

Immigration

THE DIVERSITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS UNMISTAKABLE evidence of the variety of places from which immigrants have come. Yet each succeeding generation of immigrants found itself being reluctantly accepted, at best, by the descendants of earlier arrivals. The Chinese were the first immigrant group to be singled out for restriction, with the passage of the 1882 Exclusion Act. The initial Chinese immigrants became scapegoats for America's sagging economy in the last half of the nineteenth century. Growing fears that too many non-American types were immigrating motivated the creation of the national origin system and the quota acts of the 1920s. These acts gave preference to certain nationalities until the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965 ended that practice. Many immigrants today in the United States are transnationals who still maintain close ties to their countries of origin, sending money back, keeping current with political events, and making frequent return trips. Concern about both illegal and legal immigration continues with renewed attention in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Restrictionist sentiment has grown, and debates rage over whether immigrants, even legal ones, should receive services such as education, government-subsidized health care, and welfare. The challenges to an immigrant household upon arrival are not evenly felt, as women play the central role in facilitating the transition. Controversy also continues to surround the policy of the United States toward refugees.

Immigration: A Global Phenomenon

Patterns of Immigration
to the United States

Today's Foreign-Born Population

Early Immigration

Restrictionist Sentiment Increases

Contemporary Social Concerns

Illegal Immigration

A GLOBAL VIEW

Immigration and South Africa

Path to Citizenship:
Naturalization

The Economic Impact
of Immigration

LISTEN TO OUR VOICES

The Next Americans
by Tomás R. Jiménez

Women and Immigration

RESEARCH FOCUS

Assimilation May Be
Hazardous to Your Health

The Global Economy
and Immigration

Refugees

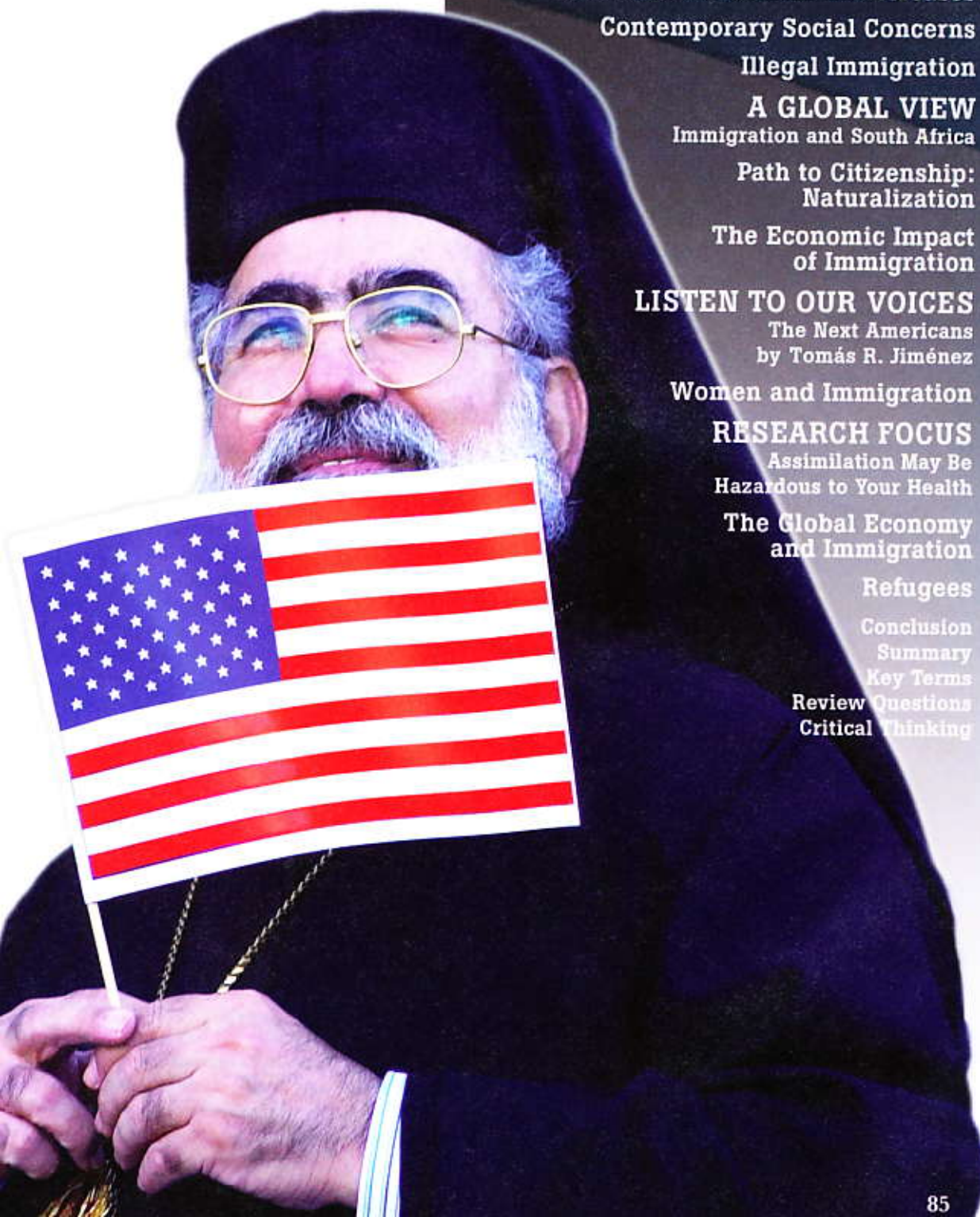
Conclusion

Summary

Key Terms

Review Questions

Critical Thinking



The small farming community of Mattawa, Washington, seems an unlikely location for seeing the social impact of immigration; but today the flow of immigrants is nationwide. Nearly everyone in Mattawa speaks Spanish, with more than 90 percent of residents using it at home. Adjustment by old-timers has been slow. City government and the police force lack bilingual employees and have only now begun to hire translators. Chain stores continue to bypass the community even though it has grown from 300 to more 3,200 in 20 years. Yet residents find authentic meals from their home countries locally at El Jato, El Caribe, and La Maravita.

Mohammed Reza Ghaffarpour is willing to adjust and is not against assimilating. The Iranian-born engineering professor aced his citizenship test in 2003 but had to wait until 2008 to gain citizenship. His trips from his Chicago home to Iran for academic meetings and tending to ailing parents led to scrutiny by the U.S. authorities. The 53-year-old man felt discriminated against but is not bitter; although he waited to become a citizen, he feels the “system is working.”

Then there are the special legal permissions for supermodels and athletes that allow them to jump to the head of the immigration line. Marching into Beijing’s Olympic stadium under the United States flag in 2008 were a kayaker from Poland, table tennis players from China, a triathlete from New Zealand, a distance runner from Kenya, and an equestrian from Australia—all newly minted U.S. citizens (Glascock 2008; Olicio 2008, and Wilson and Lehren 2008).

Faeza Jaber is a 48-year-old single mother in her first months in the United States with her 7-year-old son, Khatab. When she arrived in Phoenix, Arizona, it was 114 degrees, which is hotter than her home in Baghdad. She was granted her refugee status after her husband, who was an office manager and interpreter for *Time* magazine, was murdered in 2004 on his way to work at a time when Iraqi interpreters for foreign companies were being targeted. Previously a computer programmer at the Baghdad airport, Jaber has found the transition difficult as she works as a part-time teacher’s assistant at Khatab’s elementary school. She is striving to learn English and is encouraged by the knowledge that of the 600 Iraqi refugees who pass annually through Phoenix, 91 percent find a job and are able to support themselves without any state and federal subsidies within five months of their arrival (Bennett 2008).

The armed immigration agents arrived at the Petit Jean Poultry Plant in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, just before the 7:30 A.M. early morning shift break for breakfast. Half the shift, 119 workers, was taken away in plastic handcuffs to a detention center from which all but six were sent back to Mexico. In the weeks following, the 10,000 residents of Arkadelphia were upset that their community had been disrupted. People they had known as classmates at the local community college, neighbors, customers, fellow churchgoers, and clients had disappeared. Although the people of this Arkansas town usually embrace law enforcement, they did not like what had happened. Some even went so far as to reach the deported workers in Mexico and try to arrange to bring them back to town by crossing the border illegally (Chu and Mustafa 2006; Hennessy-Fiske 2006).

These dramas being played out in Chicago and Phoenix, Arkansas and Washington State illustrate the themes in immigration today. Immigrant labor is needed, but concerns over illegal immigration persist and, even for those who arrive legally, the transition can be difficult. For the next generation it gets a little easier and, for some, perhaps too easy as they begin to forget their family’s heritage. Many come legally, applying for immigrant visas, but others enter illegally. In the United States, we may not like lawbreakers, but often we seek services and low-priced products made by people who come here illegally. How do we control this immigration without violating the principle of free movement within the

nation? How do we decide who enters? And how do we treat those who come here either legally or illegally?

The world is now a global network, with the core and periphery countries, described in world systems theory (see p. 19 in Chapter 1) linking not only commercial goods but also families and workers across political borders. The social forces that cause people to emigrate are complex. The most important have been economic: financial failure in the old country and expectations of higher incomes and standards of living in the new land. Other factors include dislike of new political regimes in their native lands, the experience of being victims of racial or religious bigotry, and a desire to reunite families. All these factors push people from their homelands and pull them to other nations such as the United States. Immigration into the United States, in particular, has been facilitated by cheap ocean transportation and by other countries' removal of restrictions on emigration.



Refugee Faeza Jaber and her son, Khatab, pause outside a mall in Phoenix, Arizona, where they relocated after the killing of her husband, Omar, who was shot by an unknown assailant in Baghdad in March 2004.

Immigration: A Global Phenomenon

Immigration, as we noted in Chapter 1, is a worldwide phenomenon and contributes to globalization as more and more people see the world as their “home” rather than one specific country, as shown in Figure 4.1. People move across national borders throughout the world. Generally, immigration is from countries with lower standards of living to those that offer better wages. However, wars and famine may precipitate the movement of hundreds of thousands of people into neighboring countries and sometimes permanent resettlement.

Scholars of immigration often point to *push* and *pull factors*. For example, economic difficulties, religious or ethnic persecution, and political unrest may push individuals from their homelands. Immigration to a particular nation, the pull factors, may be a result of perceptions of a better life ahead or a desire to join a community of their fellow nationals already established abroad.

A potent factor contributing to immigration anywhere in the world is chain immigration. **Chain immigration** refers to an immigrant who sponsors several other immigrants who, on their arrival, may sponsor still more. Laws that favor people who desire to enter a given country who already have relatives there or someone who can vouch for them financially may facilitate this sponsorship. But probably the most important aspect of chain immigration is that immigrants anticipate knowing someone who can help them adjust to their new surroundings and find a new job, place to live, and even the kind of foods that are familiar to them. Later in this chapter, we will revisit the social impact that immigration has worldwide.

Patterns of Immigration to the United States

There have been three unmistakable patterns of immigration to the United States: the number of immigrants has fluctuated dramatically over time largely because of government policy changes, settlement has not been uniform across the country but centered in certain regions and cities, and the source of immigrants has changed over time. We will first look at the historical picture of immigrant numbers.

chain immigration
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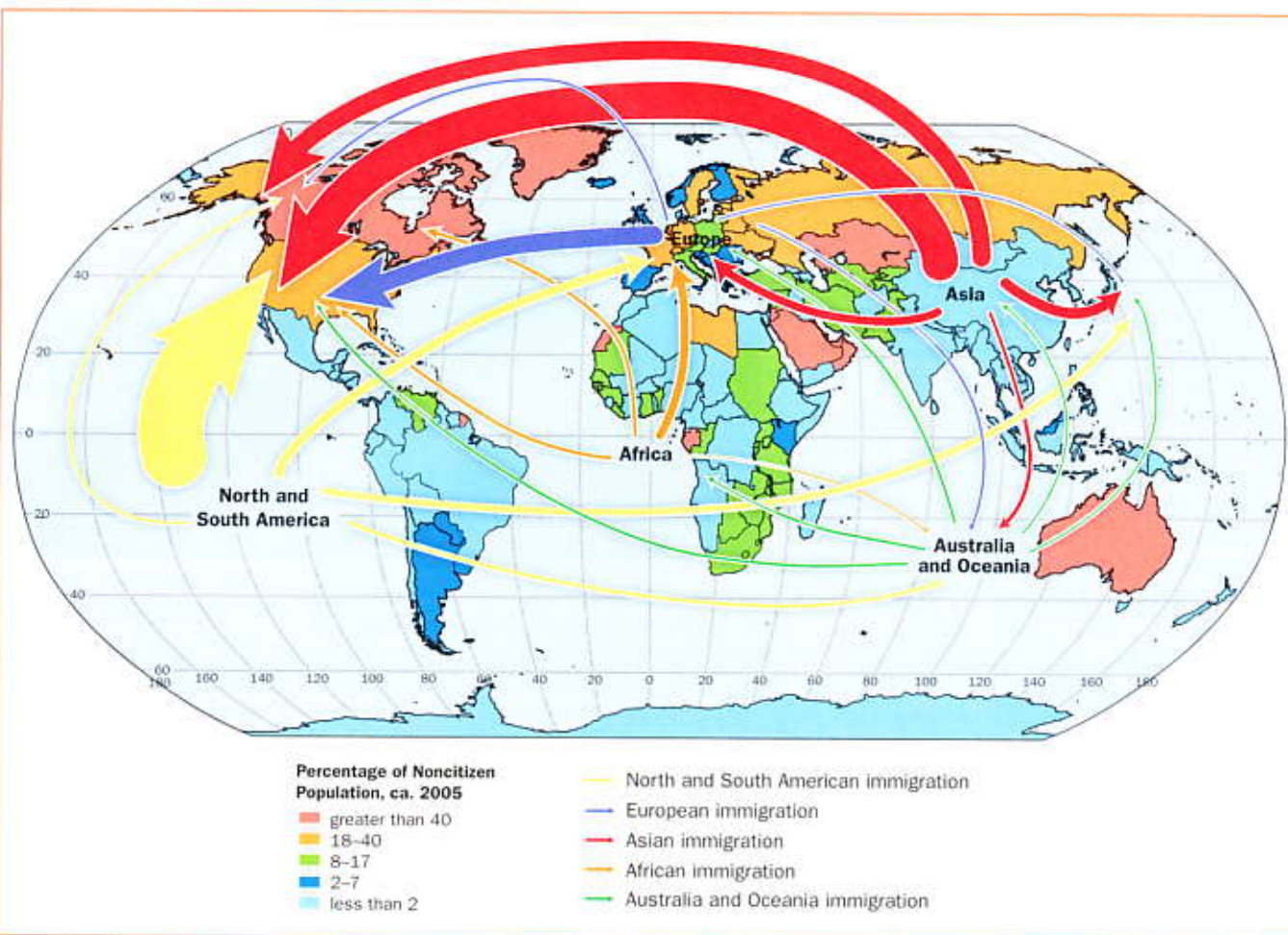


FIGURE 4.1
International Migration

Source: Fernandez-Armesto 2007, 1006.

Vast numbers of immigrants have come to the United States. Figure 4.2 indicates the high but fluctuating number of immigrants who arrived during every decade from the 1820s through the beginning of the twenty-first century. The United States received the largest number of legal immigrants during the first decade of the 1900s, which is likely to be surprised in the first decade of twenty-first century, but because the country was much smaller in the period from 1900 through 1910, the numerical impact was even greater then.

The reception given to immigrants in this country has not always been friendly. Open bloodshed, restrictive laws, and the eventual return of almost one-third of immigrants and their children to their home countries attest to some Americans' uneasy feelings toward strangers who want to settle here.

Opinion polls in the United States from 2000 through 2008 have never shown more than 10 percent of the public in favor of more immigration, and usually about 45 percent to 55 percent want less. Even a 2007 survey of Latinos found a sizable 30 percent advocated having immigration levels decreased. We want the door open until we get through, and then we want to close it (Gallup 2008).

Today's Foreign-Born Population

Before considering the sweep of past immigration policies, let us consider today's immigrant population. About 12 percent of the nation's people are foreign-born; this proportion is between the high figure of about 15 percent in 1890 and a low of 4.7 percent in 1970. By global comparisons, the foreign-born population in the United States is large but not unusual.

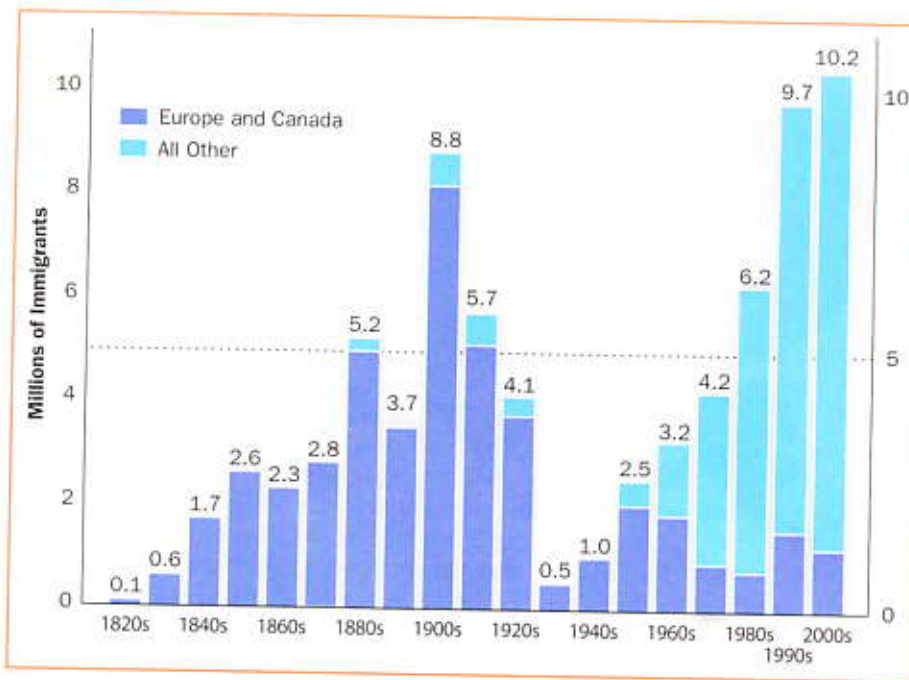


FIGURE 4.2
Legal Immigration to the United States, 1820–2010

Source: Office of Immigration Statistics 2007 and estimates by the author for the period 2000–2010.

Whereas most industrial countries have a foreign population of around 5 percent, Canada's foreign population is 19 percent and Australia's is 25 percent.

As noted earlier, immigrants have not settled evenly across the nation. As shown in the map in Figure 4.3, the six states of California, New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, and Illinois account for 70 percent of the nation's total foreign-born population but less than 40 percent of the nation's total population.

Cities in these states are the focus of the foreign-born population. Almost half (43.3 percent) live in the central city of a metropolitan area, compared with about one-quarter (27.0 percent) of the nation's population. More than one-third of residents in the cities of Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose, and New York City are now foreign-born (Camarota 2007b).

The third pattern of immigration is that the source of immigrants has changed. The majority of today's 37.9 million foreign-born people are from Latin America. Primarily, they are from Central America and, more specifically, Mexico. By contrast, Europeans, who dominated the early settlement of the United States, now account for fewer than one in seven of the foreign-born today.

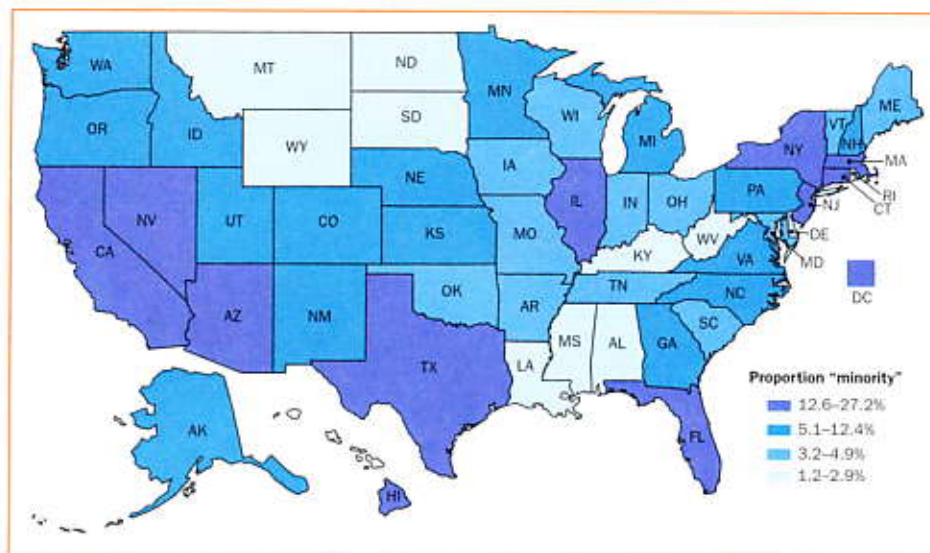
Early Immigration

European explorers of North America were soon followed by settlers, the first immigrants to the Western Hemisphere. The Spanish founded St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565, and the English founded Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Protestants from England emerged from the colonial period as the dominant force numerically, politically, and socially. The English accounted for 60 percent of the 3 million White Americans in 1790. Although exact statistics are lacking for the early years of the United States, the English were soon outnumbered by other nationalities as the numbers of Scotch-Irish and Germans, in particular, swelled. However, the English colonists maintained their dominant position, as Chapter 5 will examine.

Throughout American history, immigration policy has been politically controversial. The policies of the English king, George III, were criticized in the U.S. Declaration of Independence for obstructing immigration to the colonies. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the American republic itself was criticized for enacting immigration restrictions. In the beginning, however, the country encouraged immigration. Legislation initially fixed the residence requirement for naturalization at five years, although briefly,

FIGURE 4.3
Foreign-Born Population
for States, 2006

Source: Author's estimate based on census bureau data in the American Community Survey 2006, Bureau of the Census 2007c.



under the Alien Act of 1798, it was fourteen years, and so-called dangerous people could be expelled. Despite this brief harshness, immigration was unregulated through most of the 1800s, and naturalization was easily available. Until 1870, naturalization was limited to "free white persons" (Calavita 2007).

Besides holding the mistaken belief that concerns about immigration are something new, we also assume that immigrants to the United States rarely reconsider their decision to come to a new country. Analysis of available records, beginning in the early 1900s, suggests that about 35 percent of all immigrants to the United States eventually emigrated back to their home country. The proportion varies, with the figures for some countries being much higher, but the overall pattern is clear: about one in three immigrants to this nation eventually chooses to return home (Wyman 1993).

The relative absence of federal legislation from 1790 to 1881 does not mean that all new arrivals were welcomed. **Xenophobia** (the fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners) led naturally to **nativism** (beliefs and policies favoring native-born citizens over immigrants). Although the term *nativism* has largely been used to describe nineteenth-century sentiments, anti-immigration views and organized movements have continued into the twenty-first century. Political scientist Samuel P. Huntington (1993, 1996) articulated the continuing immigration as a "clash of civilizations" that could be remedied only by significantly reducing legal immigration, not to mention to close the border to illegal arrivals. His view, which enjoys support, was that the fundamental world conflicts of the new century are cultural in nature rather than ideological or even economic (Citrin et al. 2007; Schaefer 2008b).

Historically, Roman Catholics in general and the Irish in particular were among the first Europeans to be ill-treated. We will look at how organized hostility toward Irish immigrants eventually gave way to their acceptance into the larger society in our next chapter.

However, the most dramatic outbreak of nativism in the nineteenth century was aimed at the Chinese. If there had been any doubt by the mid-1800s that the United States could harmoniously accommodate all and was some sort of melting pot, debate on the Chinese Exclusion Act would negatively settle the question once and for all.

xenophobia

The fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners.

nativism

Beliefs and policies favoring native-born citizens over immigrants.

The Anti-Chinese Movement

Before 1851, official records show that only 46 Chinese had immigrated to the United States. Over the next 30 years, more than 200,000 came to this country, lured by the discovery of gold and the opening of job opportunities in the West. Overcrowding, drought, and warfare in China also encouraged them to take a chance in the United States. Another important factor was improved oceanic transportation; it was actually cheaper to travel from Hong Kong to San Francisco than from Chicago to San Francisco. The

frontier communities of the West, particularly in California, looked on the Chinese as a valuable resource to fill manual jobs. As early as 1854, so many Chinese wanted to emigrate that ships had difficulty handling the volume.

In the 1860s, railroad work provided the greatest demand for Chinese labor until the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads were joined at Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869. The Union Pacific relied primarily on Irish laborers, but 90 percent of the Central Pacific's labor force was Chinese because Whites generally refused to do the back-breaking work over the Western terrain. Despite the contribution of the Chinese, White workers physically prevented them from attending the driving of the golden spike to mark the joining of the two railroads.

With the dangerous railroad work largely completed, people began to rethink the wisdom of encouraging Chinese to immigrate to do the work no one else would do. Reflecting their xenophobia, White settlers found the Chinese immigrants and their customs and religion difficult to understand. Indeed, few people actually tried to understand these immigrants from Asia. Although they had had no firsthand contact with Chinese Americans, Easterners and legislators were soon on the anti-Chinese bandwagon as they read sensationalized accounts of the lifestyle of the new arrivals.

Even before the Chinese immigrated, stereotypes of them and their customs were prevalent. American traders returning from China, European diplomats, and Protestant missionaries consistently emphasized the exotic and sinister aspects of life in China. The **sinophobes**, people with a fear of anything associated with China, appealed to the racist theory developed during the slavery controversy that non-Europeans were subhuman. Similarly, Americans were beginning to be more conscious of biological inheritance and disease, so it was not hard to conjure up fears of alien genes and germs. The only real challenge the anti-Chinese movement had was to convince people that the negative consequences of unrestricted Chinese immigration outweighed any possible economic gain. Perhaps briefly, racial prejudice had earlier been subordinated to industrial dependence on Chinese labor for the work that Whites shunned, but acceptance of the Chinese was short-lived. The fear of the "yellow peril" overwhelmed any desire to know more about Asian peoples and their customs (Takaki 1989).

Employers were glad to pay the Chinese low wages, but laborers came to direct their resentment against the Chinese rather than against their compatriots' willingness to exploit the Chinese. Only a generation earlier, the same concerns had been felt about the Irish, but with the Chinese, the hostility reached new heights because of another factor.

Although many arguments were voiced, racial fears motivated the anti-Chinese movement. Race was the critical issue. The labor market fears were largely unfounded, and

sinophobes

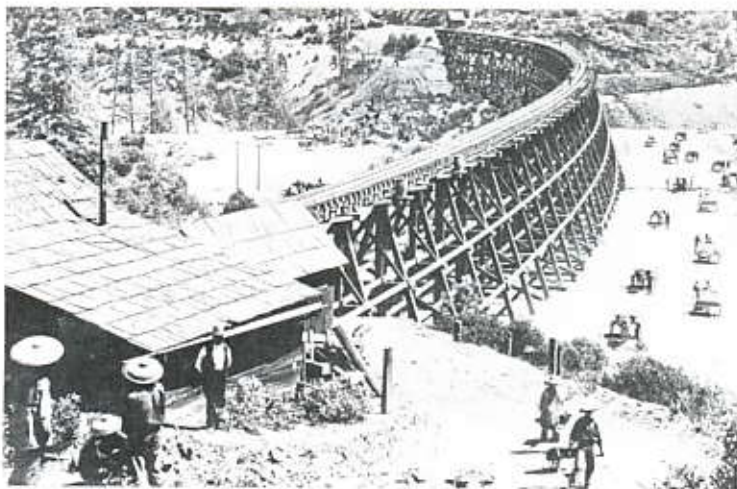
People with a fear of anything associated with China.

SHENMAN Illustration



"IT SAYS THIS ORANGE JUICE IS MADE WITH FRUIT PICKED ENTIRELY BY AMERICAN WORKERS. IT'S 43 DOLLARS."

Immigrant labor plays a significant role in many ways. Many immigrants are paid with low wages that keep prices lower for the consumer.



Chinese workers, such as these pictured in 1844, played a major role in building railroads in the West.

the nation. Because decision making at that time rested in the hands of the descendants of European immigrants, the steps to be taken were most likely to be directed against the least powerful: immigrants from China who, unlike Europeans seeking entry, had few allies among legislators and other policy makers.

In 1882, Congress enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act, which outlawed Chinese immigration for 10 years. It also explicitly denied naturalization rights to the Chinese in the United States; that is, they were not allowed to become citizens. There was little debate in Congress, and discussion concentrated on how suspension of Chinese immigration could best be handled. No allowance was made for spouses and children to be reunited with their husbands and fathers in the United States. Only brief visits of Chinese government officials, teachers, tourists, and merchants were exempted.

The rest of the nineteenth century saw the remaining loopholes allowing Chinese immigration closed. Beginning in 1884, Chinese laborers were not allowed to enter the United States from any foreign place, a ban that also lasted 10 years. Two years later, the Statue of Liberty was dedicated, with a poem by Emma Lazarus inscribed on its base. To the Chinese, the poem welcoming the tired, the poor, and the huddled masses must have seemed a hollow mockery.

In 1892, Congress extended the Exclusion Act for another 10 years and added that Chinese laborers had to obtain certificates of residence within a year or face deportation. After the turn of the century, the Exclusion Act was extended again. Two decades later, the Chinese were not alone; the list of people restricted by immigration policy had expanded many times.

Restrictionist Sentiment Increases

As Congress closed the door to Chinese immigration, the debate on restricting immigration turned in new directions. Prodded by growing anti-Japanese feelings, the United States entered into the so-called gentlemen's agreement, which was completed in 1908. Japan agreed to halt further immigration to the United States, and the United States agreed to end discrimination against the Japanese who had already arrived. The immigration ended, but anti-Japanese feelings continued. Americans were growing uneasy that the "new immigrants" would overwhelm the culture established by the "old immigrants." The earlier immigrants, if not Anglo-Saxon, were from similar groups such as the Scandinavians, the Swiss, and the French Huguenots. These people were more experienced in democratic political practices and had a greater affinity with the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, more and more immigrants were neither English-speaking nor Protestant and came from dramatically different cultures.

The National Origin System

Beginning in 1921, a series of measures were enacted that marked a new era in American immigration policy. Whatever the legal language, the measures were drawn up to block the growing immigration from southern Europe (from Italy and Greece, for example) and also were drawn to block all Asian immigrants by establishing a zero quota for them.

Anti-immigration sentiment, combined with the isolationism that followed World War I, caused Congress to severely restrict entry privileges not only of the Chinese and Japanese but also of Europeans. The national origin system was begun in 1921 and remained the basis of immigration policy until 1965. This system used nationality to determine whether a person could enter as a legal alien, and the number of previous immigrants and their descendants was used to set the group's annual immigration cap.

To understand the effect of the national origin system on immigration, it is necessary to clarify the quota system. The quotas were deliberately weighted in favor of immigration from northern Europe. Because of the ethnic composition of the country in 1920, the quotas placed severe restrictions on immigration from the rest of Europe and other parts of the world. Immigration from the Western hemisphere (i.e., Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean) continued unrestricted. The quota for each nation was set at 3 percent of the number of people descended from each nationality recorded in the 1920 census. Once the statistical manipulations were completed, almost 70 percent of the quota for the Eastern hemisphere went to just three countries: Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany.

The absurdities of the system soon became obvious, but it was nevertheless continued. British immigration had fallen sharply, so most of its quota of 65,000 went unfilled. However, the openings could not be transferred, even though countries such as Italy, with a quota of only 6,000, had 200,000 people who wanted to enter. However one rationalizes the purpose behind the act, the result was obvious: any English person, regardless of skill and whether related to anyone already here, could enter the country more easily than, say, a Greek doctor whose children were American citizens. The quota for Greece was 305, with the backlog of people wanting to come reaching 100,000.

By the end of the 1920s, annual immigration had dropped to one-fourth of its pre-World War I level. The worldwide economic depression of the 1930s decreased immigration still further. A brief upsurge in immigration just before World War II reflected the flight of Europeans from the oppression of expanding Nazi Germany. The war virtually ended transatlantic immigration. The era of the great European migration to the United States had been legislated out of existence.



Ellis Island

Although it was not opened until 1892, New York harbor's Ellis Island—the country's first federal immigration facility—quickly became the symbol of all the migrant streams to the United States. By the time it was closed in late 1954, it had processed 17 million immigrants. Today their descendants number over 100 million Americans. A major renovation project was launched in 1984 to restore Ellis Island as a national monument and a tourist destination.

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act

The national origin system was abandoned with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the foot of the Statue of Liberty. The primary goals of the act were to reunite families and to protect the American labor market. The act also initiated restrictions on immigration from Latin America. After the act, immigration increased by one-third, but the act's influence was primarily on the composition rather than the size of immigration. The sources of immigrants now included Italy, Greece, Portugal, Mexico, the Philippines, the West Indies, and South America. The effect is apparent when we compare the changing sources of immigration over the last 180 years, as shown in Figure 4.4. The most recent period shows that Asian and Latin American immigrants combined to account for 81 percent of the people who were permitted entry. This contrasts sharply with early immigration, which was dominated by arrivals from Europe.

The nature of immigration laws is exceedingly complex and is subjected to frequent, often minor, adjustments. In 2000 and 2006, between 840,000 and 1,270,000 people were legally admitted each year. For the most recent year, people were admitted for the following reasons:

Relatives of citizens	55%
Relatives of legal residents	9%
Employment based	13%
Refugees/people seeking political asylum	17%
Diversity (lottery among applications from nations historically sending few immigrants)	3%
Other	3%

Overall, two-thirds of the immigrants come to join their families, one-seventh because of skills needed in the United States, and another one-seventh because of special refugee status (Office of Immigration Statistics 2007, Table 7).

Contemporary Social Concerns

Although our current immigration policies are less restrictive than other nations', they are the subjects of great debate. Table 4.1 summarizes the benefits and concerns regarding immigration to the United States. Now we consider five continuing criticisms relating to our immigration policy: the brain drain, population growth, mixed status, English language acquisition, and illegal immigration. All five, but particularly illegal immigration, have provoked heated debates on the national level and continuing efforts to resolve them with new policies. We will then consider the economic impact of immigration, followed by the nation's policy toward refugees, a group distinct from immigrants.

TABLE 4.1
Immigration Benefits and Concerns

Potential Benefits	Areas of Concern
Provide needed skills	Drain needed resources from home country
Contribute to taxes	Send remittances home
May come with substantial capital to start business	Less-skilled immigrants compete with those already disadvantaged
Maintain growth of consumer market	Population growth
Diversify the population (intangible gain)	Language differences
Maintain ties with countries throughout the world	May complicate foreign policy by lobbying the government
	Illegal immigration

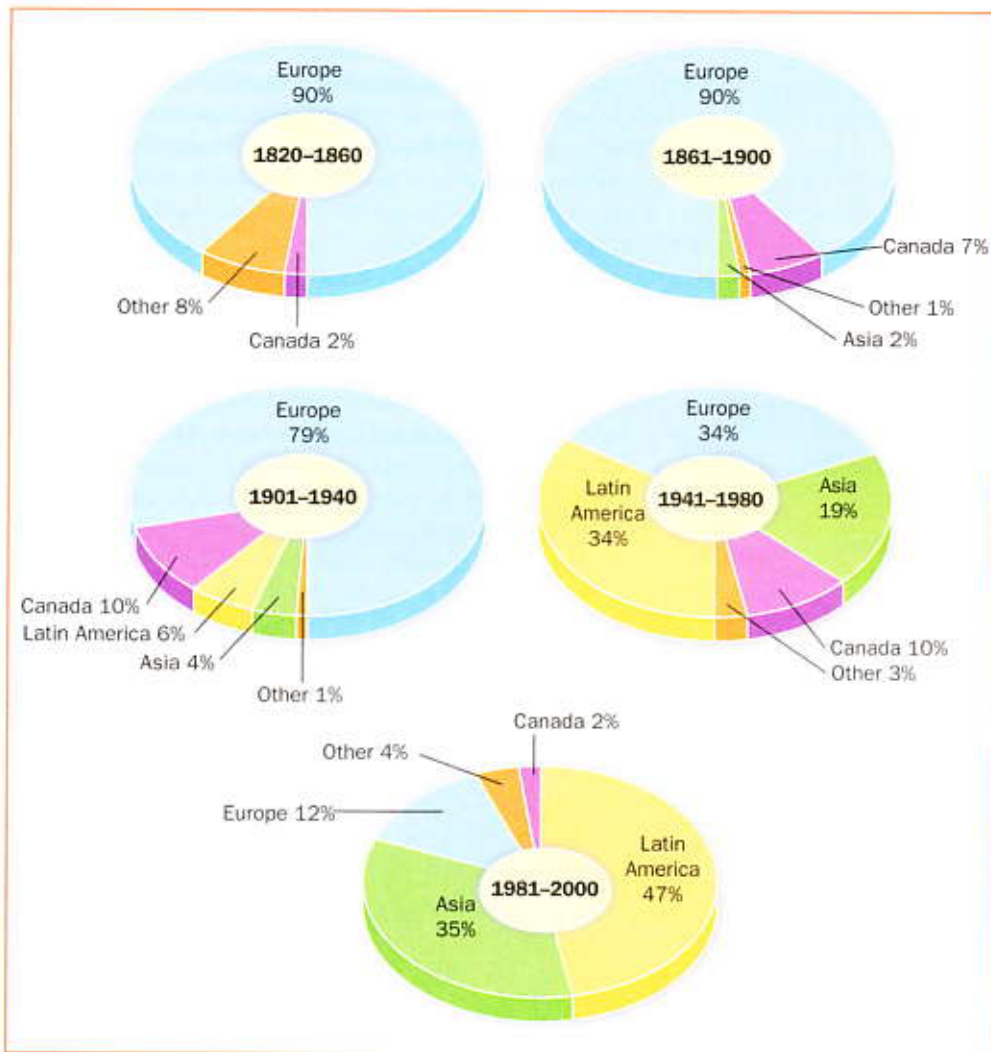


FIGURE 4.4
Legal Immigrants
Admitted to the United
States by Region of Last
Residence, 1820-2000

Source: Office of Immigration
 Statistics, 2006, 10-13.

The Brain Drain

How often have you identified your science or mathematics teacher or your physician as someone who was not born in the United States? This nation has clearly benefited from attracting human resources from throughout the world, but this phenomenon has had its price for the nations of origin.

Brain drain is the immigration to the United States of skilled workers, professionals, and technicians who are desperately needed by their home countries. In the mid-twentieth century, many scientists and other professionals from industrial nations, principally Germany and Great Britain, came to the United States. More recently, however, the brain drain has pulled emigrants from developing nations, including India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and several African nations. They are eligible for H-1B visas that qualify them for permanent work permits.

One out of four physicians in the United States is foreign-born and plays a critical role in serving areas with too few doctors. Thousands of skilled, educated Indians now seek to enter the United States, pulled by the economic opportunity. The pay differential is so great that, beginning in 2004, when foreign physicians were no longer favored with entry to the United States, physicians in the Philippines were retraining as nurses so that they could immigrate to the United States where, employed as nurses, they would make four times what they would as doctors in the Philippines (Mullen 2005; *New York Times* 2005b).

Many foreign students say they plan to return home. Fortunately for the United States, many do not and make their talents available in the United States. One study showed that

brain drain
 Immigration to the United States of skilled workers, professionals, and technicians who are desperately needed by their home countries.

the majority of foreign students receiving their doctorates in the sciences and engineering remain here four years later. Critics note, however, that this foreign supply means that this country overlooks its own minority scholars. Currently, for every two minority doctorates, five foreign citizens are receiving this degree. In the physical sciences, for every doctorate issued to a minority citizen, foreign citizens receive 11. More encouragement needs to be given to African Americans and Latinos to enter high-tech career paths.

Conflict theorists see the current brain drain as yet another symptom of the unequal distribution of world resources. In their view, it is ironic that the United States gives foreign aid to improve the technical resources of African and Asian countries while maintaining an immigration policy that encourages professionals in such nations to migrate to our shores. These are the very countries that have unacceptable public health conditions and need native scientists, educators, technicians, and other professionals. In addition, by relying on foreign talent, the United States is not encouraging native members of subordinate groups to enter these desirable fields of employment (Hoffer et al. 2001; Pearson 2006; Wessel 2001).

Population Growth

The United States, like a few other industrial nations, continues to accept large numbers of permanent immigrants and refugees. Although such immigration has increased since the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the nation's birthrate has decreased. Consequently, the contribution of immigration to population growth has become more significant. As citizen "baby boomers" age, the country has increasingly depended on the economically younger population fueled by immigrants (Meyers 2007).

Immigration, legal and illegal, accounted for about 45 percent to 60 percent of the nation's growth in the early years of the twenty-first century. To some observers, the United States is already overpopulated. The respected environmentalist group Sierra Club debated for several years whether to take an official position favoring restricting immigration, recognizing that greater numbers of people put greater strain on the nation's natural resources. Thus far, the majority of the club's members have indicated a desire to keep a neutral position rather than enter the politically charged immigration debate (Barringer 2004; Camarota 2007b; Passel and Cohn 2008).

The patterns of uneven settlement by immigrants in the United States are expected to continue so that future immigrants' impact on population growth will be felt much more in certain areas; say, California and New York rather than Wyoming or West Virginia. Although immigration and population growth may be viewed as national concerns, their impact is localized in certain areas such as Southern California and large urban centers nationwide (Bean et al. 2004).

Mixed-Status Families

Very little is simple when it comes to immigration, and this is particularly true to the challenge of "mixed status." **Mixed status** refers to families in which one or more members are citizens and one or more are noncitizens. This especially becomes problematic when the noncitizens are illegal or undocumented immigrants.

The problem of mixed status clearly emerges on two levels. On the macro level, when policy debates are made about issues that seem clear to many people—such as whether illegal immigrants should be allowed to attend state colleges or whether illegal immigrants should be immediately deported—the complicating factor of mixed-status families quickly emerges. On the micro level, the daily toll on members of mixed-status households is very difficult. Often the legal resident or even the U.S. citizen in a household finds daily life limited for fear of revealing the undocumented status of a parent or brother or even a son.

There are almost 7 million families in which the head of the household or spouse is an illegal immigrant. Yet in about one-third of these families, one or more of the children are U.S. citizens. This means that some of the issues facing illegal immigrants, whom we

mixed status

Families in which one or more members are citizens and one or more are noncitizens.

will discuss later, will also affect the citizens in the families because they are reluctant to bring attention to themselves for fear of revealing the legal status of their mother or father (Brewington 2008; Fix and Zimmerman 1999; Passel 2005).

Language Barriers

For many people in the United States, the most visible aspect of immigration are non-English speakers, businesses with foreign-language storefronts, and even familiar stores assuring potential customers that their employees speak Spanish or Polish or Chinese or some other foreign language.

About 19 percent of the population speaks a language other than English, as shown in Figure 4.5. Indeed, 32 different languages are spoken at home by at least 200,000 residents (Shin and Bruno 2003). As of 2006, about half of the 37 million people born abroad spoke English less than “very well.” This rises to 75 percent among those born in Mexico. Nationally, about 70 percent of Latino schoolchildren report speaking Spanish at home (Brodie et al. 2002; Bureau of the Census 2003a, 158, 2007c, Table S0506).

The myth of Anglo superiority has rested in part on language differences. (The term *Anglo* in the following text is used to mean all non-Hispanics but primarily Whites.) First, the criteria for economic and social achievement usually include proficiency in English. By such standards, Spanish-speaking pupils are judged less able to compete until they learn English. Second, many Anglos believe that Spanish is not an asset occupationally. Only recently, as government agencies have belatedly begun to serve Latino people and as businesses recognize the growing Latino consumer market, have Anglos recognized that knowing Spanish is not only useful but also necessary to carry out certain tasks.

Until the last 40 years, there was a conscious effort to devalue Spanish and other languages and to discourage the use of foreign languages in schools. In the case of Spanish, this practice was built on a pattern of segregating Hispanic schoolchildren from Anglos. In the recent past in the Southwest, Mexican Americans were assigned to Mexican schools to keep Anglo schools all-White. These Mexican schools, created through de jure school segregation, were substantially underfunded compared with the regular public schools. Legal action against such schools dates back to 1945, but it was not until 1970 that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, in *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District*, that the de jure segregation of Mexican Americans was unconstitutional. Appeals delayed implementation of that decision, and not until September 1975 was the de jure plan forcibly overturned in Corpus Christi, Texas (Commission on Civil Rights 1976).

Is it essential that English be the sole language of instruction in schools in the United States? **Bilingualism** is the use of two or more languages in places of work or educational facilities, according each language equal legitimacy. Thus, a program of **bilingual education** may instruct children in their native language (such as Spanish) while gradually introducing them to the language of the dominant society (English). If such a program is also bicultural, it will teach children about the culture of both linguistic groups. Bilingual education allows students to learn academic material in their own language while they are learning a second language. Proponents believe that, ideally, bilingual education programs should also allow English-speaking pupils to be bilingual, but generally they are directed only at making non-English speakers proficient in more than one language.

Do bilingual programs help children learn English? It is difficult to reach firm conclusions on the effectiveness of the bilingual programs in general because they vary so widely in their approach to non-English-speaking children. The programs differ in the length of the transition to English and how long they allow students to remain in bilingual classrooms. A major study released in 2004 analyzed more than three decades of

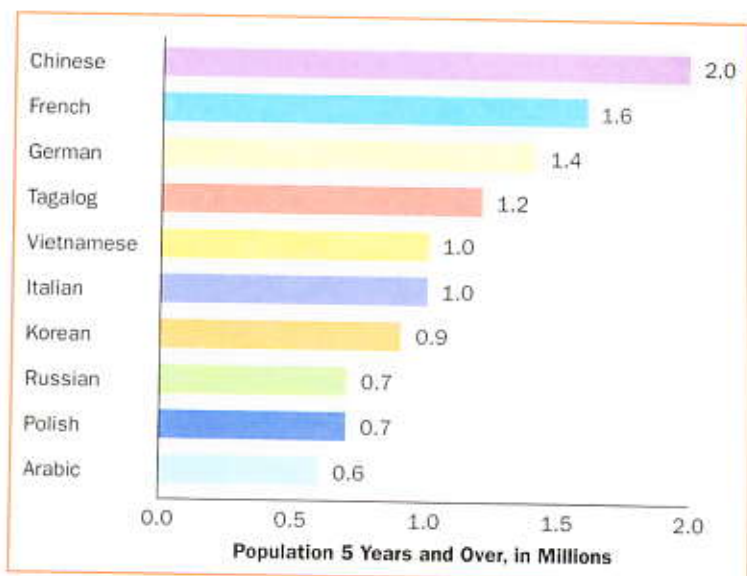


FIGURE 4.5
Ten Languages Most Frequently Spoken at Home, Other Than English and Spanish

Source: Data for 2000 released in 2003 in Shin and Bruno 2003.

bilingualism

The use of two or more languages in places of work or education and the treatment of each language as legitimate.

bilingual education

A program designed to allow students to learn academic concepts in their native language while they learn a second language.



The United States has a long history of receiving immigrants who do not speak English very well, and the response recently has included both bilingual programs as well as calls for a constitutional amendment to make English the official language.

States, 30 states as of 2008 have made English their official language. Repeated efforts have been made to introduce a constitutional amendment declaring English as the nation's official language. Even such an action would not completely outlaw bilingual or multilingual government services. It would, however, require that such services be called for specifically as in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which requires voting information to be available in multiple languages (U.S. English 2008).

Non-English speakers cluster in certain states, but bilingualism attracts nationwide passions. The release in 2006 of "Nuestro Himno," the Spanish-language version of "The Star-Spangled Banner," led to a strong reaction, with 69 percent of people saying it was appropriate to be sung only in English. Yet at least one congressman who decried the Spanish version sang the anthem himself in English with incorrect lyrics. Similarly, a locally famous restaurant owner in Philadelphia posted signs at his Philly steak sandwich diner announcing he would accept orders only in English. Passions remain strong as policy makers debate how much support should be given to people who speak other languages (Carroll 2006; Koch 2006b).

Illegal Immigration

The most bitterly debated aspect of U.S. immigration policy has been the control of illegal or undocumented immigrants. These immigrants and their families come to the United States in search of higher-paying jobs than their home countries can provide.

Because by definition, illegal immigrants are in the country illegally, the exact number of these undocumented or unauthorized workers is subject to estimates and disputes. Based on the best available information, there are more than 11 million illegal or unauthorized immigrants in the United States. This compares with about 4 million in 1992. Today, about 7.2 million are employed, accounting for about 5 percent of the entire civilian labor force (Camarota 2007b; Jenness et al. 2008; Passel 2006).

Illegal immigrants, and even legal immigrants, have become tied by the public to almost every social problem in the nation. They become the scapegoats for unemployment; they are labeled as "drug runners" and, especially since September 11, 2001, "terrorists." Their vital economic and cultural contribution to the United States is generally overlooked, as it has been for more than a hundred years.

The cost of the federal government's attempt to police the nation's borders and locate illegal immigrants is sizable. There are significant costs for aliens—that is,

research, combining 17 different studies, and found that bilingual education programs produce higher levels of student achievement in reading. The most successful are paired bilingual programs—those offering ongoing instruction in a native language and English at different times of the day (Slavin and Cheung 2003, Soltero 2008).

Attacks on bilingualism in both voting and education have taken several forms and have even broadened to question the appropriateness of U.S. residents using any language other than English. Federal policy has become more restrictive. Local schools have been given more authority to determine appropriate methods of instruction; they have also been forced to provide more of their own funding for bilingual education. In the United

foreign-born noncitizens—and for other citizens as well. Civil rights advocates have expressed concern that the procedures used to apprehend and deport people are discriminatory and deprive many aliens of their legal rights. American citizens of Hispanic or Asian origin, some of whom were born in the United States, may be greeted with prejudice and distrust, as if their names automatically imply that they are illegal immigrants. Furthermore, these citizens and legal residents of the United States may be unable to find work because employers wrongly believe that their documents are forged.

In the context of this illegal immigration, Congress approved the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) after debating it for nearly a decade. The act marked a historic change in immigration policy compared with earlier laws, as summarized in Table 4.2. Amnesty was granted to 1.7 million illegal immigrants who could document that they had established long-term residency in the United States. Under the IRCA, hiring illegal aliens became illegal, subjecting employers to fines and even prison sentences. Little workplace enforcement occurs for the hiring of undocumented workers. In 2007, fewer than 100 executives or hiring managers were arrested, and only 4,100 unauthorized workers were apprehended nationwide (Preston 2008).

Many illegal immigrants continue to live in fear and hiding, subject to even more severe harassment and discrimination than before. From a conflict perspective, these immigrants, primarily poor and Hispanic or Asian, are being firmly lodged at the bottom of the nation's social and economic hierarchies. However, from a functionalist perspective, employers, by paying low wages, are able to produce goods and services that are profitable for industry and more affordable to consumers. Despite the poor working conditions often experienced by illegal immigrants here, they continue to come because it is still in their best economic interest to work here in disadvantaged positions rather than seek wage labor unsuccessfully in their home countries.

Although never a priority, prosecuting those who hire illegal immigrants has fallen to the point where only about 100 employers are arrested annually, involving about 4,000 workers nationwide (Hsu 2008).

Amidst heated debate, Congress reached a compromise and passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, which emphasized making more effort to keep immigrants from entering the country illegally. The act prevented illegal immigrants from having access to such programs as Social Security and welfare. Legal immigrants would still be entitled to such benefits, although social service agencies were now required to verify their legal status. Another significant element was to increase border control and surveillance.

TABLE 4.2**Major Immigration Policies**

Policy	Target Group	Impact
Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882	Chinese	Effectively ended all Chinese immigration for more than 60 years
National origin system, 1921	Southern Europeans	Reduced overall immigration and significantly reduced likely immigration from Greece and Italy
Immigration and Nationality Act, 1965	Western hemisphere and the less skilled	Facilitated entry of skilled workers and relatives of U.S. residents
Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986	Illegal immigrants	Modest reduction of illegal immigration
Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996	Illegal immigrants	Greater border surveillance and increased scrutiny of legal immigrants seeking benefits

Illegal aliens or undocumented workers are not necessarily transient. A 2006 estimate indicated 60 percent had been here for at least five years. Many have established homes, families, and networks with relatives and friends in the United States whose legal status might differ. These are the mixed-status households noted earlier. For the most part, their lives are not much different from legal residents, except when they seek services that require citizenship status to be documented (Passel 2006).

Policy makers continue to avoid the only real way to stop illegal immigration: discourage employment opportunities. The public often thinks in terms of greater surveillance at the border. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, greater control of border traffic took on a new sense of urgency, even though almost all the men who took over the planes had entered the United States legally. It is very difficult to secure the vast boundaries that mark the United States on land and sea.

Reflecting the emphasis on heightened security, a potentially major shake-up took place in 2003. Since 1940, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had been in the Department of Justice, but now it was transferred to the newly formed Department of Homeland Security. The various functions of the INS were split into three agencies with a new Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services and two other units separately concerned with customs and border protection. For years, immigrant advocates had argued for the separation of border enforcement from immigration, but the placement of immigrant services in the office responsible for protecting the United States from terrorists has sent a chilling message to immigrants.

Numerous civil rights groups and migrant advocacy organizations have expressed alarm over the large numbers of people now crossing into the United States illegally who perish in their attempt. Some die in deserts, in isolated canyons, and while concealed in containers or locked in trucks during smuggling attempts. Several hundred die annually in the Southwest, seeking more and more dangerous crossing points, as border control has increased. However, this death toll has received little attention, causing one journalist to liken it to a jumbo jet crashing between Los Angeles and Phoenix every year without anyone giving it much notice (Del Olmo 2003; Sullivan 2005).

What certainly was noticed in 2006 was the public debate over how to stop further illegal immigration and what to do about illegal immigrants already inside the United States. Proposals to harden the border by erecting a 700-mile-long double concrete wall brought concerns that desperate immigrants would take even more chances with their lives in order to work in the United States. A congressional proposal to make assisting an illegal immigrant already here a felony led to strong counterdemonstrations that drew tens of thousands of marchers in cities across the United States. Meanwhile, the federal government, as it has for a century, struggled between addressing the need to attract workers to do jobs many people here legally would not do and enforcing the laws governing legal immigration (Tumulty 2006).

When it comes to issues of race and ethnicity, South Africa usually evokes past images of apartheid and the struggle to overcome generations of racial separation—both important topics to be considered in Chapter 16. However, in *Global View*, we consider the contemporary challenge of dealing with immigration.

Path to Citizenship: Naturalization

In **naturalization**, citizenship is conferred on a person after birth, a process that has been outlined by Congress and extends to foreigners the same benefits given to native-born U.S. citizens. Naturalized citizens, however, cannot serve as president.

Until the 1970s, most people who were naturalized had been born in Europe. Reflecting changing patterns of immigration, Asia and Latin America are now the largest sources of new citizens. In fact, in 2006, the number of naturalized citizens from Mexico came close to matching those from all of Europe. In recent years, the number of new citizens going through the naturalization process has been between one-half million and one million a year (Simanski 2007).



A Global View

IMMIGRATION AND SOUTH AFRICA

With its nearly 50 million people, the Republic of South Africa is not rich by global standards, but its economy is very attractive to most of the African continent. For example, South Africa has a gross national income per person of \$9,560, compared to well under \$1,000 in neighboring Zimbabwe. Even when South Africa was ruled by a White-supremacist government, Black Africans from throughout the continent came to the country fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries and to work, often in the mining of coal and diamonds. In the post-apartheid era, the numbers of immigrants, legal and illegal, have skyrocketed. Today's government is caught between compassion for those seeking entry and the growing inability of the economy to absorb those who seek work and shelter.

In 2008, the world took notice as riots broke out between poor South Africans taking out their rage on even more impoverished foreigners. The growing xenophobia took the government, which advocates racial harmony, by surprise as it tried to quell violence among Black Africans divided by citizenship status and nationality. In a matter of months in early 2008, some

32,000 immigrants had been driven from their homes, with attackers seizing all of their belongings. Some immigrants returned to their home countries—including Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe—but most settled temporarily in camps.

South Africa, with limited government resources, deported 260,000 in 2006–2007, a proportion nearly comparable to that of the United States (with six times the population), which reported 1.2 million deportations during the same period. However, estimates of the total number of illegal immigrants in South Africa range from 3 million to 5 million—a much higher proportion than estimated in the United States.

The scapegoating of immigrants, or “border jumpers” as they often are called in South Africa, is not unique to this nation, but for the global community that still relishes Nelson Mandela’s peaceful ascent to power, it has been a reminder of immigration’s challenge throughout the world.

Sources: Dixon 2007; Haub 2008; Koser 2008; Nevin 2008; Roodt 2008; Office of Immigration Statistics 2007; South African Institute of Race Relations 2007.

To become a naturalized U.S. citizen, a person must meet the following general conditions:

- be 18 years of age;
- have continually resided in the United States for at least 5 years (3 years for the spouses of U.S. citizens);
- have good moral character as determined by the absence of conviction of selected criminal offenses;
- be able to read, write, speak, and understand words of ordinary usage in the English language; and
- pass a test in U.S. government and history.

Table 4.3 offers a sample of the types of questions immigrants face on the citizenship test. As of 2009, the fee for applying for citizenship is \$675, compared with \$95 in 1998.

Although we often picture the United States as having a very insular, nativistic attitude toward foreigners living here, the country has a rather liberal policy toward people maintaining the citizenship of their old countries. Although most countries do not allow people to maintain dual (or even multiple) citizenships, the United States does not forbid it.

TABLE 4.3**So You Want to Be a Citizen?**

Try these sample questions from the naturalization test (answers below).

1. What do the stripes on the flag represent?
2. How many changes, or amendments, are there to the Constitution?
3. Who is the chief justice of the Supreme Court?
4. What are some of the requirements to be eligible to become president?
5. What are inalienable rights?
6. What is the introduction to the Constitution called, and what year was it written?
7. Name one right or freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment.
8. What group of essays supported passage of the U.S. Constitution?

Answers:
 (1) The first 13 states; (2) 27; (3) John Roberts; (4) Candidates for president must be natural-born citizens, be at least 35 years old, and have lived in the United States for at least 14 years; (5) Individual rights that people are born with; (6) The Preamble and 1787; (7) The rights are freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and press; and freedom to petition the government; (8) *The Federalist Papers*.

Source: Bureau of Citizenship and Immigrant Services (CIS) 2008. Sample reflects changes proposed by CIS as of January 2008.

Dual citizenship is most common when a person goes through naturalization after already being a citizen of another country or is a U.S.-born citizen and goes through the process of becoming a citizen of another country—for example, after marrying a foreigner (Department of State 2008).

The Economic Impact of Immigration

There is much public and scholarly debate about the economic effects of immigration, both legal and illegal. Varied, conflicting conclusions have resulted from research ranging from case studies of Korean immigrants' dominance among New York City greengrocers to mobility studies charting the progress of all immigrants and their children. The confusion results in part from the different methods of analysis. For example, the studies do not always include political refugees, who generally are less prepared than other refugees to become assimilated. Sometimes, the research focuses only on economic effects, such as whether people are employed or on welfare; in other cases, it also considers cultural factors such as knowledge of English.

In *Listen to Our Voices*, sociologist Tomás Jiménez of the University of California–San Diego considers the role that immigration has played in the United States in shaping the nation's identity.

Perhaps the most significant factor in determining the economic impact of immigration is whether a study examines the national impact of immigration or only its effects on a local area. Overall, we can conclude from the research that immigrants adapt well and are an asset to the local economy. In some areas, heavy immigration may drain a community's resources. However, it can also revitalize a local economy. Marginally employed workers, most of whom are either themselves immigrants or African Americans, often experience a negative impact by new arrivals. With or without immigration, competition for low-paying jobs in the United States is high, and those who gain the most from this competition are the employers and the consumers who want to keep prices down (Steinberg 2005; Zimmerman 2008).

The impact of immigration on African Americans deserves special attention. Given that African Americans are a large minority and many continue to be in the underclass, many people, including some Blacks themselves, perceive immigrants as advancing at the expense of the African American community. There is evidence that in the very lowest

paid jobs—for example, workers in chicken-processing plants—wages have dropped with the availability of unskilled immigrants to perform them, and Blacks have left these jobs for good. Many of these African Americans do not necessarily move to better or even equivalent jobs. This pattern is repeated in other relatively low-paying undesirable employment sectors, so Blacks are not alone in being impacted; but given other job opportunities, the impact is longer lasting (Borjas, Grogger, and Hanson 2006; Holzer 2008).

About 70 percent of illegal immigrant workers pay taxes of one type or another. Many of them do not file to receive entitled refunds or benefits. For example, in 2005, the Social Security Administration identified thousands of unauthorized workers contributing about \$7 billion to the fund but that could not be credited properly (Porter 2005).

Social science studies generally contradict many of the negative stereotypes about the economic impact of immigration. A variety of recent studies found that immigrants are a net economic gain for the population in times of economic boom as well as in periods of recession. But despite national gains, in some areas and for some groups, immigration may be an economic burden or create unwanted competition for jobs (Kochhar 2006).

What about the immigrants themselves? Considering contemporary immigrants as a group, we can make the following conclusions that show a mix of success and challenges to adaptation.

Less Encouraging

- Although immigrants have lower divorce rates and are less likely to form single-parent households than natives, their rates equal or exceed these rates by the second generation.
- Children in immigrant families tend to be healthier than U.S.-born children, but the advantage declines. We will consider this in greater detail later in this chapter.
- Immigrant children attend schools that are disproportionately attended by other poor children and students with limited English proficiency, so they are ethnically, economically, and linguistically isolated.

Positive Signs

- Immigrant families and, more broadly, noncitizen households are more likely to be on public assistance, but their time on public assistance is less and they receive fewer benefits. This is even true when considering special restrictions that may apply to noncitizens.
- Second-generation immigrants (i.e., children of immigrants) are overall doing as well as or better than White non-Hispanic natives in educational attainment, labor force participation, wages, and household income.
- Immigrants overwhelmingly (65 percent) continue to see learning English as an ethical obligation of all immigrants.

These positive trends diverge among specific immigrant groups, with Asian immigrants doing better than European immigrants, who do better than Latino immigrants (Capps et al. 2002; Zimmerman 2008; Farkas 2003; Fix et al. 2001; Myers et al. 2004).

One economic aspect of immigration that has received increasing attention is the role of **remittances**, or the monies that immigrants return to their countries of origin. The amounts are significant and measure in the hundreds of millions of dollars flowing from the United States to a number of countries where they provide substantial support for families and even venture capital for new businesses. Although some observers express concern over this outflow of money, others counter that it probably represents a small price to pay for the human capital that the United States is able to use in the form of the immigrants themselves. Immigrants in the United States send billions to their home countries and worldwide remittances bring about \$300 billion to all the world's developing countries, easily surpassing all other forms of foreign aid (International Fund for Agricultural Development 2007).

The concern about immigration today is both understandable and perplexing. The nation has always been uneasy about new arrivals, especially those who are different from the more affluent and the policy makers. In most of the 1990s, we had paradoxical

remittances

The monies that immigrants return to their country of origin.



THE NEXT AMERICANS

How immigrants and their descendants see themselves will change over time, and they will simultaneously transform many aspects of what it means to be an American. This is undoubtedly an uncomfortable process, fraught with tension between newcomers and established Americans that can occasionally become explosive. But the real issue is whether the United States can provide opportunities for upward mobility so that immigrants can, in turn, fortify what is most essential to our nation's identity.

History is instructive on whether immigrants will create a messy patchwork of ethnicities in the U.S. About a century ago, a tide of Southern and Eastern European immigrants arriving on our shores raised fears similar to those we hear today. Then, as now, Americans worried that the newcomers were destroying American identity. Many were certain that Catholic immigrants would help the pope rule the United States from Rome, and that immigrants from Southern Europe would contaminate the American gene pool.

None of this came to pass, of course. The pope has no political say in American affairs, the United States is still a capitalist



Tomás R. Jiménez

democracy, and there is nothing wrong with the American gene pool. The fact that these fears never materialized are often cited as proof that European-origin immigrants and their descendants successfully assimilated into an American societal monolith.

However, as sociologists Richard Alba and Victor Nee point out, much of the American identity as we know it today was shaped by previous waves of immigrants. For instance, they note that the Christmas tree and the leisure Sunday made their way into the American mainstream because German immigrants and their descendants brought these traditions with them. Where religion was concerned, Protestantism was the clear marker of the nonsecular mainstream. But because of the assimilation of millions of Jews and Catholics, we today commonly refer to an American "Judeo-Christian tradition," a far more encompassing notion of American religious identity than the one envisioned in the past. . . .

Even in Los Angeles County, where 36% of the population is foreign-born and more than half speak a language other than English at home, English is not losing out in the long run. According to a recent study by

concerns about immigrants hurting the economy despite strong economic growth. With the economic downturn beginning in 2008, it was clear that low-skilled immigrants (legal or illegal) took the hardest hit and, as a result, remittances immediately declined.

Women and Immigration

Immigration is presented as if all immigrants are similar, with the only distinctions being made concerning point of origin, education, and employment prospects. Another significant distinction is whether immigrants travel with or without their families. We often think that historical immigrants to the United States were males in search of work. Men dominate much of the labor migration worldwide, but because of the diversified labor force in the United States and some policies that facilitate relatives coming, immigration to the

Listen to Our Voices

social scientists Rubén Rumbaut, Douglas Massey, and Frank Bean, published in the *Population and Development Review*, the use of non-English languages virtually disappears among nearly all U.S.-born children of immigrants in the county. Spanish shows more staying power among the U.S.-born children and grandchildren of Mexican immigrants, which is not surprising given that the size of the Spanish-speaking population provides near-ubiquitous access to the language. But the survival of Spanish among U.S.-born descendants of Mexican immigrants does not come at the expense of their ability to speak English and, more strikingly, English overwhelms Spanish-language use among the grandchildren of these immigrants.

An equally telling sign of how much immigrants and their children are becoming “American” is how different they have become from those in their ethnic homelands. Virtually all of today’s immigrants stays connected to their countries of origin. They send money to family members who remain behind. Relatively inexpensive air, rail, and bus travel and the availability of cheap telecommunication and e-mail enable them to stay in constant contact, and dual citizenship allows their political voices to be heard from abroad. These enduring ties might lead to the conclusion that continuity

between here and there threatens loyalty to the Stars and Stripes.

But ask any immigrant or their children about a recent visit to their country of origin, and they are likely to tell you how American they felt. The family and friends they visit quickly recognize the prodigal children’s tastes for American styles, their American accents and their declining cultural familiarity with life in the ethnic homeland—all telltale signs that they’ve Americanized. As sociologist David Fitzgerald puts it, their assimilation into American society entails a good deal of “dissimilation” from the countries the immigrants left behind.

American identity is absorbing something quite significant from immigrants and being changed by them. Language, food, entertainment and holiday traditions are palpable aspects of American culture on which immigrants today, as in the past, are leaving their mark. Our everyday lexicon is sprinkled with Spanish words. We are now just as likely to grab a burrito as a burger. Hip-hop is tinged with South Asian rhythms. And Chinese New Year and Cinco de Mayo are taking their places alongside St. Patrick’s Day as widely celebrated American ethnic holidays.

Source: Jiménez 2007.

United States generally has been fairly balanced. Actually, most immigration historically appears to be families. For example, from 1870 through 1940, men entering the United States exceeded women by only about 10 percent to 20 percent. Since 1950, women immigrants have actually exceeded men by a modest amount (Gibson and Jung 2006).

The second-class status women normally experience in society is reflected in immigration. Most dramatically, women citizens who married immigrants who were not citizens actually lost their U.S. citizenship from 1907 through 1922 with few exceptions. However, this policy did not apply to men (Johnson 2004).

Immigrant women face not only all the challenges faced by immigrant men but also additional ones. Typically, they have the responsibility of navigating the new society when it comes to services for their family and, in particular, their children. Many new immigrants view the United States as a dangerous place to raise a family and therefore remain particularly vigilant of what happens in their children’s lives.

Immigration is a challenge to all family members, but immigrant women must navigate a new culture and a new country not only for themselves but also for their children, such as in this household in Colorado.



Caring for the health of their households falls mainly on women in their social roles as mother, wife, and caregiver for aging parents. In Research Focus, we consider the most recent research on how immigrants are doing in the United States in terms of health. The outcome may not be what one expects.

Male immigrants are more likely to be consumed with work, leaving the women to navigate the bureaucratic morass of city services, schools, medical facilities, and even everyday concerns such as stores and markets. Immigrant women are often reluctant to seek outside help whether they are in need of special services for medical purposes or they are victims of domestic violence. Yet immigrant women are more likely to be the liaison for the household, including adult men, to community associations and religious organizations (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003).

Women play a critical role in overseeing the household; for immigrant women, the added pressures of being in a new country and trying to move ahead in a different culture heighten this social role.

The Global Economy and Immigration

Immigration is defined by political boundaries that bring the movement of peoples crossing borders to the attention of government authorities and their policies. Within the United States, people may move their residence, but they are not immigrating. For residents in the member nations of the European Union, free movement of people within the union is also protected.

Yet, increasingly, people recognize the need to think beyond national borders and national identity. As noted in Chapter 1, **globalization** is the worldwide integration of government policies, cultures, social movements, and financial markets through trade, movement of people, and the exchange of ideas. In this global framework, even immigrants are less likely to think of themselves as residents of only one country. For generations, immigrants have used foreign-language newspapers to keep in touch with events in their home countries. Today, cable channels carry news and variety programs from their home countries, and the Internet offers immediate access to the homeland and kinfolk thousands of miles away.

Although it helps in bringing the world together, globalization has also highlighted the dramatic economic inequalities between nations. Today, people in North America, Europe, and Japan consume 32 times more resources than the billions of people in developing nations. Thanks to tourism, media, and other aspects of globalization, the people of less-affluent countries are aware of such affluent lifestyles and, of course, often aspire to enjoy them (Diamond 2003).

Transnationals are immigrants who sustain multiple social relationships that link their societies of origin and settlement. Immigrants from the Dominican Republic, for example, not only identify themselves with Americans but also maintain very close ties to their

globalization

Worldwide integration of government policies, cultures, social movements, and financial markets through trade, movements of people, and the exchange of ideas.

transnationals

Immigrants who sustain multiple social relationships that link their societies of origin and settlement.



Research Focus

ASSIMILATION MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH

Immigrants come to the United States seeking a better life, but the transition can be very difficult. We are familiar with the problems new arrivals experience in finding good jobs, but we may be less aware of how pervasive the challenges are.

Researchers continuously show that immigrants often encounter health problems as they leave behind old health networks and confront the private-pay system of medical care in the United States. The outcome is that the health of immigrants often deteriorates. Interestingly, this occurs with Puerto Ricans, who are citizens upon arrival and obviously do not experience as much culture shock as other new arrivals. Scholars Nancy Landale, R. S. Orapesa, and Bridget Gorman looked at the implications for infant mortality of migration from Puerto Rico to the United States. Their analysis showed that children of migrants have lower rates of infant mortality than do children of mainland-born Puerto Rican women. This means that babies of Puerto Rican mothers who are born in the United

States are more likely to die than those of mothers who migrated from Puerto Rico.

Why does this happen? Immigrants generally are still under the protection of their fellow travelers. They are still networked with other immigrants, who assist them in adapting to life in the United States. However, as life in a new country continues, these important social networks break down as people learn to navigate the new social system—in this example, the health care system. They are more likely to be uninsured and unable to afford medical care except in emergencies. The researchers do note that Puerto Ricans in the United States, regardless of recency of arrival, still experience better health than those in Puerto Rico. Of course, this finding only further indicates the legacy of the colonial relationship of Puerto Rico to the United States and the health care system there on the island.

Source: King 2007; Landale et al. 2000; Lara et al. 2005; Read and Emerson 2005.

Caribbean homeland. They return for visits, send remittances, and host extended stays of relatives and friends. Back in the Dominican Republic, villages reflect these close ties, as shown in billboards promoting special long-distance services to the United States and by the presence of household appliances sent by relatives. The volume of remittances worldwide is easily the most reliable source of foreign money going to poor countries, far outstripping foreign aid programs.

The growing number of transnationals, as well as immigration in general, directly reflects the world systems analysis we considered in Chapter 1. Transnationals are not new, but the ability to communicate and transfer resources makes the immigration experience today different from that of the nineteenth century. The sharp contrasts between the industrial “have” nations and the developing “have-not” nations only encourages movement across borders. The industrial haves gain benefits from such movement even when they seem to discourage it. The back-and-forth movement only serves to increase globalization and help create informal social networks between people who seek a better life and those already enjoying increased prosperity.

The transnationals themselves maintain a multithreaded relationship between friends and relatives in the United States, their home country, and perhaps other countries where relatives and friends have resettled. Besides the economic impact of remittances described above, scholars are increasingly giving attention to “social remittances” that include ideas, social norms, and practices (religious and secular) throughout this global social network (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007).

Refugees

refugees

People living outside their country of citizenship for fear of political or religious persecution.

asylees

Foreigners who have already entered the United States and now seek protection because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution.

Refugees are people living outside their country of citizenship for fear of political or religious persecution. Enough refugees exist to populate an entire "nation." There are approximately 11 million to 12 million refugees worldwide. That makes the nation of refugees larger than Belgium, Sweden, or Cuba. The United States has touted itself as a haven for political refugees. However, as we shall see, the welcome to political refugees has not always been unqualified.

The United States makes the largest financial contribution of any nation to worldwide assistance programs. The United States resettles about 70,000 refugees annually and served as the host to a cumulative 1 million refugees between 1990 and 2003. The post-9/11 years have seen the procedures become much more cumbersome for foreigners to acquire refugee status and gain entry to the United States. Many other nations much smaller and much poorer than the United States have many more refugees than the United States, with Jordan, Iran, and Pakistan hosting more than 1 million refugees each (Cumming-Bruce 2008; Jefferys 2007).

The United States, insulated by distance from wars and famines in Europe and Asia, has been able to be selective about which and how many refugees are welcomed. Since the arrival of refugees uprooted by World War II, the United States through the 1980s had allowed three groups of refugees to enter in numbers greater than regulations would ordinarily permit: Hungarians, Cubans, and Southeast Asians.

Despite periodic public opposition, the U.S. government is officially committed to accepting refugees from other nations. According to the United Nations treaty on refugees, which our government ratified in 1968, countries are obliged to refrain from forcibly returning people to territories where their lives or liberty might be endangered. However, it is not always clear whether a person is fleeing for his or her personal safety or to escape poverty. Although people in the latter category may be of humanitarian interest, they do not meet the official definition of refugees and are subject to deportation.

Refugees are people who are granted the right to enter a country while still residing abroad. **Asylees** are foreigners who have already entered the United States and now seek protection because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. This persecution may be based on the individual's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Asylees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the United States. Asylum is granted to about 13,000 people annually.

Because asylees, by definition, are already here, the outcome is either to grant them legal entry or to return them to their home country. It is the practice of deporting people who are fleeing poverty that has been the subject of criticism. There is a long tradition in the United States of facilitating the arrival of people leaving Communist nations, such as the Cubans. Mexicans who are refugees from poverty, Liberians fleeing civil war, and Haitians running from despotic rule are not similarly welcomed. The plight of Haitians has become one of particular concern.

Haitians began fleeing their country, often on small boats, in the 1980s. The U.S. Coast Guard intercepted many Haitians at sea, saving some of these boat people from death in their rickety and overcrowded wooden vessels. The Haitians said they feared detentions, torture, and execution if they remained in Haiti. Yet both Republican and Democratic administrations viewed most of the Haitian exiles as economic migrants rather than political refugees and opposed granting them asylum and permission to

As these Haitians now in detention facilities awaiting processing and most likely deportation found, the United States is often reluctant to accept refugees seeking to escape desperate conditions in their own countries.



enter the United States. Once apprehended, the Haitians are returned. In 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court, by an 8–1 vote, upheld the government's right to intercept Haitian refugees at sea and return them to their homeland without asylum hearings.

African Americans and others have denounced the Haitian refugee policy as racist. They have contrasted it to the “wet foot, dry foot” policy toward Cuban refugees. If the government intercepts Cubans at sea, they are returned; but if they escape detection and make it to the mainland, they may apply for asylum. About 75 percent of Cubans seeking asylum are granted refugee status, compared with only 22 percent of Haitians.

Even with only about a thousand Haitians successfully making it into the United States each year, there is an emerging Haitian American presence, especially in southern Florida. As of 2000, about 70,000 immigrants and their descendants live in metropolitan Miami. Despite continuing obstacles, the community exhibits pride in those who have succeeded, from a Haitian American Florida state legislator to hip-hop musician Wyclef Jean (Alvarez 2008; Dahlburg 2001; U.S. Committee for Refugees 2003).

New foreign military campaigns often bring new refugee issues. The occupation of Iraq, beginning in 2003, had been accompanied by large movements of Iraqis throughout the country and the region. Hopefully, most will return home, but some clearly are seeking to relocate to the United States. As was true in Vietnam, many Iraqis who have aided the U.S.-led mission have increasingly sought refuge in the West, fearing for their safety if they were to remain in Iraq or even in the Middle East. Gradually, the United States has begun to offer refugee status to Iraqis; some 2,700 arrived in 2008 to join an Iraqi American community of 90,000. The diverse landscape of the United States takes on yet another nationality group in large numbers (Bennett 2008; Klein 2008).

Conclusion

For its first hundred years, the United States allowed all immigrants to enter and become permanent residents. However, the federal policy of welcome did not mean that immigrants would not encounter discrimination and prejudice. The possibility of a melting pot, which had always been a fiction, was legislated out of existence.

In the 1960s and again in 1990, the policy was liberalized so that the importance of nationality was minimized, and a person's work skills and relationship to an American were emphasized. This liberalization came at a time when most Europeans no longer wanted to emigrate to the United States.

Throughout the history of the United States, as we have seen, there has been intense debate over the nation's immigration and refugee policies. In a sense, this debate reflects the deep value conflicts in the U.S. culture and parallels the “American dilemma” identified by Swedish social economist Gunnar Myrdal (1944). One strand of our culture, epitomized by the words “Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses,” has emphasized egalitarian principles and a desire to help people in their time of need. One could headily have anticipated at the time the Statue of Liberty was dedicated in 1886, that more than a century later that Barack Obama, the son of a Kenyan immigrant, would be elected President of the United States.

At the same time, however, hostility to potential immigrants and refugees, whether the Chinese in the 1880s, European Jews in the 1930s and 1940s, or Mexicans, Haitians, and Arabs today, reflects not only racial, ethnic, and religious prejudice but also a desire to maintain the dominant culture of the in-group by keeping out those viewed as outsiders. The conflict between these cultural values is central to the American dilemma of the twenty-first century.

The current debate about immigration is highly charged and emotional. Some people see it in economic terms, whereas others see the new arrivals as a challenge to the very culture of our society. Clearly, the general perception is that immigration presents a problem rather than a promise for the future.

Today's concern about immigrants follows generations of people coming to settle in the United States. This immigration in the past produced a very diverse country in terms of both nationality and religion, even before the immigration of the last 50 years. Therefore, the majority of Americans today are not descended from the English, and Protestants are just more than half of all worshippers. This diversity of religious and ethnic groups is examined in Chapter 5.

Summary

1. Immigration to the United States has been consistent since the country achieved its independence, but in the last 30 years the number of legal immigrants has even exceeded the numbers of the early 1900s.
2. Immigration has been regulated by United States; the first significant restriction was the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882.
3. Subsequent legislation through the national origins system favored northern and western Europeans. Not until 1965 were quotas by nation largely lifted.
4. Immigration policy is impacted by economic demands for workers who cannot be found among citizens. These workers may be professionals, but they also include large numbers of people who are prepared to do hard labor for wages deemed too low for most citizens but which are attractive to many people outside the United States.
5. Issues such as population growth, the brain drain, mixed-status households, and English-language acquisition influence contemporary immigration policy.
6. Illegal immigration remains formidable and heightened by new concerns about securing our borders since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
7. Economically, immigration impacts local communities differently, but the new arrivals typically pay taxes and energize the national economy.
8. Refugees present a special challenge to policy makers who balance humanitarian values against an unwillingness to accept all those who are fleeing poverty and political unrest.

Key Terms

asylees 108	globalization 106	remittances 103
bilingual education 97	mixed status 96	sinophobes 91
bilingualism 97	nativism 90	transnationals 106
brain drain 95	naturalization 100	xenophobia 90
chain immigration 87	refugees 108	

Review Questions

1. What are the functions and dysfunctions of immigration?
2. What were the social and economic issues when public opinion mounted against Chinese immigration to the United States?
3. Ultimately, what do you think is the major concern people have about contemporary immigration to the United States: the numbers of immigrants, their legal status, or their nationality?
4. What principles appear to guide U.S. refugee policy?

Critical Thinking

1. What is the immigrant root story of your family? Consider how your ancestors arrived in the United States and also how your family's past has been shaped by other immigrant groups.
2. Can you find evidence of the brain drain in terms of the professionals with whom you come in contact? Do you regard this as a benefit? What groups in the United States may not have been encouraged to fill such positions by the availability of such professionals?
3. What challenge does the presence of people in the United States speaking languages other than English present for them? For schools? For the workplace? For you?