

Title—Understanding Immigration: Issues and Challenges in an Era of Mass Population Movement

Author—Marilyn Hoskin

Year—2017

Categories: Migration, Politics, Colonialism

Place: United States, UK, Germany, France

Time: 20th Century

Argument Synopsis:

Hoskin's book attempts to understand modern immigration by comparing the recent experiences of the United States, Britain, Germany, and France. She finds that immigration has seen a revival as a prominent global concern, particularly after the mass migrations in Europe of 2013. Hoskin contends that immigration cannot be explained only as related to unique national experiences; she claims common themes emerge allowing us to understand immigration more organically. She characterizes modern immigration as a complex problem in an increasingly complex world. She finds that some features of immigration appear consistent over time, notably the search for sage lives and economic opportunity motivates most immigrants. Generally, Hoskin argues that continuous forces of migration have been economic need, although she notes that disruptive events like war can influence immigration as well. Another major feature of modern immigration illuminated by Hoskin is that the push to increase immigration generally comes from business and industry who have long advanced the position that economic health and growth hinged on encouraging the growth of the workforce. Recruiting labor is a constant challenge for resilient economies, making immigration a continuous issue for modern states. Hoskin's book is a political science book, not a history, and thus makes use of mostly political science methodologies.

The study is divided into chapters that focus on each of the four countries being studied: France, Germany, the UK, and the United States. Each country's chapter is subdivided into sections focused on what Hoskin identifies as central aspects of immigration: history, economics, politics, and geography. Geography and space are central to immigration, even with modern innovations in travel, she demonstrates how physical barriers continue to affect immigration. Hoskin posits that history helps in understanding how nations came to be and how they are likely to deal with current and new immigration issues. Although she is comparing the experiences of all four countries, she notes that the main comparisons are actually between the United States and Britain and France and Germany respectively. Still she finds ways to pose comparisons across all four, revealing that in all four cases the issue of immigration has created uneasy political alliances within and between parties.

Hoskin spends considerable time in the historical sections of each country chapter to consider the context for the modern responses to immigration. In particular, she highlights the influence of the colonial history for both Britain and France in influencing the public opinion towards immigration in both places. She argues that colonialism can explain much of the resistance to immigration in both Britain and France. She concludes by arguing that all four nations suffer from increasingly strident calls to limit or even end foreign admissions, making immigration a permanent challenge to all nations.

Key Themes and Concepts:

- Continuous force of migration across history have been economic need
- Immigration was once a regional problem, but has become increasingly global
- Immigration combines central national concerns with very personal priorities