American Misperceptions of Immigration

Victoria Seymour

Dr. Perez

POV 423

22 April 2020

Introduction

Immigration is both a subject that a lot of people talk about, and a subject that a lot of people are not well-informed about. The trouble with Americans is that, oftentimes, they only hear one side of the story, and thus have negative perceptions of immigrants without being fully informed. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, and many of the arguments from conservatives are valid, but this paper aims to provide some details on the real effects of immigration, undocumented migration in particular. Essentially, I want readers to see how not only immigrants are better off, but Americans can be too if we are more aware of what immigration really does for the country. Well-being can be called into question when looking at undocumented migration from both perspectives. From the American point of view, their well-being is being compromised because they believe these people are bringing in crime and drugs and stealing jobs from Americans. However, that is just the problem: they *believe* this will happen, but have not actually experienced it, nor do they have any empirical evidence to support their claims. For undocumented migrants, on the other hand, they actually have reason to want to improve their well-being by migrating to the United States. In Mexico, for instance, many of the people living there are living amongst corruption and horrible living conditions. They know they could lead better lives in the United States, and thus they have experienced firsthand that their well-being is not optimal and are working to change it, even if it means trekking through the desert for days and avoiding border patrol officers in order to reach well-being. And this is where autonomy comes into play: is it up to the U.S. government to tell people outside of the U.S. they are not allowed into the country? Or is it up to the personal autonomy of people to make this decision for themselves? It is also important to investigate the economic implications more, because this is where the immigration debate often becomes political, which allows us to assess

whether they are actually helping the country by coming, and if so, why are there such xenophobic tendencies amongst Americans? Are these stigmas what contribute to the preconceived notions about immigrants that makes people not want them in the U.S.? With the 2020 presidential election coming up this year, immigration policy is one of the most prominent issues, especially amidst President Trump's building of the Mexico-U.S. border wall. Portions of the American public have many misperceptions about the nature and consequences of undocumented immigration, and when we correct these misperceptions, against the background of the philosophical framework of Carens and Miller, we see that Americans should favor regularization of the status of undocumented migrants. My research, combined with existing knowledge on both documented and undocumented migration into the United States, will contribute an ethical consideration on government policies regarding immigration and the misperceptions that come from them.

Methodology

The methodologies used in all of these works are different. Some use normative frameworks, some use sociological and economic quantitative data, and some use qualitative research through hands on experiences. However, all of these methodologies could affect results. There is quantitative data out there proving that immigration is good for the economy, and other quantitative data out there showing it does not have an adverse impact on native workers. There is qualitative research out there proving that government policies have unethical consequences on immigrants, while there is other data out there showing that government policy is in everyone's best interest. Thus, no matter what methodology used (though both qualitative and quantitative data will be used in this argument), there will be a counterargument. The authors of this literature are of all different ethnicities and races, so that there are different viewpoints and

hopefully less bias. However, by doing this, people who have actually experienced immigrant discrimination can give their piece, and others who have not experienced it (Americans and their different views on immigrants) can also give theirs.

In addressing my research question, I will be using four different sources. First, primary sources with qualitative data (books and journal articles with firsthand accounts of immigrants crossing the border). Second, books on the ethical implications of immigration (where I plan to tie in a utilitarian framework). Third, news articles with conservative and liberal views of undocumented migration, and quantitative data (sociological data on migration patterns and also looking at economic journals to find out the economic implications of undocumented immigrants). I have found journal articles by looking at Google Scholar, receiving recommendations from experts in the field, and looking a news outlets I know are reliable (*The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, and *Vox*, mostly). I have mainly been looking at articles from the last four or five years so they are all somewhat current. Through my analysis, not only do I want to prove how immoral the government policies toward undocumented migrants are, but also how the U.S. needs these people in the country, working, in order to sustain a stable economy. Thus, the well-being of the majority will be substantially improved: immigrants get better lives than they had in their home countries, and Americans get a better economy.

Aside from using all the qualitative and quantitative data mentioned above, I find it important to also include news articles in my analysis. In trying to show the misperception Americans have about undocumented migration, I first must explore why people are for or against it. In an ideal world, all immigrants would come to the U.S. legally, but unfortunately, it is not that easy, thus leaving Americans at a huge divide when discussing undocumented immigration. On one hand, there are arguments to give them a chance and allow more into the

country, with citizenship (think about the DREAMers). On the other hand, there are some groups who think undocumented migrants are bringing in crime and drugs (as President Trump often claims) and stealing jobs from Americans. By reading news articles from both perspectives, I have gained more insight into why people think the way they do about undocumented migration, and it has helped me in trying to figure out the truth about undocumented migrants.

While studying immigration into the United States, however, there is one big limitation: not all undocumented migrants are accounted for in statistics, as detailed in De Leon's explanation of there being thousands of dead undocumented immigrants that no one even knows about. Unfortunately, when measuring something like undocumented migration, it is hard to track them since many of them try to stay off the grid to avoid deportation, or some that die on the way to the United States may never even have their bodies found. Furthermore, another limitation I face is, with my conclusion being that Americans do have misperceptions of undocumented migrants and the issue is not handled correctly in the U.S., then what is the alternative? The policies ultimately imposed by the government are all the U.S. has known in regards to handling undocumented migrants. So, if I find that this is unethical and inhumane by the end of my research, I will be at a roadblock, because I will have to offer a better, more viable solution to immigration policy. Not only that, but I will also have to disprove many arguments against undocumented migrants and show why these claims are false. Nowadays, it seems like everything goes back to politics, but what if it did not? That is something I will have to work through when coming to my conclusion. An alternative to addressing my research question would be to just use qualitative data or just use quantitative data, as Jason De Leon does in *The Land of Open Graves* and Filiz Garip does in *On the Move*. However, this would limit me greatly in my research, as it is vital to back up my claims with statistics. If I am trying to convince my

audience that undocumented immigration should or should not be a political issue, I need to give them good reason to listen to me, and the only way to do that is to include both types of data in my analysis. Ultimately, by using all these sources to deduce the economic and ethical implications of undocumented migration, I will conclude whether or not it should be handled politically, or if there are other systems we need to consider.

Utilitarianism and Immigration

There are many different philosophical frameworks one can use to describe why immigrants not only help, but should have a place in the United States. Utilitarianism is the one that allows people to see most clearly why immigrants help the country economically, thus leading to maximum well-being for people in the country overall. However, what Americans who are opposed to undocumented migrants would say is that these rights only apply to people who "belong" in the United States – a more contractualist view on immigration and human rights. Thus, I find it important to include both quantitative and qualitative data in my analysis to help support the utilitarian argument for immigration ethics. Since I am exploring American misperceptions on undocumented migration, it is also important to look at the economic implications of having them working in the U.S. This not only disproves those who are against having them because of the myth that they are "stealing jobs," but it also goes to help my ethical argument in the utilitarian framework, in that having them work actually maximizes the well-being of the majority of people in the country because they help the economy prosper. The reason I want to use a utilitarian framework for part of my ethical argument is because of the idea of well-being versus autonomy that has been discussed in class at length. When thinking about undocumented migration, the question surrounding well-being is often raised, asking, "do

undocumented migrants coming into the country minimize the well-being of Americans?" or "does keeping them out minimize the well-being of the immigrants?"

To give utilitarianism some context, think of Peter Singer's *The Life You Can Save*. He describes a scenario in which a person is walking through a park and sees a child drowning in a pond. The person can easily save the child, as it is shallow enough for the person to go in without drowning himself, but then the person would risk ruining his brand new shoes. To keep the person's shoes clean, that maximizes the well-being of that person, but to save the child, that maximizes the well-being of the child, all the child's friends and family, and even future American society as when he is old enough, he can contribute to the economy. This theory can be applied when looking at immigrants: by allowing undocumented migrants into the United States, they can contribute to the economy, therefore maximizing well-being of Americans, and also maximizing well-being of themselves by leaving their bad living conditions of their home countries and finding better lives in America. Americans are worried about their own place in the American job market and are afraid of change to the American demographic, and so they let the immigrants suffer and/or die for the sake of themselves. The issue is that, even though immigrants do bring benefits, Americans think well-being will be harmed once immigrants enter the U.S. For as long as the United States has had its own democracy, white, heterosexual men have been in control and claimed most of the power. As a result, there has not been much diversity of thought in political decisions, especially when it comes to things like immigration. What do these men know about who "belongs" in the U.S., or any of the tribulations immigrants go through in their home countries? In *Three perspectives on the ethics of immigration: utilitarian, liberal egalitarian and libertarian*, Diana Virginia Todea explains that there is a difference between methods to control *private* goods and methods to control *public* goods. She

says, "The market usually controls in a very efficient way private goods, like the food industry, film industry, etc., whose goods are afterwards sold to private individuals according to a set price. Immigration, however, is considered to affect public goods, among which the culture of nations. In this perspective, nations are very sensitive to the effects of immigration upon their cultures because any alteration involved in this process also affects the nation itself as an entity...As it can be observed, the national culture is a public good and the market has no practical ability in managing it for a better outcome" (Todea 31-33). If a country is a public good, as Todea explains, who, if anyone, has authority over who and who cannot be let in?

American Misperceptions

Immigration has been a highly controversial issue in the United States. Over the years, American attitudes have grown to be more accepting across the board, but we still have a long way to go. There is still a sense of xenophobia that lingers in the country, though, with President Trump's border wall, Prevention Through Deterrence, and other government programs. As detailed in *Social Contexts*, "Immigrants who are already disadvantaged – those who have less education, don't speak fluent English, just recently moved to the United States, and are unemployed or have jobs in the informal economy – are suspected of being undocumented at higher rates" (Flores et al. 38). Thus, Americans already have preconceived notions towards immigrants without actually knowing anything about them. After examining all these different factors, it leads to the question: are Americans anti-undocumented immigrant, or are they just anti-immigrant in general? The government is the one deciding who a "rightful citizen" is – but why? Migration is a basic human right and so should be beyond politics. As will be discussed more later on, migrants have been tortured both by Border Patrol agents and by the harsh environmental conditions they have to endure to get to the United States. The U.S. government

would not say we should hold votes on whether people should be tortured, and yet the U.S. government is, in the same breath, deciding that torture is okay, as long as it means keeping undocumented migrants out of the U.S. In 2011, Herman Cain ran for the Republican presidential candidate, and had many thoughts on immigration security. He said, "We'll have a real fence. Twenty feet high with barbed wire. Electrified with a sign on the other side that says, 'It can kill you.'…Then I get criticized: 'Mr. Cain, that's insensitive.' What do you mean insensitive? What's insensitive is when people come to the United States across our border and kill our citizens and kill our Border Patrol people. That's insensitive and I'm not worried about being insensitive when I tell people to stop sneaking into America" (De Leon 156). If this is how many conservatives view undocumented migration, then there are many things they do not know about it. This is clearly a violation of human rights, and it should not be something that is up for public deliberation, especially when people are not fully informed.

Economic Impact of Undocumented Migration

Job creation is highly desirable in the U.S., with it both stimulating the economy and improving people's livelihood. Government policy is contingent on the fact that historically, old, white, heterosexual men have been controlling how things are to be in the world, but from a utilitarian standpoint, policy that prohibits undocumented migrants from working does not maximize well-being for all, and they have no rationale as to why Americans should get those jobs over hardworking immigrants. Just because Americans were lucky enough to be born in a country with optimal job opportunity does not mean they have right over non-Americans to have these jobs, and them having preference over immigrants defies both the theories of social membership and utilitarianism. In *The Ethics of Immigration* by Joseph H. Carens, one of the overarching themes he draws on is the theory of social membership. In short, he claims that

"There is one general idea that plays an important role in almost all of the chapters, and it

is that living within the territorial boundaries of a state makes one a member of society,

that this social membership gives rise to moral claims in relation to the political

community, and that these claims deepen over time...It says that almost every moral

claim to citizenship rests upon facts and expectations about social membership, and if this

claim is correct, it follows that social membership is normatively prior to citizenship"

(Carens 158-160).

The primary example he gives towards social membership is whether descendants of immigrants

should get citizenship at birth, but also whether people who arrive to the U.S. as immigrants,

children and adults alike, should have access to citizenship. He argues that since social

membership has priority over citizenship, the state in which children and adult immigrants live in

for an extended period of time becomes a crucial part of their social formation, and thus there is

no denying their social membership and right to live there. Additionally, this brings up the aspect

of well-being: is it in the well-being interests of both American citizens and immigrants to rank

social membership over citizenship? How can government policy be created to reach a utilitarian

society in which well-being is maximized for everyone, including undocumented immigrants? A

lot of literature proves that undocumented migrants actually boost the economy, as most of them

work the jobs Americans do not want to work, or they create new jobs. Without these workers,

the economy would collapse, as that would be losing seven million workers, especially in the

agricultural industry. Thus, without immigrants, the U.S. economy simply would not work. The

government implementation of the Bracero Program was never temporary -- it showed Mexican

migrants that they could build lives for their families in the United States, and that even though

they were being underpaid, they were willing to work in the U.S. to do whatever jobs were

available. For them, this meant getting out of Mexico, and since then, the desire to migrate to the

U.S. has skyrocketed. This urge to migrate is a good thing, and is why the DREAM Act is so

important. However, recent government policy has been making that increasingly harder.

Migrant work in the U.S. has proved that the economy needs immigrants to remain stable, as

they create jobs, add to the GDP, reduce the deficit, and work important jobs that most

Americans are too proud to take. However, with this has come a lot of exploitation of

undocumented migrants. Many of them are working in the underground job market to avoid

deportation, and along with that, government policy has become a lot harsher since the

implementation of Prevention Through Deterrence in 1994, leading many undocumented

migrants to die in the Sonoran Desert. "In the United States, spending on border enforcement

increased by a factor of twelve between 1980 and 2000, and the number of U.S. Border Patrol

officers rose four times, even though the U.S. and Mexican economies were rapidly integrating

under the North American Free Trade Agreement" (Massey et al. 1,076).

Many Americans make ill-founded claims without actually knowing the vast economic

benefits of having undocumented workers in the country. In 2018, the government was shut

down for over a month due to President Trump's demand for $5.7 billion worth of funding to go

towards the wall on the Mexico-U.S. border. Thus, undocumented migration has been a very

significant issue in the U.S. for the past few years especially, leaving many people at odds. Since

the implementation of the Bracero Program in 1942, undocumented migration in the United

States has become even more of a highly debated topic. The Bracero Program was active from

1942 to 1964 in an effort to bring Mexicans to the U.S. to help with low-paying agricultural jobs.

This was initially due to a huge labor shortage from men going off to fight in World War II.

However, it ended up going on even two decades after the conclusion of the war. In the span of

22 years, 4.6 million contracts were signed, showing the pervasive desire for Mexicans to

migrate to the U.S. (Leon et al. 1). However, at the end of the program in 1964, 3.8 million

Mexicans were deported, forcing them to return to their homes, even though they were starting to

build lives in the U.S. (Scruggs 1). The Bracero Program was never for the benefit of Mexicans -

- it was simply a way to find cheap labor to fill in the gaps of American men out at war. They

were not given adequate transportation, living conditions, and fair pay. The argument for not

wanting undocumented migrants coming into the U.S. is often that they will bring illicit drugs

and crime and take away jobs from Americans. However, this anti-immigrant stigma stems from

Americans' own insecurity in finding jobs in the legal job market and the stability of the

American economy. If the U.S. government were to somehow repatriate every single

undocumented immigrant in the United States, the economy would simply collapse.

Even though the Bracero Program was supposed to be a temporary plan simply to keep the

American economy stable while men were away at war, Douglas Massey argues that there really

is no such thing as a "temporary worker program." He says, "Given a desire to continue

migrating, migrants draw upon contacts and experiences made while abroad as 'temporary' guest

workers, and use them to undertake additional trips, both legally and illegally; once this behavior

pattern is established, they draw their relatives and friends into the process; and as the number of

trips grows and foreign experience lengthens, the probability of permanent settlement increases"

(Massey et al. 201). Thus, even though several government policies have been put in place in

attempts to keep undocumented migrants, particularly from Mexico, out of the United States, it

was government policy from the 1940s that really sparked this desire to migrate to the U.S. in the

first place.

From what the Bracero Program showed, the U.S. clearly needs immigrants to help keep the economy flourish. Massey goes on to detail how migration has become some sort of a family business now, as parents encourage their children to immigrate to the U.S. at a young age so they can build their lives there and escape the bad living conditions of their native countries. "Through such mechanisms, guest worker programs generate immigrant flows far in excess of the number of temporary visas originally issued. In a very real way, therefore, the Bracero Program of the 1940s and 1950s established the foundations for large-scale Mexican immigration to the United States during the 1970s and 1980s" (Massey et al. 201). In a New York Times video about undocumented migration across the Mexico-U.S. border, a reporter visits Honduras and interviews several teenagers on their quest to cross the border. In this, the reporter found the toxic living conditions in Honduras: kids at school all said they knew someone in a gang, witnessed violence in their neighborhood at least once a day, and their schools were severely under resourced and were literally falling apart. There was also a clip of a television reporter in Honduras giving a news report in front of dead bodies just lying on the street, and kids would just pass these as if it were normal. Furthermore, they had to dig through the dump just to try to find necessities for themselves and their families. When interviewing the teens on their mission to cross the border, Brent Renaud, the reporter, would witness a 16-year-old boy try to make it all the way from Honduras to the United States with only eight dollars in his pocket and a 2,000 mile trek ahead of him. He would watch him maneuver only through depopulated areas in an attempt to avoid immigration officers. This is his fourth time trying to cross the border but he is far from alone, as in 2014, more than 68,000 minors from Central America were apprehended at the Mexico-U.S. border (Renaud 1). Thus, Latinx minors are deprived from a "normal" childhood because instead of running around outside playing sports with their friends,

they are risking their lives at a very young age in order to escape these horrible living conditions and make a better life for themselves, not to bring drugs and crime into the U.S. as President Trump accuses them of. "Alone or with family in tow, they took flight north as a last-ditch effort to escape dire poverty, climate-crisis-driven drought, and a plague of criminal gangs that have made life back home unbearable" (Motlagh 1). As a result of this, the U.S. government has put huge pressure on Mexico to stop the kids and bring them back home before they even make it to the Mexico-U.S. border, making it even more difficult for people from Central America to reach better lives in the United States. As Filiz Garip outlines in her book *On the Move*, in which she uses sociological data to analyze why people migrate, people use a diversification strategy when migrating: in other words, families think as households rather than as individuals. After the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which tried to control the high rates of undocumented migration across the border by granting citizenship to 2.3 million Mexicans and approving citizenship for nine out of ten IRCA applicants, more and more families were incentivized to migrate to the United States (Garip 96-97). "By granting legal status to millions of undocumented migrants, IRCA created incentives for new migrants -- and more women and children than ever before -- to join family members already in the United States (Garip 98). Thus, a lot of the policies the U.S. government has implemented in the past has actually encouraged more migration across the border, as people want to do what is best for their families. Not only is immigration necessary for the stability of the United States, but it has also become so stigmatized that Americans do not realize how valuable the immigration system is and are supporting government policy that does nothing but cause more issues in the U.S. Furthermore, many Americans have fallen victim to the myth that undocumented migrants will

hurt the economy by taking jobs and social services without paying taxes (adl.org). However, just the opposite is true.

Firstly, undocumented most immigrants do not even qualify for social services such as Medicaid, food stamps, and Social Security, and hence there is no way they would be taking these services away from Americans. Also, undocumented migrants do, in fact, pay an average of $11.64 billion in taxes a year. In fact, each migrant will pay about $80,000 more in taxes than government services in their lifetime (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine). For example, this can be seen in the story of "Xiomara: Working Toward Home" by Jennifer Scott. Xiomara migrated to the U.S. and started her own cleaning business in Austin, Texas, and her husband also hired several workers to help him with his construction job. Through this, Xiomara and her husband not only offered more of a variety of services to Americans (wealthy ones, in particular), but also created more jobs, which, in turn, stimulates the American economy and offers new job opportunities to people. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine provides some insight into how immigrants are necessary in the U.S. economy. They found that the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act could bring between 336,000 and 470,000 undocumented immigrant entrepreneurs into the legal job market, and if each business hired around eleven employees, then these business would account for between 3.7 million and 5.2 million jobs in the formal economy (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine). Additionally, according to The New American Economy's research, "In 2014, almost 10 percent of the working-age undocumented population were entrepreneurs. In more than 20 states, they boast higher rates of entrepreneurship than either legal permanent residents or citizens of the same age group. These self-employed workers frequently create American jobs. Their companies also

generated $17.2 billion in business income in 2014" (The New American Economy). In the book

Three Perspectives on the Ethics of Immigration: Utilitarian, Liberal Egalitarian, and

Libertarian, Diana Virginia Todea makes this claim regarding the utilitarian view towards

immigration:

> "In the utilitarian framework, immigration has a positive influence on the lives of
>
> immigrants and their well-being. The reason for leaving the home countries in the first
>
> place means that immigration is the solution to get out of a difficult economic/financial
>
> situation or/and to find better opportunities for education or/and profession. Thus,
>
> immigration improves the situation of immigrants in the sense that they find better
>
> opportunities of education, to work and live. In return, the immigrants also pass important
>
> financial changes because they have to contribute to the host countries' tax scheme and
>
> assure that they live and work on the foreign territory in full legality. The level of
>
> improvement in the well-being of immigrants is in direct proportion with their adaptation
>
> to the foreign customs, life conditions, work expectations and social interaction. These
>
> factors represent the key to a successful integration in the host countries and determine in
>
> a high degree the future evolution of immigrants' well-being in all aspects of life" (Todea
>
> 28).

U.S. Federal Immigration Policy

Thus, immigrant presence in the United States can improve well-being for all.

Government policy is very severe for undocumented immigrants, which is explored in works

such as Jason De Leon's *The Land of Open Graves* and Filiz Garip's *On the Move*, both of which

talk about what undocumented immigrants come to the U.S. seeking, and the adverse effects

U.S. immigration policy have on these migrants. According to De Leon, Prevention Through

Deterrence has caused 7,000 known deaths and countless more appearances, as border patrol officers either watch migrants die while trekking through the Sonoran Desert or use brutal force to repatriate them. Prevention Through Deterrence is "a strategy that relies largely on rugged and desolate terrain to impede the flow of people from the south" (De Leon 5). Essentially, through Prevention Through Deterrence, the government has set more Border Patrol agents at the border thinking that migrants would then be deterred from trying to cross illegally. In reality, though, migrants just end up crossing through more depopulated areas, and thus have to endure the harsh conditions of the Sonoran Desert. Since the Border Patrol agents want to deter them from trying again, they let the migrants suffer from dehydration and hyperthermia, and rescue them right before they are about to die. This tactic attempts to scare the migrants and show them the Border Patrol agents are not going to let anyone through, and that if they keep trying to cross illegally, there is a high chance they will die. "One of the major misconceptions about immigration control is that if the government spends enough money on fences, drone planes, motion sensors, and Border Patrol agents and makes the crossing process treacherous enough, people will eventually stop coming. De Leon explains that close to two decades of research has shown that boundary enforcement efforts play only a minimal role in discouraging people from attempting to cross the border and that social and economic factors are the key determinants of trends in migration rates. Obama perpetuated this misconception when he argued for heightened security as a way to slow undocumented migration flow by saying we need to 'put more boots on the southern border than at any time in our history and reduce illegal crossing to their lowest levels in forty years'" (De Leon 101). Crossing the Mexico-U.S. border is an arduous, pain-staking, and life-threatening process. However, what the U.S. government did not take into account is that these people are more than willing to risk their lives if it means even a glimmer of hope of them reaching better

lives for themselves and their families. "Despite the militarization of the border, however, the number of Mexicans in the United States increased by 450 percent over the same period, and the share of immigrant population that was undocumented continued to expand" (Massey et al. 1,076). This policy, in turn, just made more people aware that they could try and cross the border, perhaps their mentality being the more people that try to migrate, the less of a chance they will get caught, and thus sought out more depopulated areas to cross the border in. "Over the past 20 years, Prevention Through Deterrence has caused 7,000 known deaths and countless more disappearances. It has failed to halt the mass movement of people without papers into the U.S. interior. However, it has succeeded in proliferating border deaths, disappearances, and informal economies of violence, converting the region into an increasingly deadly arena" (No More Deaths 1). This book is essentially a cry for change in the United States border patrol and immigration policy. De Leon gives an example of what it is like for migrants to trek through the Sonoran Desert in hopes of finally reaching America, and the terrible hardships they had to endure. He began by simply explaining the policies implemented by the U.S. government and how detrimental they are to the people trying to cross the border. Ever since the Department of Homeland Security was created following the 9/11 attacks, they have been extremely forceful in keeping undocumented migrants out of the U.S. When visiting the Juan Bosco migrant shelter in Nogales, De Leon noticed a flier that warned, "The next time you try to cross the border without documents you could end up a victim of the desert" (De Leon 29). As mentioned earlier, the Border Patrol either would use force on the undocumented migrants if found, or they would not touch them and ultimately let them die from struggling through the desert. Thus, by implementing Prevention Through Deterrence, the U.S. government has found a way to lure migrants into the desert, let them die, and not have to use any force in the process, this way

"providing the federal agency with plausible deniability regarding blame for any victims the desert may claim" (De Leon 30).

In a nutshell, the government used Prevention Through Deterrence as a way to scare undocumented migrants out of crossing the border, and if they tried and got hurt or died in the process, it would not be the U.S. government's fault because they technically did not do anything to them directly. Prevention Through Deterrence has extremely damaging effects. It forces migrants to travel through more hostile terrain in their attempts to cross the border, and then these migrants end up having to seek border patrol for help, knowing they are going to be sent right back to their home countries and probably get hurt by the border patrol in the process. With many people showing outward opposition to the government's cruel immigration policy, specifically ones like Prevention Through Deterrence and President Trump's wall, Jason De Leon has created a pop-up exhibition to provide a visual aid of migration across the Sonoran Desert for the public. Through De Leon's pop-up exhibition "Hostile Terrain 94," awareness is brought towards the detrimental effects of Prevention Through Deterrence. This art project shows a map of the Sonoran Desert between the mid 1990s and 2019, and has toe tags on the exact places in the desert where approximately 3,200 people died trying to make it across the border (The Undocumented Migration Project). De Leon is turning this phenomenon into an art form that allows people to actually see what this government policy is doing to people, and through this installation, people, no matter what their stance on border policy is, will be able to get a glimpse of what life is like for people on the migrant trail.

Furthermore, showcasing how the U.S. government treats human beings through Prevention Through Deterrence puts the country far behind others when it comes to immigration.

In a Politico article by Justin Gest entitled "How America Fell Behind the World On

Immigration," he explains,

> "As a result, the United States stands out. About 65 percent of our permanent visas are
>
> granted for the purposes of family reunification. No other country is higher than 50
>
> percent, and nearly all other countries are under 30 percent. The share of all visas granted
>
> to family members and refugees is higher than all other countries as well—more than 11
>
> percentage points higher than the nearest countries, Ireland and Sweden. People who
>
> immigrate for family and refuge—non-economic reasons—are typically placed on a path
>
> to citizenship; and yet American naturalization rates are lower than numerous other
>
> countries with a greater emphasis on economic migrants, especially Canada. Further,
>
> while other countries have regularized undocumented immigrants, the United States
>
> features the highest estimates of undocumented immigrants in the world—between 10
>
> million and 12 million people" (Gest 1).

Why, then, is the United States so against helping undocumented migrants? People want to

immigrate to the United States because of its historical reputation of being the land of the

American Dream, but with the government's treatment of immigrants, how much longer will

people from across the globe want to immigrate to the United States? With less immigration

comes a weaker economy, and no one wants that.

What Should Immigration Policy Look Like?

When assessing how to view immigration policy, one must first recognize the

implications of having a strong immigrant presence in the United States. A common

characterization made of undocumented migrants by Americans is that they steal jobs from

Americans. In a *Washington Post* article entitled "Yes, undocumented immigrants take jobs from

Americans. Here's the proof," Henry Olsen provides the example of seven chicken processing

plants in Mississippi, all of whose operators knowingly hired undocumented immigrants so that

they would work for lower wages and make no trouble. In turn, Olsen argues, plenty of

American workers in these highly impoverished counties, who would have loved to work at the

plants, were deprived of jobs. One of the places, Jasper County, is the primary case for this:

"Jasper's unemployment rate this June was 7.4 percent, more than twice the national average. A

majority-black county, Jasper County has a median household income of only about $35,000 and

a 23.8 percent poverty rate. Those who live there need those jobs, but the employer's alleged

scheme denied them that basic chance" (Olsen 1). He then goes on to explain that, according to

the Pew Research Center, there are about 7.5 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. labor

force, which leads to the "victims of illegal immigration" being the "poor people of color whose

continued poverty is a national tragedy" (Olsen 1). To add some economic research behind this,

George Borjas explains that if the U.S. were to have high-skilled immigrants working, then it

would not be as much of a problem. However, Americans with low education levels are

adversely impacted by immigrants working because they see wage declines as a result of

employers using undocumented immigrant labor as an excuse to hand out lower wages.

"According to census data, immigrants admitted in the past two decades lacking a high school

diploma have increased the size of the low-skilled workforce by roughly 25 percent. As a result,

the earnings of this particularly vulnerable group dropped by between $800 and $1,500 each

year" (Borjas 1). Furthermore, Borjas explains that, "Somebody's lower wage is always

somebody else's higher profit. In this case, immigration redistributes wealth from those who

compete with immigrants to those who use immigrants—from the employee to the employer"

(Borjas 1). From this point of view illustrated by both Olsen and Borjas, it is understandable why

some may think immigrant labor hurts American labor. Obviously, many people in the United States are out of jobs and in poverty, and it is a "national tragedy" as Olsen puts it, but that is not due to undocumented immigrants working, and this is exactly the language that shows the lack of ethicality in government policy towards immigrants. To blame working undocumented immigrants for millions of Americans being unemployed is simply not true, but it is something to be examined. While looking at it on the surface, Borjas is correct – adding immigrant labor does, in fact, reduce wages. However, it is important to look at what types of people are migrating and their effects on the economy as a whole rather than just looking at wage declines.

> "The first group consists of the highly educated, in particular, college-educated individuals. They have emigration rates four to five times higher than workers with no college education, and in poor countries, they are 10 to 12 times more likely to migrate. The second group is made up of the young: individuals between 20 and 40 years of age have the highest propensity to migrate. After 45, few people choose to leave their home countries. Looking at the United States, a very large group of immigrants (as a percentage of the native population with similar skills) is made up of young, highly educated workers, mainly scientists and engineers. Another large group consists of young workers with little education who are employed in highly manual-intensive occupations" (Peri 1).

By looking at this research by Giovanni Peri, we can see that most people who migrate to the United States are actually well-educated, and even George Borjas said that highly educated immigrant workers would be good for the economy. There are four factors that Peri explains as to why immigrant workers are actually boosting the economy overall, despite the fear of wage declines for native workers. First, firms will invest more if there are more workers available in

the labor market because they can then expand their productive capacity and build more

establishments (capital per worker was higher when immigration was at its peak in 2007 than it

was in 1990 before the big immigration boom began). Second, the wage-depressing effect many

people think immigrants have is actually not relevant in the U.S., due to the combination of

immigrants at both the top of the schooling distribution (having a Ph.D. in Science or

Engineering) and bottom of the schooling distribution (being high school dropout), and thus it is

balanced and does not cause wage declines. Third, immigrants work jobs that similarly educated

natives do not work. Fourth, and finally, immigrant workers are more willing to move for work

than native workers are, which also slows wage decline in stagnant regions and contributes to

economic growth in booming ones (Peri 1). Most undocumented migrants work low-paying,

menial jobs, mostly in the agricultural, cleaning, and construction businesses, and many of them

even start businesses of their own, and are working jobs Americans do not want to work.

Furthermore, why are Americans mad at the fact undocumented immigrants are working and

contributing to the economy? It seems that Americans either are mad at undocumented

immigrants for stealing jobs, or are mad at them for just coming to the U.S. to live off the

welfare and free handouts from the government. How can they be doing both? And where are

Americans getting this information? Olsen calling Americans "victims of illegal immigrants" is

dehumanizing and makes them out to be evil villains, while they are coming to the U.S. to

achieve what every person wants: the American Dream. However, the American Dream has

changed since its inception. According to Frontline, some people claim it really is a dream

because you have to be asleep to believe in it (Tobey 1). If Americans themselves are even aware

the American Dream is not really attainable, why are they so hostile towards immigrants coming

to the U.S. and working? Are they afraid these undocumented migrants will come and achieve

the American Dream before they do?

The economy would collapse without immigrants, as they work very hard in important

jobs. Particularly, they work in the agricultural sector, and this is needed to keep the economy

booming -- and they are even doing it while being severely underpaid. Also, government policy

has literally been implemented in the past for the purpose of bringing immigrants to the U.S. to

help the economy, as seen through the Bracero Program. Thus, immigrants have been helping

sustain the economy for decades now, and not only that, but they have been doing it while being

maltreated and underpaid. On top of all of this, sanctuary city are not only offering refuge to

immigrants, but are also boosting the economy and creating safer communities in the U.S. in

general. A sanctuary city, according to Reuters, is, "The label is now generally applied to states

and localities that have laws, policies or regulations that make it harder for Immigration and

Customs Enforcement (ICE) to track down and arrest immigrants they believe are deportable.

However, there is no official definition of a "sanctuary" and levels of cooperation vary from

place to place" (Cooke et al. 1). According to the Center for American Progress, there are 35.5

fewer crimes committed per 10,000 people in sanctuary counties compared to non-sanctuary

ones, median household income is $4,353 higher in sanctuary counties, the poverty rate is 2.3

percent lower, and unemployment is 1.1 percent lower (Wong 1). As these data are evidence for,

government policy should be focusing on ways to integrate immigrants into the American

society and economy rather than brainstorming new ways to punish them and get them out of the

country, as they are, in fact, essential to sustaining a stable and stimulated economy. With

President Trump's decision to terminate the DACA program, it is estimated that about $433.4

billion will be eliminated from the GDP over the next decade, as the government would no

longer receive the $465 application fee per DACA applicant, and there were already 750,000

approved applications within the five years it was active. The deficit would also be greatly

reduced if the immigration bill in 2013 had been passed, as according to the Congressional

Budget Office, the deficit would be reduced by $197 billion, increased investment by 2 percent,

and increased overall employment by 3.5 percent by 2023 (National Academies of Sciences,

Engineering, and Medicine). The reason for this massive reduction in deficit spending is due to

the simple fact that as more migrants are able to work in the legal job economy, more jobs are

created, more people are working, and the government is receiving more money and tax dollars.

Even though it would be impossible for the government to deport every single undocumented

migrant in the U.S., the more they deport, the worse the economy gets. If all migrant workers

suddenly vanished, the economy would not be able to sustain itself, and this would in turn

negatively impact the economy of the entire country, especially considering migrant worker

statistics are very high in other states as well -- big states that contribute a lot to the American

economy. Sectors such as the agriculture business are vital to the U.S. economy, but also find

difficulty in employing American workers, as many are reluctant to fill these roles. Thus, 50 to

70 percent of farm laborers are undocumented migrants, and being that the agricultural industry

contributed $1.053 trillion to GDP in 2017, without these workers putting in time to farm

laboring, the GDP would suffer and American citizens would not have access to safe, reliable

food (United States Department of Agriculture 1).

 With the clear economic boost undocumented migrants bring to the United States, there is

reason to say that, through a utilitarian framework, they maximize well-being for the majority of

people in the country. However, even despite the economic boosts, many Americans fear that

immigrants will disrupt the national culture of the United States. David Miller's *Strangers in Our*

Midst shares this fear and takes a more conservative approach to immigration. He considers his book to be a "political approach to immigration that focuses on institutions and policies rather than on individual behavior, and which 'gives greater weight to the evidence about immigration, trust, and support for welfare' than purely ethical approaches that refuse to consider barriers to a more generous immigration policy" (Miller 18, Deller 1). Through this, Miller touches just on the research question at hand, and he claims that immigration *should* be a political discussion, and that even approaching it from an ethical standpoint is inefficient. Even though he recognizes the economic benefits of undocumented immigrants, he says these "benefits" are really just "'liberal idealists' but also 'business leaders, for whom immigrants are a welcome addition to the ranks of what Marxists used to call 'the reserve army of the unemployed,' helping to push down wages to the minimum'" (Miller 153, Deller 1). In other words, Miller claims that the only reason anyone would want undocumented immigrants in the U.S. is to exploit them for work and lower wages, and that these are the only economic "benefits" of them are that American business leaders can use them for cheap labor. Furthermore, he claims that the more diversity that is present in the United States, the lower levels of trust that are present because bringing in new people disrupts the community of trust that has been built up for years. He says that immigrants will likely not integrate into American culture and simply retreat to hanging out with each other, which will then lead to them bringing practices that are not accepted by U.S. society (i.e. arranged marriages, abandonment of religion, etc.), thus posing a threat to the sanctity of American culture and values. Then, he proposes the solution that the only viable and just solution that would maximize benefit for both Americans and immigrants and integrate them into society would be to require mandatory citizenship tests.

Ethical Considerations

Joseph Carens, who provides an ethical approach to immigration, has his own critique of

Miller's book, claiming that permanent residents should be able to gain citizenship after a

suitable period of time -- and those are using Miller's own words. As mentioned previously,

Carens emphasizes the idea of social membership, in which once a person lives in a certain place

for a while, that place is essentially their home. From this perspective, citizenship tests are

inherently discriminatory, and do not successfully integrate immigrants into American culture.

Beyond that, Americans' perception of "integration" is much different from that of immigrants

themselves. People like Miller want integration to mean completely conforming to American

values and social norms, but to immigrants, it means adapting to the American environment

while still embracing their cultural heritage. Globalization is on the top of America's priority list

when it comes to trade relations, forming allies, etc., and so by rejecting other cultures in its own

nation, how would 1) that look to other nations and 2) maximize well-being for the majority?

According to Todea, "The exchange of cultural information is vital for intercultural relations

between states and immigration plays a valuable role in this process of cultural enrichment. The

home countries benefit from interaction with the returning immigrants even from the distance

through the exchange of information. The home countries' national cultures enrich in the same

manner as the national cultures from the host countries" (Todea 36). People like Miller refuse to

accept that undocumented immigrants maximize well-being in an economic sense, and that the

presence of them in the country is not a "threat" to American culture. Rather, they are a chance

to spread American culture to others while also learning about other cultures, which in turn

maximizes well-being for the majority, as both parties get to share their cultural values with

others. For example, millions of Americans celebrate Cinco de Mayo each year, with tons of

young people holding huge parties and drinking to commemorate this day. When looking up

Cinco de Mayo on Google, it says "observed by Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and people of non-Mexican heritage." Thus, if it were not for immigrants (undocumented ones, namely) in the U.S., Cinco de Mayo would not be celebrated. Similarly, people in say, Australia, follow many American trends, in music, clothing, and even politics. People all across the globe follow American presidential elections because so many immigrants have gone there and spread news about the country to others. Why would people all the way across the world in Australia care about who the President of the United States is? It is because of the cross-cultural enrichment due to immigration.

Therefore, going back to Peter Singer's *The Life You Can Save*, is it worth ruining one's shoes to save the life of an undocumented migrant, or is preserving "American culture" prioritized over the lives of immigrants? This is not to say that cultural preservation, as a goal, is not important. Of course, American culture is something to be preserved, but letting in immigrants is not going to completely destroy American culture as Miller and others believe it to. Immigrants are simply bringing in new cultures to add to American culture, not bringing them in to *replace* American culture. And, to some extent, all immigrants must integrate into American culture if they want to lead successful lives there. Thus, while cultural preservation is valuable, it is not being argued for in the correct way. If there were to be more open migration policies, the livelihood of American culture would not be threatened. American culture would change as a result of immigrants (but it would change anyway with changing times), but the livelihood of it and its natives would not be completely destroyed. However, even if immigration did severely threaten the cultural preservation of the United States, this should not be a priority over human lives. When weighing preserving American culture against the well-being of human beings, the well-being of humans is far more important. As humans, it is our duty to take care of

each other, and so if it were one or the other, cultural preservation should not be at the top of the

agenda. This can also be applied to crime rates. Hypothetically, if crime rates did increase with

immigration, should host society natives reject immigrants entirely? While higher rates of crime

is clearly not ideal, crime is always going to be an issue, and if host society natives are more

welcoming of immigrants, crime rates can always go down. Human lives come first above

everything, and that is what should be prioritized when thinking about immigrants. If the U.S. is

to continue treating immigration as a political issue, then xenophobia and unjust policies will

always be the outcome. "The conclusion that Miller draws is that a clear immigration policy

'accompanied by strong border controls' is necessary to alleviate 'a perception of cultural threat

and a sense that their home is under invasion on the part of members of the receiving society.'

Politicians (and presumably political philosophers) sympathetic to immigrants need to rein in

their liberal instincts 'to avoid alienating their working and middle-class supporters.' This

assumption treats anti-immigrant prejudice as an inevitable reaction to immigration, rather than

seeing attitudes as shaped by state policies and by anti-immigrant rhetoric promoted by some

politicians and journalists" (Miller 160, Deller 1). Carens explains in the *Ethics of Immigration*

that the way in which the world is organized is not fair or natural, as some people are born into

rich families, some into poor, some are born in rich states, and some are born in poor. Yet, the

government has control over who can and cannot get into a country. In this, it can be seen how

an egalitarian approach to immigration would not work, as it is near impossible to create equal

opportunity for everyone when everyone is born into different families in different places.

However, without border control, a utilitarianist state where maximum happiness exists can be

achieved for both Americans and immigrants if there were open borders. As Carens details, "I

think in a just world there wouldn't be any need for immigration controls. There could be open

borders, and it wouldn't be a big threat, because most people don't want to move. Europe has

open borders within Europe, and there's a very low rate of movement. Very few European

citizens live outside the state where they're citizens. Who wants to move to a place where they

don't know anybody or can't speak the language? People in Greece or Spain might try to move

now because things are so desperate, but normally people aren't going to move for just a minor

advantage" (Carens 1). Even though Miller is incorrect in his claim that undocumented

immigrants do not boost the U.S. economy, he is right in one sense: many undocumented

migrants are exploited for work by American employers, and that, in itself, is inhumane.

Immigrants should not be treated as a means to an end, but as people. Therefore, the most

feasible solution to not treating immigration as a political issue is to not make it an issue at all.

As Carens explains, open borders is the best outcome for all, and people would no longer have to

worry about "immigrants" because that word would become irrelevant, as the government would

have no jurisdiction over who lives where.

     To gain more insight into the ethical argument regarding immigration, one can look at

Martha Nussbaum's *Ten Central Human Functional Capabilities*. We cannot look at this theory

entirely in the immigration debate, as Nussbaum aims to achieve human dignity for each

individual person, rather than maximizing well-being for the majority as has been discussed in

this paper. In the immigration case, it is better to look at human beings as a whole rather than at

each person individually in order maximize well-being for both groups: undocumented migrants

and Americans. It would not be practical to try and fulfill every single person's needs as

Nussbaum suggests, because then immigration reform would never happen, as we cannot make

every person happy. However, we can use a few of the capabilities to illustrate just how many

basic human rights undocumented migrants are lacking. In other words, we can look at the

situation as, "What would be most beneficial to America as a whole?" rather than "What would

be most beneficial to every migrant and every American?" The three capabilities that really stand

out in the midst of the immigration debate is "control over one's environment," "affiliation," and

"other species." Control over one's environment is, "Being able to participate effectively in

political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of

free speech and association, being able to hold property and having property rights on an equal

basis with others, having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the

freedom from unwarranted search and seizure." Affiliation is, "Being able to live with and

toward others; to be able to imagine the situation of another; being able to be treated as a

dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of

nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national

origin. Other species is, "Being able to live with concern for an in relation to animals, plants, and

the world of nature" (Nussbaum 34). Going off of Carens' solution, if there were to be open

borders, immigrants would have more control over their environment and even be able to

contribute more to their new environment in the U.S. in regards to politics, job discrimination,

etc. Furthermore, affiliation explicitly claims it is not okay to discriminate on the basis of race,

ethnicity, religion, or national origin, at least one of which applies to all immigrants, and the fact

that the U.S. is denying them entry on the basis of these denies them of this central capability and

degrades their dignity. Lastly, other species stands out because oftentimes, it seems as if the U.S.

government treats undocumented immigrants as "other species" (for example, putting children in

cages and separating them from their families). With this dehumanizing stereotype, how are

immigrants supposed to assimilate into American society if they are always being treated as the

"other?" They are humans too, and according to this central capability, all beings of the world

should be living in harmony and appreciating each other's beauty, and Americans need to appreciate the beauty of multiculturalism that immigrants can bring into the United States.

Now, what is it exactly that makes the treatment of undocumented migrants in the U.S. so dehumanizing and immoral? With the huge emphasis President Trump has placed on building a wall to increase border security, this has been a hot topic of discussion of the upcoming presidential election. As stated previously, thousands of children are being ripped away from their parents by ICE, and thousands of immigrant children are literally being held captive in cages. Not much has been reported about this situation recently, but as of August 2019, "Trump decried the county's immigration laws, saying undocumented immigrants 'may get in but it doesn't matter, because they're going out'' (Ainsley et al. 1). Evidently, this practice is still ongoing. "There are more than 2,000 children being held in custody without their parents at the southern border daily...since the start of Donald Trump's presidency, two dozen migrants have died in custody with U.S. Border Patrol, including six children" (Golshan 1). Not only that, but President Trump has cut the number of refugees the United States lets in by more than 60 percent, despite the massive global refugee crisis (Golshan 1). According to the UN Refugee Agency, 70.8 million people have been forcibly displaced around the world, 25.9 million are refugees, and 3.5 million are asylum seekers (UNHCR 1). Thus, even as more and more immigrants are in desperate need of refuge, the Trump administration is making it even more difficult for immigrants to enter the United States, as if it were not difficult enough already. Oftentimes, Americans like to emphasize that they are not "anti-immigrant," but simply "anti-illegal-immigrant." According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are approximately 45 million immigrants in the U.S., and 11 million are undocumented (Pew Research Center 1). The only way to truly become an American in the U.S. and have safe immigrant status is through

getting a green card. In a study conducted in 2016, it was found that the U.S. only gave out one million, and that they are really only given out to people who are recommended by a U.S. employer or who have very close family members who are either U.S. citizens or are already permanent residents themselves. The biggest immigration debate has been over undocumented migration across the Mexico-U.S. border, as that is where 25% of all U.S. immigrants come from (Pew Research Center 1). If 25 percent of undocumented immigrants come from Latin America, that shows the U.S. is not accommodating enough to them if so many of them are crossing the border illegally. About 26,000 immigrants come from Mexico legally each year, but there are 1.3 million Mexicans on the waitlist, meaning the State Department is still processing applications that go all the way back to 1997 (CBS Denver 1).

Clearly, letting in immigrants is not a priority of the U.S. government, and most Americans do not realize how difficult it is to migrate to the United States. The main government policy that brings most Democrats together on immigration reform is the passing of the DREAM Act. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act was proposed in 2001 to grant residency to qualifying immigrants who entered the United States as minors (adl.org). Since President Trump decided to end the DACA program, the Democratic presidential candidates have been putting immigration policy to the forefront of their agendas. They have had goals of reinstating DACA, halting the construction of the border wall, increasing the number of refugees the United States admits, decriminalizing being apprehended at the border, and stopping the process of holding undocumented immigrants in detention centers and separating children from their parents (Golshan 1). Based on whether President Trump is reelected for another term or if a Democratic candidate wins the nomination could determine the fate of the Mexico-U.S.

border conflict in the coming years. Furthermore, stricter immigration laws on that border will impact undocumented migration from other countries as well.

Why has this anti-immigrant movement become so prevalent in American society, though? The cries of politicians certainly do not help with the anti-immigrant stigma, with people like President Trump saying things like, "[Mexican illegal immigrants] are bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Nowrasteh 1). The question remains, however, where is Trump getting information from that sparked this ill-founded claim? According to the National Bureau of Economic Research and the American Community Survey, immigrants are less crime prone than the native-born population, and also that increased immigration does not increase crime -- in fact, it sometimes causes crime rates to fall (Nowrasteh 1). Butcher and Piehl of the National Bureau of Economic Research conducted a study in which they examined incarceration rates for men aged 18-40 in the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses. Through this, they found that, "In each year immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated than natives with the gap widening each decade. By 2000, immigrants have incarceration rates that are one-fifth those of the native-born" (Butcher and Piehl 1). Also, the American Immigration Council found that about 1.6 percent of immigrant males aged 18-39 are incarcerated, while 3.3 percent of native-born are incarcerated (Ewing et al. 1). Politicians and celebrities often contribute to stigmas against immigrants. For example, the Central Park Five, a group of five black and Latino teenage boys, were wrongly accused of raping and beating a woman jogging in Central Park in 1989. President Trump has been known to be an avid proponent of the death penalty. According to The Atlantic, "Donald Trump took out full-page ads in all four major New York newspapers to argue that perpetrators of crimes such as this one 'should be forced to suffer' and 'be executed.'" And after the five men were offered a $41

million settlement for false arrest, "Trump took to the pages of the New York Daily News,

calling the settlement 'a disgrace,'" even insisting during his 2016 presidential campaign that the

Central Park Five were guilty, 27 years later (Graham et al. 1). Through this example, Trump's

extreme racism is evident, and it shows through his abhorrent immigration views and policy and

his empty claims of Mexicans being "rapists" and bringing crime and drugs, when in fact, there

is no data to prove these accusations. In fact, research has found that areas with undocumented

immigrants actually have less crime:

> "The results of the analysis resemble those of other studies on the relationship between
>
> undocumented immigration and crime. Last year, a report by the Cato Institute, a
>
> libertarian think tank, found that unauthorized immigrants in Texas committed fewer
>
> crimes than their native-born counterparts. A state-level analysis in Criminology, an
>
> academic journal, found that undocumented immigration did not increase violent crime
>
> and was in fact associated with slight decreases in it. Another Cato study found that
>
> unauthorized immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated" (Flagg 1).

The notion that undocumented migrants commit more crimes than their native counterparts is a

myth: why would they go through so much to get to the U.S., and then commit a crime? That

would get them instantly deported. Furthermore, most people do not take into account, or even

know, what undocumented migrants go through to get to the United States, and almost all of that

is a result of government immigration policy.

Conclusion

From this, it is clear that government policy is not only inhumane, but ineffective. As a

result of many of the government policies put in place against undocumented migrants, many

Americans have misperceptions about immigrants and do not want them in the U.S. The solution

to this would be to create open borders. Over the years, creating government policies to regulate immigration has led to millions of immigrant deaths, an isolation of the U.S. from the rest of the world because of its poor immigration policies, lack of diversity in the U.S., and exploitation of undocumented workers in the U.S. These policies have divided Americans at large and have only caused the U.S. to take steps back rather than forward. Furthermore, having open borders would increase the global economy anyway. Michael Clemens, an economist at the Center for Global Development, explains,

> "The reason migration packs such economic punch is both simple and mysterious: a worker's economic productivity depends much more on location than skill. A taxi driver in Ethiopia's capital, no matter how talented and industrious, cannot earn more than a few thousand dollars a year. The same person doing the same job in New York City can easily earn $35,000 a year. The reason people will pay him that much is that his driving adds more than $35,000 of value to the New York economy, more value than his actions can add to the Ethiopian economy.

> This has puzzled economists since Adam Smith in the 18th century. It is related to international differences in legal systems and geographic traits, and to pure proximity to other high-productivity workers. But regardless of the reason, the fact remains that simply changing a worker's location can massively enrich the world economy. And stopping such movement massively impoverishes it" (Clemens 1).

Through this, it is evident that having open borders would contribute to the utilitarian framework and maximize well-being for both immigrants and natives. However, at first read, this sounds like this *is* still treating immigration like a government policy. Thus, it is important to define

what a government policy is in this context. For the purposes of this paper, a government policy

is something gives the government control over someone or something. As a result, having open

borders would result in immigration not being a government policy, because politicians would

have no control over who goes in and out of the country. People would be able to migrate freely

to the U.S., and the government would not be able to interfere. The statements politicians make

regarding immigration simply fuel Americans' fire and make the hatred stronger, which is why

these people should not have authority over immigration at all. These are human lives being dealt

with, and using them to make a political statement is an utterly unethical and impractical way to

deal with it, especially with the harsh and inhumane policies that have been put in place thus far.

With open borders, both Americans and immigrants alike can maximize on reaping benefits from

each other, and people can have more access to the ten capabilities, and people can be more

accepting of one another rather than having a pervasive anti-immigrant stigma in the United

States. Why should immigration be such a huge political issue when it does not have to be one at

all? Through maintaining open borders, some misperceptions about undocumented migrants can

be settled once and for all when Americans see the true impact they have on the U.S.

Works Cited

Agriculture, United States Department of. *Ag and Food Sectors and the Economy*. 20 September 2019. 25 November 2019.

Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, Jens Manuel Krogstad. *What we know about illegal immigration from Mexico*. Research Article. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2019.

Between Borders: American Migrant Crisis. Perf. Craig Renaud Brent Renaud. 2015. New York Times Documentary.

Borjas, George. "Yes, Immigration Hurts American Workers." Politico. News Article.

Camarota, Steven et al. *There Are No Jobs Americans Won't Do*. Center for Immigration Studies, 2018.

Carens, Joseph H. *Why Do Political Philosophers Disagree? Reflections on David Miller's Strangers in Our Midst*. University of Toronto, 8 Sept. 2017, www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Carens-Berkeley-paper-on-Miller.pdf.

Clemens, Michael. "A World Without Borders Makes Economic Sense." *The Guardian*. News Article.

David A. Graham, Adrienne Green, Cullen Murphy, Parker Richards. *An Oral History of Trump's Bigotry*. News Article. Washington, D.C.: The Atlantic, 2019.

Deller, Rose, et al. "Book Review: Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration by David Miller." *LSE Review of Books*, 9 Dec. 2019, blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2016/09/06/book-review-strangers-in-our-midst-the-political-philosophy-of-immigration-by-david-miller/.

Douglas S. Massey, Chiara Caopoferro. "Measuring Undocumented Migration." 2004. *JSTOR*. 25 November 2019.

Economic Impact of Immigration. 2019. 25 November 2019.

Flagg, Anna. "Is There a Connection Between Undocumented Immigrants and Crime?" *The Marshall Project*. News Article.

Flores, René et al. *Examining Americans' Stereotypes About Immigrant Illegality*. Social Contexts, 2019.

Garip, Filiz. *On the Move*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017.

Gest, Justin. *How America Fell Behind the World on Immigration*. Politico, 2018.

Golshan, Tara. "The 2020 Democratic immigration debate, explained." News Article. 2019.

How Hard Is It To Come To The U.S. Legally? News Article. Minneapolis: CBS Denver, 2018.

Julia Ainsley and Didi Martinez. "What ICE Did and Did Not Do for Kids Left Behind by Mississippi Raids." *NBC*. News Article.

Klein, Ezra. "Peter Singer on the Lives You Can Save." *Vox*, Vox, 6 Dec. 2019, www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/12/6/20992100/peter-singer-effective-altruism-lives-you-can-save-animal-liberation.

Kristina Cooke and Ted Hesson. *What Are 'Sanctuary' Cities and Why is Trump Targeting Them?* Reuters. 25 February 2020.

League, Anti-Defamation. *Mainstreaming Hate: The Anti-Immigrant Movement in the U.S.* 2019. 25 November 2019.

Leon, Sharon. *Bracero History Archive*. 2019. 25 November 2019.

León, Jason De. *The Land of Open Graves*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015.

Lind, Dara. *"Immigrants are coming over the border to kill you" is the only speech Trump knows*

how to give. News Article. Washington, D.C.: Vox, 2019.

MacKenzie, Debora. *The truth about migration: how it will reshape our world*. New Scientist, 2016.

Matthews, Dylan. "What Gives Us a Right to Deport People? Joseph Carens on the Ethics of Immigration." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 29 Nov. 2013, www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/11/29/what-gives-us-a-right-to-deport-people-joseph-carens-on-the-ethics-of-immigration/.

Miroff, Nick. *Smugglers are sawing through new sections of Trump's border wall*. News Article. San Diego, California: The Washington Post, 2019.

Motlagh, Jason. *The Deadliest Crossing*. News Article. New York City: Rolling Stone, 2019.

New American Economy. February 8 2020.

Norwasteh, Alex. *Illegal Immigrants and Crime -- Assessing the Evidence*. News Article. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2019.

Olsen, Henry. *Yes, undocumented immigrants take jobs from Americans. Here's the proof*. The Washington Post, 2019.

Peters, Margaret E. *Why did Republicans become so opposed to immigration? Hint: It's not because there's more nativism*. News Article. Washington, D.C.: The Washington Post, 2018.

Scott, Jennifer. *Xiomara: Working Toward Home*.

Scruggs, Otey M. (August 1, 1963). "Texas and the Bracero Program, 1942–1947". *Pacific Historical Review*. 32 (3): 251–64.

"Tell Congress: End Prevention Through Deterrence & Operation Streamline." *The Action Network*.

"The Central Capabilities." *Creating Capabilities: the Human Development Approach*, by Martha C. Nussbaum, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013, pp. 17–45.

The Dream Act, DACA, and Other Policies Designed to Protect Dreamers. American Immigration Council, 2019.

The Dream Act, DACA, and Other Policies Designed to Protect Dreamers. 3 September 2019. 25 November 2019.

The Undocumented Migration Project. 2019. 15 November 2019.

Tobey, Nathan. "What Does the American Dream Mean to You?" *Frontline*. News Article.

Todea, Diana V. *Three perspectives on the ethics of immigration: utilitarian, liberal egalitarian and libertarian*. University of Edinburgh, 2010.

Wong, Tom K. *The Effects of Sanctuary Policies on Crime and the Economy*. News Article. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2017.