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# **A Comparative Analysis of Political Climates in Lithuania, Poland, and Ireland in the Early 1900s Related to US Immigration and Media Culture**

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the process and experience of Lithuanian, Irish, and Polish immigrants during the late 1800s and early 1900s, as well as the role of media, specifically newspapers and books, in creating the representation and portrayal of these immigrant groups. These different ethnic groups left Europe for a variety of reasons, mainly economic and political, and sought a better life in the United States. Upon arrival, each group struggled with the Americanization process, learning English, building connections, and forming a new society. Although some immigrant groups formed stronger networks and communities upon arrival, each group faced poverty and discrimination. The media was used to not only showcase anti-immigrant sentiments and public opinion about immigration restrictions but also by these immigrant groups themselves to build a more positive public image and grow support for their own causes.

## INTRODUCTION

My family emigrated from Lithuania, Ireland, and Poland in the late 1800s and early 1900s. With Jewish and Catholic roots, both sides of my family settled in Chicago to create their new lives and chase the American dream. This thesis project seeks to understand the immigration process, motivations in moving to America, settling into the United States, and how the media of this time played a role in shaping beliefs. This project holds personal significance in that it allows me to research my own family tree and the creation of my roots here in the United States on a multidimensional level, taking politics, religion, and culture into account. It provides me insight on a different level in a time when most of my ancestors have passed, and little is known about why or how they came to live in Chicago.

As a student here in the South Carolina Honors College, I am double majoring in Experimental Psychology and Global Studies, with concentrations in cultural studies and conflict and security and a focus in Europe. I have two minors in French and Advertising/Public Relations. This thesis combines many of my scholarly interests, looking at political conflict and culture both in Europe and here in the United States, as well as the role of the media.

This thesis will take a comparative approach and look at the political climates of Lithuania, Ireland, Poland, and the United States during this time period, along with the stereotypes associated with each group of people and how their entry to the United States was received on both sides. It will compare Jewish and Catholic emigration on a political, religious, and cultural level, and look at immigration as a whole. Finally, it will look at the role of the media in shaping these stereotypes, expressing different political views, and enforcing the hope of a better life in America, along with analyzing newspaper clips published in Chicago during this time.

The exigency of this project goes beyond my own personal investment in my family's history. Immigration is a crucial political topic in the United States, with rising anti-immigration tendencies, harsher policies, racist attacks, and anti-Semitism being only a few aspects of this current issue. Beyond the scope of the political climates of different countries and the immigration process in itself, the media plays an essential role in framing immigration stances and public opinions, both then and now.

Some of the takeaway implications from this research is the duality of the role of media in different immigrant and ethnic groups. Although we will see the stereotypes and anti-immigration agendas pushed in the media, we will also see the power the media has in allowing immigrant and ethnic groups to speak out against said stereotypes and racism. It is important to note that the media has changed a great deal in the past hundred years with the formation of new technology and social media that allows more interconnectedness society but simultaneously allows everyone with a voice to share their opinions, whether they be positive, negative, harmful, or offensive.

Another implication is the continuing portrayal of the American Dream throughout the world and the idea that by coming to the United States, there is a better life to be found. This economic reasoning was the reason for the majority of the immigration at the turn of the century and continues to be a major reason for immigration today.

When thinking about and discussing immigration related issues and concerns today, we should take a step back and look at the process as a whole objectively and from a historical context as well. The United States was built by immigrants yet many of the same issues continue to persist over time: negative stereotypes, anti-immigration policies, difficulty in the Americanization process, group infighting, and maintaining a sense of community and culture.

Why do these issues continue to persist despite the changing political climate? Do they affect some groups more than others? Is the 'American Dream' ideal falsely portrayed? Why is America so anti-immigrant? It can be helpful to compare the process and struggles of different immigrant groups in the past to those today in order to gain insight to these questions and open the possibility to solutions.

## METHODS

This thesis is research based and uses qualitative assessment of a variety of scholarly literature. For my information gathering process, I started on Google Scholar and the JSTOR online library through UofSC's library database website. I divided my research into two categories: immigration and media. First, for the immigration section, I divided that research into five categories: Lithuania, Ireland, Poland, Immigration as a Whole, and Religion. For the country categories, I used the name of the country as well as the other key terms "immigration", "1900s", "stereotypes", "process", "reception", "United States", and "Chicago". Within each group, I was looking specifically for information regarding (1) political climate, (2) stereotypes, and (3) entry into the United States. I was also looking for sources that provided historical context, matched the time frame, and were specific to each ethnic group. I chose these categories because I believed that they were broad enough terms to provide ample resources and search results while still narrow enough to target my specific research topic.

I read each source and highlighted the information in each of those three categories in different colors, and also highlighted sections regarding religion, immigration as a whole, and media to go back to for the later sections of the thesis. If a source did not have any relevant or new information regarding these categories, I chose not to include it. Out of my original search, I had at least 5 sources for each country, and ultimately used around three or four of each. After reading each source from my initial search, organizing the highlighted sections, and creating an outline for my thesis, I did follow up searches in areas that were lacking information using again the country name and "political climate", "stereotypes", or "entry to the US" depending on the area and category.

For the 'Immigration as a Whole' section I used the key terms "immigration", "United States", "reception", and "process". For the religion category, I used "Jewish immigration",

“United States”, and “1900s”. I chose not to research Catholicism or do follow up searches on ‘Immigration as a Whole’ because multiple of the sources I found for the previous country sections included ample information on these topics that I marked and included in the appropriate areas. For the immigration section I used different categories to organize my research: (1) U.S. reception, (2) process, and (3) adjusting and assimilating to life in the United States.

For the media section, I first used the same two search platforms, Google Scholar and JSTOR, to do searches for materials. My key words were “role of the media”, “media representation”, “media”, “immigration”, “Lithuania”, “Ireland”, “Poland”, “early 1900s”, “stereotypes”, and “newspapers”, all used in different combinations. I followed a similar pattern of reading each source thoroughly, highlighting important information, creating an outline, and following up with further searches to supplement missing areas.

For the newspaper clippings, I used newspapers.com, which is a reputable database of newspaper clippings from across the country and in the past. I first searched “immigration” in Chicago from 1890-1910 and read through a few different articles before I found two that related to the topics covered previously in the thesis. I then did a search each for Lithuania, Ireland, and Poland, in the same city and time frame, using a similar process of reading through until I found one that was relevant.

I ultimately used 21 different sources for this thesis, many of which were used in multiple sections and contained information regarding different ethnic groups and themes. This was incredibly helpful and due to the overlap and similarities between many of the experiences of the different ethnic groups in this immigration process.



It may be true that this research was limited by the key words, databases used, and the method of obtaining and analyzing information. Other key words that may have been used to broaden the search include “diaspora” and “Eastern European”. The search terms used may have been narrow enough to get specific information on each ethnic group but could have missed some of the bigger picture implications.

## MAIN BODY

My original inspiration for this project came from when my maternal grandparents did a test through Ancestry DNA. My grandmother, Ethel Graner Snarski, found both her grandparents, Patrick Connolly and Margaret Sutton, as well as her great grandparents, Michael Sutton and Mary Neville, both born in 1860. To her surprise, she found that she was 49% European Jewish, mostly concentrating in Central and Eastern Europe in Lithuania, Latvia, and Belarus. She also found that she was 44% Irish, coming from Munster and Leinster, Ireland. The remaining 7% found roots to Scotland, England, and Northwestern Europe. My maternal grandfather, James Snarski, is 100% Polish.

My entire father's side is from Lithuania, and my father is 100% Lithuanian. Based on the results above, my mother is approximately 50% Polish, 25% Jewish, and 25% Irish. This means my siblings and I are 50% Lithuanian, 25% Polish, 12.5% Jewish, and 12.5% Irish. See Image 1 in Appendix to view the AncestryDNA results.

This news actually came as a bit of a shock to my family. My maternal grandmother's parents were both deaf, and there had always been a bit of a family mystery surrounding their ethnicity, where they came from, and why they came to the United States. I had always known that my father was Lithuanian, and my mother was Irish and Polish, but we had no idea that we were ethnically Jewish and my mother's side came from Lithuania as well. I have been raised Catholic my entire life, as was my father, but my mother was not raised religious and converted to Catholicism in her twenties.

This discovery made me incredibly curious about my family's history in Chicago and all of the circumstances surrounding their immigration process. I have studied political science and global studies throughout college, so I was curious about the political climates of the countries

and the United States during the time period of the late 1800s/early 1900s when they would have emigrated. I have also studied media and have been aware of different stereotypes surrounding different ethnic immigrant groups, so I was also curious about the role that the media might have played in the entire immigration and assimilation process. Thus, my thesis project was born.

This next section will look at emigration from Lithuania, Poland, and Ireland, into the United States. For each country, I will look at the political climate, stereotypes associated with each group of people, and their entry into the United States in order to provide an accurate depiction of the immigration process.

## LITHUANIA

One of the major reasons for emigration from Lithuania during this time period was the Russian occupation of the country (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). The bonds of serfdom were lifted in 1861, and Lithuanians began to migrate into the United States in search of wealth (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). They also sought to avoid prison or military duty, especially in the onset of the Russo-Japanese War (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). It is estimated that in 1900, “18% of Lithuanians leaving the empire were avoiding prison or military duty and that 82% were emigrating for economic reasons and hoped to return home with new wealth (Eidintas & Senn, 1987 pg. 6).

The Russian government was not known for treating their occupied countries well. Lithuanian Catholics, after emigrating to the United States, protested the barbarity and inhuman cruelty towards Lithuanians in hopes of growing the nationalist movement towards Lithuanian independence, both in Lithuania and abroad (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). This movement for independence had been in progress since the mid-nineteenth century, despite Russian attempts to stop the effort (Hartman, 1998). The movement became concentrated in the Lithuanian-American communities in the United States by the early 1900s, with people hoping to reclaim Lithuania’s prestige and preserve its political and cultural heritage (Hartman, 1998). Many sought to validate the Lithuanian-American community itself as well (Hartman, 1998).

Inside this nationalist movement in the States was a great amount of dissent and infighting between the different factions, including secular nationalists, Catholic clericals, and socialists (Hartman, 1998). Despite the same overarching goal of independence and cultivating the Lithuanian culture both in the homeland and abroad, these factions had very different ideas about how to accomplish these goals and what to prioritize.

However, many individuals in Lithuania condemned emigration and those who left (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). They felt that Lithuanians leaving their homeland would cost the nation its culture and disrupt individual lives (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). There was a great human cost in those that had to compensate for the lack of workers (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). Furthermore, these commentators argued, the nation would be deprived of young vital forces and the nation would be at risk for colonization by others (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). Writer Vincas Kudirka suggested in 1894 that the tsarist authorities may have favored Lithuanian emigration as a means to reduce the cost of Russifying the region (Eidintas & Senn, 1987).

In 1913, the Russian tsarist government made efforts to regain the forces drained by emigration (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). It offered amnesty to men who had fled the country to evade military service, while men under 33 years of age would have to fulfill their military obligation but those older would be exempt. Despite the threat of harsh penalties for those who did not return, the flow back to Lithuania did not match the continuing emigration out of the country (Eidintas & Senn, 1987).

In the early 1900s in the United States, in the beginning of World War I, immigrant groups felt even more pressure to demonstrate loyalty to the war effort and the United States, despite the widespread nativism and anti-immigration legislation in the country (Hartman, 1998).

There were few stereotypes that generalized the Lithuanian American immigrants as a whole. Upton Sinclair's novel "The Jungle" characterized Lithuanians as "a good-hearted, hardworking, but probably not too intelligent group of foreigners" (Eidintas & Senn, 1987 pg. 1). One of the most prominent stereotypes of not just Lithuanians but immigrants in general was alcohol and drinking (Hartman, 1998). It reinforced that they were slovenly or irresponsible and

threatened to tarnish any positive images associated with different ethnic groups (Hartman, 1998).

Throughout these years, they were often considered Russians or Poles, as Lithuanian identity was less distinct and these other immigrant communities had already been established (Hartman, 1998). There were many efforts made to set themselves apart from Polish Americans as a separate group. A Lithuanian saloon keeper once said that a Polish census taker refused to acknowledge his Lithuanian identity, claiming that “there is no such nationality” and “entered him in the census records as a Pole” (Hartman, 1998, pg. 41). It was not until 1910 when the United States Bureau of the Census decided to recognize Lithuanians as a distinct group (Hartman, 1998).

One of the major goals of the nationalist movement was to create a more favorable image of Lithuanians as a distinct ethnic group that was proud of its unique culture yet loyal to the United States and its national interests (Hartman, 1998). The goal of this image was to gain greater acceptance as an immigrant group and also gain support from the American public and politicians for Lithuanian independence (Hartman, 1998). They sought to make Lithuania a “test case” for the United States to show support of global self-governance in order to demonstrate that the United States was the wellspring of universal democracy (Hartman, 1998). However, many of these efforts were in vain due to the United States’ complicated relationship with Russia and President’s Wilson’s fear of dismembering the empire when he needed unity (Hartman, 1998).

Getting to the United States was difficult for many Lithuanians, as Russian laws did not recognize emigration. Many people utilized secret agents of shipping lines in order to first make their way to Germany and sail from there (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). They generally settled first in

established Polish communities before they could create their own (Hartman, 1998). Major Lithuanian colonies formed in Chicago, New York, eastern Pennsylvania, and elsewhere in the country (Hartman, 1998).

Life in America was considered to be wondrous across Lithuania, much to the disappointment of many immigrants upon arrival. They had been lured by dreams of wealth but found that in this “land of high prices... the poor man was almost as poor as in any other corner of the earth”, from “The Jungle” (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). Another writer and priest, Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, described America as seeming like “a land of freedom, wealth, light, and happiness”, but up close it consisted of “hard rock”, from which it was difficult to obtain anything (Eidintas & Senn, 1987 pg. 12). It was difficult for Lithuanian immigrants to earn significant amounts of money in the urban and industrialized America (Eidintas & Senn, 1987).

The mass influx of European immigrants into the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to widespread discrimination against these immigrant groups, including Lithuanians, and brought immense pressure from the public for them to conform to Americanism (Hartman, 1998). In the Lithuanian community, immigrants felt pressure to show loyalty to America as their new homeland and adopt mainstream customs and causes (Hartman, 1998). However, many individuals found it difficult to reconcile the pressure to be both American and Lithuanian (Hartman, 1998).

Saloons played a huge role in the lives of immigrants (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). They served as clubs, casinos, theaters, libraries, and more. After visiting, many Lithuanian government officials and priests denounced the behavior of the immigrants and claimed unpleasant impressions of life in America (Eidintas & Senn, 1987), including priest Jurgis Matulaitis-Matulevičius. They believed that too much money was spent on beer and whiskey in

saloons, and that younger generations of immigrants, or ‘émigrés’, were denationalized and too far separated from the religion and culture of Lithuania (Eidintas & Senn, 1987).

Many Lithuanians arrived in the United States with little to no formal education and were claimed to be “the most illiterate” (Hartman, 1998). To counter this, parishes provided schools, libraries, or reading rooms, although these lessons were presented in Lithuanian. There was worry with many immigrant parents that English-based learning in public schools would lead to the Americanization of their children and a loss of culture.



## IRELAND

The peak of Irish immigration to the United States was in response to the Famine in the late 1840s (Moloney, 2009). However, the Irish continued to arrive in the States throughout the twentieth century, in part because Ireland remained a poor country lacking a vibrant industrial base (Moloney, 2009). Between 1840 and 1890, more than three million Irish immigrants had entered the United States, and an estimated five million Irish had settled in the States by 1900 (Barrett & Roediger, 2005).

Many Irish families had strong ties to communities and institutions in the U.S., leading to communities growing in New York, Boston, Chicago, and Portland, Maine (Moloney, 2009). Although the Irish were not the most numerous of groups, they were more concentrated in these cities and thus more visible (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). In Chicago, groups concentrated in large numbers on the West and South Sides, but smaller groups lived throughout the city (Barrett & Roediger, 2005).

The strength of the Irish identity in America gave them great advantages, as it facilitated the process of networking and the level of organization needed to exert social, political and economic influence (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). This created an ideological legacy passed on to new immigrants arriving in the States, along with the growing Irish mass nationalist movement (Barrett & Roediger, 2005).

Irish immigrants faced barriers and discrimination with extreme nativism during the late nineteenth century until the 1920s and sought refuge in the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). They often embraced progressive positions on many social issues in the labor movement, the notion of the living wage, and welfare policy, conveying democratic ideals and effective mass organization (Barrett & Roediger, 2005).

The Irish in the roles of saloonkeeper, priest, cop, and war heeler became ethnic caricatures (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). Some scholars say that the Irish had the most definite stereotypes, beginning with the character of the servant Teague of the Restoration comedies and was developed in the *Joe Miller Jest Books* (Linneman, 1974). The comic Irishman was caricatured as a “hirsute, muscular laborer, with cheek whiskers, a broad upper lip, a button nose, and prognathous jaws”, with “lowering, ape-like faces”. The Irish were also associated with derby hats, dudeen pipes, belligerent attitudes, love of whiskey, living in a shanty, having multiple children, a ‘termagant’ wife, and being in poverty.

The entry and reception of Irish immigrants into the United States was much different than other immigrant groups. They were entrenched in the developing immigrant communities, serving as union officers, shop stewards, and bishops, giving other immigrants the impression that the Irish ‘controlled the world’ (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). This Irish ubiquity was a result of many factors, including the sheer numbers and timing of their arrival, as well as their acculturation and how they chose to construct their identities as white in America (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). However, Irish immigrants still faced overall poor treatment, poverty, and injustice (Alzughaihi, 2015).

In America, the Irish community was divided, not only by Old World parents and American children, but between the upwardly mobile “steam heat or lace curtain” Irish and those who had more recently arrived, the “greenhorns and shanty” Irish (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). Despite the strength of the Irish identity, there were many versions of Irishness that represented a contested identity (Barrett & Roediger, 2005). The process of being “American” and undergoing acculturation was in fact a lifelong learning process, including learning a new language,

absorbing new ideas and lessons, and understanding politics and government (Barrett & Roediger, 2005).

In the book *Brooklyn*, written by Colm Toibin in 2009, the cultural and social struggles faced by these Irish immigrants in America were described in greater detail (Alzughaihi, 2015). The author highlights the importance of the social networks already created for Irish immigrants upon their arrival to the United States, as well as the difficulties faced due to stereotypes and discrimination. Toibin further showcases the economic challenges, including poor housing, treatment in the workplace, and low paying jobs. Although set in the 1950s, the setting and implications of this story are equally applicable to immigrants at the turn of the century.

## POLAND

Polish immigrants were among the most numerous in the city of Chicago, alongside the Germans, making the city one of the largest German and Polish in the world (Blejwas, 1984). Polish immigration to the United States began in 1854, and mass immigration began in 1870 after the Franco-Prussian war (Madaj, 1949). The panic of 1873 caused a decrease in the immigration, but it had increased again by 1881 (Madaj, 1949). By 1900, there were over 800 Polish settlements in the United States, concentrated mostly in Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and New York (Madaj, 1949). This first major wave of Polish immigrants occurred from 1880 to 1920, although two waves followed post World War II and in the 1980s (Mello, 2020). The biggest reasons for this immigration were for economic opportunities, and this was facilitated by improved means of transportation and industrialization during the second half of the nineteenth century that allowed rural Poles to travel to port cities.

Much like Lithuanians, the Polish immigrants struggled to retain their identity in the United States and were often classified as Russians, Germans, or Austrians instead (Madaj, 1949). Poles, Polish Jews, and Lithuanians were indiscriminately confused (Madaj, 1949). These new Polish settlements in the United States instead relied on building churches (Madaj, 1949). Religion tied the community together and formed the foundation for other aspects of their group.

Polish immigrants also had major impacts on United States policy changes since their arrival, including workers' rights campaigns (Mello, 2020). Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, as mentioned above in the Lithuania section of this thesis, provided further support to many of these campaigns and the work of these two groups ultimately resulted in the development of the Pure Food and Drug Act. This shows not only the influence of Polish and other immigrant groups but their interconnectedness as well.

Upon arrival into the United States, Polish immigrants, alongside other immigrant groups, had to adapt their traditional patterns of behavior into new social, cultural, economic, and political configurations in the process of Americanizing (Blejwas, 1984). However, they succeeded well in preserving their communal ethnicity and keeping their communities and parishes fully Polish, instead of being a fully Americanized immigrant community (Blejwas, 1984). Anton Scherrman, one of the first Polish men to arrive in Chicago in the earlier 1800s, developed the Polish agency, an organization that helped bring immigrants of Eastern and Central Europe to Chicago (Mello, 2020).

Many scholars highlight the clash between immigrant and ethnic infighting in these Polish immigrant communities, the one in Chicago being referred to as ‘Chicago Polonia’ (Erdmans, 1995). There is a lack of cultural identity between the Polish Americans and Polish immigrants (Erdmans, 1995). Ethnicity is shaped both by agency and structure, as an individual must choose to be a member of the group (Erdmans, 1995). That is, the cultural identity is a voluntary allegiance for the ethnic but the immigrant (Erdmans, 1995).

Another difference between these two groups are the resources and opportunities available to them upon arrival in the United States (Erdmans, 1995). Immigrants are newcomers and have more limited access to these resources and opportunities, and many of them depend on what skills and backgrounds each individual possesses (Erdmans, 1995). The different needs of the different ethnic and immigrant groups create different communities (Erdmans, 1995). Immigrant communities are spatially located, easily recognizable, and work to reduce the strain of the newcomer status by providing immigrant and consumer services (Erdmans, 1995). Contrastingly, ethnic communities work to celebrate and defend cultural identity, and can be dispersed throughout larger areas (Erdmans, 1995).

## JUDAISM, CATHOLICISM, AND RELIGION

This next section will focus on Judaism, Catholicism, and the importance of religion in immigrant communities. It is important to note that there is both a Jewish identity in religion and ethnicity, and that there is a great deal of overlap between these groups and the immigrant groups listed above. At the beginning of the twentieth century the United States was the third largest Jewish population center in the world, with about one million Jews (Golden & Sarna, 2000). About half of these Jews lived in New York City. Between 1900 and 1924, more than 40% of America's Jews were new to the country, and another 1.75 million Jews would come to America, mostly from Eastern Europe. This resurgence allowed American Jews to realign their priorities, implement new traditions, and have communal life while retaining elements from East European Jewish folkways. Among them was an intense division between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews (Golden & Sarna, 2000).

Many scholars note that the establishment of parishes by different ethnic groups upon arrival in the United States were the “foundation stones of nationality consciousness and were usually the first viable instruments for transmitting ethnic culture”, which was a pattern seen in most European-American ethnic groups (pg. 34, Augustyn, 2000). These parishes were nationality-based and helped found schools, organize societies and alliances, and spread cultural values, as well as provide support for incoming immigrants. They allowed new immigrants to reconstruct their Old World cultures in the new with familiar symbols of the homes they left behind (Moloney, 2009).

There was a great deal of conflict among immigrants regarding Catholicism, specifically between the Irish and other Catholic immigrants. By the 1880s, the Irish dominated American Catholicism to the point “that critics often referred to it as the ‘One Holy, *Irish*, and Apostolic’

Catholic Church” (Moloney, 2009). They controlled virtually all of the important dioceses, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Baltimore, as more than two thirds of all Catholic bishops were Irish by 1920. However, this did not guarantee a unified ideology, suggesting instead a different character of Catholicism between the Irish and newer immigrants.

Although the Irish Catholics were undoubtedly powerful during this time, some immigrant groups wanted to remove themselves from their influence, including Polish Catholics (Mello, 2020). They responded by creating entirely Polish or Polish dominated Roman Catholic Churches that would spread Polish and Catholic knowledge to future generations, along with the creation of Polish Catholic schools.

## IMMIGRATION AS A WHOLE

Although millions of Europeans immigrated to the United States during this time period, there were rising movements of anti-immigration policies and attitudes, especially among rural populations (Goldin & Libecap, 1994). In May 1921, the United States passed the Emergency Quota Act, thus ending the period of open immigration and creating a quota system that would remain in place until 1965. Leading up to this law was rising anti-immigration sentiments, especially in native-born rural America. A coalition formed among various groups, including organized labor, owners of capital, immigrants, and rural America as early as the 1890s to oppose unrestricted immigration through legislation. These groups were nearly successful several times during this time period from 1890 to 1921, with legislation passing through both the House and Senate on different occasions yet never making it into law.

The beginnings of European immigration restriction in the United States began “with the movement to pass the literacy test”, which succeeded in 1917 after over twenty years of debate (Goldin & Libecap, 1994). The literacy test was administered to physically capable adults and generally consisted of reading multiple sentences of the United States Constitution in any language chosen by the immigrant. This test was not as successful in reducing immigration due to rising literacy rates in Europe, and was followed by immigration quotas in 1921, 1924, and 1929. Table 1 (See Appendix) below shows the tumultuous history of the literacy test in Congress.

During the time period from 1890 to 1921, approximately 17 million immigrants from among nations in Europe sought shelter in the United States (Goldin & Libecap, 1994). Graphs 1 and 2 (See Appendix) show immigration numbers in the thousand from 1880 to 1930. New immigrants are those from southern, central, and eastern Europe. The countries included in this



group are Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and the Baltic republics (Goldin & Libecap, 1994).

A study of butcher workmen in the Chicago stockyards from 1900-1922 demonstrates the immigrant diversity in the city, the complicated social relations, fragmentation of different groups, how immigrants learned ‘the rules of the game’, and the creation of subcultures (Im3). These subcultures were built on strong social, economic, and cultural institutions, and were often supported by ethnic and religious organizations. One of the most dominant groups on Chicago’s South Side was the traditional Irish American Catholicism.

However, in these work yards, there were distinctions among workers in terms of wages and benefits that led to a stratification of the working class, enhancing the divisive effects (Im3). In the growing market for common labor, there was constant social recomposition in order to account for the growing influx of immigrants from Eastern European countries, including Bohemians, Poles, and Lithuanians. These new groups displaced groups of Irish and German workers who had been there much longer.

Each community created its own religious, fraternal, and political groups along ethnic or racial lines (Im3). These subcultures were a response of the migrant people seeking to adjust to the rigors of life in America and undergoing the assimilation and Americanization process while simultaneously attempting to preserve their individual cultural traditions and values.

One major issue faced by ethnic groups in assimilating to life in the United States was the language barrier. Chicago public schools offered night programs for immigrants and working youth that included elementary English classes for adults (Augustyn, 2000). According to newspapers from the early 1900s, some Lithuanians considered English a threat to their ethnicity

instead of a tool for advancement in society, and attendance was low. Out of the twelve Chicago schools set up “for Lithuanians alone, three had already closed for lack of interest” (Augustyn, 2000). Many immigrants did not understand the importance of English and how essential it was in order to get a job, despite many identity groups, including Czechs, Italians, and Jewish immigrants, promoting literacy.

## **MEDIA**

There is no doubt that the media, including newspapers, press conferences, and public rallies, played a huge role in not only attitudes around immigration during the late 1800s and early 1900s but in forming communities, building images, and communicating messages on a larger scale. This next section will dive deeper into how the media was used by different ethnic groups, to what extent it was successful, specific examples from newspapers, and its role in shaping public opinion.

First, it is essential to understand the purpose of media, potential biases, and how it works. The primary function of media in the United States is to provide sufficient information to the public for use in the evaluation of matters of policy and governance (Branton & Dunaway, 2009). Although journalists must remain politically neutral, report objectively, and present all sides of an issue, recent research suggests that there are slants present in news coverage. This slant could be caused by a variety of different reasons, including profit-making, political, and journalistic goals, which may lead to particular trends in news coverage. The news tend to emphasize “the sensational and the negative”, including topics such as sex, violence, and crime. This is at least partially due to economic reasons, including the need to attract and retain audiences. The negative slant regarding immigration can be seen in modern day media in regards to the conflicts surrounding the U.S.-Mexico border. Although there is less research surrounding media slants in media during the early 1900s, a similar model can be applied to understand possible biases and impacts of different newspapers.

Further comparisons can be drawn using the policy debates on the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (H.R. 4437) in 2006 and on the Support our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act or Arizona Senate Bill (S.S.) 1070

in 2010 (Quinsaat, 2014). The discourse surrounding these bills shows how framing in the media creates opposed representations of immigration yet simultaneously normalizes dominant ways of thinking.

The newspaper was a major source of communication and unity among these different ethnic groups in Chicago, especially Lithuanians. As seen in the issues of illiteracy among Lithuanians upon their arrival in the United States, community members used their own newspapers to encourage their fellow nationals to attend classes in English (Augustyn, 2000).

These ethnic newspapers served “as the mouthpieces of ethnic leaders who sought to increase the standing of their nationality vis-à-vis other groups” (Augustyn, 2000). Lithuanian Americans specifically understood the “power of mass media in influencing public opinion and reinforcing ethnic solidarity”, despite the struggle with high illiteracy rates among their community (Hartman, 1998). In 1896, Chicago Lithuanians arranged a press conference at Pulaski Hall prior to the presidential election in order to show that Lithuanians have “political organizations, are just as good as any other people in this country [and] understand how to elect a prudent man for the future of the United States”(Hartman, 1998).

In February 1896, a popular newspaper, the *Evening Journal*, criticized some Lithuanian Americans who had lost their savings in a bank. They called them ‘semi-civilized’ and nearly all illiterate. In response, Lithuanian nationalist leaders organized a mass rally attracting thousands of Lithuanians, journalists, and dignitaries, forcing other newspapers to report on the event and the *Evening Journal* to apologize for their statements (Hartman, 1998).

In 1900, Dr. Jonas Sliupas proposed a joint publication of a newspaper in English with immigrant groups from Lithuania, Poland, and Ruthenia called *Freedom* (Hartman, 1998). The purpose of this newspaper was “to educate Americans about the cultural heritage and nationalist

aspirations of these provinces, inform them of Russia's oppressive policies in the region, and rally public support for the independence of these territories" (Hartman, 1998). Although it was never published, it illustrates an awareness of the importance of mass communication to improve their public image and win support for their campaigns. Other examples of Lithuanian newspapers during this time include *Lietuva*, Chicago's leading nationalist paper, and *The Lithuanian Booster*.

Not only did Lithuanian media have an impact in the United States, but it was also incredibly impactful back in the homeland of Lithuania. After the Polish and Lithuanian rising of 1863, tsarist authorities in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, banned the publication of Lithuanian texts in Latin script in an effort to ban the Lithuanian press and repress the nationalist movement (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). In response, Lithuanian émigrés began to publish more newspapers in the United States and return them to Lithuania. Those that returned had a 'disruptive influence' and reflected the life and values of the New World, to the discontent of conservatives. Radical publications in the United States were more likely to be smuggled back to Lithuania and reached a significant audience. The Chicago Lithuanian newspaper *Lietuva*, as mentioned above, declared in 1893, "'Tell us in America about whatever bad happens to you... when we know where any misfortune or oppression occurs, we will try to correct it'" in efforts to rally support for the Lithuanian nationalist movement (Eidintas & Senn, 1987).

At the Paris World's Fair of 1900, Lithuanian émigré leaders created a Lithuanian exhibition to focus attention on the ban of Lithuanian press by the tsarist government (Eidintas & Senn, 1987). The exhibition was described as "documentation of the 'intellectual and cultural progress' of the Lithuanian people, even the basis 'for a future national Lithuanian library'.

## NEWSPAPER CLIPS

This next section will analyze five different newspaper clips, all from Chicago, Illinois, during the time period from 1890-1910. All of these clips were found via newspapers.com and can be found in the Appendix below, titles Newspaper Clippings 1-5. The first two clippings focus on immigration as a whole, and the remaining three each focus on Lithuania, Ireland, and Poland, individually.

The first newspaper clipping is from the *Chicago Tribune* in 1892, titled “Closing the Ports”. In this article, numerous congressmen share their views and opinions on the subject of immigration. The majority of those questioned “favor its stoppage or restriction during next year because of the danger from cholera” and propose to suspend immigration during the next year. Many of the congressmen highlighted in this article share anti-immigrant sentiments outside of the dangers from disease, including Senator Pepper, who would “exclude all immigrants of the very poorer classes, such as are not able to take care of themselves” and Senator Perkins of Kansas, who said, “I will be glad to support a bill affording the country relief from the further influx of undesirable people”. These excerpts showcase many of the anti-immigrant opinions shared by Americans during this time period, the reasoning behind anti-immigration policy, and the creation of public opinion surrounding immigration at this time.

The second newspaper clipping is from the *Chicago Tribune* in 1904, titled “Foreign Born Citizens of the US Object to Further Restrictions: Herman Ridder of the New York Staats-Zeitnag Gives German American Views”. In a section titled “Where Lies the Menace?”, Ridder states that he believes immigration has not added a menace that was not present in the earlier days of immigration. He says, “It is said that the immigrants of the present day ‘herd themselves’ together and do not become Americanized rapidly enough. The same charge was made against

the Germans and the Irish fifty years ago, and the same charge could be brought and proven against the earliest settlers, the English as well as the Dutch. It is utterly ridiculous as an argument against immigration". This excerpt shows that not all Americans shared anti-immigration sentiments, as well as the process of Americanization undergone by many immigrants and their children after arrival to the United States and the hypocrisy of some anti-immigration rhetoric.

The third newspaper clipping is from *The Inner Ocean* in Chicago, Illinois, in 1896, and is titled "REPLY TO SLANDERS". It features the description of a mass meeting held in the Church of St. George and the speeches by Eugene Seeger, Judge Brentano, and Mary Othra in response to the attack on Lithuanians from Chicago by an evening paper. This paper had called them "ragpickers; that, as in the old country, they were accustomed to serfdom and misery; they were but a degraded people, and consequently came to America fit only for keeping junk shops and content to accept even the lowest conditions". This excerpt shows not only the intense anti-Lithuanian sentiments held by other members of the Chicago community, but how Lithuanians used the media to their advantage and responded to these claims, as mentioned above in this thesis in the Lithuania section.

The fourth newspaper clipping is from the *Chicago Tribune* in 1907 and is titled "The Irish in America". It was published on St. Patrick's Day and highlights the positive aspects of the Irish community in the United States and the contributions they have made. It begins with, "Somebody has said that 'The history of the Irish in America is the history of America.' It probably was an Irishman who said this, but is near enough the truth to pass. The Irish helped to settle America. They had their full share in the country's colonization". This excerpt shows not only the different experience Irish immigrants had upon their arrival to the United States but again how the media was used in the favor of the Irish to help their public image.

The fifth and final newspaper clipping is from the *Chicago Tribune* in 1895 and is titled “The Polish Settlements in Chicago”. Although this newspaper article is mainly descriptive, it also reinforces stereotypes, “The women wear shawls and hoods in place of hats and bonnets. Short skirts expose to view felt slippers and hand-knit purple stockings. The men are above the medium height, of slender physique, with straight black hair and dark or deep blue eyes. A lingering expression of sadness is on each swarthy face – a national inheritance... China images of the Savior, effigies of the crucifixion, and print portraits of the Madonna adorn the shop windows”. Although this description is not exactly negative, it shows how the media was able to create general representations of the Polish people through these articles, as well as emphasized the importance of Catholicism.



## CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, it can be seen that there were numerous reasons that Lithuanians, the Irish, and the Polish left their home countries in search of a better life in the United States. These groups are not only interconnected through their experiences but by their yearning for a better life in the United States, although that was not necessarily what they found. Each group experienced the struggles of Americanization, learning a new language, forging communities and societies of their own, and maintaining their culture to pass on to the future generations.

During the immigration process, the media at the time worked both for and against these immigrants. This can be seen most apparently in the creation of Lithuanian newspapers to gain support for the nationalist movement and spread awareness about the suppression by the tsarist government. Although they may have been the most aware of the importance of using media to achieve their goals and improve their image, they were not the only ones. The media also played a role in fostering anti-immigrant sentiments in the early 1900s leading to immigration caps, literacy tests, and restrictions, as seen in the newspaper clippings. Anti-immigration sentiments were not uncommon at the turn of the twentieth century, nor are they uncommon now.

Future research on this topic should focus more on the role of religion in the immigration and Americanization process, especially the divide between Eastern European Jewish and Catholic immigrants. Another avenue for future research would be to compare the media's representation and portrayal of immigrants during the 1800s/1900s to the portrayal in modern day in the United States.

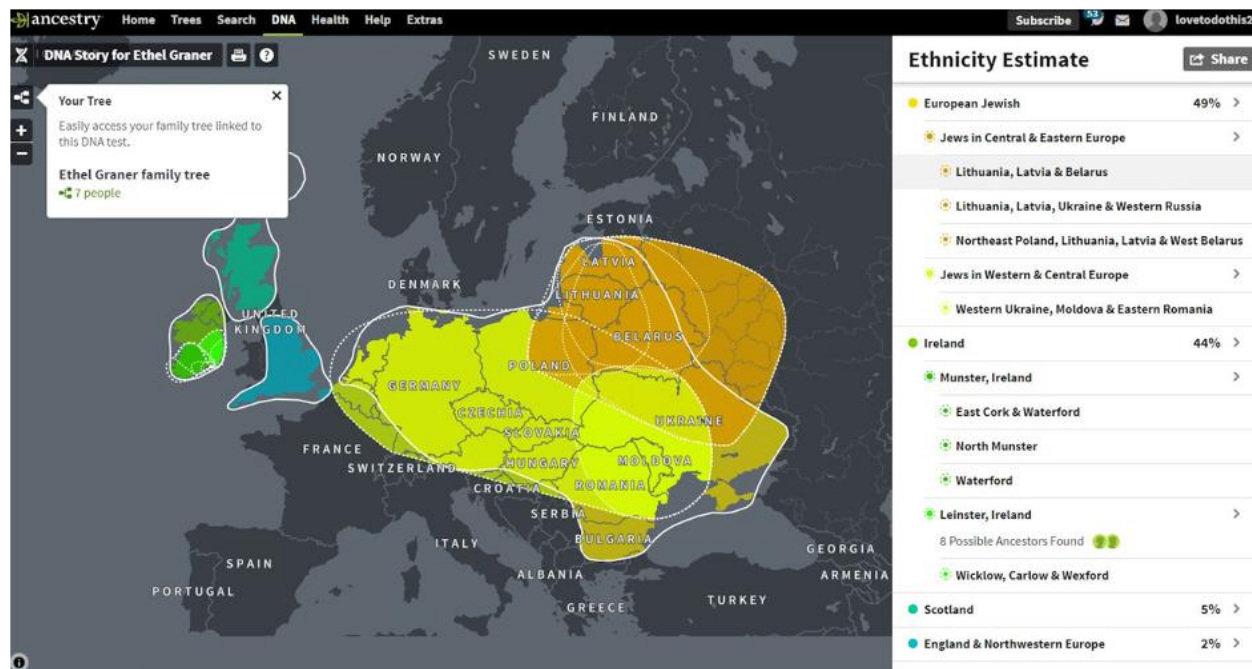
I was inspired to embark on this thesis project by my own ethnicity and the stories of my family who came to the United States before me. I have learned much more throughout this process than I had ever hoped and am confident that this thesis portrays not only an

understanding of the immigration process and reception to the United States during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but my personal sentiments as well.

## APPENDIX

## IMAGE 1

Provided by Ethel Snarski



**TABLE 1**

(Goldin &amp; Libecap, 1994).

**Table 7.1                      Immigration Restriction Chronology: Votes on the Literacy Test**

Date	Branch of Government	Vote	Notes
2/9/97	House	217-36-102 <sup>a</sup>	Affirmative vote on bill
2/17/97	Senate	34-31-25	Affirmative vote on bill
3/2/97	President Cleveland	Veto	
3/3/97	House	195-37-123	Overrides Presidential veto
3/3/97	Senate		Takes no action, bill dies
1/17/98	Senate	45-28-16	Affirmative vote on bill
12/14/98	House	101-104-150	Negative vote on consideration of bill
5/27/2	House	No vote found	Affirmative vote on bill, literacy test dropped in House-Senate conference
6/25/6	House	128-116	Vote to remove literacy test from immigration bill and to set up Immigration Commission
4/19/12	Senate	9-56-30	Vote to strike the literacy test from the bill; affirmative vote on bill, sent to conference
12/18/12	House	179-52	Affirmative vote on bill, sent to conference
2/14/13	President Taft	Veto	
2/19/13	House	213-114-54	Fails to override
1/2/15	Senate	50-7-39	Affirmative vote on bill
1/15/15	House	227-94-103	Affirmative vote on conference report of bill
	President Wilson	Veto	
2/4/15	House	261-136-26	Fails to override
3/30/16	House	307-87-39	Affirmative vote on bill
12/14/16	Senate	64-7-25	Affirmative vote on bill
	President Wilson	Veto	
2/1/17	House	287-106-40	Overrides veto
2/5/17	Senate	62-19-5	Overrides veto

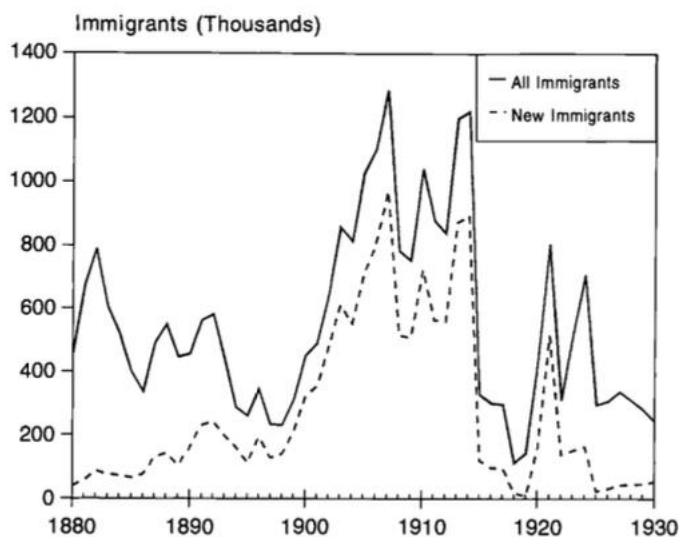
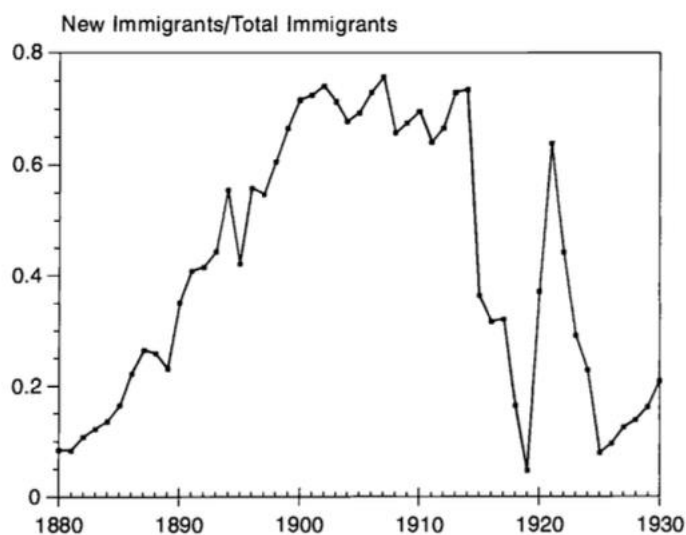
Sources: Hutchinson 1981; *Congressional Record*, 62d, 63d, and 64th Cong.

Note: Roll call votes count those not voting, whereas non-roll call votes have only pro and con.

<sup>a</sup>Hutchinson reports those not voting as 125, not 102.

**GRAPHS 1 & 2**

(Goldin &amp; Libecap, 1994).

**Fig. 7.1 Immigration, 1880–1930***Source:* U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975, series C89–119.*Note:* New immigrants are those from southern, central, and eastern Europe. See note 9 for the included countries.**Fig. 7.2 Proportion of new immigrants, 1880–1930***Source:* U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975, series C 89–119.*Note:* New immigrants are those from southern, central, and eastern Europe. See note 9 for the included countries.



## NEWSPAPER CLIPPING 2

*Chicago Tribune, 1904***Where Lies the Menace?**

"Is it not true, however, that the change in the character of our immigration has added a menace which was not present in the earlier days when most of the newcomers were German, Scandinavians, and Irish?"

"The question whether immigration in general, and the kind of immigration we now receive in particular, embodies a danger to American institutions is no doubt a serious one. But when we examine the arguments brought forward by those who would rashly answer it in the affirmative we find that those same arguments have been used time and again, whenever the latent hostility to 'foreigners' broke forth against the Germans and the Irish with the same vehemence.

"It is said that the immigrants of the present day 'herd themselves' together and do not become Americanized rapidly enough. The same charge was made against the Germans and the Irish fifty years ago, and the same charge could be brought and proven against the earliest settlers, the English as well as the Dutch. It is utterly ridiculous as an argument against immigration. As long as the children of all immigrants, whether born on American soil or brought to this country in early youth, are thorough Americans in spirit and character, there exists no danger American institutions could or might be perverted by foreign notions or ideas. We have yet to see the first indication that one child of the immigrant is unamerican in any respect and under any circumstances, and there is consequently no ground for apprehension."

**Opposes an Educational Test.**

"What is..."







beach, girls you have about as much snow-days—have a profusion, some of my own, and drive at the club, you know.

Oh Lady!—Ah, I see. You must let me introduce you to my next-door wife lives with me. He is a very nice and smart man, you know." —*New York Weekly.*

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