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LABOUR IMMIGRATION, FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND IMMIGRATION POLICY:
THE US EXPERIENCE

by

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The attached paper has been prepared by Ms. Guillermina Jasso, New York University and Mr. Mark R. Rosenzweig, University of Pennsylvania. This is one of the reference documents to be discussed in the first session, Item C. on "Selection and programming of migration flows in the light of labour market needs and capacities of integrating immigrants".

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SUMMARY

Labour immigration and the entry of family members, by means of "Family Preference", are closely interrelated in the United States. Persons entering the country by right of "Family Preference" also participate in the labour force. However, the immigrated family, or soon to immigrate family, of immigrants chosen according to their professional qualifications, embody elements of both stability and balance. The right of American citizens to marry whomever they choose and to live with their close relatives has been judged to be of such importance that the number of visas granted is limitless for those falling under the main categories of "Family Preference". Since American citizens, including naturalised Americans, take advantage of this policy, it is important to examine the impact of this major component of immigration on the labour market. For this reason the report studies the estimates of immigrant sponsorship of close family members according to the entry categories of these immigrants.

It is first necessary to examine the effects of immigration selection criteria on immigrants' qualifications, whilst distinguishing between the different countries of origin of the immigrants. The second step consists in combining the different criteria for immigration with the right to family reunification, and then attempting to assess the importance and composition of future flows generated by this incentive to immigrate.

It seems that immigrants who are married to American citizens possess qualifications equivalent to those persons considered "independent". Thus, according to this criterion, if immigrants selected according to ability have qualifications much higher than those in other categories, then the general level of those entering the country on the basis of this criterion drops dramatically when taking their spouses into consideration. However, these conclusions must be modified according to the geographic origin of the immigrants.

The follow on effects induced by family immigration policy are complex and varied, depending on the different channels of entry and the country of origin of the first migrants. If family reunification profoundly modifies the composition and volume of immigration flows according to the countries of origin, its impact on the labour market seems limited, for above all it concerns those who are not part of the labour force. In fact, the tendency for spouses capable of directly entering the labour market to immigrate later is slight. Furthermore, children who arrive as young immigrants have similar characteristics to those of children born in the United States of immigrant parents.

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United States immigration laws have historically incorporated a number of principles that guide the selection of immigrants. Two of the most important are the unification of families and the supply of needed labor skills. These two principles or objectives are not, of course, independent. First, those immigrants who come via family unification criteria also contribute to and affect the skill composition of workers in the United States. Second, those immigrants who meet the labor or skill criteria often have families or want to start them. Few workers would come to stay in a country if that country did not also allow them to immigrate with their immediate families (spouses and children). Thus, family unification immigrants have an impact on the labor force and immigrants chosen on the basis of their contribution to the economy affect the economy not only through their own behaviours but also because they bring in other (family) immigrants with them.

The immigration laws of the United States also embody the notion that the numbers of immigrants not be unlimited and that there be a balance in the country-of-origin composition of US immigrants. This is reflected in the limitations placed on the number of visas allocated each year for certain categories of immigrants, including those selected on the basis of extraordinary skills or particular labor market demand, and on the number of those numerically-limited visas issued each year by country of origin. However, the rights of US citizens to marry whomever they want and to be with their immediate relatives -- spouses, parents, children -- has been considered sufficiently important such that visas for such immigrants who are relatives of US citizens have never been numerically limited. This has meant that until the last reform of US immigration laws in 1990, neither the total number of immigrants nor their skill or country-of-origin composition has been set or greatly controlled by US law. Instead these important characteristics of immigration flows have been determined by the propensity of US citizens -- conferred by birth in the United States or, among immigrants, through naturalisation -- to marry the foreign-born or to sponsor blood relatives.

The 1990 changes in US immigration law placed an overall ceiling on the number of immigrants by reducing the number of numerically-limited immigrants as the number of numerically-unlimited (family-unification) immigrants increased beyond a certain number. The number of immigrants entering without the sponsorship of relatives and without offers of employment from US employers was also increased.

Even with an overall numerical ceiling on the number of immigrants, the existence of family reunification criteria with no numerical limits means that the skill (and country-of-origin) composition of the immigrant labor force will mostly reflect the outcome of family-based immigration to the extent that US

citizens, including those naturalised citizens who immigrated by dint of their potential labor market contributions, take advantage of these opportunities. Indeed, in 1985, 36 per cent of all US immigrants were in the numerically-unlimited immediate-relative category. The entitlement conferred on citizens to bring in wives, parents and children without limit has concerned many about the ability of US immigration law to govern the impact of US immigration on the US economy or on US society even if the number of immigrants "screened" for their economic impact were to increase at the expense of other family immigrants (such as brothers and sisters).

Despite the importance of the issue of the propensity of immigrants to sponsor additional family immigrants little is known about the consequences of family reunification for immigration -- how many additional immigrants are sponsored by immigrants who immigrate by skill or employment criteria? How does this compare to the propensity of "family" immigrants to sponsor additional immigrants? Does the propensity for immigrants of certain types to sponsor relative immigrants differ by country of origin? And how does the skill composition of family and employment immigrants differ at entry? The only prior study to quantify the sponsorship of family immigrants by immigrants (Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1986 and 1990) was based on a relatively small sample of immigrant records from the 1971 entry cohort of US immigrants matched with naturalisation records for those who naturalised. That study noted that the propensities of immigrants to naturalise, a prerequisite for sponsoring immediate relatives without numerical limitation, differed importantly by the immigration entry criteria and country of origin of the immigrants. However, no estimates of actual sponsorship rates classified by these immigrant characteristics could be made.

In this paper we examine the interactions between family and labor immigration based on recent US immigration experience by estimating for the first time the actual propensities of US immigrants classified by their entry criterion and country of origin to sponsor immediate relatives. The estimates are based on two newly-available data bases -- a sample of 1985 immigrant records matched with the records of their sponsors drawn by the US General Accounting Office (GAO) and the complete set of immigrant and matched naturalisation records (through 1990) of the 1977 cohort of US immigrants recently made available by the US

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). We use these and other data to assess the importance of selection criteria and of family sponsorship in determining the skill composition and the size of immigrant flows.

In section 1 we describe briefly the relevant provisions of US immigration laws that select immigrants, define the principal categories of immigrants that we study based on those laws, and describe how these differing selection criteria and region of origin of immigrants may affect their skill composition and their propensity to sponsor additional family immigrants. We categorise immigrants for the purpose of the study as (i) those who obtained a permanent visa on a first-come, first-served (or {laissez}-{faire}) basis (independent immigrants), (ii) those sponsored by an employer who are deemed to have extraordinary or high-demand labor market skills (job-offer immigrants), and (iii) those immigrants who obtained a visa by marrying a US citizen (spouse immigrants). Section 2 contains a comparison based on the 1977 immigrant cohort data of the at-entry skill composition of immigrants brought in via the

different entry criteria and by region of origin to assess whether such criteria matter for skill composition and the implications of family reunification for the skill composition. Section 3 describes the methodology by which we compute sponsorship rates by immigrant entry criterion and region of origin and reports the results of this methodology -- estimates of the total number of family immigrants sponsored by immigrants who entered under different selection criteria up through 14 years after they originally immigrated -- based on the GAO data merged with aggregate statistics from INS Annual Reports. In Section 4, we examine immigrant sponsorship via marriage and chain migration, taking into account that the sponsored spouse immigrants themselves subsequently bring in additional immigrants.

The estimates indicate that the number of family immigrants who enter the United States because they are sponsored by prior immigrants is substantial, but varies importantly by the region of origin of the immigrants as well as by the criteria under which the sponsoring immigrants entered. However, the skill composition of immigrants selected under the different criteria do not differ as much as would be expected, because of the policy of admitting the immediate family of skilled immigrants who may be less skilled than the screened immigrant. Moreover, as most of the family-reunification immigrants sponsored by prior immigrants after immigrating are elderly parents or minor children, the direct immediate labor-market impact of this provision of the law, despite the magnitude of sponsorship rates, is not large. •

1. Immigrant selection criteria, immigrant skill composition and the sponsorship of family immigrants

The selection criteria used to allocate visas among prospective immigrants can potentially have important implications for who enters the destination-country's economy. Three major criteria by which immigrants may be selected are 1) on a first-come, first-served basis, 2) on the basis of kinship relations to US citizens, and 3) on the basis of labor demand. US immigration laws have in the recent past and up through the present embodied all three of these selection criteria. From 1965 through 1977, 120 000 immigrants from the Western Hemisphere were provided visas each year on a first-come, first-served basis. These "independent" immigrants did not have to have relatives residing in the United States, nor did they have to meet any particular skill requirements (although they were, like all immigrants, subject to the restriction that they demonstrate that they would not become "public charges," i.e., be self- or otherwise supported). After 1977 and prior to the last major reform of US immigration law in 1990, approximately 25 000 Western Hemisphere immigrants continued to receive visas on this basis each year (Silva cases), and after 1990, a new, independent immigrant category was created for immigrants from both Hemispheres.

Immigrants are also selected on the basis of the demand for skills. From 1965, US immigration laws have specified that a certain number of visas be set aside for "skilled" immigrants who have offers of employment from US employers and who meet the criteria that they have rare skills or skills that are in short supply in the United States. This provision originally covered only immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere, but in 1977 was extended to cover the Western Hemisphere up to 20 per cent of the numerically-limited

visas (or 54 000) were available each year in this skilled category. However, the visas in this category are also allocated to the spouses and children of the "job offer" immigrants, with all of the visas of the accompanying family members counted in the "skill" category. In the period 1970-1985, about half of the visas allocated for these skill categories went to the accompanying family members. Thus only half of the immigrants in the "skilled" visa category had job offers and were screened on the basis of their skills, the rest are family reunification immigrants. Overall, approximately five percent of all US immigrants are selected on the basis of their labor-market skills.

The marriage market as well as the labor market also determines who enters the United States as immigrants. For both Hemispheres, all foreign-born persons marrying US citizens were and are entitled to an immigrant visa, and there are no numerical limits on this category of immigrant, which is by far the largest category numerically among US immigrants -- in 1985, for example, approximately 25 per cent of all immigrants entered as spouses of US citizens. Moreover, US citizens may sponsor the immigration of their parents and minor children, with no numerical limitation on the total number of these immigrants.

Do these very different immigration selection criteria matter for the skill composition of immigrants? Clearly we would expect that immigrants screened on the basis of the scarcity of their skills in the domestic labor market and in the world would be the most highly skilled immigrants. However, approximately 60 per cent of these job-offer immigrants are accompanied by spouses. It is not clear how these accompanying members of the skilled immigrant visa class compare to other immigrants. To the extent that there is assortative mating, we would expect that the skill composition of those married to job-offer immigrants, who have the highest level of skills, would exceed those immigrants who marry US citizens. However, the US citizens who marry immigrants are not a random sample of all US citizens. They are clearly, for example, persons who have contacts, professional or via tourism, outside of the United States or persons within the United States who are in close contact with younger foreign-born, such as in colleges and universities. Such persons would likely have above-average skills.

Least clear is the relative skill composition of those chosen on a first-come first-served basis. Since almost all of these immigrants in recent US experience will have come from the Western Hemisphere, country proximity will play an important role in the skill composition of these immigrants. We have found in earlier work that greater distance from the origin country to the United States, which is associated with a higher cost of immigration, tends to (self) select more skilled immigrants. Thus, the US immigration experience with respect to independent immigrants will confound country proximity effects with the selection criterion. Some of this will be evident by comparing the skill composition of spouse immigrants across different sending-country regions. If proximity is important as a screen, then we would expect that the spouse immigrants from the Western hemisphere countries would have less skills than those from Europe and Asia.

All immigrants are entitled after a certain period of residence in the United States and subject to English language proficiency requirements and other tests of knowledge about the United States to become US citizens via naturalisation. The minimum period of residence for almost all immigrants is five years that for immigrants who immigrated by marrying a US citizen is

three years. Thus, all immigrants are able after a period of time to take advantage of the family-reunification criteria of US immigration law after immigrating. That is, they may sponsor immediate-family immigrants -- spouse, parents, minor children -- without numerical limitation. The effects of the three types of immigrant selection criteria on the propensity of immigrants to actually take advantage of this entitlement by sponsoring family immigrants is less clear than their effects on skills.

All of the immigrants have parents who may live abroad. One can speculate that because spouse immigrants are younger than job-offer immigrants and can naturalise more quickly, they are more likely to have parents who are alive when they can use the sponsorship entitlement and whose immigration could thus be sponsored. Moreover, if job-offer immigrants are more skilled than spouse immigrants it is more likely that their parents are wealthier and/or more educated. Such parents may be less likely to seek to immigrate. On the other hand, the investments in the skills of the children may represent a long-term strategy for ultimately obtaining an immigration visa for the parents and thus of accomplishing the migration of an entire household.

With respect to the sponsorship by the immigrants of spouses, it would be likely that spouse immigrants would be substantially less likely than all other immigrants to sponsor the subsequent immigration of new spouses, although some spouse immigrants will inevitably divorce after immigration. As only 40 per cent of job-offer immigrants and 52 per cent of the Western Hemisphere independent immigrants are already married at immigration, the propensities of these immigrants as a group to sponsor spouses after immigrating should be higher than those of spouse immigrants.

Origin country may also matter within visa groups -- distance may deter the immigration of parents and perhaps acquaintanship with potential mates in the origin country. Moreover, origin-country customs and practices may be reflected in the sponsorship rates. Traditions of household extension and family unity and attitudes to exogamy may differ importantly across countries and carry over national boundaries.

2. Immigrant skill composition and immigration selection criteria: evidence

We can assess the effects of immigrant selection criteria and of region of origin or distance by examining the occupational distribution of the immigrants in the three selection categories, stratified by region of origin, based on immigrant records of admission. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) requires the listing of the immigrant's occupation and records country of birth or chargeability on the record of immigration for each immigrant at the time that he or she becomes a permanent resident alien. These administrative records are in fact the only data base providing an approximate "at-entry" occupational breakdown by the entry visa of US immigrants. These data are, however, somewhat problematical because for immigrants not selected on the basis of a job offer from a US employer and screened on the basis of that job offer, the occupation reported may refer to either an occupation in the origin country or in the United States, which may differ considerably at entry. All of the job-offer immigrants report their US occupation by which they qualified for an entry visa.

We use the 1977 Immigration and Naturalization Cohort data newly-released by the INS. This data base provides information from the immigration records of 459 356 immigrants who attained permanent residence status in the United States in 1977. These records were matched with naturalisation records for any person from that cohort who had naturalised (successfully obtained US citizenship) through the 1990 fiscal year (159 456 naturalised). The large sample size of this data set permit precise differentiation of occupation by country-of-origin and by finely-detailed visa categories that are provided on the records. The occupation of the immigrants at naturalisation is also provided, but less than half of immigrants naturalise and the sample of naturalised immigrants is not likely to be a random sample of all immigrants. Indeed, rates of naturalisation differ dramatically by entry visa and country of origin (Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1982). For example, in the 1977 cohort, 25 per cent of European job-offer immigrants naturalised by 1991 while 67 per cent of Asian job-offer immigrants did so.

Table 1 provides a simple occupational breakdown for the male immigrants in the 1977 cohort stratified by entry criteria -- independent, spouse, job-offer, and spouse of the job-offer immigrant. We also stratify by the region of origin of the immigrants -- Western Hemisphere, Europe and Asia -- to assess whether there are important regional differences in skill composition. As noted, because all of the independent immigrants prior to 1990 came from the Western Hemisphere, this category is missing for the Eastern Hemisphere regions. Also because 1977 was the first year that Western Hemisphere immigrants were admitted on the basis of the job-offer criteria, we omit this category of immigrants for that Hemisphere.

We look at the occupational listings of male immigrants because a large proportion of the female immigrants report that they are not in the labor force, at least at the time of entry. In addition, an important factor leading to the immigration of female migrants via marriage to a US citizen is the presence of a US military base in the origin country. This somewhat distorts the effect of origin-country proximity on the skill composition of female immigrants compared to what would arise if such outposts containing US citizens did not exist. These influences on the immigration of men via marriage are far less important. Moreover, eighty and 60 percent of the job-offer immigrants from Europe and Asia, respectively, and 56 per cent of the independent Western Hemisphere immigrants were men in 1977. Because most of the job-offer immigrants are men, however, the proportion of men among the accompanying spouses of the job-offer immigrants is very small -- 7 per cent among Europeans and 28 per cent among Asians. Approximately a third of the 1977 Asian and European spouse immigrants were men and the majority (53 per cent) of Western Hemisphere spouse immigrants were men.

We have aggregated the 26 occupational categories provided in the data to two of the most skilled with, according to Census data, the highest wages or salaries -- professional/technical and executive or managerial. The former category includes doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, professors, health workers, scientists, artists and professional athletes. The executive/managerial category is a single aggregate category provided in the data.

The figures in Table 1 indicate that among the Western Hemisphere immigrants, the distribution of the two high-skill occupations is no different across the independent immigrants, who entered on a first-come, first-served basis, and spouse immigrants, who entered by marrying a US citizen. However, as expected, the proportion of skilled immigrants from Europe and from Asia was considerably higher among job-offer immigrants, chosen on the basis of their skills, compared to immigrants chosen in the marriage market -- among the 1977 European immigrants, the proportion of professionals among job-offer immigrants is more than twice that among spouse immigrants and among the immigrants from Asia, the ratio is more than three to one across the same immigrant-entry groups.

The lower skill levels among the Western Hemisphere independent immigrants compared to those of the job-offer immigrants in part appears to reflect the closer proximity to the US of those immigrants as well as the selection criterion. This is seen in the skill differential among the spouse immigrants across regions. The proportions of professionals among spouse immigrants from Europe and Asia are almost two and one half times the proportion among the Western Hemisphere spouse immigrants.

As noted, job-offer immigrants bring with them family members who also become immigrants. How does the occupational distribution of this family-unification group compare to the other categories of immigrants? Table 1 indicates that among European immigrants, those who obtained a US immigrant visa by becoming the spouse of a US citizen and those who obtained a visa by dint of being married to a job-offer immigrant have the same skill composition, but one that is less skilled, as noted, than that of the job-offer immigrants. Among Asian immigrants, however, the accompanying spouses of job-offer immigrants are more skilled than immigrants marrying a US citizen -- 36 per cent of the job-offer immigrant spouses are in the professional category compared to 23 per cent among spouse immigrants. The greater skill-level among the accompanying spouses of Asian job-offer immigrants reflects assortative mating -- the skill-level of the Asian job-offer immigrants are greater than those of the job-offer immigrants from Europe and this is also reflected in their spouses. The proportion of professional immigrants among the Asian job-offer spouses, however, is less than half that of Asian job-offer immigrants and 71 per cent of that of the European job-offer immigrants.

Thus, while on average the spouses of job-offer immigrants are somewhat more skilled than immigrants who obtain a visa by marriage to a US citizen, they are considerably less-skilled than their job-offer spouses. As job-offer spouses constitute 30 per cent of all of the skill-category immigrants, because of the necessity of permitting the joint immigration of immediate relatives, the skill composition of all of the adult immigrants brought in within the "skill" preference category is not, as might be expected, as dramatically different from that of immigrants who enter the United States via marriage. Nevertheless, immigrants chosen for skills by US employers and their accompanying spouses taken together are more skilled on average than immigrants chosen by US citizens in the international marriage market.

3. Immigration selection criteria and rates of sponsorship of family immigrants: evidence

{Methodology and Data}

However immigrants are initially screened and selected, the entitlements embodied in immigration laws that permit citizens to sponsor the immigration of immediate family members -- spouses, parents, and minor children -- means that an assessment of the longer-run impact of the selection criteria must include the size of the post-immigration sponsored immigrant flow. The appropriate method of quantifying the propensities of immigrants, stratified by selection criteria, to sponsor additional family immigrants would be to follow an initial cohort of immigrants and count the number of immigrants they sponsor. This longitudinal design would be expensive, however, and the results would not be known for many years, as the process of sponsorship is prolonged by the waiting-period for naturalisation. This kind of study has not been undertaken in any case.

An alternative method of estimating the number of family immigrants sponsored by immigrants that is far less costly is to match a given immigration cohort with the immigration records of those who had sponsored that cohort. This design was employed by the US General Accounting Office (GAO) based on a sample drawn from the 1985 immigration cohort. In particular, the GAO investigators defined the population of interest as the set of all persons who immigrated to the United States in fiscal year 1985 as "exempt (from numerical limitation) immediate relatives" -- that is, as spouses, parents, and minor children of US citizens. This population consists of 198 143 persons, of whom 124 093 are spouses and 38 986 are parents. The GAO sample consisted of 200 immediate family immigrants from each of the ten countries that represented the top origin countries for the entire class of immediate relatives in fiscal year 1985 and 200 immediate-family immigrants randomly-drawn from the rest of the immigrant cohort. The ten countries were Canada, Mainland China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, western Germany, India, Korea, Mexico, Philippines, and the United Kingdom.

The GAO data describe the characteristics of family-immigrant sponsors, including their country of origin and their immigrant visa (entry criterion) if not born in the United States. Based on the actual number of immigrants in 1985 from each of the sampled countries and the residual category, one can obtain a picture of the characteristics of all of the sponsors of the 1985 immediate-family immigrants. However, the GAO data alone cannot provide information on the rates by which an immigrant sponsors subsequent family immigrants. To compute sponsorship rates from information on the sponsors of a single immigration cohort requires information as well on the size of the immigrant cohorts of the sponsors.

More formally, if the number of family immigrants sponsored in 1985 by a previous immigrant selected by criterion i (i =spouse, job-offer, independent) who immigrated in year t is S_{it} then the rate of sponsorship in 1985 for the immigrants in that entry-group is $\frac{S_{it}}{I_{it}}$ where I_{it} is the number of immigrants entering under entry criterion i in year t . Since immigrants who immigrated in year t were in the United States $85 - t$ years, a set of duration-specific rates of sponsorship ($\frac{S_{it}}{I_{it}}$, where $d = 85 - t$) can

be constructed based on the GAO data combined with information on year- and visa-specific immigrant cohort sizes. If T years is the largest duration of any immigrant sponsor in the 1985 GAO data, then if duration-specific rates of sponsorship are the same for each immigrant entry cohort (within visa-type), the total number of sponsored immigrants associated with each prior immigrant of visa-type i is the sum of the computed duration- and visa-specific sponsorship rates over the duration interval from 1 to T:

(1)

We constructed the duration-specific sponsorship rates for the Western Hemisphere independent immigrants for spouse immigrants from the Western Hemisphere, Europe and Asia, and for job-offer immigrants and their accompanying family members from Europe and Asia using the GAO sample information (employing the sample weights) and the corresponding year-specific immigration statistics published in the INS Annual Reports over the period 1971 (the earliest date of entry for the immigrant sponsors) through 1985. Based on equation (1) we can thus calculate the total number of family immigrants sponsored by each of these entry-criterion and region-specific immigrants up to 14 years after their initial immigration.

{Results}

Figure 1 plots the estimated accumulated number of family immigrants sponsored by Western Hemisphere independent and spouse immigrants, by the duration of their residence in the United States. The results indicate that, as expected, spouse immigrants begin sponsoring family immigrants earlier than do the independent immigrants, reflecting their right to naturalise two years earlier. The speedier rate at which sponsorship is initiated, however, may also reflect a greater demand for family unification, as the Western Hemisphere spouse immigrants also sponsor more family immigrants at every duration interval -- after 14 years in the United States, 79 immigrants have been sponsored for every 1 000 spouse immigrants initially admitted compared to 49 for the independent immigrants. Given that all of the spouse immigrants are married at entry and just over half of the independent immigrants are married, this higher rate for the spouse immigrants reflects a much higher sponsorship of parents by the spouse immigrants, a result confirmed below.

Figures 2 and 3 depict the rates of accumulation of sponsored immigrants by duration of stay for the spouse, job-offer and accompanying job-offer family immigrants from Europe (Figure 2) and from Asia (Figure 3). As for the Western Hemisphere immigrants, the spouse immigrants initiate sponsorship earlier. However, among the immigrants from Europe the number of sponsored family immigrants sponsored by the job-offer immigrants overtakes that of the spouse immigrants after 8 years in the United States, and among Asian immigrants, the number of sponsored family immigrants is almost identical after 14 years for the job-offer and spouse immigrants. The group sponsoring the least family immigrants is the family-immigrant group accompanying the job-offer immigrants, as expected given that these immigrants are either married to a job-offer immigrant, and thus less likely to be subsequently sponsoring a spouse, or are children of the job-offer immigrants who are unlikely to be sponsoring a parent.

The most dramatic result in Figures 2 and 3 is the contrast between the numbers of family immigrants sponsored across the two regions of origin. For all three immigrant groups characterized by selection criterion, Asian immigrants have substantially higher sponsorship rates than do European immigrants, and higher rates, among spouse immigrants, than do their Western Hemisphere counterparts. The results indicate that for every 1 000 spouse immigrants admitted, those from Asia sponsor 237 family immigrants, principally parents, after 14 years in the United States compared to 36 from Europe and 76 from the Western Hemisphere. For every 1 000 job-offer immigrants from Asia, 224 family immigrants are sponsored after 14 years compared to 113 from Europe. And among the immigrants who accompany the job-offer immigrants, 104 additional family immigrants are sponsored after 14 years for every 1 000 immigrants admitted from Asia compared to 27 from Europe. Thus, family-reunification provisions can dramatically affect the country-of-origin composition of the foreign-born.

An alternative way of looking at the interactions between family immigration and labor immigration is to add together for the job-offer immigrants, who are screened for their labor market impact, (i) the number of family members they bring with them when they immigrate (the accompanying family immigrants) and (ii) the number of immigrants sponsored by them and their accompanying family members subsequent to their admission. Figures 4 and 5 report these figures for European and Asian immigrants respectively along with the accumulations for spouse immigrants for comparison. The figures for the job-offer immigrants reflect subsequent sponsorship and the fact that at entry, as noted, there is one accompanying family member on average for every job-offer immigrant, as half have families at entry. The estimates indicate that for every 1 000 job-offer immigrants admitted into the United States from Europe, after 14 years 1 140 family immigrants also are legally admitted. Over the same interval, for every 1 000 job-offer immigrants admitted from Asia, 1 328 family immigrants also enter. Thus, these estimates indicate that after 14 years, less than half (44 per cent) of the immigrants admitted as a consequence of the admission of the "labor" immigrants are actually screened for their labor market impact as a consequence of family immigration.

4. Immigrant sponsorship of spouses and chain migration: evidence

Up to now we have not distinguished among the kinship relations of the immediate-family immigrants that are sponsored to the immigrants who are the sponsors. Whether the sponsored family immigrants are spouses, parents or children of the sponsoring immigrant matters for two reasons. First, parents (and children, at least initially) are unlikely to have much of an impact on the labor market, as most immigrants sponsored as parents are over the age of 65 according to the 1977 immigrant cohort data. In contrast, sponsored spouses are of labor-force age and thus do affect the size and composition of the domestic labor force. Second, while the sponsored immigrant parents and children (at least for many years) are unlikely themselves to sponsor additional immigrants, we have seen that the sponsorship rates of spouses are not trivial. Thus, to the extent that immigrants subsequently sponsor immigrant spouses, there is the possibility of chain migration that extends beyond the "first generation" sponsorship patterns we have estimated.

If n_{id} is the number of spouse immigrants sponsored at duration d by one immigrant admitted by criterion i and ssd is the sponsorship rate at duration d of spouse immigrants, then the total number of immigrants sponsored per immigrant admitted by entry criterion i as of duration of residence T taking into account chain migration via the sponsorship of sponsored spouse immigrants is given by (2):

(2)

The accumulated sponsorship rate given by equation (2) differs from that given by equation (1) by the added term incorporating the number of spouses sponsored per immigrant and the sponsorship rate of spouses. The importance of the term, and thus of chaining, thus depends on the sponsorship patterns with respect to spouses. Figures 6, 7 and 8 present those estimated patterns for the Western Hemisphere independent and spouse immigrants, and the European and Asian "employment"-category (job-offer and accompanying family) and spouse immigrants. The estimates in Figure 6 for the Western Hemisphere immigrants indicate that, as expected, after 14 years there are more spouse immigrants sponsored by independent immigrants than by spouse immigrants. Spouse immigrants are mostly sponsoring parents and at higher rates than independent immigrants.

What may be surprising about the estimates in Figure 6 is that there are spouses sponsored after immigration by immigrants who were admitted by marrying a US citizen. This reflects in part the fragility of marriage. Indeed, among the naturalised immigrants from the 1977 immigration cohort who were married at entry, 10 per cent from the Western Hemisphere reported that they were no longer married. The corresponding figures for European and Asian immigrants are 8 and 4 per cent, respectively. These rates may understate the probabilities of marital break-up, however, as some of the immigrants who naturalised may have subsequently remarried prior to naturalisation. On the other hand, divorced immigrants may have higher propensities to naturalise in order to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by naturalisation to marry foreign-born mates.

Figure 7 indicates that for the European immigrants to the United States, the spouse immigrants sponsor more spouses than the employment immigrants as a group, although after 14 years the number of spouses sponsored for every 1 000 spouse immigrants sponsored is only 5, one-seventh of all of the immigrants sponsored by spouses. In contrast, as shown in Figure 8, among the Asian immigrants the employment immigrants sponsor more spouses than do the spouse immigrants after 14 years of residence in the United States, although after 11 years more spouses had been sponsored by spouse immigrants. The delayed increase in spouse sponsorship among the job-offer immigrants reflects both the restriction on naturalisation for this group relative to spouses and the maturing of the accompanying children of the job-offer immigrants in the employment-immigrant group.

While the numbers of spouses sponsored by Asian spouse and employment immigrants are higher than those sponsored by either group of the European immigrants or by the Western Hemisphere immigrants, the fractions of total

immediate-relative sponsored immigrants that is composed of spouses is lower among the Asian immigrants than among the European and Western Hemisphere immigrants -- at 14 years, the proportion of immigrant spouses sponsored by Asian spouses is 6 per cent compared to 14 per cent among both European and Western Hemisphere spouse immigrants. This is because Asian immigrant-spouses are far more likely than their European or Western Hemisphere counterparts to sponsor the immigration of their parents.

The small fractions of spouses sponsored by either the spouse or employment immigrants means that the initial labor market impact of the provisions of US immigration law that permit the sponsorship by US citizens of spouses, children and parents is small most of the sponsored immigrants are elderly parents or young children. The number of spouses sponsored even after 14 years is also small -- the highest cumulated total of spouses sponsored is 20, by the Asian employment immigrants. Based on the formula given by (2), this results in a total of two more immigrants being added to the cumulative total of sponsored immigrants by immigrants admitted on the basis of their labor-market skills after 14 years of residence in the United States. The smallness of the additional chaining factor is due to both the delay in spouse sponsorship (compared to the sponsorship of parents) seen in Figure 8 -- are not sponsored until about 10 years after entry -- and the limited number of spouses ultimately sponsored.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have looked at newly-available data describing immigrants to the United States to examine how the criteria by which immigrants are chosen affect the skill composition of the domestic labor force and how, in concert with the family-unification entitlements of US immigration law, such immigration criteria affect the sponsorship of additional family immigrants and the size and country composition of future immigration flows. US immigration law incorporates three major selection criteria for immigrants -- via marriage, on a first-come, first-served basis, and on the basis of skills in high demand in the domestic economy. US immigration laws permit as well, without numerical restriction, the sponsorship by citizens, whether native-born or naturalised, of immediate relatives (spouse, parent child). Thus, the US immigration experience is a useful laboratory from which inferences about the consequences of different immigration selection rules can be made and the interaction between labor and family-reunification immigration can be studied.

Our estimates indicate that US immigrants selected via marriage, principally by native-born US citizens and the largest component of US immigration flows, do not differ in their skill composition from immigrants that have been selected on a first-come, first-served basis. While those immigrants screened with respect to skills do have a significantly higher skill composition than do other immigrants, when the skill-composition of the spouses of these immigrants is taken into account, the overall skill level of the immigrant group with one family member screened for skills is less different from that of other immigrant groups than might be expected.

Our estimates of the rates at which immigrants selected under the different entry criteria sponsor additional family immigrants indicate that the numbers of additional family immigrants that come to the United States as a

result of family-reunification entitlements is not trivial and varies importantly by the area of origin of the immigrants. For example, our estimates suggest that for every 1 000 immigrants from Asia, whether selected via marriage or by skill criteria, about 230 additional family immigrants are sponsored within 14 years after the entry of those immigrants. In contrast, among European-origin immigrants to the United States, each 1 000 immigrants who entered by marrying a US citizen sponsor only 36 immigrants within 14 years but those who entered by dint of their labor-market skills sponsor 113 immigrants.

While the results with respect to total, cumulated sponsorship rates suggest that numerically-unrestricted family unification -- entitlements for US citizens to sponsor the immigration of immediate relatives -- does importantly affect the size and origin-country composition of immigration flows, the impact of this type of immigration in the labor market is not large. This is because all but 5 per cent (Asian) or 14 per cent (Asian or Western Hemisphere) of these family-reunification immigrants are minor children or elderly parents. The latter, who make up most of the family-reunification immigrants sponsored by prior immigrants, do not typically participate in the labor market, and the children do not flow into the labor market for many years after the original immigration of their sponsoring parents. The labor-market and other effects of the immigrant minor children of immigrants is in some sense no different from those of the native-born children of any other group residing in the United States. Moreover, as all immigrants to the United States must show that they can be supported by non governmental sources, the elderly and the children do not, at least initially, consume the resources of taxpaying citizens who are not relatives.

Finally, the design of an immigration policy that paid strict attention to the labor market impact of immigrants and that selected only those immigrants with high labor-market demand would inevitably have to permit the immigration of the immediate family of those immigrants in order for the screened immigrant to want to remain in the destination country. Thus, it is not likely that under any immigration policy family immigration will be an unimportant component of overall immigration. Indeed, in the numerically-limited skill category of US immigration law, in the past 20 years there have been as many unscreened family immigrants who accompany the screened immigrants as there have been immigrants whose skill qualifications were actually screened.

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Table 1

Percentage of Professional and Managerial Immigrants at Entry,
by Selection Criterion and Region: 1977 Immigrant Men

Skill Category	Western Hemisphere		•Europe ••		•Asia			
	Independent	Spouse	Job•Spouse	Job-spouse	Job•Spouse	Jobspouse		
Professional•	6.4•	9.4•	49.8•	24.2•	23.5•	78.9•	23.4•	35.6
Executive•	6.7•	6.4•	20.1•	13.1•	11.8•	8.0•	13.3•	16.2

Table 2

Immediate-Family Immigrants Sponsored Per 1000 Original Immigrants,
by Years Since Immigration, Selection Criterion and Region

Years	West. Hem.		Europe			Asia		
	Spouse	Indep.	Spouse	Job-Offer	J-O Acc.	Spouse	Job-Offer	J-O Acc
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1.43	0	1.84	0	0	22.8	0	0
5	12.3	0	3.56	0	0	65.6	4.05	0
6	18.3	1.98	4.60	0	0	118.7	18.0	7.59
7	31.3	10.7	10.4	0	0	160.9	66.8	26.5
8	47.0	19.8	12.2	0	26.9	176.6	124.8	35.4
9	56.5	23.4	12.2	103.3	26.9	193.1	160.0	50.8
10	65.9	26.0	14.4	103.3	26.9	203.8	198.0	70.2
11	67.6	34.3	33.7	103.3	26.9	217.6	201.4	70.2
12	69.2	40.7	35.7	112.8	26.9	230.0	201.4	103.7
13	79.1	43.4	35.7	112.8	26.9	231.4	203.9	103.7
14	79.1	48.5	35.7	112.8	26.9	237.1	224.4	103.7

Estimates based on the 1985 GAO Sponsor Sample and INS Annual Reports, 1971-1982.

Table 3

Spouse Immigrants Sponsored Per 1000 Original Immigrants,
by Years Since Immigration, Selection Criterion and Region

• Years	West. Hem.		Europe		Asia	
	Spouse	Indep.	Spouse	Job-Offer	Spouse	Job-Offer
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0.59	1.29	1.04	0	1.24	0
7	6.14	1.77	1.04	0	12.7	0
8	6.14	3.17	2.83	0	12.7	0
9	6.14	5.49	2.83	0	12.7	0
10	8.28	5.95	4.96	0	12.7	7.19
11	8.28	14.1	4.96	0	14.0	7.19
12	9.10	18.6	4.96	0	14.0	16.8
13	11.3	20.9	4.96	0	14.0	16.8
14	11.3	24.0	4.96	0	14.0	19.7

Estimates based on the 1985 GAO Sponsor Sample and INS Annual Reports, 1971-1982.

END-OF-TEXT