

Introduction free
riding is inevitable in
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Introduction

In a situation where firms are operating in a free market economy, most business entrepreneurs will only be aiming at getting returns of their investments. Therefore some services and goods and services essential to the society will not be provided forcing the government to come in and provide them. Such goods are referred to as public and merit goods.

Therefore, Public goods are commodities provided by the government in a free market economy because the private firms would not provide them (Cornes and Sandler, 1986, p. 254). The finance that the governments use to provide the public goods is obtained from taxation of citizens. The private firms refrain from providing them because of the main reason that they cannot adequately charge them on the public. In addition if private firms in the market are left to provide public goods they will be inadequate and of low quality hence undesirable. Some Examples of public goods include; street lighting, national defence, national reserves and parks just to mention but a few. Public goods have two distinct features which make them fit in that class of public goods (Cornes and Sandler, 1986, p. 272).

They are non-excludable meaning that on provision it is not possible to bar people from using them. They are thus used by the general public whether they have paid or not paid for them. This consequently leads to the issue of free-riding. Free-riding means that everyone has access to such goods despite the fact that they have not paid for them. Free-riding occurs in the case of street lights, public roads, defence, natural scenery such as oceans and forests among others. This paper is therefore an in-depth analysis of the

free riding concept and its relationship with illegal immigrants who are deemed to be the most free-riders in any nation.

The Free-rider problem

As mentioned above the free rider problem will exist when people enjoy the benefits of government-provided public or merit goods without paying for them, or pays less than their fair share, or they consume more than they paid.

Not all the people who enjoy the public goods are taxpayers yet the government uses the taxpayer's money to facilitate the provision of these goods and services to the general public (Musgrave, 1995, p. 1). The issue of free riding is inevitable in each and every country because of the presence of the presence of minors, tax evaders and illegal immigrants just to mention but a few.

Illegal Immigrants and their impacts

Illegal immigrants are people who enter the borders of a nation without proper immigration procedures and choose to remain in that country without permission. Such people are forced to run away from their countries because of political, religious issues as well as natural disasters.

The United States of America is one of the most preferred destinations for most illegal immigrants in the world because of its open border policy. As a matter of fact, the United States has procedures in its constitution that allow the presence of illegal immigrants in the country. Thus it is deemed to have the highest number of immigrants according to research done by the Department of Homeland Security where the population of illegal immigrant

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was 10.8 million in 2009 (Espenshade, 1995, p. 195). Illegal immigrants in the United States of America have led to both negative and positive impacts in terms of economic and social status. For example, they have created problems of a bilingual society, drug trafficking, traffic congestion and the free-rider problem. However, illegal immigrants contribute greatly to the society by performing tasks that the civilised Americans would not perform such as the construction industry.

The relationship between free-riding and illegal immigrants

It has for a long period of time been believed that the free-rider problem is as a result of illegal immigrants. I do not agree with this theory because I believe that those who risk their lives to cross their border are in search for the fulfilment of the American dream and not to use the freely available resources. The reason that these immigrants do not apply for U. S.

citizenship is mainly because of their illegal entry (Espenshade, 1995, p. 195). I presume that Most of these illegal immigrants are willing to become U. S. citizen and pay for taxes, and many of them are actually paying for income taxes. The illegal immigrants enter the border for genuine reasons such as being safe and getting cheap employment to sustain their livelihoods. Thus assist in industries such as the construction, restaurants, truck driving, and masonry among others which heavily depend on the labour from illegal immigrants. It has been noted that most of the employers prefer using labour from the illegal immigrants because they end up saving so much on the cost of wages.

Therefore, despite the fact that these illegal immigrants do not pay taxes to enjoy the public goods and services, their contribution to the economy counterbalances the argument. Therefore the notion that that the illegal immigrants enter the country to enjoy the public utilities and should therefore be barred from accessing them is not appropriate. This is because recent research has indicated that about sixty seven percent of the illegal immigrant's population in the United States actually pay taxes. In actual sense, these immigrants have great contribution to the provision of social services, Medicare as well as payment of personal taxes. This makes it clear that despite their citizenship in the country, they play a great role of contributing to the revenue of the country. Given the aforementioned assertion, it would be against the human rights to deter the illegal immigrants from accessing the public utilities.

The issue of illegal immigrants as the free-riders is not worth causing any upheavals because the 1996 reforms on the Welfare Bill barred the illegal immigrants from accessing some of the public goods and services. " These include; Medicaid and Medicare, Housing assistance, Food stamps and Funded hospitalization" (Beck, 2001, p. 98). The aforementioned services are only available to legal citizens of the United States of America. In addition to this, illegal immigrants should not expect any form of assistance from even charitable organizations and churches.

This is because provision of any form of assistance to them is against the law where the organization could face charges if found guilty of supporting an illegal immigrant. Thus, very few organisations and institutions would be willing to assist the illegal immigrants thus forcing them to work in order to

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survive. In my opinion, most of illegal immigrants are genuine people who unlike some people view them are only in the country because of concrete reasons. This can be depicted when the US government warranted all the illegal immigrants to apply for social security numbers so as to pay taxes. Statistics collected after 1996, indicated that about seventy five percent of the illegal immigrants have social security numbers which they use to pay taxes from their little earnings (Beck, 2001, p. 126). Statistics have at the same time depicted that the amount of tax collected from the illegal immigrants is much higher than the amount they use on public services. The surplus definitely goes to the government to perform other duties which would not even benefit the immigrants.

This is an indication that the illegal immigrants are not in the country to just enjoy the public services offered by the government.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that despite the fact that the illegal immigrants are a societal problem, their benefits outweigh their disadvantages. Those who accuse the illegal immigrants as increasing the problem of free-riders in the country are deemed to be wrong.

As a matter of fact, the free-riding concept on illegal immigrants should only be accorded to the thirty three percent who do not pay the taxes. It has been clearly seen that the larger percentage of the illegal immigrants are paying taxes from their meagre earnings in a bid to obeying the law. To add on this, is the fact that their tax contribution outweighs their consumption of the

public goods and services hence a surplus to the government thus a contribution to the country's economy.

They also contribute to the country's economy by providing cheap labour in industries that the civilised Americans would not work such as in the construction industry among others. It can thus be concluded that illegal immigrants are not the cause of free-riding problem and nor is the free-riding issue a cause of the presence of illegal immigrants.

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