The Cultural Politics of International Migration

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Today’s Plan

• Reading Quiz

• Today’s topic:
  • The Cultural Politics of Migration
    • Milman article
  • Migration and Family Structure
    • Transnational Motherhood
  • Muslim migration, terrorism, and cultural assimilation
Reading Quiz (1)

• Which of these is not one of Douthat’s Theses?
  • A. Culture is very real, and cultural inheritances tend to be enduring
  • B. Nativist backlash against perceived cultural transformation is very powerful…
  • C. Liberal societies are not guaranteed survival
  • D. Freedom of movement across borders is a fundamental human right.
How does Qatar try manage its migration policies?

- A) Pay its immigrant workers higher wages than they would earn in their home country
- B) Only selecting non-Arab immigrants
- C) Not granting immigrants rights
- D) Hiring many immigrant workers to maintain a large supply of labor
- E) All of the above
- F) None of the above
Is migration good for rich countries? (The Bad)

- Immigration into the U.S. increases inequality
  - Mostly because we let in very unskilled and very skilled workers, few people in the middle
- Low skilled migrants reduce low-skilled wages
- BUT: Migrants and non-migrants are not perfect substitutes, even at the same skill level

- In total: 1980-2000, immigration accounts for about 5% of the increase in inequality in the U.S. (Card 2009).
Is migration good for rich countries? (The Bad)

• What group(s) in the U.S. tend to oppose immigration? Why?
• Is unskilled labor in the U.S. politically powerful?
  • Why or why not?
And An Anti-immigration Ad
How Immigration Works in the U.S.

• Three historical principals:
  • Reunification of families
  • Admitting immigrants with valuable skills
  • Protecting refugees
Immigration into the U.S.: The Numbers

• 675,000 total (legal) permanent immigrants per year
  • Refugees not included (80,000 in 2010)
• Of that 675k:
  • 480,000 of these are for family reunification
  • 140,000 for employment based (and their children)
  • 50,000 diversity lottery visas per year

• Refugees don’t have a quota in the U.S. or EU
  • This is the root of the European migrant crisis
Why Michael Clemens is My Hero

• Careful, rigorous work quantifying the effects of migration on:
  • 1. Migrants themselves
  • 2. Migrants’ families
  • 3. Migrants’ countries of origin
Global Wealth Distribution
Global Population Distribution
Migration paths into Europe (now)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcoOENLfpUI
Who Should the U.S. be Admitting?

• Between the following groups, who should receive priority in getting into the U.S.?
  • A. Highly skilled workers
  • B. Relatives of U.S. citizens
  • C. Refugees
Cultural Impact on Receiving Countries

- Economic insecurity leads to fear, so does terrorism.
- And then there are strictly cultural concerns.
  - These can be hard to untangle.

- Not only people of color. The Irish faced this, as did Italians, and Jews. We used to be very concerned about Catholics.
Vincent Chin

- Chinese American man murdered in Detroit in 1982
- Killed by Chrysler workers angry over job losses due to trade with Japan
- Lenient plea-bargain drew criticism
  - Politically mobilized the Asian American community
THE FOLLOWING PREVIEW HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR ALL AUDIENCES
BY THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Political Responses on Migration Now

• U.S.: Rise of Donald Trump
  • Make America Great *Again*

• France: Rise of the National Front party
  • Far right parties with anti-immigration, and sometimes explicitly racist, platforms are on the rise across Europe
Tell Me the Other Version

• Let’s say (for sake of argument) that religion as a flashpoint is epiphenomenal
  • Tell me the economic story about these mosque controversies
Enclaves vs Assimilation

- Immigrants in enclaves, retain cultural identity
  - retain strong ties to the homeland
- Is this better or worse than dispersion and assimilation?
A Question:

• Why does capital move so much more freely than people?
• Does this make sense?
Migration and Family Structure

• Labor migration:
  • Often single, young men
    • But not always
  • Many women, especially domestic workers
    • More vulnerable
  • Different implications for family structure
Transnational Motherhood

• Two major groups:
  • Latina mothers working in the U.S.
  • SE Asian mothers working in the Middle East
• Household employees are hidden from public view
  • Isolated from one another
• Women face sexual, as well as labor, exploitation
Migration and Family Structure

• What does it mean to be a good mother?
  • father, son, daughter