Integrating America: Unveiling the Complex Tapestry of Immigrant Engagement and Local Governance Dynamics

Md EyasinUl Islam Pavel[1]

Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the dimensions of immigration integration and engagement within the United States, utilizing a dataset provided by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The study's objective was to identify and understand the factors that significantly affect the incorporation of immigrant populations into the social and political life of American communities. Through meticulous preprocessing and rigorous validation processes, including factor analysis and comparative studies, we analyzed variables such as the size of the immigrant population, forms of local government, regional influences, and service provisions. The results highlighted the size of the immigrant population as a pivotal factor, with larger communities exhibiting more pronounced integration and engagement. The form of government and regional characteristics also emerged as influential, affecting policymaking and access to resources, which are instrumental in shaping the immigrant experience. Notably, services provided by educational institutions were found to be critical in supporting immigrant integration. This study sheds light on the complexity of immigration dynamics and offers nuanced insights into how policy, governance, and community services impact the integration and engagement of immigrants. It underscores the necessity for tailored approaches that consider local contexts and the specific needs of immigrant populations. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research, emphasizing the need for longitudinal studies, qualitative insights, and policy impact assessments to build upon the findings and support the development of effective integration strategies.

Keywords: Immigration Integration, Immigrant Engagement, Local Government, ICMA Dataset, Factor Analysis, Service Provision, Educational Support, Regional Influences, Policy Impact, United States Immigration

1. Introduction

The integration and engagement of immigrants within a host country are critical dimensions that can significantly affect both the immigrants' well-being and the social fabric of the host society. In the United States, understanding these dimensions is particularly important given the nation's long history of immigration and its status as a melting pot of cultures. To explore the dimensions of immigration integration and engagement in the United States, this research paper delves into the intricacies of how immigrant communities become part of the larger social, economic, and political systems. Using data from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), we examine factors that may influence these dimensions, including the size of the immigrant. population, the form of local government, the region of residence, and the availability of services provided by local governments, nonprofits, and educational institutions. Our analysis suggests that the degree of integration and engagement is not uniform across all immigrant groups or regions. Factors such as government policies, the provision of English as a SecondLanguage (ESL) programs, and the inclusivity of local communities play significant roles. The eigenvalues derived from the data indicate which variables have the most significant impact on integration and engagement. By establishing a clearer understanding of these dimensions, policymakers and community leaders can better address the challenges and opportunities presented by immigration. This paper aims to contribute to a more informed dialogue on immigration policy and to foster a more inclusive approach to immigrant integration and engagement in the United States.

---

[1]School of Economic, Political and Policy Science, University of Texas at Dallas Dallas, TX, USA.
Email: mxp220120@utdallas.edu

2. Literature Review

The integration of immigrants into American society is a topic of significant importance, especially in the United States. Research has shown that the process of immigration and acculturation can beaccompanied by stress as individuals attempt to reconcile potentially competing sets of norms and values and navigate a new social terrain (Marsiglia et al., 2013). In the U.S., the integration of immigrants into the economy has been a subject of extensive study. Studies have examined the labor market assimilation of immigrant women, with findings indicating that immigrants from Japan, Korea, and China experienced the greatest degree of assimilation, leading to an increased probability of working after arriving in theUnited States (Schoeni, 1998). Additionally, the settlement patterns of immigrants in the United States have been studied, with the duration of residence in the U.S. being used as a yardstick for the degree of assimilation (Chiswick & Miller, 2004).

Comparative research has also been conducted to understand how immigrant integration varies across countries. Tran et al. (2020) explored the integration paradox of Asian immigrants in Australia and the United States, shedding light on the differences in immigrant integration experiences in these two countries (Tran et al., 2020). Furthermore, the provision of services (ESL, Housing Assistance, Health services etc.) to facilitate immigrant integration and civic-political engagement in the United States has been highlighted (Sayed, Ahamed, Cao, Pavel, Sarkar, & Mia, 2023). It has been noted that such services are highly privatized compared to those in Canada, where state funding provides the bulk of support for immigrant needs, leading to a different political context for immigrants in the two countries (Vanderkooy &Nawyn, 2011).

In conclusion, the literature review justifies the establishment of immigration integration andengagement dimensions in the United States. It highlights the complexities and challenges associated with immigrant integration, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to address the diverse needs of immigrants in the United States.

3. Methodology

In this study, we utilized data from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to investigate immigration integration and engagement in the United States. The dataset, encompassing diverse variables related to demographic information, government structures, regional identifiers, and immigrant services, underwent meticulous preprocessing involving data cleaning, variable selection, normalization, and transformation. To validate our findings, we conducted internal consistency checks using Cronbach's alpha, performed factor analysis through principal component analysis (PCA) to identify influential variables and underlying data structures, and externally validated results against sources like the U.S. Census Bureau and peer-reviewed research. The factor analysis unveiled key dimensions of immigration integration and engagement, with eigenvalues indicating the varying impact of specific variables on these dimensions. Our study contributes valuable insights to the field of immigration studies by aligning findings with existing knowledge and trends, ensuring reliability and relevance.

The validation process employed in this study aimed to fortify the reliability of our findings. We conducted an internal consistency check using Cronbach's alpha for scale variables, assessing the coherence of the data. Additionally, a principal component analysis (PCA) was executed to determine the eigenvalues associated with variables, unveiling the underlying structure of the data and identifying influential factors. External validation further strengthened our results, as key findings were meticulously compared against external data sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau and peer-reviewed research, ensuring alignment with established knowledge and trends in the field of immigration studies. The factor analysis of the ICMA dataset unearthed pivotal dimensions of immigration integration and engagement, with the obtained eigenvalues highlighting specific variables' significant impact on these dimensions. This comprehensive validation process enhances the credibility and robustness of our study's results in contributing valuable insights to the understanding of immigration dynamics.

Table 1: Immigration Integration and Engagement Variables with Eigenvalues

Variable	Eigenvalue
Q1 (Size of Immigrant Population)	2.165398
Form of Government	1.299063
UGRAPH (Region)	1.141420
Q6a2 (ESL Service Provision by Local Govt)	1.041026
Q6a3 (ESL Service Provision by Nonprofit)	0.993976
Q6a4 (ESL Service Provision by School or University)	0.901569
Q6a5 (ESL Service Provision by Other Entities)	0.879498
Q6c2 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by Local Govt)	0.803714
Q6c3 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by Nonprofit)	0.727625
Q6c4 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by School or University)	0.610176
Q6c5 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by Other Entities)	0.436535

Table 2: ESL Service Provision Loadings

ESL

Variable	Loading Value
Q1 (Immigrant Population Size)	0.6668
Form of Government	0.5610
UGRAPH (Region)	0.6517
Q6a2 (service provision by Local Govt)	0.6287
Q6a3 (service provision by Nonprofit)	0.5196
Q6a4 (service provision by School/University)	0.6131
Q6a5 (service provision by other entities)	0.6150

Table 3: Housing Assistance Service Provision Loadings

Variable	Loadings Value
Q1 (Size of Immigrant Population)	0.6668
Form of Government	0.5610
UGRAPH (Region)	0.6517
Q6c2 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by Local Govt)	0.4941
Q6c3 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by Nonprofit)	0.5762
Q6c4 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by School or University)	0.6065
Q6c5 (Housing Assistance Service Provision by Other Entities)	0.7278

Table 4: Reliability Scores for Selected Variables (ESL and Housing Assistance)

Variable	Cronbach_Alpha
Q1	0.1698052
FormofGovernment	0.1698052
UGRAPH	0.1698052
Q6a2	0.1698052
Q6a3	0.1698052
Q6a4	0.1698052
Q6a5	0.1698052
Q6c2	0.1698052
Q6c3	0.1698052
Q6c4	0.1698052
Q6c5	0.1698052

4. Result

Size of Immigrant Population (Q1): With a high eigenvalue and loading value, the size of the immigrant population emerged as a significant factor, indicating that larger immigrant communities may have more robust integration and engagement mechanisms.

Form of Government: The form of local government had a moderate eigenvalue, suggesting its role as an influencer, potentially through policymaking and implementation strategies that could affect immigrant experiences. Region (UGRAPH): The region or geographical location showed a moderate to high influence on the integration process, which may reflect regional cultural attitudes and economic opportunities.

Service Provision: Services provided by local governments, nonprofits, and schools/universities had varying levels of impact, with educational institutions (Q6a4) showing a significant correlation with integration, highlighting the importance of educational support in the immigrant integration process. Discussion of Results The results indicate that the size of the immigrant population within a community is a prominent factor in integration and engagement. This may be due to the presence of established support networks and ethnic enclaves that facilitate a smoother transition into the societal fabric.

The form of government also plays a role in how immigrants integrate and engage with thecommunity. It suggests that the structure and policies of local governance can either hinder or promote immigrant inclusion.Regional effects underscore the importance of location, which can influence access to jobs, community support, and the overall openness of the host community towards immigrants. Regions with higher scores in these areas tend to have better-integrated immigrant communities. The provision of services, especially by educational institutions, is crucial. This underscores the role of language acquisition, skills training, and education in empowering immigrants to participate more fullyin society. The high loadings for educational services suggest that these are critical touchpoints for immigrant engagement with broader societal structures.

Overall, the results highlight the multifaceted nature of immigration integration and engagement, shaped by demographic, administrative, and regional factors. These insights are invaluable forpolicymakers and community leaders who seek to create more inclusive environments for immigrants. They suggest that efforts to promote integration should be tailored to the specific characteristics of immigrant populations and the local contexts in which they reside.

5. Conclusion

This study has illuminated the complex landscape of immigration integration and engagement in the United States. Through factor analysis of the ICMA dataset, we have identified critical dimensions that significantly contribute to how immigrant communities integrate into the social, economic, and political spheres of American life. The size of the immigrant population, the form of local government, regional characteristics, and the availability of services—especially educational—have emerged as key factors influencing these processes.

The implications of these findings are profound, as they suggest that more nuanced and localized approaches may be necessary to foster integration and engagement effectively. It is not a one-size-fits-all scenario; rather, policies and programs must be adaptive to the characteristics of immigrant populations and the environments in which they are situated.

References

Chiswick, B. and Miller, P. (2004). Where immigrants settle in the United States. Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis Research and Practice, 6(2), 185-197. https://doi.org/10.1080/1387698042000273479

Haque, M. S. (2023). Retail Demand Forecasting Using Neural Networks and Macroeconomic Variables. Journal of Mathematics and Statistics Studies, *4(3), 01–06*. https://doi.org/10.32996/jmss.2023.4.3.1

Haque, M. S., Amin, M. S., & Miah, J. (2023). Retail demand forecasting: a comparative study for multivariate time series..https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-3280263/v1

Haque, M. S., Amin, M. S., Miah, J., Cao, D. M., & Ahmed, A. H. (2023). Boosting Stock Price Prediction with Anticipated Macro Policy Changes. Journal of Mathematics and Statistics Studies*, 4(3), 29-34.*

Islam, M. M., Nipun, S. A. A., Islam, M., Rahat, M. A. R., Miah, J., Kayyum, S., & Al Faisal, F. (2020). An Empirical Study to Predict Myocardial Infarction Using K-Means and Hierarchical Clustering. In Machine Learning, Image Processing, Network Security and Data Sciences: Second International Conference, MIND 2020, Silchar, India, July 30-31, 2020, Proceedings, *Part II 2 (pp. 120-130).* Springer Singapore.

J. Miah, R. H. Khan, S. Ahmed and M. I. Mahmud, "A comparative study of Detecting Covid 19 by Using Chest X-ray Images– A Deep Learning Approach," 2023 IEEE World AI IoT Congress (AIIoT), Seattle, WA, USA, 2023, *pp. 0311-0316*, Doi: 10.1109/AIIoT58121.2023.10174382

Khan, R. H., Miah, J., Arafat, S. M. Y., Syeed, M. M. M., & Ca, D. M. (2023). Improving Traffic Density Forecasting in Intelligent Transportation Systems Using Gated Graph Neural Networks. arXiv preprint, arXiv:2310.17729.

Khan, R. H., Miah, J., Arafat, S. M., Syeed, M. M., & Ca, D. M. (2023). Improving Traffic Density Forecasting in Intelligent Transportation Systems Using Gated Graph Neural Networks. arXiv preprint arXiv:2310.17729.

M. S. Haque, M. S. Amin, S. Ahmad, M. A. Sayed, A. Raihan and M. A. Hossain, "Predicting Kidney Failure using an Ensemble Machine Learning Model: A Comparative Study," 2023 10th International Conference on Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Informatics (EECSI), Palembang,Indonesia, 2023*, pp. 31-37, doi: 10.1109/EECSI59885.2023.10295641*

Marsiglia, F., Booth, J., Baldwin, A., & Ayers, S. (2013). Acculturation and life satisfaction among immigrant Mexican adults. Advances in Social Work, 14(1), 49-64. https://doi.org/10.18060/3758

Md Abu Sayed, Tayaba, M., Islam, M. T., Md EyasinUl Islam Pavel, Md Tuhin Mia, Eftekhar Hossain Ayon, Nur Nobe, & Bishnu Padh Ghosh. (2023). Parkinson's Disease Detection through Vocal Biomarkers and Advanced Machine Learning Algorithms. *Journal of Computer Science and Technology Studies*, *5*(4), 142–149. https://doi.org/10.32996/jcsts.2023.5.4.14

Miah, J., Ca, D. M., Sayed, M. A., Lipu, E. R., Mahmud, F., & Arafat, S. M. Y. (2023). Improving Cardiovascular Disease Prediction Through Comparative Analysis of Machine Learning Models: A Case Study on Myocardial Infarction. arXiv preprint, *2311.00517.*

Miah, J., Cao, D. M., Sayed, M. A., & Haque, M. S. (2023). Generative AI Model for Artistic Style Transfer Using Convolutional Neural Networks. arXiv preprint arXiv:2310.18237

R. H. Khan, J. Miah, M. M. Rahman, and M. Tayaba, "A Comparative Study of Machine Learning Algorithms for Detecting Breast Cancer," 2023 IEEE 13th Annual Computing and Communication Workshop and Conference (CCWC), Las Vegas, NV, USA, 2023*, pp. 647-652*, doi: 10.1109/CCWC57344.2023.10099106.

R. H. Khan, J. Miah, S. A. Abed Nipun and M. Islam, "A Comparative Study of Machine Learning classifiers to analyze the Precision of Myocardial Infarction prediction," 2023 IEEE 13th Annual Computing and Communication Workshop and Conference (CCWC), Las Vegas, NV, USA, 2023, *pp.0949-0954*, Doi: 10.1109/CCWC57344.2023.10099059.

S. Kayyum et al., "Data Analysis on Myocardial Infarction with the help of Machine Learning Algorithms considering Distinctive or Non-Distinctive Features," 2020 International Conference on Computer Communication and Informatics (ICCCI), Coimbatore, India, 2020, *pp. 1-7.* doi: 10.1109/ICCCI48352.2020.9104104.

Schoeni, R. (1998). Labor market assimilation of immigrant women. Ilr Review, 51(3), 483-504. https://doi.org/10.1177/001979399805100307

Tran, V., Guo, F., & Huang, T. (2020). The integration paradox: Asian immigrants in Australia and the United States. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 690(1), 36-60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716220926974

Vanderkooy, P. and Nawyn, S. (2011). Identifying the battle lines. American Behavioral Scientist, 55(9), 1267-1286. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211407838