

Misled **Perceptions** on **Immigration** during the **Great Recession**

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Twitter,
@realDonaldTrump
20 April 2020

Topic

I am studying economic effect of and attitudes towards immigrants

because I want to find out how perception differs from reality

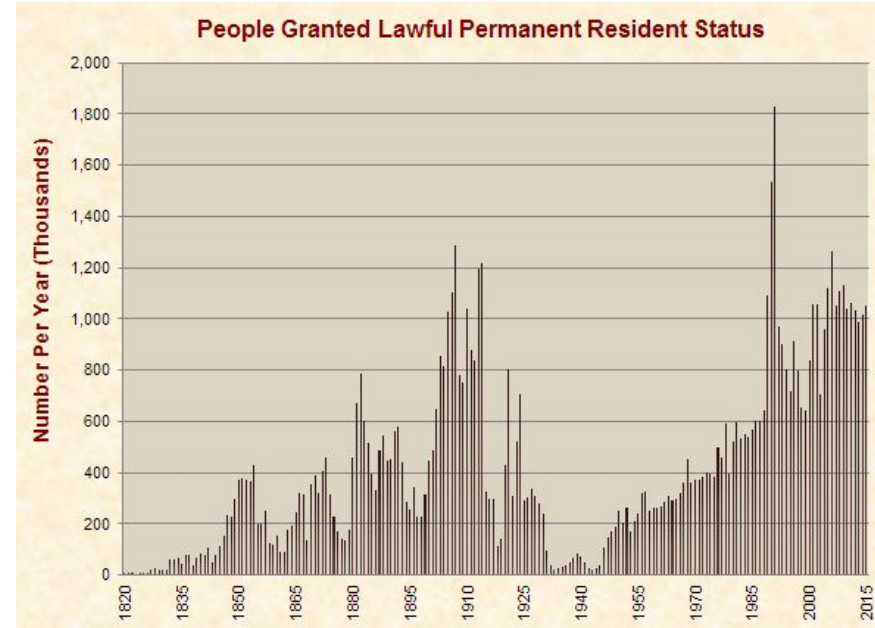
in order to help my reader understand the actual vs. perceived economic effect of immigrants

Significance

Great Depression during a time of nativism

- Large immigrant flux in mid-1800s, 1920s
- Immigration Act of 1924 (1929)
- Mexican Repatriation (1929-1936)
- Watsonville Riots (1930)

Chart source: <https://www.justfacts.com/immigration.asp>



Significance

Great Recession during a time of unrest

- Large rise in immigrant population in 1990-2010
- War on Terror (2001-)
- Mass deportations (1993-2011)
- 156 immigration-related laws in 2012
- Anti-immigrant legislation biased towards Latino populations

Undocumented immigrant apprehensions¹

By top 10 countries of citizenship, FY 2017:

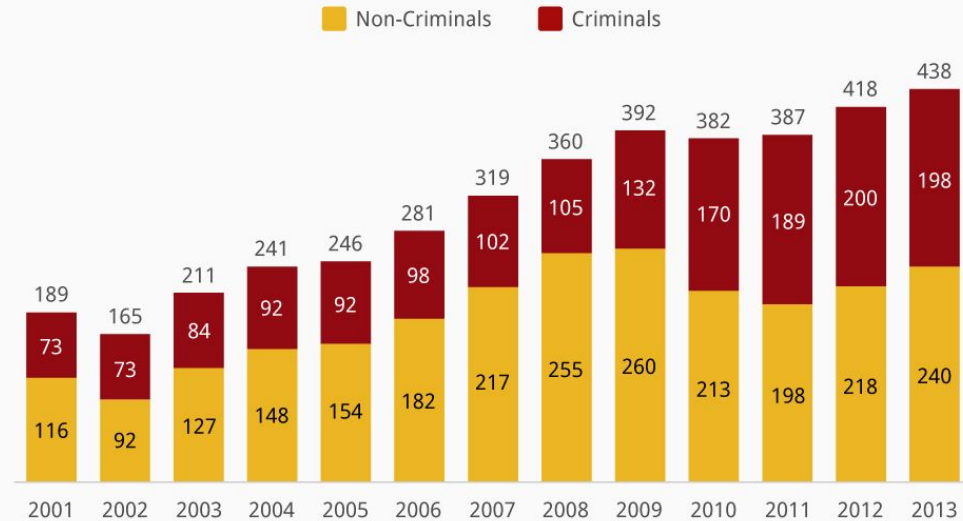


1 — Apprehensions are the physical control or temporary detainment of a person who is not lawfully in the U.S. which may or may not result in an arrest.

SOURCE U.S. Customs and Border Protection
George Petras/USA TODAY

Deportations From The U.S. Reached a Record High in 2013

Number of deportations by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (in thousands)



Sources: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2013

statista

Graphics sources:
(left) <https://www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/graphics/deportation-explainer/>
(right) <http://www.crfimmigrationed.org/featured-news>

Arguments against Immigration

- Threat to American culture (social)
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- Threat to American culture (social)
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- Threat to American jobs (economic)
 - Widespread belief
 - Undocumented immigrants are larger strain on government aid

Threat Rhetoric

“In light of the attack from the Invisible Enemy, as well as the need to protect the jobs of our GREAT American Citizens, I will be signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States!”

Conflation of immigrants with threats to U.S. citizens \Leftrightarrow not a racial bias

No real evidence but high support

Personal Insecurities

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Personal Insecurities

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- Increased fear of similarly-skilled immigrant groups during Recession
- With respect to negative attitudes on immigration:
 - **low correlation** with **actual immigration numbers**
 - **low correlation** with **actual economic instability** in the local region
 - **low correlation** with **actual personal financial position**
 - **high correlation** with **perception of personal financial position**

⇒ Negative attitudes not rooted in fact

Actual effects of immigrants on economy

In general:

- Over time
- Costs of enforcement of immigration laws (ICE budget)
- No large changes on natives' salary or unemployment levels

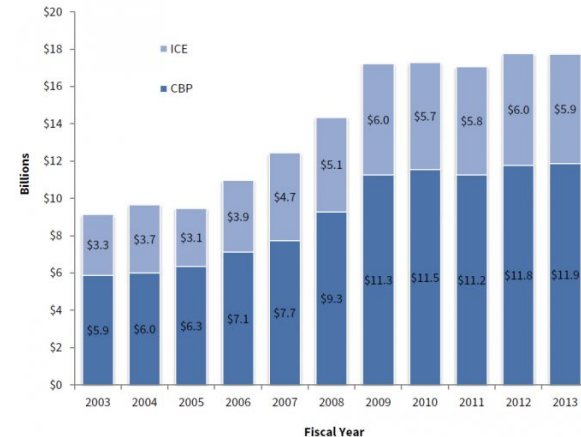


Image source: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/growth-us-deportation-machine>

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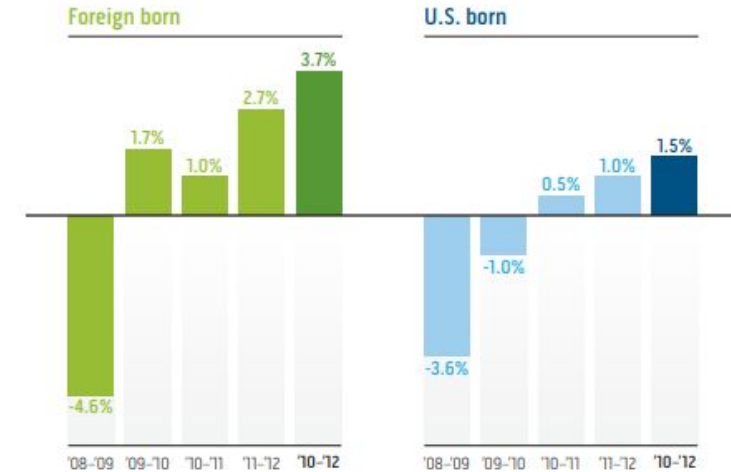
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Figure 2. Employment Changes for Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Workers, 16 Years Old and Over, 2007–2012



Source: Data for 2008 through 2011 are based on the Current Population Survey annual average from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Characteristics of Foreign-Born Workers." Data for 2012 are tabulations by the author based on Current Population Surveys, January 2012 to June 2012.

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 - a. Allowed politicians to easily enable discriminatory and sometimes illegal behavior.
2. Anti-immigrant sentiment not heavily rooted by fact
3. Immigrants may be more sensitive to economic changes, but:
 - a. They don’t contribute heavily to “taking American jobs,” instead they get hardest hit
 - b. Recover quickly from the Recession
 - c. Provide greater long-term stability

“all previous crises of the 1900s, including the Great Depression ... affected migration in different ways and spurred resentment of foreigners and xenophobic actions”

GMG and UNESCO, 2009

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