

Argument essay: immigration essay sample

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



Even a brief glance at our nation's history shows that the United States, as we know it, was founded by immigrants. Since then our culture has grown through a succession of immigration waves. Immigration is cornerstone to the cultural identity of our country. However, immigration, as a political and social issue has been continually distorted through uninformed debate and media attention. Some look at immigrants as the personification and cause of many, if not all, contemporary social problems. Over time immigrants themselves have become a targets of blame for complex and challenging social and economic questions that they could not possibly to responsible for creating..

Many of these concerns relate to the economy. Some answers emerge from research by William Foster. He concludes that “ No significant evidence can be found on any of the traditional indicators that immigration has done harm to the modern economy. There are indications, moreover, that it has done some good, in terms of its evidently favorable, albeit small, effects on the unemployment rate and average income.”

Foster goes on to say “ The effect of immigration on unemployment is negligible and that immigrants create at least as many jobs as they fill. Immigrants may increase unemployment in certain regions or among certain occupations during a recession, but this is offset by their raising the overall level of demand, particularly for housing and household-related goods and services. This promotes both a higher level and a wider range of goods and services produced, stimulating both the economy and job growth.”

The article written Varno et. al concludes that “ Immigrants bring new skills and experience to our workforce. They help to reduce labor shortages for skilled personnel (which keep labor costs lower); promote exports through language skills, knowledge of and contacts in foreign markets. Most skilled immigrants also do not incur a cost to government in education and training, and most arrivals are aged between 20 and 39. Therefore they will be paying taxes to help sustain our aging population.”

According to the book by Annabelle Hill “ there has also been the complaint that immigrants increase the need for spending on welfare, essential services and infrastructure. Many forget that as a group, immigrants bring considerable amounts of prior savings and proceeds from the sale of immovable assets, which are then used in America to establish a new set of assets. The amount transferred varies considerably according to the type of immigrant, though the average amount is \$17, 000 per person in 1997/98 - represents a significant injection of funds into the economy. The business migration program alone brings almost \$1 billion into America annually.”

Another critical point to emerge is that the actual cost to government of a given intake of immigrants takes years properly research and gain sufficient perspective. William Foster’s research estimates “.. that the net budgetary costs of immigration in the first four years (\$650m) become a substantial net gain to revenue within ten years (\$800m), by which time most migrants of working age speak the language and are contributing members of society. Whether an individual immigrant is employed or runs a business employing

others they generating tax revenue and widening the tax base to fund expenditure on government services.”

Another frequently aired claim is that migrants exacerbate environmental problems. This by-passes the real issues. A genuine environment policy requires innovation and far greater investment in public transport, resource recycling and alternative energy sources, as well as new approaches to urban and regional planning. The focus should be on the environmentally damaging activities millions and millions of Americans rather than the relatively small number of recent immigrants.

America’s luxury of space and abundant natural resources has created for generations the development of far-sighted energy and urban development policies. According to the article by Magana et al “ About 50 per cent of households contain one or two people, while immigrant households are substantially larger than average. Their presence does increase the demand for housing and resources such as electricity, sewage and water.

However, the increase is less than it would be for ‘ natural’ population growth. The difference in resources intake is staggering. Perhaps the average American has a thing or two to learn about resource-conservation from immigrants.”

There are concerns that immigrants create social problems through living in ghettos and asserting alien cultures and values. While it is true that immigrants of the same origin tend to congregate together to establish a community of support, their doing so eases the settlement process for the individual and allows communities to create their own welfare networks. The

family reunion program is an essential part of developing this social fabric that keeps a community peaceful and prosperous. In the end, the support that immigrant family is being given from their neighborhood/community could be saving your tax dollars in the long-term.

That American cultural values are under threat is a similarly subjective argument. Our culture has developed and changed as constantly as the look of our homes and streets. The result of receiving immigrants has been the rejuvenation of our cultural life; in the arts, intellectual debate, social activity and the total transformation of our cuisine. Ours culture has long been a rich tapestry of cultures which we are still discovering. These new citizens offer us ideas, making us more humane and empathic in our outlook and foreign policy. The key to making it work is bringing people together- those crying the loudest about the ‘erosion of our culture’ are those with little interest or knowledge in other cultures.

Immigration issues can be dealt with in more affective and ways than to shut our doors. There are those that feel immigrants should not only feel welcome, but valued as potential contributors to the nation’s development. They are not seen as a burden reluctantly taken in and barely tolerated, but a resource to nurture and develop to its fullest potential, not only in economic terms but in their enrichment of social and communal life.

According to Martin Havey, “In the sweep of history, America’s post-WWII immigration program has been in tune with and taken advantage of developments in the industrialized world – turning an inward looking, economically sheltered and parochial nation into one which reflects

the cross-cultural currents of an increasingly interconnected world. Indeed, movements of peoples across nations and continents have been an ever growing phenomenon of modern times. The world is becoming increasingly ethnically mixed, such that one of the prime tasks of governments in the 21st century will be managing and harnessing the ethnic diversity of national populations.”

I agree with Annabelle Hill when she says “ A sensible debate is warranted about our immigration laws, their administration, entry categories, citizenship requirements and perhaps an agreed upon population target. It is important to separate it from other issues which ought to be treated comprehensively in their own right: the economy, industry development, education and training, the environment and urban planning.”

A little foresight and balanced analysis is all a person should require to conclude our immigration policy should continue at its current level at least. It’s a challenge to organize and implement, but through immigration, taking in the stranger, we are making our own lives richer in a multitude of ways. Our country was built on the backs of immigrants- we cannot afford to turn our back on them now.

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