focus MIGRATION

COUNTRY PROFILE

United States of America

No. 4 August 2007

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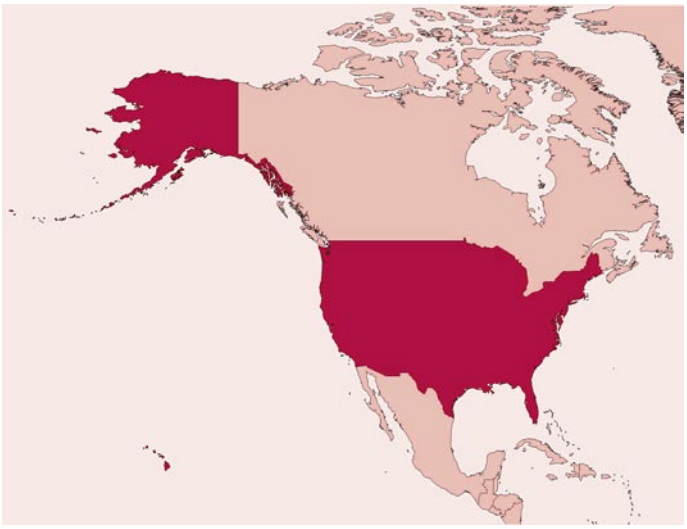
The United States is often regarded as the definitive "immigrant nation". After more than two hundred years of significant inflows, immigration to the US is characterised by its diversity. Each year large numbers of people from different socio-economic, educational and ethnic backgrounds are drawn to the country.

Initially, the majority of people immigrating to the US were of European origin. Now the majority of newcomers are from Latin America. Successive waves of immigration from around the world have ensured that a wide range of origins are represented to some extent in today's US. Immigration has generally resulted from family reunification and labour migration, with relatively low refugee flows.

Immigration is now both a symbol of the very essence of the US and a controversial political issue. Security has played an increasingly important role in the debate since the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001, as has the controversy surrounding the unauthorised immigrant population. This profile will give an overview of longer-term developments in immigration to the US and then focus on some of the current issues.



At the outset, however, it is worthwhile to note that the US is far less divided on the fundamentals of the immigration debate than current events sometimes indicate. There is continued pride in the country's history as a nation of immigrants, and an overwhelming majority of people favour political reform that combines tougher enforcement with earned legal status for those already in the US.

Background information

Capital: Washington D.C.

Language: English

Area: 9,809,155 km²
(for comparison, Germany: 357,027 km²)

Population (6/2007): 302,070,500

Population density: 31 inhabitants per km²

Population growth (2003): 0.8%

Labour force participation rate (2006): 75.5% (OECD)

Foreign-born population as a percentage of total (2003): 11.7% (33.5m persons)

Foreign-born labour force as percentage of civilian labour force (2006): 15.3%

Unemplomet rate: 4.6% (2006); 5.1% (2005); 5.5% (2004) (OECD)

Religions (1999): 62M Catholics; 28.3M Baptists; 13.1M Methodists; 11.3M Pentecostals; 8.3M Lutherans; 6M Jews; 5.1M Mormons; 4.1M Presbyterians; 4M Orthodox; 4M Muslims; 3.5M Church of Christ; 2.4M Episcopalian; 2M Buddhists; 1.9M Reformed; 1M Jehovah's Witnesses; 1M Hindus; 0.8M Bahais; 0.2M Sikhs

Immigration Policy

Major legislation up to 1980

Throughout much of the twentieth century, US immigration policy sought to limit admissions according to countries or regions of origin. Building on the Quota Law of 1921, the Immigration Act of 1924 restricted immigration levels to 150,000 persons a year and established the "national-origins quota system", which aimed to foster immigration from favoured Northern and Western European countries while limiting the arrival of the "undesirable races" of Eastern and Southern Europe. This was accomplished by tying national quotas to US census figures on the national origins of the population. Chinese, Japanese, South Asian and many African persons were thus effectively barred from immigrating.[1]

bpb: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung

NETZWERK MIGRATION IN EUROPA

HWWI Hamburgisches WeltWirtschafts Institut

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952 eased the restrictions of the 1924 Act somewhat while maintaining the national origins premise. Race was eliminated as a bar to immigration, and all countries were allocated a minimum quota of 100 immigrants. Additionally, a system of selected immigration was introduced, with preference being given to skilled immigrants whose abilities where needed in the US as well as to the relatives of US citizens and residents.

Amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965 abolished the national-origins system and thus paved the way for substantial immigration from Asia and Latin America, as well as from Southern Europe. Immigration ceilings were established according to world region, and a seven-category preference system for allocating visas was introduced. According to the preference system, visas were to be issued on a "first come, first served"-basis, both to relatives of US citizens and permanent residents, and to potential immigrants with special skills, abilities or training needed in the US economy.

Legislation since 1980

In 1985, amid a period of economic insecurity marked by income inequality, stagnating wages and widespread unemployment, President Ronald Reagan claimed that the US had "lost control" of its borders to an "invasion" of illegal immigrants, thus marking the emergence of immigration as a national security issue.[2] The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 responded to this new sense of urgency with four key provisions: enforcement along the Mexico-US border was enhanced, employer sanctions were introduced in order to make employing undocumented workers a less attractive option, long-term undocumented residents were offered an amnesty (the Legally Authorized Worker, LAW, Program), and a special legalization program was created for agricultural workers (the Special Agricultural Worker, SAW, Program).

Following this, the Legal Immigration Act of 1990 contained provisions to increase the inflow of skilled immigrants to the US. It introduced a flexible cap of 675,000 immigrants per year beginning in 1995; 480,000 of these admissions were allocated for family-sponsored immigrants, 140,000 for employment-based purposes, and 55,000 for "diversity immigrants" from countries with low rates of immigration to the US.

In the 1990s focus shifted to immigrants' access to welfare. Most controversially, in 1994, Proposition 187 was passed in California, which denied illegal immigrants access to social services such as medical care. This was only the most well-known of a number of legislative moves against irregular immigrants. The latter 1990s also saw a rise in pressure for increasing the access of highly-skilled migrants to the labour market, in order to fill jobs in the booming economy.

Developments since 9/11

The terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 provided a new impetus for administrative reform of the immigration system. As the attacks were carried out by non-US nationals entirely within US territory, they were seen as a sign that cooperation between federal agencies, state police forces and border control personnel had become inadequate. Following the attacks, responsibility for immigration and border control was consolidated under the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Immigration and security issues were further brought into close association with the 2001 Provide Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (PATRIOT) Act, which expanded the range of offences for which an immigrant could be deported and made it easier to detain non-US citizens for long periods of time.

Recently, several attempts have been made to reform immigration law in such a way as to reconcile labour market demands for immigrants with border control and security concerns. In December 2005, the House of Representatives passed a bill (H.R. 4437) which focused on tough new enforcement measures at the border, whilst the Senate passed a bill (S. 2611) in May 2006 which complemented stringent enforcement measures with substantially expanded opportunities for legal immigration and gaining citizenship. Neither of these bills was approved by Congress, and the continuing debate over an adequate means to address failures in the immigration system remains mired in partisan politics (see Current Issues).

Current Admissions Policy

Non-US citizens can be admitted to the US on a permanent basis in three general categories: family reunification, employment sponsorship and humanitarian cases. The number of people granted lawful permanent residence (LPR) status each year[3] is comprised of new arrivals and persons who have adjusted their residence status from temporary to permanent. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs, known as "green card" holders) enjoy a wide range of rights: They may live and work permanently in the US, own property, attend public schools, colleges and universities, serve in parts of the armed forces and apply to become US citizens.[4]

Family reunification is by far the largest channel of entry for LPRs, accounting for over one-half of all entries. The other main channels are employment-based immigration, refugees and asylum seekers (see Flight and Asylum) as well as the so-called Diversity Lottery (see below).

Family reunification is available to two broad groups of people: immediate relatives of US citizens and family members sponsored according to preference categories. The first group includes spouses and children of US citizens and has no numerical limit; they generally account for 40% of LPR admissions. The second group is divided into four so-called "preference categories", three of which govern family reunification to US citizens, and one of which provides for the entry of spouses and unmarried children of US permanent residents (LPRs). The total number of entries under all four preference categories is limited to between 226,000 and 480,000 per year.[5] Additionally, no single country may account for more than 7% of admissions in the preference categories.

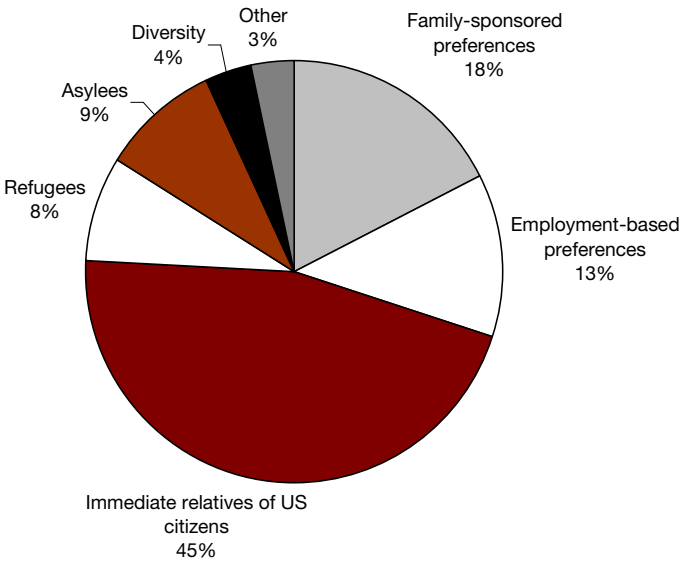
Employment-based immigration, another path to permanent settlement, is available to employees with a range of skill levels under four separate categories, most of which require that an applicant be sponsored by an employer. A fifth category provides for the admission of investors. Employment-based admissions are limited to 140,000 per year, plus any unused

family preferences from the previous year, with a 7% annual cap per sending country.

Finally, the Diversity Lottery awards LPR status to citizens of countries which have not sent more than 50,000 immigrants to the US in the previous five years. Since 50,000 the annual limit for admissions in this category has been 50,000. The names of eligible countries are published by the State Department before each year's lottery begins.

In addition to these means of entry for permanent settlement, there is a wide variety of visa categories for the admission of temporary residents, or so-called "nonimmigrants (sic)", all of which are subject to numerical limits. For example, 65,000 work visas for temporary highly-skilled workers (H-1B) are made available each year (plus an extra 20,000 for foreign graduates of US universities), as are 66,000 work visas (H-2B) for seasonal workers or workers needed to fill temporary labour shortages in sectors such as construction, health care, landscaping, lumber, manufacturing, food service/processing and resort/hospitality services.

Figure 2: Persons obtaining LPR status in 2006, by class of admission (total 1,266,264)



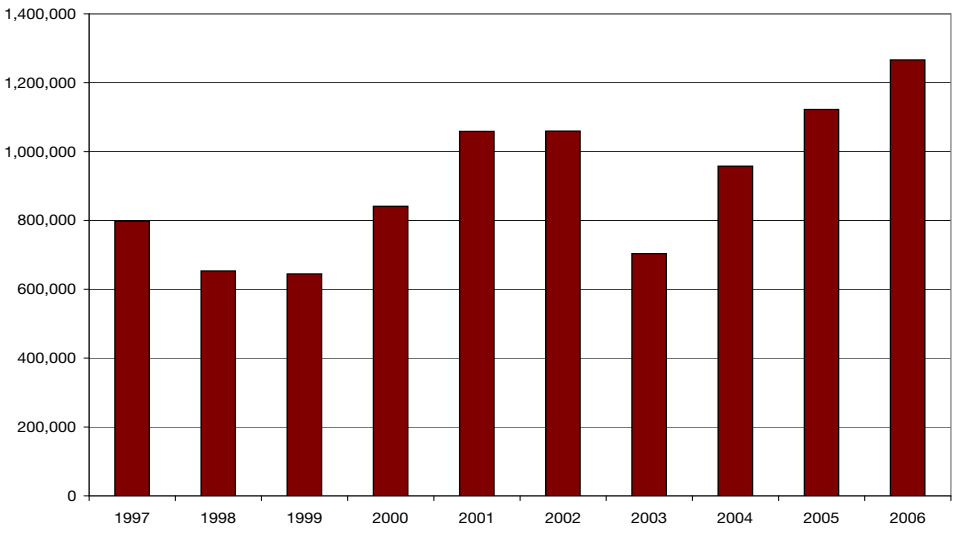
Source: Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, US Department of Homeland Security

Inflows

The number of people receiving LPR status each year has been increasing since the Second World War, quadrupling from an average of 250,000 persons per year in the 1950s to just over one million per year in the period from 2000 to 2006.[6]

In 2006, a total of 1,266,264 people were awarded LPR status, 447,016 (35.3%) of whom were new arrivals, and 819,248 (64.7%) of whom had adjusted their status (i.e. were not new immigrants, but people who had applied for LPR status while living in the US under a different permit). A total of 803,335 people (63%) acquired LPR status under family reunification provisions, 159,081 (13%) in the employment-based category, 44,471 (3.5%) in the Diversity Lottery, 216, 454 (17%) as refugees and asylees, and the remainder via other categories.

Figure 1: Number of persons obtaining LPR status, fiscal years 1997-2006



Source: Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, US Department of Homeland Security

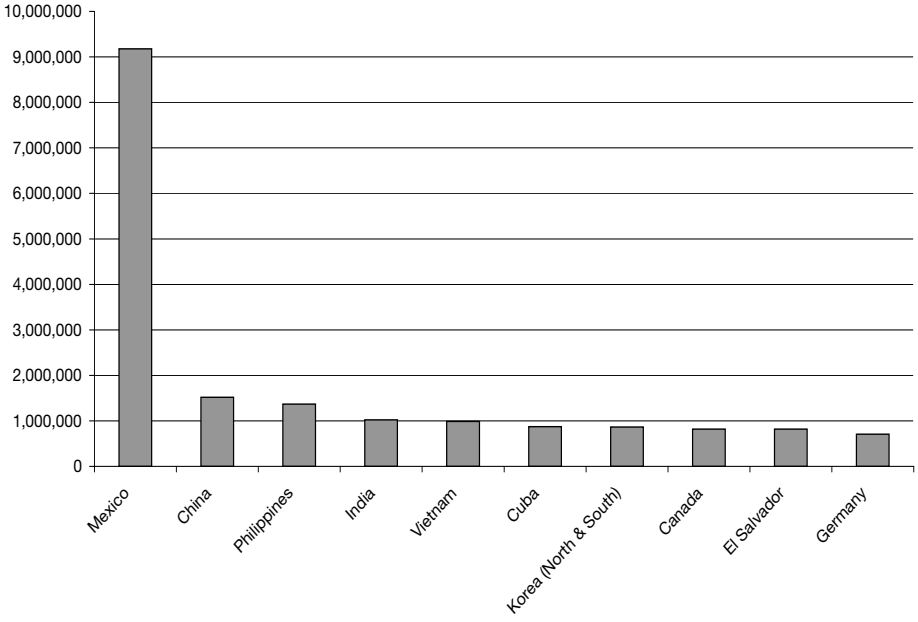
The Immigrant Population

In recent years, the immigrant population in the US has risen significantly. While there were an estimated 19.8 million foreignborn persons living in the US in 1990, this figure had risen to 33.5 million (or 11% of the total population) by 2003. The majority of the foreign-born population, 52%, was born in Latin America, while 25% were born in Asia, 13.7% in Europe and 8% in other regions of the world.[7]

Educational attainment is a key issue with regard to the immigrant population as it often correlates strongly with job prospects and successful integration. Overall one-fifth of the foreign-born population (21.5%) have less than a ninth-grade education, compared to only 4.1% of natives. Also, foreign-born persons are less likely than natives to have completed high school (40% compared to 60.3%). However, the foreign-born and native populations converge at the level of higher education, with 27.3% of foreign-born persons and 27.2% of natives holding a bachelor's or higher degree.

In terms of employment, foreign-born workers are more likely than natives to hold jobs in the service sector (23.3% compared to 14.9%) and less likely than natives to be in managerial or professional occupations (26.9% and 36.2%, respectively), although this proportion varies across ethnic groups. For example, among the foreign born, the highest proportion of workers in management and professional occupations is from Asia (47%), and the lowest from Central America (7.9%).

Figure 3: Top 10 countries of birth of the foreign-born population in 2000



Source: US Census Bureau

Results from the 2000 US Census show that the number of people who speak a language other than English at home rose to 25.5 million in 2000, up from 15.4 million in 1990. However, the majority of foreign born in this situation speak English "very well" or "well". A total of 35% were shown to have limited English proficiency, though, with 23% speaking English "not well" and 12% "not at all". It is worth noting that there has been pressure in recent years for English to be designated as the official language of the US, which it is currently not. Proposals in the Senate in 2007 have called upon federal agencies to preserve and enhance the role of English. Although they would not preclude information being given in languages other than English, they would clarify that citizens do not have an affirmative right to ask for such services.

The foreign-born population is concentrated in the states of California, Texas, New York, Illinois and Florida, but there has been increased dispersal of migrant communities across the US in recent years. This has been driven by a combination of employment opportunities elsewhere and the high cost of living in traditional settlement areas. Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, North Carolina and North Dakota have recently experienced the highest percentage increase in arrivals of new permanent residents.

Citizenship

All persons born in the US are automatically granted US citizenship. People who are not US citizens by birth may obtain US citizenship through the process of naturalisation, which requires the fulfilment of a series of criteria. The process can take anywhere from six months to two years. A legal immigrant who wishes to naturalise must be over 18 years old, must have lived in the US for at least five years (three years if married to a US citizen) and have no criminal record. Additionally, candidates must demonstrate English language proficiency and know-ledge of US history and government by passing a naturalisation test.

Historically, less than half of all immigrants to the US have become citi-zens, but the level of interest in natura-lisation has risen since the 1990s. At the beginning of the 1990s there were 6.5 million naturalised citizens living in the US, a number which had increased to 11.3 million (or 49% of the foreign-born population) by 2002. This increase has been attributed to measures restricting public benefits for non-citizens and changes in application fees.[8] In 2006 a total of 702,589 persons were naturalised; the top five countries of birth of these new citizens were Mexico (12%), India (6.8%), the Philippines (5.8%), China (5%) and Vietnam (4.3%). The largest number of people who were naturalised in 2006 lived in the states of California (21.8%), New York (14.8%) and Florida (12.9%).[9]

Integration

Debate about integration of new immigrants and challenges for the US focuses largely on Hispanic Americans and specifically Mexicans. This discussion has been wide ranging but affected by controversial ideas such as those put forward by Samuel Huntington in "Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity." He argues that the current influx of Mexican immigrants provides a greater challenge and is fundamentally different from those of the Irish, Jews and Italians previously. His thesis is that the assimilation successes of the past are unlikely to be repeated by contemporary immigrants from Latin America due to what he describes as problems of contiguity, scale, illegality, regional concentration, persistence and historical presence. This view has been both greatly controversial and subject to intense criticism.

In contradiction to Huntington's argument, scholars point out that Mexican immigration is currently emulating integration patterns set by earlier groups of immigrants. For example, Mexican newcomers largely find limited access to jobs beyond the low-wage sector, which is not unprecedented for a large immigrant flow from one country; both Italian and Polish immigrants at the start of the last century were in a similar position. Therefore, there ought to be considerable scope for the immigrant population of Mexican origin to integrate successfully into the working class in the US, even if they are unable to access higher educational or professional levels. Many Mexican immigrant offspring grow up in communities which are poor, but which are well integrated into the local labour markets. This provides contacts and access to employment, which are crucial for further integration.[10]

Refuge and asylum

Refuge and asylum are similar in that they apply to non-citizens who are unable to return to their country of origin as a result of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion. Whereas refugees are persons who apply for resettlement from outside the US, asylees do so from within the country or at a port of entry. Persons granted asylum or refugee status are entitled to work in the US, and both groups can apply for LPR status after one year of continuous residence.[11]

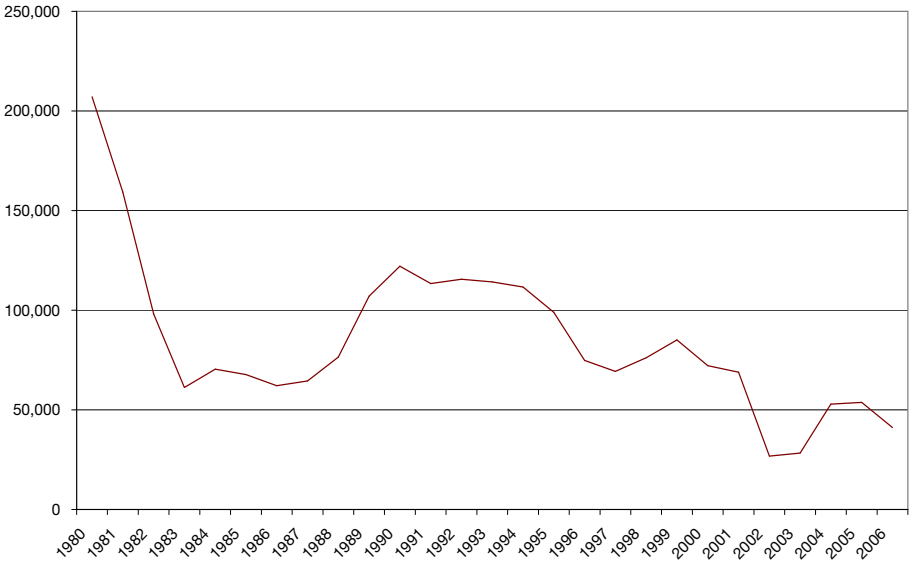
The quota for refugee admissions is set every year by the President in consultation with Congress, and it has been reduced significantly in recent years. In 1980, when the admissions ceiling was first introduced, it was set at 231,700 persons. Since 2004, the limit has been 70,000 per year. No quotas are set for asylum admissions.

In 2006 a total of 41,150 refugees were admitted to the US. The leading countries of origin were Somalia (25%), Russia (15%) and Cuba (7.6%). In addition to these refugees, 26,113 people were granted asylum in 2006. The top countries of origin for persons granted asylum in 2006 were China (21%), Haiti (12%), Colombia (11%) and Venezuela (5.2%).

US refugee policy has been the subject of serious criticism, particularly in recent years and with respect to the low number of people granted refugee status. In the 1990s, an average of 100,000 refugees arrived in the US every year; in the 2000-2006 period, this average had declined to 50,000, well below the authorised quota.

Criticism has been especially severe with respect to Iraq, where 2 million people have become refugees and 1.8 million more internally displaced since the US-led invasion of that country. In February 2007 Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state, revealed plans for the US to allow 7,000 Iraqi refugees – who are already in neighbouring countries – to settle in the US over the next year. Prior to this announcement the US had accepted a total of just 463 refugees from Iraq since the war began in 2003.[12]

Figure 4: Refugee arrivals, fiscal years 1980-2006



Source: Department of Homeland Security

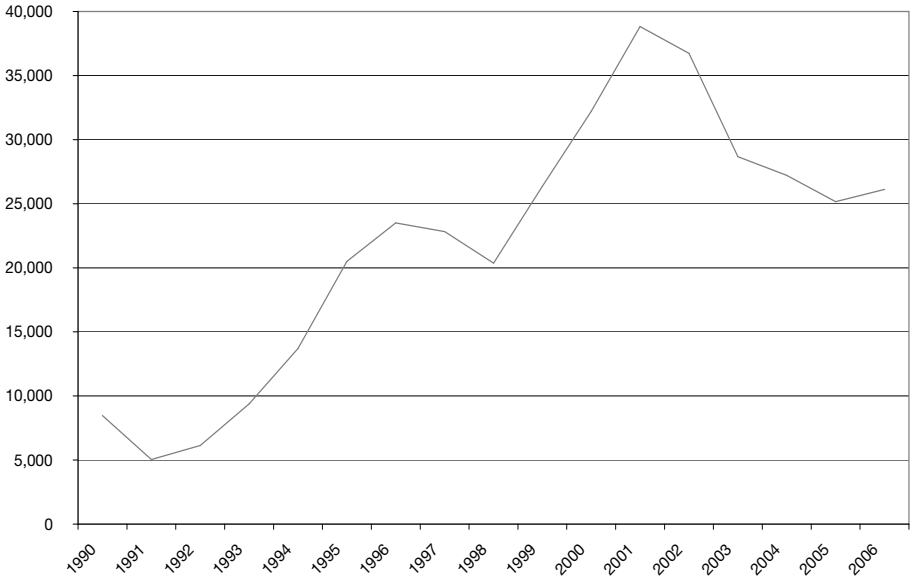
Irregular migration

There are an estimated 12 million unauthorized immigrants in the US, forming nearly a third of the total foreign-born population in the country. The issue of irregular migration is fiercely debated in the context of security concerns. It is the undocumented nature of these migrants' presence that is seen as problematic, particularly since September 2001.

Of all the individuals residing in the US without a permit, it is estimated that close to 60% are Mexican, and that a further 25% are from other Latin American countries. It is presumed that the great majority of these people have entered legally and overstayed their visas or arrived illegally via the southern land border between the US and Mexico.

During the last fifty years there have been various, largely futile, attempts to prevent irregular migration. In 1954, Operation Wetback[13] resulted in the deportation of over one million Mexicans and US-citizens of Mexican origin (in this case, the US-born children of unauthorised immigrants). Other mea-

Figure 5: Persons granted asylum, fiscal years 1990-2006



Source: Department of Homeland Security

sures, such as Operation Gatekeeper, which was carried out on the San Diego sector of the border in 1994, have simply forced people to attempt crossings in more dangerous areas of the border, away from the heavily protected westernmost section.

Much attention has been devoted to the shortcomings of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which was almost exclusively dedicated to the issue of unauthorised immigration. Approximately 3 million undocumented immigrants were legalised under the IRCA provisions. However, as it failed to create legal channels for migrants to help meet the high demand for labour in the US, it ultimately failed to stop the inflow of new irregular immigrants. Many legalised immigrants – who mostly came from Mexico and Central America – were subsequently joined by their families and relatives, touching off a wave of permanent immigration. This, in turn, resulted in a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, with particular concern being expressed about the issue of access to education, healthcare and welfare benefits.[14]

An area of serious discussion in recent years, especially in the states bordering Mexico, has been the policing of the southern border of the US. Attempts to prevent further undocumented arrivals, including the construction of barriers across various sections of the border, have just driven would be migrants to use more extreme measures to get to the US, resulting in a large number of fatalities.[15]

Border crossings by illegal immigrants have evoked strong emotions among the general public and have led a number of private individuals to set up groups to monitor these crossings. Some of these groups have been accused of acting more like vigilantes than independent monitors. It is clear that voluntary border control militias cannot be tolerated, and that border control activities must be left to official border agents. However, any policy to increase border control cannot stand alone and must form part of a comprehensive reform of immigration policy (see discussion below).

Current issues

Pressure has been mounting in recent years for the government to carry out significant reform of the US immigration system. Political debate in the area of immigration reform tends to centre on three interrelated aspects: border control and the national labour shortage, meeting the impending skills shortage, and accommodating the large number of irregular immigrants already residing in the country.

Reconciling labour market demand and public pressure for immigration control

The increasing global integration of labour markets has imposed new realities on any discussion regarding immigration. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics has estimated that the domestic economy will create close to 60 million new jobs between 2002 and 2012, half of which will require no more than a high school education.[16] This economic expansion will coincide with a period when 75 million baby-boomers are set to retire, declining native-born fertility rates will be approaching replacement level, and native-born workers will be becoming ever more educated. The shortfall in semi-and unskilled labour resulting from these factors has already become visible in a number of sectors.

Essential labour is often provided by immigrant workers who are residing in the US without a permit. This is because the number of workers needed far exceeds the number of work permits available, and because long processing times can make applying for one of the limited numbers of H-2B visas (for seasonal workers or workers to fill temporary labour shortages) inconvenient for employers and workers alike. The Pew Hispanic Centre has shown that unauthorized workers make up 14% of all persons employed in construction and extractive occupations.[17]

The most recent attempt to reconcile labour market needs for semi- and unskilled workers with strong public demand to secure borders was the comprehensive immigration reform bill S. 1639 (hereafter referred to as the Senate bill), which was introduced in the Senate on 18th June 2007.[18] At the time of writing, the Senate had just failed to advance the bill to a final vote, effectively marking its demise.

At the heart of the bill were provisions that aimed to tighten border security at the US-Mexico border and to deter irregular migration. These included the installation of vehicle barriers, the erection of hundreds of kilometres of fencing, a significant increase in the number of patrol agents, a new electronic identification system for employers to verify the status of potential employees and greater sanctions for employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers. To complement these security measures, the bill proposed that 200,000 visas be made available each year to temporary workers. This new "guest worker" scheme would have allowed temporary workers to enter for up to three separate stays of two years each, with a one-year break between each of the stays.

Additionally, the Senate bill contained the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security ("AgJOBS") Act of 2007, which would have given undocumented agricultural workers the opportunity to apply for temporary, and then permanent, legal status, provided that they continue to work for a certain amount of time in the agricultural sector. In addition to improving working conditions, this provision might have helped reduce demand for new immigrants in the agricultural sector by encouraging experienced workers to stay in that line of work.

Facing the skills shortage

Businesses and universities in the US have long benefited from an influx of foreign talent. However, the number of people wishing to enter the US through legal channels far exceeds the number of visas available in employment-related visa categories. The annual quotas for H-1B visas for highly-skilled workers are usually filled within the first few weeks or months of the fiscal year. For all employment-related visas, large delays are difficult to reconcile with the needs of employers.

In order to improve legal channels of entry for skilled and highly-skilled workers, the Senate bill proposed the introduction of a points system. This points system would have been used to evaluate potential immigrants on the basis of their job-

related skills, education, English language proficiency, etc. Those ear-ning the most points each year would have been admitted until the quota for the year had been reached. In the long term, the introduction of such a system would have come at the expense of family-related immigration, which has been the main path of entry, even for skilled workers. It would have also marked a shift away from employer-led labour migration.

Accommodation of unauthorised immigrants residing in the US

Persistently high levels of undocumented immigration have effectively resulted in the creation of a large group of second-class residents who are unable to integrate into US society, despite the fact that they contribute to the country's economic success. It is widely acknowledged that the immediate removal of all unauthorised immigrants would be a disaster for the US economy. Additionally, any attempt to deport large numbers of people would create serious logistical and financial issues. Such deportations would also likely raise the moral issue of what to do with immigrant children who have the right to stay in the US, having been born there, if their parents are sent home. There is also considerable political pressure not to deport unauthorised residents, as demonstrated by protests against draft immigration reforms in the Senate in March 2006; hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in Los Angeles alone.[19]

The Senate bill would have provided irregular immigrants who had entered the US prior to 1st January 2007 an opportunity to obtain legal status under a new "Z" visa category. The Z visa was to be valid for four years; it was also to be renewable under the condition that knowledge of English and US society be demonstrated. In order to apply for LPR status, the head of a family would have needed to file an application from his/her country of origin and pay a US$4,000 application fee; however, they would have been allowed to return to the US while the application was being processed.

The Senate bill also contained an initiative to help young unauthorised persons integrate into US society: the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act). Under the act, youths eligible for the above-mentioned Z visa would have been able to adjust to permanent legal status immediately if they had arrived in the US before age 16 and had either graduated from high school or completed two years of higher education or military service. At the very least, legislation to this effect would have offered a strong incentive for unauthorised youths to complete their high school education - education being a factor that generally facilitates labour market entry and the opportunity for integration into US society.

Future challenges

Many observers were optimistic that a sweeping reform of immigration legislation would take place in the first half of 2007, given mounting public pressure, Democrat control over Congress and the fact that President Bush is no longer facing re-election. The Senate bill outlined in the previous section was arguably the most consolidated attempt at immigration reform in recent years. The Senate's decision on 28th June not to move the bill to a final vote has made it unlikely that a major reform will be passed before the November 2008 presidential election. The bill's failure has been attributed to the refusal of many Republicans to support legislation that they saw as amounting to an amnesty for unauthorised immigrants.

Any successful legislative proposal will almost certainly have a significant emphasis on security – not only on border controls, but on enforcing the laws on employer sanctions – as well as some means of accommodating irregular immigrants already residing in the US. While Democrats and Republicans are likely to reach a compromise on border control measures, dealing with the large irregular immigrant population residing in the country promises to be significantly more difficult.

Increasing enfranchisement among the Latino population in the US will likely influence the immigration debate in the future. Latinos residing legally in the US represent a large and growing voter constituency with a marked interest in immigration reform. Both Democrats and Republicans will find that their stance on immigration will play a significant role in courting these voters during the next presidential election.

Finally, it remains to be seen whether any new legislation will be able to successfully direct irregular immigration flows into legal channels. For this to happen, admissions quotas for temporary and permanent workers – at all skill levels – will have to be sufficiently large to meet the demands of the US labour market, and the visa-granting process will need to function more efficiently than it does now.

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Endnotes

[1] See Ngai (1999).

[2] See Durand et al (1999).

[3] The term year refers throughout to the US fiscal year, which runs from October to September.

[4] The information contained in this section is based on Jefferys (2007b).

[5] The means of calculating the actual limit are complicated and take into account, among other things, the number of people awarded LPR status in certain categories (e.g. immediate relatives of US citizens, who are not limited by a quota) in the previous fiscal year. The admissions quota for family preferences is not permitted to drop below 226,000. If the calculated quota falls below that minimum, it is set at 226,000 as a default. See Jefferys (2007b).

[6] See Jefferys (2007b).

[7] Information on region of birth, educational attainment and occupations of the foreign born is taken from Larsen (2004).

[8] See Margon (2004)

[9] See Simansiki (2007).

[10] See Waldinger, R. et al. (2007).

[11] For an overview of the refugee and asylum provisions in the US as well as current trends presented here, see See Jefferys (2007a).

[12] "World looks away as Iraqis flood nearby states." The Financial Times, 15 February 2007.

[13] "Wetback" is a disparaging term for an unauthorised Mexican immigrant who crosses the Rio Grande into the US, sometimes swimming to get across.

[14] See Durand et al.(1999) and Gonzalez Baker (1997).

[15] It is estimated that more than 400 Mexicans died in attempted border crossings in 2005. See "Sense, not Sensenbrenner." The Economist. 30th March, 2006.

[16] See Jacoby (2006).

[17] Pew Hispanic Center (2006).

[18] The bill can be accessed on the website of the Library of Congress: http://thomas.loc.gov

[19] See "Migration und Bevölkerung" 3/06 (in German). Estimates of the number of demonstrators vary from 500,000 to one million.

References and Further Reading

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Further internet links

- American Immigration Lawyers Association
  http://www.aila.org/
- National Council of La Raza
  http://www.nclr.org/
- National Immigration Forum
  http://immigrationforum.org

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