

U.S. Historical Legacies of Blame: China and Chinese Immigration

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International Affairs Honors

University of Colorado, Boulder

Defense Date: April 7th, 2021

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This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Katherine Alexander, Dr. Douglas Snyder, and Dr. William Wei. Their encouragement and support is the reason I felt the confidence to apply to graduate school and I am eternally grateful. Thank you for everything.

Abstract

The present research is a qualitative study investigating how rhetorical blaming of China and Chinese immigrants has influenced historical and contemporary discussions regarding American economic shortcomings. To explore this, a thematic and comparative analysis is utilized on the two time periods of Chinese exclusionary immigration and the U.S.-China trade war to demonstrate how blame rhetoric remains prevalent in U.S. governmental decision-making. Research was performed on the Burlingame Treaty of 1868, the Angell Treaty of 1880, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In order to analyze rhetorical blaming, newspapers, political cartoons, and governmental legislation were viewed through the thematic lens of tropes. These tropes were then applied to the U.S-China trade war, with conclusions demonstrating that rhetorical blame rhetoric remains prevalent in governmental decision-making.

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I. Introduction

At the peak of discussions between the United States and China regarding the possibility of a trade war in 2018, the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that “a glass is easily broken, but difficult to repair.”¹ While Minister Wang Yi’s remark was specific to the events of the 2018 trade war, his statement reflects the historical trajectory of U.S.-China relations and not solely China’s opinions of U.S. foreign policy. The fragmentation of relations has created an environment not conducive to cooperation. Misgivings regarding trade policy and disagreements on China’s accumulation of power remain at the forefront of relations. The Trump administration took what could be considered an anti-Chinese approach, arguing that China was a bully and played unfairly within the international economy. China’s global rise to power has warranted consistent adaptation from the United States and its foreign policy. Some politicians believe that additional cooperation is needed, while others feel that cooperation is unproductive due to an uncompromising and deceitful approach on the part of China.

While policy implemented during the Trump administration does not encompass all attitudes towards China in the 21st century, the Trump administration’s stances and policies reveal deeper narratives that persist throughout the U.S. government and population. There is historical precedent in the perception of China as the “other” and how this perception influences relations today. Understanding and creating clear connections between the history of anti-Chinese sentiment and its presence in political figures’ opinions, congressional hearings, and governmental processes paves the way for more productive policy. This perception of China as the “other” is closely associated with sentiments of economic discontent in the United States. Insight into economic disaffection as well as economic shortcomings, and their innate

¹ Kimberly, “After the Trade War, US-China Relations Will Never Be the Same.”

relationship with blame rhetoric in the United States, can create context into deeply ingrained and problematic language.

This paper seeks to answer two questions: 1. *How has rhetorical blaming of China shaped historical and contemporary discussions about American economic shortcomings?* 2. *What similarities exist between the late 1800s debate surrounding Chinese immigration and today's trade disputes?* When looking back on the development of relations, acknowledging how foundations were formed plays a critical role in working to rectify present-day misconceptions regarding how to approach U.S.-China relations.

II. Background

Ignorance stemming from the origins of historical legacies in current rhetoric has resulted in a single-dimensional approach to policy creation. The 2018 U.S.-China trade war represents an instance where blame rhetoric has played a role in the United States' approach to trade relations with China. On a more critical level, the U.S.-China trade war is reflective of the United States' utilization of China and the Chinese people as scapegoats for economic shortcomings.

When analyzing the U.S.-China trade war, it is essential to make clear delineations between valid concerns regarding economic policy and blame rhetoric used by the United States to divert responsibility regarding economic realities onto China. Historical origins associated with blaming China and the Chinese people can be seen in Chinese exclusionary immigration policies. This paper focuses on legislation from the 1800s to demonstrate how the United States government has evolved to incorporate blame rhetoric as adequate justification for economic shortcomings.

Exclusionary immigration policy represented a turning point in how the Chinese people were viewed in the eyes of the American people and the United States government. In the 1850s,

Chinese immigrants pursued migration to the United States due to the economic instability present in China. China was entrenched in political turmoil. This political instability accompanied by an increased foreign presence acted as a catalyst towards political revolutions. Chinese immigrants migrated to the United States due to prospects of jobs from gold mining and the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad.

In the 1800s, Chinese immigrants were essential in fulfilling labor shortages, yet a competitive anti-Chinese attitude was adopted by “native” or White workers. Anti-Chinese attitudes were influenced by the Chinese immigrants’ willingness to work for significantly lower wages than White laborers. By 1860, Chinese immigrants were “the single largest foreign ethnic group in California.”² Chinese immigrants were singled out in the form of pay disparities, taxation, and poor labor treatment. In the journal article “Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California,” Mark Kanazawa draws a clear distinction between the competitive nature present between the White laborers and the immigrants, pointing directly to how the Chinese immigrant specifically bore the blame for economic realities that were not their fault.³ He goes on to assert that while everyone was placed in a similarly competitive environment, Chinese immigrants were singled out exclusively. Soon after, governmental legislation slowly began to indicate changing rhetoric in how immigrants were viewed and taken advantage of, resulting in the California State Legislature implementing the Foreign Miners’ Tax (a \$20 tax imposed on individuals who were not citizens of the United States).⁴

In tandem with the development of anti-Chinese sentiment during the Gold Rush, the Transcontinental Railroad and its desperate need for additional labor furthered these

² Kanazawa, “Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation,” 781-785.

³ Ibid., 782.

⁴ Ibid., 782.

apprehensions. More than 2.5 million Chinese immigrants helped construct the Transcontinental Railroad, with the massive transportation project being near impossible without Chinese laborers.⁵ Companies argued that White laborers lacked the reliability that the Chinese immigrants had. In addition to a lack of motivation and reliability, other economic opportunities had held greater appeal to the White man.⁶ Chinese immigrants could be paid significantly less than White laborers and were also willing to work in extraordinarily dangerous conditions. At this time, the Chinese, in general, were viewed as a morally inferior and intellectually incapable group of people. Yet, many companies described the Chinese laborers as more hardworking than other immigrant groups.⁷ The experience of the Chinese immigrants during the 1800s was entrenched in hardship. The conditions in which Chinese immigrants worked and the racism they experienced were only exacerbated by the White laborers' complaints.⁸ The Gold Rush and the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad served as the starting points from which the Chinese immigrant's association with the "other" became radically reflected in government policy, resulting in the creation of the Angell Treaty of 1880 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 does not contain the blatant anti-Chinese rhetoric that is seen in the implementation of later exclusionary immigration policies; however, it served as critical legislation that was eventually built upon to reflect the public's anti-Chinese sentiments. The Burlingame Treaty established a formal understanding with China regarding the presence of free and open immigration in addition to having granted China most-favored-nation status through trade. The Angell Treaty served as a revision to the Burlingame Treaty and offered

⁵ Sayej, "Forgotten by Society' – How Chinese Migrants Built the Transcontinental Railroad."

⁶ Obenzinger, "Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Library of Congress, "Struggling for Work."

starkly different motivations in addressing Chinese immigration. The Angell Treaty was enacted in 1880, and resulted in the suspension of open immigration (skilled and unskilled labor) from China. Prior to the revision of the Angell Treaty, legislation proposed in Congress to limit Chinese immigration increased, signaling the growing discontent among political figures and constituent populations concerning the Chinese immigrant's presence.

Both the Angell Treaty and the Chinese Exclusion Act demonstrate a gradual progression of how the social animosity towards Chinese immigrants became integrated into governmental decision-making. The Angell Treaty served as one of the first pieces of legislation in which the United States declared sovereignty over its ability to limit immigration with quotas.⁹ The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 specifically restricted immigration in all forms, demonstrating that the progression of anti-Chinese sentiment had evolved from the Angell Treaty's use of just quotas to outright exclusion.

President Chester A. Arthur made efforts to withstand the mounting pressure to enact the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 for fear of jeopardizing relations with China.¹⁰ Yet, the White laborer's growing discontent culminated in the government's eventual implementation of these exclusionary policies. The Chinese Exclusion Act instigated a ten-year moratorium on immigration from China, with substantial fines being imposed on Chinese immigrants who were deemed to be in the United States illegally.¹¹

III. Review of Relevant Literature

The U.S.-China trade war and Chinese exclusionary immigration are two topics that have received extensive analysis individually, though they are rarely analyzed comparatively. Other existing literature presents clear perceptions of the "other" and how "otherness" influences

⁹ U.S. Congress, "Angell Treaty of 1880."

¹⁰ Hairston, "Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882," 247-248.

¹¹ Ibid.

attitudes in the United States. Current research has also applied the Chinese immigrant as the “other” to how newspapers perpetuated this isolation during the 1800s.

The article titled “The Legacy of Racially Restrictive Immigration Laws and Policies and the Construction of the American National Identity” by Enid Trucios-Haynes creates an understanding of how perceptions of immigrants have permanently influenced government policy. She states, “the theory of race as a valid proxy for citizenship eligibility and full membership in the political community continues today. This correlation is based on the false assumption that noncitizens of color do not wish to and are not capable of fully participating in U.S. social structures and political institutions.”¹² The author identifies an extraordinarily significant identity represented in both the U.S. government policies and the White population towards immigration. She states that acceptance of a multiracial population only occurs if the multiracial population is subordinate and non-threatening to the dominant Western European culture.

Bill Ong Hing connects the alienation experienced by Chinese immigrants to an economic setting in “Chinese Immigration and Exclusion (US), Nineteenth-Century.” He outlines how Chinese immigration was encouraged at the start of the Gold Rush with states such as California providing immigrants with financial incentives to pursue employment.¹³ In the 1860s, anti-Chinese sentiment began to evolve with the implementation of exclusionary immigration arising from opposition of Chinese immigrants working on the Transcontinental Railroad.

Origins and perceptions of the “other” are discussed by Robert Villanueva in “Gilded Freedom: U.S. Government Exclusion of Chinese Migrants, 1848-1882.” He points to the 1850

¹² Trucios-Haynes, “The Legacy of Racially Restrictive Immigration Laws and Policies and the Construction of the American National Identity Symposium.”

¹³ Hing, “Chinese Immigration and Exclusion (US), Nineteenth Century.”

Foreign Miners' Tax as one of the first governmental policies that began to "rectify" wage gaps between Chinese, Mexican, and White miners.¹⁴ The Foreign Miners' Tax was created to "even" the playing field for White laborers and decrease competition between the labor groups. The tax resulted in the displacement of Chinese immigrants within the gold and coal mining industry. Villanueva further argues that the Foreign Miners' Tax and exclusionary immigration resulted in a historical legacy of punishing immigrants, specifically Chinese and Mexican immigrants, for the economic realities of the United States.

The establishment of the sociological "other" and its historical significance with Chinese immigrants is analyzed in "Unlimited American Power: How Four California Newspapers Covered Chinese Labor and the Building of the Transcontinental Railroad, 1865–1869," with authors Chiu and Kirk depicting the evolution of America's perception of the Chinese. Chiu and Kirk describe the initial need for Chinese labor, citing that White laborers refused to accept the offered wages, and companies had to seek out alternative labor sources¹⁵. Chiu and Kirk establish that there was no other labor group willing to provide the manpower to fill this position. This paper identifies the early beginnings of negative sentiments from Irish immigrants who felt the Chinese were stealing their jobs.

Most importantly, Chiu and Kirk establish how newspapers served as the battlegrounds through which these sentiments were widely publicized, with "writers of the period [exploiting] familiar narratives of "otherness" to "[tell] stories about the unfamiliar Chinese."¹⁶ This work also draws distinct comparisons to the development of the Chinese immigrant as the "other" in different states across America, creating a cohesive narrative demonstrating how racism overtook

¹⁴ Villanueva, "Gilded Freedom: U.S. Government Exclusion of Chinese Migrants, 1848-1882," 7.

¹⁵ Chiu and Kirk, "'Unlimited American Power,'" 507-524.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 507-524

states' boundaries. Chiu and Kirk's narrative lacks a connection between the association of the United States' use of the Chinese immigrant to absolve itself of its economic shortcomings.

The book *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* by Andrew Gyory focuses on answering the question: Why did the United States pass the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882? This book is a comprehensive analysis of the decision-making and individuals that influenced the ratification of the Chinese Exclusion Act. At the end of the book, Gyory asserts that the Chinese Exclusion Act served as a significant turning point in immigration legislation within the United States.¹⁷ While this book diligently establishes a deeper understanding of the motives behind exclusionary immigration, little is done to identify the evolution of these policies and how current policy might still reflect the rhetoric that was born during the 1800s. Scholar Lon Kurashige establishes a compelling debate in the book *Two Faces of Exclusion: The Untold History of Anti-Asian Racism in the United States*, published in 2016. Competing understandings are presented in the late 1800s and early 1900s regarding whether anti-Chinese sentiment was a widely held belief or one that was isolated to specific communities.¹⁸

The research paper titled "Framing China: Discourses of othering in U.S. news and political rhetoric," by Su-Mei Ooi and Gwen D'Arcangelis, draws a distinct connection between present-day relations in the United States and China's othering through analysis of political rhetoric and newspapers. Ooi and D'Arcangelis begin with the statement that the "Western construction of the cultural and moral inferiority of China" has led to connections in the rhetoric that surrounds China's currency valuation, cyber intrusions that target commercial and military information, and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) disputes.¹⁹ This article creates a unique perspective of China's depictions in political policy, introducing societally constructed tropes of

¹⁷ Gyory, *Closing the Gate*.

¹⁸ Kurashige, *Two Faces of Exclusion*.

¹⁹ Ooi and D'Arcangelis, "Framing China," 269-283.

China. Ooi and Arcangelis argue that Orientalism and anti-Chinese sentiment are connected to current divisions in U.S.-China relations. However, this article fails to demonstrate the historical origins of these tropes and how historical events ensured their prolonged impact.

Establishing an understanding of racially charged narratives within the United States towards China can only bolster relations, with acknowledgment representing the first step needed to move forward. The connection of the above-mentioned topics through a historical lens, including their relationships to present-day economic policy and rhetoric within the government, has not been fully established. Interlacing the U.S.-China trade war with historical policy and rhetoric creates an ever-important timeline of how biased anti-Chinese policies have become deeply rooted in decision-making from the United States towards China.

IV. Methodology

This research paper's intent is to identify ways in which historical legacies have become ingrained in rhetoric and policy involving U.S.-China relations. Two different forms of analysis will be used, the first being a thematic analysis performed on primary source documents (newspaper articles, speeches, political cartoons, and governmental legislation) and the second being a comparative analysis on the time periods of exclusionary immigration and the U.S.-China trade war.

A. Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis will provide common themes, patterns, and ideas that consistently present themselves within literature, governmental legislation, and political cartoons. This form of analysis will allow patterns of U.S. blame rhetoric towards China regarding economic shortcomings to become apparent. The thematic analysis will be performed on both time periods, with exclusionary immigration and the U.S.-China trade war both being independently evaluated.

The three pieces of legislation that will be examined are the Burlingame Treaty of 1868, the Angell Treaty of 1880, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Newspapers from 1868-1870 will be used for the Burlingame Treaty analysis. This will ensure the inclusion of anti-Chinese sentiments that developed after the implementation of the policy. The Angell Treaty will encompass dates from 1878 to 1880. This section will focus on government documents, newspapers, and political cartoons during the three years before the implementation of the treaty. The data collection years for the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 will be from 1880 to 1882. This data collection will also encompass government documents, newspapers, and political cartoons. In regard to the U.S.-China trade war, data from 2018 to 2020 will be considered. This data will include government documents and published articles.

Thematic analysis will be performed based on the tropes of China and the Chinese immigrant as a cheat, as a thief, as a threat, and as invasive. A trope refers to a recurring theme present in a variety of different media. There will be no independent or dependent variables; instead, observations will be drawn through the examination of qualitative data. Other methods were considered for analysis, such as the creation of data sets in which vocabulary would be quantifiably measured. However, identifying the persistence of tropes in literature and other media through quantified data would limit the ability to perform comparative analysis as well as create isolated understandings of blame rhetoric.

1. Definition of Tropes and Applicability

The Chinese and China as a threat, as a cheat, as a thief, and as invasive present unique but deeply ingrained biases with which to evaluate primary source material. China and the Chinese immigrant as a cheat within this paper refers to the historical and modern-day perception that China often does not play fair and manipulates to achieve success. An example of the cheat

trope can be seen in the article titled “China Is Cheating at a Rigged Game” from *foreignpolicy.com*. The author, Jake Werner, argues that China operates with an inherent duplicitous nature. While Werner goes on to defend China’s motivation in the global economy, his rhetoric implies that China is still using unfair tactics in order to gain high levels of economic development, and that cheating is the predominant way in which China can achieve this.²⁰ China and the Chinese immigrant as a threat refers to rhetoric often used to describe the impending harm that will likely befall the United States due to China and the Chinese immigrant. In an article published in *The Washington Post*, author Fareed Zakaria argues that China is using both unfair trade practices and protectionist policy to cheat its way to economic growth.²¹ Similarly to the rhetoric used to describe China in the present-day international community, Chinese immigrants were often described in similar terms with White laborers arguing that they did not play fair in the job market and were inherently deceitful. These two examples allow one to conceptualize the utility in the use of the cheat and threat tropes for thematic analysis across time periods.

The thief trope persists through many facets of the United States’ comprehension of China and the Chinese. The perception of the Chinese immigrant stealing jobs during the mid-1800 to early 1900s demonstrates how this trope became prevalent in rhetoric. An article published by the U.S. Embassy in Georgia titled “How the Chinese Communist Party steals science,” perfectly outlines the presence of the trope of China as the thief in current literature. The article explicitly states that it is the Chinese Communist Party’s goal to advance its military and economic power through the theft of technology and intellectual property.²²

²⁰ Werner, “China Is Cheating at a Rigged Game.”

²¹ Zakaria, “Trump Is Right: China’s a trade cheat.”

²² U.S. Embassy in Georgia, “How the Chinese Communist Party Steals Science.”

The invasive trope has become innately intertwined with China's global rise to power. This trope persists throughout the United States government in vocalizing dissent towards China's economic policy. A research paper titled "The United States, China, and invasive species: present status and future prospects," by Peter T. Jenkins and Harold A. Mooney, demonstrates how the perception of China as invasive is inherent in the United States' approach to economic relations, specifically with trade.²³

There is validity in using the aforementioned tropes as this method allows analysis to cross time periods. These tropes allow themes to be constructively compared and also prioritize clear routes in which to identify similarities and differences between Chinese exclusionary immigration and the U.S.-China trade war.

B. Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis will be performed between the two time periods to contrast how and in what ways historical legacies have remained salient. For connections to be made, a comparative analysis will draw parallels between the thematic conclusions that arose from blame rhetoric and tropes in both time periods. Comparison will occur with direct quotes being used to assist in demonstrating how sentiments have evolved and remained stagnant throughout society and the government. The choice to perform a comparative analysis on Chinese Exclusionary Immigration and the U.S.-China Trade War does exclude over 100 years of history between the two countries. The decision to focus on the 19th and 21st centuries was strategic in that it represented differences in demographic composition, partisanship in government, and cultural influences. The evolution in rhetoric in some areas and lack thereof in others is more identifiable when excluding the 20th century because qualitative differences across the space in time are more pronounced.

²³ Jenkins and Mooney, "The United States, China, and Invasive Species."

C. Anti-Asian Sentiment and Anti-Chinese Sentiment

In determining which historical time periods to research, arguments can be made that the Chinese Exclusion Act and the blame rhetoric that became popularized during the 1800s were more reflective of anti-Asian rhetoric and the “Yellow Peril” phenomenon. While racism is present generally for Asian immigrants, for the purpose of this thesis, blame rhetoric towards Chinese immigrants is the primary consideration due to its economic relationship and its prolonged impacts into the 21st century. To understand the validity in focusing predominantly on blame rhetoric surrounding Chinese immigrants, United States census numbers can provide a degree of understanding for why Chinese immigrants and the attitudes towards them remain prevalent. The 1880 census reveals that Chinese immigrants composed the majority of Asian immigration in the United States. Chinese immigrants totaled 105,465 in comparison to 145 Japanese immigrants.²⁴ While the Chinese immigrant’s increased presence does suggest that their influence was of greater note, census reports should not be the only reason for this justification.

The 1880 census and many other censuses from this time period reflect prejudicial sentiments which had a great influence on how numbers were reported. This census did not allow individuals to self-report race.²⁵ Race was instead determined by the individuals conducting the census. Taking these factors into account, the 1880 census's portrayal in congressional settings was influenced by many individuals’ and politicians’ goals to prevent Chinese people from immigrating. Political figures would exaggerate the numbers in the census to garner support for exclusion.²⁶ The 1880 census remained a central point in discussions concerning whether or not the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 should be enacted. Data does demonstrate that Chinese

²⁴ Scharf, “The Farce of the Chinese Exclusion Laws,” 85-97.

²⁵ Hochschild and Powell, “Racial Reorganization and the United States Census 1850–1930.”

²⁶ Ibid.

immigrants composed the largest of all Asian immigrant groups at the time, having an impact on multiethnic communities as well as the labor market.

Additional importance can be placed on the differing roles that the Japanese government took in contrast to the Chinese government regarding how immigrants were treated. These differing roles influenced how blame rhetoric was formed and which groups the United States could single out in governmental legislation. In addition to the reduced numbers of Japanese immigrants in U.S. society, the Japanese government issued envoys to prevent the same level of discrimination that Chinese immigrants had experienced. In the book titled *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, author Sucheng Chan describes how extensive efforts were made by the Japanese government through diplomacy and audits to prevent such discrimination from occurring.²⁷ By the early 1900s, Japanese immigrants became included in anti-immigration rhetoric. Blame rhetoric persists throughout all Asian immigration groups, yet it is argued that “Chinese immigrants suffered worse treatment than any other group that came voluntarily to the U.S.”²⁸

Whether it be the Chinese massacre of 1871 in which 19 Chinese immigrants were killed, the Rocks Springs Massacre of 1885 in which 28 Chinese immigrants were killed, or the Tacoma riot of 1885 in which the Chinese population was forcibly removed from Washington territory, violence against Chinese immigrants during this time period was extraordinarily prevalent.²⁹ In the book titled *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*, Jean Pfaelzer states that between 1849 and 1906, more than 100 purges of Chinese residents occurred in just

²⁷ Chan, *Asian Americans*, 104–105, 109.

²⁸ Library of Congress, “Intolerance.”

²⁹ Gomez, “Mapping Anti-Chinese Violence.”

California.³⁰ This singling out is reflected in every level of governmental policy that explicitly and repeatedly identifies Chinese immigrants.

To begin addressing the questions of *How has rhetoric blaming China shaped historical and contemporary discussions about American economic shortcomings? What similarities exist between the late 1800s debate surrounding Chinese immigration and today's trade disputes?* a chronological approach will be utilized in order to create clarity in the evolution of tropes and rhetoric.

V. The Burlingame Treaty of 1868

The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 does not represent exclusionary immigration policy, but it serves as an excellent starting point for the “othering” of the Chinese immigrant. This section will address the enactment of the Burlingame Treaty and its relation with the blooming of anti-Chinese sentiment during the oncoming economic downturn. The Burlingame Treaty established a direct path for Chinese immigration into the United States. It lifted all former restrictions, ensuring that large-scale immigration could begin. The Burlingame Treaty’s goals were to foster positive relations with China and while this was achieved to some degree, the progression of racism in the wake of the Burlingame Treaty created social undercurrents in the United States for years to come.

To demonstrate the progression of the tropes of the Chinese immigrant as a thief, as a cheat, as a threat, and as invasive, a variety of different newspapers from different geographical locations will be used. When utilizing tropes to understand the evolution of rhetoric, it is critical to acknowledge that positive perceptions did persist throughout the population. Individuals and politicians did attribute value to the presence of the Chinese immigrant. Regardless, undercurrents of anti-Chinese sentiment permeated into the status quo. Contrasting

³⁰ Pfaelzer, *Driven Out*.

generalizations were made regarding the impacts of Chinese immigrants, with some newspapers arguing that their presence was beneficial to the development of the U.S. economy because they filled labor shortages that otherwise would remain unfilled. Yet, the voice of the White laborer was gaining momentum and influence within policy, overpowering any rhetoric that supported Chinese immigration. The White laborer's animosity grew from the belief that stolen jobs and lack of economic prosperity were the Chinese immigrant's fault. These beliefs eventually dominated opinions on who assumed blame in the 1873 economic downturn.

The Burlingame Treaty (1868) represented the United States government's intention to normalize relations with China and pursue economic growth by means of Chinese immigration and access to the Chinese economy. The vision that Chinese immigrants would benefit the economy was not shared across the country. Newspapers often used terminology depicting Chinese immigrants as goods and not as people. An article in the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* (July 8th, 1870) discussed the negative implications that the importation of the Chinese immigrant would have on White Christian laborers, pointing towards a disconnect between the Chinese as human and the Chinese as an object.³¹ The article reads "the Chinaman who is now imported to take the place of the Christian New England shoemaker comes in duty free."³² Similarly, in the *New York Herald* on July 5th, 1869, the statement "the importation of Chinese" is discussed as if the Chinese were goods or objects and not a group of people.³³ Desensitization and alienation towards the Chinese immigrant as a person bolster the United States' ability to blame them. If the Chinese immigrant is nothing other than an object or an abstraction, and not a group of individuals with dreams and goals, and China is nothing more than a far-away location, scapegoating becomes easy.

³¹"The Ruin of Radical Rule."

³² Ibid.

³³ "The Mistake of San Francisco-Opening for a Chinese City on the Pacific."

A. Newspaper Analysis

The three years after the implementation of the Burlingame Treaty and the newspapers associated with that time period demonstrate a chronological progression in the development of anti-Chinese rhetoric. The increased presence of Chinese immigrants resulted in the further perpetuation of the invasive trope. The article titled “The Chinese.” in the *Chicago Tribune* (June 14, 1869) addresses what approach should be taken to address Chinese immigration now that the labor group is no longer needed for the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. The author takes an interesting stance on the United States’ approach to Chinese immigrants, arguing that the mistreatment of the Chinese immigrant could result in backlash from China. The power and wealth commanded by China warrant greater respect and consideration from the United States government.³⁴

Whether or not China and Chinese immigrants pose threats, statements such as “it will be seen that the population of China alone is greater than that of all the great nations of the world combined” and “if this nation was warlike it would conquer all Europe or Asia or Africa” paint the image of a dangerous China waiting to pounce on the world.³⁵ The author goes on to claim that given the opportunity, China would “swarm” the United States and its economy, with the term “swarm” referencing the associated connotation of invasiveness. The word “dormant” is used later in the article to describe the Chinese immigrant, implying that this invasive aspect of the immigrant could be subdued but never eliminated. The author argues in favor of fair treatment towards Chinese immigrants to mitigate the Chinese threat, fearing that Chinese control of the United States government could become a reality otherwise. The article makes compelling arguments on how to improve relations with China and the Chinese immigrant, but

³⁴ About, “The Chinese.”

³⁵ Ibid.

motivations to improve relations are based on the perception that China posed an imminent threat to the well-being of the United States and its economic development.

In the *New York Herald*, the article “The Mistake of San Francisco-Opening for a Chinese City on the Pacific” (July 5th, 1869) introduces the need for a geographic decentralization of Chinese immigrants in San Francisco. According to the author, the congregation of Chinese immigrants in cities would be undesirable.³⁶ If the Chinese were to organize and construct a city in San Francisco, the United States economy would be placed in jeopardy as these Chinese cities would become “a formidable rival.”³⁷ In considering this statement, it might seem unrelated to current issues as the Chinese did have separate spaces across the country and these cities did not become formidable rivals. However, a deeper analysis reveals an underlying fear that if the Chinese immigrant gains economic power, the United States will not be able to compete. The rhetoric within this article is present today in U.S.- China relations as well. Present-day commentators argue that China’s centralization of power and its economic growth has detracted from the United States’ own economy.

An article titled “The Chinese and Their Coming” in *The Macon Weekly Telegraph* (July 16th, 1869) further insinuates the Chinese immigrant’s perceived negative relationship with the economy and the oncoming job shortage. This article summarizes rising concerns in San Francisco regarding the recent influx of Chinese immigrants. The thief trope takes a predominant presence in the grievances White laborers express about the Chinese. The article states that “the employment of these slaves displaces a like portion of White labor.”³⁸ The author also utilizes fear of poor economic growth and the negative implications it could have on younger generations to garner support for the removal of Chinese immigrants. The article goes on to assert that the

³⁶ “The Mistake of San Francisco-Opening for a Chinese City on the Pacific.”

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “The Chinese and Their Coming.”

White person's quality of life will be significantly decreased. The theft trope is further emphasized when the article states that "the money paid to Chinese labor has been drained out of the country for export to Asia."³⁹ These comments instill the idea in the reader that if White people had been given these jobs, reinvestment of the money could have more effectively spurred the United States' economic growth.

The article titled "Chinese Labor: A California View of the Question" from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (July 20th, 1869) shows how the invasive trope began to take form within the White laborer's perception of the Chinese immigrants' influence in the economy. The article states that California will likely be "over-flowing" and "over-run" with Chinese immigrants if immigration is to continue at the rate that had previously been allowed.⁴⁰ The word choice and the negative connotation associated with the words "over-flowing" and "over-run" are indicative of the fear that the Chinese immigrant could negatively impact society. The author argues for a reduction in Chinese immigration, asserting the influx of Chinese immigrants could create an unfit economic and social environment for White people.

The article argues that it is to California's economic advantage to encourage and support the employment of White laborers. One of the economic advantages in hiring White laborers is that the wealth belongs to "ourselves" in contrast to the Chinese, who consolidate and guard their wealth, leaving little for the United States' benefit. This article does allude to what becomes a prominent argument among the White laborers and an argument that is also consistently used to rationalize poor economic performance. The general public, as represented by newspapers, blames economic shortcomings on the Chinese immigrant's taking of jobs. The word choice suggests that wrongdoing is occurring, with the trope of the thief taking root in how the White

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ "Chinese Labor. A California View of the Question."

laborer chooses to associate lack of economic growth in the United States with the presence of the Chinese immigrant. The article concludes with the statement “let us send to the Atlantic States and to Europe, and we may obtain all that we desire, which will be vastly preferable to importing Chinaman by hundreds of thousands.” The author of the article draws clear divisions in how he views immigration and its relationship to the United States. His support for immigration from more “desirable” geographies is absent in contrast to the blame rhetoric and economic connotation that is present in his sentiments on Chinese immigration.

An article titled “The Chinese” from the *Chicago Tribune* (August 4th, 1870) published demands of White laborers during the Anti-Chinese Convention of California. These demands and the justification that accompanied them contain explicit terminology inherent in the construction and integration of the thief trope. The letter provides reasoning for why they are demanding the removal of Chinese immigrants, stating that their presence is unlawful because the Burlingame Treaty had unfairly allowed it. The language used to describe Chinese immigrants is as follows: “Your laborers have dug our gold, carried it away, and impoverished our mines,” drawing clear associations between the economic shortcomings of the Gold Rush and the presence of the Chinese immigrant.⁴¹ This association with the Gold Rush presents the idea that the economic growth that has been derived from natural resources should remain in the United States and not be shared with the Chinese immigrant and thus China.

An article published by *The Macon Weekly Telegraph* (August 13, 1869) titled “Chinese Puzzle Among Politicians” excerpts stories from newspapers across the country on the topic of Chinese immigration. The newspaper quotes an article from the *Norfolk Journal* that uses the familiar invasive trope: “...the Asiatic flood must be prevented from overflowing this country.”⁴²

⁴¹ “The Chinese.”

⁴² “Chinese Puzzle among Politicians.”

The verbiage of an “Asiatic flood” directly alludes to the perceived overwhelming nature of the immigrant and its relationship to the recent influx of Chinese immigrants. The word choice, *overflowing*, indicates that the United States lacks the capacity to handle the destruction that Chinese immigrants will cause.

The Philadelphia Inquirer published an account of a meeting for people who opposed Coolie (an offensive term to describe an unskilled native laborer from Asian countries) immigration (September 10, 1870). White laborers and politicians would use meetings such as this one to vocalize dissatisfaction with the current status of Chinese immigration. This article discusses an individual named Mr. William P. Dickinson who is quoted saying that “the disadvantage of Chinese importation arises from the fact of their great numbers,” which will “inundate” the country.⁴³ The term “inundate” coincides with the trope of invasiveness. Furthermore, Mr. Dickinson stated that clear economic ramifications have originated from the presence of the Chinese immigrant, arguing that “California today is poor to what she was three years ago, and why? Because of the coolies.”⁴⁴ The poor economic growth within California became associated with the Chinese immigrants’ presence, regardless of how economic misfortunes actually arose.

The Cincinnati Daily Enquirer published an article titled “The Ruin of Radical Rule” (July 8th, 1870) that discussed what the author believed was hypocrisy regarding the protection afforded to factors of production in shoes but not to the makers of the shoes, White laborers.⁴⁵ The article explores the impact of Chinese immigration on the shoemaking industry in Massachusetts. The author identifies that almost everything surrounding the creation of shoes is protected from foreign competition, whether it be the leather used for the shoe or the oils and

⁴³ “Meeting in Opposition to Coolie Importation.”

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “The Ruin of Radical Rule.”

chemicals also necessary in their manufacture. The author draws attention to the perceived inequality experienced by White laborers as they are not protected from Chinese immigrants and the lower wages they are willing to accept. This article directly coincides with the trope of the Chinese representing thieves, with the author writing that Chinese immigrants have “taken the place of white workmen,” resulting in White laborers “[having] been robbed.”⁴⁶

In the *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 22, 1870), a resolution at the Mechanics State council that would limit Chinese immigration is outlined. The council feels that Americans need to be “saved” from Chinese immigrants. The article reads that “Chinese immigrants continue to flood the country with cheap labor, to the great injury of American mechanics and other men and women.”⁴⁷ The council identifies Chinese immigrants as a threat to the livelihoods of American mechanics. The trope of the Chinese being invasive and a threat are represented in the rhetoric that the Chinese are flooding the country and creating an unfair labor market.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Mechanic’s State Council.”

B. Political Cartoon Analysis



The Great Fear of the Period, 1860-1869, Lithograph, Library of Congress,

<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98502829/>.

A single political cartoon is used in this section due to the fact that political cartoons containing Chinese immigration imagery had not been utilized as prominently during the 1860s. This cartoon published by *White and Bauer* between the years of 1860 and 1868 references tropes that persist through present-day relations with the United States. *The Great Fear of the Period* contains a drawing of three different characters. The upper portion of the cartoon shows the Irish immigrant and the Chinese immigrant swallowing Uncle Sam. The lower portion of the cartoon shows the Chinese immigrant eventually consuming Uncle Sam and the Irish immigrant. This cartoon depicts the threat trope of the Chinese, with the implication that China will eventually ingest the United States. The background contains imagery of the Transcontinental

Railroad, a reference to the Chinese immigrants' presence in the building of the railroad, and the anti-Chinese sentiment closely tied to the industrialization effort.

C. Economic Realities and Blame Rhetoric: The Panic of 1873 and the Long Depression

The economic downturn that followed the implementation of the Burlingame Treaty furthered the development of anti-Chinese sentiment and its relationship with blame rhetoric. The Panic of 1873 was directly tied to Congress's passing of the Revenue Act of 1861 and the economic policy that accompanied it.⁴⁸ The printing of greenbacks (paper money) enabled payment for Civil War expenses and the construction of the railroad. \$356 million worth of greenbacks were printed.⁴⁹ This paper money had no gold or silver backing and was only based on the optimism of investors.⁵⁰ The years that followed were defined by unregulated growth, lack of government oversight, and corruption.

The panic's origins lie in over-speculation of the greenback's value. It soon became apparent to banks that as the costs of the railroad's construction increased, the capabilities to finance such a large project were no longer viable. Failing banks such as Jay Cooke and Co. served as a signal to the rest of the financial world that the risk and investment placed in the new railroad were not sustainable. Jay Cooke and Company no longer had the financial resources to market millions of dollars in railway bonds. Lack of financial capital was exacerbated by Ulysses S. Grant's monetary policy. His raising of interest rates and contraction of money supply only worsened the failing economy.

During this period, the culmination of five years of open immigration reached its boiling point. The economic downturn resulted in skyrocketing unemployment and the New York Stock

⁴⁸ Lovas, "The Panic of 1873."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Exchange temporarily closing for the first time in history.⁵¹ The economic impacts of the Panic of 1873 would evolve into a recession lasting six years in the United States. The social consequences were felt particularly acutely by the working class as wages collapsed, agricultural prices dropped, and mortgages became unavailable.⁵² This economic downturn only further revealed the concentration of wealth and the economic inequality in the United States. Individuals who owned the means of production were increasingly wealthy in contrast to laborers who lived in poverty. The lack of infrastructure within industrialized cities only became more pronounced as the long depression continued.⁵³

When viewing the evolution of blame rhetoric leading to this economic downturn, primary sources indicate the connection that White laborers made between the increased presence of the migrants and lack of jobs. The tropes of the Chinese as a thief, threat, cheat, and invasive took center stage in how White laborers established the justification for the economic downturn. White laborers argued that the Chinese were to blame for high unemployment and low wages regardless of the intangible connections between the failing economy and the Chinese immigrant's presence.⁵⁴ The United States' own economic policies deriving from the Revenue Act of 1861 and its inability to maintain the value of currency were only worsened by President Grant's fiscally conservative approach to the economy. The culmination of these actions caused what is now considered the first Great Depression in the United States, as opposed to the presence of Chinese immigrants in the labor market.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Barreyre, "The Politics of Economic Crises."

⁵³ Library of Congress, "City Life in the Late 19th Century - Rise of Industrial America, 1876-1900."

⁵⁴ Library of Congress, "Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History: Legislative Harassment."

⁵⁵ Lovas, "The Panic of 1873."

VI. The Angell Treaty of 1880

President Rutherford B. Hayes realized that he would eventually need to placate the rising concerns of White laborers and Western states regarding Chinese immigrants, so he appointed James Angell to revise a portion of the Burlingame Treaty. This revision, called the Angell Treaty, drastically changed the previously established standard of allowing free immigration between China and the United States. Although President Hayes had previously vetoed many bills that pursued exclusionary immigration because they violated the Burlingame Treaty, the Angell Treaty was passed as a way to address rising popular sentiments. The new treaty placed quotas and limits on immigration.

During the late 1800s, discussions involving assimilation and the Chinese immigrant's social impact on society became increasingly influential in government policy. The primary justification for supporting the enactment of this treaty was that Chinese immigrants were not capable of assimilating to the dominant U.S. culture. Government-funded investigations began into the presence of Chinese immigrants in the United States and their impact on social order. Concerns regarding the cleanliness of the Chinese immigrant, their negative influence on Christian ideals, and the vague dangers posed by the immigrant all became of great concern. The Angell Treaty of 1880 and the Chinese Exclusion Act represent legislation ingrained in blame rhetoric, but are also reflective of a desire to maintain social order through a dominant White population. In only 12 years, anti-Chinese sentiment had gone from being restricted to the domain of newspapers to being openly reflected in government policy. By allowing anti-Chinese sentiment to become a part of governmental policy, the validity of the White laborer's perceptions of the Chinese and the racist tropes associated with them became established.

Geography must be factored into the discussion of how anti-Chinese sentiment developed and became popularized in the three years prior to the Angell Treaty. Support for exclusionary immigration was pervasive, yet communities on the West Coast and East Coast had differing opinions on Chinese immigrants and whether they should be allowed to continue residing in the United States. Newspaper sources and political cartoons from the West Coast, namely *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *The San Francisco Wasp*, demonstrate how anti-Chinese sentiment was extraordinarily prominent, with racism taking center stage in the justification for exclusionary immigration. However, East Coast periodicals such as *The New York Times* published opinions based on differing experiences within the labor market. The East Coast associated more positive feelings with the presence of the Chinese immigrant. Although anti-Chinese sentiment still persisted on the East Coast, some value was seen in the presence of the Chinese immigrants because of the economic benefits they provided.

A. Political Cartoon Analysis



(?), *The Equal of Person's? Gibson and Loomis*, 1877, Lithograph, Thomas Nast Cartoons, <https://thomasnastcartoons.com/2014/02/15/equal-persons-gibson-loomis/>.

This political cartoon was published in 1877, one year before the data collection time range of 1878 to 1880. However as it was the first anti-Chinese political cartoon published in the *San Francisco Wasp*, its inclusion was warranted. *The Equal of Persons? Gibson and Loomis* depicts four different scenes encompassing the varied anti-Chinese sentiments evolving in society. This cartoon was created based on hearings from the Committee of the Senate of the State of California, in which people were questioned regarding the negative influences of the Chinese immigrant in furthering Christianity. The upper left-hand corner shows a Chinese immigrant carrying an axe aimed at a woman with the caption below reading “They are peaceable.” The visual of the Chinese immigrant carrying an axe points towards the perception that they are threats. The second illustration in the upper right-hand corner shows the Chinese immigrant in a dirty environment with the caption below reading “They are clean.” The lower left-hand corner contains the imagery of the Chinese immigrant stealing birds from a White man, imagery reflective of the thief trope. The lower right-hand corner depicts the Chinese immigrant assimilating to predominant White culture. The artist tries to draw attention to the absurdity of the idea that the Chinese immigrant can assimilate.



George F. Keller, *The Balky Team*, 1879, Photograph, University of California,

<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb2q2n98mq/>.

In the political cartoon titled *The Balky Team*, published in 1879, George Keller visually illustrates the growing number of factors behind the push for the removal of Chinese immigrants. The Chinese immigrant is labeled for export and is being pulled by six horses towards a sign that reads “to China.” The horses are labeled individually: workingmen, capital, California press, Eastern press, Chinese missionaries, and common sense. The cart holding the Chinese immigrants has run over two rocks that stand in the way of its path. The first one is labeled “puritanical notions” and the second one is labeled “The Burlingame Treaty.” A wasp is seen driving the carriage with the accompanied caption reading “Uncle Sam: “Say, Mr. WASP, you’ll never get that wagon out unless your team pulls together, can’t you see those rocks?”” The six

horses paint a clear picture of how capital and working men have played a prominent role in trying to remove the Chinese immigrant. While this political cartoon does not make any specific references to tropes present in previous cartoons, it visually demonstrates variables that influenced and continue to influence governmental decision-making such as the working class's opinions and the press's influence on these opinions.



George F. Keller, *Uncle Sam's Farm in Danger*, 1878, Photograph, Thomas Nast Cartoons, <https://thomasnastcartoons.com/2014/02/14/uncle-sams-farm-in-danger-9-march-1878/>.

This political cartoon was created for *The San Francisco Wasp* also by George Keller in 1878. Chinese immigrants are drawn in a dehumanizing manner, as grasshoppers. Uncle Sam can be seen in the corner fighting off the grasshoppers with a sign labeled “House Committee Resolutions.” He is joined by another individual holding a sign that reads “California Press,” a nod to the anti-Chinese rhetoric present in many Californian newspapers. This political cartoon depicts the overwhelming, invasive image of the Chinese immigrant that developed during this time period and portrays the fight between the Chinese immigrant and Uncle Sam and the

California Press as unwinnable. The usage of grasshoppers refers to the devastating effects that grasshoppers can have on a crop's yield. This strategic use of agricultural references was intended for individuals who worked in the California agricultural sector. Many Californians' livelihoods were dependent on the agricultural industry, with the imagery playing into fears that the Chinese immigrant might negatively impact the agricultural worker's financial stability.

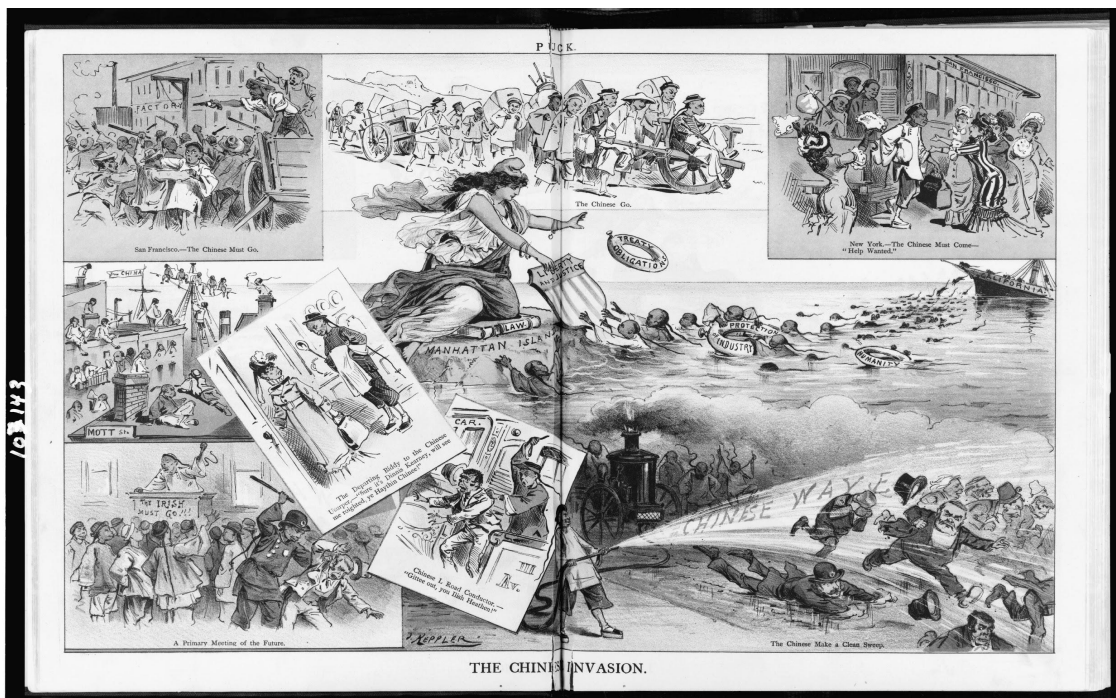


George F. Keller, *Reasons Why the Anti-Coolie Bill Had No Effect*, 1879, Photograph, University of California, <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb1w1001fw/>.

In this political cartoon titled *Reasons Why the Anti-Coolie Bill Had No Effect*, created by George Keller for *The San Francisco Wasp* in 1879, the ongoing debate of immigration within the government is portrayed, with the Burlingame Treaty taking center stage. Rutherford B. Hayes is illustrated wearing women's clothes and aggressively wielding a roll of paper labeled “Anti-Chinese bill.” He is being held back by his wife Lucy, Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas De Witt Talmage, and a pilgrim.⁵⁶ Hayes is trying to fight off a crocodile with a White laborer in its clutches. The White laborer's hat is labeled “Western states,” referring to the group that

⁵⁶ Hall, “The Wasp’s ‘Troublesome Children’: Culture, Satire, and the Anti-Chinese Movement in the American West.”

vocalized the largest amount of dissatisfaction with the Chinese immigrant. The use of the crocodile dehumanizes the Chinese immigrant into a predatory animal. The fence separates the crocodile from President Hayes, labeled “Burlingame Treaty,” the only legal obstacle to Chinese exclusionary immigration policy in the United States.



Joseph F. Keppler, *The Chinese Invasion*, 1880, Photograph, Library of Congress,
<https://www.loc.gov/item/91793028/>.

This political cartoon created by Joseph Keppler in 1880 is a composite of nine political cartoons. Keppler produced cartoons for the humor magazine *Puck*, in which he represented controversial political and social issues through drawings. The middle cartoon depicts Lady Liberty kneeling on top of a book titled “Law” on Manhattan Island handing out life preservers to Chinese immigrants who have jumped off a boat named California. In this political cartoon, the Chinese immigrant's depiction is representative of both the invasive and threat tropes. Upon closer inspection, the Chinese immigrants who have jumped off the boat are drawn as rats and

morph into people as they get closer to shore. The life preservers being handed out are labeled “treaty obligation,” “protection of industry,” and “humanity.” The Chinese immigrants closest to Manhattan Island are drawn clinging to a shield with the words “liberty and justice” written on it. This cartoon depicts the expulsion of the Chinese immigrant from San Francisco, with the boat representing California and Manhattan Island representing New York. The decision to depict the Chinese as rats jumping off the boat alludes to two different perceptions of the Chinese. The first interpretation is that Chinese immigrants manifest as a plague invading New York, with plague being defined as a disastrous evil or affliction.⁵⁷ The second reference could be to the stereotype that Chinese immigrants eat rats. The quantity of Chinese immigrants leaping off the boat and swimming towards the island is visually exaggerated to demonstrate an overwhelming hoard.

In the political cartoon directly below the Lady Liberty depiction, a scene surrounding a fire truck is drawn with the caption “the Chinese make a clean sweep.” This cartoon is representative of three tropes, with the Chinese being depicted as invasive, threatening, and thieving. The image depicts the Chinese immigrant using a water hose to spray the White laborers, with the water labeled as the “Chinese wave.” The scene insinuates that the Chinese immigrant has forcefully taken the firehouse from the fireman and is violently spraying the White laborers and forcing them out. In the background of the image, it appears as though Chinese immigrants are destroying the overall area and enjoy causing damage to the land.

The third image to the right of the firehose cartoon depicts a Chinese immigrant standing on a train as a ticketing agent. He is chasing the White laborer off the train. This political cartoon illustrates a variety of different concerns held predominantly by the White population at the time. This political cartoon again depicts the tropes of the Chinese being a threat, specifically to the

⁵⁷ “Definition of Plague,” in *Merriam Webster*.

White laborer. The presence of the railroad in this drawing suggests the social strife inherent in White laborers' opinions on the use of Chinese labor in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. The implication in this drawing is that the immigrant has taken a job that belonged to a White man while kicking him off the train.

The fourth political cartoon illustrates a Chinese immigrant having taken the job of a "biddy" (a term used towards female Irish immigrants who worked as domestic servants for upper-middle-class families). This cartoon contains imagery representative of the cheat and thief trope. The caption reads "The Departing Bidy to the Chinese Usurper. - Sure it's Dinnis Kearney, will see me roighted, ye Haythin Chinese." The Irish immigrant is referring to Denis Kearney, an Irish immigrant who worked for the Workingmen's Party of California and supported the removal of Chinese immigrants. The terminology of "usurper" again denotes the belief that the Chinese immigrant has seized the job of a White laborer by force or without right.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the cartoon emphasizes the trope of thievery, with the Chinese immigrant wearing an apron and holding a spoon, assuming the position and uniform of an Irish immigrant working the same job. While the word "usurper" is not consistently used to discuss the country of China or Chinese immigrants today, its meaning is latent in government legislation and media underscoring a perception that the Chinese have pursued economic growth through unjust means at the disadvantage of the United States.

In the bottom left corner, the political cartoon portrays a scene in which the Chinese immigrant has taken over U.S. society. A Chinese immigrant is drawn as a policeman removing an Irish immigrant from the area. The caption at the bottom reads "a Primary Meeting of the Future." This caption indicates the rising fear that in the near future, the Chinese immigrant will

⁵⁸ "Definition of Usurper." In *Merriam Webster*.

take over society and establish control over the White population. The scene also depicts a Chinese immigrant standing on a soapbox with the box reading “The Irish Must Go,” a statement that echoes the popular call to action from Denis Kearney. This political cartoon demonstrates the continued impacts of the invasive trope in conceptualizing the Chinese immigrant as someone who will take over the political and legal institutions that protect White laborers.

The political cartoon on the left in the middle area depicts the Chinese as invasive. The Chinese immigrants are sitting on top of the roofs by a street labeled “Mott St.” In the background, the top of a boat’s mast can be seen with the label “from China.” Mott is a street that runs through Manhattan in what is now considered New York City’s Chinatown. The Chinese immigrants are exploding out of chimneys, balconies, and windows. This depiction reveals White laborers’ concerns about the creation of areas in which only Chinese immigrants resided.

The political cartoon in the upper left corner depicts a scene in San Francisco outside of a factory. The political cartoons on the top row are all connected and depict a progression of anti-Chinese sentiment. The caption at the bottom reads “San Francisco - The Chinese Must Go.” Similar to previous depictions of the Chinese and underlying themes, this cartoon contains a battle being fought between the White laborers and the Chinese outside of a building labeled “factory.” This political cartoon portrays the Chinese as a threat to the White laborer, once again in terms of employment. The inclusion of the building labeled “factory” shows the economic connotation that the White laborers are fighting the Chinese for taking their jobs. The cartoon to the direct right illustrates the Chinese leaving San Francisco and traveling to New York. The caption at the bottom reads “The Chinese go.” The final cartoon on the upper righthand corner depicts Chinese immigrants debarking a train labeled “San Francisco.” The caption at the bottom

reads “New York. - The Chinese Must Come - “Help Wanted.” The Chinese immigrant is drawn exiting the train with White women welcoming them, with the insinuation that New York people are much more welcoming of Chinese immigrants in contrast to people from the West Coast.

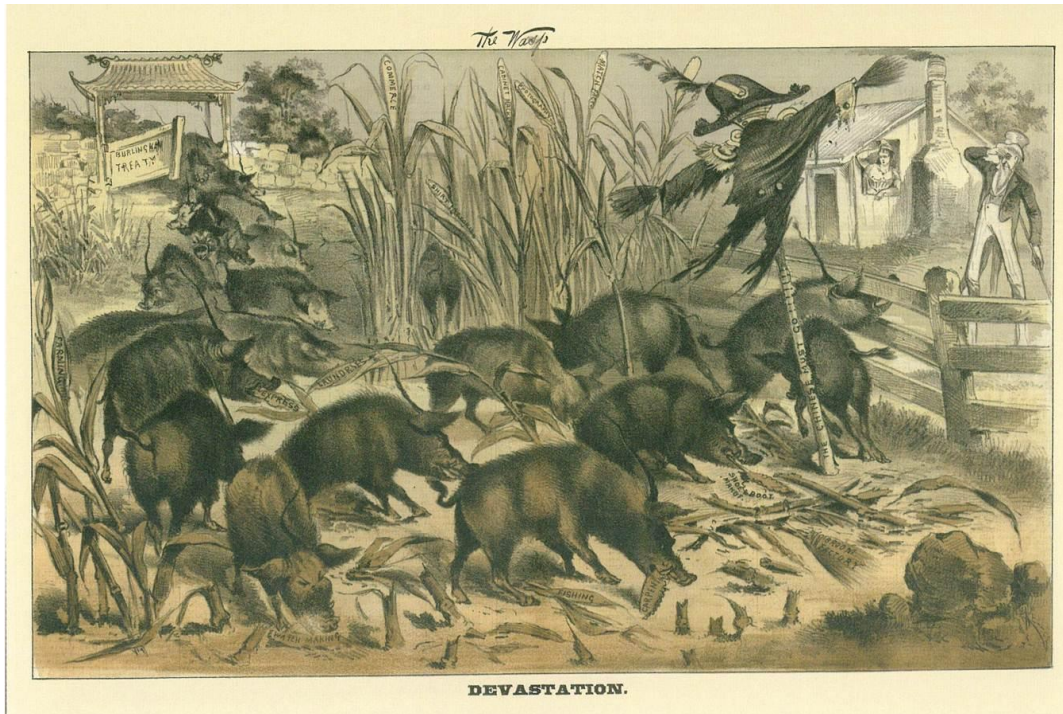


(?), *The Tables Turned*, 1880, Photograph, Library of Congress,

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2001696527/>.

This 1880 cartoon from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, which contained literary pieces and images of American life, includes a drawing of Chinese immigrants and White women on opposite sides of the street. The White females are holding luggage and personal belongings while the Chinese immigrants are holding babies, pushing strollers, and holding signs advocating for all work. The caption at the bottom of the cartoon reads “The Tables Turned. How our streets will look next Summer as a result of the Chinese invasion.” This political cartoon portrays two tropes, the Chinese as invasive and the Chinese as thieves. The caption is indicative of the perception that White people had of the Chinese immigrant at the time. The fear held by White laborers was used to convey that if Chinese immigrants are allowed to keep immigrating,

an invasion is inevitable and furthermore that the immigrants will steal jobs previously held by White females.



George F. Keller, *Devastation*, 1880, Photograph, Thomas Nast Cartoons, <https://thomasnastcartoons.com/2014/02/14/devastation-2-october-1880/>.

This political cartoon titled “Devastation” was created by George Keller on October 2, 1880, for *The San Francisco Wasp* and contains imagery of Chinese immigrants as wild pigs. Similar to the drawing created by Keller titled “Uncle Sam’s Farm In Danger” in 1878, this drawing depicts the dehumanization of Chinese immigrants in political cartoons. Within the background, the pigs can be seen initially bursting through a gate labeled “Burlingame Treaty.” The pigs are eating cobs of corn which are labeled as different industries in the United States economy (watchmaking, laundries, shirt factories, broom factories, and cabinet makers). The scarecrow represents the staunch anti-Chinese advocate Denis Kearney with his popularized call to action, “The Chinese Must Go.” Uncle Sam and Columbia, seen in the background, are visibly

distressed by the Chinese immigrants' presence. This political cartoon depicts the Chinese through tropes in several distinct ways. The trope of invasiveness is present in the large number of pigs that have been drawn. When viewing the gates through which the pigs burst from, the viewer is overwhelmed by their numbers. The Chinese immigrant is further depicted as a threat through the illustrations of the pigs eating the corn, causing destruction to the surrounding environment. This political cartoon depicts the previously established idea that the presence of the Chinese immigrant has negative implications for the United States economy. The corn is symbolic of the job-rich industries in the United States, which are falling to the devastating consumption by the pigs (Chinese immigrants).

B. Newspaper Analysis

When viewing primary sources from this time period, it becomes clear that anti-Chinese sentiment had become more pervasive within society. A larger selection of newspapers had published pieces on the growing animosity towards Chinese immigrants in contrast to the number of newspapers publishing pieces during the years after the Burlingame Treaty. In addition to the further integration of anti-Chinese sentiment into society, governmental legislation began to distinctly reflect these opinions. The Angell Treaty of 1880 is the first predominant example in which the entire community of Chinese immigrants was targeted.

The article titled "The Chinese As Colonists" was published in a magazine titled *Littell's Living Age*, a literary periodical from Boston. This article was published on October 5th, 1878, and argues that the presence of Chinese immigrants should be of great concern to people living in the United States due to their "bizarre" nature.⁵⁹ The article states that Chinese immigrants "ignore or defy judicial or municipal institutions" and that they "fail to take root in the soil,

⁵⁹ Medhurst, "The Chinese as Colonists."

making it their aim always to carry home their gains to the old country.”⁶⁰ The writing goes on to claim that the Chinese immigrant and their habits are colonizing the United States. This article makes connections to the tropes of the Chinese being threats and thieves. The Chinese are described as unwilling to comply with the rule of law. In addition to the threat trope, the Chinese are also depicted as taking money from the United States and sending it back home. The author discusses the Chinese as being inherently selfish in only sharing their economic gains with China. This insinuation is common in present-day literature discussing the U.S.-China trade war, in which China is depicted as selfishly only thinking of themselves and not playing fairly, placing the United States at a disadvantage.

The article titled “Chinese Cheap Labor” in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (December 23rd, 1878) asserts strong opinions regarding the negative implications that might plague Ohio if Chinese immigration is allowed to continue. The article states that unless Chinese immigration is stopped, Ohio “will find every avenue of occupation choked with the hungry hordes of Chinese, seeking employment at rates of compensation upon which a White man would starve.”⁶¹ The words of the White laborer being “choked” indicates the perception of the Chinese immigrant as harmful to White laborers. In addition to the negative connotation associated with being choked, the word choice of the “hungry hordes of Chinese” reveals an underlying perception that the Chinese are desperate and crave economic success. The article advances further to identify the economic impacts of the Chinese immigrant specifically within the job market. It reads “for twenty years the number of Chinamen in that state has been steadily increasing, and in exact ratio to their increase have the opportunities of White laborers to secure employment decreased.”⁶² While it is not blatantly stated, the correlation between the lack of jobs for White

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Chinese Cheap Labor.”

⁶² Ibid.

laborers and the increased presence of the Chinese immigrant demonstrates a theft perception of the Chinese immigrant. The article then argues that Chinese immigrants “bring nothing of value to the country and take everything out,” insinuating that the money made by the Chinese does not benefit the United States’ economy but only China’s economy, further driving home the trope of the Chinese immigrant being a thief.⁶³

An article in *The San Francisco Chronicle* published on June 12th, 1879, discusses the recent work that the Grocers Protective Union has done towards advocating for poor White families and limiting Chinese immigrants in the United States. One of the individuals in the Grocers Protective Union is quoted saying “I have always been an anti-coolie man, and I have been so for perhaps selfish reasons. In the first place, as a business man I consider the presence of the Chinese as a barrier to the best and most healthy development of our industries.”⁶⁴ He continues to say that “John will surely drive us all to the wall” (John referring to the caricature of John Chinaman).⁶⁵ This individual perceives the presence of the Chinese as a threat to the economic development and success of United States industries. Furthermore, this individual discusses the invasive nature of the Chinese immigrant within the economy when he says that they will “surely drive us all to the wall.”⁶⁶

The article titled “Increasing and Multiplying” in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (January 17th, 1880) claims that Ohio is experiencing negative impacts from the presence of Chinese immigration. It goes on to cite statistics that explain the increase of the Chinese population across America. In its concluding sentence, it reads “these facts must be considered as suggestive and speak eloquently of the danger which threatens our working people.”⁶⁷ The facts being

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ “A Good Example: What a Few Men Have to Discourage Chinese Labor.”

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Increasing and Multiplying.”

referred to in this sentence are that of the newly developed Chinatown in San Francisco and the extensive number of Chinese immigrants traveling across the United States. The trope of the Chinese as a threat is explicitly identified in this article as well.

An article from *The Sun* (March 20th, 1880), a publication from Baltimore, Maryland, discusses the recent conclusions arising from the special report on Chinese immigration that took place in Congress in 1877. This report is discussed in further detail in the upcoming governmental legislation section. The article states the report's conclusion that "Chinese immigration is destroying the trade and materially affecting the businesses of San Francisco and the whole Pacific coast, thousands of industrious White men and women being thrown out of employment."⁶⁸ This article refers to the trope of the Chinese as threats. The article emphasizes the government's conclusion that there is a direct correlation between the presence of Chinese immigration and the threat they pose to the economy. The threat trope is furthered in the writing when the author uses the term "throw out" to imply the negative effects that Chinese immigrants have had in displacing White laborers.⁶⁹

C. Government Legislation and Documents

Congressional reports, hearings and bills from 1878 to 1880 demonstrate the integration of anti-Chinese sentiments into governmental officials' opinions and government documents. The Angell Treaty reads that "whenever in the opinion of the United States, the coming of Chinese laborers... affects or threatens the interests of that country... the Government of China agrees that the Government of the United States may regulate, limit, or suspend such coming or

⁶⁸ "The Chinese Question: Majority and Minority Reports in Congress."

⁶⁹ Ibid.

residence, but may not absolutely prohibit it.”⁷⁰ The legislation points towards this continued rhetoric that the Chinese immigrants have become threats to all interests of the United States.

Congress opened an investigation on Chinese Immigration with the investigation and final report being completed on February 27th, 1877. While this report does fall outside of the primary data collection time range, it serves as one of the most critical investigations performed by the government into Chinese immigration. The report from the Joint Special Committee outlined that Chinese immigrants were only residing in the United States to make money and send it back to China, and thus had no motivations to pursue cultural and social integration. This congressional report contained inherently racist assertions that had become deeply ingrained in the public and government’s relationship with China and the Chinese immigrant.

The opening statement offered by Benjamin Sherman Brooks to the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration argued that the current opinions on Chinese immigrants being popularized in the media were ones that are not valid. He stated that many of the people who opposed Chinese immigration were Irish and, in turn, were also foreigners. As such, according to Brooks, they should have no position determining law within the United States government.⁷¹ He continued to make an extraordinarily compelling argument, stating that the current economic realities of the United States and specifically the labor market in San Francisco were the fault of the United States government and no one else. His statement reads “I would remark that all that is bad, all that is noxious, about this thing is the creature of our own legislation, our own neglect, and our own mismanagement,”⁷² and then argues that “all that is noxious about it comes from ourselves, and not the Chinese.”⁷³ In the transcript for this

⁷⁰ “Angell Treaty of 1880,”

⁷¹ Brooks and United States., *Opening Statement of B.S. Brooks, before the Joint Committee of the Two Houses of Congress, on Chinese Immigration.*

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

investigation, Senator Aaron Augustus Sargent of San Francisco questions Brooks on who is to blame for economic shortcomings in the United States, with Sargent enforcing the idea that it is the Chinese immigrants' fault. Senator Sargent says “Chinese labor is not helping us, but exhausting our lands, and thereby impoverishing the state.”⁷⁴ Mr. Brooks provided a rebuttal, asserting that in order to combat the current economic downturn, the United States should look towards “introducing new industries” and pursuing diversification within the economy to increase the vitality of the labor market.⁷⁵

In the 1877 report from the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration introduction, the presence of tropes is ever persistent in many of the conclusions drawn from witness statements. The report reads “the apparent prosperity derived from the presence of the Chinese immigrant is deceptive and unwholesome, ruinous to our laboring classes, promotive of caste, and dangerous to free institutions.”⁷⁶ Continuing on, the report states that the Chinese immigrant’s “vices are corrupting to the morals of the city, especially of the young.”⁷⁷ The threat trope is presented throughout the majority of this report, with the previous quotes representing the perceived threat level of the Chinese immigrant to society. The trope of the cheat is present in the statement “the Chinese have advantages which will put them far in advance in this race for possession.”⁷⁸ The identification of the United States’ animosity towards Chinese immigrants and the negative implications they could have on the United States’ free institutions is reminiscent of concerns in the modern-day. For example, recent concerns have been expressed regarding whether or not China’s increased influence within the global economy will result in the export of authoritarian traits into developing countries, ultimately jeopardizing free markets.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ United States., *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration.*

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Bill 45 S. 1697 was introduced to Congress during the 45th Congress and third session on January 24th, 1879 and was sponsored by Senator La Fayette Grover (D - OR).⁷⁹ This bill introduced many of the initial ideas present in the Fifteen Passenger Bill of 1879 that would eventually be proposed in February. This proposed bill reflects the increasing pressure mounting towards the government's lack of action in regard to Chinese immigration.

Bill 46 H.R. 335 was introduced by Representative John Goode Jr. (D - VA) to the House of Representatives on April 21, 1879.⁸⁰ This bill was introduced 10 days prior to the introduction of the Fifteen Passenger Bill of 1879. Similar to Bill 45 S. 1697, it continues to introduce the idea of restricting Chinese immigrants through a quota placed on how many Chinese people can be present on boats arriving in the United States.

D. Economic Realities and Blame Rhetoric: Colorado

Viewing discontent in the economy on a localized scale demonstrates how pervasive blame rhetoric against Chinese immigrants became among smaller populations outside of San Francisco. Newspaper rhetoric instilled fear in the White population in Colorado that the Chinese immigrant was a threat to Colorado's economic prosperity. In the book titled *Asians in Colorado: A History of Persecution and Perseverance in the Centennial State*, Dr. William Wei establishes the concerns that Coloradans had with the presence of the Chinese immigrant, citing an editorial that identified a fear in reduction of wages as reasoning for this animosity. Chinese laborers were willing to take reduced wages compared to the White laborer, and this wage disparity culminated in a competitive environment between the two labor groups.

⁷⁹A bill to restrict the immigration of Chinese to the United States, S. 1697, 45 Cong., 1879.

⁸⁰A bill to restrict the immigration of Chinese to the United States, H.R. 335, 46 Cong., 1879.

A large number of Chinese laborers were used in the Gold Rush in Colorado, with the population of immigrants increasing as companies began to profit off their employment. The growth in the Chinese immigrant population coincided with a growth in animosity among White laborers. Wei states that “using the Chinese as scapegoats for economic distress was a tactic largely imported from California.”⁸¹ This scapegoating resulted in action being taken against the Chinese immigrants in the form of violence and outright removal. He goes on to note that this scapegoating occurred regardless of the Chinese immigrant’s actual physical presence, stating that “oddly, long after the Chinese were banned from Leadville, they continued to be blamed for suppressing the wages of Leadville’s mainly Irish mine workers. Dislike of the Chinese persisted for decades.”⁸² The integration of blame rhetoric in Colorado’s White population no longer was contingent on the presence of the Chinese immigrant and became an assumed aspect of how White laborers chose to understand economic realities.

VII. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 served as the first instance in U.S. history of a specific ethnic group being targeted through the use of an immigration ban. This legislation not only prevented new Chinese immigration but also required that Chinese immigrants residing in the United States prior to the implementation of the act gain approval for re-entry from the Chinese government. The 1877 report from the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration presented many of the arguments that were used in implementing the Exclusion Act. Motivations regarding the need for immigration to fulfill labor shortages were no longer present within the government.

⁸¹ Wei, *Asians in Colorado*, 52.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 54

This section will continue to outline rhetoric that has become deep-seated in the discussion and portrayal of the Chinese immigrant. The implementation of the Chinese Exclusion Act reveals a government willing to incorporate popular opinion into governmental decision-making and in turn deflect responsibility. The inclusion of these opinions does not originate from fact, but from biased and racist views of the Chinese immigrant. This specific act serves as the most distinct form of “othering” in legislation against the Chinese immigrant. This “othering” and its inherently racist origins will have a prolonged presence in the decades following. Lack of acknowledgment towards these racist origins and the lasting impacts of the legislation reflecting these origins begs the question, when considering current U.S.-China relations, what has changed?

A. Political Cartoon Analysis



George F. Keller, *The Coming Man*, 1881, Photograph, Thomas Nast Cartoons,
<https://thomasnastcartoons.com/2014/04/03/the-coming-man-20-may-1881/>.

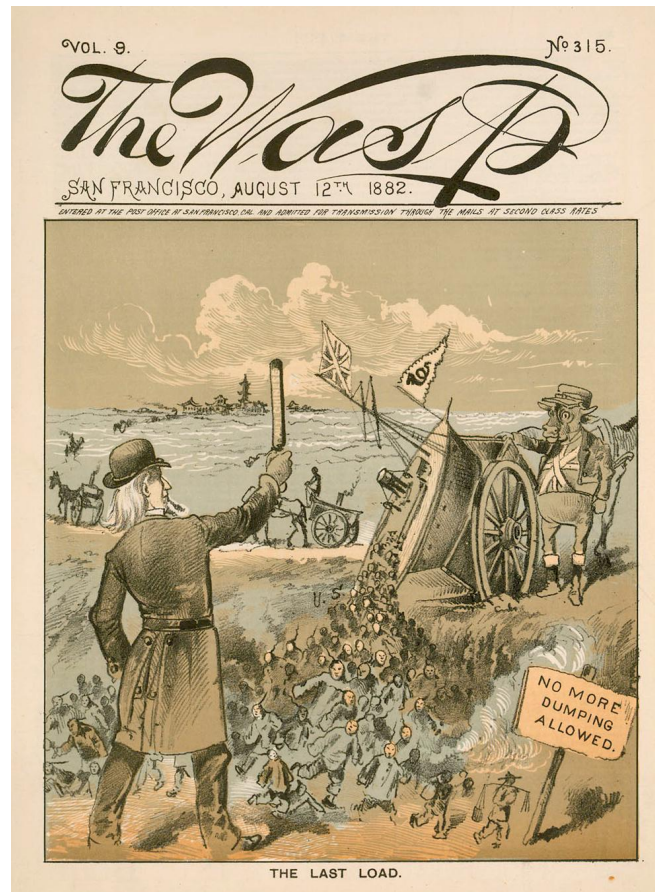
This political cartoon by George Keller for *The San Francisco Wasp* was published one year before the implementation of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The cartoon depicts the stereotype of the Chinese immigrant having increased control over production, trade, and the selling of many key goods in the United States. The Chinese immigrant is illustrated with his right hand drawn exaggeratedly large over a variety of objects. The Chinese immigrants' physical appearance is drawn in a dominating manner, towering about the factories in the background. The scale of the Chinese immigrant symbolizes an intimidating and threatening presence. This cartoon directly plays into the popular perceptions from White laborers that the Chinese were taking over industries as well as labor markets.

His hand is drawn over objects labeled box factories, clothing factories, and laundries. Chinese immigrants pursued work in the garment industry and laundries after the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad ended and the Gold Rush subsided because no specialized skills were required. The inclusion of cigars and shoes in the drawing is an indication of the sentiment that Chinese immigrants were taking away from integral parts of the United States economy. Shoe manufacturing was very prevalent in East coast industries, specifically in cities like Philadelphia and Massachusetts, providing a significant portion of jobs to the working population. Cigar manufacturing in California utilized Chinese immigrants in 91% of their labor force.⁸³

In the background, faint outlines of White laborers can be seen. The White laborers are protesting and expressing outrage. This cartoon mirrors modern views towards China and its

⁸³ Brown and Philips, "Competition, Racism, and Hiring Practices among California Manufacturers, 1860-1882," 62.

influence on the economy. The Chinese immigrant is inhibiting the White laborer from achieving the economic success that they would otherwise have been able to reach. Furthermore, the portrayal of the Chinese having a monopoly on large portions of industries within the United States economy directly coincides with the belief that the Chinese control many different industries, preventing American businesses from competing.



George F. Keller, *The Last Load*, 1882, Photograph, University of California,
<http://cdn.calisphere.org/data/13030/7n/hb0000007n/files/hb0000007n-FID4.jpg>.

This political cartoon created by George Keller in 1882 for *The San Francisco Wasp* depicts the “dumping” of Chinese immigrants into the United States. The Chinese immigrants are depicted as invasive, with large numbers of immigrants exiting off of the boat. A cow dressed in a shirt with the British flag on it is pictured dumping them off. Uncle Sam is drawn standing

firm and confident, holding a baton that reads “anti-Chinese.” This political cartoon depicts how anti-Chinese legislation was perceived as an accomplishment by government officials and White laborers. The exclusion of Chinese immigrants is depicted as being “the last load” with Chinese immigrants disembarking a ship that represents the British-controlled colony of Hong Kong. This political cartoon furthers the idea that Chinese influence on the economy is unfavorable, with the term *dumping* implying that the Chinese are similar to an unwanted good.



George F. Keller, *What shall we do with our boys?*, 1882, photograph, University of California,

<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb938nb337/>.

In this political cartoon, the Chinese immigrant is drawn in a monstrous nature with 11 arms, performing an extensive number of jobs. This drawing demonstrates the idea that the Chinese immigrant is uncontrollable in all that he does. In contrast to the quiet, patient, and well-dressed White laborers drawn outside of the building, the Chinese immigrant seems ill-mannered. While the drawing does imply that the Chinese immigrant is ill-mannered and domineering in the economy, it also hints towards the Chinese immigrants' higher tolerance for

hard work in contrast to the complacent domestic workers standing outside. The Chinese immigrant is seen painting, sawing, hammering a shoe, making cigars, sewing clothing, washing clothes, and holding a bag of money labeled “savings for China.” This constant interpretation of the Chinese immigrant’s possession of money aligns with the trope of being a thief. All of the money that is being made by the Chinese immigrants is going back to China and not into the United States’ economy. A wood plank that reads “Chinese trade monopoly” is under the immigrant’s foot, indicating Chinese power and appearing almost impossible to remove.

Similar to the previous political cartoon by Keller titled “The Coming Man,” the portrayal of the Chinese immigrant and the viewpoint that they are causing a monopoly can directly be tied to current perceptions of the Chinese government’s trade in the global economy. The trope of invasiveness is portrayed through how many jobs the Chinese immigrant has stolen from the White laborer. The threat trope is demonstrated in the negative connotation of the Chinese having a monopoly. The buildings in the background are labeled “San Quentin” (a state prison in California), “Industrial School,” and “House of Correction.” A cop is seen dragging a White boy off to one of the three buildings, indicating that a future of hardship is awaiting these unemployed laborers whose job prospects have been "stolen" by Chinese immigrants. This political cartoon uses an emotional ploy through the depiction of the honest and hardworking White boy being beaten out of employment by the Chinese immigrant who is seen as eroding the economy.

B. Newspaper Analysis

There was an overarching transition in the ways that newspapers chose to report on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, with political partisanship having an increased role in how immigration and economic policy were addressed. Congressional Democrats rallied behind the

implementation of exclusionary immigration, while congressional Republicans experienced division, especially with the party's record on civil rights. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was signed into law by President Chester A. Arthur, nine months into his presidency. He had previously vetoed the first version of the Chinese Exclusion Act on March 22nd due to the length for which Chinese immigrants would be barred from entering the United States (20 years). In the second version that was passed into legislation, the period in which Chinese immigrants were barred was reduced to ten years. Anti-Chinese sentiment was still increasingly evident during this time period and, most notably, was further integrated into a political landscape. This integration was pursued by Democrats and Republicans broadcasting opinions on Chinese immigration through the publication of op-ed pieces and speeches.

While the text of the following article published on January 7th, 1882 in the *Tombstone Daily Epitaph* does not make statements indicative of tropes, the title "The Chinese Invasion" does. The article describes plans within the Senate for the Foreign Relations Committee to discuss a bill to fully exclude Chinese immigrants.⁸⁴ The same title can be seen in Joseph Keppler's political cartoons as well. This title and its normalized use in newspaper articles and political cartoons demonstrate society's absorption of this rhetoric.

The *Tombstone Daily Epitaph* published a piece on February 12, 1882, discussing the recent introduction of Senator John Franklin Miller's (R-CA) Chinese Exclusion Act to the Senate. The author of the piece outlines ways in which to establish justification for the exclusion of Chinese immigrants. He states that Chinese immigrants cannot be called criminals as there are instances in which they abide by laws. Instead, he latches onto the idea of the diminishment caused by Chinese immigrants in society, stating that "the Chinese are the least desired who have

⁸⁴ "The Chinese Invasion."

ever sought the United States.”⁸⁵ The article goes on to identify the Chinese immigrant’s “careful accumulation of savings [being] sent back to the flowery kingdom” as undesirable to the United States.⁸⁶ The word choice “careful accumulation” indicates an underlying perception that the Chinese immigrant is strategic in not just saving money but sending money back to China.

The article published in the *Salt Lake Tribune* titled “Commodore Shurfeld’s Opinion of the Chinese” introduces an evolving perception of the Chinese whereby he suggests that the United States and China cannot have positive relations, nor should they. Commodore Shurfeld’s opinion was constructed with his bias of Chinese immigration impacting his views on U.S.-China relations. He opens his writing by stating that “China is especially antagonistic to our form of government,” with the word choice of “antagonistic” connecting to the trope of the Chinese as a threat.⁸⁷ He feels that the hatred in the United States towards foreigners, and specifically towards Chinese immigrants, is indicative of an inherent inability to establish relations between the two countries.

Commodore Shurfeld argues that an unrelenting force is needed to combat China’s presence. The article states that “there is and can be no affinity between the United States and China. The government of the United States and the governments of Europe should insist upon their rights, conceding no more than is granted and in trusting no more than is trusted.”⁸⁸ This article presents a clear “othering” of the Chinese immigrant within American society and the population’s general attitudes towards China as a country.

In the *Idaho Statesmen’s* article titled “Two Thousand Chinese Immigrants” (April 26th, 1881), discussions are presented regarding the opposition to the Chinese Exclusion Act. The

⁸⁵ “That Little Man from China.”

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ “Commodore Shurfeld's Opinion of the Chinese.”

⁸⁸ Ibid.

article directly attacks Senator Farley (D-CA) for sowing doubt in the Senate and preventing the bill from passing. The article proceeds to state the negative impacts that will occur due to the postponement of the passing of the bill. The article reads “a thousand Chinese immigrants are vomited on this Western shore,” as a result of the postponement.⁸⁹ The concluding arguments made in the article state that the reason Democrats have slowed down voting on this bill is because they are trying to increase political capital. Regardless of whether or not this is true, vomiting refers to something being emitted in an uncontrolled stream or flow, and the use of it in this article is therefore indicative of the invasive trope.

This article titled “The Chinese. Imposing Demonstrations Against the 'Heathen' in California” published in the *Arizona Weekly Journal* on March 10th, 1882, discusses recent anti-Chinese immigration demonstrations at Platt’s Hall in San Francisco. The article published a list of resolutions that were established during the demonstration, imploring Congress to act on “the ruinous consequences of Chinese immigration.”⁹⁰ Using the words “consequences” and “ruinous” strikes fear in people that the current impacts of Chinese immigrants won't be reversible or will cause unprecedented damage. Consequences are also present in the rhetoric that political figures use now, imposing the idea that if nothing is done about the ruinous nature of China, the economy and society will be negatively, and likely permanently impacted.

This article titled “Anti-Chinese Meeting in San Francisco” (March 10th, 1882) from the *Arizona Weekly Journal* also addresses the anti-Chinese protest demonstrations previously discussed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* article titled “The Chinese. Imposing Demonstrations Against the 'Heathen' in California.”⁹¹ This article cites a different speech given at the demonstrations at Platt’s Hall, with Governor Perkins of California being the main focal point of

⁸⁹ “Two Thousand Chinese Immigrants.”

⁹⁰ “The Chinese. Imposing Demonstrations Against the 'Heathen' in California.”

⁹¹ “Anti-Chinese Meeting in San Francisco.”

the article. His speech reads “Western civilization must and shall dominate this slope, and the Asiatic invasion is to be turned back,” eventually citing the Chinese as “a great evil.”⁹² The tropes of the Chinese immigrants as invasive and as a threat are present in the political speeches that took place at this demonstration. Governor Perkin’s speech introduces the idea that Western civilization must overcome and remain ahead of China, with the descriptions of the evils of the Chinese acting as reasoning for the Chinese immigrant’s exclusion.

This article titled “The Chinese Bill as a Political Question” addresses the reasoning used to justify the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act, stating that Chinese labor “destroyed the bread-winning power of our native, and of adopted citizens.”⁹³ The common perception of the Chinese being harmful to White laborers persists in the underlying tone of the article and the interpretation of the immigrants destroying the bread-winning power of “native” laborers. The destruction of the United States’ bread-winning power points towards larger destruction of the economy, leaving the U.S. less competitive.

“The Chinese Question,” an article published in the *Dallas Weekly Herald* on April 20th, 1882, includes viewpoints from a reader who has written into the newspaper. This reader argues, “for with immigration unrestricted, it will be the matter of a few generations, before California and her adjacent states and territories will have to be given up as colonies of the Chinese empire.”⁹⁴ The reader identifies his experience living on the Pacific coast in arguing the differences between European immigrants and Chinese immigrants. The main differences according to the reader are that European immigrants “come to seek homes and to aid in building up our country, and the earnings of the immigrants all remain in the country and are capitalized

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ "The Chinese Bill as a Political Question."

⁹⁴ "The Chinese Question."

for the good of the country. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that the Chinese come with no such object in view. They come to make what they can out of the country."⁹⁵ This article presents the tropes of the Chinese immigrant as a threat, invasive, and a thief. The article portrays both the Chinese immigrant and China as having the motivation to detract from the well-being of the United States.

C. Government Legislation and Documents

The Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted on May 6th, 1882, with the beginning of the bill demonstrating that anti-Chinese sentiment had fully been incorporated into governmental legislation. The first line in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 reads “Whereas, in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof.”⁹⁶ The word “endangers” directly correlates to the trope of the Chinese as a threat. The Angell Treaty exhibited this same rhetoric but used the direct term of “threat” when identifying the justification in pursuing restrictive immigration. This rhetoric is continued in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, yet the key difference is the further synthesis of public opinion into stricter and more comprehensive immigration policy.

A report titled “Chinese Immigration” was submitted to the Committee on Education and Labor by Horace F. Page on April 12th, 1882, to accompany H.R. 5408 (the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882).⁹⁷ Horace F. Page utilizes ideas of White supremacy to pioneer the enactment of such policy. He states that the six main Chinese companies that have aided in the importation of Chinese immigrants have “[monopolized] many of the mercantile industries of the Pacific Coast to the detriment of the better class. They take the places of the poor laboring classes who are

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Chinese Exclusion Act, 22 Stat. 58 (1882).

⁹⁷ U.S. Congress, *Chinese Immigration: Report* (to Accompany H.R. 5408).

compelled to compete with them or starve."⁹⁸ It is now visible that the growth in sentiment among the White population has been readily reflected in governmental policy, with little effort going into disguising the anti-Chinese sentiment that has riddled the country's population. The report interestingly says that the Chinese immigrant's "labor is brought into competition with our citizens," a viewpoint that is salient in many congressmen today regarding the competition of China-based businesses against domestic producers.⁹⁹ Horace F. Page introduced numerous pieces of legislation between 1880 through 1882, all with the intent of preventing Chinese immigration such as Bill H.R. 49 (December 31, 1881).

Bill H.R. 3285 was introduced to the Senate on January 23rd, 1882. The contents of the bill thoroughly aligns with the threat trope. The second sentence within the bill reads "whereas, for the above reasons, [the Chinese immigrants'] presence affects or threatens to affect the interests of our people."¹⁰⁰ Again, this governmental legislation reflects the Chinese immigrant's perceived threat and its impact on every aspect of an individual's life. Bill H.R. 5668 was introduced to the House of Representatives on April 6th, 1882, by Representative Albert S. Willis of Kentucky, the same individual who introduced H.R. 3285 in January. This bill contains the same trope of the Chinese immigrant as a threat.¹⁰¹ Bill H.R. 5670 contains almost identical language to bill H.R. 3285 and H.R. 3285.¹⁰² Bill H.R. 3540 was introduced to the Senate on January 26th, 1882. This bill contained restrictions on immigration that would last 25 years, a

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ A bill to regulate and limit Chinese immigration, H.R. 3285, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 1882.

¹⁰¹ A bill to regulate, limit, and suspend the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States, H.R. 5668, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 1882.

¹⁰² A bill to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese, H.R. 5670, 47th congress, 1st sess, 1882.

duration of time that was considered too long by President Arthur. The bill did not pass the house.¹⁰³

In comparing the anti-Chinese sentiment that was present during the years prior to the enactment of the Angell Treaty and the anti-Chinese sentiment that is present in 1882, small differences present themselves. Most notably, from 1878 to 1880, while the rationalization of allowing exclusionary immigration to occur was still rooted in racism, more time was spent providing economic evidence as support for the measure. However, during the Chinese Exclusion Act, the justification was increasingly generalized more toward the negative social implications that the Chinese immigrant would have. Fewer news articles were published discussing specific businesses that were impacted by Chinese immigrants.

D. Economic Realities and Blame Rhetoric: Wyoming

Economic realities in Wyoming paint a very similar image of the economic discontent in Colorado. Chinese immigrants were hired as miners by the Union Pacific Coal Department because of their willingness to work for lower wages than White laborers. Similar to mining, Chinese immigrants were also hired to work on the Union Pacific Railroad and outnumbered all other nationalities on the project. The culmination of anti-Chinese sentiment from the Chinese immigrant's presence in the mining industry led to the Rock Springs Massacre of 1885 in which 28 Chinese miners were killed and 15 injured. Furthermore, 78 Chinese immigrant's homes were burned down.¹⁰⁴ While no direct connection was ever established, the labor federation group the Knights of Labor formed a chapter in Rock Springs two years prior to the massacre. The Knights of Labor supported exclusionary immigration against the Chinese and had been involved in the

¹⁰³ A bill to regulate, limit, and suspend the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States, H.R. 3540, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 1882.

¹⁰⁴ Daniels, *Asian America*, 61-63.

removal of Chinese workers in Tacoma, Washington.¹⁰⁵ Newspaper articles published after the mass violence argued that the violence and animosity towards Chinese immigrants was justified due to the plight of the White laborer.

VIII. The U.S.-China Trade War

Initial assumptions regarding U.S.-China relations in the present-day may seem inherently disconnected from governmental legislation and public opinions of the late 1800s. Yet, the rhetoric and opinions influencing modern relations suggest the United States government is stationary in terms of its operational guidance. Blame rhetoric in the United States has become deeply ingrained in governmental legislation, specifically trade policy. The U.S.-China trade war's origins arose from the perception that China was unwilling to play fairly within the economic sphere, placing the United States at an inherent economic disadvantage. The Trump administration pursued a confrontational foreign policy agenda with China, arguing that the presence of the current trade deficit threatens the future stability of the U.S. economy, and that China is at fault for this.

President Trump and his administration prioritized the use of blame rhetoric to shift responsibility for economic shortcomings onto China, utilizing tariffs as a form of punishment to force China into buying more American goods. The goal in applying tariffs was to lessen the deficit and spur growth within the United States economy, including improvement and creation of job opportunities. Yet, aggressive tariffs disproportionately impacted American workers due to cost shocks in sectors dependent on imports. These policies resulted in job losses and price increases which disproportionately plagued the exact population the policy was meant to support and protect. Arguments have been made that a large trade deficit negatively impacts the United

¹⁰⁵ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*.

States economy, however many economists argue the case that a trade deficit does not necessarily hurt the United States economy.

The U.S.-China trade war represents negotiations between two countries regarding valid economic concerns. However, the United States' approach to the trade war has revealed the persistence of tropes in policy and society. The continued impact of tropes inhibits governmental figures and the population from fully grasping the complex set of variables that impact economic relations between the two countries. There is justification in the discontent surrounding how China approaches economic growth within the international community. However, the United States has chosen to utilize blame rhetoric in addressing these discrepancies, in contrast to neutral rhetoric and beneficial economic policy that would support continued investment in industries. Broad generalizations blame China, diverting the population's attention from the variables that have influenced job loss and the reduced ability to compete technologically in the international community.

In understanding the presence of the tropes of China as a cheat, as a thief, as a threat, and as invasive, three subcategories of sources will be established to evaluate the U.S.-China trade war. The first subcategory of primary source documents will contain congressional hearings that feature statements from scholars, businessmen, and governmental officials. The second subcategory will contain executive branch publications. The final subcategory will present newspaper articles from online publications, connecting the persistence of anti-Chinese sentiment and tropes in newspapers from the late 1800s to present-day anti-Chinese sentiment and tropes.

A. Congressional Hearings

On February 16th, 2018, the Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness held a hearing titled “Trade Enforcement and Infrastructure: Safeguarding Our Industrial Base From Present and Future Challenges.”¹⁰⁶ Four different witnesses contributed statements to this hearing: Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing, Rick Galiano, president of Beaver Lawrence County Central Labor Council, Petra Mitchell, president and CEO of Catalyst Connection, and Todd Young, managing director of United States Steel Corporation. Senator Robert Casey (D-PA) provided the opening statement making the stance that “when China cheats, Pennsylvania loses jobs” going on to elaborate that “if China can’t buy it or if China can’t run it out of business, they usually steal it.”¹⁰⁷ A direct connection is made between the trope of China cheating and the economic impacts of job loss in Pennsylvania. In addition to the cheat trope, the tropes of China as a threat and as a thief are also presented through the lens that China is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve economic prosperity at the downfall of the United States, even if it means stealing. Further into the hearing, Senator Casey demonstrates the pervasiveness of the tropes of China as a cheat and a thief in his call to action to President Trump. He encourages President Trump “to use every tool at his disposal to fight back against China cheating, to fight back against any country trying to take our jobs, and to put in place bipartisan approaches to create and retain jobs.”¹⁰⁸ Again, Senator Casey references the cheating and stealing tropes and their now innate connection to the United States perception that China takes away jobs unfairly.

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Congress, *Trade Enforcement and Infrastructure: Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness of the Committee on Finance*.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

A Joint Hearing occurred before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives on July 11th, 2018. The hearing was titled “China’s Predatory Trade and Investment Strategy.”¹⁰⁹ In the introduction of the joint hearing, China is identified as a country that “does not want to play by the rules” and “is exploiting its vulnerabilities to gain a strategic edge over competitors.”¹¹⁰ The introduction blatantly states that “China has no intention of becoming an equal partner in the world community. They do this by cheating.”¹¹¹ Throughout the entire document, numerous statements are reminiscent of the tropes that became widely popularized during Chinese exclusionary immigration. The introduction continues to read that “ultimately, billions of dollars and millions of jobs in the United States have been lost because China cheats.”¹¹²

In contrast to many of the newspaper articles from the 1800s, there are instances in which direct language of these exact tropes is used in current governmental hearings, with little effort going into the justification of these statements and the anti-Chinese undertone that encompasses them. Representative Ted Yoho, a former House of Representatives congressman representing Florida's 3rd district stated when discussing the U.S.-China trade deficit, that “the threat [of China] is no longer a matter of debate but an accepted fact.”¹¹³ He then goes on to connect the perceived threat of China to the negative implications it has on U.S. citizens and laborers, stating that “Xi Jinping and his cronies have made clear that they do not intend to make any good-faith

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Congress, *China’s Predatory Trade and Investment Strategy: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific*.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

efforts to address these valid concerns. Instead, they have decided to punish innocent U.S. citizens and workers."¹¹⁴ Almost identical to the blame placed on Chinese immigrants during the 1800s, Representative Yoho argues that China's presence and the economic benefits they derive from the United States negatively impact the livelihoods of United States citizens and laborers. He proceeds to say that "it is critical for the United States to address the full scope of China's predatory trade and investment policies."¹¹⁵ Similar to the animalistic nature of Chinese immigrants depicted in many of *The San Francisco Wasp* cartoons and the associated trope of the threat, Representative Yoho uses the word "predatory" to further this idea of China in this committee hearing.

Senator Yoho then broadens his argument regarding China and its economic practices to encompass the entire world, arguing that "the United States and many other nations have been cheated for too long."¹¹⁶ Primary sources from the 1800s indicate that the perceived threat level of the Chinese immigrant was contained within the United States; however, the rhetoric used in this statement indicates that the United States now believes that the threat level of China has expanded to the entire world. The document proceeds with Robert D. Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, arguing that the United States "didn't start the war, the Chinese started the war."¹¹⁷ The opinion that China and not the United States started the war similarly shifts the blame of any misgivings the United States could have contributed to the current trade war. Arguing that China started the war is also indicative of the historical trope that the Chinese immigrants are threats and are harmful to United States interests. This statement is indicative of the idea that China's problematic behavior initiates conflict, not the United States.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 25.

He concludes his statement by using identical language to that of Representative Yoho, saying “taking firm and strategic action against Chinese predatory, mercantilist practices is long overdue.”¹¹⁸ The opinion that China is predatory and a threat has persisted throughout U.S.-China Relations. Ted Poe, member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Texas's 2nd district, continues later in the Joint Hearing stating that China “cheat[s] a lot and it works. They steal everything they can from us.”¹¹⁹ This language is similar to how White laborers viewed Chinese immigrants in the 1800s and 1900s, arguing that the Chinese were cheating innocent White laborers out of jobs and stealing money that belonged in the United States.

Delineations should be made between the statements of scholars during this hearing at that of governmental representatives. Representatives, such as Yoho and Poe, made broad generalizations regarding China’s behavior while the scholars provided specificity in China’s actions and why such actions were taken by the country. The scholars still exhibited many of the tropes in their statements but diverged from just stating that tariffs were the most efficient way in which to address the problem. Mr. William Alan Reinsch encouraged the representatives to view the current trade war by understanding that the United States can either hold back China through tariffs or run faster than China through investment into the U.S. economy. He states that “What we can control is our own economic policy and if we do it well we can surmount the Chinese challenge,”¹²⁰ encouraging the United States to seek out deeper understandings of the current problems rather than returning to the historical blame rhetoric influencing decision-making now.

On February 27th, 2019, a hearing was held for the Committee on Ways and Means in the House of Representatives on U.S.-China trade.¹²¹ This hearing involved the questioning of

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 43.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 60.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹²¹ U.S. Congress, *U.S.-China Trade: Hearing before the Committee on Ways and Means*.

Robert E. Lighthizer, the U.S. Trade Representative, by members of Congress. Representative Kevin Brady (R-TX 8th District) provided the opening statement to the hearing with his introduction stating that “we can all strongly agree that China has cheated on trade for decades, severely harming American workers and businesses.”¹²² Within this statement, economic shortcomings that have hurt American workers and businesses over the past decade are directly attributed to the idea that China cheats at trade. Representative Brady identifies trade as the harmful variable that negatively impacts American laborers, disregarding the extensive list of factors that influence the profitability of working-class jobs. Brady continues to state that “President Trump deserves significant credit for being the first President to confront China’s unfair and predatory trade practices head-on,” with the word “predatory” being used throughout this hearing to indicate the perceived threat level of China.¹²³ Similar to the previous congressional hearing titled “China’s Predatory Trade and Investment Strategy,” the use of “predatory” is indicative of the animalistic tendency of preying on others, a concept visually depicted in the political cartoon titled “Devastation” by George Keller, published in 1880. Representative Ron Estes (R-KS 4th District) provides statements further demonstrative of the inherent connection he has made between downturns in economic growth and China, stating that “one of the things I think our colleagues on both sides of the aisle would agree with is that China has been harming American businesses and workers for decades. In fact, we have seen so much cheating over the years that it is having a drastic impact.”¹²⁴

On March 13th, 2019, the Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States Senate had a hearing titled “A New Approach For an Era of U.S.-China Competition.”¹²⁵ This hearing

¹²² Ibid., 4.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹²⁵ U.S. Congress, *A New Approach for a New Era of U.S.-China Competition: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations*.

addresses the economic support the United States provided China in the late 1900s, and how that support has since come back to haunt the United States. Within the opening statement, Senator James Risch (R - ID) makes the blanket statement that “China steals our intellectual property and uses it to put our people out of work.”¹²⁶ This claim of inherent malice associated with almost all of China’s economic policies towards the United States reveals a single-dimensional perspective originating from the United States that China’s goal is to hurt the United States, not achieve its own economic prosperity. The introduction goes on to argue that there are innate differences between the values held by the Chinese Communist party and those widely held in the United States, preventing collaborative solutions from being applicable. Furthermore, Senator Risch states that while the United States gave China the opportunity to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the population, it has since abandoned that role. Risch makes blanket statements discussing the evils that China represents, pushing forth the idea that “China exports corruption and its authoritarian model across the globe.”¹²⁷ Within the two statements provided by Senator Risch, the tropes of China as a threat and China as thieves are apparent. His blanket statement on the theft of intellectual property and its association with loss of jobs indicates that there is malicious intent behind China’s actions, with the country deliberately trying to hurt the United States. Similar to the hearing on “China’s Predatory Trade and Investment Strategy,” Senator Risch’s statements imply that China has since become a threat to the entire world, expanding from the previous notion that this threat only included the United States. This threat being China’s desire to export corruption and an authoritarian model. Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) interjects later in the hearing stating that he is “concerned that there is a perception that somehow China will be dissuaded from action by virtue of shame or by being called cheaters or the people

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

who thieve intellectual property."¹²⁸ This statement does not call China a cheat or a thief, but identifies that the persistent use of such rhetoric does little in changing the realities of the United States' economic struggles.

On July 22nd, 2020, a hearing was held before the Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States Senate titled "Advancing Effective U.S. Competition with China." This hearing contains statements submitted by Stephen Biegun, the Deputy Secretary of State, in which he discusses the perceived threat level of China to the United States and proposed policy options moving forward. This hearing contained a variety of different approaches to dealing with the U.S.-China trade war in which confrontational and competitive policies were debated. Recommendations for a confrontational approach were made and were followed up with generalized statements blaming China for its sole responsibility in U.S. economic shortcomings. In comparison, proposed competitive policies were followed up with statements that support the United States taking responsibility for its lack of competitiveness within the international sphere. Biegun states that "we at the Department of State are working hard every day to counter Beijing's threatening and malign activities around the world."¹²⁹ Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) then draws parallels between the identified threat levels of China to the United States. He argues that "China represents a threat to freedom, to our economy, to our military capability, to our national security of an entirely different nature than what we have faced before."¹³⁰

B. Executive Branch Statements

On May 3rd, 2020, President Trump provided remarks for a question and answer session at a Fox News Virtual Town Hall. Within this question and answer session, President Trump was

¹²⁸ Ibid., 38.

¹²⁹ U.S. Congress, *Advancing Effective U.S. Competition with China: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 15.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 33.

asked “if [he was] elected to a second term, what's [his] plan to be more fiscally responsible to either reduce or eliminate the deficit in response to increased Federal spending for the coronavirus stimulus packages?”¹³¹ President Trump responded by stating that he is ensuring that countries pay “us” for military protection among other things. He specifically states that “China ripped this country off for many, many decades,” and then introduces the argument that the presence of the budget deficit is at the fault of China for ripping the United States off trade-wise.¹³² The use of the words “ripping this country off” denotes a cheating element perceived in China’s nature. Further into the session, an individual asks a question regarding tariffs and agriculture. The person says “For my firm, the current tariffs add up to almost \$60,000 in monthly additional costs for my operations. Lifting these tariffs would help us speed the recovery for many of us by allowing those funds to be used to hire workers, invest in equipment, and recoup some of the cash we've spent to weather the current economic situation. Would you consider permanently or even temporarily reducing or eliminating those tariffs?”¹³³ The president responded by stating that the tariffs being imposed on China are actually benefiting farmers. He proceeds to redirect attention back to the idea that any economic misgivings this individual has about additional costs his business has experienced are China’s fault, not the negative impacts that tariffs have on American workers. He continues on to reiterate the statement that China was ripping the United States off an additional time during the conference.¹³⁴

During a news conference on May 11th, 2020, President Trump answered questions from the press regarding a variety of different topics, with one of them being progress on the recent trade deal and negotiations. President Trump is asked if he is interested in reopening negotiations

¹³¹ Trump, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Fox News Virtual Town Hall, May 11th, 2020,” 18.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 19

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

on the trade deal as China feels they can demand more favorable terms according to the South China Morning Post. President Trump adamantly states that he will not do that because “China has been taking advantage of the United States for many, many years, for decades.”¹³⁵ While the trope of China as a cheat is not notably apparent in this statement, the underlying tone of China taking advantage of the United States indicates a connotation that they do not play fair or justly.

On May 29th, 2020, President Trump provided remarks on the United States’ actions against China. In the first paragraph of his remarks, President Trump states that “China's pattern of misconduct is well known. For decades, they've ripped off the United States like no one has ever done before.”¹³⁶ The misconduct stated in this sentence denotes a tone of unfairness and not playing by the rules. President Trump goes on to argue that “hundreds of billions of dollars a year were lost dealing with China, especially over the years during the prior administration. China raided our factories, offshored our jobs, gutted our industries, stole our intellectual property, and violated their commitments under the World Trade Organization.”¹³⁷ President Trump also states that he does not solely blame China for these economic realities, as it was the shortcomings of his predecessors that permitted them the behavior to go unchecked. In his statement regarding the loss of billions of dollars to China, President Trump’s accusations demonstrate the presence of China as a threat, a cheat, and a thief. He makes sweeping generalizations in this statement, arguing that China is the one responsible for our industries being gutted, and our jobs being offshored.

On August 10th, 2020, another news conference was held in which President Trump was asked to discuss recent relations with China and the World Trade Organization. President Trump stated that “China is treated much differently than we are. This should have been handled many

¹³⁵ Ibid., 18.

¹³⁶ Trump, “Remarks on United States Actions Against China, May 29, 2020,” 1.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

years ago when it first happened, but they are treated as a nation that's developing. They're treated as what they call a "developing nation," which gives them tremendous incentives and advantages over and above what the United States gets."¹³⁸ President Trump introduces the idea that China has utilized outside organizations such as the World Trade Organization to seek out advantages, leaving the United States unable to compete. The insinuation that China seeks out advantages it does not deserve is reminiscent of the cheat trope. Trump goes on to state that the "latest action by China clearly indicates its determination to keep the United States at a permanent and unfair disadvantage, which is reflected in our massive \$376 billion trade imbalance in goods."¹³⁹ By stating this, President Trump is more inclined to blame China's economic policy on wanting to place the United States at a disadvantage than China's own desires to achieve economic prosperity.

C. Newspaper Analysis

In contrasting the two time periods of exclusionary immigration to the U.S.-China trade war, tropes do present in a variety of different ways. The economic association of these tropes has become inherently complex as the economic ties between the two countries have also evolved. It is imperative to understand that valid concerns are arising from the United States regarding China's position within the economy; however, efforts continue to go into deflecting responsibility onto the Chinese for U.S. economic shortcomings. The constant use of blame rhetoric and the persistence in these tropes limits the United States' ability to pursue economic and foreign policy that meets China's competitive edge.

In the *Fox News* article titled "How does China cheat on trade? Let us count the ways" (June 24th, 2018), author Steven Mosher makes the blanket statement that China's harmful

¹³⁸ Donald Trump, "The President's News Conference, August 10th, 2020."

¹³⁹ Ibid.

impacts on the United States economy are because of one reason, that “China cheats.”¹⁴⁰ Mosher notes that high tariffs on imports, subsidizing exports and manufacturing, and stealing intellectual property theft are all ways in which China cheats. According to Mosher, China’s goal is to eventually replace the United States as the one global power. His willingness to blame China demonstrates how anti-Chinese sentiment has become second nature in understanding economic realities between the two countries.

In the article, “China is Cheating at a Rigged Game” by Jake Werner on *foreignpolicy.com* (August 8th, 2018), Werner discusses the recent outlooks that many politicians have had on China’s rise to global power and its position within the U.S. economy. He argues that the rhetoric presented by many politicians, Democrats and Republicans, is demonstrative of anti-Chinese racism.¹⁴¹ The article argues that vilifying China, instead of acknowledging economic shortcomings, prevents much-needed development from occurring.

In the article titled “China Isn’t Cheating on Trade” from *The Atlantic* (April 21, 2019), author Peter Beinart draws comparisons between the rhetoric used by politicians regarding the U.S. China trade war. He says ‘from Elizabeth Warren, who earlier this year claimed that China has “weaponized its economy,” to Marco Rubio, who last year tweeted that the Chinese aim to “steal & cheat their way to world dominance,” leading Democrats and Republicans describe China’s economic practices as uniquely malevolent and getting worse.”¹⁴² Both Senators Warren and Rubio demonstrate the tropes of China being a threat, a thief, and a cheat. Beinart discusses how these perceptions of China as an adversary result in the conclusion that the United States is all good and China is all bad. These conclusions prevent adequate understanding of the complex nature of economic problems that impact the two countries. He states that the current foreign

¹⁴⁰ Mosher, “How Does China Cheat on Trade? Let Us Count the Ways.”

¹⁴¹ Werner, “China Is Cheating at a Rigged Game – Foreign Policy.”

¹⁴² Beinart, “U.S. Trade Hawks Exaggerate China’s Threat.”

policy goal that “only harsh American retaliation can remedy this” is inaccurate. He argues that America’s unwillingness to adopt policies that adequately support the working-class are what is preventing the United States from achieving the growth it desires. In regard to the negative implications that have befallen United States workers as a result of China’s recent accumulation of wealth, he blames the United States instead. Mosher says that “if Americans who lost their jobs didn’t also lose their health care; if they had access to generous government wage subsidies, retraining programs, and even guaranteed federal jobs; if paying for college didn’t plunge them and their children into debt—then the political incentive to scapegoat Beijing might not be as great. Over the past two decades, American politicians have not proved weak and inert in responding to China’s real and imagined misdeeds. They have proved weak and inert in responding to their own citizens’ needs. The reckoning Washington requires is not with China. It’s with itself.”¹⁴³

In the article titled “China cheats - and we let them” by Kevin Brock (October 7th, 2019), the statement is made that “China largely has cheated its way to prosperity.”¹⁴⁴ Brock establishes the idea that China has taken control of the United States as “they [have become] a loan-shark nation furnishing funds to an insatiable U.S. Congress that makes the prodigal son look like Ebenezer Scrooge. In other words, we’ve gone into debt to a nation that has lent us money it essentially stole from us.”¹⁴⁵ Brock deflects responsibility away from the United States and its lack of regulation in its own debt onto China, the supposed thief.

In an article titled “U.S. trade chief says talking with China won't stop cheating” by Reuters Staff (June 18th, 2019), commentary is provided on many recent statements given by U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. When discussing the possible outcomes of tariffs

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Brock, “China Cheats — and We Let Them.”

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

on China, Robert Lighthizer stated that “I don’t know if it will get [China] to stop cheating, tariffs alone.”¹⁴⁶ Lighthizer has consistently taken an anti-Chinese approach in addressing trade relations during President Trump’s administration. Lighthizer’s use of cheating rhetoric limits how one chooses to approach addressing relations with China. The United States can work to prevent China from “cheating” but this blame rhetoric does not acknowledge that the United States has more control in its own policy than China’s policy.

The article titled “No, Mr. President: China didn’t steal our jobs. Corporate America gave them away” (November, 9th, 2019) presents an incredibly compelling analysis on how the United States governments’ use of blame rhetoric does not reflect recent realities in economic policies. Author Cody Cain begins by countering the popular argument that China is stealing American jobs. His acknowledgement of this common understanding of China indicates its constancy in people’s opinions. Cain states that “President Trump loves to blame China for the job losses that have devastated American workers under globalization. But the truth is that Trump is blaming the wrong party.”¹⁴⁷ Cain identifies corporate America and their willingness to pursue cheaper labor outside of America as the main culprit in recent job loss, stating that China only took advantage of opportunities that were presented to them. He continues this line of thought by acknowledging that “it is true that numerous American manufacturing jobs have been shipped overseas to China, thereby leaving American workers jobless and suffering. But China did not steal these jobs.”¹⁴⁸

In an article published by *CNBC* (November 12th, 2019) discussing President Trump’s recent speech at the Economic Club of New York, the cheat trope takes center stage in the President’s rhetoric. He states that “Since China’s entrance into the World Trade Organization in

¹⁴⁶ Reuters Staff, “U.S. Trade Chief Says Talking with China Won’t Stop Cheating.”

¹⁴⁷ Graham and Leffel, “Is China Actually Stealing American Jobs and Wealth?”

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

2001, no one has manipulated better or taken advantage of the United States more,” going on to preface that he “will not say the word ‘cheated,’ but nobody’s cheated better than China.”¹⁴⁹

President Trump's statement is indicative of rhetoric from the 1800s, with China and the Chinese immigrants having an extensive set of capabilities that will disadvantage the United States. The president’s perception now indicates that China’s capabilities in cheating are unrivaled by anyone else.

An article published in the *Harvard Business Review* calls into question the popularized rhetoric of China stealing and whether or not data provides backing to this widely held belief. The article titled “Is China Actually Stealing American Jobs and Wealth?” introduces quantitative data addressing two main beliefs of China’s behavior, the first being China is “stealing American jobs and (2) pirating American intellectual property.”¹⁵⁰ The article reports that “data collected by the Long U.S.-China Institute suggest that China is far less guilty of these crimes than many policymakers and commentators would have us believe.”¹⁵¹ The article cites that intellectual property theft has actually decreased since 1995. The United States also utilizes theft of technology from Europe during its development, yet hypocritically labels China as a thief.

On December 3rd, 2020, Senator Marsh Blackburn tweeted that “China has a 5,000 year history of cheating and stealing. Some things will never change...”¹⁵² This tweet demonstrates the ever-present nature of the tropes of China as a thief and a cheat within the United States government. While Senator Blackburn identifies the origins of China’s cheating and stealing to

¹⁴⁹ Cox, “Trump Says China Cheated America on Trade, but He Blames US Leaders for Letting It Happen.

¹⁵⁰ Graham and Leffel, “Is China Actually Stealing American Jobs and Wealth?”

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Magnier, “Chinese-Americans Protest US Senator Marsha Blackburn’s Tweet over China’s ‘Cheating and Stealing’.”

thousands of years ago, the exact rhetoric she is using was widely popularized and reflected governmental legislation during the implementation of Chinese exclusionary immigration. The statement that “somethings will never change” indicates that even in the future, regardless of the realities surrounding China’s decisions, this perception of cheating and stealing will continue.

When contrasting the two different time periods presents many similarities and differences, self-awareness has become increasingly prominent when viewing rhetoric present in the U.S.-China trade war. However, articles published between 2018 to 2020 demonstrate that the presence of anti-Chinese sentiment is still prominent and lacks adequate justification in its use.

IX. Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis will be performed on the two different time periods to demonstrate how the rhetoric towards China and Chinese immigrants has evolved and remained the same. The tropes of the Chinese immigrant and China as invasive, a cheat, a threat, and a thief have evolved to encompass three broader themes. These themes include blame rhetoric regarding the threat of China to the Western world and the United States’ democracy, the theft of jobs and money from White/American laborers, and the threat of China to the economic vitality of U.S. industry. By contrasting governmental legislation, reports, hearings, political cartoons, and newspapers through these three themes, blame rhetoric towards China becomes readily apparent.

The first distinct theme between these two time periods is the fear of the Chinese immigrant and China overtaking the United States. In the article titled “The Chinese” (June 14th, 1869), this over-taking rhetoric is depicted with the article reading “if this nation was warlike it would conquer all Europe or Asia or Africa.”¹⁵³ In 1880, in the political cartoon titled *The*

¹⁵³ About, "The Chinese."

Chinese Invasion, Joseph Keppler draws a Chinese immigrant as a policeman, possessing power in the institutional law and order of the government.¹⁵⁴ These two historical references to the invasive and threat tropes demonstrate the fear that China has the capability to and overtake key institutions within other nations. The article "China Isn't Cheating on Trade" from *The Atlantic* (April 21, 2019) provides almost identical statements in which author Peter Beinart cites politicians who have recently presented similar rhetoric. He includes a statement by Senator Marco Rubio, who stated "that the Chinese aim to 'steal & cheat their way to world dominance'."¹⁵⁵ Beinart then constructs a broader argument that "leading Democrats and Republicans describe China's economic practices as uniquely malevolent and getting worse."¹⁵⁶ This trope of China as a threat and as invasive presents itself in both time periods, demonstrating the now inherent association of China's nature as threatening and invasive to the United States.

The connection between China's government type and its threat to the United States is made both in the 1800s, during exclusionary immigration, and during the U.S.-China trade war. In the article titled "Commodore Shurfeld's Opinion of the Chinese" (March 25th, 1882) Commodore Shurfeld states that "China is especially antagonistic to our form of government."¹⁵⁷ In the *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration* (February 27th, 1877), the claim is made that "the apparent prosperity derived from the presence of the Chinese immigrant is deceptive and unwholesome, ruinous to our laboring classes, promotive of caste, and dangerous to free institutions."¹⁵⁸ On March 13th, 2019, during the hearing titled "A New Approach For an Era of U.S.-China Competition," Senator James Risch (R-ID) stated that

¹⁵⁴ Joseph F. Keppler, *The Chinese Invasion*.

¹⁵⁵ Peter Beinart, "U.S. Trade Hawks Exaggerate China's Threat."

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ "Commodore Shurfeld's Opinion of the Chinese."

¹⁵⁸ United States., *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration*.

“China exports corruption and its authoritarian model across the globe.”¹⁵⁹ Further into the same hearing, Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) argues that “China represents a threat to freedom, to our economy, to our military capability, to our national security of an entirely different nature than what we have faced before.”¹⁶⁰ Parallels in the two periods of time can be drawn between the perception of China’s antagonistic nature and its threat to the United States government, free institutions, and national security. Almost identical rhetorics are being reflected between discussions on the Chinese immigrant during 1877 to discussions being had in 2019 on China’s threat level to the U.S. economy.

Historical blame rhetoric has shaped contemporary discussion on U.S. economic shortcomings by allowing legislators and politicians the ease of access in using historic tropes. The protection of democracy in the United States is an idea that is consistently capitalized on in order to induce fear and garner support towards stronger anti-China policy. Contemporary discussions on U.S. economic shortcomings utilize blame rhetoric and fear-mongering language to motivate the public and government officials to view China’s institutional power and economic growth as a significant threat to the survival of U.S. democracy. Pointing the public’s attention to the perceived threat that China poses enables a diversion from the United States’ role in its economic shortcomings. The United States’ choice to target China’s government system is reflective of a straw man attack through the extremely embedded ideological attachment to democracy as a "supreme" structure.

The theft trope endures throughout exclusionary immigration and is now increasingly prevalent in many politicians’ viewpoints on job and financial loss attributed to China. An article

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Congress, *A New Approach for a New Era of U.S.-China Competition: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations*.

¹⁶⁰ U.S. Congress, *Advancing Effective U.S. Competition with China: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations*.

titled "The Chinese" published in the *Chicago Tribune* on August 4th, 1870, argues that Chinese immigrants "have dug our gold, carried it away, and impoverished our mines."¹⁶¹ This argument is very similar to the modern debate regarding the theft of the United States' intellectual property by the Chinese: that China absconds with what rightfully belongs to the United States and uses it for their own economic advantage. During the 1800s, White laborers strongly believed that the Chinese immigrants who participated in the Gold Rush would send remittances back to China and place White laborers and the economy at a disadvantage. The trope of the Chinese stealing is seen in another article published two years after the implementation of the Burlingame Treaty. The article reads "California today is poor to what she was three years ago, and why? Because of the coolies."¹⁶² Through the context of the modern U.S.-China trade war, Senator James Risch (R - ID) makes the blanket statement that "China steals our intellectual property and uses it to put our people out of work."¹⁶³ A similar statement is made by Representative Poe, saying that China "cheat[s] a lot and it works. They steal everything they can from us."¹⁶⁴ Senator Casey also stated, "if China can't buy it or if China can't run it out of business, they usually steal it."¹⁶⁵ All of the above statements paint a picture of the internalization of the thief trope that became widely popularized during Chinese exclusionary immigration. Senators have continued to utilize this rhetoric as a way to publicize dissatisfaction with China's assumed negative impact on the United States' economy. In 2020, President Trump argued that "hundreds of billions of dollars a year were lost dealing with China, especially over the years during the prior administration.

¹⁶¹ "The Chinese"

¹⁶² "Meeting in Opposition to Coolie Importation."

¹⁶³ U.S. Congress, *A New Approach for a New Era of U.S.-China Competition: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations*.

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Congress, *China's Predatory Trade and Investment Strategy: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific*.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

China raided our factories, offshored our jobs, gutted our industries, stole our intellectual property, and violated their commitments under the World Trade Organization."¹⁶⁶ This idea that China has come to exploit the economic prosperity in the United States is also present in the rhetoric that the Chinese immigrants stole the economic prosperity afforded to them by immigrating here. This blame rhetoric and the theft trope have become second nature in how politicians address U.S.-China relations, and specifically the trade war. The United States continues to use accusatory language in hopes of addressing perceived economic disparities with China.

One of the most deeply ingrained rhetorics is the idea that China and the Chinese immigrants have stolen jobs away from hard-working Americans. In 1870, the article titled “The Ruin of Radical Rule” demonstrates this, reading that Chinese immigrants have “taken the place of white workmen,” resulting in White laborers “[having] been robbed.”¹⁶⁷ Continuing on, The *San Francisco Chronicle* published an article in which this exact rhetoric is presented, reading “Chinese immigrants continue to flood the country with cheap labor, to the great injury of American mechanics and other men and women.”¹⁶⁸ The article titled “Chinese Cheap Labor,” published in 1878, furthers this rhetoric and takes it a step further by identifying the harm that is likely to befall on White laborers if the Chinese immigrants’ presence continues. The article states that Ohio “will find every avenue of occupation choked with the hungry hordes of Chinese, seeking employment at rates of compensation upon which a White man would starve.”¹⁶⁹ The U.S.-China trade war further depicts the deep-seated anti-Chinese sentiment that arose from these historical legacies. Representative Ron Estes (R-KS 4th District) makes a

¹⁶⁶ Trump, “Remarks on United States Actions Against China, May 29, 2020.”

¹⁶⁷ “The Ruin of Radical Rule.”

¹⁶⁸ “Mechanic’s State Council.”

¹⁶⁹ “Chinese Cheap Labor.”

statement saying that “one of the things I think our colleagues on both sides of the aisle would agree with is that China has been harming American businesses and workers for decades. In fact, we have seen so much cheating over the years that it is having a drastic impact.”¹⁷⁰ Senator Casey is also seen demonstrating this exact rhetoric, encouraging President Trump “to use every tool at his disposal to fight back against China cheating, to fight back against any country trying to take our jobs.”¹⁷¹ Representative Ted Yoho also vocalizes statements that encompass this idea that China’s theft of jobs has left the American people at a disadvantage. He argues that “Xi Jinping and his cronies have made clear that they do not intend to make any good-faith efforts to address these valid concerns. Instead, they have decided to punish innocent U.S. citizens and workers.”¹⁷² There is a consistent rhetoric that implies the American worker has unjustly and unfairly lost their job due to China.

Specificity is afforded to complaints regarding exactly how China is stealing from us, with Americans and White laborers being targeted; however, more generalized impacts on the economy are also vocalized between these two time periods. The invasive trope persists in the understanding of China’s influence on the economy. In the political cartoon *The Coming Man* published in 1881, the Chinese immigrant is drawn in a manner that depicts increased control over extensive facets of the U.S. economy, preventing growth.¹⁷³ In the article titled “A Good Example: What a Few Men Have to Discourage Chinese Labor” (June 12th, 1879), the author states that the Chinese are “a barrier to the best and most healthy development of our

¹⁷⁰ U.S. Congress, *U.S.-China Trade: Hearing before the Committee on Ways and Means*.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² U.S. Congress, *China’s Predatory Trade and Investment Strategy: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific*.

¹⁷³ George F. Keller, *The Coming Man*.

industries."¹⁷⁴ In the U.S.-China trade war rhetoric, many people argue that China's presence is unhealthy and damaging to U.S. industry.

X. Conclusions

In answering the questions *How has rhetorical blaming of China shaped historical and contemporary discussions about American economic shortcomings? What similarities exist between the late 1800s debate surrounding Chinese immigration and today's trade disputes?*

historical legacies of blame rhetoric become readily apparent in present day relations. Rhetorical blaming of China has shaped contemporary discussions about American economic shortcomings through the continued displacement of responsibility.

The United States often disregards the innate role that racism has played in its development. Arguments are made that the inequality and prejudice experienced by an extensive number of groups, including the Chinese, are less relevant because they occurred a "long time ago." This lack of inclusion presents single-dimensional understandings of how United States governmental policy is formed and how racism and its presence in tropes still continues to influence popular sentiment. Chinese exclusionary immigration serves as a predominant form of "othering" in United States history. To simply disregard such a significant historical occurrence and the racism that evolved from this policy exhibits the United States as unwilling to mature from previous mistakes.

The government has placed prioritization of blame at the forefront of its goals, in contrast to increased motivation towards more effective economic policy or better safeguards against China's economic power. Copious amounts of time are spent blaming China for economic realities. While this blame rhetoric garners political support from the masses, it does not change the current international landscape and China's role in it. The United States currently lacks the

¹⁷⁴ "A Good Example: What a Few Men Have to Discourage Chinese Labor."

capability to reorient economic policy without the inclusion of anti-Chinese tropes. The use of retaliatory tariffs on China demonstrates a hardline approach and an unyielding United States, yet in the pursuit of these tariffs, the United States remains stationary in how it chooses to address current economic realities. Disregard for the extensive list of variables influencing job loss and the trade deficit only inhibits the United States from further economic growth. The United States' antagonist approach to the trade war with China does little to improve how the United States seeks out economic development. The United States' focus remains on prevention in contrast to resolution. This prevention encompasses an effort to hinder China's economic growth - something China is unlikely to allow.

To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could address a broader set of historical time periods in which this blame rhetoric has evolved. While this thesis chose to focus on U.S. economic shortcomings and blame rhetoric, blame rhetoric is often used to further U.S. interests within the international community in a variety of different ways. Future research could encompass the following research questions: *How does the U.S. utilize blame rhetoric to further U.S. interests with China? How do politicians utilize blame rhetoric towards China to garner political support?* Furthermore, future research could include in-depth economic solutions that emphasize mutual benefit for both countries, in contrast to the present desire to stifle China's economic growth.

Concerns arising from the United States regarding China's economic power remain valid to some degree; however, what does not remain valid is a constant focus on blame rhetoric to address these issues. The United States has been able to identify legitimate instances in which China's tactics in the economy do negatively impact industries, but a constant focus on blame rhetoric does not move the United States towards more productive discussions. The continuation

and lack of acknowledgment towards this rhetoric has allowed the normalization of anti-Chinese sentiment to occur and, lacking justification, is still used in society. The persistence of this rhetorical blame presents significant obstacles to how the United States is able to move forward towards productive relations with China.

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