Influencing Immigration Reform in the United States

“Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.” This quote by Franklin D. Roosevelt is one of the most significant reasons why I decided to focus my honors thesis paper on the issue of immigration reform. As he states all of us are descended from immigrants and revolutionist; however with the lack of immigration policies it seems that the government has forgotten where it comes from. As a result the intended research question for this honors thesis is the following: “What factors influence support for immigration reform?” For the purposes of this paper immigration reform refers to support thereof. Immigration reform is an important matter because it affects every single aspect of today’s society. The creation of an immigration reform could impact the U.S economy in unprecedented ways. Such reform could allow for the U.S to be able to bring more skilled workers into the workforce and thus bettering not only the economy but the United States’ position on the globalization scale. Immigration also affects individuals traveling to this country while attempting to escape the hardships and brutalities of their own countries. Immigration is what makes this country so rich and diverse, in knowing what factors influence immigration reform one could also be on a path to bettering the nation, and to help the countless lives, and families who are being separated on a daily basis due to unjust deportations.

The proposed research question alludes to factors that influence immigration reform. In order to fully comprehend how these factors change over time and what significance they play on today’s society the research question will be analyzed during two different time periods. The first period ranges to the years prior to the 2008 election in which Barack Obama became President. The second time period will then focus on the years after President Obama took office. The two time periods are vital since President Obama has been especially active in the push for immigration reform and in doing so he has passed a series of executive actions that grant deferred action to individuals who were brought to the United States illegally as children, as well as parents of lawful residents and citizens. By testing the research question in two different time periods I hope to see what role President Obama played in the factors that influenced support for immigration reform, and if at all these kind of policies affect the way U.S society thinks.

In order to test the research question a quantitative analysis will be conducted. A literature review will then yield the factors that influence support for immigration reform as well as different theories that explain why someone might not support immigration reform. The factors that will presented range from economic to sociodemographic factors including the significance of crime levels. From these factors the variables I hope to test are age, gender, and economic status among others, using the NES2008 and ANES2012 data set. By the end of this honors thesis I hope to be able to understand not only the factors that influence immigration reform but how these change over time, and which are more important and relevant today.