

iCi

**Index of Children's
Importance**



Report

California's Diminishing Resource: Children

Prepared by



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The Generational Future of Los Angeles: Projections to 2030 and Comparisons to Recent Decades

Executive Summary

This report reveals a dramatic generational change in the Los Angeles population. Comparing the last 20 years to the next 20 years, sweeping changes are found on many fronts. Explicit comparison to past decades highlights the magnitude of transition now under way. These include major changes in the immigrant origins of the population and rapidly slowing rates of racial and ethnic change. Of greatest importance are changes in the age mix of the residents, including shrinking numbers of children and dramatically higher numbers of seniors.

These demographic changes reverse some long-established trends and overturn old assumptions about Los Angeles and its residents. The reversals have already begun and can be observed in census data of 2010. But they are best understood when viewed over both a 20-year historical and 20-year future horizon.

Foresight on the current decade and coming years is drawn from detailed demographic projections newly developed after the 2010 census and presented in this report. The new Pitkin-Myers 2012 Generational Projections for Los Angeles are benchmarked to related projections completed in 2012 for California as a whole. This projection series, under development for more than a decade, includes details about immigrants and residents born in California that are not reported in other projections.

Ten major findings emerge from the 2012 Los Angeles generational projections. They reflect population dynamics whose changes may be surprising and which have very consequential impacts. (All data are for the greater Los Angeles population that resides in Los Angeles county.)

1. Continuing Low Population Growth. Much slower population growth is foreseen in these projections than was expected in the early 2000s. In fact, we now expect total population growth in each of the coming decades to resemble what was experienced in 4 of the last 5 census decades. The lone exception of high growth in the 1980s is increasingly viewed as an anomaly that has confused many observers about what is normal for a county as large and fully settled as Los Angeles.

2. Declining Number of Children. From 1990 to 2000, the number of children under age 10 had grown by 11.4%, but after 2000 the numbers of children turned steeply downward, falling 16.9% by 2010. The projection for the current decade is a further decline of 14.6% by 2020, with only a small further decline (4.0%) by 2030. Birth data show this decline commenced well prior to the onset of the recession in 2007, and in fact births in Los Angeles county in 2011 are fully 35% lower than in their peak year of 1990.

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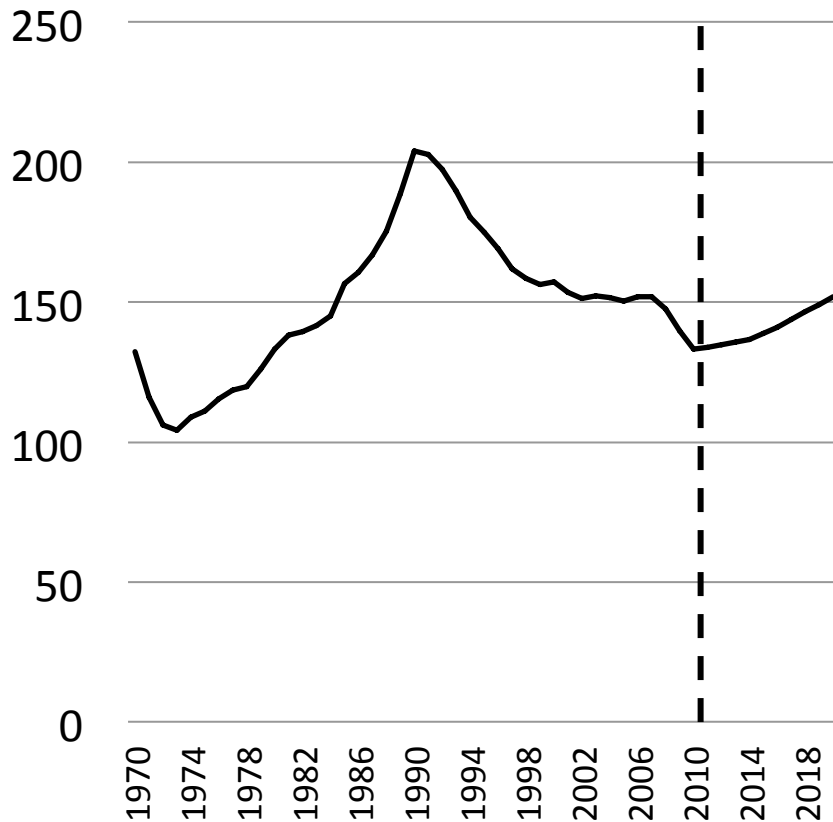
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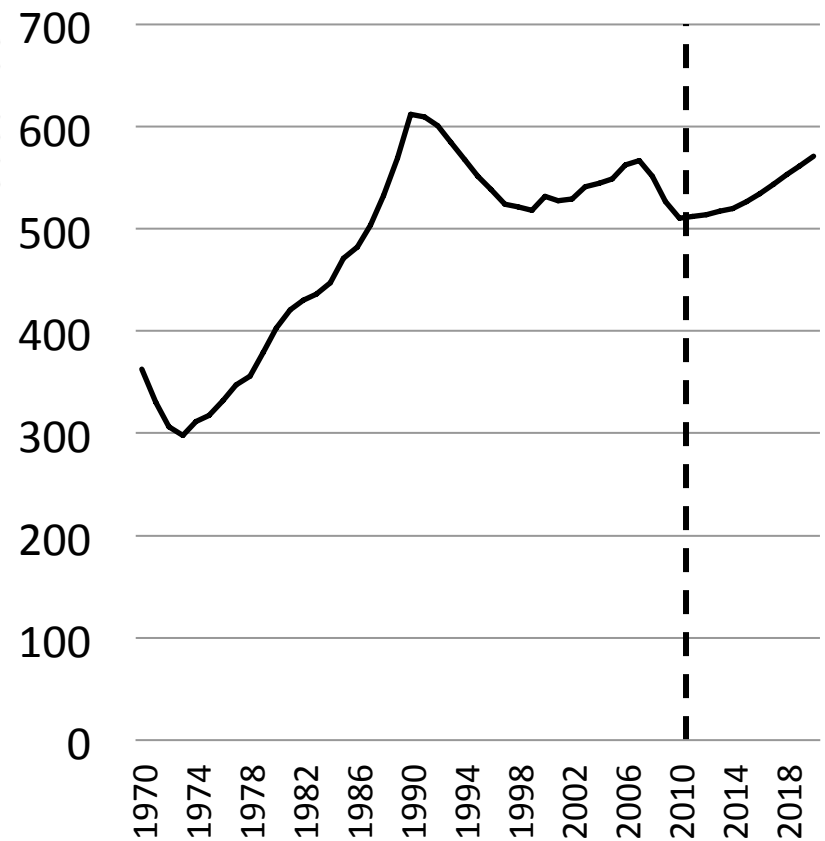
Annual Births

No longer on an Upswing after 1990

Los Angeles

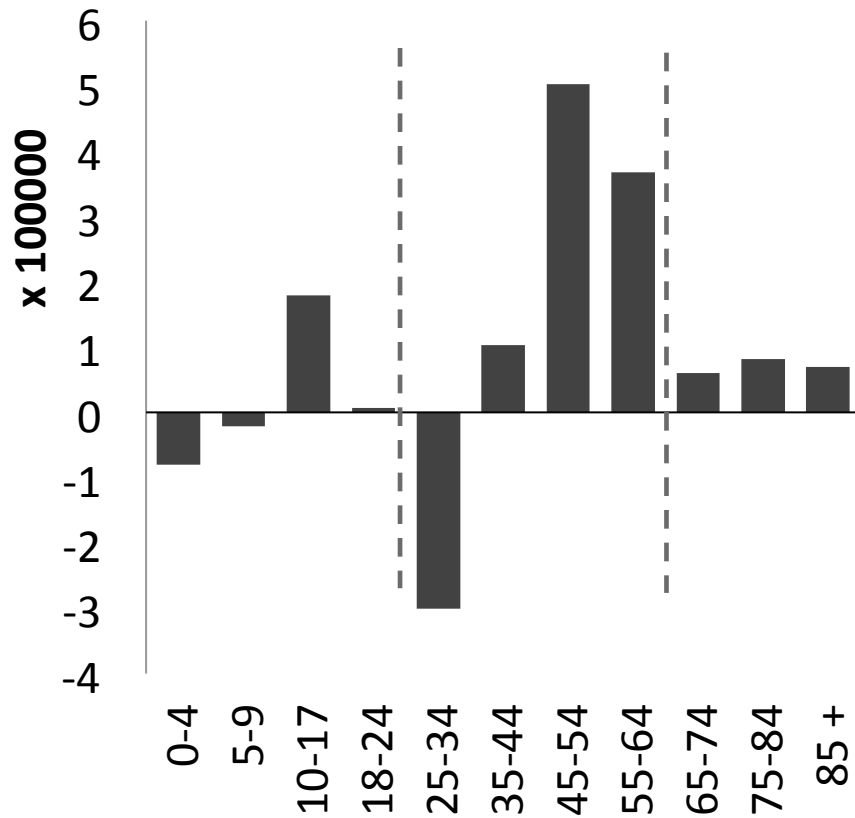


California

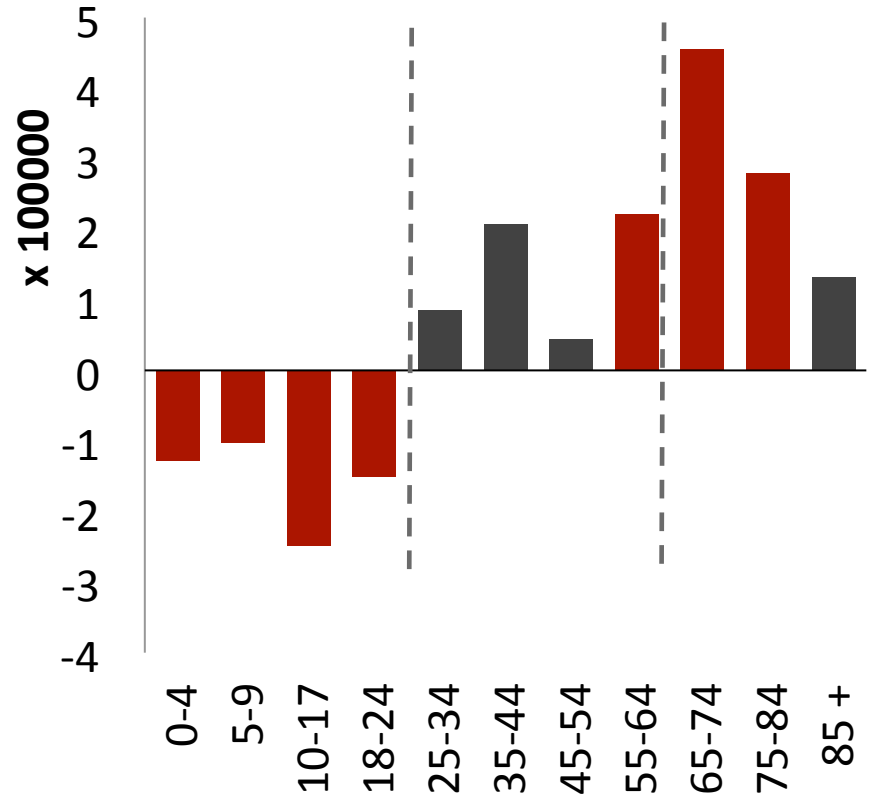


Growth in Age Groups in LA County Children Decline in Number

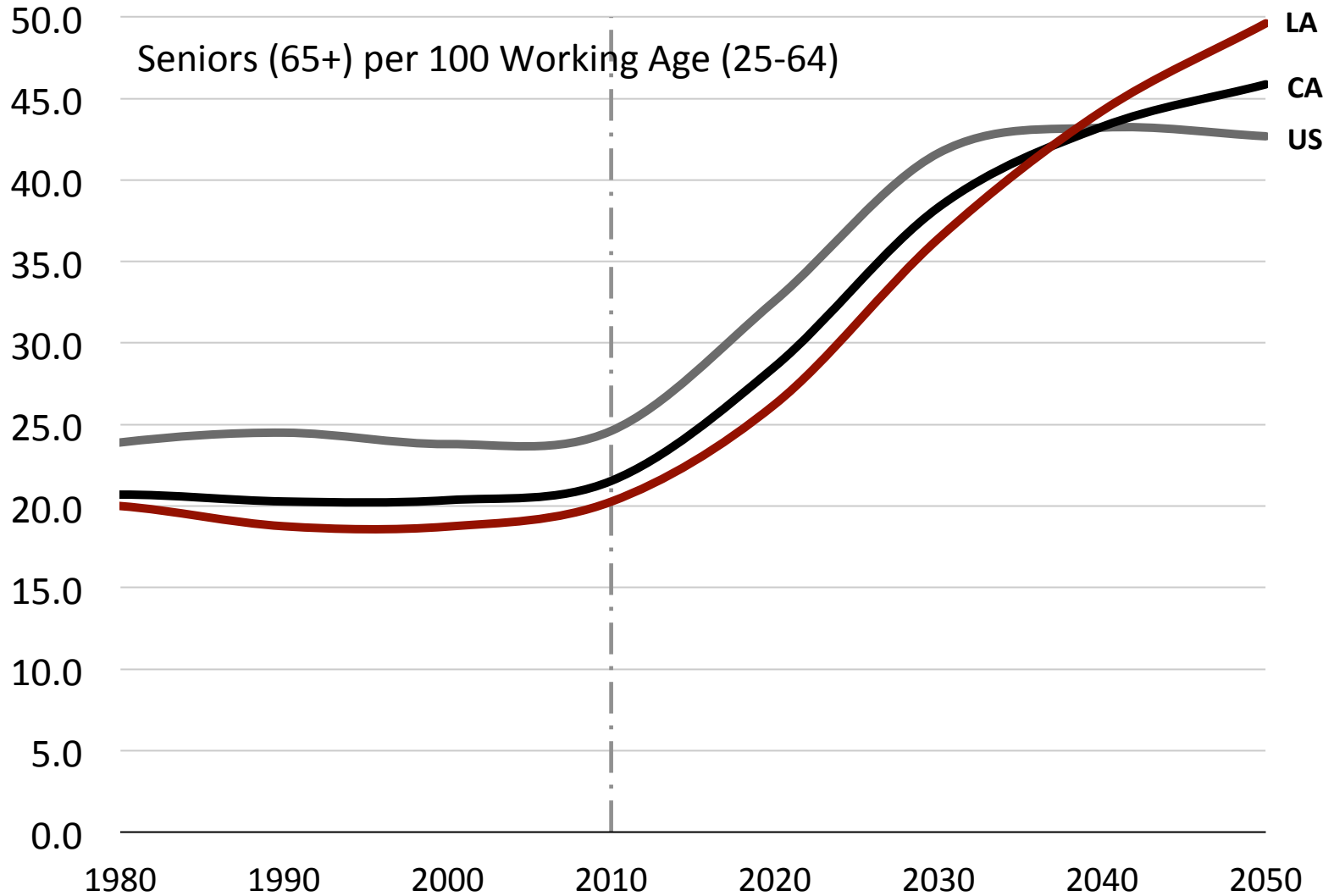
1990-2010



2010-2030



Meanwhile the Senior Ratio Soars



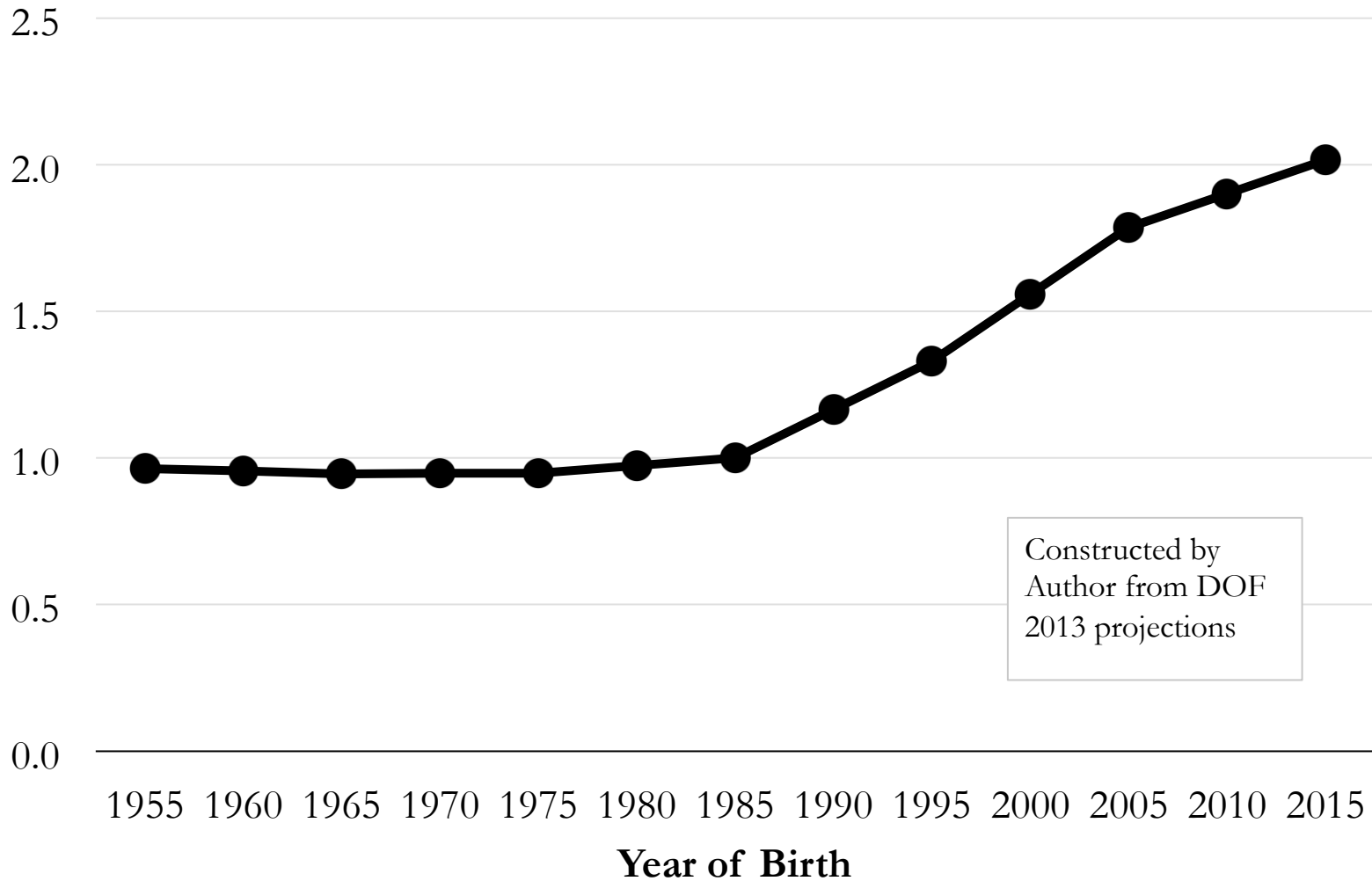
The **NEW** Importance of Children

- Not growing in number like before
- Not enough children means ...
- Not enough workers, tax payers and consumers when they grow up in 20 years
- Not enough supporters for the older generation who votes today
- How to measure and show this concisely?

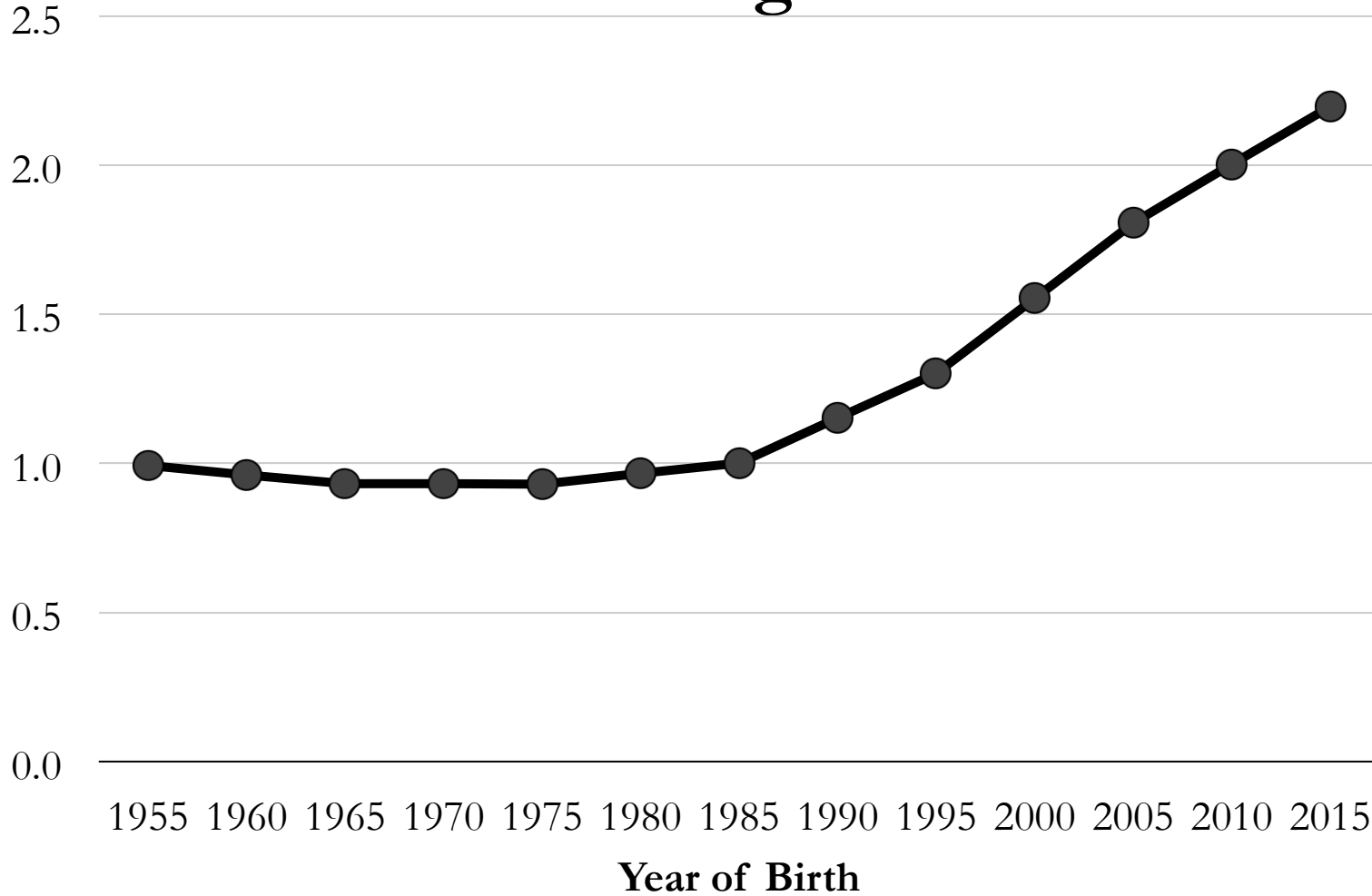
Defining the Index of Children's Importance (iCi)

- Assigned at birth, based on the senior ratio expected to prevail when the child reaches age 25 (number of seniors per 100 working age)
- Growth in that ratio indicates the added economic and social weight to be carried by the children when grown
- A child born in 2010 in Los Angeles is exactly twice as important (index of 2.00) as a child who was born in 1985 (index of 1.00)

Rising Importance of Children in California



Rising Importance of Children in Los Angeles



Making the Most Out of Our Scarce Assets

III. Racial and Ethnic Diversity of Children

Who are these children on whom society will rely so heavily? This section reviews details collected in the 2010 census, and summarizes the racial/ethnic diversity and broad changes that have occurred since 1990 and are anticipated in California by 2030. This diversity is accompanied by declining birth rates in all groups, and so all are contributing to the reduced growth in the child population.

A. Rich Diversity Among Children

Racial and ethnic diversity is well established among California's children, foreshadowing what is expected for the nation as a whole in coming decades.⁵ A 2010 detailed profile for the population of California and children under age 18 is provided in the Appendix.

Latinos constitute a slight majority of all children under age 18 (51.2%), a higher percentage than of the entire population (37.6%). However, in the case of Asians, fertility is lower, and migration of adults relatively high, so that a *smaller* share of children are of Asian descent than is found among the total population (10.4% versus 12.8%). Among African Americans and American Indians/

- BTW children have much greater diversity
- Our most neglected children hold the **greatest potential** to help us
- We need all hands on deck — let's get smart
- Its only fair to the kids — we need greater equity

Implications and Possibilities for the iCi

- Answers the question: why should I really give more priority to children than was the usual neglect of the past?
- The importance index indicates the trend in spending (investment) on children that should be made
- Actual spending trend per child could be superimposed on the iCi trend
- The iCi can be accurately constructed for every county in California; it also can be crudely estimated for every city as well

More Information

Dowell Myers. 2013. California's Diminishing Resource: Children. Special report. Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. Palo Alto.

Dowell Myers and John Pitkin. 2013. The Generational Future of Los Angeles: Projections to 2030 and Comparisons to Recent Decades. Produced by the Population Dynamics Research Group, Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California. Text and supporting materials published at:

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