Published in final edited form as:

Int Migr Rev. 2017 ; 51(3): 727–756. doi:10.1111/imre.12241.

Multiplying Diversity: Family Unification and the Regional Origins of Late-Age US Immigrants

Marta Tienda

Princeton University

This bill that we will sign today is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives or add importantly to our wealth and power...this Bill says simply that from this day forth those wishing to emigrate to America shall be admitted on the basis of their skills and their close relationship to those already here.

-Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965¹ (emphasis added)

At the height of the Civil Rights Movement, President Johnson's vision of the Great Society resonated with the dismantling of the racist immigration quotas with a system privileging family reunification. But history shows that the 1965 Amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (1965 Amendments) had profound, unanticipated consequences. These resulted partly because architects of the legislation vastly underestimated the power of chain migration in driving future flows and partly because of policy choices made when high fertility rather than aging dominated population policy agendas. In addition to making family unification the centerpiece of admissions by broadening the preference categories to include adult relatives of citizens and legal permanent residents (LPRs), the 1965 Amendments added parents of US citizens to the uncapped category.

A large body of research chronicles how the regional origins of new immigrants shifted since 1970 and subsequently altered the ethno-racial makeup of the US population (Hirschman 2005; Smith and Edmonston 1997; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990), with due attention to the rapid increase in the share of new LPRs from Asia (Reimers 1992; Nowrasteh 2012). Until recently, however, there has been scant attention to changes in the age composition of immigrant flows (Batalova 2012; Terrazas 2009; Carr and Tienda 2013; O'Neil and Tienda 2015). This is understandable because working-age immigrants dominate new admissions (He 2002; Smith and Edmonston 1997) and because published reports from the Congressional Research Service and the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Immigration Statistics provide limited age information about new immigrants.

Changes in the national origin and age composition appear to be related, but it has proven difficult to demonstrate how much and in what ways because few nationally representative population surveys include information about visa status for the foreign-born. That Europeans constitute the largest group among foreign-born seniors is not surprising because of low rates of replenishment with young workers after the flows receded and earlier arrivals

¹Cf. Kennedy, 1966, p.148.

aged in place. But if employment is the primary driver of immigration, it is unclear why already in 2000 the Asian share of all foreign born residents was similar to that of foreign-born seniors—25 and 22 percent, respectively (He 2002). Jasso and Rosenzweig (1989) argued that family chain migration, including sponsorship of parents, is responsible for the rapid growth of migration from Asia, including late-age immigration. To date, only a handful of studies have examined how family chain migration drives changes in the demographic composition of legal permanent residents (see GAO 1988; Reimers 1992; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1986; 1989; Carr and Tienda 2013; Yu 2008).

Building on claims that the family unification provisions of 1965 Amendments drive changes in *both* the age composition and the regional origins of US legal permanent residents, we use administrative data to examine empirically whether and how chain migration links these two trends. Specifically, we ask: (1) How does the prevalence of family chain migration differ among major sending regions, and (2) how does the surge in late-age immigration since 1980 vary by source regions and major sending countries? Specifically, we derive age-specific migration multipliers for the major sending regions and the four top source countries. These nations also feature the largest backlogs for numerically capped family visas (Wasem 2012), which has implications for the age composition of sponsored relatives who age as they wait for visas in multi-year queues.

In addition to improving on prior estimates of chain migration, our analyses clarify why the age composition of the foreign stock population from Asia and Latin America diverged (He 2002; Grieco et al. 2012). Before describing the data and estimation methods we provide a brief overview of the logic that led to Congress's gross miscalculation of the impact of the 1965 Amendments on the regional origins of US immigrants. The concluding section discusses the implications of family chain migration in the context of an aging society and contemplated comprehensive reform.

Policy Background

The Congressional debates leading to 1965 Amendments reveal several issues that preoccupied advocates and detractors of immigration reform in the 1960s. According to Senator Edward Kennedy (1966:145), then chair of the Subcommittee on Immigration, reform critics worried that the proposed amendments “would greatly increase annual immigration, would contribute to increased unemployment and relief rolls, would ease the bar to the entry of security risks, and would permit excessive entry of persons from Africa and Asia.” Several members of Congress worried that the nation's ethnic mix would change if the bans on immigration from Asia and Africa were rescinded. Also, having nixed the Bracero Program in 1964, there was little appetite for admitting unskilled workers. In allocating a mere 27,000 annual visas each for professionals of exceptional ability and for skilled occupations facing labor shortages, Congress envisioned German not Chinese engineers and British rather than Indian physicians; however, these employment visas proved pivotal for the surge in Asian immigration (Reimers 1992; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990:40).

Architects of the 1965 Amendments erroneously assumed that the expanded family preference categories would favor migrants of European stock, namely relatives of earlier immigrants, rather than Asians or Latin Americans. With Asians comprising about one percent and Hispanics less than five percent of the US population in 1960, neither group appeared to represent a huge future demand for family visas (Hirschman, 2005:Table 1; Bean and Tienda 1987). Thus, in making family reunification the centerpiece of the 1965 Amendments, Kennedy and his supporters reasoned that the exclusion of Chinese and Japanese laborers during the late 19th and early 20th century coupled with the restrictions on immigration from the Asia-Pacific triangle imposed by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 implied few Asians to sponsor relatives (Kennedy 1966; 1970).²

Kennedy and his supporters vastly underestimated the strength of family ties in driving future flows. Not only did annual immigration flows increase, but the influx from Asia surpassed that from Latin America within a dozen years. A less documented trend is a shift in the age composition of LPRs toward older ages. Supporting claims by Jasso and Rosenzweig (1986, 1989), we demonstrate that both changes are, to some measure, unanticipated consequences of the family reunification provisions of the 1965 Amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, including the broadened definition of immediate family members to include parents.

Regional origins of legal permanent residents (LPRs)

In light of longstanding labor agreements with Mexico and the explicit exemption of Latin American and Caribbean nations from the country quotas imposed in 1924 (Tienda 2002), a gradual rise in legal permanent migration from the southern hemisphere is not surprising. The termination of the Bracero Program in 1964 without a legal alternative to satisfy the entrenched demand for agricultural workers had the unintended effect of spurring unauthorized migration from Mexico during the 1970s and 1980s (Massey et al. 2002). Moreover, prior to the imposition of country limits on Western hemisphere countries in 1978, Mexico consumed between one-quarter and one-third of all visas allocated to the Americas (US DHS, 2011:Table 2). By imposing annual quotas on all nations, the 1978 legislation was particularly consequential for Mexico because it further restricted legal pathways to the US labor market (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990; Massey et al. 2002; Tienda and Sanchez 2013).

The surge in Asian migration was unexpected not only because few US citizens of Asian origin had close relatives living abroad, but also because the 1965 Amendments capped employment visas at less than 55,000 annually. Because large numbers of LPRs from Asia gained admission as employer-sponsored skilled workers during the 1970s and 1980s (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1989; 1990), the limited number of employment visas kept Asian immigration in check—at least temporarily because Congress increased employment visas to 140,000 in 1990 (Wasem 2012). Refugee flows have proven less predictable in their timing, magnitude, and source countries. Between 1955 and 1974, about 15,000 immigrants

²Reporting to the House subcommittee on immigration chaired by Senator Edward Kennedy, Attorney General Robert Kennedy reported that “5,000 immigrants would come in the first year, but we do not expect that there would be any great influx after that” (Reimers 1983: 16).

were admitted from Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam combined; over the next decade, over 760,000 refugees were admitted from these nations (Gordon 1987: Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Upon receipt of LPR status, refugees are entitled to earn citizenship and subsequently sponsor family members.

Published data from the Statistical Yearbooks of the (now defunct) Immigration and Naturalization Service show that within a dozen years after the enactment of the 1965 Amendments, the number of new LPRs from Asia surpassed those from Latin America (see Figure 1). For the next decade immigration from Asia was consistently higher than that from Latin America. Because the vast majority of the beneficiaries of the legalization program authorized by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) hailed from Latin America, LPR admissions from the region spiked between 1988 and 1992 (Borjas and Tienda 1993). During the early 1990s LPR admissions from Asia and Latin America converged, but owing to a surge in asylum requests from Central Americans and parole status granted to Cubans over the next dozen years, immigration from Latin America surpassed that from Asia (Tienda and Sanchez 2013). Since 2010 legal immigration from Asia has, once again, overtaken that from Latin America (Pew Research Center 2012; Nowrasteh 2012).

The auspices of entry are important for understanding future immigration flows because of differences in propensities to naturalize and differences in opportunities to sponsor relatives. Jasso and Rosenzweig (1989) argued that both employment and “government-sponsored” admissions, which include both refugees and legalized immigrants, have the highest family sponsorship rates because most of their immediate relatives live outside the United States. The influx of over 700,000 refugees from Southeast Asia after the fall of US-backed governments in the region and the legalization of nearly three million immigrants during the late 1980s dramatically increased the pool of new LPRs eligible to sponsor relatives upon becoming naturalized citizens.

Using administrative data for immigrants admitted in 1985 as spouses of US citizens, Jasso and Rosenzweig (1989:872) report that the foreign-born were *four times* more likely than native-born citizens to sponsor foreign spouses, with immigrants from Mexico, Philippines, Korea, China and the Dominican Republic among the top five beneficiaries of the immediate family member entitlement. Their analyses also revealed that naturalized citizens from the Philippines, China, Korea, India and Mexico featured the highest parent sponsorship rates (Table 8). Although Jasso and Rosenzweig (1989) lacked information about relatives subject to numerical limitation (e.g., brothers and sisters and adult children), their findings based on numerically unlimited immediate relatives imply that family chain migration contributed appreciably to the dramatic growth of Asian immigration (p. 884). This is a testable proposition with important implications for understanding changes in the age composition of future flows.

Age composition of immigrant flows

Unlike Australia and Canada, the United States does not consider age in determining eligibility for admission (Walsh 2008; O’Neil and Tienda 2015). Although the vast majority of new LPRs are in their prime working-ages, we argue that the expansion of the immediate

family member category to include parents of US citizens appears to have altered the age composition of new LPRs by increasing late-age migration (Terrazas 2009; Batalova 2012; Carr and Tienda 2013). Using administrative data for LPRs admitted since 1980 Carr and Tienda (2013) claim that increases in the number of numerically exempt parents of US citizens were largely responsible for the rise in late-age immigration. They did not examine the regional origins sponsored migrants, thus were unable to empirically validate Jasso and Rosenzweig's (1989: 884) contention based on a single LPR cohort that parent sponsorship is "an overwhelmingly an Asian phenomenon."

Two primary mechanisms drive the growth of foreign-born seniors: *in situ* aging of adults who arrived during their prime working years, and sponsorship of adult siblings and elderly parents by naturalized legal permanent residents (Terrazas, 2009). He (2002) shows that between 1960 and 2000, the *number* of foreign-born residents ages 65 and over was stable at around three million; between 1990 and 2010, however, the number of foreign-born seniors (aged 65 and over) nearly doubled, rising from 2.7 million to almost five million (Batalova 2012). Because Europeans were the major source of US immigrants until the 1960s, they comprised the largest group of foreign-born seniors through 2000 (Terrazas 2009); by 2010 Asians and Latin Americans surpassed Europeans among immigrant seniors.

With stock measures it is not possible to determine how aging in situ and late-age immigration contribute to changes in the age composition of foreign-born seniors, but annual trends in exempt relative admissions reveal a sharp increase after 1965.³ Specifically, between 1967 and 1971, the number of exempt sponsored relatives rose from 47,000 to 81,000, with parents representing 11 percent of uncapped immigrants (US DOJ 1971:Table 4). In 1981, over 151,000 exempt family relatives were granted LPR status, with parents comprising 22 percent of the total (US DOJ 1981:Table 4A). Although the size of the exempt LPR cohort varied annually during the 2000s—from a low of 331,286 in 2003 to a high of 580,348 in 2006—the parent share rose gradually from less than 18 percent in 2001 to 24 percent in 2010 (US DHS 2011:Table 6).

Data and Methods

Establishing links between family unification entitlements and the changing regional origins and age composition of new LPRs requires information about entry visas and immigrant characteristics over multiple years. The best data source to meet these requirements is the *Immigrants Admitted to the United States* micro-data (USDOJ 2007), which we supplement with special tabulations from the US Department of Homeland Security (USDHS).⁴ The micro-data file consists of records for all LPR admissions between 1981 and 2000, including persons present in the United States who adjusted their status to permanent resident during those years with the exception of the 2.7 million immigrants granted legal permanent resident status under the provisions of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act

³The published statistics do not tabulate class of admission by age; therefore, it is not possible to ascertain how much parent admissions contributed to late-age admissions.

⁴The Department of Homeland Security *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* does publish the aggregate age distribution of male and female LPRs, but not jointly by visa classes and regions of origin. The *New Immigrant Survey* includes visa status for persons granted LPR status in 2003, including persons who adjusted their visa status, but these data can only be used to estimate cross-sectional sponsorship rates, not migration multipliers.

(IRCA). Using custom tabulations requested from the Department of Homeland Security, we augment the *Immigrants Admitted* data with summary tabulations: (1) for LPR admissions for the period 2001–2009; and (2) for persons granted LPR status under IRCA for the period 1989–2000.

Both the micro-data and the customized tabulations contain data requirements for deriving age-, cohort- and origin-specific estimates of family unification chain migration: year LPR status was granted; age at admission to LPR status; visa class; and region (country) of origin. The augmented data file consists of a multi-dimensional table that cross-classifies admission *cohort* (groups of admission years), admission *age* (grouped), visa *class* (employment, government, family), and region (or country) of *origin*. Specifically, the analysis file consists of 51,210 observations with (Age*Cohort*Visa class*Origin) count data over 29 years represent nearly 25.5 million legal permanent residents admitted to the United States between 1981 and 2009. Each observation is a frequency count of LPR admissions for the given set of age, cohort, visa class, and regional (country) origin values.

In this classification, admission years are aggregated into 5-year cohorts, beginning with 1981–1985; arrival age is aggregated into three broad categories: 0–16 (youth), 17–49 (working ages), and 50+ (late-ages); and countries are assigned to five broad regions (Africa; Asia; Europe; Mesoamerica; and South America).⁵ Visa class, is a key requirement for estimating family unification chain migration. Following Yu (2008), we collapse 352 specific visa classes into 10 exhaustive categories that represent the major admission classes. Importantly, these major classes differentiate between (1) initiating versus family unification immigrants; (2) accompanying versus later-sponsored family immigrants; (3) citizen versus LPR-sponsored family immigrants; and (4) numerically capped versus uncapped immigrants. The distinction between citizen and foreign-born sponsors is important because of the demonstrated family links between past and future immigration (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1989:858; Yu 2008; GAO). Our analyses use the typology developed by Yu (2008) and modified by Carr and Tienda (2013) to differentiate between initiating and family unification migrants.

Family migration multipliers

Immigration multipliers represent the “total number of future immigrants generated by immigrants who are not themselves sponsored by relatives” (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1989: 861). Unlike immigrant sponsorship rates, which are based on ratios of sponsored and total LPRs admitted in a given year or cohort, multipliers are cumulative measures of immigrants directly or indirectly sponsored by an *initiating immigrant*, defined as the first in their families to move to the United States.⁶ Initiating immigrants must be sponsored either by nonfamily entities (e.g., employers or the US government in the case of refugees or legalized immigrants) or marry a US-born citizen. We define four categories of initiating immigrants

⁵We use the term Mesoamerica, which includes Mexico and Central America, rather than North America because relatively few US immigrants hail from Canada. This terminology also makes clear that Central America is not part of South America. We would prefer to classify Oceania with Europe, but the aggregated tabulations we obtained precluded reallocation of these LPRs. Because the number of immigrants from Oceania is relatively small, this allocation decision is inconsequential for our estimates.

⁶Others use the term “principals” or “original migrants” to designate immigrants who initiate a new chain; however, we prefer the latter term because of its more intuitive meaning in the context of chain migration the potential initiation of a new family chain.

denoted by the subscript “0”, and letters E, G, and S designate employer, government and spouse sponsors:⁷

- ${}_0E$ Employer-sponsored initiating employee immigrants (excluding dependents)
- ${}_0G$ Government-sponsored initiating immigrants (excluding dependents, excluding IRCA)
- ${}_0G'$ IRCA amnesty immigrants (special government sponsored initiating immigrants)
- ${}_0S$ Initiating spouse immigrants (sponsored by native-born citizen spouses)

Using these admission criteria, we estimate a series of *family migration multipliers*, which represent the cumulation of sponsored family members relative to the number of initiating immigrants per admitted cohort.

Only initiating immigrants can start new migration chains, which are activated either when spouses and children accompany (or follow) initiating immigrants. After naturalization, foreign-born citizens are entitled to sponsor both immediate family members and relatives such as adult offspring or siblings, thus activating the multiplicative properties of chained migration (Yu 2008). *Family unification immigrants* are defined as LPRs sponsored by family members who themselves are immigrants (both naturalized citizens and legal resident aliens) or who are the accompanying family members of an initiating immigrant. The calculations distinguish among four types of family immigrants: (1) accompanying family dependents; (2) numerically-limited later following family dependents; (3) numerically unlimited immediate relatives of US citizens; and (4) numerically limited preference relatives of US citizens.⁸ The antecedent subscripts 1 through 4 indicate the sequence in the migration chain.

Accompanying family dependents	${}_1D$ Spouses and minor children who accompany initiating immigrants on admission to LPR status
Numerically-limited, later following family dependents of initiating immigrants (<i>Sponsored by LPRs under numerically-limited family 2nd family preference categories</i>)	${}_2D$ Spouses, minor children, unmarried adult offspring) of previously admitted initiating immigrants
Numerically-unlimited immediate relatives of US citizens (<i>Sponsored by citizens under numerically-exempt family preference categories</i>)	${}_3S$ Spouses of <i>foreign-born</i> US citizens
	${}_3C$ Children of US citizens
	${}_3P$ Parents of U. citizens
Numerically-limited preference relatives of US citizens (<i>Sponsored by citizens under 1st, 3rd and 4th family preferences</i>)	${}_4F$ Adult sons, daughters, and siblings, with associated dependents, of adult US citizens

The formula for the age-, origin-, and cohort-specific family migration multipliers is given by:

$$FMM_{jkt} = \frac{\sum {}_1D_{jkt} + {}_2D_{jkt} + {}_3S_{jkt'} + {}_3C_{jkt'} + {}_3P_{jkt'} + {}_4F_{jkt'}}{\sum {}_0E_{jkt} + {}_0G_{jkt} + {}_0G'_{jkt} + {}_0S_{jkt}}$$

⁷IRCA legalized LPRs are distinguished from other government sponsored immigrants because they are generally reported separately in published reports and were excluded from the *Immigrants Admitted* microdata files.

⁸Our definition of “family immigrants” differs slightly from that used by the Department of Homeland Security. (Monger 2010: 2). For consistency with our distinction between initiating immigrants and their family members, we classify the accompanying family members of an employer-sponsored initiating immigrant as family immigrants, whereas US DHS assigns them to employment-based admissions.

where the terms in the numerator represent counts of specific types of sponsored family migrants, and the denominator terms represent the counts of the four classes of initiating immigrants. The core notation of each term consists of an upper case letter and a leading subscript representing an aggregated admission class. Specifically, ${}_0E$, ${}_0G$, ${}_0G'$, and ${}_0S$ denominator terms represent employer-sponsored, government-sponsored and spouse initiating immigrants, respectively. The numerator includes initiating immigrants' accompanying and later-following family dependents (${}_1D$ and ${}_2D$); US citizens' numerically exempt spouses, children and parents (${}_3S$, ${}_3C$ and ${}_3P$, respectively); and US citizens' adult offspring, siblings and their respective dependents (${}_4F$). Subscript j denotes one of the three age groups at admission (<17, 17–49 or 50+) among family sponsored immigrants; the subscript J , which applies to the initiating immigrant terms in the denominator, is an aggregate across all ages. The subscript k signifies region of origin (Asia, Africa, Europe, Mesoamerica, or South America) or, in more detailed analyses, a top sending country of origin (China, India, Philippines, or Mexico).

Subscripts t and t' reflect five-year admission cohorts corresponding, respectively, to the early and later stages of the migration chain. For initiating immigrants and their accompanying and later-following dependents (${}_1D$ and ${}_2D$ sponsored family members), admission cohort t consists of one of the following cohorts: 1981–1985, 1986–1990, 1991–1995, or 1996–2000. The multipliers are truncated in the year 2000 because, except for accompanying and later-following family dependents (${}_1D$ and ${}_2D$), activation of family unification entitlements requires acquisition of citizenship, which requires appropriate temporal lags in order to estimate family chain migration multipliers.

Sponsorship and naturalization lags

Sponsorship entitlements are constrained both by decisions of LPRs to naturalize and the waiting times to attain citizenship because only citizens can sponsor numerically exempt immediate relatives and several family preference migrants (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990). Therefore, in order to refine the link between initiating cohorts and sponsorship of family members, the migration multiplier calculations adjust the cohorts of citizen-sponsored family immigrants to correspond with one sponsorship generation beyond the initiating immigrant cohort by introducing 9-year lags. This is analogous to the immigrant generation cohort approach used by others (e.g., Park and Myers 2010) to model mobility with cross-sectional data. The 9-year lag reflects the average eight-year duration in pre-naturalization LPR status plus an additional year for visa processing delays; but it is generous for migrants from Asia but not migrants from Latin America, whose average time to naturalization is typically longer (Lee 2010).

Operationally, subscript t' is applied to numerically-exempt immediate relatives (${}_3S$, ${}_3C$, ${}_3P$) and citizens' family preference relatives (${}_4F$) in order to approximate the timing of naturalization and eligibility for citizen-based sponsorship among initiating immigrants from cohort t such that $t' = t + 9$. Figure illustrates the generation-lagged citizen sponsored relatives for initiating cohorts included in our calculations (1981 – 2000). Annual initiating immigrant cohorts (${}_0E$, ${}_0G$, ${}_0G'$, ${}_0S$) appear on the vertical axis; accompanying and later-following LPR dependents (${}_1D$, ${}_2D$) are temporally aligned with these cohorts. $\mathbf{X}$ denotes the

corresponding annual cohorts of generation-lagged, citizen-sponsored family immigrants (${}_3C$, ${}_3S$, ${}_3P$, ${}_4F$), which appear along the horizontal axis. The ${}_3S$, ${}_3C$, ${}_3P$, and ${}_4F$ cohorts are advanced by nine years to reflect this lag, and the 1981–1985 initiating cohort corresponds to 1990–1994 ${}_3S$, ${}_3C$, ${}_3P$, and ${}_4F$ family admissions. The grey cells indicate the five-year admission cohorts in multiplier estimates.

Regional Variations in Family Unification Migration

Table 1, which reports the changing age composition of new LPR cohorts since 1980, reveals considerable variation in the level of late-age immigration across regions and over time. As was true historically, working-age adults have dominated contemporary US immigration streams: approximately two-thirds of all LPRs admitted between 1981 and 2009 were in their prime working ages (bottom panel). During this period not only did the size of successive cohorts increase—from 2.8 million between 1981 and 1985 to about 4.5 million between 2006 and 2009—but the share of late-age immigrants also rose. The worldwide averages reported in the last row show that dependent youth outnumbered late-age LPRs by more than 2:1 among LPRS admitted during the early 1980s, but after 2005 the share of youth and seniors was roughly equal.

This pattern is mirrored for all regions with notable variations in both the initial levels and relative growth in late-age immigration over the 29-year period. During the early 1980s, for example, late-age immigrants made up 13–14 percent of new arrivals from Asia and Europe, but owing to larger cohort sizes, the absolute number of late-age Asian LPRs was four times that from Europe (see numbers in parentheses). By the end of the period, late-age immigration from Asia approached 20 percent—the largest share among all regions, which is consistent with the 2000 and 2010 stock measures (He 2002; Grieco et al. 2012). By comparison, about 17 percent of European LPRs from the 2006–2009 cohort were ages 50 and over and the cohort was approximately one-quarter as large as that from Asia. Between 1981 and 2000, both the absolute cohort size and the share of late-age immigrants approximately doubled for new LPRs from Mesoamerica and South America. Only Africa sent below average shares of late-age immigrants throughout the observation period; however, even as the size of African immigrant cohorts mushroomed from 77 million to 437 million, this region witnessed a doubling in the cohort shares of late-age immigration (from 6 to 12 percent).

The migration multipliers reveal how family unification chain migration drives the regional diversification and shifts the age composition of new LPR flows. The first and second columns of Table 2 report the absolute number of initiating immigrants and the cumulative number of cohort sponsored family migrants for the major sending regions. The last four columns show the cohort-age-specific multipliers and the all-ages cohort multiplier (which is the sum of the age-specific multipliers) for the major regions. With two exceptions, discussed below, all of the family unification multipliers are above one, but there is considerable variation in *levels* of family chain migration. Substantively the 1.78 migration multiplier in the top row of Table 2 indicates that every 100 initiating European immigrants admitted between 1981 and 1985 collectively sponsored 178 *additional* family members; of these, 22 were ages 50 and older.

The multipliers, which vary in magnitude across regions and according to the size of initiating cohorts, yield several insights about how family unification chain migration diversified immigration flows in ways the proponents of the 1965 Amendments could not envision. Contrary to reformers' intentions, for example, the *lowest* multipliers correspond to Europe, and for the 1986–1990 and 1991–1995 LPR cohorts, the multipliers barely exceed one. Unlike immigrants from Asia and Latin America, moreover, the family members sponsored by Europeans during the 1980s and early 1990s primarily involved youth or working-age relatives. Only 12 percent of sponsored European family members during the 1980s were aged 50 and over ($22/178 = .12$; $14/117 = .12$). As European source countries included growing numbers from former Soviet Bloc nations during the late 1990s, the share of late-age family members rose to 20 percent.

Further defying reformers' intentions, and despite the establishment of hemispheric and country caps designed to limit immigration from Asia, family unification multipliers for the region are consistently above two. The multipliers imply that during the 1980s and early 1990s Initiating LPRs sponsored between 221 and 256 additional family members per 100 eligible sponsors; of these, between 20 and 25 percent were ages 50 and over. Asian family chain migration was particularly intense during the latter part of the 1990s, when the ratio of sponsored to initiating Asian LPRs approached 4:1. About a quarter of these sponsored LPRs were ages 50 and over. Although African migration streams are considerably smaller than those from Asia, the initiating cohorts have grown steadily since 1981, as did the number of sponsored family migrants. New LPRs from Africa activated family unification migration chains by sponsoring between 151 and 229 family members per 100 initiating LPRs, with seniors representing between 14 and 18 percent of sponsored relatives.

Cubans and Mexicans dominated US migration streams from Latin America during the 1960s, but economic dislocations and armed conflicts in South America triggered an exodus from Colombia, Peru and Ecuador during the 1980s (Tienda and Sanchez 2013). These flows sparked new family migration chains and fueled large family migration chains during the early 1980s and the late 1990s. The multipliers for these cohorts imply that every 100 initiating immigrants sponsored over 500 family relatives, of which 16 and 21 percent, respectively, were ages 50 and over.

Family migration multipliers for Mesoamerica exhibit the greatest temporal variation because Mexicans and Central Americans were the largest beneficiaries from the IRCA legalization program, which dramatically increased the size of initiating cohorts during the 1990s. New LPRs from this region are also taking advantage of their family unification entitlements by sponsoring relatives. The share of sponsored relatives ages 50 and over rose from 11 to 18 percent over the observation period, which parallels the national trend. The family migration multipliers for the 1981–1985 and 1996–2000 initiating cohorts indicate that each 100 LPRs from Mesoamerica sponsored, respectively, around 350 and 420 additional relatives by 2009. That the multipliers corresponding to the 1986–1990 and 1991–1995 Mesoamerican cohorts are below unity is an artifact of the outsized initiating cohorts legalized under IRCA. Initiating cohorts from the region approached 1.5 and 1.4 million, respectively, during the legalization period, which extended through the early 1990s (see Table 1). Another reason for the comparatively low multipliers for these cohorts is the large

representation of Mexicans, who average longer times to naturalization, and whose waiting times in the queue for country-capped visas are among the longest (Baker 2007; 2010). Nevertheless, the legalization cohorts jointly sponsored over two million family members by 2009 (.921 thousand and 1.3 million, respectively, for the 1986–1990 and 1991–1995 initiating cohorts).

To summarize, not only does the magnitude of family chain migration differ over time and by region, but partly owing to large fluctuations in the size of initiating cohorts, the absolute numbers also differ appreciably. This is dramatically evident for migrants from Mexico and the Caribbean in the aftermath of the legalization program. Second, although the majority of legal permanent residents are in their prime working ages, late-age immigration rose for all regions, albeit not uniformly (see also Table 1). A comparison of the two largest sending regions—Asia and Mesoamerica—underscores this point. Third, the total number of sponsored family members depends both on the size of initiating cohorts and whether relatives are subject to numerical limitation: spouses, dependent children and immediate family members of US citizens are exempted from country caps, but other relatives are not. The family unification late-age immigration multipliers imply that the 1996–2000 initiating LPR cohort from Asia sponsored roughly 320,000 relatives ages 50 and over $[(106/396) \times 1192213]$ compared with 235,000 from Mesoamerica $[(75/420) \times 1313381]$.

Although informative, regional trends conceal a great deal of country-specific variation that can clarify how Asia became the dominant regional source of new immigrants within a dozen years after the restrictions on entry from the Eastern Hemisphere were lifted (Figure 1), and why the age composition of family unification chain migration differs across regions. We focus on the four top sending countries—Mexico, China, India and the Philippines—because of their potential to intensify late-age immigration due to the growing visa backlogs for non-exempt family relatives (Wasem 2012) and because the absence of a cap for immediate family relatives, including parents of US citizens, potentially can accelerate the growth of late-age immigration in the future. This is particularly important for China, whose population will age gradually until 2015, and rapidly thereafter (Peng 2011).

Family Chain Migration: The Top Four Sending Countries

Mexico is currently and has been the largest single source of legal US immigrants since the second half of the 20th century. Between 1961–1970, for example, 454,000 Mexicans received LPR status compared with 428,000 for all of Asia, including 35,000 and 27,000 from China and India, respectively (see USDOJ *1980 Statistical Yearbook*: Table 2). Despite the longstanding role of Mexicans as a source of low-wage labor for the United States, employers sponsor relatively few LPRs from Mexico; rather, the vast majority of Mexican LPRs are beneficiaries of family reunification entitlements exercised by US citizens. Of the Mexicans granted LPR status in fiscal year 2010, for example, less than 10 percent qualified for an employment visa (Tienda and Sanchez 2013). Except for the federal legalization program that enabled over two million Mexican nationals to adjust their legal status during the late 1980s and early 1990s, family reunification remains the main pathway to legal US residence for Mexicans.

Owing partly to US involvement in the Pacific during the late 19th and early 20th century, migration from the Philippines has longer antecedents than that from India and China. This is reflected in the consistently larger Philippine cohort sizes through 2000; thereafter, the size of LPR cohorts from India and subsequently China surpassed that from the Philippines, as shown in Table 3. After restrictions on Asian immigration were lifted in 1965, India and China joined Philippines in sending large numbers of legal immigrants to the United States by first availing themselves to the skilled employment preference visas and, after acquiring citizenship, sponsoring relatives (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1989).

Table 3 shows rather distinct country profiles based on the size, growth and age composition of new immigrant streams. Between 1981 and 2009, about 1.2 million LPRs were admitted each from China and India, which compares with 1.5 million from the Philippines and 5.4 million from Mexico. Both India and China witnessed steady, if not monotonic, growth in LPR cohort size such that the 2006–2009 cohorts were over two times larger than the 1981–1985 cohorts (ratios of 2.1:1 and 2.3:1 for India and China, respectively). The LPR cohorts from the Philippines peaked at 280 thousand during the latter half of the 1990s, but generally averaged around 250–260 thousand per five-year period.⁹

Because employment visas served as the primary gateway to Asian migration since 1981, prime-age workers dominated these streams, particularly for migrants from India. Nevertheless, the cohort shares of late-age migrants from the top three Asian source countries exceeded the global averages by a considerable margin throughout the observation period (see last row in Table 1). For example, during the 1980s between 29 and 33 percent of LPRs from China were ages 50 and over. Although this share fell to under a quarter during the 1990s, the absolute cohort sizes more than doubled, which corresponds to an 80 percent increase in the absolute *number* of Chinese LPRs ages 50 and over (from 36 thousand to 66 thousand). The size of Indian LPR cohorts more than doubled over three decades even as the share of late-age migrants rose from 17 to 22 percent. In absolute terms, late age-migration from India rose from about 20 thousand during the early 1980s to over 53 thousand for the most recent LPR cohort. Unlike India and China, the cohort shares of late-age Filipino immigrants held fairly steady between 21–22 percent until after 2005, when almost one-in-four new LPRs (over 62 thousand) were ages 50 and over.

Mexico differs from the top Asian source countries in two key respects. First, Mexican LPR cohorts are more than twice the size of the three top-sending Asian countries (particularly the post-IRCA cohorts), which is important because cohort size influences the future scale of family unification chain migration. Second, the prevalence of Mexican late-age migration is consistently lower than all of the top three Asian nations over the entire period; however, Mexico witnessed a trebling in late-age migration since 1981, from about 6 percent to 18 percent, which is just above the worldwide average of 17.3 percent (compare last row of Tables 1 and 3). Furthermore, except for the 1981–1985 cohort, the *absolute number* of late-age Mexican immigrants was significantly larger than each of the three top Asian origin nations. For perspective, fewer than 20,000 Mexicans granted LPR status between 1981 and

⁹The peak and ebb during the 1990s may reflect timing of visa issuance, possibly due to backlogs because the average for these two 5-year cohorts of 245 thousand is consistent with slow growth trend over the entire observation period.

1985 were ages 50 and over, compared with 36,000 and 48,000, respectively, from China and the Philippines. Mexico also was the largest single source of late-age immigrants during the 2006–2009 period, when the number of new LPRs ages 50 and over exceeded 100,000.¹⁰

Bolstered by the higher worldwide ceilings and the larger number of visas for skilled workers established by the 1990 Immigration Act, country-specific estimates of family unification chain migration reported in Table 4 reveal migration multipliers that are higher than the regional averages. Enabled by high family sponsorship rates among naturalized immigrants, each 100 initiating Chinese immigrants sponsored between 767 and 843 family relatives during the 1980s. That the United States offered refuge to thousands of Chinese following the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre increased the size of the 1991–1995 initiating cohort more than fivefold compared with the 1986–1990 initiating cohort. The low multiplier for the 1991–1995 cohort reflects the refugee-produced bulge, but as column (2) indicates, the absolute number of accompanying and sponsored family migrants cumulated through the 1990s, even after the size of the initiating immigrant cohort was halved.

The family unification migration multipliers for India are even more striking, as index values approached 10 during the 1980s, indicating that every 100 initiating Indians admitted during the 1980s sponsored between 960 and 998 additional relatives by 2009; of these, approximately one-in-four were ages 50 and over. The multiplier index was nearly halved by the late 1990s; however, because the size of the initiating cohorts had more than doubled, the absolute scale of family unification immigration increased as well—from 147 thousand in the late 1980s to about 185 thousand sponsored family members during the late 1990s. Multipliers imply that every 100 Indians granted LPR status between 1996 and 2000 on average sponsored more than 500 additional relatives by 2009.

Mexicans also have benefited from family reunification chain migration both in absolute and relative terms. Although Mexico's family unification multipliers are smaller than those of the top three Asian source countries through the mid-1990s, after 1996 they surpassed those of India and the Philippines, and converged with the Chinese multipliers. The smaller multipliers for the interim LPR cohorts from Mexico reflect the hefty IRCA cohorts in the denominator of the multiplier index; however, the absolute number of sponsored relatives was over double that from China and India during the 1980s and over three times larger during the 1990s. As legalized immigrants acquired citizenship, many activated their family unification entitlements by sponsoring relatives exempt from and subject to the numerical caps. The former include parents and the latter include adult relatives that may have to wait years for a visa.

An examination of the uncapped visa category provides further insight into the underlying dynamics, and specifically the unintended consequences of broadening the definition of immediate relatives to include parents in 1965. For each of the top Asian source countries, the *number* of sponsored parents grew steadily as earlier arrivals naturalized and submitted

¹⁰Only between 8 and 6 percent of Mexican LPRs admitted during the late 1980s and early 1990s were ages 50 and over, but in absolute terms this represents over 100,000 and 94,000 late-age migrants, respectively.

visa petitions on behalf of their parents. Not surprisingly, over 95 percent of sponsored parents from Asia (compared with about 87 percent of those from Mexico) are ages 50 and over (Table 5). The modest dip in the number of sponsored parents from Asia during the late 1990s likely reflects the impact of the 1996 welfare reforms, which restricted senior immigrants' access to Supplemental Security Income were enacted (O'Neil and Tienda 2015). This change was particularly consequential for the Philippines; however, after 2005 the number of sponsored parents from the Philippines rebounded to the level of the early 1980s.

By contrast, late-age immigration from Mexico was lower than that from Asia during the early 1980s in both absolute and relative terms (see shaded column in Table 4 and numbers in parentheses in Table 5); however, the intensification of Mexican family unification chain migration was accompanied by a rise in both the number and share sponsored family members ages 50 and over. During the 1980s and early 1990s, naturalized Mexican immigrants sponsored between 10 and 20 thousand parents. And, as the outsized IRCA cohorts began to qualify for the family reunification entitlements that allow naturalized citizens to sponsor parents outside of the country caps, there was a surge in late-age migration from Mexico. Between 2001 and 2009 naturalized Mexican immigrants sponsored over 200 thousand parents; this is well above the roughly 30,000 parents sponsored by naturalized counterparts during the 1980s. These results suggest that IRCA indirectly increased late-age migration from Mexico, yet another unintended consequence of federal policy.

Parents are not the only source of late-age immigration. Because siblings and adult children of US citizens are subject to annual country caps, the number of family preference LPRs from Asia has remained fairly steady over the last three decades. Nevertheless, due to the long queues for the oversubscribed family visas from China, India and the Philippines (Wasem 2012), numerically capped relatives also contribute to late-age immigration by "aging in place" as they wait for their visa in a multi-year queue. Table 6 reveals that the share of sponsored family members ages 50 and over rose even as the cohort size remained stable. For example, among numerically limited family relatives admitted from the Philippines during the 1980s, approximately 7.5 percent were ages 50 and over; however, nearly one quarter of capped family relatives admitted after 2005 qualified as late-age migrants. For the Philippines, the wait for a capped family visa can extend over 20 years (Wasem 2012). Similar trends obtain for capped relatives from China and India as both nations evince a steady increase in the cohort shares ages 50 and over.

Mexico stands as an exception in two respects: first, the absolute number of sponsored relatives is higher than that of the top Asian source countries for every cohort; second, the share of late-age family relatives rose more gradually and never exceeds six percent of any given cohort. Nevertheless, partly owing to the outsized initiating cohorts legalized under IRCA, the number of capped sponsored relatives from Mexico more than doubled between 1986–1990 and 1991–1995, and nearly doubled again during the late 1990s (lower panel Table 6). Since 2000 the number of sponsored relatives from Mexico has fallen, but it is conceivable that higher shares will qualify as late-age migrants in the future as family members approved for admission age in the visa backlog queues. In 2010, for example,

unmarried Mexican adult children sponsored by US citizens had waited 18 years to receive their entry visa (Wasem 2012).

Summary and Discussion

In making family reunification the centerpiece of the 1965 Amendments to the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act, Congress did not contemplate radical changes in the volume and composition of immigrants. Proponents of the reforms claimed that tight visa controls for the employment preferences combined with annual hemispheric ceilings and country caps would keep the size of flows in check. There appears to have been little discussion about the implications of expanding the definition of immediate relatives to include parents of citizens or how immigration might contribute to population aging. At that time the US population was relatively young owing to the baby boom; also, less than 10 percent of LPRs were ages 50 and over (US DOJ 1971:Table 10). Neither did Congress factor in their calculations how naturalized citizens would avail themselves to the family unification entitlements by sponsoring both exempt and numerically capped relatives. In hindsight, it is clear that Congress did not understand the power of migrants' social networks in activating family chain migration. Not only did this lack of understanding produce the feared changes in the ethnic mix of the nation (Kennedy 1966; 1970), but it also altered the age composition of subsequent flows as naturalized migrants sponsored parents (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1989) and approved relatives waited in ever longer queues to receive entrance visas (Wasem 2012).

In hindsight, detractors' worries about increases in the size and composition of future flows were well founded, albeit not for the reasons proffered at the time. Although the number of work-related visas was kept low, at least until 1990, high naturalization rates increased rapidly the number of Asian immigrants eligible to sponsor family members (Baker 2007; 2010; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1989). And sponsor relatives they did! Our analyses of new LPRs reveal that since 1980, each initiating 5-year cohort from Asia collectively sponsored over one million family members. Furthermore, the estimates of chain migration indicate an acceleration of family unification chain immigration from Asia, such that each 100 initiating LPRs admitted between 1996–2000 sponsored almost 400 additional relatives compared with 221 for Asian LPRs admitted during the early 1980s (Table 2).

Additional reasons that the family unification provisions intensified the diversification of the immigrant streams are the huge refugee flows from Southeast Asia during the 1970s, and from Central America during the 1980s, but especially due to the generalized amnesty program that legalized nearly three million LPRs during the late 1980s and early 1990s. These formidable additions to the "planned" LPR world quotas initiated migration chains as large majorities naturalized and activated their family unification entitlements. For example, initiating immigrants admitted from Mexico and Central America during the 1990s sponsored over 1.7 million relatives by 2009. That family unification chain migration from Mesoamerica appears to be accelerating suggests that the myriad status adjustment programs for Central and South Americans since IRCA will continue to increase family migration streams as new LPRs qualify to sponsor relatives.

This study addresses several limitations of prior work by extending the timeline for estimating the magnitude of family unification chain migration beyond 2000, relaxing assumptions of synthetic methods that assume uniform cohort sizes, and disaggregating multipliers by age. Yu's (2008) estimates based on the *Immigrants Admitted* micro-data are likely understated because they exclude the outsized IRCA cohorts. The longer observation period also permits an early assessment of how the increase in employment visas after 1990 boosted family unification migration. Jasso and Rosenzweig (1989) argue that employment and government-sponsored immigrants have the highest sponsorship rates both because they are unlikely to have many relatives in the host country and because they naturalize at high rates. Although their data only permitted estimation of multipliers for labor certified initiating immigrants over a single decade, their predictions were spot on for Asia. Following the massive legalization program that disproportionately benefitted Mesoamericans, parent and sibling sponsorship became a Mexican phenomenon as well. By increasing the base of initiating immigrants, our analyses suggest that other legalization programs, such as the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997, will likely foment family unification chain migration from the region (Tienda and Sanchez 2013).

Parents of US citizens, who are not subject to annual country caps or worldwide ceilings, are the major source of late-age migration, but the numerically limited admission classes consisting of adult sons, daughters and siblings of US citizens increasingly contribute to late-age migration owing to long visa queues for oversubscribed countries. In fact, just a dozen or so years after the 1965 Amendments went into effect, Reimers (1983:24) predicted huge changes in US immigration, including backlogs for Mexico, China and the Philippines as well as a large undocumented labor force. His predictions were prescient. Our analyses verify his predictions by showing how the parent exemption changed the age composition of LPR flows, and convergence in regional- and country-specific LPR cohort shares ages 50 and over. The provision in the 1965 Amendments that explicitly exempts parents from the numerically capped visas is the primary driver of late-age immigration (Table 5), but the sizeable backlogs for numerically capped family visas from Mexico and the top sending Asian countries portend further growth in late-age immigration (Table 6). Proposals to clear the backlogs may reduce the extent of aging in place for oversubscribed countries, but could also potentially increase family unification chain migration if the spouses of sponsored relatives activate new chains.

When Congress amended the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 by broadening the family sponsorship categories, the baby boom was unwinding. But times have changed in ways that may warrant a reconsideration of family admission categories. Particularly during a period of tight fiscal constraints and population aging, decisions about the number and categories of family visas should be made with a clear grounding in evidence about the social and economic costs of late-age migration for the migrants themselves as well as for the hosting families and communities. Many studies examined the impacts of the 1996 welfare and immigration reforms on foreign-born seniors (Fix and Passel 1999; Van Hook and Bean 1999; Van Hook 2003). Surprisingly few studies consider whether and how the impacts differ according to age at arrival. Given the rise in late-age migration and evidence that changes in US social welfare policy were particularly deleterious for late age

immigrants (O'Neil and Tienda 2015), trends in family unification migration reported here warrant additional research both to investigate how various policy proposals enable or restrict future family migration and to better understand how late-age migrants fare relative to their counterparts who arrive in their prime working ages (Terrazas 2009; Batalova 2012).

Acknowledgments

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2013 Annual Meetings of the Population Association of America. This research was supported by the Princeton Center for the Demography of Aging (NIH Grant P30 AG024361); institutional support was provided by a grant (#P2CHD047879) from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to the Office of Population Research. I am grateful for the excellent guidance from anonymous reviewers; remaining errors are, of course, all mine.

References

- Baker, Bryan C. Fact Sheet. Office of Immigration Statistics, Policy Directorate. US Department of Homeland Security; 2007 Dec. Trends in Naturalization Rates. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ntz_rates508.pdf [Accessed January 16, 2014]
- Baker, Bryan C. Fact Sheet. Office of Immigration Statistics. US Department of Homeland Security; 2010 Oct. Naturalization Rates Among IRCA Immigrants: A 2009 Update. <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/irca-natz-fs-2009.pdf> [Accessed September 25, 2014]
- Batalova, Jeanne. [Accessed May 10, 2015] Senior Immigrants in the United States. Migration Information Source. 2012 May 30. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=894>
- Bean, Frank D., Tienda, Marta. The Hispanic Population of the United States. NY: Russell Sage; 1987.
- Borjas, George J., Tienda, Marta. Employment and Wages of Legalized Immigrants. *International Migration Review*. 1993; 27(4):712–747. [PubMed: 12286923]
- Carr, Stacie, Tienda, Marta. Family Sponsorship and Late-Age Migration in Aging America: Revised and Expanded Estimates of Chained Migration. *Population Research and Policy Review*. 2013; 32(6):825–849.
- Fix, Michael, Passel, Jeffrey S. Trends in Noncitizens' and Citizens' Use of Public Benefits Following Welfare Reform: 1994–1997. Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute; 1999.
- Gordon, Linda W. Southeast Asian Refugee Migration to the United States. *Center for Migration Studies Special Issues*. 1987; 5(3):153–173.
- Grieco, Elizabeth M., et al. American Community Survey Reports. Vol. ACS-19. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office; 2012 May. The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010." US Census Bureau.
- He, Wan. Current Population Reports. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office; 2002. The Older Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000." US Census Bureau. Series P23-211
- Hirschman, Charles. Immigration and the American Century. *Demography*. 2005; 42(4):595–620. [PubMed: 16463913]
- Jasso, Guillermina, Rosenzweig, Mark R. Family Reunification and the Immigration Multiplier: US Immigration Law, Origin-Country Conditions, and the Reproduction of Immigrants. *Demography*. 1986; 23(3):291–311. [PubMed: 3758442]
- Jasso, Guillermina, Rosenzweig, Mark R. Sponsors, Sponsorship Rates and the Immigration Multiplier. *International Migration Review*. 1989; 23(4):856–888. [PubMed: 12282606]
- Jasso, Guillermina, Rosenzweig, Mark R. The New Chosen People: Immigrants in the United States. NY: Russell Sage Foundation; 1990.
- Kennedy, Edward M. The Immigration Act of 1965. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 1966; 367:137–149.
- Kennedy, Edward M. Immigration Law: Some Refinements and New Reforms. *International Migration Review*. 1970; 4(3):4–10.

- Lee, James. Annual Flow Report. Office of Immigration Statistics, Policy Directorate, US Department of Homeland Security; 2010. Naturalizations in the United States: 2009. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/natz_fr_2009.pdf [Accessed August 15, 2014]
- Massey, Douglas S., Durand, Jorge, Malone, Nolan J. Beyond Smoke and Mirrors : Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration. NY: Russell Sage Foundation; 2002.
- Monger, Randall. Annual Flow Report. Office of Immigration Statistics, Policy Directorate. US Department of Homeland Security; 2010 Apr. US Legal Permanent Residents: 2009. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/lpr_fr_2009.pdf [Accessed July 15, 2014]
- Nowrasteh, Alex. The Rise of Asian Immigration. Forbes. 2012 Jul 9.
- O'Neil, Kevin, Tienda, Marta. Age at Immigration and the Incomes of Older Immigrants, 1994–2010. Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences. 2015; 70(2):291–302. [PubMed: 24942972]
- Park, Julie, Myers, Dowell. Intergenerational Mobility in the Post 1965-Immigration Era: Estimates by an Immigrant Generation Cohort Method. Demography. 2010; 47(2):369–392. [PubMed: 20608102]
- Peng, Xizhe. China's Demographic History and Future Challenges. Science. 2011 Jul 29;333:581–587. [PubMed: 21798939]
- Pew Research Center. [Accessed online July 15, 2014] The Rise of Asian Americans. 2012 Jun 19. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>
- Reimers, David M. An Unintended Reform: The 1965 Act and Third World Migration to the United States. Journal of American Ethnic History. 1983; 3(1):9–28.
- Reimers, David M. Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America. 2. New York, NY: Columbia University Press; 1992.
- Smith, James P., Edmonston, Barry. The New Americans: Economic, Demographic and Fiscal Effects of Immigration. Washington, DC: National Research Council; 1997.
- Terrazas, Aaron. Older Immigrants in the United States. Migration Policy Institute; 2009 May. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=727> [Accessed May 19, 2014]
- Tienda, Marta. Demography and the Social Contract. Demography. 2002; 39(4):587–616. [PubMed: 12471845]
- Tienda, Marta, Sanchez, Susana. Latin American Pathways to the United States: Immigration Policies and their Unintended Consequences. Daedalus. 2013; 142(3):48–64. [PubMed: 26560092]
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Various, 2003–2009. Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2002–2008. Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics;
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (US DHS). 2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics; 2011.
- U.S. Department of Justice (US DOJ). 1971, 1980 and 1981 Statistical Yearbooks of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Washington, DC: Office of Immigration Statistics;
- U.S. Department of Justice (US DOJ), Immigration and Naturalization Service. Immigrants Admitted To The United States, 2000 [Computer file]. ICPSR03486-v2. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service [producer]; Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor]; 2007. 20022007-11-27
- U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO). Immigration: The Future Flow of legal Immigration to the United States. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office; 1988.
- Van Hook, Jennifer. Welfare Reform's Chilling Effects on Noncitizens: Changes in Noncitizen Welfare Reciprocity or Shifts in Citizenship Status? Social Science Quarterly. 2003; 84(3):613–631.
- Van Hook, Jennifer, Bean, Frank D. The Growth in Noncitizen SSI Caseloads 1979–1996: Aging Versus New Immigrant Effects. Journal of Gerontology. 1999; 54B(1):S16–S23.
- Walsh, James. Navigating Globalization: Immigration Policy in Canada and Australia, 1945–2007. Sociological Forum. 2008; 23(4):786–813.
- Wasem, Ruth E. US Immigration Policy on Permanent Admissions. Washington, D.C: Congressional Research Service; 2012. Report RL32235. Retrieved April 2, 2014

Yu, Bin. Chain Migration Explained: The Power of the Immigration Multiplier. New York, NY: LFP Scholarly Publishing; 2008.

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Figure 1. Legal Permanent Residents Admitted from Asia and Latin America, 1976–2011
Sources: 1986 and 1999 Statistical Yearbooks of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; 2011 Statistical Yearbook of the Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics.

		Cohorts of Citizen-Sponsored Family Migrants (3C, 3S, 3P, 4F)												
		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	...	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009		
Cohorts of Initiating Immigrants (0E, 0G, 0G', 0S) and LPR-Sponsored Family Immigrants (1D, 2D)	1981	X												
	1982	X												
	1983	X												
	1984	X												
	1985	X												
	...						X	X						
	1996							X						
	1997								X					
	1998									X				
	1999										X			
	2000											X		

Figure 2. Cohort Matrix for Initiating Immigrant Cohorts, Generation-Lagged Citizen-Sponsored 5-Year Admission Cohorts

Source: Adapted from Carr and Tienda 2013

Table 1
Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) Admitted by Region of Origin, Age at Admission and 5-Year Cohort, 1981–2009
 (Percentages; Ns in parentheses)

Region of Origin/Age at Admission	5-Year LPR Cohort					
	1981–1985	1986–1990	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2009 ^a
Europe	(321,133)	(385,150)	(670,698)	(518,750)	(679,782)	(449,391)
0–16	19.8	17.7	19.4	20.3	19.2	14.2
17–49	67.6	70.0	64.6	64.2	67.3	69.2
50+	12.6	12.3	16.0	15.5	13.6	16.6
Meso-America ^b	(881,648)	(2,239,907)	(2,397,916)	(1,499,658)	(1,729,727)	(1,506,105)
0–16	26.4	16.2	16.5	25.7	18.6	18.9
17–49	65.4	74.8	75.6	60.9	67.4	64.4
50+	8.2	9.0	7.9	13.4	14.0	16.7
South America ^c	(198,576)	(286,757)	(300,662)	(276,410)	(398,739)	(468,442)
0–16	23.4	19.4	20.6	21.1	17.3	15.7
17–49	67.2	68.6	67.3	65.3	68.2	67.9
50+	9.4	11.9	12.1	13.6	14.6	16.4
Asia	(1,350,448)	(1,414,772)	(1,661,277)	(1,253,290)	(1,658,069)	(1,618,588)
0–16	25.1	21.1	19.6	19.5	15.7	15.9
17–49	61.0	61.6	62.5	61.7	67.4	64.3
50+	13.9	17.3	17.8	18.8	16.9	19.7
Africa	(76,989)	(115,261)	(160,012)	(221,103)	(311,362)	(437,013)
0–16	13.9	11.8	16.5	19.1	16.9	18.2
17–49	80.5	81.6	75.1	71.8	73.5	69.8
50+	5.6	6.6	8.5	9.1	9.6	12.0
Worldwide	(2,828,794)	(4,441,847)	(5,190,565)	(3,769,211)	(4,777,679)	(4,479,539)
0–16	24.5	18.0	18.1	22.2	17.4	17.0
17–49	64.1	70.0	69.5	62.6	67.9	65.8
50+	11.5	12.0	12.4	15.3	14.8	17.3

Source: Immigrants Admitted to the United States 1981–2000 data files (USDOL, Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1981–2000–2007) and Special Tabulations provided by U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010.

^gThe 2006–2009 admission cohort represents four rather than five years. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

^hIncludes Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and Canada.

^cIncludes Oceania.

Table 2

Summary of Family Migration Multipliers by Region of Origin, Age at Admission, and 5-Year LPR Cohort, 1981–2000

Family Migration Multipliers by Age at Admission						
LPR Cohort	Initiating Immigrants (n)	Cumulative Accompanying and Following Sponsored Relatives (n)	<17	17–49	50+	All
Europe						
1981–1985	128,235	228,878	0.44	1.13	0.22	1.78
1986–1990	178,928	208,684	0.33	0.70	0.14	1.17
1991–1995	308,902	373,634	0.38	0.66	0.17	1.21
1996–2000	215,868	359,383	0.46	0.89	0.32	1.67
Mesoamerica ^a						
1981–1985	221,260	765,742	1.09	1.98	0.39	3.46
1986–1990	1,497,026	921,425	0.18	0.34	0.10	0.62
1991–1995	1,380,413	1,329,522	0.30	0.52	0.15	0.96
1996–2000	312,381	1,313,381	1.23	2.22	0.75	4.20
South America ^b						
1981–1985	37,758	195,245	1.30	3.07	0.81	5.17
1986–1990	101,633	224,133	0.58	1.32	0.31	2.21
1991–1995	88,967	284,426	0.84	1.86	0.49	3.20
1996–2000	61,239	325,445	1.21	3.02	1.09	5.31
Asia						
1981–1985	472,080	1,044,320	0.55	1.16	0.51	2.21
1986–1990	403,160	1,033,399	0.66	1.40	0.51	2.56
1991–1995	526,489	1,222,461	0.58	1.28	0.46	2.32
1996–2000	301,427	1,192,213	0.87	2.03	1.06	3.95
Africa						
1981–1985	29,967	66,377	0.43	1.49	0.32	2.24
1986–1990	57,603	86,784	0.32	0.94	0.24	1.51
1991–1995	70,866	117,934	0.41	1.01	0.24	1.66
1996–2000	88,261	201,708	0.59	1.27	0.42	2.29

Source: *Immigrants Admitted to the United States 1981–2000* data files (USDJ 2007) and Special Tabulations provided by the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2010.

^aIncludes Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and Canada

Includes Oceania
q

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Table 3
New Legal Permanent Residents by Age at Admission: Top Four Sending Countries by 5-Year LPR Cohort, 1981–2009

(Percentages; Ns in parentheses)

Origin Country/Age at Admission	5-Year LPR Cohort					
	1981–1985	1986–1990	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2009
China	(126,689)	(135,923)	(222,430)	(n=177,277)	(250,964)	(289,748)
0–16	15.7	13.2	12.1	16.5	12.3	10.5
17–49	55.5	54.2	64.5	60.2	65.0	66.8
50+	28.8	32.6	23.4	23.3	22.7	22.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
India	(117,608)	(134,510)	(173,176)	(n=189,005)	(343,618)	(246,044)
0–16	17.2	16.1	17.2	16.0	11.8	12.7
17–49	65.6	62.6	62.6	63.2	73.1	65.6
50+	17.1	21.3	20.1	20.8	15.1	21.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Philippines	(219,319)	(255,750)	(280,475)	(n=211,425)	(266,637)	(260,174)
0–16	21.5	21.4	21.9	19.7	18.9	19.3
17–49	56.5	57.6	57.7	57.9	60.9	56.4
50+	22.0	20.9	20.4	22.4	21.2	24.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mexico	(334,507)	(1,320,175)	(1,488,140)	(n=757,593)	(875,719)	(575,561)
0–16	26.9	12.8	11.4	29.0	18.0	18.4
17–49	67.6	79.6	82.3	57.3	67.2	63.6
50+	5.6	7.6	6.3	13.8	14.8	18.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: *Immigrants Admitted to the United States 1981–2000* data files (USDOJ, *Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1981–2000–2007*) and *Special Tabulations provided by U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010*.

Notes: The 2006–2009 admission cohort represents four rather than five years. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. IRCA amnesty immigrants for China, India, and the Philippines are suppressed because of small numbers.

Table 4

Summary of Family Migration Multipliers by Age at Admission and 5-Year Initiating Immigrant Cohorts: Top Four Sending Countries, 1981–2000

Initiating Cohort	Initiating Immigrants (n)	Cumulative Accompanying and Following Sponsored Relatives (n)	Family Migration Multipliers by Age at Admission			
			<17	17–49	50+	All
China						
1981–1985	16,197	124,139	0.89	3.86	2.91	7.67
1986–1990	14,048	118,369	1.05	4.67	2.71	8.43
1991–1995	79,134	173,466	0.37	1.18	0.65	2.19
1996–2000	32,521	202,944	1.06	3.15	2.03	6.24
India						
1981–1985	12,825	127,998	1.78	5.55	2.65	9.98
1986–1990	15,370	147,538	1.61	5.59	2.40	9.60
1991–1995	29,086	169,794	1.05	3.30	1.49	5.84
1996–2000	36,162	184,830	0.81	2.62	1.69	5.11
Philippines						
1981–1985	36,569	217,329	1.38	3.11	1.45	5.94
1986–1990	47,110	180,656	0.93	1.92	0.99	3.84
1991–1995	51,059	206,017	1.00	2.08	0.96	4.04
1996–2000	39,568	200,769	1.08	2.33	1.66	5.07
Mexico						
1981–1985	124,385	233,377	0.60	1.06	0.22	1.88
1986–1990	1,093,752	316,008	0.07	0.15	0.07	0.29
1991–1995	1,084,947	686,966	0.18	0.34	0.11	0.63
1996–2000	102,647	654,398	2.01	3.25	1.12	6.38

Source: *Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1981–2000* data files (USDOL 2007) and Special Tabulations provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010.

Table 5
Sponsored Parent (3P) LPRs by Age at Arrival: Top Four Sending Countries by 5-Year Cohort, 1981–2009

(Percentages; Ns in parentheses)

Country of Origin/Age at Admission	5-Year LPR Cohort					
	1981–1985	1986–1990	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2009
China						
0–16	(22,229)	(27,742)	(33,695)	(26,619)	(36,949)	(39,062)
17–49	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
50+	2.9	2.1	2.7	3.2	1.2	1.8
Total	97.1	97.9	97.3	96.8	98.8	98.2
India						
0–16	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
17–49	(17,127)	(23,988)	(27,627)	(26,907)	(32,201)	(38,071)
50+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	4.6	5.4	5.9	5.0	3.7	3.8
95.4	94.6	94.1	95.0	96.3	96.2	
Philippines						
0–16	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
17–49	(39,710)	(41,451)	(38,767)	(29,642)	(31,427)	(40,136)
50+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	4.5	4.3	5.2	4.8	3.4	3.7
95.5	95.7	94.8	95.2	96.6	96.3	
Mexico						
0–16	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
17–49	(10,023)	(19,576)	(22,342)	(87,215)	(115,261)	(89,769)
50+	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	16.7	12.9	13.3	10.4	13.5	13.2
83.2	87.1	86.7	89.6	86.5	86.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: *Immigrants Admitted to the United States 1981–2000* data files (USDOJ 2007) and Special Tabulations provided by U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010.

Notes: The 2006–2009 admission cohort represents four rather than five years. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table 6
Sponsored Family Preference (2D, 4F) LPRs by Age At Arrival: Top Four Sending Countries by 5-Year Cohort, 1981–2009

(Percentages; Ns in parentheses)

Country of Origin/Age at Admission	5-Year LPR Cohort						
	1981–1985	1986–1990	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2009	
China	(76,439)	(81,311)	(61,370)	(62,150)	(62,378)	(59,250)	
0–16	22.3	19.3	18.4	19.5	17.6	18.9	
17–49	66.6	66.0	66.0	61.8	59.2	58.3	
50+	11.0	14.7	15.7	18.7	23.2	22.8	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
India	(78,156)	(79,319)	(80,381)	(81,264)	(70,719)	(58,028)	
0–16	21.3	22.2	27.0	25.8	20.0	22.1	
17–49	74.7	71.7	63.7	59.7	57.4	58.4	
50+	4.1	6.1	9.3	14.5	22.7	19.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Philippines	(78,969)	(78,745)	(79,360)	(73,371)	(75,007)	(57,639)	
0–16	24.9	25.1	26.0	26.4	27.2	27.3	
17–49	67.8	67.2	62.6	56.0	50.2	49.3	
50+	7.3	7.7	11.4	17.6	22.6	23.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Mexico	(92,065)	(83,699)	(186,143)	(369,372)	(289,247)	(188,654)	
0–16	36.6	29.9	41.5	42.4	30.4	29.1	
17–49	61.1	67.1	53.4	52.5	63.9	64.9	
50+	2.3	3.0	5.1	5.2	5.7	6.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Source: *Immigrants Admitted to the United States 1981–2000* data files (USDOJ 2007) and Special Tabulations provided by U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010.

Notes: The 2006–2009 admission cohort represents four rather than five years. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.