

Immigration patterns and contributions of immigrants to the US economy.

OER / ZTC class project from Race and Ethnic Relations Course by Prof. Remi Alapo. Bronx Community College, CUNY. Fall 2018. Email: oluremi.alapo@bronx.cuny.edu

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

This research examines the current immigration patterns and policies under the “Trump Administration” and contributions of immigrants to the United States Economy. Some factors that may be affecting the assimilation of new immigrants such as language proficiency, national culture, assimilation into a new dominant group especially in recent light of crimes across many communities which are often based on historical biases in opinions about specific groups of racial and ethnic minorities will also be explored.

Immigrants migrate to the United States for various reasons - legally and illegally. Some for purposes such as education, job opportunities, fleeing from political violence while others simply choose to migrate for a change of environment. In recent news, it was reported that about 7,000 Central American immigrants were trying to get to the United States border to gain access to entry into the United States for a better future for them and their family members. This was reported to be “...the largest known caravan of migrants to head toward the U.S. border under the Trump administration.” Historically, the United States experienced major waves of immigration during the colonial era, the first part of the 19th century and from the 1880s to 1920.

Many immigrants came to America seeking greater economic opportunity, while some, such as the Pilgrims in the early 1600s, arrived in search of religious freedom. From the 17th to 19th centuries, hundreds of thousands of African slaves came to America against their will. The first significant federal legislation restricting immigration was the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Individual states regulated immigration prior to the 1892 opening of Ellis Island, the country’s first federal immigration station. New laws in 1965 ended the quota system that favored European immigrants, and today, the majority of the country’s immigrant’s hail from Asia and Latin America. Ever since the founding of the United States, immigration laws have been put in place, reformed, and dismantled. These laws reflected the needs of the time, but often represent political statements of peoples’ perceptions, which have cycled back and forth from favorable to hostile.

In a recent article on immigration patterns, it was reported that the president of the United States will do anything it takes to prevent the people who are coming from long distance countries to enter the United States. It also was stated that “...caravan's arrival came around the time the Trump administration began its widely-condemned practice of separating migrant families at the

border as part of a "zero tolerance" policy to deter illegal immigration. Immigrants who don't speak English or whose first language is not English may have a harder time assimilating into the everyday. Nowadays language diversity in the United States has grown as the immigrant population has increased and become more varied. Today, many immigrants arrive already speaking English as a first or second language making it easier for many to assimilate and contribute to their individual communities.

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NOTE

This is an initial pilot study conducted to gather public opinion or perceptions on the current state of race and ethnic relations in urban areas and the extent to which immigrants contribute to the United States economy. The background information and survey design was part of a collaborative project by the Race and Ethnic Relations (SOC 31 section 57542) Sociology course students at the Bronx Community College, Fall 2018 supervised by Prof. Remi Alapo. Special appreciation to all the SOC 31 students who contributed to the background section and the design survey of this initial pilot study.