When Do People Actually Migrate to the United States?

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Abstract:

The little understood difference between in-migration and immigration to the United States drives the economic and social consequences of immigration, policy, and research. New immigrants include both "new arrivals" and "status adjusters" and the proportion of new immigrants that adjust status has been increasing since World War II. Status adjusters, who may have migrated many years before, are now more than one-half of all "new" immigrants. As a result, research and policy discussions that think of new immigrant data as migration flow data are less and less accurate every year. For the first time, we calculate when new immigrants actually arrive in the United States and examine how arrivals have changed over the past 50 years. We profile differences between status adjusters and new arrivals and discuss the implications of those differences. Further, it appears that immigration policy is now driven by non-immigrant policy. Newly created data help predict the demand for new immigrant visas. The work in this paper uses new data sets created from government data on new immigrants to examine new immigrants when they actually arrived, permitting us to consider the consequences of in-migration and non-immigrant policy on immigration by examining the flow of people to the United States.

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https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/landing.jsp

Introduction and the Problem

Many of us are aware of the controversies that surround immigration and the calls for new policy, changes in existing policy, and policy restricting immigration. Often, the conversation includes information about the number of immigrants to the United States, how immigration has grown, and how the characteristics of immigrants have changed over time.[1] While the gist of many arguments is true, statements are often based on flawed data and the specific conclusions drawn from those data are often incorrect. In addition, researchers who use new immigrant data to develop theories of migration or as a control variable in their analyses (for example to assess immigration flow's effect on a job market), use data that is incorrect for their purposes. The U.S. government statistics that are typically used as evidence in immigration policy development and in research are derived from data sets typically called "New Immigrants to the United States".[2] They provide a skewed picture of immigration because there is a common misconception about who is new to the United States.[3]

How can we explain migration flows (and their impact) to the United States over time? The data commonly used, which are featured in the ubiquitous graph, are based on new immigrants to the United States (Figure 1). But migrating to the United States and becoming an immigrant may not take place at the same time. Explanations about the push and pull factors of migration, the impact of immigration's flow on job markets, and other questions, require that we access and analyze changes in migration not changes in status.

Our policy structure provides for two kinds of entrants to the United States. Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) are those who have been granted permanent residency and they migrate to the United States and stay permanently (or as long as they choose). LPRs provide the pool of potential new citizens. Non-immigrant entrants are only authorized to stay in the United States for a limited period of time while pursuing some legitimate and temporary visiting activities. There are many visa categories for both kinds of entrants.

We have moved, somewhat unwittingly, away from this system of separate entry possibilities toward a two-step immigration process where non-immigrants, after residing in the United States, change status and become LPRs. Those who are classified as new immigrants include both "new arrivals" and "status adjusters". Status adjusters are people who have entered the United States as a non-immigrant and then adjusted their status to LPR. For example, someone may enter the United States on a student visa, live for seven or eight years as a graduate student, and then get a job in the United States and successfully convert to LPR. This person will count as a new immigrant after he or she becomes an LPR,

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[1] This paper does not focus on the controversies surrounding undocumented immigration. Some people who are status adjusters start out as undocumented immigrants but this paper concentrates on the controversies surrounding legal immigration and legal immigration policy.

[2] The specific name of these data sets changes over the years.

[3] One could argue that researchers and policy makers are the problem because they don't realize that the data they use does not have the expected meaning. The genesis of this paper came from watching a keynote presentation by a noted labor economist who developed a theory of labor migration from these government statistics—not understanding that they bore almost no relationship to migration.

not the year when he or she first arrived. The proportion of new immigrants who are status adjusters has been increasing since World War II. In 2011, almost 55 percent of all "new" immigrants were status adjusters who may have come many years before. Figure 2 shows dramatically the comingling of these two systems into one that is dominated by the non-immigrant to immigrant transition.[4]

As we consider changes to immigration policy, Figure 2 also makes clear that we must think about non-immigrant policy and immigration policy as a single package, each of which has differing time consequences for future immigration.

Some Issues Associated with the Migration—Immigration Difference

There are several issues associated with this pattern of migration, immigration policy, and the perception of immigration.

Brain drain politics has led to many debates within different countries about the impact of sending students to the United States to be educated and about the potential for highly skilled workers to immigrate to the United States. There have been many debates in Germany about the potential impact of the brain drain from Germany to the United States. According to Diehl and Dixon (2005; p.1), opposition parties in Germany confronted the German government about German brain drain and the European Advisory Group discussed the brain drain as well. Looking over a ten to twelve year period between 1990 and 2002, they find that there are many highly skilled German workers who come to the United States to work, but they come on non-immigrant visas. As a result, Diehl and Dixon conclude that brain drain is temporary. They carefully examine the transition to immigrant visas using aggregate data from published U.S. government tables and note that migrants on non-permanent visas do adjust their status. As an example, they say there is evidence that about one-half of all H-1B visa holders eventually adjust their status. They cannot actually estimate these probabilities because they use aggregate published statistics rather than individual data. Without the individual data there is no way to measure conclusive one-way brain drain from different countries.

U.S. researchers have used census data for years to examine immigration, the length of time in the United States, and their consequences using census responses to the various migration questions (see Chiswick; 1978; Borjas; 1985 find more current sources). Many researchers over time have disparaged the use of numerous "length of time in the United States" measures because the data seem to be wrong given our knowledge about immigration. In fact, this problem probably has two sources. First, the questions can be confusing (like, When did you first come to the United States to stay? and Where did you live five years before the census?) and respondents do not know whether to provide

[4] In Figure 2, the big blip in the early 1990's is from people who were legalized under The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). In order to be legalized under IRCA, they had to prove that they had come permanently to the United States before 1982. The characteristics of "new immigrants" then, in 1991, contain mostly information about people who arrived in the 1970's.

information on when they arrived in the United States (non LPRs are NOT allowed to stay) or when they received their LPR status. These kinds of questions about the validity of the data are brought out in many research papers but few researchers have investigated the breadth or consequences of this problem. Ellis and Wright (1998) are among the few to think about the problems in census data. Their work is important and provides information on this topic, and they bring forth the difficulties of the interpretation of coming to stay. They conclude that the original contribution of their article is to "demonstrate that a significant proportion of recent foreign-born arrivals indicate they were in the United States before the year they report they came to stay." They point out the monumental research implications of this problem. The subject of any research--such as a project on wages in the Untied States and U.S. experience will be strongly affected by the interpretation of length of stay.

Finally, a few authors have begun to explore the question of U.S. experience by looking at the histories of people who are new immigrants in the United States. Massey and Malone (2005) use the New Immigrant Survey to assess prior experience in the United States and found that two-thirds of the new immigrants in 2003 had prior experience in the Untied States. NEEDS MORE REVIEW REFERENCES.

Data and Methodology

An investigation of the arrival of immigrants rests on the manipulation of many large data sets that have been transformed using arrival rather than immigration. The data set creation and comparison process is essential to understanding this research and so is carefully explained.

This paper is based on data sets on individual new immigrants and on tables produced by DHS (and INS—The Immigration and Naturalization Service—before 2003) in the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. The individual data used in this analysis are called "Immigrants Admitted to the United States", and they cover the years 1972—2000 (29 data sets).[5] This data series contains individual data records on every person who became a legal permanent resident in each fiscal year (with one exception, see below).[6] In the public use data sets, these files, without identifying information, include 18-21 variables. The exact variables vary by year but typically include port of entry, month and year of admission, class of admission-3 digit, country of chargeability, age, country of birth, sex, marital status, occupation, nationality, country of last permanent residence, type of case or admission, state of destination or residence, INS district of intended residence, labor certification, non-immigrant class of entry, non-immigrant year of entry, zip code, and sometimes, 2-digit class of admission.

[5] The author currently has access to new immigrant public use data sets from 1972 to 2000 through ICPSR. Data from later years, 2001-2011, are not available as public use data sets. These latter data sets have been under FOIA appeal and the author has won the appeal, but the data have not been released and are not used here. Without these years, only the IADDS (discussed below) between 1969 and 1994 will be relatively complete.

[6] In the United States, only legal permanent residents (or past legal permanent residents) are considered immigrants.

Some parts of the paper also rely on The Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (1949-2011). These yearbooks contain numerous detailed tables about immigrants and non-immigrants and their tables are calculated from the individual data sets used here along with individual data on non-immigrants.[7] Even though the immigrant data only go back to 1972, some "new immigrants" were non-immigrants earlier (hence the use of non-immigrant information from earlier years).

A profile of immigrants by their arrival date requires the creation of data sets that consist of immigrants when they arrived in the United States (called IADDS—Immigrant's Arrival Date Data Set).[8] The process of creating these data sets is most easily described by thinking about individuals who become immigrants. Consider XX, a non-immigrant who adjusts status and is admitted as an immigrant in fiscal year 2000. XX is from Chile and arrived in the United States on an O1 non-immigrant visa (workers of extraordinary ability) in 1994.[9] His information becomes a record in IADDS in 1994 (no personally identifying information—PII—is included in any data set nor used in any analysis). Another non-immigrant, YY, adjusts status in 1998 and she arrived in the United States from Korea in 1994 on an F1 (academic student) visa. Her information becomes another record in the 1994 IADDS file. ZZ is a new arrival LPR on a family visa in 1994 and also is included in the 1994 IADDS data. And so forth. There is an IADDS file for every year of entry. From these yearly IADDS files we can examine the characteristics and future immigration behavior of all of the non-immigrants who arrived in any year, comparing them with new arrivals in the same arrival years, profiling them in specific ways, and evaluating the transition to LPR by examining both the length of time to status adjustment and the LPR visas that are used by these non-immigrants. We can compare these outcomes across years to examine and evaluate changes in new arrivals to the United States over time.

There are incomplete IADDS files on both ends of the timeline. The new immigrant data sets begin in 1972 with the presence of status adjusters who may have migrated in the 1960s or even earlier. But some non-immigrants who arrived in the 1960s adjusted status before 1972 and would not be in these IADDS files. Similarly, the fact that currently available individual new immigrant data ends in 2000 means that there will not be a complete accounting of all of the non-immigrants who become immigrants for later IADDS fiscal years. This is always true; Even if all new immigrant data up to 2011 is available, the IADDS files for 2010 will be incomplete because many non-immigrants from 2010 won't adjust status for some years. However, we evaluate the potential biases of incomplete files by examining years where there is complete data and comparing those who adjust status within short time frame with those who adjust status after a longer time to see if there are

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[7] These volumes, whose name changes over the years, also contain detailed tables on immigrants, refugees and asylees, enforcement, etc. along with specific information about that fiscal year. They are published by the Office of Immigration Statistics in Homeland Security (since 2003) and by The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) before then.

[8] There are no available individual record data sets on new non-immigrants. More specific questions could be asked if individual records on non-immigrants in each fiscal year were made available. These fiscal year data sets contain millions of records each and have never been made available to the public.

[9] For some new immigrants, the previous non-immigrant visa and year of arrival may not be the first time they have entered the United States. The year of arrival calculated here is based on the non-immigrant year of arrival information given in the new immigrant data sets. In some yearbooks, it is stated that it is the first time the immigrant came to the United States as a non-immigrant but it's accuaracy should not be assumed.

biases in the characteristics of people who adjust status earlier or later. This can then be used to assess the results derived from the incomplete files.

This analysis has not been completed. We calculate, for every IADDS year, the percentage of status adjuster non-immigrants in different non-immigrant visa categories that are admitted as immigrants in different LPR visa categories in different future years. Using basic forecasting techniques, the trend in this percentage and in the time lag to status adjustment is used to project demand into the future. Specifically, the forecast regression calculates expected percentages and time lags in the future based on the changing trends over the years for which we have data. These forecasts are used to predict demand from each non-immigrant visa category to each LPR visa category for different years into the foreseeable future. When applied to non-immigrant admission numbers in the most recent years, the prediction of the demand for specific LPR visas for the next five to ten years should be reasonable approximations of internal demand unless there are dramatic and unforeseen changes. As an example, the expected future LPR visa demand from non-immigrants who arrive in 2012 can be determined immediately by using the forecast of the rate of status adjustment from every non-immigrant visa category to every LPR visa category. There is no demand predicted from people outside of the United States but status adjustment demand now accounts for the majority of LPR visa demanders.

There are some issues with the data. There are several classes of entrants who will not be consistently included in the new data sets. One important category is status adjusters who were given legal permanent residence under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. While these people are documented in the published tables, they often appear to be missing in the public use data sets. As an example, many of those legalized under IRCA became legal permanent residents in 1991 (See Figure 1). The 1991 Yearbook records 1,381,460 status adjusters and 443,107 new arrivals in its immigrant statistical tables. While there are, indeed, 443,107 new arrivals in the 1991 new immigrant public use tape, there are only 260,898 status adjusters—none of whom changed status as a result of IRCA. There appear to be a significant number of missing IRCA adjusters in each year between 1989 and 1993 and a few stragglers after that. With this exception, a comparison of the published tables and the new immigrant individual data suggests that the individual data contain all new immigrants to the United States.[10] Secondly, the data tapes of individual immigrants have missing data in some variables and, while missing cases are typically eliminated from any analysis using that variable, techniques for allocating them are used for some variables. In particular, in 1999 and 2000, a high proportion of arrival years for status adjusters have missing data. For the purpose of this draft of the paper, non-immigrants who became immigrants in these two years **only** are randomly assigned to a year of arrival using year of arrival distributional charateristics from the previous year. Finally, while some variables apply to arrival time (like non-immigrant visa) some are recorded when adjusting status. While some can be recalculated to date of arrival (like age), some cannot (like marital status) and may apply to later behavior of someone at

[10] Sometimes the number of new immigrants in the published tables is adjusted in later years' calculations. There are a few years when there are more new immigrants in the data tape than published data for that year and I continue to investigate this as a source of the discrepancy.

arrival. Occupation refers to occupation in the United States for status adjusters but occupation in the home country for new arrivals. The implications of each of these are discussed in the text.

New Immigrants and New In-migrants—A Policy Observation

Figure 2 reveals the flow of new immigrants has been slowly and generally steadily increasing since 1949. Varied fluctuations in the number of new immigrants come from rapid changes in the number of status adjusters to new immigrant status. Overall, the flow of immigrants as new arrivals has been following a relatively consistent upward trend.[11] It also shows the steady and growing percentage of status adjusters among new immigrants. Now the majority of new immigrants are status adjusters. As a result, while changes in immigration policy will have an impact on the number and characteristics of new immigrants, it is changes to non-immigrant policy that may well have the largest impact on immigration and the consequences of immigration in the future. Status adjusters are drawn from a very different pool of potential immigrants than new arrivals. Status adjusters are more educated, more highly skilled, and are more likely to work in professional occupations. This figure permits two potential conclusions. First, immigration is now being driven by non-immigrant policy. Second, non-immigrant policy should be thought of as "trying out" immigrants. It appears that non-immigrants use entry into the United States as a steping stone to immigration and the United States uses non-immigrant policy to change the characteristics of future immigration.

The following discussion provides simple profiles of new immgirants from 1972 to 2000. Even so, many new facts and characteristics of these new immigrants emerge from the discussion.

New Immigrants to the United States, 1972—2000

Over the course of these twenty-nine years, the United States accepted about twenty million new immigrants. Of them, about 53% are women and 47% are men. Overall, new immigrants are young; the median age is only 27 and three quarters of all new immigrants over those twenty-nine years are under the age of 39 when they are admitted as an immigrant. Of those over the age of 17, 71% are married at the time of being admitted as immigrant and 24% are single.

There is little surprise in the source countries of new immigrants over the twenty-nine years. Almost 14% are from Mexico, 8% from the Philippines, 3% from China, 4% from India, 4% from Vietnam, 3% from Cuba, and 4% from Korea. These seven countries account for two out of every five immigrants and the demography of our country will reflect those numbers. Similarly, there is little surprise where new immigrants live (or

[11] There is a large dip in the transition quarter of 1976. Those data only cover three months instead of a fiscal year. At this time, the federal fiscal year changed its beginning from July to October.

intend to live). Almost three out of five live in just four states: California, 26%; Texas 7%; New York 18%; and Florida, 8%.

Their occupations and work lives are varied. Of all new immigrants in the twenty-nine years over the age of 17, 5% are executives, 10% are laborers, 4% work in administrative support, 9% work in service, and 6% in production and crafts. Many new immigrants don't work, however. More than one in five (21%) is a housewife, 12% are unemployed or retired (impossible to separate in many years), and 10% do not work. In all of these years, two out of five new immigrants was not working at the time of being admitted. For new arrivals, that non-work reflects their status in the home country.

New Immigrants: Status Adjusters and New Arrivals

Status adjusters and new arrivals are very different, however. Over all of these years, 37% of all new immigrants were status adjusters and 63% of all new immigrants were new arrivals. The differences begin with demographics. Figure 3 shows the age pyramid for all new immigrants from 1972 to 2000, and the separate age pyramids for status adjusters and new arrivals. Status adjusters and new arrivals have similar gender compositions over the twenty-nine year period; about 53% of status adjusters and 51% of new arrivals are women (but see next section).

Status adjusters are older at the time of immigration; the median age is 29 for status adjusters and 25 for new arrivals. But the median age of status adjusters on arrival is 26, so median age at arrival in the United States is similar for the two groups. Figure 3 shows that the distribution of age varies by status and gender within status. Men that are new arrivals are two years younger than women who are new arrivals (median 24 and 26) and 36.7% of male (31.7% of female) new arrivals immigrate at age 18 or lower. Of new arrivals, 22.6% of women and 19.3% of men were 40 or older when they arrived. Men that are status adjusters are only one year younger than women who are status adjusters (median 30 and 29). Status adjusters are unlikely to be children at the time of adjustment. Only 10.7% of men and 14.4% of women were 18 or younger at the time of adjustment. They are older at the time of adjustment than new arrivals at the other age extreme as well. Almost 25% of female (21.2% of male) status adjusters were 40 or older at the time of adjustment. But this age distribution is condensed at the time of arrival; 29.5% of male (26.2% of female) status adjusters arrived at age 18 or lower and 16.4% of male (20.1% of female) status ajusters arrived at age 40 or older. At the time of immigration, 75% of status adjusters over the age of 17, but only 68% of new arrivals is married.

Where they come from, where they live, and what they do distinguish status adjusters from new arrivals. Table 1 documents country of last residence, state of (intended) residence, and occupation for status adjusters and new arrivals. The specific home country varies significantly, partly as a result of refugee and immigrant policies (status adjusters overwhelmingly outnumber new arrivals from Vietnam and Cuba and new arrivals overwhelmingly outnumber status adjusters from Korea and India) but also more generally. Just over 10% of status adjusters come from Mexico but more than 16% of the new arrivals came from there. Importantly, however, these same seven countries account for almost

exactly the same percentage of both status adjusters and new arrivals (39.3% and 40.6%) over the course of twenty-nine years.

Looking at Table 1 again, geographic distribution depends on whether immigrants are status adjusters or new arrivals (which depends on accumulated years of immigrant and non-immigrant policy). Both California and Texas have similar shares of status adjusters and new arrivals, but Florida bears a heavier burder of status adjusters (principally from Cuba) and New York bears a heavier burden of new arrivals (from multiple countries). Florida's Cuban community has developed a well-oiled machine to integrate new Cuban immigrants over time and immigrants from Cuba have diminished in numbers over the years. New York, however, may bear a significant fiscal burden of immigration because 12.7% of status adjusters and a whopping 21.5% of new arrivals reside in New York. If the services for new arrivals are significant, New York is paying the cost. Once again, however, these four states together are the residences of a similar share of status adjusters (56.7%) and new arrivals (59.5%) over the twenty-nine year period.

The specific occupations of employment are different for status adjusters and new arrivals but not as different as one might expect—since some status adjusters arrived specifically on employment visas and the occupations of new arrivals are for the home country. Male and female new arrivals are more likely to have worked at home (78% and 27% of known) than status adjusters worked in the United States at the time of their adjustment (65% and 24%). But the distribution of non-workers is very different for the two groups. They didn't work for distinctly different reasons. Both male and female status adjusters, perhaps because of their age at adjustment, are more likely to be unemployed or retired (it is impossible to separate these two statuses in most years) than new arrivals. Female status adjusters are four times more likely and male status adjusters are two and a half times more likely than new arrivals. Working against this, though, is the fact that both male and female new arrivals are more likely than status adjusters to be students and female new arrivals are more likely to be housewives (45.9% compared to 35.8%). In part, these figures are driven by the much higher rate of non-reporting among status adjusters. Almost one in six status adjusters do not have a reported occupation or activity (see Table 1).

If the impact of immigration is now being driven by non-immigrants then the designed immigration system of family reunification and employment driven immigration is changing significantly. Of all of the new imigrants who were status adjusters, 8.6% originally arrived on a student visa, 9.4% on a temporary employment visa, 24.0% on a refugee visa, 13.0% on a parolee visa, 6.5% without inspection, and a startling 30.6% on a visa for pleasure. As a result, almost one in ten new immigrants from these twenty-nine years first came here for vacation (or used a pleasure visa to immigrate).[12]

[12] While an important goal of this project is to examine the differences in LPR visas used by status adjusters and new arrivals as well as the non-immigrant visa to immigrant visa stream, coding immigrant visas is more than challenging and incomplete. There are hundreds of visa categories and they change over time. Further, for some years there are only 3-digit visa categories, for some years there are only 2-digit visa categories, and for some years there are both. Added to this is the problem that the same visas are not coded the same way over the years. This work is in process.

When Do New Immigrants Actually Arrive?

In the heat of the ongoing debate about unauthorized flows, enforcement, and legalization, we can forget that the existing infrastructure for admitting immigrants sets the context for the discussion about immigration. Many of the economic and social impacts of immigration develop because non-immigrants become immigrants. The presence of high skilled immigrants in a locality is preceded by the arrival of high skilled non-immigrants. The geographic distribution of non-immigrants who do and do not adjust status informs us about the integration of non-immigrants into various communities. Legal permanent residents who become citizens are likely to have originally migrated on a non-immigrant visa. Knowing when new immigrants actually arrive helps us consider some of the labor market consequences as well as the community integration consequences associated with immigration.

The IADDS data reveal the year of arrival for all new immigrants between 1972 and 2000. Remember that these data do not include IRCA adjustees and the counts for year of arrival will be lower than they actually are at the beginning and the end of the data. Some new immigrants from 1972 arrived in the 1960s but not everyone who arrived in the 1960s waited until 1972 to become an immigrant. Similarly, some non-immigrants who arrived in 1998 had not yet become an immigrant by 2000 even though they did so in the future.

These data are a nearly complete documentation of arrivals from 1972 until about 1991. Panel A of Figure 4 shows that between 1972 and 1991 (nearly complete years) there is a nearly steady and consistent growth of arrivals to the United States. There are two blips in the data. The first, revealing a dip in 1976 and 1977 is an artifact of incomplete data—the 1976 transition quarter has not been included in this data set yet. The second, revealing a bump in 1980 and 1981 probably reflects significant changes in refugee policy, the presence of IRCA legalized residents, and other significant changes in the early 1980's, and is almost certainly real. Arrivals, then, exhibit a much smoother and consistent growth than new immigrants.

Panel B of Figure 4 uses published tables from the Yearbook that describe the year of arrival for new immigrants to develop a longer timeline for arrivals and estimates for status adjusters in the later years. In many Yearbooks, an immigrant table for status adjusters tabulates the number of status adjusters that arrived in each of a number of previous years. These tables change in number and sometimes name in the Yearbook volumes and, while each year of arrival for ten years previously is common, there are some tables with twelve years or with fewer than ten years of arrival information. The vast majority of non-immigrants who do become immigrants do so within ten years. For years with fewer than ten years of arrival statistics, estimates are made to allocate arrival date. Two different methods of estimating year of arrival were used. This table uses the arrival percentages for the closest year with at least ten years of arrivals listed adjusted by the number of years actually reported.

This panel is important to compare to Panel A because it **does** include IRCA legalized residents and shows that new arrivals to the United States (at least until 2002) maintained a slow and steady increase over the years.

When we look at arrival date, the extreme fluctuations in new immigrant data have essentially disappeared. This finding, while based on simple calculations, should have an impact on the immigration debate. First, at least through 2002, arrivals have been predictably increasing at a regular rate allowing us to consider the number of arrivals far into the future. Second, these arrivals, along with predicted visa demand from non-immigrants mean that immigration numbers over the ten years following arrival can be predicted with some accuracy.

It is even more revealing to examine these arrivals for status adjusters and new arrivals separately. Going back to the use of IADDS data, Figure 5 shows counts of arrival data for new arrivals (which is the same as the date of immigrant admittance). There are two bumps in the arrival date of new arrivals, in the early 1980's and the early 1990's. But noticeably, because of immigrant policy restricting numbers and the kind of people who newly arrive in the United States as immigrants, there is a relatively low growth in new immigrant arrivals. In 1972, there were 302,565 new arrival immigrants and in 2000 there were 407, 279 for a twenty-nine year growth rate of only 35%.

Status adjusters, before the tapering off for data related reasons, show instead huge leaps in the arrivals of people who start out as non-immigrants but then become immigrants. Looking at the same time period, there were 82,120 status adjusters in 1972 and 433,723 in 2000 for a twenty-nine year growth rate of 428%. Assuming that our policy of test driving non-immigrants continues, nearly all the growth in immigration in the future will come from non-immigrants who already reside in the country.

How Have Arrivals Changed Over the Years?

Once we begin to understand that arrival data and not immigrant data is informative about the impact of immigration, we can begin to examine how changes in arrival characteristics have had an impact on our economy and communities.

Figure 6 examines changes in the country of last residence by arrival year. What percent of arrivals in that year came from different countries (using our seven countries to illuminate changes). This figure reads more completely of geopolitical policies in immigration—as new immigrant data does not. In some cases, there are no surprises. Cuban arrivals were dominant right after the revolution, again in the late 1960s, and again in the early 1980s with the Mariel Boatlift. Vietnam spikes in the middle 1970s at the end of the war and the early 1980s with changes in refugee policy and immigration possibilities for Amerasian children. The relatively steady percentage of arrivals from Mexico over time, however, is somewhat startling. Of course, IRCA legalized residents are not in these data and the undocumented are typically not in these data. But as a consideration for immigration policy, and given the oversubscription of LPR visas from Mexico, this steady percentage of

new arrivals suggests that the lack of favored status for Mexico in our immigration strategy may lead to the strong demand for undocumented migration.

But breaking this graph down by status adjusters and new arrivals (see Figure 6B) reveals differences in arrival by countries over the years. Non-immigrant arrivals from these countries that adjust status later reflect the geopolitical stresses that are discussed above. Mexico, on the other hand, has non-immigrant new arivals that would be broadly the same over the years if the IRCA legalized were included. As a proportion of all status adjusting arrivals, the dip in the mid to late 1970s and early 1980s corresponds with the arrival dates for people legalized uner IRCA.

It is the arrival timing of new arrivals that is, instead, broadly smooth. The percentage of Koreans falls and the percentage of Chinese rises but the rates change in small and smooth movements over the years. It is Mexican new arrivals that show striking upheavals and shifts over the twenty-nine year period. While the mid-1990s is partly explained by IRCA relative arrivbals, the reasons for such dramatic shifts are not obvious. Nor is it obvious, in spite of a complete history of migration, why the Mexican pattern is so c ompletely different from other countries.

Surprisingly, the state of residence shows little change over the arrival years of new immigrants from this time period. Figure 7 shows that, with a couple of exceptions (like Cubans going to Florida in the early 1960s and Mexicans going to California after the Bracero Program), the state of residence is remarkably stable over time. That stability reflects the stable choices of new arrivals. For new arrivals (see Panel 7C), state reflects the state where thety intend to live. Looking at the years for which there is relatively complete data, the proportion of new arrivals who intend to live in one of these four states is remarkably stable. New arrivals, much more so than status adjusters, migrate to be with family and so this stability in arriving to immigrant rich states may be expected. The state of residence for status adjusters (see Panel 7B) reflects where they actually reside when they adjust status. We don't know where they lived upon arrival (with the possible exception of Cubans to Florida), and internal migration has surely taken place, but this graph suggests that both California and New York may have fluctuating immigrant populations based on the residence choices of non-immigrants. Knowing these patterns of residence by arrival instead of immigration date wouyd help states and localities better plan for shifts in the labor market and in the need for services.

The feminization of immigration has been noticed for many years. But when we look at the gender characteristics by year of arrival and by immigrant status, it becomes clear that the changing gender characteristics of immigrants come because of the changing gender charateristics of non-immigrants. As this graph shows, the proportion of men was 0.46 for new arriving immigrants in 1972 and 0.44 for new arriving immigrants in 2000. Between those years the proportion only ranged from 0.44 to 0.49 for a relatively stable gender composition of the newly arriving immigrant population. But the gender composition of status adjusters at the time of arrival is striking in its vacillation, ranging from 0.59 to 0.44 and spiking up and down before settling into a long decline in the proportion of men.

Less has been discussed about the age of immigration. The median age of arrival over all the years was between 24 and 26 years old. Using Figure 9, once again we find that the median age of arrival is very stable for new immigrant arrivals. It varies only between 24 and 27 years old for new arrivals with a slow and steady upward trend. In part, this may represent the aging of the population in countries that send immgirants to the United States. The median age of non-immigrant arrivals was very high in the 1960s, starting at 37 years old and falling to 24 years old in 1975. After a six or seven year period with very low median age of arrival, the age begins to change in the early 1980s and steadily climbs to 32 by the end of the data.

Much of the thinking about immigration policy rests on considerations of the labor market. Figure 10 shows the changing occupations over time for new immigrants. These data suggest that the labor market impact of immigration will vary significantly by year of arrival. By year of arrival, production workers, service workers, executives, and administrative support workers have all declined (it is important to remember that occupation information is from year of immigration, not year of arrival) by year of arrival for both newly arriving immigrants (whose occupation is for the home country) and for status adjusters (whose occupation is in the United States). There have been dramatic increases in the proportion of new arrivals and especially of status adjusters who are unemployed or retired at the time of immigration. Finally, the proportion of housewives has declined for new arrivals but vacillated greatly for status adjusters.

Summary and Discussion

This paper begins to take advantage of a newly created data set on the year of arrival of imigrants to reconsider the timing and consequences of having new residents in our country. These data, called IADDS for the Immigrant Arrival Date Data Set, allow us to glimpse at some of the true changes taking place in immigrant migrating behavior.

The work in this paper shows that the flow of new immigrants has been slowly and generally steadily increasing since 1949. This flow is comprised of a slow growth in new arrivals as immigrants and a rapid growth of status adjusters as immigrants. These two groups are very different and their presence has different implications for labor markets and for communities. Varied fluctuations in the number of new immigrants come from rapid changes in the number of status adjusters to new immigrant status. It also shows the steady and growing percentage of status adjusters among new immigrants. The majority of new immigrants are now status adjusters. As a result, while changes in immigration policy will have an impact on the number and characteristics of new immigrants, it is changes to non-immigrant policy that may well have the largest impact on our communities and the consequences of immigration in the future. It is fairly clear from examining these data that immigration is now being driven by non-immigrant policy. Yet we do not have a coherent strategy for non-immigrants. Further, nearly one in ten new immigrants came to the United States on a temporary visa for pleasure or vacation. This means that there is no knowledge of the desirable or undesirable labor market characteristics of these new immigrants.

A striking feature of the long-term trends in immigration is that diversity and variation in immigrant charateristics and behavior come from status adjusters. In part because of the constraints driving new arriving immigrants, their charateristics and behavior are relatively stable over the years. The countries they come from, the states where they intend to reside, their gender and age and demographic status stays relatively flat. But status adjusters add uncertain changes to the immigrant population.

There is also little or no control over the non-immigrant to immigrant pathway for these residents. Non-immigrant policy should be thought of as “trying out” or “test driving” potential immigrants. It appears that non-immigrants use entry into the United States as a steping stone to immigration and the United States uses non-immigrant policy to change the characteristics of future immigration. Continued work is required in this field.

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Ellis, Mark and Richard Wright. 1998. When Immigrants are not Migrants: Counting Arrivals of the Foreign Born using the U.S. Census. International Migration Review. Spring. p. 127.

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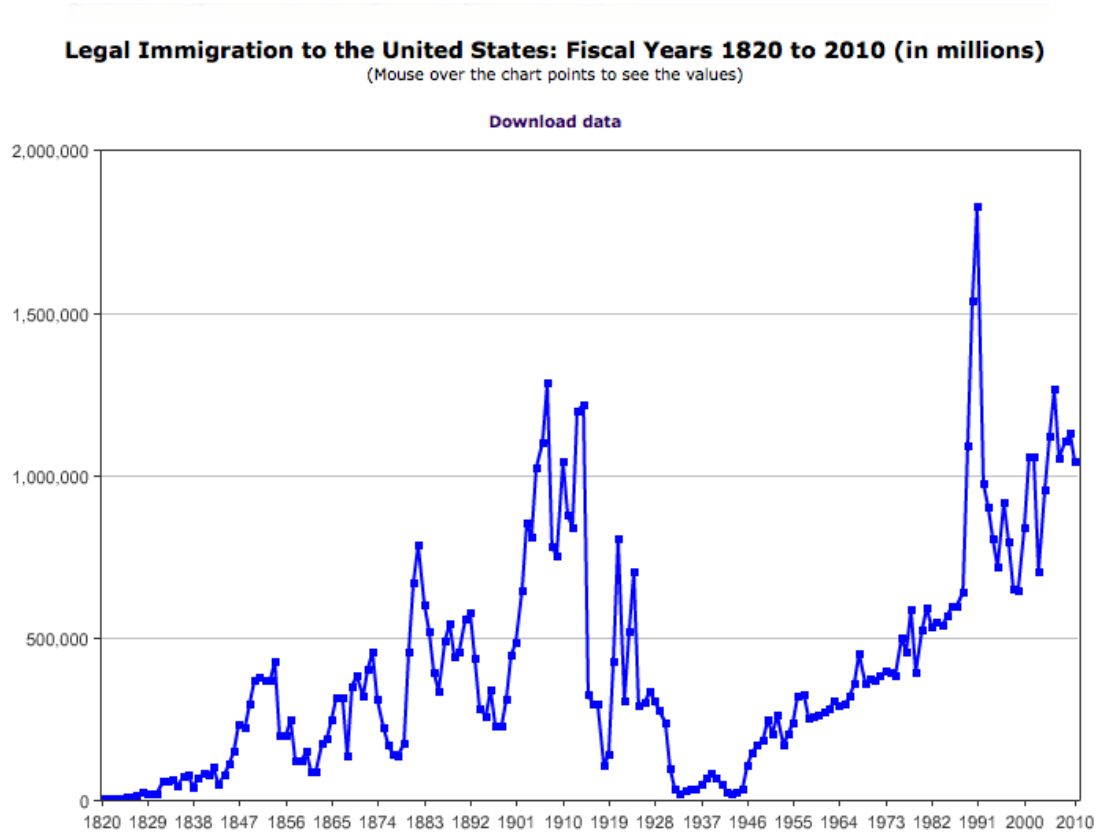
Figure 1: Typical Representation of Immigration to the United States

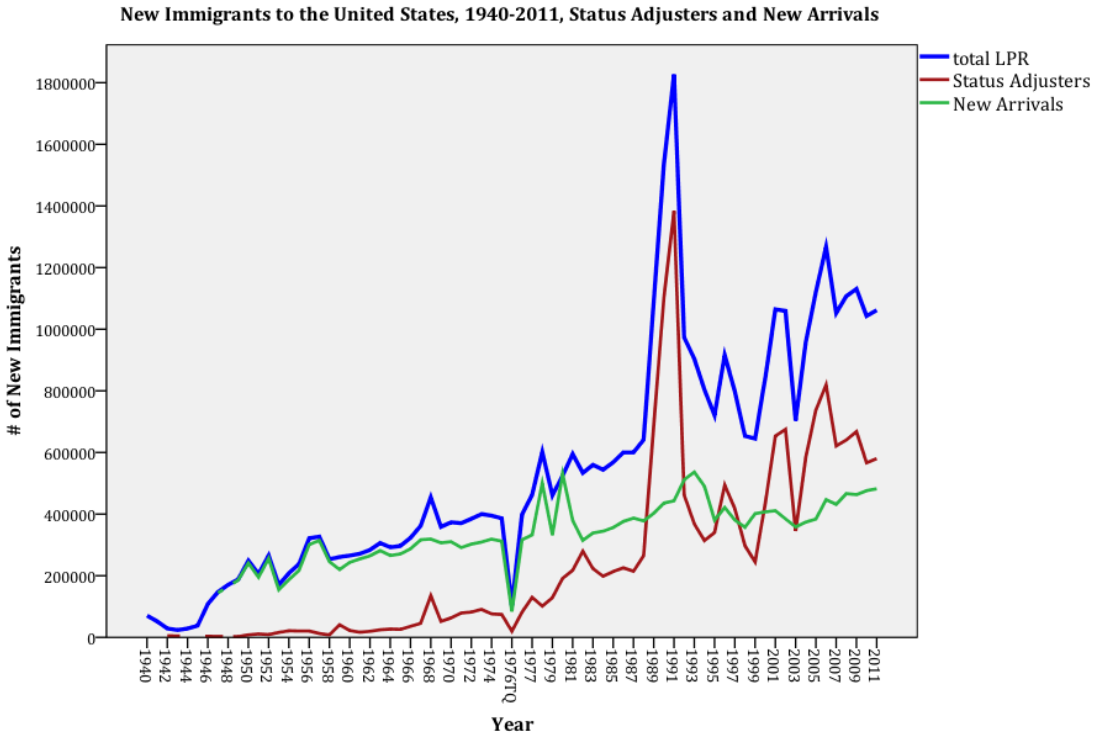


Note: These data represent persons admitted for legal permanent residence during the 12-month fiscal year ending September 30 of the year designated. The total for 1976 includes both the fiscal year and transitional quarter data.

Source: Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (various years)*. Available at **http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm**.

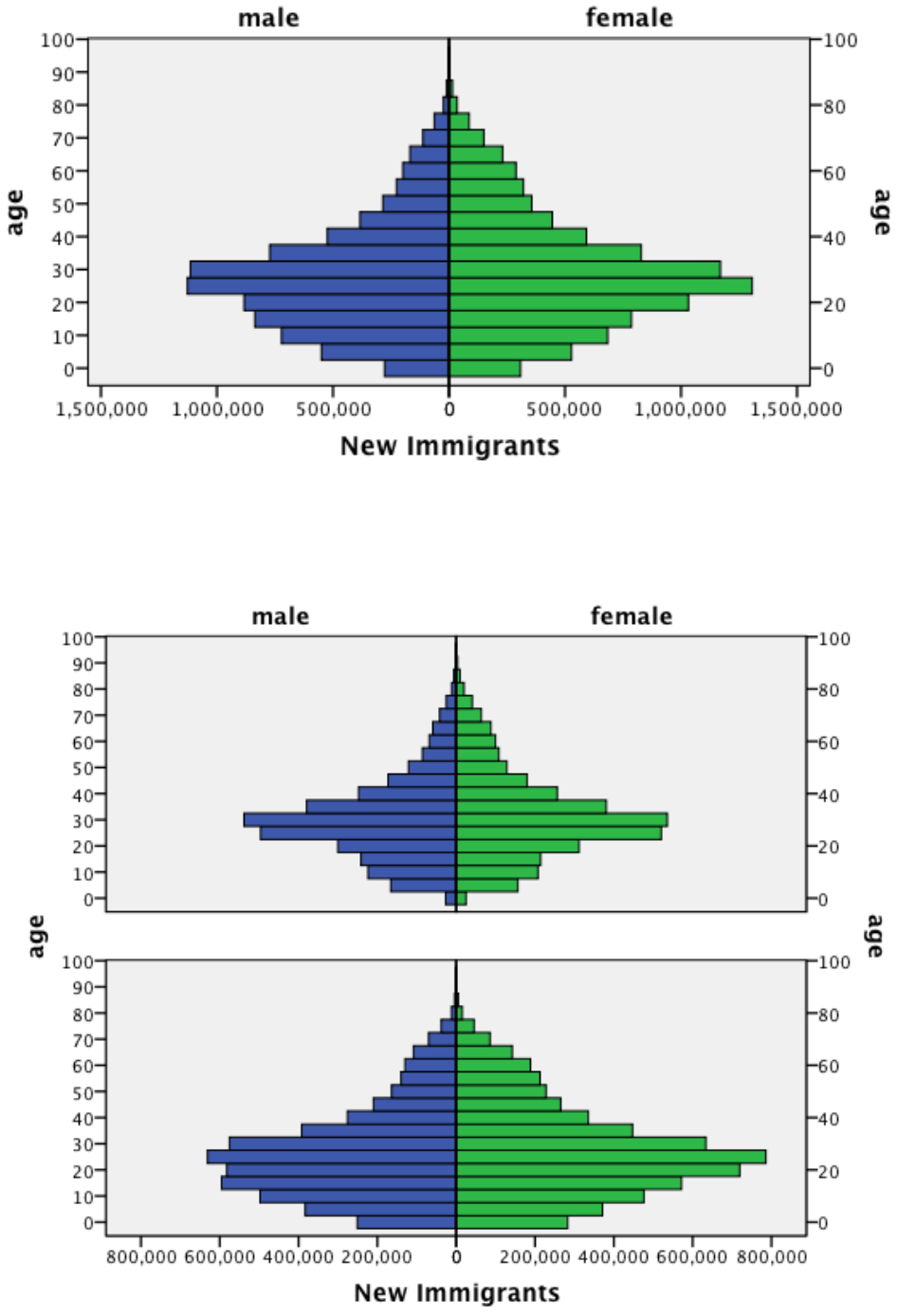
Source: The Migration Policy Institute, http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/charts/historic1.cfm

Figure 2: New Immigrants to the United States 1940—2011: Status Adjusters and New Arrivals



Source: Author's calculations from documents commonly called The Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. The Department of Homeland Security and, before 2003, The Immigration and Nationality Service provide the data.

Figure 3: New Immigrants to the United States, 1972—2000: Total, Status Adjusters, and New Arrivals



Source: Author's calculations from IADDS data

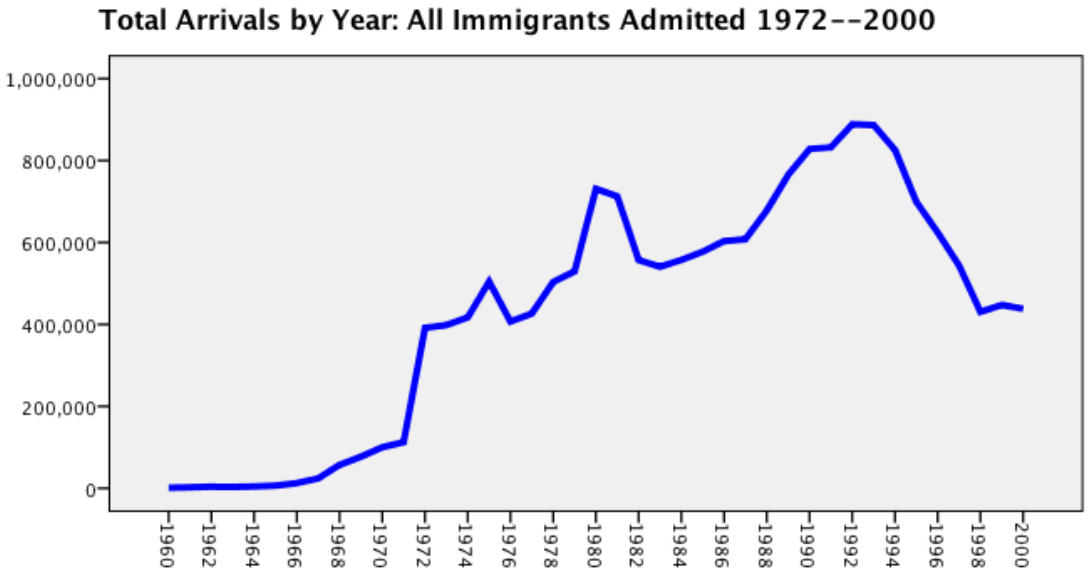
Table 1: Characteristics of Status Adjusters and New Arrivals, 1972—2000

	Status Adjusters %		New Arrivals %	
Country of Last Residence				
Mexico	10.3		16.3	
Philippines	5.4		9.0	
China	3.1		3.3	
India	2.8		5.0	
Vietnam	8.4		1.0	
Cuba	7.4		0.5	
Korea	1.9		5.5	
7 Country total	**39.3**		**40.6**	
State of Residence/Intended Residence				
California	26.1		25.8	
Texas	6.5		7.5	
New York	12.7		21.1	
Florida	11.4		5.1	
4 State total	**56.7**		**59.5**	
Occupation[ξ]	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**
Professional Executive—social scientist	10.1	23.1	9.8	18.4
Laborer	6.5	16.4	4.9	19.6
Sales and Service Worker	9.6	14.0	13.1	12.5
Administrative	4.6	2.8	6.4	4.4
Production and Craft	2.0	7.9	3.1	12.7
Housewife	35.8	0	45.9	0.2
Unemployed--Retired	23.5	22.3	5.9	8.9
Students/Children	5.1	7.6	9.3	12.2
Work Status/Occupation Not Reported	16.5	15.4	2.9	3.4

Source: Author's calculations from IADDS data.

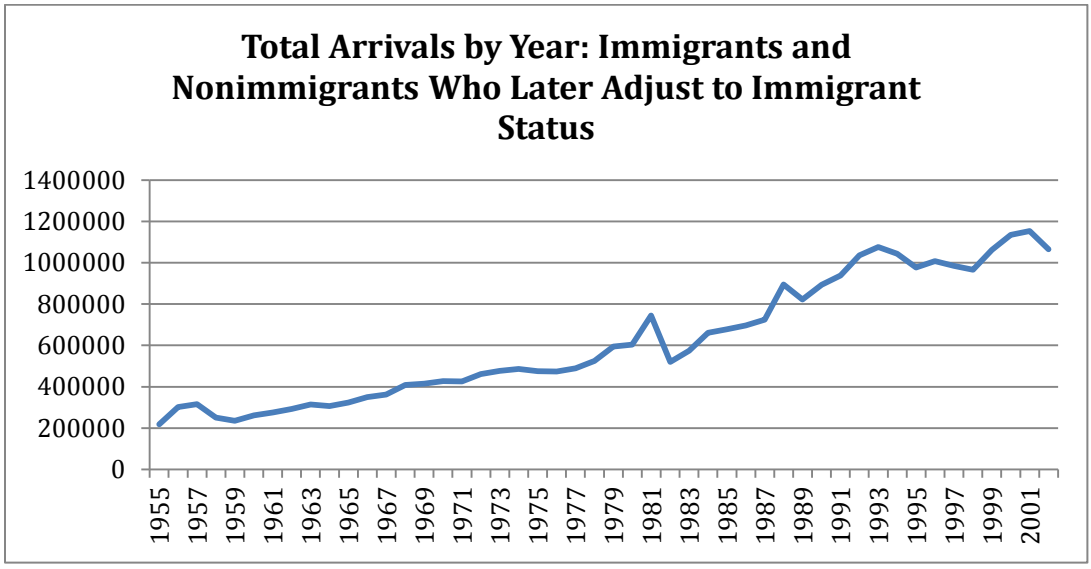
[ξ] Occupation percentages are calculated with 100 - % not reported as the denominator. These calculations are only for people age 18 or older. Not all occupations are included.

Figure 4a: The Actual Arrival Year of New Immigrants, Only for New Immigrants 1972—2000



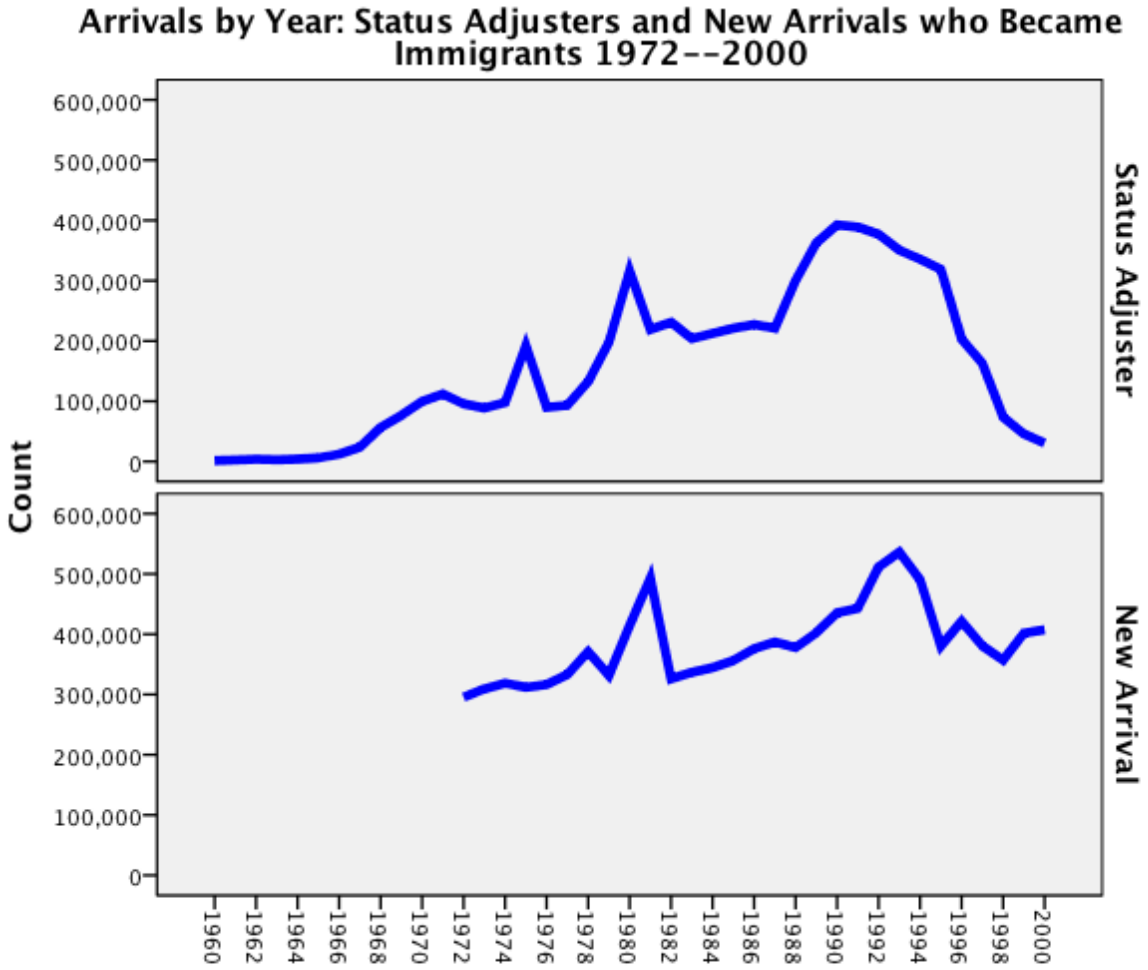
Source: Author's calculations from IADDS data sets.

Figure 4b: The Actual Arrival Year of New Immigrants, partly estimated



Source: Source: Author's calculations from documents commonly called *The Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. The Department of Homeland Security and, before 2003, The Immigration and Nationality Service provide the data. See the text for specific definitions and problems.

Figure 5: The Actual Arrival Year of New Immigrants, Status Adjusters and New Arrivals Only for New Immigrants 1972—2000



Source: Author's calculations of IADDS data.

Figure 6: Arrival Country by Arrival Year for New Immigrants 1972--2000

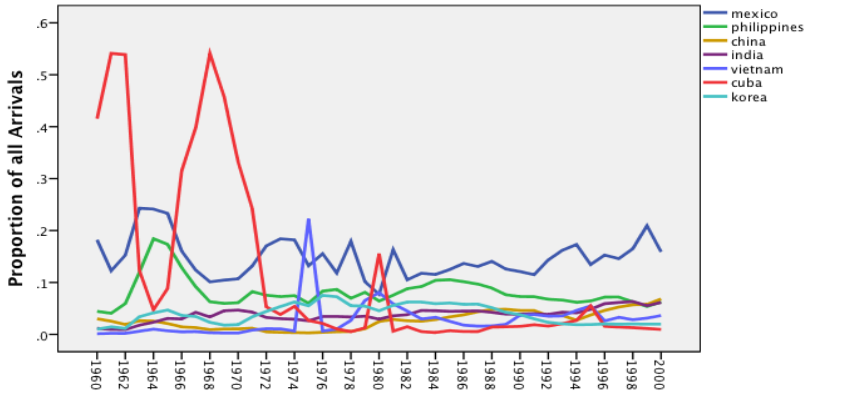


Figure 6B: Country by Arrival Year for Status Adjusters

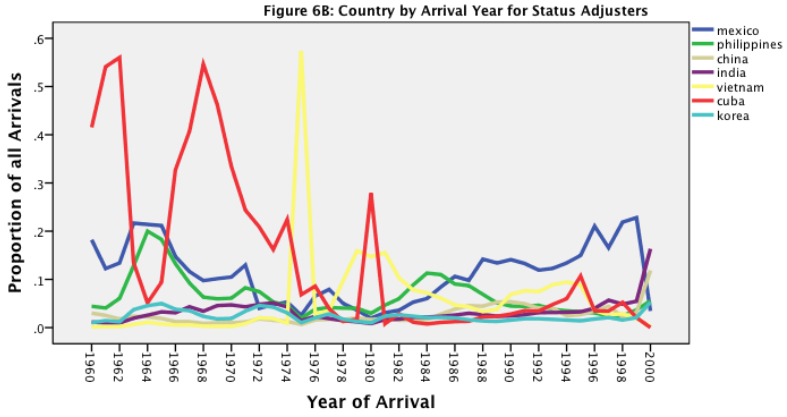
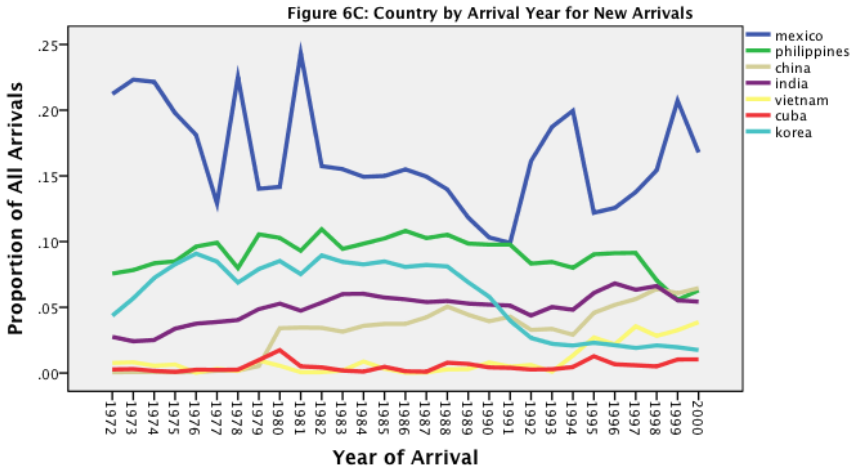


Figure 6C: Country by Arrival Year for New Arrivals



Source: author's calculations using IADDS data.

Figure 7: State of Residence by Arrival Year for Immigrants 1972--2000

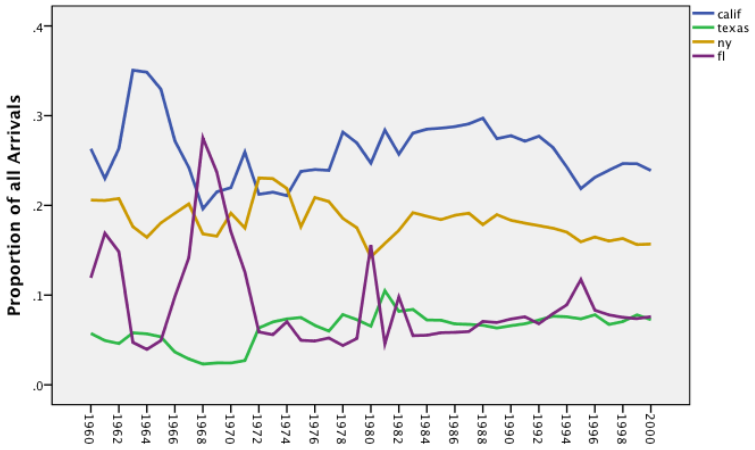
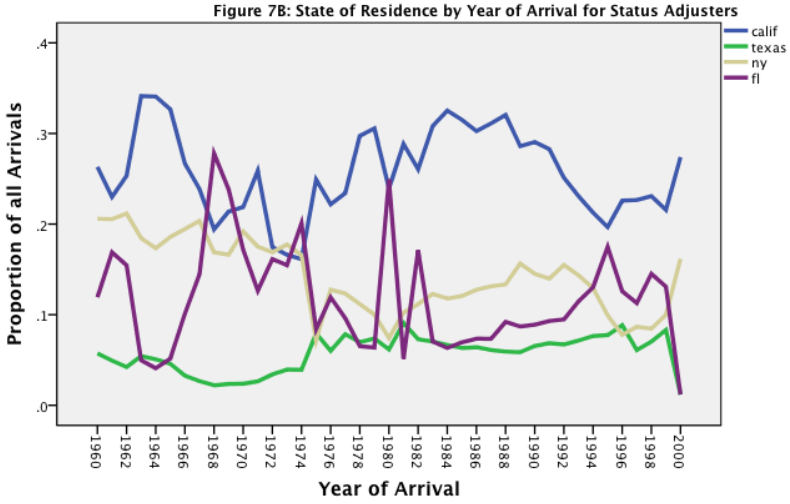
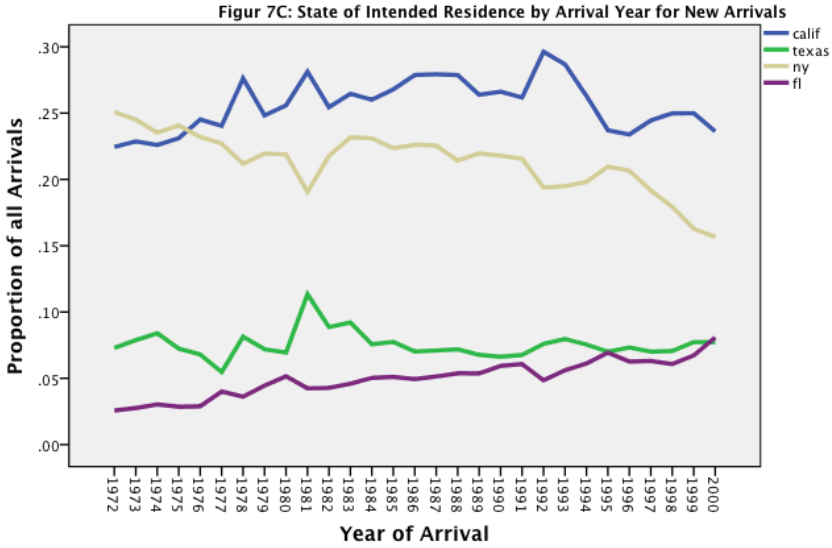
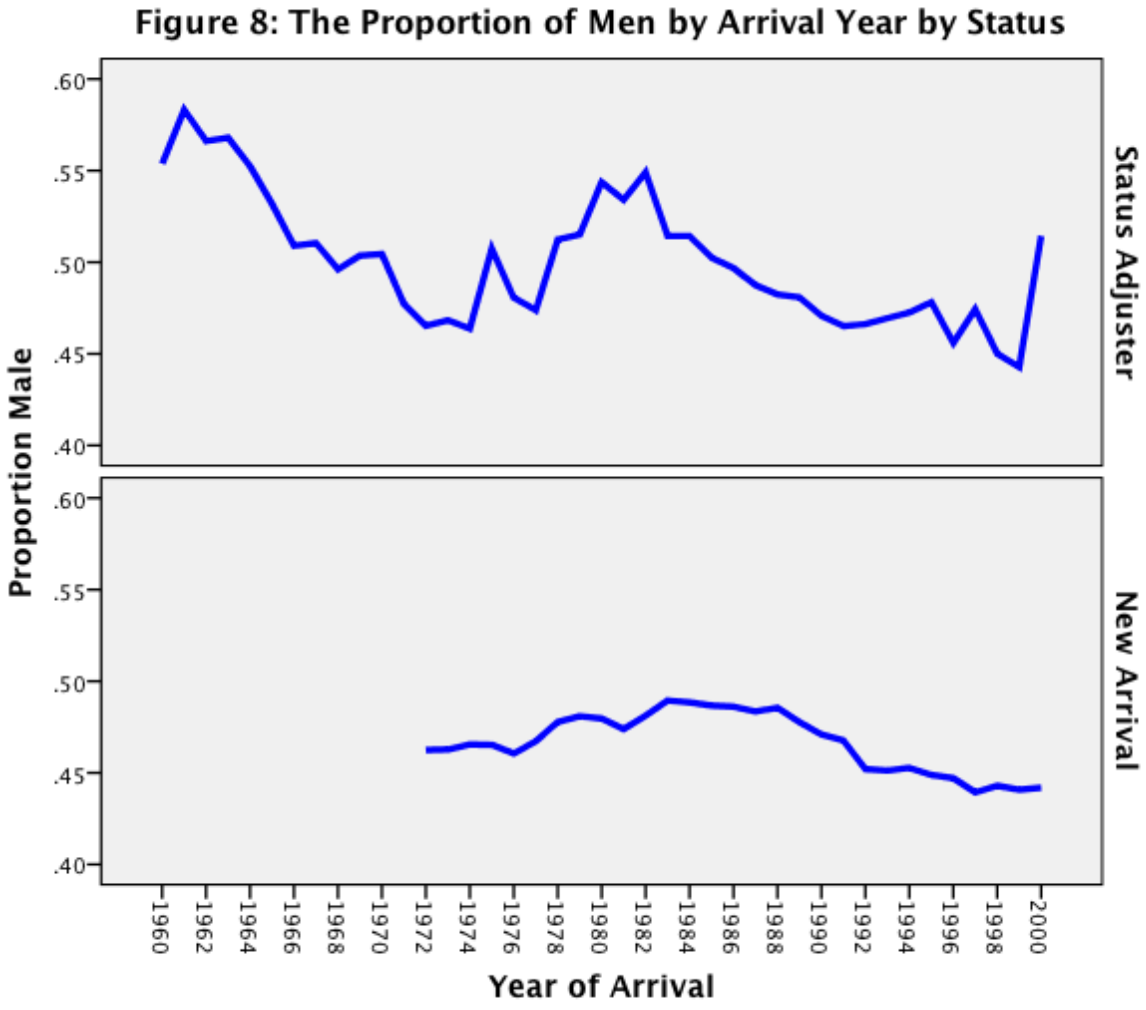


Figure 7B: State of Residence by Year of Arrival for Status Adjusters

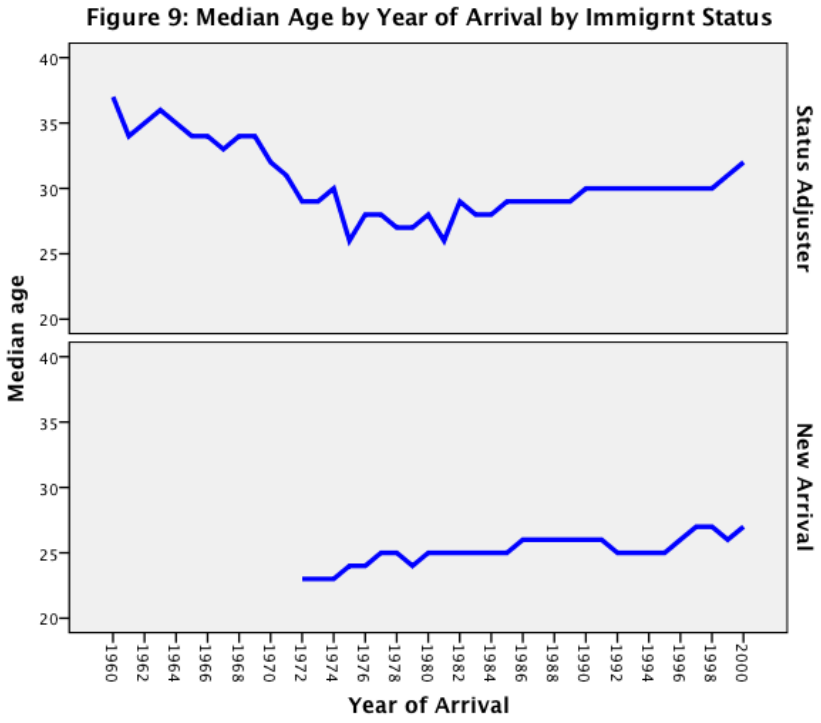


Figur 7C: State of Intended Residence by Arrival Year for New Arrivals





Source: author's calculations using IADDS data.



Source: author's calculations using IADDS data.

Figure 10: Occupation by Year of Arrival by Immigrant Status