

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions

“Economic Sanctions Reconsidered.”

Institute for International Economics, 11 Dupont Circle N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
753 pp. \$45.00.

Authors: Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Jeffrey J. Schott

On September 9, 1985, President Reagan announced the imposition of certain economic sanctions against the government of South Africa. To prod Pretoria into dismantling its apartheid policies, Washington decided, among other things, to ban the export of American computers and bank loans to that country.

The White House action spurred debate in Washington: Would the sanctions work or not?

According to economists Hufbauer and Schott, sanctions are generally *not* effective. They may work, when applied “judiciously to reach carefully defined objectives.”

The researchers based that conclusion on their survey of 103 post-World War I cases of economic sanctions—the “deliberate government-inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of ‘customary’ trade or financial relations.”

The authors judged only 39 of the 103 cases to be “successful”—that is, sanctions did contribute to the foreign policy goals of the country imposing the measures. Successful efforts include U.S. imposition in 1960 of an “entry fee” on sugar from the Dominican Republic (to exert pressure on the regime of Rafael Trujillo); the 1972–79 Anglo-American ban on trade with Uganda (to weaken the government of Idi Amin); and the memorable 1973 Arab oil embargo against the United States.

Resorting to sanctions, Hufbauer and Schott found, is a bully’s tactic. In more than one-half of all 103 cases, the sender’s gross national product (GNP) was 50 times larger than the target’s GNP. The United States imposed sanctions 68

times, Great Britain 21 times, and the Soviet Union 10 times.

Yet a country’s economic power by itself does not ensure effectiveness. Much depends on what the instigator is trying to do. Sanctions designed to “destabilize” a country have succeeded 53 percent of the time, probably because they were often coupled with other measures (such as covert military action). Those meant to punish an enemy’s military actions (e.g., the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) rarely work.

Not surprisingly, the more sanctions hurt the target country, the more effective they were in achieving political goals. When successful, the economic burden of sanctions equaled, on average, 2.3 percent of the target’s GNP; in unsuccessful cases, less than one percent.

The government that imposes sanctions can do the most damage when it has had a high volume of trade with its target. In cases where sanctions worked, the country imposing them accounted for, on average, 27 percent of the target country’s total volume of trade—compared with 19 percent in cases where sanctions failed.

Whether or not economic sanctions actually change the world, they may still serve political purposes. Politicians may impose sanctions to demonstrate “resolve” to voters at home and to assure allies that words will be supported by deeds. As former British prime minister David Lloyd George said in 1935, after the League of Nations imposed sanctions against Italy for attacking Abyssinia: “[Sanctions] came too late to save Abyssinia, but they are just in the nick of time to save the [British] government.”

"Asian Americans: Growth, Change, and Diversity."

Population Reference Bureau, 2213 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. 44 pp. \$4.00.
 Authors: Robert W. Gardner, Bryant Robey, Peter C. Smith

"Once looked down upon as poorly educated, blue-collar 'Orientals,' Asian Americans are now often perceived as a 'model minority,'" according to the authors, who work at the East-West Population Institute in Honolulu.

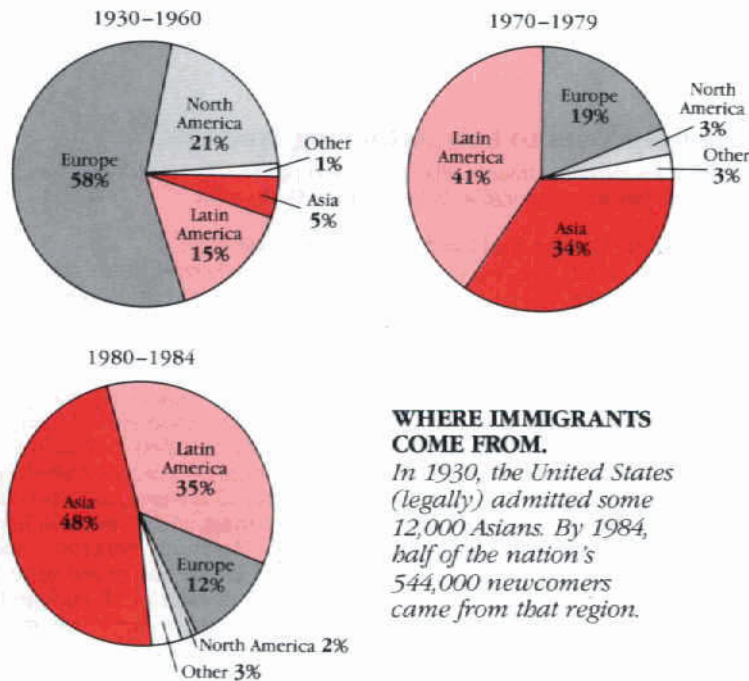
The popular notion that Asian Americans are well educated and highly paid, they say, is true, although some Asian groups currently fare better than others.

Today, Asian Americans are a diversified lot. Whereas 58 percent of all Asian Americans were Chinese in 1900, only 21 percent are today. And they are joined by five other major Asian ethnic groups: the Filipinos (who account for 20 percent of all Asian Americans), the Japanese (15 percent), the Vietnamese (12 percent), the Koreans (11 percent), and Asian Indians (10 percent).

Their combined numbers are increasing; Asian Americans constitute the largest proportion of new immigrants to this country. In 1970, only 1.4 million Asians lived in the United States. But over the next 10 years the population of Asian Americans swelled by 141 percent.

Included among the new arrivals are the roughly 300,000 Indochinese refugees who have fled to the United States since the Vietnam War ended in April 1975. Some 5.1 million Asians now live in the United States; by the year 2000 that number may reach almost 10 million, or about four percent of the nation's entire population.

Asian Americans favor urban settings and the Western states. Forty-nine percent have taken up residence in either California or Hawaii. Ninety-two percent



choose to live in cities—compared with 75 percent of all Americans.

Except for the nation's 634,000 Vietnamese, many of whom were destitute "boat people," Asian Americans are doing at least as well as, if not somewhat better than, white Americans, in socioeconomic terms.

The success story begins in the classroom. More than 90 percent of all 16- and 17-year-old Asian Americans are enrolled in school. Nearly all of them leave with diplomas in hand. Excluding the Vietnamese, more than 90 percent of all Asian males, aged 25-29, have finished high school; the figures for their white and black American counterparts are much lower (87 and 73 percent, respectively). And, whereas 17 percent of white Americans aged 25 and older have earned a university degree, 35 percent of all Asian Americans have done so.

Why have Asian American students done so well? The researchers credit

"strong parental pressure and support and a level of discipline that other ethnic groups lack."

Asian Americans also outperform white Americans in professional life. A higher percentage of them hold white-collar jobs. And the 1980 median *family* income for Asian Americans (\$23,600) is higher than for white and black Americans (\$20,800 and \$12,674), largely because a higher proportion of Asian American households (63 percent) contain two or more wage earners.

Indeed, most Asian American families are larger than their American counterparts, and many include adult relatives. These "members of the householder's extended family" help to boost family income, to provide child care, and to cut rent costs.

Thanks to such family teamwork, researchers conclude, "even the most disadvantaged immigrants begin to climb up the American ladder."

"College Responses to Low Achieving Students."

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Orlando, Fla. 32887. 108 pp. \$28.00.

Authors: John E. Roueche, George A. Baker, Suanne D. Roueche

Every autumn at the University of California, Los Angeles, about one-half of the incoming freshmen take, and fail, an English proficiency examination.

According to the authors, education specialists at the University of Texas at Austin, UCLA's students are not much different from those anywhere else. "It is not uncommon," they write, "to find 30-40 percent of entering freshmen reading below a seventh-grade level."

Why are today's high school graduates so ill-prepared for college work? Because high schools, the authors say, now require only that their graduates attain "competence" in reading, writing, and mathematics. And competence means performing on what is now defined as an

eighth-grade level.

To find out how colleges and universities are coping with freshmen who have not mastered the basics, the authors queried 2,508 institutions of higher education—large universities as well as small liberal arts and community colleges.

Overall, they discovered, 84 percent of the institutions offered students basic skills courses; 80 percent provide some type of special services, such as counseling, or tutoring; and 41 percent have established "learning centers"—half of which have been constructed since 1970. Roughly 15 percent of all college freshmen now attend at least one remedial class in the three Rs.

While all types of colleges and univer-

sities provide remedial education, some provide more than others. Ninety-five percent of community colleges, but only 67 percent of liberal arts colleges, offer basic skills instruction. The figures for public and private institutions vary widely: 92 percent versus 67 percent.

In 1977, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching urged colleges *not* to accept permanent respon-

sibility for overcoming their students' basic deficiencies. But today most institutions of higher learning, the authors point out, cannot be too choosy in selecting the freshman class; the nation's pool of applicants has been shrinking since the passage of the large "baby boom" generation into adulthood. Thus, colleges must either prepare their new students for college, or go out of business.

"Mortality of Nuclear Weapons Test Participants."

National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. 47 pp.
Authors: C. Dennis Robinette, Seymour Jablon, Thomas L. Preston

On August 31, 1957, the U.S. military detonated a nuclear weapon in the desert near Las Vegas, Nev. In 1979, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta reported that eight of the 3,224 servicemen who had participated in the test, code-named SMOKY, had since died from leukemia, a form of cancer that can be caused by radiation.

Given the number and demographic characteristics of the servicemen, the CDC said, only 3.1 men should have died from that disease.

Why did an "extra" 4.9 men succumb to leukemia? The CDC report caused scientists to wonder if low levels of radiation were more hazardous than they thought. And some of the servicemen involved feared that the government might have needlessly endangered their lives.

To see if the CDC's findings were generally true, the National Research Coun-

cil's Medical Follow-Up Agency (MFUA) examined the death records of 4,841 men who had participated in SMOKY and other nuclear tests, carried out at the Nevada Test Site and at the Bikini and Eniwetok atolls in the central Pacific during the 1950s.

The authors, all MFUA staffers, confirmed the CDC's findings: More SMOKY participants had died of leukemia than expected. But the opposite was true for the participants from the other test shots. Forty-six men died from leukemia—six fewer than expected. Why? The MFUA surmised that the soldiers, as a group, were healthier than most Americans.

What then caused the unexpected deaths from leukemia at SMOKY? The researchers conclude that it was either a "chance aberration" or SMOKY produced heavier doses of radiation than originally estimated.