Coming to America

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*Introduction*

Illegal immigration can be termed as the process whereby people move into another country unlawfully. The US has had to grapple with an influx of people who reside in the country illegally in search of better lives. The issue about illegal immigrants is critical to the US particularly concerning the current regime. The current government is determined to ensure that illegal immigration is curbed and that movement into the US is restricted. Many families risk being disintegrated after the deportation of members who have been residing in the country illegally. This essay discusses the issue concerning illegal immigration and the benefits of curbing illegal immigration in the US.

*Legal and Illegal Immigrants in the US*

The number of immigrants in the US can be classified as 14 percent of the country’s population. These statistics mean that out of the country’s 323 million citizens, over 43 million people are immigrants as stipulated by the Census Bureau data (Felter & Renwick, 2018). Immigrants who are not documented are about 11 million and have steadied since the occurrence of the economic crisis in 2008, which contributed to the movement of some of the immigrants back to their countries of origin. Additionally, the economic crisis also discouraged many other people from migrating into the US, hence contributing to the steadying rate of the migrants’ movement into the country. The Customs and Border Protection cited a 26 percent reduction in the number of individuals stopped or apprehended at the country’s southern border (Felter & Renwick, 2018). It can also be observed that a significant number of illegal immigrants comprise of those that overstayed their visas and those who illegally crossed the border, especially from Mexico (Felter & Renwick, 2018).

*Illegal immigration and cheap labor*

There is a relationship between illegal immigrations and cheap labor. For example, with an increase in the number of illegal workers, there is an elevated probability that labor charges would diminish (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). When the supply of workers is high, the price for hiring workers reduces based on the supply and demand concept (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). Thus, the prices that companies may be willing to pay for labor services rendered are reduced greatly. Firms may be unwilling to pay high wages whereas cheap labor is available.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that illegal immigrants work for cheap labor because it may sustain them. This statement is based on the understanding that workers need to remit taxes to governments for the sustenance of the economy. Through tax remission processes, the government gains funds to meet the desired financial needs of the country (Camarota, 2004). There are arguments that the majority of illegal immigrants find low wages sustaining for them because they do not pay taxes. Even in situations where illegal immigrants appear to pay federal tax, there are inconsistencies in their tax payment because the immigrants apply the federal tax code to claim refundable tax credits (Agresti, 2016). Therefore, on most instances, illegal immigrants are not enthusiastic in paying taxes to federal governments as expected. The inability of the majority of illegal workers to have social security makes it challenging for the government to follow up on individuals who have been unable to pay taxes (Camarota, 2004). This statement also means that the government loses millions from individuals who are unable to pay taxes, leading to loss of significant financial resources that would have assisted the government in meeting the necessary needs.

Therefore, by restricting illegal immigration, there are high probabilities that the wages would rise. The restriction of illegal immigrants would mean that the number of people willing to work for cheap wages would reduce significantly, mainly because the majority of illegal immigrants could work for low wages due to their inability to possess skills (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). Thus, companies would have to pay citizens and legal migrants better for the labor services offered. Furthermore, the government may be better placed to monitor its tax revenues because it could track employees’ tax payments through their social security numbers (Camarota, 2004). The government, thus, does not have to lose significant revenues from non-payment of taxes.

Moreover, there is the issue of unnecessary competition particularly in the employment sector, where legitimate migrants and native citizens have to compete for employment opportunities with illegal immigrants. Allowing illegal immigration to continue would be subjecting the citizens and legal migrants to unnecessary competition for job opportunities (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). In such competitions, the natives and legal migrants are the most vulnerable to lose out because of the cheap prices the companies offer regarding labor. Since the legal and native citizens have additional costs to meet such as tax, the cheap labor costs may not be beneficial to them. However, since the illegal immigrants are in the country unlawfully, they may not be lawfully ‘known’ to the authorities, hence their being ‘non-existent’ in the country. If the rate of competition is allowed to continue, the qualified citizens may not access employment, leading to extending unemployment trends.

*Illegal immigration and criminal activities*

Whereas all illegal immigrants are not criminals, there is a need to limit illegal immigration due to its association to crime. There are times when it has been challenging for federal authorities to solve criminal cases particularly where illegal immigrants are involved. For example, Rafael Resendez-Ramirez has been involved in several cases pertaining to brutal murder. Being an illegal drifter from Mexico, Ramirez managed to commit about eight murders in states such as Illinois, Kentucky, and Texas before eventually surrendering to the police in Texas in 1999 (Horowitz, 2001). Ramirez’s case was made intriguing by the understanding that he was a repeat offender who could commit crimes, get deported, but resurface again. Ramirez illegally re-entered the US after three deportations and also returned to Mexico voluntarily about nine times after being apprehended (Horowitz, 2001). By being an illegal immigrant, Ramirez was a risk to people and it can be observed that he could sneak back into the US illegally.

Another notable case involves the District of Columbia, which was quoted in *The Washington Post* in 1998 as having met challenges in trying to resolve over 20 homicide cases because the perpetrators had fled to El Salvador, their native country (Horowitz, 2001). From this case, it can be observed that illegal immigration can have negative impacts on security and crime. Since the perpetrators of the crimes had fled to their country of origin, attainment of justice was delayed (Horowitz, 2001). The El Salvador immigrants’ intentions were to avoid prosecution in the US and through the porous borders; they could sneak into their country of origin.

Furthermore, there are other cases such as the one involving Russian immigrants in Brooklyn, who have engaged in a network of engaging in heroin smuggling, prostitution, stock fraud, and money-laundering activities (Horowitz, 2001). This group of Russian immigrants has also been involved in committing murders against fellow mobsters, whom they thought were hindering their successful implementation of the identified activities.

Moreover, there is the case of the MS-13 gang, which comprises of immigrants or their descendants from El Salvador. The gang operates on the mantra of killing, violence and control (The White House, 2018). This gang is a threat to the communities in America due to the orchestration of fear, violence and suffering. By instilling fear on the community, the gang manages to control and perpetuate its heinous activities. About 38 percent of murders committed in Suffolk County, New York, were associated with MS-13, particularly from January 2016 to June 2017 (The White House, 2018).

By curbing illegal immigration, then it would be easier to monitor criminal activities. People such as Ramirez would not find it easy committing crimes in the US and re-entering the country after deportation. With stringent immigrant rules and policies, individuals wishing to re-enter the US illegally would find it extremely challenging. When measures are implemented to ensure that illegal immigration is limited, it would be easier for law-enforcers to carry out their duties successfully. Through the legal documentation process, it would be easier for government forces to trace individuals compared to situations when the individuals are legally residing in the country (The New York Times, 2003). Individuals illegally residing in a country can be termed as ‘not-existing’ because they are not ‘known’ to the authorities. The authorities do not have their names and reasons for residing in the country. Therefore, when such individuals commit crimes, it may be challenging for the relevant government forces to identify and apprehend them (Horowitz, 2001). Through the process of limiting illegal immigration, the influx of people with dubious motives into the US would be reduced.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the government may gain from a reduction in deportation costs. It can be observed that the government incurs heavy costs deporting individuals who have been found to illegally reside in the country. Additionally, it is also worth noting that illegal migration also subjects the immigrants into further risks. For example, illegal immigrants in their search for better pastures may need to embrace risky mechanisms to enter the US such as through smuggling channels (Horowitz, 2001). The immigrants may be forced to liaise with smugglers for them to be sneaked in the US. During this process, the immigrants may be vulnerable to death and many have died in ships and boxcars before their arrival to the US (Horowitz, 2001). This statement means that illegal immigration can also cost lives particularly during the smuggling process. By limiting illegal immigration, it is possible to save lives because immigrants would not have to seek such risky mechanisms to enter the USA. Additionally, by restricting illegal immigration, the US would contribute to the reduction of slavery levels in major countries. Currently, slavery is orchestrated in several countries as people seek opportunities, albeit through unlawful mechanisms, to enter the US (Horowitz, 2001). With the desire to get into the US surpassing the imminent risks involved, individuals are vulnerable to slavery in the promise of getting into the US. Therefore, by restricting illegal immigration through stringent measures around the borders, it may be possible to restrict slavery.

*Illegal immigration and disfranchised families*

In the US, the *citizenship by birth* regulation has brought many challenges particularly where illegal immigration is concerned (Lykes, McDonald, & Boc, 2012). Since any person born in the U.S. becomes a U.S. citizen, the issue of illegal immigration continues to elicit mixed debate. This citizenship issue is guaranteed even when the parents are not U.S. citizens or even when they are in the U.S. illegally. Thus, for illegal immigrants, their children become U.S. citizens once they are born in the country. This provision is affecting families because the children may become “parentless” in the event that their parents are deported because the children cannot be deported with their parents based on the understanding they are already U.S. citizens (Ferriss & Isackson, 2012). Furthermore, when the parents are deported, assuming they were all illegal immigrants, it is the government’s responsibility to ensure that the children are not neglected (Siddiqui, 2018). Majorly, the government, through the social services, would meet the costs of ensuring the children get the right services in terms of education, food, and health, among other relevant services.

The higher the number of illegal immigrant parents deported, the more the government would have to spend to ensure that he children get the necessary emotional, financial, and physical support. Currently, debate is rife regarding the consequences of having to separate families based on the citizenship of parents and children (Siddiqui, 2018). Thus, families are suffering greatly due to the impact of illegal immigration. The deportation process, although painful, can be a deterrent to other individuals intending to engage in illegal immigration and start families under the thought that they would gain citizenship based on their children’s attainment of citizenship by birth.

*Conclusion*

In conclusion, it can be observed that people migrate to the US in search of better pastures such as employment. However, the majority of people are illegal immigrants based on the process of overstaying their visas or sneaking illegally into the US through borders such as the Mexican border. Other individuals get into the US through smuggling routes and they are exposed to dangers and death. Curbing illegal immigration would contribute greatly to the saving of lives, particularly those who die in ships and boxcars before their arrival to the US. Furthermore, the curbing of illegal immigrants would also contribute greatly to the elimination of unnecessary competition in the labor market, as well as, the improvement of wages in the labor sector.

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