Introduction to Latin America

Migration and Immigration
Terminology

- Push factors - things that force movement away from a place
- Pull factors - things that incentivize movement to a place
- Tejanos - Residents of Texas with Mexican heritage
- Chicanos/as - people of Mexican heritage born in the U.S.
- Hispanic - people of Latin American origin and from Spanish-speaking countries; ethnic group, not race
- Latinos/as - people of Latin American origin; can be from non-Spanish-speaking countries; ethnic group, not race
- Latinx - person of Latin American origin or descent; used as an inclusive, gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina; ethnic group, not race
19th Century Migration

• Texas
  • 1829 influx of non-Hispanic migrants (by request)
    • Mexican authorities wanted buffer between Tejanos and Comanches
    • Solidified land claims and expanded territory borders
    • Concerns about high numbers
      • Move to ban slavery
      • Taxes
  • 1835-1836- Fight for independent Republic of Texas
    • Push for independence to keep slavery

• Aftermath of Mexican American War (1846-1848)
  • CA, NV, NM, AZ, UT, TX become part of U.S.
  • Dispute over border line- Nueces River or Rio Grande

• 1890 height of foreign immigration to the U.S.- 14.8% of the population
Mexican Immigration

• The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920)
  • Civil war and unrest across entire country
  • First major wave of Mexican immigration to the U.S.
• Lynching (1848-1928)
  • Border disputes
  • Retribution for “crimes”
  • Economic competition
  • Racism/Jim Crow
• President Hoover blamed Mexicans for the Great Depression (1930)
  • “we must rid ourselves of criminal aliens”
  • 2 million deportations (1/2 U.S. citizens)
• Bracero Program (1942-1964)
  • Unofficial Period (1942-1951)
  • Official Period (1951-1954)
  • “Operation Wetback” (1954)
Puerto Rican Immigration

- 1940s and 1950s
- U.S. occupation since 1898
  - Became protected territory
- Jones Act of 1917
  - Declared U.S. citizens
- “Operation Bootstrap” in 1947
  - Push for industrialization on the island
  - Massive rural to urban migration
  - Loss of jobs in country and city competition spurred U.S. immigration
    - 21% of the total island population
    - Known as “The Great Migration”
- Largest communities in NYC and Miami
Cuban Immigration

- **1959**
  - Elite immigration (class/race)
  - 124,000

- **1960-1962**
  - “Operation Peter Pan”
  - 14,000 unaccompanied minors

- **1965-1973**
  - “Freedom Flights”
  - 274,000
  - Bilateral arrangement
    - More diverse population (race/class/gender)
  - Cuban Refugee Program provided:
    - Health services
    - Monthly relief checks
    - Job training
    - Education (English classes/professional certification)

- **Late 1970s-1980s**
  - Thawing of U.S.-Cuba tensions
  - Mariel boatlift
    - “human avalanche”
    - Mostly poor and Black

- **1990s**
  - 1994 limit on Cuban refugees
  - Rafting incidents/deaths
Cold War Immigration

• 1950s-1970s
• Chileans, Brazilians, Argentinians
• Fleeing several types of violence:
  • Political
    • Dictatorships
    • Torture
    • Assassination
    • “Disappearances”
    • Loss of basic rights/freedoms
  • Military
    • Paramilitary groups
    • U.S. intervention
  • Economic
    • Explosive inflation
    • Depressed wages
    • High unemployment
    • Foreign monopolies
1980s-1990s

• Major shift in immigration patterns
• “Refugee Act of 1980” signed by President Carter
• Demographic shift
  • Central Americans
  • Poor
  • Indigenous
• Category change
  • Asylum/refugee
    • Very narrow parameters/bias
• Push factors
  • Natural disasters
  • Drug wars
  • Civil wars/genocide
• Temporary Protected Status (1998)
  • Victims of natural disasters

“We are not myths of the past, ruins in the jungle, or zoos.
We are people and we want to be respected.”

-Rigoberta Menchu
1992 Nobel Peace Prize Winner
1980s: Asylum applications from Central Americans

- **Guatemala**: 9500 applications, 171 granted (1.9%)
- **El Salvador**: 45000 applications, 1170 granted (2.6%)
- **Nicaragua**: 48000 applications, 12000 granted (25%)
Current Immigration Trends

• 1990s-2000s
  • Predominantly men
  • Economic pull factors

• 2000s-2010s
  • Larger portion of women
  • Economic pull factors

• 2010s-2020s
  • Women and children
  • Family reunification
Undocumented Immigration Debate

• Problems
  • Misrepresentation/Misinformation
    • Who is coming?
      • Not just Mexicans (25%)
      • Asians largest ethnic group
  • How are they getting here?
    • Not walking
  • Why are they staying?
    • Safety
    • Education
      • DACA/Dreamers
    • Want to work
      • Pay taxes and SSI but can’t receive

• Dehumanizing the issue
  • People, not numbers
  • U.S. is nation of immigrants

• Scope of the issue
  • 1 out of every 30 people in U.S. in undocumented
  • 25% of all immigrants are undocumented
Undocumented Immigration Debate

- Proposed Solutions
  - Wall
    - Cost- $21.6B
    - Practicality- 40% enter other ways
    - Circular flow vs. Border security
      - 1980s shift
      - 280% increase
  - Political rhetoric
    - Distracts from real solutions
    - Preys on people’s fears
Undocumented Immigration Debate

- Deportation
  - Immigration courts system
    - High caseloads
    - Almost 1m cases backlogged
    - Political control of judges
    - High rate of resignation (2020)
    - Too few courts
      - 57 in U.S.
    - Small budget
      - Less than 2% of total allocation
      - Elimination of administrative closure option (2020)

- Results: Mistakes and Mishandling of Justice
  - No translators (not Spanish)
  - No representation
  - Simple documentation issues
    - U.S. citizens (20k) since 2003
  - People unable to defend themselves
    - Children
    - Disabled
  - Virtual hearings
Famous Formerly-Undocumented People

- Salma Hayek
  - Actress/philanthropist
- Carlos Castro-
  - CEO & Founder, Todos Supermarket
- Dr. Alfredo Quinones-Hijonosa
  - MD, neurosurgeon at the Mayo Clinic
Recent Issues

• Child Detention
  • U.S./Mexico border
  • Unaccompanied minors
  • April 2018 “Zero Tolerance” policy from AG Sessions criminally prosecuted all adults and increased minimum penalty
  • Limited legal ports of entry asylum seekers and restricted access there
  • Children not allowed to be held with parents if criminal charges
  • Children sent to detention centers
  • Estimated 3,000 children held for over a year
  • Executive Order in June 2018 ended the detention of minors
    • Kept family detention
    • Did not include family reunification plan
    • Did not result in increased prosecutions
Current Data

- Latinos make up the largest minority group in the U.S.
  - 54 million people (17%)
  - Has grown 592% since 1970
- Average of 1M documented immigrants total per year (20% Latino)
- Primary Latin American countries of origin are: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Colombia
- 4 out of 10 in the U.S. identify as a race/ethnicity other than white
  - In 2019, for the first time, more than half of the nation’s population under age 16 identified as a racial or ethnic minority.
- The unanticipated decline in the country’s white population means that other racial and ethnic groups are responsible for generating overall growth in the future.
  - White populations have been experiencing disproportionate death to birth ratio for over a decade.

Unauthorized immigrants are almost a quarter of U.S. foreign-born population

Foreign-born population estimates, 2017

- Unauthorized immigrants 10.5 million (23%)
- Lawful immigrants 35.2 million (77%)
- Naturalized citizens 20.7 million (45%)
- Temporary lawful residents 2.2 million (5%)

Note: Figures for the total and subgroups differ from published U.S. Census Bureau totals because census data have been augmented and adjusted to account for undercount of the population. All numbers are rounded. Unauthorized immigrants include some with temporary protection from deportation under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS), as well as pending asylum cases.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on augmented U.S. Census Bureau data.

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