

# Immigration Policy: Migration Patterns

Expanded from print edition of "Region at a Glance."

By Nora J. Kleinman

**T**he United States has long been a nation of immigrants – frequently referred to as a “melting pot” or more recently a “salad bowl.” National legislation has changed dramatically over the last hundred years, influencing the number and composition of immigrants.

In the early 1900s immigration legislation was enacted piece by piece. This changed in 1921 with the passage of the National Origins Act (passed in a final form in 1924). This act restricted the number of immigrants who could enter the United States and established a quota system based on country of origin. The Western Hemisphere was excluded from the quota system and quotas for northern and western Europe were relatively generous. However it severely limited the number of individuals who were allowed entry from eastern and southern Europe and did not allow immigrants from Asia.

In 1965 the immigration laws changed dramatically with the passage of the Hart-Cellar Act. This legislation replaced the national quota system with hemispheric caps, and preference groups. Certain groups were given preference, such as individuals with relatives in the United States or those who worked jobs seen as critical by the Department of Labor.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 created sanctions for employers who knowingly hired illegal immigrants, increased enforcement at US borders, and legalized certain agricultural workers and undocumented aliens who had lived in the United States continuously since 1982. This led to larger numbers of recorded immigrants than usual in 1989, 1990, and 1991.

## Technical Notes for Graphs

These graphs display the number of legal permanent residents (LPRs) who have immigrated to the six state Northwest region over the last ten years. LPRs are persons who have been granted lawful permanent residence in the United States, commonly known as “green card” recipients. These numbers do not include individuals who have come to the United States as refugees, asylees, nonimmigrant admissions, or illegal immigrants. Refugees or asylees are individuals who sought residence in the United States in order to avoid persecution in their country of origin. Persons granted refugee status applied for admission while outside the United States. Persons granted asylum status applied either at a port of entry or at some point after their entry into the United States. Nonimmigrant admissions are people who come to the US for a limited period of time, such as tourists, business travelers, temporary workers, students, or participants in cultural exchange programs.

These graphs also include both new arrivals and individuals who have received an adjustment of status. An adjustment of status is a procedure allowing certain foreign nationals already in the U.S. to apply for immigrant status. Foreign nationals admitted to the U.S. in a nonimmigrant (e.g. tourist or student), refugee, or parolee category may have their status changed to that of lawful permanent resident if they are eligible to receive an immigrant visa and one is immediately available. In such cases, the foreign national is counted as an immigrant at the date of adjustment, even though they may have been in the United States for an extended period of time.

## Shifting Borders

The Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics categorizes countries and their territories and dependencies into specific regional groups. The following lists the countries included in each region. Countries in italics were categorized by DHS as part of Europe before 2009.

### 2009:

**Africa** includes Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Reunion, Rwanda, Saint Helena, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra

### Author

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### Special thanks to

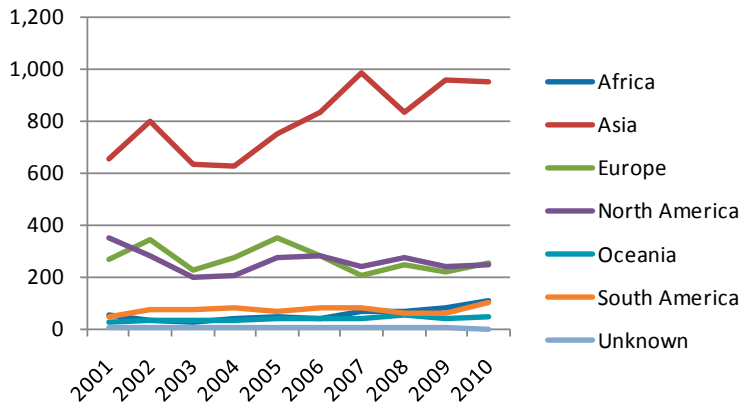
John Simanski at the Department of Homeland Security who graciously and quickly handled many data requests.

A shorter version of this article appears in the print edition as “Region at a Glance.”

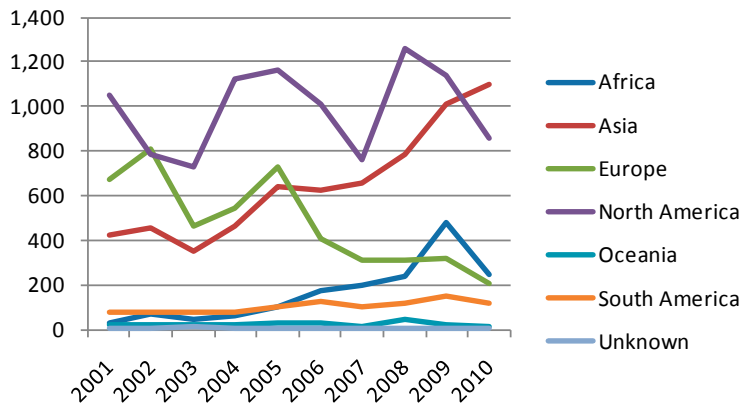


# Regions of Birth of Immigrants to Each State in the Northwest

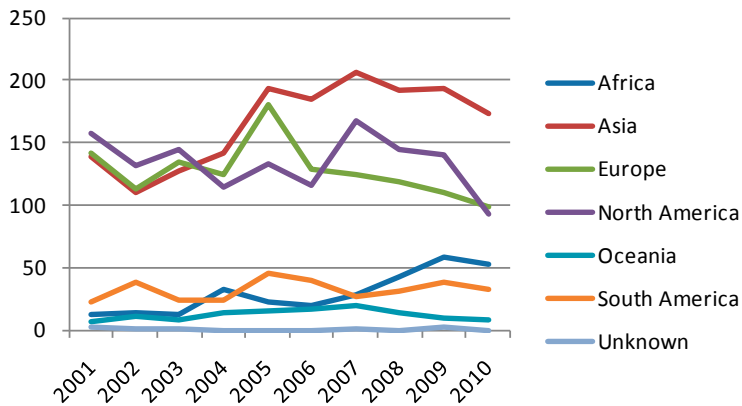
## Alaska



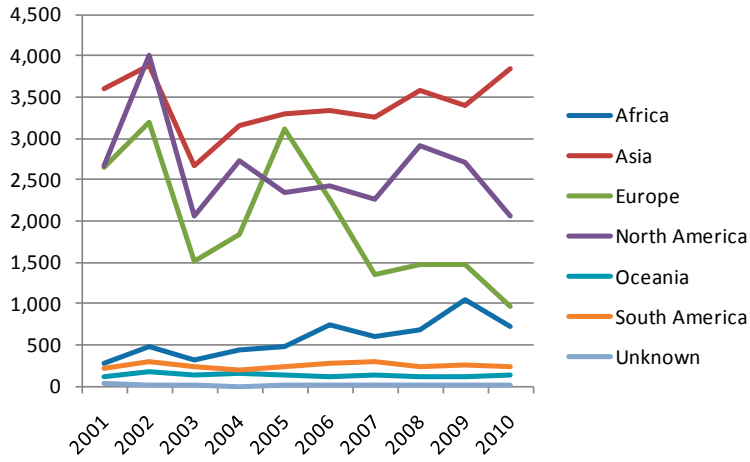
## Idaho



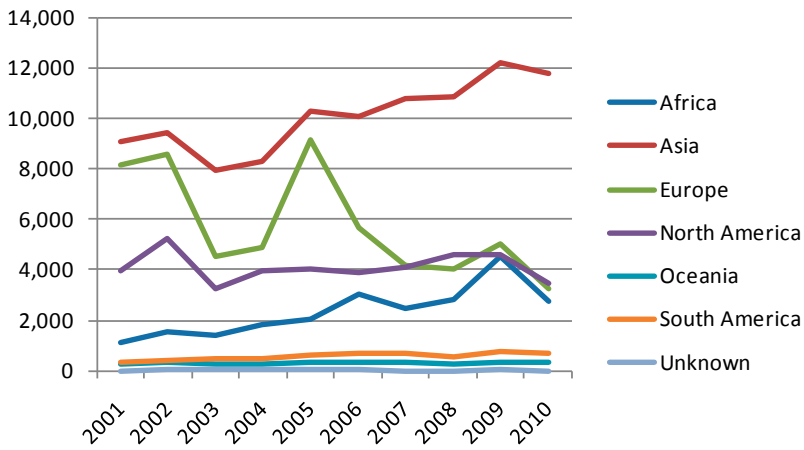
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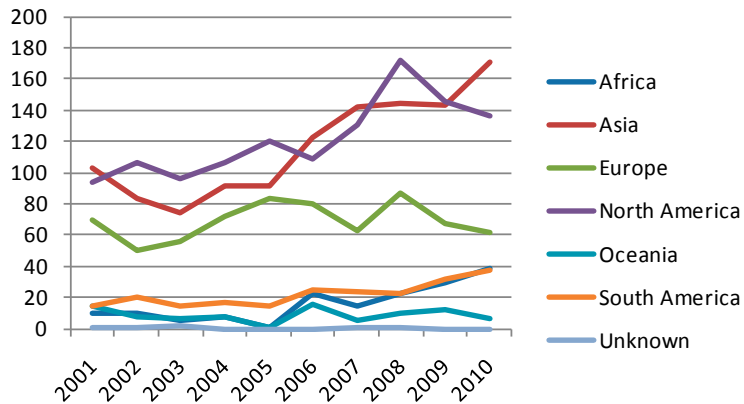
### Oregon



### Washington

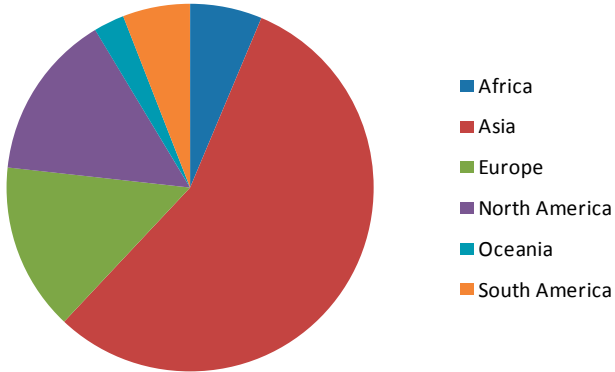


### Wyoming

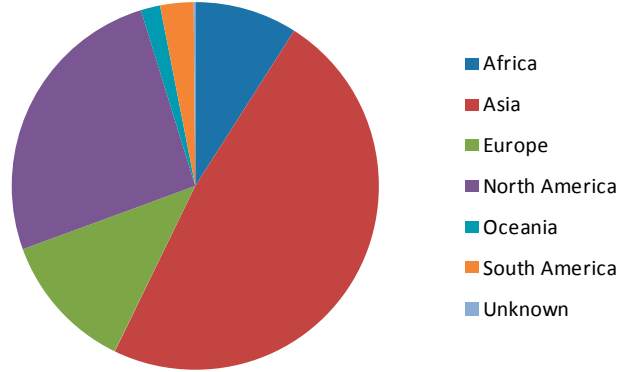


Regions of Birth of Immigrants to Each State in the Northwest in 2010

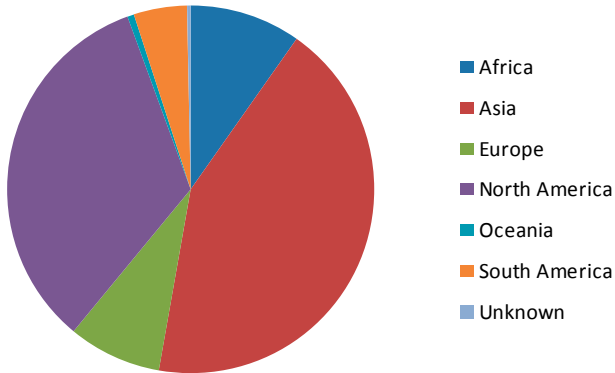
**Alaska**



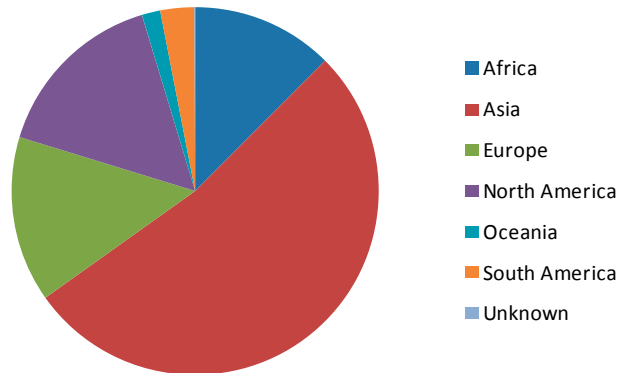
**Oregon**



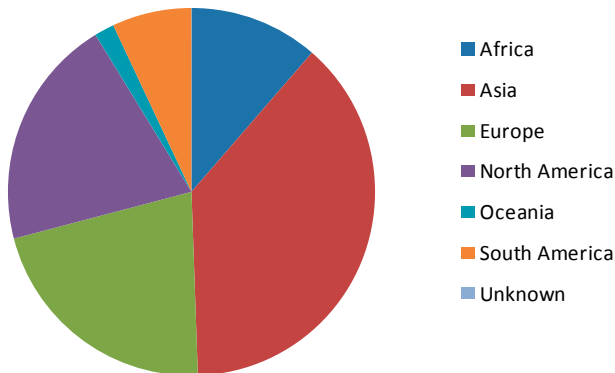
**Idaho**



**Washington**



**Montana**



**Wyoming**

