

**Chinese Student and Labor Migration to the United States:  
Trends and Policies since the 1980s**

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## **Introduction**

In the year 2000, the U.S. foreign-born population included an estimated 7.25 million persons born in Asian countries; this comprised about 26 percent of the total U.S. foreign-born population. Of the more than 7 million foreign-born from Asia, almost 1.4 million of them were born in China (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002).<sup>1</sup>

Historically, Chinese immigrants to the United States are a special group. They were banned for almost a century, but in the past few decades their numbers have increased rapidly. China usually ranks among the top two or three countries sending student immigrants (i.e., temporary immigrants with F1 or M1 visas – see discussion below) to the U.S. Since 1983, Chinese students have comprised over 10 percent of all foreign students in the United States. But the numbers of labor immigrants from China are a very small portion of the total number of laborers who immigrate each year to the U.S.

Between 1882 and 1943, the U.S. Government severely restricted immigration from China. But in 1965 the United States abolished national origin quotas and eliminated national origin, race, and ancestry as bases for immigration. Since 1968 when this law came into effect, thousands of Chinese immigrants have entered the United States every year, and the Chinese immigrant population has increased tenfold.

During the many decades the Chinese have been in the U.S., their social status has undergone significant change. The socioeconomic status of this one time laboring ethnic group has improved considerably. Sociologists now regard the Chinese as one of the most “successful” of the minority groups in America (Wong, 1980).

The study of Chinese immigration cannot be detached from U.S. immigration laws and policies and their changes over the years. Immigration laws typically express the demands of the country’s national economy and the preferences of its politics and ideology. The economy is usually the most important consideration of policy makers, but other factors, such as international relationships and election campaigns and results, do play a role. For instance, changes in immigration law to protect the wages of native-born workers often result more from pressures of local and national labor unions than from real economic needs. Sometimes immigration laws function as they are intended, and sometimes they do not.

This paper analyzes Chinese immigration to the U.S. between 1980 and 2002. We mainly compare the trends in the migration to the U.S. of students and laborers. Foreign students enter the U.S. usually as temporary immigrants with F1 or M1 visas, so they may be distinguished easily from permanent immigrants. Labor immigrants come to the U.S. in either a permanent or temporary status. We examine and compare the trends of these groups for the 23-year period of 1980 to 2002. And we evaluate the degree to which U.S. immigration laws have influenced these trends. We conclude the paper by introducing qualitative data recently obtained from Chinese social scientists regarding the past and future immigration of Chinese students and scientists to the U.S.

But to understand the dynamics of student and labor immigration to the U.S. from

China, one first needs to be aware of the long history of Chinese immigration to the United States. Only in the past few decades have Chinese students been attending school in the U.S. in sizable numbers. Three decades ago there were very few Chinese citizens attending colleges and graduate schools in the U.S. And a similar observation may be made with regard to labor migrants from China, especially skilled workers.

International migration is influenced significantly by social, economic, and political conditions at both the origin and destination countries. An understanding of the conditions in the origin and destination countries at key points in time is important because they are largely the reasons why Chinese immigration to the U.S. has increased so dramatically since the 1970's. First, on the U.S. side, the Amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act that were passed in 1965 and went into effect in 1968 eliminated quotas based on national origin, race, and ancestry as bases for immigration to the United States. The passage of these Amendments opened a new era of Chinese immigration to the United States after a nearly 80 year ban.

Second, on the side of the People's Republic of China (PRC), when Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party founded the country in 1949, the door was closed to relationships and interaction with Western countries for more than 30 years. During the period between 1949 and 1978, Chinese international migration policy only allowed immigration into socialist countries, and it occurred on a very small scale. During those years there was virtually no immigration to the U.S. of students, laborers, and other citizens from the PRC. But in 1978, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China launched its new social and economic reforms and initiated relationships with the outside world, particularly Western countries. Indeed the year of 1978 may be regarded as the

dividing line of Chinese international policy from “closed” to “open.”

The dramatic increases of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. since the 1980s thus have not only been the result of the Amendments passed in the U.S. in 1965, but also the result of Deng’s policy reforms that began to be implemented in China in the late 1970s. Given that the bulk of Chinese immigration to the U.S., especially student immigration, has occurred since the 1980s, the analyses we present in this paper will focus on the period of 1980 to 2002. We first present some trend data to show the patterns over time since the 1880s of Chinese immigration to the U.S. Students will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

### **Patterns of Chinese Immigration to the U.S.**

Since the passage in 1882 of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the numbers of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. were so minimal they were easy to be overlooked. But since the late 1960s, the numbers of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. have increased steadily and in a few decades have caught up with overall U.S. immigration trends.

Figure 1 presents data for the decades from 1891 to 2000 on the numbers of permanent immigrants to the U.S. whose last residence was China. The number of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. was so small for the decades up to the 1950s that they do not appear in the figure. For instance, there were only 68 recorded immigrants to the U.S. from China in the 1880s and but 496 in the 1930s. In the 1960s they numbered over 27,000 and over 124,000 in the 1980s. In the 1990s, there were almost 420 thousand Chinese immigrants to the United States, which accounted for 4.6 percent of all permanent immigrants to the United States.

In Figure 2 we compare Chinese immigration data for the decades of 1891 to 2000 with data for total immigration to the United States. As would be expected, prior to the 1970s, the numbers of permanent Chinese immigrants to the U.S. were too few to be reflected in the figure. But Chinese are clearly represented in the last two decades, comprising 4.7 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively, of all permanent immigration to the U.S.

In Figure 3 we provide data for the single years of 1980 to 2002 for Chinese permanent and temporary immigration to the U.S. Of the more than 700,000 temporary immigrants from China in 2002, about one-tenth of them are students. The trends show clearly that the dynamics of temporary immigration are very different from those of permanent immigration. There is a sustained increase in the numbers of temporary immigrants up to the year 2000 with slight reductions in 2001 and 2002. The trend in the numbers of permanent immigrants fluctuates over the 23 year period, although it does increase in the long term.

The remarkable increases in the numbers of permanent immigrants in 1993 and in 1994 are likely the result of the Chinese Students Protection Act passed in 1992 (see discussion below). This Act granted green cards to an estimated 80,000 Chinese students and other Chinese nationals who were in the United States during the Tian An Men protests in Beijing in 1989.

We next present some broad background that will provide historical perspective for the quantitative analyses that follow. In later sections we discuss the data we use and the definitions of the various kinds of immigrants. This is followed by quantitative analyses of the trends in Chinese student immigration, Chinese labor immigration and

Chinese permanent immigration to the U.S. In each analysis we examine the immigration trends since the 1980s and the extent to which changes are associated with U.S. immigration laws and policies.

### **Background of Chinese Immigration to the United States**

In many respects, the motivations for Chinese to immigrate to the United States are similar to those of other immigrants. Most Chinese immigrants are seeking to improve their economic livelihood. They immigrate to the U.S. to attend school and receive specialized training unavailable to them in China, and/or they leave China specifically for the purpose of obtaining employment in the U.S. Since an estimated 90 percent of Chinese students who immigrate to the U.S. do not return to China, their schooling in the U.S. often leads to employment. But this was not always the case.

Chinese immigration may be distinguished according to three main time periods: 1849-1882, 1882-1965, and 1965 to the present. The first period (1849-1882) began shortly after the beginnings of the California Gold Rush in 1849 and ended abruptly with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. An estimated 288,000 Chinese entered the U.S. during this period. However, many returned to China before 1882 (Black, 1963). Like most immigrants, the Chinese first came to the United States as laborers in search of work and wages. And the port of entry for most Chinese immigrants during this first period was San Francisco. To this day the Chinese name for San Francisco is 舊金山 (Jiu Jin Shan), translated as “Old Gold Mountain.”

During the rapid growth period of the frontier economy in the U.S. between 1850 and 1880, thousands of Chinese immigrated mainly to the western United States under

the indenture system as miners, railroad workers, and agricultural laborers. They also came as cooks, laundrymen and in other jobs American workers did not want. Later they were instrumental in building the western part of the trans-continental railroad. During this period, the United States needed workers. Owners of factories and vineyards tended to prefer Chinese workers because they were perceived to be docile, amiable, and capable (Black, 1963). Few students immigrated to the U.S. from China during this period.

The second period of Chinese immigration (1882-1965) began in 1882 with the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act which prohibited for ten years the immigration to the U.S. of laborers from China. The Act was renewed in 1892 and made permanent in 1902; it was repealed in 1943. For all practical purposes Chinese immigration to the U.S. during this period was banned. The only exceptions were diplomats, merchants, and some students, and their dependents, but these were extremely small in number (see Figure 1).

The Chinese Exclusion Act resulted from a concern about the large numbers of Chinese who had come earlier to the United States in response to the need for inexpensive labor, particularly to help with the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Competition with American workers and a growing nativism brought pressure for restrictive action, beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act of May 6, 1882. Passed by the 47<sup>th</sup> Congress, this law, as noted above, suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years. It permitted Chinese who were in the United States as of November 17, 1880 to stay, travel abroad, and return. It prohibited the naturalization of Chinese. And it created the so-called “Section 6 exempt status” for teachers, students, merchants, and travelers. Persons in the exempt classes were admitted on presentation of a certificate from the Chinese government.

The next significant exclusionary legislation was the “Act to Prohibit the Coming of Chinese Persons into the United States of May 1892.” This law was written by Congressman Thomas J. Geary, who was born in Boston, grew up and attended schools in San Francisco, and served in the 51<sup>st</sup>, 52<sup>nd</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Congresses from 1890 to 1895 as a Representative from Santa Rosa, California. This bill is better known as the Geary Act. It allowed Chinese laborers to travel to China and reenter the United States, but its provisions were otherwise more restrictive than preceding immigration laws. The Geary Act required Chinese to register and to secure a certificate as proof of their right to be in the United States. Those who failed to do so could be put into prison or deported. Other restrictive immigration acts affecting citizens of Chinese ancestry followed. The Chinese ban continued in force until 1943, when an annual quota of 100 was assigned to Chinese who wished to enter the U.S. (King and Locke, 1980).

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed in 1943 an Act to Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, mainly because China and the United States were allies during World War II. The Act of 1943 also lifted restrictions on naturalization. However until the Immigration Act of October 1965, various laws continued to restrict Chinese immigration.

During this second period (1882-1965), Chinese already in the United States were confined to highly segregated Chinatowns in major cities and in isolated regions in rural areas across the country. Because the Chinese were deprived of their democratic rights, they often made extensive use of the courts and diplomatic channels to defend themselves.

The U.S. Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, particularly the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, brought in the third period of Chinese immigration, covering the years from 1965 to the present. The

new laws restored many of the basic rights denied earlier to Chinese Americans.

Particularly since the 1980s, thousands of Chinese people have come to the United States each year.

During the 23 years between 1980 and 2002, the volume of permanent Chinese immigration to the United States numbered over 911 thousand. This is almost seven times the number of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. between 1891 and 1979, of just under 137 thousand. And it is during this period that the numbers of Chinese student immigrants to the U.S. increased substantially; in most cases, students are not included in the count of permanent immigrants.

### **Data and Definitions**

The immigration data we use in this paper are drawn mainly from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The USCIS, formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service, maintains a very good and easily accessible website containing data files on all immigrants to the United States, including legal entrants, transient visitors, undesirable aliens, violators of immigration and naturalization laws, and petitioners for naturalization.

According to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, international migrants entering the U.S. may be categorized into two classes: “Immigrants” and “Nonimmigrants.” The “Immigrant” category refers to persons who immigrate to the U.S. in a permanent status, and the “Nonimmigrant” category refers to persons who enter the U.S. but not in a permanent status. Because the latter category seems to suggest that all “nonimmigrants” are not immigrants, when indeed many are immigrants, we have

changed the labels. In this paper we will use the terms “Permanent Immigrants” and “Temporary Immigrants” to refer to the USCIS categories of “Immigrants” and “Nonimmigrants,” respectively. Student immigrants, as we show below, are mainly classified in the “Temporary” category.

Permanent Immigrants are persons lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States and are comprised of two types. The first refers to aliens living abroad who apply for an immigrant visa at a consular office of the U.S. Department of State. Once issued a visa, they may enter the United States and become legal immigrants when they pass through the port of entry. The second refers to aliens already living in the United States, including certain undocumented immigrants, temporary workers, foreign students, and refugees; these persons file and apply with the INS for adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence. Students in the U.S. frequently obtain permanent residence status in this manner after they have completed their education.

Temporary immigrants are aliens admitted to the United States for a special purpose and temporary period but not for permanent residence. Although most temporary immigrants are tourists who visit the United States for a few days to several months, there are numerous other classes of nonimmigrant admission, ranging from students to ambassadors. In 2002, of the over 700 thousand temporary immigrants admitted to the U.S. from China, over 550 thousand were “temporary visitors for business” or “temporary visitors for pleasure.”

Students and their families enter the U.S. as temporary immigrants. Academic students have an F1 visa and vocational students an M1 visa. Their spouses and children have F2 and M2 visas, respectively. In 2002, of the 646 thousand student immigrants to

the U.S. from all countries, almost 99 percent were issued academic visas.

Accompanying these 646 thousand student immigrants were only 41 thousand spouses and children. Most student immigrants come to the U.S. without family members. Almost 69 thousand students were admitted to the U.S. from China in 2002, and they brought with them just over 6 thousand family members.

In this paper we also examine trends in the numbers of temporary labor immigrants to the U.S. from China. As just noted, students comprise as much as one-tenth or more of temporary immigrants from China. A much smaller proportion of the temporary immigrants from China are skilled workers. We discuss this issue now in more detail.

According to definitions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), we differentiate temporary workers as skilled and unskilled, by visa-type, that is, H1, skilled; and H2, unskilled. An H-1B temporary worker is an alien admitted to the United States to perform services in “specialty occupations,” based on professional education, skills, and/or equivalent experience. To obtain an H-1B visa to work temporarily in the United States, an immigrant must meet one of the following criteria:

“1) hold a bachelor or higher degree as required by the specialty occupation from an accredited U.S. college or university;

2) possess a foreign degree determined to be equivalent to a bachelor or higher degree as required by the specialty occupation from an accredited U.S. college or university;

3) have any required license or other official credential to practice the occupation (for example, architect, surveyor, physical therapist) in the state in which employment is

sought; or

4) have, as determined by the INS, the equivalent of the degree required by the specialty occupation acquired through a combination of education, training, and/or experience. Specialty occupations include computer systems analysts and programmers, physicians, professors, engineers, and accountants” (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004a). Clearly, scientists, engineers and other kinds of skilled labor immigrants referred to by the U.S. Government as “workers of distinguished merit and ability” enter the U.S. with H-1B visas.

Historical data on all H-1B visas were combined with H-1A and H-1C as H1 prior to fiscal year 2000. H-1A and H-1C visas are assigned to aliens who come temporarily to the United States to perform services as registered nurses.

On the other hand, temporary workers under H2 visas are aliens who immigrate to the United States to perform other temporary services or labor, if it is not possible to find unemployed persons already in the U.S. capable of performing such services. H2 visa holders are referred to as “other temporary workers” whereas H1 visa holders are referred to as “workers of distinguished merit and ability.” In this paper, we use H1 visa data to refer to temporary immigrants who are skilled workers, and H2 visa data to refer to temporary immigrants who are unskilled workers.

Chinese H1 and H2 temporary immigrants usually comprise a very small percentage of the total number of H1 and H2 immigrants. This is not the case, however, for students who immigrate to the U.S. with F1 or M1 visas. Since 1983, China has ranked among the top three countries sending student immigrants (i.e., temporary

immigrants with F1 or M1 visas) to the U.S. Chinese students have comprised over 10 percent of all foreign students in the United States.

For instance, in 2002, Chinese student immigrants comprised 10.6 percent of all student immigrants to the U.S. With 68,722 student immigrants, China was second only to Japan (with 87,478 student immigrants), followed by Korea (67,145), India (48,708), Canada (20,042), Mexico (18,894), and Germany (16,070).

Moreover, Chinese students provide a large pool from which permanent immigrants and other types of temporary immigrants, such as H1 immigrants, are drawn. It has been estimated that more than 90 percent of Chinese students who study in the U.S. do not return to China after graduation. Most remain in the U.S. and eventually become either permanent immigrants or temporary H1 workers. Chinese student immigrants are a special immigrant group among Chinese immigrants and must be considered separately.

We encountered several limitations using the USCIS data. First, not all the immigration data begin with 1980 and end in 2002. There are a few gaps in the historical series for the temporary immigrant data because of the unavailability of arrival and departure records for 1980, 1981, and 1982. And there are no reliable data available for 1997 because of a dataset change. In some of our analyses we estimated the values for the missing years by annualizing the available data.

Second, the data recorded by the USCIS are based on arrivals via the collection of INS Forms I-94. Thus, the records represent arrival events during the year rather than the actual number of individuals admitted. Temporary immigrants, such as students, company transferees, and visitors for business may enter (and leave) many times in any given year. This is a common problem with migration data based on entries and exits.

Third, there are several different types of origin classification for immigrants that are used by the USCIS. One is based on the last permanent residence of the immigrant, another is based on country of birth, and a third is based on citizenship. In most cases these will be consistent for an immigrant, but not always. We use data from the various categories, paying more attention to availability and completeness and less attention to the consistency of the classification standards for the different immigrant types.

Last but not least, the USCIS data on Chinese temporary immigrants include Chinese coming from both the People's Republic of China (mainland China) and Taiwan. When the USCIS records China as the origin of holders of temporary immigrant visas, they include both mainland China and Taiwan together. There is no way to distinguish one from the other.

### **Description of Patterns of Chinese Immigration and Their Relationships with U.S. Immigration Laws**

In this section, we describe the dynamics of Chinese immigration for the different categories of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. The trends are compared with total immigration from all countries. The effects of U.S. immigration laws on Chinese immigration are also described. We first consider trends in permanent immigration to the U.S. from China. Next we examine and compare trends in student immigration to the U.S. from China and temporary worker immigration to the U.S. from China. In our discussions of temporary labor migration, we focus in particular on temporary workers in the skilled category. The trends and dynamics of student immigration and temporary labor immigration, particularly skilled temporary labor migration, are very similar.

**Permanent Immigration.** Table 1 shows for each of the 23 years between 1980 and 2002 the total number of permanent immigrants to the U.S. from all countries, the number from China, the size of the Chinese population (in thousands), the Chinese immigration rate, and the annual change in the number of permanent immigrants from China to the U.S. The immigration rate for each year is calculated by dividing the number of permanent immigrants for that year by the size of the Chinese population. The rate of 0.0281 for 1980 means that in 1980 there were 28.1 permanent immigrants to the U.S. per 1,000,000 persons in China. The rate increased to 0.0551 in 1993, dropped to 0.0256 in 1999 and then increased to 0.0477 in 2002. The relative number of Chinese immigrants who received permanent resident status in 1993 is about twice as large as the number in most of the prior years.

The second rate in Table 1 (last column) is a rate of annual change in the number of permanent immigrants from China to the U.S. It is calculated as:

$$R_{\text{change}} = (\text{Permanent Immigrants}_t - \text{Permanent Immigrants}_{t-1}) / \text{Permanent Immigrants}_{t-1}.$$

In 1981 the number of permanent immigrants admitted to the U.S. from China was 6.7 percent less than the number for 1980. In 2002, the number was 8.6 percent greater than the number for 2001.

Do American immigration laws tend to have the same effects on permanent immigration from China as they do on permanent immigration from all countries? Figure 4 compares the trends from 1980 to 2002 in the numbers of permanent immigrants from all countries with the numbers from China. The basic trend for all countries is very

similar to that for China from 1980 to 1988, and after 1996 (Figure 4). The apex in the trend for all countries, however, occurred three years ahead of that of China.

Total permanent immigration to the United States has undergone many changes in recent years, with the numbers of permanent immigrants increasing from about 600,000 in 1986 and 1987 to a peak of 1.8 million in 1991, and then falling back to around 660,000 in 1998. The rise in the total number of permanent immigrants from 1987 to 1991 may be attributed in part to the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA86) of 1986 that granted legal status to undocumented immigrants who had been in the United States continuously since 1982. This act has also been cited as a reason for an increased number of pending "adjustment of status" applications and the subsequent reduction in the number of approved applications. Between 1991 and 1999, the total number of admitted permanent immigrants to the U.S. declined every year except for 1996. The levels of permanent immigration in 1999 were approximately the same as they were eleven years earlier (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004b).

Changes in the numbers of permanent immigration from all countries are also explained in part by the impact of the Immigration Act of 1990 (IMMACT90), which revised the annual ceiling on immigration and the preference categories used to regulate immigration. This act, which became effective on October 1, 1991, increased the levels of employment-based immigration and allotted a higher proportion of visas to highly skilled immigrants.

The numbers of permanent immigrants from China have fluctuated from 1989 to 1994. IRCA86, a one-time only amnesty, does not appear to have had as dramatic an impact on Chinese permanent immigration as it had on total permanent immigration.

Table 1 shows that the permanent Chinese immigration rate has been relatively stable since 1980, except for the years of 1993 and 1994. These increases are due in part to the influence of the Immigration Act of 1990 (IMMACT90), and also the Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992 (CSPA92). Let us consider this 1992 law in more detail.

The Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992 (CSPA92) was a bill sponsored by Representative Nancy Pelosi, from San Francisco, California, which granted permanent resident status to Chinese immigrants who were in the United States after June 4, 1989 and before April 11, 1990. Its stated purpose was to prevent the political persecution of Chinese students in the aftermath of the Tian An Men demonstrations and protests of 1989. One of its provisions was that permanent residency status slots granted to Chinese nationals under the act would be subtracted from the immigration spaces available in later years. Ironically, the primary beneficiaries of this act were undocumented immigrants from Fujian Province who were not students at all.

CSPA92 was an amnesty for Chinese immigrants. Its significance for Chinese immigrants can be compared with the 1986 Immigrant Reform and Control Act for Mexican and other Latin American beneficiaries. The passage of CSPA92 resulted in large numbers of Chinese temporary immigrants becoming permanent immigrants between 1992 and 1994.

The permanent immigration rate of Chinese permanent immigrants (PIR) increased from 0.0277 in 1990 to 0.0284 in 1991 and to 0.033 in 1992. Chinese immigrants, including illegal immigrants who entered the U.S. from China, apparently took advantage of the 1992 amnesty (CSPA92). The permanent immigration rate was almost twice as high in 1993 as in other years. But as just noted, because the numbers of

permanent resident status that were granted to Chinese nationals under CSPA92 were partly subtracted from the immigration spaces available in later years, the rate in 1995 dropped to 0.029.

In 1996 two laws were passed that impacted Chinese permanent immigration, namely, the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (WRA96) and the Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IRIRA96). WRA96 was signed into law by President Bill Clinton and eliminated the entitlement of support for poor families, requiring able-bodied persons who received government assistance to work (Espenshade, Baraka, and Huber, 1997). WRA96 circumscribed the eligibility of immigrants for public benefit programs by creating a four-tier system. “The broadest eligibility is reserved for US citizens; next come refugees and asylees; newly limited access is imposed on legal immigrants; and illegal immigrants remain ineligible for almost all social programs” (Espenshade, Baraka, and Huber, 1997). Prior to the enactment of WRA96, U.S. citizens, legal immigrants, and refugees were all equally eligible for most public benefit programs.

To strengthen the effects of the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, the Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IRIRA96) was passed to combat illegal immigration and to create higher standards of financial self-sufficiency for the admission of sponsored legal immigrants. The IRIRA96 focused in particular on immigrant access to public benefits: 1) it established measures to control U.S. borders, protect legal workers through worksite enforcement, and remove criminal and other deportable aliens; 2) it placed added restrictions on benefits for aliens; and 3) it introduced miscellaneous limitation provisions, such as a limit on the ability of F-1 students to attend public schools without reimbursing those institutions.

Espenshade and his colleagues (1997) have argued that the combined effects of these two 1996 laws have important consequences. The welfare reforms of 1996 led to a larger number of eligible legal immigrants becoming nationalized so that the actual cost savings attributable to benefits for immigrants were smaller than expected. Also the 1996 immigration and welfare reforms are expected to reduce the future volume of U.S. legal immigration and produce a legal immigrant stream with higher skill and income levels. However, both laws impacted the Chinese permanent immigration rate (Table 1). The rate dropped a little in 1997 and again in 1998.

In 1998 the Congress passed the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act (WIA98). This Act was a response in part to the belief in Congress that the United States was facing a severe shortage of workers qualified to perform skilled jobs in information technology, even though the evidence of a shortage was inconclusive. Under WIA98, the annual ceiling of H-1B petitions valid for initial employment was increased from 65,000 to 115,000 in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 and to 107,500 in 2001.

The stated purpose of WIA98 is to protect native American workers by preventing employers from hiring low-skilled aliens instead of native workers. Employers are required to take good faith steps to recruit American workers for jobs to be performed by H-1B aliens, and to offer the jobs to American workers who are equally or better qualified than the aliens.

WIA98 may have resulted in more Chinese immigrants, who came to the U.S. years ago but who later applied for permanent residence, to be unemployed and thus not eligible to apply for Green Cards via employment. This at least is a possible reason for the decrease in the rate of permanent Chinese immigration in 1999 to 0.0256. However,

in 2000, the rate began again to increase, reaching a high of 0.0477 in 2002. If WIA98 had an impact on permanent Chinese immigration, it was not long lasting.

We have addressed the trends and dynamics of permanent Chinese immigration to the U.S. for the period of 1980 to 2002, and have examined the degree to which various immigration and related regulations may have influenced these trends. We turn now to a consideration of Chinese student immigration and Chinese temporary labor immigration, with a special focus on skilled temporary labor immigration.

**Student Immigration.** Figure 5 presents data on the numbers of Chinese immigrants entering the U.S. between 1983 and 2002 as students (mainly with F1 visas). Also included are the small numbers of students with M1 visas and the spouses and children of students (with both F2 and M2 visas). Chinese student immigrants numbered just under 12,000 in 1983, over 24,000 in 1988, over 32,000 in 1991, over 36.3 thousand in 1994, over 46.2 thousand in 1996, over 68.6 thousand in 2000 and almost 74,000 in 2001. The number declined slightly in 2002. Nevertheless, the twenty-year trend shows the numbers of Chinese students entering the U.S. increasing six-fold since the early 1980s.

Figure 6 shows for the years of 1983 to 2002 the percentages of all temporary migrants to the U.S. from China who were students. In 1983, close to 8 percent of all temporary immigrants from China were students; this increased to 9 percent in 1989, dropped to 6 percent in 1992, and to 5 percent in 1993. It went back up to 7 percent in 1998, to over 8 percent in 2001 and to nearly 10 percent in 2002. The trend has increased, decreased, and then increased again.

Figure 7 also presents data on student immigrants to the U.S. from China. But in this chart, Chinese students are represented as a percentage of all students immigrating to the U.S. The percent of Chinese student immigrants of all student immigrants was 4 percent in 1993, and increased to 7 percent in 1986 and to almost 9 percent in 1990. It reached more than 12 percent in 1992 and almost 12 percent in 1993, but fell back to 9 percent in 1994. The Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992 (CSPA92) may have been a factor influencing the higher percentage of Chinese students compared to all students immigrating to the U.S. in 1992 and 1993. The percentage stayed at 9 percent through 1998, but increased to 10 percent in 1999 and to almost 11 percent in 2001 and 2002.

**Temporary Immigration.** The trend since the 1980s in the numbers of student immigrants to the U.S. from China (as shown in Figure 5) is almost the same as the trend in the rate of temporary immigration from China. We have charted the latter trend in Figure 8. The rates climbed steadily each year between 1983 and 2000. The rate declined slightly in 2001 and even more so in 2002. The declines in 2002 in the number of Chinese students and in the temporary immigration rate are likely attributed to the implementation of stricter immigration policies after the 9-11 tragedy in the U.S. in 2001. In the next section we focus on temporary immigrants. In our discussion of their trends, we will compare them with those for student immigrants. The trends for temporary immigrants, particularly skilled immigrants, are very similar to those for student immigrants.

Table 2 presents annual data for the years of 1983 to 2002 on the numbers of temporary immigrants from all countries and from China, as well as rates of temporary immigration from China. The country designated for the temporary immigrant is the

country of last residence. We also include for each year a temporary immigration rate that is calculated by dividing the number of temporary immigrants for that year by the size of the Chinese population. The rate of 0.015 for 1983 means that in 1983 there were 150 temporary Chinese immigrants to the U.S. per 1,000,000 persons in China. The rate increased each year to 0.071 in 2000, and then dropped to 0.055 in 2002. The drop-off in 2002, which we also saw in the numbers of Chinese student immigrants, is likely due to the more stringent enforcement of immigration procedures that were implemented after the 9-11 tragedy of 2001. The relative number of temporary Chinese immigrants in the U.S. in 2000 is almost five times larger than it was in 1983.

The second rate in Table 2 (last column) is a rate of annual change for the years of 1984 to 2002 in the number of temporary immigrants from China to the U.S. It is calculated as:

$$R_{\text{change}} = (\text{Temporary Immigrants}_{t-1} - \text{Temporary Immigrants}_{t-2}) / \text{Temporary Immigrants}_{t-2}.$$

In 1984 the number of permanent immigrants to the U.S. from China was 6.2 percent greater than the number for 1983. In 1993, the number was 17.8 percent greater than the number for 1992.

We next compare the numbers of Chinese temporary immigrants with the numbers of temporary immigrants from all countries (Figure 9). The trends in the two data series are very similar. However, although China has the largest population of all countries in the world, the number of temporary immigrants to the U.S. from China is a very small part of the total number of temporary immigrants to the U.S. Chinese temporary immigrants are only 2.4 percent of total temporary immigrants to the United

States between 1983 and 2002, while Chinese permanent immigrants are around 4.6 percent of total permanent immigrants to the U.S. in the same period.

However, China is consistently one of the top two or three countries sending students to the U.S. Recall from Figure 7 that nearly 11 percent of all students immigrating to the U.S. in 2002 were from China.

We plot in Figure 10 the annual percent change rates of temporary Chinese immigrants to the U.S., as shown in the last column of Table 2. The influence of immigration laws on these annual change rates of temporary immigration is obvious. The major increases or decreases in the change rate of Chinese temporary immigration occur in the years of significant immigration laws. Chinese students are included among the temporary immigrants. We may gain a better appreciation of the effects of immigration laws on Chinese student immigration by considering them as a part of all temporary immigrants. Accordingly, the trend data on temporary immigrants will be discussed here along with the trend data for Chinese student immigrants presented above in Figures 5 through 7.

Throughout the 1980's and the 1990's, the temporary immigration rate of Chinese immigrants continued to increase (see Figures 8 and 10). Only in one year, 1986, was the rate not larger than in the previous year. Similarly, the numbers of students from China increased every year, only to fall back slightly in 2002 (Figure 5).

In 1990, there was a significant adjustment in U.S. immigration policy with the passing of the Immigration Act of 1990 (IMMACT90). IMMACT90 revised the numerical limits and the preference categories used to regulate legal immigration. It also established several transitional programs that ended in 1994. Like the 1986 Act, the 1990

Immigration Act tried to address both international and domestic concerns. IMMACT90 established the largest ever quotas both for family preferences (465,000) and for labor migrants (140,000), as well as 55,000 for spouses and children of legalized aliens and 40,000 for diversity immigrants in fiscal years 1992-1994. Beginning in 1995, the lower overall level of immigration (675,000) consisted of an increase in family-sponsored immigrants to 480,000, a continuation of 140,000 employment-based immigrants, and the conversion of the temporary diversity into a permanent category of 55,000 visas annually. IMMACT90 also established a numerical minimum of 226,000 for family-sponsored preferences. This new law had a big effect on temporary labor migration, especially skilled workers. It had less of an effect on student migration.

IMMACT90 maintained a preference system for legal immigrants rooted in family relationships and job skills. In 1990, Congress made major changes in family-sponsored preferences over previous laws with the modification of the second preference category. The second preference includes spouses and minor children (under 21 years old) of legal permanent residents and unmarried sons and daughters (21 years old or more) of legal permanent residents. IMMACT90 reserved 77 percent of second preference visas for spouses and children, and 75 percent of these visas were exempt from country-specific limitations. This change effectively reduced the number of visas for adult children beginning in 1992 and increased the number of visas available for spouses and minor children. Exemption from the per-country limit also allowed spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents from certain countries to immigrate to the United States.

In addition to increasing the level of employment-based immigration, IMMACT90 also allotted a higher proportion of visas to highly skilled immigrants. Prior to

IMMACT90, 27,000 visas were issued to highly skilled immigrants and their family members, and 27,000 were to unskilled workers and their family members. Beginning in 1992, approximately 110,000 visas were made available to highly skilled immigrants and only 10,000 to unskilled workers (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004b).

As noted, this law had an effect on the annual numbers of temporary Chinese immigrants, particularly skilled workers. The rate increased around 14 percent each year from 1988 to 1993. IMMACT90 established the largest ever number of quotas for family preference and for skilled labor migrants. Chinese temporary immigrants benefited considerably. After 1994, the change rates in the numbers of temporary immigrants from China were lower and below 10 percent each year. In 1997 and 1998, they were as low as 1.5 percent but still positive.

The change rates increased to 6.64 in 1999 and to 9.96 in 2000. These were likely a response to the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act (WIA98), passed in 1998. We noted earlier that under WIA98, the annual ceiling of H-1B petitions valid for initial employment was increased from 65,000 to 115,000 in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 and to 107,500 in 2001 (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004b). The increase of H-1B quotas under WIA98 likely resulted in increases in Chinese skilled temporary immigration up to the year 2000. The drop in temporary Chinese immigrants in 2001 and 2002 paralleled the drop in total temporary immigration to the U.S. (Figure 6).

Because U.S. immigration policies regarding temporary immigration prefer skilled and well-educated immigrants to unskilled immigrants, the effects of immigration policies are likely to not be the same for the two groups. The definitions of skilled and

unskilled immigrants are based on the immigrant classification of the USCIS. We noted earlier that H1 immigrants, which include highly skilled and highly educated H-1B workers and professional nurses (H-1A and H-1C), are defined as high-skilled workers, whereas H2 immigrants are likely to be unskilled workers.

Chinese H1 and H2 immigrants comprise only a very small proportion of all H1 and H2 immigrants (see Table 3). In all the years of 1984 to 2002, the number of Chinese H1 immigrants reached its peak in 2001 with a total of 17,213 immigrants (almost 4.5% of H1 immigrants from all countries). Between 1984 and 2002, the total number of Chinese skilled (H1) immigrants was 100,934 and comprised 3.3% of H1 immigrants from all countries during this period.

Regarding Chinese unskilled (H2) immigrants, during the years of 1984 and 2002, the number reached its peak in 1991 with 1,922 immigrants (more than 4.8% of H2 immigrants from all countries). In most years the number of H2 immigrants from China did not exceed 1,000. China sent fewer and fewer unskilled (H2) immigrants to the U.S. compared to H2 immigrants from all countries. The total number of H2 immigrants from China for the years from 1984 to 2002 is only 8,571, which is a little less than one percent of H2 immigrants from all countries during this period.

Table 3 also shows that Chinese H1 immigrants numbered only 471 in 1984 but reached 15,895 in 2002, which is almost 33 times greater than that of the earlier year. Unlike Chinese H2 immigration, Chinese skilled workers continued to increase numerically. This was especially the case after 1995 when Chinese H1 immigrants increased each year, until the tragedy on September 11, 2001.

Table 3 also presents Chinese H1 and H2 percentage rates comparing the numbers from China with the numbers from all countries. These Chinese H1 and H2 immigrant rates are calculated by dividing the number of Chinese H1 immigrants by the total number of H1 immigrants, and similarly for H2 immigrants.

The percentage of Chinese H1 immigrants to all H1 immigrants was 1 percent in 1984, increased to 2 percent in 1991, to 3 percent in 1998, and to 4 percent in 2002. However, the trend in the percentage of Chinese unskilled (H2) immigrants increases and decreases with little apparent pattern. Two reasons may be introduced to explain the different patterns of Chinese immigrant labor.

First, immigration law in the U.S. continues to be heavily based on a preference system rooted in job skills. IMMACT90 allotted a higher proportion of visas to highly skilled immigrants. Prior to IMMACT90, the visa quotas of unskilled workers were equal to those of highly skilled workers. Since the passing of IMMACT90, the visa quotas of highly skilled workers have been ten times those of unskilled workers. This may explain the major increase of H1 immigrants beginning in 1991.

Second, WIA98 increased the annual ceiling of H-1B petitions for initial employment from 65,000 to 115,000 in 1999 and 2000 and 107,500 in 2001. This too may help explain the huge increase of H1 immigrants from 1999 to 2001. There is no similar legislation focusing specifically on unskilled (H2) immigrants.

In Figures 11 and 12 we have charted for each year the numbers of skilled (Figure 11) and unskilled (Figure 12) immigrants from China and from all countries. As noted, scientists and engineers are included in first figure. Chinese H1 immigration grows in almost exactly the same way as H1 immigration from all countries (see Figure 11) and

also in the same way as the numbers of Chinese student immigrants (Figure 5). This suggests that immigration laws and other socioeconomic conditions influence in the same way Chinese H1 immigration and total H1 immigration and Chinese student immigration.

However, the trend over the years in the numbers of Chinese unskilled (H2) immigration is completely different from the trend for H2 immigration from all countries (see Figure 12). The extremely small number of Chinese H2 immigrants may be one reason for the different trend lines for Chinese H2 immigration and total H2 immigration.

The three countries with the largest number of H2 immigrants to the United States are Jamaica, Mexico, and Canada. In 1984 they comprised 74.8 percent of all immigrants who entered the United States with H2 visas, and in 2002, 81.4 percent. There is not much room for H2 immigrants from China, as well as from other countries, after accounting for H2 immigrants from Jamaica, Mexico, and Canada. There are a limited number of H2 visas to be distributed.

In addition, as we noted earlier, Chinese students provide a major pool for permanent Chinese immigrants and other types of temporary Chinese immigrants, especially H1 temporary immigrants. A large number of Chinese H1 immigrants are the result of transfers from other immigrant categories, particularly students with F1 visas. And this trend has become more substantial in recent years. As already noted, the trend over time in the number of Chinese students parallels that of total Chinese temporary immigrants.

**Qualitative Data from Chinese Social Scientists Regarding the Immigration to the U.S. of Chinese Students and Scientists**

In this last section of our paper we present qualitative data obtained from Chinese social scientists about their views and reflections on the immigration of Chinese students and scientists to the United States. This mainly qualitative information should provide some perspective for better understanding the quantitative data presented earlier.

In March of 2006, we sent electronic messages to more than twenty Chinese social science colleagues asking them to address the following questions:

1. What is the current situation in China regarding the domestic demand for students?
2. Do you know of U.S. and/or European Union institutions setting up facilities in China to train Chinese students in China?
3. What are your views and those of your colleagues and students about how welcoming the U.S. is these days for students and scientists who wish to immigrate to the U.S.?
4. Do you have any personal experiences of students having difficulty in studying in the U.S.? This would involve both difficulties in obtaining visas from U.S. embassies in China, as well as difficulties in gaining admission and funding from U.S. universities.
5. Do you believe that in future years China will continue to be at the forefront of sending students to the U.S. to study?

Eleven colleagues returned answers to us to the above questions. We now summarize their responses.

Regarding the domestic demand in China for students, several colleagues reported that since increasing numbers of Chinese students now appear to be returning

home to China after completing their studies abroad, the domestic market has become saturated. Many of the jobs for college graduates seem to be in the inland areas where few college graduates wish to relocate. The prize jobs in Beijing, Shanghai and other big coastal cities are in short supply. One respondent sent us quantitative data from a survey conducted in 27 cities in 2005 by the State Ministry of Personnel. In 2005 there was a total demand in China for 1.2 million new graduates. But there were 3.4 million new graduates in China in 2005, 21 percent more than in 2004. Given this tightened market, employers have tended to raise their educational requirements for new employees. There is thus more of a need these days for students with advanced degrees than just a few years ago.

Regarding our colleagues' knowledge of universities in the U.S. and European countries setting up facilities in China for the training of students, most everyone had information to contribute. They knew of foreign universities establishing collaborative educational efforts in China with Chinese universities from the United States, Germany, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom, as well as from Australia. More of these collaborative efforts involve graduate training than undergraduate training.

We next asked our Chinese friends about their views and those of their colleagues and students about how welcoming the U.S. is these days for students and scientists wishing to immigrate to the U.S. Almost to a person the responses indicated a less welcoming atmosphere, especially after the 9-11 day of tragedy. U.S. visas are much more difficult to obtain in China although a few mentioned there has been some improvement in this regard in recent months (since the end of 2005). We also received evidence from some that Chinese students now in the U.S. are reporting subtle forms of

discrimination directed against them by Americans, again particularly since 9-11. Our respondents reported that it is their impression that U.S. universities have also become less accepting of foreign students in general, and Chinese students in particular. The Chinese appear to be so frustrated by these situations and policies that many of their students are going elsewhere for graduate study. The United States has been and continues to be the top choice for students wishing to pursue graduate work abroad. But, increasingly, Chinese students appear to be immigrating to universities in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, mainly because of the easier accessibility to these countries.

Most every respondent reported one or more “horror stories” about students having difficulties in coming to the U.S. It seems that everyone knows of students in China being denied F-1 visas to immigrate to the U.S., even after being accepted in prominent (i.e., Research I) U.S. universities. One of our respondents herself was twice denied an F-1 visa before finally receiving one on her third attempt. This delayed her beginning of graduate work in the U.S. by more than one year. Many other good Chinese students, it is believed, have not been as persistent and have decided instead to pursue their higher educational goals in other countries or in China. Other respondents told stories of students already studying and working in the U.S. who returned home to China for visits, only to be denied re-entry visas. Many hope that the post 9-11 climate will improve in future years.

Finally, we asked our respondents if they believed that in future years China would continue to be one of the top countries sending the most students to the U.S. to study. Most everyone responded in the affirmative. Despite the difficulties discussed above, most of our respondents believe the U.S. will still be the preferred destination of

Chinese students. Several of our colleagues noted that China's improved economic situation has itself resulted in more students being able to afford to immigrate abroad to study.

We entertain this hypothesis with trend data shown in Figure 13 reporting for each year from 1983 to 2002 the numbers of Chinese students immigrating to the U.S. (left axis) and China's gross net product (GNP) (right axis). There is a definitely clear positive association over time between the two trends. The numbers of Chinese students immigrating to the U.S. have increased with increases in China's GNP. China's economy continues to increase, suggesting that the numbers of Chinese students to the U.S. will continue to increase.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper we have endeavored to advance the understanding of patterns of Chinese immigration to the U.S. from the beginning of the 1980s to 2002. We focused in particular on permanent immigration, student immigration, and skilled and unskilled labor migration. Special focus was given to the effects of U.S. immigration laws on Chinese immigration.

Our analyses suggest that the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA86) did not have much of an impact on Chinese immigration patterns, permanent or temporary. Unlike the case with other immigrant groups, particularly those from Latin America, this act had only minimal if any effect on the dynamics of Chinese immigration.

In contrast, the Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992 (CSPA92) offered certain Chinese immigrants already present in the U.S. an opportunity to obtain permanent

resident status. This immigration law resulted in a dramatic increase in the numbers of permanent immigrants in 1992 and 1993. Although intended mainly for Chinese students, the primary beneficiaries were illegal Chinese immigrants from coastal provinces. Because CSPA92 only focused on Chinese immigrants already residing in the U.S. when the law was passed, it had less influence on Chinese temporary immigration.

The Immigration Act of 1990 (IMMACT90) had important and significant effects on Chinese temporary immigration. The rate of temporary Chinese immigration increased significantly after IMMACT90 went into effect. But IMMACT90 does not appear to have benefited Chinese skilled workers any more than it benefited skilled workers from all countries.

We also examined the possible impacts on Chinese immigration patterns of the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (WRA96) and the Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IRIRA96). We found that these did not appear to have significant effects on any of the categories of Chinese immigration any more than on immigration to the U.S. from all countries. However, we did find an impact of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act (WIA98) on Chinese immigration patterns. We noted that the effects of WIA98 on the numbers of Chinese H1 skilled workers seemed to be greater than they were on the numbers of all skilled immigrant workers. WIA98 significantly increased the percentage of Chinese H1 immigrants compared to total H1 immigrants. And WIA98 also had a positive effect on the absolute number of Chinese H1 immigrants. Immigration laws of the U.S. thus seem to play an important role in controlling levels of Chinese immigration.

Our analyses of the effects of U.S. immigration laws on Chinese immigration are preliminary. We need now to take into account other dynamic factors dealing with the economic and social structures of the U.S. and China, and introduce them in time-series regression analyses, along with the immigration laws. Such analyses would enable us to better gauge the effects of the laws on immigration patterns.

However, individuals often make migration decisions based on outdated and one-sided migration information. This is particularly the case in China. The information system in China, including statistical information, is often out of date. Furthermore, the rigid administrative control of the Chinese government on the public media restricts full public accessibility to real information. In China, information obtained through personal networks is relied upon more often than official information and is regarded as more reliable. Many Chinese evaluate their future migration benefits and decisions based on hearsay, which is likely to be partial, outdated, and/or contorted. On the other hand, in China, migration to developed countries is looked on as admirable and honorable for both the individual migrant and his/her family. Former migrants are thus reluctant to tell the truth if they suffered during their migration experiences because they do not want to lose face. There is a Chinese saying among international migrants, “Report the good news, and hide the bad news,” 报喜不报忧 (Bao Xi Bu Bao You). A great deal of the migration information that is spread among potential international migrants in Chinese thus tends to be positive and extremely one-sided. Analyses such as those conducted in this paper are by their nature limited and restricted to aggregate trends. Additional work is clearly needed.

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## **Note**

1. China includes Taiwan (325 thousand) and Hong Kong (195 thousand).

**Table 1.**  
**Numbers of Permanent Immigrants to the U.S.**  
**From All Countries and from China,**  
**and Chinese Immigration Rates (1980-2002)**

Fiscal Year	Permanent immigrants from all Countries	Permanent immigrants from China	Chinese Population (1,000)	Immigration Rate (0/00)	Change Rate (0/0)
1980	530,639	27,651	984,736	0.0281	
1981	596,600	25,803	997,001	0.0259	-6.68
1982	594,131	27,100	1,012,490	0.0268	5.03
1983	559,763	25,777	1,028,357	0.0251	-4.88
1984	543,903	23,363	1,042,756	0.0224	-9.36
1985	570,009	24,787	1,058,008	0.0234	6.10
1986	601,708	25,106	1,074,523	0.0234	1.29
1987	601,516	25,841	1,093,726	0.0236	2.93
1988	643,025	28,717	1,112,866	0.0258	11.13
1989	1,090,924	32,272	1,130,729	0.0285	12.38
1990	1,536,483	31,815	1,148,364	0.0277	-1.42
1991	1,827,167	33,025	1,163,607	0.0284	3.80
1992	973,975	38,907	1,177,482	0.0330	17.81
1993	904,292	65,578	1,190,571	0.0551	68.55
1994	804,416	53,985	1,203,434	0.0449	-17.68
1995	720,459	35,463	1,215,787	0.0292	-34.31
1996	915,900	41,728	1,227,767	0.0340	17.67
1997	798,378	41,147	1,239,459	0.0332	-1.39
1998	654,451	36,884	1,250,366	0.0295	-10.36
1999	646,568	32,204	1,260,107	0.0256	-12.69
2000	849,807	45,652	1,268,853	0.0360	41.76
2001	1,064,318	56,426	1,276,883	0.0442	23.60
2002	1,063,732	61,282	1,284,276	0.0477	8.61

SOURCE: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Visa Office.

**Table 2.**  
**Numbers of Temporary Immigrants to the U.S.**  
**from All Countries and from China,**  
**and Chinese Immigration Rates (1983-2002)**

Fiscal Year	Temporary immigrants from all countries	Temporary immigrants from China	Chinese Population (10,000)	Immigration rate (0/00)	Chang Rate(0/0)
1983	9,849,458	154,220	102,836	0.015	
1984	9,426,759	166,012	104,276	0.016	6.16
1985	9,675,650	202,447	105,801	0.019	20.19
1986	10,471,024	203,830	107,452	0.019	-0.86
1987	12,272,866	220,521	109,373	0.020	6.29
1988	14,591,735	258,008	111,287	0.023	14.99
1989	16,144,577	307,117	113,073	0.027	17.15
1990	17,574,055	362,834	114,836	0.032	16.33
1991	18,962,520	409,740	116,361	0.035	11.45
1992	20,793,847	469,211	117,748	0.040	13.16
1993	21,446,993	558,648	119,057	0.047	17.75
1994	22,118,706	615,250	120,343	0.051	8.95
1995	22,640,539	665,632	121,579	0.055	7.09
1996	24,842,503	721,724	122,777	0.059	7.37
1997*	27,379,066	739,139	123,946	0.060	1.45
1998	30,174,627	756,975	125,037	0.061	1.52
1999	31,446,054	813,536	126,011	0.065	6.64
2000	33,690,082	900,749	126,885	0.071	9.96
2001	32,824,088	861,930	127,688	0.068	-4.91
2002	27,907,139	705,596	128,428	0.055	-18.61

(SOURCE: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Visa Office.)

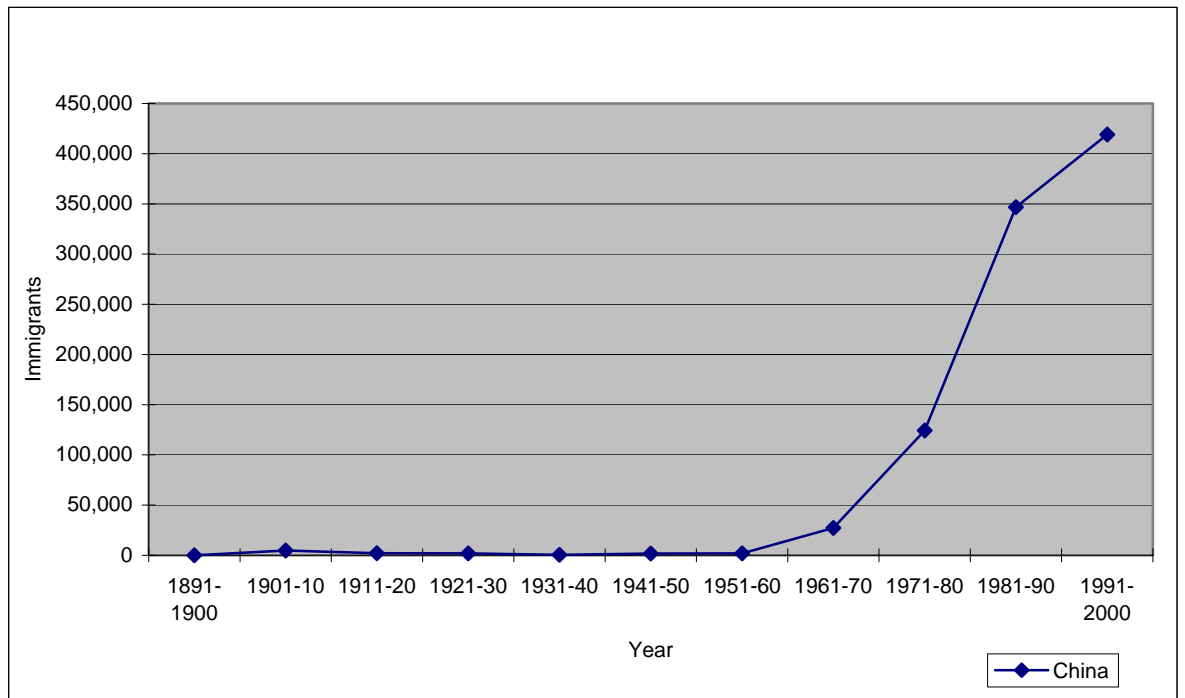
\* 1997 data are estimated by annualizing data for 1996 and 1998.

Table 3. Numbers of Immigrants Entering the U.S. with H1 and H2 visas: China and All Countries, 1984-2002

Year	Workers of Distinguished Merit and Ability, CHINA (H1)	All Countries (H1)	H1 Rate (%)	Other Temporary Workers, CHINA (H2)	All Countries (H2)	H2 Rate (%)
1984	471	42,473	1.11	30	23,362	0.13
1985	856	47,322	1.81	182	24,544	0.74
1986	1,084	54,426	1.99	411	28,014	1.47
1987	1,604	65,461	2.45	130	28,882	0.45
1988	1,435	77,931	1.84	559	32,966	1.70
1989	1,765	89,856	1.96	486	49,247	0.99
1990	1,458	100,446	1.45	644	41,266	1.56
1991	2,863	118,038	2.43	1,922	39,972	4.81
1992	2,764	117,340	2.36	828	34,414	2.41
1993	2,778	99,506	2.79	245	31,295	0.78
1994	2,733	112,005	2.44	478	28,872	1.66
1995	3,525	124,086	2.84	611	25,587	2.39
1996	4,384	146,504	2.99	436	23,980	1.82
1997*	6,073	194,001	3.13	577	38,092	1.51
1998	7,761	241,498	3.21	717	52,203	1.37
1999	11,384	302,860	3.76	56	68,187	0.08
2000	14,888	356,170	4.18	96	84,754	0.11
2001	17,213	384,847	4.47	50	100,082	0.05
2002	15,895	371,746	4.28	113	102,615	0.11
Total	100,934	3,046,516		8,571	858,334	

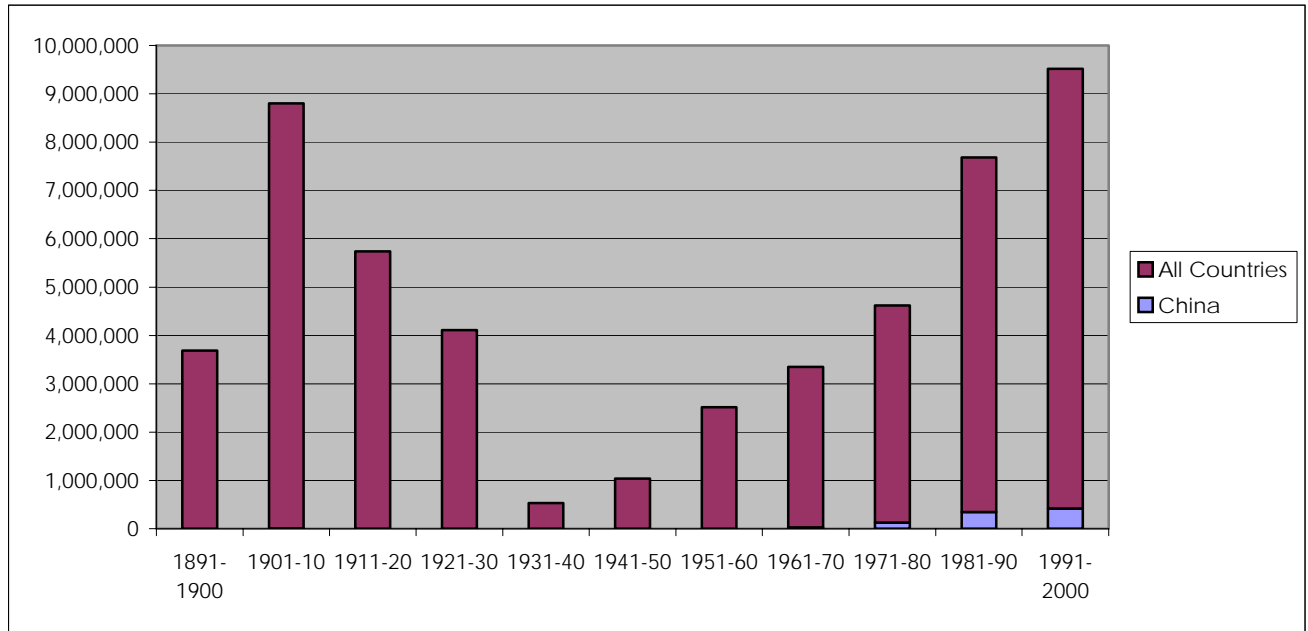
\* Data in 1997 are not available and are estimated with data in 1996 and 1998.

**Figure 1. Permanent Immigrants to the U.S. from China, 1891 to 2000**

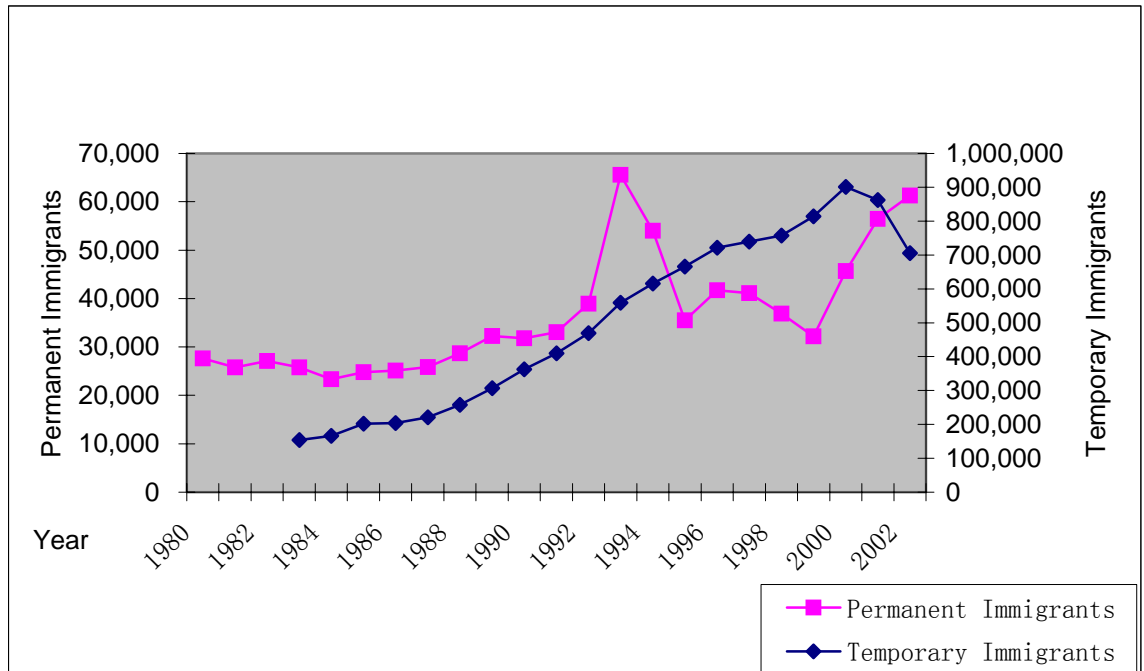


**Figure 2. Permanent Immigrants to the United States**

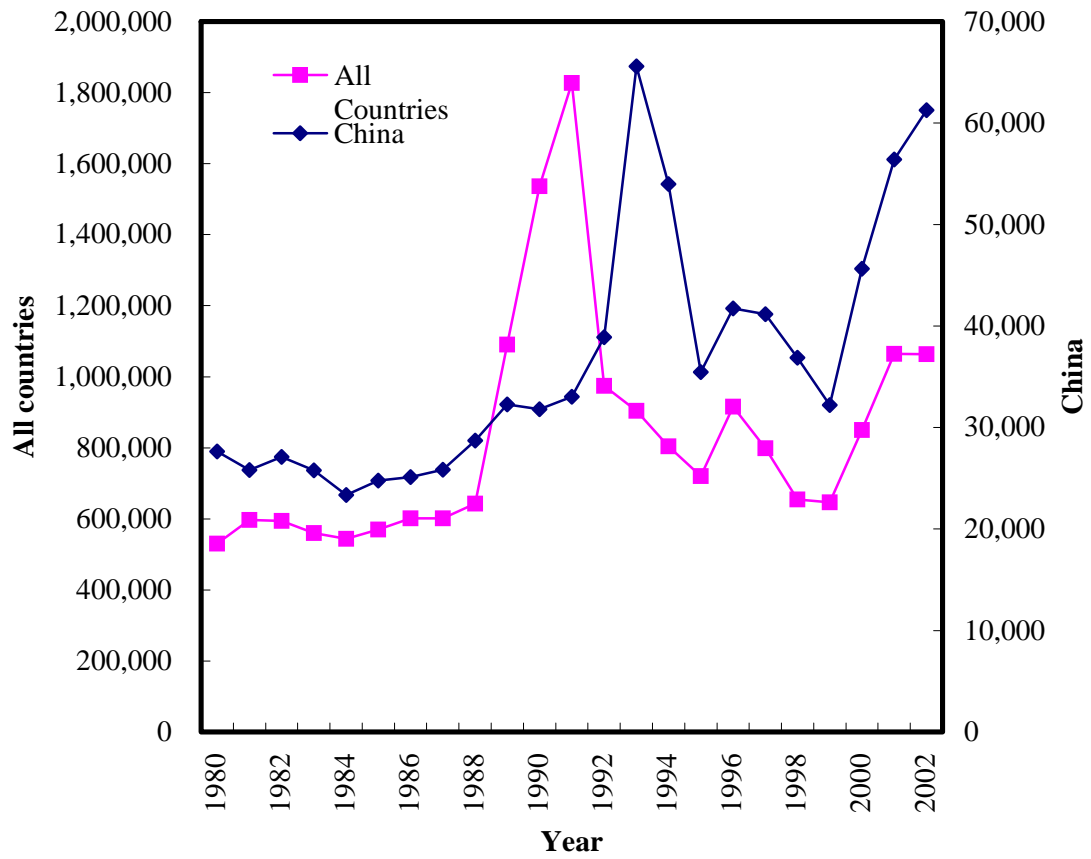
**From All Countries and From China (1891-2000)**



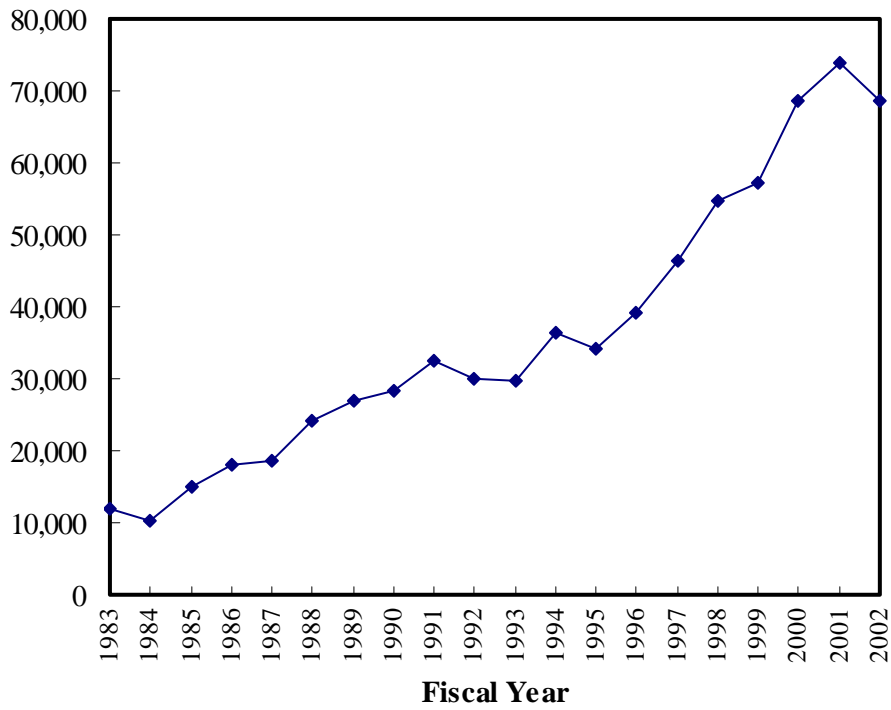
**Figure 3. Permanent Immigrants to the U.S. Claiming China as Last Residence, and Temporary Immigrants to the U.S. Claiming China as Country of Citizenship (1980-2002)**



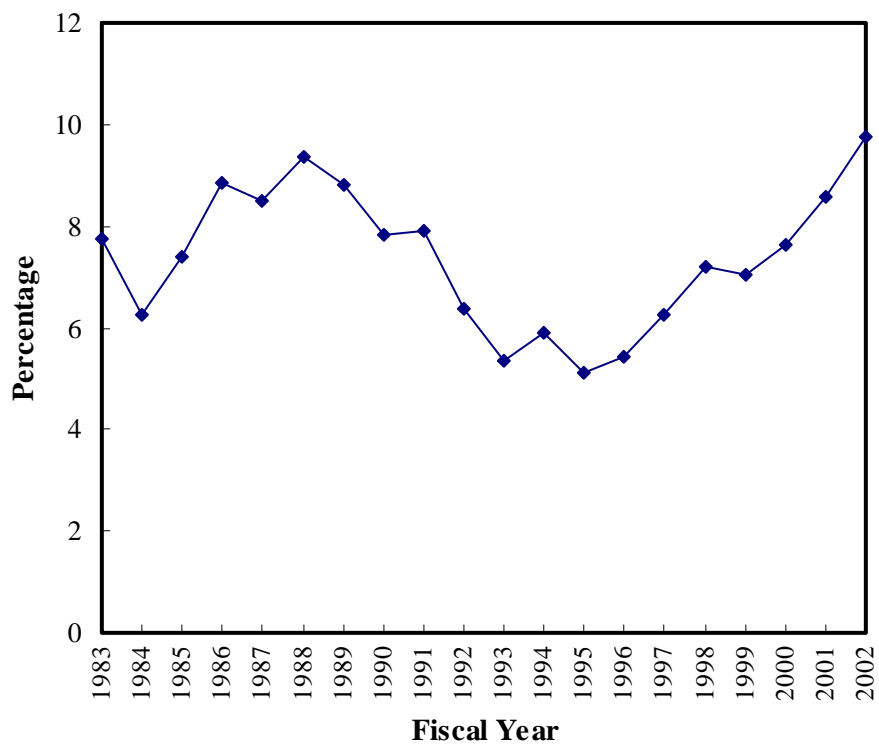
**Figure 4. Number of Permanent Immigrants from All Countries and from China, 1980-2002**



**Figure 5. Number of Student Immigrants from China,  
1983-2002**



**Figure 6. Percent Student Immigrants from China of All Temporary Immigrants from China, 1983-2002**



**Figure 7. Percent Student Immigrants from China of Student Immigrants to the U.S. from All Countries, 1983-2002**

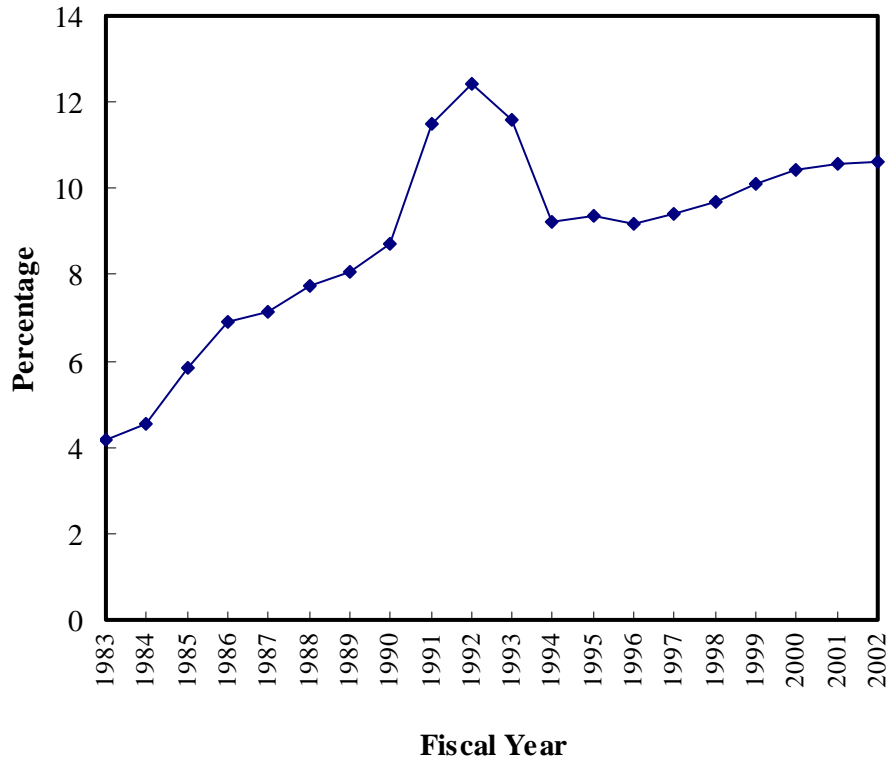


Figure 8. Temporary Immigration Rate, Chinese Immigrants, 1983-2002

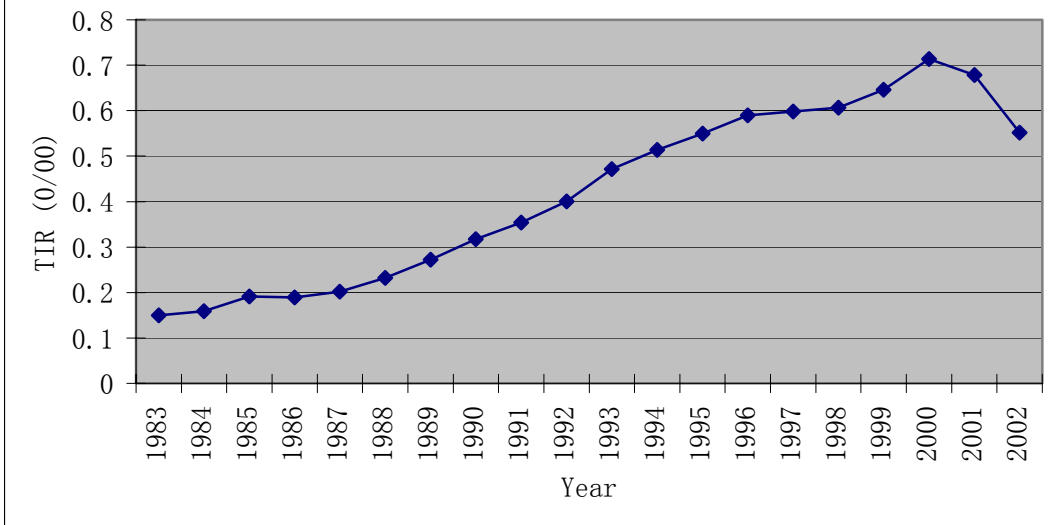


Figure 9

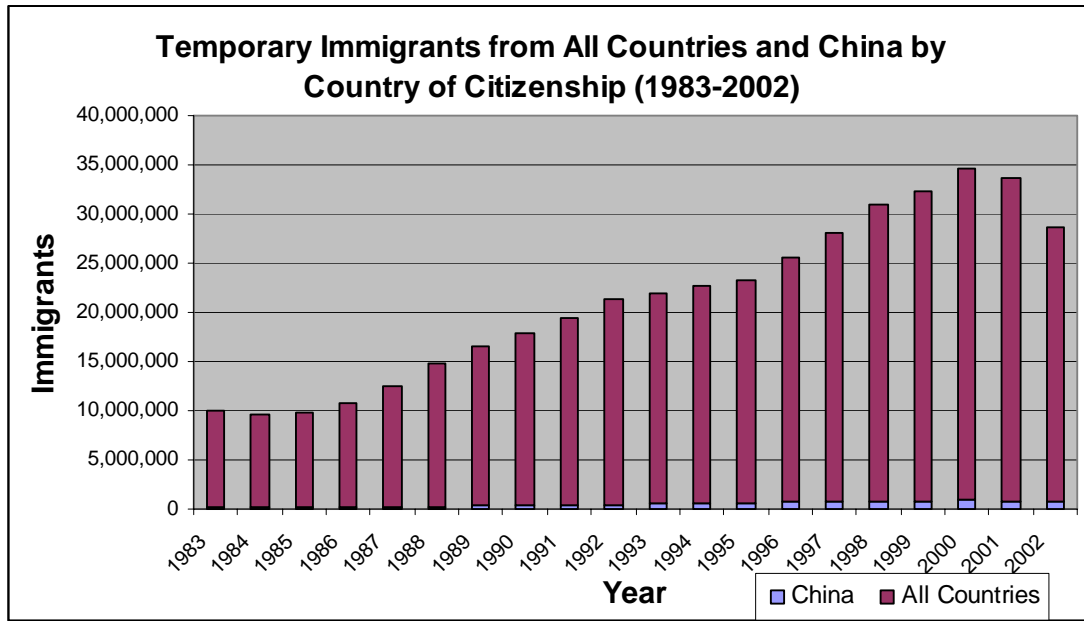


Figure 10.  
Annual Percent Change in Number of Chinese Temporary  
Immigrants, 1984-2002

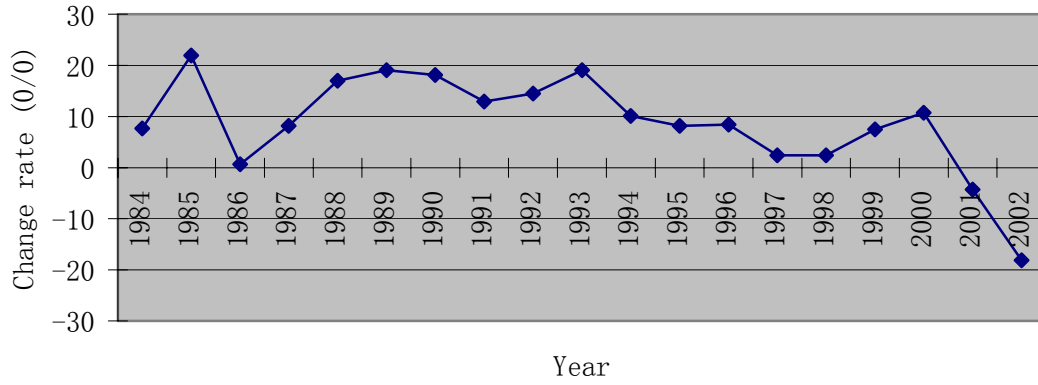


Figure 11. Skilled Immigrants (H1) from China and from All Countries, 1984-2002

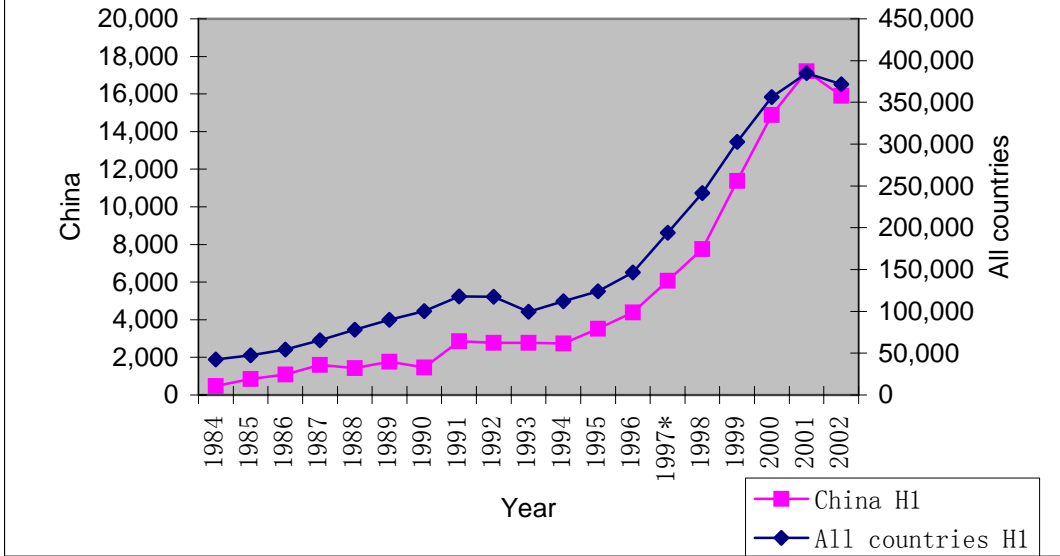
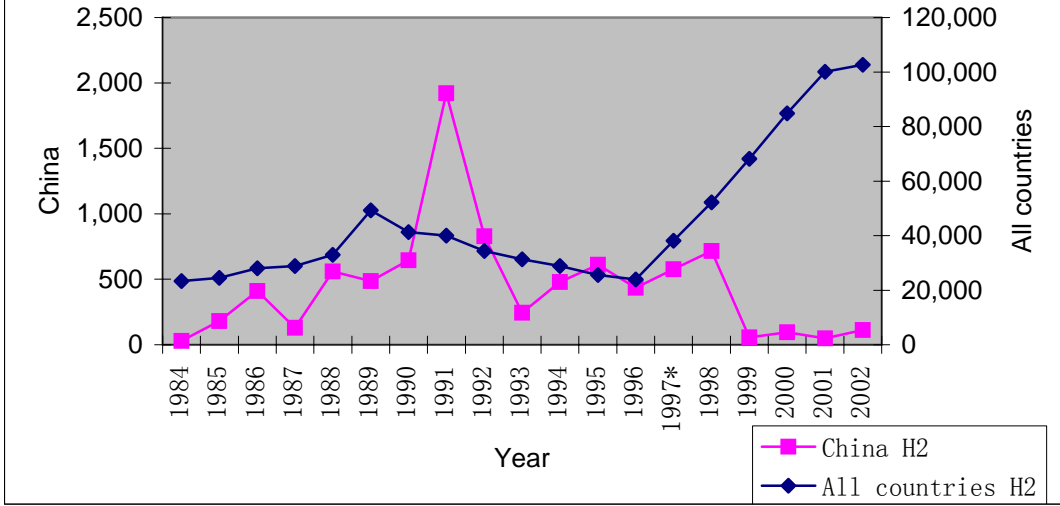


Figure 12. Unskilled Immigrant Laborers from China and from All Countries, 1984-2002



**Figure 13. Student Immigrants from China and China GNP, 1983-2002**

