

**Understanding Lay Perceptions of Immigration**

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**INTRODUCTION**

- Neoliberal ideologies perpetuate perceptions of commoditization (Davies, 2018)
- Instrumental diversity for the benefit of dominant groups (Starck, 2021)
- Lay theories informal explanations (Hong, 2001)

**METHODS**

111 undergraduates (49 male, 60 female, 2 non-binary/third gender), Mean age 19.26 (SD = 1.60), 61.3% White, 15.3% Asian-American Pacific Islander, 6.3% Hispanic-American/Latino, 6.3% Other, 4.5% African-American/Black, 4.5% Biracial/Multiracial, 0.9% Arab Arab-American/Middle Eastern

Immigration is a topic that is heavily debated in the United States. What are all the possible reasons for allowing Hispanic/Latino immigrants to continue to immigrate to the United States? Take a few minutes to generate at least 3 reasons you can think of.

Immigration is a topic that is heavily debated in the United States. What are all the possible reasons for not allowing Hispanic/Latino immigrants to continue to immigrate to the United States? Take a few minutes to generate at least 3 reasons you can think of.

**RESULTS**

Many possible reasons for allowing Hispanic/Latino immigrants to immigrate the United States are economic benefit and instrumental benefit

Many of the negative reason were associated with problem in which the U.S. has caused

**DISCUSSION**

Understanding of the questions

Student sample

Lay theories not necessarily endorsed from the participants themselves but of what they have heard

**Positive Lay Theories**

Theme	Description	Examples
<b>Better Life Opportunities</b>	The Better life opportunities theme refers to providing individuals with the chance to escape poverty, famine, and unlivable conditions, and offering new beginnings for their lives.	for them to have a chance at a better life, A new beginning for their life,
<b>Ethnically Diverse Population</b>	Incorporating a more ethnically diverse population into society brings new perspectives, ideas, skills, and values, enriches the culinary experience, and enhances the cultural heritage	Incorporating a more ethnically diverse population, Persecution/ violence, cultural enriching, Different cultures enrich American culture as a whole,
<b>American Values and Constitution</b>	American values and the Constitution reflect the principles of democracy, individual liberty, equality, justice, and the rule of law that serve as the foundation of the nation and its government, providing a framework for the rights and freedoms of its citizens.	The United States provides a safe haven for many refugee, Freedom in general, if Hispanic/Latino immigrants want to immigrate to the U.S. they should be allowed to without having to give a detailed reason why. escaping political problems in their country, American dream
<b>Economic Benefits</b>	Economic benefits of immigration include skilled immigrants filling labor gaps, contributing to the workforce by doing jobs others may not want, providing meaningful contributions that enrich the quality of life.	Stimulate the economy by introducing more opportunities for entry-level to professional occupations that they can contribute to society, They are looking for opportunities in work, Fill labor gap, They create a huge part of the labor force.

**Negative Lay Theories**

Theme	Description	Examples
<b>Fear of Crime and Violence</b>	immigration policies have allowed for illegal immigration, leading to the influx of drug trafficking and violence	To keep crime out?, possible threats to the united states, small % could introduce new drugs,
<b>Overpopulation/ Abundance of Workers</b>	Overpopulation workers can lead to a strain on resources, infrastructure, and public services, overwhelming healthcare and education systems.	Over-inflating the job market, taking away jobs, Lack of jobs, overwhelming the health care/education systems, Increasing unemployment, The US infrastructure cannot support additional people
<b>Immigration Policies and Illegal Immigration</b>	lack of government funding, disagreements with other countries, and disregard for immigration laws have made illegal immigration easier for criminals.	Legality?, National Security?, To work out its system of immigration
<b>Cultural Clashes</b>	Cultural clashes within the country's cultural diversity, leading to tensions and concerns over the forced imposition of cultural values on those already residing in the country.	worry over "american culture" being lost, discontented local people (potential chaos), the belief that they won't assimilate into American society, language/ culture barrier, Ruining "American culture", Unwilling to assimilate
<b>Legal and Ethical Concerns/ Racism (negative for immigrants)</b>	The United States' legal and ethical concerns surrounding immigration, coupled with racism and negative attitudes towards immigrants, have led to issues that many immigrants face in their daily lives in the U.S.	Bigotry, Racism, people are racist, Exploitation of immigrants, Xenophobia
<b>Political Divisiveness and Power Struggles</b>	This discord and polarization can lead to a resistance to change and diversity, particularly when it comes to the treatment of immigrants.	Hard to settle on a political/religious/social law/form/structure, It may sow political discord.