



AMERICAN IMMIGRATION

How can we make the American Immigration system fairer and more accessible?



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OVERVIEW

Immigration is one of the most hot-button topics in modern-day American politics, and rightly so. Immigration, and the controversy surrounding it, has been an integral part of the country's history since colonial times (Lee). In 1790, the Nationality Act was passed stating that only "free white persons" can be citizens. Later was the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the 1917 Immigration Act, and many more that regulated immigration (Goek). It wasn't until the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act that racial and ethnic discrimination in American immigration policy was outlawed (Goek). Modern fear and mistrust of immigrants, especially those coming from the Middle East, has roots in a terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 1993. A poll done by CNN and USA Today found that 76% of Americans thought that immigration should be stopped or greatly reduced. President Bill Clinton said, "The simple fact is that we must not and cannot surrender our borders to those who wish to exploit our history of compassion and justice.... We must say no to illegal immigration." and moved focus to America's southern border (Garcia).

Today, these xenophobic ideas and legislature are still seen. Donald Trump's presidency brought anti-immigration legislature, like placing a cap for the amount of asylum seekers (Esterline and Batalova).

As of 2019, there are more than 44.9 million immigrants that live in the United States (Esterline and Batalova). In November 2021, 4.1 million green card applicants were put on the waitlist, where they could stay for over 20 years (Esterline and Batalova). According to data from the Department of Homeland Security, over 57 million immigrants have been deported since 1892. That is more than any other country. If they get their green cards and are not deported, they face lower incomes, lack of health insurance, and more (Lee). The laws and social opinions in America have made immigration a difficult process.



APPROACH ONE: MODIFYING THE CAP

Bolstering an ever-increasing population size of roughly 330 million residents, the US has become one of the largest countries in power around the world. Given this power, wealth, and societal status, the US definitely has the resources to provide a home to a large number of immigrants. Currently, the United States Immigration policy has a hard cap of the number of immigrants that could enter the country each year. Looking at an economic and logistical view of the US, the country has the funds, room, and job openings to allow a greater number of immigrants into the country, but should the US be required to?

Looking at the immigration status of other similarly acting world powers such as that of Canada, Canada allows roughly four times the density of immigrants into the country relative to its population size. The current cap in the US allows only 675 thousand immigrants to enter the country each year (How the United). This number is roughly 1/500th of the population of the United States, and for being such a "diverse country", it makes one consider how the country become such. Contrarily Canada has no immigration cap and has no issues with an influx of immigrants economically, logistically, or socially (Notice Supplementary Information).



Questions of Interest

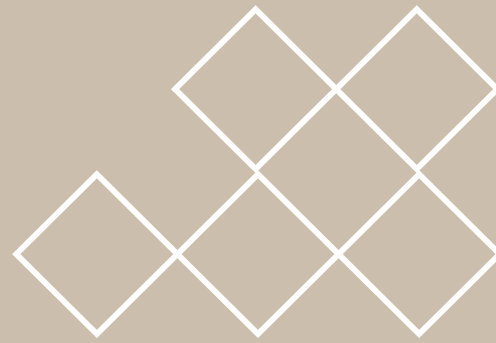
- Should those with resources and power be required to support those who are less fortunate?
- Should everyone have equally priority in the immigration process regardless of the safety concerns of remaining in a war torn or third world country?



In addition to the hard cap of the number of immigrants that may enter the US each year, the country puts a 7% limit of the total immigrants from any given country. For example, only 7% of the 675,000 immigrants could come to the US from Iran or a maximum of 7% from South Africa (How the United). This 7% cap from each country limits those who may be seeking asylum from getting the help they need, and puts many at risk for their life due to a measly little country's immigration cap. At the loss of life for those coming from third world and war-torn countries, it is clear that there needs to be reform to the US immigration cap.

The cap needs reform in both the hard cap, but also on the country percentage cap. Both caps create significant obstacles for those desperate to escape their current circumstances but do not impact those who are coming from a safe environment. While America is accepting 1/500 of its population as immigrants, Canada accepts over 1/100 of its population each year (VOA news) and plans to increase that number in the coming years. This shows that America could accept 5 times the amount of immigrants it does now. The cap could be raised to 2 million immigrants per year, and still be under its ability. On top of that, the per country cap should be removed so that those coming from dangerous situations have a place of refuge without competition from first world countries.

PROS AND TRADE-OFFS



Pros	Trade-offs
<p>Changing cap allows more to escape dangerous situations (No limit for those coming from war torn countries)</p>	<p>Changing cap prohibits equal (or semi equal) entry from multiple countries, thereby creating a more disproportional immigration situation (May have significant number from war country and little from a third world or those who help the workforce)</p>
<p>Expedited waiting process of immigrants. Current processing time is up to 20 months, but does not include waiting for the opportunity to apply. More slots = less waiting</p>	<p>Increase in taxes and economic need for immigration by speeding up processing and hiring more workers, resulting in significant public outcry against the policy.</p>
<p>Would create jobs for the immigrants to support themselves, opportunities to build homes and create more communities</p>	<p>May not have enough housing resources, open jobs, or work opportunities for influx of immigrants</p>

APPROACH TWO: EDUCATE AMERICANS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS

Xenophobia is not a natural human behavior, but rather one that is learned and taught (Web MD). When it comes to immigration, many immigrants often have a difficult time creating and/or adapting to life in the United States due to inherent xenophobia from established citizens. Thus, the fairness of the immigration system also stems from within. In a study of 2,002 adults, the Pew Research center concluded that fewer than half of Americans know that the majority of immigrants are here legally, and 69% of Americans are somewhat sympathetic to those that are here illegally (Pew Research Center). Though, regardless of research, it's important for us to understand that we are just as much of the problem as the government and whatever policies and hindrances immigrants may face. In order to foster an inclusive environment, we need to reduce our chances of xenophobic behaviors which often start with educating our children.

Children and young adults are extremely influenced by what they see online, sometimes even mimicking and imitating the behaviors and words they see. Because school and academics take up the majority of their days, it's important to instill differing worldviews in their curriculums. When discussing significant historical events such as Pearl Harbor, the Holocaust, and slavery, introducing material from both sides of the story is critical. Not only does it offer a nuanced perspective, but it fosters understanding. For example, Native American history is often only told from the caucasian perspective which gives an inaccurate depiction of what actually occurred. Allowing other perspectives and voices is a catalyst for empathy and understanding.

Humans, especially children, are heavily influenced by the media they consume through screens, books, music, and other mediums. Thus, a second approach would be to allow more representation of various peoples of color and sexuality through these showings. A study done by Opportunity Agenda proved that the media people consume significantly influences their perceptions of the people they're shown (Opportunity Agenda). For example, the negative connotation surrounding black men greatly contributes

Questions of Interest

- Do you think schools, especially elementary to middle schools, should be required to educate children on the importance of diversity?
- Do you think educating people on diversity creates an "Us vs Them" mentality and if so how do we tackle this issue?

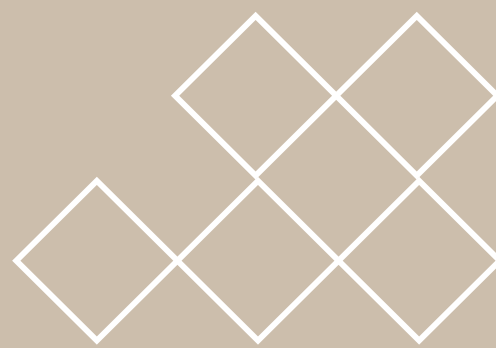
to the misconception that they're aggressive, untrustworthy, and suspicious. TV and Movies can thus normalize these stereotypes and create room for racist and exclusive behaviors. In a recent Red Table Talk episode, Golden-Globe-winning Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh described how growing up, she never believed she could be an actress due to the lack of Asian representation on screen. However, it's important to note a potential tradeoff of diversity in the media: tokenism. Tokenism is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "the policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort (as to degenerate)" (Merriam-Webster). Diversity is not something that should be forced, but rather something that is naturally celebrated and brought about. While a POC might be represented in a film, constantly using the same cultural stereotype is inaccurate to the culture and offensive to their achievements.

Hispanics have often been portrayed as drug lords or maids; Asians are seen wearing glasses and acing every math test; Black men are shown as criminals. These stereotypes can give an incorrect depiction to young children which can negatively affect their views and behaviors toward those of color. Adjusting to life in a new country is already incredibly difficult enough. By changing our views and allowing for more voices to be heard, we can create a safer, more inclusive, and easier environment for immigrants in the United States.

The most effective form of fostering inclusivity is just by, well, doing it. One way to accomplish this is to organize community events around important cultural holidays and events such as Lunar New Year, Diwali, Black History Month, and other heritage days and months. These events can provide insight to those not part of the culture and perhaps eliminate preconceived biases and opinions. A second form of cultural celebration is to support businesses run by POCs. Storebrands reports that businesses run and owned by POCs and women are less likely to receive funding than other competitors in their industries: Crunchbase found that in 2020, Black and Latino business owners received only 2.6% of venture capital funding (Storebrands). A possible tradeoff could be to make the previously mentioned cultural events feel forced. Not every individual has the desire to learn about other races and making them attend these events, can lead to disrespect (especially in schools, workplaces, and universities).



PROS AND TRADE-OFFS



Pros	Trade Offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing educational material by POCs teaches children at a young age to appreciate and acknowledge other cultures • Introduces other potential experiences of historical events • Creates room for in-class discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can create the assumption that everyone from that culture is/believes those same ideas • Can create an Us vs. Them mentality (POCs vs. whites) • Can create potential arguments at home as some families might not be comfortable discussing those topics
<p>Representation in media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifies films, • Creates validation for audiences of color • Creates oppritunities • Can give voice to the voiceless 	<p>Tokenism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Asian, • Hispanic Maid • Black Criminal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate local communities • Celebration of holidays from other cultures • Access to more cuisines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Indian, Szechuan, Korean, Japanese, Italian, American, Lebanese, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can feel forced and uncomfortable • Can provide an inaccurate representation of the race/culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ex: Asians only eat sushi and Hispanics only eat tacos.

APPROACH THREE: STRENGTHENING THE U.S ECONOMY

The debate about immigration revives a decades old question concerning Immigrants contribution to our economy; and whether or not less immigration will result in more jobs and higher wages in America for native-born workers. Immigration is incredibly beneficial to our Americas economy by further propping it up. Immigrants boost overall GDP and increase productivity. That is why our solution of expanding work visa and employment opportunities to foreign born individuals will strengthen the US economy.

Contrary to popular belief, immigrants do not actually take away jobs and opportunities from native born citizens. In reality, immigrants rarely compete with native-born Americans. In contrast, studies find that immigration has actually raised average wages of native-born workers during the last few decades. Immigrants have however affected "earlier immigrants, who experienced significant reductions in wages from the surge in immigration" (THE EFFECTS OF IMMIGRATION).



Questions of Interest

- Do we give preference to American workers when extending employment to immigrants?
- Do we continue to allow competition between just immigrants or push for competition between immigrants and native-born workers as well?
- Should there be a difference in wage between foreign-born and native workers?



The US labor force consists of 17 percent of immigrant workers (migrationpolicy.org). Take them away, and the economy would tank. When immigrants join the workforce, they expand the economy just by receiving a paycheck and spending it. According to estimates by the national bureau of economic research, immigrant workers create \$500 billion a year in economic output. Since Immigrants pay in state federal taxes and wages, they boost Americas overall GDP. According one study by the international monetary fund (IMF), for every 1% increase in the migrant population, there's a 2% increase in GDP per capita. Further extending employment and work visas to immigrants increases productivity per worker because immigrants' skills often complement the existing population.

Offering more employment opportunities to immigrants in the US increases the percentage of the working age people because migrants tend to fall within the age bracket for the of age labor force population. What if these Immigrants were deported? The economy could loose big time, nearly 8 trillion, over the next 14 years. (Center for Migration Studies)

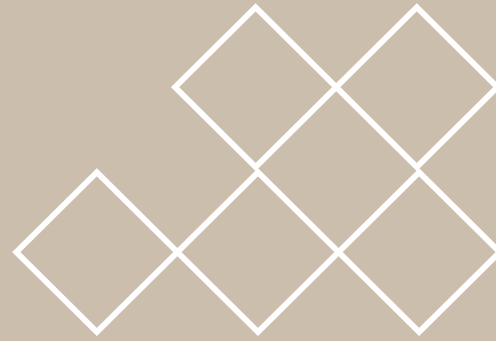
One complication with expanding employment opportunities to immigrants however is that foreign born individuals tend to earn less than native born Americans. On average, immigrants earn 89 cents for every dollar a native born American makes. That disparity generally holds true across age groups and education levels.

Immigrants also tend to have lower incomes than native born Americans. Immigrant households in 2019 had a median income of \$63,550, compared to \$66,040 for native-born households. Fourteen percent of migrant families live below the official poverty threshold of \$25,750, compared to 12 percent of the U.S. born. So while we can expand employment to immigrants, there is no guarantee they still won't face poverty and income disparity for a multitude of socioeconomic reasons. It will continue to strengthen our overall economy however.

Offering work visas and employment to immigrants can help in assuring Americans in taking a stand that immigration is beneficial for our economy. For many immigrants, getting a job is vital in helping them integrate into America. It allows them to maintain their self-respect and independence whilst surviving and supporting their loved ones. Many countries offer immigrants work permits. American business can offer work visas to immigrants with particular skills, as well as training and work experience.



PROS AND TRADE-OFFS



Pros	Trade Offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Immigrants, on average, expand the economy, boosting overall GDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Uneducated immigrants often become tax burdens on states
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Immigrants rarely compete with native workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Immigrants offer competition to other immigrants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Immigrants increase overall productivity within the labor force, having skills that complement the existing population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There continues to be a wage gap between native born and immigrant workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">An increase in the overall labor force population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Immigrants have a propensity to live in poverty in comparison to Americans

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THANK YOU

Here is a QR code to our post-deliberation survey, please fill this out after our conclusion.