

Introduction to the American Political Process

Class 25: Immigration

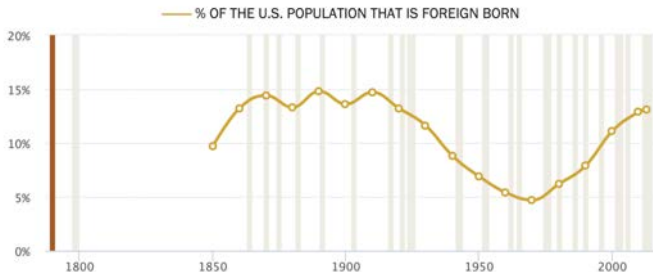
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1. Readings

Tichenor, "Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America"

Readings

Immigration Policy Over Time



Source for the share of the U.S. population that is foreign born: U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850-2000" and Pew Research Center tabulations of 2010 and 2013 American Community Surveys (IPUMS).

Cohn, D'Vera. "How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History." Pew Research Center. September 30, 2015. © Pew Research Center. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Immigration Attitudes Over Time

TABLE 2.1

Opposition to Expanded Immigrant Admissions under Restrictive Regime,
1938–1965

	<i>Percentage Opposing</i>
1938 Opposition to emergency increases in immigration quotas to help “German, Austrian, and other political refugees”	86
1939 Opposition to “a bill to open the doors . . . to a larger number of European refugees than are now admitted under our immigration quota”	83
1946 Opposition to permitting “more persons from Europe to come to this country each year than we did before the war”	83
1947 Opposition to “a bill in Congress to let 100,000 selected European refugees come to this country in each of the next four years”	72
1955 Disagreement with the statement that “the United States is not letting enough immigrants come into this country”	76
1965 Disagreement with the statement that immigration should be “increased”	72

Standard Explanations for Changes in Policy Regime

1. Economy

- Theory: stable and prosperous economy → liberal and expansive policy
- But, empirically it has gone both ways

2. Special interests

- Theory: pluralism
- But why do powerful interests sometimes lose?

3. National values

- But how do values explain policy **shifts**?

Tichenor's Explanation: A Historical Institutionalist Approach

Elements of the theory:

- Institutional dynamism
 - Changing veto points: president, committee chairs, Senate majority leader, Speaker of the House, bureaucrats (e.g. State Department)...
 - Creation and destruction of institutions: committees created, laws passed and repealed
 - Party system
- Institutions change power dynamics between interest groups
- Successful groups shape public narratives
- Influence of global pressures and events

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