

Immigration Lecture Notes

1. Americans have long felt a deep ambivalence toward immigration
 - We have thought of ourselves as a nation of immigrants and believed that immigration revitalizes our society.
 - But we also have viewed immigrants as a threat to economic security and cultural traditions
2. Attitudes toward immigration blur party and ideological lines: There have been intense differences in opinion among free marketers, environmentalists, and civil rights advocates.
3. Population movement is nothing new. The movement of peoples is one of the oldest themes in human history.
4. Nevertheless, in 1500, the world was highly segregated by race.
5. Spain, Portugal, France, and the Netherlands were unable to convince large numbers of people to migrate despite
 - offers of free passage,
 - allocations of land,
 - official propaganda, and
 - forcible transportation of orphans, petty criminals, and the unemployed
6. Only England sent large numbers of people to settler colonies.
7. Why didn't other European powers establish white settler colonies?
 - Fewer willing or available settlers
 - Slower population growth
 - England had large numbers of displaced landless, propertiless workers
 - England also had large numbers of religious sectarians
 - Spanish America and the Caribbean were able to meet their labor needs through the slave trade
8. Push and pull factors contribute to the movement of people.
Levels of explanation:
 - a. Psychological: economic opportunity, escape political persecution and social turmoil, economic dislocation and stress
 - b. Family Dimension: strategies for family survival, creation of bi-national families; family needs and resources for stability
 - c. Structural-institutional level: political, economic, financial, rural dislocation
 - d. Pull factors: freedom, opportunity, wage differentials, focus on the economic dimensions
 - An important factor contributing to migration is “uneven development.”

- The new capitalist system had many disparities in income, standards of living, wealth, forms of labor, and concentrations in various sectors of the economy.
- Core areas are wealthier and are more engaged in manufacturing.
- Peripheral areas are characterized by heavy involvement in primary sectors of the economy: agriculture; and the extraction of raw materials
- The core and periphery have very different mechanisms for controlling labor. The periphery uses crude traditional methods: slavery, serfdom, whipping, physical coercion. Labor control is very important. Sugar or fruit will spoil. Grain will rot.
- Core areas dispense with traditional methods of labor control. They rely on wages and technology to control workers: such as factories. Today, core areas rely on the tools of modern labor relations that manufacture consent on a psychological level.
- The essential point is this: Economic development required BOTH highly educated, skilled labor, and unskilled, low-cost manual labor--especially in mining, heavy agriculture, and construction.

9. Unfree labor

- Production of tropical commodities and precious metals depended on various forms of unfree labor.
 - 1.5 million indentured laborers were recruited from India to work in tropical plantations; 1 million Japanese; 500,000 Chinese
- The word "coolie" refers to workers taken by force and deception.

10. Example: China and the foundations of the coolie trade:

- overpopulation (population tripled between 1700 and 1850)
 - drought and floods
 - political turmoil (25 million died in Taiping Rebellion)
- Two methods:
- An indenture spelled out the terms of a 5-8 year term of service. Promised free housing, return passage, rations, and health care in exchange for work 9 hours a day, 6 days a week.
 - Ticket system: the cost of passage was advanced by brokers, and then was repaid through earnings.

11. European Immigration

- a. Irish Potato Famine was not an "act of God" or simply a natural catastrophe.
 - Like most famines, it was the product of human action.
 - British desire for a low wage labor force
 - Land subdivided
 - Diet totally dependent on fate of a single crop
- b. Famine reduced Ireland's population by half, with about 3 million moving abroad.
 - Didn't move in family groups. Included many unmarried women

- Coffin ships: 5 percent died on shipboard
 - Extreme poverty forced many to live in points of debarkation: eastern cities or in urban periphery.
 - Engaged in irregular day labor, petty trading, backyard gardening, and as servants.
- c. Strengths: ethnic solidarity, tradition of political activity, high levels of literacy, geographic concentration, shared sense of grievance against England
12. 1840s marked beginning of first wave of immigration from Europe
Common roots:
- population pressure
 - surplus rural population
 - slow economic growth which could not absorb rural population
 - fragmentation of land holdings
 - decline of household industries in face of factory production
13. Late 19th Century “New Immigrants” from Eastern and Southern Europe
- a. Harsh anti-Jewish legislation
Popular outbursts known as pogroms
25 year military conscription
- b. Changing structure of opportunity in industrializing America
Economy was shifting from heavy industry and construction to production of consumer goods: garments
- Employers eager to draw labor from underdeveloped regions: ethnically diverse, unfamiliar with unions
 - Earned 7-10 times more than agricultural workers and artisans in Eastern Europe.
14. The story of U.S. immigration has been distorted by its focus on Ellis Island. U.S. also received massive migration from Mexico in the Southwest and from Asia in Hawaii, California, and other western states.
- a. During the 20s, employers deposited 20 percent of Mexican workers' pay with immigration officials; it could only be collected by workers as they exited the country.
- b. Twice in the 20th century, Mexican workers faced massive deportations.
- During the Depression, 400,000 Mexicans--many of whom were U.S. citizens-- were deported or forced to leave the country.
 - In 1953, alarm that Mexican workers depressed wages, displaced white workers, and jeopardized national security led to "Operation Wetback." Hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers were rounded up and deported.
15. Asian Immigration
- a. Asians arrived in the U.S. in 19th century in response to need for labor in agriculture, railroads, and mining.

- This was a direct response to Western Imperialism in Asia.
 - Western powers secured footholds in Asian port cities.
 - These areas experienced disruption of the indigenous economy and a weakening of traditional political authorities.
- b. Western intrusion combined with other factors:
- overpopulation
 - natural disaster
 - poverty
- c. Given the dominance of British and US shipping in the Pacific, it was natural that most Asians emigrated to British and US controlled areas.
- This migration overwhelmingly consisted of men.
 - The result was to establish distinct communities characterized by high ethnic solidarity and family like organizations that provided emotional security, political representation, employment opportunities, and recreation.
- d. Asians soon encouraged laws curtailing their civil and political rights.
- 1875 Page Act required immigration officials to investigate whether Chinese women were prostitutes.
 - 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited further immigration and made Chinese aliens ineligible for citizenship.
 - 1922 Cable Act rescinded citizenship of female citizens who married aliens ineligible for citizenship.
 - 1924 Immigration Act virtually ended all Asian immigration.
 - In 1942, 110,000 Japanese Americans, 2/3s US born, were incarcerated.
- e. The shift in policy reflected the U.S. desire to legitimate itself as leader of the free world.
- 1943: Congress repealed Chinese Exclusion Act
- 1945: War Brides Act permitted entry of women married to US servicemen
- 1948: Displaced Persons Act opened doors to refugees and created an occupational preference category for immigration
- 1965 immigration reform act abolished quotas and gave greater emphasis to family reunification.
- f. From 1965 to 1992, 4 million Asians immigrated, tripling earlier levels.
- 1 million from Philippines
 - 900,000 from China
 - 700,000 Vietnamese
 - 500,000 from Laos and Cambodia
- g. Asian population has grown sharply divided and increasingly diverse.
- Average median income--\$39,000--is higher than that of whites.
 - But poverty rate is twice that of whites.

16. Ethnic Success

- The economic success of immigrants varies starkly.

- Why have some immigrant groups gotten ahead and others have had less success?
 - a. The simplest explanation is racism.
 - Prejudice, discrimination, and law oppress some people, who are unable to get good schooling, good jobs, good housing.
 - b. A second explanation argues that certain groups have a distinctive culture.
 - Culture is a vague term that encompasses customs, habits, attitudes and more.
 - It usually is taken to mean a commitment to entrepreneurship, education, community self-help, and a willingness of family members to sacrifice for the family's collective good.
 - c. A third explanation emphasizes social circumstances.
 - Whether a group enters an expanding or a contracting economy;
 - Whether the economy needs the kinds of labor that the immigrant group offers.
 1. Japanese Americans were subject to severe discrimination, culminating in their mass removal from the Pacific coast, loss of most of their property, and incarceration in internment camps.
 2. Yet today, Japanese Americans have a higher family income and higher educational attainment than non- Hispanic whites.
 3. Families typically contain multiple wage earners.
 4. High degree of ethnic trust.
 5. Seized certain economic niches, especially opportunities in small business, agriculture and commercial.
 6. Made extensive use of unpaid family labor.
 7. Excluded from the society around them, Japanese Americans gravitated toward higher education, even when there were no jobs for them in the economy because of discrimination.
 8. Concentrated in particular in areas like engineering.
16. African Americans
- Faced much more severe discrimination than other immigrant groups.
 - Mass migration northward took place at a time when unskilled and semi-skilled jobs were disappearing in the North.
 - Prevented by racism from intermarriage or moving into integrated neighborhoods.
 - Unlike any other ethnic group, racism meant that whites were unwilling to patronize black-owned businesses.
17. The Future

More than 3/4s of all legal immigrants live in 6 states: California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas

- Immigration is not only concentrated in certain states, it is concentrated in specific cities.
- The U.S. is being reshaped more and more as two nations.
- Our coastal port cities--Houston, Miami, San Francisco--are becoming intensely diverse.
- But the rest of the country is experiencing this new diversity only modestly.
- Half of all immigrants settled in just 8 cities.
- Add undocumented immigrants, and the figure rises to perhaps 90 percent.