

The Place-of-Birth Composition of Immigrants to the United States: 2000 to 2013

Abstract

In 2013, China became the top sending country for immigrants to the United States, replacing Mexico. This followed a decade of increasing immigration from China while immigration from Mexico was declining. In addition to China, several of the other top immigrant-sending countries in 2013 were from Asia including India, Korea, Philippines, and Japan. In this paper, we will show trends in the national origins of recent immigrants to the United States using data from the 2000 to 2013 single-year American Community Survey data. In addition to showing trends in the size of immigrant flows, we also analyze the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the recent immigrants from the top sending countries.

Extended abstract

In 2013, China became the top sending country for immigrants to the United States, replacing Mexico. This followed a decade of increasing immigration from China and India while immigration from Mexico was declining. In addition to China and India, several of the other top immigrant-sending countries in 2013 were from Asia including Korea, Philippines, and Japan. This new pattern in the national origins of recent immigrants marks a dramatic change from recent decades.

The U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program currently measures annual immigration as the foreign-born population whose residence one year ago was abroad. In the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) there were 1,201,000 immigrants. China was the top sending country with 147,000 followed by India with 129,000 and then Mexico with 125,000. The numbers of immigrants from India and Mexico were not statistically different from each other. In the 2012 ACS data, Mexico and China were the top two sending countries with 125,000

and 124,000 immigrants, respectively. The estimates for Mexico and China in 2012 were not statistically different.

Change in the racial and ethnic composition of immigrant flows contributes to the overall racial and ethnic make-up of the United States. While Hispanics are still the largest racial or ethnic minority group, a larger percentage of the Asian population was foreign born (65.5) compared to the Hispanic population (35.1) in 2013. The contribution of immigration to overall population growth will be greater for Asians than for Hispanics.

Historically, the national origins of immigrant flows have changed dramatically. The earliest waves of immigrants originated in Northern and Western Europe. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe later predominated. The most recent wave of immigrants has largely been from Latin America, and to a lesser extent, Asia (Bean and Stevens 2003, Greico et al. 2012). Whether these recent trends signal a new and distinct wave of immigration is yet to be seen.

In this paper, we plan to show trends in the national origins of recent immigrants to the United States using data from the 2000 to 2013 single-year American Community Survey. In addition to showing trends in the size of immigrant flows, we will also analyze the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the recent immigrants from the top sending countries in 2013. Specifically, we will look at characteristics such as age, sex, school enrollment, educational attainment, employment status, industry and occupation, and median earnings of immigrants from the top sending countries.

References:

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