

A Profile of Immigrants in the Illinois Workforce

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The foreign-born made up approximately 10 percent of the Illinois workforce in 1990. They are proportionally over-represented among the following occupations:

Operators, fabricators and laborers	17.2 percent
Service occupations	13.6 percent
Precision production and craftsmen	12.7 percent

Among industries, the foreign-born are over-represented in the manufacturing industry at 16.1 percent of employees.

2. Manufacturers in Illinois depend heavily on immigrants in both skilled and unskilled positions.
 - In particular these are skilled craft workers from Europe and to some extent Mexico, and laborers from Mexico.
 - While the foreign-born as a whole are under-represented among managers and professional specialists, Asian immigrants are over-represented in this group.
 - Service industries depend upon European and Mexican immigrants to fill those jobs.
3. The age profile of major immigrant groups differs substantially.

Mexican immigrants are the youngest of the major groups with almost 25 percent of workers younger than 25 years of age.

European workers were the oldest with nearly 50 percent over 45 years of age.

4. Mexican immigrants have particularly low English skills and educational achievement. A high proportion of Asian immigrants have a college education and so represent an important source of highly skilled professionals in the Illinois economy.

Mexican immigrants with strong English skills are far more likely than Asian or European immigrants with strong English skills to do operator, fabricator or laborer jobs.

5. In general, the more recently immigrants have arrived the more likely they were to be working in either service or laborer occupations in 1990. Pre-1965 arrivals were twice as likely to hold managerial or professional jobs in 1990 as were immigrants who arrived during the 1980s.
6. The immigrant group arriving from 1965 to 1979 was more likely than either the pre-1965 immigrants or post-1980 immigrants to enter the manufacturing industry. The post-

1980 cohort was only half as likely as the pre-1965 cohort to be in the finance, insurance and real estate industry.

7. For recent European immigrants, significant improvements in English enhance one's likelihood of working in a managerial, professional or technical, sales or administrative job. They substantially decrease the likelihood of working in a service occupation or in an unskilled position.

8. Language acquisition appears to play less of a role in determining occupation for recent Mexican immigrants. Moving from speaking English well to exclusively did decrease one's chances of working in a precision, production or craft occupation. However, few Mexicans work in managerial or professional occupations irrespective of language skills.

9. For Asians, there appeared to be a potentially large payoff in moving from not speaking English well to speaking it well or very well. It made a worker much more likely to have a managerial, professional or technical job, and much less likely to work in service or as an unskilled worker. The benefit appeared to be far less for moving from speaking English very well to exclusively.

10. Education significantly enhanced the likelihood that an immigrant would attain a managerial or professional specialty job. This effect was strongest for European immigrants. High school degrees were especially important for Europeans or Asians to attain technical, sales or administrative jobs. Attainment of a college degree was especially important for Mexicans to rise above laborer jobs.

There are important relationships between the dates of arrival of immigrants, their national origin and their English skills and educational levels.

- Poor English speaking Europeans of the 1980s were much more likely to take service jobs than poor English speakers who arrived earlier. Conversely, poor English speakers arriving before 1965 had greater opportunities to attain technical or administrative jobs than those who have arrived more recently.
- Strong English speakers arriving from Mexico before 1965 were much more likely to attain managerial, professional, or administrative jobs by 1990 than were more recent immigrants who had the same English skills.
- Analysis of immigrants arriving in the 1970s indicates that from 1980 to 1990 there was a tendency for them to move from operator/fabricator/laborers occupations into precision production/craft occupations. Others likely moved from service occupations into managerial/professional/specialty occupations. These patterns appeared to maintain across Mexicans, Asians, and Europeans, although Mexicans were far less likely to attain managerial, professional, technical or administrative occupations.

- Within ten years of arrival, approximately 40 percent of Asian and European immigrants who start in laborer jobs attain higher status jobs. About 10 percent of Mexican immigrants attain higher status jobs within ten years.
- During the 1980s there was a significant migration of immigrant workers from Chicago to its suburbs.
- European and Asian immigrants entering during the 1970s improved their English skills substantially during the 1980s. For Europeans, the percent not speaking English well, or not at all, dropped from 35 percent to 17 percent. For Asians the percent declined from 61 percent to 39 percent. Over 80 percent of Mexicans claimed that they spoke English at least well.
- Very few European, Mexican, or Asian immigrants arriving during the 1970s and working appear to have earned a college degree by 1990.
- More recent arrival cohorts of all nationalities were far less likely to be working in managerial or professional occupations even when controlling for attainment of college degrees and higher language skills.
- Recent European female arrivals were far more likely to be working in service jobs in 1990 than were their predecessors. Recent Mexican female arrivals were far more likely to be working in laborer jobs in 1990 than their predecessors.

Policy Implications

Illinois manufacturers have depended upon European crafts workers. These people tend to be aging and the supply of these skilled workers may be increasingly limited in the future without replenishment.

To the extent that Mexican laborers fail to gain additional education or climb occupational ladders, the Illinois economy will for many years have a continued supply of low wage labor for manufacturing and service industries.

Mexican immigrants must substantially improve their language and educational skills if they are to improve their occupations and earnings. However, Mexican immigrants with strong English skills are under-represented among managers and professionals. Affirmative programs may be necessary to help these persons enter these professions, for which they appear to be qualified.

The Illinois economy has come to depend upon Asians for highly skilled service occupations. Continued expansion of that sector may depend upon continued recruitment of these people to the United States and Illinois.

Few working immigrants appear to earn a college degree after arrival, despite the fact that there is a strong occupational return to doing so and that very few European and Mexican immigrants attain them. The overall capability of the Illinois workforce could be enhanced by helping adult immigrants complete college degrees. The Mexican immigrants present a particular challenge because only small percentages of them have high school degrees.

INTRODUCTION

The question of how immigrants are performing in the Illinois labor market is important for various reasons. First, there is extensive debate over the nature of our immigrant admissions policies and whether they should or should not be altered to more closely suit the economic needs of the U.S. Some argue that our current process of legal immigration, which is heavily weighted in favor of immigrants who have family members here, should be altered to favor immigrants who have more human capital in the form of education and English ability, for example, so that they would be more likely to be economically successful here, pay more in taxes, use less in services such as welfare, etc. Others argue that our current mix of immigrants suits our labor market well, i.e., our economy has job openings for both high- and low-skilled workers and, indeed, immigrants have a bimodal educational profile, with large percentages having low levels of education and large percentages having advanced academic degrees. Highly publicized studies published by the National Academy of Sciences in 1997 found that our existing collective of immigrants -- including both the low- and high-skilled -- on the whole make a positive economic contribution, with each immigrant alive in 1994 (in combination with his or her descendants) found to pay a net surplus of taxes over government services used to the extent of \$80,000 per immigrant.¹

Another important reason to examine the role and progress of immigrants in the state labor force has to do with the employment training programs conducted by federal, state and some local governments. These governmental entities may be interested in further investing in the preparedness and economic competitiveness of the workforce. In Illinois, our economy has seen many changes in recent years, with some industrial sectors such as durable-goods manufacturing on the decline, while other sectors involved with high-technology research and design are concerned about whether they will have sufficient workers with appropriate skills. Government programs or policies designed to improve or maintain the quality of the workforce will benefit from information on the role of immigrants in the local labor force, particularly in a state like Illinois where immigrants are more than 10 percent of the labor pool.

To respond to these and other concerns for information on the Illinois immigrant workforce, the Illinois Immigrant Policy Project (IIPP) commissioned this and other papers to provide a set of baseline data, analysis and policy recommendations that will inform the IIPP's deliberations on immigrant needs. The reports will inform a final summary report on the immigrant workforce and the topic of immigrant economic development, to be issued by the IIPP in 2002.

In this report we strive to answer three key questions relative to immigrants in the Illinois labor force. These questions are:

1) What is the overall demographic and socioeconomic status of immigrant workers in Illinois?

¹ Smith, James P. and Edmonston, Barry, eds. 1997 *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic and Fiscal Effects of Immigration* Washington, DC: National Academy Press

- 2) How do immigrant workers perform depending on when they arrived in the U.S.?
- 3) How do immigrant workers that arrive in a given time period adapt and change over time?

The analysis of Illinois immigrant workers focuses on three groups of immigrants, from Asia, Europe and Mexico. The Methodology section below describes the rationale for selecting these groups.

METHODOLOGY AND SELECTION OF IMMIGRANT COHORTS

Data Source

The source of information for this analysis is the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 5 percent records from the 1980 and 1990 censuses. (Comparable information from the 2000 Census is not available as of this writing.) The PUMS records are actual census records representing 5 percent of the Illinois workforce. For our analysis we selected those records including only persons aged 16 and over who were employed at the time they filled out their census form.

World Region Cohorts

This analysis sought to meaningfully examine the experiences of immigrant groups in Illinois within the constraints of limited numbers of immigrant records in the PUMS data, while recognizing the diversity of immigrant groups found in this state. The numbers of immigrant PUMS records from different geographic regions of the world were examined to find representative world region or national cohorts. After reviewing the data, three groups were selected: 1) immigrants from Europe, 2) immigrants from Asia, and 3) immigrants from Mexico. This was done because the authors believe that the conditions of immigration, whether one came as immigrant or refugee, is a stronger factor determining labor market disposition than the broad racial/ethnic categories of white, Asian or Hispanic. Thus in keeping with this approach, the immigrants from Europe analyzed in this paper do not include immigrants from the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and from the former Soviet Union, who tended to come as refugees during the period under study. Similarly, the immigrants from Asia do not include persons from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, also predominantly refugees. By excluding these nations, the European and Asian cohorts more closely resemble groups of regular legal immigrants. A large portion of the Mexican cohort may be expected to include non-legal immigrants, i.e., the undocumented, yet the census data do not permit a distinction to be made of which immigrants have legal status. (Also, past studies have made no distinction between the characteristics of legal and undocumented Mexican immigrants, as both types of immigrants have similar social and economic characteristics.²

Period of Arrival Cohorts

This study includes analysis of how immigrants have fared in the Illinois labor market depending on their period of entry. Based on important historical and public policy milestones, three major period of entry are distinguished here: 1) pre-1965, 2) 1965-1979, and 3) 1980-1990.

² Passel and Clark use census data on Mexican immigrants to proxy the characteristics of both legal and undocumented aliens in Illinois (Passel, Jeffrey and Clark, Rebecca L., 1996 *Taxes Paid by Illinois Immigrants* Chicago: Illinois Immigrant Policy Project).

Persons who immigrated prior to 1965 and who were still found in the 1990 census entered the U.S. in an era marked by relatively low immigration, few de facto refugees or undocumented arrivals, and with most of the arrivals coming from European nations. Then the Immigration Act of 1965 ended the system of preferential treatment of European applicants for immigrant visas, and began to allot visas more equitably to nations around the globe. This led to increases in both Latin American and Asian immigration in the context of increased facility of international travel and growing pressures to emigrate from many world regions. The period 1980-1990 marks another key period. The Refugee Act was passed in 1980, and the legislation began a formal process of admitting and resettling persons with a credible fear of persecution abroad. The 1980s also marked the growth of undocumented immigration, a fact attested to by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which recognized the phenomenon and attempted to reduce the numbers of undocumented immigrants by a combination of methods.

PROFILE OF THE IMMIGRANT WORKFORCE

Overall Size and Extent of Immigrant Workforce

There were 5,400,000 persons in the Illinois labor force in Illinois in 1990. Of these persons, 89.8 percent were native-born U.S. citizens and 10.2 percent were foreign born.

While immigrants were 10.2 percent of the Illinois workforce in 1990, they were relatively concentrated in certain occupational sectors. Immigrants were 17.2 percent of persons in operator/fabricator/laborer positions, 13.6 percent of the service sector workforce and 12.7 percent of precision production/craftsmen occupations. Immigrants are underrepresented in the two broad occupational categories that generally pay the highest salaries: managerial/professional specialty and technical/sales/administration.

Immigrant Representation in Occupational Categories

	Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Foreign Born	7.9%	6.9%	13.6%	9.4%	12.7%	17.2%	10.2%
Native Born	92.1%	93.1%	86.4%	90.6%	87.3%	82.8%	89.8%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The types of industries in which workers are employed are commonly divided into eleven major categories. For ease of presentation, however, in this report we present data only for those six segments of Illinois industry where at least 5 percent of all workers are found. These are displayed in the table below, along with the percent of workers in each categories who are foreign-born.

Immigrants are most highly represented in the manufacturing industry in Illinois, where 16.1 percent of all workers are foreign born, while immigrants are 10.2 percent of the overall labor force. Immigrants are proportionately represented in the construction and services industries, where they are roughly one in ten workers. The lowest immigrant representation of the major industries in Illinois are in transportation/communication/public utilities and finance/insurance/real estate, in both of which categories immigrants are less than 7 percent of the work force.

Immigrant Representation in Major Industrial Categories

	Construction	Mfg.	Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Services	Total
Foreign Born	10.9%	16.1%	6.3%	10.4%	6.7%	9.4%	10.2%

Native Born	89.1%	83.9%	93.7%	89.6%	93.3%	90.6%	89.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Occupations of Major Immigrant and Native-Born Groups

Occupational profiles differ significantly according to the race and ethnicity of native-born workers, just as the profiles vary among the major immigrant groups. To place immigrant workers in an appropriate context, then, we compare the three major immigrant groups that are the focus of our study to the major racial and ethnic groups found among the native-born population in Illinois.

The representation of the various foreign-born and native-born groups in the major occupational categories varies considerably. More than 36 percent of both the native-born Asians and the foreign-born Asian cohort are employed in managerial/professional occupations, for example, compared to only 4.4 percent of Mexicans. On the other hand, nearly 48 percent of Mexican foreign-born persons are employed in low-skilled operator/fabricator/laborer jobs, compared to less than 7 percent of native-born Asians.

These differences illustrate the significant diversity between immigrant groups and the different occupational niches that they tend to occupy. These data also demonstrate that native born whites, a group with a relatively high socioeconomic status, are actually spread somewhat more evenly across the occupational categories than other groups, rather than being concentrated in well-paying jobs in the managerial/professional specialty and in technical/sales/administration sectors. There is no major occupational category where native-born whites are more likely to be represented than other groups.

Occupations of Major Foreign- and Native-Born Groups

	Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision Prod., Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
FB Asia	37.8%	31.8%	12.6%	0.1%	6.1%	11.6%	100.0%
FB Europe	23.2%	23.4%	17.2%	0.5%	18.8%	16.8%	100.0%
FB Mexico	4.4%	12.3%	19.5%	4.2%	14.9%	44.7%	100.0%
NB API	36.7%	39.7%	10.9%	0.1%	5.8%	6.7%	100.0%
NB Black	20.2%	35.1%	19.5%	0.3%	6.6%	18.3%	100.0%
NB Latino	15.1%	34.6%	14.4%	1.1%	10.8%	24.0%	100.0%
NB White	26.9%	33.1%	11.8%	2.4%	11.3%	14.5%	100.0%
Total	25.6%	32.4%	12.8%	2.2%	11.1%	15.9%	100.0%

Note: FB=foreign -born, NB=native-born

Gender

Women were 51.5 percent of the overall population at time of 1990 census but a majority of workers in Illinois were men. Men were more than 50 percent but less than 59 percent

of all the immigrant groups analyzed, with exception of persons from Mexico. More than 70 percent of Mexican foreign-born workers were male.

Age

While 15.3 percent of all Illinois workers are less than 25 years old, two of the foreign-born groups, Europe and Asia, have less than 10 percent of their workers at this young age level. For European-born workers this can perhaps be explained by the fact that much of their immigration to Illinois took place many decades ago, and so that group was relatively older than other immigrant groups at the time of the 1990 census.

National-level data on some of the major immigrant groups that form our Asian cohort confirms that they are relatively older than other immigrants. Some 30.0 percent of Indian immigrants in 1998, for example were less than 25 years old at their arrival, compared to 38.9 percent of all immigrants.

The youngest workers in Illinois are the native-born Latinos and Asian/Pacific Islanders. This may be explained by fact that these groups are mostly children of immigrants, and Asian and Latino immigration are relatively new phenomena in Illinois (in contrast to European immigration). It makes sense that the children of newer immigrants would tend to be relatively young.

The oldest workers in Illinois are the foreign-born Europeans. Almost 44 percent are aged 45-64 years, and almost 6 percent are over the age of 65. No other group has nearly as large a portion of its workers in the 45-64 age category.

Age Categories of Major Foreign- and Native-Born Workers

	17-24 Years	25-44 Years	45-64 Years	65 Years +	Total
FB Asia	9.3%	58.8%	30.4%	1.5%	100.0%
FB Europe	5.2%	45.3%	43.8%	5.7%	100.0%
FB Mexico	24.4%	59.9%	14.9%	0.8%	100.0%
NB API	33.0%	43.9%	18.9%	4.1%	100.0%
NB Black	15.4%	53.7%	28.0%	2.9%	100.0%
NB Latino	28.1%	54.2%	16.7%	0.9%	100.0%
NB White	15.0%	52.8%	28.4%	3.7%	100.0%
Total	15.3%	53.1%	28.1%	3.5%	100.0%

Note: FB=foreign - born, NB=native-born

Human Capital Attributes -- English Ability and Education

The ability to speak English well and the level of education of an immigrant are key assets that have important implications for their ability to obtain a well-paying job. As these assets can be modified by the immigrant, they represent human capital that can be accrued by an immigrant during his or her lifetime.

English Ability

With regards to English levels, our principal interest is in relation to the immigrants, as the native born groups nearly all speak English well or better. Among the three immigrant groups, the Mexican-origin population is notable for having well over 40 percent of its workforce lacking the ability to speak English well. Some of this may be due to the “recentness” of Mexican immigration, given that most immigrants need some years of residence in the U.S. before they acquire English fluency. But the lack of English is clearly a factor that distinguishes Mexican immigrants from European and Asian immigrants, and which is likely to be an impediment to the economic progress of the Mexican immigrant workers.

Bilingualism

An interesting aside may be noted about bilingualism. Workers may be defined as bilingual if they speak English very well or well. They are not monolingual English speakers and yet their command of English is relatively high. Of the foreign-born workers, the Asian cohort has the highest degree of bilingualism, 81.1 percent. Notably, 61.1 percent of the *native-born* Latino workers have bilingual capabilities. It is not clear, however, the extent to which bilingualism is a marketable skill for the average worker, and in many or most cases it may not be (in essence, their bilingualism is wasted in the labor force marketplace).

Education Levels

Many entry-level jobs routinely require a high school diploma or its equivalent as the price of entry into those positions. It can safely be assumed that lack of a high school degree in today’s marketplace is a significant handicap for a job aspirant or worker. In this regard, foreign-born Mexican workers again are disadvantaged in comparison to other groups, with nearly 72 percent of the foreign-born Mexicans lacking a high school degree. The lack of high school education extends even to the native-born Latino workers, 42.1 percent of whom do not have this level of education, a rate that is higher than those of the foreign-born Europeans and foreign-born Asians.

The foreign-born Asians stand out as being the best-educated group in the Illinois workforce, with nearly half of them (53.3 percent) possessing a college degree. This is more than twice the rate of even native-born whites.

English and Education Levels of Major Foreign- and Native-Born Groups

	Speak Only English	Speak English Very Well or Well	Speak English Not Well or Not at All	Less than High School	High School, no College Degree	College Degree
FB Asia	7.1%	81.0%	11.9%	14.7%	32.0%	53.3%

FB Europe	26.2%	60.2%	13.6%	40.8%	44.9%	14.3%
FB Mexico	2.8%	52.9%	44.4%	71.7%	25.3%	3.0%
NB API	72.5%	26.1%	1.4%	7.0%	48.4%	44.5%
NB Black	97.0%	2.6%	0.4%	34.6%	54.1%	11.2%
NB Latino	32.7%	61.1%	6.3%	42.1%	48.1%	9.8%
NB White	96.5%	3.2%	0.3%	18.8%	58.1%	23.0%

Note: FB=foreign -born, NB=native-born

Income

Foreign-born Latino workers in Illinois have the lowest incomes of all the groups analyzed for this report. Some 17.0 percent of all foreign-born Mexican workers had earnings of less than \$10,000. Foreign-born Mexican workers were also the only group to have more than half of its members with income below \$20,000. Our tabulations of census data do not control for full- or part-time status of workers nor for other relevant factors, but these data nevertheless highlight the low economic status of FB Mexico workers and are consistent with our findings in other areas such as educational levels and English abilities of the different groups of workers.

The foreign-born Asian cohort and the native-born Asian/Pacific Islanders were the two groups most likely to be found at the upper income ranges. More than 25 percent of each of these groups had personal incomes at or above \$40,000.

Income Levels of Major Foreign- and Native -Born Groups

	\$0-\$9,999	\$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000-\$29,999	\$30,000-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$49,999	\$50,000+	Total
FB Asia	7.8%	25.5%	23.4%	16.5%	10.5%	16.2%	100.0%
FB Europe	5.9%	25.6%	24.6%	16.0%	11.2%	16.7%	100.0%
FB Mexico	17.0%	48.6%	21.4%	8.9%	2.6%	1.5%	100.0%
NB API	4.5%	21.2%	28.4%	19.9%	9.1%	16.9%	100.0%
NB Black	7.3%	33.7%	29.5%	18.3%	6.7%	4.6%	100.0%
NB Latino	8.4%	39.1%	26.3%	16.2%	5.5%	4.5%	100.0%
NB White	6.5%	25.5%	25.3%	18.2%	10.4%	14.1%	100.0%

Note: FB=foreign -born, NB=native-born

Industry

All of the native-born groups we analyzed, as well as the foreign-born Asians, are most likely to be in the service sector. With regard to Asians, it bears noting that the service

sector of industry includes many small business, self-employed workers as well as most medical personnel.

Foreign-born Europeans are about equally as likely to be in manufacturing, 26.8 percent, as in services, 29.5 percent. Foreign-born Mexicans are most likely to be in manufacturing, 44.3 percent, but native-born Latinos, as noted, are most likely to be found in the services sector.

Percent of Workers in Major Industrial Sectors						
	Construction	Mfg.	Transportation., Communications, Public Utilities.	Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Services
FB Asia	1.6%	19.2%	5.3%	16.5%	7.0%	43.9%
FB Europe	8.7%	26.8%	5.4%	15.6%	7.1%	29.5%
FB Mexico	6.4%	44.3%	3.5%	17.7%	1.8%	15.8%
NB API	2.1%	12.9%	6.1%	20.5%	9.1%	41.6%
NB Black	2.5%	15.7%	12.8%	13.9%	7.9%	36.8%
NB Latino	3.8%	26.1%	8.1%	18.8%	7.2%	26.1%
NB White	5.7%	19.0%	7.5%	16.4%	7.9%	30.9%

Note: FB=foreign -born, NB=native-born

Impact of English Ability and Education Level on Immigrant Workers

An immigrant's educational level and English ability can be expected to significantly affect the type of occupation available to him or her. Higher levels of education and greater fluency in English can be expected to open more job possibilities up for the immigrant worker.

Impact of English Ability

There is clearly a relation between the level of English ability and the type of occupation that an immigrant worker holds. For example, among immigrants who report that they speak only English, a high 26.3 percent have Managerial and Professional Specialty jobs.

But the connection between English ability and type of occupation does not hold equally strong for all groups. Only 9.6 percent of FB Mexicans who speak only English are in Managerial and Professional Specialty jobs, compared to 41.1 percent of FB Asia immigrants. In fact, 40.4 percent of all Mexican foreign-born workers who speak only English are in relatively low-prestige and less-remunerated Operator, Fabricator, Laborer jobs. Clearly, English abilities interact with other factors such as education level to determine the type of job that a worker obtains.

Among immigrants who do not speak English well or at all, the lower-skilled Service occupations and Operator, Fabricator, Laborer occupations account for more than half of all workers in each of the three major immigrant groups we analyzed. Among Asians, however, 34.6 percent of persons who do not speak English well are nevertheless employed in either Managerial and Professional Specialty jobs or Technical, Sales and Administration jobs.

Impact of Education

In five of the seven groups we studied, workers without a high school degree are most likely to be found in operator/fabricator/laborer jobs. The exceptions are foreign-born Asians, who are most likely to be in Service occupations, and the native-born Asian/Pacific Islanders, 27.3 percent of whom are found in both technical/sales/administration occupations and in service occupations.

Nearly all the groups analyzed are most likely to have a job in the technical/sales/administration categories if they have a high school education but not a bachelor's degree. The sole exception are foreign-born Mexicans, who are most likely to hold Operator, Fabricator, Laborer jobs even when they have a high school degree.

Finally, in the case of persons with a bachelor's degree, every group analyzed was most likely to have a Managerial, Professional Specialty job. Among foreign-born Mexicans, however, only 43.6 percent of workers were in this category compared to more than 55 percent for all other groups. Thus, for the Mexican foreign born, level of education does not appear to predict a higher level of occupation as in the case of other groups.

Education Levels of Major Foreign- and Native-Born Groups, by Occupation

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision Prod., Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Not a HS Grad	FB Asia	4.4%	14.1%	39.7%	0.7%	10.0%	31.1%	100.0%
	FB Europe	6.8	11.2	26.9	0.9	25.7	28.4	100.0
	FB Mexico	2.2	6.3	18.5	4.4	15.8	52.8	100.0
	NB API	9.1	27.3	27.3	0.0	13.6	22.7	100.0
	NB Black	6.1	16.8	32.5	0.6	9.9	34.1	100.0
	NB Latino	4.5	17.3	17.4	2.0	15.3	43.6	100.0
	NB White	6.2	18.9	20.0	4.9	18.2	31.8	100.0
HS Grad, No B.A.	FB Asia	21.1	32.3	17.2	0.1	11.2	18.2	100.0
	FB Europe	18.6	29.3	15.9	0.4	20.3	15.5	100.0
	FB Mexico	6.7	21.4	16.1	2.1	17.4	36.2	100.0
	NB API	23.3	46.1	8.6	0.0	12.5	9.5	100.0
	NB Black	15.2	40.1	18.0	0.2	8.0	18.5	100.0
	NB Latino	14.9	38.5	12.6	0.7	13.5	19.7	100.0
	NB White	17.3	37.2	11.7	2.7	14.8	16.3	100.0
B.A. or Higher	FB Asia	55.3	31.2	5.0	0.0	3.5	4.9	100.0
	FB Europe	61.4	22.2	5.2	0.3	6.9	4.0	100.0
	FB Mexico	43.6	19.7	10.1	0.0	12.2	14.4	100.0
	NB API	69.4	23.9	2.4	0.0	2.4	2.0	100.0
	NB Black	66.0	24.1	5.1	0.0	2.0	2.7	100.0
	NB Latino	65.6	22.6	5.7	0.0	3.7	2.4	100.0
	NB White	66.6	25.0	2.9	1.1	2.6	1.8	100.0

English Abilities of Major Foreign- and Native -Born Groups, by Occupation

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision Prod., Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Only English	FB Asia	41.1%	34.4%	9.3%	0.6%	4.1%	10.5%	100.0%
	FB Europe	32.8	32.2	9.7	0.7	14.5	10.1	100.0
	FB Mexico	9.6	17.2	18.7	2.5	11.6	40.4	100.0
	NB API	38.9	39.7	9.4	0.2	5.7	6.1	100.0
	NB Black	20.1	35.0	19.6	0.3	6.6	18.4	100.0
	NB Latino	17.6	36.8	14.6	0.8	11.8	18.4	100.0
	NB White	26.8	33.0	11.7	2.5	11.4	14.6	100.0
English Very Well or Well	FB Asia	41.2	33.0	10.3	0.1	5.8	9.6	100.0
	FB Europe	23.0	22.8	17.2	0.5	19.7	16.8	100.0
	FB Mexico	6.4	17.2	17.2	2.9	16.7	39.6	100.0
	NB API	32.4	39.6	14.0	0.0	6.3	7.7	100.0
	NB Black	25.3	35.7	16.3	0.0	8.4	14.2	100.0
	NB Latino	14.4	34.9	14.0	1.1	10.5	25.1	100.0
	NB White	29.3	36.5	12.1	1.7	9.4	11.0	100.0
English Not Well or Not at All	FB Asia	12.5	22.1	30.1	0.2	9.4	25.8	100.0
	FB Europe	4.1	7.4	33.1	0.2	24.0	31.3	100.0
	FB Mexico	1.6	6.0	22.4	5.9	13.0	51.2	100.0
	NB API	9.1	45.5	27.3	0.0	0.0	18.2	100.0
	NB Black	23.2	45.1	11.0	0.0	6.1	14.6	100.0
	NB Latino	5.7	18.8	17.7	1.9	9.0	46.9	100.0
	NB White	25.1	36.6	13.6	2.6	8.6	13.4	100.0

IMMIGRANT WORKERS -- IMPACT OF PERIOD OF ARRIVAL

The following analyzes several considerations in immigrant economic development:

- The extent to which differences in factors such as ability to speak English, levels of education, or gender correspond to immigrant presence in various occupations and industries.
- The extent to which the occupations and industries in which immigrants were found in 1990 differs depending on the period of arrival and the immigrant characteristics.
- Differences between immigrants according to region of origin of arrival, occupation/industry, and characteristics.

Occupation Profile by Period of Arrival

Immigrants who arrived in the United States prior to 1965 are more likely than later arrivals to hold relatively prestigious managerial/professional specialty occupations in Illinois. More than 28 percent of pre-1965 arrivals hold managerial/professional specialty jobs compared to about 22 percent of 1965-1979 arrivals and less than 15 percent of 1980s arrivals. A similar trend is evident with regard to technical/sales/administration jobs, which also tend to be relatively well remunerated. These latter occupations include more than 27 percent of the pre-1965 arrivals but only about 19 percent of 1980s arrivals.

The pre-1965 arrivals are less likely than the other arrival cohorts to hold the generally less desirable service jobs. For example, only 12.1 percent of pre-1965 arrivals hold service jobs, compared to almost 14 percent of 1965-1979 arrivals and almost 23 percent of 1980s arrivals. A similar trend is seen in operator/fabricator/laborer jobs, in which only 16.0 percent of pre-1965 workers are employed, compared to 28.2 percent of 1980s arrivals.

Occupational Profile by Period of Arrival

	Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	28.4%	27.3%	12.1%	0.9%	15.1%	16.0%	100.0%
1965-1979	21.5%	22.9%	13.7%	1.1%	13.1%	27.8%	100.0%
1980-1990	14.9%	19.3%	22.8%	2.7%	12.1%	28.2%	100.0%

Industrial Profile by Period of Arrival

The shifts in industries where the three arrival cohorts are employed are not as pronounced as with occupations. As seen below, comparable percentages of each immigrant group are found in practically all the industrial categories. For example, some 26.1 percent of pre-1965 arrivals are found in the manufacturing industry, compared to an

only slightly higher 29.2 percent of 1980s arrivals. The fact that immigrants do not shift industrial categories over time, even as they do change occupations (as described above), suggests that over time there is a ladder effect in which longer term immigrants acquire better jobs than newer immigrants working in the same industries.

Immigrant Representation in Major Industrial Categories

	Construction	Mfg.	Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Services	Other	Total
Pre-1965 Arrivals	5.8%	26.1%	6.5%	15.2%	7.6%	30.8%	8.0%	100.0%
1965-1979 Arrivals	4.9%	33.8%	5.2%	14.6%	5.7%	28.3%	7.5%	100.0%
1980-1990 Arrivals	6.1%	29.2%	3.5%	19.7%	3.5%	29.5%	8.5%	100.0%

Europe

Occupational Profile by English Ability and Period of Arrival - European Immigrants

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Only English	30.0%	31.8%	11.1%	.8%	15.9%	10.4%	100.0%
1965-1979	Only English	35.2	33.5	6.2	.6	13.9	10.5	100.0
1980-1990	Only English	39.9	30.8	9.5	.4	8.5	11.0	100.0
Pre-1965	English Well or Very Well	25.9	26.4	13.0	.6	19.2	14.9	100.0
1965-1979	English Well or Very Well	21.2	20.7	18.3	.4	21.5	17.8	100.0
1980-1990	English Well or Very Well	20.2	17.6	24.0	.1	19.9	18.3	100.0
Pre-1965	Not Well or Not at All	8.4	16.7	22.0	0	20.9	32.1	100.0
1965-1979	Not Well or Not at All	4.7	8.3	28.1	0	24.4	34.5	100.0
1980-1990	Not Well or Not at All	3.8	5.7	37.7	.3	23.6	28.8	100.0

For European immigrants, the time of arrival appears to have had minimal impact on the occupation of people of various levels of English skills in 1990. The area of greatest

impact was among the poor English speakers in the service occupations. Poor English speakers who arrived before 1965 were much less likely to work in service occupations than were the poor English speakers of the 1980s. Among Pre-1965 arrivals, only 22 percent of these were in service occupations. Among the 1980s arrivals, 37 percent worked in service occupations. The poor English speakers from pre-1965 were somewhat less likely to end up in Technical, Sales, or Administrative jobs, 16.7 percent among the pre-1965, compared to only 5.7 percent of the 1980s arrivals.

Mexico

Occupational Profile by English Ability and Period of Arrival - Mexican Immigrants

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Only English	20.3%	31.9%	9.9%	0.0%	13.3%	24.6%	100.0%
1965-1979	Only English	8.6	17.3	13.9	3.8	13.2	43.2	100.0
1980-1990	Only English	3.7	8.9	26.9	6.1	5.5	48.9	100.0
Pre-1965	English Well or Very Well	14.0	22.3	12.9	2.4	16.4	32.0	100.0
1965-1979	English Well or Very Well	6.3	18.8	15.1	2.2	17.1	40.6	100.0
1980-1990	English Well or Very Well	4.1	10.9	23.9	3.8	15.7	41.6	100.0
Pre-1965	Not Well or Not at All	3.5	6.7	15.2	5.1	14.2	55.3	100.0
1965-1979	Not Well or Not at All	1.9	5.3	15.2	3.3	13.4	61.0	100.0
1980-1990	Not Well or Not at All	1.8	5.9	27.9	7.9	12.7	43.8	100.0

Mexican immigrants experienced large differences in their occupational destinations that correspond to their level of English and time of arrival. The best English speakers experienced a strong relative shift away from Managerial, Professional, and Technical/Sales/Administrative occupations to service and unskilled labor occupations. In 1990, over 50 percent of Mexican immigrants who spoke only English were in the former occupations; however, of the 1980s immigrants only about 11 percent were. Conversely, over 70 percent of 1980s arrivals who spoke English well were found in service or unskilled labor positions in 1990, compared to only 35 percent of the pre-1965 arrivals.

Poor English speakers also experienced a shift toward the service occupations, with 15 percent of those from the pre-1965 arrivals and 1970s arrivals working in service occupations, compared to almost 28 percent of the 1980s arrivals. The poor English speakers among the 1980s arrivals were about 10 percent less likely than the pre-1965 arrivals to be found in unskilled jobs in 1990.

Asia Non SE

Occupational Profile by English Ability and Period of Arrival - Asian Immigrants

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Only English	46.6%	28.6%	7.5%	0.0%	8.1%	9.1%	100.0%
1965-1979	Only English	38.9	38.4	8.0	.1	3.9	10.8	100.0
1980-1990	Only English	35.6	34.5	19.2	1.1	1.5	8.2	100.0
Pre-1965	English Well or Very Well	57.0	20.8	9.0	.5	6.7	6.0	100.0
1965-1979	English Well or Very Well	45.7	31.8	7.6	.1	5.7	9.2	100.0
1980-1990	English Well or Very Well	31.3	37.2	13.8	0	6.0	11.7	100.0
Pre-1965	Not Well or Not at All	21.5	0	35.4	0	0	43.1	100.0
1965-1979	Not Well or Not at All	10.3	24.8	27.8	.3	10.2	26.5	100.0
1980-1990	Not Well or Not at All	12.4	24.3	29.0	0	9.9	24.4	100.0

The pre-1965 Asians were highly likely to be found in managerial professional occupations in 1990 irrespective of their levels of English. This pattern dissipated somewhat with ensuing cohorts so that only about one-third of Asians who spoke only English or English well or very well were found in managerial or professional occupations.

Asians who have arrived more recently have been far more likely to work in technical, sales or administrative jobs, even when they had poor English. None of the pre-1965 Asians who spoke English poorly were in technical, sales or administrative occupations, or in precision production or craft occupations in 1990, but 24 percent and 10 percent of the post-1965 Asian immigrants were respectively.

Poor English speakers among the 1980s entrants were much less likely to be found in unskilled positions (24.4 percent) than were the pre-1965 immigrants (43.1 percent).

Europe

		Occupational Profile by Educational Level and Period of Arrival - European Immigrants						Total
		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	
Pre-1965	Not HS Grad	7.7%	14.0%	22.3%	1.3%	27.2%	27.4%	100.0%
1965-1979	Not HS Grad	6.9	10.6	28.6	.3	26.2	27.4	100.0
1980-1990	Not HS Grad	4.4	4.5	34.6	.5	22.1	33.8	100.0
Pre-1965	HS Grad, Some Col.	22.2	37.4	11.0	.5	18.3	10.6	100.0
1965-1979	HS Grad, Some Col.	17.7	24.4	15.3	.5	23.0	19.1	100.0
1980-1990	HS Grad, Some Col.	11.4	15.1	28.5	.2	23.0	21.8	100.0
Pre-1965	BA or More	68.2	22.7	2.8	.3	3.4	2.5	100.0
1965-1979	BA or More	60.7	24.8	2.9	.4	7.9	3.3	100.0
1980-1990	BA or More	47.1	19.5	13.4	0	12.0	8.0	100.0

European immigrants with college education who arrived in the 1980s were much less likely to work in managerial jobs than the pre-1980s cohort. They were more likely to be found in service or precision production/craftsman jobs.

Europeans with less than a college degree who arrived in the 1980s were much less likely to be found in technical, sales or administrative jobs than their pre-1965 forebears.

The post 1965 arrivals who were high school graduates, but not college graduates, were almost twice as likely as the pre-1965 arrivals to work in unskilled jobs.

Mexico

Occupational Profile by Educational Level and Period of Arrival - Mexican Immigrants

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Not HS Grad	5.3%	6.7%	16.1%	3.7%	18.9%	49.2%	100.0%
1965-1979	Not HS Grad	2.4	6.6	16.1	2.9	16.7	55.3	100.0
1980-1990	Not HS Grad	1.3	5.1	24.7	7.2	12.8	48.8	100.0
Pre-1965	HS Grad, Some Col.	11.1	37.6	10.0	2.0	14.6	24.7	100.0
1965-1979	HS Grad, Some Col.	7.1	21.7	13.8	1.6	17.5	38.3	100.0
1980-1990	HS Grad, Some Col.	3.5	11.5	23.6	3.1	16.9	41.4	100
Pre-1965	BA or More	67.5	15.2	10.1	0	1.5	5.7	100
1965-1979	BA or More	39.8	22.8	4.0	0	12.9	20.5	100
1980-1990	BA or More	32.5	13.4	17.7	0	19.2	17.2	100

Among Mexicans there was a huge difference in 1990 occupation associated with educational level. Two-thirds of Pre-1965 arrivals with college degrees worked in management or professions in 1990. However, only about one-third of comparably educated Mexicans who had arrived since 1965 worked in those professions. The more recent arrivals among the college educated were much more likely to work in precision crafts and in unskilled positions, occupations that were quite rare in 1990 for the pre-1965 college educated.

Occupational prospects for the least educated Mexican immigrants changed little with arrival cohort as about half of them were among unskilled workers in 1990. The proportion of those with high school but no college who worked in unskilled jobs increased significantly with arrival cohort moving from 24.7 percent of the pre-1965 group to 41.4 percent of the 1980s group.

Asia

Occupational Profile by Educational Level and Period of Arrival - Asian Immigrants

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Not HS Grad	3.5%	5.0%	46.2%	4.0%	9.5%	31.7%	100.0%
1965-1979	Not HS Grad	6.4	16.1	33.2	.1	8.7	35.3	100.0
1980-1990	Not HS Grad	2.8	17.1	43.9	.4	10.8	25.0	100.0
Pre-1965	HS Grad, Some Col.	33.7	24.2	12.0	0	15.6	14.4	100.0
1965-1979	HS Grad, Some Col.	23.6	33.7	13.0	.1	11.4	18.2	100.0
1980-1990	HS Grad, Some Col.	13.9	32.6	21.7	0	10.7	21.1	100.0
Pre-1965	BA or More	73.0	23.7	1.7	0	1.4	.2	100.0
1965-1979	BA or More	59.5	29.4	3.7	.1	3.4	3.8	100.0
1980-1990	BA or More	43.7	37.6	7.2	0	4.3	7.3	100.0

The Asian occupational pattern when considered for educational level appeared more stable across arrival cohorts than either the European or Mexican patterns. Like the other groups, Asian arrivals of the 1980s who reported college degrees were less likely to be found in management or professions in the 1990s than the pre-1965 or 1980s arrival cohorts. Asians of all educational levels who arrived in the 1980s were more likely to be found in the technical, sales and administrative occupations in 1990 than were the earlier arrivals. The relationship between education and arrival cohort remained mostly unchanged in all other occupations.

Europe

Occupational Profile by Gender and Period of Arrival - European Immigrants

		Managerial, Professional Speciality	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Male	29.9%	16.9%	8.8%	1.1%	28.6%	14.8%	100.0%
1965-1979	Male	22.8	13.6	12.5	.6	30.5	20.0	100.0
1980-1990	Male	19.3	12.0	13.4	.3	30.0	25.0	100.0
Pre-1965	Female	23.4	41.7	17.1	.2	5.2	12.4	100.0
1965-1979	Female	19.8	31.9	24.2	.2	6.9	17.0	100.0
1980-1990	Female	15.4	20.9	44.7	0	4.6	14.4	100.0

The year of arrival had a particular impact for European immigrant women. Women arriving during the pre-1965 period were disproportionately working in technical, sales and administrative jobs in 1990 (41.7 percent). Almost one quarter of these women were in managerial or professional jobs, and only 17 percent in service occupations. Women arriving during the 1980s were far more likely to work in service occupations (44.7 percent) and much less likely to be in technical, sales or administrative positions, or in managerial or professional jobs.

European male occupational patterns were much more stable across arrival cohorts. More recent arrivals were more likely to be working in unskilled jobs in 1990 and somewhat less likely to be in managerial or professional jobs.

Mexico

Occupational Profile by Gender and Period of Arrival - Mexican Immigrants

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Male	12.2%	11.8%	12.2%	4.1%	21.2%	38.6%	100.0%
1965-1979	Male	4.3	8.9	15.6	3.7	19.7	47.8	100.0
1980-1990	Male	2.5	6.0	27.8	8.3	15.7	39.7	100.0
Pre-1965	Female	13.4	36.7	14.8	.1	5.2	29.8	100.0
1965-1979	Female	5.9	24.6	14.1	.3	7.8	47.4	100.0
1980-1990	Female	2.9	13.2	22.5	.7	7.0	53.6	100.0

Mexican women who arrived in the United States more recently were far more likely to work in unskilled positions than were those women who arrived earlier. Of the Mexican women who arrived during the 1980s, over half (53.6 percent) were working in unskilled jobs in 1990. Male representation in unskilled jobs rose for the 1965 to 1979 cohort, but the proportion of males in the 1980s arrival cohort in unskilled jobs was similar to that of pre-1965. The result of these patterns was that among the early arrivals, men were more likely than women to work in unskilled jobs but for the more recent arrivals, women were more likely than men to work in those jobs.

Both men and women who arrived after 1965 were substantially less likely to have managerial or professional occupations than the post-1965 arrivals, and Mexican women who arrived earlier were much more likely (36.7 percent) to work in technical, sales or administrative jobs than were more recent arrivals (13.2 percent).

Asia

Occupational Profile by Gender and Period of Arrival - Asian Immigrants

		Managerial; Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	Total
Pre-1965	Male	62.3%	18.7%	7.0%	0.0%	5.4%	6.6%	100.0%
1965-1979	Male	42.5	28.8	8.6	0.1	8.9	11.1	100.0
1980-1990	Male	30.3	32.6	14.2	0.0	8.3	14.6	100.0
Pre-1965	Female	43.3	25.7	12.2	0.8	8.5	9.4	100.0
1965-1979	Female	42.4	35.1	9.8	0.1	2.6	10.1	100.0
1980-1990	Female	24.9	37.7	20.3	0.1	4.1	12.9	100.0

Asian males in particular exhibited dramatic differences in occupation depending on when they arrived in the United States. Almost two-thirds of the pre-1965 Asian male arrivals were working in managerial or professional occupations by 1990 while only one-third of 1980s arrivals were. Asian women displayed a similar, although less dramatic, pattern decreasing from 43.3 percent managers or professionals to 24.9 percent.

Both Asian males and females experienced greater access to technical, sales, administrative, and service positions in more recent arrival cohorts.

Asian men were more likely to work in unskilled jobs in 1990 if they were recent arrivals.

		1980s Arrivals – Impact of Language Gap- Change in Likelihood of Being in Occupation					
		Managerial, Professional Speciality	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer
Europe	Not Well to Well	16.4	11.9	-13.7	-0.2	-3.7	-10.5
	Well to Only	19.7	23.8	-15.5	0.3	-11.4	-7.3
Mexico	Not Well to Well	2.3	5.0	-4.0	-3.9	3.0	-2.2
	Well to Only	-4	-2.0	3.0	2.3	-10.2	7.3
Asia	Not Well to Well	18.9	12.9	-15.2	0	-3.9	-12.7
	Well to Only	4.3	-2.7	5.4	1.1	-3.5	-3.5

Table XX above indicates for each occupation and region of origin, the percentage difference in likelihood that an immigrant arriving during the 1980s will be in that occupation by comparing immigrants whose English speaking was “well” or “only”, or “not well” to “well.” For instance, European immigrants who spoke English “Only” were 19.7 percent more likely to be in managerial or professional jobs than European immigrants who spoke English only “Well or Very Well.” Occupations with low numbers indicate, therefore, that the level of English bears little on the likelihood of an immigrant working in that occupation.

Conversely, where numbers are higher, language appears to have a strong bearing on the probability that a member of the immigrant group would work in the occupation.

The data indicate that for recent European immigrants, significant improvements in English enhance one’s likelihood of working in a managerial, professional or technical, sales or administrative job. They substantially decrease the likelihood of working in a service occupation or in an unskilled position.

Language acquisition appears to play less of a role in determining occupation for recent Mexican immigrants. Moving from speaking English well to exclusively did decrease one’s chances of working in a precision, production or craft occupation. However, few Mexicans work in managerial or professional occupations irrespective of language skills.

For Asians, there appeared to be a potentially large payoff in moving from not speaking English well to speaking it well or very well. It made a worker much more likely to have a managerial, professional or technical job, and much less likely to work in service or as an unskilled worker. The benefit appeared to be far less for moving from speaking English very well to exclusively.

1980s Arrivals: Impact of Educational Gap

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer
Europe	HS Grad	7.0	10.6	-6.1	-0.3	0.9	-12.0
	College Grad	35.7	4.4	-15.1	-0.2	-11.0	-13.8
Mexico	HS Grad	2.2	6.4	-1.1	4.1	4.1	-7.4
	College Grad	29.0	1.9	-5.9	3.1	2.3	-24.2
Asia	HS Grad	11.1	15.5	-22.2	-0.4	-0.1	-3.9
	College Grad	29.2	5.0	-14.5	0	-6.4	-13.8

College graduation appeared to be a virtual requirement for working in a managerial or professional job for all groups. Again, the biggest benefits appeared to accrue to European immigrants where the gap between having a college degree and not was 35.7 percent. Only for Asians did attaining a high school diploma appear to enhance their chances of attaining a management job very much. Attaining each level of education significantly decreased the likelihood that an Asian would work in a service occupation and getting a high school diploma particularly helped both Europeans and Asians to get technical, sales or administrative jobs. Attaining a college degree appeared particularly important for Mexicans rising above operator, fabricator or labor jobs.

1980s Arrivals: Impact of Being Male

		Managerial, Professional Specialty	Technical, Sales, Admin.	Service	Farming, Forestry, Fishing	Precision, Production, Craftsman	Operator, Fabricator, Laborer
Europe	Male	3.9	-8.9	-31.3	.3	25.4	10.6
Mexico	Male	-0.4	-7.2	-5.3	7.6	8.7	13.9
Asia	Male	5.4	-5.1	-6.1	-0.1	4.2	1.7

Gender appears to have had the strongest impact on occupation among Europeans. Being male decreased by 31 percent the likelihood of a recent European immigrant working in a service occupation. It increased by 25.4 percent the likelihood that a male would have a precision, production or craft job. For all groups, males were less likely to have technical, sales or administrative jobs than were women, and more likely to be laborers, although for Asians the male/female difference for likelihood of working as a laborer was minimal.

PROGRESS OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS OVER TIME

In this section we address the question of how immigrant workers progress over time. To accomplish this we follow a procedure in which we select immigrant workers that arrived in the 1970s who are included in the 1980 census. We compare this group to immigrant workers that arrived in the 1970 who are included in the 1990 census. This gives us a simulated longitudinal analysis to follow the trajectory of immigrants over a ten-year period in the Illinois labor force.

Spatial Redistribution

One of the interesting findings of this simulated longitudinal analysis is the glimpse it gives of how immigrant workers are moving about the state of Illinois, i.e., how they are changing their residential patterns. We find a clear pattern of movement out of the city of Chicago and into the suburbs.

In 1980, 60.5 percent of the immigrant workers who arrived in the 1970s lived in Chicago, but only 49.8 percent were in the city by 2000. Conversely, the percent living in suburban Chicago grew from 20.2 percent to 26.2 percent. The portion in DuPage County grew from 6.1 percent to 9.1 percent.

Among the three immigrant groups analyzed, the movement to the suburbs over the years was most accelerated among Asians. The portion of 1970s Asian workers living in the city of Chicago in 1980 was 51.1 percent, but this had dropped by nearly 20 percentage points within a decade, to 32.8 percent in 2000. The percent of both the European and Mexican immigrant workers living in Chicago fell by approximately 10 percentage points between 1980 and 1990.

Percent of 1970s Arrivals in Illinois Regions

	1980	1990
Chicago	56.5%	46.0%
Suburban Cook County	24.7	34.8
DuPage County	6.3	7.6
Rest of State	12.5	11.6

Shifts in Overall Occupational Categories

Overall, immigrant workers who arrived in the 1970s were less likely to work in service occupations and in operator/fabricator/laborer occupations. These are occupations that generally are among the least remunerated and require the least skill. The percent of immigrant workers in service occupations fell from 16.4 percent to 14.3 percent. The percent of immigrant workers in operator/fabricator/laborer positions fell from 35.0

percent to 31.0 percent. The portion of 1970s arrivals working in each of the other major occupational categories grew during the 1980s.

Change Over Time of Occupations of 1970s Immigrants

	1980	1990
Managerial, Professional Specialty	18.1%	20.7%
Technical, Sales, Administration	18.7	18.8
Service	16.4	14.3
Farm, Forestry, Fishing	1.0	1.3
Precision Production, Craft	10.7	14.0
Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	35.1	31.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Industries Employing Immigrants

Little overall change is observed in the industries employing the 1970s arrivals. Proportionately the largest change occurred in the growth in the percent of immigrants employed in construction. In 1980, 2.6 percent of the 1970s arrivals were working in construction, but by 1990 approximately twice that amount or 5.3 percent of the 1970s arrivals were in construction jobs.

Change Over Time of Industry of 1970s Immigrants

	1980	1990
Construction	2.6%	5.3%
Manufacturing	41.9%	37.2%
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	3.4%	4.8%
Retail Trade	13.7%	13.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	4.1%	5.0%
Service Industry	27.8%	27.5%
Other	6.5%	7.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Occupational Shifts Among the Major Immigrant Groups

The occupational shifts observed among immigrants overall were evident among the three major immigrant groups in this study. Each group, for example, showed marked declines in the percent of workers in operator/fabricator/laborer positions, and clear if less dramatic declines in the percent of workers employed in service occupations. The European cohort represented in operator/fabricator/laborer jobs fell from 30.0 to 19.6 percent over the 1980s, the Asian cohort fell from 17.0 to 12.7 percent, and the Mexican

workers declined from 59.5 to 52.0 percent. In terms of representation in service sector jobs, each group fell by at least x percentage points.

Each of the three cohorts saw increasing portions of their members employed in prestigious managerial and professional specialty jobs during the 1980s. The percent of European immigrants in these groups grew from 15.7 to 20.6 percent, the portion of Asians grew from 34.3 to 40.9 percent, and the portion of Mexicans went from 2.0 percent to 3.7 percent. Overall, Mexicans had the smallest percentage of their workers in managerial and professional specialty jobs, but their proportionate increase over the eighties was the highest of the three groups.

Change Over Time of Occupations of 1970s Immigrants by World Region

Europe		
	1980	1990
Managerial, Professional Specialty	15.7	20.6
Technical, Sales, Administration	16.3	18.2
Service	20.0	18.8
Farm, Forestry, Fishing	.3	0.5
Precision Production, Craft	17.8	22.3
Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	30.0	19.6
Total	100.0	100.0
Mexico		
Managerial, Professional Specialty	2.0	3.7
Technical, Sales, Administration	7.4	8.9
Service	18.5	15.5
Farm, Forestry, Fishing	2.3	2.8
Precision Production, Craft	10.2	17.1
Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	59.5	52.0
Total	100.0	100.0
Asia		
Managerial, Professional Specialty	34.3	40.9
Technical, Sales, Administration	28.9	29.6
Service	12.4	9.3
Farm, Forestry, Fishing	0.1	0.0
Precision Production, Craft	7.3	7.5
Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	17.0	12.7
Total	100.0	100.0

English Ability

The percent of immigrant workers who spoke only English was virtually unchanged in the eighties remaining at about 8 percent in 1980 and 1990. There was clear growth, however, in the percent who spoke English well or very well, and a decline in the percent who spoke English not well or not at all. In the 1980s the percent who spoke English well or very well grew from 57.1 percent to 69.2 percent. The portion who spoke English not well or not at all declined from 34.9 percent to 22.9 percent.

Among the three immigrant cohort groups, Asians showed the least overall change in their English abilities. This is undoubtedly due to some extent to the fact that this group began the decade with high language abilities. Already in 1980, 87.6 percent of the 1970s arrivals from Asia spoke English only or spoke it very well or well, and by 1990 some 91.8 percent had similar language capabilities.

Immigrants from Europe and Mexico showed greater proportionate increases in language abilities, in part because they began the decade with lower levels of English skill. In 1980 some 64.7 percent of European immigrants spoke English well or better. By 1990 this had increased to 83.3 percent. For Mexicans, the comparable increase was from 38.5 percent to 60.5 percent.

Change Over Time of English Ability of 1970s Immigrants by World Region

Europe		
	1980	1990
Pct. Speak English Only	11.5	15.7
Pct. Speak English Well or Very Well	53.2	67.6
Pct. Speak English Not Well or Not at All	35.3	16.7
Total		
Mexico		
Pct. Speak English Only	4.0	5.5
Pct. Speak English Well or Very Well	83.6	86.3
Pct. Speak English Not Well or Not at All	12.4	8.2
Total		
Asia		
Pct. Speak English Only	1.2	2.0
Pct. Speak English Well or Very Well	37.3	58.5
Pct. Speak English Not Well or Not at All	61.5	39.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Education

Among all 1970s immigrants and among each of the three cohorts, relatively little change is observed in educational levels during the 1980s. For example, among all immigrant workers who came in the 1970s, about 60 percent had a high school degree both in 1980 and ten years later in 1990. Similarly, roughly 30 percent of the 1970s immigrants had a college degree in 1980 and in 1990.

Among the European cohort, a noticeable change in high school education levels is seen between 1980 and 1990, when the percent with a high school degree grew from 56.1 to 64.6 percent. The percent of the Asian cohort with a high school education remained largely the same, 88.1 percent in 1980 and 89.8 percent in 1990. For the Mexican cohort, the percentage grew from 17.9 to 20.3 percent.

An even more uniform picture is seen in relation to college education. Each of the three cohorts had virtually the same percentage of its members with a college degree in both 1980 and 1990.

The static nature of the educational attainment of the 1970s immigrants is striking. Generally speaking, the immigrant workers who arrived in the 1970s did not seem to return to the classroom for formal education that would lead to a high school or college degree.

Change Over Time of Education Levels of 1970s Immigrants by World Region

Europe		
	1980	1990
HS Graduate	56.1	64.6
College Graduate	19.1	18.4
Total	100.0	100.0
Mexico		
HS Graduate	17.9	20.3
College Graduate	2.1	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Asia		
HS Graduate	88.1	89.8
College Graduate	58.3	60.1
Total	100.0	100.0