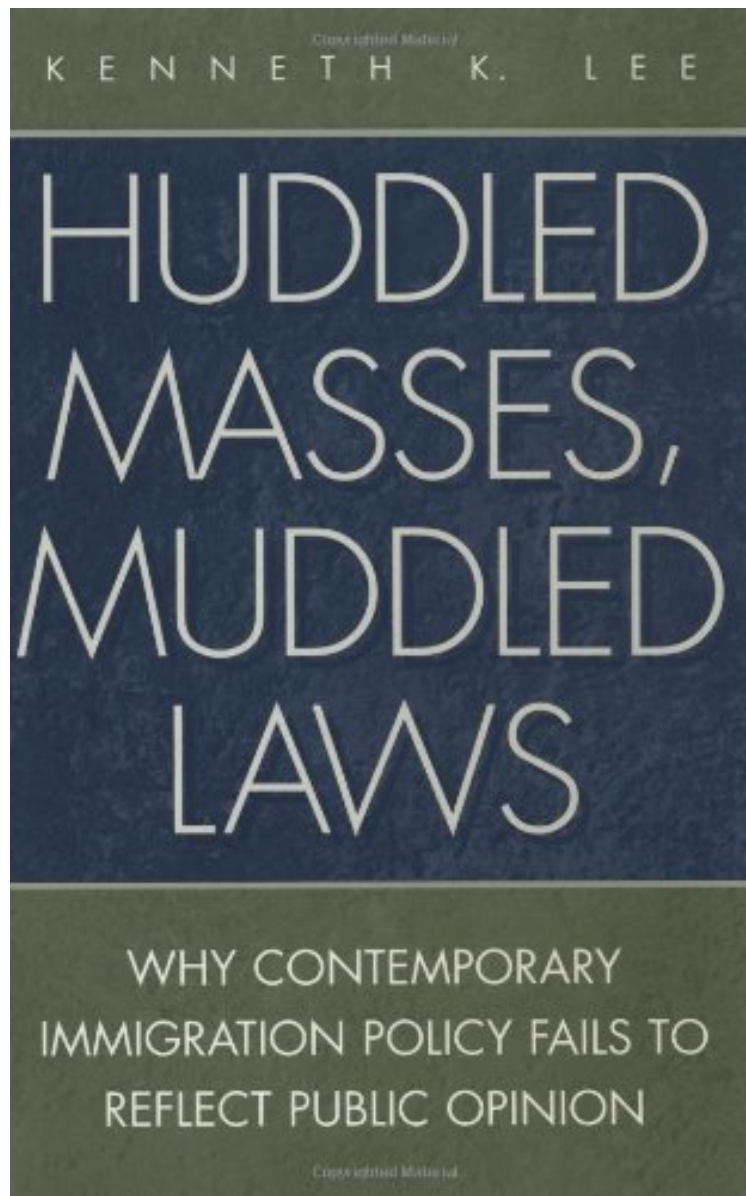


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Huddled Masses, Muddled Laws: Why Contemporary Immigration Policy Fails to Reflect Public Opinion (History; 62)

Kenneth Lee

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7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A core addition to immigration policy studies. By Midwest Book Review
In 1997 the United States accepts more legal immigrants than all the other countries in the world combined. This large influx of newcomers (further swollen by legions of illegal immigrants) has become politically controversial and touches upon such controversial regional and national issues as multiculturalism, bilingualism, unemployment, crime, welfare subsidy, national and public security, etc. In *Huddled Masses, Muddled Laws: Why Contemporary Immigration Policy Fails To Reflect Public Opinion*, author and researcher Kenneth Lee explains why recent immigration policy has failed to reflect outraged and alarmed public opinion by approaching the question from both a broad, historical perspective and a focused, contemporary analysis. He traces several political movements such as the rise of conservative economics and racial liberalism in the 1970s, examines immigration policy on a micro-level detailing the intense lobbying that went on for the 1990 and 1996 immigration bills, and shows how such unlikely players as the Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed helped defeat the immigration restrictionist bill in 1996. *Huddled Masses, Muddled Laws* is highly recommended reading for students of American political science, immigration issues, multiculturalism, bilingualism and the "English Only" movements, economics, and social/legal issues related to immigrant assimilation and services.

In 1997 the United States accepted more legal immigrants than all other countries combined. This large influx of newcomers, however, has alarmed many Americans. Immigration is a controversial issue because it intersects with the most contentious issues of our time: multiculturalism, bilingualism, unemployment, crime, etc. Opinion polls since 1965 show that a strong majority want to reduce immigration. Yet our government has refused to respond to the public's wish. In 1996, Congress scuttled a proposal to reduce immigration by a third. (Earlier, in 1990, Congress voted to increase immigration by a whopping 40 percent.) This is all the more surprising because the United States has had no qualms about severely restricting immigration in the past. Kenneth Lee explains why recent immigration policy has failed to reflect the public opinion by approaching the question from a broad, historical outlook, and from a focused, contemporary perspective. He traces several momentous historical changes that have abetted the pro-immigration block and weakened the restrictionists' clout (mainly, the rise of conservative economics in the 1970s and the growing racial liberalism in America). He also examines immigration policy on a micro-level: detailing the intense lobbying that went on for the 1990 and 1996 immigration bills, and he also shows how unlikely players as, for example, Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed, helped defeat the restrictionist bill in 1996.

"Mr. Lee skillfully portrays the political manipulation of illegal immigration as a buffer issue during the last quarter of a century. As such, he has made a worthy contribution to the thorough and judicious debate he rightly believes the subject of immigration deserves."-International Immigration "Objective, well-written with bibliography and index, this primer on immigration deserves the attention of all."-Society for German American Studies Newsletter
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"Kenneth Lee has written an incisive analysis of immigration law, including an excellent behind-the-scenes description of how the most recent policy battles were fought in Washington."-John J. Miller Vice President, Center for Equal Opportunity and author of *The Unmaking of Americans*
About the Author
KENNETH K. LEE, a free-lance writer, has written on immigration and other issues for various publications, including *The New Republic*, *Orange County Register*, *The American Enterprise*, *Heterodoxy*, *Liberty*, and *The Los Angeles Times*.