

Us immigration reform policy circa 2001 to present research paper

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



Research question: Has immigration reforms enacted in America since 2001 enhanced the ease or the difficulty of entry into the nation by immigrants, both legal and illegal?

Hypothesis: Immigration policy in the United States since 2001, has made it harder for illegal immigrants to enter the nation while it has also at the same time made it harder for legal immigrants to enter due to strict policies and laws.

Economically prosperous nations such as the US tend to attract a lot of immigrants who are searching for a better life. Many leave their home countries in droves as they seek for better pastures in the US. Unfortunately, a large number of these immigrants do not follow the proper and legal channels for immigration. This has led to a huge number of illegal immigrants in the nation. The United States- Mexico border has been one of the most notorious entry points for illegal immigrants who stream into the nation from not only Mexico but also from a host of other South American countries (Massey & Pren, 2012). The presence of a large number of illegal people in the nation has led to what is referred to as “ immigration reform” (Coleman, 2008). Immigration reform simply refers to changes in the nation’s immigration policy. Under normal circumstances, it means to improve the current rules of immigration, to amend them or to remove any faults in them. Ultimately, a reform in immigration policy translates to either expanded or reduced immigration.

Since 2001, the United States immigration policy has changed dramatically. (Duleep & Regets, 2014). The regime of George Bush which commenced in the mentioned year saw various immigration reforms enacted. In fact, one of

the primary agendas of President George W. Bush was immigration (Coleman, 2008). The issue of immigration was particularly thrown into the spotlight a few months after his inauguration when terrorists attacked the nation. The 9/11 attacks have been credited with stimulating extensive reforms into the nation's immigration policy because exposed the nation's loopholes within the immigration sector and stimulated widespread campaigns for changes within the immigration policy. There were calls for more stringent immigration rules and requirements (Coleman, 2008). There were also calls for increased surveillance of immigrants residing in the nation.

Some of these suggestions and calls were heeded but some were ignored for simply being too outrageous, for instance those that called for the arrest of all undocumented immigrants in the nation and their subsequent deportation (Duleep & Regets, 2014). One of the new immigration laws that were however passed, for instance, in 2002 was the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, commonly referred to as SEVIS (Wells, 2004). This was an immigration law that required international students as well as exchange students to go through an intensive registration process with the federal government where they were required to provide amongst others their names, their course majors, their addresses, graduate dates, course loads and so on (Wells, 2004). There was also a host of other immigration laws including increased border patrols, workplace raids and so on.

The presidency of Barack Obama has also witnessed various reforms in the immigration sector. There have been calls to augment some of the reforms enacted during the Bush era. During the Presidential campaigns in 2008,

immigration was once again at the center stage of the presidential candidate's agenda. President Barack Obama has put forward his proposal regarding immigration. Although he does not advocate for the deportation of more than 12 undocumented and illegal immigrants in the nation, his proposal is that these people are identified, fined and then taken through severe citizenship education including English and then slowly assimilated them into the American culture where they will potentially gain full citizenship by the end of ten years (Immigration Reform, 2014).

Since 2001, there have been major changes within the immigration policy. While some reforms have been criticized, others have been welcomed. In fact, the nation's opinion on the subject has been split right at the middle. There are some who advocate and support stricter immigration policy while there are those who support the relaxation of the current immigration policies.

Given this, it is clear that the immigration reform is an important topic that requires further insight. It is a topic that is worthy of research as a lot of relevant, important information is bound to be established. As mentioned earlier, there are over 12 million illegal immigrants in the nation, unfortunately, as much as these immigrants are illegal, there are many of them who hold full-time jobs and who therefore contribute massively to the national economy. In addition, many of them have been in the nation for so long that they have started families. This has led to a new generation of children in America; these who are naturally American by birth but whose parents are illegal immigrants.

With this in mind, it is clear that the topic of immigration reform will be of

great benefit as it will bring out the implication of such reforms not only the immigrants, both legal and illegal, but also the implications on the entire nation. Some of the questions that this research seeks to answer include; what are the factors that have stimulated immigration reforms in the nation? What are some of the major reforms in the immigration sector that have been implemented since 2001? Has immigration policy reforms favored the welfare of some people? Has immigration reforms disadvantaged immigrants, both legal and illegal? How has the entire nation been affected?

References

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