

Question and Key Points: For Cuban vs. Vietnamese immigrants?

KP1: In terms of integration and social mobility, how have Cuban immigrants done in comparison to other Hispanic immigrant groups in the NY tri-state area? In Florida?

KP2 Why? What policy made social mobility easier for Cuban immigrants?

KP3 What does the future look like for Cuban immigrants with the termination of the “wet foot, dry foot” policy? By President Obama in 2018?

KP4 Why is social mobility a key issue for Hispanic Immigrants (compared to all others?) Are Puerto Ricans like Lynn Manuel Miranda and his father Latino Immigrants? (Latina/Latinx)

KP5 Why are Vietnamese a good comparator group for Cubans?

Cuban Refugees Summary/Outline

- I. With regard to social mobility, how have Cuban immigrants done in comparison to other Hispanic immigrant groups in the NY tri-state area?
 - A. Cuban immigrants have lower poverty rates, the highest share of home ownership, and the highest share of 4+ years of college. (refer to Tables)
- II. Why? What policy made social mobility easier for Cuban immigrants?
 - A. Because their refugee status under the “Cuban Adjustment Act” gave them preferential treatment.
 - B. They had an easier time integrating because of their legal status and special treatment (Waters and Pineau, 2015, p. 3)
- III. What does the future look like for Cuban immigration now that the “wet foot, dry foot” policy?
 - A. They will be treated like other migrants who arrive without authorization, which means they can be sent back to Cuba at the border. (Meissner, 2017)
 - B. Yet, the “Cuban Adjustment Act” is still in effect which means that if Cuban immigrants are present in the U.S. for one year, they can still apply for permanent residency (Meissner, 2017)
- IV. Evidence that refugee status is related to the social mobility of an immigrant group
 - A. Study conducted by Cortes (2014) found that refugees had greater gains in labor market performance than economic immigrants over a time period.

My case study will be focusing on the social mobility of Cuban immigrants within the U.S., with specific attention given to home ownership, educational attainment, and poverty rates within the NY tri-state area. Cuban immigrants, more than any other Hispanic immigrant group, have the highest share of home ownership (refer to Figure F-4 below) and the highest share of 4+ years of college (refer to Figure F-5 below) in the tri-state area. Furthermore, Cuban immigrants have the lowest poverty rate among all other Hispanic immigrant groups (refer to Figure F-8 below) in the tri-state area. As shown on the x-axis on all three graphs, Cuban immigrants have the highest citizen share (or lowest share “not a citizen”) in comparison to other Hispanic immigrant groups, which explains their success in social mobility.

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The reason Cuban immigrants have the lowest “not a citizen” share is because, unlike other Hispanic immigrant groups, a majority of Cubans came to the U.S. as refugees. The “Cuban Adjustment Act”, enacted on November 2, 1966, treats all Cuban migrants as refugees and allows them to become lawful permanent residents after being physically present in the United States for at least one year. They are given special benefits such as financial support and medical benefits, therefore, unlike other Hispanic immigrant groups, the Cubans were given preferential treatment and could more easily become citizens. Citizenship seems to play a major role in determining the social mobility of an immigrant group. According to Waters and Pineau (2015), *the outcomes of educational attainment, income, occupational distribution, living above the poverty line, residential integration, and language ability, immigrants also increase their well-being as they become more similar to the native-born and improve their situation over time. Still, the well-being of immigrants and their descendants is highly dependent on immigrant starting points and on the segment of American society—the racial and ethnic groups, the legal status, the social class, and the geographic area—into which they integrate* (p. 3). A way of interpreting this study is to say that Cuban immigrants have increased their well-being because they have become more similar to the native-born in that they were able to become citizens, which perhaps led them to assimilate or integrate more than other groups. It can be said that they have done better than other Hispanic immigrant groups because they had a different starting point in regard to their legal standing.

Another article by Meissner (2017) explains that the ending of the “wet foot, dry foot” policy, which allowed Cuban migrants who successfully reached U.S. soil to stay and become legal permanent residents after one year, will consequently end the U.S.’s preferential treatment of Cuban migrants (Meissner, 2017). Cuban migrants will be treated the same as all other migrants who arrive without prior authorization, which means that Cubans arriving to the U.S. can be sent back to Cuba (Meissner, 2017). However, Cuban migrants can still assert a claim for political asylum and could potentially be granted a hearing in immigration court (Meissner, 2017). Moreover, the “Cuban Adjustment Act” is still in effect which means that if Cuban immigrants are present in the U.S. for one year, they can still apply for permanent residency (Meissner, 2017). It will be up to Congress to decide whether to amend or terminate the “Cuban Adjustment Act” (Meissner, 2017). It is still uncertain what the future for Cuban immigrants will look like.

This relates to the course because examining the social mobility of immigrants is relevant and useful information for economists when determining what factors help promote the development and well-being of immigrants and subsequently the host country.

Material for the Final exam

Quotes

Q1- *The outcomes of educational attainment, income, occupational distribution, living above the poverty line, residential integration, and language ability, immigrants also increase their well-being as they become more similar to the native-born and improve their situation over time. Still, the well-being of immigrants and their descendants is highly dependent on immigrant starting points and on the segment of American society—the racial and ethnic groups, the legal status, the social class, and the geographic area—into which they integrate* (Waters & Pineau, 2015, p. 3)

Q2- *since 1966, the United States has had special legislation—the Cuban Adjustment Act—which treats all Cubans as refugees. Under terms of the law, Cubans who arrive in the United States are eligible for legal permanent residence (getting a green card) one year after arrival. Under a separate 1980 law, certain Cubans are also eligible for welfare benefits similar to refugees. No other nationality group has such*

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preferential or immediate access to green cards and welfare benefits, which include financial support, medical benefits, and other assistance. (Meissner, 2017)

Q3- The policy change ends the automatic parole into the United States of Cubans presenting themselves at or between land ports of entry. Cubans who reach U.S. soil are now to be treated the same as all other migrants who arrive without prior authorization. Fuller details on how the new regime will work in actual practice have not yet been detailed. However, they are likely to involve using expedited removal procedures at the borders or granting a credible-fear interview to those who assert a claim for political asylum. Those found to have a possible claim or other grounds for relief would be admitted to the United States pending a hearing in immigration court. Those who do not assert a claim for asylum would be placed in expedited or regular removal proceedings. (Meissner, 2017)

Q4- In addition, the administration has not declared how it would want to handle the Cuban Adjustment Act, which remains on the books. Permitting applications for permanent residence within a year of U.S. presence is discretionary. However, if the Department of Homeland Security continues to accept applications from Cubans for adjustment of status to a green card, it would continue to serve as a magnet for migration. (Meissner, 2017)

Q5- I find that refugee immigrants in 1980 earned 6% less and worked 14% fewer hours than economic immigrants. Both immigrant groups had approximately the same level of English skills. By 1990, the two groups had made substantial gains; however, refugee immigrants had made greater gains. Refugees in 1990 earned 20% more, worked 4% more hours, and improved their English skills by 11% more than economic immigrants. The relative gain of refugee immigrants is 26% in annual earnings and 10% in the improvement of English skills. (Cortes, 2014, p. 15)

**This paper analyzes how the implicit difference in the time horizons of immigrants affects their subsequent human capital investments and wage assimilations. The major refugee waves analyzed are from Afghanistan, Cuba, the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Haiti Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Non refugees, which I classify as economic immigrants, are from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, northern Europe, western Europe, southern Europe, central eastern Europe, East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Asia Minor, the Philippines, and northern Africa (Cortes, 2014, p. 15)*

Some additional tables and Figures from presentations on Indians, Vietnamese, Chinese and Cubans.

Questions: How well have Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian and Cuban refugees assimilated? What about the contribution of Indian refugees, especially to innovation (patents) and new technologies? Where have they migrated?

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Tables and Figures

Table 3. State-Level Distribution of Major Refugee Groups, 2009–13

Refugee Group	Total	California (%)	Florida (%)	New York (%)	Texas (%)	Other States (%)
Vietnamese	651,000	42	4	2	11	41
Cuban	648,000	2	82	1	2	13
Russian	200,000	15	4	24	3	54
Iraqi	119,000	20	2	2	6	71
Burmese	78,000	10	2	12	13	63

Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2009–13 ACS data.

Source: Fix, et al. (2017, p 13)

Table 4. Share of Adults (ages 25 and older) with at Least a Bachelor's Degree, by Immigration Status, (%), 2009–13

	United States (%)	California (%)	Florida (%)	New York (%)	Texas (%)
U.S. Born	29	33	27	35	28
Refugees	28	30	20	42	28
Vietnamese	23	25	23	23	23
Cuban	18	21	18	26	24
Russian	63	64	59	60	77
Iraqi	28	28	-	-	41
Burmese	20	42	-	26	8
Other Foreign Born	28	25	26	28	20

Note: "-" indicates a sample size of less than 100.

Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2009–13 ACS data.

Source: Fix, et al. (2017, p 14)

Table 5. Share of Limited English Proficient Adults (ages 16 and older), by Immigration Status, (%), 2009–13

	United States (%)	California (%)	Florida (%)	New York (%)	Texas (%)
U.S. Born	1	3	2	3	4
Refugees	61	62	70	57	60
Vietnamese	69	70	67	65	67
Cuban	74	66	75	67	71
Russian	44	46	43	56	31
Iraqi	63	65	-	-	63
Burmese	83	67	-	89	93
Other Foreign Born	51	58	43	47	61

Note: "-" indicates a sample size of less than 100.

Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2009–13 ACS data.

Source: Fix, et al. (2017, p 15)

Table 6. Employment Rate of Adults (ages 16 and older), by Immigration Status, (%), 2009–13

	United States (%)	California (%)	Florida (%)	New York (%)	Texas (%)
U.S. Born	57	55	52	57	59
Refugees	61	57	59	61	67
Vietnamese	66	61	69	67	70
Cuban	57	47	57	52	65
Russian	62	61	58	61	65
Iraqi	41	38	-	-	53
Burmese	55	53	-	51	58
Other Foreign Born	61	60	57	60	62

Note: "-" indicates a sample size of less than 100.

Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2009–13 ACS data.

Source: Fix, et al. (2017, p 16)

Table 7. Share of College-Educated Adults (ages 25 and older) Underemployed in the Civilian Labor Force, by Immigration Status, (%), 2009–13

	United States (%)	California (%)	Florida (%)	New York (%)	Texas (%)
U.S. Born	18	18	20	18	16
Refugees	29	24	40	26	24
Vietnamese	19	18	16	18	17
Cuban	44	-	44	-	-
Russian	22	20	33	23	15
Iraqi	48	38	-	-	-
Burmese	40	-	-	-	-
Other Foreign Born	24	24	28	25	21

Notes: Underemployment refers to college-educated individuals in the civilian labor force who are either unemployed or are in low-skilled jobs. "-" indicates a sample size of less than 100.

Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2009–13 ACS data.

Source: Fix, et al. (2017, p 17)

Table 8. Relative Household Income of Refugees and Other Immigrants, as Compared to the U.S. Born, 2009–13

	United States	California	Florida	New York	Texas
U.S. Born	\$53,000	\$65,000	\$48,000	\$60,000	\$54,000
Refugees	84%	79%	73%	83%	91%
Vietnamese	108%	93%	99%	89%	107%
Cubans	61%	57%	67%	45%	69%
Russians	104%	84%	98%	89%	129%
Iraqis	39%	35%	-	-	36%
Burmese	52%	69%	-	40%	-
Other Foreign Born	91%	80%	87%	84%	74%

Note: "-" indicates a sample size of less than 100.

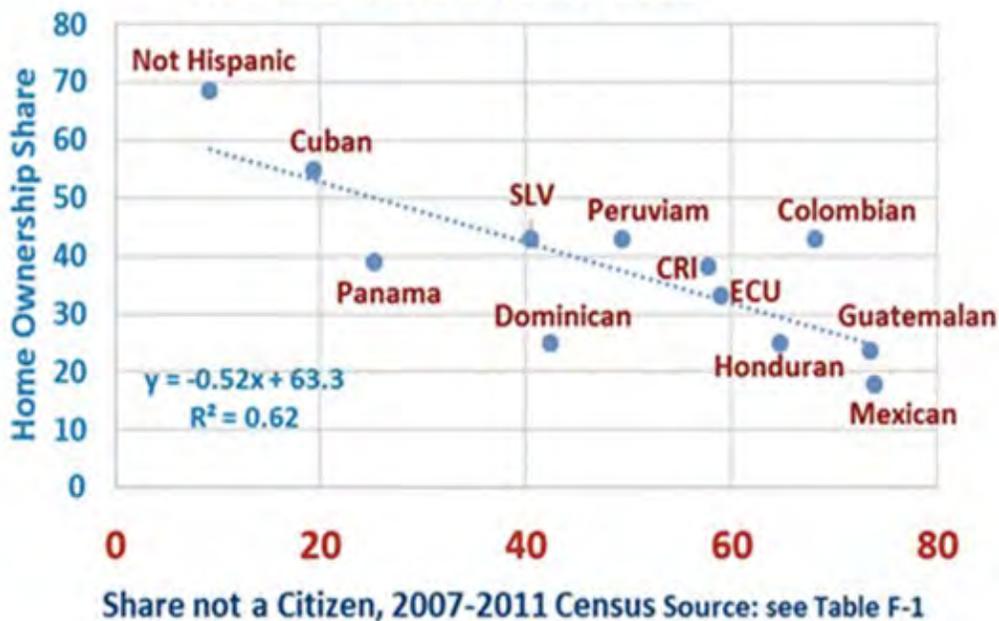
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2009–13 ACS data.

Source: Fix, et al. (2017, p 18)

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Vietnamese Refugee Case Study: Among Vietnamese refugees who came to the U.S. largely in the late 1970s the share with a BA degree is highest in California (Table 4) which also has the highest share of refugees (42%, Table 3). Though Vietnamese face obstacles including limited English proficiency among the first generation which is the highest for any refugee group (Table 5). Despite these obstacles the employment rate for Vietnamese is among the highest for any refugee group, 66% and much higher than the 57% rate for U.S. born workers (Table 6). This may reflect high rates of self-employment in the Vietnamese community (see NY Times story below). As shown in Table 7 just 19% of Vietnamese college graduates are “underemployed” compared to Cubans (44%), Iraqis (48%) and Burmese (40%) this implies Vietnamese refugees with college degrees have been able to find employment matching their skill levels, a measure of successful integration. Finally, Vietnamese have the highest household income of any refugee group overall (108% of U.S. born income, see Table 8) and especially in Texas (107%). However as a May 5th 2018 NY Times story points out one price of successful integration can be a loss of ethnic identity. Even in New Orleans tight-knit Vietnamese community, formed around the Shrimp industry, is losing its distinct restaurants and markets, especially have the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. That said, many Vietnamese dishes have symbolically been incorporated in the mainstream New Orleans cuisine... language and customs may fade among the 2nd and 3rd generations but important elements of Vietnamese traditions and culture become part of the larger cities they inhabit. China and Korea towns in New York and Los Angeles started larger, but even they begin to blend into the city around them, much as China town in New York encroached on Little Italy (in Manhattan, not in Queens or the Bronx). Growing prosperity in Vietnam has also slowed Vietnamese migration to the United States, some Vietnamese refugees and their children have begun to return to Vietnam (see PBS Newshour, 2016).

Figure F-4 Citizen share predicts home ownership in the Tri-State Area, 2007-2011



Source: [McLeod, 2018 Lecture notes on the 2nd Generation](#) see slides 15-30

Source: estimates for Hispanic Groups and Non-Hispanics as reported in the combined 2007-11 5% combined ACS survey as downloaded from Ruggles, et al. 2010, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: V 5.0, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/23550>.

Figure F-5 Inclusion ladder for College education Tri-State Area, adults age 25-65 2007-2011 ACS as predicted by share now citizens

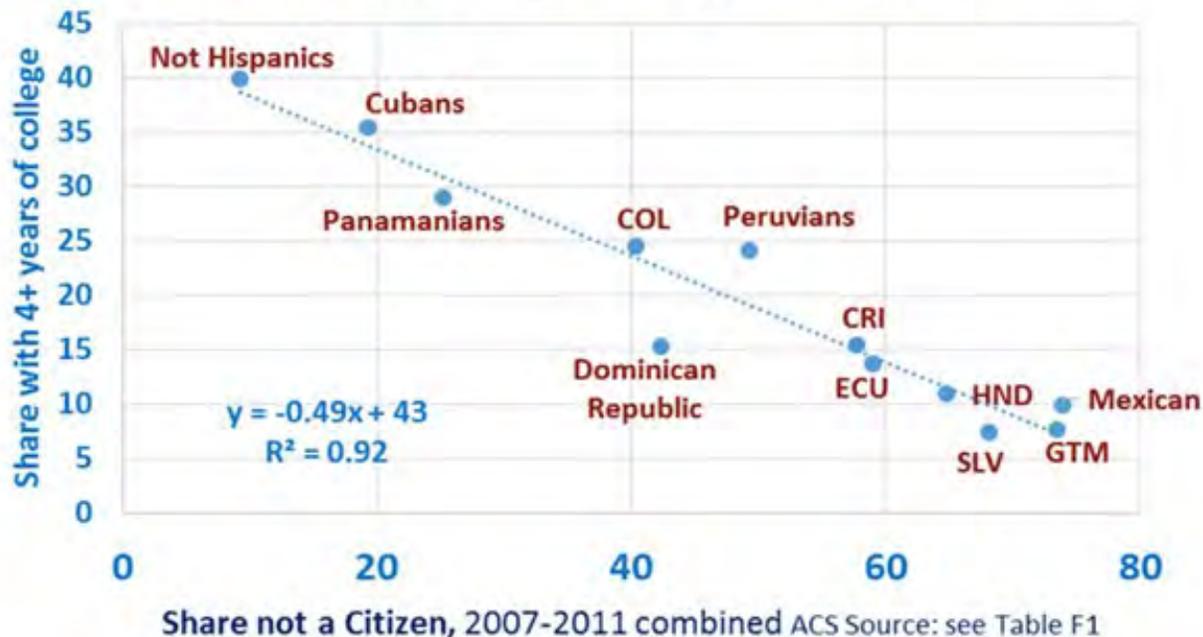


Figure 3 Growth in U.S. Patents by Ethnic Group

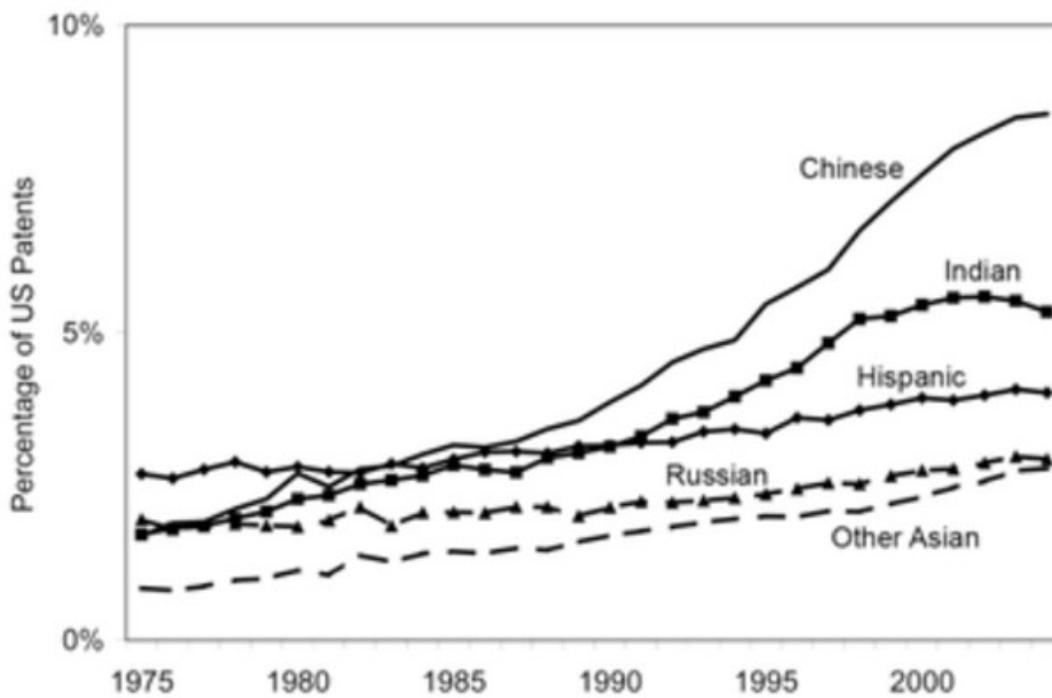


FIG. 1.—Growth in U.S. ethnic patenting. Trends are ethnic shares of patents filed by inventors residing in the United States. Patents are grouped by application years. Inventor ethnicity is determined through inventor names listed on patents. Anglo-Saxon (76%→63%) and European (16%→13%) shares are excluded for visual clarity. Other Asian contributions include Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese inventors.

Source: Kerr and Lincoln, 2010, page 478)

Figure 2 Indian Immigrants contribution to new technologies

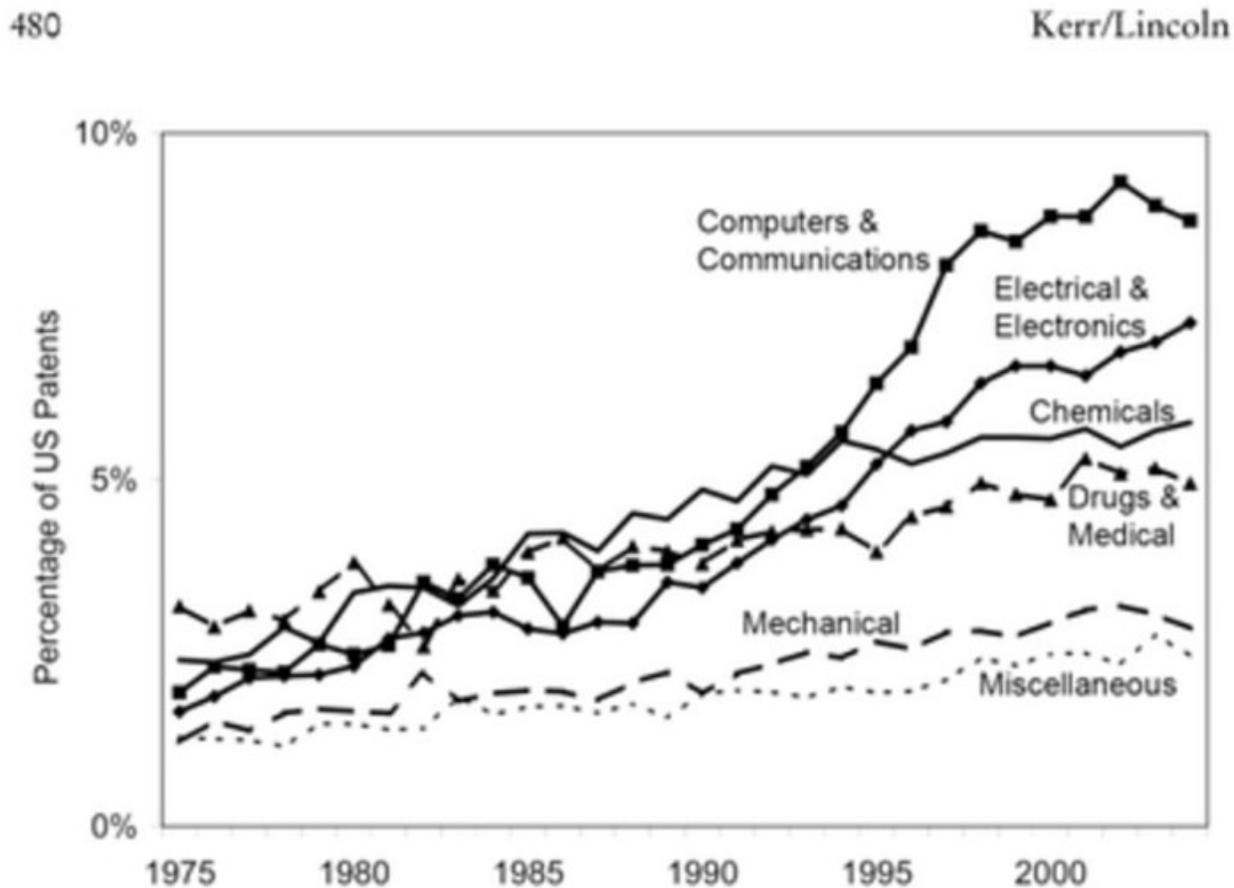
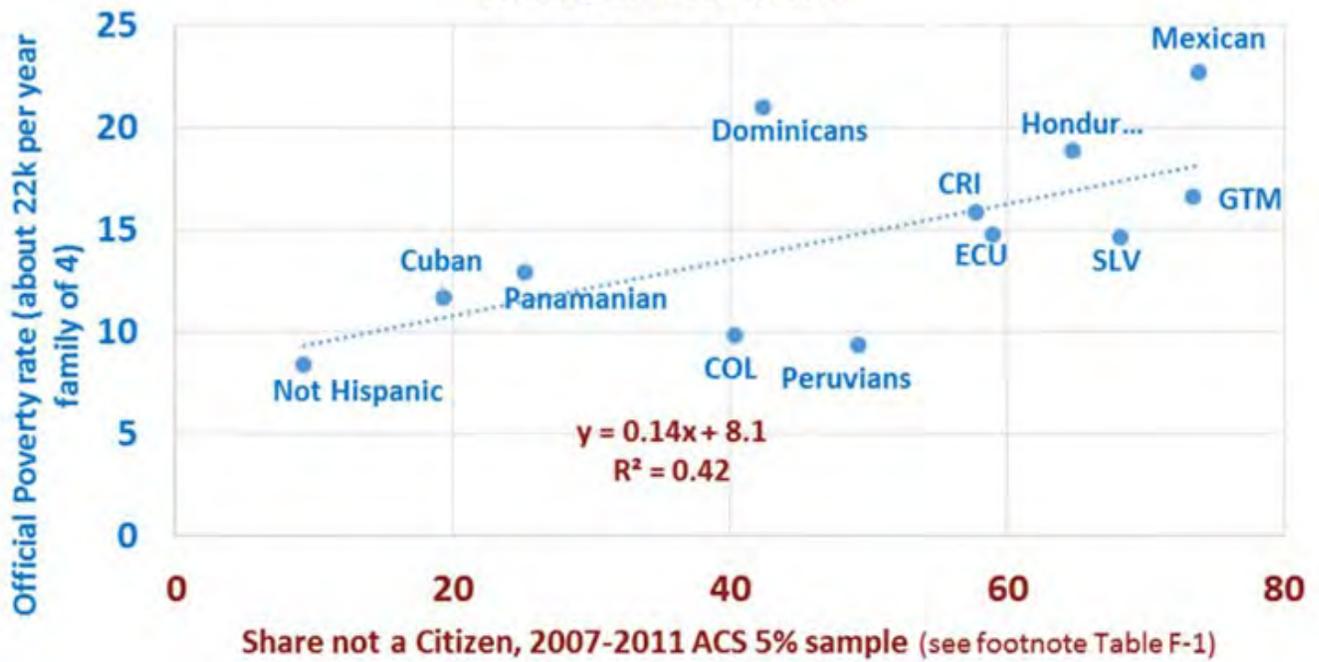


FIG. 2.—Indian contributions by technology. Trends are Indian invention shares by broad technology categories for patents filed by inventors residing in the United States. Patents are grouped by application years.

Source: Kerr and Lincoln, 2010, page 478)

Figure F-8 Citizen share predicts Tri-State Area poverty rates, adults age 25-65 using the 2007-11 ACS



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NAS, 2015 or Waters and Gerstein Pineau (2015)Waters, Mary C. and Marisa Gerstein Pineau. (2015) "The Integration of Immigrants into American Society." National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine see <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/21746/the-integration-of-immigrants-into-american-society>

Hiltner, Stephen (2018) Vietnamese Forged a Community in New Orleans. Now It May Be Fading, *New York Times*, <https://nyti.ms/2HQxqjh>

Cete, Michael (2016) PBS Newshour Video, Children of Vietnamese refugees return home, May 24th 2017 Video, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/daily-videos/children-of-vietnamese-immigrants-return-home/>

Box 2. Major Refugee Flows to the United States

This analysis focuses on the following five major refugee groups that have been resettled in the United States since 1980. They vary significantly in important ways, including the reasons for their displacement and migration, period of arrival in the United States, and the human capital they possessed at entry.

- **Burmese.** Government persecution and ethnic and religious violence have led tens of thousands of refugees (primarily ethnic minorities) to flee Burma (Myanmar) for neighboring countries such as Thailand and Malaysia. Between 2005 and 2014, the United States operated a group resettlement program for eligible Burmese refugees in Thailand. As of 2009–13, there were approximately 78,000 Burmese refugees living in the United States.
- **Cubans.** The Cuban revolution and the establishment of the Castro regime in 1959 sparked large-scale Cuban migration to the United States, with most admitted through humanitarian channels since the mid-1960s. Following spikes in maritime migration in the mid-1960s, 1980, and 1994, Cuba and the United States established the “wet-foot, dry-foot” policy to manage orderly migration. Under this policy, which the Obama administration terminated on January 12, 2017, Cubans intercepted at sea were returned to Cuba, while those who reached U.S. soil were admitted and could proceed to permanent residency under uniquely favorable terms. As of 2009–13, there were approximately 648,000 Cuban refugees living in the United States.
- **Iraqis.** The United States has resettled Iraqi refugees since the early 1990s, following the first Gulf War in 1991, focusing on those with links to the U.S. government and persecuted minorities (e.g., Kurds). The second Gulf War and escalating violence displaced millions of Iraqis, and large-scale processing of Iraqi refugees was introduced in 2007. Iraqi nationals who were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq and who meet certain requirements are also eligible to apply for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV), participate in the refugee resettlement program, and receive social services and benefits. As of 2009–13, there were approximately 119,000 Iraqi refugees living in the United States.
- **Russians.** The United States admitted refugees from the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War and into its immediate aftermath. As of 2009–13, there were approximately 200,000 Russian refugees living in the United States.
- **Vietnamese.** Following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 and the subsequent Indochinese refugee crisis, the United States resettled hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese refugees, beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the late 1990s. As of 2009–13, there were approximately 651,000 Vietnamese refugees living in the United States.

Note: Historical data on refugee resettlement by country of origin are limited. To overcome these limitations, the authors employ an imputation methodology to determine the number and characteristics of refugees. This method may underestimate recent refugee groups.

Sources (citations available in full in the Works Cited): Bridging Refugee Youth & Children’s Services, “Refugee Families from Burma;” Rusin, Zong, and Batalova, “Cuban Immigrants in the United States;” International Rescue Committee, *Iraqi Refugees in the United States*, 4-5; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Iraqi Refugee Processing Fact Sheet;” Bruno, *Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs*; Newland, “Impact of U.S. Refugee Policies on U.S. Foreign Policy;” Miller, “From Humanitarian to Economic: The Changing Face of Vietnamese Migration;” Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2009–13 ACS data

The 10 best TV shows of 2020

#3 Little America (Apple TV +) This eight-episode anthology drama is based on the true stories of immigrants across America, from the Indian motel owner's son to the Nigerian wannabe cowboy professor. The stories are separate vignettes that together weave a bigger story of what it takes to come here from somewhere else. Entrepreneurs, dreamers and doers populate "Little America," and each episode is written and directed by folks who represent different paths to the American dream. Created by Lee Eisenberg ("The Office"), Emily V. Gordon and Kumail Nanjiani, "Little America" is slated for a second season. Better than immigrant nation but not American Factory..