

The first objective of this paper is to document changes in the educational profile of recent immigrants to the United States. Using data from the American Community Survey, I present a portrait of recent immigrants' educational attainment and document an increase in the fraction of immigrants with a bachelor's degree or higher among arrival cohorts of 1996 to 2016 for both males and females.

My second objective is to analyze possible determinants of this upward trend. I find that the upward trend for immigrant men is completely accounted for by the changing composition of sending countries. On the other hand, at least half of the change in trend for women is attributed to changes in education levels within origin country groups. I supplement the analysis by utilizing the Barro-Lee dataset and conduct a number of counterfactual exercises. My results suggest that within origin country group, change in education is not due to changes in positivity of selection, but instead to an increase in education levels of women in sending countries overall. My findings cast doubt on the need for a skill-based points system that rewards immigrants for more education and higher skill. In fact, the US is already receiving cohorts of highly educated immigrants in absence of such a major shift in immigration policy.