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Immigration: Media Portrayals and the Immigrant Experience**

Isabelle Breifelder

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DISRUPTING THE NARRATIVE OF GLOBAL SOUTH TO GLOBAL NORTH IMMIGRATION: MEDIA
PORTRAYALS AND THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

by

Isabelle Breitfelder

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Interdepartmental Studies

Dr. Alberto Ortiz-Diaz
Thesis Mentor

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All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
Interdepartmental Studies have been completed.

Dr. Sokhieng Au
Interdepartmental Studies Honors Advisor

**Disrupting the Narrative of Global South to Global North Immigration:
Media Portrayals and the Immigrant Experience**

Isabelle Breitfelder

Global Health Studies Honors Thesis

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Alberto Ortiz-Diaz

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Abstract

Immigration studies often focus on immigration from the Global South to the Global North and fail to recognize other patterns of immigration. The purpose of this study is to fill this lacuna of knowledge by quantitatively and qualitatively exploring immigrants' perceptions and health experiences in their country of immigration—namely, Latin American immigration to the United States mainland, Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico, and Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates. The primary research question is: What perceptions and health experiences do immigrants have en route to and upon arrival in their destination countries? A sub-question of the broader topic is: How does the immigrant experience through testimonials differ from the experience reported through other methods, such as academic publications, government reports, and news outlets? By conducting a literature review, I interpreted data from interviews, testimonials, databases, and media outlets using ethnographical, archival, and interdisciplinary methods. Analyzing immigration within both the Global North and the Global South allows researchers to better compare the immigrant experience to develop a global understanding of immigration. Results show that the portrayal of the immigrant experience differs greatly by media source, but common themes of experience arise: death, economic hardship, trauma, and rights abuse. Audio and visual sources provide viewers and listeners with the faces and voices behind the immigrant experience, while textual sources lack those benefits. However, some reports may contain photographs to support their publications, further compelling the audience. Video sources seem to use more stark and dramatic language than other sources.

Introduction

History

Current immigration streams to the United States have deep historical roots related to changes in United States immigration policy. The United States foreign-born population has increased from 9.7 million in 1960 to 44.4 million in 2017, illustrating the importance of increasingly studying the rising population and the experiences they face (Radford, 2019; Tienda & Sanchez, 2013). However, when researching the population, one must rely on a variety of resources to gain a better understanding. The purpose of this report is to inform readers of the experiences and health issues immigrants face, while emphasizing the potential differences in the immigrant experience portrayal based on type of source. Further, this report provides the reader another perspective—that is, one from the viewpoint of immigration within the Global South, rather than solely the Global South to the Global North pattern as is frequently studied. This report shows there are Global South to Global South immigration dynamics, in addition to the mainstream Global South to Global North dynamic.

There is a long history of immigration to the United States. During the colonial era, Europeans began settling in the United States. Some immigrants came to the United States in search of religious freedom, while most came in search of economic opportunities. Black slaves from West Africa were brought to the United States against their will during the colonial period. During the 19th century, there was another major wave of immigration into the United States. Irish and German immigrants flooded the country (HISTORY, 2019). During this period, there were also a significant number of Asian immigrants arriving in the United States. The immigrants were not welcomed to the country and were perceived to be stealing jobs from the native-born. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was federal legislation that banned Chinese

laborers from coming to the United States (HISTORY, 2019). This act was one of the first significant immigration restrictions the government enacted. In 1890, the government had become even more upset with the influx of immigrants, so Ellis Island was designated as a federal immigration station. From 1892 to 1954, over 12 million immigrants arrived in the United States through Ellis Island. Between 1880 and 1920, over 20 million immigrants arrived in the United States. Most of the 20 million immigrants were from Europe, including Italians and Jews fleeing persecution (HISTORY, 2019).

The manner in which racial and ethnic constructs have been determined and how they are implicated to immigration has changed throughout history. Further, immigration and health deprivation have been related historically (See, e.g. Cox & Marland, 2013). During the 19th century, immigrants were deemed dangerous by the native-born. There was a perceived link between immigrants and disease, which resulted in restrictive immigration legislation such as the creation of the immigration station at Ellis Island. The ethnicities of the immigrant populations during the 19th century were seen to be inferior. Italians, for example, were perceived as “dirty” (Marks & Worboys, 1997). Although the prestige of specific ethnicities—such as the Italians—has altered in contemporary United States society, the inferiority of the ethnicities of immigrants prevails. According to Chomsky (2007), citizenship status in the United States has long depended on race and ethnicity and continues to discriminate against immigrants of the perceived inferior group. Today, Latin American immigrants are subject to a plethora of discrimination based on false claims such as immigrants stealing jobs, draining the economy, or breaking laws (Chomsky, 2007).

With that in mind, it is critical to understand the following timeline regarding Latin American immigration to the United States: According to the Public Broadcasting Service

(2013), in 1921, the United States imposed a limit on the number of immigrants allowed into the United States for the first time. The United States Border Patrol was created by Congress in 1924 under the Department of Labor (United States Customs and Border Protection, 2018). In 1931, the government began to deport Mexican immigrants. Between 300,000 and 500,000 Mexican immigrants were forced out of the United States at this time (Public Broadcasting Service, 2013). The United States Border Patrol was transitioned to the Department of Justice in 1940. This period of bureaucratization resulted in the addition of hundreds of officers, bringing the patrol officer total to over 1,500 (United States Customs and Border Protection, 2018). In 1943, the United States launched an agreement with Mexico to import temporary workers due to the labor shortage in the agricultural sector after World War II. The next year, Operation “Bootstrap” was initiated to encourage industrialization and meet United States labor demands in Puerto Rico. This operation fueled a large wave of migrant workers to the United States (Public Broadcasting Service, 2013). In *We Are Left Without a Father Here*, Eileen J. Suárez Findlay describes how Puerto Ricans experienced the effects of colonialism in both Puerto Rico and the United States in the 1950s. Thousands of migrant workers in the United States were denied conditions that had been agreed upon by contract, such as wages and food (Miller, 2016).

In 1951, the Bracero Program was formalized and brought an average of 350,000 Mexican workers into the United States annually until 1964 (Public Broadcasting Service, 2013). The termination of the program fueled the growth of undocumented immigration from Latin America to the United States. Agriculture industries were dependent on immigrant labor during this time, and for decades, millions of immigrants could enter the United States without strict inspection. With the termination of the Bracero Program, thousands of immigrant workers were

told to return to Latin America but immigration flows to the United States were already deeply entrenched (Tienda & Sanchez, 2013).

In 1952, federal legislation began to permit patrol agents to arrest undocumented immigrants traveling within the country. That same year, the government airlifted 52,000 undocumented immigrants back to Mexico; however, the government soon ran out of funds to continue this practice (United States Customs and Border Protection, 2018). The next border patrol operation was put in place from 1954 to 1958. The goal of Operation “Wetback” was to locate and deport undocumented workers. During this time, 3.8 million Mexican workers were deported (Public Broadcasting Service, 2013). The United States Border Patrol continued to implement operations to attempt to control undocumented immigration. According to the United States Customs and Border Protection (2018), Operation “Hold the Line” was established in 1993 in El Paso, Texas. This operation consisted of agents and technology concentrated in specific areas to “show force” to potential border crossers. After this operation resulted in a decrease in apprehensions, the United States Border Patrol decided to implement Operation “Gatekeeper” which reduced undocumented entries in San Diego, California by more than 75 percent (United States Customs and Border Protection, 2018). Operation “Gatekeeper” intensified militarization at the Southwest border, increased detention space, and created interior checkpoints. However, this was not the first time militarization was present at the border. There have been established dynamic relations of authority and power along the United States-Mexico Border since the 18th century (see, e.g., Alonso, 1995). The efforts of Operation “Gatekeeper” pushed migrant crossings away from safer areas and toward more dangerous areas, resulting in thousands of immigrant deaths due to harsh desert conditions. The operation has also resulted in

increased flooding and the endangerment of protected species as a result of the more than 700 miles of wall built on the border (Southern Border Communities Coalition, n.d.).

The North American Free Trade Agreement was implemented in 1994 and eliminated all tariffs between Canada, Mexico, and the United States by 2009. This agreement was devastating to Mexican farmers as crops from the United States flood into Mexico (Public Broadcasting Service, 2013). After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Department of Homeland Security was created. At this point, the United States Border Patrol became part of the United States Customs and Border Protection, a component of the Department of Homeland Security. Since then, the United States Border Patrol has only intensified.

In 2004, a surge of anti-immigrant groups was seen along the border. One anti-immigrant group was the Minutemen, who is known for leading the contemporary anti-immigration movement. In 2010, 19 million of the 40 million immigrants in the United States were Latin Americans (Tienda & Sanchez, 2013). That April, states began implementing their own immigration policies in response to a lack of comprehensive federal immigration policy. Arizona implemented the broadest and toughest anti-undocumented immigrant law in United States history (Public Broadcasting Service, 2013). This legislation gave local police unprecedented powers and prosecuted anyone harboring or hiring undocumented immigrants. In 2011, Georgia followed suit by implementing legislation that allowed anyone stopped by police without a driver's license or proof of residency to be handed over to the immigration authorities (Public Broadcasting Service, 2013).

Today, the United States Border Patrol continues to intensify, as does its budget. The annual budget of the patrol was 4.7 billion in 2019, compared to 363 million in 1993 (Southern Border Communities Coalition, n.d.). Estimates from 2017 show that undocumented immigrants

are nearly a quarter of the United States immigrant population, meaning that most immigrants are in the United States lawfully (Radford, 2019). The top countries of origin for immigrants in the United States are Mexico, China, India, the Philippines, and El Salvador, with Mexico accounting for 25 percent of all immigrants. Approximately three million refugees have resettled in the United States since 1980. In 2018, over 22,000 refugees resettled in the United States, with more than half of those refugees originating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burma (Myanmar). The United States immigrant population is expected to reach 78 million by 2065 (Radford, 2019).

With an understanding of how United States immigration and economic policy affected and even brought forth current immigration patterns, one can begin to understand a portion of the immigrant experience. On that note, throughout this report, notions of “the immigrant experience” will be discussed, with the assumption that someone who is not an immigrant could understand the experience to some degree. To clarify, this report does not assume that any person could understand the immigrant experience from reading literature. Rather, the assumption is that the non-immigrant reader could *begin* to understand the immigrant experience but could only do so if a variety of resources from different perspectives is used. Limited research has been done about the differences in portrayal of the immigrant health experience, and this report intends to fill that lacuna of knowledge. The research methods used in preparing this report are outlined below.

Prior Research on the Immigrant Portrayal in the Media

The focus of this report is on the experiences immigrants face, including how the experiences are portrayed in the media. Some researchers have found significant patterns in the portrayal of immigrants in the media. Television influences the attitudes and opinions of its

viewers, which ultimately affects decision-making and policy. Researchers have found that many storylines tied to immigration have focused on a form of illegal activity. In an ethnic breakdown of these storylines, researchers found that 50 percent of Latino immigrant characters were represented in an unlawful act and 38 percent were depicted as incarcerated. White immigrant characters on television are more likely to be depicted in higher-ranking professions such as roles in the military, medical, or research fields (Villafaña, 2017).

Researchers at Salud America!, a Latino organization focused on researching policy, examined over 2,500 immigration articles in California. They found terms such as “illegal immigrants,” “illegal aliens,” and “illegals” in nearly every news outlet and 13 percent of all articles examined. The term “public health” was not found in any of the articles (Cantu-Pawlik, 2019). Another study of television shows used a sample of 143 episodes of 47 of the most popular shows that aired from 2017 to 2018. The study found that immigrants are often overrepresented as criminals and that immigrant characters are often portrayed as less educated on television than they are in reality (Easton, 2019).

While the foregoing information is important to understand how immigrants are portrayed in the media, this report will focus on how specific types of media differ in their portrayal of the immigrant experience—namely, novels, film, the news, nongovernmental organizations, and governmental organizations.

Methodology

Literature Review

This study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research. I analyzed a variety of resources to address the purpose of the study: to explore immigrants' perceptions and health experiences in their country of immigration—namely, Latin American immigration to the United States mainland, Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico, and Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates; and to answer the following questions: What perceptions and health experiences do immigrants have en route to and upon arrival in their destination country? How do social determinants of health or the conditions and environments in which people live affect health risks and outcomes of immigrants? How does the immigrant experience through testimonials differ from the experience reported through other methods, such as academic publications, government reports, and news outlets?

I found that the representation of the immigrant experience differs greatly by media source, but common themes of experience arise: death, economic hardship, trauma, and rights abuse. Social determinants of health affect the immigrant health experience prior to immigration, during immigration, and after immigration. Hostland environments contribute to the motives behind immigration, environments en route contribute to health risks, and environments in the destination country contribute to health risks and health access. Results also show that the language used in sources varies by the type of source. For this reason, it is critical to investigate a variety of sources about immigration to attempt to understand the immigrant health experience. In that regard, it is necessary to understand the perspective of health I approach in this report. I understand health holistically. I follow the World Health Organization definition of health outlined in the organization Constitution: “health is a state of complete physical, mental, and

social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, 1946). In this report, I consider social factors such as living conditions and economic prosperity to be conditions of health.

As the majority of this report focuses on Latin American immigration to the United States, a greater amount of time was spent searching for relevant literature to that flow of immigration. A literature search was conducted using Academic Search Elite, Scopus, Google, YouTube, nonfiction narratives, and online news sources. Within those searching mechanisms, a variety of sources were gathered, including ethnographic interviews, firsthand accounts and narratives, governmental reports, academic publications, eyewitness accounts and narratives, analyses of the experiences, data reports, and digital reports. The sources I utilized collected data by interviewing immigrants, analyzing governmental reports, interviewing eyewitnesses of immigration, and personally experiencing the immigration journey. Many of the sources I analyzed had compiled interviews with various actors in immigration. I interpreted the sources by examining the type of information they provided and analyzing the type of language, audio, or video used. Sources that contained direct reports from immigrants or people affected by immigration were interpreted to have the most prestige, while sources that lacked immigrant representation were interpreted apprehensively. I interpreted the sources in this manner because the immigrant experience can easily be taken out of context and misrepresented; therefore, sources that provide the experiences of immigrants from immigrants directly have the most likelihood of being accurate. This report only uses literature that had already been published at the time of preparation due to limited time to receive Institutional Review Board approval.

Organization of Literature

The literature gathered was then organized into a spreadsheet based on the type of the source. From there, the categories of sources became defined as historical or introductory, film, novels, academic reports, and news articles. I also categorized sources by the age, race, and gender of the people involved, along with the location and date of the source in order to understand its perspective. Finally, the sources in each category were analyzed to find themes in information, whether the themes were associated with the history of immigration, the immigrant experience, or the health effects of immigration. Themes found in the data include death, economic hardship, trauma, and rights abuse.

The same literature search, method of organization, and analysis process were done for the sections of this report describing the patterns of immigration from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico and India to the United Arab Emirates, but on a smaller scale. For each case, I began by searching for a wide variety of results using Google. From there, I began to search for articles using Scopus and Academic Search Elite. Academic and governmental reports were much more difficult to find for Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico and Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates. For that reason, most data about Puerto Rico and the United Arab Emirates were found using Google. In-depth research on Latin American immigration to the United States was conducted prior to research on Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico and Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates. Because of this, there is some potential for bias within the following sources—namely, in-depth research had just been conducted on immigration to the United States. It is possible that the research already conducted may have contributed to the sources I gravitated to about immigration to Puerto Rico and the United Arab Emirates.

Addressing Language Barriers

Much of the literature contained information in languages other than English. Information that was stated in Spanish was translated using knowledge of the language. Additionally, many videos already included English subtitles to translate the Spanish used by many of the immigrants. In the same regard, the textual literature examined had already been translated. For this reason, it is possible that some translations may not be 100 percent accurate. All information in languages other than English and Spanish were translated by the sources. There was a substantial language barrier in finding literature about the flows of immigration from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico and India to the United Arab Emirates. These sections of the report are therefore limited compared to the analysis of Latin American immigration to the United States. While I was able to locate film about Latin American immigration to the United States in a variety of areas (YouTube, academic sources, online newspapers), I was only able to find film about immigration from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico and India to the United Arab Emirates on YouTube. Further, the film I was able to access regarding the latter two cases was much shorter in length than the film I analyzed about Latin American immigration to the United States.

Results

The portrayed experience of Latin American immigrants when crossing the border to the United States varies drastically depending on where the information is reported from. Different sources of information contain various perspectives of the immigrant experience, which may result in lacking or misinformed results. The purpose of this research project was to investigate these varying sources of information and how they differ in their portrayal of the immigrant experience. In short, the results show that common themes of the immigrant experience arise within all three flows of immigration: death, economic hardship, trauma, and rights abuse. Social determinants of health affect the immigrant health experience prior to immigration, during immigration, and after immigration. Hostland environments contribute to the motives behind immigration, environments en route contribute to health risks, and environments in the destination country contribute to health risks and health access. Although the sources varied in context and portrayal of the immigrant experience, the overall themes of the experience still arose. For this reason, it is critical to investigate a variety of sources about immigration to attempt to understand the immigrant health experience.

Portrayed Immigrant Experience

Death as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in a Nonfiction Novel

A frequent consequence of immigration is death. This consequence may occur during migration or after arriving in the destination country. *The Devil's Highway*, a novel written by Luís Alberto Urrea, tells the story of 26 Mexican immigrants who attempted to cross the United States-Mexico border in 2001. Urrea, a Mexican-American, interviewed immigrants and United States Border Patrol agents, received governmental reports from Mexico and the United States,

and consulted legal correspondence to document the experience. The novel is filled with descriptive language, personal narratives, and graphic details to compel the reader.

Urrea (2004) describes the journey the men took, and how their trip through the Yuma Desert took the lives of 14 of the men. The 26 men were promised financial success and fortune by their smugglers if they crossed the border. Some of the men came from Veracruz, which was in a state of economic collapse in 2001. As a result, many families in Veracruz struggled to put food on the table, and mortality was high. Urrea (2004) vividly shared the background of a few of the 26 men:

Rafael Temich González was a quiet twenty-eight-year-old corn farmer from Apixtla....Rafael lived in a thatch-roofed home on a dirt road. You had to be careful in these grass and palm frond houses—scorpions and killer banana spiders could fall out of the fronds. Huge tropical roaches and beetles fell on you in your sleep like warm rain in some of the infested homes. Small lizards—cachorras—ran the walls, licking up the mosquitoes and slower bugs. In his hut, Rafael took care of an extended family. Along with his wife and year-old daughter, he supported his mother, two sisters, and their four daughters. All of them slept together in the house. (p. 147)

Julian Ambros Malaga could take it. He was a healthy twenty-four-year-old former soldier....He was planning to make money to build cement walls for his mother's house. He was recently married, and he and his wife were expecting a child that October....He had a note from his bride in his pocket. (p. 148)

Another San Pedro paisano was Lorenzo Ortiz Hernandez. He and his wife, Juana, had five children, aged from three to twelve....The kids were deeply into the ages when they needed things, things he couldn't afford for them. If the coffee prices hadn't dropped, they were his own small plantation staff. But no coffee money, no money at all....He decided to try his luck. He borrowed seventeen hundred dollars at 15 percent interest. (p. 145)

By providing readers with the backgrounds of some of the men who attempted to cross the border, Urrea humanized the men. Further, he presented readers with the motives behind their attempts to cross the border. A theme arose of the men wanting to travel to the United States to work and make money to support their families. The men were in search of economic health for themselves and their families.

Urrea also gave an in-depth narrative of the men's journey across the desert. According to Urrea (2004), Jesús Lopez Ramos who became known as "Mendez" attempted to smuggle the 26 immigrants across the border. However, Mendez was a rather inexperienced migrant smuggler, and the journey required crossing through the Devil's Highway, a treacherous strip of the desert. To reach the desert, the men were stashed in a motel and a safehouse before eventually boarding a bus that Mendez had secured by bribing the driver. The bus left the group near the border, and the men began walking (Urrea, 2004).

Urrea (2004) wrote that the first night of their journey, the group saw bright lights. Mendez informed the group that la Migra—the Border Patrol—was responsible for the lights. The group, in an attempt to avoid the Border Patrol, took off into the desert. Day one of their journey, the group had already strayed far off-course. On day two of their journey, the group had strayed even farther off-course. Mendez eventually told the group he would leave and bring back water or help. Mendez left, but never returned. By day three of the journey, the men were beginning to die. The men resorted to drinking their own urine and eating cacti in an attempt to survive. At this point, five men left the larger group to seek help. Eventually, they found la Migra, and a rescue mission ensued (Urrea, 2004). As will be discussed in the remainder of this report, death is a common result of immigration.

Urrea (2004) vividly described the six stages of hyperthermia that several of the men experienced: The first stage is heat stress and is accompanied by general discomfort, heat rash, headache, and thirst. Stage two is heat fatigue. This stage is characterized by full body sweating, but dry skin, and labored breathing. Stage three is heat syncope and results in fever, pale skin, difficulty speaking, and dizziness. Heat cramps are the fourth stage. A person experiencing heat cramps may tumble and fall as their body aches. Urrea described people in this stage of

hyperthermia skinning their hands and knees as they fall to the ground. At this stage, 80 percent of lost immigrants could still be saved if border patrol were to find them. Stage five is heat exhaustion. At this point, fever spikes, the head aches, and a feeling of nausea sets in. The body is weak, the heart is pounding, breathing is shallow and fast, and many people faint as the body attempts to protect itself. The last stage is heat stroke. This stage is characterized by the heart pumping harder than ever before to get oxygen to the organs. During this stage, sweat runs out, eyes turn red, blood vessels burst, and the human flesh bakes. People begin hallucinating and their organs fail (Urrea, 2004).

The horrific stories of two couples who merely visited the Yuma Desert for a short walk were told. All four people died of hyperthermia. According to Urrea (2004), “In the desert, we are all illegal aliens” (p. 124).

In the novel, Urrea was matter of fact. He did not spare the graphic details of the men’s experience. The descriptive language of the book reveals a story telling the disturbing journey many immigrants go through in search of a better life. While there are no images or audio to compel the reader, the novel inspires vivid mental imagery. Death overwhelmingly emerged as a theme of the novel. Specifically, death occurred as a result of hyperthermia, regardless of one’s citizenship status.

Trauma as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in Film

Immigrants and nonimmigrants experience social, emotional, physical, and psychological trauma as a result of immigration. Although the experiences of trauma differ, immigration begets trauma for everyone involved. The trauma may have been the motive for immigration, it may have been a consequence of the immigration journey, or it may have arisen after arriving in the destination country. The film *Crossing Arizona* produced in 2006 provides a collection of

personal narratives describing immigration and border security at the United States-Mexico border. Experiences from both immigrants and nonimmigrants are explored to provide a comprehensive account of immigration and its effects. The film has received several awards, including “Best Documentary” at the Arizona International Film Festival, “Winner” at the Munich Film Festival, and “Official Selection” at the Sundance Film Festival (Crossing Arizona, 2020).

The film began by setting the scene in Arivaca, Arizona. This town of about 700 people is located just 11 miles from the United States-Mexico border (Trevizo, 2016). While walking throughout her home and property five or six miles from the little town of Arivaca, American author Byrd Baylor described her perspective on immigration:

There are many, many people who feel that anything that happens to you if you're crossing the border illegally you deserve. If you're going to die of thirst, that you deserve to die of thirst. I mean I don't believe in the death penalty for anything, so I certainly don't believe in the death penalty for trying to walk across the desert to try to look for a better life for your family.

Baylor brought up the issue of human rights as she drew a comparison between walking across the desert to an offense punishable by the death penalty. It was Baylor's understanding that many immigrants were in search of a better life for their family, and that by doing so, they should not be given a death sentence.

The film then transitioned to Douglas, Arizona, by showing viewers a panoramic view of the city with vehicles driving by and a mountain in the background. Mayor Ray Borane of the city began writing President George W. Bush and “anybody that would listen” when he felt that the American government was addressing the issue of immigration poorly. Ray Ybarra of the American Civil Liberties Union provided a snapshot of growing up in Douglas near the border:

When I was a kid, we used to come here to my grandfather's house which is just one block from the border, and my brothers used to like to play a little game where they would run through the fence in Mexico, at that time it was just a little chain-link fence, and see how far they could get before running back and having the Border Patrol come over and shoo us away. And now when I come back home, there's this giant steel fence there. You can see a huge difference from what it was like when we were growing up here. There wasn't helicopters flying over us every night. There wasn't these gigantic stadium lights that make it look like you're in a war zone.

Ybarra's perspective of the border has changed over the years. He used to see the border as just a little fence, but now, it seems like a war zone to him. Ybarra's experiences coincide with the United States government's efforts to further militarize the border and terminate undocumented immigration.

Near Douglas, Armando Alarcon and Mario Luna of Paisanos Al Rescate dropped bottles of water from a helicopter using parachutes. Luna said, "When you hear of little kids being abandoned in the desert and dying or people just getting lost, I mean God, we save the whales, we save the gray wolf, can't we save a few humans?" Luna and Alarcon bring light to the humanitarian perspective of immigration. Health is seen as a resource to live a full life, yet immigrants are frequently denied the right of health. Thus, immigrants often die as a result of conditions that could easily be prevented or treated today, such as dehydration.

Next, the video transitioned to Ajo, Arizona. Mike Wilson, a member of the Tohono O'odham Nation, was shown putting water out in the desert. He placed water stations in the 100-degree Fahrenheit desert in an attempt to save lives. Wilson came across an immigrant from Hildago, Mexico, who paid 13,000 pesos (approximately 500 United States dollars) to a migrant smuggler to cross the border, only to be abandoned by the smuggler. Wilson provided the man with some food and water, but he was quick to inform the immigrant that he could not take him in his truck because he could go to prison if he did so. The following is a portion of the conversation between Wilson and the immigrant:

Immigrant: I don't know where I am. I don't know what to do. I stayed under one of those trees. Then later I didn't see anyone. I started walking along this road. I saw the tire tracks. I thought cars must go by.

Immigrant: And how far is it to get to Phoenix?

Mike Wilson: Miles or days?

Immigrant: Time, hours?

Mike Wilson: Days, man, days.

The immigrant seems to be getting emotional as he states: I wanted to come work. My wife has to have surgery. I don't have the money and they told me I could come here for work. I have little children. I'm not afraid to die, but for the sake of my kids....

The theme of economic hardship and economic health arises again. The immigrant desires to provide for his family. His desire to provide for his family is so strong that he does not fear death. Similar to many other immigrants, the poverty entrenched in society has chosen his family to harm, and he feels his only option is to migrate to save his family.

In Altar, Mexico, a young woman sat with her fiancé and explained her situation:

I'm 23 years old. I crossed when I was 19. I lived for five years in Tennessee. I came back to see my family in Mexico City. I came back to get married. Now I'm leaving again and it's really hard. I'm expecting a baby, I'm two months pregnant. It's very hard to cross this way. You don't know what could happen to you. What might go wrong.

Even if an immigrant desires to migrate to the United States, their hostland will always remain with them, because family, friends, and connections remain in the country. While many immigrants never return to their hostlands, this young woman felt she could return for a period of time and successfully return to the United States.

An immigrant smuggler named Hector shared:

These people have the courage to leave everything to go over there. They want to give their children something better, you know? United States border security has become much tougher. I used to walk 2 hours, then 4, then 6, then 8, then 12, then 15, then 20. And up to 40 hours. Now it's at 40 hours.

The smuggler witnessed United States border security intensify over the years. Even though smugglers often place immigrants in extreme danger, this smuggler still understood what was driving immigrants to attempt to reach the United States—economic prosperity.

In the background, a man played the guitar and sang, while people crowded around, danced, and young children played games with each other. Over the background, the Pima County Legal Defender Isabel Garcia said:

Immigration into this country is not new. Immigration into Arizona is not new. It's something that we have actually created ourselves. Many Americans say, you know, 'We're having an influx of immigrants and Mexico's too poor, too corrupt, everybody's coming here now.' I think it's really vital that people realize in this country that we have had a hand in exactly what's occurring.

Garcia's perspective that Mexican immigration to the United States is inevitable given the actions the United States government has taken historically is accurate. As discussed in the introduction of this report, the United States has implemented many measures that have resulted in Mexican immigration to the United States, such as the Bracero program and the North American Free Trade Agreement.

An immigrant from Veracruz stood against a stone wall, wearing a flannel and a baseball cap, and shared the reason he came to the United States:

I have a daughter who is 22 years old with a daughter—a grandchild—my wife, and my other children. It's hard there, in Veracruz, it's hard. That's why so many people come here. There's no work. They come to get work.

Similar to the other motives for migrating described earlier in this report, this immigrant from Veracruz desires to work in the United States. He implies that he, along with so many other immigrants, needs to provide for his family.

Some citizens living near the border are not supportive of immigrants crossing to the United States. In Tombstone, Arizona, Ruth Evelyn Cowan, who owns Tombstone Beef says:

I always look to see if there are tracks, so that I know when I walk up to my headquarters that I don't get a surprise. And it's really scary to drive up here myself. And I normally drive around in my truck to see if someone has been here or is here besides me before I ever get out of the truck.... Last week, we picked up 6,060 pounds of trash. Cattle will eat just about anything, unfortunately. I had a 2,400 dollar bull. I owned him three days, and he ate a plastic sack and died.

A white older man kicked around plastic bottles and garbage in the grass as he said:

People like the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) or these groups, why don't they let these people do what they do to this property? Why don't they allow them to go into their backyards and throw their garbage, walk through their yards, or walk through their house like they're doing on the property that these ranchers own down here along the border?

Cowan and the man were both distressed by immigration. Cowan experienced the trauma of fear living near the Mexico-United States border. She also experienced a sort of economic trauma when her cattle became injured from eating trash. Cowan's perspective reflects the mainstream narrative surrounding immigration to the United States today—immigrants are dangerous. The man's statements support the mainstream narrative that immigrants are troublesome, and that groups attempting to aid immigrants do not understand the reality of immigration.

Other people living near the border somberly described finding deceased bodies of immigrants. An older woman walked to a pile of rocks and described the level of death people living near the border witness:

It had been about 120, 115 every day for the few days before. What we think is they probably didn't die right here, but very often, if people died off the road even a quarter of mile, their friends will bring their body to the road. It was just lying there with lots of scratches and bloody marks on him from the catclaw thorns.

In St. David, Arizona, George Monzingo described finding a woman's deceased body:

This is about where she was at right here in the bottom of this ditch, where they found her right in here. And what had happened, a lot of the varmints had ate part of her, and so they scattered the bones around a little bit, and so they had to come and gather everything up, but it was just below this wire right there is where it was at. I have found five people that have died on this ranch in the last five years. I never found anybody before all this started about five, six years ago.

The film showed pictures of decomposed bodies as Al Tomlinson, the Deputy Sheriff of Cochise County, shared:

Over the last three years, I've recovered *personally*, probably over 60 bodies along the Arizona-Mexico border. And to recover a body, you know, it's not like what people see in the movies. In the movies, you see somebody die, it looks like they're asleep. You don't smell the blood, you don't smell the body, you don't smell the urine, where they probably urinated themselves or defecated themselves, it's TV and we've become anesthetized to that, all right? When you recover these bodies, sometimes, and a lot of cases, they've been down about two months, which means they've started to decompose, which means the bodies are bloated. And what happens is when you go to recover the bodies, you go to grab an arm or a leg, the arm or leg comes off in your hand like a leg a chicken, as blunt as I can put it. It changes you. You never get used to recovering a body in the desert, ever. I recovered the body of a 28-year-old female four months ago just west of here, who was eight months pregnant. She couldn't keep up. The coyote left her to die. That still bothers me to this day, because the coyote left her.

Not only are immigrants experiencing the trauma of death, but so are nonimmigrants who are witnesses of the treacherous journey that is immigration. *Crossing Arizona* not only humanized immigrants by sharing their stories, but the film provided viewers with images of the immigrants. Instead of a narrator telling their stories, most of the immigrants told their stories to the filmmakers themselves. Further, the film illustrated the experience of immigration through the eyes of both the immigrant and the bystander. The film provided viewers with the experiences of people living near the United States-Mexico border. While their experiences varied, each narrative exposed shocking details about life near the border—namely, the plethora of deceased bodies being found regularly near the border. Thus, immigration also affects the health of nonimmigrants living and working along the border. Regardless of immigration status, people are traumatized by the experience of death at the border.

Another film, *Which Way Home*, provides viewers with personal stories and experiences through the eyes of migrant children as they attempt to reach the United States-Mexico border, hopeful of a better life in the United States. The 2009 film tells the stories of several

unaccompanied minors as they travel by train throughout Mexico toward the United States. It is prohibited by Mexican train companies for people to ride on the freight trains; however, the rules are difficult to enforce with thousands of people boarding the trains. Among the thousands of migrants who ride trains attempting to reach the United States, approximately five percent are unaccompanied children. Throughout the film, children share their motives for migrating, their hopes and dreams, and their struggles throughout the journey (Cammisa, 2009).

The film begins by setting the scene in Piedras Negras, Mexico—a city that lies on the United States-Mexico border. The camera pans to a dead body floating in a river. Officer Rogelio Ramos of Mexican Municipal Police watched the body retrieval and described that this was not an infrequent experience. Officer Ramos said that recently there had been some children who drowned trying to cross the border through the river (Cammisa, 2009). After the body was removed from the river, Officer Ramos met with a 13-year-old boy who he believed was Central American. The boy explained that he was brought into the Public Security Department because he was alone in the river. He shared that he arrived by train and was attempting to reach his family in Virginia (Cammisa, 2009).

Central American migrants traveling by train must first cross the Guatemala-Mexico border. From Tapachula near the border, the trains travel to Coatzacoalcos, Mexico City, Monterrey, and finally, Piedras Negras near the United States-Mexico border. In Tapachula, two boys were filmed lying along train tracks (Cammisa, 2009). These two boys were Kevin and Fito, and they were going to be attempting the 1,450-mile trip to the United States by train. The boys came from Honduras and imagined the United States to be similar to its representation on television and in the movies. They expected to find big towers and huge cities (Cammisa, 2009).

The boys shared the motive behind their journey: to make money. Kevin, 14 years old, shared his experience as he jumped from one train car to another:

What I've always dreamed of was to be in the United States. Most of the children in Honduras they grow up with that idea, 'I'm going to the United States.' The truth is my mother is really poor. The money she makes is barely enough to feed us. In my life I would like to help her and be able to buy her a house.

Kevin felt the need to support his mother at the young age of 14 years old. He fell into the desire of economic health and prosperity at a young age.

Fito, 13 years old, hoped to be adopted so he could grow and then make money. He shared that he did not inform his mother that he was leaving because she was gone. When he left with Kevin, his mother was "partying with her husband." Fito's father was deceased (Cammisa, 2009). Fito was searching for family and compassion in the United States.

Kevin was filmed sleeping on concrete. He kept his arms inside of the body of his shirt for warmth. His backpack became his pillow. "Let's go to battle," another migrant said to the boys as the train arrived the next morning. The boys begged passersby for food, and they received packaged snacks and soup. They hopped on the slowly moving train along with many other migrants and were greeted by tree branches that necessitated ducking to avoid getting hit. Kevin shared that he missed his mother already at the beginning of their trip:

I miss her a lot but when I think about her it makes me cry, and I don't want to cry. I want my mother and I to get ahead. She sells empanadas. And I shine shoes and make \$5 per day.

Kevin's intentions behind traveling to the United States remain economical in nature. When asked if it was "really bad back home," Kevin shared, "It's just that I have a stepfather who said that I was not his son, and it's true, but he didn't want me." As the dangerous journey by train began for Kevin, he pointed out at the mountains and bright green grass, indicating how

beautiful the site they were witnessing was. Even in dark times, Kevin still saw the beauty surrounding him. When asked where his biological father was, Kevin responded:

In Honduras. I do see him, but when I do it's like I greet him out of respect, because I know that he brought me into the world, but I would have preferred it if he hadn't. It's like a stake that I carry in my heart.

While Fito was quick to explain that he was hoping to be adopted in the United States, Kevin did not mention that desire; however, both boys made statements that supported a desire to find family and familial support in the United States.

On the train, Kevin and Fito met two other boys who they decided to travel with. Jairo was a 14-year-old boy from Mexico. His mother was killed over money when he was 13 years old. He started living by himself and ended up meeting his friend "Dog" who asked if he wanted to go with him to the United States. Yurico, who goes by "Dog," was 17 years old (Cammisa, 2009). "Dog" shared his motive for the journey:

I have lived 15 years in the streets. I was a drug addict. I started thinking, if my life is going to be like this, I better look for another life, so I can free myself from this. I never had the love of a father, the love of a mother. I'd like to have a family where I can get the love I never had.

"Dog" was also in search of a better life, like so many other immigrants. Similar to Kevin and Fito, "Dog" was also in search of a family. "Dog" had more experience than the other boys because he was three to four years older than them. Because of this, "Dog" was extremely aware of the dangers of the freight trains:

It's dangerous, train life. At any given time, on one of those curves, it can derail. It's gone. I've heard the train called "Horse" but more than anything, they call it "The Beast" because you fall asleep, and before you know it, you don't feel it, you just roll off. You fall, and the train wheels grab hold of you...But I'll say this, 'Don't fool around, kids.'

The trains can be so dangerous that people may die while riding on them. Kevin described how he witnessed two people die on the train. The people were standing and when the train came to a

tunnel, the people hit the tunnel. “Dog” shared that the people were unable to duck and fell off the train. In addition to the trauma of death, migrants experience abuse by authority figures. Later in their journey, Kevin and “Dog” were robbed. Kevin said, “They kicked us off the train. They robbed us. Those dirty cops.” “Dog” described that the cops told them if they did not get out of the boxcar, they would throw in tear gas (Cammisa, 2009). Even though the migrants were just teenagers, they received no mercy from authority figures they encountered on their journey. At such young ages, the boys experienced a plethora of trauma. The boys witnessed or experienced death, hunger, and abuse of power.

With five immigration checkpoints left to pass, the film crew lost the boys when they failed to appear at the next station. Two weeks later, Fito and “Dog” were found cold and hungry on the train tracks in Irapuato. Out of frustration, they had abandoned their journey. Mexican Immigration placed them in a shelter to await deportation. “Dog” started using drugs again upon his return to Tapachula. The filmmakers called Kevin’s mother and found out that he was at Southwest Key, a shelter for unaccompanied child migrants in Houston, Texas (Cammisa, 2009). Kevin played basketball as he described his experience on the night train after leaving the film crew:

I got on that train and from there on it was very dangerous. There was a young woman going on the train, and I was in a boxcar, and there was a hole through which I was watching how two women were raped by 15 men. And the truth is, it was extremely unpleasant for me to come on this journey and see how the women suffer. A mother and a daughter. I don’t know what it was that made me change because I came determined to cross. Like a feather in the wind to cross without another thought. But something got me thinking. To cross the desert. The desert, you understand? How could I, being a kid, cross a desert? Maybe I could because I imagine kids younger than I have crossed it. But to cross the desert for a few dollars that maybe I’ll earn only to be sent back to my country. I’m better off suffering in my own country and not meet my end in that desert. I turned myself in but even the immigration people didn’t want me. They have these rails, and I jumped over them. ‘Hey, why don’t you come and get me?’ They grabbed me right there. They took me to a center and that’s the story.

Kevin shared that he felt trapped, locked up, and sad in the United States. He did not expect to feel that way in the United States. After a couple of months, Kevin was sent back to Honduras. He shared his purchases and his success in English courses at the shelter with his family. Although the United States was not exactly what Kevin had expected it to be, he was still proud of his experiences there. He stepfather told filmmakers, “I’ll be straight with you. Kevin here is a burden for this mother. When he’s not here, she’s at peace. This lazy bum has made her anxious. Because he doesn’t want to do anything.”

Nine months later, Kevin and Fito attempted to reach the United States again. Fito was deported back to Honduras. Kevin made it to a shelter in Washington and was hoping to be adopted. “Dog” planned to leave for the United States again when he turned 18 years old (Cammisa, 2009). Although the boys experienced hardship throughout their first journey to and from the United States, the hardship they faced in their hostlands was so extreme that they were willing to attempt the treacherous journey again.

During their first journey by train, there were humanitarian groups who attempted to help the migrants. At one point, a red truck drove beside the train. People started cheering from the train and shouting, “Beta! Beta!” In response to the thousands of migrants crossing its borders, Mexican Immigration formed Grupos Beta. This mobile humanitarian unit does not enforce the law, but provides water, medical aid, and information to migrants in need (Cammisa, 2009). A boy winced as someone from Grupos Beta gave medical attention to his foot. The Grupos Beta official told a group of migrant children:

What we in Grupos Beta want is for you guys to travel safely, okay? Never trust the smugglers because they kidnap you and then ask for ransom, especially because you are minors, they ask for ransom from your families in the United States or in your home country. So, never trust a smuggler. Get on the train when it’s stopped, because many times the train drags you and throws you on the tracks and it’s going to grind you. If it gets the foot, it wants to get the leg, too.

The deaths of the Yuma 14 discussed earlier in this report are evidence that what the Grupos Beta official was telling the migrant children about smugglers was truthful. Further, the official knew that the trains were deadly and warned the children of it. Still, the boys witnessed people die on the train. Death was a very real possibility of the immigration journey.

Another humanitarian group that attempted to help migrants was the House of Migrants, a privately-run shelter in Coatzacoalcos, Mexico (Cammisa, 2009). Migrants could stop and rest at the shelter on their journey to the United States. The founder of the shelter addressed a crowd of people:

Whoever wants to eat, come forward. We have information, brothers, that three trains are leaving tonight. Mexico is the passage of death for you guys. The freight train can be your best friend because it will help you travel. But it can also be your worst enemy. It can kill you. The United States is not the passage of death, the United States is death itself. At the border during the day, temperatures go from 120 up to 140 degrees. And this jug will not even last you for 3 days of traveling. It is proven that at the border out of every 100 migrants, between 10 and 20, or more, will die. Maybe many of you here will die. Many of you will never see your families again. Many of you here will never return to your countries. Because you will die on the way. Now brother, who really wants to get to the United States? Raise your hand.

Again, the theme of death arises. Many migrants are aware that the immigration journey could result in their death, yet they still choose to take that risk. The potential reward and the hardship back home outweighs the risk.

Two children from Honduras were resting at the House of Migrants shelter. Their names were Olga and Freddy, and they were both nine years old. They had left their homes 20 days prior. Olga intended to reach Minnesota where her mother was living. She had not seen her mother for three years. Freddy was looking for his father who was working in the United States to support his family. Olga and Freddy shared that they both aspired to be doctors. Then, they

walked away with nothing but the clothes on their bodies and a small plastic sack. Their whereabouts are unknown (Cammisa, 2009).

The film also shared the stories of other migrant children who were not seen on the freight train. In Tehuacan, Mexico, a mother shared school pictures of her son Eloy before visiting his grave. Eloy was 13 years old and dreamt of studying in the United States. One month after Eloy left for the United States with his cousin, his body was found in the Arizona desert. Eloy's cousin, Rosario, was 16 years old. Rosario's mother and father had been waiting for six months before they were informed by immigration authorities that a body was found with Rosario's belongings. DNA evidence confirmed that the decomposed body was Rosario (Cammisa, 2009). The hearse driver loaded Rosario's casket and said:

About six months ago I brought the body of Eloy. And sadly, I have returned with his cousin, Rosario. Every day we repatriate a body. Every day. My feelings about all this are sadness and pain. It's something that you keep inside you like a bomb.

Even someone who regularly worked with the deceased was traumatized by the deaths of Eloy and Rosario.

Child migrants, who are detained in Mexico, are taken to the Tapachula Detention Center. A ten-year-old migrant boy from El Salvador cried in Tapachula Detention Center (Cammisa, 2009). He told a woman working at the detention center that a lady he was unfamiliar with brought him to the center. The child's smuggler sent him to another man, who brought him to another man, who finally took him to the lady who brought him to the center. The child had been abandoned by his smuggler. He shared that his mother lived in New York and that he hadn't seen his mother or father in three years.

At a Guatemalan Consul, Juan Carlos was interviewed. The boy was a 13-year-old Guatemalan. He shared that he was attempting to reach Los Angeles and was traveling alone. His

parents did not give him permission to leave, so he left a note for his mother informing her of his intention to reach the United States. He did not feel guilty about leaving his mother without permission because he intended to work in the United States to help them (Cammisa, 2009). Juan wrote the following in his letter to his mother:

Mommy I hope this letter finds you well. The reason for this letter is to let you know that I love you and I don't like to see you suffering with all these problems. So I have decided to go to find work in the United States so that you and my siblings will be all right and never want for anything. Tell my siblings that I love them a lot. When I return, we will go to the river. I love you very much.

The 13-year-old boy felt compelled, as do many other young Latin American boys, to reach the United States in order to provide for his family. He was in search of economic health and prosperity. In Retalhuleu, Guatemala, Juan's mother Esmeralda said the following in response to his letter:

I was very afraid when I found out. I found the boy's letter. I began to read it. For me it was a terrible scare to find out that he had gone on an unfamiliar path, with no money. To me he is not only 13, to me he is my baby. And I always want to have him in my sight.

According to Cammisa (2009), Esmeralda said that she believed Juan was attempting to reach his father in New York. Juan was five years old when his father left for the United States. He has not seen him since, but he now feels he has the same duty as his father to take care of his family. However, Juan would not be the first Carlos child to reach the United States. His nine-year-old brother Francisco was smuggled into California just one month earlier. Francisco's grandmother, Gloria, paid a smuggler 3,500 dollars to help him cross the border. On the journey, Francisco tripped and fell. He fractured his arm and fainted from the fall. The other migrants traveling in his group were shouting for their own survival. Francisco reported that they shouted at each other to leave him, but someone picked him up. When Gloria was asked what she would have done if Francisco had been left behind, she said, "The smuggler wouldn't have called me. I would have

gone searching for my grandchild. Dead or alive, one finds them.” In every story so far, the smugglers show no compassion for the migrants they place in danger. Loss of life is not the only trauma immigrants may experience. Even immigrants who successfully cross the border face trauma. Gloria shared that she lost the love of her family after migrating to the United States:

I left Esmeralda when she was one year old. I didn't see her again until she was 13. So, when we reunited, I didn't feel anything. I didn't feel she was my child. Like the love between us was gone. For us women who leave our children and come here to fight for them, we never recover their love. That's the price we have to pay to be in this country.

For many mothers, providing for their children economically is worth losing the ability to remain in their lives.

Immigrants and immigrant families are not the only people who experience pain and trauma as a result of immigration. Andrew Adasme, a United States Border Patrol officer stood in front of his vehicle and shared his experience at the border:

It's sad. It's sad to find a child that's been left in the hands of a smuggler. You know, because we've found children that have been raped... Male kids that have been raped... By their own smugglers and then abandoned, so we find them walking in the desert, you know, near roads usually... You know a... Violated... You know I have personally seen dead children in the desert, and you know 99 percent of the cases, they were abandoned. Here's a six-year-old kid, doesn't know anything about life. His parents make that decision to bring him to the United States and place them in the hands of some person that they don't even know. Some person that will get drunk, use drugs, smuggles dope. And that's the person that they give their kid to. They shouldn't be surprised if their kid never makes it.

Adasme described another form of trauma immigrants face: sexual abuse. In addition to the impact the trauma has on the lives of the immigrants, it also affects Adasme. Not only does Adasme portray his sadness for migrant children, but he also portrays his anger for their families who he believes are to blame for the trauma the children face en route to the United States.

Trauma overwhelmingly emerged as a theme of the immigrant health experience. Even people who were not immigrants themselves experienced trauma in some form as a result of

witnessing the immigrant experience. Trauma manifests in many forms—mental distress, physical harm on the body, loss of family, fear, and inability to economically provide for oneself.

Demonization as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in the News

Many news articles have covered immigration in the community of Arivaca, Arizona. The town was founded in the 1800s and is 11 miles from the border. The town of approximately 700 people is in the Altar Valley and is surrounded by mountains (Wiles, 2019). As a result of the mainstream narrative surrounding immigration and the contemporary news, immigrants are demonized in society. Immigrants are blamed for many social ills, such as high unemployment and crime rates.

The article “Arivaca the face of border frustration” provides context to the immigration issues facing Arivaca. In the past 20 years, drug smuggling has spiked, so United States Border Patrol has increased their surveillance. During the Mexican Revolution, the population grew as middle- and upper-class Mexicans resettled in Arivaca. Until World War II, most residents of the town were of Latin American descent. Now, most residents are older and white. A decade ago, the population was about 2,500. Cattleman Jim Chilton estimates that up to 50,000 people go through his ranch in a given year. He installed drinking fountains in water troughs and says, “No one deserves to die of thirst, I don’t care whether they are druggers or an MS-13. Life is important.” (Wiles, 2019). Although Chilton believes in the right to human life, his belief is not without biases. He perceives that the immigrants crossing the border are drug users or gang members, fueling the mainstream narrative of Global South to Global North immigration.

While some residents of Arivaca may believe in the right to life, that is not always the case. In Arivaca, a hate group called the Minutemen started organizing. The Minutemen are credited with leading the demonization of undocumented immigrants; however, the group has

been splintering off after members of the organization have been charged with crimes such as murder and robbery (Reidy, 2019). In May 2009, Shawna Forde, the leader of the Minutemen, a militia that patrolled the Borderlands for migrants, posed as a United States Border Patrol agent and entered the Flores family home in Arivaca. She murdered Raul “Junior” Flores and his nine-year-old daughter, Brisenia. Not only do immigrants face the possibility of death due to risks en route to the United States, they face the risk of being brutally murdered in their destination countries. Hate groups like the Minutemen spread propaganda to demonize immigrants and minimize their humanity.

For this reason, in 2017, when Tim Foley of Arizona Border Recon and Lewis Arthur of Veterans on Patrol arrived in Arivaca, locals were worried. Veterans on Patrol had taken over Arivaca by filming their propaganda in local businesses (Reidy, 2019). “Vigilantes Not Welcome: A Border Town Pushes Back on Anti-Immigrant Extremists” describes how the community took a stand against anti-immigrant groups in August of 2018. Citizens of Arivaca created a phone tree and helped bartenders close up at night to protect each other. Citizens held community meetings to determine their next steps and began recording the groups to document potential harassment claims. Locals reached out to Facebook to shut down the groups’ pages (Wiles, 2019). Eventually, businessowners and citizens in the town began banning the organizations from their establishments (Reidy, 2019).

The news articles provide a mixture of personal narratives and visual aids with the voice of the reporter. The foregoing articles begin with a photograph of someone from the community of Arivaca and transition to the report. Throughout the remainder of the reports, there are a few photographs of the town of Arivaca or other community members; however, the photos are generally simple headshots lacking emotion from the models. The reports contain few personal

narratives as seen above, but the descriptions do not contain shocking language. The articles do not consist of far as emotional accounts as the nonfiction novel or films discussed above; however, the news brought to light that immigrants face the threat of death regardless of where they are located. Further, the news has the capacity to demonize immigrants on both ends of the political spectrum. As seen above, even people who believe in the right to life for immigrants still hold biases, such as the bias that all immigrants are drug users.

General Health Issues as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in Governmental and Nongovernmental Reports

Governmental and nongovernmental organizations prepare reports regarding the health experiences of immigrants who face many health issues en route to and upon arrival in their destination countries. In the United States, immigrants face health issues that may be similar to those faced by the general population, but the health issues for migrants are often aggravated by the migratory lifestyle. Health issues migrants face include health care access, en route health needs such as adequate nutrition, at-work risks such as toxic exposures, legal concerns, inadequate housing and sanitation, food insecurity, and climate change.

According to the Migrant Clinicians Network (n.d.), a nonprofit global organization, en-route health needs include hyperthermia, hypothermia, dehydration, disease exposure, and increased vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation. Regarding health care access, immigrants face barriers to care including mobility, language, cultural differences, and lack of familiarity with health care services in the United States (Migrant Clinicians Network, n.d.). Immigrants have limited eligibility for funded health care programs. Even with the Affordable Care Act, immigrants are often unable to afford insurance co-pays and deductibles. Undocumented

immigrants are ineligible for coverage. Some immigrants may fear deportation and thus refuse to contact governmental agencies for assistance (Migrant Clinicians Network, n.d.).

According to the Rural Health Information Hub (n.d.), which is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, immigrants work in the riskiest industries in the United States. Immigrants often work in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and construction industries. Because of their employment in risky industries, immigrants have higher rates of injury and fatality compared to workers in other sectors. Immigrant workers are more likely to die on the job than workers born in the United States (Migrant Clinicians Network, n.d.). While working in risky industries, in particular agriculture, immigrants may be exposed to harmful chemicals. Farmworkers and farmworker families are exposed to pesticides in the fields. Further, even though immigrants work in the riskiest industries, immigrants lack on-the-job protections (Migrant Clinicians Network, n.d.). Immigrant workers may not know their rights or may fear speaking up when their rights are violated.

Migrant housing is associated with unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and crowding (Rural Health Information Hub, n.d.). Further, it is estimated that over half of farmworker households are food insecure (Migrant Clinicians Network, n.d.). Households may have a lack of access to transportation, food storage, and cooking facilities, which intensifies the food insecurity. Additionally, climate change disproportionately affects the poor and outdoor workers. Climate change affects the health of outdoor workers through increased temperatures, extreme weather, degraded air quality, and more vector-borne diseases (Migrant Clinicians Network, n.d.). Further, migrants may have a higher risk of experiencing the effects of climate change because of substandard housing and fewer resources to cope with the changes.

The Rural Health Information Hub (n.d.) recommends that community health workers serve migrant communities. Community health workers are frontline public health experts who are trusted members of the communities. They can use their knowledge of the community's culture and language to provide healthcare outreach and healthcare services.

The Urban Institute, a think tank that researches social policy and is funded by the government, foundations, and private donors, published an article about the health and well-being of children in immigrant families. The researchers report that children of immigrants are more likely to live in two-parent families than children of natives, but they are still poorer than natives' children. Children of immigrants in two-parent homes are substantially more likely to be low-income than their native counterparts. Antipoverty policies intended to promote marriage may be less successful for immigrant families. Children of immigrants participate in fewer extracurricular activities and are less likely to work after school. Their parents are also less involved in the community. Immigrant families are less able to draw on food, health, mental health, and housing assistance (Reardon-Anderson, et al., 2002).

Reports from governmental and nongovernmental organizations provide analyses of the health experiences of immigrants that are similar in nature. One common theme of health issues immigrants face is inadequate access to health care, and barriers within the healthcare system from there. Nongovernmental and governmental organizations seem to provide candid and substantiated reports regarding the health experiences of immigrants. Further, some reports focus on biomedical effects of immigration such as dehydration, while others focus on social aspects of health such as community involvement.

Overall, the Latin American immigrant experience to the United States is one full of death, economic hardship, trauma, and rights abuse. Different sources report the immigrant

experience in different manners, but those common themes arise. Now, this report will analyze how the immigrant experience of Latin Americans to the United States compares to the immigrant experience of Dominicans to Puerto Rico.

Dominican Immigration to Puerto Rico

There is a long history regarding migration between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. Since the 16th century, there has been a constant flow of people in both directions. Puerto Ricans were heavily involved in the development of the Dominican sugar industry as workers and investors. Additionally, Puerto Rico has the richest per capita economy in Latin America, while the Dominican Republic economy is lacking, and many citizens live in destitution. The flow of migration from the Dominican to Puerto Rico increased in the 1980s when the Dominican Republic suffered an economic recession. Since the 1980s, the United States Coast Guard has come across more than 24,400 undocumented Dominicans attempting to migrate to Puerto Rico (Minority Rights Group International, n.d.). Dominicans are the largest migrant community in Puerto Rico (Tamez, et al., 2018). Approximately 100,000 Dominicans live in Puerto Rico, and about 30,000 are thought to be undocumented immigrants. Some Dominicans migrate to Puerto Rico with the goal of eventually making it to the United States mainland, while others remain in Puerto Rico.

Due to language constraints, literature discussed regarding Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico is limited in comparison to the literature discussed regarding Latin American immigration to the United States.

Death as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in Film

Similar to the risk of death Latin American immigrants face when migrating to the United States, Dominican immigrants face the risk of death when migrating to Puerto Rico. Similarly, the migrants' motives for immigration outweigh the potential risks, including death. Youtuber Educated Traveler (2018) filmed interviews with Dominicans discussing why people migrate abroad. "Mr. T" interviewed Dominicans in Puerto Rico to see why Dominicans attempt to migrate and why many of them end up returning to the Dominican Republic afterward. Carlos Alvarez is a Spanish teacher in Sosua, Dominican Republic:

People think that if you leave this country, all your problems are going to be solved. And they don't realize that when you leave this country, there are all the problems that you need to deal with. And with this country, you don't have them. The point is that people feel mesmerized by material things.

Alvarez is aware that immigrants will face problems regardless of their final destination.

However, the types of problems faced may differ. Immigrants who choose to leave their hostlands believe that the issues they will face in their destination countries are preferable to those faced in their hostlands. Another video on YouTube, "Puerto Rico: An Unsettled Dominican Dream," interviewed Dominican immigrants who have survived the journey to Puerto Rico. A woman stood outside a barn and shared her thoughts about Dominican immigrants in Puerto Rico:

It's sad because they come here just to be just discriminated, mistreated, deported, denied of anything and everything that they can be denied. You work a month or two months and they tell you cause you're illegal they're not going to pay you, and because they're so scared of being deported, they keep working. I mean it's another sense of slavery.

Immigrants in Puerto Rico face workplace rights abuses and are often unable to report the abuse because of the citizenship status. Hector, an undocumented Dominican explained his journey traveling to Puerto Rico:

It was not easy because I thought I was going to die in the water. It's not easy to get here by water.... We were hiding for some time, and the Coast Guard was watching to make sure no one left Santo Domingo.

Hector expected death as a possibility of immigration. He knew the journey would be difficult, but he still chose to take it. Ramon, an undocumented Dominican, sat on a beach as he described his journey to Puerto Rico:

It was a very sad journey, because it started out with 40 people from there and only 15 survived. There were approximately eight women, and some of them were pregnant, and the others were men. All of them women lamentedly died. They all died.... We started with 40 people and only 15 people survived because the boat was destroyed in the Mona Passage. The ones that lived had lifejackets or held onto pieces of wood. It made an impression on me. Imagine everyone screaming, the sharks nipping into people also, so it was sad. It was very sad.

Twenty-five people died on that one journey from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico. Yet the deceased were not the only ones impacted by the journey. Ramon survived, but he still lives with the trauma of witnessing so much death. The videos provided views with the raw experience of the immigrant experience from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico. Immigrants shared the death they saw on their journey in addition to the hardships they faced. Additionally, the videos served to give viewers faces and voices to attribute to the experiences, rather than just textual accounts of the experiences.

Violations of Rights as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in the News

When immigrants cross borders illegally, the methods of transportation they utilize do not follow health or safety guidelines. An article in the *Miami Herald* reported that the United States Coast Guard and Puerto Rican law enforcement have stopped hundreds of people attempting to make their way to Puerto Rico and the United States mainland from the Caribbean. In February of 2019, the United States Coast Guard returned 22 people to the Dominican Republic who were attempting to enter Puerto Rico. The boat held a total of 25 people and was

overloaded. The boat did not have any of the required safety equipment or navigational lights. Many lives are lost each year as people attempt to cross aquatic borders (Goodhue, 2019). If the immigrants had not been undocumented, perhaps they would have received the right to safety and the right to health throughout their journey.

Immigrants also face rights abuses in their destination countries. *The New York Daily News* published “Dominicans in Puerto Rico allege police brutality” in 2008. This article described how many Dominicans attempt to migrate to Puerto Rico in search of jobs or a path to the United States mainland. However, Dominican immigrants in Puerto Rico have reported police brutality, discrimination, and other rights abuses. In 2008, the Dominican population in Puerto Rico was more than 80,000, making it the largest foreign-born group on the island of four million people. Dominican migrants work low-paying jobs in construction, coffee-picking, and domestic service industries (The Associated Press, 2008).

Immigrants experience a multitude of rights abuses, whether in their hostlands, en route to their destination countries, or in their destination countries. The rights abuses may involve low wages, lack of safety when traveling, or lack of job safety, but ultimately, they all stem from immigrants being unable to speak up or being fearful of doing so.

General Health Issues as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in Governmental and Nongovernmental Organizations

Immigrants face health issues in their hostlands, en route to their destination countries, and in their destination countries. Latino USA, a nonprofit organization, provides critical information about Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico. The stretch of ocean between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico is known as the Mona Passage. This passage is the main route for immigration from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico. Smugglers often bring the

migrants to Puerto Rico in yolas, or small wooden boats that can be packed with over 100 people (Bishop, 2015).

Latino USA also provides narratives from immigrants and people who work in the field. United States Coast Guard Captain Drew Pearson said, “The Mona is treacherous. It can be calm one minute, and then have eight- to ten-foot seas the next minutes. And that can lead to a boat capsizing or people being ejected into the water.” Similar to Latin American immigrants traveling to the United States, death is a possibility.

Economic hardship also motives many Dominicans to migrate. Altagracia Pablo described her life in the Dominican Republic before migrating to Puerto Rico, “We didn’t even have a house. It collapsed in the storm, and we were sleeping wherever people would let us.” Altagracia left her two daughters in search of a better life in Puerto Rico. She paid \$1,500 to the smugglers. Her journey to Puerto Rico took 28 hours, and throughout the journey she remembers vomiting over and over again (Bishop, 2015). The theme of economic hardship arises again.

Although the motive behind immigration for many people is economic hardship, immigrants also face economic hardship in their destination countries. Many Dominican immigrants live in dilapidated conditions. Immigrants live in deteriorated houses in inner city areas (Minority Rights Group International, n.d.). Researchers have found that Dominicans in Puerto Rico attain less education, report lower household income, lack health insurance to a greater scale, and report food insecurity to a greater scale than Puerto Ricans (Tamez, et al., 2018). As the number of Dominicans in Puerto Rico increases, immigrants are increasingly experiencing racism and discrimination. These experiences translate to job discrimination and inequality in various areas of society, including education (Minority Rights Group International, n.d.). Rights abuses are not limited to safety or employment, but also occur in education.

However, some Dominican immigrants succeed economically in Puerto Rico. An academic article from Arizona State University contains several interviews with Dominicans who have migrated to Puerto Rico. Rossy Santos went on the 80-mile journey in a boat with 26 other Dominicans in 2005. During the journey, she survived on bottled water, cheese, and crackers. Santos left her daughter and most of her family in the Dominican Republic. Santos was searching for a better life for her and her family. Most Dominicans in Puerto Rico work informal, low-skill jobs. Santos, however, is no longer undocumented and owns a business. She was able to save up enough money from working at a beauty parlor to take a loan out with her brother to purchase the building where her own beauty salon is now housed. Every two weeks, Santos send money home to her family in the Dominican Republic (Persad, 2012). Juan Ciprian Parra, a 50-year-old from the Dominican Republic who is living in Puerto Rico said, “If the Dominican has to work in construction or security, we will work in that; we don’t care the type of the job that it is, we always try to earn our money,” (Persad, 2012). Parra describes how severe economic hardship can be for some Dominicans. Many Dominican immigrants will work any job they can in order to earn money.

Dominican immigrants experience a plethora of health issues throughout their lives as immigrants. They face economic hardship in the Dominican Republic, but they also face economic hardship in Puerto Rico. Immigrants risk their lives traveling aquatically, and after arrival, face discrimination and other poor health outcomes such as food insecurity. Nongovernmental and governmental reports provide readers with narratives of the immigrant experience, as well as data about the immigrant experience. By reporting both personal immigrant accounts in addition to raw information about the issues immigrants face, the reports portray an encompassing perspective of immigration.

Similar to the case of Latin American immigration to the United States, Dominican immigration to Puerto Rico results in death, rights violations, and other various health issues. Each type of source provided different perspectives of the immigrant experience, but common themes persisted. Now, the foregoing cases will be compared with the case of Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates.

Indian Immigration to the United Arab Emirates

Over two million Indians live in the United Arab Emirates, constituting over 27 percent of the country's population (Non Resident Indians Online, n.d.). The flow of Indians to the United Arab Emirates began as a result of trade and commerce centuries ago. Many Indians migrated to the United Arab Emirates when the pearling industry was booming in the Persian Gulf. Indian migration to the United Arab Emirates peaked when the petroleum reservoir was discovered and created a plethora of jobs. Today, India is the largest trading partner of the United Arab Emirates, and the United Arab Emirates is the third largest trading partner of India (Non Resident Indians Online, n.d.).

Due to language constraints, literature regarding Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates is limited in comparison to the literature discussed regarding Latin American immigration to the United States.

Violations of Rights as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in Film

Indian immigrants travel to the United Arab Emirates for work, but their experiences working in the United Arab Emirates are not always just. YouTube videos provide personal narratives of Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates. Immigrants may not achieve economic prosperity as intended. *Gulf News* published a video in 2017 that showed 14 jobless

and homeless Indian workers who had been living and sleeping in Dubai Central Park. The men stood in a circle talking to each other and the reporter. Some of the men said they had been living in the park for several months. A few people in the neighborhood have delivered them food or helped them take showers. The men lived several days on empty stomachs. They only had access to toilets at the nearby bus station (Gulf News, 2017).

The video *Tourist visa leave Indian workers in the United Arab Emirates open to abuse* showed Indian immigrants working in various industries such as construction while text beneath the video described the issues Indian immigrants working on tourist visas face in the United Arab Emirates. The video described that tourist visas leave immigrants open to rights abuse because they are sold by hotels and airlines, not issued by embassies. The tourist visas do not leave a paper trail, meaning that the United Arab Emirates has no record of the Indians who are working under tourist visas. Employers may withhold wages or subject workers to debt bondage and mental or physical torture as the immigrants work despite the lack of wages. More than 9,700 complaints of torture have been filed by Indian workers in the United Arab Emirates since 2016, but the true scale of the exploitation is unknown since workers often fear speaking up and tourist visas do not appear on official records (TRT World, 2020).

Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates face a variety of abuse in the workplace, even though their intentions for immigration had been employment. Further, economic prosperity is not always achieved after immigrating for potential employment opportunities. Videos regarding Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates also provide viewers with personal accounts of the immigrant experience from the immigrant themselves. In addition to providing the personal immigrant experience, videos may provide data about issues immigrants

face, such as workplace abuse. Videos have the benefit of showing viewers the faces and voices behind the experiences and issues.

Unfulfilled Employment Promises as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in the News

Many Indians are led to believe by employment recruiters that they will achieve economic success in the United Arab Emirates. Many people agree to a process of immigration that results in a loss of rights. *The Hindu*, an Indian newspaper, wrote that the United Arab Emirates is a top destination for Indian immigrants. While the overall Indian immigrant population had barely doubled by the 2000s, the number of Indian migrants to the United Arab Emirates had grown by six times. In 2015, there were over 2.8 million Indians living in the United Arab Emirates (S., 2017). The newspaper reported that the United Arab Emirates makes it difficult to gain citizenship, so most Indian workers are in the country on temporary visas. In 2014, Indian immigrants sent nearly 13 billion dollars in remittances back to India (S., 2017).

Reuters is an international news company that published an article describing possible exploitation of Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates. Indian immigrants working in the United Arab Emirates report they are being exploited by the United Arab Emirates employers who are increasingly using tourist visas to hire Indians. Indian immigrants on tourist visas, which are quicker and cheaper to obtain than work permits, experience labor abuse and often refrain from reporting such abuses for fear of deportation. The United Arab Emirates does not record entrants with tourist visas, so there is no record of immigrants who work in the country after entering with a tourist visa (Srivastava, 2020). For information about how tourism perpetuates poverty, see Irmgard L. Bauer's *Improving Global Health*.

The news company also shared a personal story: Mohammad Pasha came to the United Arab Emirates from India to work and was told by his job agent to tell police at the airport that he was sightseeing in the United Arab Emirates. His recruiter told him that he risked going to jail if the police found out the truth. Pasha was promised 1,000 dirhams monthly, but only received 800 dirhams monthly while working 16 hours days. Pasha's employer warned him to keep quiet. Pasha was scared to approach the labor court because he was working illegally on a tourist visa (Srivastava, 2020). Employers often perpetuate the risks and consequences of immigration.

Broken promises by employers result in economic hardship and rights abuses for Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates. Indian immigrants who migrate to the United Arab Emirates with tourist visas are unable to seek governmental assistance when their employment rights are violated. The news in India and internationally provided both personal narratives about the immigrant experience, in addition to data about the current and historical trends of Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates. The news serves immigrants as it reports their experiences to the public. By providing both data and personal testimony, the news can provide a better depiction of the immigrant experience.

Risky Work Environments as a Consequence of Immigration, as Portrayed in Governmental and Nongovernmental organizations

Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates work in risky industries, similar to the other immigrant experiences discussed in this report. Governmental and nongovernmental organizations in India and the United Arab Emirates report on the pattern of Indian immigration to the United Arab Emirates. Economic and Political Weekly published an article discussing employment and working conditions in the United Arab Emirates for Indian workers. The article reported that most Indian migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates work in construction,

production, and transport activities. Employment in industries like construction is dangerous and can result in workplace injury. Additionally, nearly one-third of Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates live in worker camps, which are dormitories where immigrants live while working. Further, Indian immigrants reported non-payment of wages, denial of wages and non-wage benefits, refusal to release passports, and non-payment of charges for the air ticket to return to India. The United Arab Emirates law states that free air tickets should be given to immigrants for their return home; however, most immigrants are forced to buy their own tickets to return home (Zachariah, et al., 2003).

Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates face risk in their employment industries, in addition to the risk they faced during immigration. Often, immigrants cannot prepare themselves for the risk because they are misled and lied to by employment recruiters. The journal article shared immigrant experiences from reports from immigrants themselves, giving readers a more accurate understanding of their experience. The article followed similar themes seen in other media sources, such as the denial of wages and immigrants working in the construction industry, but it also included information about how immigrants return to India.

Overall, Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates face similar health issues and experiences to Latin American immigrants in the United States and Dominican immigrants in Puerto Rico. Most notably, in all three cases, economic hardship is present. However, the experience of Indian immigrants in the United Arab Emirates seems to focus more heavily on workplace and visa rights than the other two flows of immigration.

Discussion

Although the immigrant experience of Latin Americans to the United States, Dominicans to Puerto Rico, and Indians to the United Arab Emirates may vary, it is true that common themes are found within all three patterns of immigration. Social determinants of health affect the immigrant health experience prior to immigration, during immigration, and after immigration. Hostland environments contribute to the motives behind immigration, environments en route contribute to health risks, and environments in the destination country contribute to health risks and health access. In all three flows of immigration, immigrants reported migrating because of economic hardship, experiencing en route hazards, and facing cultural difficulties or discrimination in their destination countries. Further, common themes of death, trauma, and rights abuse arose. Thus, the immigrant experience within the Global South should not automatically be categorized as drastically different than the immigrant experience from the Global South to the Global North.

Additionally, the portrayal of the immigrant experience varies by type of source. While analyzing novels, film, news articles, governmental reports, and nongovernmental reports, this report found common themes in the sources analyzed, but also drastic differences. Audio and video reports included graphic images, as well as firsthand and eyewitness accounts of the immigrant journey or struggles, which elicit strong feelings. Language used in the novel and video sources elicits a specific reaction from the audience as it is shocking or desolate. Academic or government reports occasionally provide personal immigrant accounts but mostly provide data supporting the accounts. Because of the variation in the portrayal of the immigrant experience by source, a comprehensive aggregate of varying sources is necessary to study the true immigrant experience.

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