Border Visions and Immigration Reform

ENDNOTES
3 The Senate bill considers high-risk border sectors as those “where apprehensions are above 50,000 individuals per year.”
4 Of the nine Border Patrol sectors along the 1,954 mile U.S.-Mexico border, three are considered high-risk based on fiscal year 2012 data: Tucson (112,033 apprehensions); Rio Grande Valley (59,763), and Laredo (84,932). In 2011 Tucson had an effectiveness rate of 88.8 percent, Rio Grande Valley had an effectiveness rate of 70.8 percent, and Laredo had an effectiveness rate of 84 percent. Illegal entry data will include only the immigrants detected by Border Patrol, and not those who cross without notice. Sue Jan Urdinola, “The Immigration Bill’s Security Vision Pill,” Mother’s voice, April 27, 2013, at www.mothersvoice.com/immigration-irel/pdf/immigration-security개요문들보기.
5 Doris Meissner, Donald M. Kerwin, Muzaffar Chishti, and Claire Bergeron, The Senate bill considers high-risk border sectors as those “where apprehensions are above 50,000 individuals per year.”
10 Exceptions here are for children who entered the U.S. as children (DREAMers) and people granted agricultural-card status.

THE MISSION OF THE JESUIT SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Jesuit Social Research Institute works to transform the Gulf South through action research, analysis, education, and advocacy on the core issues of poverty, race, and migration. The Institute is a collaboration of Loyola University New Orleans and the Society of Jesus rooted in the faith that does justice.

A major criticism leveled against recent newcomers to the United States is that they are “takers” creating an economic drain on the nation. Not only are they takers, critics lament, but also categorically “illegals,” echoing past racist associations of criminality with African-Americans and many other people of color.

Those criticisms of newcomers are old in U.S. history. Various strains of economic utilitarianism and racism have reared their ugly heads throughout U.S. history to render the latest newcomer less than human and unworthy of citizenship.

Recognizing those historical parallels in the current immigration debate is critical for two reasons: so we do not repeat the conflicts that have pitted Americans against one another in the past and so we achieve a truly common good today.

In the 2013 debate over immigration reform, critics have focused on the economic burden of new immigrants to the near exclusion of the benefits they provide to society. The Heritage Foundation released a report on May 6, 2013, “The Fiscal Cost of Unlawful Immigrants and Amnesty to the U.S. Taxpayer,” that epitomizes this spurious argument.

The Heritage Foundation report contends that immigrants always will be dependent on government supports. The “bottom line” of the Heritage Foundation’s study “Even if all the children of unlawful immigrants graduated from college, they would be hard-pressed to pay back $56.3 trillion in costs over their lifetime.” In other words, so-called “unlawful immigrants” over the next fifty years will only be an economic burden on the nation with no hope for becoming an economic benefit.

The American Conservative Union, the libertarian Cato Institute, and the progressive Applied Research Center immediately criticized the method and content of the Heritage Foundation study. A major flaw of the Heritage Foundation study is that the economic benefit immigrants bring is well beyond how much any household receives in benefits and how much it pays in taxes. Numerous longitudinal studies examining the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) demonstrate that not only does

—Continued on page 2
In Praise of Newcomers

No group of newcomers has ever created any kind of loss for American society. Every group has contributed to the growth and development of society in many ways that go well beyond cost-benefit analysis. Our most successful newcomers have contributed to the defense of the nation, helped build their local communities, and cared for their children so that future generations would enjoy levels of education, health care, and a quality of life that previous generations could only imagine. We ought to praise newcomers and welcome their wisdom, cultures, and ways of life.

More important, perhaps, every group has taught us about our common vulnerability, our common need for one another, and the interdependence of the human family. When we recognize our common humanity in newcomers, there is possibility. Recognizing our common humanity, we may envision new possibilities of who we may become in hope and solidarity as the people of God.

ENDNOTES


3 See the inclusion of exhibits at the Immigration Policy Center website available online at: www.immigrationpolicy.org/ about/immigration- policies/immigration-costs/benefit-cost-benefit-program.

4 Full text by Matthew Viskanta in The Atlantic (February 4, 2013) available online at: http://www.theatlantic.com/ politics/archive/2013/02/war-on-welfare-69124/3

5 Letter to Peter Collinson, May 9, 1753, Benjamin Franklin Papers (Yale Manuscript and Print Collections, University of Pennsylvania).


Unemployment and a Worse

It is bad enough when millions of people are unemployed, but, even, or underutilized. Reducing unemployment benefits to the longest unemployed, cutting food aid, reducing health coverage, and throwing away jobs, however, vividly embodies the old adage about “kicking a person when he is down.”

ENDNOTES


2 Heidi Shierholz, 275,000 jobs a month won’t make up the 6.6 million lost in 2007. Working Economics Blog, Economic Policy Institute, May 1, 2013.

3 Ibid., No. 32, emphasis in original.

4 Pope Francis, Address to the New Non Resident Ambassadors to the Holy See, Regina Apostolorum, June 6, 2013.


7 Ibid.

8 Chad Stone, SNAP Cuts Would Hurt Millions. A 38,000 new jobs in Kentucky, 13,600 new jobs in Louisiana, 23,000 to 300,000 new jobs in Texas.

employment opportunity, education, job opportunity, diverse, blue or white collar job, or any other factor. In other words, the first thing employers look at is how long you’ve been out of work, and that’s the only thing they look at if it’s been six months or longer.”

Cutting SNAP Food Benefits

SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly food stamps) truly is the nation’s last “safety net,” providing food to people whose incomes are below certain levels and providing nutrition assistance at levels depending on income and family size. The majority in the U.S. House of Representatives continues to try to cut SNAP benefits, now arguing that the program is “broken” and must be “reformed” because the SNAP budget has continued to rise even after 2009 when “official” unemployment started its slow decline. But, as defenders say quite accurately, SNAP is doing precisely what it was designed to do, which is to meet basic food needs of a population that continues to suffer “unusually high unemployment, reduced incomes and other adverse circumstances.”

Throwing Away Jobs

Our Gulf South governors and legislatures, with very high levels of unemployment, underemployed, and underutilized workers, this year are adding the most short-sighted and cynical burden to their states’ most needy workers by refusing the expansion of Medicaid offered under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Because of their opposition to “Obamacare,” they are resisting the enormous federal infusion of health coverage provided under PPACA and, in so doing, they are doing nothing, just not health coverage for hundreds of thousands of citizens, but a great opportunity to improve the jobs picture in their states.

In the Gulf South states, some estimates for jobs creation under PPACA include approximately 9,000 new jobs in Mississippi, 15,600 new jobs in Louisiana, 231,000 to 300,000 new jobs in Texas. 

In contrast, the immigration law of 1924 concerned “colored races” as having “no country of origin.” They were outside the concept of nationality and, therefore, citizenship. They were not even bona fide citizens. They were not even bona fide concept of nationality and, therefore, “1924 conceived “colored races” as having economic ascendancy. Germans would overrun the English colony of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin infamously derided them as “swarthy” and as “the most ignorant stupid sort of their own nation.”

Germans, however, became one of the largest immigrant groups in the nation, disproving Franklin’s view. That they became “white” in the U.S. racial hierarchy is not insignificant reason for their social and economic ascendancy. So, for example, when the U.S. recodified racial hierarchy into national immigration law in 1924, Europeans, including Germans, were assigned the highest quota to increase their numbers and national homogeneity. The question of who would gain the rights and dignity of citizenship has always been tied up with the internal border of whiteness.

As Noel Ignatiev explains in How the Irish Became White, when the newly arrived Irish were considered a threat to American society, they were told that they and blacks “need not apply.” The Irish learned that by joining in anti-black racism they could become white and gain economic ascendancy. As Noel Ignatiev explains in How the Irish Became White, when the newly arrived Irish were considered a threat to American society, they were told that they and blacks “need not apply.” The Irish learned that by joining in anti-black racism they could become white and gain economic ascendancy.
Where are the Jobs? Continuing

BY FRED KAMMER, S.J.

The stock market is soaring to set new records. CEOs are taking home bundles of cash, stock options, and rich severance packages. Wall Street is handing out million dollar bonuses again. Congress and state legislators seem to find no tax cut unpalatable. And big tech firms like Apple acquire smaller ones like Tumbler for a billion dollars. What is the matter with this wacky picture? Unemployment.

The "official" unemployment rate for April 2013 was 7.5 percent, representing 11.7 million persons, of whom 4.8 million have been unemployed for at least six months. This does not include people who simply have given up looking for work or those working part-time who want to work full-time. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) puts the total of "labor underutilization" at 14.3 percent, almost double the official unemployment rate.

We can understand the different kinds of "unemployment" by looking more closely at the double the official unemployment rate. Any jobless person available for work who actively sought work in the past four weeks is other than their belief about availability of jobs for them, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers.

Involuntary part-time workers: Persons working less than 35-hours a week who want full-time employment but gave an economic reason for working part-time (hours cut back or unable to find a full-time job), as a percent of the civilian labor force plus marginally attached workers.

The table below reflects the cumulative effect of these four categories of workers in each locale. BLS notes that these measures of labor underutilization move together over time and across business cycles so that states with high official unemployment rates tend to have high rates of underemployed and underutilized workers, as well. Workers of color, of course, have higher rates of labor underutilization than white workers.

The Economic Policy Institute reports that, since late 2010, the U.S. economy has been adding an average of only about 150,000 jobs per month and that, at that rate, we will not get back to the pre-recession labor market health until early 2020. In other words, at the current growth rate, the labor market will not be healed whole again before the end of the decade. For tens of millions of workers, this is too long to wait.

For those guided by the principles of human dignity, justice, and the common good, the current situation demands that we “prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone.” The refusal of our elected leaders to make this priority a reality—by stimulus spending, job training and retraining, and basic incomes for the unemployed—constitutes a criminal and moral judgment.

Marginally attached workers: Includes discouraged workers whose reason for not seeking work in the past four weeks is other than their belief about availability of jobs for them, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus marginally attached workers.

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Border Visions and Immigration Reform

BY SUE WEISHAR, PH.D.

“...we picture a border where virtually all migration is legal, not because the United States and Mexico cede their authority to regulate admissions, but because immigration laws align with the labor, family, development and protection needs of residents, visitors, and passers-through.”

—From The New Ellis Island

Migration theologian Fr. Daniel Groody suggests that the U.S.-Mexico border is more than an imaginary dividing line between two countries. Rather, a complex history and conflicting prerogatives have resulted in a border between “national security and human insecurity, sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law, and citizenship and discipleship.”

Groody suggests that the U.S.-Mexico border is more than an imaginary dividing line between two countries. Rather, a complex history and conflicting prerogatives have resulted in a border between “national security and human insecurity, sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law, and citizenship and discipleship.”

The eloquent testimony of a border-crosser identified as Ignacio, interviewed by Miguel De La Torre in 2008, illustrates how the intertwine of natural law, human insecurity, and the struggle for basic human rights compel migrants to risk their lives for an uncertain future in the United States:

“...It's enough to drive you mad. If you leave your family—your wife, your children—to come here, and of course, fear of having to cross the desert again. That is the hardest thing about being here for three years, they were right...I simply could not provide the basic necessities for my children. I had to cross for their sake...”

The goal of the Comprehensive Southern Border Security Strategy is to achieve and maintain “effective control” of high-risk sectors of the border. Effective control of high-risk sectors is defined as: persistent surveillance and 100% “effectiveness rate” of 90 percent (measured by adding apprehensions and turnbacks in a sector divided by total number of known illegal entries). The $4.6 billion allocated to meet border security goals will be spent on additional mobile, video, and agent portable surveillance systems, Department of Defense border radar equipment, and the deployment of 160 unmanned aircraft systems, including crew and personnel. The $8 billion S. 744 allocates to achieve its border fencing goals will be used to double the length of fencing along the southern border from 350 miles to at least 700 miles. The bill also allocates additional funding to criminally prosecute and incarcerate people crossing the border and increase coordination with state and local law enforcement agencies along the Southwest border. Additionally, S. 744 authorizes the deployment of the National Guard to the southern border to construct fencing and checkpoints and to increase ground-based mobile surveillance systems, among other tasks.

This massive increase in border security funding is being considered despite the following facts:

- The U.S. government currently spends more funding on border enforcement than on all other major criminal law and enforcement agencies combined.
- Prior high-tech initiatives to secure the border, such as the Secure Border Initiative (SBP), have proven costly and ineffective.
- The border has never been more secure, with apprehensions hovering at a 40-year low.
- Just under half of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. never even walked across a border, they arrived by plane and overstayed their visas.

Furthermore, net migration from Mexico—the largest sending country for undocumented migration—is at net zero for several reasons, including those that have little do with U.S. border policies. Would-be migrants have been discouraged by the lack of jobs in the U.S. since the onset of the Great Recession and the dangers posed by drug cartels that have taken hold in northern Mexico. A drop in the Mexican birth rate from 6.8 children per woman in 1970 to about two children per woman today has led to a decreased migrant pool. Increased economic and educational opportunities have created a more hopeful future for Mexico's citizens—since 2000 per capita gross domestic product and family income in Mexico has jumped nearly 45 percent.

Nevertheless, the obsession with border security in S. 744 is so pervasive that the path to citizenship the bill holds out for millions of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. is tied to two “triggers” having to do with border enforcement and fencing. Applications for Registered Provisional Immigrant status (RPI) cannot begin until the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has submitted and certified to Congress the strategies for border enforcement and fencing. DHS has six months to submit such plans after the bill becomes law. RPI individuals cannot be granted legal permanent resident status until ten years after enactment and DHS certifies that the border security plan is substantially operational and the fencing plan is substantially operational, too. An initial employment verification system for all U.S. employees must also be implemented, an electronic exit system at air and sea ports must be operational, and no fewer than 38,405 border patrol agents must be deployed along the southern border.

The eloquent testimony of a border-crosser identified as Ignacio, interviewed by Miguel De La Torre in 2008, illustrates how the intertwine of natural law, human insecurity, and the struggle for basic human rights compel migrants to risk their lives for an uncertain future in the United States:

“We risk death for the families left behind. Would you not cross a hundred deserts to feed your child? It may be crazy to cross, but we are not crazy, we are desperate. Even though I am a believer and put my trust in God, I still despise... simply could not provide the basic necessities for my children. I had to cross for their sake...”

However, the bill also contains a provision that would allow undocumented immigrants to work in the United States without legal status. The bill would establish a pathway to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S., but only if they meet certain requirements, including paying back taxes, passing a background check, and paying a $4,700 fine. The bill would also establish a pathway to citizenship for children who were brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents and have lived here for at least five years.

The bill also contains provisions to help undocumented immigrants obtain legal status and become citizens. The bill would allow undocumented immigrants to apply for legal status if they have been in the U.S. for at least five years and meet other requirements. The bill would also allow undocumented immigrants to apply for citizenship if they have lived in the U.S. for at least 10 years and meet other requirements.

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Border Visions and Immigration Reform

BY SUE WEISHAR, PH.D.

It’s enough to drive you mad.2

It is crazy to cross the desert by foot. It is more than an imaginary dividing line between two countries. Rather, a complex history and conflicting preconditions have resulted in a border between “national security and human insecurity, sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law, and citizenship and discipleship.”1

The eloquent testimony of a border-crosser identified as Ignacio, interviewed by Miguel De La Torre in 2008, illustrates how the interplay of natural law, human insecurity, and the struggle for basic human rights compel migrants to risk their lives for an uncertain future in the United States: “It is crazy to cross the desert by foot. It is miserable. If the extreme heat and lack of food and water don’t kill you, accidents, make bitex, or crooked coyotes set on robbing you of your life’s possessions will. We risk death not because we want to, or because we are foolishly,

Migration theologian Fr. Daniel Groody suggests that the U.S.-Mexico border is more than an imaginary dividing line between two countries. Rather, a complex history and conflicting preconditions have resulted in a border between “national security and human insecurity, sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law, and citizenship and discipleship.”1

We risk death for the families left behind. Would you not cross a hundred desserts to feed your child? It may be crazy to cross, but we are not crazy, we are desperate. Even though I am a believer and put my trust in God, I still desperately... simply could not provide the basic necessities for my children. I had to cross for their sake... At the safe house... They told us how we would be treated... as if we were either invisible or invisible. At first I didn’t believe them, but after being here for three years, they were right... I live in fear, fear of being caught, fear of being returned, and of course, fear of having to cross the desert again. That is the hardest thing about this... not being able to hug my children, knowing they will grow up not knowing who I am. It’s enough to drive you mad.2

Although it is widely recognized that migrants cross without authorization into the United States to escape poverty and to build a better life for their families, that basic reality is rarely considered by political leaders when addressing our nation’s immigration crisis. This lack of vision afflicts the legislation now being considered in Congress.

Instead of addressing the root causes of migration, the comprehensive immigration reform bill that was voted out of the U.S. Senate on June 27, 2013, authorizes the deployment of the National Guard to the southern border to construct an astronomical amount of resources, $46 billion, to further fortifying our country’s border with Mexico. Of this amount, $4.6 billion is dedicated to implementing a Comprehensive Southern Border Security Strategy, $8 billion for a Southern Border Fencing Strategy, and $30 billion to hire and deploy an additional 19,200 U.S. Border Patrol agents—resulting in an almost doubling of the current number of agents to 38,405.

The goal of the Comprehensive Southern Border Security Strategy is to achieve and maintain “effective control” of high-risk sectors of the border.3 Effective control of high risk sectors is defined as a) persistent surveillance and b) an “effectiveness rate” of 90 percent (measured by adding apprehensions and turn backs in a sector divided by total number of known illegal entries). The $4.6 billion allocated to meet border security goals will be spent on additional mobile, video, and agent portable surveillance systems, Department of Defense border radar equipment, and the deployment of 160 unmanned aircraft systems, including crew and personnel.4 The $8 billion S. 744 allocates to achieve its border fencing goals will be used to double the length of fencing along the southern border from 350 miles to at least 700 miles. The bill also allocates additional funding to criminally prosecute and incarcerate people crossing the border and increase coordination with state and local law enforcement agencies along the Southwest border. Additionally, S. 744 authorizes the deployment of the National Guard to the southern border to construct fencing and checkpoints and to increase ground-based mobile surveillance systems, among other tasks.

This massive increase in border security funding is being considered despite the following facts:

- The U.S. government currently spends more funding on border enforcement than on all other major criminal law enforcement agencies combined.5
- Prior high-tech initiatives to secure the border, such as the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), have proven costly and ineffective.6
- The border has never been more secure, with apprehensions hovering at a 40-year low.7
- Just under half of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. never even walked across a border, they arrived by plane and overstayed their visa.8

Furthermore, net migration from Mexico—the largest sending country for undocumented migration— is at net zero for several reasons, including those that have little do with U.S. border policies. Would-be migrants have been discouraged by the lack of jobs in the U.S. since the onset of the Great Recession and the dangers posed by drug cartels that have taken hold in northern Mexico. A drop in the Mexican birth rate from 6.9 children per woman in 1970 to about two children per woman today has led to a decreased migrant pool. Increased economic and educational opportunities have created a more hopeful future for Mexico’s citizens—since 2000 per capita gross domestic product and family income in Mexico has jumped nearly 45 percent.9

Nevertheless, the obsession with border security in S. 744 is so pervasive that the path to citizenship the bill holds out for millions of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. is tied to two triggers—having to do with border enforcement and fencing. Applications for Registered Provisional Immigrant status (RPI) cannot begin until the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has submitted and certified to Congress the strategies for border enforcement and fencing. DHS has six months to submit such plans after the bill becomes law. RPI individuals cannot be granted legal permanent resident status until ten years after enactment and DHS certifies that the border security plan is substantially operational and the fencing plan is substantially operational, too. By a revolutionary employment verification system for all U.S. employees must also be implemented, an electronic exit system at air and sea ports must be operational, and no fewer than 38,405 border patrol agents must be deployed along the southern border.

Despite all these shortcomings, the hope is that provisions in S. 744 having to do with future immigrant visas will finally begin to align our nation’s clear need for immigrant labor with a legal immigration system to accommodate that need. The bill also addresses concerns about abusive practices of border patrol agents long based by requiring DHS border personnel to be trained on the human and civil rights of migrants. Most importantly, it provides a way for millions of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to come out of the shadows to earn legalization and eventually citizenship. For this reason alone people of faith must do everything we can this summer and fall to work for passage of comprehensive immigration reform on which rests the hopes and dreams of millions of immigrants.

And then let us work to realize a new narrative of the border. Faith leaders and border scholars describe in a new report what a revised border could look like:

“We picture a border where virtually all migration is legal, not because the United States and Mexico cede their authority to regulate admissions, but because immigration laws align with the labor, family, development and protection needs of residents, visitors, and passers-through.”

—From The New Ellis Island

Endnotes on back cover
The stock market is soaring to set new records. CEOs are taking home bundles of cash, stock options, and rich severance packages. Wall Street is handing out million dollar bonuses again. Congress and state legislatures seem to find no tax cut unpalatable. And big tech firms like Apple acquire smaller ones like Tumblr for a billion dollars. What is the matter with this wavy picture? "Unemployment."

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We can understand the different kinds of "unemployment" by looking more closely at the statistics for the five Gulf South states in the four categories used by BLS. The figures are drawn by BLS from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, augmented with other data, based on averages over the twelve months ending in March 2013.1 The four categories are:

- **Officially unemployed:** All jobless persons available for work who actively sought work in the past four weeks as a percent of the civilian labor force
- **Discouraged workers:** Persons not in the labor force who want and are available for work and have sought work in the past twelve months, but not in the past four weeks because they believe no jobs are available for them (economic reason), as a percent of the civilian labor force
- **Marginally attached workers:** Includes discouraged workers whose reason for not seeking work in the past four weeks is other than their belief about availability of jobs for them, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers
- **Involuntary part-time workers:** Persons working less than 35-hours a week who want full-time employment but gave an economic reason for working part-time (hours cut back or unable to find a full-time job), as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers.

The table below reflects the cumulative effect of these four categories of workers in each locale. BLS notes that these measures of labor underutilization move together over time and across business cycles so that states with high official unemployment rates tend to have high rates of underemployed and underutilized workers, as well. Workers of color, of course, have higher rates of labor underutilization than white workers.

The Economic Policy Institute reports that, since late 2010, the U.S. economy has been adding an average of only about 175,000 jobs per month and that, at that rate, we will not get back to the pre-recession labor market health until early 2020.3 In other words, at the current growth rate, the labor market will not be made whole again before the end of the decade.4 For tens of millions of workers, this is too long to wait.

For those guided by the principles of human dignity, justice, and the common good, the current situation demands that we "prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone."5 The refusal of our elected leaders to make this priority a reality—by stimulus spending, job training and re-training, affordable health care, and investment in the future—"is unpalatable. And big tech firms like Apple acquire smaller ones like Tumblr for a billion dollars."

**Measure of Labor Underutilization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Officials unemployed</th>
<th>Officials unemployed plus discouraged</th>
<th>Officially unemployed plus discouraged workers</th>
<th>Discouraged workers</th>
<th>Marginally attached</th>
<th>Involuntary part-time workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Historical Context**

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church names solidarity as a core principle of Catholic social teaching.

Solidarity highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more community of people. The acceleration of interdependence between persons and peoples needs to be accompanied by equally intense efforts on the ethical-social plane, in order to avoid the dangerous consequences of perpetrating injustice on a global scale.6

Many associate the term "solidarity" with the writing of Blessed John Paul II, who developed the concept extensively. The term, however, was used by Vatican II in Gaudium et Spes in discussing universal interdependency and international relations, as well as the communal character of the human person taught by Jesus Christ, the community of believers that he established, and the ultimate solidarity to be "brought to perfection" at the end of time.7 In writing Facem in Tension during the Council, Blessed John XXIII called for an "active solidarity" that "cannot be divorced from the common good of the entire human family."8

To develop the term "duty of solidarity," Pope John Paul II underscores the urgency of connecting action to justice for faith. For him, solidarity is the structural response demanded by gospel love. Solidarity, as a social principle, involves fundamental economic and social changes.9 In addition, in a striking assertion, the Pope says, "Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue."10

Solidarity therefore must play its part in the realization of this divine plan, both on the level of individuals and on the level of national and international society.11

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**ENDNOTES**

1 Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (CSDC), No. 392 (trans. in its original).
2 Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, No. 32.
3 Pope John XXIII, Exortum in Terris, 1963, No. 98.
4 "The principle of social solidarity means that altogethery present great difficulties in social and economic structures that perpetuate glaring inequalities and cut off millions of citizens from full participation in the economic and social life of the nation. The process of change should be one that does not separate all citizens, whatever their economic status, into two categories."
7 Ibid., No. 38.
legislation lead to increases in wages, higher levels of education, and better jobs but also ultimately to economic expansion.1 It is important to evaluate the potential economic costs and benefits of any immigration reform legislation. Where there is danger on the political left and right if the economic utility of immigrants becomes the exclusive or primary focus of debate.

The contemporary question of the economic utility of immigrants is not a new concern in U.S. history. Fearing that Germans would overrun the English colony of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin famously referred to them as “sentry” and as “the most important staple of our own nation.”2 Germans, however, became one of the largest immigrant groups in the nation, disproving Franklin’s view. That they became “white” in the U.S. racial hierarchy is no insignificant reason for their social and economic ascendancy. So, for example, when the U.S. recodified racial hierarchy into national immigration law in 1924, Europeans, including Germans, were assigned the highest quotas to increase their numbers and national homogeneity. The question of who would gain the rights and dignity of citizenship has always been tied up with the internal border of whiteness.3

In contrast, the immigration law of 1924 conceived “colored races” as having “no country of origin. They were outside the concept of nationality and, therefore, citizenship. They were not even bona fide immigrants.4

As Noel Ignatiev explains in How the Irish Became White, when the newly arrived Irish were considered a threat to American society, they were told that they and blacks “need not apply.” The Irish learned that by joining in anti-black racism they could become white and gain economic ascendency.

We abound human life when we reduce human persons to units of economic production and categorize an entire group of people as “unlawful.” The danger is not only in how we treat newcomers in our midst. A greater danger is how racism and economic utilitarianism tear apart human community and human, moral, practical, and spiritual commitments that bind us together as sacred and social beings.

In their now classic examination of American individualism, Habits of the Heart, Robert Bellah and colleagues warned us of the threat economic utilitarianism poses to a good society. Habits of the Heart invited Americans to reflect on two contradictory views of who we may become in hope and life. More important, perhaps, every group has taught us about our common vulnerability, our common need for one another, and the interdependence of the human family. When we recognize our common humanity in newcomers, there is possibility. Recognizing our common humanity, we may envision new possibilities of who we may become in hope and solidarity as the people of God.

ENDNOTES


3 See the italicized date at the Immigration Policy Center website for a similar online version. For a detailed report on their undocumented status see: “Undocumented Immigrants: A Statistical Portrait.” Available online at http://www. immigrationpolicycenter.org/reports/immigrant-statistics/undocumented-immigrants.


5 Letter to Peter Colman, May 9, 1975, Benjamin Franklin Papers at Yale University Library. The Atlantic has archived the entire Correspondence between Franklin and others, as well as his Pennsylvania Gazette, and can be accessed online at http://www.franklinpapers.org/franklin/ Franklin/PennsylvaniaGazette.


8 No group of newcomers has ever created any kind of loss for American society. Every group has contributed to the growth and development of society in many ways that go well beyond short-term financial benefit analysis.

9 We abound human life when we reduce human persons to units of economic production and categorize an entire group of people as “unlawful.” The danger is not only in how we treat newcomers in our midst. A greater danger is how racism and economic utilitarianism tear apart human community and human, moral, practical, and spiritual commitments that bind us together as sacred and social beings.

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11 It is bad enough when millions of people are unemployed, or underemployed, or underutilized. Reducing unemployment benefits to the longest unemployed, cutting food aid, reducing health coverage, and throwing away jobs, however, vividly embodies the old adage about “kicking a person when he is down.”

ENDNOTES


3 Ibid, No. 34, emphasis in original.


7 Ibid.


Unemployment and Worse

Our Gulf South governors and legislators, with very high levels of unemployment, underemployed, and underutilized workers, this year are adding the most short-sighted and cynical burden to their states’ most needy workers by refusing the expansion of Medicaid offered under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Because of their opposition to “ObamaCare,” they use as a facade the enormous federal infusion of health coverage provided under PPACA and, in so doing, not just health coverage for hundreds of thousands of citizens, but a great opportunity to improve the jobs picture in their states.

In the Gulf South states, some estimates for jobs creation under PPACA include approximately 900 new jobs in Mississippi, 15,600 new jobs in Louisiana,5 and 231,000 to 300,000 new jobs in Texas.6

ENDNOTES


3 Ibid, No. 34, emphasis in original.


7 Ibid.


Border Visions and Immigration Reform

Continued from page 5

ENDNOTES
3 The Secure Border Index considers illegal border sectors those where apprehensions are above 10,000 individuals per year.
4 Of the nine Border Patrol sectors along the 1,954 mile U.S./Mexico border, three are considered high risk based on fiscal year 2012 data. Tucson (112,103 apprehensions), Rio Grande Valley (97,762), and Laredo (44,872). In 2011 Tucson had an effectiveness rate of 98.0 percent, Rio Grande Valley had an effectiveness rate of 90.8 percent, and Laredo had an effectiveness rate of 84 percent. Illegal entry data will include only the immigrants detected by Border Patrol, and not those who cross without notice. Sue Jan Ordinario, “The Immigration Bill’s Security Vision,” Mother Notes, April 27, 2013, at www.sueorbinario.com/profitablenationalsecurity.html.

A major criticism leveled against recent newcomers to the United States is that they are “taking” creating an economic strain on the nation. Not only are they takers, critics lament, but also categorically “illegal,” echoing past racist associations of criminality with African-Americans and many other people of color.

These criticisms of newcomers are old in U.S. history. Various strains of economic utilitarianism and racism have revered their ugly heads throughout U.S. history to render the latest newcomer less than human and unworthy of citizenship.

Recognizing these historical pitfalls in the current immigration debate is critical for two reasons: so we do not repeat the same old mistakes, and so we achieve a truly common good today.

In 2013 debate over immigration reform, critics have focused on the economic burden of new immigrants to the near exclusion of the benefits they provide to society. The Heritage Foundation released a report on May 6, 2013, “The Fiscal Cost of Unlawful Immigrants and Amnesty to the U.S. Taxpayer,” that epitomizes this specious argument.

The Heritage Foundation report contends that immigrants always will be a cost burden on government supports. The “bottom line” of the Heritage Foundation’s study “Even if all the children of unlawful immigrants graduated from college, they would be hard pressed to pay back $6.3 trillion in costs over their lifetime.” In other words, so-called “unlawful immigrants” over the next fifty years will only be an economic burden on the nation with no hope for becoming an economic benefit.

The American Conservative Union, the libertarian Cato Institute, and the progressive Applied Research Center immediately criticized the method and content of the Heritage Foundation study.

A major flaw of the Heritage Foundation study is that the economic benefit immigrants bring is well beyond how much any household receives in benefits minus how much it pays in taxes. Numerous longitudinal studies examining the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) demonstrate that not only does