



**Linnaeus University**  
Sweden

BACHELOR THESIS

# GLOBALIZATION AND IMMIGRATION

*IMPACT OF DONALD TRUMP'S IMMIGRATION  
POLICIES ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND  
IMMIGRANTS INTEGRATION*



**Author:** Abdi Kadir Abdi Azzis

**Supervisor:** Martin Nilsson

**Examiner:** Patric Lindgren

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## **ABSTRACT**

The immediate former and the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Donald Trump, is inarguably amongst the most controversial leaders in US history. His "nation first" campaign rhetoric propelled his way into the presidency. Upon becoming the president, he remained true to his word and promise. One of his promises was in regards to changing the American immigration policies in the favor and interests of US citizens. Therefore, this paper primarily seeks to examine how Trump's immigration policies during his administrative reign impacted globalization. The immigration policies chiefly focused on pertains to the decisions by Trump to impose travel bans and restrict refugee admissions.

The explanation extends to how these policies impacted globalization within the spheres of America's relations with other nations and the rights and opportunities of immigrants to integrate into the society. In other words, the paper specifically focuses on determining how Trump's immigration policies through imposing travel bans, trade restrictions, and restricting refugee admissions impacted globalization by influencing America's relations with other nations and the rights and opportunities of immigrants to integrate into the society. Guided by this focus, the paper thus aims to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between immigration policies and globalization and how this affects societies both domestically and internationally.



### **KEYWORDS**

Donald Trump, Immigration Policies, Travel Bans, Refugee Admissions,  
Globalization, Asylum Seekers.



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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Globalization fundamentally describes the manner in which people and countries from around the world relate, interact, and integrate, as contended by Hopper (2017). Giddens (2021) further posits that globalization is a consequence of modernity, which is indeed far more embodying contemporary elements. In this regard, globalization, especially in the current era, is characterized by considerable uniqueness relating to the depth of its reach and impact on the elite societal strata. Based on the above stated deliberations, it is justifiable to allude that globalization thus signifies the interconnectedness of the global community in regards to the interaction and integration of people and the interrelation of nations. The campaign and rise to presidency by Donald Trump exploited the discontent by large swaths among the American population on several national matters with far-reaching implications on globalization.

With an increased criticism of several global events, Trump, for instance, blamed others, such as migrants and unfair trade practices of other nations for the America's adverse economic plight. In response to this diagnosis, Trump did promise to renegotiate the existing trade and immigration agreements with other nations globally with the commitment of asserting the America's market power and Americans' labor dominance. Admittedly, Trump stayed true to his promise and actuated it through the introduction of strict immigration policies, upon which this thesis focuses. The paper thus tailors its attention towards



examining the impact of Trump's immigration policies on globalization, explicitly focusing on the policies of travel bans and restrictive refugee admissions and their respective associated influence at a global level on the relation of the United States with other nations and the integration of immigration into societies.

### **1.2. Research Problem**

Trump spearheaded the establishment of immigration policies that were principally tailored towards serving the unilateral interests of Americans. Within the context of the United States, Trump's immigration policies received an immense backing, a situation that saw him rise to the position of presidency. In an increasingly interconnected world due to heightened globalization efforts, no country exists or can exist in isolation.

Therefore, the immigration policies of Trump, specifically in regards to travel bans and restricting admission of refugees into the United States attracted a global attention. Globally, owing to countries existing through interdependence and collaboration with one another, the policies that the leadership administration of each country make are opined to serve not only the national interests but also consider those of others. If a country pursues and adopts policies that serves only its individual interests or those of its citizens, then it risks contributing to its own downfall, because in one way or another, it will still need the support and assistance of others.





Notably, America is largely regarded to have built its success based the reliance of the efforts and contribution of immigrants. Central to this, was the ability of immigrants to actively participate in the social, economic, and political facets of the US society. Consequently, labor was distributed across multiple industries, the level of education experienced an upward trajectory, eventually leading to the US becoming an economic powerhouse and home to millions of immigrants. Nonetheless, following the radical immigration policies imposed by Trump, questions beg as to whether the US global superpower status and overall image has been tainted, in addition to the extent in which legal immigrants (including asylum seekers) are able to assimilate into the US society and actively participate in the country's economy, social and political affairs.

### **1.3. Research Relevance and Significance**

With every new administration that comes into power, there is always an associated change in policies. The beneficial and detrimental nature of each policy is usually dependent on its respective context. Trump's immigration policies are a perfect example of this notion. Therefore, this study is of relevance because it embodies both a national and an international scope of application. From a national perspective, the immigration policy on travel ban was beneficial. Considering that it was during the reign of Trump that the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, the ban served an important role in protecting Americans from this highly contagious and deadly disease. Similarly, with the



Americans constantly concerned with unemployment challenges, citing concerns of their jobs being taken away by immigrants, restricting refugee admissions served to cushion American nationals from this crisis. As a result, this study is significant as it helps have a comprehensive understanding on the relationship between immigration policies and the associated events whose outcomes have an impact on the global scale.

#### **1.4. Research Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to establish the relationship between immigration policies and globalization during Trump's Administration (2017-2021). Immigration is a component of the larger globalization process. The immigration policies focused on are specifically those adopted during the Trump's presidency, and chiefly include imposing travel bans and restricting refugee admissions into the United States.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

- What are the impacts of Trump's strict immigration policies on America's relations with other nations?
- How has Trump's immigration policies influenced the integration of immigrants into the American society?

In relation to above clarified research purpose and research questions stated that guides this study, the strict Trump's immigration policies being focused are categorized into two folds. These two folds pertain to the imposing of



travel bans and restricting refugee admissions into the US. The study is mainly contextualized into examining how these policies have impacted the relation of America with other nations globally and integration of immigration into the American society. However, the policies being focused on further extend to components specifically characterized by the assimilation of asylum seekers, Trump's merit-based system in relation to the integration of immigrants and diversity visa lottery program, negative correlation between public charge policy and integration of immigrants in regards to permanent residency and citizenship, and Muslim ban and Xenophobic-related concerns. In this context, the impacts of Trump's immigration policies on America's relations with other countries and integration of immigrants in the US is largely extending its influence to the globalization process.

Globalization principally seeks to improve the relationship between countries within the international context coupled with increased integration of people globally so that the world can operate as one interconnected society. The fundamental principle that guides globalization is to increasingly reduce the geographical limitations that impeded interaction of nations and their respective people. The goal of becoming globalized is thus to make world, regardless of locations of countries and people, whether far or near, function as a singly-knit environment. In other words, countries and people should freely interact and integrate without being restricted either due to the physical barriers or their ethnic or religious affiliations. However, with the strict Trump's immigration policies, they serve to limit the relations of US with



other nations and impede the interaction among people by inhibiting the integration of immigrants into the American society, which violate the critical tenet of globalization.

### **1.6. Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is divided into six major sections. The first section is the introduction, which constitutes the background of the study, research problem, research relevance and significance, research purpose, and research questions. The second section is the literature review, which details the deliberations of previous researchers on the themes related to the topic of study relating to travel ban, the security dimensions of immigrants, and America's position in the international arena. This section also includes the theoretical framework, which details the two theories, Rational Actor Model and Spatial Assimilation theory, applied to the study. The third section is the methodology, which entails the research design and method, materials, operationalization, and limitation and delimitation of the study.

The fourth section is the findings and discussion, which provides answers to the stated research questions by deliberating on the impact of Trump's immigration policies on American's position in the global world order and integration of refugees in the US, specifically in the context of remain in Mexico policy, undermining the DV lottery program, attack against immigrant citizenship and permanent residency in the US, the public charge immigration policy, the Muslim ban, assimilation of asylum seekers, and merit-based



immigration system. The final section is the conclusion, which provides an overall summation of the study's deliberation.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Travel Ban**

In line with the goal of this thesis in seeking to establish the relationship between Trump's immigration policies and globalization as well as integration and assimilation, the linkage factor in this relationship is through travel. As posited by Cornelius and Rosenblum (2005) who conducted a study that adopted a systematic review design to analyze the impact of imposing travel ban on the immigration process, the researchers deliberated that immigration in itself is fueled on the basis of interaction among people. Through this interaction, people from far and near meet, but these meetings can only be actualized through traveling. Robertson and White (2007) conducted an empirical study based on the information obtained from already published literature and informed that globalization, in its primary characteristic, is founded on the idea of making world operate like a single village. The idea denotes that people can easily and conveniently interact despite their geographical differences. Since people are located in different countries worldwide, the only way through which they can meet is through being accorded the liberty to travel from one country to another.

In support of the insights by Robertson and White (2007), Wolf (2004) who carried a qualitative research through administering online surveys with open-ended questions to a sample size of 72 respondents to gather their insights on what they perceive to be an important role being played by globalization in the interaction of people, floated the argument that the world is thriving due to



globalization, which one of the process critical for its sustenance is immigration. However, since immigration revolves around traveling, this automatically makes traveling an equally interconnected process important for fostering globalization. Through the immigration that is embedded on traveling, people meet for various beneficial purposes. These meetings are often purely for specified engagements, but in some cases the traveling can even extend to permanent residency.

The United States, for instance, has been reported in history to have developed through immigration. Those individuals who had taken refuge in America as immigrants, for instance the Mexican Americans and African Americans, provided the needed input that facilitate its growth to attain the global superpower status it currently enjoys.

Similarly, in a qualitative study that employed a systematic review as its methodological design carried out by Jameson in 2020, the researcher deliberated that traveling across the globe is the fundamental tenet of globalization. He stated, "if people had no opportunity to travel from one destination to another, our existence as human beings would actually be meaningless" (Jameson, 2020, p.49). Guided by this deliberation, social interaction is the essential pillar of human relationships, and globalization thrives through these relations. It is through traveling that these social interactions at a global level comes to fruition. Therefore, Trump's immigration policy to impose travel bans against citizens from particular



countries, in the disguise of the COVID-19 crisis had a severe impact on the human and trade activities reliant on the globalization through physical movement from one country to another.

The COVID-19 pandemic, as reported by Aquino et al. (2020), whose study relied on secondary data from other scholars, was associated with numerous measures that limited physical movement globally, one of them being travel restrictions of people from regions severely hit by the disease. However, if an individual had coronavirus clearance certificate, there are nations that still allowed such people across their borders. Thus, travel restrictions did not necessarily insinuate imposing a travel ban. Nevertheless, as with the case of travel ban by Trump, there were countries whose citizens were completely prevented from visiting America, not to mention the numerous incidences of deportations.

In other words, Trump's travel ban policy had closed the American border for immigrants. According to Juss (2016), who carried out a research by reviewing the findings of a sample of 12 scholarly publications, movement from one country to another is the critical pillar that serves justice to the immigration and effective integration process across the globe.

## **2.2. The Security Dimension of Immigrants**

The 9/11 attacks – a series of coordinated attacks by the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda on US soil – brought a paradigm shift on migrant policies





across the Western world. Following the attack, former US President George Bush launched the ‘GWOT’ terrorism campaign that targeted Islamist extremists and Salafi jihadism that advocate for stringent Sharia laws and the establishment of a caliphate or an Islamic state (Belasco, 2009). While GWOT ended during the early 2010s, studies argue that ‘war on terror’ is now largely used as a metaphor, especially by countries in the West, to also describe the repress of certain terrorist networks and the perceived threats to national security.

Whittaker (2007), whose research was backed up by evidence collected through semi-structured interviews with a sample size of 16 selected participants from the Canadian and American Ministry of citizenship and immigration, established that a majority of Western countries, Canada and US included, have been exhibiting resentments towards extending generosity towards asylum seekers and refugees, especially from war-torn countries. This rhetoric has in fact, been consistent for decades, but was only magnified following the 9/11 attacks. For example, the US government deported thousands of Haitian refugees that were fleeing brutal persecution by the Haitian government in 1992 (Little, 1992). The US main rationale behind this largescale deportation was based on the notion that Haiti was plagued by a plethora of economic challenges coupled with Haitian refugees posing a security threat to the US. As Little (1992) remarks, refugees and asylum seekers are generally considered “importers of external political conflicts into the West” (p. 413). In agreement with Little’s sentiments, Loescher (2002),



whose study relied on the review of previous research, further elaborates that refugees residing in a country as well as newly incoming refugee populations tend to destabilize the order of state and regional security in the host country. Loescher's argument is based on the assumption that refugee populations from war-torn countries have a spill-over effect of armed and conflict exile. His argument is particularly compounded when asylum seekers and refugees set up camps or temporary establishments along the border between the country of immigration and the country of emigration. Loescher provides the example of refugee establishments in East Africa and Central Africa, which have been found to not only host refugees, but also armed combatants and guerilla forces. From this, failure of the host country to comprehensively assess the asylum seekers and refugees entering the country may result into people with malicious intent gaining access into the country.

The Dadaab concentration camps in the border of Somalia and Kenya provide an eloquent testimony as claimed by Konečná and Mrva (2021), who administered online questionnaires whose inclusion criteria was limited only to participants from East African countries, reported that militants from Somali-based Al Shabab Islamist extremist group are concentrated in the Dadaab camps, and have been responsible for perpetrating violent attacks on Kenyan soil. Nonetheless, this discourse has been criticized by policy makers and human rights activists alike, based on the argument that asylum seekers pose little to no security threat to the host nation. Furthermore, the discourse is used by policy makers to attack civil liberties and infringe upon the refugees'



and asylum seekers' human rights including torture and controversial surveillance. Consequently, the security discourses prompt governments to enact anti-immigrant policies, as well as create an environment that fosters xenophobic attacks against existing minority immigrant groups in the host country, especially from right wing extremist groups. Within this context, xenophobia can be described as hatred towards citizens/immigrants from other countries.

The deliberations by Konečná and Mrva (2021) are further echoed by Abdelkader (2017). The researcher, Abdelkader, hypothesizes that Europe experienced a refugee crisis during the Syrian War in the mid-2010s, which saw European countries such as Germany, France, and the UK experience an influx of Syrian asylum seekers and refugees. The Muslim group was met with widespread resentment from native Europeans, which created a fertile ground for Islamophobia and Xenophobic attacks on Muslim groups to thrive. This was largely manifested in spiked anti-hate and anti-Islam crimes in respective jurisdictions. The situation has served to fuel the prevalence of a hostile environment for marginalization advanced along religious context.

### **2.3. America's Position in the International Arena**

Feinstein and Pirro (2021), whose study adopted a theoretical framework of relying on studies conducted strictly within the scope of the US, advanced the idea that a country should only be accorded the right and privilege of holding the superpower status to the extent that it contributes to solving global



problems and not worsening them, making reference to America's position as the global leader.

To improve the relationship between nations and people globally, Hussain (2021) further suggests that this requires that the leading global superpower such as the US be the pivotal point that holds all the turbulent forces together. Some of the turbulent forces that usually have an adverse impact on the world include war and crisis such as the recent coronavirus pandemic. Refugees, for example, are always migrating from their home countries to foreign countries in search of better conditions and the problems they face. Therefore, when a country like the US restricts refugees from entering within its border, it worsens an already bad situation.

Considering that the US is the global superpower required to set a pleasant example to other nations by being in the forefront to solving prevailing problems, this becomes a concern. Similarly, in line with the need for the US as the world leader to provide solutions to global problems, Hussain (2021), who carried an online survey with open-ended questions using a sample size of 48 American nationals who voluntarily registered their willingness to participate in the exercise, as per the responses obtained, contended that Trump's administration handling of the COVID-19 pandemic was wrong, especially though imposing travel ban on some nations. By imposing such a ban, the US, which should rather help the struggling nations, did exactly the opposite, by inflicting more harm. Imposing a travel ban on the nations already



hit by such a pandemic does not offer any solutions to the prevailing problem, instead it subjects the affected people to more sufferings and thwart the integration of immigrants.

**Previous studies** show us that Trump's stance on immigration contradicted the principles of immigration. Others contend that the policies aimed to protect domestic jobs and national security, but this study, however, departure from the rational actor model and spatial assimilation theory, this thesis primarily focuses on analyzing the impact of Trump's immigration policies within the global context in regards to America's position internationally and the fate of immigrants and refugees, to provide a comprehensive understanding on how these two theories apply to stated research questions is imperative, as elaborated in the respective tables below.

### *Rational Actor Model*

The rational actor model is by far one of the most used foreign policy analysis approach and policy decision-making. This model assumes that the state is a monolithic actor responsible for making calculated, informed, and rational policy decisions that will elevate its value and perceived benefits (Shahryarifar, 2016). The rational actor model has four main steps including identifying the problem, highlighting the desired policy outcomes, evaluating the potential consequences of policy choice, and rational decision making for maximum policy benefits and outcomes. Within the context of Trump's immigration policies, it is safe to argue that the main rationale behind his



policies pertain to protecting US citizens against outside threats. These include Trump's rhetoric that immigrants negatively impact the US labor market, put a considerable burden on the US government in terms of the provision of social services, and act as a threat to national security, especially in light of the increase of asylum seekers flocking in the US-Mexico border.

Globalization advocate for increased integration and assimilation of people across borders without imposing physical or policy restrictions that limit people to the spheres of their respective geographical locations. In other words, globalization advocates for the operation of the world and the people in it as a "single village" where is free movement and interaction. Therefore, Trump's immigration policies clearly violate the spirit of globalization. As a result, Rational Actor Model suitably fits in its application to understand how Trump's immigration policies have impacted America's international relations with other countries and the associated effects on the integration and assimilation of immigrations into the American societies as a critical component of the globalization pursuit.



**Table 1: How the Rational Actor Model helps to analyze the stated research questions**

<b>Theory Rationale</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Relation of the theory with the Research Questions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying the problem</li><li>• Highlighting the desired policy outcomes</li><li>• Evaluating the potential consequences of policy choice</li><li>• Rational decision making for maximum policy benefits and outcomes</li></ul>	<p>What are the impacts of Trump's strict immigration policies on America's relations with other nations?</p> <p>How has Trump's immigration policies influenced the integration of immigrants into the American society?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theory identifies the issue of Trump's immigration policies, including travel bans and restrictions on refugee admissions to the US.</li><li>• The goal is to enhance America's global standing and integrate immigrants into American society.</li><li>• The potential consequences of policy choice in relation to Trump's immigration is the threat on US' superiority position as the global superpower.</li><li>• The rational decision making for maximum policy benefits and outcomes is to help the US is safeguarding its superpower position as the global leader.</li></ul>



### *Spatial Assimilation Theory*

Separate from the rational actor model, the research paper also draws from the spatial assimilation theory. However, before diving deep into the theory, it is important to shed light on what an ethnic enclave is for the purpose of this research paper. As described by Lee (2009), an ethnic enclave is a third labor market or an economic geographical area in a host country in which immigrants mostly participate. For the most part, such a geographical location is usually economically and socially different in comparison to regions dominated by the majority group. According to Lim et al. (2017), immigrants are the main participants involved in developing the ethnic enclave by creating new opportunities and maintaining economic growth through labor division.

Often times, immigrants enter into an ethnic enclave because they can easily integrate with their ethnic peers, after which they occupy a bottom position and progress upwards upon the arrival of new immigrants. The success and prosperity of an ethnic enclave is largely attributable to dependency on ethnic groups for both sustenance, resource distribution, and business. Building on the ethnic enclave hypothesis, the theory of spatial assimilation is a concept wherein immigrants move from an ethnic enclave as they accrue socioeconomic gains into affluent and better residential environments and housing spaces that are predominantly occupied by the majority group (Lee, 2009). In other words, this model asserts that new immigrants tend to first





arrive in low socioeconomic ethnic enclaves but later strive to spread out in high suburban areas.

In several occasions, immigrants are drawn to such residential environs by better amenities including safe neighborhoods, better quality schools, better access to healthcare, and well-kept streets amongst many others. This theory helps gain a better understanding of how Trump's policies have impacted the integration of existing immigrants in the country, especially from a socioeconomic dimension. As Lee (2009) hypothesizes, this spatial assimilation allows for "the process of social incorporation into the United States on the basis of their upward economic mobility and potential for increased contact and intermixing with majority members of the mainstream both in business and in the neighborhood" (p. 739).

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that spatial assimilation or rather the integration of immigrant groups does not always translate to a smooth transition of an ethnic group. According to Murayama and Nagayasu (2021), a spatial assimilation is heavily dependent on the context of a receiving residual environ or neighborhood in the host country. To illustrate, Murayama and Nagayasu provide the example of Japan, where built up friction between Japanese citizens and immigrants does not facilitate the smooth assimilation and integration of immigrants in the country. This is largely attributable to factors such as increased crime rates by non-Japanese residents and difficulty in obtaining employment. From this, the theory of spatial assimilation is considered as an important integration indicator, which supports the



globalization endeavor to advocate for the increased interaction of people without being limited to physical, geographical barriers.

**1.1 Table 2: How Spatial Assimilation Theory helps to analyze the stated research questions.**

Theory Rationale	Research Questions	Relation of the theory with the Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ethnic enclave</li><li>• Labor market</li><li>• Economic growth</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the impacts of Trump's strict immigration policies on America's relations with other nations?</li><li>• How has Trump's immigration policies influenced the integration of immigrants into the American society?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theory explains the link between ethnic enclaves and Trump's discriminatory immigration policies like the travel ban, targeting Mexican individuals in refugee restrictions.</li><li>• US labor market depends on immigrants, aiding its success. Theory studies Trump's immigration policies' impact on global connections, new immigrant admissions, and improved social integration (education, healthcare, housing).</li><li>• The theory shows how US economic growth relies on immigrants for labor in industries like agriculture and manufacturing, driving its success as a global superpower and enabling business opportunities with fewer barriers.</li></ul>



## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Research Design and Method**

To answer this study's formulated research questions and draw its conclusions, a qualitative systematic review design based on already published literature was adopted. First, a comprehensive preliminary review of Trump's exclusionary policies towards immigrants and asylum seekers was conducted based on findings and experts' opinions in the existing literature. A search of Trump's policies in relation to globalization and integration were searched using the keywords "Trump's immigration policies," "asylum seekers," or "immigrants." To assess the relationship between Trump's policies and immigrant integration into US society, multiple keywords were also searched including "assimilation," "integration," "access to work," "access to medical care," "human rights," and "citizenship." Boolean operators including "OR," "AND" were also used to source data in academic online databases and credible online sources.

Databases spanning different fields, including *Political Science*, *International Relations*, and *Immigration* were utilized to find appropriate scholarly works for this study. Precisely, research studies published from 1998 onwards were obtained from accredited databases such as ScienceDirect, Springer, Scopus, the Education Resources Information Center, and ResearchGate. Additionally, Google Scholar was utilized as a viable search engine for scholarly material in the event that the databases provided little to no results involving the impacts



of Trump's policies on immigrant integration. Upon locating a reliable article, a careful assessment of the study's reference list was also conducted to identify potentially relevant studies that may compliment this study's findings. Credible articles from credible websites such as Council on Foreign Relations, the New York Times, the Guardian, and Reuters among others were also used to compliment the study findings, especially by highlighting experts' opinions on the subject matter. Relevant government reports were also included to provide concrete evidence of Trump's immigration policies and measures.

### **3.2. Materials**

In this study's findings and discussion section below, several academic literatures on Trump's immigration policies in relation their impacts on America's relations with other countries internationally and how they have affected the integration and assimilation of immigrants into the American society are provided. Trump's immigration policies and their influence on US international relations and treatment of immigrants in America are discussed. The materials used in reference to this discussion include a large samples of academic studies and articles by scholars such as Benner and Dickerson, Slack, Hing, Mercado, Pilkington, Gilman, Gales, Alamillo, Chang, Villazor and Johnson, Ibe, Silva, Narea, Park, Panduranga, Anderson, Weber, Zallman, Caps, Detrow, Vohra, Lee, Hannafi and Marouani, Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė, Maddali, Liebig, Parrot, Perreira, Barofsky, Vohra, and Bazz in addition to the publications by Human Rights Watch, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Pew Research Center. These literatures were used to answer the



stated research questions in line with the research problem being addressed in this thesis.

### **3.3. Operationalization**

This study adopts the theoretical framework guided by two theories, namely, the rational actor model and the spatial assimilation theory, as detailed in the literature review section above. As a result, the respective definition and analysis of these theories in the context of how they apply to Trump's immigration policies and their associated impact on America's position in the global world order and integration of refugees in the American society are elaborated in detail.

Therefore, this study has developed operational indicators relating to the distinctive variables of 'remain in Mexico' policy, undermining the diversity visa lottery program, attack against immigrant citizenship and permanent residency in the US, the 'Public Charge' immigration policy, the Muslim ban in the context of Trump's immigration policies. These policies are further discussed in regards to how they have affected America's position in the global world order and influenced integration of immigrants and asylum seekers in the United States and the disproportionate treatment of Muslims. In attaining a good reliability and validity of this study, an extensive operationalization of these selected variables was completed.



This study focused on the thorough operationalization on the variables embedded on the two categories relating to the selected Trump's immigration policies and their associated impact on international relations and integration of immigrants. Hence, the operationalization of these selected categories of distinctive variable helped in fostering the validity and reliability of this study in regards to answering the stated research questions within the stipulated methodological framework, as highlighted in the two tables above.

### **3.4. Limitation and Delimitation**

The study explicitly sought to examine the impacts of Trump's immigration policies on America's international relations with other countries, of special mention is Mexico, and immigrant's human rights, with reference to Muslims. However, this examination adopted a methodological approach of basing its findings and discussion on the information obtained from already published literature. Therefore, this study is limited in relation to its reliance on secondary data based on the deliberations made by other scholars.

The study's dependence on existing data raises a potential criticism on its validity and credibility because it was not backed up by primary data. Guided by this understanding, as a researcher, in as much as this research is backed up with personal opinions and creativity, it is thus challenging to take full acknowledgment on this thesis' deliberations. Nevertheless, the delimitation of this study is with reference to the consideration that it narrows its scope to a specific administration, the Trump led regime, which helps avoid the risk of generalization of its results.



## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

During his presidential reign, Trump's administration made significant and seemingly harmful changes to the country's immigration policies. These changes were mostly evident in the administrations' imposition of cruel border policies and human rights abuses at the US-Mexico border, ramped up immigration raid and deportations, and radical policy changes towards immigrants within the US jurisdiction.

As highlighted by Alamillo et al. (2019), Trump's anti-immigrant agenda was characterized by attacking legal immigrant pathways into the US, including expanding a travel ban against immigrants from Muslim and African majority nations, as well as attempts to rapidly and entirely dismantle the US asylum system. Furthermore, Trump's administration used its executive power to change existing immigration laws, thereby bypassing Congress' authority to enact or amend immigration policies. When factored in together, a closer analysis of Trump's immigration policies reveal that they are rooted in a white nationalist agenda.

More precise, Trump's administration was motivated to reduce immigration of people of color into the country, by either keeping them out, deporting the ones already in the country, and creating an environment of xenophobia, fear, and nativism. At optics' view, such an environment is bound to negatively affect immigrants moving into or those residing within the country, including how they eventually integrate into communities. This section takes an in-depth analysis of the myriad of immigration policies enacted by Trump's administration during his presidential reign and what they translated into in regards to America's international relations with other countries and how this



consequently influenced the integration of immigrants in the American society.

#### **4.1. TRUMP'S IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATED IMPACT ON AMERICA'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES**

##### **4.1.1. Dismantling the Asylum System – The “Remain in Mexico Policy”**

During his tenure, Trump was particularly adamant in restricting asylum seekers from claiming protection by the US. The US justice department enacted a federal policy that deemed gang- and gender-based violence as lawful and viable basis of claiming asylum from the US. In his narrowed claim, former US Attorney General Jeff Sessions explained, “generally, claims by aliens pertaining to domestic violence or gang violence perpetrated by nongovernmental actors will not qualify for asylum” (Benner & Dickerson, 2018, para. 17).

The administration's major rationale behind this policy is his rhetoric that violent gang members and drug traffickers are leveraging potential loopholes within the US legal immigration system to illegally enter into the US, particularly through Mexico. This argument is partly true considering that a majority of immigrants who infiltrate the US via the US-Mexico border are mainly from the Northern Triangle of Central America – consisting three countries including El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. According to Slack et al. (2015), these three countries are marred with a plethora of socioeconomic and political problems that cannot be overlooked, which as per the proposition of Spatial Assimilation theory, serves to fuel ethnic enclaves that impede the integration of people subsequently preventing harmonious





existence. Such problems include but not limited to extreme and vicious cycles of poverty, disastrous climatic changes with destructive outcomes, gang violence, and gender-based violence, youth gangs, and drug cartels among many others. To put this argument into perspective, Hing (2018) explains that in 2017, Honduras ranked first as the country with the highest homicide rates, while El Salvador and Guatemala ranked fourth and fifth respectively. Within the context of security, it cannot be denied that Trump's policy to steer away potential criminals from entering the US through the US-Mexico border is justifiable to some extent. However, a closer analysis of the policy reveals that Trump's administration was using security as an excuse for restricting asylum seeking and overturn a precedent that was set by former president Obama's administration.

Fast forward to January 2019, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implemented the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, commonly referred to as the 'Remain in Mexico' program. According to Mercado et al. (2021), MPP was designed to allow the US government to either release immigrants back into Mexico as they wait for their respective hearings in the US, or keep asylum seekers at bay in Mexico while they que to seek for asylum. The DHS established that immigrants whose claims were deemed invalid would be removed from the country and deported to their country of origin and those whole claims were deemed meritorious would remain in the country. The policy also restricted immigrants that failed to apply for asylum in their country of citizenship but rather passed through another country for application. Data from the Human Rights Watch (2021) reveals that as of 2021, the DHS was able to send more than 72,000 asylum seekers that were awaiting court hearing to ill-equipped and unsecure countries, including Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries. The report adds that asylum



seeking immigrants were expelled more than 400,000 times to Mexico and denied the ability to justify their claims.

Concerns abounded with regards to increased cases of human rights abuses against these asylum seekers as a result of the Remain in Mexico Program. As Mercado et al. (2021) demonstrates, tens of thousands of immigrants who are not originally from Mexico are subjected to harsh living conditions and environments. They fall prey to Mexican youth gangs and drug cartels, evidenced in the rising cases of kidnappings and sexual violence in their makeshift but dilapidated camps established within Mexican streets. Furthermore, the Human Rights Watch (2021) adds that these asylum seekers also susceptible to extortion from corrupt Mexican law enforcement officials, in addition to insecurity related issues tied to being homeless. Within the US jurisdiction, the government set up detention camps designed to hold asylum seekers awaiting trial. These detention camps are also reported to have high-profile cases of human rights abuses, especially from US border officials. To illustrate, consider the case of the McAllen detention facility in Texas.

According to Pilkington (2021), the center is not only overcrowded and lack basic standards of hygiene, but also immigrants are mistreated by officials in the camps. In fact, more than 160 cases of abuse and gross misconduct have been reported across multiple detention facilities in the US. In an interview with the Guardian, one Honduran refugee cited that they were more than 69 people in a small room and when they complained about the presence of scorpions and hygiene related concerns, US border officials were quick to rubbish off such claims (Pilkington, 2021).



In fact, the MPP policy concerns were further compounded during the COVID-19 pandemic. Undeniably, the pandemic ravaged the international community in ways unimaginable, forcing governments to introduce restrictive regulatory measures in efforts to control the spread of the disease and potential paralysis of respective healthcare systems. At the same time, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that Trump took advantage of the pandemic to impose targeted bans on immigrants seeking asylum in the US-Mexico border. As Mercado et al. (2021), illustrates, at the peak of the pandemic, the US suspended more than 850,000 court hearings with the argument that immigrants were purportedly virus carriers to posed threats to the US healthcare systems. While nothing can be taken away from Trump's rationale behind suspending court hearings during the pandemic, concerns abounded considering that tens of thousands of asylum seekers had to cross the border at four am to attend court hearings, be processed, appear in trial, and later return back to Mexico in the same day. According to Gilman (2020), immigrants who failed to appear for the scheduled court date were liable to face deportation. Furthermore, how border officers handled immigrants during the pandemic further endangered the lives of immigrants in terms of rapid spread of the virus and the associated negative health outcomes.

#### **4.1.2. Undermining the Diversity Visa Lottery Program**

During his reign, Trump consistently attacked and undermined legal channels of immigrating into the US, including the US diversity visa (DV) program, also largely known as the 'green card lottery' across the globe. The DV program was established in 1995 under The Immigration Act of 1990. It is a yearly lottery that affords 55,000 immigrants from countries with



significantly low immigration rates to the US with an opportunity to apply for a US immigrant visa (Gales, 2009).

In the end, winning immigrants get to lead a lawful permanent residence in the US and chase the American Dream. At the same time, Trump's administration was quick to undermine and critique the program altogether as part of Trump's nation first campaign, which as per the deliberations of the Rational Actor Model theory, serves as the problem inhibiting America's relations with other nations and further extending to obstruct immigration integration process. As Alamillo et al. (2019) highlight, Trump was able to achieve this best by negatively framing the DV program across mainstream media as a program that lacks merit or precipitates threats to the country's national security. From a security dimension, the major argument is that potential criminals and terrorists use the DV lottery program to legally enter into the US and potentially perpetrate acts of violence. For these reasons, the US administration began proposing and implementing a series of restrictive reforms that either targeted DV lottery winners or would hinder immigrants seeking to participate in the annual lottery program.

To illustrate, consider the case of the Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy (RAISE) program that was proposed in 2017 by Trump and his Republic peers in the Congress. With special emphasis on 'Strong Economy' Trump and his Republican allies touted the bill as one that would significantly increase US citizens' wages, steer forward economic growth, and help America to become a hub for the highest skilled immigrants from across the globe. However, studies suggest that the RAISE Act was simply an extension of Trump's restrictive immigration policies guised as a bill that would improve the US economy. As Chang (2018) elaborates, the proposed



Act was a merit-based immigrant scheme that was designed to reduce legal immigration into the US by slashing the number of issued green cards by up to 50% within a decade (Chang, 2018). This Act would cut family-based immigration to the US, especially from countries such as China, India, and Mexico which have been sending the largest number of legal immigrants into the US. On Merit grounds, the Act would have introduced a points-based system on the basis of immigrants' financial prowess, educational achievements, and language abilities. More precise, Villazor and Johnson (2019) illustrate that under the point-based system, "visa applicants would earn points for having high-paying job offers, advanced degrees, and the ability to make investments of more than one million dollars in the United States. Persons in their twenties with English language proficiency would receive more points than other visa applicants" (p. 119). Ultimately, individuals with the most and sufficient points would be considered for an immigrant visa, which differs from the previous DV lottery policy that was based on random selection.

Separate from the RAISE Act, studies suggest that Trump used the COVID-19 pandemic to further wage an attack against the DV program. While countries were within their means restrict the flow of people and merchandise during the pandemic to control the spread of the virus, Trump's actions with respect to the DV program reveal a different tale. In other words, his administration froze the processing of an estimated 43,000 DV lottery winners. According to Ibe (2020), this move was largely stimulated by the hope that these applications would eventually time out during the pandemic, and eventually forfeited to avoid a surplus of immigrants seeking to legally migrate into the US. The administration also included additional countries such as Tanzania, Nigeria, and Sudan in the list of countries barred from the DV lottery



program (Villazor & Johnson, 2019). With this in mind, it is safe to deduce that the US DV program under Trump's reigns was under the threat of ending entirely or prioritize immigrants from developed economies at the expense of those from developing economies.

#### **4.1.3. Attack against Immigrant Citizenship and Permanent Residency in the US**

In addition to undermining the DV program, Trump's administration made it nearly impossible for legal immigrants in the US to attain citizenship or permanent residency in the country, which clearly, as per the provisions of Spatial Assimilation theory, curtail the integration along racial and ethnic lines. The administration achieved this best by significantly slowing down processing and court case completions for fiancé-, family-, and employment-based applications as well as naturalization applications to a crawl in the fiscal years during Trump's tenure.

This argument is largely attributable to the skyrocketed backlog of pending legal immigrant applications under the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – the US agency responsible for processing immigrant applications. Singling out naturalization applications alone, Silva (2018) illustrates that by the end of 2017, there were an estimated 730,000 applications – an 87% increase since 2015 when former president Barack Obama was in office. Furthermore, unlike what seemed like a straightforward, fast, and relatively cheap application process for naturalization, Trump's administration has made it particularly challenging, longer, and expensive. Based on data from the USCIS, immigrants with at least five years are eligible for naturalization. After application, they wait up to 8.8 months before



becoming a US citizenship, which is approximately a 50% increase when compared to Obama's administration. In fact, Narea (2020) explains that in cities such as Miami and Seattle, the wait times for naturalization can take up to two years. The process of becoming a citizen also became more expensive for immigrants during Trump's tenure. In 2006, immigrants had to part with \$330 for online naturalization application fees (Park, 2008).

Fast forward to 2020, the USCIS introduced a \$1,160 application fee, in addition to eliminating waivers for immigrants that cannot be able to afford this cost. Such costs put low-income immigrant families at a disadvantage, especially considering that the bulk of legal immigrants into the US are from developing economies such as Mexico. In part, this slowed process of application is attributable to Trump's point-based system and partially due to the 'extreme vetting' executive order signed in 2017.

In their book, Panduranga et al. (2017) explain that the extreme vetting policy was designed to ensure that immigrants are vetted in depth on the premise of tooting out Islamic terrorists or fraud. Consequently, immigrants seeking naturalization have been subject to robust screening, including the validity of their green card applications, criminal history, tax compliance, proof of five or more years of permanent residency in the US, and family ties among others. In fact, Narea (2020) adds that in states such as Minnesota, immigrants have been vetted more than once, especially if they arrived in the country on temporary visa. Considering that Trump allowed for the USCIS to place visa and green card applicants in deportation proceedings if their applications have errors or miss crucial evidence (Ibe, 2020), millions of people with valid visas were therefore at increased risk of facing deportation, which as per the provisions Rational Actor Model, attributed to the problem that tinted



America's relations with other nations globally. To compliment this argument, an analysis by the Berry Appleman & Leiden, a US firm that meets immigrants' challenges, concluded that "immigrants in the green card backlog would lose their place in line and would need to apply under the new point-based system" (Anderson, 2019, para. 3). This would have placed millions of people that were waiting in green card backlogs at a disadvantage. To put it into perspective, data from the US Department of State reveals that as of 2018, there were an estimated 3.6 million individuals still waiting in family-based immigration backlogs. Of this, 2.2 million were under the sibling category, 950,000 under US citizens' adult children, while 470,000 were the adult unmarried children of lawful permanent citizens or the spouse's category (Anderson, 2019).

From this, Trump's administration policies were primarily aimed at slowing down the process of immigration to extremely vet applicants, and potentially find dirt on them that would help the government either impose its merit-based system that does not favor low-income immigrants and further strip them of their valid visas and potentially deport them to their countries of origin.

#### **4.1.4. The 'Public Charge' Immigration Policy**

Perhaps one of the cruelest and controversial immigration policy under Trump's administration is the revision of the 'public charge' policy. Within this context, public charge was a concept introduced by congress introduced by Congress back in 1882 (Weber, 2020). The law was designed to allow the US government to determine whether immigrants seeking to enter the country or apply for permanent residency, are or may likely become a public charge – an immigrant that will mostly become extremely dependent on the government





for assistance and subsistence (Zallman et al., 2019). Such immigrants are denied entry, reentering, or becoming a permanent resident in the US particularly if they used public cash assistance or is institutionalized in a government-funded facility.

Prior to Trump's tenure, only these receipts were used by the government to assess the status of an immigrant's public charge. Fast forward to the spring of 2020, Trump's administration was given the go-ahead by the Supreme Court to implement its public charge revisions which were proposed in 2018. According to Capps et al. (2020), the new policy allowed for immigrant officials to review a widened range of public benefits in the country. These include but not limited to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or commonly known as food stamps), Medicare Part D low-income subsidies, as well as housing assistance such as Section 8 housing vouchers (Capps et al., 2020; Zallman et al., 2019). Clearly, these changes are seemingly targeted towards low-income immigrants and their respective families by punishing them from enjoying certain public benefits that are also extended towards native US residents, hindering the possibility of their assimilation into the American society. As Ibe (2020) comments, the revised public charge policy is simply a 'wealth test' imposition for immigrants seeking to apply for entry or for legally residing US immigrants seeking for permanent residency status.

#### **4.1.5. The 'Muslim Ban' – Xenophobic**

As part of his 'nation first' campaign, Trump consistently reiterated that he had the US security at his interests, evidenced in multiple policies and rhetoric geared towards preventing criminals and potential terrorists from entering the



country. Drawing from GWOT Trump consistently called for a ban of travelers and immigrants from countries deemed to be hubs for terrorists during his presidential campaign. While responding to the 2015 terror attacks in San Bernardino, California, Trump loudly critiqued that attack and the perpetrators involved and their places of origin. More precise, “when I am elected, I will suspend immigration from areas around the world when there is a proven history of terrorism against the United States, Europe, or our allies, until we understand how to end these threats” (Detrow, 2016, para. 5). Soon after ascending into office, Trump was quick to make true of his word by deterring foreign Muslims from entering into the US – a concept later labelled as the ‘Muslim Ban’ by critics. The Muslim ban is a series of executive orders issued by Trump’s administration to prohibit both travel and refugee resettlement from a selected but predominantly Muslim countries. Specifically, Trump issues an executive order on January 2017 that banned travelers from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya from traveling into the US for more than 90 days, clearly propagating discrimination that hindered the assimilation of immigrants into the American society subsequently threatening the position of the US as the global leader (Panduranga et al., 2017).

Ibe (2020) adds that in 2018, the ban was extended to North Korean and Venezuelan nationals. Later in 2020, the restrictions were further extended to six additional countries, including Tanzania, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Eritrea, and Sudan. According to Narea (2020), the Muslim ban was part of Trump’s extreme vetting policy, which as previously highlighted, was designed to keep terrorists out of the country’s border (as previously highlighted) on the bases of tightening national security. The former president



added that non-Muslim minorities from these countries would be prioritized to enter the US, based on the argument that they were being persecuted and ‘horribly treated’ in countries such as Iraq and Syria. Drawing from the definition of xenophobia – hatred towards citizens from other countries, it can be argued that Trump’s Muslim ban was seemingly xenophobic. Similar insights are shared by Vohra (2021), who claims “Trump had masqueraded the xenophobic ban as an essential tool to strengthen national security in order to push it through the American Supreme Court” (para. 11). Such policies create a cloud of uncertainty amongst Muslim minorities in the US, especially by creating a less welcoming and xenophobic country, in turn thwarting integration and assimilation efforts.

#### **4.2. TRUMP’S IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND HOW THEY HAVE AFFECTED IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN THE US**

Evidently, Trump’s tenure was marred by relentless attacks on the US immigration system, evidenced in multiple and seemingly harmful amendments to immigration policies. From the MPP policy to the RAISE Act, point-based system, extreme vetting, visa denials, revision of public charge policy, and the Muslim ban, it can be argued that Trump’s policies were seemingly geared towards deterring immigrants from legally entering the country, or frustrate (even deport) the batch of legally existing immigrants seeking permanent citizenship in the country to exercise their rights. Joshua Hoyt, executive director of the National Partnership for New Immigrants that advocates for immigrants’ rights, puts it blatantly in interview with NBC News that “the Trump administration has built a second wall that prevents legal



immigrants in the US from becoming voting US citizens” (Silva, 2018, para. 3).

As previously highlighted, a majority of these policies are guised under protecting the national and security interests of US residents. Nevertheless, little is known how these immigration policies have been received by immigrants seeking to enter the US or those currently residing in the country, and how their integration or assimilation in communities has been impacted. At optic’s view, it cannot be denied that Trump’s immigration policies created a rather unwelcoming country that does not prioritize the interests and to some extent, rights of non-natives in the country. In such an environment, it is practical to conclude that immigrants would face the challenges of positive integration or upward assimilation within US communities.

#### **4.2.1. Integration and Assimilation of Asylum Seekers**

Trump’s MPP policy towards asylum seekers from the Northern Triangle countries was seemingly designed to refuse or frustrate the influx of immigrants seeking asylum from the US.

Consequently, asylum seekers, including those awaiting court proceedings inside the US border were sent to Mexico, where they were met with multiple hostilities. According to the Human Rights Watch (2021), asylum seekers and refugees enter into a country with different backgrounds, experiences, and values that enrich respective communities with cultural divisiveness in turn fostering assimilation. Furthermore, countries, especially developing countries, are mandated to accept asylum seekers within their jurisdictions, and create a welcoming environment that facilitates integration and assimilation. As elaborated by Lee (2009), “outcomes for immigrants who



arrive under refugee or asylum status, after being officially legitimated and given appropriate status, often result in positive or upward assimilation” (p. 734).

In fact, such has been witnessed in developed economies such as Germany, which is lauded for accepting close to a million Syrian immigrants who were fleeing the Syrian War during the mid-2010s (Hannafi & Marouani, 2023). Assimilation and integration asylum refugees in Germany were mainly a consequence of resilient coalition of political parties and human rights advocates in the country.

Nevertheless, drawing from Trump’s rhetoric of deterring criminals and terrorists entering the US under the pretense of seeking asylum, the integration of asylum seekers and refugees may be at jeopardy. A classic case in point that can be references to illustrate this argument involves that of Lithuania. Following an influx of Syrian refugees into Lithuania during the Syrian War, Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė et al. (2017) examined the perception of Lithuanians towards refugees seeking asylum in the country. The study found that Lithuanians deemed refugees as a security threat to the country, and would likely distort the country’s stability, lead to crime proliferation, potential terrorism, and social conflicts. Therefore, the less welcoming a community is towards asylum seekers, the more it becomes difficult for refugees to assimilate and integrate into the country, and the reverse is also true. For the US however, Trump’s administration did not only hinder asylum seekers from entering the country, but also slowing the assimilation of refugee groups in the country and the ability to integrate into welcoming communities (including ethnic enclaves).



#### **4.2.2. Impacts of Trump's Merit-based System on Immigrant Integration**

Under Trump's RAISE Act, DV lottery and applicants were placed at a disadvantage from entering into the US. As illustrated by Villazor and Johnson (2019), the Act meant that applicants and winners would be considered based on their educational achievements, wealth, and English proficiency. Evidently, this system denies immigrants seeking to legally enter the US from entering into the US, and further assimilate and integrate within US communities.

The crux of the matter, was when Trump's administration plotted to employ the merit-based system, coupled with the extreme vetting policy, on the millions of legal immigrants seeking waiting for permanent residency and citizenship but were on the green card backlog of the USCIS. Consequently, these immigrants were likely to lose their place in line and apply under the new merit-based system. This extremely slowed down naturalization application process created a cloud of uncertainty, in turn precipitating panic and anxiety amongst legal immigrants within US borders. For instance, Ibe (2020) argues that significantly reduce the number of family-issued green cards. This would significantly affect immigrants from countries such as India, China, and Mexico, which send the bulk of immigrants into the US. Furthermore, fewer families from such countries will be able to reunite with legal immigrants currently residing in the country.

This argument is especially true given that Trump's policies meant that applicants would be subjected to longer wait times, which was mainly



advanced along ethnic lines, in turn tearing families further apart and for longer time periods, and in the context of Spatial Assimilation, limits the integration process. It is no surprise therefore, that the RAISE Act received widespread criticism from immigrant families and sparked a lot of protests from Indian and Mexican immigrants (Maddali, 2017).

In a different line of thought, the RAISE Act has also negatively impacted integration of immigrants from low-income families and with low-income skills to assimilate and integrate in the US. To put this argument into perspective, Liebig (2007) illustrates that “employment is often considered to be the single most important indicator of integration” (p. 63). In other words, employment opportunities make up the main source of income for legal immigrants in the country. It enables them to actively participate in the labor market and in society in general, especially in terms of finding lucrative accommodation, peer-to-peer interactions in the workplace, and learning the economic and financial values of the host country.

Furthermore, and drawing from the spatial assimilation theory, employment opportunities allow for immigrants to leave an ethnic enclave, move to high-income neighborhoods, in turn leaving a gap that can be filled with newer immigrants. However, the RAISE Act enacted by Trump prioritizes high skilled immigrants as part of the merit-based system. According to Ibe (2020), low- and medium-skilled immigrants who work in major US industries such as agriculture, construction, and hospitality are placed at a huge disadvantage. Similar insights are shared by Maddali (2017), who explains that a majority of women who fill up important needs in the US service industry mainly enter the country through the family-based system. As such, these women are curtailed from performing mostly demanding jobs such as care work of the US



aging population. Furthermore, the additional charges immigrants are required to pay in order to apply for naturalization also places low-income immigrants at a disadvantage of effectively integrating into the US communities.

#### **4.2.3. The Negative correlation between Public Charge Policy and Immigrant Integration**

Arguably, one of the harshest immigration policies implemented during Trump's tenure was his revision of the public charge policy. As Ibe (2020) argues, this policy was more of a wealth test for immigrants that was designed to punish low-income immigrants and their families for using much needed public benefits necessary for bolstering low-income communities in the country.

This policy warrants examination of how it has impacted the integration of immigrants in the country, especially considering that public benefits play a crucial role in how immigrants assimilate with existing communities in host countries. According to Lee (2009), immigrants who arrive as asylum seekers or refugees experience upward assimilation, owing largely to "their access to a variety of government-supported programs offering assistance and benefits" (p. 734). In stark contrast, Trump's policy was designed to deny such a category of immigrants the access to public benefits such as Medicaid and SNAP among others.

For the above reasons, studies suggest that immigrants have been finding it hard to adjust to the consequences of the revised public charge policy on different grounds. Within the context of healthcare for instance, women and children immigrants have been particularly placed at a significant disadvantage. In other words, immediate response to the proposed changes was the likelihood of multiple immigrant parents or noncitizen adults to





disenroll their family members, including children, from the Medicaid safety-net program offered by the US government. Zallman et al. (2019) establishes that in a disenrollment scenario, approximately 8.3 million were at risk of losing nonemergency Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). This argument is similarly echoed by Parrot et al. (2018), who explains that the public charge policy would establish new rules over which individuals could remain in or migrate to the US, and it would also convince a copious amount of immigrants who legally reside in the country as well as their US-citizen family members to forgo government benefits and tax credits despite being eligible for them.

Parrot et al. (2018) add that pregnant women and children in particular, will feel the brunt of the policy and their resultant decision to forgo health benefits would prove to be deleterious both in the short- and long-term. In other words, lack of access to this government assisted programs translates to limited access to health care, in turn leading to unforeseen consequences such as lower educational achievements in children's later years, access to work, and higher earnings. To drive this point across, consider the following statistics as illustrated by Perreira et al. (2018). As of 2016, at least 38% of non-citizen children and 19% of non-citizen adults were enrolled in CHIP or Medicaid. Additionally, nearly six million citizen children but with a non-citizen parent received either CHIP or Medicaid in 2016. If this staggering number of children are forced to forgo these benefits, the resultant implications prove to be detrimental.

Similar aforementioned insights can also be discussed within the context of access to nutrition assistance or the SNAP program as well as housing assistance including Section 8 housing vouchers that are provided to



immigrants in the country. To put this argument into perspective, Perreira et al. (2018) highlight that approximately 15% of non-citizen adults and 25% citizen children with non-citizen adults are enrolled in SNAP for nutritional benefits. The research team explain that if SNAP experiences a 28% reduction such as the one witnessed following the 1996 welfare-reform law, nearly one million individuals, mostly immigrants would face food insecurity. This analysis reveal that the policy created a cloud of uncertainty that precipitated mistrust, confusion amongst immigrants in the country, and mostly fear – the fear of jeopardizing application to permanently reside in the US. Nonetheless, and as argued by Barofsky et al. (2020), the public charge policy was discriminatory in nature towards legal immigrants in the country, and such an environment is nonconductive for upward integration and assimilation into the US overall society.

#### **4.2.4. Muslim Ban and Xenophobic-related Concerns**

Lastly, Trump's 'Muslim ban' also took a significant toll on immigrant integration in the US, especially the integration of the Muslim minority group in the country. For the most part, this can be attributed to the security discourse or rather GWOT as to how immigrants from hostile countries are perceived as a security threat. In the US, Trump's administration banned immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya, Tanzania and Nigeria among other countries (Ibe; 2020; Panduranga et al., 2017).

The administration's rationale was security-based, especially following the 2015 San Bernardino terror-related shooting in California. Studies indicate that intolerant groups in host nations tend to be particularly hostile, prejudiced or rather xenophobic towards immigrants from war-torn countries. For



example, following the Syrian war, a large influx of Syrian refugees into Europe was met by widespread criticism from European citizens and far-right movements in countries such as Germany, France, the UK, and Lithuania among others (Hannafi & Marouani, 2023; Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė et al., 2017). Consequently, Muslim immigrants in the country were a constant target of hate crimes, manifested in the form of abuse, violence, and disrespect towards the Muslim religion, including attacks on Mosques. Following the Muslim ban and Trump's extension of the travel ban to other countries with people of color, immigrant advocates and human rights activists were quick to slam the policy and label it as a weaponized lawful extension of the Trump's regime xenophobic agenda.

Consequently, Vohra (2021) establishes that this policy created a xenophobic and less welcoming environment towards Muslim minority groups in the country. This was manifested through a spike in hateful crimes towards Muslims in the US following Trump's rhetoric on Muslims as a security threat as well as his policies. To demonstrate, data from the Southern Poverty Law Center found that just five days after Trump ascended into office, there were more than 400 instances of hateful crimes, intimidation, and harassment towards Muslim minorities (Bazz, 2016). According to Bazz, Trump and his advisors were responsible for creating an environment whereby his supporters felt that they would openly express racism, bigotry, and xenophobia. Furthermore, Trump appointed former head of Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) as his national security adviser.

At the same time, Flynn has made multiple headlines for making inflammatory remarks about Islam, including comparing the religion to a 'cancer' and that "fear of Muslims is rational" (para. 6). Consequently, the



Muslim population in the country have expressed heightened worries and concerns about the country's future and where they are placed in American society during Trump's era. As a 2017 study by Pew Research Center (2017) found, a majority 68% of the respondents featured were worried, angry, and overall dissatisfied with Trump's policy approach towards the Muslim population in the country. This uptick in Muslim discrimination and anti-Muslim hate crimes creates an uncondusive environment for Muslims to effectively integrate into communities within the US.

**Table 1** above summarizes how Rational Actor Model theory helps in answering the stated research questions in relation to identifying problems, establishing desired policy, and making rational decision to understand the problem under study pertaining to how Trump's immigration affects America's relations with other countries and integration of immigrants.

**Table 2** summarizes how Spatial Assimilation theory helps in answering the stated research questions in regard to fostering understanding on ethnic clave, the US labor market, US economic growth concerning how these variables contributes to the understanding on how Trump's immigration affects America's relations with other countries and integration of immigrants in the US.



## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

Globalization is not a new concept. It describes the manner in which people and countries within the global community relate, interact, and integrate through improved travel and information communication technologies. However, the concept of globalization is thwarted by nationalist ideologies, held predominantly by leaders with nation-first and anti-immigrant interests. Trump is a classic nationalist case in point, whereby his presidential campaign and tenure was rooted on putting America's interests first and revising immigrant laws in the country. After assuming office, Trump did not hesitate to implement policies designed to steer away immigrants seeking to enter into the US, or frustrate non-citizen Americans seeking to apply for permanent residency in the country.

This research paper conducted a comprehensive analysis on Trump's enacted and proposed immigration policies during his reign and further how these policies have affected the integration and assimilation of immigrants into US communities. From the public charge policy to the Muslim ban, attack on DV lottery program, and the RAISE Act among others, it is evident that Trump's administration was keen to undermine immigrant policies that were previously established in the country, under the guise of securing the country's national interests such as security and welfare. Furthermore, the implementation of the aforementioned policies took paid little or no consideration to the lives of immigrants, including children, as well as the legal process in which a majority had to undertake to secure Visas and gain permanent residency in the US.

Similarly, the policies also undermined asylum and refugee seeking in the US-Mexico border, as well the human rights of the families involved, despite asylum seeking being protected under international law. Consequently, the



research found that Trump's seemingly anti-immigrant policies created a cloud of uncertainty and a less welcoming environment, in turn precipitating fear especially amongst low-income and Muslim minority immigrants, as well as exacerbate concerns such as disenrollment from government assisted programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, and CHIP among others. This unwelcoming and fearful environment is not conducive for smooth and effective integration and assimilation of immigrants into the US and also threatens the process of globalization in the long-run. Furthermore, the policy approach also threatens to tarnish the US' image, especially given that the country is touted as a free democratic country where immigrants can legally and easily find their way into to chase their American Dream.

Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that there is room for optimism for immigrant integration into the US, given the incumbent President Biden has removed some of the policies implemented by Trump and is striving to enact favorable policies towards immigrants. At the same time, Biden's administration also has a daunting task ahead of removing the cloud of mistrust created by the previous regime and ensure that America is still considered a welcoming country in the international arena.



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