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Immigration

My grandfather on my dad's side, Alex Mitrovich, or "Jedo" as I call him, was born in Yugoslavia. Like many people in poor countries, Alex yearned for a better life. Determined to fulfil his dream, he decided to immigrate to the United States during the early 1930s. He began this journey by first moving to Mexico, working as a dishwasher for two long years. In the meantime, he contacted his uncle in San Diego, California, and they arranged a way for him to move to the United States. My great-great uncle would be Jedo's sponsor.

In 2014, there were 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States. This accounts for 3.5% of the nation's population. Although this number is down from the peak of 12 million in 2007, the questions have been raised as to why so many people immigrate to America, what the process is like, and why so many people come to the United States illegally.

There are many ways people can immigrate to the United States legally. These methods include; family based immigration, employment based immigration, refugee immigration, diversity visas, humanitarian relief, and US citizenship. Visas are only allowed for an allotted amount of time, while citizenship is life-long. For each method, there is a set number of visas or citizenships allowed per year. This essentially limits legal immigration to an exact number that the government has previously set. The three main ways, however, that immigrants come to America legally is through the family

sponsors, employer sponsors, and diversity visas. Family sponsors works like so; if you are a minor child or spouse of a U.S citizen, you can get a visa fairly easily. Employer sponsors are what they sound like; a person is sponsored by an employer in America to essentially work for their visa. Lastly, the U.S. gives out 50,000 diversity visas per year to different countries in an effort to keep the United States diverse.

Another dimension with the issue of immigration pertains to family relations. In 2012, 7% of students in Kindergarten through 12th grade had at least one illegal parent. When an undocumented citizen has a child born in the U.S, the child is automatically a U.S citizen. Now, these partially illegal families are eligible for things like food stamps and “WIC”, women, infants, children. Most of these programs are for low income families, which is common among illegal immigrants because they often do not have high paying jobs. Having a child that is a citizen and parents that are not complicates the situation. Deporting the illegal parents would be splitting a family up, and we cannot deport the whole family because the child is a U.S. citizen. This is one of the reasons why people have the misconception of all illegal immigrants qualifying for U.S programs like those listed above.

Because the amount of green cards given are limited, immigrants that miss the mark for the year do not want to have to wait and go through the process again the next year. Annually, 675,000 is the limit for total legal immigration to America. In response to the family visas, most illegals do not have family members in the United States, and if they do, they could possibly have to wait 4-8 years to get a visa. This sad reality begins to shed light as to why people choose to come to America illegally, rather than go through the slow, tedious process.

Personally, I believe the problem with people coming to America is not that they are immigrating. I find the problem with the people that come to America illegally. From the outside, it seems silly; why would people risk their lives to come live here illegally, when they could go through a process and not break any laws? As I did my research however, I finally realized the flaws in the system, why it is always talked about it in presidential debates, and why the number of illegal immigrants to our country is so high. It currently costs approximately \$325 to simply apply for and get an issued visa. If someone wants full citizenship, that cost can increase to approximately \$10,000. Although this is just a piece of the puzzle, I believe cost is one of the hardships for immigrants. Like stated earlier, immigrants generally do not have high paying jobs, and are often trying to come to America to make a better life for themselves and their families. If this is true, it is almost impossible to pay these fees. I believe these fees should be lowered, because cost should not be a deciding factor on whether someone will come to America legally or illegally.

I also find time to be a large factor in the issues with illegal immigration. Although there are some visas that only take a day or two to be issued, most take months or years, sometimes even up to 10 years, to be fulfilled. With this long of a potential wait, the legal immigration process seems impossible. Although it would always be best in the long run to complete the legal process, desperate times call for desperate measures, and in the moment, I believe time plays a large part in the decision being made.

Immigration is a part of American life seen everyday, that is in no way going to stop any time soon. There will always be the argument of how to fix, change, or end

illegal immigration, and there are many theories, most of which are currently floating around the 2016 presidential campaign. However, the bottom line is that people strive to live in our country so much that they will break laws to get here. Instead of pushing them away, which will only lead to more illegal immigration, we should reform the process and embrace those who truly want to better their lives in America.