
THE NEW HOMEGROWN MAJORITY IN CALIFORNIA

RECOGNIZING THE NEW REALITY OF GROWING COMMITMENT TO THE GOLDEN STATE

Executive Summary

The new reality of California is of a more settled, homegrown population. The growth of a population dominated by those born and raised in California represents a sea change in the state's history. Always before, California's people were formed largely of migrants from other states and lands. This has significant implications for policy making in education, infrastructure, tax policy, and state budget making.

The rising number of homegrown citizens represent native sons and daughters who have lived their whole lives in California and whose economic careers are a product of the California school systems, for better or worse. Already today more than 70% of the state's teens and young adults ages 15 to 24 were born and raised in California. As recently as 1990, barely half (53.2%) of that age group was California born.

There are many signs that California-born residents are more attached to the state than earlier generations, and this bodes well for the future of the state. Native Californians are more likely to remain in the state than are residents who were born elsewhere. In fact, California natives are more attached to their state than is typical in other states. While California suffered an unusual loss of its native sons and daughters during the 1990s recession, the losses have been stemmed since about 1996 and the youngest generation is showing stronger attachment than any time since 1980. This generation, across the racial and political spectrum, also expresses stronger support for higher taxes and greater public services for the improvement of California than is found among the older generation.

Less Migration Presence and More Homegrown in Middle Age. Traditionally in California our residents of middle age (45-54) have been mostly born out of state. That includes 78.4% of the generation in 1970 whose youth (15-24) was in 1940, 62.6% of those currently age 45-54 whose youth was in 1980, and likely only 48% of today's youth when they become middle age. That means today's youth will be the *first generation in California history whose majority will be California born when they assume the positions of leadership in middle age*. The most important distinction of the homegrown residents is that their entire lives are shaped by their California experience including, most significantly, the quality of their schooling.

Stronger Retention of the Homegrown in California. The ability to retain your grown children is a powerful measure of a state's attractions. On this score, California ranks near the top. The California-born move away from California slowly over time, as the natives do from every state of birth. Nationwide, only 50.0% of adults ages 25 and older still resided in their state of birth in 2007. For California natives that figure was 66.9%. California natives are more committed to their state than are the natives of all but four other states: Georgia, North Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin.

Recovery from a Bad Spell in the 1990s. Following a period of accelerated loss of native Californians in the 1990s, due to the deep recession in the state, retention significantly improved from 2000 to 2007. At age 25-34, the retention of California na-

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tives rose from 68.1% to 70.9%, an increase reflected across all the major racial or ethnic groups.

Native Sons And Daughters Are More Attached than Other Residents. Their rate of out-migration from California is roughly one-third that of residents born in other states or nations. Observing California residents age 30-34 in 2007, fully 7.2% of those who had been born in other states left California in a single year. This compared to 5.9% of those who had been born in other nations and only 1.7% of those who were California natives. At older ages the rate of out-migration is lower but similar differences prevail.

California Natives Have Deeper Roots, Especially Latinos and Asians. The homegrown residents are more deeply rooted in the state than are migration transplants. By virtue of their birth, the homegrown citizens likely have their parents, siblings and other relatives living in the state as well. And by virtue of growing up in California they also are immersed in networks that include their high school classmates or other old friends. Latino and Asian California natives appear to be more family-anchored than whites or blacks. Observed at age 25-34, fully 82.6% of Latinos and 82.5% of Asian and Pacific Islanders who were California born remained living in the state in 2007, rather than move elsewhere in the U.S., compared to 75.7% of blacks and 62.1% of whites.

Younger Generation Shows Stronger Support for Higher Taxes for More Public Services. Mostly comprised of homegrown citizens, voters under age 45 appear to be more financially committed to improving public services in the state. Overall, just under half of likely voters in 2008 (49.4%) preferred the alternative of higher taxes and more services rather than lower taxes and services. However, 63.1% of those age 18-24 and 59.4% of those age 25-34 shared this preference. Conservative voters, not surprisingly, were much less supportive of higher taxes (28.1%), but even among conservatives, young voters expressed relatively strong support for higher taxes and more services: 51.5% of voters under 25 and 41.0% of voters age 25-34, compared to 19.8% at age 45-54.

Implications Are Consistent with Other Studies. These findings support earlier conclusions by the Center for the Study of the California Economy (Levy 2006 and 2009) and the Public Policy Institute of California (Johnson and Reed 2007), as well as scholars at USC (Pastor and Ortiz 2009, Myers, Pitkin and Park 2005 and Myers 2007), or UC-Berkeley (Brady, Hout and Stiles 2005). The future of California rests with the younger generation who will need to replace the baby boomers in the workforce and also pay them a good price for their houses. Whereas in the past we have imported workers to fill the needs of the state's economy, the consensus now is that the state will have to cultivate its own workers, most of who already live here today.

The present study highlights the growth of a homegrown population and underscores the potential economic benefits they provide because of their strong commitment to California. With much deeper roots in the state, the California-born residents are more likely to remain in the state as workers, taxpayers and home buyers after their education. Accordingly, these are good candidates to repay the public's educational and social investments made while they were children.

Part of the New Narrative for California. The political impasse in Sacramento is a recurring problem that reflects a conflict of visions for the state. What is the compact that the people of California want to negotiate for their governance? The authors above, among others, have been contributing to a new narrative as a guide to California's future, one that links generations and spans ethnic groups. The present study focuses on the surprising transformation of California from a migration magnet that supplies its needs from outside the state to a more self-contained society that depends on its present members. The younger generation knows only one home, and they appear committed to building their careers in the Golden State. The new reality to be embraced about California is that we have become a land of settled and increasingly committed residents who share a future together. With this good news we can begin to make wise decisions for the Golden State.