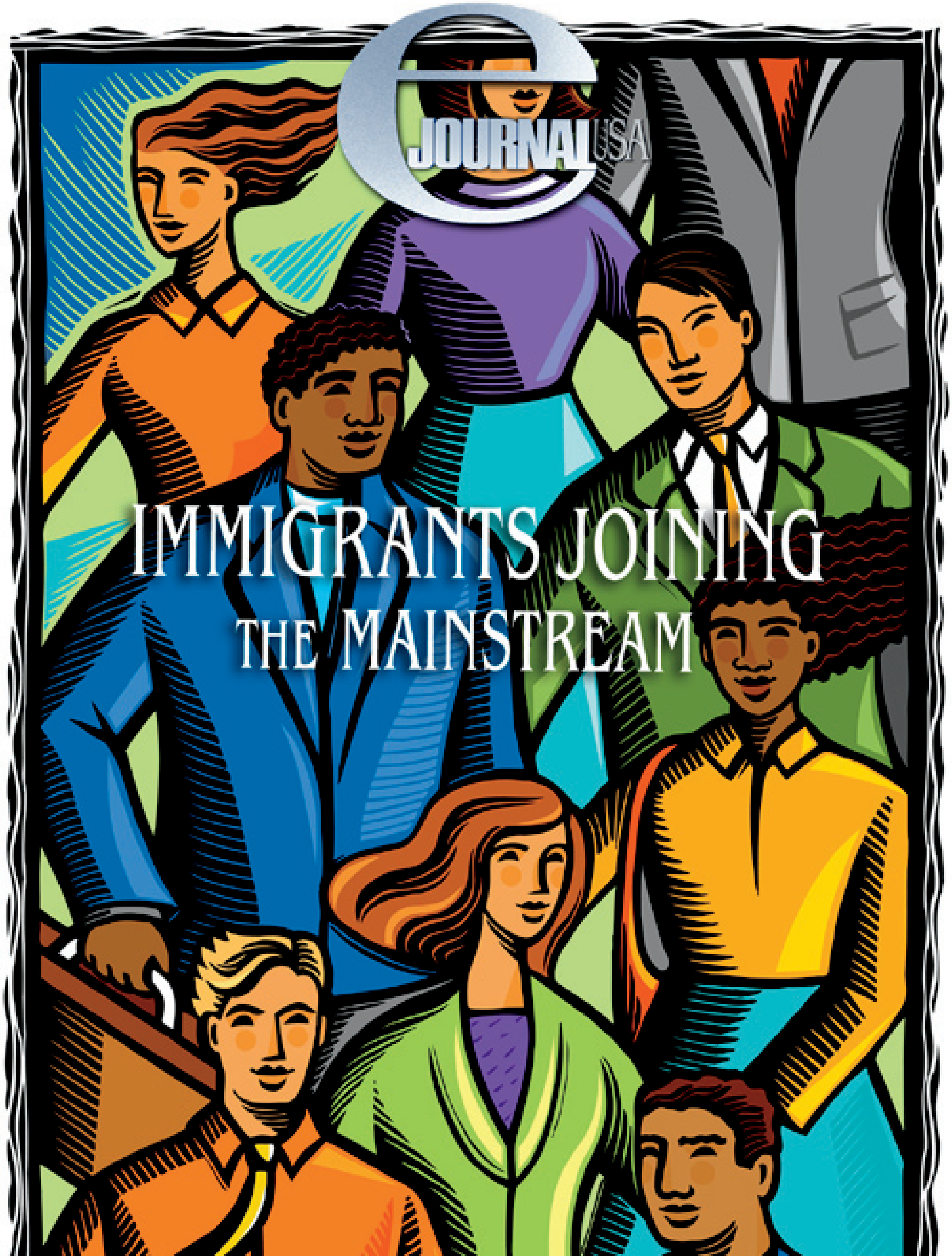
eJOURNAL USA

IMMIGRANTS JOINING THE MAINSTREAM



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE · BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS

Volume 13, Number 2

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Immigrants Joining the Mainstream

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One new journal is published monthly in English and is followed by versions in French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Selected editions also appear in Arabic, Chinese, and Persian. Each journal is catalogued by volume and number.

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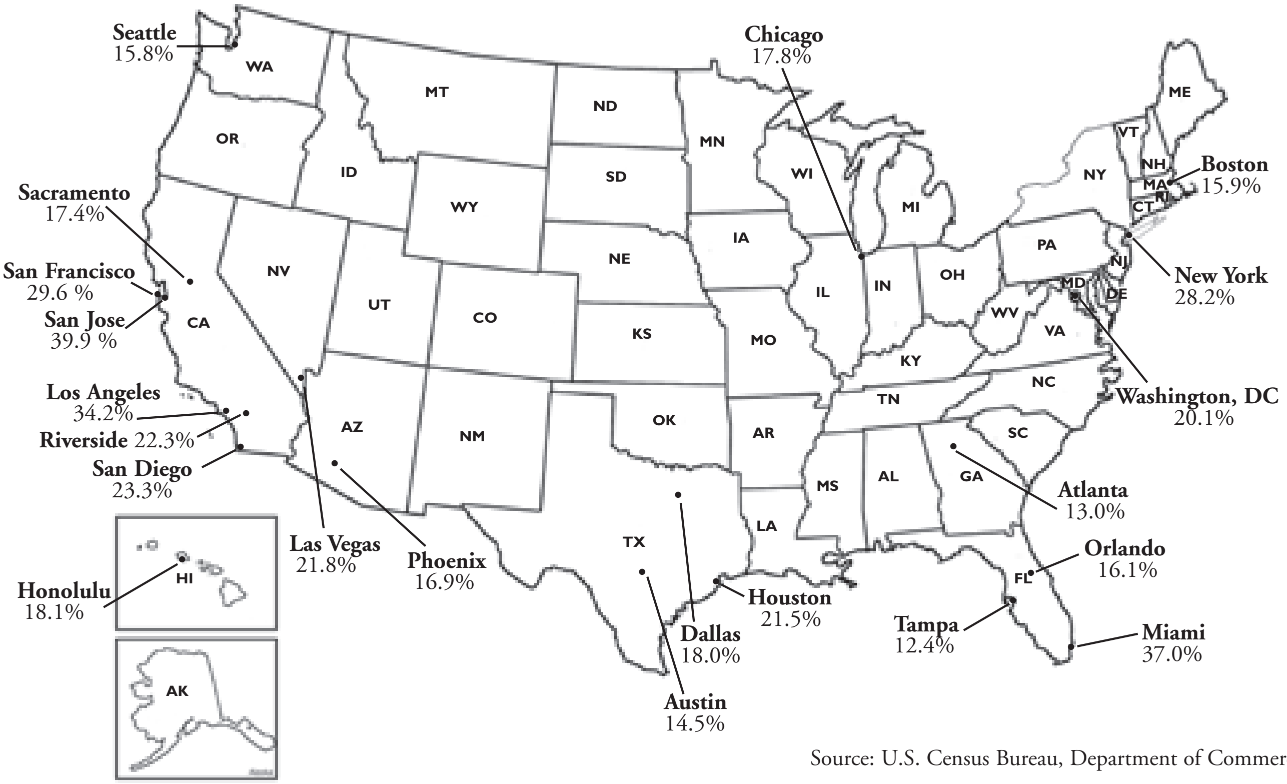
Immigration by the Numbers

Metropolitan Areas with High Proportion of Foreign Born


Seattle 15.8%
WA
OR
ID
MT
ND
SD
WY
NE
MN
WI
MI
IA
Chicago 17.8%
ME
VT
NH
MA
RI
CT
NY
Boston 15.9%
PA
NJ
New York 28.2%
MD
DE
OH
IN
IL
WV
VA
KY
MO
KS
CO
UT
NV
CA
Sacramento 17.4%
San Francisco 29.6 %
San Jose 39.9 %
Los Angeles 34.2%
Riverside 22.3%
San Diego 23.3%
Las Vegas 21.8%
Phoenix 16.9%
AZ
NM
OK
TX
AR
TN
NC
SC
GA
AL
MS
LA
FL
Washington, DC 20.1%
Atlanta 13.0%
Orlando 16.1%
Houston 21.5%
Dallas 18.0%
Austin 14.5%
Tampa 12.4%
Miami 37.0%
HI
Honolulu 18.1%
AK

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce

About This Issue

It is often said that the United States is a country of immigrants. In fact, in the 1960s President John F. Kennedy, the great-grandson of Irish immigrants, published a book titled *A Nation of Immigrants*. This label is not quite accurate, however, since we know that Native American civilizations had flourished in this land for thousands of years before the first European settlers arrived in the 1500s.

What is true is that immigration has been a central issue in determining this country's history. The immigrant French farmer Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur in 1781 posed a famous question: What is an American? A common answer among Americans ever since is that being an American does not depend on where one's ancestors came from. In the United States being an American depends, above all, on accepting some fundamental American ideals — representative government, rule of law, individual freedom.

Over the course of this country's history, Americans have welcomed waves of immigrants, but often, as Hasia Diner points out in our lead essay, with a certain ambivalence toward the new arrivals. Even today immigration policy remains an issue on the mind of many Americans. In particular, the question of how to deal with illegal immigrants is the subject of much debate in the U.S. political campaign leading up to the 2008 elections. But this edition of *eJournal USA* is not about illegal immigrants: Our topic is how legal immigrants to the United States have assumed the identity of Americans, how generations of newcomers entered the mainstream.

There are those who say that the United States' strength as a nation — its creativity, dynamism, and ready willingness to embrace the new — results in good part from the diversity that immigrants have brought to these shores. We agree.

—The Editors

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http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournals.html

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Immigration and U.S. History

Hasia Diner

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About 16 million immigrants entered the United States through Ellis Island in New York from 1892 to 1924.

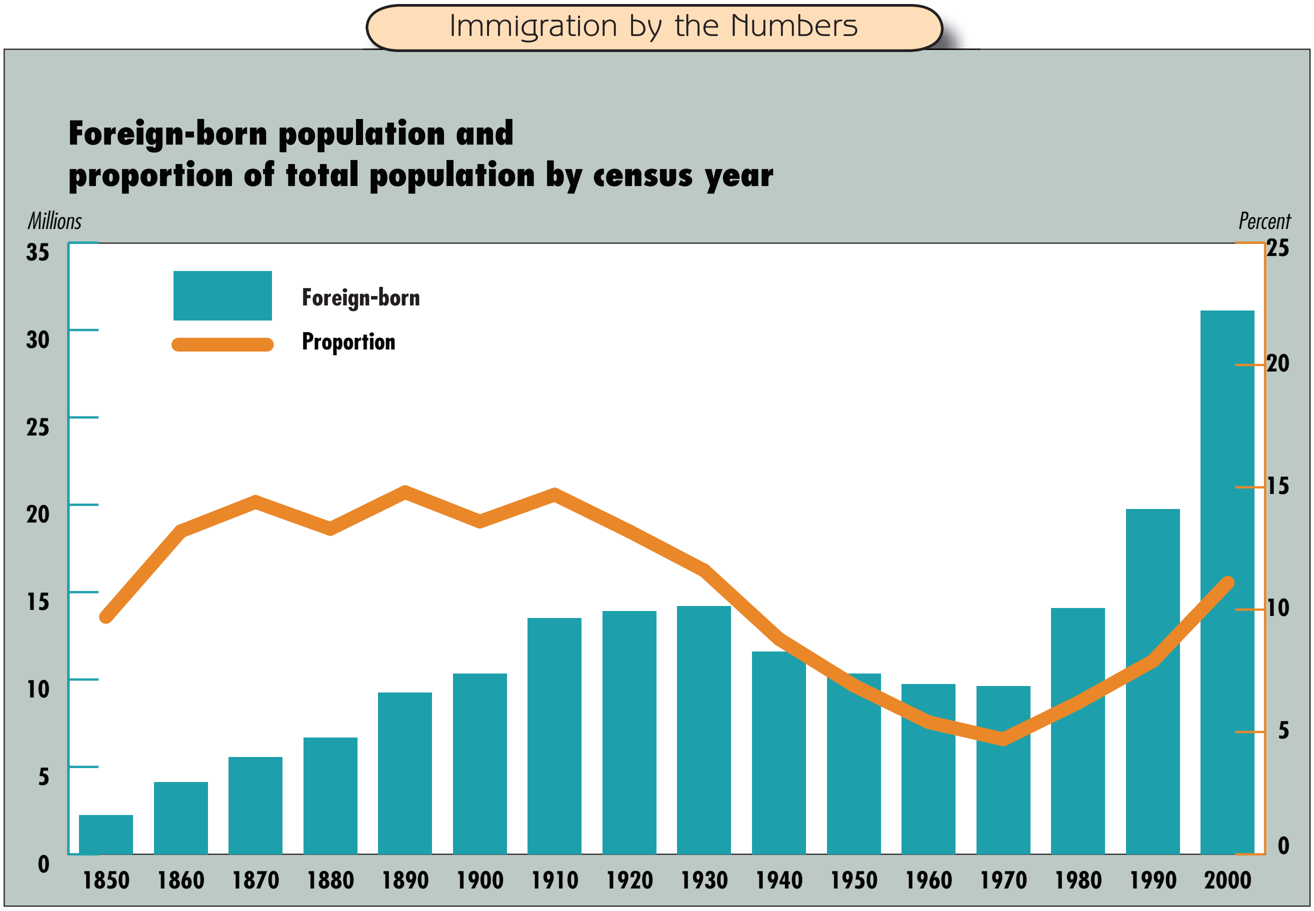
Tens of millions of immigrants over four centuries have made the United States what it is today. They came to make new lives and livelihoods in the New World; their hard work benefited themselves and their new home country.

Hasia Diner is professor of history at New York University in New York City.

Millions of women and men from around the world have decided to immigrate to the United States. That fact constitutes one of the central elements in the country's overall development, involving a process fundamental to its pre-national origins, its emergence as a new and independent nation, and its subsequent rise from being an Atlantic outpost to a world power, particularly in terms of its economic growth. Immigration has made the United States of America.

Like many other settler societies, the United States, before it achieved independence and afterward, relied on the flow of newcomers from abroad to people its relatively open and unsettled lands. It shared this historical reality with Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Argentina, among other nations.

In all of these cases the imperial powers that claimed these places had access to two of the three elements essential to fulfilling their goal of extracting natural resources from the colony. They had land and capital but lacked people to do the farming, lumbering, mining, hunting, and the like. Colonial administrators tried to use native labor, with greater or lesser success, and they abetted the escalation of the African slave trade, bringing



Immigration by the Numbers

Foreign-born population and proportion of total population by census year

Source: Table 1. Nativity of the Population and Place of Birth of the Native Population: 1850 to 2000 http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0081/twps0081.pdf

millions of migrants, against their will, to these New World outposts.

Immigration, however, played a key role not only in making America's development possible but also in shaping the basic nature of the society. Its history falls into five distinct time periods, each of which involved varying rates of migration from distinctly different places in the world. Each reflected, and also shaped, much about the basic nature of American society and economy.

SETTLERS OF THE NEW WORLD

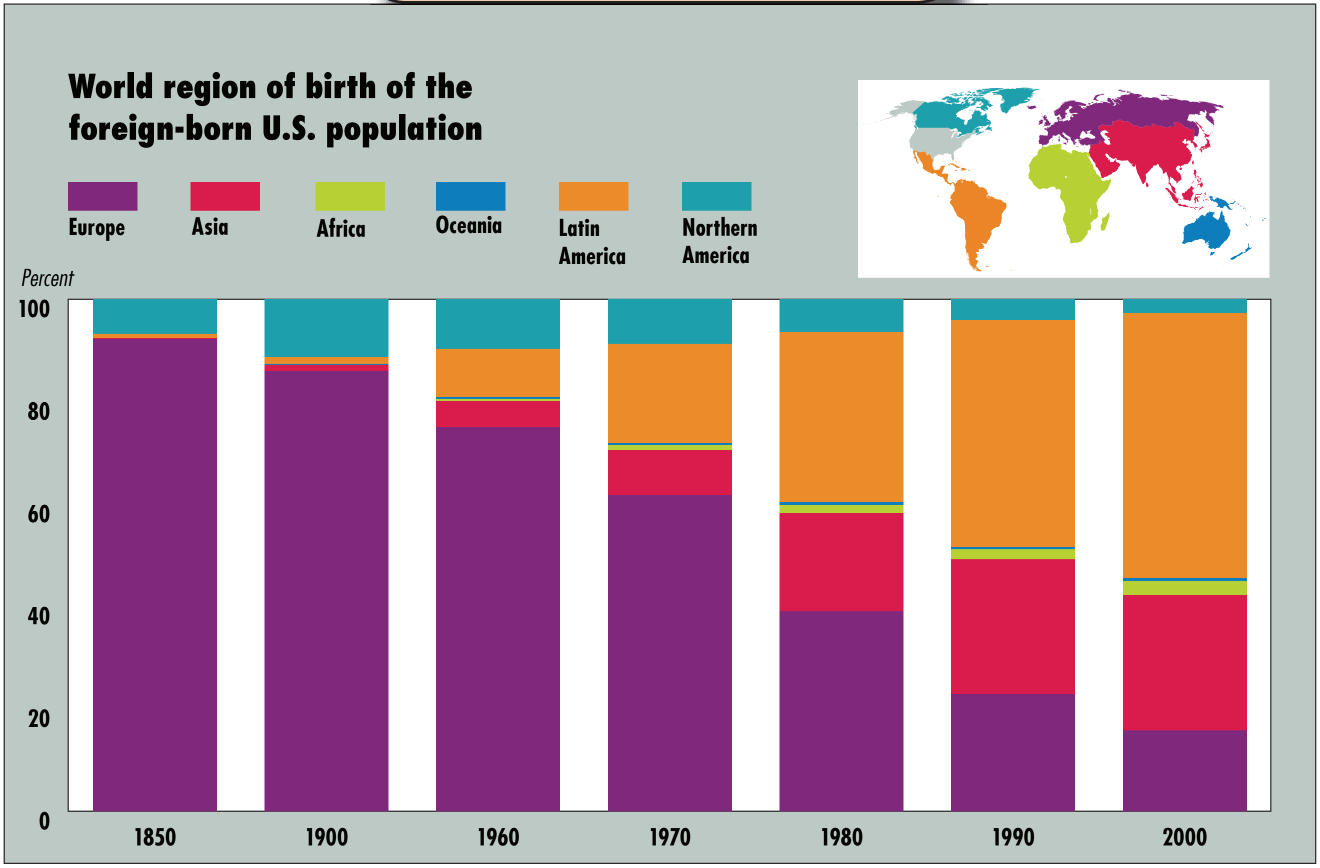
The first, and longest, era stretched from the 17th century through the early 19th century. Immigrants came from a range of places, including the German-speaking area of the Palatinate, France (Protestant Huguenots), and the Netherlands. Other immigrants were Jews, also from the Netherlands and from Poland, but most immigrants of this era tended to hail from the British Isles, with English, Scottish, Welsh, and Ulster Irish gravitating toward different colonies (later states) and regions.

These immigrants, usually referred to as settlers, opted in the main for farming, with the promise of cheap land a major draw for relatively impoverished northern and western Europeans who found themselves unable to take advantage of the modernization of their home economies. One group of immigrants deserves some special attention because their experience sheds much light on the forces impelling migration. In this era, considerable numbers of women and men came as indentured servants. They entered into contracts with employers who specified the time and conditions of labor in exchange for passage to the New World. While they endured harsh conditions during their time of service, as a result of their labors, they acquired ownership of small pieces of land that they could then work as independent yeoman farmers.

MASS MIGRATION

The numbers who came during this era were relatively small. That changed, however, by the 1820s. This period ushered in the first era of mass migration.

Immigration by the Numbers


World region of birth of the foreign-born U.S. population

Source: Table 2. World Region of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population: 1850 to 1930 and 1960 to 2000
http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0081/twps0081.pdf

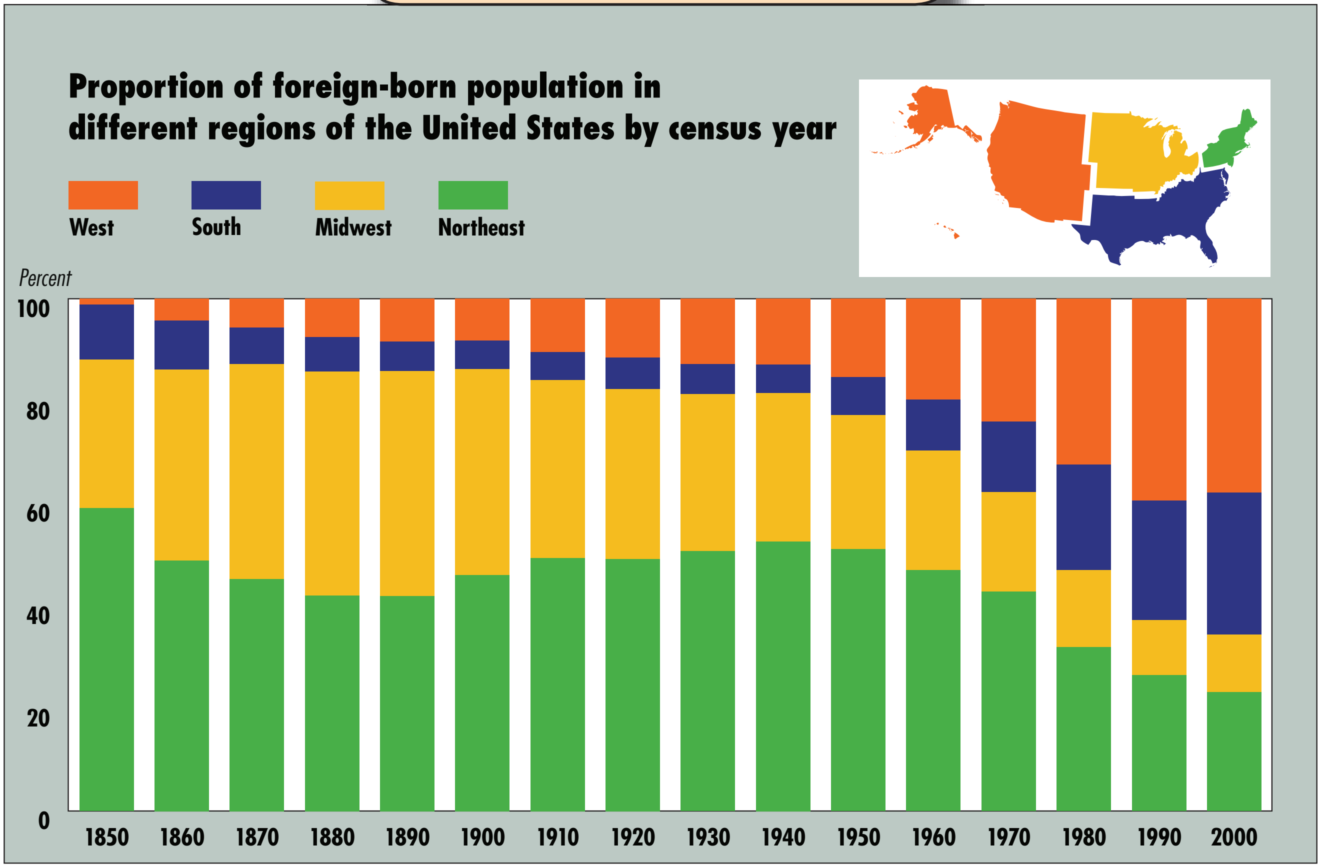
From that decade through the 1880s, about 15 million immigrants made their way to the United States, many choosing agriculture in the Midwest and Northeast, while others flocked to cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore.

Factors in both Europe and the United States shaped this transition. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe liberated young men from military service back home at the same time that industrialization and agricultural consolidation in England, Scandinavia, and much of central Europe transformed local economies and created a class of young people who could not earn a living in the new order. Demand for immigrant labor shot up with two major developments: the settlement of the American Midwest after the inauguration of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the related rise of the port of New York, and the first stirrings of industrial development in the United States, particularly in textile production, centered in New England.

Immigrants tended to cluster by group in particular neighborhoods, cities, and regions. The American Midwest, as it emerged in the middle of the 19th century as one of the world's most fertile agricultural regions, became home to tight-knit, relatively homogeneous communities of immigrants from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Bohemia, and various regions of what in 1871 would become Germany.

This era saw the first large-scale arrival of Catholic immigrants to the largely Protestant United States, and these primarily Irish women and men inspired the nation's first serious bout of nativism, which combined an antipathy to immigrants in general with a fear of Catholicism and an aversion to the Irish. Particularly in the decades just before the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865), this nativism spawned a powerful political movement and even a political party, the Know Nothings, which made anti-immigration and anti-Catholicism central to its political agenda. This period also witnessed the arrival of small numbers of Chinese men to the American West. Native-born Americans reacted intensely and negatively to their arrival, leading to the passage of the only piece of U.S. immigration legislation that specifically named a group as the focus of restrictive policy, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Immigration by the Numbers



Source: Table 15. Foreign-Born Population by Historical Section and Subsection of the United States: 1850 to 2000
http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0081/twps0081.pdf

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A WAVE BECOMES A FLOOD

Gradually over the course of the decades after the Civil War, as the sources of immigration shifted so too did the technology of ocean travel. Whereas previous immigrants had made their way to the United States via sail power, innovations in steam transportation made it possible for larger ships to bring larger loads of immigrants to the United States. The immigrants of this era tended to come from southern and eastern Europe, regions undergoing at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries the same economic transitions that western and northern Europe had earlier experienced.

As among the immigrants of the earlier period, young people predominated among the newcomers. This wave of migration, which constituted the third episode in the history of U.S. immigration, could better be referred to as a flood of immigrants, as nearly 25 million Europeans made the voyage. Italians, Greeks, Hungarians, Poles, and others speaking Slavic languages constituted the bulk of this migration. Included among them were 2.5 to 3 million Jews.

Each group evinced a distinctive migration pattern in terms of the gender balance within the migratory pool, the permanence of their migration, their literacy rates, the balance between adults and children, and the like. But they shared one overarching characteristic: They flocked to urban destinations and made up the bulk of the U.S. industrial labor pool, making possible the emergence of such industries as steel, coal, automobile, textile, and garment production, and enabling the United States to leap into the front ranks of the world's economic giants.

Their urban destinations, their numbers, and perhaps a fairly basic human antipathy towards foreigners led to the emergence of a second wave of organized xenophobia. By the 1890s, many Americans, particularly from the ranks of the well-off, white, native-born, considered immigration to pose a serious danger to the nation's health and security. In 1893 a group of them formed the Immigration Restriction League, and it,

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A boatload of immigrants race to New York in 1922 to enter the United States under a new quota.

along with other similarly inclined organizations, began to press Congress for severe curtailment of foreign immigration.

LEGISLATING IMMIGRATION

Restriction proceeded piecemeal over the course of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but immediately after the end of World War I (1914-1918) and into the early 1920s, Congress did change the nation's basic policy about immigration. The National Origins Act in 1921 (and its final form in 1924) not only restricted the number of immigrants who might enter the United States but also assigned slots according to quotas based on national origins. A complicated piece of legislation, it essentially gave preference to immigrants from northern and western Europe, severely limited the numbers from eastern and southern Europe, and declared all potential immigrants from Asia to be unworthy of entry into the United States.

The legislation excluded the Western Hemisphere from the quota system, and the 1920s ushered in the penultimate era in U.S. immigration history. Immigrants could and did move quite freely from Mexico, the Caribbean (including Jamaica, Barbados, and Haiti), and other parts of Central and South America. This era, which reflected the application of the 1924 legislation, lasted until 1965. During those 40 years, the United States began to admit, case by case, limited numbers of refugees. Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany before World War II, Jewish Holocaust survivors after the war, non-Jewish displaced persons fleeing Communist rule in eastern Europe, Hungarians seeking refuge after their failed uprising in 1956, and Cubans after the 1960 revolution managed to find haven in the United States because their plight moved the conscience of Americans, but the basic immigration law remained in place.

THE HART-CELLER ACT

This all changed with passage of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, a by-product of the civil rights revolution and a jewel in the crown of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs. The measure had not been intended to stimulate immigration from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere in the developing world. Rather,

© AP Images

A Chinese immigrant is interrogated at a detention center on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, California, in the 1920s, a time when Asians were excluded.

by doing away with the racially based quota system, its authors had expected that immigrants would come from the "traditional" sending societies such as Italy, Greece, and Poland, places that labored under very small quotas in the 1924 law. The law replaced the quotas with preference categories based on family relationships and job skills, giving particular preference to potential immigrants with relatives in the United States and with occupations deemed critical by the U.S. Department of Labor. But after 1970, following an initial influx from those European countries, immigrants began to hail from places like Korea, China, India, the Philippines, and Pakistan, as well as countries in Africa. By 2000 immigration to the United States had returned to its 1900 volume, and the United States once again became a nation formed and transformed by immigrants.

Now in the early 21st century, American society once again finds itself locked in a debate over immigration and the role of immigrants in American society. To some, the new immigrants have seemed unwilling or unable to assimilate into American society, too committed to maintaining their transnational connections, and too far removed from core American values. As in past eras, some critics of contemporary immigrants believe that the newcomers take jobs away from Americans and put undue burdens on the educational, welfare, and health care systems. Many participants in the debate consider the large number of undocumented workers (immigrants without formal papers) to pose a threat to the society's basic structure.

The immigrants, however, have supporters who point out that each new immigrant wave inspired fear, suspicion, and concern by Americans — including the children and grandchildren of earlier immigrants — and that Americans claimed, wrongly, that each group of newcomers would somehow not fit in and would remain wedded to their old and foreign ways. So too advocates of immigration and most historians of immigration argue that immigrants enrich the United States, in large measure because they provide valuable services to the nation.

In every era of U.S. history, from colonial times in the 17th century through the early 21st century, women and men from around the world have opted for the American experience. They arrived as foreigners, bearers of languages, cultures, and religions that at times seemed alien to America's essential core. Over time, as ideas about U.S. culture changed, the immigrants and their descendants simultaneously built ethnic communities and participated in American civic life, contributing to the nation as a whole. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Immigration by the Numbers

Area of birth of foreign-born population, 2000

Total	31,107,889
Mexico	9,177,487
Caribbean	2,953,066
Southern and Eastern Europe	2,840,721
East Asia	2,739,510
Northern and Western Europe	2,070,466
Central America	2,026,150
South and Central Asia	1,745,201
Canada and other North America	829,442
Sub-Saharan Africa	690,809
Middle East and Caucasus	658,603
North Africa	190,491
Australia, New Zealand, Pacific islands	168,046

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce

Irish Immigrants in the United States

Kevin Kenny

© AP Images

President John F. Kennedy, whose 1960 election signaled the end of anti-Irish, anti-Catholic nativism, is shown here in 1963 meeting cousins in Ireland.

Irish immigrants had a rough start in the United States, stuck in urban poverty and taunted by some of their neighbors. They and their descendants overcame the obstacles and prevailed.

Kevin Kenny is professor of history at Boston College in Boston, Massachusetts.

In the century after 1820, 5 million Irish immigrants came to the United States. Their presence provoked a strong reaction among certain native-born Americans, known as nativists, who denounced the Irish for their social behavior, their impact on the economy, and their Catholic religion. Nonetheless, by the early 20th century, the Irish had successfully assimilated.

All legal immigrants who subscribe to the U.S. Constitution are entitled to become U.S. citizens, and white immigrants have encountered relatively few obstacles in their attempt to do so. Despite nativist hostility, the Irish never encountered racism comparable to that inflicted on African Americans and Asians, who were excluded from citizenship or restricted from entering the United States. Turning their Catholic identity to their advantage and pursuing political opportunities unavailable in Ireland, the Irish moved steadily upward in American society.

The Irish made up almost half of all immigrants in the United States in the 1840s and one-third in the 1850s. These figures are remarkable given that Ireland is no larger than the state of Maine and its population never exceeded 8.5 million. Between 1846 and 1855, due to repeated massive failures of the potato crop, the Irish population declined by one-third. More than 1 million people died of starvation and famine-related diseases and another 1.5 million fled to the United States. Many Irish immigrants believed the famine could have been avoided. "The almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight," the Irish nationalist and political exile John Mitchel wrote, "but the English created the famine." At the heart of Irish-American identity thereafter was a sense of banishment and exile.

EARLY STRUGGLES

The Irish immigrants of the famine era were the most disadvantaged the United States had ever seen. Some of the poorest lived in the Five Points district of lower Manhattan in New York City, which the English novelist Charles Dickens described as "reeking everywhere with dirt and filth," with "lanes and alleys, paved with mud knee deep." This neighborhood, Dickens wrote, was filled with "hideous tenements which take their name from robbery and murder; all that is loathsome, drooping, and decayed is here."

The Irish poor lived in basements, cellars, and one-room apartments lacking natural light and ventilation and frequently flooded with sewage. They suffered from alarmingly high rates of cholera, yellow fever, typhus, tuberculosis, and pneumonia. They also succumbed to mental illnesses, often complicated by alcohol abuse. They accounted for a greatly disproportionate number of admissions to poorhouses and public hospitals, and they topped the charts for arrests and imprisonment, especially for disorderly conduct. In New York City in 1859, for example, 55 percent of all people arrested were of Irish origin.

The Irish immigrants were mostly unskilled, worked for low wages, and were often used as substitute labor to break strikes. Native-born workers worried that their own wages would decline as a result and that gains made by organized labor would be undercut. Many Americans also feared that the Irish would never advance socially but would instead become the first permanent working class in the United States, threatening the central principle of 19th-century American life: upward social mobility through hard work.

Equally disturbing to nativists was the immigrants' religion. Would Irish Catholic immigrants ultimately be loyal to the United States or to the church in Rome? Were they beholden to their priests on political matters? Did a church headed by a pope, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops have a legitimate place in a democratic republic? And why did Irish Catholic immigrants send their children to separate parochial schools rather than using the free public system? The Irish response was that the public school boards were dominated by evangelical Protestants. Freedom to cultivate their children's faith as they saw fit, they insisted, was what the United States was all about.

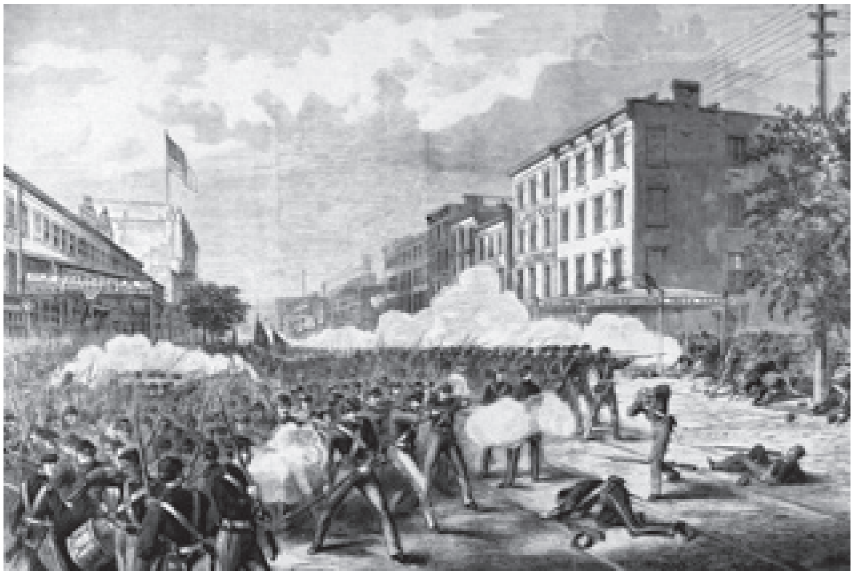
Nativists launched a sustained attack on Irish immigrants because

Immigration by the Numbers

Total and foreign-born U.S. population

	Total	Foreign-born	Percent
2000	281,421,906	31,107,889	11.1
1970	203,210,158	9,619,302	4.7
1940	131,669,275	11,594,896	8.8
1910	91,972,266	13,515,886	14.7
1880	50,155,783	6,679,943	13.3
1850	23,191,876	2,244,602	9.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce



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Nativists turned to violence against Catholics in some cities; here a militia fires into a crowd of anti-Irish rioters in New York in 1871.

© AP Images/Shiho Fukada

As the 2007 St. Patrick's Day parade in New York demonstrates, the Irish became good Americans without sacrificing their religious and cultural heritage.

of their Catholicism. In 1834 a mob burned down the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts. In 1836 nativists in New York published the *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*. An emotionally troubled young woman, Monk claimed to have witnessed debauchery and infanticide during her stay in a convent. The book became a huge best seller. In 1844 nativist rioters burned two Catholic churches in the Philadelphia suburbs in a dispute over which Bible to teach in public schools, the Catholic one or the Protestant King James version.

IRISH-AMERICAN IDENTITY

Rebutting accusations of divided loyalty, Irish immigrants insisted that they could become good Americans but that they would do so on their own terms. Because they spoke English and were the first Catholic group to arrive in the United States in large numbers, the Irish quickly took control of the American Catholic Church. As a popular saying put it, the church in the United States was "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic — and Irish." Catholicism became the single most important ingredient of Irish-American identity.

Anti-Catholicism remained part of American culture until 1960, when John F. Kennedy was elected to the presidency. The Irish had long dominated the politics of many American cities — including New York, Boston, and Chicago — by controlling the local Democratic party. In the 1920s, they began to move onto the national stage, when Al Smith became the first Catholic to run for president. Smith had little chance of being elected, but Kennedy, who was acutely conscious of his Irish heritage, finally laid to rest America's long anti-Catholic tradition. "I am not the Catholic candidate for President," he declared during the campaign. "I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters — and the church does not speak for me."

Irish immigrants became good Americans without sacrificing their religious and cultural heritage. They demonstrated that assimilation is not a one-way process in which immigrants must conform to a dominant Anglo-Protestant culture while forsaking their own traditions. Immigrants always change the United States as much as the United States changes them. By becoming Americans in their own way, the Irish carved out a distinctive ethnic identity and helped lay the groundwork for today's cultural pluralism in the United States.

Today the Irish are one of the most prosperous ethnic groups in the United States, significantly exceeding national averages on education levels, occupational status, income, and home ownership. In line with their steady upward social mobility during the 20th century, the American Irish moved out of the tight-knit urban communities of the Northeast and Midwest to settle in suburbs, towns, and cities across the United States. They also married increasingly outside their ethnic group, first with other Catholics and then with Americans generally. The result of these developments is a much less cohesive sense of communal identity than in the past. But Irish Americans retain a strong sense of ethnic pride, especially in the realms of politics and culture. To be Irish-American, after all, is to be part of a national success story. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

New Ways of Seeing and Thinking

Scott E. Page

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Albert Einstein, shown taking oath of citizenship in 1940, was not the only U.S. immigrant to win a Nobel Prize.

An important reason for the dynamic success of the U.S. economy is the new ways of seeing and new ways of thinking brought to the United States by waves of immigrants from around the world.

Scott E. Page is professor of complex systems, political science, and economics at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and an external faculty member at the Santa Fe Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as well as author of The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies.

The immigration policies of the United States result in a diverse nation. That diversity — differences in culture, nationality, ethnicity, and religion — contributes to the robustness and productivity of the U.S. economy. More directly, that diversity partly explains why the United States leads the world in innovation and scientific achievement.

Immigrants prove more likely to be entrepreneurs. From 1995 to 2005, more than one-fourth of all high-tech startups included an immigrant as part of their leadership teams. In 2005 those firms employed nearly a half million workers and generated more than $50 billion in revenue. Among them are Intel, Google, Yahoo!, Sun, and eBay.

The impact of immigrants on science is similar. More than a third of American Nobel laureates in science are immigrants. These include the 2007 Nobel Prize winners in medicine, Mario Capecchi and Oliver Smithies, who both teach at public universities.

As much ability as immigrants possess, they owe part of their success to simply bringing different skills, new ways of seeing, and new ways of thinking. When immigrants arrive in the United States, they bring with them diverse histories, narratives, cultures, and religions. They also bring a determination to succeed. Those two characteristics — cognitive diversity and desire — enable immigrants to make such substantial contributions.

Data showing the benefits of cognitive diversity are unequivocal. These benefits exist in the economy: Workers in larger cities with more immigrants are the most productive in the U.S. economy, partly due to spillovers of diverse ideas. They exist in the academy: Research produced by teams of researchers from diverse

British-born American Oliver Smithies, center, was one of the 2007 Nobel Medicine Prize winners.

© AP Images/Karen Tam

backgrounds has greater impact than that of solitary scholars. And they exist in the artistic and cultural worlds: Achievements in these areas depend critically on the influx of new ideas brought by immigrants.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Economists, sociologists, and psychologists have begun to unpack the mechanisms through which diversity operates. Why does a diverse citizenry produce more innovations, more scientific breakthroughs, and more interesting art? The short answer is that cultural and ethnic diversity translates into more ways of seeing and thinking. Social scientists refer to these as perspectives and heuristics.

"The wave of the future is not the conquest of the world by a single dogmatic creed but the liberation of the diverse energies of free nations and free men," President John F. Kennedy said.

Diverse perspectives enable people to reframe a difficult problem and turn it into an easy one. New products, scientific breakthroughs, and new forms of art all arise from diverse perspectives. After seeing a plowed field, inventor Philo Farnsworth realized how to transmit images through air, an insight that led to television. We can never anticipate which perspective will lead to a breakthrough, but we can encourage diverse ways of seeing so that breakthroughs naturally occur.

Diverse ways of thinking produce smaller, more routine improvements than the bigger breakthroughs that can come from diverse perspectives. The members of any society bring and acquire an enormous collection of formal problem-solving techniques and informal rules of thumb learned from experience, education, and families. These diverse ways of thinking enable a society to make consistent, small innovations, be these in the laboratory or on the assembly line floor.

Economic growth and scientific progress depend on combining breakthroughs with sustained innovation. First, someone brings a new perspective and comes up with the idea of the bicycle, the personal computer, or the business that will allow people to run auctions on the Internet. Then others spend decades refining and improving the idea by applying different ways of thinking.

Immigration provides a steady inflow of new ways of seeing and new ways of thinking — hence the great success of immigrants in business start-ups, science, and the arts.

LEVERAGING DIVERSITY

The economic, scientific, and cultural benefits of immigration do not arise without the proper political, social, and economic infrastructure. Diverse societies differ from homogeneous societies in three important ways. First, diversity increases complexity. Managing complexity is never easy. This is true in economies, societies, and teams. Interactions within diverse groups and communities can at times be contentious and unpredictable.

Second, communicating different ways of seeing and thinking requires patience and tolerance. Success requires accepting difference. It requires looking beyond the color of someone's skin and hearing ideas, not accents. Most

© AP Images/Jonas Ekstromer

Italian-born American Mario Capecchi, left, was another 2007 Nobel Medicine Prize winner.

of all, success demands accepting that someone else, someone different, might have a better answer.

Third, diverse groups of people differ not only in how they think and see but also in their goals and ideals. If people disagree in their fundamental preferences — for example, if they pursue distinct national goals — then problems can arise. Diverse people cannot come together to solve a problem if they do not agree on what the problem is. People must agree on their fundamental goals and values. As strong as the evidence may be that diverse ways of seeing and thinking create enormous benefits, equally strong evidence suggests that diverse core values can create large problems.

PROPER ENVIRONMENT

In light of these three characteristics, the benefits of the diversity produced through immigration cannot accrue without the proper environment. This environment must include appropriate informal societal norms — a willingness to listen and to tolerate difference — as well as formal laws, such as those that prohibit discrimination based on identity. The hoped-for result is a national culture that, while encouraging people to think differently, also achieves broad agreement on core national goals and principles.

For example, in a healthy political system, people often disagree over how to respond to challenges. We see that in the United States in debates about how to fund public schools and how to write environmental policies. But those same people should broadly agree over the ends: the importance of education and a clean environment.

To be sure, open immigration policies create cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. But they also produce cognitive diversity. In that cognitive diversity resides the economic, scientific, and cultural value of immigrants. New ways of seeing result in breakthroughs. A Taiwanese immigrant, David Ho, was the first to realize that while no one antiviral drug could stop AIDS, a diverse cocktail of such drugs might do it. Following through on that logic resulted in new AIDS drugs and his selection as *Time* magazine's Man of the Year in 1996. He saved millions of lives.

TIME
MAN OF THE YEAR
© Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images

Taiwanese-born David Ho

An extension of Ho's logic explains the value of immigration. People from different cultures bring diverse ways of seeing and thinking about the challenges and opportunities that a nation confronts. No one person can meet every challenge, but the constant influx of new and diverse ways of seeing and thinking produced by open immigration ensures that collectively we can. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

General Naturalization Requirements for U.S. Citizenship

AGE

With certain exceptions, applicants must be at least 18 years old.

RESIDENCY

An applicant must have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. Lawfully admitted for permanent residence means having been legally accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the immigration laws.

RESIDENCE AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

An applicant is eligible to file if, immediately preceding the filing of the application, he or she:

- has been lawfully admitted for permanent residence (see preceding section);
- has resided continuously as a lawful permanent resident in the United States for at least five years prior to filing with no single absence from the United States of more than one year;
- has been physically present in the United States for at least 30 months out of the previous five years;
- has resided within a state or district for at least three months.

GOOD MORAL CHARACTER

Generally, an applicant must show that he or she has been a person of good moral character for the statutory period (typically five years, but three years for an applicant married to a U.S. citizen or one year for an applicant serving in the U.S. Armed Forces) prior to filing for naturalization. An applicant is permanently barred from naturalization if he or she has ever been convicted of murder or aggravated felony. A person also cannot be found to be a person of good moral character if during the past five years he or she has been convicted of a number of other crimes.

ATTACHMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

An applicant must show that he or she is attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States.

3 bug
4 teg
5 net
6 cap
7 pan
8 k

© AP Images

Juma Kennedy from Tanzania works on his spelling in a Kansas City, Missouri, classroom.

LANGUAGE

With certain exceptions, applicants for naturalization must be able to read, write, speak, and understand words in ordinary usage in the English language.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY KNOWLEDGE

With certain exceptions, an applicant for naturalization must demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history and of the principles and form of government of the United States.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

To become a citizen, one must take the oath of allegiance. By doing so, an applicant swears to:

- support the Constitution and obey the laws of the United States;
- renounce any foreign allegiance and/or foreign title;
- bear arms for the Armed Forces of the United States or perform services for the government of the United States when required. ■

Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security

Revised Naturalization Test

Beginning October 1, 2008, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will be giving prospective citizens a newly redesigned naturalization test. Out of 100 possible questions, the applicant will be tested on 10 questions and generally have to answer six correctly to pass. You can test your knowledge with the following 10 samples from the 100 questions:

Questions	**Answers**
1. How many amendments does the Constitution have?	1. 27
2. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?	2. Senate and House of Representatives
3. In what month do we vote for president?	3. November
4. What does the judicial branch do?	4. Reviews laws; explains laws; resolves disputes; decides if a law goes against the Constitution
5. What is the name of the speaker of the House of Representatives now?	5. Nancy Pelosi
6. When must all men register for the Selective Service?	6. Either at age 18 or between age 18 and 26
7. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.	7. James Madison; Alexander Hamilton; John Jay; Publius (pseudonym)
8. What did Susan B. Anthony do?	8. Fought for women's rights; fought for civil rights
9. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.	9. Many possible answers including Cherokee, Navajo, Sioux, Chippewa, Choctaw, Pueblo, Apache, Iroquois, Creek, Blackfeet, Seminole, Cheyenne, Arawak, Shawnee, Mohegan, Huron, Oneida, Lakota, Crow, Teton, Hopi, Inuit
10. Why does the flag have 50 stars?	10. Because there is one star for each state

Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security

© DanitaDelimont.com/David R. Frazier

Before you can take the oath, as these new Americans did in Boise, Idaho, in 2007, you have to answer a few questions.

American Identity: Ideas, Not Ethnicity

Michael Jay Friedman

© AP Images/Ross D. Franklin

Immigrants sworn in as citizens in Phoenix, Arizona, in 2007 demonstrate that being American does not depend on national or ethnic origin.

Since the United States was founded in the 18th century, Americans have defined themselves not by their racial, religious, and ethnic identity but by their common values and belief in individual freedom.

Michael Jay Friedman is a historian and writer in the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State.

"I'm in a New York state of mind."

—*Billy Joel*

In 2000 35.9 percent of the people living in New York City were foreign born.

—*U.S. Census Bureau*

In 1782, barely six years after the United States of America declared its nationhood, Benjamin Franklin offered certain "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America." Among the constellation of outsized historical actors Americans came to know as their "founding fathers," Franklin was in many ways the most typically American: If George Washington was inapproachably august, Thomas Jefferson bookish, and John Adams dour, it was Franklin — that practical inventor, resourceful businessman, and ever-busy civic catalyst — who best understood that his countrymen were, as the historian Walter McDougall would later call them, a nation of hustlers. In such a land, Franklin instructed the would-be immigrant:

> People do not inquire concerning a Stranger, What is he? but, What can he do? If he has any useful Art, he is welcome; and if he exercises it, and behaves well, he will be respected by all that know him.

Franklin's remark was grounded in first-hand observation: As early as 1750, German immigrants outnumbered English stock in his home colony of Pennsylvania. The newcomers were perceived as industrious and law-abiding. Skillful farmers, they

© Bettmann/Corbis

Traditionally dressed immigrants from Iraq, Indonesia, India, and Turkey join together in 1959 in front of the Statue of Liberty.

improved the land and stimulated economic growth. In 1790, when Congress set the first national standard for naturalized citizenship, it required no ethnic or religious test, no literacy test, no property requirement — just two years residence, good character, and an oath to uphold the Constitution. Because American identity is, as Franklin understood, grounded in actions and attitudes rather than racial, religious, or ethnic identity, Americans differ from many other peoples both in how they define themselves and in the kinds of lives they choose to lead. Membership in the national community, as cultural scholar Marc Pachter has written, "demands only the decision to become American."

This communal American identity embraces a pluralism that spans racial, religious, and ethnic divides. It also encompasses a strong civic commitment to individual freedom and to a representative government of limited and clearly defined powers that respects that freedom.

MELTING POT OR SALAD BOWL?

The American self-image has always harnessed a creative tension between pluralism and assimilation. On the one hand, immigrants traditionally have been expected to immerse themselves in the American "melting pot," a metaphor popularized by the playwright Israel Zangwill's 1908 drama *The Melting Pot*, in which one character declares:

> Understand that America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming! A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians — into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.

Nor were Zangwill's sentiments new ones. As far back as 1782, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a French immigrant and keen observer of American life, described his new compatriots as:

> ... a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes ... . What, then, is the American, this new man? He is neither an European nor the descendant of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American… leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners ... .

The melting pot, however, has always existed alongside a competing model, in which each successive immigrant group retains a measure of its distinctiveness and enriches the American whole. In 1918 the public intellectual Randolph Bourne called for a "trans-national America." The original English colonists, Bourne argued, "did not come to be assimilated in an American melting pot ... . They came to get freedom to live as they wanted to ... to make their fortune in a new land." Later immigrants, he continued, had not been melted down into some kind of "tasteless, colorless" homogeneous Americanism but rather added their distinct contributions to the greater whole.

The balance between the melting pot and transnational ideals varies with time and circumstance, with neither model achieving complete dominance. Unquestionably, though, Americans have internalized a self-portrait that spans a spectrum of races, creeds, and colors. Consider the popular motion pictures depicting American troops in action during the Second World War. It became a Hollywood cliché that every platoon included a farm boy from Iowa, a Brooklyn Jew, a Polish millworker from Chicago, an Appalachian woodsman, and other diverse examples of mid-20th century

American manhood. They strain at first to overcome their differences, but by film's end all have bonded — as Americans. Real life could be more complicated, and not least because the African-American soldier would have served in a segregated unit. Regardless, these films depict an American identity that Americans believed in — or wanted to.

INDIVIDUALISM AND TOLERANCE

If American identity embraces all kinds of people, it also affords them a vast menu of opportunities to make and remake themselves. Americans historically have scorned efforts to trade on "accidents of birth," such as great inherited wealth or social status. Article I of the U.S. Constitution bars the government from granting any title of nobility, and those who cultivate an air of superiority toward their fellow Americans are commonly disparaged for "putting on airs," or worse.

Americans instead respect the "self-made" man or woman, especially where he or she has overcome great obstacles to success. The late 19th-century American writer Horatio Alger, deemed by the Encylopaedia Britannica perhaps the most socially influential American writer of his generation, captured this ethos in his many rags-to-riches stories, in which poor shoeshine boys or other street urchins would rise, by dint of their ambition, talent, and fortitude, to wealth and fame.

In the United States, individuals craft their own definitions of success. It might be financial wealth — and many are the college dropouts working in their parents' garage in hopes of creating the next Google, Microsoft, or Apple Computer. Others might prize the joys of the sporting arena, of creating fine music or art, or of raising a loving family at home. Because Americans spurn limits, their national identity is not — cannot be — bounded by the color of one's skin, by one's parentage, by which house of worship one attends.

Americans hold differing political beliefs, embrace (often wildly) divergent lifestyles, and insist upon broad individual freedoms, but they do so with a remarkable degree of mutual tolerance. One key is their representative form of government: No citizen agrees with every U.S. government decision; all know they can reverse those policies by persuading their fellow citizens to vote for change at the next election.

Another key is the powerful guarantees that protect the rights of all Americans from government overreaching. No sooner was the U.S. Constitution ratified than Americans demanded and received the Bill of Rights: 10 constitutional amendments that safeguard basic rights.

There simply is no one picture of a "typical" American. From the powdered-wigged Founding Fathers to the multiracial golf champion Tiger Woods, Americans share a common identity grounded in the freedom — consistent always with respecting the freedom of others — to live as they choose. The results can bemuse, intrigue, and inspire. Cambodia's biggest hip-hop star, born on a Cambodian farm, lives in southern California. (He goes by the name "praCh.") Walt Whitman, the closest Americans have produced to a national poet, would not have been surprised. "I am large," Whitman wrote of his nation, "I contain multitudes." ■

Immigration by the Numbers

U.S. citizens and noncitizens, estimated 2006

Total population	299,398,485
Citizens by birth	261,850,696
Citizens by naturalization	15,767,731
Noncitizens	21,780,058

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce

A Market for Diversity

Photographs by David Snider

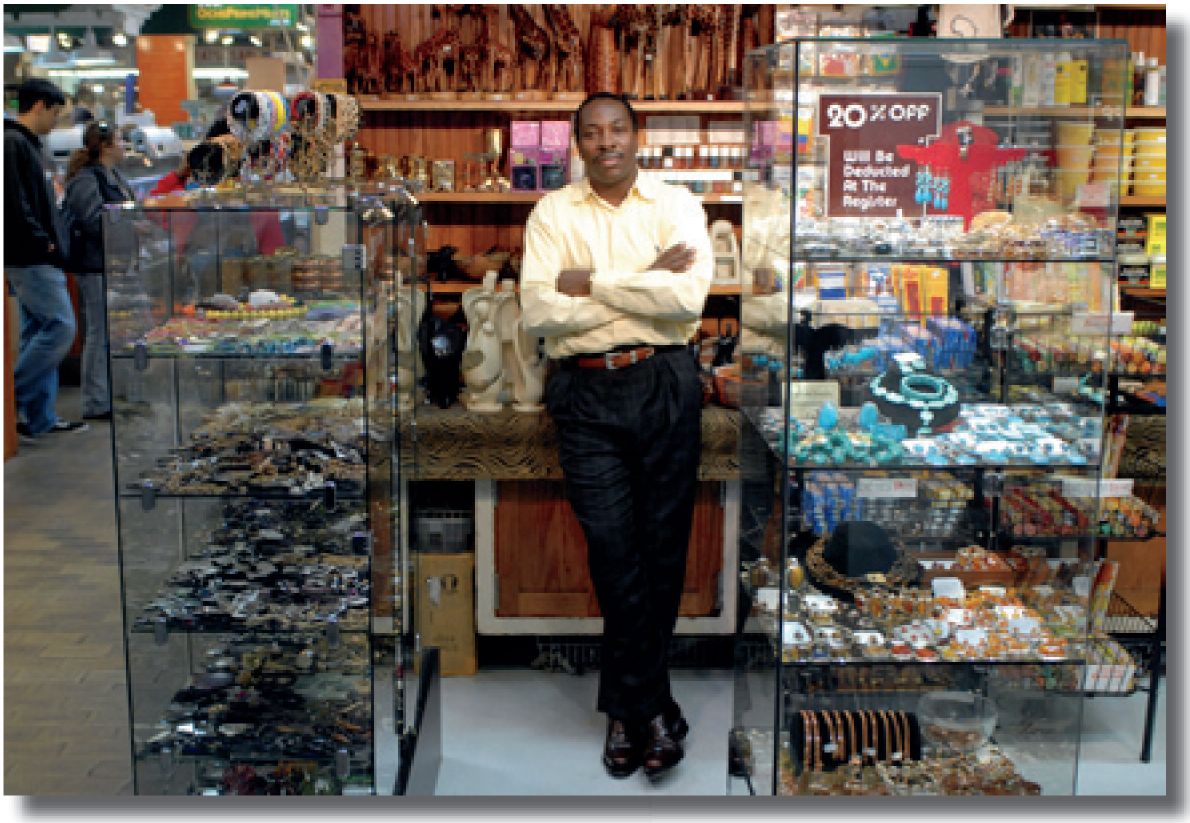
Suppose you went to lunch in Center City Philadelphia's Reading Terminal Market, underneath what used to be the Reading Railroad train shed. Well, you would have a choice of ethnic foods: Mexican, Italian, African-American soul food, Pennsylvania Dutch (actually Deutsch — that is, German), Chinese, Jewish, Middle Eastern, Thai, Indian-Pakistani, Greek, French, Japanese. And then there's dessert.

DINIC'S
ROAST PORK AND BEEF
CHEESESTEAK

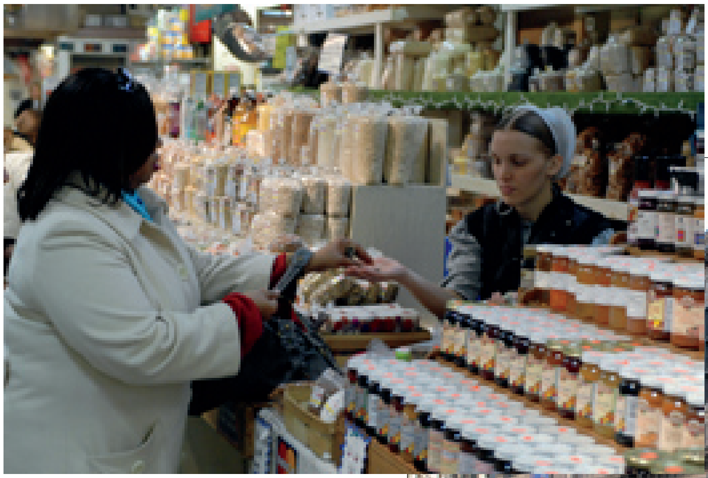
More than 100,000 people every week sample fare from the 80 vendors at the Reading Terminal Market.

Sabina Ahmad and Tayyaba Khanoum make fresh nan (bread) and other South Asian dishes.

Japanese-born David Dinh serves sushi lunch.


20% OFF
Will Be Deducted At The Register

Watson Parks, from Trinidad and Tobago, sells African jewelry, clothing, and sculptures at his stall.



A Pennsylvania Dutch woman takes payment.

READING TERMINAL MARKET

The Reading Terminal Market is a place to see the diversity of America under one roof.

The Good Immigrant Student

Bich Minh Nguyen

The author's family left Saigon on April 29, 1975, when she was eight months old. After staying in refugee camps in the Philippines, Guam, and Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, they settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This piece is excerpted from her book Stealing Buddha's Dinner *and the essay* "The Good Immigrant Student."

Nguyen is an assistant professor teaching creative writing and Asian American literature at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. She is the author of the memoir Stealing Buddha's Dinner *(Viking Penguin, 2007).*

Courtesy of Bich Minh Nguyen

Bich Minh Nguyen, a kid who fled Saigon, struggled to become an American in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which has been designated an All-American City in recognition of its good governance.

We arrived in Grand Rapids with five dollars and a knapsack of clothes. Mr. Heidenga, our sponsor, set us up with a rental house, some groceries — boxed rice, egg noodles, cans of green beans — and gave us dresses his daughters had outgrown. He hired my father to work a filling machine at North American Feather, one of his factories. Mr. Heidenga wore wide sport coats and had yellow hair. My sister and I were taught to say his name in a hushed tone to show respect. But if he stopped by to check on us my grandmother would tell us to be silent because that was part of being good. Hello girls, he would say, stooping to pat us on the head.

It was July 1975, but we were cold. Always cold, after Vietnam, and my uncle Chu Cuong rashly spent two family dollars on a jacket from the Salvation Army, earning my grandmother's scorn. For there were seven of us in that gray house on Baldwin Street: my father, grandmother Noi, three uncles, and my sister and me. Upstairs belonged to the uncles, and downstairs my sister and I shared a room with Noi. My father did not know how to sleep through the night. He paced around the house, double-checking the lock on the front door; he glanced sideways out the taped-up windows, in case someone was watching from the street.

***

I came of age in the 1980s, before *diversity* and *multicultural awareness* trickled into west Michigan. Before ethnic was cool. Before Thai restaurants started popping up in every town. When I think of Grand Rapids I remember city signs covered in images of rippling flags, proclaiming "An All-American City." Throughout the '80s a giant billboard looming over the downtown freeway boasted the slogan to all who drove the three-lane S-curve. As a kid, I couldn't figure out what "All-American" was supposed to mean. Was it a promise, a threat, a warning?

***

When my father married Rosa, when I was three, she wanted my sister and me to take bilingual education classes. She believed not in total assimilation but in preservation; she was afraid English would take over wholly, pushing the Vietnamese out of our heads. She was right. My sister and I were Americanized as soon as we turned on the television.

I knew a lot of immigrant kids who tried to have it both ways: keep one language for home and family; use English at school, with friends, and anywhere out in the world. Somehow, I couldn't manage that double life. I spent most of my school years trying to go unnoticed. Because I couldn't disappear into a crowd, I wished to

Courtesy of Bich Minh Nguyen

Bich, holding her baby cousin David, sits between her sister Anh, left, and stepsister Christine in this 1980 photo.

disappear completely. Anyone might have mistaken this for passivity.

Once, in second grade, I disappeared on the bus ride home. Mine was usually the third stop, but that day the bus driver thought I wasn't there, and she sailed right by the corner of my street. I said nothing. The bus wove its way toward downtown, and I got to see where other children lived — some of them in neat and clipped neighborhoods, others on streets where windows were boarded up. All the while, the kid sitting across the aisle from me played the same cheerful song over and over on his boom box. *Pass the doochee from the left hand side, pass the doochee from the left hand side*. He and his brother turned out to be the last kids off the bus. Then the driver saw me through the rearview mirror. She walked back to where I was sitting and said, "How come you didn't tell me you were here?" I shook my head — don't know. She sighed and drove me home.

Later, in high school, I learned to forget myself a little. I learned the sweetness of apathy, of forgetting my skin and body for a minute or two, almost not caring what would happen if I walked into a room late and heads swiveled toward me. I learned the pleasure that reveals itself in the loss, no matter how slight, of self-consciousness. These things occurred because I remained the good immigrant student, without raising my hand often or showing off what I knew. Doing work was rote, and I went along to get along. I never quite got over the terror of speaking up in class, but there is a slippage between being good and being unnoticed, and in that sliver of freedom I learned what it could feel like to walk in the world in plain view.

I would like to make a broad, accurate statement about immigrant children in schools. I would like to speak for them (us). I hesitate; I cannot. My own sister, for instance, was never as shy as I was — she chose rebellion rather than silence. We had an arrangement: I wrote some papers for her and she paid me in money or candy; she gave me rides to school if I promised not to tell anyone about her cigarettes. At the same time, I think of an Indian friend of mine who told of how, in elementary school once, a blond classmate told the teacher, "I can't sit by her. My mom said I can't sit by anyone who's brown." And another friend, whose family immigrated around the same time mine did, whose second grade teacher used her as a vocabulary example: "Children, this is what a foreigner is." And sometimes I fall into thinking that kids today have the advantage of so much more collective cultural wisdom, that they are so much more socially and politically aware than anyone was when I was in school.

But I worry that I am wrong, that some kids will always want to disappear and disappear until they actually do. Sometimes I think I see them, in the blurry background of a magazine photo, or in a gaggle of kids following a teacher's aide across the street. The kids with heads bent down, holding themselves in such a way that they seem to be conscious even of how they breathe. Small, shy, quiet — such good, good kids, i*mmigrant, foreigner*, their eyes watchful and waiting for whatever judgment will occur. I reassure myself that they will grow up fine, that they will be okay, that things will work out for them as they somehow have for me. Maybe I cross the same street, then another, glancing back once in a while to see where they are going.

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A Diverse Fighting Force

Lisa Alley

U.S. Army

In basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, recruits from different cultures are drilled in the U.S. Army culture.

The U.S. Army educates its military and civilian workers to understand and respect diverse ethnic cultures. It makes an effective fighting force from people of diverse backgrounds by valuing the strengths and experience of all and uniting them in the Army's culture.

Lisa Alley is a public affairs specialist with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

If you were a drill sergeant looking over a typical formation of U.S. Army recruits on their first day of basic training, you'd look into the faces of both males and females and see a stew of ethnic groups broadly defined by the Army as Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian-Pacific Islander, Native American, or "other."

Out of your basic-training company of, say, 100 soldiers, 85 would be male and 15 would be female. Among those 85 men, the company may consist of 60 whites, 10 blacks, 10 Hispanics, four Asian-Pacific Islanders, and one Native American. Among the 15 women, eight may be Caucasian, four may be African-American, two may be Hispanic, and one may be Asian-Pacific Islander.

Some may see this stew of different national origins, ethnic groups from within the United States, and both genders as a nonappetizing mixture promising a bellyache, but the U.S. Army is one of the world's most effective fighting forces and is known as a model for diversity. Somehow the Army makes it work. How?

The Army's success rests on its noncommissioned officer (NCO) trainers: drill sergeants, instructors, equal-opportunity advisers. NCOs serving as trainers describe two keys to the Army's success.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

One key is the Army's Equal Opportunity Program for educating its military and civilian workforce to understand and respect the Army's diverse cultures and viewpoints.

"As a society we haven't yet broken through the racial and gender barriers, and the Army is no different," said Sergeant 1st Class Michelle Fonseca, a native Hawaiian. Fonseca serves as an equal-opportunity adviser at Fort Benning, Georgia, where she educates people on understanding diversity. "However, as an institution, we are the social leaders in equality and fairness for all. We provide awareness and continue to promote dignity and respect for all soldiers, regardless of their race or color, religion, gender, and national origin."

The other key is what is called "soldierization" in basic training, where drill sergeants make new recruits into soldiers. Drill sergeants teach new soldiers the seven Army core values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. These values are inculcated toward the Army and all other fellow soldiers. Diversity is especially addressed by the Army value of respect and by the Soldier's Code, in which soldiers pledge to treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same.

"Putting [new soldiers] through the 'Army soldierization' process is an incredible experience," said Master Sergeant Tony McClure, who serves as the senior equal-opportunity adviser for U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Of Thai and African-American heritage, McClure spoke from the perspective of a former drill sergeant, Airborne School instructor, U.S. diplomat in Africa, and company first sergeant.

"The training environment self-melds soldiers from different national origins, ethnic groups, and sexes because soldiers have to live with each other and deal with each other's differences, good or bad," McClure said. "You realize the Army is doing a good thing when you see the change that occurs in each soldier at graduation and [hear] the feedback from their parents saying their daughter or son has become a new woman or man."

SHARED CONNECTIONS

In building teams of soldiers from diverse backgrounds, NCOs focus on what unites soldiers: their Army service.

The Army's culture is a social system that includes shared values, beliefs, customs, and traditions, Fonseca said.

"Often, when we come in contact with individuals of various races or ethnic backgrounds, we focus on the differences between us rather than on what can be gained or accomplished by sharing our experiences and perspectives," she said. "To build an effective fighting force, we must recognize that every member of the organization is valuable and has something unique to contribute."

Recognizing the benefits of diversity, the strengths and experiences of every military member, is crucial for success, she said.

Upon entering the Army, Fonseca said, she had no expectations other than to travel, pursue her education, and meet people. Meeting other soldiers from varied racial or ethnic backgrounds turned out to be a cultural shock for her because they had nothing in common on a personal level.

"I learned to form bonds with other soldiers based on the connection we experienced together through the Army," Fonseca said. "Soldiers share a common thread: loyalty, duty, and commitment to our country. Together we train, lead, fight, and often die."

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Army isn't perfect when it comes to diversity, NCOs said. "There are things the Army could do better," said Sergeant 1st Class Matt Ruan, a drill sergeant in the 229th Military Intelligence Battalion,

U.S. Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Denise Rayder

"Soldierization" at Fort Jackson includes training about teamwork.

Presidio of Monterey, California. Ruan emigrated from China to the United States in 1992 and became a naturalized American citizen in 1997.

"For example, minorities make up a good percentage of our force, but in the Military Intelligence Branch, only a small percentage is [a member of a] minority, especially in the leadership positions," he said. On the other hand, he said, across the Army, minority leadership in some other branches outnumbers whites. An example is Fort Jackson, South Carolina, one of the Army's major training bases, where, he said, "minorities in leadership positions, especially African Americans, far outnumber white Americans."

Fonseca said the Army often acts in a more reactive than proactive way to eliminate discrimination and address racial issues.

"We sometimes forget that soldiers are human beings and not machines," she said. "To be an effective fighting force, we must remember the human aspect of our force and its members."

An endorsement of diversity comes from the Army's top officer, who said that the U.S. Army's example in Iraq has helped the Middle Eastern country make a team of its army, which comprises Sunni and Shiite Muslims, Kurds, and people of other groups.

"I firmly believe the strength of our Army comes from our diversity," said General George Casey, the Army's chief of staff. Seeing how U.S. soldiers of different nationalities work together "has really helped the Iraqi army retain its role as the only nonsectarian organization in that whole country," he said, "so if you're looking for the impact of the strength, the diversity of an organization, look no further than that." ■

Immigration by the Numbers

Language and income of foreign-born

	Foreign-born: Entered 2000 or later	**Foreign-born: Entered 1990 to 1999**	**Foreign-born: Entered before 1990**
Language spoken at home in percent			
English only	10.3%	11.4%	21.4%
Language other than English	89.7%	88.6%	78.6%
Speak English less than "very well" in percent			
	64.5%	55.2%	43.7%
Median household income in 2006 inflation-adjusted dollars			
	$35,807	$42,649	$49,289

Median income for population 15 and older who earned income in 2006 inflation-adjusted dollars

Total native-born and foreign-born	$24,287
Foreign-born	$21,563

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce

Immigrants Who Made Real Good

The United States and its immigrants have enriched each other. Some of those immigrants have made life-changing contributions to the global economy. A few of them are featured here.

Andrew Grove

A refugee from the Nazis and the 1956 Soviet Communist invasion of his native Hungary, Andras Grof arrived in the United States in 1957 and changed his name to Andrew Grove. He earned degrees in chemical engineering and rose to head the Intel Corporation, a leading manufacturer of semiconductors and microprocessors.

"I grew up to be 20 years old, and I was always told I was undesirable for one reason or another," Grove later said. "I got to the United States, and I expected there would be some of the same because I was an immigrant. And there wasn't."

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Isaac Larian

Isaac Larian's memories of his childhood in Iran are colored by the "constant hard work" of helping his father run a retail textile business rather than playing with toys or games. Larian emigrated to the United States in 1971, studied engineering, then started a number of businesses. He displayed a flair for developing toys and games that children loved. Larian today is president and chief executive of the world's largest privately held toy company, MGA Entertainment, based in Van Nuys, California — and he has been named "entrepreneur of the year" by a leading accounting firm.

Vinod Khosla

"It was a long sought-after dream for me to come to the Silicon Valley," says venture capitalist Vinod Khosla. Arriving in the United States from India with an electrical engineering degree, Khosla continued his studies at Carnegie Mellon University and at Stanford University. With a number of Stanford classmates, Khosla founded Sun Microsystems, a Fortune 500 company specializing in networked computer and information technologies.

As a venture capitalist, Khosla backed a number of successful high-tech start-up firms. Today he works to perfect bioengineered "cellulosic" ethanol, a clean, efficient energy source derived from agricultural waste, and supports charities that assist microenterprises. "I never work," he says, "I just play this game and enjoy it."

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Sergey Brin

Moscow native Sergey Brin came to the United States with his family at age six. He earned a National Science Foundation graduate fellowship and studied computer science at Stanford University. ("He was so smart, it just oozed out of him," a Stanford adviser later said.) There he met fellow student Larry Page. The two devised a superior algorithm for ranking Internet search engine results. They incorporated their own search company, Google, in 1998. The company went public in 2004, with an initial market capitalization of more than $23 billion.

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Levi Strauss

Born in 1829 in Bavaria, Löb Strauß emigrated to the United States with his family at the age of 18, adopting the name that later would adorn pant seats the world over. With the California Gold Rush of 1848, Strauss set off for San Francisco to supply dry goods for the growing numbers of gold prospectors. Durable, comfortable denim work pants emerged as one of his most popular items. In 1873, Strauss and tailor Jacob Davis patented the process of strengthening these pants by copper riveting the pocket corners — the first blue jean. The trademark "two-horse" leather patch followed in 1886 and the "red tab" in 1936. Today, billions of Levi's blue jeans have been sold the world over.

I.M. Pei

Born to a wealthy family in China, Ieoh Ming Pei came to the United States in 1935 to study architecture and stayed once World War II prevented him from returning to China. As an architect his sensuous use of materials and bold geometric shapes brought worldwide attention to his sculptured structures, including the JFK Airport terminal in New York, the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, and a controversial glass pyramid for a courtyard of the Louvre Museum in Paris.

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Cultural Competence Required in Today's Economy

The Staff of DiversityInc

Customer Service
verizon wireless

© AP Images/Damian Dovarganes

Customer service representative Ghaer Martinez, right, assists Hovanes Keshishian at a Verizon store in Los Angeles in 2005.

Telecommunications giant Verizon Communications employs a multiethnic workforce for its multiethnic customers. It's good business, but it requires effort and commitment. Sometimes immigrant groups join the mainstream when the stream itself widens.

DiversityInc is the leading publication on corporate diversity.

In today's global economy, employees and customers come from many different cultures and speak many different languages. Companies that want to compete must be fluent in the languages and cultural nuances of communities.

One U.S. company that understands this and has built a strong consumer and employee base is telecommunications giant Verizon Communications, number six on the 2007 DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity® list. Verizon has developed a strong multicultural work force and management while focusing on consumers for whom English is a second language.

Verizon provides products and services in foreign languages. That effort once meant hiring a minimal number of Spanish-speaking operators. Now it means going further externally and internally by building relationships among employees who have different cultural backgrounds. To that end, Verizon has strong company-sanctioned employee-resource groups that are valued both as recruitment and retention tools and for their input on the consumer markets.

The employee groups are based on affiliation with traditionally under-represented groups, usually considering race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The company pays for them, allows them to meet during the work day, and has a senior executive involved with each one. The groups are used to help recruit and retain employees and to gain ideas and test plans to market to customers.

"It's a journey not only for the business but for each individual that constitutes the business," said Magda Yrizarry, Verizon's vice president for workplace culture, diversity, and compliance. "If you can only see talent that comes in a package that looks just like you, you have a problem because our customer base doesn't necessarily look just like you."

The company's diverse workforce is exemplified by its retention of African-American, Asian, and Hispanic employees, all of whom stay at the company at the same rate as white employees or at an even higher rate. The company reported that in 2006, 39 percent of its managers were African-American, Asian, or Hispanic.

Verizon, with the diversity focus in mind, has 12 consumer call centers that provide service in Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Russian. For customers who are small-business owners, Verizon provides service in Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese.

"This effort goes back to the early 1970s, but then it was probably five or six people in a main call center handling in-language calls," said Pedro Correa, vice president for multilingual consumer and business sales for Verizon Plus retail stores.

Today, Verizon employs more than 1,500 people in its call centers who provide service in languages other than English. "That tells you where the market and the whole country have gone," Correa said. "Back then, it was survival mode. Today, there's a business reason to do it. The return on investment pays for itself."

Verizon estimates its multilingual-customer segment is growing at a rate of 9 percent annually. Hispanics now make up 11.2 percent of its U.S. customer base, and Asian Americans, 6.7 percent.

Verizon has seen a bump in revenue of between 10 percent and 20 percent from the in-language efforts. "Enhancing the customer's experience through in-language service helps offset losses by driving loyalty, which drives growth," Correa said. Correa is also in charge of the company's 62 Verizon Plus stores. Those stores that provide in-language service deliver up to 20 percent more customer revenue than stores that do not. Of the 660 employees who work in those stores, about half are Hispanic, Asian-American, African-American, or Native American, and about half are fluent in a foreign language spoken by consumers who patronize the stores.

"Hispanic and Asian customers prefer to do business face to face, so we give that outlet at our stores and then provide the in-language experience as well," Correa said.

For Verizon, a company that competes with heavy hitters such as AT&T, Qwest, Sprint Nextel, Comcast, and Time Warner, building brand loyalty is tantamount to survival.

"In business, creating a relationship with the customer is most important," Correa said. "So we do this because it is about enhancing the customers' experience, which ultimately gets them to buy more products and services."

Added Yrizarry: "Creating and sustaining a culture that both values and effectively manages diversity for better performance doesn't just happen — it requires effort and commitment. You have to be as intentional and determined about diversity as any other business imperative." ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

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Internet Resources

Online sources for information about Immigration and Diversity

The African-American Migration Experience
This Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture site focuses on the 13 defining migrations that formed and transformed African America.
http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm

Becoming an American: The Chinese Experience
The dramatic story of struggle and triumph, progress and setbacks, discrimination and assimilation, taken from personal stories.
http://www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/index.html

Chicago, City of the Century: Decades of Immigrants
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/chicago/sfeature/sf_nations.html

Destination America
This resource-rich site includes compelling immigration stories, the history of immigration to the United States, a quiz, and resources.
http://www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/index.html

Immigration: Library of Congress
A presentation of the history of immigration, using primary sources of the Library of Congress.
http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/introduction.html

Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930
Selected historical materials from Harvard University's collections document voluntary immigration to the United States.
http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/

Immigrant Voices — Primary Sources
http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/ethnic_am.cfm

Migration Policy Institute "Data Hub"
The latest facts, stats, and maps on international migration.
http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub

The New Americans
Personal stories and cultural riches from the newest wave of immigrants to the United States.
http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/index.html

Peopling North America: Population Movements & Migration
http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/migrations/Fhome.html

U.S. Historical Census Data Browser
From the University of Virginia Library, this census tool allows users to compare populations in states over different time periods.
http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census

Online Readings

America's Newcomers
http://mumford.albany.edu/census/NewComersReport/Americas%20Newcomers.pdf

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http://www.cis.org/articles/2007/back1007.pdf

The Foreign-Born Population of the U.S.
http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p20-551.pdf

Immigration and America's Black Population
http://www.prb.org/pdf07/62.4immigration.pdf

The Immigration Debate
http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/1204/ijse/barone.htm

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http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/science/08conv.html?_r=1&ref=science&oref=slogin

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http://brookings.edu/views/papers/lindsay/20030601.htm

One from Many: U.S. Immigration Patterns and Ethnic Composition
http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0699/ijse/portrait.htm

Singer, Audrey. The Changing Face of America
http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/1204/ijse/singer.htm

Spain, Daphne. The Debate in the United States over Immigration.
http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0699/ijse/spain.htm

Filmography

Avalon (1990)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099073/
Director: Barry Levinson
Running time: 126 minutes
Synopsis: A Polish-Jewish family seeks a better future in the so-called promised land of the USA.

Crash (2005)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0375679/
Director: Paul Haggis
Running time: 113 minutes
Synopsis: The lives of several inter-related characters from different ethnic groups and national origins collide and interweave during two days in Los Angeles.

Gangs of New York (2002)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0217505/
Director: Martin Scorsese
Running time: 167 minutes
Synopsis: In 1863, Amsterdam Vallon seeks revenge on his father's killer in the notorious Five Points district of New York City, where nativist hatred of Irish immigrants has deadly consequences.

Godfather II (1974)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071562/
Director: Francis Ford Coppola
Running time: 200 minutes
Synopsis: Robert De Niro delivers a masterful performance portraying the early career of Vito Corleone in Italy and New York during the first decades of the 20th century.

Joy Luck Club (1993)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107282/
Director: Wayne Wang
Running time: 139 minutes
Synopsis: Four Asian women and their American born daughters support each other, and reflect on the past, in contemporary San Francisco.

Mambo Kings (1992)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104802/
Director: Ame Glimcher
Running time: 104 minutes
Synopsis: Cesar and Nestor, a pair of musician brothers, leave Cuba for America in the 1950s, aiming to be stars of the Latin music scene.

Mississippi Masala (1992)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0102456/
Director: Mira Nair
Running time: 118 minutes
Synopsis: An Indian family, expelled from Uganda when Idi Amin takes power, moves to Mississippi, where the daughter falls in love with a black man.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0259446/
Director: Joel Zwick
Running time: 95 minutes
Synopsis: Young Greek woman falls in love with a non-Greek. Struggling to win her family's acceptance of the match, she gradually finds a better appreciation for her heritage and cultural identity.

Saving Private Ryan (1998)
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120815/
Director: Steven Spielberg
Running time: 170 minutes
Synopsis: In this World War II drama, US soldiers from various ethnic, economic and geographic backgrounds join forces to rescue paratrooper Ryan, who is stationed behind enemy lines.

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