

Introduction to American Studies

Immigration

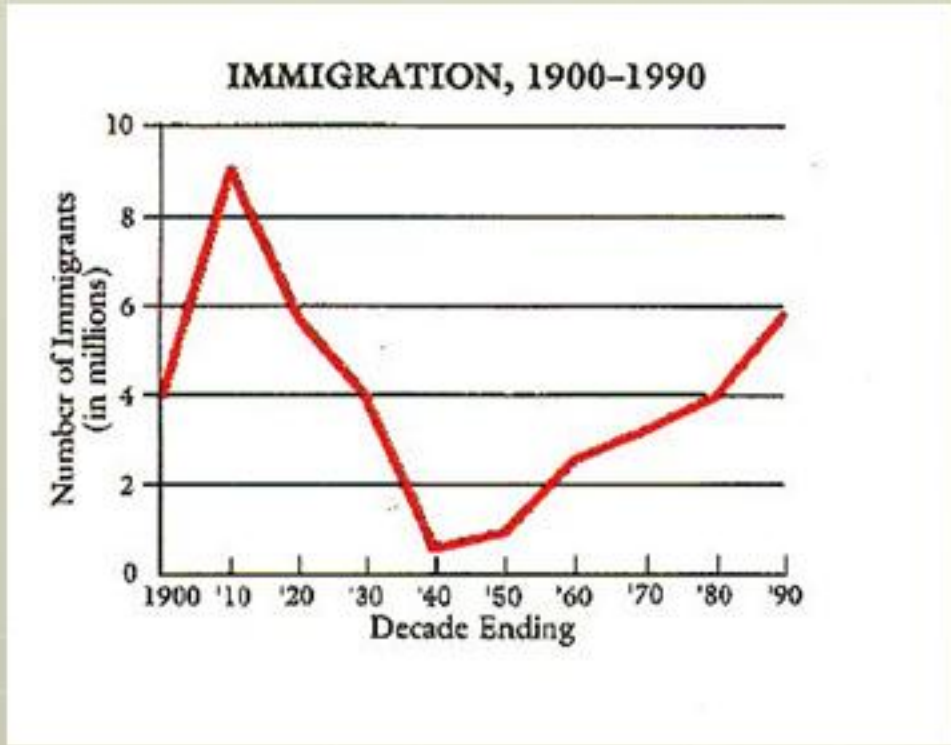
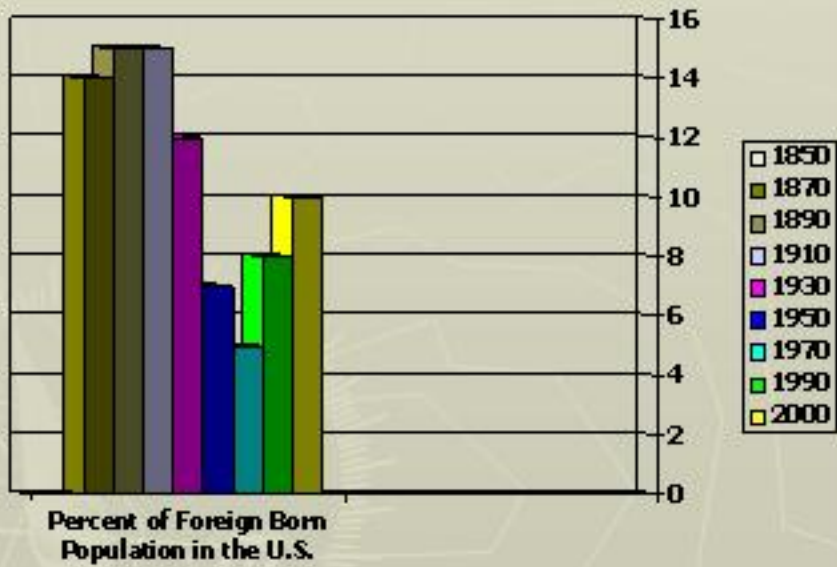


Immigration to the U.S. I

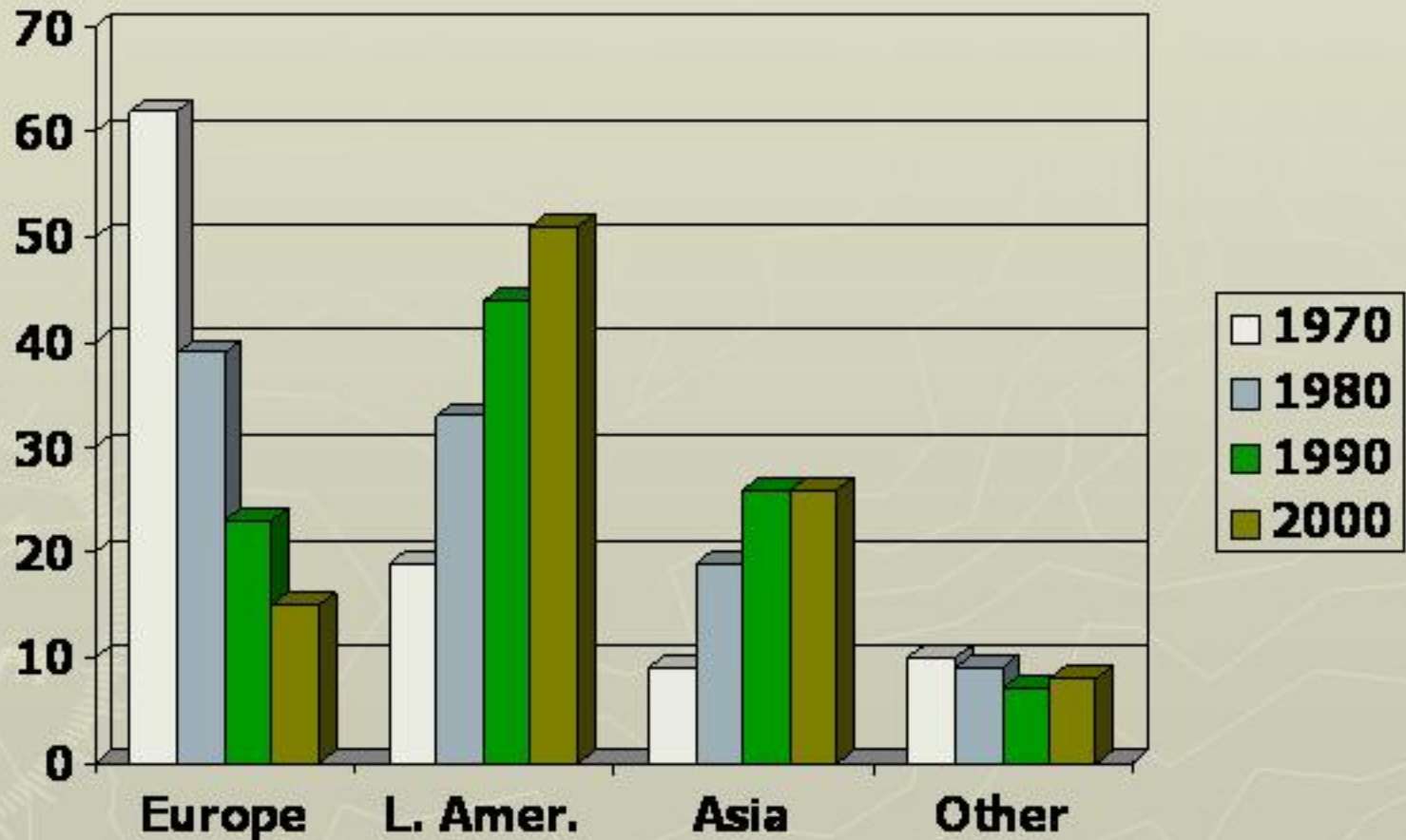
- ▶ **Pre-1860**
 - **Northern and western Europe**
 - ▶ Predominately Protestant, relatively prosperous
 - ▶ Irish
- ▶ **1860-1870**
 - **Relatively little immigration due to the Civil War**
- ▶ **1870-1914**
 - **Immigration from Central and Eastern Europe**
 - ▶ Catholics, Jews, Orthodox
 - ▶ Relatively poor
 - **Attempts to restrict immigration from outside Europe**
 - ▶ Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Compact with Japan in 1905
 - **Ellis Island (1892-1954) – more than 12 million immigrants passed through**
- ▶ **1914-1960s**
 - **WWI, WII and the Great Depression meant less interest in emigrating from Europe**
 - **American attitudes and laws towards immigrants began to change in the 1920s**
 - ▶ 1924 Immigration Act established quotas that limited immigration from Europe and basically ended it from all other parts of the world

Immigration to the U.S. II

- ▶ Since the 1960s immigration has opened up to all parts of the world using a quota system
 - Majority of new immigrants come from Latin America and Asia
 - ▶ In 2000, 14.5 million, or about half, of the nation's 28.4 million foreign-born residents were born in Latin America.
 - ▶ The size of the foreign-born population from Latin America has grown rapidly. In
 - ▶ 1960, about 900,000 (or 9 percent of the total foreign-born population) came from Latin America.
 - ▶ By 1990, this population numbered 8.4 million, or 44 percent of the total.



Foreign Born Population by Region of Birth



Immigration in the 1990's

PERCENT OF POPULATION



DENSITY





CHANGE IN IMMIGRATION RATE



Projections:
 Transverse Mercator
 Albers Equal-Area Conic,
 Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census:
 Population Estimates Division & Current
 Population Survey 1999; TIGER Boundary Files.

Author:
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 Geography 371
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Countries of origin: Top 10

1920		2000		1820-1996	
Country	% of immigrants	Country	% of immigrants	Country	No. of immigrants
Germany	12.1	Mexico	27.6	Germany	7,142,393
Italy	11.6	Philippines	4.3	Mexico	5,542,625
Soviet Union	10.1	China	3.8	Italy	5,427,298
Poland	8.2	India	3.5	U. K.	5,225,701
Canada	8.2	Cuba	3.4	Ireland	4,778,159
U.K.	8.2	Vietnam	3.0	Canada	4,423,066
Ireland	7.5	El Salvador	2.7	Soviet Union	3,752,811
Sweden	4.5	South Korea	2.5	Austria	1,841,068
Austria	4.1	Dominican Rep.	2.4	Hungary	1,673,579
Mexico	3.5	Canada	2.4	Philippines	1,379,403



Statue of Liberty

"THE NEW COLOSSUS"

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to
land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall
stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes
command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!"
cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your
poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe
free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to
me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Emma Lazarus (1849-1887)

- ▶ With this poem at its base, the statue has become the most recognizable symbol of the U.S. commitment to immigration and to the granting of democratic rights to the oppressed of the world.
- ▶ However, the symbolic association of the statue with immigration was the intention not of those who originally proposed the statue but of immigrant advocates who successfully commandeered the statue for their political agenda in the years after it was first proposed.

- ▶ The French government commissioned the Statue as a gift to the people of the United States for the centennial celebration of the American Revolution in 1876. The purpose of the statue was to remember French support of the revolution and to honor the two countries shared commitment to liberty and democracy.
- ▶ While the French government committed to finance the statue, it was left to the American people to raise the necessary funds for the statue's base in New York harbor. When fundraising floundered in the U.S., Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of *The World*, a New York newspaper, began an editorial campaign denouncing the city's wealthy and middle classes for failing to support the project. Fundraising for the pedestal was not completed until the summer of 1885. The Statue was finally erected in July 1886, ten years after the centennial celebration.

- ▶ It was the delay in the fundraising campaign that gave advocates of European immigration the opportunity first to reconfigure the statue's meaning. At an 1883 Art auction for the statue, Emma Lazarus, a published poet and one of the founders of the Society for the Improvement and Colonization of East European Jews, read her poem imagining the statue as a beacon drawing the oppressed of the world to the land of Freedom. Born into a very wealthy fourth-generation New York Jewish family, Lazarus was an outspoken advocate of Jewish and Immigrant concerns, while the Society that she had helped to found was a Zionist organization committed both to aiding Immigrant Jews and to raising international concern about anti-Jewish pogroms in Eastern Europe.
- ▶ Lazarus died just a year after her first public reading of "the New Colossus." By 1901, however, advocates of Eastern European immigration had succeeded in having her poem inscribed on the statue's base and over the generations since the Statue of Liberty has become a symbol not only of the role of Immigrant families and their descendants in nation's history but of the Immigrant Narrative itself.

Immigration resulted, and continues to result, from both push and pull factors

"Push"-Factors

▶ Ireland:

- The Enclosure: English Protestant Landlords force subsistence tenant farmers off of estates so that they could raise cattle for the English market.
- The Potato Famine: Between 1845 and 1855 more than a million Irish peasants die from malnutrition after potato blight wipes out 10 years of potato crops, the staple of the Irish diet. As a result of British colonial policy in Ireland, 5 million Irish immigrated to the U.S. between 1815-1920.

▶ China:

- Growing British Imperial influence leads to increased taxes, social disruption that impoverish the poor, restrict economic opportunity for large portions of the population.

▶ Imperialism and the Market Revolution:

- Ireland, Eastern Europe, China & Japan were all located on the Periphery of the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Lacking capital/financial systems necessary to compete with British and American economies, these countries, along with the rest of the non-Euro-American world, became sources of natural resources and low-wage labor for those economies.

"Pull" Factors

- Industrial development means jobs at wages significantly higher wages than those available in the immigrants' homelands.
- Employers seeking cheap labor arrange affordable passage. For example, English workers offered Indentured Servitude in the 17th century and the credit-ticket system in the 18th century; following the Civil War, southern planters recruit Chinese labor to compete with freedpeople in an effort to keep down the cost of agricultural labor.
- Immigrants and Labor Recruiters Tell Stories of the Instant Riches Available in the U.S.

Immigrant responses ranged from resistance to acculturation

- ▶ Just about every immigrant groups was the belief that economic success was the key to becoming American.
- ▶ This idea we might call Earned Citizenship-- the belief that hard work and loyalty to one's new country will convince native-born (white) Americans to treat immigrants and their communities as full members of the nation.
- ▶ Sport (baseball and football) played an important role in the second generation
 - Many famous players were clearly "immigrant"
- ▶ Schools as a tool for acculturation in the second generation
 - Language
 - The Pledge of Allegiance
 - ▶ I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands: one Nation [under God], indivisible, With Liberty and Justice for all.
 - First used in 1892, made official (i.e. put in law) in 1942, "under God" added in 1954 – currently the subject of a 1st Amendment legal challenge
- ▶ Resistance: It's important to remember that acculturation was not the goal of every immigrant.
- ▶ Many came to the U.S. to make their fortune and then to return home.
 - More than half of Chinese immigrants to California and Japanese immigrants to Hawaii before 1930 returned to their homeland.
 - The return rate for Italian migrants was 60%.

Reality of the immigrant experience could be quite different

The next morning, early, Bartolo told us to go out and pick rags and get bottles. He gave us bags and hooks and showed us the ash barrels. On the streets where the fine houses are the people are very careless and put out good things, like mattresses and umbrellas, clothes, hats and boots. We brought all these to Bartolo and he made them new again and sold them on the sidewalk; but mostly we brought rags and bones. The rags we had to wash in the backyard and then we hung them to dry on lines under the ceiling in our room. The bones we kept under the beds till Bartolo could find a man to buy them. Most of the men in our room worked at digging the sewer.

Rocco Corresca
December 1902

At seven o'clock we all sit down to our machines and the boss brings each one the pile of work that he or she is to finish during the day.... This pile is put down beside the machine and as soon as a skirt is done it is laid on the other side of the machine. Sometimes the work is not all finished by six o'clock and then the one who is behind must work overtime.... The machines go like mad all day, because the faster you work the more money you get. Sometimes in my haste I get my finger caught and the needle goes right through it.... The machines are all run by foot power and at the end of the day one feels so weak that there is a great temptation to lie right down and sleep. But you must go out and get air, and have some pleasure....

Adie Frowne
from *The Independent*, 1902

Institution-building

- ▶ In many ways, though, the immigrant experience was more collective than individual.
- ▶ For most immigrants, their ability to survive and prosper in the U.S. was based on their ability to build collective organizations and strong communities: families, churches, fraternal organizations, unions, businesses, and ethnic enclaves. Within each of these institutions, we can find elements of resistance and acculturation.
- ▶ They were sites both for defending ethnic traditions and solidarities and for claiming Americanness, either by asserting their democratic rights or by demonstrating their fitness to be included in American society (earned citizenship).

Ethnic Niche Strategies

- ▶ Central to the range of immigrant strategies for life in the U.S. was the development of Ethnic Niches within the American Economy that served as the basis for either immigrants to save money for their eventual return home or as a springboard, usually for the next generation, for entering parts of American life and business that had previously been blocked to people of one's ethnicity and race.
- ▶ Why did specific immigrant groups tend to end up concentrated in specific industries and occupations?
- ▶ The reasons are myriad from the presence of specific skills and experiences brought from the old country and the success of individual entrepreneurs to anti-immigrant discrimination in other parts of the economy.
- ▶ What is important for our course is to pay attention to the ways that ethnic niche strategies combined old world traditions and ethnic solidarities with American aspirations and individualist ideals, particularly the belief that hard work would enable immigrants to earn the wealth and cultural attributes necessary to enter into mainstream American society.

Ethnic identity in American society

- ▶ While immigrants to the U.S. bring with them a sense of ethnic identity and cultural values and traditions, it is within their American experience and their interactions with both native Americans and other members of other ethnic and racial groups that their sense of identity-- of what means to be Irish, Jewish, Japanese-- is remade.
- ▶ Moreover, what it means to be Irish, Jewish, Chinese, Japanese in America is largely defined by distinguishing one group from another.
- ▶ Drawing contrasts with the other is crucial to the development of in-group understanding of what makes one's group different from others.
- ▶ Use of "ethnic holidays"
 - St. Patrick's Day – March 17 (Irish)
 - Columbus Day – October 12 (Italian)
 - Cinco de Mayo – May 5 (Mexican)
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day – 3rd Monday in January (African Americans)
 - Casimir Pulaski Day (Illinois) – March 1 (Polish)
 - Christmas Variants:
 - ▶ Hanukkah
 - ▶ Kwanza
 - Lunar New Year – January/February (Asians)