



Patterns in Temporary Migration to the U.S.

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Overview and Background

In 1952, immigration policy in the U.S. was codified into the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA). This provided a cohesive policy for admitting immigrants and temporary migrants with a clearly defined set of admission classes. Since that time, the numbers and classes of "nonimmigrants" have expanded significantly. Also, demand for different types of temporary employment-based migrants and students has varied as have the sending countries. This poster investigates the changing trends in temporary migrant admissions. The poster uses data from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Immigration Statistics published annually in the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. Overall statistics for temporary migrants is provided and then broken down into four subcategories. Specific observations of interest are provided for each category of migrant.

Comparison Over Time of Changes

The world has become a more global place in the last 50 years. Advances in communications and transportation along with increasing international trade have led more people to travel internationally than ever before. Tourists and other temporary admissions to the United States have increased greatly since 1952, but they have done so unevenly.

Observations of Interest:

- Total percent change from the previous year has been consistently positive except for after the terror attacks in late 2001 and a data collection change in 1983.
- Although the total percent increase was positive, 1979 showed a significant percent decrease for students and diplomats, presumably because of the occupation of the U.S. embassy in Tehran.
- Europe, the Americas, and Asia have sent comparable proportions of temporary migrants since 1952, but together they contribute 95.5% of all temporary migrants
- Asia's percent change from the previous year is consistently higher than the total in the 1960's and 1970's.
- Almost two-thirds (65.8%) of all temporary migrants come from the top 10 sending countries.

Data Limitations

As with any project comparing large amounts of data over long time-periods, there are concerns with data consistency and accuracy. The data collected by DHS has varied in level of detail, countries have changed boundaries and names, and economic data is never as complete as analysts would like. In addition, as immigration policy has changed over time, the categories or classes of admission have changed making it difficult to track comparable populations over time. Some periods of data are missing from certain datasets because of lack of reporting or changes in procedures requiring interpolation in order to show continuous graphs. These data limitations do not negate the observations that can be made, but they require notation in any conclusions that are drawn.

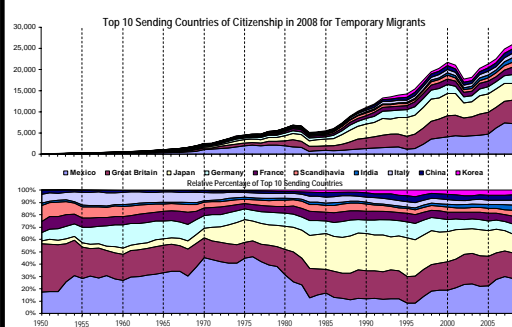
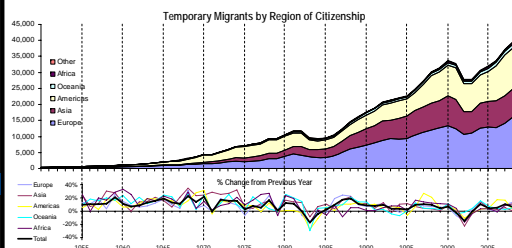
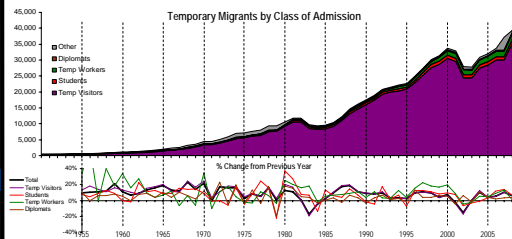
Conclusions

This poster provides an interesting way to present and compare existing data on temporary admissions over time. Although not new sets of data, the collection of the data and comparison with various historical events allows a useful comparison that provides insight into why people migrate temporarily to the United States. Notwithstanding the data limitations, the poster provides a unique perspective on how temporary admissions to the U.S. have changed over time and in response to global events. Understanding the decision making process for people embarking on international travel is useful for demographic analysis of international migration.

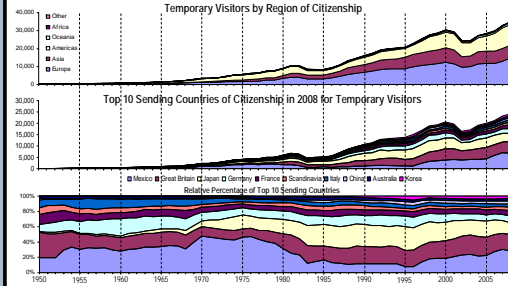
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All Temporary Migrants

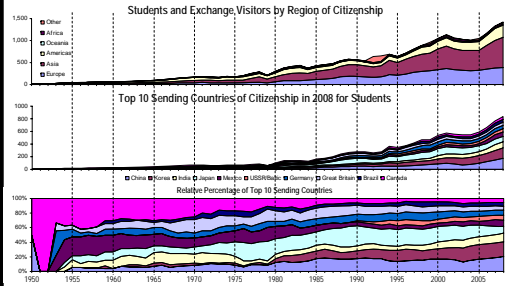


Temporary Visitors for Business or Pleasure



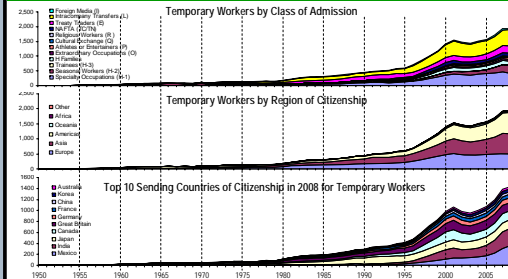
- ### Observations of Interest for Temporary Visitors for Business or Pleasure:
- Although the top 10 countries are primarily the same as for total temporary migrants, the order has changed for the lower 4 countries and Australia has replaced India.
 - High levels of temporary visitors from Asia are a relatively recent phenomenon with Japan ramping up in the 1970's and China and Korea in the late 1980's and early 1990's.
 - Mexico is the largest sending country for the past 3 years and Temporary Visitors from Mexico have significantly increased since 1996 and these statistics exclude temporary border crossings.

Students and Exchange Visitors



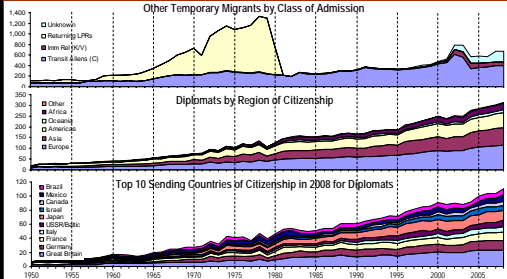
- ### Observations of Interest for Students and Exchange Visitors:
- The top 10 sending countries provide 58.5% of all students and exchange visitors.
 - Asia is the largest sending region with 48.4% of all students and responsible for the top 4 sending countries.
 - Students and exchange visitors from former Soviet countries began coming in 1990 and now provide the 6th highest number of students overall.
 - Canada and Mexico have provided consistently high numbers of students since the 1960's, but their relative proportion has decreased compared to students from Asia.

Temporary Workers



- ### Observations of Interest for Temporary Workers:
- Several new categories of temporary workers were created in 1993 (Q, P, O, and R) which added to the rapid increase in temporary workers in the late 1990's.
 - Temporary workers from Asia also significantly increased in the late 1990's although there has been some shifting from traditional sending countries like Japan to new emerging countries like India and China.
 - The only significant decrease in temporary workers during the last 50 years occurred after 9/11 but current levels have roughly regained their former trajectory.

Diplomats and Other Temporary Migrants



- ### Observations of Interest for Diplomats and Other Temporary Migrants:
- Diplomat admissions have been remarkably consistent over time, even after the terrorist attacks in 2001.
 - Top diplomat sending countries are consistent with U.S. partners in foreign policy, but overall numbers are relatively low.
 - Other temporary migrants were dominated by returning Legal Permanent Residents until 1980 when a policy change resulted in those entrants being counted separately, not as temporary migrants.
 - Persons transiting the United States showed significant increase post 9/11 due to new visa requirements.