International News Coverage in U.S.

Concept of 'Homogeneity'

- People or social groups that are similar in upbringing, culture or ethnic background

Concept of 'Navel Gazing'

- Assuming your location, culture or experiences are the center of the universe

Concept of 'Otherness'

- Different in appearance or character from what is familiar, expected, or generally accepted

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Traditional vs. current economic power

G7 nations:

- United States
- United Kingdom
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Canada
- Japan

World's largest economies by GDP:

- United States
- China
- Japan
- Germany
- United Kingdom
- India
- France
- Italy
- Canada
- South Korea
- Russia
- Brazil
- Australia
- Spain
- Mexico

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Latin America

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Caribbean Nations

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Stereotype of Latin America:

- 'All those Spanish-speaking countries'

Reality of Latin America:

- Largest country – Brazil – Portuguese
- Northern South America – French, Dutch, English
- Numerous other languages

Stereotype of Latin America:

- Impoverished, desolate

Reality of Latin America:

- Brazil & Mexico – huge economies
- Manufacture cars, airplanes, TVs, computers, etc.
- Some great wealth – but also great disparities

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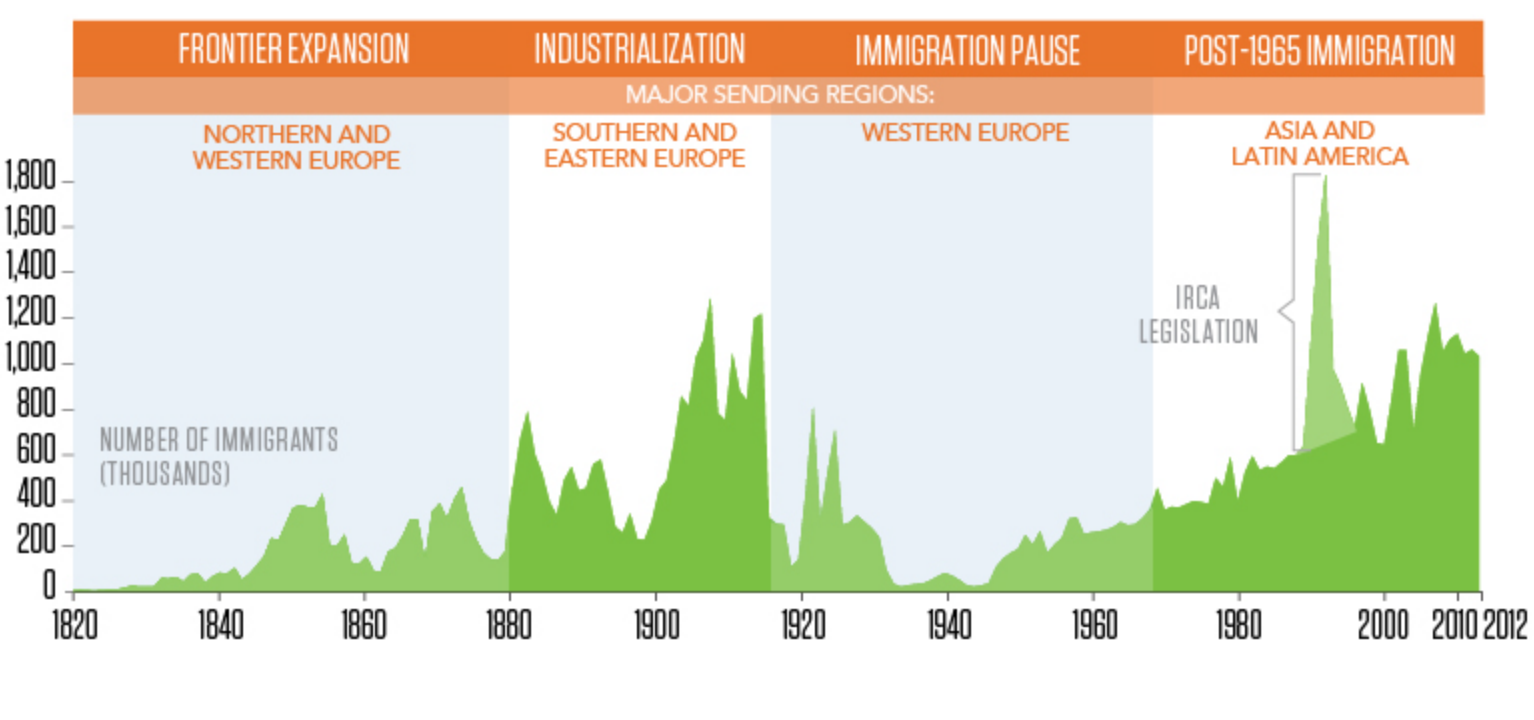
Dominant recent narrative: Immigration



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Key legislation:
Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965

- Abolished quota system based on national origin
- Prioritized skilled, talented, well educated people
- Aimed to reunite families with relatives in U.S.
- Favored workers with skills in short supply in U.S.
- Established new guidelines for refugees

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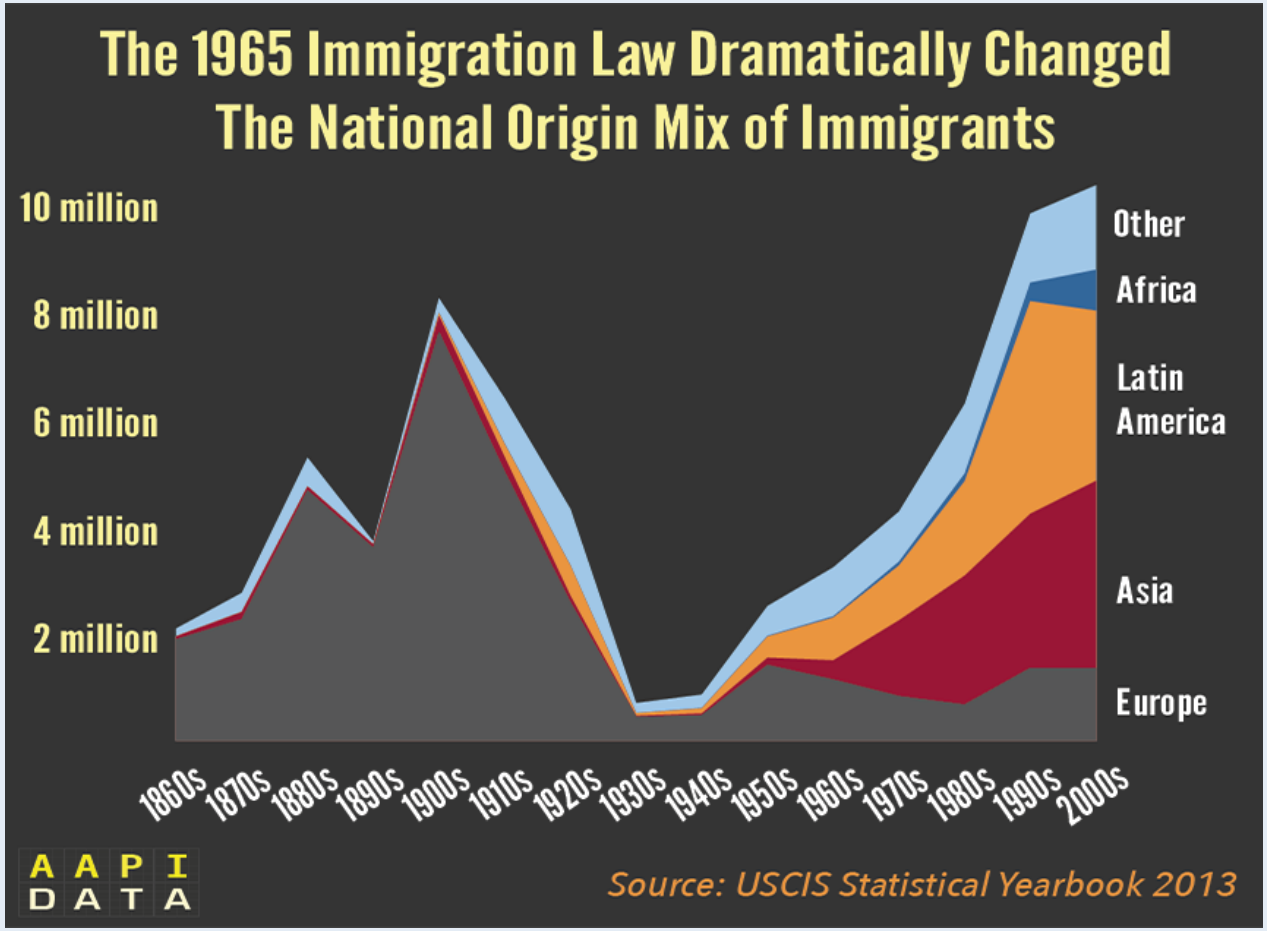
Changing Immigration Patterns



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Asia, by region

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Asia is divided into five geographical regions:

East Asia:

- China, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau

Southeast Asia:

- Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, East Timor, Vietnam

Central Asia:

- Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan

South Asia:

- Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives

Western Asia:

- Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia

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Changing U.S. perceptions of East Asians

Before 1960s-70s:

- Ethnically undesirable ‘others’
- Full of ‘filth and disease’
- ‘Marginal members of the human race’
- ‘Illiterate, undesirable, and unassimilable’
- Denied the right to naturalize, intermarry
- Residentially segregated
- The enemy, forced into internment camps (WWII)

From Lee and Zhou, “From Unassimilable to Exceptional: the Rise of Asian Americans and ‘Stereotype Promise’,” *New Diversities,* Vol. 16, No. 1, 2014

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Changing U.S. perceptions of East Asians

Last 50 years:

- ‘Plucky,’ ‘Credit to their race’
- Provider of electronics, cars
- Assimilating into culture
- Masters of high tech
- ‘Model Minority’

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Model Minority Myth:

- Asian-Americans are ‘better’ than other minorities
- Born successes, particularly in tech fields
- Quiet, hardworking, industrious
- Universal achievers through some combination of:
  - Innate abilities
  - Crazy work ethic
  - Relentless family pressure
  - Immigrant striving
  - Willingness to adapt
  - Not trying to lead

International News Coverage in U.S.

Model Minority Myth problems:

- Patronizing, condescending tone
- Assumes all Asians are the same
- Assumes other ethnicities are inferior
- Creates unrealistic expectations within culture
- Creates tensions across cultures
- Assumes Asians shielded against racism
- Puts people from 48 countries into one box
- In its own way, reinforces otherness
- Seems to only apply to East Asians

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Early immigration to America

Earliest:

- England
- Scotland
- Ireland
- Germany
- France
- Netherlands
- Spain
- Italy

Later:

- Scandinavia
- Mexico
- Israel
- Russia
- Eastern Europe
- Asia
- Middle East

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Early immigration to America: Africa

Forced immigration: Slavery

- More than 380,000 Africans captured, brought to U.S.
- Came from regions with waterways for transportation
- Senegambia (Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali)
- West Central Africa (Angola, Congo, Gabon)
- Also Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon
- Seen as subhuman – property

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Africa

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U.S. media stereotypes of African Americans

- The ultimate ‘other’ – skin color
- Subhuman – servants at best
- Uneducatable, dirty, immoral
- Animalistic, threatening – thieves, rapists
- Permanently in poverty
- ‘Impure’ in numerous ways
- Deserving of segregation, lesser status
- These stereotypes persist to this day

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U.S. media stereotypes of Africa – 'otherness'

- Skin color (not all Africans are Black)
- Nations, regions not differentiated
- Cultural traditions portrayed as alien, backward
- Assumed to be all jungles, wild animals
- Poor, uneducated – 'everyone lives in huts'
- Inherently inferior (well after slavery ended)

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Distinction – Slaves vs. Later Immigration

- After slavery, little immigration from Africa for a century
- Decolonization – new freedoms
- 1990s and forward – big influx of Africans come to U.S.
- Many sought higher education, labor opportunities
- Some sent remittances back to families in Africa
- Many aimed for permanent residence in U.S.
- Often covered positively in U.S. media
- Contrast with coverage of refugees

International News Coverage in U.S.

What should news consumers consider?

- Look for signs of ‘otherness’ in coverage
- Are stereotypes assumed true in stories?
- Is familiar always good, unfamiliar always bad?
- Beware of stories that drive anger, fear
- Don’t take stereotypes stories at face value
- Look at international news sources to get a fuller picture and different angles of stories
- Learn more about unfamiliar countries, cultures