Pew Hispanic Center
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Report

March 28, 2007

Growing Share of Immigrants Choosing Naturalization

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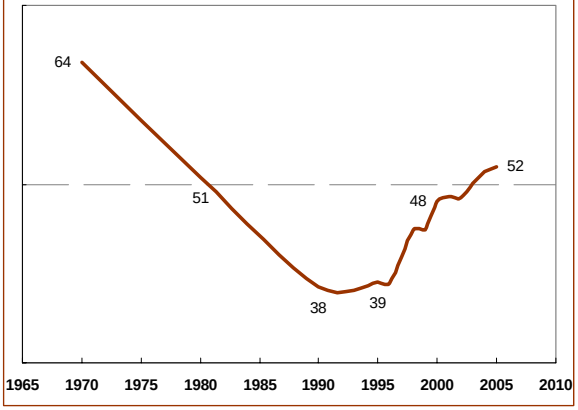
The proportion of all legal foreign-born residents who have become naturalized U.S. citizens rose to 52% in 2005, the highest level in a quarter of a century and a 14 percentage point increase since 1990, according to an analysis by the Pew Hispanic Center. Mexicans still have a comparatively lower tendency to become U.S. citizens, but the number of naturalized citizens from Mexico rose by 144% from 1995 to 2005—the sharpest increase among immigrants from any major sending country.

Figure 1. Percent Naturalized Among Legal Permanent Residents, 1970-2005



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of augmented March supplements to the Current Population Survey

About this report: This report is based largely on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's March Supplement to the Current Population Survey, the monthly household labor force survey supplemented to provide more detailed information on socio-economic characteristics. The report also draws on data from the federal Office of Immigration Statistics.

About the Pew Hispanic Center: Founded in 2001, the Pew Hispanic Center is a nonpartisan research organization supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, a Philadelphia-based charity. The Center's mission is to improve understanding of the diverse Hispanic population and to chronicle Latinos' growing impact on the nation. The Pew Hispanic Center is a project of the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" in Washington, D.C., that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world; it does not advocate for or take positions on policy issues.

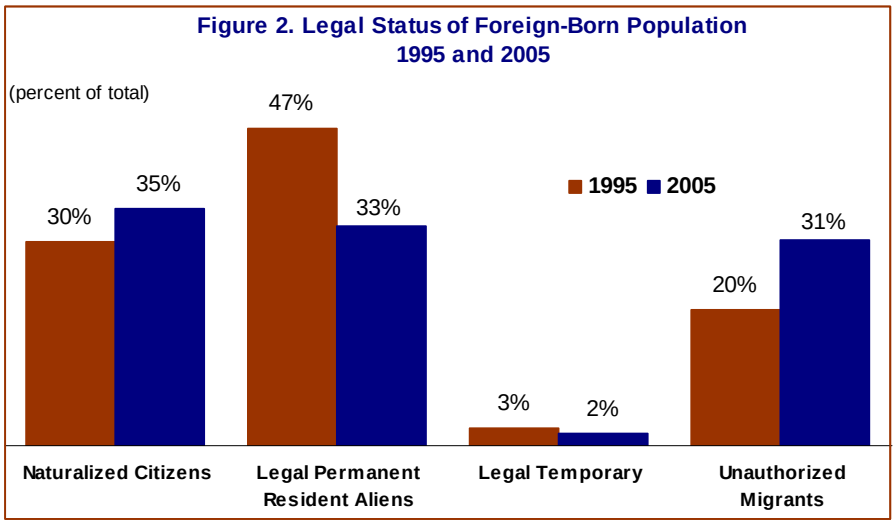
Executive Summary

The proportion of all legal foreign-born residents who have become naturalized U.S. citizens rose to 52% in 2005, the highest level in a quarter of a century and a 15 percentage point increase since 1990, according to an analysis by the Pew Hispanic Center.

The population of naturalized citizens reached 12.8 million in 2005, a historic high that reflects both a rise in the number of legal migrants and an increased likelihood that those who are eligible apply for citizenship. As a result of these combined trends, the average number of naturalizations annually has increased from fewer than 150,000 in the 1970s to more than 650,000 since the mid-1990s.

By 2005 (the last year for which figures are available), naturalized citizens accounted for slightly more than one-in-two (52%) legal foreign-born residents. Among all 36 million foreign-born residents in 2005, naturalized citizens made up a slim plurality (35%) over legal non-citizens (33%) and unauthorized migrants (31%). In 1995, legal non-citizens had accounted for a near majority (47%) of the 24 million foreign-born residents who were in the country at the time, compared with 30% who were naturalized citizens and 20% who were unauthorized migrants.

Figure 2. Legal Status of Foreign-Born Population 1995 and 2005



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of augmented March supplements to the Current Population Survey. Figures for 2005 add to more than 100% due to rounding.

The population of immigrants who are eligible for naturalization was 8.5 million in 2005; of these more than a third, or nearly 3 million, were Mexican. Mexicans still have a comparatively lower tendency to become U.S. citizens, but the number of naturalized citizens from Mexico rose by 144% from 1995 to 2005—the sharpest increase among immigrants from any major sending country.

While the number of legal permanent residents admitted to the U.S. has risen in recent years, the number of naturalized citizens has grown even more rapidly (Appendix Table 2). In fact, because so many new immigrants have become citizens, the size of the legal non-citizen population has barely grown since the mid-1990s.

These trends point to a sharp rise since the mid-1990s—following nearly half a century of decline—in the tendency of legal permanent residents to naturalize. Legal immigrants are not only becoming citizens at a higher rate than in the recent past, but they are also naturalizing more quickly. Whatever the reasons for this, it is clear that today's legal immigrants are signing on to a closer relationship with the U.S. than was the case a decade or two ago.

Citizenship Eligibility

To become a citizen, a legal permanent resident in most cases must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have lived in the U.S. continuously for five years.
- Be able to speak, write, read and understand basic English.
- Answer questions that demonstrate knowledge of U.S. government and history.
- Undergo a successful background check.
- Demonstrate attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution.
- Take the oath of citizenship swearing allegiance to the U.S.

Some of those requirements are waived for certain groups:

- Spouses of U.S. citizens can naturalize after three years of continuous residence, if the sponsoring spouse has been a U.S. citizen for all three years.
- Foreign-born minor children become citizens when their parents naturalize.
- Foreign-born minor children who are adopted by U.S. citizens are eligible for citizenship upon their arrival in the U.S.

The federal agency that processes citizenship applications, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, recently proposed an increase in naturalization fees, citing rising costs. The cost of processing a citizenship request for adult applicants would rise from $330 to $595 and for children from $225 to $460.

The number of unauthorized migrants also rose sharply between 1995 and 2005, the main period covered by this analysis—so this 10-year stretch has seen a growth among both the most and the least rooted of immigrants.

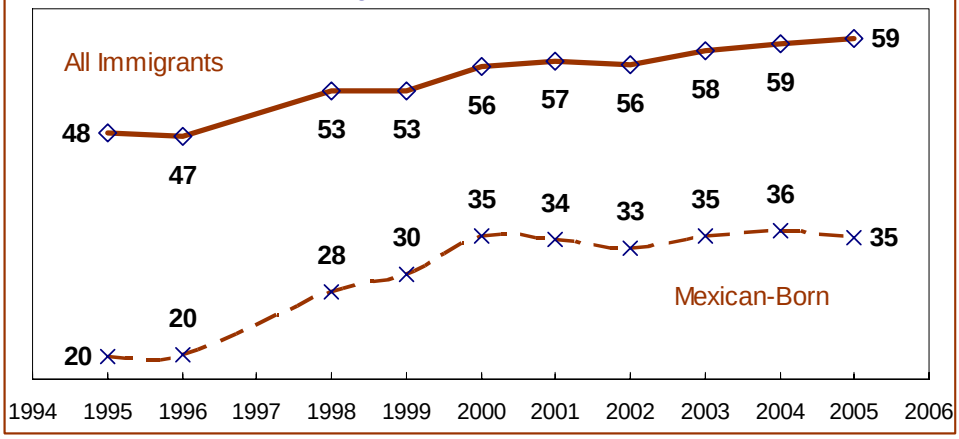
The makeup of the naturalized population has also changed. Immigrants from Europe and Canada no longer are the largest group. Over the past decade, they have become outnumbered by naturalized U.S. citizens from both Latin America and Asia.[1] The number of new citizens from Latin America grew by nearly 2.4 million—more than that from any other region—between 1995 and 2005.

[1] In this report, Asia refers to countries in South and East Asia.

Although immigrants from Europe are among the most likely to become citizens, naturalization rates are rising more rapidly among immigrants from other parts of the world.

This analysis also finds, as previous studies have shown, that the longer immigrants have been in the U.S., the more likely it is that they will become citizens. Men and women are about equally likely to naturalize. Immigrants are most likely to naturalize if they speak English well, are highly educated or have high incomes. Also, people who are homeowners or are married to U.S. citizens are far more likely to be naturalized than those who rent or are married to non-citizens.

Figure 3. Percent Naturalized of Eligible Immigrants, All Immigrants and Mexican-Born, 1995-2005



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of augmented March supplements to the Current Population Survey

This report is based largely on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, with some adjustments (see Methodology section). It also draws on data from the federal Office of Immigration Statistics, now part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Major findings include:

- The proportion of all legal foreign-born residents who are naturalized rose to 52% in 2005, the last year for which figures are available. The proportion hit a low point of 38% in 1990 and had begun to rise by 1995.

- The proportion of legal immigrants who are naturalized is now about the same as it was in 1980, when the share had been declining since its peak of 79% in 1950.

- Not all legal immigrants are eligible to become U.S. citizens. Among those who are eligible, the naturalization rate increased to 59% in 2005. A decade earlier, it was 48%.

- The number of naturalized citizens from Mexico grew 144% from 1995 to 2005, a greater increase than that of any other major sending nation or region.

- Although immigrants from Mexico are less likely to become citizens than those from other countries, the gap closed somewhat between 1995 and 2005. Only 20% of eligible permanent residents from Mexico had naturalized in 1995. In 2005, 35% had.

- Mexican-born legal immigrants constitute more than a third of the eligible population, or nearly 3 million out of 8.5 million.

- Although the nation's population of legal permanent immigrants has grown significantly—by 30% from 1995 to 2005—the number of naturalized citizens climbed even more, by 73% during those years.

- The number of non-citizens who are legal permanent residents was 11.8 million in 2005, only a slight increase from 11.5 million in 1995. That is because the rising naturalization rate is offsetting growth in the authorized immigrant population.

- Immigrants eligible to naturalize numbered 8.5 million in 2005, a small rise from 8 million a decade earlier. Additionally, 2.8 million people soon will be eligible for citizenship but are too young or recently arrived to apply.

- Naturalized citizens are a slightly larger proportion of the foreign-born population (35%) than legal non-citizens (33%) and unauthorized migrants (31%). In 1995, those proportions were 30%, 47% and 20%.

- There are nearly 4.4 million naturalized citizens from Latin America, 4 million from Asia, 2.8 million from Europe and Canada, and 444,000 from Africa and other regions.

- The naturalized citizen population from the Middle East is a relatively small 726,000. But its numbers grew 156% from 1995 to 2005. Middle Easterners were increasingly likely to naturalize after 2001.

- Among immigrants eligible to become citizens, 77% of those from the Middle East had done so by 2005, compared with 71% from Asia, 69% from Europe and Canada, and 46% from Latin America. The high citizenship rates of immigrants from some Latin American countries are offset by Mexico's comparatively lower rate of 35%.

- Immigrants eligible and soon to be eligible for naturalization are less well-educated than the naturalized population. Among foreign-born citizens, only 15% of adults ages 25 to 64 did not graduate from high school, compared with 38% of those who are eligible and 27% of those soon to be eligible.

- Naturalized citizens are less likely to be poor than legal permanent residents who are eligible for citizenship, or will soon be eligible. About 14% are below the poverty line, compared with 24% of those eligible to naturalize and 30% of those soon to be eligible. One in four unauthorized migrants (25%) is poor.

- Naturalization rates are rising both among immigrants who arrived recently and among those who have been in the U.S. for decades. But an analysis of cohorts—groups of immigrants who arrived in the same year—shows that those who arrived in the 1990s have taken less time than those who arrived earlier to reach the same naturalization rate.

- The nation's historic peak in new naturalizations was in 1996, when more than 1 million people became citizens. The number declined after that, then rose this decade to 600,000 to 700,000 annually. Because the number of legal permanent admissions exceeded 1 million for several years this decade, naturalizations also could rise somewhat.

- Naturalized citizens are a majority of the eligible foreign-born in all but 10 states, and only one of those—Texas—has a large immigrant population. The others are Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, South Carolina, Mississippi, Montana and Idaho. [See Appendix Table 6.]

About the Researcher

Dr. Jeffrey S. Passel is a senior research associate at the Pew Hispanic Center. He is widely recognized for his demographic expertise and as one of the country's premier authorities on immigration. In 2005, Dr. Passel was made a fellow of the American Statistical Association, which cited his outstanding contributions to the measurement of population composition and change. Prior to joining the center in 2005, Dr. Passel was principal research associate at the Urban Institute.

Acknowledgement

This report was written by D'Vera Cohn. Ms. Cohn wrote about local and national demographics for The Washington Post from 1991 to 2006 and was the newspaper's lead reporter for the 2000 Census. She is currently a senior editor at the Population Reference Bureau.

A Note on Terminology

The following terms are used describe immigrants and their status in the U.S. In some cases, they differ from official government definitions because of limitations in the available survey data.

Legal permanent resident, legal permanent resident alien, legal immigrant, authorized migrant: A citizen of another country who has been granted a visa that allows work and permanent residence in the U.S. For the analyses in this report, legal permanent residents include persons admitted as refugees or granted asylum.

Naturalized citizen: Legal permanent resident who has fulfilled the length of stay and other requirements to become a U.S. citizen, and taken the oath of citizenship.

Unauthorized migrant: Citizen of another country who lives in the U.S. without a currently valid visa.

Eligible immigrant: In this report, a legal permanent resident aged 18 or older who meets the length of stay qualifications to file a petition to become a citizen but has not naturalized.

Soon to be eligible immigrant: Legal permanent resident who will become an eligible immigrant (i.e., will meet the age and length of stay requirements to naturalize) in the next five years.

Contents

Introduction

Naturalization confers specific rights, some of them quite valuable. Citizens have voting privileges and protection in foreign countries. They have the right to cross the U.S. border at will and to sponsor family members for immigration who in turn can become eligible for citizenship. Since 1996, being a citizen also is a qualification for some government social programs.

In a broader sense, citizenship is a marker of integration into U.S. society. It makes a statement that an immigrant is here to stay. It is no surprise that citizenship rates are highest among immigrants who are far from their lands of birth, who own homes here and who are married to U.S. citizens. The general shift over the past decade from a declining naturalization rate to a rising one could signal a tipping point in the behavior of the nation's latest wave of legal immigrants.

The U.S. is in the midst of its fourth great influx of foreign-born residents since the founding of the Republic. The first arrivals mainly were English and other western Europeans who settled in the early decades, seeking their fortunes or looking for political or religious freedom. They were followed in the mid-1800s by economic and political migrants, especially from Germany, Britain and Ireland, who helped settle the frontier.

The third group arrived from the late 1800s until 1914, when the outbreak of World War I restricted immigration. They included southern and eastern Europeans who moved mainly to urban areas, as well as immigrants from Asian nations who settled in western states. Immigration resumed briefly in 1920, but then a long period of restrictions took hold. Those limits began to relax after Congress passed legislation in 1965 that gave priority to immigrants with relatives in the U.S., who sponsored them for visas. This legislation, which helped instigate the fourth wave of immigrants, removed the country restrictions that tilted immigration toward Northern and Western Europe. It placed all countries on a more or less equal footing, which resulted in the first limits on Northern European immigration and permitted new immigrant flows from Asia.

That law, as well as conditions in sending countries, helped reshape the composition of the nation's foreign-born population. Once primarily from Europe, the foreign-born population—naturalized citizens, legal immigrants, and unauthorized migrants—is now dominated by people born in Asia and Latin America.

The number of legal permanent resident admissions, which exceeded 1 million annually for some years this decade, has doubled since the late 1970s. As a result, the legal immigrant population has more than doubled in that time period to more than 24 million. At the same time, the unauthorized population, mostly immigrants from Mexico, also has risen sharply and now numbers more than 11 million. Immigration in-flows have subsided slightly from peaks in the late 1990s but remain high.

This report begins by discussing trends in legal immigration and naturalization in recent years, especially from 1995 to 2005, when the pace of naturalization picked up markedly. It presents results that illustrate the rising tendency on the part of legal immigrants to naturalize.

The next section explores the growth of both the foreign-born population and the naturalized-citizen population, with a discussion on countries of origin. Section three examines the characteristics of the naturalized population and of legal permanent immigrants who are eligible to naturalize and those who are soon to be eligible.

The last section analyzes which groups have been the most likely to naturalize, and how those tendencies have changed over time. It also compares countries of origin and regions to each other. Its analysis demonstrates that changes in behavior, not characteristics of the immigrant population, are driving up the naturalization rate.

The number of legal permanent residents who naturalize, and the proportion of those who do, still has room to grow. There are indications that it may: Legal immigration levels have topped 1 million per year several times this decade, creating a large pool of potential new citizens. And the fact that today's authorized immigrants are taking fewer years to match their predecessors' citizenship rates suggests that the proportion of those who eventually naturalize may rise above levels seen in the past.

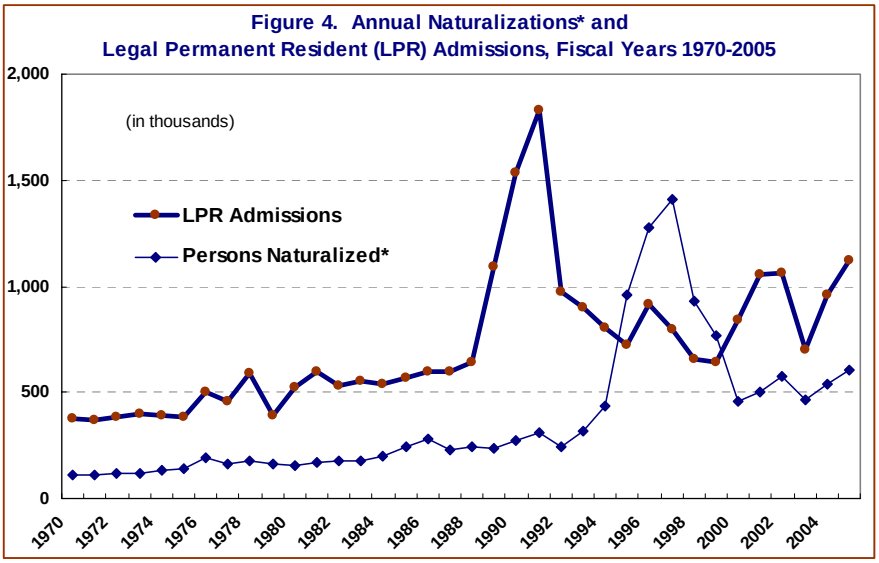
In every era, the question of whether immigrants will become full-fledged members of society hangs in the air. A study of citizenship behavior offers a lens through which to look at this crucial issue. Theories abound over what causes the naturalization rate to rise or fall. This report does not address that question. [See Appendix A for a discussion on theories that try to explain why immigrants naturalize.]

Trends in Naturalizations

The number of foreign-born residents who became U.S. citizens rose from an annual average of less than 150,000 throughout the 1970s to more than 650,000 since the mid-1990s. This growth reflects both an increase in the nation's supply of legal immigrants and an increased likelihood that those who are eligible apply for citizenship.

After years of incremental, steady increases, the pace of naturalizations suddenly picked up in the early 1990s. The number of people who became citizens had risen by about 5% annually from 1970 through 1993 (Figure 4 and Appendix Table 1). But a new pattern emerged as many more immigrants began to file naturalization papers. The number of new citizens doubled—from 240,000 to 490,000—between 1992 and 1995. In 1996, for the first time, more than 1 million people took the oath of citizenship.

Figure 4. Annual Naturalizations* and Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) Admissions, Fiscal Years 1970-2005



Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security
**Petitions for naturalization shown for 1995-2001*

The number dropped after that, in part because of delays in processing applications, but began rising again. So far this decade, an average of about 630,000 people has become naturalized citizens each year.

Naturalizations Track Admissions

The number of foreign-born residents who become naturalized citizens in any given year generally tracks the number admitted six years earlier. [See box explaining citizenship eligibility.] The total can be affected by backlogs in the application system or changes in the processing of applications. It also depends on the share of legally admitted immigrants choosing to apply for citizenship.

In the late 1960s, about 345,000 people a year were admitted as legal immigrants. The average number of admissions rose by about 3% a year, reaching 600,000 by 1986. Admissions of legal permanent residents peaked temporarily during 1989–1992 , when more than 2.6 million formerly unauthorized immigrants obtained permanent residency under provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). In addition, about 2.8 million immigrants were admitted as permanent residents under regular provisions of immigration law. As a result, more than 5.4 million people became legal permanent residents during those four years.

There were small surges in the number of naturalized citizens in 1986 and 1991 that roughly reflect increased admissions in 1978 and 1981. The rise in the number of naturalizations in 1996, to a peak of more than 1 million—more than double the total from the previous year—clearly reflects the impact of the peak admissions under IRCA.

Citizenship Eligibility

To become a citizen, a legal permanent resident in most cases must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have lived in the U.S. continuously for five years.
- Be able to speak, write, read and understand basic English.
- Answer questions that demonstrate knowledge of U.S. government and history.
- Undergo a successful background check.
- Demonstrate attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution.
- Take the oath of citizenship swearing allegiance to the U.S.

Some of those requirements are waived for certain groups:

- Spouses of U.S. citizens can naturalize after three years of continuous residence, if the sponsoring spouse has been a U.S. citizen for all three years.
- Foreign-born minor children become citizens when their parents naturalize.
- Foreign-born minor children who are adopted by U.S. citizens are eligible for citizenship upon their arrival in the U.S.

The federal agency that processes citizenship applications, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, recently proposed an increase in naturalization fees, citing rising costs. The cost of processing a citizenship request for adult applicants would rise from $330 to $595 and for children from $225 to $460.

Recent Trends

The number of citizenship applications increased to 1.4 million in 1997, a new high. Naturalizations declined from the previous year's record, though they remained high. Changes that delayed the processing of applications contributed to the decrease. A large backlog of citizenship applications built up: About 1.8 million applications were pending in 1998, but the backlog settled down to

about 600,000 in the first years of this decade. For 2005 and 2006, about 500,000 applications were pending each year.

The number of people admitted as legal permanent residents, which has bumped up and down since the early 1990s, exceeded 1 million in at least three years this decade. That suggests that the number of naturalizations, now about 600,000 to 700,000 a year, may increase slightly in the near future and reach a new plateau.

The data indicate that eligible immigrants increasingly are likely to apply for citizenship and naturalize. The number of legal permanent residents has gone up since 1970, as has the share becoming naturalized citizens.

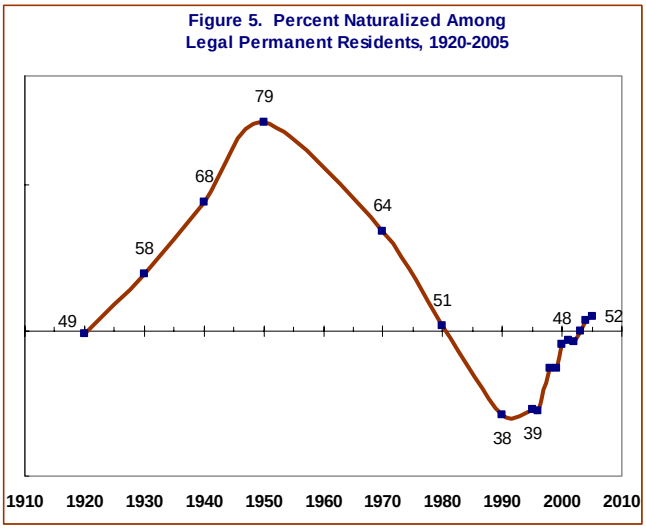
Naturalized Citizen Population

The nation's population of naturalized citizens has never been higher: 12.8 million in 2005. The share of legal immigrants who become citizens has been rising since the mid-1990s, reversing a long-term decline. Naturalized citizens became the majority of legally admitted immigrants during this decade.

History shows that the proportion of foreign-born residents who are naturalized tends to be highest in times of low immigration. The highest percentage of naturalized citizens among the foreign-born for the past century was in 1950, which followed several decades of restrictions on immigration (see Appendix Table 2). The opposite also has been true: Naturalization levels were not as high in 1910 and fell in 1920, just after a surge in immigration between 1900 and 1914 that was not equaled again until the 1980s.

By mid-century, most of the nation's foreign-born population had arrived in the wave of immigration decades earlier. In general, immigrants are more likely to naturalize the longer they have been in the country, and by 1950 the foreign-born population had reached its peak rate of citizenship.

Figure 5. Percent Naturalized Among Legal Permanent Residents, 1920-2005



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of augmented March CPS, 1995-2005 and estimates drawn from decennial census data for 1920-1990

As limits on immigration eased and more non-citizens were added to the population, the naturalization rate began to decline. Less than two-thirds of the

legal foreign-born population had become citizens in 1970, and by 1980, about half were citizens.

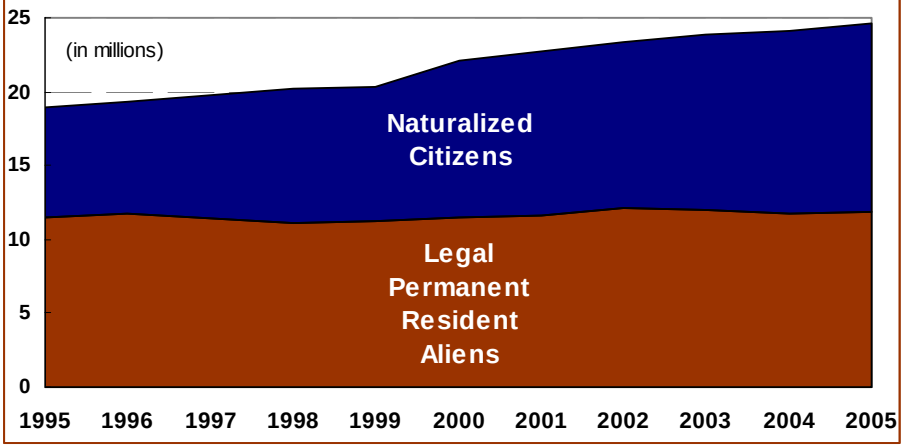
The share of legal permanent residents who were citizens hit a low point of 38% in 1990. The downward trend then stopped for the first time in decades; by 1995, the share naturalized was 39%. The share then climbed steadily to reach a slim majority in 2003. By 2005, the proportion of legal immigrants who were naturalized reached 52%, about the same as it was in 1980 (Figure 5).

Trends in the Foreign-Born Population

The nation's foreign-born and naturalized citizen populations continue to reach record numbers each year. But the number of legal permanent residents who are not citizens is about the same as it was in the mid-1990s. That is because the rising number of naturalized citizens has balanced growth in new authorized migrants. In other words, though large numbers of new legal immigrants enter the non-citizen pool each year, their arrival is offset by the large number of non-citizens who naturalize.

The naturalized population nearly doubled from 1990, when it was 6.5 million, to 2005, when it was 12.8 million. From 1995, when it was 7.4 million, to 2005, it grew 73%. Most of that increase came during the peak of naturalizations in the late 1990s.

Figure 6. Legal Foreign-Born Population by Citizenship 1995-2005



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of augmented March supplements to the Current Population Survey

The number of non-citizens who are legal permanent residents was 11.8 million in 2005, only a slight increase from 11.5 million in 1995. Those who are eligible to naturalize numbered 8.5 million in 2005, a small rise from nearly 8 million a

decade earlier. The number of legal permanent residents who will become eligible to naturalize within five years has fluctuated within the range of 2.6 to 2.9 million since 1995.

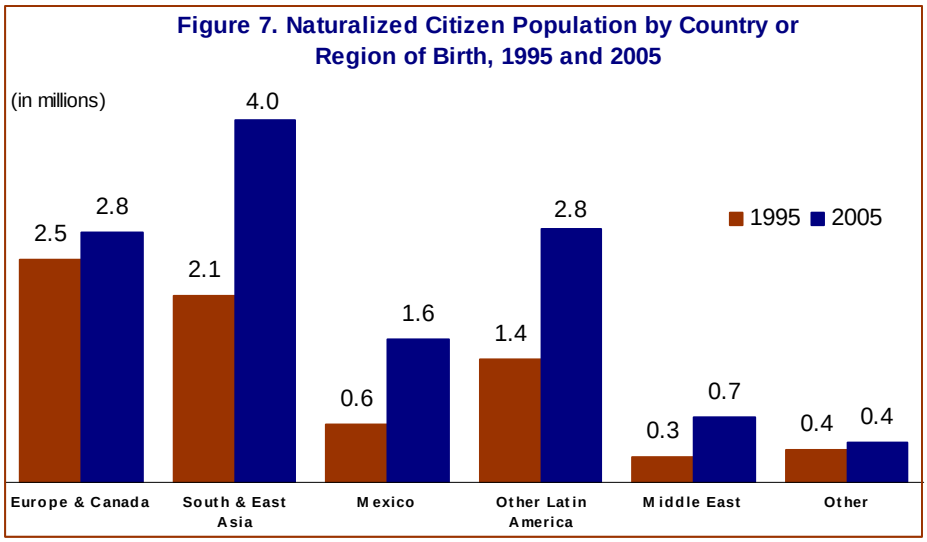
During the same time period, the nation's foreign-born population, including both authorized and unauthorized immigrants, has grown by 49 percent, from 24 million in 1995 to 36 million in 2005. Among the nation's foreign-born population in 2005, the three major groups of immigrants were roughly equal in size: 35% were naturalized citizens; 33% were legal permanent residents; and 31% were undocumented immigrants (Figure 2). In 1995, those proportions were 30%, 47% and 20%, respectively.

Geographic Trends in the Naturalized Population

As the naturalized population has risen, its composition has changed, reflecting trends in sending countries as well as naturalization rates that rose more sharply for some countries of origin than for others.

Between 1995 and 2005, the number of naturalized citizens from Europe fell below the number from Asia and Latin America. In 1995, slightly more than a third of the naturalized population was from Europe, with Latin America and Asia each having slightly less than a third. In 2005, Latin America accounted for slightly more than a third, Asia about a third and Europe less than a quarter.

Figure 7. Naturalized Citizen Population by Country or Region of Birth, 1995 and 2005



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of augmented March supplements to the Current Population Survey

Among the major sending countries and regions, new citizens from Latin America grew the most in number, rising by nearly 2.4 million over the 10-year period. The nearly 1.6 million naturalized citizens from Mexico now outnumber those from any other single country; a decade earlier, the Philippines ranked first.

The naturalized population from Mexico grew the most rapidly of any large country or region, 144% over the decade. The new-citizen population from the Middle East rose even more sharply, 156%, but its numbers were smaller, 726,000 in 2005.

Characteristics of Naturalized and Eligible Populations

Country and Region

Among those eligible to naturalize, Mexicans constitute 3.0 million of the 8.5 million total, more than any one country or region. Because of their large representation among legal immigrants and their low naturalization rates, Mexicans also dominated this group in 1995. The next largest groups are immigrants from Asia and from Central American/Caribbean countries, each totaling 1.6 million (see Appendix Table 3).

Mexicans are 35% of those eligible to naturalize, but they constitute only 13% of naturalized citizens. On the other hand, Asian immigrants make up 32% of naturalized citizens but only 19% of those who are eligible. The shares of citizens and eligible immigrants for most other groups are more evenly matched.

Among those soon to be eligible to become citizens, the distribution by country and region generally is similar to that of the eligible population. Again, Mexico is an exception: Mexicans make up 23% of those who soon will be eligible, a lower share than among the currently eligible population. The low Mexican naturalization rate means they make up a disproportionately high share of eligible non-citizens.

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic makeup of the adult naturalized population echoes its geographic origins. Hispanics make up 27% of naturalized citizens, but more than half (54%) of the eligible population and 42% of those who will soon be eligible. Asians and Pacific Islanders are 32% of the naturalized population, 19% of the eligible group and 25% of those soon to be eligible. Non-Hispanic whites are 31% of the naturalized population, and only a fifth of those who are eligible and soon to be eligible. Non-Hispanic black immigrants represent less than 10% of the naturalized and eligible groups and 11% of those soon to be eligible.

English Language Skills

Regardless of where they come from, adult immigrants are more likely to become citizens if they speak English well. According to 2000 Census data, 52% of

eligible immigrants with limited English proficiency had naturalized.[2] By contrast, 67% who said they were proficient at English had become citizens.

Among the naturalized population, those with limited English proficiency are a minority—less than 40%. But among Mexican-born U.S. citizens, 58% do not speak English well. Among immigrants who are eligible to naturalize or who soon will be, most have limited English skills.

Percent of Eligibility Group with Various Characteristics
All Countries and Mexico
March 2005 CPS

Characteristic	Naturalized	Eligible to Naturalize	Soon to be Eligible
	All Countries of Birth		
Below 100% of Poverty	14%	24%	30%
Less than High School	15%	38%	27%
Bachelor's Degree or more	37%	22%	35%
Limited English Proficient	38%	55%	67%
Labor Force Participation			
Male	87%	86%	86%
Female	70%	57%	62%
20+ years in U.S.	63%	31%	(z)
	Born in Mexico		
Below 100% of Poverty	17%	32%	39%
Less than High School	45%	65%	62%
Bachelor's Degree or more	11%	4%	9%
Limited English Proficient	58%	72%	82%
Labor Force Participation			
Male	89%	88%	88%
Female	66%	45%	44%
20+ years in U.S.	73%	36%	(z)

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of March 2005 Supplement to the Current Population Survey and the 5% Public-Use Microdata Sample of Census 2000 with corrections for misreporting of citizenship and adjustment for omissions.
See text for definitions. (z) -- defined as zero.
Age groups: poverty, duration of residence, English proficiency --18 years and over; education--25-64 years; labor force--18-64 years.

[2] Data on English language proficiency is from the decennial census of 2000. The Current Population Survey does not ask about English proficiency.

Education

Education also raises the likelihood that an immigrant will become a citizen. Of eligible immigrants ages 25–64 with a college education, most have become citizens. Most migrants in that age group who did not complete high school have not naturalized.

Among naturalized citizens, 37% hold at least a college degree, and 15% have not graduated from high school. The next group of potential new citizens is less well-educated: Among those eligible, the comparable figures are 22% and 38%, reflecting the disproportionately high share of Mexican-born immigrants. Among those soon to be eligible, 35% hold a college degree and 27% have not graduated from high school.

Mexicans are far less likely than immigrants from other countries to hold college degrees or to have completed high school. More than 60% of Mexican immigrants who are eligible for citizenship or soon will be have not completed high school, compared with less than 40% of all other legal permanent residents.

Gender and Employment

Among naturalized citizens, 53% are female. Females also are a slight majority among those eligible and soon to be.

Male and female immigrants are equally likely to become citizens, but the likelihood rises perceptibly for female immigrants who are in the labor force. There is no such difference for males. (Nearly all working-age male immigrants—90%—are in the labor force, compared with 62% of females.) Of eligible females in the labor force, 63% are naturalized citizens, compared with 48% of those not in the labor force. Working women are more likely to speak English and hold a college degree than those who do not hold paid employment. Those factors also increase the likelihood of becoming a citizen but do not explain all of the difference.

Income and Poverty

Immigrants with low incomes are less likely to become citizens than those with higher ones. Among naturalized Americans, 14% have family incomes below the poverty line and 35% have high incomes (at least four times the poverty level). Among those eligible to naturalize, a quarter (24%) are poor and 22% have high family incomes. Among those soon to be eligible, 30% are poor and 18% have high incomes.

Another way to compare the naturalized and eligible populations is to look at those with low incomes, defined as up to double the poverty level. Low-income

immigrants make up a minority of those who have recently naturalized (38%). They are 52% of the population that is currently eligible to naturalize and 58% of those who will soon be eligible.

Naturalization Rate

The rate of naturalization has risen markedly over the past decade. By 1995, 48% of those eligible to naturalize had done so. By 2005, 59% had naturalized. (The naturalization "rate" describes the share of *eligible* foreign-born residents who obtain citizenship papers, so it is higher than the share of *all* legal immigrants who do, which was 39% in 1995 and 52% in 2005.) Some groups are more likely to naturalize than others. This section delves into the most noteworthy differences and describes how they have changed over time.

Regression and decomposition analyses show that the recent increase in the naturalization rate has been primarily the result of changes in the behavior of immigrants rather than changes in the characteristics of the immigrant population.

Nearly two-thirds of the increase in the naturalization rate from 1995 to 2005 is attributable to the increasing tendency on the part of immigrants to become citizens. Just under 40% is due to a change in the makeup of the eligible population: The share of long-term immigrants, who are most likely to naturalize, grew. Countering that was a small downward pull because immigrants from Europe, who have the highest naturalization rate, are a shrinking share of the eligible population while Mexicans, who have very low rates, are an increasing share.

Geographic Characteristics

Of the three major regions contributing to U.S. immigration, Latin America had the lowest naturalization rate. Asia had the highest, followed closely by Europe and Canada. (See Appendix Table 3.) The Middle East, although still a small contributor to U.S. immigration, had a naturalization rate of 77% in 2005, higher than Asia's.

Latin America had a naturalization rate of 46% in 2005. But only 35% of eligible immigrants from Mexico, the single largest contributor to U.S. immigration, had naturalized in 2005. The rest of Central America was only slightly higher (41%). The rate for South America and the Caribbean was just over 60%.

Among major sending regions, immigrants from Asia have the highest naturalization rate (71%).

Europe and Canada, the major traditional sources of immigration to the U.S., have long had high naturalization rates. Seven of every 10 European immigrants were naturalized in 2005, as were 57% of Canadian migrants.

Time in Country as a Factor

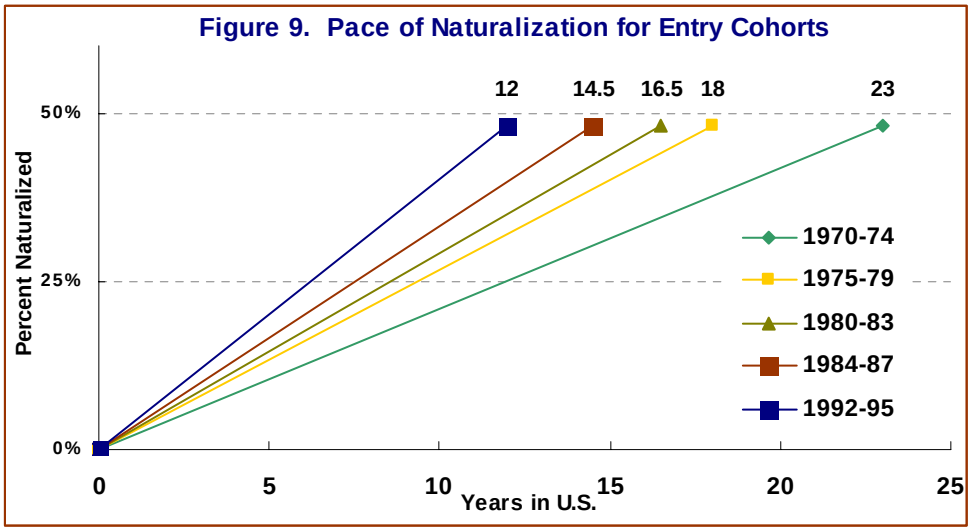
The longer immigrants stay in the U.S., the more likely they are to naturalize. Most legal permanent residents who have been in the country for more than 10 years become citizens. Most who arrived six to 10 years ago have not, though presumably they are eligible. Typically, the naturalized share of a cohort that arrived in any given year rises sharply for several years after becoming eligible for citizenship, and then levels off.

Almost three-quarters of the longest-term immigrants—those in the U.S. for more than 20 years—had naturalized. Just over half—53%—of those who arrived 11 to 20 years ago had done so. Only a third, or 31%, of the immigrants who arrived six to 10 years ago had naturalized.

The U.S. Office of Immigration Statistics has tracked the naturalization trends of groups of people who became legal immigrants in the same year. Its research also shows how the pace of naturalization has increased. Among immigrants admitted in 1990, 32% had naturalized after 10 years in the U.S.[3] Up until that point, the pace of naturalization had remained relatively unchanged. The comparable figure for 1985 admissions was 35%; for 1980 it was 34% and for 1975 it was 32%. But among those admitted in 1995, the share naturalized had increased markedly as almost half (49%) had become U.S. citizens within the first 10 years.

Examining the cohorts after longer stays in the country emphasizes that the increases have occurred in recent years. After 17 years in the U.S., the 1975 cohort had achieved a naturalization rate of 41%. In contrast, almost 49% of the 1980 cohort had naturalized after 17 years in the country.

[3] These measures are not strictly comparable with the results from the CPS. The OIS figures are derived by matching naturalization records with admission records; the CPS figures are based on self-reported information on citizenship and year of arrival in the U.S.



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of augmented March supplements to the Current Population Survey

The same pattern of accelerated naturalization appears in data from the CPS, aggregated into four-to-five-year periods to gather more statistically reliable samples. It took 12 years for the cohorts that entered in 1992-95 to reach a 48% naturalization rate. [See Figure 9] It took 14 or 15 years for the 1984-87 group to reach that level; 16-17 years for the 1980-83 cohort; 18 years for the 1975-79 entrants; and 23 years for immigrants who arrived in 1970-74.

Naturalization Rate by Country and Region

The naturalization trajectory differs somewhat depending on where immigrants come from, but all groups show some evidence of a speedier tendency to naturalize. Among Mexicans and Central Americans, for example, immigrants who arrived in the 1980s reached a 20% naturalization rate in 13 to 16 years. Those arriving in the 1970s took 19 to 24 years.

The pace clearly is more rapid among immigrants from the Caribbean and South America. Groups arriving in the late 1980s to mid-1990s took 10 or 11 years to reach a 40% naturalization rate. Those arriving in the early to mid-1980s took 13 to 15 years to get there.

Immigrants from a grouping of countries that includes mainly Asians, as well as migrants from Africa and Oceania, also have accelerated their citizenship rates. Among those who arrived in 1988 to 1995, about 45% had naturalized after 10 or 11 years. For cohorts in the early to mid-1980s, it had taken 11 to 14 years.

Among European immigrants, it took 16 to 21 years for those who entered from 1975 to 1987 to reach a naturalization level greater than 60%. The next group, those who entered from 1988 to 1995, took only 10 or 11 years. In fact, of those who entered in 1988–91, three-quarters had become citizens after only 16 years, equaling the long-term rate of earlier European entrants.

Tendency to Naturalize by Country and Region

This section explores changes in the rate of naturalization for different countries and regions. It also assesses how the tendency to naturalize has changed over time.

Statistical analyses were used to determine the possible impact of country of origin on naturalization tendencies. The analyses take into account differences across countries and changes over time in the composition of the immigrant population.

The results clearly show that the tendency to naturalize has increased significantly between 1995 and 2005, regardless of an immigrant's individual characteristics. An eligible immigrant's odds of having naturalized were 40% to 50% higher after 2000 than in 1995-96 (see text box).

The onset of the increased tendency to naturalize began at different times for different groups. For long-term immigrants (those in the U.S. for more than 20 years), the acceleration began in 1998. For those in the U.S. less than 20 years, it began in 2000. The change began in 1998 for Mexican and Caribbean immigrants but later for others. Asian immigrants did not experience a sustained rise in the tendency to naturalize until 2001, and Middle Eastern immigrants until 2002. Only in 2004 or 2005 did increases appear for immigrants from Africa, Europe and Canada.

Calculating the Odds

The logistic regression analyses looked into the impact of a wide variety of individual characteristics on the odds of naturalizing and whether they might be driving naturalizations up. Among them were the immigrants' country and region of birth; how long they lived in the U.S.; their age; education; gender and labor force status; marital status; spouse's citizenship; and whether they were homeowners. Also examined were the potential impacts of full- or part-time work; gender without other factors; state of residence; border area residence; blue- or white-collar occupation; and refugee status.

The regression analyses looks at the odds of naturalizing rather than naturalization rates. For example: In 2005, 59% of eligible immigrants had naturalized; the odds that this had occurred were 1.43 to 1 (0.59/1-0.59). In 1995, only 48% of eligible immigrants had naturalized; the odds of naturalizing were 0.92 to 1 (0.48/1-0.48). The odds of naturalizing by 2005 were 55% higher than in 1995 (1.43 vs. 0.92).

Mexico

Because Mexican immigrants are the largest single group in the U.S. foreign-born population, their behavior has an outsized impact on overall naturalizations. Mexicans are less likely to naturalize than immigrants from any other region, in

part because so many have low education levels, high poverty and other characteristics that are associated with low citizenship levels.

Yet even after taking those characteristics into account, their odds of becoming a citizen were much lower than other immigrants, but essentially doubled from 1995 to 2005, with indisputable increases evident after 1996. The odds of an eligible Mexican immigrant becoming a U.S. citizen in the mid-1990s were only a fifth of those of a migrant from Europe. By 2001–05, the relative odds had doubled to about 40%.

The naturalization rate for eligible Mexicans, though low, has risen more sharply than that of other groups. In 1995, only 20% of eligible Mexican immigrants had become citizens, but that rate rose 15 percentage points by 2005. Among all other immigrants, the rate rose 11 percentage points, to 66%. Put another way, the share of Mexicans who naturalized rose 75% during that time, compared with a 20% increase for all others.

Central America, South America, Caribbean

Central Americans are slightly more likely than Mexican immigrants to become citizens, but considerably less likely than most other groups. Their trend has been less clear-cut than some others: Their likelihood of naturalizing rose in relation to European immigrants in 2000-02, but fell somewhat after that. Still, the tendency of eligible Central Americans to naturalize is markedly higher this decade than in the mid-1990s.

As a group, Caribbean immigrants are nearly as likely to naturalize as European immigrants. Their likelihood of naturalizing, already high, began rising in the late 1990s. By the middle of this decade, the odds that eligible immigrants from the Caribbean had naturalized were 80% higher than in the mid-1990s.

South Americans also are nearly as likely as Europeans to become citizens. But in the mid-1990s, their odds were only half those of Europeans. Those odds began to increase in 2000 and have stayed high since then.

By 2005, naturalized citizens became a majority of eligible-to-naturalize immigrants for both South American and Caribbean immigrants.

Asia

The naturalization rate of eligible immigrants from Asian nations also rose rapidly, going from 57% in 1995 to 71% in 2005. Within the region, the Philippines has had the highest rate, reaching 76% in 2005. As a group, their

tendency to naturalize relative to Europeans began rising after 1996 and now is significantly higher.

Middle East, Other Areas

After 2001, eligible Middle Eastern immigrants have had odds of naturalization that are consistently 80% to 100% higher than those of European immigrants. In the years before then, no clear pattern emerged.

Eligible African immigrants have only slightly lower odds of naturalizing than do Europeans. Their odds of naturalizing began rising in 2004-05 and grew by at least 60% over 1995 levels.

Naturalization by Time in Country

The naturalization rate has risen among both short- and long-term eligible immigrants. Among those in the U.S. for more than 20 years, about three-quarters are now naturalized, compared with two-thirds a decade ago.

The tendency to naturalize among those in the country less than 20 years clearly increased beginning in 2001. A majority of those who became legal permanent immigrants 11 to 20 years earlier are citizens, compared with 44% a decade earlier.

Methodology

The Current Population Survey (CPS) identifies the foreign born population through questions on country of birth and citizenship. However, the CPS does not differentiate among legal immigrants, undocumented migrants, and legal temporary residents. CPS data also tend to overstate the number of naturalized citizens, especially among recent arrivals, in comparison with official administrative data on naturalizations. For this analysis, the reporting of naturalization has been corrected and two groups not eligible to naturalize—unauthorized migrants and legal temporary migrants (or "non-immigrants")—have been identified in the data so that they can be excluded. The resulting comparisons of naturalized citizens and legal aliens (or "legal permanent residents") are thus more accurate and precise.

Legal permanent residents (LPR) aged 18 and over who have been in the U.S. for more than 5 years (based on the question, "When did you come to live in the U.S.?") are classified as "eligible" to naturalize. In addition, LPR adults who have been in the U.S. 3 to 5 years and are married to a U.S. citizen are also "eligible." Adult legal aliens who have been in the U.S. less than 6 years are part of the "soon to be eligible" population. LPRs ages 13 to 17 will become eligible to naturalize in 5 years and are also part of the "soon to be eligible" population.

The techniques employed to augment the data were developed initially at the Urban Institute by Passel and Clark.[4] First, the number of unauthorized migrants included in the CPS is estimated using residual methods. In this process, the CPS data are first corrected for over-reporting of naturalized citizenship on the part of recently-arrived aliens.

Then, persons entering the U.S. as refugees and with certain kinds of temporary visas (including students, diplomats, and "high-tech guest workers") are identified in the survey and assigned an immigration status using information on country of birth, date of entry, occupation, education, and various family characteristics.

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[4] Passel, Jeffrey S. and Rebecca L. Clark. 1998. *Immigrants in New York: Their Legal Status, Incomes and Tax Payments*. Urban Institute: Washington, DC. April. Also, http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=407432.

Passel, Jeffrey S., Jennifer Van Hook, and Frank D. Bean. 2006. *Estimates by Migrant Status, Narrative Profile with Adjoining Tables of Unauthorized Migrants and Other Immigrants, Based on Census 2000: Characteristics and Methods*. Report to the Census Bureau. Urban Institute: Washington, DC. February 15. Also, http://www.sabresys.com/whitepapers/EMS_Deliverable_2-3_022706.pdf

Individuals who are definitely legal and those who are potentially unauthorized are then identified in the CPS (based on state of residence, age, sex, occupation, country of birth, and date of entry). Finally, using probabilistic methods, enough are selected and assigned to be unauthorized so as to agree with the residual estimates of legal and unauthorized immigrants.

The last step involves a consistency edit to ensure that the family structure of both legal and unauthorized populations "make sense." The whole process requires several iterations to produce survey-based estimates that agree with the demographically-derived population totals. For the 2000–2005 CPS datasets, the populations of legal immigrants and unauthorized migrants are adjusted to account for CPS omissions, as measured in the residual estimation process.

Appendix A: Theories on Naturalization

There is no one explanation that covers every immigrant's decision to naturalize, but some broad theories suggest why citizenship rates rise and fall.

Country of birth has long been a significant predictor of whether an immigrant will naturalize. Immigrants are more likely to return to home countries that are geographically close to the U.S. They are less likely to naturalize if their home countries have strong economies, and they are more likely to naturalize if they came from countries with totalitarian regimes or if they arrived as refugees.

Immigrants also may be more likely to naturalize if their home country allows dual citizenship or provides an easy way to reclaim former citizenship rights. Over the past decade, many countries—Mexico is one of the most prominent—have liberalized their policies toward dual citizenship, removing a hurdle that deterred some immigrants from naturalizing.

The political climate in the U.S. and in countries of origins also may play a role. Immigrants from the Middle East are the most likely to naturalize, and their increase shows up most clearly since 2001. Political turmoil in the Middle East may keep many from returning. At the same time, becoming a citizen could provide security against political backlash or threats to their rights.

It is also possible that a good economy and a welcoming immigrant community make new arrivals feel more secure in their decision to stay. The only time more immigrants left the U.S. than stayed was during the Depression, when the poor job market made it hard to find work and some foreign-born residents were deported.

Citizenship also is a qualification for some social benefits. Since 1996, many federal programs require citizenship rather than long-term residency as a condition of participating and receiving benefits. Some of those requirements were later rolled back, but many immigrants might be under the impression that they are still in place.

One intriguing but unexplained finding of this report is that the gap in naturalization rates between refugees and other foreign-born arrivals has closed. Refugees from regions other than Asia once were far more likely to naturalize than others, but that is no longer true. The analysis covers only refugees who

arrived since 1980. It could be that the smaller number of new refugees in the population, compared with 10 years ago, may be affecting the analysis.

Appendix B: Tables

Table 1
Annual Naturalizations, Denials, Applications and Legal Permanent Resident Admissions
Fiscal Years 1970-2006

Fiscal Year	Persons Naturalized	Petitions Denied	Petitions Filed	Applications Pending	LPR Admissions
2006*	742,500	134,500	692,000	490,500	n.a.
2005	604,280	108,247	602,972	552,940	1,122,373
2004	537,151	103,339	662,796	653,190	957,883
2003	463,204	91,599	523,370	621,794	703,542
2002	573,708	139,779	700,649	623,519	1,059,356
2001	608,205	218,326	501,643	618,750	1,058,902
2000	888,788	399,670	460,916	817,431	841,002
1999	839,944	379,993	765,346	1,355,524	644,787
1998	463,060	137,395	932,957	1,802,902	653,206
1997	598,225	130,676	1,412,712	1,637,709	797,847
1996	1,044,689	229,842	1,277,403	n.a.	915,560
1995	488,088	46,067	959,963	n.a.	720,177
1994	434,107	40,561	543,353	n.a.	803,993
1993	314,681	39,931	521,866	n.a.	903,916
1992	240,252	19,293	342,238	n.a.	973,445
1991	308,058	6,268	206,668	n.a.	1,826,595
1990	270,101	6,516	233,843	n.a.	1,535,872
1989	233,777	5,200	227,692	n.a.	1,090,172
1988	242,063	4,304	237,752	n.a.	641,346
1987	227,008	6,771	232,988	n.a.	599,889
1986	280,623	5,980	290,732	n.a.	600,027
1985	244,717	3,610	305,981	n.a.	568,149
1984	197,023	3,373	286,440	n.a.	541,811
1983	178,948	3,160	187,719	n.a.	550,052
1982	173,688	3,994	201,507	n.a.	533,624
1981	166,317	4,316	171,073	n.a.	595,014
1980	157,938	4,370	192,230	n.a.	524,295
1979	164,150	3,987	165,434	n.a.	394,244
1978	173,535	3,894	168,854	n.a.	589,810
1977	159,873	2,845	186,354	n.a.	458,755
1976	190,722	2,799	199,152	n.a.	499,093
1975	141,537	2,300	149,399	n.a.	385,378
1974	131,655	2,210	136,175	n.a.	393,919
1973	120,740	1,708	126,929	n.a.	398,515
1972	116,215	1,837	121,883	n.a.	384,685
1971	108,407	2,028	109,897	n.a.	370,478
1970	110,399	1,979	114,760	n.a.	373,326

Sources: 2005 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (DHS 2006), Tables 1 and 20; Fiscal Year End Statistical Reports, 1998-2005 and Monthly Statistical Report, March 2006; http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/index.htm
Note: Fiscal year 1970-1975 are July-June; 1977-2006 are October-September; 1976 includes 5 quarters (July 1975-September 1976).
** Fiscal year data for 2006 are estimated by projecting data for October 2005 - March 2006; pending applications as of March 31, 2006.*
n.a. - Not applicable.

Table 2
Legal Permanent Foreign-Born Residents by Citizenship
1920-2005

Year	Legal Foreign-Born Residents *(in thousands)*			
	Total	Naturalized	Resident Alien	Percent Naturalized
2005	24,602	12,772	11,830	52%
2004	24,137	12,396	11,741	51%
2003	23,912	11,958	11,954	50%
2002	23,392	11,330	12,063	48%
2001	22,680	11,029	11,651	49%
2000	22,088	10,605	11,483	48%
1999	20,370	9,141	11,230	45%
1998	20,213	9,066	11,147	45%
1996	19,307	7,523	11,784	39%
1995	18,890	7,382	11,508	39%
1990	16,822	6,470	10,351	38%
1980	12,072	6,118	5,954	51%
1970	9,740	6,198	3,542	64%
1950	10,347	7,563	2,053	79%
1940	11,595	7,280	3,480	68%
1930	14,204	7,920	5,785	58%
1920	13,921	6,490	6,629	49%

Sources: 2000-2005: Tabulations from March Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) with corrections for misreporting of citizenship and adjustments for CPS omissions.
1995-1998: Tabulations from March Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) with corrections for misreporting of citizenship, but no adjustments for CPS omissions.
1990: Demographic estimates based on data from 1980 and annual microdata on naturalizations (Passel 1996; Passel & Clark 1997).
1980: Demographic estimates based on previous censuses INS Statistical Yearbook tabulation of naturalizations Warren & Passel 1987).
1920-1970: Tabulations from census data published in Gibson and Jung (2006). Totals for 1920-1950 include persons with citizenship not reported. Percentages based on reported data only.
Note: Data for 1980-2000 exclude legal temporary foreign-born residents (i.e., legal non-immigrants).

Table 3
Naturalization Status of Legal Permanent Foreign-Born Residents by Country or Region of Birth
March CPS 1995 and 2005

Country or Region of Birth	2005 CPS *(populations in thousands)*				1995 CPS *(populations in thousands)*			
	Naturalized	Eligible to Naturalize	Soon-to-be Eligible	% Natz. of Eligible	Naturalized	Eligible to Naturalize	Soon-to-be Eligible	% Natz. of Eligible
Total	**12,361**	**8,482**	**2,758**	**59%**	**7,186**	**7,914**	**2,780**	**48%**
Europe & Canada	2,778	1,260	412	69%	2,465	1,227	542	67%
Former USSR	480	218	160	69%	176	103	275	63%
Other Europe	2,015	829	210	71%	2,006	880	217	69%
Canada	283	213	42	57%	284	243	50	54%
South & East Asia	4,009	1,631	655	71%	2,060	1,536	826	57%
China*	956	346	161	73%	421	300	90	58%
Philippines	901	288	112	76%	701	310	122	69%
India	464	248	133	65%	222	177	78	56%
Vietnam	585	239	88	71%	200	155	202	56%
Korea	332	132	30	71%	196	192	53	51%
Other S & E Asia	771	378	131	67%	319	403	281	44%
Middle East **	726	216	113	77%	284	219	91	56%
Latin America	4,403	5,071	1,357	46%	2,021	4,621	1,191	30%
Mexico	1,583	2,988	646	35%	648	2,636	629	20%
Central America	479	692	166	41%	234	597	151	28%
Caribbean	1,552	917	314	63%	829	953	268	47%
Cuba	531	258	112	67%	374	329	66	53%
Dominican Republic	269	233	70	54%	80	217	100	27%
Jamaica	327	150	37	69%	186	196	44	49%
Other Caribbean	425	276	96	61%	189	212	59	47%
South America	789	475	231	62%	310	435	143	42%
Africa & Other	444	303	220	59%	355	310	130	53%

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of March Supplement to the Current Population Survey with corrections for misreporting of citizenship (1995, 2005) and adjustment for CPS omissions (2005 only). See text for definitions of eligibility groups.
Notes: Individual countries are shown if the adult foreign-born population exceeds 600,000 in any year from 1995 through 2005.
Naturalized and eligible populations are adults ages 18 and over; soon-to-be eligible are ages 13 and over.
** China includes China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.*
*** Middle East includes North African countries and southwest Asia from Turkey in the north to Iran and Afghanistan in the east.*

Table 4
Percent Naturalized by Time in the United States by Country or Region of Birth
March 2005 CPS

Country or Region of Birth	Percent Naturalized of Eligible by Years Lived in U.S.				
	Total	Less than 6 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	More than 20 years
Total	**59%**	**16%**	**34%**	**54%**	**75%**
Latin America	46%	10%	20%	38%	64%
Mexico	35%	8%	13%	24%	52%
Central America	41%	14%	11%	27%	61%
Caribbean	63%	6%	28%	57%	78%
South America	62%	17%	41%	60%	81%
South & East Asia	71%	21%	48%	69%	88%
Middle East**	77%	16%	54%	80%	91%
Europe and Canada	69%	24%	34%	66%	80%
Europe	70%	25%	36%	68%	83%
Canada*	57%	4%	15%	47%	65%
Africa & Other	59%	17%	53%	59%	80%

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of March Supplement to the Current Population Survey with corrections for misreporting of citizenship and adjustment for CPS omissions .
** Canada includes "Other North America."*
*** Middle East includes North African countries and southwest Asia from Turkey in the north to Iran and Afghanistan in the east.*

Table 5
Percent Naturalized by Educational Attainment for Ages 25-64
March CPS 1995 and 2005

Educational Attainment	Percent Naturalized of Eligible	
	2005	1995
Less than 9th grade	31%	21%
9th to 12th grade	41%	33%
High school graduate	56%	46%
Some college	68%	57%
Bachelor's or higher	69%	60%

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of March Supplement to the Current Population Survey with corrections for misreporting of citizenship (1995, 2005) and adjustment for CPS omissions (2005 only).

Table 6
Naturalization Status of Legal Permanent Foreign-Born Adult Residents by State
March CPS 1995 and 2005

State or Area	2005 CPS (*populations in thousands*)				1995 CPS (*populations in thousands*)			
	Naturalized	Eligible to Naturalize	Soon-to-be Eligible*	% Natz. of Eligible	Naturalized	Eligible to Naturalize	Soon-to-be Eligible*	% Natz. of Eligible
Total	**12,361**	**8,482**	**2,758**	**59%**	**7,186**	**7,914**	**2,780**	**48%**
"Big Six"	8,605	6,212	1,877	58%	4,764	6,059	1,942	44%
California	3,477	2,945	736	54%	1,718	2,869	833	37%
New York	1,937	932	361	68%	1,045	1,049	434	50%
Texas	739	834	260	47%	517	680	215	43%
Florida	1,268	756	275	63%	678	778	209	47%
New Jersey	671	396	131	63%	428	308	141	58%
Illinois	512	350	114	59%	378	375	109	50%
Rest of Country **	3,756	2,270	881	62%	2,421	1,856	838	57%
New England	646	346	114	65%	489	329	121	60%
Mid-Atlantic	735	346	164	68%	468	342	143	58%
Southeast	493	353	199	58%	258	241	126	52%
Mid-West	672	332	148	67%	490	265	109	65%
Plains	179	155	47	54%	126	65	37	66%
Mountain	566	438	136	56%	297	370	172	45%
Pacific	465	301	71	61%	294	244	131	55%
Maine	20	7	2	74%	11	11	7	50%
New Hampshire	22	12	4	65%	26	10	8	72%
Vermont	9	4	0	68%	4	7	1	36%
Massachusetts	366	212	80	63%	270	188	67	59%
Rhode Island	55	32	11	63%	30	33	11	47%
Connecticut	175	79	16	69%	149	79	27	65%
New York	1,937	932	361	68%	1,045	1,049	434	50%
New Jersey	671	396	131	63%	428	308	141	58%
Pennsylvania	198	78	42	72%	199	89	46	69%
Delaware	19	10	7	64%	15	9	3	61%
Maryland	274	114	61	71%	120	113	50	51%
DC	20	20	10	50%	11	14	7	45%
Virginia	220	121	44	65%	115	112	37	51%
West Virginia	3	3	1	53%	8	4	1	69%
North Carolina	114	90	64	56%	53	43	39	55%
South Carolina	33	39	0	46%	22	9	2	71%
Georgia	174	97	63	64%	70	79	54	47%
Kentucky	25	22	21	54%	21	8	0	73%
Tennessee	40	38	23	51%	23	14	3	62%
Alabama	18	13	10	58%	21	21	4	50%
Mississippi	8	16	5	35%	13	11	6	54%
Arkansas	20	10	5	67%	14	9	4	59%
Louisiana	61	27	7	69%	21	47	13	31%
Florida	1,268	756	275	63%	678	778	209	47%
Ohio	167	44	31	79%	160	60	21	73%
Indiana	73	22	16	77%	18	28	0	40%
Michigan	232	135	45	63%	222	96	31	70%
Wisconsin	70	59	10	54%	35	52	17	41%
Minnesota	130	73	45	64%	55	30	39	65%
Illinois	512	350	114	59%	378	375	109	50%
Iowa	27	32	9	46%	17	1	0	95%
Missouri	44	35	9	56%	29	18	12	61%
North Dakota	2	3	3	31%	4	1	1	75%
South Dakota	4	5	4	43%	6	3	1	62%
Nebraska	18	22	8	45%	9	3	7	75%
Kansas	33	35	5	48%	36	16	5	69%
Oklahoma	53	23	10	69%	26	22	11	54%

(continued)

Table 6 (*continued*)
Naturalization Status of Legal Permanent Foreign-Born Adult Residents by State
March CPS 1995 and 2005

State or Area	2005 CPS (*populations in thousands*)				1995 CPS (*populations in thousands*)			
	Naturalized	Eligible to Naturalize	Soon-to-be Eligible*	% Natz. of Eligible	Naturalized	Eligible to Naturalize	Soon-to-be Eligible*	% Natz. of Eligible
Texas	739	834	260	47%	517	680	215	43%
Montana	2	4	0	36%	7	4	2	64%
Idaho	17	26	7	40%	11	13	7	44%
Wyoming	3	1	0	75%	2	3	0	43%
Colorado	103	83	20	55%	67	75	47	47%
New Mexico	46	41	22	53%	22	48	22	31%
Arizona	226	173	48	57%	124	151	69	45%
Utah	39	34	14	53%	26	21	9	56%
Nevada	130	76	25	63%	40	56	15	42%
California	3,477	2,945	736	54%	1,718	2,869	833	37%
Washington	225	167	40	57%	151	106	61	59%
Oregon	98	70	17	58%	32	69	47	32%
Alaska	22	10	4	69%	17	6	4	74%
Hawaii	120	54	11	69%	94	63	19	60%

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of March Supplement to the Current Population Survey with corrections for misreporting of citizenship (1995, 2005) and adjustment for CPS omissions (2005 only). See text for definitions of eligibility groups.

Area definitions: Groups of states do not correspond to Census divisions; state groups are:
New England: ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT
Mid-Atlantic: PA, DE, MD, DC, VA, WV
Southeast: NC, SC, GA, KY, TN, AL, MS, AR, LA
Mid-West: OH, IN, MI, WI, MN
Plains: IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK
Mountain: MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV
Pacific: WA, OR, AK, HI