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Immigration in American History

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Immigration in American History

by

William G. Spencer
January, 2010

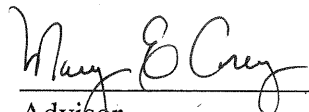
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Master of Science in Education

Immigration in American History

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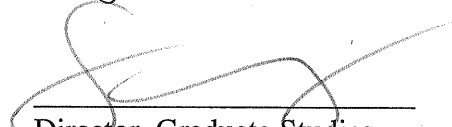
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Americans often cite their country as a nation of immigrants. To this end, the topic of American immigration has garnered significant attention by historians and sociologists, as well as policy makers. This historiography will review the body of research and analysis which has contributed to our current understanding and perspectives on American immigration.

To gain a firmer grasp of American immigration as it has evolved over time, this paper will examine how immigration has been researched through nine themes and events. These themes are: the general study of American immigration; early American immigration; nativism; the Chinese Exclusion Act; Immigration from Mexico; immigration's effect on American culture; American opinion on immigration; immigration in education; and immigration policy formation. Reviewing the research performed in each of these themes or events lends perspective to the overall landscape of immigration in American history.

The most logical place to begin exploring immigration in American history is to examine how historians have viewed and critiqued the study of immigration. In 1985, Thomas Archdeacon explored the problems of studying immigration in terms of ethnic history. Archdeacon, whose critique of immigration research appeared in the *International Migration Review*, argued that immigration and ethnic research are too often limited by the ethnic background of those conducting the research. According to Archdeacon, there is "a limitation of focus to the experiences of the

first and second generations individual immigrant groups, and a disinterest in immigration and ethnicity as processes.”¹ He asserted that researchers generally are biased towards studying the new immigrants of the twentieth century. Archdeacon notes that this is due to the fact that first and second generations of these groups can be easily located and many of the researchers are direct descendants of the new immigrants. Due to this bias, immigrant groups who have long since acculturated into American society do not receive sufficient attention. Ultimately, he concluded the study of immigrant history will remain incomplete until researchers systematically examine the influences of ethnicity on the lives of families that have been in the United States for more than two generations.²

Another major concern in the study of American immigration history is the lack of reliable immigration numbers in colonial, revolutionary, and early republic times. Henry Gemery explores this problem and points out that for a nation of immigrants, “the early immigration record is surprisingly uncertain.” Gemery’s work in 1989 included reviewing aggregate census and immigration records from 1700 to 1860. He noted that a key problem is that immigration records were not formally kept by the United States government until 1820. As such, historians need to rely on local demographic studies to estimate immigration patterns and numbers before this date.³ In addition, even after 1820, the United States government only tracked immigrants entering through seaports. Land-based immigration from Mexico and Canada remained undocumented. Based on demographic studies, Gemery asserted

that there was probably significant under-recording of immigration in the 18th and 19th centuries. ⁴

In response to this concern, Robert Cohn performed a comparative analysis of European immigrant groups during the Mass Migration of the mid 19th century. In addition, he analyzed the male to female and adult to child ratios by nationality. Through his analysis, Cohn found that the major sources of immigration during the Mass Migration were Ireland, England, and Germany. He also noted that most immigrants did not come to America in order to find jobs in factories, as would be seen in the late 19th century. In his gender analysis, Cohn found that there were increasing numbers of female immigrants across nationalities. He concluded that “the actual or perceived improvement in the labor market conditions for females in the United States could have attracted larger numbers of females.” He further found that immigrants who arrived from the European continent were much more likely to bring their entire families than immigrants from Ireland or England. Through 1845, immigrants from the British Isles were more likely to arrive alone. After 1846, however, the Irish potato famine prompted Irish families to immigrate in mass. At this point, America was not seen just as a place for opportunity, but as a place for survival. ⁵

In the decades before the Irish potato famine and the Mass Migration, it was long assumed that population growth in America was due almost entirely by natural increase. As noted by Gemery, no immigration records were kept by the United

States Government until 1820. In 1989, Hans-Jurgen Grabbe challenged the natural increase assumption by studying records which he used to estimate immigration numbers and patterns. Grabbe examined books kept by harbor captains, harbor pilots, customs offices, and health authorities covering the period 1783 through 1820. In addition, he also reviewed foreign emigration records for this time period.

Through his research, Grabbe found that contrary to the assumption of natural increase, there was a very strong immigration into the United States in the post revolutionary period. According to Grabbe's calculations, "a total of 366,00 immigrants of European descent came to the young United States from 1783 to the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century." He further noted that this is almost one and one-half times the total previously assumed. Grabbe pointed out that many of these immigrants came from Germany and Switzerland, and settled in the Philadelphia region. Other groups with sizable immigration numbers during this period included the Irish, English, Scottish, and Welsh. ⁶

Grabbe inferred two key points from his research. The first point was that though immigration was sizeable during this period, Americans chose to downplay its importance. Americans who participated in the revolution wanted to claim America's growth as their own. Secondly, Grabbe infers that the revolution turned the United States into the destination of choice for emigrants. ⁷

Soon after the United States began tracking immigration in 1820, a wave of anti-foreigner sentiment swept through the country. Raymond Cohn contributed significantly to current scholarship by directly linking the rise of nativism to the end of the Mass Migration in the 1840s and 1850s. In 2000, Cohn conducted research featuring a regression analysis of potential causes of the end of the Mass Migration. He noted that before his study, there were four main causes attributed to the sharp decline in immigration. These causes were: improved economic conditions in Europe; deteriorating economic conditions in the United States; Europe's involvement in the Crimean War; and the rise of the nativist movement.⁸

Of the four causes noted, Cohn pointed out that the nativist movement was generally perceived as the weakest. Cohn's studied challenged this perception and found that of the four causes, the rise in nativism most strongly influenced the end of the Mass Migration. Cohn stressed that nativist groups, "controlled virtually every New England state" and that "Congress included over 70 members of the Know-Nothings." Cohn ultimately concluded that the political success of groups such as the Know-Nothing Party and a growing intolerance of diversity associated with the nativist movement convinced potential immigrants to reconsider moving to the United States.⁹

Nativism is a theme which has resonated throughout American history. In 1997, George Sanchez explored how nativism has recently and adversely affected Asians and Latinos in the United States. In his study, Sanchez examined the events

which led to the group beatings of Rodney King and Reginald Denny in California. Sanchez found that before the infamous King and Denny beatings were captured on tape, there was a rise of nativism within the black community in South Central Los Angeles.¹⁰

In the decades leading up to the 1990s, traditionally black neighborhoods in South Central were being infiltrated by Korean and Mexican immigrants. Sanchez found that Blacks in South Central felt threatened by immigrants invading their culture. Sanchez notes, “the decision was not about who was white, but about who was not black...and centered around how Latinos and Asians had invaded the territory of South Central, one which they claimed as their own turf.”¹¹ As a result, blacks in South Central grew resentful of all non-blacks, as opposed to just whites. Sanchez noted that this was most evident in the twenty group beatings in South Central just before the King and Denny beatings. In eighteen of the twenty attacks, the victims were Asian or Latino. Sanchez concluded that the rise of modern-day nativism was the underlying cause of the attacks.

Historians have also fingered nativism as the driving force behind the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The Chinese were the first group which the United States government banned from immigration on the sole basis of race. In 1989, Lucy Salyer examined the judicial enforcement of the Act. By reviewing court case judgments and immigration records from the period 1882 through 1892, Salyer found that there were ways for Chinese immigrants to bypass the Act. Salyer found that despite the

official law banning entry of any Chinese person, local and federal courts routinely allowed Chinese people to immigrate into California. Salyer notes, “by 1890, Chinese had filed in the federal courts at San Francisco a total of 7,080 petitions to challenge the collector’s decisions to deny them entry and had won reversals in approximately 85 to 90 percent of the cases.” Salyer explains this phenomenon citing that Chinese immigrants had a strong network within the Chinese-American community which fought for their immigration approval in courts. Salyer noted that there were a strong number of talented Chinese-American lawyers who were committed to advocating for their Chinese countrymen.¹²

However, by 1893, white American nativists began to fiercely resist the blatant failure of Chinese Exclusion Act.¹³ In response, Congress expressly forbade any courts from granting exceptions to the Act. Erika Lee, in 2002, noted that Chinese immigrants found alternative ways to reaching American soil. Lee’s research consisted of a case study of United States border security with Mexico and Canada after the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Lee found that although anti-Chinese nativism formally ended legal immigration, Chinese people took advantage of lax immigration policies in Canada and Mexico to cross into America illegally over land. Lee noted that America responded by adding border security measures and imposing “American nativism, immigration laws, and enforcement practices on both Canada and Mexico” to control Chinese migration into the United States.¹⁴

The issue of immigration from Mexico remains in contemporary times. However, the immigrants from Mexico today tend to be Mexican, as opposed to Chinese. In 1999, Durand, Massey, and Parrado surveyed the current status of the Mexican immigration issue and analyzed the events leading to the mass permanent migration of Mexicans into the United States. The authors noted that by the mid 20th century, it became clear that Mexico trailed in global economic positioning. This created a severe shortage of jobs in Mexico at the same time when more workers were needed in the booming American economy. ¹⁵

For decades, Mexican migrant workers illegally crossed the border to find seasonal work. When the working season ended, the laborers generally migrated back to Mexico to share their earnings with their families. By the 1980, however a conservative movement in the United States called for a curtailment of illegal immigration. The United States adopted a new immigration policy called the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). The new law was designed to prohibit illegal immigration and grant amnesty to those immigrants who were already in America.

Durand, Massey, and Parrado argued that IRCA failed in its attempts to control illegal immigration. They found that the law convinced illegal immigrants to stay in the United States, while it did not effectively deter additional entrants. The authors noted that illegal immigration actually increased as a result of IRCA because

migrant workers encouraged their families in Mexico to come join them in the United States. The authors concluded that IRCA transformed Mexicans from seasonal migrants into “a more permanent population of settled legal immigrants” joined illegally by their families.¹⁵

The authors also found that IRCA had further reaching consequences. The law forced employers to document each employee’s employment eligibility. Instead, employers often subcontracted “foreign-looking” people and paid them lower wages than documented workers. The authors argue that this has contributed to an overall decline of unskilled labor wages.

The depression of wages is one of many impacts that historians have argued to be the effects of immigration on American culture. In 1998, Aaron Fogleman analyzed how America was shaped by immigration in colonial and revolutionary times. Fogleman examined 17th and 18th century immigration estimates and analyzed their relationship to the presence of indentured servants and African slaves.

Fogleman’s study identified several key conclusions. He noted that in early America, labor was needed to sustain settlements and help develop the colonies. Colonists encouraged others to join them in helping to build the economy. It was soon established that there were not enough free settlers to perform all of the labor which the colonies required. When free settlers were not available, colonists

embraced indentured servants to meet their labor needs. Fogleman notes that in the 17th century, indentured servants outnumbered free settlers three to one. ¹⁶

As conditions improved in Europe in the late 17th century, fewer Europeans saw a need to become indentured servants in America, and simply stayed in Europe. When the number of indentured servants was insufficient to meet the colonies' growing labor needs, African slaves were a welcome addition to the workforce.

Fogleman also examined the effect of the American revolution on the character of American immigration. He found that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution changed Americans' views which afforded white immigrants more freedoms. Fogleman notes, "many Americans concluded that a large immigration of slaves, convicts, and servants was incompatible with the egalitarian ideas of the Revolution and with the cultural changes occurring in the United States."

¹⁷ After America won its independence, America was perceived as a land for freedom and became the destination of choice for emigrants. Fogleman noted that in the years following the revolution, the vast majority of white immigrants came to the United States free of indenture. In addition, several Americans wanted to extend some of the freedoms afforded by the Declaration of Independence and Constitution to African slaves.

Ultimately, Fogleman found that while immigrant labor was embraced in the 17th and 18th century, most people who immigrated to America during this time

period arrived with curbed degrees of liberty. However, after the revolution, immigrants enjoyed more freedom.

In 1999, Mae Ngai complemented this research on the impact immigration has had on American culture. Ngai explored how the Immigration Act of 1924 helped construct an American race. Ngai's research was based on an analysis of immigration quotas and statistics in the years following the Act.

Ngai noted that the Immigration Act of 1924 was a policy aimed at reducing the number of immigrants from certain ethnicities. The United States created a quota system which restricted immigration from a country to the proportion of that respective nationality already living in the United States. Ngai argued that the government designed this law to maintain the population predominance of Americans with Northern and Western European ancestry. The quota system resulted in very low immigration allowances for "less desirable" ethnic groups, including Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans.¹⁸

Another contemporary study, conducted by Charles Hirschman, challenges the traditional perception that immigration breeds nativism and racism. In his 2005 article, Hirschman argues that immigration creates diversity, which in turn, encourages tolerance. Hirschman concludes, "immigration, along with preexisting sources of population diversity, has created a more cosmopolitan and tolerant society that is much less susceptible to monolithic claims of American nationalism."

Moreover, Hirschman argues that immigrants generally come to America because they value American ideals and they seek to share and help establish civic and cultural norms.¹⁹

Immigration has also affected American culture by influencing school choices. In 1980, sociologists John Ralph and Richard Rubinson conducted an empirical study analyzing the correlations between immigration and school enrollment. Ralph and Richardson found that when nativism is at its peak and immigration policy is liberal, public school enrollment has decreased and private school enrollment has increased. The researchers attributed this to natives fearing to send their children to public school with immigrants and choosing private school as an alternative. When nativism is high and immigration policy limits non-Anglo Saxon immigrants, as in the Immigration Act of 1924, public school enrollment increased and private school enrollment decreased.²⁰

Ralph and Rubin concluded from their study that nativism combined with immigration caused parents to perceive a threat to their children. The researchers, however concede that the study lacks detail regarding which immigrant groups generated the most perceived threats. As such, the authors suggest future research in the area.

The perception of threat from foreigners arriving at American shores is a recurring theme in American history. Even in modern times, xenophobic attitudes

have dominated American opinion on immigration. Research, however, has shown that American attitudes have not been the same towards all immigrant groups. Research over the past fifty years shows marked contrasts in the way Americans have responded to various immigrant groups in history.

In 1960, Elizabeth Cometti analyzed the American reception of Swiss immigrants for the period 1864-1884. Cometti's study examined Swiss immigration into West Virginia. In her case study, Cometti found that the Swiss were welcomed and encouraged to settle in the United States. In particular, residents of West Virginia saw the Swiss as ideal immigrants to help the land and develop their economy. Cometti notes, "Swiss immigrants were generally esteemed in West Virginia, as they were throughout America."²¹

Cometti concluded that race was the primary reason for Americans' embrace of Swiss immigrants. The Swiss were viewed as a high quality race, which was considered both desirable and assimilable. This group of immigrants looked similar to old-stock Americans and shared the Protestant tradition.

Cometti notes, however, that several West Virginians encouraged the Swiss to immigrate in order to take advantage of them. Due to their lack of proficiency in the English language and naiveté of American laws, many Swiss immigrants were exploited with fraudulent land sales. In these cases, Swiss immigrants purchased land from unscrupulous Americans who did not have legal title to the property.²²

In 1966, another study supported Americans tolerance of immigrants. Murphy and Blumenthal argued that the United States continues to be an immigrant receiving country in both principle and practice. This implies that the American government not only accepted immigrants both also embraced them at their arrival.

Murphy and Blumenthal argued that the tolerance of immigrants is evidenced by the United States immigration policy no longer discriminating on the basis of race. In addition, the authors pointed out that new federal welfare programs were targeted at improving the lives of immigrants. The authors also ventured to say that the immigrant is well received not just by the government, but by American citizens themselves. They argue that the contemporary American culture, including government assistance programs, facilitated immigrants' easy transition into society.²³ Finally, the authors argued that although some Americans feared losing their jobs to immigrants, most realized that immigrants help the economy by increasing consumer demand.

By the 1980s however, researchers have taken a converse perspective on American attitudes towards immigration. What was considered acceptance and tolerance in the 1960s might have actually been a façade covering deep-seated American nativism. In 1986, Edwin Harwood explored the relationship between public opinion and United States immigration policy in the 1970s and 1980s. By reviewing opinion polls and government policy, Harwood found that American views

of immigration were increasingly negative. He notes, "because of economic and other problems, Americans became more restrictionist toward immigrants." He points out that these sentiments have been strong for decades but there have been a lack of mobilized interest groups to actually compel the government to make a change to immigration policy. Ultimately, Harwood concluded that the majority opinion against immigration was not powerful because it was not well organized.²⁴

Consistent with Harwood's arguments, in 1993, Rita Simon found that most Americans quietly resisted immigration. Her study consisted of analyzing survey results of recent descendants of immigrants and of Americans in general. Overall, Simon found that Americans are generally proud of the contributions made by early, white, fair-skinned immigrants. She noted that most Americans cling to an outdated American image which is of Anglo-Saxon ancestry.

Simon found that the only popular or valued immigrants are those who arrived a long time ago, and are now not truly seen as immigrants. The Irish, for example, are widely embraced in America society today. Simon notes that this is because they have enmeshed themselves into American culture. In the 1840s, however, Americans viewed the Irish as undesirable and inassimilable.²⁵

Another perspective which is garnering increased attention among researchers is that of African Americans. Jeff Diamond, in a 1998 article for the *International Migration Review*, explored how African Americans view United States immigration

policy. To conduct his study, Diamond examined historical and recent surveys of black opinion on immigration.

Through his study, Diamond found that blacks have always been torn on the issue of immigration. As far back as antebellum times, blacks in the North feared having their jobs taken by immigrants. For example, in New York City, before the Mass Migration, most wealthy families hired African Americans as house servants. In addition, many blacks found work as petty merchants or artisans. After the influx of immigrants, northern blacks lost these jobs and had to find lesser, menial types of work. Diamond found that immigrants were, “overwhelmingly uneducated and unskilled, and they tended to settle in the urban areas of the North, where they would compete with the many similarly situated free blacks.”²⁶

After the Civil War, southern blacks opposed an influx of Chinese labor into the south. Diamond notes that white plantation owners sought cheap Chinese labor to replace the labor lost from the ending of slavery. Blacks wanted to keep their labor in demand and therefore resisted Chinese labor supplanting their importance in the southern economy. Diamond notes however, that blacks did not want to keep the Chinese out permanently. Many blacks bitterly opposed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 because they did not think any race should be singled out for exclusion.

Regarding current immigration issues, blacks remain torn between their ideals and their economic welfare. Current African American newspapers favor liberal

immigration policy regarding Mexicans. They use their position on the immigration issue to fight against American racism in general. Diamond notes, "many blacks have historically viewed the advancement of their race as linked to acceptance in American society of universal principles of fairness and justice." However, Diamond found that most blacks oppose free immigration for fear of losing their jobs to unskilled Mexican labor.²⁷

American opinion on immigration may be largely a function of the way it is presented in education. Most migration historians and sociologists argue that immigration is not afforded enough attention in high school or college American history studies. Research from the past twenty years has indicated that immigration history has not received its due attention in classrooms or textbooks.

In 1987, Sam McSeveney reviewed several college American history textbooks for coverage on the topic of immigration. His analysis showed that not only is coverage brief, but much of it is also filled with errors. In addition, some key ideas about literacy tests and other restrictions on immigration are omitted from textbooks entirely.²⁸

In 2004, Diane Vecchio reviewed the degree to which immigration and ethnicity are included in school curriculum. Similar to McSeveney's findings two decades before, Vecchio concluded that students are leaving high school without a reasonable grasp on immigration and ethnicity in American history. She argued that

teachers must “discuss immigration as a continuous process in American history”, as opposed to in the context of an isolated unit. She further contended that students should learn to examine the development of the American identity from the immigrant viewpoint. Finally, she asserted that students need to learn how Americans have accepted or resisted ethnic diversity.²⁹

How immigration is taught and how it is perceived are two of the leading contributors to the formation of United States immigration policy. In 1982, Maxine Seller analyzed how the major argument for and against immigration have shaped United States immigration policy over time. In her study, Seller examined key factors which played roles in three immigration periods: early 18th century; pre-Civil War decades; and late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Through her analysis, Seller found that there are moral justifications for accepting immigrants into America. During various point in American history, Americans sought to help people suffering from political or religious persecution or natural disasters. Seller, however, noted that most immigrants entered the nation not to avoid persecution or natural disasters, but in search of economic opportunities. Seller pointed out that many Americans realized that immigration could be economically positive for America as well. These Americans believed that immigrants were generally able, energetic, and ambitious. Furthermore, they believed that immigrants added cultural richness to America.

This pro-immigration position assumes that immigrants are worthy, productive, and socially desirable. It further assumes that immigrants are adaptable to American life and that they will have a minimal and favorable impact on society. Ultimately, those favoring liberal immigration policy believe that immigrants represent the best of their respective nations.³⁰

In contrast, Seller noted that those against immigration argue that immigrants endanger economic, political, and cultural welfare. They fear that immigrants will consume American resources which would have otherwise been available to citizens. Seller explains the restrictionist viewpoint that, “the massive infusions of alien beliefs, customs, and genes would undermine the nation’s unity, destroy its cultural identity, and mongrelize its population.” Further, Seller noted that opponents argue that immigrants take jobs away from Americans and depress wages for unskilled labor. Ultimately, those in favor of strict immigration policy believe that immigrants are the lowest of their nation and that they come to America because they could not succeed in their own country.³¹

Seller also noted that current immigrants are now coming from the world’s poorest countries, as opposed to fleeing richer countries for political or religious freedoms. She pointed to a trend in American history which indicates that when there are increases in perceived global or economic threats, immigration policy tightens. In addition, when America has failed militarily or diplomatically in the world, the government tends to tighten immigration as a backlash. Finally, when economic

times are poor, Seller noted that the American people tend to use immigrants as a scapegoat.

In 1986, Otis Graham expanded on Seller's arguments, challenging how history is being used as a basis for immigration policy. Graham's research involved an analysis of the failed Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill of 1984. In this case study, Graham concludes that policy makers misused history in order to defeat passing the bill into law. A problem that Graham identified is that policy makers cite immigration in history to support their position but they seldom use professional historians as a reference.

Graham found that in this case, as in others, history has been cited to defeat otherwise legitimate proposals. It is presumed that since a policy did not work in the past, then it should be shunned in the present and future, regardless of differences in circumstances. Graham asserts, "a misapplied past has made our national future more difficult by helping to confuse the policy process." Graham argues that if history was applied in appropriate contexts only, then policy makers may be able to consider some avenues of policy which might actually work in the present day.³²

In 1997, J. Taylor and Philip Martin explored the consequences of immigrant farm labor and how these workers are contributing to immigration policy. Taylor and Martin explored two conflicting theories from the 1980s and the 1990s. In the 1980s, the authors note that immigrants had positive effects on America as they helped build

the economy, while saving the desirable jobs for American citizens. By contrast in the 1990s, the authors argue that the typical view was that immigrants take over local jobs by accepting low pay and drive local workers away from the area.

To test the theories, Taylor and Martin measured the economic impact of immigration on rural California, relating immigration, employment, poverty, and government welfare. Through their research, the authors found a strong correlation between agriculture production and poverty. An increase in immigration directly increased the number of individuals working on farms. An increase in farm employment directly increased the number of individuals living below the poverty level and receiving government assistance.³³ Due to the high rate of immigrants working in agriculture, the United State government has created assistance programs for immigrants in poverty. The programs include cash assistance, Medicaid, food stamps. The government also provides for education, training and other health-related services.

The Taylor and Martin note that the American public is growing increasingly aware and unsettled by the government assistance given to immigrants. In response, modern day nativist groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of White People, U.S. Citizens, Inc., and the Rockford Institute are among the most vocal in influencing government immigration and welfare policies.

Over time, researchers have modified the study of immigration in American history. As shown in this historiography, certain immigrant groups are receiving a great deal of attention. For example, the new immigrants of the 20th century tend to receive more research than older immigrant groups. In addition, new research is including perspectives of Americans who were not previously considered. For example, there is a growing field of research addressing African American perspectives on immigration. Finally, the way researchers have viewed immigration appears to be influenced by the times in which they were writing. In the 1960s, when liberal forces were peaking, researchers focused on how Americans found the best in those arriving at its shores. However, into the 1970s and since, research has focused more on condemning Americans for their xenophobia and nativism.

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Perspectives on American immigration have been greatly influenced by the media and popular culture. Motion pictures, especially, have had a profound effect on the way Americans alternatively accept, embrace, and reject immigrants. This paper reviews and analyzes movies in popular American culture which create impressions about various immigrant groups.

The researcher has established two key objectives which drove this study. The first objective was to analyze how six influential immigrant groups have been characterized in popular film. The second objective of this research was to examine how the six immigrant groups' respective demographic images in films compare to actual recent demographic statistics per the 2000 United States Census.

In determining which movies to select, the researcher reviewed a list of immigrant-related movies on Muthy.com. Murthy is an immigration law firm which seeks to advance the cause of immigrants in American society. In addition to selecting several films from this list, the researcher also chose some movies based on their familiarity in the public spectrum. The immigrant groups analyzed in this paper were chosen based on their influence on American culture, either historically or in modern times. These groups include the Irish, Italian, Russian, Greek, Chinese, and Mexican.

The Irish have been characterized in many films, including *Gangs of New York*, *Far and Away*, and *In America*. *Gangs of New York* was a Martin Scorsese film

released in 2003 which chronicled the Irish versus nativists struggles in the mid 19th century. In this drama, Irish immigrant, Amsterdam, seeks to avenge his father's murder against nativist gang leader, Bill Cutting. Ultimately, New York City erupts into race riots between Irish, nativists, and blacks as the country moves into the Civil War. This movie characterizes the Irish as poor. Amsterdam says, "Everywhere you went people talked about the draft, they say you could buy your way out of it for \$300 but for us Irish it might as well have been \$3 million." Here, we see the Irish portrayed as too poor to buy their way out of military service.

This film also portrays the Irish as violent. In a verbal altercation with another Irishman, Amsterdam says, "Are you callin' me a chisler? Because if you are, then we've got business." Amsterdam and the other Irishman proceed into a bloody fistfight. This shows Irish immigrants as hot-tempered and quick to resort to physical violence to resolve differences.

The Irish are also likened to insects in this film. A billboard in New York reads, "An Irish Invasion...while the North invades the South, the Irish invade New York...talk about locusts! Irish and more Irish, this year we have whole shiploads of them!" This portrays the Irish as unwelcome immigrants "invading" the city in way similar to destructive pests.

In addition, this film characterizes the Irish as criminals. Amsterdam says, "New York loved William Tweed or hated him, but for those of us trying to be

thieves we could not help but admire him.” Here, the Irish are portrayed as outlaws and without scruples. Another example came from the Irish police chief, “You boys will settle with me before you settle with each other” as he steals a share of the jewelry stolen by Amsterdam and his friends. This characterizes the Irish as member of the police force and corrupt.

Catholicism is also built into the Irish characterization in *Gangs of New York*. When the Irish gang marches into battle, gang members proudly carry Celtic crosses. When preparing to kill Bill Cutting, Amsterdam prays, “Lord give me the strength to do what I must do.” This shows the Irish as religious and finding strength and comfort in Catholicism to perform the act of revenge.

Finally this movie perpetuates the stereotype that Irish are drunks. A fellow Irishman is introducing Amsterdam to a neighborhood explaining, “Maggie tried to open her own drunk shop but she drunk up all her own liquor and got thrown out on the street.” This shows the Irish as unable to operate productively in society because of their alcoholism.

A second film which characterizes the Irish is *Far and Away*. This drama, released in 1992, follows the journey of Joseph, a poor tenant farmer in Ireland, make his way to America. The story takes place in the late 19th century as peasants in Ireland began to rebel against unfair rents imposed by rich landlords. Joseph escaped from Ireland with the assistance of a wealthy landowner’s daughter, Shannon. The

pair struggle to survive in Boston and eventually unite in Oklahoma to realize their dreams of owning land.

This movie characterizes the Irish as land-hungry. In Ireland, Joseph's father tells him, "Without land, a man is nothing, they say." This shows that the Irish believe that the value of a man is directly related to the land that he owns. This implies that an Irish man cannot respect himself without land ownership.

Far and Away also portrays the Irish as reserved and conservative. When Shannon rides home to her Irish mansion, her mother says, "Shannon, I saw you galloping in the fields...dignity Shannon, dignity...a lady must always be civilized, even when she rides." This quote shows that Irish women were expected to constantly be aware of their image and should fear being seen as uncivilized. This characterization is seen again when Shannon's mother speaks to Shannon about her undone collar, "Do it up...it's better to choke than be vulgar." This portrays upper-class Irish women as caring more about how they are presented than their physical comfort.

Irish women are also presented as jealous in this movie. When Shannon discovers that Joseph may take an American girlfriend to church, she says, "It must be hard to go to the confession box at church...she could never come out." This characterizes Irish women as jealous, contemptuous, and judgmental.

Far and Away also portrays the Irish as racist and resistant to social mobility. When Joseph entered the bare fisted fighting circuit in Boston, he was scheduled for a championship match against an Italian immigrant. The Irish boy who promoted the fights, announced "The club is crawling with Iti's!". This shows the Irish not being above using racial slurs. In addition, wealthy Irishman, Stephen speaks down to Joseph about trying to bond with Shannon, "Did you really think you could rise to her station in life?" This indicates clear social class stratifications and lack of social mobility in Irish culture.

This movie also shows Irish as heavy drinkers. There are several scenes in both Ireland and America where the Irish are indulging in excess drinking. When Joseph returns to the Boston inn where Shannon and he were staying, he says, "How can you be drunk? You just left my sight." Shannon responds, "When I finish this one, I may or may not have another one." Shannon proceeds to quickly consume her drink and prepare for another. This scene portrays the Irish as unable to control their alcoholism.

A third film which characterizes Irish-American immigrants is *In America*. This 2002 movie, directed by Jim Sheridan, is a drama about a 1980s Irish family seeking a better life in America. The film portrays a poor Irish family of husband, wife, and two school aged daughters sneaking into America through Canada. In addition to trying to improve their financial situation, the family is also leaving Ireland to leave behind the memory of their deceased third child. Ultimately the

family is able to find peace when they have a new baby in America and are finally able to say goodbye to their lost child.

In America shows Irish immigrants as poor, desperate, and living in squalor. Upon arriving to New York City, the only apartment they could afford to rent was in the “junkee building”. When the family moves into the apartment, it appears dark, filthy, and inhabited by pigeons. The younger daughter naively says, “Dad can we keep the pigeons?” This characterizes the Irish as members of the lowest social-economic class.

This film also characterizes Irish immigrants as idealistic. After moving to New York, the oldest daughter, and narrator, says “It seems all our problems are flying away.” Despite being destitute in a foreign and unfamiliar land, the Irish are portrayed as only seeing the best in the situation.

In America shows the Irish as impulsive gamblers. Though the family had barely enough money to pay the month’s rent, the father risked losing everything they had in a carnival game. The mother and the daughters were also well aware of the risk however, they encouraged him to continue playing until he won his money back.

The reason the father was able to win his money back, the narrator says, is because of a prayer she sent to God and her deceased brother. The film shows the family as devout Catholics, despite the tragedies they have suffered. The oldest

daughter recalls, "We had to go to Catholic school, so my dad took a night job." This portrays the Irish as so committed to their faith that even in poverty, a Catholic education is necessary.

The second immigrant group examined in this study are the Italians. Two popular movies which characterize Italian-Americans are *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas*. *The Godfather*, released in 1972 and directed by Francis Ford Coppola, is a drama exploring the lives of mafia leaders in the New York City area. The movie is set in the 1940s as Italian-Americans come to Don Vito Corleone (the Godfather) for justice. Gang wars develop among rival families and Michael Corleone enters the mafia scene as he avenges an attack on his father.

The Godfather characterizes Italian-Americans as victims of an American system set against them. A man appealing to the Godfather for help after his daughter was attacked says, "I believe in America...I went to the police...the judge suspended their sentences...I felt like a fool in the courtroom." Since the system failed the Italian-American, he felt he must take vigilant action using an illegal organization, the mafia.

The film portrays Italian immigrants as sensitive to their honor. In response to a request for vigilant action, Don Corleone says, "Why did you go to the police? Why didn't you come to me first?" Here, Corleone's honor is insulted since he was not chosen as the man's first recourse to his problem. In addition, it characterizes

Italians as believing that justice is better handled by mobsters and that one cannot depend on the police.

The Godfather repeatedly shows Italians as pro-crime. Don Corleone's oldest son, Sonny says, "God damn FBI don't respect nothing". This characterizes Italians as being against law enforcement. In addition, Corleone's top adviser speaks of a new business venture for the family, "Narcotics is the thing of the future, if we don't get into that action, we'll risk everything we have...if not now, ten years from now." Here, Italian-Americans are portrayed as money-obsessed drug dealers.

A second film which portray Italian-Americans is *Goodfellas*. Like, *The Godfather*, this was also a very popular crime drama involving the Italian mafia. The story takes place in 1950s Brooklyn. Half-Italian Henry Hill quits school to begin a new life as a mobster. He becomes consumed by gangster life with fellow mob members Jimmy and Tommy.

Goodfellas paints Italians as violent and unlawful. The film begins with a narration from Henry Hill, "As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster." Here, Italian men are shown as glorifying violence and a life of crime. In addition, Italians are seen as an immigrant group which holds its honor high. In a violent scene, Tommy and Jimmy avenge Tommy's honor by brutally beating another mob leader for having previously insulted Tommy when he was a shoe-shine boy.

This perpetuates the notion that Italians do not forget when someone offends them and hold grudges or vendettas.

Despite being portrayed as tight-knit as gang members, Italians are also portrayed as disloyal. In *Goodfellas*, Tommy and Jimmie turn against Henry and try to kill him. This prompts Henry to testify against Tommy and Jimmie in order to protect his family. This suggests that Italian alliances are fleeting when individuals seek to promote their own self-interest.

The third group analyzed in this study are the Russians. This researched reviewed three movies which created meaningful impressions of Russian immigrants. These movies are *Hester Street*, *Avalon*, and *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. In each of these movies, the main characters are not only Russian but also Jewish. As a result, an overall impression is reached suggesting that Jews were more likely to flee Russia for America than gentiles.

Hester Street is a 1974 drama which follows the story of a young Russian immigrant in the 1890s. Jankov, or Jake, is joined by his wife and young son shortly after he has established himself in New York City. His wife, Gitl, is stunned to learn that Jake has become Americanized and is abandoning his Russian and Jewish traditions. Gitl also discovers that Jake has been seeing a mistress. Ultimately, Gitl finds the strength to divorce him and negotiates a large divorce settlement.

Using the character of Jake, this movie portrays Russians as adaptable to American ways. Jake says to his friends, "In America you marry for love, and that's all....this is not the old county like Russia or Poland." Here, Russians are characterized as resentful of the ways they were forced to live in their homelands. Jake further portrays his embrace of American ways as he insists they change the image of their young son. Jake cut their son's long hair to make him look more like a "Yankee", as Gitl cries hysterically. Jake announces that his son's new name is "Joey". Here, Jake is characterized as abandoning his Russian past in pursuit of a brighter American future.

Using the character, Gitl, *Hester Street* shows Russian women as very conservative. She says to Jake, "Jankel, I can't go around in my own hair...I'm a married woman." She says this in response to Jake telling her that in America, women don't wear wigs or kerchiefs on their heads. This suggests that Russian immigrant women respect a very conservative culture and those who are married must not be appreciated for their beauty.

This characterization of sexism is portrayed in the scene explaining the divorce terms. After granting Gitl and Jake a divorce, the Rabbi tells Gitl, "remember daughter you may not marry again before ninety-one days." He tells Jake, "you, young man may wed even this very day if you so desire." This characterizes the Jewish tradition and laws as blatantly sexist. It suggests that a Russian woman should feel grief or remorse, while a Russian man is free to part without repercussion.

A second movie which characterizes Russians is *Avalon*. This film is a drama which is set in the 1940s in Baltimore. The story chronicles the arrival of Russian immigrant Sam Krichinsky in 1914. *Avalon* shows how Sam marveled at the wonders of America and was able to build a better life for his family and relatives.

Much like *Hester Street*, *Avalon* characterizes Russian immigrants as resentful of the old country. In response to a family member being robbed and stabbed, Sam's brother announced, "In the old country, the government would kill you, take your money, your property and whatever you had." Here, Russians are portrayed as defending America as a decent place despite the miseries that occur there. This is justified by comparing the mild misfortunes in America to the great calamities in Russia.

Avalon also characterizes Russians as idealistic. At the beginning of the film, Sam announces, "I came to America by way of Philadelphia in 1914, that's where I got off the boat...and then I came to Baltimore...it was the most beautiful place you've ever seen in your life." This quote shows Russians as having an ideal picture of what America is. This shows that in an average city like Baltimore, an immigrant's dreams can become reality.

This movie portrays Russians as very patriarchic. Throughout the movie, all the major decisions were made by the men. The physical size of the Russian man had

little impact on his role as the leader. Sam recalls, "All I remember was hearing 'wait until the father comes (to America)'...the head of the family...though he was a little, little man." The Russians are characterized as patriarchic and traditional as the short, small father remained very powerful within the family system. *Avalon* also portrays Russian-immigrants as having very large families. Sam says, "Oh how the family grew, wives, kids, Krichinsky, Krichinsky everywhere!" This suggests that Russians are prone to multiply and expand their presence in America.

The movie also shows Russians as being very charitable and loyal. Sam recalls, "We had family circle meetings, we put money in a hat to bring over the cousins, the uncles, the aunts (to America)." Here, the film portrays Russian immigrants as eager to help fellow Russians escape the mother land. At the family circle, Sam's brother announces, "How much money should we give to charity this year? Last year we gave to six charities." This quote characterizes Russian immigrants as happy to share their good fortune with those in need in the Baltimore community. As such, Russians are seen as generous and charitable.

Finally, *Avalon* shows Russians as adaptable to the American way of life. Each year, the Krichinsky family celebrates the American holiday of Thanksgiving. Sam's brother, who arrived late, exclaimed, "To cut the turkey without me, we leave the house!" Here, the Russian family has fully embraced the American tradition of Thanksgiving. The holiday is so important that a family member is offended by the

idea that the family may have cut the turkey without him present. This shows Russians as taking personal meaning in an American tradition.

A third film which characterizes Russian Jewish immigrants is *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. This is a screenplay based on the Broadway play by Neil Simon. The story follows a two week period in the lives of a 1930s Russian Jewish family in Brooklyn. The story is narrated by Eugene Jerome, a fifteen year-old who is discovering the wonders of transitioning to manhood. The family has a small apartment which houses Eugene's immediate family as well as his aunt and two cousins. The film shows the family pulling apart and coming together under times of financial strain and personal crisis.

Brighton Beach Memoirs portrays Russians as victims in an American system. Despite hardships, this film shows Russians as hard workers who strive to persevere. Eugene addresses the audience, "I would like to introduce my father...a real hard worker...he was born at the age of 42." Here, Russian men are characterized as having to work so hard that they must skip their youths. Eugene's father, Jack, confides to his wife, Kate, about his boss's business going bankrupt, "Who are the ones you think go bankrupt? You live in a cold water flat on Delancey Street and bankruptcy is the one thing God spares you." This quote characterizes Russians as victims in society and that it is fate that is keeping them poor.

Poverty is another theme which this movie impresses upon the viewer regarding Russian immigrants. After Jack loses his job, he says to Kate, "I can't get by without the extra twenty-five dollars a week. I can't pay rent and insurance and food and clothing for seven people." Here, Russians are characterized as poor, helpless victims of society. In addition, like in *Avalon*, this film also portrays Russians as having large families.

Brighton Beach Memoirs also characterizes Russians as devout in their Jewish faith. In Kate's response to Jack losing his job, she insists, "something will come up. You will go to temple this weekend. You'll pray all day Saturday." This quote shows the Russian family strong in their belief system and trust that, with prayer, God will pull them through their difficulties.

The fourth immigrant group studied are the Greeks. Two films which characterized Greeks immigrants are *America America* and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. *America America* is a 1963 drama about a young Greek man's obsession with reaching America. The film explains how in 1896 the Greeks were subject to Turkish rule. The main character, Stavros, decides to leave his home and family in Turkey to escape persecution and build a better life. Stavros journeys to Constantinople where he is eventually able to find a way to get to America. Once Stavros reaches America, he earns enough money to bring the rest of his family.

This movie characterizes Greeks as determined as perseverant. The movie begins with the director saying, "I am Greek by blood, a Turk by birth, and an American because my uncle made a journey." This opening quote characterizes Greeks as people who can achieve extraordinary feats, such as the ability to bring an entire family to America. *America America* also paints the Greeks as victims. In Turkey, Stavros' grandmother says, "The Turks spit on us and we say that it is raining." A Turk says to Stavros, "You've learned how to swallow insult and just smile." These quotes suggest that Greeks are in denial of their poor treatment. Denial however, appears to be the way they cope with it in order to survive.

Another characterization made by this film is that Greek parents put tremendous pressure on their children to succeed. Stavros' father spoke to his wife regarding sending Stavros to Constantinople, "If you and I failed as we brought up our eldest son, then we deserve to go down at this time". This quote shows that Greek parents consider themselves failures and deserve misery if their children are unable to be successful. In a letter Stavros sends to his parents, he writes, "I have plans, big plans, and when that day comes, you will be proud of me." This quote emphasizes the impetus that a Greek boy feels regarding making his parents proud of him.

Another movie which characterizes the Greek immigrant group is *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Unlike, *America America*, this film is a comedy which openly attempts to emphasize the eccentricities of Greek immigrant culture. The movie tells

the story of modern day 30 year-old, unmarried Greek-American woman Toula. Her parents expect her to follow tradition and marry another Greek. Toula meets and falls in love with American, non-Greek Ian, to whom she becomes engaged. The movie is about the culture clash of American Ian and Toula's traditional Greek family, with Toula torn between her Greek and American identities.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding characterizes Greeks as traditional and patriarchic. Toula recalls, "Since I was fifteen, my dad told me that nice Greek girls are supposed to do three things in life...marry Greek boys, make Greek babies, and feed everyone...until the day we die." This quote portrays Greeks as valuing women only for their traditional female roles. Furthermore, it shows Greek men as both sexist and having power over the future of the females in the family.

This film also paints Greek women as paradoxical. Toula notes, "My mom was always cooking foods filled with warmth and wisdom, and never forgetting that side dish of steaming-hot guilt." Here, Greek women are shown as tender and loving, yet they tend to be meddling and judgmental. Toula's mother tells her, "The man is the head of the family, but the woman is the neck, and she can turn the head anyway she wants." Though filled with love, Greek women are also seen as cunning and able to manipulate a patriarchic culture to their benefit.

Though the family lives in a middle class neighborhood, the movie characterizes Greek immigrants' beginnings in America as financially strained.

Toula's father reminds her, "Toula, I came to this country with eight dollars in my pocket, to give all of this for you." This quote portrays Greeks as poor immigrants who have worked hard to achieve a better life for their families.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding also characterizes the Greeks as very proud of their history and culture. Toula says, "We lived in a normal, middle class Chicago neighborhood of tasteful modest homes, our house however was modeled after the Parthenon." This quote characterizes Greeks as extraordinarily proud of their home land and favor extravagance in their homes to honor Greece. This pride appears again as Toula's father declares, "Give me a word, any word, and I'll show you how the root of that word is Greek." This portrays Greeks as very ethnocentric and boastful of Greek history and accomplishments.

A fifth group researched in this study was the Chinese. Though many American movies include representations of Chinese people, relatively few focus on this group. Two movies in popular culture which specifically characterize Chinese American immigrants are *The Joy Luck Club* and *Saving Face*.

The Joy Luck Club is a 1993 film about modern day Chinese-American women and their experiences in China and The United States. This film, directed by Wayne Wang, explores the unique relationships Chinese mothers and daughters share. The story shows how perspective and self-concept are passed down generations from grandmother to mother to daughter.

One characterization that this movie makes of the Chinese is that this group does not hold a high value for life. A scene details how June's mother left behind her twin daughters by the roadside in China. As a young girl, June exclaims to her mother, "I wish I was like them...the babies you killed in China." This characterizes Chinese as people who abandon their children and seek to avoid their responsibilities. This characterization is partially rebutted by June resolving that she would travel to China to meet the twin sisters who actually survived.

The Joy Luck Club portrays the Chinese as only valuing males in their culture. At a marriage ceremony in China, the priest says, "Be blessed with prosperity. Be blessed with many sons." This quote implies that the Chinese feel only masculine offspring are desirable and that the primary purpose of females is to make more males.

This film also characterizes Chinese parents as having tremendous power over the lives of their children. When Waverly is justifying her engagement to an American man, she exclaims, "Mom, you don't know the power you have over me...one word, one look...nothing I do can ever please you." This shows that even as an adult, a Chinese-American woman recognizes the importance of her mother's approval. In China, An-Mei's mother expresses her shame for her daughter, "If you have any self-respect left, you should kill yourself...your husband just died and now you are another man's concubine." This characterizes the Chinese as being very

sensitive to their family honor and to shame that honor is a disgrace to one's parents. Indeed, to later reclaim her standing with her mother, An-Mei cut her arm open to feed her blood to her dying mother. This sacrifice of the flesh reestablished An-Mei's honor with her family.

A second film which characterizes Chinese Americans is the 2005 romantic comedy, *Saving Face*. This film, which was featured at the Sundance Film Festival and the Toronto Film Festival, follows the story of an attractive young lesbian doctor in New York City. Wilhelmina, or Wil, takes in her forty-eight year-old pregnant widow mother after her grandfather disowns her. The movie has many entertaining moments as the Chinese American community tries to get Wil to marry as Wil finds herself able to show the world who she really is.

Saving Face is about the importance of one's image in Chinese American culture. This movie characterizes this immigrant group as being espoused to maintaining traditional gender roles. A Chinese American friend tells Wil of her clothing, "I see dressing like a man is still in style...you are ready for a war in clothes like these." The quote is an attack on Wil's individuality and choice of clothing as being unfeminine and therefore against cultural expectations.

Much like the *Joy Luck Club*, *Saving Face* portrays Chinese American parents as being very judgmental and having significant power over their children. Wil's mother, Hwei-Lan is scolded by her father for being pregnant and unwed, "No

daughter has shamed her parents more than you.” This quote shows the importance of reputation in the Chinese American community. The father continues to Wil, “Your mother is no longer a part of the family. When I think of all that we’ve sacrificed in the old country...to give you kids a better life in the new one. Had I known, I would have left you in the mainland.” This powerfully suggests that in this group’s culture, to shame one’s parents is unforgivable.

The final immigrants reviewed in this study are the Mexicans. There are a surging number of movies and documentaries being released which characterize this immigrant group. This is likely due to media attention given to immigration reform policy in recent years. Three films which create significant impressions regarding Mexican-American immigrants are *Spanglish*, *Romantico*, and *La Luna Misma* (*Under the Same Moon*).

Spanglish is a 2004 comedy which explores the difficulties Spanish-speaking Mexicans have in adapting to American life. Mother, Flor, and daughter, Cristina illegally cross the border from Mexico into the United States and settle in the Los Angeles area. Flor finds work as a housekeeper for a very wealthy, but quirky American family. The story follows Cristina and Flor as they adapt to American life while maintaining their linguistic and cultural identities.

Spanglish characterizes Mexican immigrants as unable to speak English. Flor’s employer, John asks Flor, “Do you understand any of the words I am saying?”

Flor simply shakes her head and appears confused. This creates an impression that Mexicans are helpless and unable to improve upon their poor circumstances. The movie also characterizes American intolerance of the language difference. John's wife reminds herself, "I need to learn how to say in Spanish 'you need to learn to speak English.'"

This movie also portrays Mexicans as being very religious and dependent on the graces of God. Cristina prays aloud, so her mother can hear, "Please God, talk to my mom, this is my education, let her know what this school means to me." Here, Mexicans are shown as both religious and manipulative, as Cristina is able to convince her mother to let her attend a private school. Cristina later explains to John, "We know about guilt, we're Catholic." Here, Mexicans are clearly portrayed as members of the Catholic Church.

A second film which portrays the lives of Mexicans in America is *Romantico*. This film is a documentary, released in 2005, which chronicles the experiences and journeys of a Mariachi band singer. Carmelo is a talented guitarist and singer who crossed illegally into the United States from Mexico to earn money as a musician in San Francisco. Carmelo's objective throughout the film is to improve life for his family in Mexico. He is able to earn much more money in the United States than in Mexico, but must suffer the fact that he spends a great deal of time away from his loved ones. Eventually, Carmelo decides that he would rather live a poverty-stricken life in Mexico than spend any more time away from his family.

Romantico characterizes Mexicans as very family-oriented. On his weekly phone call home, Carmelo tells his oldest daughter, "I want to spend more time here in America to make more money so I can give you a big fifteenth birthday party." This shows that Mexican will make extreme sacrifices in order to maximize the happiness of loved ones. Happiness however, is not characterized by material wealth as his daughter replies, "No Papi, I don't want anything, I just want you back." Here, Mexicans are seen as valuing family above all else.

This film also characterizes Mexican-Americans as very poor. Throughout the film, Carmelo and his family are seen living near or below the poverty line. Carmelo speaks about his earnings as a musician in San Francisco, "On Sundays, when few people go out, we make twenty-five to thirty dollars...I can make forty to fifty dollars on Fridays and Saturdays." This indicates that even on lucrative days, Mexicans are unable to earn a livable wage. On days where earnings are low, they can barely make enough money to eat. The film also characterizes Mexican poverty by Carmelo working in menial jobs. He says, "I also work in a car wash, because here I have to pay rent and I have to send money to my family." This image portrays Mexicans engaged in manual labor for very low pay, though still committed to sending any excess to family.

Finally, this documentary characterizes Mexican immigrants as helpless victims. Carmelo declares, "Because like we Mexicans say...unfortunately God

made me Mexican...I must put up with everything they do to me.” The quote suggests that it is poor fate to be born Mexican and that members of this immigrant group are required to accept whatever misery life brings them. Furthermore, it shows that Mexicans accept the hardships so their families can live better.

A third film which characterizes Mexican American immigrants is *La Luna Misma*, or *Under the Same Moon*. This 2007 drama tells the story of a mother, Rosario, who has illegally immigrated to the United States from Mexico to earn a living as a nanny and housekeeper in Los Angeles. Rosario’s son, Carlos was left behind to grow up with his grandmother. When Carlos turned nine, his grandmother died and he decided he must reunite with his mother in America. Carlos moves along an immigrant smuggling system which eventually brings him to Los Angeles and his mother.

La Luna Misma portrays Mexicans as very committed to reaching American soil. Carlos’ travel partner, Enrique declares, “no one chooses to live this way without a good reason.” This indicates that anyone who crosses the border illegally is doing so at great risk and personal hardship. However they do this because they have something meaningful to believe in. Carlos recalls his trip into America, “The INS almost caught us...that was easy...crossing the border was what was hard.” This shows Mexicans as willing to make great sacrifices to gain the benefits of living in America.

This film also characterizes Mexicans as unable to become naturalized citizens. In a letter to Carlos, Rosario writes, "I don't know when you can come see me in America...it's so hard to get papers." Here, Mexicans are shown as unable to gain legal resident status so they cannot sponsor visits by family. Rosario jokes with her friend, "We should get a couple of Gringos to marry us...it would be cheaper and faster." Here, Mexicans are portrayed as belonging to a culture which embraces marriage as a way to gain citizenship rights. Finally, Rosario complains, "I looked for work all day...and nothing." This supports the idea that Americans do not want to hire Mexican labor, especially those without working papers.

Each of the six immigrant groups reviewed have been characterized blatantly or subtly in popular films. The second phase of this analysis is examining how demographic characterizations in movies compare to actual demographic data per the 2000 United States Census Bureau report. To perform this analysis, the researcher searched for demographic trends which were prevalent in each of the movies characterizing the respective immigrant groups. Once the attributes were determined and compared to United States Census data, the researcher made a judgment as to whether the characterizations of the immigrant group in the films are fair. The attributes which were examined were: citizenship status, stated or implied educational level, stated or implied income level, poverty status, unemployment rate, type of employment, primary language spoken at home, and whether housing is owned or rented. The researcher only compared data to census numbers if attributes were consistently seen across all films reviewed within each immigrant group.

There were six prevailing attributes for Irish American immigrants. These were: low income, low educational level, in poverty status, manual labor employment, speak English at home, and rental housing. The low income characterization is not fair, as the census data shows that only one quarter of Irish-American households earn less than \$25,000 per year. The low education characterization is not fair, as Irish-Americans are 3.3% more likely to hold a college degree than the average of all immigrant groups. The poverty characterization is not fair, as only about three percent of Irish-Americans live below the poverty line. This is significantly below the overall immigrant average of fourteen percent. The manual labor characterization is not fair, as Irish-Americans are 31% more likely to work in management or professional fields than the average of all immigrant groups. The English language characterization is fair, as 89% of Irish immigrants speak English as their primary language at home. The rental housing characterization is not fair as 64% of Irish immigrants own their homes. Of the six attributes tested, only one was supported by census data. As such, the overall characterization of Irish immigrants in the films reviewed was not fair.

There were five prevailing attributes for Italian American immigrants. These were: naturalized citizens, low educational level, high income, not legally employed, and owned housing. The naturalized citizens characterization is fair, as 75% of Italian immigrants living in America are now citizens. The low educational level characterization is fair, as only 17% of Italian American immigrants hold at least an

associates degree. The high income characterization is fair, as Italian immigrants are 15% more likely to earn more than \$100,000 per year than the overall immigrant average. The not legally employed characterization is not fair, as the Italian American unemployment rate is only 4.1%, which is significantly below the overall immigrant average of 6.8%. The owned housing characterization is fair, as 79% of Italian immigrants own their homes. Of the five attributes tested, four were supported by census data. Though the gangster theme is not supportable, the overall characterization of Italian immigrants in the films reviewed was fair.

There were five prevailing attributes for Russian American immigrants. These were: naturalized citizens, low education, legally employed, manual labor, and rented housing. The naturalized citizens characterization is fair, as Russian immigrants are 11% more likely than the immigrant average to be citizens. The low education characterization is not fair, as 59% of Russian immigrants have at least an associate degree. The legally employed characterization is fair, as the unemployment rate for Russian-Americans is only 5.9% compare to the overall immigrant average of 6.8%. The manual labor characterization is not fair, as Russian immigrants are 42% more likely than the overall immigrant average to work in management or professional fields. The rented housing characterization is fair, as only 37% of Russian immigrants own their homes. Of the five attributes tested, three were supported by census data. As such, the overall characterization of Russian immigrants in the films reviewed was fair.

There were four prevailing attributes for Greek American immigrants. These were: naturalized citizens, legally employed, speak Greek at home, owned housing. The naturalized citizens characterization is fair, as 77% of Greek immigrants are citizens. The legally employed characterization is fair, as the Greek immigrant population has a very low unemployment rate of 3.3%. The Greek language characterization is fair, as only 11% of Greek immigrants speak English as their primary language at home. The owned housing characterization is fair, as 74% of Greek Americans own their homes. Of the four attributes tested, all were supported by census data. As such, the overall characterization of Greek immigrants in the films reviewed was fair.

There were six prevailing attributes for Chinese American immigrants. These were: naturalized citizens, highly educated, high income, legally employed, professional employment, and speak English at home. The naturalized citizen characterization is fair, as Chinese immigrants are 20% more likely to be citizens than the overall immigrant average. The highly educated characterization is fair, as 47% of Chinese immigrants have a college degree, compared to the overall immigrant average of 29%. The high income characterization is fair, as Chinese Americans are 35% more likely to earn over \$100,000 per year than the overall immigrant average. The legally employed characterization is fair, as Chinese Americans have a low unemployment rate of only 4.3%, compared to the overall immigrant average of 6.8%. The professional employment characterization is fair, as Chinese Americans are 42% more likely than the overall immigrant average to be employed in

management or professional fields. The English language characterization is not fair, as only 5.7% of Chinese immigrants speak English as their primary language at home. Of the six attributes tested, five were supported by census data. As such, the overall characterization of Chinese immigrants in the films reviewed was fair.

There were five prevailing attributes for Mexican American immigrants. These were: not citizens, low educational level, low income, speak Spanish at home, and rented housing. The not citizens characterization is fair, as only 23% of Mexican immigrants are naturalized citizens. This is significantly lower than the overall immigrant average of 40%. The low educational level characterization is fair, as only 6.1% of Mexican Americans hold a college degree. The low income characterization is fair, as Mexican immigrants are 17% more likely to earn less than \$25,000 per year than the overall immigrant average. The Spanish language characterization is fair, as only 5.6% of Mexican immigrants speak English as their primary language at home. The rented housing characterization is fair, as only 44% of Mexican immigrants own their homes. Of the five attributes tested, all were supported by census data. As such, the overall characterization of Mexican immigrants in the films reviewed was fair.

All of the six immigrant groups reviewed have been characterized in popular culture films. Overall, the demographic impressions created by the films are supported by current census data. The one exception is the Irish immigrant group, which was largely mischaracterized using this census data analysis. The discordance for this group may be attributable to the time period in which the films were set, as

well as the limited size of the sample tested. It is possible that with a larger sample of Irish immigrant movies, especially if set in the present day, their characterizations may be more aligned with census data.

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This paper's historiography focuses on how researchers have explored the experiences of various immigrant groups in American history. The original research focuses on how our perception of various immigrant groups has been influenced in popular culture; specifically in motion pictures. One of the key findings in the historiography was that immigration is often taught in American high schools as a side topic, rather than a key theme or unit. Teachers of American history should heed this as a call to action in their own classrooms. Given the salience of immigration on the course of American history, teachers must embrace the topic as a key theme which resonates throughout this country's past. Staying abreast of the research that has been performed on immigration will help American history teachers build and deliver effective lesson plans on the topic.

A key finding in this paper's original research is that major motion pictures generally characterize immigrant groups consistently across films, and that these characterizations can be perpetuations of ethnic stereotypes. Another important finding is that many of these characterizations can be defended by demographic data in public records. Gaining this perspective is especially relevant to teachers of American history, in that they can further develop their own understanding of the relationship between popular media and immigrant stereotypes. After viewing the original research in this paper, teachers should see the value in checking the accuracy of immigrant group portrayals in other films. In turn, teachers will be able to more effectively validate or critique ethnic portrayals in films by examining how various stereotypes compare to government census data.

Another reality which stems from this research is that in general, students in history classes should better understand the role that immigration has played in American history. Students must understand the historic roles of newly immigrated Americans as well as how American citizens have accepted, tolerated, or rejected foreigners on American soil throughout our history. Regardless of their location or socioeconomic status, all American students are affected in some way by immigration. In urban schools throughout the country, students may hear several different languages in the hallways or lunchroom. While in rural areas, students have parents who complain or worry about losing jobs to immigrants. Given that students have informal, and sometimes inaccurate, exposure to the topic of immigration in their own lives, it is incumbent on teachers and schools to ensure that they are provided with a reasonable foundation for understanding this complex topic. To ensure that students are provided with such a foundation, teachers and school districts should view immigration as a central theme for American history courses.

In order for students to connect to immigration in American history, teachers need to find ways to make the material appealing and relevant to them. The original research in this paper focuses on how film accurately or inaccurately portrays immigrant groups in society. Given that students are a vital part of American society affected by immigration, and that high school students generally have an interest in movies, teachers can use the research presented herein to provide instruction using film. With the knowledge and perspective gained from a film-based lesson, students will be prepared to perform their own research on immigration in their community.

Below outlines a teaching approach which American history teachers across the country can use to effectively, and creatively, teach immigration in American history.

Lesson Plan – Immigration in American History: A Film and Research Approach

Objectives: Given information from class activities and discussions, students will demonstrate comprehension, analysis, and synthesis of Immigration in American History.

Essential Questions:

- 1) How have various immigrant groups been characterized in movies?
- 2) How can we tell if generalizations or stereotypes of immigrant groups are fair or unfair?
- 3) What impact has immigration had on our community?

Specific NYS Curriculum addressed:

Unit 1: Introduction, Section 1: Geography, Subsection D: Demographics,
Part 2: Immigration.

Unit 2: The Constitution Tested, Section 2: Constitutional Stress and Crisis,
Subsection C: Foreign Immigration and Nativist Reaction.

Unit 3: Industrialization of the United States, Section 3: Adjusting to Industrialism, Subsection B: Immigration, Subsection C: Reactions to the New Immigration.

Unit 5: At home and Abroad: Prosperity and Depression, Section 1: War and Prosperity, Subsection C: Mass Consumption and the Clash of Cultural Values, Part 2: Constitutional and Legal Issues, Sub Part d: Restrictions on immigration: Closing the Golden Door.

Unit 7: World of Uncertain Times, Section 5: The Trend Towards Conservatism, Subsection D: New Approaches to Old Problems, Part 3: The “New” Immigrants (Immigration Control Act of 1986).

Social Studies Skills:

Research and Analysis, Critical Thinking, Reading and Interpreting a Chart, Making inferences.

NCSS Standards Met:

Culture

Time, Continuity, & Change

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Global Connections

Civic Ideals and Practices

Purpose: This lesson is important because immigration has always been one of the most influential factors in shaping American history. Equally important, immigration continues to shape American policy and society today.

Materials for Part 1 (Movie Analysis): DVDs of movies showing immigrants in America (Italian: The Godfather, Goodfellas; Mexican: La Luna Misma, Spanglish; Greek: My Big Fat Greek Wedding, America America; Russian: Avalon, Hester Street; Irish: Far and Away, Gangs of New York; Chinese: The Joy Luck Club, Saving Face.); Sufficient copies of each attached hand-out.

Materials for Part 2 (Immigration in the Community): Scrapbook paper and supplies. Access to one internet-capable computer per student and teacher (for projector); Sufficient copies of each attached hand-out.

Part 1 Procedures (2-3 class periods):

- Each student will begin class by writing down the first two essential questions in their class notebooks:

1) How have various immigrant groups been characterized in movies?

2) How can we tell if generalizations or stereotypes of immigrant groups are fair or unfair?

- The teacher should let students know that we will be studying “Immigration in American History” and that the essential questions they have written in their notebooks should guide them in their learning.
- Part 1 Anticipatory Set: Hand out graphic organizer listing three different immigrant groups (Italian, Mexican, Chinese). Instruct students to work with one or two other students to brainstorm as many characteristics they can think of and record them on the graphic organizer.
 - The class will then share some of their thoughts aloud and the teacher should record these on the board or overhead projector. Students should also explain how they arrived at the attributes they had
 - Students should be given an opportunity to share how they feel about the characterizations.
 - It is very important for the teacher to remind students to remember to be sensitive to students’ feelings; as ethnicity and race can ignite passionate responses.
- Explain to students that one of the most powerful influences that shapes our view of immigrant groups is popular media, like movies. Explain that we need to use a critical eye whenever we watch films portraying ethnic or immigrant groups, as it is important to not allow our understanding of people to be unfairly biased.
- Explain that we will be viewing brief clips from several different films depicting characteristics of various immigrant groups. Hand out the Movie

Analysis structured notes in which students will be required to record their observations of how immigrant groups are portrayed.

- Explain to students that they will be required to watch the films carefully and take conscientious notes so that they can effectively analyze immigrant characterization.

Guided Practice:

- Instruct students to turn their attention to their Movie Analysis sheet and to write down the name of the movie, the year released, and the immigrant group being characterized. Begin with the opening scene from *The Godfather* in which a man approaches Don Corleone for help.
- Watch the scene and then as a class complete the remainder of the Movie Analysis sheet for *The Godfather*.
 - Under “How is the immigrant group characterized?”, appropriate responses may be: “mobsters, vigilantes, family-oriented, businessmen, murderers.”
 - Under “Are the main immigrant characters in the movie ‘naturalized’ or ‘not citizens’?”, appropriate responses should be “naturalized” or “appear to be citizens”
 - Under “What is the stated or implied educational level of the main immigrant characters”, appropriate responses may be “lots of street-smarts” or “little formal education.”

- Under “What is the stated or implied income level of the main immigrant characters?”, an appropriate response may be “very rich”.
 - Under “Do the main characters appear to be living in poverty?” the appropriate response should be “no.”
 - Under “Are the main characters legally employed?”, the appropriate response would be “no”.
 - Under “What language do the main characters speak at home?”, appropriate responses would be “Italian and English”.
 - Under “Do the main immigrant characters rent or own their housing?”, the appropriate response would be “own”.
- Now that the class has completed the Movie Analysis sheet for The Godfather, explain that we will now be comparing how the movie characterizes Italians to actual demographic data per the 2000 U.S. Census.
 - Hand out a Census Data Sheet to each student. The following demographic information is included on the sheet:
 - Population of group in the United States
 - Percentage of immigrants that are naturalized citizens
 - Information on average household income
 - Percentage holding a college degree
 - Percentage living below the poverty level
 - Unemployment rate
 - Percentage working in professional or other high-paying jobs

- Percentage in which English is the only language spoken at home
- Percentage of immigrants who own their homes
- Instruct students to work in pairs to determine which characterizations in the movie were supported or contradicted by U.S. census data.
- Have students complete the portion of the Movie Analysis sheet in which they determine whether the movie fairly or unfairly characterizes Italian immigrants. The teacher and students should go over their responses as a class.
- This discussion will serve as a formative assessment to ensure that students are gaining an understanding of characterization of immigrant groups in film. The teacher should clarify any questions that students have heading into independent practice.

Independent Practice:

- The teacher will select scenes from several other movies (listed under materials above) depicting various immigrant groups and repeat the process above.
- Students will be responsible for completing the Movie Analysis sheets on their own and submitting them to be used as a summative assessment. From the completed analysis sheets, the teacher should be able to determine whether students have grasped a higher level of understanding of immigration in film.

Part 1 Closure:

- The teacher will instruct students to open their notebooks to where they had recorded their essential questions on “Immigration in American History”.

Instruct students to write a paragraph responding to each of the first two questions:

1) How have various immigrant groups been characterized in movies?

2) How can we tell if generalizations or stereotypes of immigrant groups are fair or unfair?

- The teacher should collect the notebooks as an additional summative assessment.

Part 2 Procedures (2-3 class periods):

- Each student will begin class by writing down the third essential question in their class notebooks:

-What impact has immigration had on our community?

- The teacher should let students know that we will continue studying “Immigration in American History” and that the essential question they have written in their notebooks should guide them through the remainder of the lesson.

- Part 2 Anticipatory Set: In their notebooks, tell students to write down as many ethnicities as they know of people they are aware of living in their city, town, or county. As a class, students will share out the ethnicities they had

written down. The teacher should record each on the board as they are called out. In all, there will likely be many different groups listed on the board.

- Then ask students to hypothesize why there are so many different ethnicities living in their community. Students will then be called on to share out their hypotheses.
- Explain to students that they will be completing a research project on the effects of immigration in their community. Explain that the form of the project will be a “Webquest”, in which they will be required to research various online resources to gain information to ultimately compile an “Immigration in the Community” scrapbook.
- The teacher should explain that the purpose of this activity is to show students the impact that immigration has on their lives and on their community. In addition, students should be able to use the background they gained from the movie analysis activity to effectively synthesize the importance of immigration in their community.
- The class should move to a computer cluster or have laptops brought to them. Each student should have their own internet-capable computer. The teacher should have a computer that can have its screen projected for the class to see and follow along.
- The teacher should hand out copies of the Webquest task sheet. The first website will be <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>. This is the United States Census website for community demographic statistics.

- The teacher should go to this website and ascertain that students are following along on their own computers. On this webpage, there is a field in which students will put their zip code. After entering their zip code and clicking “go”, students will be directed to a page of demographics for their community.
- The teacher should point students to key demographics including percentage of population “Foreign-Born” and “Speak a language other than English at home”.
- Students will record demographic data on their Webquest sheet and then move on to the next website.
- The teacher will need to decide on additional local websites based on what is available in the community. However, the following tend to be prevalent in many communities: ethnic clubs, such as the Italian-American Club, the Polish-American Club, and Jewish-American Centers. In addition, local government websites may have additional resources from which to draw immigration information.

Independent Practice:

- Once students have compiled sufficient information on immigrants in their community, they should create a four to five page scrapbook on their findings. The scrapbook should be a colorful, creative representation of the impact of immigration and immigrant groups on their community. This scrapbook will

serve as a summative assessment to determine the level of student understanding of the role of immigration in the community.

Part 2 Closure:

- Teacher will instruct students to open their notebooks to where they had recorded their essential questions on “Immigration in American History”.
Instruct students to write a paragraph responding to the question:
 - What impact has immigration had on our community?
- The teacher should collect the notebooks as an additional summative assessment.

Overall Lesson Closure:

- Students will individually present their scrapbooks to the class. Students will also discuss how their findings regarding immigrants in the community supported or contradicted the characterizations made in the films analyzed.

The activities and methods used in this lesson were carefully selected to optimize student learning and achievement. To ensure that all students acquire the knowledge and skills associated with studying immigration in American history, this lesson incorporates a wide variety of research-based teaching techniques.

One research-proven technique utilized in this lesson is note-taking.

According to research studies by Marzano, Gnad, & Jessie in 1990, the use of note-

taking can lead to a forty percentile gain in student achievement. During this lesson, students use this technique when watching and analyzing movies for characterization of immigrant groups. Students are responsible for taking structured notes focusing on demographic attributes which they observe while watching the clips from movies. They are then better able to apply their observations to other information presented, such as U.S. Census data.

Another research-based method built into this lesson is assigning homework and independent practice. According to a study by Ross in 1988, assigning homework increases student achievement by twenty-four percentile points. This lesson on immigration in American history adheres to the principle that homework should be used as a tool to help extend learning and build confidence. In both parts of the lesson, the first task is performed as a class. Modeling with guided practice ensures that students are able to grasp the process to complete the remainder of the assignments on their own. Within this lesson, students have the opportunity to reinforce their learning by independently completing the Immigration in the Community Webquest, as well as the corresponding scrapbook. Moreover, this project is a research-based activity, which involves analysis and synthesis of information gained, which are key skills in social studies.

A third research-based strategy in this lesson is the use of non-linguistic representations. Marzano, R.J., Pickering, D.J., Pollock, J.E. (2001) define non-linguistic representations as an imagery way of understanding new material.

According to Marzano et. al., students need access to traditional linguistic instruction as well as creative non-linguistic ways of gaining and retaining new information. Since some students learn more effectively with visual aids, this lesson on immigration will include graphic organizers to support visual and audio information presented within the clips from selected movies. In addition, students will use a graphic organizer to brainstorm different characteristics of immigrant groups. Finally, students will also have an opportunity to create pictures in their scrapbook projects based on what they have learned through their Immigration in the Community Webquest.

A fourth research-proven strategy weaved into this lesson is setting objectives. According to a study by Walberg in 1999, when teachers set goals or objectives for lessons, student achievement benefits by eighteen percentile points. As such, setting objectives for learning is a key component of this lesson. Each part of the lesson is introduced with an Essential Question, which students are required to write down in their notebooks. Students hypothesize what they believe appropriate responses could be to the essential questions. Students can then test their hypothesis by paying close attention to the day's lesson. This gives students a sense of purpose for their learning. Throughout the course of the lesson, the teacher prompts students to ponder the essential question to see if they can formulate a better answer. This serves as a powerful formative assessment. Depending on the level of comprehension achieved, the teacher can revisit ideas already taught, or move on to the next phase of the lesson. Each part of the lesson will conclude by the class providing responses to the

essential question. Students will be required to write their response to the essential question in their notebook. The teacher can check notebooks and verbally question students to gauge how well students understand the material. This will inform the teacher to what degree any re-teaching or review will be necessary.

This lesson was specifically targeted toward boosting student comprehension of immigration in American history. It gives students a superior understanding of how America was built, developed and exists today. Students will benefit by appreciating the challenges various immigrant groups have faced and how they overcame obstacles. They will realize that there are some immigrant groups that have not overcome their obstacles, resulting in a poorer quality of life in America. This lesson benefits students by helping them develop their analytical skills by critically reviewing the way movies have characterized immigrant groups. It also will help them improve their research skills by exploring deeper into the experiences of immigrants in their community. Finally, through the completion of these activities, students will be better prepared to participate in the modern-day conversation on problems surrounding the issue of immigration.

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Name _____

Date _____

Use to the chart below to brainstorm as many characteristics that you can think of for each immigrant / ethnic group.

Italian	Mexican	Chinese

Movie Analysis Sheet

Your Name _____ Date _____

Name of Movie _____

Year Released _____

Immigrant group characterized _____

Based on the scene you watched:

-How is the immigrant group characterized / portrayed?

-Are the main immigrant characters in the movie “naturalized” or “not citizens”?

-What is the stated or implied educational level of the main immigrant characters?

-What is the stated or implied income level of the main immigrant characters?

-Do the main immigrant characters appear to be living in poverty? _____

-Are the main immigrant characters legally employed? _____

-What is the employment of the main character(s)? _____

-What language do the main immigrant characters speak at home? _____

-Do the main immigrant characters rent or own their housing? _____

**U.S. Census Demographics
Immigrant Group Data Comparison
Source: United States Census Bureau 2000**

Category	All Foreign-Born Persons Living in U.S						
	Greek Immigrants	Italian Immigrants	Russian Immigrants	Irish Immigrants	Mexican Immigrants	Chinese Immigrants	
Population	165,750	473,340	340,175	156,475	9,177,485	1,192,435	
	31,107,890						
Naturalized Citizenship %	76.7%	74.8%	45.5%	60.5%	22.5%	50.0%	
Household income under \$25,000	26.3%	31.6%	40.1%	25.7%	38.1%	29.8%	
Household income over \$100,000	18.3%	14.7%	13.3%	18.6%	4.8%	19.1%	
College Degree	23.5%	17.0%	58.6%	30.0%	6.1%	47.4%	
Living below the poverty level	6.3%	5.1%	14.1%	3.0%	24.4%	11.5%	
Unemployment Rate	3.3%	4.1%	5.9%	2.9%	9.5%	4.3%	
Management or Prof. Employment	37.5%	30.8%	48.8%	41.1%	8.1%	49.3%	
English Only Spoken at Home	10.9%	21.1%	11.0%	88.8%	5.6%	5.7%	
Owned Housing	74.3%	79.0%	37.1%	63.8%	43.7%	54.8%	

Website #2: (Teacher fill-in based on local immigrant group associations in area) –

web address: _____

Important information about immigration or immigrant life in my community: _____

Website #3: (Teacher fill-in based on local immigrant group associations in area) –

web address: _____

Important information about immigration or immigrant life in my community: _____

Category	All Foreign-Born Persons Living in U.S.	Greek Immigrants	Difference from Average	Comparison Ratio*	Italian Immigrants	Difference from Average	Comparison Ratio*	Russian Immigrants	Difference from Average	Comparison Ratio*
Population	31,107,890	165,750			473,340			340,175		
Naturalized Citizenship %	40.3%	76.7%	36.4%	47.5%	74.8%	34.5%	46.1%	45.5%	5.2%	11.4%
Household income under \$25,000	31.6%	26.3%	-5.3%	-20.2%	31.6%	0.0%	0.0%	40.1%	8.5%	21.2%
Household income over \$100,000	12.5%	18.3%	5.8%	31.7%	14.7%	2.2%	15.0%	13.3%	0.8%	6.0%
College Degree	29.0%	23.5%	-5.5%	-23.4%	17.0%	-12.0%	-70.6%	58.6%	29.6%	50.5%
Living below the poverty level	15.3%	6.3%	-9.0%	-142.9%	5.1%	-10.2%	-200.0%	14.1%	-1.2%	-8.5%
Unemployment Rate	6.8%	3.3%	-3.4%	-104.1%	4.1%	-2.7%	-66.6%	5.9%	-0.9%	-15.5%
Management or Professional Employment	28.4%	37.5%	9.1%	24.3%	30.8%	2.4%	7.8%	48.8%	20.4%	41.8%
English Only Spoken at Home	17.0%	10.9%	-6.1%	-56.0%	21.1%	4.1%	19.4%	11.0%	-6.0%	-54.5%
Owned Housing	49.8%	74.3%	24.5%	33.0%	79.0%	29.2%	37.0%	37.1%	-12.7%	-34.2%

*Comparison Ratio represents the percentage difference in each category between the immigrant group and the overall average.

Category	Irish Immigrants	Difference from Average	Comparison Ratio*	Mexican Immigrants	Difference from Average	Comparison Ratio*	Chinese Immigrants	Difference from Average	Comparison Ratio*
Population	156,475			9,177,495			1,192,435		
Naturalized Citizenship %	60.5%	20.2%	33.4%	22.5%	-17.8%	-79.1%	50.0%	9.7%	19.4%
Household income under \$25,000	25.7%	-5.9%	-23.0%	38.1%	6.5%	17.1%	29.8%	-1.8%	-6.0%
Household income over \$100,000	18.6%	6.1%	32.8%	4.8%	-7.7%	-160.4%	19.1%	6.6%	34.6%
College Degree	30.0%	1.0%	3.3%	6.1%	-22.9%	-375.4%	47.4%	18.4%	38.8%
Living below the poverty level	3.0%	-12.3%	-410.0%	24.4%	9.1%	37.3%	11.5%	-3.8%	-33.0%
Unemployment Rate	2.9%	-3.8%	-131.3%	9.5%	2.7%	28.8%	4.3%	-2.5%	-58.5%
Management or Professional Employment	41.1%	12.7%	30.9%	8.1%	-20.3%	-250.6%	49.3%	20.9%	42.4%
English Only Spoken at Home	88.8%	71.8%	80.9%	5.6%	-11.4%	-203.6%	5.7%	-11.3%	-198.2%
Owned Housing	63.8%	14.0%	21.9%	43.7%	-6.1%	-14.0%	54.8%	5.0%	9.1%

*Comparison Ratio represents the percentage difference in each category between the immigrant group and the overall average.