



Components of Orange County's Population Growth: The Last Thirty Years

INTRODUCTION

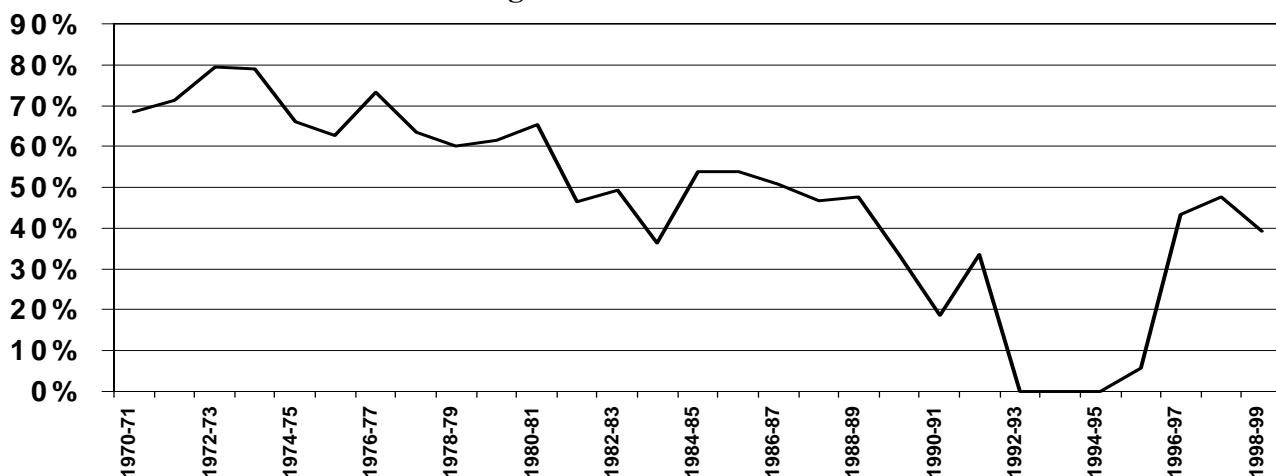
Between 1970 and 1999, Orange County's population nearly doubled, from 1.43 million to 2.81 million. One of the most basic questions regarding this growth is "What factors contributed to the growth?" There are many factors that one can highlight, such as great weather, a good economy, a desire to have children, and a favorable quality of life. Although these factors may be very important in shaping one's personal decisions, demographers focus on the events that result in population change. Population in a geographic area changes because of four events: people move into an area, people move out of an area, people are born and people die. Demographers refer to these events as migration and natural increase. The population would be static if these events did not occur. Equally important, these events occur hundreds of times each day involving hundreds of people daily. This *Profiles* will focus on each of these events during the past thirty years in Orange County. By examining these events we get a better

understanding of the dynamics of Orange County's population growth both past, present, and even future.

MIGRATION

For years Orange County was synonymous with migration and migration was synonymous with Orange County. Orange County's meteoric growth was spurred on by masses of people moving out of Los Angeles County and into Orange County. In addition, many people left the Frost Belt and Rust Belt states in search of good weather, economic opportunities, and the "California Lifestyle." Even as Orange County began to settle and mature as a metropolitan area in the 1970's, most of Orange County's growth was the result of migration (Chart 1). Throughout the entire decade of the 1970's, migration accounted for a majority of Orange County's population increase. Migration represented 60% of the total population growth from 1978 to 1979, and 79% of the total population growth from 1972 to 1973 and 1973 to 1974.

Chart 1- Migration as a Percent of Total Growth

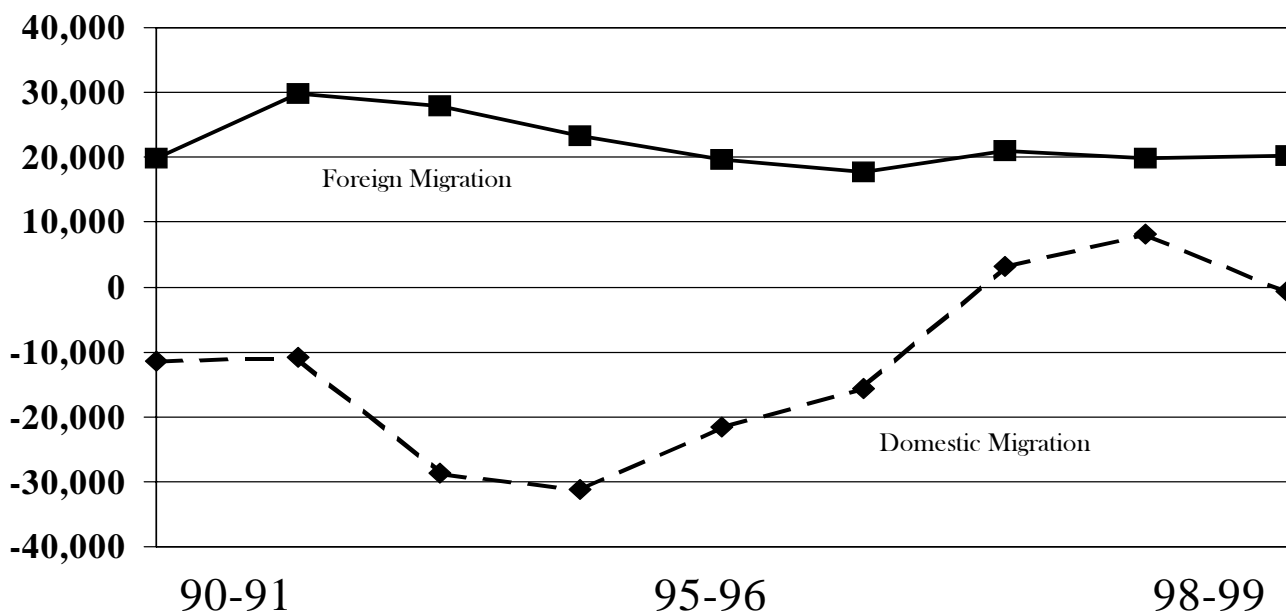


SOURCE: California State Department of Finance, 1999

The 1980's marked a significant change in the contribution and character of migration. Beginning in the early 1980's, migration began to take a less significant role in the population change equation. In the first seven years of this past decade migration accounted for more than 50% of the growth in four of the years and less than 50% of the growth in three of the years. In the four years that migration accounted for more than 50% of the growth, it was just slightly over 50% percent (ranging from 50.8% to 53.95%). From 1987, onward migration has never accounted for a majority of the county's population growth. In fact, in a three year period (1992-1995), there was actually a net loss of population due to migration.

As the relative role of domestic migration and foreign migration has changed over time, so has the makeup of the migrants changed significantly from the 1970's. Domestic migration in Orange County is defined as people moving out of other California counties into Orange County, people moving out of Orange County into other California counties, people moving into Orange County from other states, and people moving out of Orange County to other states. Although not exclusively, a majority of the domestic migrants have been native born Whites. Foreign migration, or immigration, in Orange County is defined as people moving into Orange County from other nations and people moving out of Orange County to other nations. Most of the immigrants coming to Orange County are Asian and Latino.

Chart 2- Domestic and Foreign Migration 1990 - 1999



SOURCE: California State Department of Finance, 1999

Domestic migration's role has been diminishing since the mid-1970's while the importance of foreign migration has grown. The diminished role of domestic migration in the 1990's is depicted in Chart 2. Several factors have contributed to this decreasing role of domestic migration: 1) The relative competitiveness of other metropolitan area economies improved reducing many of California's and Orange County's economic advantages; 2) More new jobs in California and Orange County were filled by residents as the population base and labor pool grew; 3) A growing number of Orange County residents who were reaching or had reached retirement age were moving out of Orange County than were moving into Orange County; 4) Housing costs in Orange County were rising and more inexpensive housing, relative to Orange County housing prices, became available in the Inland Empire. In addition, a combination of net out-domestic migration with foreign migration, has fostered Orange County's ethnic diversification over the past twenty to twenty-five years.

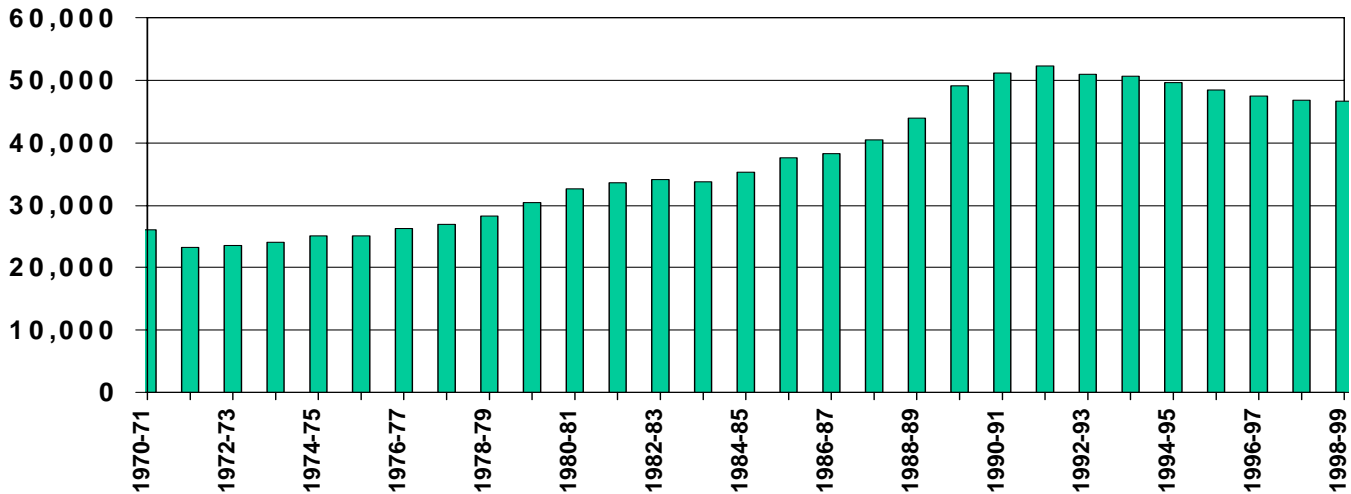
NATURAL INCREASE

Natural Increase is defined as the difference between births and deaths. It has contributed continuously to Orange County's growth and will do so well into the 21st century. Due to the sheer numbers of people migrating into Orange County during the 1960's and 1970's, growth due to natural increase was overshadowed by growth due to migration. As the role of domestic migration lessened, and as the role of foreign migration increased, fertility rates increased in Orange County resulting in a growing number of births. Orange County averaged approximately 25,800 births each year in the 1970's, approximately 37,900 births each year in the 1980's, and approximately 49,300 births each year in the 1990's (Chart 3).

The number of deaths increases each year particularly as more Orange County residents age. Certainly the number of people over the age of 65 has grown continuously. In 1970, there were approximately 9,000 deaths in Orange County increasing to over 16,000 in 1999. However, the growing number of births in Orange County has outpaced the growth in the number of deaths. In fact, the ratio of deaths to births has declined between 1970 and 1999. The net result is that total growth due to natural increase has grown (Chart 4).

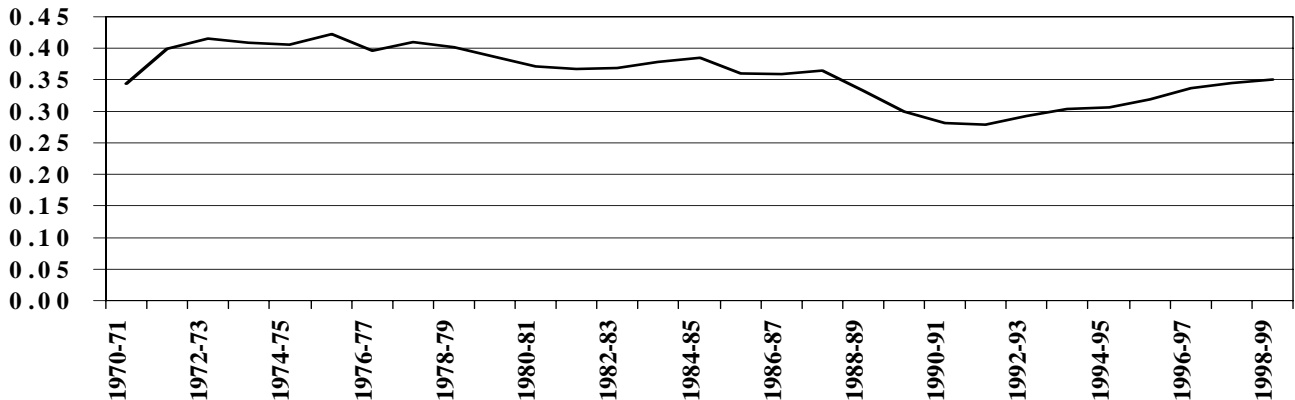
Natural increase has also contributed to the ethnic diversification of Orange County. A growing proportion of births in Orange County are Asian and Latino children. Ever since the late 1980's, Asians and Latinos have made up the majority of births. Today, Latinos represent the majority of births in Orange County. Whites, on the other hand, account for a vast majority of deaths in Orange County because they represent the majority of the elderly population.

Chart 3- Orange County Births 1970 - 1999



SOURCE: California State Department of Finance, 1999

Chart 4- Ratio of Deaths to Births



SOURCE: California State Department of Finance, 1999

The future will see a continuing and a probable larger role of natural increase. Expected levels of migration will decrease as continued growing levels of domestic out-migration will offset growth due to foreign net immigration. As the population continues to age, increasing levels of mortality will reduce the growth due to births. Thus, population growth in Orange County will continue well into the 21st century, but at a substantially lower level.

Demographics on the Web

The internet has evolved into an invaluable source for demographic information. Data is available from government and private sources in a variety of formats. Check out the Center for Demographic Research web page for products and data available for Orange County ([HTTP://WWW.FULLERTON.EDU/CDR](http://WWW.FULLERTON.EDU/CDR)). Our web site also provides links to many of the following sites:

[HTTP://WWW.DOF.CA.GOV](http://WWW.DOF.CA.GOV)

California Department of Finance home page. Wealth of information for California cities and counties regarding housing & population demographics. Also includes links to additional sites.

http://factfinder.census.gov/java_prod/dads.ui.homepage.homepage

American FactFinder - U.S. Census Bureau. The newest feature on the Census Bureau's web site; access population & housing demographics from the U.S. Census and American Community Survey.

[HTTP://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/CGI-BIN/GAZETTEER](http://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/CGI-BIN/GAZETTEER)

U.S. Gazetteer. This gazetteer is used to identify places to view with the Tiger Map Server and obtain census data from the 1990 Census Lookup server. The entire www.census.gov site is massive.

[HTTP://WWW.SCAG.ORG/](http://WWW.SCAG.ORG/)

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Access Project. Citizens can also use our Web pages to obtain information about member agencies.

Commercial Sources:

[HTTP://WWW.MARKETINGTOOLS.COM/](http://WWW.MARKETINGTOOLS.COM/)

American Demographics and Marketing Tools are Dow Jones publications for businesses looking to find, reach and keep customers.

[HTTP://WWW.ESRI.COM/DATA/INDEX.HTML](http://WWW.ESRI.COM/DATA/INDEX.HTML)

A wealth of ArcInfo GIS data. Tour ESRI's extensive collection of data resources to discover everything from free data sets to SPOT satellite images.

[HTTP://WWW.CLARITAS.COM/](http://WWW.CLARITAS.COM/)

Claritas' Precision Marketing. An integration of demographics, specialized data, customer data, geography, mapping and marketing.

[HTTP://WWW.MAPINFO.COM/](http://WWW.MAPINFO.COM/)

MapInfo presents MapXpress—the online GIS store, where you can buy data and more. This comprehensive online catalog lists hundreds of different data types for use with MapInfo.

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