01. Introduction

Today’s political climate calls for a necessary discussion on the history of female immigration. The rise of global conflicts that have displaced women from their home countries in tandem with a growing negative sentiment towards the feminist movement creates a need for the education of the historical impact of immigration on women. This change must start in the history classroom, more specifically in the teaching of immigration history. The research presented will examine how migration policies, rules, and mandates have impacted women’s livelihoods, gender roles, and world views. It is important to analyze and understand the causes and consequences of immigration from the viewpoint of gender to better understand the evolution of hierarchical gender roles that persist until today.

02. Objective

We will present information that can help differentiate between several causes for the migration of women, whether it be because of familial obligations, gender inequalities, or for self-driven motives. Cross-analyzing this data with differing migration policies throughout history will allow conclusions to be drawn about the evolution of more inclusive immigration policies. These conclusions will assist in a larger movement to educate the youth of today on the integral impacts of immigration on women in hopes to spark change for future immigration policies.

03. Methodology

A basic timeline of immigration policies for/against women was created after compiling information from various articles and studies produced by:

- Migration Policy Institute
- U.S. Census Bureau
- Immigrationhistory.org
- Pew Research Center

04. Results/Findings

A comprehensive timeline of immigration legislation that have limited female immigration to the United States.

- 1790 - Nationality Act only allowed “free white persons” gain citizenship.
- 1875 - Page Act created as a way to prevent Chinese women from migrating to the U.S.
- 1907 - 1910 Amendment guaranteed citizenship to those born in the U.S. if not including women.
- 1907 - Expiration Act took away women’s citizenship if they married a non-citizenship man.
- 1920 - 1929 Amendment allowed women to vote.
- 1922 - Cable Act restored U.S. born women’s citizenship that was taken away from the Expiration Act after the 19th Amendment.

1942 to 1964 - Bracero Agreement directly barred Mexican women from entering the U.S. by only allowing the men for labor.

1945 & 1946 - War Brides Act allowed WWII soldiers to bring non-citizen spouses/lunaces.

1952 - McCarran-Walter Act allowed women to petition to bring their family members to the U.S. without the restriction of national quotas.

05. Analysis

Based on the number of immigration policies that deter women from immigration to the U.S. or stop them from gaining citizenship, this has had an effect on their poverty levels and types of jobs they can have. Since 2018, about half the population of immigrant women live in poverty. Many of them hold service occupations compared to immigrant men and those who were born in the U.S. The amount of opportunities for immigrant women are limited because of the lack of resources for them entering a new country. The bureaucratic system used today to obtain a citizenship is a long process that takes years, limiting the type of jobs that are available to them and making it difficult to earn a stable income.

06. Conclusion

The historical trends of restrictions on women immigration in the United States from 1790 to the 1900’s suggest that women have always been prejudiced against for their femininity in the immigration process. The acts and laws created were driven to make immigration for women a grueling process. The first major deduction is that women have consistently been treated as property, resulting in their immigration being viewed only as an extension of their spouse. The possibility of their migration heavily depended on their relationship status. Additionally, it was found that the women who were able to migrate to the United States often held work that relied on a lack of autonomy, showing that these women had not yet achieved their skills to systematically misogynistic positions of employment. Opportunities for immigrant women only began to open up once it was realized that they were an essential part of the workforce and the larger economy. Overall, these three ideas are strongly backed by the overarching conclusion that policies for immigrants during this time period were methodically crafted to exclude women from advancing in society.

References

- Beacje, Jeanne Bielak and Joanne, “Immigrant Women and Girls in the United States.”