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The Immigrant Threat. Leo Lucassen.

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Leo Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005. \$25.00 papercover.

Immigration has become a hot topic. Public opinion is sharply divided over President Bush's proposals to establish a guest worker program and there is much disagreement about whether illegal immigrants should be given amnesty and allowed to settle permanently. Among academics, opinions on immigration are also divided. Some take the view that the ability of American society to assimilate more immigrants is being sorely tested while others point out that the cultural differences between recent immigrants and those who came from Europe in the 19th century are so great that continued immigration poses a significant challenge to social cohesion and stability.

Similar debates have been raging in Europe and, if anything, have been more intense. Several European countries introduced guests worker programs in the post World War II era, but it is clear that most of those who came as guest workers have become permanent settlers. Despite religious, ethnic and racial differences, their children often regard themselves as Europeans and have limited identification with their "home" countries. While some immigration experts believe that this is indicative of a longer-term assimilationist trend, others are skeptical pointing out that recent immigrants to Europe are so different in religion, language and culture that they will remain separate, living within culturally distinct enclaves.

Lucassen's book makes a useful contribution to these debates by reviewing the experience of immigration in different European countries at different periods of time and assessing the extent to which immigrants were integrated into the host culture. The first part of the book provides examples of what the author calls 'old migrants'—they include, Irish immigrants to Britain in the 19th century, Poles in Germany during the early 20th century and Italian immigrants in France during the same period. Part two of the book deals with Caribbean immigrants to Britain since 1948, Turkish immigrants to Germany since 1960, and the immigration of Algerian Muslims to France since 1945. Based on the historical evidence, Lucassen concludes that it is very likely that newer immigrant groups

will integrate into European societies in much the same way as did the "old immigrants". The problem, he contends, is the limited opportunities for new immigrants to integrate rather than their willingness to identify with their new societies. Continued unemployment, racism, limited educational opportunities and other factors pose a greater threat to social stability than immigration itself.

Lucassen's book is well written and extremely well researched. The author draws on a great deal of interesting historical and ethnographic information and he obviously knows the material extremely well. His case studies are well chosen and provide important insights into the way different immigrant groups adapted to host societies in different periods of time. His conclusions are thoughtful and balanced. His book makes a significant contribution to current immigration debates and should be widely consulted.

Robert S. Weiss, *The Experience of Retirement*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2005. \$18.95 papercover.

As the baby boom generation approaches retirement age, and as members of this generation expect to live healthier, longer lives, the body of literature on retirement and the "second half of life" or "the third age" is growing. *The Experience of Retirement*, Robert Weiss' view of the lives of 89 retirees, is both timely and insightful. The book focuses on the experience of retirement through all of its stages: planning for it, leaving the workforce, and adapting to it. The method of conducting in-depth interviews before, during, immediately after, and one year after retirement provides rich longitudinal data to document this major phase of the life course. It also gives the reader the opportunity to view the experience of retirement as a multi-year process.

Weiss begins with a summary of multi-disciplinary perspectives on retirement by providing economic, psychological, and sociological definitions of retirement. Next, an exploration of the transition period, from the workforce world to the retirement world, is presented. In this exploration of the