

Topic of the week cultural diversity



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Social Forces Influencing Immigration Policies Throughout American history there have been many factors influencing immigration policies. After World War II and prior to the Hart-Celler Act of 1965, there was a huge influx of immigrants from Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, as well as from Europe. This caused great concern for many Americans as it overloaded the eastern coastline with uneducated laborers who were considered a threat to the social structures of developing urban areas. The educational and health care systems, as well as the infrastructure were overloaded. Today, the same scenario exists, only the immigrants of today come somewhat illegally and bring their drug trade, crime, and uneducated ways of life with them. There is current legislation to help reform this situation.

Social Forces Influencing Immigration Policies Prior to World War I, there was a huge wave of immigrants arriving from predominantly European countries. This was good, in a way, because it provided the necessary laborers for the factories and various infrastructure projects America had under construction. They were primarily young people; able bodied, with a burning desire to have a bite of the American dream. They weren't particularly educated, just eager to take their places and create a new life for themselves and their future families. With the development of steamship travel there was a possibility for greater numbers of immigrants to arrive at one time. This brought immigrants primarily to the eastern seacoasts. Urban areas quickly filled up with immigrants and put undue pressure on currently existing systems; health care, education, and infrastructure. The influx of immigrants during this period began to concern the leaders of society as they felt their communities were being overburdened by low class, uneducated people who would populate the areas well into the future and

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downgrade what they were trying to socially maintain for their own families. The nation's well off felt that this would become a threat to the security, health and well-being of their communities. They requested immigrant legislation from Congress which resulted in the National Origins Act of 1921, to be further defined in 1924. The National Origins Act of 1924 further defined immigration by placing overall limits on numbers coming from Europe; the Western Hemisphere immigrants were not included in this legislation. Within those overall limits, there were quotas stating how many immigrants were allowed from each part of the world. Preference was largely given to Northern and Western Europe, where it was believed that people were more educated and healthier, and severely limited with regards to immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. Immigration continued with Western Hemisphere immigrants capitalizing on the lack of quotas; creating a huge influx from the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America. There were also limited numbers of refugees admitted as a result of political campaigns in Europe, Hitler's purge of the Jews, and Castro's Communist regime in Cuba. Asians were not permitted entry. The Hart-Celler Act of 1965 took away the immigration quotas, as a result of the civil rights reform at that time, and instead made immigration based on family relationships and needed job skills. Today, again, there is much concern from the U. S. citizen over immigration. Unlike earlier periods of intense immigration, many of today's immigrants are illegal aliens. These illegal aliens are mainly from Central America and Mexico. The problem with this current influx is that by them remaining illegal, they do not pay taxes to support the economy; they abuse social programs and further tax health care, educational systems, and the infrastructure. They come here to have "anchor babies" that give them

the right to stay and raise those children here. Their contributions aren't that of skilled labor, but unskilled, uneducated labor; bringing with them the drug culture from their countries as well. This poses a huge problem to the already overburdened economy and justice system in America today. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act of 1996 was aimed at helping to get this situation under control. It made some serious and much needed changes to the way political asylum is granted, as well as minimizing immigrant retention. It also placed high priority on prosecution of crimes committed by illegal aliens, with deportation assured. References Diner, H. (2008). Immigration and U. S. history. American. gov. archive. February 13, 2008. Web. April 9, 2011. <http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2008/February/20080307112004ebyessedo0.1716272.html>