

Crime & Immigration

Name

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Author Note

1. Introduction

All through history, various peoples have moved massively from some regions to others. War, famine, cultural shifts and population pressure have been causing immigration since before the written history. These movements have not reduced with time. Today, the forces of commerce and international law dictate the way individuals move from one place to another. Immigration in the United States has a long history. From the Europeans that moved into the country in the 17th century for farming purposes to the Africans that were transported to the US for slavery, there have been numerous reasons to move across countries. The research problem lies in the debates whether the increase in illegal immigration has a direct correlation with the rising numbers of violent crimes. The proposal will cover theoretical foundations and literature review on the topic on hand as well as formulate research questions and hypotheses.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Basis

As the socio-economic turmoil in a society progresses, it is important that the people involved in the struggle use various means to change the direction of the changes. The analysis in this paper will use the political opportunity theory as a basis to show whether the assertion that illegal immigrants are directly responsible for the increase in violent criminal activity is relevant and evidence-based. The theory discusses the ample opportunity structure that describes the movements in society (Kubrin, Zatz, & Martínez, 2012). The main contention of the theory is that the behavior of people in a population is determined by the political opportunities that are available to those people. The theory of resource mobilization will also be a part of the theoretical framework for this research. The theory states that the social movement should have a

driven leadership concept that is based on the effective use of the available resources (Eisinger, 1973).

2.2 Literature Review

The work by Ruben G. Rumbaut, ‘Undocumented Immigration and Rates of Crime and Imprisonment: Popular Myths and Empirical Realities’, proves that in the absence of intensive research, the possible misconception will continue to exist (Kanstroom, 2010). Rumbaut’s work is very useful to this study because the author makes a compelling case for the immigrant population’s misconception, especially in light of the fact that currently, the recorded population of unauthorized immigrants has stabilized, after reducing slightly, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

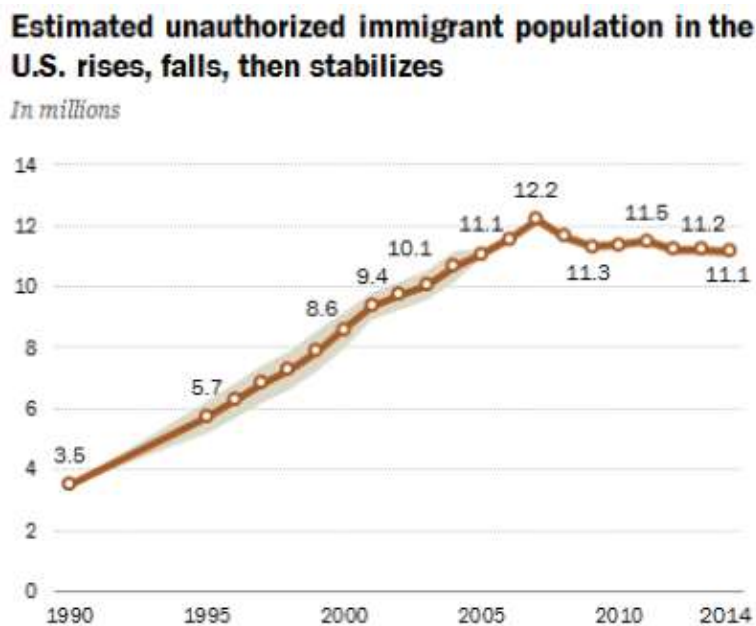


Figure 1. Unauthorized immigrant population stable for half a decade (Source: Passel & Cohn, 2016).

Rumbaut notes that National Opinion Research Center’s 2000 General Social Survey proved the empirical extent to which the mainstream media controls the biasness towards

immigrants and feeds the belief that the rising number of cases of criminal activity is directly linked to the influx of immigrants. The respondents in the survey were adults of a nationally representative quantity. When confronted with the question of whether increases in illegal immigrant flows into the country directly corresponded to the rise in violent crimes, almost three fourths opted for 'likely'. In total, 73% of the respondents held that it was 'somewhat' or 'very likely' that immigration is causally related to rising crime rates.

3. Research Problem

More people are moving to the United States of America than its government is willing to take or capable of taking in, which prompts for the fact that some individuals get to the country without the lawful authorization of the US government (Thumbaut & Alba, 2013). There have been debates that immigrants have saturated the market with cheap labor which may have influenced the jobs of the citizens (Ramiro, Lee, & Nelsen, 2004). Another important aspect to be considered is that people are drawn to the US by the fact that the cultural spectrum in the country is wide. Therefore, it is expected that there is little to no discrimination on the grounds of diversity (Passel, 2006).

Around election times, the promoted rhetoric pertinent to the subject of illegal immigrants is frequently centered on the criminalization of the group. For instance, on May 15, 2006, President George W. Bush addressed the nation on immigration reform and mentioned that "illegal immigration puts pressure on public schools and hospitals, it strains state and local budgets, and brings crime to our communities." (Harris & Tichenor, 2010, p.427). The influence of such proclamations is reflected in the culture of the nation.

4 Research Questions & Hypotheses

The dissertation will aim to answer the following research question:

i. What classes in society influence the opinion of the general public on the modal category of violent criminals?

There will be also two hypotheses:

- i. Illegal immigration does not have a direct causal link to the rates of violent crimes in the US.
- ii. The political class utilizes xenophobia and demagoguery to manipulate the voters' opinions around election times and promote abstract policies.

5. Research Methods

The research to be carried out will be desk-based. The rationale for this approach is that the statistical part of the study on a national scale is very expensive. Therefore, the reliance on quantitative data from secondary scholarly sources will be helpful in completing a cost-effective analysis. The sources of information will include peer-reviewed articles, proceedings from conferences that bear relevant statistical and analytical relevance, books, reports from non-profit foundations that deal with immigrants and the law, international treaties and declarations as well as contemporary and verifiable news sources with information pertinent to the subject.

6. Conclusion

The study aims to objectively analyze whether illegal immigrants indeed influence the numbers of violent crimes reported in the recent years. The research question will help to determine if there are other socio-political or economic pressures that cause the negative perceptions to persist.

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