

# HOW THE EARNINGS GROWTH OF US IMMIGRANTS WAS UNDERESTIMATED

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## ABSTRACT

Two radically different descriptions of immigrant earnings trajectories in the USA have emerged. One asserts that immigrant men, following the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, have low initial earnings and high earnings growth. Another asserts that the post-1965 immigrants have low initial earnings and low earnings growth. We describe the methodological issues that create this divide and show that low earnings growth becomes high earnings growth when immigrants are followed from their initial years in the USA; earnings growth is allowed to vary with entry earnings; and-when following cohorts instead of individuals-sample restrictions commonly used by labor economists are avoided.

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