

Future trends of immigration in the United States

Ernesto F. L. Amaral

RAND Corporation

eamaral@rand.org

Overview

- Discussion about trends in immigration is always a challenge in demography:
 - More than fertility and mortality.
- Immigration in the United States is a controversial topic:
 - Politics, security...
- I will emphasize immigration trends from Central America and Caribbean.

Increase of immigrant population

- The United States has experienced an increase of immigrant population in the last decades (Zong, Batalova 2015):
 - 9.6 million (1970)
 - 41.3 million (2013)
- Immigrants increased its share of the national population:
 - 4.7% (1970)
 - 13.1% (2013)
- The foreign-born population entered the U.S. in:
 - 2000–2009: 29% (12 million)
 - 2010–2013: 10% (4 million)

Main sending countries, 2013

- Most of the foreign-born population comes from Mexico.
- Central America and Caribbean (El Salvador, Cuba) are also in evidence.

Country	Immigrants (million)	Population (million)	Ratio
Mexico	11.6	117.6	9.9%
China	2	1,370	0.2%
India	2	1,280	0.2%
Philippines	1.8	96.2	1.9%
El Salvador	1.3	6.3	20.6%
Vietnam	1.3	89.7	1.5%
Cuba	1.1	11.3	9.7%
South Korea	1.1	50.2	2.2%

Source: Zong, Batalova 2015; PRB 2013.

Factors associated with migration

- Migration is considered to be a mechanism that establishes regional spatial-economic equilibrium (Harris, Todaro 1970; Ravenstein 1885, 1889; Rogers, Castro 1983; Todaro 1969, 1976, 1980, 2014).
- Environmental, demographic, and economic “push-pull” factors drive migrants away from origin towards new places of destination (de Haas 2007, 2009; McDowell, Haan 1997).
- Other factors influencing migration (Greenwood et al. 1991; Lee 1966; Passaris 1989):
 - Intervening obstacles: distance, physical barriers...
 - Age, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status...

Effects of migration: controversial

- Studies have been investigating costs and benefits of immigrants.
- Migrants usually move towards areas that have higher job opportunities and income levels, compared to origin.
- **Short-term effects:** greater proportion (supply) of migrants negatively affect levels of earnings of low-skilled natives (Borjas 2003).
- **Long-term effects:** businesses and workers adapt to immigration and take advantage of new labor configurations (Card 2012; Manacorda et al. 2012; Ottaviano, Peri 2012).

Demography, economy, education

- Central America and Caribbean (PRB 2015):
 - High birth rates.
 - Young population.
 - Low economic activity.
 - High crime rates.

- These factors might:
 - Contribute to increase immigration.
 - Continue to do so in the near future.

Age distribution, 2015

– U.S. has an older population than countries in Central America, Caribbean, and South America.

Country	Population (million)	<15	65+
United States	321.2	19%	15%
Mexico	127	28%	7%
Central America without Mexico (lowest and highest)	46	23% (Costa Rica) 40% (Guatemala)	4% (Belize) 8% (Panama)
Caribbean	43	26%	9%
South America	414	26%	8%

Source: PRB 2015.

Fertility, 2015

- Birth rates are higher in Central America than in the U.S.
- Total fertility rates have highest levels in Central America.

Country	Birth rates (per 1,000)	Total fertility rate (children per woman)
United States	13	1.9
Mexico	19	2.3
Central America without Mexico (lowest and highest)	15 (Costa Rica) 25 (Guatemala)	1.9 (Costa Rica) 3.1 (Guatemala)
Caribbean	18	2.3
South America	17	2.0

Source: PRB 2015.

Migration, 2015

– Strongest negative net migration in Central America and Caribbean.

Country	Net migration rate (per 1,000)
United States	3
Mexico	-2
Central America without Mexico (lowest and highest)	-8 (El Salvador) 4 (Belize)
Caribbean	-4
South America	0

Source: PRB 2015.

Economic activity, 2014

– Lowest level of economic activity is observed in Central America.

Country	Gross National Income (GNI) per capita
United States	\$55,860
Mexico	\$16,710
Central America without Mexico (lowest and highest)	\$4,120 (Honduras) \$19,630 (Panama)
Caribbean	\$12,800
South America	\$14,850

Source: PRB 2015.

Educational enrollment, 2008/2014

– Secondary school enrollment is still low in Central American countries.

Country	Secondary school enrollment ratio	
	Males	Females
United States	94%	94%
Mexico	84%	91%
Central America without Mexico (lowest and highest)	64% (Honduras) 105% (Costa Rica)	62% (Guatemala) 113% (Costa Rica)
Caribbean	80%	85%
South America	93%	98%

Note: Ratio can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students (early or late school entrance and grade repetition).

Source: PRB 2015.

Case study: northern triangle

- Immigration from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala increased significantly in the last years (Gov. Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras 2014; US Dept. State 2015; Board 2014):
 - 68,000 unaccompanied immigrant children in 2014FY.
 - Increase of over 75% from 2013FY.
 - 51,000 (75%) originated from northern triangle.
 - Increase of girls and children under 14 years of age.
- Some factors associated with this increase in migration:
 - Extremely poor economic conditions.
 - Family reunification.
 - Increased violence.
 - Gang activity.

Plan for the Alliance for Prosperity of the Northern Triangle

- Partnership of U.S. and northern triangle governments:
 - Invigorate productive sectors.
 - Create economic opportunities.
 - Develop human capital, social inclusion.
 - Improve public safety, legal system.
 - Strength institutions, trust in the state.
 - Diversify/integrate energy markets.
 - Facilitate trade with the U.S.

- Preliminary analyses:
 - Improvement in educational programs in El Salvador.
 - Reduction in mortality rates in Guatemala.
 - Reduction in fiscal deficit in Honduras.

Natural hazards and immigration

- Environmental hazards are positively associated with emigration rates (Drabo, Mbaye 2011; Hunter 2005).
- Association varies by setting, hazard types, and household characteristics (Hunter 2005).
- Environmental factors play important role in shaping migration decisions (Drabo 2011):
 - Particularly among **most vulnerable**.
 - Also among **high-skilled workers**.
 - Brain drain is good to the U.S., but it generates vulnerability in sending countries.

Future trends

- Immigration from Central America might continue to increase in the coming decades, due to:
 - Young population.
 - Low educational enrollment.
 - Poor socioeconomic conditions.
 - Low earnings.
 - **High crime rates** (Gov. Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras 2014; US Dept. State 2015; Board 2014).
 - **Increase of natural disasters** (Baez et al. 2015).

Further studies and public policies

- **Integrate data:**
 - Deepen knowledge about population flows and natural disasters.
- Investigate who **immigrant children** are at destination might help act at origin countries.
- Policies should **increase resilience** in sending countries, due to their high human vulnerability.
- **Corruption** and weak institutions make it a challenge to invest in these countries.

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