

# The recession and public tolerance to immigrants essay

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



The recent recession was blamed for various impacts on the American society. It had a tremendous impact on policies and budget cuts. Therefore, it is not surprising to connect the recession to one of the most influential processes in the American society building, meaning the process of migration. The main task of this paper is to find how the recession affected immigration process in the United States. The answer would be that recession had not decreased the immigration flow as much as it was expected and it resulted in more negative consequences rather than positive ones. This paper will therefore seek to explain that the recession did not lower the rate of immigration but instead had a neative impact unlike expected.

Recession reffers to the slowing down of economic activity that last over many months or years. It is indicated by factors such as employment rates, GDP and inflation in the price of commodities and general cost of doing business. Immigration refers to the movement of foreigners from one country to the next in serach of permanent residence. Commerce is the activity that facilitates the exchange of goods and services, making commodities available to target customers. Sustainability refers to the ability to maintain a course without running out of resources and also adapting to present market trends. Commerce should be sustainable in order to maintain a healthy economy. Unsustainable commerce practices largely influence the economy and contribute to recession.

According to the general economic model, described by Chris Tilly, the main impact of the recession on the immigration in the USA was supposed to be a

decline (Tilly 2011). In this context, he meant that the migration was triggered by economic interests, which means that the movement of people from the inferior third-world countries to the wealthier countries of the west. Since economic immigrants target wealthy countries to gain profit which they cannot earn in home countries, the economic recession and subsequent decline in the number of jobs available was supposed to decrease the number of those immigrants (Hero 2010). Although the number of illegal migrants in the USA had fallen from 12 million in 2007 to 11.1 million in 2009, “the Mexico-USA flow alone account for 11.6 million out of total bilateral migration stock of 30 million in 2010” (Tilly 2011, p. 676).

Although in various countries no substantial connection between recession and intolerant attitude to immigrants was found, the immigrants' history and ethno-cultural diversity of the American society proved to result in unemployment differences in respect to racial and immigrant statuses. Tilly argued that “unemployment also varies among natives by race and ethnicity, so that US-born Latinos and US-born non-whites fared worse than their foreign-born counterparts” (2011, p. 685). Therefore, the flow of new migration to the country contributes only to the increase of interracial intolerance on the basis of competition for the employment positions. The best example of this was described by Rodney Hero in his comparison of different ethno-racial group in USA. The fact that in the urban areas Latinos and Afro-Americans usually lives close to each other due to the socio-economic status, the tension between two groups is usually much more

severe than between any of these groups and the white population of the country (Hero 2010, p. 450).

Thus, the constant movement of immigrants from Mexico contributes to the increase of tensions between those categories of society and subsequent need of resources and new policies for the improvement of situation. In this context, recession resulted in differentiation of the society, disruption of its fragile balance of tolerance and acceptance and triggered public claim for the building of the wall between two states. Overall, the recession contributed to marginalization of certain groups of illegal immigrants in the American society and subsequent need for the extreme measures affecting at balance of tolerance and national well being in the American society.

Some of the central laws were civil rights, voting rights the housing act. A national consensus was developed on the principles of equality of opportunity between ethnic groups by the 1980's. Immigration policies had by this time emerged as one of the major political issues. Other changes included bilingual education programs for the minority ethnic groups. However, there was also some opposition to these developments in some states and hence some of the programs were eliminated in other states.

However, the extent to which these minority groups have influenced the state government has not been largely studied. One study has shown that as a result of the 1996 ' Welfare Reform' legislation, state governments were granted discretion to determine who was eligible for welfare. One study found that the percentage of immigrants in a given state did not necessarily

determine the state's decision to include them for welfare eligibility (Hero 2010, pg 458).

Since September 11 2001, the borders have become increasingly fortified especially between First and Third world countries. The immigration policy of the United States have been criticized with the ideas of a nationality that excludes non-white people and justified that immigrants are incapable of being assimilated into the country's political culture. After September 11, most policies rested upon the ideologies that people from the Middle East and Asia were not to be trusted, they were not rational and they were inferior in terms of culture to the West thus leading to an increasing view of immigrants as criminals (Critelli 2008, pg 143).

The severe economic after-effects of the September 11th were mostly felt by the immigrants, who are concentrated in low wage occupations. They were already struggling to get jobs because of the recession and the attack only made the situation even more difficult for them. For the first time since the red scare, after World War 1, where many immigrants were deported without a hearing, immigration in the United States has been turned into a national security matter. The United States Attorney General declared that the best weapon for fighting terrorism were to be immigration laws.

The policies adopted after the post September 11th attacks differed from those of organized crime since the authorities decided that they would arrest any male individual of Islamic, Arabic or South Asian descent who lived in the United States but was not a citizen. On October 26th 2001, the USA

PARTRITIC ACT was passed albeit hastily. The Act increased the powers of the law enforcement authorities in an effort to fight the war on terrorism. The Act gave them powers to conduct searches without warrants, monitor communications via phones and the internet and also check personal records. Most of the provisions affected the immigrants because there were new rules for deportation and detention (Critelli 2008).

The recession has a different impact on both the legal immigration and regular immigration in the United States. In the United States, family reunification is considered the greatest factor for legal immigration. Undocumented immigration is on the other hand linked with the economy. When the economy expands, there is a large flow of undocumented immigrants whereas this number decreases during recessions. Over the years, many undocumented immigrants have managed to stay in the United States without a hitch. But, over the last 10 years, due to the Great Recession, most of them have not been able to keep up with this. The raids at work places of the undocumented immigrants have increased forcing them to hide and even the legal residents live in fear of deportation for very minor offences.

With the increase in the financial meltdown, the United States government, in 2008, created a program for tracking down undocumented persons using finger print tracking system where all persons detained by the state or local authorities had their fingerprints put in the states security system. This program was known as " Secure Communities". The program was meant to find and deport undocumented persons who were found guilty of serious

crimes since they were already in the country illegally. But by February 2011, the immigration agent's statistics showed that twenty percent of all the people who were undergoing deportation proceedings had no criminal records. The importance of this technology for finding a shadow population that cannot be otherwise found by normal statistics cannot be overestimated.

A lot of political arguments are brought about by recession. These arguments normally arise from an individual's behavior. Thus the criminalizing the undocumented is attached to anti-welfare language and possibly forms anti-immigrant arguments. The recession creates a risk for the undocumented by making it difficult for them to work or even live like other people ( Citrelli 2008, pg 158).

## References

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