

# ASIAN IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA – FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION. THE CHINESE AND FILIPINO STORY

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Asians have been arriving in the United States since the late decades of the nineteenth century. Their fate in the new land was as diverse as diverse were their origins, reasons for migration, and the process of acculturation in the US.

In the 2000 United States Census data, researchers observed an interesting fact connected with the Asian migrant inflow. A report released in 2012 declared that the Asian population grew faster over the previous decade than any other race group. While Latinos still remained the most numerous ethnic population, their share in the immigration stream to the US has dropped. Suddenly, Asian immigrant groups became the focal point in discussions on the future character of immigrant America.

Asian immigrants have come a long way and experienced prejudice, exploitation and persecutions. Their beginnings in the US were not easy. Racial stereotypes and prejudice brought the Chinese to closed doors of American gates. The policy of exclusion shaped Asian immigration to the United States for many years. Surprisingly, in spite of many obstacles created by enacted laws or the American society's attitudes towards Asians, Chinese immigrants became valuable and awaited members of the US labor force. Professionals from China filled a gap in the labor market for professionals and this appeared to be an important step in creating a new profile of Asians in the United States. Filipino immigrants also were an important part of American labor force. Their experience, however, was completely different.

Today, exclusion policy is history and Asians are gaining more and more attention as their share in the American reality increases. They are also becoming a more and more important and powerful actor in American politics.

**Keywords:** Chinese immigrants in the US, Filipino immigrants in the US, Asian immigration to the USA

## OD WYKLUCZENIA DO ASYMILACJI. HISTORIA AZJATYCKIEJ IMIGRACJI DO USA NA PRZYKŁADZIE CHIŃCZYKÓW I FILIPIŃCZYKÓW

Azjaci przybywali do USA już od drugiej połowy XIX wieku. Ich los na amerykańskiej ziemi był różny, tak jak różne było ich pochodzenie, powody migracji, czy wreszcie proces akulturacji.

Spis powszechny przeprowadzony w 2000 roku dostarczył interesujących danych związanych z napływem azjatyckich imigrantów do USA. Dodatkowo, według raportu opublikowanego w 2012 roku wynikało, że liczebność populacji azjatyckiej w pierwszej dekadzie XXI wieku rosła szybciej niż jakiegokolwiek innej grupy etnicznej. Wprawdzie Latynosi nadal pozostali najliczniejszą grupą imigrancką w USA, to jednak ich udział w strumieniu migracyjnym dostrzegalnie zmalał. Nowy trend, który pojawił się w imigracji azjatyckiej do Stanów Zjednoczonych stał się istotnym punktem debat nad przyszłością imigranckiej Ameryki.

Azjaci pokonali długą drogę, w czasie której doświadczyli uprzedzeń, wykorzystywania oraz prześladowań. Ich początki w USA nie były łatwe. Stereotypy rasowe na długi czas wykluczyły Chińczyków ze strumienia migracyjnego i zamknęły możliwości przybycia do USA. Zaskakujące w tej sytuacji było, że wbrew uprzedzeniom żywionym przez amerykańskie społeczeństwo i pomimo ograniczającego imigrację azjatycką ustawodawstwa, Chińczycy stali się istotnym składnikiem amerykańskiej siły roboczej.

Filipińczycy również wyraźnie zaznaczyli swą obecność na amerykańskim rynku pracy. Ich losy jednak zdecydowanie odbiegały od tego czego doświadczyli Chińczycy.

Dzisiaj polityka wykluczenia przeszła do historii, a na imigrantów azjatyckich kieruje się uwagę proporcjonalną do ich rosnącego udziału w strumieniu migracyjnym. Tym bardziej, że populacja azjatycka w USA staje się również coraz istotniejszym aktorem amerykańskiej sceny politycznej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Chińczycy w USA, Filipińczycy w USA, azjatycka imigracja do USA

Asian immigration to the US has a long and interesting history. Asians have been arriving in the United States since the late decades of the nineteenth century. Their fate in the new land was as diverse as diverse were their origins, reasons for migration, and the process of acculturation in the US. Before the 1965 immigration reform, a turning point in US immigration law, more than nine million Asians had migrated to the US in spite of many obstacles experienced on the way (Yang 2010: 1).

In the 2000 United States Census data, researchers observed an interesting fact connected with the Asian migrant inflow. A report released in 2012 declared that the Asian population grew faster over the previous decade than any other race group. While Latinos still remained the most numerous ethnic population, their share in the immigration stream to the US has dropped. The Asian population,

identified either as mono-racial or multiracial persons, grew by 45.6% from 2000 to 2010. Those who were identified as mono-racial Asian, grew 43.3%. According to the 2010 Census data, 5.6% of all people living in the US are Asians (*2010 Census Shows Asians Are Fastest-Growing Race Group*: www.census.gov). The American media were eager to announce the news. When updated, detailed Census data proved that the observed trends deepened, the media started paying even more attention to Asian immigration issues, to name a few examples: *Asian Newcomers Drive Immigration* (The Wall Street Journal), *Asian Immigrants Surpass Hispanics As Biggest Immigrant Wave To U.S.* (Huffington Post), *Asian Now Largest Immigrant Group In Southern California* (The New York Times), *Caught In The Middle: Asian Immigrants Struggle To Stay In America* (CNN).

Suddenly, Asian immigrant groups became the focal point in discussions on the future character of immigrant America, building a false image of Asians as “fresh” newcomers while in fact their presence in the US dates back to the nineteenth century. Some sources even say, that the first Asians were present in the US about a decade before the American Revolutionary War. The so called *Manilaman*, Filipino sailors, settled in 1750 in a territory that later became the state of Louisiana (Sterngass 2007: 40). As they founded their settlements during the 1800s, they started a wave of immigration from the Philippines to the US. They had a privileged position in comparison to other Asian immigrants. After taking control over the Philippines by the US in 1898 (Bert 2011: 60), Filipino immigrants were admitted with no restrictions, unlike immigrants from China or Japan. It is arguable if it was beneficial for them, as they were not eligible for American citizenship which was open to other immigrants. Taking control over the Philippines resulted in 150 000 Filipinos migrating to the US. In New Orleans and the neighboring states they built quite a numerous community. Some sources claim that in 1906 there were even up to 2000 Filipinos living in Louisiana (Cobb, Stueck 2005: 101). The first wave immigrants from the Philippines (1870–1940) mostly were not permanent settlers. They arrived as laborers or students. Laborers were eagerly hired in the sugar industry in Hawaii, where they migrated more often than to mainland US. Between 1909 and 1934 the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association recruited over 100,000 laborers. They were mostly young man, who eventually decided to leave Hawaii and return home or to move to the mainland. Only some of them decided to stay. These were mostly those who married women of other than Philipino nationalities. Although almost half of the Filipino laborers working in Hawaiian sugar plantations decided to leave the isles, in 1940 their number was still higher than the Filipino population living in the continental US (Barkan 2013: 348).

At the beginning of the twentieth century immigrants from the Philippines were recognized by the US Navy as perfect for jobs like newsmen, stewards,

or musicians. These jobs had been occupied mostly by African-Americans. In 1901 president William McKinley signed an executive order allowing the Navy to enlist 500 Filipinos as a part of the insular force (*Filipinos in the United States Navy*, www.history.navy.mil). To make the process of Filipino recruitment easier, the navy soon waived the citizenship requirement for enlistment. However, based on 1918 legislation, immigrants from the Philippines who had served military service during World War I became eligible for US citizenship (Barkan 2013: 348).

In 1903 the United States legislators enacted a new law, called *The Pensionado Act*. The law provided a government supported education for young Filipinos. Once admitted, they were housed with American families and enrolled in schools or universities (Schultz 2000: 321). The act was a response to the new situation the US had to face after gaining control over the Philippines. *Pensionados* (young Filipinos, who were granted scholarships) were educated and trained to take administrative positions on the island under American rule. It was good to be chosen to join the program, as alumni returning from the US were given better job opportunities and their social position was higher. However, it was not easy to be selected. The first 100 *pensionados* were chosen from almost 20,000 applicants. By starting the program in 1903, the American government wanted to build a new administrative corps familiar with American expectations. Many alumni of the program were members of the Filipino elite and after returning home they often became national leaders in politics, business, or education (Collins, O'Brien 2011: 344). The program was also helpful in maintaining stable rule over the islands.

The idea of educating Filipino elites was born as the US took control over the Philippines from Spain. It was impossible to provide education in English as the language was not spoken among islands' residents. It was also difficult to teach in Spanish as Spain had not bothered about the islanders' education considering them uneducable. What is more, local languages were so diverse and numerous that it was impossible to start universal education in either one of them. In 1901, two years before enacting the *Pensionado Act*, William Howard Taft (the future US president), serving as the Philippine governor-general, decided to start from scratch. By building new schools and teaching in English, the American administration wanted to teach American ideals and prepare Filipinos for future independence. There were many obstacles to overcome and among them was the lack of teachers and books. Thanks to Taft's engagement the US Army Transport *Thomas* carried the first 500 teachers: "The American Teacher brought with him the American spirit. He was the Apostle of progress. He gave the children a healthy outlook toward life. He explained to them the principles of hygiene and sanitation. He

brought with him the spirit of service. He inculcated in them a realization of the dignity of labor. And the children carried this spirit back into the homes where it made its impress upon the parents” (Thompson 2003: 21). The hard work of *the Thomasites* (the nickname given to American teachers by the Filipinos) opened the gates to migrating to the US for many of the islands’ citizens. The *Pensionado Act*, only strengthened the desire of studying in the US. Visible examples of returnees who started brilliant careers back at home were the best encouragement. The numbers collected by subsequent Censuses show rapid growth of the Filipino population in the USA. In 1910 there were only 406 Filipinos in the continental United States, in 1920 over 5,000, and just ten years later the number increased to 45,208 (Barkan 2013: 350). After arriving to the US Filipino students almost immediately joined the American labor force. It became a common pattern to study and work and Filipino laborers became very visible.

The Filipino’s situation in the United States was better than that of other Asian groups. They were obtaining “American style” education in their home country as well as in the US, and they knew English. It made them feel more comfortable among the members of the American society. Their relationship with the US created an impression of equality between those two societies (Starr 2009: 450). After arriving in the United States Filipino migrants very often discovered that their expectations had been unrealistic. Especially, when the Great Depression shook the American economy and revealed inequalities and prejudice. Filipino migrants became the subject of attacks which ranged from calling names, through forbidding Filipino-white marriages, to physical violence. The third decade of the twentieth century was not fortunate for Filipino immigrants. They experienced many difficulties emerging on the basis of the economic downturn. They also had to face important changes in their home country and their resident status in the US. In 1934 president Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the so called *Tydings-McDuffie Act*. Officially, it was the *Philippine Independence Act*, which provided for the self-government of the Philippines. Since then, Filipino immigrants, including those already living in the US, have been classified as aliens: *For the purposes of the Immigration Act of 1917, the Immigration Act of 1924 [except section 13 (c)], this section, and all other laws of the United States relating to the immigration, exclusion, or expulsion of aliens, citizens of the Philippine Islands who are not citizens of the United States shall be considered as if they were aliens* (the Philippine Independence Act, <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/polsciwb/brianl/docs/1934PhilippineIndep.pdf>). This meant that immigrants from the Philippines were no longer eligible to own land or businesses in the US. As it was the era of the quota law in American immigration, Filipinos have been allotted a quota of 50 immigrants per year (that number was changed in 1946,

when the Philippines, as an independent subject, were allotted a new quota of 100 immigrants to the US per year). The new law, however, did not solve the problems with Filipinos already living in the US. Many of them were in a difficult situation caused by the Great Depression, many engaged in union organizing, provoked tensions and pro-expulsion movements. All these factors laid grounds for new decisions. A year after announcing the *Tydings-McDuffie Act*, the *Filipino Repatriation Act* was enacted. It established a program of financial help (free one way transportation) for adult, single Filipino immigrants living in the US who wanted to return home. Although the act was declared unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court in 1940, it was not as effective as its authors meant it to be. Only about 2,000 Filipinos had left the United States based on the provisions of the *Filipino Repatriation Act* (Guevarra, jr. 2012: 36).

A few decades of Filipino presence in the United States resulted in some changes, especially among those, who decided to stay. Having joined the US labor force, having started careers and families, they changed their status from student (mostly) to “transition”, a label given to Filipino immigrants and to the situation in the Philippines since the *Tydings-McDuffie Act*. One could notice the establishment of different organizations, labor or social, indicating the emergence of an identity of the Filipino community in the US.

After granting the Philippines the commonwealth status, ties between the United States and the Philippines were loosening. However, Filipinos were still engaged with the US military. After the Pearl Harbor attack, the Filipinos joined Filipino segregated regiments, hoping it would help them to get rid of the Japanese from the Philippines. They also benefited in at least two other ways. First, many of them could take advantage of the *War Brides Act* of 1945. Thanks to the new regulation, they could marry Filipinas back at home before returning with them to the US (Barkan 2013: 355). Second, service personnel could naturalize. Thanks to the *Nationality Act* of 1940 (the *Nationality Act* of 1940: <http://library.uwb.edu/guides/usimmigration/54%20stat%201137.pdf>), aliens who have been serving honorably in the US Army for at least three years, could be naturalized. They were not required to have permanent residence in the US or prove a lawful admission. This provision was changed in 1952. The *Immigration and Nationality Act* (also called the *McCarran-Walter Act*) stated that there was a possibility of being granted American citizenship if an alien honorably served at least three years in American military forces, yet only after proving that one had been lawfully admitted for permanent residence (the *Immigration and Nationality Act* of 1952: <http://library.uwb.edu/guides/usimmigration/66%20stat%20163.pdf>).

The possibility of serving in the American Navy first ended in 1946, when the Philippines were granted independence. It was resumed a year later, though,

based on a new agreement between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines, which granted Filipino citizens the right to enlist voluntarily in the American Armed Forces. American engagement in the Korean Conflict and need for additional recruitment led to new negotiations in 1952. On their basis the number of Filipino recruits was set at 1,000 per year. Two years later the number reached 2,000 per year (*Filipinos in the United States Navy*, www.history.navy.mil). Many of those Filipinos were awarded with the possibility of receiving US citizenship. According to the amended the *Immigration and Nationality Act* of 1961, the veterans of the Korean Conflict did not have to prove their legal admission for permanent stay in the US. For many decades the so called “Navy based” immigration was an important part of the Filipino immigration history to the US. The program was exceptional in many ways. First, the citizens of the Philippines were the only foreigners allowed to serve in the American military. It also became a slot for immigrants to fulfill their American dream. Second, the Navy was the only branch in the US military forces that could lawfully recruit Filipinos. Third, it terminated almost a century after its announcement in 1901. The reason why in 1992 the Navy decided to end enlisting Filipinos was connected with the expiration of the military base agreement (Reza: www.latimes.com). The decision was applauded by the opponents of Filipino military service in the US Army as a visible sign of cutting the last rope of colonialism between the US and the Philippines. Others stressed that Filipinos lost one of their limited chances for economic betterment.

Nonetheless, the ties maintained for such a long time between the US Navy and the Philippines, are still strong. Especially, as both sides are interested in keeping them alive. In 2012 the former American military base, called Subic Bay, again became an important location in American plans. At the same time, the Philippines were seeking an ally in the territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea. In June, Filipino government declared that the US military could use the old base. This decision followed a prior agreement, *Visiting Forces Agreement (1999)*, that introduced conducting large scale exercises between the US and the Philippines. Both partners also agreed that Subic Bay would host American ships, Marines and aircraft on a semi-permanent basis.

The modern wave of the Filipino immigration to the US began after the 1965 immigration act, called the *Hart-Cellar Act*. The act was a milestone in American immigration law. It abolished national quotas and introduced a new system based on immigrants’ skills and family relationships with US citizens or residents. It led to a significant increase in the number of Asian immigrants. Filipinos comprised about one quarter of that stream and became the largest Asian group entering the US (Espiritu 2010: 19). The immigration law based on family preferences

unexpectedly lead to exceeding an annual limit assigned for Filipinos. This was the case from the late 1960s till the early 1980s. Spouses, minors, and parents of Filipinos who became American citizens arrived in large numbers: *During the ten years immediately after passage of the 1965 Act, over 230,000 Filipinos immigrated to the United States, more than doubling the Filipino American population of 1960* (Posadas 1999: 37). Among the newcomers were also the so called “mail order brides”. Some Filipinas, who had no other possibility to migrate to the US, decided to marry American citizens and thus regulate their immigration status. After a chain of incidents of abuse and even murder by their American husbands, new laws were enacted to change the situation. The Immigration Marriage Fraud Amendments (enacted in 1986) gave conditional immigration status to those trying to regulate their immigration status on the basis of a marriage lasting less than two years. Additionally, Filipinas willing to marry American citizens had to meet their future husbands in person before marriage. These new regulations did not resolve the problem, though, and it escalated to a point at which it could no longer be ignored. In 1996 the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act* recognized the issue of the so called “mail order bride business” (the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)) and authorized the Attorney General to conduct a study of the problem. The Philippine government was active as well. In 1990 a law banning the matching of Filipinas to foreign men on a mail order basis was signed. It prohibited any advertisement, publication, printing or distribution of any material which promoted the mail order bride business. Unfortunately, even severe penalties for violations of the law (e.g. imprisonment of between six and eight years and a fine) did not change much (Chun 1996: 1189). The regulation has had little effect, also because of the demand among Filipino women, who were looking for matchmaking agencies on their own, and aggressive advertising was not necessary. News were spreading across interested groups unofficially, as well.

Since 1990, Filipino immigration to the United States has been raising. Data shows that the number of Filipino immigrants in the USA tripled between 1980 and 2006, from 501,440 to 1.6 million (Terrazas 2008: [www.migrationinformation.org](http://www.migrationinformation.org)). Immigrants from the Philippines now represent the fourth largest immigrant group in the United States by country of origin. The first three positions are occupied by Mexican, Chinese, and Indian immigrants. Data indicate that there is 3.4 million of Filipinos living in the United States, but it is believed that their number is much higher. Popular estimates say there are about one million more undocumented Filipinos (Rueda 2012: *Philippine Daily Inquirer*).

The popular image of Filipinos living in the US is quite positive. They are usually better educated than other immigrant groups, especially in comparison



to Latinos, the largest immigrant population so far. Thanks to their historical background, the immigrants from the Philippines more often have little or no problems with communicating in English. Almost half of the Filipino population in the United States lives in California, particularly in Los Angeles and San Francisco. New York City/State is also a popular destination place for immigrants from the Philippines. Researchers from the Migration Policy Institute also rightly pointed out that the share of Filipino-born immigrants who have naturalized (65%) is significantly greater than the share of all US immigrants who have naturalized (45%) (Stoney, Batalova 2013: [www.migrationinformation.org](http://www.migrationinformation.org)).

Although Filipino immigrants were the first Asians who arrived in the US and they still constitute a significant share of that group, they are being overcome by the Chinese. The history of Chinese immigration to the United States started later than in the Filipino case, but Chinese immigrants experienced more prejudice and exclusion than Filipinos. The first ties between the US and China were established by sailors and merchants who were followed by the first Chinese immigrants arriving in the US around 1820, although some individual Chinese were reported in Pennsylvania already in 1785 (Daniels 1988: 9). These pioneers were not numerous. By 1850 there were only 450 Chinese living in continental America, but after the discovery of gold in California, their number skyrocketed. Between 1848 and 1882, when the *Chinese Exclusion Act* was in force, nearly 300,000 Chinese immigrants entered the United States. As many as 100,000 of them arrived in California in just one year (1849) right after the news about gold had spread around the world (Toro-Morn, Alicea 2004: 37). The story of the Chinese presence in the US started with the gold industry, but laborers from China became quickly present at building sites of American railroads, and in the agriculture and manufacturing industries. Although they were paid significantly lower than their white co-workers, the Chinese were eagerly looking for such jobs as these wages were much higher than those earned at home. At that time many Chinese immigrants were repeatedly arriving in the United States, treating their presence there as temporary stay. Researchers stress the prevailing economic reasons which encouraged Chinese men to migrate. The sojourn character of their stay, till the second half of the nineteenth century, differentiated them from Italians and other minority groups in the US. Besides economic, there were also other reasons that influenced such a temporary character of Chinese immigration. Among them was an imbalance between the number of Chinese men and women arriving and living in the US. Although history of immigration to the United States shows that, especially till the end of the nineteenth century, it was mostly men who were deciding to migrate, it also shows that this imbalance was constantly decreasing due to more intense female migration. In the Chinese

case, differently than in the case of other minority groups in the US, female migration was almost inexistent. The *Chinese Exclusion Act* only worsened the situation. Very rare cases of interracial marriages were not a remedy, and Chinese the population became “a bachelor society” without a future in the United States. Unable to start families, without children, deciding to stay in America, they became “threatened with extinction”. Growing older and banned by law, the Chinese population declined steadily from 1882 until the 1920s.

Chinese newcomers were copying typical migrants’ patterns, such as the desire to live among those of their own kind, to be a member of a group that celebrates traditions of the same religion, food, language, etc. This led to creating ethnic areas, districts that were able to fulfill such needs. It also led to increasing tensions and anti-Chinese sentiments. Any time when the American economy was experiencing a downturn immigrants were believed to be the cause. Such accusations started appearing in the second half of the nineteenth century and surfaced concurrently with economic declines. Chinese laborers offered cheap labor, they were not willing to go on strikes and were coming in large numbers. All of these factors were used to build the so called *yellow peril* theory, that became a stigma, influencing not only the lives of the nineteenth century Chinese immigrants, but later it also applied to Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans (Zhou 2009: 44). According to the *yellow peril* theory Asians were uncivilized, filthy, immoral, and not able to develop any higher social relations. It led to enacting the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 1882. It forbade Chinese immigrants to enter the United States, but it also dealt with those already present on the American territory by refusing them citizenship. They had to register with the federal government and carry valid passports. Leaving the United States temporarily to visit families in China also became risky. Before leaving the USA, such travelers had to obtain a special return permit. Losing that document meant entry denial. The new law also closed American gates to the wives of Chinese laborers already working in America. The act established a few exemption categories such as diplomatic personnel, merchants, students, teachers, and tourists, but decision who fitted into those categories was ceded to immigration officers at ports of entry. Their everyday decisions usually tended to deny entry, however. In 1884, only 279 Chinese officially came to the United States. Subsequent years brought further decline of Chinese immigrants. From 1885 to 1889 the numbers were, respectively, 22, 40, 10, 26, and 118 (Seonnichsen 2011: 68). Strict enforcement of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* by immigration authorities was effective in reducing the number of Chinese immigrants coming to the United States, but it also led to a number of law suits, as many of those deported from the ports of entry were eligible to

be admitted. The situation worsened when the new immigration official for the port of San Francisco, John Hager, was appointed as the collector of customs (Bottoms 2013: 92). His task was designed to enforce The *Chinese Exclusion Act*. He was known for his strong anti-Chinese opinion and his ambitions to make immigration officials' decisions final and not subject to appeal. This generated many tensions between Hager and two judges of the Circuit Court, Ogden Hoffman and Lorenzo Sawyer. Both judges interpreted many Chinese immigration cases in favor of immigrants. The most controversial were the cases of the Chinese who lived in the US before 1880, left the US to visit China, and wanted to go back after the enactment of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. Immigration officials usually denied their entry as they did not have return certificates. Judge Hoffman wrote that "free men in the United States – whether White or Chinese – had the right to protection from our laws, and the right to approach the court with a grievance" (Seonnichsen 2011: 79). Sawyer shared his opinion, but Judge Stephen Field, who had seniority over both judges did not agree with them. He was more likely to share John Hager's sentiments. As there was no agreement between judges on the ruling in such cases, decisions were often appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. The situation became complicated for Chinese immigrants and the Chinese population living in the United States. An overall support for extending the *Exclusion Act* for another few years buried any dreams about liberalizing the law. The United States was debating its present and future relations with China. The friendly relationship sanctioned by the Burlingame – Seward Treaty (The Burlingame – Seward Treaty, [www.history.state.gov](http://www.history.state.gov)) became history when in 1882 the treaty was terminated. A new framework of American-Chinese relations was under construction. Waiting for a new treaty to be approved, in 1888, Congress passed an *Act to Prohibit the Coming of Chinese Laborers to the US* which repealed the 1882 act and enacted the *Scott Act*, which permanently banned reentry to the USA, even after short visits to China. The ban did not differentiate between long- and short-term residents. The *Scott Act* also terminated the certification procedures. It kept in power, however, the five exempt categories allowed to enter the US, but enforcement of the law at the ports of entry was so strict, that almost nobody was qualified to enter based on that premise. Four years later, in 1892, the situation of Asian immigrants worsened even more. The Congress established a new regulation, the *Geary Act*, which required the Chinese to carry certificates of residence to prove their right to be in the United States. Any Chinese who did not have such papers was presumptively deportable. His or her only way of defense was going to court. The *Geary Act* made this possibility complicated enough to be impossible to go through. It required that

paperless Chinese, who attempted to prove their rights in court, would need at least one credible white witness' testimony (Gold 2012: 282). The act was designed to expire after ten years. In 1902, however, the Congress decided to extend the exclusion policy indefinitely and the prohibition was expanded to cover Hawaii and the Philippines.

In 1906, Chinese living in San Francisco were given a chance to regularize their status. A terrible earthquake ruined a huge part of the city. Many official buildings of the city government were destroyed and public records disappeared. It was a chance for many Chinese to claim they were born in the USA and many of them perfectly too advantage of that chance. It was an unprecedented incident that has never happened again.

Surprisingly, enacting laws which were very harsh for Chinese immigrants, such as the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, the *Scott Act* or the *Geary Act*, did not change the negative attitudes toward them. Incidents of anti-Chinese violence were not accidental. Most of them occurred in California, but they were also recognized in other parts of the United States. Rulings by judges L. Sawyer, O. Hoffman, and Matthew Deady (from Oregon) who usually resolved cases in favor of Chinese immigrants complaining about immigration enforcement officers' mistreatment, were still under vivid criticism (McKeown 2013: 174). Anti-Asian sentiments were not satisfied even when 1911, 1912, and 1913 brought more moderate, but still strong exclusion laws. In 1917 the Congress passed another immigration bill called the *General Immigration Act*, that was enacted in spite of president Woodrow Wilson's veto. One of the main supporters of the proposed changes in the immigration law was the Immigration Restriction League founded in 1894. The League was calling for such restrictions in immigration laws that would quell the stream of lower class immigrants. The idea of introducing a literacy test for newcomers was first proposed in 1897, but it was vetoed by president Grover Cleveland. After ten years the Congress had to face a presidential veto once again, but this time it was able to override it. The 1917 *General Immigration Act* became a law and it required a literacy test for immigrants and barred Asian laborers, except for those from countries which had a special treaty signed with the USA. One of them were the Philippines Islands, whose citizens could enter the United States. The late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century were very important for American immigration history, as at that time the United States received the world's largest number of immigrants. This has made many American citizens more xenophobic and the government's decision to enter the World War I only intensified those fears what resulted in enacting yet another act against immigrants. At the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century American nativism was at its high. The years 1921, 1924,

and 1929 brought major changes in immigration law and a quota law system has been born. New regulations were introduced by the *National Origins Law* in 1924, the act that is sometimes called the *Second Exclusion Act* (Seonnichsen 2011: 84). It also had a small, but important provision, connected to Chinese immigration. The act disabled the admission of the wives of Chinese men already living in the United States. Since the beginning of Chinese immigration to the United States, women's situation was complicated. First, in 1875, the *Page Law* was enacted to protect the country from the inflow of Chinese prostitutes. As it soon appeared, the day to day enforcement of the law proved that it became a quite useful instrument of denying entry, even if there was no real proof a woman was a prostitute. The *Married Women's Independent Nationality Act* (called the *1922 Cable Act*) penalized Chinese women for a number of violations and prohibited them from entering the US. Under a 1907 act of Congress, women's national allegiance automatically followed their husband's nationality. The 1922 act established an independent citizenship and let women who had married men racially eligible for naturalization to restore their American citizenship. The law did not apply, however, in cases when US residents had married Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or South Asian men. In those cases women were still bound to their husband's nationalities. Only divorce and remarriage could change their status (Shah 2011: 251). The *Cable Act* was rescinded in 1930 and it resulted in the arrival of large numbers of Chinese women. The late 1940s and early 1950s brought the first great Chinese-American "baby boom" (Teitelbaum, Asher 2009: 66).

Exclusion laws were in force until World War II. They influenced Chinese lives in many ways. Many of those living under constant pressure of deportation decided to leave the United States permanently. Those who decided to stay, were more likely to move to urban enclaves that were evolving into Chinatowns. The immigration stream from China was diminishing, reaching its historical low in the 1930s. Although the *Chinese Exclusion Act* was repealed in 1943 (in the, so called, *Magnuson Act*) the number of Chinese newcomers to the US did not change significantly till the 1960s. World War II was an important factor shaping the American opinion on Asians. Considering the Japanese, Americans were sure their past decisions restricting Asian immigration were correct, as the Japanese were considered "bad" Asians, especially after the Pearl Harbor attack. Conversely, the Chinese appeared to be "good" Asians who supported the US in a global conflict. A large number of young Chinese men joined the US army. The complicated and ambiguous relationship between the Americans and the Chinese, first improved in 1943 with the revocation of the exclusion policy, and then, three years later, with the enactment of the *Chinese War Brides Act* – an act to admit Chinese wives

of American citizens on a non-quota basis. It allowed (along with other similar acts enacted by the Congress between 1945 and 1950) all Chinese-American war veterans to bring their spouses and children to the US. In the first five years after World War II almost 8,000 Chinese women entered the United States. That number represented 80% of total Chinese arrivals at that time (Barkan 2013: 816). The post war reality, in spite of positive legislation steps improving the Chinese immigrants' situation in the United States, was not optimistic. Long lasting prejudice revealed its long lasting consequences. The Chinese became disliked once again when communism expanded in China. J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI, declared in a testimony before the Senate: "Red China has been flooding the country with its propaganda and there are over 300,000 Chinese in the United States, some of whom could be susceptible to recruitment either through ethnic ties or hostage situations because of relatives in Communist China" (Barkan 2013: 816). The number given by Hoover was more than doubled in comparison to official statistics. The Chinese living in the United States found themselves in a very uncomfortable situation. They were accused of being spies. Especially those coming illegally to the US were attacked. Eventually, on the grounds of anti-Chinese feelings present in the American society, the Immigration and Nationality Service (INS) introduced the so-called "Confession Program". It was a procedure for an administrative adjustment of status for those who voluntarily disclosed their illegal status (Ngai 2013: 218). Although the "Confession Program" was controversial, it turned out to be beneficial for a vast majority of the 30,000 people who were involved in it (Ngai, *Legacies Of Exclusion...*: 4). The main aim of the program was to identify "paper sons" and prevent other Chinese from coming to the United States illegally (Hsu 2000: 210). "Paper sons" were persons not eligible to come to the United States, who had bought papers which identified them as children of American citizens. To avoid hordes of illegal Chinese entering the country, the US Department of State issued additional regulations like the necessity of submitting affidavits from the American father in triplicate, photographs from childhood onward, and other documents that were very difficult or almost impossible to get. In 1951 blood tests became a standard procedure to determine paternity and bone x-rays to prove the applicants age. But these procedures were useful only in some cases. Blood tests were not as trustworthy as they are now. The method could detect about 50 percent of the false relationships. X-rays and other clinical examinations confirming age were also useful only in those cases in which the age declared by an applicant was far different from his biological age (Lai 2004: 26). Hence, another step on the road to become sure if an applicant was lying or not, was an interview with detailed questions and any revealed discrepancy usually meant rejection.

Although the Chinese immigrants' situation in the United States improved after World War II, large scale Chinese immigration did not occur until the 1960s. The *Immigration Act* of 1965 opened the American gates to migrants from eastern and southern Europe, and Asia. The 1965 act repealed the system of national origins quota and established a new system of preferences. Chinese newcomers benefited from the new regulations in the family preference category and the professional preference category. The latter was important as it started a new wave in Chinese immigration to the US. Under that category highly educated Chinese migrants arrived, coming mostly from Hong Kong and Taiwan. They were soon called "the Uptown Chinese" and they differed from those representing working-class. They tended to live more of a middle class lifestyle with residency in integrated urban neighborhoods rather than in ethnic ghettos (Gustaitis 2009: 65). Their large share within the group of Chinese immigrants changed its character. To that day, the Chinese in the United States had usually worked as service labor and few had a college degree. The profile of Chinese Americans in the 1970s showed that fewer of them worked as service labor and more were college graduates. According to the US Census, after the *Immigration Act* of 1965 the Chinese population grew steadily but surprisingly quickly. The 1990 the US Census reported an increase of over 100 percent. It was the period of fastest growth as in 2000 data showed an increase of only 75 percent (Barkan 2013: 816).

American attitudes towards Chinese immigrants in the post war reality were changing just as the character of that group was changing. One of the most visible signs of changes were Chinatowns and what was happening inside those districts in the 1970s. Thanks to a vivid flow of newcomers, Chinatowns were experiencing an economic boom. Chinese immigrants, mostly women, who were allowed to come to the United States on the basis of the *Immigration Act* of 1965, joined a cheap labor force making small business services around Chinatowns more profitable. Benefitting from developing small firms, Chinese owners became investors. Many new banks, luxury office buildings, condominiums, and restaurants were rooted in Chinese neighborhoods (McArdle, Erzen 2001: 228). New trends were beneficial only temporarily, however. Prosperous development soon became a trap for those who started those trends – small business owners. Increasing costs of doing business and living in Chinatowns, forced many of them to move outside of these districts. It also discouraged immigrants and cheap labor from living there. Chinatowns began to face serious hardships, bringing them in the end to a role of a tourist attraction. The character of the American economy at that time was also one of the factors that diminished the role of Chinatowns. The garment industry, the most powerful among Chinatown businesses, but not

only that one, took a new shape. Many American corporations moved their production to East Asia to reduce costs. At the same time the constant demand for high-skilled workers in the United States dramatically increased the numbers of Chinese newcomers, possessing not only wanted skills, but also a strong sense of ethnic self-confidence. They were building communities not so eager to assimilate, but still expecting a comfortable middle class lifestyle. Contemporary Chinese-Americans, who were traditionally viewed as rather not engaging in politics, have made another step and reached for local public offices. Although there are many Chinese-American elected officials at state and local level, there is only one serving current term in the US House of Representatives (Chinese American Elected Officials, <http://ca-ceo.org>).

Today, there are 14.7 million Asians living in the United States. According to 2010 US Census this population was the fastest growing race group. When the total US population grew by 9.7 percent, the increase among Asians was 43 percent. Almost half of that population (46%) lived in the West. Hawaii and California had the highest proportions of Asians. In Hawaii, Asian residents represented 57 percent of the total population, and in California it was 15 percent. New York, Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco, and San Diego are among the most popular cities for Asians to reside. The most numerous groups in the Asian population are the Chinese and the Filipinos. These groups were more likely to reside in the West. California is the destination for 36 percent of Chinese, who most often choose Los Angeles as their place of residence. However, according to authors of the 2010 US Census report, the number one among all American cities was New York, where the Chinese population was the most numerous.

Asians have been in the US for a long time. They have come a long way and experienced prejudice, exploitation, and persecutions. Some scholars, like Adam M. McKeown (2013: 46) argue, that Asian and particularly Chinese migration was different from patterns known from European experiences. Besides clear differences motivated for example by internal affairs or foreign policy of both sending and receiving countries, there were factors influencing Asian migrations to the USA, that were common among migrants all over the world. Among them was an economic opportunity. The main pull factor for Filipino and Chinese migrants was to improve their financial position. Ways to achieve this goal were as different, as different was the situation of Chinese and Filipino immigrants in the United States. The beginnings were not easy. Working at railroad building sites or in medical services were opportunities used by those groups not only to earn more money than in their native countries, but also to find their own place in the American society. However, when comparing these two groups it becomes clear that the Filipinos were more fortunate. Racial stereotypes and



prejudice brought the Chinese to closed doors of American gates. The policy of exclusion shaped Asian immigration to the United States for many years. Surprisingly, in spite of many obstacles created by enacted laws or American society's attitudes towards Asians, Chinese immigrants became a valuable and an awaited part of the American labor force. Professionals from China filled a loophole in the American labor market. This appears to be an important step in creating a new profile of Asians in America. Today, exclusion policy is history and Asians are gaining more and more attention as their presence in American reality increases. They are also becoming a more important and powerful factor in American politics. According to a report released by the Immigration Policy Center, between 1996 and 2008 Asian-American electorate increased by 128 percent and the number of registered voters by 88 percent. Moreover, according to the latest projections, Asian-American electorate is expected to more than double by 2040. Those numbers together with the fact that 70 percent of adult American-Asians are either US- born or naturalized citizens, over half of them are registered to vote, and about 50 percent actually voted, indicate the growing significance of Asian-Americans, who together with Latinos has already been called *New Americans*.

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