

I. Globalization and Immigration

I would like to introduce this topic first with a definition of globalization, and then describe the ways in it has impacted immigration in the United States and worldwide.

Globalization refers to a process of international integration of national goods, financial, and labor markets. This process is primarily driven by companies in their search for profits, and in recent years has been greatly facilitated and of financial capital by technological advances that have essentially eliminated barriers restricting the flow of information and financial capital, and improved the mobility of goods and material.

Today, companies can be headquartered in New York while production takes place thousands of miles away in China, and yet the production process remains intimately controlled via electronic communication and integrated computer systems. Economic policies have sought to enable unfettered flow of financial and material capital on a global basis. There are both benefits and serious negative effects of globalization at many levels but today we are talking only about one and that is immigration.

I mentioned earlier that globalization is the flow of money, material and labor to take competitive advantage. But we have yet to update national policy to reflect the labor migration stimulated by the exigencies of a globalized marketplace, and we see the effects of this in our immigration system today. There is an imbalance between America's economic needs and the ability of people to immigrate to help meet those needs. U.S. immigration laws actually work against meeting the needs of business and ready and willing immigrant workers

We see this especially with Mexico: implementation of NAFTA in 1994 created competition for Mexican farmers and displaced over 1 M job; largely due to cheaper American corn due to our farm subsidy policy. The corresponding creation of jobs via the construction of American-owned factories has been thwarted by the closing of many of these factories because of the advanced competitiveness of Chinese labor. On the other hand, agricultural jobs in the US are in need of workers: the unbalanced nature of Immigration law has increased unauthorized immigration as displaced workers in Mexico and Central America seek to earn wages where there is demand. Immigrants are generally young and mobile and go where there is work. They create a just-in-time delivery of workers to places where they are most needed

On the other end of the employment pay scale U.S. Universities are not getting as many foreign-born students due to increased competition for educated workers in other countries, a need created by information technology advances (read Tom Freidman's The World is Flat). Our visa systems inhibit the immigration of highly educated workers at the same time as we are producing fewer and fewer engineers and scientists. In 1989, American universities awarded twice the number of PhDs granted by Asian countries. By 2001, the gap had closed.

The U.S. is losing its dominance in attracting the most talented students to higher education and faces more competition for the highly skilled to fill U.S. jobs. Globalization increases the

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demand for high-tech and other professional workers. Immigration policy affecting high-skilled workers becomes increasingly important as the competition for high-skilled labor increases around the world. Ease of employment-linked permanent residence is a factor that can facilitate or deter immigration to the U.S.

Bottom line: our system has not taken into account the effects of globalization on the world's labor markets: this is only one of the ways in which it is broken.

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