

A Record-Setting Decade of Immigration: 2000 to 2010

By Steven A. Camarota

New data from the Census Bureau show that the nation's immigrant population (legal and illegal), also referred to as the foreign-born, reached 40 million in 2010, the highest number in American history. Nearly 14 million new immigrants (legal and illegal) settled in the country from 2000 to 2010, making it the highest decade of immigration in American history. This is the case even though there was a net decline of jobs during the decade. In contrast, from 1990 to 2000 job growth was 22 million and 13.2 million new immigrants arrived. Immigrants come for many reasons, such as a desire to join relatives or to access public services. As a result, immigration remains high even during a prolonged period of economic weakness.

Among the findings:

- The nation's immigrant population (legal and illegal) reached 40 million in 2010, the highest number in the nation's history.
- The nation's immigrant population has doubled since 1990, nearly tripled since 1980, and quadrupled since 1970, when it stood at 9.7 million.
- Of the 40 million immigrants in the country in 2010, 13.9 million arrived in 2000 or later making it the highest decade of immigration in American history, even though there was a net loss of jobs during the decade.
- New arrivals are offset by out-migration and deaths. As a result, the net increase in the immigrant population was more than 8.8 million over the last decade, from 31.1 million in 2000.
- While the number of immigrants in the country is higher than at any time in American history, the immigrant share of the population (12.9 percent) was higher 90 years ago.
- Growth in the immigrant population has primarily been driven by high levels of legal immigration. Roughly three-fourths of immigrants in the country are here legally.
- Immigrants continue to head to non-traditional states of settlement. The six states with the largest immigrant populations accounted for 65 percent of the total in 2010, 68 percent in 2000, and 73 percent in 1990.
- Overall the immigrant population grew 28 percent between 2000 and 2010. But it grew at more than twice the national rate in: Alabama (92 percent), South Carolina (88 percent), Tennessee (82 percent), Arkansas (79 percent), Kentucky (75 percent), North Carolina (67 percent), South Dakota (65 percent), Georgia (63 percent), Indiana (61 percent), Nevada (61 percent), Delaware (60 percent), Virginia (60 percent), and Oklahoma (57 percent).

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- Since 1990 the immigrant population has doubled. It grew at more than twice the national rate in: North Carolina (525 percent), Georgia (445 percent), Arkansas (430 percent), Tennessee (389 percent), Nevada (385 percent), South Carolina (337 percent), Kentucky (312 percent), Nebraska (298 percent), Alabama (287 percent), Utah (280 percent), Colorado (249 percent), Minnesota (235 percent), Delaware (223 percent), Iowa (222 percent), Indiana (219 percent), Oklahoma (215 percent), and Arizona (208 percent).
- States with the largest numerical increases over the last decade were: California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Washington, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts.
- Latin America continued to dominate immigration. Countries from this region accounted for 58 percent of the growth in the immigrant population from 2000 to 2010.
- With nearly 12 million immigrants, Mexico was by far the top immigrant-sending country, accounting for 29 percent of all immigrants and 29 percent of growth in the immigrant population from 2000 to 2010.
- Other countries have also seen significant growth in their populations. In 1990 there was only one sending-country with more than one million immigrants in the United States, by 2000 there were four such countries, and in 2010 there were eight.
- The median age of immigrants in 2010 was 41.4 compared to 35.9 for natives.

Introduction

The nation's economic performance over the last decade has been described as a "lost decade" for jobs. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of jobs in the United States actually declined. In terms of immigration, however, the number of new immigrants and the overall size of the immigrant population both set new records. In contrast, from 1990 to 2000 job growth exceeded 20 million, yet fewer immigrants actually arrived during that decade. This does not mean that immigration is entirely unconnected to the U.S. job market. But these figures are a reminder that immigration levels are not as tightly linked to the economy as some have imagined. Such factors as the desire to access public services, or to enjoy greater political freedom or to join relatives in the United States significantly impact migration. And these things are unaffected by the U.S. economy.

The data for this *Background* come primarily from the just-released American Community Survey (ACS) collected by the Census Bureau. The ACS asks immigrants, also referred to as the foreign-born, when did they come to the United States. The ACS from 2010 shows a total immigrant population of 40 million (legal and illegal). Of this number some 10 to 12 million are likely illegal immigrants.¹ The ACS also shows 13.9 million immigrants (legal and illegal) arrived in the last decade. This compares to the 13.2 million (legal and illegal) who arrived from 1990 to 2000 shown by the 2000 Census.² Statistically, the figures for the decade just completed are higher than those from the 2000 Census, making the period from 2000 to 2010 the highest decade of new immigration in the nation's history. In the 1980s, which like the 1990s was also a period of economic expansion, 8.7 million new immigrants arrived.³

Data and Methods

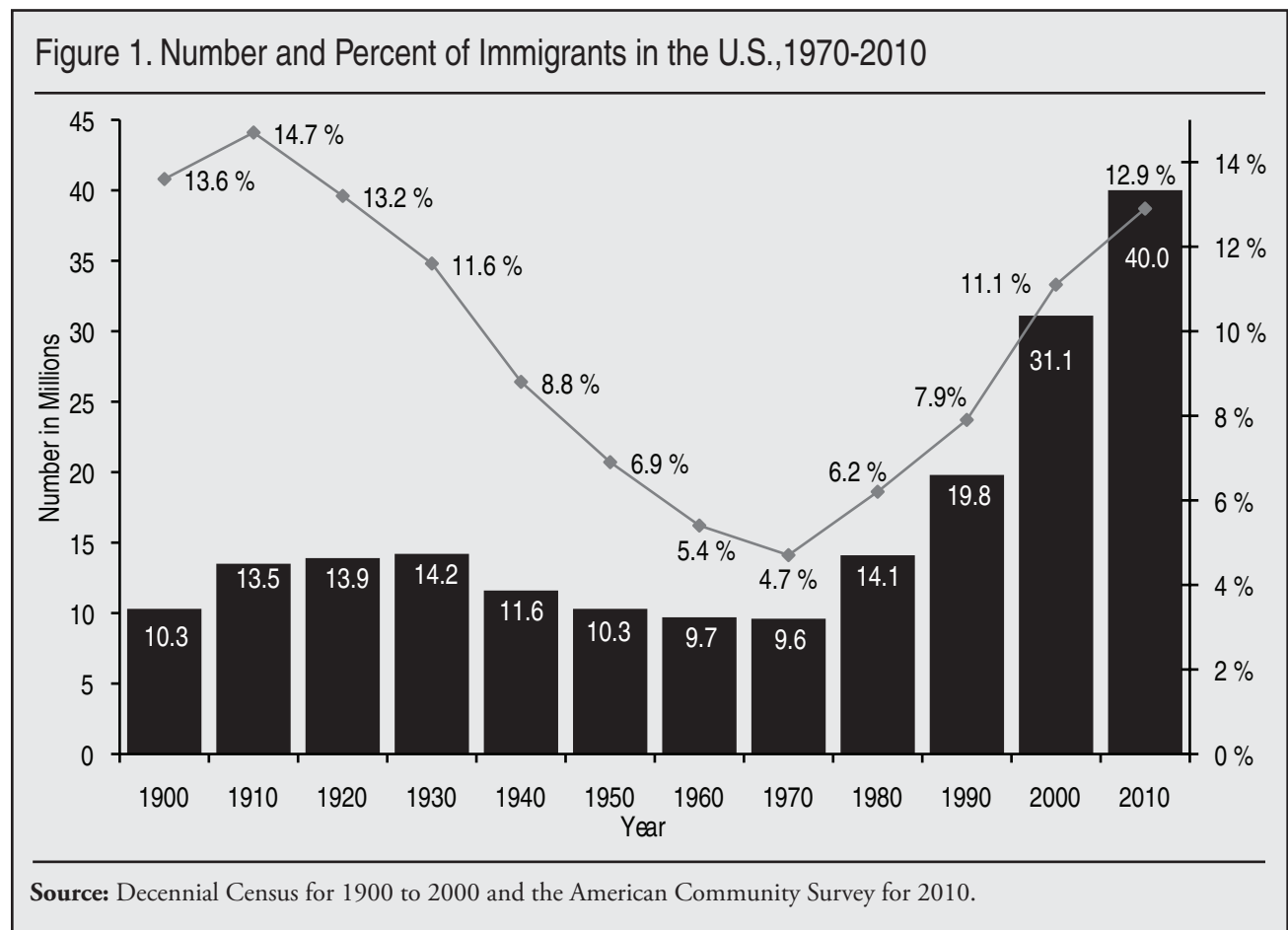
As already discussed, the data for this *Background* come primarily from the ACS collected by the Census Bureau. The ACS has become one of the primary sources of data on the size and growth of the nation's immigrant population. The ACS samples roughly 4.5 million individuals. In this report, the terms foreign-born and immigrant are used synonymously. Immigrants are persons living in the United States who were not American citizens at birth. This includes naturalized American citizens, legal permanent residents (green card holders), illegal aliens, and people on long-term temporary visas such as foreign students or guestworkers, who respond to the ACS. It does not include

those born abroad of American parents or those born in outlying territories of the United States such as Puerto Rico. There is research indicating that some 5 percent of the immigrant population is missed by Census Bureau surveys of this kind.⁴ If correct, then the overall foreign-born population stood at 42 million in 2010.

Growth in the Immigrant Population

Overall Numbers. Figure 1 reports the immigrant population in the United States from 1990 to 2010. The bars show the number in millions and the line shows the share of the U.S. population that is immigrant. The figure shows that the size and growth of the immigrant population varied significantly over the last 110 years. The total immigrant population of 40 million in 2010 is much higher than at any other period of American history. This population has grown dramatically in recent decades; doubling since 1990, nearly tripling since 1980, and quadrupling since 1970. This dramatic growth is striking, because the only way the immigrant population can grow is through new arrivals. By definition, no one born in the United States is foreign-born and so births cannot add to the immigrant population. Moreover, each year some immigrants die, and others return home. There is some debate about the size of out-migration, but combined deaths and return-migration together equal 1-2 percent of the immigrant population annually or 300,000 to 800,000 each year over the last decade.⁵ As will be discussed later, for the immigrant population to have actually increased by more than 8.8 million from 2000 to 2010, new immigration must greatly exceed this net growth.

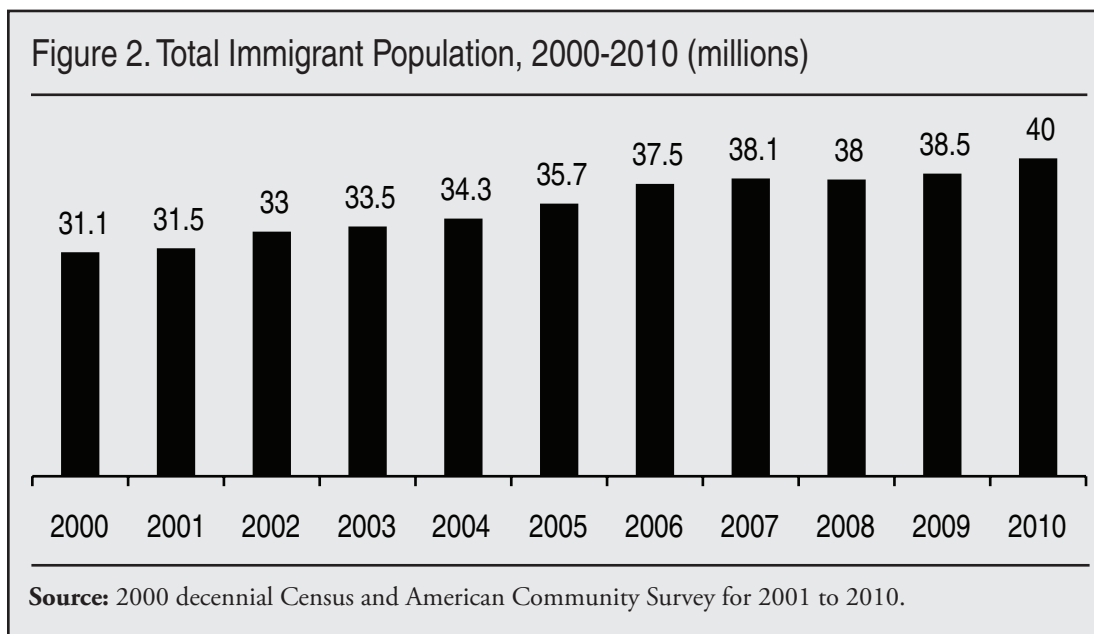
In addition to the number of immigrants, Figure 1 also shows the share of the U.S. population that is foreign-born. The foreign-born share has grown significantly, though not as dramatically as the number of immigrants because the overall size of the U.S. population has increased substantially. In 2010, 12.9 percent of the population, or about one out of eight people in the United States, were foreign-born. The immigrant share of the U.S. population has



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increased two-and-a-half fold since 1970, when it was 4.7 percent. Figure 1 shows that the foreign-born percentage of the population was higher than it is today from 1900 to 1930, while it has been lower in every census since then.

Figure 2 reports growth in the foreign-born population from 2000 to 2010 based on the ACS. The survey shows significant growth throughout the decade. The figure for 2000 is from the decennial census because the ACS was not fully implemented until 2005.⁶ Therefore, for 2000 we use the decennial census. Because the ACS was not fully implemented until 2005, it is better to compare 2000 and 2005 and individual years after 2005, then to examine growth using the 2001 to 2004 ACS.⁷ Figure 2 shows a significant fall off in the growth of the immigrant population from 2007 to 2009, with an increase of only 400,000 over that two-year period. This slowing in the growth likely reflects a reduction in the number of new immigrants (legal and illegal) settling in the country and an increase in out-migration.



The deterioration in the U.S. economy coupled with stepped-up enforcement efforts at the end of the Bush administration likely caused fewer immigrants to enter the country and more to leave. In a series of recent reports, the Center for Immigration Studies estimated immigration and emigration rates throughout the decade. In general, our prior research found good evidence that the level of new immigration fell at the end of the decade and also that out-migration increased substantially.⁸

The new data for 2010 show very substantial growth of more than 1.4 million between 2009 and 2010. As already discussed, because of emigration and deaths, the number of immigrants between 2009 and 2010 must be significantly higher than 1.4 million for the total population to grow by this amount. This may be an indication that immigration levels have begun to accelerate again even though the U.S. economy remains weak. However, the high growth from 2009 to 2010 must be interpreted with caution. Single year-to-year comparisons can be volatile. Moreover, changes in the way the Census Bureau prepared the data between 2009 and 2010 may partly explain the seemingly high rate of growth from 2009 to 2010.⁹

New Arrivals. Figures 1 and 2 show that the immigrant population grew dramatically in the last decade. For this to have occurred, the number of new arrivals must also have been high. In addition to asking respondents if they are immigrants, the ACS also asks them what year they came to the United States to live. Of the 40 million immigrants in the country in 2010, 13.9 million ($\pm 99,000$) responded that they came to the United States in 2000 or later. That is, 13.9 million immigrants were in the country in 2010 who had come to the United States between 2000 and 2010.¹⁰ Of course, some of the immigrants who arrived during the decade would have died or returned home by

2010, so the actual level of new arrivals is somewhat higher. The reason that the immigrant population did not grow by 13.9 million is that roughly five million immigrants died or went home over this time period so the net change was slightly more than 8.8 million.

The 2000 Census also included the year of arrival question. It found that 13.2 million immigrants arrived during the preceding decade and were still in the country in 2000. The difference between the number of new arrivals 1990-2000 and the decade just completed is statistically significant.¹¹ This makes the last decade the highest in U.S. history. The 1990 Census showed 8.7 million new immigrants arrived between 1980 and 1990, much lower than the nearly 14 million who arrived in the 10 years prior to 2010. Based on the available evidence, no other decade comes close to this level of new immigration.¹²

Job Growth. The finding that new immigration was higher in the 10 years prior to 2010 than in the 10 years prior to 2000 is important because the two decades were very different in terms of job growth. There were two significant recessions during the first decade of this century plus the September 11 terrorist attacks. As Figure 3 shows, during the decade there was actually a net loss of about 400,000 jobs according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) survey of businesses. In contrast, the BLS reports a net increase in jobs of about 22 million between 1990 and 2000.¹³

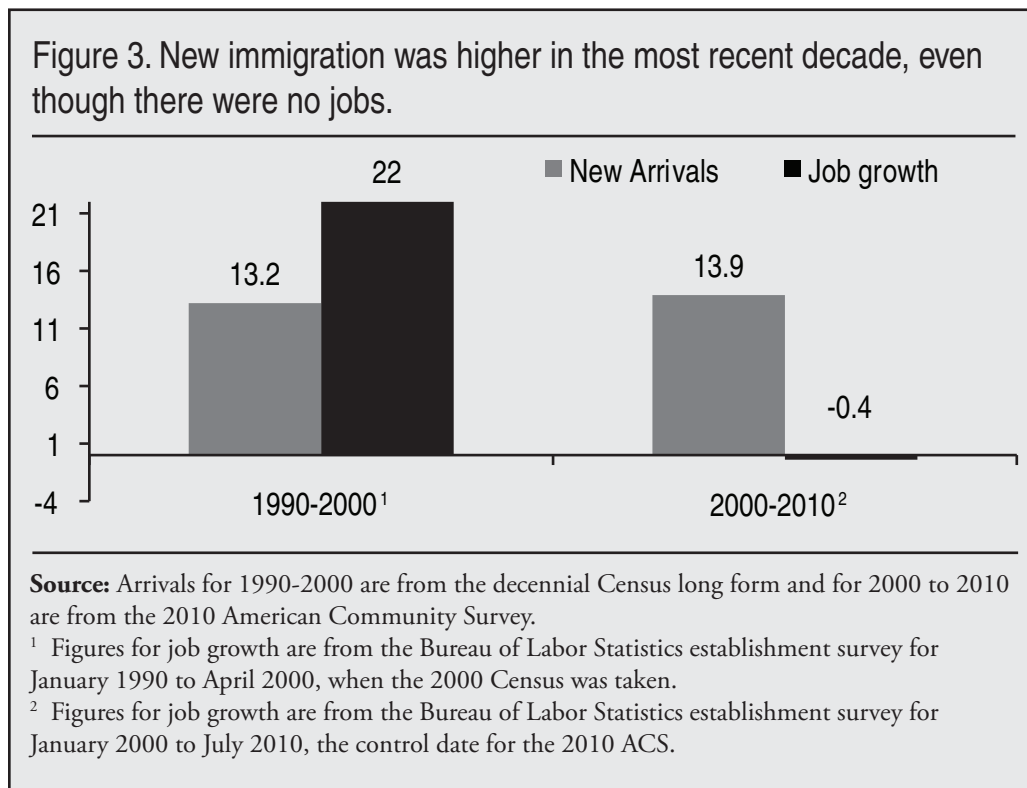
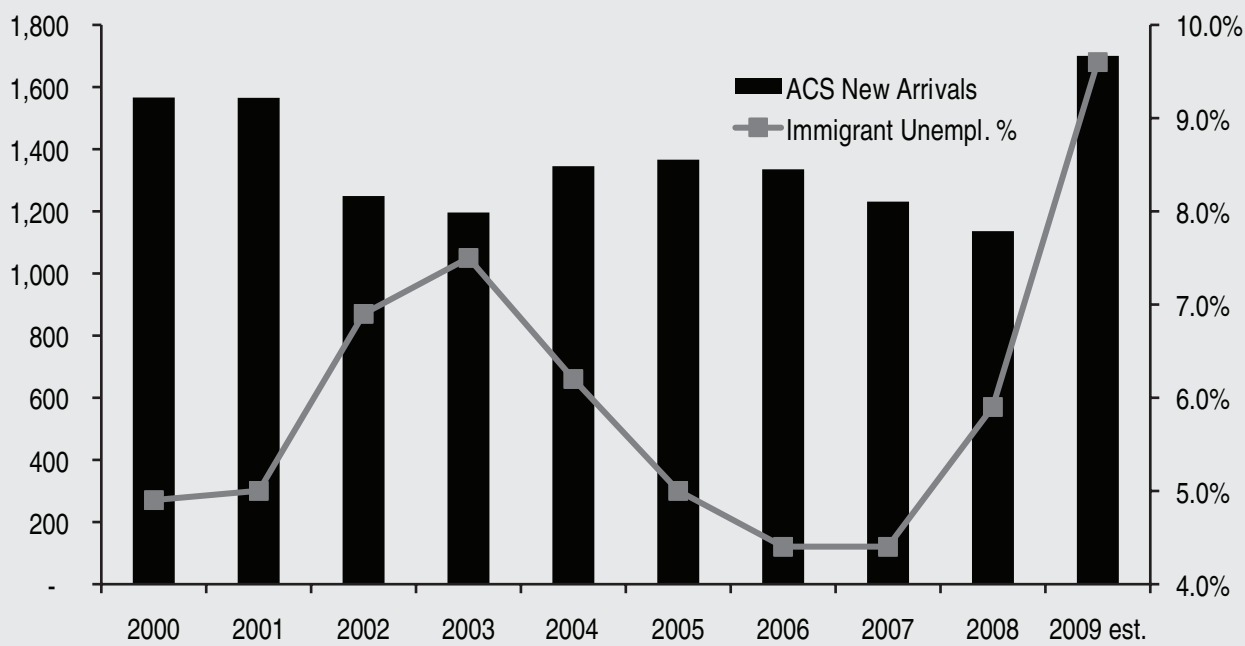


Figure 4 (p. 6) reports new arrivals based on the ACS from 2000 to 2009. It also reports the unemployment rate for immigrants during the decade. It must be emphasized that individual year of arrival data are not yet available from the 2010 ACS. The figure of 1.7 million for 2009 is an estimate based on other information in the 2010 data.¹⁴ Therefore, the 1.7 million new arrivals in 2009 must be interpreted with caution. When figures for individual year of arrival become available from the 2010 public use of the ACS, that number will need to be revised. Although the arrival data support this figure, 1.7 million arrivals seems implausibly high. On the other hand, for the immigrant population to grow by 1.4 million between 2009 and 2010 (see Figure 2), the number of new arrivals would have to be several hundred thousand higher than 1.4 million because of the deaths and return migration that take place each year. Overall, Figure 4 shows that unemployment does seem to impact immigration levels. However, the figure also shows that the level of new immigration can remain very high even when unemployment increases significantly for immigrants.

Figure 4. New Arrivals From the ACS Compared to Immigrant Unemployment Rate



Source: Immigrant arrivals for 2000 to 2009 are from the American Community Survey, which asks about arrival in the United States. The figure for 2009 is an estimate based on a comparison of the 2009 and 2010 ACS and should be interpreted with caution as the Census Bureau has not yet released individual year of arrival data from the 2010 ACS. Immigrant unemployment rates are from the March 2000 through 2009 Current Population Surveys, seasonally unadjusted.

The above figures are a reminder that immigration is a complex process; and it is not simply a function of labor-market conditions. Such factors as the desire to be with relatives or to enjoy the political freedoms and lower levels of official corruption play a significant role in the decision to come to the United States. The generosity of America’s public benefits and the quality of public services can also make this country an attractive place to settle. These things do not change during a recession, even a steep one. Moreover, the employment and wages available in the United States may still be much better than in many of the primary immigrant-sending countries, even during a severe economic downturn or a prolonged period of weak job growth such as the past decade.

It is also important to understand that immigration is driven in part by social networks of friends and family who provide information about conditions in the United States to those back home, which both makes them more aware of opportunities in the United States and more likely to come. Also, new immigrants often live with friends who can assist new immigrants after they come. Thus, as the immigrant population grows, it creates its own momentum for more immigration. As a result, immigration can remain very high even if there is no job growth. This does not mean that economic factors are unimportant. But the fact that more immigrants arrived in the first decade of the 21st century than in the previous decade is a clear indication that factors other than the state of the U.S. economy matter a great deal.

State Data. Tables 1 through 5 (pp. 8-12) show state data. Table 1 shows the number of immigrants in each state for 2010. California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts, Georgia, Virginia, Washington, Arizona, and Maryland have the largest immigrant populations. Each of these states had more than 800,000 foreign-born residents in 2010. California has the largest immigrant population, accounting for more than one-fourth of the national total. New York and Texas are next, with about 10 percent of the nation’s immigrants. With 9 percent of the nation’s immigrants, Florida’s foreign-born population is similar in size. New Jersey and Illinois are next,

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with five and four percent of the nation's immigrants respectively. Table 1 shows that the immigrant population is concentrated in only a few states. These six states account for 65 percent of the nation's foreign-born population, but only 40 percent of the nation's overall population.

As a share of their populations, many of the states with the largest immigrant populations are also those with the highest foreign-born shares. However, several smaller states such as Hawaii and Nevada rank high in terms of the percentage of their populations that are foreign born, even though the overall number of immigrants is more modest relative to larger states.

Table 2 shows the immigrant populations by state based on their year of arrival grouped by decade. Table 3 reports the size of state immigrant populations in 2010, 2000, and 1990. Table 3 shows that while the immigrant population remains concentrated, it has become less so over time. In 1990, California accounted for 33 percent of the foreign-born, but by 2000 it was 28 percent, and by 2010 it was 25 percent of the total. If we look at the top-six states of immigrant settlement, they accounted for 73 percent of the total foreign born in 1990, 68 percent in 2000 and 65 percent in 2010.

There were 13 states where the growth in the immigrant population was more than twice the national average of 28 percent over the last decade. These states were Alabama (92 percent), South Carolina (88 percent), Tennessee (82 percent), Arkansas (79 percent), Kentucky (75 percent), North Carolina (67 percent), South Dakota (65 percent), Georgia (63 percent), Indiana (61 percent), Nevada (61 percent), Delaware (60 percent), Virginia (60 percent), and Oklahoma (57 percent). It is worth noting that the growth rate in California, the state with the largest immigrant population, was only about half the national average. Table 3 makes clear that the nation's immigrant population has grown very dramatically outside of traditional areas of immigrant settlement, such as California.

Countries. Table 6 (p. 13) shows some of the regions of the world by year of arrival. Mexico was by far the top-sending country in the last decade with more than four million immigrants from that country arriving between 2000 and 2010. Table 7 (p. 13) reports the countries with the most immigrants in the United States in 2010. It also shows those same countries in 2000 and 1990. Overall, the 2.5 million increase in the size of the Mexican population accounted for 29 percent of the growth in the foreign-born, a share consistent with that nation's overall share of the immigrant population. Latin America continued to dominate immigration in the last decade. Countries from this region accounted for 58 percent of the growth in the immigrant population from 2000 to 2010. The immigrant populations from many countries have grown significantly. In 1990 only one country had more than one million immigrants in the United States. In 2000 there were four such countries, and by 2010 there were eight countries with more than one million immigrants in the United States.

Conclusion

This report examines just-released Census Bureau data collected in 2010 showing that the nation's immigrant population reached 40 million in 2010, the highest level in American history. The same data also show that 13.9 million immigrants (legal and illegal) arrived in the United States between 2000 and 2010, making it the highest decade for immigration in the nation's history. This compares to 13.2 million arrivals from 1990 to 2000. This is a striking finding because the number of new arrivals in the decade just completed is higher than the decade prior to the 2000 Census, yet the two decades were fundamentally different in terms of job growth. There were two significant recessions between 2000 and 2001, plus the September 11 terrorist attacks. In fact, there was no job growth for large parts of the decade and, in fact, there was an overall net loss of jobs from January 2000 to the middle of 2010. The finding that immigration was so high in the first decade of the 21st century is important because it is a reminder that immigration is a complex process; and it is not simply a function of labor-market conditions in this country.

Many factors influence migration decisions, such as the desire to be with relatives, the political freedoms in this country, and the generosity of American public services. These things do not change, even during a prolonged period

of economic stagnation such the decade just completed. It is also important to understand that immigration is driven in part by social networks of friends and family who provide information about conditions in the United States and often help new immigrants after they arrive. As the immigrant population grows, it creates pressure for more immigration. As a result, the level of new immigration remained high, even in the face of a weak job market.

The new data also show that the immigrant population continues to grow outside of traditional areas of immigrant settlement. Between 2000 and 2010 there were 13 states where the immigrant population grew by more than twice the national average of 28 percent. In addition, Latin American countries continue to dominate the flow of immigrants into the United States, accounting for 58 percent of the growth in the foreign-born population between 2000 and 2010.

Absent a change in policy, new immigration will likely continue at very high levels. In fact, there is evidence that immigration levels have already begun to increase.

Table 1. State Immigrant Populations and Percentages, 2010

State	Immigrant Number	Immigrant Share
California	10,150,429	27.2 %
New York	4,297,612	22.2 %
New Jersey	1,844,581	21.0 %
Florida	3,658,043	19.4 %
Nevada	508,458	18.8 %
Hawaii	248,213	18.2 %
Texas	4,142,031	16.4 %
Massachusetts	983,564	15.0 %
Maryland	803,695	13.9 %
Illinois	1,759,859	13.7 %
Connecticut	487,120	13.6 %
District of Columbia	81,734	13.5 %
Arizona	856,663	13.4 %
Washington	886,262	13.1 %
Rhode Island	134,335	12.8 %
Virginia	911,119	11.4 %
New Mexico	205,141	9.9 %
Colorado	497,105	9.8 %
Oregon	375,743	9.8 %
Georgia	942,959	9.7 %
Utah	222,638	8.0 %
Delaware	71,868	8.0 %
North Carolina	719,137	7.5 %
Minnesota	378,483	7.1 %
Alaska	49,319	6.9 %
Kansas	186,942	6.5 %
Nebraska	112,178	6.1 %
Michigan	587,747	6.0 %
Pennsylvania	739,068	5.8 %
Idaho	87,098	5.5 %
Oklahoma	206,382	5.5 %
New Hampshire	69,742	5.3 %
South Carolina	218,494	4.7 %
Indiana	300,789	4.6 %
Iowa	139,477	4.6 %
Tennessee	288,993	4.5 %
Arkansas	131,667	4.5 %
Wisconsin	254,920	4.5 %
Vermont	27,560	4.4 %
Ohio	469,748	4.1 %
Missouri	232,537	3.9 %
Louisiana	172,866	3.8 %
Alabama	168,596	3.5 %
Maine	45,666	3.4 %
Kentucky	140,583	3.2 %
Wyoming	15,843	2.8 %
South Dakota	22,238	2.7 %
North Dakota	16,639	2.5 %
Mississippi	61,428	2.1 %
Montana	20,031	2.0 %
West Virginia	22,511	1.2 %
Total	39,955,854	12.9 %

Source: 2010 American Community Survey.

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Table 2. State Immigrant Population, 2010, By Year of Arrival

State	Total Immigrant Population	2000-2010	1990-1999	1980-1989	Pre-1980
California	10,150,429	2,823,969	2,686,511	2,404,953	2,234,996
New York	4,297,612	1,341,567	1,199,340	852,747	903,958
Texas	4,142,031	1,509,389	1,192,763	755,117	684,762
Florida	3,658,043	1,292,354	883,965	656,569	825,155
New Jersey	1,844,581	629,632	511,414	333,643	369,892
Illinois	1,759,859	572,494	536,635	283,942	366,788
Massachusetts	983,564	374,605	241,810	169,326	197,823
Georgia	942,959	408,745	299,347	134,509	100,358
Virginia	911,119	378,626	248,646	151,160	132,687
Washington	886,262	332,727	255,836	142,818	154,881
Arizona	856,663	271,974	245,823	164,649	174,217
Maryland	803,695	334,783	205,334	137,072	126,506
Pennsylvania	739,068	298,325	188,960	110,474	141,309
North Carolina	719,137	328,762	223,399	89,146	77,830
Michigan	587,747	218,726	164,457	70,881	133,683
Nevada	508,458	162,097	139,712	107,192	99,457
Colorado	497,105	199,552	146,320	67,130	84,103
Connecticut	487,120	181,951	125,320	70,228	109,621
Ohio	469,748	196,391	107,093	55,019	111,245
Minnesota	378,483	165,741	109,412	57,309	46,021
Oregon	375,743	128,285	119,550	59,597	68,311
Indiana	300,789	144,376	76,216	32,967	47,230
Tennessee	288,993	149,035	75,610	33,580	30,768
Wisconsin	254,920	102,862	67,208	34,703	50,147
Hawaii	248,213	78,030	52,209	50,338	67,636
Missouri	232,537	104,352	65,318	26,782	36,085
Utah	222,638	83,934	69,859	36,600	32,245
South Carolina	218,494	110,872	51,015	21,936	34,671
Oklahoma	206,382	92,190	57,882	27,925	28,385
New Mexico	205,141	71,740	48,799	34,807	49,795
Kansas	186,942	75,188	57,803	27,834	26,117
Louisiana	172,866	78,172	35,022	27,231	32,441
Alabama	168,596	95,333	37,162	15,718	20,383
Kentucky	140,583	71,810	36,236	13,418	19,119
Iowa	139,477	64,317	43,014	15,850	16,296
Rhode Island	134,335	48,112	29,250	21,944	35,029
Arkansas	131,667	62,525	35,984	16,134	17,024
Nebraska	112,178	43,225	38,952	17,526	12,475
Idaho	87,098	31,166	24,875	14,792	16,265
District of Columbia	81,734	36,875	17,651	14,696	12,512
Delaware	71,868	30,925	19,444	8,161	13,338
New Hampshire	69,742	23,122	15,922	10,301	20,397
Mississippi	61,428	30,105	15,123	6,836	9,364
Alaska	49,319	17,314	14,629	9,832	7,544
Maine	45,666	14,479	8,696	5,075	17,416
Vermont	27,560	9,949	7,087	2,931	7,593
West Virginia	22,511	9,296	4,120	3,315	5,780
South Dakota	22,238	10,690	7,025	2,481	2,042
Montana	20,031	6,415	3,714	2,561	7,341
North Dakota	16,639	8,123	4,140	1,946	2,430
Wyoming	15,843	7,853	3,266	1,746	2,978
Total	39,955,854	13,863,080	10,854,878	7,413,447	7,824,449

Source: 2010 American Community Survey.

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**Table 3. Number and Growth of Immigrant Populations by State, 2010, 2000, and 1990
Ranked by Percentage Increase, 2000 to 2010**

State	2010	2000	1990	Numeric Growth 1990-2010	Percent Growth 1990-2010	Numeric Growth 2000-2010	Percent Growth 2000-2010
Alabama	168,596	87,772	43,533	125,063	287.3 %	80,824	92.1 %
South Carolina	218,494	115,978	49,964	168,530	337.3 %	102,516	88.4 %
Tennessee	288,993	159,004	59,114	229,879	388.9 %	129,989	81.8 %
Arkansas	131,667	73,690	24,867	106,800	429.5 %	57,977	78.7 %
Kentucky	140,583	80,271	34,119	106,464	312.0 %	60,312	75.1 %
North Carolina	719,137	430,000	115,077	604,060	524.9 %	289,137	67.2 %
South Dakota	22,238	13,495	7,731	14,507	187.6 %	8,743	64.8 %
Georgia	942,959	577,273	173,126	769,833	444.7 %	365,686	63.3 %
Indiana	300,789	186,534	94,263	206,526	219.1 %	114,255	61.3 %
Nevada	508,458	316,593	104,828	403,630	385.0 %	191,865	60.6 %
Delaware	71,868	44,898	22,275	49,593	222.6 %	26,970	60.1 %
Virginia	911,119	570,279	311,809	599,310	192.2 %	340,840	59.8 %
Oklahoma	206,382	131,747	65,489	140,893	215.1 %	74,635	56.7 %
Maryland	803,695	518,315	313,494	490,201	156.4 %	285,380	55.1 %
Mississippi	61,428	39,908	20,383	41,045	201.4 %	21,520	53.9 %
Missouri	232,537	151,196	83,633	148,904	178.0 %	81,341	53.8 %
Iowa	139,477	91,085	43,316	96,161	222.0 %	48,392	53.1 %
Nebraska	112,178	74,638	28,198	83,980	297.8 %	37,540	50.3 %
Louisiana	172,866	115,885	87,407	85,459	97.8 %	56,981	49.2 %
Pennsylvania	739,068	508,291	369,316	369,752	100.1 %	230,777	45.4 %
Minnesota	378,483	260,463	113,039	265,444	234.8 %	118,020	45.3 %
Washington	886,262	614,457	322,144	564,118	175.1 %	271,805	44.2 %
Texas	4,142,031	2,899,642	1,524,436	2,617,595	171.7 %	1,242,389	42.8 %
Wyoming	15,843	11,205	7,647	8,196	107.2 %	4,638	41.4 %
Utah	222,638	158,664	58,600	164,038	279.9 %	63,974	40.3 %
Kansas	186,942	134,735	62,840	124,102	197.5 %	52,207	38.7 %
Ohio	469,748	339,279	259,673	210,075	80.9 %	130,469	38.5 %
North Dakota	16,639	12,114	9,388	7,251	77.2 %	4,525	37.4 %
New Mexico	205,141	149,606	80,514	124,627	154.8 %	55,535	37.1 %
Florida	3,658,043	2,670,828	1,662,601	1,995,442	120.0 %	987,215	37.0 %
Idaho	87,098	64,080	28,905	58,193	201.3 %	23,018	35.9 %
Colorado	497,105	369,903	142,434	354,671	249.0 %	127,202	34.4 %
Alaska	49,319	37,170	24,814	24,505	98.8 %	12,149	32.7 %
Connecticut	487,120	369,967	279,383	207,737	74.4 %	117,153	31.7 %
Wisconsin	254,920	193,751	121,547	133,373	109.7 %	61,169	31.6 %
Arizona	856,663	656,183	278,205	578,458	207.9 %	200,480	30.6 %
Oregon	375,743	289,702	139,307	236,436	169.7 %	86,041	29.7 %
New Hampshire	69,742	54,154	41,193	28,549	69.3 %	15,588	28.8 %
Massachusetts	983,564	772,983	573,733	409,831	71.4 %	210,581	27.2 %
New Jersey	1,844,581	1,476,327	966,610	877,971	90.8 %	368,254	24.9 %
Maine	45,666	36,691	36,296	9,370	25.8 %	8,975	24.5 %
Montana	20,031	16,396	13,779	6,252	45.4 %	3,635	22.2 %
Vermont	27,560	23,245	17,544	10,016	57.1 %	4,315	18.6 %
Hawaii	248,213	212,229	162,704	85,509	52.6 %	35,984	17.0 %
West Virginia	22,511	19,390	15,712	6,799	43.3 %	3,121	16.1 %
Illinois	1,759,859	1,529,058	952,272	807,587	84.8 %	230,801	15.1 %
California	10,150,429	8,864,255	6,458,825	3,691,604	57.2 %	1,286,174	14.5 %
Rhode Island	134,335	119,277	95,088	39,247	41.3 %	15,058	12.6 %
Michigan	587,747	523,589	355,393	232,354	65.4 %	64,158	12.3 %
DC	81,734	73,561	58,887	22,847	38.8 %	8,173	11.1 %
New York	4,297,612	3,868,133	2,851,861	1,445,751	50.7 %	429,479	11.1 %
Total	39,955,854	31,107,889	19,767,316	20,188,538	102.1 %	8,847,965	28.4 %

Source: 1990 and 2000 decennial Census and 2010 American Community Survey.

Table 4. Citizenship for Immigrants by State

State	Total Immigrant Population	Percent Immigrants Who Are Citizens
Alabama	168,596	28.5 %
Alaska	49,319	48.9 %
Arizona	856,663	36.3 %
Arkansas	131,667	27.7 %
California	10,150,429	45.6 %
Colorado	497,105	35.7 %
Connecticut	487,120	46.8 %
Delaware	71,868	46.6 %
District of Columbia	81,734	39.7 %
Florida	3,658,043	48.5 %
Georgia	942,959	35.0 %
Hawaii	248,213	56.9 %
Idaho	87,098	33.9 %
Illinois	1,759,859	43.7 %
Indiana	300,789	36.5 %
Iowa	139,477	37.1 %
Kansas	186,942	32.5 %
Kentucky	140,583	34.2 %
Louisiana	172,866	38.7 %
Maine	45,666	56.6 %
Maryland	803,695	44.9 %
Massachusetts	983,564	48.1 %
Michigan	587,747	49.1 %
Minnesota	378,483	44.7 %
Mississippi	61,428	30.7 %
Missouri	232,537	43.1 %
Montana	20,031	57.4 %
Nebraska	112,178	40.6 %
Nevada	508,458	41.8 %
New Hampshire	69,742	54.0 %
New Jersey	1,844,581	49.9 %
New Mexico	205,141	33.9 %
New York	4,297,612	51.7 %
North Carolina	719,137	30.2 %
North Dakota	16,639	37.2 %
Ohio	469,748	48.8 %
Oklahoma	206,382	31.9 %
Oregon	375,743	37.4 %
Pennsylvania	739,068	49.5 %
Rhode Island	134,335	47.6 %
South Carolina	218,494	30.2 %
South Dakota	22,238	40.8 %
Tennessee	288,993	33.5 %
Texas	4,142,031	32.0 %
Utah	222,638	33.6 %
Vermont	27,560	60.2 %
Virginia	911,119	45.5 %
Washington	886,262	45.5 %
West Virginia	22,511	45.7 %
Wisconsin	254,920	40.4 %
Wyoming	15,843	40.7 %
Total	39,955,854	43.7 %

Source: 2010 American Community Survey.

**Table 5. Foreign-Born Share by State
1990, 2000, and 2010**

State	2010	2000	1990
California	27.2 %	26.2 %	21.7 %
New York	22.2 %	20.4 %	15.9 %
New Jersey	21.0 %	17.5 %	12.5 %
Florida	19.4 %	16.7 %	12.9 %
Nevada	18.8 %	15.8 %	8.7 %
Hawaii	18.2 %	17.5 %	14.7 %
Texas	16.4 %	13.9 %	9.0 %
Massachusetts	15.0 %	12.2 %	9.5 %
Maryland	13.9 %	9.8 %	6.6 %
Illinois	13.7 %	12.3 %	8.3 %
Connecticut	13.6 %	10.9 %	8.5 %
District of Columbia	13.5 %	12.9 %	9.7 %
Arizona	13.4 %	12.8 %	7.6 %
Washington	13.1 %	10.4 %	6.6 %
Rhode Island	12.8 %	11.4 %	9.5 %
Virginia	11.4 %	8.1 %	5.0 %
New Mexico	9.9 %	8.2 %	5.3 %
Colorado	9.8 %	8.6 %	4.3 %
Oregon	9.8 %	8.5 %	4.9 %
Georgia	9.7 %	7.1 %	2.7 %
Utah	8.0 %	7.1 %	3.4 %
Delaware	8.0 %	5.7 %	3.3 %
North Carolina	7.5 %	5.3 %	1.7 %
Minnesota	7.1 %	5.3 %	2.6 %
Alaska	6.9 %	5.9 %	4.5 %
Kansas	6.5 %	5.0 %	2.5 %
Nebraska	6.1 %	4.4 %	1.8 %
Michigan	6.0 %	5.3 %	3.8 %
Pennsylvania	5.8 %	4.1 %	3.1 %
Idaho	5.5 %	5.0 %	2.9 %
Oklahoma	5.5 %	3.8 %	2.1 %
New Hampshire	5.3 %	4.4 %	3.7 %
South Carolina	4.7 %	2.9 %	1.4 %
Indiana	4.6 %	3.1 %	1.7 %
Iowa	4.6 %	3.1 %	1.6 %
Tennessee	4.5 %	2.8 %	1.2 %
Arkansas	4.5 %	2.8 %	1.1 %
Wisconsin	4.5 %	3.6 %	2.5 %
Vermont	4.4 %	3.8 %	3.1 %
Ohio	4.1 %	3.0 %	2.4 %
Missouri	3.9 %	2.7 %	1.6 %
Louisiana	3.8 %	2.6 %	2.1 %
Alabama	3.5 %	2.0 %	1.1 %
Maine	3.4 %	2.9 %	3.0 %
Kentucky	3.2 %	2.0 %	0.9 %
Wyoming	2.8 %	2.3 %	1.7 %
South Dakota	2.7 %	1.8 %	1.1 %
North Dakota	2.5 %	1.9 %	1.5 %
Mississippi	2.1 %	1.4 %	0.8 %
Montana	2.0 %	1.8 %	1.7 %
West Virginia	1.2 %	1.1 %	0.9 %
Total	12.9 %	11.1 %	7.9 %

Source: 1990 and 2000 decennial Census and 2010 American Community Survey.

Table 6. Region of Origin for Immigrant Population by Year of Arrival, 2010

	Total	Entered 2000 or Later	Entered 1990-1999	Entered 1980-1989	Entered Before 1980
Europe	4,817,437	1,165,176	1,185,065	565,450	1,901,746
Asia	11,283,574	4,088,455	3,005,664	2,331,339	1,858,116
Latin America	21,224,087	7,470,706	6,020,374	4,195,263	3,537,744
Caribbean	3,730,644	1,119,717	909,531	786,656	914,740
Mexico	11,711,103	4,036,342	3,597,360	2,202,746	1,874,655
Central America	3,052,509	1,203,763	811,722	711,603	325,421
South America	2,729,831	1,110,884	701,761	494,258	422,928
Other Areas	2,630,756	1,138,743	643,775	321,395	526,843
Total	39,955,854	13,863,080	10,854,878	7,413,447	7,824,449

Source: 2010 American Community Survey.

Table 7. Top-20 Sending Countries, 1990, 2000, 2010

Country	2010	2000	1990
1 Mexico	11,711,103	9,177,487	4,298,014
2 China, HK, and Taiwan	2,166,526	1,518,652	921,070
3 India	1,780,322	1,022,552	450,406
4 Philippines	1,777,588	1,369,070	912,674
5 Vietnam	1,240,542	988,174	543,262
6 El Salvador	1,214,049	817,336	465,433
7 Cuba	1,104,679	872,716	736,971
8 Korea	1,100,422	864,125	568,397
9 Dominican Republic	879,187	687,677	347,858
10 Guatemala	830,824	480,665	225,739
11 Canada	798,649	820,771	744,830
12 United Kingdom	669,794	677,751	640,145
13 Jamaica	659,771	553,827	334,140
14 Colombia	636,555	509,872	286,124
15 Germany	604,616	706,704	711,929
16 Haiti	587,149	419,317	225,393
17 Honduras	522,581	282,852	108,923
18 Poland	475,503	466,742	388,328
19 Ecuador	443,173	298,626	143,314
20 Peru	428,547	278,186	144,199
All of Latin America	21,224,087	16,086,974	8,407,837
All Immigrants	39,955,854	31,107,889	19,767,316

Source: 1990 and 2000 decennial Census and 2010 American Community Survey. The Former Soviet Union would rank in the top-20 for all three decades if it were still a country. In 2010 about one million immigrants from that former nation were living in the United States.

End Notes

¹ The Department of Homeland Security uses the ACS to estimate the size of the illegal-immigrant population. They found that 25 percent of those in the ACS were illegal immigrants in 2009. See “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2010”, at http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_ill_pe_2010.pdf.

² The ACS is a July 1st estimate of the U.S. population, while the Census is for April 1. This means that the arrival data in the 2010 ACS is for January 2000 to July 2010 and arrival data for the decade prior to 2000 in the Census is from January 1990 to April 2000. Those three additional months in the ACS would tend to add slightly to the number of new arrivals. However, they cannot account for the higher number from the 2010 data because three extra months could only add perhaps 300,000-400,000 new arrivals to the 2010 ACS compared to the 2000 Census. The margin of error for 13.9 million arrivals from 2000-2010 in the new ACS is only $\pm 99,000$. Thus, even if 400,000 is added to the 1990-2000 arrivals found in the 2000 Census, the difference between the two decades would still be statistically significant.

The year of arrival data from the 2000 Census come from the so-called “long-form” questions. Prior to the 2010 Census, about 15 percent of the population was sent a detailed questionnaire along with the standard Census questions. The detailed questions were referred to by the Census Bureau as the long form. The long form included questions on citizenship and year of arrival. The 2010 Census did not include any long-form questions. The ACS is explicitly designed to replace the long-form questions. Historic Census data by year of entry can be found at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/twps0029.html>.

³ Figure based on year-of-arrival data in the 1990 census.

⁴ For the post-1980 immigrant population, the Department of Homeland Security estimates a 5 percent undercount in the ACS. See “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2010”, at http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_ill_pe_2010.pdf. The Pew Hispanic Center comes to a similar conclusion in their analysis of the Current Population Survey. See “Trends in Unauthorized Immigration: Undocumented Inflow Now Trails Legal Inflow”, October 2008, at <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/94.pdf>.

⁵ Given the age, gender, race, and ethnic composition of the foreign-born population, the death rate over the last decade should be about seven per 1000. This means that the number of deaths over the last decade varied from 217,000 a year at the start of the decade to nearly 266,000 by the end of the decade. There is debate over the issue of emigration. However, if there were ~2.4 million deaths among the foreign-born during the decade, ~13.9 million new arrivals and growth of ~8.8 million, then this implies emigration of ~2.6 million during the decade.

⁶ In 2000, the ACS was called the Census 2000 Supplemental Survey and it showed 30.3 million immigrants.

⁷ The ACS did not add those living in group quarters like prisons or nursing homes until 2006.

⁸ See for example, “Immigration and Economic Stagnation: An Examination of Trends 2000 to 2010”, November 2010, at <http://cis.org/highest-decade>. See also “Homeward Bound: Recent Immigration Enforcement and the Decline in the Illegal Alien Population”, July 2008, at http://cis.org/trends_and_enforcement, and “A Shifting Tide: Recent Trends in the Illegal Immigrant Population”, July 2009, at <http://www.cis.org/IllegalImmigration-ShiftingTide>.

⁹ The ACS, like all surveys of this kind, is weighted based on what the Census Bureau believes is the total population of the United States at the time of the survey. To calculate the weights used in the ACS from 2001 to 2009, the Bureau used the 2000 Census population and carried it forward each year using administrative data on births, deaths, and legal immigration, as well as estimates of illegal immigration and emigration. However, the data for 2010 were weighted based on the results of the 2010 Census. While this should make the data more accurate, it also means there is a break in the continuity of the ACS between 2009 and 2010. This break in continuity exists for all Census Bureau population surveys and essentially occurs every 10 years when the results of the decennial census become available. Of course, this problem does not affect comparisons between 2000 and 2010. When the public-use data for the 2010 ACS are released sometime in October, it will be possible to look at individual year of arrival. This will help determine if the very substantial growth from 2009 to 2010 is a function of the 2010 Census based weights or some other factor is at work. For a discussion of how the ACS is weighted, see Chapter 11

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of the Census Bureau's "ACS Design and Methodology", at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/survey_methodology/acs_design_methodology_ch11.pdf.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is also collected by the Census Bureau, shows a significantly smaller number of immigrants. The CPS for March 2010 (also referred to as the Annual Social and Economic Supplement) shows 37.6 million foreign-born residents and 13.1 million arrivals 2000 to 2010. The CPS does not include persons in institutions, as does the ACS, so this partly accounts for the difference. Moreover, the CPS is a March total not July, as is the ACS, and the CPS uses a slightly different weighting scheme from the ACS. In recent years the CPS has produced lower estimates of the foreign-born than the ACS. However, 2.4 million is a large difference. In general, the ACS has come to be seen as the more reliable source for the size of the immigrant population because it is a much larger sample than the CPS.

¹¹ See Note 2 for a discussion of the ACS and the decennial census.

¹² Starting in 1970, the Census began to ask the year of arrival question so arrival by decade is available for the 1960s forward. Administrative data on legal immigration goes back to 1820 and shows that no decade comes close to the nearly 14 million immigrants who arrived from 2000 to 2010.

¹³ If we line up the arrival data with job growth and compare January 1990 to April of 2000 (the date of the Census), job growth was 22 million. If we compared January 2000 to July 2010 (the control data for the ACS) we find a decline of 425,000 jobs. In a previous study we reported a net decline of over a million jobs from 2000 to 2010 and a net gain of some 21 million from 1990 to 2000. That study, "Immigration and Economic Stagnation: An Examination of Trends 2000 to 2010", used the year of arrival data from the Current Population Survey, which is taken in March. The Census is taken in April and the ACS is weighted to reflect the population in July. Although the months compared in that earlier study were different, resulting in somewhat different job figures, the basic conclusion is exactly the same. Immigration was higher between 2000 and 2010 compared to between 1990 and 2000, even though the economy was fundamentally different in each decade.

Historical data from 1994 to the present can be found at http://www.bls.gov/schedule/archives/empsit_nr.htm#2010. Figures for January 1990 can be found in the November 1990 issue of *Monthly Labor Review*, at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1990/11/rpt1full.pdf>.

¹⁴ The Census Bureau has released data from 2010 showing the arrival of immigrants grouped by decade. The 2010 ACS shows 13.9 million individuals in 2010 who indicated that they arrived between 2000 and 2010. The 2009 ACS showed 12.2 million immigrants who arrived from 2000 to 2009. If we subtract these two numbers we can estimate the number of new arrivals in 2009 or, more accurately, arrivals between the middle of 2009 and the middle of 2010. It must be emphasized that this approach is only an indirect approximation of new immigration. More precise figures for 2009 will have to wait until the ACS public-use data are released.



A Record-Setting Decade of Immigration: 2000 to 2010

By Steven A. Camarota

New data from the Census Bureau show that the nation's immigrant population (legal and illegal), also referred to as the foreign-born, reached 40 million in 2010, the highest number in American history. Nearly 14 million new immigrants (legal and illegal) settled in the country from 2000 to 2010, making it the highest decade of immigration in American history. This is the case even though there was a net decline of jobs during the decade. In contrast, from 1990 to 2000 job growth was 22 million and 13.2 million new immigrants arrived. Immigrants come for many reasons, such as a desire to join relatives or to access public services. As a result, immigration remains high even during a prolonged period of economic weakness.

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