



Weighing the Costs and Benefits of Mexican Immigration

Elena Polyanichko

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Seminar paper from the year 2010 in the subject American Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 2,3, University of Kassel, language: English, abstract: The topic of immigration is a thorny issue in the American society. Specifically, the issue of illegal immigration is a burning issue. A record 12.7 million immigrants lived in the United States in 2008, a 17-fold increase since 1970. Mexicans now account for about one third of all immigrants living in the United States, and more than half of them are unauthorized¹. Looking at these statistics it is agreeable that Mexicans are representing the most noticeable immigration group in the U.S. and compared to other minority groups are of most greatness to American society. By thinking of Mexican Americans today the most discussed question arises. Are they burden for the country or simply a source of cheap labor? In 2002 the book with intriguing name "The Death of the West" was published and immediately caused contradictory responses and recognition at the same time, connected to the burning issues published in this book. The book is written by the well known American politician Patrick J. Buchanan, the former main adviser of U.S. Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan and devoted to the analysis of hazards representing deadly threats to the existence of the western civilization. The mass immigration, caused by requirement of labor in the developed countries, is one of those hazards. According to the author the fact that an overwhelming part of the immigrants, coming to these countries, are representatives of other races, religions and cultures can change not only ethnic structure of the population, but also the historically developed shape of the West as a whole, its character and foundations. Mexicans, coming to the U.S., in many cases illegally, represent that mass immigration and because of their high number, raise some doubts in American society, whether they are useful or rather harmful. In this paper I will compare two controversial issues regarding Mexican immigration group. On the one side I will consider Mexicans as a threat to the United States, on the other side I will count them as an important source of labor, and therefore try to understand their role and current social status in American society today. I will also take a closer look at the historical backgrounds and general facts forcing them to leave their homeland.

[...]

¹ Pew Hispanic Center „Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 2008“, p. 1
<http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/47.pdf>,

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