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Nativism or Response to Globalization? Business Reaction to Immigration Reform

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Abstract

Industries such as agriculture, service, health care, construction, and meat packing and processing have relied heavily on immigrant labor and have voiced opposition to the restrictive immigration reform passed recently by the House of Representatives which would provide no amnesty, no path to legalization, and which would reduce the number of worker visas.

Other industries and coalitions favor tighter border security and punitive action toward undocumented immigrants and those who hire them. I propose that the position these businesses take toward immigration reform is more a response to globalization than one of nativism.

Introduction

Immigration is a hotly debated issue in the United States today and has been at certain points throughout history. Immigration reform, led by politicians seeking to please contradictory needs of constituents and businesses, has been a complicated mix of expansive and restrictive policy. The response to this issue by the business community is equally as complicated and at times, contradictory.

While many businesses and industries lobby for access to hard-working, easily exploitable immigrants, other businesses press for “no amnesty”, punitive based legislation. What may appear to be nativist response to increased numbers of immigrants is more likely a response to globalization. The complicated history of U.S. immigration policy has affected today’s debate.

Literature Review

Immigration has been widely researched and information on the topic includes concepts such as push and pull factors in the economies of Mexico and the U.S. respectively. Piore (1979) argues that there is an intense pull of workers from developing countries to

developed nations to fill a “chronic” need for unskilled workers. World systems theory highlights the effects of globalization. The movement of business and capital into pre-market societies changes the social fabric of those communities which in turn creates highly mobile labor pools. Systems of reciprocation are interrupted, consumers are created and capital becomes necessary. Corporations based in industrialized nations move into developing countries to exploit the raw materials and labor. This practice disturbs the balance, forces competition, and drives farmers from the land. Mechanization also serves to displace agricultural workers who then move to cities to find work. When cities become saturated with workers, laborers must move on to the next viable option, which can include migration to developing countries (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino and Taylor 1998; McMichael 2004). Philip L. Martin also illustrates how the “Benign Neglect” has created a pull of workers to the U.S. Massey, Durand and Malone (2002), add to that a push factor from Mexico. Historically, Mexico has had a dearth of capital, credit and insurance markets. Citizens who wish to purchase or build homes, or start businesses must look for other options when the Mexican state does not provide avenues to low-interest loans (Massey et al 2002).

It can be said that industrialized economies, driven by the imperative to make profit at any cost, are creating these conditions which make it necessary for workers to move to established countries to find work. The processes that link developing countries to industrialized countries create natural and obvious pathways for immigrants to follow. In other words, the U.S. has created a pull system that draws immigrants in, a system that cannot be stopped simply by building a taller border fence. The wheels of globalization are turning and cannot easily be reversed.

Massey, Piore, Calavita, Martin and others have documented the pull factors that lure workers from developing countries to industrialized nations. Massey et al (2002) have illustrated that the history of U.S. Immigration policy has been one that contains many contradictions. Historic caps on immigration designed to exclude immigrants from certain locales, particularly European countries and Asian countries, did not include Mexico or North America. These caps were implemented to alleviate citizen fears of an unassimilable population of immigrants flooding the workforce. Employers, limited by the caps, then actively recruited undocumented Mexican workers (Massey et al 2002). Indeed, this practice was legal until the immigration reforms of 1986. After the stock market crash of 1929 and the following depression, attitudes toward Mexican workers turned hostile. Massive deportations of Mexicans ensued (Jaffe, Cullen and Boswell 1980). The need for contract labor disappeared as U.S. workers rushed to fill the low wage jobs left open by the deportations. "Through the massive use of repressive force and police powers, the U.S. government sought to undo in the 1930's what it had actively encouraged over the preceding two decades" (Massey et al 2002 ,pg 34).

The mobilization of American industry for war efforts created job shortages in agriculture. Those who were not drafted left the low wage and low status jobs to find higher wage work in the cities (Massey et al 2002). Agriculture turned to President Roosevelt for assistance. Roosevelt turned to Mexico. Pressure from the agriculture industry encouraged the government to instate the Bracero Program which operated from 1942-1964. This plan repatriated thousands of people, undocumented Mexicans and even Mexican American citizens. Workers were taken from their jobs, shipped to Mexico, given Bracero visas and returned to the same work sites from which they had been taken. U.S. citizens, unaware of

the visa part of the program, believed the government had responded to their fears of labor competition. This plan ensured the Agriculture industry access to immigrant labor.

Massey et al (2002) refer to this government strategy as “having its cake and eating it too”. The United States must respond to demands of citizens to provide jobs and to business and industry to provide streams of cheap labor. Responding to this seeming contradictory pressure, the U.S. has historically instated contradictory immigration policy. While appearing to appease citizens, policies have restricted immigration flows. At the same time, visa programs ensure that immigrants are able to fill the low-wage jobs required to keep business afloat. Business needs are fulfilled and citizens are content.

This strategy, however, does not provide long-term solutions for immigration problems. Factors other than fears of immigrants taking jobs often come into play. The recession following the Korean War in conjunction with the McCarthy era hysteria led citizens to pressure their government to control the borders. At the same time, growers pressured government for more workers. According to Kitty Calavita (1992), 1954’s “Operation Wetback” led to increased militarization of the border and a mass round-up of undocumented immigrants (over 1 million in 1954). To satisfy growers, INS doubled bracero visas. Again, undocumented workers were rounded up, shipped back to Mexico, given Bracero visas and sent back to the fields of U.S. growers. This operation satisfied citizens and business. The issue of immigration seemed to disappear. The socially constructed “problem” was “solved” in the eyes of the public, even as the same immigrant workers were filling the same jobs.

The climate of the 1960’s turned the public attention to civil rights violations and to the exploitative Bracero program. Growers had become unsatisfied with the unfair allocation of Bracero visas and found it more cost effective to hire undocumented workers and so did not

put up a fight when the public pushed for the end of the bracero era (Massey et al 2002).

The agriculture industry had continued access to fresh undocumented immigrants, as employees encouraged friends and family to migrate to the U.S., with the promise of jobs.

The oil crisis of the 1970's and ensuing recession again turned the public focus toward Mexican immigration. High inflation, rising unemployment and low wages created more competition for low-wage jobs. Those filling the low-status and usually invisible jobs again found themselves in the spotlight. Andreas (2000) also points out that as other employment opportunities became available in urban areas, undocumented workers were now more visible to the public and public tolerance began to deteriorate.

Response to this deteriorating tolerance came in the form of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) which was supposed to balance the interests of business, immigrants, citizens and everyone involved in the immigration debate. It is difficult, however, to please all sides of an issue. The Act increased the INS budget, which expanded the Border Patrol and led to an increased militarization of the border. An amnesty and legalization program created a path to citizenship for undocumented workers already in the country. The Act also made it illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers. These changes were intended to decrease undocumented migration and reduce employer reliance on undocumented workers.

Unintended consequences of the IRCA were addressed in the Immigration Act of 1990, which worked to actually encourage more illegal immigration as undocumented family members from Mexico came to join the residents who gained amnesty under the new law. Legal migration had also increased as dependents and spouses now qualified for visas under IRCA laws (Massey and Espinoza 1997). This Act added Border Patrol agents, tightened employer sanctions, streamlined deportations, increased penalties for multiple immigration

violations and imposed limits on the total number of immigrants per year to “creatively” limited Mexican legal immigration (Massey et al 2002).

Successive reforms have sought to mitigate unintended consequences of previous reforms. The Clinton Administration’s Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996: increased penalties for smugglers and undocumented immigrants, gave new money for military technology, added 1,000 new Border Patrol agents per year until 2001 which would bring the total number of agents to 10,000 (Andreas 2000), and made undocumented immigrants ineligible to get Social Security benefits even if they paid taxes. It also gave authority to states to limit public assistance, and increased income required to sponsor relatives to come to U.S. (Massey et al 2002).

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996: barred illegal migrants from most federal, state and local public benefits, determined that INS was to verify status before any federal benefits were given, prohibited food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or means tested programs until 5 years after legal immigration, and gave states authority to exclude legal immigrants from federal and state programs (Massey et al 2002).

Each round of immigration reform becomes more restrictive, while the U.S. economy becomes more integrated with economies of other nations. Mexico’s signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 ensured that the two economies would increasingly become intertwined.

Research Question

Currently, the House and Senate have drafted their own immigration reform bills and will soon meet to decide which road to take. The Bush Administration has acknowledged America’s need for immigrant workers, while it tries to appear tough on undocumented

migrants and those who hire them. A guest worker program has been proposed which, like visa programs of the past, will provide business with low-wage workers. President Bush also opposes amnesty for undocumented workers already in the U.S. This approach attempts to satisfy business interests and native wishes.

Immigration reform has, in the past, contained contradictory measures- intending to tighten border security, reduce legal and illegal migration, while providing visas and amnesty for workers. Which industries back certain provisions and why? Are businesses opposed to expansive immigration reform nativist or expressing anti-immigrant sentiments? Wikipedia, the on-line encyclopedia, defines nativism as: “the fear that certain new immigrants will inject alien political, economic or cultural values and behaviors that threaten the prevailing norms and values” (www.wikipedia.com). Does this definition apply to businesses in favor of H.R. 4437?

Methodology

Three strategies were used to identify business positions on immigration reform. First, peak organizations were identified which oppose H.R. 4437, typically, large coalitions of businesses and industries which use immigrant labor. Organizations which were in favor of H.R. 4437 were then identified using a simple internet search using key words, “business support for H.R. 4437”. Websites found in search results were used to find links to other organizations.

Second, based on literature review, researcher identified main business industries that rely on immigrant labor and have been involved in immigration policy in the past.

Third, public statements were researched through industry organizations and their publications, as well as newspaper articles. Congressional testimony was also used to

research position on immigration reform. Websites from specific industries and coalitions was accessed to determine whether the topic immigration was addressed.

Findings

Current bills in the House and Senate differ drastically on the approach to immigration and hence have drastically different groups supporting each side. HR. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, calls for restrictive and punitive measures to stop undocumented immigration. Punitive measures, which place focus on individuals, have received mixed responses. Under H.R. 4437, undocumented presence in the U.S. would become a felony offense. Those who aid and assist those determined to be “illegal aliens” would face the same penalties as the “aliens” themselves.

H.R. 4437 not only targets undocumented immigrants, but those who employ them. Employers would be required to use a verification system to determine legal status of new hires and previously hired individuals. This bill would also increase the criminal penalties for companies shown to have repeated uses of undocumented workers (H.R. 4437, 2006).

Business already finds itself vulnerable to stiffer penalties and investigation by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. According to Julia Preston (2006) of *The New York Times*, employers are now receiving federal indictments as opposed to civil fines of the past. The article highlights contractors and perhaps these businesses were easy targets, as it is widely known that labor contractors often use immigrant labor. To avoid penalties themselves, many businesses contract out for labor, allowing contractors to assume the risks if they are found to have hired undocumented workers.

The description of the bill also includes allocation of massive amounts of resources to border security, and not incidentally, would increase contracts to companies such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon, to name just a few. The

Department of Homeland Security also backs this strategy of border militarization with plans through the Secure Border Initiative to increase the numbers of Border Patrol agents, increase detention facilities, build higher fences and vastly increase detection technology (Immigration & Borders nd).

Border security measures, as Massey and others have described, work not to deter clandestine border crossings, but instead, force migrants to choose less patrolled, more remote areas to cross (Massey et al 2002). The strategy, to throw money at the border, has been ineffective and will most likely continue to be ineffective in preventing undocumented immigration. It will, however, be lucrative to major corporations with government contracts.

KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton, was awarded a government contract to build detention centers for undocumented immigrants (Swarns 2006). Halliburton, which recently lost its no-bid contracts in Iraq, has been widely criticized for its accounting practices (Witte 2006). Companies mentioned above have not made public statements regarding immigration reform. It is possible that these companies have refrained from public statements and hearings because they have other ways of getting their voices heard.

In Dollars and Votes: How Business Campaign Contributions Subvert Democracy, the authors reveal the process of access. Corporations which give large sums of money to political campaigns can, in effect, “buy time” with politicians. This does not lead to quid pro quo relationships exactly, but an organization which gives money to finance expensive campaigns is more likely to get face to face time with a politician to lobby for certain concessions (Clawson, Neustadtl and Weller 1998). A 2005 *Washington Post* article revealed use of corporate jets by members of Congress (Smith and Willis). The jets, owned by some of the largest corporations, were offered, “in the hope of currying favor with the leaders,

that lobbyists were typically onboard their flights, and that they used the opportunity to press the interests of the aircrafts' owners".

Corporations may not be able to directly buy votes, but politicians may be "persuaded to make behind-the-scenes compromises" (Clawson et al 1998; pg 9). This process may explain why certain corporations do not appear to have a strong position on immigration reform. This industry has a stake in immigration reform in that they are rewarded when policy is formed which focuses on the threat of terrorism and need for increased border security.

This bill seems to run contrary to the needs of most large businesses who many employ immigrants regardless of legal status. There are no provisions to expand worker visas or provide a way for workers to come to the U.S. legally. There are many types of visas available to students, and visitors, workers and their families. H1-B visas for skilled workers and H2-B visas for seasonal workers both have low caps. Many industries have been pushing for an increase in the caps, as well as other guest worker programs which would allow for legal immigration. The House appears to be responding only to a heightened fear of terrorism and nativist fears expressed in the media and by some politicians. The Senate has taken a different approach to immigration reform and seems to be responding to business pressure for continued and increased access to immigrant labor streams.

S. 2611, Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006, the Senate's attempt at immigration reform was passed in May. This bill, unlike H.R. 4437, creates a guest worker program as well as multiple paths to citizenship. This bill addresses the needs of the economy and U.S. businesses, addresses humanitarian issues, while also including measures to protect the border (S. 2611, 2006). To address the fears of terrorism, this bill also increases the border militarization efforts, again, which will reward lucrative contracts to

many large corporations. Any new legislation must address the perceived threat of a terrorist attack which could occur at any moment.

While the Senate and House pursue different strategies to immigration reform, American businesses, trying to lobby in their interest, have weighed in on the issue. Many businesses have been categorically opposed to the repressive measures proposed in the House bill 4437 and have organized to lobby for more access to immigrant labor pools. Other groups have formed which back HR 4437 and have responded with what might be considered to be nativist views. What are the motivations driving businesses and organizations on each side of the immigration debate?

Powerful organizations such as the United States Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than three million businesses and organizations, have been outspoken in their opposition to H.R. 4437. Their website contains statements on immigration topics such as: Border Security and Prosperity, Essential Workers, Skilled Worker Visas, Seasonal Workers, Visa Issuance, and the Americans for Better Borders Coalition (Immigration Issues and).

The Chamber, as its website exhibits, seeks to:

- Provide an earned pathway to legalization for undocumented workers already contributing to our economy, provided that they are law-abiding and prepared to embrace the obligations and values of our society.
- Create a carefully monitored guest worker program to fill the growing gaps in America's workforce recognizing that in some cases, permanent immigrants will be needed to fill these gaps.
- Refrain from unduly burdening employers with worker verification systems that

are under-funded or unworkable.

-Ensure the continuity and expansion of H-1B and L-1 visas for professionals and highly valued workers.

A letter to members of the House of Representatives urges Congress to be practical in their plans for immigration reform. The Chamber was critical of House plans to implement a government-run verification system, stating that it “cannot realistically be implemented...” (Josten 2005, para 3).

While lobbying for increased access to immigrant labor, The Chamber is careful to address the fears of the public surrounding terrorism and border security. Addressing the horror of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Chamber acknowledges a need for sensible border security while pointing to the fact that the vast majority of traffic across borders is related to commerce and not terrorism. A sensible plan, according to the Chamber, would identify real threats while allowing continued flows of imports, exports, labor and tourism (Border Security and Prosperity, nd).

Regarding essential workers, the Chamber references Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) which projects a diminishing supply of native workers to fill increasing positions in the growing industries such as construction, service, landscaping and healthcare. Essential workers are those which are purported to do the jobs that Americans are unwilling to do. Testimony by Ronald Bird, Chief Economist with the U.S. Department of Labor, at the Senate Committee on the Judiciary Field Hearing, “Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Examining the Need for a Guest Worker Program” on July 5, 2006 also states that job growth is continuing while the native labor force is declining. According to Bird, immigrant workers are essential to the health of the economy, “Immigrants are a significant and

growing component of the U.S. labor force” (Bird 2006: para 10). This testimony is in-line with Chamber position on the necessity of guest worker programs and paths to citizenship.

The Chamber of Commerce is also a member of a coalition of corporations, universities, research institutes and trade associations called Compete America- The Alliance for a Competitive Workforce. This Coalition has been instrumental in pushing for an increase in the H1-B and H2-B visas. In his testimony before the U.S. Senate, Thomas J. Donohue (2005) stressed the need for more pathways to legal immigration, which would satisfy business needs. Representing many industries, this testimony and others’ must have had a powerful impact on the Senate decision to include expanded visas and a guest worker program.

The Business Roundtable, also a member of Compete America, is another large coalition of businesses with powerful influence. According to the website, “Member companies comprise nearly a third of the total value of the U.S. stock market and represent nearly a third of all corporate income taxes paid to the federal government” (About Business Roundtable, nd). With such a stake in the future of the U.S. economy, one would assume that the Business Roundtable would have a distinct position on the immigration debate. Indeed, a press release dated May 25, 2006 Roundtable President John J. Castellani applauded the Senate for increasing the numbers of H-1B visas for highly educated temporary workers.

The Senate should be commended for recognizing that many U.S. companies rely on highly educated foreign nationals, and that current policy governing this situation is in dire need of reform... The Senate Legislation includes provisions that will raise the cap on H1-B visas for highly educated temporary workers to 115,000 per fiscal year... (Castellani 2006).

Reminding the Senate that business concerns must be addressed in any new legislation, the press release went on to urge members of Congress to, “keep this critical issue in mind as broader discussions on immigration continue,”(Castellani 2006; para 5).

Other coalitions have also been highly active in the push for expanded H-1B visas. The Essential Worker Immigrant Coalition (EWIC) represents such members as: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Hotel & Lodging Association, American Meat Institute, American Health Care Association and the American Nursery & Landscape Association, among dozens of others. This coalition makes clear on their website homepage that the coalition has, “...been intimately involved with the legislative process and has been working closely with key Congressional members to shape and draft practical immigration reform legislation,” (para 1).

A cross reference of Business Roundtable members with Chamber of Commerce websites for different states does show that many members of the Business Roundtable are also members of the Chamber of Commerce. Some of the companies with dual memberships are: CitiMortgage, Allstate Insurance, Liberty Mutual Insurance, New York Life Insurance, Office Depot, Verizon, Coca-Cola, Ford Motor Company, Pfizer, Daimler Chrysler, BNSF Railway, Boeing and Tyson Foods.

The meat packing and processing industry has been one of many purported to prefer immigrant workers. The American Meat Institute “represents the interests of packers and processors of beef, pork, lamb, veal and turkey products and their suppliers throughout North America” (Boyle 2002; para 6). Active for years on the topic of immigration reform, this organization supports an expanded visa program, a path to citizenship and legalization for workers and assistance with compliance of any employee verification system

implemented. Richard Bond, of Tyson Foods inc. is on the Board of Directors of the American Meat Institute (American Meat Institute Board of Directors, nd).

A search on Tyson foods, a processor of chicken beef and pork, and member of both the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Roundtable showed information which links the industry to immigrant workers. On May 1, 2006, immigrants, advocates and supporters of humanitarian immigration reform marched in cities throughout the United States. Some businesses shut down operation to express solidarity and to support immigrant workers. Tyson Foods, which closed some of its meat processing plants on that day, issued a press release, available on its website. In an April 28, 2006 Press Release available on its website, Tyson vowed that it has no tolerance for employment of undocumented workers and encouraged workers not to take unscheduled time off to participate in the rallies (Press Releases, 2006).

A 2001 article in the New York Times details an indictment of Tyson Foods on charges that it smuggled undocumented immigrants into the country to work in the plants (Barboza 2001). This practice will no longer stand with new legislation from both the House and the Senate, as bills from both which would increasingly hold employers responsible for hiring undocumented workers. If the Senate and House agree on a more business friendly plan that will increase the numbers of work visas, companies such as Tyson Foods will not have to risk hiring undocumented workers.

A search through the Senate bill 2611 reveals obvious concessions to businesses. The American Hospital Association (AHA), a national organization of hospitals and health care networks has been active on the topic of immigration in recent years and has expressed strong opposition to H.R. 4437. A letter to the Senate from AHA Executive Vice President Rick Pollack and President of the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health

Systems, Larry Gage lobbied for reform which would not hold businesses responsible for unknowingly hiring undocumented workers. AHA has also lobbied for increased numbers of visas for nurses. A *New York Times* article highlights the AHA plan to continue to recruit nurses from developing countries, regardless of effects (Dugger 2006).

The American Health Care Association (AHCA) has also lobbied for increased numbers of visas for skilled workers. Testimony by Hal Daub, President and CEO of AHCA at a Senate Hearing on “Comprehensive Immigration Reform” stresses the expected shortfall of nurses in the coming years and the need for foreign-born workers. Daub urges the Senate to consider the healthcare industry when drafting immigration reform (Daub 2005).

Previous President and CEO of AHCA, Charles H. Roadman II, also testified at a Senate Hearing on Immigration, stating:

America’s health care system, in particular, is strained from a shortage of the key caregivers necessary to help care for a rapidly aging population. From the standpoint of long term care, Mr. Chairman, we are ready, willing and able to offer tens of thousands of good-paying jobs that, if filled, can help boost the quality of seniors’ care in nursing homes across America.... If an American employer is offering a job that American citizens are not willing to take, we ought to welcome into our country a person who will fill that job- especially a job that has the capacity to improve the health and well being of a vulnerable senior, or person with disabilities (Roadman, 2004).

Pressure from powerful and large coalitions has influenced the Senate. Evidence of this can be found in Sec. 505 (d) of S. 2611, which increases visas for shortage occupations including nurses, but which also intends to increase the domestic supply of healthcare workers (S. 2611 Sec. 505, 2006).

Agriculture, service, construction, healthcare, hospitality, meat packing, and maintenance, among other industries employ large numbers of immigrant workers. Businesses which rely on immigrant labor, whether low-skilled or highly skilled, have a great stake in immigration reform. Large corporations, which belong to multitudes of coalitions, have been successful thus far in persuading the Senate to consider their needs. These industries have been vocal in opposing harsh employer sanctions and restrictive immigration policy. They advocate for increased amounts of worker visas, an expanded guest worker program, and lighter penalties for undocumented workers. Increased border security measures are supported as long as they do not restrict trade and negatively impact business.

Although coalitions such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Roundtable represent many business interests and portray solidarity within the business community regarding immigration reform, there are smaller coalitions which oppose expansive immigration measures. An internet search of business support of H.R. 4437 revealed the *United States Business and Industry Council* (USBIC) website, which purports to “champion the interests of America’s domestic family-owned and closely-held firms—our nation’s ‘main street’ businesses...” (About USBIC, nd). This organization claims to have 1,000 member companies, although no member list is available on the website. The Board of Directors include representatives from many American-owned businesses including; Walker Die Casting, Inc., Cummins-American Corp., Eagle Manufacturing Company, and American Felt & Filter.

Launched by USBIC, the website *American Economic Alert* is devoted to “fighting for American Manufacturers and for American jobs.” A letter to Congress on its website highlights support for the bills’ tough stance on immigration and for “no amnesty” provisions. This letter asserts that undocumented immigrants drive down wages and “are a

national security threat” (Letter To Congress, 2006). More than a half dozen opinion articles written by William R. Hawkins are posted on the website and argue that immigrants are a threat to security, are uneducated and are taking jobs away from Americans. This rhetoric sounds familiar and is used often by the politicians and the right. Jose A. Padin and Shelley Smith conducted a study of Conservative Talk Radio (CTR) which seems to have an implicit curriculum that strives for “gut reaction” to emotional subjects such as immigration without regard to accuracy of the information presented. Their analysis of some of the top CTR shows showed a clear and consistent message that immigrants were regarded as an economic drain and as terrorists (pg 304). Constant bombardment with these images of immigrants can begin to take its toll on the public imagination.

Barry Glassner (2004) has called this strategy “fear mongering”. Media and politicians capitalize of the fears of the American public. Scare tactics are used by politicians to appear to constituents as though “problems” are being addressed. Unfortunately, some politicians have used these tactics in this way to address concerns of immigration. Republican Congressman James F. Sensenbrenner, who introduced the Border Security, Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437), used this tactic when naming the bill by choosing to link terrorism to undocumented immigration. Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo has also chosen to use scare tactics to appear as if he is addressing the socially constructed problem of undocumented immigration. His website links immigration to negative impacts on the culture, environment, health, labor and national security. He even goes so far as to list emotional stories of murders and rapes allegedly committed by immigrants (Immigration Impacts on Crime, nd). This blatant attempt to use the topic of immigration to rally support can be classified as fear mongering and follows the immigration and race curriculum. It is easier by far, to turn attention toward vulnerable immigrants than

to multi-national corporations which contribute to economic strains. A politician may have more success at tackling issues of undocumented immigration than at restructuring business practices of multi-national corporations.

Taken together, the American Economic Alert website, the Conservative Talk Radio curriculum, fear mongering and links made by politicians' of terrorism and crime to immigrants, a nativist picture emerges. Are those businesses which have supported HR 4437 nativist as well?

Linked to the American Economic Alert website are those of many manufacturing businesses and industries such as American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), which "serves as the voice of the North American Steel industry in the public policy arena" (AISI: Our Members, nd). AISI represents more than twenty producer members in the United States. A search on their website using keywords: "immigration", "immigrants", "illegal immigration", "illegal immigrants" and "H.R. 4437" revealed no matches. A search using "globalization" revealed four hits and a search using, "foreign competition" revealed 52 hits. These findings suggest that although linked to U.S. Business and Industry Council and to American Economic Alert websites, which have strong views on immigration reform, of more concern to AISI are foreign competition and effects of globalization. A paper by Peter Morici (2004) on the website reveals the struggle to maintain profits in the face of competition from China. China, whose currency is undervalued, is able to better compete in the U.S. economy than small American companies.

Another link found on the American Economic Alert website represents members of the engineering industry. According to the website, the non-profit, American Engineering Association (AEA) has members from throughout the engineering community. It is evident that this organization is also responding to pressures of globalization. The home page

illustrates the frustration by members of the practice for, “corporations to jump on the bandwagon to hire cheap foreign workers,” (Tax [nd] para 2). The section labeled, “Immigration” highlights articles responding more to corporate profit-driven motive than to immigrants themselves (Immigration, nd). This organization points to corporations which wish only to maximize profits and may prefer to hire immigrants with H1-B visas who may be willing to work for lower wages than American workers. Reaction from the engineers seems to be directed more toward corporate practices than toward sealing off America’s borders to immigrants.

Rescue American Jobs is another organization linked to the American Economic Alert website. They advertise themselves as a national organization formed to save the American middle class. A search on their site using keywords, “immigration reform” led directly to a praising review of Tom Tancredo’s Political Action Committee (PAC) “Team America” and its motto: “The defense of a nation begins at its borders” (American Jobs Journal, 2006).

This PAC makes no apologies for its blatant anti-immigrant sentiment. But is the organization, Rescue American Jobs anti-immigrant because they associate with this PAC?

A thorough search of the Rescue American Jobs website reveals again, that this seeming anti-immigrant sentiment is more a response to globalization. A petition on the website pleads with President Bush and Congress to help blue collar workers. “America’s manufacturing base has been devastated by unfair trade deals and now big corporations are shipping white-collar jobs out of the country too” (Rescue American Jobs Petition, nd).

At times, frustration with an unfettered market economy is directed toward the most vulnerable in society. It is easier by far, to direct anger, fear or frustration toward those with few protections than to tackle the process of globalization.

Another group, not tied to the previous organizations but worth mentioning, has made headlines recently, with concerns about immigration. The organization Choose Black America is comprised of business professionals who support restrictive immigration reform. Their homepage describes the feelings of this group:

Mass illegal immigration has been the single greatest impediment to black advancement in this country over the past 25 years. Blacks, in particular, have lost economic opportunities...and felt the socio-economic damage of illegal immigration more acutely than any other group (Choose Black America, nd).

Choose Black America is outspoken in its support for the enforcement only bill HR 4437. On its “Press Room” page, the group purports to express the views of most of the African American community and states that amnesty for “illegal aliens” would be extremely damaging (Black Americans Oppose, nd).

This issue of African Americans being adversely affected by immigration policy has also been addressed by others. In an article in *The Review of Black Political Economy*, Vernon M. Briggs (2003) suggests that African Americans are not considered when immigration policy is formed and blacks have historically been in direct competition with immigrants. This seems to be more a response to institutionalized racism than to nativism. All Americans, though, are affected by globalization, some more than others.

This seeming anti-immigrant or nativist sentiment is not an irrational response, but an attempt to have some impact on legislation. Businesses which must compete in a global marketplace must consider immigration reform. Large, powerful companies who hire immigrants may have a competitive edge in business. Small companies face different pressures and may see immigration as a threat.

Using this definition, I have found no compelling evidence to suggest that the businesses and organizations which support HR 4437, have nativist ideals. Instead, the apparent anti-immigrant sentiment appears to be a somewhat rational response to the pressures of globalization. Unfortunately, immigrants themselves can become targets.

Ideally, free-market economics should work to benefit the majority of citizens. In reality, capitalism can drive down wages, force unfair competition, widen the gap between rich and poor as well as manifest other negative effects. These undesirable effects put pressure on the weakest members of society and can create tensions between the least powerful groups. Small businesses face different pressures in the market than do large multi-national corporations. Unlike multi-national corporations, small American-owned businesses cannot move their companies to other countries to take advantage of low wages and thus are less competitive in the market. Small businesses also face different pressures regarding competition with foreign companies and other countries. These factors, taken together must be considered when analyzing business response to immigration reform.

What may look to be anti-immigrant sentiment is more likely unease with an economy without restraints. Workers such as those in the high-tech sector, who compete with H1-B visa immigrants have a stake in keeping visas for high-skilled workers to a minimum.

Conclusion

Politicians, seeking to please constituents and the business community, have responded to the immigration issue in different ways. These contradictory needs are addressed in legislation which thus ends up with contradictory results. Businesses, industries, and concerned groups must choose sometimes, the lesser of two evils in terms of legislation from the House or from the Senate. Regardless, neither side of the issue will be fully satisfied as the complex needs of the market economy clash with the needs of citizens.

What is certain is that the economy of the U.S. is more intertwined with economies of other countries than in any other time in history. The outcome of the immigration debate is less certain.

The relationship between U.S. business and immigration reform is not as straightforward as first thought. Expecting a majority of business opposition to H.R. 4437, this is what the researcher found. Large corporations and industries which rely on immigrant labor have lobbied for continued access to immigrants through expanded visa programs and guest worker programs, while addressing rhetoric of border security linked with terrorism. These findings were not surprising. Business, to stay competitive in a market-driven economy, must lobby in its interest and has done so regarding the topic of immigration.

However, there are coalitions of businesses and business professionals which align themselves with the restrictive immigration stance of the U.S. House of Representatives. Coalitions which represent mostly American owned companies in the manufacturing sector do not appear to rely heavily on immigrant labor, and so may have reason to lobby against expansive immigration reform. Small companies which find themselves in direct competition with multi-national corporations, struggle to maintain and make a profit. The appearance of anti-immigrant sentiment seems to be more a response to the pressures of globalization than to nativist leanings.

Although the jury is still out on whether immigrants drive down wages for native workers, these companies fear that corporate use of immigrant labor may put small business at a disadvantage. The issue of immigration reform is complex and responses by businesses on either side of the debate are equally as complex.

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