

Chapter Eight

UNDERSTANDING THE ASIAN AMERICAN AND LATINO MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand why the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino migrate(d) to the United States.
- identify laws that halted immigration and enacted mistreatment against the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino.
- recognize why the Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans migrate(d) to the United States.
- comprehend discriminatory actions against the Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans.
- describe why some in the United States wanted the Asian and Latino populations in America and why some did not.
- apply what is learned to immigration issues and the concept of cheap labor in today's workplace.



ASIAN AMERICAN MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

Who are Asian Americans?

Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, ethnic Lao, Hmong, Thai, Samoans, Tongans, & Asian Indian are just a few of the ethnicities that are considered Asian American. Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Asian Indians, Koreans, and the Vietnamese constitute nearly 90% of all Asian Americans.

Many would also like to add Hawaiians, Samoans, & Guamanians to the above list however they should not be added, as they are Pacific Islanders. Pacific Islanders make up smaller numbers as compared to the population of Asian Americans in the United States and therefore will not be discussed.

Each Asian American group is very distinct with its own history, language and culture. The ancestral tongues of Asian Americans range from Tagalog to Japanese to Hindi to Korean. They also practice various religions such as: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism and Roman Catholicism just to name a few. Any person of Asian descent, either native or foreign born, living in the U.S. is considered Asian American. But, many of Asian descent still identify strongly with their country of origin. They may often be more likely to refer to themselves as Japanese or Chinese American, etc... rather than just Asian American.

Many of Asian descent as well as other immigrants come to the U.S. seeking relief from their communistic economic systems and dictatorial leadership. In many communistic countries the government has control of all the land, labor and capital (money). They can therefore make it very difficult for the average citizen to have any freedom or wealth. In a communistic country those in rule could decide to take 90% of the wealth and divide it amongst 2% of the population and the other 98% of the country could live in extreme poverty. The people who leave these countries and migrate to the United States are often in search of the many

freedoms and individual wealth that the U.S. has to offer.

CHINESE AMERICANS

The first significant immigration to America came about in the 1850s when gold was found in California. The Californians didn't seem to mind when more than 80,000 fortune seekers from every corner of the globe descended on the gold mines.¹ The Chinese (mainly men) were among these seekers whom California rolled out the welcome mat for.

While the Chinese may have come for gold, the U.S. wanted them here because they needed cheap labor to work in the fields, factories and on the railroads.² The word got out and more Chinese men came to assist the U.S. in building up its country. As the population of California continued to increase, by 1852, 10% of the 250,000 people were Chinese.³ But, now they weren't welcomed. Some whites were becoming furious at their arrival as they felt they were a threat for their employment.⁴ There were soon cries like, "California for Americans" that were heard across the state.⁵

The government, however, refused to pass laws forbidding foreigners to mine, nor did the government limit immigration. This outraged many Whites because they were not only mad about the Chinese participation but also considered the Native Americans and Mexicans who lived in California foreigners as well.⁶ Never mind the fact that the both the Native Americans and Mexicans lived in California and elsewhere in the U.S. centuries before the arrival of White settlers.

In these days of the California Gold Rush, the young American Republic was pursuing a dream of "Manifest Destiny."⁷ That is, stretching its borders in every direction for the free development of multiplying millions. America needed strong, reliable workers and they found them in the Chinese. The Chinese were also in abundance and would work for minimal wages. Therefore, the government did not want them to leave.⁸

Some whites in Congress, however, didn't just want to use the Asian Americans for cheap labor they wanted to secure citizenship rights for them by amending the Naturalization Law of 1790.⁹ This Law specified that only "whites" were eligible for naturalized citizenship. However, this only received one-third of Congress' support and the fight against the Chinese did not end here.

Another very detrimental act towards the Chinese was passed. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was a victory for those who wanted to rid the U.S. of Chinese immigrants. This Act was the first and only immigration law in American History to target a specific nationality as it prohibited the Chinese from entering the U.S.¹⁰

At the time of the Act there were 70,000 documented Chinese men and fewer than 4,000 Chinese women in the U.S.¹¹ These numbers posed a serious problem for the Chinese bachelors, because there were so few Chinese women and most non-Chinese women shunned their company. Furthermore, many of these men only wanted Chinese women because they did not want to jeopardize the ethnic purity of their lineage.

But over time, as the Chinese men assimilated to American life these aliens did marry American women who were citizens. They themselves were then able to achieve citizenship. But, the government felt that America's Anglo-Saxon way of life was in jeopardy and so they then passed the Draconian Cable Act in 1922.¹² This act punished American women for marrying these Chinese men. Their punishment was a loss of U.S. citizenship. This act was fought and repealed in 1936, but until then American women stayed clear of Chinese men.¹³

But those angry Whites with power did not stop there, there were other acts passed that were similar to the Cable Act, such as the Exclusion Act. The Chinese Exclusion Act was a United States federal law signed by President Chester A. Arthur on May 6, 1882. It was one of the most significant restrictions on free immigration in U.S. history, prohibiting all immigration of Chinese laborers.¹⁴ By 1943, the Exclusion Act was finally repealed and a statue was put into place that was to be completely colorblind. However, this new law only allowed an annual quota of 105 for naturalization (citizen by oath).¹⁵ This law did not alleviate the obvious racism that had been targeted towards the Chinese. For example, if there was a Chinese born in Canada they still fell into this category of naturalization, but if a person of European ancestry was born in Canada they could enter as a non-quota immigrant despite the fact that both of these individuals would have been Canadian citizens.

So even though the Chinese came for freedom and wealth once here they struggled for equality and dignity. Yet despite all these setbacks, there were still many Chinese Americans who contributed significantly to American history. The construction of the Central Pacific Railroad line was a feat accomplished mainly by the Chinese. Of the 10,000 laborers in the Central Pacific, 9000 were Chinese.¹⁶ They worked extremely hard, clearing trees, blasting rocks with explosions,

shoveling and carting away debris and laying tracks. A thousand of these Chinese workers lost their lives in this endeavor.¹⁷

But, when the railroad was done and the golden spike was driven to commemorate the momentous occasion, no Chinese were present. Despite their significant contributions, the Chinese had been purposely left out of the ceremonies as well as from the "famous" photograph of Americans who drove the golden spike.¹⁸ As if this wasn't enough, to add insult to injury, the Central Pacific then laid-off almost all of the Chinese.

Rather than return home to a government controlled impoverished China, these now unemployed Chinese gathered in San Francisco where they joined with other Chinese ex-miners in the manufacturing fields. San Francisco, the 9th leading manufacturing city in America, may have not acquired this title had it not been for the Chinese. The Chinese were in low paying jobs in these manufacturing companies and even when they did the same work as Whites, their wages were less. This hostility exhibited toward the Chinese was not only discriminatory (according to today's laws) but also racist.

While every culture or ethnicity has the premise to be racist, in understanding racism, an important variable to understand is the presence of power. It is the power to enforce the "prejudgment" of superiority or inferiority that leads to racism. Author Judy Katz in studying "White" racism wrote, "Racism is perpetuated by Whites through their conscious and/or unconscious support of a climate and institutions that are founded on racist policies and practices."¹⁹ The racial prejudice of these White people (those at the top of the wealth pyramid who have power) coupled with their political, economic, and social power allows them to be able to enforce discriminatory practices on every level of life.

Racism can make it very difficult it's victims to achieve success, but it does not prevent success. In this climate of racism, the Chinese have continued to aid the U.S. For instance, the horticulturalist Ah Bing developed in Oregon the popular Bing Cherry and in Florida Lue Gim Gong bred oranges that were resistant to frost, thus enabling Florida's nascent citrus industry to get off the ground. In 1957, Tsung-dao Lee and Chen-nin Yang were awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in physics for breaking the conservation-of-parity law.²⁰

The Chinese also advanced their community, for example in 1852 in San Francisco the first Chinese theater was established in a building brought from China; then in 1854, to advance their own interest San Francisco's first

Chinese Newspaper was published.²¹ A few years later an organization was formed known as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association which arbitrated on behalf of the Chinese, their social welfare and community interests.²²

During this time of racial discourse directed toward the Chinese, it did not prevent the Chinese from fighting for their rights. In one such case Yick Wo, who was convicted of operating a laundry without a license, took his case to the Supreme Court and they found that "the law was administered with an evil eye" to drive Chinese out of business; the law was struck down as discriminatory and this was a key case in defining the 14th Amendment.²³

JAPANESE AMERICANS

In the 1880s the Japanese government lifted its ban on emigration. Thousands of Japanese, mostly from the countryside, came to Hawaii and later to the United States.²⁴ They came as many other immigrants did, because of the prospect of a brighter financial future. But, their difference was that while they came to work hard and save money, they also planned to return home. They were planning on being sojourners, that is, travelers. They just wanted to come, live and work for a while in this country.

As the Japanese came to the U.S., the Japanese government strictly supervised who came in order to protect their honor sending only healthy, strong and relatively well educated Japanese.²⁵ Many of these Japanese who came were from the rural areas of their country and they brought a wealth of agricultural skills. They utilized these skills in the U.S. and were successful farmers. But, the Japanese weren't comfortable working other's land. They wanted farm ownership for themselves. So, they started pooling their money to make this happen. Even though they owned less than 2% of all farmland in California, White landowners in the western states began to fear Japanese competition.²⁶ They had so much fear that they used their power to cause Congress to pass the Alien Land Act.²⁷

The Alien Land Act of 1913 prohibited ownership of property by "aliens ineligible to citizenship" which due to the Naturalization Act included the Japanese.²⁸ But, the Japanese attempted to find a loophole in the law. They started purchasing land in the name of their children who were American citizens.²⁹ But, to keep the Japanese from being successful Congress then amended the Alien Act to exclude purchase of land by minors. This completely eliminated the Japanese from farm ownership.

Around the time of the Alien Land Act hatred toward the Japanese was widespread. Not only weren't they ineligible for citizenship and barred from owning land, but they often experienced the same Jim Crow like hostilities that were enforced on Blacks.³⁰ The Japanese were routinely segregated by Whites and refused service in barbershops, grocery stores, hotels and restaurants.

Roosevelt, president at the time, was worried that this treatment of the Japanese in the U.S. would get back to Japan and cause international chaos. Therefore, Roosevelt signed a Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan.³¹ This agreement halted Japanese immigration and legislation was designed to reduce the harassment of the Japanese. The agreement also allowed immigration of the parents, wives and children of the 90% male U.S. Japanese population.³²

This last immigration arrangement angered the White exclusionists (Whites who felt access to America should be only for Europeans) as the immigration of these men's family were more than many thought would come. Therefore, Congress appealing to the White male voting population passed the Immigration Act of 1924.³³ This Act prohibited foreigners ineligible for U.S. citizenship—by definition all Asians—from coming to American shores.

With all of this turmoil the Japanese Americans were experiencing, when the attack at Pearl Harbor occurred it just made it worse for the Japanese. Roosevelt had signed the Executive Order 9066. This order authorized and structured the relocation and internment of nearly 120,000 Japanese women, men and children.³⁴ Executive Order 9066 imparted a large dose of legitimacy to the wartime hysteria and racism rampant in America.³⁵

Americans bought the propaganda they were fed about how the Japanese Americans on the West Coast were enemy aliens loyal to Japan. The U.S. public supported the government in its assault against Japanese Americans. Newspaper columnists commonly called Japanese Americans the following: nips, japs, and yellow vermin.³⁶ This just incited others into the hatred of the Japanese. However, the thing to remember is that this was not the first exhibition of hatred toward the Japanese. The war was seemingly a more 'valid' reason to incite hatred.

FILIPINO AMERICANS

While the Philippines are an Asian country, some think due to its name that it is not. Confused because it has a Spanish name taken from Philip II, does not make

it any less "Asian." While Japan and China have contributed to the shaping of the history of the Philippines, the country has also been impacted by Spain and later the United States. Despite the Filipinos resistance to foreign domination, the U.S. went there and enacted many of its ways of living. It setup a democratic government and American style schools, which enforced usage of the English language. The schools also taught American history and values instead of teaching Philippine history. This introduction to America inspired many to immigrate to America.

When the Filipinos arrived many were already accustomed to American culture. Because Americans wanted the Filipinos to come to America, Filipinos were exempt from the discriminatory legislation that virtually halted all Asian immigration for a period of time.³⁷ But just like the Chinese and Japanese aliens in America, Filipinos did not have the right to vote, own land or attain U.S. citizenship.

When the Filipinos arrived in the U.S. many were men. But, unlike their Japanese and Chinese counterparts who either weren't comfortable around American women or wanted to preserve their lineage, the Filipinos had neither concern. In the absence of Filipino women, many married White women. At the time, however, anti-miscegenation laws only barred marriages between Whites and persons of African or Mongolian blood.³⁸ But, even though the marriages between Filipinos and Whites were allowable by law many still received harassment. The Caucasian women were often called "nigger lovers."³⁹ They called them this because of the brown skin tone of the Filipinos.

While this harassment dampened the experience of the Filipino immigrants, what really hurt them was the Great Depression. The Great Depression was a bad time for all, but it was even worse for people of color who were already being discriminated against. Desperate from the shortage of jobs across the country, racists blamed their misfortunes on these immigrants of color.⁴⁰ There was also rioting against Filipinos on the Pacific Coast. In October 1929, in White River Valley, Washington, some White farm workers fought Filipino workers because the latter worked for less pay. By the summer of 1930 anti-Filipino activities had spread to Idaho and Utah.⁴¹

In addition, there were many attempts to exclude Filipinos from the mainland. Congressman Richard Welch of California introduced a bill with this aim. He received support from the states of Oregon and Washington, from labor

unions, and from groups concerned about the ethnic composition of the United States population.

But despite this turmoil, the American government started making deals with the Philippines that was presented as a win-win that is, a win for the U.S as well as the Philippines. In 1932, the Cutting-Hare Bill passed which was the culmination of these dealings. Then in 1934, there was the Tydings-McDuffie Act. These acts were a triumph for those who wanted to end Filipino immigration.

The act stated that the Philippine Islands would become independent after a transition period of 15 years. The U.S was to provide assistance during those 15 years of commonwealth status, in exchange for an annual quota set at 50 immigrants to the mainland, U.S.⁴² This also called for separate regulations for immigration to Hawaii. Filipinos in Hawaii were restricted from moving from Hawaii to the U.S. and they were reclassified as aliens rather than nationals. After successful lobbying, the Hawaiian Sugar Planter's Association convinced Congress to allot additional spaces for Filipino immigrants to Hawaii, where cheap labor was needed.⁴³

The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 still restricted immigration and it wasn't until The Immigration Act of 1965 which liberalized immigration from Asia did Filipino immigration pick back up.⁴⁴ While the previous immigrants were laborers, these new immigrants were White-collar professionals. But, many still couldn't meet stringent U.S. certification requirements.⁴⁵ For example, dentists from the Philippines were forced to work as dental aides in the U.S., unless they underwent more training. What was strange about this is that the U.S. set up the school systems in the Philippines and therefore it would be assumed that their quality of education wouldn't be questioned. But, was the quality of education the issue or more the issue of keeping these well-paying jobs for those American's or immigrants who were more favored?

Furthermore, these new Filipino immigrants brought their wives who were educated as well. These women often worked outside the home in one of the few fields open to women, nursing.⁴⁶ Because many American women weren't really working outside the home this opened this opportunity to the Filipino women and this economic opportunity helped the Filipinos preserve their heritage in America.

LATINO/HISPANIC MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

Who makes up the Hispanic/Latino population?

The term "Hispanic" is often used to refer to people of the Latin culture but according to the dictionary "Hispanic" only refers to the language, people and culture of Spain.⁴⁷ The term "Hispanic" is therefore not representative of all Latin ethnicities, such as: Africans of Cuba and Puerto Rico as well as Indians of Central America. It is therefore necessary to extend this definition to include people who live in the U.S. who came or whose ancestors came—not just from Spain—but from other Spanish-speaking countries around the world. Many will refer to this grouping of people as Latinos. Insisting that Latinos not only includes the above groups but also those from other Latin areas like the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. But, because the U.S. government recognizes Hispanic rather than Latino the terms are often used interchangeably.

As we discuss Latinos/Hispanics in the United States, a group that is estimated at 44.3 million (not including the 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico) as of 2006 they constitute at least 15 percent of the nation's total population. They have become the nation's largest ethnic or race minority group. We will focus on the three largest of this ethnicity, which are: Mexican Americans, Puerto Rican Americans and Cuban Americans.⁴⁸

Like many Americans, Latinos are the product of immigration from an old world to a new one. Yet they are unique. Through their history, Latinos bring together three great cultures: African, Native-American and European which explains their variation in color—from the light skin color of Jennifer Lopez (famous entertainer) to the darker skin color of Sammy Sosa (famous baseball star) both of whom consider themselves Latino.

The African influence of Latinos began through the first Africans who crossed the narrow Strait of Gibraltar to the Iberian Peninsula in 2000 B.C.⁴⁹ These Iberians lived in Libya, Algeria and Morocco and they built their own villages and planted crops.⁵⁰ One thousand years later, they mixed with newcomers, the Celts, to create a new culture and about 500 B.C., a powerful city-state in northern Africa, Carthage, began to send armies and colonists across the Mediterranean to the Iberian Peninsula.⁵¹ There, the Carthaginians created colonies that lasted almost 300 years that is, until the Roman Empire moved in to take control.

Then in 711 A.D., a group of African Muslims invaded this Iberian Peninsula and forced the mixed European culture northward toward the Pyrenees. For the next 800 or so years, these Moors, as they became known, shaped the culture of

the Iberian Peninsula.⁵² Their mark can still be seen in the Mosques, gardens, and paved streets of Spanish cities.

In the late 1400s, Spain joined Portugal in the African slave trade.⁵³ This type of slavery was similar to the slavery that existed in a few countries in Africa. A person was enslaved for a time period and was required to work; however, once this period ended the slaves assumed all rights as free citizens. Over the next few centuries, Spain relied on the labor of Africans to build its empire in the New World. In Spanish America, Spain's African heritage joined with the heritage of enslaved Africans. This heritage was passed on through the years to other Hispanic Americans.

The second cultural influence was from the Native Americans. About 7000 B.C. some ancient Native Americans turned from hunting and gathering to farming for food. Over the next 5000 years, farming brought these groups together and a village culture grew. By 1200 B.C., the Olmec culture had been founded.⁵⁴

Elsewhere in the Americas other Native American civilizations grew and prospered. Among some of the most important were the Incas of Peru and the Pueblo culture of the American Southwest.⁵⁵ Others lived in South America, the Caribbean, and the American Southeast. These cultures influenced the Spaniards and Africans who traveled to the New World after 1492. This Native American heritage has also been passed on through Latinos/Hispanic Americans.

Beginning in 1492, there were the Spanish conquests that again brought together these different cultures. Christopher Columbus, born in Italy, but working for the Spaniards, sought new routes to the rich lands of Japan and China. But in 1492, he startled onto a different continent. In this growing of the Spanish empire—the Old World—Europeans and Africans came together and mixed with the New World—Native Americans.⁵⁶ These people of Spanish America created many of the cultures and traditions that we now view in the U.S. among Hispanic Americans.

The movement of Latinos to the Americas began at the start of the 20th century that found Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico in turmoil. Spain's archaic rule of its Caribbean possessions was challenged successfully in 1898. The U.S. went into these countries trying to clean up what they considered to be neglect and mismanagement of these countries' resources.⁵⁷

Hispanic Colonial History

According to the contributors of "AmericaUSA", out of the 50 U.S. states Hispanics explored and colonized at least 31 of the present states in the United States.⁵⁸ Spanish speaking America's far-reaching influence, and contributions, continues throughout the U.S. today. Spanish was spoken in the majority of the present states in our country from the early 1900's to the present, during which time English and Spanish have shared the status of dual languages in the present USA. In 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed, it was a toss up between several languages. Even though Spanish continued to be the collective language of the majority in the "U.S." at the time of the American Revolution it was not selected as the nation's language.⁵⁹

When new immigrants from Spanish speaking countries assimilate, they assimilate into the USA Spanish speaking community, which has been in existence collectively for 500 years. There are two collective (dual languages) throughout the present USA- Spanish and English. Within the Spanish and English languages, which are spoken collectively in the USA, there are also thousands of Indigenous Tribes, each with their own distinct languages. As the following facts illustrate, the Spanish language was/is not only confined to the American southwest, but is spread throughout the present USA. When it comes to pioneers, one fact was that these Spanish speaking people were very instrumental in spreading the Hispanic culture and the Spanish language; from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California (which is a Spanish word), Florida (a Spanish word meaning flowery) and Georgia which were traditionally Spanish speaking from the early 1500 as they colonized by the Hispanics.⁶⁰

Also, during the 1500's, 1600's, 1700's the influence was provided to the United States through the Hispanics: Presidios (forts), Missions were established; in 1598 they created the 1st Cattlemen's Organization; in 1776's American Revolution the Hispanics or Spanish speaking people from New Mexico collected funds and fought British soldiers on behalf of the United States and 500,000 Hispanics fought in WWII.⁶¹

Mexicans in America

While Mexicans occupied and lived in western North America during manifest destiny, there was a time period in history that brought immigrant Mexicans to America. Dictator Porfiria Diaz, who had ruled for 30 years, had left lower classes poor and much of the country's wealth was in the hands of a few Mexicans and

foreigners.⁶² In 1910, this situation in Mexico got worse. The bloody Mexican Revolution that lasted several years made life unbearable for most. As Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico continued to experience the harsh life of many dictatorial rulers along with the remains of the war, these people began to head North in hopes of finding a better life in the U.S.

Based on the history of Mexico and many other countries (including the U.S.), it is easy to see how greed and the desire for wealth have caused those in power to do undeserving acts to humans. For those who can migrate to the U.S. they believe they will be able to escape the poor conditions of their homelands.

The railroads enabled masses of Mexicans to reach the U. S. Once in the U.S., the railway also employed many of these immigrants. However, most Mexicans in the U.S. worked as constructions workers, watchmen, in agriculture or mining. Many of these occupations isolated Mexican Americans from the rest of the American population—creating separate Spanish speaking communities.⁶³ This separation also did nothing to increase the “American” education of the Mexican workers and their children. There was no access to schools in these remote locations, and because many of the children worked alongside their parents, this made formal “American” education and adaptation to the English language nonexistent for them. It was also during this era, that Mexican Americans developed the stereotype of being uneducated agricultural field hands.⁶⁴ This stereotype has existed for many decades.

This massive movement of people from Mexico to the U.S. was not intended to be a permanent emigration. Many came to stay for a season or for a few years to accumulate money as the wages were three to four times better than in Mexico. But, as circumstance would have it, many did not return back to Mexico. Like other groups of transient workers, labor contractors recruited these non-English speaking agricultural Mexican laborers. They worked in gangs under the contractor’s direction and total control. While these Mexicans were working, they still were very poor and lived under such primitive conditions that it shocked other Americans.⁶⁵ This poverty that they had to accept, along with their folk culture, race and work patterns set them apart culturally. But not all were set apart as the lighter complexioned, acculturated and middle class portion of the Mexican-American population was more easily accepted.⁶⁶ They often could speak English and could therefore blend into the White society (melt into the pot).

But, as more Mexicans arrived there was increased prejudice felt from

some of the Anglo-community. The result of this prejudice impacted the Mexican community in many ways. By the 1940s, the Mexican children, many who were born U.S. citizens, had grown dissatisfied with the bad housing, bad schools and bad jobs. To deal with their feelings of mistreatment, they formed gangs.⁶⁷ These gangs were largely concentrated in Los Angeles (LA) where there was a large Mexican population.

The Pachucos, one of these gangs, emphasized the difference in their culture and the rest of White society.⁶⁸ They dressed differently, wearing zoot suits consisting of high waisted baggy pants and long suit coats with very broad shoulders. These young people needed a way to express their feelings of frustration and bitterness, which is what they did through their clothing and hairstyles.

However, the LA police saw these gangs as more than just rebellious teenagers. They believed the Pachucos were a threat to public order. Also, at this time in LA, military men were on leave and also felt that these young men were "Un-American" and needed to be taught a lesson.⁶⁹ What began as street fights, turned into major race riots. Many say this was the ugliest mob action since the coolie (Chinese) race riots of the 1870s.

The race riots continued until the Mexican Ambassador in Washington asked the U.S. State Department to help stop the violence. U.S. Government officials stopped the riots by removing the military men.⁷⁰ While many Mexican Americans weren't easily accepted into the Anglo communities due to their differences, Mexican Americans still held strong to their own culture.

The family is central in Mexican American culture.⁷¹ Family breakups are much less common among Mexican Americans than other immigrant groups. Spanish is also the language that is still spoken in more than half of Mexican American homes.⁷² Language choices of all Latinos and proficiency in English have in recent years become ideological issues, rather than simply pragmatic questions related to functioning in an English speaking country.

Some believe that these families should use English more. But, many others in this debate don't see the value in this—even non-Latino intellectuals see this issue as an attempt to stigmatize Spanish as "inferior." But, what makes one language better than another? People who believe this about Spanish should remember that Spanish as well as the 300 or so Native tongues were spoken on this continent long before English became the "first language" of the United States.

Columbus and the Spaniards

What do the following people/groups have in common that is related to the Latino experience:

- Puerto Rico
- Christopher Columbus
- Cuba
- Native Americans
- Blacks

The Crusades were responsible for bringing to Europe imported treasures that were coveted.⁷⁴ An alternate route was needed. Christopher Columbus devised a plan to reach the East by traveling west. The British decided to back Columbus, but it was too late, Spain had already signed an agreement with Columbus.⁷⁵

With profit being the motivating factor of the journey, Columbus was unsuccessful. He sailed within twenty miles of the Mayan ruins and was just hairs from the pearl fisheries in Columbia.⁷⁶ His journeys did take him to both Puerto Rico and Cuba. Claimed by the Spanish, the islands were subsequently settled by people obsessed by the Three G's—Gold, Glory, and Gospel.⁷⁷ Neither Cuba nor Puerto Rico was initially as profitable as Mexico and certain parts of South America. In order to gain the most from these possessions agriculture was to be developed. The Spanish tradition of not sullyng one's hands led to the use of "Indians" as laborers. To better facilitate this aim Queen Isabella issued an order on December 20, 1503.⁷⁸ In the document she compelled the governors of the possessions to 'compel and force' the Indians to do the labor.⁷⁹ Subsequently, literally millions of Indians were worked to death.

"A Bartolomé de la Casas (1474-1566), a Dominican monk, was appalled at the treatment the Spaniards bestowed on the Indians. He crusaded for the natives, pled their case to King Ferdinand (1515), wrote the Historia de las India, and was appointed the 'Protector of the Indians.' In his role as the latter, he suggested something he would regret for the rest of his life. He proposed that instead of Indians, Black slaves be used in the mines and plantations. African slaves were then imported in 1518. There emerged in the possessions a very rigid caste system. (Many Indians also had one.) The

Spanish class system was triangular. At the top were the Peninsulares, those born on the Iberian Peninsula. They were the only ones who could hold top administrative positions. Next were the Criollos, sons and daughters of Europeans born in the possessions. They had status, gained wealth, but had no administrative power. Constituting the

*lower echelons were the Mestizos, half Indian half European; the Mulattos, half black half European; the Indians, the Negroes, and the Sambos, half black half Indian.*⁸⁰

America had designs on its southern neighbors for much of the nineteenth century. Jefferson saw them as Spanish daggers; the South saw them as potential slave states (slavery was abolished in Spain in 1870). Nothing really came of it until William Randolph Hearst went to New York, bought a newspaper, *The Journal*, and began a circulation war with his competitor, Joseph Pulitzer. Taking on the cause of the Cuban revolutionaries, he and his battalion of 'literary mercenaries,' the Yellow Journalists, began an all-out effort to rally support for a war. Americans were also quite concerned over their investments involving sugar. In 1898 when the *Maine* was sunk, either accidentally or deliberately, the U.S. went to war with Spain. The "Splendid Little War," or "Hearst's Little War" was over quickly, cost few lives to the U.S., and reunited a nation that had not been cohesive since the Civil War. Spain had lost its entire empire. Spanish influence declined, relegating her to the position of a defeated mother. This marked the beginning of U.S. intervention in the islands. Cuba was granted independence under U.S. supervision. Puerto Rico became a possession of the U.S.

Puerto Ricans and America

Puerto Rico has had a relationship with the United States since the early 1900s when the United States starting intervening in the island. Why would the U.S. intervene on behalf of Puerto Rico? Some would say that it's Puerto Rico's prime location. It would seem easy for enemies of the United States to take up location there if it is not controlled by the United States.

But for whatever the reason, the United States passed several legislative acts regarding Puerto Rico. The acts concluded with Puerto Rico being a possession of the United States and not a state as it had once desired.⁸¹ While Puerto Rico is a possession and not a state the acts created a provision that provides U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans who live in Puerto Rico. But as citizens they do not pay federal income tax. Puerto Rico is also not provided the same services that would be offered through an income tax system. Puerto Rico was issued a Bill of Rights and a governor who is selected through the United States political process in Washington but this was later overturned.⁸²

The governance and support of Puerto Rico through the United States has been strong and weak throughout the years. This strength of the Puerto Rican economy versus the United States economy has contributed to the waves or downfalls of Puerto Ricans migrating to the United States.⁸³ Since 1930, many Puerto Ricans in the U.S. have lived in New York City. The water access of New York (it being a port city) and boat travel created this access to migration.⁸⁴

Puerto Ricans, like the Irish and many other migrants to this country came from environments that provided little or no access to formal education, limited exposure to U.S. language and culture. Like many others who have Spanish as their first language, Spanish is spoken in the homes of most Puerto Ricans. These language and cultural issues have become a complication in the life of Puerto Ricans living in the U.S.⁸⁵

Color (for the darker skinned Puerto Ricans) is also an additional complication in an already difficult situation.⁸⁶ Individual color differences remain socially significant in a group that extends from pure Caucasian to pure African American. Studies show that those Puerto Ricans who have attained middle class status have tended to be lighter in skin color and may identify themselves as white in order to gain the unspoken privileges that many Whites in the U.S. have.⁸⁷

Cuba

Just like Puerto Rico, the United States has maintained some control over Cuba since the early 1900s until the 1950s. This control extended to the United States having power to intervene as it related to Cuba's independence.⁸⁷ However, the U.S. did not exert much influence over Fulgencio Batista's regime allowing what called inhumane treatment to take place in this country.

Cuba has been no stranger to dictatorships, which like many countries who operate under these conditions pass poverty unto its citizens. Some chose to stay in their homeland and live under these conditions while others have sought a better life elsewhere.⁸⁸ This is what brought many of the well-educated upper and middle class Cubans to America.

At the time they arrived, Miami was in decline and welcomed the Cuban refugees with open arms. These well-educated Cubans started new businesses and brought this once crumbling city back to life. Before long, Cuban Americans in Miami had higher average incomes than non-Latino Whites. They had created 18,000 new

businesses many small and family run.⁸⁹ These new business ventures brought large investments from Latin American business people who had barely noticed Miami before.

By 1980, the next wave of refugees arrived to find Miami a bilingual community. These refugees arrived but were considered "social problems" in Cuba, some were even criminals.⁹⁰ Many had maintained this criminal lifestyle in order to survive the communistic dictatorial regime in Cuba. Cuba was having a difficult time supporting its citizens due to agricultural losses. So what better way to cut your cost than to get rid of some of your troubled citizen's?

Exclusionists in the Anglo/white community were not happy with the new Cubans arrival. But, Florida's Cuban community assisted these new Cubans in American living and finding jobs. Still, not all made successful transitions. Many of the Cubans were discouraged due to the bitterness and despair that life in America offered them. What we must remember, though, is that these new refugees had never experienced personal freedom. They had been told all their lives what to do, what they could have and how to do things. Arriving in a country where motivation and discipline are the keys to success was a true culture shock.

However, the Cubans because of their education and wealth were able to gain influence in the United States. They used this power to create the Torricelli Bill which was signed by President Bush to express what many considered an expression of the outrage of the treatment of their people in Cuba. This bill showed the power of the Cubans in America as it banned trade with Cuba by the United States and prohibited ships docking in U.S. ports if they had visited Cuba.⁹¹ This bill however was not supported by the United Nations.

Other Legislation Affecting the Latino Population

Californians passed a measure designed to keep undocumented immigrants from receiving state-funded social services, including welfare and non-emergency treatment. It also forced undocumented schoolchildren out of California schools. A federal court order kept this law from passing, but there was an increase in discrimination to the Latinos in California.⁹²

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was another piece of legislation that has impacted the Latino population. This agreement allowed Canada, Mexico and the to eliminate all tariffs between them till 2009. This was

a step towards an American common market, but there were Northern Mexican farmers who protested this by marches and sit-ins. They knew as small farmers it would be difficult to compete against this new competition.

Concluding Thoughts

There is a central theme to this chapter—Asians and Latino/Hispanics migrated to this country in search of opportunity, a better life or to assist their government. Once here they faced racism from exclusionist whites who felt they did not belong. The fear of “these” immigrants taking jobs forced congress to enact laws that stifled these groups participation in American society. Just as the Native Americans gave America “free land”, the Africans provided “free labor”, poor whites provided “cheap labor” through indentured servitude, the Asians and Hispanic/Latino population provided more “cheap labor” as they were exploited work groups. Yet, despite this ill treatment it was still better in the United States for Asians and Latinos than in their home countries due to the dictatorial governments and the impoverished living conditions. While these groups just like many others have contributed significant accomplishments to American society— their recognition is just swept away. They are often not even recognized today as “full” citizens—just immigrants. But aren’t most people in America immigrants?

End of Chapter Questions

1. Why did the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino **each** migrate to the United States? How were they **each** treated once here?
2. How did the Cable Act impact the Chinese and their migration?
3. How did the Chinese participate in the construction of the U.S. Railroad and how were they rewarded (if at all)?
4. A. What is the Alien Land Act?
B. What racial group did it impact the most?
C. Why was it enacted?

5. What is the Naturalization Act of 1790 and how did this impact non-white immigrants?
6. Why were the Filipinos encouraged to come to the U.S.?
7. Why did the Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and first group of Cubans migrate to the United States?
8. Why were the Cubans treated better than other Latino groups?
9. How has laws against Asian Americans and Latinos impacted their migration to the U.S.? Has it been fair and equitable?
10. What does cheap labor have to do with migration experiences of the Asian Americans and Latino/Hispanic groups?

Internet Exercise

Part A.

Use the internet to find out about the stereotype of Asian Americans being the model minority?

Search Key Words: model minority Asian Americans

Now answer the following questions?

1. What is the Model Minority Stereotype?
2. How can this impact Asian Americans in the workplace
3. Despite being seemingly positive, how is this a harmful stereotype?

Part B.

Go to <http://learn.latpro.com/hispanic-culture-at-work/> or if this link does not work go to google and search: Hispanic/Latino culture at work.

1. Summarize what the article stated in one paragraph.
2. Provide three tips that as a manager you could utilize in the workplace

End of Chapter Exercise

Immigration

Some companies want to hire individuals with a unique set of talents and skills that state they can't find in American applicants for their jobs. They look outside the country for individuals with those skills, and help them obtain working visas. Diversity takes on a new dimension in the workplace when it involves bringing in people who may be unfamiliar with life in the United States. It can cause friction among employees, and it can spur creative new ideas that improve a company.

Anger

Some Americans do not agree with bringing in immigrants to work in U.S. companies. They feel that qualified, unemployed Americans could fill those positions and that the immigrants work for lower wages. The lower wages offered to immigrants could be seen to suppress wages for similar positions staffed by Americans. Diversity in the workplace brought about through immigration can be a difficult subject for some companies' managements to tackle. Continued use of diversity training and open communication with employees about companies' reasons for hiring immigrants may help alleviate the problem.

After reading about immigration laws and understanding how cheap labor and skills of those who provided cheap and free labor helped to build the U.S., what is your viewpoint on this workplace employment perspective? (Don't just say...I agree or don't agree—please support your answer).