

ABSTRACT

Immigration has been a subject of controversy throughout American history. In this nation, where the notion of “land of immigrants” was strongly embraced, leaders have been consistently struggling with immigration issues, and more than once their policy has had momentous consequences on the fate of foreign immigrants. The Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 marked a watershed in the American immigration policy as the very first one to impose restrictions on a specific group of immigrants, the Chinese. The Act triggered widespread concern among people in American society, and ultimately received the majority’s support on the grounds that Chinese immigrants posed direct threats to the nation, both racially and economically.

The intent of this research paper is to examine this particular controversial Act in the light of American laws and values. Based on a wide range of governmental and legal documents, online and printed publications, the paper argues that by passing the legislation, the American government deliberately and seriously challenged the nation’s laws and long-standing traditional values. Besides, the research also attempts to analyze the historical background and justifications that led to the passage of the Act.