	14
Lake	1,428	1,267	47	5
Lassen	877	358	29	4
Los Angeles	2,113,398	781,668	27	33
Madera	9,864	3,288	25	15
Marin	17,379	13,110	43	13
Mariposa	115	256	69	3
Mendocino	3,662	1,804	33	7
Merced	27,225	8,132	23	20
Modoc	184	151	45	3
Mono	682	278	29	10
Monterey	52,900	23,766	31	22
Napa	8,687	4,278	33	12
Nevada	1,086	1,699	61	4
Orange	402,576	172,532	30	24
Placer	4,333	4,163	49	5
Plumas	202	317	61	3
Riverside	119,890	53,864	31	15
Sacramento	62,327	41,551	40	10
San Benito	4,763	1,504	24	17

Table 4.11 (continued)

	Noncitizen Immigrants	Naturalized Immigrants	% of Immigrants Naturalized	% of Immigrants in Population
San Bernardino	127,089	59,807	32	13
San Diego	274,438	154,372	36	17
San Francisco	142,700	103,334	42	34
San Joaquin	55,828	22,803	29	16
San Luis Obispo	9,403	6,809	42	7
San Mateo	95,565	69,202	42	25
Santa Barbara	43,811	18,776	30	17
Santa Clara	225,681	121,520	35	23
Santa Cruz	23,149	9,003	28	14
Shasta	2,262	1,927	46	3
Sierra	44	41	48	3
Siskiyou	760	892	54	4
Solano	22,557	21,673	49	13
Sonoma	21,252	14,168	40	9
Stanislaus	38,576	14,268	27	14
Sutter	6,620	2,449	27	14
Tehama	1,828	984	35	6
Trinity	84	196	70	2
Tulare	41,743	13,182	24	18
Tuolumne	1,073	878	45	4
Ventura	77,523	36,481	32	17
Yolo	14,230	6,099	30	14
Yuba	3,971	1,395	26	9
Total	4,452,421	2,006,404	31	22

SOURCE: 1990 census.

NOTE: These counts include immigrants in the United States less than five years and immigrants younger than 18 years of age and are therefore not comparable to other estimates of naturalization rates in this report that exclude those groups.

It is clear from our analysis that most of the difference across counties is due to differences in the characteristics of the immigrant population in each county. For example, the lower rate of naturalization in Los Angeles County is mainly due to immigrant length of stay. Los Angeles County has an immigrant population with a large number of

recent immigrants and, as discussed above, recent immigrants have lower naturalization rates than immigrants who have been in this country for many years. This is also true for San Joaquin and San Bernardino Counties. On the other hand, most of the explanation for the lower rate of naturalization in Tulare, Stanislaus, and Monterey Counties is not only the length of stay but also the lower level of education among the immigrant population. Finally, controlling for personal, family, community, and country-of-origin characteristics explains the variation in all but nine counties (Santa Cruz, Kern, Santa Barbara, Orange, Sonoma, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and Solano). Naturalization rates in these counties are higher than what we would have expected given the characteristics of their immigrant populations.¹⁴

Naturalization rates are especially low in agricultural areas of California. The characteristics of the immigrant population (i.e., length of stay in the United States, education, English proficiency, and country of origin), and the disproportionate number of unauthorized immigrants in the agricultural counties of the San Joaquin Valley, Imperial Valley, and the coastal counties of California, explain their disadvantage in terms of rates of naturalization. Although differences in naturalization rates across counties are primarily due to compositional effects, most immigrants in California live in counties with low rates of naturalization. Only nine counties in the state have naturalization rates above 50 percent, and they have very small immigrant populations (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Humboldt, Mariposa, Nevada, Plumas, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties).

¹⁴The exception to this is Santa Cruz, which, even after holding constant for the characteristics of the immigrant population in the county, has naturalization rates below those of other counties.

5. How Has the Propensity to Naturalize Changed over Time?

In this chapter, we first use administrative data from the INS to estimate trends in naturalization from 1960 through 1996. We then use CPS data to analyze the substantial increases in naturalization that occurred between March 1996 and March 1997.

Naturalization Trends: 1960–1996

The number of immigrants naturalizing each year in the United States is a function of the number of immigrants eligible to naturalize as well as the rate at which such immigrants choose to naturalize. As shown in Figure 5.1, the number of immigrants naturalizing in the United States has been increasing since the 1970s, with a dramatic upturn in the mid-1990s. The number of naturalizations increased from about 100,000 people in 1969 to over 1,000,000 in 1996. The record in previous years was 442,000, set in 1944. The increase in naturalizations

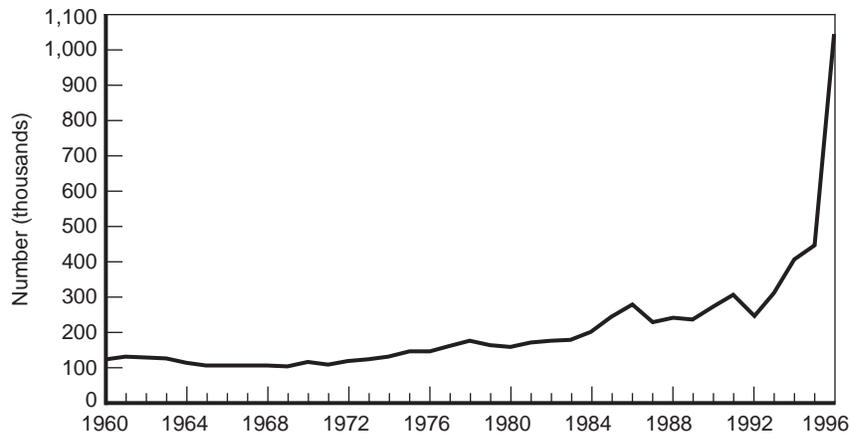


Figure 5.1—Number of Persons Who Naturalized, 1960–1996

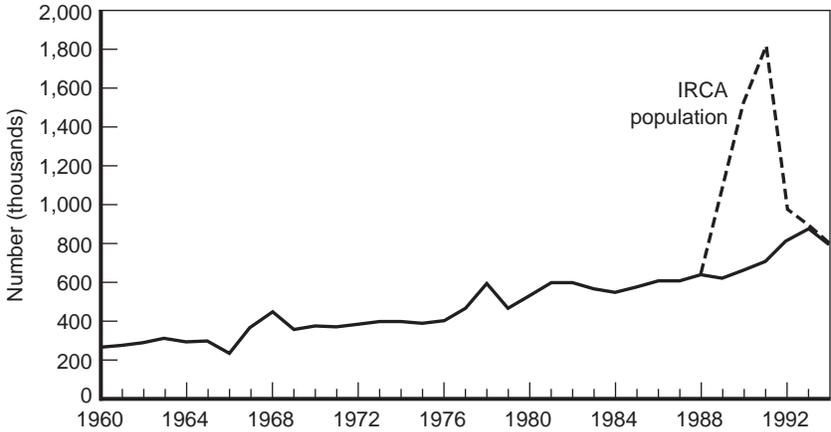
in the 1990s resulted, in part, from administrative actions by the INS, a large increase in immigrants eligible to naturalize under IRCA, and possibly legislative efforts to restrict public benefits to noncitizens.

The Green Card Replacement Program, begun in 1992 by the INS, required that long-term permanent residents replace their resident cards with new cards; many immigrants chose to naturalize rather than apply for new cards (INS, 1997). Also, in 1995 the INS started the program “Citizenship USA,” which was designed to encourage naturalization and reduce the backlog in the naturalization process. However, the most significant change that occurred in this period was the tremendous increase in the number of immigrants eligible for naturalization, as formerly unauthorized immigrants were granted amnesty (legal permanent residency) through the 1986 IRCA. As a result of IRCA, the number of immigrants granted legal residency in the United States increased dramatically from 1987 to 1991—in the peak year, 1991, the

number of immigrants granted legal admission was three times higher than just four years earlier.¹

Those granted amnesty became eligible for naturalization starting in 1993, and by the end of 1996 almost 2.5 million legalized immigrants became eligible to naturalize. Figure 5.2 shows the number of immigrants who entered the United States legally or changed legal status between 1960 and 1994.

To estimate long-term trends in the propensity to naturalize, we used INS data to estimate the number of naturalized immigrants and the number of legal immigrants in the United States.² As shown in Figure 5.1, the number of immigrants naturalizing has increased over time;



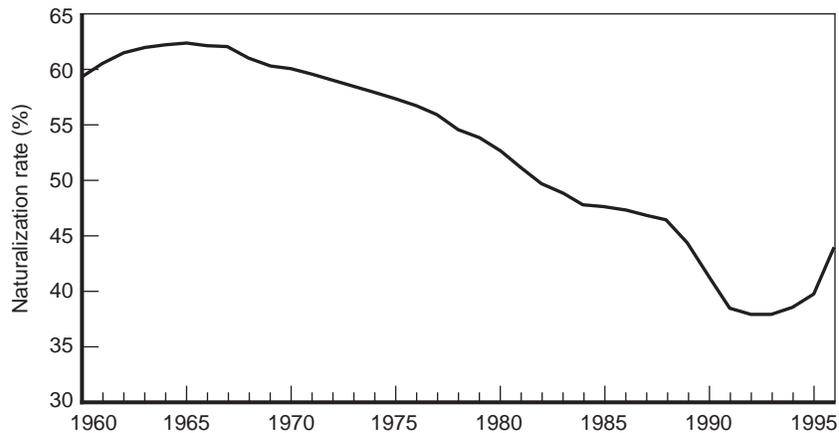
SOURCE: Authors' estimates from INS administrative data.

Figure 5.2—Number of Legal Immigrants to the United States, 1960–1994

¹It is important to note that the majority of immigrants granted amnesty under IRCA had been resident in the United States for many years before becoming legal immigrants.

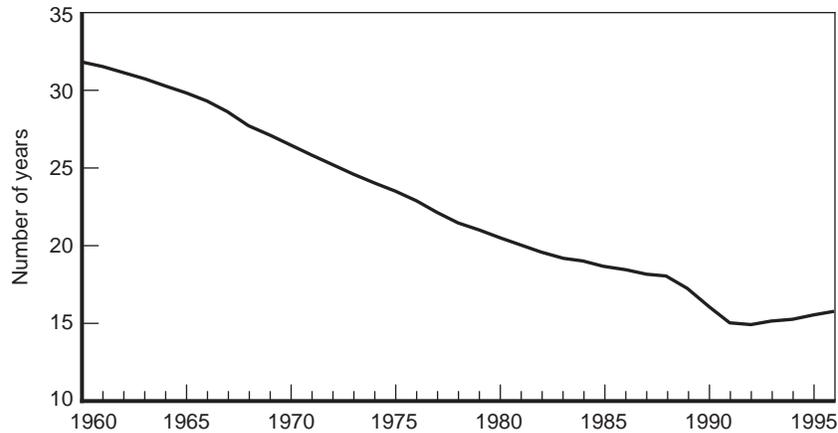
²See Chapter 3 for a discussion of our methodological approach.

however, as shown in Figure 5.3, the naturalization rate among legal immigrants declined substantially over the past few decades, falling from a high of 63 percent in 1965 to 38 percent in 1993 (the upturn in 1995 will be discussed in the next section). Most of this decline can be attributed to a change in the composition of the legal immigrant population, from a population that had, on average, resided in the United States for a long period of time to a much more recently arrived population. As shown in Figure 5.4, in 1960 the average legal immigrant had been admitted to the United States over 30 years earlier; by 1990, the average had declined to just 15 years. These changes simply reflect historical changes in the number of immigrants admitted to the United States. In 1960, for example, relatively few immigrants had been admitted to the United States in the preceding three decades—more



SOURCE: Authors' estimates from INS administrative data.

Figure 5.3—Estimated Naturalization Rates for Legal Permanent Residents, 1960–1996



SOURCE: Authors' estimates from INS administrative data.

Figure 5.4—Average Time Since Becoming Legal Permanent Residents, 1960–1996

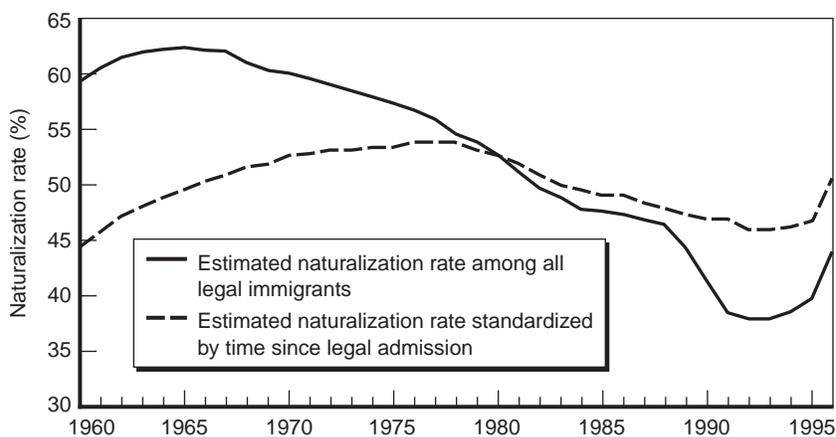
legal immigrants residing in the United States in 1960 had arrived in 1914 than in any other year. In contrast, among legal immigrants residing in the United States in 1990, more had been admitted as legal immigrants in the previous year than in any other year.

When we control for time since arrival, we find that rather than a consistent decline in naturalization rates since the 1960s, naturalization rates increased from the 1960s to the mid-1970s, and then declined until the early 1990s before beginning to increase again in the most recent years (as shown in Figure 5.5). Not controlling for how long immigrants have resided in the United States, therefore, obscures the true propensity of recent cohorts to naturalize.³

³Similar findings emerge from an INS study of naturalization among two entry cohorts of legal immigrants. By 1995, 46 percent of legal immigrants admitted in 1977 had naturalized, whereas 41 percent of legal immigrants admitted in 1982 had naturalized. Controlling for time in the United States, however, the study found that

What Explains Recent Trends in Naturalization?

In Chapter 4 and the previous section of this chapter, we discussed the factors associated with naturalization and noted long-term trends in naturalization rates. As shown in Figure 5.5, we observed a sizable increase in naturalization propensities in the mid-1990s, and particularly in 1996. Although the INS effort to reduce the backlog of citizenship applications was the superficial cause of the increase, the fundamental and more important question is why did applications for citizenship increase so dramatically? Is there something specific about the mid-1990s that led to higher rates of application for citizenship? Or has there been a transformation in the composition of the immigrant population



SOURCE: Authors' estimates from INS administrative data.

Figure 5.5—Estimated Naturalization Rates for Legal Immigrants, Standardized by Time, 1960–1996

immigrants admitted in 1982 were slightly more likely to naturalize: After 13 years in the United States, 41 percent of immigrants admitted to the United States in 1982 had naturalized compared to 38 percent of immigrants admitted in 1977 (INS, 1997).

in recent years, which has altered naturalization rates? What would this imply about naturalization in California and the rest of the nation?

In this section, we use the CPS March Supplements from 1996 and 1997 and use the same models discussed in previous chapters to determine the reasons for the increase in naturalization.⁴

The naturalization rate in the United States and in California was significantly higher in March 1997 than in March 1996.⁵ In the United States, among adults aged 18 and over, the rate increased from 40 percent to 45 percent, whereas the rate in California increased even more dramatically—from 31 percent to 39 percent (see Table 5.1). These one-year increases are remarkable.⁶ In California, for example, the increase suggests that the number of naturalized citizens aged 18 and over increased 24 percent, or by almost 500,000 persons. Much of this increase is attributable to INS efforts to reduce backlogs of naturalization applications through its “Citizenship USA” program. The backlogs, which arose as the INS received record numbers of applications for citizenship in the 1990s, were particularly large in California. The “Citizenship USA” program, however, does not explain the reason for the record numbers of persons applying for citizenship in the early 1990s. To try to explain this, we examined how the factors associated with naturalization changed from March 1996 to March 1997.

⁴We combined the CPS March Supplements from 1996 to 1997 and eliminated duplicate records of respondents who were in the CPS for both years. See Appendix C for an explanation of the matching and elimination process. We performed similar analyses with 1994 and 1995 CPS data, but problems with coding and reporting of the 1994 and 1995 CPS data led us to drop observations from those years.

⁵We verified that the total number of naturalizations implied in the CPS data is consistent with INS administrative data.

⁶The larger increase in the naturalization rate in California than in the United States is statistically significant.

Table 5.1
Naturalization Rates in the United States
and California, 1996 and 1997

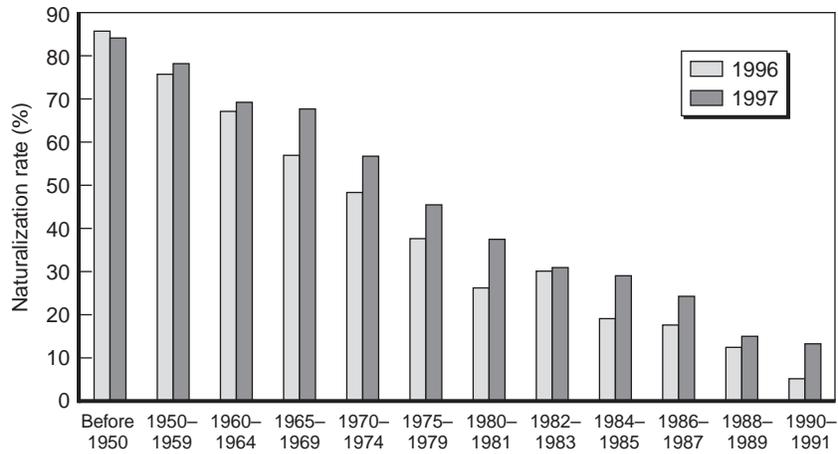
	Naturalization Rate (%)	
	1996	1997
California	31	39
Rest of United States	44	48
Entire United States	40	45

SOURCE: 1996 and 1997 CPS; duplicate records omitted.

Through the use of logistic regression models (see Appendix A, Table A.3), we found that the higher naturalization rates in March 1997 resulted from widespread increases in the propensity to naturalize among all immigrants. Naturalization rates increased for immigrants who had arrived in the United States fairly recently as well as for immigrants who had been here for some time. As shown in Figure 5.6, only immigrants who had arrived here before 1965 did not experience substantial increases in naturalization rates between 1996 and 1997, and those immigrants already had very high naturalization rates.⁷ Controlling for a host of personal, social, economic, and institutional factors, we found that the average immigrant in 1997 was 1.2 times more likely to have naturalized than an otherwise similar immigrant in 1996.

At the same time, we found that the propensity to naturalize increased even more dramatically for particular groups of immigrants: better educated immigrants, Latino immigrants, and immigrants in

⁷The vast majority of immigrants in the United States (83 percent) arrived after 1965.



SOURCE: Authors' tabulations from 1999 and 1997 CPS.

NOTES: Immigrants in the United States less than five years or younger than 18 years of age are excluded. Duplicate records are omitted.

Figure 5.6—Naturalization Rates by Period of Immigration, 1996 and 1997

California. Better educated immigrants were especially likely to have naturalized between March 1996 and March 1997 (see Table 5.2). For example, controlling for a number of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, the naturalization rates in California for immigrants with college degrees or some college were about 15 percentage points higher in March 1997 than in March 1996. Immigrants with a high school education or less had naturalization rates about 7 percentage points higher in March 1997 than otherwise similar immigrants in March 1996.

We also found some evidence suggesting that the increase in the propensity to naturalize between March 1996 and March 1997 was greater in California than in the rest of the United States and that the increase was greater among Latinos than among any other immigrant group. Although immigrants in California are still less likely to

Table 5.2
Naturalization Rates by Educational Attainment,
1996 and 1997

	Naturalization Rate (%)	
	1996	1997
California		
8th grade or less	19	25
Some high school	26	32
High school graduate	33	40
Some college	34	48
College graduate	35	50
Rest of United States		
8th grade or less	26	31
Some high school	35	38
High school graduate	43	47
Some college	44	55
College graduate	45	57

SOURCE: Authors' tabulations from 1996 and 1997 CPS.

NOTES: Results are based on logit Model 3 in Appendix A. Simulations are based on unmarried, non-Latino immigrants between the ages of 18 and 34 (at the time of arrival) arriving in the United States between 1975 and 1979. Controls for income are also included in the model.

naturalize than immigrants in the rest of the country, and although Latinos' naturalization rates remain substantially lower than those of other immigrant groups, the gap between California and the rest of the United States and that of Latinos and other immigrants shrank from March 1996 to March 1997.⁸

⁸It is difficult to disentangle these two effects because they are strongly correlated.

Two factors might account for the especially large increases in naturalization among better educated immigrants, immigrants in California, and Latinos: an increase in the proportion of immigrants eligible to naturalize, or an increase in naturalization rates among those who are eligible. IRCA led to a substantial increase in the proportion of Latino and California immigrants eligible to naturalize, because a disproportionate share of those granted amnesty under IRCA were California residents and Latino immigrants. Also, political events taking place in the 1990s may have led to the increased naturalization rate among eligible immigrants. Proposition 187 was passed in California in 1994 in an attempt to curtail social services to unauthorized immigrants, and in 1995–96, the nation was debating the virtues of restricting benefits to *legal* immigrants. The media and many scholars argue that Proposition 187 and a perceived anti-immigrant sentiment encouraged many immigrants to naturalize as a way to protect their rights and cast their vote against anti-immigrant legislation. Our results show some support for this assertion. Immigrants in California might have felt especially motivated to naturalize because the anti-immigrant sentiment was especially strong in the state. Latino immigrants in particular may have felt especially targeted by Proposition 187 and may have used naturalization as a way to protect themselves. Finally, better educated immigrants may have been more likely to react to these policies by naturalizing because they have better access to information about political events and political debates.

6. What Role Should State and Local Governments Play in Encouraging Immigrant Naturalization?

In its final report to the congress, the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform urged the government to “Americanize” its immigrant population and do more to help immigrants integrate into society.¹ The commission sees “naturalization as the most visible manifestation of civic incorporation as well as a crucial component of the Americanization process” (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997). As argued by the commission, naturalization involves more than just providing new citizens with benefits; it is meant to ensure “the vitality of this nation through the inclusion of new members and through

¹By “Americanization,” the commission means “the cultivation of a shared commitment to the American values of liberty, democracy, and equal opportunity—something that is possible regardless of the nationality or religious background of immigrants and their children” (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997).

cohesion of our nation's people" (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997).

Given the significance of naturalization for the integration of new immigrant groups, for social cohesion, and for democratic representation, it is important to determine what states can do to encourage naturalization, especially in California, which has a disproportionate number of noncitizens. Some argue that the government should not attempt to influence the decision to naturalize, given the personal nature of that decision. Others fear that a systematic effort to "Americanize" the immigrant population by way of naturalization may be synonymous with the old "Anglo-conformism" and would undermine immigrants' cultures and values for the sake of social cohesiveness. However, most observers believe that the government has an important role to play in helping immigrants to naturalize and view naturalization as part of the process of integration into U.S. society, as a means for becoming civically and politically engaged in society, and as a necessary element in the success of a participatory democracy.

The importance of naturalization to state and local governments has also increased since the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which, in essence, made citizenship a requirement for qualifying for certain benefits. As originally passed, the welfare reform legislation created large incentives for states to encourage naturalization among their immigrant populations, thereby shifting the cost of social programs back to the federal government. Because county welfare departments are considered service providers of last resort, many counties were particularly active in fostering the naturalization of their immigrant populations. In the remainder of this

chapter, we discuss what California and its counties have done to encourage naturalization.

How Has the State Sought to Encourage Naturalization?

Until the last year of former Governor Pete Wilson's administration, the state funded citizenship assistance through federal monies rather than by creating a state program. The only resources the state allocated to naturalization instruction and services originated from the Department of Education's adult education funds. In 1997, \$12.6 million of the federal adult education funds were allocated to citizenship education and naturalization assistance. No general fund resources were allocated for naturalization services. The monies were used to fund English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes for legal permanent residents, outreach services, assessment of skills, instruction and curriculum development, staff development, citizenship testing, naturalization preparation and assistance, and regional and state coordination and program evaluation. But the need for greater resources—in part because of the welfare reform legislation—was apparent. In 1998, the governor approved a bill to allocate \$2 million from the general fund to the Department of Community Services and Development—in addition to \$12.5 million appropriated from the federal adult education funds—for citizenship education and naturalization assistance.

Given the large number of immigrants in California, it is not clear whether the funding levels allocated for naturalization will adequately provide the amount and type of assistance necessary to encourage naturalization. The INS estimates that over two million legal permanent

residents in California are eligible to naturalize but have not yet done so. Many of them are hard-to-reach populations: recent arrivals with low levels of education, poor knowledge of the English language, and limited social networks to encourage them to naturalize. It is clear that to have an effective naturalization program, the state must create avenues to provide as many immigrants as possible with information about naturalization. It is also clear that to accelerate immigrants' naturalization, it is necessary to improve their educational attainment, and particularly their knowledge of the English language. Finally, refugees from countries such as Laos, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador, as well as Mexican immigrants, have the lowest rates of naturalization of all immigrant groups, indicating the need to target these populations in naturalization programs.

How Have the Counties Sought to Encourage Naturalization?

When Congress voted to eliminate legal immigrants' eligibility for federal means-tested programs in August 1996, California counties feared the worst. County welfare departments expected that many of the immigrants losing benefits would apply for county-financed general assistance. As a first line of defense, community activists and welfare departments in many counties embarked on unprecedented programs to encourage legal immigrants to apply for citizenship, seeking to shield them from cuts in services as well as to alleviate the effect on county general assistance funds.

To learn more about this activity, PPIC conducted a phone survey in October and November 1997 with respondents designated by each county welfare office in the state. We asked each respondent how welfare

reform was affecting legal immigrants in the county and what activities the county welfare office was undertaking to promote citizenship and naturalization. By the time of the survey, which occurred just two months after the federal and state reinstatements of most benefits, most respondents had concluded that welfare reform would have a minimum effect on legal immigrants in the county, limited to the termination of eligibility for federal food stamps (since then, the state has replaced the lost food stamp assistance for adult food stamp recipients). Survey respondents explained that as a result of this, advocacy for naturalization of immigrant welfare clients was no longer viewed with the same urgency as it had been earlier in the year. However, immigrants who enter the United States after 1996 are no longer eligible for any federally funded means-tested programs until they become naturalized or work for 40 quarters. Thus, the risk of a large ineligible immigrant population demanding general assistance from the counties remains real, if less immediate. In the remainder of this chapter, we discuss the funding and activities undertaken by counties to encourage naturalization.

Funding

California counties either directly allocated or helped to leverage over \$5.5 million for citizenship activities in 1997–1998. Of this amount, \$2.3 million was leveraged in foundation grants, mostly for citizenship services offered by community-based organizations. The remaining \$3.2 million was either county-allocated funding or in-kind contributions of staff time and other resources. In almost every case, the resources were raised specifically to respond to the effect of welfare reform. Table 6.1 details these expenditures.

Table 6.1
**Funding for Citizenship Activities Directed or Assisted by County Welfare
Offices in California, 1997 and 1998**

Type of Funding	Amount of Funding (\$)
Grants obtained from foundations or other noncounty agencies for direct services provided by community organizations, for which a county service agency acted as the pass-through and monitor	2,188,705
Grants obtained from foundations or other noncounty agencies for administration purposes of a county department	133,000
Total grants	2,321,705
County-generated direct allocation for services provided by community organizations	1,606,000
Other county-generated allocation	45,000
Total county-generated funds	1,651,000
In-kind contribution of county staff time or other resources (no formal allocation of county funding)	1,589,519
Total funding	5,562,224

Types of Activities

Starting as early as the fall of 1996, California county welfare offices developed initiatives to encourage Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and food stamp recipients to naturalize. The most common activity to promote citizenship was to refer affected immigrants to community organizations for services. Other activities included organizing broad educational outreach and citizenship events. Table 6.2 summarizes the types of activities engaged in by county offices.

To better understand how much effort a particular county expended on citizenship efforts, we created categories that incorporate

Table 6.2
Types of Citizenship Efforts

No. of Counties	Type of Citizenship Effort
28	Refer affected clients to community organizations for services
15	Provide referrals to clients by phone or in person
18	Send mailing to client with citizenship information
5	Provide client's name to community organizations for follow-up
8	Produce information on citizenship to be disseminated in county
3	Organize phone hotline to provide citizenship information
6	Run/help run public service announcements, or use other media outlets
10	Organize or assist in organizing citizenship events
11	Hire or assign staff to organize citizenship campaigns

combinations of activities. From our survey, we found that the pattern of citizenship activity undertaken by county welfare offices falls roughly into six categories. Table 6.3 describes those categories.²

Citizenship Activity by Counties

The different levels of citizenship activity undertaken by county welfare offices are closely related to the size of the immigrant population in the county. However, some counties with a large noncitizen population did not engage in any efforts to encourage naturalization, whereas others with a small population did a substantial amount of work in encouraging their population to naturalize. Figure 6.1 displays California counties by the level of citizenship activities undertaken in 1997–1998, and Figure 6.2 presents the geographic distribution of the immigrant population in California. In general, counties with large numbers of immigrants engaged in high to very high levels of citizenship

²After the completion of our survey, Santa Clara County entered into a unique agreement with the INS: Nine county workers will assist INS with clerical tasks and other duties to help reduce the backlog of pending citizenship applications in that county.

Table 6.3
Categories of Effort

Activity Level	Description
None	No activity
Low	Provided referrals for affected clients to organizations for citizenship services with minimal collaboration
Low-medium	In addition to referrals, organized citizenship events
Medium	Participated in an ongoing coalition with community organizations by providing names of affected clients for follow-up by community groups
High	Mobilized community groups to provide citizenship assistance to affected clients, close participation
Very high	Played a central leadership role in a broad coalition, organized outreach activity to promote citizenship beyond assisting affected clients.

activity. Most of the counties with over 100,000 immigrants engaged in at least some citizenship activity. Most of these counties generally organized or participated in one-time citizenship events such as forums and citizenship fairs. Counties located in the eastern and north central portions of the state, where there are few legal immigrants, tended to not participate in any citizenship activities. Coastal counties, particularly those with large immigrant populations, tended to be more active in promoting citizenship than other counties.

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 display the percentage of noncitizens in California counties and the proportion of SSI recipients who were legal immigrants at the end of 1996, respectively. The maps indicate that although there were relatively few noncitizens in north coast counties, noncitizens represent a relatively high share of SSI recipients in that

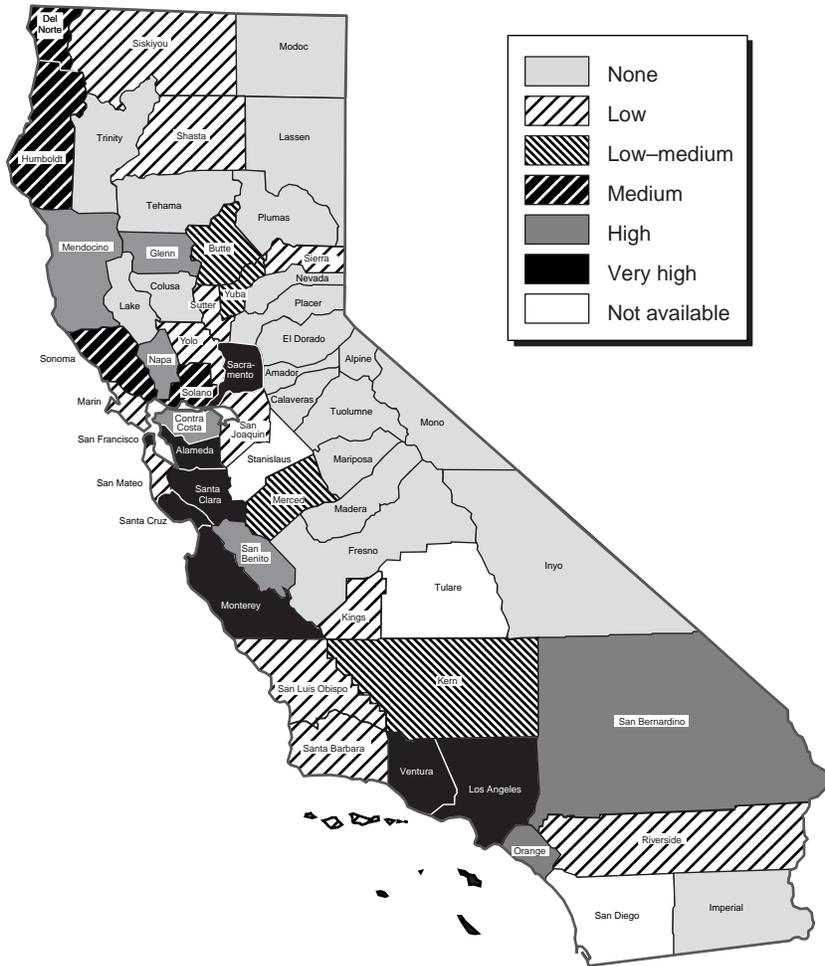
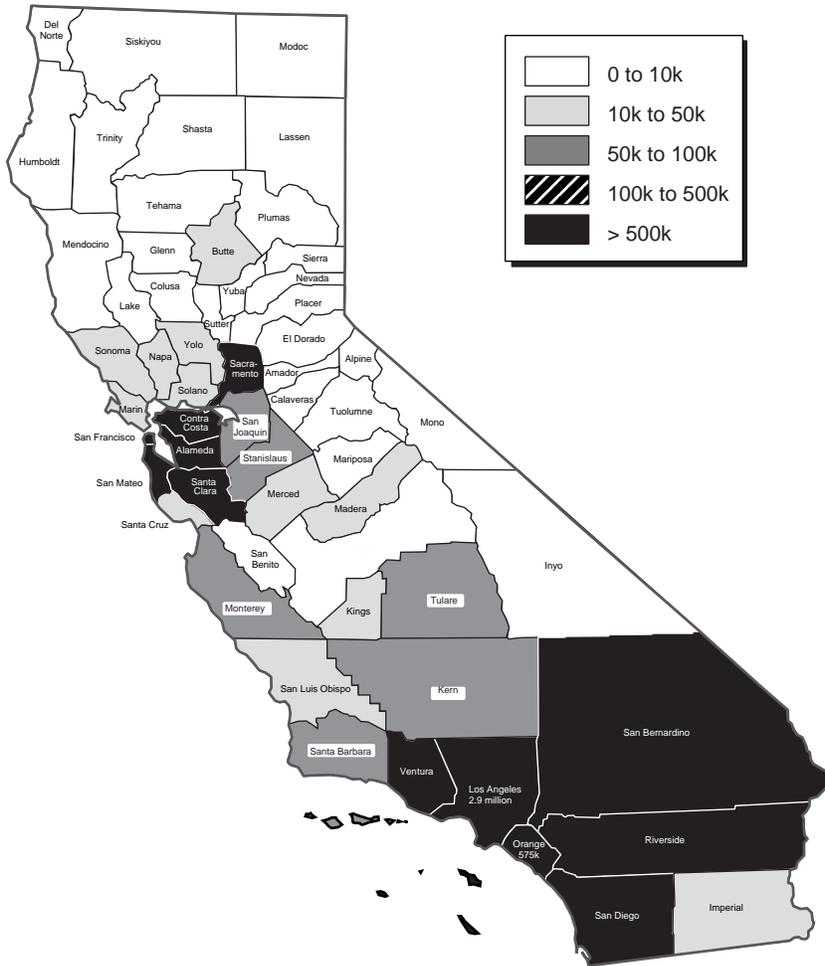
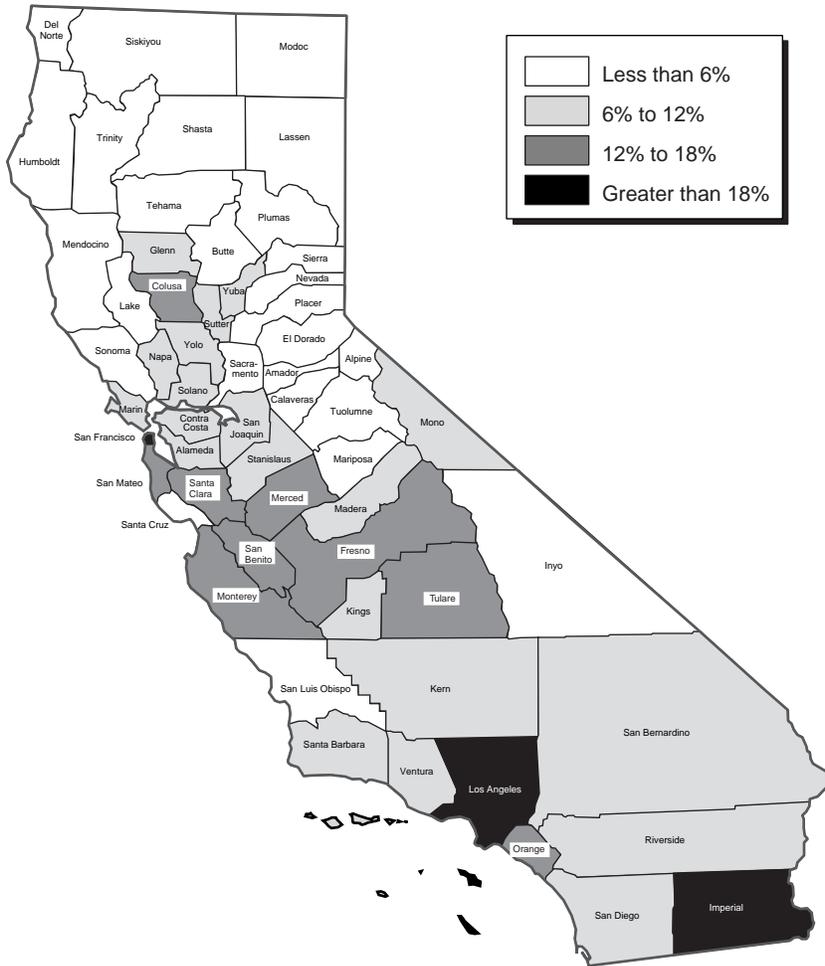


Figure 6.1—Citizenship Activity by County in California, 1997



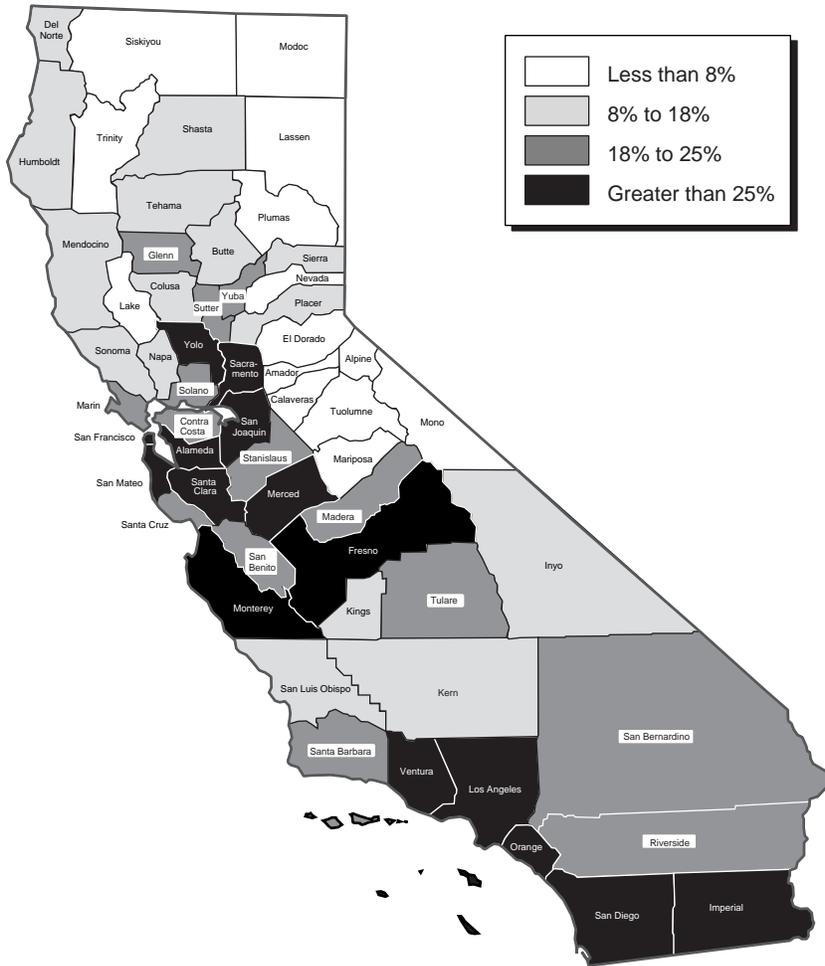
SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census.
 NOTE: Total number = 6.5 million

Figure 6.2—Foreign-Born by County in California, 1990



SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census.

Figure 6.3—Percentage Noncitizen by County in California, 1990



SOURCE: Social Security Administration, December 1996.

Figure 6.4—Legal Immigrants on SSI as a Share of All SSI Recipients by County in California, 1996

region. This may explain the higher activity level among north coast counties compared to other counties with few legal immigrants. For example, Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, and Sonoma Counties engaged in medium or high levels of citizenship activities. In contrast, the Central Valley counties, with relatively high numbers of noncitizens and a high share of noncitizen SSI recipients, engaged in low levels of activity.

Most of the counties in which the welfare office engaged in no citizenship activity have few legal immigrant residents. Important exceptions are San Diego and Fresno Counties.³ In San Diego, the welfare office did not respond to our survey but informed us that they had not engaged in any activity to encourage naturalization. Fresno County, with one of the largest proportions of noncitizens in the state, did not engage in any activity to encourage naturalization.

Finally, many of the high activity counties are also those with highest numbers of noncitizens and very high shares of noncitizen SSI recipients. They are also likely to contain the urban centers of the state. These very high activity counties played a central role in directing citizenship campaigns that promoted naturalization more broadly than just targeting affected clients. In these cases, county social service departments, in close cooperation with community groups, organized events such as citizenship fairs, conferences, training, media outreach, and phone hotlines; they even lobbied in Sacramento. These counties include Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Alameda, Ventura, Monterey, Sacramento, and Santa Cruz.

³Although Orange County undertook no activity to promote citizenship in 1997, it organized an effort to target elderly refugees starting in 1998; for this reason, we included it as a high activity county.

Citizenship Efforts and Coordination

For those counties with high levels of citizenship activity, coordination became the key to success, as welfare offices created a referral system to assist immigrants in the naturalization process. The offices served as a nexus for coordinating a broad network of organizations and advocated for citizenship throughout the county. Examples of such activity include visiting organizations and centers that assist immigrants, developing brochures, and lobbying in Sacramento. The community organizations with which county welfare offices collaborated were geared primarily to work with specific ethnic groups and other target populations.

Spillover benefits occurred as a result of county involvement in coordination and mobilization. Many county welfare departments developed closer relationships with community organizations than had existed previously. According to some of the citizenship campaign coordinators, the increased cooperation provided benefits on both sides—in the form of enhanced resource sharing for the community organizations and an enhanced ability to provide services for the welfare departments.

Obstacles to Naturalization

In many counties, the level of effort diminished after benefits were restored. However, in other cases, campaigns that were under way continued. County welfare offices report that more than 95,000 welfare recipients applied for citizenship in 1997 as a result of the campaigns in which welfare offices were involved (85 percent of these applications occurred in Los Angeles County).

Partly as a result of these efforts, the INS has experienced a severe backlog of applications in California. A number of welfare offices have cited the need to provide follow-up assistance for their immigrant clients. Anecdotal evidence from Los Angeles County suggests that a substantial portion of the backlog in Los Angeles is over 15 months old, which means that the applications have expired and the applicants need to resubmit fingerprints and other documents.⁴ In some cases, fingerprints are resubmitted many times to the INS. The INS is implementing new approaches to reduce backlogs. Much of the improvement will come in the form of automation of many of the procedures in the naturalization process, as well as better tracking systems and methods to counteract fraudulent documents and applications. However, there is increasing concern from the public and from immigrant advocates about increasing numbers of refusals as INS tries to reduce backlogs (*Chicago Tribune*, July 9, 1999).

In addition to the INS backlog, the issues most commonly cited as problematic for county welfare offices involved in citizenship efforts are the difficulty in organizing effective outreach to the elderly and disabled, problems with access to naturalization services, the difficulty that elderly immigrants experience in learning English to satisfy citizenship requirements, and the high cost of citizenship application fees. These obstacles often make it difficult for the welfare population to naturalize.

⁴Conversation with Josie Marquez, Los Angeles County Citizenship Assistance Campaign, Department of Community and Senior Services, Los Angeles County.

7. Conclusions and Policy Implications

This report has examined trends in naturalization in California and the United States, the factors associated with naturalization, and the reasons for low rates of naturalization in California. Our findings confirm the importance of time in residence and economic progress in the United States as precursors for naturalization. Social capital also has a strong effect on the propensity to naturalize. Being connected to a diverse social network that includes U.S. citizens is more likely to provide immigrants with information about the naturalization process and the benefits of naturalization than does belonging to a network of only noncitizens. But even after holding constant for personal and socioeconomic characteristics, there are substantial differences in the rate of naturalization by country of origin—immigrants from the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, Laos, Guatemala, and Mexico have the lowest rates of naturalization, *holding everything else constant*.

We found that California has a low rate of naturalization, compared to the rest of the nation, not only because of the characteristics of the immigrant population in the state—low levels of education, low English proficiency, disproportionate numbers of recent immigrants, and disproportionate numbers of immigrants from countries with low rates of naturalization—but also because certain groups of immigrants in California have a lower propensity to naturalize than their counterparts in the rest of the nation. The groups that are less likely to naturalize in California than in the rest of the nation include recent immigrants, Mexican immigrants, immigrants with noncitizen spouses, and immigrants with fewer than eight years of education. Moreover, California has a disproportionate number of unauthorized immigrants and temporary migrants; most of the recent immigrants may not qualify for naturalization, and others may not plan to remain in this country long enough to naturalize.

Over the past 25 years, naturalization rates have been declining in the United States. This decline can be largely attributed to a change in the composition of the immigrant population—from those who had resided in the United States for long periods of time to those who have arrived much more recently. However, controlling for time in the United States, naturalization rates have risen in the 1990s. In 1996, over one million immigrants naturalized. The increase in the rate of naturalizations in the 1990s has resulted not only because of a surge in the number of immigrants eligible to naturalize, primarily those granted amnesty under IRCA, but also because of the increased political importance of naturalization.

Immigrants are also naturalizing sooner than in the past. Recent immigrants—those arriving since 1965—were more likely to naturalize

by March 1997 than just one year earlier. Immigrants living in California, Latino immigrants, and immigrants with at least some college education were especially more likely to have naturalized by March 1997 as compared to March 1996.

Our findings suggest that naturalization rates vary even more widely across California counties than they do across other U.S. states. In general, counties with low concentrations of immigrants have high naturalization rates, whereas counties with high concentrations of immigrants have low naturalization rates. In addition, except for a few large urban counties, the counties with low naturalization rates are primarily those where agriculture figures prominently. In those counties, immigrants tend to be recent arrivals and tend to have low socioeconomic status.

The results from our survey of county welfare offices indicate that, overall, county welfare offices played a significant role in extensive efforts undertaken over the past two years to help immigrant welfare clients to naturalize. However, counties vary widely in the level of activity undertaken to promote citizenship. Several county welfare offices provided little naturalization assistance, despite large numbers of affected immigrant welfare recipients. Our survey results also indicate that most county welfare offices have not assessed the effect of welfare reform on legal immigrants beyond the current caseload, in spite of the fact that changes in welfare eligibility bar newly arrived immigrants from receiving any major welfare benefits.

It is likely that the efforts of county welfare departments and community organizations to promote citizenship over the past years have helped to increase naturalization rates. However, the existing data do not enable us to verify this. Given the findings of this study and the trends

taking place in the nation, we expect an increase in naturalization but not necessarily for difficult-to-reach or other disadvantaged populations. These county efforts have also highlighted many of the challenges involved in naturalization. Many counties complained of significant barriers. For example, the problems of inadequate English skills among elderly immigrants, poor access to services, and high citizenship application fees make citizenship a high hurdle for many.

California is one of the few states to allocate state funds to encourage naturalization.¹ But given the large number of immigrants in California relative to other states, it is not clear whether these funds will adequately provide the type of assistance necessary to encourage naturalization. In our survey, county social service offices emphasized the importance of coordination with a broad network of organizations. Community-based organizations tend to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of the immigrant community than are county agencies. Also, the state's method of payment based on classroom hours prevents the allocation of resources to other important purposes, such as preparation of documents, assessment, or legal services. A more flexible model may be necessary.

California has a difficult noncitizen population to naturalize. Many of its immigrants are recent arrivals with low levels of education, poor knowledge of English, and a lack of the social networks that might encourage them to naturalize. They tend to live in neighborhoods with large numbers of immigrants and to have noncitizen spouses and children. To have an effective naturalization program, the state must

¹Twelve other states have state programs established to assist in immigrant naturalization—Illinois, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Arizona, Maryland, Rhode Island, Washington, Hawaii, Nebraska, and Oregon (National Immigration Law Center, 1998).

create avenues to provide this hard-to-reach population with information about the benefits of naturalization and the naturalization process. It is also clear that to accelerate immigrants' naturalization, it is necessary to improve their educational attainment and particularly their knowledge of English. Finally, immigrants from Laos, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador, in addition to Mexican immigrants, have the lowest rates of naturalization, which indicates the importance of targeting these populations in naturalization programs.

Appendix A

Logit Results

Table A.1
Full Model of the Probability of Naturalization,
1990 Census

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error
INTERCPT	-1.6785***	0.0606
ARV18-35	0.00117	0.00847
ARV36-53	0.1643***	0.0131
ARV54UP	-0.0345	0.0243
Years in U.S.	0.0804***	0.00134
Years in U.S. squared	-0.00015***	0.000023
MALE	-0.0727***	0.00787
GRADE8	-0.2556***	0.0118
NOHS	-0.1274***	0.0116
SOMECOLLEGE	0.0425***	0.00298
COLLEGE	0.0577***	0.00229
INC10-19	0.1842***	0.00914
INC20-29	0.2582***	0.0115
INC30-39	0.3201***	0.015
INC40-49	0.3542***	0.0202

Table A.1 (continued)

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error
INC50UP	0.3669***	0.0181
ENGONLY	0.5179***	0.0151
ENGVWELL	0.4484***	0.0123
ENGWELL	0.389***	0.0122
ENGNONE	-0.633***	0.0190
Public assistance	-0.2205***	0.0173
UNEMPLOYED	-0.0471***	0.0170
Married	-0.2276***	0.0123
Citizen spouse	1.4056***	0.0252
SPOUSE_CIT_SAME	1.4506***	0.0305
SPOUSE_CIT_LATER	0.2285***	0.0354
SPOUSE_SAME	-0.2259***	0.0270
SPOUSE_LATER	0.8775***	0.0262
Children	-0.9753***	0.0218
Citizen children	1.0754***	0.0218
Percent foreign	-0.4468***	0.0304
Home ownership	0.0634***	0.0080
PER CAPITA INCOME90	-0.00004***	0.000003
MIGRATION INDEX	-0.0181***	0.0008
Dual citizenship	0.0868***	0.0211
France	-0.2309***	0.0579
Germany	0.1376***	0.0381
Ireland	-0.2318***	0.0443
Italy	0.7647***	0.0452
United Kingdom	-0.8207***	0.0402
Cambodia	1.1468***	0.0651
China	0.5271***	0.0316
Hong Kong	1.071***	0.0481
India	-0.2453**	0.0294
Iran	-0.3***	0.0339
Japan	-0.2102***	0.0626
South Korea	0.6773***	0.0247
Laos	-0.2455***	0.0455
Philippines	0.8124***	0.0228
Thailand	-0.198***	0.0467
Vietnam	0.87***	0.0268
Canada	-0.5601***	0.0445
Salvador	-0.00902	0.0315

Table A.1 (continued)

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error
Guatemala	-0.1184***	0.0418
Honduras	-0.0462	0.0500
Mexico	-0.0765***	0.0261
Nicaragua	-0.3914***	0.0483
Panama	-0.0944**	0.0506
Cuba	0.2245***	0.0230
Dominican Republic	0.3092***	0.0359
Haiti	0.4202***	0.0487
California	-0.1626***	0.0114
Texas	0.1614***	0.0148
New York	0.0352**	0.0141
New Jersey	0.107***	0.0181
Illinois	-0.0124	0.0185
Florida	-0.0497***	0.0161
PUMA INCOME	-0.00001***	0.0000
PUMA UNEMP	-0.8411***	0.1826

***Significant at the 1 percent level.

**Significant at the 5 percent level.

*Significant at the 10 percent level.

Table A.2

The Effect of Living in California on the Probability of Naturalization, 1990 Census

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error
INTERCEPT	-2.6746***	0.0419
ARV18-35	-0.0345**	0.00927
ARV36-53	0.2035***	0.0139
ARV54UP	0.0202	0.0261
Years in U.S.	0.0861***	0.00142
Years in U.S. squared	-0.00014***	0.000025
Male	-0.0714***	0.00857
Married	-0.2218***	0.0136
Citizen spouse	1.3037***	0.0243
Citizen children	1.164***	0.0244
Children	-1.0532***	0.0243

Table A.2 (continued)

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error
SPOUSE_CIT_SAME	1.5641***	0.0277
SPOUSE_CIT_LATER	0.2041***	0.032
SPOUSE_SAME	-0.3456***	0.026
SPOUSE_LATER	0.8126***	0.026
Home ownership	0.0977***	0.00869
UNEMPLOYED	-0.0662***	0.019
GRADE8	-0.2472***	0.0129
NOHS	-0.118***	0.0126
SOMECOLLEGE	0.0383***	0.00321
COLLEGE	0.0495***	0.00238
INC10-19	0.1741***	0.00999
INC20-29	0.2688***	0.0124
INC30-39	0.3259***	0.0161
INC40-49	0.3882***	0.0215
INC50UP	0.406***	0.019
ENGONLY	0.4368***	0.0157
ENGVWELL	0.4549***	0.0139
ENGWELL	0.4208***	0.014
ENGNONE	-0.7677***	0.0225
Public assistance	-0.165***	0.0199
France	-0.4701***	0.0432
Germany	-0.2265***	0.0186
Ireland	-0.1258***	0.0385
Italy	0.1621***	0.0206
United Kingdom	-0.9249***	0.0199
Cambodia	0.2103***	0.0605
China	0.8515***	0.0302
Hong Kong	0.9722***	0.0519
India	-0.0228	0.0253
Iran	-0.4311***	0.0434
Japan	-0.5385***	0.0352
South Korea	0.7726***	0.0257
Laos	-0.0145	0.0512
Philippines	0.7825***	0.0229
Taiwan	0.5709***	0.0306
Thailand	-0.148***	0.0544
Vietnam	0.9607***	0.0287
Canada	-1.0848***	0.0182

Table A.2 (continued)

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error
Salvador	-0.1673***	0.0403
Guatemala	-0.3583***	0.0551
Honduras	-0.1308**	0.0546
Mexico	-0.3708***	0.0141
Nicaragua	-0.5631***	0.0635
Panama	0.1297**	0.0527
Cuba	0.1761***	0.0186
Dominican Republic	-0.1037***	0.0278
Haiti	-0.3503***	0.0324
California	-0.1907***	0.0534
MSAINC	-6.02E-06***	8.54E-07
MSAUNEMP	-0.6042***	0.1577
Percent foreign	-0.3803***	0.0298
CAYRINUS	-0.0124***	0.00256
CAYRINSQ	-0.00011**	0.000045
CAEDGR8	-0.0622***	0.0234
CANOHS	-0.0148	0.023
CASOMCOL	0.00318	0.00573
CACOLL	0.0126***	0.00437
CARV1835	0.0455***	0.0163
CARV3653	-0.0163	0.0256
CARV54	-0.0336	0.0453
CACHILD	0.109***	0.0414
CASPCIT	0.2367***	0.0237
CAFOREIN	0.2165***	0.053
CAENGNO	0.363***	0.037
CAENGVW	0.0345	0.0237
CAENGW	-0.0188	0.0235
CAENGONL	0.1467***	0.0295
CAPUBASS	0.00179	0.0327
CAUK	0.1982***	0.0571
CACANADA	0.1822***	0.0387
CANICA	0.1612*	0.0914
CALAOS	-0.39***	0.0902
CAHAITI	0.4587*	0.2401
CAFRANCE	0.0636	0.0947
CAJAPAN	-0.1356**	0.0557
CAPHILIP	-0.0148	0.033

Table A.2 (continued)

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error
CAMEXICO	-0.313***	0.0229
CACUBA	0.0147	0.0572
CASKOREA	-0.2576***	0.0422
CAMALE	0.00615	0.015
CAMARRY	0.0252	0.0221
CACHCIT	-0.0774*	0.0415
CASPSAME	0.2366***	0.0243
CASLATER	0.2281***	0.0288
CAHOME	0.00709	0.0152
CAUNEMP	0.0604*	0.0323
CAY10_19	-0.0156	0.0178
CAY20_29	-0.025	0.0221
CAY30_39	-0.0468*	0.0282
CAY40_49	-0.0567	0.0376
CAY50UP	-0.0806**	0.0333
CADUAL	-0.0531	0.0431
CAGERMAN	0.0723*	0.0433
CAIRELAN	-0.1251	0.1064
CAITALY	0.2609***	0.0759
CACAMDIA	-0.2441***	0.0935
CACHINA	-0.1566***	0.0459
CAHKONG	-0.00051	0.0862
CAINDIA	-0.00028	0.0541
CAIRAN	0.0374	0.062
CATHAI	-0.2257**	0.0947
CAVIET	-0.0635	0.0414
CASALVDR	-0.2863***	0.0665
CAGUATML	-0.223***	0.075
CAHONDU	-0.0858	0.1217
CAPANA	-0.114	0.1238
CADOMINC	-0.0651	0.2122

***Significant at the 1 percent level.

**Significant at the 5 percent level.

*Significant at the 10 percent level.

Table A.3
Identifying Trends in Naturalization

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 4a	Model 4b	Model 5a	Model 5b
Intercept	INTERCPT	-0.51***	-0.30***	-2.72***	-2.53***	-2.74***	-2.55***	-2.72***	-2.54***
Year	YR97	0.19***	0.15***	0.94***	0.89***	0.99***	0.95***	0.96***	0.91***
California residence	CALIF		-0.75***	-0.44***	-0.32***	-0.45***	-0.32***	-0.38***	-0.25***
California residence interacted with year	CALIF7		0.17**	0.14	0.15	0.16*	0.16*		
Latino origin	LATINO			-0.52***	-0.58***	-0.46***	-0.50***	-0.53***	-0.58***
Latino interacted with year	LATINO7			0.14	0.18**			0.15*	0.19**
Asian origin	ASIAN			0.55***	0.05	0.55***	0.06	0.55	0.05
Age at time of arrival	ARV18-34			-0.01***	-0.04	0.00	-0.04	-0.01	-0.04
	ARV35-54			0.25***	0.13*	0.25***	0.13*	0.24***	0.12*
	ARV55-99			0.22	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.22	0.00
Period of immigration	PER0050			4.55***	4.71***	4.56***	4.71***	4.54***	4.71***
	PER5060			3.69***	3.81***	3.69***	3.80***	3.68***	3.80***
	PER6064			3.27***	3.32***	3.25***	3.30***	3.27***	3.32***
	PER6569			2.88***	2.85***	2.86***	2.83***	2.87***	2.85***
	PER7074			2.71***	2.71***	2.69***	2.69***	2.70***	2.71***
	PER7579			2.28***	2.31***	2.27***	2.30***	2.27***	2.31***
	PER8081			1.85***	1.77***	1.84***	1.76***	1.84***	1.77***
	PER8283			1.82***	1.79***	1.82***	1.78***	1.82***	1.79***
	PER8485			1.41***	1.40***	1.40***	1.40***	1.40***	1.40***
	PER8687			1.24***	1.25***	1.24***	1.24***	1.24***	1.24***
	PER8889			0.94***	0.97***	0.93***	0.96***	0.94***	0.97***
Personal and household characteristics	MALE			-0.04	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03
	MARRIED			-0.69***	-0.65***	-0.69***	-0.65***	-0.69***	-0.65***

Table A.3 (continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 4a	Model 4b	Model 5a	Model 5b
			0.96***	1.01***	0.97***	1.01***	0.96***	1.01***
			1.92***	1.80***	1.92***	1.81***	1.92***	1.80***
			0.52***	0.37**	0.52**	0.37**	0.52***	0.37**
			0.77***	0.79***	0.77***	0.79***	0.77***	0.78***
			-0.72***	-0.72***	-0.72***	-0.72***	-0.72***	-0.72***
			-0.64***	-0.65***	-0.64***	-0.65***	-0.64***	-0.65***
			0.47***	0.48***	0.47***	0.48***	0.47***	0.48***
			0.18***	0.23***	0.18***	0.23***	0.18***	0.23***
			-0.14	-0.16	-0.15	-0.16	-0.14	-0.16
			-0.74***	-0.67***	-0.75***	-0.68***	-0.74***	-0.67***
			-0.34***	-0.32***	-0.35***	-0.33***	-0.34***	-0.32***
			0.06***	0.05***	0.06***	0.05***	0.06***	0.05***
			0.10***	0.09***	0.11***	0.10***	0.10***	0.09***
			0.18***	0.20***	0.18***	0.20***	0.18***	0.20***
			0.26***	0.27***	0.26***	0.27***	0.26***	0.26***
			0.37***	0.35***	0.37***	0.35***	0.37***	0.35***
			0.43***	0.40***	0.43***	0.40***	0.43***	0.40***
			0.38***	0.36***	0.38***	0.36***	0.38***	0.37***
			-0.08	-0.18	-0.09	-0.19	-0.08	-0.19
			-1.13***	-1.11***	-1.16***	-1.14***	-1.13***	-1.11***
			-0.91***	-0.89***	-0.92***	-0.89***	-0.92***	-0.89***
			-0.93***	-0.91***	-0.90***	-0.87***	-0.93***	-0.90***
			-0.58***	-0.62**	-0.56**	-0.59**	-0.58**	-0.62**
			-0.70***	-0.66***	-0.67***	-0.62***	-0.69***	-0.65***
			-0.76***	-0.74***	-0.74***	-0.72***	-0.74***	-0.73***

Education

Period of immigration interacted w/year

Table A.3 (continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 4a	Model 4b	Model 5a	Model 5b
PER78081			-0.58**	-0.53**	-0.56**	-0.50**	-0.57**	-0.52**
PER78283			-1.01***	-0.97***	-1.00***	-0.95***	-1.01***	-0.97***
PER78485			-0.50**	-0.43*	-0.49*	-0.42*	-0.49**	-0.42*
PER78687			-0.49*	-0.48*	-0.48*	-0.47*	-0.48*	-0.47*
PER78889			-0.70***	-0.70***	-0.69***	-0.68***	-0.70***	-0.70***
GRADE87			0.04	0.05	0.08	0.10	0.05	0.06
NOHS7			-0.03	0.00	0.00	0.03	-0.02	0.00
SOMECOL7			0.25***	0.22**	0.25***	0.21**	0.26***	0.22**
COLL7			0.30***	0.29***	0.28***	0.27***	0.31***	0.30***
PUBAST7			0.00	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.03
Country of origin dummies			No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

NOTE: Using March 1996 and March 1997 CPS data, we developed eight logit models to identify factors related to changes in the propensity to naturalize.

***Significant at the .01 level.

**Significant at the .05 level.

*Significant at the .10 level.

Table A.4

Identifying Differences in Naturalization by California Counties, 1990 Census

Variable	Only the County Dummies	Length of Stay	Length of Stay and Education	Length of Stay, Education, English Proficiency, and Country of Origin	Full Model
MERCED	-0.7751***	-0.5533***	-0.2825***	-0.1128	-0.113
IMPERIAL	-0.7167***	-0.7938***	-0.5379***	-0.1074	-0.1107
TULARE	-0.6628***	-0.4808***	-0.1106*	0.1101	0.048
SCRUZ	-0.5898***	-0.5801***	-0.5521***	-0.4374***	-0.3368***
FRESNO	-0.544***	-0.3856***	-0.1346**	0.1006**	0.0525
LA	-0.3746***	-0.0448*	-0.0465*	-0.0176	0.0633*
STANSLS	-0.3739***	-0.2108***	-0.0522	0.0114	-0.1222
MONTEREY	-0.3553***	-0.2182***	-0.0913*	-0.054	-0.0364
RIVER	-0.3087***	-0.2079***	-0.1714***	-0.0777*	-0.0749
KERN	-0.2575***	-0.0405	0.2067***	0.35***	0.2446***
VENTURA	-0.2146***	-0.11***	-0.1644***	-0.092**	-0.0449
SANBERN	-0.1739***	0.0252	-0.00857	0.02	-0.0046
SJOAQUIN	-0.1137	-0.1348	-0.0142	-0.1572	-0.1726
SBARBRA	-0.0922*	-0.0625	-0.0641	0.0393	0.1471**
ORANGE	-0.086***	0.2809***	0.1605***	0.1108***	0.1693
SCLARA	0.0901**	0.4498***	0.1832***	-0.0995***	-0.0534
SDIEGO	0.0967***	0.2842***	0.1971***	0.1479***	0.178***
SONOMA	0.1901**	0.0292	-0.1611*	-0.1862**	-0.2017**
ALAMEDA	0.2529***	0.5433***	0.2992***	-0.0227	-0.0314
SAC	0.2927***	0.4542***	0.3358***	0.1056**	0.1347**
SMATEO	0.3879***	0.5733***	0.3067***	0.0402	0.0871*
SF	0.4027***	0.6592***	0.5253***	0.0902**	0.1706***
CCOSTA	0.424***	0.5921***	0.2722**	0.077*	0.0438
SOLANO	0.6701***	0.8809***	0.6438***	0.2202***	0.1864***

***Significant at the 1 percent level.

**Significant at the 5 percent level.

*Significant at the 10 percent level.

Appendix B

Response Rates to the PPIC Survey of County Welfare Offices

In the late fall of 1997, PPIC conducted a phone survey with respondents designated by each county welfare office in the state concerning the citizenship and naturalization activities undertaken by the welfare offices over the past year and the participation of legal immigrants in county-run welfare programs.

Fifty-five county welfare offices participated in the survey. San Diego, Tulare, and Stanislaus Counties did not. All fifty-five counties that participated supplied information on the type of citizenship and naturalization assistance provided by their offices. Fifty-three county offices provided information on the level of funding devoted to those services. Napa and San Joaquin Counties did not provide this information.

Thirty-two counties (55 percent of all counties) provided usable, recent statistics on legal immigrant AFDC (Aid to Families with

Dependent Children) recipients. For counties where this information was not available, we imputed values by calculating the ratio of AFDC recipients to noncitizen immigrants for all counties for which the data were available, and then imputed the same share of noncitizen immigrants to counties for which the AFDC information was not available.

Appendix C

Matching of March CPS Records

The CPS March Supplement uses a rotation method whereby households selected for sampling are interviewed for four consecutive months, dropped from the sample for eight months, and then reinterviewed for four more consecutive months. This method produces an overlap of respondents by roughly 50 percent from year to year. To not double-count records, we needed to remove this overlap for data pooled from 1994 to 1997. To remove the overlap, we first had to identify the matching sequence for a pair of CPS years. This was done by essentially taking the month in survey value for a particular record in the base year (t) and progressing it by 4 to arrive at the month in survey value for that same record in the following year ($t + 1$). For example, if a record in the 1994 CPS has a month in survey value of 1 then its corresponding month in survey value in 1995 would be 5.

The next step was to identify corresponding records within the possible match subsets. The CPS removes entire households from the

sample, and not individuals, even though data on each individual in the household are recorded. The CPS does not use a unique personal tracking number for each record throughout the two rotations. Thus, matching person records is accomplished on the basis of personal characteristics that do not change between rotations. The personal characteristics chosen were household identification number, sex, race, year of birth, relationship to household head, marital status, and educational attainment.

Since our final sample eliminated children under the age of 18 and full-time students, the last characteristic was not considered to be a problem. The incidence of nonmatches with and without educational attainment was under 1 percent of all records. It is possible that some records were kept that showed a change in marital status and relationship to household head; however, this effect is considered to be minimal since many of those records were more likely to leave the household than stay in another rotation (e.g., if a wife divorces her husband, she is more likely to leave the sample than stay in). Other possibilities of missed records include cohabitants who marry, identical twins over the age of 18, and change in headship (e.g., the household head becomes the wife because the husband leaves or dies). However, these occurrences were small and the addition of restrictions were found to add more accuracy than non-matches.

Finally, only two CPS year pairings were subjected to the overlap removal process: 1994 with 1995, and 1996 with 1997. Matching is not possible between March 1995 and March 1996 because the March 1996 file is based entirely on the 1990 census design sample.

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