The Politics of Illegal Immigration: Critical Evaluation of the Contemporary Political Perspectives and Influence on Regional Security in the West

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Abstract

Illegal immigration is a global challenge that affects countries' social, economic, and security dynamics due to individuals crossing borders without proper authorization in search of better opportunities or refuge. In the West, illegal immigration has sparked debates over border control, national security, and the treatment of undocumented individuals, with millions living in legal limbo. However, there is a limited understanding of the politics surrounding illegal immigration based on evaluating contemporary political perspectives and their influence on regional security in the West. This paper critically evaluates contemporary political perspectives on illegal immigration and its influence on regional security in the West. Utilizing a literature-based approach, this study synthesizes key political theories, policy analyses, and security assessments to explore how illegal immigration is framed within the Western political discourse. This research highlights the intersection of immigration policies with national security concerns, revealing how political rhetoric often shapes public perceptions and policy responses. By analyzing various scholarly sources, this article uncovers the complexities of immigration debates, including the tension between humanitarian considerations and security imperatives. These findings suggest that the politicization of illegal immigration has significant implications for regional stability and international relations. The study contributes to a broader understanding of how political narratives around illegal immigration influence security strategies and policymaking in Western countries. Recommendations for practice, policy, and further research are provided and justified.

Keywords: *Illegal Immigration, Political Perspectives, Regional Security, Western Politics, United States.*

INTRODUCTION

Despite the recent decline, the number of illegal immigrants in the United States remains high. Illegal immigration remains one of the most divisive issues in the nation (Natter, 2018; Cassarino, 2018; Favell, 2022). Illegal immigration is a complex issue affecting nations worldwide. Millions of people cross borders illegally in search of better opportunities or safety to escape poverty, political instability, and conflict that mostly characterize their countries (Cassarino, 2018). While host countries often face economic strain, social integration, and security challenges, migrants frequently endure dangerous journeys and exploitation (Ehrkamp, 2019). The issue sparks intense political debates, with some advocating stricter border controls and others calling for more humane immigration policies. Despite the sensitivity of illegal immigration, scholarly research has rarely addressed this issue, considering the risks associated with it. Addressing illegal immigration requires international cooperation, balanced policies, and efforts to tackle the root causes driving migration (Art et al., 2023). However, choices that must be made within these spectra require empirical findings to justify them.

Most undocumented immigrants in the United States originate from Latin America (Samers, 2004). Approximately 60% come from Mexico, while another 20% are from other Latin American nations, particularly El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Additionally, over one million undocumented immigrants are from Asia, with hundreds of thousands coming from Europe and Canada (Kramer, 2018). California has a significantly higher proportion of undocumented immigrants from Mexico compared to other states and has the largest undocumented immigrant population overall, estimated at 2.6 million (Kostakopoulou, 2024). However, this has shifted over time. In the 1980s, nearly half of the country's undocumented immigrants resided in California, but this share has now dropped to less than 25%. Meanwhile, states in the Southeast and Midwest have seen substantial increases in their undocumented immigrant populations. Based on the assertion by Schuck (2018), states like Texas, Florida, and New York continue to host large numbers of undocumented immigrants despite several shifts.

The demographic profile of illegal immigrants in the U.S. is predominantly made up of individuals from Latin American countries, particularly Mexico and Central America, rather than predominantly Muslim countries. According to the Pew Research Center, the majority of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. are from Latin America, with Mexicans constituting a significant portion, followed by immigrants from Central American countries, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (Pew Research Center, 2019). However, the number of unauthorized immigrants from other regions, including predominantly Muslim countries, was relatively small. Islamic immigrants have found access to the United States and are sometimes involved in terrorist activities during the Jihad War (Light & Thomas, 2021). While there is a significant Muslim population in the United States, most Muslims are either citizens or legal residents. The largest Muslim communities in the U.S. are from South Asia (such as Pakistan and India), the Middle East, and North Africa, many of whom entered the country through legal immigration channels (Pew Research Center, 2017).

This study aims to critically evaluate the current politics of illegal immigration in the West. The findings provide an in-depth understanding of the realities and political responses to the problem of illegal immigration in the United States while tackling its causes and consequences. The

significance of this study is based on the realization that illegal immigration is ever-increasing, and the United States security and policy apparatus may not have given it the necessary level of effort to prevent it, making it look like a norm that several people from different parts of the world are daring to try. The study seeks to act as a wake-up call to the government to recognize the current and future problems of illegal immigration and address them instantly to save the United States from unnecessary, illegal interference.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study employed a literature-based approach to collect and analyze data on the topic under investigation. This methodology was designed to ensure a comprehensive and systematic review of relevant scholarly materials, enabling the identification of key themes, trends, and insights.

Source Selection

The first step involved identifying and selecting appropriate sources of literature. A systematic search was conducted across multiple academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest, focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reputable reports published in the last 15 years. Keywords such as "illegal immigration, permissible immigration, migration ethics," and "immigration policies were used to locate the relevant sources. To ensure the credibility and relevance of the selected literature, inclusion criteria were established: sources had to be published in English, related directly to the topic, and authored by recognized experts in the field (Booth et al., 2016). Sources that did not meet these criteria were excluded from this review.

Data Organization

Once the sources were selected, they were organized into a reference management system (e.g., EndNote) to facilitate easy retrieval and citation. The sources were categorized according to themes identified in the preliminary review, such as ethical theories on immigration, the economic impacts of illegal immigration, and immigration policy frameworks. This thematic categorization helped streamline the data extraction process and ensured that all relevant aspects of the research topic were adequately covered (Bryman, 2016). Data organization is critical because it increases the clarity and speed of the analysis.

Data Extraction

The data extraction involved a meticulous reading and annotating of the selected literature. Essential information, including theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and author arguments, was highlighted and summarized in a structured format using data extraction sheets' (Silverman, 2020). This process ensured that critical data from each source were systematically captured and organized according to predefined themes. The themes were based on data extracted from the literature.

Data Analysis

The extracted data were analyzed using the content analysis technique, widely recognized for its ability to identify patterns and themes in qualitative data (Krippendorff, 2018). The analysis involved coding data into categories based on recurring themes and concepts. This coding process allowed for the synthesis of findings across multiple sources, facilitating the identification of overarching themes and areas of consensus or debate in the literature. The final step involved interpreting the coded data to draw conclusions and provide insights that address the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Content analysis was adopted because it allowed research to increase the clarity and organization of the discussion.

FINDINGS

Illegal Immigration as a Contemporary Problem Hinged in History

The historical context of immigration policies in Western countries reveals the complex interplay of economic needs, social attitudes, and political ideologies that have shaped migration trends over-time. Initially, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, many Western countries, particularly in Europe and North America, maintained relatively open borders (Kostakopoulou, 2024). These regions actively encouraged immigration to fuel industrial growth, settled frontier lands, and addressed labor shortages. For example, the U.S. welcomed millions of European immigrants during this period, often with minimal restrictions. The world population was lower during the times and the threats to immigration were either non-existent or minimal (Samers, 2004). Hence, it was easy for people to enter a country searching for new opportunities.

However, as the 20th century progressed, immigration policies in these countries began to dramatically shift. The interwar period and aftermath of World War I saw the rise of nativism and a growing fear of the "other," leading to more restrictive immigration policies (Hayworth & Eule, 2013). The U.S. Immigration Act of 1924, which imposed national quotas, is a prime example of racial and ethnic bias that aimed to limit the influx of immigrants from specific regions, particularly Asia and Southern and Eastern Europe (Spencer, 2008). World War II and the subsequent Cold War era further influenced immigration policies in Western countries. The devastation of the war led to a humanitarian focus on refugees and displaced persons, prompting Western nations to accept large numbers of refugees, mainly from Europe (Light & Thomas, 2021). However, the Cold War intensified security concerns, leading to stricter controls on immigration from communist countries.

The post-war economic boom in the 1950s and the 1960s brought a renewed demand for labor in Western Europe and North America, leading to guest worker programs and the recruitment of migrants from former colonies and developing countries (Helbling & Meierrieks, 2020). However, these policies are often temporary and do not anticipate the long-term settlement of these workers and their families, leading to challenges in integration and social cohesion (Bachmann & Paphiti, 2021). In recent decades, immigration policies in Western countries have increasingly focused on managing illegal migration, asylum-seeking, and the integration of immigrants. The rise of globalization, economic disparities, and conflicts have driven migration flows while growing concerns over national security, cultural identity, and economic competition have led to stricter

border controls and more selective immigration policies (Laque, 2021). This historical context underscores the ongoing tension between the economic benefits of immigration and its social and political challenges.

The Im(possibility) of Living with Illegal Immigration

McNevin (2017) questioned what nations might gain by accepting the reality of irregular migration rather than striving to eliminate it. In their article, the authors explored two aspects of the issue: the persistent nature of displacement and migration and the conflicting justice claims that underpin various policy approaches. The political aspect of the issue, which represents the second sense of the problem, should be addressed more in public discussion. However, engaging directly with this political dimension could help move the debate beyond a polarized stalemate (Ferreira, 2019). To support this argument, scholars such as Gravelle (2018) and O'Brien et al. (2019) have analyzed the debate on irregular migration through various typical positions, focusing on their underlying justice claims. Using the findings from this study, McNevin (2017) advocated for a more expansive discussion that fully explores competing justice claims. However, it is worth noting that such a debate requires a more robust defense of justice claims, whether they are rooted in communitarian, cosmopolitan, anti-capitalist, or hybrid values concerning citizenship and political communities.

Several scholars have argued that illegal immigration should not be understood as a problem that can be rectified by better state policies or international governance; instead, it is an unavoidable structural feature of contemporary liberal democratic states (O'Brien et al., 2019; Castles, 2019; García, 2021). Boswell (2014) discusses three different routes for theorizing illegal migration as a structural phenomenon: liberal constraints, political economy, and social system accounts. Table 1 provides details of each route.

Table 1: Three routes for theorizing illegal immigration as a structural phenomenon

Route	Explanation
Liberal Constraint	This perspective focuses on the tension between liberal democratic states' commitments to human rights, the rule of law, and the need to control immigration. States face a dilemma: While they are obligated to uphold the rights of individuals, including migrants, they must also enforce immigration laws. This creates a situation where illegal migration is often tolerated or inadequately addressed because reconciling these conflicting imperatives is difficult.
Political Economy	This approach examines illegal migration through the lens of economic structures and labor markets. It suggests that illegal migration is a structural outcome of the global economy, where the demand for cheap labor in specific sectors creates incentives for illegal migration. States may tacitly accept illegal immigration because it fulfills economic needs, particularly in low-wage, labor-intensive industries. However, this acceptance is often accompanied by exploitative conditions for migrants.
Social Systems Accounts	This perspective views illegal migration as a byproduct of broader social systems, including the international migration system. It considers how

Route	Explanation
	migration flows are shaped by networks, institutions, and practices that perpetuate illegal migration as a normalized aspect of global mobility. These systems may involve the interplay of policies, enforcement practices, and migrant networks that sustain ongoing migration despite restrictive immigration policies.

Source: Boswell (2014)

Boswell's framework offers a comprehensive understanding of illegal migration by highlighting how it is deeply embedded in the structural dynamics of states, economies, and social systems rather than merely being the result of individual actions or policy failures. After setting out each of these accounts, Boswell (2014) further explored their plausibility, drawing on examples of how European states and the European Union (EU) have attempted to prevent or control irregular migration.

About 1 in 20 workers in this country is an illegal immigrant, with 19 working in all sectors of the economy but mostly in low-skill occupations. About half of the farm workers nationwide are illegal immigrants, but most illegal immigrants are not farm workers.20 They are also concentrated in construction, manufacturing (especially textiles and animal processing), retail trade (especially restaurants), and services (especially private household services) (Massey, 2020). In California, where the concentration of illegal immigrants is almost twice as high as that of the rest of the nation, about 9 percent of workers are illegal immigrants. According to one estimate, 14 percent of workers in Los Angeles County are in the informal economy, and more than half (61%) of those workers are illegal immigrants (Coffey, 2023). Such high numbers indicate that in the United States, most workers are illegal, spelling a serious problem in the country's homeland security.

The "Theory of Permissible Illegal Immigration" explores the notion that certain forms of illegal immigration may be morally and socially permissible under specific conditions (Niño Arnaiz, 2024, p. 23). This theory suggests that in situations where legal immigration channels are excessively restrictive, inaccessible, or discriminatory, illegal immigration might be justified as a means for individuals to escape dire circumstances, such as poverty, violence, or political persecution (Hillman & Weiss, 1999). It argues that the ethical permissibility of illegal immigration can be assessed based on the intent and circumstances of migrants, the fairness of the receiving country's immigration policies, and the impact on both the host country and the migrants themselves.

Proponents of this theory highlight that many illegal immigrants contribute positively to the economies of host countries, often taking on low-wage jobs that are essential but less desirable to native workers (Hillman & Weiss, 1999). Furthermore, they argue that overly restrictive immigration policies may unjustly limit individuals' rights to seek better living conditions, thus legitimizing illegal immigration as a form of civil disobedience against unjust laws (Carens, 1992). Critics, however, argue that such a theory could undermine the rule of law and incentivize more unlawful behavior, complicating efforts to regulate immigration effectively.

Factors Motivating Illegal Immigration

The key factors that motivate illegal immigration are economic and family pull elements.

The Economic Pull

When undocumented immigrants arrive in the United States, many employers are willing to hire them, contributing to their high workforce participation. Research indicates that at least 75% of undocumented adult immigrants are employed, with undocumented men having exceptionally high participation rates, exceeding 90% (Chavez, 2023). Wages and job opportunities in the U.S. are significantly better than in their home countries. For instance, the average wage for manufacturing production workers in the U.S. is approximately nine times higher than in Mexico, a disparity that has remained relatively consistent over the past two decades. Additionally, limited access to credit and loans in many home countries creates another economic motivation for migration (Johnson & Hill, 2006). For numerous families, having members migrate to the U.S. provides financial means to afford significant expenses, such as purchasing homes in their countries of origin (Ambrosini, 2021).

The Family Pull

Illegal immigrants also come to the United States to join family members. These family members can provide housing and job information. They can also help pay the costs of a coyote (a smuggler who charges to bring in illegal immigrants) (Ambrosini, 2021). Research finds that people who have U.S. family ties are much more likely to come than people who do not have these ties. For example, an earlier PPIC study showed that California experienced a substantial increase in family-based illegal immigration during the late 1980s. As a result of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, more than one million illegal immigrant workers in the state were allowed to apply for legal permanent residence (Donato & Amuedo-Dorantes, 2020). Many who became legal residents sent family members to join them, and many of those family members were initially illegal immigrants.

Because many illegal immigrants have children while they are in the United States or join family members who are here legally, a large percentage live in households with U.S. citizens. Many will eventually attain legal status through the family reunification provisions of U.S. immigration law (Pierce & Bolter, 2020). Family reunification provisions in U.S. immigration law aim to uphold the principle of family unity, allowing U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (LPRs) to sponsor certain relatives to immigrate to the United States. While this system reflects humanitarian values, it also presents significant challenges in its implementation and structure. An analysis of immigrants granted legal permanent residency in 2003 showed that 44 percent lived in the U.S. as illegal immigrants. Slightly more than half overstayed their visas, and the remainder crossed the border without authorization (Coffey, 2023). This exacerbates the illegal immigration problem in the West.

Economic Impacts of Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration affects the economic well-being of legal residents in the United States, influencing income levels and income distribution. To simplify the analysis, we consider a model with three economic factors: low-skilled workers, high-skilled workers, and physical capital (which is in fixed supply) (Piyapromdee, 2021). In this model, we assume that these three factors can substitute for each other, and the production function has a constant elasticity of substitution. The impact of illegal immigration largely depends on the characteristics of immigrants, who are often low educated, inexperienced, and non-English-speaking (Niño Arnaiz, 2024). While their skills, job status, and earnings may improve over time in the U.S., they generally remain low-skilled workers.

When additional low-skilled workers enter the labor force through illegal or legal migration, the marginal productivity of all low-skilled workers declines. This usually results in lower wages for native, low-skilled workers (Bansak et al., 2020). Additionally, it could lead to reduced employment among native workers, especially if they have an upward-sloping labor supply curve or if wage rates are rigid because of factors such as minimum wage laws or union agreements. On the other hand, an increase in low-skilled labor boosts marginal productivity and, therefore, the wages of high-skilled workers and the return on capital (Mehmood & Balakrishnan, 2020). This outcome is driven by the principle of complementarity, which suggests that the productivity of one factor increases when there is a greater supply of other factors with which it works (Mayda et al., 2022). Nevertheless, this is only a short-term gain that cannot provide long-term economic benefits because it tends to encourage illegal activities in the United States.

Some parties to the debate claim that illegal immigrants and their children drain public coffers. Others claim that they pay more tax than they receive in services. Sorting out the fiscal effects is a serious challenge, and the outcomes depend on the accounting methods used (Mehmood & Balakrishnan, 2020). Some would argue that the cost of educating the children of illegal immigrants is part of the equation. In this case, illegal immigrants almost certainly constitute a substantial drain on state and local public funding. However, most children of illegal immigrants are born in the United States, are U.S. citizens, and are thus entitled to be educated in public schools (Mehmood & Balakrishnan, 2020). Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that children residing in the United States can attend public schools, regardless of their immigration status (Pierce & Bolter, 2020). To put the issue in a larger context, most U.S. native families with children probably receive more in state and local services (primarily educational) than they pay in state and local taxes (Chavez, 2024).

Effectiveness of Policy and Regulatory Responses

There are various policy and regulatory responses used to control illegal immigration. Studies have evaluated some of these frameworks. These frameworks are classified into Immediate Relatives and Family Preference Categories, Visa Allocation and Numerical Caps, Child Status Protection Act (CSPA),

Immediate Relatives and Family Preference Categories: The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) divides family-based immigration into immediate relatives (spouses, parents, and unmarried minor children of U.S. citizens) and family preference categories, such as adult children and siblings. Immediate relatives benefit from unlimited visas, while family preference categories are subject to annual numerical caps. A notable problem is the visa backlog in family preference categories. For example, siblings of U.S. citizens (F4) and married children (F3) often face over a decade waiting periods due to high demand and limited slots. These long waits can strain family ties and exacerbate emotional and financial difficulties for separated families.

Visa Allocation and Numerical Caps: The numerical cap system, designed to limit the number of family-based visas, creates inequities between countries. Each country is subject to a per-country cap of 7% of the total visas, leading to disproportionately long waits for applicants from nations with high demand, such as Mexico, India, and the Philippines. This approach needs to account for the varying sizes of national populations and migration patterns, contributing to extensive delays for applicants from these countries, effectively making family reunification a years-long, and sometimes decades-long, process.

Child Status Protection Act (CSPA): The CSPA protects children from "aging out" of eligibility when they turn 21 while waiting for visa processing. However, its application can be complex, and many families struggleneed help navigating the calculations and legal requirements involved. In some cases, delays in processing still result in children losing their eligibility as dependents, forcing families to restart the immigration process under a different category, which can take several more years.

Affidavit of Support (Form I-864): Sponsors of family-based immigrants must file an Affidavit of Support, demonstrating that they can financially support the immigrant. This requirement ensures that the immigrant will not become a public charge, but it can impose a significant burden on sponsors, especially those with low incomes. Many families find themselves ineligible to sponsor relatives due to stringent income thresholds, effectively excluding lower-income families from the family reunification process. This requirement disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, including recent immigrants who may still need to gain stable financial footing.

Humanitarian Provisions: Humanitarian provisions like the Lautenberg Amendment and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) aim to address unique situations but face their challenges. For instance, the Lautenberg Amendment applies to limited groups, leaving many others without similar protections. Violence Against Women Act offers self-petitioning rights to victims of abuse, but many individuals are unaware of these provisions or fear retaliation, deterring them from applying. Additionally, processing these cases often involves lengthy investigations, delaying justice for vulnerable applicants.

Systemic Challenges and Reform Needs: The family reunification system faces administrative inefficiencies, including delays in processing times due to understaffed immigration offices, outdated technology, and fluctuating policy priorities. Changes in immigration policy compound these issues, creating uncertainty for families navigating the system. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive immigration reform has perpetuated these systemic problems, leaving many families in limbo.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was passed during the closing days of the 1986 legislative session (Chiswick, 1988). The primary purpose of the IRCA is to remove illegal aliens from the U.S. labor market. Illegal aliens are foreign-born persons whose mere presence in the United States violates the law or who have violated the condition of lawful entry (Bean & Khuu, 2020). They are primarily persons who surreptitiously entered the country by evading an immigration service inspection, which has two primary policy instruments. One is granting legal status or amnesty for certain illegal aliens, thereby in part 'wiping the slate clean.' According to Dowlah and Dowlah (2020), the Immigration Reform and Control Act legalized most illegal immigrants who had arrived in the country prior to January 1, 1984, ' (p. 32). The other is imposing penalties, referred to as employer sanctions, against employers who hire illegal aliens. The intention of employer sanctions was to reduce the demand for illegal alien labor in the United States.

Most immigration policy is federal, but state and local governments are becoming more active in addressing immigration issues (Jiménez, 2022). Recent state and local initiatives have ranged from the establishment of sanctuary cities, legislation enacted to discourage the employment of illegal immigrants, and formalized relationships between police departments, immigration, and customs enforcement (ICE) (Dowlah & Dowlah, 2020). The most recent policies enacted by state and local officials are seen as a response to failed federal immigration policies, and many have focused on restricting the employment of illegal workers. Twenty-one states have adopted requirements that state contractors or state employers use a federal electronic verification system (known as E-Verify) to determine each prospective employee's legal status, and four states require all employers in the state to verify the status of their workers.

In California, the city of Mission Viejo requires contractors to use E-Verify, and the city of Lancaster requires E-Verify for all employers. However, there are concerns about E-Verify, including its accuracy, timeliness, and whether its use would lead to discriminatory practices on the part of employers. A recent PPIC study found that Arizona's E-Verify mandate led to a decline in the number of unauthorized workers, but also pushed more workers into informal employment (Reich, 2021). It is critical for the government to increase the strictness of employing illegal immigrants in order to discourage them from persisting. Increasing the strictness of employing undocumented immigrants is critical for several reasons, as it addresses the root economic incentives that encourage unauthorized migration and ensures compliance with labor and immigration laws. By limiting access to employment opportunities for undocumented workers, governments can reduce the economic draw that motivates many to cross borders unlawfully.

CONCLUSIONS

Illegal immigration remains a complex and divisive issue within the political landscape of Western nations, particularly the United States. Despite a recent decline in numbers, the enduring presence of illegal immigrants and the challenges they pose to national security and social cohesion highlight the need for a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to immigration policies. This study has demonstrated that while illegal immigration is often driven by economic disparities, political instability, and familial ties, political responses to this phenomenon are deeply intertwined with broader issues of national identity, security, and economic interests. The literature reveals that the politicization of illegal immigration has led to polarized debates that often overshadow the

humanitarian aspects of the issue, making it difficult to find balanced solutions that address both the security concerns and rights of migrants.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of viewing illegal immigration not merely as a legal or security issue but as a structural phenomenon deeply embedded in the global economic and political systems. This study has shown that current immigration policies, which often focus on restrictive measures and enforcement, may fail to address the underlying factors driving illegal migration. These policies may inadvertently perpetuate the problems they seek to solve, such as labor exploitation and social marginalization. As such, there is a pressing need for policymakers to re-evaluate their approaches and consider more holistic strategies that include addressing the root causes of migration, promoting legal pathways, and enhancing international cooperation.

Illegal immigration is a multifaceted challenge requiring a comprehensive and empathetic response from national governments and the international community. This study advocates for policies that balance security with humanitarian concerns, recognizing the complexities of migration in a globalized world. It is imperative that future research continue to explore the ethical, economic, and political dimensions of illegal immigration, providing evidence-based insights that can guide more effective policies. As the global landscape continues to evolve, so too must the strategies to manage migration uphold the values of security, equity, and human dignity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To increase the strictness of employing undocumented immigrants, several methods can be implemented effectively. One approach is mandating the use of E-Verify, a government-run system that verifies employment eligibility. Research shows that states requiring E-Verify have experienced reductions in unauthorized employment (Orrenius & Zavodny, 2015). Additionally, imposing higher fines and criminal penalties for employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers can act as a deterrent. For example, while the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) introduced employer sanctions, inconsistent enforcement has limited its effectiveness; strengthening these penalties can enhance compliance (Massey et al., 2016). Regular workplace audits and inspections further discourage violations by signaling to employers that hiring undocumented workers will not be tolerated.

Moreover, raising awareness through education campaigns plays a crucial role in addressing the issue of employing undocumented workers by equipping businesses with the knowledge necessary to comply with legal hiring practices. These campaigns can inform employers about tools like E-Verify, which verifies employment eligibility, and provide guidance on navigating complex labor laws. They also serve to highlight the potential consequences of non-compliance, such as financial penalties, legal action, and damage to a company's reputation. By emphasizing the importance of ethical hiring practices, these initiatives encourage employers to adopt compliance as a standard part of their operations.

When effectively enforced, such education campaigns can significantly diminish the demand for unauthorized labor. By making the rules and consequences clear, employers are less likely to take risks associated with hiring undocumented workers. Moreover, they can address systemic policy gaps, such as inconsistencies in enforcement and the exploitation of undocumented workers, by

promoting transparency and accountability within industries. This shift in employer behavior reduces reliance on unauthorized labor, thereby mitigating its broader socioeconomic impacts, including wage suppression for domestic workers and unfair competition in the labor market (Borjas, 2017; Passel & Cohn, 2019). Ultimately, well-designed and consistently implemented awareness programs complement other enforcement measures, fostering a more equitable and lawful employment environment.

Policymakers need to accept that 'illegal immigration' is entirely against U.S. law and handle it as a severe illegal activity, like any other crime. The country has provided legal procedures for people to gain access to the U.S. in a way that retains the security of American citizens (Ruhs & Martin, 2017). Illegal immigrants trying to use unlawful means to gain access are an abuse of security and have long-term economic and political implications for American citizens. Hence, it is crucial to establish systems to curb illegal immigration menace, persecute perpetrators, and restore sanity in the United States.

Employers who hire illegal immigrants should be considered part of the accomplices of illegal immigration. It is estimated that 5 percent of workers in the United States are illegal immigrants working in all sectors of the economy but mostly in low-skill occupations. Therefore, strict sanctions should be imposed to prevent employers from hiring illegal immigrants. The penalty levels could also be increased beyond demotivating US-based employers from hiring people who are considered illegal immigrants.

SUGGESTIONS FUTURE RESEARCH

Future researchers could consider using more primary methods to unravel the reasons for the delayed complete curbing of illegal immigration. Laws and regulations have been enacted and applied; however, the problem seems to persist. It is crucial to conduct research and provide evidence-based practices that can be used to address this problem. Moreover, more studies should be conducted to examine the reasons for some degree of support for illegal immigration by some Native Americans. The motivation grounds should be identified and needs addressed to limit the willingness of Native Americans to support unlawful immigration into the country.

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Dr. Zack Harvey is a highly accomplished professional with a **Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership**, currently serving as the **CEO and Research Director** of **NorCal Research Consulting**. In this role, he leads a team of skilled researchers dedicated to delivering comprehensive research, in-depth data analysis, and strategic reporting for clients across various industries. Dr. Harvey and his team are known for their ability to manage the entire research process—from data collection and analysis to delivering impactful final presentations. His leadership ensures that each project aligns with clients' business objectives and provides actionable insights for organizational success.

Dr. Harvey's professional affiliations further reflect his commitment to excellence. He is an active **Member of the Editorial Board** for the **IPRJB Journal for the European Journal of Business and Strategic Management**, a **peer-reviewed journal** dedicated to advancing the fields of business and strategic management. He is also a dedicated **Executive Member of the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS)**, a proud member of the **Delta Mu Delta International Honor Society in Business**, and the **Association for the Study of the Middle East & Africa (ASMEA)**. These memberships underscore his leadership and commitment to advancing both business practice and academic scholarship.

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Before founding NorCal Research Consulting, Dr. Harvey served as the **CEO of Bayareacss IT Solutions**, where he successfully drove growth and innovation through advanced IT solutions. His extensive experience in both technology and leadership, combined with his academic background, positions him as a distinguished figure in organizational leadership and research.

Dr. Harvey's leadership, combined with his team's expertise, has had a lasting impact across industries, and he remains a trusted consultant for businesses seeking innovative solutions and strategic direction. Have many studies and books in different fields like government, immigration, project management, leadership, government and enterprise management, technology, politics and religion

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