

Group 2: Economic Mobility for Immigrants

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Economic Mobility for Immigrants

The impact of immigration on the economy can be perceived as positive as well as negative. It all depends on your perspective. There are many arguments, opinions, myths and preconceptions when it comes to the topic of immigration. Some people believe that immigrants are lazy and take native workers jobs. Others believe that immigrants are the backbone of the economy. In reality, immigrants are constantly marginalized in American society, regardless of social status, occupation, or gender. They are a driving force for the growth of the US economy, yet their contributions are more than often overlooked.

Immigrants play an increasingly crucial role in the U.S. economy. Immigrant contributions are often overlooked, but they significantly benefit all Americans. Americans benefit from the taxes that immigrants pay and from the money they spend on services and consumer goods. Their participation in the economy generates a demand for goods and services, thereby increasing job growth. Immigrants pay the same taxes we all do, this includes: federal income tax, social security tax, Medicare tax, property tax, state income tax, sales tax. The taxes they pay help to cover federal and state services that benefit communities.

Undocumented immigrants make important contributions to the economy as well. If they had a pathway to secure legal status, they would likely earn more, therefore, more of their income would be on the books. Removal of undocumented workers would constitute as a major loss for the U.S economy. Certain industries that are more dependent on undocumented workers, such as construction, agriculture, leisure and hospitality, would be particularly affected in a negative way. The deletion of undocumented workers would lead to more job openings and fewer individuals to fill them.

Immigrants bring a wave of talent and creativity into our country. A 2011 survey of the top fifty venture capital funded companies found that half had at least one immigrant founder and three quarters had immigrants in top management or research positions. A significant share of advanced degrees awarded in science and engineering — often the foundation for innovation and job growth — go to foreign-born students with temporary visas studying in American universities. According to a 2012 National Science Board report, foreign students earned 27 percent of science and engineering master's degrees in 2009 (Effects of Immigration on the United States, n.d). In addition, Economic theory suggests a direct link between a skilled and innovative labor force and faster GDP growth, and more than three quarters of U.S. growth over the last 150 years can be explained by improvements in education and research-driven innovation (Effects of Immigration on the United States, n.d). This greater specialization leads to a more efficient distribution of labor, raising the incomes and productivity of both natives and immigrants.

Affirmative action is a fairly new action or policy trying to bring total fairness amongst society. It persists of favoring those who suffer from discrimination, usually minorities, when it comes to education or the work place. An example of Affirmative Action would be a school choosing to admit an African American student over a Caucasian student in order to create diversity. Another example would be a job choosing a Hispanic over a Caucasian for diversity in the work place. Affirmative Action does not only help minorities but also women as they are looked upon as a group that have suffered discrimination in the past. The start of Affirmative Action has sprung many government mandated public and private programs. Although this policy was made to help the historically excluded groups in America, many believe it is not enough to and think it is an excuse to make us forget the past. As an outcome of the Civil Rights

movement of the 1960s, Affirmative Action was intended to provide equal opportunities to those that did not receive before, as mentioned earlier. From this policy comes supporters and those that are against it. Those that support Affirmative Action do so for many good reasons. One of those good reasons is the role of Affirmative action in education. This policy is not just an admissions application, but more of a process. Instead of just admitting all of the Hispanic and African American students that apply, schools that participate in this policy also reach out to those who haven't applied, and not only do they give admission support but they also give financial support to their students.

Due to the actions of the schools under Affirmative action, the number of minority applications to colleges and universities have more than doubled in numbers. Due to this policy, minority students who have graduated college go on to earn more money and acquire better jobs. The other side is those who oppose this policy. Opposers believe this policy strictly goes against the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment, in a way shifting the discrimination to the opposite side. Another reason some oppose this policy is the lower standards the students are up against. Minorities who are influenced by Affirmative Action are usually middle-upper class instead of lower class, and expected less of, because of their social status. They believe instead of Affirmative action lowering standards, all students, no matter the race or social status, should be held to the same equal standards.

Strong public support on "hard" affirmative action has not been present, but the support of "soft" affirmative action has. The extensive majority of Americans, including immigrants, have supported equality of opportunity. However, they have been against superior treatment for members of racial and ethnic groups. Members of numerous immigrant groups have pointed out that immigrants come to the United States looking for economic opportunity, not special

treatment. As such, immigrants and immigrant families are largely uncertain about affirmative action. Even for low-income families, other groups' disadvantages (though serious) are not similar to those faced by African Americans. Although the number of high-poverty white communities is growing, poor whites are less likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than poor blacks (Stars,2018). Nationwide, 7 percent of poor whites live in high-poverty neighborhoods, while 23 percent of poor blacks do so (Stars, 2018). There are still compelling arguments for why affirmative action in confession based on race is still needed.

When we refer to the term affirmative action, it has a different meaning depending on the context of your discussion. In our case, we can simply define it as a set of well-reviewed policies applied in the US under which employers, government, and universities adapt to reduce the discrimination in the labor market against women and the minority groups. For instance, the immigrants. Despite the minorities having lower credentials, the affirmative action makes them competitive against the stronger in the labor market. With the affirmative action, the migrants are in a better position as they do not feel discriminated anymore by their own government which they contributed to putting in place through their tax contribution.

One of the immediate benefits of the affirmative action to the working immigrants is the fact that despite their weaker grades their salaries are matched with the rest of their counterparts. Despite all the positive benefits it comes with, it has been politicized with candidates coming up with changes which according to them gives them some political mileage. This leaves the policy in the hands of those who take over power. A good example of this is during the most recent US elections where Donald Trump took power and the affirmative action and the mass immigration seem to be colliding. With the new government in place, the affirmative action is now seen as a discrimination against the whites and Americans of Asian origin and it has promised a judicial

intervention. The government seems to be against even the legal migration to the US if a bill proposed by Tom Cotton and endorsed by the president is anything to go by.

With the new government, the migrants are in great fear of being sidelined in the wake of the new government. Having been a protected class of people in the US, now the government's suggestion to do away with the affirmative action which has always come to their rescue has left them with no option other than to be anti-diplomats in their political alignment. Their job security is also in jeopardy with the policy becoming more vulnerable daily.

In recent time the affirmative action has remained the number one line of defence to the immigrants since it has always brought them to the same level with the natives. To the immigrant, this action still holds some value to them. But what are some of the advantages of this affirmative actions to immigrants?

To start with, the affirmative action has given them the opportunity to the government's contracts set aside for the minority. A good example was Washington's set-aside contracts which were given to the immigrants in the year 1980. The public jobs in the municipality are now available to the immigrants most of them from Mexico. In LA County, at least 30 % of its workers come from the immigrant's groups who now feel recognized and appreciated.

Another aspect of the affirmative action that the immigrants feel is a positive impact is an opportunity it has given them when it comes to the faculty hiring since universities no longer consider one's country of origin while hiring the teachers. In Stanford University half of its workforce is made up of foreign-born employees. Having looked at the immense benefits the affirmative action has brought to the immigrants some of them still feel there is more to be considered and perhaps suggest some revision of the original clause.

Some of their suggestion is the inclusion of some of the challenges they face due to the fact that they are immigrants and of black color. They are of the view that some government institution is too harsh to them compared to the native Americans. The debate on deportation takes a center stage in this discussion where the immigrants are deported whenever they have a criminal conviction. If these changes will ever be affected, the immigrants will feel at home where their origin does not affect their life in whole but will enjoy their right just like the other native counterparts.

In terms of the effects that immigrant brings to the economy there is no change instead there is positive outcome. According to “The Immigrant Effect” assumes, “Many Americans assume that immigrants have zero effect on the economy or think that immigrants subtract value from an economic pie of fixed size. In fact, immigrants make the pie bigger”. This means the Americans believe that the immigrant does not bring a negative impact in terms of economy. Instead, it rises the economy by having more immigrants as workers. Many immigrants oversee the lower labors and the Native Americans stay on the superior labor jobs. However, immigrants are enhancing in education and becoming owners of companies that helps the economy of United States. according to “Berkley Review of Latin American Studies, Fall 2013” it says “In 2006, immigrants founded 25 percent of new high-tech companies with more than \$1 million in sales, generating income and employment for the whole country. Innovation and technological growth are the engines of economic growth in technologically advanced countries like the United States, where attracting and training new scientists and engineers is key to continued economic success”. This shows that immigrants had develop in important areas that are beneficial for the country of America also many immigrants are becoming part of the scientific world where the

higher profit is made. Both examples illustrate how immigrants do not affect the economy of United States instead it brings success and positive outcome in the economy area.

The Growth of Immigrant in the United States is raising, which means that in the future Immigrant will play an important role in society. According to "Immigrants in the U.S. States with the Fastest-Growing Foreign-Born Populations" it explains the growth of immigrants in the United States, "Between 2010 and 2016, the number of immigrants in the United States increased by 9 percent. The foreign-born population grew by 15 percent or more in 15 states: North Dakota, West Virginia, South Dakota, Delaware, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wyoming, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Indiana, Florida, Nevada, Washington, Iowa, and Maryland (listed from highest to lowest growth rates; see Figure 1). Approximately 9 million immigrants, or one in every five, reside in these 15 states. This shows how immigrants had expanded throughout the years in different states. This means that in the future if this percentage increased, immigrants will have a larger population more than the native American. This might affect the United States in terms of power and the superiority that Native Americans have. This illustrates that the growth of immigrant population will grow and their power and position in the United States will grow too.

Everyone's heard of the American Dream. If you haven't heard those words specifically then you know the sentiment. The idea is if you work hard one day you'll reap the fruits of your labor and join the ranks of the elite. Anyone can lift themselves from the bootstraps and make a name for themselves. Sadly in America for many people this is not the case. Although the opportunities for social mobility may exist for minorities and immigrants, there are many significant barriers that keep these opportunities out of reach.

Immigrants account for a "large share of US Labor growth; 51 percent between 1996 & 2002, despite only 14 percent of the labor force." (Orrenius 2003) Immigrants are a strong

driving factor in the US economy yet are vastly underrepresented and blamed for society's problems. The common rhetoric among conservatives is that migrant workers are taking the jobs of native born workers but this couldn't be farther from the truth. "Undocumented workers often work the unpleasant, back-breaking jobs that native-born workers are not willing to do." (Felbab-Brown 2017) Immigration has a negligible impact on native-born workers. Migrant workers tend to take the less desirable jobs that native workers do not want such as gutting fish or working on farms. This has led to aggressive policies from lawmakers such as within Trump's administration. The common belief is that immigration is hindering our country's economy when in actuality immigrants truly are the backbone of our economy.

Immigration has been so important for growing our economy yet we are not taking care of our immigrants. CIS.org reports statistics that shows that the poverty rates from Latin American immigrants range between 20% and 30% and 40% to 60% are near poverty. There's a clear disparity when compared with European and Asian immigrants whose rates range between 10% to 20%. Statistics have also shown that a range from 30% to 50% of Latin American immigrants do not have health insurance as opposed to sub 10% rates for European immigrants. All of these factors contribute to less upwards economic mobility for most immigrants.

Although immigrants get more upward mobility in the US than they would find in their home countries, once they arrive they tend to plateau. The children of immigrants are expected to far outperform their parents. They benefit from knowing the native language, English, and having parents that understand the American labor system. However according to a journal article titled, Making It in America, research shows that the children of immigrants tend to not be as successful as their parents. It also shows that students who manage to escape poverty, only tend to earn an average wage, without much more mobility.

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