

# Racial Employment Patterns of Foreign- and Native-Born Workers in the U.S.: An Exploratory Analysis

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The composition of the American labor force has experienced a number of changes as we moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In particular, there have been increases in the concentration of immigrants in the labor force. Previous descriptive studies mostly by sociologists and economists have produced mixed findings, with some suggesting that the influx of immigrant workers may have a negative effect on the employment of native-born persons of color. Other studies have shown no effect. This exploratory, descriptive study goes beyond existing studies to provide more recent data on the status of foreign- and native born workers in the United States by race. Also, unlike previous studies, this research provides a complete, comparative picture of the actual employment of foreign- and native-born workers in the U.S. over time. In addition, it offers a number of policy implications. Importantly, this is an exploratory study, intended to generate interest in the public administration community to conduct further research here.

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The issue of immigration has historically been a thorny one in the U.S., particularly from the standpoint of employment opportunities and labor market outcomes. And, interest has been heightened recently, as witnessed by the surfeit of immigration laws passed by state governments across the nation most notably that of Arizona, where the U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld the centerpiece of that law: police are empowered to verify a person's immigration status during routine traffic stops, if there is reasonable suspicion that the individual may be illegal.<sup>1</sup>

Around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. experienced a massive influx of European immigrants seeking to escape poverty, political upheaval or religious oppression. The promise of economic security or political refuge drew millions of immigrants to the

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<sup>1</sup>*Arizona v. United States* (2012). Other states around the country, including Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Utah have enacted immigration laws similar to that of Arizona's. Some are more stringent, but given the High Court ruling in the Arizona case, those states will need to modify their laws.

U.S. throughout the 1800s and well into the early 1900s. In some cases, immigrant labor was consciously imported by U.S. employers in an effort to avoid hiring African Americans (see, for example, Murrin, et. al., 2010 and Foner, 2005). The problem for African Americans during this immigration expansion was further exacerbated by the creation of split labor markets, which fueled racial animosity between whites and African Americans.

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has also brought immigrants, albeit in less numbers, to the U.S. for similar reasons. In the late 1980s, demographers in a series of reports projected that by year 2000, there would be a large influx of immigrants or foreign-born workers in the U.S. labor force;<sup>2</sup> some studies further suggested that this influx would have a negative effect on the employment of native-born persons of color, in particular, that the impact would be seen most prominently in job gains for foreign-born Latinos at the expense of African Americans (see, for example, Borjas, 1998). Camarota (1999: 7) contends that there “are at least four reasons to be concerned about the impact of immigration on native workers:

- because they often come from countries where wages are much lower, immigrants may be willing to work for less....
- immigrants may be seen as more desirable workers by employers....
- employers can use the threat of further immigration as a way of holding down the wages and benefits of workers....
- the most important reason to examine the impact of immigration on less educated natives is that immigration increases the supply of labor.”

The purpose of this exploratory study is to provide data on the status of foreign- and native born workers<sup>3</sup> in the United States by race. It is intended to encourage greater research into potential explanations for the differences in job status, and also to help find policy solutions to problems that may be uncovered. It goes beyond previous studies by illustrating the pattern of employment comparatively for these groups from 1996, the first year for which complete data are available, to 2010.<sup>4</sup> Policy implications are also offered. Importantly, as a descriptive study, we do not seek to explain the variations in racial employment patterns presented here.

### **Immigration and the U.S. Workforce**

There has been an abundance of research on immigration in general, as well as the effects of immigration on population patterns in the U.S., and on wage structures and the skill

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<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Johnston and Packer (1987), who prepared the *Workforce 2000* report for the Hudson Institute.

<sup>3</sup>Because of the lack of data on “employed” immigrants, studies such as this rely on foreign-born workers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the data sources for this study, provides the following parameters for the foreign and native born. “The foreign born are persons residing in the United States who were not U.S. citizens at birth. That is, they were born outside the United States or one of its outlying areas such as Puerto Rico or Guam, to parents neither whom was a U.S. citizen. The foreign-born population includes legally admitted immigrants, refugees, temporary residents such as students and temporary workers, and undocumented immigrants. The survey data, however, do not separately identify the number of persons in these categories....The native born are persons born in the United States or one of its outlying areas such as Puerto Rico or Guam or who were born abroad of at least one parent who was a U.S. citizen.” See page 4 of [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_05272011.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_05272011.pdf), accessed July 5, 2011.

<sup>4</sup>It should be noted that there are some limitations on the availability of data; for example, data on foreign and native-born workers are available by age and gender, but not race. The same can be said for occupation.

composition of the labor force (see, for example, Card, 2009; Rector, Kim and Watkins, 2007; Smith and Edmonston, 1997). The research is generally mixed, with some studies showing that there is virtually no effect of unskilled immigrant labor on wage structures (see Card, 2009; Gang and Rivera-Batiz, 1994). Card (2009), for example, found that immigrants are concentrated in cities with better job prospects, thereby obviating potential negative impacts of their presence.

Some studies show the positive effects of immigrant labor, such as an increase in the production of goods and services as well as a greater increase in federal revenues, mostly due to higher collections of income and Social Security taxes (see, for example, Smith and Edmonston, 1997). Fix and Passel (1994: 47), for instance, point out that “Immigrants contribute substantially to the U.S. economy. They create more jobs than they themselves fill. They do so directly by starting new businesses and indirectly through their expenditures on U.S. goods and services.”

Yet other studies suggest that unskilled immigrants have a deleterious effect on the overall economy, particularly if it results in lower wages overall (see, for example, Rector, Kim, and Watkins, 2007). Borjas and colleagues (1997), for example, find that immigrant labor has negatively affected the economic status of the lowest-skilled U.S. workers. They point out that “the flow of less educated immigrants into the country has been substantial,” thereby increasing the supply of low-skilled workers to the detriment of low-skilled native-born workers (Borjas, et. al., 1997: 67).

Boswell (1986) argues that the costs of immigration are also found in a split labor market, which creates an antagonistic climate for laborers overall; in particular, the emergence of class conflict fuels ethnic and racial antagonisms.

There are also a few descriptive studies exploring the potential effects of foreign-born workers on native-born Blacks or African Americans. Here, too, the results of the studies are mixed. Some studies show that foreign-born workers have negatively affected African Americans. Borjas (1998: 51), for example, suggests that “many of the benefits from immigration are received by firms. Blacks probably own a relatively small proportion of capital stock of the nation.”<sup>5</sup> He also argues that because there is a small difference in skill distributions between foreign-born workers and African Americans, the latter will need to compete more aggressively for jobs (also see, Borjas, 2001).

Greve and Salaff (2005) point to the problem that, unlike various immigrant groups, African Americans have not been as successful in developing small businesses; ethnic immigrants are able to develop “social and economic relations” within their enclaves which allow them to start small businesses, thereby leading to employment for ethnic immigrants as well as a secure customer base.

Others have found little effects, overall of foreign-born workers on African Americans (see, Butcher, 1998). Fix and Passel (1994: 47), for example point out that “Immigration does not hurt the job prospects of African Americans as a whole, but it reduces their economic opportunities in areas of high immigration during recessionary periods” (e.g., in large metropolitan areas of states such as California, New York, Texas and Florida). Interestingly, Fix and Passel (1994: 47) point to one group that can be undermined by new immigrant workers; they find that “New immigrants appear to hurt the overall labor market chances of one population group—the immigrants who immediately preceded them.

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<sup>5</sup> Also see Greve and Salaff (2005) who discuss these issues in the context of a split labor market.

Notwithstanding the existing research here, there is virtually no study which provides a complete, comparative picture of the actual employment of foreign- and native-born workers in the U.S. over time. These data are examined in the following section.<sup>6</sup>

**The Employment Picture**

Table 1 examines the job patterns of foreign- and native-born workers based on race.<sup>7</sup> As the data show, non-Latino Whites represented 19 percent of all foreign-born workers in 2010; for this same time period, non-Latino Blacks represented 8.7 percent, Asian non-Latino 22.7 percent, and Latino foreign-born 49.6 percent. For native-born in 2010, non-Latino Whites represented 79.7 percent; non-Latino Blacks represented 10.9 percent, Asian non-Latino 1.4 percent, and Latino 8.0 percent.<sup>8</sup>

The data also show overall, that every racial group of foreign-born workers increased their share of jobs between 1996 and 2010. The largest gain in employment between the two time periods was made by non-Latino Blacks (92.4 percent), followed by Latinos (83.1 percent) and non-Latino Asians (50.4 percent). Foreign-born non-Latino Whites increased their share of jobs by 27 percent. It should be noted, however, that non-Latino Blacks hold the smallest share of jobs: In 2010, they accounted for only 8.7 percent of the foreign-born civilian labor force, compared to 49.6 percent for Latino, 22.7 percent for non-Latino Asian, and 19 percent for non-Latino White.

In addition, among foreign born workers, as seen in Table 1, there is an increase in employment between 1996 and 2000 at least for Latinos and non-Latino Blacks, which corresponds with demographers’ projections for changes in the labor force by the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Table 1. Foreign- and Native-Born Workers in the Civilian Labor Force, 1996-2010 (in thousands)**

Foreign Born					
	1996	2000	2005	2010	% Change
White Non-Latino	3,259 24.3%	3,839 22.7%	4,187 20.1%	4,138 19.0%	879 27.0%
Black Non-Latino	984 7.3%	1,370 8.1%	1,631 7.8%	1,893 8.7%	909 92.4%
Asian Non-Latino	3,276 24.4%	3,999 23.6%	4,728 22.7%	4,928 22.7%	1,652 50.4%
Latino	5,886 43.9%	7,706 45.6%	10,252 49.3%	10,776 49.6%	4,890 83.1%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>13,405</b>	<b>16,914</b>	<b>20,798</b>	<b>21,735</b>	<b>8,330 62.1%</b>

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that due to data limitations, this study does not seek to provide explanations for the patterns, but rather to provide comprehensive comparisons of them.

<sup>7</sup> As noted, 1996 is the first year for which data are available by the U.S. BLS. A fifteen-year period, from 1996-2010, is a reasonable timeframe for examining changes to racial employment patterns of foreign- and native-born workers in the U.S.

<sup>8</sup> As with most other descriptive studies on immigration, the U.S. BLS is relied upon for data. These data are the most comprehensive, and although there are some shortcomings such as sampling errors, which have implications for reliability, they are widely used for social science research. Again, however, it remains one of the most complete and comprehensive data sets for studies, particularly given the difficulties associated with gathering primary data here.

Native Born					
	1996	2000	2005	2010	% Change
White Non-Latino	93,500 83.0%	95,851 81.7%	95,430 80.6%	91,483 79.7%	-2,017 -0.02%
Black Non-Latino	12,284 10.9%	13,523 11.5%	13,155 11.1%	12,529 10.9%	245 2.0%
Asian Non-Latino	1,084 1.0%	1,225 1.0%	1,434 1.2%	1,641 1.4%	557 51.4%
Latino	5,772 5.1%	6,786 5.8%	8,380 7.1%	9,130 8.0%	3,358 58.2%
TOTALS	112,640	117,385	118,399	114,783	2,143 1.9%

**Data Sources:**

1996 and 2000: Unpublished foreign born tables, Current Population Survey (CPS), Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed July 19, 2011.

2005: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_04142006.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_04142006.pdf), accessed July 15, 2011.

2010: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_05272011.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_05272011.pdf), accessed July 11, 2011.

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding function.

The picture for native-born workers shows that the share of jobs between 1996 and 2010 went down slightly for non-Latino Whites (-0.02 percent). It also shows that the largest gain in jobs was made by Latinos (58.2 percent) followed by Asians (51.4 percent). Native-born Blacks, on the other hand, experienced the smallest increase in jobs—only 2 percent.

Table 1 also shows that overall, foreign-born workers increased their share of jobs between 1996 and 2010 by 62.1 percent, whereas native-born workers increased theirs by only 1.9 percent. The table also indicates the concentration of workers by race for each time period.

For example, in 1996, 7.3 percent of the foreign-born workers were non-Latino Black; 43.9 percent were Latino, while 24.4 percent were non-Latino Asian, and 24.3 percent were non-Latino White. By 2005, the concentration for every group but Latino dropped by a small amount. By 2010, the percentage of jobs held by non-Latino Blacks rose to 8.7 percent; for non-Latino Whites it dropped to 19.0 percent and for non-Latino Asians it remained at the 2005 level (22.7 percent). Only foreign-born Latinos experienced a steady growth between 1996 and 2005, with only a slight change from 2005 to 2010.

For native-born workers, as Table 1 indicates, the largest gains in employment between 1996 and 2010 were made by Latinos. In 1996, they held 5.1 percent of the total number of jobs held by native-born workers, and by 2010, they held 8 percent. Native-born Whites lost a share of jobs for the two time periods, and non-Latino Asians experienced a slight increase. Non-Latino Blacks held the same share of jobs in 2010 as they did in 1996 (10.9 percent). They experienced a slight increase in 2000 and then a small drop in 2005. Native-born whites continued to hold the largest share of jobs across all time periods.

A slightly different picture is presented in Table 2, which shows a breakdown of workers by race as a percentage of the total civilian labor force. The data show, for

example, that in 1996, foreign-born, non-Latino Whites held 2.6 percent of all the jobs in the labor force, where native-born Whites held 74.2 percent for that same time period. Foreign-born, non-Latino Blacks held .8 percent, whereas non-Latino Asians held 2.6 percent and Latinos, 4.7 percent. Between 1996 and 2010, every group of foreign-born worker increased their share of jobs in the total civilian labor force. Black, non-Latino increased their share by 75 percent, followed by Latinos at 68.1 percent; non-Latino Asians by 38.5 percent and non-Latino Whites by 15.4 percent. Black, non-Latinos, however, held the smallest share of jobs for each time period. Overall, foreign-born workers increased their share of jobs by 50 percent. Table 2 also indicates, as predicted by demographers, that the share of jobs by foreign born in the overall labor force would increase as we moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Table 2. Foreign- and Native-Born Workers as Percentage of Total Civilian Labor Force (percentages).**

<b>Foreign Born</b>					
	1996	2000	2005	2010	% Change
White Non-Latino	2.6%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%	15.4%
Black Non-Latino	0.8%	1.0%	1.2%	1.4%	75.0%
Asian Non-Latino	2.6%	3.0%	3.4%	3.6%	38.5%
Latino	4.7%	5.7%	7.4%	7.9%	68.1%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
<b>Native Born</b>					
	1996	2000	2005	2010	% Change
White Non-Latino	74.2%	71.4%	68.6%	67.0%	-9.7%
Black Non-Latino	9.7%	10.1%	9.5%	9.2%	-5.2%
Asian Non-Latino	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%	33.3%
Latino	4.6%	5.1%	6.0%	6.7%	45.7%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>89.4%</b>	<b>87.4%</b>	<b>85.1%</b>	<b>84.1%</b>	<b>-5.9%</b>

**Data Sources:**

1996 and 2000: Unpublished foreign born tables, Current Population Survey (CPS), Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed July 19, 2011.

2005: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_04142006.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_04142006.pdf), accessed July 15, 2011.

2010: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_05272011.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_05272011.pdf), accessed July 11, 2011.

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding function.

Native-born workers, on the other hand, decreased their share of total jobs by 5.9 percent. Native-born Whites lost the highest share by 9.7 percent, followed by native-born

Blacks, whose share of total jobs dropped by 5.2 percent. Non-Latino Asians increased their share by 33.3 percent and native-born Latinos by 45.7 percent.

Table 3 presents data on the overall population of foreign- and native-born persons. For the foreign-born, and with the exception of White non-Latinos for every time period, and Asian non-Latinos for 2010, the data indicate that all groups are overrepresented in the labor force. That is to say, their representation in the labor force exceeds their composition in the overall population. These data further point to the healthy employment status of foreign-born persons in the U.S. labor market.

For native-born, the data show a somewhat different picture. For example, African Americans are underrepresented in the labor force compared with their concentration in the overall population; only in 2000 are the figures somewhat comparable. The same holds true for Asian non-Latinos at least for 1996 and 2000, where they comprised close to four percent of the overall population for both these time periods, but only 1 percent of the workforce. Similarly, native-born Latinos represent a greater share of the population than the labor market for every time period.

On the other hand, native-born White non-Latinos are overrepresented in the labor force as compared to their concentration in the general population for every time period. Thus, compared to their foreign-born counterparts, native-born Whites are consistently overrepresented. For all other groups, the trends are in the reverse: native-born workers are underrepresented, whereas foreign-born workers are overrepresented.

**Table 3. Total Population of Foreign- and Native-Born Persons in the U.S., 1996-2010 (percentages).**

<b>Foreign Born</b>				
	1996	2000	2005	2010
White Non-Latino	27.1%	25.4%	22.4%	20.7%
Black Non-Latino	6.5%	7.3%	7.3%	8.2%
Asian Non-Latino	23.3%	23.2%	22.6%	22.7%
Latino	43.1%	44.1%	47.6%	48.3%
<b>Native Born</b>				
	1996	2000	2005	2010
White Non-Latino	75.3%	73.6%	79.2%	77.7%
Black Non-Latino	11.6%	11.8%	12.3%	12.5%
Asian Non-Latino	3.5%	3.9%	1.3%	1.5%
Latino	9.6%	10.8%	7.3%	8.4%

**Data Sources:**

1996 and 2000: Unpublished foreign born tables, Current Population Survey (CPS), Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed July 19, 2011.

2005: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_04142006.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_04142006.pdf), accessed July 15, 2011.

2010: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_05272011.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_05272011.pdf), accessed July 11, 2011.

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding function.

## Discussion

The overall employment picture presented here shows that foreign-born workers are gaining a larger share of jobs compared to native-born workers. It also shows that foreign-born Latinos are doing slightly better than their native-born counterparts. In addition, the data indicate that native-born, non-Latino Blacks (i.e., African Americans) appear to be making very little if any progress compared with other persons of color. They made virtually no gains in the percentage of jobs held between 1996 and 2010 compared to other native-born workers, and as a percentage of the total civilian labor force, they lost a share of jobs between those time periods. Foreign-born Blacks, however, are making some progress, although they hold the smallest share of jobs for each time period compared to all other foreign-born workers.

A comparison of labor force with population statistics further indicates that foreign-born Latinos, Asians and Blacks fare better than their native-born counterparts in terms of employment. They are employed at rates higher than their share of the general population.

This study also showed that native-born Whites also lost a share of jobs compared to all native-born workers. But, they still account for the largest share of all civilian jobs in the U.S. This trend may correspond with overall decline in the nation's White population and as a corollary the labor force in the U.S. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) indicates that by 2008, the proportion of Whites decreased to about 74 percent of the population, with a little over 12 percent African-American, 15 percent Latino (all races), over 4 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, and close to 1 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native. By 2050, the Census Bureau predicts that not even 53 percent will be non-Latino White. The proportion of the population is projected to be 16 percent African American, 23 percent Latino origin, 10 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, and about 1 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native.

It is important to note that it is possible that the patterns of employment by immigrants in the years reported here have been affected by policies or laws enacted concomitantly. For example, The Immigration Act of 1990 signed by President Bush increased the number of legal immigrants allowed into the U.S. each year and also created a lottery program that randomly assigned a number of visas. The law increased the number of openings for permanent legal immigrants to the U.S. by more than thirty-five percent (Aragonés, 1991).

Then, in 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act was passed which increased border patrol and enforcement and also strengthened efforts to verify an employee's citizenship status. These actions no doubt have implications for immigrant employment. So too will more recent events, such as an executive order issued by President Obama in June of 2012, which protects illegal immigrants from deportation if they can prove they were brought to the United States before they turned 16, are younger than 30, have been in the country for at least five continuous years, have a high-school diploma, and a clean police record. The action could benefit more than 800,000 young people across the Nation.

The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Arizona v. United States* (2012) will also impact immigrant employment. The Court majority first struck down the most draconian aspects of Arizona's immigration law, stating that certain immigration policies fall within the purview of the federal government, not the states. Specifically, the Court struck down provisions of the law that made it a crime for an undocumented immigrant to seek or hold a

job or for failing to register with the federal government. Nonetheless, the main provision of the law was upheld: police can stop and ask the immigration status of anyone if they suspect they are in the country illegally, which could result in possible detention. To be sure, the effect of the law is chilling; it will promote racial profiling, possible civil rights violations, and drive immigrants out for fear of being detained.

### **Policy Implications**

Examining the job status of foreign- and native-born workers has long been of significance to social scientists as well as policymakers. It certainly encourages progress in terms of understanding and addressing negative attitudes and inequalities in the labor market. It assists in the search for potential causes of inequalities (e.g., lack of educational opportunities; bias; managerial incompetence or ineffectiveness) and hopefully for policy solutions to correct the inequities. Unfortunately, comparisons of job status along racial and immigrant lines have often been used in counterproductive manners, most notably by anti-immigrant groups which seek to propel the myth that “immigrants take American jobs.” These groups also seek to drive a wedge between African Americans and Latinos by claiming that the latter are taking jobs from the former. Certainly, this is not our purpose here.

Rather, we call attention to the employment patterns of foreign- and native-born workers by race to first encourage greater research into potential explanations for the differences in job status, and second to help find solutions to problems that may be uncovered. So, for example, if public opinion and interest group behaviors toward immigrant labor are driven by racism, as some have suggested (see, Rocha, Longoria, Wrinkle, Knoll, Polinard and Wenzel, 2011; Ha, 2010; Ayers, Hofstetter, Schnakenberg and Kolody, 2009), governments and employers must seek to gain a better understanding of these discriminatory attitudes and work toward alleviating them. Some communities are developing networks of “older,” settled immigrant groups to work with newly arriving immigrant groups in an effort to facilitate their integration into local neighborhoods. Others have coordinated community dialogues and outreach efforts in an effort to facilitate interactions and to break down barriers, especially those stemming from negative stereotypes about immigrant workers (see Rubaii-Barrett, 2009; McKibben, 2008; Long, 2004). Some policy analysts encourage local governments and employers to rely on conflict resolution strategies to alleviate fallacious perceptions about and tensions between immigrant and native-born groups or workers (see, Isajiw, 2000);<sup>9</sup> some have called for greater government involvement in intra-immigrant tensions, for example between and among different Latino groups (see de Lancer Julnes and Johnson (2011).

Again, the key is isolating the problem. If it is determined that the job opportunities of African Americans in a particular geographic location are impaired by high immigration during a recessionary period, local governments would direct policy solutions toward this problem. Similarly, if research shows that native-born Latinos experience reduced earnings as a result of competition with foreign-born Latinos, the solution may be to raise their earnings. In fact, some economists have argued that instead of focusing attention on wage competition between foreign- and native born workers that governments find solutions on how to lift up all low-wage American workers (see, Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda, 2010; Hanson, 2009, Jaynes, 2009; 2000). Jaynes (2000: 42) argues that:

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<sup>9</sup> See Hall (2003), for an excellent article on the importance of community involvement in the management of elections as it pertains to immigrants.

the question we should be debating is not whether we should end immigration. The nation benefits from immigration. We should be debating how society should be compensating less-skilled workers through combinations of better training, relocation, and educational opportunities and how the federal government should address the unequal burdens of immigration among the states.

In the end, to be sure, the approach to any policy solutions to address potential tensions and competitions between immigrant and native-born workers will be premised on either a framework of human rights or one of castigation and retribution.

### Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

This research compared employment patterns by race and ethnicity of foreign- and native-born workers, and provided potential policy solutions to address any problems uncovered. It illustrated that foreign-born workers have a comparative edge in the U.S. labor market compared to native-born workers. It also showed that foreign-born Latinos are doing slightly better than their native-born counterparts and that African Americans are making relatively little progress if any compared with other persons of color. Importantly, this study was descriptive in nature and thus, unable to show in a quantitatively empirical way that increases to the immigrant population of the U.S. labor force negatively affect native-born persons of color. Nonetheless, the descriptive data are significant in that they elucidate employment patterns of these groups, and also generate interest in future research by scholars of public administration. Certainly, as noted, explanatory studies are needed.

Future research by public administration scholars may also focus on the effects of the more recent government measures which will impact the employment patterns of immigrants, particularly since these policies are at cross purposes. For example, most recently, the U.S. Supreme Court in its *Arizona v. United States* (2012) decision, upheld the “show me your papers,” provision, requiring police to check the immigrant status on anyone they stop and suspect of being illegal. This will open the door for any state, including those that already have restrictive immigration laws, to develop measures that will create a chilling effect on all immigrants.

On the other hand, President Obama’s executive order opens the door for young, high-school educated and even college-bound immigrants. Importantly, President Obama’s edict is very different from the 1990 Immigration Act signed by President Bush. The 1990 law opened the doors primarily for white European immigrants, while President Obama’s order will affect black, Latino and Asian immigrants.<sup>10</sup> But, the point here is that the recent measures around immigration, and those forthcoming as a result of the High Court’s ruling in *Arizona* will bring some changes to the landscape of immigrant employment. Public administration scholars are encouraged to examine the effects of these changes on the employment of native- and foreign-born persons by race and ethnicity. And, as discussed above, the policy implications of these issues would also need further exploration in light of these changes.

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<sup>10</sup> If the Dream Act were to pass, it too would obviously impact the employment of immigrants. The Dream Act would grant permanent residency to certain illegal immigrants if they could meet certain conditions (e.g., graduated from a U.S. high school, entered the country as a minor and completed two years in the military or two years at a four-year college).

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