

*Immigrants and Immigration Policy:
Individual Skills, Family Ties, and
Group Identities*

Edited by Harriet Orcutt Duleep
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PREFACE

In an early spring night's dream of canceled flights, tortured connections, alternative transportation modes, mistaken identities, and worried spouses, over twenty scholars from around the nation gathered in the midst of a blizzard to discuss immigration.

At the time of the conference, a key debate was raging in immigration policy circles as to whether the United States should abandon its family-based immigration policy in favor of a more skills-based policy, such as currently exists in Canada. Since the time of the conference, debate on this issue has intensified. Recently, the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform as well as some members of Congress have recommended eliminating the immigration preference categories that have for decades allowed the siblings and adult children of U.S. citizens to immigrate. If enacted, the proposed reform would constitute a major break in the 40-year-old U.S. admissions policy favoring family members.

This volume is the tangible fruit, after thoughtful revision in several cases, of the Immigrants and Immigration Policy Conference held at Middlebury College on the second and third days of April 1993. All of the papers are relevant to the ongoing debate concerning the direction U.S. immigration policy should take. More generally, these papers add to our basic knowledge about the complex interactions of immigrant admission policies, individual skills, human capital investment, group strategies, and immigrant-native labor market competition. The papers—by historians, sociologists,

anthropologists, and economists—reflect diverse methodological and theoretical perspectives, which we have tried to highlight and develop in the introduction. We hope the resulting mix will contribute to current and future debates about immigrants and immigration policy.

The Immigrants and Immigration Policy Conference was the Fifteenth Annual Middlebury Conference on Economic Issues. This series of conferences is made possible each year through the generous support of Robert A. Jones, who has helped Middlebury College host constructive debates on a wide range of topics in political economy.

Several other persons were vital to the success of the conference and volume. We especially want to acknowledge the essential institutional expertise provided by Sheila Cassin in overseeing all the nitty-gritty conference arrangements, without which the conference and volume never would have occurred. We also thank Noga Peled, Michael Lauterbach, and Cristian Dima for their invaluable assistance when the details of organizing tables and notes required focused, careful labor. We would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the authors, beginning with their resourcefulness in making it to the conference through their creative and gracious cooperation in the long and sometimes difficult journey to this book's completion.

Finally, we are indebted to the support, patience, and encouragement of those who have been closest to our excitements and frustrations as we worked on this conference and book, especially Vijaya Wunnava, Geetha Wunnava, Sanjay Wunnava, Geil and Guy Orcutt, and K. Gopalakrishnan Duleep.

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