

Miscellany28: Some of the Nonmonetary Costs of Immigration

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Commentary on recent news, reading and events of personal interest.

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The arguments in favor of immigration almost always center on the economic cost or benefit. Immigration to the US is very high – about one percent of the population, or about three million people per year – since immigration is profitable for the wealthy elite who control the US. The US economy is a “growth-based” economy, which means that a substantial portion of the income and wealth generated by the economy results from growth – either growth of the population or growth of the economy (level of production of goods and services).

Focusing on measurement of the economic costs and benefits of immigration is very misleading and shortsighted, because many of the important costs of immigration are nonmonetary. These costs include damage to the environment (both in the US and world-wide), weakening of US security and culture, degradation of the quality of life for the American middle class, and harm to US citizens. In this brief article, I will address a few of these nonmonetary costs of immigration.

Immigration destroys US natural land. On average, every immigrant to the United States causes the destruction of one acre of natural land. This land is destroyed in order to make room for homes, roads, buildings, schools, stores, hospitals, and all of the other infrastructure that US residents use. In 1950, the US population was about 150 million. Today (2006), the US population is about 300 million. Since the US birth rate dropped to replacement level by 1972, most of the population increase since 1950 has been the result of immigration or births to immigrants. Because of immigration, 150 million acres of natural land has been destroyed in the US since 1950. Every year, the US population increases by about three million (because of immigrants since 1950 or their progeny). This means that immigration to the US is causing the destruction of about three million acres of natural land every year.

Immigrants murder many US residents. The murder rate in the United States is about six per 100,000 per year. The number is about 20,000 per year. About half of the murders each year are caused by immigrants since 1950 and their progeny. This means that about 10,000 US residents are killed each year by immigrants since 1950 and their offspring. If the murder rate is the same for illegal immigrants as the general population – and it is reasonable to believe that it is not any less, since these people are in fact criminals – then the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants in the US kill about 660 US residents each year.

It is an unavoidable aspect of human life that murders occur. When they occur at the hands of a fellow countryman, that is bad enough. But when they occur at the hands of an illegal alien who is allowed to stay in our country because our government – the government of the most powerful nation on earth – does not have the will to keep them out, that is an entirely different matter. Ask any mother whose child has been murdered by an illegal alien what she thinks of

the US government position on immigration. By failing to act to repel the alien invasion, President Bush has willfully chosen to break his oath of office to uphold the US Constitution – which explicitly requires the President to defend the country from invasion. By his actions, he – along with any other government official who has taken an oath to uphold the Constitution – is guilty of gross dereliction of duty and high treason. Ask any mother whose child has been murdered by an illegal alien what she thinks should be done to traitors whose actions have led directly to the death of her child. By its policy of allowing 11 million illegal aliens to remain in this country, the US government has committed itself to a policy of slaughter of 1,430 US residents per year. All done for money.

Immigrants kill many US residents through automobile accidents. The death rate from automobile accidents is about 42,000 per year, or about 14 per 100,000 per year. If we assume that half of these accidents involve someone other than the driver of the car causing the accident (e.g., pedestrians, passengers, or occupants of other vehicles), then the rate at which “other people” are killed by drivers is about 7 per 100,000. Let us assume once again that immigrants have about the same accident rate as all residents – a really “optimistic” assumption, in view of the sorry drunk-driving record of Mexican immigrants! This means that immigrants since 1950 and their offspring kill about 21,000 US residents per year, by means of automobile accidents. This year’s crop of immigrants (three million people) will kill about 210 US residents via automobile accidents, and the 11 million illegal immigrants already in the country will kill about 770 people in this way. This is not counting at all the number of people who are injured from automobile accidents, some of them very seriously (e.g., spinal-cord injuries).

In the preceding, I have tallied the cost of immigration attributed just to murder and automobile deaths caused by immigrants. In addition, there are countless other crimes perpetrated against US residents by immigrants, such as rape, robbery, assault, identity theft, fraud and arson. America’s policies of mass immigration, open borders and massive international free trade have caused a dramatic decline in personal safety and security. When I was a child, we rarely locked our house or car, and children could safely walk downtown to the theater, library, park, or almost anywhere else. Vagrancy was nonexistent in the places I lived as a child – “no loitering” signs were posted, enforced, and obeyed. All of that is gone, and mainly because of mass immigration, through the overcrowding and disintegration of American culture that it has caused.

Immigration has destroyed the quality of life for the US middle class. In 1950, when I was a boy, the quality of life was much better for the US middle class than it is now. Then, a man of average means could afford to raise a family, purchase a home and car, and his wife did not have to enter the competitive labor market. Most Americans lived in cities or towns with population under 50,000, and commute times were low. Many families, such as mine, could afford to own a nearby vacation home on a lake, the mountains, the seashore, or a farm. Today, in 2006, all of this has changed. The country’s population has doubled from 150 million in 1950 to 300 million in 2006, and overcrowding is severe. Automobile traffic is horrendous, and commute times are high. Because of massive international free trade, US workers must now compete with workers in poor countries who earn very little. It is now difficult for a young US couple to own a home, unless both work in the competitive labor market. It is difficult for a US worker of average means to own a “country home” now, not only because the increase in demand caused by the country’s massive population increase has caused the price to soar, but also because nice nearby places (e.g., lakes close to towns) are now occupied – or destroyed from pollution, overcrowding or urban sprawl. Having a nice second home is now a luxury reserved for the well-to-do. When I was young, you could visit and camp in a state park or national forest at any time. Now, it is necessary to reserve a place a year in advance. There

was lots of “open space,” such as at the seashore or in the mountains, where you could camp at will. Every year, because of increasing overcrowding from immigration – and increased competition from massive international free trade – the quality of life diminishes for the US middle class.

(The environmental and social destruction that is happening in the US because of population growth is happening worldwide. When I was a boy in elementary school in Canada, I can still recall my teacher, Miss Foster / Mrs. Wallace, telling us about the horrific crowding in India, which at that time had the incredible population of 400 million. At that time (1950), Canada’s population was about 14 million; now it is 33 million. The population of the US has now doubled from 150 million in 1950 to 300 million today, and is on its way to 400 million. India’s population is now 1.1 billion. The number of people living in abject poverty and misery around the world has exploded. As the population explosion continues, the availability of living space and resources, such as water, will continue to diminish, as will the quality of life for Earth’s inhabitants.)

Immigration to the US dramatically increases global pollution. In general, immigration to the US is from much poorer countries. When an immigrant moves to the US, he uses up to ten times as much commercial energy as he did in his home country. Through this increased use of energy, the new immigrant generates much more pollution than he did before, and causes much more damage to planetary resources, such as the Amazon rain forest. In short, immigration to the US causes global pollution to increase substantially over what it would otherwise be. If the US had maintained its 1950 population of 150 million, it would now be producing half the waste and pollution that it does today.

It is important to recognize that all of the preceding costs – murders of US residents, automobile deaths caused to US residents, and destruction of natural land – are associated with immigration of either kind – legal or illegal. It is simply the increase in population that is causing this death and destruction, not whether it is “legal” or “illegal.”

Let’s just look at the cost of “illegal” immigration. Since much of the political discussion centers on “illegal” immigration, let’s just summarize the death and destruction to be caused this year alone by that segment of the immigration population. This year, the 11 million illegal immigrants in the US will murder about 660 US residents and cause the deaths of 770 US residents by automobile accidents. In addition, their presence in the US will cause or has already caused the permanent destruction of 11 million acres of US natural land. Finally, they will consume about 88 billion kilograms-of-oil-equivalent (about 8,000 kgoe per person) more energy while in the US – this year alone – than if they had remained in their home countries.

Round up illegal aliens? Why bother? It is not only impractical, but unnecessary. The July 9, 2006, issue of the *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* presented an article by State Representative James E. Clyburn on the issue of illegal immigration. At one point, Mr. Clyburn states, “Common sense tells us that it will be impossible to round up and deport the millions of undocumented workers currently living in the United States. Those who have been allowed to remain in the country for years should be allowed to undertake a transition to legality or citizenship that is transparent.”

What utter foolishness! If the US were the least bit interested in removing the illegal aliens, it could do so within a few weeks. All it has to do is make illegal immigration a capital crime, and hang an illegal alien each day. Within weeks, most illegal aliens would have fled the US, and “deported” themselves. There is no need to “round up” anyone.

If this were done, then all of the deaths caused by illegal immigrants could be avoided. This would mean the saving of about 1,430 lives of US residents this year, at the “cost” of at most a few dozen lives from hanging of illegal immigrants – criminal invaders of our country.

Will any effective action such as this be taken to solve the illegal immigration problem? Of course not. The US government does not want to take any action against illegal immigrants, because they generate income and wealth for the wealthy elite who own the country. They are not at all against the death and environmental destruction caused by immigration. They are not at all against the destruction of US culture or quality of life by mass immigration. They are not at all against the loss of planetary diversity being caused by mass immigration, mass species extinction, and gross intermingling of species. They do not distinguish between legal and illegal immigration, because both are lucrative. That is why the government is so interested in converting illegal immigrants into US citizens (“a path to citizenship”). In this way, the “embarrassing” problem of illegal immigration (why would any government allow its country to be invaded by aliens?) is “solved,” and the country does not forego any of the income and wealth generated by those immigrants. Even if the government were to deport all of the eleven million illegal immigrants, it would, over the next few years, simply allow the entry of eleven million more *legal* ones to take their place. The government’s population policy is a population growth of about one percent a year, and it does not care very much whether it is from legal or illegal immigration, or the high birth rate of recent immigrants. In fact, it has a slight bias in favor of illegal immigration, because it provides cheap labor the oligarchs who run the country, who must, because of massive international free trade, compete with foreign firms whose labor costs are a small fraction of ours.

Americans: Wake up! By its policies of mass immigration and massive international free trade, your government is destroying the environment and seriously degrading the quality of life for the US middle class. The 11 million illegal immigrants currently in the US will continue to murder or kill about 1400 US residents every year they remain here – whether they are given a “path to citizenship” and converted into US citizens or not! In refusing to repel the invasion of illegal aliens, your leaders are violating their oaths of office to uphold the US Constitution, and are guilty of malfeasance of office and high treason. The only way to stop the destruction of the environment and decline in quality of life caused by immigration is to stop immigration. Deporting all illegal aliens would also help.