



EMPLOYMENT TRENDS OF ORANGE COUNTY IMMIGRANTS: 1980 - 2000

INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Orange County Profiles* is the third in a series on the immigrant population living in Orange County using the 2000 Census Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) data. The December 2003 *Profiles* (Volume 8, Number 4) presented information on several key social and economic characteristics of Orange County's foreign-born population compared to the native-born population, providing a one-time snapshot of information. Volume 9, Number 4 released in December 2004 focused on the county's immigrant population utilizing data from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses. By using data from multiple years, we were able to focus on the changes that have occurred to this population over several decades.

The target population of this current issue is the immigrant population and the industries and occupational sectors in which Orange County's immigrants obtain employment. Immigrants are again defined as foreign born persons living in the United States who are either naturalized citizens of the U.S. or not a citizen of the U.S. As a reference note, those who indicated in the Censuses that they are not citizens of the U.S. may or may not have arrived through legal processes. Again, utilizing PUMS data from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses, this issue of *Profiles* will look at the changes in immigrant employment over time. [Note: Some of the statements and corresponding data are not displayed in table form but can be made available upon request.]

INDUSTRY

In past issues of *Profiles*, we have seen that various measures of income and wealth suggest that overall the economic position of immigrants improves over time. This was labeled as economic mobility. Looking more closely at the occupations and industries of the immigrant population in Orange County, definite changes can be seen over time in each immigrant cohort (grouped by year of entry) for each census.

Economic mobility can be attained through the securing of jobs in particular industries. It is known that industries such as Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (FIRE) or Professional Services can be more lucrative than agriculture, for example. Many types of blue-collar jobs such as Manufacturing, Construction and Agriculture are commonly held by immigrants.

For example, the 1980 Census (Table 1) shows the top three industries employing county immigrants were Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Education & Health Services which, in total, accounted for 62.3% of all immigrant jobs. Figure 1 displays

Table 1
Top Three Industries by Number and Percent of Workers for Orange County's Immigrant Population, 1980-2000

	1980		1990		2000	
	Workers	Percent	Workers	Percent	Workers	Percent
Rank 1	Manufacturing		Manufacturing		Manufacturing	
	2,859	35.5%	107,669	27.3%	146,295	24.1%
Rank 2	Retail Trade		Retail Trade		Education & Health Services	
	1,237	15.4%	70,039	17.8%	79,395	13.1%
Rank 3	Education & Health Services		Education & Health Services		Professional Services	
	924	11.5%	41,703	10.6%	71,271	11.7%
Summary Total	5,020	62.4%	219,411	55.7%	296,961	48.9%

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Censuses 5% Public Use Microdata Samples.

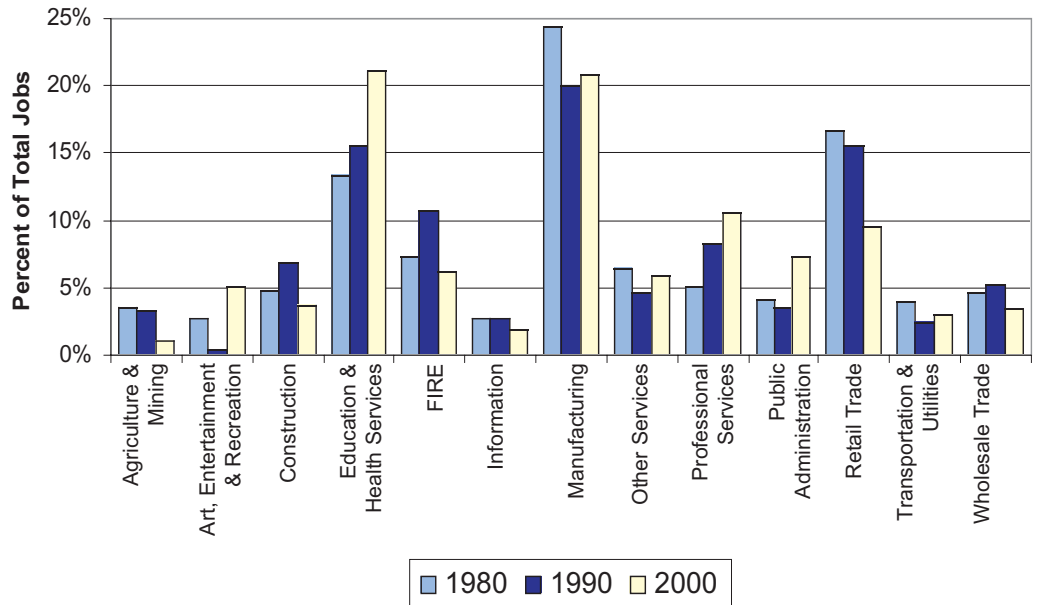
immigrant employment by industry for each census year. For those entering in the decade prior to the 1980 Census (1970-79), 43% held Manufacturing jobs. This rate declines as the length of residency increases and for those entering prior to 1950, about 24% held a Manufacturing job. In 1980, Retail Trade was the second most common industry with about 16% of each cohort holding a Retail job and was followed by Education & Health Services.

At the time of the 1990 Census, one-fifth to about one-third of each immigrant cohort held a manufacturing job; these in total accounted for 27% of immigrant-held jobs. The next most common industries were in Retail Trade and Education & Health Services.

During the 2000 Census, the most popular industry for the four immigrant cohorts entering between 1960 and 2000 was Manufacturing with 21% - 25% of each cohort holding a Manufacturing job. For the cohorts entering prior to 1960, Education and Health Services was the most common with 21% of each cohort holding a job in this industry. These were followed by Professional Services and the Art & Entertainment industries.

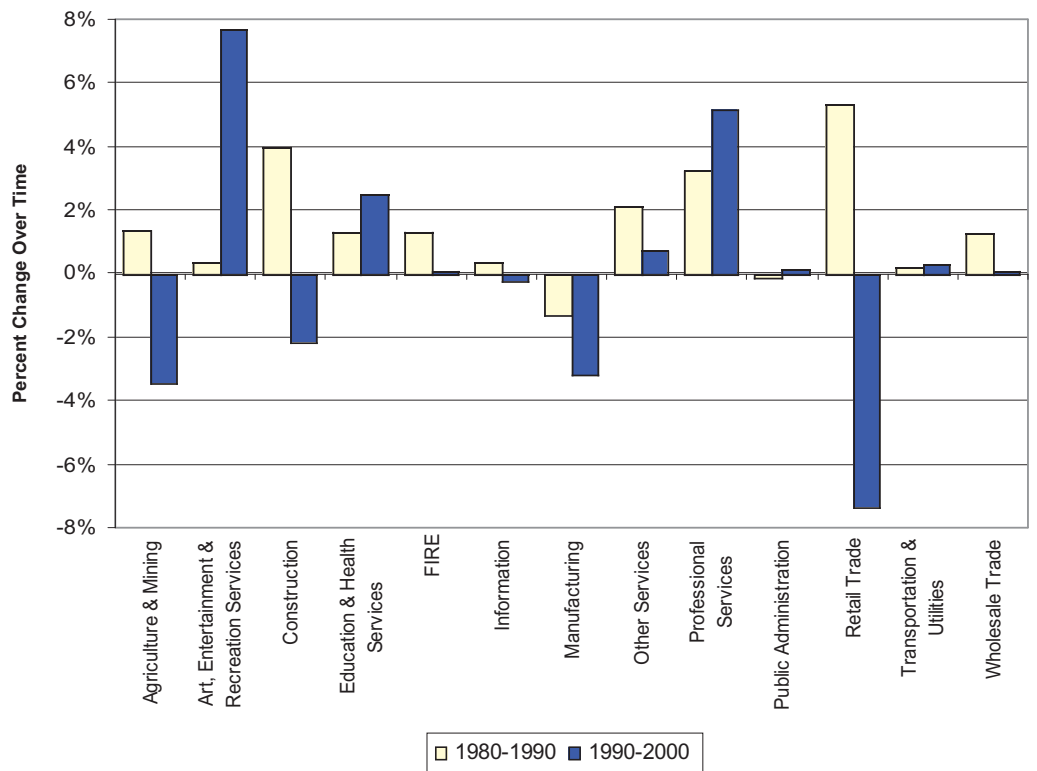
Figure 2 displays the total percent growth by industry for all immigrants over the two decades between the 1980 and 2000 Censuses. By 1990, a

Figure 1
Percentage of Jobs held for
Orange County Immigrants by Industry, 1980-2000



Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Censuses 5% Public Use Microdata Samples.

Figure 2
Decadal Change of Industry Share for
Orange County Immigrants, 1980-2000



Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Censuses 5% Public Use Microdata Samples.

smaller percent of jobs were held in Manufacturing and Public Administration, dropping by 1.3% and 0.2% respectively. The largest percent growth in this same period was in Retail Trade, Construction, and Professional Services. Then, during the 1990s, Agriculture & Mining, Construction, Retail Trade and Manufacturing held a smaller percent of all foreign-born jobs, declining between 7% and 2%. The largest increases were seen in Arts & Entertainment, Professional Services, and Education & Health Services.

OCCUPATION

As residency lengthens, participation in particular industries and sectors shift from one to another, as seen in Tables 2 and 3. For this issue of *Profiles*, we selected several

occupations that generally fall within the common perception of unskilled labor. The occupations identified were kitchen workers, maids & housemen; janitors & cleaners; groundskeepers & gardeners; textile/sewing machine operators; launderers & ironers; helpers; construction laborers; garbage collectors; vehicle washers; and in private households: cooks, housekeepers, child care workers, and cleaners/servants. Table 2 shows the percent of immigrants by year of entry by the skill level of their occupation.

As expected, the newest immigrants, those entering in the ten years prior to the Census (an example is those entering between 1990 and 2000 for the 2000 Census), had the largest percentage of workers in the selected unskilled occupations. Each cohort entering the decade prior to each census had at least 22.6% employed in unskilled occupations. For the four cohorts showing data for each of the 3 censuses, Pre-1950, 1950-1959, 1960-1969, and 1970-1979, the amount of unskilled labor decreased by an average of 5.9%.

Table 2
Percentage of Unskilled Labor for Orange County Immigrants by Year of Entry, 1980-2000

Occupational Level	Before 1950	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 2000
1980 Census						
Selected Unskilled	10.9%	7.8%	12.1%	22.6%		
All Other Occupations	89.1%	92.8%	87.9%	77.4%		
1990 Census						
Selected Unskilled	8.5%	7.4%	10.0%	16.5%	28.0%	
All Other Occupations	91.5%	92.6%	90.0%	84.5%	72.0%	
2000 Census						
Selected Unskilled	3.7%	7.2%	7.0%	12.0%	18.6%	24.4%
All Other Occupations	96.3%	92.8%	93.0%	88.0%	81.4%	75.6%

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Censuses 5% Public Use Microdata Samples.

Table 3
Employment Class of Orange County Immigrants by Year of Entry, 1980-2000

	Before 1950	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 2000
1980 Census						
Private	69.1%	77.7%	82.2%	87.6%		
Public*	12.3%	11.1%	9.0%	6.9%		
Self-employed	18.7%	11.2%	8.9%	5.5%		
1990 Census						
Private	71.1%	69.6%	74.3%	81.9%	88.0%	
Public*	12.8%	10.9%	10.9%	7.7%	4.6%	
Self-employed	16.1%	19.7%	14.8%	10.3%	7.4%	
2000 Census						
Private	65.0%	66.8%	71.9%	77.4%	83.5%	88.3%
Public*	16.9%	14.1%	12.4%	10.0%	5.7%	4.6%
Self-employed	18.1%	19.1%	15.8%	12.7%	10.8%	7.0%

*Includes Government

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Censuses 5% Public Use Microdata Samples.

Interestingly, the cohort entering between 1950 and 1959 had the lowest percent of unskilled workers at 7.8% and dropped only .6% to 7.2%. The largest drop in the ten year period between any of the censuses is from the most recent immigrant cohort which entered between 1980 and 1989, dropping 9.4% between 1990 and 2000. The second largest drop was also from a recent cohort entering 1970 to 1979, changing 6.1% between the 1980 and 1990 Censuses.

EMPLOYMENT CLASS

As the length of time an immigrant is in the U.S. increases, the more likely it is that he or she become self employed. The rate is slightly lower though for those who have resided in the U.S. longer than 40 years (Table 3). For any length of time in residency, the vast majority of immigrants hold jobs in the private sector; at least 65% of immigrants hold private sector jobs at any given time. There is a decrease in private sector work as length of residency

increases to self-employment and public sector, which includes government, work. As residency lengthens, a larger number of immigrants work in the public sector.

EDUCATION

As has been stated repeatedly before, higher education levels are tied to higher incomes. This is also true for skilled workers and occupations. Table 4 shows the educational level for each cohort by year of entry. Again, in each census, the most recent immigrants have the lowest educational levels. The most prevalent educational level for those entering the ten years prior to the census is less than 9th grade with at least 31.1% of each recent cohort. We see that over time, the number of college graduates increases. For the four cohorts showing data in all 3 censuses, there is an average of 8.0 percentage point increase between the 1980 and 2000 Censuses in the number of college grads for each cohort. The low was 5.2% increase for the 1960-1969 cohort. The highest percent increase was 11.1% for the cohort entering prior to 1950.

Table 4
Education Level of Orange County Immigrants by
Year of Entry, 1980-2000

	Before 1950	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 2000
1980 Census						
Less than 9th Grade	26.9%	13.8%	21.5%	35.3%		
Some High School	15.8%	10.0%	11.0%	10.0%		
High School	28.0%	28.0%	21.7%	16.4%		
Some College	17.3%	27.4%	22.7%	17.9%		
College Graduate	12.0%	20.4%	23.2%	20.0%		
1990 Census						
Less than 9th Grade	20.9%	12.2%	19.0%	30.9%	31.1%	
Some High School	17.0%	11.7%	10.6%	11.2%	12.6%	
High School	22.1%	21.2%	18.3%	12.8%	17.2%	
Some College	22.4%	31.4%	26.0%	19.0%	16.6%	
College Graduate	17.6%	23.5%	26.1%	26.1%	22.5%	
2000 Census						
Less than 9th Grade	13.8%	11.1%	19.4%	30.2%	31.0%	33.7%
Some High School	12.1%	10.8%	13.0%	10.2%	12.0%	16.0%
High School	24.4%	18.9%	15.9%	12.4%	14.7%	16.5%
Some College	26.6%	32.0%	25.5%	18.4%	16.9%	14.5%
College Graduate	23.1%	27.2%	28.4%	28.9%	25.3%	19.4%

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Censuses 5% Public Use Microdata Samples.

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