

— Introduction —

The Political Incorporation of Immigrants, Then and Now

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IN THE HALF century between 1881 and 1930, 27.6 million immigrants arrived on our shores, mostly from eastern, central, and southern Europe. Although as many as a third of some groups ultimately returned to their countries of origin, those who stayed had an enormous impact on a national population that stood at only 50 million in 1880. In the peak decade of this influx, between 1901 and 1910, newly arriving immigrants alone boosted the nation's population by 10.4 percent and accounted for more than half the population growth in many of the cities where they settled. To distinguish them from earlier English, Scottish, Irish, German, and Scandinavian immigrants, commentators of that period called them "the new immigrants."

Now, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, another great migration is once more reshaping America. Since Congress liberalized the immigration laws in 1965, more than 20 million immigrants have arrived from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia.¹ Although these new "new immigrants" make up a smaller share of a much larger national population (totaling 194 million in 1965), they, too, are having a pervasive impact on America, just as arriving in a new society is reshaping the lives of these newcomers and their children. Owing to declining fertility rates among the native born, these new "new immigrants" make up more than 30 percent of the overall national population growth. Because immigrants are concentrating in certain places, from which natives

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have tended to move away, the substantial national impact is magnified in the “gateway cities” in which they have settled. In places like New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and San Francisco, immigrants and their children comprise more than half the total population (Mollenkopf, Olson, and Ross forthcoming; Gerstle 2000).

Now, as then, incorporating this massive body of immigrants into American society is a central challenge for our civic and political institutions. This process goes to the core of who we are as a people and as a nation. It is also deeply intertwined with the many struggles over the status of involuntary Americans, particularly Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans in the parts of the United States ceded from Mexico, and Puerto Ricans. Because the nature of modern America has largely been determined by the interaction of immigration, urbanization, and industrialization, understanding the interplay of these factors has been a focal concern of historians, political scientists, and sociologists. Scholars from these disciplines, as well as economic historians and historically oriented geographers, have produced an enormous body of work on the turn-of-the-century migration. Those who study the current immigration have not yet produced an equal body of work, but they are well on their way. To say the least, what immigrant absorption means for America and what living in America means for immigrants and their children are now, as they were eighty years ago, highly charged topics commanding the attention not only of scholars but of federal commissions, the National Academy of Sciences, journalists, and broad public opinion, as well.

Although the absorption of these two great waves of immigration have been critical episodes in the nation-building process and have stimulated much social research, surprisingly little effort has been devoted to the systematic study of how these two eras resemble or differ from each other. Few historians of the past great wave of migration have addressed the current one, and only a few social scientists studying the current migration have formally compared it with the previous one, though they approach the current wave with many, often unexamined, assumptions about the last. (For exceptions, see Foner 2000; Min 1999; Shanahan and Olzak 1999; Morawska 1990; and Morawska and Spohn 1997.) Far too

little dialogue has taken place about the lessons historians and social scientists can learn from each other or about how juxtaposing the two waves can help us expand our ability to theorize and understand either the specific processes of immigrant incorporation or the larger story of American national development. Instead of embracing the lessons of historiography, contemporary social scientists often rely on stereotypes, even caricatures, of what historians have come to believe and prefer to think of the new “new immigration” as distinctive. For their part, historians have not risen to the challenge of applying the lessons they learned from the earlier wave to the current one.

This volume aims to correct two aspects of this situation: First, it engages historians and social scientists in a dialogue about how each group thinks about immigrant political incorporation and what they can learn from each other. Second, it sets the stage for the more systematic comparative study of what Rogers Smith (2001) has called “the politics of people-building” in these two eras. The result, we hope, is at least modest progress on both fronts. Readers of this volume will see some of the lessons that social scientists should have learned from historians but did not. They will also see how the distinctively new ways in which contemporary social scientists see the current situation may be of value to historians as they go about their work. Finally, the juxtaposition of the two approaches allows us to ask how the similarities and differences between these two periods may help both disciplines to transcend the time-boundedness of their perspectives.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE OLD AND NEW “NEW IMMIGRANTS”

The arrival of 28 million foreign-born people from 1880 to 1930 drove the net foreign-born population of the United States from 6.7 million to 14 million, or from 9.7 percent to 14.7 percent of the total. Three-quarters came from Europe, particularly Italy (4.6 million), Austria-Hungary (4.1 million), Russia and Poland (3.7 million), and Germany (2.9 million), but this wave of immigration also planted seeds that would germinate in the contemporary period, with 148,000 arriving from China, 926,000 from Mexico, and

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368,000 from the Caribbean (Gibson and Lennon 1999). Although these new foreign residents spread across the country, different groups tended to cluster in different places, particularly in large, rapidly growing cities like Boston, New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and San Francisco. New immigrants provided half the population growth in these cities at the turn of the century.

By 1930, immigrants and their children made up half to three-quarters of the populations of these and other northern and western cities. They provided the labor force for rapidly growing manufacturing, construction, warehousing, and other blue-collar sectors, leading to the formation of a white, ethnic, urban working class. Nationality, gender, and industry interacted to create new ethnic divisions of labor that provided the foundation for post-World War I developments—the Polish autoworkers of Detroit, the Italian construction workers of Chicago, and the Jewish garment workers of New York.

Legal restrictions on immigration adopted in 1924 and after, the Great Depression of 1929 to 1941, and World War II (1941 to 1945) dramatically cut the number of new foreign arrivals. Between 1930 and 1965, only 5.5 million immigrants arrived, mostly post-World War II displaced persons. As the previous generation of immigrants aged and passed away, the number and share of foreign-born residents in the U.S. population gradually diminished, bottoming out at 10.3 million persons and 5.4 percent of the population in 1960. At the same time, their children, the “old second generation,” became an increasingly large share of the population as the U.S. economy was growing steadily, income inequality declining, and the median family income rising substantially in real terms.

These circumstances produced steady upward mobility for the (white) native-born children of the immigrants who arrived from 1880 to 1930 compared either with their parents or, because they were starting on the whole from a lower base, with the native born (Alba 1990; Waters 1990; Card, DiNardo, and Estes 1999). The resumption of sustained national economic growth after the onset of World War II created many new economic opportunities for these immigrant children. It also created new demands for unskilled labor in northern and western cities, which was met not by

renewed European immigration but through the northward and westward migration of African Americans from the southern states, later augmented by Puerto Rican migration to New York City and, to a lesser degree, Chicago, and by Mexican migration to San Antonio, Los Angeles, and other emerging cities of the Southwest. The children of the earlier immigrants generally stood in front of these minority groups in the ethnic queue of the labor market. Their upward mobility gradually blurred the formerly sharp distinctions between native white Protestants and young adult children of Catholic and Jewish immigrants. Meanwhile, the appearance of comparatively disadvantaged native minority groups alongside these white ethnics made the distinction between whites and blacks (and other native minority groups) the central social cleavage in northern metropolitan areas.

With major revision in the rules governing immigration in 1965, however, the seemingly fixed nature of racial difference as the central division in urban society once more began to change as the number of immigrants arriving in the United States and the net foreign-born population began to grow again. Twenty million foreign-born persons have been legally admitted since 1965, and several million more have arrived without documentation. This surge caused the net foreign-born population to rebound to 28.4 million, or 10.4 percent of the population, by 2000.² In contrast with the previous wave, only 3.2 million of these later immigrants came from Europe. Most came from Mexico (4.5 million), the Caribbean (3.4 million), other parts of Latin America (2.4 million), and Asia (6.9 million, primarily from China, the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, and India). Even more so than before, the foreign-born population is concentrated in a relatively few “gateway” cities. More than a third of the national total are located in the Los Angeles and New York metropolitan areas alone, with another fifth in Miami, Houston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Boston. Mexican factory workers, Chinese restaurant workers, West Indian nurses, and Korean grocers have added new layers to the ethnic division of labor in these places.

These two waves of immigration share powerful similarities but also have sharp differences. Both waves ended up in disproportionately urban destinations; both inserted new national-origin groups into an established ethnic division of labor (that is, distinc-

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tive ethnic concentrations within the lattice of industries and occupations) in these urban areas; and both set up complicated new patterns of competition and synergy with previous immigrant and native populations. In both waves, groups clustered in certain neighborhoods, giving them a specific ethnic character, but these neighborhoods nonetheless remained diverse in their composition, requiring groups to interact with one another. The trajectories of each group reflected the opportunities and barriers afforded by the places they arrived at and the time they arrived as well as the strategies, resources, and burdens each group brought to bear on them. Each wave of groups faced established elites, interests, and institutions that feared they might destabilize prevailing political arrangements but that also sought to use the new immigrants to advance their own agendas. Both waves arrived in the United States at times of rapid economic transformation and growing income and wealth inequality (in part stimulated by their arrival at the bottom of the social hierarchy). Both sought to organize collective political and economic action that would span the ethnic and cultural boundaries created by differing national origins. All experienced religious or racial discrimination. Even the European immigrants of the first wave and their descendants had to fight hard to win acceptance for their Catholic and Jewish religions and to gain recognition that they were “white” and not members of “inferior” Slavic, Italian, and Jewish races.

Although these two great waves of immigration experienced broadly similar processes, the specific contexts of origin and reception are starkly different, or so it would seem from the twenty-first-century vantage point. In 1880, the United States was still recovering from the Civil War. The North was largely white and Protestant (though Irish and German Catholics had already made their marks on northern cities and had been important participants in the Union army). The northern cities were entering a period of sustained economic growth and transformation that would begin with steam, rail, and small manufacturing and culminate in electricity, the automobile, air travel, corporate capitalism, and mass consumption. Turn-of-the-century immigration was a central stimulant to this transformation. If we can judge by Olivier Zunz’s (1982) seminal study of Detroit, immigrants were segregated by ethnicity and integrated by class at the beginning of this process

but more integrated by ethnicity and segregated by class at the end of it.

The immigrants entering this economic vortex often succeeded in increasing their real household earnings over time, but this took far longer for most groups than is often recognized. Not until the 1940s and 1950s, sixty to seventy years after the new immigrants began arriving, could their descendants point with some assurance to their groups' economic and social progress. They secured this progress not just by working diligently at their jobs but also by struggling through a major economic crisis and political transformation, the Great Depression and the New Deal. Their votes made the Democratic Party dominant in national politics, and their support was critical in building a state willing to regulate capitalism and promote political incorporation among immigrants and other outsiders. This process nationalized the urban political machines that had earlier mobilized their votes and promoted blue-collar white ethnic interests, including strong labor unions, social protections of various sorts, and an end to religious discrimination. By the 1940s and 1950s, these cultural and political struggles had yielded real progress across the immigrant generations in economic, social, and political terms.

A less visible source of this progress may have been the restriction of immigrant flows—first by World War I, then by restrictive national quotas enacted in 1924, and finally by the Depression and World War II. These factors dramatically slowed the arrival of new immigrant workers, who, it was feared, might have weakened the labor market position of their predecessors and extended their cultural contact with the old country. The 1924 quotas, which were meant principally to stop southern and eastern European immigrants (and to reinforce bans on Asian immigrants) on the grounds that they were of racially inferior stock, angered those European immigrants already here and impelled them to organize, to become naturalized, and to vote. Many became convinced that economic and social progress would come only through political and social conflict. They were also eager to shed their racial stigmatization either by civil rights campaigns to overturn all racial distinctions or by becoming “white” themselves.

Although only time will tell, the picture after 1965 seems to be quite different. Instead of settling in prosperous industrial cities,

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most new “new immigrants” have found themselves in urban areas that have been undergoing a tumultuous racial transition and uncertain economic change. This shift has been especially rapid in the blue-collar activities that absorbed so many in the earlier immigrant wave. Where urban economies have been prospering, they have done so largely on the basis of advanced corporate services, nonprofit social services, and government employment (as well as high technology in southern California). The immigrant groups with large numbers of professionals among their ranks, such as Koreans, Indians, and Filipinos, have experienced remarkable social mobility in these contexts. Most recent immigrants, however, have lacked the education or skills required for success in the new economy.

The previous wave of immigrants had also been poorly educated, but in this respect they did not much differ from the native population of their time, nor were credential requirements for good jobs nearly so high as they are today. Although both immigrant waves were ethnically diverse, the current one is largely non-European, so native whites are prone to classify its members as nonwhites alongside African Americans, even as immigrants have increasingly competed with blacks for jobs and political influence. Moreover, as blue-collar work in central cities has declined, so have the traditional institutions of immigrant political incorporation, including political party organizations, labor unions, and the Catholic Church.

Finally, today’s immigrants enter a more culturally relaxed, multicultural, and perhaps less prejudiced society, in which the black struggle for justice has ended many aspects of institutionalized discrimination against nonwhites. In the mid-1990s, the political environment did become hostile toward immigrants, as anti-immigrant groups sought to reduce the flow of new migrants, restrict immigrants’ contact with or allegiance to their nations of origin, and penalize those who did not become American citizens or learn English quickly. This anti-immigrant reaction appears not to have taken hold, however, serving mainly to stimulate higher levels of naturalization and political mobilization among immigrants themselves. Meanwhile, America seems to be tolerating the spreading practice of holding dual citizenships. No looming international geopolitical cataclysm seems likely to prompt native-born

Americans to force immigrants to choose between their allegiances, although one could always emerge (with China, for example) with little notice.

Echoes of the past immigrant wave can be found in the desire of many contemporary immigrants, even nonwhite ones, to distance themselves socially and politically from African Americans and to become if not white then at least “not black.” Competition between the new immigrants and their children and the black political establishment in many areas may strengthen this color line within the nonwhite population and reinscribe the nation’s oldest and most invidious racial distinction—between black and nonblack—on twenty-first-century metropolitan society. On the other hand, it is equally possible that the colored character of the current immigration will scramble old racial distinctions, even to the point of removing race as a defining characteristic of America.

In short, the systematic comparison of political incorporation of the great eras of immigration at the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has much to teach us about American national development. How much will future generations care about an entity called America? In our increasingly globalized age, will national identities and incorporation into national polities cease to have so much salience, while immigrant affiliation becomes far more open ended and voluntary than in the past? It is hard to know. Nevertheless, we cannot turn our backs. It is incumbent upon us as scholars and citizens to make sense of where we have been and where we are going.

DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

One might well argue that sociology and political science were both founded in the United States on the study of immigrant incorporation. Certainly, those who established the Chicago school of sociology used that city as a laboratory for understanding processes of neighborhood change, ethnic succession, and urban transformation. Survey research and social research were initially prompted by concern for the living conditions of immigrants. The early works of political science also dealt with big-city bosses, the

reform of municipal administration, and the ethnic base of politics. Indeed, even Robert Dahl's classic 1961 work of political science, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, tells the story of how ethnic succession intertwined with urban political modernization in New Haven.

The early work in these social science disciplines produced a "received wisdom" based on the apparent success of the first and second generations of immigrants between the 1930s and the 1960s. It held that they experienced "straight-line assimilation," to the point where the contemporary descendants of white immigrants, at least, can choose their "ethnic options." As social scientists turn their attention to the current wave of migration, however, they are less likely to think that this "received wisdom" applies. They see, instead, the possibility of "segmented assimilation" and downward mobility for many immigrant groups, especially those most likely to be classified as racially nonwhite (Portes and Zhou 1993; Gans 1992). They worry about a systematic exclusion of current immigrants from politics and the ways in which local institutions work against incorporation rather than promote it, as, in their view, historians have argued in the past.

Much of the best historical scholarship questions whether the "received wisdom" was ever adequate for its time, much less for today. Although some contemporary social scientists paint a positive picture of the urban machines, for example, historians see them in a far less flattering light. Contemporary social scientists seem to think historians have concluded that assimilation worked in a fairly straightforward fashion, whereas contemporary historical scholarship describes the contested nature of this process, the price that groups paid to achieve material gains, and the ways in which reality departed from its democratic image (Gerstle 1999). The time is ripe, therefore, to take careful stock of what the best strands of both kinds of scholarship are saying and how they can learn from each other.

A full-scale comparison of immigration past and present is too big an undertaking to be accomplished in a single volume. Our task here is more modest and more focused: to inquire into the manner in which immigrants, either voluntarily or involuntarily, became or are becoming part of the American polity. We approach this task by looking at institutions—political parties, the

state, labor unions, voluntary associations, and schools—that are thought to be important to political incorporation and by asking how they have done—or failed to do—their work in defining the boundaries of the American nation, extending or restricting access to citizenship and civil rights, and formulating processes of inclusion and exclusion. We also look at how the political cultures that immigrants encountered in America and those that they brought with them, or to which they remain linked, influence the trajectories of political inclusion or exclusion. We ask how institutional processes and cultural dispositions have shaped the process of becoming American—or not—and how immigrants articulate their political and cultural aspirations.

This book is organized into five parts. Each part consists of a pair of essays, one by a historian (in one case, by a historically minded sociologist) and one by a social scientist (in one case, by a legal scholar), offering different perspectives on the assigned theme. In some parts, the essays reflect methodological and conceptual divergences between history and the social sciences; in others, the differences are less disciplinary than interpretive or ideological. In all cases, we think the scholarly pairings generate a lively interchange of ideas and enrich our understanding of the story of immigrant political incorporation, past and present.

THE POLITICS OF IMMIGRANT INCORPORATION

The “political boss” and the “party machine” hold special places in historical thinking about the modes of political incorporation dominant a hundred years ago. Many historical accounts depict the bosses as crooked but indispensable caretakers of urban immigrant masses whom no one else would help to adapt to their new circumstances. Just how important were bosses and their political machines to immigrant political incorporation? Did institutions such as unions, churches, and other kinds of voluntary associations play more important, if less appreciated, roles? Given that political parties seem weak and incapable of fulfilling these functions today, what critical institutions of incorporation, if any, have taken their place?

Evelyn Savidge Sterne assesses the myth of the “boss” in her

wide-ranging and illuminating “Beyond the Boss: Immigration and American Political Culture from 1880 to 1940.” She argues that political machines were undoubtedly an important feature of the immigrant landscape, though neither as dominant nor as empowering of immigrants as some scholars have thought. Indeed, Sterne argues, labor unions, civic associations, and the Catholic Church were as important to immigrant political incorporation as the political machine—perhaps even more so. So, too, was the Great Depression, an economic crisis that created opportunities for political reorganization and new spaces for participation by newcomers. The absence of strong political machines today may not hinder contemporary immigrant political incorporation, as is sometimes thought, especially where labor unions and civic associations organize immigrant communities. Sterne points out, however, that political incorporation can take a long time—fifty years in the case of the old “new immigrants”—and depends not just on the efforts of political leaders and the immigrants themselves but also on events, such as economic depressions, that throw prevailing political structures into disarray and create opportunities for new forms of political mobilization.

Are the institutions Sterne writes about available to immigrants today? Louis DeSipio’s meticulous “Building America, One Person at a Time: Naturalization and Political Behavior of the Naturalized in Contemporary American Politics” argues that they are not. While noting the rising number of immigrants who have naturalized in the 1990s, DeSipio’s central finding is that relatively few of these recently naturalized are politically active, at least as measured by their willingness to vote. The reason, he suggests, lies in an American political system whose institutions and rules have, since the 1950s, discouraged the participation of the poorer and less educated elements of the American electorate. He underscores the decline of political parties (and their machines) as one factor and the increasing professionalization of civic associations, with the attendant atrophy of their grassroots appeal, as another. Even the 1965 Voting Rights Act, passed to encourage minority participation in American politics, has, ironically, worked in the opposite direction by creating safe districts in which minority representatives, once elected, encounter little opposition and thus see little point in galvanizing the electorate or mobilizing new voters

(such as the recently naturalized). If the recent immigrants are becoming incorporated into something called America, DeSipio makes clear, they are not doing so through partisan political institutions or processes.

DeSipio paints a sobering picture of immigrant political disinterest and alienation. Nevertheless, his analysis, in combination with Sterne's, suggests that some institutions and events may still be capable of altering this situation. First, the organization of immigrant workers into labor unions that is currently under way in certain immigrant metropolises, such as Los Angeles, suggests that it may yet be possible to resuscitate one institution that, in the past, has been central to immigrant political mobilization. Sterne's analysis also reminds us of how long it took the "new immigrants" of the previous era to make their mark on American politics, an effect accomplished only when an economic crisis weakened the dominant political arrangements. From this perspective, a full evaluation of the current immigrant situation may not be possible for another twenty to thirty years. We have to be alert, too, to how dramatic changes in economic well-being or public policy can affect immigrants' relationship with their polity. Nevertheless, DeSipio's analysis ably documents the obstacles to immigrant political mobilization and incorporation that currently prevail in American society.

IMMIGRANTS AND AMERICAN CIVIC CULTURE

Civic culture is a second important arena for immigrant political incorporation. A popular argument, powerfully set forth by Philip Gleason in "Sea Change in the Civic Culture of the 1960s," holds that traditional civic culture, dominant through the mid-1960s, attracted immigrants with a promise of equality, liberty, and individual opportunity. To participate in this culture, immigrants had to sacrifice some of their ethnic distinctiveness and repudiate group claims—for example, demanding special treatment from the state because of their group's alleged accomplishments or victimization. If they were willing to forgo these claims, they would be accorded the same status as old-stock Americans. Gleason does not deny the persistent gap between this ideal civic culture, which

he calls, following Gunnar Myrdal, the American Creed, and its actual application to American life, but he argues that it “nonetheless has been brought closer to full realization over the course of the years,” making America an exceptionally free and democratic society.

According to Gleason, this civic culture fell apart in the 1960s, diminished by the conflict and disillusionment surrounding the civil rights revolution and the war in Vietnam. In its place arose a new political culture, less optimistic than the old and more willing to acknowledge group claims by oppressed minorities. This has altered the political climate, giving immigrants much less reason to join the mainstream and much more encouragement for maintaining their linguistic and cultural separateness. As a result, Gleason suggests, America has been less successful since the 1960s in incorporating new immigrants into its polity and in convincing them of the value of the American Creed. If such circumstances persist, Gleason implies, America will not only lose its capacity to absorb newcomers but will also diminish the very freedom and democracy that have long been this country’s hallmark.

Desmond King disputes this line of interpretation in his provocative “Making Americans: Immigration Meets Race.” He rejects the notion that the American Creed of liberal universalism was ever a dominant ideology in the United States or that we can understand American history as gradually realizing the creed’s ideals. Focusing on the period from 1880 to 1930, he demonstrates an intensifying discrimination against eastern and southern European immigrants, Chinese immigrants, Native Americans, and African Americans that undermines the argument that liberal ideals were predominant. Drawing on the work of Rogers Smith, he insists that American national identity was, from the country’s very beginning, constructed on the exclusion from the polity and from metaphorical representations of the nation (such as in Westerns and other movies) of groups marked as savage, racially inferior, or non-Protestant. From his perspective, it is wrong to view the 1960s as a fall from the golden age of American liberal universalism, for that golden age never existed. The 1960s should be seen instead as one more in an ongoing series of negotiations through which Americans have attempted to uproot old, and stubborn, problems of racial discrimination and exclusion.

TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR OF IMMIGRANTS

Implicit in the arguments put forward by DeSipio and Gleason is the suggestion that the forces of social and political incorporation are weaker now than they were at the turn of the past century. Either the allure of becoming American or the pressure to become so has atrophied—perhaps both. Whereas DeSipio and Gleason focus on factors internal to the United States to explain this phenomenon, another group of scholars focuses on external factors, especially globalization. This latter group claims that today's immigrants are far more international or "transnational" than previous immigrants and thus are much less willing to embrace one nation's culture or polity. To contemporary immigration scholars, this emergent "transnationalism" means that immigrants are so immersed in the cultures of two countries—their country of origin and their country of residence—that they belong to neither but find reason to cultivate national loyalties to both. Transnational ties diminish immigrant loyalty to the United States, thereby retarding, even halting, their political incorporation.

The success of this argument would seem to depend a great deal on whether transnationalism is in fact a phenomenon distinctively new. Its advocates claim that it is. But is this the case? In a sophisticated paper, "Immigrants, Transnationalism, and Ethnicization: A Comparison of This Great Wave and the Last," Ewa Morawska argues that the immigrants of the period from 1880 to 1940 possessed far deeper transnational loyalties than is generally realized. As many as 30 to 40 percent of the southern and eastern Europeans who arrived at the turn of the twentieth century returned home, and many traveled back and forth across the Atlantic. Those who did not kept in close touch with their relatives and friends in the old country through letters and newspapers. Virtually all of those European immigrants, whether they stayed or returned home, constructed complex identities that drew on both the Old World and New World cultures, a culturally syncretic, even transnational, process that historians now label "ethnicization." In view of the prevalence and durability of transatlantic ties that historians have demonstrated, Morawska urges scholars of

contemporary migration to abandon their presumption that earlier waves of immigration can be understood in terms of a rupture with the old country and “straight-line assimilation” into American society.

Morawska does not believe that the new transnationalism is simply a carbon copy of the old, however. She stresses the greater diversity of peoples and backgrounds discernible in the current immigration and the consequent variation in the forms of ethnicization and transnationalism. Morawska calls on scholars to examine these differences, past and present, in a systematic way. The transnationalisms of the two periods also differ because of what Morawska sees as a decline of the nationalist ideal. Neither the immigrants nor the natives of today regard the nation, or “*la patria*,” according to Morawska, as the “primordial, morally imperative, and exclusive symbolic community” it was once thought to be. Across a wide range of societies, many individuals and groups no longer feel the nationalist imperative that earlier generations experienced. The nation-states in which they reside are often willing to acknowledge forms of religious, ethnic, regional, or gender belonging that are not only independent of the nationalist ideal but may actually corrode it. Most remarkable, perhaps, is that nation-states seem increasingly willing to recognize the legitimacy of dual citizenship and thus to accept the possibility that other nation-states might have equal or greater claims on their citizens. This official tolerance of dual, even competing, loyalties, Morawska points out, would have been unimaginable fifty or one hundred years ago; its existence would seem to have important consequences for both the processes and content of immigrant political incorporation.

Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, in “On the Political Participation of Transnational Migrants: Old Practices and New Trends,” picks up Morawska’s challenge in his intensive case study of transnational political practices among Dominican and Colombian migrants to New York and Salvadoran immigrants in Los Angeles. While acknowledging that transnational political activity was an important process in the past, he argues that it has taken on distinctive new forms, not simply because international travel and communications are now cheaper and faster but also because neither sending-country states nor the United States are forcing immigrants to

choose one national membership or the other. To the contrary, having spent many years thinking of emigrants as traitors to the national cause, sending-country states are now actively encouraging dual citizenship, and the U.S. government no longer seems to level any sanctions against this practice. Retaining membership in the polity of the sending state is no longer mutually exclusive with becoming an American citizen or engaging in political action in the United States as a resident alien. Instead, some sending states now want their emigrants to play formal political roles both “there” and “here.”

Guarnizo distinguishes between the “transnationalism from below” discussed by many contemporary scholars and the “transnationalism from above” most of interest to him. The former describes the tendency of immigrants to retain ties to their home villages, maintaining transnational families and kinship networks and investing in communal facilities back in the villages, such as schools, health clinics, or power plants. Guarnizo joins those who take the view, however, that the most important aspect of transnational political activity is efforts by sending countries to construct a “deterritorialized state” that will retain the loyalties of emigrants, keep them under political control, and use them to advance sending-state interests. He documents this position by a close look at three groups in two cities. As he notes, every major Dominican political party has an office in Washington Heights (the Dominican neighborhood of northern Manhattan), where Dominican presidential candidates campaign and raise funds. Indeed, former Dominican president Leonel Fernández lived for many years in Washington Heights and retains his green card. In 1997, the Dominican Congress granted Dominicans living abroad the right to vote in Dominican presidential elections, starting in 2002. This close connection with home-country politics is not inconsistent, Guarnizo points out, with a high level of involvement in New York City politics, including the election of Dominicans to seats on the city council and in the state assembly. Similarly, Colombians living abroad have been able to vote in that country’s national elections since 1961, and the Colombian government has established a program to provide services to and promote Colombian identity among its emigrants in the United States and has sought to use them as a lobby in support of U.S. aid to Colombia.

Finally, the Salvadoran governing party, Arena, has made a major effort since 1992 to gain support among Salvadorans in Los Angeles. While Arena has not yet made much headway there, Guarnizo sees its activities as fundamentally similar to the efforts of the more successful Dominican and Colombian governments to control their emigrants and to organize them as a political resource within the United States. He expects this to be a relatively permanent feature of immigrant politics in the United States, and likely to make this immigrant wave's road to political incorporation different from that of the last.

IMMIGRANTS AND THE AMERICAN STATE

Until recently, scholars of contemporary immigration have shown little interest in the state's role in shaping the immigrant experience. They have depicted the state as irrelevant or at best secondary to the economic and social forces that impel international migration. Yet as T. Alexander Aleinikoff and Reed Ueda show, the state deeply structures the immigrant experience. It establishes and guards borders, determines the volume and character of immigrants allowed in, decrees categories of legal status, and controls access to citizenship, voting, and eligibility for publicly sponsored services. It possesses a fundamental interest in defining a polity compatible with its aims and in determining the role that immigrants and their children should play in it.

In "Policing Boundaries: Migration, Citizenship, and the State," Aleinikoff offers us a bold conceptual piece on how to think about the state's role in shaping access of immigrants to American society and determining the terms under which they can claim membership in the American polity. He first stresses the need to see the American state as a complex series of institutions ranging from the local to the national and from the legislative to the administrative. Sometimes the different parts work in concert with one another, sometimes not; sometimes the state responds to the interests of the society, or the most powerful factions within it, while at other times it responds to internally generated bureaucratic imperatives. But it is wrong, Aleinikoff argues, to view the state simply as a jumble of clashing interests and bureaucracies, for certain fundamental beliefs have long guided the American state's immi-

gration policy: a commitment, since the 1860s, to *jus soli* (citizenship on the basis of birthplace as opposed to parentage, race, or national origin); a reluctance to strip any man of his citizenship (the state, for many years, refused to extend this protection to women); and a commitment to granting most constitutionally guaranteed rights to all residents of the United States, even immigrants and noncitizens. The Supreme Court set forth these policies in a series of judicial decisions that, in the Court's eyes, made good on principles set forth in the U.S. Constitution. In the process, the Court made itself an indispensable player in the American state and in shaping the experience of immigrants in American society.

In Aleinikoff's eyes, the Court's constitutional interpretations made possible a largely liberal immigration system, especially when compared with those of other nations. In at least two critical areas, however—regulation of immigration and naturalization—the Supreme Court turned its power over to the Congress, to the point of renouncing its right of judicial review, thus creating opportunities for illiberal legislation. The Congress alone, the Court decided, could determine how many immigrants to allow into the United States, from which social categories (men, women, family relatives, unskilled laborers, professionals, political radicals, paupers, prostitutes), and from which foreign lands (northwestern Europe, southeastern Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America). The Congress possessed the same power to decide whom to admit to citizenship and under what terms. The Court ruled that these powers were inherent to the United States as a sovereign state in an international system of states in which, as with foreign policy, no domestic court could interfere.

What this meant in practice is the subject of "Historical Patterns of Immigrant Status and Incorporation in the United States," Reed Ueda's authoritative survey of the immigration, citizenship, discrimination, and antidiscrimination policies enacted by the U.S. Congress from 1789 to the present. Like Aleinikoff, Ueda notes the many liberal policies emanating from the American state, especially in the nineteenth century, which made the United States more open to immigrants and more committed to their quick political incorporation than almost any other nation in the world. Ueda's stress on the openness of American society resembles Philip Gleason's emphasis on liberal universalism as the dominant American creed. Ueda's story of the late nineteenth and twentieth

centuries diverges from Gleason's account, however, while buttressing Desmond King's. Beginning in the 1880s with the Chinese Exclusion Act and culminating in the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act, which reduced immigration from eastern and southern Europe to a trickle and barred eastern and southern Asian immigrants altogether, the United States repeatedly violated liberal universalism in order to recast itself as a racially superior and homogeneous society of western European, or "Nordic," stock. The ethnic and racial composition of American society today would be far different had those restrictive laws not been imposed to keep out millions of "undesirables." The impact of those laws shows the state's extraordinary ability to determine the contours of American society.

Ueda does not end his account with restriction, for he stresses that American law was reversed as the civil rights movement built pressure to pass the Hart-Celler Immigration Act, a "revolutionary new law" that, he argues, abolished the racially charged notions that had underwritten the nation's immigration regime for nearly half a century. That 1965 law revived mass immigration and the tenet that America does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or ethnicity. Still, Ueda finds traces of the racially motivated 1920s immigration-restriction system in the new system of "regulatory state pluralism" that seeks, through affirmative action and related policies, to bestow entitlements and opportunities on disadvantaged racial minorities. While he understands how these policies emerged logically from a past suffused with racial discrimination, Ueda, like Gleason, criticizes their effects as inimical to the best aspect of the American heritage—the tradition of liberal individualism. For Ueda, ironically and controversially, the United States in 2001 is still not as open and free a society for immigrants as it was in the nineteenth century, largely owing to the regulatory powers exercised by the state.

IMMIGRANTS, SCHOOLS, AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

The historical mythology surrounding immigrant incorporation invariably assigns a key role to the public schools. Here the children

of past immigrants allegedly learned English, civic ideals, and cultural mores. The schools traditionally melted the many into one by providing the tools and incentive necessary to participate in civic life. As long as the schools did this work, immigrants were effectively socialized and incorporated. Now that they no longer do, the incorporation of immigrants has become a more perilous and uncertain project.

The final section of the book interrogates this mythology by asking what role schools have historically played in civic education and what role they play now. In "School for Citizens: The Politics of Civic Education from 1790 to 1990," David Tyack offers a masterful synthesis of two hundred years of civic education. Tyack makes clear that he is focusing on what public educators wanted to impart to students in the classroom, not on how, or if, the lessons transformed the students. He identifies five distinct periods of civic education, stretching from the 1790s to the 1990s, during which the emphasis on transmitting republican and American values—liberty, independence, order, individual rights and duties, patriotism—remained fairly constant even as the pedagogies meant to deliver these values changed over time. Educators in the early national period (1790s to 1830s) worried about securing support for the republican idea of government itself, whereas those in the common-school era (1840s to 1880s) focused on creating a common national culture to counteract growing differences in ethnicity, language, and religion among the American population. Concern about immigrants and their capacity to become responsible citizens intensified in the turn-of-the-century period (1880s to 1920s), leading to coercive Americanization campaigns meant to impose a harsh uniformity on the children of strange-speaking and strangely-costumed newcomers.

Tyack's view of the harshness of this period corresponds closely to the views of Desmond King and Reed Ueda, but Tyack sees the effect of that period ebbing sooner. Progressive education, Tyack argues, made strides in the 1930s and 1940s, inaugurating a fourth period of civic education, which insisted on ethnic, religious, and then racial equality as pillars of citizenship instruction. Most educators of the time did not encourage group difference, as later educators would; to the contrary, they continued to insist on unifying all Americans around republican and pa-

triotic ideals. In Tyack's eyes, however, progressive educators did a great deal to encourage ethnic, religious, and racial tolerance.

For Tyack, this period, stretching from the 1930s through the 1960s, forms a golden age of citizenship instruction, especially because it helped to prepare for the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the inclusion of blacks as equal citizens. In this sense, his argument draws close to that of Philip Gleason. Just as Gleason's golden age was upended by the unanticipated radicalization and group balkanization of the 1960s, so too, is Tyack's. An emphasis on group rights and multiculturalism overtook the earlier celebration of America as an experiment in liberty in which every individual has a chance to get ahead. Tyack is not sure, however, that this major shift in educational emphasis (the fifth period of civic education, from the 1970s to the 1990s) has made much difference in what American schoolchildren actually learn about their country and how they conceive of their relationship to it. Indeed, he finds comfort in the idea that arguments about multiculturalism keep alive the idea that "political education matter[s] to the whole society." His greatest concern is that a new discourse on schooling as a form of human capital for individual economic advancement in the global marketplace is replacing the old discourse that education should teach Americans about their common political inheritance and prepare them to be responsible citizens. Thus, our moment is a perilous one as schoolchildren, native born and immigrant alike, are no longer being taught that they live in a society of democratic promise that will flourish only if they learn their rights and embrace their duties.

Laurie Olsen's essay, "Public Education, Immigrants, and Racialization: The Contemporary Americanization Project," could not be more different from Tyack's. In place of a sweeping history of civic education, she offers us a case study of one California high school in the 1990s. Instead of focusing on the intentions of educators, Olsen relates the experience of schoolchildren. In her chronicle, told largely from the children's viewpoint, civic ideals remain relevant to the school experience, although in a diminished form: civic education seems to have become synonymous with learning English. Immigrant schoolchildren experience their lack of proficiency in English keenly and are eager to learn more in order to become American. Becoming American, however, as

they quickly learn from the school's "hidden curriculum," does not entail learning about democracy, opportunity, or civic rights or duties; rather, it involves learning the importance of racial distinctions in the school and in American society at large. Peer societies in the school organize themselves largely around race—Americans (white), blacks, Latinos—and the newcomers are really outcasts or invisible until they, too, acquire a racial identity. Many of the immigrant children are Asian, and therefore they do not have easy access to any of the existing racial categories. They must create a new racial identity for themselves based either on their national origin or on a pan-Asian identity forged out of national groups that, in Asia, possess little sense of commonality. They must then negotiate their place in the racial hierarchy—higher than blacks? Equal to Mexicans? Lower than whites?

Olsen ably renders the complexity of this process and the trepidation it stirs up in the immigrant children. She demonstrates the dominance of a teenage racial system that students feel they cannot escape and that teachers are either too busy or too powerless to mitigate. Olsen raises questions parallel to Tyack's about whether the multicultural and bilingual policies of the past quarter century have made much difference in the experience of schoolchildren. Ethnic and racial equality in this high school seems a distant, even receding, dream. Programs such as those teaching English as a second language, meant to ease immigrants' transition into American society, seem to have created as many problems as they have solved. At the conclusion of her essay, Olsen wonders whether America's democratic promise matters at all in this school or elsewhere among America's youth. Olsen shows us political incorporation at work, but it is incorporation not into a democratic polity but rather into a harsh racial hierarchy.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The pairing of historical and contemporary perspectives across these five dimensions of immigrant political incorporation suggests a host of new directions for future research. It demonstrates how much we have yet to learn about the immigrant experience, how much we might gain by comparing the present with the past,

and how important it is for historians and social scientists to come together to conduct joint inquiries. Evelyn Sterne's historical chapter points us toward the systematic study of how contemporary voluntary institutions in immigrant communities shape immigrant access to local political systems. Such a study must go beyond examining how local party organizations selectively organize the immigrant and second-generation vote to inquire as well into the roles of churches, fraternal organizations, community centers, women's groups, and labor unions. Until that has been done, too little will be known about the various dimensions along which immigrants are or are not becoming incorporated into American political life. From Louis DeSipio, historians should learn that their almost universal assumption that the high rates of naturalization among immigrants in the 1920s led to high levels of immigrant political activity in the 1930s may not be warranted. Certainly, it is imperative that some historians focus on the link (or lack of one) between naturalization and political mobilization in the 1920s and 1930s. Ewa Morawska and Desmond King issue a similar kind of admonition about a key assumption that often informs the work of social scientists—namely, that immigrants of the past assimilated rather quickly and unproblematically into the American polity.

Laurie Olsen presents a grim picture of the immigrant experience in today's public schools, but ultimately, we can only assess the current situation through historical comparison. Olsen's essay makes clear the need for historical studies of the "hidden curriculum" of racial and ethnic sorting that past generations of schoolchildren have experienced and how this shaped their Americanization and incorporation. One can certainly imagine, on the basis of Desmond King's essay, that rigid systems of racial and ethnic sorting pervaded urban high schools in the first, second, and third decade of the past century, powerfully affecting the immigrant and ethnic populations of those years. Some scholars, such as Paula Fass, have done such studies, but more historical work of this sort needs to be written. Adopting a historical perspective also warns against imputing too much importance to any case study until it is located in the proper context: were these systems of racial and ethnic sorting worse at certain historical moments than at others—during the years of peak migration, for example, or times of economic hardship? Did their influence lessen during the

period that David Tyack and Philip Gleason see as the golden years of civic culture (1930s to the 1960s)? How do we assess their influence in private schools, especially parochial institutions? And how did these systems of sorting interact with other influences on schoolchildren emanating from home, work, religious institutions, neighborhoods, and mass culture?

Simply providing a historical context, of course, is not going to give us all the answers we seek. Indeed, historians are sometimes too quick to historicize or periodize without sufficiently developing the conceptual implications of what they are doing. Take the golden era of civic culture referred to by Tyack and Gleason. How are we to reconcile their claims for the special character of this era with the fact, stressed by King and Ueda, that these years were marked by a highly restrictive and racially discriminatory system of immigrant regulation (1924 to 1965)? One path of resolution is simply to determine which group of scholars has the stronger argument or the better evidence. Perhaps it makes more sense, however, to adopt the approach suggested by Alexander Aleinikoff: to recognize that the American state possesses both liberal and antiliberal tendencies and that both can influence public policy, either sequentially or simultaneously. Thus, it may have been the case that American civic culture and the political incorporation of immigrants made significant advances even as a set of discriminatory immigration laws sharply restricted access to this civic polity and culture. If this was indeed the case, we need to inquire into how these seemingly contradictory phenomena coexisted, and in particular, to ask whether the contradictions generated conflict and instability or whether they functioned to support each other. Historical research can help us provide some answers, but that research must itself be guided by theoretical and conceptual frameworks that will help us to understand how nations function, how states operate, how civic cultures advance. And, in this regard, social scientists and political theorists have much to teach historians.

Taken as a totality, these essays teach us several basic lessons. The first is that social science often rests on unexamined assumptions both about the current context (which a historical perspective might suggest is actually quite contingent) and about what historians have said about the past (assuming unproblematic

straight-line assimilation where historical research shows struggle, selective incorporation, and ambiguity). Similarly, historians have not yet taken on the challenge of studying the current era of immigration in contrast with immigration at the turn of the past century nor that of theorizing the continuities and discontinuities between these eras. All the essays in this volume, in their own ways, suggest ideas about how to go about these tasks.

The second basic lesson is that the thorough incorporation of first-generation immigrants into local and national political processes has been the relatively rare exception, not the rule, in the United States. More typical are various forms of exclusion, subordination, and co-optation. This stands to reason because political establishments, whatever their ethnic or class composition or ideological leanings, benefit little from mobilizing and empowering marginal groups. Only under certain circumstances, such as a breakdown of the dominant coalition or a crisis of its capacity to govern combined with rapid demographic and economic changes that may undermine its social base, will some part of the political establishment find it to its advantage to mobilize emerging nationality groups. Even then, these groups may be required to sacrifice certain important goals or political positions in order to be allowed admittance (Shefter 1994).

If the pace of immigrant political incorporation is slow in the first generation, it picks up in the second. Our third lesson is that the children of the post-1965 immigrants, the second generation, are likely to have a greater impact on American politics than their parents, just as the children of the migrants from 1880 to 1920 provided the social base for the New Deal in the 1930s. We should think of immigration not simply as one wave that washes in and through the polity but rather as a series of generational waves, with the second having different political characteristics from the first. Naturalized immigrants may be relatively few and uninvolved in the process of Americanization; immigrant children born here will grow up as citizens and will play the central role in the process of “ethnicization” described by Ewa Morawska. We must carefully examine the circumstances under which successive immigrant generations have come of political age, both in the past and now.

The fourth lesson that these essays teach us is that what seems

solid now may melt and then evaporate when historical circumstances change. We tend to read developments of the 1990s as defining the overall character of post-1965 era of immigration; but it could be argued that the 1990s were, rather, a fluid period in terms of Americanization, incorporation, racialization, social mobility, and transnationalism. We will not really know how these processes turn out for another twenty to thirty years. Thus, for example, while one can certainly argue, as several of our authors do, that the decline in civic culture and political parties has worsened the current prospects for immigrant political incorporation, one must also be alert to less visible processes that might, in the right set of circumstances, strengthen civic culture and invigorate a “politics of inclusion” in immigrant communities.

An appreciation for fluidity and contingency is also useful when analyzing the manner in which the international system of nation states shapes the immigrant experience. Luis Guarnizo makes the important point that this system is now more open to multiple and transnational forms of citizenship (and individual rights) than in the past. This was often not the case for previous immigrants, as Americans of German or Japanese descent are particularly aware: U.S. involvement in international conflict can have major consequences for what is demanded of those whose national loyalty is suspect. If the current situation is novel, however, it may be less fixed than transnationalists tend to assume. It is not hard to imagine the international system becoming less peaceful and open or to imagine circumstances under which long-settled Americans might press Mexican Americans, Chinese Americans, or Muslim Americans to demonstrate their loyalty to America. Historical perspectives on matters of immigrant political incorporation suggest that we must heighten our sensitivity to key assumptions about the current context. These assumptions must be made visible, and a way for testing their validity should be built into our research designs.

Finally, these essays teach us that states are important both in determining the volume and destinations of migrants within the international system and in shaping the speed and character of political incorporation of migrants into the societies in which they have settled. The American state, as Alexander Aleinikoff reminds us, comprises a complex series of institutions that do not always

work in concert with each other. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the major political tendencies of that state and to demonstrate how they impact on immigrants in particular eras of the past and present. The essays by Evelyn Sterne, David Tyack, and Laurie Olsen remind us that key encounters between this “state” and immigrants often occur at a local level, in public schools run by municipal school boards, and thus that any theory about the American state must address its federal character and the devolution of important powers onto independent local authorities.

These essays, as we have tried to show, stimulate a great deal of thought. Because the rate of immigration into the United States shows no signs of slowing, and because the children of the post-1965 immigrants are becoming an increasing share of the native-born population, the question of whether and how they will be incorporated into our political system will loom ever larger. Other advanced societies, not just fellow settler-states like Canada and Australia but also European states and even Japan, are experiencing similar trends. Thus the issue of immigration has not just national but also global significance.

NOTES

1. These figures are drawn from U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 2000b, tables 1 and 2, and U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000b.
2. Editors’ calculation based on data from U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000a. In addition, 15 million people had two foreign-born parents, accounting for 5.4 percent of the U.S. population, while another 13 million, or 4.3 percent of the population, had one foreign-born parent. Almost 90 percent of the foreign born arrived after 1964, but only about 60 percent of the second generation are children of the new “new immigrants,” the remainder being the aging “old second generation.”

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