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Fresno in Transition: Urban Impacts of Rural Migration

by

Bert Mason, Andrew Alvarado and Robert Palacio

Working Paper No. 26
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Julian Samora Research Institute
Michigan State University
301 Nisbet Building
1407 S. Harrison Road
East Lansing, MI 48823-5286

Phone: (517) 432-1317
Fax: (517) 432-2221
E-mail: jsamorai@msu.edu
Web: www.jsri.msu.edu

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Paper Presented at the Conference on Immigration
and the Changing Face of Rural California
Asilomar, California
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Bert Mason is director of the Center for Agricultural Business and professor of Agricultural Economics. Andrew Alvarado is senior research associate with the Center and professor of Social Work Education. Robert Palacio is associate professor of Sociology, California State University, Fresno.

Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Julian Samora Research Institute
Refugio I. Rochin, Director

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RELATED READINGS:

CIFRAS-6 Rumbaut, Ruben G. "Immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean: A Socioeconomic Profile." 18 pp. (1995)

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Rochin, Refugio I., editor, *Immigration and Ethnic Communities: A Focus on Latinos,* Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 1996

INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of this conference is to examine the impacts and policy consequences of international migration to rural communities of California. Our assignment is to identify and discuss the immediate or eventual effects of the transformation of many rural communities into binational migration nodes on urban centers such as Fresno. We attempt to accomplish this assignment by first examining available secondary data on social and economic changes that have occurred in Fresno during the past two decades. Included in this discussion are analyses of the growth and composition of population and employment, demographic changes and an assessment of potential effects of immigration-induced changes on public services, education and other socioeconomic indicators. At this point, we can only identify potential rather than actual causality between immigration and socioeconomic changes. Within the context of rapid community change forged by numerous factors, it is also impossible to quantify the importance of these relationships.

The second part of this paper provides some insight into the issue of assimilation and acculturation of recent immigrants from Mexico. We base this section largely on intensive field research we have conducted during the past several years on farmworkers and their families. In this section, we will argue that the development of "third-world" Mexican villages in rural California slows the process of assimilation for immigrants, and makes the transition to urban environments and non-agricultural jobs highly unlikely for first-generation immigrants and more difficult for their children.

For more than a century, California agriculture has provided an easy-access point of entry into the U.S. economy. Since the early 1980's, this migration has been dominated by illegal

immigrants (many of whom eventually acquire legal status) who come from rural Mexico seeking agricultural jobs in rural California. Our working hypothesis for this paper is that this rural migration impacts urban centers in agricultural regions, but these impacts lag the dramatic and obvious effects on rural communities and are primarily the result of movement of second-generation immigrants from rural communities to nearby urban areas. We will argue that this internal migration is motivated by the desire among second-generation immigrants to seek non-farm jobs, and that the outcome of this search process can often be negative for both the relocator and the receiving community.

A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF FRESNO: COMPARATIVE SNAPSHOTS

The Fresno metropolitan area, comprised of the city of Fresno and surrounding suburban areas, serves as the financial, trade, and commericial center for central California (figure 1). The California Department of Finance estimated total population in Fresno County to be 755,200 in January, 1994. Of this total, approximately 402,100 lived in the city of Fresno, 180,335 lived in the fourteen incorporated cities other than Fresno, and 171,700 lived in the unincorporated areas of the county.

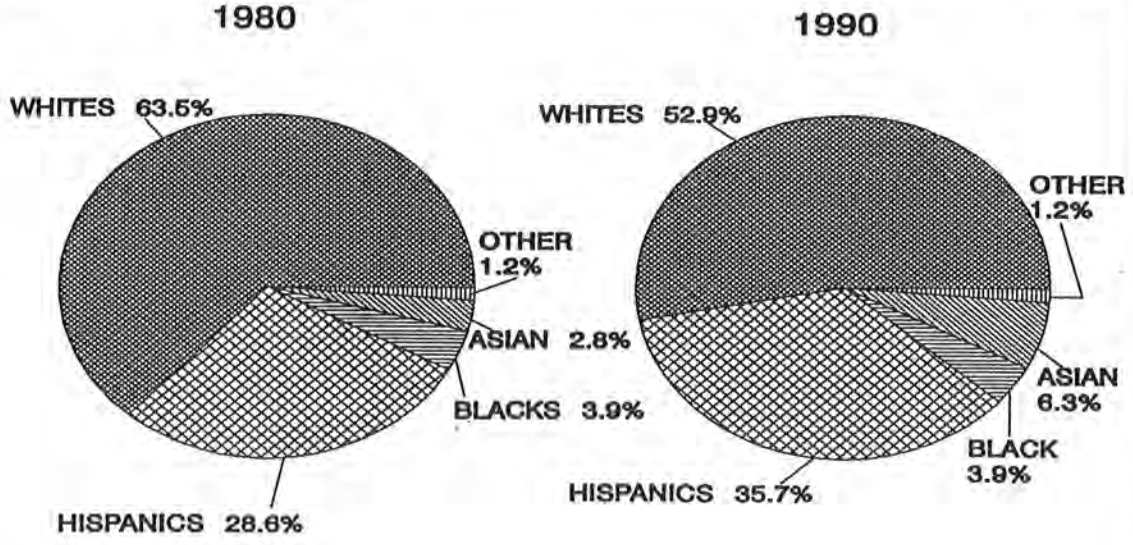
The decade of the 1980s was one of significant population growth for the incorporated cities and for the county as well. The county population grew by almost one third (31 percent) between 1980 and 1990 with all major ethnic/racial groups showing gains. The share of the total population for "whites" actually decreased as it did "blacks" and "others" who remained constant at 3.9 and 1.2 percent, respectively. Numerically, all groups show an increase during this period.

The data in the table below illustrate these increases by ethnicity, relative percentage share, and percent gain.

TABLE 1: CHANGE IN FRESNO COUNTY POPULATION BY ETHNICITY 1980 - 1990, IN NUMBER AND PERCENT

	1980		1990		Percent Gain
	N	%	N	%	
Whites	326,784	63.5	353,102	52.9	+ 8.1
Hispanics	147,181	28.6	238,293	35.7	+ 62
Blacks	20,070	3.9	26,033	3.9	+ 30
Asian	14,409	2.8	42,052	6.3	+ 192
Other	6,175	1.2	8,010	1.2	+ 30
Total	**514,621**		**667,490**		**+ 31**

FIGURE 1. CHANGE IN FRESNO COUNTY POPULATION BY ETHNICITY: 1980 - 1990



Source: Table 1.

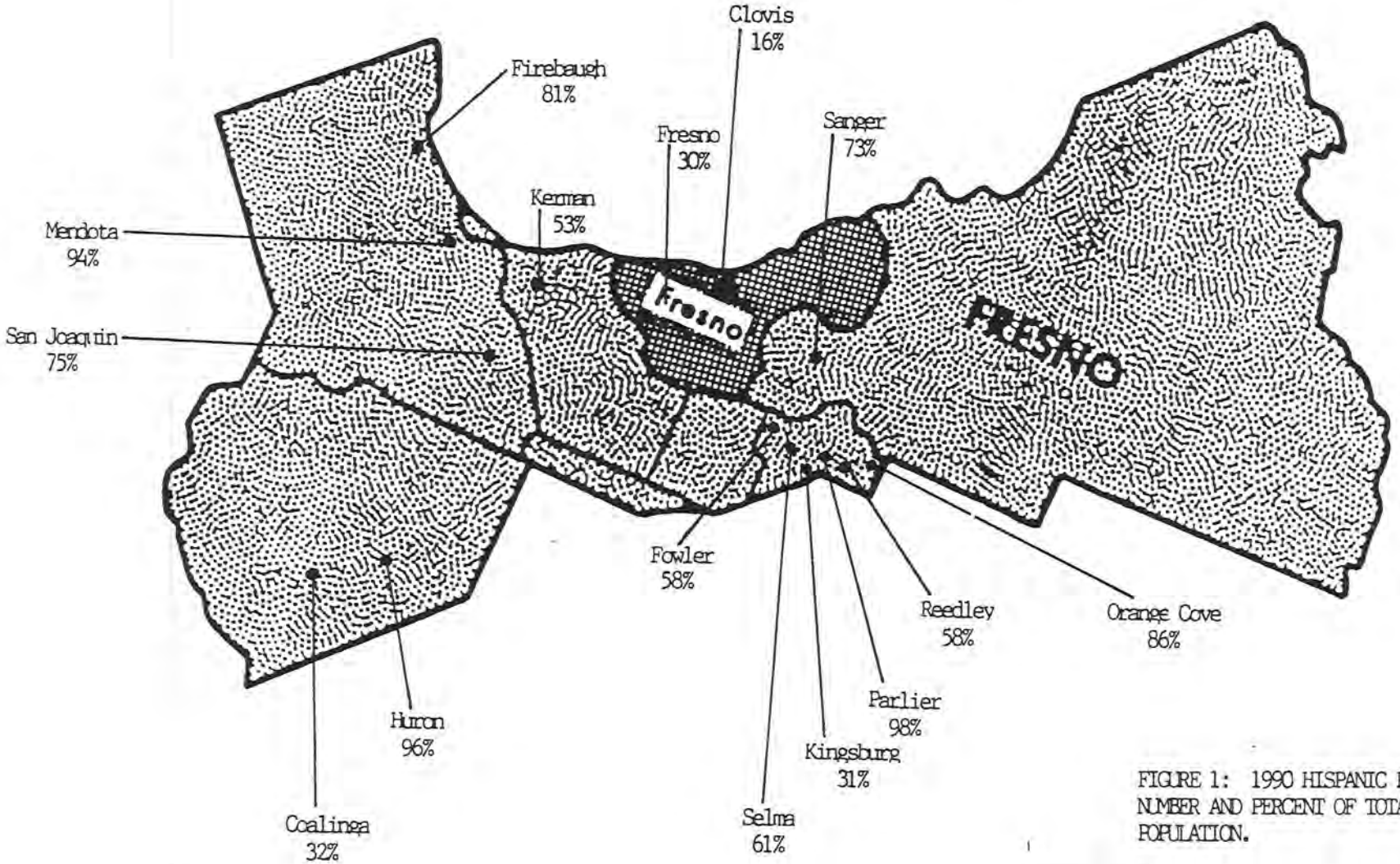


FIGURE 1: 1990 HISPANIC POPULATION IN NUMBER AND PERCENT OF TOTAL COUNTY POPULATION.

Metropolitan:

Fresno	105,906 (30%)
Clovis	8,203 (16%)
Rural Fresno County	122,849 (46.7%)
Total Number of Hispanics	236,958 (35.5%)

The greatest gains during the decade were made by Asians (191 percent) which is largely accounted for by a sizeable influx of resettled Southeast Asian refugees from other parts of the United States. In 1980, 10.6 percent of the country's residents were foreign born, and by 1990, this figure had increased to 17.8 percent. Hispanics also account for a considerable share of the increase, particularly of those born outside of the United States. This is further reflected in the language spoken in the home by many of the county's residents. Here, the 1990 Census shows that 33.1 percent spoke a language other than English and among 20 percent of all county residents, Spanish was the dominant language used in the home.

Much of the increase in the Hispanic population occured in the outlying, small, rural communities of the county. The data in table 2 show the increases in these small towns as well as in the Fresno and Clovis metropolitan areas. Clearly, rural Fresno County has become more "Mexicanized" whereas the urban center comprised of Fresno and Clovis continues to be predominantly white. Throughout the city, residential clusters are segregated by ethnic group status, so that there are sections in Fresno that are populated predominantly by Asians, while other sections are either Hispanic or black. The flight of whites out of the southern and central sections of the city continued during the decade and their growth numerically did not keep pace with other groups as shown in the table above. Overall however, whites did not lose as much ground in the city as in the rural areas where Hispanics have clearly become the dominant group, as shown in Table 2 below. Only in the communities of Coalinga and Kingsburg do Hispanics comprise less than half of the total population in the county's rural incorporated small towns.

TABLE 2: PERCENT OF HISPANIC POPULATION BY CITIES IN FRESNO COUNTY, 1980 AND 1990

City	1980	1990
Clovis	13.1	16.3
Coalinga	16.2	31.5
Firebaugh	69.7	80.6
Fowler	48.3	58.4
Fresno	23.6	29.8
Huron	91.3	96.4
Kerman	37.3	52.6
Kingsburg	23.8	31.4
Mendota	84.6	93.9
Orange Cove	72.1	86.0
Parlier	90.4	97.0
Reedley	45.0	58.2
Sanger	65.7	72.8
San Joaquin	60.1	75.4
Selma	49.4	61.2

The total population in the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area also increased substantially between 1980 and 1990. In 1980, the combined population for these two cities was 250,512 and by 1990, this figure had increased to 404,202. It is very difficult to provide exact comparative figures on population change by all ethnic groups for the City of Fresno as the Census-designated ethnic group categories in 1980 differ in some instances from the 1990 designations. In addition, the data presented on Asians are not separated between those residing in the City of Fresno and those living in the county.

The focus of this analysis is on the effects of migration from Mexico to rural areas of California. It is important to note, however, that the Fresno area has also been heavily impacted by heavy migration from Southeast Asia during the past decade. Since the late 1970s, Fresno County and the City of Fresno in particular, have experienced a substantial secondary migration and influx of Southeast Asian refugees. Presently, Fresno County ranks only behind Los Angeles, Orange,

San Diego, and Santa Clara Counties in the number of Southeast Asian refugees who have settled in California during the past decade.

TABLE 3: CITY OF FRESNO POPULATION BY ETHNICITY, 1980 - 1990, IN NUMBER AND PERCENT

	1980		1990		
	N	%	N	%	Percent Gain
Whites	136,366	62.7	209,604	52.2	54%
Hispanics	51,110	23.5	105,905	29.9	107%
Blacks	21,314	9.8	29,398	8.3	38%
Asian*	6,307	2.9	44,275	12.5	602%
Other	2,392	1.1	4,250	1.2	78%

*The figures for the Asian group include those living in areas outside the City of Fresno thus making the total of all groups exceed 100 percent.

Within the Asian category, the majority are Hmong, but there are also Cambodian, Lowland Lao, and Vietnamese. Between 1980 and 1992, almost 40,000 refugees from Southeast Asia located in Fresno County, primarily within the Fresno city limits (Department of Finance, March 1994). As a result, the proportion of Fresno city residents who were classified as Asian increased from less than three percent in 1980 to more than 12 percent in 1990. Indeed, Asians and Hispanics made very large gains during the decade of the 1980s.

As will be discussed in the following sections, migration from Southeast Asia to the Fresno area is concentrated in the urban areas and therefore impacts the city of Fresno, the social service system and the schools much more immediately and visibly than migration from Mexico which has been concentrated in the rural areas. There are also important qualitative differences in the migrants from Southeast Asia and Mexico. First-generation immigrants from Mexico are generally motivated by economic considerations and typically are employed immediately in agricultural jobs.

Southeast Asians, on the other hand, are political refugees without existing support networks and linkages to easy-access farm employment. The effects of primary and secondary migration by Southeast Asians are likely to be felt in the foreseeable future, with an additional 40,000 refugees expected to settle in Fresno County by 1998 (United Way, 1994).

EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Detailed data on employment and related economic activities are generally reported at the county level. There are some differences in economic activity between the rural and urban areas of Fresno County, most notably in the importance of employment in agriculture. Primary (or production) agriculture dominates the rural economies, while agricultural services and processing are relatively more important within the city. Unfortunately, these observations cannot be analyzed in any detail due to data limitations. The discussion which follows necessarily relies on county-level aggregate data.

Between 1973 and 1990, total employment in Fresno County grew by 39 percent (Appendix A and Figures 2 and 3). Despite this steady growth, there appears to be very little diversification in terms of employment. Fresno County is the leading agricultural county in the U.S., with a farm-gate value of more than $3 billion in 1994. Agriculture continues to be a major employer in Fresno County, accounting for 21 percent of total employment in 1973 and 19 percent in 1990. There has been some shift, however, away from employment in production agriculture towards increased employment in agricultural services. This follows a long-term, national trend in the agricultural sector.

During the 1973-90 period, manufacturing employment increased by about 50 percent, but only accounted for 9 percent of total employment in the county. Moreover, a closer examination of the data indicates that 40 percent of the "manufacturing" jobs are in the category of food and kindred products. Transportation and public utilities have followed county growth patterns, with employment increasing by 34 percent between 1973-90. Growth in the transportation portion of this sector (+39 percent) reflects Fresno's strategic location midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Government employment has lagged county averages, with total growth at 32 percent. Finance, insurance and real estate employment grew by an above-average 51 percent during this period, yet accounted for only 5 percent of total employment in 1993. According to local economic development experts, growth in this sector is largely due to relocation of insurance claims and related "paperwork" processing businesses to the central valley.

Retail trade, with a growth of 44 percent between 1973 and 1990, and services with a growth of 54 percent during this same time period, represent large and increasing opportunities for employment. The service industry, which includes health, business and social services, employs about 19 percent of the Fresno County workforce. The Employment Development Department predicted that 60 percent of the new jobs in Fresno County between 1990 and 1997 would fall into services and retail trades (EDD, 1994). The majority of these jobs are likely to be relatively low-skilled and therefore low-paid. Fresno County continues to be plagued by high levels of unemployment (Table 4). During the past decade, annual unemployment rates have averaged between 10 and 14 percent. Moreover, the seasonal nature of agricultural employment compounds

this problem with winter unemployment rates often averaging 16-17 percent. In several rural communities, the unemployment rate during the winter months is much higher.

So what do these employment data tell us about job prospects for the migrant from Mexico or rural California? It appears that entry-level jobs in retail trade and services have been created in the Fresno economy, and are likely to continue to expand in the near future. Government jobs, which have been historically sought by second-generation immigrants throughout the history of the U.S., have not expanded as fast as population has grown and are not likely to do so in the future. High-paying jobs in durable, non-food manufacturing firms simply don't exist to any significant extent in Fresno County. One bright spot appears to be food processing, which is growing and employs large numbers of first- and second-generation immigrants from Mexico. One might argue that eviscerating chickens is not the job of American dreams, but food processing jobs do provide steady employment with some security, health insurance and similar benefits.

Because of high unemployment, seasonality of employment, and low wage levels, Fresno County income levels lag state and national averages. In 1993, per capita income in Fresno County was $12,395, or 65 percent of the California average. According to the United Way, large numbers of the rural population in Fresno County live in poverty. Huron, Laton, Del Rey, Mendota, Parlier and Orange Cove all have 40-50 percent of their households with incomes below the federal poverty level. The United Way report concludes "comparisons among populations in the poorest communities with the populations by ethnicity indicates (sic) that poverty is much more prevalent among Hispanics in rural areas." (United Way, 1994: p. 24)

FIGURE 2: FRESNO COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

1973 - 1990

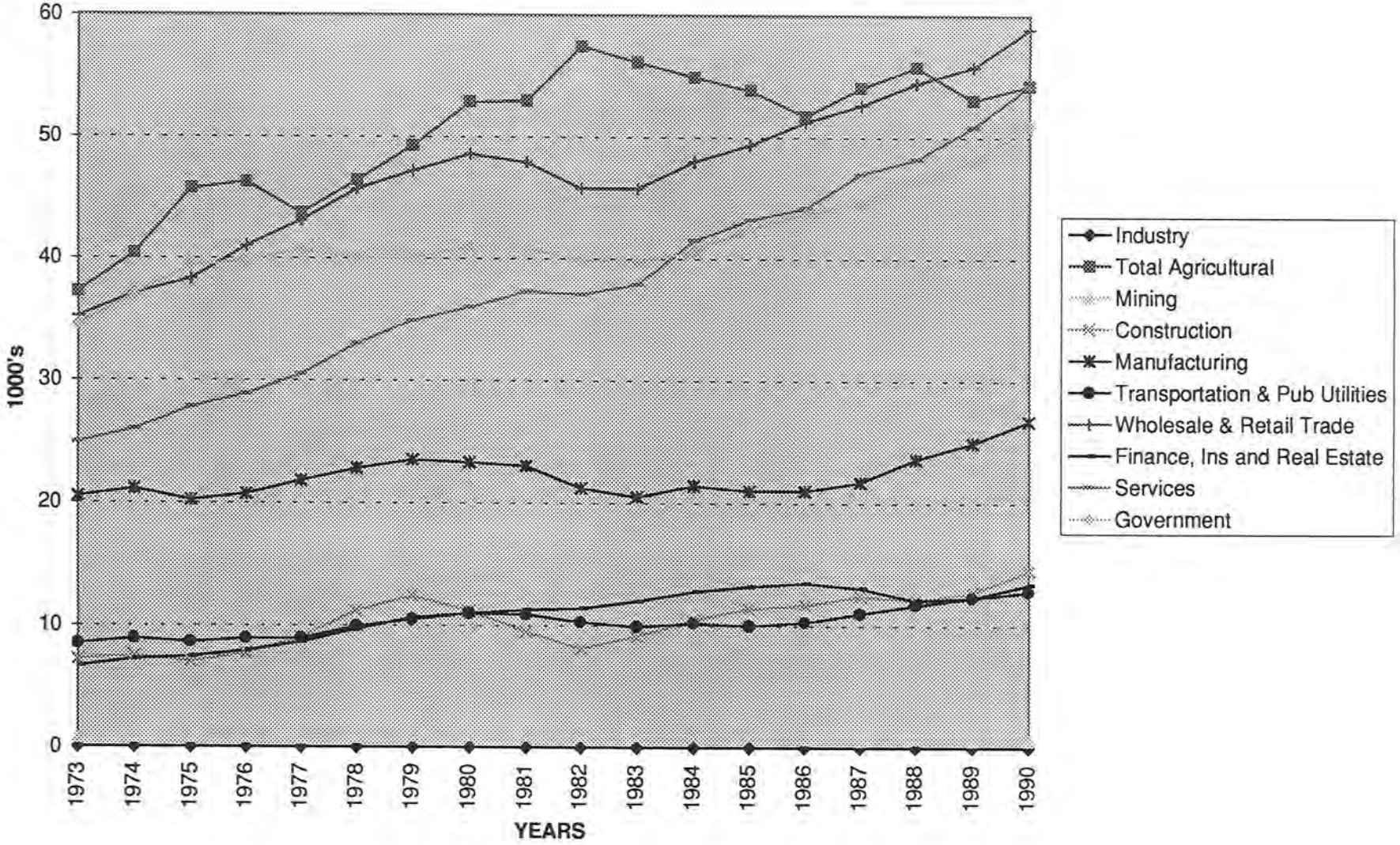


FIGURE 3. EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR, FRESNO COUNTY: 1990

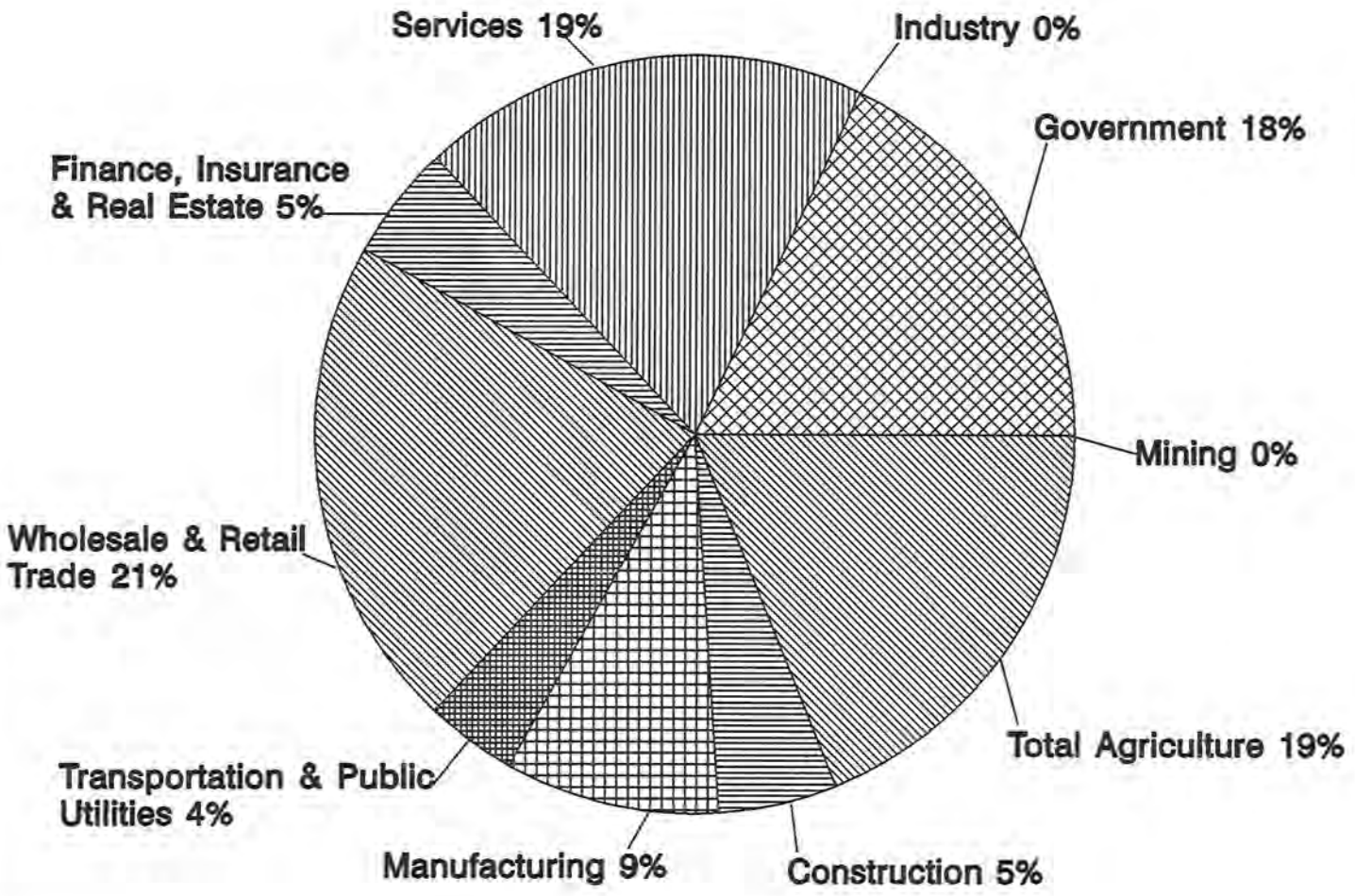


TABLE 4

FRESNO COUNTY AND FRESNO/MADERA SMSA EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT 1983-93

(Annual Averages)

Year	*Labor Force*	*Employment*	*Unemployment*	*Unemployment Rate*
1983	282,300	241,800	40,500	14.3
1984	284,300	247,700	36,600	12.9
1985	286,200	249,200	37,000	12.9
1986	290,800	254,700	36,100	12.4
1987	295,500	264,100	31,400	10.6
1988	307,400	274,300	33,100	10.8
1989	313,200	281,800	31,400	10.0
1990	329,400	295,100	34,300	10.4
(see note)				
1991	338,900	297,300	41,600	12.3
1992	354,800	303,200	51,600	14.5
1993	364,100	311,500	52,600	14.4

NOTE:
In 1991, the U.S. Department of Labor combined Madera County with Fresno County. Employment data from 1983-90 are therefore not comparable to the data for 1991-93.

In the city of Fresno, approximately 25 percent of the population lives below the poverty level. Much of this poverty is concentrated in the southern and central parts of the city. For example, the United Way estimated that only 4 percent of the children living in the affluent northwest portion of the city live in poverty, while 99 percent of the children who reside in central Fresno live with families with incomes below the poverty level. It is also estimated the 58 percent of central Fresno residents are Hispanic and 26 percent are Asian.

In sum, the employment prospects for those with limited education and skills are not bright in Fresno County. High unemployment rates, low wage levels, and unstable employment indicate that the urban economy has not been able to absorb all new entrants into the labor market. The lack of significant diversification in the economy means that this will not change in the near future. The net result is that the offspring of immigrant farmworkers who move from the rural areas into urban cities such as Fresno are often frustrated in their search for economic advancement. The inability to secure stable, well-paying jobs often leads to increased demands for social services and leads to deteriorating social conditions in the community as indicated by increasing crime rates, substance abuse and family discord. In the following section, we will discuss some indications of the strains placed on public services and the community that are the ultimate consequence of rapid immigration.

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Within the geographical boundaries of the City of Fresno, the primary school district is the Fresno Unified School District. From 1985 to 1990, the total number of ethnic minority students enrolled in the district increased by 7.9 percent. This increase represents a growth of 11,181 minority students in only four years. Indeed, by 1994, the Hispanic students had become the single largest group numerically in the district, surpassing whites who comprised 35.2 compared to Hispanics at 44.8 percent during the same year. In 1990, Asian students made up 18.3 of all students while blacks comprised 10.5 percent of the total K-12 school population. The data in table 5 provide a comparison of the ethnicity of Fresno Unified School District students to the general population of Fresno. Since the boundaries of Fresno and the school district are not entirely coterminous, the ethnicity of students enrolled in schools within Fresno Unified Schools varies from the ethnicity of the overall general population of the City of Fresno. The ethnicity of students within the district offers a dramatically forecast for the city's future ethnic makeup.

The growing cultural diversity of students attending schools in the Fresno Unified Schools is also evidenced by the number of primary languages spoken, currently over 80 at the elementary and secondary school levels in the district. There are also more than 20,000 elementary and secondary students considered to have limited English proficiency. Among those classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), 35 percent speak Spanish, 36 percent speak Hmong, 15 percent Lao, 8 percent speak Khmer, and 6 percent speak other languages.

TABLE 5: COMPARISON OF POPULATION AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN CITY OF FRESNO, 1990, IN PERCENT

Ethnicity	Schools	City
White	35.2	52.2
Hispanic	34.8	29.9
Asian	18.3	12.5
Black	10.5	8.3
Other	1.2	

POVERTY AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IN FRESNO COUNTY

The central San Joaquin Valley, where the County of Fresno is located, is one the most productive agricultural region in the nation. It is also a region with one of the nations's highest poverty rates. In August 1993, for example, Fresno County ranked fifth in the state in the total number of persons receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children. More specifically, 125,910 individuals were recipients of financial assistance and services in the county under that program. Of this figure, 85,456 were children and 40,454 were adults. Poverty rates in both the city and county increased sharply between 1980 and 1990 as shown in table 6 below.

TABLE 6: PERCENT LIVING BELOW POVERTY LEVEL IN FRESNO COUNTY AND CITY, 1980 - 1990

	1980	1990
City	15.7	24
County	14.5	21.4

Nearly one-third (31.4 percent) of the total 1990 population in the county was under 18 years of age and they are in greater risk of living in poverty and in conditions associated with poverty than in most other parts of the state. For example, Fresno County ranked fourth out of all 58 counties in the state in the proportion children living in extreme poverty; ranked third in the state for births to unmarried teens; and fifth in teenage violent crime. On an average day, 40 automobiles are stolen in the City of Fresno, and most of the perpetrators are teenage males.

During August 1993, 37,896 separate households (118,741 individuals) received food stamps in the county amounting to a total dollar value of $7,247,387 in food stamps issued that month. The number of children living in households receiving food stamps totalled 15,484. Among the 741,500 residents of Fresno County in the last quarter of 1993, 29.7 percent received some type of public assistance compared to overall state figures of 11.8 percent. Race and ethnicity are key factors in the distribution of public assistance as can be observed from the table below.

TABLE 7: PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY ETHNICITY OF TOTAL COUNTY ALLOCATIONS IN PERCENT FOR 1993

Race/Ethnicity	% of Total County Population	% of Total Recipients Receiving Aid	% of Group on Aid
White	47.7	17.1	10.6
Hispanic	36.4	48.1	39.2
Black	8.3	9.6	61.9
Laotian	1.5	4.3	86.8
Cambodian	.8	2.3	83.6
Hmong	4.8	14.9	91.1
Vietnamese	.4	0.8	62.6
Other	3.6	2.2	23.3

The per capita income of Fresno County residents in 1990 was $11,824 while Fresno City residents had a slightly lower per capita income at $11,528. Among households in the total county, the median income was $26,377 while the same figure for households in the City of Fresno was lower at $24,923. Median family income, on the other hand, in both the city and the county were slightly higher than that of household income. Here, the figure for the city families was $28,336

and that of families living in the county was $29,970. Thus, rural residents appear to be better off financially than those living in metropolitan Fresno where 60 percent of the total county population reside. Family income even for rural county residents, however, does not fare very well compared to state-wide figures which indicate that Fresno County ranks 40th in family income among all counties. Dependence upon an economy driven by agriculture results in a labor force in the region characterized by seasonal employment and low annual earnings for many.

RURAL IMMIGRATION: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION

For the past ten years, we have conducted several studies of the central California farm workforce. Most of these studies have been field-based with substantial primary data collected from farm workers and farm employers. The most recent of these studies (Alvarado, Riley and Mason, 1995), included intensive family interviews with farm workers who had obtained legalization via the Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) program authorized under IRCA in 1986. Some of the results from this study are relevant to the current topic.

A specific focus of our recent research was to examine the extent that SAWs have become assimilated into the broader community and into the expanded social and economic systems of central California. It was hypothesized that a legalized SAW-workforce, after almost ten years since the passage of IRCA, would begin to follow the classic patterns of social and cultural assimilation experienced by other 20th- century immigrant groups. In order to address these questions, field survey research was supplemented by intensive case studies of SAW families.

While our findings are not verifiable in a statistical sense, we did discover that the predictions of social scientists about the likely effects of legalization via the SAW program have been largely unrealized. Economists predicted that labor supplies would be reduced, labor markets would tighten, and employment conditions for SAWs workers would improve. There was also an expectation that legalization and permanent residence would result in rapid assimilation and acculturation for these individuals. Neither prediction has been borne out.

Our research over the past few years has found little evidence of SAWs workers moving into nonagricultural jobs, or into urban areas. Most workers interviewed have stated interest in nonfarm jobs, but always viewed them as unobtainable: "There's nothing to do here except *trabajo del campo* for those of us who didn't go very far in school and who don't speak English very well...and we're lucky to find much of that (farm labor) with all of Mexico coming here."

One major avenue to economic improvement and assimilation is through education. For the SAWs workers, very few have pursued this opportunity except for limited English language training needed for legalization. None of the SAWs workers interviewed indicated they had enrolled in formal education in the U.S., and only 7 percent reported that they had participated in any form of training in the U.S. As one worker responded, "We came here to work, not to go to school...if I had wanted to go to school, I would have stayed home in Mexico."

In lieu of learning English by formal instruction, another form of language acquisition can occur by frequently hearing and otherwise interacting with others who speak the dominant language. Inasmuch as most of the SAWs who were interviewed have been in the U.S. for more than 10 years and considering that 50 percent of them reported having children who are enrolled in

U.S. schools, it would also be reasonable to find a high rate of fluency in English among the SAWs based on the notion that children might be transmitters of language from school to the home. This does not occur very often, as only 2-3 percent of the SAWs reported they spoke English "very well" or "fairly well."

We found that non-English speakers needing to communicate in English (for interacting with stores, schools, and agencies) first seek out others whom they know for assistance in translating before relying on bilingual personnel employed by such agencies. Often, such persons known to the parents may not be readily available, except the English-speaking children in the household. The respondents related to the interviewers that indeed this is what occurs when no one else who speaks English is conveniently available. In numerous instances, the parents rely solely upon their children to translate, especially the older children.

Nearly all of the case study respondents expressed confidence that even when there is no one in the home to assist with translation, employees of business establishments, public offices, government agencies, and other private vendors are available to communicate with non-English speakers. The incentive to learn English by the SAWs is therefore minimized by this readily-available pool of English translators either in the home or in the community.

The children of immigrants, unlike their parents, are confronted with the need to learn English much sooner, and this normally occurs when they enroll in U.S. schools. Many of the children, particularly the older siblings, are able to retain their first language, i.e. Spanish, while also learning English. The older children, often born in Mexico, tend to be bilingual, whereas their

younger siblings, usually born in the United States, are more often monolingual, i.e., English-speaking only.

To a large extent, the majority of farm workers are geographically isolated and insulated from large English-speaking populations. Most recent immigrants working in agriculture reside in small incorporated towns or in rural areas of the region. Thus, among the workers living in these communities, towns, and unincorporated hamlets in the rural areas of the region, another point of contact with others where language might be expected to be a potential barrier is community life. Here, very little evidence of personal and social interaction between the farm worker population and non-Hispanic English speakers was found. To be sure, many of these rural communities are highly segregated to the extent that entire neighborhoods are made up of Hispanic homes and where the personal and public language is Spanish.

Business and professional offices, supermarkets, and other retail establishments invariably employ, are managed by, or to a lesser extent, are owned by Spanish speakers. Increasingly, many of the retail businesses are owned and operated by recent immigrants from other regions of the world, particularly from Middle-Eastern and Asian countries. These new proprietors have been very adept at learning to speak Spanish to better serve their predominantly Spanish-speaking rural customers. Thus, for many, there is little need to learn English -- especially for those who reside in rural enclaves of Spanish-speaking residents, store-owners, and service providers.

These segregated communities or enclaves in California have been well documented by Palerm and others (Palerm, 1992). The point here is that immigrant farm workers who are unable to communicate in English are really under no pressure to do so and therefore to learn how to do

so. But the school-aged children of these workers are certain to acquire English-speaking skills and to become bilingual or even monolingual in English only as they (the dependents) are fully assimilated into the English-speaking majority culture.

In the workplace, comprised of a workforce almost entirely of Mexican-born Spanish speakers, there are no communication problems reported by the SAW workers, nor by the undocumented workers who have practically no English language skills. When required to communicate in English with employers and others, their foremen, crew bosses, and FLC employers are readily available at the job site to assist the non-English speakers.

In sum, our research has found very little evidence that recent immigrants (legalized or otherwise) have begun to expand their formal education, acquire fluency in English, and interface with the broader economic and social cultures. The assimilation process is most easily and accurately described as being one which involves the assimilation of the Mexican-born SAWs into the community enclaves populated by others of Mexican origin.

The next generation, however, which consists of the children of the SAW families, has begun to assimilate into the American social system. Once enrolled in American public schools, these children learn English, view television programs in English, go to movies in English, and make friends with English speakers -- all of which result in the achievement of not only a high level of language acquisition but also of a high level of cultural adaptation and assimilation. Evidence of this can be observed from enrollments at California State University, Fresno where among first year Hispanic enrollments, those graduating from rural high schools in the county exceed those graduating from the city high schools.

TABLE 8: FIRST YEAR ENROLLMENTS AT CSU, FRESNO BY HISPANICS COMPARING RURAL AND URBAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 1992 - 1994

City		County		Total
N	%	N	%	
410	37.6	680	62.3	1,090

What does this rather circuitous voyage through rural California mean for Fresno? We would like to offer the following tentative conclusions. Throughout the history of the United States, waves of immigrants have been assimilated into the economy and society rather easily. But the large numbers of immigrants from Mexico to rural California, which accelerated in the early 1980's, are different quantitatively as well as qualitatively from previous immigrant experiences. Specifically, parts of rural California have become so dominated by Mexican immigrants that assimilation is no longer necessary for first-generation immigrants. Work can be found, business conducted, and social networks developed with almost no contact with the rest of the "world".

Our research does, however, indicate that the children of these immigrants are attending school, learning English and are becoming assimilated. The children enroll in public schools, make English-speaking friends, and watch English television shows. Perhaps most importantly, they are not going into agricultural jobs. This means they are likely to leave the rural communities and seek employment in Fresno, San Jose, Los Angeles and other urban areas.

As discussed earlier, for many of the second-generation immigrants, the odessey to urban areas is unsuccessful. A variety of factors creates these problems, but one that may be most important is their parents' lack of assimilation. If the first generation became more educated and

acquired language skills more quickly, it is likely that their children would do better in school, would be more aware of nonagricultural economic opportunities, and generally would have a better chance at succeeding in urban labor markets. What is it about the second generation, or the sons and daughters of the immigrants, which disproportionately disenfranchises them from the social and economic mainstream of American life? We have found that the "Latinization" of much of rural central California has made it unnecessary (if not impossible) to accelerate the assimilation process, and to the extent that this becomes a disadvantage for the second generation, their social and economic well-being is diminished. If indeed assimilation is to be considered as a critical factor for social and economic advancement among the Hispanics, and we believe that it is, then why is it that the first generation immigrants seem to fare better than their offspring in terms most indicators associated with poverty as the data presented here strongly indicate. Vega and Kolody (1994) found, for example, that second generation Mexican origin women in Fresno County are eight times more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol than do their first generation counterparts. To be sure, the immigration during the past decade to this region from Mexico and Southeast Asia is not one that presents a "brain-drain" problem to those parts of the world. On the contrary, it is usually those who are impoverished and with little formal schooling who are attracted to employment in agriculture which demands (and pays) very little in terms of either schooling or job skills. This labor market has become saturated and an excess of workers is evident in all of production jobs in California agriculture. To us, the notion of relative deprivation becomes a better fit in explaining the problems experienced by many in the second generation, who unlike their parents, are not at all

likely to remain employed in an industry where annual earnings amount to less than what can be received from public assistance.

SOME POLICY THOUGHTS

One of the objectives of this conference is to develop policy recommendations that may help ward off the creation of a new rural poverty. It is our observation that we are too late, and any recommendations must address the reality of the current situation. The following thoughts apply equally to rural and urban areas, and are offered to stimulate discussion rather that provide simplistic solutions to complex questions.

Certainly, there are numerous benefits to immigration. The massive levels of immigration into rural and urban areas of California, however, appear to be overwhelming the abilities of the local economies and communities to continue absorbing immigrants at these recent rates. The passage of Proposition 187 provides evidence of increasing public concern, well-founded or not.

Recognizing these realities, we believe that any policies or programs which attempt to address the concerns of immigration-related rural poverty must have three important components -- much like the three legs of a stool. First, illegal immigration must be slowed in order to provide the local economies, school systems and infrastructure a chance to catch up. Any policies designed to slow this immigration must consider the fact that agriculture is the port of entry for most immigrants to the San Joaquin Valley.

The second leg of our stool is the development and provision of job training that will provide second-generation immigrants with skills needed to compete in urban labor markets. Part of the need is a major rethinking of the role of the K-12 schools in providing technical and vocational education. It may seem unfair to place yet another burden on our public schools, but it is clear that the California economy cannot continue to provide employment for those with poor basic education and limited technical abilities.

The final leg is the development of nonagricultural employment opportunities in rural and urban areas that will provide stable, decent-paying jobs for large numbers of people. In our opinion, this is the most difficult of the three tasks. The San Joaquin Valley has had some success in attracting light industry, transportation-related businesses, and "pink-collar" jobs such as insurance claims processing. With its strong production agricultural base and access to expanding export markets, further development of food processing and other value-added agricultural industries holds promise. These economic development efforts must be linked closely with job training activities. An economic development policy based on an abundant and well-trained workforce -- as opposed to "cheap labor" -- will be more beneficial and sustainable.

It is standard procedure for researchers to conclude that what is needed is "more research." In this instance, we believe that such a plea is defensible. Our preliminary analysis raises more questions than it answers. Rural California is clearly undergoing a major transformation, largely due to unlimited migration from Mexico. These changes are also affecting urban centers such as Fresno, albeit in less dramatic and in more diluted ways. Standard explanations for the negative consequences are applicable, e.g., lack of job skills, inadequate employment opportunities, or loss

of family support. What we don't understand is why some migrants and their children succeed while others fail. Effective policies and interventions cannot be developed until we have some grasp of the dynamics of these fundamental social and economic relationships.

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APPENDIX A: FRESNO COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR
1973-1990

	1973		1974		1975		1976		1977		1978	
Industry	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%
Total All Industries	175.2	100%	185.8	100%	195.2	100%	202.1	100%	207.3	100%	219.3	100%
Total Agricultural	37.2	21%	40.4	22%	45.7	23%	46.3	23%	43.7	21%	46.4	21%
Total Nonagricultural	138.0	79%	145.4	78%	149.5	77%	155.8	77%	163.6	79%	172.9	79%
Mining	0.7	0%	0.8	0%	0.8	0%	0.8	0%	0.7	0%	0.8	0%
Construction	7.2	4%	7.5	4%	7.0	4%	7.7	4%	9.0	4%	11.2	5%
Manufacturing	20.5	12%	21.1	11%	20.2	10%	20.7	10%	21.8	11%	22.8	10%
Nondurable Goods	11.1	6%	11.3	6%	11.3	6%	11.6	6%	12.0	6%	12.0	5%
Durable Goods	9.4	5%	9.8	5%	8.9	5%	9.1	5%	9.8	5%	10.8	5%
Food and Kindred Products	6.6	4%	7.1	4%	7.1	4%	7.4	4%	7.7	4%	7.7	4%
Canned, Cured, Frozen Foods	2.6	1%	2.9	2%	2.8	1%	3.0	1%	3.5	2%	3.5	2%
Beverages	1.2	1%	1.3	1%	1.2	1%	1.2	1%	1.2	1%	1.3	1%
Other Food & Kindred Product	2.8	2%	2.9	2%	3.1	2%	3.2	2%	3.0	1%	2.9	1%
Other Nondurable Goods	4.5	3%	4.2	2%	4.2	2%	4.2	2%	4.3	2%	4.3	2%
Lumber&Wood Prods Exc Furn	1.3	1%	1.3	1%	1.3	1%	1.4	1%	1.2	1%	1.2	1%
Furniture & Fixtures	0.6	0%	0.6	0%	0.6	0%	0.4	0%	0.4	0%	0.5	0%
Stone, Clay & Glass Products	1.0	1%	1.0	1%	1.0	1%	1.1	1%	1.2	1%	1.4	1%
Primary & Fabricated Metals	1.9	1%	2.0	1%	1.7	1%	1.7	1%	1.9	1%	1.9	1%
Mach Exc Eclect & Transp Eq	3.6	2%	4.0	2%	3.4	2%	3.4	2%	4.2	2%	4.9	2%
Othr Durable Goods	1.0	1%	0.9	0%	1.0	1%	1.0	0%	1.0	0%	1.0	0%
Transportation & Pub Utilities	8.5	5%	8.9	5%	8.6	4%	8.9	4%	8.9	4%	9.9	5%
Transportation	4.8	3%	4.9	3%	4.8	2%	5.0	2%	4.9	2%	5.4	2%
Communication & Electric Serv	3.7	2%	4.0	2%	3.8	2%	3.9	2%	4.0	2%	4.5	2%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	35.2	20%	37.1	20%	38.3	20%	41.0	20%	43.1	21%	45.7	21%
Wholesale Trade	10.4	6%	11.2	6%	11.5	6%	12.4	6%	13.2	6%	13.4	6%
Retail Trade	24.8	14%	25.9	14%	26.8	14%	28.6	14%	29.9	14%	32.3	15%
Finance, Ins and Real Estate	6.6	4%	7.2	4%	7.4	4%	7.9	4%	8.6	4%	9.7	4%
Finance	3.0	2%	3.1	2%	3.1	2%	3.4	2%	3.7	2%	4.2	2%
Insurance, Real Estate, Othr	3.6	2%	4.1	2%	4.3	2%	4.5	2%	4.9	2%	5.5	3%
Services	24.9	14%	26.0	14%	27.8	14%	28.9	14%	30.5	15%	33.0	15%
Government	34.5	20%	37.0	20%	39.4	20%	39.8	20%	40.7	20%	40.0	18%
Federal	5.8	3%	6.1	3%	6.5	3%	6.7	3%	6.7	3%	7.1	3%
State & Local	28.7	16%	30.9	17%	32.9	17%	33.1	16%	34.0	16%	32.9	15%
County	4.7	3%	5.1	3%	5.4	3%	5.7	3%	6.0	3%	6.0	3%
City	3.5	2%	3.6	2%	4.0	2%	3.5	2%	3.7	2%	3.9	2%
Other State & Local	20.5	12%	22.2	12%	23.5	12%	23.9	12%	24.3	12%	23.0	10%

FRESNO COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR
1973-1990

	1979		1980		1981		1982		1983		1984	
Industry	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%	(thou.)	%
Total All Industries	229.1	100%	235.9	100%	234.7	100%	232.4	100%	232.3	100%	241.3	100%
Total Agricultural	49.3	22%	52.9	22%	53.0	23%	57.5	25%	56.2	24%	55.0	23%
Total Nonagricultural	179.8	78%	183.0	78%	181.7	77%	174.9	75%	176.1	76%	186.3	77%
Mining	0.9	0%	1.0	0%	1.0	0%	1.0	0%	1.0	0%	1.1	0%
Construction	12.4	5%	11.2	5%	9.5	4%	8.1	3%	9.1	4%	10.5	4%
Manufacturing	23.5	10%	23.3	10%	23.0	10%	21.2	9%	20.5	9%	21.4	9%
Nondurable Goods	12.3	5%	12.4	5%	12.1	5%	11.4	5%	11.1	5%	11.2	5%
Durable Goods	11.2	5%	10.9	5%	10.9	5%	9.8	4%	9.4	4%	10.2	4%
Food and Kindred Products	8.2	4%	8.4	4%	8.0	3%	7.7	3%	7.0	3%	7.4	3%
Canned, Cured, Frozen Foods	3.9	2%	3.9	2%	3.3	1%	3.5	2%	7.6	3%	3.1	1%
Beverages	1.3	1%	1.2	1%	1.2	1%	1.0	0%	3.3	1%	1.1	0%
Other Food & Kindred Product	3.0	1%	3.3	1%	3.5	1%	3.2	1%	3.2	1%	3.2	1%
Other Nondurable Goods	4.2	2%	4.1	2%	4.1	2%	3.6	2%	3.6	2%	3.9	2%
Lumber & Wood Prods Exc Furn	1.4	1%	1.3	1%	1.1	0%	0.9	0%	1.0	0%	1.1	0%
Furniture & F Fixtures	0.5	0%	0.4	0%	0.4	0%	0.4	0%	0.4	0%	0.4	0%
Stone, Clay & Glass Products	1.6	1%	1.6	1%	1.6	1%	1.3	1%	1.3	1%	1.3	1%
Primary & Fabricated Metals	1.9	1%	1.8	1%	1.8	1%	1.8	1%	1.8	1%	1.9	1%
Mach Exc Eclect & Transp Eq	4.9	2%	4.8	2%	5.0	2%	4.5	2%	4.2	2%	4.6	2%
Othr Durable Goods	1.0	0%	1.1	0%	1.0	0%	0.9	0%	0.8	0%	0.8	0%
Transportation & Pub Utilities	10.5	5%	11.0	5%	10.9	5%	10.3	4%	9.9	4%	10.2	4%
Transportation	5.6	2%	5.7	2%	5.5	2%	5.3	2%	5.1	2%	5.4	2%
Communication & Electric Serv	4.9	2%	5.3	2%	5.4	2%	5.0	2%	4.8	2%	4.8	2%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	47.2	21%	48.6	21%	47.9	20%	45.8	20%	45.8	20%	48.0	20%
Wholesale Trade	13.2	6%	14.0	6%	13.6	6%	12.5	5%	12.1	5%	12.1	5%
Retail Trade	34.0	15%	34.6	15%	34.3	15%	33.3	14%	33.7	15%	35.9	15%
Finance, Ins and Real Estate	10.6	5%	11.0	5%	11.3	5%	11.4	5%	12.0	5%	12.8	5%
Finance	4.7	2%	5.0	2%	5.1	2%	5.1	2%	5.3	2%	5.6	2%
Insurance, Real Estate, Othr	5.9	3%	6.0	3%	6.2	3%	6.3	3%	6.7	3%	7.2	3%
Services	34.9	15%	36.0	15%	37.3	16%	37.1	16%	37.9	16%	41.5	17%
Government	40.0	17%	41.0	17%	40.9	17%	39.9	17%	39.8	17%	40.6	17%
Federal	7.7	3%	7.9	3%	7.8	3%	7.2	3%	7.0	3%	7.2	3%
State & Local	32.3	14%	33.1	14%	33.1	14%	32.7	14%	32.8	14%	33.4	14%
County	5.9	3%	6.0	3%	6.0	3%	6.2	3%	6.1	3%	6.2	3%
City	3.9	2%	4.0	2%	3.7	2%	3.5	2%	3.4	1%	3.5	1%
Other State & Local	22.5	10%	23.1	10%	23.4	10%	23.0	10%	23.3	10%	23.7	10%

FRESNO COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR
1973-1990

Industry	1985 (thou.)	%	1986 (thou.)	%	1987 (thou.)	%	1988 (thou.)	%	1989 (thou.)	%	1990 (thou.)	%	% Change 1973-1990
Total All Industries	245.5	100%	247.9	100%	257.3	100%	265.2	100%	270.7	100%	286.4	100%	39%
Total Agricultural	53.9	22%	51.8	21%	54.1	21%	55.8	21%	53.1	20%	54.3	19%	31%
Total Nonagricultural	191.6	78%	196.1	79%	203.2	79%	209.4	79%	217.6	80%	232.1	81%	41%
Mining	1.0	0%	0.7	0%	0.6	0%	0.7	0%	0.6	0%	0.6	0%	-17%
Construction	11.4	5%	11.7	5%	12.4	5%	12.1	5%	12.7	5%	14.5	5%	50%
Manufacturing	21.0	9%	21.0	8%	21.7	8%	23.6	9%	24.9	9%	26.7	9%	23%
Nondurable Goods	11.0	4%	11.4	5%	12.0	5%	13.2	5%	14.6	5%	15.8	6%	30%
Durable Goods	10.0	4%	9.6	4%	9.7	4%	10.4	4%	10.3	4%	10.9	4%	14%
Food and Kindred Products	7.0	3%	7.5	3%	8.1	3%	8.9	3%	9.6	4%	10.6	4%	38%
Canned, Cured, Frozen Foods	2.8	1%	2.8	1%	2.7	1%	no #	no %	no #	no %	no #	no %	
Beverages	1.1	0%	1.2	0%	1.2	0%	no #	no %	no #	no %	no #	no %	
Other Food & Kindred Product	3.1	1%	3.5	1%	4.2	2%	no #	no %	no #	no %	no #	no %	
Other Nondurable Goods	4.1	2%	4.0	2%	4.0	2%	4.3	2%	4.7	2%	5.1	2%	12%
Lumber & Wood Prods Exc Furn	1.0	0%	0.9	0%	1.0	0%	no #	no %	no #	no %	no #	no %	
Furniture & F Fixtures	0.4	0%	0.3	0%	0.3	0%	no #	no %	no #	no %	no #	no %	
Stone, Clay & Glass Products	1.1	0%	1.1	0%	1.2	0%	1.1	0%	1.1	0%	1.6	1%	38%
Primary & Fabricated Metals	1.9	1%	1.9	1%	2.0	1%	2.2	1%	2.4	1%	2.3	1%	17%
Mach Exc Eclect & Transp Eq	4.6	2%	4.2	2%	4.1	2%	4.3	2%	4.2	2%	4.2	1%	14%
Othr Durable Goods	1.0	0%	1.1	0%	1.1	0%	2.8	1%	2.6	1%	2.8	1%	64%
Transportation & Pub Utilities	10.0	4%	10.3	4%	11.0	4%	11.7	4%	12.3	5%	12.8	4%	34%
Transportation	5.4	2%	5.6	2%	6.0	2%	6.6	2%	7.3	3%	7.9	3%	39%
Communication & Electric Serv	4.6	2%	4.7	2%	5.0	2%	5.1	2%	5.0	2%	4.9	2%	24%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	49.4	20%	51.3	21%	52.7	20%	54.5	21%	55.8	21%	58.9	21%	40%
Wholesale Trade	12.1	5%	12.8	5%	12.8	5%	13.0	5%	13.6	5%	15.0	5%	31%
Retail Trade	37.3	15%	38.5	16%	39.9	16%	41.5	16%	42.2	16%	43.9	15%	44%
Finance, Ins and Real Estate	13.2	5%	13.5	5%	13.1	5%	12.1	5%	12.3	5%	13.4	5%	51%
Finance	5.8	2%	6.0	2%	5.7	2%	5.6	2%	5.6	2%	6.0	2%	50%
Insurance, Real Estate, Othr	7.4	3%	7.5	3%	7.4	3%	6.5	2%	6.7	2%	7.4	3%	51%
Services	43.2	18%	44.2	18%	47.0	18%	48.2	18%	50.9	19%	54.3	19%	54%
Government	42.5	17%	43.7	18%	44.6	17%	46.5	18%	48.0	18%	51.0	18%	32%
Federal	8.2	3%	8.9	4%	9.0	3%	9.6	4%	9.5	4%	9.9	3%	41%
State & Local	34.3	14%	34.8	14%	35.6	14%	36.9	14%	38.5	14%	41.1	14%	30%
County	6.4	3%	6.4	3%	6.4	2%	6.6	2%	6.9	3%	7.3	3%	36%
City	3.6	1%	3.7	1%	3.7	1%	3.7	1%	3.8	1%	4.0	1%	13%
Other State & Local	24.3	10%	24.7	10%	25.5	10%	26.6	10%	27.8	10%	29.8	10%	31%