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Latino Immigrants in America

### Immigration is not uncommon in the united states of America as it holds the majority influx of immigrants from all over the world and this ratio is larger than any other country in the world. Many reasons serve as motivation for migration, for instance, better opportunities, escaping the plight of war, globalization and natural disasters such as plague, earthquake or famine. The history of immigration in America dates back to the late 19th century and early two decades of the 20th century since, in this period, the first wave of immigrants entered in U.S.A for better opportunities. According to an estimate, second-generation immigrants from Latin America constitute a massive portion of this immigrant population. In the documentary, *Harvest of Empire* and Garcia’s article, “Latino Migration and U.S. Foreign Policy”, the history of Latin America and its relation with American Foreign policies are discussed. This essay revolves around the history of Latin America before and after the first wave of immigration to America. Similarly, it also discusses the dark reality of American foreign policies as a key factor behind the large-scale presence of Latino immigrants in America.

In *Harvest of Empire*, a common myth about immigration in America is debunked that people from different countries, choose to come to America because it is a land of endless opportunities and provides a better lifestyle. He gives his audience a reality check that Latinos came in America since their land was invaded by America in the 19th century (*Eduardo López*). It is also a general notion that America is an epitome of human rights and it is a liberal state, however, slavery was first abolished in Latin America many years before America. Likewise, Latin Americans maintained the legal rights of once enslaved people and gave them liberty and freedom. Quite contrary, the war between America and Latin America was fought on an ideological basis since racism was extremely prevalent in 19th century America. As a result, there was a lot of collateral damage, as well as, around fourteen thousand U.S soldiers losing their lives in this war. In the same manner, American forces looted the resources of Latinos at a larger scale and took over their agricultural lands and small-scale businesses. This situation forced people from different parts of Latin America to enter America since they were in a state of war. American foreign policies directly affected the ratio of immigrants because of its invasion of the neighboring countries, such as Latin America. After the Mexican-American war, immigrants continued to enter America because of the post-war conditions and unequal distribution of resources from their native country to their new home country.

Likewise, due to the increased political and economic interests of America in looting the resources of Latin America, its foreign policies were altered throughout history to date, so they can justify their hegemony in these postwar areas. Similarly, Garcia states that in the background of this hegemonic control, many schemes and slogans were introduced such as manifest destiny and Monroe Doctrine. American presidents, in their tenure (especially Ronald Reagan), were well aware of the resources and manpower found in Latin America and they kept on stressing the need of having good relations with their neighboring countries (flavia, “IMMIGRATION”). However, in reality, these slogans were no less than an attempt at increasing the imperial control of America in Latin states such as Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. These American foreign policies resulted in the continuous fluidity of these immigrants into America to take up different jobs and prosper. These immigrants were directly affected by the Great Depression because it turned them into cheap laborers where they could barely meet both ends. American economy, in the time of crisis, always looked up to Latin America as a potential market for trade, but unfortunately, this trade was not done on an equal basis and only America generated its capital. To establish its control, America declared that in many parts of Latin America such as Cuba there was a disorderly and dangerous situation concerning drugs. American foreign policies damaged the sovereignty of Latin America at a much larger scale and caused multiple challenges regarding their domestic and international politics, as a result of it. Moreover, America plagued the Latin markets with the drug trade and forced the locals to buy American goods. Quite similarly, the condition of Latino immigrants in America was not any different than their native country after the Cold War (flavia, “IMMIGRATION”).

America and its nationalistic ideology make it exceedingly difficult for Latin Americans to keep their cultural values intact in their home country. The second generation, Mexican Americans and their children refuse to go back to their countries because they have been deprived of these facilities in their native land by American foreign policies. American policies focus on drugs in Cuba but they do not give them equal benefits of trade revenue. Similarly, in the documentary, President Clinton made many immigrants cross a desert as a corridor to enter America as part of his foreign immigration policy (*Eduardo López*). The state has to justify its imperial control and strong capitalist position in the free trade market by taking these immigrants and leaving them in a helpless condition where they are forced to culturally assimilate in their host culture. In the light of this discussion and examples from both the sources, it is evident that America is not an attractive destination for immigrants because it is known as a land of opportunity. Moreover, as a result of American foreign policies, Latin Americans are forced to enter America in a postwar condition. They are not well received in America because of the strong sense of American nationalism. In the past, Latin Americans were more civilized than Americans concerning the treatment of slaves and after the Mexican-American war and mass American looting in their native land, the flow of resources was unequally distributed among Latin Americans. This practice is still dominant in American foreign policies due to their political and economic interests in Latin America. I agree with the points made in both these sources because they provide a background history of Latin America and how America looted its resources to create its imperial control on the former state. Besides, this background history also discards the myth that immigrants are getting their rights in America or they are a burden on the American economy. In reality, they are not here because America is a liberal state which focuses on equality and liberty, instead, they are here as war refugees because of American unlawful control on their native economy and trade policies.

Works Cited

*Eduardo López: Harvest of Empire: The Untold Story of Latinos in America*. Accessed November 29, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIl8y4jkNiE&t=1297s>.

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