

ROLE OF IMMIGRATION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY'S WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

World immigration is on the rise and it has many economic and political ramifications. Since the last presidential campaign in the U.S., immigration has become one of the most debated issues in American politics. This paper analyzes the role of immigrants in American prosperity. First, the paper overviews both historic and current immigration statistics and compares immigration rates in the U.S. with such rates in other developed countries. The paper examines the role and importance of immigrants in different areas of the American economy from hi-tech and digital industries to construction, agriculture and accommodation services. The study also compares American immigration policy with such policies in other countries and argues in favor of the merit-based policy. The paper concludes by emphasizing the positive role of immigration on the American job market and especially the importance of attracting high-skilled specialists for keeping American leading positions in the global economy.

Keywords: *the U.S. immigration, immigrants in the U.S. economy, immigration policy, immigration visas*

1. INTRODUCTION

For many years before and during the 21st century until the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the immigration all over the world was on the rise. According to United Nations data, in 2019, the total number of international migrants was about 272 million and has increased by about 23% since 2010. (DESA, 2019). Today number of migrants represents almost 3.5% of the global population. If in the past immigration was associated only with western countries, today countries with a large number of immigrants whether in absolute terms or in per capita numbers can be found in the Middle East (like UAE and Saudi Arabia), in South Asia (India), in Eastern Europe (Russia and Poland), and in Latin America (Columbia and Panama).

There are many reasons for the active growth of immigration including globalization of the world economy, ease of transportation across the globe, climate change, international conflicts, and many others. However, two factors, to our mind, act as the main contributors to the increasing flow of people over national borders. First, search for a better life by those living in less developed countries during the times when everyone is aware of potential perspectives thanks to the Internet. Second, since WWII, almost all developed countries have used immigration as an important instrument to expand their aging workforce and to bolster their economic expansion. As a result, large-scale immigration has become an important social phenomenon, generating intensive political and economic debates in many countries.

In 2016 American presidential campaign immigration became one of the most important political subjects. Opponents of immigration argue that immigration to the U.S. is primarily a one-way road as immigrants get more from the country than they contribute to its well-being. Other critics of immigration insist that immigrants undermine the American job market and thus suppress salaries. Another popular argument claims that immigrants disproportionately contribute to crime rates in America.

This paper reviews the role immigrants play in the U.S., primarily considering their contribution to different sectors of the American economy and their substantial role in increasing American intellectual capital. We analyze the roles and impacts of both high-skilled and low-skilled immigration, current immigration policies in the U.S. in comparison with similar policies in other countries, and discuss possible ways of making immigration less contradictory and more beneficial to the American society. The analysis of the pros and cons of immigration to the U.S. is extensively based on the most recent statistical data available. Though