Illegal Immigration

Why are people opposed to illegal immigration?

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Illegal immigration has hit a record high over last few years. The research for illegal immigration has increased; as well according to research anti-immigration sediments are still high. To understand why Americans are opposed to illegal immigration research into immigration policy, stereotypes and arguments towards illegal immigration must be research. This is the purpose of this literature review.

Research findings in an article by Massey and Pren (2012) explain some of the unforeseen repercussions of immigration policy after 1965 surrounding the surge in U.S. immigration. The Civil Rights movement helped open the door to examine the racist legislator that set a quota on immigrants based on their birth country. Massy and Pren expound that the 19665 amendments intention was to not revoke racist legislator. The two dominating countries were Asia and Latin America, the new legislator did increase immigration from Asia, who were previously not included in the legal immigration quota. Although, “…the surge in immigration from Latin America occurred in spite of rather than because of the new system,” clarifies Massy and Pren. The purpose of the article was to specifically explain the how’s and why’s of the 1990’s surge of immigration from Latin America. The larger point that Massy and Pren expounded on was how little American policy on immigration trends and “ Instead, over time the relative openness or restrictiveness of US policies is more strongly shaped by prevailing economic circumstances and political ideologies (Timmer and Wil- liamson 1998; Massey 1999; Meyers 2004).” Most of the attention on immigration 1965 was focused on the consequences of immigration from Asia and Africa to America and not Latin America. The Bracero Program beginning in 1942 was completely inactive by 1968, allowed foreign workers to immigrate for a allotted time to work during the war.

“During the period 1955–59, around half a million Mexicans were entering the country each year, the number fluctuating around 450,000 temporary Bracero migrants and 50,000 permanent residents (Massey 2011). Given this large annual inflow, the sudden elimination of the Bracero Program clearly would have dramatic consequences on migration between Mexico and the United States; and with the imposition of a hemispheric cap, and eventually country quotas, the displaced temporary migrants were not going to be accommodated within the system for legal immigration,” Massy and Pren explains further that it was during this time illegal immigration skyrocketed. They attribute most of illegal immigration to the sudden ending of the Bracero Program. Despite immigration reform policies from 1993 to 2010 by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Department of Homeland Security, illegal immigration has not decrease but increased of the years.

According to Massy and Pren, “to say that US immigration policies have failed is an understatement. From 1970 to 2010 the population born in Latin America increased more than 11 times.” Massy and Pren explain that if the American government would have provided alternative work programs and support for the Baracero Program immigrants it could have prevented future illegal immigration. Overall their belief was that if America had a legalization process that was more comprehensive and affordable America would see a decrease in illegal immigration.

In the second article Jesse Diaz, Jr. researches racial stereotypes of immigrants which evokes hateful labels and policies, these stereotypes have also produced a ill-informed idea in American society that immigrants are more prone to violence and crime. Diaz explains that do “Native-born” citizen and legislators felt the need to keep immigrants subordinate they labled them often as criminal even though all evidence supported otherwise. Diaz presents further evidence for this, “In the same vein, Kelsey (1926) found that from 1880 to 1890 as the foreign-born population went up, the rate of criminality went down.” The idea of violence and crime in relation to early immigrants was in almost all cases violence against the foreign-born population, “In examining this first period of high immigration to the US, the link perpetuated between criminality and immigration has provided the foundation for popular violence against immigrants, particularly marginalized immigrants of color,” informs Diaz. This idea of immigrants of criminal’s fuels social institutes such as the “Immigration Industrial Complex” which is involved with most of the deportations, detentions, and workplace raids. Diaz argues that this is a way to rid America of the Latin American population similar to other programs in the past that excluded African American, Asian American and other racial groups. Diaz concludes that his research has begun to uncover “the relationship between immigration and crime”, but further research needs to be done in order for the stereotypes to be dismantled.

In the third article by Justin Allen Berg (2012) explores symbolic-racism and Native-born citizens in America, specifically group threat among native-born citizens who are the dominant ethno racial group and feel possessive over the resources available in America. Thus the less predominant ethno racial group is marginalized and subjected to discriminatory policy. Diaz hopes that by understanding the connection between symbolic racism, such as group threat, and immigration will help further political policies. He asks the question does symbolic racism affect the opinions and ideas of immigration policies. Diaz analyzed date from two surveys “the 1994 General Social Survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, and the 2004 Immigration Survey, sponsored by National Public Radio, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.” Both surveys included adults 18 years and older. Diaz restricted the results to just native-born participants. Diaz used 5 dependent variables and 2 independent variables (symbolic racism and group threat). The results supported Diaz original hypothesis that symbolic racism impacts native-born Americans’ opinion on immigration policies. When measuring group threat Diaz found that there was variation in favorable and negative opinions of immigration policy. The results displayed the variation and conflicting opinions that individual native-born citizens have. Diaz concludes that pro-immigrant groups have work to do in dispelling some of the stereotypes and revealing the symbolic racism that effects immigrant policy opinions. Further research will need to be done on the significant of symbolic racism and group threat.

The fourth article by Kenneth Jost examines the recent laws introducing harsher consequences towards illegal immigration and anti-immigration sediments in America. States such as Alabama and Arizona both have implicated tougher immigration laws that punish undocumented immigrants with either jail time for fist time offenders or deportation. Jost presents both sides of the illegal immigrant argument. The argument of job loss for Native Americans includes the Republican side arguing that illegal immigration has caused a lower standard of pay for American workers and the Democratic side arguing that illegal immigrants are taking jobs that American workers refuse to do. Jost provides a comprehensive summery of illegal immigration laws, which he admits are confusing to even the experts. Jost presents the question, “Should state and local police en- force immigration laws?” On one side of the argument, those who are without documentation are here illegally and should be punished, on the other side asking assumed illegal immigrants is a form of racism and profiling that is unconstitutional. Even the whether immigrants should become citizens is debated by both sides. Jost’s article presents important questions that adhere to both sides of argument.

In the fifth article by Christine Reyna, Geoffrey Wetherell, and Ovidiu Dobria (2013), the research presents conflicting opinions towards immigrant groups. Renya, Wetherell and Dobria examine the feelings towards Asian, Middle Eastern, Arab, Musulim, Latin American, and Anglo-European immigrants. The results showed that no one group and only positive or negative opinions towards them. Each group varied although some had more negative harmful critics against them such as Latin America and Middle Eastern immigrants. Anglo-European and Asian immigrants had much more positive opinions towards them. In conclusion if American opinions toward immigrants are as varied as the research shows their opinions on immigration policy can be expected to vary just as much. The research towards illegal and legal immigration portrays a complicated system of stereotypes, ill-informed ideals. What can be conceived through the research that Americans are ill informed for what is the cause of illegal immigration and the racism that they have that could affect the immigration policies.

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