The Demographic, Social, and Economic Characteristics of Recent Immigrants from China, India, and Mexico

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INTRODUCTION

Since last decade, the country-of-birth composition of recent foreign-born immigrants to the United States has shifted. The number of immigrants from China[1] and India increased while immigrants from Mexico decreased. By 2014, both China and India surpassed Mexico and became statistically tied to become the top sending countries for foreign-born immigrants (see Figure 1). In this poster, we analyze changes in demographic, social, and economic characteristics of foreign-born immigrants from China, India, and Mexico using the 2005-2009 and the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data. Our analysis focuses on educational attainment, school enrollment, labor force participation, occupation, and household structure.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program uses data primarily from the ACS to produce annual estimates of net international migration by demographic characteristics for the nation, states, and counties. Ongoing research into recent immigration trends supports our efforts to evaluate current methodologies to improve the population estimates. In addition to the country-of-birth composition of immigrants, prior research has revealed shifts in the age and sex composition of immigrants from these countries over time. Chinese immigrants are younger compared to last decade whereas recent Mexican immigrants are older. The age structure of recent Indian immigrants remains the same. This research continues the exploration of other characteristics of the recent immigrant population from these countries.

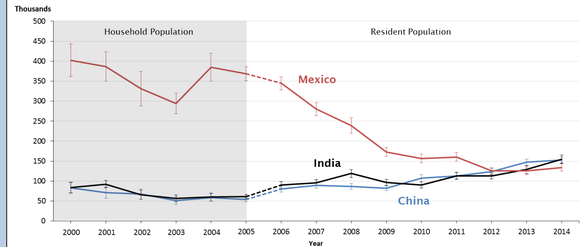
DATA AND METHODS

The Population Estimates Program currently measures annual foreign-born immigration as the foreign-born population whose **residence one year ago (ROYA)** was abroad. We use the **1-year ACS** to estimate annual foreign-born immigration flows. In order to draw from a sufficient sample size, we use data from the **5-year ACS** to report characteristics of the ROYA immigrant populations. Unless otherwise stated, the terms immigrant and recent immigrant refer to the ROYA population.

[1] The China immigrant category includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.
Note: The ACS estimates presented in this poster are subject to sampling and non-sampling error. For more information, see: http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html.

ANNUAL FOREIGN-BORN IMMIGRATION

Figure 1.
Annual Estimates of Recent Immigrants to the U.S. by Selected Countries of Birth: 2000-2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey (C2SS), and 2001-2014 Single-Year American Community Surveys
Note: 90 % confidence intervals are shown. The C2SS was the demonstration phase of the ACS. 2000-2004 had smaller sample sizes. The ACS was fully implemented in 2005 and expanded in 2006 to include group quarters. For more information see:
http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/design_and_methodology/acs_design_methodology_ch02_2014.pdf

EDUCATION

Figure 2.
School Enrollment of Recent Immigrants Ages 18-24: 2010-2014

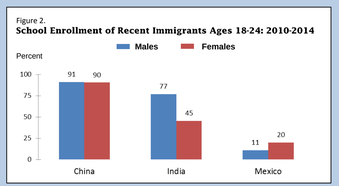
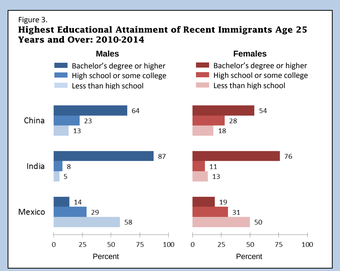


Figure 3.
Highest Educational Attainment of Recent Immigrants Age 25 Years and Over: 2010-2014



Figures 2 and 3 show education-related characteristics of recent immigrants18-24 and 25 and over:

- Most Chinese immigrants are enrolled in school. Both males and females have about a 90 percent enrollment rate.
- Enrollment for Indian immigrants is differentiated by sex; 77 percent of males were enrolled compared to 45 percent of females.
- Enrollment for Mexican immigrants is also differentiated by sex. However a larger percent of females (20 percent) were enrolled compared to males (11 percent).
- Most Chinese and Indian immigrants age 25 years and over hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2005-2009 and 2010-2014 5-Year American Community Surveys.
Note: Figure brackets represent 90% confidence intervals.

LABOR FORCE AND OCCUPATION

Figure 4.
Labor Force Participation of the Recent Immigrant Population 16 to 64 Years: 2005-2009 and 2010-2014

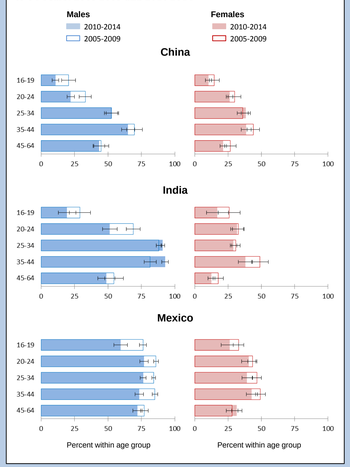


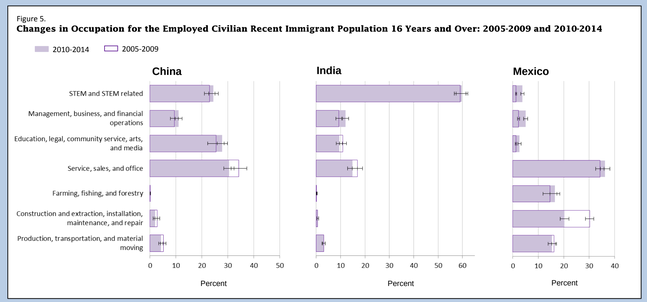
Figure 4 shows the percent of recent immigrants participating in the labor force by sex:

- For most age groups, males had higher participation rates than females.
- Chinese had relatively low participation rates in the youngest age groups, and these rates declined since last decade.
- Though participation has dropped, male Mexican immigrants continue to have high levels of participation across all age groups.

Figure 5 shows percent of employed recent immigrants by occupation.

- The share of employment by occupation has remained unchanged for most categories.
- The share of Mexicans in **Construction** has declined whereas their share in **STEM**, **Management**, and **Education** increased slightly.
- Indians continue to work predominantly in the **STEM** fields. Their share in the **Management** fields increased.

Figure 5.
Changes in Occupation for the Employed Civilian Recent Immigrant Population 16 Years and Over: 2005-2009 and 2010-2014



HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

Figure 6.
Changes in the Structure of Households Containing Recent Immigrants: 2005-2009 and 2010-2014

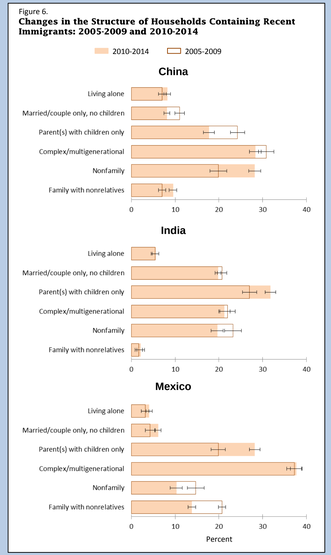


Figure 6 shows the percent of households containing at least one recent immigrant by household type. The type is based on all household members' relationship to the householder:

- The share of households comprised of those **living alone** as well as **complex/ multigenerational** families show little to no change.
- Households comprised only of **married or cohabitating couples** increased for Mexican immigrants but declined for Chinese.
- Households with **parents with children only** declined for Chinese but increased for Indians and Mexicans.
- The share of **nonfamily** households increased for Chinese and became tied as the most common household type for this immigrant group. This share declined for Indian and Mexican households.
- Mixed households with both **family and non relatives present** increased for Chinese and declined for Mexicans.

CONCLUSIONS

Our overall findings show that these three immigrant groups have markedly different characteristics and changes over time. Here we highlight two experiences of immigrants after arrival: education and work. The results suggest that Chinese immigrants came to the U.S. to study and became more likely to live with nonrelated individuals, similar to student living arrangements. Mexican immigration shows characteristics of employment or job seeking, less likely to be younger working-age males living with unrelated individuals, but represented by an older population living in households as parents with children or in complex/multigenerational households. Indian immigrants share characteristics with both recent Chinese and Mexicans, with higher enrollment as well as labor force participation.

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