

ABSTRACT

The problem of illegal immigration is one of the most pressing issues of USA's domestic politics today. The number of illegal immigrants currently present in the country is estimated to be around 11 million, and the inflow of new illegal immigrants seems unstoppable. Finding and applying the right solutions, however, seems to be highly problematic; this thesis will therefore try to analyze the reasons of such an impasse, and what could be expected in the discussion about this issue.

The thesis, aside from a necessary introduction to today's immigration system and demographic characteristics of illegal immigrants, also contains an illumination of the reasons why illegal immigration is criticized. It focuses on four areas of criticism – legal, economic, cultural and security-related, and shows that arguments in the discussion about all these aspects exist for both sides of the debate – one that sees illegal immigrants primarily as criminals and a burden for America, and also the one that tries to defend illegal immigrants, and stresses their right to be treated humanely.

The existence of two conflicting concepts pertaining to the approach to illegal immigrants in the USA is in this text further documented through the analysis of particular steps and measures proposed as the solutions for the issue of illegal immigration. The extreme conceptual solutions, mass deportation and legalization of illegal immigrants' status, seem politically unacceptable, and the rest of the solutions induce a lot of opposition as well.

The thesis concludes with finding out that because of the existence of various adverse views and interests related to illegal immigration, a breakthrough in the immigration debate or legislative activities can hardly be expected. The need for unusual coalitions and compromises and cynicism brought about by past attempts at a solution further complicate the situation.